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## Land Use

This Section of the Buffalo-Clinton Townships Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan is perhaps the most important, in tandem with the section that follows (implementation plan). The 1968 Regional Comprehensive Plan was largely an effort to inventory the region and many of the recommendations and policies were intended to expand the range of community facilities and services. Over the past 37 years, some of this was accomplished. The combination of scenic beauty, small town quality of life, and available infrastructure has made the area more attractive to growth and development. The task of the next decades is simply to prevent that success from destroying the small town and rural quality of life that made the two townships attractive in the first place. The key to success in this will be the land use policies of each community. To help better understand how land use policies are important, this section of the plan will briefly analyze existing conditions, land use regulations, then present a concept plan for both future development and conservation.

**Existing Conditions:** The Existing Land Use Patterns of the Two Townships are illustrated on the maps entitled Existing Land Use Conditions. Comparing these to the 1968 plan, it is apparent that the forces of growth and infrastructure investment are intertwined. Perhaps the most discernable change has been in the scale and form of residential development. Most of the new residential lots created in the 1960's or 1970's were carved out of road frontage. More recently, the community has seen a real estate market which is vibrant enough to justify the enormous cost of building new roads and streets or other public infrastructure investments by private developers. This can be seen in the new public streets, such as Wonderly Drive and Buffalo Trails. The following analysis is adapted from the Buffalo Township Land Use and Transportation Plan as it applies to both Buffalo and Clinton Township.

Both existing and future land use potential are factors of the demographic potential for growth against the natural and regulatory impediments to growth. Each Township has areas that are more conducive to growth and areas less so. In general, there are factors that increase the likelihood of future development of any area. These include:

1. Presence of public water
2. Presence of public sewer
3. Permitted use zoning designation for the proposed use
4. transportation access
5. Lack of environmental limitations, such as floodplain, slope or wetlands

There are conversely factors which will decrease the likelihood of future growth and development. These include:

1. Ground sloping more than 25 percent is generally considered undevelopable in all but the most urban settings
2. Ground sloping 16-25 percent can be technically developed but never a primary choice.
3. Floodplains can be technically developed, but choices are limited and lending institutions strongly disfavor the practice
4. Wetlands are not developable without complex regulatory limitation
5. Zoning actions which require municipal action beyond permitted use and a subdivision/land development plan, are not as attractive unless the site is otherwise very favorable.
6. In some cases, land cannot be developed at all because private deed covenants or other restrictions are present
7. In the case of agriculture security areas, the municipality has covenanted with farmland owners to recognize the preeminence of agricultural use in that area

In addition to these relatively objective conditions, there are times when subjective criteria become important. The Planning Code recognizes the need to plan for protection of sites with scenic, historic or patriotic value. Sometimes residents oppose development due to real or perceived impacts upon their property, or negative impacts upon an area of natural beauty.

With an understanding of these factors, thematic land use analysis can reveal much about Buffalo and Clinton Townships. As briefly mentioned previously, there have been two phases of residential development. Initially, development was a pattern of "roadside civilization" where lots were cut from frontage and few new roads were constructed. This left narrow bands of house lots with existing road frontage and rear yards abutting farm or forest land. More recently the pattern of full tract utilization and more extensive public and private improvements has emerged. This happened in Buffalo Township earlier, with such developments as Wonderly Drive. Clinton Township has just seen its first major residential development which involved a new road network very recently. The largest land development in Clinton Township was actually on the site of a long time heavy industrial site, which has been redeveloped as a mixed light industrial business park (Victory Road Business Park).

**Land Use and Land Development Regulations:** The two principle means for a Pennsylvania community to regulate future growth and development are the subdivision and land development ordinance and a zoning ordinance. Both Clinton and Buffalo Township have adopted each of these forms of ordinance. The following is an abbreviated edition of review material which was presented to each township:

The Clinton Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance is one of the few in the region which is consistent with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code in terms of the definition and processing of land developments and appropriate remedies for violations. There is a clear link between the release of accessory uses for land development requirements when combined with the definition of "accessory uses." The land development definition mentions farm structures.

The Clinton Township Zoning Ordinance creates five zoning districts within the Township, four of which are actually depicted on the official zoning map. The R-1 Residential District consists of the frontage of most public roads with A-Agricultural designation behind it. The main difference in these two districts seems to be in allowable uses. The I-Industrial district is very broad and allows for a range of uses. The C-2 Commercial District is geographically very small. The R-3 Residential District is enabled, but not designated. However, similar uses to the R-3 are

allowed through utilization of Planned Residential Development Standards as enabled by both Article VIII-A of this ordinance and Article VII of the MPC. The most recent amendments in Clinton were to update aspects of this chapter. In addition, amendments were made to minimum lot sizes to ensure buildable lots which are free of slope, floodplain, and similar hazards. The structure of the ordinance is relatively easy to follow, and is a modern tabular format.

The present base of the Buffalo Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance was adopted in 1982, and has been amended seven times since that date. The first amendment was in 1989 to conform to procedural, enforcement and definitional changes in the 1988 comprehensive amendments to the MPC. Oddly, the ordinances pre-1988 text includes a fairly consistent definition of "Land development." The main features of this ordinance is that its detailed design standard for public or private improvements are directly in the ordinance, and that the numerous amendments are not codified into the text. The first situation forces a formal amendment on changes to specifications that could be adopted by reference and changed by resolution. The second feature of un-codified amendments makes the ordinance difficult to follow. However, the amendments do seem to be consistent with evolving standards of planning and design.

The Buffalo Township Zoning ordinance was adopted in 1983. Since initial adoption, it has been amended 70 times. Like the subdivision ordinance, these amendments have been added to the back to the original zoning book which is made available to citizens and developers. There is thus some difficulty in using the ordinance, and correctly determining standards.

While the format may be confusing, the ordinance's standards are in depth and have evolved as reality necessitates. There are 9 base zoning districts (excluding Floodplain) and one overlay district. One district, RA Rural Agricultural is not designated on the map. Some innovative features that the ordinance contains include:

1. Effective Agricultural Zoning, through limitations on the creation of new lots
2. Planned Residential Development Standards that change with district designation
3. A limited commercial district

4. Transitional standards for homes with frontage on major roads
5. Access controls on major roads
6. Grading standards

In different ways each community has implemented land use policies to protect health safety and welfare of citizens and provide for planned growth and development. To implement the Comprehensive Plan, further amendments may be made. The next section presents some overall concepts to fulfill citizen and local leader visions.

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## Community Development Goals and Objectives

This Section of the Clinton-Buffalo Townships Comprehensive Plan will state the community development goals and objectives as they relate to the location, timing, and character of future growth and development in each municipality. The Concept Land Use Plan contains a strategy to implement these goals and objectives through both policy and action.

The key community development goal of both Clinton and Buffalo Township is to accommodate necessary development while still protecting rural uses and features within the community. Generally, The Townships will control the **location, character and timing** of future growth and development by utilization of consistent local zoning, and policy decision such as consistent infrastructure investments. For the purpose this ordinance, goals are defined as broad policies the two townships wish to achieve, and objectives are more narrow means to make the goals come true. The Township may develop refined community development objectives as provided for by Section 606 of the Pa. Municipalities Planning Code. If these are developed after the date of initial adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, they shall be incorporated herein by reference. The **vision** of retaining a rural community, preventing high taxes and still allowing choices for landowners, as described under the Citizen Participation section of this plan, is also incorporated herein by reference.

- I. **Location Goals:** The Townships will protect and conserve natural resources to the extent not pre-empted by state or federal law. In some cases, this may be

accomplished by steering development away from sensitive resources. In other cases, good design can protect the resource within the context of development. The Townships will either make infrastructure investment in selected areas, or permit the installation of public and private improvements to support more intensive growth and development in selected areas.

- II. **Character Goals**: The Townships may discourage development which is not of a compatible nature with pre-existing development. It may accomplish this through its zoning authority, or establishing standards to mitigate potentially conflicting uses through distance, screening, buffering or other measures.
- III. **Timing Goals**: The Township may limit growth and development to achieve optimum timing with public or private improvements. In general, intensive development should occur first where water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure are already available. After that, development should occur where such infrastructure can be made available in a scenario where growth pays for itself.

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## Concept Land Use Plan

The land use plan map illustrates how the Townships would prefer to accommodate projected growth and development over the next ten to fifteen (10-15) years. The map divides the two Townships into a number of different categories or classifications. However, this plan will not realize the desired future without local public policy changes. In some cases, these categories may require the creation or implementation of new zoning districts, new land use regulations, or changes to the designation of areas. In other cases, the tools to implement the plan may include purchase of land, easements, or development rights. In other cases, improvements to infrastructure or other public policies can help create the conditions for the desired future. The following represents a sketch of each category and potential ways to implement that category in the area it is depicted on the Concept Plan Map.

Before further explaining categorical land use, it may be helpful to discuss the approaches recommended. As mentioned previously, most zoning ordinances in Western Pennsylvania are based upon a simple Euclidean approach. For example, commercial uses are not allowed or are severely restricted in residential districts. This rigid separation of uses is a major difference between a traditional American small town or urban neighborhood and a postwar suburb. To cure this, planners are looking to other concepts, including Development Models, Planned Residential Development (PRD), Conservation Subdivisions, and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). Each of these tools, or a combination of these tools, can ensure that Buffalo and Clinton Townships can accommodate development within the context of existing rural and natural character. Because the terms are frequently discussed throughout the text, some explanation is in order.

*Development Models* are a wholly new approach to zoning and land use, which has been successfully utilized in Adams Township, Butler County. In Adams Township, the models are combined with overlay zoning to create a conditional use that may only be selectively applied. Property owners retain all their normal zoning designation and use rights. The models broaden choice by allowing more uses under some form of unified development approach, based upon the overlay the property is located within. Because they broaden use choice, the models have higher design standards than can be expected under normal zoning. The Adams Township models specify the residential/nonresidential mix, required mix of lot sizes, building size limits, and the proposed use and ownership of open space. The development models also specify “participation fees” which are a modest amount imposed to pay for increased traffic impacts. These are not an impact fee because participation in the overlay district is wholly voluntary.

*Conservation Subdivisions* are an approach developed and advocated by planner Randall Arendt, though they are clearly based upon principle developed by many predecessors. Arendt’s principle work Rural By Design formed the basis for a publication by the Pa. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources entitled, Growing Greener: A Conservation Planning Workbook for Municipal Officials in Pennsylvania. This workbook outlines the means to integrate Conservation Subdivisions into local planning. The key is to utilize identification of natural features before development activities, then require developers to plan house lots around

natural features. Pure conservation subdivision approaches require amendments to both the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances, as the preliminary plan becomes crucial as a means of identifying the site's natural features. This approach has been much more widely used in eastern Pennsylvania. Several lower growth western Pennsylvania municipalities have conservation subdivision standards, but almost all as an option to conventional development. Thus, regulations have not been widely used.

*Planned Residential Development (PRD)* Is a tool that needs less introduction, as it has already been used by both Clinton and Buffalo Townships. PRD's are enabled by Article VII of the Pa. Municipalities Planning Code. However, this article largely handles the procedural treatment of a PRD as a form of unified development where zoning and subdivision approval can be concurrently granted. The MPC does not set extensive standards for PRD's. Thus, the design standards for PRD's vary widely in western Pennsylvania. Open space requirements, allowable dwelling types and land uses, and density may range significantly. A PRD with 20 percent open space and apartment buildings of 10 acres each looks very different from a PRD with 15 percent commercial development, or one with 50 percent open space and only single family dwellings. One interesting twist is to incorporate the design standards for a Conservation Subdivision into the procedural approach of a PRD. Buffalo Township has begun this with the PRD standards within their RA district. In this district, Conditional Use approval requires a natural conditions map and build out analysis before a tentative plan may be submitted. Mercer County also advocates this approach in their model ordinances.

*Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)* This planning tool is also enabled by the MPC, under Article VII-a. There are many similarities to PRD, such as the unified development approach. A major difference is that while a municipality can allow PRD's to occur in a variety of places, only the landowner can initiate development of a PRD as a choice. For TND there is clear local government authority to designate TND through an outright zone or overlay. TND also has stronger design regulations enabling powers. Related to TND have been some national concepts, such as Form based Codes. These are all efforts to return to earlier traditions in town planning and community building.

## Green Space Area/Natural Features Preservation and Conservation Core

- **Priority Activity** - Acquire land, development rights, or assist other conservation entities in doing so. The main goal in this area of the Township is to prevent development from overwhelming natural systems by keeping density and land use intensity very low.
- **Tools** - Bond issue (to buy open space), grants, and transfer of development rights.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models** - Create a Conservation Zoning District, net out environmentally sensitive areas, apply very low density. If development occurs, target 60-70% open space. If models are used, apply Farm-Forest Development Model.

*Farm/Forest:* This model is designed to illustrate the limited types of development permitted in agricultural areas.

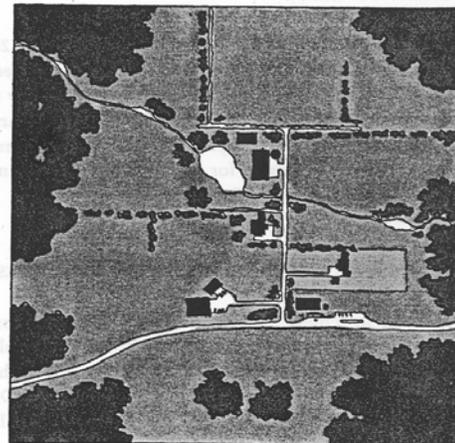
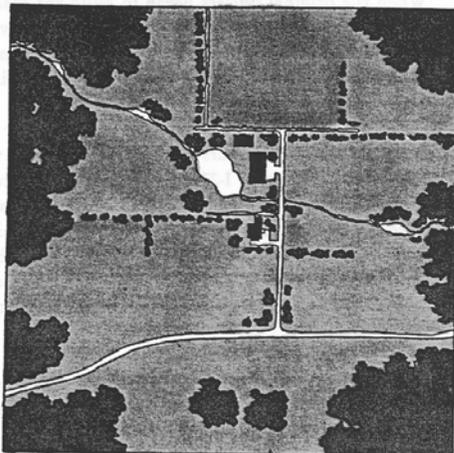
### Goals:

- \* Allow some limited development in agricultural areas - e.g. farm related commercial (farm equipment and supplies) and single family low density residential subdivision.

### Policies:

- \* Establish minimum agricultural operation size (e.g. 50 acres)
- \* Establish a list of permissible land uses including, farm related business such as farmers markets and stands, farm equipment sales, feed and grain stores, limited residential.
- \* Require shared driveways and access roads to minimize number of entrances onto existing roads.
- \* Limit number of times property may be subdivided.

### Farm/Forest: Existing Conditions



Proposed Farm/Forest Model

These drawings show the same farm with a single lot subdivision. Access is via a shared driveway and the new house is set back 60 feet from the road to minimize visual impact. Farm related business uses, such as roadside produce stands and farm implement dealerships are permitted and encouraged.

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## Farmland Preservation Core

- **Priority Activity** - Purchase of development rights, protect farmland from urban encroachment, retain value as farmland. Discourage rezoning or infrastructures extensions.
- **Tools** - Bond issue, grants, transfer of development rights.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models** - "Sliding Scale" agricultural protection zoning (Buffalo has done, Clinton should consider). Apply Farm/Forest Development Model. Target density/dwelling unit/ten acres; Target 60-70% open space.

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## Rural Development Core

- **Priority Activity** - Allow a wide variety of activities, but ensure density remains low. Create a "country setting" for farms, small businesses, forest and mineral activities, and select small businesses.
- **Tools** - Implement rural residential and agriculture district. Do not extend public infrastructure.
- **Zoning Concepts** - Rural residential/rural development zoning. Target density - 1 dwelling or principle building to 2-5 acres; 50-60% open space. Low density/large lot development model. Part of these areas should also be reserved for rural resource uses, such as mineral extraction. If overall density is kept low, a wider variety of uses can flourish, such as family businesses, home occupations, and rural businesses such as sawmills. In this type of scenario, the countryside becomes a source of wealth for landowners based upon land based activities. Low density and low intensity prevents land use conflict.

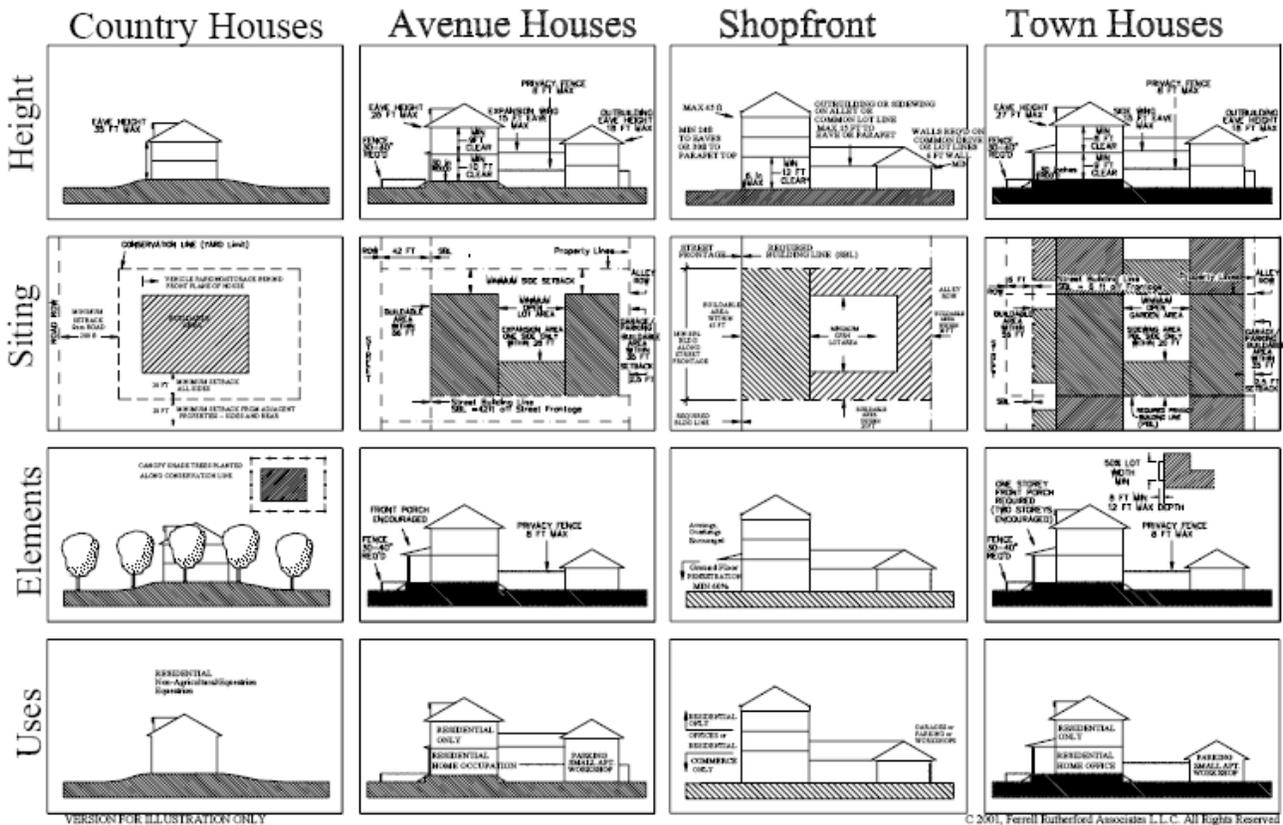
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## Smart Growth Target Area

- **Priority Activity** - The Smart Growth Target Area is not to imply that other areas of the two townships are reserved for dumb growth. Smart growth in a variety of forms is a key approach to this entire multi-municipal comprehensive plan. However, the communities must recognize that these areas specifically identified for smart growth are both extremely attractive to development and still retain many desirable rural

and natural features. These features include small streams, farmland, patches of woodland and traditional buildings. The aspect of this area that makes it unique is that transportation access is excellent, and it is served by public sewer. Rural land that is served by public sewer, or relatively near public sewer is much harder to protect for rural uses and features; especially in a high growth community. This can be seen as a problem; or it can be seen as an enormous opportunity. Market forces should work here in concert with public policy to create prosperity and conserve natural resources and community character at the same time.

- **Tools** - Consider a development concept here that strongly discourages any form of development without open space, pedestrian friendly design, preservation of select high quality features in the context of development, and ensuring the careful placement of buildings, and respect for traditional forms of architecture. These measures could all be done through an overlay zone on top of a non-residential base zoning designation. However, regardless of the tool selection, this area must be treated differently. This was recognized by the Buffalo Township Land Use and Transportation initiative, where this area was recommended for some form of new village style development. Since that time, Planned Residential Development that incorporates many of these features (Sarver's Mill) has been constructed that incorporated many of these approaches. There are many definitions of smart growth, but for this area, the principles should be:
  - Maintain clear edges between developed and undeveloped areas.
  - Preserve select scenic resources and viable patches of farmland.
  - New construction must respect community character with regards to building placement, building footprints and form.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models** - A combination of Planned Residential Development, PRD, Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), and Conservation Subdivision techniques and approaches may be the best approach in these areas. Density in these areas could be flexible, based upon a number of design features. Higher density or less open space would mandate more traditional village or small town design features, such as sidewalks, build-to lines, street trees, and regulation of architectural form. Upgraded standards could be based upon a village or hamlet model. An architectural pattern book could be prepared and adopted if TND were the implementing concept. This allows the community to clearly set and regulate a vision, without limiting innovation or trying to codify building style (Clear authority to adopt pattern books is contained in the MPC for Traditional Neighborhood Developments). At present, one western Pennsylvania community (Cranberry Township) is preparing a pattern book to be able to gain better quality development in a common sense manner. An alternative to a pattern book is a Form Based Code, which replaces conventional use zoning with detailed regulations about building form. One Pennsylvania Borough is presently in the process of considering a form based code. Woodford County, Kentucky has adopted one. In many ways it functions as a combination pattern book and ordinance. The attached illustrations are from the Woodford Kentucky Code.



It is important to note how different these are from conventional zoning, and how the results differ. Whether a building is a professional office, duplex, or single family dwelling is less important than how large it is, its materials, and its relationship to its surroundings.

The next illustration is an example of how the Woodford Code regulates building materials and form in one district:

**CODE PRESCRIPTIONS:** (Where Clearly Visible from the Street)

**MATERIALS**

- ◆ Asphalt Shingles
  - “Dimensional” shingles
  - Diamond pattern
- ◆ Metal “Galvalume,” its equivalent or better
  - 5-V crimp
  - Standing seam
- ◆ Cedar Shingle, equivalent or better

◆ *Slate, equivalent synthetic or better*

**CONFIGURATIONS AND TECHNIQUES**

◆ *Pitch*

- *Simple Hip and Gable roofs shall be symmetrically pitched between 7:12 and 12:12.*
- *Shed roofs, for additions and ancillary structures only, pitched between 3:12 and 5:12 must be attached to main building wall).*

◆ *Overhang*

- *Eaves must overhang between 12" and 24" on the primary structure.*
- *Rakes (gable end) must overhang between 8" and 24".*
- *Eaves and rakes on Outbuildings, dormers, and other smaller structures must overhang at least 6."*
- *Open eaves (exposed rafter tails) and simple classical soffits and fascia are allowed.*
- *Fascia boards for closed soffits shall be a minimum of 6" high.*
- *Soffits shall be perpendicular to the building wall, not sloping in plane with the roof (except for gable end rakes).*
- *Cornices and soffits may be a combination of vinyl, wood and/or metal materials.*

While this is certainly a higher level of detail than traditional zoning, it is much less restrictive of use. For this reason, the idea of Form Based Codes or architectural pattern books are receiving support from a wide variety of divergent groups, from real estate professionals and bankers to environmental groups.

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## Rural Corridor/Viewshed and Capacity Protection

- **Priority Activity** - Prevent excessive development of frontage lots and excessive new curb cuts (Route 228 in Clinton Township, possibly Ekastown Road)
- **Tools** - Purchase scenic easements, access management regulations, specific plan, transportation enhancements grant.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models** - Refine Access Management Overlay Zone, Implement Scenic Corridor model.

### Scenic Corridor Model

This model is designed to guide development along scenic sections of the Township roadways. It sets out provisions for protecting significant views, and establishes setback and landscape guidelines designed to shield and reduce the presence of developments that can be seen from the road. This model is particularly relevant to sections of arterial roadways, but is also applicable to scenic sections of all roads in the Township.

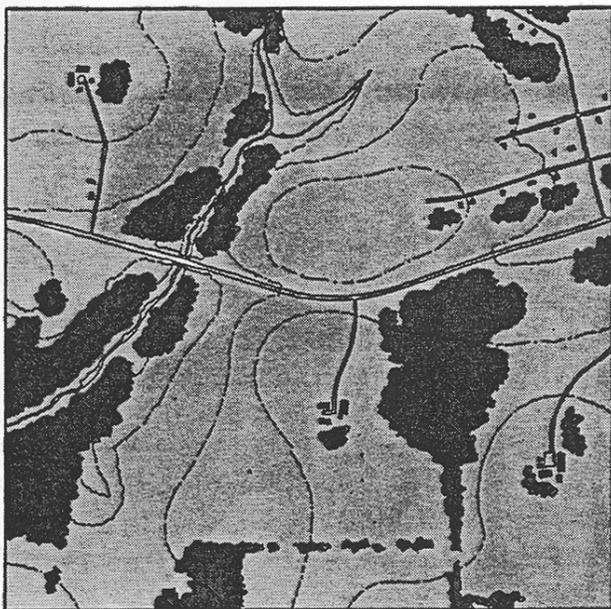
#### Goals:

- \* Preserve the rural character of the Township.
- \* Avoid visual clutter and noise.
- \* Maintain the economic viability of the Township by ensuring that it remain an attractive and scenic community.

#### Policies:

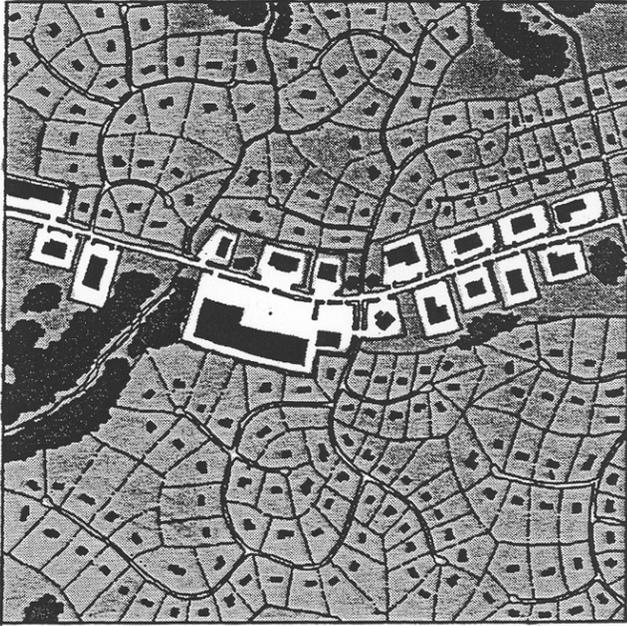
- \* Revise zoning and land use ordinances to include appropriate zoning designations, viewshed protection, landscaping and setback regulations.

### Scenic Corridor: Existing Conditions



This drawing depicts a portion of a typical Township road with views across farm fields and wooded areas. The scale and density of existing buildings adds to the scenic view. The many stream valleys and rolling hills create a large number of these scenic vistas throughout the Township.

## Scenic Corridor: Conventional Development Under Existing Policy



Under conventional development practices scenic corridors are often destroyed by insensitive residential subdivisions and “strip” commercial development.



## Proposed Scenic Corridor Model

The Scenic Corridor Model establishes setbacks, and landscaping guidelines designed to shield roadside development from view - or to make the view from the road attractive (free from clutter, large signs, and parking lots). The Model also maps particularly scenic views and attempts to ensure that these views are not blocked by development.

## Greenway

- **Priority Activity** - Establishes a connection of open space between the two (2) major areas of public open space.
- **Tools** - Acquire easements if trails are to be established.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models**-If major development occurs, it should be in the form of a Planned Residential Development (PRD) or Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) or some form of development which maximizes open space. Open space, whether publicly or privately owned, should conform to map to building connectivity in open space within the Greenway, target open space is 90 + %.

## Residential Growth Areas

- **Priority Activity** - Encourage major residential development to occur within these areas by providing density incentives and infrastructure. Protect residential uses from land use conflict as practical. Priority should be given to near term growth areas now, until infrastructure can be fully provided in the long term area.
- **Tools** - Allow higher density/smaller lot sizes as a transfer of development rights receiving area. Allow mixed density of housing types, with buffering between major developments or land use changes. Target density - 4 dwelling units to 1 acre with bonuses, 2 dwelling units per acre without bonuses. Target open space - 25-30%. Higher density should lead to better design.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models** - Infill development model, some applicability of village or hamlet model. Develop a Traditional Neighborhood Development overlay as a vehicle.

### *Infill model*

Many of the elements of a traditional town are present (traditional town elements include: houses, shops, offices, warehouses, industries, and public buildings), however, here they are spread out at low densities and they are segregated by use. The transportation system which provides the links between these developments presently tries to funnel all traffic onto arterial roadways. Because of the low densities and segregated uses, travel by any means other than the private automobile is difficult.

The Infill Model proposes to “fix what is broken” in these low density suburban areas through appropriate mixed-use infill development and road improvements. These improvements are designed to weave together the presently disconnected suburban elements to form a more cohesive community. These areas are already served by public sanitary sewers in many areas and public water service has also been provided.

### Goals:

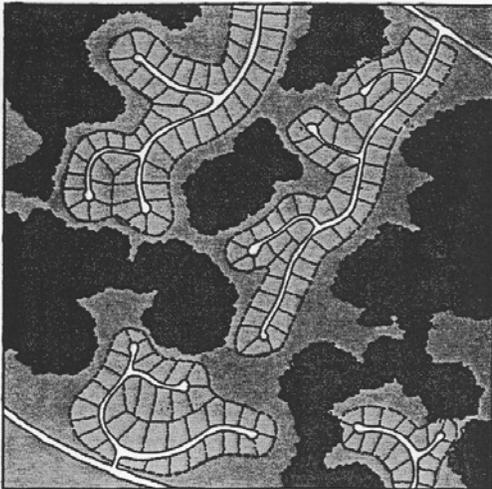
- \* Transform existing disconnected development patterns into a series of interconnected neighborhoods through selective infill development.
- \* Strive for a mixture of uses including: a variety of housing types and densities, local and regional commercial and retail, light industrial, as well as public facilities.
- \* Encourage a more compact, pedestrian-oriented development pattern.
- \* Take advantage of existing public infrastructure and establish appropriate public utility services.
- \* Maintain open spaces.

### Policies

- \* Zone (where regulations are in effect) specific areas within the Infill Model for mixed-use development. Zone other areas to allow for higher density residential.
- \* Do not permit retail and commercial strip zones.
- \* Encourage the development of neighborhoods with mixed-use centers.
- \* As density rises, require, where possible, pedestrian-scale development. Establish Site Design and Architectural Review Procedures which set out appropriate building setbacks and heights, road widths, bulk coverage, building materials and landscaping.
- \* Housing is to be encouraged at various scales and densities, with buffering necessary between developments.
- \* Require individual developments to provide through-road connections.
- \* Encourage alternative means of transportation including: walking, cycling, public transit.
- \* Some open space is to be an integral part of the design. It is not to be left-over space between buildings. However, the percentage of open space can certainly be lower than more rural areas, perhaps as low as 15-20 percent. (see below)

### **Infill: Existing Conditions**

New residential sub-developments have been inserted into a landscape of rolling farm fields and forests. The new road pattern consists primarily of cul-de-sacs which funnel onto one or two feeder roads connected to a major arterial.

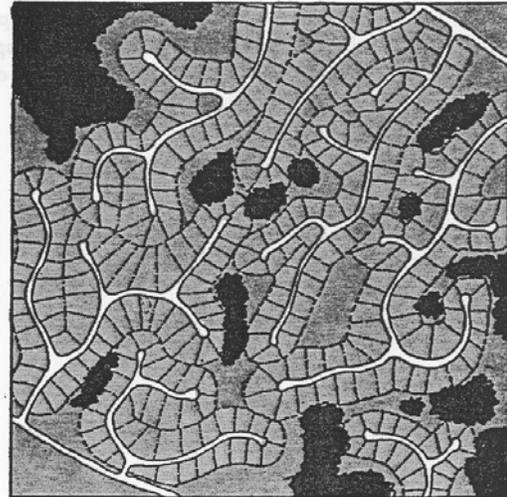
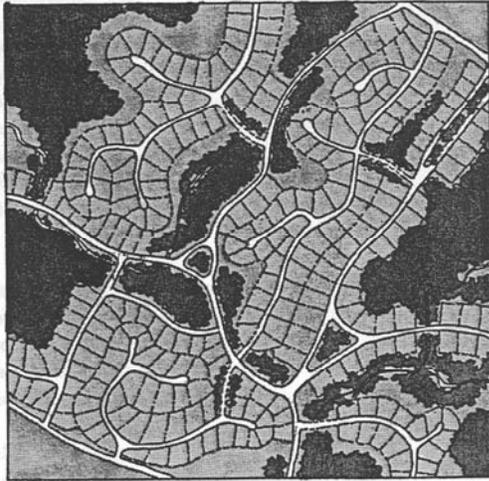


### **Infill: Conventional Development Policy**

Under conventional development policies this kind of residential development pattern can be repeated until the entire area is covered with single family residential lots arranged along cul-de-sac roads. The lack of connections between development results in a situation where all traffic is funneled onto a major arterial - which contributes to traffic congestion problems.

### **Proposed Infill Development Model**

This drawing illustrates the preferred development pattern for this area: smaller landscaped lots surrounded by permanently preserved open fields and forests. A network of roadways provides alternate routes for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists.



## Small Business Development; Commercial and Key Commercial Areas

- **Priority Activity** - Keep the majority of commercial development in Buffalo Township to offset residential growth and diversify tax base. Ensure good design standards for new commercial development to avoid congestion use. Utilize the overlay zone areas of Route 356 as a small business incubator.
- **Tools** - Access management overlay zone (done). Work with school district to examine tax incremental financing (TIF) to pay for infrastructure for new commercial entities. Specific plan could locate new curb cuts and speed up process for developers.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models** - Commercial development model.

### *Commercial Model*

This Model is proposed as an alternative to the typical “strip-commercial” development pattern. The Commercial Model is designed to satisfy both of these goals. The idea is to create commercial areas which look and function more like a Main Street than a strip mall. Careful attention is paid to pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, street furniture and lighting, and to minimizing the distances between buildings, and connecting them by sidewalks. Where possible, parking is to be shared, and placed behind or to the sides of buildings.

### Goals:

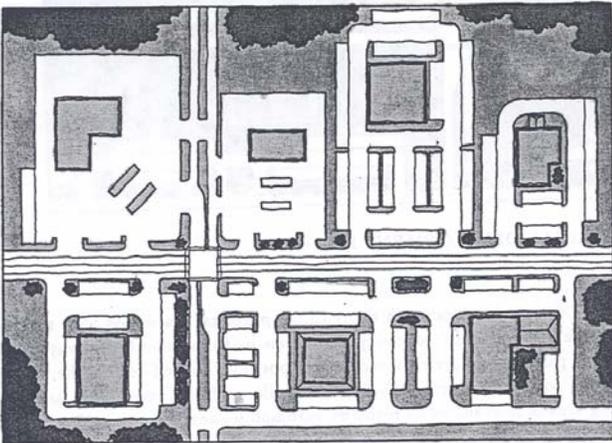
- \* Architectural themes.

- \* Convenient - for pedestrians and cars (and, where possible, bicycles).
- \* Designed to minimize traffic congestion on existing arterial roads (Impact Fee Program).
- \* Mixed-use (where appropriate).

Policies:

- \* Continue to require shared parking areas (preferably in the rear or to the side of buildings).
- \* Continue to require shared driveways or parallel access roads (curb cut regulations)
- \* Establish guidelines to ensure high quality design of the following elements: setbacks, parking lots, landscaping and architectural design guidelines.
- \* Amend Zoning ordinance to allow mixed use development (including commercial office, retail, light industrial, and showrooms.)

**Commercial: Conventional Strip Development**

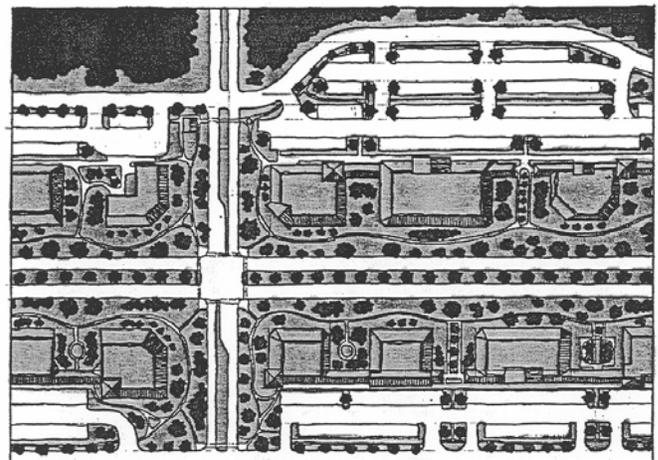


The drawing to the left depicts a typical “strip-commercial development” like those found on high volume transportation corridors or tracts in the Township. This form of development requires each parcel to provide its own entrances and exits and private parking facilities designed to accommodate the theoretical maximum number of customers. These policies promote a wasteful development pattern in which businesses are spread out over large distances along a busy road. Customers are

forced to use their cars as no pedestrian connections are provided. Unattractive “cookie-cutter” buildings, oversized signs, and lack of pedestrian amenities all contributed to creating an unpleasant generic atmosphere.

The Commercial Model top the right is designed to deal with many of the problems associated with strip-commercial development. Curb-cuts are minimized by requiring that access be from shared driveways or, in this case, a feeder or parallel access road. Shared parking lots are required (where possible, located behind the buildings so as to make the view from the road more attractive). Sign and

**Proposed Commercial Development Model**



building design regulations are established to ensure that the shopping area is convenient to reach by automobile, and pleasant and convenient for pedestrians.

## Priority Nonresidential Development Areas/Flexible Development Opportunity

- **Priority Activity** - Encourage major development of the northwestern quadrant of the Route 28/Route 356 interchange. Nonresidential (perhaps mixed with alternative residential, such as elderly housing) could diversify tax base. This area could also accommodate major development without creating major impacts elsewhere. Similar opportunities exist after the Victory Road buildout in Clinton Township.
- **Tools** - Specific plan could do site planning, flexible zoning utilizing a wide range of preferred development modes, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) potential. Both TIF and LERTA are forms of property tax relief extended to nonresidential development to stimulate economic development. In a TIF situation, newly generated property taxes are reserved to pay for infrastructure improvements to benefit the site. With LERTA, the property taxes on any new improvements, such as a building, are partially or completely abated for a certain number of years. These type of tools can make a site more attractive to development, and can be used by the community only in situations where the community itself believes the tool is appropriate. The community can also aggressively seek funding to extend infrastructure (such as PA DCED's Business in our Sites grant/loan). This area also has the ability to provide a unique town center as the area grows. An interesting twist to this would be the incorporation of institutional uses, such as a township hall, library, or community center into a mixed residential/retail/office setting. Buffalo Township lacks a clearly identified town square. As the community grows, this may be important. Public space could include an area for publication, memorials, public gatherings or even passive recreation space for office workers on their lunch hour. Constructing this type of space will require a true public/private partnership, similar to the ones that built many traditional American towns.
- **Zoning Concepts/Development Models** - Rural Commercial/Industrial Park/Institutional/TND overlay. If public uses are envisioned, there must be more than a zoning approach.

### *Rural Commercial/Industrial Park Model*

This Model is intended to provide an alternative to typical office and industrial park developments. The Model sets out design standards which require buildings to be grouped around a square or center. Design Review guidelines can also be established in order to create a rural building vocabulary - that is, standards based on rural building types such as barns, silos, greenhouses, and sheds. This is substantially different from a town center or institutional approach, as it does not necessarily provide the denser, mixed character and public space. It could fit into a wider array of rural areas, and meet the goal of diversifying tax base.

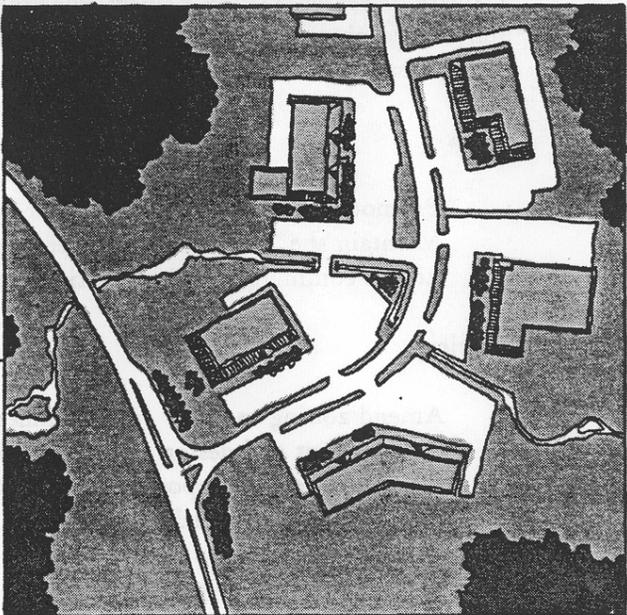
Goals:

- \* Promote economic development and tax base diversification.
- \* Maintain the Township's rural character.
- \* Locate commercial and industrial development close to major transportation corridors.

Policies:

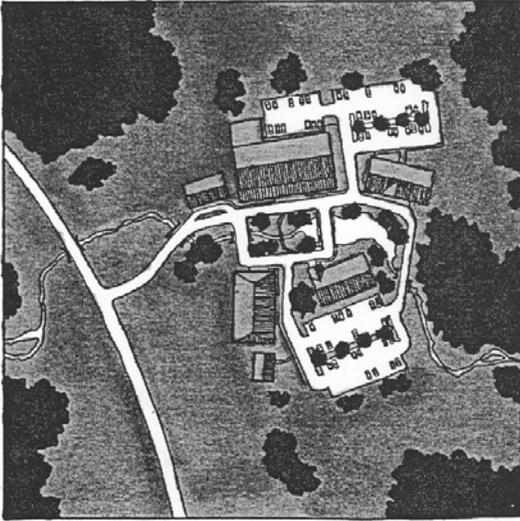
- \* Amend Zoning regulations to allow rural commercial/industrial parks. Zoning should include site development and design review guidelines.
- \* Could set maximum retail component set at 30% or 40%.
- \* Access could be by feeder or parallel access road only (i.e. no individual driveways onto major roads or arterials). This would depend on the location of the development.
- \* Buildings should be grouped around a central square or plaza (where appropriate).
- \* Parking should be shared to save space.
- \* Significant buffer standards.

**Rural Commercial/Industrial Park: Conventional Development Practice**



Typical office/industrial parks arrange large warehouse buildings randomly along a wide feeder road. Each building is required to have its own parking lot based on theoretical maximum capacities. The absence of pedestrian amenities force employees to drive out of the park for lunch, and the lack of landscaping leaves the complex within full view of passing motorists. The park is isolated, and development between individual businesses is not well coordinated.

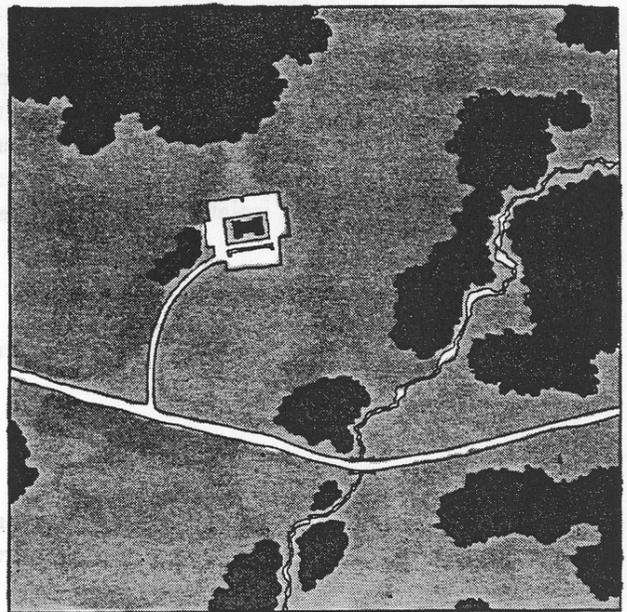
## Proposed Rural Commercial/Industrial Park Model



This Model allows the office/industrial park to take on a more rural image that fits the character of the Townships. Rural buildings such as barns, greenhouses, feedmills, etc. are used as models for the new commercial/industrial buildings, which are grouped around a square, or pond, or other landscaped area. This acts as a gathering space for workers at lunch and break times. Parking is shared for maximum efficiency.

## *Institutional/Town Center Model*

This model is designed for other communities in areas where school district facilities and other institutional uses have been developed. It could also serve as the heart of a town center. For Buffalo Township, it would be a good alternative approach to develop the northwest quadrant of the Pa. Routes 28/356 interchange. The idea is to use civic buildings to help create the heart of a place that is closely connected and related to the economic activities and residential neighborhoods that might be built around it. This is in contrast to the current practice of locating civic buildings in isolated areas accessible only by car.



### Goals:

- \* Make civic and institutional buildings a vital and central part of a new mixed retail office commercial neighborhood.

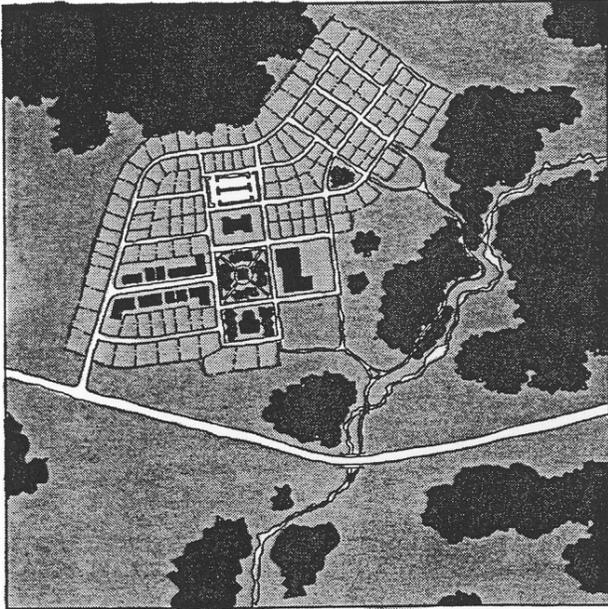
### Policies:

- \* Zone for the desired mixture of land uses. Be ready to commit to public investment of community uses.
- \* Link the civic buildings to the community using a network road system as well as through a system of open spaces/linear greenways or trails or sidewalks.
- \* Enhance the role of civic buildings and grounds as multi-purpose community centers. Public building and space can and should be used for a broad range of community events.

\* **Institutional: Development Under Existing Policy**

In this drawing a library or municipal building is located on remote isolated site accessible only by car. The building is open only during regular business hours. In spite of substantial maintenance costs, it is single purpose.

**Proposed Institutional/Town Center Model**



This Model is based on the premise that Civic buildings can be used to create a true community center if they are grouped together with other uses and connected to residential neighborhoods. The key is for the community to commit to buy and build within the development. An alternative may be to combine certain public reservations through the subdivision ordinance (for open space such as a town square) and official mapping for other public grounds. Obviously, there must be a carefully arranged public/private partnership that maintains transparency with the public.

This group of buildings, consisting of a municipal building, a library, a school, and some small commercial buildings; is linked to newly created residential neighborhoods and a mix of retail and office uses through a network of streets and linear greenway-pedestrian and bicycle-paths. The buildings and grounds are used day and evening, seven days a week. Note the interconnected street systems in the illustration.

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**Development of Regional Impact and Significance**

- **Priority Activity** - Confine, new, large scale heavy industry, and major truck traffic activities here.
- **Tools** - Intermunicipal zoning agreement pursuant to Article XI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

This area has already been developed through a significant public private/partnership. It has the potential to host many land uses that cannot be accommodated elsewhere without significant community impacts.