

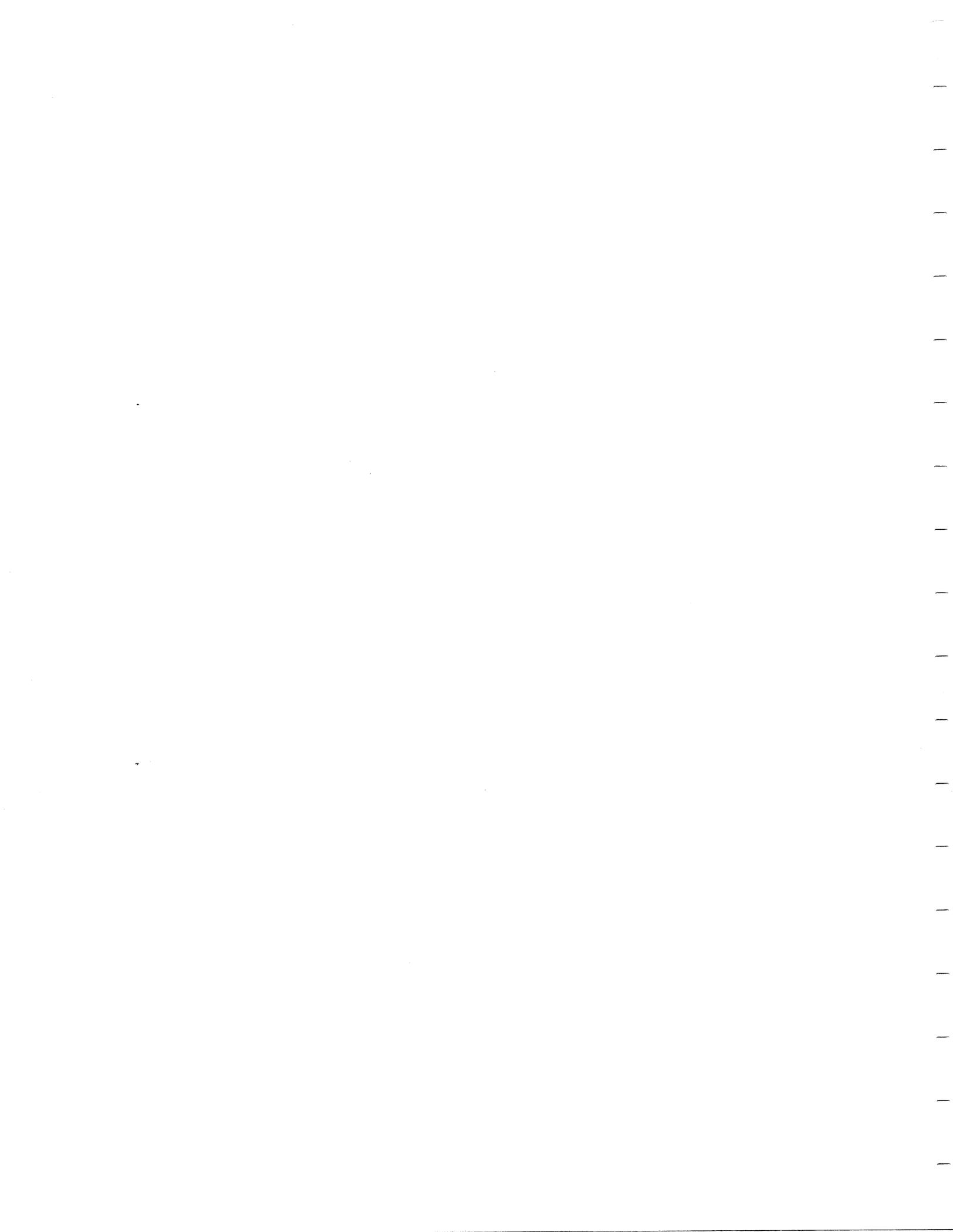
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WEST PENN TOWNSHIP Schuylkill County, PA

Planning Consultant

Urban Research & Development Corporation
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

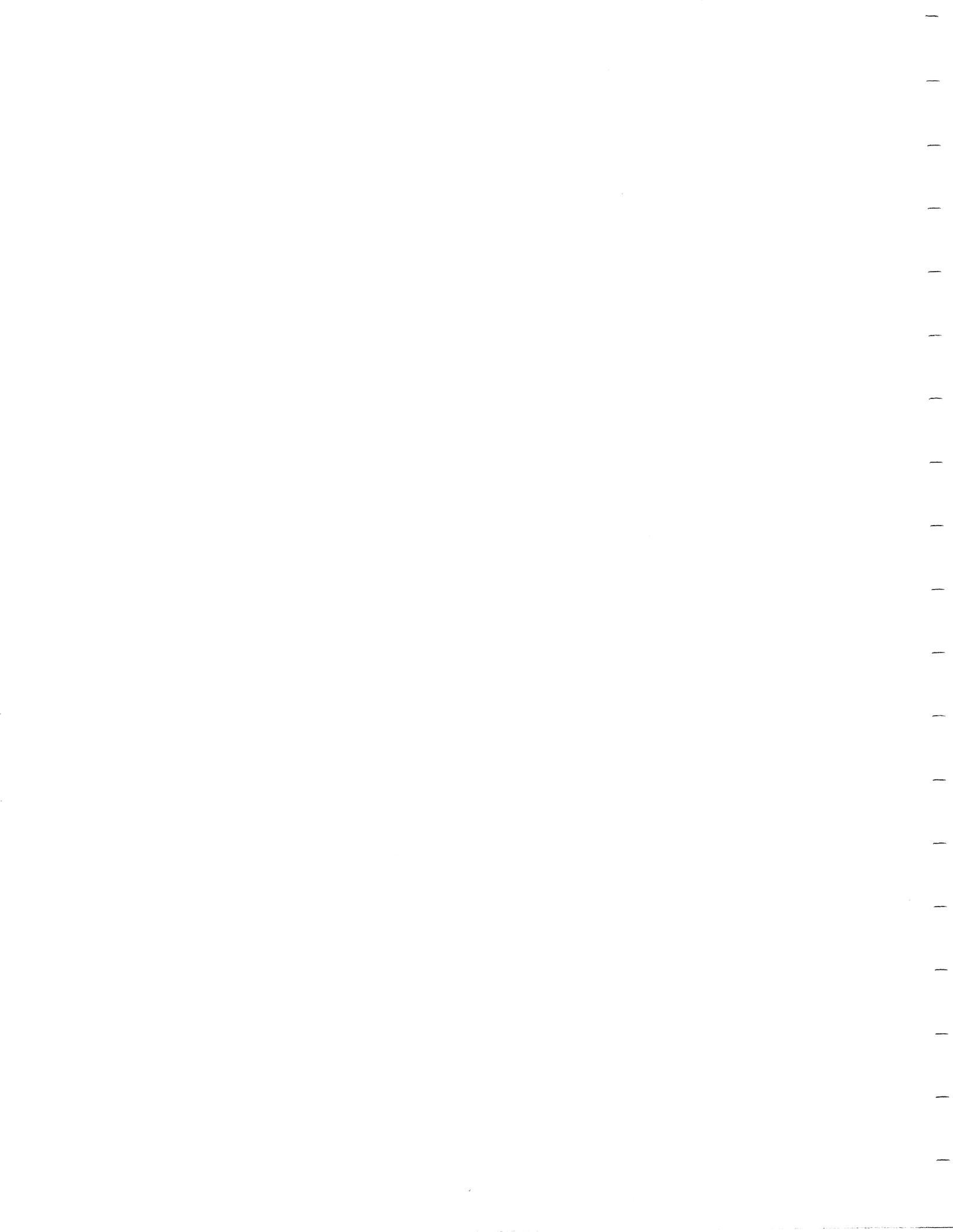
The West Penn Township Board of Supervisors adopted the Comprehensive Plan on May 6, 1985. This document includes the amendments adopted on August 3, 1992.



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FORWARD

To the Residents of West Penn Township:

The people of West Penn Township have always maintained an appreciation and respect for their land. Our 38,000 acres of wooded hills, scenic valleys, peaceful villages, and sloping farms provide us with living space, a standard of living, lifetime investments and enjoyment. However, our Township is undergoing constant growth and change. One thing is certain: West Penn will continue to change. That is why our Township Supervisors asked us to spend time carefully thinking about the future development and preservation of West Penn. This Comprehensive Plan...our Township's first...is the result of thinking long and hard about West Penn's future.

This Plan is important to everyone in the Township. It will help manage the forces-of-change to help ensure that West Penn continues to become an even better place to live and work. The Plan will also enable the Board of Supervisors, our Commissioners and the citizens to review current issues and proposals against a clear picture of what has been decided as the most desirable plan for the future physical development and the future character of the Township.

The West Penn Township

Commissioners

INTRODUCTION

WEST PENN'S FIRST PLANNING PROGRAM

This is West Penn's first Comprehensive Plan. It is divided into three parts:

- A Summary of Background Studies used to help prepare the Plan.
- A Plan for Growth and Preservation which contains policies for future land use, open space and agricultural preservation, community facilities, and transportation.
- An Action Program to carry out the Plan.

SCOPE OF THE PLANNING PROGRAM

The Planning Program involved four major phases: Problems,

Background Studies	Problems, Opportunities and Guidelines for the Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Action Program
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- Background Studies - The Planning Commission and its Consultant traveled together throughout West Penn to observe and discuss existing and potential assets, problems, and opportunities. Maps were prepared and studies were conducted to determine factors which will influence present and future improvements and land development patterns.
- Problems, Opportunities and Guidelines for the Plan - Residents commented on the Background Studies and on two alternative Comprehensive Plans presented at public meetings during this phase. These resident insights helped reconfirm and identify additional Township problems and opportunities. They also helped identify goals and other guidelines to use in preparing a Comprehensive Plan to guide the growth and preservation of West Penn Township.
- Comprehensive Plan - A Preliminary Comprehensive Plan was prepared based on comments and discussions at public workshop meetings and Planning Commission workshop sessions. This Plan provided recommendations on preserving open space, developing appropriate land uses and community facilities, and improving roads and highways. A public meeting was held on the Preliminary Plan and revisions were made.

- Action Program - Recommendations were selected in the final Comprehensive Plan which require immediate action. A Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance were also prepared to provide a legal way for carrying out the Comprehensive Plan.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

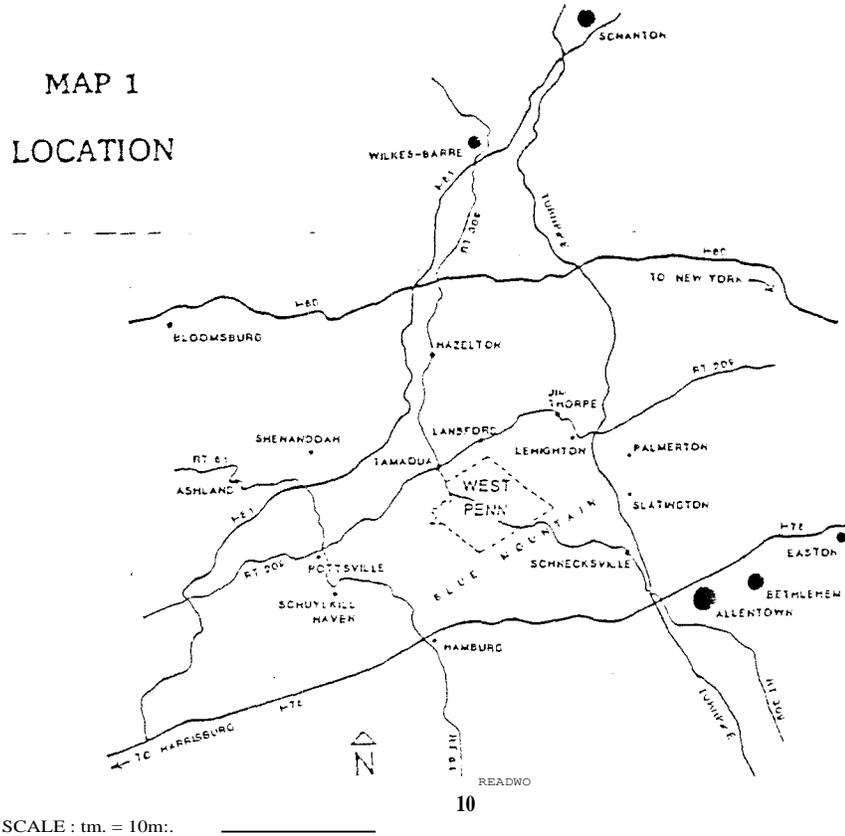
This Comprehensive Plan provides policies for guiding the growth and preservation of West Penn Township over the next five to ten years. Its real value to the Township will be in evaluating each proposed community change against the Plan's policies for public facilities and services, land uses, and roads. The test of each change affecting any one of these subjects should be a question: "Does it conform with our Comprehensive Plan?", or "Does it carry out the goals of our Plan?"

BACKGROUND STUDIES

A SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

REGIONAL SETTING AND HISTORY

Regional Setting - West Penn Township, covers 59 beautiful square miles between the Blue Mountain and Mauch Chunk Ridge. Route 309 connects the Township to the Allentown-Bethlehem area, about 35 miles to the southeast. To the north are the regions traditionally known for coal mining, including the Borough of Tamaqua. (Map 1)



History - The first known settler of West Penn was around 1740. Most of the early families were "Pennsylvania Dutch." West Penn Township and Schuylkill County were both established in 1811. Although some small industries developed in West Penn in the early 1800's, most of the Township's residents lived off of agriculture.

West Penn's young people were spread between seventeen schools from the late 1800's until the West Penn Elementary School was completed in 1959. Two railroads were built through the Township in the 1890's and 1910's. The anthracite coal belt to the north started to be intensely developed in the early 1800's, spurred by canals. This provided a regular market for West Penn's agricultural products. Then in the 1930's and 1950's, the coal market collapsed, causing unemployment to skyrocket throughout the region and encouraging a lot of younger people to leave the area.

Throughout the 1900's, farming has become more mechanized and transportation improvements have opened up new markets.

A number of historic sites are located in the Township. (Map 2)

NATURAL FEATURE CHARACTERISTICS

Slope of the Land - The slope of the land can limit the type and intensity of development that a site can accommodate. Steep (15%+) sloping topography characterizes approximately one-half of the Township's land area. The most predominant steep slopes are located: 1) adjacent to the Mauch Chunk Ridge, 2) along the ridges which separate Mahoning Creek and Lizard Creek, 3) along the north slopes of Blue Mountain, and 4) along the Little Schuylkill River. Many other smaller steep sloping areas are scattered throughout the Township. Steep slopes are best suited for uses that occupy a small percentage of a lot. Ideally, the very steep areas (25%+) should remain open. (Map 3)

Alluvial Soils - Alluvial soils deposited in the past by flooding are a reliable indication that heavy runoff conditions will probably create flooding in the future. Flood prone, alluvial soils exist along the Little Schuylkill River, Mahoning Creek, Lizard Creek, and some of their tributaries. Because of their vital natural function in absorbing storm water runoff and because of potential flooding, these soils should remain open. (Map 4)

High Water Table Soils - Shallow soils within three feet of the water table also are found in West Penn Township. Most of these high water table soils are located in the lower lying areas adjacent to the streams and drainage channels. Development of these wet soil areas could result in poor foundation stability, ponding, and chronic wetness in homes and other buildings. (Map 4)

Shallow Soils to Bedrock - Some soils in the Township have a shallow depth to bedrock. Most of these shallow soils are located in the vicinity of Mauch Chunk Ridge and the Blue Mountain. Because bedrock is generally less than three feet below the surface, development could be expensive wherever hard bedrock is encountered. (Map 4)

Geology - The geologic formations which underlie the Township have important implications relating to water supply, foundation stability and excavation. The Catskill Formation, which underlies most of the Township, yields fair to good quantities of water of excellent quality. On this formation, foundation stability is good; blasting is required for bedrock removal.

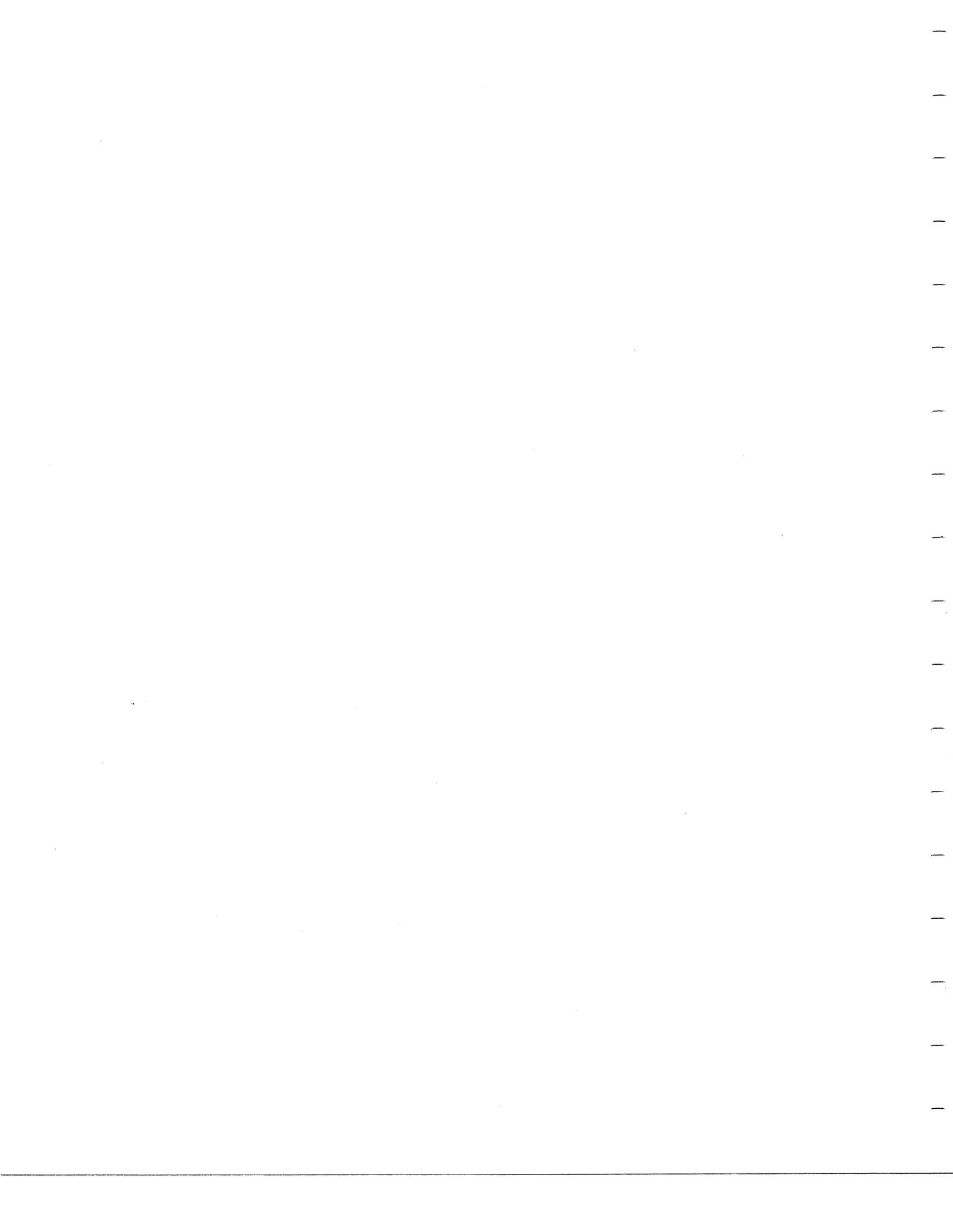
Waterways and Drainage Basins - West Penn Township has a distinct drainage system that consists of three major drainage channels: 1) the Little Schuylkill River, 2) Mahoning Creek, and 3) Lizard Creek. Many other smaller drainage channels are located in the Township. The Township is part of two different drainage basins: 1) the Lehigh River Basin and 2) the Little Schuylkill River Basin. These basins and their sub-basins, delineated by ridgelines, are logical areas for planning and designing water treatment and storm drainage facilities. (Map 5)

Agricultural Soils - Soils well-suited for agriculture are located in scattered pockets throughout the Township. These soils are designated as "Class II" soils in the County Soil Survey; they pose only slight to moderate limitations to farming. These soils are located on the more gently sloping (3%-8%) areas. No "Class I," prime soils, are found in the Township. (Map 6)

MAP 3
STEEP SLOPES



MAP 4
WET AND SHALLOW SOUS.



Wooded Areas - Wooded areas are not only attractive, but they provide shade and help to reduce soil erosion. Some of the Township's woodland has been cleared for agricultural uses or for development purposes. Heavily wooded areas are located mostly on the steep slopes of the Blue Mountain to the south and Mauch Chunk Ridge to the north.

LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

Residential Use - Residential development is scattered along roads in all parts of the Township. A large percentage of newer development, especially mobile homes, has occurred in the southern part of the Township directed towards Route 309 towards the Lehigh Valley.

Commercial Use - Commercial development has been clustered north of South Tamaqua, west of Mantzville, in Leibyville and in Snyders.

Industrial Use - West Penn has little industry. The largest industrial land uses are the Atlas Powder Company and the Andreas Quarry.

Public/Semi-Public Uses and Recreation Areas - The major land uses are the Community Park, the Blue Mountain Christian Retreat, the West Penn Elementary School and the Mahoning Valley Golf Course. The State Game Commission and the National Park Service are interested in purchasing reasonably priced land all along both sides of the Blue Mountain.

Agricultural Land - Agricultural land is spread throughout the Township on areas that are not of steep slope. Fields are broken up in size by forested sloped areas.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Government Administration - West Penn Township is governed by the three-member Board of Supervisors, with the assistance of an appointed Planning Commission and Recreation Commission.

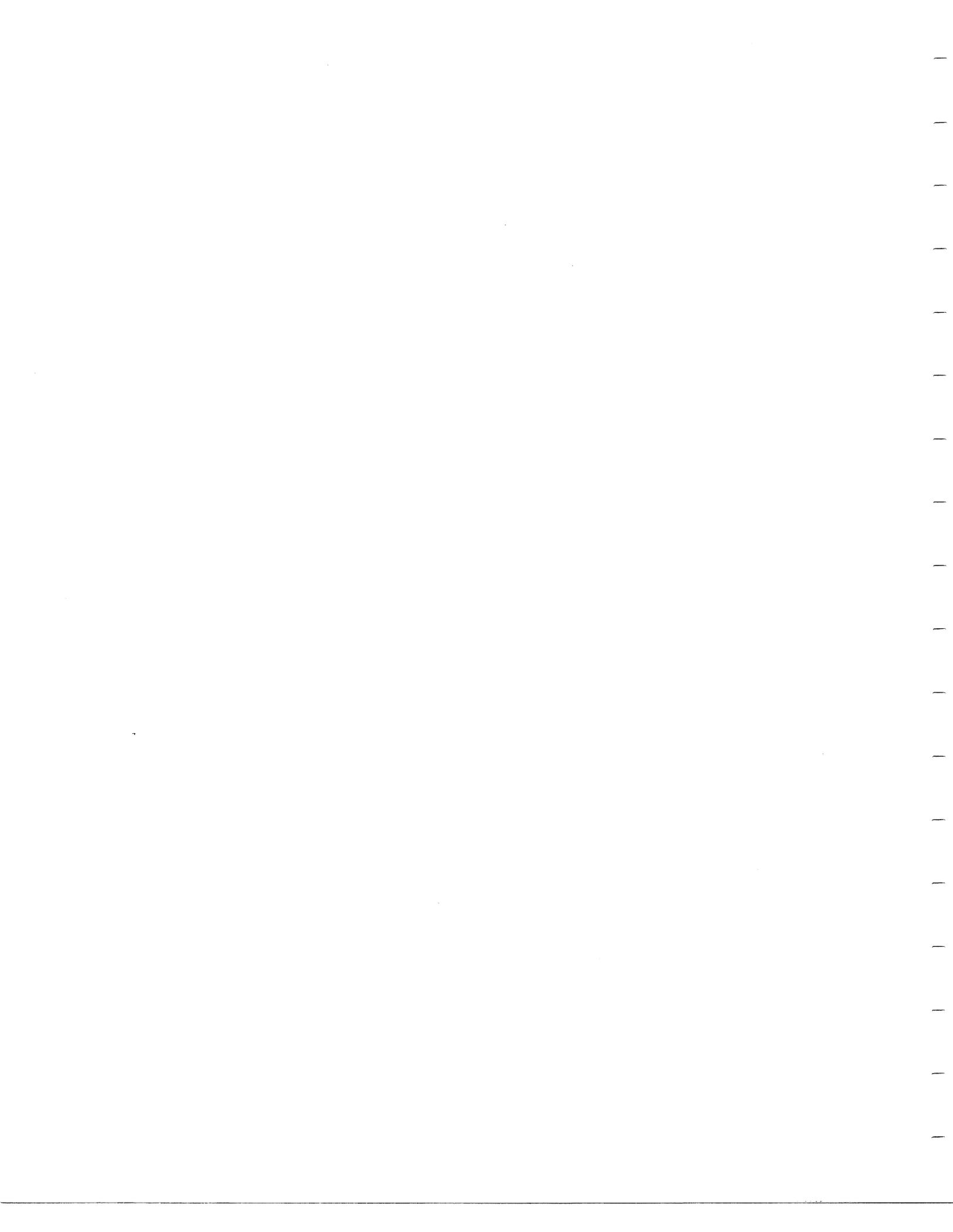
Government Finance - In 1983, West Penn Township's real estate tax (1.4 mills) was insignificant compared to the Tamaqua Area School District tax (40.4 mills) and the Schuylkill County tax (14.5 mills).

Municipal Building - The Township Municipal Building is modern and should be more than adequate for all the Township's needs for the foreseeable future.

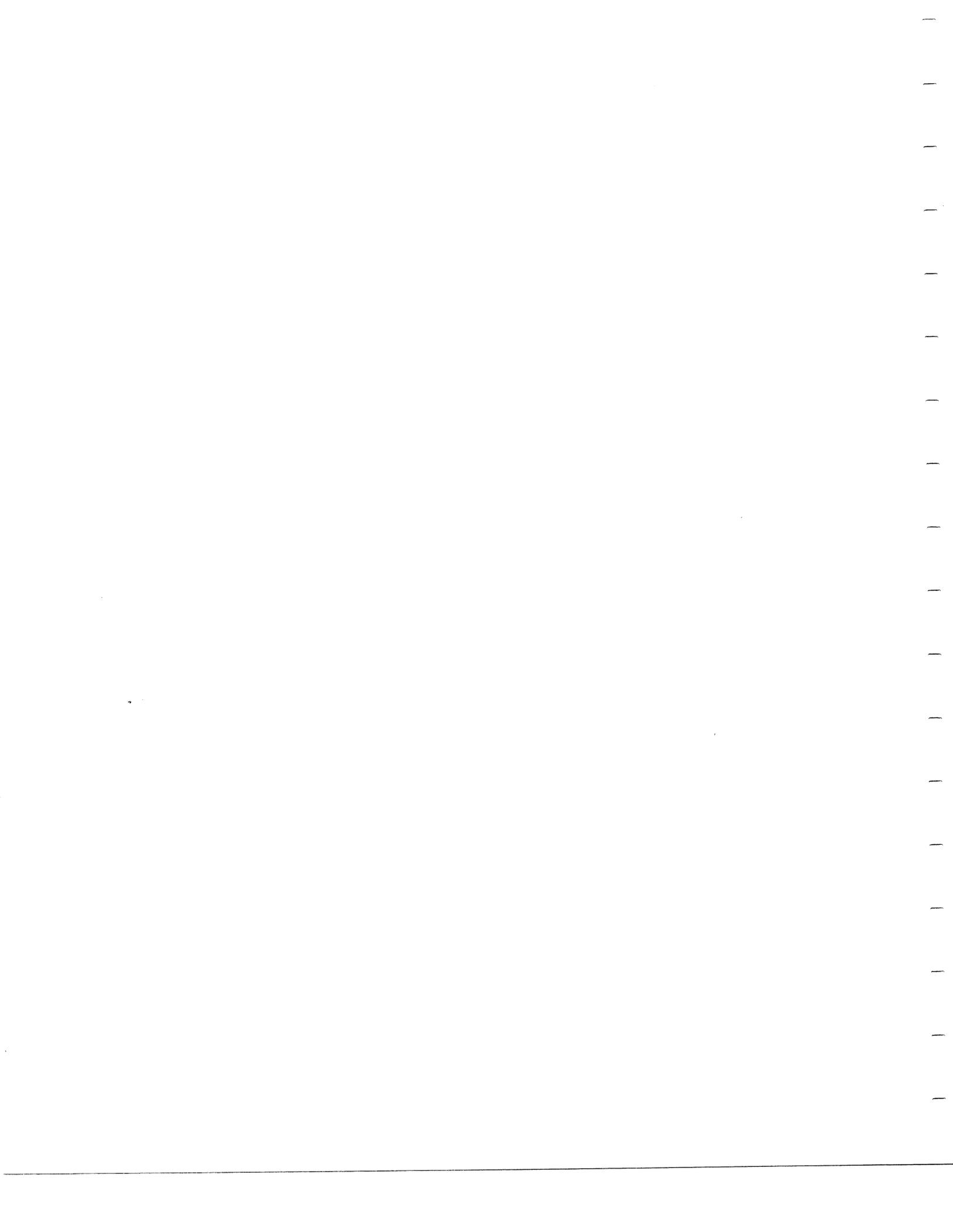
Park and Recreational Facilities - The West Penn Community Park and the areas around West Penn Elementary School provide a variety of recreational facilities. In addition, many private recreational facilities, including a golf course, exist within the Township. Within close driving distance are numerous large recreation and conservation areas including State Parks and Game Lands.



MAP 5
RIDGELINES AND DRAINAGE BASINS



MAP 6
AGRICULTURAL SONS



EXISTING LAND USE



Schools - As part of the Tamaqua Area School District, the young people of West Penn attend the West Penn Elementary School, the Tamaqua Junior High School, the Tamaqua Area Senior High School and the North and South County Vocational-Technical Schools. The School District's buildings are all modern or have been recently remodeled. Enrollments are projected to decline and the School District foresees little need for additional construction or reconstruction.

Police Protection - The Township has a part-time police force on call 24 hours as needed. This force is assisted by the Pennsylvania State Police.

Fire Protection - Excellent fire services can actually save residents money by lowering home insurance premiums. The Andreas Volunteer Fire Company provides fire protection to West Penn with the assistance of many surrounding fire companies. Andreas Fire Company has had to work hard to serve the Township's constant growth and to deal with the increasingly more complex fires caused by the increased use of chemicals. The Fire Company suffers from a location in the far southeastern corner of the Township and is considering, in the long-term, building a small satellite fire station in a more central location.

Ambulance Service - The Penn-Mahoning Ambulance Association operates an ambulance out of Andreas.

Church and Social Activities - West Penn residents are active in their three churches and numerous social and civic organizations.

Health Care - Good health care service is available to the people of West Penn, although it often requires a ten mile drive.

Library - West Penn is served by the Tamaqua Public Library.

Water - Although some water service is provided by a water line from Tamaqua and by a small private water company, most residents use their own wells and cisterns.

Sewage Disposal - Sewage disposal is by on-site septic tanks except for a small package treatment plant in South Tamaqua.

Electric Service - PP&L provides electric service.

Storm Sewers - Proper subdivision regulations and site design can minimize the need for storm sewer systems.

Solid Waste Disposal - Private contractors are used to collect solid waste.

Telephone - The Continental Telephone Company provides telephone service to West Penn.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population Trends - West Penn's population has grown steadily since 1960. The U. S. Census shows that 3,388 people lived in West Penn Township in 1980--nearly 29 percent more than in 1970. If this growth rate continues, about 4,370 people would live in the Township by 1990.

Population Density - West Penn's population density is approximately 57 persons per square mile, almost four times lower than the County's average of 205 persons per square mile. In 1970, the Township's density was only 44 persons per square mile.

Income - Between 1974 and 1979, West Penn's per capita annual income increased by approximately 77 percent, from \$3,602 to \$6,360. All the measures of income in 1979 showed that West Penn residents were wealthier than the average Schuylkill County residents, but West Penn still had lower income measures than Pennsylvania as a whole. About six percent of the families in the Township have incomes below the poverty level as defined by the U. S. Census.

Education - In this age of growing technology, education is more necessary than it ever has been in the past. The 1980 U. S. Census indicates a higher percentage of college graduates in West Penn Township (6.9%) than in the County (6.1%).

Age and Sex Characteristics - Age and sex characteristics of the Township help indicate the kinds of facilities that should be provided. According to the 1980 U. S. Census, the median age of the Township was only 32.1 compared to 36.9 for the County as a whole.

Natural Population Increase - Between 1971 and 1980, 143 more West Penn residents were born than died. Natural increase accounted for about one-fifth of the Township's total increase in population during that decade, indicating that in-migration has been more responsible for West Penn's population growth than natural increase.

"Dependent"/"Productive" Age Ratios - Children and adolescents (under 18), and senior citizens (65 and over) are more "dependent" than the more productive age groups between 18 and 64. Nearly 60 percent of the population is "productive," indicating that the Township has a favorable balance. The degree to which this balance can be maintained will be influenced by most factors involved in planning for the future, especially by the Township's policies and programs regarding employment and housing.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing Growth - West Penn Township had 1,167 total housing units in 1980--237 more than in 1970. This represents a 20 percent increase and an average annual increase of about 24 new housing units.

Type of Housing - Single-family housing comprises about 85 percent of West Penn's total housing supply. An increase in the demand for multi-family housing and mobile homes is likely to occur in the future because many people can no longer afford to buy or build expensive single family homes.

Housing Tenure - About one out of six housing units in the Township is renter-occupied. This percentage is significantly lower than the percentage for all of Schuylkill County or Pennsylvania.

Housing Vacancy Rate - According to the 1980 Census figures, there were 42 vacant dwelling units in West Penn Township, resulting in a vacancy rate of only 3.6 percent. Between three to six percent of the housing units should be vacant to provide opportunities for mobility and housing choice.

Number of Persons per Household - The average number of persons per household in West Penn Township dropped from 3.17 in 1970 to 3.03 in 1980. This decline reflects the national trend toward small families

Plumbing Deficiencies - According to the 1980 U. S. Census, two and one-half percent (27 units) of the total occupied housing units "lacked complete plumbing facilities." This terminology includes units that lack hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet or bathtub or shower inside the housing unit for the exclusive use of the unit.

Crowded Housing Units - The 1980 U. S. Census indicates that almost three percent of West Penn's housing units were "crowded." "Crowding" exists when a household has more than one person per room.

Age Groups and Housing Preferences - Housing preferences tend to vary between age groups. As a household matures, it tends to demand various kinds of housing. Families with children, for example, have a particularly strong preference for single family homes. The elderly, on the other hand, generally require small, reasonably-priced housing units because of their fixed income and reduced mobility.

Housing Costs - The median value of owner-occupied housing in West Penn is \$39,500, according to the 1980 U. S. Census. Thirty-two percent of the homes were valued at over \$50,000 and two percent were valued at less than \$20,000. West Penn's median housing value was very close to the State median but was significantly greater than the Schuylkill County median.

Rental Costs - Monthly rental costs in the Township are very low. The median contract rent in West Penn in 1980 was \$121, compared to \$163 for Schuylkill County and \$225 for Pennsylvania.

Housing Affordability - Generally, a household rents when its income is low, proceeds through various increasing investments as income capability increases, and eventually recycles back again as investment needs diminish and income stabilizes. Ideally, a household should spend no more than 30 percent of its gross income on all housing costs. West Penn, like all municipalities, has a responsibility to provide opportunities for a variety of housing types.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Economic Trends - The economy of the West Penn area can expect to be changed significantly over the next couple decades by dramatic long-term changes sweeping over the world. All economies are becoming more international and technology is influencing every activity.

Agriculture - Agriculture in Schuylkill County was on an upward curve by most measures from 1974 to 1978 after years of decline. The farm population of the County remained stable from 1970 to 1980 at about 2,100 people. Ninety-four percent of those who responded to a Planning Commission survey reported that farming was not their primary source of income.

Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade and Retail Trade - From 1972 to 1978, manufacturers with 20 or more employees suffered a decline in employment of 11 percent in Schuylkill County. Employment in wholesale trade fell 14 percent during this period, but retail employment increased eight percent. In 1977, Schuylkill County had a low average retail sales—per person, especially compared to Lehigh County.

Employment By Sector - In 1980, West Penn had a large percentage (36 percent) of its workforce employed in manufacturing. This sector will undergo a tremendous transformation over the next couple decades as new technologies are introduced and the economy becomes more internationalized. Of those who work in manufacturing, a very large percentage work in apparel. Atlas Powder Company and New Jersey Zinc are other major manufacturing employers in the area.

Employment Outlook - The area's dependence on the apparel manufacturing industry and two major employers warrants attention. The consequences of not having a diverse economy, as many in the region know from the decline of the coal industry, are unfortunate. Every region should strive toward a diversified economy rather than to rely on a type of economic activity.

Place of Employment - Thirty-eight percent of those people who responded to the 1983 Township survey said they travelled at least 20 miles to work, while 22 percent travelled between ten and twenty miles.

Unemployment - The April 1984 Schuylkill County unemployment rate was 11.7 percent. While this represents a major recovery from the January 1983 rate of 17.5 percent, it is still much higher than the Lehigh Valley (9.2), Pennsylvania (9.2) or United States (7.6) unemployment percentages.

Economic Development - West Penn Township is a member of the Greater Tamaqua Industrial Development Enterprises, Inc., a public-private organization designed to attract industry to the area. The organization has built and maintained a large industrial park in Hometown and administers many types of government incentives to develop jobs in the region.

Job Training and Services - Programs to train adults for many different trades are available through the Schuylkill County Vo-Tech Schools. The Tamaqua office of the Pennsylvania Job Service provides a variety of services to employers and job seekers.

TRANSPORTATION CHARACTERISTICS

Overview - West Penn's road network consists of about 40 miles of State roads and about 115 miles of Township roads (Map 8). Three expressways (1-78, 1-81 and the Northeast Turnpike Extension) approach within ten to twenty miles of West Penn. Route 309 is the major traffic artery of West Penn, connecting it with Tamaqua and Allentown. Route 443 provides access to Lehighton and New Ringgold. Route 895 provides a link to Palmerton.

Road Functions - Roads should be classified by their different functions in order to prioritize improvements and to help regulate growth. Arterials, such as Route 309, are higher speed routes to connect cities. Collectors, such as LR-53019 (past the West Penn Archery Club), are meant to collect traffic off local roads. Local roads, which make up most of the road system of West Penn, are meant primarily to provide access to properties.

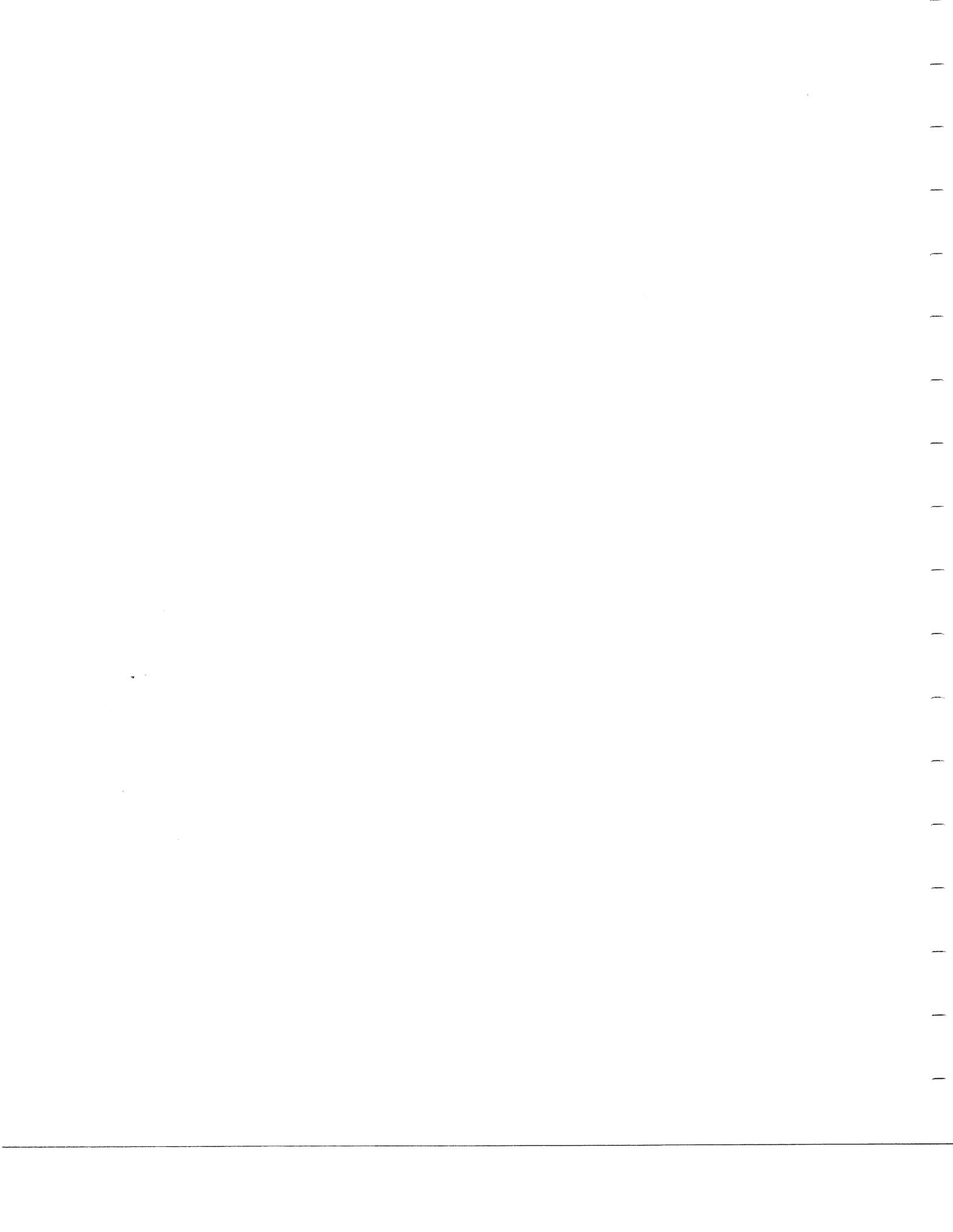
Traffic Volumes - Route 309 between Tamaqua and South Tamaqua had the highest average daily traffic volume (ADT) in the Township in 1983, 10,900 vehicles. A significant percentage of these are trucks. The ADT of Route 443 varied between 2,300 and 2,900. The highest increase in ADT between 1971 and 1983 was experienced on Route 895 between Route 309 and the Carbon County line, a 35 percent increase to 1,750 vehicles.

Cartway Standards - According to PennDOT standards, the five State highways in West Penn have sufficient width for their present volume.

Dangerous Intersections - Many of the dangerous driving conditions in West Penn are related to slopes causing limited visibility. Five intersections in the Township are considered especially dangerous.

- Route 309/T-777
- Route 309/LR-53020 (Leibyville)
- Route 309/Route 895
- Route 309/T-968 (south of Snyder's)
- Route 443/T-992 (Clamtown)
- Route 309/Route 443 West
- Route 309/Route 443 East

Road Maintenance - A 1983 survey found that residents who responded were more satisfied with the Township's road maintenance than that of the State. In 1983, roads accounted for 58 percent of the Township's expenditures.



CIRCULATION CONDITIONS



Pedestrian/Bicycle Travel - There may be areas along the more heavily travelled roads where the shoulder is too rough or narrow for safe bicycling, forcing bicycles onto the road and threatening their safety.

Public Transportation - Schuylkill Transit Systems operates regular scheduled bus service from Tamaqua, but not to West Penn. They also provide door-to-door van service anywhere within the County and scheduled van trips to cities outside the County. The van service is free to the elderly, handicapped and poor if they qualify through a County agency or program.

Scenic Drives - The rural character and many great scenic views of West Penn could easily be disturbed by "strip" development along its roads.

Rail Transportation - West Penn is no longer served by railroads.

Airports - The Carbon County Airport and East Penn Airport provide some local air transportation. Most residents travel to the ABE Airport for national flights. -

THE PLAN

A PLAN FOR GROWTH AND PRESERVATION

This Plan has an overriding theme: well-planned, controlled growth in West Penn Township. The overall development policy is to retain the Township's predominantly rural character. The Plan strongly encourages farmland preservation and keeping floodplains and steep slopes in open space. Development is encouraged in areas which are physically suitable, accessible and located near community facilities.

Circulation recommendations include making intersection improvements and classifying roads according to their purpose.

The Plan is described in six parts:

- Goals for West Penn's Future
- Land Use Plan
- Housing Plan
- Community Facilities Plan
- Circulation (Transportation) Plan
- Energy Use Plan

GOALS FOR WEST PENN'S FUTURE

Eleven goals underlie West Penn's Comprehensive Plan. They are listed below along with objectives which describe how to reach these goals.

Goal 1: **PRESERVE WEST PENN'S SPECIAL RURAL CHARACTER**

Objectives:

- Preserve prime agricultural land, working farms, pastures, nurseries and other high value agricultural land.
- Support the "Agricultural Security Area" established in accordance with the Pennsylvania Agricultural Area Security Act (PA. 1981-43).
- Explore other ways to preserve farmland and cooperate with the Pennsylvania Farmers Associations in their efforts toward agricultural preservation.
- Encourage farmers, who must sell their land, to give other farmers the right of first refusal.

- Determine ways to minimize conflicts between agricultural and residential uses.
- Provide for the continuation and expansion of agriculturally-related businesses in the agricultural areas.
- Direct development away from concentrations of prime agricultural land.

Goal 2: **RECOGNIZE, RESPECT, AND CONSERVE THE NATURAL QUALITIES OF WEST PENN**

Objectives:

- Use geologic, slope, and soils information to help decide the most suitable type, location, and density of land development.
- Insist that all development adhere to sound soil and water conservation practices.
- Strictly regulate development on land with slopes greater than 15%.
- Try to preserve floodplains in open space and avoid development on high water table soils.
- Require developers to take actions that will ensure storm water runoff from future developments will not cause flooding.
- Preserve woodlands.
- Recognize important mineral resource areas.
- Provide conservation areas to help preserve the Township's scenic qualities, and to protect the Blue Mountain and Mauch Chunk Ridge.
- Provide uniform, equitable enforcement of regulations to protect environmental quality.

Goal 3: **ACHIEVE GREATER RESIDENT AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, AND PARTICIPATION IN CARRYING OUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Objectives:

- Publicize the Plan to keep residents well informed and to obtain resident participation in planning related matters.

-
- Continuously use the Comprehensive Plan in making decisions that affect land use, community facilities and transportation in and around West Penn.
- Cooperate with adjoining municipalities on planning-related matters of mutual concern on immediate, short-term and long-term issues.
- Encourage subcommittees and/or local interest groups to work with and advise the Planning Commission on matters of local interest.
- Support regular news coverage on planning-related matters.

Goal 4: **ASSURE ADEQUATE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN WEST PENN**

Objectives:

- Provide appropriate areas for various housing types and densities.
 - Increase the supply of housing for younger and older adults.
 - Encourage rehabilitation and renovation of existing older homes.
- Require all residential development to meet the highest standards of site design, and enforce standards for site layout.
- Encourage builders to respond to changing housing demands.
 - Encourage higher density living areas at locations which are physically suitable, accessible, and close to community facilities.
 - Continue to provide single family low density residential areas and protect these areas from incompatible land users.
 - Provide opportunities for modern mobile homes on individual lots and for well-designed mobile home parks.

Goal 5: **ASSURE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN PRESENT AND FUTURE LAND USES**

Objectives:

- Prepare West Penn's Zoning Ordinance and a Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan and assure maximum compatibility between adjacent land uses.

- Continually cooperate with adjoining municipalities to ensure that the zoning ordinances provide for compatible development along municipal boundaries.

Goal 6: **ASSURE THAT APPROPRIATE LAND IS MAINTAINED FOR SCENIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL USES**

Objectives:

- Preserve land with severe development limitations (e.g., flood prone areas and steep slopes) and outstanding scenic areas for enjoyment as open space areas or for passive recreational uses.
- Support the efforts of private land trusts, sportsmans organizations and the Pennsylvania Game Commission to preserve the Blue Mountain.
- Provide close-to-home public recreation areas that provide facilities to continually meet the growing recreation demands of all age groups.
- Seek additional recreational facilities adjacent to the Elementary School and encourage their fullest uses.
- Use the common open space in cluster-type subdivisions for small playlots or playgrounds, where appropriate.
- Continue to evaluate the demand for and feasibility of providing needed recreation programs and facilities.
- Make maximum recreational use of the Tamaqua Area School District facilities, churches and other public, quasi-public and private facilities.
- Avoid extensive strip development along roads which would destroy the rural and scenic character of West Penn.

Goal 7: **ASSURE THE PRESERVATION AND IDENTITY OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND SITES WITHIN WEST PENN TOWNSHIP**

Objectives:

- Continue to identify sites and structures which have historic importance or architectural significance and develop practical ways to preserve these features as part of West Penn's cultural heritage.
- Consider developing selected historic features as recreational and/or tourist attractions.

Goal 8: ASSURE THAT PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES WILL BE ADEQUATE TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH

Objectives:

- Systematically plan and program for capital improvements and municipal services.
- Plan for a small satellite fire station at a more central location in the Township, such as attached to the back of the Township Building.
- Adopt a provision within the Zoning Ordinance that will assure that the revenues, the direct and indirect costs, and other implications of major developments are identified at the outset of submitting a plan for review.
- Clearly identify the responsibility for and the necessary funds for providing and sustaining public facilities and services.
- Continue to periodically evaluate the Township's sewer and water needs.
- Continually explore the feasibility and appropriateness of alternative methods of sewage disposal (such as sewage lagoons) for the Township.
- Provide for an adequate level of security and safety in the Township by supporting, the Andreas Fire Company and continuing, to cooperate with neighboring fire companies.
- Work and cooperate with other municipalities to find appropriate regional solutions to the serious solid waste disposal problem.

Goal 9: ENSURE THAT COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IS ADEQUATE TO MEET TOWNSHIP NEEDS AND IS DESIGNED AND LOCATED IN HARMONY WITH THE TOWNSHIP'S DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Objectives:

- Identify land best suited for desirable commercial and industrial development to contribute to the Township's economic growth, opportunities for local employment, and shopping facilities; and assure that this land remains available for this use.
- Encourage all new commercial and industrial development to provide the highest quality building and site design.

- Designate areas for commercial and industrial development with respect for safe and efficient highway access and for compatibility with neighboring uses.
- Encourage commercial clusters and discourage wasteful and unsafe strip commercial developments.
- Work to encourage industrial development in appropriate areas of the Tamaqua Area School District, such as the industrial park at Hometown.

Goal 10: ESTABLISH A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY CIRCULATES PEOPLE AND GOODS WITHIN AND AROUND WEST PENN

Objectives:

- Identify accident-prone areas and alleviate these driving hazards in cooperation with PennDOT.
- Continue to carefully identify roads needing maintenance and improvement, and regularly determine priorities.
- Classify roads according to the function they will serve in the future and establish standards in the zoning ordinance which relate to these road functions.
- Plan road improvements in close coordination with land use policies. Discourage excessively wide cartways in residential subdivisions.
- Limit the number of new driving hazards by carefully examining the circulation improvements proposed for each subdivision, land development or change of use.

Goal 11: INCREASE THE IDENTITY OF WEST PENN TOWNSHIP

Objectives:

- Consider trying to reorient postal routes to the Andreas Post Office, and then renaming it the West Penn Post Office.
- Consider installing attractive signs at major entrances to the Township.

LAND USE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan Map at the end of this report designates locations for agricultural, residential, business, conservation and environmental protection, recreation and other public and private activities. Areas for these activities are appropriately located to help ensure a pleasant, safe and attractive Township.

Four sections comprise the Land Use Plan:

- Agricultural Preservation Plan
- Residential Land Use Plan
- Commercial, Business and Industrial Plan
- Environmental Protection Plan

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PLAN

This Plan strongly encourages farmland preservation. The extensive "Agricultural" area on the Comprehensive Plan Map is intended primarily as an area to continue farming in West Penn. It is characterized by its rural-farm setting, little development and lack of centralized water and sewer. Farmers in this rural area are encouraged to continue farming as long as profitable and to sell their land to other farmers whenever possible. But if development occurs, the Plan recommends single family homes on lots of no less than 1-1/2 acres.

Farmers in the Township should continue pursue and work together with Township officials to establish an "Agricultural Security ^{Area}" under the Agricultural Areas Security Law (PA. Act 43) to help protect farmland. Farmers in designated Agricultural Security Areas have some-extra protection for their property rights. This protection is designed to let failliers use their resources as efficiently as they can with less interference from the Township, property owners and the state. The specific benefits authorized by PA. Act 43 include:

- The Township can not pass laws or ordinances which would unreasonably restrict farm structures or farm practices,
- The Township can not define any normal farming practice to be a public nuisance,
- The ability of the State and the Township to take farmland for public use is a little more restricted. However, gas pipelines and electric power lines are generally not restricted by this Act, and
- State agencies must modify their regulations and procedures to encourage profitable

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE PLAN

The Residential Land Use Plan offers three living environments to provide the Township's present and future residents a broad choice of different types of living areas. Housing types and residential densities, in particular, are the major distinguishing characteristics between the three living environments.

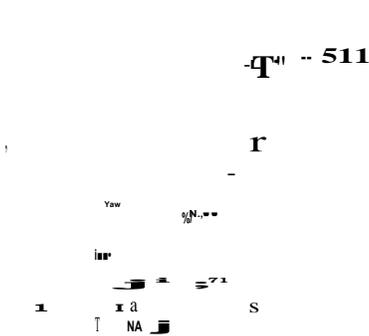
The Plan's three living environments are described below.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

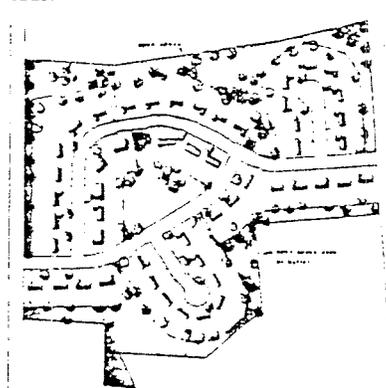
Rural Residential areas provide for single family homes at a density of one to three dwelling units per acre, depending upon the availability of centralized sewer and water service. These areas are encouraged in Chain, Mantz, Valley Park Estates, around the West Penn Elementary School near the Municipal Building and in several other smaller areas of the Township.

The Plan also endorses the concept of clustering single family homes on lots smaller than permitted in a conventional single family subdivision, provided the land saved by going to smaller lots is put into open space (either private or public). The following sketches contrast a conventional single family subdivision with a single family cluster subdivision.

CONVENTIONAL



CLUSTER



Two important planning principles to follow are to have the open space interconnect the entire development and to have areas large enough for recreation facilities.

This concept of single family cluster is encouraged in the Rural Residential and the Suburban Residential areas.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

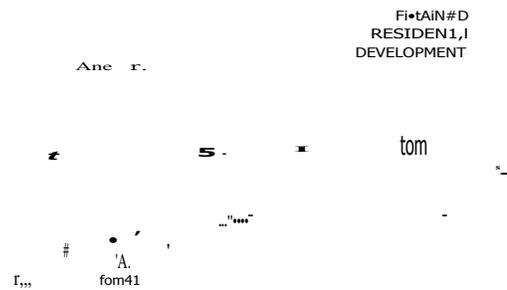
Suburban Residential areas provide for a wide variety of housing types, including single family houses, duplexes, townhouses and apartments and other multi-family housing types. Development densities in the Suburban Residential area range between one to eight dwelling units per acre depending upon the type of housing and the availability of centralized sewer and water service.

Suburban Residential uses are designated for the area west of the Mahoning Valley Golf Course and north of PA. Route 443. This area is physically suitable, very accessible and is located close to commercial areas. Also, part of this area has already been approved for multi-family housing.

The Plan also endorses the concept of planned residential development (PRD) in Suburban Residential areas. In a PRD a developer would be free to build a variety of housing types--single family detached, duplex (twin), townhouse or apartments on a single tract of land. This provides the freedom to choose the dwelling unit types that meet market demands and to fit the housing types to the characteristics of the site. All PRD's would require centralized sewer and water service.

Adjoining land uses must be considered when designing a PRD. If single family homes already exist, the planned residential development should plan single family homes next to single family homes. Other housing types could be planned next to more densely developed adjacent land uses. Uses can be mixed to compatibly match up with adjoining land uses.

Insuring the construction of housing to meet market demands, good land planning and insuring compatibility between existing and proposed land uses are not the only objectives of the planned residential development. Preserving unique natural resources to insure open space within the development is an equally important objective.



VILLAGE CENTERS

The Plan's third type of residential area is the "Village Center" which provides for a wide variety of housing types, including single family houses, duplexes, townhouses and small apartments, at densities of between one to four dwelling units per acre. Small convenience commercial uses and select public uses also are encouraged in the Village Centers. Commercial buildings and signs should be designed in hannony with the village character of the area.

Two Village Centers are designated on the Comprehensive Plan Map: 1) Clamtown and 2) Andreas. These two areas represent larger existing Village Centers which have some potential for expansion. The other villages are severely limited for expansion by flood prone areas, steep slopes, major highways and high water table. Although only two village centers are indicated, the Plan supports enhancing and strengthening the identity of all the villages in the Township.

MOBILE HOME PARKS

Opportunities for mobile home parks should be provided in the vicinity of Millers and the area east of Dorset. These areas are already oriented toward mobile home development. Mobile home parks should have centralized sewer and water and a maximum overall density of no more than five mobile homes per acre. These and other specific regulations relating to mobile home park development should be included in the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

COMMERCIAL, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL PLAN

Opportunities for commercial and industrial use must exist in West Penn Township. Close-to-home shopping opportunities and employment opportunities are not only convenient but they represent an energy-efficient land use policy because of less fuel being consumed. They can also enhance the Township's tax base.

Because of the environmental preservation and residential orientation of this Comprehensive Plan, commercial and industrial uses must be attractively designed and carefully located and planned. This will help ensure that these nonresidential uses will be compatible with the prevalent rural and residential character of West Penn Township.

This Plan provides carefully planned locations for commercial, business and industrial use. Four different types of commercial and industrial areas are shown on the Plan:

- Planned Highway Commercial
- Light Industrial Business
- General Industrial
- Mineral Extraction

PLANNED HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

Four Planned Highway Commercial areas are shown on the Plan--three areas along Route 309 and one along Route 443. These areas are easily accessible and already commercially oriented. They should provide for a wide variety of commercial goods and services. The Plan stresses the importance of well-planned, attractive commercial developments in these areas.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS

The Plan provides a Light Industrial/Business area along Route 895, just east of Route 309. This area is very accessible and physically suitable for development. This Light Industrial/Business area provides for smaller manufacturing or assembly operations and other industrially-related establishments, as well as business offices. Totally planned and well-designed industrial/business developments are strongly encouraged here.

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL

The Plan also provides an area for " General Industrial" uses in the extreme western part of the Township, southwest of Clamtown. A portion of Atlas Powder is already located in this area.

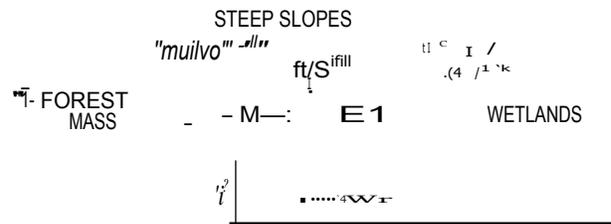
MINERAL EXTRACTION

The Plan recognizes the existing mineral extraction activities taking place at the Andreas Quarry and the potential for future general industrial use after the quarry operations cease. To ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses, industrial operations in this area should provide adequate setbacks and conform with appropriate performance standards regulating noise, dust and other potential negative impacts. Also, the traffic circulation system of any proposed new industrial development in this area should be designed to minimize heavy truck traffic and congestion in the Village of Andreas.

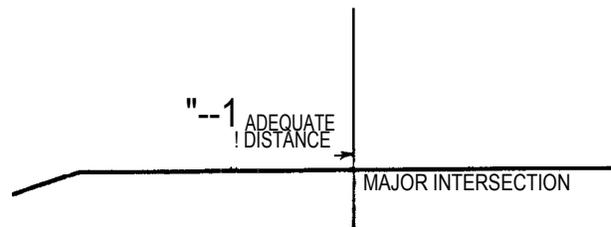
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Where applicable, the following planning and design principles should be used in the planning and design of commercial and industrial developments in the Township:

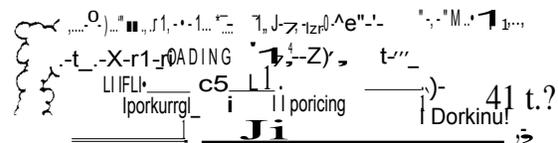
Recognize and respect the natural limitations of the land.



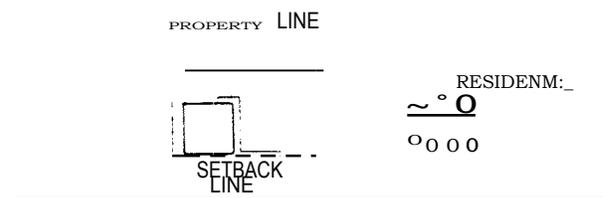
Separate access points from existing roadway intersections to minimize congestion.



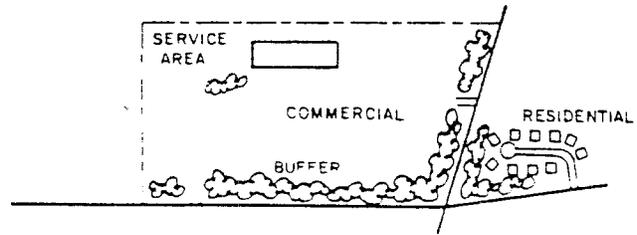
Provide a limited number of access points. Provide adequate off-street parking and loading areas.



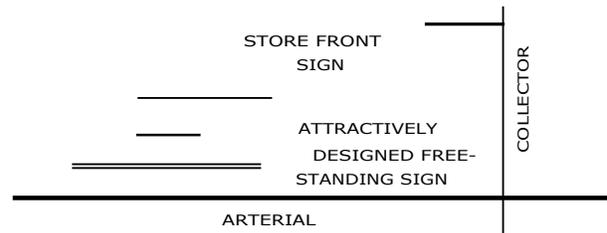
Establish setback lines between the development and adjoining roadways and residential uses. This prevents crowding and allows for future improvements and expansion.



Use landscaped buffer areas to screen development areas from residential areas and roadways. Service areas should especially be screened. Buffer areas can help create attractive environments and minimize distractions to the motorist.



Provide safe, attractive and unobstructive signs and carefully control the location, design and construction of signs and lighting.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PLAN

Planning is designed to work with, instead of against, the natural environment. For example, instead of allowing building in a floodplain and then building huge expensive dams to hold back floodwaters, it is easier and more logical to regulate construction beside a creek to begin with. Different lands are suitable for different levels of development because of steep slopes, tendency to erode, high water tables and inability to support septic systems. By encouraging the clustering of development on the lands that are best able to support development and by avoiding the best farmland, the more environmentally sensitive areas can be less densely developed and the rural character of West Penn can be maintained.

Protecting West Penn Township's environmental resources and recognizing development limitations of environmentally sensitive areas are major aspects of the Plan. This is why natural feature conservation and stream valley protection areas are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map:

CONSERVATION AREAS - The three "Conservation" areas shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map have either: severe natural feature limitations to development (steep slopes, wet soil conditions), difficult accessibility or outstanding scenic qualities. For these reasons open space uses and only limited single family large-lot (10 acre plus) development are recommended in these Conservation areas.

- **STREAM VALLEY PROTECTION AREAS** - The preservation of streams, natural drainage channels and flood prone areas in open space is strongly endorsed. The areas adjacent to streams are natural areas for wildlife and can be used for passive recreation. Keeping the natural drainage channels open will also reduce the need for expensive storm sewers in the future.

This Plan recognizes the importance of four types of natural resources: topography, surface water, groundwater and wooded areas.

TOPOGRAPHY

Steep sloping topography characterizes much of the Township's land area. Extensive areas with steep slopes over 25 percent are located on Blue Mountain, Mauch Chunk Ridge and along the Little Schuylkill River.

Developing steep sloping land can result in increased erosion and runoff and increased construction and maintenance costs. Contamination of the groundwater by septic systems also becomes more likely as slope increases, as does the cost of providing central sewerage systems.

Once poorly-designed or constructed developments on steep slopes are established, soil erosion and extensive water runoff are invariably a constant problem during rains. Development on steep slopes can also detract from these scenic resources. These are reasons the Plan recommends the conservation of steep sloping areas. Also, vegetation on slopes 15 percent and greater should be retained as much as possible to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation.

SURFACE WATERS

Surface waters (e.g., creeks and streams) are important to preserve for four major reasons:

- They affect the quantity of water resources. Increased runoff and sedimentation can cause irregular flow in streams and choke connections with groundwater resources.
- They affect the quality of water resources as a source of groundwater recharge and stream flow.
- They are the major corridors for transporting nutrients in the environment and provide habitats for wildlife.
- They are a scenic asset. To preserve the quantity and quality of water resources and to maintain the general health of its environment, the Township must plan and regulate development to control the amount and rate of runoff, erosion and sedimentation and chemical and biological pollution. Township regulations should discourage development adjacent to natural drainage channels and require developers to provide for adequate storm water drainage and to control soil erosion and sedimentation through subdivision and land development regulations.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater, which has percolated through surface soils or seeped from surface waters, is contained in underground formations called aquifers. The water stored in aquifers is released to the surface through wells, springs or by seepage into creeks, streams and wetlands.

Aquifers are important resources because:

- They are natural reservoirs for groundwater used for drinking, irrigation and other purposes.
- They are natural filters for groundwater used for drinking, irrigation and other purposes.
- They are interconnected with surface water systems and help to moderate the flow of such system.

Increased development can deplete an aquifer when wells remove groundwater and because more impervious surfaces decrease recharge and increase runoff. Aquifers can be polluted by salts, petroleum products and other dissolved chemicals which pass relatively intact into an aquifer even after percolating through soils and transmitting formations. Pollution of the aquifer can also occur when pollutants are permitted to enter the water table with little or no filtering by soils. --

To protect and conserve the Township's groundwater resources, the Plan urges the Township to regulate development to control the amount and rate of runoff, erosion and sedimentation, and chemical and biological pollution.

WOODED AREAS

Much of the Township's woodland has been cleared for agricultural use. Yet, extensive areas of woodland are still found throughout the Township.

Wooded areas are important resources in the Township. Not only are they attractive and provide shade, but they also help reduce soil erosion and the effects of strong winds. Trees and wooded areas also can be used as buffers to achieve compatibility between otherwise incompatible, adjacent land uses. For these and other reasons it is desirable to preserve trees and woodland whenever possible.

HOUSING PLAN

Comprehensive Plans are now required, under Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, to include a housing element. This section of the Comprehensive Plan provides the overall housing policies and proposals for the Township.

OVERALL HOUSING POLICY

The overall housing, policy of West Penn Township is to assure adequate, affordable housing for existing and future families in the Township. The following proposals are aimed at achieving this overall housing policy.

PROPOSALS

The Land Use Plan offers three general living environments to provide the Township's present and future residents a broad choice of different types of living areas. These areas include the Rural Residential areas, the Suburban Residential areas and the Village Center areas (see Land Use Plan section). Housing types and residential densities, in particular, are the major distinguishing, characteristics between the three living environments.

The plan continues to provide for single family low density residential areas and urges protecting these areas from incompatible land users. Moderate density residential areas also provided at locations which are physically suitable, accessible and in proximity to public sewer and water. This will help increase the supply of housing for younger and older adults.

The Housing Plan also encourages the rehabilitation and renovation of existing older homes. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of state and federal housing rehabilitation assistance programs. The Township officials should keep abreast of the available housing programs and pass this information on to Township residents.

It will also be important for the Township to continue to monitor housing vacancies, characteristics and conditions. Detailed records of the types of new housing constructed and demolitions also should be maintained. This will allow the Township to determine the net increase in housing units by type of unit and to estimate the Township's population size.

The following list provides a summary of the major proposals aimed at achieving the overall housing policy of the Township:

- Provide appropriate areas for various housing types and densities.
- Increase the supply of housing, for younger and older adults.
- Encourage rehabilitation and renovation of existing older homes.
- Require all residential development to meet the highest standards of site design and enforce standards for site layout.

- Encourage builders to respond to changing housing demands.
- Encourage moderate density living areas a locations which are physically suitable, accessible and in proximity to public sewer and water services.
- Continue to provide single family low density residential areas and protect these areas from incompatible land users.

Include the following new paragraph relating to timing of future development, consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan. and the interrelationship of the various plan elements to the section before the Goals.

This is a Plan for 1990's. The goals and recommendations contained in the Plan are based on our vision of how West Penn should grow and develop to the year 2000. Each of the Plan elements listed above are interrelated, for example, the Community Facilities and Circulation Plan are essential to support the Land Use Plan. Success of the Housing Plan is also based on implementing the Land Use Plan. The goals and recommendations contained throughout the Plan are consistent with the objectives of the Schuylkill County Comprehensive Plan.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

A community should provide its residents with public services and facilities that are needed to protect their welfare and promote their social and cultural well-being. The buildings, parks, and other facilities necessary to carry out these basic services are the concern of this Community Facilities Plan. Since Township government provides most of these facilities, they represent one effective way in which governmental action can directly influence the development of the Township.

SCHOOLS

Because of decreasing enrollment trends and available space in the existing Tamaqua Area School District schools, no school construction is anticipated in the Township during the next 5 to 10 years. The Plan endorses the continued use of the District's schools for education, recreation, and community use.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Continued development of the existing West Penn Community Park is urged to meet future needs. The Plan also encourages the School District to provide additional recreation facilities around the West Penn Elementary School.

Additional "close-to-home" recreation areas should also be provided as needed. The park planning guidelines on the following page will be useful in deciding when and where new parks are needed.

OPEN SPACE DEDICATION

New residents create additional demand for recreation sites and facilities within the Township. Recognizing this, the State Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended) now permits municipalities to require developers to dedicate open space for public recreation.

If there is mutual agreement, the developer can donate cash instead, provided:

1. The fee is comparable with the prevailing cost of land required for dedication.
The fee is used strictly for open space/recreation purposes.
3. The resulting improvements are accessible to the development against which the recreation impact fee is being levied.

The Township's persons per household average should be measured against the per capita recreation standards contained in this chapter. This will indicate what amount of land dedication should be required to offset demand created by each new dwelling unit. An appropriate fee level in lieu of dedication can be established by determining the cash value of the land dedication requirement.

STREAM VALLEYS

The Plan strongly urges the preservation of stream valleys in the Township. The areas adjacent to these streams are typically undeveloped and provide natural areas for wildlife and opportunities for passive recreation. Because of their winding courses, the streams represent a potential recreational and open space network throughout much of the Township.

-- TOWNSHIP BUILDING--

The West Penn Township Municipal Building should continue as the center for Township Government. The Plan encourages expansion of the building if additional space needs develop.

SEWER AND WATER

The Plan discourages the need for a Township-wide sewer and water system by providing large building lots (one acre or more) in the "Agricultural," "Conservation," and "Rural Residential" areas of the Township. Centralized water and sewer service is appropriate in the other areas of the Township when more intense development is to be achieved.

Steep slopes, shallow soils, and high water tables make many areas of the Township poorly suited for on-lot sewer systems. Residents and developers who install individual on-lot sewer systems are urged to over-design them and to construct and operate them: in strict compliance with all applicable regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources; consistent with the objectives of the Township Official Sewage Facilities Plan; and in compliance with applicable Township procedures and regulations.

STORM SEWERS

As West Penn becomes more and more developed, the amount of storm water runoff will increase, sometimes requiring the construction of a storm sewer system to alleviate runoff problems. The Plan encourages minimizing the need for future storm sewers by discouraging development adjacent to natural drainage channels and by requiring developers to provide adequate storm water drainage through subdivision regulations.

PARK PLANNING GUIDELINES - WEST PENN TOWNSHIP

Classification	Function	Size	Population	Service Area
Local Park	Small recreation areas such as playlots or miniparks normally provided in built up areas where space is at a premium. The facilities which are primarily intended for children up to seven years include play apparatus, a paved area, benches, sand areas, landscaping, quiet time areas, and multi-purpose courts.	Up to one acre	500- 2,500	Sub-neighborhood
Neighborhood Park	These moderately sized parks should adjoin public elementary schools whenever possible and serve as a center for education, recreation and cultural activities for the people of a neighborhood. Active and passive recreation areas for children and adults should be complemented by attractive landscaping.	5 to 20 acres	2,000- 7,500	1/4 to 1/2 mile
Community Park	The larger community park should whenever possible, adjoin junior and senior high schools. While having many of the same facilities as the neighborhood park, the community park has facilities which require more space such as tennis courts, swimming pool, multi-purpose courts, extensive ballfields, community center building and adequate off-street parking.	20 to 100 acres	7,500-35,000	1/2 to 3 miles
Open Space & Conservation Area	Steep slopes, floodplains, low wet areas, dense woodlands and other areas of conservation significance constitute these areas. Although preservation-oriented, limited and scattered recreation activities such as hiking, fishing, nature study, picnicking, biking and other activities which do not disturb the environment would be encouraged in these areas.			Distributed wherever appropriate to protect natural resources
SOURCES:	National Recreation and Park Association, National park <u>Recreation and open Space Standards</u> ; and, Urban Research and Development Corporation, <u>Bethlehem Area Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan</u> , 1975.			

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

A serious problem exists with many landfills throughout the region quickly filling up and new landfills extremely difficult to open. Township officials need to work closely with neighboring governments to develop regional solutions to the solid waste dilemma. This may mean considering trash burning at New Jersey Zinc Company or working through a Schuylkill County Solid Waste Association.

POLICE PROTECTION

Future development in the Township may eventually require a full-time Township police force. In evaluating the Township's need for police protection or law enforcement services in general, many factors must be taken into account. These factors include: population size, settlement pattern, residential-nonresidential land use mix, the amount of existing development and the rate of development. In addition to these types of factors, cost and the residents' perceived need for police protection also must be considered.

Guidelines exist for estimating how many full-time police officers a municipality should consider based only on population (see following table). Since population is only one factor to consider, West Penn Township must evaluate the level of service that is appropriate to satisfy its particular needs and to fit its particular budget.

GUIDELINES FOR ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF NEEDED POLICE OFFICERS

POPULATION	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME OFFICERS NEEDED	
	LOW ¹	HIGH ²
3,000	3	6
5,000	5	11
7,000	7	13

NOTES: ¹ The Pennsylvania Police Chiefs' Association recommends .9 police officers per 1,000 residents in nonurban municipalities. Based upon a nationally recognized guideline of 1.8 to 2.0 officers per 1,000 people, the FBI has reported that in the Mid-Atlantic Region, suburban municipalities have 1.9 officers per 1,000 residents.

FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection is important because it is directly related to the safety of Township residents. Inadequate service can result in costly financial and social losses.

The Middle Atlantic States Fire Underwriters Association recommends that a fire department should be located within three miles of rural development. However, the Andreas fire house is located in the southeastern corner of West Penn, requiring drives of up to ten miles to many areas of the Township. Therefore, to assure a quicker response to emergencies, this Plan recommends building a small satellite fire house that would house one or two pieces of equipment in a more central location, such as adjacent to the Township Municipal Building.

CIRCULATION PLAN

The roads in West Penn Township form the framework for development. These roads not only influence the general direction of growth but are often deciding factors in commercial, industrial, and residential location. This Plan addresses itself to a future road system and other facets of a circulation system--intersection improvements, pedestrian pathways and bikeways, street maintenance, and public transportation.

HIGHWAY/ROAD PLANNING PRINCIPLES

FUNCTIONAL ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

Every road and highway in West Penn Township has a part to play in moving traffic within and through the Township. Some roads are more important than others, underscoring the importance of knowing what function each road should have. The following table shows 3 types of roads that are needed to efficiently and safely accommodate traffic in the Township.

FUNCTIONAL ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS
WEST PENN TOWNSHIP

ROAD CLASSIFICATION	FUNCTION	ROADS
ARTERIALS	Provide access between major parts of counties & through & around cities, towns & major activity centers. They are designed for large traffic volumes & high speed traffic with access to abutting properties sometimes restricted.	(Major) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Route 309 (Minor) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA. Route 443 • PA. Route 895
COLLECTORS	Provide connection between arterial highways & connect residential areas to each other. They are designed to carry a moderate volume of traffic, intercepting traffic from local streets & directly serving local activity centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-992 (Old LR-53021) • LR-53020
LOCALS	Provide direct access to abutting properties and channel local traffic to collector streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other existing roads.

The Comprehensive Plan Map shows each road in the Township as one of the 3 types -- Arterial, Collector, Local.

The following design principles should be used to help determine the appropriate width of roads in the Township:

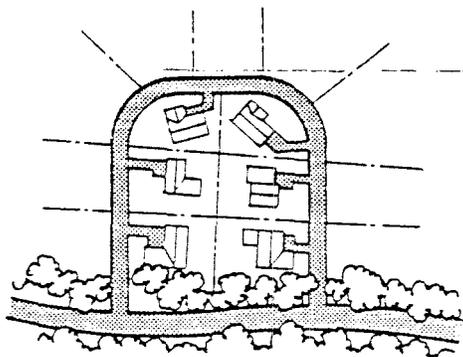
- Wider streets will provide for larger and faster traffic flows, an undesirable objective within residential areas. For local single family access roadways, a 26-foot wide pavement will provide either 2 parking lanes and a driving lane or 1 parking lane and 2 driving lanes. Widening this pavement a few feet more will not provide any significantly increased capacity, but it will provide wider driving lanes, which will, in turn, tend to encourage faster driving. Where adequate off-street parking is provided, roadway widths can be reduced accordingly.
- A 24-foot wide pavement technically is suitable for automobile parking on both sides of the street without impeding one-lane vehicle movement. Comparative accident incidence studies for 24-foot wide minor residential streets are scarce and somewhat inconclusive. While not normally recommended, the proliferation of small automobiles may well make the use of a 24-foot wide pavement very feasible and desirable.
- A 22-foot wide pavement offers no significant advantage over a 20-foot wide pavement. Although parking is feasible only on 1 side, a 22-foot width is wide enough to tempt drivers to park on both sides.
- A 20-foot wide pavement is the minimum width which generally offers year-round utility and convenience where snow and ice control needs are foreseeable such as in the Township. Suitable for cul-de-sacs up to about 300 or 400 feet, a 20-foot wide pavement will provide parking on 1 side with alternating vehicular traffic flow, is sufficiently narrow that drivers are not tempted to park on both sides, and has minimum construction, space and maintenance requirements. Its biggest disadvantage is that it will not accommodate parking on both sides.
- An 18-foot wide pavement is suitable only for use on short one-way loop streets serving not more than 15 dwellings, or on short cul-de-sacs, usually serving no more than 5 to 7 dwellings. A properly parked vehicle on an 18-foot wide one-way pavement will not impede the largest truck which might use the roadway.
- The 16-foot pavement is not suitable for cul-de-sacs having more than three dwellings but offers acceptable utility on one-way loop streets. The 16-foot pavement cannot be considered a desirable width but must be conceded to be acceptable under certain conditions such as 16-foot wide one-way streets created to avoid destruction of unique natural features.
- Once the traffic from local residential streets has reached sufficient volume so that 2 clear traffic lanes are required, a street takes on the function of primarily moving traffic and should be designed for accommodating more traffic; the street becomes a collector. Automobile movements should be relatively swift (34-45 mph) and

unrestricted. Ideally homes should not face on a collector street since this results in the multiple traffic hazards of street parking, automobiles entering the street from driveways, and children who may dart unseen into the roadway.

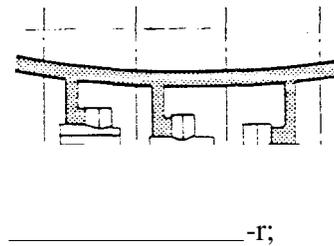
Collector streets having a pavement width of 36.-feet will provide 2 adequate traffic and 2 curb parking lanes. Where houses do not have access to the collector street and, hence, no parking is normally to be expected, 2 moving lanes of pavement will be adequate with shoulders graded to provide for emergency parking.

LOTING ALONG ARTERIAL HIGHWAYS

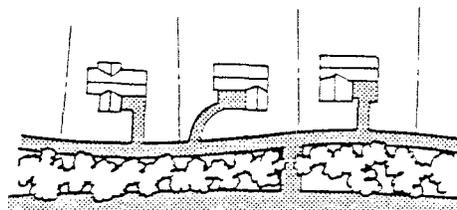
The following sketches show design principles which should be used when lotting along the Township's arterial highways. The application of these principles will reduce traffic hazards and congestion and provide quieter and more attractive residential areas.



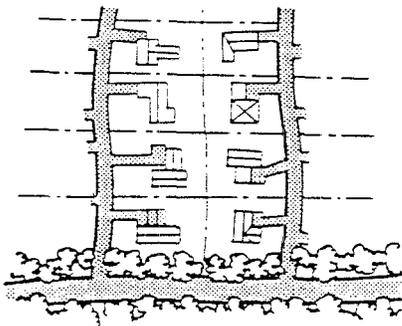
LOOP



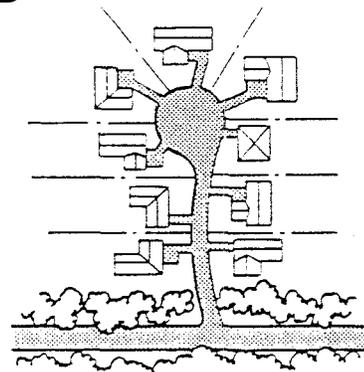
REVERSE FRONTAGE



FRONT ACCESS ROAD



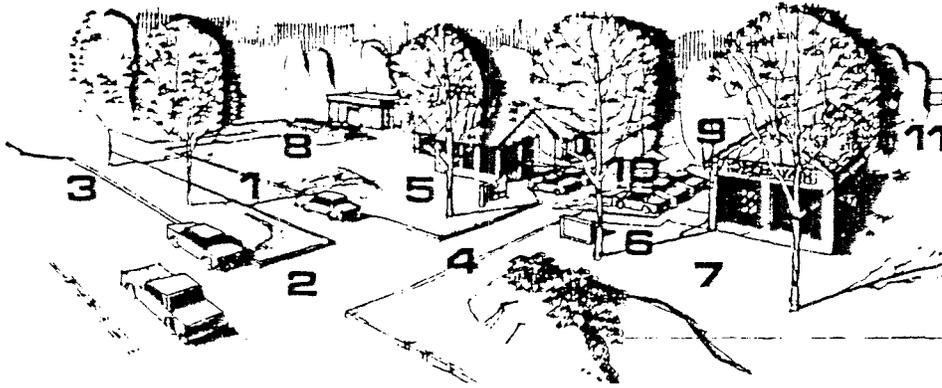
EXTENDED STREETS



CUL-DE-SAC

SITE DESIGN PRINCIPLES ALONG HIGHWAYS

The following design principles serve as guidelines for achieving safe and attractive highway development, particularly along the more heavily travelled arterial highways.



PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|---|
| 1 | Marginal Access Road | 7 | No Parking in Front Yard |
| | Reduced Number of Highway Access Road | 8 | Parking Area in Front but not in Front Yard |
| 3 | Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes | 9 | Parking Areas Broken up by Landscaping |
| 4 | Future Extension of Marginal Access Road | 10 | Combined Parking Area for Two Uses |
| 5 | Deep Front Yard Setback | 11 | Buffer Yard |
| 6 | Parking Areas Screened from Highway | | |

STREET MAINTENANCE

Most of the roads and highways in the Township are in good condition and are kept well-maintained. The Plan calls for continual road maintenance and paving portions of unpaved roads each year.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

The following key intersections should be improved (e.g., signalized, widened, redesigned, etc.). These improvements will help the roads move traffic more safely and efficiently.

- U. S. Route 309/T-777
- U. S. Route 309/LR-53020 (Leibyville)
- U. S. Route 309/PA. Route 895
- U. S. Route 309/T-968 (south of Snyders)
- PA. Route 443/T-992 (Clamtown)
- U. S. Route 309/PA. Route 443 West
- U. S. Route 309/PA. Route 443 East

Since these intersections involve State roads, the Township should work closely with PennDOT to study these intersections and determine exactly how each intersection can be improved.

These problems should be recognized and, whenever possible, corrected.

The Plan also encourages the continued identification of accident-prone areas. Through remedial planning and design efforts, in full cooperation with PennDOT, the major driving hazards can be alleviated.

Special attention should be paid to possible dramatic increases in truck traffic on Route 895 after the new bridge at Bowmanstown is completed. This may require efforts to deal with the many curves on Route 895.

PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS AND BIKEWAYS

Pedestrian pathways and bikeways will undoubtedly become more important in the future, especially in light of our limited energy resources and the increasing amount of leisure time. As opportunities arise, Township Officials should consider the development of pathways within West Penn Township for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel. The proposed open space system provides opportunities for scenic pathways which could be linked with the existing Appalachian Trail which extends along the southern end of the Township.

MASS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is important to a balanced transportation system. Besides offering commuters a reasonable alternative to driving, mass transportation enables people without cars to reach jobs, shopping areas, schools, libraries, and other community facilities. Public transit also offers an alternative to the automobile--one of the least efficient uses of gasoline.

As the Township grows, the feasibility of providing bus service to and from West Penn Township should be explored.

ENERGY USE PLAN

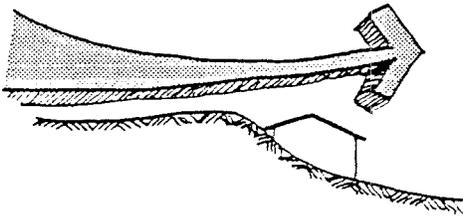
PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

The higher costs of energy and the need for national independence for sources of energy have caused a greater need for energy conservation. This Plan acknowledges the Township's awareness of the need to achieve effective energy conservation in all development.

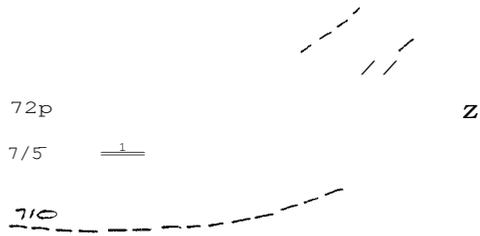
Developers should be encouraged to use the following principles and objectives which illustrate examples of how the natural elements such as the sun, wind, landform, and vegetation can support heating and cooling systems.

FOUR BASIC WAYS TO CONSERVE ENERGY

1. Siting

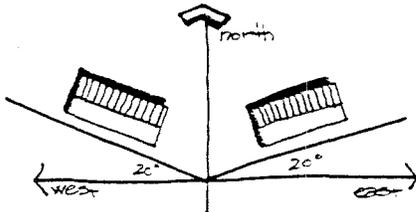


Use Landform to Deflect Winter Winds -

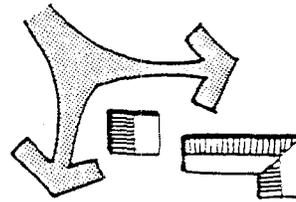


Use South and Southeast Facing Slopes as Much as Possible

2. Building Orientation



Orient Buildings on an East-West Axis to Maximize Solar Access and Minimize Overheating

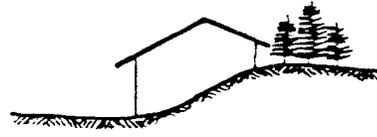


Orient Unheated Buildings to Buffer Heated Buildings from Winter Winds

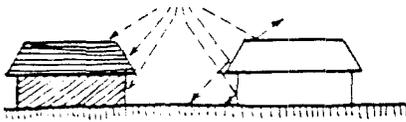
3. Building Design and Construction



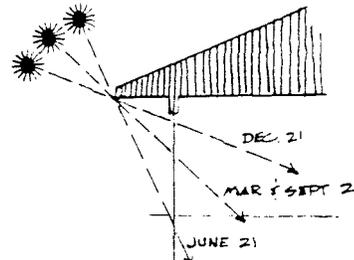
Flat or Shallow Pitched Roofs Hold Snow for Added Insulation



Buildings Built into Hillside or Partially Covered with Earth and Planting are Naturally Insulated



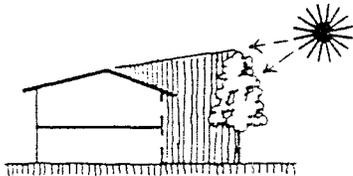
Darker Colors Absorb More Radiant Energy from the Sun



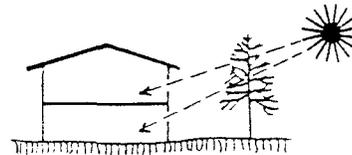
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Overhangs Can Control the Sun's Rays

4. Landscaping

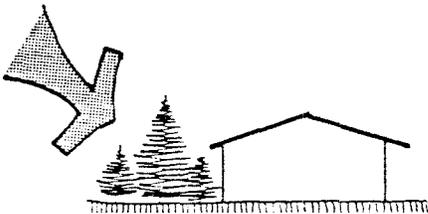


Deciduous Trees Provide Shade in Summer

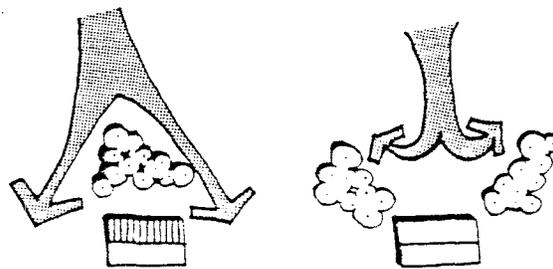


Deciduous Trees Allow Sun in Winter

4. Landscaping (cont.)



Evergreens Buffer Winter Winds



Deflect Rather than Dam Winds

PLANNING FOR SOLAR ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

The term, "solar access," refers to the availability of sunlight during the period of the day and year when the sun's energy can be most usefully employed by solar energy collection systems. Solar access consists of 2 basic principles:

- 1) proper orientation to the sun, and
- 2) freedom from shading by obstructions.

PLANNING FOR ORIENTATION REQUIREMENTS

A general southern exposure is essential for solar systems to be effective, but the ideal orientation will vary according to the nature of the solar application and microclimatic conditions. An exposure within the range of 20 degrees east to 20 degrees west of south is generally acceptable for most solar applications.

This implies orienting streets in a general east-west direction. On rolling terrain, streets can follow the contours of the land, while lots and (particularly) buildings should be oriented for ideal solar exposure. In areas already platted in a manner detrimental to solar utilization, building additions, in-fill developments, and redevelopments should be permitted to be solar-oriented.

PLANNING FOR SHADING REQUIREMENTS

The term, "solar skyspace," refers to the space which must be free of obstructions to protect a given area from shading. Protection of the solar skyspace need not be absolute for solar energy systems to be effective. But land use controls should protect that portion of the solar skyspace necessary for the economical operation of solar energy systems without unreasonably burdening adjacent landowners.

The Township should also promote the best use of topography to maximize the efficiency of solar systems. Development should be encouraged on south-facing slopes and discouraged on north-facing slopes. Shadow analyses should be provided in the review of proposed developments to preserve solar access for both that development and adjacent developments.

PLANNING FOR ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

The Plan recognizes that alternative energy sources (e.g., windmills, methane distillation, etc.) will likely play an increasing role in the future use of energy by residents. The land use controls of the Township should encourage the safe and reasonable development and use of alternative sources of energy.

ACHON PROGRAM

ACTIONS TO MOVE THE PLAN'S RECOMMENDATIONS CLOSER TO REALITY

CONTINUING PLANNING

This Comprehensive Plan must be used consistently in every decision pertaining to land use and circulation. Then and only then will it really be a useful document. The test of each proposal affecting either one of these areas should be a question: "Does it conform with our Comprehensive Plan?" or "Does it carry out the goals of the Plan?"

But the Plan should be annually reviewed and, if necessary, updated to reflect the major problems of the time. As part of its continuing planning program, West Penn should maintain a close working relationship with adjoining municipalities on planning, development, and preservation matters.

Continued consultation and technical assistance from specialists in law, planning, engineering, finance and other disciplines is vitally important to effectively carry out the Plan. Wise use of these specialists will save time, provide realistic alternative solutions, and in the long run result in high quality, timely services to Township residents at comparatively small costs.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

This is West Penn's first Comprehensive Plan. It is a valuable document because it provides the policies for guiding the future development and preservation of West Penn Township. The Plan is not, however, a legislative document. Three types of ordinances can help implement the Plan: (1) the zoning ordinance, (2) the subdivision and land development ordinance, and (3) the official map.

ZONING

Schuylkill County prepared and has enforced a zoning ordinance in West Penn Township since 1967. With the preparation and adoption of this Plan, the Township has chosen to prepare and administer its own zoning ordinance. It is the legal tool for regulating the use of land. Its regulations apply to: (1) the height and bulk of buildings and other structures, (2) the percentage of a lot that may be occupied and the dimensions of yards required, (3) the density of development, and (4) the actual use of the land.

The zoning ordinance has 2 parts: (1) an official zoning map which delineates land use districts and (2) the text which provides general information regarding administration of the ordinance and regulations for each zoning district.

The changing conditions in the Township, the plans and projects which are creating more and more impacts, the policies in this Plan, and the revisions to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code will require changes to the present Zoning Ordinance.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance guides and controls the layout of streets, lots, and utility systems. Subdivision control helps achieve the following results:

- 1) Coordinated street patterns.
- 2) Adequate utilities that protect streams, wells, and the land from pollution.
- 3) Reduced traffic congestion.
- 4) Installed improvements.

Although the present subdivision regulations have served the Township reasonably well, a new subdivision and land development ordinance will be needed to reflect changes in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, to be compatible with the revised zoning ordinance, and to incorporate the latest principles and standards in subdividing land.

OFFICIAL MAP

Section 401 of Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, empowers the Township Board of Supervisors to make or cause to be made surveys of the exact location of the lines of existing and proposed public roads, watercourses and public grounds. This includes the widening, narrowing, extension, diminution, opening or closing of these roads, watercourses and public grounds. Act 247 also provides for the Supervisors to adopt, by ordinance, such surveys as the Official Map of the Township. When an Official Map is adopted, no permit may be issued for any building within the lines of any road, watercourse or public ground shown or laid out on the Official Map.

An Official Map is an important legal tool by which the Township can effectively implement portions of this Comprehensive Plan such as the preservation of land for the development of future park areas. It is not the intent of the Official Map to force or compel a dedication of land without adequate and just compensation. Rather, it is intended to prevent development of buildings on a site so that planned roads, parks, etc. can be constructed in the future without incurring excessive public costs of clearing the land of structures.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

The Township Planning Commission should annually recommend capital improvements to the Township Supervisors. Capital improvements will normally include major physical facilities such as streets, public buildings, storm water systems, parks, etc., and involve expenditure of funds over and above those needed for normal operations and maintenance in the Township.

The development of a good capital improvement program involves a complete and intensive study of the financial resources of the Township. This study would analyze aspects of the fiscal structure such as operating revenues and expenditures, debt limit, tax rates, etc., to determine exactly what the Township's financial capabilities are. Recommendations for

capital improvements based upon the Comprehensive Plan are then scheduled in accordance with the Township's financial capacity.

ROLE OF THE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

One of the West Penn Township Planning Commission's greatest responsibilities is to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is carried out. But it has other responsibilities as indicated in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Article II):

- A. The Planning Commission shall, at the request of the Township Supervisors, have the power and shall be required to:
 - 1) Prepare the Comprehensive Plan for the development of the Township and present it for the consideration of the governing body.
 - 2) Maintain and keep on file records of its action.

- B. The Planning Commission, at the request of the Supervisor, may:
 - 1) Make recommendations to the Supervisors concerning the adoption or amendment of an Official Map.
 - 2) Prepare and present a Zoning Ordinance to the Supervisors and make recommendations on proposed amendments to it.
 - 3) Prepare, recommend, and administer the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
 - 4) Prepare and present a building code and housing code to the Supervisors.
 - 5) Prepare and present an environmental study to the Supervisors.
 - 6) Submit a recommended capital improvements program to the Supervisors.
 - 7) Promote public interest in, and understanding of, the comprehensive plan and planning.
 - 8) Make recommendations to governmental, civic and private agencies and individuals as to the effectiveness of the proposals of such agencies and individuals.
 - 9) Hold public hearings and meetings.
 - 10) In the performance of its functions, enter upon any land to make examinations and land surveys with the consent of the owner.

ROLE OF THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The final decision on nearly every matter that affects the growth of West Penn Township rests with the Board of Supervisors. They certainly have a vital role, if not the key role, in carrying out the Plan and insuring a continuing planning program. It is imperative that the Supervisors maintain a relationship of trust and confidence in the advice and recommendations of the Planning Commission. The Township Supervisors and the Planning Commission should at all times keep one another informed of matters concerning development in the Township.

MAJOR ACTIONS--A SUMMARY

The following major actions should be taken to implement the Comprehensive Plan:

- For every new land use that is proposed in the future, ask the question, "Does it help carry out the goals and objectives of the Plan?"
- Prepare a West Penn Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the goals, objectives and recommendations in the Township's Comprehensive Plan.
- Revise the Township's existing Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to help ensure safe and well-designed new development.
- Prepare a Capital Improvements Program to guide the scheduling of future public improvements according to priorities established by the Township and according to the Township's ability to pay for these improvements. Annually update this program to constantly plan expenditures in advance; the Planning Commission should prepare and recommend the annual update to the program.
- Make maximum use of federal, state, and county funds to assist in making needed public improvements. The Planning Commission or a committee of Township Officials should be responsible for keeping informed of funding programs.
- Form a committee comprised of people representing the building trades, the general citizenry and the Township to determine whether it would be desirable for the Township to adopt a building code now or at some future time.
- Annually evaluate the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, make modifications to the Plan to ensure that it remains a useful document to help make day-to-day decisions about the future growth and preservation of the Township.
- The Planning Commission should submit an annual written report to Township Supervisors, summarizing its conclusions on the evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan, a summary of the past year's major activities, and a summary of the upcoming year's major projected activities and crucial issues that will or may be facing the Township.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP

