



Chapter 4

Land Use

Existing Land Use

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that a comprehensive plan include a “plan for land use which may include provisions for the amount, intensity, character, and timing of land use proposed for residence, industry, business, agricultural, major traffic and transit facilities utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation, preservation of prime agricultural lands, flood plains and other areas of special hazards and similar facilities or uses” (MPC Section 301.a.). The land use plan in this chapter is designed to meet this requirement. Figure 4.2 displays the township existing land use categories.

Analysis

The existing land use analysis focuses on the current land uses and land use patterns within the municipality. The assigned land use categories are derived from the county

board of assessment parcel data. Figure 4.1 details the acreage in each category and the percent change between the last comprehensive plan and the current update. It is important to note that during the period between the 1998 plan and this update parcel digitization occurred and this contributes to the discrepancy between total acres reported. The comparative data is useful in understanding changes in land use patterns and may help to identify future housing, recreation and open space needs as well as point to areas of opportunities for redevelopment of vacant or underutilized areas.



Residential

One of the earliest suburban communities to emerge surrounding Philadelphia, Springfield’s development pattern and character as a residential community is well



established. Nearly 60% of Springfield's land use is used for residential purposes. Fifty-two percent of residential dwellings are single-family detached units that are located throughout the township. The twin homes, duplexes and townhouses make up 3.3% of the total housing units and are generally located closer to the commercial districts in Oreland, Wyndmoor and Erdenheim/Flourtown with some larger-lot townhouses located in the Springfield's Panhandle. County residences (parcels with 5 acres or more) continue to occupy nearly 83 acres or 2.2% of the township. Multifamily apartments occupy 49 acres, less than 2% of the township's total acres and are generally located near the commercial districts. The largest apartment complex, the Lincoln Woods Apartments, occupies 23 acres and on Germantown Pike in the upper panhandle. In recent years, new townhouse developments were approved on the Piszek and Boorse Tracts although they have not been constructed as of the date of this publication. The total number of residential acres decreased by 109 acres between 1996 and 2010 and may be attributed to the removal of preserved open space from the residential category.

Nonresidential

Nonresidential uses make up about 41% of the land area of the township and are distributed throughout the community. The largest commercial area is located along Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown. Smaller scaled neighborhood commercial uses are found in Oreland and Wyndmoor (Willow Grove Avenue). Wyndmoor and Oreland also contain the townships industrial areas, one of the smallest land use types found in the township. By contrast, the largest segments of non-residential land uses in the township are Institutional (15%) and Parks/Recreation/Open Space (16.5%), and are a prominent part of the township.

Figure 4.1

Existing Land Use Comparison: 1996 and 2010

Land Use Summary	1996		2010		% Change 1996-2010
	Acres	% Total	Acres	% Total	
Residential	2,333	60.6%	2,234	59.2%	-4.2%
Commercial/Office	186	4.8%	121	3.2%	-34.9%
Industrial	53	1.4%	64	1.7%	20.7%
Institutional	663	17.2%	566	15%	-14.6%
Utilities	48	1.3%	64	1.7%	33.3%
Combined Open Space	376	9.8%	623	16.5%	65.6%
Undeveloped	189	4.9%	104	2.8%	-44.9%
Total Acres*	3,848*	100%	3,776*	100%	2%

* Discrepancies due to parcel digitization.
Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessments.



Springfield Township

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

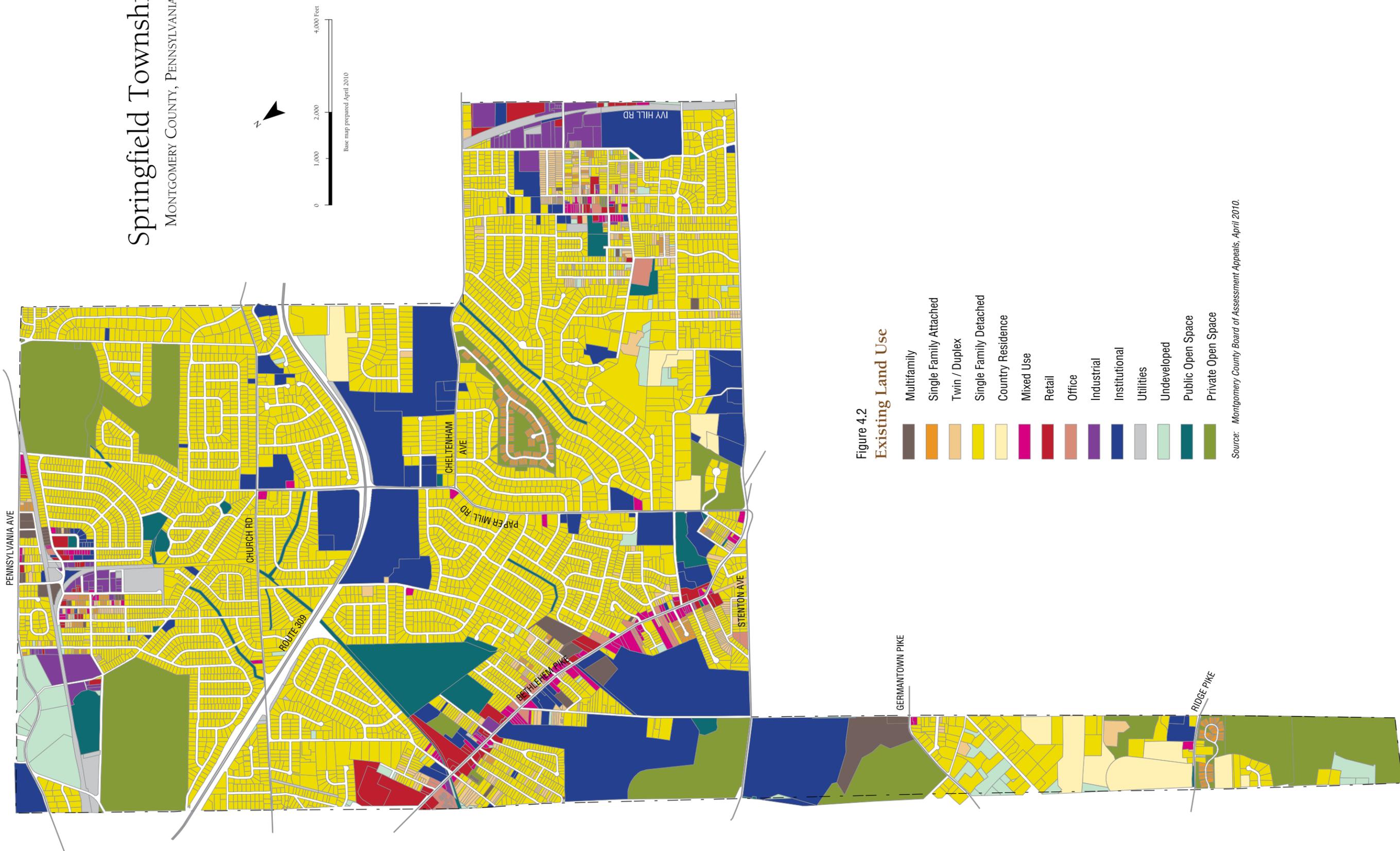


Figure 4.2
Existing Land Use

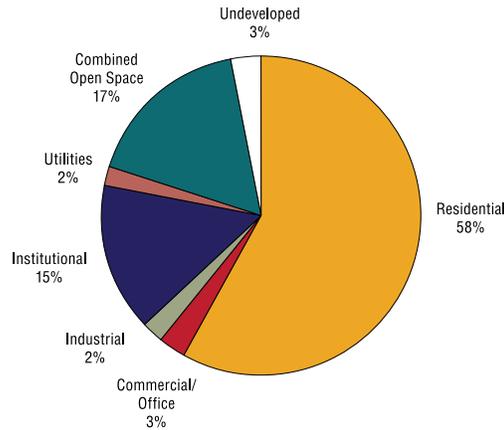
- Multifamily
- Single Family Attached
- Twin / Duplex
- Single Family Detached
- Country Residence
- Mixed Use
- Retail
- Office
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Utilities
- Undeveloped
- Public Open Space
- Private Open Space

Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, April 2010.

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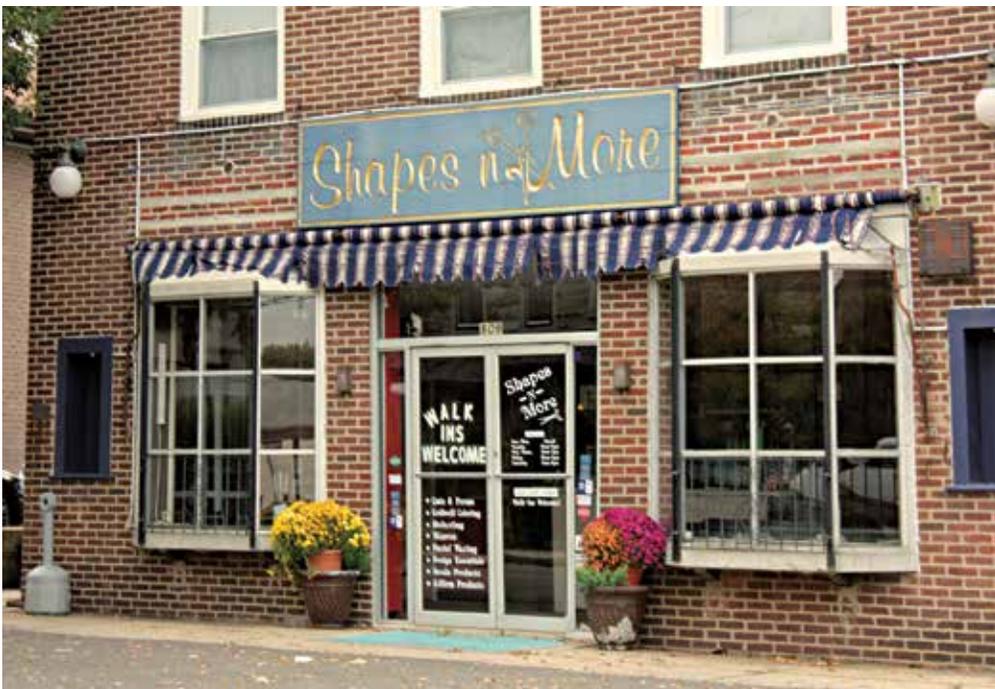
Figure 4.3
2010 Land Use Summary



Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessments.

Commercial/Office

Land devoted to the commercial/office category decreased by 65 acres or 35% between 1998 and 2010 mainly due the change of parcel categories from mixed use to industrial, institutional or residential uses and are scattered throughout the business districts. Regardless of the reduction, the dominant commercial areas of the township continue to be concentrated in Erdenheim/Flourtown, Wyndmoor and Oreland business districts. Although these areas are not what is consider a typical “Main Street” or center of town, they do in fact contain a substantial mixing of uses and have the potential for creating “village-like” centers through adaptive reuse of existing buildings, new infill development, and redevelopment of existing parcels.



Institutional

Springfield has a variety of institutional land uses that include public and private schools, churches, public offices and library facilities, and long-term care facilities. Many of these uses offer a significant amount of private open space such as the Morris Arboretum and Carson Valley School. Between 1996 and 2010 there was a 14.6% reduction of institutional lands. This in part is attributed to the former U.S. Navy quarry changing from an institutional use to township-owned open space and the former University of Pennsylvania's Wharton-Sinkler Estate changing from institutional use to a private residential use.



Bloomfield Farm at the Morris Arboretum

Open Space/Parks/Recreation

The number of municipally owned community parks facilities has remained relatively stable in Springfield Township. Lands designated as public and private open space increased between 1996 and 2010 from 376 to 623 acres respectively. This can be attributed to the change in land use on a number of parcels. The equestrian tract located on the Erdenheim Farm was previously designated undeveloped land and in 2009 became permanently protected open space. The 84-acre tract of land owned by the Girl Scouts of America located in the lower panhandle was designated undeveloped in the 1998 Plan and is now identified as protected open space. The former Tecce Tract has an approved land development plan that will change its designation from a county





Erdenheim Farm Equestrian Tract

residence to residential use with protected open space. The former U.S. Navy quarry pond and associated lands were institutional lands and are now protected open space owned by the township, slated to become a public park. The former Robertson tract and other small-scaled township open space acquisitions added to public open space. The Springfield Township 2005 Open Space Plan and 2008 Parks and Recreation plan have identified new opportunities for growing this land use category in the future.

Industrial

Industrial uses occupy 1.6 % of land in Springfield Township. The remaining sites are located in Wyndmoor along Mermaid Lane and Ivy Hill Road adjacent to the PECO power line right of way and in Oreland along Pennsylvania Avenue. Some sites previously identified as industrial have been changed to mixed use and the associated acres are calculated under the Commercial/Office category.

Utilities

Utilities make up 1.6% of township land. Most of the remaining utility land use is associated with rail corridors and power line easements.

Undeveloped Land

Undeveloped land in Springfield Township makes up only 2.7% of the land area, down from 4.9% in 1996. Previously, the equestrian tract of the Erdenheim Farm was designated undeveloped. In 2009 this land became permanently protected open space.



Future Land Use Goals

Promote balanced land use that considers environmental, open space and recreation needs with the need for sustainable growth that complements established patterns of development in the township. Foster a well-integrated community development pattern with a mix of residential, institutional and commercial uses that supports the changing needs of the community. Continue to provide for residential, institutional, and commercial uses in ways that are complementary to maintaining the historic character of the township.

Objectives

1. Update the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to reflect the current and future needs of the township.
2. Provide for compatible infill development that respects the scale of existing neighborhoods and architectural history.
3. Preserve conservation areas and strengthen the protection of natural resources.
4. Coordinate long-range planning between large institutional uses and other large land owners in the township to encourage cooperation and to minimize potential conflicts with future land use.
5. Investigate opportunities for shared planning and improvement projects with adjacent municipalities.
6. Support a sustainable community that balances the rights of property owners to reasonable use of land with the community's expressed goals.
7. Continue to provide for a variety of dwelling types that meet the needs of current and future residents of the township.



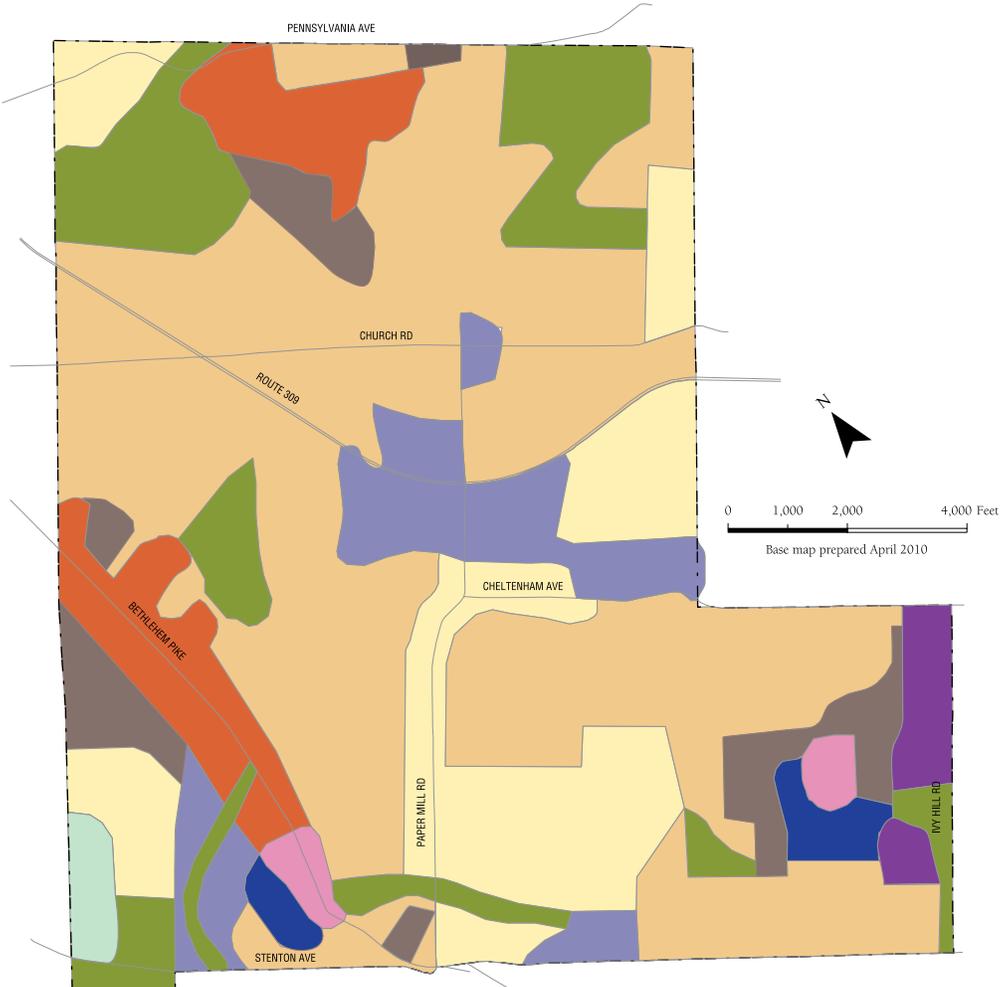


Figure 4.4
Future Land Use

-  Low-Density Residential
-  Medium-Density Residential
-  High-Density Residential
-  Community Mixed Use and Services
-  Institutional
-  Open Space/Natural Resource Protection
-  Village Residential
-  Rural Area
-  Village Center
-  Employment Center

