

**OPEN SPACE PLAN**

**DRAFT 5/31/05**



**SPRINGFIELD  
TOWNSHIP**

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

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Hillcrest Pond, Cover Background

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**OPEN SPACE PLAN**

**APRIL 2005**

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The Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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# INTRODUCTION

## **SPRINGFIELD'S 2005 OPEN SPACE PLAN**

### **GREEN FIELDS/GREEN TOWNS PROGRAM**

In 2003, a referendum to fund open space and green infrastructure projects was passed in Montgomery County. This funding was distributed to municipalities, private non-profit conservation organizations and the county to preserve more open space and enhance the livability of existing communities throughout the County. A similar referendum was passed in 1993. At that time, Springfield drafted its 1996 Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan, which has served as a valuable guide to the Township's open space activities for the past nine years.

Under the new program, Springfield is eligible to receive a total of \$1,397,301 for open space planning and implementation between April 2004 and April 2008. This grant requires matching funds equal to twenty percent of project costs from the township. The County grants come with several conditions. The most important condition is that any land purchased with grant money must be permanently preserved as open space or for active recreation. Another condition is that Springfield must complete and adopt an updated Open Space Plan. This plan must be approved by the County's Open Space Board before grant money can be disbursed.

### **DEVELOPING AN OPEN SPACE PLAN**

In May 2004, the Springfield Open Space Committee was formed according to the requirements of the Green Fields/Green Towns Program. Members represented the Springfield Planning Commission, The Shade Tree Commission, the Park and Recreation Board, the Board of Commissioners, and several neighborhood representatives with

interest in and knowledge of open space issues. Liaisons from the Township as well as the Montgomery County Planning Commission also served on the committee. The Open Space Committee held public meetings on a monthly basis from June 2004 through May 2005 to develop this plan. The committee presented a draft version of

this plan to the Board of Commissioners during a regularly scheduled meeting, as well as to the community during a public hearing. Comments were solicited from the public and incorporated into the final document.

The 2005 Open Space Plan was reviewed and approved by the County Open Space Board prior to adoption by the Township. This assures that the plan's recommendations are eligible for funding through the Green Fields/Green Towns program (this does not, however, guarantee that any specific project will receive funding). In addition to County Open Space grants, grants from other agencies will be sought to implement many of the recommendations in this plan. Upon completion of this plan, Springfield Township will embark on implementing the recommendations listed in Chapter 10 by writing specific project proposals and applying to various organizations and agencies for grants.

The Open Space Committee made every effort to consider all aspects of open space planning relevant to the Township. However, in the event that a project, program or policy was overlooked, the plan may be amended by following the procedure outlined in section 302 (a) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN**

This plan was developed for two major purposes. First, as previously stated, it is a requirement that must be filled in order to be eligible to apply for funding through the Green Fields/Green Towns program. It was also developed to serve as a guide to the Township in acquiring new open space, forging connections through existing open space via an enhanced trail network, and developing programs and policies to preserve and maintain active and passive open space in the Township.

## **THE OLD PLAN VS. THE NEW PLAN**

Springfield's previous open space was vital in guiding the Township's open space development. That plan mainly emphasized land acquisition and trail development. As a result of the plan, several projects were implemented, including the acquisition of The Black Horse Inn and Laurel Beech

Park, the development of the AAA zoning district, acquisition of a trail easement on Northwest Avenue, utilization of a \$48,997 tree-planting grant, and establishment of a private conservation easement on the Wharton-Sinkler Tract.

In addition to acquisition and trail development, the new plan emphasizes revitalization of Green Infrastructure such as park improvements, enhanced tree-planting activities, and gateway installation. It also focuses on Heritage Resource Conservation, County Trail Connections, and Floodplain Restoration. These items were not previously eligible for funding through County Open Space grants, and are a new feature of the 2005 Green Fields/Green Towns Program.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Open Space Committee has included over eighty recommendations for open space projects, programs and policies. Each recommendation is described in detail in Chapter 10. It is also listed along with its priority level, the party responsible for implementation, and potential funding sources in the implementation matrix in Chapter 11.

## **WORKING WITH OUR NEIGHBORS**

Springfield Township has been working with its neighbors, including Whitemarsh Township, Upper Dublin Township, Cheltenham Township, and the City of Philadelphia, to develop this open space plan. It will continue to work with them to implement the recommendations of this plan and to work on planning efforts in the future.

# CHAPTER 1

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Community Profile Chapter of the Springfield Township Open Space Plan is designed to provide residents, planners and officials the necessary background information to make well-informed decisions regarding the future preservation of natural and cultural resources within their community. It consists of three parts: 1) the Community Context section, which examines the community's historical background and regional setting, 2) the Existing Land Use Analysis, which details the use of each property in the Township, and 3) the Community Demographic Analysis, a study of the demographic trends in Springfield Township.

### COMMUNITY CONTEXT

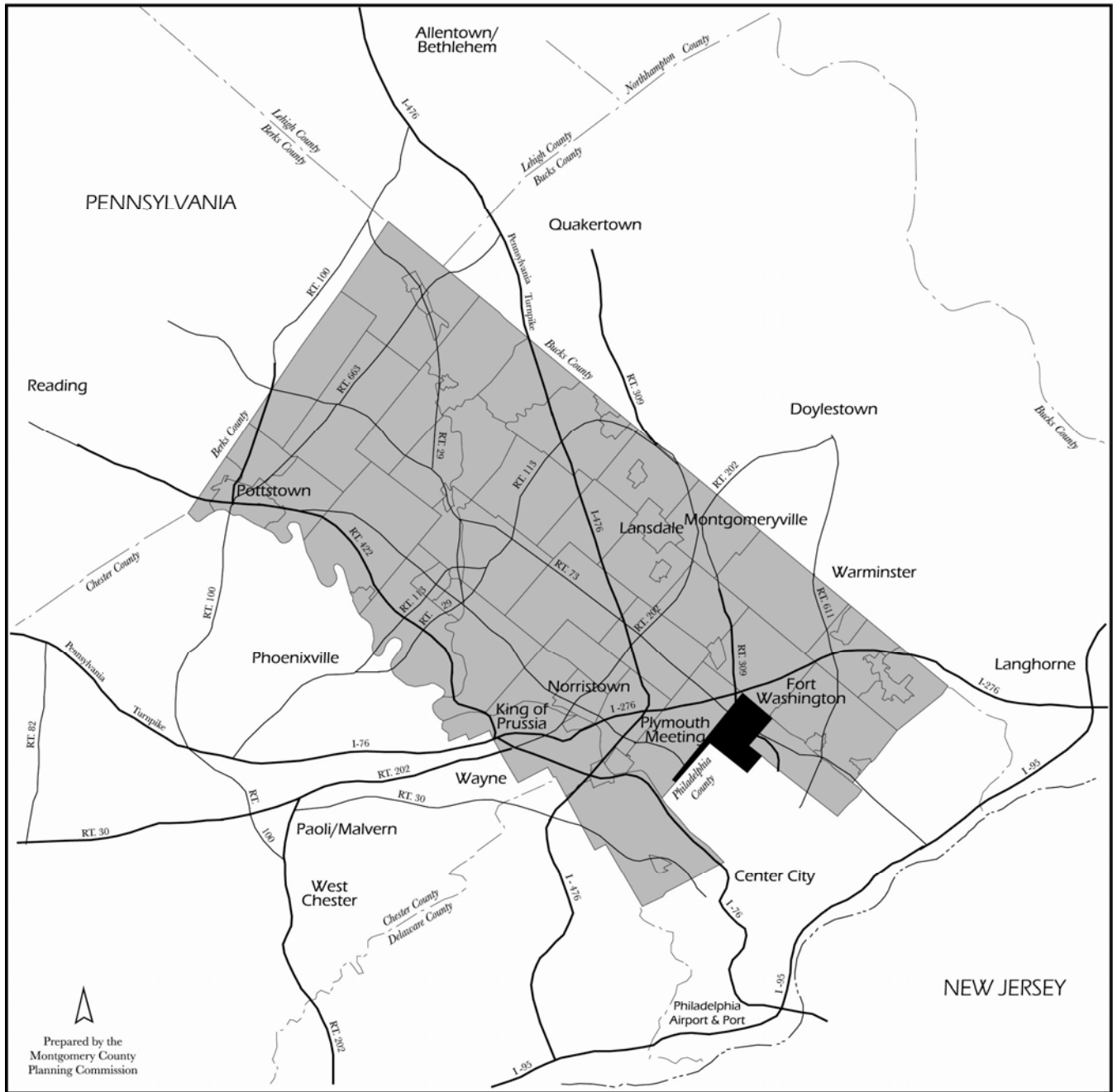
#### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

*Adapted from the Springfield Township Historical Society's "Springfield Township, Montgomery County," 2002.*

Springfield Township, an area rich in historical significance, has contributed greatly to the growth of Montgomery County and the Philadelphia region. Established circa 1681, the land was given as a gift by William Penn to his wife, Gulielma Maria Springett Penn, and was surveyed as "Penn's Manor of Springfield." Springfield's early development and economic growth are directly related to its location. Situated northwest of Philadelphia, it was an area rich in mineral deposits

with fertile land for agriculture. These resources led to its development as a farming community and as a provider of raw materials to early industries in lime burning and iron ore mining. Many of the early settlers and founders of the area built homes and carved out farms that still exist today. Springfield's location also made it a way station for the large numbers of travelers and settlers moving along the major roads in and out of Philadelphia. Germantown Pike, Bethlehem Pike and Ridge Pike

Figure 1  
Regional Settings



were major arteries out of Philadelphia in Colonial times and remain so today. The many rivers and other tributaries of the Schuylkill River provided waterpower for numerous paper and flour mills. Wissahickon Creek, Sandy Run, Sunnybrook Run, and Paper Mill Run were but a few. Although many of these waterways have been reduced to minor streams or have vanished due to urban development, the remains of some of the mills are silent reminders of their contribution to the early economic growth of Springfield.

In the late 1800s, the emergence of railroads and the rail transit system promoted rapid development of local industries. In addition, Springfield Township became more accessible to people living in Philadelphia. Its scenic beauty and countryside attracted wealthy Philadelphians who established summer homes and country estates. After World War II, Springfield Township experienced rapid growth in population and residential development, as returning GIs and their families looked to the “good life” of suburban living. Between 1945 and 1970, much of the current community infrastructure and residential development was built. Today, only the vestiges of many of the original farms, great estates, early industries, the amusement park, and the trolleys remain. But each of these in its own way helped shape the township, and the people who live here, in to the wonderful community that Springfield is today.

## REGIONAL SETTING

Springfield Township is a 6.2 square mile, flag-shaped community located in eastern Montgomery County, surrounded in the county by the Townships of Cheltenham, Upper Dublin, and Whitemarsh, and the neighborhoods of Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia, as indicated in Figure 1. Its regional location places it close to center city Philadelphia and several major employment centers in Montgomery County, such as Fort Washington, Willow Grove, Plymouth Meeting, and King of Prussia. Convenient access to these and other areas is made possible by several major roads, including the Fort Washington Expressway (PA 309), which extends northward through the North Penn area and into Bucks County and southward to the city; PA Route 73 (Church Road), which runs the entire length of the county from the city to Douglass Township; Bethlehem Pike,

which also connects the Township with the city (Chestnut Hill) and the North Penn area; and Germantown Pike, which runs east-west between the city and Collegeville Borough. In addition, SEPTA operates five bus routes and the R-5 commuter rail line serving many areas.

Major natural features in the Township include the Wissahickon Creek and surrounding woodlands located in the panhandle area (a section of the Township that remains largely undeveloped and includes part of the Morris Arboretum site). The area also lies within the regionally important open space and recreation corridor comprised of Andorra Park (part of Fairmount Park in Philadelphia), the Wissahickon Trail, and Fort Washington State Park (in Whitemarsh Township).

## EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

The Existing Land Use Analysis is the second part of the Community Profile Chapter for the Springfield Township Open Space Preservation Plan. This analysis focuses on the current land uses within the municipality, enabling a more in-depth focus of municipal land use patterns. In addition to the Existing Land Use Map (Figure 2), Figure 3 details the acreage of each category and the percent change from 1993 to 2004. The assigned land use categories are derived from board of assessment parcel data. These numbers are useful in understanding changes in land use patterns and help to identify potential open space and/or recreational needs.

### RESIDENTIAL

One of the earliest suburban communities surrounding the city to develop, Springfield’s basic development pattern and character as a residential suburb is well established. Although a full range of other uses has developed over time, the Township remains largely a “bedroom” community. This is evident in the existing land use data shown in Figure 3. This figure shows that nearly 60% of Springfield’s land is used for residential purposes.

### COMMERCIAL/OFFICE

Commercial and office uses comprise about 3% of

Figure 2  
*Existing Land Use*

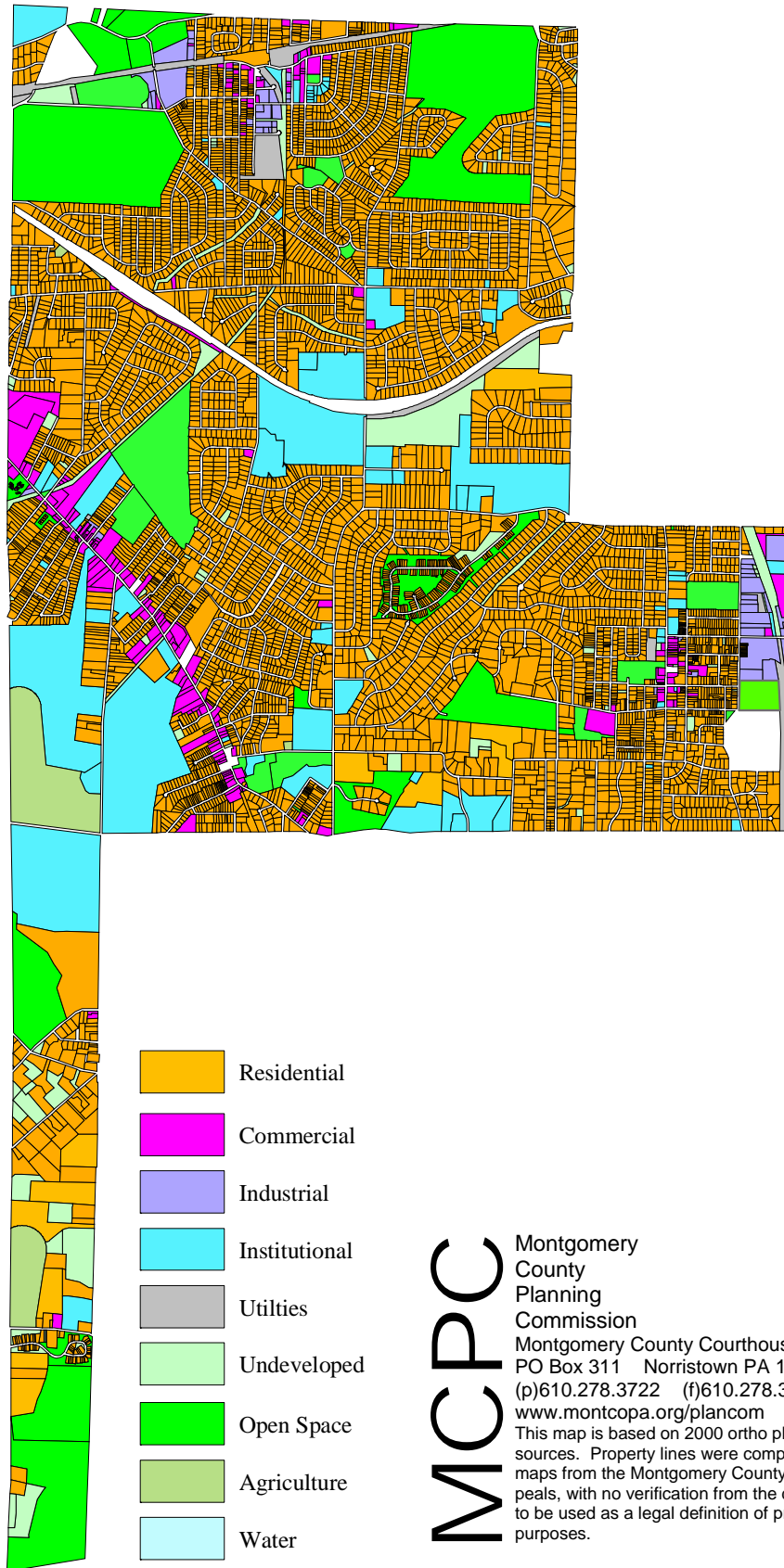
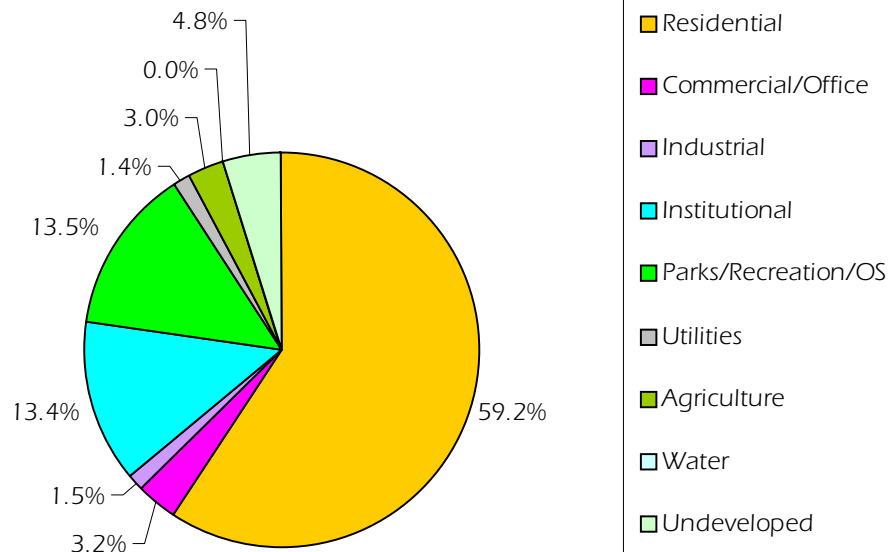




Figure 3  
Existing Land Use Comparison: 1993 and 2004

Land Use	1993		2004		% Change
	Acres	% Total	Acres	% Total	1993-2004
Residential	2,354	59.7%	2,285	59.2%	-2.9%
Commercial/Office	132	3.4%	123	3.2%	-6.8%
Industrial	84	2.1%	57	1.5%	-32.1%
Institutional	681	17.3%	517	13.4%	-24.2%
Parks/Recreation/OS	450	11.4%	519	13.5%	15.3%
Utilities	50	1.3%	55	1.4%	10.0%
Agriculture	0	0.0%	117	3.0%	N/A
Water	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	N/A
<b>Total Developed</b>	<b>3,751</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>3,672</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>
<b>Undeveloped</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>
<b>Total Acreage*</b>	<b>3,940</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,857</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>



Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission Land Use Maps  
\*Discrepancies due to digitization of parcel information

the township. Centers of commerce include Bethlehem Pike, the Oreland Commercial District, and a smaller commercial strip along Willow Grove Avenue in Wyndmoor.

**INDUSTRIAL**

Springfield Township supports a very small number of Industrial uses, such as small manufacturing

and automobile maintenance. Several of the parcels designated industrial are not currently in use. Industrial uses comprise only 1.5% of the township's area.

**INSTITUTIONAL**

Institutional uses comprise about 13% of the township. Such uses include elementary, junior

and senior high schools as well as the Morris Arboretum, government facilities, and churches.

**PARKS/RECREATION**

Nearly 14% of the township consists of parks and recreational activity areas. This category includes the Sandy Run, North Hills, Flourtown, and White-marsh Valley Country Clubs, as well as community parks, ball fields, and playgrounds.

**UTILITIES**

Utilities comprise about 1.4% of the township. This category includes substations, rail corridors, and some power easements.

**AGRICULTURE**

Approximately 3% of the township is designated as agricultural land. This includes the portion of the Dixon Farm that lies within the township, the Boorse tract, Biddle Woods, and portions of the Tecce tract.

**UNDEVELOPED LAND**

Springfield Township has a small amount of land considered to be undeveloped (approximately 184 acres), including the Karr tract, portions of the Tecce tract, the Piszek tract, several utility corridors, and a number of scattered sites.

**HOUSING TYPES**

Figure 4 shows a breakdown of the residential land use category by housing types. Although there is a predominance of single-family detached dwellings, a range of housing types is available and the overall housing stock has become more diversified in recent years with the addition of more attached units (townhouses) and apartments, particularly those in larger multi-unit buildings.

**CONCLUSION**

Since the last Open Space plan for the township was completed in 1993, Springfield has not changed much from a land use perspective. The most significant changes have been the reduction of about 32% in land categorized as industrial, a 26% reduction in land classified as institutional, and a 10% reduction in land devoted to utilities.

This is mainly due to development or reclassification of such parcels. The amount of land devoted to parks and recreation has increased by approximately 17.5% due to the acquisition by the township of Sandy Run Park, Laurel Beech Park, Hillcrest Pond, Mermaid Park, and Puddleducks School, as well as the private protection of a portion of the Girl Scouts of Philadelphia property and the Wharton-Sinkler Property.

COMMUNITY  
DEMOGRAPHIC  
ANALYSIS

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

Demographic characteristics provide insight when planning for open space preservation and recreational development. They can assist in determining not only how much land should be preserved, but also where. Additionally, this information can further assist a municipality in determining what type of recreational facilities, if any, should be placed in the preserved land.

**POPULATION TRENDS**

The rate of municipal population change (relative population increase or decrease) is an important measure of the magnitude of population change that has occurred over time. Figure 5 shows population trends in the Township.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Township experienced a small population decline of about 79 people. This was a continuation of a downward trend that started after the 1980 census, when the population total peaked at 20,344 people.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) serves as the region’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Among other reports, it provides population and employment forecasts through the year 2025. These projections will be addressed in further detail in Chapter 3. According to these reports, during the next 20

Figure 4  
*Housing Types*

Housing Types	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Single-Family Detached	5,667	78.8%	5,736	75.2%	1.2%
Single-Family Attached	671	9.3%	792	10.4%	18.0%
Multifamily (2-4 Units)	582	8.1%	622	8.2%	6.9%
Multifamily (5 or More Units)	237	3.3%	468	6.1%	97.5%
Mobile Home/Trailer/Other	37	0.5%	13	0.2%	-64.9%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>7,194</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,631</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

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

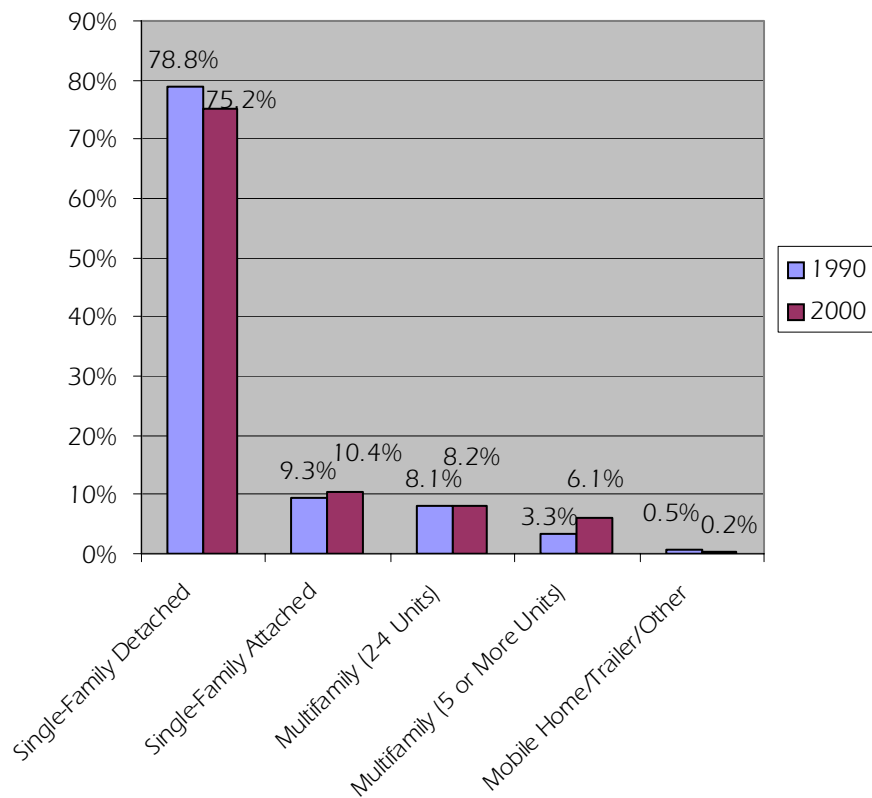


Figure 5  
*Population Classification*

Population Type	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1980 to 1990
Household Population	18,186	92.7%	18,199	93.2%	0.1%
Group Quarters Population	1,426	7.3%	1,334	6.8%	-6.5%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>19,612</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,533</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>

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

years the population of Springfield Township is projected to continue declining, but at relatively low rates. In fact, if projections hold true, the population would basically stabilize around 19,320 people. In general, projections are based on several factors, including past levels of development, recently proposed development, proximity to employment centers, available land, and public facilities (particularly sewers).

**POPULATION CLASSIFICATION**

Population classification refers to those segments

of the population either in households or in group quarters (institutions). Figure 5 shows that more than 93 percent of the Township’s population continues to be in households. Between 1990 and 2000 the proportion of residents in group quarters decreased to less than 7 percent.

**AGE**

A community’s age profile over time can be an important measure of growth and change. Among other things, shifts in the distribution among age groups can have significant impacts

Figure 6  
*Age Profile*

Age Profile	1990		2000		%Change 1990-2000
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	
0-4	1,137	5.8%	1,054	5.4%	-7.3%
5-17	2,789	14.2%	3,129	16.0%	12.2%
18-24	1,171	6.0%	912	4.7%	-22.1%
25-34	2,573	13.1%	2,113	10.8%	-17.9%
35-44	2,884	14.7%	2,924	15.0%	1.4%
45-54	1,985	10.1%	2,999	15.4%	51.1%
55-64	2,179	11.1%	1,846	9.5%	-15.3%
65-74	2,474	12.6%	1,780	9.1%	-28.1%
75+	2,420	12.3%	2,776	14.2%	14.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,612</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,533</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>42.3</b>		<b>43.9</b>		

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

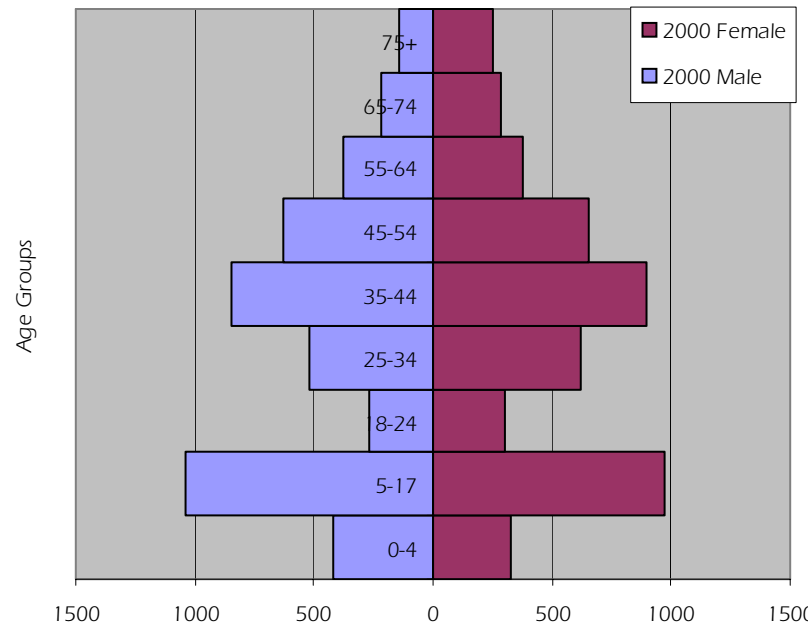


Figure 7  
*Income Levels (1999 \$)*

Income	1989	1999	% Change
Per Capita	22,208	32,628	46.9%
Median Household	49,203	67,226	36.6%

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

Figure 8  
*Special Needs Groups*

Special Needs Groups	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Persons 16-64 with Disabilities			1,509	7.7%	N/A
Persons 16-64 with Mobility and Self Care Limitations	231	1.2%			N/A
Over 65 Years of Age	4,894	25.0%	4,556	23.3%	-6.9%
Under 18 Years of Age	3,926	20.0%	4,183	21.4%	6.5%
Income Below Poverty Level	648	3.3%	652	3.3%	0.6%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>19,612</b>		<b>19,533</b>		<b>-0.4%</b>

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

on the provision of social services, housing, school enrollments, park and recreation needs, and the labor force. Figure 6 summarizes changes in the Township’s age profile from 1990 to 2000. It shows that the fastest growing age groups were middle-aged adults (45-55), the elderly (75 and over), and school-aged children (5-17). Negative growth was seen among young adults (18-35) and older adults (55-74). In the long term, since families with children and the elderly make up the bulk of the population, housing (demand for smaller units), transportation (such as para-transit), and recreation needs may be affected.

**INCOME**

Figure 7 shows changes in per capita and household incomes for 1989 and 1999 (in 1999 dollars). Among other factors, changes in income reflect the state of the economy overall (recession or growth) and social changes such as the maturation of the baby boom generation (an expanded labor force).

Per capita income is a per person average computed for every man, woman, and child in a given

area. Per capita income also accounts for persons living alone, a growing segment of the population that is excluded from family income tabulations. As the percentage of the population earning income has increased, so has the per person average. In Springfield, per capita income grew by 46.9 percent between 1989 and 1999 to more than \$32,000.

Median household income refers to the income of the primary householder and incomes from all other person over the age of 15 in the home, regardless of their relationship to the householder. Because households of unrelated individuals can be a fairly large proportion of all households, this measure may be a better indicator of the typical income for an area than the family income measure. Also, since many households consist of only one person, this measure is usually lower than median family incomes. Springfield’s median household income grew nearly 37 percent to over \$67,000.

**SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS**

Certain groups within Springfield Township have

Figure 9  
*Education Level*

Education Level	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Less than 9th grade	777	5.4%	360	2.5%	-53.7%
9th through 12th grade, no diploma	1174	8.1%	1286	9.0%	9.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	3615	24.9%	3145	21.9%	-13.0%
Some college, no degree	2279	15.7%	2185	15.2%	-4.1%
Associate degree	897	6.2%	836	5.8%	-6.8%
Bachelor's degree	3449	23.8%	3858	26.9%	11.9%
Graduate or Professional degree	2298	15.9%	2676	18.7%	16.4%
<b>Total Population 25 Years and Over</b>	<b>14489</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14346</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>

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

Figure 10  
*Household Types*

Household Types	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990 to 2000
Married Couples with Children	1847	26.1%	1812	24.3%	-1.9%
Married Couples with No Children	2711	38.3%	2510	33.6%	-7.4%
Single Parent	271	3.8%	362	4.8%	33.6%
Other Family	470	6.6%	453	6.1%	-3.6%
1 Person Non-Family Households	1568	22.1%	2011	26.9%	28.3%
2+ Person Non-Family Household	215	3.0%	323	4.3%	50.2%
<b>Total No. of Households</b>	<b>7,082</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7471</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
<b>Average People per Household</b>	<b>2.57</b>		<b>2.44</b>		<b>-5.1%</b>

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

special needs that should be considered in determining how much open space is needed, the type of open space that is needed, and the specific design of the open space development. In particular, the very young, the very old, those with incomes below the poverty level, and people with disabilities have special needs that will affect the need for and development of open space. Because definitions of persons with disabilities have changed between the 1990 and 2000 censuses, a direct comparison for these groups could not be made. However, in 2000 approximately 7.7 percent of Springfield's population between the ages of 16 and 64 had some type of disability. Over the past decade, the number of people over age 65 has decreased by nearly 7 percent, while

the number of people under age 18 has increased by 6.5 percent. The number of people with incomes below poverty level has remained about the same (see Figure 8).

### EDUCATION LEVEL

Residents of Springfield Township tend to be fairly well-educated (Figure 9). Almost 19 percent of those over age 25 have graduate or professional degrees, while over a quarter have earned bachelor's degrees. Since 1990, the number of people possessing less than a 9th grade education has dropped by almost 54 percent.

**HOUSEHOLD TYPES**

A household profile is defined by the Census Bureau as a person or persons occupying a single housing unit. A household can be broken down into two categories. A family household is two or more related persons living in a single housing unit, and a non-family household is occupied by a single person or a group of unrelated persons. Nationally, as well as locally, households are changing. There has been an overall increase in non-family and single person’s households since the 1970’s. Fragmentation of the family unit through divorce, death of a spouse, or children leaving home to form their own households has contributed to an increase in the number of households and a decrease in the size of households. For example, Figure 10 shows that Single Parent Households in Springfield have increased by nearly 34 percent between 1990 and 2000. Springfield has also seen one-person households increase by 28 percent, and households of two or more non-family members increase by over 50 percent, comprising over one quarter of all households. The traditional household of married couples with children account for fewer than one in four households in the Township.

The average household size is the number of persons in households divided by the number of occupied housing units. This too has seen a national decline as households continue to diversify. Springfield has seen the average household size decrease from 2.57 people in 1990 to 2.44 in 2000— a decrease of over 5 percent.

Figure 11  
*Labor Force by Occupation*

Occupation	2000	
	Number	% Total
Management	2049	21.3%
Professional	3131	32.5%
Sales	1265	13.1%
Clerical/Office	1234	12.8%
Construction	607	6.3%
Production/Transportation	539	5.6%
Farming	24	0.2%
Services	776	8.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9625</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

**EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR**

As used here, employment figures refer to the number of workers in a given area, and can serve a variety of purposes. As one aspect of the economy, they serve to inform the public of current and anticipated future economic conditions and may serve as decision-making input for current and potential employers and investors in the region. Because an area’s growth and activity is related to its economy, employment data can also be tied to land use and transportation planning.

In recent years, Montgomery County has experienced a significant change as it has gone from being principally a bedroom suburb for Philadelphia commuters to an area that is a major source of jobs. The county’s central location in the region and its major road network that permits direct access from surrounding counties are major reasons for this transformation. Evidence of this is found in the office, industrial, and commercial development in Fort Washington, Plymouth Meeting, King of Prussia, and Willow Grove— areas easily accessible from Springfield.

**OCCUPATIONS**

The types of occupations held by residents in 1990 and 2000 are shown in Figure 11. The wide range of occupations listed have historically been classified as being “white collar” (managerial), “blue collar” (operative), or “other” (farm workers). Although this has generally been a useful distinction in terms of income, educational requirements, etc., the lines of distinction have become less marked as the nation’s economy has moved from being industrially based to information and service based. This change is evident nationally with the proportion of the U.S. labor force in white collar jobs increasing from 37 percent in 1950 to 60 percent in 2000. In Springfield Township, nearly 80 percent of jobs were white collar positions in 2000. Due to this shift, the census has implemented a new system for compiling labor force statistics, making it difficult to draw a comparison between categories from 1990 and 2000.

**EMPLOYMENT FORECAST**

As with population, the DVRPC provides employment forecasts for the area. Employment is projected to shrink from approximately 7850 jobs in

Figure 15

*Employment Forecast*

Year	Total Employment
1990	8079
2000*	7850
2005*	7750
2010*	7650
2015*	7500
2020*	7400
2025*	7300

Years	% Change
1990-2000	-2.83%
2000-2010	-2.55%
2010-2020	-3.27%
2000-2025	-7.01%

\*Source: DVRPC Forecasts

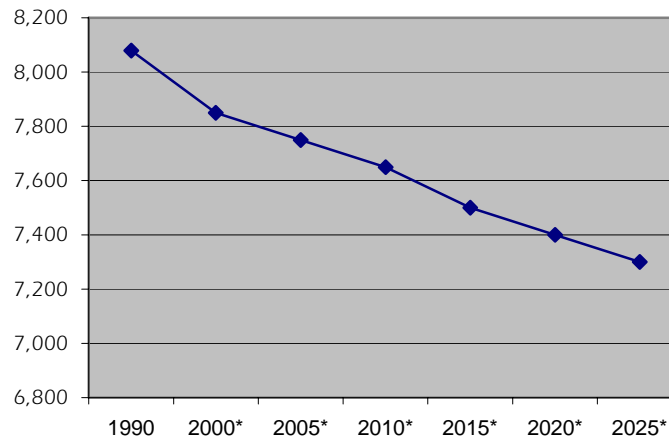


Figure 13

*Major Employers*

	Employer	Industry	Employees
1	School District of Springfield Township	Education	395
2	United States Dept. of Agriculture	Government	200
3	Commissioners of Springfield Township	Government	131
4	Inst. For the Achievement of Human Potential	Research	115
5	Carson Valley School	Education	103
6	LaSalle College High School	Education	100
7	Acme Markets #7723	Retail	80
8	Mount St. Joseph's Academy	Education	67
9	Rest Haven Nursing Center	Health Care	56
10	North Hills Country Club	Recreation	54



2000 to 7300 jobs in 2025, representing an overall decline of about 7 percent over 25 years (see Figure 12).

**MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN MUNICIPALITY**

According to the Keystone Tax Bureau, Inc.’s records based on first and second quarter 2004 Earned Income Tax remittals, Springfield’s top ten employers include the industries of education, government, research, retail, health care, and recreation (see Figure 13). Combined, these employers provide 1,121 jobs within the Township. The largest among these is the School District of Springfield Township, while the United States Department of Agriculture’s Research facility on Mermaid Lane employs the second largest number of people.

**STATUS OF RELEVANT PLANS  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The primary existing planning document for the Township is its 1998 Comprehensive Plan, updated from the original 1968 version. The 1998 plan is based on 1990 census data and analyzes demographics, housing, transportation, community facilities, and existing and potential land uses. Unlike a plan for a less developed community, a plan for a developed community like Springfield is less concerned with shaping future growth and development through comprehensive land use decisions than it is with maintaining and improving upon existing conditions.

**OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN**

Prior to the update of the comprehensive plan, the first Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan was developed in accordance with the Montgomery County Open Space Preservation Program Guidelines and adopted in 1996. For the past ten years it has served as a guide for Township open space preservation activities, enabling the Township to use its open space acquisition funding allocation included in the County Program. This plan serves as the basis for this 2004 update, and contains many of the same sections. Among the key recommendations from this plan were:

- Provide an open space linkage between Township open space in Flourtown and Fairmount Park in the panhandle.
- Extend open space along the Wissahickon Creek to fill in a missing link in the existing greenway.
- Pursue acquisition and non-acquisition preservation methods for many of the target open space areas.
- Coordinate with land conservancy groups, the county, and other municipalities to implement key inter-municipal and regional open space opportunities.

As part of the update of this plan, these and other recommendations were reviewed in detail as part of an audit process.

**SANDY RUN CREEK WATERSHED CONSERVATION PLAN**

Another existing planning document is the Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan of 2001, which was a joint effort among the Montgomery County Planning Commission and Abington, Springfield, Upper Dublin, and Whitemarsh Townships. This plan provides recommendations regarding storm water management, open space preservation, riparian buffers, trail design, and land management coordination.

**FLOURTOWN-ERDENHEIM VISION PLAN**

Prepared by the Flourtown-Erdenheim Enhancement Association (FEEA), The Flourtown-Erdenheim Vision Plan (January 2004) outlines economic development initiatives, transportation and parking strategies, streetscape enhancement strategies (particularly street trees), and architectural design guidelines for the Bethlehem Pike corridor between Gordon Lane and Valley Green Road. Public plazas, open space, and quality public environments in general are one of the main foci of this plan.



# CHAPTER 2

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

### THE 1996 OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PLAN

Springfield Township adopted an Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan in 1996. At that time a series of goals and objectives was developed to address issues regarding the preservation of open space and the protection of environmental resources. As a part of the update process required by the Montgomery County Open Space Program, Springfield has evaluated its previous goals and objectives to address whether the goals are still valid and to evaluate why some of the last plan's recommendations were not implemented. Below are listed the previous recommendations that have been acted upon with accompanying explanations of their status and proposed future action where applicable.

- **Project: Blackhorse Inn fee simple purchase**

Status: The building has been donated to the Township. The donation includes an easement across the adjacent land for future trail connections to Bysher Field and Bethlehem Pike.

Future Action: The inn could serve as a staging area for a trail head; The easement will become a paved trail.

- **Project: Morris Arboretum trail easement**

Status: A trail along Northwest Avenue is under construction.

- **Project: Revise cluster development zoning regulations.**

Status: The AAA zoning district was created to protect open space.

- **Project: Revise floodplain regulations and develop riparian protection standards.**

Status: A riparian buffer ordinance has been discussed for the past five years. The prototype zoning overlay proved too restrictive for the community. The Board of Commissioners has asked the Planning Commission to re-work the proposed ordinance to address the community's concerns.

- **Project: Implement shade tree planting program.**

Status: A shade tree commission was established and has been active. A tree-planting grant of \$48,997 was utilized.

- **Project: Coordinate preservation with regional efforts.**

Status: The Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan has been approved.

- **Project: Develop zoning regulations that help encourage historic preservation.**

Status: A historic demolition ordinance is being considered by the Board of Commissioners.

Explanation: Historic preservation awareness is still in the early stages.

Future Action: The township is still interested in pursuing additional historic preservation options.

- **Project: Wharton-Sinkler Tract**

Status: A private conservation easement was established.

- **Project: Robertson/Ferry Tract fee simple purchase**

Status: As a result of a subdivision of a larger parcel into three lots, the township was able to acquire this 6.36 acre parcel utilizing a grant of \$495,000 in 1999. It is now known as Laurel Beech Park. The remaining two parcels have been commercially developed.

The following recommendations have not been acted upon to date. An explanation and/or description of possible future action is provided for each project:

- **Project: Karr Tract fee simple purchase**

Explanation: The land is currently too expensive and is involved in a court stipulation that makes purchase difficult at this time.

Future Action: When a land development plan is submitted, a recreation area could be negotiated.

- **Project: Carson Valley School trail easement**

Explanation: The idea of a trail has been presented. The township is awaiting internal organization of Carson.

Future Action: The township is still interested in pursuing this project.

- **Project: Dixon Tract trail easement**

Explanation: Government and local groups are preparing ideas to present to Mr. Dixon.

Future Action: The township is still interested in pursuing this project.

- **Project: Mt. Saint Joseph's Academy trail easement**

Future Action: The township is still interested in pursuing this project.

- **Project: Develop an open space overlay zoning district.**

Explanation: The intent of this recommendation was to protect properties of over 10 acres, which may have been sufficiently accomplished through the AAA zoning district.

Future Action: The township plans to uphold the purpose of this district.

- **Project: Strengthen woodlands protection standards.**

Future Action: The Subdivision & Land Devel-



*The former Robertson/Ferry tract, now known as Laurel Beech Park, was acquired in 1999.*

opment ordinance could be strengthened in this regard.

- **Project: Hold land preservation workshop for target OS landowners & residents.**

Future Action: The township is still interested in pursuing this project.

- **Project: PECO Tract fee simple purchase**

Explanation: There are asbestos and contamination issues at the Oreland substation. PECO periodically abandons and reuses site.

Future Action: The township is still interested in pursuing this project.

- **Project: PECO Corridor trail easement**

Future Action: The township is still interested in pursuing this project.

- **Project: Railroad Corridor fee simple purchase (adjacent to Flourtown Country Club)**

Explanation: Some sections are no longer available.

Future Action: The County is currently working on this project.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE 2005 OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Open Space Committee has evaluated the goals and objectives of the previous plan and revised them to reflect issues identified during the audit process. This chapter will serve as the framework for Springfield’s plan for open space preservation and protection of natural resources. Goals are provided regarding retention of open space, enhancement of existing facilities, coordination of open space, and protection of natural and cultural features followed by a series of objectives. Action items related to these goals and objectives will be created throughout the open space planning process and included in the recommendations and implementation chapters of this plan.

### GOAL 1: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES

#### OBJECTIVES:

- A. In addition to the funding available through the Open Space program, seek out a broad range of outside funding sources.

### GOAL 2: MAXIMIZE PERMANENT PRESERVATION OF REMAINING OPEN SPACE

#### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Continue to encourage permanent preservation of open space on large institutional properties such as the Carson Valley School and Mount St. Joseph’s Academy sites.
- B. Keep Flourtown Country Club in open space use and encourage other golf courses to remain as open space.
- C. Continue to encourage creative site design that preserves contiguous open space.
- D. Keep low-intensity and/or clustered uses throughout much of the panhandle area.
- E. Assist residents in permanently preserving open space on privately-owned property.
- F. Create small green oases in the most intensely developed areas to buffer incompatible land uses and provide visual relief.

### GOAL 3: MAXIMIZE OPEN SPACE ON EXISTING ABANDONED AND UNDERTILIZED PROPERTIES

#### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Seek to acquire blighted buildings and abandoned properties (or portions thereof) that cannot be used for other purposes to add to the open space inventory.

### GOAL 4: PRESERVE NATURAL FEATURES

#### OBJECTIVES:

- A. Preserve aquatic features wherever possible.
- B. Preserve woodlands, particularly those in the panhandle area.
- C. Encourage creative site design that limits disturbance to natural features.

**GOAL 5: ENHANCE THE TOWNSHIP'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Require adequate buffering and landscaping throughout the township as part of the land development process.
- B. Reactivate street tree planting programs.
- C. Develop new shade tree planting program for public areas.
- D. Encourage private landscaping and beautification efforts.
- E. Create gateways to enhance the entrances to the township.

**GOAL 6: CREATE A COORDINATED OPEN SPACE NETWORK**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Connect Township open space wherever practical.
- B. Establish open space linkages with neighboring communities and the county.
- C. Coordinate groups involved in Open Space planning and implementation.

**GOAL 7: MEET RECREATION NEEDS**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Provide additional neighborhood-level open space.
- B. Provide a network of pedestrian and bicycle

corridors and linkages within and between greenways and open space parcels.

- C. Provide additional recreation facilities and complete other planned improvements for existing parks.
- D. Invite residents to identify long term needs and bring them to the township's attention.
- E. Support and coordinate with the developing Park and Recreation plan.

**GOAL 8: PROTECT SCENIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Preserve views of natural features and open space areas.
- B. Preserve corridors of mature, healthy street trees.
- C. Encourage creative development that preserves views and historic structures.

**GOAL 9: SUPPORT AND ENHANCE THE GOALS OF THE SANDY RUN CREEK WATERSHED CONSERVATION PLAN AND OTHER EXISTING AND FUTURE WATERSHED PLANS.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Implement the action items identified in these plans whenever possible.



*Laurel Beech Park Recreation Facility*

# CHAPTER 3

## **EVALUATION OF GROWTH AREAS**

When planning for open space, it is also important to identify areas that can accommodate any projected community growth. While much of Springfield Township is built out, there is some room for both residential and non-residential infill development. The Township will have to consider where such development should be located. This chapter examines the amount of population and employment growth that is expected in Springfield and assesses whether the township can accommodate that growth under current zoning, and if so, where such growth should be directed..

### **POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS**

By the year 2025, Springfield is projected to have a residential population of 19, 320 persons, about 213 less than the Township had in 2000 (Figure 14). In addition, it is expected to have about 7300 persons employed, down from 7850 in 2000 (Figure 15). Although population and employment are expected to decline by 2025, so will Springfield's average household size, resulting in more housing units

needed (Figure 16). These units can be accommodated in the future growth areas indicated in Figure 17.

### **SPRINGFIELD'S FUTURE GROWTH AREAS**

While Springfield has already experienced its major growth spurt, there is some room for further

development in the Township. The Schematic Land Use Plan in the 1998 Springfield Township Comprehensive Plan identifies three main areas for future mixed-use and high density and/or cluster residential infill development. These are the Oreland area in the north, the Wyndmoor industrial area in the east, and along Bethlehem Pike in the

west (Figure 17). In addition to these areas, other parts of the Township may also experience subdivision and infill development. Any future development in the Township would need to be compatible with the character of surrounding areas and would aim to preserve any existing natural features.

**Figure 14**  
*Population Projection*

Year	Population
1990	19,612
2000	19,533
2005*	19,550
2010*	19,490
2015*	19,380
2020*	19,320
2025*	19,320

Years	% Change
1990-2000	-0.40%
2000-2010	-0.22%
2010-2020	-0.87%
2000-2025	-1.09%

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

\* Projected population

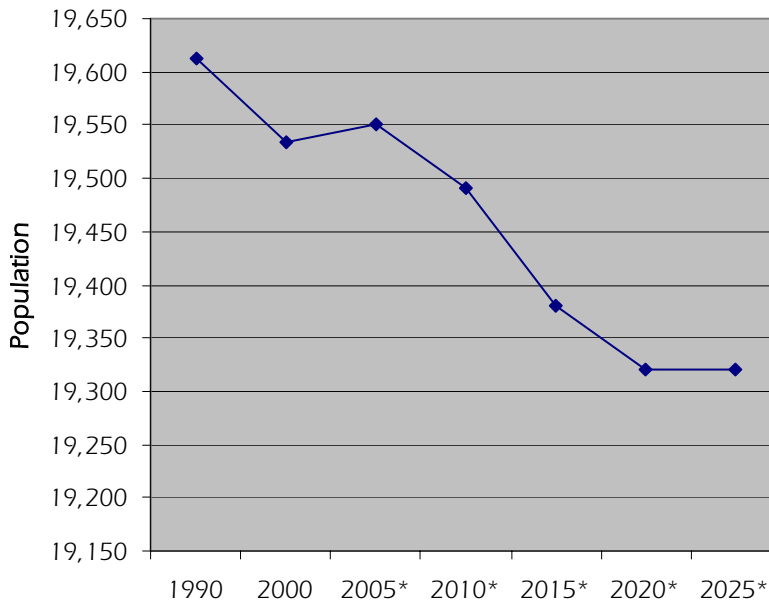




Figure 15  
*Employment Forecast*

Year	Total Employment
1990	8,079
2000*	7,850
2005*	7,750
2010*	7,650
2015*	7,500
2020*	7,400
2025*	7,300

Years	% Change
1990-2000	-2.83%
2000-2010	-2.55%
2010-2020	-3.27%
2000-2025	-7.01%

\*Source: DVRPC Forecasts

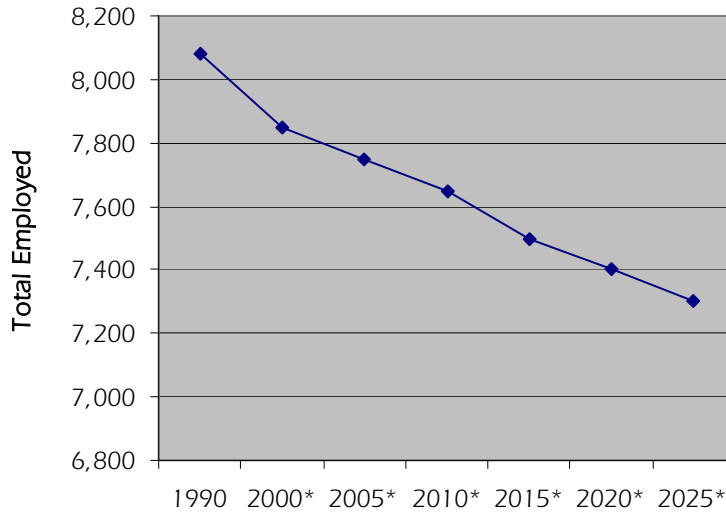
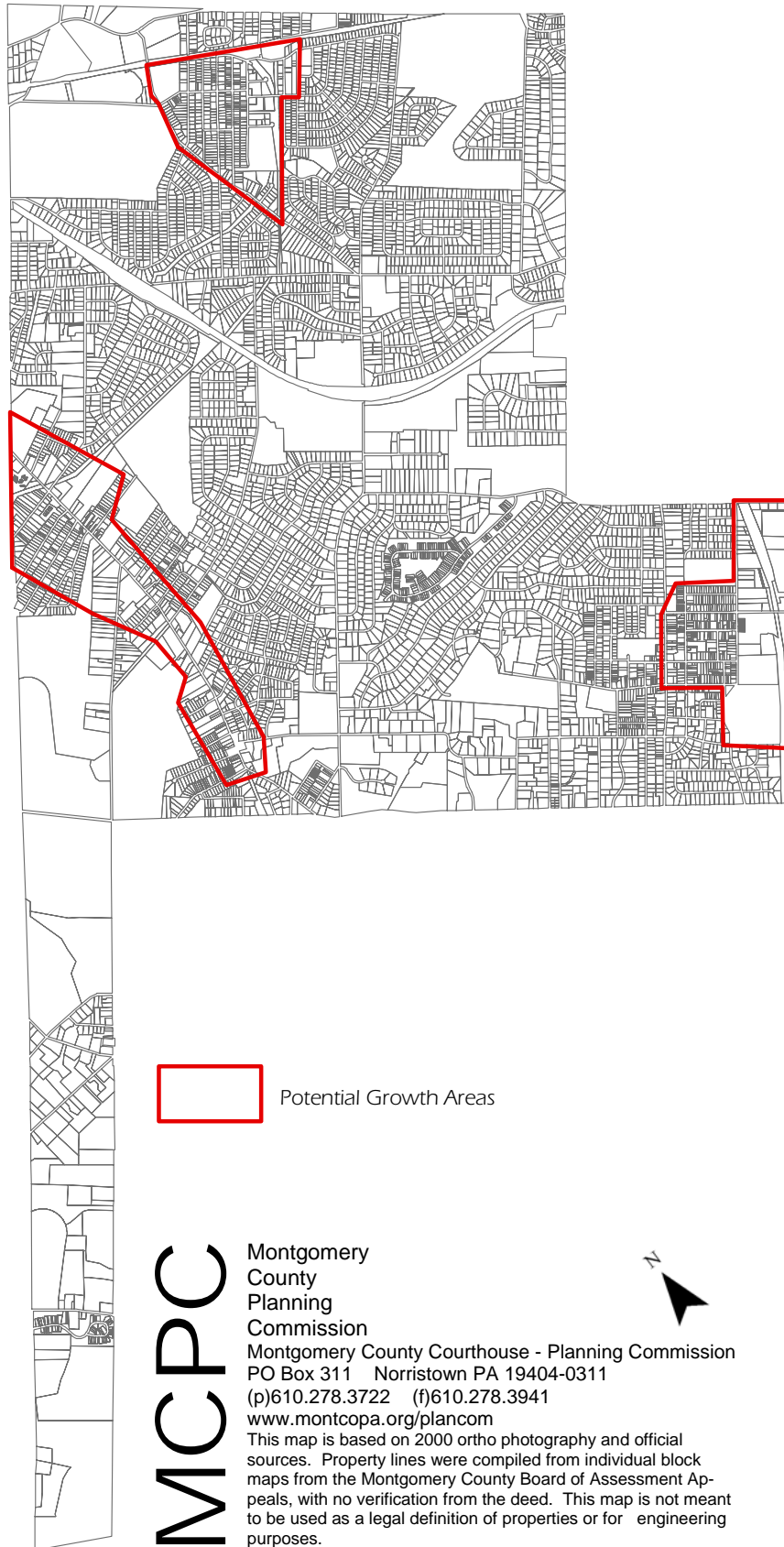


Figure 16  
*2025 Housing Unit Demand*

Residential	2025
Projected Population in HHs	18,001
Future Average HH Size	2.37
Total Households	7,595
Existing Households (in 2000)	7,471
New Households	124
Vacancy Rate	1.1%
New Units Needed	126

Figure 17  
*Potential Growth Areas*



# CHAPTER 4

## EXISTING PROTECTED LAND

A key component of the open space plan is a review of existing protected land. An inventory of existing conditions, along with an assessment of future needs, is necessary for formulating many of the plan's goals and objectives. Existing protected land refers to land preserved for active or passive recreation use and/or for environmental conservation purposes. In addition to municipally-owned areas, it can include land preserved by private conservation groups, farmland, schools sites, and private open space preserved as part of residential or non-residential development.

This chapter identifies existing open and recreational land in Springfield Township and separates it into two categories of protection - permanently and temporarily protected land. The latter category makes an important contribution to the overall recreation base of a community by preserving open space, conserving significant natural features, and/or providing recreation facilities that do not require municipal involvement in maintenance. However, temporarily protected land can easily be lost. In evaluating open space needs, this distinction is important, as is the goal of increasing the amount of permanently protected land so that future generations can also benefit from open space.

### PERMANENTLY PROTECTED LAND

Currently, there are nearly 276 acres of permanently protected open space in Springfield Township (see Figure 18). This land is owned by a variety of public and private institutions and individuals, and is used for a variety of purposes,

including ballfields, golf courses, lakes, meadows, and ponds. Following is a description of this highly valued land.

### MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE

Springfield Township's existing system of parks and open space has grown over the past ten years with the acquisition of the Robertson/Ferry



*Flourtown Country Club*



*Mermaid Park*



*Oreland Park*

tract, now known as Laurel Beech Park, and Sandy Run Park (see Figure 18). Today, a total of 12 parks and open spaces are owned and maintained by municipality. These parks comprise approximately 124.31 acres of land, 90.1 of which are considered active space. The active open space includes amenities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, basketball courts, tot lots, and ball fields. Each offers community residents important recreational opportunities and scenic amenities.

### **PRIVATE OPEN SPACE**

Approximately 151 acres of permanently protected land are in private ownership. This includes institutional, residential, recreation, education, and Natural Lands Trust properties. The Biddle Woods cluster subdivision, Paper Mill Estates, the Eagle View subdivision, the Stotesbury cluster development, the Wharton-Sinkler tract, and the Morris Arboretum all contribute open space to the township. The Girl Scouts property in the panhandle is also included in this category. However, the Township has been unable to determine precisely how much of the property is in fact permanently protected.

### **TEMPORARILY PROTECTED LAND**

Over 690 acres of open space are temporarily protected in Springfield Township (see Figure 20). This land falls into several categories including private open space, schools, and lands benefiting from certain tax incentive programs.

### **ACT 319**

The Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act was created to preserve land devoted to agricultural use, agricultural reserve, or forest reserve. This preferential tax assessment gives landowners a small incentive to keep their parcel intact (minimum 10-acre parcel size). If a breach occurs, the landowner must pay roll-back taxes for the previous seven years plus interest. With the high demand for land, this penalty is not a significant deterrent, and therefore Act 319 provides minimal land protection. Currently, the Dixon Farm, the Boorse tract and Rock View Farm take advantage of this program (see Figure 20).

Figure 18

*Permanently Protected Land*

Open Space Type	Map Key	Name	Acreage	Location	Owner	Facilities
Public Open Space	1	Cisco Park, Hillcrest Pond	13.0	Hillcrest Avenue	Township	Soccer field; multi-use field; ballfield; fishing pond
	2	Bysher Fields	10.5	Bysher Avenue	Township	Ballfields (5)
	3	Flourtown Country Club	51.0	Wissahickon Avenue	Township	Golf course
	4	Wyndhill Playground	4.5	Hartwell and Flourtown Avenues	Township	Tennis court; multi-use field; soccer field; tot lot
	5	Oreland Ballfield	4.3	Lyster and Enfield Roads	Township	Ballfields (2); refreshment stand; basketball court
	6	Oreland Park	0.8	Clement Road	Township	Basketball courts (2); swings; benches
	7	Veterans Park	6.0	Traymore Avenue	Township	Ballfields (3); refreshment stand
	8	Mermaid Park	8.0	Mermaid Lane	Township	None
	9	Laurel Beech Park	11.1	Pleasant Avenue	Township	None
	10	–	0.9	Enfield Road	Township	None
	11	Sandy Run Park	14.21	Camp Hill Road	Township	Pond (restricted)
Private Open Space	12	Girl Scouts of Phila.	24.0	Manor Road	Girl Scouts of Phila.	None
	13	Paper Mill Estates	1.8	Skyline Drive	Paper Mill Estates Community Association, Inc.	None
	14	Eagle View	7.0	Eagle View Drive	Private	None
	15	Stotesbury	7	Trumbaure Drive	Stotesbury Community Association, Inc.	None
	16	Morris Arboretum	70.0	Northwestern Avenue	University of Pennsylvania	None
	17	Wharton-Sinkler	17.0	Gravers Lane	Private	None
	18	Natural Lands Trust	16.5	Biddle Woods Lane	Natural Lands Trust	None
18B	Natural Lands Trust	7.8	Montgomery Avenue	Natural Lands Trust	None	
<b>Total Permanent Open Space</b>			<b>275.5</b>			



*Hillcrest Pond, a permanently protected open space.*



*Morris Arboretum's English Park, a permanently protected open space.*

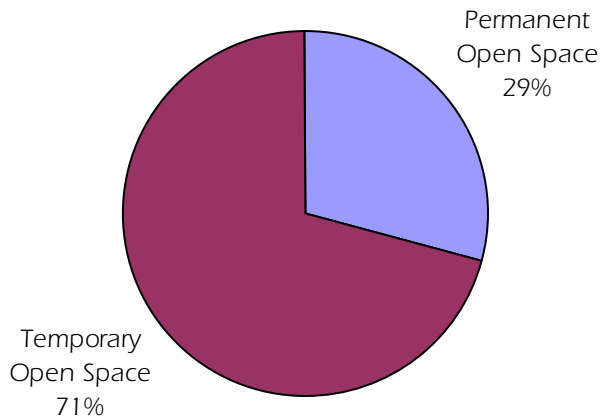


*The Wharton-Sinkler Estate includes permanently protected open space.*



*Sandy Run Country Club, a temporarily protected open space*

**Figure 19**  
*Distribution of Open Space*



## ACT 515

The Pennsylvania Open Space Covenant Act was created to stabilize open areas through the use of real estate tax assessment techniques. It allows certain counties to covenant with landowners for preservation of land in farm, forest, water supply or open space uses. Some eligible lands can be as small as ten acres and must be consistent with the county or municipal open space plan. Unless properly terminated, covenants require the landowner to pay roll-back taxes for the previous five years plus interest. Act 515 provides little to no long-term land protection. The three private country clubs in the township (Whitemarsh, Sandy Run, and North Hills) fall into this category, comprising 288 acres of temporarily protected open space.

## INSTITUTIONAL

Springfield Township also has a substantial amount of recreational open space offered by several institutions. Public schools including Penn Manor Elementary (currently leased to a school of photography), Enfield Elementary, Springfield Township Middle, Springfield Township Senior High, and Erdenheim Elementary provide much open space in the form of playing fields, basketball courts, and open fields. In addition, private schools such as Carson Valley, Mt Saint Joseph's, and LaSalle College High provide both passive and active open space. The Oreland and Flourtown Swim Clubs also contribute recreational spaces.

These open spaces differ from the municipally owned spaces because they may not remain open forever. First, land use decisions for public schools are not made by the municipality. Therefore, as enrollment patterns in the region as a whole change, the local schools could be closed. When this happens, the school district often offers the property to the township for purchase. If the township does not accept the offer, the schools may close and be used for other purposes, including offices or apartments, and the recreational and open space could be lost. Second, if the institutional space changes hands, there is no guarantee that the new owners will want or be able to offer the same open space for public use.

Despite their temporary nature, these sources of open space are still important to Springfield as

Figure 20  
Temporarily Protected Land

Open Space Type	Map Key	Name	Acreage	Location	Facilities
Private Open Space	19	Carson Valley School	103	Wissahickon Avenue	Tennis court; basketball court; open fields
	20	Mt. St. Joseph's Academy	77	Wissahickon Avenue	Tennis courts (4); open fields
	21	Oreland Swim Club	9.0	Paper Mill Road	Swimming pools; playground equipment; basketball court; volleyball court
	22	Flourtown Swim Club	3.0	Bysher Avenue	Swimming pool; tennis courts (3); basketball court; open field
	23	Piszek Properties	30.0	Pennsylvania Avenue	None
	24	LaSalle College High School	43.0	Cheltenham Avenue	Swimming pool; tennis courts (5); ballfields (2); soccer field; track; multi-use field
Schools	25	Penn Manor Elementary School	7.0	Paper Mill Road	Ballfields (2); playground equipment
	26	Enfield Elementary School	5.4	Paper Mill and Church Roads	Ballfields (2); basketball court; playground equipment
	27	Enfield Jr. High School	13.8	Paper Mill Road	Tennis courts (10); basketball court; soccer field; ballfields (2); track
	28	Senior High School	21.1	Paper Mill Road	Ballfields (4); soccer field; tennis courts (4); track
	29	Erdenheim Elementary School	4.7	Haws Lane	Soccer field; basketball court; playground equipment
Act 515	30	Whitemarsh Country Club	66.0	Germantown Avenue	Golf course
	31	Sandy Run Country Club	107.0	Walnut Avenue	Golf course
	32	North Hills Country Club	115.0	Paper Mill Road	Golf course
Act 319	33	Dixon Farm	54.0	Wissahickon and Stenton Avenues	None
	34	Boorse	14.4	Pennsylvania Avenue	None
	35	Rock View Farm	17.43	Northwestern Avenue	None
<b>Total Temporary Open Space</b>			<b>690.8</b>		

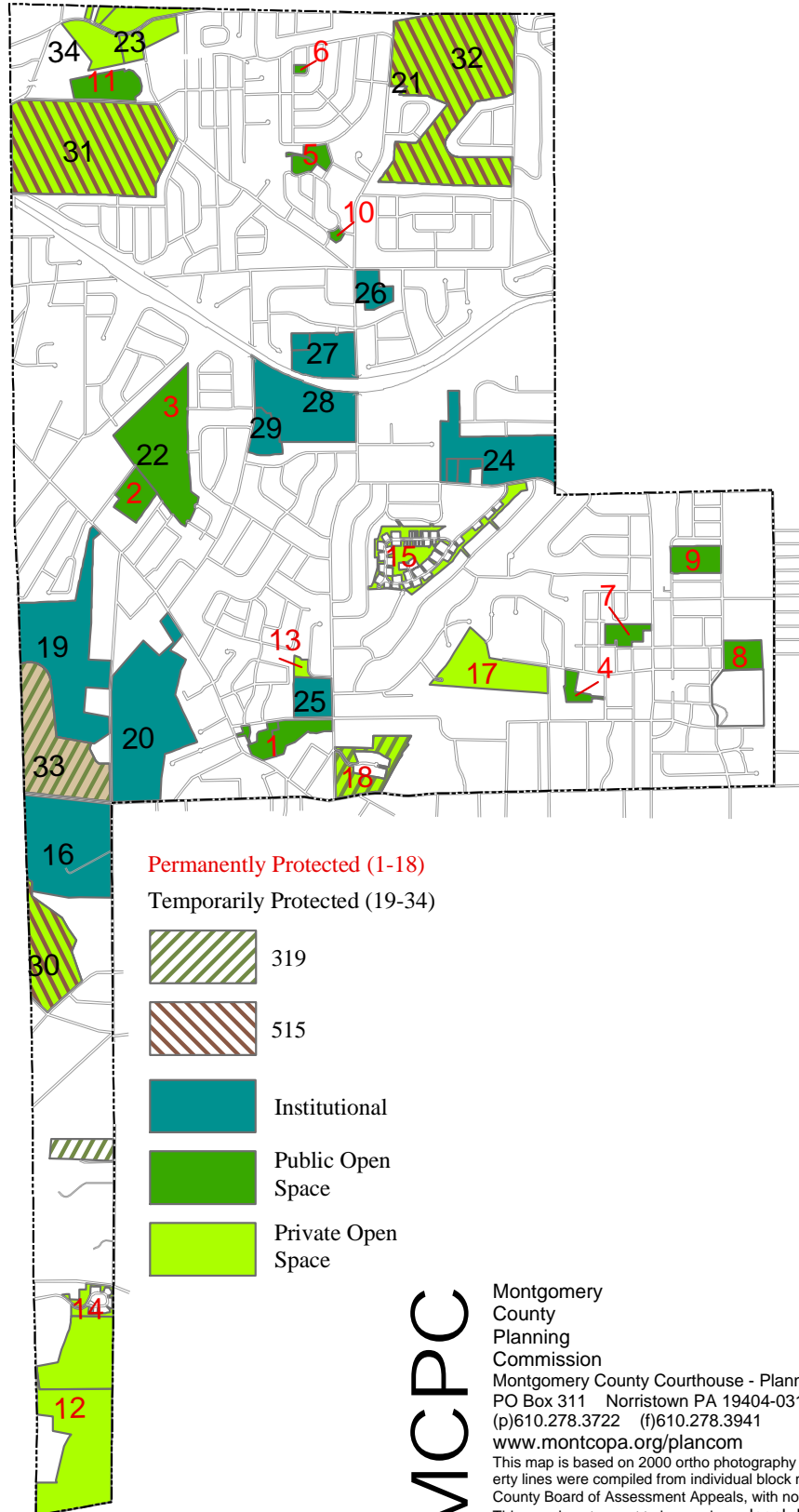
they offer residents a greater range of choices to meet their recreational needs. They also add an aesthetic quality to the township by opening up views and providing some relief to the largely developed landscape.

In total, Springfield has a significant amount of protected land, with more than 966 acres being either permanently or temporarily protected. This land provides Springfield residents with many opportunities to enjoy all that open space can offer –

recreation, tranquility, beauty, and a sense of community.

However, more than two thirds of this open space could be lost to development in time if the land owners or land use changes (see Figure 3.3). If the township acquires additional open and recreational land, residents can be assured that the municipality will be able to offer them the same or greater level of active and passive open space as they enjoy today.

Figure 21  
*Protected Open Space*





# CHAPTER 5

## INVENTORY OF POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE RESOURCES

A key component of the open space plan is an inventory of potentially vulnerable resources. Such an inventory examines geology, topography, soils, surface waters and hydrology, vegetation and wildlife, and historic and cultural resources. Identification of these sensitive areas is a first step toward determining priorities in open space planning.

### GEOLOGY

Except for surface outcrops, bedrock geology is unseen, and as a result its influence on natural features is not always acknowledged. However, the influence is both strong and pervasive, for bedrock geology is the foundation of an area. Bedrock, along with the hydrologic cycle, is responsible for the changes in elevation, steep slopes, location of watercourses, and orientation (orientation, in turn, will influence vegetative communities, soils, and availability of sunlight). The bedrock or parent material has a great influence on the type of soil formed. For example, hard, igneous bedrock has resulted in soils with a high stone and boulder content. Groundwater yield differs from one bedrock formation to the next. In Montgomery County, the difference ranges from under 1 gallon per minute (gpm) to over 30 gpm.

Montgomery County is located in the Triassic Lowland and Piedmont Upland section of the Piedmont Physiographic Province. The Triassic Lowlands are primarily red shales and sandstones, with intrusions of diabase. Four formations - Stockton Sandstone/Conglomerate /Shale, Lockatong Argillite/Shale, Brunswick Shale/ Sandstone, and Diabase - comprise the Triassic Lowlands. The formations underlying Springfield are described below and shown in Figure 22:

- Ledger Dolomite/Elbrook/Conestoga Limestone forms a limestone valley that extends eastward from Lancaster County through Chester County, tapering off in Abington Township. The soils formed from this parent material are fertile, and the groundwater yields are good when solution

Figure 22  
Geology



channels (underground streams) are tapped. This is the largest formation found in the Township, covering virtually all of Oreland and Enfield, and much of Flourtown.

- Wissahickon Schist/Felsic Gneiss (granitic gneiss) are the other major formations in the Township, covering much of Wyndmoor and the panhandle area, and parts of Erdenheim. The Schists are softer rock and are highly weathered near the surface; the felsic areas are harder, more resistant to weathering and have relatively steep but stable slopes. Joints through which groundwater flows are moderately abundant, making groundwater

yields variable, though generally moderate (usually less than 20 gal/min).

- Chickies Quartzite is located between the two formations noted above, forming a band that extends from the Cheltenham Township line in Enfield across Paper Mill Road into parts of Erdenheim and the panhandle. Quartzite is a metamorphic rock formed when sandstone was exposed to extreme heat and pressure. It is a hard, dense rock that weathers slowly and forms prominent, narrow hills and ridges. Groundwater supplies are small but adequate for domestic use.
- The Bryn Mawr formation covers a large portion of Wyndmoor between Cheltenham Avenue and Stenton Avenue. A mix of gravel and sand, it is deeply weathered with moderate to high permeability and good surface drainage. It is generally not considered an important aquifer, although good water yields may be obtained from shallow wells.
- Two small areas in the Township - near Sandy Run Creek and just north of East Mill Road - contain Diabase, an igneous rock also referred to as 'black granite'. Diabase was formed as molten rock that was extruded into large cracks in the surrounding Brunswick geologic formation. The intrusions of Diabase, called sills and dikes, are generally narrow (less than half a mile wide, and in some cases only several feet in width). The intrusions are very resistant to erosion, weathering, water infiltration, and groundwater movement. Diabase bedrock contains some fractures near the surface, resulting in minimal absorption of water. The formation is notorious for low well yields, and is very difficult to excavate. Areas of diabase are often steeply sloped and wooded, with numerous surface rocks and boulders.
- Patapsco is found in two relatively small areas in Flourtown. This clay and gravelly sand formation is deeply weathered, has a moderate to high permeability, and is a good source of groundwater.
- The Pensauken/Bridgeton formations are found in three small areas - near the North

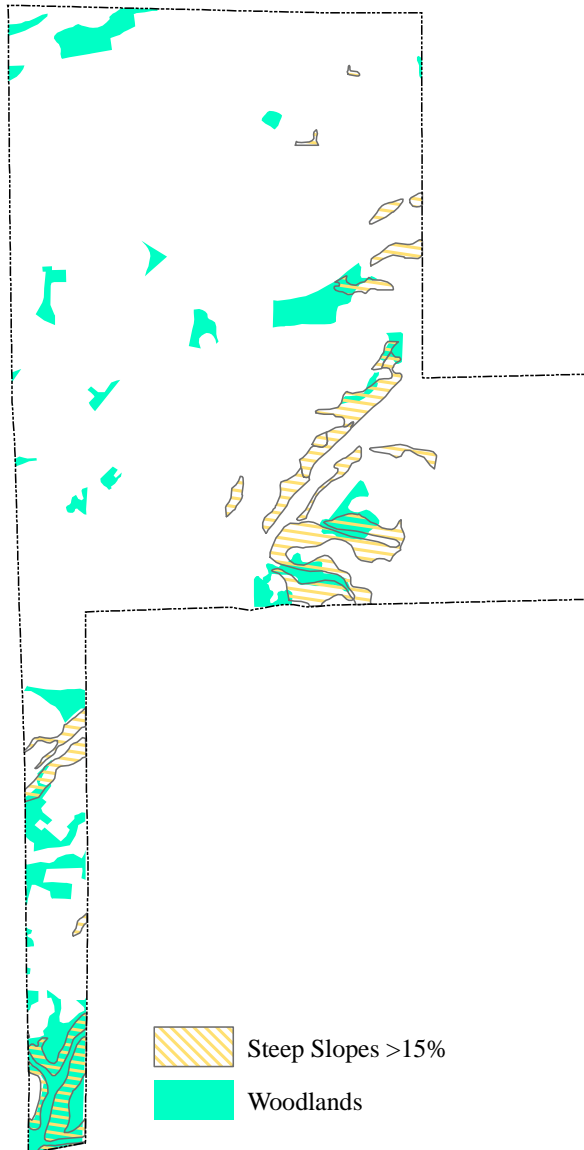
Hills Country Club, and next to the areas containing the Patapsco formation noted above. Also a deeply weathered formation, it generally has good surface drainage, although it may be poor in some locations. The Pensauken formation is known to be an important water source in southeastern Bucks County while yields in the Bridgeton formation vary.

## TOPOGRAPHY

### STEEP SLOPES

Slope, or frequency of change in elevation, is an important environmental condition. When

Figure 23  
*Topography*



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

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

Overall, steep slopes are not a major feature of the Township. Using soil types from the Soil Survey as a general guide, Figure 23 shows that a concentration of steep slopes occurs in areas of Wyndmoor and Erdenheim, between Cheltenham Avenue and the Paper Mill Road/Stenton Avenue/Bethlehem Pike intersection.

To the extent that development in this part of the Township has been slope sensitive and/or has provided open space, as with the Biddle Woods development, some preservation has occurred, but few if any further preservation opportunities appear to exist. Some of the smaller areas of steep slopes located in the panhandle and in Oreland have been less affected by development and should be considered in the Township's open space preservation planning.

### WOODLANDS

The original vegetation of Montgomery County was a dense forest of hardwoods which covered

over 99 percent of the county. Oaks were the dominant species, but chestnut, tulip poplar, hickory, ash, red maple, and dogwoods were also present. Several hundred years of clearing and cultivation, and in more recent times the rapid development of houses and commercial facilities, have reduced woodlands to a shadow of their former extent. The principle types of woodlands remaining in the county are:

Red Oak - About 60% of all remaining woodlands. Northern Red Oak is predominant, but Black, Scarlet and Chestnut Oak are also abundant.

Ash/Maple/Elm - About 19% of all woodlands. Local mixtures will vary, and include minor species, such as the Slippery Elm, Yellow Birch, Black Gum, Sycamore, and Poplar.

Eastern Red Cedar - 18% of the county's wooded acres are covered with this species and associated species: Gray Birch, Red Maple, Sweet Birch, and Aspen.

Sugar Maple/Beech/Yellow Birch - The remaining three percent of woodlands is comprised of this association. Associated species include Red Maple, Hemlock, Northern Red oak, White Ash, and Tulip Poplar.

Woodlands and hedgerows serve many purposes, both functional and aesthetic. Woodlands prevent erosion, provide habitat for wildlife, provide buffers for creeks, and offer recreational opportunities for residents. Hedgerows and wooded corridors prevent erosion also, and provide cover for wildlife movement, shelter, and migration.

The distribution of woodlands in Montgomery County can be described in three different patterns. Small, widely scattered stands can be found east of the central county ridge, often strung along alluvial soils. Long, linear stands along streams and on alluvial soils are typical in the central part of the county. Large forested blocks of land, often hundreds to thousands of acres in size, are found on ridges in the central and northern areas of the county.

Important woodlands in the Township are found in the panhandle area - including the Morris Arboretum and land between Ridge Pike and Manor Road (Figure 20). However, with the exception of the arboretum, no permanent open space currently exists for preservation of these areas.

Figure 24  
Soils



**SOILS**

Soils are a natural assortment of organic materials and mineral fragments that cover the earth and supports plant life. The composition of soils changes slowly over time, due to weathering of rock and activity of soil organisms. As a consequence, soils vary with respect to depth to bedrock, depth to groundwater, color, mineral characteristics, fertility, texture, and erodibility. One of the most influential natural features, soils

are a result of the hydrology and the weathering capacity of the underlying geology in a given area. They are also influenced by the orientation of the land and the types of vegetation that grow in them. Conversely, the type of soil influences the vegetative cover of the land, which effects the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater, wildlife diversity, rates of erosion, and the aesthetic quality of the landscape.

Though soils are diverse, soil scientists have classified the soils found in Montgomery County into several groups called soil series. Soils listed within the same series will display similar subsurface characteristics. The surface characteristics of soils within a particular series can vary in slope, degree of erosion, size of stones, and other easily recognizable features. Although a variety of soil types exist in all parts of the Township, the most extensive type is "made land" from several soil series (Duffield, Lawrenceville, Chester, and Manor, for example).

In addition to the soil mapping units, soils can also be divided into prime and important agricultural soils, hydric components, and alluvial soils. The groups of soil pertinent to the Township are described below and shown in Figure 24.

#### **PRIME AND IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL SOILS**

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

Figure 24 shows that many Township areas contain soils suitable for agricultural use, including a number of areas with prime soils. Many of these areas remain undeveloped at this time, including the private golf courses, and sites throughout the panhandle area.

However, except for selected sites such as the

Carson school property, agricultural uses do not exist and therefore are not an important part of the Township's character. As a result, preserving open space in these areas will not be to protect the land for farming, but for other purposes, such as to protect other natural features or link open space areas.

#### **ALLUVIAL SOILS**

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

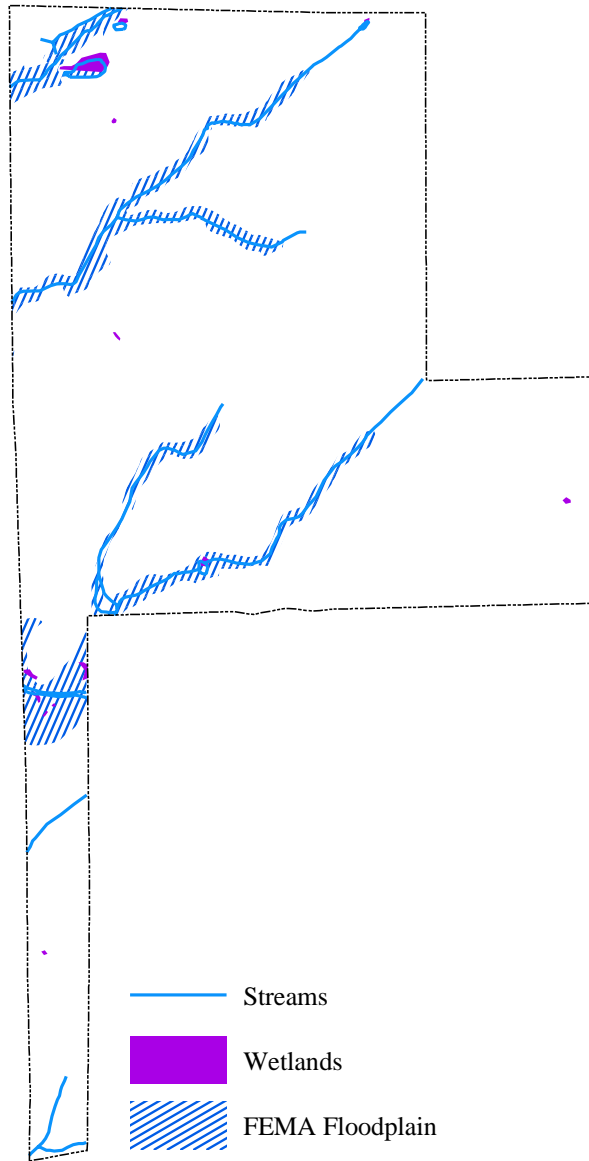
#### **HYDRIC SOILS**

In general, soils that are saturated with water at or near the ground surface, particularly during certain times of the year, are considered to have a high water table. As would be expected, such areas often exist near water bodies and watercourses and may be part of wetlands. Because of wetness, these soils present a major constraint for development wherever on-site subsurface sewage treatment is utilized, as in many rural areas, since treatment depends largely on adequate water percolation through the soil. In Springfield this is not an issue since it is almost completely seweraged, and such soils exist only in small concentrations anyway.

## **SURFACE WATERS AND HYDROLOGY**

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

Figure 25  
*Hydrology*



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

## TOWNSHIP WATERCOURSES AND WATERBODIES

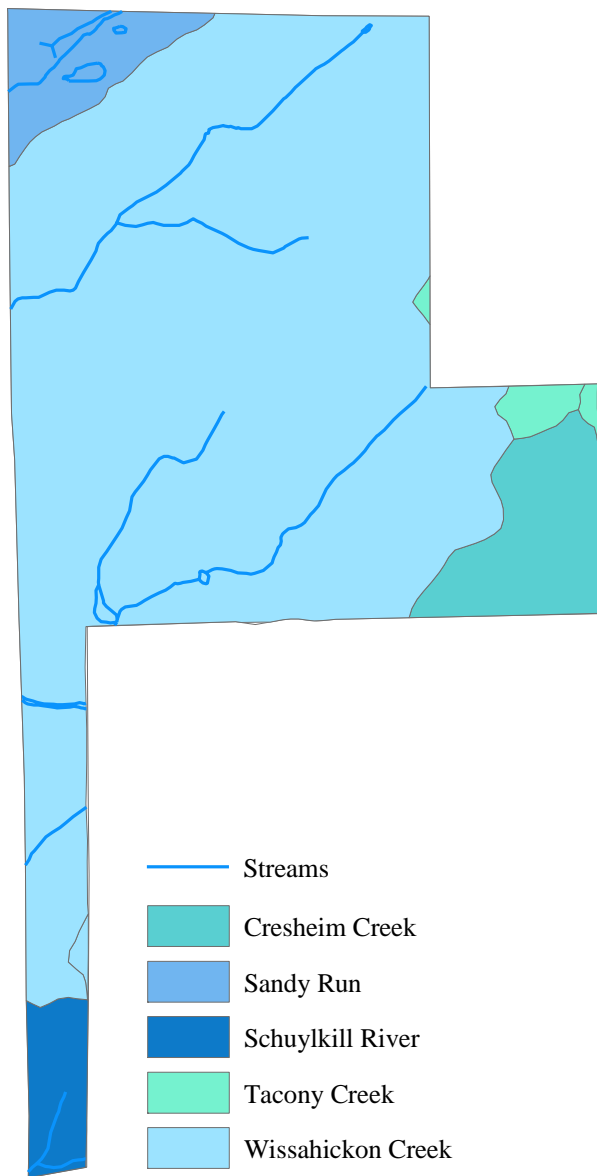
The township is crossed by three creeks— the Wissahickon in the panhandle, Sandy Run in Oreland, and Sunny Brook covering parts of Enfield, Oreland and Flourtown. Parts of each of these are protected by existing open space. For example, the Wissahickon is bordered by the Morris Arboretum and Whitemarsh Country Club. However, in general this open space is not permanently protected. In addition to its creeks, the township also contains three ponds located in Mermaid Park, Cisco Park, and Sandy Run Park. These serve as habitat and a water source for wildlife and storage areas for stormwater, and enhance the aesthetic quality of the community (see Figure 25).

## FLOODPLAIN AND STREAM CORRIDORS

The 100-year floodplain is a feature that will affect the health, safety, and welfare of township residents. Much of the time, it is dry. During storms, however, the floodplain stores and conveys floodwater. Development within the floodplain reduces the carrying capacity and increases the height and destructive ability of floodwater. In addition to carrying floodwaters, the floodplain and stream corridor serve other important functions. The condition of the stream corridor itself is important in minimizing erosion and water pollution, protecting water quality (temperature and velocity), and providing animal habitat and recreation opportunities. Floodplains in the township identified by the Federal Emergency Management System (FEMA) are found along Sandy Run Creek, the Wissahickon Creek, and two feeder streams.

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

Figure 26  
Watersheds



**WETLANDS**

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

defined wetlands as, “Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.”

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

The township has a few wetland areas based on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). The NWI offers a broad based, generalized overview of wetlands, therefore other wetlands may also exist in the municipality. Hydric soils may also indicate the presence of wetlands. The Army Corps of Engineers or a qualified consultant could be enlisted for a final determination of where wetlands are in fact present. Small NWI wetland sites are scattered across the township mainly near the Sandy Run Creek, in the panhandle, and along the Wissahickon Creek floodplain (see Figure 25).

**WATERSHEDS**

In terms of drainage, all Township land drains toward the Schuylkill River, as does the major portion of the county. As shown in Figure 26, this occurs within the Wissahickon watershed basin, which also covers parts of Upper Gwynedd, Lower Gwynedd, Upper Dublin, Whitmarsh, and Whitpain Townships and the Borough of North Wales. This basin is comprised of a series of smaller basins, the most important of which for Springfield is the Sandy Run Creek.

Because watershed basins are usually larger than one community, an interrelationship exists whereby municipalities that are upstream contribute surface water flow to Springfield, while those downstream receive the Township’s flow.

With this in mind, the Township should aim to maintain the natural conditions of its drainage system, such as through preservation of open space along watercourses.

**PROTECTED WATERCOURSES**

Pennsylvania, as required by the Federal Clean Water Act, has established water quality standards that apply to all streams and other waterbodies in the Commonwealth. The water quality standards, codified in Title 25 PA Code Chapter 93, establish water quality criteria that need to be maintained to protect designated water uses.

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

The protected water use designation for a given waterway is an indicator of its value for the protection and propagation of aquatic life and can be used to prioritize the unprotected stream and stream valley resources in a municipality. The only designated watercourse in the Township is the Wissahickon Creek, which is protected for trout stocking.

**GROUNDWATER**

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

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

The Township obtains its water supply from Aqua American and the Philadelphia Water Company, which utilize a series of wells (14 percent of

supply) and reservoirs (86 percent of supply) for its system. Two of the thirteen wells are located in Flourtown and Enfield, and are probably the direct source of water for many residents.

**SCENIC ROADS AND VISTAS**

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

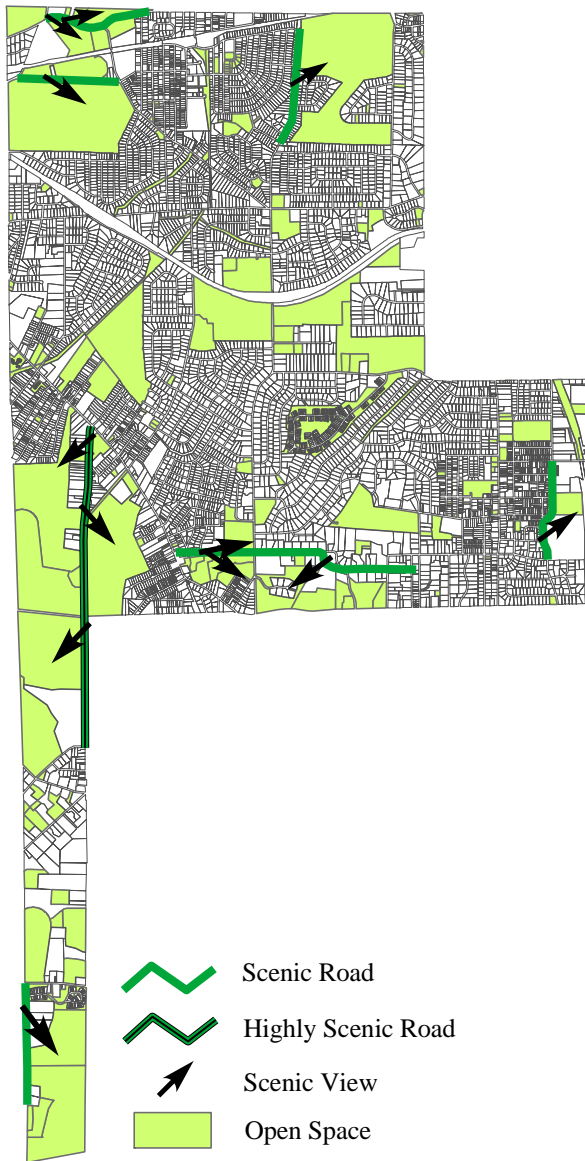
Although the process of identifying a scenic resource is largely dependent on the observer’s own opinions and preferences, information collected from a community group, such as a planning commission, can provide a relatively broad inventory. Wherever possible, these areas should be preserved and linked to the community’s open space and recreation system. Scenic resources in Springfield are summarized below under the combined heading of roadways and views and are mapped in Figure 27. The defining element or feature for each resource is noted.

Roadways with scenic attributes contribute to a community’s open space system because they provide a way to view its scenic resources and in some cases also serve as recreation routes for walkers, bicyclists, and joggers. A number of such roads exist in the Township.

- **Paper Mill Road - Edann Road to Bruce Road.** This road segment takes the traveller past North Hills Country Club, one of the Township’s major open space areas. The view this provides should be protected.
- **Pennsylvania Avenue - Camp Hill Road to Lynn Avenue.** Scenic views of private open space (Boorse/Piszek properties) exist along both sides of this winding road.
- **Walnut Avenue - Camp Hill Road to Oreland Mill Road.** This road provides views across parts of Sandy Hill Country Club, one of the Township’s major open space areas.



Figure 27  
*Scenic Roads & Vistas*



- **Wissahickon Avenue - Bethlehem Pike to Stenton Avenue.** This is perhaps the Township's most scenic road, taking the traveller into a significant open space corridor (comprised of Carson and St. Joseph's schools, Dixon farm, and the Morris Arboretum)
- **Northwestern Avenue— Stenton Avenue to Andorra Road.** In terms of its scenic value, this road functions as an extension of Wissahickon Avenue, continuing the quality views into private open space in this part of the

township.

- **Montgomery Avenue— Bethlehem Pike to Evergreen Avenue.** This road provides scenic views of open space in Cisco Park and the Biddle Woods area across Paper Mill Road.
- **Mermaid Lane— Stenton Avenue to Queen Street.** This part of Mermaid Lane passes through a residential area that has pleasant shade tree cover. It is also adjacent to Mermaid Park, one of the township's main public open space areas.
- **Manor Road— South of Ridge Pike.** Manor Road serves the most undeveloped are of the township, taking the traveler past a dense area of woodlands and adjoining open space.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic sites are another important vulnerable resource in a community. Historic structures and places are an important element in creating and maintaining a community's sense of place. These historic resources add to an area's quality of life by providing a community with pride and ownership of its past. They also make a valuable contribution to an area's current educational, cultural, and social environment.

Preservation also makes good economic sense. Long considered the "ultimate in recycling," historic preservation allows for the re-use of existing buildings and infrastructure, while retaining the heritage that defines a community.

## NATIONAL REGISTER SITES

The National Register of Historic Places contains a record of properties considered worthy of preservation at the national level. Five sites in Springfield Township are currently included on the Register: Springfield Mill, Carson Valley School, John Welsh House, Stotesbury Club House, and the Yeakel Miller Complex.

## OTHER HISTORIC RESOURCES

At this time, the most comprehensive inventory of

township sites has been compiled by the Springfield Township Historical Society. Although in some respects only a preliminary survey, it contains good information on numerous sites, some of which are mentioned below in Figure 28 and their locations shown on Figure 29. It should be noted that the list is not intended to confer any priority to these sites in terms of preservation, but rather simply highlights sites that are generally recognized as important.

In addition to these sites, the township has created an ordinance to protect buildings built before 1931 from demolition. Figure 29 shows these sites grouped into properties with buildings built between 1700 and 1851 (61 structures); 1851 and 1900 (300 structures); and 1901 and 1930 (772 structures). If a property owner seeks to demolish any of these structures, the proposal must first go through the Planning Commission upon adoption of the pending ordinance.



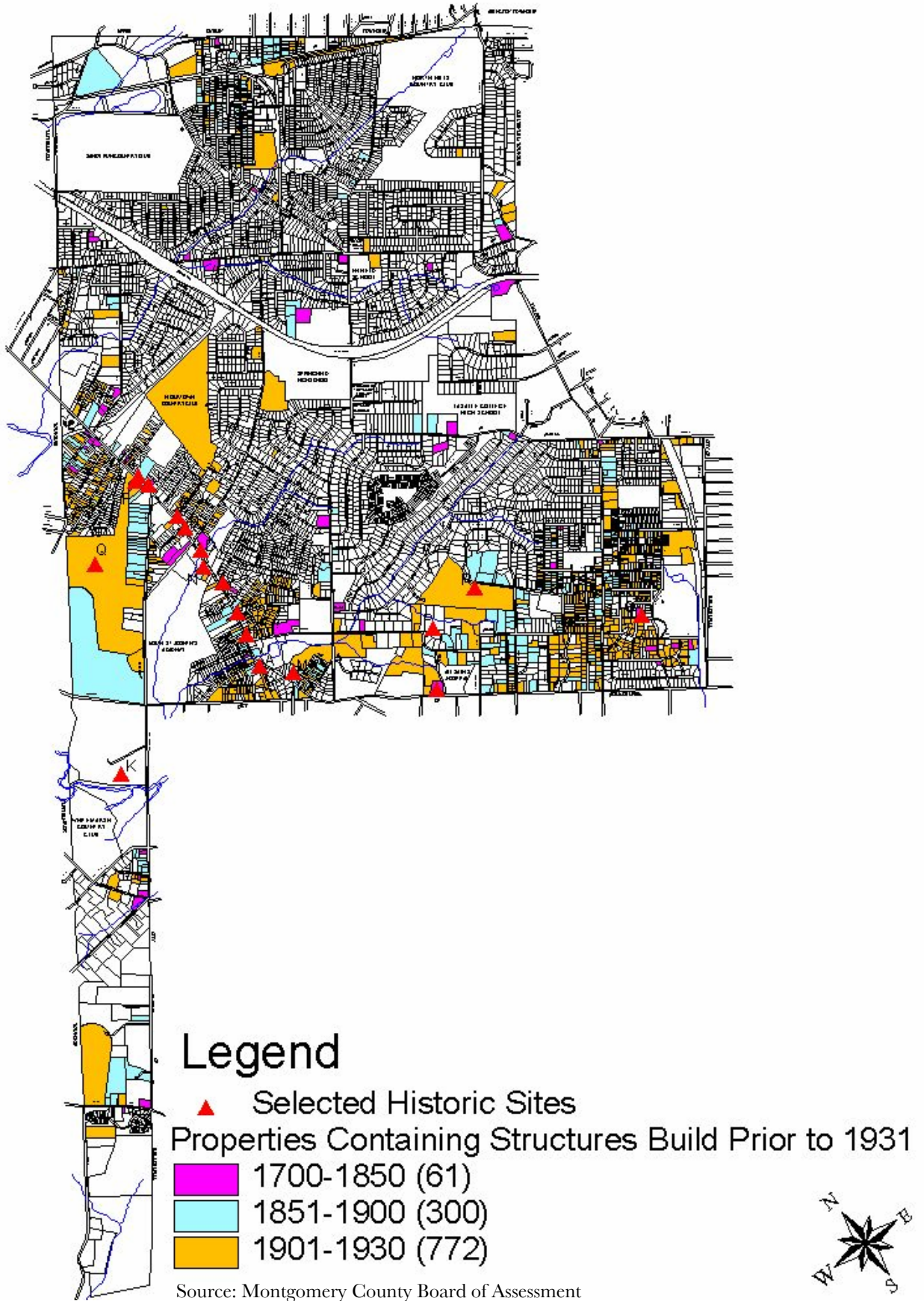
*Keystone House, Built 1867*

Figure 28  
*Selected Inventory of Historic Resources*

Map Key	Description	Address	Circa
A	The old "Wheelpump" hotel	529 Bethlehem Pike	pre 1740s
B	The "Wardrobe"; Township Library	1140 Bethlehem Pike	1741
C	COMO House; "Window on Pike" Inn	2 Chesney Lane	1743
D	Office of Burke, Lawton, Bewer	926 Bethlehem Pike	1744
E	Streeper-Karr House	1208 Bethlehem Pike	1744
F	"Darwin Hall"; Real estate office	1415 Bethlehem Pike	1750
G	Oyster houses: "Fingers" & "Dudley's"	700 Bethlehem Pike	1829
H	Urbano's; residence	808 Bethlehem Pike	1820
I	Black Horse Inn; "Sampson & the Lion"	1432 Bethlehem Pike	1833
J	Rowe's house (early brick house)	1408 Bethlehem Pike	1850
K	"Springfield Mill"*; Piper-Streeper Mill	Northwestern Avenue	1854
L	Keystone House*; John Welsh House	8765 Stenton Avenue	1867
M	Yeakel Miller Complex*	500 & 502 Bethlehem Pike	1875
N	House and carriage home	907 Bethlehem Pike	1876
O	Stotesbury Club House*	7830 Eastern Ave	1904
P	"Poe House"; "Ropsley" house & gardens	8700 Montgomery Avenue	1916
Q	Carson Valley School*	Wissahickon Avenue	1917
R	"Guildford"; Wharton Sinkler Conference Center	Gravers Lane	1920s

\*National Historic Register site

Figure 29





# CHAPTER 6

## ANALYSIS OF UNPROTECTED RESOURCES

This chapter identifies areas where vulnerable resources are not permanently protected, proposes priorities for their future preservation, and establishes specific protection goals. Generally, the priority categories are based on the extent of resources found in a given area, particularly where a concentration exists, their location and contribution to community identity, and the open space goals established in Chapter 2. Figure 30 shows the locations of these sites. These priorities are only based on vulnerable resources, and may not be the same as the priorities established in the implementation portion of this plan.

### COMPOSITE OF VULNERABLE RESOURCES

As can be seen from Figure 30, Springfield Township has several natural resources that are not currently protected from future degradation. The township's goals for this open space plan include maximizing permanent preservation of open space, protecting scenic and historic resources, and preserving natural features such as creek corridors and woodlands. With this in mind a composite of vulnerable resources was created including woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes (15% or

greater), alluvial soils, hydric soils, and state and prime agricultural soils within the township. These vulnerable resources are generally not protected by ordinances. As floodplains are protected by ordinance, they are not included in the list of unprotected resources, although they are indeed vulnerable and should continue to be protected. Priority areas have been chosen based on concentration of resources, scenic views, and proximity to existing open space. Figure 30 also

Figure 30  
*Unprotected Resources*



illustrates the locations of protected open space to show the extent to which these vulnerable resources are already protected.

## PRIORITIZATION OF AREAS FOR PRESERVATION

### HIGHEST PRIORITY PARCELS

Highest priority parcels were determined by examining those properties that contain vulnerable features, particularly woodlands, and are designated as undeveloped, agricultural, or private open space. These vulnerable parcels, shown in Figure 31, are most likely to benefit from available open space preservation tools and should be the highest priority for acquisition, should they become available.

- **Piszek Parcels**– Woodlands, State & Prime Agricultural Soils, adjacent to existing public open space (Sandy Run Park), provides scenic vistas.
- **Rear of Tecce Property**– Woodlands, Prime Agricultural Soils, located in important preservation area (panhandle).
- **Rock View Farm Partnership on Andorra Road**– Woodlands, located in important preservation area (panhandle).
- **Scattered Properties on Andorra Road**– Woodlands, State & Prime Agricultural Soils, located in important preservation area (panhandle).

### HIGH PRIORITY PARCELS

High priority parcels were determined by examining those properties that contain vulnerable features other than woodlands, and are designated as undeveloped, agricultural, or private open space.

- **Karr Tract**– Prime & State Agricultural Soils, adjacent to existing institutional open space (LaSalle College High School).
- **MJE Builders Parcel**– Woodlands, Prime Agricultural Soils, located in important preservation area (panhandle).

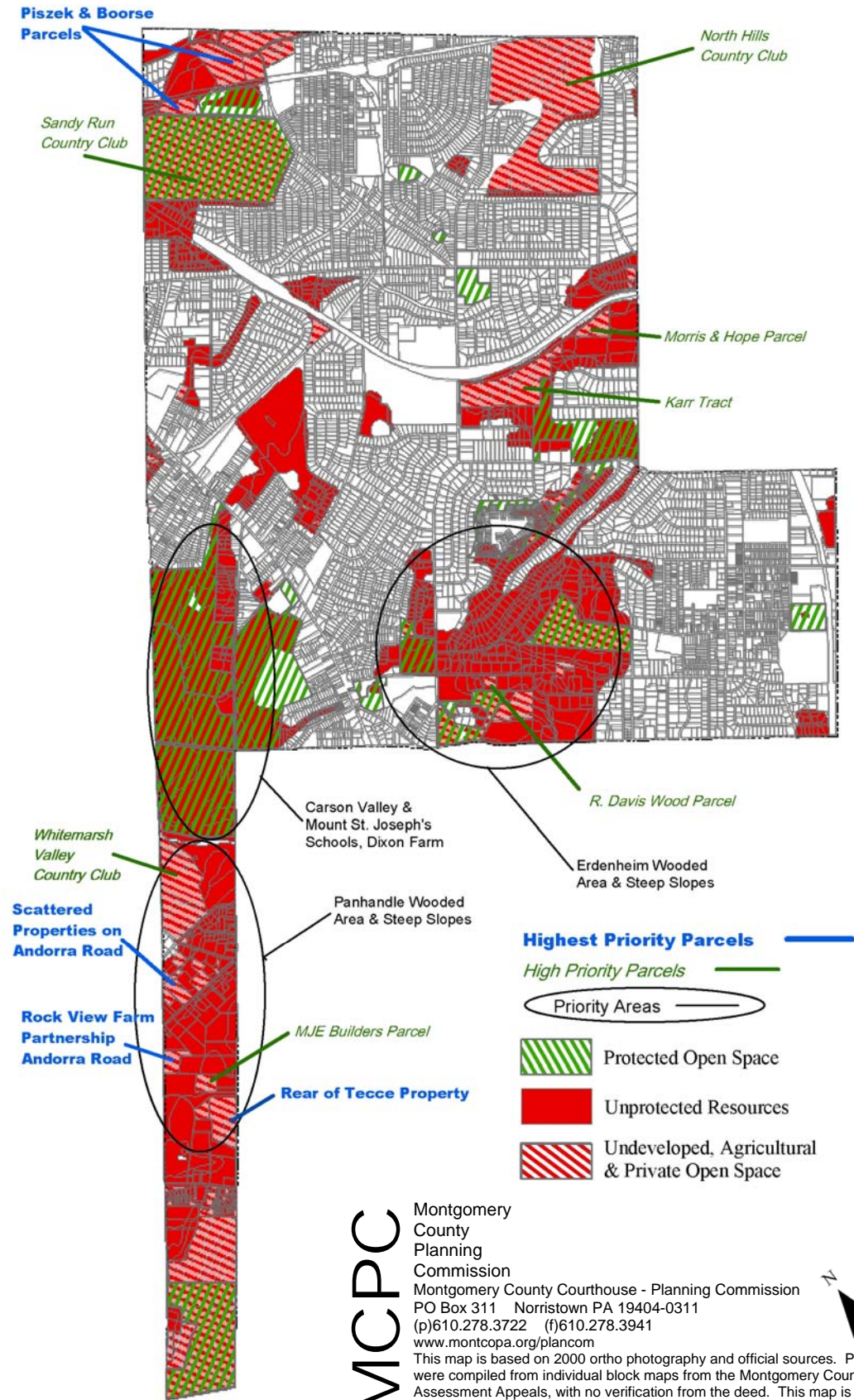
- **Morris & Hope Parcel**– Also known as the Hope Starr Lloyd Property: Prime Agricultural Soils, in the vicinity of the Karr Tract.
- **North Hills Country Club**- State & Prime Agricultural Soils, provides scenic vistas.
- **R. Davis Wood Parcel**– Prime Agricultural Soils, Adjacent to existing private open space (Biddle Woods).
- **Sandy Run Country Club**- State & Prime Agricultural Soils, adjacent to existing public open space (Sandy Run Park), provides scenic vistas.
- **Whitemarsh Valley Country Club**- State & Prime Agricultural Soils, adjacent to existing permanently protected open space (Morris Arboretum).

### PRIORITY AREAS

Priority areas were determined by examining which areas contain contiguous vulnerable features that are not necessarily designated as undeveloped, agricultural, or private open space. Many of these areas are currently institutional or underutilized single-family residential areas. Some of these areas contain temporarily protected open space. These areas are also shown in Figure 6.2.

- **Erdenheim Farm (Dixon Property)**: Prime & State Agricultural Soils, Scenic Vistas.
- **Carson Valley and Mount St. Joseph's Schools**: *Temporarily Protected Open Space*- Prime & State Agricultural Soils, provides scenic vistas.
- **Erdenheim Wooded Areas and Steep Slopes**– Woodlands, Steep Slopes, Prime & State Agricultural Soils, Alluvial & Hydric Soils, adjacent to existing private open space (Biddle Woods), provides scenic vistas.
- **Panhandle Wooded Areas and Steep Slopes**– Woodlands, Steep Slopes, and Prime & State Agricultural Soils.

Figure 31  
Priority Vulnerable Resources



**MCPC**

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

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





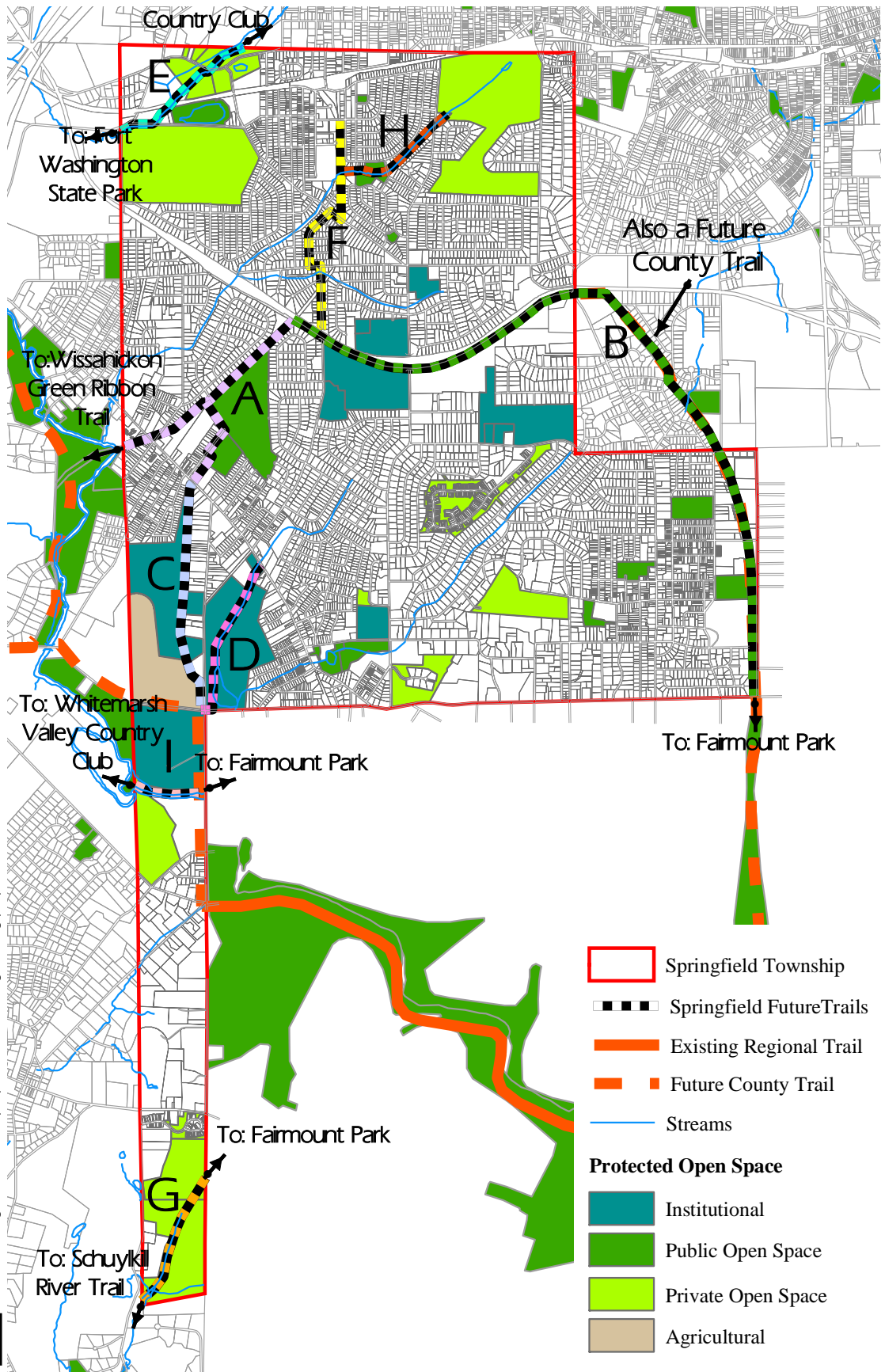
# CHAPTER 7

## **POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE LINKAGES**

An important aspect of open space is the accessibility of that space to community residents and to the region as a whole. This section of the plan identifies potential open space linkages that can tie together open space sites within the Township and connect to open space in adjacent communities. Such connections help form a more comprehensive open space system for residents and contribute to the creation of a more effective and enjoyable regional network. They can increase the accessibility of parks by allowing off-street pedestrian and bicycle access and can offer recreational opportunities in and of themselves as passive, natural recreational space. Examples of potential linkages include utility corridors, stream valleys, abandoned rail lines, sidewalks, and similar linear features.

Identification of potential linkages on a regional level will help to contribute to Montgomery County's vision of a Countywide Trail System. Nine possible connections for Springfield Township are described below and shown in Figure 32. These linkages have been prioritized into two categories: short-term priorities and long-term priorities. Trails in the short-term priorities category should be planned within the next two to five years and long-term priorities should begin within five to ten years.

Figure 32  
Existing and Future Trails



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

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

**MCP**

- Springfield Township
- Springfield Future Trails
- Existing Regional Trail
- Future County Trail
- Streams
- Protected Open Space**
- Institutional
- Public Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Agricultural

## SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

### A. CRESHEIM TRAIL/WISSAHICKON GREEN RIBBON TRAIL CONNECTOR (AKA PLYMOUTH RAIL TRAIL)

This linkage would utilize the remaining portions of the former railroad right-of-way corridor adjacent to Flourtown Country Club. It would connect the proposed Cresheim Trail to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail and Fort Washington state park, which are important regional open space resources. The width, length, and location of this linkage make it one of the most important potential open space corridors in the Township.

In addition to connecting open space areas, its existing and potential links with shopping areas, schools and neighborhoods represent a unique opportunity to encourage more non-motor vehicle trips to meet local needs.

A spur of this trail adjacent to Flourtown Country Club and Bysher Fields connecting to the historic Black Horse Inn on Bethlehem Pike is currently underway.

### B. CRESHEIM TRAIL

This linkage would utilize the former Philadelphia/Germantown/Chestnut Hill railroad corridor between Stenton Avenue and Paper Mill Road. The trail will connect the village center of Flourtown to Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, passing through Cheltenham along the way. The trail will link to recreational facilities including Fairmount Park, Mermaid Park, and Springfield High School. Currently, portions of this corridor are owned and used by Philadelphia Electric Company and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (for Route 309).

The Cresheim Trail has also been identified in the County's Proposed Primary Trail Network. The Cresheim Trail-Wissahickon Trail Connector (A) would link to the Cresheim Trail at the junction of the 309 corridor and Penn Oak Road.

The Foundation of the Rotary Club of Chestnut Hill submitted an application for funds for a feasibility study of this trail to DCNR in October of 2004 with a letter of support from Springfield Township. Cheltenham Township has also applied for a grant for matching funds for the DCNR grant.

### C. WISSAHICKON AVENUE TRAIL CONNECTOR

A paved trail is already underway between Bysher Fields and the Black Horse Inn. A connection between this trail and the planned Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail at Stenton Avenue is possible through the Carson Valley School tract. In January of 2005, Springfield applied for a \$10,000 PECO Energy grant for a feasibility/trail design study.

### D. BETHLEHEM PIKE- FAIRMOUNT PARK

These two areas can be linked using the watercourse and surrounding open space that extends across the Mt. St. Joseph's institutional site. This trail would connect to Stenton Avenue, where it would meet the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail, connecting Fairmount Park to the Wissahickon Valley in Whitemarsh via the Springfield panhandle.

### E. SANDY RUN CREEK

Sandy Run Creek extends into the northern corner of Springfield from Upper Dublin Township before entering Wissahickon Creek at Fort Washington State Park in Whitemarsh Township. It therefore provides an opportunity to connect Springfield with an important regional open space area. Further, it would complement Upper Dublin's plan to preserve its portion of the creek as part of a proposed greenway/trail system. This linkage is also identified in the 2001 Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan.

## LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

### F. ORELAND CONNECTOR

This link would connect Haws Lane, Church Road, Meadow Lane, and Montgomery Avenue up to Ulmer Avenue. This linkage connects Erdenheim Elementary and Senior High Schools to Orland Ball Field and homes in the northern portion of the Township.

### G. MANOR CREEK

This portion of Manor Creek is located at the far end of the panhandle area on permanently protected land owned by the Girl Scouts of Philadel-

phia organization. Its value as a link lies in possible connections with Fairmount Park to the north (via Northwestern Avenue in the Township or Bells Mill Road in Philadelphia) and the Schuylkill River Trail to the south in Whitemarsh Township.

#### **H. NORTH HILLS COUNTRY CLUB - ORELAND BALLFIELD**

This linkage would utilize an existing Township-owned drainage right-of-way that extends from the golf course (and also the swim club) in Oreland to the Oreland Little League Fields. Although usually filled with some water, a portion of its sixty-foot width could be used as an open space connection between the golf course and the ball field site. Further, if used beyond the little league fields it connects with linkage F identified above.

#### **I. WISSAHICKON CREEK**

This portion of the Wissahickon Creek could serve as an extension of the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association's Greenway. After the development of the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail along Stenton Avenue, creating an additional greenway along the creek may become be a priority. This link is also listed as a Primary Greenway in the County Comprehensive Plan.

### **LINKAGE FORMS**

Some details concerning the form of these trails (precise location, surface type, amenities, etc.) may appear in the recommendations section of this plan, however details of individual projects will be determined at the time of their implementation. This plan simply identifies the general locations where linkages of some type are desirable.

# CHAPTER 8

## **EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS**

This section of the plan examines the amount of existing public open space and types of recreation facilities in relation to current and expected future needs. Recreation-oriented organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommend that municipalities strive to meet their open space needs independently of other providers, such as schools and private developments. Therefore open space provided by quasi-public establishments is considered only peripherally. An analysis of recreational public open space considers how open space land is distributed in addition to showing if a deficit exists or will occur in the future. The results of the analysis should help guide decisions concerning future open space preservation and facilities planning.

### **RECREATION STANDARDS**

The NRPA has developed national standards for recreation, parks, and open space (Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines; 1983). Its standards are widely accepted and used, although they should be viewed only as a guide for planning, not as absolute standards. In addition, these standards mainly apply to recreational uses, rather than passive or natural open space (of which there is no standard minimum or maximum). The commonly used standard is the population ratio method, or the number of acres

of parkland per 1,000 people. The NRPA estimates that a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of municipally owned and developed open space per 1,000 people is a useful guide. Generally speaking, the more densely populated an area is, the higher the ratio should be. Therefore a more developed Township like Springfield would apply a higher ratio than a rural municipality such as New Hanover Township. For the purposes of this plan, both the low and high ratios are used to create a range for evaluating existing condi-

tions and to perhaps establish an acreage goal for the community. For example, the midpoint value of the recommended range may be a good target.

Further, the NRPA recommends that the developed open space consist of a core system of parkland, distributed among mini parks (such as tot lots), neighborhood parks, and community parks. Each of these components are of a certain size, have a defined "service area" (Figure 34 shows a .25 and .5 mile service area for each public park), and provide for certain uses (active and/or passive). This division of acreage has been applied to the Township to determine if a particular need exists now or may develop in the future. Figure 33 shows the results of applying the NRPA standards.

### PARK TYPES

As shown, Springfield's current total open space acreage falls at the low end of existing and future recommended ranges. Springfield should aim for the mid-range of these standards (about 164 total acres), which means the Township needs to

provide up to 40 additional acres of recreational open space by 2025. This goal can be approached if the Township acquires much of the target public open space proposed in Chapter 10.

### EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

Springfield's parks can be placed into two main categories: community-level and neighborhood-level. Typical characteristics of community-level parks are large size (serving more than one neighborhood), a central location, a good range of facilities/amenities (creek and woodlands corridor, ballfields, playground equipment, etc.), and parking.

Seven Township sites - Bysheer Fields, Cisco Park, Flourtown Country Club, Hillcrest Pond, Laurel Beech Park, Sandy Run Park, and Veterans Park-belong in this category (see Figures 34 and 35). With nearly 106 acres of community level open space, Springfield is at the lower range of the NRPA standard. This indicates that the Township needs to pursue new open space that serves the entire Township. As is shown in chapter nine, this

Figure 33  
*Minimum Recreational Open Space Needs*

Projected Population*	2005		2015		2025	
	19550		19380		19320	
Range	From	To	From	To	From	To
<b>Recommended Acreage**</b>						
Community	98	156	97	155	97	155
Neighborhood	24	49	24	48	24	48
<b>Total</b>	122	205	121	203	121	203
<b>Existing Acreage</b>						
Community	105.81		105.81		105.81	
Neighborhood	18.5		18.5		18.5	
<b>Total</b>	124.31		124.31		124.31	
<b>Difference</b>						
Community	8	-51	9	-49	9	-49
Neighborhood	-6	-30	-6	-30	-6	-30
<b>Total</b>	2	-81	3	-79	4	-79

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

\* Projected Population

\*\* Recommended Acreage - Range per 1000 persons as follows:

Community Level = 5.0 - 8.0 acres; Neighborhood Level = 1.25 - 2.5 acres

Total = 6.25 - 10.5 acres

Figure 34  
Public Open Space Service Areas

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

**MCP**



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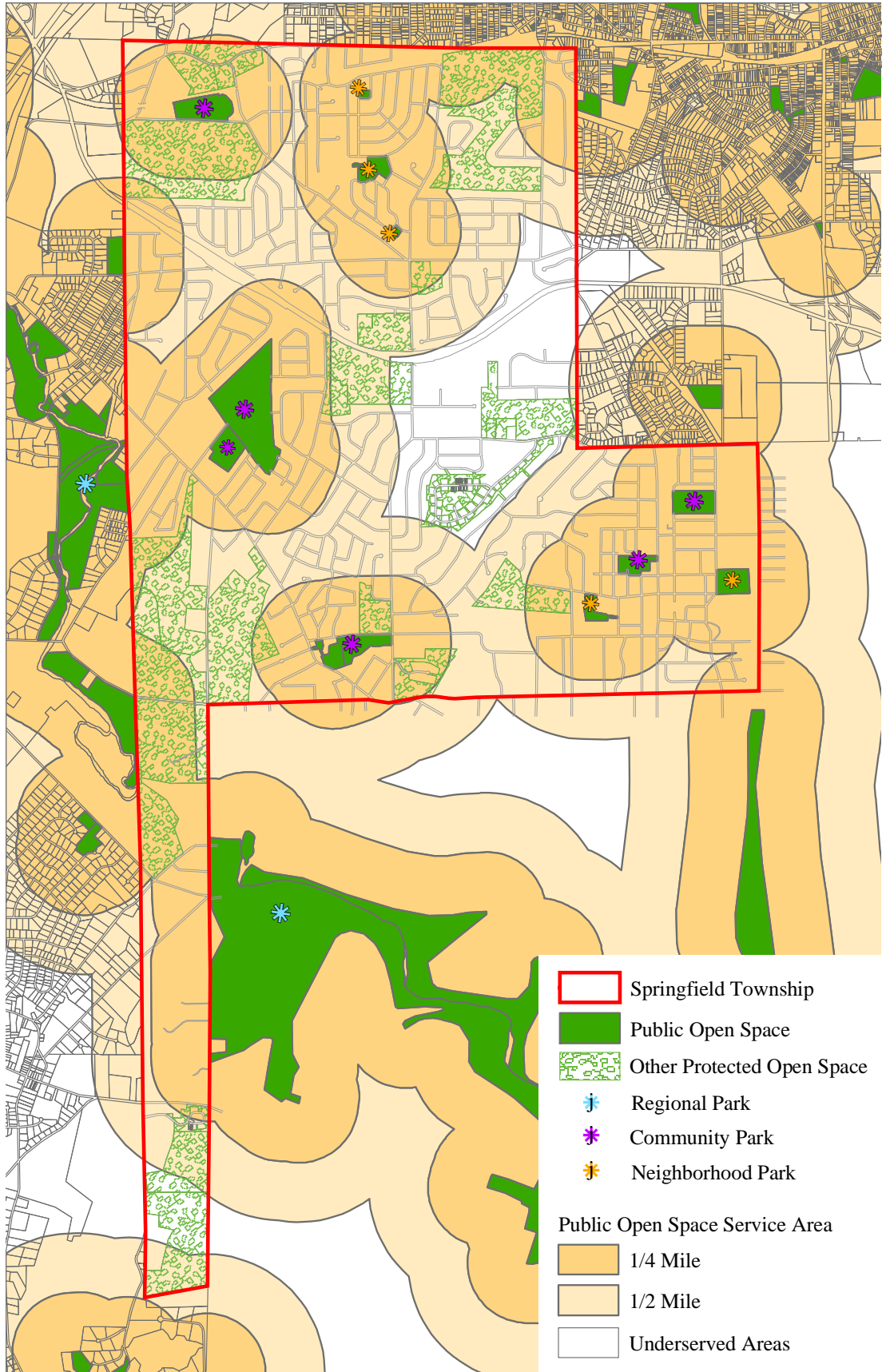


Figure 35  
*Recreational Open Space Categories*

Open Space Type	Name	Acreage	Facilities
Community	Bysher Fields	10.5	Ballfields (5)
Community	Cisco Park, Hillcrest Pond	13.0	Soccer field; multi-use field; ballfield; fishing pond
Community	Flourtown Country Club	51.0	Golf course
Community	Laurel Beech Park	11.1	Tot lot; soccer field
Community	Sandy Run Park	14.21	Pond (restricted)
Community	Veterans Park	6.0	Ballfields (3); refreshment stand
Neighborhood	Kingston Triangle	0.9	None
Neighborhood	Mermaid Park	8.0	Pond
Neighborhood	Oreland Ballfield	4.3	Ballfields (2); refreshment stand; basketball court
Neighborhood	Oreland Park	0.8	Basketball courts (2); swings; benches
Neighborhood	Wyndhill Playground	4.5	Tennis court; multi-use field; soccer field; tot lot
<b>Total</b>		<b>124.3</b>	

will be done by establishing a Township trail system and pursuing a few potential parkland sites. In fact, if the target sites are acquired, the Township will meet the mid-range standard for community open space.

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

The Township has five neighborhood-level sites that are generally well located to serve residents' needs (see Figures 34 and 35): Kingston Triangle, Mermaid Park, Oreland Ballfield, Oreland Park, and Wyndhill Playground. However, there is currently a deficit of neighborhood-level parks. The Township needs to acquire approximately 18 additional acres of neighborhood open space to meet the mid-range standard by 2025.

**PASSIVE OPEN SPACE**

As mentioned earlier, unlike active open space needs, there is no standard to determine how much acreage to devote to passive open space. Often, a determining factor is the location and extent of natural resources that are currently unprotected. As shown in Chapter 6, there are several such areas in the Township that should be permanently protected.

**RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

Figure 36 summarizes the results of applying specific recreational facility standards to Springfield and compares the results to the supply of existing Township facilities. It should be noted that some results shown as fractions are rounded up to a whole number; for example, .3 football fields means 1 football field should be provided. As can be seen, the Township falls short of the recommended levels for all but three of the facilities. Some of these, however, are available through the schools, including playground equipment, tennis courts, and running track.

As a result, the Township need not try to meet all of these standards, but rather should focus on



several that can more realistically be accomplished, such as adding multipurpose fields, baseball and softball fields with facilities, and running/walking tracks and trails. The Park and Recreation Board is currently working on a Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan for the Township that will address recreational needs in more detail.

Figure 36  
*Recreational Facility Needs*

Standard Per 1,000 Pop.		2000 Population	2025 Population*	Permanently Protected Facilities	2025 Deficit	Additional Facilities provided by Temporarily Protected Areas
		19533	19320			
Basketball Courts	0.2	4	4	3	-1	6
Tennis Courts	0.5	10	10	1	-9	20
Volleyball Courts	0.2	4	4	0	-4	1
Baseball/Softball Fields	0.4	8	8	11	3	12
Field Hockey Fields	0.05	1	1	0	-1	0
Football Fields	0.05	1	1	0	-1	0
Soccer Fields	0.1	2	2	2	0	4
Running Track (1/4 mile)	0.05	1	1	0	-1	2
Swimming Pools	0.05	1	1	0	-1	3
Playgrounds	0.6	12	12	2	-10	4
Picknicking Areas	0.24	5	5	2	-3	0
Multipurpose Fields	0.3	6	6	2	-4	3
Shuffleboard Courts	0.8	16	15	0	-15	0
Multipurpose Courts	0.1	2	2	0	-2	0
Nature Areas	0.24	5	5	0	-5	0
Golf Courses	0.04	1	1	1	0	3

\* Projected

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



# CHAPTER 9

## **EVALUATION OF COUNTY AND ABUTTING MUNICIPAL PLANS**

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

This chapter compares the recommendations of this plan with those in the County comprehensive plan and the comprehensive, open space, and revitalization plans of abutting municipalities and counties. The intent is to prevent conflicts between plans and to encourage collaboration of efforts. By gaining an understanding of how Springfield’s plan will fit into the larger open space and trail linkage picture, partners can optimize both the quantity and quality of future open space preservation and management.

### **COMPARISON TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY LAND USE PLAN AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

In 2001, Montgomery County began updating its Comprehensive Plan. Although not yet complete, this plan will help guide the growth of housing, transportation, economic development, and natural & cultural resource management, through

2025 and beyond. Each of these factors could potentially bear great significance on open space needs and opportunities in Springfield.

Within this plan is the Vision of the County in

2025. This Vision sets up four issues as the highest priority for action:

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

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

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

**Vision Plan**

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

**Land Use**

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

**Open Space, Natural Features, and Cultural Resources**

- Preserve Large Interconnected Areas of Significant Open Space
- Protect and Manage Wetlands, Streams, Steep Slopes, Woodlands, and Natural Habitats
- Create a Greenway System along Rivers, Creeks, and Other Sensitive Natural and Historic Features
- Develop a Countywide Network of Interconnected Trails
- Provide Park Facilities to Meet the Public's Recreation Needs
- Protect Scenic Roads, Vistas, and Viewsheds

- Protect Historic Resources and Cultural Landscapes

**Water Resources**

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

At a site-specific level, the County Comprehensive plan identifies several open space areas worthy of protection in Springfield Township. They include the Sandy Run and Wissahickon Greenways; several properties eligible for and listed on the National Historic Register; scenic roads (Manor Road, Willow Grove Avenue, and Montgomery Avenue); proposed open space; and county trails (Cresheim Trail and the Wissahickon Trail). As outlined in this plan, Springfield also considers these areas significant resources and will act to preserve, protect, and enhance them using acquisition and non-acquisition methods.

**RELATION TO PLANS OF ABUTTING MUNICIPALITIES**

Three townships and the City of Philadelphia abut Springfield Township. The current zoning map, open space policies and other pertinent information of each township are summarized below. Adjacent, yet incompatible, land uses may result in conflicts while potential linkages could lead to cooperative partnerships between municipal neighbors.

Based on the Montgomery County Open Space Program in 1993, the townships developed Open Space Plans. Over the years since these plans were adopted, many projects have been implemented, including the acquisition and preservation of land and implementation of trails. In addition, over this ten-year period, the needs of the communities have changed. It is therefore vital that Springfield keeps abreast of the continually evolving planning efforts of its neighbors and the county.

## WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP

Whitemarsh Township lies to the west of Springfield, sharing a border measuring approximately 5.75 miles. Whitemarsh contains many acres of public open space that is either adjacent or quite near to Springfield Township, including portions of Fort Washington State Park, the Wissahickon Trail, Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, and the Ace Golf Club. At the time of publication of this plan, Whitemarsh Township was still in the process of updating its own Open Space plan. At that time, open space issues of interest to Springfield include creation of a connector to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail at Fort Washington State Park, and the extension of the Green Ribbon Trail through Springfield along Stenton Avenue.

Sandy Run Creek is also a major open space connection between the two Townships, and implementation of the Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan, described in Chapter 1, is important to both municipalities.

In addition, green infrastructure improvements mentioned in the Flourtown-Erdenheim Vision Plan, which encompasses areas along Bethlehem Pike in both Whitemarsh and Springfield, are also priorities in the municipalities' open space plans.

## UPPER DUBLIN TOWNSHIP

To the north of Springfield lies Upper Dublin Township, sharing an approximately 1.6 mile border roughly along Pennsylvania Avenue. Upper Dublin was also in the process of developing its open space plan at the time of this plan's publication. Sandy Run Creek is the main open space connection between the Townships, and implementation of the Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan is also important to these two municipalities.

In addition, Springfield has worked with Upper Dublin on the Pennsylvania Avenue Enhancement Plan headed by the East Oreland Neighbors Association. In the near future, Pennsylvania Avenue will be reconnected at the 309 interchange. This will provide an additional opportunity to work with Upper Dublin in improve this gateway.

## CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP

Cheltenham Township lies to the east of Springfield, and shares a nearly 2-mile border along Cheltenham Avenue and through several residential neighborhoods. Cheltenham's draft 2005 Open Space Plan identifies the Cresheim trail (a Philadelphia Electric Company utility corridor in the Laverock Neighborhood) as a potential open space corridor. This corridor extends into Springfield north along route 309 and south between Cheltenham Avenue and Stenton Avenue. Implementation of this trail would connect Philadelphia to Whitemarsh via Springfield and Cheltenham.

## CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

### FAIRMOUNT PARK SYSTEM

Consisting of 77 parks in 12 park complexes, the Fairmount Park system incorporates 9,204 acres and offers a variety of experiences including trails, gardens, woodlands, rivers and streams, day camps, ball fields and golf courses, picnic areas and playgrounds, historic homes, and environmental, cultural and history centers.

Springfield residents regularly access many of these facilities, and in fact Springfield is within the direct quarter- and half-mile service areas of portions of this park system. Portions of the park itself border Springfield in the panhandle area, and is a heavily used regional resource.

The Fairmount Park Commission released its latest Strategic Plan, "A Bridge to the Future," in July, 2004. The plan lays out more than 75 individual strategies for transforming and revitalizing the Park system. The Park Commission's mission is to:

- Preserve, protect, and maintain the open space, street trees, natural and cultural resources of Philadelphia's parks for the recreation and enjoyment of residents and visitors;
- Educate the public on the environment, history, and use of the Fairmount Park system;
- Promote, celebrate, and enhance the uniqueness and value of the Fairmount park system and its economic impact to the City, region and state.

Planned improvements to the park system will benefit residents of Springfield and other municipalities in Montgomery County, as well as residents of the City of Philadelphia. The Township's plan will complement Fairmount Park by preserving additional open space along the Wissahickon creek and connecting it to Township open space through the Cresheim Trail.

## **PHILADELPHIA RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

In addition to the Fairmount Park system— which mainly consists of passive, self-directed recreation, the Department of Recreation provides active recreation with emphasis on programmed activities and facilities. Springfield residents also have access to facilities managed by this group, particularly the Water Tower Recreational Center at Hartwell and Ardleigh in the Chestnut Hill section of the City.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL OR MULTIMUNICIPAL COOPERATION**

A number of avenues exist for cooperation with neighboring municipalities. These include:

- Planned trail connections with Whitemarsh and Cheltenham Townships.
- Planned greenway connections with Upper Dublin township.

Springfield is already involved in multi-municipal plans with Upper Dublin Township (Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan and the Pennsylvania Avenue Improvement Plan) and Whitemarsh Township (Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan and the Flourtown-Erdenheim Vision Plan). The municipality plans to continue this cooperation, and has included recommendations from these two planning efforts in this Open Space plan.

Springfield Township is interested in working with its neighbors to implement the recommendations of all Open Space plans and to work on planning efforts in the future.

# CHAPTER 10

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After completing a community profile, establishing goals and objectives, analyzing existing protected land and potentially vulnerable resources, considering opportunities to link open space, evaluating growth areas, examining open space and recreation needs, and examining the open space plans of abutting municipalities, the Springfield Township Open Space Planning Committee has developed a set of recommendations to guide the future acquisition, development, and coordination of open space in the Township. This chapter discusses recommendations for projects, programs and policies, as well as special options available through the Green Fields/Green Towns program.

### PROJECTS

- **Create Trail Network** – The linkages identified in Chapter 7 should be implemented to link existing internal (Township) and external open space.
- **Obtain Institutional Easements** - In order to maximize the permanent preservation of remaining open space, Springfield wishes to seek easements on large institutional properties such as the Carson Valley School and Mount St. Joseph’s Academy. The Township would also like to look into requesting easements on the golf course properties including Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, Sandy Run Country Club, and North Hills Country Club.
- **Protect Sandy Run Greenway** – As prescribed by the Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan, the Sandy Run Greenway should be protected via easements and/or buffer requirements.
- **Record History of Significant Properties** – A goal of the open space plan is to protect scenic and historic resources. When an actual building or site cannot be preserved, the his-

tory of culturally significant structures and their landscapes should be recorded for prosperity. A list of such properties should be created and maintained.

- **Acquire Additional Open Space** – Additional open space is very desirable in Springfield Township. Highest priority areas for potential acquisition are the Piszek and Boorse properties in Oreland and various properties in the Panhandle (See Chapter 6). Other priorities include the Karr Tract, undeveloped parcels containing woodlands, steep slopes or prime agricultural soils, Carson Valley and Mount St. Joseph’s Schools, and sensitive portions of Erdenheim farms should they become available. The Township would also like to protect portions of the private golf courses through acquisition or other means whenever possible.
- **Monitor Recreation Impact Fee** – In order to meet the Township’s open space needs, the park and recreation impact fee that has been levied to help obtain new park land should be monitored to ensure that it keeps pace with the cost of maintaining and acquiring property.
- **Maintain and Improve Ponds** – A holistic approach should be taken to preserve Springfield’s ponds and protect them from contamination and over silting. In particular, the need for recurring dredging operations should be minimized, especially at Hillcrest Pond. Research should be conducted to find ways to improve water flow into the ponds to minimize such operations.

## PROGRAMS

- **Provide Open Space Preservation Information** – In order to assist residents in permanently preserving open space on privately owned property, the Township should create a program that accomplishes the following:
  - Provide information on the Township website including links to organizations that are involved with land preservation and other open space issues;
  - Provide printed educational materials identifying various methods of land pres-

ervation, including information concerning landscape design and appropriate plant species; and

- Stress the tax benefits of permanently preserving private land.
- **Support the Shade Tree Commission** – The Shade Tree Commission should be reenergized in an effort to enhance the Township’s natural environment. The Township supports the effort to inventory existing plans and create new plans to identify trees in decline and establish a proactive program for rejuvenating the tree population.
- **Spread the Word** – The Township should hold an “Open Space Kickoff” event to gather input, promote the open space plan and disseminate information. This will increase the likelihood that recommendations contained in the plan will be implemented.

## POLICIES

- **Identify Funding Sources** – The Township will continually seek to secure a combination of private and public funds to implement the recommendations in this open space plan.
- **Preserve Open Space on School Sites** – The Township will continue to foster the existing positive relationship with the School District and other educational institutions to address open space and recreation issues. The practice of obtaining the right of first refusal for abandoned school sites has been very successful in the past: Wyndhill Park, Bysher Fields, and Cisco Park were all acquired by the Township from the School District. Springfield will continue this policy in the future.
- **Preserve Open Space on Golf Courses** – In order to maximize permanent preservation of remaining open space and keep the Flourtown golf course in open space use, the Township should actively support positive relationships with all golf courses. They should also retain the AAA zoning overlay that currently aids in protecting these sites and/or seek other means of preservation such as easements.



- **Encourage Creative Site Design** – Ensuring that the Planning Commission keeps the concept of encouraging creative site design that preserves contiguous open space in mind when reviewing site plans will also help to permanently preserve remaining open space. The significant environmental benefits of maintaining contiguous open space should be stressed as part of this effort.
  - **Uphold Low-Intensity Development Policy in the Panhandle** - In areas of the panhandle that are under development pressure, low-intensity and/or clustered uses should be encouraged. This can be accomplished through:
    - Supporting the Land Use portion of Springfield’s current Comprehensive Plan;
    - Maintaining a dialogue with community members and developers to create a balance between development and open space preservation; and
    - Urging the Planning Commission to consider height, buffers, and impervious coverage when reviewing developments in this area.
  - **Establish Stream Buffer Criteria** – The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance should establish requirements for protecting stream buffers to help preserve natural aquatic features.
  - **Preserve Woodland and Natural Features** – The Township should encourage creative site design that preserves contiguous stands of trees, particularly old growth/mature trees. Teeth should be added to existing ordinances that require filing of a natural features conservation plan for site plans as part of the subdivision and land development process.
  - **Maintain Landscaping Expertise on Planning Commission** – The Board of Commissioners should ensure that expertise regarding buffering and landscaping always be part of the planning Commission.
  - **Support FEEA’s Bethlehem Pike Vision**
- Plan** – This plan aims to enhance the Township’s natural environment and recommends street tree planting programs to meet this goal. The Township should support and aid in the implementation of this plan whenever possible.
- **Promote Morris Arboretum’s Programs** – The Arboretum offers a number of excellent classes to the public involving landscape design and horticulture. In an effort to encourage private landscaping and beautification efforts, these programs should be promoted and supported by providing print and web information to residents.
  - **Coordinate Open Space Groups** – There are many groups in and around Springfield Township involved in open space planning implementation. The Township should coordinate with these groups, including, but not limited to:
    - Erdenheim Civic Association
    - Flourtown Erdenheim Enhancement Association (FEEA)
    - Friends of Historic Bethlehem Pike
    - Friends of Hillcrest Pond
    - Friends of Mermaid Pond
    - Friends of The Panhandle
    - Friends of The Wissahickon
    - Parks and Recreation Department
    - Sandy Run Coalition
    - Shade Tree Commission
    - Springfield Neighbors Association
    - Wyndmoor Civic Association
  - **Identify Recreation and Open Space Needs** – The Township should encourage community groups to informally or formally survey residents concerning their open space and recreation needs and report this information to the Planning Commission, the Open Space Committee, and/or the Park and Recreation Department.
  - **Support the Park and Recreation Plan** – The 2005 Park and Recreation Plan will contain specific information regarding maintenance and programming of open space and recreational areas. This plan supports that effort.

- **Preserve Views** – Views of natural features and open space areas, particularly of the Carson Valley School, the Dixon Farm, and the Wharton Sinkler Tract should be preserved. Façade easements should be obtained where appropriate.
- **Preserve Corridors of Mature, Healthy Trees** – The results of the tree inventory should be used to:
  - Prioritize efforts to fund the purchase of new street trees;
  - Encourage strategies that prevent tree diseases; and
  - Encourage the prompt removal of diseased trees and facilitate their replacement.
- **Encourage Preservation of Historic Structures** – Creative site development that preserves views and historic structures should include the practice of maintaining historic elements (or remnants thereof) in the open space areas of developed properties to recall the property’s past history. As a first step toward historic preservation, the Township is currently in the process of drafting a Historic Demolition Ordinance that would require more scrutiny of plans to demolish potentially historic structures. This report strongly supports those efforts.
- **Support the Creation of an Environmental Action Committee** – Such a committee would review land development proposals and advise the Township on issues related to the natural environment including watersheds, soils, woodlands, and floodplains. It would help to emphasize the importance of protecting Springfield’s natural resources.

## GREEN FIELDS/GREEN TOWNS PROGRAM OPTIONS

Land acquisition is one of the primary means of preserving open space. However, it is recognized that Springfield Township has limited opportunities to acquire large vacant tracts of land, but has open space, tree planting, recreation develop-

ment, heritage preservation, trail connection, and floodplain restoration needs. Through the Green Fields/Green Towns Program, these alternative means of preservation are now eligible for funding through the various grant options described in this chapter, including Green Infrastructure, Heritage Resource Conservation, County Trail Connections, and Floodplain Restoration.

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Under the 2003 Green Fields/Green Towns Program, communities with limited opportunities to purchase large vacant tracts for open space have the opportunity to improve their green infrastructure. This “green infrastructure” may include the creation of safe, usable open space, recreation areas, or public spaces through the demolition of dilapidated property or the restoration of older industrial sites into parks, plazas, trails, and natural areas. Landscaping as well as improving existing open space and recreation areas also is included in this category.

### REVITALIZATION

Three main objectives that fall under the goal to enhance the Township’s natural environment are to require adequate landscaping throughout the township, plant street trees, and create gateways to enhance the entrances to the township.

In order to meet these objectives, the Township will design gateway entrances, install street trees, and create public plazas/village greens within the Flourtown, Erdenheim, Oreland, and Wyndmoor commercial districts (see Figure 37). The gateway improvements on Bethlehem Pike and E. Mill Road have also been proposed in the Flourtown/Erdenheim Enhancement Association’s Vision Plan, and are currently in the process of receiving a grant for their implementation. If for some reason that process is not completed, the Township would like to find additional funding sources for those particular projects.

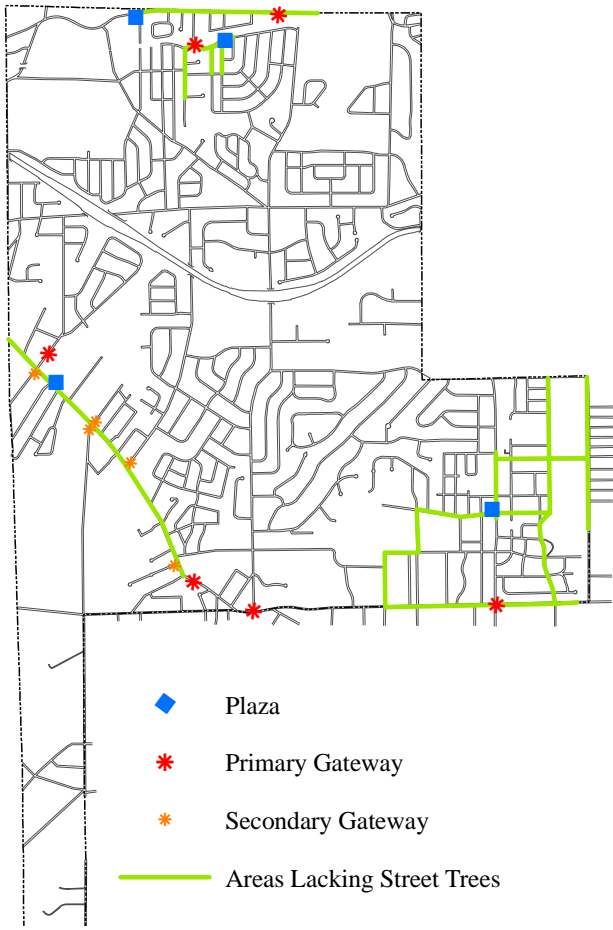
### PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Providing additional recreation facilities and completing other planned improvements for existing parks, as well as supporting the recommendations of the Township’s Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan will help achieve the goal of meeting the

Figure 37

*Proposed Gateways, Street Trees, and Plazas*

Village	Street	Task
Flourtown	Bethlehem Pike	Gateways, Street Trees, Plaza
Flourtown	E. Mill Road	Gateway, Street Trees
Erdenheim	Bethlehem Pike	Gateways, Street Trees
Oreland	Bruce Road	Gateway, Street Trees
Oreland	Allison Road	Street Trees, Plaza/Town Green
Oreland	Montgomery Avenue	Street Trees, Sidewalks
Oreland	Pennsylvania Avenue	Gateway, Street Trees, Plaza
Wyndmoor	Willow Grove Avenue	Gateways, Street Trees, Plaza



**Investments in greening and in vacant land management can increase property values by as much as 30%.**

*The Determinants of Neighborhood Transformation in Philadelphia, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania's Real Estate Department, November 2004.*

Township's open space needs. This can be accomplished by implementing various park upgrades and enhancements to improve recreation facilities and address recreation deficiencies (see Figure 38). These improvements would help to make existing recreational areas safe, accessible, and more useable.

**PROPERTIES TO CONSIDER FOR ACQUISITION**

In order to maximize permanent preservation of remaining open space, properties containing abandoned, unused, or derelict buildings can be acquired and demolished under the Green Fields/ Green Towns program to create open space, such as the following:

- PECO Building at Roesch Avenue in Oreland: This derelict building is located along a possible trail link and is adjacent to other green space.
- Tank Car Corporation at Walnut Avenue in Oreland: This building is abandoned, unused and derelict, and the property could serve as a link to Sandy Run Park.
- AT&T Tower Building on Southampton Avenue in Wyndmoor: Removal of this abandoned structure could expand and create an additional entrance to the adjacent Veterans Park.

**TREES**

Trees and other forms of landscaping are an important part of green infrastructure, and contribute to the quality of life in every community. Trees can be used for aesthetic purposes to add beauty and natural character to a community, soften harsh scenery, provide privacy and even raise property values. Environmental benefits include improving air quality, enhancing water quality, reducing noise, enhancing biological diversity and stabilizing local climate.

**Shade Tree Commission**

The Springfield Township Shade Tree Commission promotes the beautification of public spaces and encourages good planting and landscaping in private spaces. The commission is responsible for coordinating an annual tree clean up day along Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown and Erdenheim to celebrate Arbor

Figure 38

*Proposed Park and Recreation Improvements*

Map Key	Park	Acreage	Use	Improvement Needed	Underutilized
A	Bysher Fields	10.5	Active	Re-orient fields for senior league baseball and multi-purpose play	Yes
B	Cisco Park	13.0	Active/ Passive	Pave walking path; Dredge pond; Construct restrooms	No
C	Flourtown Country Club	51.0	Active	Create Gateway Entrances; Install landscape islands; Replace swimming pools	Yes
D	Laurel Beech Park	6.0	Active	Construct walking path; Construct restrooms	No
E	Mermaid Park	8.0	Passive	Construct walking path	Yes
F	Oreland Park	0.8	Active	Create Village Green; Replace playground equipment; Rehabilitate basketball courts	No
G	Sandy Run Park	14.2	Passive	Implement Master Plan to permit public access	Yes
H	Veterans Park	6.0	Active	Implement Master Plan to create additional multi-purpose fields and walking path	Yes
I	Wyndhill Park	4.5	Active	Re-grade playing fields; Construct parking lot	Yes

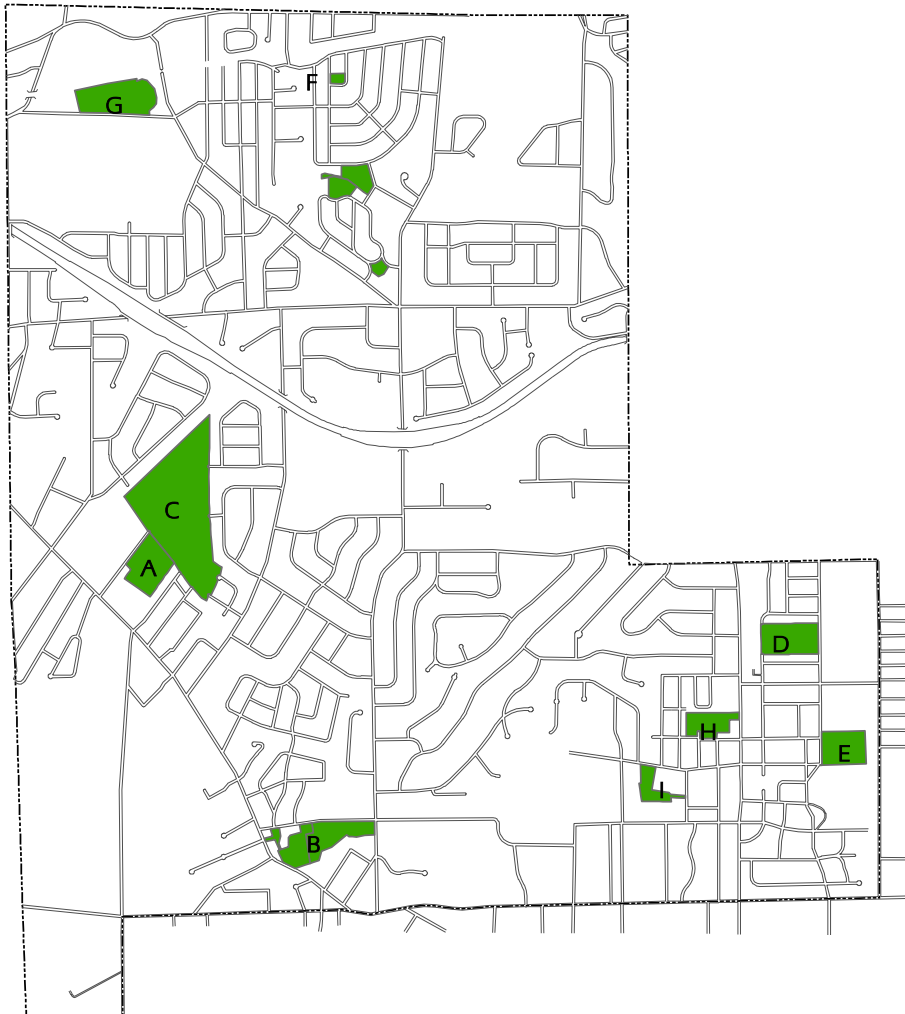
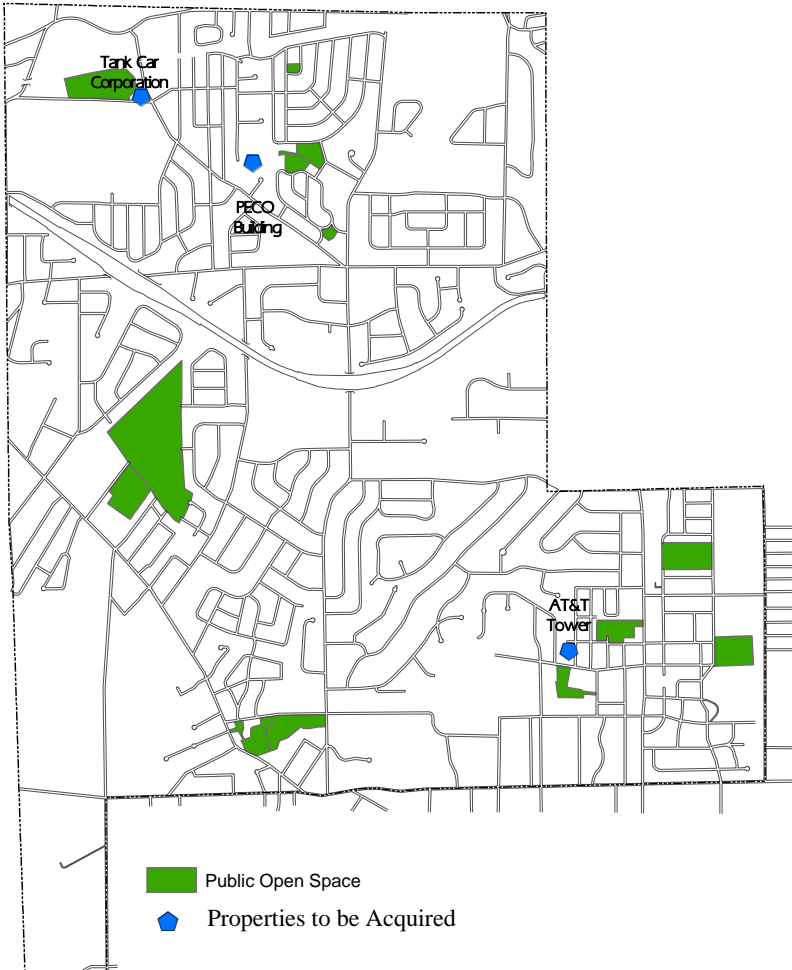


Figure 39  
*Properties to consider for Acquisition*



Day. Trees are pruned and fertilized before a fresh layer of mulch is added. The commission recently designated the White Oak (*Quercus alba*) as the official tree of Springfield Township.

**Public Tree Inventory**

A tree inventory has not been completed at this time. Open Space funds could be utilized to assist the Shade Tree Commission in completing such an inventory.

**Public Areas Lacking in Trees**

The following areas are generally lacking in adequate tree cover:

- A - Flourtown and Erdenheim Commercial Districts along Bethlehem Pike.
- B, D - Oreland Shopping and Industrial Districts along Bruce Road, Allison Road, Montgomery Avenue, and Roesch Avenue.
- C, E - Wyndmoor Shopping and Industrial Districts along Willow Grove Avenue, Queen Street, Mermaid Lane, and Ivy Hill Road.
- F - Historic Wyndmoor from Flourtown Avenue to Stenton Avenue and Evergreen Avenue to Mermaid Lane.
- G - Pennsylvania Avenue from Lynn Avenue to the Upper Dublin Township border.

**Tree Planting Priorities**

Future street tree plantings are identified in Figure 40. Priority has been given to those projects that are likely to generate the greatest public impact, both visually and economically. High priority areas are located along primary commercial districts, usually retail in nature. Medium priority has been assigned to secondary commercial districts characterized by more industrial uses. Lower priority is assigned to residential streets because they are less traveled. See Figure 41 for locations.



*The Oreland Shopping Center would benefit from adequate tree cover.*

**ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT**

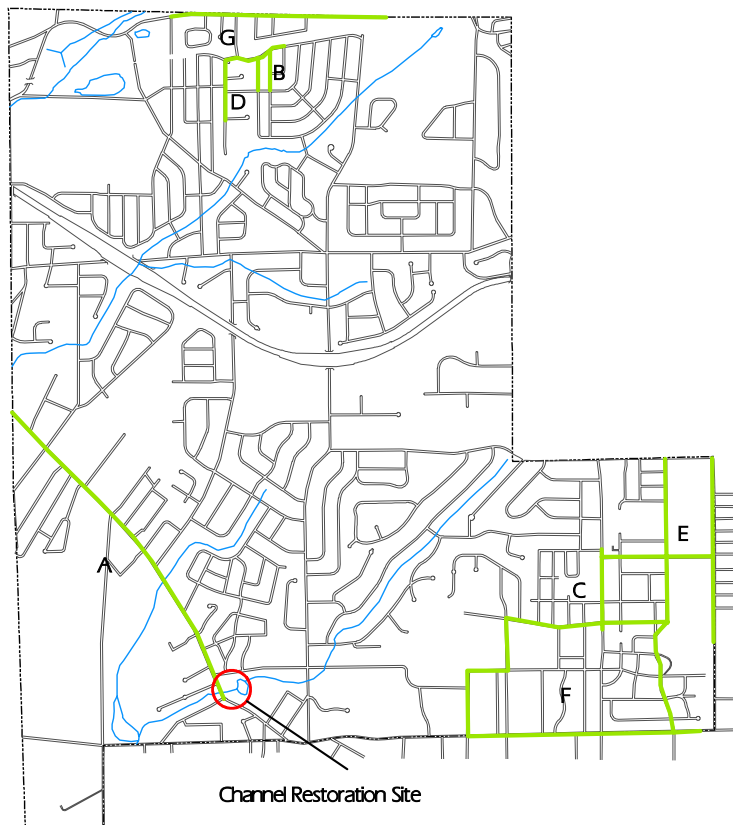
**Rehabilitation Methods**

The channelized portion of the Paper Mill Run between Cisco Pond and Bethlehem Pike is in need of restoration. The use of bio-

Figure 40  
*Tree Planting Priorities*

Map Key	Location	Goal	Priority
A	Bethlehem Pike	Revitalize/Enhance	High
B	Bruce/Allison Roads	Revitalize/Enhance	High
C	Willow Grove Avenue	Revitalize/Enhance	High
D	Montgomery/Roesch Avenues	Revitalize/Enhance	Medium
E	Queen Street, Mermaid Lane, Ivy Hill Road	Revitalize/Enhance	Medium
F	Historic Wyndmoor	Enhance	Low
G	Pennsylvania Avenue	Revitalize/Enhance	Medium

Figure 41  
*Tree Planting Priorities and Environmental Enhancement Projects*



engineered stabilization may be appropriate at this location (see Figure 41)

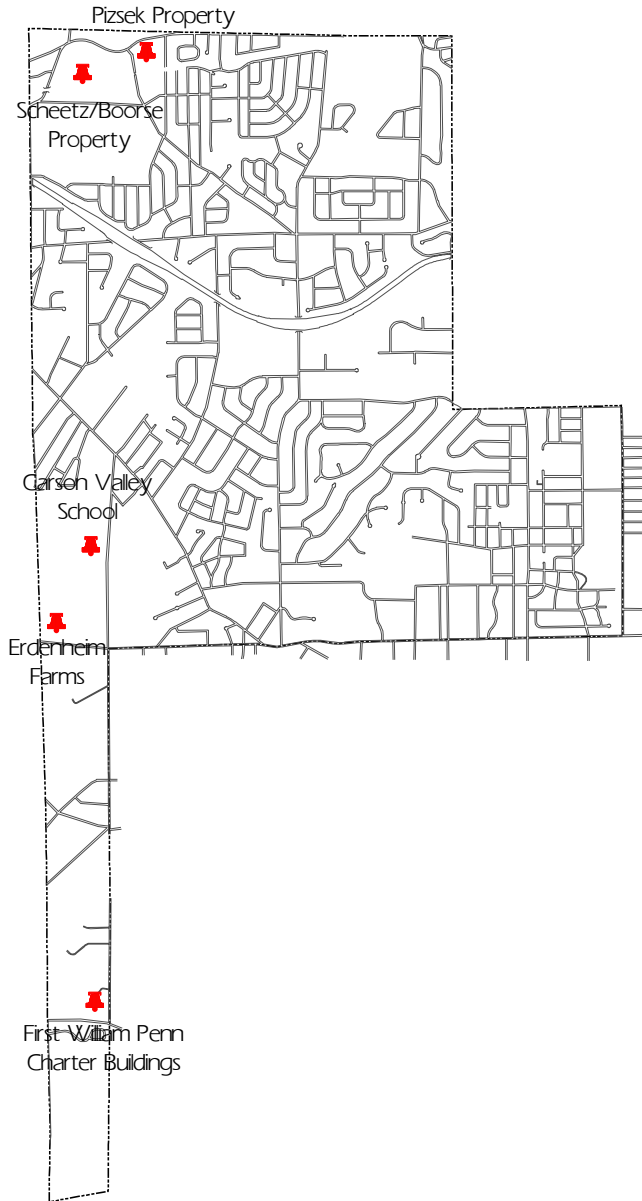
**HERITAGE RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

The preservation of our local heritage is important in maintaining the quality of life in Springfield Township. Local heritage basically consists of the historic buildings, landmarks, and landscapes that provide a link to a community's past and thereby make a valuable contribution to its current educational, cultural, and social environment. While it

can be difficult to define exactly what makes something historic, historic areas can generally be thought of as buildings and sites that are worth saving.

Under the Green Fields/Green Towns Program Springfield has the option for acquisition and limited stabilization of heritage resources. A heritage resource property primarily includes the land that provides an appropriate setting for a historic building. Throughout the open space planning process, we have identified several heritage resources

Figure 42  
Heritage Resource Conservation



*Scheetz/Boorse House*



*Scheetz/Boorse Paper Mill and Dwelling*



*Carson Valley School*

that are worth saving (see Figure 42). They are as follows:

**A. Scheetz/Boorse Property, 10 Camp Hill Road**

The Scheetz property, now more commonly known as the Boorse property, became eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. It is an 18th century milling property deemed "significant in the local industrial history of the area and representative of the local vernacular building styles of the area and period." For the majority of the 20th century, the property was used as a horse farm.

The property contained at one time a house, a paper mill/dwelling, a springhouse, a barn, sheds, a stable, and a former detached kitchen/slave quarters as well as an associated mill race. The house is a good example of a stone and stucco Georgian residence, and belonged to a prominent landowner. Along with the house, the mill/dwelling is also of interest to the township.

These structures are located adjacent to the Sandy Run Greenway, and could be utilized in conjunction with a new trail in this area. While it might not be feasible to refurbish these structures to living condition, it may be possible to retain portions of the structures for public use.

The Boorse property is currently under consideration for redevelopment, and the township would need to either seek an easement or attempt a fee-simple purchase of the land surrounding the structures or the entire property.

**B. Carson Valley School, 1419 Bethlehem Pike**

This tudor-style village on 104 acres was built in 1913 and opened in 1917 as the Carson College for Orphaned Girls. It was conceived by Robert N. Carson, who willed a portion of his land to develop “a rural children’s village for poor, white orphan girls,” and Albert W. Kelsey, who won the competition to design the facility. While much has changed since its opening, Carson Valley School has remained dedicated to serving its original purpose— to serve children in need.



*Edward J. Piszek*

While there are no immediate plans for Carson Valley School to cease operations, if the property were ever to be sold, Springfield would be interested in protecting both the open space and the structures.

**C. Erdenheim Farms, Stenton Avenue**

Located on Stenton Avenue in both Springfield and Whitemarsh Townships, this bucolic farm owned by Mr. Fitz Eugene Dixon is an asset to both communities. This working farm provides rural vistas and remains a reminder of the area’s farming past. Portions of this property are already protected, and various groups are working to protect any remaining acreage. Springfield is interested in supporting this effort.

**D. First William Penn Charter Buildings, Northwestern Ave & Ridge Pike**

Currently a residence, this 1,629 square foot colonial residence is situated on approximately one-half acres of land. The residence and several outbuildings are presumed to have been built prior to the 1800’s.

**E. Piszek Property, Pennsylvania Avenue**

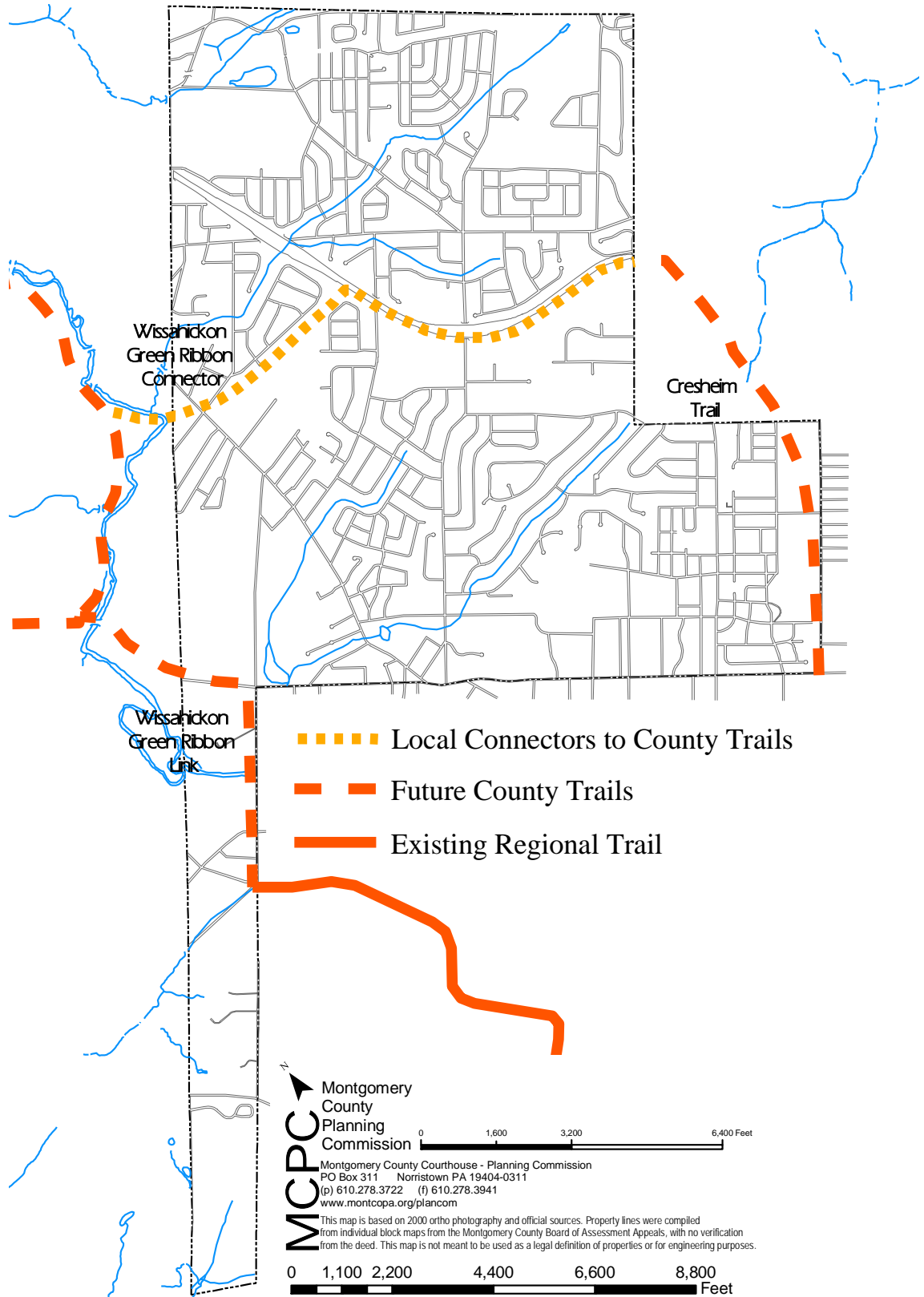
Edward J. Piszek was a Polish-American industrialist and philanthropist with several claims to fame. He was a co-founder of Mrs. Paul’s frozen foods and a generous supporter of worthwhile Polish causes, including the establishment of a Polish Little League baseball. His residence was the Emlen House, a historic mansion that served as George Washington’s Headquarters during the revolutionary war. Of the parcels that make up the estate, three are located entirely in Springfield Township and include almost 31 acres of undeveloped property. The two parcels containing the Emlen House, which was built by George Emlen, a Philadelphia Quaker, as his summer house around 1745, are located in both Springfield and Upper Dublin Townships. With the passing of Mr. Piszek in 2004, the future of the Piszek Estate is uncertain. This report strongly supports preserving the open space, viewshed, and/or historic nature of this property.

**COUNTY TRAIL CONNECTIONS**

The development of an interconnected trail and pathway system in Montgomery County will en-



Figure 43  
County Trail Connections



hance pedestrian and cyclist mobility and provide increased recreation opportunities. Many trails and pathways are proposed in the County's vision plan, and it is important to connect to, complete or expand this system at every opportunity. Springfield Township proposes the following trails (see Figure 44):

**A. Wissahickon Trail Link**

This portion of the Wissahickon Trail lies within the Springfield Panhandle adjacent to the Whitemarsh Valley Country Club and the Morris Arboretum. This is a vital link in the Countywide Trail System establishing a connection between portions of the Wissahickon Valley in Montgomery County to the Fairmount Park system in Philadelphia. This trail would consist of pedestrian and bicycle paths along the south side of the creek. Scheduled to open in 2005, design for this trail is currently under way.

**B. Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail Connector**

The Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail snakes along the western bank of the Wissahickon River in Whitemarsh Township. A portion of the trail located in Fort Washington State Park comes within yards of Springfield, and the Township would like to link to this trail via an existing abandoned railroad trestle located north of West Mill Road.

**C. Cresheim Trail**

This trail is proposed to connect Philadelphia's Fairmount Park with the Laverock Neighborhood in Cheltenham Township via Springfield. It would utilize the PECO corridor east of and parallel to Willow Grove Ave. Springfield is interested in expanding this trail further to connect to the Wissahickon Green Ribbon Trail in Whitemarsh Township as the Wissahickon Blue Ribbon Trail Connector listed above, which is routed along the 309 corridor and an abandoned rail right-of-way.

**FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION**

The restoration of developed floodplains to their natural state is an effective way to reduce the cycle of flood induced property damage that impacts several areas within the County.

Several locations in the township experience severe flooding during heavy storms. Three of these

are located within the 100-year floodplain. They are the Hemlock Road area along Sunnybrook Creek; the Longfield Road area within the St. Joseph's Run floodplain; and the Montgomery Avenue area along the Paper Mill Run near Auchy Road. Homes are sited within the first two areas, which would make it excessively difficult to restore the floodplains there.

However, the third area is free of homes, and is the current site of the Springfield Township School District bus garage (see Figure 44). The bus garage and parking areas flood on a routine basis. Flood losses have reached the hundreds of thousands of dollars and require disruption of schools. Demolition of the bus garage will restore the floodplain and create additional park space at the adjacent Cisco Park. Demolition of this facility is contingent on finding an alternate location for the bus garage.

While this newly-created open space would primarily be used by residents of Springfield Township, it would be available to all residents of Montgomery County.

In addition to Floodplain Restoration, Springfield has been carrying out a number of activities to reduce flooding and manage stormwater. Following a severe flood in 1996, the Township conducted a township-wide stormwater management study. The study took into account the density and level of development of the community, and the fact that most of the community was built prior to the requirement of stormwater management practices. The study recommended the installation of stormwater detention basins wherever possible. A series of detention basins have been built by the township, including those within the Sandy Run at the Flourtown Shopping Center, on the former PECO property along Bethlehem Pike, and at the Penn Weldy Apartment complex. Springfield has also made modifications to existing basins to increase storage capacity. In addition, the basins at Shepherd's Pond, Susan Circle, the PADOT 309 project, and other private developments have been oversized at the behest of the township.

In addition to the floodplain restrictions in the zoning code, Springfield has instituted an ordinance requiring any building project that increases impervious coverage by 200 square feet or more to install some form of underground detention system. Annually, the township clears the streams of debris

Figure 44  
Floodplain Restoration



and makes sure that the waterways are clear of obstructions. They also actively enforce regulations prohibiting dumping of leaves and other yard waste in streams.

The township has not encouraged buyouts as a mitigation alternative. Instead, they have provided residents with information regarding flood-proof doors and windows, and other structural alternatives.

**FARMLAND PROTECTION**

The diversity of Montgomery County’s economy has made it a desirable place in which to live and work. The result is growth in both population and land development. While it is a reflection of economic strength, this development has a heavy impact on the land and the natural features found on it. Farmland is often seen as very desirable for development. Because of this, the County has seen a great deal of its farmland sold for development or taken out of production. This represents the loss of a productive resource, which cannot be replaced.

However, the farming economy in Montgomery County has historically been, and still is, strong and visible. There is much active farmland, as well as agricultural businesses which process farm prod-

ucts, or sell products & services to farmers. The dynamic population of the Delaware Valley provides opportunities for farming to thrive. Conventional farms continue to produce commodities like feed corn, wheat, and beef, while newer types of farming have a significant place in the county as well. A Montgomery County resident can find projects like organic vegetables, nursery stock, buffalo meat, apples, and more right within the County’s borders. The County’s Farmland Preservation Program and the Green Fields/Green Towns Program are opportunities to preserve farmland by placing it in agricultural security areas and purchasing conservation easements from interested landowners. The program focuses on the following objectives:

- Encourage a long-term commitment to agriculture.
- Protect normal farming operations.
- Conserve viable agricultural lands.
- Purchase agricultural conservation easements.

The protection of viable agricultural lands by acquiring easements strengthens farming operations in the county while providing benefits such as lowering property taxes for everyone, providing jobs, promoting local tourism, assisting the national trade balance through exports, providing fresh locally-produced food, retaining tranquil scenery, contributing to the nation’s food supply, protecting ground water recharge areas, and improving wildlife habitats.

**SPRINGFIELD’S FARMLAND**

Although the majority of Springfield Township is developed, it actually contains nearly 170 acres of active farmland! This includes the 70.56 acre Bloomfield Farm at Morris Arboretum, about 30 acres of farmland at Carson Valley School, the Dixon Horse Farm (54.28 acres) and the Boorse Horse Farm (14.41 acres). These farm areas are a great asset to the Township and should be protected as part of the Township’s overall goal of protecting open space.

**AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREA (ASA)**

There is currently interest in establishing a local ASA in Plymouth, Whitemarsh, and Springfield Townships. In order to enter the program, owners of at

least 500 acres of active farmland must apply and be accepted. This farmland does not have to be contiguous. Once a district is established, property owners may start receiving the many benefits listed above.

If Springfield Township and the individual land owners are interested in this program, more detailed information on each farm must be collected, including:

Farm Evaluation – Define and evaluate potential farmland to be preserved based upon the following criteria:

- Size of the farm
- Historic qualities
- Scenic qualities
- Farm product sales
- Vulnerability
- Adjacency/proximity to other farms
- Adjacency/proximity to other preserved lands
- Unique value
- Viability of farming operation (current & future)
- Other considerations
- Act 319 preferential status
- EQIP program
- State and County program eligibility
- Conservation Plan
- Nutrient Management Plan
- Public access

# CHAPTER 11

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

Implementation is perhaps the most important part of any plan. Having identified and examined the open space issues important to the Township, a timeframe for implementation is established here to guide Springfield toward achieving its goals. In essence, this chapter is Springfield's "action plan." In the near term, implementation principally involves securing funds from Springfield's funding allocation under the County Open Space Program for high priority projects. This would occur over the next three to five years (2005-2009). It also means taking other, non-acquisition actions for open space preservation and recreation facility planning and development. Long term priorities will build upon these earlier efforts, and will be implemented within the next five to ten years (2009-2014).

### **FUNDING SOURCES**

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

### **GREEN FIELD/GREEN TOWN OPEN SPACE GRANTS**

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

Springfield is eligible to receive a total of \$1,397,301 for open space planning and implementation. This grant requires matching funds equal to twenty percent of project costs from the township. The County grants come with several conditions. The most important condition is that any land purchased with grant money must be permanently preserved as open space or for active recreation. Another condition is that Springfield must complete and adopt the Open Space Plan. This plan must be approved by the County's Open Space Board before grant money can be disbursed.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION  
PROGRAM (MCRP)**

Initiated in 2000, this program is intended to create a strategic, economic development program that will strengthen and stabilize the county's older communities for the long term. It helps these communities become more vibrant, livable, and attractive places. Funding from this competitive program is used for projects consistent with the Township's Community Revitalization Plan.

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES (DCNR)**

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

A priority goal of these programs is to develop and sustain partnerships with communities, nonprofits, and other organizations for recreation and conservation projects and purposes. With this in mind, the Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) was established. It is a combination of several funding sources and grant programs, including the Commonwealth's Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (KEY 93, described below), the Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Act (Growing Greener,

also described below), Act 68 Snowmobile and ATV Trails Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Recreational Trails component of the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-First Century (TEA-21).

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
(DEP)**

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

**KEYSTONE RECREATION, PARK  
AND CONSERVATION FUND**

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

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT  
OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT (DCED)**

The mission DCED is "To foster opportunities for businesses and communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy, thereby enabling Pennsylvanians to achieve a superior quality of life." There-

fore there are several assistance and grant programs available to Pennsylvania municipalities. Often, local economic and community revitalization efforts are supported by the implementation of green infrastructure and open space plans. Below is a list of programs offered by DCED through which revitalization funds may flow to implement the recommendations described in this open space plan.

- **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)** - Provides grant assistance and technical assistance to aid communities in their community and economic development efforts.
- **Community Revitalization Program (CR)** - Provides grant funds to support local initiatives that promote the stability of communities.
- **Main Street Program** - This program provides assistance for revitalization planning and projects.
- **Elm Street Program** - Grant funds for planning, technical assistance and physical improvements to residential and mixed use areas in proximity to central business districts.
- **Industrial Sites Reuse Program** - Grant and low-interest loan financing to perform environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites.

**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION (PHMC)**

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

- **Certified Local Government Grant Program**- Provides funding for cultural resource surveys, national register nominations, technical and planning assistance, educational and interpretive programs, staffing and training, and pooling CLG grants and third party administration
- **Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program** - Funding for preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation

- **Pennsylvania History and Museum Grant Program** - Funding under this program is designated to support a wide variety of museum, history, archives and historic preservation projects, as well as nonprofit organizations and local governments. There are 10 types of grants.

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (PENNDOT)**

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

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

**HOME TOWN STREETS**

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

**DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (DVRPC)**

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

- Supporting local planning projects that will lead to more residential, employment or retail opportunities;
- Improving the overall character and quality of life within these communities to retain and attract business and residents, which will help to reduce the pressure for further sprawl and expansion into the growing suburbs;
- Enhancing and utilizing the existing transportation infrastructure capacity in these areas to reduce the demands on the region's transportation network; and
- Reducing congestion and improving the transportation system's efficiency.
- Building partnerships to achieve community-set goals
- Assessing resources
- Developing concept plans
- Engaging public participation
- Identifying potential sources of funding
- Creating public outreach
- Organizational development
- Providing conservation and recreation information

**CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)**

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

**TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (TE)**

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

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

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

**PECO ENERGY GREEN REGION OPEN SPACE GRANT PROGRAM**

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

**DONATIONS**

Springfield should encourage donations from individuals and groups to help pay for parkland acquisition, development, and tree planting. The donations may be cash, materials, or labor. The Township could organize special days during which local citizens and groups could gather to participate in implementing open space projects.

**IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

Figure 45 lists each recommendation along with goals and objectives achieved, method of implementation, responsible party, potential funding source, and priority.



## RESPONSIBILITY

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

- Board of Commissioners (BC)
- Engineer (E)
- Flourtown Erdenheim Enhancement Association (FEEA)
- Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC)
- Open Space Committee (OSC)
- Park and Recreation Board (PRB)
- Solicitor (S)
- Springfield Historical Society (SHS)
- Springfield Planning Commission (SPC)
- Shade Tree Commission (STC)
- Springfield Township (TWP)

## PRIORITY CATEGORIES

Highest Priority projects should be implemented within the next three years (2005-2007). High Priority projects, programs and policies should begin in three to five years (2007-2009), and Long Term Priority projects, programs and policies should be implemented within five to ten years (2009-2014).

## ACQUISITION METHODS

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

### FEE SIMPLE ACQUISITION

This option is the most direct way to acquire open

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

### INSTALLMENT BUYING

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

### LONG TERM LEASE WITH OPTION TO BUY

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

### PURCHASE AND LEASE-BACK

Purchase and lease-back results in buying land and leasing it back to the owner in accordance with agreed-upon policies for the use and protection of the land. Its primary advantage is that it permits purchase of property before prices rise or before the property is lost to development. It also permits flexibility because once the land is purchased it can be used for another public purpose, sold, or exchanged for another parcel.

### PURCHASE AND RESALE

This method is similar to purchase and lease-back, except that the land is purchased with the sole

Figure 45  
Implementation Matrix.

Recommendations	Goal/ Objective Achieved	Implementation Method	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source
<b>Highest Priorities: Begin 2005-2007</b>				
Hold an "Open Space Kickoff" event	7/D	Meeting	OSC	N/A
Acquire easements, design, and install short-term priority trails	6/A,B, 7/B	Acquisition, Design, Construction	MCPC, TWP	MCOS, RTCA
Implement proposed improvements at Cisco Park, Oreland Park, Sandy Run Park, and Veterans Park (see Chapter 10)	7/C	Various	PRB	MCOS
Acquire the Springfield Township School District Bus Garage to restore floodplain	4/A	Land Exchange, Fee Simple Purchase	TWP	MCOS, TWP
Coordinate groups involved in Open Space planning and implementation	6/C	Administration, Policy	OSC	N/A
Provide educational materials to the public that identify various methods of land preservation	2/E	Administration, Education	OSC, TWP	TWP
Provide information concerning landscape design and appropriate plant species to communities	5/D	Administration, Education	OSC, TWP	TWP
Provide links on the Township website to organizations that are involved with land preservation and open space issues	2/E	Administration, Education	TWP	N/A
Promote programs offered by Morris Arboretum to encourage private landscaping efforts	5/D	Administration, Education, Policy	OSC, TWP, SPC	N/A
Stress the tax benefits of permanently preserving private land	2/E	Administration, Education, Policy	OSC, TWP, SPC	N/A
Secure a combination of private and public funding sources	1/A	Administration	OSC, TWP	Various
Acquire/protect highest priority unprotected resources including Pizek, Boorse, and panhandle properties (see Chapter 6)	8/C, 2/D, 4/B	Acquisition, Easements	TWP	DCNR
Acquire or facilitate preservation of aspects of the Scheetz/Boorse property	8/C	Acquisition, Easements, Historic Documentation	TWP, SPC, SHS	PHMC, PF
Assist Shade Tree Commission in locating existing and creating new plans	5/B	Planning	OSC, TWP, STC	N/A
Plant Street Trees (See Chapter 10 for phasing)	2/F	Purchase & Plant Trees	STC	MCOS
Encourage strategies that prevent tree diseases	8/B	Education, Policy	STC	N/A
Identify trees in decline and proactively replace them	5/C	Survey	STC	N/A
Encourage prompt removal of diseased trees and facilitate their replacement	8/B	Policy	STC	N/A
Continually seek funding for street tree planting	8/B	Administration	TWP, STC	N/A
Add teeth to existing ordinances to limit disturbance of natural features	4/C	Policy	SPC	N/A
Continue to support the Land Use Plan in Springfield's Comprehensive Plan	2/D	Policy	SPC	N/A
Retain open space protection via the AAA overlay zoning where it currently exists	2/B	Policy	SPC	N/A
Actively support positive relationship with golf courses	2/B	Policy	SPC, TWP	N/A
Ensure that a member of the Planning Commission possesses landscaping/horticultural expertise	5/A	Policy	SPC, BC	N/A

Figure 45  
Implementation Matrix Continued...

Recommendations	Goal/ Objective Achieved	Implementation Method	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source
Urge the Planning Commission to consider height, buffers, and impervious coverage when reviewing developments in the panhandle	2/D	Policy	SPC	N/A
Ensure that the Planning Commission encourages creative site design that preserves contiguous open space	2/C, 4/B	Policy	SPC	N/A
Stress the significant environmental benefits of maintaining contiguous open space	2/C	Education, Policy	SPC	N/A
Require the filing of a natural features conservation plan in the SLDO	4/C	Policy	TWP, SPC	N/A
Obtain new parkland through SLDO process and Park & Rec impact fees	7/A	Acquisition	SPC, PRB	N/A
Support and coordinate with developing Park and Recreation planning efforts	7/E	Administration, Policy	SPC, PRB, OSC	N/A
Seek easements to protect open space on large institutional properties	2/A	Easement	TWP	MCOS, DCNR
Protect Carson Valley School in case of ownership change	8/C	Easement, Acquisition	TWP	N/A
Develop relationship with private educational institutions	2/A	Policy	TWP, SP, OSC	N/A
Secure right of first refusal for abandoned school sites.	2/A	Right of First Refusal, Policy	TWP	N/A
Encourage community park and recreation surveys	7/D	Policy, Survey	TWP, PRB	N/A
Continue efforts to protect Erdenheim Farms	8/C	Policy, Easements, Acquisition	TWP, various groups	DCNR
Maintain a balance between development and open space preservation in the pan handle	2/D	Policy	SPC, OSC	N/A
Preserve views of natural features and open space areas through facade easements where possible	8/A	Easements	SPC, TWP	N/A
Maintain historic elements in open space areas of new developments	8/C	Policy	SPC, SHS	N/A
Research and protect First William Penn Charter buildings	8/C	Easements, Acquisition	SPC, SHS	N/A
Protect Pizsek properties and encourage a trail and/or greenway along Sandy Run	8/C	Easements, Acquisition	SPC	MCOS
Protect Sandy Run Greenway via easements or buffer requirements	9/A	Easements, Policy	SPC	MCOS
Research ways to improve water flow into ponds to minimize dredging	4/A	Study	E, TWP	N/A
Support FEEA's Bethlehem Pike Vision Plan	5/B	Policy	ALL	N/A
Support the installation of gateways in Flourtown (Bethlehem Pike, E. Mill Rd) and Erdenheim (Bethlehem Pike)	5/E	Policy, Construction	TWP, FEEA	N/A
<b>High Priorities: Begin 2007-2009</b>				
Implement proposed improvements at Bysher Fields, Flourtown Country Club, Laurel Beech Park, Mermaid Park, and Wyndhill Park	7/C	Various	TWP, PRB	MCOS

Figure 45  
Implementation Matrix Continued...

Recommendations	Goal/ Objective Achieved	Implementation Method	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Source
Acquire Peco Building	3/A	Fee Simple Purchase, Easement	TWP	MCOS
Create Plazas (See chapter 10 for phasing)	2/F	Design, Construction	FEEA	N/A
Design and install primary gateways in Erdenheim (Paper Mill Rd), Oreland (Bruce Rd & Pennsylvania Ave), and Wyndmoor (Will Grove Ave)	5/E	Design, Construction	FEEA	N/A
Design and install secondary gateways along Bethlehem Pike (5)	5/E	Design, Construction	FEEA	N/A
Establish stream buffer criteria in the SLDO	4/A	Policy	SPC	N/A
<b>Long-Term Priorities: Begin 2009-2014</b>				
Acquire easements, design, and install long-term priority trails	6/A, 7/B	Design, Acquisition, Construction	SPC, MCPC	MCOS
Acquire/protect additional unprotected resources including the Karr Tract, undeveloped parcels containing sensitive natural features, and institutional properties (see Chapter 6)	2/A, 4/B	Acquisition, Easements	SPC, TWP	DCNR
Seek easements to protect open space on golf courses	2/B	Easement	SPC, TWP	DCNR
Acquire portions of the Township's private golf courses, if available	2/B	Acquisition, Easement	TWP	DCNR
Record history of Tank Car Corporation and other culturally significant properties	8/C	Administration, Study	TWP, SHS	PHMC, PF
Acquire Tank Car Corporation Building	3/A	Fee Simple Purchase, Easement	TWP	MCOS
Acquire AT&T Tower Building	3/A	Fee Simple Purchase, Easement	TWP	MCOS
Investigate restoration of Paper Mill Run sluiceway	4/A	Study, Construction	TWP, E	MCOS
Execute a Public Tree Inventory	5/C	Study	STC	N/A

**Key: Funding Sources**

DCNR	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
MCOS	Montgomery County Open Space Funds: Green Fields/Green Towns Grant
MCRP	Montgomery County Community Revitalization Program
PF	Private funds
PHMC	PA Historical & Museum Commission
TWP	Township Funds

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

### **LEASING**

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

### **EASEMENTS**

Easements are a successful way to save public funds, yet receive open space benefits. An easement is a limited right over land owned by another person. Legally, a person has the right to use his property subject to zoning laws, subdivision regulation, etc; however, he may sell his right to use the land in specific ways. The costs of easements vary with the type acquired. Easements can be affirmative or negative. Affirmative easements grant limited rights to the public to use the land for public purposes, such as hiking, fishing, or riding. Such easements can be used selectively to obtain public use of private lands for trails and access to water-based recreational facilities. In contrast, negative easements do not allow public access, but restrict the owner in his use of the property. For example, a scenic easement requires the owner to preserve the “openness” or natural beauty of a site; this type of easement can be effective in maintaining municipality’s visually attractive roads.

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

### **EMINENT DOMAIN**

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

### **LAND TRUSTS AND CONSERVANCIES**

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

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

### **LAND EXCHANGES**

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

## **VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS**

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

## **PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS**

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

## **RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL AND PURCHASE OPTION**

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

## **LIFE OR TERM ESTATES**

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

## **DONATIONS AND BARGAIN SALES**

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

## **CONCLUSION**

Springfield Township looks forward to adopting the 2005 Open Space Plan and implementing its recommendations. The Township believes that parks and open space contribute greatly to the quality of life of its residents, and that a "Green Town" is what Springfield strives to be.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program

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

Springfield Township

<http://www.springfield-montco.org/>

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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







