



Northampton Township

Comprehensive Plan

2018



Northampton Township

Board of Supervisors

Barry Moore, Chairman
Eileen Silver, Vice Chairman
Frank O'Donnell, Secretary
Dr. Kim Rose, Treasurer
Larry Weinstein, Member

Planning Commission

Edward Ingle, Chairman
Steve Saddlemire, Vice Chairman
Andrew Gannon, Secretary
Michele Druding, Member
Dr. Arthur Friedman, Member
Patrick McGuigan, Member
Mark Shapiro, Member

Township Staff

Robert M. Pellegrino, Manager
Michael Solomon, Director of Planning and Zoning

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	v
Plan Elements	vi
Implementation	x
PLAN INTRODUCTION	1
Planning Statues and Laws	2
Update to the Northampton Township Comprehensive Plan.....	3
Comprehensive Plan as a Living Document.....	3
Need for Continuing Planning.....	4
PART I – COMMUNITY VISION	5
Chapter 1. Community Vision	7
Planning Principles.....	8
Plan Goals	9
PART II – EXISTING CONDITIONS	13
Chapter 2. Community Profile	15
Early History	15
Demographic Information.....	16
Township Government.....	24
Existing Land Use	26
Chapter 3. Natural Resources and Sustainability	31
Natural Resources	32
Significant Natural Areas.....	42
Energy Conservation	43
Chapter 4. Agriculture Resources	47
Farmland Preservation.....	48
Sustainable Agriculture.....	52
Agricultural Uses and Food Supply.....	53
Chapter 5. Historic and Scenic Resources	55
Historic Resources	56
Scenic Resources	69
Chapter 6. Parks, Recreation and Open Space	73
Public Lands.....	74
Easements and Privately-Owned Lands	77
Greenways and Trails	79
Open Space Plan Recommendations Summary	81

Chapter 7. Economic Activity and Development	83
Local Workforce.....	83
Business Characteristics.....	86
Local and Regional Economic Conditions.....	88
Industrial and Manufacturing Uses.....	90
Local Economic Redevelopment Tax Assistance (LERTA)	91
Agriculture and Open Space Benefits	92
Local Initiatives.....	93
Chapter 8. Transportation, Circulation and Mobility.....	95
Street Classification.....	95
Public Transit.....	96
Road/Intersection Layout and Improvements.....	97
Holland and Richboro Village Master Plans	100
DVRPC Transportation Improvement Program	100
Access Management.....	101
Complete Streets.....	102
Traffic Calming.....	103
Sidewalks and Bicycle Paths	104
Chapter 9. Community Facilities	107
Township Administration	107
Public Safety.....	110
Education	115
Northampton Township James E. Kinney Senior Center.....	117
Public Infrastructure	118
Utilities, Solid Waste and Other Services	121
PART III – LAND USE PLANNING AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	127
Chapter 10. Plan Interrelationship and Compatibility.....	129
Plan Compatibility Among Surrounding Region.....	129
Chapter 11. Future Land Use Plan	139
Vision Statement	139
Planning Principles.....	140
Future Planning Designations	140
Chapter 12. Plan Elements and Recommendations	151
Agriculture Plan.....	151
Environmental Plan	153
Historic and Scenic Resources Plan	154
Housing Plan.....	156
Transportation, Circulation and Mobility Plan	158
Economic Development Plan	160
Community Facilities Plan	161
Emergency Management Plan.....	162

Water and Sewer Facilities162
 Solid Waste Management.....163
 Stormwater Management163
 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.....164

MAPS

Map 1 – Existing Land Use..... after page 26
 Map 2 – Natural Resources..... after page 38
 Map 3 – Agricultural Resources after page 48
 Map 4 – Farmland Soils..... after page 48
 Map 5 – Historic Resources..... after page 56
 Map 6 – Scenic Areas..... after page 70
 Map 7 – Parks and Recreation Lands..... after page 74
 Map 8 – Functional Classification..... after page 96
 Map 9 – Zoning..... after page 134
 Map 10 – Future Land Use..... after page 140

TABLES

Table 1 – Population History.....17
 Table 2 – Northampton Township, Bucks County Pennsylvania Population 1990-2010.....18
 Table 3 – Northampton Township and Bucks County Forecasted Population, 2015-2030.....19
 Table 4 – Percent of Population by Age Group and Median Age.....19
 Table 5 – 2010 Population Target Age Group.....20
 Table 6 – Racial/Ethnic Composition by Percentage of Population21
 Table 7 – Educational Attainment of People 25 Years and Older in 201021
 Table 8 – Median per Capita Income, 2010.....22
 Table 9 – House Units.....23
 Table 10 – Housing Information, 2010.....23
 Table 11 – Building Permits for Northampton Township.....24
 Table 12 – Existing Land Use.....26
 Table 13 – Non-Energy Greenhouse Gas Emissions45
 Table 14 – Council Rock School District Recreation Land77
 Table 15 – Employment Status.....84
 Table 16 – Occupational Status84
 Table 17 – Township Industries.....86
 Table 18 – Number of Businesses and Employees87

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Roundabout.....97
 Figure 2 – Richboro Road Network Improvements.....99
 Figure 3 – Northampton Township Organizational Chart108

Northampton Township Comprehensive Plan

Figure 4 – Summary of Township Boards, Commissions and Committees.....109
Figure 5 – Northampton Township and Surrounding Municipalities129
Figure 6 – Lower Neshaminy Creek Trail Study.....133
Figure 7 – *Connections 2040* Land Use Vision.....138
Figure 8 – Northampton Township Business Campus147

APPENDICES

- Appendix A - *Holland Village Master Plan* (2014)
- Appendix B - *Richboro Village Master Plan* (2018)

Executive Summary

Northampton Township is a second-class township in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, located approximately 12 miles northeast of Philadelphia. The Township is geographically defined to the northwest by the Little Neshaminy Creek and to the north and east by the Neshaminy Creek. It is bordered by Wrightstown, Newtown, Middletown, Warwick, Warminster, Upper Southampton, and Lower Southampton Townships, as well as Ivyland and Langhorne Boroughs.

Successful communities start with good, sound planning for land use, transportation systems, and their interface with natural, cultural and societal (human) resources. A Comprehensive Plan is the community’s blueprint for enhancing the quality of life for its residents and preserving its resources.

The *Northampton Township Comprehensive Plan* (2018) identifies five basic planning principles on which to establish and maintain a sustainable community. Northampton Township recognizes that a healthy environment, strong economy, and viable community social structure are mutually dependent upon one another.

Planning Principles

Livable Built Environment: Ensure that all elements of the built environment—land use, transportation, housing, energy, infrastructure, and institutions—work together to provide a high quality of life that is sustainable for living, working, and recreating.

Resilient Economy: Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health. Encourage development and redevelopment strategies that foster sustainable business growth and build reliance on local assets.

Lasting Landscape: Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being, including historic and visual amenities, are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their qualities is a primary objective.

Healthy Community: Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, education, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.

Responsible Regionalism: Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

PLAN ELEMENTS

The 2018 Plan is intended to address the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code consistent with applicable laws and State planning principles, regional plans, and the plans of municipalities bordering Northampton. It will help guide Northampton's future in the formulation of innovative or improved zoning and land use ordinances, as it also addresses housing location and densities, economic development, transportation improvements, provision of community resources, and the protection of natural and historic resources. The plan elements of the *Northampton Township Comprehensive Plan* are as follows:

Agriculture Plan—Farming has been a tradition in Northampton for more than 300 years. Due to the gently sloping topography of the Township's upland areas and the quality of its soils, Northampton is covered by some of the best farmland in the County. Preserving agricultural soils and existing farms in the Township is important to sustain the local and regional agricultural industry, providing fresh produce and food supplies. Appropriate cultivation and farming practices need to be implemented to protect the air and water resources. Northampton has a large block of agricultural uses in the north above Hatboro Road. Many of these farms are deed restricted from further development and contain conservation easements through county, state, and local programs for farmland preservation. In addition, the Township has adopted zoning provisions that attempt to balance land use strategies to encourage the continuation of farming operations, including low density development and cluster development option. Lower density housing arranged in a manner that is screened and adequately set back from the farming operation can help act to mitigate potential impacts.

Natural Resources and Sustainability Plan—Natural resources play an important role in the ecology of a community and region. The natural features present in Northampton support a rich diversity of native vegetation and wildlife, indicating a healthy living environment for people, plants and animals. Northampton's goal of preserving natural resources will help achieve the following elements of sustainability:

- Equitable sharing of resources among the current and future generations;
- Protecting and living within the natural carrying capacity;

- Minimization of natural resource use; and
- Satisfaction of basic human needs.

Protecting natural resources requires more than identifying significant resources. The Township recognizes the importance of protecting natural resources to help maintain the character of a place and enhance the quality of life in a community. These actions include sediment and erosion control, stream corridor restoration, forest and vegetation management, wetlands preservation, and slope stabilization. The preservation and restoration of the functions of natural systems also helps to minimize losses to properties. Policies on what, and how much, should be preserved have been established over the years and are reflected in the Township's land use regulations (zoning and subdivision ordinances) and are part of the on-going land use recommendations of this Plan.

Historic and Scenic Resources Plan—Historic and scenic resources are important features that help make up a community's natural and historical landscapes. For example, historic structures not only impart knowledge of the area's heritage, but also helps to accent the way one perceives the landscape. Fieldstone (often covered in stucco), log, frame, and brick buildings are the characteristic building materials of the region, and most buildings were sited to take advantage of opportunities in the landscape, particularly relative to slope and climatic exposure. These historical man-made features, including stone walls, bridges and spring houses, provide visual accents that add particular distinction to scenic quality. Special vegetation, including tree-lined drives and specimen trees located prominently in a field, or alongside roads or streambanks, rock outcroppings, and water bodies, also often offer strong visual foci, sharply contrasting both the rolling upland and the steep-sided stream valleys in the Township.

The Township is not only an important trustee of the natural and cultural resources that characterize Northampton, but also desires to conserve and maintain these resources in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all of the residents and future generations, who may learn from, and appreciate, their past. As such, the Township will extend the regulatory means where appropriate to conserve the continued economic viability of historical resources. Historic and scenic landscapes will continue to be preserved through inclusion in the Township Open Space Program and through regulatory means that minimize development impacts wherever possible and to mitigate impacts where not.

Housing Plan—The Township seeks to maintain quality, connectivity, historic character, and sustainability in its housing stock by encouraging a balance among housing unit types. The Township plans to promote proper maintenance of the existing housing stock by enforcement of housing, zoning, health, safety, historic preservation and property maintenance codes to ensure that sound buildings, attractive neighborhoods, property values, historicity, affordability and diversity of housing choice are enhanced. New and infill development or redevelopment will be appropriate in size, density and type of construction to preserve the character of residential neighborhoods. Methods for encouraging energy efficiency of existing housing units and new construction will be explored by the Township, and connections among neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public facilities will be made as appropriate opportunities arise.

Transportation, Circulation, and Mobility Plan—Transportation systems provide for the movement of people and goods between places and are intended to be designed for safe and convenient movement for all users, such as motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles, and public transit. The continued growth of the Township will depend on the advantages that a well-functioning transportation system provides. Maintaining and enhancing the quality and efficiency of the system also supports the Township’s economic development efforts and can help achieve a cleaner environment through the reduction of fossil fuel emissions.

Economic Development Plan—Most business enterprises are subject to locational factors, market forces, transportation access, and commuter patterns beyond the scope of municipal planning control. Northampton’s attraction derives from its proximity to New Jersey, Philadelphia and New York City, and its unique mix of natural beauty, high-quality residential neighborhoods and schools, cultural vitality and historic charm. The Township recognizes that it is tied to the regional economy through residents’ employment, spending patterns, services and trade. Nonresidential uses serving the needs of area residents are varied and concentrated in Richboro and Holland. The Business Commons located in the northwestern area of the Township off of Jacksonville Road contains facilities for large industrial and business needs.

The Township supports revitalization of Richboro and Holland as village centers and adopted master plans that are incorporated into this Plan. Zoning regulations and design

guidelines also have been established. The zoning ordinance provides for local retail and services, mixed uses (including a residential component), arts and culture, and government activity. Villages design standards, compatibility with surrounding historic characteristics, and that encourage pedestrian connectivity have also been established. The economic development planning policies and improvement strategies for the villages of Richboro are outlined in the *Richboro Village Master Plan* (2018). Likewise, the *Holland Village Master Plan* (2014) is the guiding document for land uses and improvements.

Community Facilities Plan—Community facilities and utilities are important components in determining the quality of life in a community. Community facilities and services are necessary to maintain the health, safety, and social needs of communities. In addition, as they affect the quality of life, facilities and services can also be an economic development tool since businesses often look at these attributes within a community when they locate.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan—Parks, recreation facilities, and other open space resources are important parts of a community’s identity and contribute to the overall quality of life and vibrancy of a community. Park and recreation facilities and programs provide opportunities for residents to gather and interact and help create a sense of community. Open space resources help to preserve the Township’s natural ecosystems and provide an attractive setting in which to live and work.

Future Land Use Plan—The Future Land Use Plan for Northampton establishes a policy guide for land use in the Township over the next ten years and beyond. It provides a vision for municipal policy and action, integrating the planning issues and factors addressed throughout this Comprehensive Plan. Its foundation is based on previous plans and studies undertaken by the Township. The stated goal for land use is to sustain a balance of land uses at a scale and intensity that is compatible with population forecasts, infrastructure capacity, natural environment, and existing character. Factors most relevant to future land use planning include:

- projected population growth and housing demand;
- existing land use and development patterns;
- zoning and municipal policy;

- existing and planned infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, water and sewer services);
- regional development influences and transportation patterns;
- environmental constraints; and
- natural, historic and scenic resource conservation and protection.

The philosophy of the proposed Future Land Use Plan is to depart as little as possible from the pattern of development that has emerged during the past several decades while accommodating growth expected to occur in coming years in a desirable fashion.

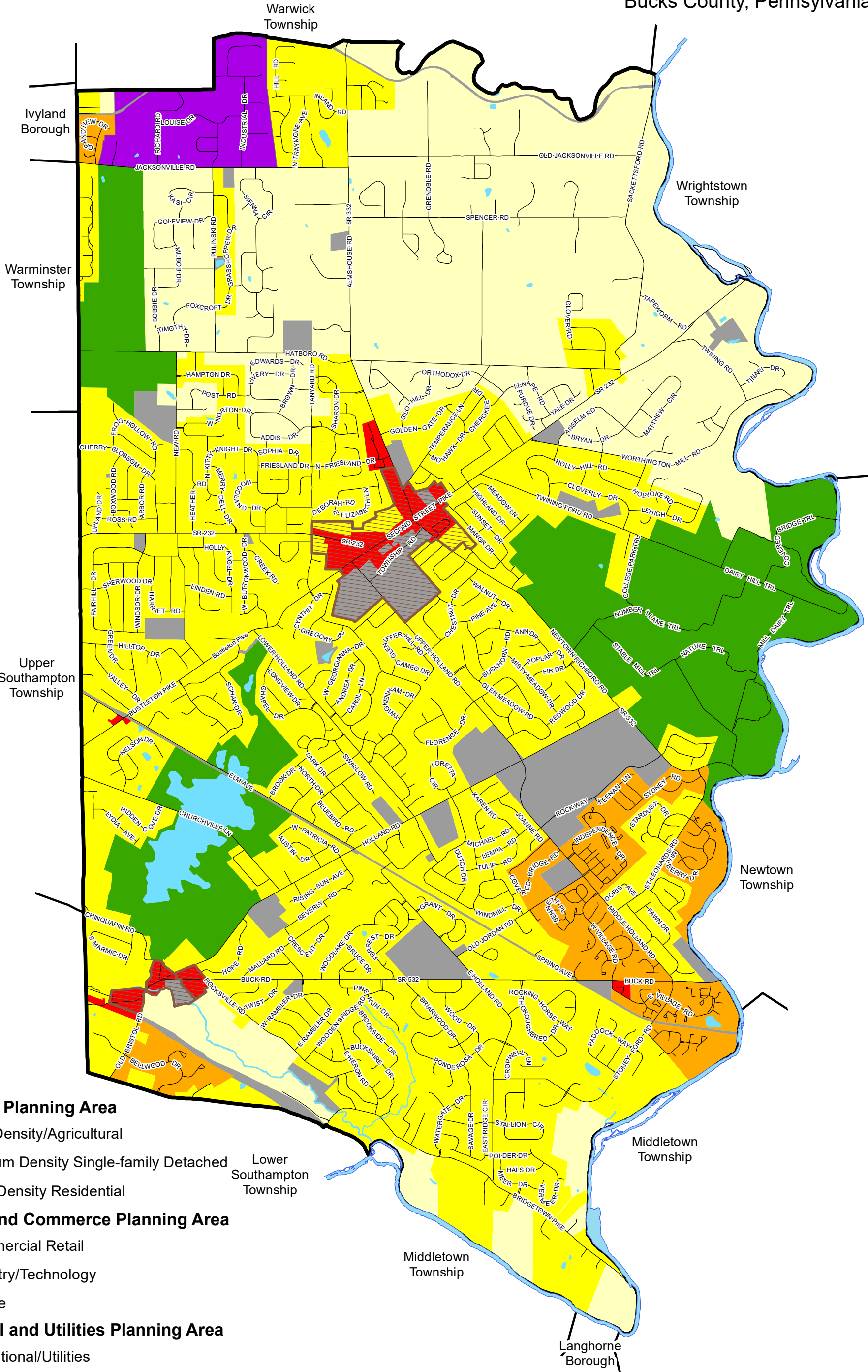
IMPLEMENTATION

Successful implementation of this plan requires that specific measures and actions be taken in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner. In addition to the future land use plan to help guide future development, there are recommended actions for plan elements. Recommended strategies from the *Northampton Township Comprehensive Plan* include:

- Permit a wide variety of agricultural uses and accessory uses that support the farming industry, including adaptive reuse of existing farm structures, farm-related businesses, alternative energy structures, etc., that allow farmers to adapt to changing industry trends.
- Develop ordinance provisions to require native plants in landscaping plans (e.g., buffer yards, along streets, in parks and open spaces).
- Adopt zoning regulations to preserve and protect individual historic structures by expanding incentives for conservation of historic and architecturally significant structures and landscapes, offering added design standard flexibility, or allowance for certain additional uses, beyond those otherwise authorized within the zoning district.
- Consider provisions for in-law suites or accessory apartments to supplement future housing needs of older family members.

- Implement a Complete Streets Policy Plan (design and operate streets to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities), and ensure that access management techniques are implemented.
- Ensure the economic development policies of the Holland and Richboro master plans are implemented.

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



Residential Planning Area

- Low Density/Agricultural
- Medium Density Single-family Detached
- High Density Residential

Business and Commerce Planning Area

- Commercial Retail
- Industry/Technology
- Village

Institutional and Utilities Planning Area

- Institutional/Utilities

Parks and Recreation Planning Area

- Recreation (Public and Private)

Plan Introduction



Successful communities start with good, sound planning for land use, transportation systems, and their interface with natural, cultural and societal (human) resources. With a firm understanding of the past and present conditions, the planning process enables municipal leaders, businesses, organizations, and citizens to establish a vision for the future, set goals, and develop projects and programs to achieve that vision. A Comprehensive Plan is the community's blueprint for enhancing the quality of life for its residents and preserving its resources. The plan outlines a set of strategies and actions to guide desired outcomes recognizing the limited nature of land and resources so that they can be sustained for future generations.

Northampton is an attractive blend of rural and suburban landscapes in proximity to both local services and major metropolitan areas. Its scenic landscape of gently rolling hills, farm fields, wooded streambeds, and historic features along with its good schools, area parks and public facilities, all combine to make Northampton a desirable place to live. Perhaps the most important Township asset however is the many residents who work hard to protect, preserve and manage its residential neighborhoods, business centers, and natural and historic character.

A review and update of the Township's Comprehensive Plan is timely due to the many land use changes that have occurred since the 1999 comprehensive plan was adopted. This document not only provides the foundation on which local policies are established, but continues to build on them to guide the Township's future. Reaffirming existing policies and formulating new land use policies to help sustain the community has been undertaken to address housing, economic development, transportation provisions, energy conservation, community facilities, and natural and historic resources preservation.

PLANNING STATUES AND LAWS

In Pennsylvania, municipalities are authorized to prepare a comprehensive plan through the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). With this authority comes the responsibility of complying with the MPC's provisions for plan content and with other guidelines for community development that have been established by other laws and court decisions.

The State Constitution entitles residents of Pennsylvania residents to a high quality environment, free of pollutants and absent of significant threats to public health, safety and welfare. Authority and responsibility to sustain a high quality environment and quality of life is delegated, to a large extent, to local municipalities by the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code* (PaMPC). Courts have specifically said that the municipality has a responsibility to protect limited resources, natural or man-made. The courts have also said that the municipality must plan for its existing and future residents.

Pennsylvania law has long recognized the comprehensive plan as an important land use tool. The legal basis for municipalities adopting comprehensive plans was established in 1968 when the PaMPC was enacted. Section 301 of the MPC sets forth the requirements for preparation of a comprehensive plan. The plan will typically contain a statement of community development objectives, which are goals and objectives for future development; a land use plan, which is a guide for the future development, redevelopment, conversion, and preservation of land; a plan for meeting the housing needs of present and future residents; a circulation plan for the movement of people and goods; a community facilities plan; a statement of the interrelationships among the plan components; a discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategy; a statement indicating the relationship of existing and proposed development to development and plans in adjoining municipalities, to the objectives and plans for development in the county, and to regional trends; a plan for protecting natural and historic resources; and a water supply element.

UPDATE TO THE NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2018 Plan is intended to address the requirements of the PaMPC consistent with applicable laws and State planning principles, regional plans, and the plans of municipalities bordering Northampton. The objective is to revise the Plan based on updated census data and other information, including the incorporation of municipal planning studies that have been undertaken since 1999, and utilize a range of planning tools to minimize potential impacts from land use changes and development consistent with the vision and goals of the Township.

The *Northampton Township Comprehensive Plan* (2018) is an evolution and expansion of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan. It reaffirms many of the previous planning policies and introduces a new sustainability concept. It will help guide Northampton's future in the formulation of innovative or improved zoning and land use ordinances, as it also addresses housing location and densities, economic development, transportation improvements, provision of community resources, and the protection of natural and historic resources.

The Comprehensive Plan is divided into three parts with respective chapters, each addressing one or more of the required plan elements of Article III of the PA MPC.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS A LIVING DOCUMENT

The written Comprehensive Plan is just a start. It is the foundation for attaining the goals and objectives established within this Plan, which can be realized only with the support of local government, commissions, boards and committees, businesses, residents, community organizations, surrounding municipalities, and regional planning groups.

The purpose of updating the Plan has been to prepare a document that will be used as intended, acting as a continually-accessed resource for the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and other groups within the Township to guide their actions in attaining the goals of this Plan. It presents a strategy to guide public officials and the

private sector in making decisions that will assure that the Township will continue to be an attractive place to live and work. Although the Comprehensive Plan is not an ordinance or regulation, it serves as the basis for proposing regulations and undertaking specific functional studies and plans designed to implement the recommendations and policies established within it.

NEED FOR CONTINUING PLANNING

Planning is an ongoing process. The Comprehensive Plan must be continually reviewed in light of development trends, the state of the economy, unforeseen influences, changes in community goals, and the continued appropriateness of this Plan's objectives, policies, and implementation programs. The plan is intended to be reviewed on a regular basis so that goals are kept in the forefront and objectives are measured.

Providing an orderly framework for accomplishing goals helps the governing body to make informed decisions about priorities and implementation of recommended actions. Projects may move up or down on the list depending upon resources available, changing opportunities, or emerging needs. It is understood that before any action recommended by this Plan is implemented, it should be evaluated to reflect changing circumstances that affect feasibility and affordability.

Part I

COMMUNITY VISION

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

PLAN GOALS

CHAPTER 1. COMMUNITY VISION

A vision states the *ideal conditions* desired for a community, its hopes for the future. It is used to set goals and direct focus on what is really important to the greater community. Goals are designed to set the course toward policies and actions that will achieve the overall community vision.

The Vision Statement that follows has been created for Northampton Township, with input from elected officials, advisory boards (Planning Commission, Economic Development Corporation, Historic Commission, etc.), and from surveys and public comment gathered through the Holland Master Plan Business Survey, Holland Village Town Hall Meeting and Survey, and Richboro Village Town Hall Meeting and Survey.



Northampton Township Vision Statement

With visible links to our rich history, and our diverse and attractive residential neighborhoods, parks, preserved open spaces and wooded stream valleys, Northampton Township is a healthy and sustainable community. Our community is safe, friendly, and connected, with a vibrant economy of varied businesses and high quality services, making it a great place to live, work, and raise families.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

This plan identifies five basic planning principles on which to establish and maintain a sustainable community. Northampton Township recognizes that a healthy environment, strong economy, and viable community social structure are mutually dependent upon one another. The distribution and nature or types of land uses should not only maintain a healthy balance, but restore or enhance the natural and physical character of the Township.

The following planning principles have been created to meet this plan's overall intent.

Planning Principles

Livable Built Environment: Ensure that all elements of the built environment—land use, transportation, housing, energy, infrastructure, and institutions—work together to provide a high quality of life that is sustainable for living, working, and recreating.

Resilient Economy: Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health. Encourage development and redevelopment strategies that foster sustainable business growth and build reliance on local assets.

Lasting Landscape: Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being, including historic and visual amenities, are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their qualities is a primary objective.

Healthy Community: Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, education, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.

Responsible Regionalism: Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

In addition to these underlying principles, planning strategies are based on goals, policies, recommendations and other applicable content outlined in this plan. Specific goals for each plan element are outlined below. These are organized by topic, but many are interrelated and may have influence in multiple planning areas.

Each goal is a general statements indicating the desired direction for the Township, reflecting long-term conditions the Township wants to maintain or achieve. The general goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide policy and land use decisions to create a sustainable community that meets the needs of the present population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The goals that have been established for the Township are intended to help achieve the community’s vision over time, and they apply during the 10-year Comprehensive Plan term as provided by the PaMPC.

PLAN GOALS

Land Use

Sustain a balance of land uses at a scale and intensity that is compatible with our population, infrastructure capacity, natural environment, and existing character.

Residential Neighborhoods and Housing

Maintain attractive residential neighborhoods and quality homes, and enhance social interaction through design and connectivity among residential developments and to the larger community.

Commerce and Economic Activities

Sustain the economic vitality and tax base of our community with a diverse mix of nonresidential uses.

Transportation, Circulation and Mobility

Enhance efficiency, safety and connectivity for all modes of transportation (vehicular, rail, freight, pedestrian, and bicycle).

Community Facilities

Provide or facilitate high-quality services, essential facilities, and utilities to accommodate the existing and anticipated population growth within the fiscal capacity of the Township.

Natural Environment

Preserve the intrinsic value of natural areas and enhance its biodiversity to provide a healthy living and sustainable environment for people, plants, and wildlife.

Agricultural Resources

Preserve active farmland and conserve agricultural resources in highly valued and sensitive areas.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Provide well-maintained and accessible recreational and community facilities for residents and all age groups including those with special needs and disabilities.

Historic and Scenic Resources

Preserve and foster the intrinsic value of our rural and visual qualities and our historic heritage for future generations to enjoy.

Energy Conservation

Reduce overall energy consumption in the Township while maintaining a high quality of life and vibrant local economy.

Local Planning

Assure that the Comprehensive Plan will be a “living document” used in decision-making by Township officials and committees.

Regional Planning

Create and sustain regional partnerships that expand the Township’s access to resources, further its interests and help mitigate adverse impacts related to growth and development in the surrounding area.

Part II

EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMUNITY PROFILE

NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

HISTORIC AND SCENIC RESOURCES

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

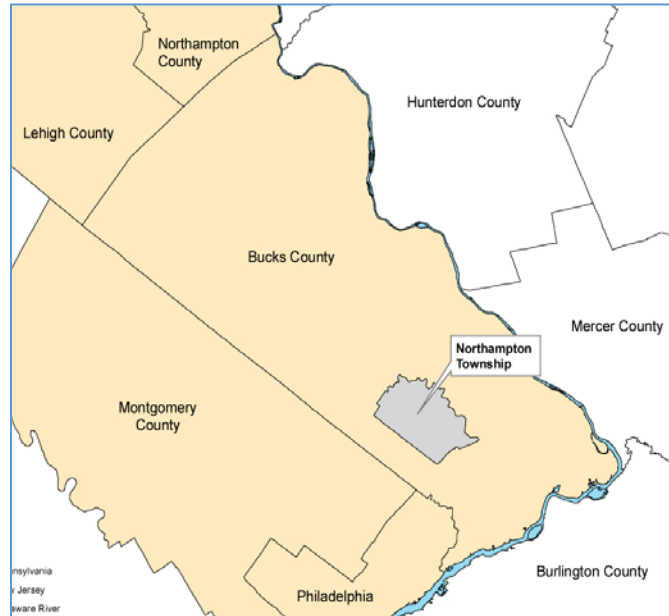
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Northampton Township is a second-class township in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, located approximately 12 miles northeast of Philadelphia. The Township is geographically defined to the northwest by the Little Neshaminy Creek and to the north and east by the Neshaminy Creek. It is bordered by Wrightstown, Newtown, Middletown, Warwick, Warminster, Upper Southampton, and Lower Southampton Townships, as well as Ivyland and Langhorne Boroughs. The community is part of the Council Rock School District and the population at the 2010 census was 39,726. Northampton Township also includes the unincorporated communities and census-designated places of Churchville, Holland, and Richboro.



EARLY HISTORY

The first settlers of the Township were English, followed by the Dutch and the French Huguenots. Although the origin of the name of the Township has never been officially verified, it is believed to have stemmed from the County of Northampton in the English midlands. Northampton was officially organized in 1722 when a petition was filed with the court to form a township from the land left over after the formation of Hilltown, New Britain, Plumstead, and Warrington townships. One of the most notable citizens was Henry Wynkoop, born in 1737, a descendant of early Dutch settlers. Wynkoop, a friend of George Washington, was active during the Revolutionary War and later became the first judge of the Court of Bucks County. He is buried in Addisville Cemetery in Richboro.

The Township's economy thrived because of its excellent farmland and livestock industry. Second Street Pike was originally an extension of Second Street in Philadelphia, and stagecoaches traversed this route to New Hope, where travelers could take a ferry across the Delaware River. By the middle of the 19th century, the Township had five small villages: Jacksonville, Richboro, Addisville, Churchville, and Rocksville. Today, Jacksonville is considered Ivyland, Addisville is Richboro, and Rocksville is Holland (a reflection of the Dutch influence). Each village has changed and expanded to accommodate modern day uses and structures, but many historic features still remain today. The Township has thirteen structures listed on registers of historic places. Four are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and others are eligible for national listing.

As of 1784 Northampton's population was 813 (722 white and 91 black) and there were 108 houses and 106 other buildings. The Township continued to grow by about 100 people per decade until it reached more than 2,000 people in 1860. By 1900 however, the population declined to 1,500.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A summary of baseline conditions and trends in a municipality helps establish the context for assessing potential impacts for decision-making purposes. A review of population, housing, and economic characteristics and trends of the broader community are useful for understanding growth trends, ethnicity, income, and mobility needs of a population. Housing data is useful for gaining insight into economic impacts, as well as changes in housing composition that could affect the character, social organization, and the level of cohesion in a particular neighborhood. Economic data can also provide insight into how the local or regional economy may be affected by a major development or transportation project. The socio-economic characteristics of a community have a direct effect on its public facilities and services. Age, income, education, and family relationships are associated with service preferences. Knowledge about existing land use and land cover becomes more important as a community develops and approaches built out. By looking

at these characteristics, one can begin to forecast the demand that will be placed on local facilities and services in the future.

Population Characteristics

The number of people and their age, racial and ethnic composition, special populations (i.e., low-income elderly or persons with disabilities), education attainment, participation in labor force, employment status, and income distribution all affect the characteristics of a community. Demographic information for Northampton is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC).

According to the census data indicated on Table 1, the Township has experienced continued growth over the past fifty years. The largest increase in population was seen during the 20-year time period between 1950 and 1970. The population more than doubled from 2,248 people to about 6,000 people by 1960, followed by another increase to more than 9,800 people by 1970. Between 1970 and 1980 significant growth continued with the Township reaching nearly 27,400 people, a 73 percent increase in population. Steady, but relatively slower growth, occurred over the next two decades before leveling out in the most recent decade (2000-2010), with a population growth of less than 1 percent.

TABLE 1

Population History

Historical Population		
Census	Population	Percent ±
1930	1,375	—
1940	1,734	26.1%
1950	2,248	29.6%
1960	6,006	167.2%
1970	15,807	163.2%
1980	27,392	73.3%
1990	35,406	29.3%
2000	39,384	11.2%
2010	39,726	0.9%

Source: U.S. Census.

Between 2000 and 2010 population growth in the Township slowed and was less than that of the county and Pennsylvania as a whole. In previous years, the Township and county have grown at comparable rates. Table 2 indicates the rate of growth for Northampton, the county and state for the last two decades (1990 and 2000, 2000 and 2010).

TABLE 2

Northampton Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania Population 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 2000-2010
Northampton Township	35,406	39,384	39,726	11.24%	0.87%
Bucks County	541,224	597,635	625,249	10.40%	4.62%
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	12,702,379	3.4%	3.43%

Source: U.S. Census.

The slower rate of population growth experienced by the Township in the past 15 years can be attributed, in part, to the following reasons:

- Major downturn in the economy and housing market (Great Recession of 2007-2009),
- Township approaching buildout with less land available for large residential developments, and
- Continuing national trend in decrease of family size.

It is estimated that the Township’s population decreased by 139 people between 2010 and 2015. As indicated on the Table below, Northampton’s population is anticipated to grow modestly over the next few decades with an overall 2.8 percent increase between 2015 and 2030. Additionally, the Township will most likely grow at a slower rate than that of the county due in part to remaining land available for future residential development as the Township approaches buildout. However, municipal officials should periodically review population forecasts and make adjustments as appropriate because unforeseen circumstances and building trends may affect the Township’s future housing market.

TABLE 3

Northampton Township and Bucks County Forecasted Population, 2015-2030										
	2010 Census	2015 Estimate	2020 Forecast	2015- 2020 Pop. Change	2025 Forecast	2020- 2025 Pop. Change	2030 Forecast	2025- 2030 Pop. Change	2015-2030 Absolute Change	2015-2030 Percentage Change
Bucks County	625,249	627,367	640,495	13,128	654,792	14,297	669,299	14,507	41,932	6.7%
Northampton Township	39,726	39,587	39,841	254	40,262	422	40,691	429	1,104	2.8%

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, June, 2016

Age

It is important to look at the percentage of individuals in a major age grouping to understand potential needs and how to plan for target services. Table 4 shows the population by major age group for Northampton, the county and Pennsylvania.

TABLE 4

Age Groups	Northampton Township			Bucks County			Pennsylvania
	2000	2010	Percent Change	2000	2010	Percent Change	
Under 5	5.7	4.4	-1.3	6.4	5.5	-0.9	5.7
5 to 19	24.7	22.2	-2.5	21.4	19.8	-1.6	19.2
20 to 44	31.5	24.3	-7.2	35.3	29.3	-6.0	31.5
45 to 64	28.1	34.6	6.5	24.3	30.8	6.5	28.1
65+	10.0	14.6	4.6	12.4	14.6	2.2	15.6
Median Age	38.9	44.4	5.5	37.7	42.0	4.3	40.1

Source: U.S. Census, 2010 Census

Northampton’s largest population group, comprising residents between the ages of 45-64, has seen an increase of 6.5 percent since 2000. Similar growth is seen in the 65 and older age group, where the increase was 4.6 percent. The age groups under 44 all saw decreases from 2000 to 2010. The largest decrease was in the 20-44 year old age group which declined from 31.5 percent to 24.3 percent. This trend is reflective of an aging community, as is the increase in the median age from 38.9 to 44.4 years.

It is noted that this trend of an aging population is not isolated to Northampton Township. Changes for all age groups within Bucks County from 2000 to 2010 are similar, with decreases in all groups under age 44 and increases in most groups over age 45. The county also saw an increase in the median age from 37.7 to 42. This is another indication of the need for age appropriate planning of services not only for the Township but for the region.

A further breakdown of age groups to help assess potential planning needs based on age groupings and assessment of existing services is provided on Table 5. The family-aged groups, ages 35-54, make up the largest number of persons in the Township by a significant margin. Additionally, with 5,631 persons aged 5-14, and with nearly 12,000 people over 55, Township services most likely should continue to focus on family-oriented and senior needs.

TABLE 5

2010 Population Target Age Group

Age Group	Northampton Township	Percent of Total
Under 5	1,748	4.4
5 to 14	5,631	14.2
15 to 19	3,177	8.0
20 to 34	4,779	12.0
35 to 54	12,464	31.4
55 to 64	6,136	15.4
65 to 84	4,961	12.5
85 Years +	830	2.1

Source: U.S. Census, 2010 Census

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, husband-wife family households make up 81.4 percent of total households in the Township. Husband and wife households consist of almost 72 percent of total households. Single male head-of households make up 2.5 percent of households and single female head-of households make up 7 percent of households. Non-family households make up 18.6 percent of households, with 16.2 percent of people living alone. The average family size is 3.20 people and the average household size is 2.84 people. It should be noted that 37.5 percent of households in the Township have children under 18 and 28.5 percent of households have individuals over 65 years of age.

Race and Ethnicity

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, nearly 95 percent of Northampton’s population identified as White. This is a modest decrease from 2000, when 97 percent of the people in the Township identified as White. People who identified as Asian increased slightly, as did Latino or Hispanic of any race. As indicated on Table 6, the Township’s population is more homogeneous in terms of race than the county and state. African American and American Indian populations remained basically the same, making up less than 1 percent of the Township’s population.

TABLE 6

Racial/Ethnic Composition by Percentage of Population

Race	Northampton Township		Bucks County		Pennsylvania	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
White	97.0	94.9	92.5	89.2	85.4	81.9
African American	0.4	0.6	3.3	3.6	10.0	10.8
American Indian	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Asian	1.8	3.5	2.3	3.8	1.8	2.7
Hispanic or Latino – Any Race	0.8	1.5	2.3	4.3	3.2	5.7

Source: U.S. Census, 2010 Census

Education

Northampton residents are highly educated compared to the county and state as a whole. Bachelor’s degrees are held by 28.9 percent of Township residents 25 years or older, with 18.3 percent holding advanced or professional degrees.

TABLE 7

Educational Attainment of People 25 Years and Older in 2010

	High School Graduate + Percent	Bachelor’s Degree Percent	Advanced or Professional Degree Percent
Northampton Township	24.2	28.9	18.3
Bucks County	31.6	21.2	13.4
Pennsylvania	37.8	16.3	10.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2010

Income

As seen in Table 8, the household, family, and per-capita income of Northampton is greater than that of Bucks County or the state. However, the percent increase from 2000-2010 is similar, with the Township having a slightly larger percentage of growth. The percentage of individuals living in poverty in Northampton is significantly lower than that in the state and lower than that in the county.

TABLE 8

Median per Capita Income, 2010

Area	Household Income	Percent Change 2000 to 2010	Family Income	Per Capita	Percent of Individuals in Poverty
Northampton Township	\$105,148	27.2	\$116,135	\$43,253	2.3
Bucks County	\$74,828	25.3	\$90,274	\$35,687	4.9
Pennsylvania	\$50,398	25.7	\$63,364	\$27,049	12.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2010

Special Needs

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Disability Status of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population includes the number of people with a special need or disability. There are 3,418 persons, or 8.6 percent of the Township population, that are in this category. Planning for appropriate access, convenient services, and inclusion of this population in the community should be considered, especially given the growing trend in an aging population.

Housing Characteristics

Housing characteristics (number of units, types of units, soundness of units); length of residency or vacancy rates, and the type of occupancy (owner vs. renter, average household size) provides some indication of the degree of stability of a community. The

number of housing units in Northampton nearly doubled in the 30-year timeframe between 1980 and 2010, with the greatest increase in housing development in the 1980s.

TABLE 9

Housing Units

Year	Total # of units	Change in units	% Change
1980	7,333		
1990	11,486	4,153	56.6
2000	13,138	1,652	14.4
2010	14,391	1,253	9.5

U.S. Census Bureau.

Nearly 92 percent of the Township housing stock is owner occupied, with single-family detached units making up about 80 percent of the housing stock. The median house value and median gross rent are above that of the county and state. These factors are indicative of a stable community.

TABLE 10

Housing Information, 2010

	Northampton Township	Bucks County	Pennsylvania
Owner-Occupied Percent	91.8	77.1	69.6
Renter-Occupied Percent	8.2	22.9	30.4
Detached Single-Family Homes Percent	79.0	63.7	57.0
Median House Value	\$404,700	\$315,100	\$165,200
Median Gross Rent	\$1,249	\$1,078	\$783

Source: U.S. Census

Northampton has experienced a much slower pace of growth over the past decade. Building activity in the Township was relatively low in the first half of this decade with only 62 units constructed, an average of about 12 units per year. In 2015, 27 housing units were built, bringing the total number of new units to 89 (65 single-family units and 24 multifamily units).

TABLE 11

Building Permits

2010 - 2014				2015			
Total Units	Single Family	% Single Family	Three or More Units	Total Units	Single Family	% Single Family	Three or More Units
62	50	81%	12	27	15	56%	12

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

It is difficult at best to forecast the number of housing units that will be built in a municipality over a decade and the years beyond. Future growth is based in part on the vision of Township officials and residents, past development patterns and land availability for future development, and policies on the expansion of community facilities. A modest population growth rate is projected for Northampton based in part on recent trends and less land available for housing development. Using the current Township’s average household size of 2.84 people and municipal population forecasts, about 388 more residential units may be constructed by 2030. However, as with population forecasts, municipal officials should periodically review housing proposals, construction and permit data to determine whether housing patterns are evolving in type or intensity.

TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

Northampton is a Second Class Township with a five member elected Board of Supervisors. The community is part of the Council Rock School District. As the Township’s population grew and land use patterns changed with new development, the government also had to grow to address the need for new or expanded services. The Municipal Complex is situated near Almshouse Road on Township Road in Richboro. The complex provides facilities where municipal business is conducted, including administrative offices, the public works and police departments, fire station, and the municipal authority. The Cultural Center which contains the Library and Senior Citizens' Center, and space for other functions, is located at the other end of Township Road, off Upper Holland Road.

As the legislative branch of government, the Supervisors are responsible for policy decisions and approval of the annual budget. The Township Manager is responsible for implementing the policies set forth by the Board of Supervisors and managing the daily operations of Northampton Township. The Township has departments responsible for specific functional areas. These include:

- Administration
- Code Enforcement
- Finance
- Fire Marshal’s Office
- Library
- Parks and Recreation
- Police
- Public Works

The Board of Supervisors is responsible for appointing boards, commissions and committees which carry out assigned initiatives and make recommendations to the Supervisors on policies and program enhancements. These boards and commissions include:

- Southwestern Bucks County Solid Waste Advisory Committee
- Telecommunications Advisory Board
- Building Code Board of Appeals
- Emergency Services Board
- Historical Commission
- Library Board
- Blighted Property Review Committee
- Parks & Recreation Board
- Pension Fund Advisory Committees
- Northampton Bucks County Municipal Authority Board
- Planning Commission
- Board of Auditors
- Tri-Hampton Rescue Squad
- Vacancy Board
- Veterans Advisory Commission
- Volunteer Fire Company
- Zoning Hearing Board

These public amenities and other community facilities are discussed more in Chapter 9 Community Facilities.

EXISTING LAND USE

Northampton is approximately 26 square miles in size, and has a population density of about 1,522 people per square mile. The Township's land use pattern has changed over the past decades, as it evolved from an agrarian community to a suburban residential community. Northampton is a community of neighborhoods. Residents tend to identify more with living in Richboro, Holland, or Churchville than they do with the jurisdiction of Northampton Township. The identification with neighborhoods provides a way of thinking and planning for how best to serve the community.

Map 1, Existing Land Use, provides a snapshot of the various land uses in the Township and Table 12 provides data regarding each category of land use. Land use was based on the Bucks County Board of Assessment records and information provided by the Township. The acreages and percentages of the following land use categories were obtained using computer calculations generated through Bucks County's GIS (Geographic Information System).

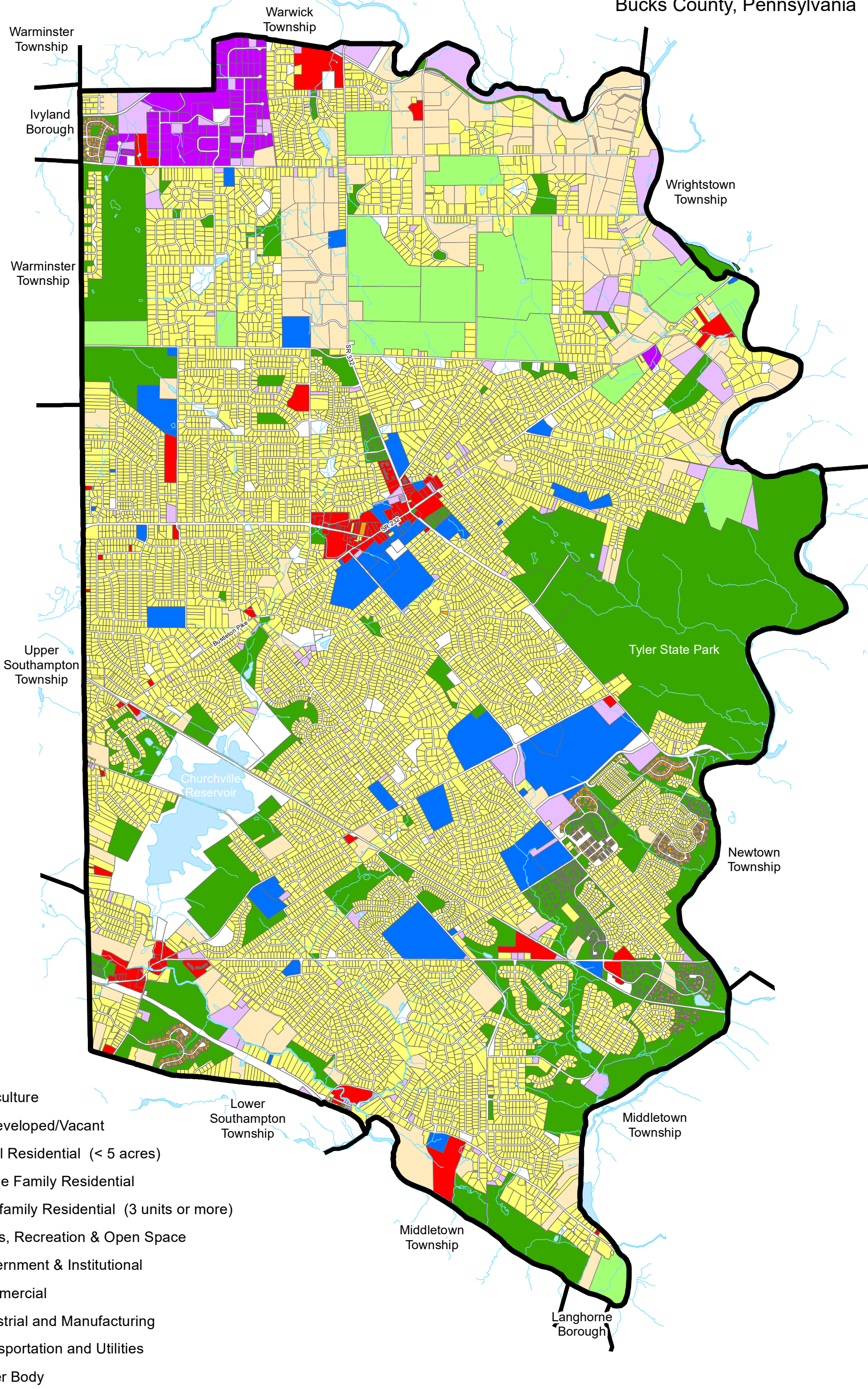
TABLE 12

Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent
Single-Family Residential	7,136.97	46.70
Multifamily Residential	149.25	0.98
Rural Residential	1,433.76	9.38
Agricultural	945.85	6.19
Government and Institutional	732.25	4.79
Parks, Recreation & Protected Open Space	2,982.17	19.51
Commercial	326.33	2.14
Mining and Manufacturing	255.96	1.60
Transportation and Utilities	810.26	5.30
Undeveloped/Vacant	509.91	3.34
Total	15,282.70	100 %

Residential land uses predominate the Township with more than one-half of its land area devoted to single-family, multifamily and rural residential use. Single-Family Residential consists of properties with single-family detached, or attached, one- or two-unit

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



dwelling on lots less than 5 acres. Nearly 47 percent of the land area in the Township is in this residential category. Established residential developments include Fairway Estates, Hampton Woods, Wedgewood Greens, Pines at Northampton, and Brookwood Estates. There are two cluster-designed developments: Villa Estates, with 91 single-family detached homes in Holland, and Tanners Farms, a 220 single-family detached homes with preserved agricultural land.

Multifamily Residential includes properties with 3 or more attached dwelling units, such as townhouses or apartments, and makes up only about one percent of the Township's land area. This area does not include the associated open space provided within these developments. Multifamily units and developments are primarily located in vicinity of the Neshaminy Creek toward the south and eastern portion of the Township.

Rural Residential are properties more than 5 acres in size that contain a single-family residential use. These properties are scattered throughout the Township and make up more than 9 percent of the total land area. Large lot residential units have been constructed in the northern portion of the Township including, Deer Run, Breckenridge Estates, Chimney's Farm, Hidden Meadow and Sunny Meadows. Although these large lot developments will not be further subdivided, other rural residential properties throughout the Township still have the potential to be further subdivided and developed with additional dwellings.

Agriculture land consists of land that is 20 acres or greater where at least one-third of the parcel exhibits agricultural or farm-related characteristics, such as stables, orchards, and active or fallow fields, including lands with a residence on the same property, as well as areas of woodlots and old fields no longer farmed. Not included are woodlots, small tracts, or old fields that have been fragmented through subdivision and are no longer related to the original agricultural use. Agriculture is still an important, but declining, land use in the Township, with just over 6 percent in active farm use. The primary areas in farm use are north of Hatboro Road. The Township also owns several tracts of open space that are leased to farmers. These farm fields and structures remain a significant part of the landscape and help to preserve the Township's farming and rural tradition.

Government and Institutional land includes all state, county, and municipal buildings and facilities, except those that are park and recreation related. All private, parochial and public schools are included, as well as religious uses, cemeteries, emergency service facilities, and fraternal organizations. Nearly 5 percent of the Township land uses are institutional. Major uses that help make this category include the Municipal Complex, Free Library and Senior Center, and Council Rock School District facilities.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space lands make up nearly 20 percent of the total land area in the Township, and includes state, county, and municipal-owned properties, ranging from Tyler State Park and Churchville Nature Center, to Township parks. In addition to publicly owned park land, areas of dedicated open space related to subdivisions and land development contribute to this category. Several parcels of land preserved as open space by Heritage Conservancy are located along streams (two along the Neshaminy Creek, one near Mill Creek, and one along a wooded tributary of the Little Neshaminy), adding to the overall acreage in this category of land use.

Commercial land uses includes (but is not limited to) retail trade establishments, finance and insurance, real estate, restaurants, inns, day care centers, hotels and bed and breakfast establishments. Just over two percent of the Township land area is occupied by commercial uses. Retail and service activities are centered in Richboro extending along Second Street Pike (from the Tanyard Road intersection to the Manor Drive intersection), Bustleton Pike, and Almshouse and Richboro Roads. Crossroads Plaza shopping center has been expanded and office complexes extend westward along Almshouse Road.

The Holland area, along Buck Road, is a smaller commercial area. Churchville also has a few commercial uses, and Village Shires has a commercial center as part of this Buck Road development. Other commercial areas are scattered throughout the Township, including several day care centers. Vacancies exist on properties in both the Richboro and Holland areas as well as in the shopping centers.

Industrial and Manufacturing uses primarily include industrial uses. Uses in this category are concentrated in the four business parks along Jacksonville Road in the northwestern part of the Township.

Utilities and Transportation include roads, three railroad lines, and transmission corridors. The Churchville Reservoir, owned by the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company, contributes to the 810 acres of land used for utilities and transportation, although much of this area is open. These land uses total a little over 5 percent of the Township's land area.

Undeveloped/Vacant land encompasses 3.3 percent of the Township. These lands do not include buildings or land used for any other specific purpose, including agricultural operations. Much of the land in this category is situated in the vicinity of the Neshaminy Creek and contains sensitive natural resources, such as steep slope and woodlands, providing only limited development potential in the future.

CHAPTER 3. NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY



Planning for sustaining places is a dynamic process through which communities plan to meet the needs of current and future generations without compromising the ecosystems upon which they depend by balancing social, economic, and environmental resources.

A sustainable community understands that the natural and human environments make up a holistic system, comprising individual components that interrelate and affect the whole. It accepts that communities are first and

foremost for people and that the primary objective of the planning and development process is to improve the quality of life of its residents, socially and economically. When tied to a community's vision, sustainable development can successfully resolve many issues faced by communities today.

The planning and development process for Northampton to be sustainable generally include the following considerations: ecological systems like forests and wetlands; cycles of geology, hydrology, and meteorology; resources like air and water; habitat conservation and native flora and fauna; maintenance of the scale of the built form; nearness to nature; waste management; security and health; opportunities for solitude, congregation, and recreation; educational and economic opportunities; accessible location of services and mix of uses; access to transportation and communication systems; pedestrian systems and spaces; historic preservation; and cultivation of a sense of community and a sense of place.

The following sections provide background information and baseline data related to the natural and built environment that can be assessed when policies and strategies are being considered to help maintain harmony and balance within the environment.

NATURAL RESOURCES



Natural resources help define a community's character and significantly contribute to quality of life. Northampton's topography and wealth of natural resources, such as geology, farmland and soils, forests and vegetation, waterways and floodplains areas, are all natural elements that contribute to the aesthetic and rural character and play a vital role in sustaining a healthy environment. Understanding the importance of environmental attributes can help guide land use planning policies, providing a framework within which more informed sustainable decisions can be made. Flooding, water pollution, soil erosion, insufficient water supply and the loss of critical vegetation and habitat are a few of the negative consequences of development that can result when the limitations of the natural environment are not considered.

Regulatory Authority

State and federal regulations protect many of Pennsylvania's natural resources. Some of these regulations, such as those pertaining to floodplain and wetlands protection, establish minimum protection standards that must be reflected in local government zoning ordinances. However, not all natural resources are protected by state or federal law.

The basis for local protection of natural resources is found in the Commonwealth's Constitution, in judicial decisions and in the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code* (MPC). In 1968, the Constitution was amended to state in Article 1, Section 27:

"The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are common property of all people, including generations yet to come."

The MPC charges local governing bodies with the responsibility for protecting citizens' health, safety, and welfare through comprehensive planning and land use regulation. The General Provisions of the Township zoning ordinance are intended to be achieve the following natural resource goals:

- Provide standards to foster the amount of open space within the Township;
- Control the intensity of development in areas of sensitive natural resources or natural features in order to reduce or eliminate adverse environmental impacts;
- Protect the people's right to clean air, pure water and the natural, scenic, historic, recreational and aesthetic values of the environment;
- Protect the soils, waterways, trees and other vegetation; and,
- Protect natural and agricultural resources which are a part of the ecological system to which the residents are all bound and therefore are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come, and which must be protected to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the people.

The following sections provide background information on these important resources and provide a basis on which to form conservation and protection strategies.

Geology, Landforms and Slopes

Geology affects landforms and slopes, water supply, the quality and composition of soil, and, by extension, the suitability for human life. The resulting topography provides the backdrop to a community's landscape and influences the type of vegetation and wildlife found in the region.

The geologic formations underlying Northampton include the Stockton and Lockatong formations that continue across neighboring municipalities. Structural issues related to geology tend to be site specific, though from a regional planning perspective, the most critical geologic issues are related to groundwater quantity and quality. The Stockton formation, a sandstone rock structure underlying most of the Township, is characterized by low, rolling country terrain that generally provides a good source of groundwater and soil infiltration. The Lockatong formation, concentrated along the area of the Neshaminy Creek is comprised of argillite with occasional zones of thin black shale. It is characterized

by ridges, and because of its hard impervious shale and fractures, ground water yields are generally poor.

The Township is located within the Piedmont Province of the Appalachian Highlands. This great band of rolling country stretches from New York to Georgia and is comprised of gently rolling uplands, with occasional low hills and ridges atop more resistant rocks. Piedmont soils, topography, and climate have fostered the eastern deciduous forests.

The slope of the ground or terrain is the vertical change in elevation over a horizontal distance that forms a natural or artificial incline. Steeply-sloping areas can represent a unique part of the natural landscape deserving protection for both their environmental and scenic value. Steep slopes in Northampton exist along the Neshaminy Creek, with some of the steepest slopes within Tyler State Park.

Stormwater runoff on slopes can cause accelerated erosion as top soil and vegetation is altered resulting in increased siltation, pollution, loss of stream capacity, and flooding problems. Slope disturbance is regulated in the EP, CR, AR, and R-1 zoning districts and allow no more than 30 percent of areas containing steep slopes (15% to 25%) are allowed to be developed, regraded or stripped of vegetation, and no more than 15 percent of areas containing steep slopes (25% or greater) are permitted to be altered.

Soils

Soils sustain the vegetative component of landscapes, support the renewable production of crops, serve as the foundation for buildings and roads, and as a mineral resource (sand, gravel and clays). In the past, soils that had proper slope and sufficient moisture were farmed, and those that were too steep or too wet were used for grazing and woodlots. As local dependence on food and forage production decreased and our ability to reshape the landscape and change drainage characteristics increased, the role that soil played in land use and development changed. The same qualities of soil that made it viable for agricultural production—slope, drainage and structural capabilities—also made it desirable for development.

Soils are not renewable resources, and accelerated erosion or other degradation diminishes these resources and causes pollution of the township waterways and streams. In contrast, minimization of soil disturbance contributes to conservation of native habitat, maintenance of natural water regimes, and capabilities to accommodate storm- and wastewater infiltration and renovation.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Web Soil Survey, considerable variation exists in the types of soils covering Northampton. Noteworthy soil types, such as Bowmansville silt loam, a floodplain soil, are located along the Neshaminy and other creeks. Two other general soil groups are Lansdale-Lawrenceville Association and Urban land-Chester Association.

Lansdale-Lawrenceville soil groups cover the majority of the Township and is characterized by nearly level to gently sloping terrain with moderately well-drained soils. Lawrenceville soils may have development limitations due to slow permeability and seasonally high water tables, whereas Lansdale soils development limitations depends on the slope of the land. Areas with steep slopes are generally unsuitable for on-site sewage disposal because of stoniness, which is typical of the steep areas. The Urban land-Chester association, generally situated in a built up area to the south of Mill Creek, is nearly level to sloping, and consists of soils formed in loamy material weathered chiefly from gneiss and schist.

For purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the following soils groupings are highlighted:

- Agricultural Soils
- Alluvial and Floodplain Soils
- Hydric Soils

Agricultural Soils

Agricultural soils (Classes I-IV) are deep, not prone to erosion, nearly level, well-drained, and generally devoid of stones and rocks. The gently sloping topography of the upland areas, combined with the nature of the soils, has allowed full development into mature, fertile soils. Agricultural soils cover the northern areas of the Township where several

farms have been preserved with conservation easements. Chapter 4. Agricultural Resources provides additional information on this topic.

Alluvial and Floodplain Soils

Alluvial soils result from the repeated deposit of floodwater sediments over years; they indicate not only past, but potential future flooding. Floodplains often comprise alluvial soils, and are low-lying areas of land, adjacent to bodies of water, and often at risk for unpredictable, recurrent, and possibly life-threatening inundations of floodwaters. Designated floodplains generally extend considerably farther up the reaches of the stream valleys than does the mapping of alluvial soils, incorporating considerable areas mapped as hydric soils.

Hydric Soils

Hydric soils are formed under anaerobic or saturated conditions; they are a strong indicator of possible wetlands. Hydric soils tend to lie along the stream corridors and extend in finger-like branches into lower-lying areas, seeps and springs at headwaters throughout the Township. Such soils frequently exhibit very shallow depth to seasonal water table and pollutants can easily enter the groundwater system through these soils, potentially contaminating water supply sources or reappearing in surface waters downstream. Hydric soils are generally unsuitable for development as they can cause wet basements and foundation problems and do not adequately absorb and filter wastewater.

The Township regulations do not specifically address or regulate these soil types.

Woodland and Vegetation

Woodlands are forested areas, groves, or stands of mature or largely mature trees. Woodlands provide an aesthetic element and play an important role in the ecological balance and well-being of the environment, including capturing and returning water to the atmosphere, holding soil in place, and providing a cooling effect on surrounding areas. Trees and their understory protect biologic diversity by providing habitat structure for a multitude of other plants, animals, invertebrates, and microorganisms. The connectivity of woodlots allows for the movement of wildlife with some protection from predators. Wooded areas also create buffers between the built environments, provide recreational opportunities, improve air quality, and promote infiltration and water quality benefits.



Wooded areas in the Township had been cleared for cultivation and farming purposes with the progression to development for houses and other land uses. Approximately 5 percent of the Township is still covered by woodlands most of which are situated along the Neshaminy Creek and in Tyler State Park. There also are scattered woodlands in the Churchville area around the reservoir and in the county park, as well as in the vicinity of Stony Ford Road.

The Township recognizes that continued loss of tree cover, or the overall tree canopy, has implications for the health and prosperity of the community and forest ecosystems. Strategies to encourage preservation of remaining trees and woodlands as well as increasing the township tree canopy, should be considered by the Township. For example a certain amount of woodland cover, determined as a percentage or through a tree replacement formula, could be required, or to be newly established for development site. Reforestation and afforestation¹ are practices that can be applied to specific zoning districts or along stream corridors.

¹ Reforestation is the replenishment of trees in areas that have suffered deforestation, for example, logging and clear-cutting of trees. Afforestation is the act or process of establishing a forest on land not currently forested or has not been used as woodland for over fifty years.

Nonnative, or invasive plant species, also pose significant competition with native plants that threaten ecosystems and wildlife habitats. Proper planting and management of vegetation on public and private land is important to help native species thrive. In addition, provisions to encourage native plants in landscaping plans (e.g., buffer yards, along streets, in parks and open spaces) will further enhance the sustainability of the community.

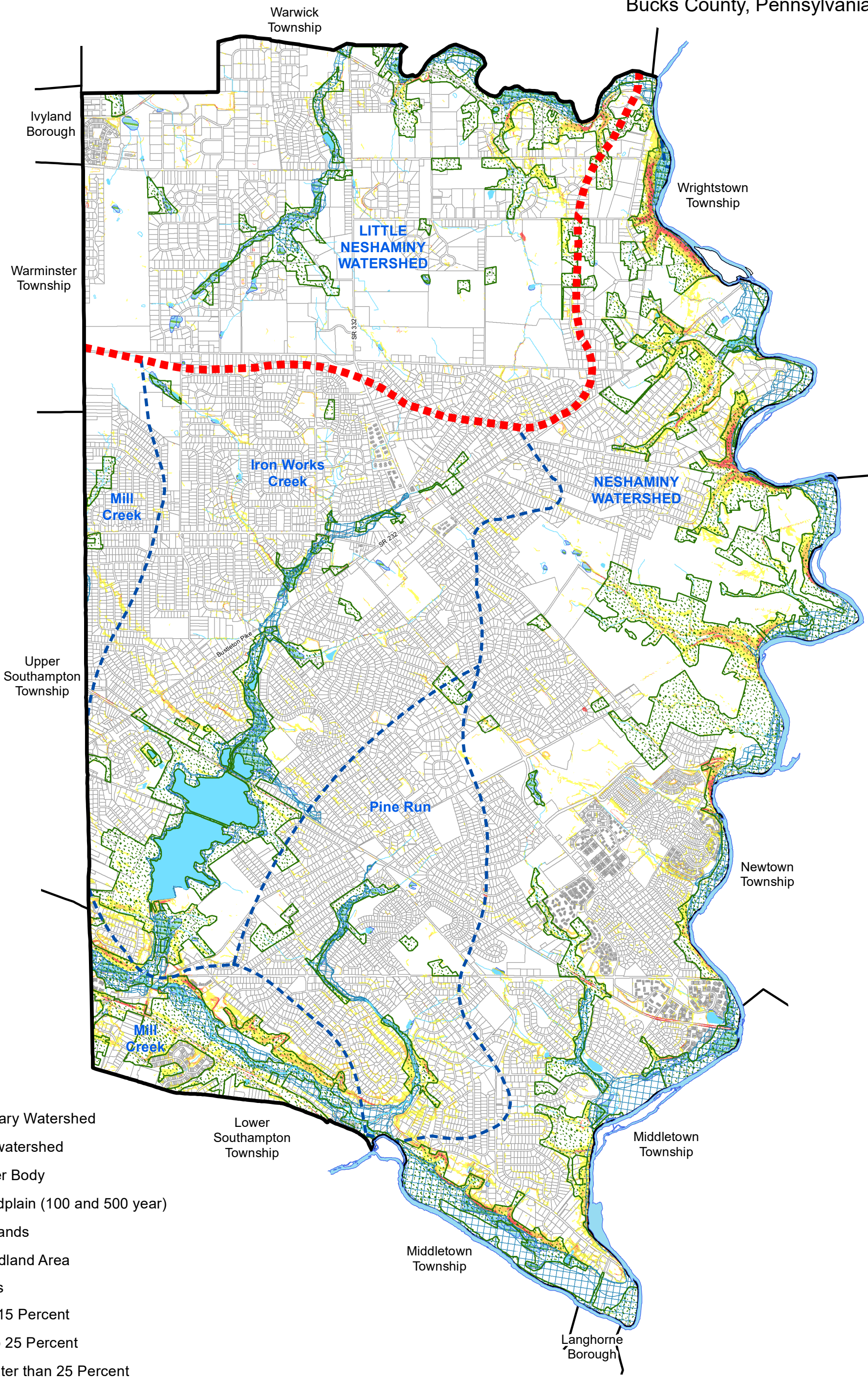
Water Resources

Water resources, including waterbodies, watershed basins, wetlands, and floodplains, are indicated on the natural resources map (Map 2). Neshaminy Creek is joined by two significant tributaries; the Little Neshaminy Creek and Mill Creek. Mill Creek also has two tributaries, Ironworks Creek and Pine Run Creek. Ironworks Creek runs above and below the Churchville Reservoir and joins the Mill Creek at Buck Road and Pine Run joins Mill Creek just upstream from Playwicki Park. All of the Township drains to the Delaware River through the Neshaminy Creek and its tributaries.



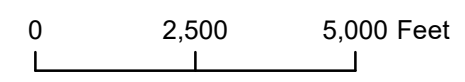
Map 2. Natural Features shows the primary watershed drainage basins and the streams and tributaries to the Lower Neshaminy Creek. The designated use for Neshaminy and Little Neshaminy creeks is a warm water fishery (WWF) with sections designated for use by migratory fishes (MF) such as the American eel. Neshaminy Creek Watershed is listed as a Category I Priority Watershed under the state’s Unified Watershed Assessment which identifies priority watersheds needing restoration. Assessment results are based on biological and habitat surveys conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), and accordingly, the main stem of the Neshaminy Creek is considered impaired. Results reflect that the aquatic life present does not meet criteria established for expected species diversity and abundance.

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



- ■ ■ ■ Primary Watershed
- - - - Subwatershed
- Water Body
- Floodplain (100 and 500 year)
- Wetlands
- Woodland Area
- Steep Slopes
 - 8 to 15 Percent
 - 15 to 25 Percent
 - Greater than 25 Percent

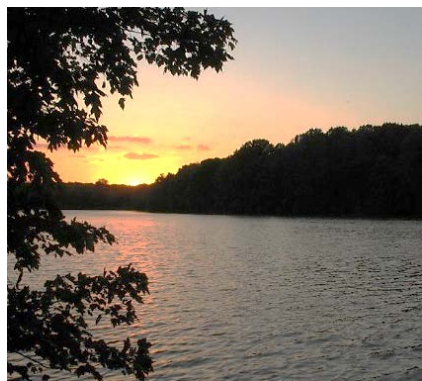
Source: Bucks County Board of Assessment, 2012
 Prepared by: Bucks County Planning Commission
 October, 2017



The Little Neshaminy Creek watershed is on the US Clean Water Act (Section 303(d)) list of impaired waters due to water and flow variability and siltation from urban stormwater runoff as well as nutrient inputs from municipal point source discharges. The Little Neshaminy Creek River Conservation Plan (2007) outlines management activities for municipalities that are aimed at protecting water quality, reducing stormwater runoff and flooding, protecting habitat, educating the public, and managing cultural and park and recreation resources.

Mill Creek and Ironworks Creek watersheds are not listed as impaired. PA DEP indicates that these stream reaches maintain a relatively high percentage of riparian vegetation.

Churchville Reservoir



Churchville Reservoir is a 172-acre impoundment, created by the damming of the Ironworks Creek and owned by the Aqua America Water Company (AAWC). The lake serves as a floodwater impoundment and provides supplemental flow to the AAWC drinking water treatment plant on the main stem of the Neshaminy Creek in Middletown. Water quality and the trophic state of Churchville Reservoir are currently being studied, but historic data provided by AAWC indicate that the lake is eutrophic with the accumulation of nutrients that support algae growth and other organisms. The lake contributes to the wildlife habitat and species diversity of Churchville County Park that occupies land adjacent to the lake. Water quality and aquatic life surveys have been conducted as part of the *Churchville Nature Preserve Master Plan and Watershed Conservation Plan (2006)*. The study area contains a total of about 650 acres which includes lands owned by Northampton Township (64 acres), Aqua PA (397 acres), and Bucks County—Churchville Nature Center and Churchville Farm (192 acres).

Floodplains and Flood Hazard Areas

Floodplains are the land areas adjacent to a stream channel that are subject to periodic inundation, and are usually categorized by the frequency of this inundation. The 100-year floodplain is land area that has a one percent chance of being flooded in a given year

and is illustrated on the natural resources map (Map 2). The 100-year floodplain is commonly used to delineate land that has significant risk of being inundated during a rainstorm event and serves as the basis for regulations restricting development in the floodplain. To qualify for the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program, communities must enact ordinances that regulate construction and certain human activities in floodplains to prevent loss of life and property due to flooding.



Floodplain identification and protection is important for many reasons including the following:

- development within floodplains is subject to the destructive force of floodwaters;
- urbanization may augment downstream flooding hazards; and
- floodplains have significant ecological, recreational, and amenity values.

In addition, areas covered by floodplain soils may be prone to flooding or periodic high water, but are not always directly related to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate maps (FIRM). Floodplain soils (Bowmansville silt loam, Rowland silt loam, Hatboro silt loam, and alluvial soils) are generally found along streams and stream tributaries, with a higher concentration in the northern portion of the Township.

The Township has adopted a stand-alone floodplain ordinance in compliance with recently updated FEMA regulations. Delineation of floodplain areas are provided on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) effective March 16, 2015. More detailed hydrologic studies of areas having experienced significant flooding, and areas which may not have been mapped previously, are in the process of being completed, with updated FIRMS to be released in the future.

Wetlands

A unique landform, wetlands are often called bogs, swamps, marshes, seeps or springs and they are seasonally or perennially wet. This situation can be due to replenishment of water from a groundwater source or the pooling of water due to poorly drained soils. Wetlands are often characterized by soil types, the presence of standing water for parts of the year and the plant communities that they support

Wetlands also provide habitats for wildlife, often serving as breeding areas for amphibians and fish, and can serve as important passive recreational areas for bird and wildlife viewing. Wetlands provide an additional benefit of improving water quality by filtering nutrients and other pollutants from the water. Wetlands can serve as a storage area for floodwaters and reduce the velocity of stormwater runoff. The



Township has several areas of wetlands located in the area of the Ironworks Creek and the Churchville Reservoir and along the Little Neshaminy tributary above Hatboro Road.

Riparian Corridors

Riparian corridors are the areas of vegetation, such as forests, that grow along stream banks. These vegetated areas, or stream buffers, serve as natural filters of stormwater and help to stabilize stream banks and reduce erosion. Riparian buffer areas also can help to control flooding and provides habitat for wildlife. They shade and cool the waterway which benefits aquatic systems, especially for species susceptible to overheated stream habitats.

A Riparian Buffer Assessment undertaken by Heritage Conservancy (based on criteria in the lower Neshaminy creek watershed conservation plan) indicates tributaries where inadequate vegetated buffer exist. The assessment could be used as a tool for establishing priority planting areas to protect water quality and habitat areas appropriately.

SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS

Significant natural areas are resource areas which, by virtue of their unique or rare conditions, require special protection. The 2011 update to the *Natural Areas Inventory of Bucks County, Pennsylvania* (NAI) lists significant natural areas in the county, and they are assigned one of four levels priorities for preservation based on distinctive combinations of biological, ecological, hydrological, and geological characteristics. Properties on the NAI list are given preference in the Natural Areas grant ranking system as part of the Bucks County Open Space Program, which provides funds that can be matched with state, local, or private funds to purchase sites or acquire conservation easements.

Northampton is located within the Neshaminy Creek Conservation Landscape, which extends to the main stem of the Neshaminy Creek from its origin at Chalfont where the West Branch and the North Branch join, to where it becomes part of the Delaware Estuary at Hulmeville. The lower portion of the Little Neshaminy Creek straddling Northampton and Warwick boundary, just above its confluence with the Neshaminy is included, as are the lower portions of Core Creek and Mill Creek/Iron Creek. The landscape contains several expanded nodes formed by the State and County parks, all connected by the 70 mile-long riparian corridor. It includes priority areas from the 1999 Natural Areas Inventory (Rhoads and Block 1999): Forks of the Neshaminy—along its northern border with Warwick, priority #2; Churchville County Park, priority #2; and Playwicki Park and Neshaminy Creek Corridor to Route 413, priority #3).

Playwicki Park and Neshaminy Creek are bounded by Northampton and Middletown Townships, the Neshaminy stream corridor stretches two miles along Langhorne Borough's northern boundary. The corridor is notable for the presence of mature forest on the banks and adjacent upland areas as well as the presence of a rare parasitic flowering plant, smartweed dodder (*Cuscuta polygonorum*), in the alluvial floodplain deposits. Bank erosion is a concern for this section of the Neshaminy Creek.

Tyler State Park and Churchville County Park are also identified as core areas within the landscape. The State park comprises 1,711 acres in Northampton, Newtown, and Wrightstown Townships, and includes a 3.2 mile stretch of the Neshaminy Creek, part of

which is dammed creating an area for boating. Despite the impaired status of water quality in the Neshaminy and tributaries, the creek corridor still harbors significant elements of biological diversity. Most notable is the diversity of reptiles and amphibians and birds. The park, formerly a private estate, contains mature forests, successional forests, forested floodplains, and fields. About one-quarter of the land is tilled by local farmers under agricultural leases. The park is cited in the eastern Pennsylvania Birding and Wildlife Guide (Brock, et al. 2009) for excellent birding opportunities year round.

Churchville County Park, priority #2, lies along the shore of Churchville Reservoir and the County, AAWC and Township own much of the land around the lake. These lands encompass a wide range of habitats, including stands of mixed oak forest, white and red pine, successional red maple forest, wetlands, grasslands and agricultural fields. High numbers and diversity of breeding birds make this location an important bird habitat in Bucks County. Unusual nesters include little green heron and Cooper's hawk. Churchville is also the site of a large breeding population of the state-threatened redbelly turtle. Permanent protection and public access is recommended for all open land around the lake that is not part of the park. Control and management of invasive plants continues to be a major challenge at the park.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Section 301.1 of the PaMPC authorizes a comprehensive plan to include an energy conservation plan element to promote energy conservation and the effective utilization of renewable energy sources. This provision allows a municipality to plan for ways to reduce energy consumption and to promote the effective utilization of renewable energy sources. An important component in building a sustainable community is investing in renewable energy resources and energy efficiency measures. This approach can save money, strengthen local economies and improve the environment.



The availability of energy resources is essential to residents, businesses, institutions, and all levels of government. Energy is required to heat and cool indoor environments, fuel vehicles, and power computers, appliances, and equipment. Energy is critical to modern personal, vocational and professional lifestyles and, as continuing technology advancements are made, reliance on energy resources increases. Encouraging new and innovative approaches to improve energy efficiency as well as educating residents to effective techniques to use in the home, at work and in their choice of transportation will help reduce energy consumption in the community.

In 2013, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission completed a regional energy use and greenhouse gas emissions inventory for the nine-county DVRPC region. As part of this inventory DVRPC allocated both energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to individual municipalities based on 2010 data. The report gathered information on energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy expenditure information for Northampton Township and it is intended to serve as a starting point for municipal policy-making. An update to the inventory is expected to be prepared by DVRPC so that changes over time can be monitored.

DVRPC estimates that Northampton Township consumed 3,890 billion British thermal units (BBTUs) of energy in stationary (e.g., home heating) and mobile (e.g., automobile travel) applications. Combustion of fuels to produce the energy consumed in the Township, in combination with non-energy sources of greenhouse gases, resulted in the release of 379,000 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MTCO₂e).²

The mobile-highway sector, including private passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, and public transit vehicles, consumed the most energy (1,710 BBTUs). Motor vehicles with trips either starting or ending in Northampton Township consumed 10,200,000 gallons of motor gasoline, containing 1,270 BBTUs of energy. Altogether, emissions related to mobile energy use from all sources attributed to the Township amounted to 134,000 MTCO₂e. from all sources.

The residential sector produced the most emissions, emitting 172,000 MTCO₂e. Electricity was the largest source of GHG emissions by the residential sector, resulting in 118,000

² <http://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/MunicipalEnergy/mcdDetail.aspx?mcdcode=4201754688>

MTCO_{2e} by using a total of 242,000,000 kWhs or 827 BBTUs of electricity. Electricity also provided the most used energy in terms of BTUs consumed for the combined commercial and industry sector (76,000,000 kWhs or 259 BBTUs) and was the largest source of the Township's GHG emissions by the sector, resulting in 36,800 MTCO_{2e} of emissions.

The largest proportion of Northampton Township's non-energy greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions was from Industrial processes, contributing 14,700 MTCO_{2e} of the municipality's total emissions.

TABLE 13

Non-Energy Greenhouse Gas Emissions						
Agricultural Sources	Fugitive Emissions	Waste Management	Wastewater Management	Industrial Processes	LULUCF*	Total
2,049	1,872	6,666	3,865	14,745	-5,274	23,923

**Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry*

Municipal policies and actions can have some effect on the amount of fuel required for transportation through infrastructure and its ability to control land use via zoning and subdivision ordinance provisions. For example, appropriate placement of sidewalks and pedestrian paths to provide convenient access to public facilities, businesses, parks and other destinations provides people with an alternative to driving, as do bike lanes. Allowing parking lots for carpooling and promoting the use of public transit facilities will help reduce the overall amount of miles driven by individuals. Also, as plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and battery electric vehicle ownership expands, there will be a need for publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Allowing for these types of facilities and implementing other conservation initiatives can help reduce atmospheric pollution.

CHAPTER 4. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

Agriculture is the leading industry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and plays a major role in the economy of Bucks County. Data from U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture, indicates that Bucks County contained 827 farms totaling more than 64,000 acres. According to NASS's the average size of a farm in 2012 was 77 acres, down slightly from 81 acres in 2007. Bucks County ranks 31st out of 67 counties in the State in terms of total value of agricultural products sold and 7th in regards to the total value of crops sold (including nursery and greenhouse). The county's market value of production was \$62,418,000.



Farming has been a tradition in Northampton for more than 300 years. Due to the gently sloping topography of the Township's upland areas and the quality of its soils, Northampton is covered by some of the best farmland in the County. The U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) classifies agricultural soils (Classes I-IV) as deep, not prone to erosion, nearly level, well-drained, and generally devoid of stones and rocks. Agricultural soils cover the northern areas of the Township, where several farms have been preserved with conservation easements.

The amount of land devoted to farming activities has declined significantly over the past 50 years as cultivated fields were converted to residential developments and other uses. In one decade alone, between 1980 and 1990, agriculture uses in the Township declined from about one-third of the total land area to less than 20 percent. Based on the county's 2015 land use data prepared for Northampton for this comprehensive plan document, about 6 percent of the Township land remains in active agricultural use, with approximately 1,000 acres under cultivation. More than 600 acres of farmland are protected by state, county, and local easements. These farmland acreages do not include the cultivated land area located in Tyler State Park, which, for purposes of this planning document, are classified as parkland.

Traveling through the Township from north to south, the landscape becomes less rural and dominated by suburban residential developments, shopping centers and other uses. A handful of farmers account for much of the acreage farmed, most of which is located in a large land block above Hatboro Road and in Tyler State Park. Retail outlets and accessory uses also occur on some of the farm tracts. The amount of open space and the proximity of farmland to residential uses is one of the characteristics which makes Northampton attractive. Views of farm fields, historic farmhouses and barns enhance the scenic quality of the community, adding to its appeal for residents.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

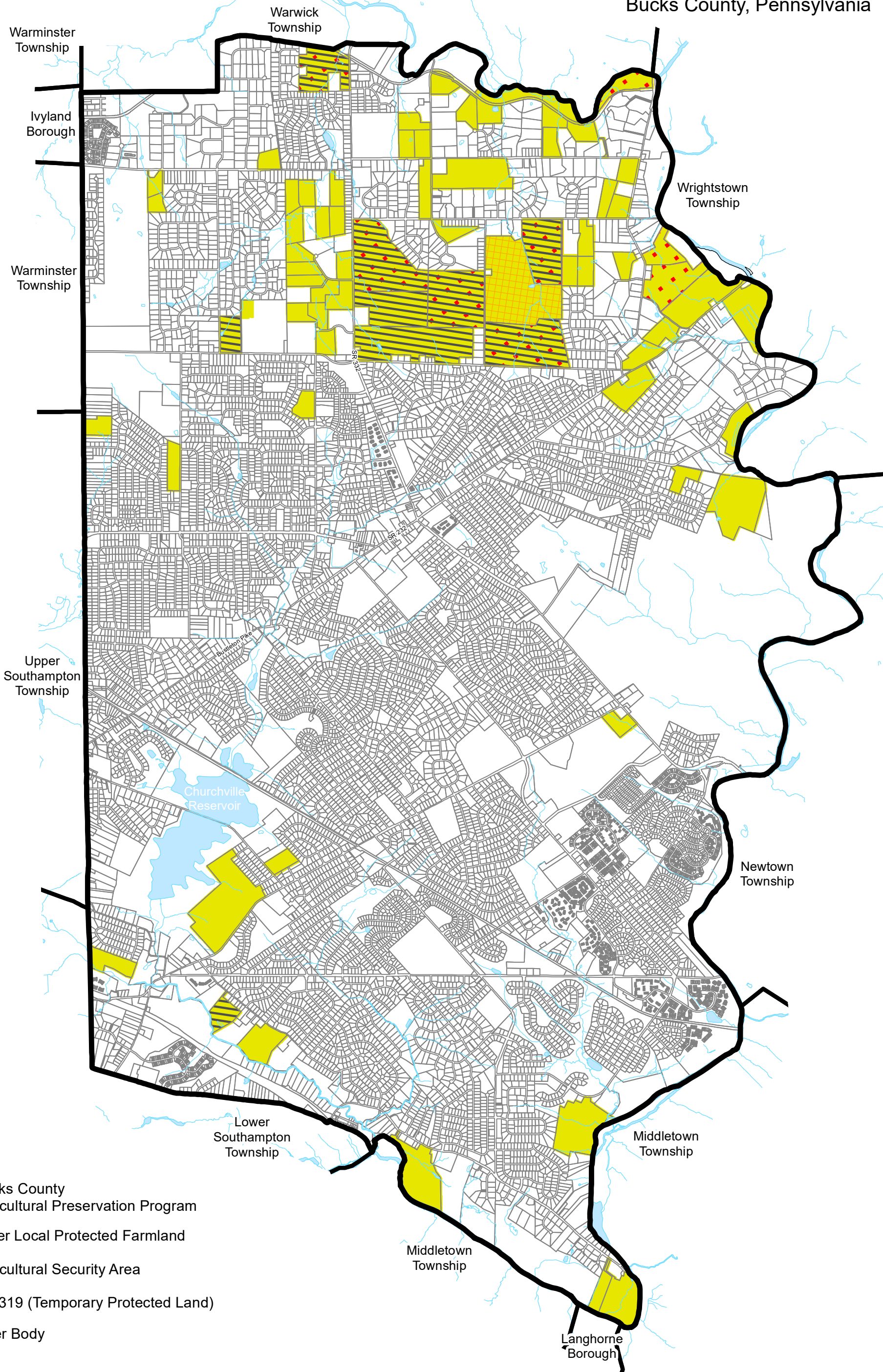
Farmland is an asset to Northampton. Map 3. Agricultural Resources illustrates existing agricultural land uses in the Township. Continuation of farmland preservation and the agricultural industry will depend on the interest and support of the farming community, as well as the willingness of Township officials to lend governmental support, through ordinances and resolutions. The agricultural industry is also dependent upon succeeding generations of farm workers and positive advancements in technologies.





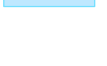
The Township's *Open Space Plan* (2010) is intended to be a guide for Township decisions regarding agricultural preservation and natural resource protection. The *Open Space Plan* indicates that the Township recognizes its agriculture land base as an important community asset, helping to bolster the local and regional economy, providing jobs, and promoting healthful community connections. The plan states that permanently preserving what remains of the agricultural identity is the priority for acquisition, with focus on properties temporarily protected through the Act 319 Program.

Preservation Programs

In 1989, the Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (BCALPP) was created to purchase agricultural conservation easements on viable farms throughout the county. The easement is a legally binding document filed with the deed of a property,

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania

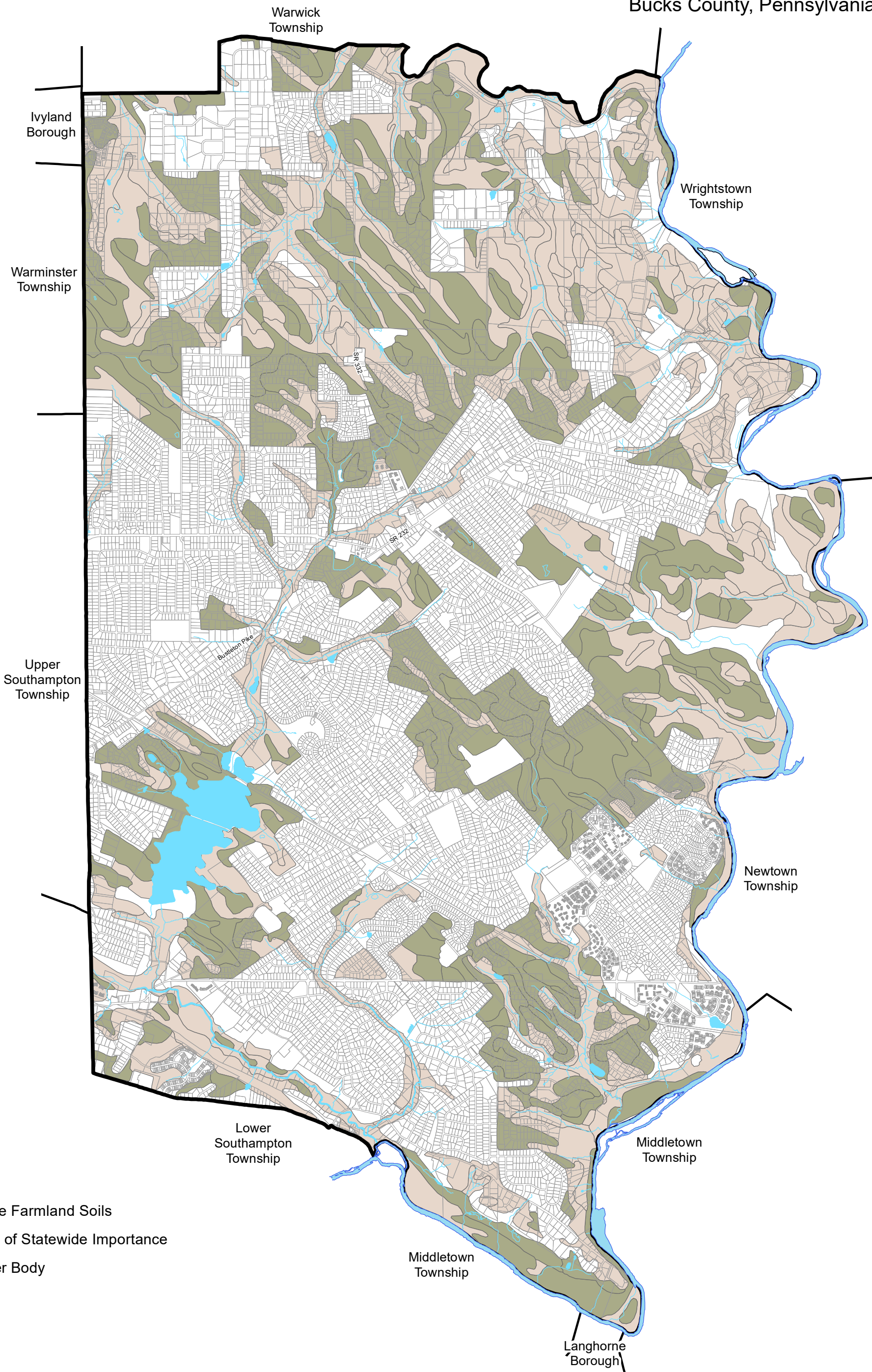





-  Bucks County Agricultural Preservation Program
-  Other Local Protected Farmland
-  Agricultural Security Area
-  Act 319 (Temporary Protected Land)
-  Water Body

Source: Bucks County Board of Assessment and Northampton Township
 Prepared by: Bucks County Planning Commission
 October, 2017

0 1,500 3,000 Feet
 1 inch = 3,000 feet

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



-  Prime Farmland Soils
-  Soils of Statewide Importance
-  Water Body

restricting its use to agricultural and directly associated uses. Restrictions carry with the land and are binding upon current and future owners. A conservation easement allows the landowner to use farmland for agricultural uses while retaining private ownership.

The BCALPP compensates farmers for the difference between the fair market value (development value) and the agricultural value of their land. To be eligible for this program, the following criteria must be satisfied:

- Size requirement: 50 acres (minimum for individual parcel or group of contiguous parcels). Tract size may be less if located adjacent to other preserved farmland;
- Location: within an Agricultural Security Area;
- Soil criteria: 50 percent (minimum) of Class I through IV soils;
- Harvest criteria: 50 percent (minimum) harvested cropland/pastureland;
- Plan approval: approved U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Plan in effect.

As of December 2016, two properties totaling approximately 165 acres have been permanently preserved by the Bucks County Agricultural Preservation Program and the Bucks County Open Space Program in conjunction with Northampton Township:

- The 116-acre **Rook Brothers Farm**, formally known as Heuscher Farm, is located on the eastern side of Temperance Lane (TMP# 31-010-011).
- The **Parson's Tract** (TMP# 31-001-041) contains 49 acres of protected open space, located on the northeast side of Almshouse and Old Jacksonville Road.

Other agricultural land has been preserved in the Township. These farms contain preservation easements that were acquired by the Township through purchase, donation, or as a result of open space required in cluster subdivision developments. In these situations, the owner retains the use of the land and is responsible for maintenance, and the Township is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the easement. The following properties are preserved by local or private easements:

1. **Farm & Garden Station** is a 40+ acre nursery situated in the northernmost section of the Township, west of Almshouse Road adjacent to the New Hope-Ivyland Railroad (31-001-015).

2. **Solly Brother's Farm** is located on the eastern side of Almshouse Road south of Spencer Road. The 86-acre farm is family-owned and operated. Baked goods and fresh, locally-grown produce are sold at the farm market. Educational tours and seasonal events are held at the farm to teach people about farm life and to promote healthy eating habits (TMP# 31-005-030).



3. **Tanner Brothers Dairy Farm** is about 83 acres located along Almshouse and Hatboro Roads. The on-site retail farm market store sells farm fresh produce and dairy products and has become a staple in the lives of many Bucks County residents (TMP# 31-005-031).
4. Between the Tanner and Solly farms, TMP# 31-005-029-001 (55 acres) was preserved by the Township. When combined with the neighboring Rook properties, a large, contiguous area of farmland is formed.
5. There are three parcels on Hatboro Road, west of Almshouse Road, in which the Township acquired development rights. TMP#s 31-077-073, 31-005-017 (Haist property) and 31-005-001 are currently used for crop cultivation.
6. **Bryan Farm** (TMP#s 31-010-049 and 31-010-069), located along the Neshaminy Creek, is owned by the Township and is deed-restricted.
7. In addition to these preserved properties, Tyler State Park leases land for farming. However, here are other farmland tracts of varying sizes situated throughout the Township that are not protected by an easement or under the control of a government entity. Most notable is the Rook property located in the northern portion of the Township.

Agricultural Security Area (ASA)

Act 43 of 1981, created the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) program to help protect the agricultural industry from issues arising from new development occurring in areas

historically used primarily for farming. Participation in an ASA is voluntary for a landowner or group of landowners, whose parcels together must comprise at least 250 acres. Parcels must be viable agricultural land and may be comprised of non-contiguous tracts at least 10 acres in size and consist of at least 50 percent of Class I through IV soils based upon NRCS's classification. ASAs promote viable farming operations by protecting farmers from nuisance ordinances and by enabling them to participate in state farmland preservation programs. Properties in agricultural security areas are not necessarily preserved farms, although many have been preserved. Northampton's ASA is made up of nine parcels comprising more than 400 acres. Map 3 illustrates ASA properties in the Township.

Preferential Tax Assessment

Numerous landowners in the Township have chosen to enroll their property into a preferential assessment program under Act 319, the Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act of 1974, also known as the "Clean and Green" Act. Under the program, soil classification and yield per acre determine a property's tax assessment, and properties that qualify for differential assessment under Act 319 are assessed at current use, instead of full market value. To be eligible for the program, the land must have a designated use of agricultural, agricultural reserve or forest reserve³. In addition to the use classification requirement, the agricultural use land must also be at least 10 acres or generate at least \$2,000 annually in farming-related income; agricultural reserve and forest reserve land must also be at least 10 acres. Enrollment in the program is continuous, unless a property is removed from the program by the landowner, or if it is determined eligibility requirements are not met in some manner. Act 319 lands lack permanent conservation mechanisms; however, use of the Act shows the desire of the landowner to maintain properties as farms or woodlands. Farmland that is permanently protected through municipal or county preservation programs can be preferentially assessed under Act 319 if the landowner applies and qualifies.

³ Agricultural use land is land that has been producing an agricultural commodity or has been devoted to soil conservation under an agreement with the federal government for at least three years. Agricultural reserve land is open space that is free and open to the public to use for outdoor recreation. Forest reserve land is land rented out to produce timber and wood products.

There are more than 1,700 acres of land in Northampton temporarily protected under the Act 319 program.

Agricultural Zoning

Act 38, the State’s Agriculture, Communities, and Rural Environment (ACRE) legislation, is important for farms to balance business interests of agriculture with the environmental concerns of local citizens and elected officials. Under Act 38, a municipality is prohibited from adopting restrictive ordinances that prevent normal farming operations in conflict with state law.

The Township’s *AR-Agricultural Residential* zoning provisions function as a form of agricultural preservation zoning. This zoning district permits agricultural uses, including kennels, horse boarding and riding academy, forestry, on 5 acre lots and single-family homes on a lot of at least one acre. Other uses, such as farm retail sales and cluster designed subdivisions are permitted by Conditional Use subject to provisions outlined for each use. A minimum open space ratio of 30 percent is required for a cluster subdivision in the AR district.

Several preserved farms and non-preserved farm properties (e.g., Rook and Gilmour) are located in the AR zoning district. Other farmland tracts are situated in the CR-Country Residential zoning district.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

In simplest terms, **sustainable agriculture** is the production of food, fiber, or other plant or animal products using farming techniques that protect the environment, public health, human communities, and animal welfare. Understanding the agricultural capabilities of a site is important to sustaining farming activities that will, over the long term:

- satisfy food and fiber needs;

- enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base;
- make efficient use of nonrenewable resources; and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
- sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and
- enhance the quality of life for farmers and the overall community.

Sustainable farming practices include mitigating runoff from nutrient-laden farm fields by good management practices that reduce surface runoff and soil sedimentation. To reduce the risk of contamination from pesticides, farmers reduce the use of fertilizer and use no-till practices and integrated pest management techniques based on specific soils, climate, pest history, and crop conditions.

AGRICULTURAL USES AND FOOD SUPPLY

Farms in Northampton produce healthful food, create social assets for residents and visitors, and are a very distinctive part of the Township.

Healthy living continues to be promoted nationwide and societal awareness in the way we eat has resulted in a larger demand for fresh and locally-grown produce, specialty crops, and organic foods and products. The desire for healthy foods and natural fibers has expanded opportunities for agriculture products to serve the local market as well as to supply regional markets. As more farmers are becoming engaged in value-added processing of farm products and farm-based businesses, niche and specialty markets have emerged from the traditional farm stand as well as increases in the number of farmer's markets. Demand for crops used in the production of alternative energy sources has also brought changes to plants grown by the agricultural industry.

By purchasing products from local farms, residents help support their own local farm economy. And as consumers become more self-reliant for food, they are less vulnerable to disruptions in food pricing and supply. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) provide an economic and working partnership between a farm and the farm retail market, as consumers purchase shares in the seasonal harvest. For the farmer, part of the

cost of raising capital is reduced, along with part of the risk of a poor harvest, while shareholders gain a greater sense of community with the farm and benefit from fresh foods locally grown.

“Pick Your Own” produce, seasonal hayrides, corn mazes, and other agri-tourism and agri-business enterprises are part of local farming trends to keep farms profitable. Allowing for agricultural-related businesses that are incidental to the agricultural use, with safeguards to reduce impacts on the surrounding properties, will benefit farmers. Permitting agricultural-associated services, such as farm supply stores, machinery and parts suppliers, and feed operations to serve the farming community may also be warranted, especially in industrial/manufacturing zones.

CHAPTER 5. HISTORIC AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Historic preservation is an inherently sustainable activity. Preservation maximizes the use of existing materials and infrastructure, reduces waste, and preserves the historic character of older places and towns. By preserving historic structures, we are able to share the very spaces and environments in which the generations before us lived. Historic preservation is the visual and tangible conservation of cultural identity.



Architecture is one aspect of our heritage with which we can interact and adapt. Some buildings have specific historic context and must be meticulously and exactly preserved. Many historic buildings, however, are inhabited and maintained by private residents. These buildings change with us, thus recording a piece of each generation's story. We have an obligation to respect these community resources and preserve them for future generations.

In addition to solidifying a community's past, preservation can help strengthen a community's future. Historic buildings help create vibrant, cultural destinations that can be the centerpieces of community life: a place to shop, invest, create and live. Simultaneously, preservation can be a tool to boost economy and quality of life through tourism, art, festivals, and other activities, which in turn can draw investment, revenue, and economic growth in the surrounding area.

Like many communities, Northampton continues to grow and change, and while it is unrealistic to preserve and protect all of its historic resources, identifying the most important resources for preservation is important. Recognizing this, the Northampton Township Historical Society was formed in 1973 to help preserve local historic resources and to educate residents about its heritage. The Board of Supervisors also created a Historic Commission consisting of seven members which serves as an advisory group in matters concerning the community's historic assets. A pictorial history of the Township called, *Winds of Change*, was published in 1985. The book provides the history of the Township, how sections developed, and its notable

citizens. This resource provides insight into the local heritage and are essential to understanding early settlement patterns, and collectively, shape the Township's unique character and identity.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

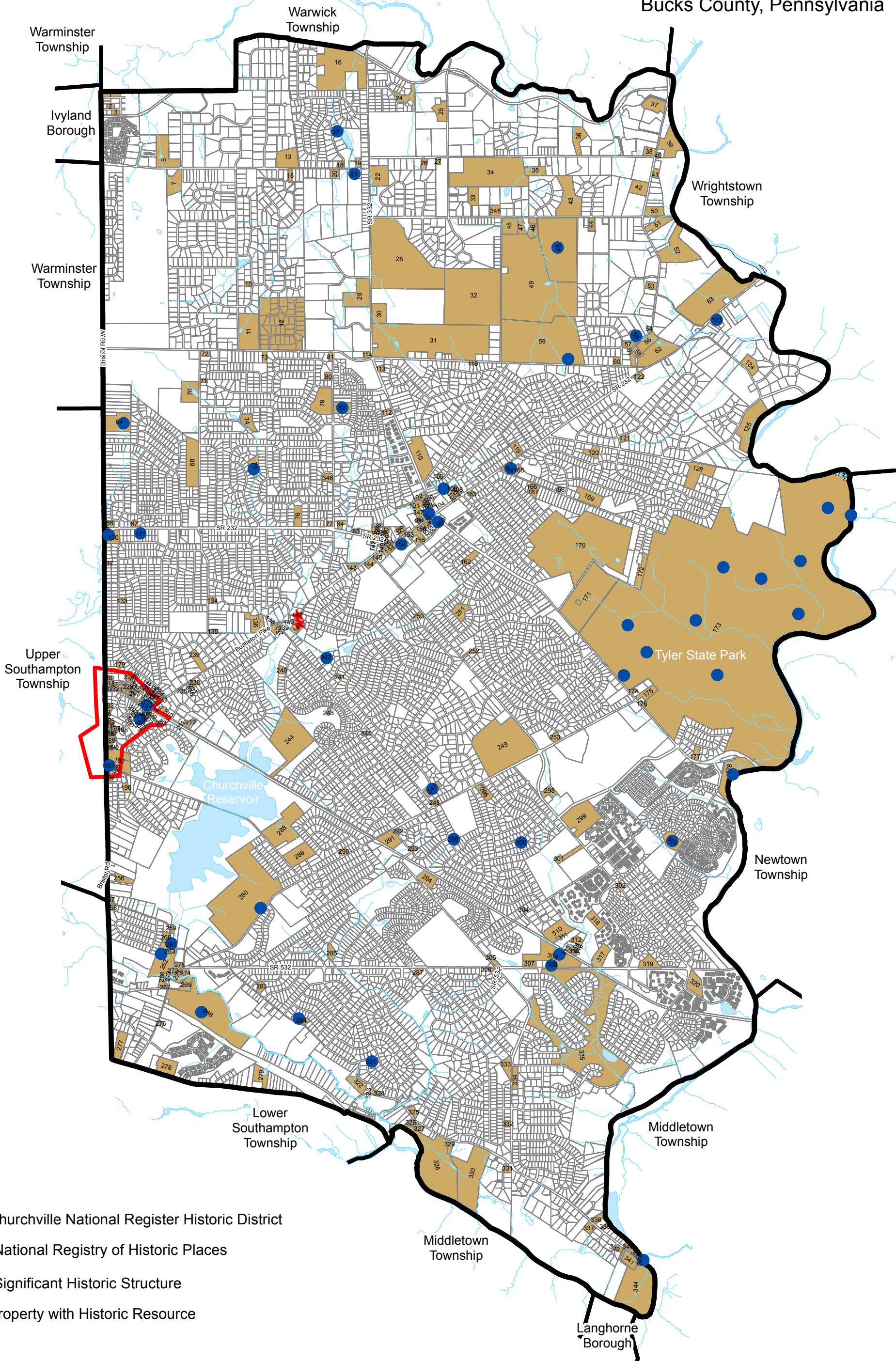
Historic resources, as defined by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), consist of buildings, objects, or sites eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as those identified as historic by the community on the basis of age or local importance. A comprehensive inventory of Township resources was conducted by the Heritage Conservancy in 1989. Based on the inventory completed, 257 resources were identified as being more than 100 years old. Map 5. Historic Resources shows parcels that had contained a resource at that time. Although not all of the structures are still standing, and not all have significant historic value, the inventory provides a good start for the further designation of important historic structures.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the “official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation” and “part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archaeological resources.”

The first step in having a property placed on the National Register of Historic Places is for the PHMC to determine that the property is eligible for inclusion. A comprehensive inventory or survey is the means of identifying and documenting the history of buildings, sites, and districts eligible to be classified and protected as historic resources.

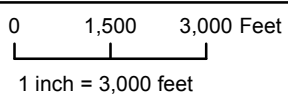
Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



- Churchville National Register Historic District
- ★ National Registry of Historic Places
- Significant Historic Structure
- Property with Historic Resource

Note: This map is for general land use purposes only.

Source: Northampton Township Natural Resources Inventory, 1989
and PA Historical and Museum Commission
Prepared by: Bucks County
Planning Commission October, 2017



Criteria for Listing on the National Register

The National Park Service's standards for evaluating the significance of properties were developed to recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have made a significant contribution to our country's history and heritage. The criteria are designed to guide state and local governments, federal agencies, and others in evaluating potential entries in the National Register.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

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

Source: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/listing.htm>

Northampton has many notable buildings and structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as properties eligible for national listing. The following provides a summary and description of some of the most significant areas and buildings located in the Township. While most of the buildings are preserved in private ownership, Northampton is fortunate to have many historically significant buildings and structures located in Tyler State Park.



Northampton has one National Register Historic District and four properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The following provides a summary of these historic resources:

- **Churchville Historic District**, located along Bristol Road, Bustleton Pike, and Cornell and Knowles Avenues in Northampton and Upper Southampton Townships, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. It is locally significant in the area of architecture for south central Bucks County. . The village shows the impact of the late nineteenth century transportation network on the development of a typical rural village. Churchville also reflects methods of construction, use of materials, workmanship, and style changes and trends in the vernacular architecture during this time period and in this geographic area. The village accurately represents its period of significance and retains its architectural integrity. The district includes 140 contributing buildings, seven contributing structures and one contributing object in the crossroads village of Churchville. They include a variety of residential, commercial and institutional buildings and notable examples of Gothic Revival and Bungalow/Craftsman architecture. Notable buildings include the **John Hillings House** (c. 1812), **North and Southampton Dutch Reformed Church** (1816), **Churchville Train Station** (1891), general store (1883), **Studebaker and Willys Car Dealership** (1920s), and **Churchville Telephone Exchange** (1900).

- **Churchville Station** is a contributing property of the Churchville Historic District and has been restored and is used as a private residence. SEPTA signage—installed in 1984, one year after train service had ended—remains in place at the station parking lot. Independent filmmaker Tom Quinn used the Churchville train station in his film *Lusting for Dust Words*.



- **Willow Mill Complex** include three interrelated stone buildings visible from the curve on Bustleton Pike in Richboro, often referred to as **Herzog's Corner**. The complex includes the 1739 **Shaw-Leedom House** and **spring house/smoke house**, the 1847 **Sager House** and **wagon house**, and mid-nineteenth-century **grist mill**. All three buildings are currently private residences, but initially they were part of a thriving

industrial and agricultural complex important to the early development of Northampton. The structures were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. The Shaw-Leedom House is a 2 1/2-story, five bay, stone dwelling with a gable roof in the Federal style. The Willow Mill is a four-story stone building that was converted to residential use in 1938. The Sager House is a 2-1/2-story, three-bay, ashlar stone building. It has a gable roof with dormers and shed roof “Dutch Stoop” kitchen wing. Associated with it is a two-story, frame wagon house dated to the 1800s.

- **Hampton Hill** also known as the Bennet-Search House, is a stone house with a gable roof built about 1744, with a larger section built about 1790. The house is thought to have harbored slaves on the Underground Railroad and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.



- **Twin Trees Farm** included a one room rubble brownstone structure with an attic above built in 1740 and was the site of important meetings in the pre-Revolutionary days. The larger cut brownstone section of the house in the Georgian style was built in 1779. The rear side is built of rubble fieldstone. It was probably the first store and post office in the Richboro area, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.



- **John Thompson House** was built in 1740 with a distinctive gambrel roof and is the former home of John Thompson, a local American Revolutionary War veteran. Despite also being known as the **Hip Roof House**, the house has an elongated-gambrel roof instead of a hip roof. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.



- **Twining Ford's Covered Bridge**, originally built in 1873 was located upstream on Sackettsford Road. In 1991 it was destroyed by arson fire. Completely rebuilt by hand in 1997 to original specs (with the addition of a window on each side) using native hemlock and oak, the bridge is now located in Tyler State Park off Swamp Road, and only accessible by foot, bike, or horseback from nearby gravel parking lot. The 170-foot town truss bridge is one of the longest in the County.



Photo Credit: Ron Greenspan

In addition to the sites on the National Register, the Township contains many other historic resources, some that may not be formally nominated, but are considered historically significant and National Register-eligible properties. Northampton has played an important role in the protection of many of these historic resources. For example, both the Spread Eagle Inn and Richboro Schoolhouse were moved from their original locations to protect their historic and structural integrity. Other buildings and structures have been restored, rebuilt, and incorporated into land developments to protect them from degradation and possible demolition. These resources are indicated below:

- **Spring Garden**, an early mill-based community in the Township and also known as “Spring Garden Mills” was established in proximity to the Neshaminy Creek at the crossing of the Newtown-Richboro Road. The hamlet takes its name from Dripping Spring located near the mill dam. Instead of bubbling up from the ground, the water from the spring drips from an overhanging bank and roots of shrubs and other vegetable matter growing on the bank. The Doan outlaw band are reputed to have hidden their horses in a dense thicket near Dripping Spring on October 22, 1781, just a few hours before they skulked into Newtown to hold up Treasurer John Hart and rob the County treasury of 1,307 pounds of hard gold and paper money.

Today, the 200-year old mill is located in Tyler State Park. It was part of a grain and gas station operation in the 1920s, when George Tyler took over running the mill. The original exterior was stone with stucco later applied and a porch added in the 1920s. Local residents may remember when the mill was in operation after World War II. Remnants of its grinding machinery are still visible inside the building on the upper floors. Since 1983 the mill has been home to, and an auditorium for, the Langhorne Players, Inc., a community theatre group. In collaboration with the state park, the Langhorne Players have undertaken renovations and painted the entrance portion of the building.

- **Spread Eagle Inn** was moved a few hundred feet from its original location on the corner of Almshouse Road and Second Street Pike to better protect its integrity from heavy truck and traffic vibrations and emissions. Unfortunately, the building suffered recently from water damage and is currently not occupied.



- **Richboro Schoolhouse** was moved from its original location on Second Street Pike between December of 2002 and January of 2003. The building is located to the east of Almshouse Road to the rear of the School House Shopping Center property (behind the bank) and contains offices for a local engineering firm.



- **Villa Joseph Marie School, Maria Hall**, was originally built in 1860 and formerly served as the home of Northampton resident, Adrien Cornell. In 1932, the Cornell farm was acquired by the Sisters of St. Casimir. Maria Hall, damaged by a fire in 2012, received a historic preservation award from Preservation Pennsylvania for its reconstruction. The school also received a Grand Jury



Photo by Doug Crompton

Award from the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia. It is presently used for school offices, meetings, and events.

- **Nike Missile Battery PH-07** was one of thirteen installations in the Philadelphia area that provided protection from Soviet aerial attack during the 1954–1970 period of the Cold War. A historic roadside marker was dedicated on October 05, 2007. The



The Nike system used radar to guide Ajax antiaircraft missiles. From the mid-1960s through the early 1970s, this missile system was replaced as technology and terms of arms control treaties evolved. The missile launch area and magazine are located about 800 feet north of Route 332, about 0.8 miles east of Route 232 on land which is now the sports complex. It is surrounded by baseball fields and basketball courts. The only Nike building standing at this site was the former “mess hall” which later became the Northampton Township Library and is now the Township recreation offices.

Additionally, the following properties are listed as significant and may be eligible for listing on the National Register. Updating the Township inventory periodically to reflect changes due to demolition, modification, deterioration, addition, or other changes will help enable the Township to continue in its preservation efforts.

- Willow Bank Farm located on Tanyard Road.
- John Van Artsdalen Farm, located off Pulinski Road built in 1760.
- Dr. Hugh Tombs Grist Mill (1773) located on Chinquapin Road.
- Merry Dell Farm, a 1748 farmhouse with a springhouse and old carriage shed.
- Shelmire Mill Tenement, a 1710 structure associated with the mill on Buck Road.
- Hidden Trail Farm, a 1780 farmhouse off Almshouse Road.
- Reckitis Farm located on Jacksonville Road.
- Dungan Farm located on Spencer Road.
- James Cornell Farm located on Sunrise Court off Lower Holland Road.
- Thomas Cornell House located on Vanderveere Avenue.
- Solly Barn located in Tyler State Park.
- VanArtsdalen Farm located on Foxcroft Drive.

Historic Preservation Programs and Tools

A variety of tools exist to protect historic resources. Methods of historic resource protection include National Register designation and regulation by ordinance, whether through an Act 167 historic district, through the zoning ordinance, or both. Ordinance provisions that aid in resource protection include historic district designation, use modifications, preservation incentives, exterior design guidelines for buildings that are built, rebuilt, or altered in historic areas, and delay of demolition ordinances. These techniques are described below.

While Northampton has resources on the National Register, such listings do not provide protection. For the most part, these designations simply express national recognition of the worthiness for preservation. Protection under the National Preservation Act of 1966 is limited and is not adequate to guarantee preservation. It does, however, mandate an additional level of review (known as Section 106 Review), should a federal action, or federally-funded action impact the property physically or visually. Examples of actions that would trigger a Section 106 review include a project funded with money from one of the federal grant programs, a project that would involve a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, or a project which would involve Federal Highway money (which would trigger a review called a Section 4F review, the transportation equivalent of Section 106).

The threat to historic resources is usually not from federally-funded projects such as road widening or urban renewal, but rather, destruction or alteration by private property owners or demolition by neglect. Many buildings are threatened or have been destroyed as farmland is converted into residential subdivisions or as redevelopment occurs. Surviving buildings often lose most of their rural or village context. In other situations the integrity of the historic buildings themselves has been compromised due to additions and modern alterations. Underused and neglected outbuildings have been allowed to deteriorate and in many cases razed.

The federal government encourages the preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures through the Federal Historic Tax Incentives program. The National Park Service administers the program with the Internal Revenue Service in partnership with State Historic preservation offices. Listing on the National Register enables the owner to rehabilitate the property for income-producing purposes as well as to take a 20 percent

Investment Tax Credit on federal income taxes. Additional regulations from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation apply to this process and must be stringently adhered to in order to qualify for the credit.

A similar but lesser tax credit (10 percent) is also available for owners who rehabilitate older structures (built before 1936) that are not on the National Register. These tax incentives for preservation can help attract private investment in historic properties. The incentives also may generate jobs, enhance property values, and augment revenues for the municipality through increased property, business and income taxes. Through the program, neglected or abandoned historic buildings such as schools, churches, or barns, can be restored to other uses that maintains their historic character.

Listing, as with eligibility, places no restrictions on the actions of private landowners or developers but has the effect of alerting landowners to the significance of a resource. The area in which the resource is located receives recognition for having a historically important resource, and indirect benefits may accrue to both individual owners and the community through increased property values, potential tourism, and other economic development.

Potential archaeological sites have little protection from land disturbances. The exception to this is any DEP-permitted project is required to be evaluated for the potential existence of archaeological resources. These potential resources should be given attention, on a site-by-site basis, to assure that important opportunities for research and discovery are not lost.

Historic Marker Program

Historic resources can be commemorated with a marker through the Historical Marker Program of PHMC. Any individual or group may nominate a structure or site for such a marker. If the independent panel designated by PHMC approves the marker the nominator must submit a grant application for half of the cost of the marker, and designate a nonprofit organization to serve as a sponsor to cover the balance of the cost.

PHMC staff helps nominators and sponsors with composing the text to be inscribed on the marker, finding a suitable location for it, and planning the dedication ceremony. The sponsor, however, is ultimately responsible for obtaining all necessary permissions to install and dedicate the marker. PHMC owns and maintains the marker once it is installed. Applying for historical markers through the Historical Marker Program helps promote awareness of such resources.

Historic Preservation Zoning

Historic resources can also be protected through the zoning power granted municipalities by Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The MPC requires local zoning ordinances to protect historic resources and allows special classifications and regulation for places of unique historic value. Historic zoning regulations enable a municipality to regulate the uses that may be permitted in an area of historic properties or a historic district. They also can regulate other characteristics such as the density of development, the maximum sizes for buildings, and the setbacks from property lines.

Historic District Ordinance

Under State Act 167 of 1961, the Historic District Act, municipalities can adopt a historic district ordinance and designate an area as a historic district. Such an ordinance would regulate the appearance of places with historic resources by permitting the review of changes to the exterior portions of buildings and structures. Historic districts designated under the provisions of Act 167 must be surveyed and documented, with all supporting materials submitted to the PHMC for certification of the district. Act 167 requires the establishment of a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), which reviews and advises the municipal governing body about any alterations within the district. The governing body then decides whether to approve or deny the proposal.

The level of regulation that a municipality may undertake under a historic district ordinance can vary from adopting provisions to control the demolition of historic buildings to governing in detail, the alteration, repair, and maintenance of the external features of a historic structure. Historic district ordinances have the advantage of providing municipalities with a wider amount of control over the appearance and

development of historic districts, but they can also be controversial because that very same control sometimes alarms residents who fear that such regulation will interfere with the use of their property and impose greater costs for renovations and repairs. An evaluation to determine the merits of establishing a historic district ordinance under Act 167 should be considered.

Districts created under Act 167, the Historic District Act, are not zoning districts. The Act 167 historic district review process is a procedure separate from zoning and a historic district ordinance is enacted as a stand-alone ordinance, although it should be cross-referenced in the zoning ordinance.

Certified Local Government

Local governments that fulfill program standards administered by the PHMC can eventually receive designation as a Certified Local Government under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. To participate in this program, municipalities need to meet certain other criteria, including effective enforcement of the historic district ordinance and compliance with appointment, training, and reporting requirements. Membership in this program allows municipalities to apply for grants under the Certified Local Government Grant Program. Such grants can be used for cultural resource surveys, technical planning and assistance, educational and interpretive programs, and other preservation activities. If a historic district ordinance is established under Act 167, consideration should be given to applying for Certified Local Government status.

Local Zoning Ordinance Versus Act 167

While the state planning code requires local zoning ordinances to protect historic resources, Act 167, the Historic District Act of 1961, affords a parallel track of protecting resources by authorizing municipalities to enact stand-alone ordinances. Act 167 ordinances create state-authorized historic districts and require appointment of a qualified review board to advise the governing body on the appropriateness of proposed construction and renovations within a historic district.

Local zoning ordinances emphasize use of property, while historic district ordinances authorized under Act 167 emphasize review and regulation of changes to the exterior of buildings. If a municipality has a zoning ordinance and a separate historic ordinance, the zoning regulations remain unaffected. Zoning and subdivision ordinances are generally the best means of preserving dispersed resources that do not fit within a historic district.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are another method of preserving the appearance of historic buildings and neighborhoods. They help to ensure that structures keep their historic character if they are rebuilt, restored, or renovated. The guidelines serve a similar purpose for new construction. They illustrate preferred design approaches to give builders and developers a sense of what the community is looking for. Guidelines may be attached to an Act 167 historic district ordinance or may be incorporated into the zoning ordinance. Design guidelines are also useful when coordinated with the requirements of a historic district. Residents easily recognize what is encouraged and what is discouraged in making design choices.

Design Guidelines for Northampton Township Village Overlay District was developed to extend the reach of the Holland and Richboro Village master plans by outlining design considerations and recommendations for development and renovations within Holland

and Richboro. The guidelines serve as design requirements for development proposed within the Village Overlay District and will assist developers understand the community's design intentions at the front end of the project review process. The guidelines also highlight the importance of patterns of symmetry, form, and other important design details, while addressing diverse elements such as sign placement, lighting, parking, and pedestrian orientation.

Design guidelines for the villages of Holland and Richboro have been drafted by the staff of the Bucks County Planning Commission and adopted as amendment to the township's subdivision and land development ordinance. The design standards provide guidance for existing and new development to reflect the traditional historic character of the Township. Architectural themes, styles, and construction materials common to Northampton's heritage are presented and serve as a template for developers to consider to realize the Township's goal regarding site design and building form. These design guidelines may have a broader application as they relate to historic preservation and ensuring infill development compatibility with nearby historic resources.

Control of Demolition

This provision provides a waiting period before a demolition permit is issued, so that means of saving the structure can be considered. If it cannot be saved, the delay could afford the opportunity for salvaging noteworthy elements and documenting the structure and its history.

Use Modifications and Preservation Incentives

Use modifications, sometimes described as adaptive re-use, and preservation incentives are useful and effective approaches to protecting and encouraging use of historic structures that can be incorporated into the zoning ordinance. The historic resource provisions in of the zoning ordinance could permit uses such as residential conversion, library or museum, office, village-oriented shop, guest house, and crafts as permitted adaptive re-use of historic structures.

Preservation incentives selectively award bonuses for preserving historic structures and incorporating them into new development. A density bonus or lot-averaging options are techniques that allows a large lot for a historic building and smaller lots for new residential development. Incentives for preserving historic structures within nonresidential development might include bonus provisions for building coverage or impervious surface.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources are characterized by natural and visual qualities, among them prominent geological formations, pristine landscapes, historic structures and sites, villages, farmlands, and unique combinations of resources such as stream valleys and wooded hillsides. Unlike the delineation of a natural resource, a scenic area requires identification based on objective criteria regarding uniqueness and attractiveness. Northampton has a variety of scenic qualities that create a visual character for the Township. Scenic areas were first delineated by field survey in 1988. The survey focused on views from roadways rural and semi-rural areas of the Township. Locations containing aesthetically pleasing views that had the potential to be obstructed by insensitive development were mapped.

The preservation of scenic resources reinforces a unique sense of place and helps to retain our cultural and natural heritage for generations to come. Although less objectively defined than other natural features, they include such amenities as:

- Farm houses, farm structures, and fields visible from many Township roads.
- Woodlands adjacent to or between farm properties.
- The wooded stream corridor of the Neshaminy Creek.
- The woods and fields of Tyler State Park, visible from many Township roads and neighborhoods.

Historic structures are the most frequently encountered visual accent and are integral to the way in which we perceive the landscape. Fieldstone (often covered in stucco), log,

frame, and brick buildings are the characteristic building materials of the region. The architecture of older buildings tend to be classified simply as vernacular with no particular dominant underlying design motif. Historical placement of structures in the landscape was derived from the character of the landscape itself. Buildings were sited to take advantage of opportunities in the landscape, particularly relative to slope and climatic exposure.

Special vegetation includes occasional tree-lined drives, specimen trees, and unique stands of understory vegetation. Ponds, as flat, open water bodies, often offer strong visual foci; sharply contrasting both the rolling upland and the steep-sided stream valleys, contributing to wildlife habitat. Other visual accents include rock outcroppings and historical man-made features such as stone walls and bridges.

Scenic Vistas and Roads

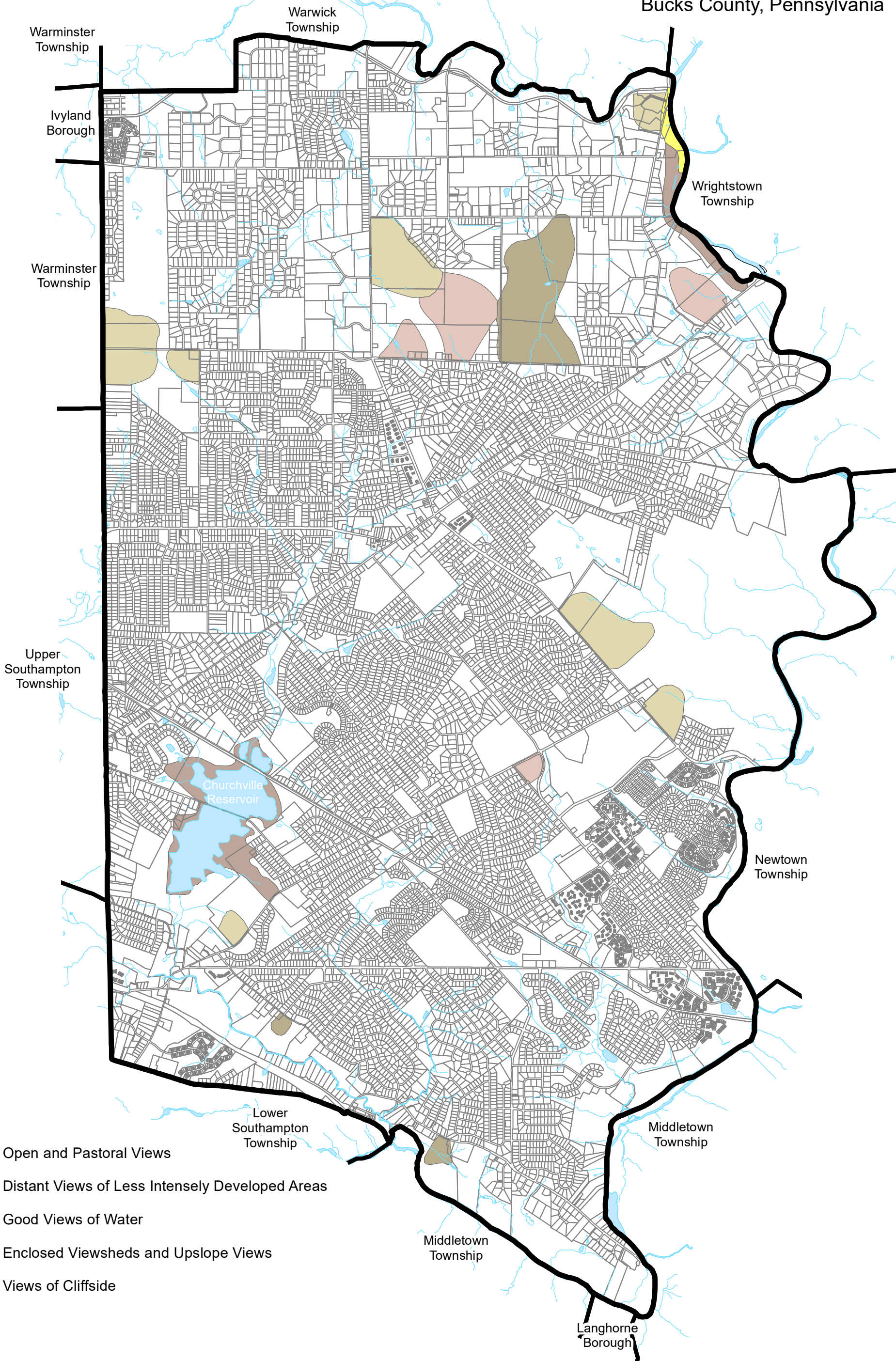
Visual resources are generally categorized as scenic vistas or scenic roads. Scenic vistas in Northampton have sweeping views of the landscape and include hedgerows, hillsides, and stream valleys. Scenic roads are segments of roadways which are rural in nature and on which scenic views can be seen directly or inadvertently by the public.

Scenic vistas in Northampton are shown on Map 6. Scenic Areas . They include vista points along public roads where relatively long views are attained, often overlooking immediate roadside landscapes. These views may be seen from upland areas, looking over long rolling landscapes toward distant hills or focal points, including the following:

- Views of cliffsides;
- Enclosed viewsheds and upslope views;
- Distant views of rural/pristine areas;
- Open and pastoral views;
- Views of water amenities.

The road segments on which the vistas can be viewed also have scenic qualities. Tree canopies, combined with terrain changes and forested views harken back to those of old country roads. Open spans of cultivated land, dotted with historic homesteads, livestock,

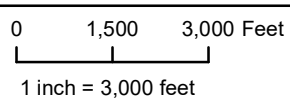
Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



- Open and Pastoral Views
- Distant Views of Less Intensely Developed Areas
- Good Views of Water
- Enclosed Viewsheds and Upslope Views
- Views of Cliffside

Source: Natural Resource Inventory, 1988

Prepared by: Bucks County Planning Commission
October, 2017



old hedgerows and fences connect the Township with its agricultural heritage. Grenoble, Sackettsford, Old Jacksonville, and Chinquapin roads all exhibit scenic qualities that may qualify them as designated scenic roads.

The establishment of provisions to protect the inherent scenic qualities of community roads and vistas is not only a way to preserve important features when development or cartway improvements are contemplated, but also to sustain its heritage and visual context. Although Northampton has not established standards for scenic roads or vistas, compatible land uses and design that complement the existing rural character are encouraged.

CHAPTER 6. PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Park, recreation, and open space resources provide the best practicable means of healthful recreation for all people⁴ and contribute to a better quality of life for residents and future generations. Parks provide areas for active and passive recreational activities, and a unique space for shared social activity and public interaction. People use parks to participate in sport and fitness activities, attend events, and to spend leisure time outdoors either alone or with family and friends. Open space preserves the natural ecosystems upon which we depend, and provides an attractive setting in which to live and work.



Northampton Township has been committed to preserving land for recreational, open space, and natural resource protection purposes. Permanently protected land comprises more than 4,600 acres of the Township. The Township is also a leader in Pennsylvania in municipal recreation with higher participation rates and revenues than comparable municipalities elsewhere. The hallmark of Northampton's award-winning programs is quality, innovation, and its noted staff and leadership. The Township Department of Parks and Recreation provides a variety of recreation programs for participation by community residents which contributes significantly to the quality of life in the Township and surrounding area.

The Township's *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan Update* (2014) and the *Open Space Plan Update* (2010) provide detailed descriptions of protected park, recreation and open space lands. The *Parks and Recreation Plan* focuses on parks recreation facilities, programs, services, and operations while the *Open Space Plan* is intended to be a guide for Township decisions regarding agricultural preservation, natural resource protection, and recreational land acquisition. Both plans provide an analysis of existing park and recreation resources, needs assessment, and recommendations. The Township has

⁴ Paraphrased from Frederick Law Olmstead

reaffirmed its commitment to provide the community with parks, recreation opportunities, and open spaces areas through incorporating these planning documents into this Comprehensive Plan; it is anticipated that the Township will achieve many of the plans recommendations within the next 10 years.

This section provides a summary of existing parks, recreational, open space lands, greenways and trails in the Township, as well as a summary of each plan's goals and recommended action. However, both the *Parks and Recreation Plan* and *Open Space Plan* documents should be consulted for specific information on these facilities. Additional information regarding agricultural resources and sensitive natural features is provided in the Agricultural Resources and Natural Resources components of this plan.

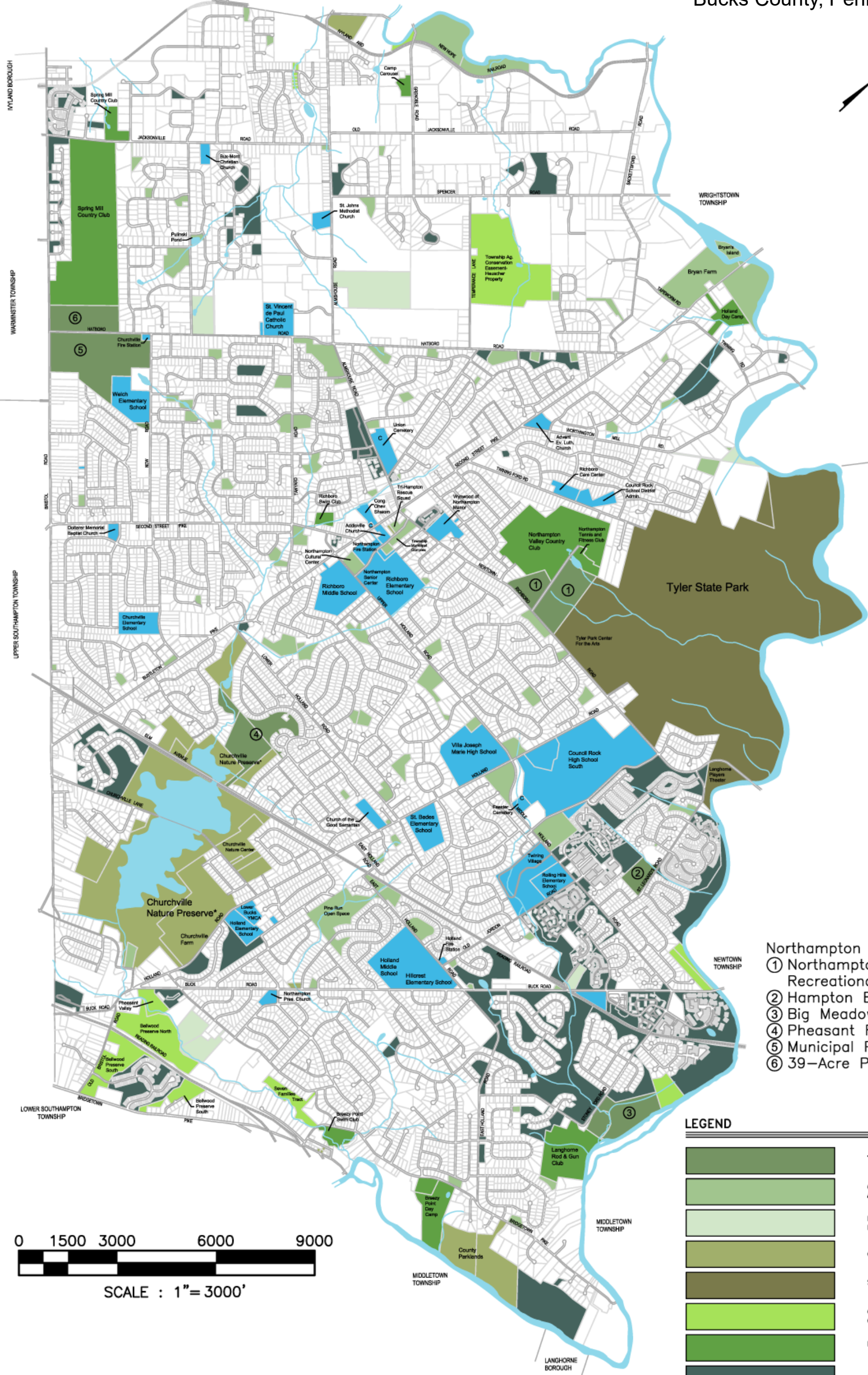
Map 7. Park and Recreation Lands prepared by the Township's engineer, Boucher & James, shows existing parks and recreation facilities including public land (state, county, and township), institutional recreational land (school district and cemeteries), private recreational land (fitness clubs, golf courses and country clubs), properties that development rights were acquired and that have conservation easements.

PUBLIC LANDS

State parkland consists of **Tyler State Park**, which comprises approximately 1,108 acres within Northampton. Tyler State Park provides opportunities for picnicking, informal play areas and sports fields, fishing and canoeing in the Neshaminy Creek, and multiple trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Additionally, the park offers environmental education and interpretive programs, a community theater and an art center.

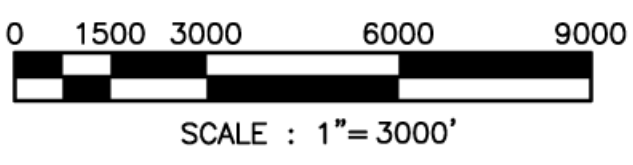
Bucks County owns approximately 706 acres of land within the Township. **Churchville Nature Center** is composed of lands of surrounding the Churchville Reservoir. The Churchville Nature Center offers opportunities for environmental education and passive recreational pursuits. The lands surrounding the reservoir function primarily to buffer and protect the water resource.

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



- Northampton Township Parks**
- ① Northampton Township Recreational Complex
 - ② Hampton Estates Park
 - ③ Big Meadow Park
 - ④ Pheasant Run Park
 - ⑤ Municipal Park
 - ⑥ 39-Acre Park

LEGEND	
	TOWNSHIP PARKS
	OTHER TOWNSHIP RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE LANDS
	DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS ACQUIRED BY TOWNSHIP
	COUNTY RECREATION LAND
	STATE PARKLAND
	CONSERVATION EASEMENT OR CONSERVANCY OWNED PROPERTY
	PRIVATE RECREATION LAND
	PRIVATE OPEN SPACE
	INSTITUTIONAL RECREATION LAND ('C' = Cemetery)



*Includes protected lands of Bucks County, Aqua Pennsylvania and Northampton Township

Map 7

PROJECT :
NORTHAMPTON COMP. PARKS & REC. PLAN
NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP
BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

APPLICANT :
NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP
55 TOWNSHIP ROAD
RICHBORO, PA 18954

JOB NO.:
215492

DRAWN BY:
VLL

CHECKED BY:
JSG

SCALE:
1" = 3000'

PLAN STATUS:
STUDY

TITLE :
PARKS AND RECREATION LANDS

Boucher & James, Inc.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
DOYLESTOWN • STROUDSBURG • MORGANTOWN

CORP. HQ: 1456 FERRY RD, BUILDING 500, DOYLESTOWN, PA. 18901
VOICE: (215) 345-9400 FAX: (215) 345-9401
www.bjengineers.com

PROJECT NAME :
COMPREHENSIVE PARKS & REC. PLAN


SHEET
1 OF 1

DATE:
FEBRUARY 20, 2013

P:\2012\125-492\dwg\Parks and Rec Mapping\Final Dwg\Parks and Recreation.dwg | Tabname :Layout1 | Oct 25, 2013 - 2:31pm | VJaggett

The County also owns two parcels along the eastern portion of the Township adjacent to the Neshaminy Creek that serve as open space and a buffer to help protect the creek.

The Township owns more than 600 acres of preserved open space. This open space includes park and recreation land, dedicated open space, and detention basins. Park and recreation areas account for approximately 265 acres of Township-owned open space, including the following Township parks:

- **Northampton Township Recreation Complex** is a 61.8-acre park centrally located within the Township on Newtown-Richboro Road in Richboro. It is made up of what is commonly called Civic Center I and Civic Center II. The Recreation Center, multiple athletic fields, batting cages, basketball, tennis courts, and a trail are on-site. The Recreation Center is active year round housing classes, leagues, summer camps, youth sport storage, and serves as the hub for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- 
- **Hampton Estates Park** is a 16.4-acre park is located on St. Leonard Road in Holland. The park has fields for youth baseball and a field house with storage, concessions, and meeting room.
 - **Big Meadow Park** is a 31.9-acre park located on Stoney Ford Road in Holland. This Park contains a soccer field and two youth baseball fields. This large open tract is situated within a natural setting along the Neshaminy Creek with parking separate from the recreation area.
 - **Pheasant Run Park** is 19.5-acre park tucked in a neighborhood, located off the intersection of Quail and Chapel roads in Holland. This Park offers both active and passive recreation opportunities and is adjacent to lands owned by the Churchville Nature Center, Philadelphia Suburban Water Company (Aqua America PA), and Bucks County open space. A softball/multipurpose field and two basketball courts are available for use.
 - **Municipal Park** is approximately 125 acres. The land associated with this park was

transferred to the Township after the close of the Naval Air and Warfare Center in Warminster. The main entrance to the park is located on Hatboro Road in Churchville with access through Maureen M. Welch Elementary School parking lot off New Road. The park offers a good mix of active and passive recreation opportunities to meet a wide range of interests and age groups. A playground, multiple athletic fields (including the Miracle League ball field and adjoining multi-purpose turf field), basketball courts, hockey rink, sand volleyball courts, and a trail system are on-site. A remembrance garden as well as an amphitheater is situated along the trail within the park. Two covered picnic pavilions and an additional picnic area are available for permitted use.

- **39 Acre Park** is situated across from the Municipal Park on Hatboro Road. This parkland was acquired through the Department of Interior Lands to Parks program. This property is currently open space and discussions have centered around the development of trails and possibly a museum on the tract.

In addition to state- and township-owned parkland, the Council Rock School District owns approximately 350 acres of land within the Township. Each school offers some type of active recreational facility for use by the public.

TABLE 14

Council Rock School District Recreation Land

School Site	Recreational Facilities	Acreage
Maureen M. Welch Elementary School	Playground, access to Municipal Park	32
Churchville Elementary School	Ball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts	19.6
Richboro Middle School	Ball fields and basketball courts	38.6
Richboro Elementary School	Ball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts	33.6
Council Rock High School South	Ball fields and basketball courts	126.3
Holland Elementary School	Ball fields, basketball courts and playground	16.7
Rolling Hills Elementary School	Ball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts and playground	18.1
Holland Middle School / Hillcrest Elementary School	Ball fields and playground	68.2

In addition to public schools, limited access to recreational facilities and open space is provided by some private schools religious institutions. Saint Vincent DePaul Catholic Church, Saint Bedes Elementary School and Villa Joseph Marie High School have ball fields, and Addisville Reformed Dutch Church Cemetery contains a playground.

EASEMENTS AND PRIVATELY-OWNED LANDS

Not all park, recreational, and open space lands are held by a government entity. Heritage Conservancy holds approximately 180 acres of land under conservation easements. Typical conservation restrictions on eased property include limitations on new development or uses, and on removal of vegetation or other resources. The land can be resold, but the conservation easement stays with the land.

Bellwood Nature Preserve is the largest area held under conservation easement by

Heritage Conservancy. The 112 acre nature preserve straddles Mill Creek near the intersection of Buck and Bristol roads and contains numerous plant communities, a sycamore and box elder flood plain forest, red oak and tulip trees and one of its more interesting features, a cattail marsh.

The *Bellwood Preserve North Master Site Plan* (2012) identifies Bellwood Preserve as a potential site to serve as a satellite location for environmental education activities. While only limited public access is planned for the property, the plan calls for the construction of a trail system, parking lot, water fountain and the installation of picnic tables on 66 acres located north of the railroad line and in the heart of a greenbelt that includes Churchville Nature Center to Playwicki Park.

Open space land has also been dedicated by developers through the provisions of the Township's zoning ordinance for residential or cluster design developments. These open space areas are required to be easily accessible and suitable for development as a recreation area. While some of these open space areas may be dedicated to the Township, many remain in the ownership of a homeowners association.

Other privately-owned land includes recreational and fitness clubs. The Spring Mill Country Club consists of about 184 acres and offers golf, banquet facilities, a fitness center and swim club to its members. The Northampton Valley Country Club, adjacent to the Township Recreation Complex, consists of 120 acres and offers golf, private swimming pool, banquet facilities, and driving range. The Township leases the swimming pool and offers swim club membership to the public. The pool is also widely used by the Township's many camps. The Langhorne Rod and Gun Club comprises nearly 50 acres. It is a private membership club, but offers several public events promoting the safe handling and enjoyment of firearms for sport. The Northampton Tennis and Fitness Club offers indoor and outdoor recreational activities on courts, as well as fitness equipment.

For more information on recreational and open space resources, see Chapter 3 in the Township's *Open Space Plan* and the *Parks and Recreation Plan*.

GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

A greenway is a linear open space area established along either a natural corridor, such as a stream valley, or along a manmade corridor such as a utility right-of-way, scenic road. Greenways can provide ecological benefits such as promoting wildlife and plant diversity and maintaining the natural character of an area. In addition to preserving natural resources, greenways may create safe, nonmotorized routes to schools, commercial centers, residential developments, and recreational areas. A recreational greenway provides a system of paths that can accommodate different users such as bicyclists, hikers, and joggers. By linking individual parks together, linear trails can create a unified park system throughout a municipality and beyond its borders.

Trails and proposed greenways within Northampton include:

- **Tyler State Park** has about ten miles of paved bicycle trails, four miles of gravel hiking trails, and nine miles of equestrian trails. Hikers are allowed on all of them, and are able to vary their hike from long or short, easy or more challenging, depending on personal preferences. Trail surfaces consist of paved paths, gravel trails, and woodland trails. The Neshaminy Creek meanders through the park, dividing the land into several interesting sections making the park an ideal hub for creating an interconnected trail/greenway system.
- **Northampton Township Municipal Park** contains over 3 miles of trails. Due to its proximity to the Maureen M. Welch Elementary School, the Spring Mill Country Club, and other smaller parcels of township-owned open space, it makes for another hub of the township-wide trail system on the western side. Connections among the uses, and the extension of sidewalks would help provide safe and convenient pedestrian access within the more built up portions of the Township. Neighborhood sidewalks play an integral part of the Township's trail network by enhancing access from individual residences to points of interest and other destinations.

Trails are also anticipated at the Township's Civic Center. Grant applications have been submitted for the construction of interior trails at the recreation center that will allow connection to Tyler State Park.

- **Churchville Nature Center** offers approximately 2 miles of nature trails which take the hiker through field and forest. Highlights include a wheelchair accessible, handicapped trail (wheelchairs are available for use upon request); a recreated Lenape Indian Village; the Dragonfly Pond; an historic springhouse; a pine forest; a bird observation blind and the Memorial Wildlife Gardens.

Portions of the Churchville Watershed, including the Mill Creek and Ironworks Creek tributaries, have been designated as greenways in various plans, including the *Churchville to Playwicki: Environmental Education, Recreation and Greenway Link Plan* (2008), the *Churchville Nature Preserve Master Plan and Watershed Conservation Plan* (2006), and as part of the larger Mill-Neshaminy-Core-Dyers Creeks (Cross County) Greenway in the *Bucks County Open Space and Greenways Plan* (2011).

The *Bucks County Open Space and Greenways Plan* (2011) indicates The Mill–Neshaminy–Core–Dyers Creeks Greenway (also known as the Cross County Greenway) follows the courses of Mill, Core, and Dyers creeks, as well as a section of the Neshaminy from the confluence of Mill Creek with the Neshaminy at Playwicki Park, to the confluence of Core Creek with the Neshaminy just southwest of Core Creek Park. This greenway provides linkages between three separate County parks, Churchville Nature Center, Playwicki Park and Core Creek Park, and six municipalities.

Other greenways within Northampton identified in the county's *Open Space and Greenways Plan* include segments of the Neshaminy Main Stem-Wrighttown/Northampton/Newtown Greenway and the Little Neshaminy Creek Greenway. The middle section of the larger Neshaminy Creek Greenway extends from the Forks of the Neshaminy near the historic village of Rushland, south to its confluence with Core Creek in Middletown Township. The predominant feature found along this section of greenway is Tyler State Park. Other large open space areas in this greenway include Clark Nature Center, Bucks County Community College's main campus, the Northampton Township Recreation Complex, and the County's Core Creek Park. The county is currently in the process of completing

a feasibility study for a trail along the Middle Neshaminy Creek. The segments proposed in Northampton include an on-road segment along Sackettsford Road and an off-road segment along the creek in the vicinity of Village Shires and Big Meadow Park.

The Little Neshaminy Creek Greenway extends from the county border with Montgomery County over to the Forks of the Delaware where the Little Neshaminy and Neshaminy Creeks converge. This greenway has connections to the north and central sections of the Neshaminy Main Stem Greenway, as well as the New Hope Ivyland Railroad Greenway.

OPEN SPACE PLAN RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The *Open Space Plan* indicates that the most effective means of protecting open space is through obtaining the development rights of a property by means of land acquisition (e.g., donation, fee simple purchase, purchase of easements). The plan recommends donation when possible; otherwise, fee-simple purchase and/or purchasing development rights to land or easement using funding from the Bucks County Municipal Open Space Program (MOSP), funds from the Township and/or other local, state or federal funds that may be available.

An Action Plan providing recommendations is provided in both the *Open Space Plan* and *Park and Recreation Plan* with some of the strategies overlapping between plans. Nothing listed in the plans are a requirement, but rather recommendations for the Township to consider and consult on the path to achieving its goals to support the current and future population of the Township.

CHAPTER 7. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Economic activity involves the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities, and economic development is the process of improving a community's overall well-being through job creation, business growth, and income growth. Community improvements that strengthen the economy tend to enhance quality of life for residents. The term "economic sustainability" is often used to identify strategies to use available resources to their best advantage, by promoting the use of such resources in a way that is both efficient and responsible, and likely to provide long-term benefits. For business operations, it calls for using resources that allows businesses to continuously function over a number of years, while consistently returning a profit.

Northampton's goal for economic development is to achieve diverse economic activity, employment opportunities, commercial services that residents' desire, and a sound tax base. The Township recognizes that it is tied to the regional economy through residents' employment, spending patterns, services and trade.

LOCAL WORKFORCE

Characteristics of the local workforce and general business makeup are key economic variables. Employment status is one indication of a healthy economy. Occupation and industry types, much like educational attainment, are factors that determine which types of employers and businesses will be attracted to the Township as a place to locate. Having a skilled workforce and diverse local economy can adapt better to changes or shifts in trends than an economy based on one or a few similar industries. Table 15 indicates that approximately 70 percent of residents are in the civilian labor force with nearly 5 percent currently unemployed.

TABLE 15

Employment Status

Employment Status	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 years and over	31,958	
In labor force	21,795	68.2
Civilian labor force	21,795	68.2
Employed	20,228	63.3
Unemployed	1,567	4.9
Armed Forces	0	0
Not in labor force	10,163	31.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates

Occupation is the kind of work a person does to earn a living. More than three-quarters of the workforce in Northampton is employed in managerial, business, sales or office work. As shown on Table 16, Township residents engaged in white-collar occupations remained steady at 78.6 percent between 2000 and 2014. A four percent loss in sales and office occupations occurred during this time period, although service occupations increased by about 2 percent. Residents employed in construction or maintenance remained about the same, while a 2 percent overall loss occurred in production or transportation occupations. It is noted that less than ½ percent of residents were employed in farming, fishing, and forestry industries.

TABLE 16

Occupation Status

Occupation	2014		2000	
	Estimate	Percent	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	20,228		20,438	
Management, business, science, and arts	10,306	50.9	9,599	49.0
Service occupations	2,173	10.7	1,745	8.5
Sales and office occupations	5,605	27.7	6,452	31.6
Natural resources, construction, maintenance	1,145	5.7	1,185	5.8
Production, transportation, material moving	999	4.9	1,440	7.0

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Industry is the type of activity at a person's place of work or the sector of the economy to which a particular occupation belongs. As indicated on Table 17 it is estimated that 28.7 percent of all employed residents worked in educational services, health care and social assistance industry. Twelve percent were employed in the professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services, and 11.7 percent within the retail trade industry. The finance, insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing and arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodations and food services sectors each employed 8.7 percent and 7.9 percent respectively.

When comparing the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates to the 2000 U.S. Census figures, growth occurred in the following three industry categories:

- Educational services, and health care and social assistance;
- Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services; and
- Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodations and food services.

The educational services, and health care and social assistance sector had the largest increase with nearly 1,400 additional residents employed in this sector since 2000. Five industry sectors remained fairly stable with slight overall gains or losses since 2000. These include the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining sector; construction; transportation and warehousing, and utilities; professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services; and the public administration industries.

Decreases occurred in the wholesale and retail trades; information; finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing; and other services. The manufacturing sector saw the greatest change of employed residents, a drop of nearly 1,350 people.

TABLE 17

Township Industries

INDUSTRY	2010-2014		2000	
	Estimate	Percent	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	20,228		20,438	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	65	0.3	84	0.4
Construction	1,264	6.2	1,360	6.7
Manufacturing	1,919	0.5	2,610	12.8
Wholesale trade	783	3.9	1,027	5.0
Retail trade	2,371	11.7	2,664	13.0
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	537	2.7	541	2.6
Information	436	2.2	705	3.4
Finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	1,751	8.7	2,241	11.0
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2,437	12.0	2,343	11.5
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	5,803	28.7	4,413	21.6
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodations and food services	1,603	7.9	1,036	5.1
Other services, except public administration	719	3.6	917	4.5
Public administration	540	2.7	497	2.4

BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

According to the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)⁵, in August of 2016, there were 1,255 businesses in the Township that employed 10,046 people. The construction industry had the highest number of businesses in the Township, and the

⁵ ERSI Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) is an international supplier of geographic information system (GIS) software, web GIS and geodatabase management applications. The North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) is currently the standard used by federal statistical agencies in classifying establishments (individual business locations). NAICS organizes establishments into industries according to the similarity in the processes used to produce goods or services. ESRI uses the NAICS to classify businesses and economic activity in accordance with geographic information to produce customized analyses for its users.

health care and social assistance sector employed the most people. The following table provides a summary of the sectors and, from highest to lowest, the number of businesses in the Township. The number of employees in each sector is also provided.

TABLE 18**Number of Businesses and Employees**

	No. Businesses	No. Employees
Construction	187	902
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	145	713
Retail Trade	129	929
Other Services (except Public Administration)	111	569
Finance & Insurance	95	358
Health Care & Social Assistance	87	1,387
Manufacturing	86	1,120
Wholesale Trade	77	546
Administration & Support & Waste Management & Remediation	72	489
Food Services	53	584
Unclassified Establishments	52	16
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	38	224
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	32	406
Education Services	26	1,111
Information	24	192
Public Administration	18	295
Transportation & Warehousing	17	103
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	82
Mining	1	14
Utilities	1	6
Total	1,255	10,446

Healthcare & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Educational Services had the highest number of people employed, with a total of 1,387 and 1,120 workers respectively. Educational Services employed 1,111 people, and Retail Trade and Construction employed 929 and 902 people respectively. The retail trade sector includes 12 categories. Of the 129 businesses in retail trade, 21 were categorized as Electronic & Appliance; 16 were Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music stores; 15 were Building Materials & Garden Equipment & Supply Dealers; 18 were Miscellaneous Store Retailers; 12 were Health and

Personal Care Stores; and 10 were Food & Beverage Stores. Food & Beverage Stores had the highest number of employees (25%) of any retail trade category with a total of 238 employees.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Most commercial enterprises are subject to locational factors, market forces, transportation access, and commuter patterns beyond the scope of municipal planning control. Northampton's attraction derives from its proximity to New Jersey, Philadelphia and New York City, and its unique mix of natural beauty, high-quality residential neighborhoods and schools, cultural vitality and historic charm.

Commercial properties in the Township make up approximately two percent of the total land area. Uses range from personal services to office, retail, and eating establishments. Shopping centers located in Richboro and Holland contain the greatest concentration of retail shops serving the day-to-day needs of residents. Churchville also has a few commercial uses, and Village Shires has a commercial center as part of this Buck Road development. Other smaller-scale commercial uses and businesses are also located in these commercial areas as well as scattered throughout the Township.

Richboro Village

Retail and service activities in Richboro extend along Second Street Pike (from the Tanyard Road intersection to the Manor Drive intersection), Bustleton Pike, and Almshouse and Richboro Roads. The Crossroads Plaza shopping center has been expanded and office complexes extend westward along Almshouse Road. Addisville Commons, a mixed-used shopping center, is currently under construction at the former Davis Pontiac site on Bustleton and Second Street Pikes. This new development features buildings (medical/office pharmacy, retail/office buildings, and bank) set close to the road, a plaza, pedestrian connections, and pedestrian-scale amenities and street lighting. A connector road linking Second Street Pike to Almshouse Road via the existing drive at

Giuseppe's restaurant across from the Brownstone office complex will provide secondary access.

The *Richboro Village Master Plan* (2018) is intended to serve as the guiding document for the future of Richboro. This plan ties together the key recommendations of previous initiatives and explores actions to be taken to strengthen the village's transportation system, physical appearance, and economic structure.

According to the plan, the type and mix of businesses appears to indicate that Richboro functions as a commercial destination for the convenience needs of local residents. An overwhelming majority of the businesses found in Richboro are commonly found in other communities and as such probably do not draw many customers from the larger regional market.

The plan concludes by illustrating a number of recommended land use, transportation, and economic development concepts to kick-start the revitalization process in Richboro and allow it to become a destination for the regional market.

Holland Village

The Holland area, along Buck and Bristol roads, is a small, quaint commercial area. Holland is centered on Mill Creek, which bisects the village in a west to east direction and eventually empties into the Neshaminy Creek two miles downstream at Playwicki Park. While Holland can be classified as a commercial village, it is somewhat unique in that the original settlement was commercial in character.

The *Holland Village Master Plan* (2014) is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan to serve as the guiding document for Holland village. The document presents concepts, maps, and implementing techniques and strategies to enhance Holland's land use, transportation, and economic environment.

The village's roadways are fronted mostly by commercial properties. This is significant in that commercial property is much more given to change than residential property.

Investments in property improvements on just a few commercial properties may provide substantial improvements in the village's commercial appeal.

The plan's market study and survey results offer a way forward in mapping out a path toward economic revitalization. Successful economic development requires a multi-pronged, nuanced approach that understands the local market and business environment, engages business owners and residents, and builds on a community's strengths.

The plan concludes with a series of maps that illustrate strategies and concept plans that form an actionable plan for improving Holland's transportation, land use, and business environment. Each map focuses on a designated Planning Area as described in previous chapters by showing concepts, resources, and potential improvements.

INDUSTRIAL AND MANUFACTURING USES

Industrial and manufacturing uses are concentrated in the four business parks located along Jacksonville Road, between Bristol and Almshouse Roads in the northwestern part of the Township. The area of these parks is approximately 330 acres, and the building lots are about two acres in size.



In 2012, the Northampton Township Business and Technology Association (NTBTA) was formed for the purpose of securing local resources for materials, products, services, and talents. Commencing from this Association is the Northampton Township Business and Technology Center (NTBTC). The Business and Technology Center is a collective organization that represents the four informally organized business and technology parks.

Working together with local businesses, Township officials, and the Northampton Community and Economic Development Corporation, the goal of NTBTA is to establish

itself as a visible contributor to the local and regional community and a facilitator for economic growth improve overall community, appearance, business relationships, and networking capabilities.

To realize the overall goal, the NTBTA intends to address the following initiatives:

- Modernize the appearance and atmosphere of the industrial park in an effort to improve and preserve competitive advantage over competing locations.
- Advance intra-park commerce by promoting the expertise of neighboring businesses and endorsing 'buy local' initiatives.
- Cultivate an all-encompassing business network with solid partnerships throughout the industrial park, township, county, state, country, and the WORLD.
- Reduce expenses for members through the consolidation of needs and volume purchasing power, such as snow removal, landscaping, recycling, etc.

LOCAL ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT TAX ASSISTANCE (LERTA)

The Township adopted a Local Economic Redevelopment Tax Assistance (LERTA) program in the I-1 zoning district along Jacksonville Road, in the Village Overlay Districts in Richboro and Holland, and the Spring Mill Manor properties. The LERTA program allows taxing authorities (municipalities, counties, and school districts) to exempt new construction and improvements to nonresidential properties from increased real estate taxes in selected areas of a community to encourage economic development. The tax exemption may be based on the actual improvement cost or a uniform maximum cost as determined by the municipal governing body for a period of not more than 10 years. Both Council Rock School District and Bucks County followed with resolutions to implement the program in the designated areas.

Furthermore, nonresidential uses in the Township contribute directly and indirectly to the municipal tax base and into the localized economy. According to the Bucks County Board of Assessment data (2016), Northampton Township, had a 153.8975 total combined

township and school district millage. The Township's tax rate of 12.9275 millage has held steady since 1998.

AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE BENEFITS

According to DVRPC publication, *The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania* (2011), protected open spaces—public parks, trails, preserved farmland, and private conserved lands—provide economic benefits to businesses, households, and governments. Economic value is created in three ways:

- via wealth generation (e.g., higher property values and earnings from open space-related activities),
- tax revenues (e.g., increased property tax collection due to higher property values, and
- avoided costs (e.g., dollars spent on health care and/or environmental issues such as water and air quality problems if land were developed).

Such uses may attract users to the area beyond the municipality boundary who will patronize local businesses. This can contribute to the local tax base as well as provide additional employment opportunities for residents. Parks also benefit residents by providing recreation and exercise facilities for free (or lower costs than private market rates) which can reduce overall health costs.

Agriculture contributes to the local economy in terms of food and plant production and employment. As indicated in the Agriculture Resources section of this Plan, Bucks County ranks 31st out of 67 counties in the State in terms of total value of agricultural products sold and 7th in regards to the total value of crops sold (including nursery and greenhouse). The County's market value of production was \$62,418,000.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

Local and regional economic growth is subject to many forces well beyond the control of municipal planning, including regional economic health, state and federal policies, and the impacts of various forms of taxation. Small businesses are sources of employment and providers and consumers of goods and services that help sustain the local economy. To encourage new businesses and redevelopment, the Township has honed its regulatory and plan review processes to create opportunities to enhance economic sustainability in the commercial zoning and industrial zoning districts.

The Village Overlay District was developed to improve aesthetics, architectural appearance, and streetscape design, establish uniform design standards and improvements, and allow and incentivize adaptive reuse and redevelopment. The district allows a mix of commercial and office uses and allows for a dwelling in combination with business uses. The district dictates an attractive streetscape along the street corridors, with access control improvements to better define and separate traffic movements. Design guidelines, which address diverse elements such as sign placement, lighting, parking, and pedestrian orientation, must be followed for all development occurring in the district. Through the provisions of the Village Overlay District and village design guidelines Northampton Township seeks to create a cohesive, aesthetically pleasing development theme that will provide an attractive business environment that exemplifies the traditional character of the community for both customers and residents.

Small-scale manufacturers like woodworkers, steel fabricators, hardware prototypers, microbrewers, and coffee roasters with regional distribution have emerged as a force in today's urban and suburban economy. Efforts to foster these uses and to promote other diverse, low impact nonresidential businesses such high-tech and incubator uses, in the commercial and industrial districts are recognized and supported by the Township. Residents also play a role in the success of their local economy. Working together, business and government leaders, local non-profit organizations, and citizen groups can analyze needs and resources and guide the economy. Local financial institutions can invest in sustainable community initiatives, and the Township can support existing local businesses through media (e.g., website, newsletter, brochures) and assist in the

marketing of vacant and underutilized commercially zoned properties through partnerships with local business associations and civic organizations.

CHAPTER 8. TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Transportation is one of many quality of life issues that can affect a community and help achieve the goal of a sustainable community. Transportation and community mobility involves moving vehicles and people safely and efficiently to desired destinations, such as homes, worksites, local and regional shopping and services areas, and community facilities (i.e., schools, parks, libraries, etc.). Modes of available transit options can add to the quality of life of residents and help attract and retain businesses by providing convenient access for customers and employees alike (i.e., pedestrian, bicyclist, motor vehicle, bus and rail). Integrated transportation, land use, and circulation systems that are well-designed help preserve a sense of community and the environment, advance economic development goals, and preserve both public and private infrastructure investments. Maintaining and enhancing the quality and efficiency of the transportation network supports the Commerce and Economic Activities Goal of sustaining economic vitality.

The following provides a summary of transportation infrastructure and public transit facilities as well as traffic studies and programs that have been prepared.

STREET CLASSIFICATION

The primary mode of travel throughout Northampton is the motor vehicle. The Township's roadways were built on old stagecoach routes dating as far back to the pre-Revolutionary days. These routes still provide for through traffic and access to facilities in the Township and are considered arterial roads (state routes) or collector roads. As more housing was built in the Township, new streets were constructed to serve access to residential developments and uses. These streets are considered Township roads or local streets.

The subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) classifies streets based on their function, and includes the categories of Major Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Local Minor Collector and Residential. A Major Arterial is a street or route

specifically designed to accommodate high traffic flow and carrying generally a high percentage of through traffic. A Major Collector is a street or route which serves as a connecting facility usually between two major arterial routes and having two or more moving lanes. A Local Minor Collector is a street which serves the function of moving locally generated traffic from the interiors of neighborhood areas to the major collector streets and arterial streets. A Residential Street is designed to serve individual residential parcels and not generally carrying through traffic. Map 8. Functional Classification illustrates streets and their classification. The SALDO provides minimum design standards for each street classification so that when residential or commercial developments are proposed, the necessary roadway improvements can be made.

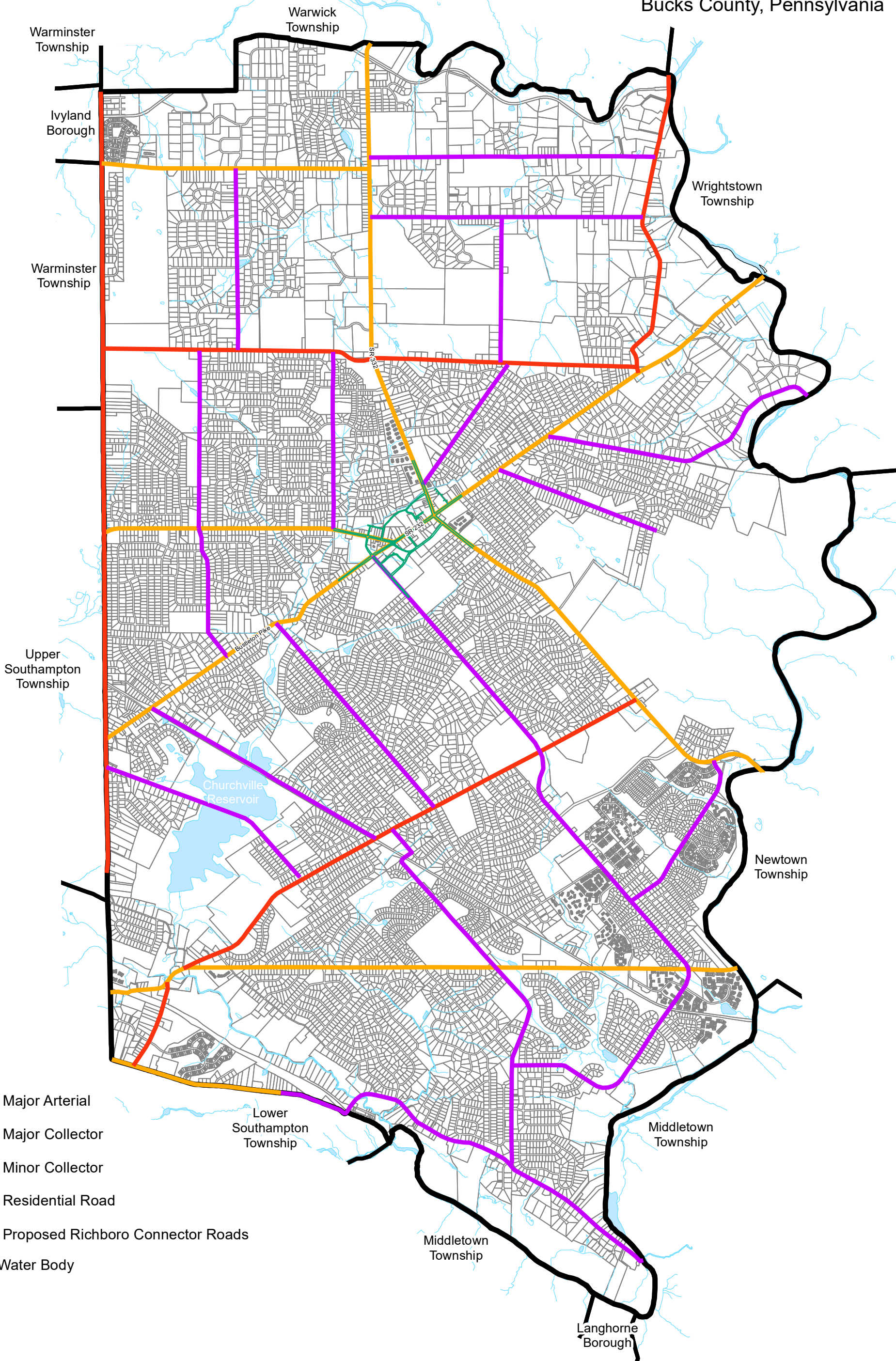
PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) provides public transportation service linking Philadelphia and the surrounding counties with an integrated network of about 200 bus and rail transit routes. SEPTA's Regional Rail Division also operates commuter rail routes to stations in New Jersey and Delaware. SEPTA's extensive network of buses, trolleys, and rapid transit trains in Center City Philadelphia, in addition to Regional Rail, links to downtown employment centers and hubs including University City in West Philadelphia and the Philadelphia International Airport.



There are no SEPTA Regional Rail Stations within Northampton, but residents have convenient access to several stations including the Warminster Regional Rail line which primarily serves commuters living in the northern portion of the Township. The West Trenton Regional Rail line has four Regional Rail Stations within proximity to areas of the southern portion of the Township. These include Trevoise Station and Neshaminy Falls Station in Bensalem, Woodbourne Station in Middletown, and Langhorne Station.

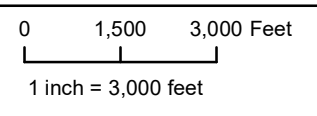
Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



- Major Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Residential Road
- Proposed Richboro Connector Roads
- Water Body

Source: Northampton Township

Prepared by: Bucks County Planning Commission
October, 2017



The Transportation Management Association of Bucks County (TMA Bucks) supplements SEPTA by providing the Richboro-Warminster rushbus. This bus service provides morning and evening peak-hour transit between Warminster Station regional rail line to locations Warminster, Ivyland, and Northampton (Richboro via Jacksonville and Almshouse roads), with the final stop at the Tri-Hampton Rescue Squad on Township Road.



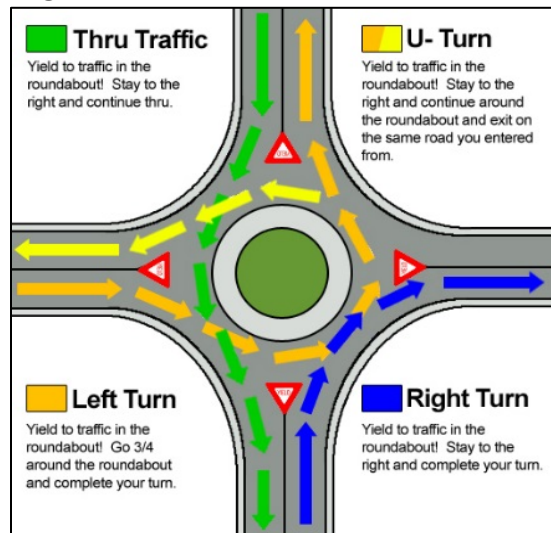
ROAD/INTERSECTION LAYOUT AND IMPROVEMENTS

The Township is working closely with their traffic engineer to develop solutions for known areas of congestion. Recommended improvements include the following intersections/ projects:

Bustleton Pike/Second Street Pike Roundabout

A roundabout is a circular intersection where vehicles travel counterclockwise around a center island (see Figure 1). There are no traffic signals or stop signs in a roundabout. Drivers yield at entry to traffic in the roundabout, then enter the intersection and exit at their desired street. Studies by the Federal Highway Administration have found that roundabouts can increase traffic capacity by 30 percent to 50 percent compared to traditional intersections. In addition, roundabouts have been shown to reduce injury crash rates by 75 percent where traffic signals were previously used. Further, they have the added benefit of reduced maintenance and costs since traffic signals are

Figure 1. Roundabout



Source: South Carolina DOT

eliminated. Also, widening of the roadway would not be necessary since the turn lanes would no longer be needed.

The creation of a more efficient travel pattern for vehicles (non-signalized) and pedestrian-friendly environment is a desired outcome from the construction of a roundabout. This improvement is seen as an important step to encourage further redevelopment of the in the commercial village, and the Township was recently awarded a Multimodal Transportation Fund grant to design the roundabout. The Townships plans to secure additional funding for construction. Figure 2. Richboro Road Network Improvements illustrates the proposed circulation enhancements.

Relocation and Extension of Township Road

Another component towards the effort to revitalize the village of Richboro, this project anticipates relocating Township Road and adding it as the fourth leg to the intersection of Bustleton Pike/Second Street Pike. This improvement will create an alternative route for north-south traffic around the village, thereby reducing traffic congestion along the Second Street Pike corridor and at its intersection with Almshouse Road.

Connector Roads

Portions of a new road that will ultimately connect Almshouse Road to Second Street Pike have been constructed as part of the redevelopment of the Guiseppes/Walgreens site along Almshouse Road. It is envisioned that the remaining portions of this connector road will be constructed as part of the redevelopment of the Davis Pontiac site.

Another potential connector road is envisioned between the Township Road extension and Upper Holland Road. These proposed connector roads would add necessary capacity to the existing road network and provide more convenient access for local businesses.

Figure 2. Richboro Road Network Improvements



Other priority roadway improvements in the Township include:

- Jacksonville and Almshouse roads intersection improvements;
- Richboro-Newtown Road and Second Street Pike intersection improvements;
- Richboro Adaptive Signal System improvement; and
- Bustleton Pike/Bristol Road and Bristol/Churchville/Bustleton Pike intersection improvements.

HOLLAND AND RICHBORO VILLAGE MASTER PLANS

Traffic congestion has been identified as a major issue affecting the economic viability in the villages of Holland and Richboro. The *Holland Village Master Plan* (2014) and the *Richboro Village Master Plan* (2016) were prepared in part to address this issue as well as other economic factors. Both plans have been adopted by Northampton Township as amendments to the Township Comprehensive Plan. The Township should consult these plans when examining transportation policy in these areas of Northampton Township.

The *Holland Village Master Plan* serves as the guiding document for the future of Holland. The study area is made up of three separated Planning Areas generally defined by Buck Road (Route 532) where it intersects Rocksville Road, Holland Road, Chinquapin Road, and Old Bristol Road. The portion of Buck Road from Old Bristol Road to the underpass of the West Trenton Cutoff freight rail line, and a 1,200-foot section of Holland Road between Rocksville Road and Buck Road is also included. The *Master Plan* provides a series of recommended transportation-related improvements including alternative road and intersection layouts, access management, traffic calming, connectivity and street configuration improvements, and improved signage.

Richboro is centered at Richboro Road and Second Street Pike, which bisects the village in a north to south direction. The *Richboro Master Plan* details recommendations for transportation improvements in the implementation section of the *Master Plan*. Recommendations include the implementation of the connector road network and a Complete Streets policy (see pg. 102), a focus on pedestrian connections in areas of need, the provision of bicycle facilities, streetscape improvements, and traffic calming.

DVRPC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) produced the *FY 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Pennsylvania* for Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, Delaware and Philadelphia counties. All projects that intend to use federal

funds, along with all non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant must be listed on TIP. DVRPC and its member governments that responds to transportation needs of the region prepare the TIP program by and ensure they comply with federal and state policies. Projects can be multi-modal; that is, they include bicycle, pedestrian, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and freight-related projects, as well as traditional highway and public transit improvement projects.

In the southeastern Pennsylvania region, the TIP contains approximately 370 projects totaling more than \$5.3 billion over the four-year span of the program. The list of transportation priorities are financially constrained by the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act* (FAST Act). As of the *FY 2017 Transportation Improvement Program for Pennsylvania*, there are two projects programmed for funding in Northampton. One project involves a bridge rehabilitation or replacement of a state-owned bridge on Worthington Mill Road that traverses the Neshaminy Creek along the border of Northampton and Wrightstown townships. This project is not scheduled for reconstruction until after 2021.

The second project is the bridge over Mill Creek located on Buck Road in the village of Holland. Phase I includes the replacement/rehabilitation of Buck Road Bridge with a wider structure to accommodate turning lanes. This project will also include improvements to the Buck Road/Old Bristol Road intersection. Phase II improvements include the realignment of the Buck Road/Holland Road intersection, and the addition of turning lanes, along with access management. Sidewalks are also to be provided throughout the corridor. Phase I of the project is funded locally and reconstruction of the bridge and redesign of the Buck Road/Old Bristol Road intersection is scheduled to occur in 2021.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access Management as defined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers is the process or development of a program intended to ensure that the major arterials, intersections and commercial strips serving a community or region will operate safely and efficiently

while adequately meeting the access needs of the abutting land uses along the roadway. Controlling the number of access points allows roads to perform their intended function. Traffic operations and transportation systems management recognize the inherent conflict between providing efficient traffic movement on roads and safe access to abutting properties. When numerous, excessively wide and separate accessways occur along a street to serve individual properties, roadway capacity and speed are affected, and congestion problems generally rise, causing more accidents.

A basic approach of access management is to minimize the number of conflict points along these types of roadways and to provide safe and efficient access to properties and businesses located along the roadways. Access management may include such techniques as shared driveways and parking, providing access to secondary roadways, driveway spacing, planted median strips, protected left turn lanes, and any other appropriate access control measures. Access management is both a land use and traffic issue that calls for land use controls and incentives to improve the capabilities of the transportation system. The access needs of residents and businesses along such road should be balanced with the convenience of vehicles traveling through the area.

COMPLETE STREETS

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. They make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work or parks. A Complete Streets planning approach would apply to road construction and reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, major maintenance, and operations work. Elements for a comprehensive Complete Streets policy include the following:

- A vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets;
- Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles;

- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way;
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions;
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes;
- Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads;
- Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs;
- Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community;
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes; and
- Provides specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

Under this approach, even small projects can have meaningful access improvements. For example, repaving projects could include an edge stripe to incorporate a bike lane, or a crosswalk could be added near a park. In routine work on traffic signals, timing could be adjusted to better accommodate motorists and pedestrian users. Over time incremental improvements through single projects will result in safe, more accessible travel ways designed for everyone. A Complete Streets policy should reflect this reality and encourage prioritization of projects to best make changes both big and small. As the Township begins further evaluates its land use and transportation issues, the Complete Streets concept may be a useful tool to consider for the Route 232 corridor through the Village of Richboro.

TRAFFIC CALMING

Traffic calming measures can be used to address speeding and high cut-through traffic volumes on neighborhood streets. These issues can create an unsafe atmosphere in which pedestrians are intimidated, or even endangered by motorized traffic. Physical traffic calming measures are usually emphasized because they tend to be self-policing, and motorized vehicles will slow down in absence of a police presence. Traffic calming

measures include: speed humps, speed tables, chicanes, planted medians, roundabouts and curb extensions. These features have been found to affect driver behavior and improve the safety of the street for all roadway users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Design considerations for traffic calming should ensure that emergency access by police, fire, and ambulance or rescue personnel is not impeded.

SIDEWALKS AND BICYCLE PATHS

About 40 percent of all trips taken by car are less than 2 miles in length.⁶ By making some of these short trips on foot or by bicycle, rather than in a car, citizens can make an impact on reducing local traffic and congestion, while potentially improving their own physical health. In addition to those who bicycle for recreation or by choice, there are residents, including children and some low-income workers, who must rely on bikes as a transportation necessity.

When people can choose to leave their cars at home and make trips on foot or bicycles, they also help make a positive impact on the environmental by reducing fuel emissions. Air and water pollution from emissions and oil leaks as well as noise levels are reduced with less motor vehicles traveling or idling on roadways. Travel opportunities by foot and bicycle is also important for recreational purposes and for members of the community who do not drive as these modes of transportation provide an alternative to the automobile.

According the *Northampton Township Sidewalk Prioritization Study* (2005) about eight percent of the Township's 211 miles of arterial and collector roads had sidewalks on one or both sides of the street. The plan lists priority ranking for sidewalks based in part by population density, gaps in sidewalk connections, and distance from destinations such as schools, parks and shopping areas. The study has allowed Northampton Township to systematically prioritize the construction of sidewalks in key areas of deficit, including Richboro.

⁶ Federal Highway Administration. *Summary of Travel Trends: 2009 National Household Travel Survey*.

The SALDO requires that both residential and nonresidential developments provide sidewalks. Grant programs, such as Safe Routes to School, are potential funding sources to implement sidewalk enhancement as recommended by the *Prioritization Study*.

Bicycle Paths

As indicated above, bicycling is a form of exercise and recreation for many people. A bike-friendly town is typically associated with a high quality of life and a sense of community. In many communities, bicycle systems that connect to neighborhoods and throughout the larger area are important facilities and aid in social interactions and time spent outdoor.

The *Bucks County Bicycle Master Plan (2013)* provides an inventory of existing conditions and opportunities for the improvement and expansion of a broader network of multimodal routes serving the Township and region. It identifies priority roadways for bike lanes and shared-use paths. The plan identifies several on and off-road connections through the Northampton including a trail spine that follows Route 532 (Buck Road) from Lower Southampton, through Northampton Township in proximity to Churchville Nature Center, to Washington Crossing State Park in Upper Makefield Township.

The Plan also identifies the Neshaminy Greenway Trail along the Neshaminy Creek. This trail, as identified in the *Bicycle Master Plan*, would eventually connect Northampton and Tyler State Park to the Neshaminy State Park in Bensalem Township and northward to Peace Valley Park in New Britain. Connections to the Little Neshaminy and Neshaminy trailheads in the northern portion of the Township also proposed.

The Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter provides more detailed information regarding bike trails and paths.

CHAPTER 9. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Northampton offers a quality of life that makes it one of the best and safest communities in the Commonwealth. Community facilities and services such as good schools, libraries, police and fire protection, and well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (i.e., roads, water, sewer and stormwater facilities) all play a role in making Northampton a great place to live, work and raise a family.

TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION

The municipal complex is located in Richboro along Township Road. Government buildings and functions, including the administrative building, police station, fire station, public works department, municipal authority, and the Northampton Township Cultural Center. The Administration Building includes a meeting room, office space for the administrative functions and space for recreational activities. Public information regarding meetings, local events, and other useful documents and forms can be found on Northampton's website at <http://www.northamptontownship.com>. Public meetings are shown on the Township's cable network, and national and local news are provided by conventional media outlets (newspapers, television and radio) and other wireless communication providers.

The Township's Organizational Chart and summary of appointed advisory Board and Commission responsibilities are summarized on the following pages (Figures 3 and 4).

Revenue generated from property and income taxes is used for most public safety, education, and governmental administration facilities, as well as basic infrastructure services and capital improvements. Fees charged for the conveyance and use of utilities pay for water, sewer, electric, gas, wireless and other services. The information gathered for this section will be used as a basis for addressing land use planning issues and to ensure that adequate facilities and services continue to be provided in the Township. The following provides a summary of the public safety, health, and educational facilities, and utilities that serve residents and businesses in the Township.

Figure 3.

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

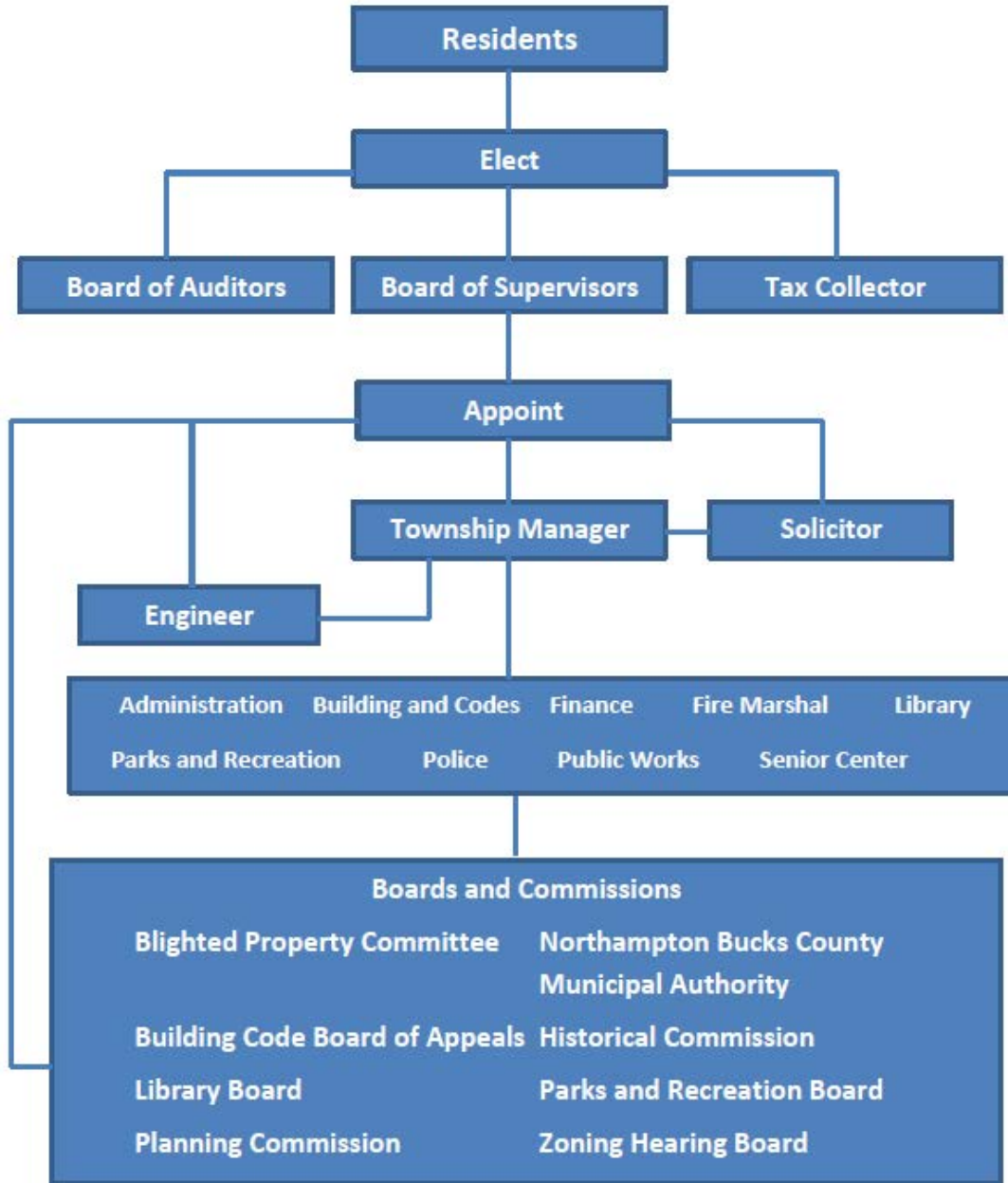


Figure 4. Summary of Township Boards, Commissions and Committees

Blighted Property Review Committee examines properties and determines if it is blighted according to eight conditions that are outlined in the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law.

Board of Auditors audits, settles and adjusts the accounts of all elected or appointed officials of the township, and its boards or agencies, that received or disbursed funds of, or owing to, the township during the preceding calendar year unless a certified public accountant or firm is appointed.

Building Code Board of Appeals listens to appeals of code interpretation from the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code.

Emergency Services Board reports to the Board of Supervisors and provides assistance to staff members regarding disaster preparedness and assistance plans and programs that address relevant hazards

Historical Commission identifies and preserves historical sites, buildings, papers, documents and relics of historical significance to the Township.

Library Board acts in an advisory capacity to the library and helps develop, monitor, and approve the department's budget and policies.

Northampton Bucks County Municipal Authority Board provides for necessary sanitary sewer/water improvement and maintenance activities.

Parks & Recreation Board provides advisory recommendations regarding parks and recreational activities within the Township.

Pension Fund Advisory Committees are two committees: one for uniform pension plan issues and the other for non-uniform pension plan issues.

Planning Commission serves as an advisory body on matters of planning and development, including the review of proposed zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.

Southwestern Bucks County Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWBSWAC) is a multi-municipal committee that includes Northampton and Upper and Lower Southampton townships to discuss waste management issues and provide recommendations to each township's board of supervisors.

Telecommunications Advisory Board advises the board of supervisors on telecommunication matters such as franchises, cable rates, emerging technologies

Tri-Hampton Rescue Squad administers Basic and Advanced Life Support services.

Vacancy Board fills vacant positions by appointing person if board of supervisors fails to do so within a 30 day time frame.

Veterans Advisory Commission advises and assists the Board with issues concerning the township's veteran population.

Volunteer Fire Company provides fire protection and prevention programs.

Zoning Hearing Board is a quasi-judicial body who hears requests for variances and special exceptions from the terms of the zoning ordinance. They also hear appeals on interpretations from the zoning officer.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The priority for public safety agencies is the prevention and protection of the public from dangers affecting safety such as crimes or disasters. Public safety organizations include law enforcement, fire departments, rescue squads, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and emergency management agencies.

Police Protection

The Township police station is centrally located in Richboro at the township complex and is the second largest “Central Booking Center” in the County. As the community grew in population over the years, so did the police force. Today there are 43 sworn officers, nine civilian support staff, and approximately 20 crossing guards. The police department is also a participant in the countywide emergency 911 communication system and patrol vehicles are dispatched in three patrol districts to efficiently cover the entire township. The annual budget for the police department is just over \$6 million and is the largest single item in the township budget.

Response time to emergency calls, road mileage to be patrolled, assignment availability, population density, and supervisor ratio contribute to the general police personnel needed. To accommodate past and projected future growth, the Township is in the process of building a new police headquarters to replace the current smaller building.

The main costs of police services will continue to be salaries and upgrades and/or replacement of police equipment and vehicles, as well as facility maintenance. Innovative devices such as body cameras, in car cameras, license plate readers, as well as other devices emerging from new technologies, will likely need to be purchased in the future. Periodic evaluations of departmental needs should continue to be performed to help plan for the future integration of these devices and associated costs.

Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by the Northampton Township Volunteer Fire Company (NTVFC) from three stations. The Fire Administration Building and Station #3 are located in the Township Complex, Station #73 is in Holland and Station #383 in Churchville. Functions include: fire suppression, rescue, training, fire police service, administration and support services. Municipal water for firefighting purposes is available throughout much of the Township.

The fire company currently operates four engines, one ladder truck, one field unit, one tanker, one heavy rescue vehicle, one light rescue vehicle, one marine rescue vehicle, and one special service unit. Additional fire apparatus and manpower resources are available to the township via mutual aid responses from the neighboring communities.

The fire company is tax-supported and is a volunteer company with approximately 75 volunteers and four paid daytime firefighters. Daytime emergency response continues to be an area of concern for the Fire Company. Fire Company and township officials are currently evaluating these trends. The critical issue regarding daytime manpower resources stems from the Northampton being a predominantly residential community with limited fire company members available for service during standard workday hours. Fortunately, the number of volunteers has rebounded in recent years and recruitment continues to be a high priority for the Fire Company.

The Township's Adopt-a-Hydrant program enlists the help of residents to keep fire hydrants free of snow during the winter season. This program helps to ensure that firefighters can quickly locate and gain access to the closest fire hydrant.

Emergency Management

Northampton Township adopted the Bucks County Hazard Mitigation Plan (BCHMP) in 2016. The updated BCHMP is a pre-disaster, multi-hazard mitigation plan that not only guides the County toward greater disaster resistance, but also respects the character and needs of communities. The plan provides a blueprint for reducing property damage and saving lives from the effects of future natural and man-made disasters and improving

community resiliency following a disaster event. Moreover, the plan qualifies the County and its municipalities for pre-disaster and post-disaster grant funding.

The BCHMP identifies the following hazards as being prevalent in Bucks County:

- Dam Failure
- Environmental Hazards
- Flood
- Ice Jam
- Hurricane
- Nor'easter
- Lightning Strike
- Subsidence
- Tornado
- Transportation Accidents
- Utility Interruption
- Drought
- Earthquake
- Extreme Temperature
- Flash Flood
- Hailstorm
- Tropical Storm
- Landslide
- Structure Collapse
- Sinkhole
- Wind Storm
- Urban Fire and Explosion
- Wildfire
- Winter Storm

Of these, Northampton has been, and is most likely to be, affected by weather-related events (e.g., winter storm, hurricane, tropical storm, etc.) and to a lesser extent, human-made hazards (e.g., transportation accidents, fire, utility interruption etc.). Some of the human-made hazards are a result from extreme storms and winds, such as flooding or utility interruption from downed utility poles and trees during extreme storms and winds.

The Township's Emergency Management Department develops and maintains comprehensive disaster preparedness and assistance plans and programs that address relevant hazards. These plans are culminated in the Township's Emergency Operations Plan, which outlines how the Township personnel coordinates with other local, county, state and federal agencies in the event of an emergency, ranging from a hazardous material spill to a natural disaster or other human-made disaster.

When a local emergency is declared, the department, along with Township personnel and representatives from the Township's first responder organizations, operate an

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate the management of community-wide resources (police, public works, fire, EMS, food, shelters, etc.) with various local, county, state and federal agencies to appropriately respond to an emergency event. These may include the following activities:

- locating requested resources and directing them to the proper place;
- managing a wide-scale evacuation;
- establishing shelters and coordinating social services;
- coordinating communications with the community; and,
- transmitting information over the Emergency Alert System.

ReadyNotifyPA

Emergency Alert messages are available for residents who sign up for the ReadyNotifyPA program. Residents get automatic notices on their handheld digital devices or personal computers. This service provides customized messages that address a specific threat to a small area such as a neighborhood or countywide. This service is available only if residents have subscribed.

Rescue Squad

The Tri-Hampton Rescue Squad has three locations in Bucks County with which they serve: Richboro Station (Northampton Township), Southampton Station (Upper Southampton Township) and Feasterville-Trevoze Station (Lower Southampton Township).

The Rescue Squad is financially supported through subscription services, billings generated from services to nonsubscribers, and contributions (through real estate taxes) from municipalities serviced. Although predominantly a volunteer organization which provides service to Lower Southampton Township and portions of Bensalem Township and Philadelphia, a paid paramedic crew is deployed during the week at the Richboro Station.

The Rescue Squad maintains a fleet consisting of four transporting advanced life support units, two basic life support ambulances, one marine rescue power and light truck, two aluminum rescue boats and trailer, two command officer cars, and one 4-wheel drive special service truck (used as a standby).

Rescue Squad plans call for the following improvements to address problems facing the emergency medical services in Northampton Township:

- Initiation of a Basic Life Support Unit stationed at the Richboro facility to improve services.
- Basic Life Support Crew, consisting of two persons, is needed to enhance daytime coverage on weekends when volunteer participation is at its weakest. It is anticipated that such a crew could relieve the paramedic crew of handling all calls and allowing for broader coverage during the week for the more seriously ill or injured patients.
- Evaluate moving from its base of operations in Feasterville to Northampton Township. The base or headquarters station would house one Advanced Life Support Unit, two Basic Life Support Units, one transport van, and a Special Services Unit.
- Provide a building containing approximately 8,000 square feet located close to the center of Richboro to minimize adverse effects of noise and traffic in residential areas, but outside of a traffic congestion area.
- Consider secondary location across from the municipal water tower on Second Street Pike, north of Newtown-Richboro Road.
- Convert Feasterville location into a satellite location.

Medical and Healthcare Facilities

Medical offices are located in the Northampton, and the Township lies in proximity of several area hospitals. Doylestown Hospital, St. Mary Medical Center, and Aria Health in Bucks County and Abington-Jefferson Health in eastern Montgomery County. Additionally, the Philadelphia region is home to many premier hospitals, including research and teaching facilities and that manage and treat specialized diseases.

EDUCATION

Library Services

The Free Library of Northampton Township is located at 25 Upper Holland Road in Richboro. In 2006, the library expanded, tripling in size to 30,000 square feet. Today, the library is open 55 hours a week and serves over 500 people a day.

The library is a full-service library with approximately 120,000 print and non-print items (making it the largest library in Bucks County,) including books, magazines, books on CD, electronic books, DVDs and Blu-ray movies, music CDs, and video games. There is also an extensive computer database with current and back issues of magazines, reference resources and downloadable music and movies. A county-wide network provides for computerized circulation of materials and a joint shared catalog. Patrons can search this online public access catalog 24/7 as well as place holds and renew materials.

Other great community services at the library include programs for adults, teens and children and services for those with low vision. Residents who have local library access cards may also use the library at Bucks County Community College.

Schools

Northampton Township is part of the Council Rock School District which includes Northampton Township, Newtown Township, Newtown Borough, Wrightstown Township and Upper Makefield Township. The Township is represented on the Council Rock School Board in five single-seat School Director regions. As indicated below, nine schools are located in Northampton including one of the two high schools, two of the three middle schools, and six of the 10 elementary schools:

1. Council Rock High School South - Rock Way
2. Holland Middle School - East Holland Road
3. Richboro Middle School - Upper Holland Road
4. Churchville Elementary School - New Road
5. Hillcrest Elementary School - East Holland Road

6. Holland Elementary School - Beverly and Crescent roads
7. Richboro Elementary School - Upper Holland Road
8. Rolling Hills Elementary School - Middle Holland Road
9. Maureen M. Welch Elementary School - New Road

District enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year was 11,047 students with 6,446 of the students attending elementary schools, 1,786 students attending middle schools, 3,807 attending high schools and 30 students placed out of district.

Northampton Township has the largest number of housing units in the Council Rock School District (14,274 units in 2010), and its proportion of the total fluctuates between 52 and 53 percent. In 2010, Newtown Township proportion of housing units grew to 28.1 percent of the district total containing the second largest number of housing units. The majority of new housing built in the decade of the 2000s was during the period 2000 to 2006, with about 75 percent (1,940 units) of the total new units constructed. The average number of new units added per year during this period was 323 units. The number of new units during the final four years of the past decade totaled just 655 units, an average of about 164 units a year. The decrease in new housing starts has continued into this first half of this decade, in large part due to the collapse in the housing market and subsequent recession. However, as the overall economy recovers, it also appears that the housing market is rebounding.

Since the explosion of student growth in the district during the housing boom of the late 1980 and 1990s, student enrollment stabilized in the early 2000s with the highest enrollment of 12,658 students occurring in the 2006-2007 school year. Since then, the enrollment has steadily decreased and is down by about 1,600 students. The recession may have played a role in the student decrease. However, Council Rock has a highly favorable reputation and attract families to move into the district, but given the current housing market combined with municipalities approaching build-out, modest growth at best is anticipated. Projections prepared for the district in 2006 forecasted continued declines in student enrollment and as indicated in the long-term school plan, ongoing analysis of enrollments will be undertaken.

The school district administration has developed a five-year capital plan and long-term school plan with options for potential redistricting and/or school consolidation beginning

in the 2016-2017 school year. The plan considers building deficiencies, including capacity and educational programs. The District's five-year capital plan includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:

- Construction of a new Newtown Middle School on the site of the existing Newtown Middle School.
- Renovation of Holland Middle School.
- Evaluate the repurposing or sale of the Richboro Middle School.
- Transition from the current use of the former Law School Admissions Center at 661 Penn Street to house both the ACHIEVE program and the Sloan School.
- Ongoing analysis of building capacity and student enrollment.

Construction and renovations have begun on both Middle Schools and the district continues to move forward with relocation plans for the Sloan School and ACHIEVE program.

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP JAMES E. KINNEY SENIOR CENTER

The Northampton Township Senior Center offers a variety of activities to improve the mind, strengthen the body, and lift spirits of those 55 years and older. This facility is operated by the Council Rock Senior Citizens Association, but the full time staff are part of the Township's Parks and Recreation Department. The Center offers an art room with kiln, outdoor horseshoe pit and covered bocce courts, catering kitchen and café-style lounge, game room, and three multi-purpose activity rooms. There is a nominal annual membership fee, which also provides a discounted rate for members participating in classes and activities. Use is limited to senior activities yet opportunities exist to expand community programming in the evenings.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Works

The Public Works department is responsible for the maintenance of township buildings, vehicles, equipment, and roads. Road maintenance includes a wide variety of tasks such as repaving, patching pot holes, ice treatment and snow removal, sweeping, lining, and painting crosswalks. The department also is responsible for installing and repairing guiderails, street lights, traffic signals and regulatory signs.

In addition to maintaining storm sewers, another major task of the Public Works Department is mowing detention basins and open space islands. The Township owns more than 800 acres of public ground and maintains 85 stormwater detention basins.

Stormwater Management

Municipalities are required to implement stormwater management consistent with state and federal regulations. The Federal Clean Water Act of 1972 regulates point and non-point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States through the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. There are two NPDES permits in Pennsylvania that regulate stormwater: one permit that regulates erosion and sedimentation during construction activities; the second permit requires qualifying municipalities (populations with 10,000 or more) to comply with standards for all municipal-owned separate storm sewer systems (MS4). Northampton Township is a designated MS4 community and the latter permit requires the township to fulfill six minimum control measures which involve education, public involvement, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction and post-construction runoff control requirements, and pollution prevention.

Pennsylvania requires municipalities to adopt stormwater management regulations that are consistent with stormwater management watershed plans within their municipal boundaries. Consistency is achieved when the municipality has incorporated recommended performance standards into their municipal ordinance. The performance

standards require that permanent controls be put in place on a development site to manage the stormwater runoff volume (amount) and the rate (speed) the stormwater is leaving the site. When controls are implemented, stormwater systems are constructed which reduce the quantity of runoff, either through systems which infiltrate or evapotranspire the stormwater, or slow the rate of runoff, typically through systems which retain or detain.

In 2011, the *Northampton Township Bucks County Stormwater Management and Grading Ordinance* (Ordinance 559) was enacted. The ordinance is not only protective, but is also diligently administered and enforced. The regulations were promulgated by the Bucks County Planning Commission pursuant to the Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Act of 1978 (Act 167).

A comprehensive hydrological study was prepared and best management practices to address water quality were identified for all municipalities in the watershed to avoid and mitigate adverse stormwater effects. In the implementation of that study, Northampton Township was required to adopt revised regulations for those portions of the Township within the Neshaminy Creek drainage basin. The Township chose to apply these new standards on a township-wide basis. Under the revised regulations, management systems must control stormwater so that the rate of runoff of post construction cannot exceed preconstruction rate of runoff. The ordinance also recommends the use of designs which:

1. Meet legal water quality requirements under state law, including regulations at 25 Pa Code 93 to protect, maintain, reclaim, and restore the existing and designated uses of the Waters of the Commonwealth.
2. Minimize increases in stormwater volume and control peak flows.
3. Provide review procedures and performance standards for stormwater planning and management.
4. Regulate activities that cause stormwater runoff by requiring a minimum of structures and rely on natural processes.
5. Encourage infiltration of stormwater for ground water recharge through the use of basins and pervious materials, including porous paving with underground recharge beds and open block walkways.

6. Retard the transmission of surface pollutants, such as road oils and fertilizers, from entering surface waters.
7. Preserve and restore the flood-carrying capacity of streams.
8. Prevent scour and erosion of streambanks and stream beds.
9. Provide standards to meet NPDES permit requirements and MS4 NPDES Phase II Stormwater Regulations.
10. Provide for proper operation and maintenance of all stormwater management facilities and BMPs that are implemented in the Township.
11. Use oversized storm sewers with flow constrictions at discharge, energy reduction spillways.
12. In smaller developments located on soils suitable for recharge: utilize on-site recharge methods, including french drains, trench drains, depression recharge plantings; preserve existing vegetation, especially woodland; minimize site disturbance through limits on grading and clustering; and refrain from altering existing topography.
13. Utilize wet ponds, artificially created wetlands, maintenance/minimum disturbance, or another suitable alternative to accomplish pollutant control.
14. Reduce/minimize lawns and landscaped areas; minimize/eliminate fertilization practices; use small on-site retention basins.

Northampton's Stormwater Management Ordinance has been cited by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as a model ordinance. Stormwater discharge deficiencies that occurred prior to the passage of the ordinance are also addressed and retrofitted when possible. To help correct areas with minor flooding problems and deficiencies in the drainage system, an Off-Site Stormwater Drainage Contribution Fund has been created which requires developers to pay \$2 per linear foot of roadway in new residential developments and \$30 per parking space in new commercial developments. These areas have been identified by the Township Public Works Department and the Township Engineer.

UTILITIES, SOLID WASTE AND OTHER SERVICES

Sanitary Service

Approximately 70 percent of the Township is served by public sewer owned and operated by the Northampton, Bucks County Municipal Authority (NBCMA). Collection and conveyance of the majority of NBCMA's sewage flows are handled through the Neshaminy Interceptor and numerous pumping stations, including the Totem Road Pump Station, with wastewater discharge ultimately to the Northeast Philadelphia Water Pollution Control Plant.

Two small drainage areas along the Township's southwest border send sewage flows to the Upper Southampton Sewer Authority and the Warminster Township Municipal Authority systems. Sewage flows sent to the Upper Southampton Sewer Authority system flow through the Poquessing Interceptor and are treated at the Northeast Philadelphia Water Pollution Control Plant. Sewage flows sent to the Warminster Township Municipal Authority system are treated at a facility owned and operated by the authority.

In 2014, DEP required that all municipalities tributary to the Neshaminy Interceptor, owned and operated by the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority (BCWSA), evaluate their present and future sanitary sewer capacity needs. An update of the Township's the 537 Sewage Facilities Plan has recently been completed to address wastewater facilities and confirm long-term capacity needs of the sewer service. The plan update provides projections on future wastewater needs, evaluates the Township's existing collection and conveyance systems, identifies potential deficiencies and recommends alternatives for addressing any deficiencies.

Overall projected flows to the Northeast Philadelphia plant from the Neshaminy Interceptor are not expected to exceed the BCWSA capacity. The plan update also indicates that the wastewater infrastructure in the Township has sufficient capacity to meet the 5- and 10-year, as well as the ultimate flow projections in the Township.

The chosen alternative for Act 537 sewage facilities planning in Northampton is continued use of the existing public sanitary sewer system (collection, conveyance, and treatment) to the Neshaminy Interceptor Service Area provided through the Upper Southampton Sewer Authority and Warminster Township Municipal Authority systems.

In addition, the Neshaminy Interceptor is to be upgraded by the BCWSA to adequately address the 10-year planning period needs of Northampton and the other contributing municipalities. The costs for the upgrade to the Interceptor will be shared by all of the contributing municipalities. The BCWSA will distribute the costs through their fees to individual municipalities. If needed, NBCMA will evaluate any increased fees and distribute the costs to the rate payers of the sanitary sewer system, as appropriate. The NBMCA will implement infiltration and inflow abatement identified in their Corrective Action Plan.

The existing sewer system serves only a portion of the area northwest of Hatboro Road. Because of the topography of this area, install a pumping station has been installed to serve several new developments. A large area of ground along Pulinski Road was developed and provided with sanitary sewers. Future development in the Pulinski Road area will either require another pumping station or enlargement of the existing one.

The Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan update also addressed the provision of sewage facilities throughout the Little Neshaminy Creek drainage area of the Township. Collection sewers and pumping facilities were proposed for most of the area southwest of Almshouse Road, plus the Traymore Manor, Grenoble Manor and Harvest Acres developments and the planned Clover Hill development located northeast of Almshouse Road. Treatment will be at the Northeast Philadelphia Wastewater Treatment Plant. The remainder of the Little Neshaminy Creek drainage area, including an existing residential area southwest of Almshouse Road with ten-acre lots, will continue to be served by on-lot sewage disposal systems.

The areas of the Township that are not proposed to be served by public sewer are considered sewage management areas that will be served by on-lot sewage disposal systems (OLDS). This area is primarily in the northeastern portion of the Township

situated within the Little Neshaminy Creek drainage basin. The parcels comprise mostly of rural residential and agricultural uses.

The majority of the older on-lot systems are seepage pits or in-ground absorption fields, and more recently sand mounds. The Act 537 Plan provides more detailed information on the types of systems as it is expected that on-lot sewage disposal systems will continue to be used to serve existing wastewater needs in areas where public sewers are not available.

The Township has an ordinance which provides for a sewage management program for on-lot disposal systems. Individual property owners are responsible for operation and maintenance of disposal systems on their property, with Bucks County Health Department's Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) responsible for administering a program that addresses problem areas and regulatory guidance for new systems or repair and replacement of disposal systems.

Water Supply

Public water is also provided by the Northampton Bucks County, Municipal Authority (NBCMA) through wells and two interconnections with BCWSA. NBCMA owns and operates the water system that consists of 15 wells, more than 210 miles of water mains, and above ground storage tanks. The wells are within the Stockton Formation, a good groundwater source. To maintain a safe and reliable groundwater supply, it must be used properly and protected from any source of pollution.

Interconnections with private wells are not permitted. All water sold by the Municipal Authority is metered and the Authority has a strict water leakage prevention program.

The Churchville Reservoir, located on Iron Works Creek, is used to augment the flow in the Neshaminy Creek and is not currently used as a drinking water source.

Solid Waste Management

The Township has separate contracts covering: curbside collection and hauling of refuse to disposal sites; composting of yard waste; and collection and marketing of recyclable materials. The Pennsylvania Solid Waste Management Act (No. 97 of 1980) requires that municipalities adopt a solid waste management plan. The economic benefits of cost avoidance (in the case of composting yard waste) led to mandatory separation of yard waste from household solid waste. Revenues were generated by the mandatory separation and sale of aluminum, clear glass and newspapers. Subsequently, recycling was expanded to include colored glass, plastics, bi-metal cans and magazines in 1994. With the volatility of the recycling market and the expected changes in technology affecting solid waste management, any and all decisions in this area should be made with an eye toward maintaining an ability to respond to any significant change that could affect the Township's current service and programs.

In addition to recycling, the Township also has collection of bulk items for a fee. Northampton Township also participates in the County's Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Collections held in each year in various locations throughout the county.

Other Utilities

Utilities that serve the township are provided by primarily by metropolitan area companies. Wireless services are generally transmitted from satellites to cellular towers, and satellite dishes. Gas and electric services are provided by PECO Energy. Two interstate gas transmission lines and one electric power line bisect the Township:

- Transcontinental Gas Line;
- Sun Pipeline Co. pipeline; and
- PECO Energy electric power line.

In addition to causing visual and public safety impacts, these major utility facilities often serve to limit the development potential of the properties they traverse or border.

Telecommunications services are important components of a community's infrastructure. It serves as a support for public safety and high speed connections to technology devices contributes to the overall educational, professional, and private aspects of residents' daily lives. The overall economic health of a community is also impacted by quality of available telecommunication networks. The Township created the Telecommunications Advisory Board to assist in setting standards for emerging telecommunication systems.

Part III

LAND USE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

PLAN INTERRELATIONSHIP AND COMPATIBILITY

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

PLAN ELEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 10. PLAN INTERRELATIONSHIP AND COMPATIBILITY

The *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code* requires that comprehensive plans take into account the planning in surrounding areas, the county, and the region. Coordinated efforts with neighboring municipalities are essential to address issues that extend beyond the municipal boundary lines. These issues include, but are not limited to, traffic-related problems, watershed-based resource protection, creation of regional trails and open space networks, and other public facilities such as schools, emergency services, and utilities.

Planning policies of surrounding municipalities have been considered in the development of Northampton's future land use plan. Also, applicable regional planning documents that may include or affect land in Northampton are provided. Issues or areas of shared concern are discussed with the intent to minimize any impacts from potentially incompatible land uses and to present opportunities for intermunicipal approaches to regional issues.

PLAN COMPATIBILITY AMONG SURROUNDING REGION

Local Perspective

There are nine municipalities that border Northampton Township. As show on Figure 5, Warwick Township is located to the northwest, bounded by a portion of the Little Neshaminy Creek. To the northeast and south, the Neshaminy Creek physically separates Northampton from the townships of Wrightstown, Newtown, and Middletown and the Borough of Langhorne. Bristol Road serves as the western boundary between

Figure 5. Northampton Township and Surrounding Municipalities



Northampton and Ivyland Borough, Warminster Township, and Upper Southampton Township. Lower Southampton lies to the southwest of Northampton.

The following evaluation of planning documents in surrounding communities presents no significant land use conflicts or major changes anticipated along municipal boundaries. The existing conditions and future land use planning efforts in all the municipalities are generally consistent with one another. Northampton has made a concerted effort to work with surrounding communities and other applicable agencies on land use issues that transcend its boundaries, including transportation improvements, park, open space and historic resources, and with solid waste management. However, further opportunities may exist for the Township to engage with neighboring communities and regional agencies to help accomplish shared goals, including enhancement of watersheds and water resources, historic amenities, trail linkages, and transportation systems.

Warwick Township

Northampton shares its northern boundary with Warwick Township along portions of Mearns Road, the New Hope-Ivyland Railroad, and Little Neshaminy Creek. Bristol and Almshouse roads provide the main access between the townships. According to the *Warwick Township Comprehensive Plan (2007)*, the Planned Industrial Areas and Natural Resource Area (Agricultural Areas) are indicated for land adjacent to Northampton.

At Bristol Road, commercial use abut Northampton's residential properties. Vacant land and industrial uses within portions of both townships' industrial parks extend along the railroad tracks and Mearns Road. An industrial business in Northampton is separated from a single-family home in Warwick by a fence, railroad tracks and Mearns Road. Properties along the bends of the Little Neshaminy Creek in both townships include agricultural use, preserved open space, single-family homes and large lot rural residential uses.

Overall, the surrounding land uses are compatible with one another and little land remains for further development. In areas where industrial uses are in proximity to

residential areas, vegetated plant buffers, fences and the roadway help separate and reduce any negative impacts.

Newtown and Wrightstown Townships

The *Newtown Area Joint Comprehensive Plan (2009)* serves as the comprehensive plan for Newtown, Wrightstown, and Upper Makefield townships. Newtown and Wrightstown townships are adjacent to Northampton separated by the Neshaminy Creek. According to the Future Land Use Plan in the *Joint Comprehensive Plan*, there are five planning areas identified in Wrightstown and two planning areas for Newtown Township adjacent to Northampton.

The CM-Conservation Management Area comprises about one-half of Wrightstown's border along the Neshaminy Creek. This planning area is reserved for low intensity uses, farming and groundwater recharge. A small concentration of houses also located along the creek is designated as NC-Neighborhood Conservation Area. The NC Planning Area is intended to provide for development compatible with the existing character of the residential neighborhood. Farther north, near Rushland, the R-H-High Density Residential and Q-Quarry Areas are indicated. Although not completely compatible with the open and rural residential uses in Northampton, these higher intensity planning areas are separated from Northampton by the wide creek. Just beyond the Quarry Area, an I-Industrial Area is indicated. This area is intended to accommodate a wide range of industrial-related uses, due to the proximity of supporting services and facilities.

In Newtown, the planning areas include the CM and PP-Public Purpose Areas. The Public Purpose Area is intended to accommodate land devoted to public and institutional uses, such as Bucks County Community College.

Much of the existing land uses traversing both sides of Neshaminy Creek include forested and steeply sloping banks, open space, parkland, agricultural and residential (single-family homes). The exceptions include the stone quarry near Rushland in Wrightstown and the Bucks County Community College property in Newtown. Tyler State Park lands traverse both Northampton and Newtown townships, and a bridge over the creek connects park facilities. In addition, three bridges span the Neshaminy Creek to connect

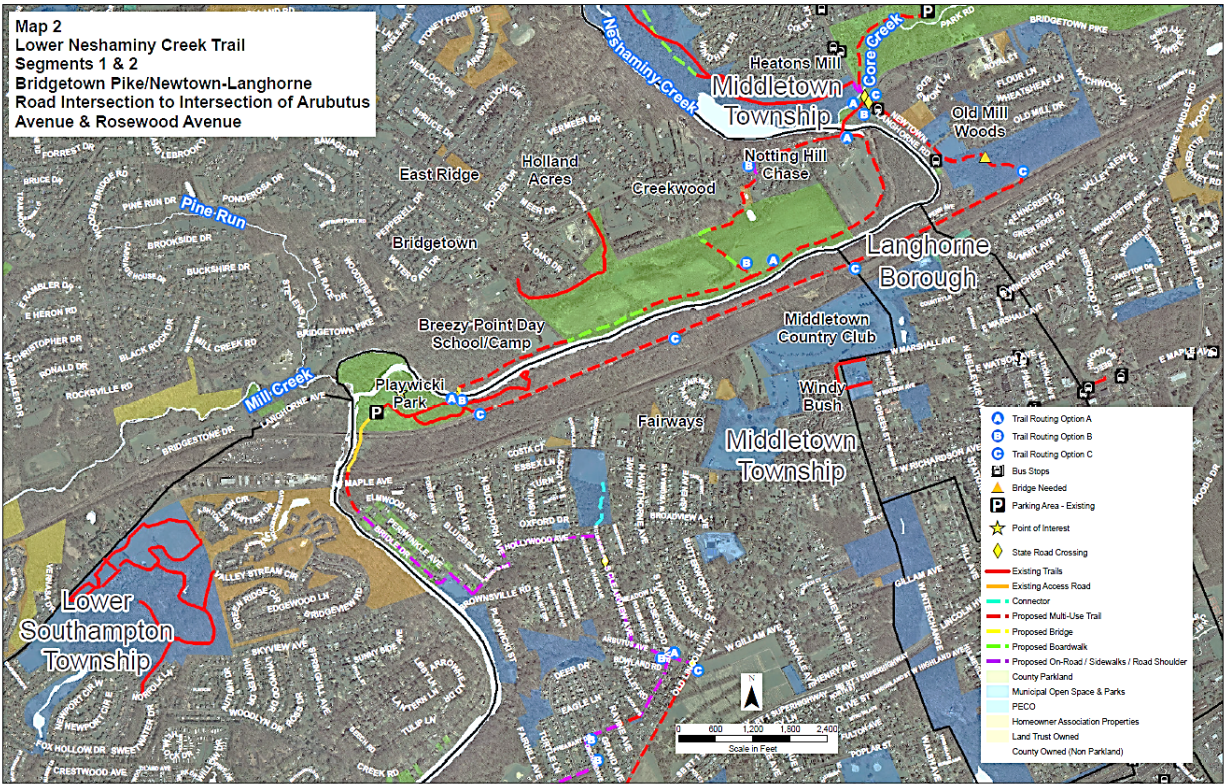
Northampton's roadways with adjoining Newtown and Wrightstown townships. These include Route 332 (Newtown-Richboro Road), Route 532 (Buck Road), and Route 232 (Second Street Pike).

Middletown Township

Similar to Newtown and Wrightstown, the Neshaminy Creek serves as a wide buffer between Northampton and Middletown. The *Middletown Township Comprehensive Plan (1994)* designates most of the land along the Neshaminy Creek as Rural and Suburban Residential, Public Parks and Open Space areas. The adjacent land uses in both communities are also mostly in open space and residential use. The George School and Pennswood Village, a retirement community, are located in the northern portion of Middletown. St. Mary Medical Center is located just south of these facilities on Route 413, providing hospital and medical care facilities to Northampton residents.

Bridgetown Pike serves as the main connector road, linking Northampton to the Route 413 corridor (Langhorne-Newtown Road) and Core Creek Park in Middletown. Historic structures and open space attributes complement this area, and nearby Core Creek Park provides residents with additional park and recreational opportunities. The Lower Neshaminy Creek Trail Study also indicates a potential trail between the two municipalities, extending along the creek to Playwicki Park, a county park located in Middletown Township (see Figure 6). A wooded, sloping buffer, active rail lines, and utilities exist along Middletown's northern boundary with the Neshaminy Creek. Beyond the railroad tracks are mainly residential uses and open space land.

Figure 6. Lower Neshaminy Creek Trail Study



Langhorne Borough

Langhorne Borough Comprehensive Plan (2014) designates the stretch of land bordering Northampton adjacent to the Neshaminy Creek as a Park, Recreation, Open Space Planning Area with a Riparian Enhancement Overlay. This northern portion of the Borough contains steeply sloping forested land, utilities, and active railroad tracks. A few buildings located just east of Route 413 in the Borough between the railroad overpass and the creek contain residential and business uses.

Across the creek in Northampton are open space floodplain lands with much of the land used for park and recreation.

Lower Southampton Township

Bridgetown Pike and Langhorne Avenue provide the southwestern border between Northampton and Lower Southampton, extending from Bristol Road east to Playwicki

Park. Residential uses and open space land (Playwicki Farm Park, Barclay Farm and Bellwood South) exist on both sides of the roadways. The *Lower Southampton Township Comprehensive Plan (2010)* indicates a potential zoning change for Playwicki Farm Park to OS Open Space.

The intersection at Bridgetown Pike and West Maple Avenue has recently been improved with the construction of a new traffic roundabout, as recommended in Lower Southampton's comprehensive plan.

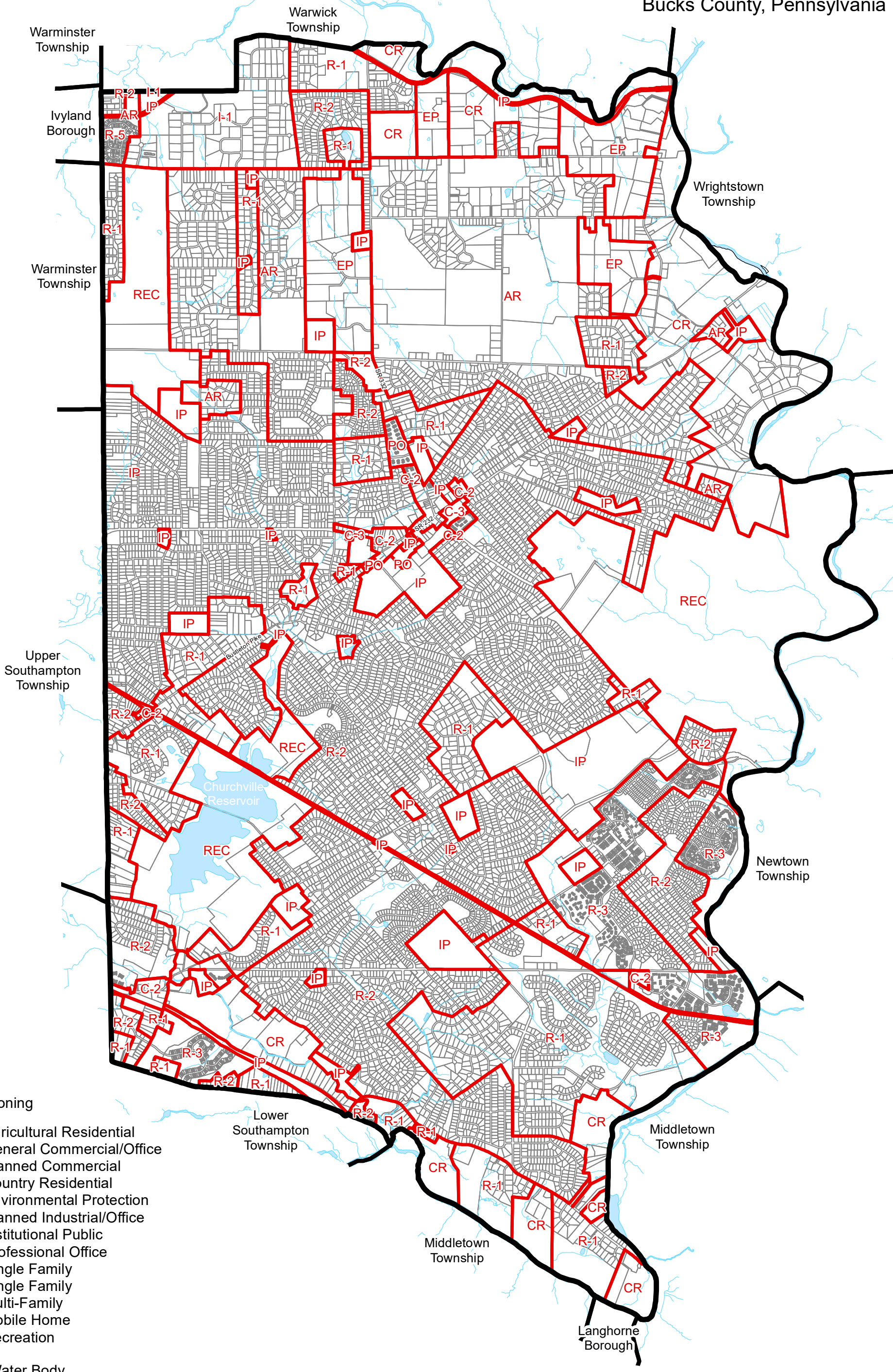
Several commercial uses also are scattered on Bridgetown Pike in both municipalities. Between Bridgetown Pike and Chinquapin Road, Lower Southampton also contains two large parcels containing a private sports complex and contractor business. These uses are well-buffered from the residential uses located in Northampton. In addition to Bridgetown Pike, Route 532 (Buck Road) serves as a major connector road between the two municipalities, providing access to the Holland Village and beyond.

Upper Southampton Township

Upper Southampton abuts Northampton along Bristol Road between Davisville and Chinquapin Roads. The municipalities share the Churchville Historic District. Except for the church in Upper Southampton, land on both sides of Bristol Road is comprised of residential uses. The *Upper Southampton Township Comprehensive Plan Update (2010)* includes residential planning areas along Bristol Road that correspond in terms of density and lot size to the existing R-1 Residential Conservation, R-2 Low Density Residential and R-3 Moderately High Density Residential zoning districts.

Route 232 (Second Street Pike) at Bristol Road is the major connector between the townships. Just north of Churchville Road and Knowles Avenue, the former SEPTA rail line crosses Bristol Road.

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



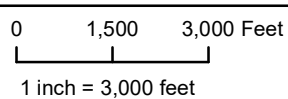
Zoning

- AR Agricultural Residential
- C-2 General Commercial/Office
- C-3 Planned Commercial
- CR Country Residential
- EP Environmental Protection
- I-1 Planned Industrial/Office
- IP Institutional Public
- PO Professional Office
- R-1 Single Family
- R-2 Single Family
- R-3 Multi-Family
- R-5 Mobile Home
- REC Recreation

Water Body

Source: Northampton Township

Prepared by: Bucks County Planning Commission
October, 2017



Warminster Township

Bristol Road, between Jacksonville and Davisville roads, serves as the municipal boundary between Warminster and Northampton. *The Warminster Township Comprehensive Plan (2004)* designates the area as Single-Family Detached Residential and Parks, Recreation & Protected Open Space. This is consistent with the existing residential and recreational land uses in Northampton. Both municipalities obtained land along Bristol Road from the former Warminster Naval Air Warfare Center and converted it to active recreational and park use.

Ivyland Borough

The *Ivyland Borough Comprehensive Plan (2003)* designates Nonresidential, Residential, and Agricultural lands along its eastern border with Northampton. The Ivybrook Corporate Center and a restaurant are situated across Bristol Road from the single-family homes in Northampton. The New Hope-Ivyland rail line traverses Bristol Road between these uses. Ivygreene, an age-restricted townhouse development in Northampton is situated across Bristol Road from single-family residences in the Borough.

Watershed Perspective

The *Little Neshaminy Creek River Conservation Plan (2007)* and *Lower Neshaminy Creek Watershed Conservation Plan (2004)* have common goals to protect and improve water quality, reduce flooding, increase recreational opportunities, link greenways, promote open space acquisition and improve watershed-wide plan coordination and integration.

County and Regional Perspective

Bucks County Comprehensive Plan (2011)

The Bucks County Comprehensive Plan “presents a common vision for the future of Bucks County and seeks to coordinate and assist the county’s municipalities, agencies and the general public in the planning, development, and management of Bucks County’s natural and built environment.” A number of guiding principles are put forth

in the plan for the purposes of ensuring that the plan is carried out in a manner that is consistent with the overall vision for Bucks County:

- Protect natural, historic, and scenic resources.
- Preserve and expand parks, open space, and agricultural resources.
- Promote energy conservation and efficiency.
- Protect water resources and reduce waste.
- Mitigate hazards to life and property.
- Provide adequate community facilities and services.
- Enhance transportation mobility.
- Promote economic opportunity, housing diversity, and efficient use of land.

The Future Land Use Plan indicates that Northampton is an Emerging Suburban Area. These areas have both planned and available public infrastructure and services intended for future development and also include areas with significant population gains over the last 20 years. Development in these areas should be compact and designed with the pedestrian in mind. Future development may include residential, nonresidential, and mixed uses as part of planned developments.

Within the Emerging Suburban Area, Richboro is indicated as a Secondary Town Center intended to serve as a focal point for revitalization in accordance with Smart Growth principles.

Bucks County Open Space and Greenways Plan (2011)

The purpose of this plan is to identify linkages between County natural resources, open spaces, recreational facilities, and historic and cultural resources. This includes the proposal of multi-use greenway trails along the main stem of the Neshaminy Greenway, along the Little Neshaminy Creek Greenway, and along Mill, Neshaminy, Core and Dyers Creeks, which comprise the Cross County Greenway.

Bucks County Bicycle Master Plan (2012)

The Bucks County Bicycle Master Plan is intended to advance opportunities for a broader network of multimodal routes. Plan recommendations within Northampton include: establishment of portions of greenway/trail systems along the Neshaminy Creek and along the Little Neshaminy Creek, a cross-county on-road bicycle connection via Route 532 (Buck Road) which would connect the Delaware River and the D&L Trail/Washington Crossing Historic Park with Montgomery County.

Bucks County PA Natural Areas Inventory (1999) and Update (2011)

This document is used as the principal source for identifying important ecological resources within Bucks County and is intended to be used for allocating open space funds, preparing zoning, subdivision, land development regulations, comprehensive plans, Act 167 and Act 537 planning and management, and reviewing individual site plans. The 2011 inventory recommends that permanent protection and public access be sought for open land around Churchville Reservoir that is not already part of Churchville County Park.

DVRPC Connections 2040: Plan for Greater Philadelphia

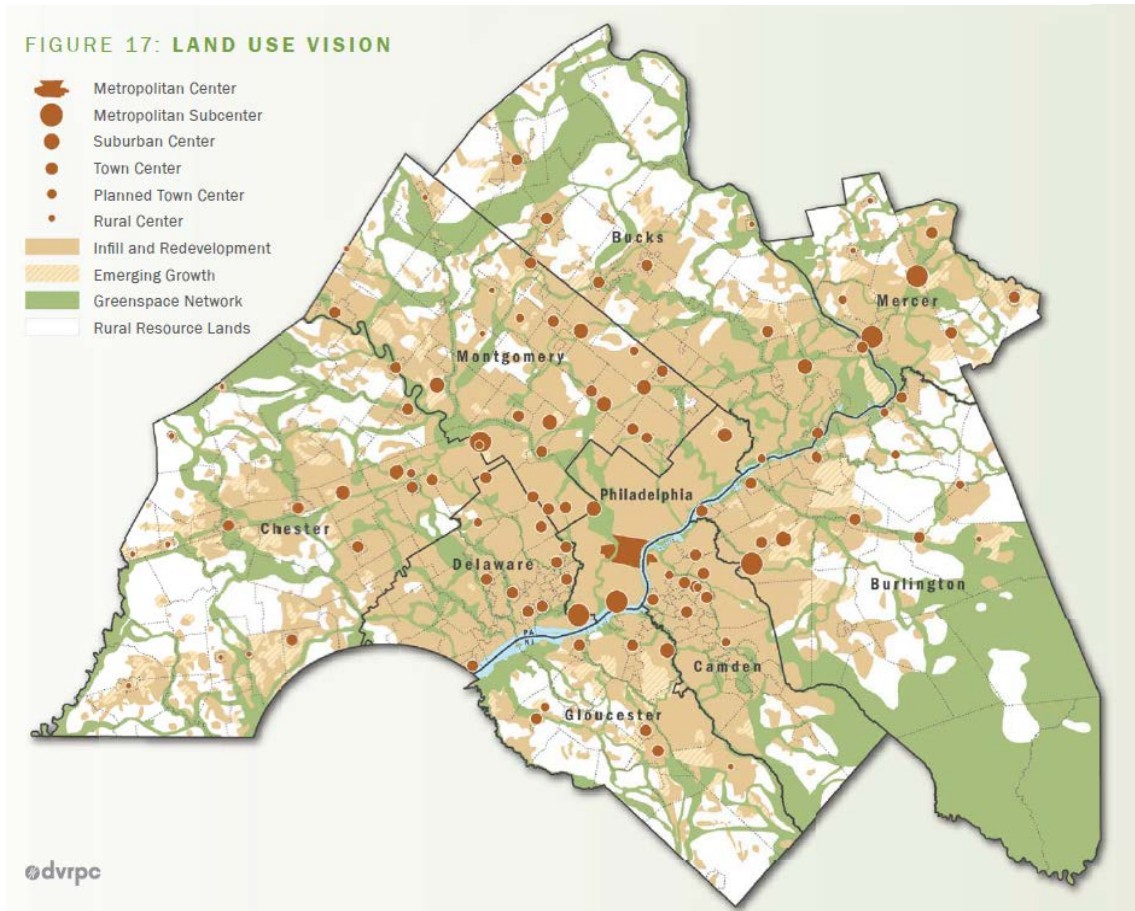
The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) developed *Connections 2040: Plan for Greater Philadelphia* (adopted July 2013) as an update to *Connections 2035: The Regional Plan for a Sustainable Future*. *Connections* is a long-range plan that outlines a vision for the future growth and development of the Greater Philadelphia region. Four core principles are established in the plan:

1. Manage Growth and Protect Resources
2. Develop Livable Communities
3. Build an Energy Efficient Economy
4. Establish a Modern, Multimodal Transportation System

The Plan designates Northampton Township as a Developed Community where new growth will be concentrated primarily as infill and redevelopment. The long-range

planning policies established for Developed Communities include rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure systems and the housing stock, revitalizing communities through local economic and community development efforts, and improving the pedestrian environment.

Figure 7. *Connections 2040* Land Use Vision



Connections 2040 also promotes the development of greenspace networks as a form of public infrastructure that benefits the health, function and sustainability of communities. The 2040 Greenspace Network shown in *Connections* identifies the eastern edge of the Township as part of the Greenspace Corridor which is part of the overall regional greenspace network. The document also identifies the Cross County Greenway Corridor in the southwestern portion of the Township. DVRPC’s recommendations regarding conservation lands and the regional greenspace network are consistent with stated objectives in this plan which are to protect important natural resources and open space areas for present and future residents to enjoy.

CHAPTER 11. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A comprehensive plan serves as the Township’s official policy document on matters relating to its future growth and development. It also serves as the framework for the Township and its agencies to follow in making decisions involving land use, resource allocation, and program development. This plan provides recommended actions that can be taken to help fulfill the Township’s vision and goals based on its common planning principles.

The foundation for the future land use plan includes previous plans and other studies undertaken for the Township, as well as input from the public, municipal officials and staff, and the Vision Statement and Planning Principles articulated during this plan review and revision process. The following reiterates Northampton’s vision and the principles as discussed in Part I of the Plan and are used in the development of the future land use plan.

VISION STATEMENT

With visible links to our rich history, and our diverse and attractive residential neighborhoods, parks, preserved open spaces and wooded stream valleys, Northampton Township is a healthy and sustainable community. Our community is safe, friendly, and connected, with a vibrant economy of varied businesses and high quality services, making it a great place to live, work, and raise families.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

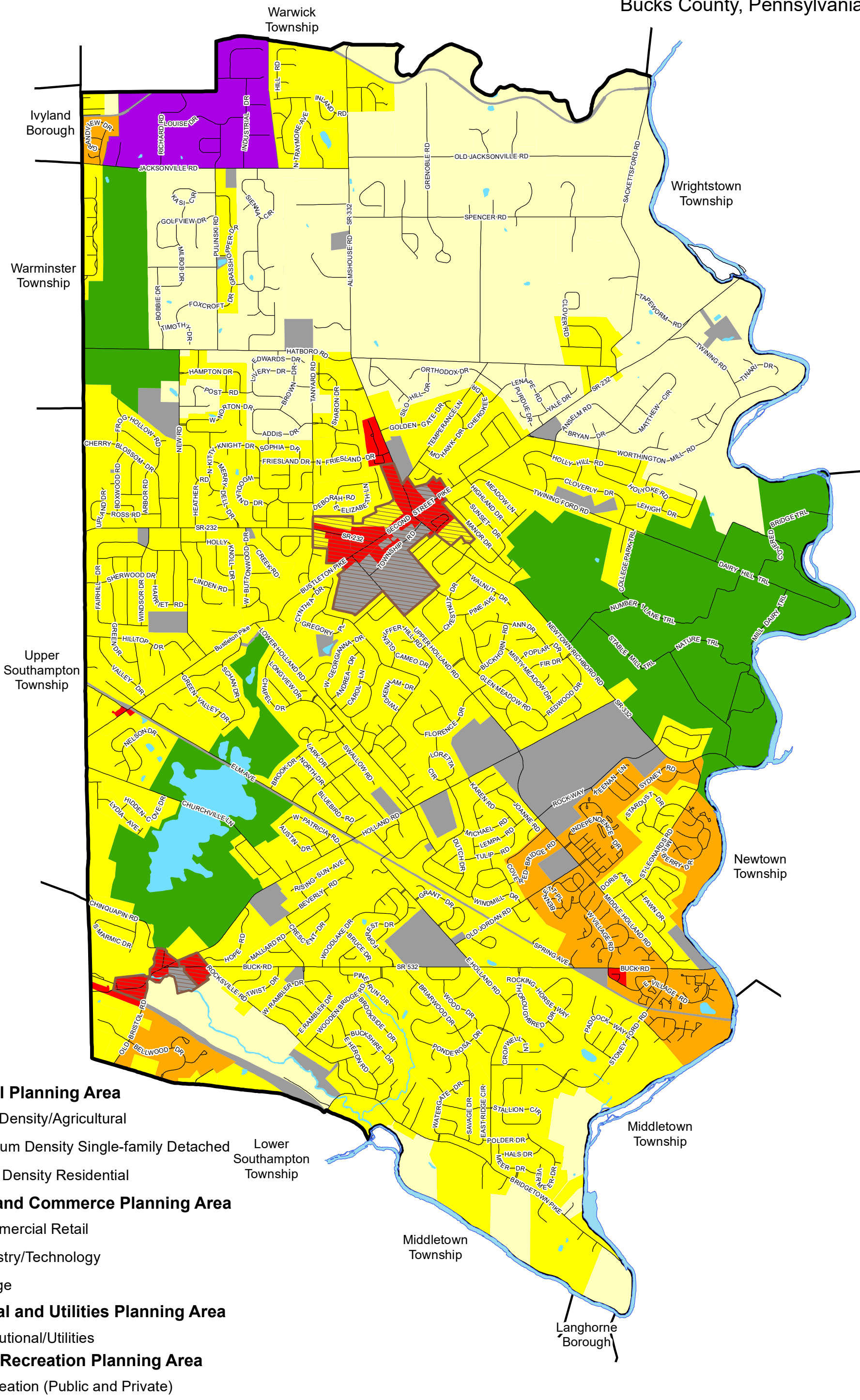
- **Livable Built Environment:** Ensure that all elements of the built environment—land use, transportation, housing, energy, infrastructure, and institutions—work together to provide a high quality of life that is sustainable for living, working, and recreating.
- **Resilient Economy:** Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and encourage development and redevelopment strategies that foster sustainable business growth and build reliance on local assets.
- **Lasting Landscape:** Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being, including historic and visual amenities, are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their qualities is a primary objective.
- **Healthy Community:** Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, education, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.
- **Responsible Regionalism:** Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

FUTURE PLANNING DESIGNATIONS

The Future Land Use Plan for Northampton establishes a policy guide for land use in the Township over the next ten years and beyond. It provides a vision for municipal policy and action, integrating the planning issues and factors addressed throughout this Comprehensive Plan. Its foundation is based on previous plans and studies undertaken by the Township. The stated goal for land use is to sustain a balance of land uses at a scale and intensity that is compatible with population forecasts, infrastructure capacity, natural environment, and existing character. Factors most relevant to future land use planning include:

- projected population growth and housing demand;
- existing land use and development patterns;

Northampton Township Bucks County, Pennsylvania



Residential Planning Area

- Low Density/Agricultural
- Medium Density Single-family Detached
- High Density Residential

Business and Commerce Planning Area

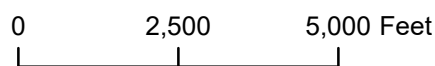
- Commercial Retail
- Industry/Technology
- Village

Institutional and Utilities Planning Area

- Institutional/Utilities

Parks and Recreation Planning Area

- Recreation (Public and Private)



- zoning and municipal policy;
- existing and planned infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, water and sewer services);
- regional development influences and transportation patterns;
- environmental constraints; and
- natural, historic and scenic resource conservation and protection.

The philosophy of the proposed Future Land Use Plan is to depart as little as possible from the pattern of development that has emerged during the past several decades while accommodating growth expected to occur in coming years in a desirable fashion. This Future Land Use Plan is similar to the one in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan in that it retains the Township’s existing land use categories for planning purposes related to future land use. These categories are largely consistent with existing land uses and with zoning districts established under the Northampton Township Zoning Ordinance. They are intended to function as a baseline or guide for recommending review, adjustment, or addition of zoning districts. For the purpose of planning land use, the Township has been divided into various categories and overlay districts. Each is described below and displayed on the Map 10. Future Land Use Plan. The land use categories are:

- Residential Planning Area
 - Low Density/Agriculture
 - Medium Density Single-Family Detached
 - High Density (Attached and Multifamily)
- Business and Commerce Planning Area
 - Commercial Retail/Services
- Village Overlay
 - Industry/Technology
- Institutional/Utilities Planning Area
 - Government/Education and Religious Uses
 - Utilities
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Planning Area
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Greenways and Open Space

Residential Planning Area

The primary land in the Township is residential including large-lot single-family detached, single-family cluster development, age restricted housing, and multifamily dwellings. In general, future residential development will be allowed at densities similar to those already specified in the existing underlying zoning district. The following provides for the continuation of the existing residential land use pattern as it relates to other land uses, the transportation network and the environment.

Low Density/Agriculture

Low density single-family residential and agricultural uses are designated above Hatboro Road to its border with Warwick, and in the lower portion of the Township along the Neshaminy Creek below Stony Ford Road including the large tracts of undeveloped land roughly contained within the boundaries formed by Buck Road, Mill Creek, and Neshaminy Creek. Other low density residential areas are located along Bustleton Pike, between Richboro and the Upper Southampton border, and adjacent to the Churchville Reservoir. The Low Density/Agricultural Area provides a transition from waterways, including the Neshaminy Creek and Churchville Reservoir, floodplains, steep slopes, woodlands, farmland and open space areas, to medium and higher density residential areas.

Farming and open spaces uses, large lot single-family detached and clustering of single-family residential lots are encouraged in this planning area. Low density residential uses are intended to encourage lot flexibility in design to protect environmentally sensitive areas, promote large areas of open space, and preserve agricultural land. A low or minimal building coverage and impervious surface ratio is provided to help protect natural resources and the environment.

The Low Density/Agriculture Area encompasses the AR Agricultural-Residential, EP Environmental Protection, and CR Country Residential zoning designations. This planning designation is consistent with the type of land uses and residential development that has occurred within the zoning districts. Much of the land in the planning area have been developed with large-lot single-family residential uses and many properties have

been preserved in open space by deed restriction or conservation easement, including several farms.

Medium Density Single-family Detached

Medium density residential areas include areas of the Township that have been developed with single-family detached units at densities somewhat higher than those in the Low Density/Agricultural area due in part to the availability of public sewer and water facilities. This is the largest planning area in the Township and includes the area between Hatboro Road and Bustleton Pike, the areas around Richboro, and the area which extends to the higher density areas along a southeast portion of the Neshaminy Creek.

Zoning districts encompassing this area include the R-1 and R-2 Single-Family districts. The land use designation is consistent with the type of uses and residential development that has occurred within the zoning districts. Open space, park and recreational uses have been provided in these zoning districts through the use of the cluster development option.

High Density Residential

These areas are located primarily below Holland Road, along Middle Holland and Buck roads, in proximity of the Neshaminy Creek. High density developments are also located adjacent to Ivyland Borough, and just north of Bridgetown Pike along the Lower Southampton Township border. High density residential areas permit all dwelling unit types including attached and multifamily with deed-restricted open space.

Smaller single-family lots, attached and multifamily dwelling units add to the diversity of the Township's housing stock. These types of dwellings are more affordable than the conventional single-family home, and provide more housing choices to lower income groups, such as singles and young couples. Other special housing types for seniors and assisted living complement the overall available housing options in the Township.

The R-3 Multifamily Residential and R-5 Mobile Home Park zoning district encompass the high density planning area.

Business and Commerce Planning Area

The Township desires to encourage a diverse make up of businesses and uses, areas that are walkable, and designed in an attractive manner to provide balance and variety of services within the commercial area.

Commercial Retail/Services

The Township has two main commercial centers, the villages of Richboro and Holland. Village Shires and Churchville also contain commercial uses and several commercial uses are scattered throughout the Township. The Commercial/Office zoning districts make up most of this Planning Area. These districts are intended to provide sufficient land area for a variety of commercial, office and service uses to meet residents' needs as growth occurs, including providing for neighborhood shopping centers at convenient locations in the Township. Such commercial uses should be served by adequate public facilities (e.g., roads, sewer, water) have sufficient on-site facilities (e.g., parking, loading, vegetation, drainage) to minimize traffic congestion and other associated impacts from noise, odor, glare, runoff, etc. The C-2 General Commercial/Office District, C-3 Planned Commercial District and PO Professional Office District make up the Commercial Retail/Services planning area.

Village Overlay District

The Village Overlay District allows for a combination of uses located on separate lots, common buildings with more than one principal use, or separate building containing more than one use. This district provides a set of dimensional requirements for lots that are intended to encourage new development or redevelopment compatible with existing village features, such as a reduced front yard setback.

- **Richboro Village**

The Richboro Village Overlay District radiates from Second Street Pike and Almshouse Road between Tanyard Road and Manor Drive. The overlay contains the

I-P and C-2 districts along with areas of C-3 Planned Commercial and P-O Professional Office districts.

The *Richboro Village Master Plan* (2018) is intended to serve as the guiding document for the future of Richboro. This plan ties together the key recommendations of previous initiatives and explores actions to be taken to strengthen the village's transportation system, physical appearance, and economic structure.

The plan's recommendations are intended to address the underlying functional issues in the village and offer a way forward in creating a newly revitalized Richboro. Concepts and strategies shown are in accordance with the three plan principles (Make It a Place; Improve Mobility, Safety, and Access; and Develop the Economy). The *Richboro Village Master Plan* was adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in early 2018.

- **Holland Village**

The *Holland Village Master Plan* (2014) serves as the guiding document for Holland village. The plan concludes with a series of maps that illustrate strategies and concept plans that form an actionable plan for improving Holland's transportation, land use, and business environment. Each map focuses on a designated Planning Area as described in previous chapters by showing concepts, resources, and potential improvements. The *Holland Village Master Plan* was adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in 2014.

Design Guidelines for Northampton Township Village Overlay District was developed to supplement the Holland and Richboro Village master plans. Design guidelines, which address diverse elements such as sign placement, lighting, parking, and pedestrian orientation, must be followed for all development occurring in the district. Through the provisions of the Village Overlay District and village design guidelines Northampton Township seeks to create a cohesive, aesthetically pleasing development theme that will provide an attractive business environment that exemplifies the traditional character of the community for both customers and residents.

Industry/Technology

Industrial, business and technology development near Ivyland Borough include four business campuses to the north of Jacksonville Road. I-1. An aerial photograph shown on the following page indicates this area, which encompasses Northampton's I-1 Planned Industrial/Office District. This planning area is intended to be a thriving business and technology center that enhances the local and regional economy. Development of business and industrial uses that are compatible with existing uses in the center are encouraged and uses or activities can negatively affect the environment (water or air pollution) or cause nuisances (e.g., noise, odor, glare) to nearby residential neighborhoods are not permitted. The Northampton Township Business & Technology Center (NTBTC) works with local businesses, Township officials, and the Northampton Community and Economic Development Corporation to improve its overall community, appearance, business relationships, and networking capabilities.

Various uses are permitted on a minimum lot area of 2 acres, and specific criteria to ensure compliance with environmental protection standards are provided in the I-1 Planned Industrial/Office zoning district. In 2014, the I-1 zoning provisions were revised to expand the list of permitted uses and delete several uses that were determined to be incompatible with the existing center. Uses added included medical and professional offices, financial establishments, motor and automotive repair and assembly, eating place, daycare centers, and personal service shops. Hotel/motel was also added as a use permitted by conditional use approval.

Planning efforts to retain and enhance existing businesses, as well as to attract new businesses in this planning area are ongoing with coordination between the EDC, LERTA, and BCA.

Figure 8. Northampton Township Business Campus



Institutional/Utilities Planning Area

Government/Education/Religious Use

The Township is home to many institutional buildings and uses, comprising approximately 5 percent of the land area. Such uses include state, county, and municipal buildings and facilities (excluding parks and recreational facilities), religious and educational facilities, and cemeteries. Utilities include public roads, three railroad lines, municipal water, sewage, and stormwater management facilities, and transmission corridors. These existing land uses have been recognized in the Future Land Use Plan and are consistent with the underlying IP Institutional/Public zoning district.

It is the Township's policy to maintain the established institutional and utilities land use patterns in areas where they currently exist.

Park, Recreation, and Open Space Planning Area

Park, Recreation, and Open Space facilities make up nearly 20 percent of the Township's land area. The largest areas consist of Tyler State Park, Churchville Nature Center, and Township Park. In addition to the recreational facilities associated with the parkland, there are also two private golf courses. The Future Land Use Plan recognizes these facilities and they are zoned REC Recreation. Park and recreational uses associated with schools and religious institutions are categorized in the Institutional-Government/Education and Religious Use Planning Area.

The Township's *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan Update* (2014) and the *Open Space Plan Update* (2010) provide detailed descriptions of protected park, recreation and open space lands. The *Parks and Recreation Plan* focuses primarily on recreation facilities, programs, services, and operations while the *Open Space Plan* is the guide for Township decisions regarding agricultural preservation, natural resource protection, and recreational land acquisition. Both plans provide an analysis of existing park and recreation resources, needs assessment, and recommendations. An Action Plan providing recommendations is provided in both plans, some of the strategies overlapping between plans. The Township will consult these plans and consider the recommendations that are intended to support the current and future population to help achieve its park, recreational, and open space goals of the Township.

Greenways and Open Space

A recreational greenway provides a system of paths that can accommodate different users such as bicyclists, hikers, and joggers. By linking individual parks together, linear trails can create a unified park system throughout a municipality and beyond its borders.

The *Bucks County Open Space and Greenways Plan* (2011) indicates The Mill–Neshaminy–Core–Dyers Creeks Greenway (also known as the Cross County Greenway) follows the courses of Mill, Core, and Dyers creeks, as well as a section of the Neshaminy from the confluence of Mill Creek with the Neshaminy at Playwicki Park, to the confluence of Core Creek with the Neshaminy just southwest of Core Creek Park. This greenway provides linkages between Churchville Nature Center, Playwicki Park, Core Creek Park, and six

municipalities. Other greenways within Northampton include segments of the Neshaminy Main Stem-Wrighttown/Northampton/Newtown Greenway and the Little Neshaminy Creek Greenway. The middle section of the larger Neshaminy Creek Greenway extends from the Forks of the Neshaminy near the historic village of Rushland, south to its confluence with Core Creek in Middletown Township.

According to the Township *Open Space Plan*, the most effective means of protecting open space is by obtaining the development rights of a property by acquisition (e.g., donation, fee simple purchase, purchase of easements). The plan recommends land donation when possible; otherwise, fee-simple purchase and purchasing development rights to land or easement with funds from the Township and other local, state or federal funds that may be available.

Much of the land indicated as greenway along the creeks has been preserved as open space or contains on protection easement. The Township reaffirms its land use policy to complete the greenways as identified in this plan.

CHAPTER 12. PLAN ELEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Successful implementation of this plan requires that specific measures and actions be taken in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner. In addition to the future land use plan to help guide future development, there are recommended actions for plan elements. These recommendations are intended to help achieve the stated goal based on information provided in Parts I and II of this plan. The plan elements are as follows:

- Agriculture Plan
- Natural Resources and Sustainability Plan
- Historic and Scenic Resources Plan
- Housing Plan
- Transportation, Circulation, and Mobility Plan
- Economic Development Plan
- Utilities and Solid Waste Plan
- Community Facilities Plan
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

AGRICULTURE PLAN

Goal: Preserve active farmland and conserve agricultural resources in highly valued and sensitive areas.

Preserving agricultural soils and existing farms in the Township is important to sustain the local and regional agricultural industry, providing fresh produce and food supplies. Appropriate cultivation and farming practices need to be implemented to protect the air and water resources. Northampton has a large block of agricultural uses in the north above Hatboro Road. Many of these farms are deed restricted from further development and contain conservation easements through county, state, and local programs for farmland preservation. In addition, the Township has adopted zoning provisions that attempt to balance land use strategies to encourage the continuation of farming operations, including low density development and cluster development option. Lower density

housing arranged in a manner that is screened and adequately set back from the farming operation can help act to mitigate potential impacts. For example, densely planted buffers and fencing on the development side of the lot line will prohibit encroachment on farmland, and interference with farming operations. Such separation between uses also reduces dust, noise and odor impacts on residential properties.

The Township's *Open Space Plan* serves as a guide for Township decisions regarding agricultural preservation. As discussed in the Future Land Use Plan section, reducing the minimum site area for a cluster subdivision option may be beneficial to preserve remaining prime soils and farmland. As farm sizes in the county have decreased over time, an upward trend has been seen in "gentleman farms" that contain less land but are used to raise a few animals or poultry, feed, and to grow specialty products and organic produce. Community efforts can also help preserve agricultural land by supporting local food producers through farmers markets and cooperative food buying programs.

Assessing the terms and conditions of existing agricultural easements to ensure that any new or innovative farming activities are encouraged may be particularly useful in the future. Alternative energy facilities such as wind turbines and solar panels, could be allowed as accessory uses on farm tracts to meet on-site electricity needs to operate the farm and also the larger energy needs of the community. Allowing adaptive reuse of existing farm structures for accessory residential or business uses could help strengthen and diversify agriculture operations and should be explored.

Recommendations:

- Continue collaboration between county, state, and local programs for farmland preservation as opportunities arise.
- Continue to review the zoning ordinance to provide opportunities for farmland preservation, such as through cluster subdivisions on a reduced site area that permit a greater area of open space, and smaller minimum lot size for dwelling units.
- Permit a wide variety of agricultural uses and accessory uses that support the farming industry, including adaptive reuse of existing farm structures, farm-related businesses, alternative energy structures, etc., that allow farmers to adapt to changing industry trends.

- Ensure farms are in compliance with state legislation regarding nutrient management plans and erosion and sedimentation management control plans.
- Provide assistance in bringing together the local farmer with the local consumer by promoting local sources for produce and sponsoring local farmers' markets. Educate residents as to the importance of the local agricultural industry and benefits of farming to help reduce social frictions between neighbors.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Goal: Preserve the intrinsic value of natural areas and enhance its biodiversity to provide a healthy living and sustainable environment for people, plants, and wildlife.

Natural resources play an important role in the ecology of a community and region. The natural features present in Northampton support a rich diversity of native vegetation and wildlife, indicating a healthy living environment for people, plants and animals. Northampton's goal of preserving natural resources will help achieve the following elements of sustainability:

- Equitable sharing of resources among the current and future generations;
- Protecting and living within the natural carrying capacity;
- Minimization of natural resource use; and
- Satisfaction of basic human needs.

Natural resources also have economic, recreational, aesthetic, and educational benefits which can be depleted if resources are not protected. The Township's *Open Space Plan* also serves as a guide for Township decisions regarding natural resource protection.

Protecting natural resources requires more than identifying significant resources. The Township recognizes the importance of protecting natural resources to help maintain the character of a place and enhance the quality of life in a community. These actions include sediment and erosion control, stream corridor restoration, forest and vegetation management, wetlands preservation, and slope stabilization. The preservation and

restoration of the functions of natural systems also helps to minimize losses to properties. Policies on what, and how much, should be preserved have been established over the years and are reflected in the Township's land use regulations (zoning and subdivision ordinances) and are part of the on-going land use recommendations of this Plan.

Recommendations:

- Continue to utilize the expertise of environmental organizations and local groups to promote environmental stewardship. Such efforts may be to pursue assistance from organizations regarding education, training and funding opportunities for tree-related matters (e.g., restoring native vegetation, enhancing community tree canopy, establishment of a tree registry).
- Encourage preservation of remaining trees and woodlands, as well as increasing the township tree canopy, by requiring tree replacement and afforestation when a certain amount of woodland cover is removed.
- Develop ordinance provisions to require native plants in landscaping plans (e.g., buffer yards, along streets, in parks and open spaces).
- Encourage sustainable long-term management and maintenance of vegetation on public properties including parks and recreational facilities.
- Consider the benefits of including Low Impact Development (LID) into land use ordinances to minimize impacts of existing natural features.
- Review and implement, as appropriate, the watershed management recommendations of the *Little Neshaminy Creek River Conservation Plan*. Provide education of streamside property owners on proper riparian management and maintenance.

HISTORIC AND SCENIC RESOURCES PLAN

Goal: Preserve and foster the intrinsic value of our rural and visual qualities and our historic heritage for future generations to enjoy.

Historic and scenic resources are important features that help make up a community's natural and historical landscapes. For example, historic structures not only impart knowledge of the area's heritage, but also helps to accent the way one perceives the landscape. Fieldstone (often covered in stucco), log, frame, and brick buildings are the characteristic building materials of the region, and most buildings were sited to take advantage of opportunities in the landscape, particularly relative to slope and climatic exposure. These historical man-made features, including stone walls, bridges and spring houses, provide visual accents that add particular distinction to scenic quality. Special vegetation, including tree-lined drives and specimen trees located prominently in a field, or alongside roads or streambanks, rock outcroppings, and water bodies, also often offer strong visual foci, sharply contrasting both the rolling upland and the steep-sided stream valleys in the Township.

Not many municipalities share Northampton's wealth of unique and irreplaceable historic resources, and despite changes to the Township's landscape over the decades, many historic buildings still remain and are considered valued community resources. Although Northampton has properties listed on the National Register, including the Churchville Historic District, such listings do not provide any special protection. The greatest threat to historic resources in the Township is demolition, alteration or neglect by property owners. Many buildings have been removed from agricultural tracts as land was converted into residential subdivisions, and surviving buildings have lost their rural context. In other situations the integrity of the historic buildings themselves has been compromised due to alterations, modernizations, or additions. In addition, vacant buildings, in some cases, have been neglected by the owner and allowed to deteriorate so that they are no longer serve a useable purpose.

The Township is not only an important trustee of the natural and cultural resources that characterize Northampton, but also desires to conserve and maintain these resources in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all of the residents and future generations, who may learn from, and appreciate, their past. As such, the Township will extend the regulatory means where appropriate to conserve the continued economic viability of historical resources. Historic and scenic landscapes will continue to be preserved through inclusion in the Township Open Space Program and through regulatory means that minimize development impacts wherever possible and to mitigate impacts where not.

Recommendations:

- Update historic survey, complete National Register nominations, and evaluate potential additional historic district designations, focusing on those resources deemed eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register.
- Identify vulnerable historic buildings and explore funding programs to help restore deteriorating conditions.
- Bolster enforcement of building and maintenance codes to prevent deterioration of historic structures and the potential for demolition by neglect. Consider a control of demolition ordinance to provide a waiting period before a demolition permit is issued, so that means of saving the structure can be considered.
- Adopt zoning regulations to preserve and protect individual historic structures by expanding incentives for conservation of historic and architecturally significant structures and landscapes, offering added design standard flexibility, or allowance for certain additional uses, beyond those otherwise authorized within the zoning district.
- Ensure any roadway improvements along identified scenic roads are safe, yet appropriate to enhance the scenic road view, as well as the treatment of the roadside edge and adjacent scenic views.
- Consider developing ordinance provisions related to the preservation and protection of identified scenic resources.

HOUSING PLAN

Goal: Maintain attractive residential neighborhoods and quality homes, and enhance social interaction through design and connectivity among residential developments and to the larger community.

The Township seeks to maintain quality, connectivity, historic character, and sustainability in its housing stock by encouraging a balance among housing unit types. The Township plans to promote proper maintenance of the existing housing stock by enforcement of housing, zoning, health, safety, historic preservation and property maintenance codes to ensure that sound buildings, attractive neighborhoods, property

values, historicity, affordability and diversity of housing choice are enhanced. New and infill development or redevelopment will be appropriate in size, density and type of construction to preserve the character of residential neighborhoods. Methods for encouraging energy efficiency of existing housing units and new construction will be explored by the Township, and connections among neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public facilities will be made as appropriate opportunities arise.

As Northampton approaches build-out stage, with the exception of the farmland that is not protected by conservation easements or deed restriction, new housing construction most likely will consist of single-family detached units, infill development, and as part of redevelopment proposals.

Through its current zoning, the Township allows for a variety of housing types. Most of the areas zoned for higher-density and single-family housing have been developed. Housing for active adults (senior citizens) has been constructed in Richboro and adjacent to Ivyland. These developments are expected to meet the need for independent living housing for older adults in the foreseeable future, however, the need for in-law suites or accessory apartments should be considered as part of an overall housing strategy. This housing type supplements age-restricted-adult housing and is particularly suited to older and frailer seniors who wish to live near family or other caregivers.

Recommendations:

- Encourage residential conversion and adaptive reuse in high density or mixed commercial areas that are appropriate with the real estate market conditions and preservation of the historic resources including apartments and live/work units.
- Consider provisions for in-law suites or accessory apartments to supplement future housing needs of older family members.
- Provide for in-fill development consistent in character with existing residential uses and that favors flexible approaches linked to resource protection and buffering between new and existing development.
- Maintain a diversity of housing by allowing attached or multi-family infill housing, live/work units, and housing above retail shops in mixed use developments.

- Support private and public efforts to rehabilitate and maintain housing stock, including, but not limited to, disability-adaptive improvements, rehabilitation of owner-occupied and rental properties, code enforcement, and historic preservation.
- Encourage Keystone Green Building and Green Building Alliance initiatives for LEED, Passive House, Energy Star, Green Globes, and Net Zero Energy design and certification for new construction.

TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION, AND MOBILITY PLAN

Goal: Enhance efficiency, safety and connectivity for all modes of transportation (vehicular, rail, freight, pedestrian, and bicycle).

Transportation systems provide for the movement of people and goods between places and are intended to be designed for safe and convenient movement for all users, such as motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles, and public transit. The continued growth of the Township will depend on the advantages that a well-functioning transportation system provides. Maintaining and enhancing the quality and efficiency of the system also supports the Township's economic development efforts and can help achieve a cleaner environment through the reduction of fossil fuel emissions.

Access management is a tool that will be used to minimize the number of conflict points along roads to provide safe and efficient access to properties. Techniques will include the use of shared driveways and parking, providing access to secondary roadways, appropriate driveway spacing, planted median strips, protected left turn lanes, and other access control measures as determined to be beneficial.

Safety of pedestrians and motorists is a priority of the Township. Therefore, as the Township maintains and improve existing streets, it will consider traffic calming measures that can help enhance the livability of neighborhoods negatively impacted by traffic speeds or traffic volume. A high level of connectivity among neighborhoods and to schools, parks, and community facilities is also desired by the Township.

Additionally, the subdivision and land development ordinance requires sidewalks in all new developments, both residential and nonresidential. In addition to their use for exercise and recreation, sidewalks provide a safe option for people to walk to a nearby destination. Sidewalks should continue to be required along all proposed and existing streets in the higher density areas of the Township.

Recommendations:

- Implement a Complete Streets Policy Plan, where appropriate, and ensure that access management techniques are implemented.
- Continue to work with TMA to ensure that the public transportation needs of the community are being met.
- Continue to coordinate circulation planning efforts with neighboring municipalities to ensure that local and regional transportation goals are met.
- Promote access management improvements along all arterial and collector roads, minimizing points of turning movement conflict, coordinating and channeling access from adjacent uses, and reducing the number of existing and substandard access points wherever feasible.
- Upgrade intersection signaling devices to increase capacity during peak travel periods without significantly reducing traffic flow during non-peak periods, using intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and other means.
- Develop a traffic calming program for local streets experiencing speeding and high volume of cut-through traffic that impact neighborhood safety.
- Enhance connectivity by continuing to improve the pedestrian circulation system (e.g., sidewalks, trails, road crossing safety) to schools, parks, and community facilities and ensure that appropriate streetscape features are included in design.
- Encourage alternative circulation opportunities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities and links, as part of the development site planning process, to minimize need for vehicular trips and improve access for transportation dependent persons;
- Utilize the *Bucks County Master Bicycle Plan* as a resource for developing bicycle facilities throughout the Township.
- Monitor availability of funding for transportation improvements on an ongoing basis, including funding for alternative transportation opportunities (e.g., trails, bike lanes, public transit, etc.) and related improvements.

- Ensure that the potential for passenger rail service along the New Hope-Ivyland Rail Line remains a feasible option.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Goal: Sustain the economic vitality and tax base of our community with a diverse mix of nonresidential uses.

Most business enterprises are subject to locational factors, market forces, transportation access, and commuter patterns beyond the scope of municipal planning control. Northampton's attraction derives from its proximity to New Jersey, Philadelphia and New York City, and its unique mix of natural beauty, high-quality residential neighborhoods and schools, cultural vitality and historic charm. The Township recognizes that it is tied to the regional economy through residents' employment, spending patterns, services and trade. Nonresidential uses serving the needs of area residents are varied and concentrated in Richboro and Holland. The Business Commons located in the northwestern area of the Township off of Jacksonville Road contains facilities for large industrial and business needs.

The Township supports revitalization of Richboro and Holland as village centers and adopted master plans that are incorporated into this Plan. Zoning regulations and design guidelines also have been established. The zoning ordinance provides for local retail and services, mixed uses (including a residential component), arts and culture, and government activity. Villages design standards, compatibility with surrounding historic characteristics, and that encourage pedestrian connectivity have also been established. The economic development planning policies and improvement strategies for the villages of Richboro are outlined in the *Richboro Village Master Plan* (2018). Likewise, the *Holland Village Master Plan* (2014) is the guiding document for land uses and improvements.

Northampton desires to encourage new nonresidential development and expand existing uses. This type of economic growth would not only enhance the local tax base, but provide for expanded employment opportunities. To help retain and strengthen existing

businesses, the Township has improved infrastructure (water, sewers and roads), created the Northampton Community and Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and implemented a LERTA tax incentive program for new development or building improvements in the Business Commons. Through website development and other marketing materials the EDC has begun a process to recruit new businesses.

Recommendations:

- Ensure the economic development policies of the Holland and Richboro master plans are implemented.
- Establish partnerships with county and regional economic development agencies and the Chamber of Commerce to identify growth industries to market the Business Commons.
- Identify and address issues that will help facilitate business attraction, retention, or expansion.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the LERTA program.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Goal: Provide or facilitate high-quality services, essential facilities, and utilities to accommodate the existing and anticipated population growth within the fiscal capacity of the Township.

Community facilities and utilities are important components in determining the quality of life in a community. Community facilities and services are necessary to maintain the health, safety, and social needs of communities. In addition, as they affect the quality of life, facilities and services can also be an economic development tool since businesses often look at these attributes within a community when they locate.

The Township will periodically review building space management to address various office, parking, and storage space needs among departments (administration, police and fire). The Township will also periodically reevaluate administrative office procedures to

make the most of available technologies and improve efficiency. In addition, the Township will continue to maintain its official web site by providing up-to-date information to residents, businesses and visitors.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Northampton adopted the Bucks County Hazard Mitigation Plan (BCHMP). The plan provides a blueprint for reducing property damage and saving lives from the effects of future natural and man-made disasters and improving community resiliency following a disaster event. Implementation of the BCHMP qualifies the Township for pre-disaster and post-disaster grant funding. The Township's Emergency Management Department is responsible for maintenance and operation of the community's comprehensive disaster preparedness and assistance plans and programs that address relevant hazards.

WATER AND SEWER FACILITIES

Public water and sewer systems are important to the health and safety of residents and growth management. These facilities are owned and operated by the Northampton, Bucks County Municipal Authority (NBCMA). An update of the Township's the 537 Sewage Facilities Plan has recently been completed to address wastewater facilities and confirm long-term capacity needs of the sewer service. The chosen alternative for sewage facilities planning includes the continued use of the existing public sanitary sewer system (collection, conveyance, and treatment) to the Neshaminy Interceptor Service Area. The Neshaminy Interceptor is to be upgraded by the BCWSA to adequately address the 10-year planning period needs of Northampton and the other contributing municipalities. The costs for the upgrade to the Interceptor will be shared by all of the contributing municipalities. The BCWSA will distribute the costs through their fees to individual municipalities.

The areas of the Township that are not proposed to be served by public sewer are considered sewage management areas that will be served by on-lot sewage disposal systems (OLDS). These systems are required to comply with the Township's sewage management program.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Township continues to work with the Southwest Bucks Solid Waste Committee to manage solid waste generated in the region and has separate contracts covering: curbside collection and hauling of refuse to disposal sites; composting of yard waste; and collection and marketing of recyclable materials. Waste reduction information and tips are e provided on the Township website. The Township also has collection of bulk items for a fee and participates in the County's Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Collections held in each year throughout Bucks County.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Northampton's *Stormwater Management and Grading Ordinance* requires management systems must control stormwater so that the rate of runoff of post construction cannot exceed preconstruction rate of runoff. To address discharge deficiencies that occurred prior to the passage of the stormwater management ordinance the Township developed a *Stormwater Management Initiatives Program*. This program helps to correct areas identified with minor flooding problems and deficiencies in the drainage system with funding provided through the *Off-Site Stormwater Drainage Contribution Fund*.

The Township will continue to monitor and maintain municipal stormwater management facilities and ensure compliance with NPDES program In addition, as a designed MS4 community, the Township will fulfill minimum control measures which involve education, public involvement, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction and post-construction runoff control requirements, and pollution

prevention. Best management practices will be provided on public lands and small stormwater mitigation projects on private property (i.e. rain gardens, rain barrels, natural basins) will be encouraged.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Goal: Provide well-maintained and accessible recreational and community facilities for residents and all age groups including those with special needs and disabilities.

Parks, recreation facilities, and other open space resources are important parts of a community's identity and contribute to the overall quality of life and vibrancy of a community. Park and recreation facilities and programs provide opportunities for residents to gather and interact and help create a sense of community. Open space resources help to preserve the Township's natural ecosystems and provide an attractive setting in which to live and work.

An Action Plan providing recommendations is provided in both the *Open Space Plan* and *Park and Recreation Plan* with some of the strategies overlapping between plans. This comprehensive plan endorses the policies and recommendations of these plans.