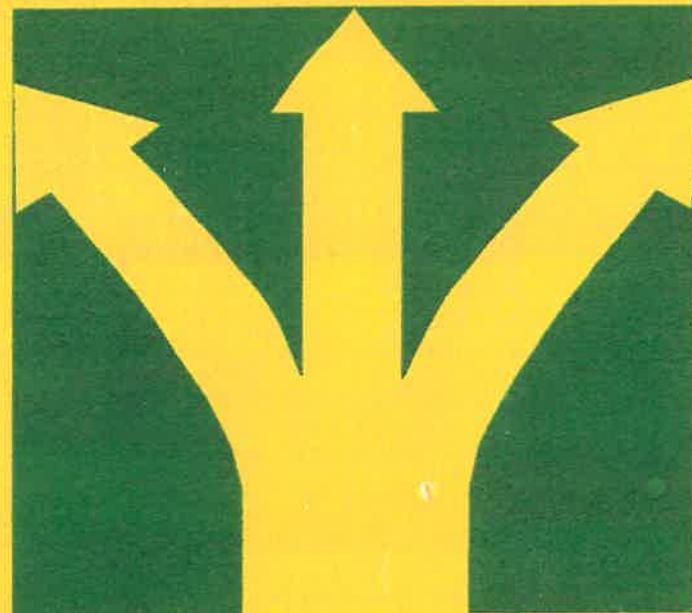


“OUR COLLECTIVE VISION FOR THE FUTURE”



Planning Matters!

North Huntingdon Township, PA

“Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan”

A Policy Guide for Land Use and Growth Management

Adopted March 15, 2000

North Huntingdon Township Board of Commissioners

196 pages \$ 41.50

CHAPTER 1: PLAN BACKGROUND AND FORMAT

Authority for the Plan

This Comprehensive Plan was developed in accordance with Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of 1968, P.L. 805, No. 247, as reenacted and amended. Under these provisions the Planning Commission is empowered and required to prepare a Comprehensive Plan and report it to the Governing Body for adoption.

Plan Process and Community Involvement

Plan Process

The North Huntingdon Township Comprehensive Plan process was started in the early 1990's with the hiring of Robert Kimball and Associates to complete a plan for the Township as an update to the previous 1974 Comprehensive Plan. While significant work was performed by the consultant over a 5 year period, and several draft plans were completed, no action was ever taken on the formal adoption of the most recently drafted 1997 Plan (Kimball).

This year, the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commission pledged to complete and update these previous drafts to consider adoption of a plan for the Township. Particular attention was focused on the following in the finalization of this document:

- Updating and correcting background and descriptive data to make the plan an accurate document
- Integrating new community input into the plan through a community survey and key person interviews to gain perspectives and a "collective wisdom" of the Township residents on issues we need to address and views on recent development trends
- Formatting editing the plan to make it a more readable document. All element chapters have been given the same format with: assets, liabilities, dynamics, goals, objectives and action strategies for implementation
- Engage the Planning Commission into the plan development process through the formation of a Working Group as a sub-committee of the Planning Commission. Encourage citizen input and participation into the weekly working group meetings.

- Provide for dialogue and communication with the Board of Commissioners through the involvement of the Commissioner who serves as the Planning Liaison with the Working Group

Community Involvement

A comprehensive plan is as credible as the efforts to gain citizen opinions and perspectives on issues affecting the Township. This plan utilized several methods to incorporate public input into this process: These include:

Community Surveys: A community survey was conducted to gauge public opinion on a variety of development and community services issues. Particular attention on this survey was focused on growth issues within the Township, since during the period of 1993-1999, , the Township experienced rapid housing growth, unlike it has seen in over 20 years. A total of 458 households participated in the survey, representing a broad cross-section of the Township. The results of this survey are included in Chapter 3 and the major opinions are also incorporated into each subject chapter.

Key Person Interviews. Persons considered as “key persons” were interviewed by the Planning and Zoning Director to both gain perspectives on issues and obtain feedback on preliminary plan goals and objectives. Key persons are defined as individuals who either : (1) are vested in a particular subject area of the plan, (e.g., realtors, builders for housing; recreation leaders for parks, etc) or (2) persons with long history and experiences in the Township (civic leaders). The responses of the key persons are not directly stated in the plan, but rather the perspectives and opinions have been incorporated into the discussion of the Working Group (see below) by the Planning and Zoning Director.

Planning Working Group: A Working Group was formed to assist the Planning and Zoning Director in the idea generation, - formatting and writing of the plan document. This Working Group’s base membership included 4 Planning Commission members and 1 Township Commissioner. Through advertising and inquiries, 3 citizens regularly attended and participated in the meetings, which were conducted weekly over a 5 month period. Approximately 5-7 other citizens attended at least one meeting to either observe or provide input as well. The Planning Working Group was designed to be a resource to the

Planning and Zoning Director, and provide the full Planning Commission with a report upon the conclusion of their work.

Student Involvement and Surveys: Planning is for the future, and the future of the community is a function of its future residents. In order to assess views of young adults living in the community surveys were distributed to Norwin High School seniors in the senior government classes and two (2) focus groups were also conducted in order to gain their input regarding the future development of the township. The results and feedback obtained from this group is incorporated into the Community Input section of this plan.

Public Hearings: As required by the Municipalities Planning Code, public hearings were conducted by both the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners. Input was reviewed and summarized, and where appropriate plan content was revised.

Distribution of Draft Plan: Upon completion of the draft plan by the Working Group copies were distributed to several community organizations, the School District, the County Planning Office and neighboring municipalities. Comments were reviewed and summarized, and where appropriate plan content was revised.

Plan Format

Required Area 1: General Planning Background

Chapter 3: Township Planning Background

This chapter provides background information to the reader on the history of the Township, with particular focus on development trends. It also provides summary history of planning efforts by the Township from the passage of the first Subdivision Ordinance in 1958 until present time.

Chapter 4: Community Survey and Public Input

Public input was emphasized throughout the development of this plan. When this plan was started in the early 1990's a survey was distributed to citizens to gain opinions on the Township and future development issues. To provide update to citizen opinions a new community survey was distributed in 1999. Analysis of both surveys are presented, with particular attention to the changes in the Township from the early 1990's to the present period.

The 1999 survey will be analyzed in depth, based upon the characteristics of responses and the summary results of the likes and dislikes of Township residents.

Chapter 5: Population and Demographics

This chapter provides both historical and projected data on Township population and demographics. Base data from the 1990 U.S. census is used in comparison with 1980 census

data and population forecasts for 2000 and 2010 conducted by the Planning and Zoning Office using a cohort-survival projection model, based on existing death, birth and migration rates.

Required Area 2: Land Use Planning

Chapter: 2: Overall Future Land Use Plan and Growth Goals

The overall future land use plan is developed to both represent a vision of what the Township desires its development patterns to be over the next 10-20 years, and as a guide to future decision making involving land use issues. The growth goals, encompass the goals and objectives of each of the subject sections into a clear, concise set of land use policy objectives, that provide both direction and overall vision to the Township as it faces development choices in the first few decades of the new millennium.

Chapter 6: Land Use Analysis and Development Impacts

The existing land use patterns for the Township are described in this section, and are compared to land use patterns present in previous Township studies conducted in 1958 and 1974. The recent development patterns of higher growth, which started in 1993, are analyzed in terms of the land consumption, traffic patterns and fiscal impact it has had on the Township.

Required Area 3 : Plan Elements

Each of the required subject areas of the Year 2000 Comprehensive Plan are similarly formatted to provide consistency and clarity. Listed below are those subject areas, and explanation of the content and purposes of each of the sub-sections of each subject chapter.

Chapter 7: Housing and Neighborhoods

Chapter 8: Natural Resources and the Environment

Chapter 9: Transportation Network

Chapter 10: Community Facilities: Parks and Recreation; Schools; Public Safety and Facilities

Chapter 11: Public Utilities

Chapter 12: Economic and Business Development

Required Element: Implementation

Chapter 13: Plan Implementation Methods

Each chapter also includes tables and maps to illustrate areas of the Township.

Plan Element Subject Area Format

Background and Description

The background and description section present factual data and historical background on each subject. It is intended to provide both information and context to the discussion of future planning issues needed.

Assets

The assets result from discussion and debate through the Comprehensive Plan Working Committee. Assets are described as items that either exist and benefit the Township now, or as Opportunities that the Township should build upon and maximize in the future.

Liabilities

The liabilities result from discussion and debate through the Comprehensive Plan Working Committee. Liabilities are described as items that either exist and cause problems within the Township now, or as Challenges that the Township should focus upon to correct in the future.

Dynamics

The dynamics section addresses issues either micro or macro issues that now, or will in the future will affect the subject area. The section also addresses in general, the things that are changing, and how these changes affect future planning decisions for the Township.

Goal

Each subject chapter includes a goal statement. This goal statement reflects the general desired end state for the subject.

Objectives

Objectives stem from the goals, but are more precise and specific. They are means to accomplish the goal, and are more easily quantifiably measured than goals. If goals are state of mind, objectives are means to get the mind "in the mood."

Action Strategies

An objective is useless if not followed by specific recommendations or ACTIONS that need to be followed to assure that the objective is attained. The Action Strategies accomplish just that. They are divided into three sections: **Policies and Programs** which generally are implemented through Administrative policies; **Projects**, which require mostly fiscal commitment and **Ordinances**, which are legal instruments to get plan objectives implemented. Action strategies are the means to implement the plan.

Updating the Plan

Annual Implementation Plan

The Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed annually to monitor implementation of the action strategies and to establish an annual implementation plan of action for the upcoming year. This process will be coordinated with the preparation of the Capital Improvement Program and the General Operating Budget.

This review will include:

Checks on data and development trends to assure that action strategies are consistent with any new data

A re-prioritization of the remaining action strategies for

implementation during the upcoming year.

Review of who is responsible for implementation of each action strategies.

Indication of whether items are to be included in the Annual Budget or Capital Improvement Program.

This process will result in an annual implementation plan and serve as a guide for projects that are to be included in the Capital Improvement Program and Annual Budget. The process will be repeated *annually* until the next five year update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Five Year Update

Every five years, the Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed, in its entirety, and updated to ensure that it is consistent with the overall community vision. This review will also provide an opportunity to assess changes in the community and to update background data and action strategies. The following outlines a general process to be followed by the Planning Commission and the Township staff when updating the plan:

Gather population, income, employment, and other data to assess trends and compare with projections.

Compile progress reports from previous annual implementation plans.

Assess progress toward implementation of the action strategies in the 2000 plan.

Update existing land use maps and background data to reflect current information.

Revise projections and targets as appropriate.

Update action strategies by incorporating ones from the previous plan that were not implemented and include new items that have emerged as a result of the review process.

Prioritize the new set of action strategies for implementation.

Chapter 2: Township Values, Challenges, Overall Land Use Goals and Limitations

Our Township's Values

There are many values held by the North Huntingdon residents, which when combined, result in the unique character of our Township. Citizens have indicated high levels of satisfaction in a variety of areas in the community survey that was conducted as part of this plan. These "reasons for living in North Huntingdon" help form the following values in the Township. A composite of all of these values result in a high quality of life for Township residents.

➤ Location/Accessibility to Other Areas

In business marketing decisions, a common answer to the question "What are the three most important components of business success?", the answer is "LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION." For North Huntingdon Township, this answer also applies to the feelings of its citizens in terms its greatest asset. More citizens have either located or stayed in the Township because of its convenient location and access to other areas within the region. Its proximity to major transportation corridors, particularly the Pennsylvania Turnpike and U.S. Route 30 provides tremendous benefit to maintain the bedroom community status for commuters who use these roads to get to work in other parts of the region. The proximity between other major regional shopping areas, such as Monroeville and Greensburg, affords the opportunity to have relatively close-to-home choices for major purchases without having the congestion of those areas. The presence of closer-to-home shopping opportunities along the Route 30 corridor and in downtown Irwin is a major asset to consumers not wanting to drive to other areas for their shopping. Finally, a non-rush hour trip to the City of Pittsburgh is approximately 35 minutes, making it a convenient for Township residents to take advantage of the many regional cultural, entertainment and sports activities.

➤ Schools

Many residents place high value on the Norwin School system as contributing to the value of our community. The growth experienced within the Township over the last several years is partially attributable to the quality of the school system as young families make choices in housing, based on this criteria. The longer term residents of the area, who attended and graduated from the Norwin Schools choose to stay in the area due to their past positive experiences to educate their children in the district. Finally, the schools assist in community pride through extra-curricular activities, community involvement and its facilities.

➤ Small Town Feel/Nice Area to Live

Small town feel has consistently been ranked high by the citizens as they identify what they like most about living in North Huntingdon. Like quality of life, small town feel cannot be easily quantified. The following items have been identified by citizens as contributing to the small Township feeling of North Huntingdon: people are friendly and you know your neighbors; a comfortable, relaxed attitude; a feeling of high citizen commitment to the community; an easy going lifestyle; pride in our history; an attractive clean community appearance.

➤ Natural surroundings and open space/Rural Atmosphere

Residents place a high value on natural open spaces and the views of the surrounding undeveloped areas and the rural feel of the Township. . Protection of streams, natural vegetation, open spaces, hillsides and scenic views will preserve this natural beauty for the enjoyment of future generations. Even residents who live in denser plans value this rural atmosphere due to the nearness of the undeveloped areas.

➤ Public Safety

Citizens of North Huntingdon value the safety of the community and its low crime rate. People feel safe.. A safe living environment contributes to the overall quality of life in North Huntingdon.

➤ Moderate Cost of Living and Taxes

Citizens of North Huntingdon enjoy the moderate regional cost of living. The community is provided with many of the amenities of a large population center in an affordable small Township atmosphere without big city problems. Of particular benefit is the lower tax rates, especially compared to neighboring Allegheny County and the costs of housing compared to other areas in the region.

Our Township's Challenges

There are many challenges our Township faces in the future, as expressed by our citizens and leaders. These are not insurmountable, but present clear issues that need to be addressed as part of our future planning efforts.

➤ Dealing with the issue of recent rapid housing growth that consumes land and natural resources and affects perceptions of changes in community character

The community has experienced rapid housing growth since 1993. This type of growth hasn't been experienced in the Township since the late 1960's early 1970's. While this growth followed a long period of slow growth and decline, the continuity of it has had its impact on both the community character and community infrastructure. Growth, in and of itself, is not good or bad. Its impact is often positive in some areas, while negative in other areas. The major impacts within North Huntingdon have been the rapid loss of agricultural land where these housing plans have been located, and the residual impacts of increased traffic flow on smaller roads.

- **Provision of an adequate number of new quality houses to serve new and growing families and an aging population.**

While housing growth is viewed by many as a problem within the Townships, many also see a need for particular types of housing developments in the area. The two groups most frequently mentioned are persons desiring starter homes (young families) and persons entering retirement years.

- **Providing for adequate public infrastructure to service the needs of a growing evolving community, particularly in the areas of parks and recreation, roads and services for special population groups**

Growth brings both benefits and demands to a community. If the growth of housing outpaces the updating and capacity of existing infrastructure, the needs of both the existing and new residents are not met. Capital improvement planning must keep pace with housing growth, and all development plans must be evaluated in terms of its impacts on existing infrastructure and the need for new infrastructure.

- **Providing for adequate commercial and manufacturing/office opportunities to service the consumer and employment needs of the citizens, while not evolving into a sprawling "Monroeville-type" community**

The ability of the Township to provide both quality job opportunities and necessary consumer choices for its residents is met through the provision of adequate amount of retail, manufacturing and office spaces. The challenge for the Township is to provide these necessary uses, without allowing them to dominate the landscape similar to trends of other suburban areas with major transportation corridors.

- **Providing for effective enforcement of community codes and inspections to protect public health and safety, protect property values insure a better appearance for the community and preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods**

Residents and property owners who invest and care for their properties deserve protection from those who ignore maintenance issues and choose not to comply with required codes. These individuals, through their inaction, hurt property values. The

Township needs to be vigilant in the enforcement of codes and delinquent properties through providing adequate resources in the enforcement of these important codes. Particular challenge and focus is needed within the Route 30 corridor, the “window” to our community.

Overall Land Use and Growth Goals –

These Land Use Goals incorporate the many goals and objectives expressed throughout this plan into a clear, concise listing of items that need to be incorporated into the future land use map and land regulations. The focus of the goals is to clearly address the trends and issues, values and challenges and visions for the future development of the Township.

- 1. Update Township Land Use Ordinances:** The Township has been operating under a Subdivision and Zoning Ordinance that were originally drafted many years ago. The Subdivision Ordinance, although modified through construction standards, grading requirements and stormwater management ordinances, over the years has not had a substantial revision since its inception in 1958. The Zoning Ordinance, originally adopted in 1964, has been modified several times, the last in 1991, but should be integrated and be made consistent with new land use objectives and the new Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- 2. Manage housing growth.** Managed growth means guiding growth in relation to the Township's character and future vision and its capacities in terms of the timing and location of development. Managed growth also means that all development decisions will be made in concert with the land's natural carrying capacity, the Township's ability to financially support development through the provision of infrastructure and related community services and facilities and the Township's desire and need for additional growth. Finally, managed growth sustains the natural environment through environmental responsible review measures for all plans to sustain our valuable natural resources for future generations while at the same time fostering economic growth for the community. Based upon trends of slower growth periods, and rapid growth periods, a sustainable level of housing growth would be a benchmark goal of 80-90 new units per year, with variance depending upon the nature of those units.
- 3. Plan and coordinate infrastructure with development.** New infrastructure and new public services will be planned in direct relationship to the managed growth policy above. Any new infrastructure and/or new public services deemed necessary during this plan's projected time frame will be analyzed, studied and considered for the Township's Capital Improvements Program relative to a managed growth policy. Planning coordination shall also be done with the sewer and water authorities to assure consistency with the managed growth goal.

4. **Make land use decisions based on the Comprehensive Plan.** Land use decisions, such as requests for zoning map amendments, requests for variances, and review of development projects shall occur through the appropriate provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and the tenants of the Managed Growth Goal.
5. **Transition and buffer land uses.** Create compatible transitions between adjoining land uses through the use of appropriate buffering and screening to stabilize residential neighborhoods adjacent to commercial areas and avoid land use conflicts as regulated by the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance
6. **Manage new commercial development.** It is understood that increases in the population in the Township increase the market for new businesses. The viability of the Township's existing businesses are of prime importance. It is the desire of the Township to focus new commercial development opportunities toward the provision of adequate numbers of businesses serving the local market area of the Township, with particular focus on re-use of existing vacant business properties. Avoid the development of larger-scale regionally based shopping complexes, except where these facilities would be accompanied by adequate infrastructure to support demand and be designed of a nature to not adversely affect community character
7. **Neighborhood enhancement.** Protect the integrity, livability, and character of existing neighborhoods through code enforcement and infrastructure improvements. Revitalize older/historic areas such as Hahntown, by seeking federal and state community development funds.
8. **Meet Special Housing Demands and Environmental Preservation Measures with Creative Performance-Based Solutions :** Provide for viable cluster development and planned development options for new housing plans as a means to enhance environmental preservation, when these developments would be compatible with surrounding land uses and would allow more sensitive development of local topography with less land disturbance and substantial preservation of green space. Focus on the need for quality housing opportunities for older adult and retirement housing for residents of the Township entering this phase of their lives and provide for performance zoning within the ordinances to allow for creative solutions to complex planning and land use issues that meets both the needs of the Township and the Developer. Utilize land use and planning measures consistent with the "Growing Greener" initiatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
9. **Proper mix of land uses.** Develop a land use plan that provides for a proper and serviceable mix of land uses that serves the needs of Township residents for housing, commercial, manufacturing and recreation areas and emphasizes the preservation of open spaces within the context of any new developments.

10. **Quality housing.** All new housing development will be focused on the provision of quality housing opportunities and choices within the Township for its residents
11. **Economic and Job Growth.** Develop a land use plan that fosters the proper amount of economic growth for the Township to provide for high-quality job opportunities for its residents, particularly those entering the labor force, and a growing tax base to provide for necessary public services for its residents without unduly burdening existing residents
12. **Transportation Improvements:** Continuing a strong commitment to improving the quality and capacity, where feasible of Township owned roads, through a planned capital improvements program and advocate for the improvement of state-owned roads within the Township, through active coordination with State and Regional Transportation Plan processes and political leaders. Establish criteria for the capacity of the existing Township road network and identify problem areas for study consistent with requirements of the Transportation Impact Fee program, per Article V-A of the Municipalities Planning Code.

Limitations

➤ **Regionalism/Decisions made by neighboring communities, the county, and surrounding counties**

We exist within a regional environment, being part of the Pittsburgh SMSA. Decisions made on a regional level invariably affect all components of the region, in one way or another. These decisions can be made on a public or private level, and can have ripple effects on North Huntingdon.

➤ **The National Market and the Economy**

Development decisions are often made on a macro-level, in terms of the national economy. A simple increase in the prime lending rate can jeopardize the economic viability of a large-scale development project or the ability of a young family to obtain a mortgage to buy a house. Both of these scenarios can impact North Huntingdon and its development trends. Over the last 10 years, with minor exception the economy has been robust in this region (especially compared to the late 1970's and early 1980's), and has increased development and investment. Changes in the national and regional economy can and will have impacts on the rate of development in the future.

➤ **Demographics**

The existing population of the Township is another limitation. The Township basically has a distribution of persons of various ages that are a result of birth rates, death rates and net migration rates. We lost a substantial portion of our younger population in the

1980's as many left the area to seek employment elsewhere. This left the Township with an increased percentage of persons in older age cohort groups, with different demands for housing and social services. The Township continues to see migration of persons ages 18-24 at an alarming rate due to the lack of employment opportunities in the area. These demographic trends, both past and current, will affect future needs within the Township and will only be altered through in-migration from persons to the Township.

➤ **Utility Expansion and Development Patterns outside the Township**

Development patterns are heavily influenced by the expansion of utility service to an area. The impacts of this development do not stop at municipal boundaries. Neighboring Sewickley Township yields much development potential upon the expansion of sewers to this area. The net effect of this development in this area on North Huntingdon Township is the utilization of roads within the Township, particularly Barnes Lake Road, by potential residents of Sewickley access key transportation corridors.

➤ **State Transportation Improvements/or lack thereof**

Most of the major collector roads located within the Township are currently state roads. These roads have also had substantial impacts over the last several years as previously undeveloped areas have been converted to more dense housing plans directly or indirectly utilizing these state highways for access to other transportation corridors. The status of these state highways are generally lower than the major state highways in terms of maintenance and upgrades. There are also limitations to major widening projects to the presence of many homes directly abutting the right-of-way. Furthermore, criteria for the issuance of highway occupancy permits is directly controlled by Penn DOT whose criteria is viewed as rather permissive.

➤ **Legal Issues, including codes and case law**

Any potential changes to land use regulations must be in complete compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code and any case law established by recent court decisions. This limitation is proper, but it hinders, in some cases, the ability to effectively address concerns of the Township. For example, in order to impose exaction's to developers on traffic impacts the Township must follow procedures of Article V-A of the MPC. This process itself can mean an initial commitment of a \$100,000 to perform the necessary planning studies. The township can initiate new and creative measures to effectively tackle complex planning issues, but must be prepared to defend their use and legality if challenged by a developer.

Glossary of terms and techniques to be used in implementing this plan

Performance Zoning

North Huntingdon has a limited performance zoning provision in its current zoning ordinance but only for R-3 and R-4 districts. Furthermore, the only resources to be protected are slopes in excess of 25%. When this option is used a developer may decrease the zoning classification standards for that area to the next lower classification if 50% or more of his/her land has slopes of 25% or more. Thus, the minimum lot size for R4 (40,000 sq. ft) would be reduced to the minimum lot size for R-3 (20,000 sq. ft). However, more resources in North Huntingdon could be protected by performance zoning techniques. Such techniques could result in the provision of more active and passive recreational opportunities, the preservation of significant amounts of open space and woodlands and provide for flexibility within a development plan to meet both Township and developer interests..

Unlike traditional zoning, performance zoning relies on a more specific list of quantifiable criteria which must be met by any proposed use. Standards may involve traffic generation and transportation improvements , the amount of prime farmland or other natural resources to be left undeveloped, or the allocation of required recreational land and open space. Typically, however, performance zoning is used to regulate the impact of development on the natural environment by permitting a full range of dwelling unit types so long as three primary performance criteria are met

1. Natural Resource Protection;
2. Open Space Ratio, and;
3. Impervious Surface Ratio.

Conventional zoning regulations normally specify a minimum permitted lot size for each zoning district. Because almost any deviation from the specified minimum involves a reduction in density and therefore an economic penalty to the developer, minimum lot size requirements foster a recurring practice of laying out subdivisions with little or no attention to principles of good design.

In order to maximize density, developers design a site by laying out a row of minimum sized lots along one property line. The process is repeated and streets inserted until the site is filled. This technique often ignores natural features of the land in a single-minded pursuit of maximizing the number of lots in the development.

Using Natural Resource Protection Provisions, standards are set for limiting the intrusion of developments into specified types of areas. An example of these provisions would be reducing the amount of allowed disturbance of areas of woodlands on a development parcel.

The open space ratio specifies, , the minimum percent of a tract that must be maintained in open uses within a development. This can apply to a housing plan through the provision of parkland and to a commercial plan through the provision of landscaped areas or plazas.

The impervious area ratio specifies the maximum percentage of a tract that may be covered with surfaces that do not absorb water (e.g. buildings, parking areas, driveways, roads, sidewalks, and any other areas in concrete, asphalt, or other materials that do not allow water to soak into the ground). This permits a wide range of dwelling types making it possible to accommodate the maximum number of dwelling units allowed by the zoning classification while meeting the natural resource protection requirements. It also allows a developer to respond quickly to changes in market conditions without obtaining a zoning change (to allow townhouses, for example). Although the performance zoning concept advocates that the complete range of dwelling types be permitted in all residential districts, in practice, some municipalities have used an abbreviated list. The performance zoning concept is usually implemented in a zoning ordinance as a permitted use in various residential districts. This is generally called a performance standard subdivision.

Performance zoning works best in planned residential and commercial developments where the “big picture” may be more important than specific zoning and subdivision standards. It is therefore recommended for use within this plan in the various proposed overlay districts and the PRD and PEDD districts of the zoning ordinance.

Overlay Zones

Using this technique, a set of zoning requirements that is described in the ordinance text and is mapped is imposed in addition to those of the underlying district. Developments within the overlay zone must conform to the requirements of both zones or the more restrictive of the two. It is usually employed to deal with special physical characteristics such as flood plains or steeply sloping areas, but it has other applications as well

This plan recommends the establishment of several overlay zones:

- (1) Environmentally Sensitive Overlay:** Includes Slopes greater than 25%; floodplains; wetlands, poor soil areas and undermined areas with insufficient cover
- (2) Commercial Transition Overlay:** Areas zoned residential but build-out with a majority of commercial uses
- (3) Route 30 Corridor Overlay:** Development directly abutting US Route 30

Clustering

In a cluster development, dwelling units are grouped on certain portions of a site and other areas in common or single ownership remain open and free from development. In a cluster residential subdivision, lots are smaller than in a conventional subdivision and clustered on those portions of the site best suited for development. Common or public open space is provided.

Clustering is an environmentally sound concept because it reduces infrastructure costs (the length of street and utility lines can be drastically reduced). The flexible location of buildings permits designs that save more energy than do conventional designs. Although the cluster concept might seem to suggest that a cluster subdivision be developed to the same overall density as a conventional subdivision, only with a different pattern of development, many ordinances allow cluster subdivisions to include more units. The shape, size and topographic limitations of the site prevent most conventional subdivision designs from achieving the maximum number of lots that theoretically could be platted. In most instances, the flexible open space of a cluster subdivision allows the maximum number of lots permissible under the ordinance.

Clustering is most often seen in planned residential developments. There are several ways to compute the amount of common or public open space provided in a cluster subdivision. One approach requires open space to at least equal the sum total of the lot-size reductions allowed for each of the lots. Another approach simply requires some minimum percentage of the gross site area (e.g. 50%) to be devoted to open space, regardless of the lot-size reduction allowed.

Chapter 3. Township Planning History and Background

Early History

1. Our Earliest Settlers

North Huntingdon Township was settled from the eastern and western ends at approximately the same time. The area that later became known as Irwin was the dividing line between the two sections. The German settlement was on the east and the Scotch-Irish was on the west. In the German settlement the schools were operated by the Lutheran church, and the German language was taught exclusively. When some progressive members advocated the teaching of English, it caused a conflict that almost broke up the church.

The western or Scotch-Irish Presbyterian settlement occurred largely in the areas of Circleville, Cavitt's Mills, and Robbin's Station. The first white settlers in what is now North Huntingdon Township were Mr. and Mrs. Mathias Cowan, who came in a covered cart in which they lived until building a cabin in the wilderness. Soon after their arrival, Mrs. Cowan's brother, Abner Gray, was captured by the Indians.

Among the earliest settlers were Colonel John Irwin and his brother, James, the Scotch-Irish progenitors of the Irwin family. After arrival in what later became North Huntingdon Township, Colonel Irwin began trading with the Indians. He took up a large tract that included the land on which the present borough of Irwin stands. His brother James settled on the site of Jacksonville (Jacktown). James' son John founded the town of Irwin. Not long after the arrival of the Irwins, a large number of other Scotch-Irish Presbyterians settled along Brush Creek and to the north. Among these were the Boyds, Marshalls, Corrys, McCormicks, Osbornes, Simpsons, Temples, Wilsons, and Shaws. Most of them came after the Revolution and before 1796.

The Township of Huntingdon was founded on April 6, 1773. At the same time newly formed Westmoreland County was subdivided by the townships of Fairfield, Donegal, Hempfield, Pitt, Tyrone, Springhill, Menallen, Rostraver, and Armstrong. The incorporation took place at the first regular session of the Hannastown Court meeting in Robert Hanna's log hotel. The first county seat was located on the Forbes Trail three and a half miles northeast of the present town of Greensburg. Named after a place in England, Huntingdon's boundaries began at the mouth of Brush Run where it empties into Brush Creek. It went along Byerly's Path to Braddock's Road; then continued to the lines that marked the township's of Mount Pleasant, Tyrone, and Pitt. Huntingdon was later divided into smaller townships of North Huntingdon, East Huntingdon, and Sewickly.

Shortly after Pontiac's War and the Battle of Bushy Run, a settlement known as Fort WalTour was started in the vicinity of Strawpump and Penglyn. Included among these early settlers were the Marchands, Studebakers, Whiteheads, Willards, Walthours, Sams, Sowashes, Harrolds, Millers, and Kunkles. Many of these early pioneers were of German extraction.

After the Revolutionary War there were disputes over whether Westmoreland was a part of Virginia or Pennsylvania. Governor Dunmore of Virginia, who claimed the area as part of Virginia, sent raiding parties of Indians and whites dressed as Indians to plague settlers of this region. Frequent attacks and massacres occurred in Huntingdon during the period known as Dunmore's War. Blockhouses were constructed throughout the area to protect the settlers during Indian attacks. Attacks occurred at Fort Walthour, Colonel Irwin's trading post at Brush Hill, Marshall's home at Circleville, the Brush Creek Lutheran Church, Davis's home, and Bryn Mawr. The dispute reached its peak with the burning of Hannastown in 1782.

Violence erupted again in the township during the 1790's preceding the Whiskey Rebellion. Farmers demonstrated against a tax on the distillation of whiskey, and levied for the purpose of obtaining funds to help pay the Revolutionary War debt. A society known as "Tom the Tinker" threatened local residents who paid the tax by sabotaging stills. One of the well known journalists who spoke out against the whiskey tax was George Scull, founder of the Pittsburgh Gazette (now called the Pittsburgh Post Gazette).

Huntingdon's principle stream was Brush Creek, the famous tributary during the seventeen hundreds in the Battle of Bushy Run during Pontiac's Conspiracy. North Huntingdon claimed it when the original township was divided. The first mills in the western part of the colonies were located on the banks of Brush Creek.

Until 1852, when the Pennsylvania Railroad was constructed, North Huntingdon's chief industry was farming. After that, for more than three quarters of a century it became one of the leading townships in the production of bituminous coal.

2. King Coal

The arrival of "King Coal" made a vast and permanent change in North Huntingdon Township. Railroads were built to transport coal. The towns of Irwin, Larimer, Hahntown, Westmoreland City, and others were built near the mines to house the incoming miners. In 1860, North Huntingdon Township was a farming community of 3,000 people, but by 1900, over 10,000 people lived here, with 1600 working in the coal mines. In 1914, at the peak of employment, 28,686 coal

miners were employed in Westmoreland County, over one in every ten people in the county at the time, and over thirty-three tons of coal were mined.

Coal was first used in this area by British soldiers at Fort Pitt before 1760. Coal was mined by the Guffeys and shipped in flatboats down the river to be sold in Pittsburgh as early as 1819, and small surface mines were operated by local farmers to supply their own needs. The coming of railroads allowed coal to become a major product. It allowed coal to be cheaply transported to cities to generate energy and make living more comfortable.

The first railroad was built in the township in 1852. The first coal mine was opened in 1854 by Thomas A. Scott who was later to become the President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The old "North Side" or "Oak Grove" was the first mine. It was a slope mine, sloping into the coal seam in the hillside of North Irwin, just to the North of the Irwin railroad station. In 1854, the Westmoreland Coal Company's Larimer slope mine was opened. Pulling two wheeled carts out of a slope mine was a slow way of removing coal. A faster method was drilling a shaft straight down some 200 feet to the coal seam and hoisting the coal out with steam power as was then being done in Wales, England. The first mine shaft sunk in the Pittsburgh coal region was east of Irwin at Shafton. In 1857, Hays, who owned the land east of the Union Cemetery, Warden, who owned between the cemetery and Irwin, and Shaw, who owned the land North of Brush Creek formed the Shafton Coal Company, which was sold to the Westmoreland Coal Company in 1880. The "Penn Shaft" of Shafton was located on the North side of present Rt. 993, about 200 feet east of Lime St. Other shaft mines were quickly opened.

After the mines were opened, men were needed to work in them. They came from many countries; first from England, Wales, and the German mines. These first miners were generally made bosses because they spoke English and knew mining. Later, around 1890, the Irish and Scandinavians came here. Tenth Street in Irwin had a Swede Lutheran Church. With jobs to be had in the "New World" a flood of immigrants came from southern and eastern Europe to work in the mines. Passage was cheap. In 1904 passage to America was ten dollars, and Coal Companies paid agents two dollars per man to get workers. The work was hard. Miners were only paid for the usable coal they dug. Life in Europe was harder and most miners stayed to help build America.

Wages were low compared to modern wages, but it was a better living than in Europe for most miners. In 1854, wages were thirty cents per ton of usable coal, loaded into a twelve and a half bushel (half a ton) mining car. Miners did not get paid for slate or coal powder. In 1872, the wage went up to seventy-five cents per ton, but the panic of 1873 and the oversupply of coal cut the wages to fifty cents per ton or two cents per bushel in 1876.

Early miners were singers. There were long periods of waiting underground for the coal train to come, and singing helped to kill the loneliness of working underground. Typical was a song they sung about the 1876 wage cut.

"Oh the bosses tricks of '76 they met with some success
Until the hand of God came down and made them do with less. They robbed the
honest miner lad and drunk his flowin' bowl. Through poverty we were compelled
to dig them two cent coal"

In 1889, the average daily wage for a Pennsylvania soft coal miner was \$1.85. Miners did not work a full work year. At times they worked less than 100 days. The coal miner laborer was paid ten cents per hour for this twelve hour day. In 1900 the day was reduced to ten hours, and in 1912 to an eight hour day.

The political power of the mine owners in North Huntingdon Township cannot be overestimated. By 1900, over one half of the male voters (there were no female voters then) worked in the coal mines. There were no organized mine unions. No federal laws protected the worker. The coal company owned the newspapers, so the mine owners policies prevailed. An example of the politics of that era is the fact that many miners got their first ride in a gasoline automobile in the 1908 elections. They would be carried from one mine town to another in an open car, told what name to sign in the voting place, vote for the mine owner's choice, then ride in the motorcar to the next mine town. A long struggle freed the miner's from the owner's yoke. Strikes came in 1894, 1897, 1910 (which lasted one and a half years), 1919 (when John L. Lewis was jailed by President Wilson), and in 1922 from April 1 to August 7. Large wage gains and improved working conditions resulted under President Franklin Roosevelt's administration with the passage of favorable union laws.

(above reprinted from the North Huntingdon Township Web Page)

RECENT HISTORY

3. Post World War II Developments

Housing

At the conclusion of World War II several national and regional trends began affecting the development patterns of the Township. Veterans returning from the war took advantage of Federal G.I. Bill Benefits, often married and started families and looked for housing with Federal FHA or VA mortgages. This upward mobility led many to seek new opportunities outside of the cities and older inner-ring suburban areas. This trend started to affect North Huntingdon in the 1950's with mass migration of persons moving into the Township from the older river-steel communities of McKeesport, Glassport, Duquense, Clairton, etc. The

township offered vast open spaces, less crowding and industrial pollution, and most important to many a backyard with a basic, but new, split level single house at a cost of roughly \$9000.

These trends continued in earnest in the 1960's as cities became viewed as troubled areas in decline, while the newer suburbs were viewed as the answer to the American dream. Large housing plan with filled with smaller tracts and roads dominated the scene. They were mostly clustered near Route 30 close to existing sewer lines. Federal environmental protection laws enacted in the 1970's made these sewer lines and plants obsolete and affected development in the following decade while remedies were being constructed.

Along with the limitations on sewer capacity, the regional economic downturn (particularly with steel) affected development patterns in the 1980's. Lack of employment and double digit interest rates stifled the housing markets and investment. It was not until the early 1990's that this trend of decline was reversed. We continue, at this time, to experience consistent housing growth with more expensive and larger homes being constructed each year.

Commercial and Industrial Development

The economic base of the Township has changed drastically over the years. While at onset of the 20th century coal was literally king (see above), over the years this industry, as well as others which were present at the birth of the Township have disappeared. During the latter part of the 20th century small manufacturing operations became more prominent, particularly machining and tool and dye companies. The success of these firms varied with the economic times. More stable job creation measures came as a result of the development of both private and public industrial/office parks during the last 3 decades. These parks featured smaller and cleaner operations with more emphasis on offices than production.

Commercial development has shifted from the central core (Borough of Irwin) to the Route 30 corridor over the last several decades. Increased traffic flow on Route 30 and its proximity to the Pennsylvania Turnpike has made it an attractive location for more transient auto-related businesses (car lots, restaurants, etc.). The 1960's and 70's saw the growth of the suburban strip centers with the Norwin Town Square, Norwin Hills and North Huntingdon Square. Development pressures continue on Route 30 as new housing markets and ideal location inflate land values and create market demand for commercial development.

Planning Responses

To be forthright pro-active planning within the Township appears to have been more of an afterthought during the past 30 years. It was not until 1958 that the Township adopted its first Subdivision Ordinance, and 1964 when the first Zoning Ordinance was developed. Accordingly, many developments approved during the most rapid period of Township growth were not governed by any regulatory land use mechanisms.

Furthermore, the Subdivision Ordinance adopted in 1958 is still the same document that is in place today, despite the adoption of the Municipalities Planning Code by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1968, numerous court decisions changing land use regulations and the existence newer and more innovative engineering and planning practices occurring during that period. There has been adoption of stormwater and Grading Ordinances over the last decade, but these are also in need of review.

The Zoning Ordinance was amended several times, the last major adoption occurring in 1991. Since then, there has been periodic amendments on special and new issues facing the Township.

It is for the above reasons that it is critical that the land use regulations be immediately updated to be compliant not only with laws and practices, but to be made consistent with the goals and objectives of this plan.

The last adopted Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1974, eons ago in terms of the development patterns that have changed in the Township. The development and adoption of this plan is essential in that it is an update, but it establishes pro-active planning as the rule, rather than the exception, as the Township faces future complex development issues.

Chapter 4: Public Participation and Input

In order to have credibility, a comprehensive plan requires an aggressive approach to gain public awareness, input and "buy-in," during the time when the plan is being prepared. This serves many benefits, including:

- (1) education on the planning process, the issues affecting the Township, and the complexities of the potential solutions;
- (2) perspectives and opinions from citizens on the issues affecting the Township;
- (3) support for the planning process and the recommendations of the plan, prior to adoption

The citizen input process utilized in the development of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan involved several components, including:

- Establishment of a Comprehensive Plan Working Group, which had weekly public meetings, and included among its members three citizens;
- Public information reports on the planning process at meetings of the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners, as well as news stories in the local papers;
- Inviting key stakeholders to Working Group meetings to gain perspectives on specialized topics;
- Conducting one-on-one, key-person interviews, with community leaders;
- Development of a community survey which was distributed through a local weekly newspaper, community organizations and random mailings;
- Distribution of the community survey to high school seniors at Norwin High School, and conducting two focus group sessions with senior government classes;
- Presentation meeting of the Draft Plan and a Public Open Forum held at the Townhouse that included "break-out" sessions on four planning issues to gain feedback on draft plan objectives;
- Formal public meetings and hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners;
- Distribution of the final recommended plan to affiliated agencies, neighboring communities and targeted individuals to gain final input before adoption.

As a result of the above approaches, the comprehensive plan process and the recommendations contained herein have gained substantial credibility among the public officials and the citizens as a whole. This credibility has particular importance at the time when the recommendations will be considered for adoption by the Board of Commissioners.

The Community Survey

The Community Survey represents the most significant public input tool used during this process. The survey (contained in this chapter), was developed by the Working Group to both engage citizens in the process and gain opinions on a variety of planning related issues. It was made short (two pages) to not inhibit participation, and included both ranking score and general questions on likes and dislikes on the Township.

It was decided that the survey should have mass distribution, rather than utilizing a strict random-scientific sampling. This was done to maximize public input. The survey was publicized extensively by the news media, which included a copy of the survey appearing in the weekly, Norwin Star. Besides surveys being made available at the Townhouse, they were also distributed to every community organization in the Township. In order to gain a balanced response, surveys were distributed to certain under-represented areas through both random mailings and by door-to-door.

As a result of these efforts, a total of 468 households participated in the survey. Based upon the population of the Township (households), this represents a survey response with a sampling error of approximately 5%. As it is illustrated in the results, the respondents represent a very accurate sampling of the Township, in terms of household type and location.

Survey Questions and Results

The survey was divided into five sections, which were:

- (1) background demographic data on respondent
- (2) opinions on community facilities (level of satisfaction)
- (3) opinions on housing
- (4) opinions on growth and development
- (5) qualitative responses on likes and dislikes within the Township

1. Background of Respondents

All areas of the Township were well represented in the survey results. This was measured through responses by ward (Table 4-2), and comparison of demographic data of survey respondents (Table 4-1) to known Township wide demographic data (age, residency, place of work, and household size). All survey

data correlated well with Township wide data, leading to the conclusion that the survey was not biased in its results.

2. Community Facilities

Community facilities include such items as streets, parks, schools, public safety and utilities. Opinions on these facilities were measured on a sliding scale of 1 to 10, where the "1" response represented a "very dissatisfied" response level and a "10" response represented a "very satisfied" response level.

The overall survey results for this grouping of questions are indicated in Table 4-3. As it can be seen, the results clearly indicate a high level of satisfaction for 4 areas (fire/ems; police; schools and sewers), a mid-range level of satisfaction for 4 areas (parks quality and availability; and condition of "your" street and Township streets), and a lower level of satisfaction for two areas (community and recreation centers and community sidewalks).

Responses to each survey question are detailed in the tables contained in this Chapter. An analysis of these responses are included later within this Chapter.

3. Housing

Housing questions within the survey focused on housing appearance, availability of housing for the elderly, affordable housing and rental housing and the quality of rental housing. A summary of these responses is included in Table 4-4.

As it can be seen, most responses in this grouping of questions fell within the mid-range of 5 out of 10, with only, the housing appearance question earning slightly higher than average in terms of satisfaction. The areas of most concern were the affordability of housing and the availability of housing for the elderly. Rental housing, in terms of quality and availability elicited little response or opinion beyond the mid-range.

4. Growth and Development

Questions concerning growth and development included opinions on the type and location of housing, commercial and industrial growth, as well as the preservation of natural resources on the 1 to 10 satisfaction scale, as well as questions on the amount of housing, commercial and industrial growth.

The sliding scale questions, revealed little variation in terms of opinions on type and location of growth, with the average responses near the 5.0 mid-range. The type of housing growth yielded the highest level of satisfaction, while the type of industrial growth yielded the lowest level of satisfaction.

The results on the question of the amount of growth provided a more stirring contrast (Tables 4-28 to 4-30 and 4-36). Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that the level of housing growth was much more of a problem than the levels of commercial growth and industrial growth. Commercial growth opinions were almost evenly distributed, while industrial growth responses indicated that there should be more efforts to encourage this type of development than to control it.

5. Responses on the “Reasons you like NHT” and “Things you would Change about NHT”

These two questions solicited open-ended responses asking which “two things” residents thought were the most positive and negative things about the Township. Many residents included more than 2 comments, while some offered less or none. Responses were grouped into similar categories (i.e., traffic concerns, location) in order to establish trends in answers.

As it can be seen by the list of positive things about the Township (see Table 4-31), overwhelmingly, respondents viewed the location of the Township as its greatest asset. This included those who specifically mentioned assets like the Turnpike and Route 30, as well as living close to where you worked.

Also ranking high, included several “quality of life” indicators such as: sense of community, quality of people, country atmosphere and clean and quiet areas. These responses tend to enforce the views of North Huntingdon as being a nice place to live.

Finally, respondents gave substantial positive views on the safety of the Township, reinforcing the quality of the police, fire and EMS departments. The affordability of the Township as a place to live is reflected in the view that one of the greatest assets of the Township are its reasonable tax rates.

The accompanying questions on “things you would change about the township” elicited more varied responses from general items to “fix my road!” (Table 4-32). The highest response of more/improved parks and recreation facilities seems to be an indicator of the influx of new families in the Township. The second item on the list is in direct response to the rapid housing growth of the last 7-8 years, with many respondents adamant that there should be no more housing growth allowed in the Township. This corresponds with the high response to preserve natural areas and open space. Community facilities improvements were well represented on this list (beyond the parks). Many respondents indicated a desire to improve roads, particularly problems on Route 30 and other state roads within the Township. The quality and amount of commercial development within the Township was also mentioned by many residents, which is in contrast to those who saw over-commercialization as a problem.

Analysis of Responses by Demographic Characteristics

This chapter includes an analysis of responses by a variety of demographic characteristics, including, residency location; children in household; length of residency in the Township and age. The purpose of this analysis is to identify trends and target issues of particular importance (or non-importance) to various residents.

The tables listing these responses for each question are included at the end of this chapter. There are several overwhelming trends apparent from these survey results:

1. Persons who have lived in the Township for a longer period of time (10 years or more) have a more negative view of many Township community facilities than those who have lived in the Township less than 10 years; (Table 4-33)
2. Persons living in the historic areas (older settlements) and rural areas of the Township have more concerns about Township growth and housing issues than persons living in other areas of the Township (Table 4-34)
3. Persons in the 45-64 age group have the most concern about the availability of elderly housing

These tables also include charts that break-down the percentage of responses within the sliding scale range of 1 to 10. They are grouped in categories of 1 to 3 (generally dissatisfied), 4 to 6 (average level of satisfaction) and 7 to 10 (generally satisfied). According to this grouping the top three in each of the above categories are as follows:

Generally Dissatisfied

1. Community Sidewalks	48.5%
2. Community Centers	33.3%
3. Preservation of Natural Resources	32.3%

Average Level of Satisfaction

1. Type of Industrial Growth	45.7%
2. Location of Commercial Growth	42.1%
3. Quality of Parks and Open Space	40.4%

Generally Satisfied

1. Fire and EMS	82.7%
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2. Police	67.1%
3. Schools	64.3%

The services questions resulting in the highest level of satisfaction (least amount of "1 to 3 responses") are as follows:

1. Fire/EMS	98.9%
2. Police	95.9%
3. Sewer Quality	92.5%

Student Input

The plan is about the future of the Township. The future of the Township is a function of the younger persons living in the Township. Accordingly, surveys were distributed to senior government classes at Norwin High School. The average responses for each question are included in the tables at the end of this chapter. In general, the responses from students were more favorable (in terms of satisfaction) than the other respondents. (see Tables 38 -40).

Of particular interest was the differences and similarities between the student responses and the general household responses on the likes and dislikes on the Township. While location was overwhelmingly seen as the number one asset by the general households, it ranked relatively low as a response among students. The item mentioned most often by students as one of the things that needed to be changed was providing more things to do within the Township for teens. This was barely mentioned by the general households.

These themes were evident during two focus group sessions conducted with Advanced Placement Government Classes at Norwin High School in the Fall of 1999. Students responding to township issues in a free-form manner expressed concerns about their future in the Township both in terms of things to do now, and places to live once they finished college and wanted to enter the job market. Comments were made that there was not enough housing choices (apartments) for young adults and that North Huntingdon wasn't the place for dynamic job choices. Students in the class expressed concerns about the changing community landscape (new houses, less trees) that has occurred over the last few years. This was also expressed by those who have only recently moved into the Township.

PUBLIC FORUM

Over 100 Township residents participated at the public forum and information session on the Comprehensive Plan on December 8, 1999 at the North Huntingdon Townhouse. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a report to

the public on the findings of the survey and the overall goals of the plan, as well as obtain feedback on specific topics through conducting 4 break-out sessions. (housing; parks, recreation and environment; traffic, utilities and safety and business and economic development).

The format was open, but structured to review the draft goals, objectives and strategies of the plan. All comments were recorded and reviewed.. Items of particular concern or disagreement were so noted, and referred to the working group for consideration.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND OTHER COMMENTS

Public Hearings were conducted before the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners. Most testimony was favorable on the planing effort. Major changes resulting from the testimony included a revision to the proposed transitional district that provided more standards for the preservation of existing neighborhoods.

Table: 4-1: Background of Survey Respondents

Number of Households:	468
Age Breakdown:	
35 years or less:	11%
35 – 44 years:	25%
45-64 years:	41%
65 years or more:	23%
18 years or less:	81 respondents (Separate survey)
Household Size: (Average)	2.74
Households with Children:	38%
Households without Children:	62%
Residency:	
Less than 10 years:	19%
10 years or greater:	81%
Planning Sectors:	
Older Settlements:	16%
First Wave Suburbs:	41%
Rural North Huntingdon:	18%
Second Wave Suburbs:	13%
Unspecified:	13%

Table 4-2: Responses by Ward

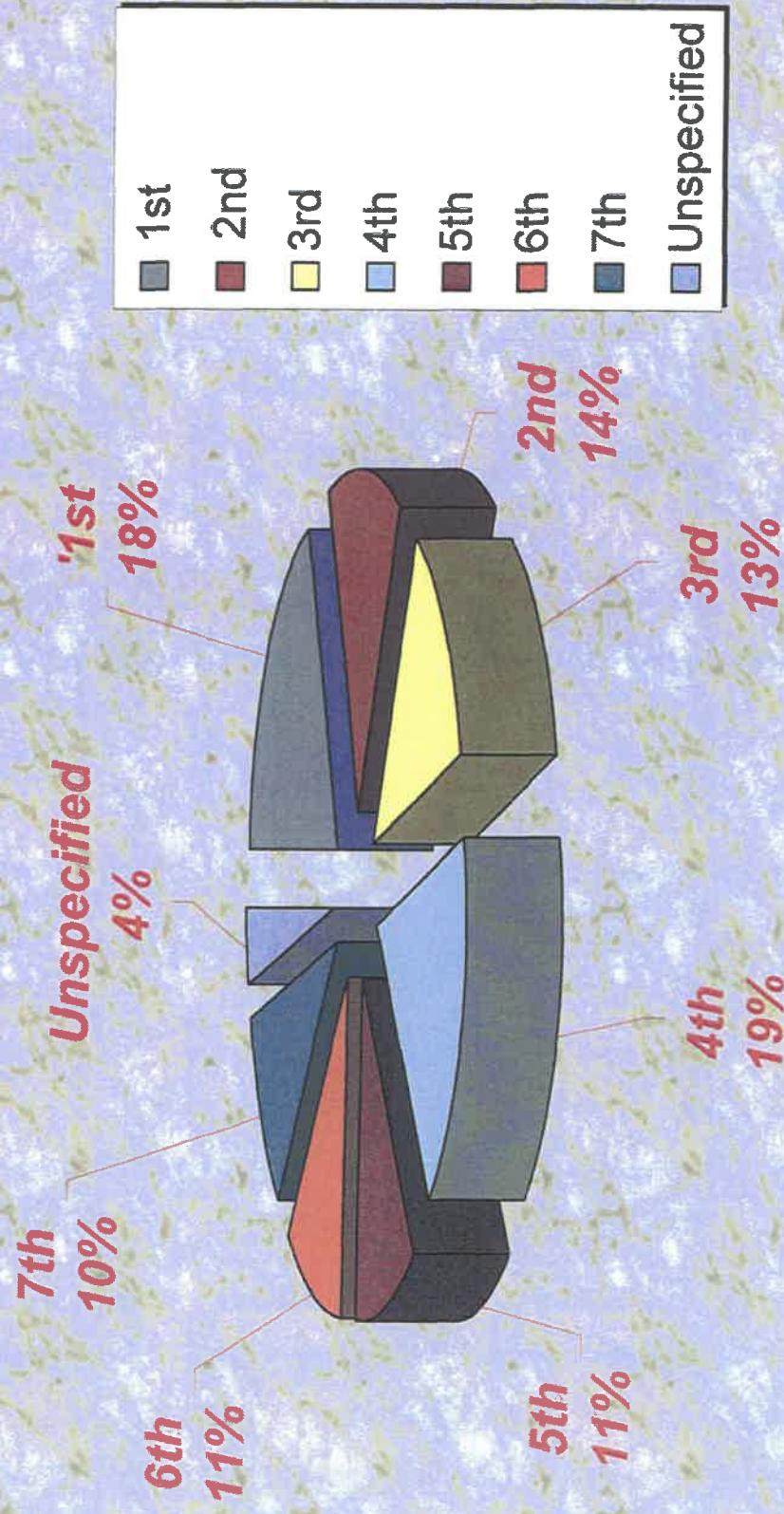


Table 4-3: Community Facilities

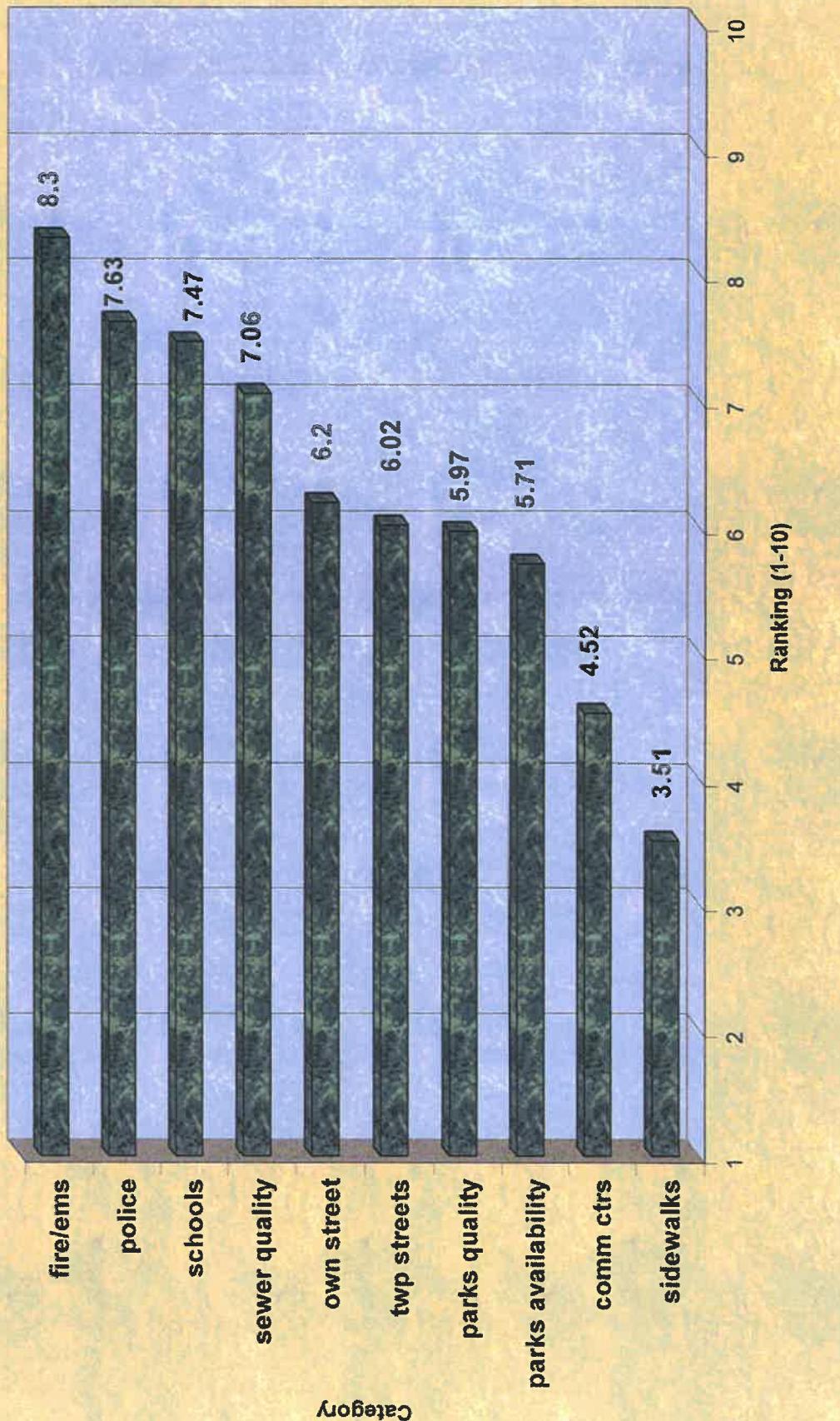


Table 4-4: Housing Questions

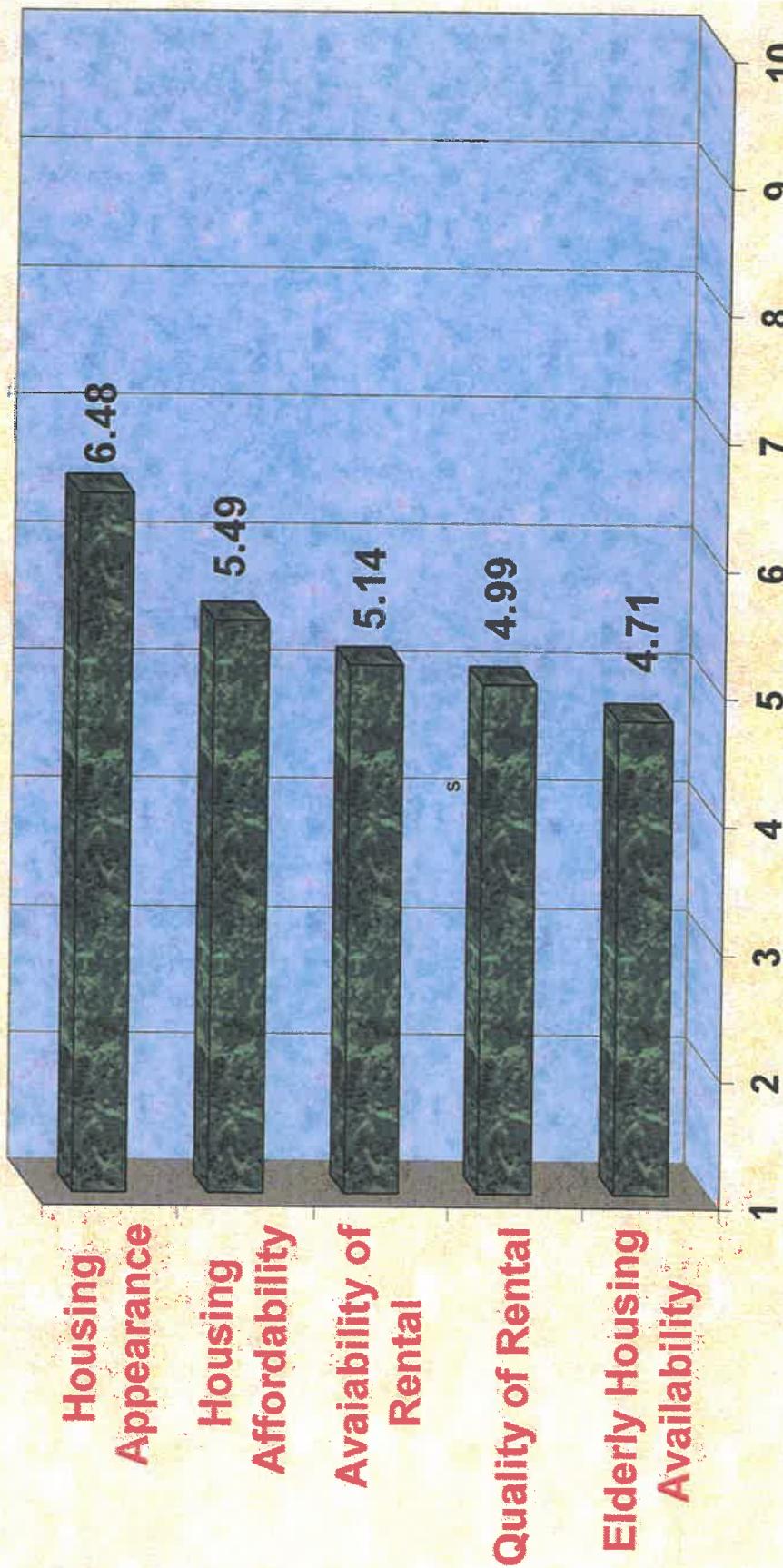


Table 4-5: Responses on Growth Questions

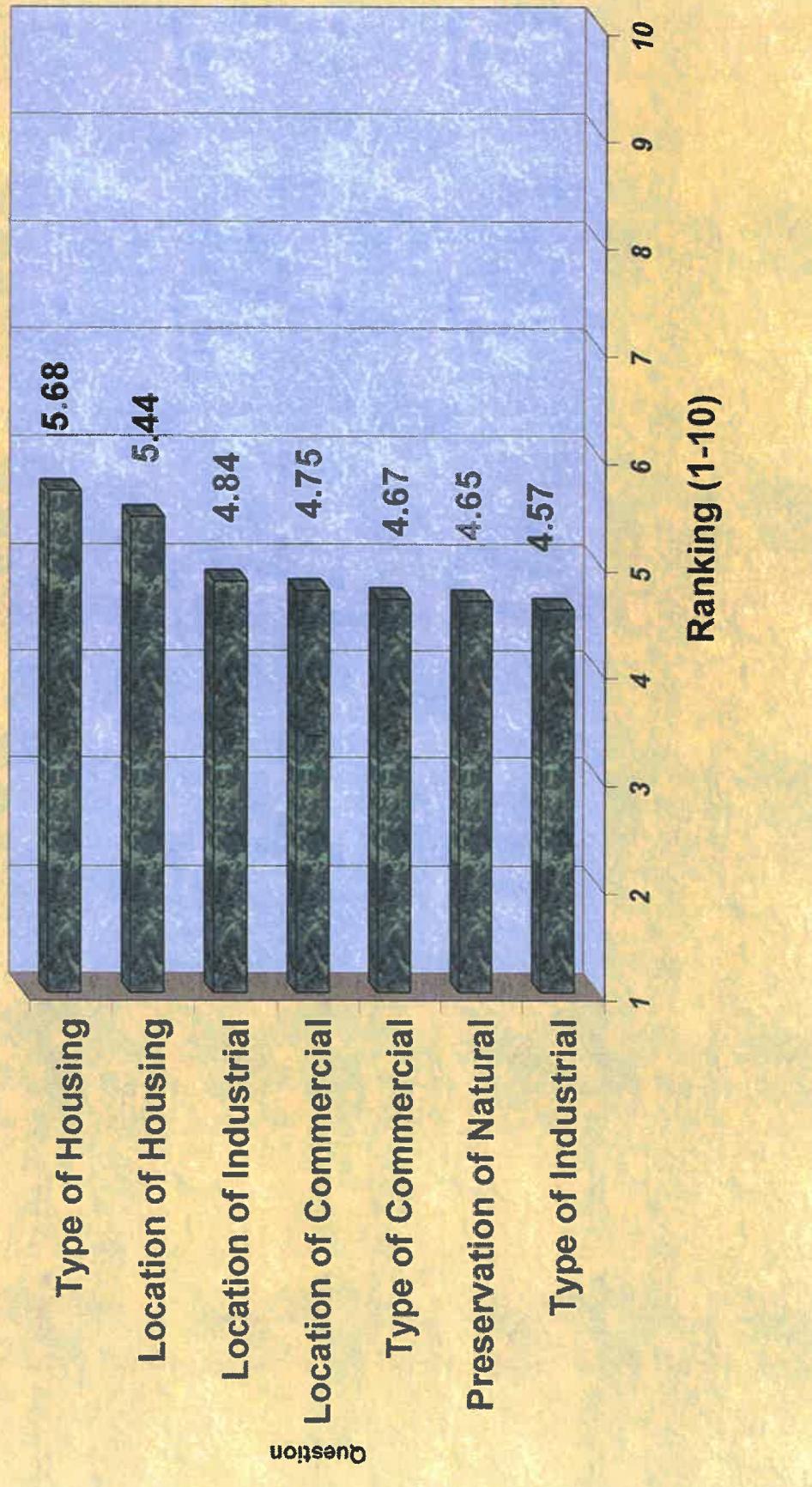


Table 4-6: Condition of Your Own Street

Overall	6.2
Historic North Huntingdon	4.95
First Wave Suburbs	6.58
Second Wave Suburbs	7.25
Rural North Huntingdon	5.68
Families with Children	6.48
Families without Children	6.04
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	7.09
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.99
Age	
Less than 35	6.98
35 - 44	6.34
45 - 64	5.72
65 and older	6.53
18 or less (students)	6.87

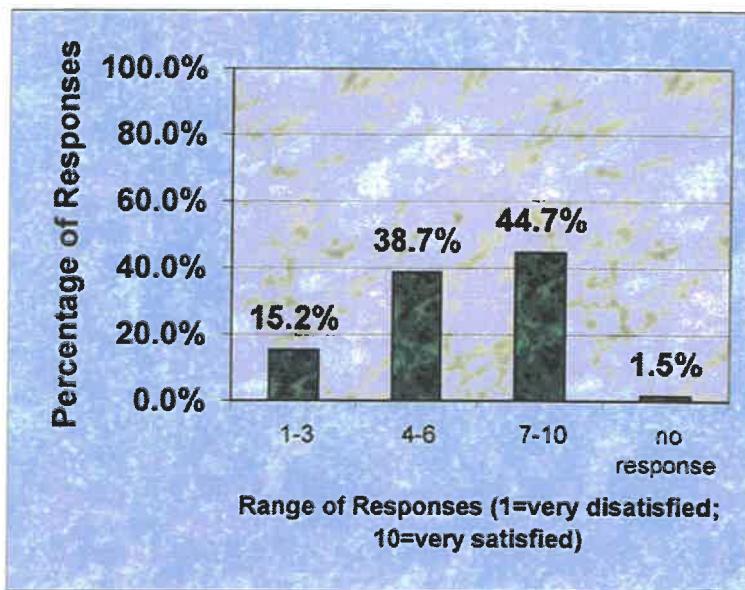


Table 4-7: Condition of Township Streets

Overall	6.01
Historic North Huntingdon	4.92
First Wave Suburbs	6.22
Second Wave Suburbs	6.33
Rural North Huntingdon	6.18
Families with Children	6.2
Families without Children	5.9
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	6.48
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.91
Age	
Less than 35	6.31
35 - 44	6.04
45 - 64	5.84
65 and older	6.15
18 or less (students)	5.2

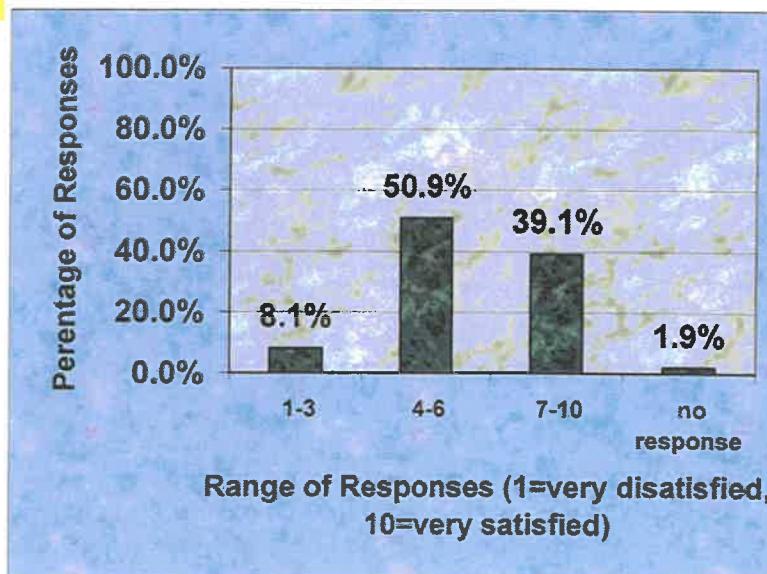


Table 4-8: Availability of Sidewalks

Overall	3.52
Historic North Huntingdon	3.28
First Wave Suburbs	3.37
Second Wave Suburbs	3.73
Rural North Huntingdon	3.69
Families with Children	3.68
Families without Children	3.41
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	3.78
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	3.46
Age	
Less than 35	4.09
35 - 44	3.6
45 - 64	3.13
65 and older	3.88
18 or less (students)	4.74

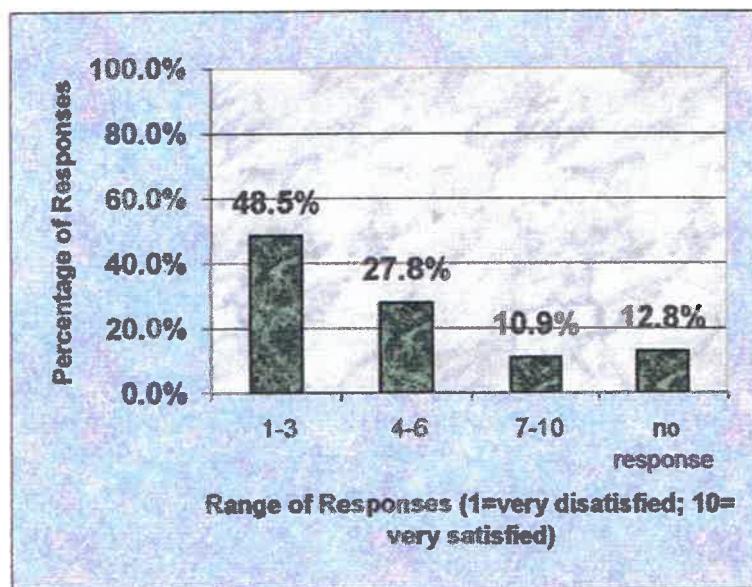


Table 4-9: Quality of Parks and Open Spaces

Overall	5.92
Historic North Huntingdon	5.78
First Wave Suburbs	5.46
Second Wave Suburbs	6.26
Rural North Huntingdon	5.84
Families with Children	5.69
Families without Children	6.12
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	6.12
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.91
Age	
Less than 35	5.85
35 - 44	5.63
45 - 64	5.86
65 and older	6.57
18 or less (students)	6.86

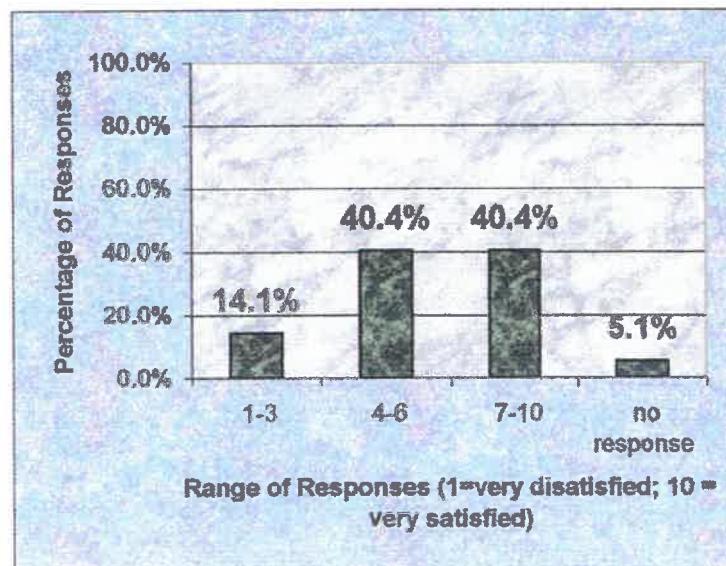


Table 4-10: Availability of Parks and Open Space

Overall	3.52
Historic North Huntingdon	5.59
First Wave Suburbs	5.63
Second Wave Suburbs	5.86
Rural North Huntingdon	5.84
Families with Children	5.41
Families without Children	5.87
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	5.93
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.62
Age	
Less than 35	5.28
35 - 44	5.47
45 - 64	5.63
65 and older	6.29
18 or less (students)	6.76

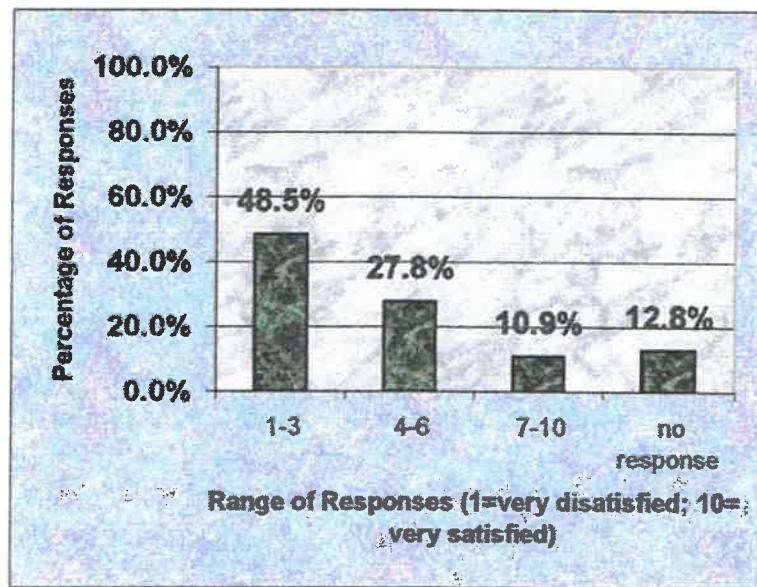


Table 4-11: Sewer Quality

Overall	5.92
Historic North Huntingdon	6.49
First Wave Suburbs	6.93
Second Wave Suburbs	7.86
Rural North Huntingdon	7.12
Families with Children	6.94
Families without Children	7.1
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	7.15
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	7.03
Age	
Less than 35	7.33
35 - 44	7.15
45 - 64	6.69
65 and older	7.39
18 or less (students)	6.96

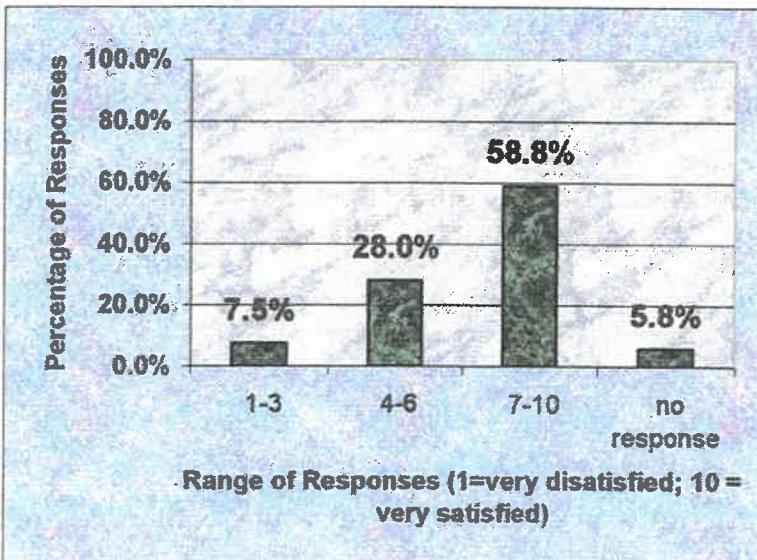


Table 4-12: School Quality

Overall	8.26
Historic North Huntingdon	7.31
First Wave Suburbs	7.32
Second Wave Suburbs	7.83
Rural North Huntingdon	7.59
Families with Children	7.26
Families without Children	7.54
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	8.07
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	7.3
Age	
Less than 35	7.68
35 - 44	7.31
45 - 64	7.16
65 and older	7.96
18 or less (students)	6.43

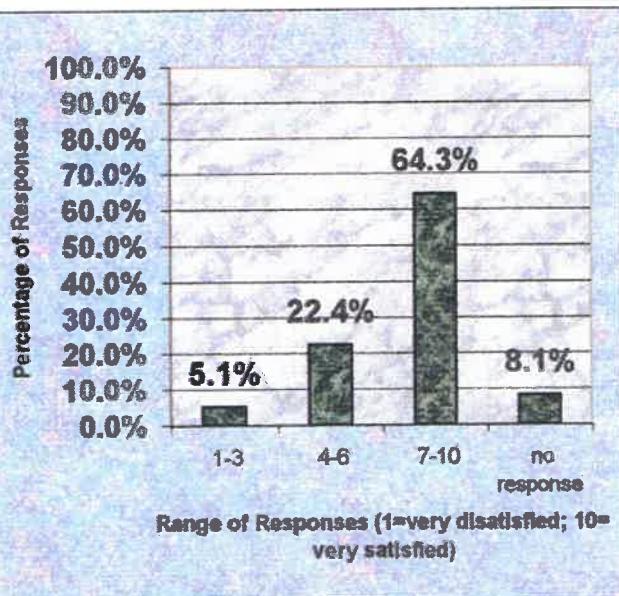


Table 4-13: Community Centers Quality

Overall	4.51
Historic North Huntingdon	4.63
First Wave Suburbs	4.45
Second Wave Suburbs	4.84
Rural North Huntingdon	4.43
Families with Children	4.28
Families without Children	4.66
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	4.67
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	4.47
Age	
Less than 35	4.56
35 - 44	4.42
45 - 64	4.19
65 and older	5.2
18 or less (students)	5.88

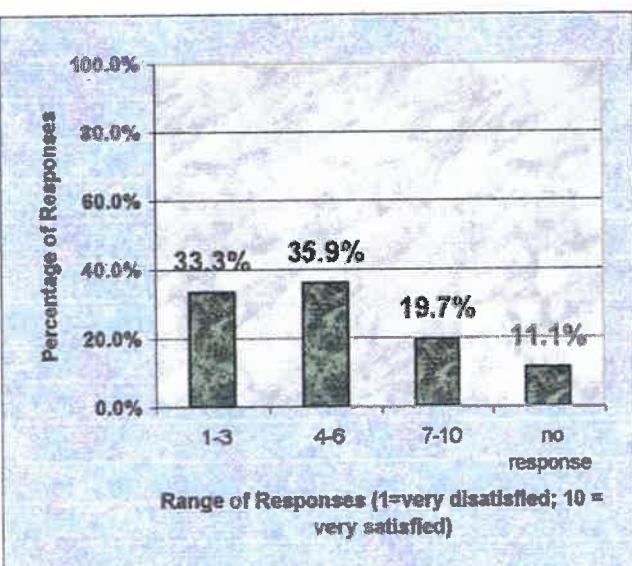


Table 4-14: Housing Appearance

Overall	6.56
Historic North Huntingdon	5.88
First Wave Suburbs	6.53
Second Wave Suburbs	7.27
Rural North Huntingdon	6.68
Families with Children	6.49
Families without Children	6.6
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	6.76
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	6.51
Age	
Less than 35	6.6
35 - 44	6.61
45 - 64	6.49
65 and older	6.6
18 or less (students)	7.33

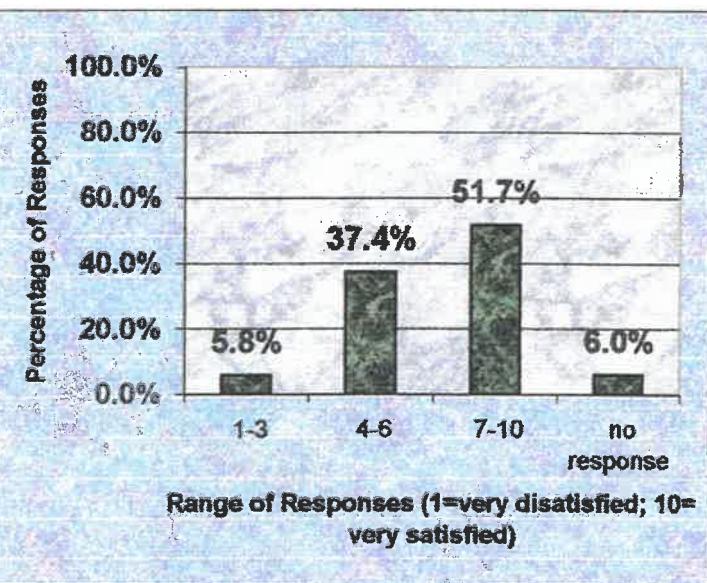


Table 4-15: Availability of Elderly Housing

Overall	4.68
Historic North Huntingdon	4.4
First Wave Suburbs	4.51
Second Wave Suburbs	4.59
Rural North Huntingdon	5.84
Families with Children	4.95
Families without Children	4.53
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	6.07
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	4.41
Age	
Less than 35	5.35
35 - 44	5.08
45 - 64	4.32
65 and older	4.66
18 or less (students)	6.82

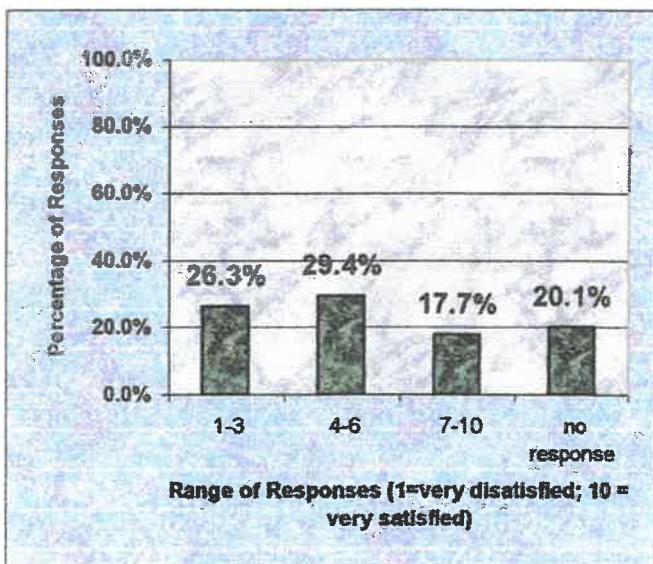


Table 4-16: Affordable Housing Availability

Overall	6.56
Historic North Huntingdon	4.76
First Wave Suburbs	5.26
Second Wave Suburbs	7
Rural North Huntingdon	5.53
Families with Children	5.87
Families without Children	5.17
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	6.38
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.24
Age	
Less than 35	5.61
35 - 44	5.88
45 - 64	5.35
65 and older	5.07
18 or less (students)	6.3

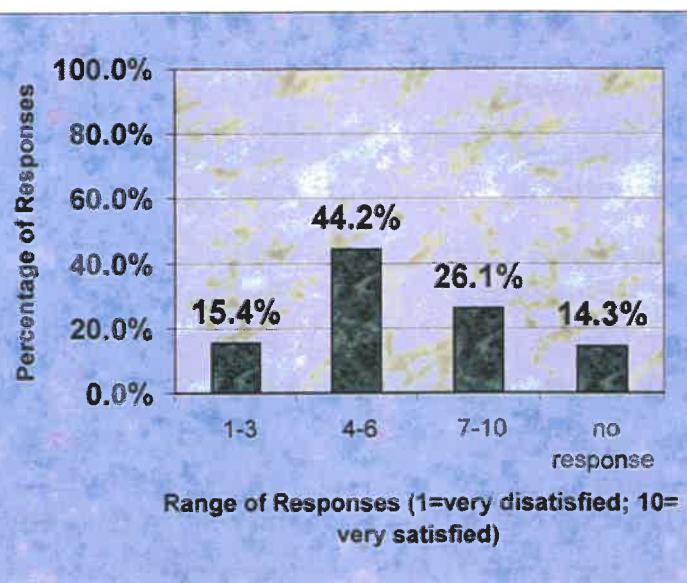


Table 4-17: Quality of Rental Housing

Overall	4.68
Historic North Huntingdon	4.45
First Wave Suburbs	4.99
Second Wave Suburbs	5.75
Rural North Huntingdon	5.02
Families with Children	5.4
Families without Children	4.74
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	5.66
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	4.86
Age	
Less than 35	4.89
35 - 44	5.41
45 - 64	4.88
65 and older	4.77
18 or less (students)	6.08

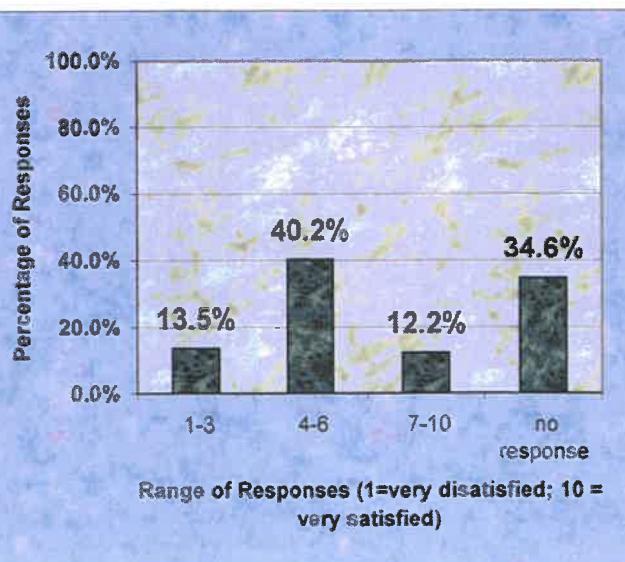


Table 4-18: Availability of Rental Housing

Overall	5.13
Historic North Huntingdon	4.83
First Wave Suburbs	5
Second Wave Suburbs	6.08
Rural North Huntingdon	5.29
Families with Children	5.52
Families without Children	4.91
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	5.87
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5
Age	
Less than 35	5.42
35 - 44	5.7
45 - 64	4.9
65 and older	4.85
18 or less (students)	6.04

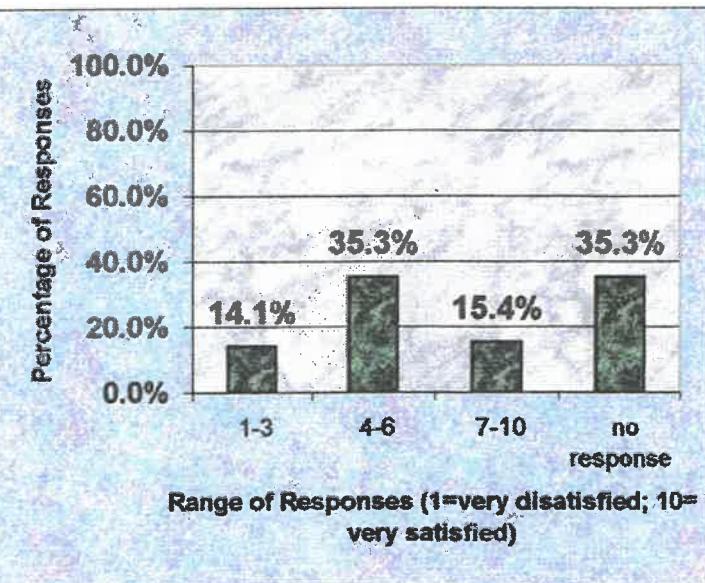


Table 4-19: Type of Housing Growth

Overall	5.68
Historic North Huntingdon	4.89
First Wave Suburbs	5.48
Second Wave Suburbs	7.12
Rural North Huntingdon	5.77
Families with Children	5.86
Families without Children	5.56
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	6.80
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.42
Age	
Less than 35	6.08
35 - 44	6.09
45 - 64	5.46
65 and older	5.41
18 or less (students)	6.84

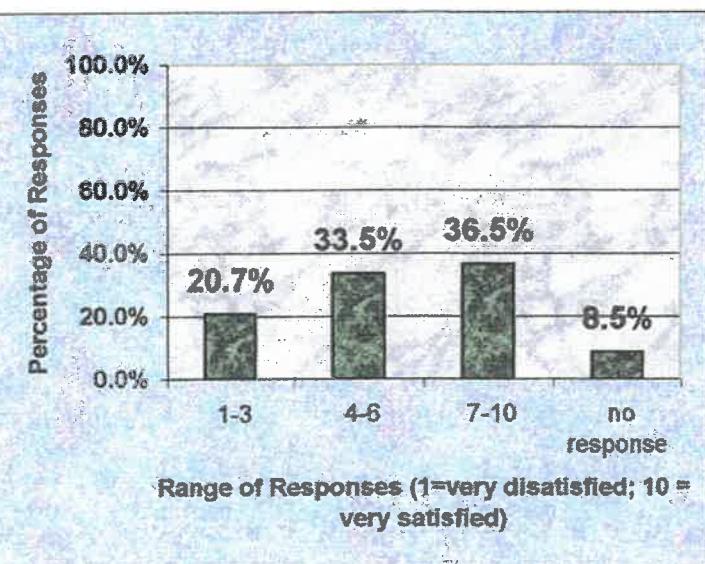


Table 4-20: Quality of Fire and EMS Services

Overall	8.26
Historic North Huntingdon	8.26
First Wave Suburbs	8.3
Second Wave Suburbs	8.25
Rural North Huntingdon	8.3
Families with Children	8.08
Families without Children	8.37
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	8.04
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	8.3
Age	
Less than 35	8.13
35 - 44	8.09
45 - 64	8.25
65 and older	8.31
18 or less (students)	8.04

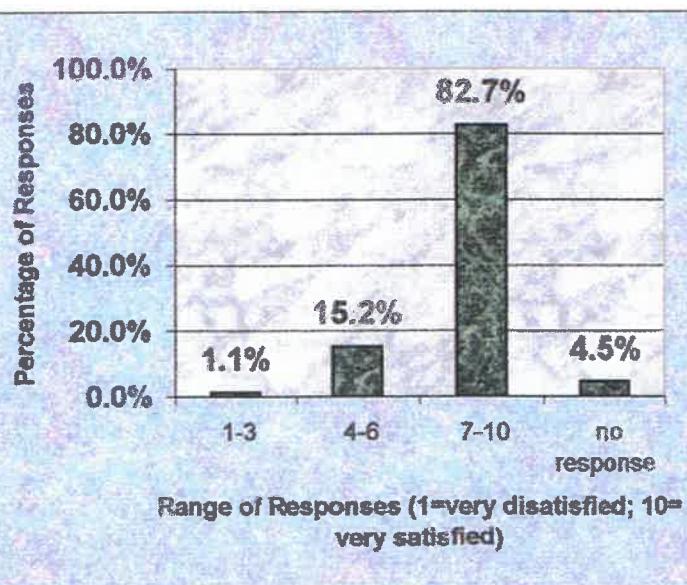


Table 4-21: Quality of Police

Overall	7.6
Historic North Huntingdon	7.08
First Wave Suburbs	7.94
Second Wave Suburbs	7.68
Rural North Huntingdon	7.92
Families with Children	7.46
Families without Children	7.69
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	7.68
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	7.59
Age	
Less than 35	7.91
35 - 44	7.46
45 - 64	7.41
65 and older	7.95
18 or less (students)	6.84

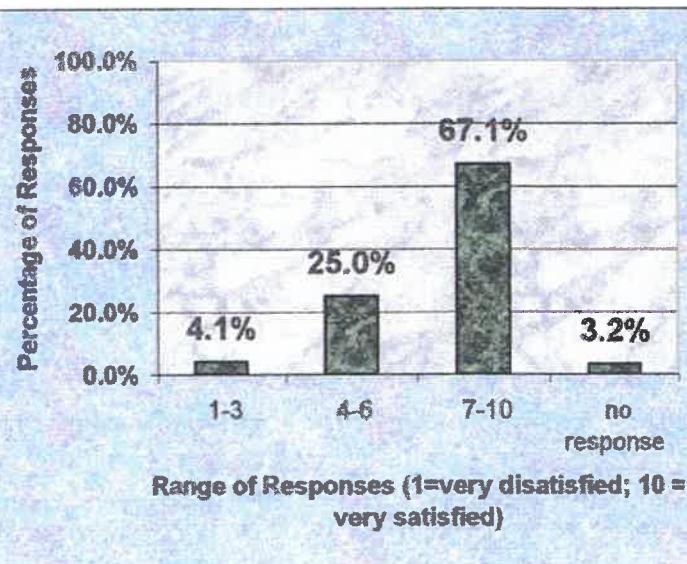


Table 4-22: Location of Housing Growth

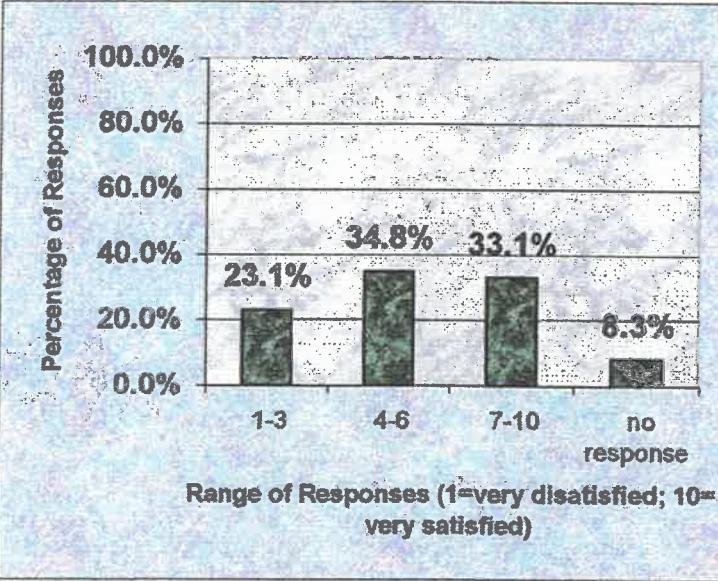
Overall	5.44	
Historic North Huntingdon	4.44	
First Wave Suburbs	5.27	
Second Wave Suburbs	6.74	
Rural North Huntingdon	5.42	
Families with Children	5.61	
Families without Children	5.33	
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	6.63	
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.18	
Age		
Less than 35	5.65	
35 - 44	5.67	
45 - 64	5.23	
65 and older	5.46	
18 or less (students)	6.27	

Table 4-23: Type of Commercial Growth

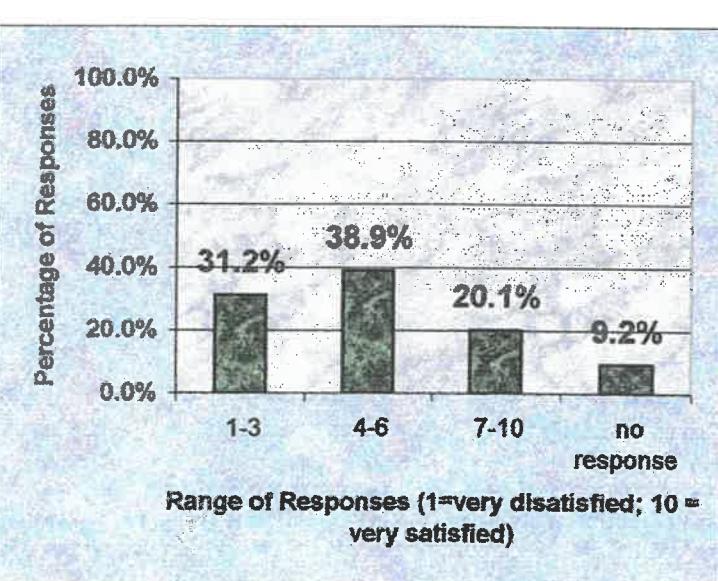
Overall	4.68	
Historic North Huntingdon	4.23	
First Wave Suburbs	4.65	
Second Wave Suburbs	5.16	
Rural North Huntingdon	4.66	
Families with Children	4.67	
Families without Children	4.68	
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	5.42	
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	4.5	
Age		
Less than 35	4.87	
35 - 44	4.66	
45 - 64	4.55	
65 and older	4.83	
18 or less (students)	6.48	

Table 4-24: Location of Commercial Growth

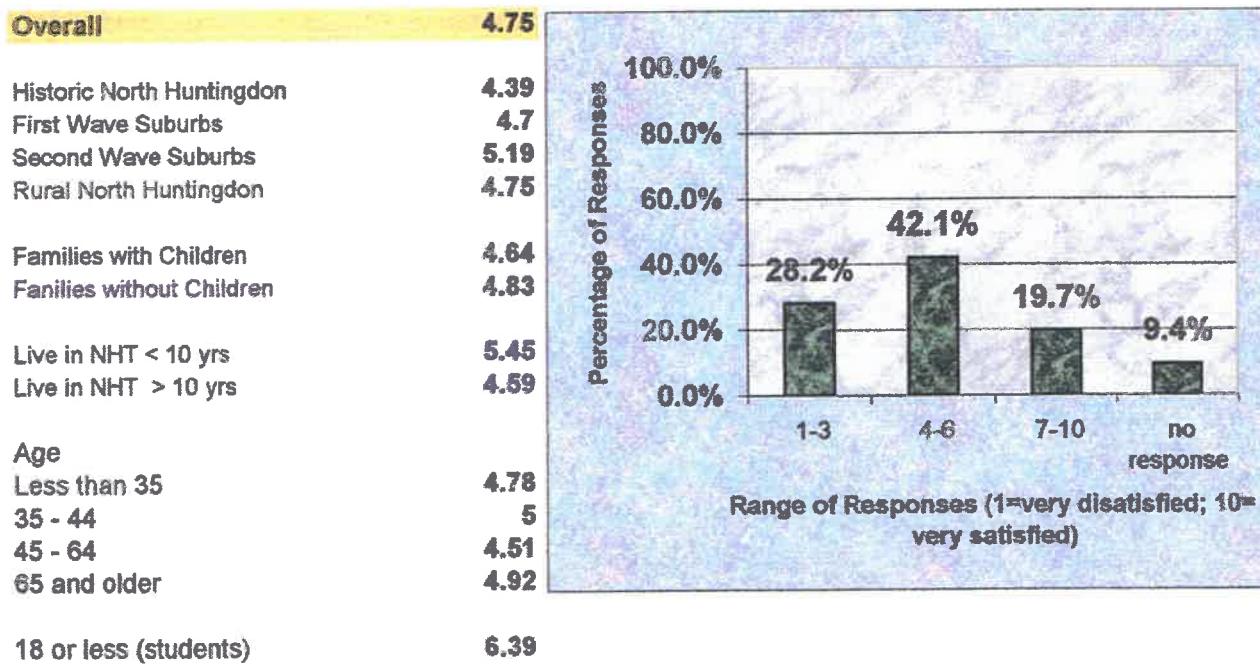


Table 4-25: Type of Industrial Growth

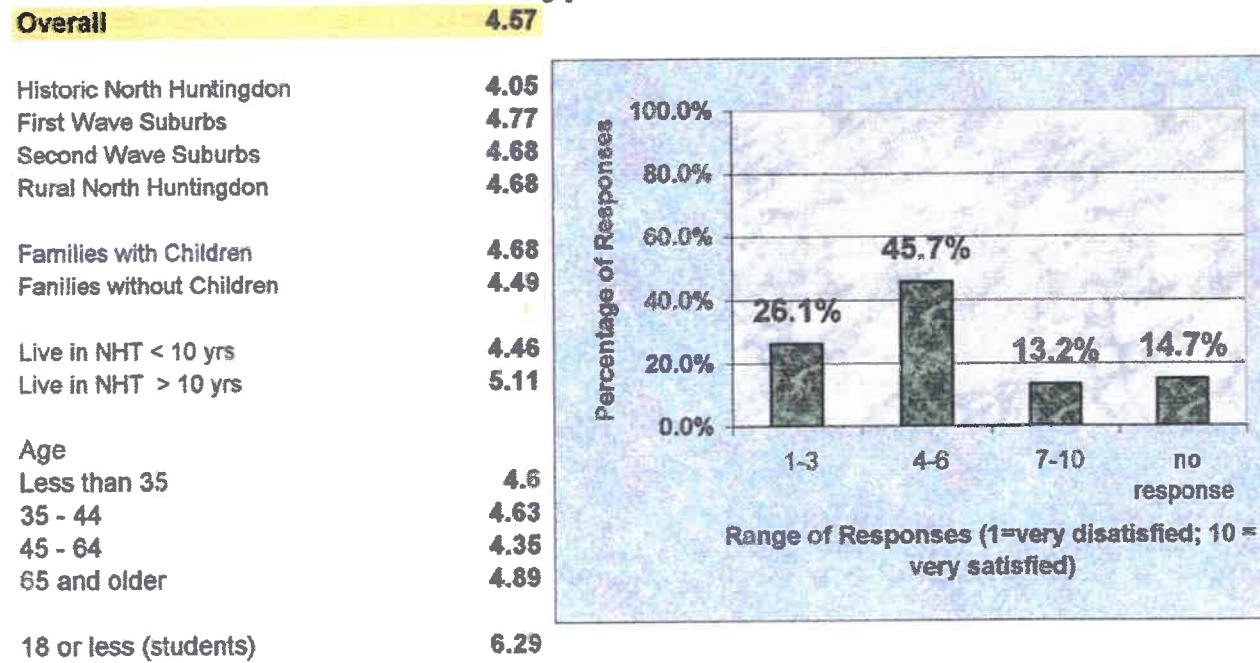


Table 4-26: Location of Industrial Growth

Overall	4.83
Historic North Huntingdon	4.45
First Wave Suburbs	4.83
Second Wave Suburbs	5.29
Rural North Huntingdon	4.92
Families with Children	4.77
Families without Children	4.88
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	4.75
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	5.22
Age	
Less than 35	4.6
35 - 44	4.81
45 - 64	4.8
65 and older	5.03
18 or less (students)	6.3

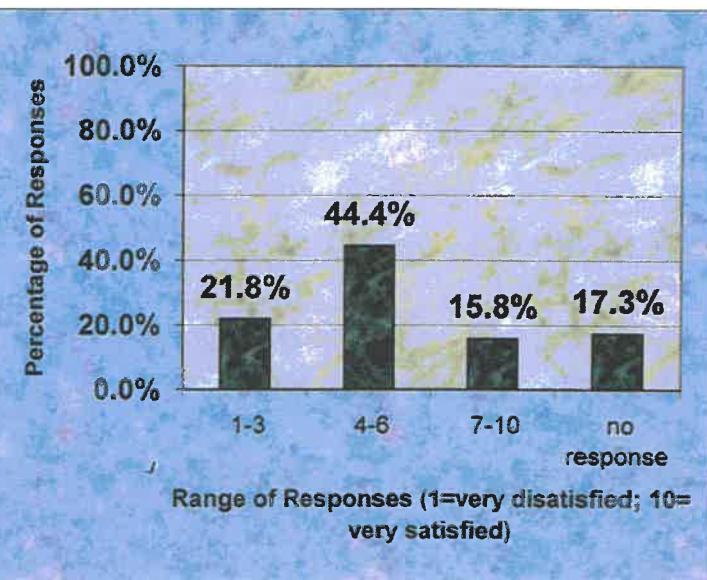


Table 4-27: Preservation of Natural Resources

Overall	4.66
Historic North Huntingdon	4.03
First Wave Suburbs	4.66
Second Wave Suburbs	4.75
Rural North Huntingdon	4.9
Families with Children	4.38
Families without Children	4.83
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	5.54
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	4.46
Age	
Less than 35	4.13
35 - 44	4.65
45 - 64	4.53
65 and older	5.21
18 or less (students)	5.8

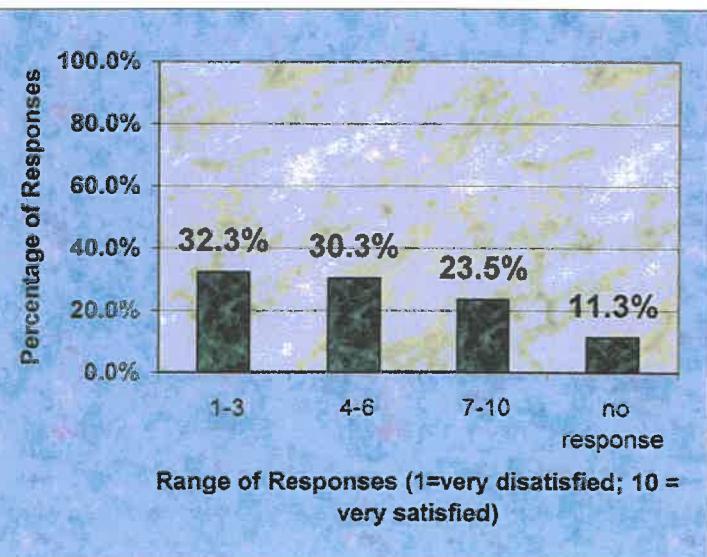


Table 4-28: Rate of Housing Growth

(1= not enough, 2= just enough, 3= too much)

Overall	2.51
Historic North Huntingdon	2.67
First Wave Suburbs	2.57
Second Wave Suburbs	2.28
Rural North Huntingdon	2.43
Families with Children	2.53
Families without Children	2.51
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	2.26
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	2.57
Age	
Less than 35	2.42
35 - 44	2.5
45 - 64	2.52
65 and older	2.55
18 or less (students)	

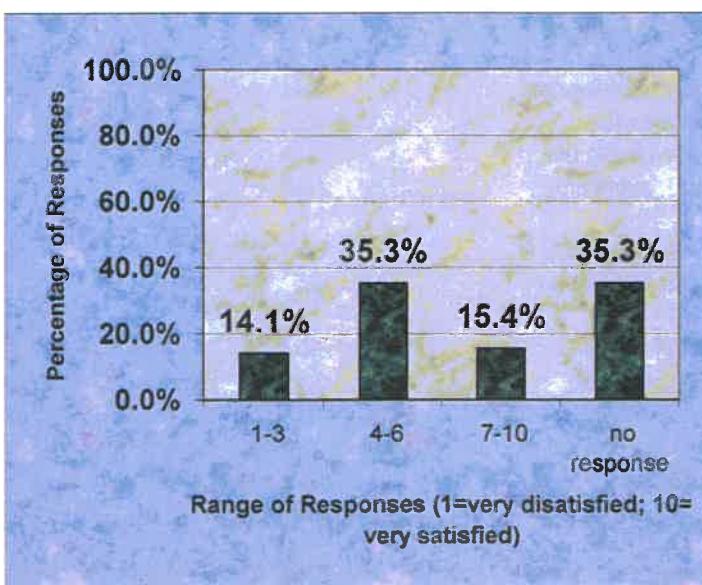


Table 4-29: Rate of Commercial Growth

(1= not enough, 2= just enough, 3= too much)

Overall	1.95
Historic North Huntingdon	1.94
First Wave Suburbs	1.95
Second Wave Suburbs	1.84
Rural North Huntingdon	2.01
Families with Children	1.87
Families without Children	1.99
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	1.99
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	1.93
Age	
Less than 35	2.08
35 - 44	1.86
45 - 64	1.9
65 and older	2.06
18 or less (students)	

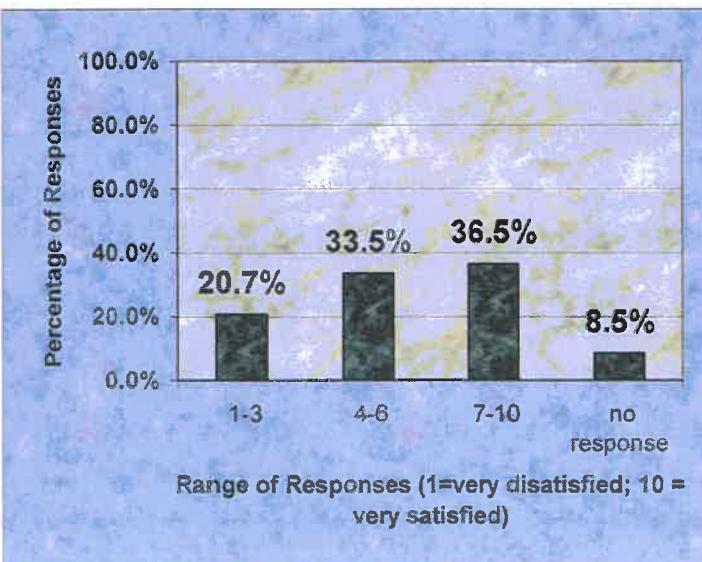


Table 4-30: Rate of Industrial Growth
(1 = not enough; 2 = just enough, 3 = too much)

Overall	1.69
Historic North Huntingdon	1.71
First Wave Suburbs	1.61
Second Wave Suburbs	1.52
Rural North Huntingdon	1.6
Families with Children	1.7
Families without Children	1.5
Live in NHT < 10 yrs	1.49
Live in NHT > 10 yrs	1.66
Age	
Less than 35	1.84
35 - 44	1.63
45 - 64	1.68
65 and older	1.71
18 or less (students)	1.84

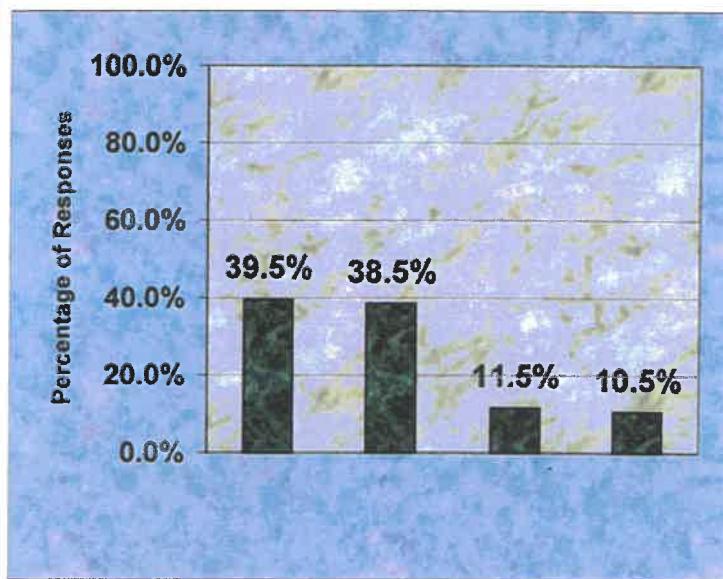


Table 4-31: Positive Comments on North Huntingdon Township

REASONS RESIDENTS LIKE NORTH HUNTINGDON TOWNSHIP	Number Of Responses
Location and Access	146
Quality of Schools	108
Sense of Community/ Good People and Neighborhoods	102
Lower/Reasonable Taxes	99
Low Crime and Good Police Services	80
Country Atmosphere/Open Spaces	67
Quality of Life/Clean and Quiet	54
Born and Raised Here	35
Commercial and Shopping Areas	31
Emergency Management/Fire Companies	10
Suburban Environment	8
Don't Like the Township	8
Affordability	8
Great Place for Kids	5
Not Congested	5

Total of 468 Responses

Table 4-32: Responses on Changes Needed for North Huntingdon Township

RESPONSES ON CHANGES NEEDED FOR NORTH HUNTINGDON	Number of Responses
More/Improved Parks and Recreation Facilities	67
Slow Down/Reduce Housing Growth	63
More/Better Quality Roads	47
More Quality Commercial Development	44
Better preservation of Open Space and Natural Areas	41
Better Enforcement of Zoning and Nuisance Codes	37
Improvements to Route 30	32
More Elderly Housing and Affordable Choices in Housing	29
Cut Taxes	27
Curtail Commercial Development	27
Better Police Department/Treatment of Citizens	21
Better School Board and School System	21
Better Government from Township	21
More Sidewalks and Bikeways	20
More industrial development/jobs	18
More/Better Public Transit	15
New School Facilities	13
New/Improved Library	11
Post Office/Own Zip Code	11
Lower Sewer Rates	10
Don't Turn into Monroeville	10
Better Snow Plowing	9
No Burning Allowed	8
More Police Funding	8
Combine Governments (NHT, Irwin, N. Irwin)	5
Place to Walk Dogs	5

(Total of 468 Responses)

Table 4.33: Community Facilities - High and Low Responses by Neighborhoods

Category	High	Low
Own Street	Markvue Manor 7.75	Fairmont/Hahntown 4.39
Township Streets	Ridge Road Area 7.23	Fairmont/Hahntown 4.82
Parks Quality	Penns Woods 7.25	Westmoreland City 5.06
Parks Availability	Ridge Road Area 6.84	Circleville 4.93
Sewer Quality	Altman Farms 8.07	Westmoreland City 5.89
Fire/EMS	Country Hills 9.25	Westmoreland City 7.31
Police Quality	Country Hills 9.00	Penns Woods 7.45
School Quality	Ridge Road Area 8.23	Circleville 7.03
Community Centers	Ridge Road Area 5.75	Circleville 4.14
Household Size	Victoria/Falcon Ridge 3.40	Fairmont/Hahntown 2.44
Housing Growth	Country Hills 2.81	Altman Farms 2.31
Commercial Growth	Westmoreland City 2.13	Hunters Woods 1.50
	(1-3 scale, 1 more, 3 less)	

Table: 4-34 Views Toward Housing Growth/Newer Residents vs. Older Residents

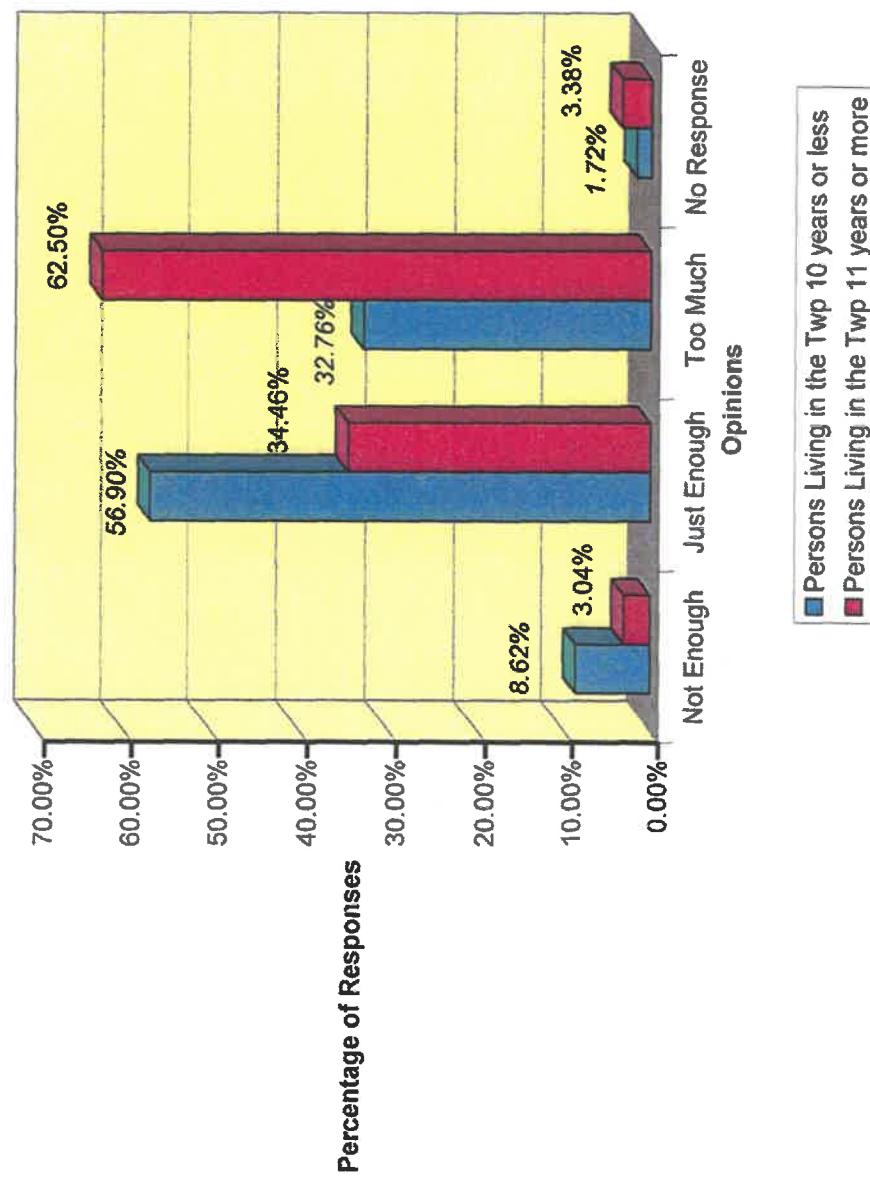


Table 4-35: Comparative Views Toward Housing, Commercial, and Industrial Growth - Student Responses

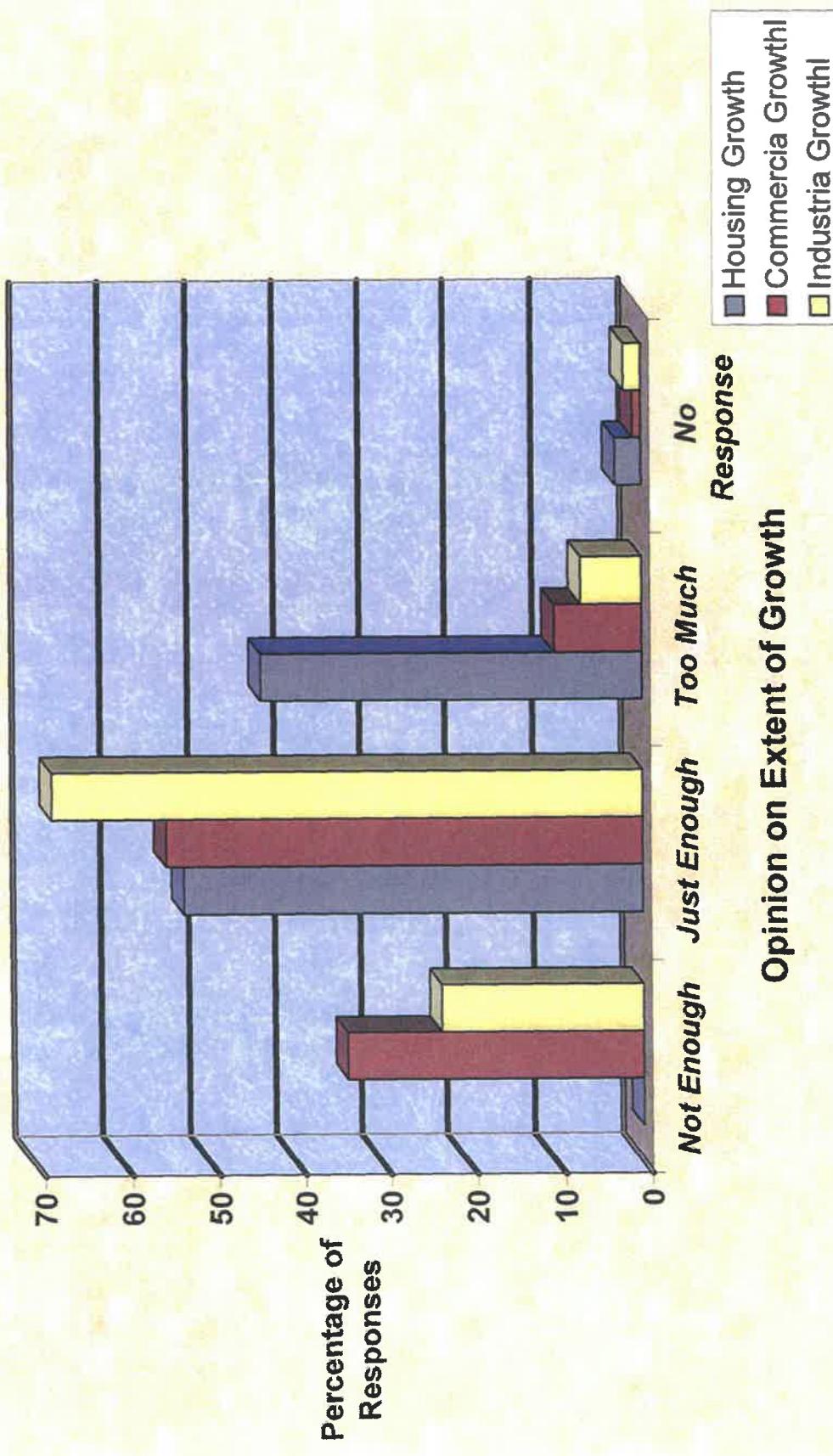
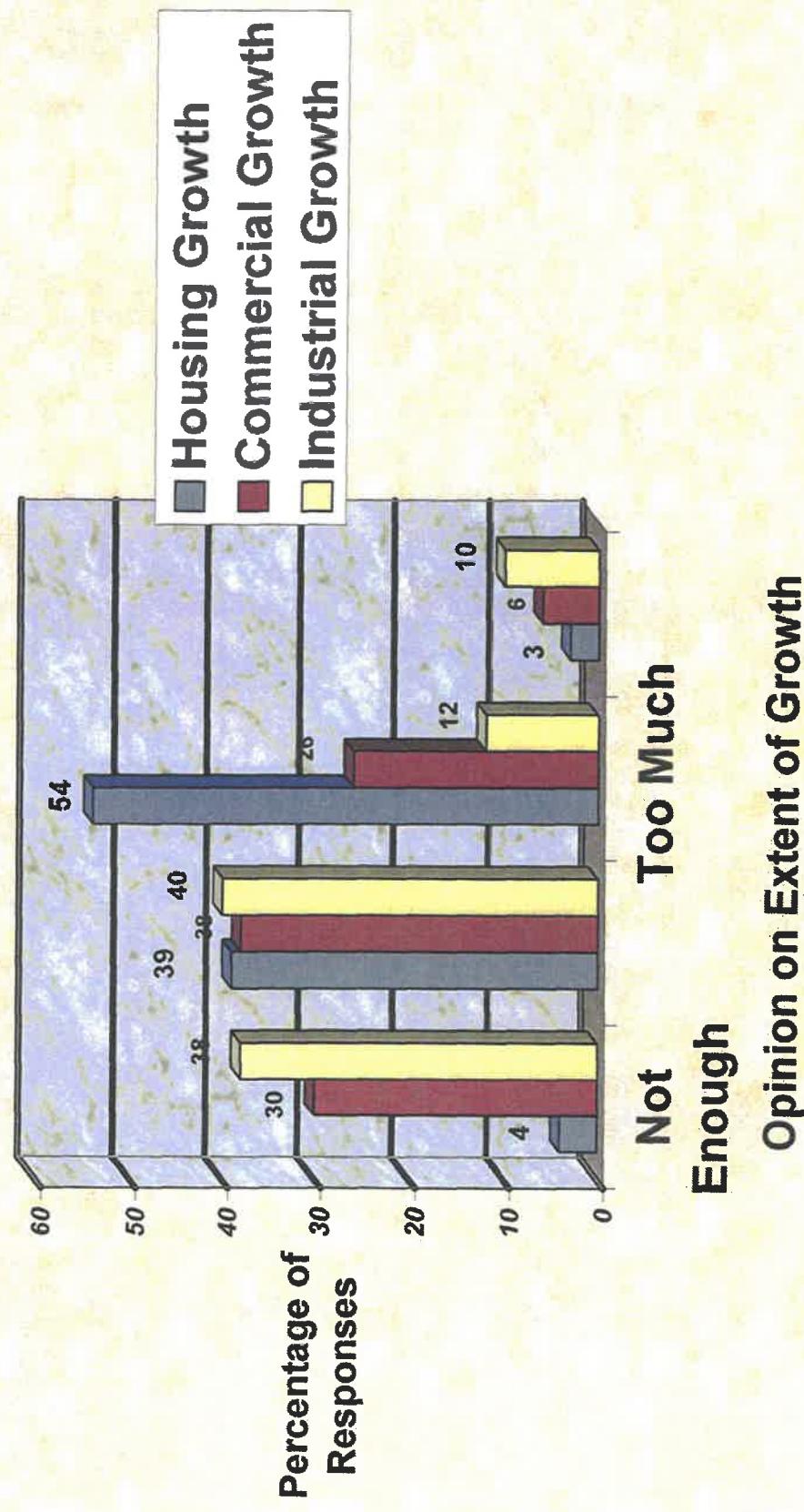


Table 4-36: Comparative Views Toward Housing, Commercial and Industrial Growth



**Table 4-37: Major Differences in Responses
Between Planning Areas within the Township**

	Second Wave (1990 – now)	Historic North Huntingdon	First Wave (1950-1980)	Rural North Huntingdon	All Planning Areas
Condition of Your Street	7.29	4.92			6.20
Condition of Township Streets	7.27	5.92			6.02
Availability of Affordable Housing	7.00	4.80	5.33		5.49
Availability of Elderly Housing	6.15	4.44	4.55	4.59	4.71
Type of Housing Growth	7.14	4.79	5.51	5.77	5.68
Location of Housing Growth	6.77	4.32	5.27	5.42	5.44

Chapter 5 – Population and Demographics

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of population trends and forecasts is the foundation upon which planning decisions are made. If the population of a community grows rapidly, the need for expanded facilities and sound growth management are critical. If the population is declining, the problems of reutilizing existing facilities for which there may be a lessening demand or the need to stimulate growth and stabilize the property tax base must be confronted. To some extent, municipalities can influence population trends through planning efforts and land use decisions.

This chapter will review population trends and forecasts. State and regional demographic and economic trends will be reviewed to gain an understanding of North Huntingdon Township's growth in relation to neighboring communities and the County. These regional trends influence a community's potential for new growth and development. It is also important to understand the age composition of the population. Changes in the composition of a municipality's residents may indicate the need for new types of public facilities and programs. For example, projected growth in the school age population may suggest a need for expanded classroom facilities and youth-oriented recreational programs. Finally, the projected population figures for the year 2000 and year 2010 and their impact on the Township will be discussed.

It should be noted that population statistics are limited to actual census counts conducted on a 10 year basis by the Federal Government, population estimates determined by the Census bureau on a periodic basis, and population projections that can be done in a variety of methods. This comprehensive plan incorporates all three sources. Unfortunately, the next census will be conducted during the year 2000, leaving only 1990 census data available for a large variety of items. Where possible, the 1990 census data has been supplemented through annual estimate data and reports from other sources. Finally, the Township Planning and Zoning Office has conducted a cohort-survival projection for the years 2000 and 2010, based on current population, projected birth rates and death rates and migration and growth patterns.

HISTORIC TRENDS

Table 5-1: Population Trends below shows the population changes between 1900 and 1990 for the Township. The period between 1950 and 1960 saw the most significant population increases in North Huntingdon Township. During this time the Township absorbed 10,317 new residents. Another significant increase in population occurred between 1960 and 1970 when the Township grew by 7,590 persons, or by 34.7%, over the 1960 figure of 21,853. Between 1970 and 1980 the population grew by 7.0%. In the 1980's the population of North Huntingdon began to decrease and by 1990 the Township had experienced a population loss of 3,359 persons.

Table 5-1: Population Trends 1900-1990			
Year	Population	10 Year Change #	10 Year Change %
1900	7,438		
1910	7,800	362	4.9%
1920	8,360	560	7.2%
1930	9,384	1,024	12.2%
1940	9,642	258	2.7%
1950	11,536	1,894	19.6%
1960	21,853	10,317	89.4%
1970	29,443	7,590	34.7%
1980	31,517	2,074	7.0%
1990	28,158	-3,359	-10.6%

Source(s): 1974 North Huntingdon Township Comprehensive Plan, 1980 and 1990 Census Data Comparison by Municipality (Westmoreland County Planning Department)

STATE AND REGIONAL POPULATION TRENDS

Table 5-2: Comparison of North Huntingdon, Westmoreland County and State of Pennsylvania Growth Rates shows North Huntingdon Township's population in relation to the State and County. Between 1970 and 1980, the population of the state as a whole grew by only 63,129 people which represented a little more than a 0.5% increase. The population of Westmoreland County grew by 4% during the same time period. Between the years 1980 and 1990, however the Township decreased in size by 10.6%. The loss of population in Westmoreland County is largely attributed to the widespread unemployment the area faced in the 1980's when nearly 100,000 jobs in the steel industry were lost in the Pittsburgh area. The Township having many people who commuted to the Pittsburgh area to work in the steel industry and its related fields left the area in search of employment.

Table 5-2: Comparison of Growth Rates 1960-1990				
Year	North Huntingdon	Westmoreland County	Pennsylvania	
1960	21,853	352,629		11,319,366
1970	29,443	376,935		11,800,766
1980	31,517	392,294		11,863,895
1990	28,158	370,321		11,881,643
Name	1960 - 1970 % Change	1970 - 1980 % Change	1980 - 1990 % Change	1960 - 1990 % Change
North Huntingdon	34.7%	7.0%	-10.6%	28.8%
Westmoreland County	6.8%	4.0%	-5.6%	5.0%
Pennsylvania	4.2%	0.5%	0.1%	4.9%

Table 5-3: Comparison of North Huntingdon Population Data with Municipalities in and Surrounding Westmoreland County, 1970-1990 compares the population of the communities in and surrounding North Huntingdon Township to Westmoreland County. Between 1970 and 1990 this region experienced an increase in population of 1.6%, growing from 139,715 to 141,750. During this twenty year period North Huntingdon lost 1,285 residents which represents a decrease of 4.4%. During this same time period, Westmoreland County decreased in population by 1.8% or by 6,614 persons.

Table 5-3: Surrounding Municipalities Population Data, 1970-1990						
Municipality	1970	1980	1990	70-80 % Changes	80-90 % Changes	70-90 % Changes
North Huntingdon	29,443	31,517	28,158	7.0%	-10.6%	-4.4%
Westmoreland County	376,935	392,294	370,321	4.0%	-5.6%	-1.8%
Westmoreland County Municipalities Surrounding North Huntingdon Township						
Penn Township	13,352	16,153	15,945	20.9%	-1.3%	19.4%
Manor Borough	2,276	2,235	2,627	-1.8%	17.5%	15.4%
Trafford Borough (Part)	4,383	3,552	3,255	-18.9%	-8.4%	-25.7%
Hempfield Township	39,196	42,609	43,371	8.7%	1.8%	10.7%
Sewickley Township	6,735	7,095	6,642	5.3%	-6.4%	-1.4%
Municipalities in North Huntingdon Township						
Irwin Borough	4,059	4,995	4,604	23.0%	-7.8%	13.4%
North Irwin Borough	1,306	1,016	956	-22.2%	-5.9%	-26.8%
Allegheny County Municipalities Surrounding North Huntingdon Township						
North Versailles Twp	13,416	13,294	12,302	-0.9%	-7.5%	-8.3%
Trafford Borough (Part)	95	110	90	15.7%	-18.2%	-5.3%
White Oak Borough	9,304	9,480	8,761	1.9%	-7.6%	-5.8%
South Versailles Twp	558	425	515	-23.8%	21.2%	-7.7%
Elizabeth Township	15,592	16,269	14,712	4.3%	-9.5%	-5.6%
Regional Total (excluding Westmoreland County)	139,715	148,750	141,938	6.5%	-4.6%	1.6%
Source(s): 1980 and 1990 Census Data Comparison by Municipality (Westmoreland County Planning Department); The Pennsylvania State Data Center; 1990 Census Report #2, Allegheny County Planning Department						

RACE AND GENDER

Table 4-4 presents Race and Gender information for North Huntingdon Township and Westmoreland County. The racial and gender make-up of the Township resembles that of the County. The data

show that North Huntingdon Township is predominately white with approximately .5% of the population reported as non-white. Only 0.3% of persons were listed as being of Hispanic origin and females outnumber males.

Gender/Race	North Huntingdon Township		Westmoreland County	
	1990 Population 28,158	Percent	1990 Population 370,321	Percent
Female	14,445	51.3%	193,307	52.2%
Male	13,713	48.7%	177,014	47.8%
White	28,004	99.5%	361,103	97.5%
Black	67	0.2%	6,930	1.9%
Hispanic*	78	0.3%	1,359	0.4%
Other	87	0.3%	2,288	0.6%

Source: Census of Population and Housing 1990 Summary Tape File 1A Table 1:
Summary of General Population Characteristics and Housing
*Persons of Hispanic origin may be black or white; therefore, percentages will not total
100%

AGE COMPOSITION

The age composition of North Huntingdon Township's population is illustrated in **Figure 5-2: Age Composition** on the following page and **Table 5-5: Age Distribution**. These data show that between 1980 and 1990. Also shown in this chapter are projections of age distribution for the year 2000 and 2010 in the projection forecast section of this Chapter.

Figure 5-1: North Huntingdon Twp Age Composition, 1980-1990

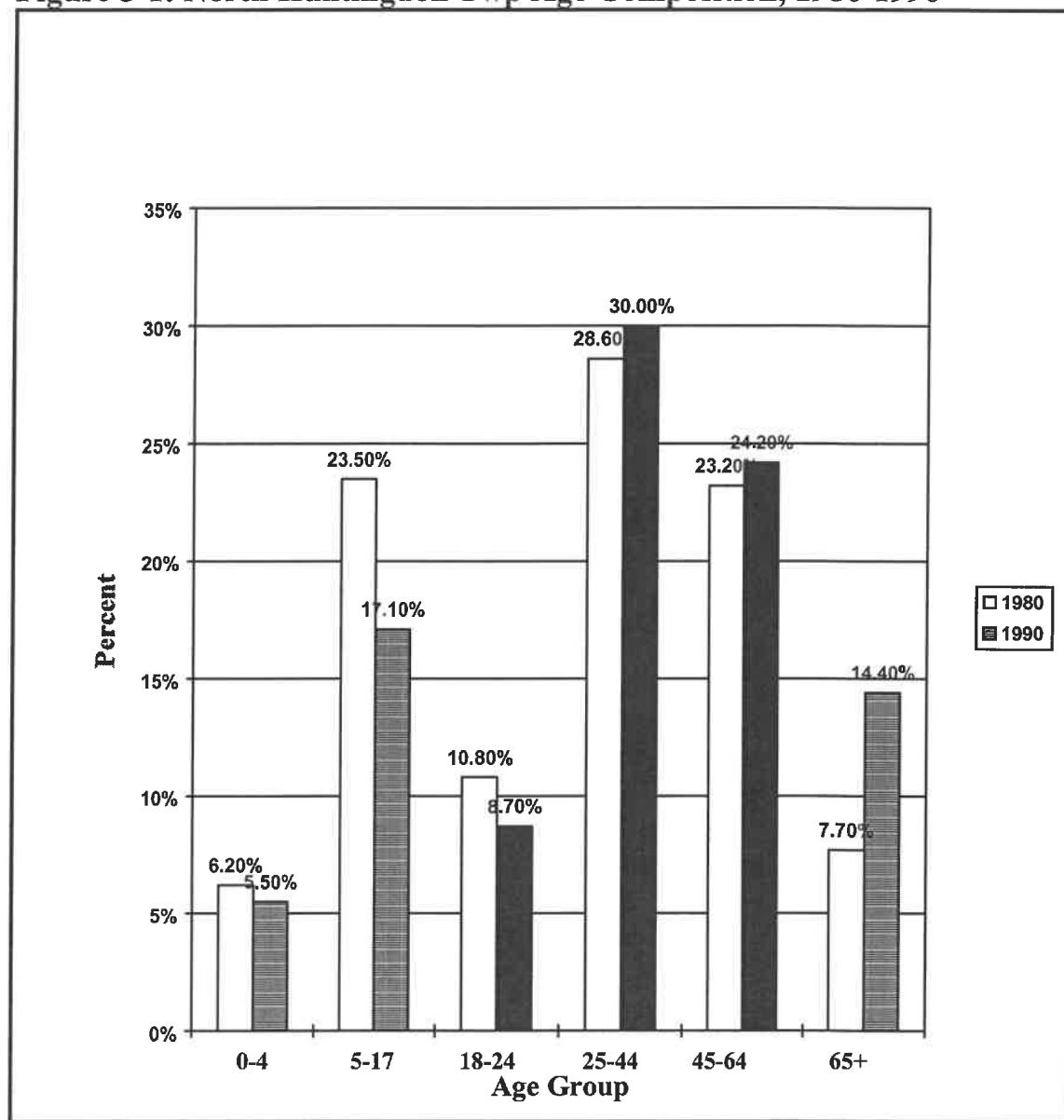


Table 5-5: North Huntingdon Age Distribution, 1980-1990

Age Group	North Huntingdon Township				Change 1980-1990		
	1980 Total	Percent of Total 1980	1990 Total	Percent of Total 1990	80-90 % Point Difference	Actual Increases	
						#	%
0-4	1,947	6.2%	1,554	5.5%	-0.7	-393	-20.2%
5-17	7,421	23.5%	4,813	17.1%	-6.4	-2,608	-35.1%
18-24	3,392	10.8%	2,446	8.7%	-2.1	-946	-27.9%
25-44	9,012	28.6%	8,457	30.0%	1.4	-555	-6.2%
45-64	7,326	23.2%	6,828	24.2%	1.0	-498	-6.8%
65+	2,419	7.7%	4,060	14.4%	6.7	1,641	67.8%
Total	31,517	100.0%	28,158	100.0%	0.0	-3,359	-10.7%
Westmoreland County					Change 1980-1990		
Age Group	1980 Total	Percent of Total 1980	1990 Total	Percent of Total 1990	80-90 % Point Difference	Actual Increases	
						#	%
0-4	24,007	6.1%	22,122	6.0%	-0.1	-1,885	-7.9%
5-17	80,354	20.5%	60,998	16.5%	-4.0	-19,356	-24.1%
18-24	43,407	11.1%	31,794	8.6%	-2.5	-11,613	-26.8%
25-44	103,052	26.3%	110,762	29.9%	3.6	7,710	7.5%
45-64	92,763	23.6%	81,173	21.9%	-1.7	-11,590	-12.5%
65+	48,711	12.4%	63,472	17.1%	4.7	14,761	30.3%
Total	392,294	100.0%	370,321	100.0%	0.0	-21,973	-5.6%

Source: 1980 & 1990 Census; SPRPC; The PA State Data Center
(Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding).

The percentage of children under 5 years of age declined to 5.5% of the total population from 6.2% in 1980;

- The percentage of persons in age group 5-17 decreased from 23.5% to 17.1%; a loss of 2,608. This was the largest decrease in population for any age group.
- All age groups, except the 65+ group, decreased in actual numbers. However, the number of persons in age groups 25-44 and 45-64 as well as the 65+ group increased as a percentage of the total population;
- The age group 65+ increased in actual numbers from 2,419 to 4,060 and as a percentage of the total population growing from 7.7% to 14.4%

North Huntingdon Township, like many municipalities in this area, has an increasing elderly population (age 65+) and a decreasing younger population (under 18). The percentage of elderly persons to the total population is higher in North Huntingdon Township than the national figure of 12.6% (See Table 4-6). Between 1980 and 1990 the percentage of elderly persons in North Huntingdon increased by slightly more than 7 points. This trend is similar to that experienced in Westmoreland County and the State of Pennsylvania where the percentages of elderly persons to the total population is even higher. In Westmoreland County in 1980 the percentage of persons age 65 and over to the total population increased from 12.4% to 17.1%. The percentage of persons age 18 and under to the total population decreased from 26.6% to 22.4%. The State of Pennsylvania experienced a similar trend where the elderly population increased from 12.9% in 1980 to 15.4% in 1990.

Table 5-6: Population Trends of the Young and Elderly, 1980-1990

	Percent Under 18			Percent over 65		
	1980	1990	Change	1980	1990	Change
North Huntingdon	29.7	22.6	-7.1	7.7	14.4	6.7
Westmoreland County	26.6	22.4	-4.2	12.4	17.1	4.7
Pennsylvania	26.3	23.5	-2.8	12.9	15.4	2.5
United States	28.1	25.6	-2.5	11.3	12.6	1.3

Source(s): 1990 Census Report #2 Allegheny County Planning Department; 1990 Census

POPULATION FORECASTS

The population projections used for this Comprehensive Plan have been determined from the following sources:

1. Projections from the U.S. Census Bureau through 1998 for base population

2. Birth and Death Rates based on historical patterns
3. Migration Rates based on new housing construction and historical trends on out-migration

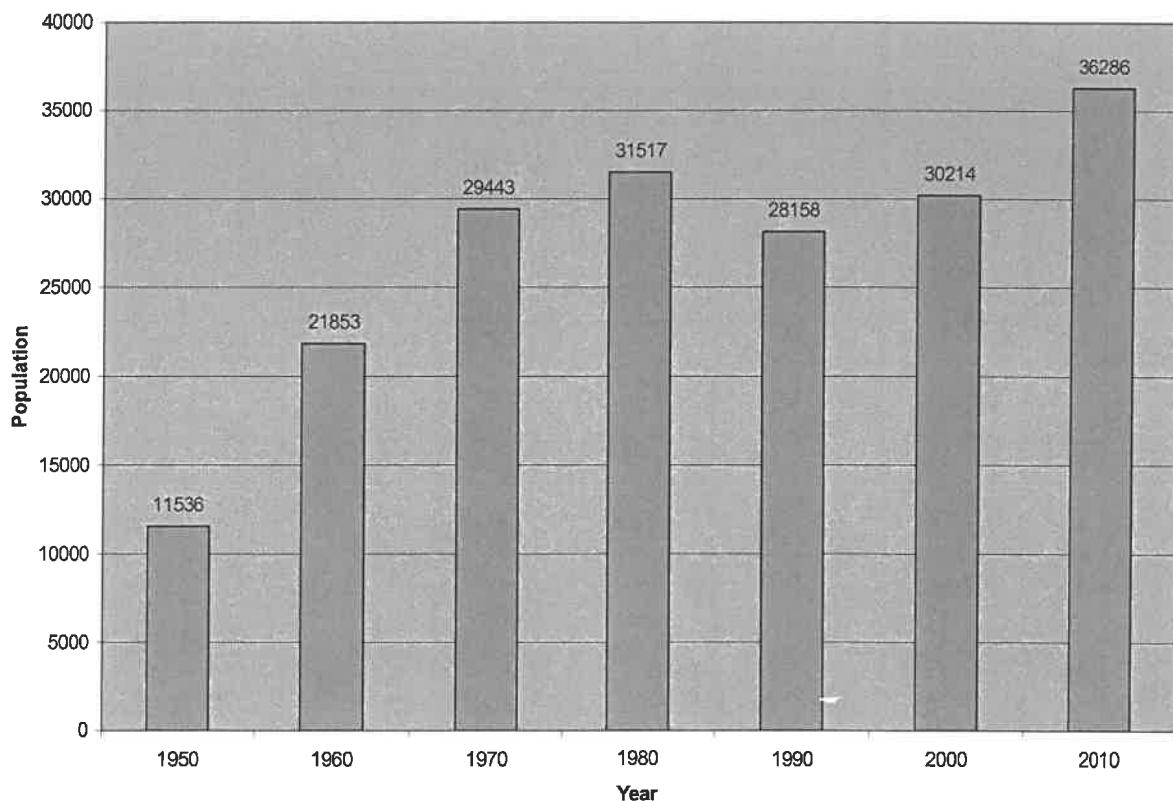
This cohort-survival method of projection is based on the assumptions of expected mortality rates from a population cohort, for example persons ages 10-19, will move into the age 20-29 cohort over a 10 year period with a percentage of those persons not expected to survive (mortality rate). The population of each cohort is also influenced by the out-migration and in-migration rates based on persons moving in and out of the Township. Current data on new house construction helps forecast in-migration data, while past trends (usually economic) will indicate out-migration data. Finally, the birth rate is a function of the number of women of child-bearing years (14-44) and the expected number of live births, based on historical trends. The sum of all of these actions can provide a reasonable model for population forecasting. **Changes in any of these assumptions can significantly alter the actual population from this model forecast.** For example, the 1974 Comprehensive Plan projected a population between 45,057 and 55,286 for the year 2000, while the actual population is closer to 30,000 persons. Significant changes in migration rates due to the changing economic/job environment, combined with reduced birth rates, led to this difference. This is not saying that population projections are useless. They are in fact, extremely helpful to analyze where the population patterns are heading, given certain assumptions.

Table 5-7: Year 2000, 2010 Population Forecasts, Current Growth Rates

Growth Rates – North Huntingdon Township 1950-2010	Percentage Increase (Decrease)	Population Added (Decrease)
1950-1960	+89.4%	+10,317
1960-1970	+34.7%	+7,590
1970-1980	+7.0%	+2,074
1980-1990	-10.6%	-3,359
1990-2000 (Projection)	+7.3%	+2,056
2000-2010 (Projection)	+20.0%	+6,072

There is a high level of confidence in the population increase projected for the period 1990-2000. The reversal of the population decline from 1980 to 1990 is evidenced by the large number of new homes being built in the Township, particularly the later part of the 1990's. One could assume that the population should be higher given the fact that there have been over 1,000 homes built during that time period. The expected larger population increase during this time period has been offset by the large number of elderly persons living in the Township who have a higher mortality rate during this time period. This, combined with the reduced number of women of child-bearing years living in the

NHT Population: 1950-1990; Projections for 2000 and 2010



Township has resulted in a more modest projected increase of population (7.3%) for this time period .

For the period from 2000 to 2010, the dynamics shift significantly within the Township in terms of its population. Several factors are important here:

- The increase of women of child-bearing age (younger families) moving into the Township during the period 1995 –2000, and projected to continue to move into the Township from 2001-2010.
- The continual trend of an older population, particularly the growth of the 45 to 64 age cohort (baby boomers) throughout the 2000 to 2010 decade
- The duality of the population pyramid with many more children and many more seniors, but less population growth in the middle of the pyramid
- The impacts of housing growth will significantly multiply during the period of 2010-2020 upon the number of school age children within the Township. This assumes that the new houses continue to attract younger growing families.

Table 5-8, North Huntingdon Township Age Distribution 1990 and 2000 (projected)

Age Group	1990 Total	Percent Of 1990 Total	2000 Projected Total	Percent of Projected Total	Percent Difference 1990-2000	Population Difference 1990-2000 (PROJECTED)
0-4	1,554	5.5%	1,854	6.1%	+19.3%	+300
5-17	4,813	17.1%	4,502	14.9%	-6.9%	-311
18-24	2,446	8.7%	2,323	7.7%		-123
25-44	8,457	28.6%	8,461	28.0%	+0.5%	+4
45-64	6,828	24.2%	8,593	28.4%	25.8%	+1,765
65 +	4,060	14.4%	4,481	14.9%	+10.4%	+421
Total	28,158	100.0%	30,214	100.0%	-----	+2,056

Table 5-9, North Huntingdon Township Age Distribution 2000 and 2010 (projected)

Age Group	2000 Total	Percent Of 2000 Total	2010 Projected Total	Percent of Projected Total	Percent Difference 2000-2010	Population Difference 2000-2010 (PROJECTED)
0-4	1,854	6.1%	2,536	6.6%	+36.8%	+682
5-17	4,502	14.9%	6,125	16.9%	+36.0%	+1,623
18-24	2,323	7.7%	2,487	6.5%	+7.1%	164
25-44	8,461	28.0%	8,334	23.0%	-1.6%	-127
45-64	8,593	28.4%	8,942	24.6%	+4.1%	+349
65 +	4,481	14.9%	7,862	21.7%	+75.4%	+3,381
Total	30,214	100.0%	36,286	100.0%	+21.9%	+6,072

CONCLUSIONS

The population of North Huntingdon, based on current growth trends, birth rates and mortality rates will continue to increases throughout the first decade of the new millennium. The actual amount of this increase will be a function of four major factors:

1. The number of new homes being built in the Township during the period 2000-2010
2. The number of children born during 2000-2010, particularly from those families who moved into newly built houses from 1993-1999
3. The migration rate of the population, particularly women 18-24, during the beginning of child-bearing years
4. Any economic upturn or decline which could create significant demand for new housing (upturn) or massive migration (decline) similar to the decline that occurred in the 1980's in the area

It is rationale to assume that there will be variations over these factor during the next decade. It is dangerous to assume that all past trends will continue at the same rate, as was done in the Township 1974 Comprehensive Plan which projected a population in the range of 45,000 – 56,000 for the year 2000! Given these potential variations it is wiser to consider these population projections as scenarios, rather than absolutes. Using that approach, a population of 36,000, with a potential variation of 2,000 persons in either direction would be a reasonable scenario, absent of any of the above-mentioned extremes.

Since the Year 2000 Census will be conducted in April 2000, with preliminary results expected in 2001 and 2002, it is recommended that these population scenarios be reexamined immediately after the results are distributed by the Census Bureau.

Chapter 6: LAND USE ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe existing land uses and to ensure future development is compatible with the general character of the community. Current development patterns will be reviewed and trends identified over the past 30 years.

EXISTING LAND USE

An existing land use map was created by updating the North Huntingdon Township base map as prepared by L. Robert Kimball Engineers in 1996, and revised by Glenn Engineering and Associates, Ltd., in 1999, with developments that were approved in the last few years. The base information was compiled from a windshield survey and data provided by the Township's planning staff based on their working knowledge of the community. The land use map was confirmed through field investigations, as needed. Land uses were classified using the broad descriptions listed in **Land Use Classifications**.

North Huntingdon Township Land Use Classifications	
Residential	Single family dwellings, duplexes, townhouses or multifamily units.
Commercial	Offices, apartments, retail, restaurants, banks, service businesses, gas stations, auto repair shops.
Industrial	Manufacturing, heavy or light
Recreation	Parks, golf courses..
Public /Semi-Public	Publicly-owned lands, municipal buildings, churches, schools, cemeteries, fire halls, etc.
Vacant	Undeveloped and under-utilized lands.

LAND USE PATTERNS

Table 6-1 : Existing Land Use lists the total acreage and the percentage it represents of the total land area for each major land use classification. **Existing Land Use** shows existing land use patterns in 1999 and illustrates past and current trends in land development patterns. These land use patterns are the result of a variety of factors such as the location of utilities, transportation routes, topography, environmental constraints and zoning.

Table 6-1 : North Huntingdon Township Existing Land Uses, 1996		
Land Use	Acres	% of Total Land
Residential	4,403.83	25.20%
Commercial	739.05	4.23%
Industrial	245.87	1.41%
Public/Semi-public	358.47	2.05%
Conservation/Recreation	878.35	5.03%
Vacant Land	10,847.23	62.08%
Total Developed Land	6,626.57	37.92%
Total Land	17,472	100.00%

Source: Windshield Survey & Field Investigations

Presently, only 38% of North Huntingdon Township's land area is developed. Approximately 10,847 acres of the Township, or 62% of its total acreage, remains undeveloped. Most of the development has occurred south of Route 30 in areas serviced by water and sewer. This area is very suburban in nature and is characterized by low and medium density residential developments on relatively large tracts. A substantial amount of vacant land remains for development in the Township. Development on the northern side of Route 30 is not as intense due to the lack of sewer and water service and development constraints posed by steep topography.

The Township is primarily a bedroom community with 25 % of the built area developed as residential. Approximately 6% of the land area is devoted to commercial or industrial uses. Most commercial development is located along Route 30, a principle east-west thoroughfare. Manufacturing and/or industrial enterprises, which account for less than 2% of the developed land area, occur in the southern part of the Township. A variety of recreational uses, comprising 2% of the total land area, are scattered throughout the Township. Public or semi-public uses represent 4% of the developed land area and are also scattered throughout the Township close to residential neighborhoods.

The northern part of North Huntingdon, in contrast, is less intensely developed. Most of the development that has occurred in the Township is immediately adjacent to arterial roads on subdivisions which have used existing road frontage.

LAND AVAILABILITY AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Future development in the Township is both a function of market and the availability of land. While market forces dictate demand, the zoning ordinance dictates the actual potential future development within the Township. This is based on lot size requirements and the amount of developable acres (which is defined as vacant land free of environmental and infrastructure constraints). A rudimentary analysis, as indicated below summarizes the amount of new units possible for all land within the Township. This is rudimentary as it does not factor in the increasing scarcity of land that is in fact easily developable. This will likely bring the developable acres portion closer to 50 – 60% over the next several decades.

Any future build-out analysis must also include the future timing of development. This is mostly a function of market demand, and historically has fluctuated in the area, as described below.

Table 6-2: North Huntingdon Township Residential Build-Out Analysis

A	B	C	D	E	F
Zone	Total Vacant Acres*	Developable Acres** .8 * B = C	Minimum Lot Size (Sq. ft)	Max Density Units per Acre	Development Potential *** C*E=F
R-1	38	30.4	7,500	6	182
R-1A	124	99.2	7,500	6	595
R-2	1,636	1,308.8	10,000	4	5,235
R-3	1,470	1,176	20,000	2	2,352
R-4	2,830	2,264	40,000	1	2,264
Total Acres	6,098	4,878			10,628
Units					

* Determined from planimeter readings.

** Vacant lands free of environmental and infrastructure constraints.

*** Totals may not add due to rounding.

Projected units based on 50% developable area: 6,616 units

Projected units based on 60% developable area: 7,937 units

LAND USE TRENDS: 1970's, 1980's and 1990's

Over the past 3 decades, since last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1974, the Township has experienced many swings of the pendulum in terms of development.

During the 1970's the Township experienced the last decade of First Wave Suburbanization as described in other chapters of this plan. There was a significant number of building permits issued for new housing within the Township, particularly in the early years of the decade. For the 10-year period of the 1970's a total of 345 permits were issued for new houses. Most of these houses were located within large development plans such as Markvue Manor, Camelot and Country Hills, on lots averaging $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre. During this time period the average household size of the Township was over 3.9, meaning most persons living in these new homes had larger families. Times were generally good, especially in the early part of the decade with high employment rates and wages. While many development plans were approved in this period, land consumption was kept relatively low due to the fact that most of the plans were developed in R-2 zoned areas, with smaller lot sizes.

The pendulum swung substantially negative, in terms of growth, in the 1980's. As a result of the decline of the industrial base, double-digit inflation rates, increase in energy costs, and limitations placed on existing sewage plants, the housing market in the Township declined substantially during this decade. The extent of this decline is staggering given the fact that more new housing permits were issued in one two-year period of the 1970's than were issued in the entire 10-year period of the 1980's. Hardly any new plans were approved in the 1980's, with most housing starts coming from plans approved in the 1970's and from existing larger lots. In addition to the lack of building activity, the Township lost substantial population during this period as more persons left the area (particularly for employment reasons) or passed away.

In the most recent decade, however, this decline started to reverse in 1993. At this point in time the combination of a robust economy with low interest rates, release of taps for sewer services and general regional growth led to a significant increase in the issuance of building permits for new housing starts. These houses tended to be larger than the counterparts built in the 1970's both in terms of square footage and lot size. They were also more expensive, with many housing plans featuring houses for sale with costs exceeding \$300,000. While many families were moving into these homes, the average household size continued to decline during this period.

The result of all of these trends during these past 3 decades is best indicated in the following table. As it can be seen, the number of actual households increased substantially (57.1%) during this period (even with the 1980's decade of decline). The anomaly to this trend in the relatively low rate of population increase (2.6%).

This is a direct result of the 1980's population decline, particularly among persons in the child-bearing age. It is also a reflection of societal changes from past decades when family size often numbered 3-4 children, while today's trends are closer to 1 to 2 children.

The major land use impact to all of these trends are:

Substantially more houses in the Township over the last 30 years;
Substantially more land being consumed for residential purposes (41% increase over the last 30 years);
Associated land use increases in commercial and manufacturing operations as a function of the increase in the housing market (by demand).

The overall land use development trends within the Township over the last 30 years strongly affect the community form and character, both positively and negatively. The recommended overall land use and growth goals contained in Chapter 6 are developed largely, as a result of the trends of the past 30 years.

Current Land Use Map

Land use maps differ substantially from zoning maps. First, the land use map identifies "what is there" as opposed to "what is desired." Since much development occurred prior to enactment of the zoning ordinance land use does not always reflect zoning desires.

Another issue with land use maps, is that they are much more general than zoning maps. It is not always possible to accumulate an accurate "parcel-by-parcel" delineation of land use. Most land use maps are generated through drive-by surveys and aerial photography. One of the goals of the new Geographic Information System (GIS) of the Township is to generate a more accurate land use map.

The current land use map clearly shows the historical development patterns in the Township. Most of the Township is residential, reflecting its "bedroom community" nature. The commercial uses are concentrated along Route 30 (strip development), and there is a scattering of more intense industrial uses along Route 993. The non-developed areas of the Township correspond significantly to the areas with the most environmental constraints (see Chapter 8). Additionally, areas of potential new development are those serviced by public water and sewer (see Chapter 11) and nearby to collector roads serving Route 30 (south central and east portions of Township).

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The future land use map is the precursor to future zoning and land regulation policy. It is the desired end-state of the Township in terms of development patterns, intensity and activity. It allows the Township to establish both regulatory and policy approaches to seek ways to accomplish the objectives in the map.

Like the current land use map, the future map is general in nature. It is impractical to classify each parcel with a future land use; rather a generalized assessment is made of areas within the Township as to its best future use. The map included in this chapter does however, get more specific in terms of the levels of certain types of development. For example, the future residential areas are categorized as low density (generally 1-2 units per acre or less) and medium density (generally more than 2 units per acre). Areas of higher density are found in the historic village overlay, as described in Chapter 7. These are older settlements with houses built closer to each other, but are generally totally built-out.

Commercial areas on the future land use map are also classified. The Route 30 corridor is all commercial, but the area from the Norwin Towne Square, eastward is more intensely retail commercial developed (including part of the Borough of Irwin). The area west of this landmark is more mixed-use. The future land use map includes this overlay along Route 30 to distinguish these differences.

Perhaps the most important element of this future land use map is the identification of sensitive environmental features. It is impractical, and legally restrictive to zone-out all uses in most circumstances. It is however, permissible to consider the intensity and type of development on land that has environmental constraints. These are regulated for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and welfare and are regulated by federal, state and local statutes. Areas included in this overlay are: slopes over 25%; poor soils areas (unstable), per the Soil Survey; floodplains, wetlands and undermined areas. It is recommended that additional zoning and subdivision regulations be imposed and enforced on these areas through applicable regulatory agencies. The purpose of these maps, which will be continually updated is to provide a "yellow caution flag" during the development review process to address issues relative to public safety and environmental protection.

FUTURE TRENDS AND IMPACTS

It can be clearly seen that a continuation of the trends of the past 30 years would yield the following:

- high economic growth, as a result of new construction,
- increased pressures on existing infrastructure due to increased population and demand;
- decrease in natural resources land, being replaced by development
- increases in the local tax base due to new developments.

Chapter 7: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Background and Description

While North Huntingdon spans over 26 square miles, and has distinct geographical areas with unique characteristics, it is more useful to delineate the neighborhood planning areas based on the timing and type of settlements. Accordingly, the following four categories of planning areas have been identified, each with common characteristics and issues. (See **Map 7-1, Planning Areas**)

Historic North Huntingdon Settlements (Planning Area 1)

Settlements and villages historically linked to area industry (coal and rail). These areas were formed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The common thread is an older housing stock with smaller lots and significant remodeling of homes over the years. The population is generally older than the rest of the Township and lower-middle income. Examples: Westmoreland City; Ardara, Hahntown, etc.

Rural North Huntingdon (Planning Area 2)

Mostly older housing associated with agricultural uses, although this has been infilled with newer lower-density, often higher-end homes. This area also has a share of less-expensive mobile and modular homes. The agricultural areas have been disappearing as a result of the suburban plans directly abutting the agricultural areas. Most of the area, if not farmed, has development constraints and is currently not served by public water or sewer or wider roads.

First Wave Suburbanization (Planning Area 3)

North Huntingdon experienced its most significant and dramatic growth from the beginnings of the post World War II period to the early 1970's. This was a result of migration from the cities and close-by inner-ring suburbs and the housing and baby boom after WW II. Development plans in the era are characterized by lots ranging from 1/3 acre to 1/2 acre with ranch or split-level design. They were often purchased with assistance from FHA or VA mortgages and have recycled ownership substantially over the years. Many homeowners of plans built in the earlier phases of this development boom later moved into plans constructed in the last phases of the boom. Many of the homes in these areas are characterized by remodeling and building additions. Income-level remain moderate, with many starter homes for new

residents being purchased by residents of the Township and migrants from other areas. Examples: Country Hills; Markvue Manor, Camelot.

Second Wave Suburbanization (Planning Area 4)

During the mid 1970's and almost the entire decade of the 1980's, many different factors affected the development patterns within the Township. The changing economy of the area, including the collapse of the steel industry reduced housing demand in the area. This along with the 15% interest rates of the late 1970's and early 1980's made new developments not feasible. Finally, sewer plant limitations curtailed development in the mid- 1980's to early 1990's, an era when development was becoming more attractive in the region.

However, since the early 1990's, the Township has experienced a second wave of suburban development. This development has increased following the extension of sewer lines and the expansion of capacity of sewer plants. This development has occurred mostly at the expense of reduced farmland, though a substantial portion is very closely located to the Route 30 corridor, as well. The market for this new development has been geared primarily to more upscale families, often with two-incomes and starting families. The housing type is more expensive, with lots ranging from \$40,000 - \$60,000 and total home packages going upward to \$250,000 - \$275,000. Examples include: Victoria Plans; Cedar Glen, , Legends Plan. There have also been new housing developments approved in this category that could better be categorized as " more affordable" areas with total home packages (house and lot) ranging from \$125,000 to \$190,000. These packages have been available in developments like Altman Farms; Hunters Woods; and Falcon Ridge.

Township Housing and Housing Data

Background and Description

Housing decisions are generally private in nature. Most housing choices made by either developers or consumers of housing are done based on market choices. Public policy is often in conflict with these private housing decisions due to the potential of physical impacts of a new housing development on a community and the public services required by citizens of that community who occupy the houses of that development. Private housing choices and the housing market ultimately affect public policy concerns such as land use planning and zoning options , timing and providing for public facilities and services, and safeguarding the environment. Conversely, public policy decisions, usually articulated in the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances affects housing location and costs through requiring the provision of utilities, public improvements, road standards and building

codes.

The housing stock and market in North Huntingdon Township has been influenced by historical trends which are both regional and local in nature. The four distinct planning areas have evolved as a result of these trends, and the housing issues within these areas are a by-product of these trends.

There are, however, some predominant statistics and trends that affect all planning areas within the Township. They are:

- A vast percentage of the existing housing stock are owner-occupied. Housing development trends in the last ten years have continued this emphasis on owner-occupied single family homes. Over 99% of new housing construction since 1993 has been single-family detached units
- The Township has been a continuous area of growth and new suburban settlements since the end of World War II, with the major exception of the 1980's where the entire region lost population
- New housing units being constructed in the Township are becoming increasingly out of reach financially to a increasingly larger portion of existing Township residents, while new opportunities are opening up for persons wishing to "buy-up" into existing homes being vacated by those moving into the newly constructed homes

Housing Affordability

Certain assumptions must be made when looking at housing affordability. The rule of thumb traditionally used is that buyers can generally obtain a mortgage for roughly two to two and a half times their gross annual income. The resulting monthly mortgage payment could then comprise as much as a fourth to a third of their monthly income, depending on the terms of the loan. Median adjusted gross income for an area (half earn more and half earn less) is commonly compared to average selling price in the area to gauge affordability of local housing to the local community.

Based upon housing appreciation trends in the region and the value of new housing being built, it is estimated that the median housing value in 1999 is approximately **\$93,000**.

Average income has also increased in the Township though both increases in wages, and the type of householders moving into new housing being built in the area. Income projections obtained through private market firms range from **\$43,000 to \$50,500** for the median family income for different areas of the Township. Based upon the above-rule, this would create the range of affordable housing of **\$86,000 - \$112,000** for residents currently living in the

Township. More liberal lending policies (with the ability to purchase a home based on 3 to 4 times the gross annual income, would increase this range to \$129,000 - \$200,000. Many households , however, do not choose to assume this substantial debt for a new house.

The new housing units being built in the Township are primarily being purchased by Township residents who can afford these higher-value homes by one or more of the following means: (1) having substantial down payment through the sale of existing homes that have no or minor mortgages; (2) having a median household eater than \$75,000. Otherwise, the more expensive new homes being built are attracting residents with higher incomes from areas outside the Township.

Despite the higher-prices of the newer homes being built in the Township, a substantial supply of affordable older homes exists. This is caused by the increased number of sales of these properties from Township residents moving into the newer homes being built, plus the natural cycle of older homeowners leaving their larger house after children are finished with school. These homes, existing mostly in Planning Area #3, are generally priced at \$75,000 to \$125,000 making them very affordable for households at the median household income level, particularly for homes priced at less than \$100,000. **This is the core of the starter homes on the market for new families in the Township.**

CONCLUSIONS:

- New Housing being built in the Township is affordable to households with higher-than the median Township income and/or households with substantial capital assets (from sales of existing homes)
- Houses built in the 1960's and early 70's (first wave suburbanization) are affordable starter homes to most households within the median household range in the Township
- Newer housing units are attracting residents from outside the Township with higher median incomes, thus raising the median income for the Township

Assets

- New Housing with higher values results in increased tax and fee revenues for the Township and the School District (Planning Area #4)
- There are many close-knit and stable neighborhoods in older settlements of the township with long-time residents and low crime rates (Planning Areas #1)

- There is a significant transition in housing stock results in continual remodeling efforts (Planning Area #3)
- Township housing is generally well maintained in most areas of the Township (All Planning Areas)
- Housing values have steadily increased within the Township (Planning Areas #3)
- School quality makes the housing market attractive providing for higher housing values and ease of sale (All Planning Areas)
- A pleasant clean environment provides an attractive place to live (All Planning Areas)
- A variety of types of areas are available to live (All Planning Areas)
- New housing construction being built in the Township result in lower maintenance and code problems (Planning Area 4)
- Non-developed areas (including forested areas and hillsides) adjoining developments, provide for rural type environment near to suburban developments (Planning Area 2)

Liabilities

- There is a limited amount of affordable housing being constructed for existing residents. . Most new housing is of the higher-cost variety only for those with above-average incomes (Planning Area 4)
- Some current residents living in older areas of the Township can't afford to maintain houses due to either being on fixed incomes or having lower than average incomes (Planning Area 1 and 3)
- The quality of the roads and pedestrian access for existing housing is a constant concern (Planning Area 2 and 4)
- There are limited opportunities for persons nearing and entering their retirement years (All Planning Areas)
- There is limited green space preservation and recreational opportunities in existing housing plans and new housing plans (Planning Areas 3 and 4)
- New housing developments have infringed upon previously undeveloped agricultural and wooded areas (Planning Area 2)

Dynamics

The overall regional housing market

The regional housing market is increasing as the population continues to shift from the urban areas and inner-ring suburbs to the rural and suburban areas and household size is getting smaller. The growth of Westmoreland County as an attractive alternative to live, especially accompanying the industrial development efforts of the County has made, and will continue to make, North Huntingdon an attractive bedroom community for both workers living east and west of the Township.

The Economy (Job Growth)

Westmoreland County is experiencing significant job growth through an aggressive industrial development program. Development of the existing County Industrial Park will affect future housing demand. Balance of the job growth in the region has been limited to normally lower paying service and retail-sector jobs.

Interest Rates

Interest rates (and inflation) have remained low. Continuation of this trend will increase housing construction. Any increases will tend to slow the growth of new housing.

Demographics

Increasing proportion of the Township population is in the 54 and over age brackets. Increasing proportion of new home buyers with higher than average incomes and more small children.

Increased percentage of higher than average income families moving into the Township.

School Quality and Taxation

Norwin Schools have a good reputation attracting families with children to the area and attracting returning "alumni" to educate their children in the area.

School taxes are appreciably lower than Allegheny County schools and several other Westmoreland County School Districts.

COMMUNITY OPINIONS:

The community survey yielded several relevant results in regard to housing, neighborhoods and associated growth issues. Overall, citizens responding to the survey were most favorable to the impression that houses were of good quality and appeared nice within the Township, while the other housing questions (elderly housing, availability and quality of rental housing and housing affordability) did not yield as high positive responses.

The question on the rate of housing growth resulted in a majority view that the rate of housing growth was too high, but this response differed substantially based upon the location of residence. Persons who live in the historic and rural areas of the Township were more inclined to view the housing growth rate as too high, as compared to persons living in plans built during the second wave of suburbanization. Similarly, persons living in the newer areas of the Township viewed housing affordability issues with less concern, while historic area township residents had a more negative view toward housing appearance and concerns about affordability. Finally, the age group most concerned with the availability of elderly housing options were those between the ages of 45 and 64.

At the public forum, a break-out group was conducted on housing and neighborhoods. Attendees at this group included housing developers, realtors and citizens from all areas of the Township. There was much concern expressed by the developers that the costs associated with building a quality house were fixed (\$150,000) and that any tinkering would result in less than quality housing in the Township. Interest was expressed in providing more opportunity for condominium and townhouse development in the Township from both developers and citizens, provided they were quality options. Similarly, there was general support for housing plans that preserved more open space provided issues associated with the ownership of this open space were resolved. There was not too much antagonism to increasing the total density (number of units per acre) within a development provided the developer met specified performance standards to enhance the quality of development (amount of open space; recreation areas; street lights; sidewalks, etc.). There was some concern expressed on the capacity of the infrastructure (roads, sewers, etc.) to handle this increased density, and this will have to be considered as part of any evaluation by the Township.

GOAL:

Provide the opportunity for comfortable, safe and high-quality housing, both new and existing; and promote and encourage the enhancement and stability of neighborhoods through the provision of adequate services and infrastructure

Objectives

1. Eliminate substandard housing units, that endanger the public, health, welfare and safety in North Huntingdon Township
2. Improve the appearance of existing older housing units.
3. Assure high-quality and safe building practices are used for new construction.
4. Provide for adequate infrastructure to improve livability of existing neighborhoods and assure that new housing developments have sufficient infrastructure to meet new demands
5. Provide for an appropriate mix of new high-quality housing styles and choices, allowing for different types of high-quality housing within the Township
6. Increase the number of high-quality affordable housing units and types of housing suitable for young families and retirees
7. Require that new housing developments built in harmony with the natural environment

Action Strategies

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS (ADMINISTRATIVE)

- Increase the level of code enforcement activity in targeted areas of the township and for targeted areas of housing deterioration and neighborhood degradation (objectives 1 & 2)

- maintain aggressive inspection procedures and staffing to assure quality and safety of new housing construction (objective #3)
- pursue active demolition program of substandard abandoned housing within the township (objective #1)
- through the township and other government agencies, provide technical and facilitate financial assistance programs for housing rehabilitation of older housing in the township (objective #2)

PROJECTS (Fiscal)

- upgrade and improve physical community facilities (e.g., streets, sidewalks, lighting, signs, parks, etc.) in existing neighborhoods to enhance housing values and neighborhood appearance (objective #4)
- allocate funds for demolition of abandoned structures (objective #1)
- commit resources for staffing and training for adequate code enforcement and building inspection services (objective #1 #2 and #3)

ORDINANCES (LEGAL)

- Amend the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to provide for a greater variety of housing types and increased flexibility through PRD and cluster development options with density incentives to developers who meet defined *community objectives* (Objectives #5 and #6)
- Emphasize and encourage the following community objectives in the review of new housing plans:
 - the amount of open space, including active and passive recreation areas to be preserved and dedicated for the benefit of residents of new developments; (Objective #7)
 - the amount and type of new streets and public facilities to be included in new development plans; (Objective #4)
 - the adequacy of existing infrastructure to meet demands of new developments; (Objective #4)
 - the mixture of housing types provided within the housing plan to meet demands of housing for young families and retirees (Objective #5,6, and 7)
 - The lack of disturbance to and preservation of natural resources located within the development area (Objective #7)
- Maintain the most current building and property maintenance codes (Objective #1, # 2 and #3)

Table 7-1: North Huntingdon Housing by Percent Renter-Occupied and Percent Owner-Occupied

Housing by Tenure	1990	1999 Estimated	Housing Added 1990-1999* Building Permits
Total Rental Housing Units	1598	1630	32**
Total Owner-occupied Housing Units	8870	9884	1014
Total Housing Units	10468	11514	1046

- Sources: 1990 Census and Building Permit Activity Reports (1990-1999), North Huntingdon Township

Table 7-2: Residential Building Permits Issued 1980-1999

Year	Residential	Year	Residential
1980	41	1993	148
1981	38	1994	121
1982	31	1995	127
1983	49	1996	105
1984	46	1997	127
1985	49	1998	131
1986	47	1999	163
1987	43		
1988	48	TOTAL 1980-89	435
1989	43	TOTAL 1990-99	1117
1990	49		
1991	65	Average 1980-89	48/year
1992	81	Average 1990-99	112 /year

TABLE 7-3, NEW HOUSING PLANS (Proposed and Built, As of April 1999)

PLAN	PROPOSED	BUILT
Altman Farms	216	195
Anthony Estates	9	8
Balkan Estates	9	7
Caruthers Plan	69	65
Cedar Glenn	66	62
Falcon Ridge	150	74
Hunters Woods	114	114
Legends Plan	74	6
Oakton Manor	70	24
Shirley Plan of Lots	7	5
Stonebridge Plan	19	9
Taylor Ridge Plan	45	44
Victoria Heights Plan	83	79
Victoria West Plan	39	25
Willow Glen Plan	176	9
Lincoln Pointe	26	0

Table 7-4, Value of New Housing by Permits

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Construction Cost</u>
1993	\$123,298
1994	\$128,424
1995	\$142,190
1996	\$138,618
1997	\$146,126
1998	\$150,191
1999	\$147,757
TOTAL (7 year average)	\$139,518

Source: Planning and Zoning Office, North Huntingdon Township. Data as reported on building permit applications.

Chapter 8 - Natural Resources and the Environment

Introduction and Background

The natural resources and environmental features within the Township contribute strongly to the aesthetic qualities of the area, the preservation of the natural ecosystems, and contribute strongly to the development patterns and land use trends within the Township. The terms "country feel" and "rural atmosphere" may seem to be states of mind in terms of residents perceptions of the area. These views, however, are in direct response to the actual natural resources and environmental features within the area.

What are the natural resources and environmental features of the Township ?

The natural resources and environmental features of the Township can be categorized as follows:

Physical Features – Non-Observable: Soils; Flood Plains and Minor Wetlands

Physical Features – Observable: Hillsides; Waterways and Major Wetlands

Land Uses: Forested (non-developed) Areas; Agriculture and Parks and Recreation Areas

Environmentally Extracted Areas: Undermined Areas; Oil and Gas Wells

These natural resources and environmental features create development constraints and potential hazards to both the resources and to other properties if adequate measures are not used during any development activity. Some areas with these resources and features have limited potential due to the severity of the features and the regulatory requirements by either the State or Federal Governments.

I. Physical Features: Non-Observable Areas

A. SOILS

A map showing soil associations is useful when necessary to obtain an understanding of the types of soils in an area. Soils have different development capabilities because of their varying physical properties. The Soil Conservation service has compiled the different soil types and listed the development capabilities for each association. A soil association is a landscape that has a distinctive proportional pattern of soils. It normally consists of one or more major soils and at least one minor soil, and is named for the major soils. The soils in one association may occur in another, but in a different pattern. The soils in North Huntingdon are mainly composed of the Westmoreland-Guernesey-Clarksburg Association (**See Map 8-1 General Soil Associations**).

These are generally deep to moderately deep, well-drained to somewhat poorly drained soils over interceded sandstone, shale, and limestone.

This association consists chiefly of rounded hills that have lone, smooth, convex slopes, and of nearly level to gently sloping benches and fans. About 50 percent of the association consists of moderately deep to deep, well-drained Westmoreland soils, which are gently sloping to steep. About 30 percent consists of moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained Guernsey soils. These soils are nearly level to moderately steep and occur on the lower parts of slopes, below Westmoreland soils. **Table 4-4** lists the general soil types of the Westmoreland-Guernesey-Clarksburg association with their development limitations.

Table 8-1: Soil Characteristics and Development Limitations

Soil Type	Drainage Characteristics	Homesite Limitations	Permeability	Septic Tank Limitations
Monogahela	Moderately Well	Moderate ²	Moderately Slow	Severe ³
Philo	Moderate to Poor	Severe ¹	Moderate	Severe ^{1,2}
Atkins	Poor	Severe ^{1,2}	High Water Table Problems	Severe ^{1,2}
Westmoreland	Well	Moderate	Moderately Slow	Severe ⁴
Guernsey	Moderate to Poor	Moderate	Slow	Severe ³
Clarksburg	Moderate to Poor	Moderate ²	Slow	Severe ³
Gilpin	Well	Moderate ^{4,5}	Moderate	Severe ⁴
Upshur	Well	Severe ^{5,2}	Moderate	Severe ²

Key to Limitations

1 – Flooding
 2 – High Water Table
 3 – Slow Permeability
 4 – Limited Depth to Bedrock
 5 – Landslide Prone

About 15 percent of the association consists of moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained Clarksburg soils. These soils are nearly level to sloping. They are in drainage ways and on benches and fans along streams. The rest the association consists of Brooke and other soils. A more detailed description of soil types with their development limitations can be found in the Soil Survey of Westmoreland County. Land has different development capabilities depending upon the physical properties of the soil. Development may be hampered by the soil's geologic, topographic, and hydrologic features.

B. Wetlands and Hydric Soils

Wetlands are physical features now valued as a natural resource. Development occurring in wetlands can pose considerable problems because of their susceptibility to flooding and slow soil permeability rates. These conditions can render septic systems ineffective thereby contaminating surface and ground water. Wetlands have high water tables resulting in poor drainage; conditions which may make building foundations weak and perhaps creating potential problems with wet basements. Development costs to overcome these limitations and the potential environmental damage caused by the misuse of these lands can be great.

Wetlands, however, do provide considerable benefits which make them worthy of resource protection efforts. Ecologically, wetlands provide a rich and diverse environment and serve as a valuable habitat for waterfowl, wildlife, freshwater fish, and endangered species. They are also an important source of timber. Furthermore, wetlands are natural flood devices. They temporarily store floodwaters and reduce downstream losses of life and property through the gradual release of water. Wetlands are also natural water purification systems. They remove silt and filter pollutants. Lastly, wetlands offer recreation opportunities by providing open space for hiking, fishing, hunting, environmental education, and photography.

There are three basic indicators for determining the presence of wetlands: soils, vegetation, and hydrology. As the scope of this study did not permit in-depth field investigation, the wetland analysis is based on hydric soil conditions identified by the Westmoreland County Soil Survey as mapped by the Soil Conservation Service. Hydric soils are defined as soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded. These soils usually support hydrophilic vegetation such as red maples, box elders, sedges, bulrushes, spike rushes, cattails, arrowhead plants, and water lilies. Hydric soils represent areas where there is a high probability that wetlands can be found. The wetlands shown on the development constraint map are a general guide to location of wetlands in the Township. For more accurate and detailed wetlands mapping, a wetlands determination would have to be completed by a trained specialist utilizing methodologies such as those prescribed in the Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands, January 1989.

Generally, the wetlands in North Huntingdon Township are located along streams. Wetlands in the narrow floors of the stream valley often form a part of the floodplain. Where the stream valleys widen (for example, at the confluence of streams), wetlands commonly occur. There are approximately 21 acres of wetlands in North Huntingdon Township, comprising less than 1% of the Township's total land area. Protection of wetlands is provided by Federal and State regulations. Under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act of 1970, permits are required for dredge and fill operations in federally designated wetlands. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers a wetlands protection program under "Chapter 105" of the Dam Safety

and Encroachment Act. The DEP defines wetlands more broadly in terms of the site's ability to support vegetation indicative of aquatic conditions or of saturated conditions. (See Map 8-2: Wetlands & Flood Prone Areas)

C. Flood Prone Areas

Flooding from major streams and rivers is a major consideration in assessing the development and resource potential of the land. Flood plains are found along major streams and their tributaries. The major streams in North Huntingdon Township include: (1) Bush Creek and the Youghaheny which flow a northwesterly direction toward Economy Township (See Map8-2: Wetlands & Flood Prone Areas).

A flood plain is a relatively flat or low-lying land area which is subject to partial or complete inundation from an adjoining or nearby stream, river, or watercourse. Flood plains are subject to the unusual and rapid accumulation of surface water. Obviously, flood plains pose a development constraint because of the potential hazards from flooding during periods of heavy rainfall and runoff. Because flood plain soils are wet or have a high water table, they are poorly suited for roads, homes and other structures. Disturbance of the vegetation, excavation and development in flood plains can cause erosion and sedimentation which adversely effects water quality and aquatic life.

The federal government has mapped flood prone areas in North Huntingdon Township. The areas designated as flood plains represent areas of special flood hazards. They are designated as Zone A on the Flood Insurance Rate Map for North Huntingdon Township, Pennsylvania by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These maps indicate areas likely to flood during the 100 year flood. The 100-year flood is one that is likely to occur once every 100 years or that has a one percent chance of occurring each year. About 8% of North Huntingdon Township's land area, or 1,443 acres, falls within these federally designated areas. Precautionary measures have already been taken in North Huntingdon Township to minimize flood damage.

Floodplain Ordinance #502 establishes minimum standards for development in floodplains. These regulations are modeled after the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program and the Pennsylvania Flood Plain Management Act. They are designed to prevent flood damage, minimize danger to public health, and reduce damage to property. For example, development is permitted in the flood plain provided certain flood proofing measures are taken and the lowest habitable floor of building construction is elevated above the elevation of the 100 year flood. Generally, development should be directed away from flood plain areas because of the potential for flooding and the instability of soil conditions.

(a) Hillsides and Steep Slopes

Slope refers to the degree to which the terrain rises and falls as expressed in terms of percent. Slope is a major factor in determining the capability of the land for development. Subsequently, as the percent of slope increases the range of land use alternatives becomes more limited; there is greater potential for landslides and environmental impacts, such as runoff, erosion and sedimentation to occur. As the percent of slope increases, development costs for building construction, site preparation, septic systems, landscaping and building design also increases.

For purposes of this analysis, steep slopes are defined as those having gradients of 25% or greater). Information contained in the Soil Survey for Westmoreland County, which identifies soils with slopes greater than 25%, was used for mapping purposes (**See Map 8-3: Steep Slopes**). Steep slopes are a major development constraint in North Huntingdon Township. Within the Township, there are approximately 1,771 acres of land area which fall into the steep slope category. This represents 10% of the land area in the Township. It should be noted that a high percentage of steep slopes occur in the northern (above Route 30) and southwestern sections of the Township. Without proper engineering, development on steep slopes that may result in irreparable environmental damage should be discouraged or prohibited.

(b) Undermined Lands

Several coal seams occur in Westmoreland County ranging in thickness from several inches to nearly nine feet. The principal coal seams in this region are the Upper Freeport and the Pittsburgh coal seams. The Freeport coal seam is located 600 to 700 feet below the Pittsburgh coal seam. According to the Undermined Lands Map, (See Map 8-4: Undermined Lands) which was compiled from mining maps of the PennDOT District Engineer's Office in Greensburg, a large portion (65%) of the Township has been undermined. The effects of underground mining can be a concern due to mine drainage, the sedimentation of streams from improperly disposed of refuse, mine fires and surface subsidence.

Strip mining of coal in Western Pennsylvania has been practiced over much of the region within the Pittsburgh Coal Seam. Constraints typically associated with older surface mined sites include residual ponding of water, the existence of steep sloped "high walls", barren ground surface, unstable rocky soil piles, a sulphurous odor associated with the weathering of some types of disturbed rock strata, acidic mine drainage and possible subsidence under the loading of new structures. State laws now require the restoration of surface mining areas to the approximate natural contours and the re-establishing of vegetative cover after the mining has been completed. Vegetation can be difficult to establish especially if the soil is of an acidic nature.

(c) Oil and Gas Wells

Within North Huntingdon Township there are several active wells. Many have been depleted and capped. Oil and gas wells are subject to state regulation by the Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Oil and Gas Management, Pittsburgh Southwest Region. Generally, wells must be at least 200 feet from existing buildings and water supplies, 1,000 feet from wetlands and surface bodies of water as shown on USGS quadrangles and, measured horizontally, 900 - 1,000 feet from existing wells. Those that are still in operation should be properly maintained to prevent safety hazards and ground or surface water contamination due to leaking casings.

(d) Prime Agricultural Soils – Agricultural Areas

Pennsylvania is the most productive agricultural state in the Northeast with more than 50,000 farms and 7.7 million acres of crop and pasture land. The Commonwealth's abundant supply of agricultural land has sustained farm families, farm operations, and rural communities in Pennsylvania for generations. Pennsylvania farmers are a vital component of the Commonwealth's economy, comprising the largest industry in the State, generating over \$3.7 billion annually in farm receipts, supporting a \$43.7 billion a year agribusiness economy and employing nearly one-fifth of the state's workforce.

Recognizing that prime agricultural soils should be considered an essential natural resource, the people of Pennsylvania have sought to halt their loss or conversion through various incentives, protective programs, initiatives and legislative efforts.

North Huntingdon has very few persons employed in farming or farm related industries and few active farms. According to the 1990 Census less than 1 percent of its work force was employed in these fields. Furthermore, the development capability analysis completed for this Comprehensive Plan, while showing the presence of prime agricultural soils in the Township also reveals that more of these areas have already been lost to development (**See Map 8-5 : Prime Agricultural Soils**). However, tracts with prime agricultural soils do remain and approximately 4,800 acres of the Township remains relatively open (See Build-Out Analysis). As of this writing the Township is the only municipality in Westmoreland County that does not participate in any type of farm or farmland preservation program.¹ Should the Township wish to pursue any type of agricultural protection initiatives it will have to establish an Agricultural Protection Task Force to generate local farmland/soils preservation support and that would work with the County's Soil Conservation Service. The force would have to become familiar with the various programs and efforts available through the State that could assist the Township in these efforts. Should the Township consider adopting provisions to further protect these lands, proper surveying and more detailed investigations must be performed as part of a comprehensive land use policy.

Assets

- The Township's natural resources and environmental features contributes heavily to the pleasant physical appearance and aesthetics of the area, particularly the hillsides, natural ridges and valleys, remaining agricultural lands and forested lands;
- The natural resources and environmental features contribute toward a healthy ecosystem and balance between the natural and man-made environments;
- The natural resources and environmental features contribute to a more varied land use pattern by providing for natural buffering between development areas within the Township;
- The natural resources and environmental features contribute strongly toward the community character
- The Township still has large areas of undeveloped areas
- The Township has a cooperative relationship with the Westmoreland Conservation District which assures for review and enforcement of erosion-related issues caused by new developments

Liabilities

- The natural resources and environmental features are being affected by newer developments both within these areas and adjacent to these areas;
- Non-developed properties within the Township have limited development potential due to the existence of natural resources and environmental features
- Development affecting natural resources and environmental features have negative synergistic impacts upon other components of the ecosystem
- The Township faces considerable growth potential and needs to develop ways to accommodate future development while enhancing and preserving environmental quality.
- The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance offers weak protection of the natural environment. The Township does not have effective mechanisms in place for the protection of steep slopes, poor soil areas and other natural features.
- There is no comprehensive inventory of the natural resources and environmental features making it difficult to deal with these issues during the development review process.

Dynamics

Development follows the course of least resistance. This basic principal is evidenced by the land development patterns within the Township. Easier developable lands (flatter, less vegetation, etc.) have generally developed first, while more challenging sites have only recently been developed or remain undeveloped. This is mostly due to the costs associated with development in challenged areas, but also can be heavily influenced by the land use regulations in place for these areas. As the Township continues to grow and face development pressures, the remaining land that is now undeveloped will become the only alternative to prospective developers. It is essential that development occur on this land, only in concert with the existing natural resources and environmental features, allowing for the "conservation development" land use category to apply to these areas, with appropriate regulations and standards to protect and sustain these resources, while not restricting private property rights.

COMMUNITY INPUT

At the public meetings and forums the support for greater environmental protection measures were expressed by many residents; while the development community expressed concerns over the costs of such regulations. The community survey ranked the preservation of natural resources very highly as it relates to preserving community character.

As a result of the discussion during the open forum, it was determined that many Township regulations actually encourage additional disturbance of the natural environment, and that flexibility was needed to meet the multiple objectives of development and environmental protection.

GOAL

Identify and preserve the natural resources and environmental features that help identify the community character, provide for scenic and aesthetic beauty enjoyed by the community, protects the public health and safety and contributes to the necessary balance required by the natural ecosystem, without limiting constitutionally based property development rights provided it is done in an environmentally responsible manner.

Objectives

1. Increase the understanding of and awareness to the Township's natural resources and environmental features as part of the development review processes
2. Implement new regulatory land use management practices to enhance and preserve the natural environment while accommodating future development.
3. Protect and maintain the quality of all waterways, including streams, drainage systems and groundwater sources for people, plants, and wildlife.
4. Minimize the potential for runoff problems, soil erosion, and flooding through appropriate innovative approaches to stormwater management.
5. Protect the quality of North Huntingdon's productive and sensitive soils.
6. Reduce impacts from unstable slope disturbances on steep slopes
7. Protect the integrity and quality of forested areas to be used as buffers, habitat, and pollution removal systems, and ensure the retention of existing high-quality trees and woodlands and the planting of new trees during land development.
8. Conserve and protect existing wildlife habitats through the preservation of natural vegetation, forest cover, streams and stream corridors, wetlands, and undeveloped steep slopes.

Action Strategies

Policies and Programs (Administrative)

- Inventory Township natural resources and environmental features into GIS (Geographic Information System) database for easy retrieval for analysis purposes during development review
- Provide information to citizens and prospective developers on Township resources prior to the submission of project applications
- Continue and strengthen ties with the Westmoreland Conservation District and other regional/state and federal environmental agencies to assure full compliance and enforcement of sound environmental regulations

- Assure full compliance with Department of Environmental Protection requirements for the installation of septic systems.
- Identify undeveloped areas in the Township with combinations of slope and soil that may pose development constraints and consider utilizing these areas as open space within any potential development
- Seek out methods and tools to fully implement local elements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 21st Century Environmental Commission Report

Projects (Fiscal)

- Commit necessary funding to complete total implemetation of GIS system for environmental inventory
- Seek methods to preserve valuable natural resource land within the Township through purchase by non-profit conservation groups and conservation easements

Ordinances (Legal)

- Amend the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to require additional environmental information to be submitted in the development application package
- Amend the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances to establish regulations in the following area: development on areas of steep slope (25% or greater); development on areas of poor soils (unstable); development on areas that have been undermined; preservation methods of existing forested areas and other environmental features within proposed development plans
- Establish regulatory procedures for the administrative review of all development projects, including the issuance of grading permits and building permits that consider environmental implications of the permit;
- Review and improve the Stormwater Management Ordinance to assure no additional runoff generated from new developments. Establish review standards for the analysis of existing drainage problems on potential development sites
- Modify the Zoning Ordinance so that it provides better protection to natural resources to include mechanisms and techniques such as cluster development, conservation easements other innovative measures for the long term enhancement and protection of the environment within proposed development plans.
- Implement alternative ways to minimize impervious surfaces . Allow greater flexibility in the subdivision code for street, parking, and curb and gutter requirements to reduce unnecessary amounts of impervious surfaces. Base

parking on actual use levels to reduce excessively sized parking lots. Add minimum landscaping requirements to development plans to replace lost landscaping and minimize impervious surfaces..

- Preserve forests on steep slopes (>25%) to reduce erosion and protect natural wildlife. On 15% to 25% slopes, site disturbances should be limited to only that necessary for essential road construction and utility installation.

Chapter 9 : The Transportation Network

Background and Description

INTRODUCTION

A required element of the Comprehensive Plan deals with transportation issues and includes a strategy for the movement of people and goods. Effective planning is a function of a sound transportation network and is an essential element in the economic and social well-being of the Township. The transportation system of the Township is composed of local streets, expressways, highways, parking facilities, pedestrian and bikeway systems and public transit routes. It also include airfields, railroads all linked together with regional and national transportation systems for the purpose of moving people and goods in an effective and efficient manner.

The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is not a substitute for engineering knowledge, experience or judgment. It is to be used by public officials, concerned citizens and the business community as a basis from which policy decisions can be made.

DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Roadways

The transportation system of North Huntingdon Township is composed of a system of roadways containing in addition to local and private streets, 3 miles of Interstate, 41 miles of State roads, and 4.5 miles of County roads. The principal roadways in the Township are Route 30, Route 993 and Interstate 76. The Interstate extends through the eastern section of the Township. Access to the Interstate is obtained via the Irwin Interchange on Route 30 near the Borough of Irwin. Extending approximately 7.2 miles through the Township Route 30, once the old Lincoln Highway, is the primary east-west arterial in North Huntingdon. A secondary arterial serving the northern portion of the Township and running parallel to Route 30 is state Route 993.

Public Transportation

Limited public transportation service is available through the Westmoreland County Transit Authority. The Township is served by only three bus routes. The Pittsburgh Commuter runs along Pennsylvania Ave and Route 30 to Pittsburgh originating in Greensburg. This line is the Authority's most profitable serving about 150 passengers per day. The Irwin Local serving the Shafton-Westmoreland City communities runs

along Center Highway, Brownstown Road and Rt. 993 towards Manor Borough. The Herminie-North Huntingdon local serves the Hahntown section of the Township running along Clay Pike, Main St, Route 30, Thompson Lane and Pennsylvania Ave. Local buses start running at 9:00am and their ridership is primarily senior citizens traveling to the area's shopping centers. The Transit Authority offers special services such as the Medical Assistance Transportation Program to its riders. Local taxi companies are contracted to provide transportation to medical facilities for those who qualify.

North Huntingdon is not well served by public transportation. For residents the automobile is the preferred mode of transport. Moreover, our suburban land use patterns typified by large-lot zoning and low densities do not lend themselves to the efficient and economical operation of public transportation facilities. On a number of local lines ridership has fallen so much that these have been discontinued. Van pooling is a more popular option to those residents living in North Huntingdon and working in Pittsburgh. US Route 30 east is one of the most heavily used thoroughfares by vanpools.

There are two types of park-n-ride facilities recommended for North Huntingdon. Exclusive Use Lots are those planned, designed and constructed specifically to serve as park-n-ride lots. They are often located at remote sites and tend to be larger than shared-use lots. Many exclusive lots in operation provide parking spaces for 100-1,000 automobiles, have passenger amenities and frequent peak period transit service.

Shared-Use Lots serve multiple functions. They may be the parking lots of churches, shopping centers or other such facilities located along local service routes. Shared lots are usually smaller than exclusive-use lots.

Rail and Interstate Bus

Conrail has 10.4 miles of track running north-southeast through the Township on which AMTRAK passenger trains also run. Greyhound Bus Lines and AMTRAK provide bus and train access to destinations anywhere in the continental US. However, Greyhound and AMTRAK do not serve North Huntingdon directly. The closest major bus and passenger rail terminals are located in downtown Pittsburgh. Local taxi companies provide service, albeit limited, to parts of North Huntingdon.

Air

National and international air travel is available via the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport (GPIA), which is operated by Allegheny County through its Department of Aviation. The Arnold Palmer Regional Airport in

Latrobe offers commuter and corporate jet service. The area is served by a number of smaller regional airports.

ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

A roadway classification system should be based on the ultimate function of a road regardless of its present traffic volumes. Using the established functional classification system is a means to controlling access to certain roads and therefore limit or prevent congestion. Historically, classifying roads as arterials, which should have meant they were only intended to serve as a major through way was usually not done until traffic volumes were so high that congestion was present. The solution, then, to many of our traffic problems would be to preclassify key roads and to develop standards in our zoning and subdivision regulations that would limit access to those roads intended to carry larger traffic volumes. These roads, the system of arterials and collectors are shown on the in this section.

US ROUTE 30

Route 30 in North Huntingdon, once part of the old Lincoln Highway, was one of the earliest national transcontinental highways. Over the years with the development of the Interstate, various bypasses, and alternate alignments, Route 30 has changed but is still a major arterial in this growth corridor. Route 30 is a state road subject to a variety of state regulations concerning curb cuts. Nonetheless, the road passes through seven municipalities in Westmoreland County alone each with its own standards for development and signage regulations. The result has been a probable decrease in the level of service and unsightly sprawl. No recent comprehensive traffic counts have been done on any significant length of Route 30. Obviously, the more this area develops the greater the amount of traffic this road will have to accommodate.

No one municipality can improve traffic flow or appearance on this principal arterial. The planning and land use decisions made in one municipality will have an impact, positive or negative, on surrounding communities. With the expected increase in traffic volumes resulting from population growth in this corridor pressure on important intersections and roadways located throughout the Township will increase. One suggestion to improve traffic flow and appearance would be for the affected municipalities to form a partnership with, PennDOT, Westmoreland County, and the SPRPC to develop a coordinated set of standards for development. Standards for land use, densities and signage would be linked to the functional classification system and the listing of Route 30 as

a major arterial. Working together with other impacted municipalities and governmental agencies Route 30 could be made to better accommodate traffic flow.

The debt service cost of bonds for that year by the ratio of the assessed value of the individual property to the total assessed value of all the assessed properties in the district. For example, the average assessment may be equal to 1.97% of the assessed value of the properties within the district. The assessment could be recalculated each year for the terms of the bonds.

Existing properties will be assessed less each year as their share of the assessed value of all properties in the district decreases because of the continuing development of property in the district. Unless they continue to grow faster than the other properties in the district, then their assessment would actually increase. One advantage to this assessment approach is that there is less likelihood of an appeal claiming unfair assessments because the assessment is based on the property value.

Transportation Studies and Impact Fees

Throughout the country, many communities are turning to impact fees as a means of easing the financial strain of growth and development. By imposing impact fees, new development pays its way, and municipalities are able to make the capital improvements that are needed to serve new development without unfairly placing the entire burden on the taxpayers of the community. Pennsylvania's impact fee law - Act 209, which took effect in December 1990, authorizes municipalities to charge impact fees on new developments for capital improvements to the transportation system. These fees would be levied as a condition to final plat approval under the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Act 209 defines an impact fee as "a charge or fee imposed by the municipality against new development to generate revenue for funding the costs of transportation capital improvements necessitated by and attributable to new development." Impact fees can not be used to pay for existing deficiencies in the transportation system; for the operation, maintenance, or repair of roads; or for other purposes other than transportation facilities. Before a municipality can adopt an impact fee program, it must have adopted the following planning elements and land controls:

- Comprehensive Plan;
- Zoning Ordinance; and,
- Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- Traffic Impact Study

Assets

- The presence of a major four lane state highway (Route 30) within the Township
- The presence of a Turnpike Interchange (Exit 7) within the Township
- The quality and maintenance of local roads through an aggressive overlay program by the Township
- Park and Ride opportunities for Township residents

Liabilities

- Limited public transit service for both inter and intra-Township travel
- Significant traffic congestion on Route 30
- Problem intersections along Route 30
- Inadequate state road network to handle increased traffic flow generated by new housing plans
- Insufficient number turning lanes on Route 30
- Intense development pressures on Barnes Lake Road, a state highway
- Street parking on narrow streets inhibits safe passage
- Lack of railroad spurs within the Township inhibits industrial development efforts
- Limited safe pedestrian and bicycle paths within plans and throughout the Township
- Commercial development activity on Route 30 encourages additional curb cuts and traffic conflict points creating high accident rate

Dynamics

The need and desire to get from one place to another is the driving force behind the Township's transportation network. The nature of development within the community has been focused along the Route 30 corridor which carries the brunt of traffic generated by Township residents. Additional state roads, such as Route 993, Lincoln Way, Barnes Lane Road, Robbins Station Road have had increased usage over the years due to increased development activity. The demands placed on these roads are significant in that the traffic generation far exceeds capacity. The attractiveness of the Township as a "nice place to live" has attracted many families who work elsewhere in the Pittsburgh

regional area thus generating traffic demand from commuters. In fact, most traffic-related issues affecting the Township are regional in nature, and must be addressed at those levels. The amount of state roads within the Township and their use is a serious issue that must be addressed.

COMMUNITY OPINIONS

The increased level of traffic, particularly on Route 30 and Barnes Lake Road, is the major focus of concern among township residents, according to survey results and input at the open forum. Residents believe that this increased traffic affects public safety, community character and causes major inconveniences.

Positive aspects of the transportation network correlate with the concerns. Many residents believe that greatest asset the township has is its access to major transportation corridors (particularly the Turnpike) which in turn helps contribute to the increased traffic discussed above.

On the whole, residents believe that the quality of the roads are slightly above average, with respondents living in historic areas of the Township having a lesser view of road quality than those who reside in development plans built in the last decade.

GOAL:

Provide an integrated regionally responsive transportation network, for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, that is safe, economical, well-maintained and provides for adequate service needs for current and future residents and safe traffic flow through the Township for persons travelling through our area

Objectives

1. Plan regionally for transportation system linkages throughout the Pittsburgh metropolitan area utilizing vehicular and other transit modes
2. Develop the arterial and collector street system in accordance with the road classification map in this plan

3. Provide collector and arterial roads in the Township which can move large volumes of traffic from within and outside the Township while minimizing impact on residential neighborhoods.
4. Acquire additional right-of-way where possible to expand capacity of existing collector roads.
5. Increase and/or improve the number and quality of routes which traverse the Township east to west, as alternatives to Route 30.
6. Work with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to create or transform arterial roads into divided roadways with landscaped medians which limit driveway access, thus increasing safety and facilitating traffic flow.
7. Serve residential neighborhoods with adequate collector roads and commercial areas with adequate collector and arterial roads into which local roads connect, so that local roads do not serve collector needs.
8. Provide for the interconnection of neighborhoods and parcels with local streets, and with collector or arterial streets where planned or dictated by traffic volumes
9. Maintain the public road system in a cost effective manner to extend roadway surface life, and allow for the safe use by the traveling public in all seasons and weather conditions.
10. Share responsibility of transportation related impacts and improvements with other governmental sources and private developers

Action Strategies

Policies and Programs (Administrative)

- Coordinate with responsible agencies (Federal, State, County and Local) to develop a capital improvements program to identify, prioritize, and correct any deficiencies in the road system. Advocate for transportation improvement projects on state highways and roads that benefit the Township through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation 12 year Planning Program
- Encourage more use of public transportation and request studies in order to determine the feasibility of improved or expanded public transportation routes and services with particular emphasis on service to the area's major shopping and employment centers.

- Work with the SPRPC and investigate the feasibility of incorporating a network of Park-n-Ride facilities with any public transit routes that may be proposed.
- Begin the necessary ground work to establish an integrated network of pedestrian and bicycle trails. Coordinate with other governments and interest groups as necessary.
- Form a partnership with, PennDOT, Westmoreland County, other municipalities and the SPRPC to develop a coordinated set of development standards for Route 30.
- Commit toward the study and evaluation of the future of state roads within the Township and their ability to handle capacity based on projected build-out patterns

Projects (Fiscal)

- The Township should continue and enhance a long range and comprehensive road surface management program. This would involve a regular yearly program of road maintenance and resurfacing. A schedule of road maintenance and expenditures should be developed into a six year Capital Improvements Program should be integrated in the CIP
- Conduct intersection studies, as referred to in the Traffic Improvement Map
- Advocate the following funding projects through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation:

Route 30

- Conduct a comprehensive engineering and traffic study of the entire State Route 30 corridor from the Allegheny County line to the Hempfield Township line.
- Coordinate the timing of and hardwire all traffic lights along the State Route 30 corridor to maximize traffic flow
- Construct a center turning lane from the Allegheny County line to the Irwin Borough line
- Reconstruct the intersection of State Route 30 and State Route 4019 to allow westbound truck traffic on State Route 30 to make uninterrupted turning movements onto State Route 4019

State Route 3022 (Lincoln Way)

- Construct drainage and curbing along the entire length of State Route 3022 from its intersection with Route 30 to the Allegheny County Line
- Consider the construction of dedicated left-turn lanes at the driveway to Norwin Town Square shopping center, Craig Drive, Five Pines Road and Bethel Road
- Resurface the entire length of State Route 3022 from its intersection with State Route 30 to the Allegheny County Line

State Route 3047 (Ridge Road) and State Route 3051 (Robbins Station Road)

- Construct drainage and curbing along the entire length of State Route 3047 and State Route 3051 from its intersection with State Route 30 to Spicher Hill Road
- Consider the construction of dedicated left-turn lanes in both directions on State

Route 3047 at the intersection of State Route 3049. In conjunction, install a new traffic signal with the appropriate left-turn lane signals.

State Road 3020 (Barnes Lake Road)

- Conduct a comprehensive engineering and traffic study of the entire State Route 3020 corridor from the intersection with State Route 30 to Clay Pike Road
- Construct designated left-turn lanes at the Norwin Hills shopping center and Clay Pike Road

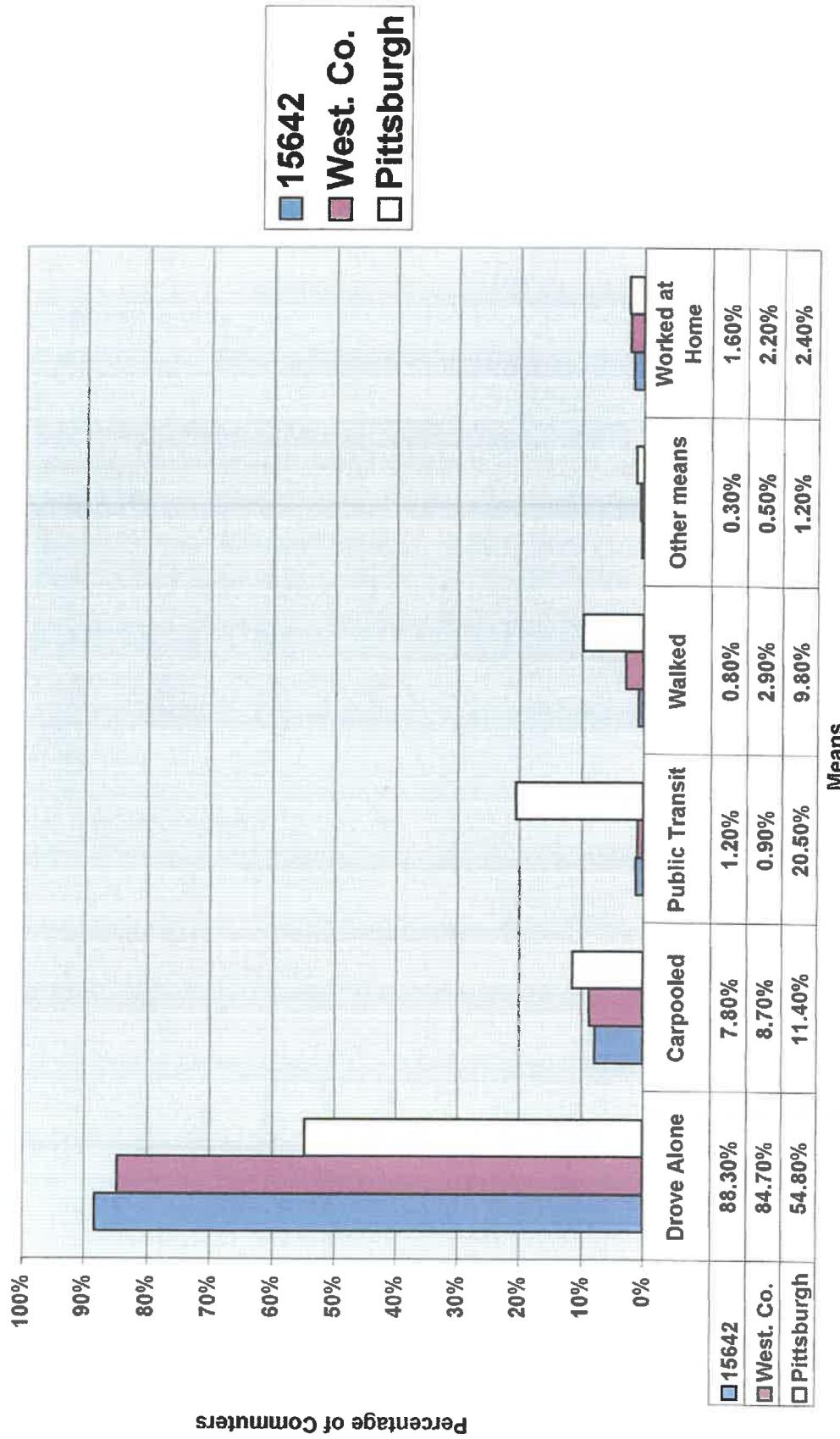
State Route 4019 (Leger Road)

- Widen each traffic lane and install a center lane from the intersection with State Route 30 to one-half mile past the CCX truck terminal facility
- Construct drainage and curbing along the above-stated segment of SR 4019
- Resurface the above stated segment of State Route 4019 from its intersection with SR 30 to one-half mile past the CCX truck terminal facility

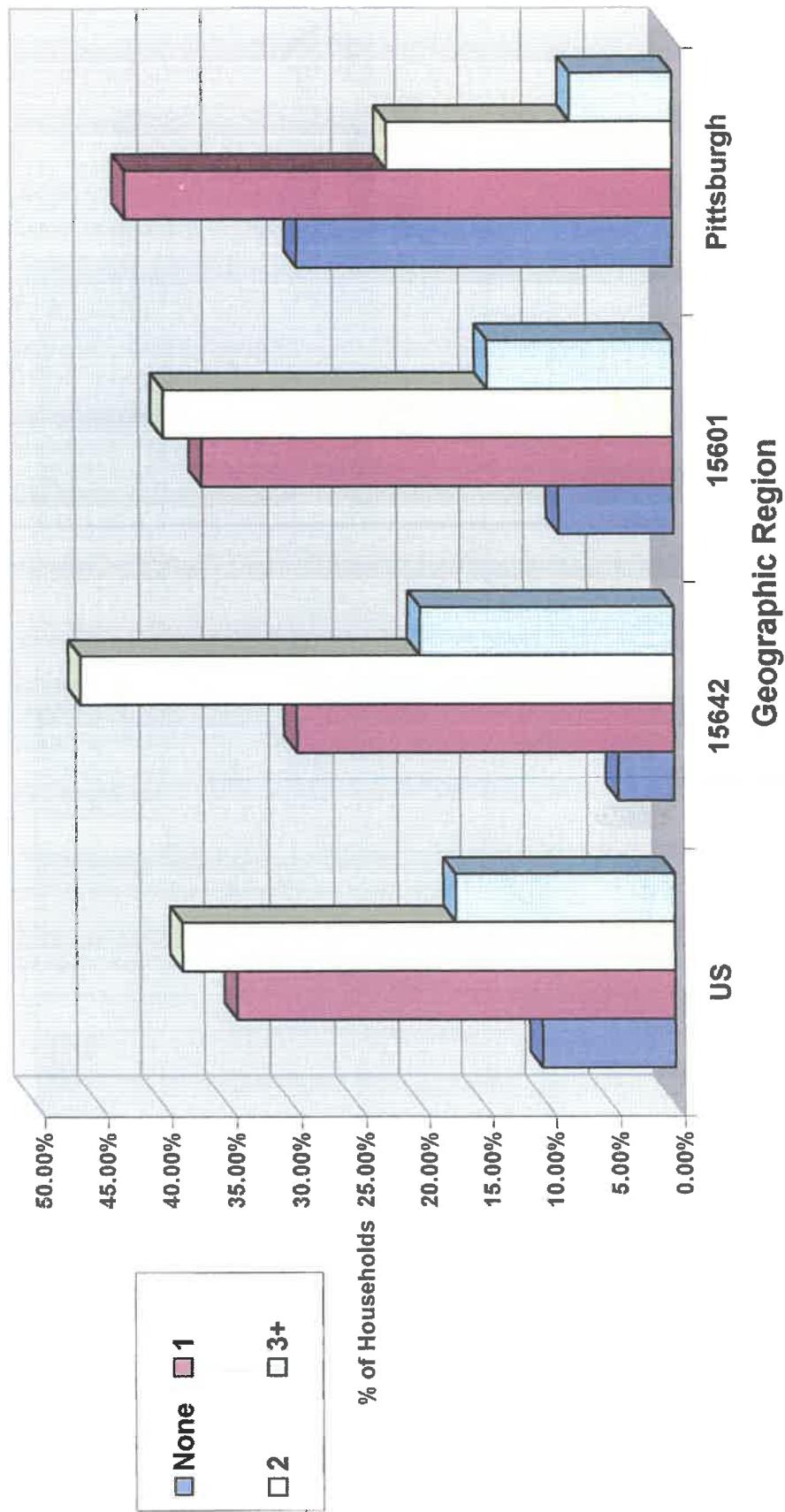
Ordinances (Legal)

- Require the submission of a Traffic Impact Study for large scale subdivisions and land developments generating more than 500 trips per day (50 lots or more)
- Establish a Transportation Impact Fee program pursuant to provisions of Article V-A of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code
- Consider reducing the required width of new streets in planned residential developments, provided that road can handle anticipated traffic demands. Excessively wide streets are unnecessary and increase costs for everyone in the development process; developers, homebuyers and municipalities. Utilize creative and flexible subdivision regulations to accomplish this strategy and obtain additional right-of-way for expanding capacity of collector roads that have less than the required right-of-way width
- Link the design of new streets to the number of units expected to be served by the new street.
- Consider adopting zoning and subdivision standards that would permit the creation of smaller streets such as lanes and ways in planned residential developments
- Consider incorporating standards for "T", "Y" and off center cul-de-sacs. In small scale developments (10 or fewer units) the use of "T", or "Y" cul-de-sacs may be a better option than the traditional "lollipop" design. In some cases, an off-center cul-de-sac when used with smaller streets can facilitate driving ease and add to visual variety in the site design. Reduce the number of cul-de-sacs in a plan.
- Consider reducing the present radii of cul-de-sacs in planned residential developments. Large radii (40ft or greater) create large expanses of paved area that are costly to maintain and add to storm water runoff.
- Consider prohibiting direct access onto collectors and arterials. Collectors and arterials should be designed for through traffic only. Numerous curb cuts on such streets diminish their function and adds unnecessarily to congestion

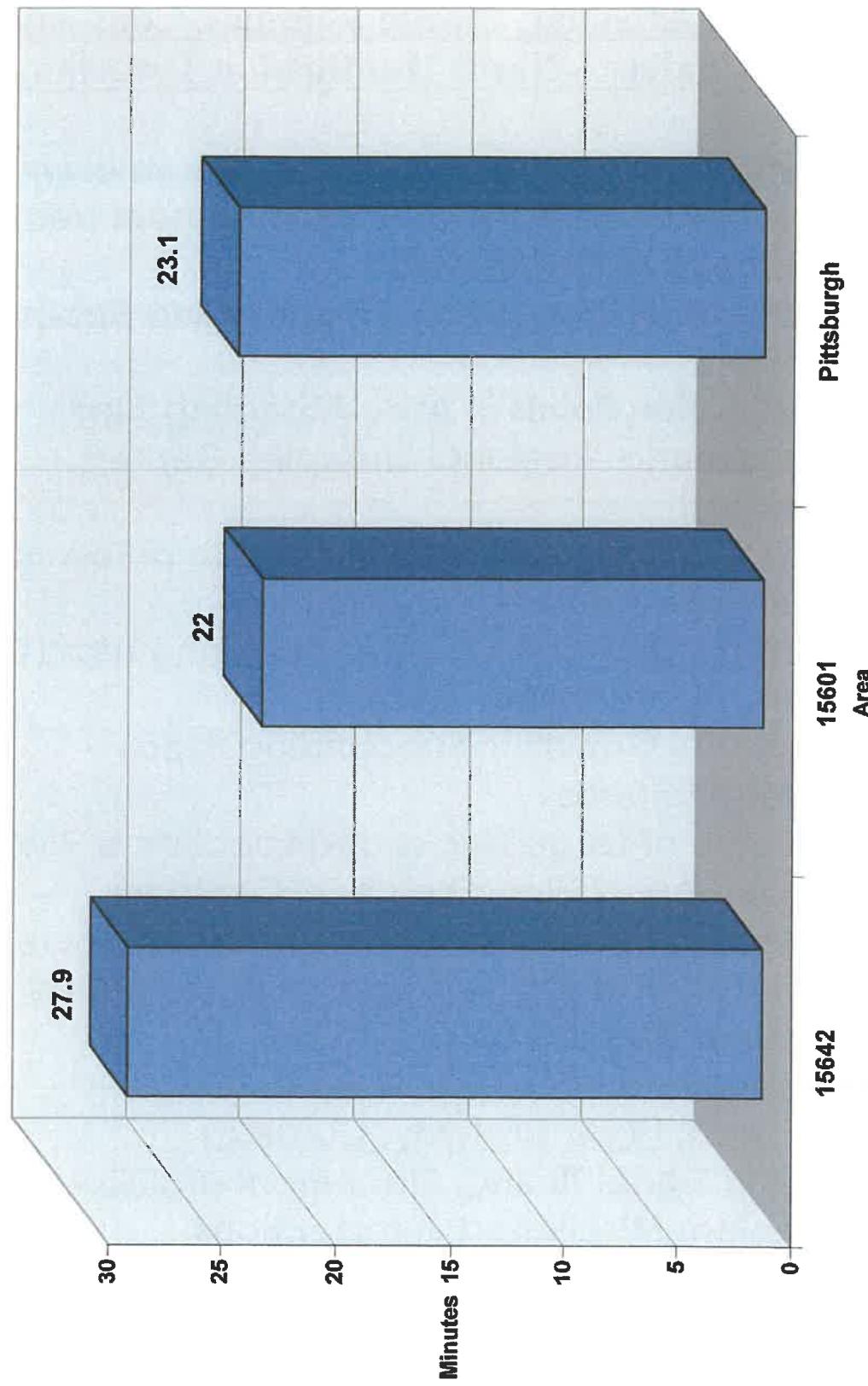
Means of Commuting to Work - 2000 Census



Vehicles Available by Percentage of Households - 2000 Census



Commuting Time to Work - Minutes - 2000 Census



Factors Affecting Traffic Volumes, Congestion and Safety – North Huntingdon Township

- Number of Registered Vehicles per Household
- Number of Households – Development Trends (10 trips per household)
- Location of Workplace – Commuting Habits by Mode
- Destination Points in Area Attracting Trips (Landmarks, Regional Shopping Centers, Schools)
- Travel to Destination Points outside of Township
- Pennsylvania Turnpike Exchange
- Increase in Daily Activities Requiring Trips (Day Care, Sports Events, etc.)
- Regional Growth in Surrounding Areas – Through Roads
- Volume of Large Trucks and Location of Major Truck Depots along Route 30 Corridor
- Number/Location of Curb Cuts along Route 30
- Left Hand Turning Movements from Passing Lane on Route 30
- Capacity and Quality of Existing Highway Network (R/W. Cartway, Curbings)
- Traffic Signal Timing, Placement and Quality
- Problem Misaligned Intersections
- Sunrise/Sunset Delays
- Accident Delays and Safety Issues
- Mass Transit and Alternative Travel Availability

Chapter 10 Community Facilities.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreational programs are considered an essential community facilities in the North Huntingdon Township. These areas and programs enhance the well being of citizens by providing them with enjoyable activities and settings in which to spend their leisure time. The economic benefits from preserving open spaces and offering recreational opportunities include increases in the value of surrounding properties and an enhanced quality of life in North Huntingdon.

Recreational opportunities, both active and passive, are available to all ages on a year-round basis. The park system includes approximately 310 acres of Township owned parks within the corporate limits. There are many and diverse facilities included in the recreational and open spaces.

Township Parks and Recreation Facilities

Norwin Lions Park

Donated to the Township in 1974, this 18 acre park contains a ball field, playground equipment and a shelter.

Oak Hollow Park

This 127 acre park contains four picnic shelters, playground equipment, a fishing lake, restrooms, basketball court, baseball field with backstop, soccer field, water fountains, free standing grills, electricity at all stations, paved roadways and parking areas. There is also a park maintenance building and a caretaker's residence.

Braddock's Trail Park.

An historic site located in the southwestern portion of the Township, this 147 acre park is used primarily for nature studies. A series of trails is being developed throughout the park by Boy Scouts.

Tinker's Run Park.

This park contains a ball field, shelters and playground equipment.

Indian Lake

This 16.2 acre site located in the Southeast portion of the Township contains a 4.8 acre fishing lake, a walking track encircling the lake, restrooms and a picnic pavilion and paved parking areas.

Hilltop Park

This park contains a baseball field, a playground and a basketball court.

Westmoreland City

This park contains a baseball field and a playground.

Lincoln Acres

This park contains a playground and a basketball court.

Country Hills

This park contains a playground and a baseball field

Jacktown Acres

This park contains a basketball court and a playground.

Penns Woods

This park contains a baseball field and playground.

Private and Quasi-Public Parks and Recreation Areas

The community also benefits from privately operated parks and recreation

facilities. These are operated by private entities, but are generally open to the public-at-large, either through membership or affiliations. These facilities include the "Y", Caradam Public Golf Course, PAL Athletic Fields, etc.

Norwin School District Recreation Facilities

The facilities of the Norwin School District are also utilized by the citizens-at-large of the Township. These facilities include an indoor swimming pool which is used for lessons during the summer and an outdoor track at the high school.

Neighboring Communities Parks and Recreation Facilities

While not within the borders of the Township, several neighboring parks are heavily used by Township residents. These include Irwin Park, which houses a track, sports facilities, playgrounds and an amphitheater, and White Oak Park (Allegheny County) which has significant picnicking and nature facilities.

(See attached map of Parks and Recreation Facilities)

Assets

- There is strong community support for recreational facilities and programs
- A variety of programs and facilities are available for public use.
- New and expanded facilities at Indian Lake and Oak Hollow Park provide quality recreational opportunities
- Neighborhood parks provide significant recreational opportunity to certain areas within the Township
- Privately operated recreational facilities provides significant recreational facilities for Township residents. A large percentage of Township residents have access to these facilities.
- Norwin School District facilities are available for use by Township residents

➤ Liabilities

- There are limits on public funding restricting the ability to maintain existing sites and staffing for maintenance and programming.
- There seems to be an increased community demand for year-round indoor recreational facilities and community centers
- Limited information is available on specific desires/needs of users.
- Significant elderly population (ages 65+) will provide a challenge to adequately address recreational needs of that age group.
- North Huntingdon currently doesn't have a long range parks and recreation plan.
- Limited recreational opportunities for activities for the 16-19 teenage group.
- Shortage of athletic fields for youth recreation to serve growing demand in this area
- Limited amount trails for walking and biking
- No impact fees or land requirements to meet recreation demands
- created by new subdivision developments
- No water-based recreation opportunities

Dynamics

The community is always in need of more recreational facilities and programs for a growing population. Increases in the number of families moving into the Township create increased demand for Athletic fields for youth sports. The community has determined that there is a shortage of soccer fields when soccer is in season. A greater need may exist in the provision of indoor facilities for year round athletic use and to provide space for community events. Keeping up with the changing needs of the community, including the increasing percentage of senior citizens living within the Township will continue to be a challenge. There has been indications that members of the 16-19 year old age group have indicated a need for activities catering to this age group.

As the Town becomes more attractive to retirees, demand for services for seniors will increase. Planning for senior activities and facilities has begun but may require greater emphasis in the future. The Township of North Huntingdon has well organized citizens and an active community groups in support of recreational facilities and programs. In order to continue to be responsive to the citizens community input through groups like the Recreation Board is critical.

Community Opinions:

The provision of parks and recreation facilities are of prime importance to residents of the Township. In answer to the question, "What two things would you change about North Huntingdon Township?", more households, responded with comments supporting the addition of new or improved parks and recreation facilities than any other answer.. A variety of interests and issues comprised these responses on parks and recreation issues ranging from support for community centers to more athletic fields to more specialized recreation programs for the elderly.

Several other questions in the survey are revealing in terms of views on existing parks and recreation facilities. Two questions within the survey queried residents on their views of the adequacy and availability of parks and recreation facilities, and one question specifically sought opinions on the availability of community and recreation centers. Overall, residents gave an average ranking of for the question on the quality of parks and open space and an on the question on the availability of parks and open space.

GOAL:

Provide a variety of accessible parks and recreational opportunities, both passive and active, to all existing and new residents of North Huntingdon Township that both helps to create an open space network to retain the beauty of the natural environment and provide for leisure activities and locations for Township residents.

Objectives

1. Address the changing recreational needs of the community by adapting facilities and programs for various age groups in the Township
2. Focus immediate attention and priority on the development of a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan by the Township;
3. Strive for innovation in all areas, providing unique and special

facilities to the community.

4. Ensure that a well balanced maintenance program is established for all Township recreational facilities.
5. Strengthen and maintain existing neighborhood parks and open spaces
6. and develop criteria for the establishment of new neighborhood parks as part of the Parks and Recreation Plan
7. Coordinate planning for parks and recreation facilities with those of the Norwin School District and neighboring communities .
8. Seek a variety of funding options for parks and recreational programs.
9. Purchase land for future parks and recreation areas when it becomes available
10. Coordinate Parks and Recreation Planning with the Parks and Recreation Plan prepared by Westmoreland County

Action Strategies

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS (ADMINISTRATIVE)

- Obtain state and federal funds for park and recreational facility
- development whenever possible, particularly through the Keystone Grant Program of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Obj. G)
- Ensure that all athletic facilities are well maintained and safe and convenient for users. (Obj. C)
- Utilize Capital Improvement Program (CIP) land banking funds to purchase strategically located land for parks where dedication through development is unlikely, for active playing fields, neighborhood parks, and bike-walkways. (Obj. G)
- Where possible, locate Township parks and recreational spaces adjacent or contiguous to school grounds to encourage the maximum use of both properties. (Obj. F)

- Develop a partnership with the Norwin School System for the shared use of recreational facilities associated with schools.
(Obj. B)
- Develop safe tot lots which are accessible to children on foot, in every neighborhood.
(Obj. A, E)
- Neighborhood parks should be constructed in large new subdivisions where feasible, providing game courts and fields for active use.
(Obj. A, E)

PROJECTS (FISCAL)

- Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation plan to guide future facility improvements and new programs which will also a citizen preference/needs assessment survey and a recreational facility user survey to help determine recreational facility and program deficiencies and future community needs.
(Obj. A, B)
- Study options for a teen center for the 16-19 year old age group for evening and weekend use with a variety of activities.
(Obj. A, B)
- Develop strategies to address concerns that are raised from the citizen surveys.
(Obj. A, B)
- Study the need for additional outdoor athletic fields and indoor recreational facilities.
(Obj. A)
- Commit funds for the purchase of land areas for parks and recreation areas (Objective H)
- Provide for water-based recreational opportunities (Objective A)

ORDINANCES (LEGAL)

- Adopt land dedication requirement in the subdivision ordinance to be based on population to be served as well as the size of a development and fee-in-lieu of land requirements based on land values
(Obj. E)

6 Civilian Dispatcher/Secretaries

The current ratio of population to sworn officers is 1,117 persons full-time per officer. For all officers, including full-time and part-time, the ratio is 995 persons per officer where each part-time officer was counted as 8/10th officers because they were scheduled 32 hours per week.

The Special Police Force is comprised of volunteers. They augment the regular force by controlling vehicular traffic at parks, festivals, parades, and outside religious facilities on Sundays.

8 Marked Police Sedans used for basic patrol

3 Unmarked Police Sedans (1 used by Detectives; 1 used for Traffic Enforcement

and 1 used by Command Staff as backup for the detective car)

1 Four Wheel Drive Shift Supervisor Vehicle

3 Four Wheel Drive Military Blazers use by K-9 Unit

1 Four Wheel Drive Military Blazer use as a D.A.R.E. vehicle

2 Police Motorcycles

1 Four Wheel Drive Military Blazer used by the Special Police Force.

The Police Department serves all of North Huntingdon Township which consists of 27.46 square miles of area

and over 254 miles of roadway. The department's mission is to be dedicated to excellence. It is organized around the principal of Total Quality Management and Community Oriented Policing. It is committed to the fair and impartial enforcement of all laws and ordinances and a respect for fundamental human rights and the creation of a safe environment for all who live, work and play within the borders of the Township. The department is constantly striving to improve itself, increase qualitative and quantitative productivity and remain responsive to the needs of an ever growing community.

To accomplish this mission, in addition to providing general police services, the department operates a nationally recognized D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program in conjunction with the Norwin School District; a Boy Scout Explorer Post for teenagers and young adults; a comprehensive Crime Prevention Program that includes a Citizen's Police Academy; and many other community interactive programs that are designed to make the department a part of the community and not apart from it. This has enabled the department to maintain a low crime rate and accident rate within the community and high-efficiency rating for the usage of its resources.

Fire

Volunteers have provided and still provide the bulk of fire fighting and emergency medical services to many rural and suburban communities across the United States. North Huntingdon Township has seven volunteer fire companies and one volunteer ambulance. The service areas of these companies can be seen on **Map 6-2: Fire Fighting Service Areas**. There are 24 vehicles of various configurations dedicated to fire fighting, four ambulances and two rescue vehicles. A description of the vehicles used by the Volunteer Fire Department's (VFD's) of North Huntingdon include:

- a) **Engines (pumper, attack pumper):** The basic fire suppression apparatus that has a pump, hose lines, and related fire attack equipment. It usually has an internal water tank and hand ladders.
- b) **Aerials (ladder truck, platform, snorkel, water tower):** Fire apparatus that has an aerial device that may be used to deliver water onto the fire. Devices with ladders or personnel bucket configurations can provide access to fire fighters for upper story ventilation, rescue, fire attack, or other missions as appropriate. The truck may have a water pump and internal water tank, and usually ground ladders, illuminating lights, and forced entry tools.
- c) **Rescue Vehicles:** Vehicles that are equipped for the recovery of trapped personnel. The vehicle may have a variety of specialized rescue tools and medical equipment. Some apparatus have dual missions and contain a rescue capability, such as a "rescue pumper."
- d) **Squad Vehicles:** Vehicles with the capacity to transport crew members. This vehicle may also have more than one mission, such as air supply or rescue.
- e) **Ambulances:** Vehicles used for life support/treatment and transportation of the sick or injured. Basic life support (BLS) ambulances provide the basic medical treatment and transport the sick or injured to medical facilities. Advanced life support (ALS) provides more extensive medical treatment.
- f) **Brush Trucks:** Light trucks that are usually equipped with a small water tank and pump, and light hand lines and portable fire suppression devices, along with related equipment.
- g) **Tankers:** Large capacity water tank trucks that

provide water for pumbers in areas of limited or nonexistent water supply. The tanker may have a "drop tank" which enables it to deposit water in a portable reservoir for use by fire fighters on the ground while the tanker moves to the nearest water source to refill.

Special Units: Equipment that provides specialized support. Such units may vary in size and provide such services as air supply, electrical energy, lighting sources, and other services.¹

The intention of this Comprehensive Plan is not to address the effectiveness of the Township's fire fighting force or its fire fighting capabilities. The efficient delivery of fire protection to the Township depends not only on the cost effectiveness of the delivery system itself but also on how effective the system is in reducing fire losses. Improving the proficiency, management or organizational structure of a fire department is a serious and complicated undertaking involving the entire community. An in-depth analysis of the Township's specific needs for any of its departments involved in the dispensing of municipal services should be done on a regular basis with more care and attention than can be accorded in this Comprehensive Plan.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided by North Huntingdon's Rescue 8. Established in 1960, it's headquarters is at 11279 Center Highway in North Huntingdon. It is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Its service area includes North Huntingdon Township and additional assistance will be provided to other communities upon request. Further services provided by Rescue 8 include tours of the station for the Boy and Girl Scouts and various community groups, standbys for various sport events, and lectures to school students about emergency medical services. Rescue 8 personnel also conducts an annual Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) drill at the high school

for senior students. For this drill, the EMS personnel simulates an emergency medical response to a vehicle accident involving drunk driving.

The EMS has 1 rescue truck and 4 ambulances which are staffed with 5 full-time and 7 part-time employees, including emergency medical technicians (EMT) and paramedics. In addition, there are several volunteers that provide support. In 1992, the Rescue 8 responded to 2,000 calls.

Emergency Management Services

Under the Emergency Management Services Act of 1978, each municipality in Pennsylvania is required to prepare for potential disasters by designating an emergency operations center, appointing an emergency management coordinator and developing an emergency operations plan. The act is intended to prepare the Commonwealth's communities for disasters beyond the scope of normal emergency operations. The Act defines emergency management as "the judicious planning, assignment and coordination of all available resources in an integrated program of prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery for emergencies of any kind, whether from attack, man-made or natural sources." Such emergencies in North Huntingdon Township might include toxic chemical spills on roadways that would require the evacuation of residents from their neighborhoods. The Township has appointed a municipal coordinator for the Township's emergency management program. An emergency operations plan is in place.

Assets

- The current force has excellent facilities, training programs and excellent response time
- Township has a safe environment with low crime rates
- Police force provides technical support and expertise the area of evaluating site distance and traffic problems
- Police offer significant community outreach and policing programs
- Special Police Forces assist the police force for labor-intensive efforts (traffic control, etc)
- The Police Department has open lines of communication with the community.
- The Township has highly trained volunteer fire and rescue crews which are prepared for many situations.
- Rescue 8 provides state of the art advanced life support ambulances.
- Police are actively involved in drug enforcement and education programs.

Liabilities

- New developments present challenges on identifying new streets and addresses
- Area has several duplicate or sound-alike street names and inconsistent addresses
- Technology and staffing requirements increase the costs of providing police services
- Increased traffic in the area, particularly on the Route 30 corridor, presents challenges to traffic safety issues
- Attracting and maintaining volunteers for fire companies and rescue services

Dynamics

A major challenge for police services is to keep up with the changing needs of the community. In the past 10 years over 1,000 new households have been created in the Township. While these households are generally of a higher income level, and do not themselves increase crime rates, the coverage areas have increased as well as traffic safety issues. In the future the types of services requested by citizens will change. Police personnel must maintain a high level of training and seek out opportunities for a wide variety of training in order to maintain a high level of service. Maintenance and improvement of response times will become more difficult as the community grows without proper improvements to facilities and equipment. New communications systems and other technologies and facilities will be needed in the future in order to properly serve the citizens.

GOAL

Maintain a safe community with appropriate numbers of public safety services which are prepared for emergencies and which serve the community in a rapid manner.

1. Objectives

2. Provide citizens with the highest quality public safety services and equipment available.
3. Maintain a high level of and expand training opportunities for Police, Fire, and Rescue personnel.
4. Ensure the safety of emergency response personnel and the citizens they serve, at all times.
5. Expand opportunities for community contact with public safety personnel.
6. Maintain public safety facilities at a level that meets community needs.
7. Identify methods of addressing the decrease in firefighters and rescue personnel

Action Strategies

- **Policies and Programs (Administrative)**
- The police department must continually evaluate its available resources to match the increasing needs of a growing community. (Objective 1)
- The police needs to explore methods in which it can utilize technological advances to improve the efficiency of the officer on the beat and operations at the station level (Objective 1, 5)
- The police department must maintain and expand programs that have proved successful and introduce new programs to enhance community involvement with the department (Objective 4)
- The police department must recruit and develop screening methods that attract the best qualified candidates for all positions within the department (Objective 1)
- The police department must expand and explore new training methods that are designed to maximize police functions and operations (Objective 2)
- Promote volunteers to serve rescue services and fire departments (Objective 1)
- **Projects (Fiscal)**
- Provide for sufficient police staffing to meet the needs of a growing community, through the to 30 full-time and 6 part-time officers (Objective 5)
- Replace police vehicles to on a scheduled basis so that approximately 1/3rd of the vehicle fleet is replaced on a yearly basis (Objective 1 and 5)
- Improve and enhance technology to assure for adequate phone service, radios and computers that will meet the needs of providing for service to citizens (Objective 1)

Ordinances (Legal)

- Working with the Department of Planning and Zoning, update nuisance ordinances and target areas for

Community Facilities: Schools

North Huntingdon Township is part of the Norwin School District. This District encompasses 3 municipalities in the southwest corner of Westmoreland County: North Huntingdon Township, Irwin Borough and North Irwin Borough. Presently, the Norwin system is comprised of 6 elementary schools, 2 junior high schools, 1 senior high school and a central administration building. Approximately 35,700 residents reside in the district's 36 square miles. Presently, there are 2,259 students enrolled in the kindergarten through fifth grade school program. The two middle schools have an enrollment of 1,252 while 1,691 students attend the high school.

Bus transportation is provided to all students in the Norwin School District who live within the areas that are approved for transportation by the Department of Education in Harrisburg. However, kindergarten children are transported only one way because noonday transportation is not provided.¹

There are 5 colleges and universities located within 20 miles of the Township. They include: Seton Hill College and University of Pittsburgh in Greensburg; Westmoreland County Community College in Youngwood; Saint Vincent College in Latrobe and Pennsylvania State University in McKeesport.² Private and parochial schools and institutions of higher learning located in the North Huntingdon area are listed in the Tables within.

North Huntingdon Township Area Public Educational Facilities

Elementary Schools	Address	Municipality	Enrollment Figures (School Years)			Capacity
			1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	
Hartford Heights	15020 Ardara Rd.	N. Huntingdon	299	288	295	462
Hillcrest	11091 Mockingbird Dr.	N. Huntingdon	424	435	454	711
Pennsylvania Ave.	PA Ave. & Green St.	Irwin	260	249	232	452
Scull	780 Bush Hill Rd.	N. Huntingdon	604	602	594	836
Shaw	1219 Morris Ave.	N. Huntingdon	156	145	151	316
Stewartsville	281 McMahon Dr.	N. Huntingdon	552	538	533	980
Middle Schools	Address	Municipality	Enrollment Projections (School Years)			Capacity
			1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	
Norwin-East	1 Main Street	N. Huntingdon	695	734	728	1,012
Norwin-West	10870 Mockingbird Dr.	N. Huntingdon	479	500	524	979
High Schools	Address	Municipality	Enrollment Projections (School Years)			Capacity
			1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	
Norwin Senior High	251 McMahon Rd.	N. Huntingdon	1,655	1,641	1,691	2,218

Chapter 11 : Utilities

Background and Description

A. WASTEWATER FACILITIES

The North Huntingdon Township Municipal Authority (NHTMA) was created in 1946 and charged with the planning, operation and maintenance of the public sewage facilities within the municipality. The existing sanitary sewer collection and treatment system consists of collector sewers, trunk line sewers, interceptor sewers, pumping stations, force main sewers and treatment plant.

The Township is divided into three major service areas. NHTMA owns and operates the Yough Sewage Treatment Plant located along Turner Valley Road. This plant has a capacity of 2.25 million gallons per day. This sewage treatment plant treats flow from the western portion of the township known as the Yough Drainage Area.

The Westmoreland Municipal Authority (WWMA) owns and operates a treatment plant located along Route 993. This plant has a capacity of 4.4 million gallons per day and treats flow from the Bush Creek Drainage Area in the eastern portion of the Township, as well as flow from several surrounding NHTMA is responsible for maintenance of all collector sewer lines in this area, and WWMA is responsible for two trunk lines.

The northwestern portion of the Township is served by collection lines owned and maintained by the NHTMA, and trunk lines owned and maintained by WWMA. Treatment is provided by the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority. (ALCOSAN).

North Huntingdon Township lies in the physiographic region known as the Appalachian Plateau. The land in this region is characterized by high, flat-topped divides separated by steep-sided valleys with deeply entrenched streams.

A series of peaks with elevations in excess of 1200 feet above mean sea level form a ridge which divides the Township into two major watersheds, the Brush Creek and the Youghiogheny River watersheds. U.S. Route 30 lies on top of this ridge in the northwest area of North Huntingdon and follows the ridge to Circleville. Here, the divide veers to the south along Clay Pike Road to Farview Drive and then extends eastward towards the Irwin Interchange.

Drainage Basins

The drainage basins of the Township are shown on **Map 11-2**. The Brush Creek drainage basin is composed of numerous unnamed streams. This watershed drains the northern half of the Township and flows into Turtle Creek to the north near Trafford Borough. Turtle Creek drains to the Monongahela River upstream from Lock No. 2.

Smaller drainage basins further subdivide the Youghiogheny River watershed in the southern portion of the Township. These are the Long Run, Crawford Run, Possum Hollow, and Little Sewickley Creek watersheds. Long Run begins to flow at the center of the Township near Cereal and travels westward draining a large portion of the developed land area in the Township. Long Run flows westward through White Oak Borough in Allegheny County where it is met by Jacks Run. From this juncture, it flows southward and eventually enters the Youghiogheny River south of McKeesport. Crawford Run begins to flow near the southern area of Drennen Heights in the vicinity of the Spicher Hill Road-Robbins Station Road intersection and flows westward toward Valley Road and then southward to the Youghiogheny River. Crawford Run has a relatively small drainage area draining into Drennen Heights region. The adjacent stream in Possum Hollow travels directly to the Youghiogheny River draining primarily undeveloped land. Because of steep terrain the development potential in this area is remote.

The finger-like drainage basins of the tributaries to the Little Sewickley Creek flow into Sewickley Creek which eventually discharges to the Youghiogheny River. In North Huntingdon Township, these tributaries drain the densely populated Park Meadows and Sunset Valley housing developments located in the south central area of the Township near Clay Pike road and sparsely developed land areas to the east. The land in this basin has a high potential for development.

Wastewater Service Areas and Wastewater Facilities

The wastewater service areas shown on **Map 7-3** illustrate the impact topography and hydrology have had on the development of wastewater service districts in the Township. The divide between the Brush Creek and Youghiogheny River drainage basins also forms a natural boundary between wastewater service districts. For the foreseeable future, however, the various authorities and their facilities described in this section that provide service to the North Huntingdon Township area have enough capacity to meet expected increases in population.

Brush Creek Drainage Basin Facilities

In the Brush Creek basin, wastewater is collected and conveyed for

treatment at either the Brush Creek Wastewater Treatment plant, owned and operated by the Western Westmoreland Municipal Authority, or the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) Wastewater Treatment Facility. Wastewater generated in the northern portion of the Township, specifically the Ardara, Cavittsville, and Route 993 areas, enters the Interceptor in Trafford Borough. The remainder of the sewered areas in the Brush Creek drainage area receive waste water treatment services from the Brush Creek Plant. Except for the Larimer area located downstream from the plant wastewater generated within the Brush Creek service area in North Huntingdon flows entirely by gravity to this facility.

The provision of wastewater services to the southern area of the Township which lies in the Youghiogheny River basin is more complex than providing similar services in the Brush Creek drainage area. Variations in topography due to the presence of several minor drainage basins require the utilization of wastewater pumping stations to transport wastewater to a central treatment facility. In addition, the Township's western-most boundary, being the Allegheny County and Westmoreland County boundary, somewhat artificially restricts the logical transmission of wastewater along natural drainage basins.

Youghiogheny River Drainage Basin Facilities.

Wastewater service in the Youghiogheny River drainage basin is provided solely by the North Huntingdon Township Municipal Authority (NHTMA) which was organized under the provisions of Act No. 191 of 1935 as amended, and incorporated in 1946. The Authority's board consists of five members who are appointed by the Township Commissioners. The NHTMA owns and operates one wastewater treatment plant and eight pump stations and the Youghiogheny Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Water

The Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County (MAWC) was organized under the provisions of Act No. 191 of 1935 as amended, and incorporated in 1942. The Authority board consists of five members who are appointed by the Westmoreland County Commissioners. It is responsible for the operation and maintenance of public water lines in North Huntingdon Township. The WCMA, the largest municipal authority in Pennsylvania, serves over 60 municipalities in the four county area of Westmoreland, Armstrong, Fayette and Allegheny. The water system of this Authority consists of treatment plants, pumping stations, a distribution system of approximately 1600 miles of pipeline, and water

storage facilities.

The goal of the MAWC is to provide the most reliable and safest drinking water at the most effective cost. Most North Huntingdon residents have access to public water. Map 11-1 shows the location of existing water lines and fire hydrants. For planning purposes an area is considered to have access to public water if located within 300 feet of an existing water line or hydrant. There are, therefore, some areas where public water is not yet available or where it is not economically feasible to run water lines. **(See Map 11-1: Water Lines).**

1. Water Treatment and Distribution

The Authority, which operates three treatment plants, obtains its water from three surface water locations, the Youghiogheny River, Indian Creek, and Beaver Run. The Authority also buys small quantities of water in bulk from the Pennsylvania American Water Company and the Plum Borough Municipal Authority. In addition to the treatment plants, the Authority operates 45 distribution system water storage facilities and three booster pumping stations located in Allegheny County. Presently, the Authority distributes water to an estimated 100,000 residential, commercial and industrial establishments and resale customers.

2. Projected Usage

The total service population is projected to increase from approximately 283,879 persons in 1993 to about 394,551 by the year 2015. Average daily water demands are projected to increase from 56.913 mgd (68.114 mgd maximum per day) in 1993 to 77.177 mgd (89.417 mgd maximum day) in the year 2015. Water supply source capacity is evaluated by comparing current capacity to the maximum daily water demand. The MAWC's water supply source capacity, expressed as a percentage of current and projected maximum daily demand, is presented in Table 7-1. Water systems with source capacities in excess of 110% of the maximum daily demands have a supply surplus and are thus able to meet current demands. The current demands of the MAWC are within the capacities of its supply source allocations and treatment facilities. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Office of Soils and Waterways Management allocates the amount of water that suppliers can draw from surface waters. However, the year 2015 demands are projected to exceed the water supply allocations and treatment plant capacities unless additional supplies are developed and additional treatment capacity is provided.

Assets

- Significant area of service for public water and sewer in densely populated areas of the Township
- Expanded and technically improved sewer plant facilities provide for effective and compliant treatment of wastewater
- Significant treatment plant capacity is available for water and sewer demand.
- The water treatment and distribution system and the sewer treatment and wastewater collection system is in compliance with all State and Federal regulations.

Liabilities

- Many areas of the Township are currently not serviced by public water or public sewer
- Areas not serviced by public sewer have higher rate of clay-like soils which are not conducive to operating septic systems
- Increased costs of compliance with Department of Environmental Protection and Environmental Protection Agency requirements increase the overall costs of providing sewer services to Township residents
- Aging infrastructure (sewer and water lines) within the Township
- Increased growth challenges capacity of existing facilities

Dynamics

The provision of adequate and safe public infrastructure to Township property owners is one of the prime responsibilities of the Township and associated authorities. The expansion of sewer and water lines and plants provide for surety in these services for the future. The consequences of expanding public utility lines, whether as a result of public policy decisions or through private expansion plans (developers) has consequences on the Township's future development patterns. Expanded lines and plant capacity help facilitate future development opportunity in areas that were previously limited in development potential. While this issue is dealt with more closely in the Growth Management section of this plan it should be recognized that as a result of expanded lines and capacity development pressures can increase. This factor must be considered.

COMMUNITY OPINIONS

Township residents, generally, have no strong opinions on the quality or extent of sewer services within the Township. Survey results ranked satisfaction levels above average, with little variation among respondents (not many real low or high responses).

GOAL:

Provide safe and reliable public water and sanitary sewer systems serving every property in the Township and within the Township's service area, in compliance with Federal and State regulations;. Assure adequacy of private water and sewer systems in compliance with State and Federal regulations for areas not presently serviced, or not to be serviced in the near future. Provide to all properties adequate and reliable electric, telephone, cable television, and natural gas service to meet demands. Accomplish all the above in a customer service oriented and cost-efficient manner.

Objectives

1. Provide sanitary sewer service to areas within the Township through at developer's expense to new construction.
2. Provide a safe, easy to maintain, and efficient sanitary sewer pumping system. Reduce reliance on pump stations where possible to enhance safety and minimize maintenance.
3. Do not rely on the use of pumping stations, except where it is not economically or geographically feasible to provide service by gravity.
4. Maintain the sanitary sewer system to provide reliable service in a cost effective manner in conformance with all State and Federal regulations, and reduce infiltration and inflow in the sanitary sewer system.
5. Maintain sewer revenues at a level that will support operation and maintenance and capital improvement needs, and maintain a fee structure under which the costs of the sewer system infrastructure necessary to serve new development are supported by new development.
6. Plan for coordinated service extension across Township boundaries.
7. Seek an adequate and reliable water distribution system throughout the Township which extends fire protection service to all properties.

Action Strategies

Policies and Programs (Administrative)

- Attend infrastructure planning meetings or events by the water and sewer authorities and evaluate how the North Huntingdon system can be best served through regional cooperation.
(Obj. F)
- Require that fire hydrants be located within the following distances from any new lot :no more than 400 feet from single family residential and townhouse lots and no more than 200 feet from any structure in commercial and industrial developments.
(Obj. B)
- Coordinate planning and development and communication efforts with the NHTMA. Require review of all subdivisions and land developments by the NHTMA as part of the Subdivision Review Ordinance
- Seek the elimination of pump stations when it would reduce operating costs and increase reliability. Permit the construction of new pump stations only where gravity flow is not feasible.
(Obj. C)
- Effectively enforce provisions of the Department of Environmental Protection requirements regarding the establishment and maintenance of septic systems within the Township through the Township Sewage Enforcement Officer and technical assistance on maintenance of existing septic systems

Projects (Fiscal):

- 5 Year NHTMA Projects
- Extend sanitary sewers to existing homes on Ardara Road, Baird Court, Masters Lane, and Masters Lane Extension.
- Replace Stewartsville Pumping Station with a larger-capacity station.
- Construction of a 3 million gallon retention tank at Long Run Pumping Station
- Eliminate Parkside Pumping Station and route flow via gravity to Stewartsville
- Construct Improvements to the Yough Treatment Plant headworks
- Increase capacity of the Penns Woods Trunk Line
- Continue inflow and infiltration investigations and repairs
- 6 – 10 Year NHTMA Projects
- Continue infiltration and inflow studies including repair and replacement of lines as required

Ordinances (Legal):

- Establish procedures on the effective enforcement of malfunctioning septic systems
- Completely integrate the provision of all utilities, public and private into the Subdivision and Land Development Review Processes

Chapter 12 : Economic Development

Background and Description

In this chapter economic information from the 1990 Census as well as recent economic strategies and trends that have occurred in the last decade will be presented. Economic Development is a complex undertaking performed under the auspices of many different public, private and non-profit organizations. It is not an exact science and much disagreement exists among economists concerning the effectiveness and outcomes of various economic policies. Nonetheless, much time and effort are expended to ensure the economic vitality of our communities. Few municipalities are self-contained. All are part of larger regions and markets and will be affected positively or negatively by economic events, decisions and policies made or occurring many miles from their borders.

The Pittsburgh region, of which North Huntingdon is a part, has been experiencing fundamental shifts in its economic base since the late 1970's. For many years the economy was dominated by the production of steel, steel products and related industries such as mining. At one time the region could boast of having the world's largest concentrations of heavy industrial facilities, the output of which was sold to other parts of the nation and to foreign countries. In the early 1950's more than one-third of the total employment in the Pittsburgh region was in manufacturing.

By the mid-1980's, increased domestic and foreign competition, a recession, declining markets and/or the opportunity to pay lower wages to workers in other areas, enticed manufacturers in western Pennsylvania to close operations, move to the Sun-Belt states or overseas. Many high-paying manufacturing jobs were permanently lost resulting in many people leaving the area in search of employment elsewhere.

It was during this time that the economic base of the region began to shift from heavy industries to services. Firms specializing in the provision of services, or those associated with the development or utilization of high technologies, became more prevalent in the region as steel and steel related industries closed down or moved away.

With the shift from an industrial economy to a service economy different areas of the region experienced different rates of job and population growth. During this twenty year period North Huntingdon lost 1,285 residents which represents a decrease of 4.4%. During this same period, Westmoreland County decreased in population by 1.8% or by 6,614 persons.

In the last decade job development and growth has taken a radical turn upward in the Westmoreland County region. This is a result of the general upturn of the national economy during this time period (with the exception of the 1991-1992 recession) and economic development strategies propagated by the Westmoreland County IDC in the development of industrial parks throughout the County. These parks mostly feature smaller scale operations of cleaner and quieter manufacturing and office complexes. In 1993 the County Industrial Park located off of Colonial Manor Road, was developed by the IDC. Today, many companies are located at the park, providing job opportunities for area residents.

Additional development was also evident in small businesses and entrepreneurial based firms in the region and the Township.

Retail business turnover a concern. There remains many large vacant commercial buildings, particularly in the larger shopping centers. Efforts should be made to make these centers viable before committing toward the development of new shopping areas.

Economic development has become an increasingly important concern to municipal officials. The Township is a bedroom community with the majority of land uses devoted to residential development (See Land Use Section). Of the 17,542 acres in the Township, 984 or roughly 5.6% of the total land area, are dedicated to commercial or industrial uses. North Huntingdon Township, like most municipalities, is presently seeking ways to broaden its tax base and promote more quality commercial and manufacturing activity. Most of the revenues raised for governmental operations are generated from residential property. Therefore, an increase in the amount of businesses and certain industrial operations would ease the tax burden on residents and diversify the tax base thereby developing a cushion against downturns in the national and regional economies.

I. ECONOMIC PROFILE (Based upon 1990 Census)

Labor Force Status

In North Huntingdon in 1989 there were 13,741 persons age 16 and over in the work force that included 862 people listed as unemployed and 24 persons in the Armed Forces. In the County there was a total work force of 170,896 with 12,087 listed as unemployed and 239 persons in the Armed Forces.

The 1990 U.S. Census reports that in 1989 roughly 67% of the working age population in North Huntingdon held occupations in the executive,

administrative, professional, sales, administrative support or service fields. By comparison, nearly 64% of the working age population in the County held occupations in these fields. Additionally, many more people traveled outside the Township to work than did residents who remained in the Township.

Income

North Huntingdon had higher income levels than those reported for the County in 1989). The median household income for North Huntingdon, according to the 1990 US Census, was \$32,066. The median household income for Westmoreland County was \$25,736.

While new income statistics will not be available until the Year 2000 Census, projections from private firm are available to, at a minimum, establish trend data on income growth over the last ten years, and compare income data by census tract.

These sources indicate the household median income was \$41,187 in 1998. This estimate varies based upon different census tracts within the Township. The tract with the highest level of new development has the highest estimated income at \$45,051, while the area north of Route 30 (with many older houses and settlements) has the lowest estimate of \$38,891.

Poverty Status

The poverty level is an annual figure determined by the federal government and is based on the consumer price index. There are different poverty levels for families and individuals, families of various sizes and various age groups. In 1989 the poverty level for a family of 4 was \$12,674. According to the 1990 US Census, 1,479 people, or 5.32 % of all persons were in families or households with incomes below the poverty level. By contrast, Westmoreland County had 38,992 or 10.72% of its residents in families or households with incomes below the poverty level.

Educational Attainment

North Huntingdon has a highly educated populace with 39.06% of those residents over 25 years of age having college degrees or some level of college education. This compares with Westmoreland County which has 36.13% of all county residents over 25 with the same levels of educational attainment.

II. THE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CORRIDORS

Route 30 remains the main commercial corridor within the Township. Its status as a four-lane highway and as a major collector for traffic going east toward Greensburg and west toward Pittsburgh (Parkway East) has made it an attractive location for both local and regionally based businesses. There is a great mixture of business types along the corridor from fast-food operations to industrial. The main concentration of commercial/consumer businesses are located from the Turnpike interchange to the Norwin Towne Square shopping center at Lincoln Way. There is a large portion of Route 30 within this area that is located in the Borough of Irwin. This area has the highest concentration of restaurants, mostly catering to Turnpike traffic.

The Route 30 area from the Norwin Towne Square to the Township/County line has a mixture of smaller retail businesses, as well as many more intense operations and plants. The topography has limited substantial development on the north side of the highway. The major tracts of land that are developable within this area have been used for car lots and trailer sales and parks, which are often not aesthetically pleasing.

The 993 corridor from the Borough of Irwin to the Borough of Trafford has pockets of industrial-based operations, and is seen as the major industrial corridor within the Township, despite the environmental limitations in the area (flood plain, slope).

III. REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Economic development can best be achieved by forming public and private partnerships with funding agencies, property owners, developers, and local economic development groups. The region has a large number of organizations and agencies that may provide funding and technical assistance to the Township in its economic development efforts. A number of successful economic development initiatives have already been undertaken in Westmoreland County to create and retain jobs and attract new businesses to the area. Regardless of how the organization with its ensuing responsibilities is delineated, the Township should take advantage of the assistance offered by the myriad state, federal and local programs, agencies and other corporations in the area to achieve its goals. The following is a description of some of the agencies and programs that may assist the municipality and businesses in an effort to spur economic growth.

IV. MARKETING THE TOWNSHIP

Township officials want to encourage selected businesses to locate or expand their facilities in the community thereby increasing employment opportunities for residents and expanding the tax base. In order to achieve these goals a marketing study should be conducted to:

1. Examine the Township's strengths and weaknesses;
2. Determine the controllable and uncontrollable factors effecting development in the Township;
3. Identify sites and/or buildings to be marketed;
4. Target the Township's marketing efforts to a particular type of business and/or industry.

An Information Fact Sheet for Prospective Business/Industrial developers should be prepared to inform the business and industrial community of the advantages of locating in North Huntingdon. Information highlighting North Huntingdon's unique location and other advantages should be included such as the Township's:

1. Access to markets;
2. High "Quality of life" attributes such as;
 - good public schools
 - parks and recreational facilities
 - housing stock in excellent condition
 - public amenities;
3. Availability of water and sewer;
4. Highly educated labor force with a strong work ethic;
5. Proximity to major colleges and universities;
6. Good road networks with linkages to Pittsburgh, the Interstate highway system and the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport; and,
7. Competitive rents and land costs.

North Huntingdon is less than an hour's drive from downtown Pittsburgh which is the nation's busiest inland port with access to 8,000 miles of navigable rivers. North Huntingdon is near the center of the largest US market. Within a 500 mile radius of the city is 52% of the US population and 51% of its buying income, 20 metropolitan areas each having a population of over one million, 59% of the total Canadian metropolitan population, 61% of the total US manufacturing markets, and 22 of the nation's top 35 industrial markets. The Pittsburgh region is home to 13 of the Fortune 500 companies which includes such corporations as USX, Alcoa, Westinghouse Electric, Rockwell International, H.J. Heinz, PPG Industries, Koppers, and Mobay Chemical.

The region is well served in terms of transportation, education, communication and health facilities. The Greater Pittsburgh International Airport, Interstate 76 allows easy access to all points of the Pittsburgh area and beyond. The University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie-Mellon University, Duquesne University, St. Vincent College, Seton Hill College and four branch campuses of the Pennsylvania State University as well as a variety of private and public colleges, community colleges, and vocational-technical schools, serve the higher educational needs of the region.

Township officials and residents must bear in mind that competition in the Pittsburgh region is intense. In order for North Huntingdon to effectively compete for its share of economic growth, it must take the necessary steps to make the Township attractive to potential businesses. At some point, the Township will have to consider the intended location of such projects. Sufficient vacant land with the appropriate zoning and the necessary infrastructure should be in place. Consequently, the Township should review existing land use regulations to ensure such controls are conducive to the type of development the Township wants to attract. Such considerations are important if the Township expects to attract private ventures. A developer wants to know all the constraints under which he or she must operate before large sums of money are invested in a project. If infrastructure is insufficient to meet the needs of a particular development, the Township will have to consider making any necessary improvements to make the site more financially feasible to new or expanding businesses. Any initial expenditures by the Township may be recovered over time through increased tax revenues.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Governments can and have been taking active roles in encouraging economic development. Traditionally, this involvement meant ensuring the adequate provision of infrastructure as a way of supporting a climate conducive to business development. Governments have also begun to develop programs to actively engage in partnerships with the private sector as a means to spur economic activity. The Township should consider establishing some type of a Community Development organization for the purpose of increasing the amount of business/industrial development in the community. A Community Development Corporation (CDC) can be a profit or non-profit group created to stimulate, finance and implement development. It is envisioned that such an organization would include members of various departments of government and dedicated Township citizens. This organization would:

1. Serve as a liaison between the Township government and business community;
2. Direct commercial and industrial development in the Township;
3. Promote high-quality, non-polluting commercial and light industrial uses such as corporate headquarters, office parks, and research and development enterprises; and,
4. Consider the development of a Township-owned and controlled commercial office park.

The Township should become pro-active in its efforts to attract businesses and industries. Establishing an economic development organization with broad support from Township Council and the general public and a clear set of goals would enable the Township to better control the amount and type of development within its borders. Such an organization should be empowered to:

1. Coordinate Township development efforts;
2. Seek any available funding and technical assistance from federal, state and other sources;
3. Form partnerships with the private sector and other levels of government.

Assets

- The Township has many well-established and successful businesses that provide services to residents
- Business support services in the region through the Chamber of Commerce, Township Association of Businesses (TAB);
- Westmoreland County and other economic development groups help small businesses
- The County Industrial Park has provided job opportunities through non-polluting light industrial and office space
- Downtown Irwin provides additional choices for consumers living in the Township. Special events and festivals enhance this business district.
- Township has abundance of highly-trained workers.
- Substantial amount of persons age 55 and above provides a good labor pool for persons seeking jobs after retirement from their primary employer
- Family income is increasing in the Township providing more

disposable income to support area businesses

Liabilities

- Route 30 has limited capacity to handle increased traffic volumes of additional commercial and industrial development
- The location of commercial and industrial development closely abuts residential areas with potential negative impacts
- No focus on marketing the Township for business development or for targeted businesses, and assisting small businesses
- Overabundance of existing vacant shopping center space within the Township
- Many zoning districts for commercial areas in the ordinance, while the map is dominated by the C-1 zone, which is very permissive
- Many commercial/industrial uses located on Route 30 are not well maintained with excessive signage, lack of landscaping and dilapidated buildings
- Limited spaces available in existing industrial parks
- Significant vacant space in many shopping centers
- Most new jobs being created by retail and service sectors offer less pay and benefits than previous industrial sector jobs

Dynamics

Dynamic 1: Relationship of Development The development of commercial areas and industrial areas obviously are inter-related and significant affect or are affected by housing development. As new jobs become available either in the Township or the region, the demand for housing increases. As the number of new homes increase, particularly those with higher prices, the demand for commercial services also increase. Job opportunities in the commercial sector creates additional demand for nearby less expensive housing choices for those employed in that sector. Therefore it is impossible to consider these development forces by themselves, they are invariably linked.

Dynamic 2: Regional Aspects of Development : Economic development, as mentioned above in this chapter is much more regional in nature than local. Development increases and/or decreases in any sector within the region will have an impact on the economy of the Township

Dynamic 3: Employment Trends: The region is becoming increasingly less industrial in nature with more jobs being created in the retail and service sectors.

Dynamic 4: E – Commerce: Nationally, more people are conducting business transaction over the Internet. As this percentage increases, it will have impacts on retail sales (in a negative manner) on local businesses.

Dynamic 5: : Large Scale Retail A substantial portion of new commercial development, particularly in suburban areas are of the “Big Box” variety. (Borders, Circuit City, etc.). These developments are often called “category killers” and can often hinder small businesses in the area. There are also concerns about the development of these establishments in a non-aesthetic manner.

Dynamic 6: Population Loss of Young Adults: The ability to maintain population levels of young adults (18-24) within the Township (and region) is the ability to provide quality job opportunities. The Township has been losing population within the age cohort due to these persons gaining employment elsewhere, usually outside the region and the State.

Community Opinions:

Opinions about commercial and economic development are mixed according to survey results and the public forum. While many residents expressed concerns about the spread of commercial development, and the resultant loss of community character (Don’t want to end up like Monroeville), an equal number of persons expressed dissatisfaction with the current retail choices within the Township. The challenge that appears obvious is to attract higher quality commercial development, without becoming a regional market area with the associated development impacts (traffic, noise, crime, etc.)

At the Public Hearings on this plan, concerns were expressed about the potential intrusion of business development into residential areas. As a result modifications were made on the recommended transition district to assure that these areas would not be created in existing majority residential areas. Modifications to the home occupation ordinance are also included to assure that only non-impact home occupations be permitted in residential zones.

GOAL:

To provide for the development of quality commercial and light industrial activities to service the needs of the growing community; To continue to assure that future commercial and industrial development is non - polluting, well-planned of high aesthetic quality and is situated to eliminate potential impacts to residential areas ; To focus economic development efforts on existing businesses by managing existing commercial and industrial development to increase quality job opportunities and increase the Township's Tax Base

Objectives

Business Development Objectives:

1. Encourage continuing growth of the Township as an a high-quality commercial and office area
2. Encourage the development of new entrepreneurial businesses in the Township.
3. Improve the appearance of the commercial corridor, particularly along Route 30
4. Discourage new large strip commercial developments along the entire Route 30 corridor, unless adequate transportation improvements accompany the development
5. Encourage construction of new and expansion of existing non-polluting industrial development on appropriate sites.
6. Encourage additional efforts of the Westmoreland Industrial Development Commission in this area
7. Discourage other uses of valuable industrial land.
8. Aggressively improve education, job training and business assistance programs offered throughout the County.

Action Strategies

Policies and Programs (Administrative)

- Develop an economic development marketing program for the Township to provide information to potential businesses desiring to locate in the Township
- Provide technical supports and referrals to area economic development agencies to potential businesses
- Provide information database to the County to assist them in their development efforts
- Pursue programs through “Clean-up” efforts and code enforcement, if necessary, to enhance the physical appearance of the Route 30 corridor businesses
- Streamline the development review and approval processes for new businesses and business expansions make the business expansion process more user-friendly at the local level.

Projects (Fiscal)

- Invest in capital improvement infrastructure through Township CIP and grants to support quality economic development
- Explore the option of Requiring developers to pay their portion of transportation improvements from large scale commercial developments through a Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance

Ordinances (Legal)

Amend the Zoning Ordinance/Map to:

- Remove industrial-type and high-impact uses from the C-1 Zoning District as a Permitted Use

- Concentrate higher-impact businesses zones uses along the Route 30 corridor at intersections that can handle the increased traffic loads. Reduce sprawl of similar businesses along the entire corridor
- Develop an overlay zone along the Route 30 corridor to establish standards to improve the appearance and property values (landscaping, signs, etc)
- Develop a Transitional Business District in areas of the Township to encourage low-scale business uses of homes that are zoned residential and maintain the residential character of the area. These areas would only be created that already have a majority of commercial uses (non-conforming), and would have criteria attached to assure that the uses permitted would not conflict with the residential character.
- Establish an Office District, similar to the PEDD, and rename the Industrial Zone to Manufacturing
- Add additional buffer and distance requirements for businesses located adjacent to residential areas.
- Establish limits on lighting and signage for these businesses
- Establish standards for any business that has potential nuisance impacts on the public, health and safety
- Revise the home occupation requirements to streamline uses that have no impact (office use, computers, etc), and make more strict uses that have potential negative impacts on the neighborhood through more specific criteria.

CHAPTER 13 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This comprehensive plan is intended to guide growth and development in the township for the next 10 years. The adoption of the plan will not, however, in and of itself lead to the development of the municipality as envisioned by its drafters. In order for the township to grow as intended the goals of the plan must be implemented and all parties involved; the governing body, the planning commission, the zoning hearing board and municipal staff, must be aware of its contents and resist the temptation to deviate from its ideals. This is not to infer that a comprehensive plan is a static document. Conclusions based on studies, reports or other secondary data sources may have to be revised as economic or social conditions change. Chapter 1 indicate how this will be accomplished through annual review through the budget and planning processes, a 5 year update, and development of a CIP.. What follows is a brief discussion on the role of some of the municipal boards and staff that have responsibility in carrying out the goals of the comprehensive plan.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The governing body has the primary responsibility in carrying out the goals of the comprehensive plan. The Township's Commissioners can ensure implementation of the plan's goals and objectives by setting priorities, creating ordinances, establishing budgets, and allocating resources for public improvements.

THE ROLE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission assists the governing body in directing growth and development within the municipality. It is responsible for the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and acts as an advisor to the governing body on matters pertaining to community growth and development. When the planning commission adopts a comprehensive plan the departments, agencies and appointed authorities, must submit projects to the planning commission for its recommendations. Each such project submitted for review is an opportunity for the planning commission to influence the direction of growth and development in the municipality.

FEDERAL, COUNTY and STATE GOVERNMENT

Many references have been made through out this text to government agencies that can provide assistance to North Huntingdon Township in carrying out this document's goals. Township officials should coordinate

their efforts with these agencies and stay abreast of new programs, grants and initiatives for which North Huntingdon may be eligible.

DEVELOPERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Developers and land owners have the greatest control over development and will decide the timing and manner in which development occurs. The Township assists that process through the establishment and enforcement of zoning, subdivision, land development regulations and building codes.

ZONING

The goals and polices of the comprehensive plan must be translated into objective standards in the land use ordinances to enable them to be realized. Zoning is a method the municipality uses to regulate the use of land and to implement its goals. Zoning should be viewed as a positive tool for encouraging development and creating the type of community envisioned in the comprehensive plan. All land within the municipality is divided into various districts with different types of land uses permitted within each district. Regulations establishing lot size and development standards are established for each zone or for various types of land uses.

THE ZONING HEARING BOARD

The duties and responsibilities of the zoning hearing board (ZHB) are defined in Section 614 of the MPC. The primary purpose of the ZHB is to ensure the fair and equitable application and administration of the zoning ordinance by hearing appeals on the zoning officer's determinations. The ZHB also grants relief from the literal enforcement of the zoning ordinance in certain hardship situations. The board has no legislative power and can not make, modify or enforce zoning policy. The ZHB schedules hearings on applications and appeals that come before it, takes evidence, and issues written decisions with findings of fact and conclusions of law.

The board plays a role in determining the effectiveness of the zoning ordinance. If there are many requests for variances the board may request the planning commission or governing body to consider a zoning amendment to correct a flaw in the ordinance. The board does have some discretion in carrying out its duties. It is therefore important that board members understand not only the letter of the law, but also the goals the laws are to achieve.¹ This can best be accomplished when all branches of local government involved in planning and land use have a thorough understanding of the goals and issues enunciated in the comprehensive plan.

ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

The Municipal Staff

In order for any municipality to effectively implement the goals and ideals of the comprehensive plan an adequate and competent staff is a fundamental requirement. It is important that the Township continue to build its planning and management capabilities.

Funding

Without the proper funding for administration and enforcement of planning and land use issues the goals of the comprehensive plan will not be set in motion. Fees for permits, inspections, and processing applications should be adequate to support short range planning activities such as subdivision review, and zoning administration. They should also be sufficient to cover the support provided by municipal departments and any planning costs related to these operations. General Revenue funds should be used to support long range planning activities such as the preparation of the comprehensive plan and its periodic review.

Periodic Plan Review and Amendment

The comprehensive plan is a long range planning tool intended to guide the physical development of the municipality. In order for the plan to be effective it must be reviewed and updated regularly as conditions in the municipality change. This will be accomplished as referenced in Chapter 1 of this document.

SUMMARY

Implementation of the goals of the comprehensive plan will require a concerted effort on the part of municipal officials, the planning commission, staff and others involved in land use issues. Each group has a vital role in the administration and enforcement of rules and regulations of the Township's land use goals and ordinances. The governing body sets policy. The planning commission prepares the comprehensive plan and reviews development plans. The zoning/code enforcement officer enforces zoning ordinances. The zoning hearing board hears appeals and grants relief from the literal enforcement of the ordinance in certain hardship situations. Local non-profits and federal, state or county, agencies may provide financial and/or technical expertise to achieve certain goals. Developers and property owners are the catalysts in the redevelopment of the Township.

As stated previously, the Plan is not the end of the planning process but only one step in a continual procedure of assessment and review which must be undertaken periodically as conditions in the Township warrant. The Plan does establish a firm foundation upon which decisions about land use and redevelopment can be made. To this end, it is hoped that this Comprehensive Plan will assist both present and future municipal decision-makers in their efforts to make North Huntingdon Township a better place in which to live.

PLAN PRIORITIES

The plan priorities are best reflected in the overall land use and growth goals as indicated in Chapter 2 of this document. These goals can be best described as the "over-arching" components of the plan. They reflect the major commitments that need to be made to address the multitude of issues facing the Township in the future, and provide an acid test for future policy changes considered by the Township. All decision making and ordinance development should reflect the intent of these goals.

Foremost of these goals in the enactment of new and revised Subdivision and Land Development and Zoning Ordinances. These are the critical implementation tools for the overall land use objectives. Related ordinances, including stormwater management, construction standards, etc. also are in need of review and revision to assure consistency with overall plan objectives. These implementation action strategies are given a "1" priority on the following tables.

There are also a number of policy changes and commitments that are not related directly to ordinance development, but are of a timely nature. The commitment is necessary to assure that these strategies are accomplished within a reasonable short-time frame. These action strategies are given a "2" priority. They are not less important than the "1" items, but are separate from the new land use regulations.

Finally, there are items that are important, but given the weight of other issues, have secondary importance to the above-items. These are given a "3" priority in the tables.

Following is a summary of the Action Strategies appearing in previous chapters and a delineation of responsibilities and prioritization for enactment of those strategies.

Abbreviations

TM – Township Manager	F&R - Fire and Rescue
TS – Township Solicitor	PC - Planning Commission
P&Z - Planning and Zoning Department	BOC – Board of Commissioners
ENG – Township Engineer	MAWC – Water Authority
PW - Public Works Department	ED - Economic Development Agencies
NHTMA – Sewer Authority	PENNDOT – Pa Dept of Transportation
NSD – Norwin School District	P&R – Parks and Recreation Board
PD – Police Department	ENV - State and Regional Environmental Agencies

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Responsibilities

PROGRAMS AND POLICIES	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIZATION
1. Increase the level of code enforcement activity in targeted areas of the township and for targeted areas of housing deterioration and neighborhood degradation	P&Z	2
2. Maintain aggressive inspection procedures and staffing to assure quality and safety of new housing construction	P&Z	2
3. Pursue active demolition program of substandard abandoned housing within the township	P&Z; TS; BOC	2
4. Through the township and other government agencies, provide technical and facilitate financial assistance programs for housing rehabilitation of older housing in the township	P&Z	3
5. Ensure that all athletic facilities are well maintained and safe and convenient for users.	PW, P&R	3

6. Utilize Capital Improvement Program (CIP) land banking funds to purchase strategically located land for parks where dedication through development is unlikely, for active playing fields, neighborhood parks, and bike-walkways.	TM, PW, P&Z, BOC, P&R	3
7. Obtain state and federal funds for park and recreational facility development whenever possible, particularly through the Keystone Grant Program of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	TM, P&R, BOC	3
8. Where possible, locate Township parks and recreational spaces adjacent or contiguous to school grounds to encourage the maximum use of both properties.	NSD, P&R, BOC	2
9. The police department must expand and explore new training methods that are designed to maximize police functions and operations	PD	2
10. The police needs to explore methods in which it can utilize technological advances to improve the efficiency of the officer on the beat and operations at the station level	PD	2
11. The police department must maintain and expand programs that have proved successful and introduce new programs to enhance community involvement with the department	PD	3
12. The police department must recruit and develop screening methods that attract the best qualified candidates for all positions within the department	PD, TM	2
13. The police department must continually evaluate its available resources to match the increasing needs of a growing community.	PD	2
14. The police department must expand and explore new training methods that are designed to maximize police functions and operations	PD	2

15. Promote volunteers to serve rescue services and fire departments. Establish a task force to review methods to accomplish these goals	TM, PD, F&R, BOC	2
16. Develop an economic development marketing program for the Township to provide information to potential businesses desiring to locate in the Township	TM, P&Z	3
17. Provide technical supports and referrals to area economic development agencies to potential businesses	TM	3
18. Provide information database to the County to assist them in their development efforts	P&Z, TM	3
19. Pursue programs through "Clean-up" efforts and code enforcement, if necessary, to enhance the physical appearance of the Route 30 corridor businesses	P&Z	2
20. Coordinate with responsible agencies (Federal, State, County and Local) to develop a capital improvements program to identify, prioritize, and correct any deficiencies in the road system. Advocate for transportation improvement projects on state highways and roads that benefit the Township through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation 12 year Planning Program	TM, ENG, PENNDOT	2
21. Encourage more use of public transportation and request studies in order to determine the feasibility of improved or expanded public transportation routes and services with particular emphasis on service to the area's major shopping and employment centers.	TM	3
22. Contact the SPRPC and investigate the feasibility of incorporating a network of Park-n-Ride facilities with any public transit routes that may be proposed.	TM, P & Z	3
23. Begin the necessary ground work to establish an integrated network of pedestrian and bicycle trails. Coordinate with other governments and interest groups as necessary.	P & Z, PC, BOC	3

24. Inventory township natural resources and environmental features into GIS database for easy retrieval for analysis purposes during development review	P & Z	2
25. Provide information to citizens and prospective developers on Township natural resources prior to submission of project applications	P & Z	3
26. Continue and strengthen ties with the Westmoreland Conservation District and regional/state and federal environmental agencies to assure full compliance and enforcement of sound environmental regulations	P & Z	2
27. Assure full compliance with the Department of Environmental Protection requirements for the installation of septic systems	P & Z	3
28. Identify undeveloped areas of the Township with combinations of slope and soil that may pose development constraints and consider using these areas as open space within any potential development	P & Z, ENG	3
29. Seek out methods and tools to fully implement local elements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 21 st Century Environmental Commission Report	P & Z, PC	2
30. Attend infrastructure planning meetings or events by the water and sewer authorities and evaluate how the township system can be best served through regional cooperation	TM, ENG, P & Z, NHTMA, MAWC	2
31. Require that fire hydrants be located within the following distances: 400 feet from any residence and 200 feet from any commercial or manufacturing development	P & Z, MAWC	3
32. Coordinate planning and development and communication efforts with the NHTMA. Require review of all subdivisions and land developments by the NHTMA as part of the Subdivision Review Ordinance	P & Z, ENG, NHTMA	2
33. Seek the elimination of pump stations when it would reduce operating costs and increase reliability. Permit the construction of new pump stations only where gravity flow is not feasible	NHTMA	2

34. Effectively enforce provisions of the DEP regarding the establishment and maintenance of septic systems through the Township SEO and provide technical assistance on the maintenance of existing systems	P & Z	3
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PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: PROJECTS

Responsibilities

PROJECTS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORIIZATION
1. upgrade and improve physical community facilities (e.g., streets, sidewalks, lighting, signs, parks, etc.) in existing neighborhoods to enhance housing values and neighborhood appearance	TM, ENG	3
2. allocate funds for demolition of abandoned structures	BOC, TM, P & Z, ENG	2
3. commit resources for staffing and training for adequate code enforcement and building inspection services	BOC, P & Z, TM	3
4. Commit necessary funding to complete total implementation of GIS system for environmental inventory	P & Z, TM	2
5. Seek methods to preserve valuable natural resource land within the Township through purchase by non-profit conservation groups and conservation easements	P & Z, BOC	3
6. The Township should establish a long range and comprehensive road surface management program. This would involve a regular yearly program of road maintenance and resurfacing. A schedule of road maintenance and expenditures should be developed into a six year Capital Improvements Program should be integrated in the CIP	ENG, TM, BOC, PC	3

7. Conduct intersection studies	ENG	3
8. Advocate the following funding projects through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation:	TM, BOC, ENG	2
<u>Route 30</u>		
9. Conduct a comprehensive engineering and traffic study of the entire State Route 0 corridor from the Allegheny County line to the Hempfield Township line.		
10. Coordinate the timing of and hardwire all traffic lights along the State Route 30 corridor to maximize traffic flow		
11. Construct a center turning lane from the Allegheny County line to the Irwin Borough line		
12. Reconstruct the intersection of State Route 30 and State Route 4019 to allow westbound truck traffic on State Route 30 to make uninterrupted turning movements onto State Route 4019		
<u>State Route 3022 (Lincoln Way)</u>		
13. Construct drainage and curbing along the entire length of State Route 3022 from its intersection with Route 30 to the Allegheny County Line		
14. Consider the construction of dedicated left-turn lanes at the driveway to Norwin Town Square shopping center, Craig Drive, Five Pines Road and Bethel Road		
15. Resurface the entire length of State Route 3022 from its intersection with State Route 30 to the Allegheny County Line		
<u>State Route 3047 and State Route 3051 (Robbins Station Road)</u>		
16. Construct drainage and curbing along the entire length of State Route 3047 and State Route 3051 from its intersection with State		

<p>Route 30 to Spicher Hill Road</p> <p>17. Consider the construction of dedicated left-turn lanes in both directions on State Route 3047 at the intersection of State Route 3049. In conjunction, install a new traffic signal with the appropriate left-turn lane signals.</p>		
<p><u>State Road 3020 (Barnes Lake Road)</u></p> <p>18. Conduct a comprehensive engineering and traffic study of the entire State Route 3020 corridor from the intersection with State Route 30 to Clay Pike Road</p> <p>19. Construct designated left-turn lanes at the Norwin Hills shopping center and Clay Pike Road</p>		
<p><u>State Route 4019</u></p> <p>20. Widen each traffic lane and install a center lane from the intersection with State Route 30 to one-half mile past the CCX truck terminal facility</p> <p>21. Construct drainage and curbing along the above-stated segment of SR 4019</p> <p>22. Resurface the above stated segment of State Route 4019 from its intersection with SR 30 to one-half mile past the CCX truck terminal facility</p>		
<p>23. Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation plan to guide future facility improvements and new programs which will also a citizen preference/needs assessment survey and a recreational facility user survey to help determine recreational facility and program deficiencies and future community needs.</p>	P & R, TM, BOC	2
<p>24. Study options for a teen center for the 16-19 year old age group for evening and weekend use with a variety of activities.</p>	P & R, TM	3
<p>25. Develop strategies to address concerns that are raised from the citizen surveys.</p>	P & R, TM	3

26. Study the need for additional outdoor athletic fields and indoor recreational facilities	P & R, TM	3
27. Commit funds for the purchase of land areas for parks and recreation areas	TM, BOC	3
28. Commit funds for the purchase of land areas for parks and recreation areas	TM, BOC	3
29. Provide for water-based recreational opportunities	P & R, TM	3
30. Provide for sufficient police staffing to meet the needs of a growing community, through the to 30 full-time and 6 part-time officers	PD, TM	3
31. Replace police vehicles to on a scheduled basis so that approximately 1/3 rd of the vehicle fleet is replaced on a yearly basis	PD, TM	3
32. Improve and enhance technology to assure for adequate phone service, radios and computers that will meet the needs of providing for service to citizens		3

<p>Chapter 10: 5 Year NHTMA Projects</p> <p>33. Extend sanitary sewers to existing homes on Ardara Road, Baird Court, Masters Lane, and Masters Lane Extension.</p> <p>34. Replace Stewartsville Pumping Station with a larger-capacity station.</p> <p>35. Construction of a 3 million gallon retention tank at Long Run Pumping Station</p> <p>36. Eliminate Parkside Pumping Station and route flow via gravity to Stewartsville</p> <p>37. Construct Improvements to the Yough Treatment Plant headworks</p> <p>38. Increase capacity of the Penns Woods Trunk Line</p> <p>39. Continue inflow and infiltration investigations and repairs</p> <p>6 – 10 Year NHTMA Projects</p> <p>40. Continue infiltration and inflow studies including repair and replacement of lines as required</p>	NHTMA	
<p>41. Invest in capital improvement infrastructure through Township CIP and grants to support quality economic growth</p>	TM, P&Z, ED, BOC	2
<p>42. Explore the option of Requiring developers to pay their portion of transportation improvements from large scale commercial developments through a Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance</p>	P & Z, PC, ENG	1

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: ORDINANCES

Responsibilities

Note: The Board of Commissioners and the Township Solicitor will be involved in the enactment of all Ordinances

ORDINANCES	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITY
<p>1. Amend the Zoning, Subdivision and other Development Ordinances as listed below, to correspond to all land use policies and goals stated in this Comprehensive Plan</p>	P & Z, PC	1

2. Amend the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to provide for a greater variety of housing types and increased flexibility through PRD and cluster development options with density incentives to developers who meet defined <i>community objectives</i>	P & Z, PC	1
<p>3. Emphasize and encourage the following community objectives in the review of new housing plans:</p> <p>4. the amount of open space, including active and passive recreation areas to be preserved and dedicated for the benefit of residents of new developments;</p> <p>5. the amount and type of new streets, pedestrian access and public facilities to be included in new developments;</p> <p>6. the adequacy of existing infrastructure to meet demands of new developments;</p> <p>7. the mixture of housing types provided within the housing plan to meet demands of housing for young families and retirees</p> <p>8. The lack of disturbance to and preservation of natural resources located within the development area</p>	P&Z	1
9. Maintain the most current building and property maintenance codes	P&Z	2
10. Working with the Department of Planning and Zoning, update nuisance ordinances and target areas for enforcement	P&Z; TS;	3
11. Develop a Transitional Business District in areas of the Township to encourage low-scale business uses of homes that are zoned residential and maintain the residential character of the area.	P&Z	1
12. Concentrate higher-impact businesses zones uses along the Route 30 corridor at intersections that can handle the increased traffic loads. Reduce sprawl of similar businesses along the entire corridor	, PW, BOC, P &R	1

13. Develop an overlay zone along the Route 30 corridor to establish standards to improve the appearance and property values (landscaping, signs, etc)	PW, P&R	1
14. Remove industrial-type and high-impact uses from the C-1 Zoning District as a Permitted Use	TM, PW, P&Z, ,	1
15. Establish an Office District, similar to the PEDD	TM, P&R, BOC	1
16. Add additional buffer and distance requirements for businesses located adjacent to residential areas. Establish limits on lighting and signage for these businesses	NSD,	1
17. Establish standards for any business that has potential nuisance impacts on the public, health and safety (similar to the adult uses and methadone clinic ordinances)	P & Z	1
18. Revise the home occupation requirements to streamline uses that have no impact (office use, computers, etc), and make more strict uses that have potential negative impacts on the neighborhood through more specific criteria.	P & Z	1
19. Require the submission of a Traffic Impact Study for large scale subdivisions and land developments generating more than 500 trips per day (50 lots or more)	P & Z	1
20. Study the establishment of a Transportation Impact Fee program pursuant to provisions of Article V-A of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code	P & Z	2
21. Conduct comprehensive studies by the Township Engineer to amend the Construction Standards for the Township, addressing the following issues: ➤ Consider reducing the required width of new streets. Excessively wide streets increase costs for everyone in the development process; developers, homebuyers and municipalities. ➤ Link the design of new streets to the number of units expected to be served by the new street. ➤ Consider adopting standards that would permit the	P & Z, TM	1

<p>creation of smaller streets such as lanes and ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider incorporating standards for "T", "Y" and off center cul-de-sacs. In small scale developments (10 or fewer units) the use of "T", or "Y" cul-de-sacs may be a better option than the traditional "lollipop" design. In some cases, an off-center cul-de-sac when used with smaller streets can facilitate driving ease and add to visual variety in the site design ➤ Consider reducing the present radii of cul-de-sacs. Large radii (40ft or greater) create large expanses of paved area that are costly to maintain and add to storm water runoff. ➤ Collectors and arterials should be designed for through traffic only. Numerous curb cuts on such streets diminish their function and adds unnecessarily to congestion ➤ Consider requiring multiple access for large-scale housing plans and commercial and industrial developments 		
22. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to require additional environmental information to be submitted in the development application package	P & Z, ENG	1
23. Amend the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances to establish an overlay district designated "Environmentally Sensitive Overlay" with regulations in the following area: development on areas of steep slope (25% or greater); development on areas of poor soils (unstable); development on areas that have been undermined; preservation methods of existing forested areas and other environmental features within proposed development plans	P & Z, PC, ENG	1
24. Establish regulatory procedures for the administrative review of all development projects, including the issuance of grading permits and building permits that consider environmental implications of the permit;	P & Z, ENG	1

25. Review and improve the Stormwater Management Ordinance to assure no additional runoff generated from new developments. Establish review standards for the analysis of existing drainage problems on potential development sites	P & Z, PC, ENG	1
26. Modify the Zoning Ordinance so that it provides better protection to natural resources to include mechanisms and techniques such as cluster development, conservation easements other innovative measures for the long term enhancement and protection of the environment within proposed development plans.	P & Z, PC	1
27. Implement alternative ways to minimize impervious surfaces . Allow greater flexibility in the subdivision code for street, parking, and curb and gutter requirements to reduce unnecessary amounts of impervious surfaces. Base parking on actual use levels to reduce excessively sized parking lots. Add minimum landscaping requirements to development plans to replace lost landscaping and minimize impervious surfaces..	P & Z, PC, ENG	1
28. Preserve forests on steep slopes (>25%) to reduce erosion and protect natural wildlife. On 15% to 25% slopes, site disturbances should be limited to only that necessary for essential road construction and utility installation.	P & Z, PC, ENG	1
29. Adopt land dedication requirements in the subdivision ordinance to be based on population to be served as well as the site of the development and fee-in-lieu of land based on the land values	P & Z, PC, P & R	1
30. Establish procedures on the effective enforcement of malfunctioning septic systems	P & Z, DEP	3
31. Completely integrate the provision of all utilities, public and private into the Subdivision and Land Development Review Process	P & Z, ENG	1

