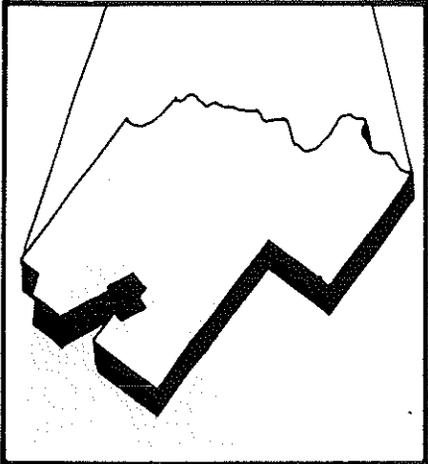


West Vincent
Township
Chester County
Pennsylvania

Open Space
& Recreation
Plan
1992



**WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN**

Adopted July 27, 1992

Re-Adopted February 22, 1993

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Consulting services provided by:

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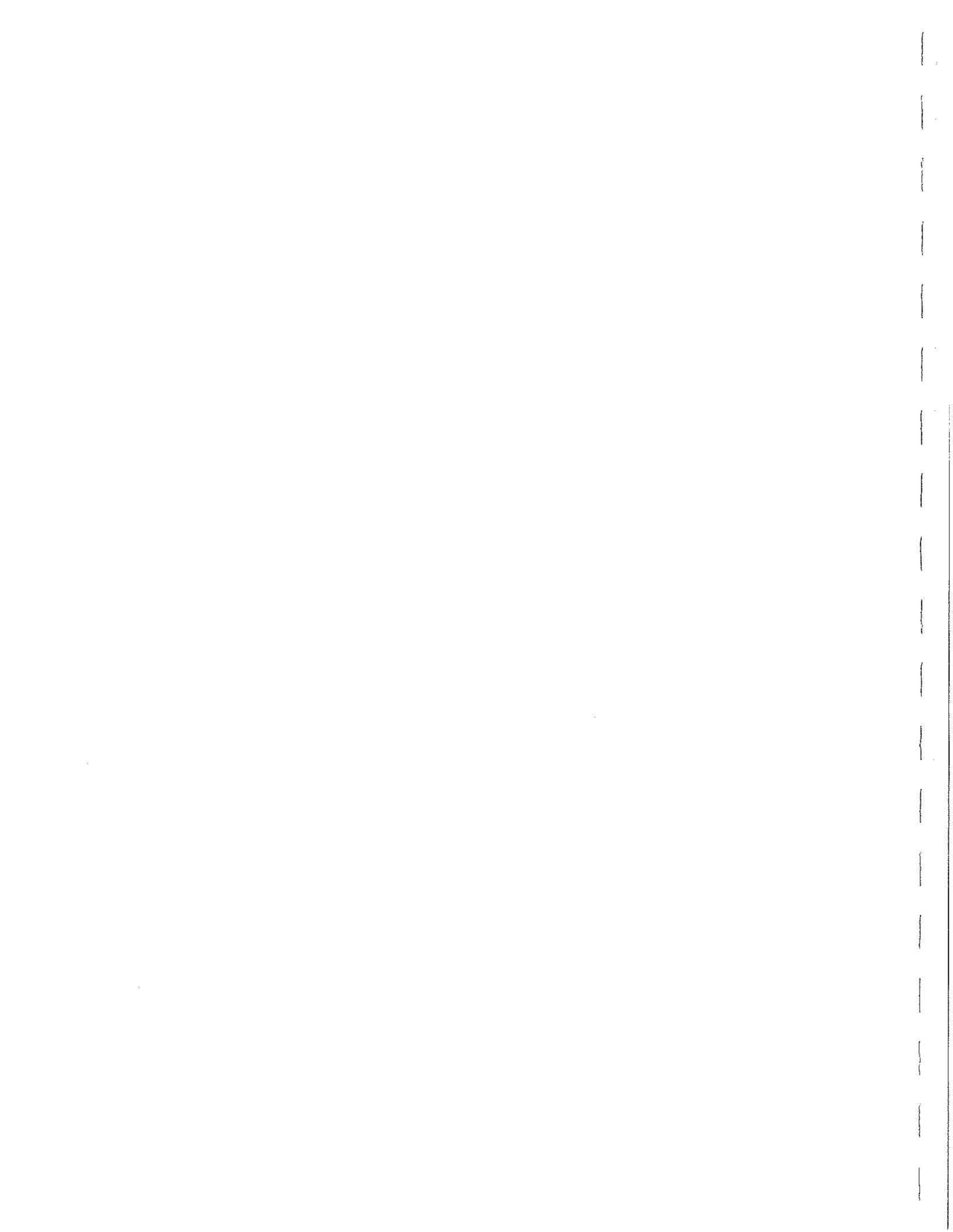


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RESOLUTION NO. 4 - 1993

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE "WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN" AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE OF 1985.

WHEREAS, the current comprehensive plan for West Vincent Township consists of the "West Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan Update of 1985", adopted October 7, 1985, and

WHEREAS, Section 302 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended) permits the adoption of comprehensive plan amendments, and

WHEREAS, the proposed "West Vincent Township Open Space and Recreation Plan" has been duly submitted to the Chester County Planning Commission, all contiguous municipalities, and the Owen J. Roberts School District for review and comment in accordance with Section 301.3 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended), and

WHEREAS, the West Vincent Township Planning Commission held a public meeting February 18, 1993, pursuant to public notice, prior to forwarding the proposed "West Vincent Township Open Space and Recreation Plan" to the Board of Supervisors in accordance with Section 302(a) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended), and

WHEREAS, the Supervisors of West Vincent Township wish to adopt the "West Vincent Township Open Space and Recreation Plan" as an amendment to the West Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan Update of 1985.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Supervisors of West Vincent Township that the "West Vincent Township Open Space and Recreation Plan" consisting of ten chapters entitled as follows:

1. Open Space Planning Context
2. Objectives for Open Space and Recreation Planning
3. Environmental Quality
4. Visual Landscape Quality
5. Scenic Roadways
6. Historic Resources
7. Agricultural Resources
8. Recreational Resources
9. Conservation/Preservation Issues and Strategies
10. Summary Recommendations

and consisting of twenty maps entitled as follows:

1. Regional Location
2. Existing Land Use
3. Upper Reaches of French Creek - Map Series

4. Geology
5. Soils
6. Slope
7. Water Resources
8. Visually Significant Landscapes
9. Visually Significant Landscapes - Sample Detail Area
10. Larking Hill Farm Case Study - Plan Series
11. Scenic Roads
12. Historic Resources
13. Conservation Features - Agricultural Soils and Woodlands
14. Restricted Lands - Act 515/319 Lands
15. Existing Open Space Lands and Facilities
16. Hypothetical Community Park Plan at "Matthews Meadows"
17. Composite Open Space Resources
18. Conservation and Development Potential
19. Recommendations Summary
20. Future Land Use Plan

and title page; table of contents; executive summary; and appendices as well as all of the maps, tables, charts, plans, textual matter and all other materials encompassed therein be and hereby is adopted as an amendment to the West Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan Update of 1985, a copy of this Resolution to be made part of the "West Vincent Township Open Space and Recreation Plan" or notation of the adoption of this Resolution to be made thereon and thus part of the West Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan Update of 1985 as amended.

RESOLVED this 22nd day of February, 1993.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

Leah
Susan T. Pedersen
Warren L. Frame

ATTEST:

Kay Segner
Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY PLAN FOR OPEN SPACE?

In the late 1980's, development of more land was proposed across Chester County than actually occurred in the entire previous three hundred years since European settlement began. In West Vincent Township, the late 1980's brought increased development pressure in the form of more and larger subdivisions. While we are still open - our landscape is still largely intact - it will take a dedicated community effort to preserve this feeling in light of recent trends. It is important to remember that open space is rarely happenstance: it represents specific land use and economic decisions.

In a recent survey conducted in June of 1989, West Vincent Township residents overwhelmingly supported municipal efforts to preserve open space. The drafting of this Open Space and Recreation Plan was undertaken in response to that widespread concern. The purpose of the Plan is (1) to develop a township-endorsed strategy for open space conservation and (2) to position West Vincent Township to be eligible for the funding of open space projects - be it through application for Commonwealth or Chester County grants or through the levying of fees-in-lieu of open space from developers in the township.

The emphasis of West Vincent's Open Space and Recreation Plan is placed on preserving community character, unlike the open space plans of more densely populated municipalities that focus primarily on meeting the recreation needs of township residents. Stated differently, this is more an "open space plan" than a "recreation plan." This choice of emphasis is consistent with West Vincent's current situation - that of a township in early transition from a rural to a suburban community.

Open space represents diverse resources including scenic roadways and landscapes, historic sites, agricultural activity, natural diversity of flora and fauna, clean streams and waterways, and recreational resources. This plan endeavors (1) to identify the diversity of West Vincent's open space resources and (2) to recommend means, both public and private, to ensure their long-term conservation.

STRATEGY FOR OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION

This plan can be considered and used as an addendum to the West Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan. In fact, this plan draws upon the planning data base provided by the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, this plan adheres to the following objectives offered by the Comprehensive Plan:

- Natural Features: To provide for the preservation, protection, management and enhancement of the natural resources and environmental qualities of West Vincent Township for present and future generations;
- Recreation and Historic Areas: To promote the adequate provision of recreation and cultural amenities;
- Agriculture: To promote the continuation of agricultural activities in the Township;

The plan develops a three-fold strategy to preserve open space in West Vincent Township:

- To support the economic viability of open space in the hands of private individual landowners; this is intended to be facilitated through the establishment of a "West Vincent Township Landowner Cooperative Program."
- To direct continuing development in such a way that it will fit the landscape, much as historic settlement patterns have - clustering buildings together while leaving large blocks of open space intact instead of spreading new construction across entire tracts. Township ordinance changes will be necessary to fully implement this objective.
- To provide for community recreational access; establishment of one 15-acre community park and a Birchrunville village green are recommended, along with protection of the French Creek Greenway and the system of trails within the Township.

Key recommendations of the Plan can be summarized in greater detail as follows. Costs shown illustrate the general realm of potential Township funding involvement; they do not take into account cost savings that could result from receipt of grant monies, reduction in scope of efforts, use of voluntary assistance, etc.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLAN

1. **Establishment of a permanent Open Space Committee** was accomplished as recommended herein in December, 1991, with the creation of the **Environmental Advisory Council**. The EAC will monitor on-going open space and recreation issues, review relevant aspects of development proposals, promote public and private efforts to conserve open space resources, foster community recognition and appreciation for those resources, and offer relevant advise to the Planning Commission and Supervisors. It is recommended that specific budget(s) and accounts to support the activities of the EAC be set up.
2. **Encourage a "West Vincent Township Landowner Cooperative Program,"** allowing for a 1-2 year start-up time frame, to monitor priorities for open space resource conservation and to set up formal and informal liaison between the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, EAC and individual land-owners, local conservation organizations, and County and state programs for open space conservation. Where direct Township involvement is envisioned, establish base annual budget and seek additional funding in cooperation with local conservation organizations, foundations, and the County. Direct funding assistance to landowners' conservation efforts (where clearly meeting public objectives) should be considered (\$10,000-\$50,000+ total, potentially over several years). Professional consulting services are recommended (\$5,000-\$10,000 annually).
3. **Consider ordinance amendments** to promote open space resource protection objectives. Consider revision to the Zoning Ordinance regarding: gross density calculation, flexible development standards (i.e., "cluster" development provisions), transfer of development rights (TDR), and open space designation and management. Consider revisions to the Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance (S/LDO) regarding: required site analyses, environmental impact assessment and mitigation, mandatory dedication of park and recreation lands and facilities and/or fees-in-lieu thereof, and protection of trail rights-of-way. Consider adoption of a comprehensive Natural Features Conservation Ordinance (NFCO). Professional consulting services are recommended (\$5,000-\$20,000 total, over a 1-3 year time frame).
4. **Seek acquisition and development of community parkland.** Pursue opportunities to negotiate acquisition of land for a single 15+ acre community park through the development process. Failing such negotiation of acquisition within 1-2 years, consider application for state and/or county parkland acquisition funds and designate

any fees-in-lieu collected for parkland acquisition (land cost depends on detailed circumstances, up to \$300,000, as a one-time expenditure; 50% potentially available from grants, remainder from Township funds). Formalize policy for acceptance of parkland dedication, collection of fees-in-lieu of land, and determination of facility development to which collected fees will be applied. Seek to establish a formal "village green" at Birchrunville for community gatherings and special events.

5. **Continue efforts to formalize the French Creek Greenway**, seeking to effect a continuous band of permanent open space. Coordinate conservation efforts with other agencies involved in the Greenway effort (i.e., Chester County, French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust).
6. **Facilitate historic preservation efforts**, supporting additional research into the historical significance of the 231 sites in West Vincent that were included in the Chester County Historic Sites Survey. Consider enactment of specific ordinance provisions aimed at protection of historic resources. Professional consultation is recommended (1-5 year time frame; \$3,000-\$8,000, total).
7. **Request formal cooperation from PennDOT** regarding protection and maintenance of scenic roadside qualities.
8. **Conduct ongoing monitoring and periodic updates** regarding all pertinent open space resources, including activities of non-Township agencies and organizations, particularly conservation easements and deed restrictions, trail access easements, and recreational programming efforts serving West Vincent residents (use voluntary efforts of the EAC).

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY DOCUMENT

This Plan represents over 18 months worth of work efforts on the part of the West Vincent Township Open Space Task Force and its consulting staff. It was quickly apparent that, in West Vincent Township, open space must be attacked on several broad fronts. Hence, the Plan was organized into several parts, as follows:

Background

Open Space Planning Context looks to define our scope of open space and recreation, its place within the local planning context, and reflect upon the planning

framework provided by efforts undertaken with a focus larger than West Vincent Township.

Objectives

Objectives for Open Space & Recreation Planning are articulated as developed specifically for West Vincent Township through the efforts of the Task Force, expanding upon themes established by Township comprehensive planning efforts.

Open Space Resources: Inventory & Analysis

Environmental Quality discussion draws from the Township Comprehensive Plan to look at critical environmental issues which, while important in their own right, also infer key locational criteria for designation of open space. These include areas clearly not appropriate for development, such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and other areas where soils will not appropriately accept disposal of wastewater, along with areas of particular importance such as vegetative and/or wildlife habitat.

Visual Landscape Quality provides analysis and delineation of areas of "visual significance," primarily defined as those which fall within the "public view." This section defines landscape elements which particularly contribute to West Vincent's open space character, noting both visual "accents" and "intrusions." A case study look at one large tract -- Larking Hill Farm -- shows how visual analysis might be drawn directly into the planning process. Several hypothetical planning scenarios serve to illustrate means to resolve seeming conflict among diverse resource protection objectives. This case study also serves to demonstrate the need to explore a variety of public and private means to implement open space resource protection.

Scenic Roadways include most roads in the Township, offering visual "access" to the open space landscape. The roadways often are notably scenic in their own right.

Historic Resources contribute to our "sense of place," offering tangible evidence of the historical processes which have gradually shaped the landscape we treasure today. Historical integrity of structures, ruins and sites is strongly linked to landscape settings, particularly in a community with primarily rural roots.

Agricultural Resources: Agriculture has been the predominant land use throughout West Vincent's known history, setting the pace for historical development patterns while marking the most visible aspects of the open space landscape. In various forms -- from

pasturage to crop production, agriculture retains current economic viability. However, agricultural economic viability is now threatened. Community-wide efforts must be made to promote farming in all its forms and to conserve our agricultural soils as a long-term resource.

Recreational Resources of varied types serve West Vincent Township residents; to date, passive enjoyment of the open space landscape has been the primary recreational pursuit within Township bounds. Residents pursue active recreation at a range of facilities in the broader region. Community and neighborhood park development is needed to meet active recreational needs as development continues.

Strategy/Recommendations

Conservation/Preservation Issues & Strategies draws diverse open space conservation issues together to focus on public and private means to conserve important and vulnerable open space resources.

Summary Recommendations pulls together suggested approaches to conservation in terms of potential policy and action on the part of the Township. Key recommendations are summarized above.

OPEN SPACE PLANNING CONTEXT

WHAT IS OPEN SPACE

Open space, in the simplest terms, is area which is not occupied by buildings. Open space surrounds and separates, yet can also connect, building clusters, villages, and neighborhoods. The arrangement and character of open space and its relationship to the built environment can play a major role in definition of community character. In West Vincent, open space - particularly the perception of open space - is the most critical contributor to the character of the community, a character that, even in the face of regional development pressures, remains quite rural.

The open space character is primarily perceived visually. A wide range of landscapes contribute to it, ranging from wooded ridge lines and open farmland, to hedgerows, woodlots, ponds, open meadows, and even small yard areas. These open space areas offer aesthetic, psychological and recreational benefits whether or not physical access to them is permitted. Their contribution to community character and identity upholds community land values.

Open space areas also serve important environmental functions. Floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes, for example, should remain in open space due to the hazards they portend if developed. In contrast, if maintained in a natural state, they promote the retention of flood waters, diminish the threat of erosion, promote groundwater replenishment, offer wildlife habitat, and provide opportunities for a variety of recreational activities, including hiking, riding, hunting, fishing, and nature study.

WHAT IS RECREATION

Recreation involves myriad leisure pursuits. It is not necessarily bound to any particular site or facility. It may be formally organized or "programmed," or it may be spontaneous. It may be "passive" or it may be "active."

Passive recreation usually refers to informal recreational activities by individuals or small groups in natural or semi-natural surroundings, such as hiking, picnicking, nature study, or cycling. Only minimal site preparation and little, if any, structural facilities are required to accommodate most passive recreational activities. Lands constrained from development for environmental reasons are often suited to passive recreation.

Active recreation refers to activities which are relatively intensive, both in terms of participation and in use of the land or facility where the activities take place. Active recreation generally requires specific facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and baseball diamonds. It tends to be group-oriented, demanding some form of organizational structure, and frequently requires some knowledge or skill for adequate participation.

MUNICIPAL ROLE IN PROVIDING FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Every municipality should assume a role in ensuring the conservation of notable open space resources. Such areas can, where appropriate, be made available for passive recreation while protecting critical natural features. The Township role may involve implementation of regulatory provisions, direct land acquisition, and advocacy of conservation efforts on the part of others. Time is of the essence, as continued development both intensifies the impacts of future development pressures and underlines the value of remaining open space resources.

Generally, municipal government is considered obliged to assume a role in providing for the day-to-day park and recreation needs of residents, close to home. In more highly developed municipalities, this is usually accomplished through the provision of a system of community and/or neighborhood parks, typically including areas and facilities for both active and passive recreational pursuit. The municipal role can even extend to direct provision of recreational programs and, if so, should aim to serve all population groups within the community. West Vincent Township has not to date reached sufficient population density to clearly justify such outright provision for recreation. Township residents are, and can be appropriately, served by other recreation providers, as discussed under Recreational Resources, below.

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP PLANNING CONTEXT

West Vincent's Geographic Setting

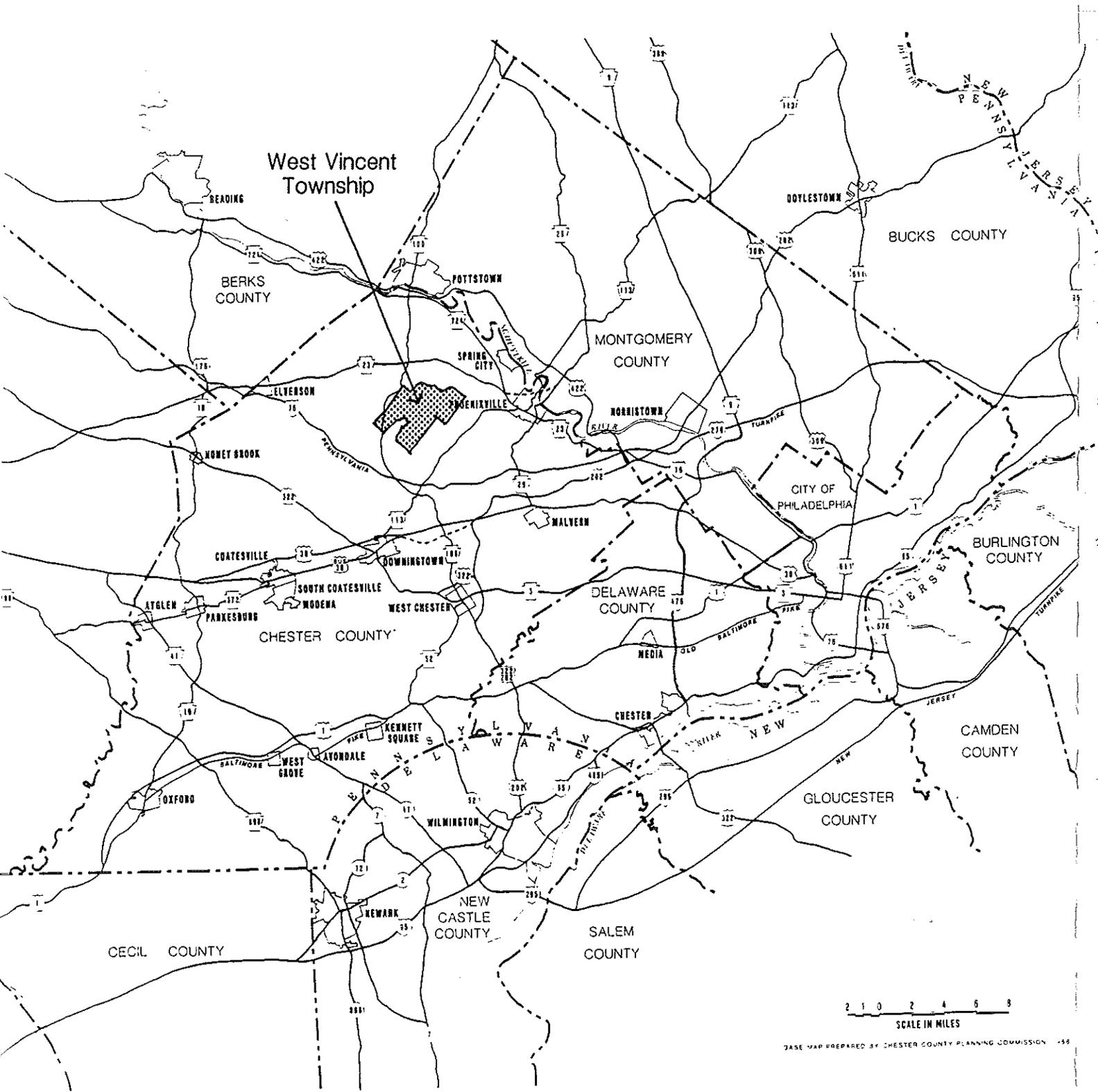
West Vincent Township is located in north-central Chester County, on the south bank of French Creek. It is bounded on the north by East Vincent Township, on the southeast by East and West Pikeland Townships, on the southwest by Upper Uwchlan Township, and on the northwest by East Nantmeal and South Coventry Townships. The Borough of Phoenixville is located at the confluence of French Creek and the Schuylkill River roughly three miles to the east. Some thirty miles west-northwest of Center City Philadelphia, the Township is part of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area.

While West Vincent's "metropolitan" location exerts continued development pressures, the Township remains "exurban" in character. It is no longer truly rural, more often characterized by "gentleman's farms" and scattered, relatively large, individual residential lots. Overall, West Vincent still seems to epitomize a community of open space; a patchwork of field, pasture, woodlot, and historic building clusters, stitched together by scenic roads, narrow stream valleys, and wooded ridgelines. More intense suburban development has remained primarily to the east and south of West Vincent itself. Nearby areas in Uwchlan, Upper Uwchlan, West Pikeland and East Pikeland Townships exhibit contrastingly intense impacts of suburban development.

So far, West Vincent has eluded the intensity of development that seems to have robbed many of its neighbors of their open space context. This situation seems to be the product of geography and topography, as well as foresight. Most of West Vincent Township seems to be off "the beaten path," not directly accessible from the major regional highway network. Yet relatively good access is not far away. The western and southern edges of the Township are traversed by PA. Routes 100 and 401, respectively. Route 100 leads to the new Pottstown Expressway (U.S. Route 422), some six miles to the north, while Route 401 intersects with the U.S. Route 202 Expressway an equal distance to the southeast. The Pennsylvania Turnpike's Downingtown Exit is only three miles south via Route 100.

Over time, as surrounding areas experience continued development, West Vincent's quiet open space character seems even more attractive, in a relative sense, and accessibility less an issue to prospective residents. Natural constraints to development are less easily overcome, even while contributing to the scenic landscape qualities that draw continued

West Vincent Township Location Map



residential development pressure. Compared to most of its neighbors, West Vincent is relatively rugged, its gentle uplands extensively bisected by the tributary valleys of the French and Pickering Creeks. The hard rock under most of West Vincent is not particularly conducive to wastewater disposal or water supply. In response, Township planning efforts to date have focussed on low-density and low-intensity development. These issues are explored more fully in the "Environmental Quality" section of this document.

Primarily a residential community, West Vincent contains few retail shopping facilities, sources of employment or community facilities. Residents look to the surrounding urban and suburban region for these services and facilities. The Township's dependence, particularly in economic terms, upon the rest of the region can be considered a given; even when viewed together with equally "undeveloped" municipalities to the west, neither future population increases nor changes in regional transportation systems would appear likely to support major non-residential development.

West Vincent Township Government

As a second class township, West Vincent is governed by a three-person Board of Supervisors, one of whom serves as chairman. The term of office is six years, one supervisor being elected every two years. Supervisors perform both legislative and executive duties, passing ordinances and administering township government. They are required by state law to establish a budget for each year's anticipated expenses and they are given the right to set various taxes to defray those expenses. The Supervisors appoint the seven members of the West Vincent Township Planning Commission. The Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors, offering in-depth review, comment and recommendations for action in regard to subdivision and land development applications, ordinance revisions, and other planning issues. Prior to the completion of this study process, the Supervisors implemented one of its key recommendations in December 1991, establishing an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) as an outgrowth of the Open Space Task Force. The EAC assists both the Planning Commission and the Board with a focus on specific open space and recreation issues.

Since 1989, the Board of Supervisors have employed a township manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the township's business. The board and the manager are assisted by a full-time secretary and a part-time clerk who take and keep minutes of all meetings as well as administer general daily activities of the township. The

Township Manager represents West Vincent in contacts with the county, state and federal governments, and controls and supervises various township departments: police, roads, inspections and planning. Much of the work of those departments is undertaken on a contract basis; in addition to administrative staff, direct Township employment is limited to three part-time police and a two-man full-time road crew. Township equipment is also limited; snow removal equipment, for example, is rented as needed. The Township Manager coordinates activities with the Board, Planning Commission, EAC, the Township Solicitor, Engineer and Building Inspector. He also serves as West Vincent's Zoning Officer.

A thorough discussion of Township planning issues and relevant data has been documented through the Township comprehensive planning process. Selected data has been updated herein, based on availability. The original Comprehensive Plan for West Vincent Township comprised two reports: Basic Studies, prepared in 1965; and Comprehensive Plan, completed in 1966. Those plan documents were augmented with preparation of the Growth Impact Study of 1974 and subsequent Plan Addendum, compiled in 1975. The current Comprehensive Plan Update, completed in 1985, was viewed as continuing to build upon and revise earlier planning efforts.

The Township's primary tools for planning implementation remain the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The first editions of these were adopted in 1955 and 1962, respectively. They were replaced by substantially amended versions in 1966-68, again in 1975, and most recently in 1987-1988, in the spirit of implementation of the comprehensive planning efforts completed just prior to those dates. As dynamic tools, they continue to be amended from time to time.

Genesis of Township Open Space Planning

West Vincent Township and its neighbors have benefitted from years of effort by the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, the Green Valleys Association, and others devoted to conservation of open space, historic, and water resources. While supporting these groups, the Township has focussed its own efforts in this arena on use of zoning and subdivision ordinance tools.

At the other end of the spectrum, active recreation needs in West Vincent Township have been perceived as limited in the recent past. In fact, residents recall informal baseball

fields having existed some 25 years ago at Hallman's Store, Ludwig's Corner and Birchrunville. These facilities having apparently disappeared over time.

Late in 1988, an *informal* group of interested Township residents approached the Supervisors regarding possibilities of Township acquisition of community parkland, more specifically for purposes of provision of public ballfields. The Lionville Youth Association (LYA), one of the most significant nearby recreation program providers, had essentially told the Township that additional participation by West Vincent residents demanded local provision of fields. That demand provided the catalyst for an initial \$2,500 budget for open space in 1989, originally earmarked to seek recreational fields.

Residents charged with seeking fields quickly began to recognize the importance of the broader issue of open space conservation. A community survey conducted in 1989 (See Appendix III) found that 88 percent of respondents agreed that open space lands should be set aside permanently for the enjoyment of Township residents. Similarly, the 1989 Chester County \$50 million open space bond referendum garnered an 80 percent favorable vote in West Vincent. Even residents opposed to public acquisition or expenditure for open space have indicated recognition of its importance to West Vincent's sense of place.

In 1990, the Supervisors agreed to budget \$10,000 to complete this Township-wide open space and recreation plan. An Open Space Task Force, comprised of Township residents, was named to spearhead these planning efforts. Additional funds were budgeted in 1991 to complete the plan and bring it into compliance with newly iterated County standards for open space planning. Further funds were also earmarked for specific implementation efforts, including revision of pertinent ordinance language and further analysis of historical resources. The Township also applied for funds to further land acquisition along the French Creek Greenway in 1991, and, through the Township Open Space Task Force, initiated discussion with Township landowners regarding private conservation possibilities (see recommendation regarding Township Landowner Cooperative Program). Additional funding for open space planning efforts is anticipated in 1992.

West Vincent Township Budget

The West Vincent Township budget has increased dramatically over the last 15 years, from \$115,393 in 1975 to \$671,900 in 1991, excluding state highway funds, which totaled an additional \$342,928 in 1991 for a total Township budget of over \$1 million! However, actual

annual revenues were estimated at \$413,970 for the general fund in 1991 and \$69,000 for the state fund, including interest. Throughout the last 15 years revenues have exceeded expenditures, resulting in cash balances at the end of the year in both the General and State Highway funds. Cash balances carried over from 1990 included \$257,930 in the general fund and \$273,930 in the state fund. In 1991, the Township has budgeted expenditures of the entire general fund, plus \$220,000 of the state fund -- used exclusively for state highway expenditures. Budget surpluses should not be viewed as a consistent funding resource in the future.

Total real estate taxes (township, county, school district) have increased from 82.5 mills in 1975 to 211.5 mills in 1991. Most of that increase is accounted for in school taxes. The Township, itself, depended primarily upon real estate taxes for general fund revenues until 1988. In that year, Township millage was reduced from eleven to four, while a 1/2 percent earned income tax was introduced. In 1991, earned income tax was estimated at 58% of revenues. Real estate taxes accounted for 12%, transfer taxes 11%, while fees, licenses, and permits made up ten percent of revenues. A \$5 per capita tax also was eliminated in 1988.

The largest expenditures from the Township general fund have been for Township roads (in addition to state fund expenditures for state highways), totaling 50 percent of general fund expenditures in 1991. Township expenditures for general administration, including administrative staff and building costs, amounted to 19% of the 1991 budget, while public safety expenses accounted for 11%. Planning, zoning, engineering and legal services accounted for 19% of the 1991 budget (\$130,100), including open space planning efforts, plan review, and \$25,000 for a "zoning legal fund."

Capital improvements programming had been suggested by both the 1975 and 1985 Comprehensive Plan updates as an aid in the budgeting of all future capital expenditures. Through 1991, West Vincent had no long-term debt and a borrowing base of roughly \$400,000, based on current revenue sources. That base would permit the borrowing of up to \$1 million without specific voter approval.

Historical Development of West Vincent Township

West Vincent Township resulted from the division of William Penn's proprietary colony into counties (initially Chester, Bucks, and Philadelphia) and then, townships.

Vincent Township, named for Sir Mathias Vincent, an original landowner and a friend of William Penn, was divided in 1832 into East and West Vincent. Before Penn's ownership, Native Americans of the Algonquin family, the Lenni Lenape branch, were in possession of this part of Pennsylvania. Even then the Native Americans used roadways traversing modern-day West Vincent, one called "the Conestoga" (Route 401) by the early settlers and another called "the Nantmeal Road" (now Horseshoe Trail).

The earliest European settlers stemmed from English, German, Swiss, and Welsh roots. In 1730, the County records showed thirty taxables (i.e., white males) in Vincent Township. Some of the trades listed were innkeeper, weaver, tanner, and of course, farmer. Streams and rivers were used for transportation, and much early land use activity was related to the iron industry.

During the memorable Valley Forge winter encampment of 1777-1778, Congress put out advertisements urging the construction of powder mills with the help of government loans. One resulting mill was built in Birchrunville on what is still called Powder Mill Hill.

After the peace of 1783, rebuilding was necessary. It is here that we see the emergence of the typical Chester County stone farmhouse. Many were built into the side of a hill and the various stories opened on different levels. Many public houses also were opened, since strong liquor was in universal use. The desire to control such use led to the establishment of a Board of Licenses in West Vincent in 1851.

The public school system was established in Pennsylvania in 1834 and by 1875 there were five public schools in West Vincent. All five are still standing; the largest of them is now the Township building. In the later half of the nineteenth century there were four churches, all of which still survive, though St. Andrews was closed several times. The Baptist Church was the most active and, because of that, a small chapel was built in Birchrunville. It was used for many years before it was closed. It finally came into possession of the Green Valleys Association and now serves as its headquarters.

Throughout this period West Vincent remained primarily a farming community, though lists of occupations included blacksmith, physician, contractor, lumberman, shoemaker, and more. The citizens of the Township, many of them members of the Society of Friends, were sympathetic to escaping slaves. The "Underground Railroad" had many branches throughout this area. Several houses had cellar passages for this purpose.

After World War II change came more quickly than before. New highways, more efficient cars, and a growing population were the driving forces behind development, pressing the Township government to draft protective legislation. A local taxpayers association was active in Township civic affairs roughly from 1950 to 1970. The chief concern of this group was to "get the Township organized." Among their projects and activities were efforts to:

- name all Township roads;
- draft an initial zoning ordinance;
- promote restructuring of the public school system, resulting in consolidation of individual municipal schools within a broader unified district;
- bring in solid waste haulers, preempting the need for individual household incineration;
- sponsor debate among local political candidates;
- lobby for County tax reassessment.

The Green Valleys Association was founded in 1964 to focus environmental concerns in the tributary watersheds of the Schuylkill River in northern Chester County. The Association has continued to work on problems of open space, ground and surface water, and other environmental issues.

Recent Land Use Trends

The 1965 Plan characterized West Vincent Township as a "predominantly rural non-farm community." Already in 1965, the dual terms, "rural" and "non-farm" reflected a very definite transition in the land use pattern of the Township and surrounding area from rural-agricultural to low density suburban or "exurban." Nevertheless, with most residences on very large lots, approximately 95 percent of the Township land area could be categorized as open space, whether devoted to farming or undeveloped. Most public and semi-public uses were located in neighboring municipalities.

A 1977 land use survey conducted for the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities concluded that West Vincent Township had relatively insignificant commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational development, and no medium density residential areas (lot sizes of 30,000 square feet or less). Low density residential use was widespread along existing roadways. The Route 100 and 401 intersection of Ludwig's Corner contained most of the commercial and industrial land uses. Institutional uses included the Township

Building and Green Valleys Association headquarters in Birchrunville, three churches, and the fire company at Ludwig's Corner.

In 1977, agricultural or undeveloped lands still accounted for 93% of the Township. The 1985 Comprehensive Plan Update inventoried 75% of the Township in the "open" land categories. Taken at face value, it would appear that a significant loss of open space had occurred in a relatively short time frame (1977-83). While that period indeed signalled the beginning of a significant surge in large-lot residential development, the gross acreage involved was exaggerated by the fact that relatively large parcels with a primary residential use were categorized as "residential." The table accompanying this text summarizes land use in West Vincent Township as catalogued in 1983. The mapped extent of each land use category is shown on the "Existing Land Use" map, excerpted from the 1985 Plan.

By 1990, development in the Township remained predominantly residential in nature, with a sense of open space still predominating. Residential uses occur in village clusters, along the road network, on large lots, and in several small subdivisions of moderately large lots (2-3 acres +). Although most of the residential development consists of single-family homes, there are multi-family homes and several mobile homes scattered throughout the Township. As noted, with commercial and industrial activity limited locally, residents are dependent on population centers in the region for commercial and employment facilities. Of the commercial establishments in West Vincent Township, most are concentrated in the Ludwig's Corner area. However, development trends during the late 1980's did serve to underline the potentially fragile nature of West Vincent's open space character. *During that period, subdivision and land development proposals were submitted for a total of 377 new lots on 1062 acres, nearly ten percent of the Township land area.*

Township Land Use Planning Philosophy

The 1975 Comprehensive Plan Addendum iterated a land use planning philosophy for West Vincent Township that essentially holds true to this day, based on the natural environment as "the most serious restraint on location and intensity of development." Respect for critical open space resources like floodplains, steep slopes and, particularly, the limited groundwater resource, was again the key planning thread in the 1985 Plan Update. The Township has pursued a course of zoning primarily for low-density residential uses, with non-residential uses concentrated at Ludwig's Corner.

1983 EXISTING LAND USE - WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Residential		
Low Density (2 acres or more)	2,397.5	20.9
Medium Density (1 to 1.9 acres)	156.9	1.4
High Density (less than 1 acre)	21.2	0.2
Commercial	64.3	0.6
Industrial	7.7	0.1
Institutional ¹	82.8	0.7
Utilities/Transportation	122.4	1.1
Agriculture	4,037.3	35.3
Recreation	74.8	0.7
Open/Undeveloped	4,485.1	39.2 ²
Total	<u>11,450.0</u>	<u>100.2³</u>

Source: West Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan Update, 1985

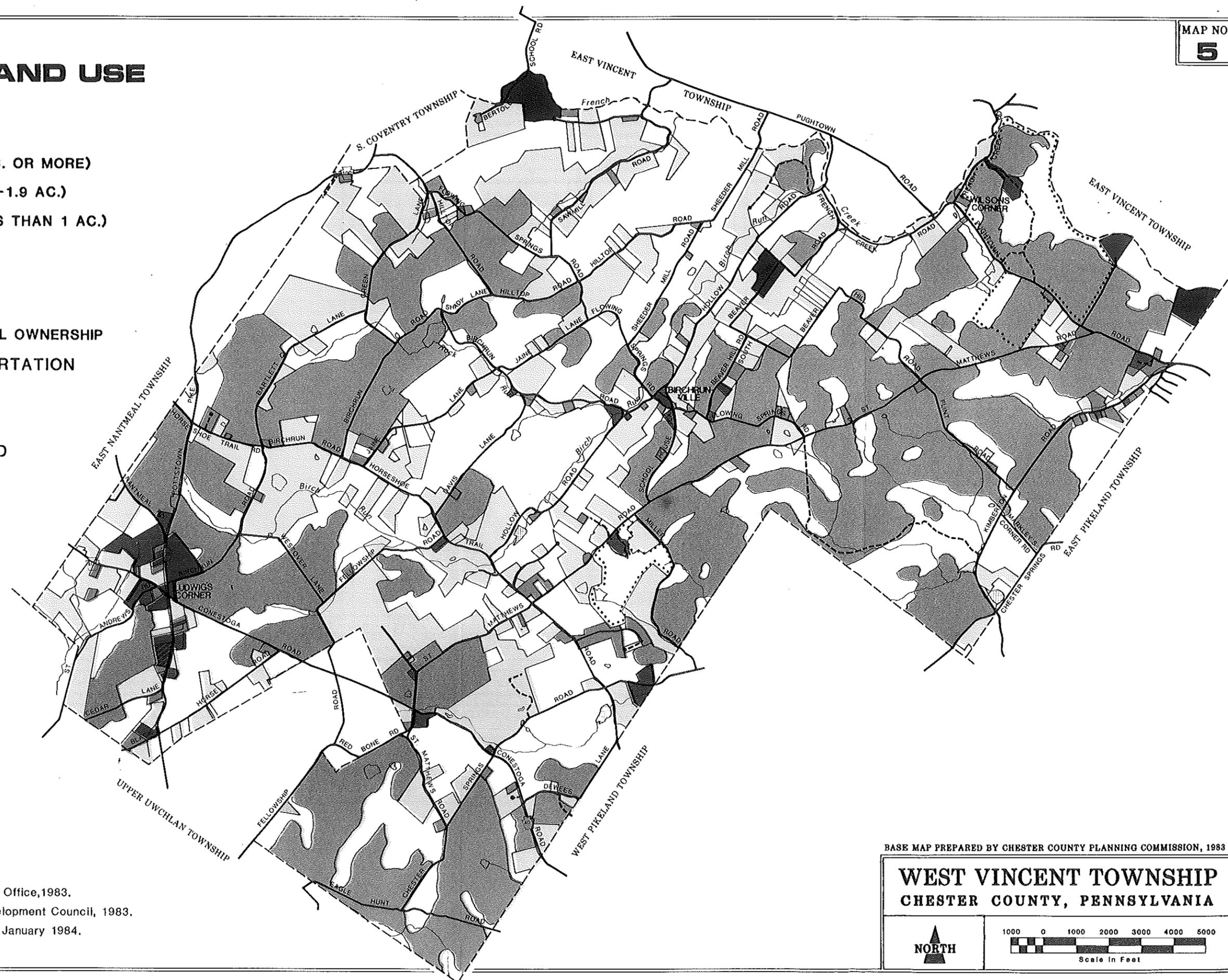
¹ Includes only lands in which primary use is institutional. An additional 502.5 acres held in institutional ownership are classified under other uses (e.g., agriculture, open/undeveloped).

² During the late 1980's, 1062 acres were proposed for subdivision/land development. If constructed, this development would leave "open/undeveloped" lands at 3423 acres or approximately 30% of the total Township land use.

³ Does not total 100.00 percent due to rounding.

EXISTING LAND USE

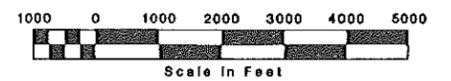
- RESIDENTIAL**
- LOW DENSITY (2 AC. OR MORE)
 - MEDIUM DENSITY (1-1.9 AC.)
 - HIGH DENSITY (LESS THAN 1 AC.)
- COMMERCIAL**
- INDUSTRIAL**
- INSTITUTIONAL**
- TOTAL INSTITUTIONAL OWNERSHIP
- UTILITIES/TRANSPORTATION
- AGRICULTURAL
- RECREATIONAL
- OPEN/UNDEVELOPED



Sources: Aerial Photographs, 1980.
 Chester County Tax Assessment Office, 1983.
 Chester County Agricultural Development Council, 1983.
 Field Survey, October 1983 and January 1984.

BASE MAP PREPARED BY CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 1983

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



Large-lot residential zoning has continued to be the primary tool utilized by the Township to effect gross and net densities of development that will not overtax the groundwater resource nor require incursion into other environmentally sensitive areas. Recently, community consensus has increasingly recognized that siting and design issues can be as important to protection of open space resources as gross density, particularly in terms of conservation of scenic landscape qualities. Recent subdivision and land development proposals have consistently raised issues of design sensitivity and the need for flexibility from conventional standards. The Township Supervisors underscored the potential value of flexibility in the context of design criteria, with the 1991 adoption of the "Visual Resource Protection Development" zoning option.

The 1975 Plan made the first formal call for open space planning within the context of comprehensive land use planning. It recommended designation of an Open Space Network and promotion of coordinated public and private open space preservation projects. That theme finally became the principal charge of this planning effort, recognizing that conservation of the open space resources that characterize West Vincent Township is largely beyond the scope of individual public or private action. The Township, itself, recognizes its role to both regulate and promote appropriate private action. The Township role in pursuit of actual open space land acquisition and management is expected to remain limited to very specific lands earmarked for public recreational use.

Population and Economic Characteristics

The 1980 population of West Vincent Township was 1,992, a slight increase of 5.4 percent from the 1970 population of 1,890. The 1990 Census recorded a population of 2,262, representing a more substantial, but still moderate, increase of 13.6% during the most recent ten-year period. In contrast, the 1974 Growth Impact Study had projected a 1980 population of 2,535, and a 1990 population of over 6,000! Assumptions established in the Growth Impact Study, that the Township would experience extensive suburban development during the 1970's, did not occur. Decreasing migration and birth rates contributed to the decline in the rate of population increase between the 1960's and 1970's.

In view of moderate rates of demographic change, the 1985 Plan Update projected a population range between 2,868 and 4,000 for the year 2010. That range infers a total housing unit count in the range of 1,002-1,397 by the year 2010, based on 1990 average household size of 2.82 with 98.5% of the population residing in households. This represents

a twenty-year range of increase of 212-607 over the 1990 count of 790 occupied households. The 1974 Study had suggested that between 1,754 and 2,069 housing units would be needed by 1990 alone, substantially off-base from current reality. Nevertheless, even a moderate increase could substantially impact open space resources, particularly if much of it continues recent patterns of subdivision of moderately large lots (2-5 acres).

West Vincent's population has slowly grown older and appears to have grown slightly older than the Chester County norm. The elderly population (over 65) in the Township increased from 7.7 percent of the population in 1970 to 9.0 percent in 1980 and 9.7 percent in 1990. In 1980, the median age was 34.1 versus 30.5 county-wide. Even so, county-wide the 1990 Census recorded 10.9 percent of the population over 65 years of age; West Vincent's higher median seemingly the result of a greater proportion of the population in the upper end of the "work force" age range (18-64).

The proportion of the Township population 19 years of age and younger decreased from 40.6 percent in 1970 to 30.2 percent in 1980. Available 1990 data breaks the age-groups at 18; those under 18 totalling 22 percent of the total population. Factors contributing to this population shift include: lower birth rates, out-migration of families with school-age children, in-migration of families with smaller household size and "empty-nesters", and a general aging of the population.

The population of West Vincent Township might be described as relatively homogeneous. In 1990, it was 99.0 percent white and only 0.1 percent black. Only 1.4 percent of the population identified themselves as of hispanic origin. The non-white population is significantly lower than that countywide, at 8.4 percent; persons of hispanic origin account for 2.3 percent of the population countywide. The ratio of males to females in West Vincent is relatively even: 55-45 percent for that portion of the 1990 population under age 18; 51-49 percent for those aged 18-64; and 45-55 percent for those over 65. County-wide, the relative proportion of males was somewhat lower in all three age groupings.

West Vincent Township is a relatively stable and affluent community. That character has essentially been reinforced by recent development. Home values are higher than average. Median value of owner-occupied housing in West Vincent was \$235,200 in 1990, more than 150 percent of the Chester County median (\$155,900). The proportion of owner-

occupied homes also was higher, 83.2 percent in West Vincent versus 74.5 percent countywide.

Incomes of West Vincent Township residents are relatively high. While pertinent 1990 census data is not yet available, earlier data (1969 and 1979) showed much higher median income levels in West Vincent than found county-wide or at the metropolitan, state, or national levels. The percentage of families with income below the federally-set poverty level was correspondingly low in 1979, dropping significantly since 1969. The increase in median family income between 1969 and 1979 also was significant, rising almost 40 percent in constant dollars -- almost double the rate of any other northern Chester County municipality and nearly five times the county-wide rate of increase (8.2%). These figures infer a significant influx of higher-income families, correlating to continuing "exurban" large-lot residential development.

West Vincent residents tend to be relatively well educated. As of 1980, over 85 percent of the adult population had completed high school, while over 37 percent had completed at least four years of college. Many residents hold professional, technical and managerial positions. Most commute to jobs outside the Township, some at fairly great distances, linking the economic health of the community to the larger regional economy as much as to immediate local issues. In fact, there are no major employers located within the bounds of West Vincent Township. Employment for West Vincent Township residents and correspondingly, unemployment, fluctuates along with the national and regional economy. Unemployment rates have not departed drastically from the overall rate for the Northern Federation region nor for the County as a whole. Unemployment for females has been more variable than for males in West Vincent Township, ranging from zero in 1970 to 7.1% in 1980.

West Vincent Township is likely to continue to attract relatively affluent residents willing and able to commute to employment outside the Township. Trends toward affluence can become self-perpetuating as younger families and lower income persons are gradually priced out of the housing market. There are indications that this has already occurred in West Vincent Township. The 1985 Plan Update noted several social, economic, and land planning issues raised by this prospect, inferring a need to periodically reassess Township land-planning policy. Open space planning issues must be part of any reevaluation and are particularly relevant where flexible land-planning alternatives are envisioned.

The predominant low-density residential land use pattern continues to be reflected in the tax base; the tax rolls have increased steadily but are dominated by residential assessment. Total assessment has increased from \$7,440,230 in 1975 to roughly \$12 million in 1991. With the advent of the earned income tax in 1988, potential disparity in the cost/revenue ratio for residential development was essentially eliminated. Agriculture remains an important economic factor in West Vincent Township, both in terms of real estate assessments and employment. Although less than ten percent of West Vincent residents were so employed in 1980, that rate was much higher than in any surrounding jurisdiction.

BEYOND WEST VINCENT: REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Several planning efforts and studies have been undertaken focussed on a geographic scope larger than a single Township, yet which deal in some manner with West Vincent Township. The following paragraphs summarize aspects of several studies as they relate to open space and recreation in West Vincent. Specific recommendations also are included here; it should be remembered that those recommendations were not addressed specifically from the context or perspective of West Vincent Township, nor are they necessarily endorsed by this Township-specific effort.

Delaware Valley Year 2010 Land Use and Open Space Plan

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Year 2010 Land Use and Open Space Plan calls for open space preservation of "natural resources" and "hazard" areas, including areas of high groundwater yield, surface waters, flood prone areas, steep slopes, woodlands, and scenic areas. The Plan suggests such areas be the focus of parkland acquisition and conservation efforts. More specifically, the regional plan focuses attention on desirable "open space preservation and conservation areas," including stream valley corridors and extensive woodland masses in and near West Vincent.

Chester County Open Space and Recreation Study

The Chester County Open Space and Recreation Study was completed in 1982 as a detailed element (#2) of the County (comprehensive) Plan. The County study identified a need for development of community parkland in West Vincent, taking a cue from nationally accepted population-based standards. The study notes, however, that park

development may not always require land acquisition, if the township can engage or negotiate the use of existing open space areas.

Regarding recreation facilities, the County study has compared inventories of public facilities to population based standards. From that broad perspective, West Vincent Township was found lacking sufficient public recreation facilities, notably areas for court sports and swimming. Certain private recreational facilities were inventoried in or along the immediate periphery of West Vincent, located primarily at the several old camps along the French Creek Valley. The study noted further that negotiation of public access to such facilities may begin to satisfy unmet needs without necessitating major public expenditures.

Stream valleys are recommended for preservation throughout the County, to form a continuous greenway network. The recommended greenway system includes the French Creek and Birch Run. Use of municipal regulatory provisions and conservation easements or deed restrictions are envisioned by the County Study as the primary means to effect a network of preserved stream valleys. A system of major trails corridors, in many cases traversing stream valleys, is proposed to link population concentrations with major park facilities. Three such trail corridors are proposed in the area of West Vincent, including the Horseshoe Trail, a trail along the French Creek, and a trail connecting those first two with Marsh Creek State Park and the Brandywine Valley -- a route informally referred to as the "Brandywine Trail."

Chester County Land Use Plan

The Chester County Land Use Plan was adopted by the County Commissioners and Planning Commission in 1988, as County Plan Element #5, setting forth broad policies and strategies for guiding future land use decisions. The Plan reflects existing development patterns and trends, attempts to accommodate likely continued development, and hopes to protect the quality of life that characterizes Chester County. The Plan outlines varying categories of development and conservation, four of which are significant in West Vincent Township. These are described below, along with the planning policy set forth for each:

Development Reserve: These areas are largely undeveloped at the present time, but are anticipated to evolve into a suburban landscape similar to that found elsewhere in the County in the future. Existing development in the "development reserve" areas is primarily residential, but also includes some commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. These are

the most appropriate areas for concentrated residential development that cannot be accommodated in the "suburban development" areas. Only a small portion of West Vincent Township has been mapped as "development reserve," in the area of Ludwigs Corner. Chester County's articulated policy for this area states, "to expand future residential development into these areas as additional land is needed to accommodate development."

Rural Development: These areas are characterized by low intensity land uses, including agriculture, woodlands, agricultural support businesses, and low density residential uses. They contain villages and hamlets serving local needs. Areas denoted "rural development" include most of West Vincent Township. The stated County policy aims "to preserve the open, rural character within the fringe areas of the County."

Agriculture: These are areas where agricultural activities currently exist and are proposed to continue as the primary use. They have been mapped to include major chunks of West Vincent - an area to the southeast of St. Matthews Road lapping into the northern corner of West Pikeland Township, and an area in the west to the north of Ludwigs Corner, extending broadly into East Nantmeal Township. Chester County aims "to support agriculture as the primary land use in these areas and as a valued element of the economy of the County."

Stream Valley Greenways have been designated following the major streams and their larger tributaries of Chester County, and include adjacent land along the watercourse. Specifically mapped in West Vincent Township are the French Creek, Birch Run, and a tributary to the Pickering Creek. The County hopes "to restrict development along streams in order to protect this valuable natural resource, preserve open space and provide for a continuous stream valley [open space] system."

Upper Reaches of French Creek Report

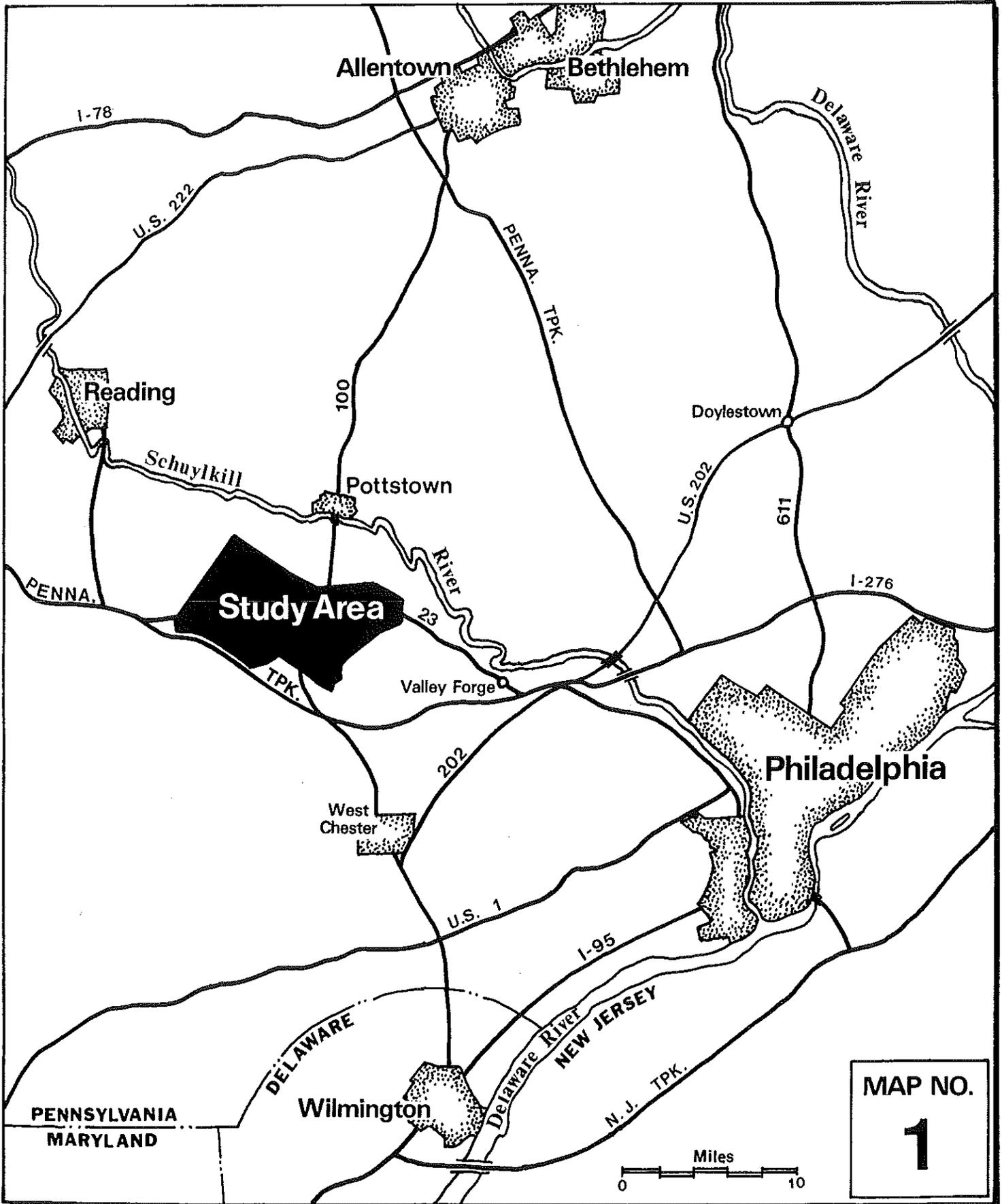
In its ongoing efforts to promote land conservation and resource preservation in northern Chester County, the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust (F&PCCT) has undertaken a major mapping and study effort entitled "Upper Reaches of French Creek." Its study area includes much of West Vincent Township, most notably the valley of Birch Run. In fact, Birch Run is one of the largest of the five tributaries within the Upper Reaches; its watershed comprises roughly two-thirds of West Vincent Township.

Unlike most municipal plans and studies (including the West Vincent Township Open Space and Recreation Plan) which limit their study areas to municipal boundaries, the Upper Reaches study is a regional report based on watershed boundaries. Watersheds are natural study areas when discussing open space resources or environmental issues, while political boundaries tend to be arbitrary.

The Upper Reaches Report presents an inventory of the remarkable environmental and cultural resources of the Upper French Creek Valley. It describes diverse efforts to protect those resources and numerous achievements accomplished over the past quarter century. It looks toward future achievements as a result of individual and public action rooted in clear recognition of resource values and the issues that threaten them. The Report and the approaches to resource protection it suggests differ from typical land-use planning efforts by emphasizing: 1) voluntary individual action over government action; and 2) scenic and cultural values considered in conjunction with natural environmental concerns. A narrative summary of the conservation achievements recognized by the Report is included as Appendix VII, along with a summary of continuing threats to conservation efforts as viewed by F&PCCT.



LOCATION OF STUDY AREA

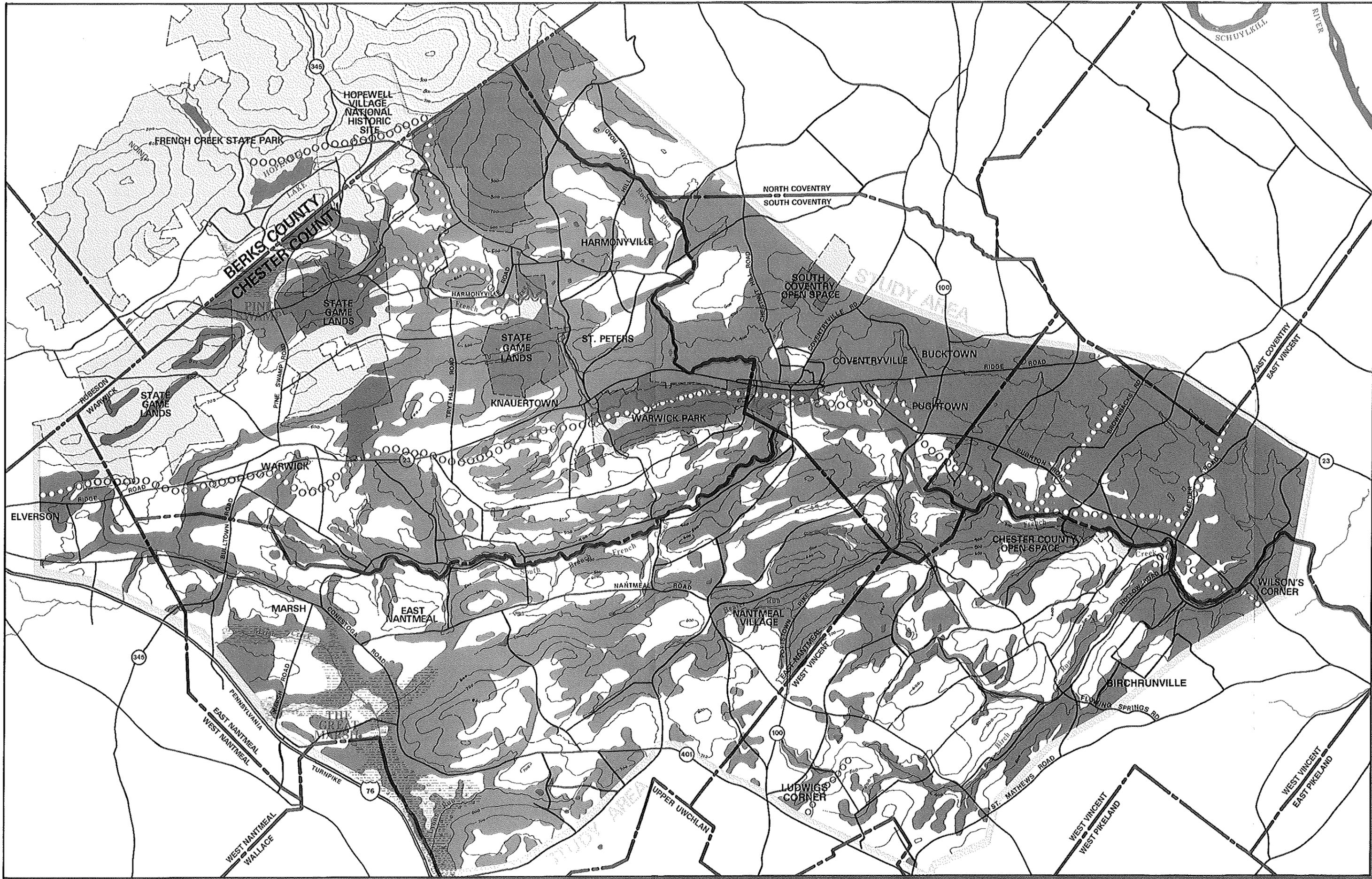


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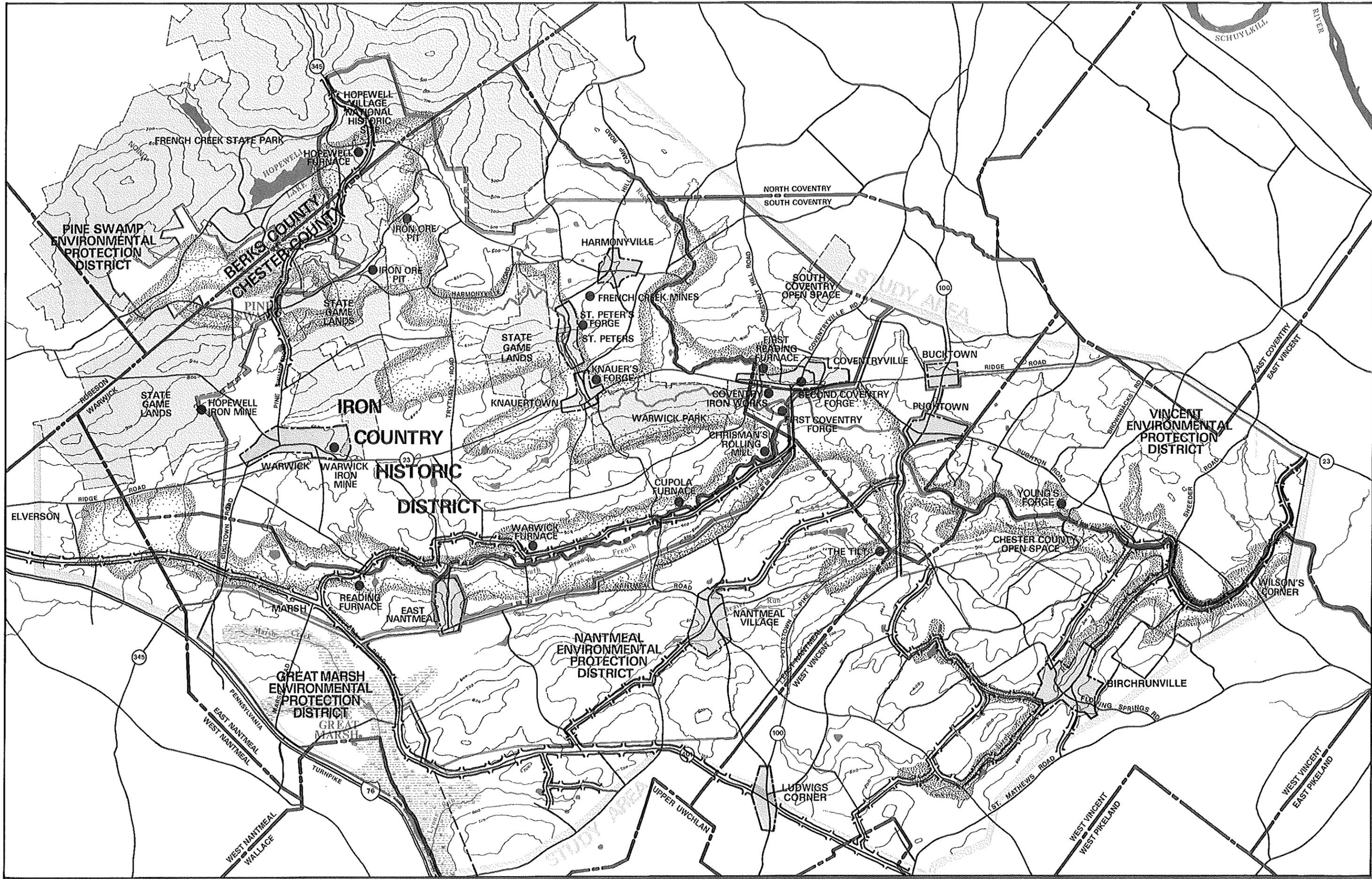
















OBJECTIVES FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

The objectives which follow were developed through discussion with the Open Space Task Force, in view of the open space character of West Vincent and reflecting the broader goals articulated in the Township Comprehensive Plan. Of those goals, three bear directly upon this effort:

Natural Features: To provide for the preservation, protection, management and enhancement of the natural resources and environmental qualities of West Vincent Township for present and future generations;

Recreation and Historic Areas: To promote the adequate provision of recreation and cultural amenities;

Agriculture: To promote the conservation and continuation of agricultural activities in the Township.

OBJECTIVES FOR PLANNING FOR OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

- Inventory open space features which visually characterize the landscape of West Vincent Township, particularly those within view of public roadways, including the character of scenic roadways themselves; discern priorities for scenic landscape protection.
- Promote public awareness of and sensitivity toward natural and scenic features of West Vincent. Support local public and private efforts to conserve and enhance natural features. Encourage the use of private means to preserve and maintain open space.
- Guide and buffer new development so as to minimize intrusion upon visually significant landscapes, prime agricultural soils, unique natural areas and historic settings; respect management planning for the French Creek (state) Scenic River corridor. Discern appropriate planning tools to accomplish this and adjust regulatory provisions as needed, including requirements aimed at management of signs, vegetation, and litter control.

- Protect and maintain water resources. Ensure that land areas subject to flooding are not used for building development purposes. Monitor enforcement of wetlands regulation. Promote and facilitate efforts toward stormwater management and wastewater disposal which recognizes the inherent water resource, emphasizing opportunities to recharge the groundwater reservoir.
- Restrict development of land areas not suitable for buildings or structures due to steep slopes, poor soil bearing qualities, or with poor or impossible water and/or sewage capabilities.
- Maintain woodland areas, particularly mature stands, to the greatest extent feasible, even while permitting careful siting of a limited amount of development within them; encourage the further establishment of trees and other vegetation, helping to create windbreaks, control soil erosion, screen undesirable views or features, and contribute to visual quality; encourage the use of native vegetation within landscaping.
- Provide for the establishment of permanent open space areas as development occurs. Promote the use of open space features (whether to be in common or individual ownership) for internal landscaping, perimeter buffering, and overall as site design features aimed at compatibility with the existing visual character of West Vincent Township. Ensure that sufficient open space is accessible, logically configured and interconnected, properly maintained, and otherwise appropriate for active and passive recreational use.
- Provide for community recreation; encourage and support public access to semi-public community recreation facilities and programs as needed. Promote coordination/cooperation with neighboring municipalities and school districts, seeking maximum public use of available recreational lands and facilities.
- Support the continuation and expansion of facilities and programs at regional and subregional parks, preserves, and recreation areas provided by the State and County governments and others, which serve or potentially serve West Vincent residents.
- Support the continuance and enhancement of non-vehicular travel ways through the Township (e.g., bicycle routes, hiking trails, equestrian trails). Seek to resolve points of potential conflict between vehicular and non-vehicular traffic and between public users and private land/resource providers.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

If planning strategies are to stand the test of time, they must carefully consider environmental features, including topography, geology, water resources, soil characteristics, and other open space resources. Specific environmental conditions, in terms of both constraints and opportunities that might guide development and conservation objectives, were studied by the 1985 Update to the West Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan. In the face of continued development activity, it is vital that respect for environmental quality, particularly soil and water resources, result in a pattern of development that is orderly, economically viable, and aesthetically pleasing. Key environmental conditions were mapped for the Comprehensive Plan; the following maps are included with this document:

- "Geology;"
- "Soils;"
- "Slopes;"
- "Conservation Features," including Class I, II, and III agricultural soils and woodlands (included in the section entitled "Agricultural Resources").

WATER RESOURCE ISSUES ARE CRITICAL TO LAND PLANNING

Nearly all of West Vincent Township is overlain by hard metamorphic rocks. These rocks provide excellent foundation support for most development, but yield relatively little groundwater. The only significant exception to this norm is the high-yield aquifer offered by the Stockton sandstone formation found in the northeastern part of the Township, generally north of Pughtown Road. The "Geology" map groups geologic formations based on generalized groundwater yields. Mapping of groundwater contours is expected to be released by USGS soon; such mapping can be interpreted to portray generalized depth to water table and direction of groundwater flow.

A continued reliance on ground water sources seems quite likely in West Vincent's future. In fact, comprehensive planning efforts have concluded that limited groundwater yields are the most critical limitation to development in the Township. The 1979 Chester County Water Resources Inventory Study asserted the availability of greater yields, but stressed their variability.

Available groundwater data suggests that future development in hard-rock areas be limited to low densities, except where high yields can be proven or where adequate community systems can be established. This is underlined by the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map and by current zoning stipulation for relatively low gross density of development across most of the Township (currently one dwelling unit per 2-5 acres). The Comprehensive Plan reflects broad community sentiment as well as environmental concerns in reminding us that future development should be sited so as to accommodate adequate well-spacing and return of wastewater to the groundwater reservoir via properly functioning on-site disposal systems. In West Vincent Township, a strong preference has been expressed for individual systems; where community systems might be utilized, they should be carefully monitored to preclude negative impact to the groundwater reservoir.

Township residents have voiced significant concern regarding potential extension of public sewerage systems into West Vincent. The chief issue is the potential for greater density of development once sewer extension seemingly removes soil suitability/permeability and groundwater issues as limiting factors. But groundwater and other water resource issues are not so easily dispatched. Development dependent upon sewer extension cannot ignore corresponding water supply needs which will impact groundwater and/or surface water systems. Public sewerage systems ultimately dispose of wastewater with corresponding water resource impacts (even if downstream from West Vincent). Increased density also infers greater stormwater runoff and other environmental impacts which must be carefully considered.

In seeming contrast to the above arguments, comprehensive planning efforts to date have earmarked the area underlain by the sandstone aquifer for the most intense development in the Township. This would appear to make sense from a water supply standpoint; it begs the issue of protection of the quantity and quality of that supply. Development atop the aquifer may occur without degrading it, but demands careful design sensitivity in regard to wellhead protection, stormwater management, wastewater disposal, and storage and disposal of other waste or potentially toxic or hazardous substances.

The Township may wish to consider more comprehensive approaches to management of the limited groundwater resource. Examples may include requirements for demonstration by developer/applicants of "no net loss" in groundwater recharge post-development, along with careful review and possibly revision of impervious surface limits, landscape standards, erosion and sedimentation requirements and stormwater management standards. To do so

will require further study of West Vincent's "water budget," looking in depth at well inventories, aquifer testing, rainfall patterns, evapo-transpiration rates, stormwater runoff patterns, stream flow conditions, existing groundwater recharge patterns and analysis of drought cycles. 1989 changes to the Municipalities Planning Code, as encompassed in Act 170, specifically allow for the inclusion of definitive water resource studies as part of comprehensive planning and zoning efforts, including the establishment of density criteria based on groundwater availability.

Surface water issues were well discussed in prior Township Comprehensive planning efforts. The largest portion of West Vincent is drained by the French Creek, primarily via its tributary Birch Run. Southern and southeastern sections of the Township are drained by the Pickering Creek while the extreme southwestern corner (west of Ludwig's Corner) is drained via small tributaries to Marsh Creek and into the East Branch of the Brandywine. The bounds of the various drainage basins are shown on the "Water Resources" map, along with stream order classification (headwater streams are order "1," two headwater streams join to form a stream of order "2," etc.). Both the French and Pickering Creeks are classified as "high quality" streams, setting the standard for Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) purview over potential impacts to stream water quality. Any proposed wastewater release into either stream, for example, would be subject to very stringent quality control standards, if approved at all. The Pickering Creek is impounded as a surface water supply by Philadelphia Suburban Water Company several miles downstream from West Vincent (Schuylkill Township).

Where community wastewater management systems become necessary in lieu of individual systems, alternative approaches involving land application of treated wastewater, can meet a number of water resource planning objectives. Land application can avoid direct impacts to streamflow and surface water quality, replenish groundwater supplies, and offer a regular source of nutrient-rich irrigation water to crop farmers -- potentially lowering both production costs and need to apply chemical fertilizers.

Management of stormwater also is critical. Unfortunately, standard engineering approaches tend to put all runoff into storm sewers and send it to the nearest large creek. This approach leads to: (1) downstream flooding; (2) increased pollution of creeks from the pollutants washed from the land; (3) reduced recharge of groundwater aquifers; and (4) reduced stream flows during droughts. The goals of stormwater management should be to disturb natural recharge as little as possible, and to encourage recharge of managed flows.

Concentration of stormwater should be avoided in favor of "natural" diffuse recharge to the groundwater reservoir, to assist long-term reliance on groundwater sources.

As part of their 1990-91 work program, the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities conducted a surface water run-off management study. The study inventoried various stormwater related issues (e.g. - source of pollutants, water budget, peak rate flow, land use impacts), evaluated alternatives available to reduce run-off problems, and identified implementation options. The study recommends numerous revisions to municipal zoning and subdivision/land development ordinances to address stormwater related issues; these implementation options are included as Appendix VIII to this document. West Vincent Township has scheduled ordinance update work in 1992-93 to address pertinent revisions.

SOIL CONDITIONS INFER SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT/OPEN SPACE

Soils in West Vincent Township exhibit a wide range of soil properties ranging from deep, well drained, highly productive soils to relatively unstable floodplain soils and rock outcrops. As mapped, large areas comprise soils sufficiently deep, well drained, and fertile to be productive for agriculture. Typically, these soils also are prone to erosion, requiring the use of conservation practices, particularly on slopes. Steep slopes should be carefully respected; here, maintenance of vegetative cover is particularly desirable. The Comprehensive Plan calls for an essential prohibition of development on slopes exceeding 25%. Certain other soils (high groundwater table, limited depth to bedrock, severe erosion, etc.) also preclude the installation of on-site wastewater disposal systems or limit the type of installation feasible.

Alluvial or "Floodplain" Soils

Alluvial soils are found in a fingery pattern corresponding with the stream network. These are soils which have been eroded, transported, and deposited by floodwaters over the millennia; hence, they generally indicate potential for flooding. Floodplain areas should remain open and undisturbed, not only for obvious safety reasons, but also to limit the potential for erosion, downstream sedimentation, and obstruction or alteration of the floodway. The Soils map shows generalized floodplain areas based on the location of alluvial soils. The Water Resources map breaks these areas down further to differentiate areas that have been designated within the "100-year floodplain" by the Federal Emergency

Management Administration (FEMA). The Township Zoning Ordinance regulates land use activity in floodplain areas based upon FEMA mapping.

Soils with High-Groundwater Table/Headwaters Areas

In upland depressions and low-lying areas at the fringes of floodplains are found soils with shallow depth to water table and, occasionally, standing water. Generalized mapping of such "wet" or hydric soils is found in the Soil Survey of Chester and Delaware Counties and is shown on the Water Resources map. These soils generally correlate to mapping of "headwaters" areas; through seepage, they supply groundwater to the surface water system. That source forms the base flow in the streams and defines a baseline for stream water quality. Protection of the water resource values of these soils is critical. At the same time, they are not typically suitable for development from a building/construction standpoint. They threaten wet basement problems and will not adequately absorb sewage. Pollutants of any sort might easily enter the groundwater system, potentially contaminating water supply sources or resurfacing in surface waters. West Vincent Township does not specifically regulate development activity atop soils with shallow depth to water table. Pennsylvania DER and the Chester County Health Department are responsible for issuing permits for sewage systems. On-site systems will not be permitted where there is evidence of insufficient depth to water table, nor where tests show insufficient soil percolation rates.

Wetlands

"Wet soils" will frequently be considered actual wetlands, from the regulatory perspective of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER). Wetlands are recognized for their special ecological values. Often found at the heart of important headwaters areas, they offer critical wildlife habitat and are important "storage" areas for both surface- and ground-water regimes. From a regulatory standpoint, the presence of wetland areas is determined based on soil, hydrologic, and vegetative criteria. From a lay perspective, any area with periodic standing water, and hosting wetland vegetation like cattails, skunk cabbage, etc., is likely to fall within the official definition. If wetlands are suspected, a cautious approach land planning is recommended.

In essence, no developmental activity may occur within a regulated wetland area without a permit. Applicability of DER and/or Corps jurisdiction is determined by the

presence of soil, hydrological, or vegetation characteristics which typify wetland conditions. The permitting process requires investigation of alternatives, and may require "mitigation." Mitigation may, for example, be accepted where "new" wetlands are created to replace those disturbed or destroyed by development activity. However, it should be noted that Army Corps and DER regulation is not all-inclusive; permit waivers are available depending on the size and scope of proposed activity. DER does not extend its purview to watersheds of less than one-half square mile. It is recommended that the Township monitor compliance with state and federal wetlands regulation and consider adoption of Township regulations to prohibit disturbance of wetlands outside state or federal regulatory purview.

No comprehensive inventory of wetlands currently exists. The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) has identified certain wetland areas in West Vincent Township, based on aerial photography. These are included on the "Water Resources" map. Identified areas include the stream system, and certain marshy areas, stormwater detention areas, open excavations, and farm ponds. Other wetlands certainly exist; their exclusion from NWI mapping is often a function of their small size or specific characteristics making them difficult to identify from aerial photography. Ignorance of their location does not excuse avoidance of the permitting process. Mapping of "wet soils," while generalized, offers the first "red flag" for potential wetland determination. The Township should formally "red flag" the wetlands issue within the subdivision and land development review process. This can be accomplished by requiring that applicants specifically map soils known generally to exhibit shallow depth to water table, and to provide detailed delineation of wetlands.

NATURAL DIVERSITY

The natural diversity found within West Vincent Township is remarkable, greatly enhancing the overall quality of life for township residents. The diverse open space environment that characterizes West Vincent, and its relative ecological health, both nurtures and is dependent upon the existence of diverse and abundant flora and fauna communities.

Natural Diversity Inventory/Habitat Analyses

Carefully planned open space protection efforts can include the conservation of biological diversity found in West Vincent Township. Effective protection of the diverse communities of species which are native to West Vincent is dependent first on knowledge

of extent and diversity, their whereabouts, their habitat requirements, and their interrelationships. An extensive inventory and analysis of local vegetation and wildlife would be the desirable approach but is beyond the scope of this Plan. A base-line inventory of diverse species known to inhabit West Vincent, excepting insects, is included as Appendix II. This listing should not be viewed as all-inclusive. To date, no sites in West Vincent have been included in the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI). Further steps toward inventory and analysis of natural diversity should be included among on-going efforts of the Environmental Advisory Council to enable full consideration of this resource within land planning processes. An approach toward that end might be outlined as follows.

In order to ensure that viable populations of native plant and animal species are maintained in West Vincent, it is important to understand local natural areas as representative examples of native ecosystems. Large, mature forest stands, for example, represent the deciduous forest ecosystem which is native to this region of Pennsylvania. While the species diversity of these stands may have been reduced by years of selective logging, the total diversity of the regional landscape is greatly enhanced by remaining large patches of maturing hardwood forest. Today, native ecosystems are fragmented and face varied impacts from human intrusion. The next step toward analytical inventory of natural diversity in West Vincent could be the definition of several basic habitat types which cover the range of what remains in the Township. Habitat types can be grouped based on similarity of physical conditions and species diversity.

All of the open land in the West Vincent Township can be categorized as a specific habitat type, defined by the vegetative communities which occur in response to both topographic conditions and to the various ways that vegetation is actively or passively managed. Local flora and fauna inhabit three broad habitat types: open field, meadow, or pasture; forest, often situated on steep slopes and/or stony soils; and wetlands, including streams, springs, seeps, ponds, and floodplain meadows. For the purpose of sustaining an ecologically healthy landscape, it is of critical importance to retain sufficient areas of each habitat type as interconnected habitat networks throughout the township. Further technical analyses could refine these groupings into a larger number of habitat types, based on finer differentiation of topographic and vegetative characteristics. A first-cut general grouping of three types is easily related to available mapping and thereby brought into land planning processes.

Shape is a related indicator of habitat value since rounded or square patches of vegetation maximize the interior area in relation to the amount of edge. As stated before, edge stresses such as invasive exotic plants, invasive wildlife, and microclimate conditions such as wind and sunlight can significantly alter the quality of a habitat area. Forests, meadows, and wetlands with irregular or elongated shapes will feature a high proportion of edge and, therefore, are more vulnerable to edge effects than rounded or square shaped habitats.

Japanese honeysuckle is an example of a common invasive exotic vine will often infiltrate forest stands or meadow communities from their edges. The greater the ratio of edge to interior habitat, the greater the success of Japanese honeysuckle at dominating over native herbs and shrubs. Clearly, decisions to protect natural areas for the conservation of biological diversity must consider the influence that the size and shape of those areas has on their value as viable habitats.

One final indicator of habitat quality is the level of connectivity or linkage between natural areas. Vegetated corridors such as utility-line right-of-ways, greenways, railroad corridors, hedgerows, and stream corridors function to help stabilize plant and animal populations by reducing the effects of isolation. Networks of interconnected upland forests, meadows, wetlands, and floodplain forests allow for greater movement, survival, and regeneration of native species. Local extinctions of species are far more likely in small, isolated habitats which face a number of external stresses and have no nearby source for repopulation. Habitat networks enhance the habitat value of each natural area by approximating, as closely as possible, the original connections which were prevalent in the pre-settlement landscape.

Planning Implications for Natural Diversity

Effective planning and management of viable habitat conservation networks to support biological diversity requires a strategy which designates priority conservation areas, establishes buffer zones around those areas, and provides a long-term land management plan for improving habitat quality. An effective method to assign priority to land for protection involves identifying those natural areas with the highest habitat value for plants and animals. An example of an approach toward assigning priority for conservation of natural habitat would be development of a point system. Such an approach may provide an

objective way to assign value to natural areas based on their ability to sustain naturally diverse plant and animal communities.

Natural Diversity Point System. The use of a point system provides an objective, defensible strategy for ranking each habitat area based on the combination of characteristics which enable it to support a diverse natural ecosystem. In this way, the most important forests, wetlands, stream corridors, and meadows can be identified and prioritized for conservation.

For example, all forest tracts in West Vincent could be selected and assigned points based on size, shape, and level of connectivity. The age or maturity of forest stands adds to the value for habitat, and the oldest woodlands should therefore be assigned additional points. The proximity of woodland patches to other nearby forests, meadow areas, streams, wetlands, or protected lands adds additional habitat value and should earn additional points. Although local protection of steep slope woodlands through zoning may provide a significant area of forest habitat, they do not constitute a healthy forest ecosystem on their own merit and should only be considered as a foundation for a more extensive woodland protection area. To illustrate this example, we can look at assigning priority to three different patches of forest for conservation, with the following assumptions:

- Rounded or square forest patches >10 acres are assigned 50 points;
- Irregularly-shaped forest patches >10 acres are assigned 40 points;
- Mature forest patches >10 acres are assigned 40 points;
- Forest patches adjacent to a vegetated corridor are assigned 30 points;
- Forest patches adjacent to open space or conservation areas are assigned 30 points;
- Forest patches <10 acres are assigned 20 points.

Patch # 1: Under this strategy, a large, rounded woodland patch (50 points), with mature trees (40 points), adjacent to a vegetated stream corridor (30 points), and adjacent to a wetland which is under conservation easement (30 points) would be assigned a total of 160 points, which is the highest ranking possible for forests. Obviously, the conditions in this type of patch are well-suited to maintaining natural diversity in the township. Lands fitting these criteria would be top priorities for conservation.

Patch # 2: A smaller forest patch of less than 10 acres (20 points), however, which was adjacent to a vegetated utility line right-of-way corridor (30 points) would be assigned a total of 50 points. This ranking reflects the habitat value of a patch which provides no forest interior habitat, but which is linked to other habitat areas by a corridor of vegetation, thus reinforcing the viability of the network of habitats.

Patch # 3: A small forest patch of less than 10 acres (20 points) which is isolated from other natural areas and is surrounded by residential subdivisions would only be assigned a total of 20 points, which is the lowest ranking possible for a woodland. This is due to the fact that a woodland of small size has a high amount of edge conditions with little or no interior habitat, which is isolated and not linked to other habitat areas has a relatively low habitat value for many species of plants and animals. Therefore, this would be less of a priority for the conservation of natural diversity in the township. Still, even the smallest woodland performs critical functions by providing structural diversity and food sources for local wildlife and stopover points for migratory birds.

While the combined ranking of Patches 2 and 3 is less than a third of that of Patch #1, this does not mean they are "worth only half as much" as Patch #1. The point system simply shows that, given the limited availability of resources for conservation, certain tracts of land are more critical than others in contributing to the natural diversity inherent to West Vincent.

The wetland and stream corridor ecosystem is also of critical importance, and may be largely protected through local floodplain zoning ordinances. Point values assigned to those habitats which do not receive protection should reflect their habitat value. Vegetated stream buffers of 300' on either side of the stream channels and wetlands should be assigned high points (50 points) as valuable habitat areas. This figure of 300' is based on the need to protect corridors of unique floodplain and adjacent upland vegetation for the movement of wildlife species along streams and between habitat areas.

Wetland areas which are adjacent to agricultural or residential land, for example, may be suffering from siltation and pollution due to runoff of pesticides, topsoil, and fertilizers from adjacent farm fields or lawns. A 75-150 foot buffer area managed as a meadow or old field/shrub habitat would significantly reduce the impacts of adjacent land use on the wetland by providing a minimal layer of protection from external stresses. A natural buffer would regulate water quality and quantity, allowing native wetland vegetation to proliferate,

and reducing the level of disturbance to wildlife inhabiting the wetland area. Since these qualities are critical for the maintenance of diverse wetland ecosystems in the township, 75-150 foot buffer zones should be assigned a high point value (50 points).

The protection of large meadows is a third priority area for conservation. Meadows should be assigned points based on their relationships to adjacent cover types. Those meadows which border high priority forest, wetlands, or stream corridors would logically be rated the highest (50 points). The presence of hedgerows is a valuable factor for enhancing diversity and those meadows which feature them should be granted additional points (30 points).

It is possible to enhance the natural diversity of the West Vincent landscape even as development takes place. As developers and site planners alter the character of the local landscape, they can be encouraged to incorporate an ethic of land stewardship in their projects. Site plans should include vegetation plans which consider the habitat value of the site and its relationship to the habitat network throughout the township. Through the wise use of design standards, the township can ensure that development projects lead to habitat creation rather than habitat loss.

In contrast, the removal of native vegetation and the fragmentation of natural areas are two interrelated ways which development projects accelerate the loss of natural diversity. Applicants for development activity should be required to provide more specific inventory of habitat areas and existing species on a site-specific basis. Such an inventory could be added to subdivision/land development plan submission requirements. Particularly on sites where existing vegetation is contiguous with significant natural areas off-site, or where it serves as a buffer zone or corridor for off-site habitat, removal of existing vegetation should be minimized. Clustering buildings in less sensitive areas is the most effective way to avoid fragmentation of ecosystems.

Landscape plans which provide grass and ornamental shrubs for new development projects contribute little or nothing to natural diversity in West Vincent Township. Even on former agricultural sites, conventional subdivision landscaping provides little improvement as enhanced habitat for local vegetation and wildlife. Land management of common open space areas in developments does not have to mean large areas of lawn. Vegetation plans should be required to account for the long-term enhancement of natural diversity of

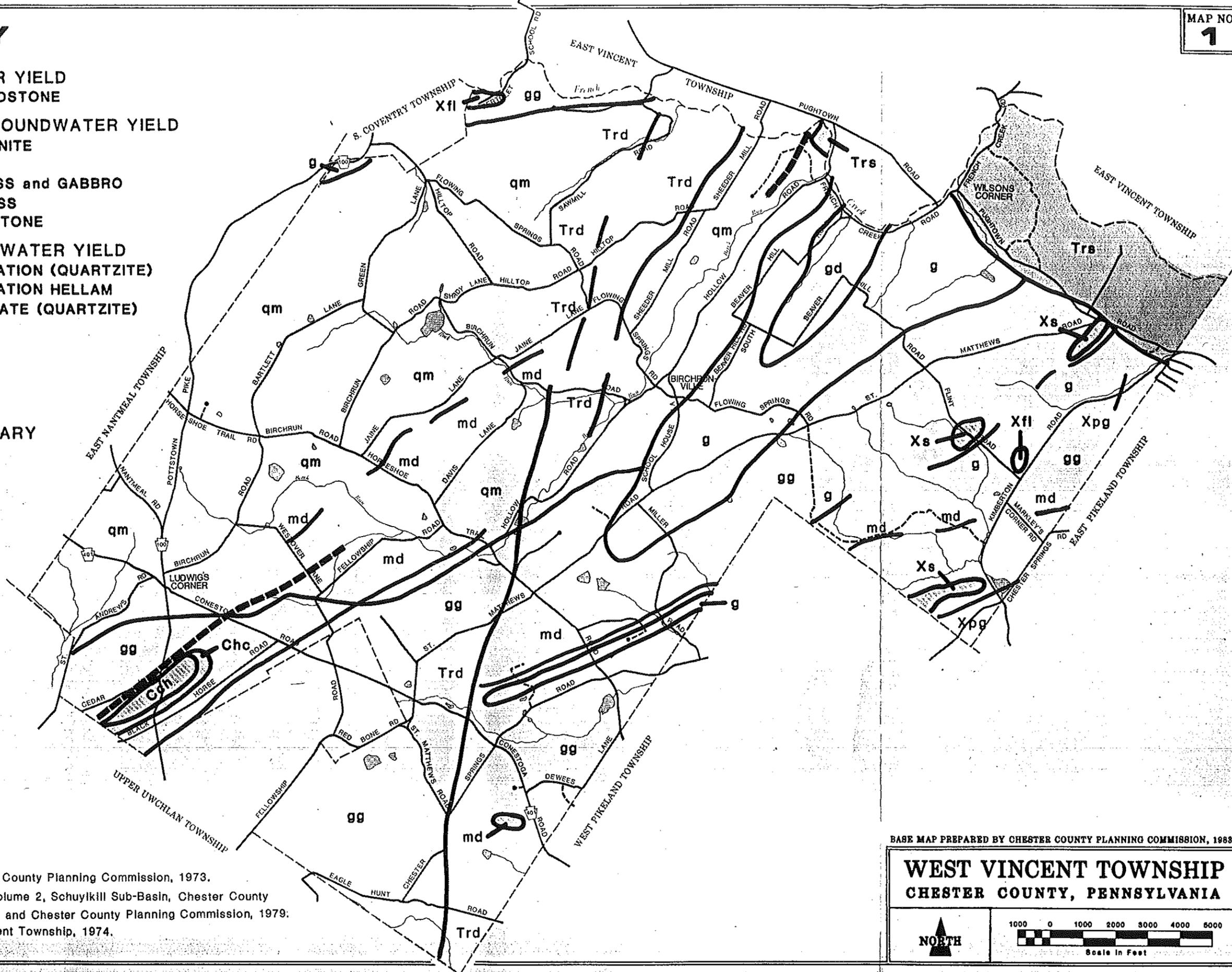
the site and the surrounding landscape by providing reforestation, meadow management, hedgerow creation, and stream corridor re-vegetation programs.

Reforestation in key areas can reduce fragmentation and enhance forest habitat conditions by improving the shape and expanding the size of existing woodlands. Vegetation plans may also promote the planting of native shrubs and trees on disturbed soils and eroding slopes. Streambank vegetation should be a priority to stabilize eroding streambanks, and to increase the habitat value of stream corridors. Meadow management should be promoted in lands which are taken out of cultivation or pasture, and large lawn areas are prime candidates for meadow management strategies to save on mowing costs, energy consumption, and to enhance local habitat diversity. Hedgerow creation is another valuable management strategy, particularly in large, unbroken fields which lack structurally-diverse vegetation. Finally, to enhance the forest interior micro-environment and to create more structural variety, forest edges should be managed to taper from canopy trees, to understory trees, to shrubs, and, at the outer edge, tall grasses and herbs. This type of "advancing edge" helps to insulate the forest from edge stresses, and it adds to habitat diversity by providing an old field community of shrubs and understory trees.

Both residents and visitors enjoy recreational, aesthetic, educational and psychological benefit from hiking, birding, hunting, fishing, and nature study; they harbor reasonable expectation that these special attributes of West Vincent be preserved for future generations. Protection of wildlife habitat may follow broad efforts to protect open space; care should be taken to note specific habitat areas while planning, with an eye toward maintenance of diversity. It is also critical to maintain continuous corridors of open space, to allow for normal movement and dispersal of wildlife and to accommodate migration patterns. Protected corridors should follow natural corridors, particularly wetlands, stream valleys, and woodland masses; they should avoid proximity to dense human settlement.

GEOLOGY

- HIGH GROUNDWATER YIELD
Trs STOCKTON SANDSTONE
- LOW-MODERATE GROUNDWATER YIELD
- qm QUARTZ MONZONITE
- gd GRANODIORITE
- g/g GABBROIC GNEISS and GABBRO
- gg GRAPHITIC GNEISS
- Xfl FRANKLIN LIMESTONE
- VERY LOW GROUNDWATER YIELD
- Cch CHICKIES FORMATION (QUARTZITE)
- Chc CHICKIES FORMATION HELLAM CONGLOMERATE (QUARTZITE)
- Xpg PEGMATITE
- Xs SERPENTINITE
- md METADIABASE
- Trd DIABASE
- FORMATION BOUNDARY
- DIKE
- FAULT



Sources: Chester County Geology, Chester County Planning Commission, 1973.
Water Resources Inventory Study, Volume 2, Schuylkill Sub-Basin, Chester County
 Water Resources Authority and Chester County Planning Commission, 1979.
Growth Impact Study, West Vincent Township, 1974.

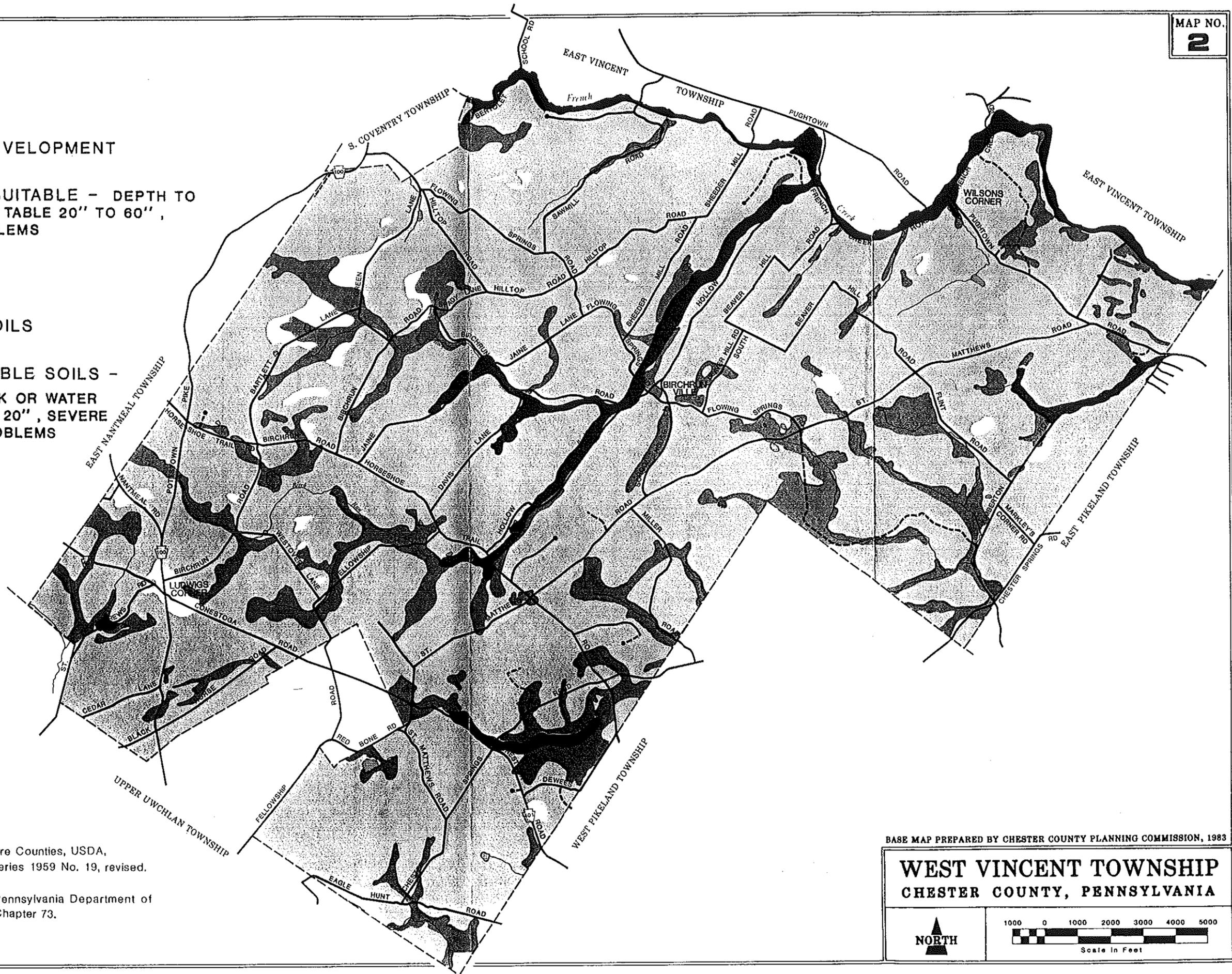
BASE MAP PREPARED BY CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 1983

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



SOILS

-  SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT
-  CONDITIONALLY SUITABLE - DEPTH TO BEDROCK OR WATER TABLE 20" TO 60" , PERMEABILITY PROBLEMS
- UNSUITABLE**
 -  FLOODPLAIN SOILS
 -  OTHER UNSUITABLE SOILS - DEPTH TO BEDROCK OR WATER TABLE LESS THAN 20" , SEVERE PERMEABILITY PROBLEMS

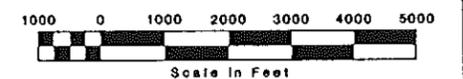


Sources: Soil Survey, Chester and Delaware Counties, USDA, Soil Conservation Service, Series 1959 No. 19, revised.

Title 25 Rules and Regulations, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Chapter 73.

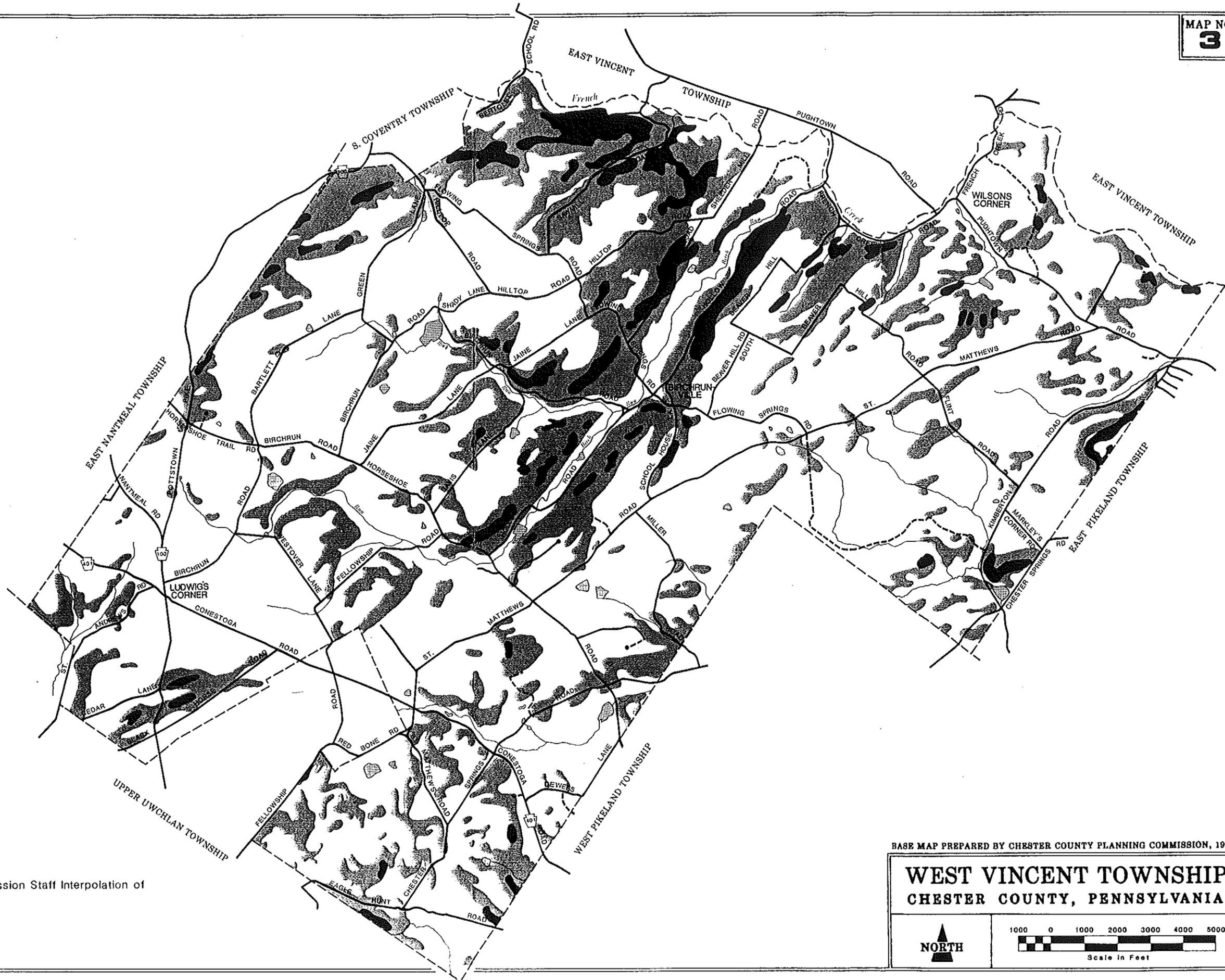
BASE MAP PREPARED BY CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 1983

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



SLOPE

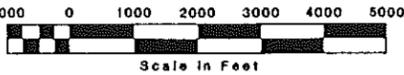
-  LESS THAN 15%
-  15-25%
-  MORE THAN 25%



Source: Chester County Planning Commission Staff Interpolation of USGS Topographic Maps .

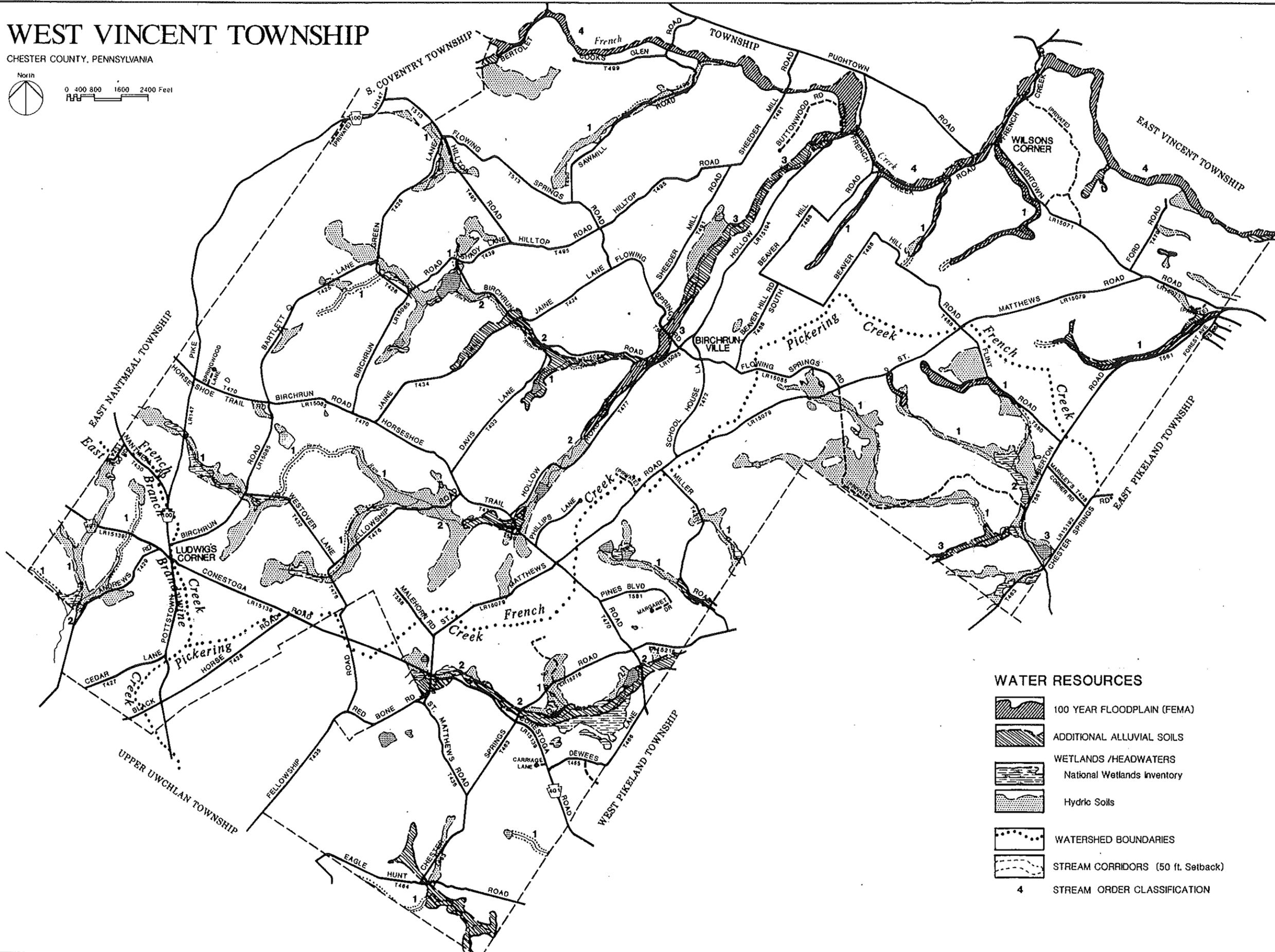
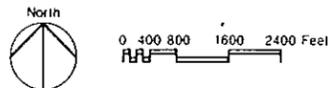
BASE MAP PREPARED BY CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 1983

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

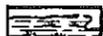
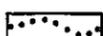
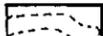


WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



WATER RESOURCES

-  100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN (FEMA)
-  ADDITIONAL ALLUVIAL SOILS
-  WETLANDS / HEADWATERS
National Wetlands Inventory
-  Hydric Soils
-  WATERSHED BOUNDARIES
-  STREAM CORRIDORS (50 ft. Setback)
-  4 STREAM ORDER CLASSIFICATION

VISUAL LANDSCAPE QUALITY

The landscape of West Vincent Township remains a rich mosaic of field and pasture, wooded hillside, farm complex and rural settlement, stitched together by historic roadways, stream valleys, and strands of treelines, fencelines, and stone walls. Indeed, that rich character represents what many Township residents value most about West Vincent; it establishes their sense of community identity: a peaceful corner in a cosmopolitan world.

The analysis of landscape for its scenic quality has traditionally been left out of the land use planning process, partly because little threat was perceived, and partly because scenic beauty has been considered a measure of personal taste, difficult to assess objectively and more difficult to justify legally. A broad public consensus now seems to agree that scenic beauty is a tangible and valuable community resource. To lose it would represent a severe loss, both in economic terms and in ways more difficult to measure, but nonetheless real.

As environmental analyses point out, flood-prone, wet, and steep areas should not be developed due to obvious hazards. Their conservation also would guarantee a fingery network of open space throughout the Township. Further preservation of open space resources can be attained through private land planning efforts and within the development process, as discussed in this report. Broad vistas, roadside banks, stone walls, hedgerows, treelines, woodlots, water courses, wetlands, and historic building clusters are all examples of landscape features that can be fitted into new development by design. Similarly, scenic roadways and trails can be retained or even created to enhance physical and visual access to open space landscapes.

OBJECTIVES OF SCENIC OR VISUAL LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The scenic landscape analysis portion of this study seeks to objectively describe and inventory the visual resources of West Vincent Township. This analysis aims to see that visual characteristics be given similar weight in the land use planning and regulatory processes as other, more traditionally recognized, limiting factors. Scenic analysis can assist private and public efforts to preserve open space. It can contribute to local planning, zoning, and site plan review functions. Acquisition of public open space lands can be directed to areas which have scenic value as well as recreational or other public values. For

landowners who wish to protect the scenic resources of their lands, scenic analysis can provide direction for future land use and management decisions. A publicly recognized scenic landscape analysis provides a Congressionally recognized justification for charitable treatment of conservation easement donations.

With these purposes in mind, scenic analysis was undertaken for West Vincent Township and summarized in map form at a scale of 1" = 800'. A colored original map entitled "Visual Resources" is available for review at the Township offices. A black-and-white reduction of the entire map is included here along with a sample mapped section of the Township at full scale (1" = 800"). The specific objectives of the scenic resource analysis included:

- Definition and identification of typical visual landscape elements which have derived from natural processes and cultural settlement patterns specific to West Vincent Township.
- Definition and identification of visually significant landscapes and visual accents (distinctive trees, bridges, buildings, stone walls, vista points, etc.) which should be protected by private and public action.
- Definition and identification of visually "degraded" landscapes and visual intrusions that detract from scenic quality.
- Development of a land classification approach for planning which identifies areas appropriate for preservation and those on which development may be accommodated without adverse impact to scenic quality.

METHODOLOGY FOR SCENIC/VISUAL LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The method of scenic analysis employed here avoids comparing or rating landscapes. The various landscapes within the Township have not been "ranked" nor have they been compared to recognized "scenic" landscapes elsewhere (as if, for example, the Grand Canyon might be regarded a "10," while a junkyard would be a "0"). Designation of visual significance is based upon landscape characteristics that can be considered as "typical" of West Vincent itself, reflecting both the Township's open space character and its historical development patterns. Thus, locally typical or **characteristic landscape elements** can serve as the collective yardstick by which the visual significance of any given tract is judged. This

approach relies on editing rather than quantifying. An inventory of "visually significant" landscapes is accomplished first by mapping all areas located within the "public viewshed" - that is, visible from public roads -- and then "editing" so as to delete areas not considered characteristic landscape elements.

While this analysis depends upon a consistent yardstick like public visibility, it should be noted that areas not within the public viewshed are not necessarily deemed visually insignificant. They must be assessed separately and on a site-specific basis where warranted. In West Vincent, the hills along the south bank of French Creek, for example, are not visible from public roads within the Township. Yet those hills do form an impressive visual backdrop as viewed at a distance from Pughtown Road in East Vincent Township. They have been included in mapping for the French Creek Scenic River Study and should be assigned equal priority for conservation efforts.



Scenic Upland Vistas Characterize Much of West Vincent

CHARACTERISTIC LANDFORMS

Characteristic landscape elements in West Vincent can be described both in terms of general landform type, and in terms of their detailed features. Five basic landform types were identified and mapped wherever visible from public roads: wetland, valley floor, upland, ridge, and village. These are described below, particularly in terms of their historical relationships to building siting. It is hoped that such an understanding might infuse the development planning process to enable a positive assessment of visual landscape quality for many years to come. While an objective of this Plan is to promote outright conservation of open space, from the standpoint of visual significance, it also is possible to guide development such that new landscape elements "fit" the characteristic landscapes of West Vincent.

Uplands account for the vast majority of visually significant landscapes in West Vincent Township, comprising areas of moderate topographical relief and broad agricultural landscapes. With gently rolling topography and suitable soils, agriculture still predominates. Since agriculture demands relatively large and open tracts, this landscape type is broad, laced by treelines and hedgerows, punctuated by farm complexes and, on occasion, by small clusters of (2-4) houses. Building setbacks vary greatly; some structures are literally within a few feet of the public road while others stand back several hundred feet. A few common characteristics are noted:

- From any given point on a public road, the perceived density is very low. (Few farm complexes or housing clusters are visible at any one time.)
- Farm complexes and housing clusters are viewed as singular objects in the context of an overall agricultural landscape.
- Building placement is irregular; as noted, setbacks from public roads vary, as does the spacing between buildings within an individual building complex or grouping. (Historically, setbacks and spacing were more or less determined by opportunities and constraints inherent in the landform and not in accordance with subdivision regulation nor master plan.)

- Buildings adjacent to and within a few hundred feet of a public road usually "address" the public road (i.e., there is a visible relationship between the road and the way the building faces - usually parallel or at a right angle to it).

As uplands comprise the most common landscape in West Vincent, it is not surprising that they have been subject to considerable development pressure. Both existing and proposed development offer examples of varied approaches to siting which exhibit equally varied success in fitting West Vincent's characteristic landscapes. At "Buttonwood Farms," for example, the former agricultural landscape still remains visually prominent. The farmstead remains a strong visual focus while the new roadway curves away to new homes at some distance from points of direct public view. At "Douglass Lane," new homes draw from the characteristic theme of the Pennsylvania "additive" farmhouse, but the scale of the homes, the lots, their relative placement, and their relationship to both the new road and to St. Matthews Rd. are all incompatible with the characteristic upland landscape. Of the common upland characteristics noted above, only the last is addressed. The new homes intentionally face the new road, but the regularity with which they do so, their even spacing and uniform setback, all present a suburban rather than a rural setting. While the new landscape may seem an unfortunate imposition upon the character of West Vincent, the "blame" cannot particularly be placed on the developer. After all, he simply abided by ordinance provisions which still remain in place. Instead, this experience should help point toward more flexible ordinance provisions which could enable more sensitive efforts in the future. As discussed further below, recent efforts by the Planning Commission and Environmental Advisory Council have focussed on encouraging more "sensitive" design, even to the point of disregarding certain ordinance provisions now in place.

Discussion regarding proposed development at "Matthews Meadows," "Wetherill Estates," and "Larking Hill Farm" has, in each case, dealt with visual impact upon prominent upland landscapes. In all three cases, the overall intensity of development -- the sheer magnitude of landscape elements to be newly "introduced" -- presents the most difficult obstacle to design which might "fit in," pointing to the importance of local land stewardship efforts which might preclude such intensity. In these cases, proposed development cannot mimic rural farmsteads; it can, however, work to guide public views, to retain and possibly enhance characteristic aspects of visual foci, to create "soft" edges between "rural" and "suburban," and to "downplay" the prominence of introduced features. Exemplary discussion regarding "Larking Hill Farm" is explored more fully below.



Treelines and Farm Complexes Often Define the Scope of Upland Views

Ridges, as mapped in terms of visual significance, are areas of prominent topographical relief, generally forming the sloping "walls" of the stream valleys which dissect the upland. For purposes of visual analysis, most rounded ridgetops have been mapped as "upland," where, from the perspective of the public view, they do not offer dramatic topographical relief. Most ridgelines are wooded, sometimes adding even greater "height" to their prominence; in fact, in several cases, it is the added height of a woodland mass that has differentiated between areas mapped as "upland" and areas mapped as "ridge." Woodlands also tend to conceal or "soften" the view of ground-level detail and often limit the extent of public view. Historically, even relatively steep slopes were farmed; most are now undergoing reforestation. Relative to the breadth of upland areas, the "ridge" landform type is found in narrow swaths. Notable examples are found along both sides of the Birch Run valley or "hollow," particularly along Hollow Road. Here, both landform and vegetation create what is perceived as a linear landscape when viewed from public roads. Buildings are encountered rather quickly (i.e., one can't see it a half mile ahead of coming to it); thus, they are seen more often as individual units rather than in groupings.

Historical building siting can be described as "opportunistic" relative to the natural landform, necessitating varied setbacks from adjacent roads. Structures occupy hollows in the hillside or natural terraces running perpendicular to the direction of the stream valley. The limited geographic extent of this landform, along with surrounding topographic constraints, generally limits setbacks to a range of a few feet to no more than 100 feet. As on the broader uplands, perceived density is extremely low, structures and small groupings tend to be viewed as singular, isolated objects, and building placement is irregular. Buildings generally address the public roads they front, yet often are set at odd angles to conform to their topographically constrained settings.

The limited extent of ridgelines in West Vincent, along with their inherent topographical constraints, also mark their vulnerability to development. Tree removal can spell major scenic as well as environmental degradation. On the other hand, careful "nudging" of new homesites into woodland niches can conceal actual density of development.

Valley floors have been mapped where stream valleys are sufficiently broad to include a distinct and relatively flat lowland landform unit. Valley floors are a narrow, linear landform type, hemmed in by ridge or upland; the valley of Birch Run contains a notably long ribbon of relatively flat valley floor, visible the length of Hollow Road. This landform generally coincides with floodplain areas and, hence, usually is not hospitable to development. Occasionally, the breadth of an open valley floor offers a more extensive foreground for a building site, a group of buildings, or a village (such as at Birchrunville). Building siting at the valley floor is particularly "opportunistic;" most are sited just off the floor of the valley on the margin of adjacent ridge or upland.

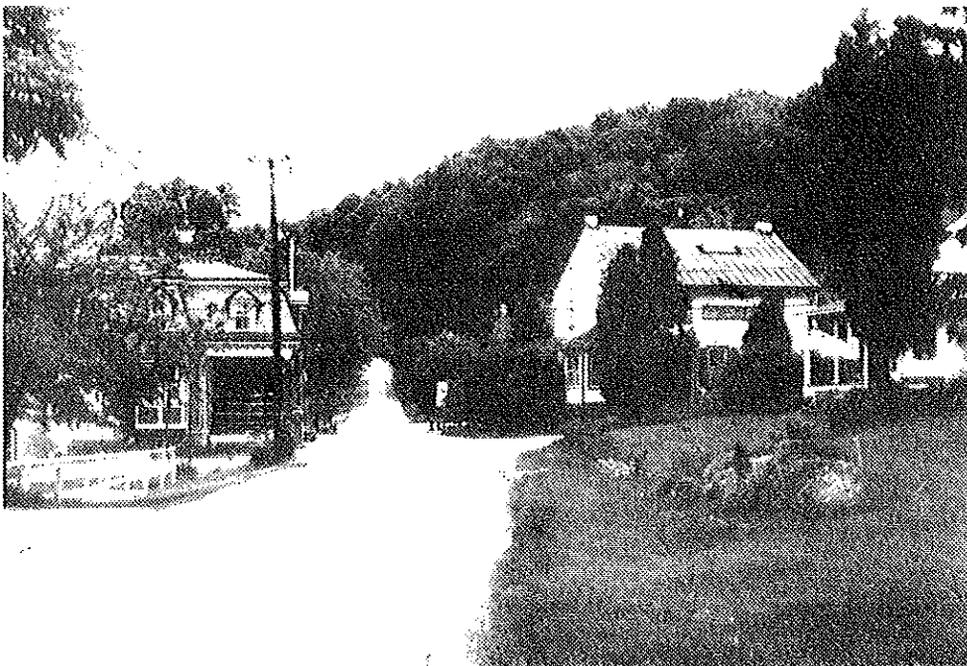
Wetlands have been mapped as a distinct landform type where visually prominent, i.e., where wetland vegetative and/or hydrologic characteristics are obvious in the midst of a public view. Wetlands punctuate both upland and valley floor; an example is the string of wetlands visible at the junction of Hollow Road and Horseshoe Trail. Wetlands appear to be devoid of the characteristics of the man-influenced landscape; neither farmed nor built upon. They offer a uniquely "natural" and contrasting visual focus. Environmental characteristics of wetlands are discussed under Environmental Quality, above.

Villages have been mapped under two sets of circumstances: those which sprouted at important crossroads (i.e., Wilson's corner, Ludwig's corner and Birchrunville); and those which are essentially isolated clusters of buildings strung along a single road, like those at

the outskirts of Kimberton, along Pughtown and Kimberton Roads. While the diverse village groupings evident in West Vincent have differed in their developmental history, they share several common design characteristics. None are clustered particularly tightly, yet each offers the visual impression of a single landscape unit, conveying a distinct sense of place, and having a definite beginning and end. The structures which make up a village form a three-dimensional space, a sort of linear landscape "room" (landscape "rooms" are discussed more fully, below) centering on the public road. Setbacks do not vary so much as to destroy the perception of a distinct spacial unit. Buildings are sited to address both the road and each other (i.e., parallel and/or perpendicular to the road and to each other, while sufficiently close to maintain a sense of three-dimensional outdoor space).

Where new development might seek to emulate a village pattern, certain design pitfalls should be avoided:

- Over-separation of buildings: though the villages of West Vincent are somewhat loose, stringing buildings out too far along a road is a common design error. As a result, the grouping is not perceived as a single unit in the landscape but becomes a linear hodgepodge of individual structures without a concise sense of space.
- Building setbacks and separation distances which are either too uniform or too varied, again destroying an almost organic sense of three-dimensional space.
- Building placement devoid of a sense of relationship between the road and the buildings or between the various buildings.



Birchrunville Represents the Quintessential Village Cluster

Landscape "Rooms" are well-defined, outdoor spaces where vegetation (usually treelines or woodland edges), landform (such as steep hillside or ridgeline), and/or structural development conspire to produce a distinct landscape entity. A "room" is viewed from the public road alone; it is "walled-in," so to speak, and is not seen as part of a broad landscape continuum. It is relatively intimate in nature. Landscape "rooms" frequently take the form of upland farm field, where hedgerows have developed along fence lines and property lines, limiting views and thereby defining small open spaces. In the narrower stream valleys, occasional landscape rooms are found in open lowlying areas. As landscape rooms transcend differentiation of landform type, they are mapped with the subscript 'r' on the Visual Resources map.

Because landscape rooms are generally associated with agricultural lands, they usually comprise simply open spaces. In some instances, however, landscape rooms provide a setting for individual buildings or complexes. In this way, it can be said that the landscape "rooms" are "furnished" by a building or group of buildings which highlight and give focus to the space.

CHARACTERISTIC LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

Accenting the various landform types which characterize West Vincent are certain landscape elements that are particularly notable in their contribution to perceived visual landscape quality. While often small in scale and detail, they transcend description of broad landform types. New development and/or "infill" might be accommodated gracefully where it strives to carefully maintain and even incorporate the essential qualities of characteristic landscape elements. The following examples of landscape elements appear particularly noteworthy in West Vincent:

Roads provide visual access to the landscape, yet they, themselves, comprise one of the most visible of landscape elements. In fact, roads can be said to 'express' the landforms which they traverse; historic road patterns evolved 'organically,' following contours and taking advantage of all opportunities to shorten distance or to reduce grade, while minimizing the scope of engineering and construction efforts. Hence, major roads follow gentle lowlands and 'flat' ridgetops; roads connecting these may meander down the lengths of small stream corridors, following the path of least resistance. The varying character which results is a major contributor to our overall perception of the landscape. The scenic

qualities of roadways, themselves, are discussed further in the following section of this report.

Vista Points have been mapped along public roads where relatively long views are attained -- a mile or more, often overlooking immediate roadside landscapes. Several magnificent views may be seen from upland areas of the Township, looking over long rolling landscapes toward distant hills. Some of the most spectacular vista points are found along St. Matthews and Beaver Hill Roads in the northeastern portion of the Township, and along the southern leg of St. Matthews Road between Red Bone Road and the Larking Hill farmstead. Long views or vistas represent scenic highlights, contrasting the generally foreshortened views associated with open roadside farmland. They offer even more startling contrast with the more "intimate" landscape "rooms," and with the tight sense of visual enclosure that characterizes a dense woodland.

In all but a few examples, the long vistas enjoyed in West Vincent have not been degraded by the visual "pollution" of inappropriate development, except for an occasional vista terminated by the steam plumes of Limerick. As is discussed more fully in regard to the example of Larking Hill Farm, introduction of new development to the landscape need not be viewed as counterproductive to preservation of scenic vistas. Primary lines of sight should be left undisturbed, especially those leading to points of strong visual focus, such as a large open hillside, a pond, or a prominent complex of historic buildings. New landscape elements may be placed unobtrusively at lower elevations, behind tree groupings, or "off to the side" of prominent views. In some cases design of new elements might intentionally strengthen focal views -- channeling them, so to speak -- so as to enhance visual distraction from new development. New development also can be sited to form soft edges between images of open space and of development. New buildings can draw from historical patterns of placement upon the land (before the era of the bulldozer), to "fit" the landscape just as we perceive genuinely historic structures to do.

Vegetation communities are diverse and heavily man-influenced in West Vincent. Active crop and pasturelands dominate the gentle uplands, broken by hedgerows, treelines, small woodlots and occasional oldfield. The narrow, steep-sided stream valleys are largely wooded, interspersed with wetland meadows and occasional small pastures. Vegetative characteristics reflect both topographic constraints which historically have inhibited agriculture or other development as well as continuing changes in land use practices. A significant portion of the township exhibits a gradual transition from what was generally

more open to what is now becoming more forested, as both crop production and pasturing operations become more selective while active forest management declines.

The Visual Resources map delineates wooded areas across all five landform types. Most woodlands appears to be in the age range of 40-60 years, and are frequently dominated by tulip poplar, not one of the dominant trees of the virgin forest (oak, chestnut, etc.). Single larger "wolf" trees abound (mostly white and red oak) indicating that, prior to recent periods of reforestation, open fields had been highlighted by individual large trees or groves of trees. Because, for the most part, even the oldest forests are so young (40-60 years), dense undergrowth often manages to impair views from the public roads. Vegetative communities are discussed in greater depth under Environmental Quality - Natural Diversity, above.



Historical Building Siting Fit the Character of the Landscape

Structural Characteristics are integral to the way in which we perceive the landscape. Most older buildings in West Vincent are constructed of field stone or field stone covered by stucco. Overall, the architecture of the older buildings can be classified simply as "vernacular" with no underlying design motif specifically common to West Vincent. As one would expect, the more modern buildings in the township vary considerably as to their materials of construction, styles, and subsequent integrity relative to visual landscape quality.

The historical placement of structures in the landscape is derived from the character of the landscape itself. Buildings were sited to take advantage of opportunities in the landscape, particularly relative to slope and climatic exposure. Building siting seldom attempted to mold the landscape to fit the building as is more common today. Structural design and placement which pays intentional "tribute" to historical themes, in terms of overall form and mass, relationship to the lay of the land, roof pitch, and visible materials may result in the introduction of new landscape elements which are just as "characteristic" of West Vincent as their forebears.



Drystone Walls Are Prominent Visual Accents

Stone Walls, for the most part freestanding dry stone walls, are unusually extensive in West Vincent Township. Most were built with the residue of fieldstone (removed to permit agriculture), once buildings had been erected, and used to define individual pastures, fields and property lines. Today, many built alongside the roads remain as an extremely important element of visual landscape quality. Some still remain in fields and in the midst

of reforested oldfields, though many have been removed to facilitate changing agricultural practices. Notable characteristics include:

- Drystone construction: the stones are loosely stacked in horizontal courses. The joints are somewhat loose (they weren't built by expert craftsmen) yet some effort was made to fit them together.
- Most are freestanding boundary walls; some are retaining walls.
- All were constructed in relatively long continuous wall sections. Short free-standing walls were not the historical norm, underlining the inappropriate character of the newer walls popping up at the entrances to new subdivisions.

Ponds do not require particular description as to their physical attributes. In West Vincent Township, they are noteworthy due to the sheer number of them and their visual prominence. As flat, open water bodies, they offer a sharp visual contrast to both rolling upland and steep-sided valley. Their value to wildlife cannot be underestimated.

VISUAL ACCENTS AND INTRUSIONS

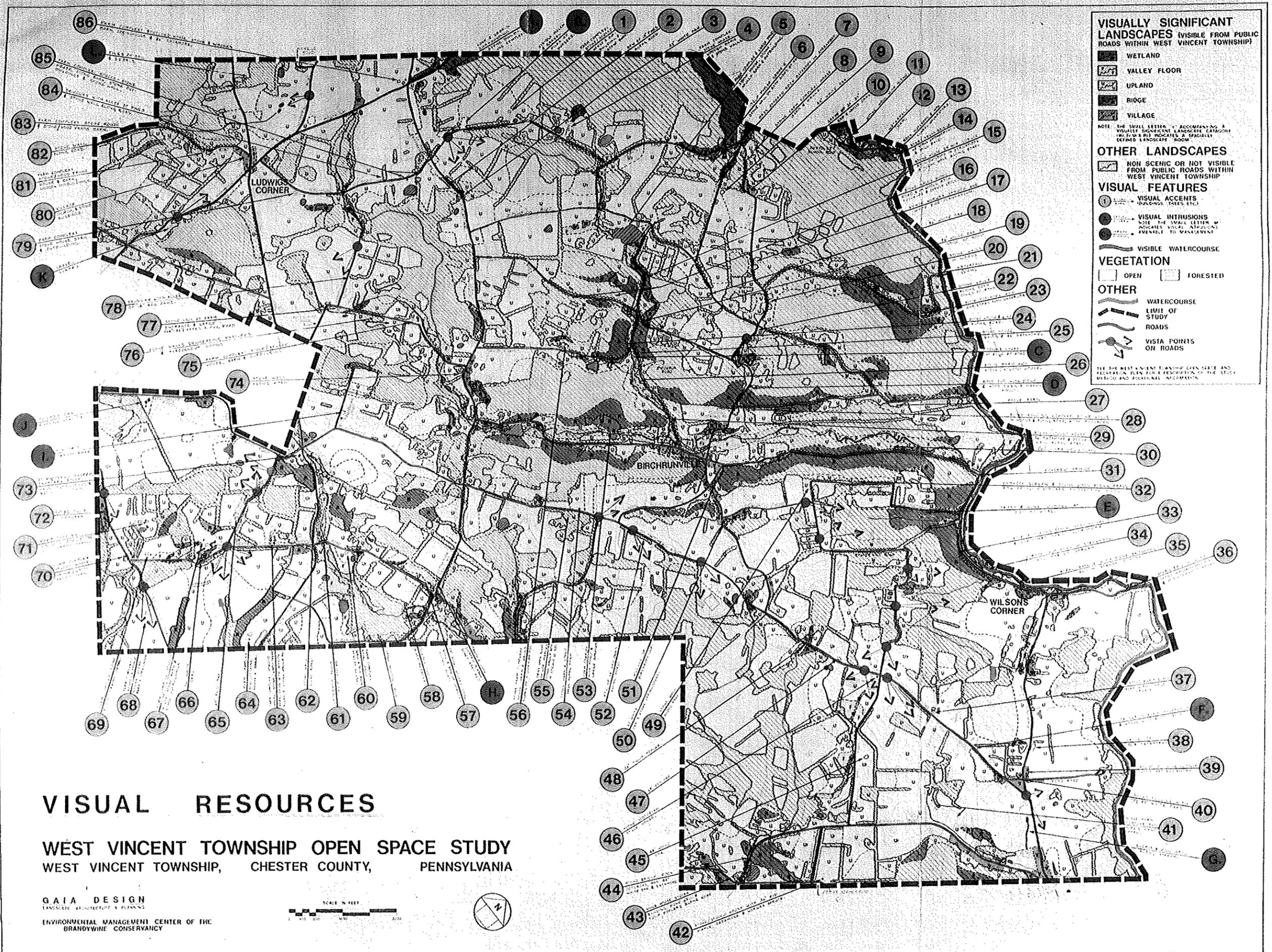
Among characteristic landscape elements, numerous examples appeared during visual analysis to add particular distinction to the landscapes which they occupy. These have been denoted "**visual accents**," and are mapped as such on the Visual Resources Map. To be considered a visual "accent," a landscape element must be: (1) "characteristic" of West Vincent -a typical representative of the local landscape, as described above; and (2) represent a distinctive visual focal point in its specific landscape context. Eighty-six visual accents were inventoried, covering a broad range of landscape features. Examples include ponds, stone walls, historic buildings, bridges, rock outcrops, specimen trees and rows of trees, and unique vegetation.

In contrast, objects which noticeably detract from the scenic quality of the landscape have been inventoried as "**visual intrusions**." To be considered a visual intrusion, an object must be: (1) a "disjunctive" visual element -- an element of the landscape which would not normally be considered characteristic of West Vincent; and (2) just as an accent, be located in such a way as to provide a focal point (albeit negative or intrusive) for the public view. Visual intrusions include some industrial or commercial uses, intrusive utility rights-of-way,

transmission lines, junk yards, buildings in styles disjunctive to their landscape context or neighboring buildings, etc. Twelve visual intrusions have been included on the Visual Resources Map.



Great Trees Are Prominent Visual Accents



VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES (VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROADS WITHIN WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP)

- WETLAND
- VALLEY FLOOR
- UPLAND
- RIDGE
- VILLAGE

NOTE: THE SMALL LETTERS ACCOMPANYING A VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE CATEGORY INDICATE A SPECIFIC VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE ROOM

OTHER LANDSCAPES

- NON SCENIC OR NOT VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROADS WITHIN WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

VISUAL FEATURES

- VISUAL ACCENTS (BUILDINGS, TREES, ETC.)
- VISUAL INTRUSIONS (NOTE THE SMALL LETTERS WHICH INDICATE VISUAL INTRUSIONS AVAILABLE TO MANAGEMENT)
- VISIBLE WATERCOURSE

VEGETATION

- OPEN
- FORESTED

OTHER

- WATERCOURSE
- LIMIT OF STUDY
- ROADS
- VISTA POINTS ON ROADS

SEE THE WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY METHOD AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

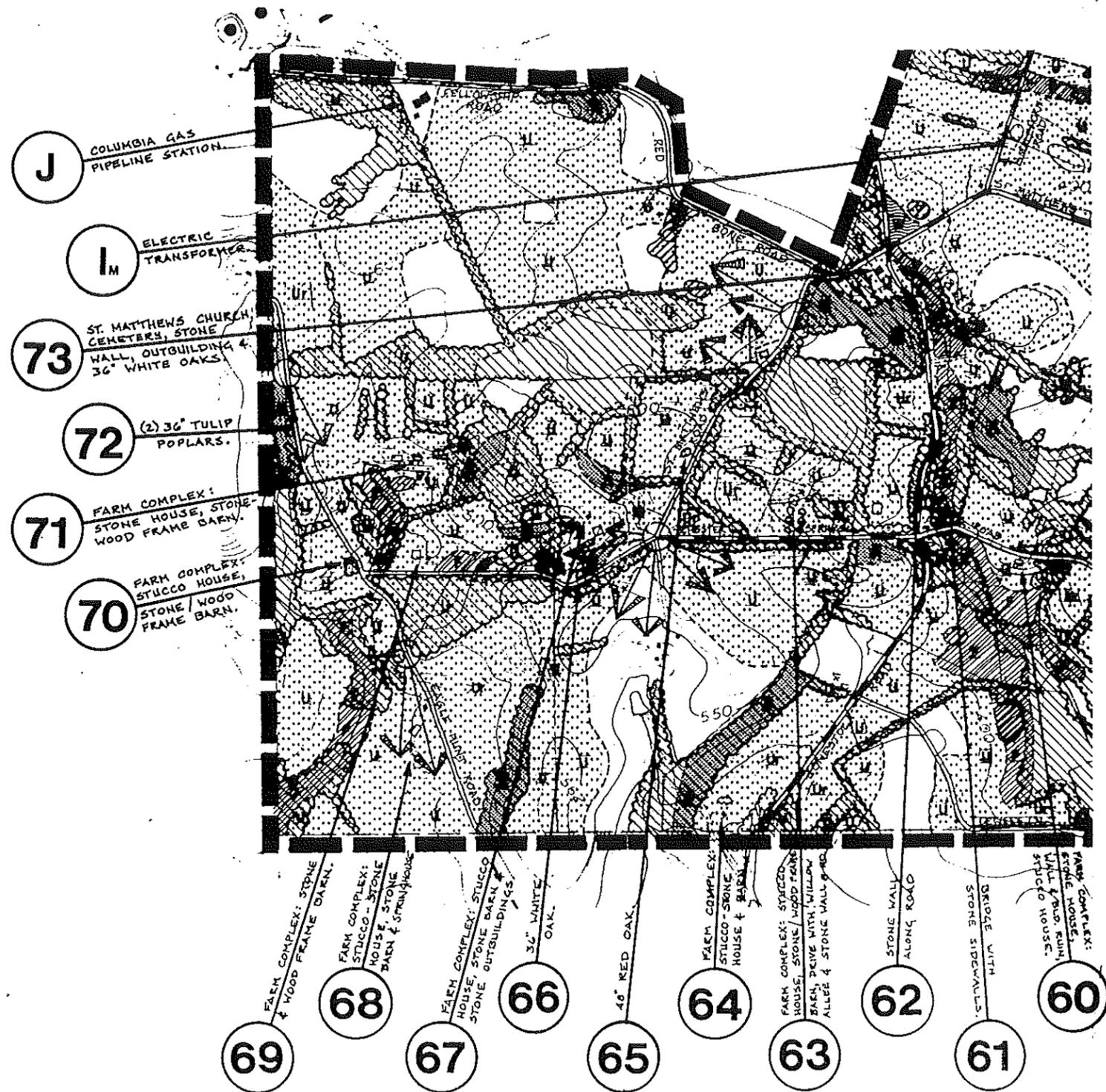
VISUAL RESOURCES

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE STUDY
 WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

GAIA DESIGN
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING
 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT CENTER OF THE
 BRANDYWINE CONSERVANCY



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SAMPLE PORTION OF VISUAL RESOURCES MAP

VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES (VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROADS WITHIN WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP)

- WETLAND
- VALLEY FLOOR
- UPLAND
- RIDGE
- VILLAGE

NOTE: THE SMALL LETTER "r" ACCOMPANYING A VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE CATEGORY (Wr, Fr, Ur & Rr) INDICATES A SPATIALLY DEFINED LANDSCAPE "ROOM".

OTHER LANDSCAPES

- NON SCENIC OR NOT VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROADS WITHIN WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

VISUAL FEATURES

- VISUAL ACCENTS (BUILDINGS, TREES, ETC.)
- VISUAL INTRUSIONS
NOTE: THE SMALL LETTER "M" INDICATES VISUAL INTRUSIONS AMENABLE TO MANAGEMENT.
- TRASH DUMPING

VISIBLE WATERCOURSE

VEGETATION

- OPEN
- FORESTED

OTHER

- WATERCOURSE
- LIMIT OF STUDY
- ROADS
- VISTA POINTS ON ROADS

SEE THE WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY METHOD AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.



APPLICATION OF VISUAL ANALYSIS TO THE PLANNING PROCESS:

The Case Study of Larking Hill Farm

"Larking Hill Farm," currently before the Township for proposed subdivision review, provides an opportune example for the application of visual or scenic analysis. The property is large (162 acres), it is zoned for relatively low gross density (1 dwelling unit per 3 acres), and, from a scenic standpoint, it is magnificent. Visual resource mapping undertaken for this plan offers a first cut at incorporation of visual analysis within the planning process. Of course, that mapping can only infer a three-dimensional perspective. Site visit(s) are necessary to augment available mapping, to allow a three-dimensional view and to "personalize" visual resource issues to those involved in the planning process. The sample portion of the Visual Resources map, included herein at full scale, includes that part of the Township where Larking Hill Farm is found, at the junction of Chester Springs and St. Matthews Roads.

What does the Visual Resources map tell us about Larking Hill Farm? At first glance, the Visual Resources map would seem to bear out community consensus regarding scenic quality at Larking Hill; the majority of the tract falls within areas denoted "visually significant landscapes." The farmstead itself, the pond, and the central ravine, while scenic, do not fall within any public view. They lie over the crest of land from Chester Springs Road and behind the wooded ridge that faces Route 401. Excepting that ridge (mapped 'R'), all visible portions of the tract have been mapped as upland (mapped 'U'). The open field fronting on Route 401 has been further denoted upland "room" (mapped 'Ur'), "walled-in" by the wooded ridge to the southwest, the neighboring historic Collins farmstead to the southeast, and a strong treeline to the northwest. At the juncture of Chester Springs and St. Matthews Roads, at the western edge of the tract, a vista point is mapped. Views are shown directed across the southern hillside and focussed down the swale in the northwest. As mapped, we can infer such differentiation of upland area -- hillside vs. swale -- only from the underlying topographical contours. An actual site visit is the best way to confirm and refine visual resource mapping. Existing site features, including those gleaned from the Visual Resources map, are summarized in map form on the following page.

How might development "fit" into the upland landscapes at Larking Hill? What should be the key design objectives? To a certain degree, development can be placed beyond the public view, although internal views should still be considered. Within areas of "visual significance," new development might be designed to fit "characteristic landforms,"

and to reflect "characteristic landscape elements." Clearly, from the standpoint of maintaining visual or scenic landscape quality, development vs. conservation need not be an "all-or-nothing" prospect. Other open space issues, however, should be kept in mind; farmland preservation, for example, demands the conservation of large contiguous tracts with appropriate soil and slope conditions. In terms of the application at hand, the type and magnitude of development proposed is not conducive to "pure" farmland preservation efforts; hence our focus here on protection of visual resources.

Referring to discussion of characteristic landforms, we find several characteristics (see discussion of "uplands") that may infer key design parameters for new development:

- perceived density should remain low;
- structures or groups of structures should be viewed as singular objects in the context of an overall agricultural landscape;
- building placement near roads should intentionally "address" or face the road; otherwise, placement should be irregular, with varied setbacks and varied spacing;
- prominent aspects of the historical landscape should be maintained, particularly visual focal points and primary lines of sight from vista points;
- newly introduced landscape elements (roads, drives, structures, fences, and landscape material) should be placed so as not to contradict the lay of the land; placement should accent or guide focal views and/or should downplay the prominence of introduced features.

How can design objectives be translated into land planning? Is conformance with ordinance provisions feasible? The applicant had presented a number of approaches to development of Larking Hill Farm, all purported to follow existing ordinance provisions. The range of proposals is shown by the two extremes illustrated on the following pages:

- 38 three-plus acre lots spread over the entire property, in conformance with "by-right" zoning provisions; and
- 54 one-acre lots with 30% common open space and 100-foot perimeter open space buffer, in accordance with existing cluster regulations.

While both plans would leave significant amounts of land open -- in the sense of not built upon, neither plan adequately addressed the exceptional scenic qualities embodied at Larking Hill. The 38-unit "lot-out" plan results in a relatively uniform sprinkling of new homesites, with no particular regard to scenic quality, and no guarantee that open portions of lots would be maintained to reflect remaining scenic value. The 54-unit "cluster" plan was forced to relatively uniform adherence to the 1-acre minimum lot size in order to maintain the required 100-foot buffer plus meet the additional 30% common open space requirement. That very lack of flexibility destroyed the purpose of the cluster approach. Clearly, decreasing the total number of units would correspondingly increase design flexibility; however, it is not our purpose here to second guess the Applicant's financial objectives but rather to explore positive solutions even at permitted density.

An alternative planning approach has been explored, roughly in conformance with existing cluster provisions. The primary intent of this alternative is to meet the design objectives articulated above. Adherence to existing regulations was a secondary consideration only. A first cut at a suggested alternative plan was explored showing the same number of units (54) as the Applicant had asserted his "cluster" plan could achieve. However, the alternative plan illustrated a variable approach to clustering, designed to create as strong a perception of open space as possible. This plan is illustrated following the two "by-right" plans and can be described more fully as follows:

Development outside "visually significant landscapes:"

- 10 new single-family dwellings are placed on small lots (6-15,000 sq. ft.) in and around the historic farm building complex, aiming to create a sense of "village" that can appear as an "organic" expansion of the existing complex. It is suggested that multi-family use be permitted to allow for the adaptive re-use of the large barn, up to four additional units. Within the village, the size and visual prominence of the barn is critical to maintaining a "sense of place" that is not inappropriate in the context of surrounding large-lot development. The barn "belongs" to the existing landscape, helping to diffuse the impact of introduced landscape elements.

- 14 new large-lot dwellings, grouped loosely so as to maintain the spatial sense and view potential of 3+ acre lots, yet placed intentionally to "fit" the lay of the land. Actual lot sizes may range from 30,000 sq. ft. to 4-5 acres, with either common or restricted private open space. Ordinance provisions would need adjustment to permit sufficient flexibility in

lot layout and open space management. The hypothetical plan shown here has intentionally left out lot lines, in order to indicate the perceived extent of the open space, regardless of actual ownership scenarios. Maintenance of an extensive perception of open space demands implementation of an intentional open space management plan. Otherwise, individual landowners could easily destroy much of the visual open space quality, even if accidentally, merely by planting treelines, erecting fences, or otherwise disturbing critical open view lines, for example.

Development within "visually significant landscapes:"

- 4 new large-lot dwellings in the upland "room" fronting on Route 401. The room could be "divided" into two rooms by a new primary access road, with each "furnished" differently -- one home reminiscent of an historical farmhouse located to the west of the new road, while three might form a tighter group at seemingly greater depth from public view (based on driveway location) to the east of the new road. A wet retention basin, as a pond, could offer a new focal view for both the new homes and the passing public on Route 401, distracting views from perception of density.

- 11 new large-lot dwellings, astride the upland swale or "hollow," in the northwestern quadrant of Larking Hill, placed so as to minimize impact to primary lines of sight from the vista point at the intersection of Chester Springs and St. Matthews Roads. New homes, as newly introduced landscape elements, can be partially hidden in the hollow relative to points of primary public view, and can be grouped both to minimize obtrusive attributes and to channel views down the hollow.

- 10 new large-lot dwellings sprinkled along the high upland crest in the southwestern part of the tract. These homes would all be visible, most at some distance to public vantage points. Here, detailed siting is critical, with particular care toward fitting the lay of the land in an "organic" fashion, stressing irregular spacing and setbacks.

Further alternatives clearly can be envisioned, each stressing or favoring a different hierarchy of open space resource planning objectives. The Township Planning Commission reviewed the alternative described above and suggested further alternative approaches. Planning Commission representatives suggested that visual landscape quality objectives and agricultural preservation objectives could be better served through removal of the large-lot units in the high upland areas of the southern part of Larking Hill Farm, and also those

along Chester Springs Road. As shown on the next alternative plan ("alternative cluster/open space plan"), this would allow for subdivision of three small farms in those areas, retaining long-term agricultural resource value and providing easily for open space management. It was suggested that some of the units "lost" be "picked-up" through further clustering in the northern part of the tract. Clearly, the applicant must weigh the economic ramifications of the "lost" units; however, it is also clear that the three "farms" would convey far greater market value than three large-lot single-family homes.

Tighter clustering, combined with introduction of the farms, reduces infrastructure costs, particularly through elimination of considerable road length. Open space management costs also can be reduced. The illustrative plan here shows only limited area in common open space, for example. As shown, the idea of a common "green" is suggested, offering potential for meeting long-term neighborhood park needs in this vicinity. The common paddocks are suggested as a way of facilitating retention of viable use of the existing stable, while promoting the concept of an equestrian community.

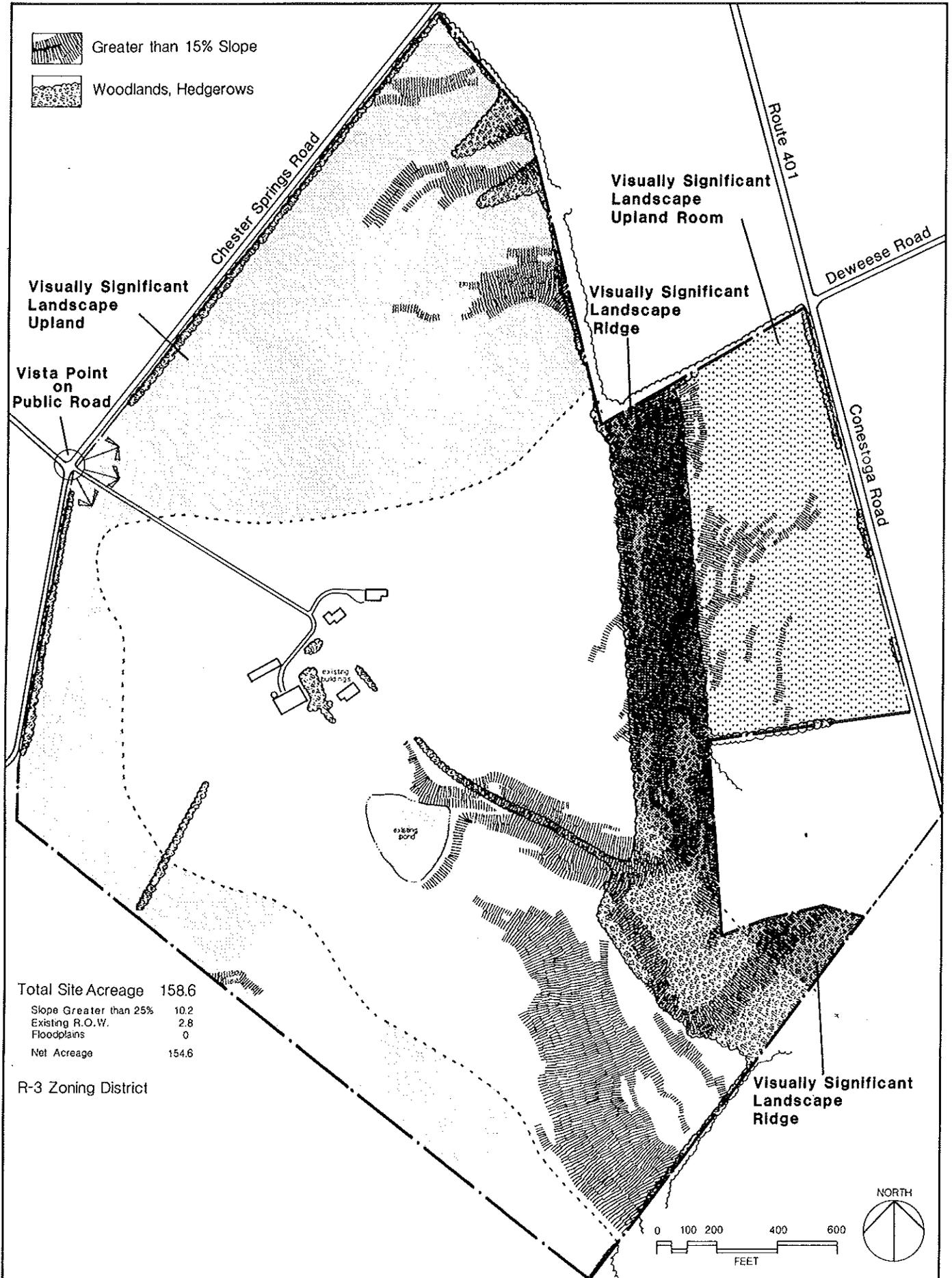
The final illustrative plan shows a radical approach to clustering, aimed at maximum retention of open space, even in the face of permitted development. This hypothetical plan places all 54 units that might be permitted under current cluster provisions in the field along Route 401. The entire remainder of the farm and its farm building complex could remain intact, restricted from further subdivision. The agricultural resource would be preserved nearly intact, as would the historical building complex and road traces. Such an approach would not appear feasible from the applicant's financial perspective; "village" or "town" houses would not capture the same market as large-lot units. However, the remaining farm would retain considerable value, even if restricted. It essentially occupies its own viewshed, and would not be visually impacted by development along Route 401. Impacts to public views along Route 401 could be mitigated through introduction of a "park" landscape and a pond along the frontage, and through retention of existing hedgerows and the visual prominence of the wooded ridgeline.

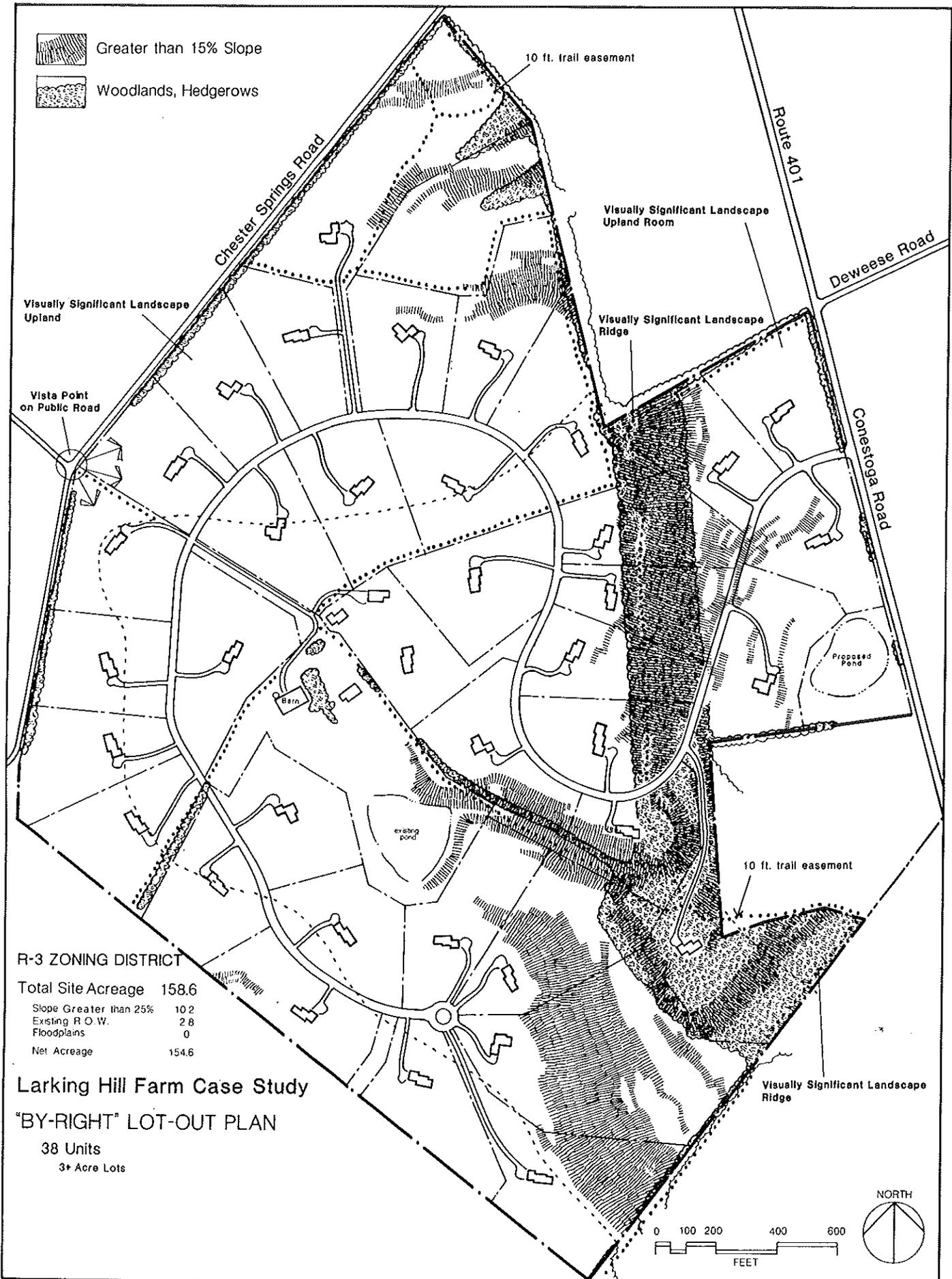
Alternative Planning as a Means to Promote Retention of Visual Landscape Quality: Suggested Summary Approach

- Review and address Township open space planning objectives in the context of Applicant's development/financial objectives (Refer to text section entitled "Conserva-

tion/Preservation Issues & Strategies" for discussion of diverse approaches to private land stewardship).

- Review extent of "Visually Significant" Areas; locate vistas and accent features, including historic structures, road traces, and any other notable landscape features.
- Assess character of "Visually Significant" Areas to discern the variable manner in which development might mitigate negative impacts to visual significance:
 - What landscape and spatial aspects characterize visual significance in each area so designated?
 - Can those characteristics be maintained after development?
 - Must they be left alone or can they be utilized?
 - Where development falls within the public viewshed, can it be situated so as to minimize disturbance to the existing lay of the land? Can new homesites appear "naturally" upon the land, the way historic structures generally do, as opposed to being "imposed" upon the landscape, out of scale and out of context? Or, can new development be planned to reflect other characteristic landscapes of the community, such as "village" or "farmstead," whether or not true to the particular tract?
 - How might grouping and massing of structural development be designed to reflect the scale and breadth of the landscape and to follow existing "breaks" in the landscape?
 - Can views be framed, focussed or channeled by siting of development? Can new views be opened up?
 - How might design of introduced landscape and plan elements (open space configuration, roadway layout, landscape planting schemes, etc.) be used to augment siting of structures?
 - Might land planning as articulated here also address other open space and/or community development objectives?





Greater than 15% Slope
 Woodlands, Hedgerows

10 ft. trail easement

Route 401

Deweese Road

Visually Significant Landscape Upland Room

Visually Significant Landscape Ridge

Visually Significant Landscape Upland

Vista Point on Public Road

Conestoga Road

Proposed Pond

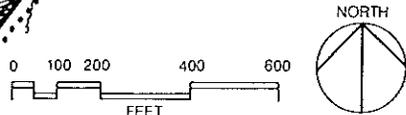
existing pond

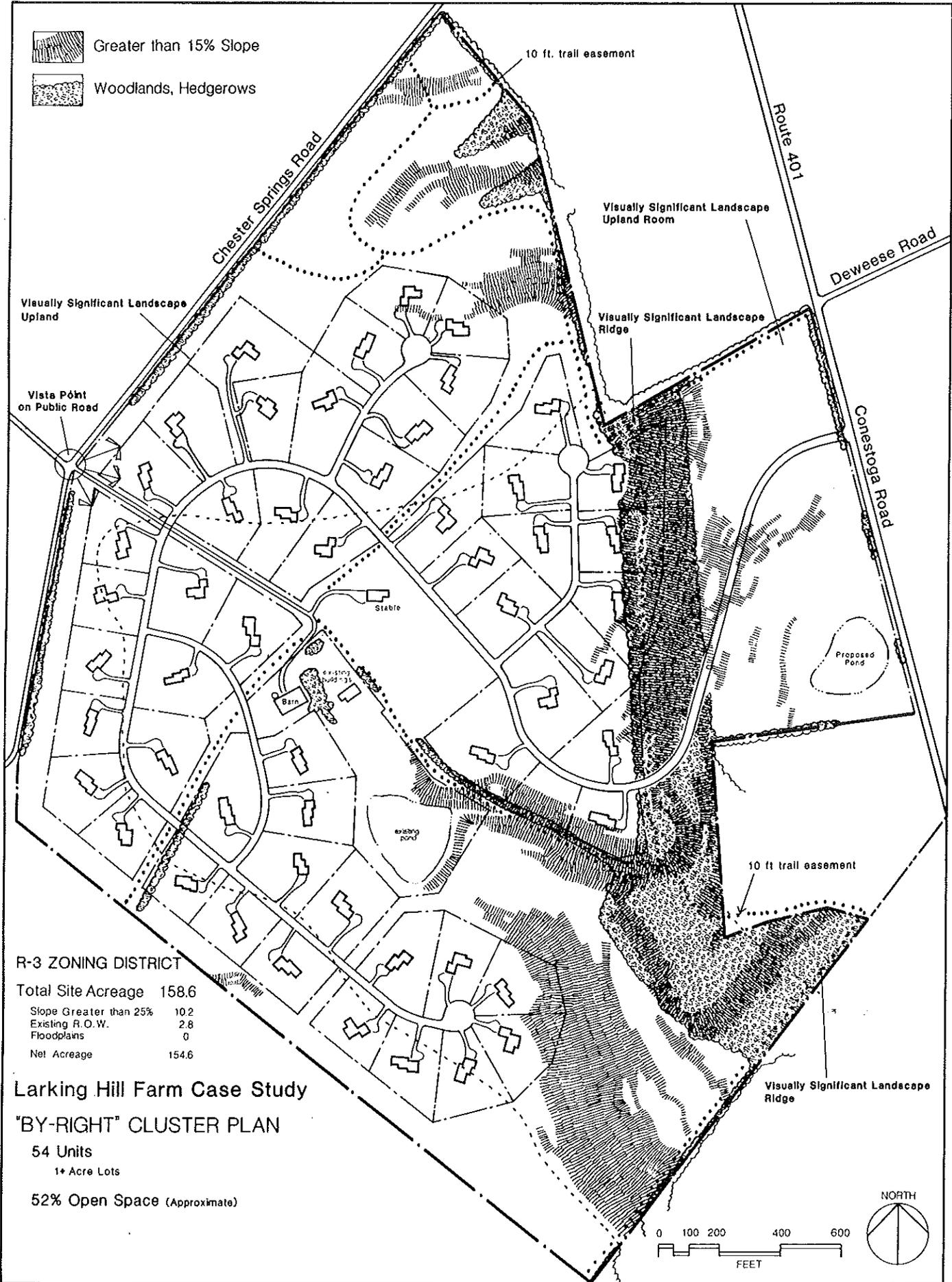
10 ft. trail easement

Visually Significant Landscape Ridge

R-3 ZONING DISTRICT
 Total Site Acreage 158.6
 Slope Greater than 25% 10.2
 Existing R.O.W. 2.8
 Floodplains 0
 Net Acreage 154.6

Larking Hill Farm Case Study
 "BY-RIGHT" LOT-OUT PLAN
 38 Units
 3+ Acre Lots

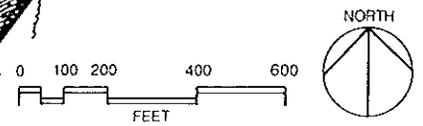


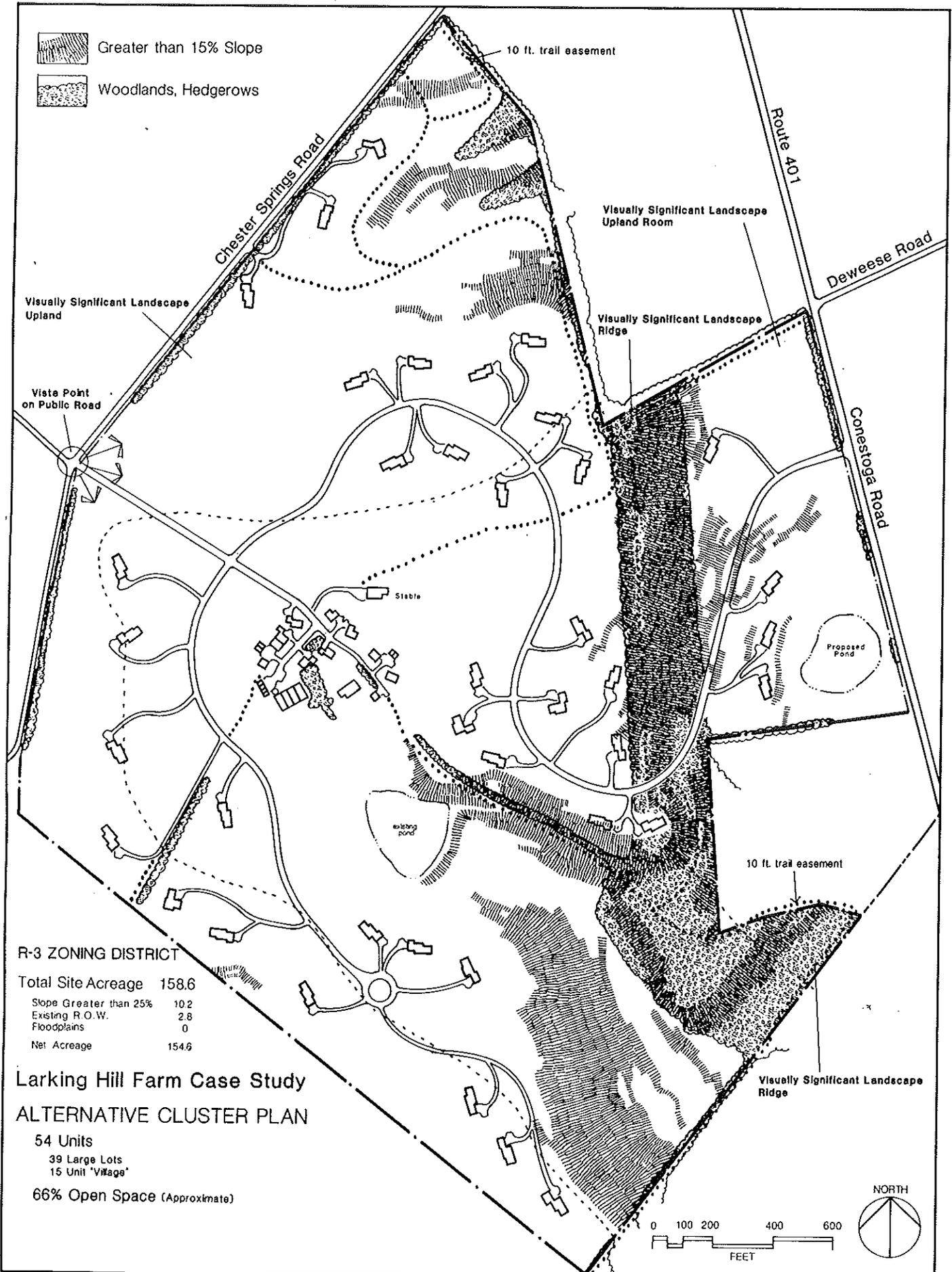


R-3 ZONING DISTRICT

Total Site Acreage	158.6
Slope Greater than 25%	10.2
Existing R.O.W.	2.8
Floodplains	0
Net Acreage	154.6

Larking Hill Farm Case Study
"BY-RIGHT" CLUSTER PLAN
 54 Units
 1+ Acre Lots
 52% Open Space (Approximate)





R-3 ZONING DISTRICT

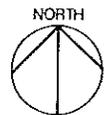
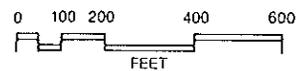
Total Site Acreage	158.6
Slope Greater than 25%	10.2
Existing R.O.W.	2.8
Floodplains	0
Net Acreage	154.6

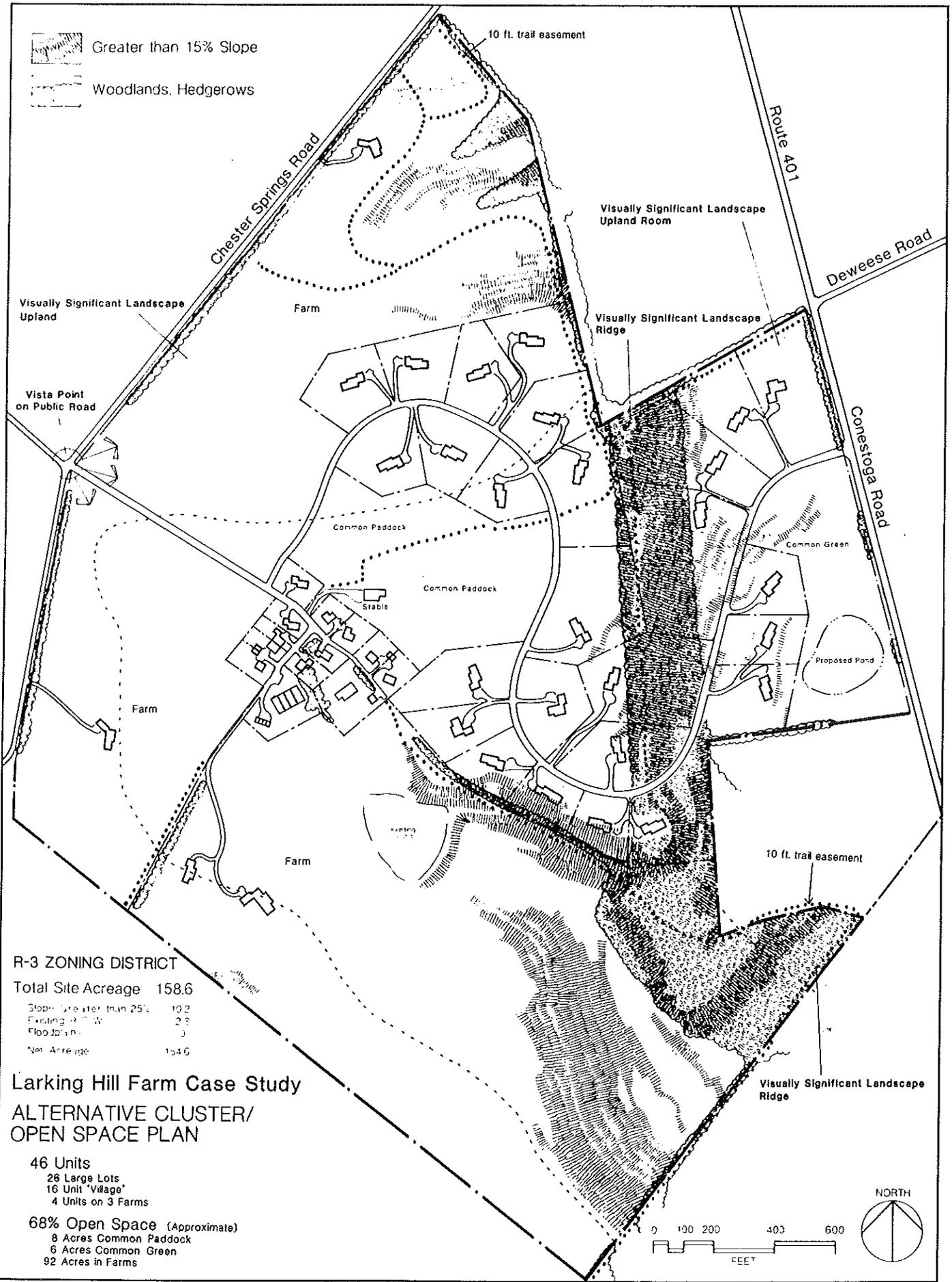
**Larking Hill Farm Case Study
ALTERNATIVE CLUSTER PLAN**

54 Units

- 39 Large Lots
- 15 Unit "Village"

66% Open Space (Approximate)



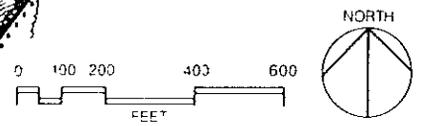


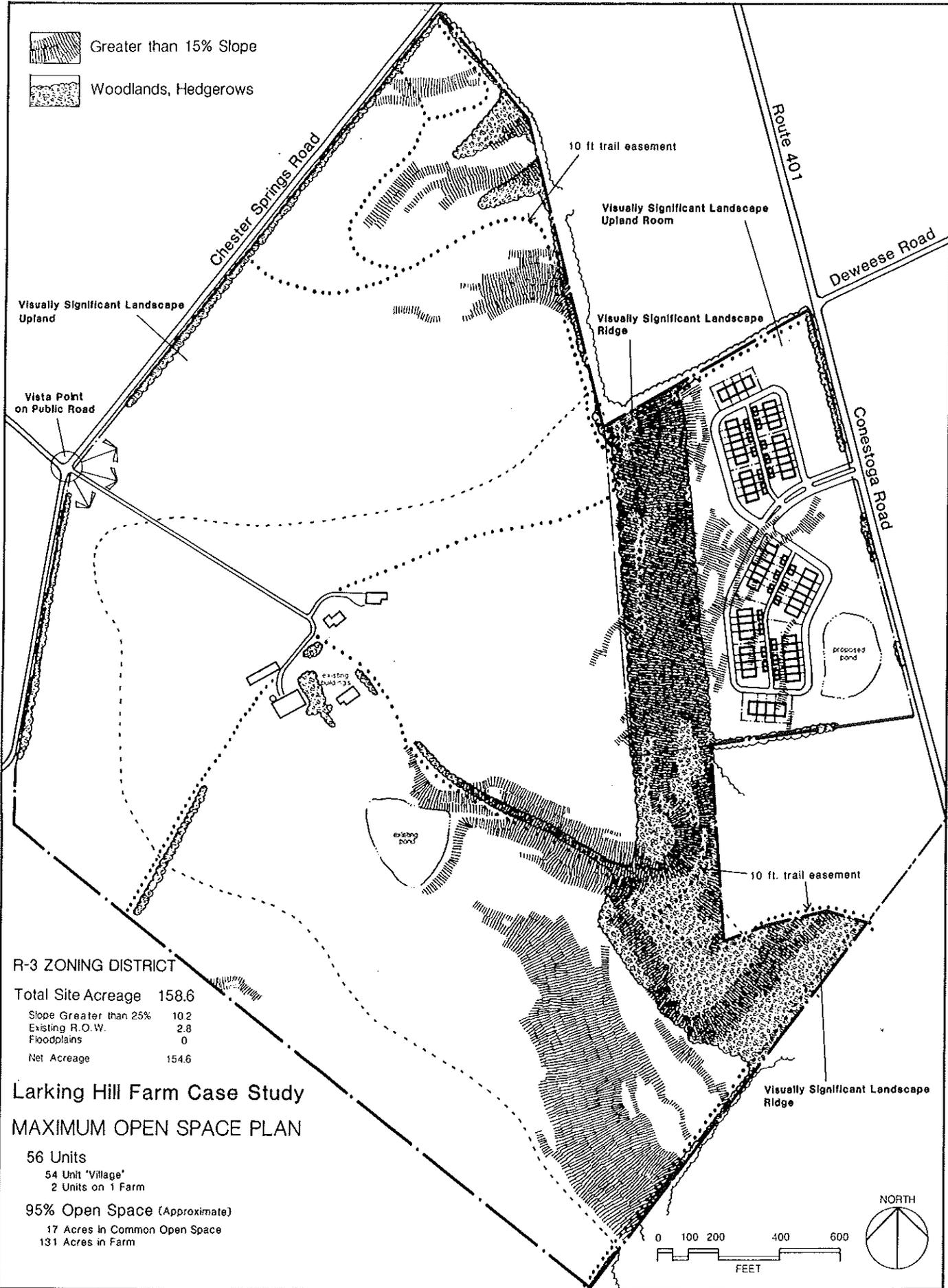
R-3 ZONING DISTRICT
 Total Site Acreage 158.6
 Slope Greater than 25% 10.2
 Existing R-1 W 2.3
 Flood Plain 1
 Net Acreage 154.6

Larking Hill Farm Case Study
**ALTERNATIVE CLUSTER/
 OPEN SPACE PLAN**

46 Units
 26 Large Lots
 16 Unit "Village"
 4 Units on 3 Farms

68% Open Space (Approximate)
 8 Acres Common Paddock
 6 Acres Common Green
 92 Acres in Farms





-  Greater than 15% Slope
-  Woodlands, Hedgerows

R-3 ZONING DISTRICT

Total Site Acreage	158.6
Slope Greater than 25%	10.2
Existing R.O.W.	2.8
Floodplains	0
Net Acreage	154.6

Larking Hill Farm Case Study
MAXIMUM OPEN SPACE PLAN

56 Units
 54 Unit 'Village'
 2 Units on 1 Farm

95% Open Space (Approximate)
 17 Acres in Common Open Space
 131 Acres in Farm

SCENIC ROADWAYS

An outstanding amount and caliber of scenic roadways exist in Chester County, and particularly West Vincent Township. Roadways may be scenic both in terms of the landscape they view and the character of the roadways themselves, curving and rolling, lined with trees, steep banks, or stone walls, for example. In West Vincent, scenic roadways are the rule rather than the exception. They accent as well as offer visual access to the pervasive sense of open space which characterizes the Township. While that form of access is distinctly passive, it is the form most frequently enjoyed by the general populace. Scenic roads provide a close to home outlet for pleasure-driving and sight-seeing, among the most popular outdoor recreation activities in Pennsylvania. Pleasure driving is one of the few outdoor activities enjoyed by many handicapped persons and many elderly. Where traffic safety conditions permit, scenic roadways may also be appropriate for shared usage as designated bicycle routes.

SCENIC ROADS INVENTORY

The most critical step toward conservation of scenic roadways is identification of those qualities and characteristics which make them so. As visual resources mapping indicates, visually significant landscapes line most stretches of road within West Vincent. As one travels the roads, visual "accents" are encountered much more frequently than visual "intrusions." Those few stretches of road which might be classified as "non-scenic" are those locations where visual intrusions mar the roadside landscape, along with those few stretches where development has occurred without respect to characteristic landscape elements.

The Environmental Advisory Council inventoried as scenic all road segments that are at least one-half mile in length and where at least two of the following scenic attributes are found:

- the road segment is unpaved;
- the road is bordered by mature trees forming a canopy over it;
- the road is lined with stone walls, at least 100-feet in length;
- the road passes alongside or over a stream or pond;
- the road affords open views at vista points or across visually significant landscapes (defined in previous text section);

- the road offers views of historic sites or settings.

All road segments meeting this test are shown on the "Scenic Roads" Map. Interestingly, they include nearly all roads in the Township.

The initial definition of scenic roads, as above, results in the inventory of some of the specific qualities which make a particular segment scenic: stone walls, historic settings, vista points, etc. Further analysis of the character of the road and its relationship to the landscape can assist conservation efforts. Roadway segments can be described as either 1) "open," where the characteristics of surrounding landscape views offer the most prominent scenic qualities; or 2) "enclosed," where the character of the roadway, itself, and the immediate roadside edge, often including vegetation and buildings, may be most scenic. Examples of open segments of scenic roadway include most of the length of St. Matthews Rd., Route 401, Pughtown Road, Birchrun Road between Route 100 and Shady Lane and others. Examples of enclosed segments of scenic roadway include Birchrun Road below Shady Lane, Sheeder Mill Road, Hollow Road, French Creek Road, and others.

CONSERVATION OF SCENIC ROADWAYS

Monitor Scenic Roadways. The Township should maintain and consider periodic updates of the inventory of scenic roads through the Environmental Advisory Council. EAC members should also travel surrounding roads and reevaluate scenic qualities as part of subdivision and land development review, adding appropriate notation to the inventory. Intrusive and/or negative features should also be noted. As the Scenic Roads Inventory is updated over time, the EAC also may wish to note "open" and "enclosed" segments, as described above. This distinction tells us how far afield to look for additional scenic attributes, particularly those features too subtle or too detailed to be addressed adequately by mapping of visual resources in general.

Manage Visual Intrusions. As indicated on the Visual Resources map, many intrusions are "manageable," primarily through removal of the intrusive feature itself, or through introduction of landscape screening. Landscaping, including fencing, might be designed to complement characteristic landscape elements, sometimes concealing or diffusing intrusive qualities.

Retain Scenic Qualities When Development is Introduced. Scenic roadways may disguise actual development patterns. Particularly along road segments "enclosed" by scenic landscape -- lined with hedgerows, enclosed by woods, or hemmed in by an historic building complex, much of the qualities of today's scenic roadways can be retained even as continued development occurs, so long as the roadside edge suffers minimal change. New development roads often represent the most obvious and seemingly unavoidable landscape change. Unobtrusive design of entrance areas, avoidance of excessive new paved area, and thoughtful landscape treatment can keep them in step with surrounding landscape character. As shown through the Larking Hill Farm case study, development also can be introduced so as to frame long vistas or to fit the existing landscape setting. Yet even low-density development, if strung right along the roadway in disregard of characteristic landscape features, can destroy scenic quality while many "back" acres remain open but hidden from view.

Conservation of scenic roadways demands careful review and input to the land development approval process. The Township may include specific provisions for identification and mitigation of the impacts of prospective development upon scenic roadways and their surrounding landscapes among site analysis and environmental impact regulation. The Township also can use zoning provisions to permit and encourage conservation of scenic qualities within development plans. Recommended amendment to appropriate sections of the Zoning and Subdivision & Land Development Ordinances is discussed further under "Conservation/ Preservation Issues & Strategies."

Consider Road Improvements Carefully. The Township should consider all possible means to maintain the scenic character of Township roads when road improvements are planned and executed. Similar cooperation on the part of the Commonwealth (PennDOT) should be requested. The Scenic Roads map compares scenic stretches with their functional classification as defined by the Township Comprehensive Plan. Most scenic roads are "local" roads or "minor collectors" carrying relatively light volumes of traffic, thus inferring little potential conflict between highway safety and scenic conservation objectives.

PA. Route 401 is a "major collector" and has been mapped as scenic from the West Pikeland Township line to Ludwigs Corner. The 1985 Comprehensive Plan Update foresaw only one area of improvement along Route 401, that being the intersection with Chester Springs Road. PA. Route 100 is a "principal arterial" highway. The segment between Nantmeal Road and the East Nantmeal Township line has been mapped as scenic in West

Vincent. This stretch has been the scene of numerous accidents. Significant improvements, possibly re-alignment, have been suggested. The 1985 Plan Update recommends that Pughtown Road be redesignated a "major collector" (currently classified as "minor collector") and realigned at Wilsons Corner. In such cases, safety must take precedence but need not obliterate scenic qualities.

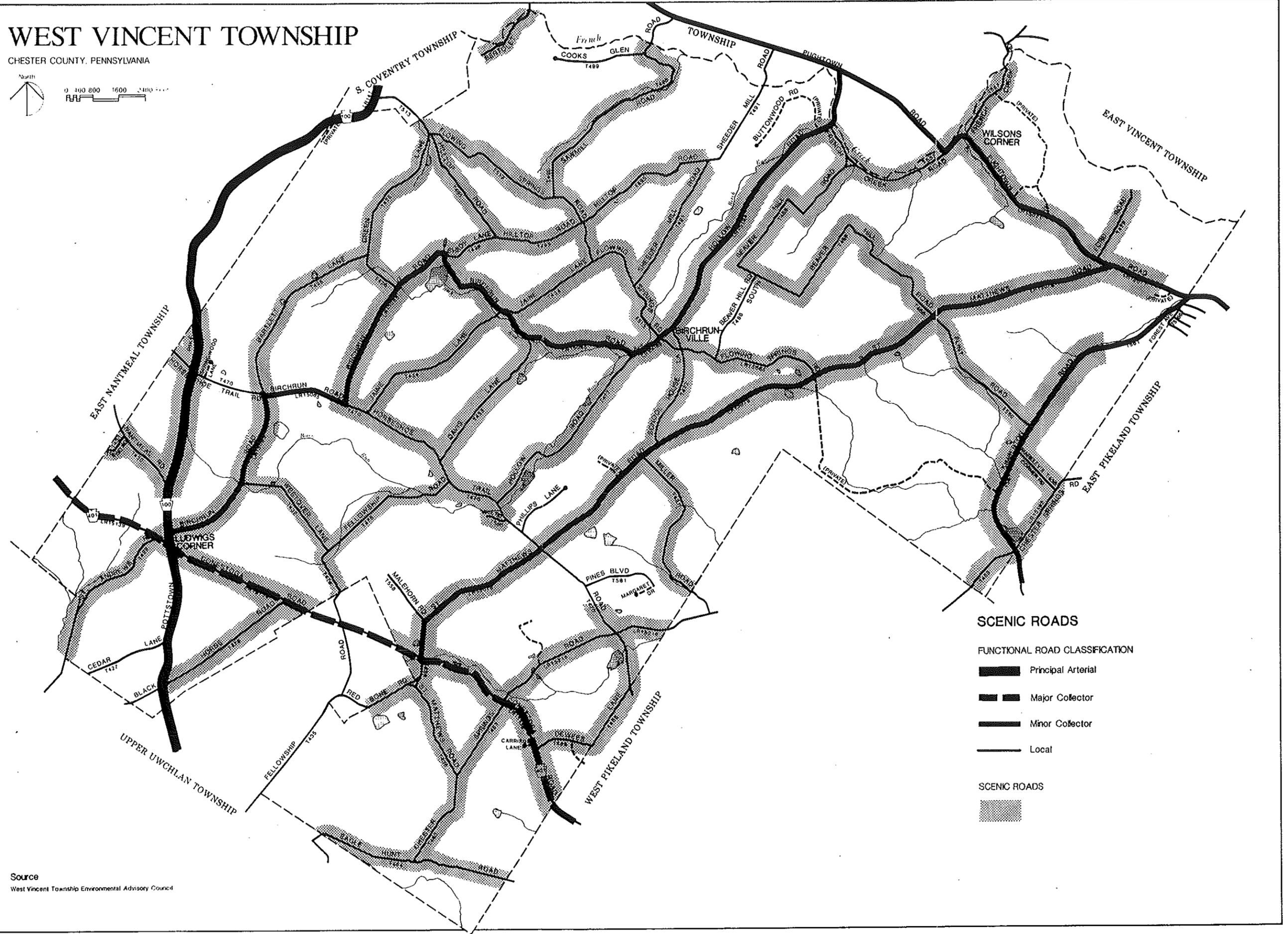
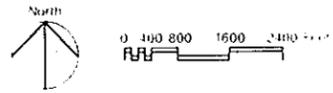
Where road improvements are necessary, conservation of scenic qualities along the immediate roadway may require limitation of the scope of improvements and/or planning for alternative means of access management. Very close scrutiny should be made of actual need for road widening, bank trimming, weed control, bridge replacement, use and type of guiderails, introduction of multiple driveway access points, etc.

Encourage Private Conservation Efforts. Property owners should be encouraged to conserve and enhance scenic qualities. For example, the establishment of scenic easements might afford permanent preservation. Use of conservation easements and other tools for private land stewardship efforts are discussed in the "Conservation/Preservation Issues and Strategies" section of this report.

Approaches toward conservation of scenic roadways are discussed at length in the "Scenic Roads Handbook," published by the Chester County Planning Commission in 1984 (Local Government Handbook Number 3) and "Guidelines to Improve the Aesthetic Quality of Roads in Pennsylvania," published by the Pa. Dept. of Transportation and DER in 1978.

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



SCENIC ROADS

FUNCTIONAL ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Principal Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local

SCENIC ROADS

- SCENIC ROADS

Source
West Vincent Township Environmental Advisory Council

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The historical development of West Vincent Township -- with its diverse themes of agriculture, industry, and residential community -- has been well catalogued in the booklet, A History of West Vincent Township, edited by Township resident and Open Space Task Force member Betty Eldridge and published in 1977. Historic resources are defined as sites, structures, buildings, objects, and districts possessing a quality of significance and measure of integrity which makes them worthy of protection and preservation. Historic resources, particularly in rural areas like West Vincent are inextricably tied to an historical landscape context. Dramatic change in landscape settings (i.e., through development) can rob a site of critical historical integrity. On the other hand, historic resources frequently comprise important "visual accents" within public viewsheds, as noted above. Their demise can similarly degrade scenic or visual landscape quality. Their preservation and protection can fit hand-in-hand with efforts to conserve scenic quality. Critical to any such efforts is an adequate, and preferably evaluative, inventory of historic resources.

HISTORICAL SURVEY

The Township Comprehensive Plan Update of 1985 noted and mapped 13 sites on the "Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places," and six on the National Register. That Pennsylvania Inventory bears no official status at this point in time; the National Register is discussed further below. Township Open Space Task Force members have undertaken the compilation of an inventory drawing from the Chester County Historic Sites Survey, conducted 1979-82 in this region under the auspices of the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. The County Survey inventoried 231 sites scattered throughout West Vincent Township, inferring potential historical value. These are mapped on the "Historic Resources Map" and listed in Appendix VI. Sixty were noted as worthy of potential National Register nomination, including 26 within a historic district at Birchrunville. Across the Township as a whole, further research is necessary to render more concise evaluation of historical significance.

Further Research of Historic Resources Should Be Undertaken

The Township should consider undertaking research leading to the compilation of an official "Township Historic Survey," and setting the tone for regulation to encourage

resource protection. The Historic Survey should take the form of a written (architectural and historical description) photographic, and mapped recordation of sites and structures within West Vincent. While the survey can be made by either trained volunteers or professionals, it should include an assessment of the degree of historic and material integrity of inventoried sites and structures based on professionally accepted standards. The standards most commonly used and accepted within the historic preservation and planning professions are the "Criteria for Evaluation" established for the National Register program.

Briefly, the National Register criteria seek to pinpoint historical significance in terms of integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, for sites, districts, buildings, structures, or objects as follows:

- that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- that have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

HISTORIC RESOURCES PROTECTION METHODS

The National Register of Historic Places

Structures, sites, and districts of historic significance and integrity identified in the inventory may be eligible for **listing in the National Register of Historic Places**. In the Commonwealth, this process involves submission of a Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey form to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in which the property is described architecturally and historically, and photographic evidence supplied of its structural condition. PHMC staff makes the first-cut determination of eligibility, and

gives permission to the applicant to proceed with the preparation of a National Register Nomination.

Listing on the National Register does not provide specific protection per se; it does, however, mandate an **additional level of review** known as a Section 106 Review (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) should a Federal action, or Federally funded action impact the property either physically or visually. Examples of such actions that would trigger a Section 106 review include a project funded with money from one of the Federal grant programs, such as the old Urban Development Action Grant, a project that would involve a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, or a project which would involve Federal Highway money (in which case a review called a Section 4F review, the transportation equivalent of Section 106). Such review processes must be followed or the use of Federal money for a project is jeopardized.

In addition to the added level of review, listing on the National Register enables the owner of a such a property to rehabilitate the property for income-producing purposes and take a **20% Investment Tax Credit** on his Federal Income Taxes. Additional regulations - The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation - apply to this process and must be stringently adhered to in order to qualify for the credit. A similar but lesser credit (10%) is also available for owners who rehabilitate older structures (those which are not National Register buildings but which might be identified in the Township inventory). Both of these credits were modified by the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

For both National Register nominations and Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit Applications it is best to have professional help in preparation.

Act 167: Pennsylvania Formally Provides for Protection of Historic Resources

While the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania no longer maintains a separate state historic register, the State has offered a mechanism for historic resource protection at the local level. **Act 167 of 1961** enables the creation of a **Board of Historic Architectural Review** (generally referred to as the HARB) which can regulate actions like demolitions, additions to structures, etc. taken within an historic district which has been certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) as to its historical significance. While National Register status lends an easy route to PHMC certification, it is not required under Act 167. The Township may wish to consider such a regulatory approach for

Birchrunville, where residents already completed the process of listing a National Register district.

The Municipalities Planning Code Infers Additional Protection Methods

Also possible at the local level is the creation by local ordinance of an **Historical Commission**. Such a commission would deal with the overall inventory of historic/cultural resources in the township, identified above. The powers and duties of such a commission would be derived from the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), and should be designed to work in conjunction with the HARB powers derived from Act 167, as appropriate. Members of the Historical Commission would be appointed by and be advisory to the Board of Supervisors.

Under the auspices of a Township Historical Commission, all inventoried resources could be marked and classified as either National Register listed or **deemed eligible** (usually termed as Class I resources), or as "locally important resources," or resources which may not have had sufficient research to be considered for Class I (usually termed as Class II resources). Local regulation could be tailored under the MPC, logically fitted into the Zoning Ordinance and/or S/LDO, to promote preservation of historic resources and their settings. This might involve fine-tuning of a number of ordinance sections, including for example:

- cluster and PRD provisions,
- building/zoning/demolition permit requirements/processes,
- allowable waivers to standard dimensional and other design provisions and/or density calculation,
- landscape requirements,
- special exception and conditional use criteria.

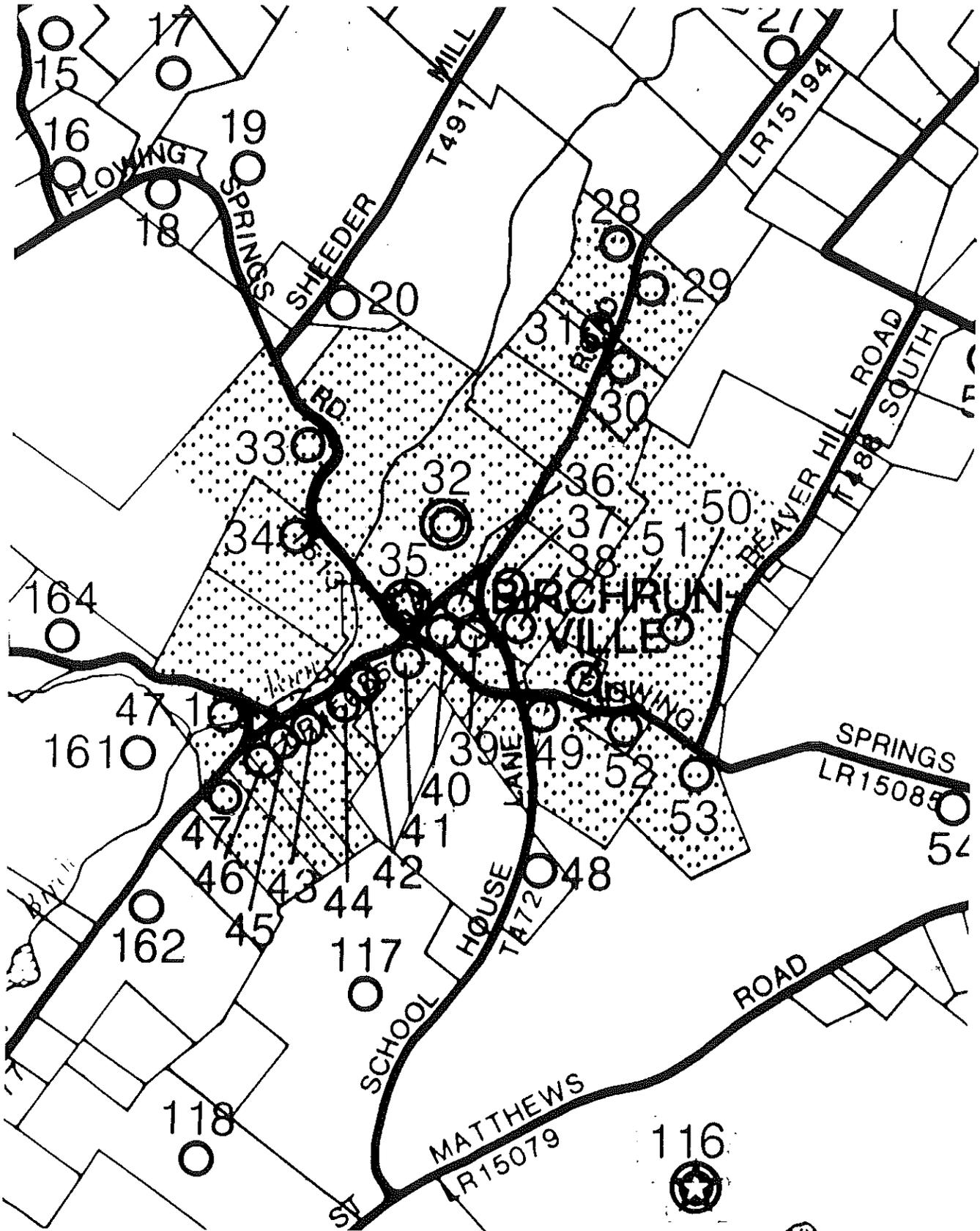
The Chester County Historic Preservation Office offers a certificate program which honorarily recognizes the historical merit of a structure, but makes no special allowances

or tax provisions for such structure. This Chester County certificate may serve to promote local recognition of historic resources.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Little detailed or site-specific information is available regarding archaeological resources. PHMC has provided mapping of areas where archaeological resources are likely to be found, based upon likely prehistoric settlement and transport patterns. Pre-European settlement in this area was for the most part nomadic, with seasonal encampments located at sources of water and food, and along transport paths. PHMC mapping has been added to the Historic Resources map, showing areas of "high" and "medium" probability for location of prehistoric resources. High probability areas coincide with most stream corridors and certain nearby upland areas. Medium probability areas are found along a few headwaters streams not mapped as "high probability," and otherwise comprise most nearly flat upland areas. The Township may wish to include archaeological resources among those required for site analysis consideration wherever subdivision or land development is proposed. Current Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) regulations require any application for revision of applicable Act 537 (sewage facilities) planning to acknowledge the location of any prehistoric resources, to the point of requiring archaeological digs if locations are suspected. These requirements would affect any applicant for development of a community sewage disposal system serving more than two lots.

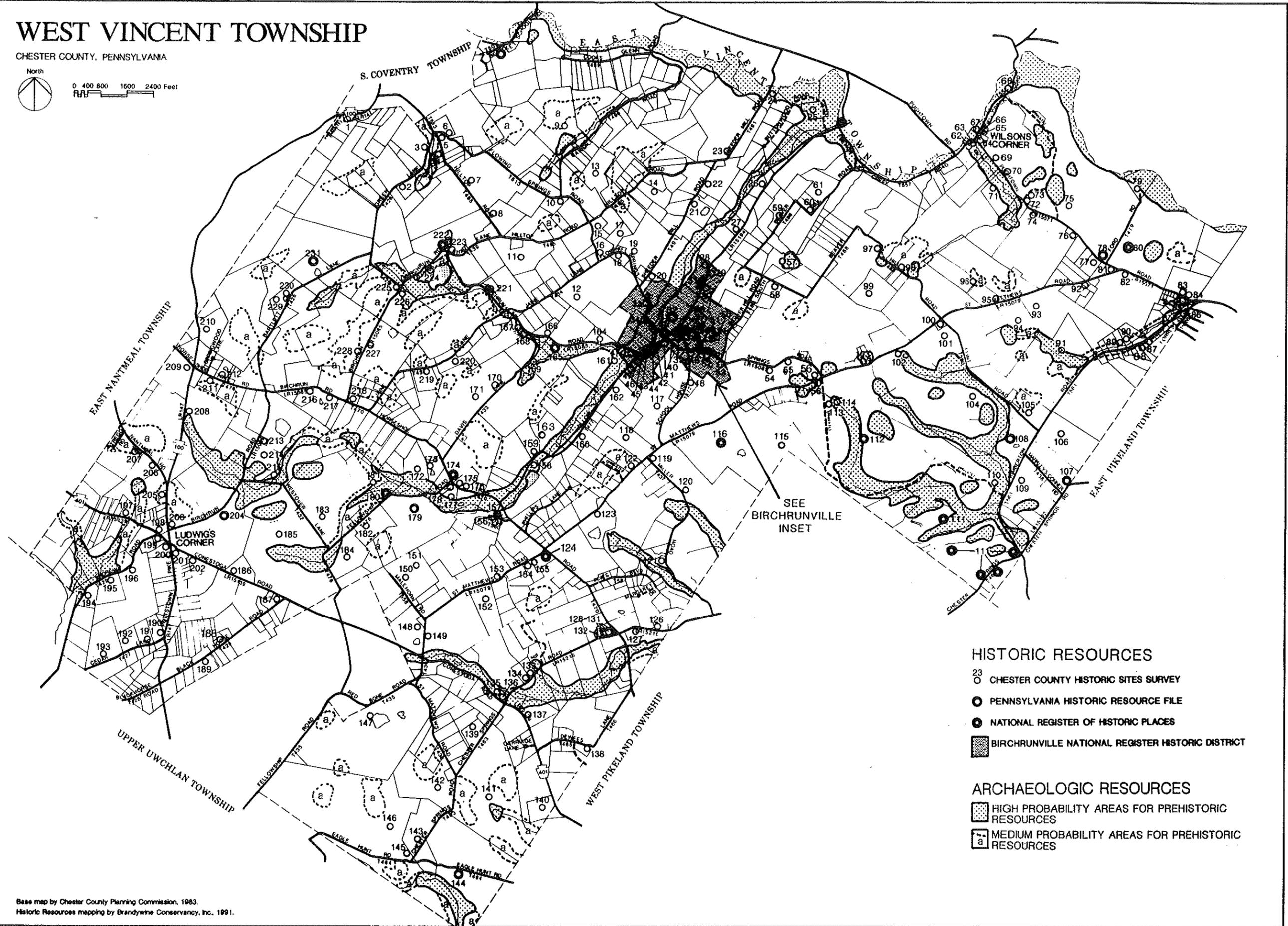
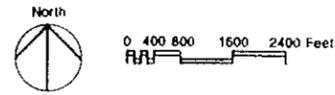
BIRCHRUNVILLE INSET MAP



Scale 1 Inch: 800 Feet

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



- HISTORIC RESOURCES**
- CHESTER COUNTY HISTORIC SITES SURVEY
 - PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE FILE
 - NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 - BIRCHRUNVILLE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
- ARCHAEOLOGIC RESOURCES**
- HIGH PROBABILITY AREAS FOR PREHISTORIC RESOURCES
 - MEDIUM PROBABILITY AREAS FOR PREHISTORIC RESOURCES

Base map by Chester County Planning Commission, 1983.
 Historic Resources mapping by Brandywine Conservancy, Inc. 1991.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Agriculture is the historically predominant land use in West Vincent Township. Agricultural activity has and continues to mold the scenic landscape we treasure today, its importance clearly transcending its visual quality. The evolution of modern farming practices has resulted in the return of steeper and wetter lands to nature. Even so, agricultural uses still occupy some 4,000 acres in West Vincent. A substantial number of large agricultural tracts are dispersed throughout the Township, primarily of what might be termed a "passive" type, including crop cultivation, equestrian and dairy pasturage, and other livestock grazing.

Preservation of Agriculture Raises Complex Natural and Economic Resource Issues

Agriculture must always be considered from complex and sometimes conflicting perspectives. It represents a soil resource, a gross land resource, and an economic activity. According to the USDA Soil Survey of Chester and Delaware Counties, Class I, II, and III agricultural soils are predominant in West Vincent Township, as indicated on Map 4 from the Comprehensive Plan, "Conservation Features." In addition to considerable agricultural activity within the Township, there remain significant agri-businesses in the broader region, that are both necessary and proximate to local farmers. The roadway network cherished for its scenic rural qualities was in fact designed to serve the needs of a rural agricultural community. It also provides good access to major East Coast markets. The presence of such an agricultural resource in both large quantity and prime quality underlines the importance of opportunities for farmland conservation policies.

The treasured agricultural landscape continues to lure "gentlemen" farmers and "exurban" development to West Vincent Township. The same large tracts that contain prime agricultural soils, are generally conducive to building activity as well as farming. In West Vincent and surrounding areas, market pressures will likely continue to induce the transformation of farmland to suburban or exurban (i.e., large lot) development. Market pressures already have raised the price of farmland such that the current generation of farmers essentially can no longer afford to buy land for farming alone. Only a few West Vincent farmers own all of the land upon which their farming operations depend. Farmers whose own family holdings are small in the face of modern agricultural practices and/or have been divided among siblings, must rely on opportunities to farm the lands of other

family members or to rent farmland from "gentlemen" farmers, speculative landholders, or development-in-waiting. In this way, most local farmers depend upon rented land to support much of their operations. A few farmers own no farmland at all. The majority of farmland in West Vincent Township is subject to lease arrangements, often negotiated on an annual basis only, hampering long term commitments to farming.

Typically, tax policy also has not particularly supported the conservation of agricultural lands; land value for tax purposes tends to be measured more in terms of market forces or use potential, rather than actual use. Farmers very often must pay taxes in seeming disproportion to the income-producing value of their land. At the local level it is difficult to alter this fact; the biggest tax "bite" at even the local level, real estate taxes for support of public schools, is beyond the purview of local government. Estate taxes often play an even greater catalytic role in the conversion of farmland, despite individual and family commitment to conservation.

In the long term, recognition of the value of agriculture may be reflected by market forces as well as by federal, state, and local tax policy; in the near term, making sure that farmland remains both open and within the economic reach of farmers is key to conservation of agriculture. Two primary objectives might be to:

- make purchase of farmland affordable to farmers;
- make leased farmland available on a longer term and consistent basis.

Either of these objectives might be realized where the farm value of the land can be separated from its "development" or remaining market value. Both the Commonwealth and Chester County have established programs providing for purchase of development rights on farmland so that the remainder value reflects farm value alone. Speculative development value is removed through establishment of conservation easement. State and County programs are discussed further below.

Private estate planning efforts may also use the conservation easement in a similar manner, whether to intentionally reduce estate tax valuation, as a tradeoff for concentrated development value elsewhere on the property, or to fulfill a personal commitment to conservation. Private land stewardship efforts to deal with conservation in the face of

dynamic tax scenarios and market pressures are discussed further in this report, in the section entitled "Conservation/ Preservation Issues and Strategies."

Where private conservation efforts do not make farmland available for sale, they can still be utilized to "lock-in" farm use as a long-term means of open space management. This could be true for lands held by "gentlemen" farmers as well as for open space resulting from creative and/or limited development plans. Wherever open space is designated, parcel size, configuration, access, and proximity to other farmable parcels should be considered, to promote conservation of viable farmland wherever possible. Open space management planning can further include lease terms or other management mechanisms favorable to farming and to farmers. Even where "gentlemen" farming, large-lot residential use, or established open space does not provide for current farm use, appropriate configuration of open lands still offer potential long-term conservation of the land resource.

Existing Real Estate Tax Abatement Programs

Several conservation programs are available for consideration by the Township and its farmers; in fact, some conservation activity has already occurred. Pennsylvania Act 515, while not specifically considered an agricultural preservation technique, per se, has offered landowners a reduced assessed land value (for purposes of real estate tax computation) in exchange for establishing a covenant which restricts the development of lands designated as farm, forest, water supply, or open space to that use for a period of ten years. Farm parcels must be at least twenty acres in size to meet the requirements of this program. Forest land must comprise at least 25 acres and water supply or open space lands at least ten acres. As of December of 1989, 6,573 acres of land in West Vincent were registered under the Act 515 program. An additional 48.7 acres were registered under the similar Act 319 program. The Township should formally join efforts to promote "use-based assessment" of agricultural lands, especially where potential development value has been limited or removed through plan restriction or private land stewardship effort, discussed further below. Lands registered under either Act 319 or 515 as of 1983 are shown on the "Restricted Lands" map, taken from the 1985 Plan Update.

Enrollment in either Act 515 or 319 programs indicates at least temporary commitment to conservation on the part of landowners. It also grants them a more affordable tax burden. In contrast, breach of covenant prior to term results in penalty assessment of back taxes that would have been paid if assessment had not been reduced

through participation in either program. This penalty sometimes can be a considerable deterrent to breaching of covenant.

Agricultural Security Areas

Further opportunity for conservation is available through the Agricultural Security Areas program, or Act 43. Under this program, land owners in a municipality may assemble agricultural parcels totalling 500 acres or more to establish an Agricultural Security Area. This program affords farmers some protection from condemnation procedures and from "nuisance ordinances" which unreasonably restrict or constrain traditional farm structures or farm practices. This conservation technique may help to create additional security for the farming industry, relieve potential conflicts between farmers and development, and may help to slow the rate of farm loss. An Agricultural Security Area has a statutory life of seven years. Because the agreement is prepared by the participating property owners, there is an opportunity for a farmer to develop a portion of his land, or change the use thereon, if he desires. In March of 1990, an Agricultural Security Area was adopted by West Vincent Township, involving 1,222 acres. An additional 131 acres were added through amendment in June, 1990, along with 66 acres in June, 1991. The extent of the Township Agricultural Security Area is delineated on the "Existing Open Space Lands and Facilities" map. Elsewhere in Chester County, a number of municipalities also have established Agricultural Security Areas, covering many thousands of acres.

Purchase of Development Rights

As noted above, the Commonwealth has recently established limited funding for acquisition of conservation easements on farmland, administered here through Chester County. The County has allocated additional funds from a bond issue to augment those earmarked by the state. Both state and county funds are only able to be applied to lands within adopted Act 43 Agricultural Security Areas. Chester County has applied additional policies to the earmarking of funds, requiring that eligible farmland also be located in areas designated as "agriculture" or "rural development" on the Future Land Use map of the County Land Use Plan. Except for a small area at Ludwigs Corner, all of West Vincent Township falls under these two designations.

The easement purchase program essentially results in the sale of potential development rights by the landowner; conservation easements restrict future development

while specifically permitting farm uses. The conservation easement is a flexible tool for protection of open space resources. Further discussion is found in the section entitled "Conservation/ Preservation Issues and Strategies". Under the state/county program, conservation easements may be purchased from farmland owners at an appraised monetary value. The value of the conservation easement is appraised by calculating the difference between the market value (which would reflect development potential) and the agricultural use value (what a farmer could be expected to pay to purchase the land as farmland only). The easement purchase program is voluntary and can only be initiated by landowner application to the County. Conservation easements may be sold with a life of twenty-five years or in perpetuity. However, the appraised value and, hence, purchase price of a 25-year easement is only a fraction of those in perpetuity.

Several West Vincent farm owners have applied for sale of development rights to date. As of early 1992, three applications are active. Inclusion in the State/County programs has become quite competitive as increasing numbers of farm owners apply for allotment from a limited annual funding pot. Existing selection criteria have worked to the disadvantage of West Vincent landowners, despite the predominance of prime agricultural soils and location within areas designated for agriculture or rural development by the County Land Use Plan. The current selection process gives 25% weight to soils criteria and 75% to locational criteria, some of which work to the distinct disadvantage of West Vincent. The locational criteria favor farms located far from development pressure and near to lands with existing commitments to conservation, i.e., lands under conservation easements. Most West Vincent locations lose points on both of those two counts. We understand that the Chester County Agricultural Preservation Board has recommended changes to State program criteria to equalize the weighting of soil and locational criteria (50% each) and to shift favor to properties facing development pressures.

Clever use of these funds can result in significant conservation of farmland. One might imagine a scenario where a farmer who sells development rights through the county/state program could turn around and use the income to purchase additional farmland. That farmland could then be protected through donation of a second conservation easement to a qualified conservation organization; the charitable donation could offset the tax bite on the initial sale. The overall result could be financially beneficial to the farmer while extending the conservation benefit of the county/state funding program.

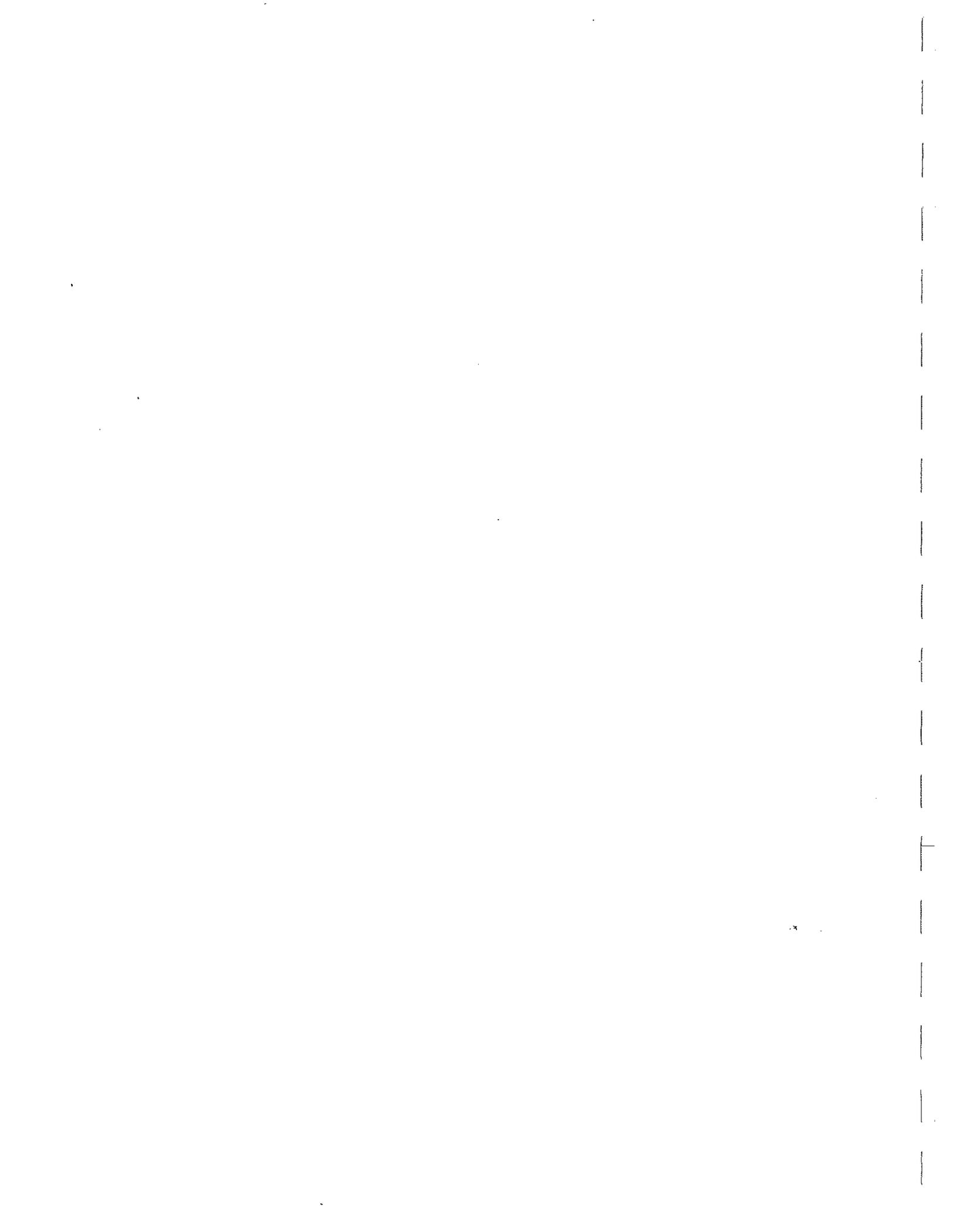
A Role for West Vincent Township

The Township should seek to foster increased public awareness of 1) the importance of agricultural resources, 2) available means to promote conservation of agricultural lands, and 3) means to help make such lands available to farmers. Farmers and landowners might be periodically reminded of opportunities for conservation and their varied financial implications. The Larking Hill Farm example has illustrated that a certain degree of open space conservation is feasible even after major monetary investment by development interests. Owners who engage in conservation planning -- prior to such investment commitment -- clearly may be able to achieve their individual and/or estate financial objectives with even greater levels of conservation. It is recommended that the Township, whether formally or informally, establish what might be termed a "landowner cooperative program" to promote private conservation efforts which address long term availability of farmland, along with other community resources protection objectives. This recommendation is discussed further under "Conservation/Preservation Issues and Strategies." The Township should also monitor State/County eligibility criteria for sale of development rights and seek to promote eligibility of West Vincent farm owners under both programs.

The Township may wish to consider careful evaluation of permitted gross and net densities of development and criteria for open space designation, relative to their potential impact on agricultural conservation efforts. Clearly, even five-acre minimum lots do not inherently promote retention of agriculture. Recent subdivision proposals have served to illustrate that alternative cluster approaches to site planning, with greater conservation benefit, may require appropriate modification of applicable zoning and subdivision provisions. The Township should encourage such approaches while carefully monitoring resultant designation of open space. Open space designation as part of the subdivision approval process should be contingent upon establishment of acceptable open space management plan(s), with consideration for conservation of agriculture, other resource protection objectives, relationship to other open space parcels, lease terms if applicable, and general ease of management.

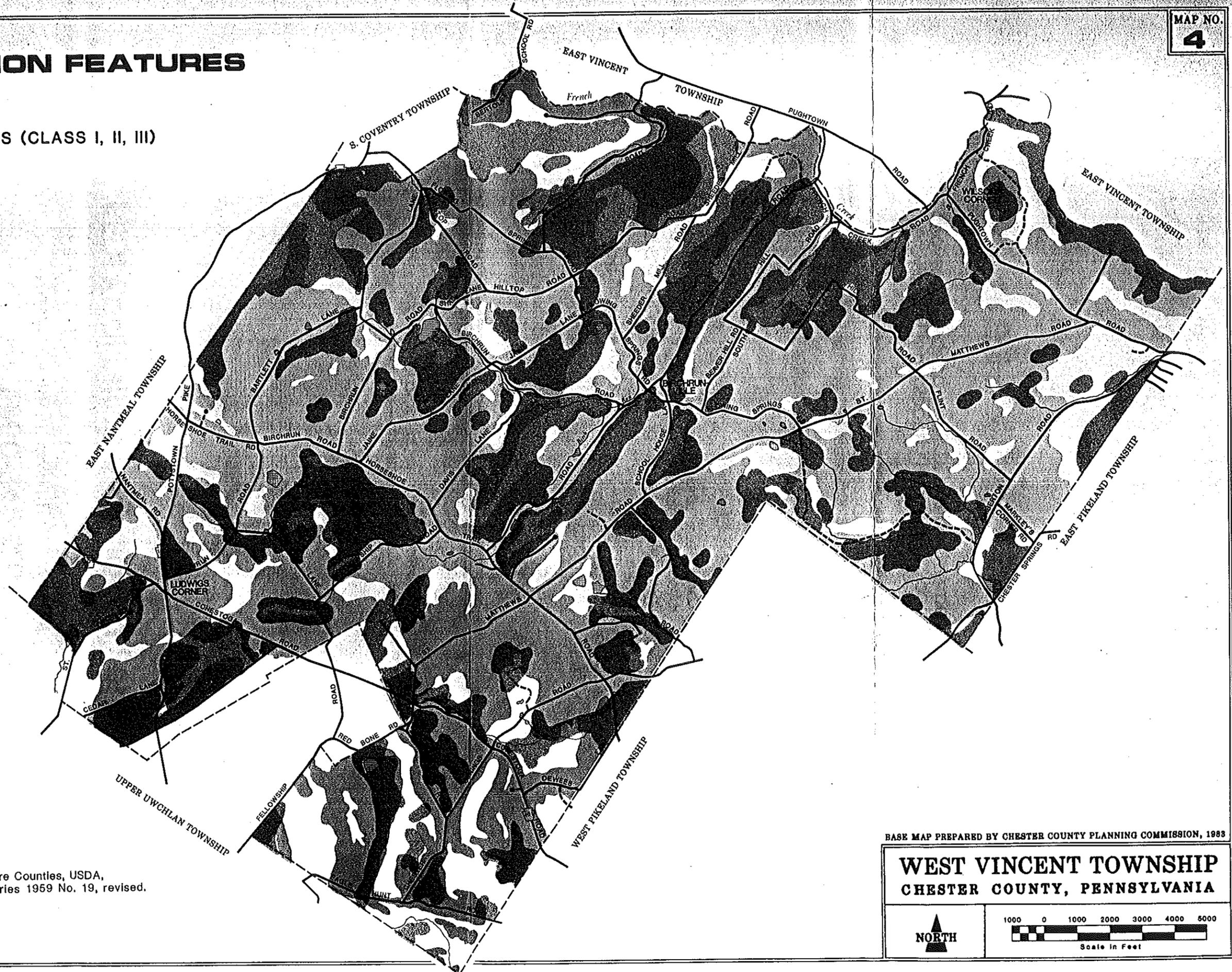
The Township should also consider possibilities to permit formal transfer of development rights (TDR) where farm owners could sell development "rights" for development at higher intensity in other parts of the Township. In another approach, municipalities elsewhere have enacted restrictive agricultural zoning districts, strictly limiting

development potential. All such zoning provisions must adhere to standards of "reasonableness," must clearly relate to "extraordinary" community resource protection objectives (coinciding with the geographical extent of prime agricultural soils, for example), and must otherwise not be determined a "taking," in order to be upheld legally. Further planning and legal review are necessary in order to recommend such an approach in West Vincent. Ordinance approaches are discussed more fully under "Conservation/Preservation Issues and Strategies."



CONSERVATION FEATURES

-  AGRICULTURAL SOILS (CLASS I, II, III)
-  WOODLANDS



Sources : Soil Survey, Chester and Delaware Counties, USDA,
Soil Conservation Service, Series 1959 No. 19, revised.

Aerial Photographs, 1980.

BASE MAP PREPARED BY CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 1983

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



RESTRICTED LANDS

-  ACT 515 PROPERTIES
-  ACT 319 PROPERTIES
-  OPEN SPACE
-  COUNTY
-  TOWNSHIP
-  GREEN VALLEYS ASSOCIATION
-  LARGE LAND ACREAGE (100+ ACRES)
-  PIPELINES
-  REGISTERED HISTORIC SITES
-  NATIONAL SITE
-  SITE
-  PROPERTY/PARCEL
-  STATE

Numbers on map correspond to Table 10 in text



Sources: Chester County Tax Assessment Office, 1983.
 USGS Quadrangle Maps.
 Chester County Historic Preservation Officer, 1983.

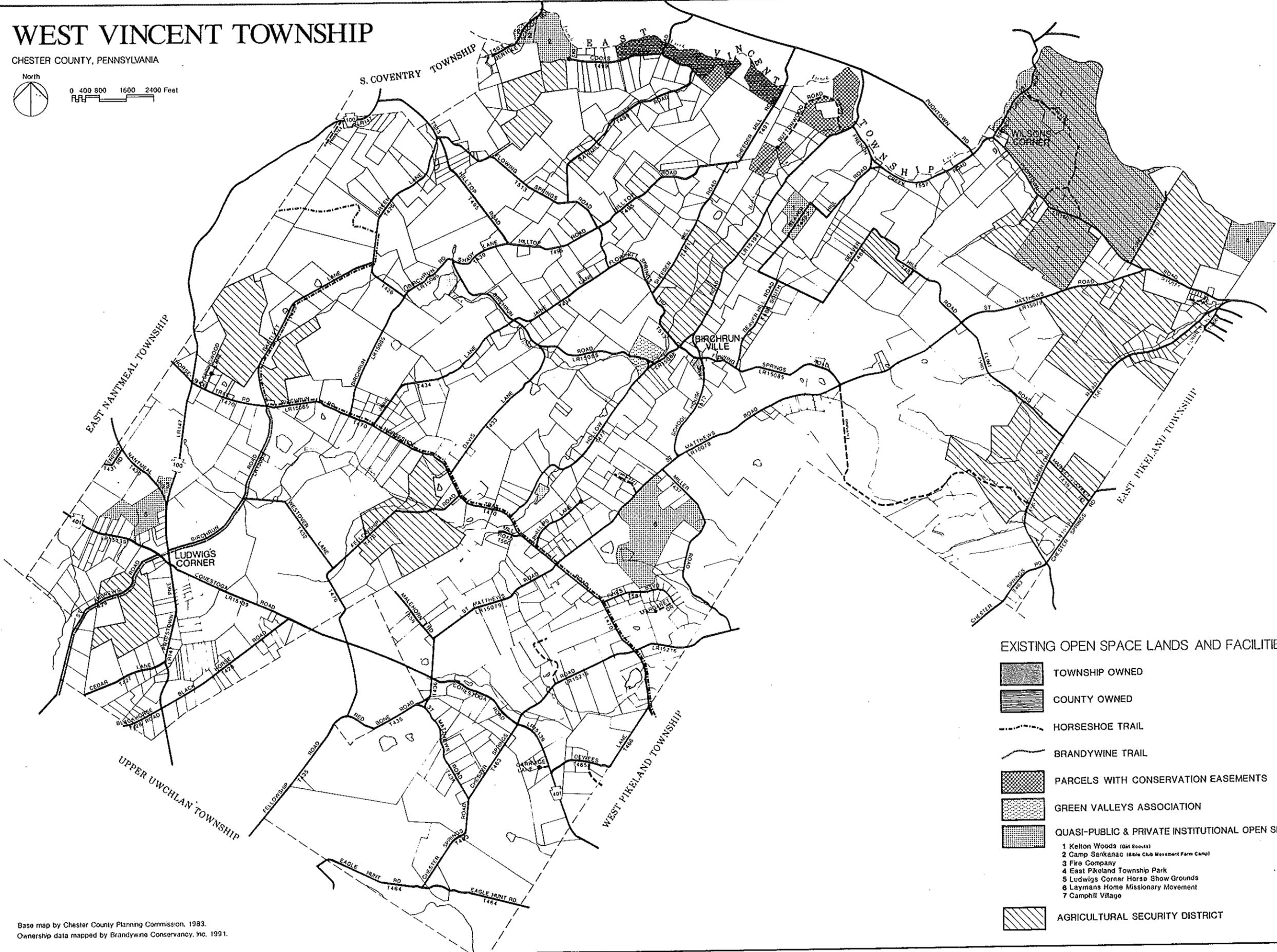
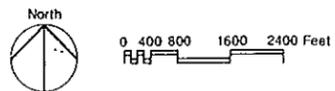
BASE MAP PREPARED BY CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 1983

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



EXISTING OPEN SPACE LANDS AND FACILITIES

-  TOWNSHIP OWNED
-  COUNTY OWNED
-  HORSESHOE TRAIL
-  BRANDYWINE TRAIL
-  PARCELS WITH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS
-  GREEN VALLEYS ASSOCIATION
-  QUASI-PUBLIC & PRIVATE INSTITUTIONAL OPEN SPACE
 - 1 Kelson Woods (Girl Scouts)
 - 2 Camp Senkanac (Bible Club Movement Farm Camp)
 - 3 Fire Company
 - 4 East Pikeland Township Park
 - 5 Ludwigs Corner Horse Show Grounds
 - 6 Laymans Home Missionary Movement
 - 7 Camp 8 Village
-  AGRICULTURAL SECURITY DISTRICT

Base map by Chester County Planning Commission, 1993.
 Ownership data mapped by Brandywine Conservancy, Inc. 1991.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

WEST VINCENT AS A GREEN-LINE PARK

While recreation is activity oriented, it is usually land based. The broad open space which characterizes West Vincent Township offers diverse recreational opportunities to area residents. One could arguably consider the majority of the Township as constituting an unofficial "green-line" park. That term is used to denote a specific geographical area, comprised primarily of private lands, yet officially recognized and, ideally, managed to conserve public open space resource values. The term "green-line" derived from the use of a green line drawn on a map to define the bounds of the "park." The British national parks are largely green-line parks, where public recreational and scenic values are maintained through regulatory processes while lands remain in private ownership and use. In this country, New York's Adirondack Park is the largest and most notable green-line park. Considerable national forest lands are actually in private ownership and could also be termed this way. The National Park Service has increasingly used the green-line approach, using scenic and conservation easements to protect public values on private lands, instead of acquiring fee title.

Public ownership of parkland does not become necessary until public recreational use reaches an intensity no longer compatible with private use of the land. In urban and suburban communities, gross population densities and limited "backyard" recreational opportunities conspire to overwhelm "left-over" open spaces. Public parkland becomes the most viable management alternative. In West Vincent Township, pro-active conservation and management of open space resources can preserve passive recreational opportunities and a sense of parkland without necessitating major efforts toward public parkland acquisition. Means to accomplish this approach through private land stewardship efforts and through careful review and "guidance" of development are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Notwithstanding the above, public recreation is usually analyzed in terms of specific park and recreation facilities. Even predominantly rural and "exurban" communities like West Vincent should address the need for specific public recreational facilities. Following discussion of "greenways," this report looks briefly at large-scale recreational areas which

offer important recreational service to Township residents, as well as community facilities within the scope of municipal provision.

GREENWAYS

The concept of greenways steps back from the broad concept of a "green-line park" to focus on specific corridors of open space. The greenway concept is usually applied to natural corridors like stream valleys, where natural constraints to development (steep sloping valley walls, floodplains, wetlands, etc.) form a backbone for open space conservation efforts. Regional planning efforts (Chester County Land Use Plan and Open Space & Recreation Study, the French Creek Scenic Rivers Report, and the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust Upper Reaches Study) have focussed local attention on efforts to conserve open space resources along the stream corridors of West Vincent Township, including Birch Run. As noted, these corridors offer major potential for scenic landscape protection, preservation of wildlife habitat corridors, and linear recreational use, particularly trails.

French Creek Greenway

The concept of a formal "greenway" along French Creek achieved a degree of official recognition with legislative designation of the French Creek and its tributaries as a Pennsylvania Scenic River in 1982. This status recognizes the scenic, historical, and cultural values of the watershed and its free-flowing, relatively high quality waters. Designation supports local municipal efforts to address identified management issues, aimed at preservation of scenic and environmental quality. It mandates state cooperation but does not establish any additional state powers. The effectiveness of scenic rivers designation depends on action at the local level, both in terms of use of municipal regulatory powers and in the day-to-day land-use decisions made by local landowners. Designation offers local citizens and officials increased awareness of the ecological, historical and aesthetic values of the French Creek valley.

In 1984, the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, of which West Vincent Township is a member, published suggested management guidelines for the scenic river corridor. The guidelines include suggested techniques for detailed delineation of the scenic river corridor (e.g., primary vs. secondary corridors, viewshed analysis), land use and zoning provisions, private conservation efforts available, and various design standards (e.g.,

ridge line setbacks, maximum clearing, signs, timber harvest, vegetative screening, access, grading and earthmoving, and sludge disposal). The Township incorporated many of these guidelines in the 1987 zoning ordinance update. Further recommendations for regulatory amendment are included in this report.

The French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust has and continues to conduct extensive inventory of open space resources along the French Creek Valley and its tributaries. The Trust's "Upper Reaches Report" was summarized and its mapping included with the discussion of regional planning context above. In terms of a public Greenway, the Trust assisted purchase by Chester County of 64 acres along French Creek in West Vincent in 1980. West Vincent Township has determined to further acquisition of lands along the Greenway, and has applied for grant monies to purchase additional parcels now available. The "Existing Open Space Lands and Facilities" map shows the locations of public acquisitions to date along the French Creek Greenway. The Township also should promote both alternative planning approaches (discussed at length in the context of the Larking Hill Farm case study) and private land stewardship approaches to conservation of these greenways. Land stewardship means are discussed more fully in the section of this report entitled "Conservation/Preservation Issues & Strategies."

Trails

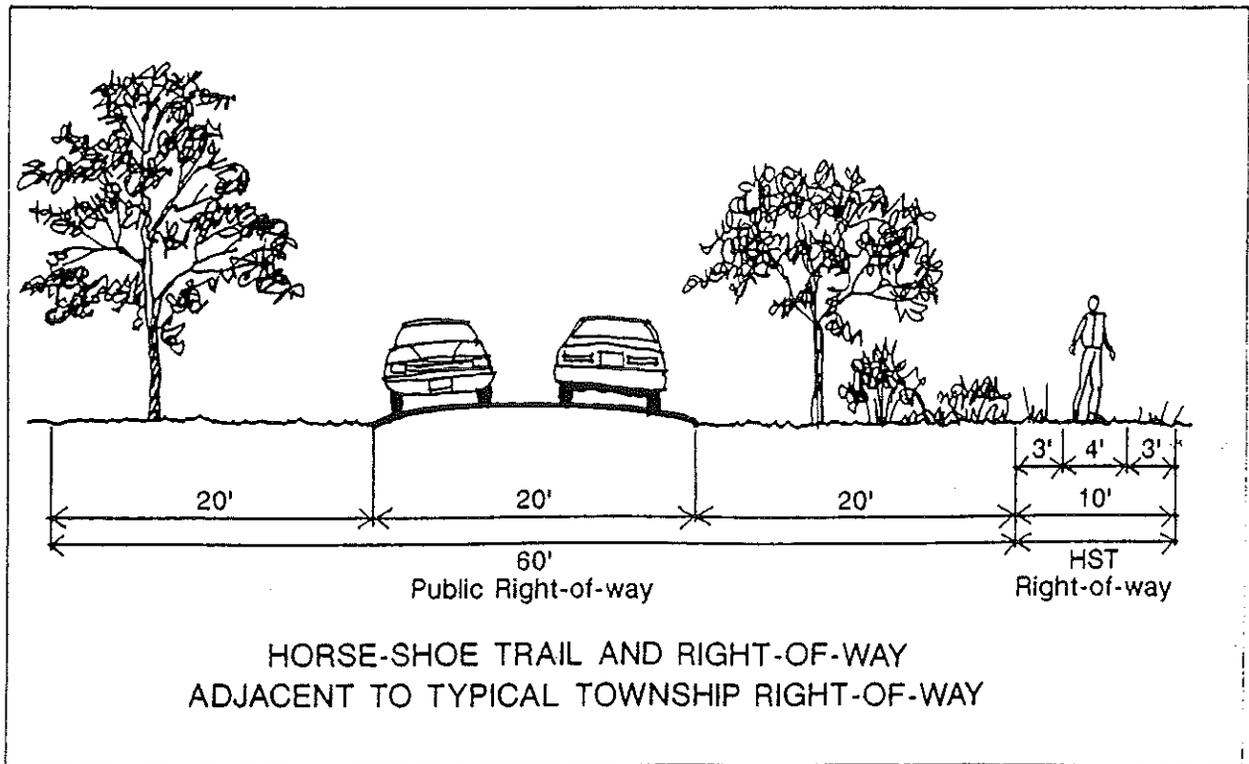
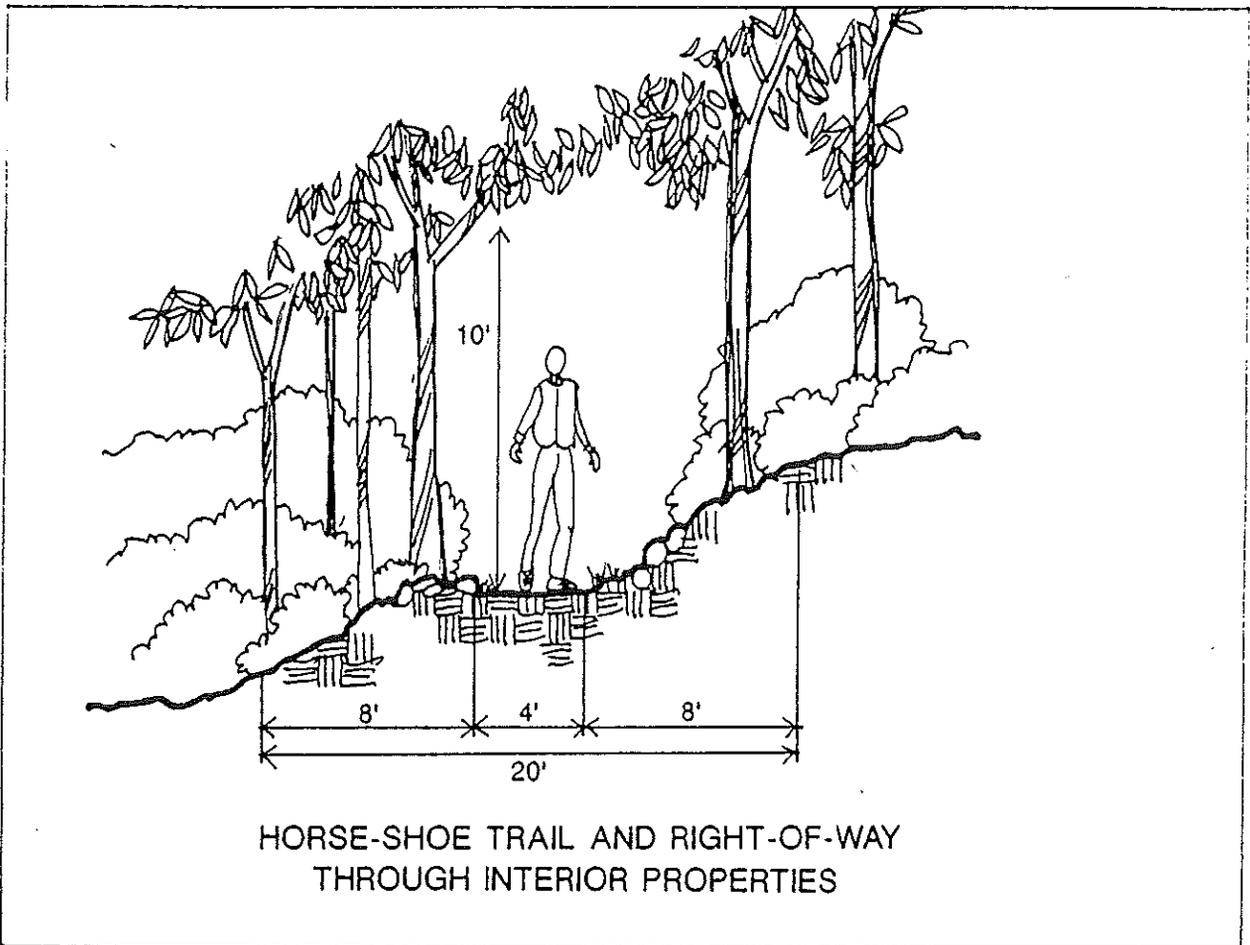
Pathways or trails are often the primary recreational focus of greenways. While occupying a narrow, linear land area, trails frequently are the primary means of access, both physical and/or visual, to the broad open space landscape. Trails may be geared to one or more types of trail use, including hiking, jogging, running, bicycling, equestrian use and cross-country skiing. Trails may be incorporated into park facilities and open space areas or may be independent, extending recreational opportunity beyond specifically designated park or open space areas. They can serve as links connecting various open space, park and recreation areas to each other and to the populace they serve. They need not be limited to public lands, but may also pass across private lands, where the privilege of recreational trail use is permitted at the pleasure of the landowners. Trails can be made permanent through public acquisition or through establishment of easements. Private land stewardship efforts in this regard are discussed more fully in the section of this report entitled "Conservation/Preservation Issues & Strategies."

The Horseshoe Trail is a well-known example of a recreational trail, traversing approximately five miles in the heart of West Vincent Township. Despite its well-known status, the Horseshoe Trail exists primarily unofficially, blazed and maintained by the Horseshoe Trail Club. The "French Creek Trail" exists in concept, aimed to link the Horseshoe Trail at Warwick Park to Phoenixville and the Schuylkill River. Implementation of the French Creek Greenway, discussed above, also aims to provide for such linear trail access. The Brandywine Trail, with about two miles in West Vincent Township, is blazed by the Wilmington Trail Club. It connects the Brandywine Valley via Marsh Creek State Park to the Horseshoe Trail in West Vincent at the junction of Birchrun Road, Bartlett Lane, and Horseshoe Trail Road.

Both the Horseshoe and Brandywine Trails are mapped on the "Existing Open Space Lands and Facilities" map. They coincide almost exclusively with existing road rights-of-way. Only in the extreme western part of the Township does the Horseshoe Trail enjoy off-road status, as it heads toward the French Creek Valley at Warwick Park. Ideally, off-road alternative rights-of-way should be found and made permanent. Lacking such opportunities, locations parallel to public roadways, yet separated from them, might be formalized.

Informal trail recreation opportunities can be found throughout West Vincent Township, in a patchwork of private open space lands and utility rights-of-way. For example, segments of the "Conestoga Trail," the forerunner of Route 401, exist in the form of old roadway traces, notably through the Larking Hill Farm tract, connecting today's Route 401 to St. Matthews and Chester Springs Roads. This and other trail segments at Larking Hill Farm will be retained despite subdivision and development of the tract, as provided in Section 616 of the West Vincent Township Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance (S/LDO). Section 616 allows for relocation of trail segments, but requires establishment of permanent easements of right-of-way and prescribes standards for trail development. The provisions of Section 616 are consistent with the recommendations of the Horseshoe Trail Protection Plan, as iterated in technical memoranda prepared for the National Park Service by the Natural Lands Trust.

The Trails Preservation Association, based in West Vincent, recently has organized to promote conservation and appropriate use of trails, particularly the informal network traversing private lands. The Association views access to such trails as a privilege, not a right, and has drafted "A Blueprint for Trails Preservation" as an educational tool for both trail users and landowners.



Trails Planning & Management Issues

Ideally, trails will occupy suitable natural corridors such as stream valleys or woodlands, or suitable man-made corridors such as railroad rights-of-way, utility easements and scenic, low-traffic-volume roadways. They should have frequent access points from existing roads, and should be designed to link recreation facilities, residential areas, schools, and other centers of activity. Minimum design standards required for intended trail use type(s) should be accommodated. Multi-use trails must have sufficient width and clearance to accommodate all permitted uses. The figures on the following page diagram spatial requirements suggested for the Horseshoe Trail, envisioned as accommodating pedestrian and equestrian traffic in primarily rural areas.

Experience has shown that where trails are well-used, they tend to be "self-policing" and relatively free of the problems inevitably brought up whenever formal trail designation is proposed. A key to proper trail usage is a meaningful system of trails with logical beginning and ending points. Short, disconnected trail segments discourage use and inadvertently offer haven to those bent on misuse. Pocopson Township, for example, has long embarked on a policy of formal trail designation, but keeps trail easements in escrow until complete segments can be formally designated. Also critical to proper usage are locally based groups such as the recently organized Trails Preservation Association, whose purposes aim to monitor trail usage, promote proper use, and maintain trail facilities. Examples of such groups with long experience include the Bridlewild Trails Association in Lower Merion Township (Montgomery County) and the Horseshoe Trail Club.

Potential liability is frequently raised as a deterrent to formal provision of trail access across private lands. In fact, landowner liability has been specifically limited by act of legislature (Act 586 of 1987). Except in cases of malicious failure to warn of hazardous conditions, the act releases landowners from liability for injury to person or property occurring when recreational use is permitted without charge. The act also specifically defines and prohibits "recreational trespass," including vandalism, littering, and failure to leave gates, fences, etc. in the same condition as they were found.

Over-use of trails can also result in real or perceived problems, ranging from erosion of trail surfaces and habitat damage to loss of privacy for neighbors and deterioration of the recreational experience. Ironically, the more that trail access is restricted or confined in

response to perceived abuse, the worse problems resulting from over-use will become on trail segments which remain open.

A number of points are illustrated by the current litigation of trail access rights in the northern part of the Township. In that case, the apparent threat of over-use is a function of both the scale of a nearby commercial equestrian boarding operation, and the lack of sufficient alternative trail routes in the vicinity, particularly within East Vincent Township where the boarding operation is located. Clearly, the more extensive the available network of trails, the less likelihood that individual segments will suffer from over-use. As the Township continues to enforce the provisions of S/LDO Section 616, it is important that trail rights-of-way or easements be clearly documented as to any access restrictions, maintenance or management responsibilities, and monitoring rights or obligations. Such issues should be resolved to the satisfaction of the Township prior to final plan approval.

It may be appropriate to consider the designation or establishment of specific trails designed to handle heavier use. Such trails could follow major "through" routes like the Horseshoe Trail or the French Creek Trail; they should be located and designed to minimize impact to neighbors. Such trails would also require a commitment to trail maintenance, trash removal, and access control.

Suggested Approach to Trails Management

The Trails Preservation Association might coordinate efforts with those of the Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) to both conserve and improve appropriate trail access throughout West Vincent. It is clear that public and private efforts can be complementary. Initial steps should include the following:

- comprehensive inventory of known trails, with notations as to restrictions of use or access of any kind;
- generalized mapping of additional desirable trail links;
- designation of major through trails appropriate for little or no access restrictions (i.e., Horseshoe Trail, French Creek Trail, etc.) including incomplete sections or other desired links;

- designation of local trails to which access may be restricted to local or Township residents, including incomplete sections and other desired links;
- delineation of management objectives/policies, regarding means to monitor access and use, keep trails clear, remove trash, and ensure compliance with any access restrictions;
- amendment of Section 616 to require dedication of additional trail rights-of-way in areas mapped as desirable trail links;
- amendment of Section 616 to require dedication of trail rights-of-way for trail segments known to coincide with public roads. This would enable such trail segments to be formally separated from the roadway, even if parallel and adjacent, as shown in the diagram on page 100.

The Township should consistently enforce the provisions of S/LDO Section 616, to guarantee conservation of trail resources on tracts subject to subdivision/development proposal. The Township should support on-going efforts (essentially informal to date) by the Trails Preservation Association, the Horseshoe Trail Club, the National Park Service, and others, to guarantee the long-term viability of trail resources. Private land stewardship efforts may prove effective in formalizing and guaranteeing the longevity of West Vincent's trail resource, if trails are given sufficient consideration as one of a number of open space resources worthy of conservation. Private land stewardship approaches are described further in the following section of this document. Private efforts may be supported and facilitated by the Township through a "Landowner Cooperative Program," as suggested in that section.

REGIONAL PARKS

Regional parks are large scale park preserves serving an area greater even than Chester County. Because of their regional significance, such parks are usually provided by federal or state governments. They typically provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities -- both active and passive, particularly those requiring large land or water areas. Emphasis is often placed on recreation opportunities beyond the scope of those typically provided at local parks, including, for example, camping, boating and swimming. West Vincent Township is, to some extent, served by five regional parks. These include Philadelphia's Fairmount Park along with four state parks: Evansburg (Montgomery Co.),

French Creek (Berks and Chester Cos.), Marsh Creek (Chester Co.) and Ridley Creek (Delaware Co.).

Based on widely accepted standards developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), regional parks in southeastern Pennsylvania do not adequately meet the regional park needs of their service areas. Of those named above, only French Creek State Park offers a full array of regional park recreation opportunities. To some extent, the availability of large open land areas for passive recreational use -- at Valley Forge, at the Chester County parks, and broadly in the sense of unofficial "green-line" parks -- reduces the regional park "deficit," from the standpoint of serving West Vincent residents. In any case, it is in the interest of West Vincent Township to support, and even promote, the expansion of regional parks and associated recreational opportunities.

SUBREGIONAL PARKS

These parks fill the gap between regional parks and local parks. Ideally, they provide relatively large tracts of public open space within a short drive of home. Fifteen minutes is considered a reasonable threshold. Serving less than an entire county, subregional parks are beyond the scope of municipal provision. They are likely to be provided by county government, but could be provided jointly by more than one municipality. Subregional parks should be geared to regular use on weekdays as well as weekends. They should offer the trails, fields, courts, water recreation areas, picnic areas, and woodlands that local parks can only partially provide.

West Vincent Township lies within, or nearly within, a fifteen minute service area radius of Chester County's Hibernia and Warwick Parks, as well as the Springton Manor Farm interpretive park. The Chester County Open Space and Recreation Study (CCOSRS) has placed high priority on the establishment of additional subregional parks in the eastern, central and southern parts of the county. Full development of additional subregional park recreation opportunities is likely to take many years, and is not expected to increase recreational access for West Vincent residents to any significant degree.

COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Community park lands and facilities are usually provided by municipal government to serve a variety of local outdoor recreation needs on a regular basis, both active and passive, group and individual. No such parks currently offer direct service to West Vincent Township residents. Typically, community parks encompass at least 15 acres and include a range of recreational facilities: multi-use playing fields and courts, specialized areas/facilities for small children and for senior citizens, picnic areas, space for special events, off-street parking, paths, trails and undesignated open space. No single park need necessarily contain a full range of recreational facilities. The actual number of fields, courts and other recreation facilities included at any one park should reflect a careful analysis of community needs. Facilities for indoor recreation should also be available to the community, but need not be provided directly in conjunction with community park facilities, nor even by the Township, if alternatives can be made available (school or community buildings, for example). Community parks frequently serve a population base much larger than that of West Vincent Township and, even in densely populated areas, need not specifically rely on a walking-distance service area radius. Smaller, less complex, neighborhood parks are more commonly geared to walking-distance service, up to about one-half mile.

Population-based Assessment of Community Recreation Need

At the time of this report, complete 1990 census data is not yet available. However, 1980 data and evident trends would not suggest radical departure from the "normal" range of recreational facilities discussed here. It also should be noted that recreational standards are generally expressed in terms of number of facilities or amount of park acreage per each 1,000 residents. That threshold represents nearly half of West Vincent Township's 1990 total population of 2,262. Population-based standards thus only can generate a gross order of magnitude of "need" when applied to such a small total population. To illustrate, CCOSRS cites a standard for basketball courts of 0.4 courts per 1,000 population. Rounding up, this standard would infer a need for only one basketball court in West Vincent ($2.3 \times 0.4 = 0.9$). West Vincent's population would have to grow by nearly seventy percent to 3,775 before the population based standard would arguably call for two courts, rounding up from 1.5. Obviously, such population-based standards cannot be our sole means of evaluating recreation needs.

CCOSRS recommends standards for estimating community park need which vary according to density of settlement. West Vincent's 1990 population density of 126 persons per square mile would keep the Township in the "rural" settlement pattern, according to CCOSRS. For rural communities, CCOSRS recommends a minimum of six acres of community parkland per 1,000 population, with no recommendation for neighborhood parkland. This recommendation was echoed by the 1985 Comprehensive Plan Update, which projected up to 24 acres of community parkland needed by the year 2010.

For this planning exercise, we have chosen to characterize West Vincent as a "rural-suburban" community, which, according to CCOSRS, should have 4.5 acres of community parkland per 1,000 residents and 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents. While gross density may not justify this classification, continuing development in West Vincent can be characterized as "exurban" or, as CCOSRS terms it, "rural-suburban." Based on anticipated development and Township zoning provisions, neighborhood parkland is likely to be provided in the future. For the short-term, need for community parkland may be estimated using the combined standard of 8.0 acres/1,000. Applying this more liberal standard to the range of population projected by the 1985 Plan Update (up to 4,000 population) results in a projected parkland "need" of up to 32 acres in the year 2010. A more conservative estimate of 2,630 persons projected by the Chester County Planning Commission for 2010 (projected as of May 1988) would infer a need for 21 acres. These figures are more instructive than conclusive. A range of 21-32 acres provides a target that might be met by a single community park, augmented in the longer-term future by neighborhood parkland.

In municipalities more populous than West Vincent Township, a system of community and neighborhood parks might collectively meet local needs in a variety of settings, spreading facilities within walking-distance of a broad spectrum of residents. Individual parks might specialize in their particular realm of recreational service. While such an approach might serve West Vincent's large geographical extent well, a one-half mile walking-distance service area radius, for example, would nowhere contain sufficient population to justify comprehensive development of public parkland, based on any review of generally accepted standards. Instead, one well-located and well-laid-out community park could easily serve the foreseeable needs of West Vincent's population. Even though much of the Township would not lie within a walking-distance service area, most would be within a short drive.

For recreational planning purposes, the population might be divided into three basic groups: school age, the work force, and retired. In terms of available 1990 census data, these correspond generally to the respective age groups: under 18, 18-64, and over 65 (prior to 1990, the groups broke at 20 instead of 18). The typical array of recreational facilities discussed here would reflect a "normal" population makeup, in terms of the proportion of the population within each group. As discussed under Open Space Planning Context above, West Vincent's population varies slightly from county-wide norms, in respect to the three primary age groupings. The only notable variation is the apparent higher proportion of residents in the later years of the "work force" age range. That factor is consistent with somewhat greater variation from County norms evident in the general character of the population. The population of West Vincent is relatively affluent, with higher average incomes and greater than average numbers of people employed in "white collar" professions. Most employed residents commute to jobs outside the immediate vicinity. At the same time, a higher proportion of women are not employed outside the home. All of these factors are consistent with typical expectations for a generally affluent exurban community. Recent and proposed residential development has certainly aimed at that same market.

While differing somewhat from the Chester County norm, West Vincent's demographic makeup does not correspond to sufficiently large numbers of persons to infer any major shift in approach to recreation planning. If anything, West Vincent's socio-economic character generally underscores the limited nature of recreational need in the Township. During the day, school children are away at schools located beyond the bounds of the Township. Working professionals may tend to take advantage of weekday recreational opportunities nearer to their place of employment than to home (fitness clubs, etc.).

Nevertheless, recreational planning cannot afford to neglect those residents who do spend most of their time within the Township, particularly the very young, the elderly, those who attend to them, and others not employed outside the home. While considerable weekend recreational pursuit may focus on "passive" activity, taking advantage of the open space landscape, a focus for community recreation is needed. The fact that, once home, it may be difficult and/or time-consuming for either youth or adults to return to recreational facilities outside the Township points toward a need not only for local sites for active recreational pursuit, but place for community special events as well. Based on CCOSRS recreational facility standards (abstracted primarily from National Recreation and Park

Association standards), a community park serving West Vincent Township should include the following facilities (approximate acreages involved are shown in parentheses):

- 2-4 multipurpose fields, at least one each appropriate for regulation baseball, soccer, and football (5-10 acres);
- at least one each of the following courts: tennis, basketball, and volleyball (approx. 0.75 acre);
- children's play area(s) with apparatus (0.75 acre);
- picnic area(s), including a pavilion shelter with seating (2 acres);
- special events area (2 acres+);
- walking/jogging path/trails, with exercise course (part of "undesigned" open space);
- attractively landscaped as well as undesignated passive open space (5 acres+);
- off-street parking (not necessarily paved; 0.5 acre+).

Community Parkland Acquisition

While full-scale community park development may proceed over a course of five to ten years or more, the Township should immediately begin to seek to acquire, or otherwise secure long-term access to, sufficient open space for development of a community park. The key land resource is likely to become more scarce and more expensive over time. When actual recreational development occurs, the exact range of facilities to be provided should be reevaluated based on a review of community demographic characteristics and professed recreational preferences (ascertained via community survey).

A potential opportunity to acquire community parkland without purchasing it had arisen in the course of consideration of application for cluster development, called "Matthews Meadows" and located at Route 401 and St. Matthews Road. The proposed cluster plan created a concise open space parcel (among other open space areas) of about 18 acres, separated from residential development by St. Matthews Road and remaining farm

buildings. Potential dedication of this major open space parcel to the Township for park use has been discussed.

While the location of the "Matthews Meadows" parcel may not seem perfect, from the standpoint of centrality to Township geography, it does offer relatively convenient access to/from all parts of West Vincent via St. Matthews Road and Route 401. In comparison to most open space likely to be created through the subdivision process, this parcel offers an excellent opportunity to provide for community recreational use, as it is clearly separated from and does not interfere or conflict with the immediate area of the new residential development, neither from the standpoint of use nor potential traffic generation. Access and parking provision off of Malehorn Road, as suggested in the proposed cluster plan, is a good idea, isolating turning movements where not interfering with traffic flow on Route 401.

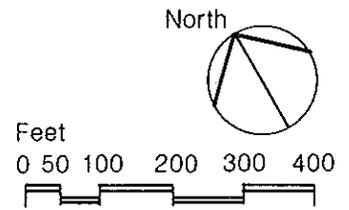
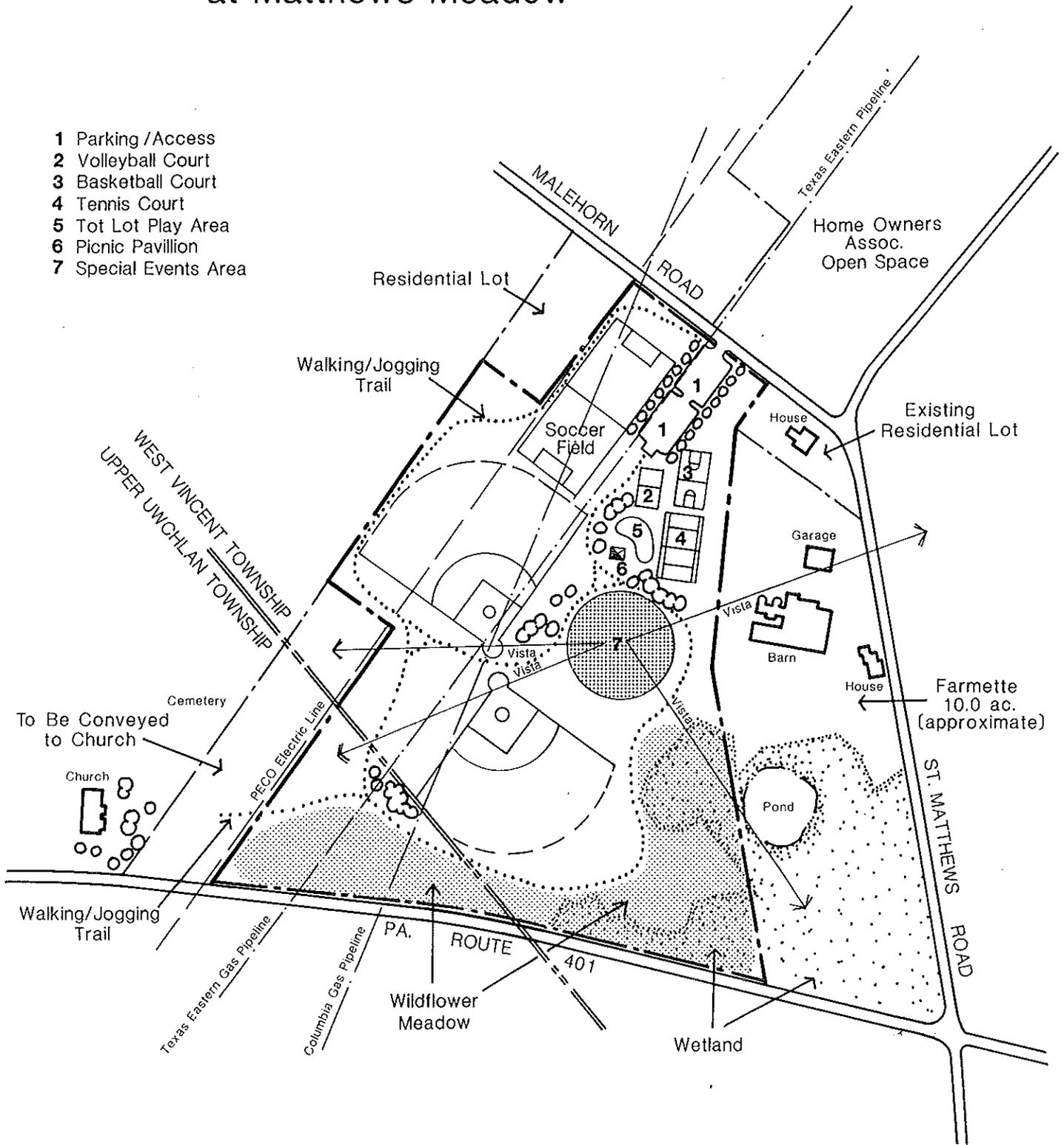
The open, relatively flat character of the 18 acre open space tract also lends itself to community recreational use, both formal and informal. Hypothetical recreational development at "Matthews Meadows" is illustrated herein, aimed at demonstrating how recommended community park facilities might be accommodated. If the Township does not envision itself in the recreation "business" in the short term, whether here or elsewhere, a management plan might be envisioned which calls for a short-term program of informal use only, or even no public use for the short term, allowing it to remain in farming. It would prove wise, in any case, to retain options for longer-term development of active recreational fields and facilities. Landscaping on potentially public open space parcels should not interfere with, but should complement potential long-term recreational use. Important community open space views and vistas should not be cut-off inadvertently by fencing or landscaping.

Alternatives to Fee Title Acquisition

While ultimate acquisition of community parkland is recommended, neither the "Matthews Meadows" parcel nor any other subdivision open space need be formally accepted by the Township in the short-term. Where formal community recreational use is ultimately envisioned, at a minimum, an on-going offer of dedication should be requested, to be accepted at the sole discretion and timing of the Township. Likewise, permanent open space status should be guaranteed through imposition of conservation easement and/or plan and deed restrictions. It might be noted that Township acceptance of open space actually

HYPOTHETICAL COMMUNITY PARK PLAN at Matthews Meadow

- 1 Parking / Access
- 2 Volleyball Court
- 3 Basketball Court
- 4 Tennis Court
- 5 Tot Lot Play Area
- 6 Picnic Pavillion
- 7 Special Events Area



relieves prospective developers (and, ultimately, homeowners associations) of potentially considerable responsibility and expense. Perhaps, as a "fair trade," the Township might reasonable request an endowment to be utilized for ongoing management/maintenance and for future recreational development.

The Township also might acquire community parkland indirectly, through negotiation of use of lands held by others, particularly lands and facilities held by quasi-public agencies. At a number of sites, potential joint use (community and quasi-public agency) might be breached. Examples might include the Ludwigs Corner Horseshow grounds, the Fire Company facilities, Chester County's lands along French Creek, private camps, and lands of Green Valleys Association (GVA). GVA holds 15 acres in Birchrunville; it has been suggested that part of these lands might be made available as a "town green" for special events. A "town green" in Birchrunville would be centrally located and would certainly be appropriate to the village setting. Opportunities for passive trail use might be coordinated broadly on lands of willing owners. It should always be remembered that not all community park attributes need be embodied in one single park if diverse opportunities exist.

If the Township cannot acquire or negotiate firm use of community parkland within a two to five-year time frame, the Supervisors should consider formal purchase of parkland meeting the criteria described below. The Township may find it necessary to spend up to \$300,000 or more to purchase adequate lands. Potential County and/or State funding opportunities must be fully reinvestigated at that time. Local funding, whether entirely or as a match, might be derived from one or more of the following sources: Township general fund, bonded indebtedness, donations, or collection of fees-in-lieu of open space.

Summary Criteria for Community Parkland Acquisition

Whether land for community park purposes is acquired through the subdivision process, through direct purchase, or indirectly through negotiation of public use, several criteria should be weighed (whether applied to an individual parksite or several sites collectively):

- A community park should encompass at least 15 acres, preferably more (particularly if that acreage is spread amongst multiple sites);

- A community park should include sufficient relatively flat land to permit ultimate development of field, court, picnic, and special event areas as discussed above, in all -- at least 6-8 acres;
- A community park should comprise or afford public access to additional lands for passive recreation, ideally offering a variety of landscape settings for hiking and nature observation;
- A community park should be easily accessible from major roads (i.e., Routes 100 or 401, St. Matthews Road, etc.), with some semblance of centrality to Township residents; possibilities for off-street parking should be considered;
- A community park should "fit" the broad landscape, it should embody characteristic landscape elements (as discussed under Visual Analysis); it should offer both physical and visual "linkage" to the broad open space landscape.

Future Community Park Development/Capital Budget Planning

The "Hypothetical Community Park Plan" for "Matthews Meadow" illustrates potential development of the community park recreation facilities recommended for West Vincent Township, as discussed above. Based on that illustration, capital development costs have been estimated by Madden/Kummer, Inc. and are shown in chart form herein. Costs are estimates only for illustration purposes based on 1991 norms and the assumption that all work is contracted. Voluntary or donated work, equipment or materials could reduce costs, as could any work items undertaken directly by Township staff. Potential field user groups such as LYA and the Coventry Little Leagues may agree to contribute to the Township share of certain capital costs. These estimates also serve to illustrate relative costs of recommended park development elements and, by extrapolation, where cost savings might be sought.

Capital planning to implement development of a community park requires initial resolution of 1) means of parkland acquisition, 2) decisions regarding scope of facilities to be developed, and 3) determination of means and timing of development. Pending resolution of those issues and other potential open space and recreation capital expenditures, a five-year capital development plan can only be developed as an illustration. As an example, the following hypothetical plan is based on several assumptions: 1) that

PREDESIGN COST ESTIMATE
HYPOTHETICAL COMMUNITY PARK AT "MATTHEWS MEADOW"

WORK ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY.	UNIT	UNIT COST	TOTAL
1.	Site Preparation/Mobilization			Allow.	5,000
2.	Asphalt Parking Lot	13,750	Sq.Ft.	2.50	34,375
3.	Wood Chip Walking Path (5'Wide, 6"Depth)	1,890	Sq.Yd.	8.00	15,120
4.	Softball Field	2	Ea.	16,000	32,000
5.	Football/Soccer Field	1	Ea.	18,000	18,000
6.	Tennis Court	1	Ea.	18,500	18,500
7.	Basketball Court	1	Ea.	16,600	16,600
8.	Volleyball Court	1	Ea.	3,000	3,000
9.	Tot Lot (3" Bark mulch)	400	Sq.Yd.	4.00	1,600
10.	Rest Rooms (fenced asphalt pad with portable units, landscaping)	1	Unit	Allow.	6,000
11.	Baseball Backstop	2	Ea.	2,340	4,680
12.	Football Goal, convertible to Soccer Goal	2	Ea.	2,010	4,020
13.	Tennis Net (Wire mesh with pair of ends)	1	Ea.	1,200	1,200
14.	Basketball Hoops with Steel Pole & Backstop	2	Ea.	700	1,400
15.	Volleyball Net	1	Ea.	250	250
16.	Play Equipment			Allow.	8,000
17.	Trash Receptacles	5	Ea.	240	1,200
18.	Picnic Tables	10	Ea.	500	5,000
19.	Picnic Pavilion (16'x18' Glu Lam)	1	Ea.	10,000	10,000
20.	Benches	10	Ea.	500	5,000
21.	Bike Rack (steel, 10' long)	1	Ea.	360	360
22.	Fitness Trail (9-10 stations with treated pine signs)	1	Ea.	9,300	9,300
23.	Lighting (for eve. pedestrian use/security)	10	Ea.	2,500	25,500
24.	Planting Bed Preparation (6" depth)	100	Sq.Yd.	25.00	2,500
25.	Small Shrubs (2-3' height)	75	Ea.	30.00	2,250
26.	Large Shrubs (3-4' height)	50	Ea.	65.00	3,250
27.	Ornamental Trees (6-8' height)	15	Ea.	200	3,000
28.	Shade Trees (2 1/2-3" caliper)	50	Ea.	500	25,000
29.	Wildflower Area (prep. seeding, mulching)	260,000	Sq.Ft.	.05	13,000
30.	Topsoiling from Stockpile/fine/grade/ reseed, including special events lawn area (may be undertaken in phases)	40,400	Sq.Yd.	2.10	84,840
	TOTAL				359,445
	PRE-DESIGN CONTINGENCY				40,555
	TOTAL				\$400,000

community parkland is acquired with minimal direct township capital outlay; 2) that community park development occurs in accordance with these illustrations; 3) that such community park development is completed within five years of parkland acquisition, and 4) that other open space and recreation capital expenditures are handled separately.

**WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY PARK
HYPOTHETICAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Year 1	Formalize Parkland Acquisition	\$0.
Year 2	Prepare site for development; create and establish 3 multi-purpose fields and install associated equipment; develop parking area.	\$143,000
Year 3	Plant shade trees; install picnic area, play area & equipment and security lighting; install restrooms; establish walking path system; fine grade and seed special events lawn	\$151,000
Year 4	Install playing courts and associated equipment; install fitness trail stations and bike rack; establish ornamental plantings and wildflower area; complete fine grading	\$106,000
Year 5	Park complete.	

Future Neighborhood Park Development

It has been noted that population density in West Vincent Township does not currently, nor is projected to, justify the specific development of neighborhood parks. Under current zoning provisions, however, the potential exists for relatively large-scale and high-density development in the northeastern part of the Township (under RM or PRD provisions) and in the MHP (mobile home park) district at Ludwigs Corner. If such development were to occur, whether in accordance with existing zoning provisions or through re-zoning elsewhere, neighborhood park facilities must be required. Review of CCOSRS indicates that a threshold population of 500-1,000 persons should be served by

neighborhood park facilities. A 200-unit development (or collective smaller developments in the same vicinity) could easily become home to such numbers, for example. Multi-family or small-lot single-family development, permitted under RM, PRD, and MHP provisions, should also provide "tot" play areas for every 20-50 dwelling units, as individual "backyard" recreational opportunities tend to be very limited at high densities of development.

In the broad residential zoning districts (R-2, R-3, and RC), conventional residential development, even where "maxed-out," will not generally infer need for neighborhood park development. Overall population density will remain low, while individual lots will generally offer sufficient "backyard" recreation opportunities to displace such need. Use of alternative planning scenarios, particularly clustering, may infer a different story. Individual lots of an acre or less may not possess significant "backyard" recreational potential. Thus, some of the open space which results from alternative plans might be made available for neighborhood park development. Strategies for mandating dedication and development of such parkland are discussed further below.

Each neighborhood park should include:

- relatively flat field area(s) appropriate for a variety of informal field sports;
- basketball, volleyball, and/or multi-purpose court(s);
- jogging/exercise trail (may be informal);
- tot play area and apparatus;
- informal picnic and sitting area.

A neighborhood park should comprise 5-10 acres and, ideally, should link to any broader open space system or network in the vicinity. Neighborhood parkland should be designed to serve the immediate needs of a walking distance service area (approximately one-half mile radius), with facilities tailored to suit the needs and preferences of local residents, taking into account the availability or lack of "backyard" recreational opportunities and/or other convenient private/community recreational facilities.

Acquire Neighborhood Parks Through the Development Process

Establishment and development of neighborhood park facilities should occur in tandem with development of the residential areas which generate their need. Applications for relatively large development should be required to incorporate appropriate recreational development within submitted plans. Developers of smaller projects also can be required to incorporate recreational development of an appropriate scale, ideally designed to integrate with that provided by other developers, such that the sum total meets neighborhood park needs. Initially and, in some cases, for any foreseeable future, the Township may wish to see responsibility for neighborhood park development and maintenance remain in the hands of affected Home Owners Association(s) (HOAs). As a matter of policy, the Township may consider requesting continuing offers of dedication to that Township ownership/responsibility might be assumed at some future date when a more comprehensive Township park system warrants overall Township purview.

Section 616 of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (S/LDO) currently provides that applicants proposing twenty or more dwelling units provide one acre per twenty dwelling units for open space and recreational purposes. While a single acre is not realistically sufficient for appropriate neighborhood park development, neither do as few as twenty dwelling units warrant such development. Larger scale development, generating population in the 500-1,000 threshold range could clearly generate significant acreage. Two hundred units, for example, inferring a population of some 500-600, could generate ten acres of recreational land under current provisions. As few as 81 units could generate a five-acre neighborhood park ($81/20 = 4.05$, rounded to 5, the next highest whole number, as required). While 81 dwellings, inferring a population of some 200 persons, does not constitute a large service area population, it may indeed justify the setting aside of neighborhood parkland, particularly where no other parks are located nearby and where "backyard" recreational opportunities may be limited. Development of additional homes in the same vicinity at a later date could further justify provision for park development on lands already set aside (see "fee-in-lieu" discussion below).

The provisions of S/LDO Section 616 apply Township-wide, yet do not specifically require development of facilities nor provide clear criteria for provision of suitably sized and configured recreational lands, particularly where neighborhood park development might be warranted. Current criteria could easily be adhered to through provision of very small recreation area(s), suitable only for tot play areas, for example.

Fee-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication

The Township also can provide for dedication of fee-in-lieu of lands/facilities. S/LDO Section 616 does provide a formula for fee-in-lieu, based on the "fair market value" of the acreage otherwise required for dedication. Section 616 predates recent (Act 170) amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) which specifically provide for mandatory dedication of lands or fees. MPC provisions now require formal adoption of a recreation plan as a prerequisite to implementation of mandatory dedication provisions. This Plan can serve that purpose.

Both lands and fees obtained through required dedication must be used to provide park or recreation facilities accessible to future residents of the development from which they were obtained. Fees must be earmarked for specific recreational facilities and deposited into interest-bearing account(s) to be expended only for those facilities for which the fees specifically were collected. If the Township does not utilize collected fees as specified within three years of collection, the developer who paid the fee may request refund plus interest accrued. This provision demands that fees collected be carefully and intentionally earmarked in step with ongoing park acquisition and development plans. By the same token, it is likely that some applicants will forego opportunities to claim refunds, whether in the interest of public relations or due to the manner in which they treat the fees paid for tax purposes.

Strategy for Required Dedication of Lands and Fees-in-Lieu

Section 616 should be fine-tuned to reflect Act 170 amendments to the MPC, providing for specific identification of lands/facilities to which fees shall be applied. It is recommended that required dedication be extended to all development, not just that involving twenty units or more. In that case, the formula for determination of fees should be amended to allow for required dedication of acreage and equivalent fees in fractions of whole numbers. Simple extension of current provisions would require a two-lot subdivision (totaling as little as 5 acres in size), for example, to dedicate an entire acre or fee of equal value. It is further recommended that the fee formula be clarified as to determination of "fair market value" of the lands for which fees are being dedicated in lieu. Current provisions would appear to leave room for differing opinions as which lands are being appraised for purposes of determining the fee. A suggested approach would be to compute

the fee based on an appraisal of the average value per acre of the entire tract under application, post development approval.

Until further development occurs, of a density and magnitude to require neighborhood park development, the Township should concentrate its park/recreation efforts on acquisition and development of community parkland, as discussed above. If it appears within a one-two year time frame to be infeasible to negotiate acquisition of community parkland through the development process or through joint use of quasi-public lands/facilities, then the Township should explore direct fee acquisition. State and/or County funds could be applied for while fees obtained through required dedication (fee-in-lieu) could be earmarked specifically for community parkland acquisition. While negotiation is pursued, any funds obtained through fee-in-lieu can be earmarked for facility development. Refer to recommended facility list above. In the absence of neighborhood parks, community park facilities offer the most immediate recreational benefit to future residents of any proposed development.

When larger scale development occurs, provision of lands appropriate for neighborhood park development should be required. Once neighborhood parkland has been designated, fees-in-lieu should be earmarked for specific park/facility development at the neighborhood park best serving (generally, most proximate to) the development under application. Park development should proceed at each park until the basic array of park facilities are in place (see list above). Fees obtained might be earmarked for additional or alternative recreational development (at the discretion of the Supervisors) where such preference has been indicated by Township residents and/or the Applicant. The following schedule is suggested as a general guide for determining Township preference for dedication of lands, fees, or a combination of the two, as a function of the type and magnitude of proposed development. These requirements are not viewed as supplanting need for general open space areas or trails.

- 1-19 units of all types - request fee-in-lieu;

- 20-69 single-family units on lots greater than 1 ac. each - request fee-in-lieu, unless Applicant voluntarily agrees to provide at least 3.5 acres of land developable for neighborhood park purposes, acceptable at the discretion of the Supervisors;

Township. In large-scale developments, neighborhood park facilities may be administered by home-owners associations, as discussed above.

Community park development has been recommended in the relative short term. It is anticipated that park administration may fall under the purview of the Township Manager, with the assistance of the Environmental Advisory Council. At such time as community park development is actually underway, the role of the Council might appropriately be supplanted by a new Park and Recreation Board. Sample costs for annual maintenance of the potential "Matthews Meadows" community park are charted below. As shown, a \$15,000 annual budget could be a reasonable expectation. General maintenance would fall within the work program of the Township road crew as directed by the Manager. Mowing could be scheduled by contract along with the roadside mowing program. Any major park maintenance or development program would be undertaken by contract.

At the general level, use of community park facilities would be programmed through the Township offices, under the direction of the Manager, and based on policy set by the Supervisors (directly or through delegation to the Environmental Advisory Council or Park Board). It is anticipated that detailed programming, in accordance with Township policy, would be handled directly by permitted park users, including local athletic associations, etc. It is possible that limited maintenance responsibilities, particularly maintenance of sport fields, might also be shared by user groups, in accordance with stipulated use agreements. Such arrangements, with limited direct involvement by Township personnel, have proven effective elsewhere in municipalities with much greater population density and recreational activity than can be anticipated in West Vincent Township during the next twenty years.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COST PROJECTIONS
HYPOTHETICAL COMMUNITY PARK AT "MATTHEWS MEADOW"

Areas (a) Multi purpose park are including court games	5.0 ac±
(b) Field games area	8.0 ac±
(c) Wildflower area	<u>5.0 ac±</u>
(d) Total park	18.0 ac±

Maintain Area A for one year

(1) Mowing (4 ac.± @ \$62/ x 10 cuttings)	\$ 2,480
(2) Spring clean/up (5 ac.± @ \$300)	\$ 1,500
(3) Equipment maintenance (playground/tennis/etc.)	allow \$ 1,000
(4) Weekly litter pick up & misc. (\$50/trip x 10 trips)	<u>\$ 500</u>
TOTAL	\$ 4,480

Maintain Area B for one year

(1) Mow total area (8.0 ac.± @ \$30 x 10 cuttings)	\$ 2,400
(2) Fertilizer field areas only (5 ac.± @ \$160/ac x 2 per year)	\$ 1,600
(3) Grooming baseball field @ 1 treatment per week for 5 months (\$75/field x 2 field x 22 treatments)	\$ 3,300
(4) Patrol/litter/misc. repairs	allow <u>\$ 2,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 9,300

Maintain Area C for one year

(1) Late fall mowing to ground (5 ac.± x \$30/ac.)	\$ 150
(2) Annual overseed & amendments (5 ac.± x \$200/ac.)	<u>\$ 1,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,150

SUMMARY

Area A - Maintain multi-purpose area (5 ac.±)	\$ 4,480
Area B - Maintain field games area (8.5 ac.±)	\$ 9,300
Area C - Maintain wildflower meadow (6 ac.±)	<u>\$ 1,150</u>
TOTAL PARK	\$14,930

RECREATION PROGRAMS

It has been noted that municipalities more populous than West Vincent Township often assume a direct role in recreational programming. West Vincent Township is not expected to reach sufficient population density to clearly justify outright provision for recreation for many years, if ever. Nevertheless, it is appropriate for the Township to keep recreational demand in clear view, to encourage access for Township residents to facilities and programs provided by others, and to monitor need for future Township action. The Township should be confident that all sectors of the community are adequately served, including children, youth, adults, senior citizens, and handicapped individuals. Yet even in the long run, direct programming involvement by the Township can be avoided or minimized through coordination and cooperation (formal and informal) with other public agencies, and with private and quasi-public agencies, including the schools, Green Valleys Association, fire companies, YMCAs, churches, and youth athletic leagues.

Based on limited survey and general knowledge on the part of the Environmental Advisory Council, it is assumed that West Vincent residents participate in a wide range of recreational programs including arts and crafts, athletics, music and dance, social activities, drama, and nature activities. However, for the most part, active programming occurs outside the bounds of West Vincent Township, due to a lack of both facilities and programming agencies within the Township. A notable exception is Green Valleys Association, whose programs are indirectly recreational, focussing on environmental education.

Outside the Township, residents avail themselves of primarily private or quasi-public facilities and programming agencies, relying particularly on the Owen J. Roberts School District, local YMCAs (Phoenixville, Pottstown, Lionville) and on private clubs. Collectively, such agencies appear to be offering sufficient recreational opportunities for West Vincent residents at this time. Most programs are offered based on local demand and, as such, are flexible to meet changing needs over time, to the extent they are not limited by facility constraints. An appropriate role for West Vincent Township would be periodic monitoring of local demand and corresponding recreation opportunities. On that basis, the Township could help point out to the appropriate agencies potential gaps in recreational service. The Township also could assist contact between recreation program agencies,

potential users, and those in charge of existing or potentially available facilities. This later group would include the Township, itself, once community parkland is acquired.

With a total population expected to range only as high as 4,000 by the year 2010, special population groups within the Township are not likely to comprise sufficient members to justify provision of highly specialized recreational programming. Camp Hill Village, with approximately 110 residents, houses the only significant handicapped population in West Vincent. It is essentially a self-contained community, providing for a full range of life experience, including appropriate recreation opportunities. The senior population (over 65) in West Vincent represents approximately ten percent of the total, or up to 400 by 2010. Programs of specific interest to senior citizens are offered at the Phoenixville Senior Center, a private, non-profit agency receiving funding support from the Department of Aging. Free transportation is available to West Vincent seniors on demand by Chester County Paratransit Service. Additional programs of interest to senior citizens are found among those offered by the Adult School (evening) at Owen J. Roberts High School. The Phoenixville YMCA offers a "Fitness over Fifty" program as well as swimming and aquatic exercise for individuals with physical problems.

Adult and youth athletics are offered regionally, coordinated through private athletic leagues. Examples include the Coventry Little League, the Coventry Soccer League, the Lionville Youth Association (LYA), and the North Chester Optimist Club. The Phoenixville YMCA offers relatively extensive recreational opportunities, including a full range of aquatic programs. The Owen J. Roberts School District makes its grounds and facilities available for public recreation during non-school hours. School athletic teams are granted priority use, generally until 5:30 pm. The high school swimming pool is open for "family swim" during the winter on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings. At other times the pool may be reserved, with provision for lifeguard and maintenance (essentially limiting it to organized group use). The Adult School offers a variety of evening programs, ranging from ballroom dancing and craft classes to yoga. Course offerings are selected based on known request and availability of teachers.

Actual participation rates in regional recreation programs by West Vincent residents are not available. Limited results of the 1989 Township open space survey infer recreational participation and preferences in keeping with regional norms; a desire for "more field space" was frequently expressed. More unique to West Vincent was interest expressed in formal designation of a "community green" as a focus for special events such as holiday parades and

community gatherings. In the course of surveying regional recreation providers, most private clubs in the area claimed not to be used to capacity. In contrast, local youth leagues reported rapid increases in participation. Again, available field space is foreseen as a clear limiting factor. This fact would seem to underline the importance of field development as an early phase of community park development in West Vincent. The youth leagues have characteristically assisted municipal development of sport fields, helping to stretch the impact of municipal expenditures for recreation.

The Township Environmental Advisory Council has proposed distribution of a detailed recreational survey which would provide more precise insight into community recreation participation and preferences. Survey of Township residents can assist in fine-tuning priority for facility and program development at future Township parks, including development of specialized facilities if sufficient demand were found. A more detailed inventory of locally available recreation facilities and programs is included as Appendix IV.

CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION ISSUES & STRATEGIES

Open space resources cover a broad range of landscape issues and features, as evidenced by the breadth of discussion in this document, ranging from scenic vistas through diverse environmental constraints to historic sites and recreational opportunities. If we were indeed able to achieve broad conservation, literally maintaining West Vincent as a "green-line" park, could development also be accommodated? If we successfully preserve agricultural lands, woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, open vistas, scenic roadsides, historic settings, and trails, what's left? In some cases, the very diversity of open space resources may seem problematic; some resources may even appear incompatible. As seen with the case study of Larking Hill Farm, a seemingly narrow focus on visual or scenic preservation may not inherently serve agricultural preservation objectives as well. Clearly, not all resources can be conserved to the same degree. Priorities must be articulated on a case-by-case basis, as development plans are reviewed, as individuals plan for their properties, etc.

COMPOSITE OPEN SPACE RESOURCE ANALYSIS

While nothing can replace adequate planning at the site level, an overall look at open space resources can extend our focus community-wide and allow us to discern broad priorities for conservation action. Local planning efforts can further emphasize protection of resources not already restricted from development in some manner. The "Composite Open Space Resources" map groups the resources described in depth in the preceding sections, based on similar degree of vulnerability to development impacts.

"Critical Open Space" is the first category of open space resources mapped. These are resources that essentially should not be disturbed by development activity. Included are resources which either preclude development for reason of environmental hazard or which are so sensitive that almost any development would destroy their resource values. As mapped, critical open space includes alluvial, hydric or seasonally high water table soils, slopes steeper than 25 percent, and 50-foot minimum streambank buffer areas. The critical resource values of these areas are described in the "Environmental Quality" section of this document. To review the individual locations of these critical resource categories, please refer to: 1) the "Water Resources" map, for all but slopes steeper than 25 percent; and 2)

the "Slope" map. They are all shown together on the "Composite Open Space Resources" map.

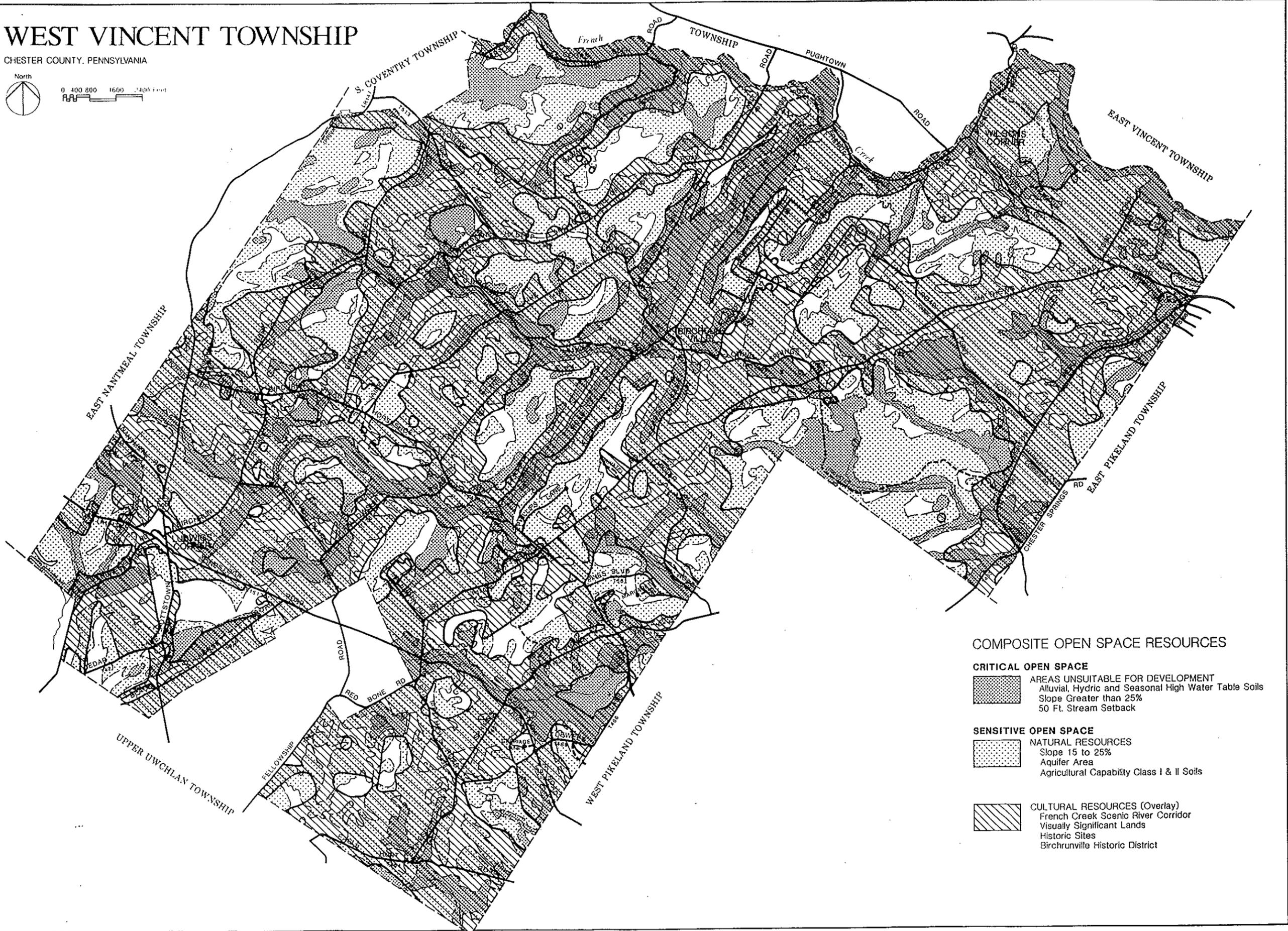
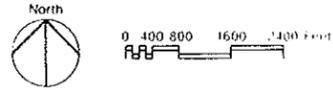
"Sensitive Open Space" areas are deemed to be able to accommodate development through careful planning and design processes. While the diverse resources in this category infer a wide variety of conservation planning issues, they are united in that appropriate design can minimize or mitigate the impacts of development upon resource values. Included are both natural and cultural resources. As cultural resource areas frequently overlap the geographic extent of both "sensitive" and "critical" natural resources, they are mapped as an overlay in a cross-hatch pattern. As mapped, sensitive natural resources include moderately steep slopes between 15 and 25 percent, prime agricultural soils (Agricultural Capability Classes I & II), and the primary sandstone aquifer area in the northeastern part of the Township. These areas are discussed in greater depth in the "Environmental Quality" and "Agricultural Resources" sections of this document. Sensitive cultural resources are mapped to include the French Creek Scenic River Corridor, lands mapped as "visually significant," the Birchrunville National Register historic district, and individual historic sites. The "Visual Landscape Quality" and "Scenic Roadways" sections of this document deal extensively with visual resource issues and their land planning implications. Historic resources and relevant planning issues and opportunities are explored under "Historic Resources."

To review the individual locations of mapped sensitive resource categories, please refer to: 1) the "Conservation and Development Potential" Map or other sources for the French Creek Scenic River Corridor; 2) the "Visually Significant Landscapes" Map; 3) the "Historic Resources" Map, for the Birchrunville district as well as individual sites; 4) the "Geology" Map, for the sandstone aquifer; 5) the "Slope" Map, for moderately steep slopes; and 6) the "Conservation Features" Map, for soils of Agricultural Capability Classes I, II and III. Only the prime Classes I and II have been included in the composite mapping of sensitive resources. Class III soils generally overlap with mapping of other resource issues, notably moderately steep slopes and areas with high groundwater table, otherwise included in this composite analysis.

The geographical patterns of "critical" and "sensitive" open space areas verify that nearly all of West Vincent Township is important from the standpoint of open space resource protection. This underlines the importance of careful planning on a variety of fronts, discussed further below.

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

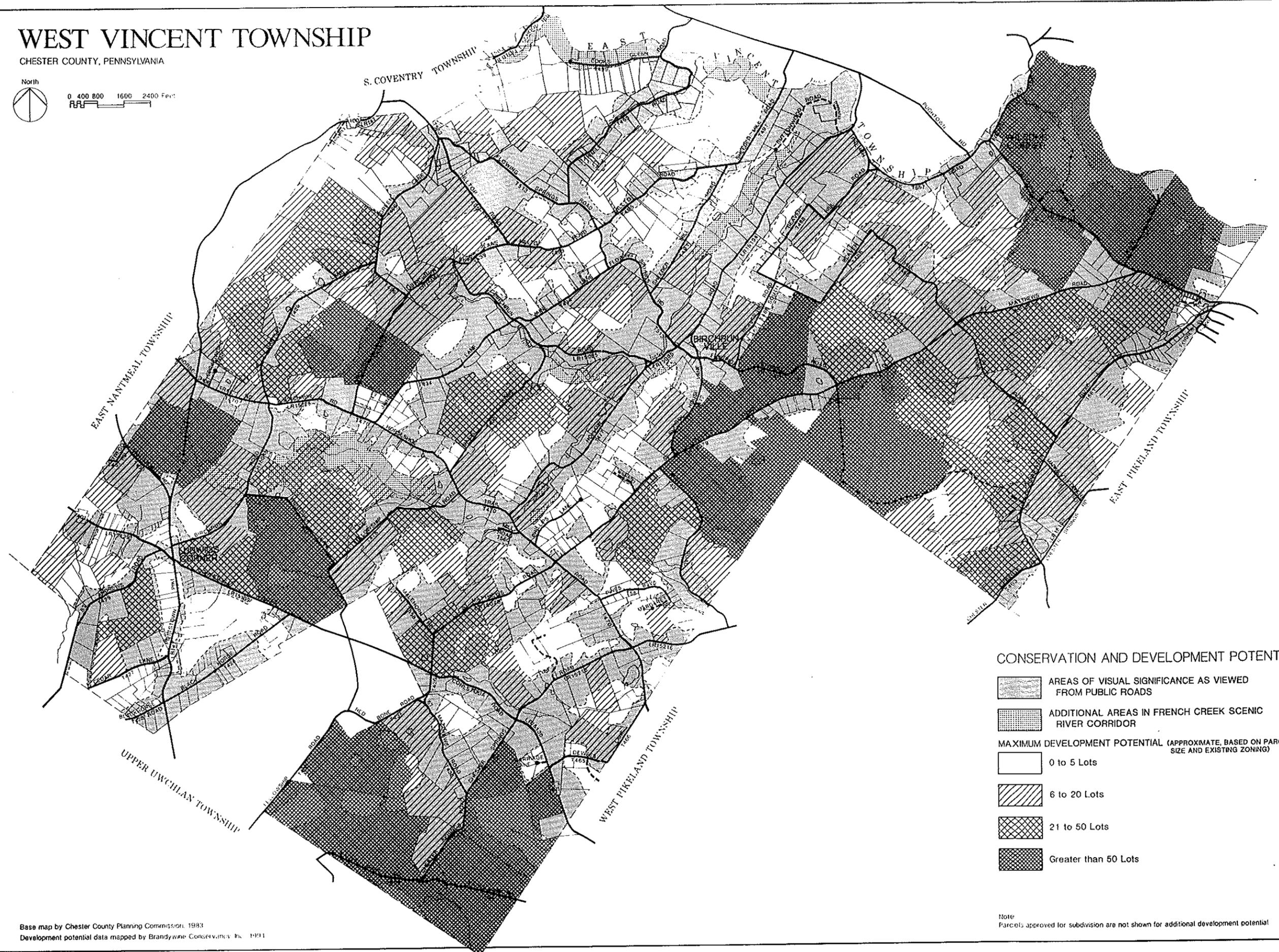
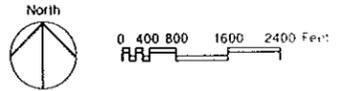


COMPOSITE OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

- CRITICAL OPEN SPACE**
 - AREAS UNSUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT
 - Alluvial, Hydric and Seasonal High Water Table Soils
 - Slope Greater than 25%
 - 50 Ft. Stream Setback
- SENSITIVE OPEN SPACE**
 - NATURAL RESOURCES
 - Slope 15 to 25%
 - Aquifer Area
 - Agricultural Capability Class I & II Soils
- CULTURAL RESOURCES (Overlay)**
 - French Creek Scenic River Corridor
 - Visually Significant Lands
 - Historic Sites
 - Birchrunville Historic District

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

-  AREAS OF VISUAL SIGNIFICANCE AS VIEWED FROM PUBLIC ROADS
-  ADDITIONAL AREAS IN FRENCH CREEK SCENIC RIVER CORRIDOR
- MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL (APPROXIMATE, BASED ON PARCEL SIZE AND EXISTING ZONING)
-  0 to 5 Lots
-  6 to 20 Lots
-  21 to 50 Lots
-  Greater than 50 Lots

Note
Parcels approved for subdivision are not shown for additional development potential

Base map by Chester County Planning Commission, 1983
Development potential data mapped by Brandywine Conservancy, Inc., 1991

Restricted Lands

Planning for conservation of open space resource values must acknowledge the results of existing efforts to restrict development or protect resources. Restricted lands fall into rather diverse categories generally either restricted by type of ownership or by regulatory provisions. While ownership is parcel-specific, most regulatory provisions are not. For ease and clarity of mapping, restricted lands are shown on a number of maps in this report.

In West Vincent Township, very little land is under some form of formal conservation ownership. The French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust holds conservation easement over 102.7 acres, including 64 acres of open space along French Creek that is owned in fee by Chester County. The Township holds an additional small parcel along French Creek and is seeking additional land purchases to extend the concept of the French Creek Greenway. East Pikeland Township's parkland includes 22.1 acres along French Creek that lap over into West Vincent. These areas are located primarily along the French Creek Greenway and fall within areas of critical or sensitive open space. They are mapped on the "Existing Open Space Lands and Facilities" map. Also shown on that map are areas within the Township Agricultural Security Area.

Considerable open space might be considered to be "protected" through restriction by regulatory provision. However, a very important caveat to analysis of the impact of regulatory provisions on land use is a dependence upon consistent administration of those provisions. A further necessary corollary for true "protection" is the need for good design.

West Vincent Township's Zoning Ordinance restricts nearly all development from floodplains, as defined for the federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and from slopes steeper than 25 percent. FEMA floodplain mapping is shown on the "Water Resources" map, while slopes greater than 25% are delineated on the "Slope" map. Both categories are included within the area mapped as "critical open space." Pennsylvania DER and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers administer state and federal wetlands regulations respectively. Wetlands included in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) are depicted on the "Water Resources" map. Additional wetlands, not inventoried, will likely fall within areas defined as hydric or seasonal high water table soils, also shown on that map. In addition, DER and the Chester County Health Department govern permitting of sewage disposal systems. Areas mapped as hydric soils or seasonal high water table, which

permitted flexibility may demand demonstration of more than the minimal protection efforts otherwise required. This might include, for example, protection and/or buffering of areas not fully covered by regulatory provisions, such as stream bank corridors and unregulated wetlands. Flexible approaches to land planning and development, from both public and private perspectives are discussed below. Township resource protection provisions should be reviewed periodically to assess their effectiveness and discern any appropriate revision. Further incorporation of site analyses requirements, impact assessment, net-out provisions, resource conservation and buffer requirements could focus even more strictly on conservation of critical open space resource values.

Conserve Sensitive Open Space through Planning and Design

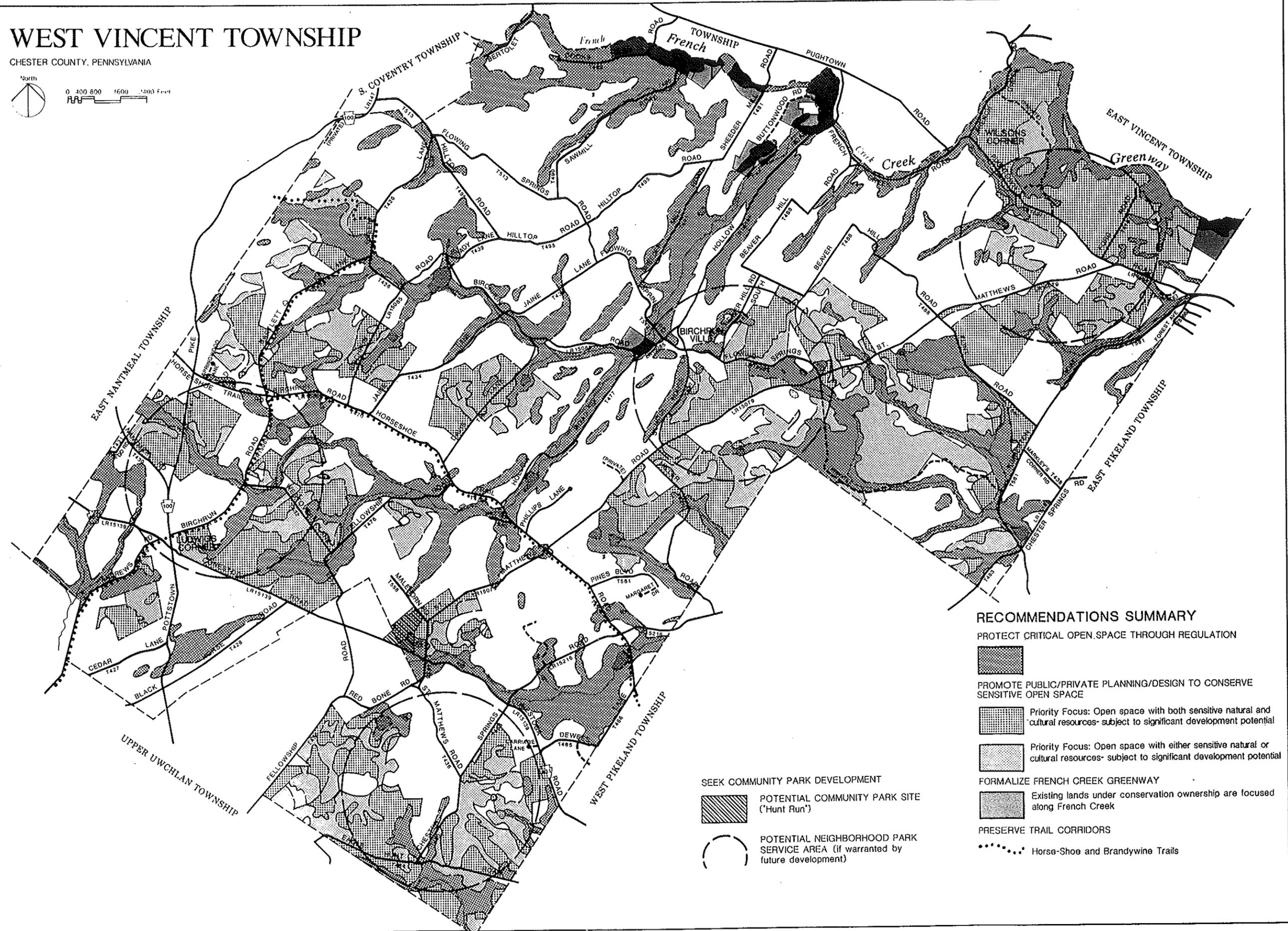
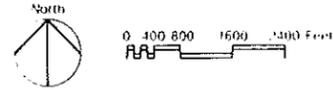
1) Encourage private conservation planning efforts, and 2) work to ensure that new development incorporates resource conservation objectives. Areas grouped as "sensitive open space" have been defined above as areas deemed able to accommodate introduction of new development through careful planning and design. They include both sensitive natural resources: moderately steep slopes, prime agricultural soils, and the sandstone aquifer; and sensitive cultural resources: the French Creek Scenic River Corridor, other "visually significant" lands, and historic resources.

Protection of "sensitive open space" resource values need not preclude development, but rather depends upon its careful delimitation through planning and design. Focus on private conservation and limited development efforts can afford the greatest opportunities for sensitive design. A Township role to promote such private efforts is suggested in the following text section. It has tentatively been termed the "West Vincent Township Landowner Cooperative Program." (Please refer to text section entitled, "Private Land Stewardship Actions.")

Even in cases of very limited introduction of new development to West Vincent's open space landscape, thoughtful siting is necessary to minimize or mitigate potentially negative impacts to sensitive open space resources. It is particularly important on tracts where significant amounts of development might be introduced. The Conservation and Development Potential map assesses approximate development potential on tracts throughout West Vincent, based on tract size and current zoning provisions.

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



- ### RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY
- 
PROTECT CRITICAL OPEN SPACE THROUGH REGULATION
 - 
PROMOTE PUBLIC/PRIVATE PLANNING/DESIGN TO CONSERVE SENSITIVE OPEN SPACE
 - 
Priority Focus: Open space with both sensitive natural and cultural resources- subject to significant development potential
 - 
Priority Focus: Open space with either sensitive natural or cultural resources- subject to significant development potential
 - 
FORMALIZE FRENCH CREEK GREENWAY
 Existing lands under conservation ownership are focused along French Creek
 - 
PRESERVE TRAIL CORRIDORS
 Horse-Shoe and Brandywine Trails
 - 
SEEK COMMUNITY PARK DEVELOPMENT
 POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PARK SITE ("Hunt Run")
 - 
POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA (if warranted by future development)

Tracts with the greatest development potential also infer the greatest potential conflict with resource protection objectives, particularly protection of extensive agricultural soils, scenic landscape qualities, and natural diversity. The tracts of land with the greatest development potential are relatively large and often comprise diverse landscapes. They also may offer great potential for resource conservation through flexible approaches to siting and design. Thus, the Recommendations Summary map assigns priority to protection of "sensitive open space" areas located on tracts with a development potential of more than twenty units (minimum tract size varies from 40-100 acres, depending on zoning district). These areas are shown on the Recommendations Summary map. All other sensitive open space resource areas are shown on the Composite Open Space Resources map and on individual resource mapping.

The summary map further portrays two separate "priority focus" areas for sensitive open space resources. The two "priority focus" areas infer not only differing priority from the standpoint of applying limited resources and energy, but differing approaches to conservation planning and design.

The **first priority focus** mapped shows those areas where both sensitive natural and sensitive cultural resources have been mapped on tracts with significant development potential. Here, in particular, simply buffering immediate resource areas may not afford sufficient protection. Simple avoidance of moderate slope areas or prime agricultural soils, for example, may nudge development into the midst of an historic setting or scenic view. Instead, development design must carefully analyze and seek to protect the essential character of all relevant open space resources. **These areas should be a primary focus of private conservation efforts and/or limited development.** They should be among initial target areas of the landowners cooperative program. Where full development potential is pursued in these areas, total resource protection may not prove feasible, as demonstrated at Larking Hill Farm (Please refer to discussion of case study). In such cases, "tradeoffs" must be assessed focussed on maximum resource protection in the context of the applicant's legitimate land development objectives.

The **second priority focus** draws attention to those areas mapped as either sensitive natural or sensitive cultural resources. These areas also should be among the first areas of focus of the landowners cooperative program. Yet here, resource protection objectives might be addressed more simply. For example, impact to moderate slopes can generally be avoided through appropriate siting and design, particularly in view of low gross densities of

development permitted in West Vincent. Nor does protection of the sandstone aquifer alone infer particular locational constraint for development, but rather calls for overall coverage limitations and careful management of both stormwater and wastewater (Please refer to the "Environmental Quality" text for further discussion of such detail).

Impact to sensitive cultural resource values also can usually be minimized or mitigated by design. Cultural resources have been measured primarily in terms of visual landscape quality. For example, conservation of primary view lines, or of the integrity of historic settings, requires thoughtful design guidelines rather than elimination of structural development. As noted, formal regulation of historic resources could extend to detailed design review in a Birchrunville Historic District if adopted under Act 167.

True protection of agriculture essentially requires total avoidance by development of relatively large contiguous land areas. This suggests that **active farmland should be considered as a specific focus of Township sponsored private conservation efforts**, including appropriate assistance to farmowners who may seek to participate in state/county programs for purchase of development rights. Already, members of the Township EAC have approached Chester County's Agricultural Land Preservation Board to suggest changes in participation selection criteria that would better recognize the value of farmland in communities like West Vincent.

Reflecting the case-by-case nature of resource protection objectives, diverse approaches toward formally bringing design sensitivity into public and private land planning processes are discussed further under "Planning for Open Space Conservation" below.

Relationship of Resources Protection Priorities to Comprehensive Land Use Planning Efforts

Chester County Land Use Plan

As introduced in the "Open Space Planning Context" section of this document, the 1988 Chester County Land Use Plan foresees varying categories of future development and conservation, four of which are significant in West Vincent Township:

Development Reserve areas are anticipated to evolve into a suburban landscape over time, and are considered appropriate areas for "overflow" development of relative concentration, which cannot be accommodated in the more narrowly defined "suburban

development" areas. Only a small portion of West Vincent Township has been mapped as "development reserve," in the area of Ludwigs Corner. Most of it does not coincide with West Vincent's priority open space resource protection areas, as delineated on the Recommendations Summary map (the very fringe of the "development reserve" area, at the southwestern boundary with Upper Uwchlan is designated by the County as "suburban development," and includes no areas mapped by the Township as priority open space).

Fingers of "critical open space" are found in the "development reserve:" 1) along headwaters of a Marsh Creek tributary along St. Andrews Road in the western corner of the Township; 2) on headwaters of Birch Run to the northeast of the intersection of Routes 100 and 401; and 3) on the steep north slope of Black Horse Hill near the Upper Uwchlan Township line. Areas of first and second priority "sensitive open space" are found most notably to the immediate northeast of the Ludwig's Corner intersection, as well as to the interior of the block of land bounded by Cedar Lane, Pottstown Pike (Route 100), and St. Andrews Road.

On the whole, development expansion in this area need not conflict with open space resource protection objectives, particularly: 1) if "net-out" provisions force gross density to respect environmental constraints, particularly those embodied in areas of "critical open space;" and 2) if locational and design criteria are imposed to ensure resource sensitivity within development sites. As noted, these approaches are discussed more fully in the sections which follow.

Rural Development areas are planned for preservation of "the open, rural character." They are expected to continue to be characterized primarily by low intensity land uses, including "agriculture, woodlands, agricultural support businesses, and low density residential uses," but also will "contain villages and hamlets serving local needs." Since areas denoted "rural development" include most of West Vincent Township, rural preservation objectives may be viewed as entirely in concert with the objectives of this plan, so long as detailed design criteria are focused on resource sensitivity as discussed.

Agriculture is envisioned by the County to continue as the primary use in two relatively large sections of West Vincent Township, including an area to the southeast of St. Matthews Road lapping into the northern corner of West Pikeland Township, and an area in the west straddling Route 100 to the north of Ludwigs Corner, and extending broadly into East Nantmeal Township. Chester County aims "to support agriculture as the primary land

use in these areas and as a valued element of the economy of the County." This laudable objective is also completely in sync with West Vincent's resource protection objectives as the Recommendations Summary map shows relatively high concentrations of priority open space in those broad areas.

Stream Valley Greenways have been designated by Chester County along the French Creek, Birch Run, and a tributary to the Pickering Creek in West Vincent Township. The County's hope "to restrict development along streams in order to protect this valuable natural resource, preserve open space and provide for a continuous stream valley [open space] system" is right in line with West Vincent's mapping of all of those corridors as "critical open space." In addition, the County Land Use Plan would infer specific support for Township efforts to implement a formal greenway along French Creek.

West Vincent Township Future Land Use Plan & Zoning Ordinance

The Land Use Plan map, prepared as part of the 1985 Plan Update, recognizes the special attributes of a number of open space resources assessed as "critical" or "sensitive" herein. The 1985 Plan Update pays particular attention to the resource values associated with floodplain and wet soils, slopes steeper than 25 percent, prime agricultural soils, and the French Creek Scenic River Corridor. Overall, current provisions of the West Vincent Township Zoning Ordinance follow the recommended future land use pattern fairly closely.

Since nearly all areas defined as "critical open space" are included within areas noted for "special consideration" by the 1985 Plan Update these areas are mapped separately from areas designated for future development. Current zoning provisions restrict development potential in these areas, as discussed above. Most of the lands falling within priority areas of "sensitive open space," as mapped on the Recommendations Summary map, have been designated as recommended areas for low density development (one unit per 2-5 acres). As noted above, given sufficient flexibility, development at low gross densities can allow for sensitive design and thereby afford conservation of significant open space resource values. From most resource conservation perspectives, "development" need not be viewed as an "all or nothing" prospect. Farmland preservation is the notable exception, as evident in the Larking Hill case study. The 1985 Plan Update centers recommended areas for more intense development at Ludwig's Corner and in the northeastern area of the Township, particularly to the north of Pughtown Road.

LAND USE PLAN

RESIDENTIAL

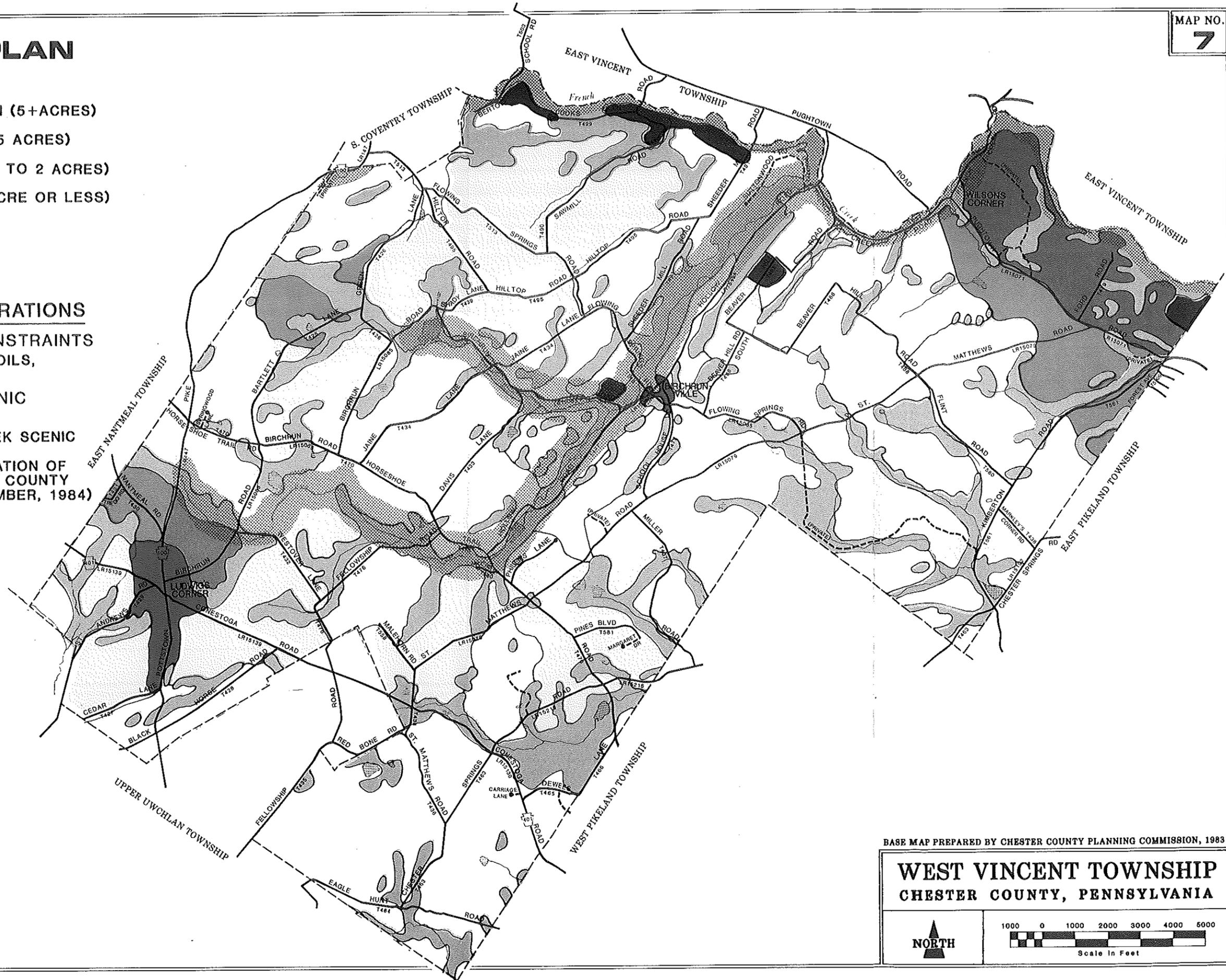
-  RURAL CONSERVATION (5+ACRES)
-  LOW DENSITY (2 TO 5 ACRES)
-  MEDIUM DENSITY (1/2 TO 2 ACRES)
-  HIGH DENSITY (1/2 ACRE OR LESS)

COMMERCIAL

-  LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
-  RECREATION

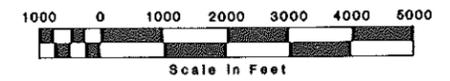
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

-  ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS
(FLOODPLAIN, WET SOILS,
AND 25%+ SLOPES).
-  FRENCH CREEK SCENIC
RIVER CORRIDOR
(FROM "FRENCH CREEK SCENIC
RIVER MANAGEMENT
GUIDELINES", FEDERATION OF
NORTHERN CHESTER COUNTY
COMMUNITIES, DECEMBER, 1984)



BASE MAP PREPARED BY CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, 1983

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



Most of the immediate vicinity of Ludwig's Corner does not fall within priority open space resource protection areas, as shown on the Recommendations Summary map. The greatest potential for conflict between development and resource protection objectives would seem to lie in the area to the east of the corner, between Birchrun Road and Route 401, and in an area a little further to the north, between Route 100 and Nantmeal Road (just north of the fire company and the horse show grounds). While not specifically prescribed in the Comprehensive Plan, development along traditional "village" or "town" patterns could help to incorporate and protect both natural and cultural resources at Ludwig's Corner through careful design.

In the northeastern part of the Township, intense development projected by the Comprehensive Plan is located in direct conflict with priorities for conservation of sensitive open space resources. Development here easily could disturb the quality of the only significant aquifer in the Township as well as prime agricultural soils, noted scenic landscapes, and the French Creek Greenway. Here too, existing Township Zoning Ordinance provisions would permit by far the greatest potential intensity of development. In light of this apparent conflict between resource and regulation, the Township would do well to consider adjusting current zoning provisions in the PRD and RM districts. Options may include reduction in gross density, further imposition of design control, or even removal of these high density districts to other location(s), such as Ludwig's Corner.

The northeastern area also might serve as an area of focus for Township promotion of private conservation or limited development planning. It should be noted that the area to the north of Pughtown Road is comprised primarily of two relatively large properties. The larger is Camp Hill Village, a self-contained residential/farming community, whose institutional nature would seem to offer a certain degree of land use stability. The historic farm to the east of Camp Hill Village has been the subject of application for sale of development rights. To the south of Pughtown Road, areas designated for "medium-density residential development" (defined as one unit per 1/2-2 acres), lap into the larger area between Kimberton and St. Matthews Roads which has become the first focus of the Landowner Co-Operative Committee's activities. Several adjoining landowners are investigating mutually beneficial conservation planning approaches.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS: FIRST PRIORITIES

A variety of public and private approaches to conservation, often within the development planning process, are discussed in detail in the text sections which follow. A full menu of recommended action items for West Vincent Township forms the final section of this document. The following specific areas are recommended for priority attention, in large part due to potential conflict between resource protection and development objectives, as discussed above, and incorporating relevant land-based recreational objectives.

Focus Landowners Cooperative Efforts

- Initial focus of the "landowners cooperative" program has begun and should continue to focus on the area bounded by Miller Road, St. Matthews Road, Pughtown Road, and the boundaries of East and West Pikeland Townships. This area, involving twelve owners of 1,965 acres and lapping onto West Pikeland Township, is comprised predominantly of areas of critical and sensitive open space.
- Extension of the initial focus area across St. Matthews Road should be considered, to incorporate a relatively large contiguous area of priority open space straddling Flowing Springs Road. Informal extension also should be considered to offer appropriate assistance to farmland preservation efforts north of Pughtown Road.
- Additional focus areas for landowner cooperative efforts should include 1) the area to the east of Birchrun Road and north of Route 401 centered on Westover Lane and Fellowship Road, and extending to the Birchrun Hollow and nearby areas of priority open space along Davis Lane; and 2) the area straddling Route 100 to the immediate north of Nantmeal Road.
- Pending impacts of ongoing development proposals in the vicinity, further focus for landowner cooperative efforts could include 1) the Eagle Farm area in the southern corner of the Township (vicinity of Larking Hill Farm); and 2) the area straddling Bartlett Lane (vicinity of Wetherill Farms).

Focus Open Space Land Acquisition Efforts

- Continue efforts to acquire fee title or appropriate conservation and recreational access easements to parcels along the French Creek Greenway (please refer to "Recreational Resources" text).
- Continue efforts to acquire a community parksite, as discussed under "Recreational Resources."
- In the longer term, in areas where landowner's cooperative or other efforts are successful in establishing a basic pattern of conservation, it would be appropriate to seek acquisition of priority open space under threat of imminent development.
- Seek to establish or acquire, if necessary, formal rights-of-way (particularly off-road) for the Horseshoe Trail, the Brandywine Trail, and other trails as recommended by the EAC in cooperation with the Trails Preservation Association.

Focus Ordinance Enforcement, Review, and Amendment

- Monitor ordinance enforcement to ensure that both administration and compliance are effective, particularly in regard to conservation of defined critical open space. Seek to extend ordinance protection to unregulated wetlands and streambank corridors.
- Review ordinance provisions on a periodic basis and pursue amendment to refine or augment provisions as needed. Provisions for cluster and lot-averaging, site analyses and/or environmental impact analysis, environmental "net-out," natural features conservation, open space management, historic preservation, dedication of fee-in-lieu of open space, and transfer of development rights warrant early consideration, as discussed in the following text sections, and under the appropriate topical headings.

PLANNING FOR OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION

Ultimately, the actual working out of any land development plan, and the degree to which it is sensitive to open space resources, is primarily the purview of the individual landowner/developer and/or his designer. Existing regulations require that development avoid a "fingery" network of environmentally constrained lands (floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands). Other open space resources also might be given careful consideration by design, with new development "fitted" to the characteristic landscape. Flexibility is paramount. The uniform platting of large lots offers a mere hit-or-miss prospect for resource protection. As illustrated at Larking Hill Farm and elsewhere, ordinance provisions might regularly be monitored as to their effectiveness in actually furthering community objectives. Local ordinances represent a dynamic planning tool. They should never be considered sacrosanct.

Flexibility also must extend to the landowner/applicant's approach to land use decisions and property disposition. Financial objectives indicate a very real open space resource as well. Opportunities to marry individual financial objectives to community resource protection objectives should never be overlooked. Again, the example of Larking Hill Farm is instructive. Estate planning prior to sale to a developer/applicant may have permitted financially-prudent consideration of a greater range of land planning scenarios. The vital role of the individual landowner in promoting conservation is discussed further below.

Know Your Resource

The first step toward sensitive treatment of open space resources within potential development sites is their identification. If both prospective developer and the community share recognition and understanding of open space resources, long-term conservation of those resources might more readily be assured. Members of official township bodies must be familiar with critical open space issues and resources, in order to bring them to the fore at the very beginning of the development review process. Inventories of open space resources and visual analyses should be kept on record (if not on display) in the township offices.

The Township has initiated an informal process with developer/applicants, aimed at mutual recognition of site resources. The Environmental Advisory Council has been invited to provide input to the Planning Commission, while various Township representatives have

on numerous occasions offered to walk specific sites with prospective applicants. The Township should consider further enactment of specific provisions to require developers to identify open space resources on proposed development sites. This can be accomplished through "fine-tuning" of existing plan submission requirements. Ideally, the broadest possible inventory/analysis of open space resource issues should be available prior to formal Preliminary Plan submission, i.e., making maximum beneficial use of the Sketch Plan process.

The Environmental Advisory Council has suggested the preparation of a "checklist," as a "hand-out" for prospective applicants, indicating site characteristics and issues of concern to the Township (many of which ultimately would be required to be identified at preliminary and final plan submission). Such a checklist could help bring the applicant "up to speed" regarding Township planning and resource protection objectives at (or even prior to) sketch plan level.

The next logical step might be to further require prospective developers evaluate the manner and degree to which proposed development may impact identified open space resources. Applicants could also be required to suggest alternative means to mitigate impacts denoted as or considered by the Township to be negative. A formal review role for the Environmental Advisory Council adjunct to the Planning Commission, should be established. In certain cases, where major open space impacts are foreseen, it will prove wise to bring in professional planning review.

Permit and Encourage Flexible Approaches to Design

Once site resources have been identified, the key to incorporating them into development plans in a positive fashion is a flexible approach to site design. Variation in lot configuration and situation are often essential, as is variety in the form of the built environment. For example, natural site boundaries -- treelines, hedgerows, streams, woodlots, meadow edges, old roadways -- might be used as lines of division within new development. This can ease the visual transition between the former landscape and the future, while breaking up the scale of new development along seemingly natural and even historical lines.

West Vincent Township's existing ordinance provisions, as minimum standards, do not pretend to prescribe design. Unfortunately, unless prospective developers have both an

understanding and an interest in community objectives and in the resources at hand, they are unlikely to seek flexibility within the context of what are often perceived to be rigid rules. It takes a clear signal from the township to nudge a prospective developer toward more sensitive, and perhaps creative, design. Larking Hill Farm serves as a case in point. Adoption of the new "Village Cluster" or "Visual Resource Protection Development" ordinance section to permit implementation of alternative planning approaches was a big step. Otherwise, existing cluster and lot-averaging provisions only offer a start in that direction, as do efforts to educate applicants (distribution of summary brochure for this report, preparation of applicant's "checklist," for example), to require adequate site analysis, and to promote site visits. Several aspects of existing provisions may warrant revision or addition as follows:

- Strict threshold parcel size for use of "Visual Resource Protection Development" at 100 acres, for cluster at 30 acres, and for lot-averaging only within the range of 10-30 acres, may deny appropriate flexible design approaches to parcels not meeting those criteria;
- Except under the "Visual Resource Protection Development" provisions, minimum lot sizes remain somewhat restrictive, particularly at one acre in the R-3 district (15,000 sq. ft. in the R-2 district). There may be instances where a "tighter" cluster -- or even a variation on the traditional single-family unit type -- offers the most appropriate design solution relative to scenic quality and environmental concerns. The Larking Hill Farm case study has show how a significant proportion of the tract's development potential might be "hidden" in a tight-knit village growing out of the historic farm building complex;
- Required open space and buffer areas under cluster provisions seem to "overlap." Technically considered neither open space nor yard area, the required perimeter buffer effectively beefs up the rather low 30% minimum open space. Yet as a buffer, it infers common ownership which may or may not be appropriate in any given situation. The character and breadth of the buffer are important, but it needn't be prohibited from inclusion within private lots. Instead, as has been accomplished for the narrowly defined "Visual Resource Protection Development" option, minimum permanently restricted open space might be boosted to the range of 55-65%, with more flexible provision for ownership, including the option of lotting it out;

- If all permitted density has been used, the open space produced by a cluster plan absolutely must be restricted from further subdivision and development. Establishment of conservation easement(s) is the most effective guarantee (discussed further below);

- Standards and criteria for the configuration, amount, use, management, and long-term maintenance of open space areas must be carefully addressed. First, the configuration of open space areas must logically relate to both the resources being retained and to maintenance concerns. Minimum requirements as to the extent of open space to be provided must be carefully defined in terms of what may be included and what must be excluded from the minimum calculation. A plan for on-going management, including funding, of the open space should be established at the time of subdivision approval and made a part of the approved and recorded plan. The right to monitor and enforce the provisions of the open space management plan should be conferred upon the township.

- Cluster design resulting in creation of relatively small lots may appropriately require development of community wastewater treatment and disposal system(s), with wastewater disposed of beyond the immediate area of each individual lot. Of numerous wastewater system design and management approaches, land application is strongly recommended to recycle waters to the groundwater reservoir. Stream discharge results in the "export" of the groundwater resource);

- Similarly, development of community water supplies is likely to be necessary, along with development of collective stormwater management facilities. Proper long-term management of all community facilities must be adequately guaranteed.

The Township might also consider the implementation of carefully designed incentive zoning provisions which might grant increased densities, additional use types or other concessions, but only in return for specific design considerations which respect and enhance open space resources and community character (and/or meet other community planning objectives). Such design considerations might include greater setbacks, lower height limitations, reverse frontage lots, landscape buffers or other special landscaping, along with retention of natural and historic features.

Encourage Compatible "Infill" Development

Regulations might be adjusted to permit further development of existing village clusters, possibly even farm building complexes as suggested at Larking Hill Farm. New development could be required to demonstrate design which expands upon historical building patterns. Allowance could be made for characteristically shallow front and side yard setbacks, for example, with new development subject to design standards which ensure appropriate and compatible area, mass, and form limitations.

Adjust Regulations in Visually Significant Areas

In identified areas of environmental, historical, and visual significance for example, low gross densities should be maintained and provision for deeper setbacks considered to maintain the integrity of public views. Screening can be mandated where needed to diffuse visible intrusion of new development. Screening should use characteristic visual elements such as stone walls and deciduous treelines to maintain continuity with the visually significant landscape. Where larger structures are introduced, building height can be limited to a maximum compatible with characteristic visual elements (i.e., 35 feet). Design guidelines could be drafted to encourage structural design whose form, proportions, color, and materials draw from examples characteristic to West Vincent.

Zoning provisions aimed specifically at defined areas of visual significance could take the form of "overlay" provisions, extending even to the applicability of specific cluster (and lot-averaging) provisions.

PRIVATE LAND STEWARDSHIP ACTIONS

In addition to regulatory techniques, there are other preservation tools where the principal incentives are federal income, gift, and estate tax reductions. These techniques require negotiation and rely heavily on the willingness and desire of a landowner to preserve open space resources. Though the tax incentives associated with these tools are likely to generate larger and more immediate financial benefits for the taxpayer, they are also irreversible. Given the right set of circumstances, however, these mechanisms can go a long way towards preserving lands otherwise destined for development.

All such preservation tools involve a taxpayers gift of property or property rights to conservation organizations and/or municipal governments. The types of land donations include: 1) outright gifts of land; 2) gifts of land with retained life estate; 3) bargain sales of land; 4) gifts by codicil; and 5) conservation easement donations. Several private conservation organizations actively promote these preservation tools in Chester County; in West Vincent, notably, the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. The Trust was instrumental in the preservation of lands along French Creek by Chester County -- through fee-title acquisition -- and presently holds conservation easements on 102.7 acres of land in West Vincent, preserving portions of nine properties as permanent open space (refer to "Open Space Resources" map).

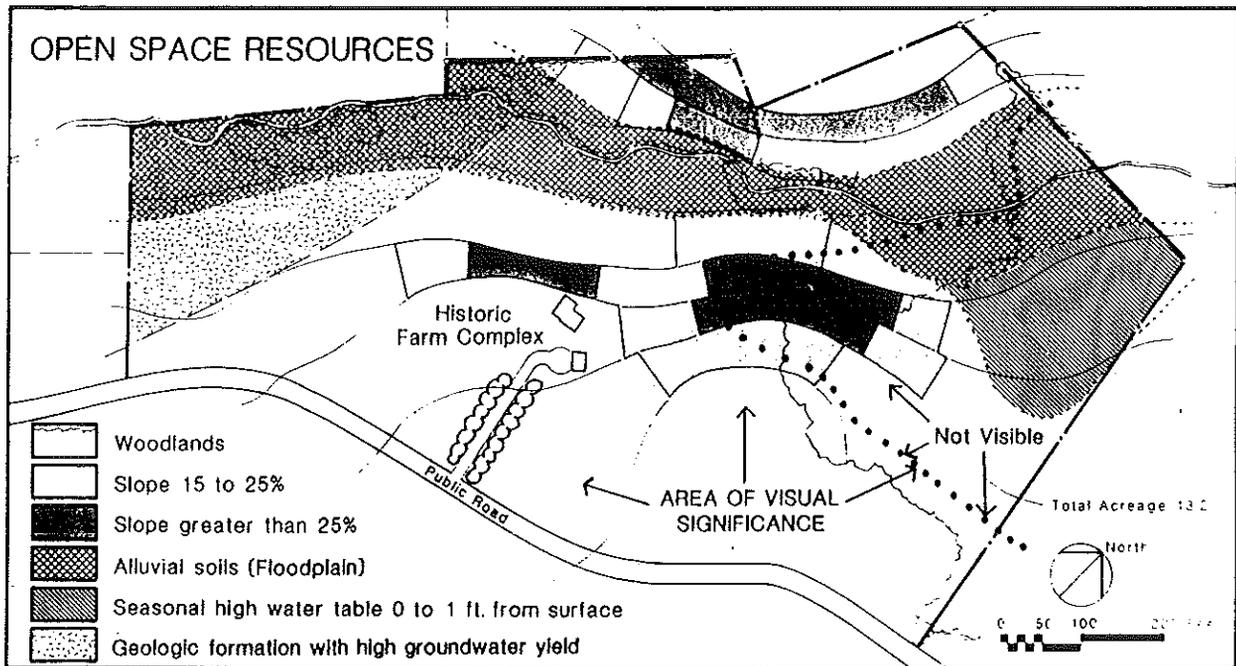
Private gifts of fee-simple title in land, as well as fee gifts with retained life estates, require a clear idea of the future use to be made of the land and a commitment of funds for its long-term maintenance. Bargain sales (where property is sold at below market value to a qualified charitable organization or municipal government and the seller claims a charitable gift for the uncompensated value) require up-front money for purchase as well as funds for maintenance. Where such means of land acquisition meet specific Township objectives (i.e., for parkland purposes), the Township may wish to accept the burden and cost of long-term maintenance. Where gifts of land for conservation purposes are made to qualified conservation organizations, further gift of endowment for purposes of maintenance are generally necessary yet often difficult to achieve. When appropriate tests of public benefit are met, all such gifts -- including gifts of endowment -- may be eligible for consideration as charitable donations for tax purposes.

The Conservation Easement is a Key Tool for Resource Protection

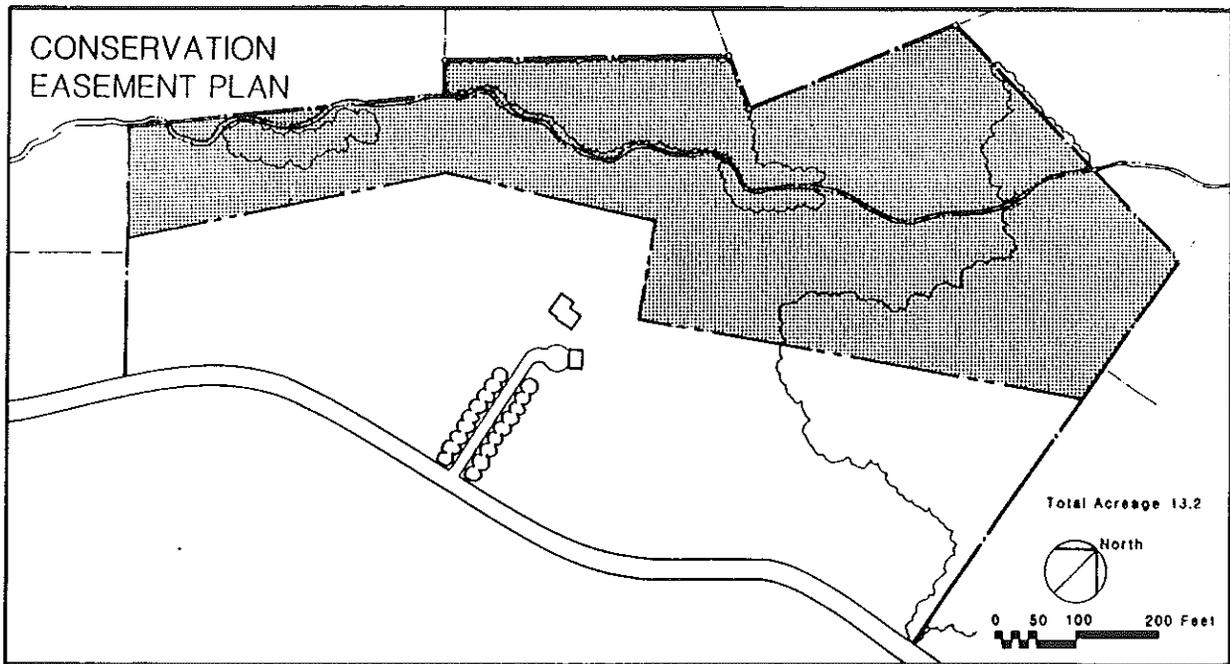
The conservation easement provides a way in which a property owner can participate in the long-term protection of valuable open space resources on lands intended to remain in private hands. It is a legal agreement between the property owner and an eligible recipient (generally a conservation organization or government entity), under which the landowner (donor) establishes restrictions usually in perpetuity over the use of the property. The recipient (donee) agrees to monitor the eased areas to assure that the easement terms are upheld. Because the public benefits from the permanent preservation of important scenic, historic, and natural areas, the donor may qualify for certain federal income tax deductions on the basis that the donated easement is a charitable contribution. Estate and gift tax deductions also can result from an easement donation, as a result of reduction in

valuation for those tax purposes. Since the landowner continues to own and manage the land, he also continues to pay appropriate taxes (though these may be reduced where use-value assessments are employed).

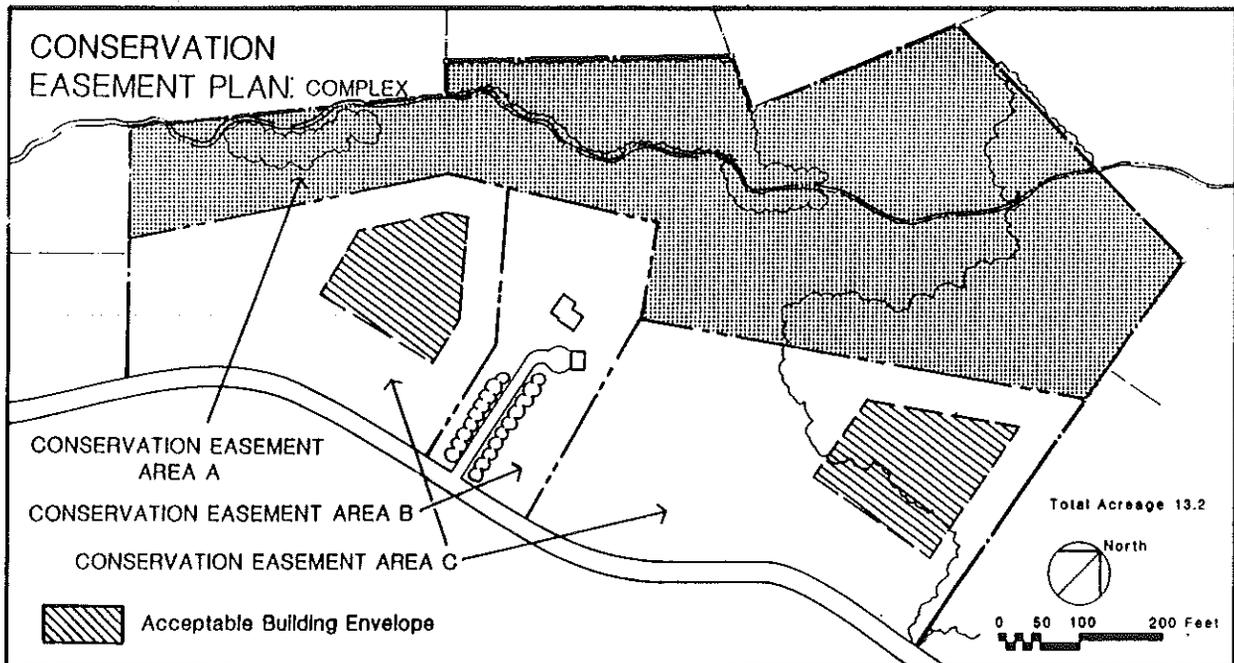
The degree of protection varies with each easement and each site, as do the conditions set between the donor and donee. Generally, easements are designed to protect identified open space resources, preclude or specifically limit development, and minimize land disturbances. Areas eased, and the degree of restriction imposed, should clearly coincide with individual and, ideally, community resource protection objectives. The series of diagrams on the following pages show a hypothetical tract of land with identified open space resources. A simple approach to a conservation easement is illustrated with a discrete area eased in concert with key resource protection objectives. Not all resources may be covered. The terms of such an easement would generally be quite restrictive, since development potential would remain unhindered on the remainder of the tract. The final



The first step in the development of a conservation easement is a careful look at the character of the tract at hand, including physical constraints, open space resources, historic resources, and visual or scenic quality.



A relatively simple easement might impose uniform restrictions across limited portions of a tract, usually those areas most environmentally constrained.



More complex easements might cover an entire tract, prescribing easement areas with varying degrees of restriction, based on open space conservation objectives. Specific areas and amounts of future development might also be fixed, as exemplified by the notation "acceptable building envelope".

diagram shows a more sophisticated approach to easement of the entire tract, with less restrictive provisions in certain areas, possibly extending to specific definition of the scope and character of future development permitted. In general, easement donations providing for public access have been successfully negotiated only where access already existed to walking, hiking, or equestrian trails and where landowners have been formally relieved of insurance liability, maintenance, and safety and security concerns.

While both individual landowners' and broad community objectives may be well served through establishment of even a single conservation easement, the tool is well suited to an area-wide approach toward resource protection. In fact, one large commitment to conservation can be used to leverage owners of other properties to make similar commitments. The net effect can be far greater stability in land values and protection of the landscape than an approach which relies solely on regulations. When adjacent tracts are subject to similar restrictions, no one landowner is "at the mercy" of his neighbor. As a result, prospective buyers will realize benefits well beyond the bounds of lands actually purchased, with market prices ultimately reflecting this fact. This has been demonstrated in areas where large-scale implementation of conservation easements has occurred. Notable examples include the Willistown and Unionville areas of Chester County, portions of the French Creek valley and, recently, the Pine Creek valley in neighboring West Pikeland Township.

Conservation Easements May Impact Public Regulation

Private implementation of conservation easements clearly can complement and reinforce public land planning objectives and regulatory approaches. Once an easement has been recorded, any subsequent proposal for development of a tract under easement must abide by the terms of the easement as well as local regulations, adding further guarantee to the protection of open space resources. The site analyses and documentation accomplished in the process of establishing easements can facilitate the public site design/review process. Knowledge of the terms of the easement is helpful, inferring a distinct "future" for the tract at hand.

One public regulatory caveat should be applied in cases where landowners donate fee title or easements for conservation purposes. If an individual makes a long-term

commitment of his land, he should not become subject to ever more rigid land use controls on the unrestricted balance of the tract. Historically, zoning and subdivision regulations have been designed to prevent the worst abuses of land. Here, however, the highly positive alternative, where an individual is willing to limit forever the density and configuration of development on his property, is utilized. Limits prescribed by easement in perpetuity go well beyond public regulatory requirements, which tend to be dynamic over time, varying both in fact and in the manner of their enforcement. Except where clearly in concert with the particular landowner's objectives, the Township should avoid any temptation to make private acts of stewardship the rationale for correspondingly restrictive land use control standards on that landowner's remaining developable ground.

Trade-offs frequently are made when a landowner wishes to develop all of his property, but the governing body wants to obtain or otherwise protect part of it. In such cases, the governing body may end up allowing for more intensive (than zoned) use of one part of the property in return for donation of the balance. When that process works in the reverse sequence, i.e., when someone voluntarily gives up far more than could ever be protected through regulation, it is sometimes suggested that he be accorded some degree of ongoing flexibility on the balance of the tract. However, it should be noted that this process, which involves a quid pro quo arrangement, could disqualify the tax deductibility of a proposed gift. As such, if the Township wishes to encourage charitable contributions by its citizens, it should be very careful not to initiate any action which could jeopardize the tax deductibility of the gift.

The Compromise Approach: Conservation & Limited Development

Another private land stewardship approach which has been used increasingly by the Natural Lands Trust and the Brandywine Conservancy, among others, is to work with landowners on "limited development" plans. Since most large landowners are unprepared to give up all future building rights on their land, most easements on large parcels provide for some future limited development. Where it is clear that a landowner would like to give fee title or easements on portions of his land and cluster more intensive development on other parts (e.g., in a less scenic or less environmentally sensitive area), limited development plans might appropriately be employed. In many cases this approach has proven essential in achieving a comprehensive conservation plan.

A number of cases have demonstrated that a landowner may derive better personal benefits as well as substantially greater community benefits by combining the limited development option with gifts of land or life estates and gifts of easements. One might imagine a number of scenarios where, for example, the charitable value of conservation easements or fee gifts is balanced against the tax bite of the income derived from limited development; or where, for the sake of the heirs as well as the land, conservation is employed to reduce overall estate tax valuation even while the income-producing aspects of limited development are retained. Such arrangements may satisfactorily fulfill individual and family financial objectives while ensuring the long-term protection of significant community open space resources.

Even in situations where full or extensive development value is utilized, if significant open space resources are to remain post-development, the conservation easement can prove to be a valuable tool toward long-term guarantee of resource protection, appropriate design considerations, and open space management. The recipient organization becomes a watchdog, beholden neither to the Applicant nor to potentially diverse citizen or, ultimately, homeowners' voices. The Larking Hill Farm case study can again provide an illustration. Alternative approaches to cluster planning, as suggested to date, would result in significant amounts of open space, which might variably be placed under the ownership of individuals or of homeowners' association(s). Conservation easements could be employed to prescribe management plans for both common and private open space, with long-term monitoring for compliance with easement terms becoming the responsibility of the recipient organization. As noted, such an easement would require funding commitment up front, in order to guarantee financial ability to uphold monitoring and enforcement responsibilities. The more complex an easement in terms of variable provisions, and the greater the potential for violation, the greater the cost. The potential for violation of conservation easement terms can be directly related to the number of land owners involved and the proximity/accessibility of residential use areas to the eased lands.

Private Land Stewardship Need Not Only Infer Immediate Action

Individual landowners may not wish to constrain their own use of the land, even while sharing long-term community resource protection objectives. A codicil may be used as an appendix or supplement to an individual's will. This mechanism can be employed to

implement an individual's wish to make a fee simple or conservation easement gift after death but before distribution and taxation of the estate. Pending individual circumstances, the heirs, on the one hand, will be constrained, while also protected from certain financial (and potentially land-use) impacts of heavy estate taxes. Codicils, however, are not permanent and can be revoked at any time prior to death.

Conservation easement or fee gifts may also be placed in escrow, designed to take effect when and if certain prescribed conditions take place. This approach is particularly useful where individual potential donors are uncertain of the objectives of neighboring landowners, and/or leery of the impact of restrictions placed on their properties in the absence of demonstrated area-wide commitment to conservation objectives. For example, a group of landowners might collectively agree to implementation of conservation easements once a certain number of them and/or certain lands are committed. Easements placed in escrow can help demonstrate the degree of commitment necessary to convince other landowners to join in participation.

The Township Role in Assisting Land Stewardship Efforts

As noted, West Vincent Township enjoys near "green-line park" stature. That perception is an important community resource, inferring a broad range of open space resource values. It is clearly in the Township's interest that conservation easements be implemented to guarantee long-term protection of community ("public") open space values across lands which may (and perhaps, for the most part, should) otherwise remain in private use. While the Township may become directly involved in negotiating and even acquiring conservation easements, for the most part the costs and responsibilities incumbent upon the easement-holder might best be left to qualified conservation organizations. Certainly the Township may suggest establishment of conservation easements during the subdivision and land development review process. Easements even may be required, to the extent that they would govern open space areas required by ordinance, becoming the chosen means to guarantee proper long-term management.

WEST VINCENT LANDOWNER COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

It is recommended that West Vincent Township encourage private implementation of conservation easements and other land stewardship efforts including, for example, participation in state/county agricultural preservation programs. For lack of a more imaginative name, let's call it the Landowner Cooperative Program. The program would aim to facilitate both formal and informal liaison between the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Open Space Committee (now Environmental Advisory Council or EAC) and individual landowners, local conservation organizations, and County and state programs for open space conservation. The primary focus of the program would be informational, making sure that West Vincent landowners are fully aware of all opportunities for land stewardship, including both financial incentives and costs. This could occur through both formal and informal informational meetings, and through introduction of individual landowners to appropriate conservation experts.

The Landowner Cooperative Program could be a primary focus of the on-going EAC. The EAC, on behalf of the Township, should set up and maintain a monitoring system to track landownership patterns, assess relative priority for conservation on a tract or tax parcel basis, monitor threats to open space resource protection, and draw attention to opportunities for resource protection efforts, particularly opportunities to effect multiple resource protection (i.e., visual/scenic, historic, agricultural, natural diversity, water resource, etc.). Such monitoring efforts need not be herculean. It is helpful to remember that fully thirty percent of West Vincent's open space is in the hands of just 15 landowners, 55 percent is held by 80 owners (as of 1990).

The chart at the end of this section suggests a basic monitoring format. This chart has been adapted from suggestions made by Natural Lands Trust to the National Park Service for use in the Horseshoe Trail corridor. Such a chart could be completed for each parcel or group of adjacent parcels held in separate ownership. It can serve to illustrate an immediate sense of both priority and urgency for conservation action. The charted range, from "high" to "low" susceptibility to change, could be visually dramatized through introduction of a color code (or pattern) -- red to green, for example. That code could then be correlated to a parcel map of the Township. This type of monitoring format might be

compiled and updated by the EAC possibly with additional volunteer assistance, starting with parcels of known or suspected priority as discussed below.

A first cut at assigning general priority for conservation is illustrated by the map entitled "Conservation & Development Potential." This map overlays defined areas of scenic/visual significance with approximate gross development potential, based upon the maximum number of units which might be achieved on any given tract under current zoning. Tracts already subdivided are not shown with additional development potential, even where actual development has not yet occurred. The darker, heavier patterns indicate greater amounts of potential development. These become even darker where lain over the grey of the scenic corridors. Thus, at a glance, the "blacker" the parcel, the greater the potential need to pursue conservation efforts. Not coincidentally, the Larking Hill Farm tract, for example, is quite dark. In contrast, the Birchrun valley is generally light. This is due to the relatively small size of most parcels in that area, in tandem with the 5-acre-minimum RC zoning district. Clearly, priority for conservation must be fine-tuned based on additional factors: the presence of other significant open space resources (agricultural value or natural diversity, for example) and known or anticipated landowner intentions.

Private land stewardship efforts may be sufficiently diverse to address a wide range of individual financial situations. In some cases, landowners may agree with community resource protection objectives and recognize longer-term personal or family financial benefits, yet remain unable or unwilling to commit "up-front" planning and endowment costs. Costs associated with the planning, preparation, documentation, and official recording of conservation easements, in some instances, can be substantial, as can an endowment sufficient to cover the long-term monitoring of an easement. The Township should consider establishment of a funding program to assist landowners with these burdens, at least where high-priority tracts are involved. Decisions regarding Township financial assistance would clearly require adherence to consistent threshold criteria, i.e., minimum level of conservation and/or limited development, magnitude of burden of planning and endowment costs relative to individual financial status, etc.

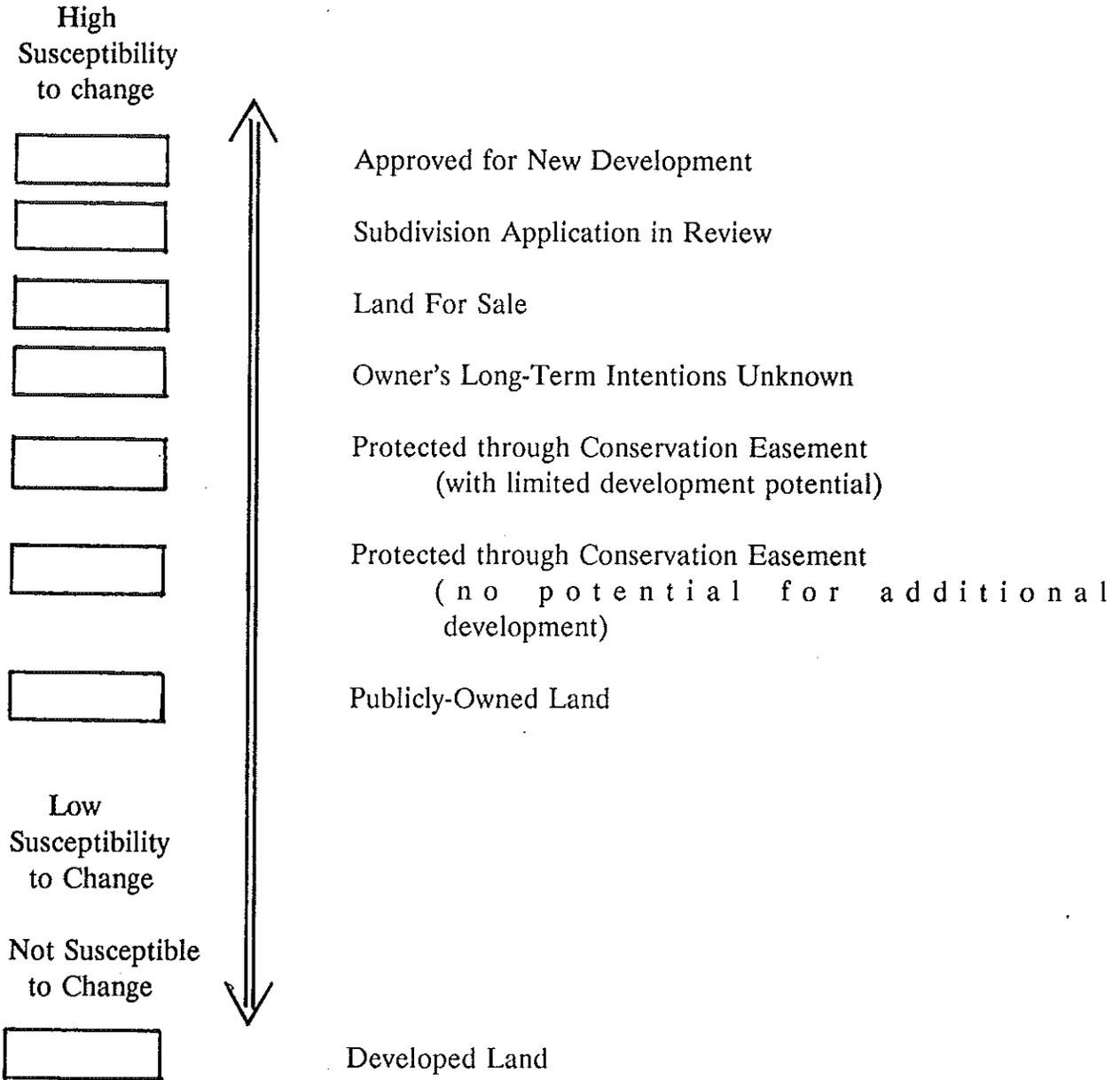
Seek Outside Funding for Landowner Cooperative Program

The Township should consider formal coordination with local conservation organizations and application to both private (foundations) and public funding sources to assist the establishment of a formal landowner assistance program. Such a program may nudge otherwise hesitant landowners toward conservation; the potential open space benefits may mean that considerable permanent open space is "leveraged" with relatively minor outlay of public funds, certainly less than would be involved in outright acquisition of open space or through purchased easements. Chester County's open space funding program does not provide for reimbursement of site-specific planning costs associated with conservation efforts. County funds may be used for purchase of conservation easements. In the case of a municipality, such easement must involve recreational access (can be passive such as trail access). By extension, such funds should be available for a "bargain purchase" of a conservation easement, designed to off-set the landowner's planning costs while still permitting him the tax impact of the charitable contribution for the incremental appraised value above the amount of the bargain sale. The planning costs actually paid up-front also may be tax deductible.

Complementary use of County funds earmarked for purchase of development rights on agricultural lands should also be explored, along with funds available to non-profit conservation organizations for purchase of lands or conservation easements (with or without formal recreational access). In these cases, the Township role may simply be helping to put the right parties in contact with one another. Funding opportunities are extremely dynamic and must be monitored on an on-going basis.

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP LANDOWNER COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Landowner Monitoring Form: Susceptibility to change



SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDED IMMEDIATE ACTION (1-2 year start-up time frame)

1. **Establish permanent Open Space Committee.** In December, 1991, as this planning effort was being finalized, the Township Supervisors formally established the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) which will fulfill this role. The EAC's primary responsibilities shall include inventory and monitoring of on-going open space and recreation issues, review of relevant aspects of development proposals, promotion of public and private efforts to conserve open space resources, fostering of community recognition and appreciation for those resources, and advise to the Planning Commission and Supervisors regarding same.
 - 1a. Assign first priority tasks to the EAC;
 - 1b. Establish annual budget for EAC, discerning and providing sufficient means to enable the Council to carry out general responsibilities, assigned tasks, and to engage appropriate consulting assistance where warranted. Consider earmarking specific revenue sources for open space programs.
 - 1c. Establish specific accounts for open space funds, particularly for funds generated via use of fee-in-lieu-of-open-space provisions.
2. **Formalize role for EAC in development review process;**
 - 2a. Establish process whereby Planning Commission refers plans involving open space issues to EAC for review and comment, within an assigned time frame. Committee review should occur at sketch plan level whenever possible;
 - 2b. The EAC should establish internal procedure for handling Planning Commission referrals. Site visits should be arranged with the applicant and available members of the Planning Commission where possible. Where the EAC believes needed, request should be made of the Planning Commission

and Supervisors for authorization to engage additional professional review and or alternative plan suggestion;

- 2c. Prepare applicant's "checklist," to be distributed via Township offices, to inform prospective developers of both required and desired site-analyses, as well as to inform him of the resource represented by this planning effort and the EAC.
3. **Encourage Landowner Cooperative Program**, setting up formal and informal liaison between the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, EAC and individual landowners, local conservation organizations, and County and state programs for open space conservation.
 - 3a. Set up monitoring system to track landownership patterns, relative priority for conservation on a tract or tax parcel basis, threats to open space resource protection, opportunities for multiple resource protection efforts (i.e., agricultural, trail recreation, visual/scenic, historic, natural diversity, water resource, etc.);
 - 3b. Establish formal and informal public information program to keep community and targeted landowners informed of all opportunities for resource protection within the context of potentially diverse financial objectives;
 - 3c. Seek to establish funding program to assist landowners with burden of planning, design, and open space management costs, where permanent Township open space resource protection objectives are achieved; set criteria for Township assistance, i.e., minimum level of conservation commitment and/or limited development.
 - 3d. Establish a Township easement monitoring process in coordination with area land trusts.

4. **Draft ordinance amendments** to promote open space resource protection objectives, in cooperation with Planning Commission:
 - 4a. **Revise cluster and lot-averaging provisions**, in view of recent adoption of "Visual Resource Protection Development Option." Key points to consider are the threshold and resource criteria for use of these provisions, formula(e) for calculation of "maximum achievable" density, minimum open space and buffer requirements, and flexible approaches to siting of dwellings and lot layout, including minimum lot size. Consider "mandatory" open space zoning approaches, perhaps using an overlay district, particularly for areas along the French Creek scenic rivers corridor, in other areas of mapped visually significant landscapes, along scenic roads, at working farms, and around historic sites and complexes;
 - 4b. **Require extensive site analyses.** Extend existing S/LDO provisions requiring prospective developers to identify all scenic, visual quality, agricultural, vegetative, wildlife, water resource, soil resource, recreational, historic and other open space resources on and adjacent to tracts under (preliminary/final) subdivision/land development application. Include additional language to stress use of site analyses to the greatest degree feasible during the sketch plan process;
 - 4c. **Consider broader application of "net-out" provisions**, excluding specific environmental constraints and other identified open space resources from required minimum net lot area or from the gross density calculation for any tract. Net-out provisions most logically relate to water quality issues, particularly sewage disposal, but other planning objectives may be served reasonably through this regulatory tool. Consider increasing threshold for "net" lot area from current 20,000 square feet; consider adding soils with seasonal high water table and delineated wetlands to list of exclusions (all or in part); consider increasing impact of net-out vis-a-vis PRD and cluster density calculation;
 - 4d. **Amend S/LDO Section 616.** Fine-tune existing provisions to reflect Act 170 amendments to the MPC, particularly to provide for specific identification of

lands/facilities to which fees-in-lieu shall be applied. Extend required dedication to all development (2 units+). Clarify the fee formula in regard to determination of "fair market value" of the lands for which fees are being dedicated in lieu. Consider revision of fee basis to cover specifically envisioned park development projects. Extend protection of trails to those along public rights-of-way (especially Horseshoe and Brandywine), calling for designation of separate (if parallel) trail rights-of-way.

- 4e. **Open Space Management.** Enact ordinance provisions requiring establishment (and submission) of plan(s) for the long-term maintenance and management of open space designated through the subdivision/land development process, including stipulation for adequate funding, insurance, etc., prior to approval of subdivision/land development plans;
 - 4f. **Demonstration of Conservation.** Consider requiring specific demonstration of conservation of open space resources as condition(s) for approval of any PRD, cluster development, lot-averaging, conditional use or special exception.
5. **Seek acquisition of community open space and parkland:**
- 5a. Continue to explore potential opportunities to acquire appropriate lands for community park development through the development process (during initial 1-2 year planning horizon);
 - 5b. Continue efforts to form a continuous greenway along French Creek. Coordinate conservation efforts with other agencies involved in the Greenway effort (i.e., Chester County, French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust). Seek less-than-fee acquisition (conservation easements or other open space guarantees) where fee acquisition is not feasible or practical (unwilling seller, for example, or parcel including lands well beyond the greenway corridor.
 - 5c. Formalize policy for acceptance of parkland and collection of fees-in-lieu of land for park development. Establish initial list of park/recreation facilities to which fees will be earmarked; review and update at least annually and

every time lands or funds are to be dedicated, based upon then unmet land and facility needs at community and neighborhood parks and play areas.

6. Establish subcommittees (of EAC, and, as desired, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors) to conduct the several tasks described herein and to formally undertake on-going monitoring of open space resource protection issues, including visual landscape quality, historic resources, scenic roadways, trails, park and recreational facilities and programs, landowner cooperative program, etc.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS (2-5 year start-up time frame, including recommended on-going efforts)

7. **Facilitate historic preservation efforts.**
 - 7a. Consider formal establishment of separate Historical Commission or adjunct committee of the EAC and/or Planning Commission to conduct the following efforts:
 - 7b. Compile all available historical research regarding the 231 sites inventoried by the Chester County Historic Sites Survey; refer to efforts previously conducted by Estelle Cremers and the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, as well as Chester County Historical Society library;
 - 7c. Evaluate the 231 sites to discern potential National Register status for both individual sites and prospective historic districts; assess degree of (local) historical significance in order to classify priority(ies) for preservation. Professional consultation is recommended;
 - 7d. Consider drafting, for recommendation to the Supervisors, specific ordinance provisions (as enabled under the MPC) aimed at protection of historic resources. Issues to be considered should include: 1) specific designation and classification of Township historic resources; 2) development of a permit process for demolition of designated historic resources, forcing a temporary "stay of execution," and requiring study of alternatives to demolition, i.e. re-use of historic structures; 3) additional landscape standards to buffer historical

settings; 4) allowance for additional units or additional permitted uses where landowner/applicants satisfactorily demonstrate preservation of historic resources;

7e. Consider establishment of an official Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB) to formally advise the Planning Commission and Supervisors regarding historical issues and to pass design review upon additions, demolitions, repairs, and other changes to historic resources within designated historic district(s). Both HARB and affected districts would require formal ordinance adoption by the Supervisors and certification by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC). HARB establishment would be a key step toward eligibility for state-administered funds for historic preservation planning and action, under the "Certified Local Government" (CLG) program.

8. **Continue efforts to provide for community recreation**

- 8a. Monitor long-term opportunities for community recreational access to quasi-public facilities (i.e., Ludwigs Corner Fire Co., Horse Show grounds, Green Valleys Assoc. land, County French Creek open space, etc.);
- 8b. Complete acquisition of community parkland. If initial attempts at acquisition by negotiation have continued fruitlessly, consider application for state and/or county parkland acquisition funds and designate any fees-in-lieu collected for parkland acquisition. This will require a formal search for a parksite that meets the criteria discussed herein and is available (with willing seller).
- 8c. Seek to establish a formal "village green" at Birchrunville for community gatherings and special events;
- 8d. Develop community parkland and recreational facilities, based on list(s) of desired facilities established and updated as per Task 5d, above.

9. **Consider additional ordinance amendment:**

- 9a. **Natural features conservation ordinance (NFCO).** Consider compiling into a comprehensive NFCO all zoning and S/LDO provisions aimed at open space resources protection, particularly provisions governing land disturbance, vegetation removal and management. The NFCO would aim to clarify those provisions, emphasize Township commitment to them, and to make them applicable to any land disturbance, not just full-scale development. The NFCO could also focus regulation of all wetlands, particularly those not within the regulatory scope of DER or the Army Corps.
- 9b. **Environmental impact assessment (EIA).** Consider broad application of requirement for assessment of anticipated impacts of development upon open space resources; consider requiring plans (and, ultimately, action) to mitigate negative impacts. An EIA could be required as a component of preliminary/final subdivision plans, making it applicable to any subdivision or land development application, or it could be applied more narrowly. Cross-reference to zoning ordinance (and NFCO) are recommended.
- 9c. **Transfer of development rights (TDR).** TDR could be formally enabled to effectively permit private sale of development rights. Specific "sending" and "receiving" districts must be designated, which may overlay existing zoning districts. Sending districts should be delineated to include critical open space resource areas, particularly working agricultural areas and defined scenic corridors and vista areas. Receiving areas must allow for the transfer in of development potential in addition to that already permitted; these areas should be designated where relatively dense "in-fill" development, village expansion, or "tight" clustering would be considered appropriate.
- 9d. **Water-resource-based zoning.** Consider further research of surface and groundwater quality and quantity and development-related impacts, as permitted under the Act 170 amendments to the MPC. Professional consultation would be required. Based on findings, consider fine-tuning of sewage facilities planning efforts, S/LDO plan submission requirements

(required hydrological study, for example), cluster development/open space relationships, stormwater management design standards, etc.

10. **Request formal cooperation from PennDOT** regarding protection and maintenance of scenic roadside qualities; monitor road improvement plans and schedules, including "routine" signage and roadside vegetation management (trimming is preferable to poison spray, for example).
11. **Conduct ongoing monitoring and periodic updates** regarding all pertinent open space resources, including activities of non-Township agencies and organizations, particularly programming efforts which might offer service to West Vincent Township residents.
12. **Coordinate open space resource protection efforts** with neighboring townships.



APPENDIX I: SCENIC INVENTORY (as of 1990)

Numbering corresponds to "Visually Significant Landscapes" Map on page 87.

Visual Accents

1. Farm complex: stone/stucco house and outbuilding and stone barn. Bartlett Lane: 300 ft. N. of road, 1/2 mile N. of Horseshoe Trail Rd. intersection.
2. Row of 12" pines along road.
Birchrund Road: 800 ft. E. of Bartlett Lane intersection.
3. 42" White oak.
Birchrund Road: Next to road 1/4 mile E. of Bartlett Lane intersection.
4. Farm complex: Stone house, wooden barn and stone walls.
Bartlett Lane: 150 ft. N. of road, 3/4 mile N. of Horseshoe Trail Road intersection.
5. Farm complex and large pond: Stone house, stone/stucco barn and outbuilding.
Birchrund Road: near Shady Lane intersection.
6. Tulip poplar grove and stone walls on both sides of road.
Green Lane: 600 ft. S. of Hilltop Road intersection.
7. Moss covered rock outcrops in streambed.
Green Lane: Near Hilltop Road intersection.
8. Stone farm complex: House, barn and walls.
Flowing Springs Road: next to road 300 ft. E. of Hilltop Road intersection.
9. 42" white oak.
Hilltop Road: next to road, 1500 ft. S. of Flowing Springs Road intersection.
10. Grove of 24" - 30" red and white oaks.
Flowing Springs Road: next to road, 1/4 mile S.E. of Hilltop Road intersection.
11. Stone wall with niche.
Bertolet School Road: next to road, near end of road.
12. Waterfall (dam).
French Creek: near Bertolet School Road.
13. Rock outcrops and Mountain Laurel understory.
Bertolet School Road: near French Creek crossing.

14. Steel truss bridge with stone embankments and mill race.
Bertolet School Road and French Creek.
15. Stone house, 24" Norway spruce, rock outcrops in streambed and stone wall along
Birchrund Road: 1000 ft. N. of Jaine Lane intersection.
16. Stone wall along road and in woods, rock outcrops and Spruce grove.
17. Dense Norway Spruce and White Pine plantation.
Flowing Springs Road: next to road, 800 ft. W. of Sawmill Road intersection.
18. 36" White Oak.
Hilltop Road: next to road, 1/4 mile W. of Flowing Springs Road intersection.
19. 36" White Oak at edge of road.
Jaine Lane: 400 ft. E. of Birchrund Road intersection.
20. Stone wall in woods.
Flowing Springs Road: 800 ft. N. of Hilltop Road intersection.
21. Waterfall (dam)
French Creek Road: at Sawmill Road crossing.
22. Stone walls long both sides of road.
Flowing Springs Road: between Hilltop Road & Jaine Lane.
23. Rock outcrops and Christmas Fern understory.
Sawmill Road: along road 1/4 mile S. of French Creek.
24. Stone house and wall along road.
Birchrund Road: 1000 ft. S.E. of Jaine Lane intersection.
25. Stone house, walls and 42" sycamore.
Birchrund Road: next to road, 200 ft. E. of Davis Lane intersection.
26. Stone barn and stone/stucco house
Birchrund Road: next to road, 1000 ft. E. of Davis Lane intersection.
27. Stone barn.
Sheeder Mill Road: next to road, 1/2 mile S. of French Creek.
28. Stone building complex, stone walls in woods and along road and rock outcrops.
Sheeder Mill Road: N. of Flowing Springs Road intersection.
29. Stone/stucco house, 36" sycamore and stone wall along road.
Birchrund Road: 800 ft. W. of Hollow Road intersection.

30. Two story log house.
Hollow Road: 100 ft. W. of road, 1/2 mile S.W. of French Creek intersection.
31. Covered bridge
Hollow Road @ French Creek.
32. Hemlock screen and stone wall along road, row of Tulip Poplars on opposite side.
Beaver Hill Road N.: 1/2 mile N. of Beaver Hill Road.
33. Rock outcrops (some moss covered) and Christmas Fern understory.
French Creek Road: along road, 1200 ft. E. of Beaver Hill Road, N. of intersection.
34. Rock outcrops in streambed and across stream.
French Creek Road: 2000 ft. S.W. of Pughtown Road intersection.
35. Steel bridge with stone embankments and midstream support.
Pughtown/French Creek Road @ French Creek intersection.
36. Steel bridge with stone embankments and midstream support.
French Creek Road @ French Creek intersection.
37. Stone farm complex with large trees.
St. Matthews Road: next to road, 2000 ft. E. of Flint Road intersection.
38. Grove of 36" + sycamores.
Pughtown Road: next to road, 2000 ft. E. of Flint Road intersection.
39. Stone building complex with 42" sycamore.
Pughtown Road: next to road, 500 ft. W.N.W. of St. Matthews Road intersection.
40. Stone building with (2) 42" white oaks.
St, Matthews Road: next to road, 500 ft. W.S.W. of Pughtown Road intersection.
41. Stone farm complex and scenic landform.
Kimberton Road: 500 ft. N.W. of road, 1/2 mile N.E. of Flint Road intersection.
42. Stone/stucco house with 36" red maple, sycamore and norway spruce.
Chester Springs Road: next to road, near township's E. boundary.
43. Stone house, stucco building, stone wall and tulip poplars along road.
Chester Springs Road: near Kimberton Road intersection.
44. Stone bridge, rock outcrops, and 42" white oak and sycamore.
Kimberton Road: next to road, 800 ft. N.W. of Chester Springs Road intersection.

45. 48" white oak.
Flint Road: in field 300 ft. N.E. of road, 2000 ft. N.W. of Kimberton Road intersection.
46. Stone Victorian style house.
Intersection of St. Matthews & Flint Roads.
47. 48" red oak
St. Matthews Road: next to road, 1500 ft. S.W. of Flint Road intersection.
48. 42" tulip poplar.
St. Matthews Road: next to road, 1/2 mile S.W. of Flint Road intersection.
49. Stone wall along road.
Beaver Hill Road N.: near intersection of Beaver Hill Road.
50. 42" white oak and stone springhouse.
Flowing Springs Road: next to road, near Beaver Hill Road intersection.
51. Village of Birchrunville
Intersection of Birchrun Road & Flowing Springs Road.
52. Row of 24" red oaks along road.
St. Matthews Road: 100 ft. E. of Schoolhouse Lane.
53. Farm complex with pond and large spruces.
Hollow Road: 400 ft. W. of road, 2000 ft. from Birchrun Road intersection.
54. Stone barn and stone wall along road.
St. Matthews Road: 500 ft. S.W. of Miller Road intersection.
55. Drive with allee of Norway Maples, stone wall and row of Spruces at road.
St. Matthews Road: along road, 1200 ft. S.W. of Miller Road intersection.
56. Stone farm complex: house, barn and walls along both sides of road.
Davis Lane: 1/2 mile N.E. of Horseshoe Trail Road intersection.
57. (3) stone houses, stone wall and row of spruces along road.
Chester Springs Road: near Horseshoe Trail Road intersection.
58. Visible oxbow (river meander)
Dewee's Lane: 500 ft. W. of road, 800 ft. S. of Chester Springs Road intersection.
59. Stone building ruin.
Dewee's Lane: next to road, 2000 ft. S. of Chester Springs Road intersection.

60. Farm complex: stone house, wall and building ruin and stucco house.
Chester Springs Road: next to road, 1000 ft. N.E. of Rt. 401 intersection.
61. Bridge with stone sidewalls
Chester Springs Road: 300 ft. N. of Rt. 401 intersection.
62. Stone wall along road.
Route 401: N.W. of Chester Springs Road intersection.
63. Farm complex: stucco house, stone/wood frame barn, drive with willow allee and stone wall along road.
Chester Springs Road: 1200 ft. S.W. of Rt. 401 intersection.
64. Farm complex: stucco/stone house and barn.
Route 401: 300 ft. S.W. of road, near S.E. border of township.
65. 48" red oak
St. Matthews Road: next to road, 800 ft. N.W. of Chester Springs Road intersection.
66. 66" white oak.
Chester Springs Road: next to road, 1000 ft. S. of St. Matthews Road.
67. Farm complex: stucco house, stone barn and stone outbuildings.
Chester Springs Road: 400 ft. W. of road, near St. Matthews Road intersection.
68. Farm complex: stucco/stone house, stone barn and springhouse.
Eagle Hunt Road: next to road, 1200 ft. E. of Chester Springs Road.
69. Farm complex: stone/wood frame barn.
Chester Springs Road: 100 ft. W. of road, 600 ft. N.E. of Eagle Hunt Road.
70. Farm complex: stucco house, stone/wood frame barn.
Eagle Hunt Road: @ intersection with Chester Springs Road.
71. Farm complex: stone house, stone/wood frame barn.
Eagle Hunt Road: 1000 ft. N. of road, 1000 ft. W. of Chester Springs Road intersection.
72. (2) 36" tulip poplars.
Eagle Hunt Road: next to road, 1/4 mile E. of Chester Springs Road intersection.
73. St. Matthews Church, cemetery, stone wall, outbuilding and 36" white oaks.
Route 401 @ St. Matthews intersection.
74. Stone wall along road.
Horseshoe Trail Road near Fellowship Road intersection.

75. Farm complex: stone/stucco house, barn and outbuildings.
Fellowship Road: next to road, 1/2 mile N.E. of Westover Lane intersection.
76. Stone walls delineating pastures and throughout woods.
Fellowship Road: 1000 ft. N.E. of Westover Lane intersection.
77. Stone wall at farm entrance and large (24" -36") trees along road.
Fellowship Road: near Westover Lane intersection.
78. Driveway with allee of 18" red oaks.
Westover Lane: 1000 ft. N.W. of Fellowship Road intersection.
79. Farm complex: stone house, barn and outbuilding.
Birchrund Road: next to road, 1/3 mile E. of Rt. 401 intersection.
80. Village: church and stone buildings.
Intersection of Rt. 100 & Rt. 401.
81. Farm complex: stone/wood frame house and barn, wooden outbuildings.
St. Andrews Road: next to road, 1000 ft. S.W. of Rt. 401 intersection.
82. Stone wall along road.
St. Andrews Road: near W. boundary of township.
83. Farm complex: stone house and stone/wood frame barn.
St. Andrews Road: next to road, 3/4 mile S.W. of Rt. 401 intersection.
84. Driveway with allee of pines and stone wall along road.
Birchrund Road: 1200 ft. N. of Westover Lane intersection.
85. Farm complex: stucco/stone house, stone barn, stone outbuildings and stone wall.
Birchrund Road: 500 ft. S. of Horseshoe Trail Road.
86. Farm complex: stucco house, stone and wooden barn, springhouse and 36" sycamore.
Route 100 @ intersection of Horseshoe Trail Road.

Visual Intrusions

- a. Junk and debris surrounding stone building complex.
Route 100: S. of road, near township's N.W. boundary.
- b. Visible mulch and gravel piles at nursery.
Green Lane; N. of road, 1200 ft. E. of Horseshoe Trail Road intersection.

- c. Tennis court at edge of road.
Birchrun Road: next to road, S. of Davis Lane intersection.
- d. Road cut with stone and wood debris strewn about.
Flowing Springs Road: next to road, 800 ft. N. of Sheeder Mill Road intersection.
- e. Trash and junk dumped at side of road.
Beaver Hill Road: next to road, 1200 ft. W. of French Creek Road intersection.
- f. Scattered farm implements and abandoned automobile.
St. Matthews Road: next to road, 1/2 mile W. of Pughtown Road intersection.
- g. Debris and fill soil along stream.
Pughtown Road: 300 ft. S. of road, 1000 ft. S.E. of St. Matthews Road intersection.
- h. Trash and junk dumped in abandoned road bed.
Horseshoe Trail Road: next to road, 200 ft. N. of Chester Springs Road intersection.
- i. Electric transformer.
Malehorn Road: next to road, 400 ft. N. of St. Matthews Road intersection.
- j. Columbia Gas pipeline station.
Fellowship Road: next to road, 1/3 mile E. of township's W. boundary.
- k. Gravel quarry.
Route 100: next to road, 1/4 mile N. of Blackhorse Road intersection.
- l. Piles of soil and debris.
Route 401: 300 ft. E. of road, 500 ft. S. of township's W. boundary.

Vistas

- Nantmeal Road: view to S.W.
- Bartlett Lane: view to E.
- Westover Lane: view to S.
- Route 100: view to N.
- St. Matthews Road: 500' S. of Red Bone Road intersection, view to W.S.W.
- St. Matthews Road: 1000' S. of Red Bone Road intersection, view to W.

- Intersection of St. Matthews Road & Chester Springs Road: view to N.E., S.E. and S.W.
- Eagle Hunt Road: 1/2 mile W. of Chester Springs Road, view to S.E.
- Eagle Hunt Road: 1000' E. of Chester Springs Road, view to S.E.
- Beaver Hill Road S. near Beaver Hill Road intersection, view to N.E.
- Beaver Hill Road: 1000' E. of Beaver Hill Rd. S., view to N.N.E.
- Beaver Hill Road: 1 mile N.W. of St. Matthews Road intersection, view to E.N.E.
- Beaver Hill Road: 1/2 mile N.W. of St. Matthews Road intersection, view to N.E.
- Beaver Hill Road: 800' N.W. of St. Matthews Road intersection, view to S.E.
- Flowing Springs Road: 500' S. of Hilltop Road, view to S.E.
- St. Matthews Road: @ Miller Road intersection, view to N.N.E.
- St. Matthews Road: 500' E. of Schoolhouse Lane intersection, view to S.E.
- St. Matthews Road: 1/2 mile E. of Schoolhouse Lane intersection, view to E.S.E.
- St. Matthews Road: 500' S.W. of Flint Road intersection, view to S.E.
- St. Matthews Road: 200' N.W. of Flint Road intersection, view to N.E. & S.E.
- Intersection of St. Matthews and Pughtown Roads, view to N.N.E.

APPENDIX II: NATURAL DIVERSITY/WILDLIFE INVENTORY

The following is a partial list of flora and fauna:

Herbaceous Plants of West Vincent Township

Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>
Asters	<i>Aster linariifolius</i>
Bee Balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>
Bedstraws	<i>Galium asprellum</i>
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>
Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>
Burdocks	<i>Arctium minus</i>
	<i>Arctium lappa</i>
Butter and Eggs	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>
	<i>Linaria canadensis</i>
Butterfly weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Celadine	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>
Chickory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>
Cinquefoils	<i>Potentilla simplex</i>
Clovers	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
Coltsfoot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>
Common Milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>
Common Mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>
Cow Parsnip	<i>Heracleum maximum</i>
Cut-leaved Toothwort	<i>Dentaria laciniata</i>
Daisy, Ox-eye	<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>
Dame's Rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>
Dandelions	<i>Taraxicum officinale</i>
	<i>Krigia biflora</i>
Dead Nettle	<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>
	<i>Lamium purpureum</i>
Daisy, Fleabane	<i>Erigeron philadelphicus</i>
Dutchman's Breeches	<i>Dicentra cucullaria</i>
Evening Lychnis	<i>Lychnis alba</i>
Evening Primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>
False Solomon's Seal	<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>

Field Garlic	<i>Allium vineale</i>
Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis scorpiodes</i>
Geranium	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>
Gill-over-the-ground	<i>Glechoma hederaca</i>
Goldenrods	<i>Solidago altissima</i>
	<i>Solidago squarrosa</i>
Great Lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>
Heal-all	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>
Ironweed	<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>
Jack-in-the-pulpit	<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>
Jewelweeds	Impatien species, mostly <i>capensis</i>
Joe-pye-weed	<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i>
Knotweeds	<i>Polygonum pensylvanicum</i>
Lesser Celadine	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>
Liver leaf or Hepatica	<i>Hepatica americana</i>
"Marsh Marigold"	<i>Calthapalustris</i>
May Apple	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>
Mints	<i>Mentha piperita</i>
	<i>Mentha arvensis</i>
	<i>Mentha rotundiflora</i>
Multiflora Rose	<i>Rosa multiflora</i>
Plantains	<i>Alisma subcordatum</i>
Mud Plantain	<i>Heterantha reniformis</i>
Pokeweed	<i>Phytolacca americana</i>
Quaker Ladies	<i>Haustonia caerulea</i>
Queen Ann's Lace	<i>Daucus carota</i>
Ragweed	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>
	<i>Ambrosia trifida</i>
Rue Anemone	<i>Anemone thalictroides</i>
Sessile Bellwort	<i>Uvularia sessilifolia</i>
Skunk Cabbage	<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i>
Smartweeds	<i>Polygonum persicaria</i>
Solomon's Seal	<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>
Spring-beauty	<i>Claytonia virginica</i>
Spring Cress	<i>Cardamine bulbosa</i>
Strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>

Thistles

Trillium

Trout Lily

Veronicas

Violets

Virginia Bluebells

White Snakeroot

Wild Ginger

Winter Cress

Yarrow

Centaurea species

Carduus nutans

Cirsium muticum

Trillium cernuum

Erythronium americanum

Veronica persica

Veronica anagallis aquatica

Viola papilionacera

Viola papilionacea

Mertensia virginica

Eupatorium rugosum

Asarum canadense

Barbarea vulgaris

Achillea millefolium

Trees of West Vincent Township

Ailanthus

American Beech

Black Cherry

Black Walnut

Black Willow

Eastern Red Cedar

Eastern Sycamore

Flowering Dogwood

Hackberry

Hickory

Mulberry

Norway Maple

Pin Oak

Red Maple

Sassafras

Slippery elm

Smooth Sumac

Spicebush

Ailanthus altissima

Fagus grandifolia

Prunus serotina

Juglans nigra

Salix nigra

Juniperus virginiana

Platanus occidentalis

Cornus florida

Celtis occidentalis

Carya tomentosa

Carya cordiformis

Morus alba

Morus rubra

Acer platanoides

quercus palustris

Acer rubrum

Sassafras albidum

Ulmus rubra

Rhus glabra

Lindera benzoin

Tuliptree
Tupelo
White Ash

Liriodendron tulipifera
Nyssa sylvatica
Fraxinus americana

Mammals of West Vincent Township

Brown Bat
Hoary Bat
Leib Bat
Seminole Bat
Silver-haired Bat
Cottontail Rabbit
Eastern Chipmunk
Eastern Mole
Field Mouse
House Mouse
Meadow Vole
Muskrat
Norway Rat
Opossum
Raccoon
Red Fox
Short-tailed Shrew
Stripped Skunk
Flying Squirrel
Fox Squirrel
Grey Squirrel
Red Squirrel
Whitetail Deer
Woodchuck

Myotis lucifugus, *M. Keenii*
Lasiurus cinereus
Myotis subulatus
Lasiurus seminoleus
Lasionye teris noctivagans
Sylvilagus floridanus
Tamias striatus
Scalopus aquaticus
Peromyscus leucopus
Mus musculus
Microtus pennsylvanicus
Ondatra zibethicus
Rattus norvegicus
Didelphis marsupialis
Procyon lotor
Vulpes fulva
Blarina brevicauda
Memphitis
Glaucomys volans
Sciurus niger
Sciurus carolinensis
Tamias sciurus hudsonicus
Odocoileus virginianus
Marmota monax

Fish of West Vincent Township

American Eel
Blacknose Dace
Bluegill
Common Shiner

Anguilla rostrata
Rhinichthys
Lepomis macrochirus
Notropis cornutus

Crappie
Creek Chub
Cutlips Minnow
Fallfish
Green Sunfish
Johnny Darter
Largemouth bass
Longnose Dace
Rockbass
Trout (stocked)
White Sucker

Pomoxis nigromaculatus
Semotilus atromaculatus
Exoglossum maxillina
Semotilus corporalis
Lepomis cyanellus
Etheostoma nigrum
Micropterus salmoides
Rhinichthys catataca
Ambloplites rupestris
Salmo trutta, *S. gairdneri*
Catostomus commersoni

Amphibians of West Vincent Township

Frogs:

Chorus
Green
Eastern Gray Tree
Pickerel
Spring Peeper

Pseudacris nigrita feriarum
Rana clamitans
Hyla versicolor
Rana palustris
Hyla crucifer

Newt, Red-Spotted

Diemictyles virdescens

Salamanders:

Northern Dusky
Slimy
Red-backed

Desmognathus fuscus
Plethodon glutinosus
Plethodon cinereus

Toad:

American Toad

Bufo americanus

Reptiles of West Vincent Township

Snakes:

Black Rat
Corn Snake
Eastern Ribbon

Elaphe obsoleta
Elaphe guttata
Thamnophis sauritus

Eastern or Common Garter
Eastern Rough Green
King Snake
Northern Ring-necked
Northern Racer (black)
Water Snake (northern)

Thamnophis sirtalis
Opheodrys aestivus
Lampropeltis species
Diadophis punctatus edwardsi
Coluber constrictor
Natrix sipedon

Turtles:

Box
Common Snapping
Eastern painted
Mud
Stinkpot
Wood

Terrapene carolina
Chelydra serpentina
Chrysemys picta picta
Kinosternon subrubrum
Sternothaerus odoratus
Clemmys insculpta

Birds of West Vincent Township

Bittern, Least
Blackbird, Brewer's
Blackbird, Redwinged
Blackbird, Rusty
Bluebird, Eastern
Bobolink
Bobwhite
Bunting, Indigo
Cardinal
Catbird
Chat, Yellow-Breasted
Chickadee, Black-Capped
Chickadee, Carolina
Creeper, Brown
Crow, Common
Cockoo, Yellow-Billed
Dove, Mourning
Dowitcher, Short-Billed
Duck, Black
Duck, Bufflehead

Ixobrychus exilis
Euhagus cyanocephalus
Agelaius phoeniceus
Euphagus carolinus
Scalia sialis
Dolichonyx oryzivorus
Colinus virginianus
Passernia cyanea
Richmondia cardinalis
Dumetella carolinensis
Icteria virens
Parus atricapillus
Parus carolinensis
Certhia familiaris
Corvus brachyrhynchos
Coccyzus americanus
Zenaidura macroura
Limnodromus griseus
Anas rubripes
Bucephala albeola

Duck, Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Duck, Ring-Necked	<i>Anthya collaris</i>
Duck, Ruddy	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>
Duck, Wood	<i>Aix sponsa</i>
Egret	<i>Bulbucus ibris</i>
Falcon, Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Finch, House	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Finch, Purple	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>
Flicker, Yellow-Shafted	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
Flycatcher, Acadian	<i>Empidonax virescens</i>
Flycatcher, Great Crested	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>
Flycatcher, Least	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>
Flycatcher, Traill's	<i>Empidonax trailii</i>
Gnatcatcher, Blue-Gray	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>
Goldfinch, American	<i>Spinus tristis</i>
Goose, Canada	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Goose, Snow	<i>Chen hyperborea</i>
Grackle, Common	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>
Grosbeak, Rose-Breasted	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
Gull, Ring-Billed	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
Hawk, Broad-Winged	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Hawk, Red-Shouldered	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
Hawk, Red-Tailed	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Hawk, Sharp-Shinned	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Hawk, Sparrow	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Heron, Great-Blue	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Heron, Green	<i>Butorides virescens</i>
Hummingbird, Ruby-Throated	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>
Jay, Blue	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
Junco, Slate-Colored	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Kingbird, Eastern	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>
Kingfisher, Belted	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>
Kinglet, Golden-Crowned	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>
Lark, Horned	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
Loon, Common	<i>Gavia immer</i>
Martin, Purple	<i>Progne subis</i>

Meadowlark, Eastern
Merganser, Common
Merganser, Hooded
Mockingbird
Nighthawk, Common
Nuthatch, White-Breasted
Oriole, Baltimore
Oriole, Orchard
Osprey
Ovenbird
Owl, Barn
Owl, Great Horned
Owl, Long-Eared
Owl, Screech
Pewee, Eastern Wood
Pheasant, Ring-Necked
Phoebe, Eastern
Pipit, Water
Redpoll, Common
Redstart, American
Robin
Sandpiper, Solitary
Sandpiper, Spotted
Sapsucker, Yellow-Bellied
Siskin, Pine
Snipe, Common
Sparrow, Chirping
Sparrow, Field
Sparrow, Fox
Sparrow, Grasshopper
Sparrow, House
Sparrow, Savannah
Sparrow, Song
Sparrow, Swamp
Sparrow, Tree
Sparrow, Vesper
Sparrow, White-Throated

Sturnella magna
Mergus merganser

Mimus polyglottos
Chordeiles minor
Sitta carolinensis
Icterus galbula
Icterus spurius
Pandion haliaetus
Seiurus aurocapillus
Tylo alba
Bubo virginianus
Asio otus
Otus asio
Contopus virens
Phasianus colchicus
Sayornis phoebe
Anthus spinoletta
Acanthis flammea
Setophaga ruticilla
Turdus migratorius
Tringa solitaria
Actitis macularia
Sphyrapicus varius
Spinus pinus
Capella gallinago
Spizella passerina
Spizella pusilla
Passerella iliaca
Ammodramus savannarum
Passer domesticus
Passerculus
Melospiza melodia
Melospiza georgiana
Spizella arborea
Poocetes gramineus
Zonotrichia albicollis

Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Swallow, Bank	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Swallow, Barn	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Swallow, Cliff	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonoides</i>
Swallow, Rough-Winged	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>
Swallow, Tree	<i>Iridoprocne bicolor</i>
Swift, Chimney	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>
Tanager, Scarlet	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>
Thrasher, Brown	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>
Thrush, Swainson's	<i>Hylocichla ustulata</i>
Thrush, Wood	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
Titmouse, Tufted	<i>Parus bicolor</i>
Towhee, Rufous-Sided	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>
Veery	<i>Hylocichla fuscenscens</i>
Vireo, Red-Eyed	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>
Vireo, White-Eyed	<i>Vireo griseus</i>
Vireo, Yellow-Throated	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>
Vulture, Turkey	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Vulture, Black	
Warbler, Black and White	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Warbler, Blackpoll	<i>Dendroica striata</i>
Warbler, Black-Throated Blue	<i>Dendroica caerulescens</i>
Warbler, Black-Throated Green	<i>Dendroica virens</i>
Warbler, Blue-Winged	<i>Vermivora pinus</i>
Warbler, Canada	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>
Warbler, Cape May	<i>Dendroica tigrina</i>
Warbler, Chestnut-Sided	<i>Dendroica pensylvanica</i>
Warbler, Kentucky	<i>Oporornis formosus</i>
Warbler, Magnolia	<i>Dendroica magnolia</i>
Warbler, Myrtle	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>
Warbler, Palm	<i>Dendroica palmarum</i>
Warbler, Parula	<i>Parula americana</i>
Warbler, Prairie	<i>Dendroica discolor</i>
Warbler, Worm-Eating	<i>Helminthophila vermivorus</i>
Warbler, Yellow	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
Waterthrush, Louisiana	<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>
Waxwing, Cedar	<i>Bombocilla cedrorum</i>

Whip-Poor-Will
Widgeon, American
Woodpecker, Downy
Woodpecker, Hairy
Woodpecker, Pileated
Woodpecker, Red-Bellied
Woodpecker, Red-Headed
Wren, Carolina
Wren, House
Wren, Berwick's
Wren, Short-Billed
Wren, Winter
Yellowthroat

Caprimulgus vociferus
Mareca americana
Dendrocopos pubescens
Dendrocopos villosus
Dryocopus pileatus
Centurus carolinus
Melanerpes erythrocephalus
Thryothorus ludovicianus
Troglodytes aedon
Thryomanes bewickii
Cistothorus platensis
Troglodytes troglodytes
Geothlypis trichas

APPENDIX III: RESULTS OF COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE SURVEY

(Edited from Township Newsletter)

A questionnaire on open space was included in the June, 1989 issue of the "West Vincent Township Newsletter." The Township Planning Commission received responses from 149 households. This represents a response rate of 19%, considered good for a mailed survey; professional survey conductors generally expect a ten to fifteen percent response rate.

In response to the central question, "Would you like to see some land in the township set aside for use by all township residents?", an overwhelming majority of 131 responses (or 88% of the total) said YES. Sixteen (or 11% of the total) said NO, and two (1% of the total) answered both yes and no. Here are answers from those who are in favor of publicly owned land:

WHY DO RESIDENTS WANT PUBLICLY OWNED LAND?	Number of respondents
To retain the rural character of the township . . . <i>"We want country not suburbia"</i>	54
Feeling pressure from development; there is a need to plan; we must buy land now before it becomes wildly expensive...	28
A park would provide: 1) community focus and enhance community spirit; 2) recreational facilities/constructive activities for youth; 3) a site for community activities like Fourth of July, Anna May Day, etc.	45
Ecological reasons: wildlife and watershed protection	10

Other responses included references to maintaining land prices by limiting the supply, and to "add to the desirability of the township..."

Roughly a third of the responses cited a desire to retain the rural character of the township: we want country, not suburbia. From a resident of forty years: *"I think most residents in the township are here because we are 'country.' We must try to keep it that way!"* He's right, according to this recent arrival: *"I moved to this township from Exton to get away from an area that was overdeveloped too quickly... (Yes, I want public land) primarily to maintain the existing rural character and prevent overdevelopment."* Said another: *"The reason most of us live in the township is for the rural characteristics - open space, farms, distant neighbors, freedom from traffic, pollution, people. It seems to me that we need to aggressively fight to maintain these things against the onslaught of developers."* One resident wrote: *"Some land is too beautiful to be spoiled by development (e.g., Dunn and Emery farms) and this land remaining open can assure West Vincent remaining semi-rural rather than something approaching a Main Line, overbuilt suburb."* Other comments echoed this feeling: *"I prefer grass to cement,"* and *"I don't want wall-to-wall development."*

APPENDIX IV: RECREATION PROGRAM/FACILITY SURVEY
(compiled March, 1990)

Quasi-Public Recreation Facilities

YMCA's

- Four serve area: Phoenixville, Pottstown, Lionville/Exton
- West Vincent included in Phoenixville's "territory"
- Phoenixville Y: large indoor/outdoor facility includes pools, tennis courts, athletic fields
- Building expansion planned:
 - Response to population increase in Kimberton/Phoenixville area
 - One pool, one gym, classrooms
- West Vincent residents are not excluded from use

Regional/Subregional Parks

- Two state parks: French Creek and Marsh Creek
- Two county parks: Warwick and Hibernia
- In general, park facilities are water-related and trail-related: boating, swimming, fishing, camping, hiking.
- No tennis courts, athletic fields

Owen J. Roberts School District - Facilities and Programs

Middle School and High School Facilities:

Three baseball fields
Two softball fields
Five tennis courts
Two gyms
One track
Two soccer fields

Programs:

Adult School (active recreation: yoga, ballroom dancing, tennis instruction and craft classes)

Community swim program

Baseball fields used by Recreation leagues

Comments:

District athletic coordinator expressed feeling that tennis courts and fields are used to capacity now.

Elementary Centers:

- French Creek/Warwick (serves West Vincent residents)
Playgrounds/all purpose rooms/no official fields

Programs: summer activities for K-2; after school intra-mural program at Warwick; scout use.

- Vincent/East Coventry (serves West Vincent residents)
Full gym
Large athletic field (V.)
Soccer fields/two baseball diamonds (E.C.)

Programs: scout use; Coventry soccer league, spring and fall (E.C. & V); adult floor hockey (E.C.)

- North Coventry Elementary
Two gyms, two fields, playgrounds
Used daily year-round by North Coventry recreation association (township)
Fields also used by private leagues (North Chester Optimist Club, Coventry Little League)

Private Clubs

- Indoor Tennis
Closest Lionville Nautilus/Pickering Racquet
Not used to capacity
Others in area: Malvern, Radnor, West Chester, King of Prussia

- Swim Clubs
Pennypacker C.C., Lionville
Summer only pool and tennis
Programs: offers competitive league swimming

Trend: Local clubs closing because ground has become valuable for development; liability coverage difficult to obtain

- Miscellaneous (not researched)

Elverson Rod and Gun - skeet, archery
Kimberton Rod and Gun - " "
Fisherman's Associations
Pickering Pony Club
Dog 4-H/Horse 4-H, etc. etc.

- Golf

It had been rumored that a major development proposal in the vicinity of Ludwigs Corner (requiring a zoning change) will be proposed to include a golf course in conjunction with a spray irrigation waste disposal system.

Private clubs are located at considerable distance from West Vincent and include, for example:

Waynesborough C.C. (Paoli)
Whitford C.C. (Exton/Downingtown)
Merion Golf Club (Haverford)

- Public Courses:
Kimberton Golf Course (Rt. 23)
Phoenixville/Valley Forge Golf Course, Cold Stream Rd.,
Phoenixville

Athletic Leagues:

- Baseball
 - Little League (Ages 6-12):
West Vincent is served by the Coventry Little League which reports recent large increases in participation; field space is viewed as the limiting factor to

continued growth. Additional fields in West Vincent would be desirable for participant convenience (The little league has indicated willingness to pay for portion of facility construction). A population base of 20,000 is considered prerequisite to starting up a new league.

- Six other (non-Little League) baseball leagues in area.

- Soccer:
 - Coventry Soccer League (Ages 6-17)
 - Increase from 370-420 in 3 years
 - Spring 1990 saw 15% increase in 8 and under significant; will it continue?
 - League not at capacity. could add 100 kids
 - More practice fields very desirable; can't rotate fields
 - Soccer also available through Y's and CYO

- Basketball:
 - CYO; Lionville, Phoenixville Y's
 - No additional information

APPENDIX V: PARKLAND & RECREATION FACILITY STANDARDS

PARKLAND STANDARDS

REGIONAL PARKS	20.0 acres/1,000 population
SUBREGIONAL PARKS	8.5 acres/1,000 population
COMMUNITY PARKS	4.5 acres/1,000 population
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS*	3.5 acres/1,000 population
SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS*	0.25 acres/1,000 population 1000 people

* Required only in suburban and urban neighborhoods or high-density development (i.e., townhouse complexes) where typical "backyard" recreational opportunities are limited or unavailable to individual households.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES STANDARDS

Golf Courses:

Standard Course Sizes

Driving Range: 10 acres minimum;
Chip and Putt Course: 20 acres minimum, 30 acres desirable;
Nine-hole Course: 50 acres minimum, 85 acres desirable;
18-hole Course: 120 acres minimum; 170 acres desirable.

Swimming Areas:

Swimming areas include not only pools but also swimming beaches at both natural and artificial water bodies. Only 30 to 40 percent of the bathers at a swimming area are actually in the water at any one time. Of those in the water, few are actually swimming. Other recreational activities, particularly picnicking, are very important in conjunction with

APPENDIX III: RESULTS OF COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE SURVEY
(Edited from Township Newsletter)

A questionnaire on open space was included in the June, 1989 issue of the "West Vincent Township Newsletter." The Township Planning Commission received responses from 149 households. This represents a response rate of 19%, considered good for a mailed survey; professional survey conductors generally expect a ten to fifteen percent response rate.

In response to the central question, "Would you like to see some land in the township set aside for use by all township residents?", an overwhelming majority of 131 responses (or 88% of the total) said YES. Sixteen (or 11% of the total) said NO, and two (1% of the total) answered both yes and no. Here are answers from those who are in favor of publicly owned land:

WHY DO RESIDENTS WANT PUBLICLY OWNED LAND?	Number of respondents
To retain the rural character of the township . . . <i>"We want country not suburbia"</i>	54
Feeling pressure from development; there is a need to plan; we must buy land now before it becomes wildly expensive...	28
A park would provide: 1) community focus and enhance community spirit; 2) recreational facilities/constructive activities for youth; 3) a site for community activities like Fourth of July, Anna May Day, etc.	45
Ecological reasons: wildlife and watershed protection	10

Other responses included references to maintaining land prices by limiting the supply, and to "add to the desirability of the township..."

Roughly a third of the responses cited a desire to retain the rural character of the township: we want country, not suburbia. From a resident of forty years: *"I think most residents in the township are here because we are 'country.' We must try to keep it that way!"* He's right, according to this recent arrival: *"I moved to this township from Exton to get away from an area that was overdeveloped too quickly...(Yes, I want public land) primarily to maintain the existing rural character and prevent overdevelopment."* Said another: *"The reason most of us live in the township is for the rural characteristics - open space, farms, distant neighbors, freedom from traffic, pollution, people. It seems to me that we need to aggressively fight to maintain these things against the onslaught of developers."* One resident wrote: *"Some land is too beautiful to be spoiled by development (e.g., Dunn and Emery farms) and this land remaining open can assure West Vincent remaining semi-rural rather than something approaching a Main Line, overbuilt suburb."* Other comments echoed this feeling: *"I prefer grass to cement,"* and *"I don't want wall-to-wall development."*

Responses showed that residents want to see land used in two different ways: active use and passive use.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH OUR PUBLICLY OWNED LAND?	Number of respondents
Nature preserve, with hiking trails (passive)	82 (63%)
Kept as is, in open space (passive)	71 (54%)
Soccer/baseball fields/playgrounds (active recreation)	60 (46%)
Equestrian park	37 (28%)

Here are some comments from residents concerning parks. From a 45-year West Vincent veteran: *"As a help to make a center for a community which is rapidly changing and is made up largely of strangers."* From an enthusiastic resident of ten years: *"I think this is a wonderful idea - and something the township should act upon now! Space is being used up and the cost of land is increasing. There are more and more young families moving in and we do need a place for our children to play and gather together. Fields that were once open and free to hike and explore are now being bought and 'No Trespassing' signs are being put up. We need a place (or places) left open for all to enjoy."* And from a Birchrunville resident of four years: *"...the existence of common land for use by local residents would contribute to the wonderful sense of community spirit which currently exists but which could be threatened by overdevelopment."*

HOW DO WE FINANCE LAND PURCHASES?	Number of respondents
Developers' contribution (land or money)	117 (88%)
Millage increase	47 (36%)
Donate time to maintain	51 (39%)
Apply for County, state, and federal grants	10 (7%)
Appeal to corporations and private foundations	2 (2%)

Also mentioned in various questionnaires were bequests, bond issues, and tax incentives; some felt the need for further information on conservation easements.

Here are some comments concerning financing. From a resident of eighteen years: *"Most of the township has already gone to the dogs. If the last bastion along Hollow Road from Green Valleys to one-half mile north of the Post Office goes, we will all suffer for it. I would pay higher taxes to support a fund to preserve that land as is, but I would not make voluntary contributions for same."* And from a 43-year resident: *"As developers are destroying our open space, they should contribute heavily to permanent open space. They profit, and we suffer, eventually we will all pay a steep price."*

Other comments from residents in favor of open space...

A Black Horse Road resident wrote: *"As the currently aligned scales of local government seem rather easily tipped in favor of the developer, I believe it is necessary that formal steps be taken toward open space preservation...I think we must expect developers to strive to develop. We in turn would do well to remember that we are charged to be good stewards of the land..."*

And there was concern for wildlife: *"Our wildlife is rapidly losing its habitat. Deer, foxes, rabbits, hawks, etc. cannot survive on two-acre spacing with no wooded areas."*

A comment on township planning from a Ludwigs Corner resident: *"Development so far has been somewhat haphazard. A planned township open space area is important to township planning."*

Other positive viewpoints included: *"...for visual and environmental reasons: to preserve what's left of the country." "To ensure the amount and quality of groundwater." "To prevent erosion, congestion, and traffic created by overdevelopment."*

And, from a resigned French Creek resident of twenty years: *"My druthers are that West Vincent Township remain the woodsy, hilly, farmy rural area that it is, in private ownership. But 'progress' is hard to check and too much of the natural beauty is being sold off and developed. We need to hold on to some of it, publicly I guess."*

Not all residents are in favor of open space. Sixteen respondents (11% of the total) were not in favor of township owned property. They tended to be people owning eleven or more acres, both long-term and short-term residents. Here are some of the reasons they gave: *"Land is too expensive to buy, maintain and police..." "No need for a park...we have our own land to enjoy...form a club if you need it...use the school facilities...there aren't enough people out here to warrant it..." "Other township priorities are pressing: roads, police protection..." "Try other means to keep open space with strict zoning and no zoning exceptions; encourage large landowners/farmers to stay..."*

Here are some comments from those opposed to township-owned property. From an adamant resident of ten years: *"Providing land to all residents is a form of communism! How do you propose to acquire the land? And maintain it? Stop dreaming! Solve our problems of living day-to-day like improving our roads, etc., etc. instead of meddling in affairs that are not township problems."* From a wavering resident of twenty-five years: *"My mind might be changed if I could envision a total plan and its benefits."* And another considered comment: *"Open space does not need to be used by all. Open space is a feeling, not a use or maintenance headache. Encourage large landowners to stay. Try to keep trails open and other country pleasures we take for granted (gravel roads, etc.)"*

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Owen J. Roberts School District - Facilities and Programs

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Three baseball fields
Two softball fields
Five tennis courts
Two gyms
One track
Two soccer fields

swimming. Where possible, picnic and swimming areas should be provided adjacent to each other.

Diving areas should be provided where practical. They should be separated from main swimming and wading areas.

For safety purposes, lifeguard and telephone facilities should be provided at all swimming areas. Parking and sanitary facilities are also essential. Food service concessions and dressing and shower facilities should be considered for inclusion. General deck or beach area should equal approximately twice the water surface area at any swimming area.

Standard:

0.2 swimming areas per 1000 population.

Baseball and Softball Fields:

Standard Field Sizes:

Regulation Hardball:	2.8 acres
Junior Hardball:	1.4 acres
Regulation Softball:	1.8 acres
Junior Softball:	0.8 acres

Standard:

0.5 fields per 1000 population

Football Fields:

Standard Field Sizes:

Regular Football:	2.0 acres
Touch Football:	1.4

Standard:

0.4 fields per 1000 population

Soccer Fields:

Standard Field Size:

Regulation Soccer: 1.4 acres

Standard:

0.5 fields per 1000 population.

Tennis Courts:

Standard Court Size:

Two regulation courts: 0.25 acres

Standard:

0.5 courts per 1000 population

Basketball Courts:

Standard Court Size:

Regular Full Court: 0.2 acre

Standard:

0.4 courts per 1000 population

Volleyball Courts:

Standard Court Size:

Regular Court: 0.1 acre. Lawn areas may be used as well as formal court surfaces.

Standard (Volleyball Courts):

0.3 courts per 1000 population.

Facility standards also exist for activities probably not appropriate in West Vincent, including water recreation.

For numerous recreational activities/facilities there are no population based standards:

Hiking and walking trails

Equestrian trails

Bikeways

Picnic areas

Fishing

Winter recreation

APPENDIX VII: HISTORIC RESOURCES

Resources List from 1992 Chester County Historic Sites Survey

Map numbers correspond with numbers on the "Historic Resources" map.
NR indicates National Register listing.

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Tax Parcel No.</u>	<u>Owner (as of 1992)</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1	25-3-29.3	Lincoln	
2	25-3-72.1	Kuper, Crampton	
3	25-3-7	Travaglini	
4	25-3-66	Dougherty	
5	25-3-74	Springer	
6	25-3-63.2	Crisman	
7	25-3-76.1E	Hompe	
8	25-3-77.1	Schreiner	
9	25-3-51.1	Montgomery	
10	25-3-79	P. Meyer	
11	25-3-110	Cusack	
12	25-3-152	Titone	
13	25-3-148	McCormick	1838
14	25-4-32	Scott/Fraley	
15	25-3-113	Bentley	
16	25-3-114	Swartley	
17	25-4-31.1A	Clemens	
18	25-4-39 & 40	Francis	
19	25-4-36	Archbold	
20	25-4-49	Keegan	
21	25-4-56	Pedersen	
22	25-4-59	Cook	
23	25-4-23.5	Hare	Potential NR nomination
24	25-4-62	Riggs	c. 1765 Travel lodge
25	25-4-63.14	Yohn	
26	25-4-58	Seacrist	
27	25-4-57	Mayerson	
28	25-4-54	Parke	In NR District
29	25-4-92	Buss	"

30	25-4-90	Schapiro	"
31	25-4-53	Parke	"
32	25-4-50	E. Johnson	Potential NR, In NR District
33	25-4-43.1	Baird	In NR District
34	25-4-44	Perkins	Incl. in millsite; 1817 1st addn.
35	25-4-47	Milner	NR. Store and Creamery
36	25-4-81	Wright	In NR District
37	25-4-83	Hansen	"
38	25-4-84	Graham	"
39	25-4-82	Mokrejs	"
40	25-4-80	Wright	"
41	25-4-75	Gaffer	Bakery, etc.; in NR District
42	25-4-74	Emery	In NR District
43	25-4-72	McCoy	"
44	25-4-73	DeMauriac	"
45	25-4-71	McCreary	"
46	25-4-70	Koenig	"
47	25-4-68	Coffin	"
47.1	25-4-64	Green Valleys Assn.	The Meeting House; In NR Dist.
48	25-4-142	George	
49	25-4-145	Zimmerman	The Bake House; In NR District
50	25-4-88	Addis	In NR District
51	25-4-86	MacKenzie	"
52	25-4-146	Pennick	"
53	25-4-147	Segner	"
54	25-4-141	Ludens, Inc.	
55	25-4-141	Ludens, Inc.	
56	25-4-148	Abell	1805; Potential NR
57	25-4-122	Strebeigh	
58	25-4-166.1	Romeu	
59	25-4-99	CC Girl Scout Council Inc.	
60	25-4-100	Hepburn	
61	25-4-101.1	Hammond	
62	25-4-104.2	Kendis	
63	25-4-106	Shubert	1846
64	25-4-140	Detwiler	
65	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	
66	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	

67	25-4-137	Coffin	Potential NR
68	25-4-138	Sancanac House, Camp Hill Village	Potential NR
69	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	1810
70	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	
71	25-4-108.1	Douglas	c. 1850
72	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	
73	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	
74	25-5-9	Camp Hill Village	Potential NR
75	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	
76	25-5-10	Ferguson	
77	25-5-13	Dunworth	
78	25-5-1	Camp Hill Village	1903; Potential NR
79	25-5-3	Yarnall	
80	25-5-4	Aman	NR
81	25-5-14.1	Smith, A.	
82	25-5-18	Clevenstine	
83	25-5-8	Shapley	
84	25-5-7	Effgen	1805; Potential NR
85	25-5-28	C. Jones	
86	25-5-50.2	Pierson	Potential NR
87	25-5-46	Sypherd	Potential NR
88	25-5-45	Jameson	
89	25-5-34.3	Ferrara	
90	25-5-34.4	Atkinson	
91	25-5-36.1	Burch	Potential NR
92	25-5-17	Wescote	Early school site
93	25-5-35	Maxwell	
94	25-4-182	Wilson	c. 1859
95	25-4-112	Casciato	1842
96	25-4-113	Chien	
97	25-4-169	Ludens, Inc.	1870
98	25-4-115	Duffield. R.	
99	25-4-170	Bronson	
100	25-4-178	Heilner	1896; Potential NR
101	25-4-177	Ludens, Inc.	Potential NR
102	25-4-175	Ludens, Inc.	
103	25-4-167.1	Dotts	

104	25-4-179	Ludens, Inc.	
105	25-9-2	Dawes	
106	25-9-3	Jugan	
107	25-9-5	Landan	Potential NR
108	25-8-21	Fraley	Underground RR stop, home of G.A. Lewis-naturalist; Potential NR
109	25-9-7	Webber-Leise	
110	25-8-22	Peeples	
111	25-8-24	Dietrich	NR; Geo. Deery family homestead
112	25-4-175	Ludens, Inc.	Potential NR
113	25-4-175	Ludens, Inc.	John Stauffer House; Potential NR
114	25-4-175	Ludens, Inc.	
115	25-8-18	Ludens, Inc.	Underground RR stop; Potential NR
116	25-8-18.3	Grace	NR
117	25-4-67	Pepple	
118	25-8-3	Siana	
119	25-8-17	Ludens, Inc.	Potential NR
120	25-8-27	Dietrich	1802; Potential NR
121	25-8-9.2	Wilmington Trust	
122	25-8-4.1	Rosato	1715 core, c. 1740 addn.
123	25-8-7	Layman's Home Mission	
124	25-7-99	Farrell	
125			
126	25-8-12	W. Vincent Bapt. Ch.	
127	25-8-14.1	Carr	
128	25-7-103	Harman	
129	25-7-103	Sbarbaro	
130	25-7-103	Sbarbaro	
131	25-7-103	Sbarbaro	
132	25-7-103	Sbarbaro	
133	25-7-104.1	Mooney	
134	25-7-105.1	Taylor	
135	25-7-107	O'Brien	
136	25-7-106	Forth	
137	25-7-111.2	Hall	

209	25-2-4	A. Griffith	
210	25-3-21	Hanebury	
211	25-3-81	Foulds	
212	25-3-18	Carr	
213	25-7-25	Byrne	Potential NR
214	25-7-24	Waters	
215	25-7-21	Ominsky	
216	25-3-90	Hughes	1801-1805; Potential NR
217	25-3-89	Chadwick	
218	25-3-104.1	Wright	
219	25-3-121.3	Dunnington	Part log; Potential NR
220	25-3-122	Brown	
221	25-3-108	McLean	
222	25-3-69.1	Kling	NR; Nicholas East House
223	25-3-69.1	Kling	
224	25-3-99	Emery	
226	25-3-106	Emery	
227	25-3-105	Dunn	
228	25-3-96	Dunn	
229	25-3-14.1	Michaelson	Main house
230	25-3-14.1	Michaelson	Tenant house; Potential NR
231	25-3-13	Gale	1761; Potential NR

APPENDIX VIII: UPPER REACHES OF FRENCH CREEK
Summary of Conservation Achievements & Continuing Threats

Resource protection or conservation achievements recognized by the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust (F&PCCT) in the Upper Reaches Report are summarized below, along with continuing threats to resource protection efforts, again, as viewed by F&PCCT.

Resource Protection Achievements

Resource protection achievements within the study area of the Upper Reaches of French Creek which relate specifically to West Vincent can be summarized as follow:

1. **Historic Surveys:** In 1971-1972, F&PCCT undertook a survey of historic sites in the watersheds of the French and Pickering Creeks, funded in part by the Dietrich Foundation. The survey resulted in the selection of 72 sites which were then researched and positioned for eventual placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Some years later F&PCCT completed a second round of survey, with funding provided by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). Between 1979 and 1982, F&PCCT directed efforts in northern Chester County for the federally mandated countywide Historic Sites Survey. To date, 44 sites and seven districts have been placed on the National Register through these efforts. Of these 51, five are in West Vincent.

2. **"Conservation Stream Use"** (now **"High Quality Waters"**), was designated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) for most of French Creek in 1976, largely through the efforts of F&PCCT and the Green Valleys Association. The entire Pickering Creek with headwaters in West Vincent was also given this designation which requires special standards for wastewater discharge into the streams.

3. **Scenic Rivers Designation** was obtained in 1982 for French Creek - the fourth waterway so named by the Commonwealth and the first in the pastoral category. The Scenic Rivers Study was undertaken by F&PCCT under contract to DER, again with assistance from Green Valleys Association. The Federation of Northern Chester County Communities subsequently took the responsibility for the management implementations of this legislation.

4. Open Space Acquisition/Public-Private Funding Partnerships. In 1980, F&PCCT acquired two tracts of land totaling 64 acres in West Vincent to prevent development along a beautiful stretch of French Creek. After seven acres were sold with an easement to an adjoining land owner, the remainder was conveyed to Chester County, and the idea of a linear greenway stretching from Warwick County Park was born. A blend of public and private funding facilitated this project, with funds from F&PCCT, the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and Chester County through its Redevelopment Authority. A similar approach had been utilized by F&PCCT in 1973 with the purchase of the Graham property (40 acres in East Pikeland and 20 in West Vincent). Containing 1,800 feet of frontage on the south side of French Creek, the tract was ultimately conveyed to East Pikeland Township; funding assistance came from DCA, the County Redevelopment Authority, F&PCCT, and East Pikeland with generous donations from neighboring townships, including West Vincent. In 1983, F&PCCT spearheaded an effort to fund the purchase of a lot containing three dilapidated structures owned by the Twaddell family at Wilson's Corner. A tenth of the cost of the purchase was contributed by donations from West Vincent residents with the remainder provided by the County Redevelopment Authority. The structures were subsequently demolished and the parcel conveyed to West Vincent Township.

5. French Creek Trail. The County acquisitions along French Creek in West Vincent promoted recognition of the potential for a trail along French Creek that could connect with the Horseshoe Trail in Warwick Park. Several easements for trail access have been granted along the creek, further extending the potential to realize a complete trail link through the northern part of West Vincent.

6. Conservation Easements. While affecting very little land in West Vincent Township to date, F&PCCT has long promoted the concept of conservation through acquisition of easements over private lands. The Trust convened two local conferences - in 1974 and 1979 - on Voluntary Preservation of Open Space and published the Proceedings. This program has extended to the monitoring and amending of easements, in view of federal requirements for tax-deductibility, and projected legislation for uniformity. F&PCCT has also undertaken to defend challenges to its easements, with support from the Pennsylvania land trust community.

Continuing Threats to Resource Protection Efforts

F&PCCT has identified a number of regional issues viewed as threats and/or approaches to policy needed to avert threats to ongoing resource protection efforts. Those which follow most probably impact West Vincent. Recommendations are as characterized by F&PCCT and do not necessarily reflect Township policy.

1. Extension of Public Sewer and Water. F&PCCT opposes further extensions of sewer and water services into West Vincent, which tend to facilitate development of densities otherwise inappropriate. High density development in the immediate vicinity of French Creek could irreparably damage the natural and scenic values of the creek and its surroundings. "Leap frog" extensions of public sewer and water lines threaten to alter the present character of the Township from rural to suburban. (Note: The West Vincent Township Sewage Facilities (Act 537) Plan recommends the extension of public sewer lines for the express purpose of serving homes with mal-functioning individual systems. The 537 Plan does not recommend extension to provide future service to currently undeveloped lands.)
2. Relocation of PRD District. F&PCCT strongly urges the Township to move its PRD zoning district, which permits high density residential development from its present location along French Creek to an area which would not harm the waterways of the Township. (Note: The Open Space Task Force also has addressed this issue, but reminds us that factors other than immediate environmental or aesthetic concerns necessarily play a role in Township regulatory decisions, such as water availability, proximity to public services, and highway access.)
3. Preservation of the Nantmeal Hills/Completion of the French Creek Greenway. Again within the context of protecting French Creek, F&PCCT urges the Township to treat the hills above the Creek with great sensitivity. The crowns of these hills, a glorious sight, are presently undisturbed yet also unprotected. The lands at the base of the hills going along French Creek should also be preserved and protected. Continued efforts to formalize the French Creek Greenway will further these objectives; similar resolution of purpose and action need be carried forth by landowners and municipal officials on the East Vincent side of the Creek.

4. Major relocation options for Route 100 as presented in the "PA Route 100 Corridor Study" published by the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities in 1986 show alternate routes to the present highway for the area between Ludwigs Corner and Bucktown. Two of the routes running to the east of the present alignment would require new bridges across the French Creek in the vicinity of either Camp Innabah or Camp Sankanac; either would be greatly disruptive to existing landscape character in West Vincent Township between Ludwig's Corner and the Creek. Equally disruptive are several of the routes proposed for the western side of Route 100.

5. Protection for Route 401 - the Conestoga Road. The Upper Reaches Report recommends both Scenic Road designation and a thematic historic district nomination to the National Register for this historic route. Both will require regional cooperation with East Nantmeal, Upper Uwchlan, and West Pikeland Townships. Development planning along this corridor should carefully consider aspects of rural character and historic resources.

APPENDIX IX: REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS FOR SURFACE WATER RUNOFF

edited from Chapter 5 of a study completed by the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, September 1991

A number options are available to municipalities for incorporating surface water runoff management into municipal planning and regulatory programs. Ideally, planning and regulatory programs should be integrated to provide for a comprehensive surface water runoff control program. Available options involve a variety of techniques, some of which involve regulatory tools such as subdivision ordinance provisions, and other which are less formal pursuits such as involvement in open space/natural resource conservation programs. The choice of which options to choose must be based on local needs and capabilities. Choices may be combined or used at intervals. A universal requirement to establishing an effective local surface water runoff program is to establish municipal policies within the Comprehensive Plan. This will help ensure that long-range priorities are pursued and that activities are mutually coordinated.

Options identified here are divided into three (3) sections which include: 1) area-wide needs, 2) local goals, and 3) options that municipalities may choose to achieve a particular goal. **Area-wide needs** are those that should be considered by all of the municipalities of the Northern Federation in order to achieve area-wide coordination of planning efforts. The **Goal** statement represents options individual municipalities may pursue to achieve the area-wide need. The **options** list describes various actions or elements of planning programs that the individual municipalities can choose from to achieve the local goals and address the area-wide needs.

REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

A. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Need: Coordinate local runoff control programs with Federal, State, County, and Regional legislative and planning programs which affect the local water resources to achieve area-wide planning objectives.

zoning provisions might include establishing a tight building envelope and limiting disturbance on the remaining site.

11. Establish provisions to protect the areas of a watershed which provide good infiltration of runoff from excessive development. In addition, consider requiring development that does occur in areas where infiltration is possible to incorporate such areas into the surface water runoff control system for the site.
12. Encourage or require recharge of surface water runoff where the conditions of the site permit recharge. This will aid in maximizing infiltration of rainfall for the purposes of preserving groundwater supplies and stream flows.
13. Incorporate water resource protection goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan into "purpose" statements to strengthen and clarify the municipal commitment to resource protection.
14. Evaluate administrative processes to ensure inspection processes meet the municipal capabilities and objectives.
15. Establish linkages and evaluate compatibility with other local planning objectives such as open space conservation, natural resource protection, lot area and bulk regulations, and steep slope/stream valley protection.
16. Ensure that design criteria and standards which regulate uses incorporate and include adequate provisions to achieve municipal objectives. Such provisions might include promoting the use of pervious coverage materials, increasing landscaping requirements, decreasing maximum lot coverage standards, and allowing a credit towards the open space requirements for the use of innovative control systems.

C. SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Need: Incorporate area-wide surface water runoff planning concerns into local planning programs to achieve coordinated and effective watershed-wide control over these issues.

Goal: Establish coordinated land development design regulations to control runoff problems in a manner which is compatible with other planning objectives.

Options:

1. Examine and amend the subdivision and land development ordinance for compatibility with the provisions of the zoning and other applicable codes and policies of the municipality.
2. Establish site design and disturbance standards to reduce potential runoff problems by minimizing disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Establish appropriate inspection and administration provisions for runoff control problems by minimizing disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Establish runoff control objectives consistent with area-wide objectives which control accelerated runoff and erosion and sedimentation problems at their source. The determination of level of runoff (design storm) and efficiency of control techniques to be controlled is a municipal decision and should be based on the specific conditions of each watershed. However, as indicated in Chapter 4, studies have shown that if the 2 and 10 year design storms are controlled then the more infrequent design storms are also effectively controlled. This section should also reference the sedimentation and erosion control practices that are required within the subdivision and land development ordinance. (See Option 9 below)

5. Establish the minimum level of maintenance and who is responsible for the management of surface water runoff control systems. Maintenance requirements are often the responsibility of an individual homeowner or a homeowner's association. In some cases municipalities have opted to assume maintenance responsibilities. Regardless of who is responsible for the maintenance, the routine inspections should confirm that maintenance is adequate. Further, it is also recommended that actions by the municipality, in the event adequate maintenance is not provided, be clearly defined in the ordinance.

Municipalities also need to identify and institutionalize techniques that ensure the continued operation of control systems by deed restricting land or vegetation areas that are utilized to achieve the runoff control standards required as part of land development approval.

6. Establish a procedure for determining how a runoff control system is chosen from the hierarchy of systems. A system which is not the first choice of the municipality should only be permitted if the applicant demonstrates that each of the systems above the one chosen is not suited for the site in question. As part of this analysis, municipalities may want to require that retention and recharge feasibility be identified and utilized if site conditions are appropriate.
7. Amend the plan submission requirements to ensure that the minimum information necessary for an adequate review is required to be submitted by the applicant. Such information should include a site analysis plan of conditions in terms of type, amount, and location of vegetation cover, soil types (particularly the presence of hydrologic soils), slope conditions, proposed changes to land surface and vegetative cover, water bodies within the project area or which will be affected by runoff from the project, and other physical features including existing drainage swales and areas of natural vegetation to be preserved.

The plan requirements section of the ordinance should be tailored to individual municipal planning needs. It may also be necessary to

Continuing Threats to Resource Protection Efforts

F&PCCT has identified a number of regional issues viewed as threats and/or approaches to policy needed to avert threats to ongoing resource protection efforts. Those which follow most probably impact West Vincent. Recommendations are as characterized by F&PCCT and do not necessarily reflect Township policy.

1. Extension of Public Sewer and Water. F&PCCT opposes further extensions of sewer and water services into West Vincent, which tend to facilitate development of densities otherwise inappropriate. High density development in the immediate vicinity of French Creek could irreparably damage the natural and scenic values of the creek and its surroundings. "Leap frog" extensions of public sewer and water lines threaten to alter the present character of the Township from rural to suburban. (Note: The West Vincent Township Sewage Facilities (Act 537) Plan recommends the extension of public sewer lines for the express purpose of serving homes with mal-functioning individual systems. The 537 Plan does not recommend extension to provide future service to currently undeveloped lands.)
2. Relocation of PRD District. F&PCCT strongly urges the Township to move its PRD zoning district, which permits high density residential development from its present location along French Creek to an area which would not harm the waterways of the Township. (Note: The Open Space Task Force also has addressed this issue, but reminds us that factors other than immediate environmental or aesthetic concerns necessarily play a role in Township regulatory decisions, such as water availability, proximity to public services, and highway access.)
3. Preservation of the Nantmeal Hills/Completion of the French Creek Greenway. Again within the context of protecting French Creek, F&PCCT urges the Township to treat the hills above the Creek with great sensitivity. The crowns of these hills, a glorious sight, are presently undisturbed yet also unprotected. The lands at the base of the hills going along French Creek should also be preserved and protected. Continued efforts to formalize the French Creek Greenway will further these objectives; similar resolution of purpose and action need be carried forth by landowners and municipal officials on the East Vincent side of the Creek.

4. Major relocation options for Route 100 as presented in the "PA Route 100 Corridor Study" published by the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities in 1986 show alternate routes to the present highway for the area between Ludwigs Corner and Bucktown. Two of the routes running to the east of the present alignment would require new bridges across the French Creek in the vicinity of either Camp Innabah or Camp Sankanac; either would be greatly disruptive to existing landscape character in West Vincent Township between Ludwig's Corner and the Creek. Equally disruptive are several of the routes proposed for the western side of Route 100.

5. Protection for Route 401 - the Conestoga Road. The Upper Reaches Report recommends both Scenic Road designation and a thematic historic district nomination to the National Register for this historic route. Both will require regional cooperation with East Nantmeal, Upper Uwchlan, and West Pikeland Townships. Development planning along this corridor should carefully consider aspects of rural character and historic resources.

establish what types of development or systems will require more detailed information. For example the amount and type of information needed to evaluate a few single family residential structures may not be as detailed as that needed to evaluate a large industrial or commercial facility. In order to promote responsive site designs, consider institutionalizing a sketch plan submission that describes among other conditions the preliminary runoff control designs. Once the Act 167 Watershed Plans are completed in the Northern Federation, the law requires that individual municipal plan submission requirements be consistent with such plans.

8. Incorporate system installation requirements for each of the control measures delineated in the chosen hierarchy of systems (see Chapter 4 of this study). Consultation with the municipal engineer is recommended for more detailed information pertaining to the engineering aspects of the various systems.
9. Ensure that sedimentation and erosion controls are consistent with the planning objectives of each watershed (see Chapter 4). While sedimentation and erosion control plans are separate from stormwater runoff plans and require a separate review process, they are related. Municipalities should consider requiring that projects be reviewed by the County Conservation District. In addition, areas that are especially prone to damage as a result of runoff should be registered with DER, Soil and Water Conservation to lower the standard (25 acres) for the submission of a request for an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit. The DER, upon review, can reduce the minimum disturbance area requirement for an erosion and sedimentation control permit.

