Ambler Borough

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted February 19, 2001

AMBLER BOROUGH

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

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Manager/Secretary
James J. Dillon

Borough Council
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Dick Hill, *Vice President*
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Montgomery County Commissioners
Michael D. Marino, *Chairman*
James R. Matthews
Ruth S. Damsker

Ambler Borough

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission

Adopted February 19, 2001

ORDINANCE NO. 953

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF AMBLER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of 1968, P.L. 805, No. 207, as amended, (53 P.S. § 10101 *et seq.*) provides that municipal governing bodies shall have the power to adopt and amend a comprehensive plan as a whole or in part; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Commission has prepared a Comprehensive Plan on behalf of the Borough of Ambler (the "Comprehensive Plan"); and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery Planning Commission has forwarded the Comprehensive Plan to the Ambler Borough Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan was made available for public inspection and was circulated to adjoining municipalities and the Wissahickon School District in accordance with the provisions of section 302 of the Municipalities Planning Code; and

WHEREAS, the Ambler Borough Planning Commission has held one or more public hearings on the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with section 302 of the Municipalities Planning Code; and

WHEREAS, the Ambler Borough Planning Commission has forwarded the Comprehensive Plan to the Ambler Borough Council with the recommendation that the Comprehensive Plan be adopted; and

WHEREAS, Ambler Borough Council held a public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with section 302 of the Municipalities Planning Code; and

WHEREAS, in the judgment of the Ambler Borough Council adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will further the interests of the Borough of Ambler and its residents in accordance with the provisions of section 301 of the Municipalities Planning Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it Ordained as follows:

1. The Borough of Ambler does hereby adopt the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission and duly considered by the Ambler Borough Planning Commission and the Ambler Borough Council as its official Comprehensive Plan.

2. The Comprehensive Plan, as adopted hereby, shall be effective as of this date.

RESOLVED this 19th day of February, 2001.

Attest:

Gloria A Bonacore

BOROUGH OF AMBLER

By: Salvatore J Rocco
, President
Borough Council

Michael W. Geary
, Mayor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

COMMUNITY PROFILE 1

DEMOGRAPHICS 1

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS 1

TOTAL POPULATION 1

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE 1

AGE PROFILE 2

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS 2

TYPE 2

TENURE AND VACANCY 3

AGE 4

CONDITION (SUBSTANDARD UNITS) 4

VALUE AND RENT 5

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS 5

EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES 5

LABOR FORCE OCCUPATIONS 7

PLACE OF WORK 7

INCOME 8

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME 8

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME 8

LAND USE 9

CHAPTER TWO

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 13

BACKGROUND 13

I. OVERALL LAND USE 13

II. HOUSING GOAL 13

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 13

IV. OPEN SPACE 13

V. TRANSPORTATION 14

CHAPTER THREE

TRANSPORTATION 15

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM 15

ROAD HIERARCHY 15

ROAD DESIGN GUIDELINES 17

EXISTING CONDITIONS 21

TRAFFIC VOLUMES 21

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION 24
IMPROVEMENTS 24
PLANNED 24
PROPOSED 24
INTERSECTIONS 24
ROAD EXTENSION(S) 29
SIDEWALKS 29
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION 29
RAIL SERVICE 29
BUS SERVICE 29
PUBLIC PARKING 31

CHAPTER FOUR
HOUSING PLAN 35
BACKGROUND 35
TRENDS 35
PLAN OBJECTIVES 35
MEET FAIR SHARE REQUIREMENTS 35
COMPATIBLE INFILL DEVELOPMENT 36
CONTROL RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS 37
REDUCE LAND USE CONFLICTS 37
PROMOTE SOUND HOUSING 38

CHAPTER FIVE
COMMUNITY FACILITIES 39
BACKGROUND 39
ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES 39
EMERGENCY SERVICES 39
FIRE PROTECTION 39
POLICE PROTECTION 39
AMBULANCE SERVICE/MEDICAL FACILITIES 39
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS 39
SCHOOLS 40
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 40
LIBRARIES 42
OPEN SPACE/RECREATION 42
EXISTING OPEN SPACE 42
FUTURE NEEDS 42
PROPOSED NEW OPEN SPACE 46
OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT 50
SEWAGE FACILITIES 52
AMBLER'S SEWAGE FACILITIES PLANNING 52
WATER SUPPLY 54

CHAPTER SIX
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS 57
BACKGROUND 57
REGIONAL TRENDS 57
BUSINESS PATTERNS 57
INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE 57
MONTGOMERY COUNTY TRENDS 57
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT 57
AMBLER'S ECONOMY 59
OVERALL TRENDS 59
COMMERCIAL TRENDS 62
INDUSTRIAL TRENDS 63
FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 63

CHAPTER SEVEN
REVITALIZATION PLAN 65
BACKGROUND 65
GENERAL FACTORS 65
OPPORTUNITIES 65
CONSTRAINTS 65
MARKET ANALYSIS 66
COMMERCIAL MARKET 66
INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE MARKETS 73
RECOMMENDATIONS 80
COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION 80
INDUSTRIAL REVITALIZATION 80

CHAPTER EIGHT
LAND USE PLAN 83
SCHEMATIC PLAN 83
RESIDENTIAL 83
COMMERCIAL 83
LIGHT INDUSTRY 83
MIXED USE 85
OPEN SPACE 85
OTHER LAND USES 85
STRATEGIC PLAN 85
COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION 85
INDUSTRIAL AREAS REVITALIZATION 89

CHAPTER NINE
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION 93

BACKGROUND 93
ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION 93
ZONING/LAND DEVELOPMENT 93
ADMINISTRATIVE 99
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS/AGENCIES 100
INFRASTRUCTURE 101
OPEN SPACE 102
HOUSING 102

CHAPTER TEN
COMPATIBILITY WITH AREA AND COUNTY PLANNING 103
BACKGROUND 103
UPPER DUBLIN TOWNSHIP 103
LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP 106
WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP 106
MONTGOMERY COUNTY 106

APPENDIX
COMPARATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA 109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure # **Figure Title**

1-1 ..... Total Population (1970-1990) 1
1-2 ..... Population Projection (1990-2010) 1
1-3 ..... Average Household Size 1
1-4 ..... Age Profile 2
1-5 ..... Housing Types (1970-1990) 3
1-6 ..... Housing Tenure (1970-1990) 3
1-7 ..... Age of Housing Stock 4
1-8 ..... Substandard Units (1970-1990) 4
1-9 ..... Median Housing Value and Rent (1970-1990) 5
1-10 ..... Employment Estimates (1990-2010) 5
1-11 ..... Employment Sectors (1977-1987) 6
1-12 ..... Labor Force by Occupation 7
1-13 ..... Place of Work (1970-1990) 8
1-14 ..... Median Incomes (1980-1990) 8
1-15 ..... Existing Land Use 10
1-16 ..... Change in Land Use (1966-1992) 11
3-1 ..... Road Functional Classifications 16
3-2 ..... Highway Functional Classification and Design Guidelines 19
3-3 ..... Road Conditions by Functional Classifications 22
3-4 ..... Average Daily Traffic 23
3-5 ..... Traffic Counts 24
3-6 ..... Traffic Circulation Pattern 25
3-7 ..... Proposed Improvements 27
3-8 ..... Accident Data-Intersections (1990-1994) 28
3-9 ..... Public Transit 30
3-10 ..... On-Street Parking Supply 32
3-11 ..... Off-Street Parking Supply 33
4-1 ..... 2010 Housing Unit Demand 35
5-1 ..... Enrollment Projections for Wissahickon School District 41
5-2 ..... Protected Land 43
5-3 ..... Protected Land (Descriptions) 44
5-4 ..... Open Space Service Areas 45
5-5 ..... Open Space Acreage Needs 47
5-6 ..... Community-Wide Recreation Facility Needs 47
5-7 ..... Proposed Open Space 48
5-8 ..... Land Inventory - Target Open Space Areas 49
5-9 ..... Proposed Trail (Tentative Route) 51
5-10 ..... Projected Wastewater Treatment Needs (1975 Estimates) 53

5-11 ..... Existing Sewage Flows (in Millions of Gallons per Day) 53
5-12 ..... Water Supply and Service Data 54
5-13 ..... Water Supply Reserve and Potential New Connections 54
6-1 ..... Regional Business Patterns (by Sector and County) 58
6-2 ..... Employment Distribution 59
6-3 ..... Land Development Patterns 60
6-4 ..... Areas of Significant Residential and Non-Residential Development (1989-1994) 61
6-5 ..... Ambler Business Distribution 62
7-1 ..... Ambler Market Area 67
7-2 ..... Commercial Business District 68
7-3 ..... Commercial Center Types 69
7-4 ..... Existing Retail Commercial Demand (Comparison Goods) 70
7-5 ..... 2010 Retail Commercial Demand (Comparison Goods) 70
7-6 ..... Shopping Centers-Ambler Market Area 71
7-7 ..... Shopping Center Inventory-Ambler Market Area 72
7-8 ..... Industrial Areas 75
7-9 ..... County Industrial Proposals (1988-1994)(Sq. Ft.) 76
7-10 ..... 2010 Industrial Space Demand Analysis Ambler Market Area 77
7-11 ..... County Office Proposals (1988-1994) 78
7-12 ..... 2010 Office Space Demand Analysis Ambler Market Area 78
8-1 ..... Schematic Land Use Plan 84
8-2 ..... Strategic Land Use Plan 86
8-3 ..... Strategic CBD Revitalization Sites 87
8-4 ..... Strategic Industrial Revitalization Sites 90
9-1 ..... Building Compatibility Concepts (Scales, Openings, Additions) 95
9-2 ..... Building Compatibility Concepts (Placement, Materials and Details) 96
9-3 ..... Proposed CBD Streetscape Improvements (Partial) 97
10-1 ..... Adjacent Land Use Plan 104
10-2 ..... Adjacent Zoning 105
A-1 ..... Total Population (1970-1990) 111
A-2 ..... Population Projections 111
A-3 ..... Average Household Size 111
A-4 ..... Age Profile 112
A-5 ..... Housing Types (1970-1990) 113
A-6 ..... Housing Tenure 114
A-7 ..... Age of Housing Stock 115
A-8 ..... Substandard Units 115
A-9 ..... Median Housing Value (1990 $) 116
A-10 ..... Employment Estimates (Number of Jobs) 116
A-11 ..... Employment Sectors 117
A-12 ..... Median Incomes (1990 $) 118

Chapter One

COMMUNITY PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic changes over the last twenty years are discussed below, covering population, housing, employment, and income, with comparisons to area communities made wherever possible. In this section, only Borough changes are highlighted; comparative data for other communities and the county appears in the Appendix.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

TOTAL POPULATION

The rate of municipal population change (relative population increase or decrease) is an important measure of the magnitude of population change that has occurred over time. Between 1970 and 1990, the Borough's population declined 15 percent, from 7,800 persons to 6,609 (Figure 1-1). Similar decreases were experienced in other boroughs and older suburban townships (e.g., Springfield) during this period and probably reflects the "empty nest" phenomenon caused by the changing life cycles of households. By contrast, most neighboring Townships experienced considerable growth during the same period.

Figure 1-1
TOTAL POPULATION (1970-1990)

1970	1990	# Change	% Change
7,800	6,609	(1,191)	-15.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Looking ahead, the population is projected to decrease 2.4 percent by 2010, to just over 6,400 people (Figure 1-2). Similar declines are expected in other boroughs like Conshohocken, but surrounding townships will continue growing. In general, projections are based on several factors, including past levels of development, recently proposed development, proximity to employment centers, available land, and public facilities, particularly sewers. Also, recent lifestyle changes, such as fewer children per family and deferral of marriage and child rearing may continue to lower totals.

Figure 1-2
POPULATION PROJECTION (1990 - 2010)

1990	2010	# Change	% Change
6,609	6,450	(159)	-2.4

Sources: DVRPC; MCPC

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Nationally, the average household size has been declining since the first census in 1790. In Ambler, it dropped 20 percent from 1970 to 1990, a rate common among other communities and for the county overall (Figure 1-3).

Figure 1-3
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE (1970 - 1990)

1970	1990	% Change
3.16	2.50	-20.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Generally, this is attributed to several factors, including aging of the population, lower fertility rates, high divorce rates, couples delaying marriage, and increases in non-family households. Also, a declining household size indicates that a community's population is becoming more dispersed, with

more dwelling units serving fewer people. This is evident in Ambler, because while its population decreased during the period, the number of households and dwelling units increased.

AGE PROFILE

A community's age profile over time is another important measure of growth and change. Among other things, shifts in the distribution among age groups can have significant impacts on the provision of social services, housing, school enrollments, park and recreation needs, and the labor force. Figure 1-4 shows changes in Ambler's age distribution between 1970 and 1990. During this period, the proportion of very young residents, age 14 and under, decreased, while the proportion of young and middle age adults, persons aged 25-44, increased from more than one-quarter of all residents to fully one-third the total. This is consistent with similar increases at the county level and is the result of the continuing rise of the baby boom "bulge" through the age structure.

Growth in this age group is particularly important since it can affect the housing market, labor force, and school enrollments. That is, people in this age group are likely to be employed, including two income couples with no children, typically become homeowners, and are more likely to start families than at an earlier age.

Figure 1-4
AGE PROFILE (1970-1990)

Age Group	1970		1990		% Change 1970-1990
	#	% Total	#	% Total	
<5	697	8.9	469	7.1	-32.7
5-14	1,456	18.7	727	11.0	-50.1
15-24	1,214	15.6	805	12.2	-33.7
25-44	1,887	24.2	2,290	34.6	21.4
45-64	1,646	21.1	1,266	19.2	-23.1
65-74	479	6.1	545	8.2	13.8
75+	421	5.4	507	7.7	20.4
Total	**7,800**	**100%**	**6,609**	**100%**	**-15.3%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Another notable change is the increase in older residents in the Borough, people aged 65 and over. This has gone from about 11 percent of the total in 1970 to 16 percent by 1990. This trend is also consistent with changes at the county level. This group may also affect the housing market, since their small household size may increase demand for smaller, easier to maintain units, such as attached housing and accessory apartments. Also, older residents tend to be significant consumers of health-related goods and services, ranging from resident-care facilities (e.g., Artman Home), to local medical offices and clinics, to community recreation centers with specialized programs.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

TYPE

Housing type falls into four main categories: single-family detached, single-family attached, multi-family, and mobile home. A balanced and diverse range of unit types is important for serving the needs of households that are at different stages of life. Like other boroughs, Ambler has a history of meeting such needs.

Since 1970, for example, attached and multi-family units have consistently comprised about one-quarter and one-third of all units, respectively (Figure 1-5). Overall, the Borough gained 174 units during the period, 142 of which were multi-family units. The increase in multi-family units is likely the result of several factors, including new conversions, a small expansion at the Edgewood Apartment complex, single room units at the Wyndham Hotel and Wissahickon Inn, and attached units (particularly twins) reported as multi-family units by census respondents.

Figure 1-5
HOUSING TYPES (1970-1990)

		SFD		SFA		MF		MH		Other	
	Total Units	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total
1970	2,455	967	39.4	690	28.1	793	32.3	5	0.2		
1990	2,629	990	37.7	674	25.6	935	35.6	1	0.0	29	1.1
Change											
#	174	23		(16)		142		(4)		29	
%	7.1	2.4		-2.3		17.9		-80.0		---	

Notes:
SFD = Single Family Detached
SFA = Single Family Attached
MF = Multi-Family
MH = Mobile Home
Other (1990 census only) = campers, recreational vehicles, trailers, etc.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TENURE AND VACANCY

Housing tenure defines occupants of a housing unit as either owners or renters. In a given area, changes can occur over time for two reasons. First, it can be caused by construction of a large number of units intended for either owner or renter occupancy. Second, the tenure of the existing stock can change, such as when owner-occupied units are converted to rental units. In Ambler, the tenure distribution during the past twenty years has remained at more than 50 percent for owner-occupied units and about 40 percent for renter-occupied units (Figure 1-6). The most notable change during the period occurred for renter-occupied units, corresponding to a significant increase in multi-family units as noted above. Overall, the Borough's distribution would be expected given its diverse housing stock as described above. By contrast, surrounding townships and the county overall have much higher proportions of owner-occupied units.

Figure 1-6
HOUSING TENURE (1970-1990)

		Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant*	
	Total Units	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total
1970	2,455	1,420	57.8	988	40.2	47	1.9
1990	2,629	1,476	56.1	1,085	41.3	68	2.6
Change							
#	174	56		97		21	
%	7.1	3.9		9.8		---	

*Vacancy rates include all vacant units whether on the market (for sale or rent) or not.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A separate but related measure is vacancy rate. As used here, it is a count of unoccupied units that are available for sale or rent and does not count other types of vacancies such as seasonal units. An available vacancy rate between 3 percent and 5 percent is generally considered desirable because it allows for mobility, choice, and renewal of the housing supply. A rate above or below that range can mean a number of things, depending on specific market conditions. For example, a low rate may indicate a relatively inactive housing market with a low level of housing turnover, or it may be the result of a strong market where housing supply is not keeping up with demand. At less than three percent, Ambler's vacancy rate has remained low during the past twenty years and suggests that there is sufficient flexibility in the Borough's housing market.

AGE

Housing age refers to a unit's original construction date, rounded to the nearest calendar year. It therefore does not include when additions, remodeling, or conversions have occurred. By itself, housing age is not a significant indicator of neighborhood quality; other characteristics such as value and condition should also be considered.

As would be expected of an older, developed community, Ambler's housing stock is relatively old. Nearly half the units were constructed before 1950 and many of these before 1940 (Figure 1-7). This follows a pattern common to other boroughs and the older townships bordering Philadelphia (e.g., Abington). The only other significant building period occurred during the 1950s, when post-war activity increased housing in many areas. Overall, the borough's median housing age - 1950 - ranks behind only a handful of other communities, mostly other boroughs, as one of the oldest housing stocks in the county. In contrast, still developing townships like Lower Gwynedd have a significant supply of new housing, many of which were built during the 1980s.

Figure 1-7
AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

Median Year	Pre 1940		1940-1949		1950-1959		1960-1969		1970-1979		1980-1989		1990-1993		1993 Estimated Total Units
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1950	1,031	38.9	256	9.7	742	28.0	275	10.4	206	7.8	119	4.5	18	0.7	2,647

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CONDITION (SUBSTANDARD UNITS)

An important indicator of housing condition is the number of substandard units. The Census Bureau defines substandard units as those that either lack complete plumbing or are overcrowded. Complete plumbing refers to the presence of hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet, and a tub or shower all for the exclusive use of the unit's occupants.

Overcrowded is a unit with over 1.01 persons per room excluding rooms such as kitchens, bathrooms, utility rooms, or unfinished attics or basements. Although persons per room is not a structural characteristic, it can be a good measure of a household's standard of living. Of the two problems, overcrowding tends to be more prevalent than deficient plumbing.

Ambler's level of substandard units has steadily declined during the past twenty years, accounting for less than 2 percent of all units in 1990 compared to more than 6 percent in 1970 (Figure 1-8). As in other communities, the primary problem has historically been overcrowding; in both 1980 and 1990 it accounted for more than 70 percent of the total. As a result, the overall decrease reflects reduced overcrowding.

Figure 1-8
SUBSTANDARD UNITS (1970 - 1990)

Year	Total Units	Substandard Units	
		#	%
1970	2,455	152	6.2
1990	2,629	37	1.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Looking beyond census data, Borough records indicate there are internal and external problems with units in two main areas - North Main Street and South Ambler. As indicated by the Comprehensive Plan, these have historically been problem areas, affected by a mix of inadequate maintenance, proximity to conflicting industrial and commercial uses, and poor environmental conditions (particularly South Ambler).

VALUE AND RENT

Housing value represents the owner's estimate of their property's current market worth, including both the land and home. Although subjective, it is another indicator of an area's overall economic condition. Changes in value tend to reflect changes in market demand and the prevailing costs of land, construction, and capital.

The median housing value in Ambler has doubled since 1970, from $59,000 dollars to $118,000 dollars (Figure 1-9). Similar increases have occurred elsewhere and for the county overall. However, the Borough's median has historically been well below other communities and the county, ranking it among the most affordable places to buy a home. This is likely a reflection of both housing type and age, given the Borough's supply of older attached units that will tend to have a lower value than newer housing found in other communities.

Figure 1-9
MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE AND RENT (1970 - 1990)

	1970*	1990	Change	
			#	%
Housing Value	$59,400	$118,200	$58,789	99.0
Gross Rent	$415	$563	$148	35.6

*1990 $

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Gross rent refers to the monthly rent paid for a unit plus estimated utility costs. Like housing values, rents can reflect an area's desirability as a place of residence. Changes over time generally reflect overall demand and supply and changes in utility and maintenance costs. Although it increased by more than one-third, the median rent in Ambler is comparable to or below those found in other communities and ranked below the county median ($458 in 1970; $593 in 1990).

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES

As used here, employment figures refer to the number of jobs in a given area, not workers, and can serve a variety of purposes. As one aspect of the economy, they serve to inform the public of current and anticipated future economic conditions and may serve as decision-making input for current and potential employers and investors in the region. Because an area's growth and activity is related to its economy, employment data can also be tied to land use and transportation planning.

In recent years, Montgomery County has experienced a significant change as it has gone from being principally a bedroom suburb for Philadelphia commuters to an area that is a major source of jobs. The county's central location in the region and its major road network that permits direct access from surrounding counties are major reasons for this transformation. Evidence of this in the greater Ambler area can be found in the office and industrial development in Fort Washington.

In the Borough itself, there were about 3,328 jobs as of 1990. It is estimated this could increase slightly by 2010, to 3,500 jobs (Figure 1-10). This is based on factoring in a portion of expected county-wide increases to the Borough and the possibility of some redevelopment and re-use occurring.

Figure 1-10
EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES (1990 - 2010)

1990	2010 (proj.)	Change	
		#	%
3,328	3,500	172	5.2

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

Sectors

The Census Bureau also collects employment data by major economic sector - Manufacturing, Wholesale, Retail, and Service - every five years. For each category, the Census Bureau uses definitions established by the Standards Industrial Classification Code (SIC). While some types of occupations are not covered within these categories, a general picture of Ambler's employment base is presented (Figure 1-11). Data for the years 1977, 1982, and 1987 are included.

Figure 1-11
EMPLOYMENT SECTORS (1977-1987)

	1977		1982		1987		% Change 1977-1982		% Change 1982-1987		% Change 1977-1987	
	# Estab.	# Employees	# Estab.	# Employees	# Estab.	# Employees	% Estab.	% Employees	% Estab.	% Employees	% Estab.	% Employees
Manufacturing	22	600	23	800	26	600	4.5	33.3	13.0	-25.0	18.2	0.0
Wholesale	30	130	32	160	43	n.a.	6.7	23.1	34.4	---	43.3	---
Retail	73	504	61	472	73	627	-16.4	-6.3	19.7	32.8	0.0	24.4
Service	61	1,153	85	1,712	119	1,985	39.3	48.5	40.0	15.9	95.1	72.2

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau

Manufacturing

In general terms, manufacturing is defined as the mechanical or chemical transformation of substances or materials into new products. The assembly of component parts of products is also counted is the resulting product is neither a structure nor other fixed improvement.

Beginning with the Keasbey and Mattison (K & M) company, historically manufacturing has been an important part of the Borough's economic base. In recent times, re-use of the former K & M complex in south Ambler (Nicolet and Interspec companies) and smaller scale businesses elsewhere (such as along Main Street) have kept the number of companies and employees relatively stable.

Wholesale

This category refers to businesses engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional users; or to other wholesalers.

Although the number of businesses has risen over time, in terms of the number of employees this sector has not played a significant role in the Borough's economy. By comparison, surrounding communities and Lansdale and Conshohocken Boroughs all have larger wholesale sectors.

Retail

Retail trade covers all establishments engaged in selling merchandise for personal or household consumption and rendering services incidental to the sale of goods.

Traditionally this sector has been important to Ambler, with numerous retail businesses along the Butler Avenue corridor serving a variety of neighborhood needs. Declines in the number of businesses and employees occurred between 1977 and 1982, but both rebounded by 1987. The increase between 1982 and 1987 paralleled similar increases elsewhere and for the county overall. Although figures for a more recent period are not yet available, substantial business turnover in recent years indicates that Ambler is experiencing another decline and upswing cycle.

Service

This sector covers all establishments primarily engaged in providing a wide variety of services for individuals, businesses, government, and other organizations. Examples include lodging, repair, amusement, health, legal, engineering, and similar professional services.

Although an important part of Ambler's economy for some time, this sector has been particularly strong in recent years. Between 1977 and 1987, the number of businesses nearly doubled and more than 800 employees were added. Further, by 1987 service businesses employed more than

three times as many people as next highest sector (retail). Similar growth occurred in other communities and for the county overall.

LABOR FORCE OCCUPATIONS

Shown in Figure 1-12 are the various occupations of Ambler residents and the unemployment rates for 1980 and 1990. The wide range of occupations listed have historically been classified as "white collar" (managerial), "blue collar" (operative), or "other" (farmworkers). Although generally a useful distinction in terms of income, educational requirements, etc., the lines of distinction have become less marked as the nation's economy has moved from being industrially based to information and service based. By 1980, this change was evident nationally, as the proportion of the country's labor force in white collar jobs increased to 53 percent from 37 percent in 1950.

Figure 1-12
LABOR FORCE BY OCCUPATION

	1980		1990		Change	
Occupation	**#**	**%Total**	**#**	**%Total**	**#**	**%Total**
Professional/Technical	460	12.6	666	17.9	206	44.8
Managerial/Administrative	284	7.8	429	11.5	145	51.1
Sales	360	9.9	467	12.5	107	29.7
Clerical	626	17.2	595	16.0	(31)	-5.0
Craft & Kindred Workers Non-Farm Workers	394	10.8	539	14.5	145	36.8
Operatives	763	21.0	334	9.0	(429)	-56.2
Farm Workers	55	1.5	101	2.7	46	83.6
Service Workers	519	14.3	433	11.6	(86)	-16.6
UNEMPLOYED	178	4.9	158	4.2	(20)	-11.2
TOTAL LABOR FORCE	3,639	100.0	3,722	100.0	83	2.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

This economic shift can in part be seen in the Borough's figures, which show a large decrease in residents working as operatives, a blue collar occupation that represented nearly one quarter of the occupations in 1980, but large increases in several white collar occupations such as managerial and administrative positions.

Unemployment for Borough residents changed slightly between 1980 and 1990, remaining at less than 5 percent. This is higher than the county overall in 1990 (3.1%), but comparable to many other communities (e.g., 3.5% in Cheltenham Township; 4.3% in Pottstown Borough).

PLACE OF WORK

Place of work refers to the geographic locations of plants, offices, stores and other establishments where members of the resident labor force work. When looked at over time, trends can be identified, such as more or fewer people working their home community or in a nearby city.

By 1980, the growth of jobs in Montgomery County was outpacing growth in the resident labor force; as a result, it has become as much an employment center as a suburban bedroom county. In fact, in 1980 the number of workers commuting into the county each day exceeded the number commuting out by approximately 46,000. This trend has largely continued to the present time.

For Ambler residents, the predominant work location has been Montgomery County, as shown in Figure 1-13. In 1990, fully two-thirds of the total reported working somewhere in the county other than the Borough, up from about half in 1980. Similarly, more people reported working in Philadelphia. Clearly, these gains and concurrent decline in people working in Ambler reflect the county-wide employment trends noted above and declining opportunities within the Borough.

Figure 1-13
PLACE OF WORK (1970-1990)

	1970		1990		Change	
	#	%Total	#	%Total	#	%Total
Workers 16 years of age and older	3,384	---	3,493	---	109	3.2
In Area of Residence	not available	---	594	17.0	---	---
Remainder of Montgomery County	2,701	79.8	2,343	67.1	(358)	-13.3
City of Philadelphia	315	9.3	328	9.4	13	4.1
Chester County	4	0.1	35	1.0	31	775.0
Bucks County	55	1.6	110	3.1	55	100.0
Delaware County	28	0.8	29	0.8	1	3.6
Camden County	15	0.4	0	---	(15)	-100.0
Remainder of SMSA*	98	2.9	0	---	(98)	-100.0
Outside SMSA	40	1.2	54	1.5	14	35.0
Not Reported	128	3.8	0	---	(128)	-100

*SMSA: Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

INCOME

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME

Median family income refers to the income of the primary householder and the incomes of all related persons over the age of 15 in the home. Because families frequently consist of more than one wage earner, family incomes tend to be higher than household incomes. Figure 1-14 shows that family income in Ambler grew more than eleven percent during the 1980 to 1990 period.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In contrast to family income, this measure refers to the income of the primary householder and incomes from all other persons over the age of 15 in home, regardless of their relationship to the householder. Because households of unrelated individuals can be a fairly large proportion of all households, this measure may be a better indicator of the typical income for an area than the family income measure. Also, since many households consist of only one person, this measure is usually lower than median family incomes, as is the case in Ambler. However, it too grew during the period, by nearly fifteen percent.

Figure 1-14
MEDIAN INCOMES (1980 - 1990)

			Change	
	1980*	1990	$	%
Family Income	$37,054	$41,409	$4,355	11.8%
Household Income	$31,088	$35,730	$4,642	14.9%

*1990$
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

LAND USE

The overall land use pattern in Ambler has not changed much; it remains a largely residential community that is supported by a small, local commercial and industrial base (Figure 1-15). There is a good mix of housing types, ranging from older single-family detached units throughout the Borough, to apartments along Bethlehem Pike, and attached and two-family units in south Ambler. The primary commercial area is found along Butler Avenue, stretching from Woodland Avenue to Main Street. This area can be considered the Borough's Central Business District (CBD) and it contains a mix of uses typical of a CBD (stores, offices, apartments, municipal parking lots, transit area). Other commercial uses are found on the fringes of the CBD on side roads such as North and South Main Streets. Remaining developed land consists of industrial uses located in south and west Ambler, and scattered institutional uses.

Parkland is located primarily north and east of Butler Avenue, consisting of passive open space along Rose Valley Creek and several active recreation sites (Ricciardi Park, Knight Playground, and Pickering Field). Most of the vacant land is located in the industrial area of south Ambler.

Changes during the past 25 years within specific land use categories are shown in Figure 1-16. It shows increases for every residential dwelling type, with the category as a whole increasing from 45 percent of the total to 50 percent. Also worth noting is the sharp decline in industrial land use and the increase in parkland. Two specific developments that brought change involved the former Ambler High School site, that produced additional homes and Ricciardi Park, and expansion of the Artman Home assisted-living facility.

AMBLER BOROUGH
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

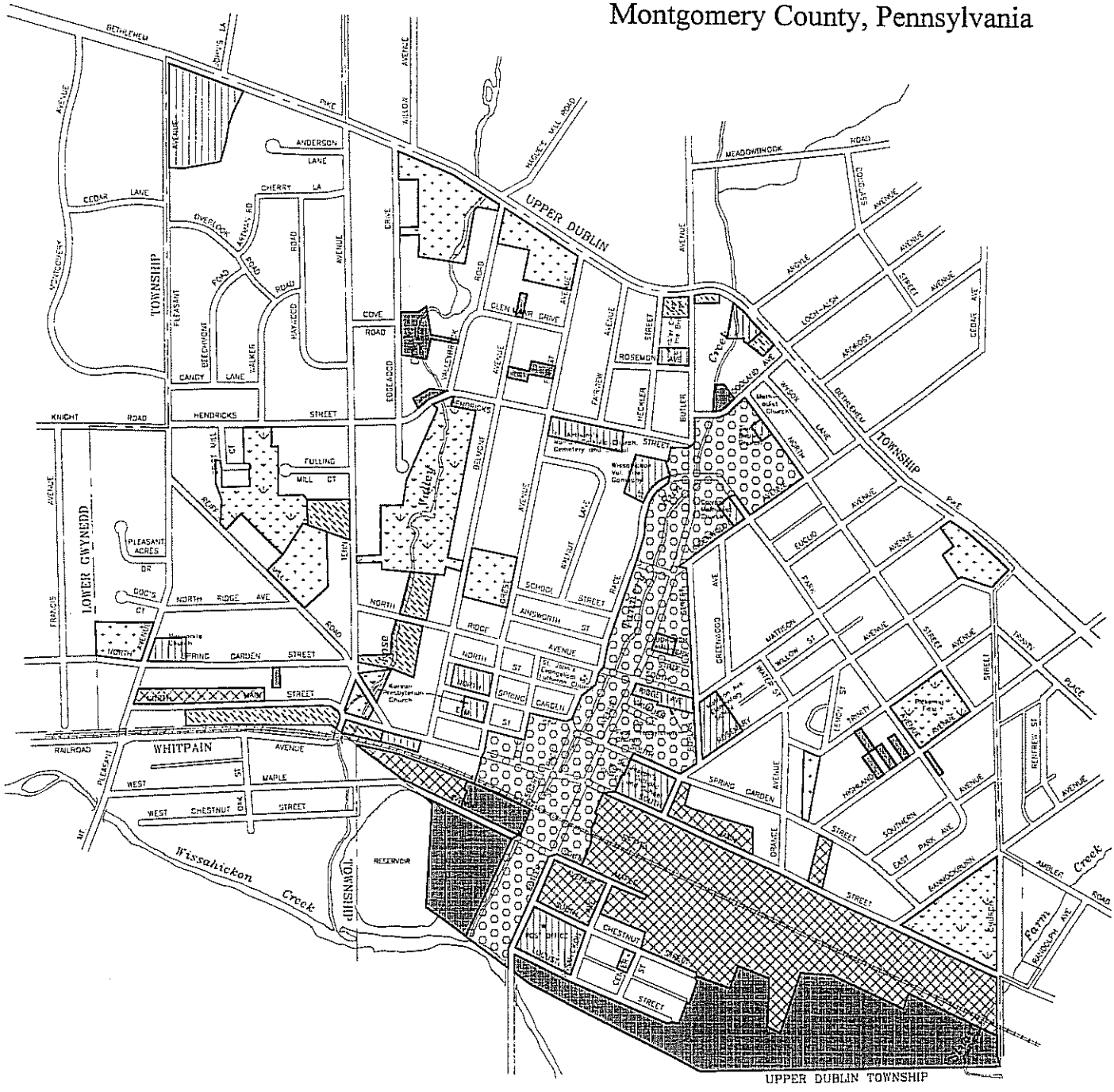

Figure 1-15
EXISTING LAND USE

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Open Space
- Mixed Use
- Undeveloped
- Multifamily Residential
- Other Residential

0 600 1200 1800 feet

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: County Board of Assessment & MCPC field check, 1994

Figure 1-16
CHANGE IN LAND USE (1966-1992)

	1966		1992		CHANGE	
	Acreage	%Total	Acreage	%Total	Acreage	%
RESIDENTIAL						
Single-Family Detached	179	34.3	192	35.7	13	7.3
Single-Family Attached	15	2.9	19	3.5	4	26.7
Two-Family	17	3.3	20	3.7	3	17.6
Multi-Family	26	5.0	42	7.8	16	61.5
OFFICE	4	0.8	8	1.5	4	100.0
COMMERCIAL	30	5.7	28	5.2	(2)	-6.7
INDUSTRIAL	73	14.0	30	5.6	(43)	-58.9
INSTITUTIONAL	30	5.7	28	5.2	(2)	-6.7
RECREATION	13	2.5	22	4.1	9	69.2
UTILITY/TRANSPORTATION	98	18.8	98	18.2	0	--
VACANT	37	7.1	51	9.5	14	37.8
TOTAL*	522	100.0	538	100.0	--	--

*Totals differ due to different data sources/methodology

Sources: Ambler Comprehensive Plan; Montgomery County Board of Assessment

Chapter Two

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND

This section of the plan is perhaps the most important because it establishes future land use and development policies and priorities for the Borough. In essence, goals and objectives are a statement of the type of community desired and serves as a guide to both private developers and public officials in their decision-making. The following goals were developed through an analysis of existing conditions and ongoing discussions with Borough officials at public meetings.

I. OVERALL LAND USE

Maintain a balanced development pattern that meets housing needs, provides local shopping and employment opportunities, preserves open space for natural resource protection and active recreation needs, and is coordinated with public infrastructure capacities.

II. HOUSING GOAL

The Borough contains a wide range of housing types that meets the needs of a diverse population. The goal is to continue meeting these needs through new housing units and the maintenance of existing ones.

Objectives:

- Provide appropriate controls for conversions of single-family dwellings into multi-family units.
- Reduce land use conflicts.
- Provide for compatible in-fill development.
- Promote a sound housing stock.
- Meet fair share requirements.

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Historically, Ambler has had industry and commercial uses that helped meet local employment and shopping needs. Recent changes in the number, type, and size of these uses has led to a relative decline and the need for revitalization. The goal, therefore, is to promote revitalization through efforts to retain existing businesses, attract new ones, and maintain a clean and attractive streetscape.

Objectives:

- Identify and promote commercial and industrial redevelopment and reuse opportunities.
- Identify and encourage a mix of uses that are diverse but compatible, that reinforce the small-town character of the Borough, and that help reduce land use conflicts.
- Develop development standards that provide a unified and attractive image.
- Encourage shared parking and similar flexible parking regulations that meet central business district parking needs.

IV. OPEN SPACE

The Borough has a number of open space sites that provide for a range of passive and active recreation uses. The Borough's Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan outlines a number of goals that by reference are hereby made a part of this plan. As a summary for this plan, the primary overall goal is to maintain a balance between natural features preservation and active recreation needs and, wherever possible, to expand upon these resources.

Objectives:

- Expand public open space along Rose Valley Creek.
- Provide public open space along Tannery Run Creek.
- Maintain shade trees in public areas and encourage private landscaping and beautification efforts.
- Establish links between borough open space areas and to regional resources such as the Wissahickon Creek Greenway.
- Acquire new open space suitable for creation of another ballfield.
- Implement site improvements to existing parks as recommended by the Borough Planning Commission.

V. TRANSPORTATION

The Borough benefits from being located near major transportation routes, allowing easy access between the Borough and many surrounding areas. It is also very pedestrian-oriented, with an extensive sidewalk network for access needs within the community. The plan goal is to maintain these advantages and to improve upon them wherever possible.

Objectives:

- Fill in gaps in the sidewalk network.
- Improve traffic circulation along Butler Avenue (e.g., encourage common access points control; turning movements).
- Evaluate the extension of Maple Avenue/South Chestnut Street.
- Coordinate with SEPTA as needed to maintain and improve upon transit service.

Chapter Three

TRANSPORTATION

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Functional classification groups roads into a hierarchy by the service and function that they provide and was developed as a planning tool for comprehensive transportation. Based on standards established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), it is used by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PADOT) for appropriate design guidelines, as well as to coordinate road functions and highway improvements among neighboring municipalities, the county, the region, and the state. By using this method, a logical and efficient roadway network can be established.

ROAD HIERARCHY

The hierarchy of roads includes expressways and other limited access highways, arterials, collectors, and local roads. These can be further divided according to the urban or rural character of an area, such as designating principal and minor arterials or major and minor collectors. The classifications for Borough roads is shown in Figure 3-1.

Two major considerations in classifying roads are access to abutting property and travel mobility. Accessibility refers to the level of control over traffic entering or exiting a roadway to or from adjacent properties. Mobility refers to the ability of a road to move traffic. For example, expressways emphasize a high degree of mobility but have virtually no access to abutting properties. Local roads, on the other hand, primarily provide access to abutting properties, while discouraging the mobility of through traffic.

Another criterion used to classify a highway is by the volume of traffic it carries. The most common way to gauge traffic on a particular road is by measuring its Average Daily Traffic (ADT). Due to the diversity of Montgomery County from highly urbanized to very rural areas, a range of ADT is considered within each category of functional classification. For example, a principal arterial in eastern Montgomery County may carry a significantly higher volume of traffic than a road with the same classification in the western part of the county because of the density of development and concentration of activity centers. Traffic counts for Borough roads are discussed later in this section but are not used here for classification purposes.

Expressway

The highest level of road classification is the expressway, which is a multi-lane highway with fully controlled access usually provided only at grade separated interchanges. Expressways are used in corridors that need to move high volumes of traffic at high speeds while providing high levels of safety and efficiency and usually traverse and connect metropolitan areas.

There are no expressways in Ambler, although the Fort Washington Expressway (PA. 309) is a short distance away in Upper Dublin Township.

Arterial

An arterial provides a high degree of mobility in order to better serve trips of longer length. Since access to abutting property is not their major function, access controls are desirable to enhance mobility. Arterials include state numbered routes such as PA-73 (Skippack Pike) and other important roads like Germantown Pike. Arterials are divided into two sub-classes:

A. Principal Arterial

A principal arterial is any major highway which is not an expressway. Generally it provides between two and four through lanes of travel depending on traffic volume and land use intensity. They serve major activity centers and carry a high proportion of cross-county traffic. Examples in Ambler are Butler Avenue and Bethlehem Pike.

AMBLER BOROUGH
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

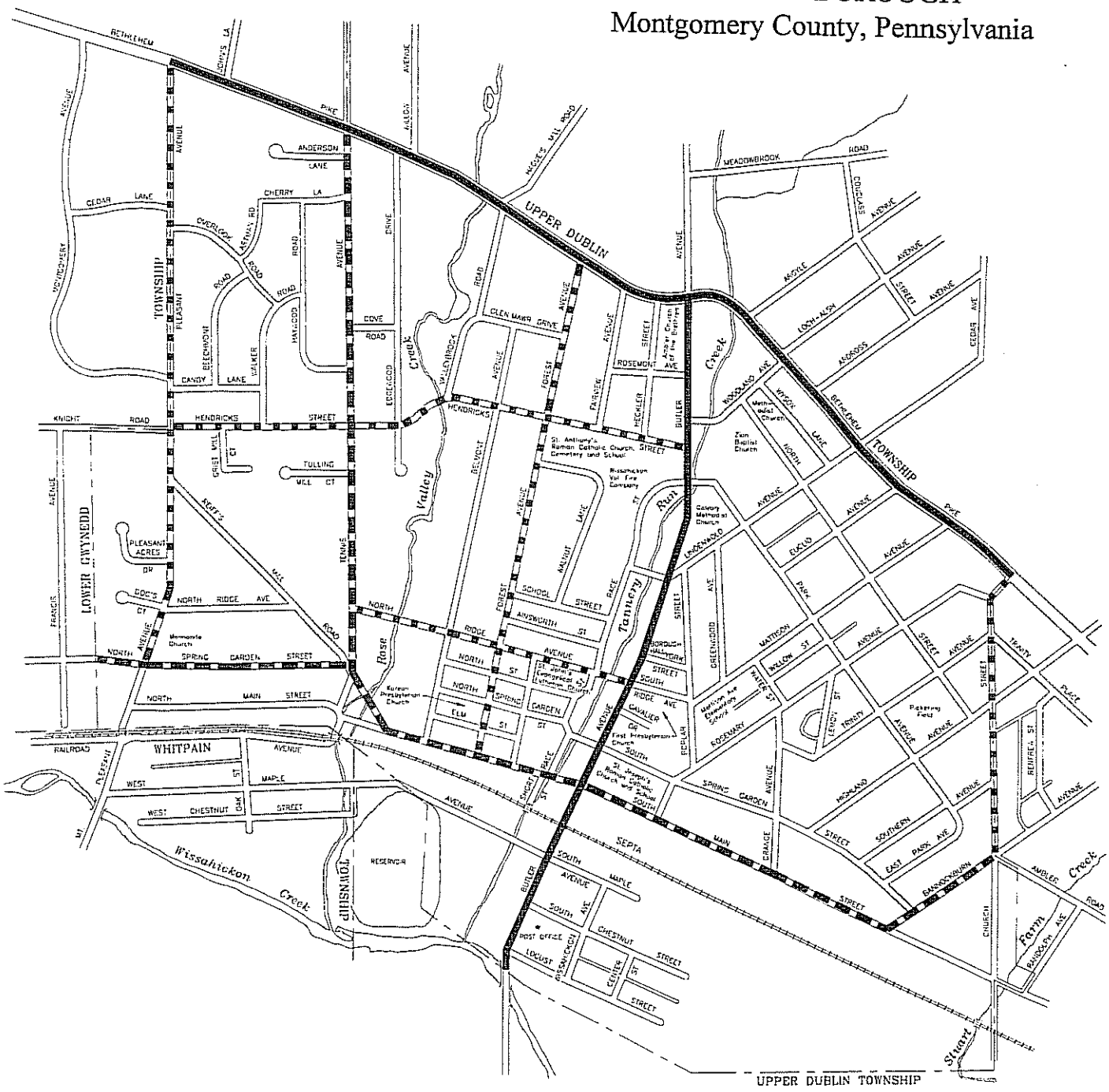

Figure 3-1
ROAD FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Principal Arterial

Major Collector

Minor Collector

0 600 1200 1800 feet

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: MCPC, 1996

B. Minor Arterial

Minor arterials interconnect with and augment principal arterials. They typically accommodate trips between three and five miles in length. They are spaced at intervals consistent with population density and carry traffic within or between several municipalities of the county. Further, they link other areas not connected by principal arterials and provide key connections between roads of higher classification. There are no minor arterials in the Borough.

Collectors

Collectors provide a mix of accessibility and mobility. They typically serve trips up to four miles in length and channel or distribute traffic to or from a road of a higher classification. Collectors are also divided into two sub-classes:

A. Major Collector

A major collector provides a combination of mobility and access with a priority on mobility. Ideally, access is partially controlled with preference given to through traffic. Access is permitted with at-grade intersections and major access driveways of selected land uses such as a retail or employment center. They accommodate trips within and between neighboring municipalities.

Further, they may serve as a major road through large industrial or office parks or provide key connections between roads of higher classification.

In Ambler, Tennis Avenue, North Spring Garden Street, Reiff's Mill Road (between North Main Street and Tennis Avenue), Main Street, and Bannockburn Avenue are major collectors.

B. Minor Collector

A minor collector provides a combination of mobility and access with a priority on access. They allow access to abutting property with little or no restriction. Generally, minor collectors accommodate shorter trips within a municipality. They are spaced to collect traffic from local roads and neighborhoods and channel it to major collectors and arterials. Mount Pleasant Avenue, Hendricks Street, Forest Avenue, North Ridge Avenue, and Church Street are examples.

Local Roads

Local roads and streets have relatively short trip lengths, generally not exceeding one mile. Because property access is the main function, there is little need for mobility or high operating speeds. This function is reflected by use of a lower posted speed between 20 and 30 miles per hour. They provide a link between property access and the collector road network. Through traffic is discouraged from using local roads.

ROAD DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design standards shown in Figure 3-2 for road functional classifications serve as overall guidelines for development of roads and related improvements. From a road engineering viewpoint, they are considered to be the minimum and desirable standards a community should follow, based on a number of standard sources (A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets by AASHTO, 1990; Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Design Manual, Part 2, Highway Design (Publication 13; 1990); Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, AASHTO, 1991. However, as indicated by the descriptions below, local conditions and other planning considerations can affect their use in a community. For example, in a developed place like Ambler the widths of rights-of-way are effectively established by existing development and may not meet the ideal standards.

Right-of-Way

The right-of-way is publicly-owned land that contains all elements of a highway and its related functions. This includes travel lanes, turning lanes, shoulders, parking lanes, and border areas (which might contain sidewalks or paths, curbing or swales, and grass areas). Right-of-way widths are determined partly by the functional classification, but other factors such as the extent of development in an area need to be considered. The width should be based on the preferable dimensions of each element to the maximum extent possible. In developed areas, it is often necessary to consider less desirable dimensions.

The design should provide an overall cross section that will give maximum service within a limited right-of-way. Procuring sufficient right-of-way for the ultimate function of a road at the time of an initial subdivision, land development, or other improvement is important. This permits future improvements, such as widenings, to be performed at a more reasonable cost with less physical impact.

Number of Lanes

Number of lanes refers to the number of continuous travel lanes assigned to a road. This number is determined by traffic volume, level of service, and capacity conditions. Two travel lanes are appropriate on low volume roads such as local roads and minor collectors. A continuous two-way center left-turn lane may be desirable in highly congested commercial areas along major collectors and arterials. The lane would provide a "safe" area for turning movement while permitting an uninterrupted flow of through traffic. Depending upon traffic demand and available right-of-way, some roads such as arterials may have four or more travel lanes in addition to turning lanes. Expressways have a minimum of two lanes per direction, physically separated by a median or barrier. Expressways may have three or more travel lanes per direction depending upon traffic volume and right-of-way.

Travel Lanes

Width and condition of pavement surface are two important safety and comfort features of a highway. Typical lane widths are ten to fifteen feet. Twelve feet is desirable for all roads except minor collectors and local roads. A ten foot wide lane is considered adequate for minor collectors and local roads where oncoming and passing vehicles is infrequent and the proportion of trucks is low. Although lane widths of twelve feet for most functional classifications are desirable on rural and urban highways, there are circumstances that necessitate more narrow lanes. In urban areas where right-of-way and development become the controlling factor, eleven foot wide lanes are acceptable. Ten foot widths are acceptable only on low speed roads (less than 30 miles per hour). Where a lane is adjacent to a curb, a fourteen foot width (thirteen feet minimum) is desirable as drivers tend to shy away from the curb edge.

Left-Turn Lanes

A left-turn lane is an auxiliary lane for the exclusive use of left turning vehicles. Rear end collisions and loss in operational efficiency are evident on roads where these lanes are not provided. The left-turn lane should be as wide as the through travel lane, but not less than ten feet. The length of a left turn lane consists of a deceleration length, storage length, and entering taper. Pavement striping, contrasting pavement texture, signs and physical separators may be used to delineate the lane. A left turn lane with a median may be used at major intersections or entrances to major employment or retail centers to control access points.

Shoulders

A shoulder is the portion of the roadway contiguous to the travel lane. It accommodates stopped vehicles, emergency use, and bridge and overpass supports. For safety, a shoulder should be continuous regardless of its width. A shoulder may vary in width from only two feet, where an emergency stopping area is not needed and roadway stability is its only function, to twelve feet on an urban expressway where the entire shoulder may be paved. Well-designed and properly maintained shoulders are necessary in all classes of roads. A vehicle stopped on the shoulder should clear the pavement edge by at least one, but preferably two feet. This preference has led to a shoulder width standard of ten feet. An absolute minimum width of two feet should be provided along rural minor collectors; six to eight feet is preferable so that a stopped vehicle can be outside the travel lane. Although it is highly desirable that a shoulder be wide enough for a vehicle to be completely off of a travel lane, vehicles can pass with caution. Heavily traveled, high speed highways and those carrying a high percentage of trucks should have usable shoulders at least ten feet wide (preferably twelve feet).

Figure 3-2
HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

Functional Classification	Right of Way[1]	Number of Lanes[2]	Travel Lane Width[3]	Left Turn Width[3]	Paved Shoulder Width[4]	Parking Lane Width[5]	Bicycle Lane Width[6]	Border Area[7]		
								Curbing[8]	Grass	Sidewalks/ Paths[9]
EXPRESSWAYS	120'-300'									
Urban[10]		4-6	12'	n.a.	10'-12'	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	10'
Rural		4-6	12'	n.a.	10'	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	10'
ARTERIAL (Principal & Minor Arterial)	80'-100'									
Urban		2-5	11'-14'	10'-12'	8'-10'	10'-12'	4'-5'	8'	4'	4'-12'
Rural		2-5	11'-12'	10'-12'	4'-10'	n.a.	4'-5'	n.a.	n.a.	4'-12'
COLLECTORS										
Major Collector	60'-80'									
Minor Collector	60'									
Urban		2-5	10'-14'	10'-12'	6'-10'	8'-10'	4'-5'	8'	4'	4'-12'
Rural		2	10'-12'	10'-12'	2'-8'	n.a.	4'-5'	n.a.	n.a.	4'-12'
LOCAL ROADS	50'									
Urban			(Total Cartway Width 26'- 30')					8'	4'	4'-12'
Rural			(Total Cartway Width 20'-30')					n.a.	n.a.	4'-12'

1. Right-of-Way: The right-of-way is variable in order to accommodate highly urbanized and laterally restricted areas as well as unrestricted areas. The greater width is desirable and should be provided except where existing development is a constraint.
2. Number of Lanes: The number of lanes is variable in order to accommodate the traffic volume, turning movements, and land capacity demand for selected level of service. This number does not include right-turn lanes where needed.
3. Range of Lane Width: Lane widths are based upon minimum and desirable standards as well as other conditions, such as being adjacent to a curb or the anticipation of heavy truck traffic when a 14-foot lane width is recommended. A 12-foot lane width is recommended for a major collector and above. A 10-foot lane width is acceptable below that classification.
4. Shoulder: Shoulder widths are based upon minimum and desirable standards as well as other conditions such as highly urbanized and laterally restricted areas or the anticipation of heavy truck traffic. An 8-to-10-foot width is recommended to accomodate a stopped vehicle. In an urban area, the shoulder is utilized as a parking lane.
5. Parking Lane: Parking lane width is based upon minimum and desirable standards as well as other conditions such as lot size, intensity of development, or potential for use as a traffic lane.
6. Bicycle Lane: A portion of a roadway that has been designated by striping, signage, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. An improved shoulder could be utilized in the absence of a bicycle lane.
7. Border Area: The presence of curbing, grass strips, and sidewalks depend upon adjacent land uses and site conditions. Otherwise, the border area would consist of a drainage swale and slope.
8. Curbing: On a state-owned, two-lane highway, curbing should be located a minimum of 16 feet from centerline.
9. Sidewalks/Paths: The width of sidewalks is based upon minimum standards as well as other conditions such as those within an urbanized area. Paths for multiuse purposes, pedestrians/bicyclists, may be desirable in lieu of sidewalks in rural areas or parallel to an expressway, arterial, or major collector.
10. Urban: Includes suburban and developing areas.

Source: Derived from design ranges specified by AASHTO, PADOT, and other design manuals

Parking Lanes

Movement of vehicles is the primary function of a roadway network. Parking on an arterial street is not desirable because it generally decreases lane capacity, impedes traffic flow, and increases accident potential. However, segments of the network may be required to provide for the parking of vehicles as a result of adjacent land use. When on-street parking is required, parallel parking is the preferred method. It is generally allowed and accepted on local roads, although not usually designated. It may also be necessary where there is inadequate off-street parking. Curb parking on urban arterial streets is often necessary and is acceptable when the travel lane(s) can accommodate the traffic volume. Many urban residential areas use pavement widths of between twenty-six and thirty feet for both mobility and parking. When parking occurs on both sides of the street, this dimension assures adequate room for one moving lane. Most vehicles park within six to twelve inches of the curb when parking parallel and occupy an area approximately seven feet wide. The minimum desirable width of a parking lane is eight feet. On rural arterials, provisions should be made for emergency stopping only.

Rural collector highways generally require provisions for emergency stopping only. On most urban collector roads, the minimum parking lane width is eight feet. A width of ten to twelve feet is most desirable because it provides better clearance and the potential to use the parking lane during peak periods as a through lane. This width can also accommodate transit operations. On urban minor collector roads within residential areas, an eight foot wide lane is adequate.

Bicycle Lanes

Bicycle movement should be considered on all roads. While a separate parallel off-road bicycle path is often most desirable, it usually necessary to accommodate bicycles on the roadway surface. In these situations, designated bicycle lanes should be considered.

Designating road space for bicyclists and motorists and signs can increase a bicyclist's sense of safety. Also, passing motorists are less likely to swerve out of their lane to avoid a bicyclist. Bicycle lanes should always be one-way facilities and carry traffic in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic. Four feet is the ideal minimum lane width. All lanes should be designed to AASHTO standard specifications.

On a street where a parking lane is provided, the recommended lane width is five feet. The lanes should always be placed between the parking lane and the travel lanes. Bicyclists generally do not ride near a curb because of grates and stormwater drainage inlets. Lanes adjacent to a curbed street should have a minimum width of five feet from the curb.

On highways without a curb, bicycle lanes should be located between the travel lanes and shoulders. They should have a minimum width of four feet, where the shoulder can provide additional width. A width of five feet or greater is preferable when a shoulder is not provided. Additional widths up to eight feet are desirable where substantial truck traffic is present or where vehicle speeds exceed 35 miles per hour.

Border Area

The border is the area between the outside edge of the road or shoulder and the right-of-way line. It helps separate traffic from homes and businesses and provides needed space for uses corollary to the road. Some needs to consider when determining minimum border widths are pedestrian requirements, snow storage, storm drainage, parallel bike paths or trails, traffic control devices, signs, and utilities. Every effort should be made to provide wide borders for functional needs, aesthetics, safety, and reducing the impact of traffic on adjacent development. A border area should be provided along all roads and should be ten feet or wider to properly accommodate present and future needs.

Curbing

Curbs control drainage, delineate pavement edge, provide aesthetics, reduce maintenance operations, and limit access points to roadside development. Barrier curbs, the most common

type, are relatively high and steep faced. Ranging in height from six to nine inches, they are designed to inhibit or at least discourage a vehicle from leaving the road. The width of a curb is generally up to eight inches. Where they are not used, grading is required to carry surface runoff in swales or natural drainage areas. As a general guide, curbs are not required where the residential density is less than or equal to one unit per acre.

Sidewalks
Sidewalks are integral parts of urban streets, but few are provided in rural areas. However, the accident potential increases for those walking on or adjacent to travel lanes in rural areas due to higher travel speeds and lack of street lighting.

Studies have shown that sidewalks in rural areas reduce pedestrian accidents. As a general practice, sidewalks or paths should be constructed along any street or highway without shoulders. Whenever roadside and land development conditions allow pedestrian movement along a main or high speed highway, a sidewalk or path area should be provided. Sidewalks in rural areas are justified where land uses generate pedestrian concentrations near or along industrial parks or where connection between facilities is desired. Sidewalks in residential areas are generally four feet wide. The width of the grass strip between the sidewalk and curb should be a minimum of four feet for maintenance. Commercial areas, schools, and other pedestrian generators may require sidewalks covering the entire border width. If sidewalks must be placed adjacent to the curb, the walkway width should be two feet wider than when a grass strip separates the walk and curb. This provides space for street hardware, opening of car doors, and safety from traffic.

Joint-Use Paths
Sometimes a sidewalk cannot be constructed adjacent to a road. In some instances, a separate joint-use, pedestrian-bicycle path should be considered. When only occasional pedestrian activity is anticipated, the width may be reduced to eight feet. A width of twelve feet is desirable when the facility is shared on a regular basis with joggers and other pedestrians.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

As noted above, existing conditions in the Borough are an important consideration in road design standards. Figure 3-3 shows existing road conditions by functional classification for Ambler, covering those elements most applicable to Ambler.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Figures 3-4 and 3-5 show traffic counts for selected roads in the Borough. Traffic counts provide a measure of how much use a road is getting at a given point in time. They typically include all types of vehicles traveling in both directions during a 24-hour period and are shown as average daily traffic (ADT) loads. Below is a summary of recent counts taken in the Borough.

Butler Avenue
Consistent with its function as a principal arterial, high traffic counts are shown for this road. Although totals vary by location, the count has ranged between 12,000 and 16,000 vehicles and in one location increased by 33 percent between 1982 and 1988.

Main Street
Overall, Main Street does not appear to carry high traffic volumes, although higher volumes do exist closer to Butler Avenue, which would generally be expected. Looked at separately, counts for North Main in 1983 and 1989 suggest an overall increase in volume, although these were taken at different locations.

On South Main, counts taken the same year at two locations are considerably different from each other, with the higher volume between Butler Avenue and Rosemary Avenue. In fact, a 50 percent decrease occurred beyond Rosemary Avenue, indicating the importance of Rosemary Avenue as a direct route into the residential area south of Butler Avenue.

Figure 3-3
ROAD CONDITIONS BY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Functional Classification	Street Name	Jurisdiction	Right-of-Way (ft.)	Number of Travel Lanes	On-Street Parking	Sidewalks/ Paths
ARTERIALS						
Principal	Bethlehem Pike	State	60	2 or 3	no	no
	Butler Avenue	Borough	50	2	yes	yes
COLLECTORS						
Major	Tennis Avenue	State	40	2	yes	yes
	South Main Street	Borough	40	2	yes**	yes
	North Spring Garden Street	State	40	2	yes	yes
	Bannockburn Avenue	Borough	50	2	yes**	yes
	North Main Street	Borough	33/42 (varies)	2*	yes**	yes
Minor	Mt. Pleasant Avenue	Borough	33	2	no	yes
	Hendricks Street	Borough	34	2	yes**	yes
	Forest Avenue	Borough	35	2	yes	yes
	North Ridge Avenue	Borough	36	2	yes	yes
	Church Street	Borough	37	1	yes	yes
LOCAL ROADS			Conditions Vary			

* One lane for one-way segment between Mt. Pleasant Avenue to Railroad Avenue

** One side only

*** Not between Forest Avenue and Tennis Avenue

Sources: Borough Zoning Map (1977); field checks; Borough staff

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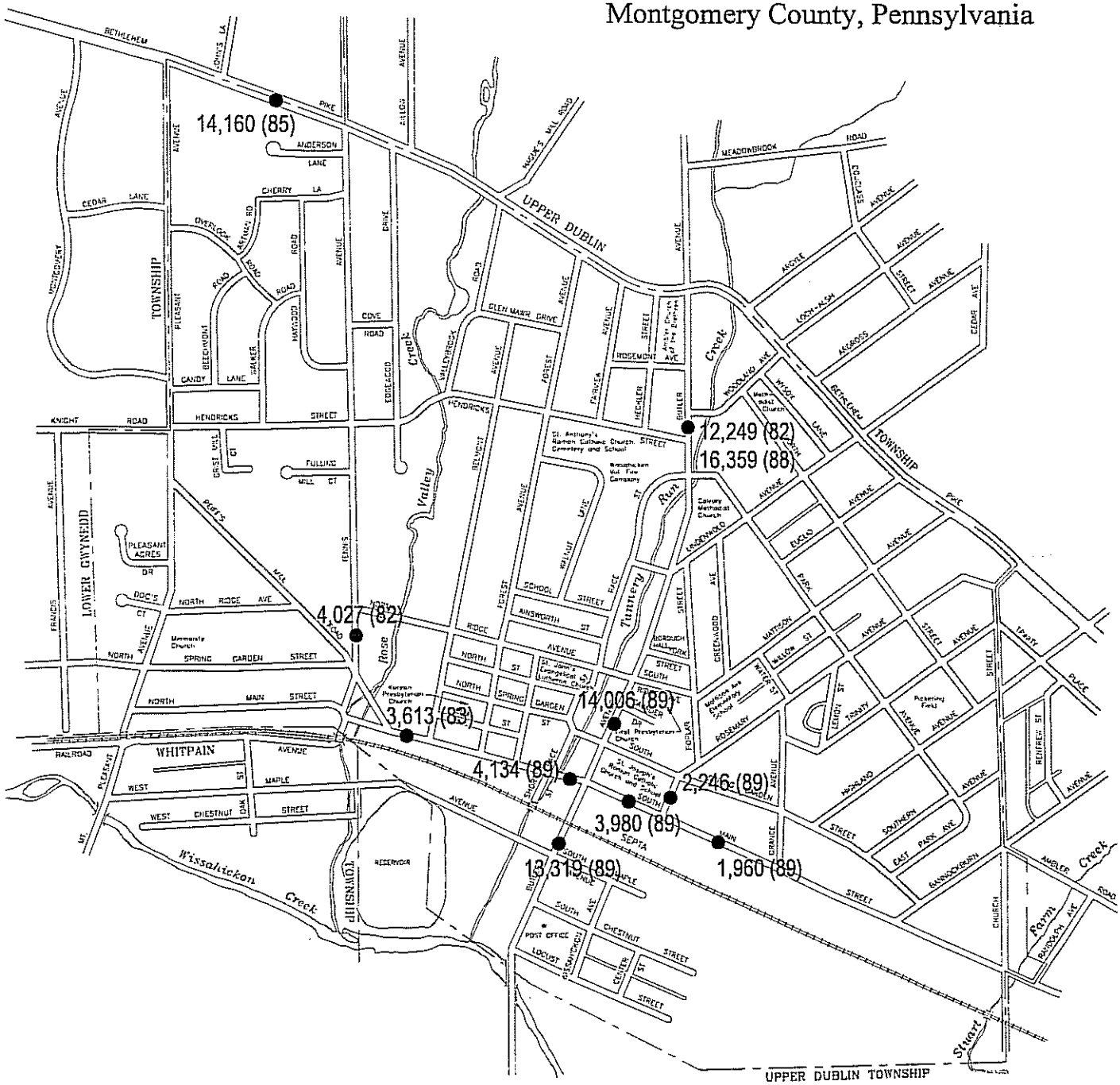

Figure 3-4
AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

- ● Count
- ( ) Year

Source: DVRPC, 1996

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Figure 3-5
TRAFFIC COUNTS

Street Name	Responsible Agency	Average Daily Traffic		
		Count	Year	Locaction Between
PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS				
Bethlehem Pike	State	14,160	1985	Tennis Av. and John's La.
Butler Avenue	State	12,249	1982	Hendricks St. and Woodland Av.
		16,359	1988	Hendricks St. and Woodland Av.
		14,006	1989	Spring Garden St. and Cavalier Dr.
		13,319	1989	Main St. and Maple Av.
MAJOR COLLECTORS				
Tennis Avenue	State	4,027	1982	N. Ridge Av. and Spring Garden Av.
South Main Street	State	3,980	1989	Butler Av. and Rosemary Av.
		1,960	1989	Orange Av. and Rosemary Av.
North Main Street	State	3,613	1983	Belmont Av. and Reiff's Mill Rd.
		4,134	1989	Butler Av. and Short St.

Bethlehem Pike

More than 14,000 vehicles were counted for this road in 1985 between Tennis Avenue and John's Lane (Upper Dublin Township). Because of its functional class (principal arterial), high counts would be expected for this road and are likely even higher near intersections with other major roads such as Butler Avenue.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

The Borough's roads basically follow a grid pattern that provides easy and efficient access throughout the community. Over time, traffic movement has been directed and controlled by establishing a series of one-way streets and signalizing key intersections, which helps maintain safe and efficient traffic flow in the Borough (Figure 3-6).

IMPROVEMENTS

PLANNED

Fort Washington Expressway (Route 309)

The expressway is scheduled to undergo complete restoration under the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PADOT) Twelve Year Plan. Among other things, this will include reconstruction of entrance and exit ramps to improve safety, bridge repair or replacement, and road resurfacing, although construction is still a few years away. The importance of this project for Ambler is that although the road will not be closed to traffic, there will be detours identified and other alternative routes sought by drivers.

As a result, it is likely that at least some roads in the Borough will be impacted, particularly main roads like Bethlehem Pike and Butler Avenue. The Borough should therefore coordinate closely with PADOT on detours and related traffic issues.

PROPOSED

As described below and shown in Figure 3-7, there are a number of areas in the Borough in need of improvements. They have been identified through site checks, knowledge of such areas by Borough Planning Commission members, and accident data available from the Borough Police Department and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Figure 3-8).

INTERSECTIONS

A. This area is the location of conflicting and sometimes hazardous traffic movements on a short stretch of Butler Avenue, as a result of three road intersections (Hendricks Street, Park Avenue, and Race Street) and the Acme supermarket driveway. For example, left and right

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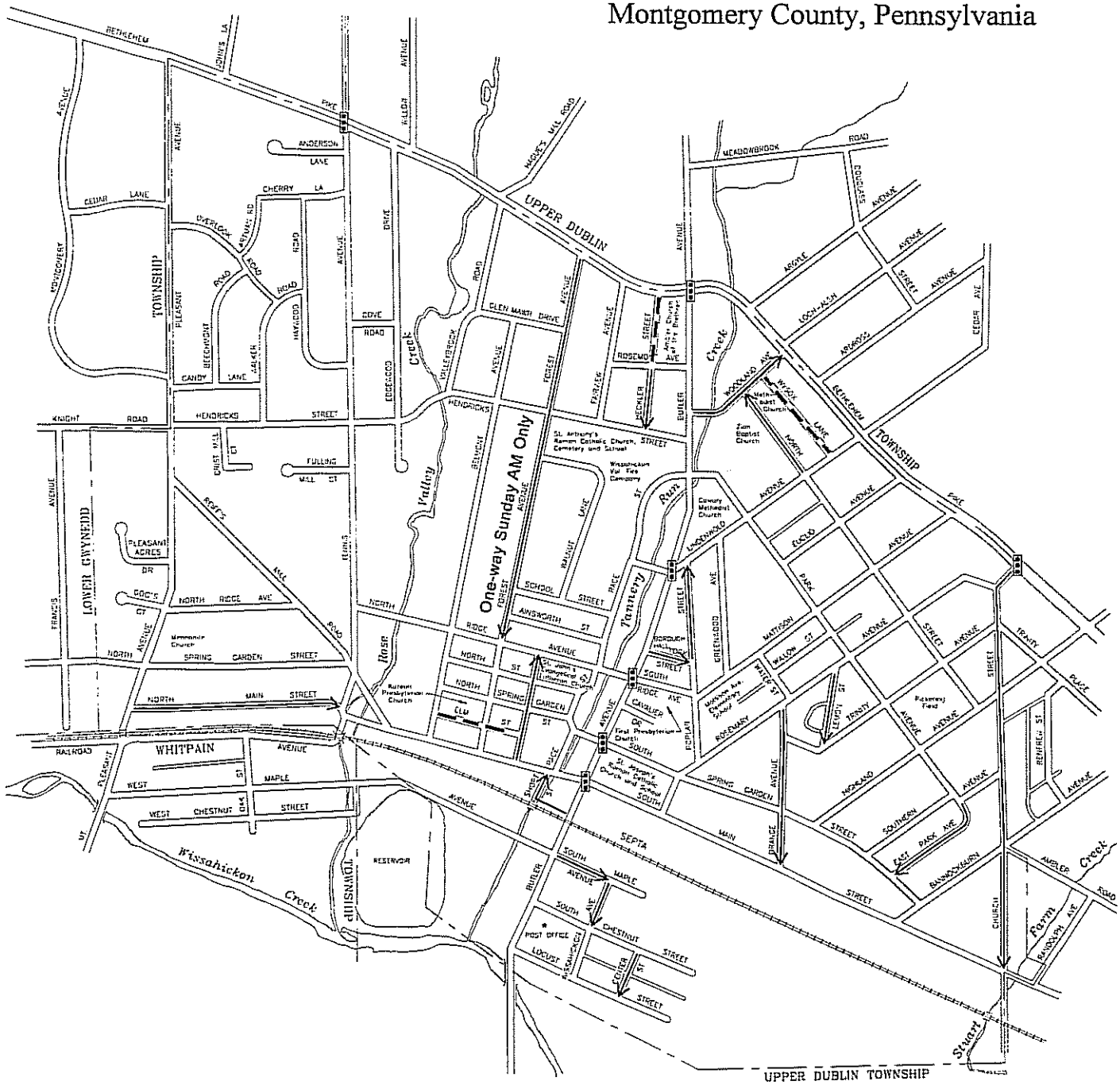

Figure 3-6
TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PATTERN

Signal

One-way

Unimproved

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Source: Borough Staff, 1996

turns onto Butler Avenue from Acme create conflicts with traffic entering Butler from Hendricks Street located directly across from the store.

Proposed Improvement: Make Acme's Butler Avenue driveway an entrance only. At a minimum, restrict the exit to right turn only.

B. This area also has conflicting traffic movements involving street and driveway intersections (Butler Avenue, West Maple Avenue, McDonald's restaurant, South Chestnut Street, Post Office and Locust Street) and several accidents have occurred.

Proposed Improvements

- Prune/remove shrubbery on the east side of Butler Avenue/West Maple Avenue corner (SEPTA lot) to improve sight distance.
- Reduce the number of left turn movements from driveways onto Butler Avenue (e.g., through change of use/redevelopment).
- Increase sight distance at corner of Butler Avenue and Locust Street

C. This area is the intersection of Tennis Avenue/North Ridge Avenue. Sight distance is restricted for traffic turning onto Tennis.

Proposed Improvements

- Prune or remove vegetation at southwest corner.
- Keep on-street parking along south side of Tennis Avenue (from Reiffs Mill Road to Ridge Avenue) a sufficient distance from intersection to ease left turns.

D. This is the five point intersection formed by Tennis Avenue, Reiff's Mill Road (2 segments), North Spring Garden Street. Traffic on Reiff's Mill Road has the right-of-way and all other traffic is required to stop. Existing conditions require sharp turns and can lead to conflicting t turning movements.

Proposed Improvements

- Ensure adequate sight distance, particularly at the southwest corner (Tennis Avenue/North Spring Garden Street).
- Realign to the east Reiff's Mill Road between North Main Street and the intersection to reduce the sharp curve for left turns from Tennis Avenue.
- Widen the north side of Tennis Avenue at the corner to ease turning movements between Tennis and Reiff's Mill Road.
- Make Tennis Avenue one-way west from the intersection to North Main Street.
- Evaluate signalization. A traffic study should be completed to determine when, if ever, this option should be used.

E. This is the intersection of North Main Street and Reiff's Mill Road and contains a sharp curve for traffic moving north.

Proposed Improvement

Reduce the angle of the curve by widening the east side of both streets or by realigning Reiff's Mill Road (see above).

F. This is the heavily traveled intersection of a principal arterial road (Bethlehem Pike) and a collector road (Mt. Pleasant Avenue). The major problem is left turns from Mt. Pleasant Avenue onto Bethlehem Pike, which are made dangerous because of traffic volumes and speed on the Pike.

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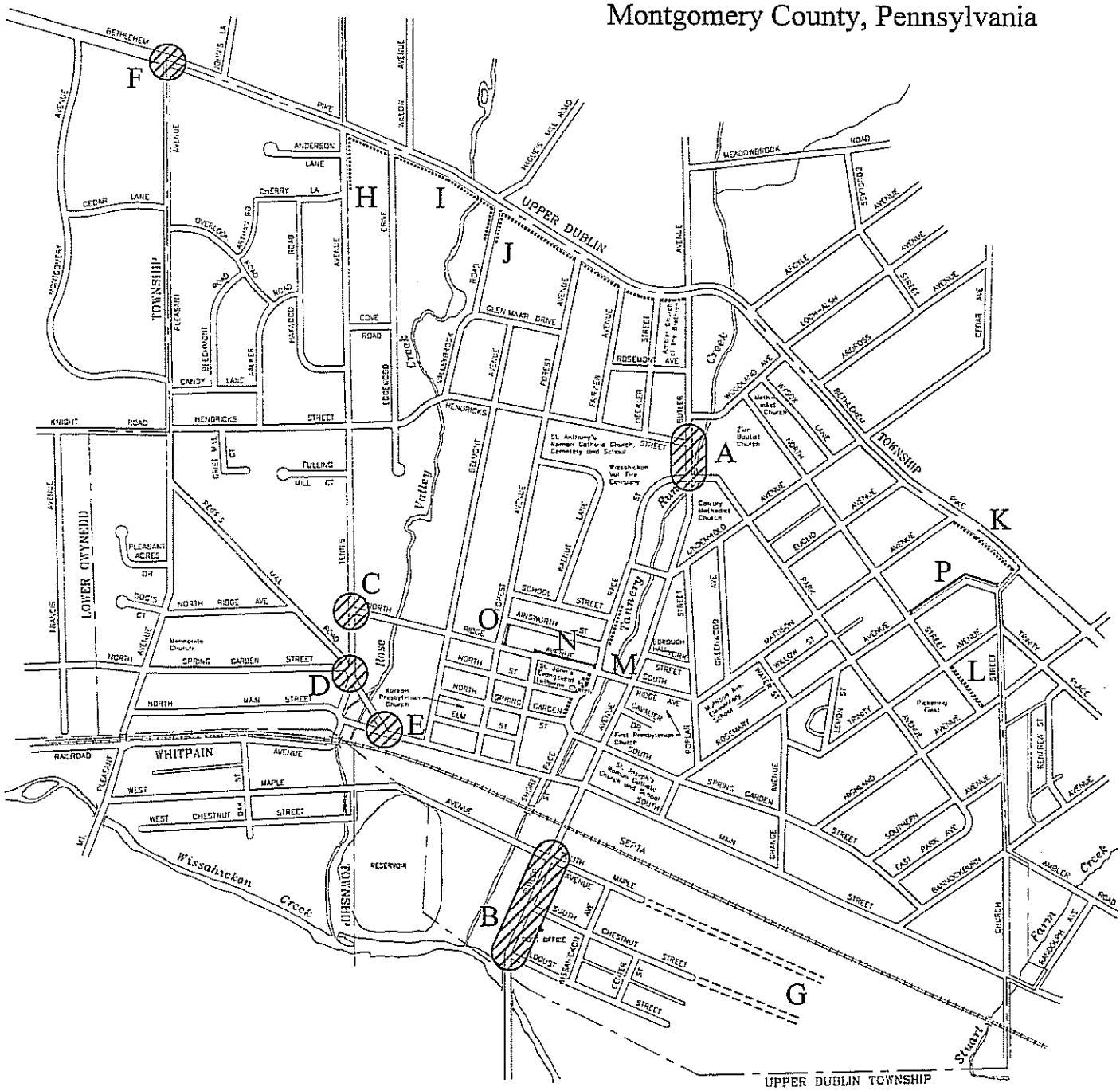

Figure 3-7
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Intersection

Road Extension

Sidewalk Extension

Sidewalk Upgrade

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Source: Borough Planning Commission & MCPC field check, 1996

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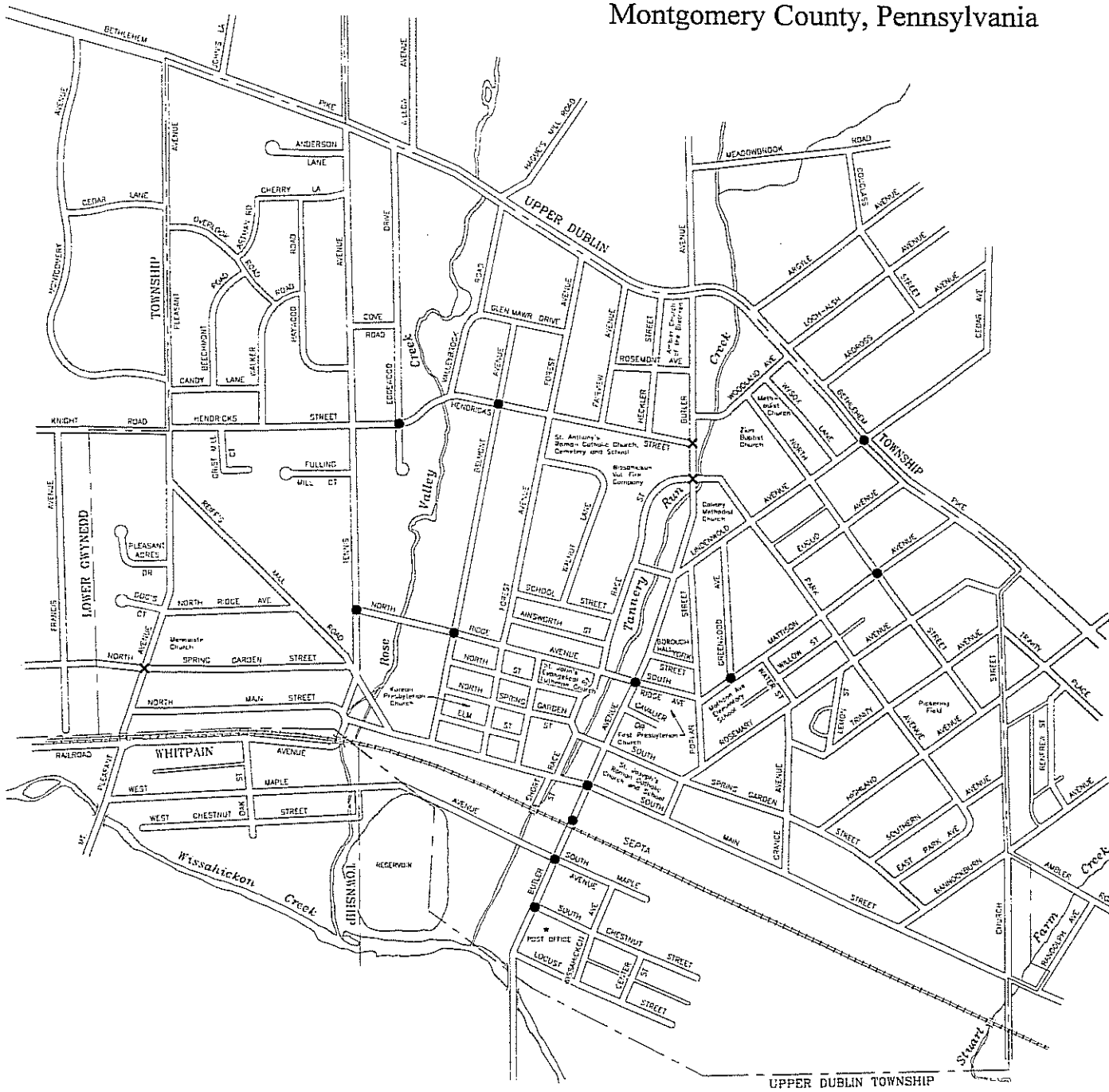

Figure 3-8
ACCIDENT DATA - INTERSECTIONS (1990-1994)

× Greater than 3 Accidents

• Less than 3 Accidents

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Source: PADOT, 1995

Proposed Improvement
Evaluate signalization

ROAD EXTENSION(S)

G. South Chestnut Street/South Maple Street. One or both of these should be extended in conjunction with redevelopment efforts in South Ambler in order to create safe, convenient access and circulation for the area.

SIDEWALKS

Extension

H. Tennis Avenue: south side across from Anderson Lane to Bethlehem Pike

I. Bethlehem Pike: Tennis Avenue to Butler Avenue

J. Valleybrook Road: north and south sides near Bethlehem Pike

K. Bethlehem Pike: Mattison Avenue to Church Street

L. North Street: east side from Highland Avenue to Trinity Avenue

M. Race Street: south side between School Street and Ainsworth Street

Improvement

N. North Ridge Avenue: north side between Race Street and Walnut Street

O. Forest Avenue: south side between Ainsworth and North Ridge Avenue

P. Rosemary Avenue: Church Street to North Street

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

RAIL SERVICE

The Borough is served by the R-5 commuter rail line operated by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA; Figure 3-9). The line runs north-south between Doylestown, Bucks County and Philadelphia, connecting numerous communities in between and connecting with other SEPTA rail and bus lines. In fact, Ambler is located mid-way, allowing riders to be at either final destination in only thirty minutes. The train is boarded on the east side of Butler Avenue for inbound trains and on the west side for outbound ones. Recently, SEPTA more than doubled the number of parking spaces at its South Main Street lot and moved all ticketing operations to the east side platform building. It continues to own the historic railroad station building on the west side of Butler, but rents it out to two small commercial businesses.

BUS SERVICE

SEPTA also operates two bus lines that directly serve the Borough. The 94 bus runs north-south between Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia and Lansdale Borough. Traveling north, it uses Bethlehem Pike to connect with Butler Avenue in the Borough via Lindenwold Avenue. It connects with the R-5 rail station at Short Street before turning onto North Main Street to continue north into Lower Gwynedd Township, via Reiff's Mill Road and North Spring Garden Street. The route connects several major destination points, including the Fort Washington office center in Upper Dublin Township (connecting with SEPTA bus line 201) and the Montgomery County Community College in Whitpain Township.

The 98 bus runs east-west between the Willow Grove area of Upper Moreland Township and the Oaks area of Upper Providence Township. It too uses the Bethlehem Pike/Lindenwold Avenue/Butler Avenue route, but continues west along Butler Avenue after connecting with the Borough rail station.

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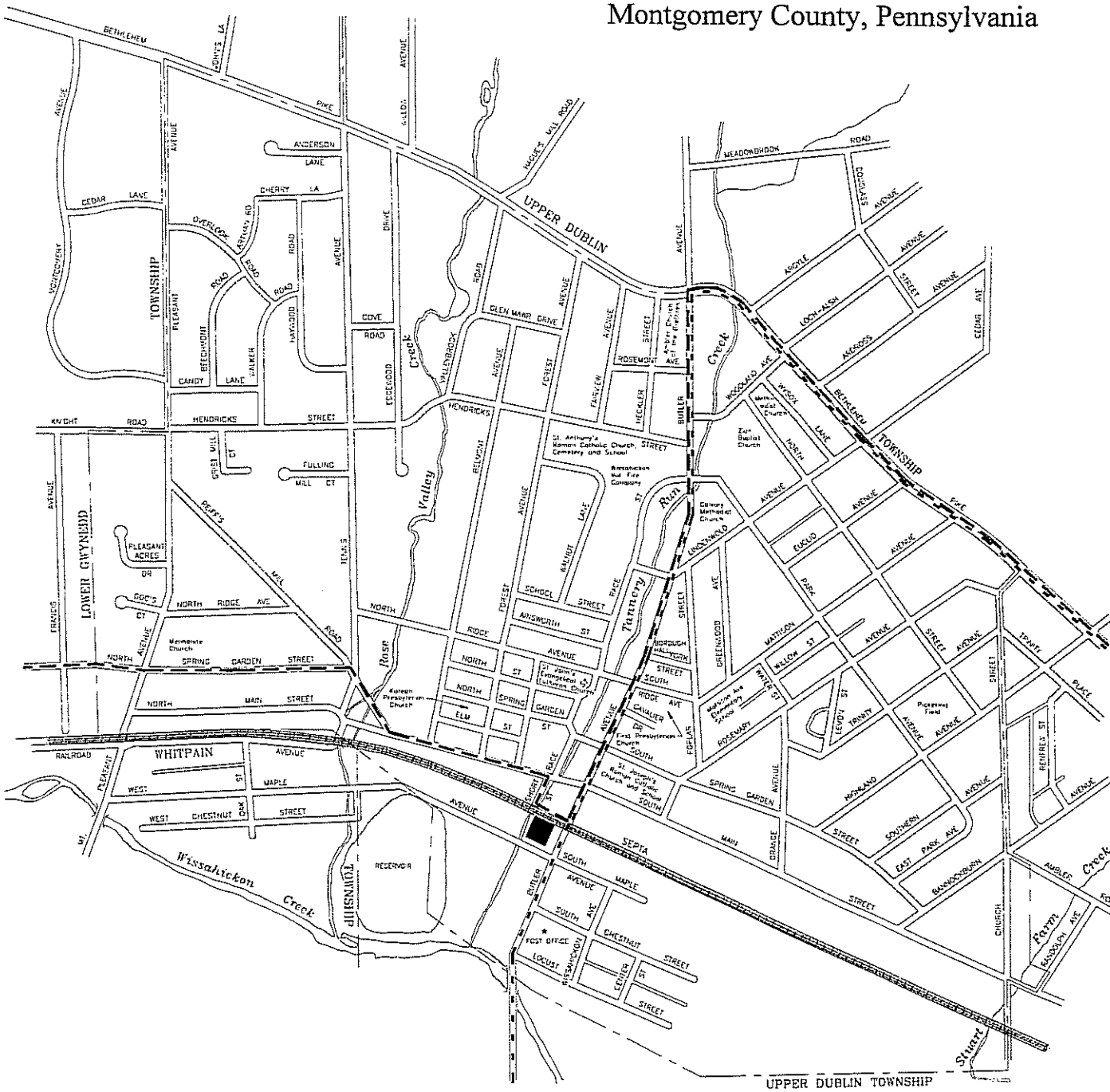

Figure 3-9
PUBLIC TRANSIT

Commuter Rail

94 Bus Route

98 Bus Route

Train Station

Source: SEPTA, 1996

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Among the key destinations it reaches are the Plymouth Meeting office center and mall in Plymouth Township.

PUBLIC PARKING

Both on-street and off-street parking is available in the Borough. Outside of the business district, on-street parking along at least one side predominates and there are few reported problems. Within the business district, metered on-street parking, private lots and three municipal lots provide spaces for business owners, employees, and shoppers (Figures 3-10 and 3-11). It is here where parking has been an ongoing issue because of a perceived lack of spaces and the Borough has taken the following steps to try and improve the situation:

1. The public lots were taken over from the former Ambler Parking Corporation to consolidate management of all public parking spaces in one group.
2. New parking meters were installed that require a uniform 25 cents for either a half-hour, hour, or two hour time period, with the short term meters providing slightly more time than the old ones (previously 20 minutes) and located in front of high-turnover locations along Butler Avenue.
3. Use of a full-time meter officer to patrol all public parking areas.
4. Completion of a parking study (1990) to evaluate conditions and identify possible changes. Implementation of study recommendations has occurred to some extent (as with greater enforcement), but many are longer term (outlined below).

Proposed Improvements

The following recommendations are mostly from the 1990 Parking Study and are those that remain valid and should be considered by the Borough as future needs dictate (the order does not indicate any priority and the study should be examined for more detailed information).

- Provide additional spaces along Race Street. This street is extra wide and could accommodate 26 perpendicular and 12 parallel spaces, a total of 38 spaces as opposed to the 25 currently there (Figure 3-12).
- Work with the Senior Adults for Greater Achievement (SAGA) organization to open its parking lot (Forest Avenue) to local employees and shoppers.
- Encourage use of the new SEPTA lot on South Main Street during weekday non-peak hours and weekends.
- Create ticket booths and parking rate schedules for the Cavalier Drive and Lindenwold Avenue lots.
- Improve lot directional signage.
- Re-evaluate the meter rates for Butler Avenue. It may be desirable to have meters that provide shorter parking durations for less cost (e.g.; 5 cents for 10 minutes, 10 cents for 20 minutes, 25 cents for 30 minutes).

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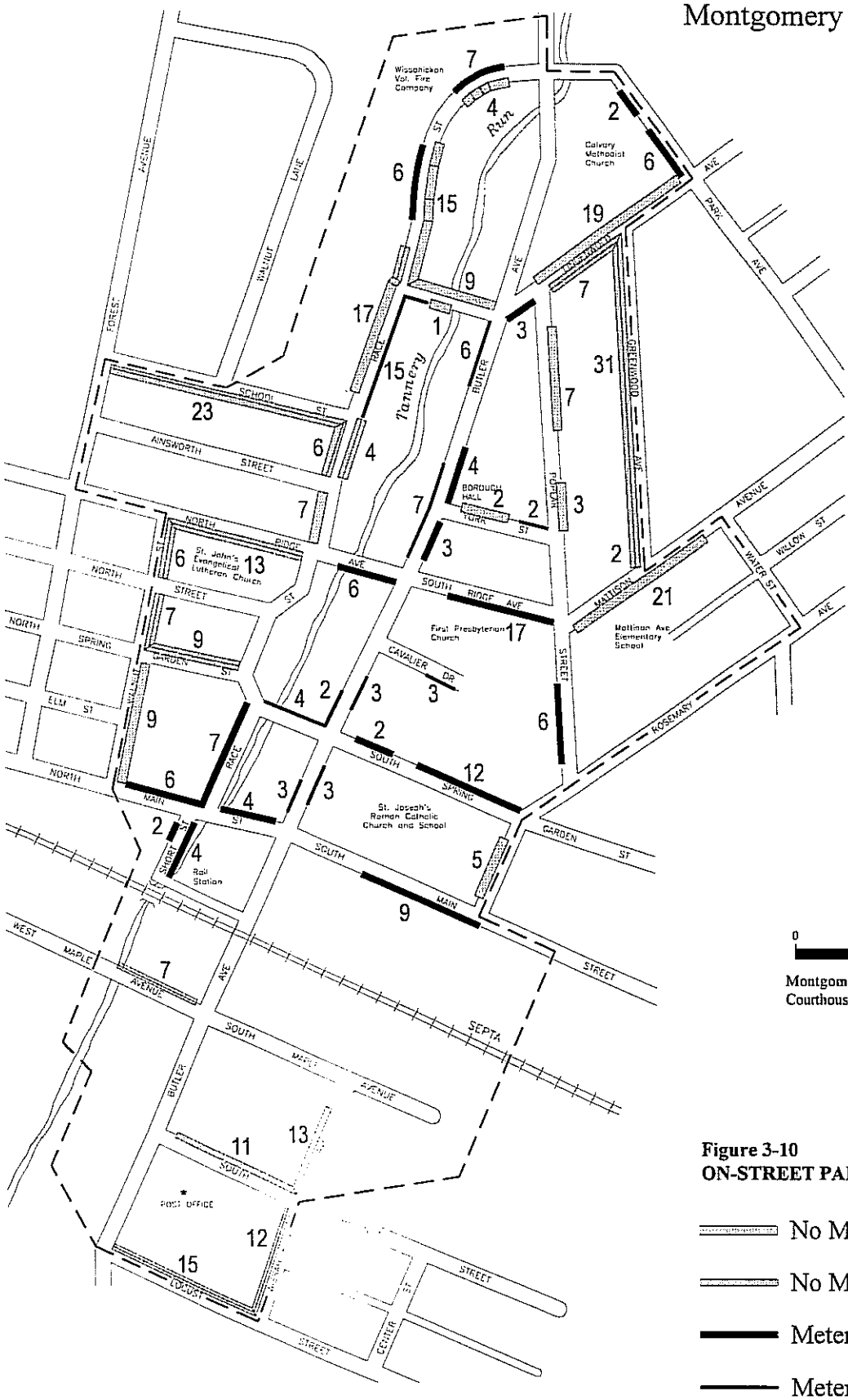

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Figure 3-10
ON-STREET PARKING SUPPLY

- No Meters - Unrestricted - 227
- No Meters - 2 hr. limit (sign) - 58
- Metered - 2 hr. limit - 106
- Metered - 1 hr. limit - 48
- Study Area - 439 total parking

Source: Ambler Parking Study, 1990

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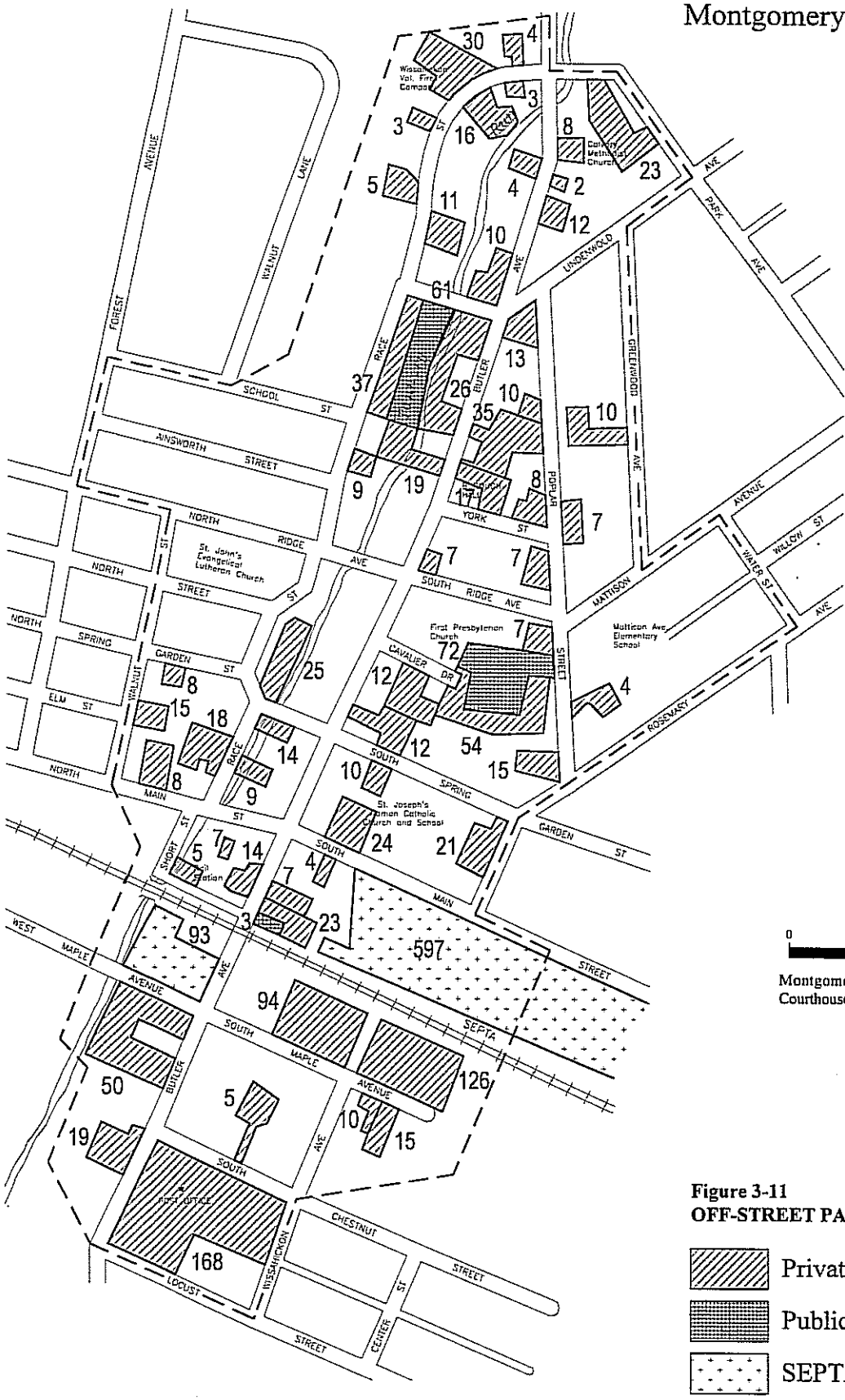

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Figure 3-11
OFF-STREET PARKING SUPPLY

Private - 1,139

Public (2 hr. limit) - 136

SEPTA - 690

Study Area - 1,965 total parking

Source: Ambler Parking Study, 1990

Chapter Four

HOUSING PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that the plan include "a plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels." (MPC Section 301.a.). These issues are part of the housing objectives outlined in chapter two. This chapter explains how these objectives will be met by the Borough.

TRENDS

As noted in chapter one, housing growth has been relatively modest during the past twenty years, averaging about eight new units each year. This reflects the limited development potential that exists; most new units have resulted from conversions of existing units and infill development. Typically, a landowner with a large single-family home on an oversized lot will seek to convert the residence into a two-family dwelling and/or subdivide additional building lots. This has enabled the housing stock to remain diverse and grow.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

MEET FAIR SHARE REQUIREMENTS

In meeting the MPC requirement noted above, the Borough must provide for anticipated future growth (housing demand) by allowing for a range of residential densities and housing types. In doing so, it meets its "fair share". What constitutes a "fair share" varies by community and depends largely on the extent to which it's in the path of growth and its present development conditions. Path of growth relates directly to housing demand; a community in a fast growing area will have greater demand than one in a slow growing area, although both must plan for growth. A fair share analysis must therefore include an estimate of future demand. Existing development conditions relates to meeting demand through a diversity of housing densities and types, considering one or more of the following - the distribution of land by residential density, the amount of developable land by residential density, and the distribution of housing types now and at potential buildout.

The importance of these in a fair share analysis is relative; where a community is substantially developed and has good diversity in its existing housing stock, the residential density measures may be less significant. This is the case in Ambler, so the fair share analysis presented below revolves around meeting future demand and maintaining its current good diversity of housing types.

Future Demand

Population and household size projections are used to determine the number of future housing units needed. Although Ambler's population is expected to decline by 2010, so will its average household size, resulting in more units needed (Figure 4-1).

Figure 4-1
2010 HOUSING UNIT DEMAND

Total Population	Group Quarters Population	Average Household Size	Total Households	Existing Households	New Households	Vacancy Rate	New Units Needed
6,450	219	2.37	2,629	2,561	68	3%	70

Notes: Group Quarters Population based on 1990 census figure. No change is projected.
Average Household Size estimated to be 5% lower than 1990 level.
Vacancy Rate estimated to be slightly higher than 1990 census level.

Source: Census Bureau; DVRPC; MCPC

There are other factors that may affect future housing demand in the Borough. As noted in chapter one, the proportions of young and middle-age adults (25-44) and older persons (65 and over) have increased, both of which can affect housing demand. The first group includes first time homebuyers while the other includes people looking to downsize from larger single-family dwellings. Another factor is the relative affordability of Borough housing, which is particularly important for first time homebuyers. Finally, the Borough's proximity to Temple University's campus in Upper Dublin Township and employment centers such as Fort Washington (also in Upper Dublin) will help maintain housing demand. All of these considerations suggest that future demand may be higher than that indicated solely by population projections.

The Land Use Plan will allow the Borough to meet its future needs in a variety of ways. Where opportunities exist, the Low Density Residential (LDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) areas will allow for new units in the form of infill development and some conversions. The total from this is likely to be relatively modest, probably 10% to 15% of demand, because of limited infill opportunities and proposed controls on conversion activity. By contrast, the High Density Residential (HDR) area adjacent to the reservoir could potentially accommodate between 75 and 125 units, more than meeting expected demand. In the central business district (CBD 1), upper floor residences will continue to be encouraged, maintaining an existing pattern. This has some potential, because several buildings have unoccupied upper floors that could be renovated for that purpose. Like infill and conversions, this will probably yield a modest number of new units. Finally, the Mixed Use (MU) area allows for higher density housing as part of revitalization of the South Ambler industrial area, taking advantage of the reuse and redevelopment opportunities that exist. Because the buildings and parcels tend to be relatively large, this could potentially yield a significant number of new units. Combined, the Land Use Plan enables the Borough to meet its future needs.

Existing Housing Types

The key fair share measure is the amount of multi-family units that are provided. As shown in chapter one, more than one-third of all units in Ambler are multi-family, including two large apartment developments located on Bethlehem Pike (Edgewood Apartments and Valleybrook Apartments). Although there is no established fair share percentage to follow, it compares favorably to the percentages of neighboring communities and is comparable to those of other boroughs (e.g., Lansdale; see Appendix). This suggests that this fair share test is being met and the Land Use Plan is designed to ensure that it will continue to be met by providing for potential additional development at higher densities as noted above.

COMPATIBLE INFILL DEVELOPMENT

As noted above, the Borough has experienced some infill development in recent years. This has raised the issue of compatibility with existing development, since some of it has resulted in odd shaped parcels and housing styles that do not fit with the predominant pattern in a neighborhood. This plan objective is to ensure that future infill development is compatible to the greatest extent possible. It will be accomplished by promoting and implementing the following concepts, most of which are illustrated in Chapter Nine, Plan Implementation:

- Consistent lot dimensions and density. New development should utilize lot dimensions (area, width, depth) that are similar to that which exists in the surrounding area and respect the established density of the area.
- Building shape, massing, and placement on the lot. Homes exhibit different shapes, such as narrow fronts and deep sides, wide fronts and shallow sides, or roughly square. Massing, which refers to the volume created by building sections, also differs. For example, a Victorian home has a varied mass while a Colonial home has one mass. Placement refers to the sitting pattern of the dwelling - to one side, in the middle of the lot, shallow or deep front yard setback, parallel to the street or at an angle. New development should follow the predominant shape, mass, and lot placement to fit with the existing neighborhood pattern.

- Materials and details. New construction should use materials and details that are compatible with existing dwellings; for example, the predominant roof shape and pitch should be followed, prominent architectural features such as front porches incorporated, and brick, stone, trim, shutters, cornices, etc. used as appropriate.

The Land Use Plan and Borough zoning ordinance will help implement these concepts. The Land Use Plan provides for residential development that will maintain current development densities throughout the Borough. The zoning ordinance also controls density and establishes the lot size and setback standards appropriate for the type of housing permitted in each district. It is proposed that these standards be reviewed to ensure that infill compatibility is achieved.

CONTROL RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

Allowing residential conversions can bring benefits to a community if impacts are adequately handled. Among the problems is changing the established density of a neighborhood. If conversions occur in an area of predominantly low density single-family detached units, traffic, parking, and municipal services are all impacted and could become difficult problems. Another potential drawback is the long term condition of structures that are no longer owner-occupied. On the other hand, it allows for an alternative use of larger single-family homes that may be difficult to maintain and are too large for smaller households. This can be particularly important for older residents who want to remain living in the home but need an additional income source. It also allows older people to live with their grown children in an accessory apartment arrangement, which has been a recent trend.

Overall, when it is carefully regulated it expands the supply and diversity of housing without dramatically changing the character of the neighborhood. To meet this objective, the Borough zoning ordinance is to be reviewed and amended as needed to address the following key factors:

- Existing neighborhood densities. The extent of the conversion permitted can be tied to permitted densities of zoning districts. In the lowest density neighborhoods where an increase in units can potentially have the greatest impact, conversions can either be prohibited or restricted to no more than one additional unit. In higher density areas, the number of additional units permitted can be increased, perhaps with a maximum limit.
- Lot size. Conversions can also be related to lot area. For example, for each additional unit, a corresponding increase in lot area may be required. This is particularly effective in ensuring that off-street parking needs can be met.
- Dwelling size. It may be appropriate to encourage or require conversions only for dwellings of a minimum size, (e.g., 3,000 square feet of gross floor area). Generally, these will be the buildings best suited for the purpose and most likely to be the subject of conversion activity. In addition, each additional unit can be required to meet minimum square footage standards (e.g., 700 square feet plus an additional 100 square feet per additional bedroom).
- Parking. Additional units will usually result in a need for more parking. The ordinance can require that each additional unit meet the applicable parking requirement for a dwelling and that the space(s) be provided on-site and to the side or rear of the property. These requirements manage a direct and potentially adverse impact of conversion activity.

REDUCE LAND USE CONFLICTS

This objective is addressed by the Land Use Plan and will be implemented through the zoning ordinance. The Land Use Plan proposes that light industrial uses be encouraged more than heavy industry in the hopes that this will be less in conflict with nearby residential areas. It also proposes residential reuse or redevelopment be considered in the South Ambler industrial area, which would be compatible with the existing residential neighborhood. Adequate performance standards for industrial uses (controlling for odors, noise, etc.), and effective landscaping, lighting, and parking controls and design standards are additional factors that will address this issue. The zoning ordinance will be reviewed and amended as needed.

PROMOTE SOUND HOUSING

Proper housing maintenance and improvements are essential to having a sound housing stock, which in turn maintains and enhances property values and helps avoid neighborhood decline. It is especially important for older units, since they typically require more maintenance than newer units. As shown in chapter one, this is an issue for Ambler, because nearly half of the units are more than forty years old. There are several of ways to ensure that these and all other units continue to meet the needs of present and future residents. Building codes and safety standards must be kept up to date to discourage substandard housing and potentially hazardous conditions. All unit turnover, whether owner or renter occupied, can be subject to the use and occupancy permitting process, which includes building inspection. Enforcement of property owners' responsibility to maintain sidewalks, curbs, and driveways within the road right-of-way adjacent to properties must also occur. Finally, housing programs are available that can provide financial assistance for housing rehabilitation.

The Borough currently uses the building code and inspection process to implement this goal. The 1990 code book for Building Officials and Code Administrators (BOCA) is in effect and is periodically updated. The Borough will continue to adopt new versions. The Borough uses the 1990 BOCA code's provisions for a use and occupancy permitting, which provides for inspections of the following:

- New construction.
- Building renovations (equal to 51% of initial value).
- Change in building ownership (residential buildings with three or more units and all nonresidential buildings).
- Change in the ownership of a business.
- Change of use.

As this shows, the process is relatively comprehensive, enabling the Borough to closely monitor building conditions. At the same time, it does not include inspection of rental units, either on an annual basis or as turnover occurs. Because this is an important part of the Borough's housing stock, it is proposed that an annual inspection procedure be instituted in the future.

The Borough also has a sidewalk and curb ordinance that enables it to enforce their maintenance. When the Borough determines an improvement is needed, the property owner is notified that the problem must be corrected. If not done, the Borough can then contract to have it completed and bill the property owner to recover costs. Improvement needs are identified and addressed through periodic inspections and as part of road projects. For example, curb improvements were part of the reconstruction of Mount Pleasant Avenue.

Although housing programs are not administered by the Borough, it can assist homeowners by increasing awareness of them and providing information on how to apply for funding. The programs identified in chapter nine - Plan Implementation - is an initial step toward doing this.

Chapter Five

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

BACKGROUND

Community facilities refers to a variety of public and non-public uses and services that are or may be provided to residents of a community, such as emergency services, schools, solid waste disposal, sewer and water services, and parks. These are among the most important elements of a community, because they directly impact residents. As a result, how they are managed is a key to quality of life perceptions and community identity. This chapter of the plan examines the existing status and condition of each facility or service in Ambler. For the most part, the system of facilities and services is well established and is expected to continue meeting residents' needs.

ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES

The Borough moved its administrative offices into the former post office building at the corner of York Street and Butler Avenue (122 East Butler Avenue) from its old location at the corner of North Spring Garden Street and Butler Avenue. The Borough gained needed space, improved access for disabled persons, and reused an attractive building at a prominent location in the central business district. In addition, the Borough garage on Greenwood Avenue, where vehicle and equipment storage and maintenance occurs, has been upgraded.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

FIRE PROTECTION

The Wissahickon Volunteer Fire Company continues to be the primary source for fire protection in the Borough and through cooperative agreements provides service to the greater Ambler area and receives assistance from other companies, including Fort Washington (Upper Dublin Township), Flourtown (Springfield Township), and Center Square (Whitpain Township). In terms of facilities, the Company completed upgrades to its main Race Street building and acquired additional, rented space from Lower Gwynedd Township at the Township building. The Company currently has ninety-five active members.

POLICE PROTECTION

The Borough has a full-time, twelve member police force that operates out of the new Borough Hall on Butler Avenue. Although many factors are considered, a ratio of one police officer per 1,000 population is a general guide used to determine community needs. Based on current and projected population figures, the Borough's force more than meets this standard.

AMBULANCE SERVICE/MEDICAL FACILITIES

The Community Ambulance Association of Ambler serves the Borough and parts of Upper Dublin, Lower Gwynedd, and Whitpain Townships. Its facility on North Main Street includes space for vehicles, equipment, administration, and staff training. However, the building is relatively small and may not meet the Association's long term needs. This might result in relocation outside of the Borough, though service would still be provided.

In addition to local clinics and medical offices that meet some needs, a broader range of services are provided by hospitals in the greater Ambler area, including Horsham Hospital (Horsham Township), Chestnut Hill Hospital (Philadelphia), Abington Memorial Hospital (Abington Township), and North Penn Hospital (Hatfield Township).

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Cooperative agreements and emergency plans are established for responding to various situations under the guidance of the Borough's Emergency Management Coordinator. With a 9-1-1 emergency

communications service in effect throughout Montgomery County, emergency responses are directed by the central radio dispatch station operated by the Montgomery County Emergency Management Agency.

SCHOOLS

Ambler is part of the Wissahickon School District, which also includes Lower Gwynedd and Whitpain Townships. At one time, the District operated two elementary schools and a Junior High School in the Borough. As needs changed, the District eventually developed a new Junior High and elementary school near the High School in Lower Gwynedd, leaving the Mattison Avenue elementary school as the only school in the Borough (serving Kindergarten to third grade). More recently, in response to growth pressures and space needs the District approved construction of a new elementary school that will become part of the existing complex in Lower Gwynedd. Enrollment projection for the District to the 2004-2005 academic year are shown in Figure 5-1.

At this time, the District plans to continue using the Mattison Avenue school; however, the facility is at a point in its useful life (it was constructed in 1965) when a comprehensive renovation is needed (*Strategic Planning Study for an Elementary School*; Wissahickon School District, 1994). If this is done, it will extend the school's use, but will probably only postpone an eventual closing. This possibility is something the Borough must recognize and be prepared to deal with in terms of determining a future reuse for the site.

The school district is affiliated with the North Montgomery County Area Vocational Technical School located next to North Penn High School in Towamencin Township. This school offers vocational-technical training to both secondary and post-secondary students.

In addition to the public schools, there are a number of private and parochial schools in the area, including Ambler Catholic in Ambler, Gwynedd Mercy Academy in Lower Gwynedd Township, Mt. St. Joseph Academy and St. Genevieve in Springfield Township and Germantown Academy in Whitemarsh Township. Colleges and universities include Montgomery County Community College (Whitpain Township), Beaver College (Cheltenham Township), Gwynedd Mercy College (Lower Gwynedd Township), Manor Junior College (Abington Township), and Temple University-Ambler Campus (Upper Dublin Township).

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Under the terms of the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101) adopted by the state in 1988, solid waste planning became the responsibility of counties rather than individual municipalities. The Montgomery County Municipal Waste Management Plan was subsequently developed in 1990 to address all management aspects (collection, transport, processing, disposal, and recycling) and created the Eastern, Northern, and Western Waste System Authorities to serve all municipalities, each with the responsibility of implementing selected disposal and recycling elements of the plan.

Within this framework, the municipal role is limited to choosing an arrangement of collection, which is typically either municipal collection, municipal contract collection, or individual homeowner service collection, and establishing a recycling program. Act 101 requires municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more and a population density greater than 300 people per square mile to establish a recycling program.

Ambler has chosen to contract for waste collection for all single residences and residential buildings with four units or less, with each unit owner paying a fee to cover the Borough's cost. As part of the contract and in accordance with Act 101, the waste hauler provides recycling service. Nonresidential uses individually contract for waste collection and recycling.Libraries

Figure 5-1
ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FOR WISSAHICKON SCHOOL DISTRICT TO THE 2004-2005 ACADEMIC YEAR

Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1990-91	330	298	303	280	276	275	282	261	245	250	226	227	234	3,487
1991-92	321	330	288	296	279	171	279	285	252	278	236	232	218	3,465
1992-93	327	315	316	296	307	293	305	287	299	269	256	229	226	3,725
1993-94	350	305	313	301	311	317	317	316	290	316	248	250	239	3,873
1994-95	334	338	307	324	321	332	330	327	314	313	306	253	243	4,042
PROJECTIONS														
1995-96	369	358	331	306	345	302	347	340	328	340	293	305	249	4,213
1996-97	343	383	351	330	326	325	315	358	341	355	319	292	301	4,339
1997-98	319	357	375	350	351	307	339	325	359	369	333	318	288	4,390
1998-99	323	332	350	374	373	330	321	349	326	389	346	332	314	4,459
1999-0	273	335	325	349	398	351	345	331	350	353	365	345	327	4,447
2000-1	271	283	328	324	372	375	367	356	332	379	331	365	340	4,422
2001-2	253	282	277	327	345	350	392	378	357	360	355	330	359	4,365
2002-3	246	263	276	276	348	325	366	404	379	387	337	354	325	4,286
2003-4	241	256	258	275	294	327	339	377	405	411	363	336	349	4,231
2004-5	234	250	251	257	293	277	341	349	378	439	385	362	331	4,147

VARIOUS GRADE GROUPINGS OF THE ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

Year	K-4	K-5	K-6	K-7	K-8	K-9	K-12	5-8	6-8	7-8	6-9	7-9	7-12	8-12	9-12	10-12
1994-5	1,624	1,956	2,286	2,613	2,927	3,240	4,042	1,303	971	641	1,284	954	1,756	1,429	1,115	802
1999-0	1,680	2,031	2,376	2,787	3,057	3,410	4,447	1,377	1,026	681	1,379	1,034	2,071	1,740	1,390	1,037
2004-5	1,285	1,562	1,903	2,252	2,630	3,069	4,147	1,345	1,068	727	1,507	1,166	2,244	1,895	1,517	1,078
Change 9495-4-5	(339)	(394)	(383)	(361)	(297)	(171)	105	42	97	86	223	212	488	466	402	276
%Change	-20.9	-20.1	-16.8	-13.8	-10.8	-5.3	2.6	3.2	10.1	13.4	17.4	22.2	27.8	32.6	36.1	34.4

Notes: (Excludes Students in Comprehensive AVTS and in Full-Time IU Classes)
If there were any K4 students, they were added to the K enrollments.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education
Historic Enrollments are as Reported on PDE-4035

LIBRARIES

Originally an independent operation serving the local area, the Ambler Public Library became part of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library system in 1970Its service area is coterminous with the school district, so Whitpain and Lower Gwynedd Townships share in the resources with Ambler. The Ambler branch functions as a neighborhood library that serves the basic needs of the community, including a reading program for children. In recent years, improvements to the Race Street building have been completed and there are future plans to automate the catalog system.

Additional libraries are found on the campuses of Temple University (Upper Dublin Township) and Montgomery County Community College (Whitpain Township).

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION

The term open space is used in a variety of contexts and means different things to different people. However, it is generally recognized to be undeveloped or predominantly undeveloped land that is permanently preserved as open space for public or private use and enjoyment. In contrast to open land that is merely vacant or unused for a period of time, open space land is protected for a purpose, such as conserving natural features or providing for recreation uses.

Existing open space resources, future needs, and proposed new open space in Ambler are examined in detail in its Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan. The major items from that report are highlighted here.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

Public

There are five publicly-owned parks in Ambler - Knight Park, Pickering Field, Borough Park, Ricciardi Park, and Jean Thompson Playground (Figure 5-2). Together these sites contain twenty-two acres and provide for a mix of active and passive recreation (Figure 5-3). The Borough also owns Loch Alsh Reservoir in Upper Dublin Township, a twenty-five acre site used mostly for passive recreation.

Outside the Borough, there are numerous parks convenient to Borough residents and which offer additional active and passive recreation opportunities, including the Wissahickon Trail in Whitpain and Whitemarsh Townships and Fort Washington State Park in Whitemarsh Township.

Private

The Locust Street basketball court in South Ambler is the only private site in the Borough. It is owned and maintained by Interspec Corporation, which has made it available to neighborhood residents.

Semi-public (schools)

As part of the Wissahickon school district, Ambler residents have access to the district's recreation facilities, although it is generally limited to non-school hours and provided that no conflict occurs with school needs. Within the Borough, the Mattison Avenue elementary school has playground equipment, and the Wissahickon High School in Lower Gwynedd, which is conveniently located for many Borough residents, has a number of fields and tennis courts. Because of limitations on public use, school sites in some cases are not counted towards meeting local needs. However, since the Borough cannot realistically hope to meet all of its own needs, the school district's role is very important and it is in the Borough's interest to support any future district efforts to expand public recreation opportunities.

FUTURE NEEDS

Estimating future needs takes into account existing resources and possible changes in the Borough that could impact the demand for them. In addition to showing if an open space "deficit" exists or will occur in the future, the analysis also considers how open space is distributed according to overall

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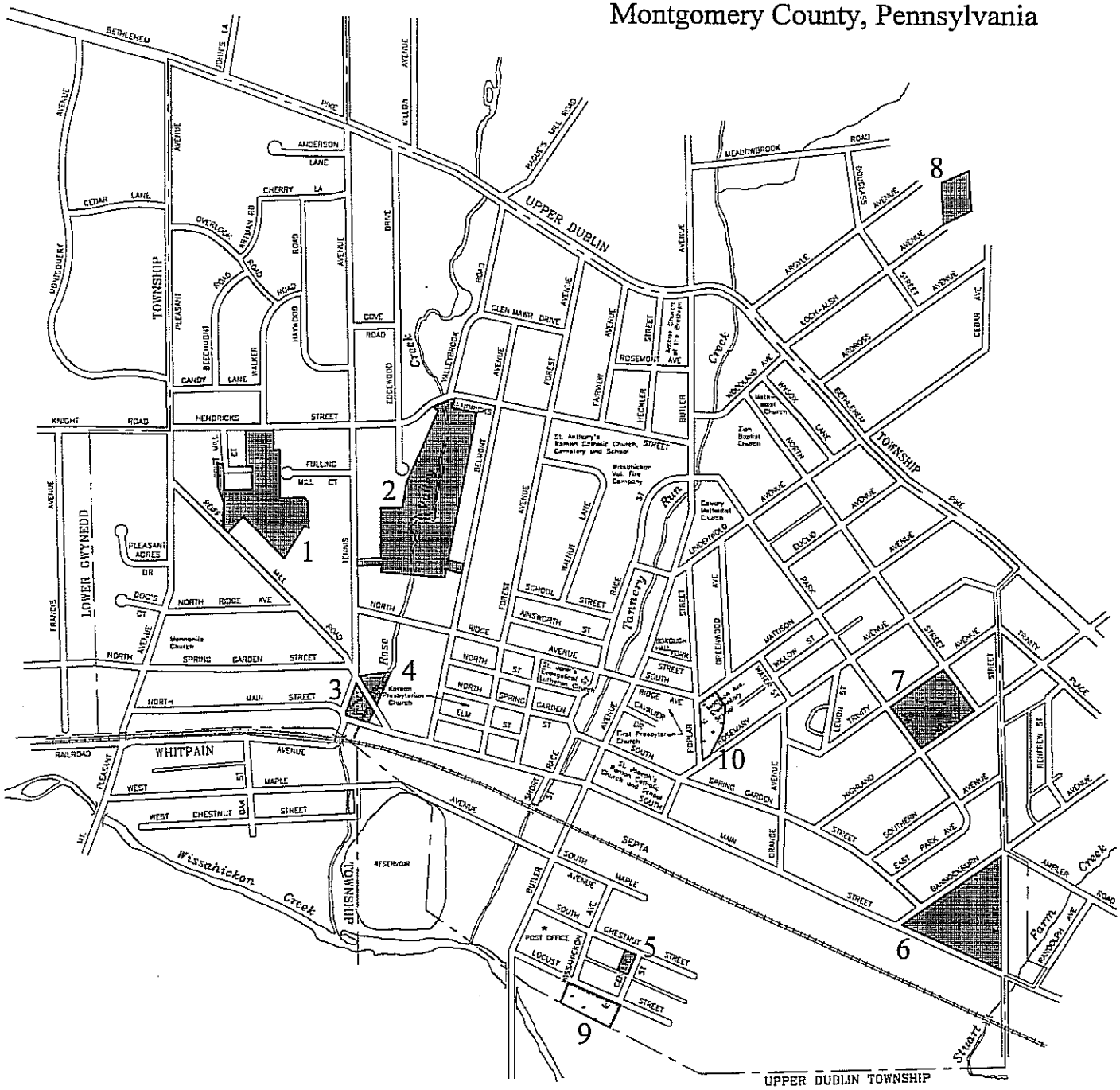

Figure 5-2
PROTECTED LAND

Permanently Protected

Temporarily Protected

0 600 1200 1800 feet

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: MCPC and Borough field check, 1994; Comprehensive Plan, 1968

Figure 5-3
PROTECTED LAND (DESCRIPTIONS)

	Map #	Ownership	Name	Acreage	Location	Facilities/Activities
Permanently Protected	1	Public	Ricciardi Park	5.2	Hendricks St.	Tennis courts; exercise trail; playfield
	2	Public	Borough Park	8.6	Hendricks St.	Benches
	3	Public		0.45	Reiff's Mill Rd.	None
	4	Public		0.4	Reiff's Mill Rd.	None
	5	Public	Jean Thompson Playground	0.4	S. Chestnut St. and Center St.	Tot lot
	6	Public	Knight Playground	4.5	Bannockburn Av. and S. Main St.	Ballfield; basketball court; tot lot; tennis court
	7	Public	Pickering Field	2.9	Park Av. and Trinity Av.	Ballfields (3); basketball court; tot lot
	8	Public	Loch Alsh Reservoir	25.6	Loch Alsh Av. (Upper Dublin Twp.)	Fishing; skating; picnicking
Temporarily Protected	9	Private		0.8	Locust St.	Basketball court
	10	Semi-Public	Elementary School	0.5 (est.)	Mattison Av. and Poplar St.	Playground equipment

community use and that which serves more specific areas or neighborhoods. The results help guide decisions concerning future open space preservation and recreation facilities planning.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed national open space acreage and recreation facility standards *(Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines; 1983)* that are commonly used as a guide for identifying future needs. Further, it recommends that the open space consist of a core system of parkland, distributed among mini parks (such as tot lots), neighborhood parks, and community parks. Each of these components are of a certain size, have a defined "service area" (for example, 1.25 to 1.5 miles), and provide for certain uses (active and/or passive). Figures 5-4 and 5-5 show the results of applying these standards to Ambler.

Total Acreage Needs

As Figure 5-5 shows, Ambler's current total open space acreage falls within existing and future recommended ranges, although it is well short of the ideal amount for a developed, more urbanized community. It is also only five to seven acres less than the midpoint value (about 54 acres) for the period shown, which should serve as targets for the Borough's open space planning.

Community - Level Open Space Needs

Typical characteristics of community sites are large size (serve more than one neighborhood), a central location, and a good range of facilities/amenities (creek and woodlands corridor, ballfields, playground equipment, etc.). Based on this, more than half the sites can be considered community-level open space (Loch Alsh Reservoir, Ricciardi Park, Borough Park, Pickering Field, Knight Park).

Because so much of the open space serves the whole community, acreage in this category falls well within the recommended ranges for the 1990 to 2020 period and is very close to the high end. In addition, the service areas for these sites cover much of the community, effectively covering most of the Borough's neighborhood-level needs.

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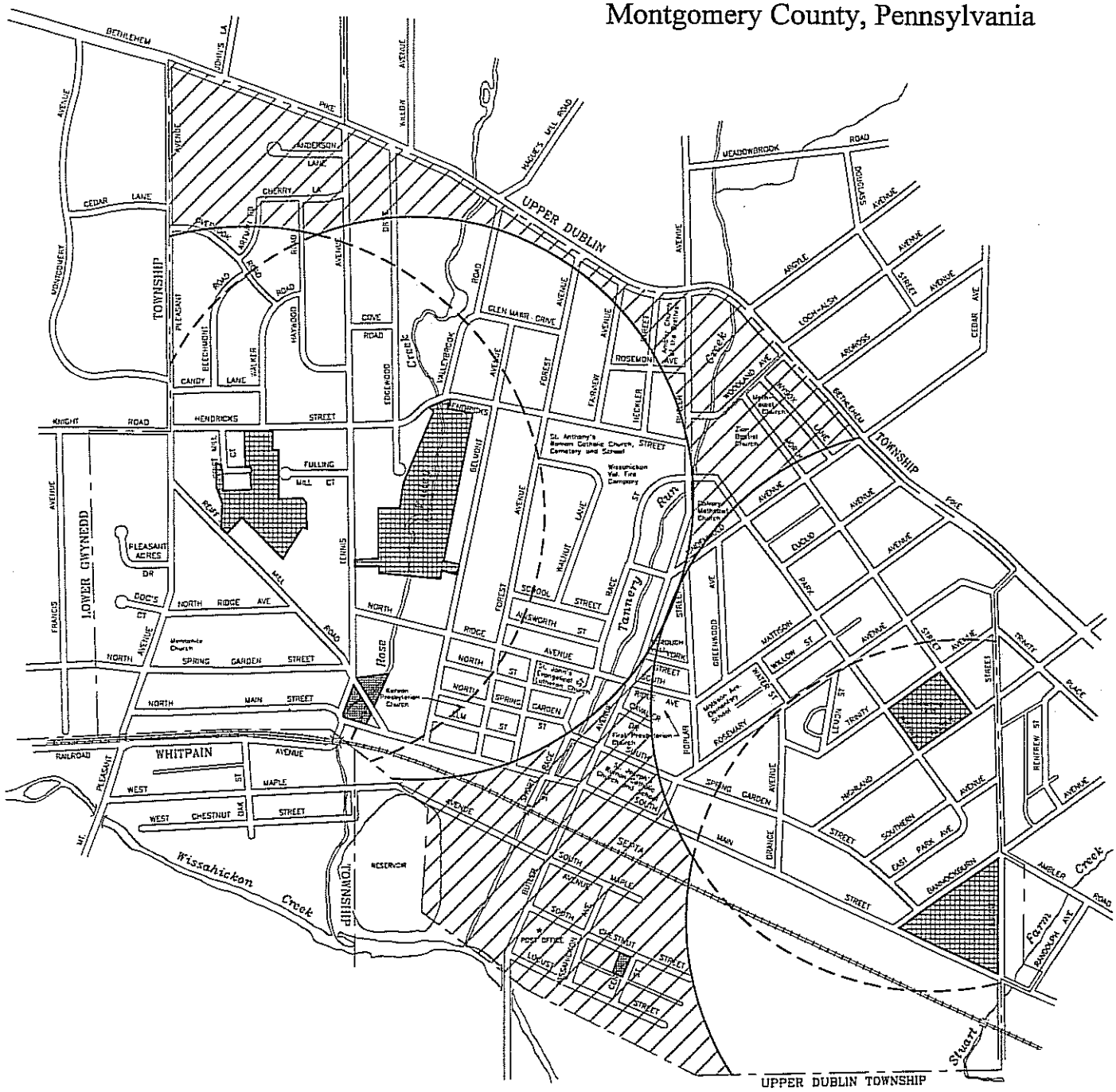

Figure 5-4
OPEN SPACE SERVICE AREAS

- Community-Level Open Space
- Neighborhood-Level Open Space
- 1/3 - Mile Radius
- Unserved/Underserved Area

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: National Recreation and Parks Association, 1983

Neighborhood- Level Open Space Needs

Neighborhood-level open space refers to smaller areas (less than an acre) that serve a particular area of the community (typically one neighborhood), a concentrated or limited population or specialized group such as elderly or tots, and provide for quiet, informal recreation as well as facilities for short term, frequent and active use. Good examples are playgrounds, tot lots, and "pocket parks" (small green space within a highly developed area) and they are most valuable in areas which are not conveniently served by existing sites due to distance or a natural or man-made barrier (hills, train tracks).

Generally speaking, however, the smaller the community the more likely that existing open space can serve both neighborhood and community-level needs, as in Ambler. As a result, the Borough's deficit in the recommended total acreage for this category (between 7-15 acres) is not as significant as it might be for a larger community.

Although the acreage standard is not a significant factor in Ambler, new neighborhood open space should still be sought in order to help achieve the goal of creating new small green areas, particularly where they serve to buffer incompatible land uses and/or soften the appearance of non-residential areas, such as in South Ambler and along North Main Street. In fact, good examples are the Borough's existing neighborhood sites - Reiff's Mill Road pocket park and the Jean Thompson Playground.

Recreation Facility Needs

Figure 5-6 shows how the supply of existing Borough facilities compares to recommended NRPA standards. As can be seen, the Borough falls short of the recommended levels for a number of facilities; however, some of these are available through the school district, including playfields, running track, and soccer field. As a result, the Borough need not try to meet all of these standards, but rather should focus on several that can more realistically be accomplished. For example, the Borough has no multipurpose courts, but one could be created by converting a tennis court and an existing basketball court, or a similar combination. Similarly, there are a number of vacant lots in the Borough that might be suitable for another playground. These and other recommended facility improvements are highlighted.

Clearly, these standards are just one measure. Facility demand, or extent of use, is an equally important consideration. For example, although the Borough has a number of tennis courts, they do not appear to be heavily used and actually get used by kids for other hard surface recreation activities.

This suggests that additional tennis courts should not be a major goal and their replacement worthwhile if other needs can be met. In contrast, ballfields are being used so extensively that another field is needed and should be a priority.

PROPOSED NEW OPEN SPACE

Future open space preservation is proposed within the following target areas with their locations shown in Figure 5-7. This and the inventory of parcels for each area shown in Figure 5-8 will guide implementation.

Rose Valley Creek (Areas A & B)
Overall Preservation Priority: Highest

Tannery Run Creek (Areas C & D)
Overall Preservation Priority: High

East Ambler (Area E)
Overall Preservation Priority: Medium

South Ambler (Area F)
Overall Preservation Priority: High

Figure 5-5
OPEN SPACE ACREAGE NEEDS

Level	1990 (6,609 pop.)	2000 (6,500 pop.)[1]	2010 (6,450 pop.)[1]	2020 (6,400 pop.)[1]
RECOMMENDED ACREAGE[2]				
Community	33-53	33-52	32-51	32-51
Neighborhood	8-16	8-16	8-16	8-16
Total	41-69	41-68	40-67	40-67
EXISTING ACREAGE				
Community	47	47	47	47
Neighborhood	1	1	1	1
Total	48	48	48	48
DIFFERENCE				
Community	14-(6)	14-(5)	15-(4)	15-(4)
Neighborhood	(7)-(15)	(7)-(15)	(7)-(15)	(7)-(15)
Total	7-(21)	7-(21)	8-(19)	8-(19)

[1]Projected Population
[2]Recommended Acreage - Range per 1,000 persons as follows: Community Level = 5.0 -8.0 acres; Neighborhood Level = 1.25 - 2.5 acres; Total = 6.25 - 10.5 acres

Source: NRPA; MCPC; US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1990

Figure 5-6
COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

Facility	Standard Per 1,000 Persons	1990 (6,609 pop.)	2020 (6,400 pop.)[1]	Existing Facilities	Difference
Baseball fields	0.2	1.3	1.3	4	2.7
Basketball courts	0.2	1.3	1.3	2	0.7
Field hockey fields	0.05	0.3	0.3	0	(0.3)
Football fields	0.05	0.3	0.3	0	(0.3)
Multipurpose courts	0.12	0.8	0.8	0	(0.8)
Multipurpose fields	0.3	2.0	1.9	1	(1.0)
Nature areas	0.24	1.6	1.5	1	(0.6)
Picnic areas	0.24	1.6	1.5	1	(0.6)
Playgrounds	0.6	4.0	3.8	3	(1.0)
Running track (.25 mile)	0.05	0.3	0.3	0	(0.3)
Shuffleboard courts	0.8	5.3	5.1	1	(4.3)
Soccer fields	0.1	0.7	0.6	0	(0.7)
Softball fields	0.4	2.6	2.6	0	(2.6)
Swimming pools	0.06	0.4	0.4	0	(0.4)
Tennis court	0.5	3.3	3.2	4	0.7
Volleyball courts	0.2	1.3	1.3	0	(1.3)

[1]Projected population

Sources: NRPA; MCPC; US Bureau of the Census

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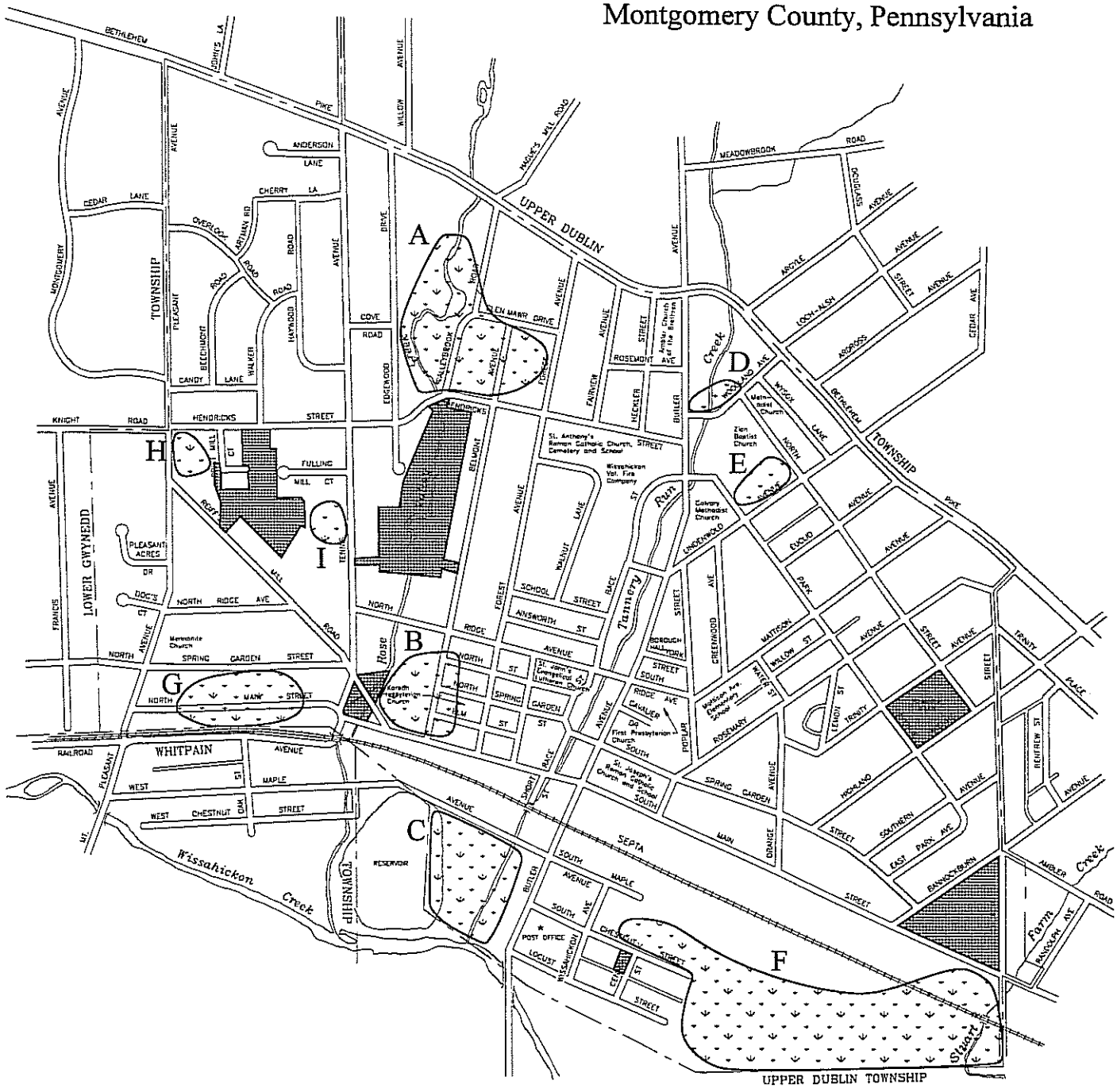


Figure 5 - 7
Proposed Open Space

Existing Open Space

Proposed Open Space-Target Area

0 600 1200 1800 feet

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: Borough Open Space Committee, 1994.

Figure 5-8
LAND INVENTORY - TARGET OPEN SPACE AREAS

Open Space Area	Block/ Unit	Location	Size	PRESERVATION ACTION(s)			Priority	Potential Use
				Acquisition		Other		
				Full	Partial			
A	30/70	Forrest Av.	12,000 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 78)			Medium	passive open space/pocket park
A	30/78	Belmont Av.	8,900 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 70)			Medium	passive open space/pocket park
A	30/79	Hendricks St.	18,700 sq. ft.	x			Highest	passive open space (park extension)
A	30/81	Edgewood Dr.	1.3 ac.	x			Highest	passive open space (park extension)
A	30/69	Valleybrook Rd.	2.0 ac.		south & west sides		High	passive open space (park extension)
A	30/77	Edgewood Dr.	16,638 sq. ft.		east side		High	passive open space (park extension)
A	30/80	Valleybrook Rd.	1.2 ac.		east side		Medium	passive open space (park extension)
A	30/83	Valleybrook Rd.	19,300 sq. ft.		west side		High	passive open space (park extension)
A	30/84	Valleybrook Rd.	24,000 sq. ft.		west side		High	passive open space (park extension)
A	30/124	Edgewood Dr.	19,000 sq. ft.		east side		High	passive open space (park extension)
B	36/4	N. Main St.	1.5 ac.		east side	conservancy protection	Highest	passive open space/trail link
B	37/16	Forrest Av.	1.3 ac.		north side		High	pocket park
C	46/11	Maple St.	5.9 ac,	x			Medium	passive open space
D	1/8	Woodland Av.	6,000 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 20)			Highest	neighborhood open space/pocket park
D	1/20	Woodland Av.	5,100 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 8)			Highest	neighborhood open space/pocket park
E	3/18	Lindenwold Av.	8,520 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 20)			Medium	neighborhood open space/tot lot
E	3/20	Lindenwold Av.	8,520 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 18)			Medium	neighborhood open space/tot lot
F	26/20	Chestnut St.	3,900 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 21)			Highest	neighborhood open space/pocket park
F	26/21	Chestnut St.	4,100 sq. ft.	x (combine with unit 20)			Highest	neighborhood open space/pocket park
F	28/7	S. Main St.	2.0 ac.		east side		Medium	active open space/ballfield
F	28/9	Church St.	5.5 ac.			through redevelopment	Medium	to be determined
F	28/23	S. Chestnut St.	27.0 ac.			through redevelopment	Medium	to be determined
G	34/25	Spring Garden St.	5,500 sq. ft.	x			High	neighborhood open space/pocket park
G	33/49	N. Main St.	4,700 sq. ft.	x (combine with units 50-53)			High	neighborhood open space
G	33/50	N. Main St.	4,500 sq. ft.	x (combine with adjacent units)			High	neighborhood open space
G	33/51	N. Main St.	4,400 sq. ft.	x (combine with adjacent units)			High	neighborhood open space
G	33/52	N. Main St.	4,400 sq. ft.	x (combine with adjacent units)			High	neighborhood open space
G	33/53	N. Main St.	4,500 sq. ft.	x (combine with adjacent units)			High	neighborhood open space
G	34/51	N. Main St.	4,500 sq. ft.	x (combine with adjacent units)			High	neighborhood open space
G	34/60	N. Main St.	4,600 sq. ft.	x (combine with adjacent units)			High	neighborhood open space
H	32/12	Mt. Pleasant Av.	1.0 ac.		east side		Medium	trail link
I	32/2	Tennis Av.	1.3 ac.		east side		Medium	trail link

Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessment; MCPC; Borough Open Space Advisory Committee; 1994

West Ambler (Area G)
Overall Preservation Priority: High

Ricciardi Park (Areas H & I)
Overall Preservation Priority: Medium

OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT

Based on the number of sites, acreage, access, and available facilities, the Borough's existing active open space areas meet most of the community's needs. A number of improvements are recommended, however.

1. Acquire land suitable for use as another ballfield.
   Priority: Highest

2. Develop one or more of the proposed neighborhood-level open space areas for active recreation use. It is proposed that this be in the form of additional playgrounds or tot lots, similar to the Jean Thompson recreation area in South Ambler.
   Priority: High

3. Develop a community trail or path that connects the major open space areas, involves historically or culturally important sites, and connects to trails and/or open space in neighboring communities.
   Priority: High

   A preliminary proposed trail route is shown in Figure 5-9. It is proposed that the existing fitness path at Ricciardi Park be utilized as a starting point and existing roads and/or sidewalks also be used. Proposed improvements along existing sidewalks and roads include signage and sidewalk marking.

   Priority roads targeted for improvements during the first phase of development:

   Hendricks Street (Lower Gwynedd line to Tennis Avenue)

   Tennis Avenue (Hendricks Street to North Main Street)

   North Main Street (Reiff's Mill Road to Butler Avenue)

   Butler Avenue (North Main Street to Upper Dublin line).

   Subsequent phases will be implemented as new open space is acquired.

4. Develop open space "Gateways" to enhance entrance points into the Borough. Coordinate with the Borough Shade Tree Advisory Committee to provide new shade trees at both ends of Butler Avenue where feasible and upgrade signage in the same locations.
   Priority: High

5. Incorporate the Wissahickon Creek Trail into signage for the Borough Trail system and coordinate with the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association to upgrade Creek Trail identification in South Ambler to better promote the proximity and availability of this regional resource.
   Priority: High

6. Develop an active and ongoing shade tree planting program.
   Priority: High

7. Develop safe and convenient access for disabled persons (including parking) at Borough Park.
   Priority: Highest

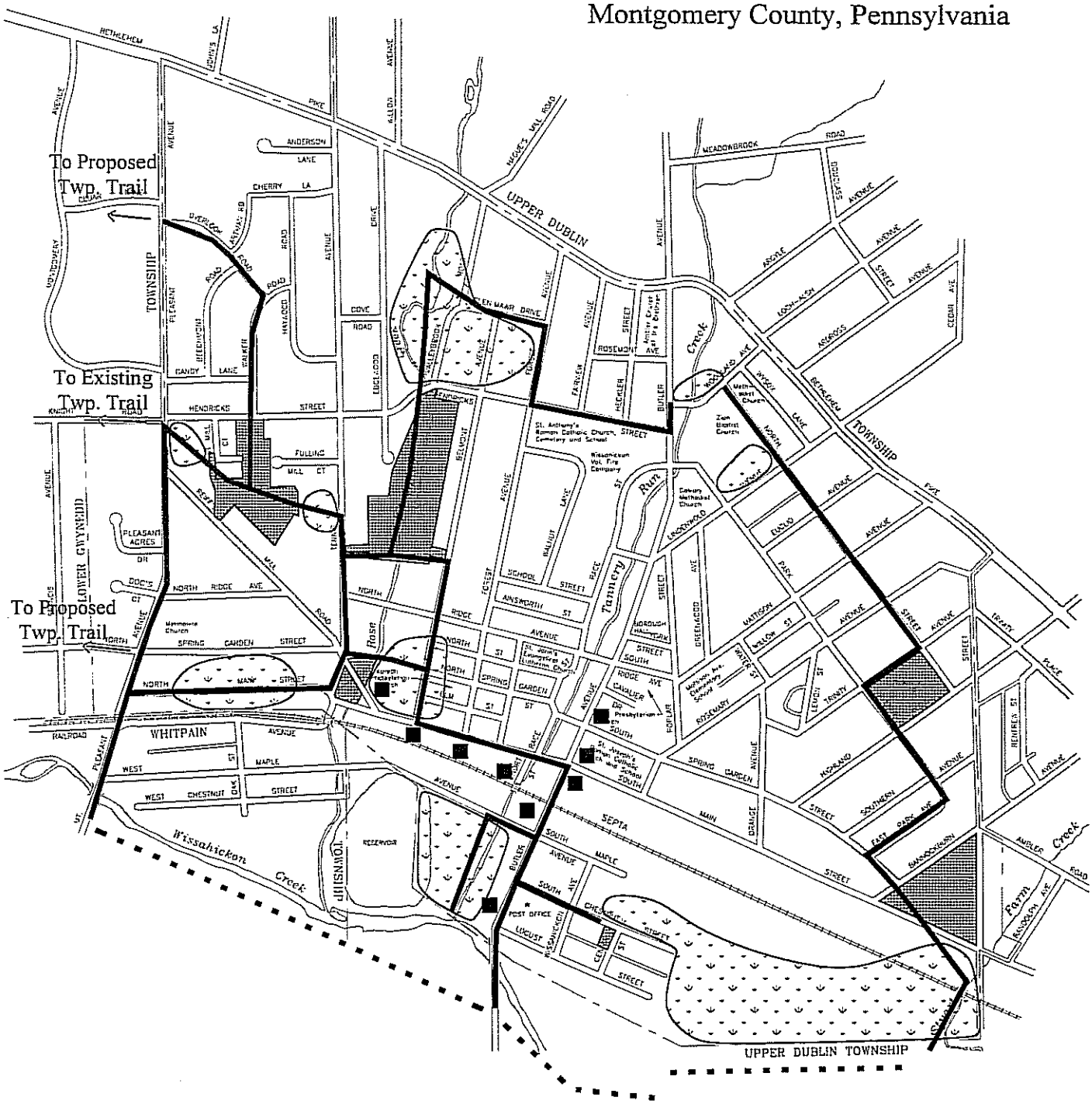


Figure 5-9
PROPOSED TRAIL (TENTATIVE ROUTE)

Source: Borough Open Space Committee and MCPC, 1994

8. Upgrade recreation facilities.
   Priority: High

   In addition to meeting community-wide needs, specific improvements to existing facilities are proposed:

Borough Park
- Provide new benches
- Re-establish/clearly identify Tennis Avenue and Belmont Avenue entrances
- Establish safe and convenient access for disabled persons (including parking)

Ricciardi Park
- Repair or replace tennis courts
- Provide playground equipment
- Maintain sufficient topsoil for field use

Knight Playground
- Resurface basketball courts
- Upgrade/replace playground equipment
- Remove one or both tennis courts
- Replace playground equipment
- Improve lighting

Pickering Field
- Upgrade/replace playground equipment

SEWAGE FACILITIES

Under the terms of the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537), each municipality is responsible for maintaining a sewage facilities plan. In turn, the rules and regulations governing the contents of the plan are contained in Chapter 71, Administration of the Sewage Facilities Planning Program (25 PA CH 71) administered by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). For example, certain planning elements that are expected to affect the specific needs of the community must be addressed, including:

- A description of the physical and demographic characteristics of the planning area (including area boundaries, surface water bodies, soils, geology, wetlands, and description of potable water supplies)
- An evaluation of the existing sewage facilities (including a map of the lines and treatment facilities and a description of the different treatment methods involved), existing problem areas, operation and maintenance needs.
- An evaluation of future sewage facilities needs, based on existing problem areas, proposed development, and the community's zoning and land use plan. An analysis of alternatives for meeting these needs, along with the preferred alternative and justification, a map of the future service area(s), and a schedule for implementation.

AMBLER'S SEWAGE FACILITIES PLANNING

Existing Borough Plan

Completed in 1975, the Borough's sewage facilities plan addresses all of the major issues required by Act 537. With an extensive public sewer system already in place, the plan focuses on system improvements and upgrades as well as expansion to meet projected growth needs. As proposed, the improvements and upgrades were to increase the facility's design capacity from 3.26 gallons per day (GPD) to 6.5 million GPD, enough to meet projected flows in 1995 (Figure 5-10).

Figure 5-10
PROJECTED WASTEWATER TREATMENT NEEDS (1975 ESTIMATES)

	Capacity Requested (millions of gallons per day)	
Municipality	**1990**	**2000**
Ambler	1.38	1.48
Lower Gwynedd	2.00	2.70
Upper Dublin	1.40	1.525
Whitpain	0.80	1.00
Whitemarsh	0.394	0.478
Montgomery	0.179	0.205
Upper Gwynedd	0.004	0.005
Total	6.157	7.393

Source: Ambler Wastewater Treatment Facilities Plan, 1975

Existing Sewage Facilities

The public sewer system is a joint venture involving Ambler and the Townships of Lower Gwynedd, Upper Dublin, Whitemarsh, and Whitpain. Each municipality owns and maintains its sewer collection lines that convey flows to the Borough-owned and operated Ambler Sewage Treatment Plant located on Church Street in Upper Dublin. The flows, in turn, are based on a reserved capacity that each municipality determines is needed.

In accordance with its 537 Plan, the system now has a capacity of 6.5 million gallons per day. Figure 5-11 shows the current flows and maximum flows permitted for the communities served. As can be seen, the plant has enough excess capacity to accommodate additional growth in the surrounding townships, most of which are well below their maximum permitted flow levels.

Figure 5-11
EXISTING SEWAGE FLOWS (IN MILLIONS OF GALLONS PER DAY)

Municipality	Current Flows	Maximum Permitted
Ambler	0.565	--
Lower Gwynedd	1.217	2.35
Upper Dublin	1.601	1.93
Whitpain	0.228	0.702
Whitemarsh	0.038	0.228
Montgomery	0.052	by request
Total	**3.701**	
Average High	4.00	
Total Capacity	6.50	
Excess Capacity	2.50	

Source: MCPC Sewage Treatment Facilities Status Report, 1993

Future Needs

The Borough's future needs are tied to its commercial and industrial revitalization efforts. More specifically, sites currently underused or vacant will generate additional flows if they are more fully used in the future. How much this amounts to will depend on the type of uses that exist; at typical flow rates of 63 gallons per day per 1,000 square feet of commercial building area and 125 gallons per day per 1,000 square feet of industrial building area, even a substantial increase in commercial and industrial activity can likely be accommodated. However, this conclusion is based on the capacity that remains beyond the maximum flows allocated to other communities; if these levels are increased, less will be available to the Borough. This means that capacity must be carefully monitored to ensure that the potential additional needs in the Borough can be met.

Beyond the capacity issue, future needs revolve around ongoing maintenance of the plant and collection system within the Borough. During the planning period of this plan (about 10-15 years) replacement/upgrading of various component parts of the system will be the primary objective.

WATER SUPPLY

The Ambler Borough Water Department operates a public water supply system that services the entire Borough and portions of Upper Dublin Township, Lower Gwynedd Township, Whitemarsh Township, and Whitpain Township. The source is groundwater from ten wells in scattered locations and a spring in Whitemarsh (Figure 5-12). A total of four million gallons is stored in two standpipes and an elevated tank. Interconnections with the North Wales Water Authority and Philadelphia Suburban Water Company systems allows the Borough to send or receive water in times of special need, such as emergency situations or during a drought.

Figure 5-12
WATER SUPPLY AND SERVICE DATA

Supply

Source	Average Daily Withdrawal (gallons)	Maximum Daily Withdrawal (gallons)
Well #2	556,769	972,000
Well #4	96,315	93,600
Well #6	249,043	345,600
Well #7	139,372	194,000
Well #8	200,583	360,000
Well #9	145,041	144,000
Well #11	220,099	396,000
Well #12	141,747	165,600
Well #14	381,972	468,000
Spring	357,539	540,000
Total	**2,488,480**	**3,678,800**

Service Connections

	LAND USE					
Municipality	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Institutional	Other	Total
Ambler Borough	1,846	167	31	5	0	2,049
Lower Gwynedd Township	467	6	5	3	0	481
Upper Dublin Township	1,969	33	1	15	1	2,019
Whitemarsh Township	228	14	0	5	0	247
Whitpain Township	665	19	3	1	0	688
Total	**5,175**	**239**	**40**	**29**	**1**	**5,484**

Source: Water Supply Facilities 1990 Status Report, MCPC

Under current conditions, sufficient capacity exists to service future growth that may occur in the Department's service area. Based on existing supply and usage, an estimated 3,792 new connections are possible (Figure 5-13).

Figure 5-13
WATER SUPPLY RESERVE AND POTENTIAL NEW CONNECTIONS

Maximum Daily Withdrawal	Average Daily Use	Reserve Supply	Number of Existing Connections	Average Daily Use Per Connection	Potential Number of New Connections
3,678,800	2,175,000	1,503,800	5,484	397	3,792

Source: Water Supply Facilities 1990 Status Report, MCPC

In terms of future needs within the Borough, new demand is likely to be relatively modest and should be accommodated without a problem. The only possible exception to this would be new or expanded industrial activity that uses significant amounts of water. As in the past, the Department will address such situations as needed. Existing facilities will remain as they are currently, with ongoing maintenance and the planned replacement of the elevated storage tank. During the time period of this plan, the Department may also add another well to the system.

Chapter Six
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

BACKGROUND

This chapter gives an overview of economic conditions and trends at the regional and Borough levels. This information provides a context and basis for determining an appropriate revitalization strategy for the Borough.

REGIONAL TRENDS

BUSINESS PATTERNS

The Census Bureau annually surveys businesses in every Pennsylvania county to gather data on the number and size of establishments, number of employees, and other items for major economic sectors (manufacturing, service, etc.). When looked at over time for several counties, it is a useful general measure of trends within a region. This is shown in Figure 6-1 for many of the counties in the Philadelphia region, of which Ambler is a part (Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington Counties in New Jersey are also in the region). The data are shown for three points in time covering a fifteen year period between 1975 and 1990. Among the key trends that can be seen:

- Declines in all but two sectors for Philadelphia, but increases across all sectors for all other counties. This suggests a movement away from the city to the suburbs.
- The number of manufacturing businesses grew in suburban counties, but employed fewer people. This probably reflects company downsizing as a result of business conditions and greater use of technology and mechanization
- Despite increases, agriculture remains a relatively minor part of the economy.
- Services are the highest growth segment of the economy.

INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE

The mixture of strongly increasing or decreasing employment levels among the region's industrial sectors during the last ten years or so resulted in a dramatic shift in the industrial configuration of the area to a less diverse structure (Philadelphia Employment Trends, 1992; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; September 1993). For example, sharp increases in service positions has led to an increasing dominance of that sector overall.

This is shown in Figure 6-2, distribution of employment by industry for 1982 and 1992. As can be seen, almost one-third of all jobs were in services by 1992 compared with about one-quarter in 1982.

Services exceeded manufacturing as the region's leading sector in 1980. Trade positions accounted for over 22 percent of the region's jobs. That sector remained the second largest, having passed manufacturing in 1982. Manufacturing had been a close third in 1982 but by 1992 growth in services and trade combined with declines in manufacturing to push the sector to a distant third. Although government employment declined, it is close to surpassing manufacturing.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY TRENDS

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Although economic conditions vary by community, overall the county's economy appears relatively strong. As shown in chapter one, population growth has been steady and is expected to continue. Figure 6-3 shows where the growth and development has been occurring in recent years. The trend has been towards the middle and western areas of the county, away from the more developed communities in the east. This continues a longer term trend of development progressing east to west that is expected to continue, as shown in Figures 6-4 and 6-5.

Figure 6-1
REGIONAL BUSINESS PATTERNS (BY SECTOR AND COUNTY)

	1975		1982		1990		% CHANGE 1975-1982		% CHANGE 1982-1990		% CHANGE 1975-1990	
	# Estab.	# Employees	# Estab.	# Employees	# Estab.	# Employees	% Estab.	% Employees	% Estab.	% Employees	% Estab.	% Employees
AGRICULTURE												
Montgomery	**216**	**801**	**257**	**1,299**	**415**	**2,431**	**19.0**	**62.2**	**61.5**	**87.1**	**92.1**	**203.5**
Bucks	113	376	159	631	302	1,473	40.7	67.8	89.9	133.4	167.3	291.8
Chester	81	250	123	665	256	1,552	51.9	166.0	108.1	133.4	216.0	520.8
Delaware	125	376	141	500	238	1,035	12.8	33.0	68.8	107.0	90.4	175.3
Philadelphia	76	407	71	250	100	616	-6.6	-38.6	40.8	146.4	31.6	51.4
MANUFACTURING												
Montgomery	**1,282**	**105,016**	**1,409**	**98,071**	**1,561**	**86,605**	**9.9**	**-6.6**	**10.8**	**-11.7**	**21.8**	**-17.5**
Bucks	847	45,309	991	48,976	1,196	47,189	17.0	8.1	20.7	-3.6	41.2	4.1
Chester	440	33,452	504	34,879	656	31,159	14.5	4.3	30.2	-10.7	49.1	-6.9
Delaware	514	45,266	538	40,382	643	34,941	4.7	-10.8	19.5	-13.5	25.1	-22.8
Philadelphia	2,824	168,373	2,136	122,864	1,730	85,300	-24.4	-27.0	-19.0	-30.6	-38.7	-49.3
RETAIL												
Montgomery	**3,868**	**47,475**	**4,194**	**55,150**	**5,312**	**78,234**	**8.4**	**16.2**	**26.7**	**41.9**	**37.3**	**64.8**
Bucks	2,328	29,057	2,521	33,362	3,296	50,670	8.3	14.8	30.7	51.9	41.6	74.4
Chester	1,428	13,384	1,506	15,822	1,949	28,143	5.5	18.2	29.4	77.9	36.5	110.3
Delaware	2,791	32,500	2,818	35,761	3,154	43,174	1.0	10.0	11.9	20.7	13.0	32.8
Philadelphia	8,573	97,136	7,654	87,323	8,216	98,905	-10.7	-10.1	7.3	13.3	-4.2	1.8
WHOLESALE												
Montgomery	**1,612**	**21,651**	**1,917**	**24,339**	**2,302**	**33,836**	**18.9**	**12.4**	**20.1**	**39.0**	**42.8**	**56.3**
Bucks	516	5,866	853	12,005	1,272	15,503	65.3	104.7	49.1	29.1	146.5	164.3
Chester	447	6,619	703	12,588	1,029	13,586	57.3	90.2	46.4	7.9	130.2	105.3
Delaware	741	7,523	769	8,786	900	10,484	3.8	16.8	17.0	19.3	21.5	39.4
Philadelphia	2,816	50,966	2,221	38,708	2,028	35,671	-21.1	-24.1	-8.7	-7.8	-28.0	-30.0
F.I.R.E.*												
Montgomery	**1,639**	**16,607**	**1,865**	**24,960**	**2,274**	**37,497**	**13.8**	**50.3**	**21.9**	**50.2**	**38.7**	**125.8**
Bucks	516	4,003	623	6,311	1,019	10,201	20.7	57.7	63.6	61.6	97.5	154.8
Chester	402	11,336	486	7,776	845	12,716	20.9%	-31.4	73.9	63.5	110.2	12.2
Delaware	787	7,788	848	9,947	1,130	15,705	7.8	27.7	33.3	57.9	43.6	101.7
Philadelphia	2,797	68,218	2,312	62,914	2,317	65,460	-17.3	-7.8	0.2	4.0	-17.2	-4.0
SERVICE												
Montgomery	**4,388**	**55,352**	**6,174**	**89,909**	**8,879**	**149,462**	**40.7**	**62.4**	**43.8**	**66.2**	**102.3**	**170.0**
Bucks	1,933	19,761	2,969	35,726	4,929	60,679	53.6	80.8	66.0	69.8	155.0	207.1
Chester	1,436	15,399	2,076	27,728	3,474	54,278	44.6	80.1	67.3	95.8	141.9	252.5
Delaware	2,655	33,335	3,331	50,116	4,905	73,595	25.5	50.3	47.3	46.8	84.7	120.8
Philadelphia	9,033	180,524	9,299	222,141	10,927	262,938	2.9	23.1	17.5	18.4	21.0	45.7

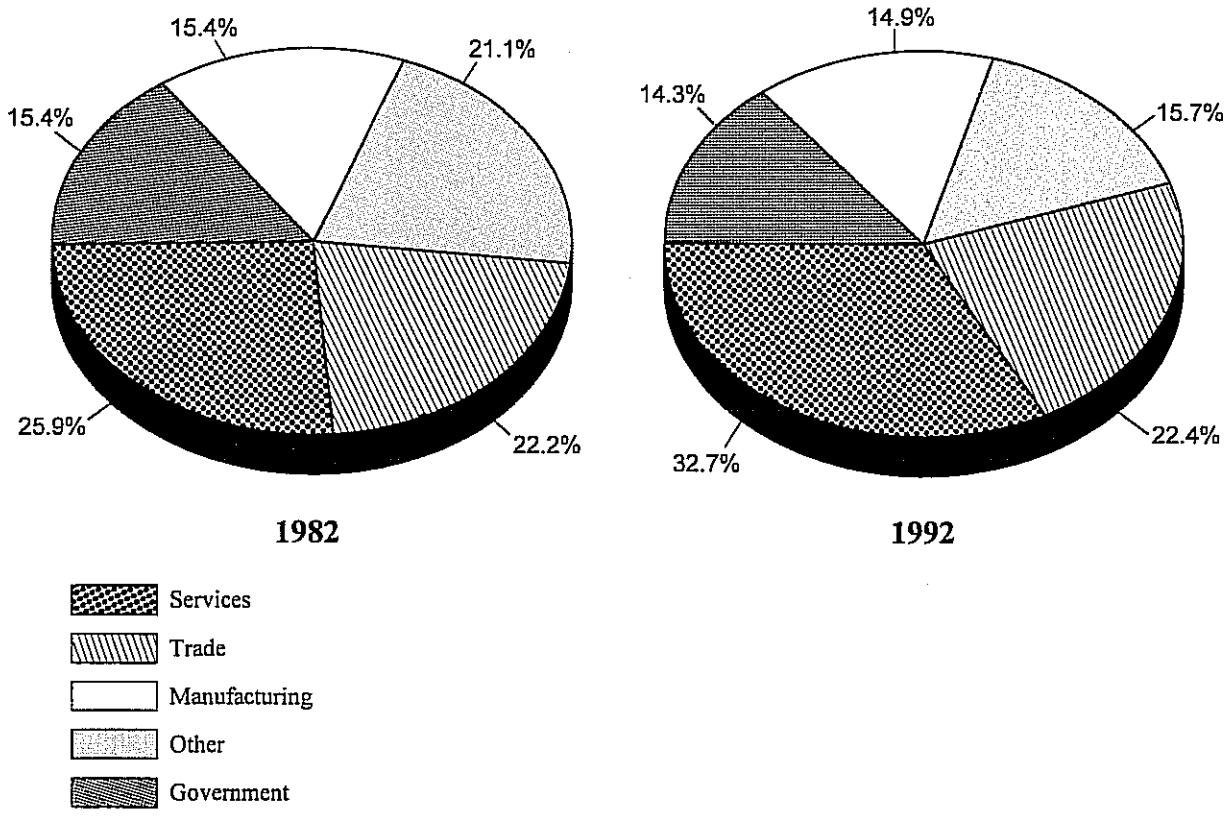
*finance; insurance, and real estate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce Dept.; 1975, 1982, 1990 Censuses of County Business Patterns

In terms of the type of development, Figures 6-6 and 6-7 show areas of the county where significant residential and nonresidential development has occurred. By comparison, significant residential development has been more widely scattered, with significant nonresidential development concentrated in three main areas (North Penn, Upper Merion, and Limerick/Upper Providence Townships).

As can also be seen, Ambler's location puts it near much of this development, particularly residential growth in Upper Dublin, Horsham, and Montgomery Townships.

Figure 6-2
EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION (PHILADELPHIA REGION)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

AMBLER'S ECONOMY

OVERALL TRENDS

The Borough's economy long ago shifted from being manufacturing based to one dependent on local commercial activities. As pointed out in the 1968 Comprehensive Plan, this change firmly linked the Borough to the regional economy and particularly to growth and development in the surrounding area. Today, industry in the Borough tends to be small scale (many with fewer than 25 employees), serves the local area, and involves a range of products. This contrasts with the past, when the Keasbey and Mattison Company (K & M), and later Nicolet Industries and the CertainTeed Corporation, dominated the local economy and influenced much of the Borough's growth and development.

As shown in chapter one, another measure of change in the Borough's economy is the distribution of businesses by industrial sector (manufacturing, retail, etc.). Similar to trends seen elsewhere, a movement away from traditional heavy industries such as manufacturing to more service oriented businesses has occurred. Recent data on businesses located in the Borough provide further evidence of this - as of 1993, nearly two thirds of all businesses fell into the service category (Figure 6-8).

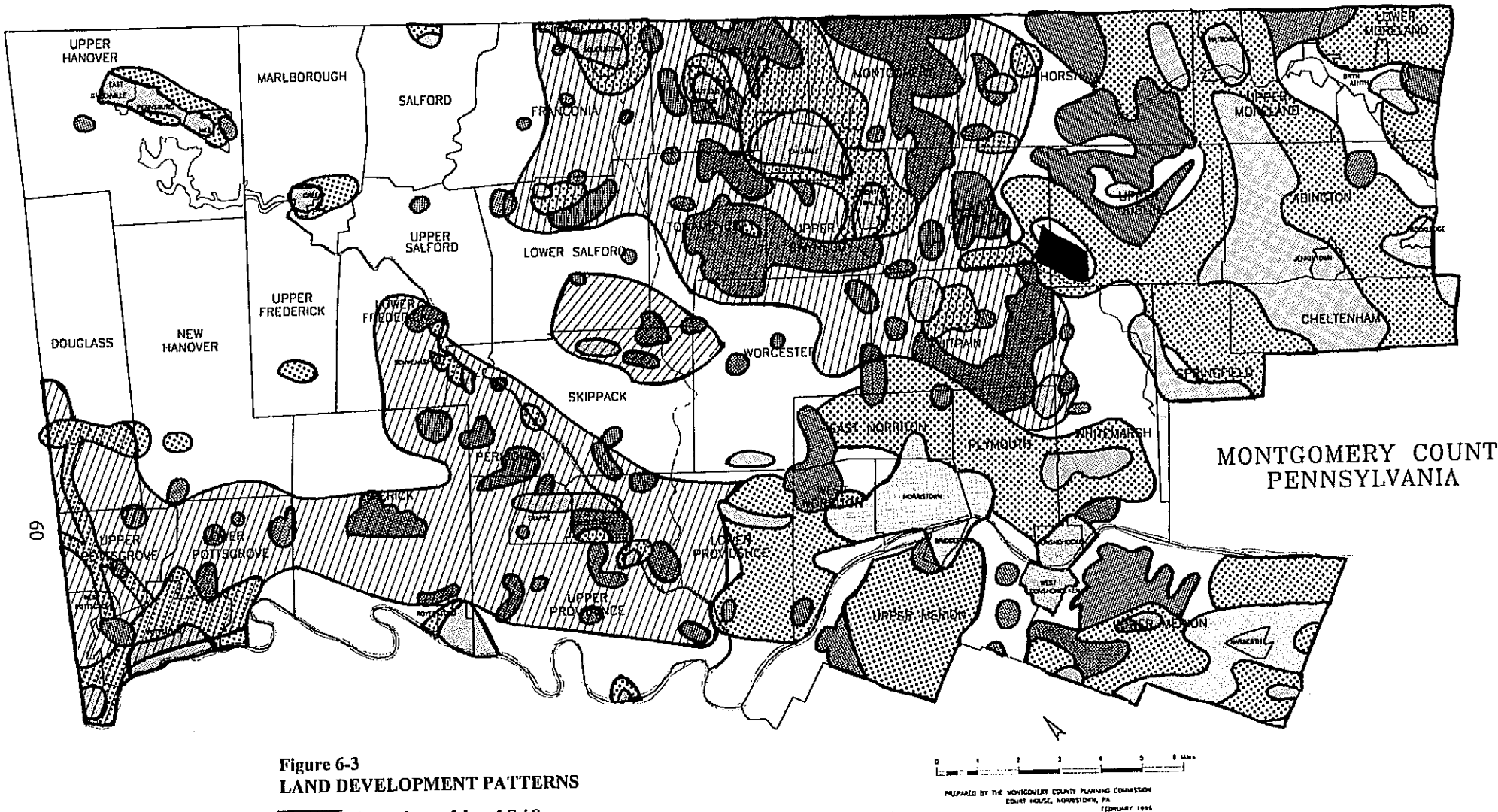


Figure 6-3
LAND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- Developed by 1940
- Developed Between 1940 and 1970
- Developed Between 1970 and 1990
- Future Development
- Ambler

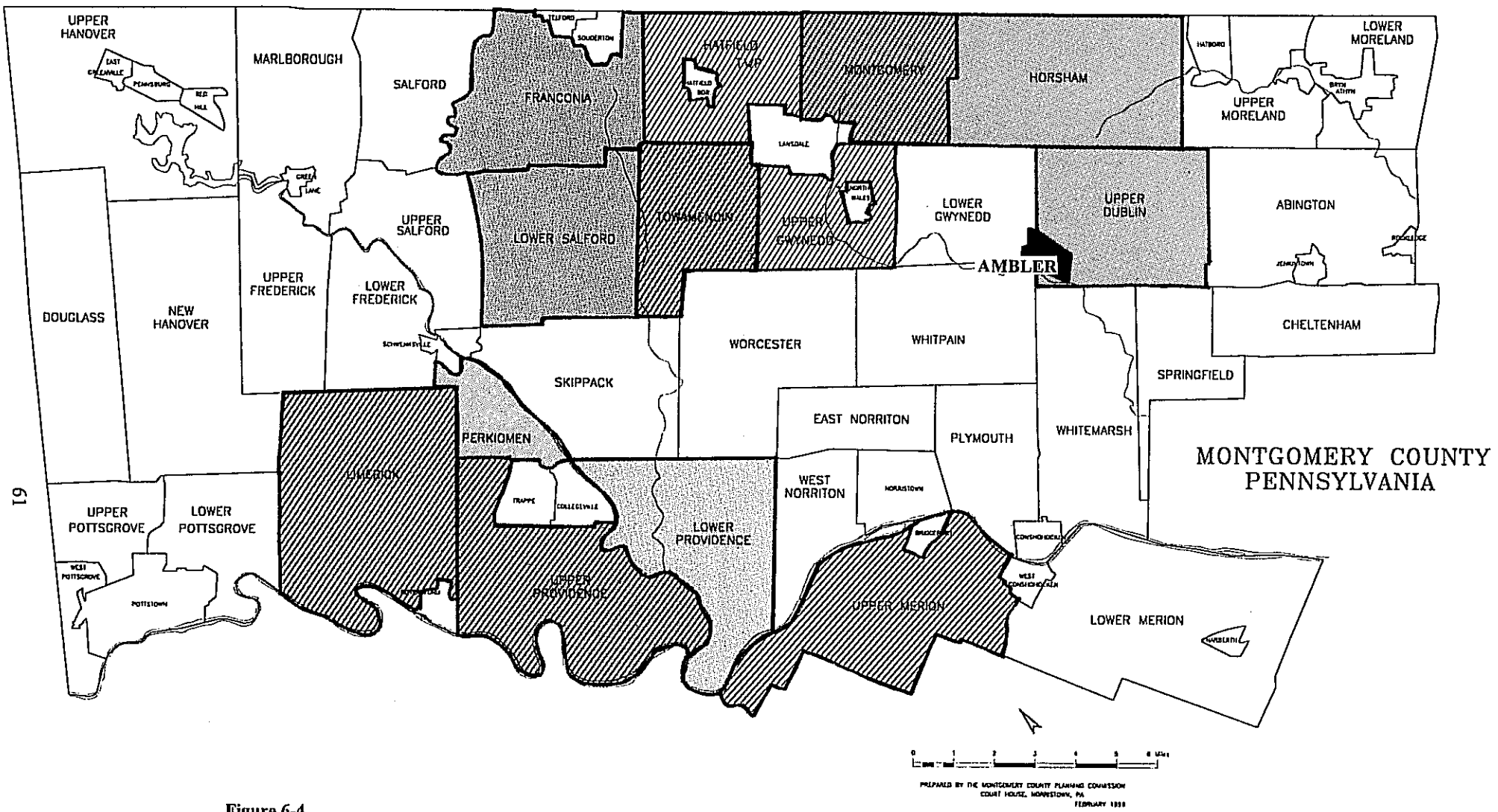
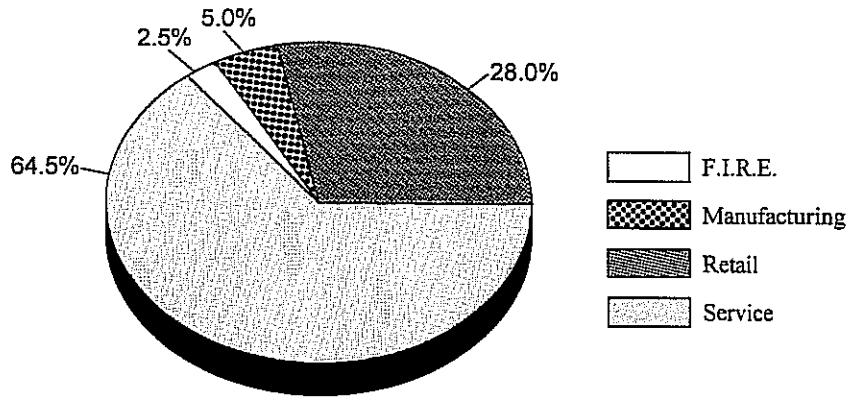


Figure 6-4
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (1989-1994)

Area of Significant Residential Development

Area of Significant Non-Residential Development

Figure 6-5
AMBLER BUSINESS DISTRIBUTION (BY SECTOR) (1993)



Source: Ambler Borough Business List

COMMERCIAL TRENDS

The Borough's commercial business district (CBD) is currently rebounding from a period of relative decline during which business turnover and closings left a considerable amount of vacant space. In response to conditions, business owners, the Borough, and the Wissahickon Valley Chamber of Commerce worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs to create a Main Street Program in 1993 called the Spirit of Ambler. It is designed to provide funding and technical assistance to the community for business attraction and retention efforts over a three year period.

When the program began, there was approximately 41,000 square feet of space available, ranging from 1,000 square feet to 12,000 square feet ("Ambler's Main Street Program, A Progress Report, June 1993 - March 1995"; The Spirit of Ambler). Included in this was space once occupied by several of the Borough's more prominent businesses - Stelacio's Market, Ambler Furniture, Ambler Cabaret, and Ambler Fashion Shop - as well as many smaller uses. Among the reasons cited for these and other business closings were:

- Better opportunities elsewhere
- Retirement of business owner
- Difficult economic climate

As of January 1995, however, nearly all of the space available when the program started in 1993 has been filled by new businesses (94 percent). Similarly, over 93 percent of space that has become available since 1993 has also been occupied. This turnover activity has resulted in several noteworthy re-uses:

Former Use	New Use
Ambler Fashion Shop (95 E. Butler Avenue)	Martial Arts Center
Ambler Furniture Store (79 E. Butler Avenue)	Regan's Quality Shoes (relocated)
Stelacio's Market (Cavalier Drive)	Counseling Center
Regan's Quality Shoes (113 E. Butler Avenue)	General merchandise store

Combined with some longer term businesses, these and other new uses have brought greater stability to the CBD.

INDUSTRIAL TRENDS

In contrast to the past, industrial uses today are considerably smaller and engaged in "lighter" industrial activities that are less land use intensive (e.g., auto body shops; fuel oil distributor). They continue to be located in three main areas - South Ambler, South Main Street, and North Main Street -

and, like commercial uses, are predominantly reuses of existing structures. The extent of business turnover has not been as great as that in the CBD, but available larger spaces remain unoccupied for extended periods, as experienced with buildings of the former Keasbey and Mattison/Nicolet Industries complex in South Ambler. In fact, the long-term disposition of vacant buildings in that area remains a key issue for the future of the Borough's economy. This is addressed further elsewhere in the plan.

FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In addition to general economic conditions, there are some key factors that will likely influence the Borough's economy in the future, as summarized below.

Opportunities

- Location. Convenient to Philadelphia and surrounded by growing, relatively affluent residential communities.
- Access. Reached by nearby major roads and public transportation (SEPTA commuter rail and bus).

Constraints

- Asbestos Piles (South Ambler)
- Perceived public parking problem
- Residential/Industrial land use conflicts (e.g., Main Street and South Ambler areas)

Chapter Seven

REVITALIZATION PLAN

BACKGROUND

By definition, revitalization is the effort to give new life or vitality to something. Because it so often describes a primary need in older communities like Ambler, it is important that planning efforts have this focus. It is often a lengthy process; in one form or another, it has been occurring for nearly two decades in Ambler. Earlier phases included an urban renewal program that focused on the removal of blighting influences, such as deteriorated structures, and later implementation of streetscape improvements along Butler Avenue to enhance the local shopping area. More recently, the Main Street Manager program has been in place to focus on business retention and attraction. These efforts have moved the Borough in the right direction and can be considered successful parts of a larger, longer term revitalization. In order to build upon these efforts and continue the positive momentum, this plan:

- Identifies and examines general factors that relate to revitalization efforts
- Identifies needs and opportunities through market analysis
- Recommends steps that should be taken to achieve revitalization

GENERAL FACTORS

This section considers overall factors that may affect revitalization efforts and provides a broad perspective or "big picture" of the Borough. It separates them out into two categories -opportunities and constraints - and briefly examines their implications.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Location and access. Ambler is convenient to major activity centers within Montgomery County (e.g., Plymouth Meeting, Fort Washington) and Philadelphia (approximately 30 minutes), and is surrounded by relatively wealthy communities (as measured by household income). Major roads in the Borough include Bethlehem Pike and Butler Pike. Nearby major roads include Fort Washington Expressway (route 309) that connects to the Pennsylvania Turnpike (route 276) and Routes 63 (via Tennis Avenue) and 73 (via Butler Pike).

  In addition, convenient public transportation is available to Philadelphia and Montgomery County activity centers via SEPTA commuter rail (R-5 line) and bus (94 and 98 lines). Given the importance businesses give to location and accessibility, the Borough offers a competitive edge over other areas.

- Sewer and Water Infrastructure. The Borough has complete sewer and water service with available capacity. This is a necessary element for redevelopment.

- Stable Population. The Borough's population stabilized between 1980 and 1990 and is expected to remain stable into the future. This can provide a dependable customer and employee base for local businesses.

- Size and scale. The Borough's size and scale is pedestrian oriented and creates a small-town atmosphere and character that promotes a strong sense of community.

CONSTRAINTS

- Traffic congestion. The Borough's size and scale presents limitations for smooth traffic flow. Normal volumes are handled, but morning and evening commuting periods create considerable congestion and there is a lack of sufficient right-of-way to mitigate the problem (such as through adequate turning lanes). This is an important consideration for all redevelopment/reuse opportunities and proposals.

- Public parking. The Borough has three municipal parking lots and meters control on-street parking in and around the central business district. However, there is a perceived problem with respect to the number and convenience of these spaces. The Borough needs to continue to work closely with the business community to ensure that adequate parking is provided and also must remain flexible and creative in its approach to the issue (e.g., permit off-site parking and encourage shared parking arrangements).
- Environmental conditions. This relates mostly to the industrial area of South Ambler, where the asbestos waste piles are located and several unoccupied and deteriorating industrial structures remain. It is important to note that the piles have been remediated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and no further action is proposed. Although the land cannot be used at this time, this may change over the long term and does not necessarily adversely affect revitalization of nearby properties. Perhaps more important for the Borough is that the piles and buildings contribute to an image that it is a subpar, undesirable area. The Borough will therefore need to help improve the perception of this area by working closely with prospective investors and developers to address any issues that arise.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Market forces provide the overall context in which development activity occurs. For this reason, Ambler's revitalization plan is based largely on a basic analysis of market conditions. An understanding of general trends, future demand for uses, and existing conditions and needs in the Borough are all part of this analysis and help shape revitalization recommendations.

Because the Borough's primary revitalization focus is nonresidential redevelopment and reuse, the commercial, office, and industrial market areas are examined.

For purposes of this plan, the Ambler market area is defined as essentially the Borough and surrounding communities served by the Wissahickon Valley Chamber of Commerce (Townships of Horsham, Springfield, Whitpain, Whitemarsh, Lower Gwynedd, and Upper Dublin - See Figure 7-1).

COMMERCIAL MARKET

Ambler's Central Business District

In its broadest sense, the central business district (CBD) is most of the Butler Avenue corridor, extending approximately one block on each side. However, the core is the portion between Lindenwold Avenue and Main Street, where the greatest density of uses exists and the Borough concentrated previous streetscape improvements (Figure 7-2). Like any mall or shopping center, the CBD functions as a commercial center that serves a portion of the broad consumer market. As typically classified, it fits the description of a neighborhood retail center that serves a primary, or local, market (Figure 7-3). It remains an area with a range of uses, with the typical building containing a business on the ground floor and residences and/or office space on upper floors. However, it has experienced a significant change over time, with greater business turnover, more space becoming vacant and remaining unoccupied for longer periods, and more non-retail uses. For example, recent figures indicate 141 uses in the CBD, divided into 79 service providers, 42 retailers, 3 banks, and 17 eating and drinking establishments.

This contrasts sharply with the CBD's former presence as a retail center that served both local and regional needs. The vitality that it had when it served that role is now largely absent and needs to be recaptured. It is likely that multiple factors have contributed to this change. For example, to some extent it reflects larger trends, as services have increasingly become an integral part of the economy. The CBD has also felt the competitive pressures from newer retail commercial centers and malls in surrounding communities. Also, as long established business owners have approached retirement they have tended to close businesses rather than passing them on to children or selling to new people.

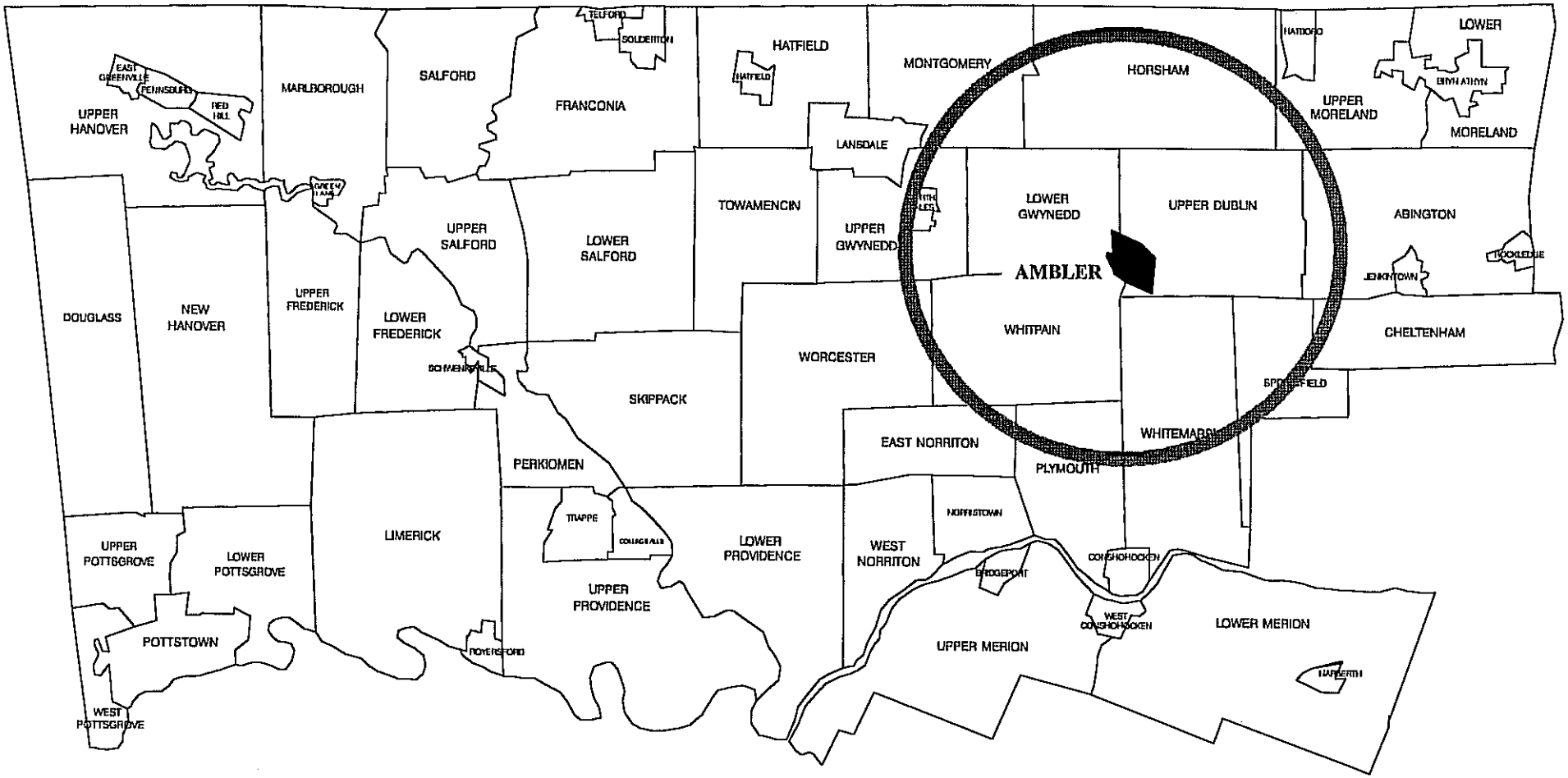


Figure 7-1
AMBLER MARKET AREA

AMBLER BOROUGH
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

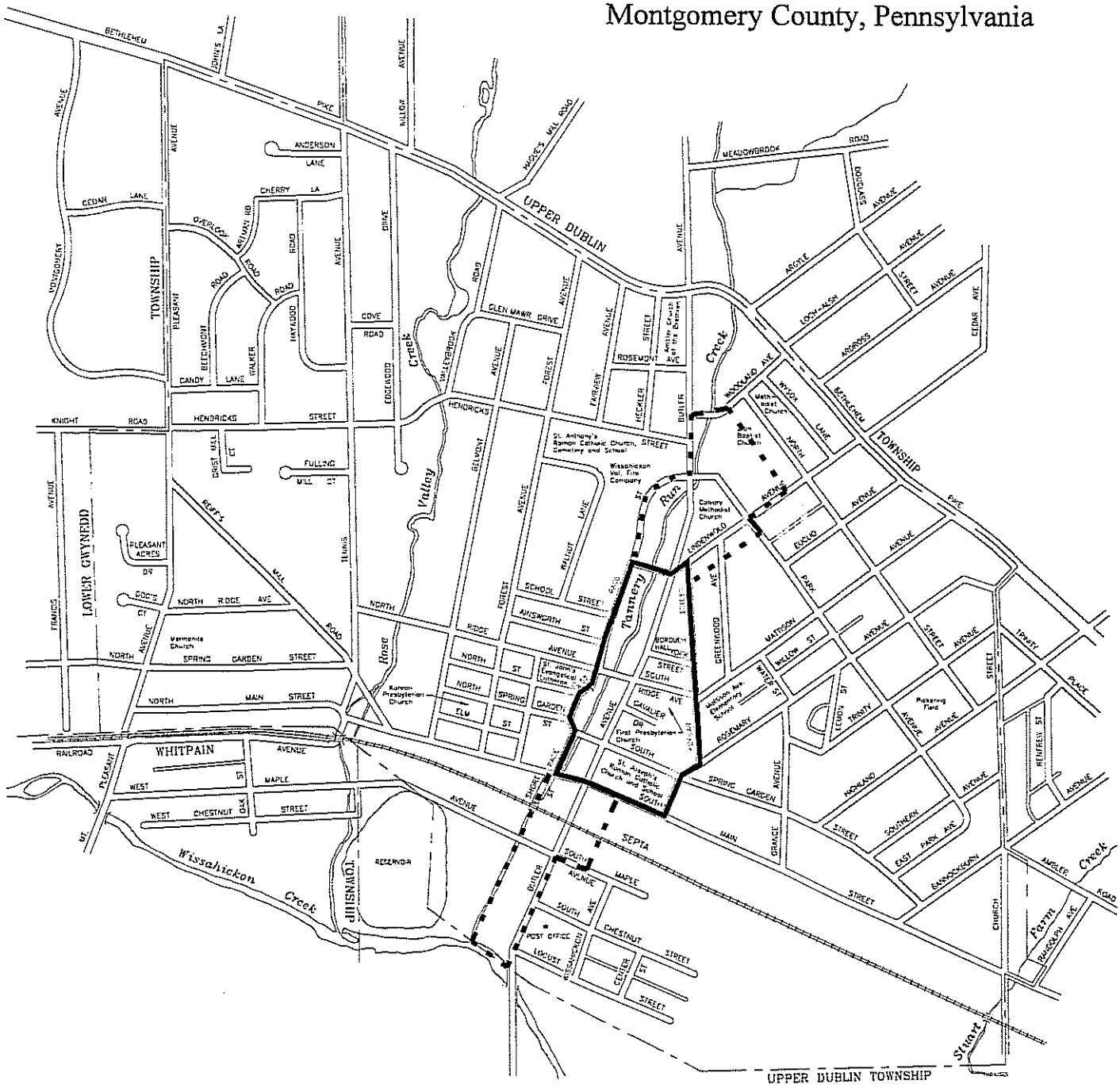


Figure 7-2
COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

CBD Core

District Limit

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: Borough Planning Commission & MCPC field check, 1996

Figure 7-3
COMMERCIAL CENTER TYPES

	CENTER TYPE			
CHARACTERISTICS	Neighborhood	Community	Regional	Super Regional
GLA (sq. ft.)* range typical	 30,000-100,000 50,000	 100,000-300,000 150,000	 300,000-900,000 400,000	 500,000-1.5 million or more 800,000
Types of Goods/Services	Convenience	Comparison	Comparison	Comparison
Leading Tenant	Supermarket	Junior department or discount store	One or more full-line department store(s)	Three or more full-line department stores
Other Stores/Services	Small variety and service stores for daily needs	Clothing and specialty stores and those found in a neighborhood center	Those similar to a community center but in greater quantity	Same as a regional center but in greater quantity
Minimum Population Support Required	3,000-40,000	40,000-150,000	150,000 or more	300,000 or more
Market Area service radius driving time	Primary 1.5 miles 5-10 minutes	Primary/Secondary 3-5 miles 10-20 minutes	Primary/Secondary/Tertiary 8 miles 20 minutes	Primary/Secondary/Tertiary 12 miles 30 minutes

*GLA: Gross Leasable Area
Source: Shopping Center Development Handbook; Urban Land Institute, 1985

In order to regain its vitality and remain competitive, the CBD must realize its potential to once again be a regional commercial presence and this should be the goal of CBD revitalization efforts. One indication of this potential, as previously noted, is the Borough's location next to some of the wealthiest, and still growing, communities in the county (as measured by median household income). Also, it is a market that includes Temple University's Ambler campus (located in Upper Dublin Township), surrounding office and industrial parks, a SEPTA commuter rail station, and the nearby Fort Washington Expo Center (Upper Dublin Township) that is an important regional draw.

Achieving this goal means that the CBD should function more like a community commercial center, with more uses offering comparison-type goods; that is, items that typically involve comparison shopping by consumers, such as household furnishings, apparel, and entertainment. Part of this could be attracting specialty retail and services to provide the CBD with a better defined image. The existing and projected demand for such comparison goods is examined below.

Future Demand

Figure 7-4 shows that the CBD's current "capture rate" (the proportion of demand being met) for comparison goods is estimated at just over 2%. By comparison, existing community shopping centers in Horsham, Springfield, and Whitpain Townships have estimated capture rates of 8%, 6%, and 4% respectively. This suggests that the CBD must increase its share of the market to be competitive in the future. A goal of between 3% and 4% seems realistic, given competition, limited new development potential in the Borough, and comparatively subpar existing commercial space in the CBD (which results in relatively lower average sales per square foot). Based on projected future demand and existing demand being met, this increase corresponds to an additional 22,500 to 50,000 square feet of CBD space devoted to commercial uses offering comparison goods (Figure 7-5).

Commercial Competition

In serving a broader market, the CBD will be competing with numerous existing shopping centers, as shown in Figures 7-6 and 7-7. Many of these are neighborhood oriented and, like the CBD, have a supermarket as the major tenant. Since they serve a local market and generally offer few if any comparison goods, they would tend to not compete directly with the CBD. Existing community, regional, and super regional centers, on the other hand, will pose direct competition.

Figure 7-4
EXISTING RETAIL COMMERCIAL DEMAND (COMPARISON GOODS)

Median Household Income (estimated)	$50,000
Average Household Expenditures	$13,011
Total Number of Households	40,821
Total Demand ($)	$531,122,031
Demand Met by Ambler Retail Uses	$11,479,226
Capture Rate	2.2%

Notes:
1. Median household income and number of households from 1990 census.
2. Household expenditures based on the average for a household earning $50,000 dollars and includes common comparison retail items such as food away from home, household furnishings, and apparel.
3. Demand met by Ambler Retail uses derived by taking existing building square footage of uses with comparison goods and multiplying by a sales per square foot figure reported for older (>19 years) community level shopping centers. The lowest reported figure was used to reflect the Borough's supply of comparatively subpar commercial spaces.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers, ULI

Figure 7-5
2010 RETAIL COMMERCIAL DEMAND (COMPARISON GOODS)

Median Household Income (estimated)	$50,000
Average Household Expenditures	$13,011
Total Number of Households	41,514
Total Demand ($)	$540,138,654
Demand Met by Ambler Retail Uses	
at existing capture rate (2.2%)	$11,883,050
at target capture rate (3-4%)	$16,204,159 - $21,605,546
Difference ($)	$4,321,109 - $9,722,496
Building Sq. Foot	22,505 - 50,638

Notes:
1. Median household income from 1990 census and kept constant.
2. Household expenditures based on the average for a household earning $50,000 dollars and includes common comparison retail items such as food, household furnishings, and apparel.
3. Number of households is estimated using projected population, minus estimated group quarters population, divided by average household size (1990 figure kept constant). Group quarters estimate based on 1990 proportion of group quarters to total population.
4. Demand met by Ambler Retail uses:
   Existing capture rate - see figure
   Target capture rate - this is based on a target increase in CBD space devoted to retail uses with comparison goods from the current estimated 30% to between 40% and 50%. The corresponding capture rate for this increase is 3% to 4%.
5. Difference in building square footage derived by dividing dollar amount by median sales per square foot figure for older (>19 years) community level shopping centers. It is assumed that new uses will offer comparison goods comparable to those found elsewhere and will be able to achieve relatively better sales per square foot than current uses.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers, ULI; DVRPC; County Board of Assessment

However, only one community center is currently close to the CBD - Flourtown Shopping Center in Springfield Township. The remainder are found near the outer limits of the market area such as in East Norriton Township and Montgomery Township and therefore also serve other markets (e.g., Montgomery Township centers directly serve North Penn communities). This relative lack of community centers may be due to the malls (Montgomery Mall, Willow Grove Park, and Plymouth Meeting), which probably serve much of the demand for comparison goods. Nevertheless, with expected future growth in the market area, the CBD could meet some of this demand and be an effective alternative to the malls.

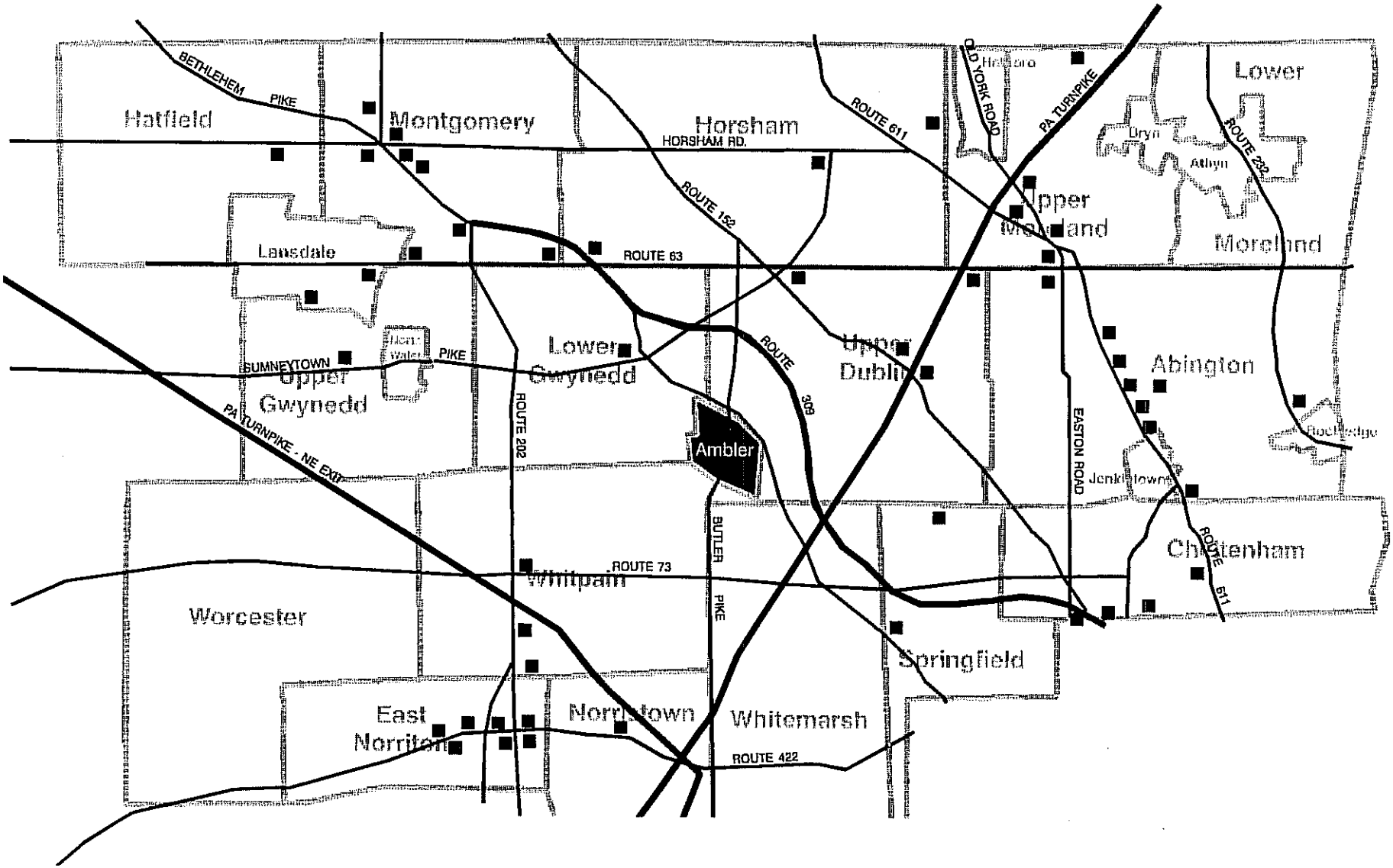


Figure 7-6
SHOPPING CENTERS - AMBLER MARKET AREA

■ Shopping Center

Figure 7-7
SHOPPING CENTER INVENTORY - AMBLER MARKET AREA

Municipality	Center Type	Center Name	Location	GLA* (sq. ft.)	# of Units	Major Tenants
Abington Township	Neighborhood	Abington S.C.	Old York Road at Highland Avenue	73,900	12	Shorday's Supermarket
	Neighborhood	The Atrium	Old York Road at Highland Avenue	179,000	13	Circuit City, Hit or Miss, Superfresh
	Neighborhood	Baederwod S.C.	The Fairway at Old York Road	103,715	35	Acme Market, United Artists Theater
	Neighborhood	Cloverly Plaza	Old York Road at Rydal Road	31,000	14	CVS, Encore Books
	Neighborhood	Bridge at Foxcroft Square	Old York Road at Township Line Road	150,000	15	Thrift Drug, Paine Weber
	Super Regional	Willow Grove Park Mall	Easton Road at Moreland Road	1,197,703	150	Bloomingdales, Strawbridge & Clothier
	Specialty	Hechinger's	The Fairway at Old York Road	74,800	1	Hechinger's
	Department Store	Hecht's	The Fairway at Old York Road	167,760	1	Hecht's
Cheltenham Township	Neighborhood	Elkins Park Square	York Road at Church Road	57,827	13	Blockbuster Video
	Neighborhood	Lynnewood Gardens	Cheltenham Avenue at Penrose Avenue	46,000	12	M & J Oriental Market, Lynnewood Billiards
	Regional	Cedarbrook Mall	Cheltenham Avenue at Easton Road	590,000	12	Caldor's, Toys R Us, Staples, Channel
	Regional	Cheltenham Square Mall	Cheltenham Avenue at Ogontz Avenue	890,703	62	Clover, Shop Rite, Home Depot
East Norriton Township	Department Store	Bradlees	Germantown Pike at Swede Street	131,166	1	Bradlees
	Specialty	Hechinger's	Dekalb Pike at Hanna Avenue	113,560	1	Hechinger's
	Neighborhood	Hillcrest Plaza	Germantown Pike at Swede Road	55,503	30	Dominos Pizza, Friendly Ice Cream
	Neighborhood	Norriton Square S.C.	Germantown Pike at Hannah Avenue	113,560	14	Shop Rite, Silo, Party City
	Neighborhood	Penn Square S.C.	Germantown Pike at Penn Square Road	12,000	10	Duke Swimming Pools
	Neighborhood	Swede Square	Germantown Pike at Swede Road	100,000	17	Genuardi Market, Mario's Pharmacy
	Community	Northtown Plaza	Germantown Pike at Dekalb Pike	270,000	38	TJ Maxx, Drug Emporium, Dress Barn
Horsham Township	Neighborhood	English Village	Bethlehem Pike at Welsh Road	68,718	25	None
	Neighborhood	Horsham Town Square	Horsham Road at Norristown Road	25,574	11	Horsham Square Pharmacy
	Community	Village Mall	W. Moreland Avenue at Blair Mill Road	236,318	21	Acme Market, Bradlees
Lansdale Borough	Community	Hillcrest S.C.	East Main Street at Highland Avenue	132,873	20	Clemens Market, Ames
	Neighborhood	Gary's Plaza	South Broad Street at Whites Road	70,000	13	I Got it at Gary's, Video Tyme
Lower Gwynedd Township	Neighborhood	Spring House Village Center	Bethlehem Pike at Sumneytown Pike	115,000	21	Clemens Market
Montgomery Township	Neighborhood	202 Market Place	Route 202 at Horsham Road	61,440	11	Subway, Fantasy Zone
	Neighborhood	Gwynedd Crossing S.C.	Bethlehem Pike at Welsh Road	91,400	10	Fresh Fields, Chuckie Cheese, Thrift Drug
	Neighborhood	Montgomery Commons	Welsh Road at North Wales Road	233,492	16	Drug Emporium, Acme Market
	Neighborhood	North Wales Plaza	Horsham Road at North Wales Road	34,194	17	Little Caesar's, Pearl Vision
	Community	Airport Square	Bethlehem Pike at Upper State Road	258,000	26	KMart, Marshalls, Best
	Community	Five Points Plaza	Cowpath Road at Bethlehem Pike	273,776	10	Weis Market, Bradlees
	Community	Water Tower Square	Horsham Road at North Wales Road	219,471	5	Ross, Home Depot, Sports Authority
	Super Regional	Montgomery Mall	Route 202 at Route 309	1,107,000	152	JC Penney, Hecht's, Macy's
Plymouth Township	Regional	Plymouth Meeting Mall	Germantown Pike at Hickory Road	951,000	135	IKEA, Strawbridge & Clothier
Springfield Township	Neighborhood	Flourtown Plaza	Bethlehem Pike at East Mill Road	183,361	13	Acme Market, Mellon Bank
	Neighborhood	Oreland S.C.	Allison Road at Montgomery Avenue	16,771	9	Nino's, Oreland Pizza, Sherco Market
	Community	Flourtown S.C.	Bethlehem Pike at Sunnybrook Road	177,273	24	KMart, Genuardi Market
Upper Dublin Township	Neighborhood	Dreshertown Plaza S.C.	Dreshertown Road at Limekiln Pike	96,755	29	Shop n' Bag, Thrift Drug
	Neighborhood	Fairway S.C.	Limekiln Pike at Twinning Road	41,220	9	Acme Market, Thrift Drug
	Neighborhood	Maple Glen S.C.	Welsh Road at Norristown Road	62,000	15	Genuardi Market, Rickel's
	Neighborhood	Upper Dublin S.C.	Twinning Road at Welsh Road	90,000	10	Superfresh, Rickel's
Upper Gwynedd Township	Neighborhood	West Point S.C.	Church Road at Sumneytown Pike	32,000	6	Genuardi Market
Whitpain Township	Neighborhood	Shoppes at Blue Bell	Township Line Road at Dekalb Pike	110,000	16	Giant, Blockbuster Video
	Neighborhood	Whitpain S.C.	Dekalb Pike at Swede Street	35,000	16	West Coast Video, Pepperidge Farm
	Community	Center Square S.C.	Skippack Pike at Dekalb Pike	115,965	10	Clover, Sears Hardware, Clemens Market

GLA - Gross Leasable Area

Future CBD Uses

The type and mix of uses is a key consideration in realizing a CBD that serves a bigger market. There is no exact process to follow in order to accomplish this, but an overall picture or vision of what it could be is developed from several sources.

First, successful commercial areas in other communities suggest some possibilities. For example, Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill and Manayunk neighborhoods both have a mix of specialty retail, specialty food stores, restaurants, and farmer's markets that are regional draws. These work in conjunction with other uses that are more local and neighborhood oriented (e.g., a hardware store).

In a similar way, Skippack Village in Skippack Township has specialty retail and food uses that draw customers from surrounding areas. In addition, a common rural theme exists among the retail uses in the village, with a number of shops offering collectibles, antiques, crafts, and fine hand-made gifts. Although both of these places have their own unique characteristics, their ability to provide a good variety of commercial uses that serve both local needs and capture some regional retail demand serves as an example for Ambler's CBD. Also, common to both is that many uses offer comparison type goods that are necessary to be a regional draw.

Another guide is the list of comparison goods typically purchased by households as reported in U.S. Census consumer expenditure data. When housing and transportation related expenditures are excluded (which are large and tend to skew the numbers), the following goods and services account for much of a household's spending:

- Food away from home
- Apparel
- Entertainment
- Household Furnishings

For example, for households earning $50,000 or more (the Ambler market area category) these four categories account for about 45% of all expenditures. This suggests that a use mix based on these categories will help the CBD achieve longer term revitalization and stability. Finally, the results of a recent CBD shopper and merchant survey provides insight into possible future uses (Shopper and Business-Owner Surveys; School of Business and Management; Temple University - Ambler Campus; 1995). Both groups felt that the uses in the CBD need to change in order to achieve revitalization. In terms of retail uses, clothing stores (e.g., specialty or boutique type) and entertainment oriented uses (books, records, video, toys) ranked very high, as did restaurants (sit-down, full-service type).

CBD Vision

The CBD will be a vibrant shopping area that continues to meet local needs while increasingly serving some regional demand. It will include a range of businesses, but have an emphasis on retail (particularly specialty retail involving apparel, household goods, etc.), entertainment (e.g., books, audio, video), and food (e.g., ethnic market, farmers market, restaurants) uses. The predominant development pattern of multi-story buildings located close to the street with ground floor commercial uses will be maintained. Conservation and reuse of existing buildings is encouraged, particularly buildings of local historic significance.

INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE MARKETS

The industrial market generally consists of industrial areas in more urbanized communities, where concentrations of freestanding factories, warehouses, supply yards, and similar uses are found, and industrial parks in less developed suburban communities, where development occurs in a more organized and coordinated manner. Although age and changes in user needs can make any industrial building obsolete, typical characteristics that help lead to obsolescence are:

- Inability to handle current communication and computer technology
- Lack of good road access
- Lack of up to date amenities or physical environment
- Buildings exhibiting poor conditions, such as air or noise pollution
- Mismatch between building space configuration and current market needs and standards

(Source: Business and Industrial Park Development Handbook (ULI, 1988)

As a result of these and other factors, new industrial buildings (particularly those in planned parks) are often constructed as flexible space that can more easily accommodate different and changing needs.

Office development can take a number of forms, ranging from stand-alone buildings to office parks to reuse of existing structures. Buildings can be either single tenant structures built for the specific needs of a user or "speculative" multi-tenant structures designed for a variety of potential users. Space is typically categorized as first (A), second (B), or third (C) class based generally on building age, location and access, management, and other related factors. Generally, tenants move from third to second class and second to first class over time and this can generate additional space needs.

Ambler Market Area

Industry

Historically, the focus of industrial activity was the Keasbey and Mattison Company's (K&M) industrial complex located in South Ambler.

For many years it was used for intensive manufacturing and was a major source of jobs and related economic activity for the Borough and surrounding area. This eventually ended and along with it the Borough's industrial base diminished. One indication of this is that the amount of land devoted to industrial use decreased by almost 60% from 1966 to 1992 (see chapter one). Today, the heavier manufacturing uses have largely been replaced by smaller, generally lighter, and less intensive uses. For example, typical uses today are autobody repair shops, general contractor shops, and printing companieS. Geographically, they and other uses remain close to the SEPTA rail line along Main Street between Mt. Pleasant Avenue to the north and Church Street to the south, in keeping with a long established development pattern (Figure 7-8). However, they tend to be in conflict with nearby residences, an issue that is addressed below and in the Land Use Plan chapter. The remnants of the former K&M complex remain and some reuse has occurred but it remains largely underutilized. Overall, the site has the appearance of an obsolete, undesirable heavy industrial area and is also partly in conflict with a residential neighborhood.

Office

There is a substantial amount of office space in the market area, with concentrations found in Blue Bell (Whitpain Township), Fort Washington (Upper Dublin Township), and Horsham Township. Of these areas, Fort Washington tends to have the older development (more than 20 years old) while Blue Bell and Horsham have experienced more recent construction, particularly during the 1980s. In fact, these areas combined have about ninety percent of the space found in the market, based on available data (Blacks Office Leasing Guide, 1991). Within Ambler, offices are a minor land use, occupying less than 2% of the land in 1992 (see chapter one). Although there are a few sizable buildings, the typical office space is relatively small and is in an older structure; for example, Butler Avenue space is often less than 1,000 square feet.

AMBLER BOROUGH
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

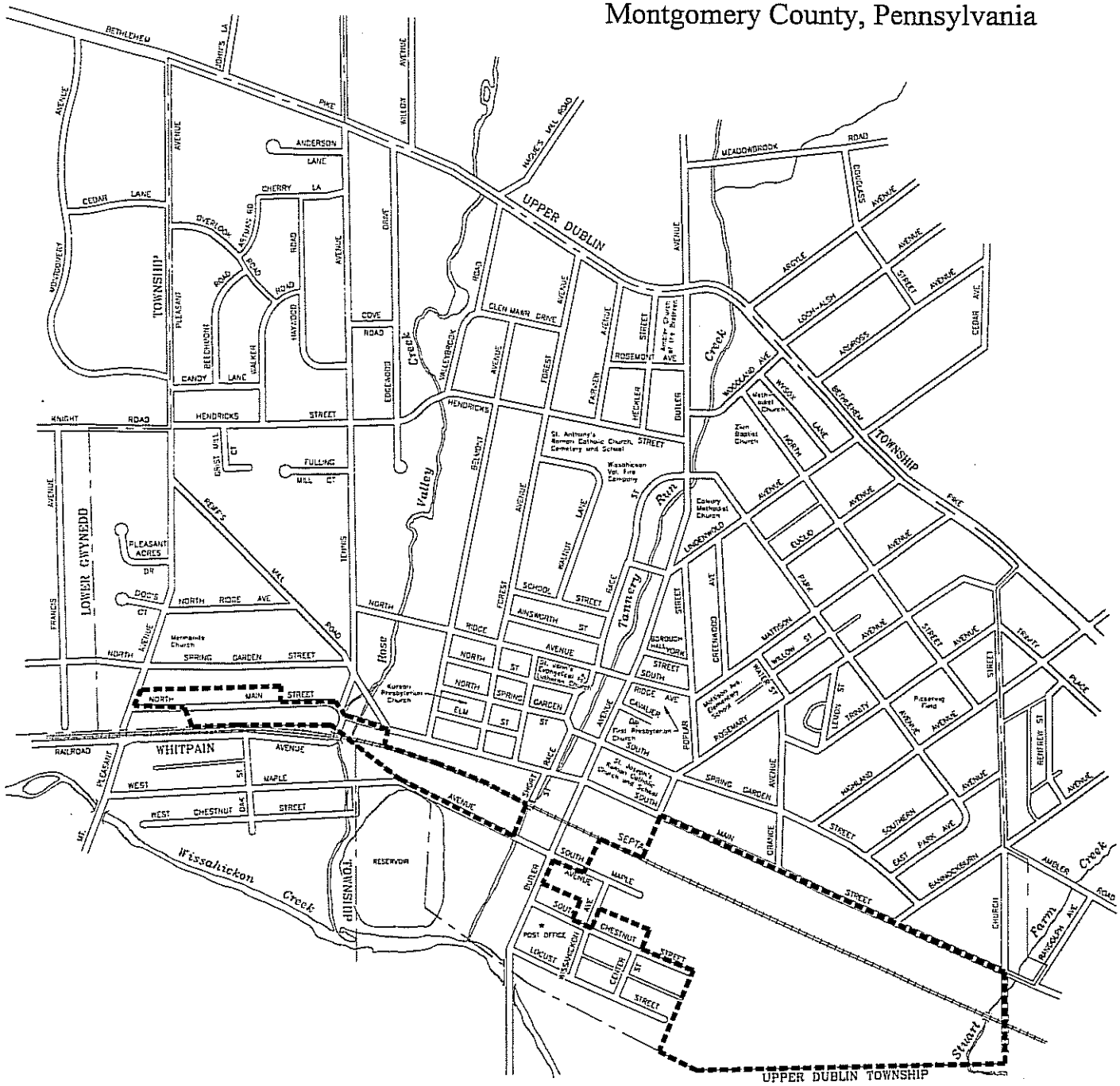


Figure 7-8
INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Industrial Areas

0 600 1200 1800 feet

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: Borough Planning Commission & MCPC field check, 1996

Future Demand

Industry

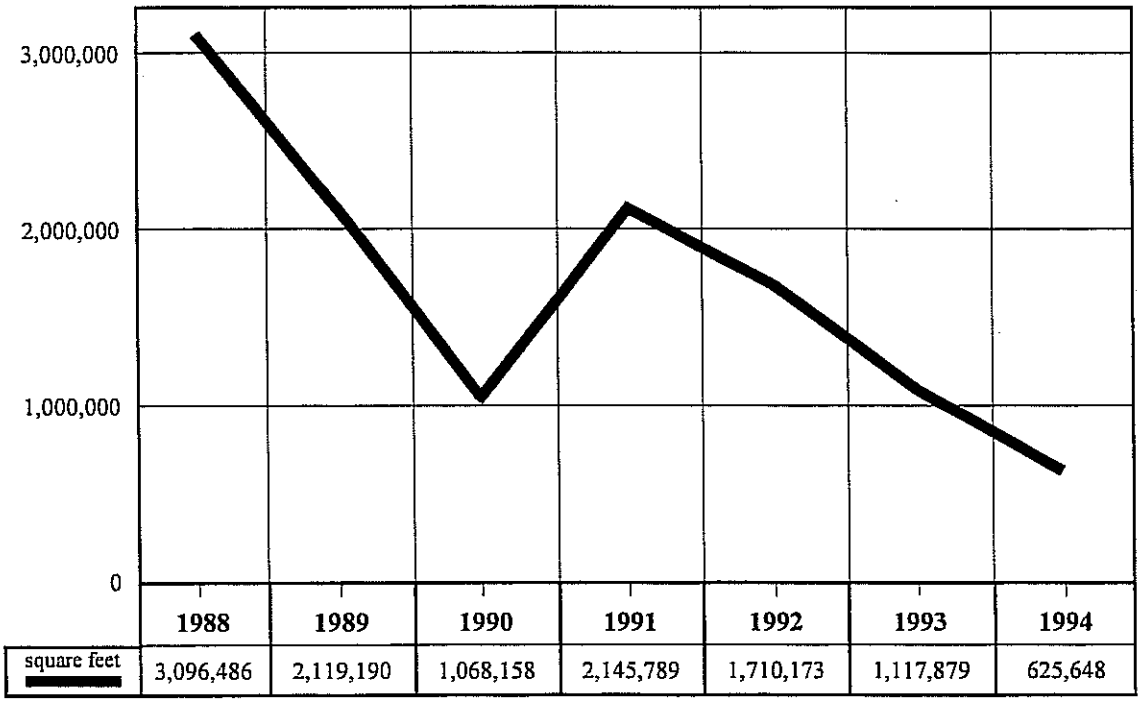
Unlike commercial and residential demand, industrial demand does not directly depend on, or respond to, population growth. Instead, growth tends to occur on a regional rather than municipal level and therefore responds to market forces that are beyond local control.

Typically, demand is generated by firms looking to relocate, expand, or upgrade from subpar existing facilities. One indicator of demand in the regional market is the amount of industrial space proposed county-wide during a given time period. For example, between 1988 and 1994 the amount of square footage proposed declined 80 percent (Figure 7-9). However, it also shows that short term changes can occur, as happened between 1990 to 1991, and are typically the result of just one or two large proposals. Overall, the development activity is almost exclusively for new construction; the redevelopment or reuse of existing structures occurs infrequently. In terms of where it is occurring, there is no discernible pattern - proposals have occurred in both developed and developing areas.

According to one source (ULI Market Profiles: 1994, Philadelphia), the immediate outlook is mixed, with demand for warehouse space expected to be relatively high, while the expected continued decline in manufacturing employment will continue to keep demand for that type of space low. In fact, manufacturing businesses that enter the market will likely find plenty of existing space that is available for sale or lease. More generally, build-to-suit space and some speculative construction may occur in certain areas of the region because of the limited availability of class A industrial space.

For the Ambler market area, an analysis of 2010 demand suggests that it may exceed one million square feet (Figure 7-10). However, like most projections this is potentially an imprecise figure based only on assumptions and best estimates using multiple factors. For example, many existing buildings contain flexible office/industrial space that affects the

Figure 7-9
COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PROPOSALS (1988-1994) (SQ. FT.)



	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
square feet	3,096,486	2,119,190	1,068,158	2,145,789	1,710,173	1,117,879	625,648

Figure 7-10
2010 INDUSTRIAL SPACE DEMAND ANALYSIS
AMBLER MARKET AREA

1.	1990 - 2010 Industrial Employment Growth	1,559
2.	Average square footage/employee (est.)	1,000
3.	Additional industrial space needed (sq. ft.)	1,559,000
4.	Available existing industrial space (sq. ft.)	212,041 - 282,722
5.	Net demand (sq. ft.)	1,276,278 - 1,346,959

Notes:
1. Based on DVRPC projections and estimated proportion of employment in industrial sector. The proportion used (17%) is based on existing employment data and is applied to projected total future employment growth.
2. Estimated based on the wide range of industrial uses and their different space utilization. For example, warehouses may have 2,000 sq. ft./employee while a light industrial use may have only 600 sq. ft./employee.
3. Additional space needed = industrial employment growth (1) x average space/employee (2).
4. Existing industrial and flex space (estimated) x anticipated vacancy rate of 15%-20%. Vacancy rate based on recent rates for metropolitan region.
5. Net demand = available existing space (4) - additional space needed (3).

Sources: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission; U.S. Census Bureau; Business and Industrial Park Development Handbook; ULI, 1988; Black's Guide to Flex/Industrial Space, 1996; ULI Market Profiles: 1994, Philadelphia

accuracy of a generalized inventory. For purposes of this plan, such space was divided equally between office and industrial use, although the distribution may be (or become) more heavily one than the other. Also, the space needs vary significantly by type of industrial use, so an overall average was estimated. Given these limitations, the results are probably best used as a general guide in planning for future industrial activity.

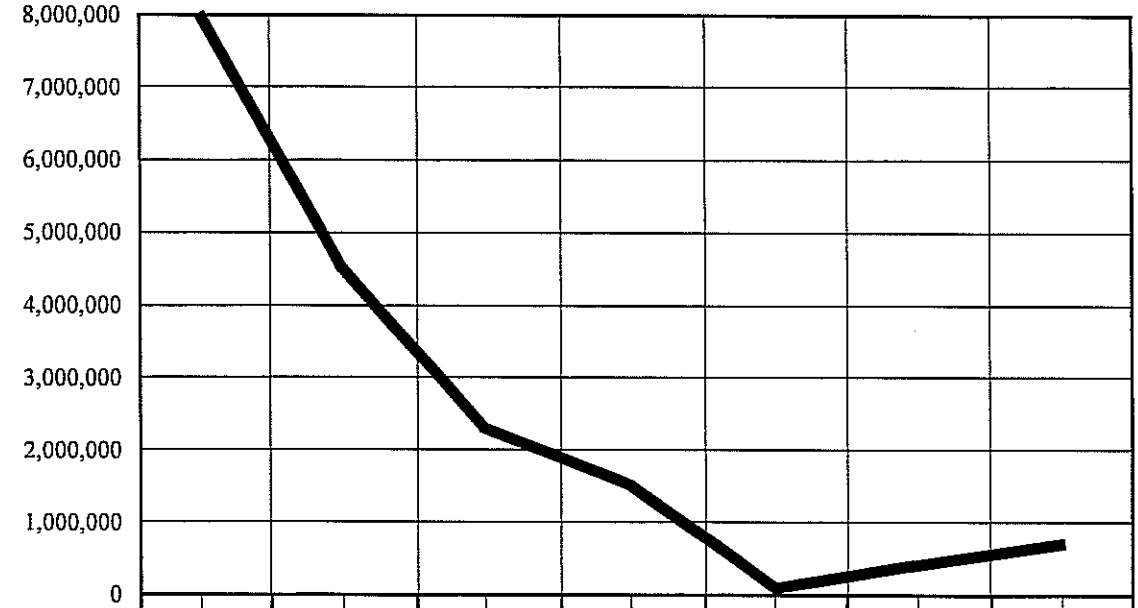
This means a couple of things for Ambler. In terms of uses, a range of industrial activities should still be provided for, but refinements to the Borough's zoning that better reflects current industry use trends (discussed below) should be considered. This should also be reflected in any evaluation of the reuse/redevelopment potential of existing properties, as is done for key sites in Strategic Land Use Plan (chapter eight) and will be done in a subsequent study of industrial sites along the Borough's rail corridor.

Office

Like the industrial sector, office market demand does not directly depend on, or respond to, population growth and therefore cannot be determined through a defined trade or market area. As a result, growth relates more to regional trends than to local factors. For example, companies located in urban centers have increasingly looked to the suburbs for relocation opportunities, citing lower costs, greater space availability, and relatively less congestion. The development of large suburban office parks, such as those in Horsham and Blue Bell, helps meet this demand. Similar to industrial growth, an indicator of the regional market for offices is the amount of office space proposed county-wide during a given time period. Figure 7-11 shows that a steady decline occurred between 1988 and 1992, before increasing during 1993 and 1994.

An analysis of the market suggests that future demand can be met by the existing supply of office space (Figure 7-12), with the potential for a considerable surplus of space. Although market conditions could change in a way that would increase demand, the existing capacity and competitiveness of the market area suggests that creation of a substantial amount of new

Figure 7-11
COUNTY OFFICE PROPOSALS (1988-1994) (SQ. FT.)



	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
square feet	7,912,212	4,454,970	2,330,695	1,550,736	163,904	331,103	721,288

Figure 7-12
2010 OFFICE SPACE DEMAND ANALYSIS
AMBLER MARKET AREA

1. 1990-2010 Office Employment Growth 1,834
2. Average square footage/employee ..... 200-300 sq. ft.
3. Additional office space needed (sq. ft.) 366,800-550,200
4. Available existing office space (sq. ft.) 664,738-997,107
5. Excess office space provided (sq. ft.) 114,538-630,307

Notes:
1. Based on DVRPC projections and estimated proportion of employment in office sector. The proportion used (20%) is based on 1980-1990 county-wide growth in finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) related jobs, considered to be representative of the overall office sector and expected to continue increasing.
2. Based on the average needed for all personnel, support spaces, and circulation.
3. Additional space needed = office employment growth (1) x average space/employee (2).
4. Existing office space x anticipated vacancy reate of between 10% and 15%.
5. Excess space provided = available space (4) - additional space needed (3).

Sources: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission; Black's Office Leasing Guide, Philadelphia and Suburbs, 1991; Development Impact Assessment Handbook, Urban Land Institute, 1994.

office space in Ambler is not justified. Whatever demand there is will probably tend to be from small users (e.g., lawyers, medical practitioners) and businesses in need of flexible industrial space.

Future Uses

Industry

As with commercial uses, determining the best future industrial uses for the Borough is an inexact process. However, the overall trend for some time has been away from traditional heavy industrial uses such as large manufacturing facilities to smaller, lighter uses such as research and development and high technology (Business and Industrial Park Development Handbook; ULI, 1988). Although assembly/manufacturing may be a component of the lighter uses, their greater use of automation and related technology tends to require less floor space and fewer employees. Further, their clean operational characteristics are more compatible in a mixed use situation, such as with offices and/or commercial businesses. In terms of location needs, they are less tied to raw materials, a large employment base, or special infrastructure needs such as large quantities of water. Also, their products tend to be in smaller units that are predominantly transported by truck or air rather than rail.

This trend indicates that the Borough needs to concentrate more on lighter industrial uses, and their mix with other nonindustrial uses, than on providing for traditional heavy industrial uses. This is consistent with the Borough's objectives of maintaining an employment base, integrating it with the commercial activities of the CBD, and reducing land use conflicts. Examples of such uses:

Employment Oriented

- Light assembly/manufacturing/repair with associated office space
- Research, development, design and/or manufacturing (e.g., a high technology incubator business)
- Wholesale storage/distribution
- Educational/Occupational Training Facility (e.g., computer training)

Service Oriented

- Convenience items (e.g., news/book store, florist, bakery, food stand)
- Indoor recreation (e.g., health club)
- Professional services (e.g., salon, dry cleaner)
- Business support services (office machines, printing/publishing, computer services)

Office

Offices should continue to be part of the mix of uses in both the CBD and industrial areas. However, in the CBD it should be secondary in importance to commercial uses and should utilize the upper floors of buildings wherever possible in order to keep ground floor space available for commercial businesses. Offices should also occupy space on the CBD periphery (one or two blocks away), in some cases as a reuse of older, large dwellings.

In the industrial areas, it should be geared toward meeting the flexible space needs of businesses and of small users as noted above. The provision of flexible space will help make the Borough more competitive with other industrial locations, while some stand-alone space is compatible with the overall the mix of employment oriented uses that is envisioned.

Industrial Areas Vision

The Borough's industrial areas will provide local employment opportunities that also complement and support the CBD. A variety of uses are encouraged, with an emphasis on light industrial activities. Reuse of existing structures is encouraged; where this is infeasible, redevelopment

should occur. All industrial uses should incorporate open space and/or landscaping as a buffer to reduce existing or potential land use conflicts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION

- Continue the Main Street Manager program so that business retention and recruitment efforts can continue uninterrupted. It is the only mechanism currently in place to actively promote and market the Borough as a place to do business.
- Encourage uses that can be regional draws, particularly entertainment, restaurants, and specialty retail. Evaluate/revise the existing commercial zoning for the CBD to create a defined market niche.
- Evaluate signage and parking standards to ensure that they are appropriate for Borough conditions (i.e., signs are harmonious with building scale, parking requirements have some flexibility).
- Identify strategic reuse/redevelopment opportunities.
- Building improvements. The CBD has a number of attractive and architecturally interesting buildings that need to be better maintained and preserved. The improvement recommendations made by a consulting architect in 1980, most of which have not been implemented, should be used as a guide whenever possible. Further, few buildings have appealing rear and/or side facades, which diminishes a shopper's impression of the CBD when entering the area. When possible, improvements such as creating an additional entrance, adding a window, or installing a canopy over an existing window (which could also include a sign for the business) should be considered.
- Infill compatibility. Just as the Housing Plan calls for compatible infill development in residential areas, new development within the CBD should be compatible with the existing development pattern. Among other things, this means that the predominant building scale, placement on the lot, materials and details should be followed.
- Streetscape improvements. Currently there is a noticeable lack of improvements along Butler Avenue outside of the core area between Main Street and Lindenwold Avenue. Since the entirety of Butler Avenue is a commercial corridor, it should be integrated better by extending improvements previously done for the CBD core, including shade trees, street furniture (trash receptacles, benches), and lights.
- Public parking. The Borough must continue to be actively involved with the public parking situation in order to counter the perception of insufficient parking. Working with businesses to address their needs and concerns, evaluating the effectiveness of metered parking on a regular basis, and developing creative solutions (e.g., use of the SEPTA lot, permitting shared and off-site parking areas) will all be necessary elements.
- Business Hours. The Borough should encourage more businesses to remain open into the evening hours (i.e., past 6PM) during the week and to consider Sunday hours so that the CBD can be more competitive with other shopping areas, particularly malls. This will obviously need the cooperation of the businesses, so it should be done through the Main Street Program, since it has ongoing contact with them. One possibility is to designate one evening during the week when businesses remain open, as the city of Philadelphia has done.

INDUSTRIAL REVITALIZATION

- Encourage a mix of uses that are employment generators. Evaluate/revise the existing industrial zoning to provide a good link between existing Borough conditions, market trends and Borough goals.

- Create a comprehensive inventory of sites in order to promote and market reuse/ redevelopment opportunities.
- Access improvements. Make improvements that enhance pedestrian and vehicle access and circulation. For example, South Maple Avenue and/or South Chestnut Street should be extended and sidewalk provided.
- Increase green space. Additional open space and landscaping should be provided to help buffer uses and soften the appearance of uses.
- Promotion and Marketing. Much like the Main Street Program promotes the CBD, the Borough should actively promote its industrial area, particularly the railroad corridor. A guide to industrial reuse/redevelopment opportunities should be developed that includes basic property information, a Borough vision statement, and reuse/redevelopment potential. Along with CBD information from the Main Street Program, this could become part of a larger package of marketing information available to prospective developers and businesses.
- Encourage larger, more intensive uses to locate or relocate to the target industrial revitalization area of South Ambler. Generally speaking, this is a more suitable area for something like heavy manufacturing because the larger land areas and buildings that are typically needed are found in the old Keasbey and Mattison complex.

Chapter Eight
LAND USE PLAN

SCHEMATIC PLAN

The Schematic Plan establishes the overall land use pattern intended for the Borough (Figure 8-1). It includes a variety of uses that meets the Borough's land use obligation under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC Section 301.a.).

RESIDENTIAL

There are three categories included to reflect different densities and housing types. Low density residential (LDR) covers extensive areas north and south of Butler Avenue. These areas have a predominance of single-family detached units and, while relatively dense for this category, tend to contain the larger lots in the Borough. Single family detached units will continue to be the primary dwelling type at a density between 4 and 7 units per acre.

Medium density residential (MDR) covers some of the oldest neighborhoods in the Borough that are characterized by a variety of dwelling types. These serve as a transition between the lower density LDR areas and nonresidential areas and will continue to provide for a mix of single-family detached, attached, and two family dwellings at a density between 8 and 9 units per acre.

High density residential (HDR) is shown where existing apartment complexes are located and for an undeveloped area north of Butler Avenue between Maple Avenue and the Upper Dublin Township border. Multi-family development (apartments) at a density between 15 and 25 units per acre is proposed.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial land use is comprised of separate but related central business district categories - CBD 1 and CBD 2. CBD 1 is intended to function as the primary commercial corridor for the Borough, with a mix of commercial, small offices, and high density residential uses (mostly upper floor apartments). It should be the main retail shopping area for residents and contain the type of commercial uses that enables it to become more of a regional draw, as envisioned in the Revitalization Plan. It is bounded by Woodland Avenue at the east end and the Upper Dublin Township border at the west end and extends north and south one block. By extending its limits to the Township border, the district is larger than previously planned. However, this recognizes established commercial uses and is intended to further the link between the CBD and a revitalized industrial area nearby.

CBD 2 is adjacent to CBD 1 and covers a two block area bounded by Butler Avenue, Bethlehem Pike, Heckler Street, and Hendricks Street. Located on the periphery of the CBD, it contains existing commercial uses (gas station, office), a church, and several residences. Because it retains a residential character, a narrower range of commercial uses are proposed that are suitable for residential structures. They will be relatively small in size and tend to have only incidental retail sales. Examples include professional offices, business or personal service (salon, tailor, computer service, craft or art instruction), day care.

LIGHT INDUSTRY

This land use is proposed for much of the railroad corridor. South of Butler Avenue, it includes the entire south side of South Main Street between the SEPTA commuter rail parking lot to Church Street, and much of the block on the north side between Poplar Street and Orange Avenue. North of Butler, it includes an area between the railroad tracks and Maple Avenue, land on the south side of North Main Street between Belmont Avenue and Reiff's Mill Road, and both sides of North Main Street between Tennis Avenue and Mt. Pleasant Avenue. All of these areas have established industrial uses that appear likely to continue. They also tend to be within or near residential neighborhoods, which creates some conflict. To help address this, and in keeping with overall market trends away from heavy

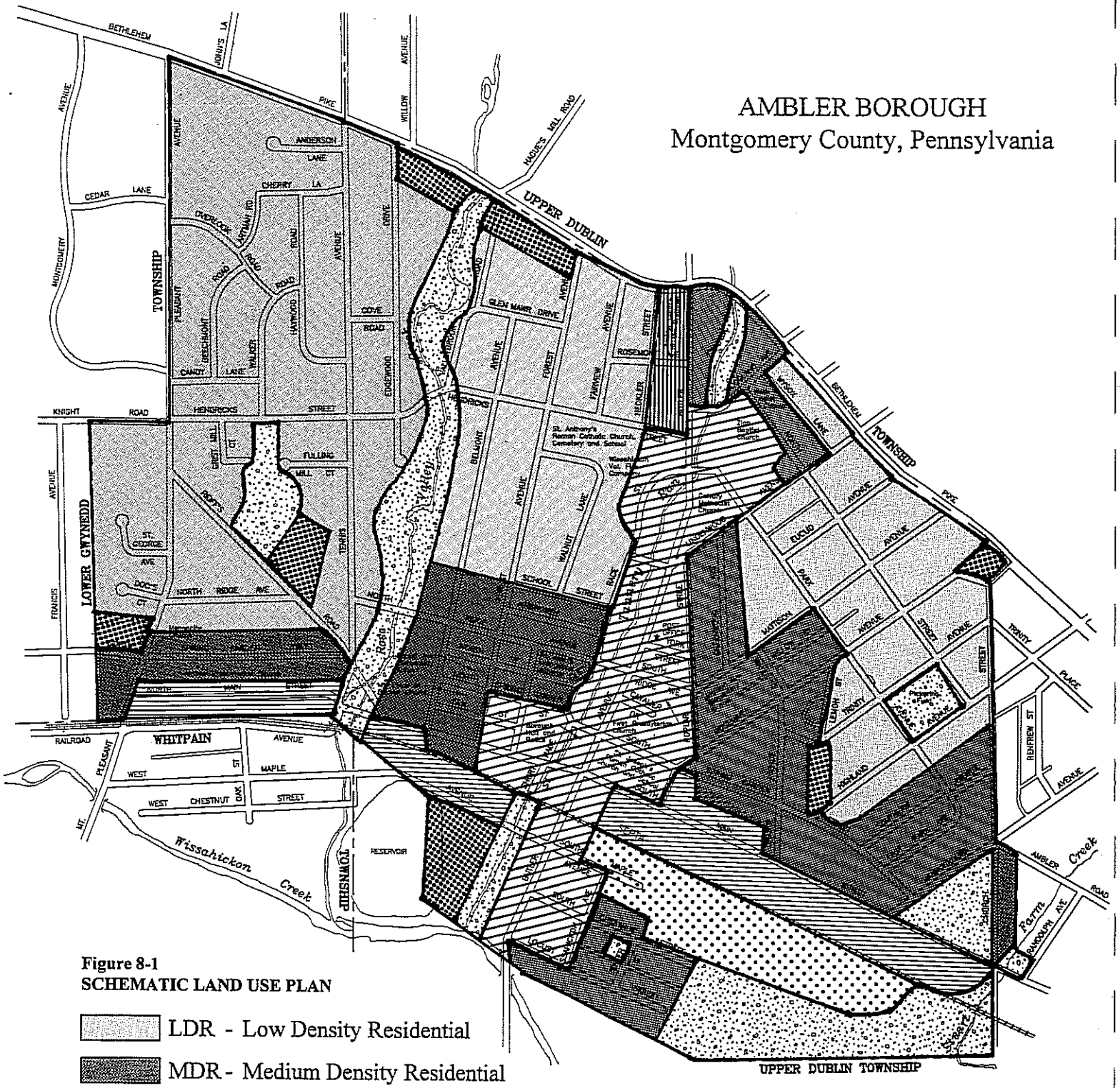


Figure 8-1
SCHEMATIC LAND USE PLAN

- LDR - Low Density Residential
- MDR - Medium Density Residential
- HDR - High Density Residential
- LI - Light Industry
- CBD 1 - Central Business District (Primary)
- CBD 2 - Central Business District (Secondary)
- MU - Mixed Use
- OS - Open Space

industrial uses, LI-Light Industry is proposed. A range of industrial uses is envisioned, but their scale should be relatively small in order to manage impacts on traffic, vehicle access and circulation, and parking. Examples of uses include assembly or manufacturing of small parts, offices, and research laboratory. Some commercial use is also proposed, but is secondary to industrial uses. Generally these should be small scale service oriented uses that complement and serve the industrial uses and neighborhood. Examples include a beauty salon, barber, news shop, cafe, coffee shop, and tailor.

MIXED USE

This land use covers the main area targeted for revitalization along the railroad corridor - the former Keasbey and Mattison complex. The MU-Mixed Use designation is intended to capture the range of potential uses that could be located in that area, either through reuse or redevelopment. It includes high density residential (apartments), commercial (mostly services supporting industry or office uses), industry (light), and office (in conjunction with industry or for small professional users).

OPEN SPACE

OS-Open Space includes existing parks and proposed preservation of natural features along the creeks (Rose Valley Creek, Tannery Run Creek, Stuart Farm Creek), and land in South Ambler. The South Ambler area follows the boundaries of the asbestos waste piles and is approximately 32 acres in size. The OS designation is appropriate for two reasons. It recognizes its current land use status as an open area and the probability that it will remain this way for at least the near term.

In the event that development is proposed in the future, it also ensures that some open space is preserved to help buffer nonresidential use(s) from the nearby residential neighborhood and additional public open space is provided. This is consistent with the goals in this plan and the Borough's Open Space Plan.

OTHER LAND USES

This category includes institutions and utilities, uses that are not mapped or specifically proposed but that will be found throughout the Borough. Examples are churches, Borough Hall, Ambler Borough Sewage Treatment Plan, the public library, and schools.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan identifies the selected areas of the Borough targeted for revitalization (Figure 8-2). In these areas proposed land use is relatively more specific, consistent with the Revitalization Plan.

COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION

Commercial revitalization involves maintaining Butler Avenue as a vibrant commercial area that serves the needs of the community while also meeting some of the regional commercial demand. It should focus on retention of existing businesses and attraction of new ones that provide the kind of goods and services outlined in chapter seven (e.g, eating places, entertainment uses; see Future CBD Uses). There are several key sites that have particularly good potential and will therefore be especially important in this process (Figure 8-3). All of them tend to have one or more of the following characteristics: prominent location, large building size, building with historic significance, larger lot size, important current or previous use.

- **Ambler Cinema**

  Built by Warner Brothers Pictures in 1926, this is among the last of the local movie theatres found in the region and is a prominent part of the CBD with its distinctive Beaux Arts architecture. The building occupies half a square block, seats approximately 850 people, and has a relatively large stage. Previously used as a community arts center ("Rising Sun"), it is now used to show religious films on weekends as part of the current owner's outreach ministry (that includes a bookstore next door). The Borough is fortunate that the building is continuing to be used, albeit mostly on a part time basis. However, it is under-used and

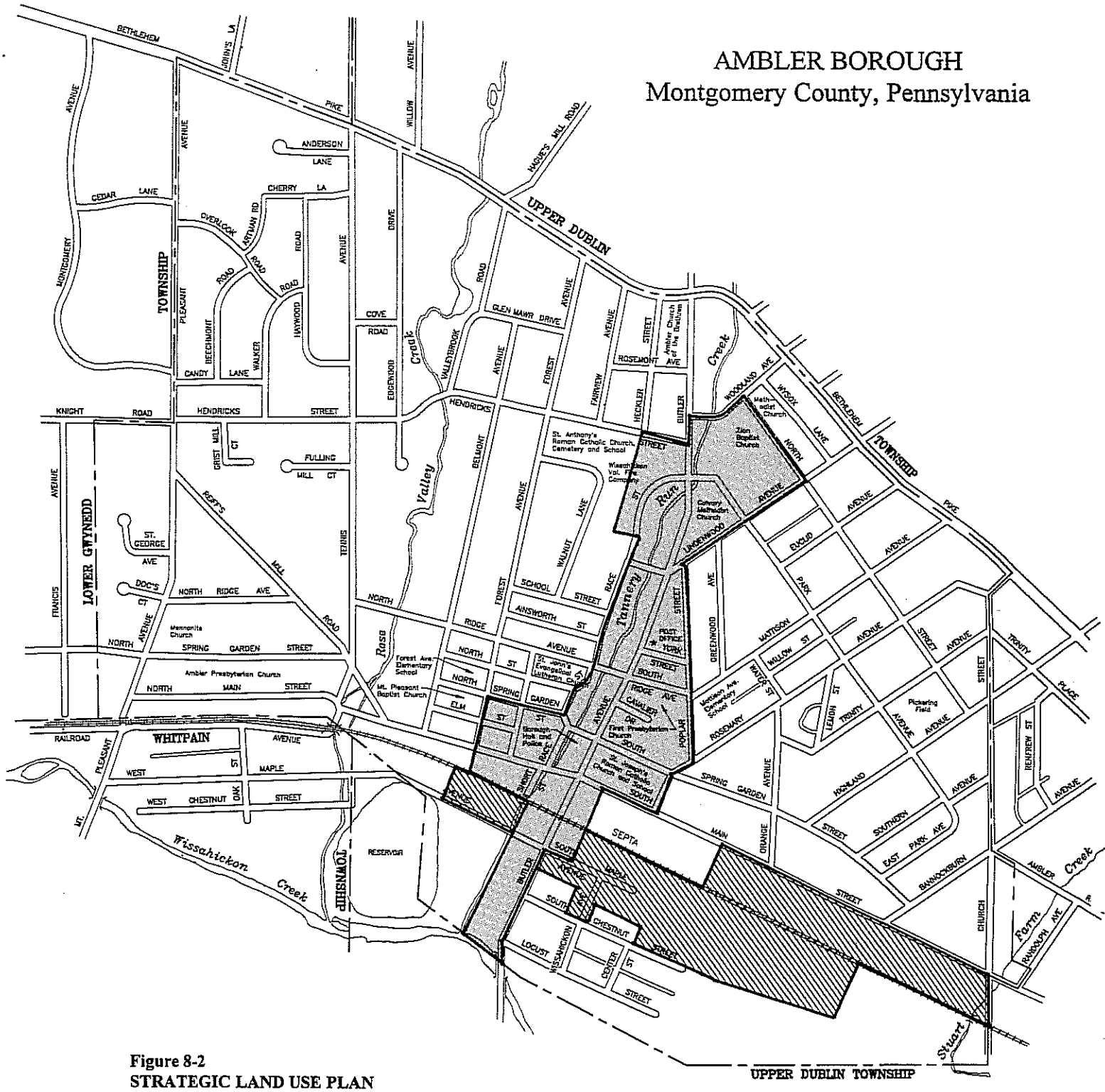


Figure 8-2
STRATEGIC LAND USE PLAN

CBD Revitalization

Industrial Area Revitalization

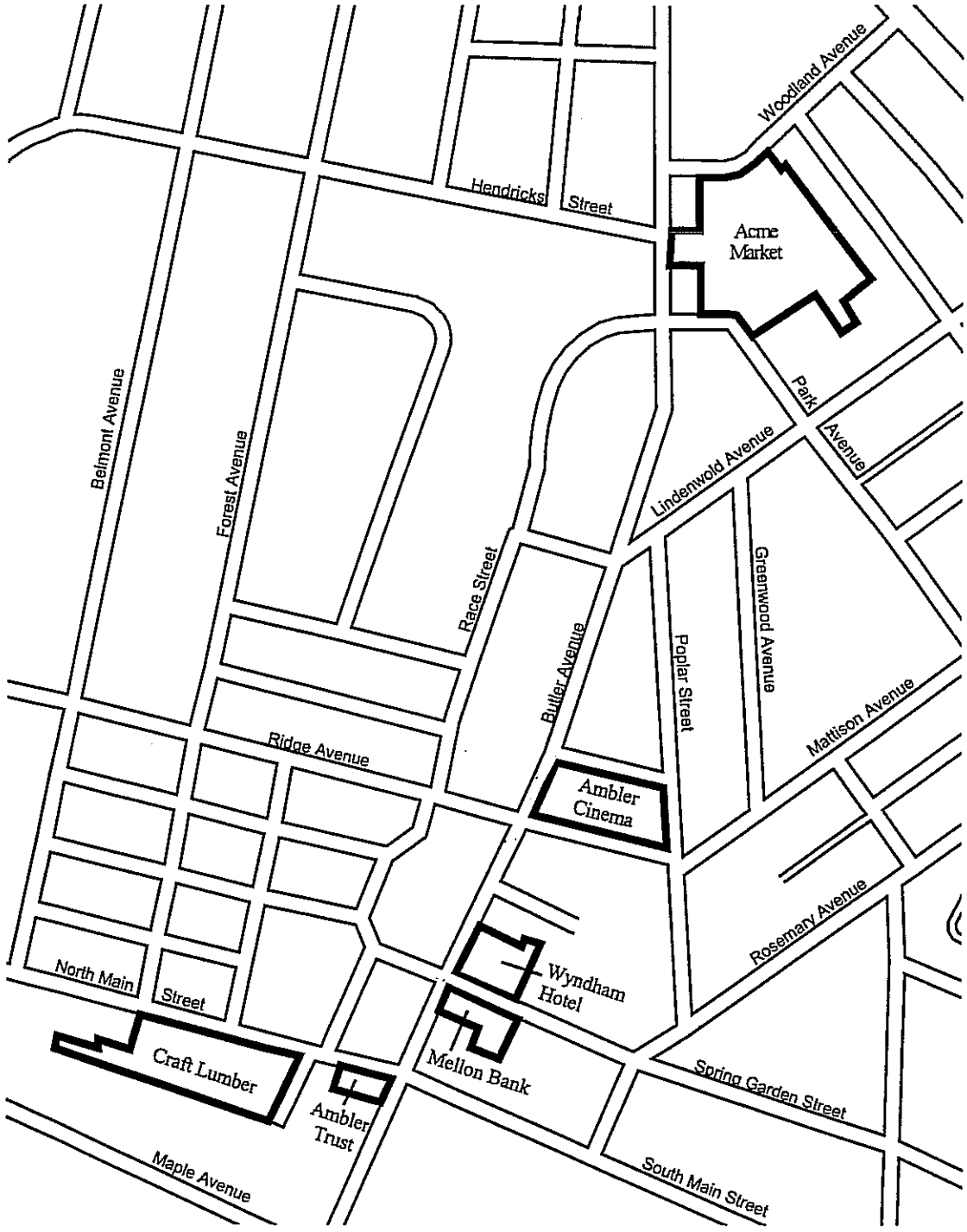


Figure 8-3
STRATEGIC CBD REVITALIZATION SITES

One Inch Equals Approx. 430 Feet

therefore a largely untapped resource that could be a more powerful stimulus to the economic and cultural life of the Borough and surrounding area. For example, the facility has the potential to serve as a venue for live musical and/or theatrical performances, similar to the Keswick Theatre in Glenside (Abington Township). In this respect, an alliance with Temple University's Ambler campus should be explored. At the same time, movies could still be shown to keep the site in full-time use. Such a mix would surely be a regional draw, attracting people into town throughout the week and generating business for other CBD uses.

- **Wyndham Hotel**

  Located a full block west of the cinema at the corner of Spring Garden Street and Butler Avenue, the hotel is an imposing four-story Victorian structure dating back more than one hundred years. In recent years, the ground floor of the building has been used as a restaurant/ bar and the upper floors as small apartments and boarding rooms. Because of its local historic significance and prominence in the CBD, ideally the building should continue to be used and preserved. Like the cinema, though, it is currently under-utilized and could be more of a regional draw for the CBD if greater commercial use can occur.

  With appropriate renovations, one possibility would be a bed and breakfast or small corporate hotel with a good restaurant (or even a combination of the two). As such, it could potentially serve the surrounding corporate community which shuttles workers in and out of corporate offices for overnight meetings, conferences, etc. Similarly, it could serve out-of-town people who are involved with events at the Fort Washington Expo Center. It would thus be anchored by a consistent corporate base and be complemented by a good restaurant that carries on a regular lunch and dinner trade. As part of the reuse, it might be possible to have students from Temple University's Business School and/or Restaurant School students participate in its operation in a practicum arrangement. Beyond this, the building's age and design may limit the commercial possibilities. At a minimum, the ground floor space should remain in commercial use. The upper floors could become small offices, remain in residential use, or some combination. All of these would still be consistent with the Revitalization Plan.

- **Ambler Trust Building**

  Built in the early 20th century, this structure at the corner of Butler Avenue and North Main Street housed the Ambler Trust Company's offices. Its location in the heart of the CBD, Colonial Revival architecture, and relatively large size make it one of the most prominent buildings. Like the cinema and hotel, though, it's currently underused as an office for collectibles (historic documents, coins, etc.). Although not an inappropriate use, it occupies important space that otherwise could be used at least in part for a commercial retail or service activity that brings a more consistent flow of customers into the CBD and better complements other commercial businesses. No on-site parking exists, but ample spaces are available nearby at a Borough lot, on-street, and at the SEPTA lots during off-hours.

- **Mellon Bank Building**

  Another large building with prominent architectural features, this was originally the site of the First National Bank of Ambler, later known as the Girard Bank and most recently used by the Mellon Bank Company. Its location across from the Wyndham Hotel at the corner of Butler Avenue and South Spring Garden Street adds to its importance for the CBD. Continued use as a bank would be desirable to help meet the needs of local residents, visitors (ATM use), and businesses and to remain part of the mix of uses in the CBD.

  However, with Mellon leaving and other banks located elsewhere in the CBD, it appears that this may not happen. As a result, its commercial reuse potential should be tapped and a range of uses appears possible, much like the Ambler Trust building. A key advantage is that the site has on-site parking.

- **Acme Market**

  Located at the east end of the CBD, the market occupies most of the block bounded by Butler Avenue, Park Avenue, North Street and Woodland Avenue. Unlike the other sites, the building is not being under-utilized. It appears that the market use will continue for the near term, but the building is more than thirty years old and is undersized (25,000 sq. ft.) by present supermarket standards. Ideally, a market use should continue indefinitely because it serves an important role in the commercial mix of the community. If discontinued, though, the site could be reused for a range of single retail uses or combination of retail and/or service uses.

- **Craft Lumber Site**

  Lost to fire, this site had been used by the Craft Lumber Company, one of the Borough's oldest companies. It is a good redevelopment opportunity that can help strengthen the CBD by providing new commercial space or as a mixed use site (e.g., ground floor commercial with apartments above or combination office/commercial space).

INDUSTRIAL AREAS REVITALIZATION

Industrial revitalization consists of reuse and redevelopment opportunities that exist within or near the established industrial areas of the Borough. Reuse will capitalize on unused or underutilized buildings, through conversion and adaptation for new uses or renovation for continued industrial use. Where reuse is not feasible, either because there are no buildings or those that exist are in poor condition, redevelopment should occur. Key sites are described below and their locations shown in Figure 8-4. A follow-up study of additional sites, focusing on the rail corridor, will be completed.

- **Interspec Building**

  This site at the corner of South Maple Avenue and Butler Avenue was formerly used by the Interspec Company and is available for occupancy. The large 70,000 square foot building is designed as flexible space that can meet the needs of a range of light industrial users. Parking for the building is reserved on the lot across South Maple Avenue.

- **Keasbey and Mattison Complex**

  This area consists of three properties that have existing structures. The first of these is known as the Boilerworks building because it was used to generate power for the complex. Its large size and smokestack make it a prominent landmark in the Borough and it appears to be in solid condition for reuse. One possibility is offices, similar to the conversion of the former Lee Tire and Rubber Factory in Whitemarsh Township (now known as LEE PARK).

  Another possibility is residential use, such as condominiums or loft apartments. Examples of this type of reuse include the Cigar Factory apartment building in Norristown and the Sweet-Orr condominium building in Pottstown Borough. It could also be some combination of the two, with ground floor office space and upper floor residences, similar to the Roller Mill site in Pottstown.

  The second site extends from the Boilerworks building to South Chestnut Street and has large structures. An existing stone structure close to the railroad tracks appears to be in solid condition and probably has the best reuse potential. Its design suggests that it functioned as a shipping and receiving area, with the remnants of a platform extending from the side to the rear, several doorways, and many windows. It might therefore be usable as a warehouse for storage and distribution, such as a wholesale operation might require. Another possibility is commercial reuse as a marketplace. Examples of such reuse exist in many areas and can provide space for multiple purposes, such as sales of fresh produce and fruits (similar to a farmers market), antiques, crafts, prepared foods (food stands and/or restaurants), and

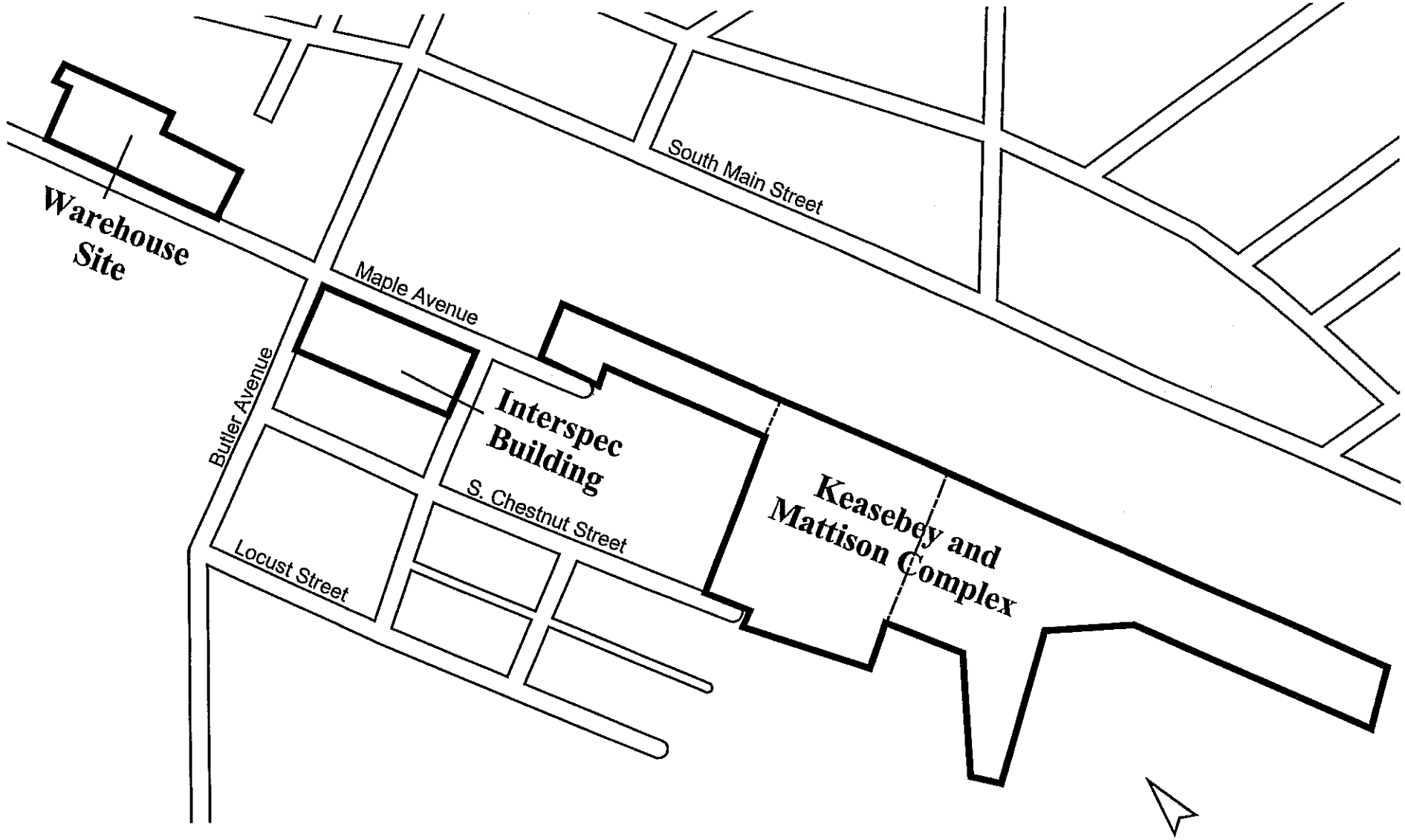


Figure 8-4
STRATEGIC INDUSTRIAL REVITALIZATION SITES

convenience items (newspapers, coffee). The remaining structures on the site do not appear in good condition for reuse, so redevelopment should be considered. This should be coordinated with reuse of the stone building and/or the adjacent site to the rear (described below) to ensure uses are relatively compatible, and adequate access, parking, and other site improvements are provided in an efficient and logical way.

The third site is an irregularly shaped parcel with existing structures. The buildings do not appear reusable, so the site has better redevelopment potential. However, the awkward lot configuration is a limiting factor and suggests that redevelopment should occur in conjunction with the adjacent property described above. Consolidation of these parcels would allow for a more coordinated approach to redevelopment and provide for greater design flexibility. With a combined area of about nine acres, a relatively large redevelopment project is possible, providing for a single light industrial use or a mix of uses.

- **Warehouse Site**

  Formerly the location of a large warehouse, this site is one of the few sizable developable parcels left in the Borough. It appears suitable for a range of industrial uses and its proximity to the CBD suggests that CBD type uses (high density residential, office, commercial) could also work.

Chapter Nine

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

BACKGROUND

This chapter identifies methods of implementing the plan and ranges from zoning techniques to programs and outside agencies that are available to assist the Borough. As such, it is not intended to establish specific steps to be taken but rather serves as a guide for revitalization efforts.

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

ZONING/LAND DEVELOPMENT

Incentive Zoning

Incentive zoning is an approach that gives development bonuses, such as greater density or floor area, in exchange for the provision of certain community amenities. Traditionally, the purpose for having a bonus falls into one or more of the following categories, although others have been used (from APA Planning Advisory Service Report Number 410; Zoning Bonuses in Central Cities, 1988):

A. To provide pedestrian amenities, such as public plazas and open space.

B. To improve access to public transportation and/or reduce congestion through parking strategies.

C. To support and encourage certain land uses.

As this indicates, by offering an economic incentive to developers a community can gain some desired amenities, uses, and improvements that otherwise may not have occurred. In order for the program to work effectively, the Zoning Ordinance must specify the purpose(s) of the bonus and contain standards that encourage use of the bonus under existing market conditions, since using the incentive is almost always optional.

The use of this method in Ambler could potentially help the Borough achieve a number of Plan objectives:

- Encourage certain uses for commercial and industrial revitalization
- Provide additional public parking for the CBD
- Preservation of existing buildings
- Encourage pedestrian links

Transfer of Development Rights

In its simplest terms, a transfer of development rights approach (TDR) transfers some or all of the potential development from one property to another. The transferred development potential can be measured in several ways, including floor area, dwelling units, and parking spaces (from APA Planning Advisory Service Report Number 401; Transferable Development Rights Programs, 1987).

Once the rights are transferred, they are no longer available to the sending property, and instead are usable by the receiving property. TDRs can serve a number of goals. In less developed communities, it reinforces land use planning by directing more residential development to designated growth areas and preserving more non-growth area land. In developed communities, they can be used to preserve historic buildings by transferring unused development rights (air rights) to other properties and can provide an incentive to develop or redevelop sites. In either case, there are several key issues that must be examined in order to develop a TDR program that works, including an assessment of market conditions, identification and size of sending and receiving areas, and the availability of necessary infrastructure to accommodate the increased development in a receiving area.

In Ambler, the use of TDRs would be to achieve the goals described above for a developed area and therefore involve selected nonresidential properties in the commercial business district (CBD) and/or industrial area. More specifically, there appear to be two possible uses:

- Transfer of unused air rights, such as from a parking lot or undersized building. An example of this would be the air rights from the SEPTA parking lots.
- Transfer of development rights from undeveloped or underdeveloped properties. An example of this is the former warehouse site that now stands vacant (see chapter eight).

Development Compatibility

Infill development, building renovations, and building additions can enhance CBD revitalization if key elements are managed properly. These concepts are described below and illustrated in Figures 9-1 and 9-2.

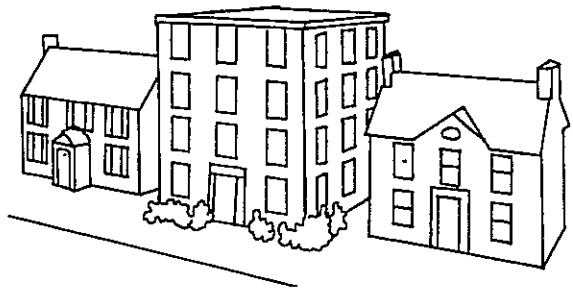
- Proportion and scale. Proportion refers to the relationship between building height and width and that between each part to the whole. Scale deals with the relationship of each building to others in the surrounding area. For example, a one story building in Ambler's CBD would be out of scale with its mostly two and three story buildings. By adhering to the predominant proportion of buildings and overall scale of the CBD, its character will be maintained and enhanced.
- Rhythm of openings. This refers to the number and spacing of windows and doors and differs by architectural style (e.g., Colonial, Victorian, Federal). New construction and building renovations can help preserve the character of the CBD by following and maintaining the predominant rhythm found in existing buildings.
- Placement on the lot. This refers to the sitting pattern of buildings (i.e., setback and location to one side or middle of the lot). The predominant pattern can be followed by new construction to help maintain village appearance. In terms of building additions, a side or rear location can help preserve the front facade.
- Materials and details. New construction can use materials and details compatible with existing ones, such as stucco, brick, shingles, stone, trim, shutters, cornices, etc.
- On-site parking. In conjunction with having flexible parking standards (see below), the location and design of parking lots are important for protecting the character of the CBD as a pedestrian oriented place. Ideally, lots should be located to the rear of buildings first, consistent with the predominant pattern. If this is not possible, a side rather than front location should be considered, with a low wall and/or landscaping employed to continue the streetscape edge (see example in Figure 9-2). In terms of design elements, lots should incorporate curbed islands to break up parking rows (particularly important for larger lots), provide ample landscaping to soften the appearance and provide shade, and provide pedestrian links as needed.

While they serve as overall guidelines for future development and building improvements, some can be implemented directly through zoning. For example, a "build-to-line" (common front yard setback) can be established for the zoning district(s) in the CBD. Similarly, an appropriate building height standard can ensure that the predominant height is respected. More specific improvements should fol-low the recommendations made by a consultant in 1980, as shown for one part of the CBD in Figure 9-3. Because these are generally aesthetic features, implementation would be less zoning-related and instead involve using established or potential funding assistance programs (described below).

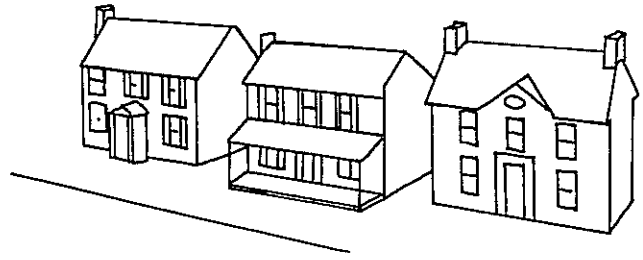
Parking Standards

Because existing development conditions in the Borough can make it difficult to meet on-site parking needs, particularly in the CBD, flexible parking standards are important in creating a positive business environment. There are two primary zoning approaches to this. One is to permit shared parking between two or more properties, an arrangement that works particularly well if the uses generate peak traffic at different times and which also encourages the use of just one access

Figure 9-1
BUILDING COMPATIBILITY CONCEPTS (SCALE, OPENINGS, ADDITIONS)



building out of scale with its neighbors



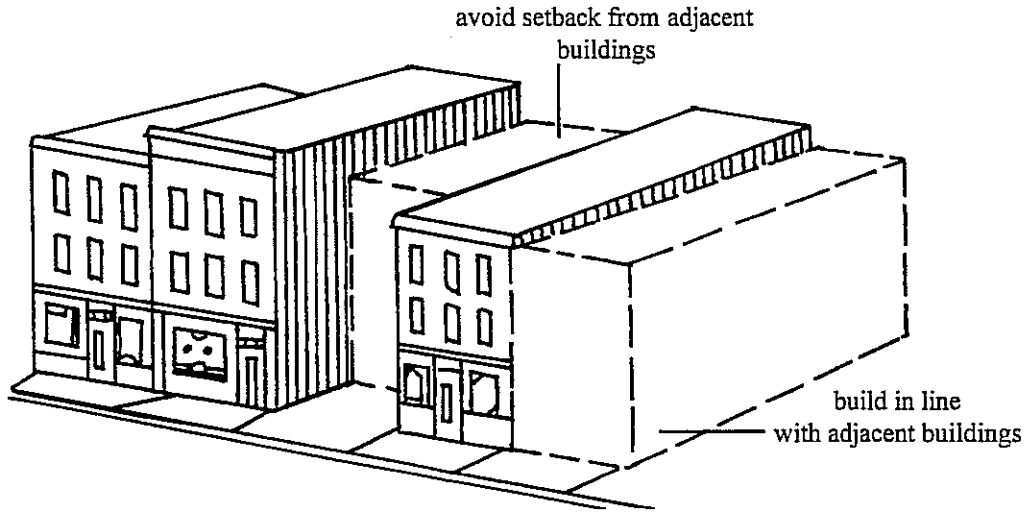
buildings in scale with each other

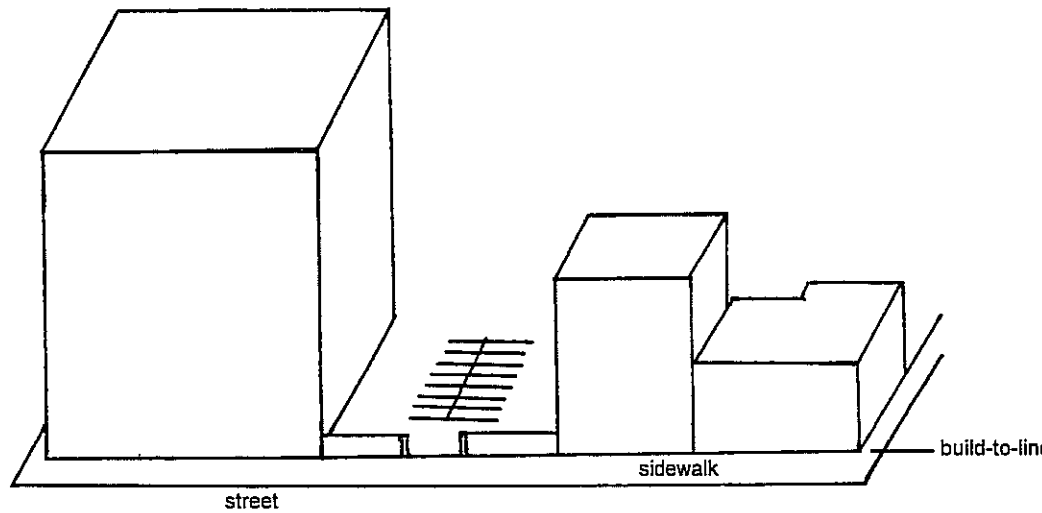
original rhythm of openings maintained

rhythm of openings disrupted

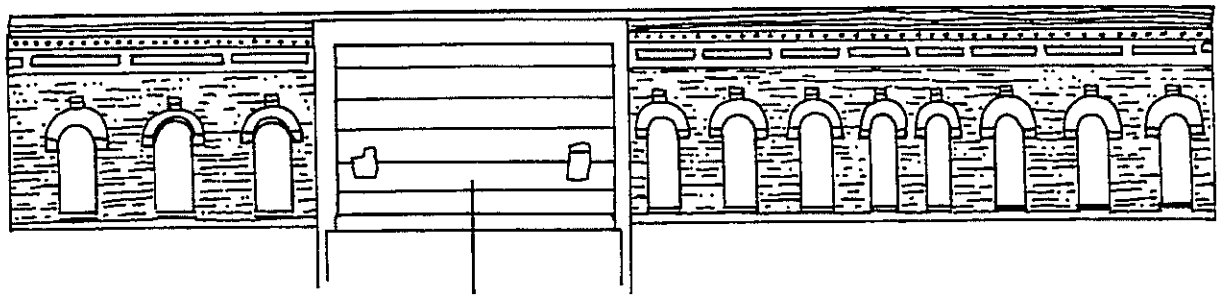
addition not compatible
with the original structure

Figure 9-2
BUILDING COMPATABILITY CONCEPTS (PLACEMENT, MATERIALS AND DETAILS)





A sense of enclosure within public spaces is an important element in creating an active pedestrian environment and defining the character of an urban setting. A sense of enclosure is achieved with buildings respecting a build-to-line thereby creating a continuous wall that frames the streetscape. Where this building wall is interrupted by parking, a brick wall and/or appropriate landscaping, installed at the build-to-line can help to achieve a sense of enclosure.



point. The other approach is to permit off-site parking, whereby a portion of the required parking for a site is met on a nearby property. To avoid problems, the number of spaces provided this way is usually limited (e.g., as a percentage of the total) and a maximum distance allowed between the site and the spaces is established. Both of these methods have potential for use in Ambler.

Signage

Signage is another development feature with an important affect on the quality of the CBD's character. The dense development conditions and pedestrian orientation of the CBD generally dictate that fewer and smaller signs are most appropriate. Sign size, type, number, and location are the primary elements that can be controlled by zoning, with aesthetic considerations and standards (design materials and colors) often established as voluntary guidelines. Some overall guidelines are presented below that can guide signage decisions and provide the Borough with a framework for developing specific standards at a later time.

- Type. Wall, window, awning, and projecting signs are the most suitable types. All of these are effective for business identification, can be easily visible to passing motorists and pedestrians, and allow for a variety of designs that can create visual interest in the CBD.
- Size. The importance of size is that a sign should complement CBD buildings rather than be the primary visual focus. Unlike highway commercial areas, large signage (e.g., 50 sq. ft.) is inappropriate for conditions in the CBD and should be avoided. The guiding principle should be that all signs be in scale with the structure to the greatest extent possible. While this can be made site specific (e.g., tied to building width), establishing a maximum limit is appropriate so that one or more signs do not dominate the streetscape.
- Number. The total number of signs for a building should be kept to a minimum to avoid unnecessary visual clutter. For example, a maximum of two distributed as one projecting sign and one wall sign would afford most businesses sufficient recognition.
- Illumination. External rather than internal illumination is generally more compatible for the older structures and pedestrian scale of the CBD and should be encouraged.

ADMINISTRATIVE

- **Main Street Manager**

  Through participation in the Pennsylvania Main Street Program, the Borough's Main Street Manager has been able to make good progress in CBD revitalization. This position, or something similar, will remain the Borough's most effective approach to revitalization, because it provides for the sustained effort needed for Borough promotion and business retention and attraction.

- **Community Development Corporation (CDC)**

  A CDC is a non-profit, locally based organization that undertakes one or more community activities, such as small business creation, housing rehabilitation, industrial development, and social services. Often it will target the needs of an economically distressed neighborhood or population subgroup (e.g., low income households or senior citizens). Because of its non-profit status, it can often obtain foundation and government grants more easily. CDCs also commonly create for-profit divisions that undertake development work and/or operate profit making enterprises.

  These characteristics suggest that creation of a CDC has potential for Ambler. One possibility would be restructuring the Spirit of Ambler Committee (SOAC), which currently oversees the Main Street Program but operates under the auspices of the Wissahickon Valley Chamber of Commerce. Under this scenario, the SOAC would become its own incorporated entity, as a CDC or similar non-profit agency. By its nature, it could then be more pro-active in its approach to CBD revitalization. It could participate in real estate and business deals, get involved with financing packages used to attract businesses and developers, and be better

positioned to receive corporate and governmental grants. These activities are powerful tools that are either unavailable to SOAC or more difficult to use because of its current structure. It would also provide a mechanism by which the Main Street Manager position could continue indefinitely.

- **Business District Authority (BDA)**
  In accordance with state law (Act 41 of 1980, the Business District Authorities Act), a BDA could be created by the Borough to help businesses in the CBD compete by providing administrative services and business improvements. Administrative services are activities that improve the ability of businesses to serve the consumer, such as reduced or free parking, public relations programs, group advertising, and district maintenance and security. Business improvements refers to needs such as sidewalks, streets, paved lots, parking garages, remodeling or demolishing blighted buildings or structures.

  As a legal entity, the BDA would be separate from Borough government and would have the power to incur debt, own property and finance its activities by means of user charges and lease rentals. Like a CDC, this means that revitalization efforts could be more pro-active and sustained for the long term.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS/AGENCIES

- **Pennsylvania Enterprise Zone**
  This program is designed to facilitate economic revitalization through assistance to developers, entrepreneurs, existing businesses and municipalities. The goal is to increase the quantity and quality of job opportunities, with an emphasis on assistance to businesses involved in industrial, manufacturing, and export services. In addition to tax benefits for companies doing business in the designated zone, the community is given priority consideration for state resources that will facilitate efforts by businesses to acquire investment capital and achieve job-creation opportunities. If the Borough could qualify, this program could potentially help revitalize the South Ambler industrial area.

- **Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA)**
  This state initiative establishes a means of attracting business and industry to an area by authorizing local taxing authorities to grant tax exemptions for property improvements. Typically, the exemptions are provided for improvements made to deteriorated commercial, industrial, or other business property located in a designated area for a specified time period (not exceeding 10 years). Joint adoption of the exemption by taxing authorities with mutual jurisdiction is permitted (e.g., school district and municipality). This program could benefit both the CBD and the South Ambler industrial area.

- **Montgomery County Infrastructure Loan (described below under Infrastructure)**
  The Borough could leverage money available to it under this program to make the South Ambler industrial area more attractive to prospective developers. For example, Maple Avenue could be extended.

- **Community Development Block Grant (described below under Infrastructure)**
  Potentially, the Borough might also use this program for infrastructure improvements in the South Ambler revitalization area.

- **Montgomery County Open Space Preservation (described below under Open Space)**
  Money available under this program for shade trees can benefit the CBD by replacing and/or adding street trees along Butler Avenue. It can also be used to increase and enhance green space as part of revitalizing the South Ambler industrial area (i.e., new street trees and/or additional parkland.

- **Pennsylvania Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation**
  Also known as the "brownfields" program, it is a comprehensive effort to address the cleanup and reuse of industrial sites throughout the state. Its primary elements are uniform cleanup

standards, liability protection, and funding assistance and is administered by the Department of Commerce. In terms of funding, up to 75% of the cost of preparing environmental studies, the cleanup plan, and implementation of the plan is covered, provided the recipient did not cause or contribute to site contamination and owns the property. This assistance is in the form of grants and low-interest loans from the Voluntary Cleanup Loan Program (VCLP). This program could play a role in revitalizing the South Ambler industrial area.

- **Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority**
  The primary purpose of this agency is to assist municipalities with economic revitalization, which can include help with planning, financing, and marketing a revitalization plan. Typically, it assists with affordable housing, commercial, retail, industrial, or municipal projects and coordinates contacts between the municipality and private sector resources such as lenders, developers, builders and major tenants.

- **Montgomery County Industrial Development Corporation**
  This private, non-profit organization markets and administers the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) financing program, which provides low cost capital for industrial projects. MCIDC also provides site selection assistance for attracting new businesses and assisting existing ones with finding new or larger facilities. This agency can therefore become an important partner in Borough revitalization by helping to match Borough commercial and industrial sites with prospective developers.

- **Montgomery County Industrial Development Authority**
  MCIDA provides financing through the issuance and sale of revenue bonds for industrial, manufacturing and non-profit organizations. In addition, by holding title to properties throughout the county, it plays an important role in the real estate market.

- **Montgomery County Development Corporation**
  MCDC provides low interest loans for industrial, manufacturing, and high-technology companies through various state funded programs. The funds can be used for real estate, equipment, and working capital.

- **Montgomery County Department of Commerce and Economic Development**
  This office provides start-up and business planning assistance, economic development information, marketing of existing financial assistance programs, site selection assistance, government procurement assistance, and international business activities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Montgomery County Infrastructure Loan Program**
  This program provides capital to municipalities to improve, expand, and rebuild public infrastructure. A total of $50 million was established for improvements over a five year period beginning in 1996. Short term loans (repayment term of 10 years or less) are interest free, while longer term ones (> 10 years) carry a low interest rate. In either case, a loan can be used to fund 100% of a project's total capital construction cost. Ambler's share of the total funding is $651,468 dollars.

- **Community Development Block Grant**
  This federally funded program administered by the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Development provides capital for a range of activities and projects. To be eligible, the project must primarily benefit low/moderate income neighborhoods, households, or persons. The Borough has participated in this program in the past for infrastructure improvements. Provided funding continues, this will remain a valuable resource.

- **Montgomery County Traffic Signal Upgrade Program**
  This program provides funding for upgrading existing signal equipment (timing adjustments, mast arms and foundations, signal heads, etc.).

- **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)**
  This federal act provides funding assistance for a range of transportation improvements on an eighty percent federal, twenty percent local match basis. Annually, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PADOT), Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), and Montgomery County coordinate the selection of eligible projects within the county that become part of PADOT's Twelve Year Plan.

OPEN SPACE

- **Montgomery County Open Space Preservation Program**
  Funding for acquisition of new open space and shade trees are the two main initiatives of this program. Under the initial round of funding, Ambler's allocation is $753,582 dollars for open space and $35, 994 dollars for trees, with a 10% local match requirement. A subsequent round of funding will be made available to all communities on a competitive basis.

- **Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (KEY 93)**
  Created in 1993, this state program provides funding for a variety of purposes, including park rehabilitation and development; parkland acquisition; and recreation or conservation purposes. Funding is available from a $50 million dollar bond issue and, beginning in 1995, an annual 15% allocation from state realty transfer tax revenues. It is anticipated that this will generate enough money for many different projects in the coming years. Grants for most purposes will cover 50% of eligible costs or approved grant amount, whichever is less. The state Department of Community Affairs should be contacted for additional details and information.

- **Community Development Block Grant (described above)**

- **State Planning Assistance Grant**
  Eligible projects under this program include preparation of a park and recreation study when a component of a comprehensive plan and development of municipal ordinances for conservation of open space and the provision of park and recreation facilities.

- **Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council Grant**
  This group provides grants for a range of community forestry programs and activities. The purpose is to "help organizations develop programs that will enhance the environmental quality in their local communities and stimulate a sense of community stewardship through specific activities (Program Manual, 1993)." Examples are training volunteers to conduct street tree inventories; prepare planting programs; and conduct tree inspection and maintenance activities. The council encourages creative projects that go beyond street tree programs as long as the basic grant objectives are met. Grants ranging from $500 to $5,000 dollars are available with matching funds or payment-in-kind not required (although strongly encouraged).

HOUSING

Implementation of housing goals is addressed in Chapter Four, Housing Plan, and involves a combination of land use planning, zoning and land development standards, and administration of the Borough's housing codes. In addition to this, numerous assistance programs exist that can help maintain and expand the housing stock, such as rehabilitation funding through the Community Development Block Grant Program (described above). The Borough can help in this respect by directing interested parties to the Montgomery County Department of Housing Services for details.

Chapter Ten

COMPATIBILITY WITH AREA AND COUNTY PLANNING

BACKGROUND

This chapter examines the relationship between the planning goals, policies and concepts of this plan and those of adjacent communities and the county, in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code (Section 301.). By comparing existing plans and zoning, it identifies the extent to which compatibility exists and the relative effect of Ambler's land use plan (ALUP). Figures 10-1 and 10-2 show this information in graphic form.

UPPER DUBLIN TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Plan

Upper Dublin's 1965 plan proposes various land uses bordering Ambler. Along Bethlehem Pike, it calls for low density (1.3 units/acre) residential development between Tennis Avenue and Butler Avenue. The corner of Butler Avenue and a small area between Loch Alsh Avenue and Andross Avenue are designated for commercial retail use. Between Argyle Avenue and Lindenwold Terrace, high density residential use (up to 10 units/acre) is proposed. From Lindenwold Terrace to the Borough line at Church Street, institutional use is proposed for the St. Mary's School property. Stream valley protection is shown for both the Tannery Run and Rose Valley Creeks. Along the southern boundary of Church Street and Randolph Avenue, high density residential, stream valley protection (Stuart Farm Creek), and utility uses (Ambler Sewage Treatment Plant) are proposed. To the west, open space and stream valley protection is designated along the Wissahickon Creek, with a small area of industrial use proposed at Maple Street.

Zoning

To some extent the Township's zoning is consistent with its plan. The Bethlehem Pike border contains low and high density residential zoning (A, B, and C Residential) and institutional zoning for St. Mary's School. Commercial zoning, though, is not confined to the Butler Avenue/ Bethlehem Pike corner; instead, it includes a series of properties between that corner and Andross Avenue.

Most of the Church Street border is high density C Residential (4.8 units/acre), with a small area of low density A Residential zoning (1.6 units/acre) between Trinity Place and Bethlehem Pike and LIM Limited Industrial covering the Ambler Sewage Treatment Plant property. A Residential and high density MD Multi-Dwelling (up to 8 units/acre) districts cover the eastern border along the Wissahickon Creek.

ALUP Compatibility

Ambler's plan relatively compatible with Upper Dublin's planning. Like the Township, it proposes residential land use with a mix of densities for much of the Bethlehem Pike corridor, along with creek corridor preservation and commercial use for the Butler Avenue/Bethlehem Pike corner. The Borough's low and medium density residential use along Church Street is in apparent conflict with the Township's high density zone, but the actual permitted zoning densities are similar. Along the Wissahickon Creek, Ambler's proposed mix of open space, and low and medium residential land use is generally compatible with the Township's proposed open space land use and low density residential zoning. It should be noted that Township land between Butler Avenue and Church Street is actually preserved open space controlled by the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, so homes will not be built in that area. The remainder of the Township's land is floodplain and the existing reservoir, further limiting potential development and future conflicts.

AMBLER BOROUGH
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

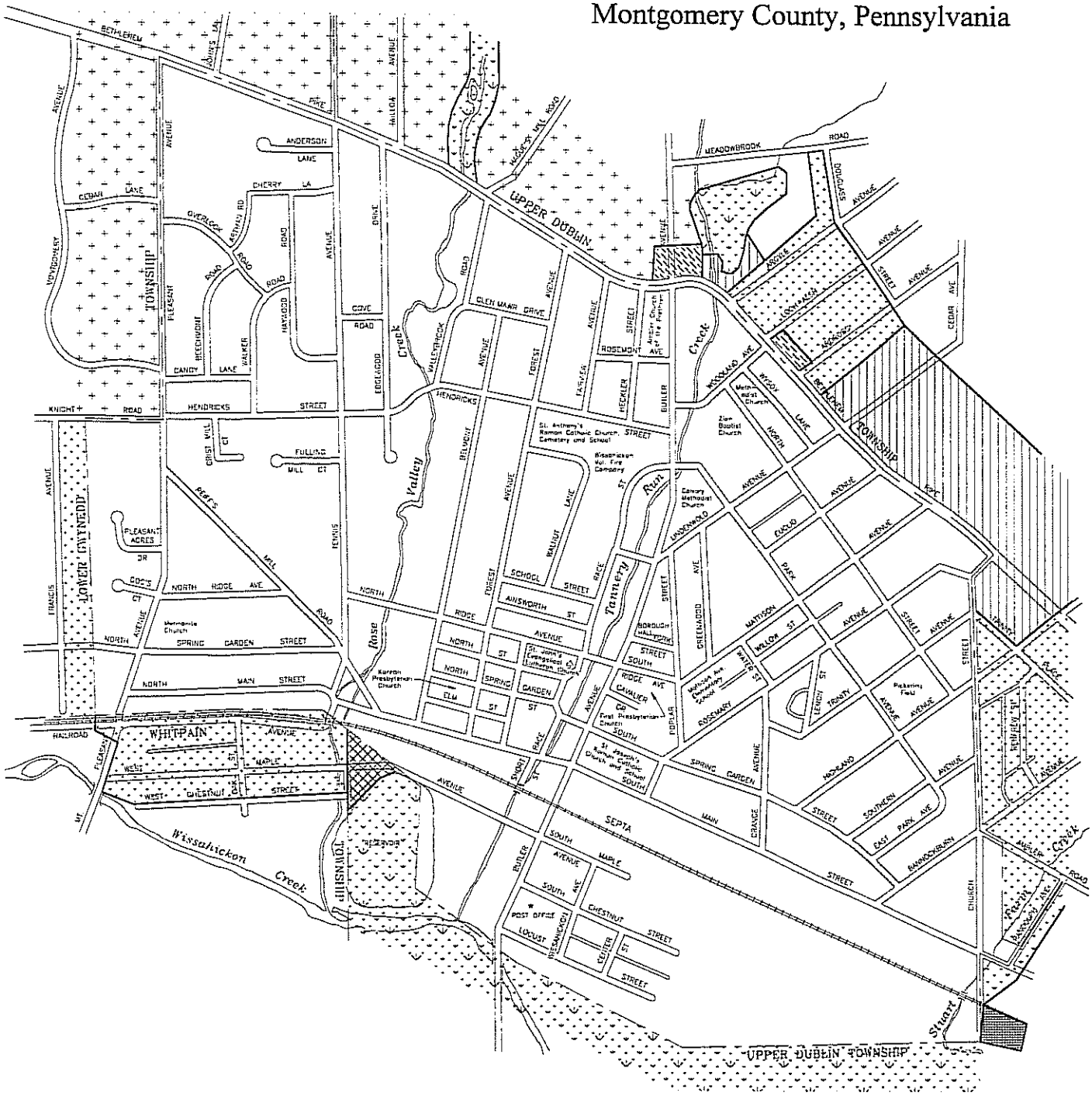


Figure 10-1
ADJACENT LAND USE PLANS

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Utility
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Open Space

0 600 1200 1800 feet

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Courthouse, Norristown, PA Winter 1997

Source: Municipal Comprehensive Plans

AMBLER BOROUGH
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

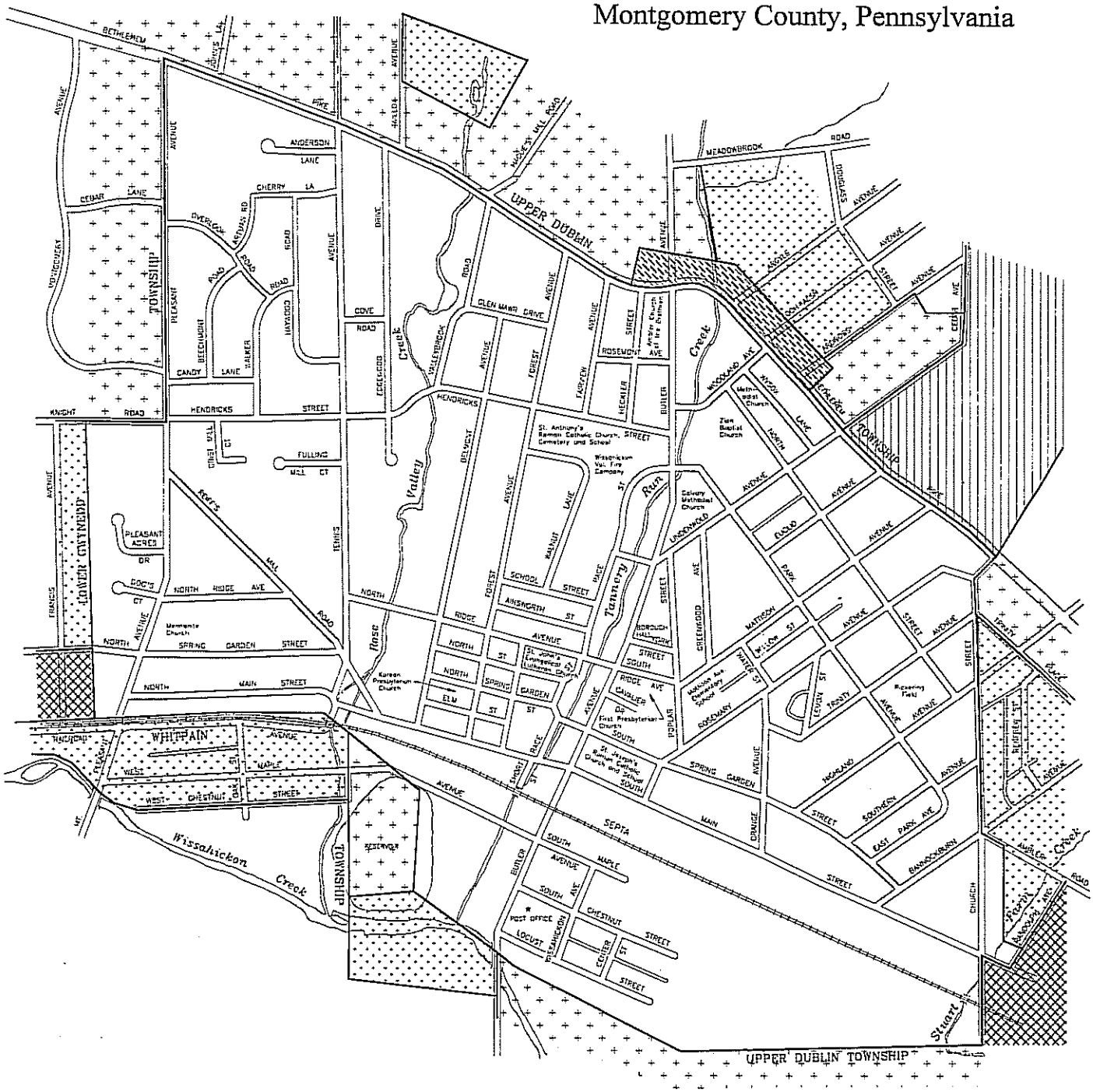


Figure 10-2
ADJACENT ZONING

Source: Municipal Zoning Ordinances

LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Plan

The common borders of Tennis Avenue and Mt. Pleasant Avenue are both designated for medium density (1.4 units/acre) single-family residential land use in the 1974 Plan Update. The other border between Knight Road and the railroad tracks is proposed for high density (4 units/acre) single-family residential land use.

Zoning

A and B Residential zoning districts cover properties along Tennis Avenue and Mt. Pleasant Avenue, with densities of up to 1 and 2.4 units/acre, respectively, using a sliding scale based on the presence or absence of public sewer and water. C Residential is between Knight Road and Spring Garden Street and permits a development density of 4 units/acre. From Spring Garden Street to the railroad tracks, F Industrial zoning covers the Henkel Company property and other land and allows a range of industrial uses.

ALUP Compatibility

Ambler's plan designates low density residential use for the areas close to Lower Gwynedd, with the exception of small areas of high and medium density residential use near North Spring Garden Street.

From a general land use planning perspective, this is compatible for the area bounded by Bethlehem Pike and Knight Road, although there is a fairly significant difference in actual zoning densities.

It is not as compatible south of Knight Road, where the Township has planned for high density development. However, the Borough's zoning density is higher than the Township's and the Township only permits single-family dwellings, so actual development in the area will be relatively compatible.

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Plan

The 1984 Plan designates the area next to Ambler for high density residential use (between 4.5 and 7 units/acre) intended to provide a variety of housing types.

Zoning

The Township has zoned the area R-4 Village Preservation, which allows for different housing types at a density up to 20 units/acre.

ALUP Compatibility

Ambler's plan for nonresidential use near Whitpain is not compatible and could create conflicts. It is hoped that this can be offset by the SEPTA rail line, which physically separates the two areas, and an emphasis in this Plan on encouraging uses that limit land use conflicts.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Comprehensive Plan

The 1977 Land Use Plan element of the County Plan is based upon the development core concept, which are areas of relatively high activity where a mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses are provided. Outside of the cores, residential development densities decrease and open space uses/resource protection areas are proposed.

Ambler is designated as a secondary development core, which is smaller than major cores such as Fort Washington (Upper Dublin Township), but provides for the same kind of development activity described above.

ALUP Compatibility

Ambler's Plan recognizes that the Borough has developed as a core area and will continue to serve this role. New development and reuse that occurs will follow the Borough's historic development pattern in terms of development mix, density, and intensity. This Plan is therefore compatible with the County Plan.

Appendix

COMPARATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Figure A-1
TOTAL POPULATION (1970-1990)

				% CHANGE		
	1970	1980	1990	1970-1980	1980-1990	1970-1990
Ambler	**7,800**	**6,628**	**6,609**	**-15.0**	**-0.3**	**-15.3**
Whitpain	9,295	11,772	15,673	26.6	33.1	68.6
Upper Dublin	19,449	22,348	24,028	14.9	7.5	23.5
Lower Gwynedd	6,361	6,902	9,958	8.5	44.3	56.5
Conshohocken	10,195	8,591	8,064	-15.7	-6.1	-20.9
Lansdale	18,451	16,526	16,362	-10.4	-1.0	-11.3
Montgomery County	624,080	643,621	678,111	3.1	5.4	8.7

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1970, 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing

Figure A-2
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

				CHANGE					
				1990-2000		2000-2010		1990-2010	
	1990 Census	2000 Projected	2010 Projected	#	%	#	%	#	%
Ambler	**6,609**	**6,500**	**6,450**	**(109)**	**-1.6%**	**(50)**	**-0.8**	**(159)**	**-2.4**
Whitpain	15,673	16,450	16,600	777	5.0	150	0.9	927	5.9
Upper Dublin	24,028	24,500	24,750	472	2.0	250	1.0	722	3.0
Lower Gwynedd	9,958	10,500	10,950	542	5.4	450	4.3	992	10.0
Conshohocken	8,064	7,950	7,900	(114)	-1.4	(50)	-0.6	(164)	-2.0
Lansdale	16,362	15,900	15,750	(462)	-2.8	(150)	-0.9	(612)	-3.7
Montgomery County	678,111	715,950	744,900	37,839	5.6	28,950	4.0	66,789	9.8

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1990 Census of Population and Housing; MCPC projections

Figure A-3
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

				% CHANGE		
	1970	1980	1990	1970-1980	1980-1990	1970-1990
Ambler	**3.16**	**2.70**	**2.5**	**-14.6**	**-7.4**	**-20.9**
Whitpain	3.92	3.06	2.80	-21.9	-8.5	-28.6
Upper Dublin	3.85	3.24	2.86	-15.8	-11.7	-25.7
Lower Gwynedd	3.10	2.85	2.46	-8.1	-13.7	-20.6
Conshohocken	3.26	2.72	2.45	-16.6	-9.9	-24.8
Lansdale	3.03	2.61	2.41	-13.9	-7.7	-20.5
Montgomery County	3.22	2.79	2.58	-13.4	-7.5	-19.9

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1970, 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing

Figure A-4
AGE PROFILE

AGE GROUP	1970		1980		1990		% CHANGE		
	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total	1970-1980	1980-1990	1970-1990
AMBLER									
<5	697	8.9	423	6.4	469	7.1	-39.3	10.9	-32.7
5-14	1,456	18.7	885	13.4	727	11.0	-39.2	-17.9	-50.1
15-24	1,214	15.6	1,155	17.4	805	12.2	-4.9	-30.3	-33.7
25-44	1,887	24.2	1,805	27.2	2,290	34.6	-4.3	26.9	21.4
45-64	1,646	21.1	1,451	21.9	1,266	19.2	-11.8	-12.7	-23.1
65-74	479	6.1	524	7.9	545	8.2	9.4	4.0	13.8
75+	421	5.4	385	5.8	507	7.7	-8.6	31.7	20.4
Total	7,800	100.0	6,628	100.0	6,609	100.0	-15.0	-0.3	-15.3
MONTGOMERY COUNTY									
<5	55,307	10.7	47,779	7.7	45,837	6.8	-13.6	-4.1	-17.1
5-14	97,840	18.9	125,054	20.0	83,189	12.3	27.8	-33.5	-15.0
15-24	60,723	11.8	96,602	15.5	84,426	12.5	59.1	-12.6	39.0
25-44	144,695	28.0	149,612	24.0	221,762	32.7	3.4	48.2	53.3
45-64	112,407	21.8	143,659	23.0	140,904	20.8	27.8	-1.9	25.4
65-74	30,717	5.9	37,865	6.1	58,404	8.6	23.3	54.2	90.1
75+	14,993	2.9	23,228	3.7	43,589	6.4	54.9	87.7	190.7
Total	516,682	100.0	623,799	100.0	678,111	100.0	20.7	8.7	31.2

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1970, 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing

Figure A-5
HOUSING TYPES (1970-1990)

		Total Units	Single-Family Detached		Single-Family Attached		Multi-Family		Mobile Home		Other*	
			#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1970	**Ambler**	**2,455**	**967**	**39.4**	**690**	**28.1**	**793**	**32.3**	**5**	**0.2**		
	Whitpain	2,354	2,179	92.6	20	0.8	145	6.2	10	0.4		
	Upper Dublin	5,055	4,521	89.4	246	4.9	288	5.7	0	0.0		
	Lower Gwynedd	1,949	1,387	71.2	99	5.1	457	23.4	6	0.3		
	Conshohocken	3,255	754	23.2	1,731	53.2	764	23.5	6	0.2		
	Lansdale	6,128	2,006	32.7	2,080	33.9	2,032	33.2	10	0.2		
	Montgomery County	193,258	118,483	61.3	26,964	14.0	46,416	24.0	1,395	0.7		
1980	**Ambler**	**2,490**	**999**	**40.1**	**641**	**25.7**	**850**	**34.1**	**0**	**0.0**		
	Whitpain	4,038	2,756	68.3	396	9.8	880	21.8	6	0.1		
	Upper Dublin	6,870	5,547	80.7	509	7.4	814	11.8	0	0.0		
	Lower Gwynedd	2,008	1,485	74.0	142	7.1	381	19.0	0	0.0		
	Conshohocken	3,216	499	15.5	1,787	55.6	925	28.8	5	0.2		
	Lansdale	6,472	1,976	30.5	2,167	33.5	2,329	36.0	0	0.0		
	Montgomery County	232,357	130,901	56.3	34,864	15.0	64,957	28.0	1,635	0.7		
1990	**Ambler**	**2,629**	**990**	**37.7**	**674**	**25.6**	**935**	**35.6**	**1**	**0.0**	**29**	**1.1**
	Whitpain	5,703	3,733	65.5	1,139	20.0	735	12.9	4	0.1	92	1.6
	Upper Dublin	8,403	6,454	76.8	1,056	12.6	857	10.2	0	0.0	36	0.4
	Lower Gwynedd	3,820	2,204	57.7	542	14.2	977	25.6	2	0.1	95	2.5
	Conshohocken	3,397	618	18.2	1,763	51.9	964	28.4	5	0.1	47	1.4
	Lansdale	7,009	2,019	28.8	2,198	31.4	2,697	38.5	3	0.0	92	1.3
	Montgomery County	265,897	147,424	55.4	45,933	17.3	67,148	25.3	2,540	1.0	2,811	1.1

*For the 1990 Census, this category was created and includes the following: campers, recreational vehicles, trailers, etc.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1970, 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing

Figure A-6
HOUSING TENURE

		Total Units	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant	
			#	%	#	%	#	%
1970	**Ambler**	**2,455**	**1,420**	**57.8**	**988**	**40.2**	**47**	**1.9**
	Whitpain	2,371	2,076	87.6	237	10.0	58	2.4
	Upper Dublin	5,091	4,502	88.4	538	10.6	51	1.0
	Lower Gwynedd	1,930	1,288	66.7	619	32.1	23	1.2
	Conshohocken	3,236	2,169	67.0	948	29.3	119	3.7
	Lansdale	6,128	3,794	61.9	2,234	36.5	100	1.6
	Montgomery County	193,258	136,122	70.4	55,404	28.7	4,766	2.5
1980	**Ambler**	**2,490**	**1,464**	**58.8**	**948**	**38.1**	**78**	**3.1**
	Whitpain	4,045	2,745	67.9	1,108	27.4	192	4.7
	Upper Dublin	6,888	5,717	83.0	1,008	14.6	163	2.4
	Lower Gwynedd	2,008	1,536	76.5	387	19.3	85	4.2
	Conshohocken	3,216	2,161	67.2	942	29.3	113	3.5
	Lansdale	6,476	3,864	59.7	2,352	36.3	260	4.0
	Montgomery County	232,569	157,740	67.8	65,776	28.3	9,053	3.9
1990	**Ambler**	**2,629**	**1,476**	**56.1**	**1,085**	**41.3**	**68**	**2.6**
	Whitpain	5,684	4,215	74.2	1,205	21.2	264	4.6
	Upper Dublin	8,403	7,205	85.7	1,001	11.9	197	2.3
	Lower Gwynedd	3,820	2,758	72.2	921	24.1	141	3.7
	Conshohocken	3,397	2,088	61.5	1,199	35.3	110	3.2
	Lansdale	7,009	3,930	56.1	2,722	38.8	357	5.1
	Montgomery County	265,856	184,317	69.3	70,678	26.6	10,861	4.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 1970, 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing

Figure A-7
AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

	Median Year	Pre 1940		1940-1949		1950-1959		1960-1969		1970-1979		1980-1989		1990-1993		1993 Estimated Total Units
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Ambler	**1950**	**1,031**	**38.9**	**256**	**9.7**	**742**	**28.0**	**275**	**10.4**	**206**	**7.8**	**119**	**4.5**	**18**	**0.7**	**2,647**
Whitpain	1973	291	4.8	197	3.3	1,040	17.3	869	14.4	1,329	22.1	1,977	32.8	323	5.4	6,026
Upper Dublin	1967	961	10.8	476	5.4	1,182	13.3	2,288	25.8	1,770	19.9	1,724	19.4	480	5.4	8,881
Lower Gwynedd	1974	373	9.4	119	3.0	562	14.1	495	12.4	866	21.7	1,405	35.3	164	4.1	3,984
Conshohocken	1941	1,646	47.6	365	10.6	550	15.9	291	8.4	332	9.6	213	6.2	62	1.8	3,459
Lansdale	1956	1,978	28.1	761	10.8	1,363	19.4	1,903	27.1	477	6.8	547	7.8	5	0.1	7,034
Montgomery County	1959	61,532	22.2	23,923	8.6	54,050	19.5	46,028	16.6	41,392	14.9	38,931	14.0	11,364	4.1	277,220

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1990 Census of Population and Housing; Montgomery County Board of Assessment

Figure A-8
SUBSTANDARD UNITS

	1970			1980			1990			CHANGE					
	Total Units	Substandard Units		Total Units	Substandard Units		Total Units	Substandard Units		1970-1980		1980-1990		1970-1990	
		#	%		#	%		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Ambler	**2,455**	**152**	**6.2**	**2,490**	**64**	**2.6**	**2,629**	**37**	**1.4**	**(88)**	**-57.9**	**(27)**	**-42.2**	**(115)**	**-75.7**
Whitpain	2,354	64	2.7	4,038	61	1.5	5,703	68	1.2	(3)	-4.7	7	11.5	4	6.3
Upper Dublin	5,055	151	3.0	6,870	122	1.8	8,403	50	0.6	(29)	-19.2	(72)	-59.0	(101)	-66.9
Lower Gwynedd	1,949	47	2.4	2,008	24	1.2	3,820	26	0.7	(23)	-48.9	2	8.3	(21)	-44.7
Conshohocken	3,255	256	7.9	3,216	143	4.4	3,397	60	1.8	(113)	-44.1	(83)	-58.0	(196)	-76.6
Lansdale	6,128	276	4.5	6,472	254	3.9	7,009	131	1.9	(22)	-8.0	(123)	-48.4	(145)	-52.5
Montgomery County	193,258	9,437	4.9	232,357	6,868	3.0	265,897	3,552	1.3	(2,569)	-27.2	(3,316)	-48.3	(5,885)	-62.4

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1970, 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing

Figure A-9
MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE (1990 $)

				CHANGE					
				1970-1980		1980-1990		1970-1990	
	1970	1980	1990	#	%	#	%	#	%
Ambler	**$59,411**	**$75,408**	**$118,200**	**$15,997**	**26.9**	**$42,792**	**56.7**	**$58,789**	**99.0**
Whitpain	$96,584	$122,196	$213,300	$25,612	26.5	$91,104	74.6	$116,716	120.8
Upper Dublin	$104,218	$128,306	$197,900	$24,088	23.1	$69,594	54.2	$93,682	89.9
Lower Gwynedd	$97,248	$121,714	$229,800	$24,466	25.2	$108,086	88.8	$132,552	136.3
Conshohocken	$74,346	$61,902	$97,600	($12,444)	-16.7	$35,698	57.7	$23,254	31.3
Lansdale	$60,075	$78,623	$114,900	$18,548	30.9	$36,277	46.1	$54,825	91.3
Montgomery County	$71,691	$97,435	$143,400	$25,744	35.9	$45,965	47.2	$71,709	100.0

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; 1970, 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing

Figure A-10
EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES (NUMBER OF JOBS)

				CHANGE					
	1990	2000 (proj.)	2010 (proj.)	1990-2000		2000-2010		1990-2010	
				#	%	#	%	#	%
Ambler	3,328	3,350	3,500	22	0.7	150	4.5	172	5.2
Whitpain	17,316	18,150	19,400	834	4.8	1,250	6.9	2,084	12.0
Upper Dublin	20,111	20,800	21,800	689	3.4	1,000	4.8	1,689	8.4
Lower Gwynedd	8,379	8,750	9,100	371	4.4	350	4.0	721	8.6
Conshohocken	5,435	6,150	6,500	715	13.2	350	5.7	1,065	19.6
Lansdale	10,163	9,700	9,900	(463)	-4.6	200	2.1	(263)	-2.6
Montgomery County	457,500	486,200	526,950	28,700	6.3	40,750	8.4	69,450	15.2

Sources: MCPC; DVRPC; DCA; various tax collectors; U.S. Census Bureau

Figure A-11
EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

	1977		1982		1987		% CHANGE 1977-1982		% CHANGE 1982-1987		% CHANGE 1977-1987	
	# Estab.	# Employees	# Estab.	# Employees	# Estab.	# Employees	Estab.	Employees	Estab.	Employees	Estab.	Employees
MANUFACTURING												
Ambler	**22**	**600**	**23**	**800**	**26**	**600**	**4.5**	**33.3**	**13.0**	**-25.0**	**18.2**	**0.0**
Whitpain	n.a.	n.a.	11	n.a.	13	700	--	--	18.2	--	--	--
Upper Dublin	41	10,200	47	11,400	46	8,400	14.6	11.8	-2.1	-26.3	12.2	-17.6
Lower Gwynedd	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	--	--	--	--	--	--
Conshohocken	44	2,900	54	2,600	61	2,800	22.7	-10.3	13.0	7.7	38.6	-3.4
Lansdale	82	5,000	72	4,200	68	5,800	-12.2	-16.0	-5.6	38.1	-17.1	16.0
Montgomery County	1,458	97,800	1,498	94,200	1,550	92,500	2.7	-3.7	3.5	-1.8	6.3	-5.4
WHOLESALE												
Ambler	**30**	**130**	**32**	**160**	**43**	**n.a.**	**6.7**	**23.1**	**34.4**	**--**	**43.3**	**--**
Whitpain	n.a.	n.a.	26	376	25	415	--	--	-3.8	10.4	--	--
Upper Dublin	86	1,562	96	1,445	84	1,173	11.6	-7.5	-12.5	-18.8	-2.3	-24.9
Lower Gwynedd	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	--	--	--	--	--	--
Conshohocken	32	484	52	411	66	621	62.5	-15.1	26.9	51.1	106.3	28.3
Lansdale	28	274	41	397	53	564	46.4	44.9	29.3	42.1	89.3	105.8
Montgomery County	1,787	20,254	1,976	22,314	2,248	26,246	10.6	10.2	13.8	17.6	25.8	29.6
RETAIL												
Ambler	**73**	**504**	**61**	**472**	**73**	**627**	**-16.4**	**-6.3**	**19.7**	**32.8**	**0.0**	**24.4**
Whitpain	n.a.	n.a.	39	592	46	744	--	--	17.9	25.7	--	--
Upper Dublin	67	911	96	1,113	91	1,212	43.3	22.2	-5.2	8.9	35.8	33.0
Lower Gwynedd	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	--	--	--	--	--	--
Conshohocken	n.a.	n.a.	74	665	91	955	--	--	23.0	43.6	--	--
Lansdale	n.a.	n.a.	144	1,586	160	2,128	--	--	11.1	34.2	--	--
Montgomery County	4,213	49,746	4,298	55,359	4,923	70,340	2.0	11.3	14.5	27.1	16.9	41.4
SERVICE												
Ambler	**61**	**1,153**	**85**	**1,712**	**119**	**1,985**	**39.3**	**48.5**	**40.0**	**15.9**	**95.1**	**72.2**
Whitpain	n.a.	n.a.	46	357	74	561	--	--	60.9	57.1	--	--
Upper Dublin	52	822	167	2,106	220	3,518	221.2	156.2	31.7	67.0	323.1	328.0
Lower Gwynedd	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	--	--	--	--	--	--
Conshohocken	37	172	78	371	106	1,035	110.8	115.7	35.9	179.0	186.5	501.7
Lansdale	87	375	198	1,700	213	1,648	127.6	353.3	7.6	-3.1	144.8	339.5
Montgomery County	2,789	37,638	5,399	56,785	7,037	87,703	93.6	50.9	30.3	54.4	152.3	133.0

n.a.: not available

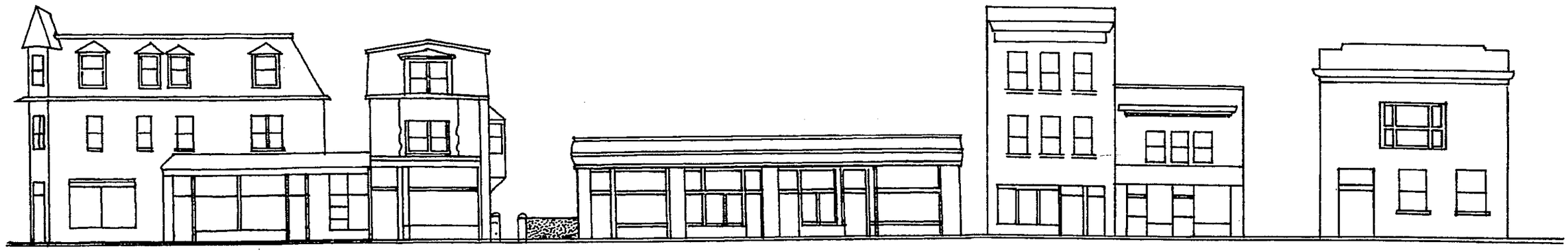
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce Dept.; 1977, 1982, 1987 Censuses of Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, and Service Industries

Figure A-12
MEDIAN INCOMES (1990 $)

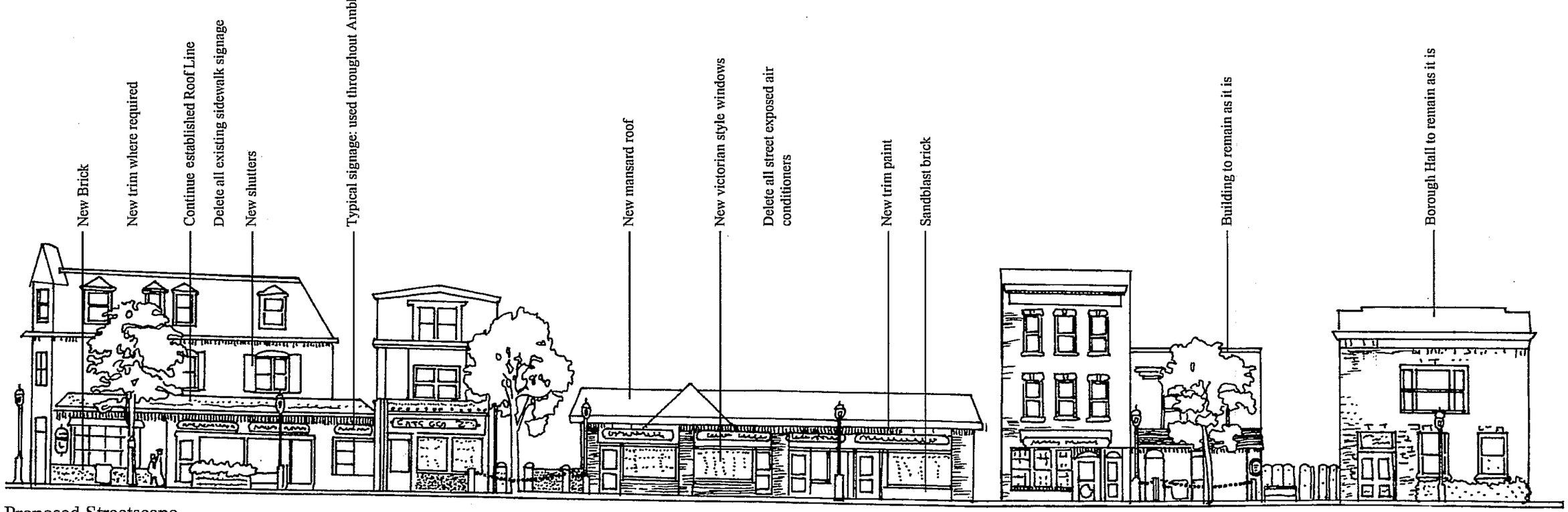
			CHANGE	
	1980	1990	$	%
FAMILY INCOME				
Ambler	**$37,054**	**$41,409**	**$4,355**	**11.8**
Whitpain	$49,100	$67,090	$17,990	36.6
Upper Dublin	$53,451	$68,803	$15,352	28.7
Lower Gwynedd	$53,802	$74,870	$21,068	39.2
Conshohocken	$31,160	$33,750	$2,590	8.3
Lansdale	$35,946	$42,222	$6,276	17.5
Montgomery County	$41,487	$51,353	$9,866	23.8
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Ambler	**$31,088**	**$35,730**	**$4,642**	**14.9**
Whitpain	$44,762	$60,952	$16,190	36.2
Upper Dublin	$48,798	$61,734	$12,936	26.5
Lower Gwynedd	$49,431	$56,700	$7,269	14.7
Conshohocken	$26,717	$29,221	$2,504	9.4
Lansdale	$30,994	$34,987	$3,993	12.9
Montgomery County	$36,189	$43,720	$7,531	20.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 1980, 1990 Censuses of Population

Figure 9-3
PROPOSED CBD STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (PARTIAL)



East Butler Avenue North Side 1



Proposed Streetscape
Source (modified): Herman Hassinger Architects, 1980