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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Previous Plans

The Township's last Comprehensive Plan was published in 1992. Much of that Comprehensive Plan continues to be relevant, including Chapter I, Sections A, C, D, E, and F; Chapter II, Sections A and B; Chapter III, Sections B and C; Chapter IV, Implementation, Subsection A, B and C. Many of these Sections are updated and contained herein.

In addition, Abington Township published an Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan, 1995. The purpose of that report was to plan for, and improve, the quality of life of residents by determining ways to meet the recreation, park, and conservation needs of the community. The Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan charts the course for the Township to follow in the development and revitalization of public recreation facilities and services within the Township. Of particular importance are the recommendations (Chapter XIII) and implementation schedules (Chapter XIV) which remain of significance for this Comprehensive Plan Update. Abington Township will participate in the current round of Open Space Planning which includes funding for the preparation of an updated Open Space Plan. This Comprehensive Plan Update will defer to this new plan for park and recreation, open space acquisitions, and trail planning recommendations.

A third important planning document is the Sandy Run Creek Watershed Conservation Plan, December 2000. The Sandy Run Creek drains a large westerly portion or about one-third of Abington Township along with portions of Upper Dublin, Springfield, and Whitmarsh Townships. These townships, along with the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, local civic groups, and the Montgomery County Planning Commission, formed a coalition to develop a watershed conservation plan. The purpose of the plan was to create a blueprint for directing the individual resources in a coordinated manner to preserve and enhance the resources of the watershed. The municipal open space plans prepared in the mid-1990s recognized Sandy Run as an existing asset with the potential to fulfill a pivotal greenway role within the region. Flooding problems and the

critical need to manage stormwater more effectively also were noted in these plans. The plan contains the highest ranked implementation priorities listed below which are intended to be included as a part of the Statement of Objectives in the Abington Township Comprehensive Plan Update.

In addition to the plans and studies cited above, the following are also incorporated by reference herein:

- Alverthorpe Manor Cultural Area Master Plan
- The Consolidated Plan for Abington Township
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing
- The Tookany Creek Watershed Management Plan
- The Roslyn Revitalization Plan
- The Easton Road (Roslyn) Existing Land Use and Blight Conditions Study
- The Old York Road Existing Land Use and Blight Conditions Study
- New Visions Abington Commercial District – Keswick Village
- New Visions Abington Commercial District – Easton Road
- Commercial Architectural Guidelines – Easton Road
- New Visions Abington Commercial – North Hills Area
- Commercial Architectural Guidelines – North Hills District
- New Visions Abington Commercial District – McKinley-Elkins Park
- New Visions Abington Commercial District – Ardsley Area
- New Visions Abington Commercial District – The Noble Area

2007 Update

The Comprehensive Plan Update, 2007 focuses on a report of significant population and demographic changes since the 1992 Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 3 presents four distinct components:

1. Demographic Characteristics.
2. Selected Characteristics of Housing.
3. Economic/Socioeconomic Characteristics.
4. Employment and Jobs.

In addition, the 2007 Update also considers requirements of Act 67 and Act 68 amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The MPC provides guidelines for the contents of the master plan. Most of these guidelines were included in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan. Additional guidelines adopted

subsequent to 1992 are included in this 2007 Update, with specific content suggestions outlined in Chapter 3.

Suggested generalized zoning revisions, future land use recommendations, and relationships to neighboring municipalities are also contained in the 2007 Update.

Mission Statement/Goals and Objectives

Mission Statement

To define goals and objectives for the future of the Township and chart the path through which those goals can be realized.

Goals and Objectives

Housing:

Goal:

As a community Abington Township should work to maintain the existing housing diversity and encourage the creation of housing choices to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Objective A: Conserve the character and encourage the maintenance of existing housing within Abington Township and where practical rehabilitate and renovate deteriorated housing.

Objective B: Where feasible, demolish deteriorated housing and replace with similar housing types in keeping with the character of the neighborhoods.

Objective C: Designate redevelopment zones within specific areas of the Township where community development issues, including housing, are treated comprehensively in order to encourage private and public investment.

Objective D: Encourage housing which maximizes the use of existing transit infrastructure to achieve a greater utilization of available economic resources.

Objective E: Develop/redevelop communities which allow for living, walking, and working within Abington Township.

Objective F: Explore the possibility of providing affordable and accessible housing units for the elderly and mobility challenged.

Objective G: Continue to work with a local housing non-profit group in an attempt to provide affordable housing.

Natural Resources/Green Spaces:

Goal:

Preserve and protect remaining green spaces and natural resources and endeavor to create or reclaim additional new green spaces and natural areas for the Township.

Objective A: Protect remaining undeveloped and open space areas within the Township for conservation and recreational purposes.

Objective B: Promote the conservation of water and energy and the reduction of non-recycled waste.

Objective C: Encourage and facilitate the preservation of historic sites and structures within Abington Township.

Objective D: Encourage and control commercial development along major highways by promoting mixed use development in these areas and simultaneously encourage the incorporation of green spaces with medium to high density residential development along commercial corridors.

Objective E: Identify opportunities and mechanisms for preservation of green space as a trade-off with developers and re-developers of sites.

Objective F: Recognize and encourage the utilization of green and sustainable techniques for the planning and maintenance of public and private outside spaces, yards and properties.

Objective G: Adopt the US Green Building Council LEED ND Rating System for neighborhood development for those sections that apply to redeveloping communities. Utilize LEED ND in conjunction with performance based incentives to promote and create a higher level of “green and sustainability”.

Parks and Recreation:

Goal:

To provide essential park and recreational facilities and organized programs to enhance the quality of life in Abington.

Objective A: Continue to evaluate existing public and private recreational facilities throughout the Township, determine future needs, and revise Township policies for renovation, development, and acquisition.

Objective B: Maximize recreational facilities by working in concert with the School District of Abington Township, all relative institutions, and organizations for the joint development and use of recreational facilities on school property.

Community Identity and Pride:

Goal:

Create a series of destinations and identity for Abington.

Objective A: Promote the unique attributes of Abington's diverse neighborhoods.

Objective B: Encourage open access to all of Abington's governing bodies.

Township/Community Facilities and Services:

Goal:

To provide community facilities and services adequate to meet the ever-changing needs of the municipality.

Objective A: Identify community needs on an ongoing basis, set priorities, determine financing techniques; pursue intermediate and long range planning activities to attempt fulfillment of the identified needs.

Wastewater Treatment:

Goal:

Update wastewater treatment facilities to meet current needs and anticipated future need.

Objective A: Begin study process to establish inflow, treatment capacities, and leak detection for wastewater infrastructure in Abington Township.

Objective B: After study is complete establish direction to repair, maintain, and increase wastewater treatment capacity in Abington Township.

Objective C: Identify funding program to effect construction of necessary infrastructure for wastewater treatment in Abington Township.

Transportation:

Goal:

Analyze and define the transportation needs of the Township and make provisions to meet those needs.

Objective A: To relieve traffic congestion and provide for the safe and efficient access to commercial, recreational, and institutional centers.

Objective B: Promote and encourage the use and expansion of public transportation.

Objective C: Provide for pedestrian and bicycle paths and walkways to encourage non-vehicular movement systems throughout the Township.

Objective D: Facilitate the current and future safety and movement of vehicles throughout the Township's roadway system.

Objective E: Encourage Transit Oriented Development and the development of medium to high density residential uses at transportation nodes and in commercial districts. Work with neighboring municipalities to enhance connections for non-vehicular movement.

Objective F: Consider updating the McMahan study.

Township Finance:

Goal:

Provide stable means to insure sufficient revenues for the sound operation of the Township.

Objective A: Analyze immediate and long-term community needs for Township services. Engage in intermediate and long-range planning activities

Objective B: Determine financing mechanisms and revenue sources to preserve the financial viability of the Township and ensure fiscal responsibility.

Economic Development:

Goal:

Abington Township should look to economic development as a means to enhance the Township's image and maximize the commercial tax base.

Objective A: Improving the Township's commercial corridors Ardsley (Jenkintown Road), Easton Road (Crestmont/Willow Grove), Easton Road (Roslyn), Keswick Village, McKinley (Township Line Road), North Hills (Limekiln Pike) (Mt. Carmel Avenue), Old York Road (Moreland to Rydal Roads), The Fairway (Old York to Rydal Roads), and Hollywood/Huntingdon Valley (Huntingdon Pike). Improvements of these commercial corridors should go beyond streetlights, benches and pavers and should examine architectural continuity to give identity, tax incentives to promote investment in business and/or property and zoning changes to allow greater flexibility.

Objective B: Develop a strategy to promote business interest in the Township (marketing, advertising, etc.).

Objective C: Create business development relationships with local institutions to promote knowledge-based and entrepreneurial businesses.

Objective D: Analyze and identify commercial/industrial districts for outdated, failing and troubled businesses and uses.

Objective E: Promote a mixture of uses for business districts along main arteries (residential, retail, office).

Objective F: Develop methods to aesthetically improve commercial corridors with surrounding neighborhoods in order to create a supporting climate.

Objective G: It is recommended that representatives from Administration, Code Enforcement, Community Development, the EDC and the PC meet periodically to share information, vision, and policies in an effort to maximize departmental resources of the Township in achieving the economic development mission.

Land Use & Zoning:

Goal:

Use space comprehensive planning and land use planning as a mechanism for creating Image, Character, and Identity for Abington Township.

Objective A: Evaluate and adjust the land use zoning map to be consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective B: Revise the Zoning Ordinance and Sub-Division and Land Development Ordinance to promote quality investment in all of the Township's land use designations.

Objective C: Create planning, design, and environmental standards which will act as guidelines to future development and redevelopment of the Township's expectations and intentions.

Objective D: Promote a mixture of uses within our commercial zoning districts to develop a mutually supporting climate among uses.

Objective E: Create an overlay district that will anticipate the obsolescence of our industrially zoned properties and other properties that will be in transition (Glenside Weldon School, for example). This overlay district should offer incentives to the developer/redeveloper while providing responsible development that will pose a minimal impact to our neighboring communities.

Objective F: Develop methods that create a seamless transition between our commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods.

- Objective G: Create methods that reward property owners and developers for preserving usable and meaningful open space.
- Objective H: Develop tools which will enable property owners the versatility to adjust their properties without vacating and moving out of the Township.
- Objective I: An effort should be made to make relevant committees aware of township zoning applications.

Implementation of Comprehensive Plan

Implementation:

1. In order to ensure that the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan are realized, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Abington Township Board of Commissioners, the Township, with the assistance of the Planning Commission will institute a detailed review of the Subdivision and Land Use Code, Zoning Code and Zoning Map consistent with the objectives and mission of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The 1992 Comprehensive Plan Section B, Mechanism of Plan Implementation serves as a thoughtful outline and provides a long list of potential solutions for many of the issues relevant to the future efforts of comprehensive plan implementation.
3. The Township shall establish methods to measure the success of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 2

MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE

Act 67 and Act 68 Revisions

The following modifications are incorporated into the 1992 Comprehensive Plan to reflect the requirements of Act 67 and 68, and by reference are included within the 2007 Update.

1. Section B, Goal 1, Objective D, shall be revised to read as follows (new words underlined):

"ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES WITHIN ABINGTON TOWNSHIP, TO THE EXTENT NOT PREEMPTED BY FEDERAL AND STATE LAW."

2. Section D, subsection 2, Drainage, Water Supply, shall be amended by adding a new last paragraph to read as follows:

"The water plan for the Township is generally consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan adopted by the Delaware River Basin Commission. Where permitted, lawful mineral extraction and commercial agricultural production may impact water supply sources."

3. Section D, Subsection 3, Natural Features, shall be amended by adding the following to the first sentence of paragraph five:

", to the extent not preempted by federal and state law."

4. Section F, Land Utilization, subsection 8, Land Uses - Surrounding Municipalities, shall be amended as follows (new words underlined):

First sentence revised to read as follows: "Generally speaking, the land uses of contiguous municipalities are compatible with existing and proposed land uses lying within the boundary of Abington Township."

Add a new fifth sentence to read as follows: "Measures are proposed to provide buffers where practicable or create transitional zones between disparate uses."

Planning Code Components

The overall focus of the comprehensive planning process is to comply with the requirements of Article III, Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The MPC, Act 247, as amended, requires that comprehensive plans include the following basic elements. These are found in the Plans as noted:

	<u>2007 Update</u>	<u>1992 Plan</u>	<u>2006 Open Space Plan</u>
1. Community Development Objectives	X	X	
2. A Plan for Land Use	X	X	X
3. A Plan for Housing	X	X	X
4. A Plan for Circulation	X	X	X (includes trails)
5. A Plan for Community Facilities and Utilities	X	X	
6. Statement of Interrelationships	X	X	
7. Implementation Strategies	X	X	
8. Relationships with Contiguous Portions of Adjacent Municipalities	X		
9. A Plan for the Protection of Natural and Historic Resources	X	X	X

Chapter 3

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The following report presents selected population, housing, and economic characteristics for Abington Township. When applicable, data for Montgomery County, and the Delaware Valley 5-County Pennsylvania Region are included in order to enable comparisons with regional trends. The 5-County Region being utilized in this report encompasses Bucks, Chester, Montgomery, Delaware, and Philadelphia Counties. Data were obtained from various sources but primarily consist of the information collected and compiled by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Other data sources include the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

The intent of this report is to highlight past and future growth patterns for purposes of community planning. This data is divided into four principal sections: Demographic Characteristics, Selected Characteristics of Housing, Economic/Socioeconomic Characteristics, and Employment.

Demographic Characteristics

Population

Abington Township is one of Montgomery County's oldest communities, dating back to the early 18th century. Today, Abington Township is the second most populous municipality in the County and comprises 7.5 percent of the County's total 2000 population¹. In the past two decades, however, the Township has recorded decreased overall population. Specifically, in 1980, the Census counted 58,836 residents in the Township, by the 2000 Census enumeration that number had declined by 2,733 to 56,103 residents for a total decrease of 4.6% over 20 years. Comparatively, the County during this same period, gained population; the decade of the 1990s witnessed double digit growth for Montgomery County.

¹ After Lower Merion, with a population of 59,850 in 2000.

TABLE 1 below provides population data and percentage change from 1980 to 2000 for the Township, the County and the 5-County Region.

TABLE 1: Population 1980 – 2000

Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5-County Region

	1980 Census	1990 Census	% Change 1980-1990	2000 Census	% Change 1990-2000
Abington	58,836	56,322	-4.3%	56,103	-0.4%
Montgomery Co.	643,621	678,193	5.4%	750,097	10.6%
5-County Region	3,682,450	3,728,991	1.3%	3,849,647	3.2%

Source: US Census, 1980, 1990 & 2000

The County’s 10.2 percent population gain is largely the result of growth in 43 of the 62 municipalities. Nineteen communities in the County lost population over the decade of the 1990s. Table 2 below presents the percent population change for Abington Township and adjacent municipalities.

TABLE 2: Percent Population Change for Abington Township and Contiguous Municipalities, 1990 – 2000

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Percent Change 1990-2000</u>
Abington	-0.4%
Cheltenham	5.6%
Jenkintown	-2.1%
Lower Moreland	-4.1%
Rockledge	-3.8%
Springfield	-0.4%
Upper Dublin	7.7%
Upper Moreland	-1.3%

Source: 1990-2000 Population by Municipality, Montgomery County Planning Commission. U.S. Census Data

Of these eight developed eastern Montgomery County municipalities, only two experienced growth in population – directly attributed to new dwelling units.

Abington, like most of its largely built-out neighbors, experienced a slight decline in overall population following the national trend of declining household size.

Table 3 delineates the 20 municipalities losing the greatest percentage of population over the 1990s.

**TABLE 3: Top 20 Municipalities with Declining Population
Montgomery County, 1990 – 2000**

Municipality	1990 Total Population	2000 Total Population	Absolute Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 1990-2000	Rank
North Wales	3,802	3,342	-460	-12.1%	1
Conshohocken	8,064	7,589	-475	-5.9%	2
Royersford	4,458	4,246	-212	-4.8%	3
Lower Moreland	11,768	11,281	-487	-4.1%	4
Rockledge	2,679	2,577	-102	-3.8%	5
Telford *	2,565	2,469	-96	-3.7%	6
Ambler	6,609	6,426	-183	-2.8%	7
Jenkintown	4,574	4,478	-96	-2.1%	8
West Norriton	15,209	14,901	-308	-2.0%	9
Lansdale	16,362	16,071	-291	-1.8%	10
Hatfield Boro	2,650	2,605	-45	-1.7%	11
Upper Moreland	25,313	24,993	-320	-1.3%	12
Narberth	4,278	4,233	-45	-1.1%	13
East Norriton	13,324	13,211	-113	-0.8%	14
Abington	56,322	56,103	-219	-0.4%	15
East Greenville	3,117	3,103	-14	-0.4%	15
Marlborough	3,116	3,104	-12	-0.4%	15
Springfield	19,612	19,533	-79	-0.4%	15
West Pottsgrove	3,829	3,815	-14	-0.4%	15
Pottstown	21,831	21,859	28	0.1%	20

Source: 1990-2000 Population by Municipality, Montgomery County Planning Commission. US Census data. Consultant's ranking.

Among the municipalities losing population, Abington is tied with East Greenville, Marlborough, Springfield and West Pottsgrove with just less than one-half of one percentage point loss in population. North Wales and Conshohocken, both older boroughs, led the County's municipalities losing population in the 1990s.

Population Projections:

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has prepared population forecasts through 2025 for the Delaware Valley Region. Table 4 below presents the forecasts for Abington Township and Montgomery County. These forecasts show a slight, continued loss of population for the Township through 2020, with an expected turn-around by 2025, albeit small.

According to the DVRPC forecasts, Abington Township can anticipate a very minor decrease in population in the present decade, 2000-2010; there will be 143 fewer residents in Abington in the year 2010, equivalent to less than one-quarter of 1 percent population change. This pattern of slight decreases in population is expected to continue, according to the DVRPC forecasts, through the first 20 years of the 21st century. By

2025, however, DVRPC anticipates that the slight losses will turn to slight gains in population.

Montgomery County is expected to steadily increase its population, from 750,097 residents in 2000 to a total of 857,030 residents in 2025. This represents a growth of 14.3% in 25 years. The 5-County Region also is also expected to gain population, though more moderately than Montgomery County. The rate of growth forecasted in the 5-County Region is 9.2% over 25 years, raising the total population from 3,849,647 to 4,203,094 residents.

TABLE 4
Population Forecasts and Change to 2025
Abington Township, Montgomery County, and the 5-County Region
2000 – 2025

Year	Abington		Montgomery Co.		5-County Region	
	Count or forecast	Change from previous data year	Count or forecast	Change from previous data year	Count or forecast	Change from previous data year
2000 Census population	56,103	-	750,097	-	3,849,647	-
2005 Forecast	56,090	(13)	776,340	26,243	3,921,530	71,883
2010 Forecast	55,960	(130)	797,990	21,650	3,979,850	58,320
2015 Forecast	55,830	(130)	818,210	20,220	4,064,250	84,400
2020 Forecast	55,690	(140)	838,700	20,490	4,148,292	84,042
2025 Forecast	55,790	100	857,030	18,330	4,203,094	54,802
Numeric Change 2000 - 2025		(313)		106,933		353,447
Percentage Change 2000 - 2025		-0.6%		14.3%		9.2%

Source: *Population and Employment Forecasts, 2000 – 2025*, 9-County DVRPC Region. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Publication No. 73, March 2002.

Note: () indicates loss.

In 1992, the Township prepared a Comprehensive Plan, part of which offered a discussion of trends and patterns vis-à-vis population, households and socio-economics in the Community through that period. In the 1992 report, the authors note that the rapid growth of the 1950s, 1960s and to some degree 1970s, experienced in Abington, was a nation-wide phenomenon for communities situated in and around large cities. Inter-state highways, public policy and technological improvements in building procedures made it likely that areas that were directly outside central cities, in this case Philadelphia, would be ripe for development. And, as with many communities with Abington’s history of burgeoning growth through the mid-20th century, rapid and intense development was followed by periods of stasis or slight decline. A deeper analysis of Abington’s demographics, as discussed throughout this report, affirms the conclusions of the 1992 study, which stated: “One might come to the conclusion that the Township is ‘slipping’ since the population has decreased this would be erroneous. The population decline is actually mostly attributable to changing household size; as the number of homes in the Township actually increased during this same period.²” Another factor raised in 1992 was increased vacancy rates in the Township. Both of these issues, as forthcoming sections of this report will detail, remain salient through 2000.

² *Abington Township Comprehensive Plan, 1992, p. 16.*

Population Density:

With a total population in 2000 of 56,103 and 15.5 square miles of area within its borders, the population density of Abington Township at 3,610 persons per square mile ranks 20th in the County and is over two times that found for the County overall where the population per square mile is 1,539 persons per square mile. Table 5 below presents pertinent population density data and the ranking for the top 20 most densely populated municipalities in the County.

TABLE 5
Population Density 2000 and Top 20 Ranking, Montgomery County
Municipalities

	2000	Square		
	Population	Miles	Pop/Sq. Mi.	Ranking
Narberth borough	4,233	0.48	8,731	1
Norristown borough	31,282	3.64	8,603	2
Jenkintown borough	4,478	0.58	7,768	3
Ambler borough	6,426	0.84	7,665	4
Rockledge borough	2,577	0.35	7,434	5
Conshohocken borough	7,589	1.02	7,416	6
Bridgeport borough	4,371	0.70	6,217	7
East Greenville borough	3,103	0.50	6,162	8
Souderton borough	6,730	1.12	5,996	9
North Wales borough	3,342	0.58	5,753	10
Lansdale borough	16,071	2.96	5,425	11
Hatboro borough	7,393	1.44	5,140	12
Royersford borough	4,246	0.83	5,112	13
Collegeville borough	8,032	1.60	5,010	14
Telford borough	2,469	0.50	4,933	15
Pottstown borough	21,859	4.95	4,418	16
Schwenksville borough	1,693	0.40	4,221	17
Hatfield borough	2,605	0.62	4,182	18
Cheltenham township	36,875	9.04	4,081	19
Abington township	56,103	15.50	3,619	20

Source: Population from the US Census, 2000. Square miles from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2000 Land Use by Minor Civil Division. Data Bulletin No. 78, March, 2004.

Abington is the second densest township in Montgomery County.

Select Characteristics of Population:

The US Census, in addition to collecting information on numbers of residents, strives to secure information on the characteristics of those residents. The following section presents information on a variety of characteristics for the population of Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5-County Region.

Age of Population

Table 6 displays the age distribution by cohort and percentage of total population for each cohort for Abington Township, the County, and the 5-County Region. As these data show, generally speaking, the distributions for each area are relatively similar though there are instances of note:

- Abington Township has a larger percentage of persons 65-74 than does the County or the 5-County Region, by several percentage points.
- Conversely, the Township has a smaller percentage of its population in the youngest cohort (0-4 years of age) and the 18-24 group, again by several percentage points.
- Abington's population tends toward the older age cohorts when compared with the 5-County Region, and this is especially true when compared to Montgomery County.
- Nineteen (19) percent of Abington's population was 65 years of age or older in 2000, while in the County the figure was 14.9% and in the 5-County Region it was 14%.

**TABLE 6:
Age Cohorts as a Percentage of Total Population
Abington Township, Montgomery County, and the 5-County Region,
1990 & 2000**

Years	Abington Township				Montgomery County				5-County Region			
	1990	% of Total Pop.	2000	% of Total Pop.	1990	% of Total Pop.	2000	% of Total Pop.	1990	% of Total Pop.	2000	% of Total Pop.
0-4	3,689	6.5%	3,248	5.8%	45837	6.8%	47,290	6.3%	267,701	7.2%	247,463	6.4%
5-17	8,572	15.2%	9,979	17.8%	107068	15.8%	133,855	17.8%	624,199	16.7%	721,052	18.7%
18-24	4,292	7.6%	3,437	6.1%	60,547	8.9%	53,089	7.1%	390,636	10.5%	346,155	9.0%
25-34	8,605	15.3%	6,426	11.5%	116,525	17.2%	100,931	13.5%	645,254	17.3%	525,025	13.6%
35-44	7,922	14.1%	9,114	16.2%	105,237	15.5%	127,953	17.1%	550,269	14.8%	622,138	16.2%
45-54	5,882	10.4%	7,901	14.1%	73,711	10.9%	106,735	14.2%	378,055	10.1%	517,699	13.4%
55-64	6,389	11.3%	5,299	9.4%	67,193	9.9%	68,447	9.1%	345,267	9.3%	334,156	8.7%
65-74	6,063	10.8%	5,073	9.0%	58,404	8.6%	55,562	7.4%	308,213	8.3%	271,774	7.1%
75+	4,908	8.7%	5,626	10.0%	43,589	6.4%	56,235	7.5%	219,315	5.9%	264,185	6.9%
TOTAL	56,322	100.0%	56,103	100.0%	678,111	100.0%	750,097	100.0%	3,728,909	100.0%	3,849,647	100.0%

Source: US Census, 1990 & 2000

According to the 2000 Census, the median age of residents of Abington Township was 40.6 years, in Montgomery County it was 38.2. The median for the 5-County region has not been computed, but the median for the Philadelphia PMSA which includes counties in New Jersey and Delaware, was 36.4.

Table 7 below presents age cohort information over time (1990 to 2000) for Abington Township, Montgomery County, and the 5-County Region. The distribution of population by age cohort over time is important in understanding the changing composition of a community.

Despite an overall slight loss in population from 1990 to 2000 in Abington Township, several age cohorts gained population, 5-17, 35-44, 45-54 and 75+. The shifting composition of the population might be in part explained by the fact that in 2000 the cohorts 35-44 and 45-54 comprise the “baby boomers,” the largest single generation to advance in the history of the U.S. This generation, born from 1946 – 1964 (post WW2) has had a profound impact on the structure of U.S. society at each stage of life. It is anticipated that their effect on society as they advance in age will be even more profound because of improved health care and longer life expectancies.

In both absolute and percent change, the greatest decline was observed in the 25-34 cohort. The percent decline in this cohort is virtually identical: 3.8%, 3.7% and 3.7% for Abington, the County, and 5-County Region, respectively. This is probably explained by the “post baby boomer” generation which grew at a much lower rate.

However, the greatest difference in percent change occurred in 55-64 and 65-74 cohorts. In these, Abington experienced a decline of -17.1% and -16.3% respectively, far greater than the County and 5-County Region. This would suggest, especially for the 55-64 cohort, that these persons downsized or retired to locations outside Abington Township – but not necessarily outside Montgomery County.

While there is no evidence to support this, a statistical response to the 65-74 cohort could be that Abington experienced a higher mortality rate than the other study groups.

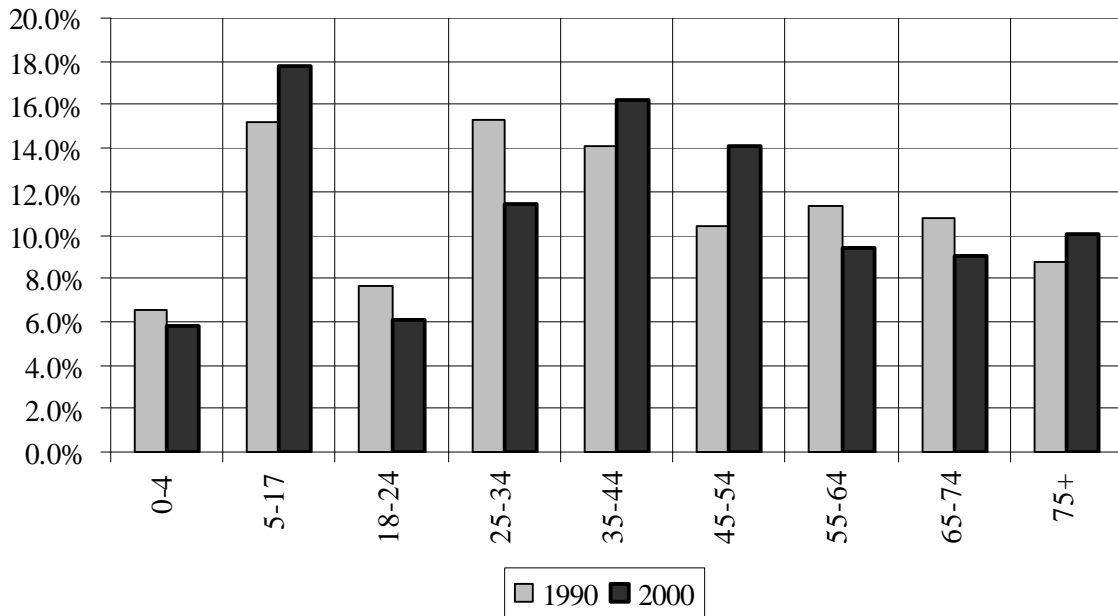
**TABLE 7:
Age Cohorts and change over time (1990 – 2000), Abington Township, Montgomery County, and 5-County Region**

Years	Abington Township			Montgomery County			5-County Region		
	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
0-4	3,689	3,248	-12.0%	45837	47,290	3.2%	267,701	247,463	-7.6%
5-17	8,572	9,979	16.4%	107068	133,855	25.0%	624,199	721,052	15.5%
18-24	4,292	3,437	-19.9%	60,547	53,089	-12.3%	390,636	346,155	-11.4%
25-34	8,605	6,426	-25.3%	116,525	100,931	-13.4%	645,254	525,025	-18.6%
35-44	7,922	9,114	15.0%	105,237	127,953	21.6%	550,269	622,138	13.1%
45-54	5,882	7,901	34.3%	73,711	106,735	44.8%	378,055	517,699	36.9%
55-64	6,389	5,299	-17.1%	67,193	68,447	1.9%	345,267	334,156	-3.2%
65-74	6,063	5,073	-16.3%	58,404	55,562	-4.9%	308,213	271,774	-11.8%
75+	4,908	5,626	14.6%	43,589	56,235	29.0%	219,315	264,185	20.5%
TOTAL	56,322	56,103	-0.4%	678,111	750,097	10.6%	3,728,909	3,849,647	3.2%

Source: US Census, 1980 and 1990.

Figure 1 presents graphically each age cohort’s change over time giving us insight into the current patterns as well as the trends that are likely to unfold, i.e. an increasing percentage of the population at older ages as the baby boomers advance.

FIGURE 1
Age Cohorts and change over time (1990 – 2000), Abington Township



Source: US Census, 2000

Race

According to a report by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission on racial composition in the Philadelphia region³, the 5-County Region has become more racially diverse over the decade of the 1990s. As of the 2000 Census, 29.5% of the 5-County Region’s population was non-white, up from 24.9% in 1990.

The racial distribution of Abington Township, shown in Table 8, is similar to the County’s overall racial distribution in 2000, though there are some variations. Montgomery County overall is the 3rd most racially diverse county in the region, following Philadelphia and Delaware Counties. Abington Township is more diverse than the County overall. Since the 1990 Census, Abington’s Black/African American population has increased from 8% to 10.8% and Asian from 2% to 3.3%.

TABLE 8:
Population by Race
Abington Township and the 5-County Region, 2000

³Twenty Years of Diversification: Minority Population County, 9-County DVRPC Region. Analytical Data Report, No. 7, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, November 2001.

	Abington Twp.	Montgomery County	Bucks County	Chester County	Delaware County	Philadelphia County	5-County Region
White alone	84.1%	86.5%	92.5%	89.2%	80.3%	45.1%	70.5%
Black or African American alone	10.8%	7.4%	3.1%	6.1%	14.4%	43.1%	21.6%
Asian alone	3.3%	3.9%	2.4%	2.0%	3.3%	4.3%	3.5%
Two or more races	1.1%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%	2.5%	1.7%
Some other race alone	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%	1.3%	0.5%	4.7%	2.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Total Population	56,103	750,097	597,635	433,501	550,864	1,517,550	3,849,647

Source: US Census, 2000

Sex

Throughout most of the last half century, women were increasingly a greater percentage of the population in Abington Township. In 2000, this trend reversed itself. Abington's experience can be viewed as a microcosm of the experience of the Nation. According to a Census Bureau report on gender in the US.

During the twentieth century, the male-female ratio in the U.S. has fluctuated significantly. From 1900 to 1940 there were more males. Beginning in 1950, there were increasingly more females due to reduced female mortality rates. This trend reversed between 1980 and 1990 as male death rates declined faster than female rates and as more men immigrated to the U.S. than women did. The gap between the number of women and men in older age groups continued to narrow in 2000, reflecting a further increase in men's life spans in comparison to women's.⁴

TABLE 9:
Population by Sex
Abington Township

	1950	1980	1990	2000
Male	47.5	47.0	46.9	47.2
Female	52.5	53.0	53.1	52.8

Source: US Census, 1950, 1980, 1990 and 2000

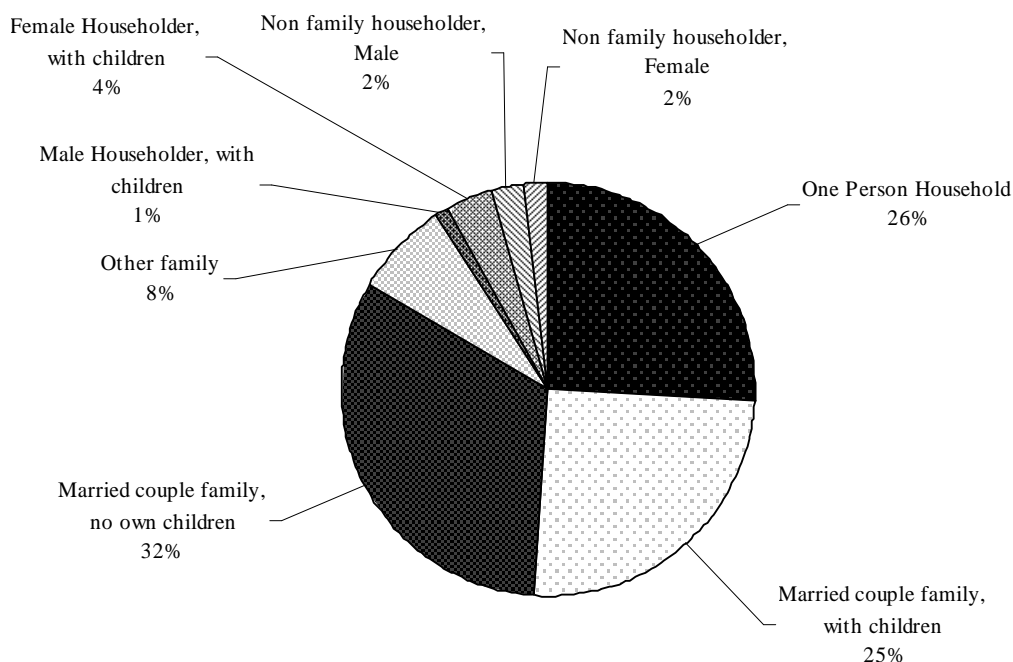
Household Characteristics

Household composition information is illustrated in Figure 2 and Table 10 below. Two types of householders (households) are distinguished by the Census: a family householder and a non-family householder. A family householder is a householder living with one or more people related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. The householder and all people in the household related to him or her are family members. A non-family householder is a householder living alone or with non-relatives only. Households are then classified by type according to the sex of the householder and the presence of relatives. Examples include: married-couple family; male householder, no wife present; female householder, no husband present; spouse (husband/wife); child; and other relatives.⁵

⁴ US Census, Fact Finder. General discussion on sex from the 2000 Census data.

⁵ US Census, glossary. See www.census.gov.

**FIGURE 2:
Abington Township Household Composition, 2000**
(percentage of total households)



Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000

Abington Township primarily consists of families; married couple families without children comprise 32% of households and married couple families with children 25%. Single person households make up slightly over a quarter of all households (26%) in Abington. Together these three household types comprised over 83 percent of all households in the Township in 2000.

**TABLE 10:
Household Composition**
Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5 PA Counties, 2000

	Abington Township		Montgomery County		5 PA Counties	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total households	21,690	100	286,098	100	1,459,119	100.0
Families	15,136	69.8	197,640	69.1	963,673	66.1
Non-family Household	6,554	30.2	88,458	30.9	495,446	34.0
Householder Alone	5,619	25.9	73,213	25.6	412,465	28.3
Householder 65 and over	2,789	12.9	28,213	9.9	151,672	10.4
Average household size	2.54	(X)	2.54	(X)	N/A	
Average Family size	3.1	(X)	3.09	(X)	N/A	

Source: US Census, 2000.

Of the three geographic levels shown in Table 10, the 5-County region maintains the largest percentage of householders living alone (28.3 percent of all households).

Generally speaking, family households will have more people in them than non-family households. In Abington the average family size is very similar to that of the County, 3.1 and 3.09 respectively. And, households, overall smaller for both the County and the Township, stood equal at 2.54. In this regard, Abington is highly representative of the County's overall appearance.

Table 11 details household size data for the United States, Pennsylvania, Montgomery County and Abington Township. Overall, the distributions are, again, largely similar, though Pennsylvania has a greater percentage of its housing stock occupied by one person than the other areas where data are presented.

**TABLE 11:
Household Size
US, Pennsylvania, Montgomery County & Abington Township**

	United States	Pennsylvania	Montgomery County	Abington township
Total:	105,480,101	4,777,003	286,098	21,690
1-person household	25.8%	27.7%	25.6%	25.9%
2-person household	32.6%	33.2%	33.3%	33.6%
3-person household	16.5%	16.4%	16.4%	15.7%
4-person household	14.2%	13.8%	15.3%	14.8%
5-person household	6.6%	5.9%	6.6%	6.9%
6-person household	2.5%	2.0%	2.0%	2.2%
7-or-more person household	1.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%

Source: US Census, 2000.

In general, owner occupied units have greater numbers of inhabitants than renter occupied units. As seen in Table 12 below, this holds true across the board for the US, Pennsylvania, the County and Abington Township. In Abington it is interesting to note that the average persons per renter occupied unit is appreciably lower than that found for the Nation as a whole, and somewhat lower than the State and County, and the average owner occupied size is slightly larger than that found in the US and Pennsylvania overall.

**TABLE 12:
Average Household Size for Occupied Units
US, Pennsylvania, Montgomery County and Abington Township, 2000**

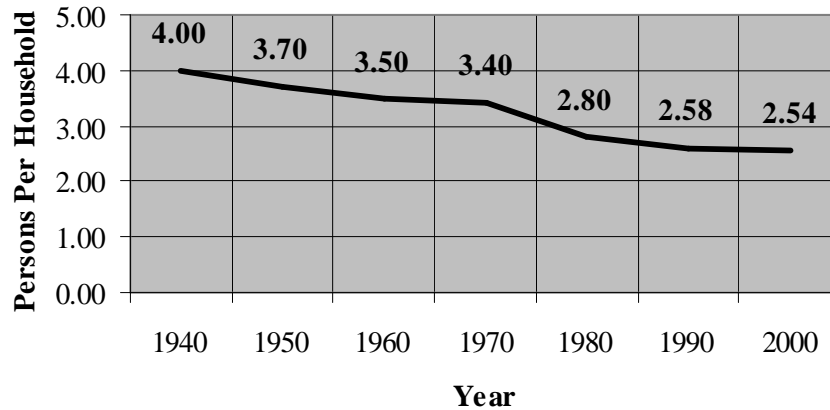
	United States	Pennsylvania	Montgomery County	Abington township
Total	2.59	2.48	2.54	2.54
Owner occupied	2.69	2.62	2.74	2.72
Renter occupied	2.4	2.12	1.99	1.85

Source: US Census, 2000.

In 2000, Abington’s total person per unit figure (average household size) was 2.54. In 1990, that figure was 2.58⁶, for a .04 person per unit loss over 10 years and representing the continuation of a declining household size in Abington -- a trend being witnessed at large in the US. Consider the comments of the Montgomery County Planning Commission after examining the patterns for the US when the 2000 data became available:

The average household size in the United States continued its descent in the 1990s, although that drop is leveling off. The average household size in 2000 was 2.59 persons, down from 2.63 persons in 1990. This represents a 2% decline, which is down from the 4% decline in the 1980s and much lower than the 12% drop in the 1970s.

Abington has clearly experienced the same decrease in household size over time:



Group Homes

Population in group quarters, according to the Census, “includes all people not living in households. This term includes those people residing in group quarters as of the date on which a particular survey was conducted. Two general categories of people in group quarters are recognized: 1) the institutionalized population which includes people under formally authorized supervised care or custody in institutions at the time of enumeration (such as correctional institutions, nursing homes, and juvenile institutions) and 2) the non-institutionalized population which includes all people who live in group quarters other than institutions (such as college dormitories, military quarters, and group homes). The non-institutionalized population includes all people who live in group quarters other than institutions.”⁷

⁶ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Report entitled 1990 Census, Selected Housing Characteristics by Municipality (no. 42, April, 1992).

⁷ See glossary of definitions, www.census.gov

Table 13 below illustrates the percentage of group homes in Abington and, Montgomery County. Abington Township has a lower percentage of persons in group homes (1.8%) than the County, where 3.1% of the population resides in group homes. In total there are 984 residents in Abington Township residing in group homes; 608 of them are institutionalized populations and 376 are non institutionalized populations. Montgomery County's total population in group homes is 23,257, 13,988 in institutional settings and 9,269 in institutionalized settings

**TABLE 13:
Persons in Group Homes as a percentage of total population
Abington Township and Montgomery County, 2000**

	Abington Township	Mongtomery County
In group quarters	1.8	3.1
Institutionalized population	1.1	1.9
Noninstitutionalized population	0.7	1.2

Source: US Census, 2000.

Educational Attainment

Table 14 below presents a distribution of educational attainment for residents, 25 and older, of Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5-County Region.

**TABLE 14:
Educational Attainment (Highest Level of Education) of Persons 25+
by Number and Percentage
Abington Township, Montgomery County, and the 5-County Region, 2000**

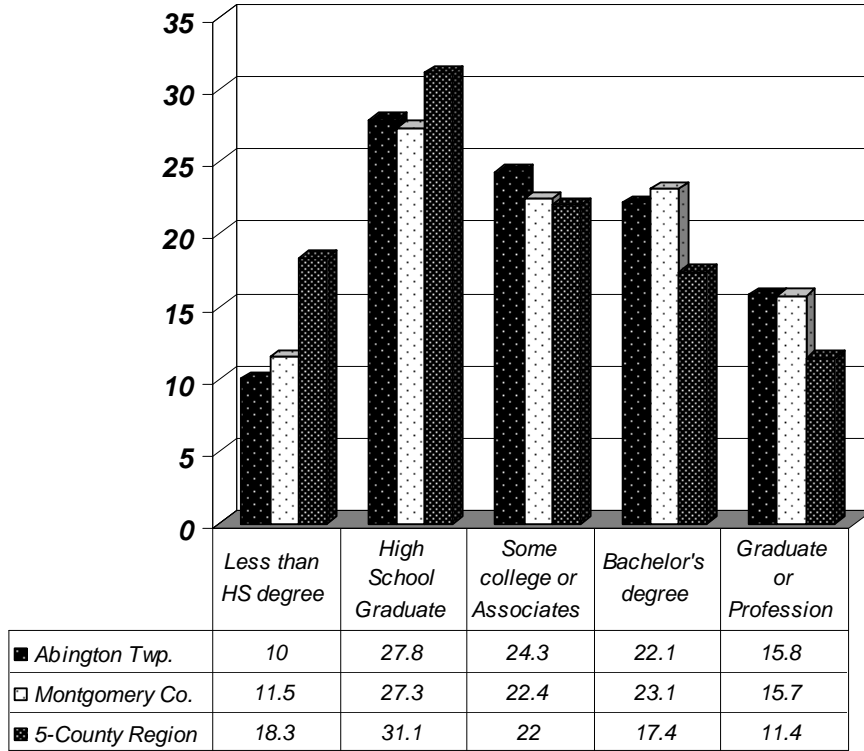
	Abington Twp.		Montgomery Co.		5-County Region	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than 9th Grade	1,007	2.6	15,649	3.0	122,948	4.9
9th-12th, No diploma	2,902	7.4	43,658	8.5	340,180	13.4
High School Graduate (includes Equivalent)	10,907	27.8	140,839	27.3	787,539	31.1
Some college, no degree	7,237	18.5	85,342	16.5	417,429	16.5
Associates Degree	2,289	5.8	30,596	5.9	138,499	5.5
Bachelor's Degree	8,681	22.1	118,910	23.1	441,167	17.4
Graduate of Professional Degree	6,190	15.8	80,877	15.7	287,871	11.4

Source: US Census, 2000.

Slightly over 18 percent of the 5-County Region's population aged 25 and older did not have a high school diploma in 2000. In Montgomery County this number drops to 11.5 and drops again for Abington where 10 percent of the Township's population 25 years of age or older did not have a high school diploma.

Abington has the lowest percentage in the less than High School degree but the highest percentage in the Graduate or Professional degree category.

FIGURE 3
Educational Attainment (Highest Level of Education) of Persons 25+
by Percentage
Abington Township, Montgomery County, and the 5-County Region, 2000



Housing

This section of the report details data and information on housing, specifically data related to housing unit counts, housing unit projections, selected housing characteristics, and housing value.

Housing Units

As shown in Table 15 below, the Township’s housing stock experienced a net increase of 251 units in the 1990s, representing a 1.6% gain in units over 10 years. At the same time, the County experienced a 12.8 percent gain in units and the 5-County Region a 5 percent gain. The 5-County Region’s growth was more moderate than what the County experienced.

TABLE 15
Housing Units and Percentage Change
Abington Township, Montgomery County, and 5-County Region,

1990 – 2000

		1990	2000
Abington Township	# of Units	22,116	22,367
	%Change 1990 - 2000		1.1%
Montgomery County	# of Units	199,934	225,498
	%Change 1990 - 2000		12.8%
5 PA County Region	# of Units	1,491,310	1,565,641
	%Change 1990 - 2000		5.0%

Source: 2000, 1990, and 1980 Data: U.S. Census

It is interesting to juxtapose the unit gains in Abington with the population losses discussed in an earlier section. While Abington’s population decreased by 219 people in the 1990s, the number of housing units *increased* by 251. This speaks to an overall decrease in the number of persons per households (discussed above), i.e. fewer people living in more houses – a nation-wide phenomenon and one tied to a number of socio-cultural issues such as increased life expectancy, divorce rates, economic feasibility, and generally smaller family and household sizes, etc.

Units in Structure

Analysis of the type of homes or units in the Township is important in forming an understanding of the character of the community. It is evident from Table 16 below that, in 2000, Abington Township had a majority of its housing stock in single-unit detached homes, 71.0%. The County’s stock of single unit detached homes is lower at 56% and the 5-County Region’s is lower still at 35.9%. The second most prevalent structure type by percentage in Abington is the unit designated as “1-unit attached” commonly referred to as a townhouse, at 7.9%.

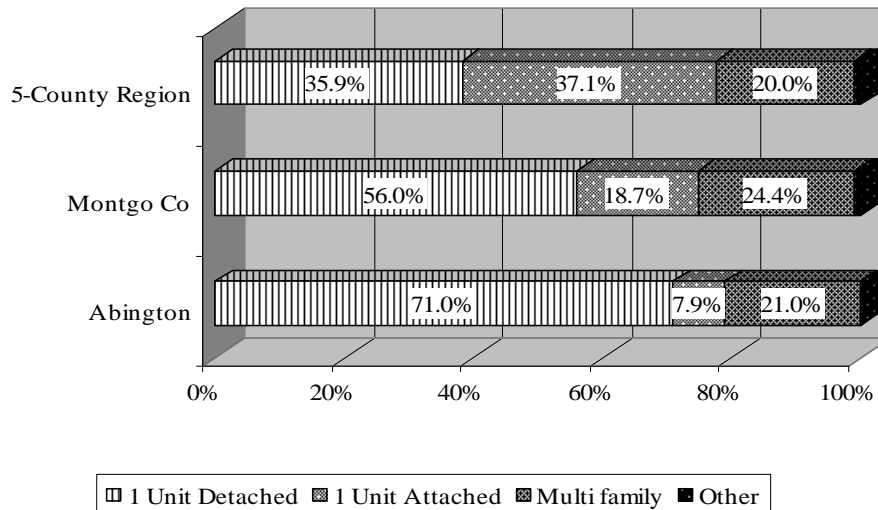
**TABLE 16:
Units in Structure as a Percentage of All Units, Abington Township,
Montgomery County, and the 5 Pennsylvania County Region, 2000**

Housing Type	Abington Township		Montgomery County		5-County Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1-Unit, Detached	15,876	71.0%	166,543	56.0%	561,806	35.9%
1-Unit, Attached	1,772	7.9%	55,745	18.7%	580,688	37.1%
2	816	3.6%	10,642	3.6%	84,349	5.4%
3 or 4	609	2.7%	12,465	4.2%	78,943	5.0%
5 to 9	483	2.2%	9,641	3.2%	54,976	3.5%
10 to 19	782	3.5%	11,613	3.9%	50,094	3.2%
20 to 49	352	1.6%	8,380	2.8%	45,281	2.9%
50 or more	1,652	7.4%	19,687	6.6%		0.0%
Mobile home	25	0.1%	2,627	0.9%	14,916	1.0%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%	91	0.0%	432	0.0%
Total	22,367	100.0%	297,434	100.0%	1,565,641	100%

Sources: U.S. Census 2000

Figure 4 below collapses several of the categories so that a more concise view of the distribution of housing in the Township, the County and the 5-County Region can be made. Here we clearly see the differential in housing unit type among the 3 geographies studied with Abington having a far greater percentage of its units as single-family detached and far fewer townhouse units than the County or the 5-County Region. Interestingly, multi-family units assume very similar proportions for each geography; and, units determined to be “other,” comprised of mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans etc., are alike in their very small representation of all units in each geography.

FIGURE 4
Units in Structure as a Percentage of All Units
Abington Township, Montgomery County, and the 5-County Region, 2000



Source: US Census, 2000

Table 17 shows the change in housing units over time by unit type. Here we see that growth occurred in attached and detached single units, units with 3 or 4 units in the structure, and units with 50 or more units in the structure. In Montgomery County, where housing growth was more robust, the only category to see a drop in units was the 10-19 units in structure and the “other” category.⁸

TABLE 17:
Units in Structure and Change Over Time, 1990 – 2000
Abington Township and Montgomery County,

	Abington Township			Montgomery County		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
1-Unit, Detached	15474	15,876	2.6%	146,844	166,543	13.4%
1-Unit, Attached	1750	1,772	1.3%	46,591	55,745	19.6%
2	818	816	-0.2%	9,360	10,642	13.7%
3 or 4	561	609	8.6%	10,392	12,465	19.9%
5 to 9	636	483	-24.1%	8,199	9,641	17.6%
10 to 19	864	782	-9.5%	14,402	11,613	-19.4%
20 to 49	376	352	-6.4%	9,177	8,380	-8.7%
50 or more	1458	1,652	13.3%	15,685	19,687	25.5%
Other	179	25	-86.0%	5,206	2718	-47.8%
Total	22,116	22,367	1.1%	265,856	297,434	11.9%

Source: US Census, 2000

⁸ Some of this change in the “other” category may be due to changes in Census definitions of these uses. This is true for each geography studied in this report.

Selected Characteristics of Housing

The discussion of selected housing characteristics includes information on housing occupancy, tenure, vacancy, value, and age.

Housing Tenure

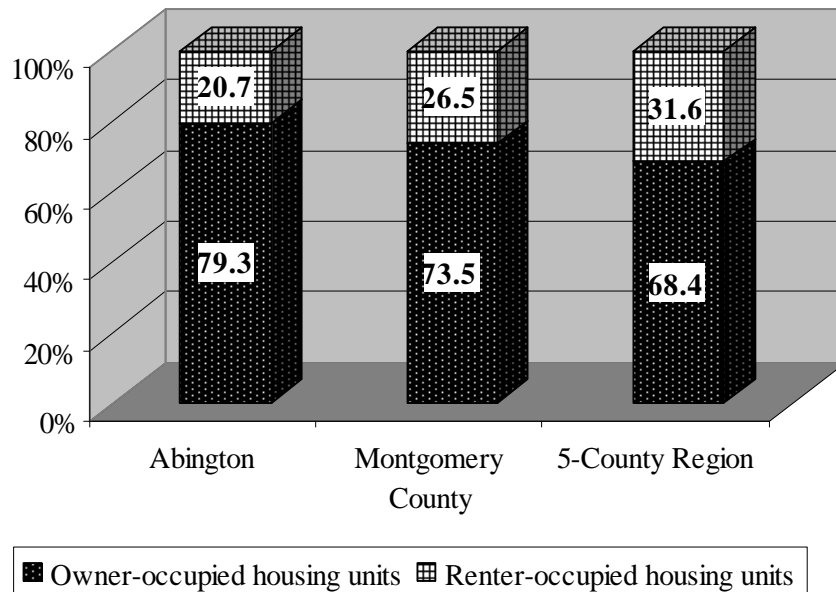
Residents of Abington are more likely to own their homes than are residents of Montgomery County or the 5-County Region. A vast majority of Abington's housing stock is owner occupied: Nearly 80% (79.3%) of Abington's housing stock is owner occupied, which is 5.8 percentage points more than the County where 73.5% of the occupied units are owner occupied, and 10.9 percentage points more than the 5-County Region, where 68.4% of the occupied units are owner occupied. The data for each area are presented below in Table 18 and illustrated in Figure 5.

TABLE 18:
Occupied Units by Tenure,
Abington Township and Montgomery County and 5-County Region, 2000

HOUSING TENURE	Abington		Montgomery County		5-County Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Occupied housing units	21,690	100	286,098	100	1,472,287	100
Owner-occupied housing units	17,205	79.3	210,233	73.5	1,007,539	68.4
Renter-occupied housing units	4,485	20.7	75,865	26.5	464,748	31.6

Source: US Census, 2000

FIGURE 5:
Occupied Housing Units by Tenure
Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5-County Region, 2000



Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Housing Vacancy

In 2000, the vacancy rate of for sale/for rent units in Abington Township was 1.8%, representing a virtual no change in the vacancy rate over 10 years. Table 19 presents total housing units, number, percent and percentage change for occupied and vacant units in 1990 and 2000 for Abington Township and Montgomery County. The vacancy rate for Montgomery County is 2.2% (down from 2.7% in 1990), and for the 5-County region 2.8% (down from 3.7% in 1990).

**TABLE 19:
Total Units and Vacancy Status
Abington Township and Montgomery County, 2000**

	Abington Township		Montgomery County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	22,116	22,367	265,856	297,434
Vacant Housing Units	387	409	7,282	6,684
Percent Vacant Units	1.7%	1.8%	2.7%	2.2%
Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000				

Abington's vacancy rate is lower but the trend is the slight reverse of both Montgomery County and the 5-County Region. For comparison purposes, the other large townships in Montgomery County with more than 10,000 dwelling units were evaluated: Lower Merion has the lowest at 1.6% while Upper Merion was the highest at 2.7% vacancy rates in 2000. Abington maintains a very low vacancy rate – compared to the County and 5-County Region and other large townships in Montgomery County. The housing market would appear highly sought after and very tight – particularly in the for sale category where only 137 of 17,205 owner-occupied housing units (0.8%) were vacant. There were 4,485 rental units and 272 (6.1%) were vacant.

Age of Housing Stock

Abington's housing stock is older than the County's overall. As can be seen from Table 20 and Figure 6, just over 45% of the Township's housing stock was built between 1940 and 1959. In fact, 67.3% of the housing in the Township was built prior to 1960; in the County 46.2 percent was built prior to 1960. Since 1990, 634 units have been built in the Township representing 2.9% of the Township's housing stock, whereas 13% of the County's total housing stock has been constructed since 1990. This speaks to the fact that Abington Township is a well established community and developed earlier than many other parts of the County.

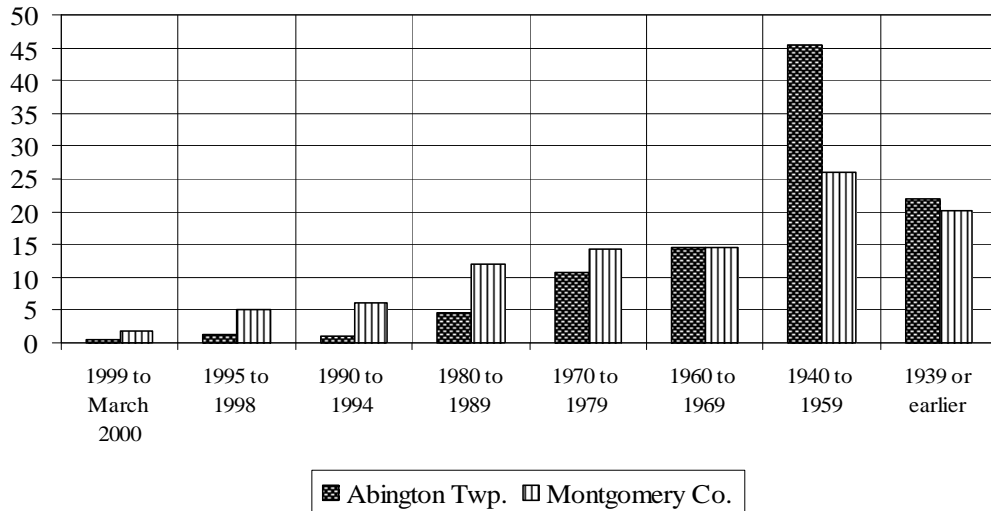
TABLE 20
Year Structure Built: Abington Township and Montgomery County, 2000

YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT	Abington Twp.		Montgomery Co.	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1999 to March 2000	88	0.4	5,075	1.7
1995 to 1998	302	1.4	15,422	5.2
1990 to 1994	244	1.1	18,148	6.1
1980 to 1989	1,044	4.7	35,774	12
1970 to 1979	2,377	10.6	42,310	14.2
1960 to 1969	3,268	14.6	43,091	14.5
1940 to 1959	10,145	45.4	77,513	26.1
1939 or earlier	4,899	21.9	60,101	20.2

Source: US Census, 2000

FIGURE 6: Year Structure Built

Percentage of
Units Built



Source: US Census, 2000

Housing Value and Rent

This section provides data pertaining to the value of owner occupied housing units and rent. Nearly half of Abington Township's owner occupied housing is valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999 range (49.5%). This is much higher than the percent for Montgomery County. Abington ranks slightly behind the County average in all other categories. The Township's median housing value is \$142,100, which was higher than that of Delaware and Philadelphia Counties, but lower than the aggregate for Montgomery, Chester and Bucks Counties.

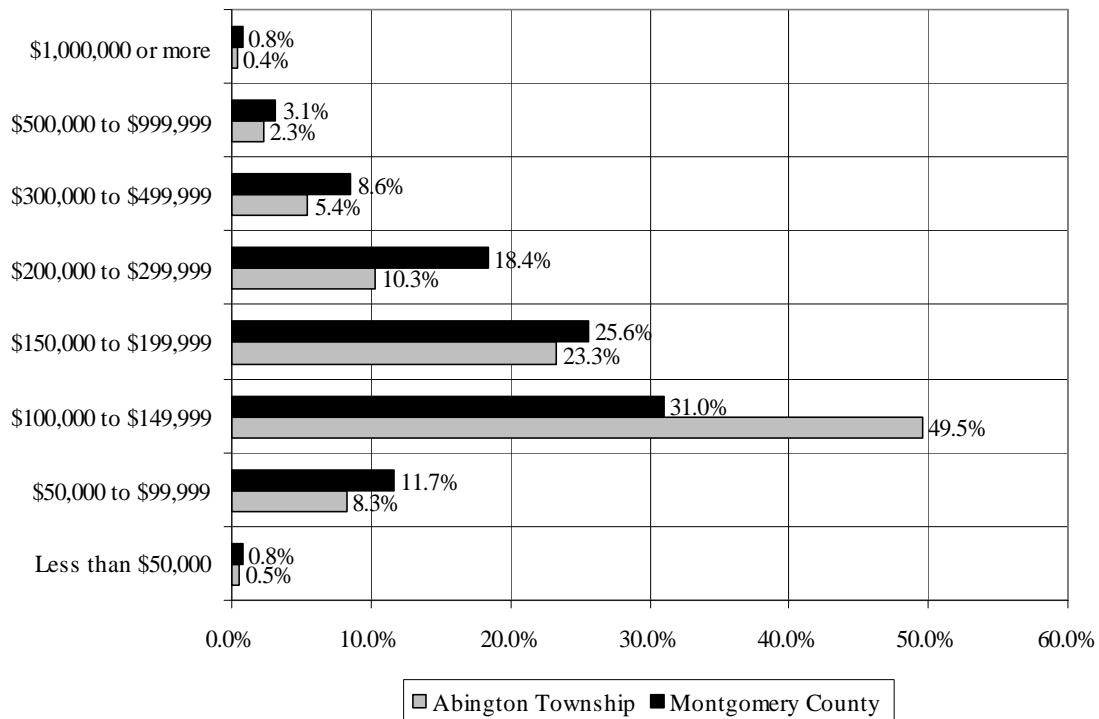
**TABLE 21:
Owner Occupied Housing Value: Abington Township, Montgomery
County. The Counties Comprising the 5-County Region and the Aggregate
5-County Region, 1999**

Specified Owner-Occupied units: Housing Value	Abington Township		Montgomery County	Bucks County	Chester County	Delaware County	Phila. County	5 PA County Total
	#	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than \$50,000	78	0.5%	0.80%	0.6%	0.80%	6.2%	38.4%	14.8%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1319	8.3%	11.70%	9.8%	9.60%	28.6%	46.5%	25.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7,917	49.5%	31.00%	31.8%	23.80%	26.6%	9.7%	22.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,723	23.3%	25.60%	26.7%	23.20%	19.4%	2.9%	16.6%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1,650	10.3%	18.40%	21.0%	25.40%	11.4%	1.4%	12.6%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	868	5.4%	8.60%	8.1%	13.40%	5.5%	0.6%	5.8%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	365	2.3%	3.10%	1.8%	3.30%	2.0%	0.4%	1.8%
\$1,000,000 or more	60	0.4%	0.80%	0.2%	0.40%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Total Valid Units (see note)	15,980	100.0%	190,477	100.0%	106,254	138,211	315,437	900,901
Median value (dollars)	\$142,100		\$160,700	\$163,200	\$182,500	\$128,800	\$59,700	n/a

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Note: Valid Units -- Not all householders of owner-occupied units responded to the question on value on the Census form. Throughout this report, the term "valid" will be used to designate the total number responding to the question and not the total number in the universe

**FIGURE 7:
Owner Occupied Housing Value: Abington Township and
Montgomery County, 1999**



Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Abington's rents are slightly higher overall than the County's. According to the data contained in Table 22, a majority of rental units fell in the \$500-749 per month range (43.3%). The second highest category of gross rent is \$750-999 (15.4%). The median value of renter occupied units in Abington Township is \$668, which was minimally lower than the County's at \$673.

**TABLE 22: Contract Rent and Median Contract Rent
Abington Township and Montgomery County, 2000**

	Abington Twp.		Montgomery County	
Less than \$200	153	3.5%	2,421	3.3%
\$200 to \$299	116	2.7%	1,700	2.3%
\$300 to \$499	566	13.0%	11,108	15.2%
\$500 to \$749	1,887	43.3%	30,141	41.3%
\$750 to \$999	672	15.4%	17,395	23.8%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	602	13.8%	8,054	11.0%
\$1,500 or more	365	8.4%	2,030	2.8%
No cash rent	128	2.9%	2,627	3.6%
TOTAL Specified Renter-Occupied (valid)	4,489		75,476	
Median Contract Rent (dollars)	\$ 668		\$ 673	

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Economic/Socioeconomic Characteristics

The section that follows presents information on household and family income, poverty, resident's occupation, journey to work information, and numbers of jobs in Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5- County Region.

Income

At \$59,921, the median household income in 1999 in Abington Township was \$908 less than the County's median at \$60,829. However, when we compare Abington's median household income to that of the State's (\$40,106) or the Nation's (\$41,994), we see that Abington is clearly a wealthy community in what is one of the wealthiest Counties in the state. Table 23 presents the median household income for each county encompassed in the 5-County region, while Table 24 presents the distribution of household income for the Township, the County and the 5-County Region.

**TABLE 23:
Median Household Income by County
in the 5-County Region, 1999**

Median household income by County, 1999	
Bucks County,	\$59,727
Chester County,	\$65,295
Delaware County,	\$50,092
Montgomery County,	\$60,829
Philadelphia County,	\$30,746

Source: US Bureau of the Census, SF3, 2000.

**TABLE 24:
Household Income Distribution and Median Household Income, 1999:
Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5-County Region**

	Abington Township	Montgomery County	5-County Region
Less than \$10,000	3.9%	4.3%	10.4%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.2%	3.6%	5.7%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	4.0%	3.8%	5.5%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	4.3%	4.3%	5.6%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	4.9%	4.6%	5.7%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	4.3%	4.9%	5.7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	14.7%	14.5%	15.0%
\$50,000-74,999	22.6%	21.6%	19.1%
\$75,000-99,999	15.3%	14.9%	11.5%
\$100,000-149,999	12.8%	13.5%	9.6%
\$150,000-199,999	3.8%	4.6%	3.0%
\$200,000 or more	5.3%	5.4%	3.2%
Total (valid)	21,707	286,255	1,459,708
Median income	59,921	60,829	n/a

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000

When per capita income and full-time workers earnings (by gender) are examined, we again see that Abington's figures are much higher than the State's and the Nation's overall.

**TABLE 25:
Per Capita and Median Earnings by Gender for full-time year round
workers, 1999:**

Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania and the US

	Abington Township	Montgomery County	Pennsylvania	US
Per capita income (dollars)	30,331	30,898	20,880	21,587
Median earnings (dollars):				
Male full-time, year-round workers	47,408	48,698	37,051	37,057
Female full-time, year-round workers	36,572	35,089	26,687	27,194

Source: US Census, 2000

Another way of examining income is to consider issues of poverty. According to the 2000 Census, 2% of families in Abington Township were in poverty and 3.6% of individuals lived in poverty. This compares favorably with the County, the State, and the Nation overall, where rates of poverty are higher, and in the case of the State and the Nation, they are much higher.

**TABLE 26:
Rates of Poverty, 1999:
Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania and the US**

POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (below poverty level)	Abington Township		Montgomery County		Pennsylvania		US	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Families	305	2.0	5,470	2.8	250,296	7.8	6,620,945	9.2
With related children under 18 years	160	2.3	4,044	4.1	188,366	12.1	5,155,866	13.6
With related children under 5 years	64	2.4	1,876	4.9	88,081	15.3	2,562,263	17.0
Individuals	1,992	3.6	32,215	4.4	1,304,117	11.0	33,899,812	12.4
18 years and over	1,642	3.9	23,597	4.3	882,372	9.8	22,152,954	10.9
65 years and over	422	4.2	5,353	5.1	164,095	9.1	3,287,774	9.9

Source: US Census, 2000

Employment and Jobs

The following section presents information on resident's employment and occupational status, followed by a presentation of data compiled by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission on numbers of jobs anticipated in the future in Abington Township.

Employment

According to the 2000 Census, 65.6% of the Township's population is in the labor force; 34.4% percent is not and .10% is in the armed forces. This distribution is somewhat similar to that found in the other counties in the region except for Philadelphia and to some extent Delaware, where a greater percentage of the population 16 years and older is not in the labor force. Table 27 and 28 present employment status information for the Township, Montgomery County, each county in the 5-County region, and a summary for the 5-County region.

TABLE 27
Employment Status, Abington Township, Montgomery County, the Counties
Comprising the 5-County Region and the Aggregate 5-County Region, 2000

<i>Place</i>	Total 16 yrs. and over <i>number</i>	In labor force		In Armed Forces		Not in labor force	
		<i>number</i>	<i>percentage</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>percentage</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Abington Township	44,530	29,232	65.6%	47	0.1%	15,298	34.4%
Montgomery County	589,000	403,574	68.5%	921	0.2%	185,426	31.5%
Bucks County	461,356	320,110	69.4%	701	0.2%	141,246	30.6%
Chester County	332,513	229,631	69.1%	162	0.1%	102,882	30.9%
Delaware County	429,983	272,268	63.3%	176	0.0%	157,715	36.7%
Philadelphia County	1,174,798	656,935	55.9%	396	0.0%	517,863	44.1%
5-County Region	2,987,650	1,882,518	63.0%	2,356	0.1%	1,105,132	37.0%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data

Note: Numbers vary slightly because of rounding.

Table 28 presents more detailed information on the civilian labor force, that is the labor force exclusive of those in the armed forces, for Abington Township, Montgomery County, each county comprising the 5-County region, and a total for the 5-County region. As can be seen from these data, Abington's employment rate for those 16 years and over in the civilian labor force, at 96.5 percent, is among the highest of the geographies presented. Conversely, then, the unemployment rate for Abington Township, at 3.5%, is tied as the lowest of the areas examined.

TABLE 28
Civilian Labor Force Status, Abington Township, Montgomery County, the 5
Counties Comprising the 5-County Region and the Aggregate
5-County Region, 2000

<i>Place</i>	Total Civilian Labor Force <i>number</i>	Employed in Civilian Labor Force		Unemployed	
		<i>number</i>	<i>percentage</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Abington Township	29,185	28,157	96.5%	1,028	3.5%
Montgomery County	402,653	384,688	95.5%	17,965	4.5%
Bucks County	319,409	308,281	96.5%	11,128	3.5%
Chester County	229,469	221,255	96.4%	8,214	3.6%
Delaware County	272,092	258,782	95.1%	13,310	4.9%
Philadelphia County	656,539	584,957	89.1%	71,582	10.9%
5-County Region	1,880,162	1,757,963	93.5%	122,199	6.5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data

The distribution of resident's employment by industry type is found in Table 29. The top three industries employing residents of Abington Township include: 1) Educational, *health and social services*; 2) *Retail trade*; and 3) *Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management services*. The same industries employ the greatest percentage of residents in Montgomery County, except that manufacturing ranks second highest for the County, whereas in Abington manufacturing tied for fourth.

TABLE 29
Civilian Labor Force 16 Years and Over by Industry, Abington Township
and Montgomery County, 2000

	Abington township		Montgomery County	
Total:	28,157	100.0%	384,688	100.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	68	0.2%	1,039	0.3%
Construction	1,811	6.4%	21,691	5.6%
Manufacturing	2,835	10.1%	57,831	15.0%
Wholesale trade	1,077	3.8%	15,069	3.9%
Retail trade	3,536	12.6%	43,445	11.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	923	3.3%	12,384	3.2%
Information	903	3.2%	13,412	3.5%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	2,844	10.1%	38,494	10.0%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management s	3,148	11.2%	49,471	12.9%
Educational, health and social services:	7,445	26.4%	83,269	21.6%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services:	1,296	4.6%	20,902	5.4%
Other services (except public administration)	1,409	5.0%	17,220	4.5%
Public administration	862	3.1%	10,461	2.7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, SF3, 2000.

Journey to Work

The Census collects data on the means by which residents commute to work. Looking at these data we see that, as with the vast majority of the 5-County Philadelphia region, most workers commute to their jobs via their own car, truck or van. Public transportation is used by slightly over 11% of the entire 5-County Region's population whereas 4.4% of Montgomery County residents use public transportation, and slightly more, 6.6%, of Abington's residents commute to work using public transportation, most by way of the region's rail system. However, a higher percentage of Abington workers use railroad transit than both the County and 5-County Region.

TABLE 30:
Means of Transportation to Work for Workers 16 Years and Over,
Abington Township, Montgomery County and the 5-County Region, 2000

	Abington township	Montgomery County	5-County Region
Total:	27,839	379,832	1,725,254
Car, truck, or van:	86.0%	88.8%	79.9%
Drove alone	77.4%	80.5%	69.9%
Carpooled	8.6%	8.3%	10.0%
Public transportation:	6.6%	4.4%	11.3%
Bus or trolley bus	1.6%	1.0%	6.6%
Streetcar or trolley car (pub	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Subway or elevated	0.5%	0.3%	1.9%
Railroad	4.4%	3.0%	2.5%
Ferryboat	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Taxicab	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Motorcycle	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Bicycle	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
Walked	3.4%	2.6%	4.7%
Other means	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
Worked at home	3.4%	3.6%	3.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000.

Where do those residents who commute head when they leave their homes for their jobs? The Census gives us some insight into this through the Journey to Work data where residents are asked to name the locality in which their place of employment is located. Looking at these data for Abington Township, we see that of the 27,839 employed residents in Abington, nearly one-quarter (23.9%) worked in the City of Philadelphia. Another 20.6% worked in Abington itself. Horsham, Upper Dublin, Upper Moreland and Cheltenham were also important employment destinations for residents of Abington. Table 31 presents the top 20 employment destinations for residents of the Township.

**TABLE 31:
Place of Employment for Residents of Abington Township
in Rank Order (Top 20), 2000**

Resident's Workplace Name	Count	Percent	Rank
<i>Total</i>	27,839	(x)	(x)
Philadelphia city Philadelphia Co. PA	6,641	23.9%	1
Abington Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	5,729	20.6%	2
Horsham Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	1,435	5.2%	3
Upper Dublin Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	1,195	4.3%	4
Upper Moreland Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	1,140	4.1%	5
Cheltenham Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	1,079	3.9%	6
Jenkintown bor. Montgomery Co. PA	801	2.9%	7
Springfield Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	558	2.0%	8
Whitpain Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	518	1.9%	9
Lower Merion Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	421	1.5%	10
Upper Merion Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	418	1.5%	11
Warminster Twp. Bucks Co. PA	369	1.3%	12
Lower Moreland Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	355	1.3%	13
Whitemarsh Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	341	1.2%	14
Montgomery Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	314	1.1%	15
Plymouth Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	292	1.0%	16
Bensalem Twp. Bucks Co. PA	285	1.0%	17
Lower Gwynedd Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	265	1.0%	18
Norristown bor. Montgomery Co. PA	227	0.8%	19
Upper Southampton Twp. Bucks Co. PA	222	0.8%	20

Source: US Census, 2000

Table 31 demonstrates the link Abington Township residents have with either Abington Township or the City of Philadelphia relative to a place of employment. The data indicates that approximately 45% of Abington residents will work in either Abington or the City of Philadelphia. Nearby communities of Horsham, Upper Dublin, Upper Moreland, and Cheltenham are important but not nearly so much as Abington itself or its adjacency to the City of Philadelphia.

Looking at these data from another perspective, i.e. the place of residence of employees *working in* Abington, we see that for nearly 27% of Abington's employed residents, Abington Township is itself their destination. Philadelphia residents are the next most likely to head toward Abington for work, with 22.7% of the commuter trips to Abington being done by residents of Philadelphia. In sum, nearly half of all employees in Abington are either Abington residents or Philadelphia residents. Table 32 presents the top 20 places where employees who commute into the Township reside, as of the 2000 Census.

**TABLE 32:
Place of Residence of Employees Working in Abington Township
in Rank Order (Top 20), 2000**

Where people who work in Abington Come from...	Count	Percentage	Rank
<i>Total</i>	21,662	(x)	(x)
Abington Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	5,729	26.4%	1
Philadelphia city Philadelphia Co. PA	4,917	22.7%	2
Cheltenham Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	992	4.6%	3
Upper Moreland Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	986	4.6%	4
Upper Dublin Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	590	2.7%	5
Horsham Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	512	2.4%	6
Warminster Twp. Bucks Co. PA	457	2.1%	7
Springfield Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	306	1.4%	8
Upper Southampton Twp. Bucks Co. PA	303	1.4%	9
Jenkintown bor. Montgomery Co. PA	294	1.4%	10
Warrington Twp. Bucks Co. PA	273	1.3%	11
Northampton Twp. Bucks Co. PA	247	1.1%	12
Lower Moreland Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	214	1.0%	13
Bensalem Twp. Bucks Co. PA	212	1.0%	14
Montgomery Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	212	1.0%	15
Whitpain Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	171	0.8%	16
Norristown bor. Montgomery Co. PA	167	0.8%	17
Warwick Twp. Bucks Co. PA	165	0.8%	18
Rockledge bor. Montgomery Co. PA	164	0.8%	19
Hatboro bor. Montgomery Co. PA	161	0.7%	20

Source: US Census, 2000.

Jobs in Abington Township

Related to the above is data on the number of jobs in the Township. What follows below is a presentation of the number (estimated and forecasted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission) of jobs in each area.

**TABLE 33
Estimated and Forecasted Numbers of Jobs in Abington Township, Montgomery
County, and the Counties Comprising the 5-County Region, 1990 – 2020.**

	1990 Census	1997 Est.	2000 Forecast	2010 Forecast	2020 Forecast	2000- 2010 Percent Change	2010- 2020 Percent Change
Abington Township	28,414	26,757	26,350	25,700	25,150	-2.5%	-2.1%
Montgomery Co.	457,501	485,435	491,200	520,250	551,450	5.90%	6.00%
Bucks Co.	245,350	264,010	271,880	296,610	323,470	9.10%	9.10%
Chester Co.	197,752	224,178	230,350	256,600	277,500	11.40%	8.10%
Delaware Co.	230,459	234,406	236,330	249,900	265,900	5.70%	6.40%
Philadelphia Co.	836,874	786,015	786,150	797,750	833,550	1.50%	4.50%
5-County Region	1,967,936	1,994,044	2,015,910	2,121,110	2,251,870	5.20%	6.20%

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Population and Employment Forecasts, 2000-2025, 9-County DVRPC Region, Publication #73, March, 2002.

Growth at the regional level is expected to increase by over 11% in the next 20 years. Abington Township, comparatively, will lose some of its job base though it will remain one of the most important employment destinations in Montgomery County. Forecasts indicate that in 2020, Abington will be the 6th largest employment destination in Montgomery County, and while this does represent a slight drop in ranking from the 3rd largest employment destination in 2000, it does denote the importance of the Township in Montgomery County and the Region overall.

**TABLE 34:
Top 10 Employment Municipalities in Montgomery County, 2000 and 2020.**

Area Name	2000 Forecast	RANK	Area Name	2020 Forecast	RANK
Upper Merion Township	50,600	1	Upper Merion Township	57,800	1
Lower Merion Township	42,850	2	Lower Merion Township	42,150	2
Abington Township	26,350	3	Horsham Township	30,000	3
Horsham Township	26,050	4	Plymouth Township	30,000	4
Plymouth Township	22,850	5	Montgomery Township	28,000	5
Upper Dublin Township	21,000	6	Abington Township	25,150	6
Montgomery Township	20,400	7	Upper Dublin Township	23,800	7
Whitpain Township	19,700	8	Hatfield Township	21,650	8
Upper Moreland Township	17,100	9	Whitpain Township	20,600	9
Hatfield Township	16,250	10	Upper Moreland Township	17,400	10

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Population and Employment Forecasts, 2000-2025, 9-County DVRPC Region, Publication #73, March, 2002.

Chapter 4

NATURAL FEATURES

Topography

Abington Township is located in the Piedmont Province of the Appalachian Upland. It is a gently rolling area with low rounded hills and scattered steep hills and ridges; the slope is generally southeastward. Slope varies little; the average slope is approximately 3-4%. Moderate changes in slope may be found along ridges where slopes may range from 8% - 15+%. Steep slopes in excess of 25% can be found in wooded areas along stream/creek banks. With the exception of the steeper slopes noted above, the topography of the planning area poses little to no restraints on development.

Watersheds

Abington Township is drained by three different major watersheds (the Pennypack, Tacony Creek and Sandy Run Watersheds) which are separated by a series of ridges which bisect the Township. Over half (53%) of the Township drains easterly through Lower Moreland Township and the city of Philadelphia into the Pennypack Creek. The Pennypack Watershed is quite extensive and has a drainage area throughout three counties which is in excess of 55 square miles. The Pennypack Creek and its tributaries (Blair Mill, Southhampton, Huntingdon Valley, and Meadowbrook Creeks) ends with its confluence with the Delaware River. The entire southern portion of the Township (26%) drains southward into Cheltenham Township and into the Tacony Watershed (and to a lesser extent, the Tookany Watershed). The northwestern quadrant (21%) of the Township is drained by the Sandy Run Watershed. The Sandy Run flows through Upper Dublin and Whitemarsh Townships, eventually joining with Wissahickon Creek.

Floodplain and Flooding

Flooding is a naturally occurring and normal process of drainage systems and of the hydrologic cycle in general. Flooding occurs when a heavy rainfall and/or melting snow cause the banks of a stream to overflow. Problems arise only when man-made development stands in the way of, or disrupts normal drainage patterns. As such, flooding and floodplain are important considerations in a Comprehensive Plan because of the problems flooding poses to already developed land and the constraints it places on the future use of undeveloped land.

The manner in which development affects natural drainage is to decrease the permeability of the soil, in many instances rendering it totally impervious (when covered by a building or pavement). Ultimately this leads to a drastic increase in the amount and velocity of water runoff. In addition to actually covering soils, development often results in a significant loss of vegetation that would normally absorb water. Obstructions in the floodway (vegetation, bridges and culverts, fences) increase the flooding situation by causing overbank flows, by restricting flows, and by causing increased water depths behind the obstruction and increased velocities downstream. Together these factors intensify the effects of flooding; normal floodplains are quickly filled up and waters spill over to form new flood-prone areas. The increased flood levels can then endanger properties that may have been previously above base flood elevation. The more development on a floodplain, the greater the level of flooding to the floodplain itself and to adjacent areas.

Any modifications to the environment that increase runoff or disrupt natural protective systems will increase flooding at other locations, particularly downstream of the watershed. Large portions of the Pennypack, Sandy Run and Tacony Watersheds have been rendered impervious by development. Consequently, minor flooding is common along all of the major creeks and tributaries through Abington Township during heavy rainfalls of short duration. But major floods have occurred in the past with varying degrees of damage. In particular, the floods of 1931, 1964, 1996, and 2001 played havoc in the suburban communities surrounding the Pennypack, Neshaminy, Sandy Run, and Perkiomen Creeks. Floods with waters as deep as 2 to 6 feet above street level have occurred in the past. Floods of the same or larger magnitude could occur in the future. Increasingly, as more land is covered by impervious materials, flood levels will be exaggerated. In a 1973 study performed by the Army Corps of Engineers, flood levels were projected to increase to depths of 6 to 9 ½ feet in future floods (due principally to development),

There are a number of areas in Abington Township which are flood-prone. These areas have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the National Flood Insurance program in 1973 and were revised in January of 1991. Some minor changes in flood boundaries are evident, particularly in the Crestmont area where the Township has been engaged in piping, channelization, and stream bank improvements along the upper reaches of the Sandy Run since 1978. Detailed mapping of flood-prone areas within the Township is contained in the Flood Insurance Study prepared by FEMA; 6 map panels show flood hazard and other flood areas. The Township's Engineering Department has copies of the report for public review. It should be noted that the flood areas shown on the map are not necessarily accurate; in fact, the Township challenged some of the information in the 1991 report.

It is evident that development of flood hazard zones is problematic not only to the immediate floodplain, but also the adjacent land. Thus, communities in

Pennsylvania have been given authority to regulate land use and development in these areas via the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Provisions of the MPC give municipalities the power to regulate land use through zoning. Zoning regulations may permit, regulate, restrict and even prohibit land uses in different areas. In fact, the legislation states that one of the primary purposes of zoning is to promote, protect and facilitate the public health, safety and the general welfare. In addition, it specifically states that its (zoning) purpose is to prevent . . . the loss of life or property from fire, flood, or other dangers.

Since the severe flood of 1996, Abington Township has spent \$14,000,000 in flood control projects throughout the Township. These projects include the following:

- Four (4) detention basins in Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary;
- Installation of stormwater pipes throughout the Township;
- Stream improvements along the Sandy Run Creek, Baeder Creek, and Pennypack Creek;

The Township has also purchased 38 homes at a cost of \$7,500,000 as follows: thirteen (13) homes on Madison Avenue (plus two elevations); six (6) homes on Baeder Road; seventeen (17) homes on Wanamaker Road, one (1) home on Irvin Road, and one (1) on Hamel Avenue

The Township has worked with the state and county to improve their highways by contributing money for engineering design plans.

Water Supply and Quality

Abington Township and surrounding communities lie within the Delaware River Basin. The water supply for the area is supplied largely by a private water company: Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. The following information was gathered from a spokesperson for the company and also from a report of the Montgomery County Planning Commission entitled “Montgomery County: Environmental Agenda for the '90's”, written in September of 1990.

Water Supply

Water supplied by Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. is drawn from a number of sources including the Neshaminy, Crum, Perkiomen and Pickering Creeks; the Schuylkill River; 34 in-ground wells and a former limestone quarry. At least two of these wells are located within the Township in the water-producing limestones of the southwest to central portion of Abington. The company also maintains a number of impounding basins (reservoirs) along each of the creeks. Abington Township

is principally supplied from the Neshaminy Creek (Neshaminy Treatment Plant); several single family residences draw water from private wells (predominantly on the east side of the Township such as near Old Ford Road). There are approximately 167 wells supplying sewer customers, predominantly in Wards 8, 5, and 4. Several others are scattered throughout the Township.

Although these resources would seem to provide an ample supply from which to draw water, it is important to remember that the service population of Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. (nearly one million persons, businesses, and industries) also rely on these same sources. In addition, other water companies draw water from these same sources – albeit in different locations. Statistics provided by Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. indicate a maximum safe withdrawal capacity of 120 million gallons of water per day (mgd). In addition, the company has a distribution storage capacity (reservoirs) of 132 mgd. Average customer daily usage is about 88 mgd (approximately 77% of capacity); based upon an average usage of 200 gallons per person per day. Abington Township utilizes in excess of 11 mgd. Using 2004 water consumption data from Aqua Pennsylvania, and extending the average to include wells, the water consumption by Abington sewer consumers (commercial and residential) was about 4.3 mgd, or about 237 gpd per connection (about 80 gpd per person assuming average 3 persons per connection). The total consumption would have to be extended to include non-sewered usage as well. In the past there have been times when customer usage neared Aqua Pennsylvania's capacity—most notably in June of 1988, when demand exceeded 117 mgd; resulting in mandatory water usage restrictions. Abington Township has been fortunate thus far and has escaped water usage bans other municipalities have had to endure.

During periods of drought (particularly during the mid 1950s, early 1960s and early 1980s), water shortages have caused water restrictions to be placed on both residences and businesses. Even individual homeowners with private wells have not been immune from water shortages; many groundwater sources are becoming overtaxed. One of the largest supplies of surface water, the Schuylkill River, has only a limited potential to supply the water needs for the area even at present. Additional use of the Schuylkill River, already the heaviest-used water body in the state, could cause potential ecological harm. Increasing water consumption by residences and businesses and the apparent trend in the region toward a hotter, drier climate may significantly affect future regional water supply. Thus, it is imperative for all municipalities within the region to control water usage.

It is highly unlikely that future development within Abington Township will have, to any measurable degree, any impact on the supply of water. After all, the Township is over 97% developed and lacks large parcels of unused land for large-scale development or industrial growth. With a good water supply and distribution system, Abington's future looks bright. Still, as an important member of the Delaware Valley region, Abington Township should continue to stress conservation and prevent over-usage of this precious resource. In 2004, Abington

Township changed their sewer billing structure to encourage conservation. The sewer billing is now based upon actual use vs. number of fixtures.

Water Quality

The Safe Water Act of 1974 charged the US Environmental Protection Agency with the responsibility of guaranteeing safe drinking water for all citizens and of establishing standards for water purity. Municipalities and industries are required to treat all water wastes and to control other sources of water pollution to help ensure a safe supply of water. The area in which Abington Township lies is highly urbanized, containing large concentrations of population as well as businesses and industries. Regionally, immense amounts of sewage and industrial wastes are generated each day. There are also many sources of so-called “non-point” sources of pollution (sediment, livestock, fertilizers and pesticides, malfunctioning on-lot septic systems, air pollution fallout and roadway runoff) which could degrade water quality. In addition, many groundwater sources are likely to have been contaminated by leaking underground storage tanks and other potentially hazardous wastes. This is why particular attention must be paid to the use of land in the limestone/dolomite area in Ardsley (as mentioned in the geology section), the solution channels in the bedrock make it easy for contaminants to travel directly into the groundwater system. A number of underground storage tanks exist (oil, sewage), and still may be in use in the area. Since 1990, a number of potentially hazardous spills occurred in this section of the Township which could have infiltrated and polluted the groundwater system.

Despite the possibility of surface and groundwater pollution as is evident from the above discussion, Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. has stated that the water it provides meets all of the national water standards set by the EPA. Still, ensuring the quality of future water supplies should be everyone’s concern; every effort should be made to protect and improve water quality.

Natural Features

Land has been developed in Abington Township to such an extent that all but a very few areas are urbanized. In many instances during the early development of Abington, natural vegetation was removed when land was cleared. The consequence of such action is that Abington has lost many of its original woodlands and wildlife habitat. This is not to say that Abington Township is a “concrete city” like most of Philadelphia, indeed it is a far cry from it. Remarkable care has been taken in developing much of the Township. The preponderance of shady, tree lined streets, beautifully landscaped lawns, and significantly wooded properties contribute greatly to the beauty of the community. In addition, scenic natural features have been thoughtfully preserved; these are discussed below.

On a large scale, one of the greatest assets of the Township is the county-run Lorimer Park. Located along the eastern edge of the Township, this passive recreation area contains approximately 183 acres; nearly all of which are heavily wooded. The presence of many steep slopes, several rock outcroppings, and the Pennypack Creek, which meanders through the park, create many picturesque vistas; the park is truly a valuable resource in our community.

Significant wooded sites under the control of the Township include a number of parks which have been left in a predominantly natural state including: Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary, Baederwood Park, Fox Chase Manor Park, Abington Township Bird Sanctuary, Briar Bush Nature Center, Abington Township Game Preserve, the Coates Property, Edge Hill Woods, Evergreen Manor Park, and the Grove Property. In addition to the above noted Township-owned lands, some steeply sloped ridges and stream banks remain heavily wooded. These widely scattered areas bring interest and beauty to the topography and are important for wildlife habitat and drainage.

There are no significant bodies of water in the Township, save for the five acre lake in Alverthorpe Park. However, wetlands and other marshy areas are located throughout the Township, particularly in the floodplain of the Pennypack Creek and in the undeveloped site between Hillside Cemetery and Ardsley Burial Park. These precious natural resources are vital for a number of socioeconomic and environmental quality values including: flood and erosion control, groundwater recharge and water supply, pollutant and sediment removal, oxygen production and nutrient recycling, and provision of essential wildlife habitat.

All efforts should be made to enhance and preserve the natural environment. It is particularly important for Abington Township as it is the intrinsic beauty of the area and the character of the community which make Abington Township such an attractive place to live. Without exercising judicious care, the Township could lose the majority of remaining unspoiled green space. This could impact the community at large and lessen the Township's aesthetic edge over surrounding municipalities. Indiscriminate clear-cutting of trees must be avoided in the future development of Abington.

In the future, due consideration should be given to alternative and less traditional types of development designed to work with the land. An example of such would include clustered developments. Developments such as Tall Trees, Biddle Estates and Alverthorpe Circle have demonstrated that these techniques can be successfully implemented.

Land and Tree Protection

Since the Township is almost completely developed, it is essential that we preserve both green space and the tree canopy. Citizens repeatedly tell us they moved to and continue to live in the Township because of this pleasant environment.

In addition to the very important, yet hard to quantify, psychological benefit of having “breathing room,” open space is essential for both recreation and flood control.

Trees naturally provide beauty; they also have practical and economic benefits. Trees do the following:

- Purify the air
- Cool the air through evaporation
- Block harmful UVA and UVB rays
- Absorb water and help control flooding
- Purify water
- Provide visual buffers
- Reduce traffic speed
- Absorb and help block traffic noise
- Block light and glare
- Serve as wind and snow breaks
- Are home to beneficial wildlife thus decreasing the need for pesticides
- Increase property values
- Provide aesthetically pleasing commercial districts
- Promote community pride

- Reduce building air-conditioning costs
- Lengthen the life of roadways.

The Land and Tree Protection Committee heartily endorses the recommendations made by Urban Research and Development Corporation on various pages in the Open Space Plan of 2006. Among the most notable recommendations are those to:

1. Assemble a short list of high priority sites for potential open space acquisition.
Criteria for the short list: size, development potential, woodland value, open space connection potential, waterway location, active recreation potential, and other criteria (historic value, scenic value)

The subcommittee recommends that Glenside Weldon School have a prominent place on the list for two reasons: 1) open space and stormwater management, and 2) historic preservation of the building

2. Contact major institutions with substantial acreage to determine their potential interest in open space conservation.
3. Acquire more property as needed to help reduce future flood damage.
4. Strengthen the Township’s steep slope protection regulations.

5. Establish streamside buffer regulations.
6. Revise the Township's woodland protection regulations.
7. Mandate buffers around wetlands.

Additional Open Space Plan recommendations the Committee endorses are those for developing New Trail Links (Crestmont Trail, Fairway Trail, Fox Chase Trail extension, building trails within selected Township parks), and those for implementation techniques and funding sources.

Recommendations from the Land and Tree Protection Subcommittee are:

1. Continue to provide support to Township staff and residents through advice and work by volunteers on both the Shade Tree Commission and the Environmental Advisory Council.
2. Continue education and outreach efforts, such as the Street Tree Planting Program. Continue to work with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Tree Vitalize program which deals with the important issue of substantial loss of tree cover in this region.
3. Enhance the Township's list of suggested recommended plantings with additional species, while emphasizing the use of native species and plantings well-adapted to this area.

Chapter 5

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Introduction

Abington's reputation as a prestigious residential community rests to a large degree upon the quality and abundance of community facilities and services provided by the Township for the enjoyment of its residents. If such a standing is to be maintained, the Township must develop and carry out a plan for community facilities consistent with the high standards of living expected by its residents. In this section of the Abington Township Comprehensive Plan, existing community facilities and services are described. Future needs for community facilities/services will be discussed later.

Educational Institutions and Services

Schools

Schools can serve a community in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the school is an educational institution; however, it usually includes facilities for social and physical development as well as academic instruction. Playgrounds, indoor and outdoor recreation areas and facilities, and auditoriums are often available for public use after school hours. Often schools and/or school sites are widely perceived as focal points for the community. The favorable property values in Abington Township are highly dependent upon and reflect the quality public school system operated by the Abington School District.

The provision of school facilities is a dynamic process, continually changing in response to a variety of factors. Obviously, growth and decline in student populations will impact space requirements and overall facility needs as well as meeting academic standards for the 21st century. Facilities must comply with laws requiring accessibility for the physically and mentally disabled and infuse much needed technology and changes in school space to meet curricular requirements. Modifications, extensions, or expansions of traditional curriculum may require the public education system to provide services (and space for such services) previously not part of its programs. Building age and the ability of a structure to be rehabilitated or "modernized" will affect the decision to retain, abandon, or sell a particular site or structure.

In the past ten years, a number of school facilities underwent such additions and renovations as well as construction of new schools to replace aging ones. At the present time the school district operates a total of nine schools, including seven elementary: Copper Beech, Highland, McKinley, Overlook, Roslyn, Rydal East

and West, and Willow Hill; one junior high school and one senior high school. Four buildings were renovated and received additions in the late 1990s, including Abington Senior High, Abington Junior High School, Rydal East and West and McKinley Elementary Schools. Needed classroom and specialized space was provided as well as new libraries and a gymnasium at the high school. Copper Beech, a brand new elementary school replaced Glenside-Weldon Elementary School and was opened in January 2002. Highland and Overlook Elementary Schools were rebuilt and reopened in September 2005. The new Field Facility on the Abington School District main campus, Schwarzman Stadium, opened in September 2005. Roslyn Elementary School was demolished and a new building is currently under construction and will be reopened in Fall 2007. Extensive renovations and additions to the Willow Hill Elementary School are currently underway with the school scheduled for completion in 2007. The Abington Senior High School Auditorium is undergoing an extensive renovation and will be completed in late Spring 2007. These building plans are the culmination of extensive study and involvement by staff, parents, community members and Township officials. They are a source of pride as Abington School District's facilities maintain the high standards of this community and reflect state-of-the-art-design.

Abington School District has had a very stable population since the 1990s. Approximately 3,500 to 3,700 elementary students and approximately 3,700 to 4,000 secondary children constitute the enrollment. The total enrollment for the last five years ranged from 7,300 to 7,500 students. The Township has enjoyed some re-seeding of young families in existing housing and a modest amount of new residential development. A portion of the growth population of school age children attend independent schools, approximately 2,000 children per year. Table 35, "Abington School District: Schools 2005 Enrollment Capacity," provides the official 2005 enrollment for each school and the Pennsylvania Department of Education's rated capacity. It is anticipated that the additions, renovations and new facilities will accommodate the projected school age population for years to come.

TABLE 35
ABINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT: SCHOOLS 2005
ENROLLMENT CAPACITY

School	<u>Enrollment 2005*</u>	<u>PDE Rated Capacity**</u>
Elementary (Grade K-6)		
Copper Beech	902	1,225
Highland	412	550
McKinley	608	800
Overlook	390	550
Roslyn	467	550
Rydal (East & West)	481	675
Willow Hill	346	550
Junior High School (Grades 7-9)		
Abington Junior High	1,935	2,102
Senior High School (Grades 10-12)		
Abington Senior High	1,984	2,013
TOTAL	7,525	9,015

Source: *Abington School District
**Pennsylvania Department of Education

PRIVATE SCHOOLS – MARCH 2007

<u>School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
Abington Friends	700
Center School	96
Manor College	800
Meadowbrook School	188
Our Lady Help of Christians School	230
Penn State University, Ogontz Campus	3000
St. Basil's Academy	397
St. Hilary of Poitiers School	215
St. John of the Cross School	210
St. Luke's School	325
Ukrainian Educational & Cultural Center	350

The Abington School District facilities plans are now complete and provide quality educational programs. Class size is optimal for student achievement, and all schools will have dedicated space for libraries, computer laboratories, science,

music and art instruction. Technology has been included in all infrastructures so classrooms are connected for video, voice and data. Plans are in progress to install a wide area fiber network for all Abington School District buildings to upgrade technology access. Future capital projects include renovation of the Junior High School Little Theatre and continued upgrades in the school district infrastructure.

The Abington School District is a premier school system earning many state and national awards. Many of the schools have earned blue ribbon status, and staff members have received state and national recognition for excellence in education. The system has been recognized as a district which has exemplary safe and drug-free programs and complimented for its outstanding service learning initiative. The students continue to amass scholastic, athletic and arts-related honors bringing much acclaim to the community. All curricular areas are based upon rigorous academic standards to ensure academic proficiency.

The Abington School District has accomplished much with a fiscally responsible approach and focused eye on spending. Though the honors are top ranked, the budget is disciplined to be mid-level in Montgomery County. In June 2006 the Pennsylvania legislature voted into law Act I, an act designed to restructure the way in which taxes are collected to fund public schools in the Commonwealth. Heretofore, property taxes were the sole source of school income. Going forward, this legislation could have a significant impact on Township residents. Until the Abington School District as well as the other 500 school districts in the State work with this legislation as they prepare their budgets, it is difficult to say how school programs and personnel will be affected. In summary, the Abington School District adds much to the community as well as enjoys an outstanding relationship with the Abington Police Department and the Abington Township Commissioners.

Higher Education

Abington Township is home to two higher education facilities, Manor College and Penn State, the Abington College of the Pennsylvania State University.

Manor College, a private, two-year, co-ed, Catholic college founded in 1947 by the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great, offers 10 programs with 24 majors/concentrations leading to Associate degrees, five certificate programs, one diploma program and numerous transfer programs through its three divisions: Allied Health/Science/Math, Business and Liberal Arts. With an enrollment of approximately 800 students, is able to provide its students with a 13:1 student-teacher ratio and the convenience of class scheduling with day, evening, Saturday and on-line courses offered. Internships and externships combine theory with practice, ensuring mobility and future advancement. Further, Manor has articulation and Dual Admissions agreements allowing Manor graduates to transfer to four-year institutions to receive a Bachelor's degree without losing time or credits. Programs include: Accounting, Business

Administration, Communications, Computer Science, Dental Hygiene, Early Child Care, Expanded Functions Dental Assisting, International Business, Legal Nurse Consulting, Liberal Arts, Marketing, Paralegal, and Veterinary Technology. Believing learning is a lifelong endeavor, Manor boasts a very active Continuing Education department offering seminars and workshops for professional development and personal enrichment. Students may live on or off-campus and have a number of clubs to join, including the Theatre Guild, the International Club and two national Honor Societies. Manor also has men's and women's basketball and soccer.

Penn State's forty-five acre campus, which lies in the heart of the Township, is utilized by approximately 3,200 day and evening students, with over a hundred full-time and a host of part-time faculty. Penn State Abington offers 2-year programs that allow students to complete their degree at another Penn State campus, and baccalaureate degrees in Administration of Justice, American Studies, Business, Corporate Communication, English, History, Information Sciences and Technology, Integrative Arts, Letters, Arts and Sciences, Organizational Leadership, Psychological and Social Sciences, Science, and Science Education, as well as associate degrees in Business Administration and Letters, Arts and Sciences. A range of student activities, including intramural and four-year intercollegiate athletics, are offered.

Libraries

The Abington Township Public Library was founded in 1971. It has evolved from the Roslyn Branch and a small portion of the Best Building at 1030 Old York Road into a cultural and informational center, with a collection in excess of 130,000 volumes and a host of services and programming for adults and children. The Library serves the informational, professional, educational and recreational needs of Abington Township's diverse, multicultural community. Abington Free Library's building of 23,000 square feet houses more than 131,000 books, ranging from current best-sellers to the latest in popular psychology, history and medicine, as well as more than 325 magazines and newsletters. An extensive reference collection includes encyclopedias, indexes and current business services such as Standard & Poor's, Mergent, Morningstar Mutual Funds, and Value Line. Through provision of the Commonwealth Libraries Power Library Databases, citizens have access to business, health, encyclopedias, literature, and magazine/newspaper articles on general, business, and health topics. All of these databases are available at public access computers in the Library, and the majority is also available to Abington cardholders through remote access at home, work, school, or anywhere Internet access is available.

In addition to books, Library patrons also may borrow DVDs/videos, audio books, and compact discs. Special needs patrons have available large print books, audio books and library-based vision-enhancement system. Homebound service is available for Abington residents unable to come to the Library because of illness or physical disability. The Library also offers services and materials outside the

scope of our current collection through our affiliation with the Montgomery County Library and Information Consortium (MCLINC). Librarians use this interlibrary loan network to obtain a range of books and other information not readily available at the Library. Through our membership in the Montgomery County District, we are able to utilize reference services provided by the Montgomery County/Norristown Library.

The Library provides a variety of additional services including electric typewriters, Internet access stations and photocopying machines, six IBM-compatible computers with linked laser printer and color laser printer Library users in the Friends Computer Center. The Children's Department has two IBM-compatible computers, with educational software installed, for use by children. The library sponsored website lists programs, booklists, and access to the Polaris Online Library Catalog, which is shared with 13 other libraries in Montgomery County.

Library programs are presented in the Gerstley Meeting Room, a facility seating 100 people, equipped with a sound system and video projection system with Internet access. The meeting room has moveable walls and will convert to three smaller rooms as needed. The meeting areas are also reserved by community groups for their meetings and activities. The Shorday Room, on the first floor, is used by citizens for quiet study.

The Children's Department offers year-round reading programs. Regularly scheduled children's activities include creative writing classes, arts and crafts, and preschool story hours. The Roslyn Branch staff conducts outreach services for disabled and homebound residents.

The Abington Free Library Children's Department has a collection of over 40,000 books as well as compact discs, CD-ROMs, multi-media kits, and videos/DVDs for children to check out. The Children's Department offers year-round reading programs, art contests and regularly scheduled preschool story hours, as well as arts and crafts classes.

The Abington Free Library is open 10:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Saturday, and 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. Sunday (September until July 30). In August, the library closes on Sunday.

Recreational/Cultural Facilities

The responsibility for providing leisure opportunities is normally shared by the public and private sectors in most communities. Abington Township has a primary role in the location, preservation, and design of open space; the development of recreational facilities; and the delivery of social programs to serve

the leisure needs of the public. Many municipalities are still playing catch-up, probably because they didn't plan adequately enough to provide park systems. But Abington Township has been very fortunate with regard to its foresight; the Township abounds in recreational facilities. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation maintains over 333 acres of park land; providing Township residents with abundant recreation and leisure-time opportunities.

Recreational facilities are usually classified according to whether their uses are active or passive. The most common type of passive recreational facilities are open space and natural areas. Natural areas are primarily left in a natural state, offering a peaceful respite from the hectic pace of today's society. Often a focal point for environmental and natural history education, they are also areas to simply enjoy natural beauty. Open space areas are not just vacant or underutilized land, nature is a legitimate use in its own right and represents important societal values. Open space performs useful functions such as water purification and storage, natural "air-scrubbers", flood control, erosion control, and wildlife habitat. In Abington there are a number of these natural open space areas to enjoy (see Table 37).

Other recreational areas are more active. The usual park amenities (such as picnic areas, tennis courts, athletic fields, play equipment, hiking and bike trails) are supplemented in Abington by a unique variety of additional facilities including: A golf course, swimming pools, lake, ice skating rinks, and two Township recreation/education/cultural centers. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation also offers year-round free and low-cost recreational programs to the community. Table 37 provides a brief summary of the parks and facilities available through the Township. Montgomery County also provides a quality park system which includes a major (regional) park within the Township; Lorimer Park lies along the eastern edge of Abington. The County park has been supplemented by adjoining park land owned by Abington Township and Philadelphia. The passive recreation area includes hiking trails and picnic facilities.

Other recreational amenities available in Abington Township include three sizable private golf courses: the Abington Club, Huntingdon Valley Country Club, and Meadowbrook. The YMCA (located on the corner of Old York Road and Susquehanna) offers gymnasiums, fitness equipment, swimming pool, and numerous recreational programs. Numerous athletic associations offer organized participation and competition in various sports including swimming, football, volleyball, baseball, softball, basketball, and soccer. Active scouting programs for girls and boys alike round out the recreational experiences available in the Township.

The myriad of parks, facilities, and programs (as noted above) operated by Abington Township is quite impressive. Still, the question arises as to whether the current facilities sufficiently meet the needs of the existing and future populations. If not, what else may be needed? The answer to these and other questions comes through the process of recreational planning. Recreation planning is a specialized field of planning which relates people (and their

behavior) to leisure time, and space -- all within the context of changing social needs and political priorities of a community.

The comprehensive plan provides the basis for a community's recreation plan and should be completed first. It provides general concepts and goals for the social and physical development of an area. The recreation plan details a community's recreation needs with specific recommendations for land acquisition, facility development, maintenance, and financing, that are not normally a part of the comprehensive plan; but the two efforts should complement each other. Abington Township has taken another important step in planning for its future by initiating the formulation of a recreation plan. The Open Space and Recreational Plan was completed in 2006.

Culture

Within Abington Township are many opportunities for cultural experiences and growth. Aside from the arts and crafts programs offered through the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, a number of other cultural activities are available. Foremost among these is the Abington Art Center at Alverthorpe Manor. The Center offers studio instruction in the visual arts and dance, as well as a variety of workshops, critiques, lectures, symposia, and bus trips. Musical enlightenment is available through the Settlement Music School, Old York Road Symphony, Abington Choral Club, and the Music Theater of Abington. In addition to these cultural resources, the renowned Keswick Theater and the Willow Manor Players Theater provide opportunities to enjoy music, comedy, dance and drama.

Table 36 SUMMARY OF ABINGTON TOWNSHIP PARK & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

PARKS

Alverthorpe Park: 116 acre community level park. Includes golf, tennis, multipurpose, playground equipment, wading pool, tricycle track, lake with boating, athletic fields, bike and walking trails, picnic, and shelter facilities.

Ardley Park: 10.84 acre neighborhood park. Includes tennis, multipurpose, ball field, walking path, playground equipment and shelter facilities.

Baederwood Park: 26.10 acre neighborhood park. Facilities include ice skating rink, playground equipment, nature trails, and picnic areas.

Conway Field: 2.5 acre neighborhood park. Facilities include athletic fields and a clubhouse.

Crestmont Park: 19.40 acre neighborhood park. Includes basketball courts, ice skating rink, swimming pool, ball fields, natural area and shelter building.

Elk Street Park: .25 acre tot lot.

Ethel Jordan Park: 3.65 acre neighborhood park. Facilities include playground equipment, basketball court, and ball field.

North Hills Playground: 3.2 acre site located on Pine Avenue, between Central and Tennis Avenues. Two baseball/softball fields, a tee ball field, playground, and pavilion are situated within the park. The specially named Dennis P. Dougherty Memorial Park portion of this site is located across Tennis Avenue from the main tract.

Penbryn Park: 18.58 acre neighborhood park. Facilities include swimming pool, playground equipment, tennis courts, ice skating rink, athletic field, ball fields, basketball court, nature trails, picnic area and shelter building.

Rockwell Park: 1.22 acre park site with ball field and playground equipment.

Roslyn Park: 17.55 acre neighborhood park. Includes ball fields, athletic fields, multipurpose area, walking path, playground equipment, and shelter building.

Roychester Park: 12.72 acre neighborhood park with ball fields, tennis courts, ice skating rink, playground equipment, community house, and picnic facilities.

Rubicam Avenue Park: 3.5 acre site with basketball court, ball field, playground equipment, and picnic facilities.

NATURAL AREAS

Abington Township Bird Sanctuary: 16.8 acres.
 Briar Bush Wildlife Sanctuary: 12 acres.
 Coates Property: 10 acres (leased)
 Abington Township Game Preserve: 13.94 acres.
 Edge Hill Woods: 10 acres
 Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary: 80 acres
 Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary

OPEN SPACE AREAS AND UNDEVELOPED PARK LANDS

Evergreen Manor Park: 12 acres.
 Fox Chase Manor Park: 10 acres.
 Scott Park: .5 acre.
 Grove Property: 9 acres
 War Memorial Island: 1.26 acres.
 Baeder Triangle
 Hallowell Island
 Tyson Green
 Tyson Avenue right-of-way
 Melmar Avenue Basin
 Franklin & Hamilton Triangle

TOWNSHIP CENTERS

Alverthorpe Manor
 Ardsley Community Education Center
 Briar Bush Nature Center

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFERED**

Recreational programs for children and developmentally disabled.
 Tennis, swimming, street hockey.
 Ski trips, golf tournaments.
 Senior citizen programs.
 Environmental education programs.
 Special events (Easter egg hunt, fishing derby, bus trips)
 Organized sports activities
 (basketball, soccer, softball leagues) - run by the numerous athletic associations of the Township.

**Programs offered by the Bureau of Parks and Recreation are adjusted seasonally and also according to the demand for particular types of activities. As such, the listing herein is representative of the types of programs offered at the time of this writing and is subject to change.

Data Source: Abington Bureau of Parks and Recreation

Police and Fire Protection

Police

The Abington Township Police Department, established as a “night watch” in 1906, is now composed of 91 sworn officers and approximately 40 civilian employees. In 2002, the Police Department became the first law enforcement agency in Pennsylvania to receive accreditation under a new statewide system of standards. In 2003, the Abington Police Department received international accreditation status from the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), becoming the first police department in the Commonwealth to receive both honors. In particular, CALEA recognized Abington’s Victim Assistant and Internet Safety initiatives as model programs. In March 2006, the Police Department received its re-accreditation.

Along with its law enforcement and crime prevention missions, the Abington Township Police Department is deeply committed to the youth of the community, maintaining a strong presence in local schools. Full-time School Resource Officers are assigned to Abington’s Junior and Senior High Schools, and trained DARE Officers serve as role models for children in all of Abington’s public and parochial elementary schools. When they are not in school, an active Police Athletic League program provides wholesome recreational activities for children. Despite the Police Department’s best efforts however, children do occasionally stray. Those who commit minor offenses have the option to avoid the Juvenile Court system by appearing before the Abington Youth Aid Panel. Developed and coordinated by the Police Department, the Youth Aid Panel is staffed by community volunteers dedicated to preventing serious juvenile delinquency. Children who appear before the panel typically make amends and are given community service.

In addition to its continued support of Abington’s youth through the DARE and Youth Aid programs, new programs have been initiated to place special emphasis on the protection of Abington’s senior citizens. New enforcement practices have been initiated that are designed to bring attention and resources to sites of troublesome traffic violation patterns. Cop Stat is another Abington Police Department initiative designed to provide continuity to local police patrol practices ensuring that there are specific officers and commanders who retain long-term responsibility for individual areas within the community.

The Police Department is a technology leader as well. Officers can access data through their in-car computers, which are connected wirelessly to the Police Department’s records system. Sophisticated incident mapping software lets officers and detectives quickly detect and counteract patterns of criminal

behavior. The Police Department is presently planning for the replacement of its computerized system with a new state of the art computerized system.

The Police Department is also a leader in intelligence and information sharing among local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. It hosts a monthly crime sharing conference, which is regularly and heavily attended by local and federal officials and supervisors to all of Abington. Significantly, the leadership of the Abington Police Department participates at the policy making level of the Maglocen Group, a regional information sharing system.

Fire

The Abington Township Fire Department has been protecting the citizens of Abington Township since 1889. The Department consists of five independent volunteer fire companies: Abington Fire Company (founded 1889), Weldon – 1904, McKinley – 1906, Edge Hill – 1908 and Roslyn – 1921. Approximately 230 volunteer firefighters handle an average of 1,800 calls for service per year. In addition to traditional firefighting, the fire department also has qualified personnel trained for vehicle, trench, building collapse, confined space, water rescue and hazardous materials incidents. It is highly unusual that a community of Abington's size and complexity has been able to maintain an all-volunteer suppression force when most communities half this size have already begun the transition to a paid force. The challenge for the future will be to maintain the professional all-volunteer force versus the more expensive paid alternative.

The Department operates a fleet of ten modern pumpers, four aerial trucks, a heavy rescue truck, an air truck with compressor and several small utility trucks. Each individual Fire Company has a chief and additional line officers and a president and executive officers. Three companies have fire police.

The Department also provides mutual aid to neighboring communities. The Department participates in both planning and practice drills at the local emergency management level. Several members of the department are certified Fire Officers at the national level and the Department is certified at operations level with the Pennsylvania State Voluntary Rescue Certification Program. The Abington Township Fire Department was recognized on October 5, 2006 by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner for certifying 75 percent (currently at 80%) of its members to the National Professional Qualifications Standards.

The Fire Department is currently undergoing self-assessment with the goal of national accreditation. The Fire Department is funded by a combination of a fire real estate tax and fundraising efforts. All Fire Companies in the Department have a junior member program that follows Pennsylvania State Law taking members in at 16 years of age. The Abington Township Fire Department is engaged in a vigorous recruitment and retention campaign, which is centered upon providing high levels of training and a new length of service awards program.

The department recently achieved a rating upgrade from 5 to 4 by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) placing it in the top 10% nationally. In addition, the Department is currently pursuing national accreditation by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) by proactively building up on the core competencies therein and master planning.

Emergency Management

Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Act and more recently the Homeland Security Act, Abington Township has established a well-conceived emergency management program. In 1992, Abington Township along with several neighboring communities formed the Eastern Montgomery County Emergency Management Group to work together as partners in all phases of disasters and emergencies. Since then, the Group has grown to include 12 municipalities, as well as local hospitals, school districts, the Red Cross and major industrial and utility partners. There are many examples of the success of this partnership, including coordination for planned major events, such as Y2K, the Republican National Convention, high performance air shows, such as the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds, response and recovery coordination from Tropical Storm Allison, and the current terrorism alert and anthrax crises. In fact, in 2002, the Governor's Award for Excellence in Local Government was presented to Eastern Montgomery County Regional Emergency Management Group.

In accordance with State and Federal directives, an emergency management plan has been created, a management coordinator nominated, and an emergency operations center established. Currently, the Abington Emergency Management and Planning Organization includes representatives of the Police Department, Abington Fire Company, McKinley Fire Company, Weldon Fire Company, Edge Hill Fire Company, Roslyn Fire Company, Second Alarmers Rescue Squad, Haz-Mat Team 919, Public Works Department, Code Enforcement Department, Abington Memorial Hospital, Holy Redeemer Hospital, American Red Cross.

The plan is updated regularly and an emergency management council consisting of the leadership of the Police Department, Fire Department and the Emergency Management Administrator meets three times per year. The Emergency Management Administrator reports directly to the chief of the Police Department, and has his sole function as emergency management. He has maintained a current library of all relevant emergency management contacts, all of which are well organized and readily accessible. Abington Township has been a leader in emergency management throughout the region, and has maintained regional cooperation partnerships with all surrounding communities. Personal communication and contact with all adjacent departments, county, state and federal agencies occurs on a frequent basis. The Emergency Management Administrator publishes a monthly activity report, which he provides to the Abington Township Commissioners. The Abington Township Police Chief is the

co-chair of the regional emergency management council, and is one of two coordinators for Montgomery County.

The Emergency Operations Center has been manned on many occasions, and has been involved in all federal disaster planning, usually weather related. All major regional events have been the subject of emergency management planning, including Presidential visits and preparation for Superbowl celebration.

Public Utilities

Water

Water is supplied throughout the Township by Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc.; water service extends into every corner of the Township. Supplies of water are adequate to meet present needs and seem to be sufficient to also meet future water needs and demands.

It should be noted that the Township has virtually no control over public water supply; it is regulated by the Public Utilities Commission (of Pennsylvania).

Sewer and Wastewater Treatment

Abington Township Wastewater Utilities is a department of Abington Township, and is responsible for improvements, upgrading, and maintenance of the wastewater system. These projects are funded by sewer fees collected by Abington Township and through municipal bonds issued by the Township.

Virtually all of the built-up areas of Abington Township (99.99) are served by public sanitary sewers; a small portion of Abington Township remains unsewered. Those properties not serviced by public sewer rely on on-site septic systems or small, private package treatment plants (Meadowbrook Apartments).

Abington has met the long range plan for the extension of public sewers throughout the entire Township and now faces the task of replacing the over-aged sanitary system.

Phase 1 replaced sewers in Glenside at a cost of \$13,000,000.

Phase II included part of Ardsley at a cost of \$6,800,000.

Ongoing metering and inspection activities have identified areas of concern, and these activities will continue until all of the older portions of the system have been completed. Priorities for rehabilitation work will be established on the basis of this information and on any occurrences that may represent a threat to public health and safety.

Waste from the over 18,250 sewer connections is handled by either the Township's own facilities or by the city of Philadelphia (via an intergovernmental agreement). Sewage collected from approximately 125 miles of lines throughout the western and central portions of the Township is treated by the Township at the Fitzwatertown Road Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant, which was constructed in 1947 and underwent a major upgrade in 1981, provides tertiary treatment.

The current capacity of the Abington Township Wastewater Treatment Plant is 3.91 million gallons per day (MGD). Discharge from the plant is regulated by the maximum flow rate permitted to be emptied into the Sandy Run Creek. At this time the discharge produced by the Wastewater Treatment Plant is at 3.155 MGD, which is 80.7% of the maximum annual average permitted flow of 3.91 MGD.

Given existing conditions of the wastewater infrastructure the Abington Township Wastewater Treatment Plant is operating at or near maximum capacity. Without improvements to the wastewater treatment system, additional flow to the system can not be accommodated. Much of the wastewater infrastructure is older and experiences inflow and infiltration from rain events which effectively limit or reduce the capacity of the treatment plant to receive additional wastewater. Repair and/or replacement of the existing wastewater piping is estimated to cost between \$150.00 to \$300.00 per foot. It should also be recognized that infrastructure repair is ongoing. Currently, expenditures in excess of one million dollars per year are projected for sewer infrastructure repairs.

In the east side of the Township, there are two drainage basins tributary to Philadelphia. The Tookany Basin lies along the southern border of the Township and is densely built-out. The Tookany Drainage Basin discharges into the Cheltenham collection system through which it is transported to Philadelphia. Cheltenham is currently under a moratorium imposed by the DEP which prohibits any new connections in Abington in that portion of the system. Flow monitoring is planned in order to establish the extent to which problems in Cheltenham are attributable to the Abington system. These results will then be used to project the need for infrastructure repair and maintenance in this area. It should be noted the sewers in Glenside have all been replaced in the 1990's.

The remaining portions of the eastern half of Abington Township produce wastewater which is discharged to a treatment plant in Philadelphia. These areas are located primarily in areas currently zoned as single family housing on one acre lots. The lower density of larger lots and single family homes do not substantially increase wastewater. Currently, wastewater from Abington Township piped to Philadelphia for treatment is limited by the agreement with the City of Philadelphia. Significant unused capacity in the Philadelphia system remains allocated for exclusive use by Abington Township.

The Abington Township Wastewater Treatment Plant is located in Upper Dublin Township. Wastewater from Upper Dublin is directed to the Abington Township

Wastewater Treatment Plant. The amount is controlled by an agreement with Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority which has been in place since 1950. The last five-year average flow from the Bucks Authority was 360,805 gallons per day, while the agreement allocates the equivalent of 250,000 gallons per day (2,500 capita). Therefore, the last five-year average flow from the Bucks Authority was 144 % of their capacity. A new agreement is currently being negotiated. The agreement with Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority needs to limit discharge to the treatment plant to an agreed upon maximum flow.

With the capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Facility currently at or near capacity, future development within Abington Township will require upgrading the wastewater system.

A number of strategies were presented to increase capacity to treat wastewater:

1. An equalization basin is planned and funded, but it will not reduce the use of treatment capacity, since the same total amount of wastewater will be treated over a longer period of time. The basin would reduce basement drain backup and overflow from the system during peak rain flow events. The increase flow rates would be “held” in a basin to allow treatment over time to allow an acceptable rate of discharge through the wastewater treatment plant.
2. As noted above, infrastructure repairs are expected to increase the capacity of the system to accept wastewater.
3. An option to be pursued is a “maximum month” provision in the NPDES permit, which will allow the Treatment Plant to exceed the annual permitted average flow during wet months as long as the annual average remains within the limit.
4. Additional capacity was obtained in 1996 by redirecting the Rydal pump station and in 2004 by redirecting the Huntingdon Road pump station. If necessary, the Brentwood pump station may be redirected to Rydal, then to Philadelphia.
5. Abington Township may petition the DEP to increase the hydraulic capacity of the treatment plant if the level of treatment is improved such that there is no change in pollutant loading to the stream.
6. A strategy to finance infrastructure repair is to issue a 15-year bond every five years, and use the proceeds to upgrade collection and treatment facilities.

It was estimated that if leaks and inflows into the system could be corrected an additional 500,000 to 750,000 gallons of treatment capacity could be harvested.

Construction of an equalization system is based on a metering study which has a ten year planning horizon.

The operation and discharge from the Abington Township Wastewater Treatment Plant is required to comply with regulations promulgated by the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency and enforced by the PA Department of Environmental Protection. There is currently an upgrade of facilities in design to allow the treatment plant to meet federally mandated discharge standards for nitrogen, phosphorus, and biochemical oxygen demand. The need for more stringent requirements is occasioned by the EPA mandated TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) study of the Wissahickon watershed, which indicates that current levels of phosphorus need to be reduced, and that it can be done most effectively by regulating wastewater treatment plants. A driving factor in the TMDL study is the reduction of algae growth in the stream. This can be aided by a shade canopy along the stream, however, neither the DEP nor Abington Township has the ability to control or enforce this.

The following actions should be taken:

1. Maintenance budget on the existing system has been increased to reduce or eliminate inflows caused by rain events. Current plans to issue bonds for infrastructure repair every 5 years should be implemented. The effect of increased sewer rates to pay for this work should be evaluated and balanced with other planning goals for the Township
2. Current efforts to construct a holding tank should be completed.
3. The agreement with Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority to receive wastewater should be renegotiated in the very near future.
4. Pursue a “maximum month” provision in the NPDES permit for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
5. Dry weather overflows occur more frequently than wet weather overflows, and solutions in the form of structural repairs, ordinances, enforcement, public education and routine system maintenance should be a part of the plan.
6. There should be a discussion of future sewerage needs, in conjunction with land use and other recommendations elsewhere in the plan. The capacity discussion needs to be grounded in numeric projections in order to quantify the capacity needs and plan for them.

Based on the scientific consensus on the magnitude and imminence of climate change, a plan of this nature should address the issue where appropriate. In the

area of wastewater treatment, there has not been much work done, but the treatment process consists of converting water borne wastes into greenhouse gases, consuming a large amount of energy to do so. Planned changes in the system include capture of methane gas for energy production and pretreatment of waste sludge to increase methane yield. Future developments may include using plants for a part of the treatment process, or separation of the waste stream at the source with on site treatment and/or reuse of a portion of the wastes.

Storm Water Management

The flood control problems in Abington Township are currently under control, and will remain so for the foreseeable future. This comes after the Township purchase of approximately 38 flooded homes, the elevation of a two others, and the addition of detention basins. However, the caveat is that each new structure built will have a ripple effect in other locations from where the new structure is located, resulting in a tremendous stormwater run-off problem. One example is the Brentwood area. These homes were built with the understanding that they would be capable of dealing with the 10 year storm. However, once what is now the Target shopping area was built on former farmland, there was major flooding where the farmland was no longer present to absorb the run-off. The cost to the Township was \$3 million in resulting stormwater run-off. The first way to control stormwater run-off costs in the Township is not to build on any of the remaining pervious open spaces in Abington.

1. The Tookany Creek area, the horse farm, and the 5 acres near Alverthorpe Park serve a crucial role in the storm water management of their surrounding neighborhoods. Development upon these properties must be limited as not to adversely affect this vital balance.
2. The fields at the old Glenside-Weldon Elementary School should not be built upon as per the above.
3. Regarding the Standard Pressed Steel Building, most of the area was already impervious, and therefore would not pose any new problems regarding storm water management, as long as the impervious footprint is maintained; however, the area also contains approximately one to two acres of fields, which are currently used as play areas. It is suggested that the open space remain intact, for if built upon, the stormwater problem will increase.
4. The residential areas which are currently of most concern are yard floods in Brentwood and Ridgewood Avenue, as well as Keswick Avenue. Regarding the flooding issue at Washington Avenue and Rubicam Avenue, it is a two-phase construction project to try to get it under control. In 2007 it is projected to lay the sewer pipe, and in 2008 perform the street reconstruction.

5. Other than the bridges that need to be replaced in the Rydal-Meadowbrook area (Washington Lane Culvert, Meadowbrook Rd. and Paul Brook Rd.), that area is relatively stable. However, if a proposed 500 unit complex should be built at Baederwood, there will be a tremendous stormwater run-off problem as a result. Additionally, there are no sanitary sewer lines in place, and no additional sewer capacity to send to Philadelphia.

Abington needs to address additional management techniques of the current stormwater run-off which occurs during periods of rain and storms. Additionally, an inexpensive and relatively easy way to help with stormwater run-off is the increased use of trees. Research has shown the dramatic effect on economics by use of trees in a community. Development increases hard, non-evaporative surfaces and decreases soil infiltration, which increases water volume, velocity and pollution load of run-off and also increases water quality losses, erosion, and flooding. Community tree cover intercepts, slows, evaporates, and stores water through normal tree functions, soil surface protection, and soil area of biologically active surfaces. Some statistics in this regard include:

- 7% of winter precipitation is intercepted and evaporated by deciduous trees;
- 22% of winter precipitation is intercepted and evaporated by evergreen trees;
- 18% of growing season precipitation is intercepted and evaporated by all trees;
- For every 5% of tree cover area added, run-off is reduced approximately 2%;
- 7% volume reduction in 6-hours storm flow by community tree canopies;
- 17% (11.3 million gallons) run-off reduction from a 12-hour storm with tree canopies in a medium-sized city resulting in \$226,000 avoided run-off water control costs. (Coder, Rim D., Identified Benefits of Community Trees and Forests, U. of GA., 1996.)

Trees facilitate more rapid absorption and capture of water in the soil. Where trees grow, only 4% of annual precipitation is lost to surface runoff. In contrast, soils without trees absorb and capture less total volume of water and lose nearly 35% to surface runoff. According to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, the nation loses more than five billion tons of soil annually to erosion. The problem is more severe in developed urban areas than on forested land. The absence of removal of trees is a major factor. Removal results in sedimentation of waterways, degradation of water quality, and reduction of watershed storage capacity. In addition to protecting water availability and quality, trees can offset the demand for irrigation of urban landscapes. A case in point is turf grass - water consumption of turf can be reduced by 20% where covered by shade trees. (Rutherford, William, The Urban Forest and Water Conservation, Salt Lake City Forester, May, 2001.)

Shade from mature trees does far more than reduce water demand of landscape plants. Recently NASA completed an evaluation of Salt Lake City's heat profile. One of the reports most prominent recommendations was to plant more trees. The benefits from doing so are not limited to cooler and cleaner air, but have a direct bearing on water conservancy. Air temperature near soil surfaces that are not sheltered by trees can be 20 to 30 degrees F warmer than the surrounding air. This not only increases soil temperature and reduces moisture content, but also impedes recovery from drying out and reduces viability of the soil to support plant material. (Rutherford). Therefore, additional trees would directly decrease potential for water restrictions in the summer as a result of droughts.

Abington currently works with surrounding and more distant townships on water management. It is noted that given the three watersheds in our community, (Pennypack, Tookany, and Sandy Run) much water "begins in and leaves Abington". Abington has a good working relationship with many, but not all, of the surrounding and nearby townships. Development and construction in surrounding areas outside of our Township has a direct impact on water management in our Township, i.e., increased construction leads to increased water run-off from nearby townships, and that water runs into Abington Township. Therefore, Abington must find a way to work with other townships in order to have effective stormwater management in the future.

LEED template is used by architects and builders to enhance erosion and sedimentation control, reducing site disturbance, effective stormwater management, use of water efficiency materials and resources, and monitoring of indoor environmental quality. All new building in the Township should be LEED certified at a minimum, and incentives be given so this status can be achieved. Doing so will help not only in stormwater management, but will improve the overall quality of life in Abington Township.

The following actions should be taken:

1. Add restrictions to prevent building upon remaining open space in the Township, and/or Township purchase of these remaining areas. As was stated in the 1992 Planning Comprehensive Plan:
It is evident that development of flood hazard zones is problematic not only to the immediate floodplain, but also to adjacent land. Thus, communities in PA have been given authority to regulate land use and development in these areas via Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Provisions of the MPC gives municipalities the power to regulate land use through zoning. Zoning regulations may permit, regulate, restrict and even prohibit land uses in different areas. In fact, the legislation states that one of the primary purposes of zoning is to promote, protect and facilitate the public health, safety and the general welfare. In addition, it specifically states that its (zoning) purposes is to

prevent...the loss of life or property from fire, flood, or other dangers.

2. Implement and add to restrictions placed in the Stormwater Ordinance adopted by the Township in May, 2004, which includes decreasing the amount of stormwater run-off from individual properties. Ways to further reduce run-off include:
 - a. decreasing roof run-off with the use of roof drains to discharge to vegetative areas or lawns, which creates a filter strip for the water;
 - b. using mandatory rain barrels on new construction and new additions to existing homes, and using pervious paving materials;
 - c. encouraging the building of “green roofs” on flat roofs built in the Township especially those with roofs the size of “big box stores;”
 - d. avoiding introduction of impervious areas by minimizing street widths, sidewalks on both sides of the street (unless part of a pedestrian/transit plan), structure of footprints, and using permeable paving materials where at all possible.
3. Use “quid pro quo” agreements where possible to add new green areas to existing blacktop. The more green space, the more “sponges” are added to absorb water from rain and run-off. One example of this would be if the Willow Grove Mall wants to build a new garage, in exchange they agree to add green space to less used areas of the parking lot.
4. Not approve new construction until a landscaper approves that the number of suggested replaced mature trees will actually “fit” on the developed property;
5. Plant and maintain new trees, and enforce ordinances for replacement of mature trees with younger trees when new construction occurs.
6. Find a way to work with other Townships in order to have effective stormwater management in the future.
7. Mandatory use of LEED certification for new buildings.

Other Utilities

Other utilities available in Abington Township are provided privately and include: telephone service by Verizon, electric and gas service by PECO Energy, and cable television by Comcast Cablevision Corporation.

Refuse

Abington Township provides weekly trash and recycling collection services through its Department of Public Works, Refuse Division. Once collected by a Township trash truck, the refuse is transported to the Transfer Station on Fitzwatertown Road. It is then compacted into trailers and taken to the Montgomery County Recovery Facility in Plymouth Township, which then burns the waste. The burned trash is generated into electricity.

In the last ten years, the Township has become much more diversified. The recycling program uses a “commingle” collection system. This process allows the collection of plastics numbers 1 and 2, (number imprinted on the bottom of container), along with colored and clear glass and aluminum and bi-metal cans. These recyclables are transported to a new Consortium-owned transfer facility in Upper Dublin Township. This system has increased collection to over 2500 tons per year. Trash and recycling trucks have a shorter distance to travel for disposal of their respective loads thus saving the Township man-hours and truck wear-and-tear.

Paper collection has been changed to “mixed paper.” This mix includes newspaper, junk mail, cardboard, books, magazines, office paper and envelopes and the like. Our paper tonnages have increased to over 5,000 tons per year. The paper is sold and produces a cost avoidance of thousands of dollars in dumping fees, by keeping paper out of the waste stream. Additionally, income is generated.

The program has expanded to include a “loose leaf collection.” Residents rake their leaves to the curb where large leaf vacuum machines pick them up. All households receive a collection schedule for their convenience. The leaves are converted into mulch which is made available at strategic sites for the residents at no cost. Abington Township has one of the best and most comprehensive composting programs in Pennsylvania and has received awards for this outstanding program. Nine months out of the year, yard debris, leaves, and grass clippings in biodegradable bags is collected curbside on the resident’s trash day. Branches and trimmed shrubbery can be bundled and tied and put curbside on trash day as well.

The Township has made a successful bid on recycling collection with Rockledge Borough and has also maintained a yearly negotiated contract with Abington School District for trash and recyclable collections. Additionally, the Township has a commercial collection route that generates approximately \$67,000 a year in revenue.

With prior arrangement and payment of a fee, large items such as furniture and appliances are collected four days a week curbside. Currently the Township is being paid for its disposal of white goods which are appliances.

In 2005, a pilot program using automated trash and recycling pick-up in selected areas of the Township was begun. Through progressive staff initiative and the

important, successful acquisition of grant monies, the program has moved forward. By the year 2008, the whole Township is expected to be using the new automated system. Projected advantages of the system include but are not limited to: stabilization of long-term cost increases, encouragement of recycling, and more equitable refuse fees for residents. As technology advances and markets and demands for recyclables fluctuate, changes in the way the Township treats refuse will move accordingly to continue to provide the Township with the best possible service.

Other Community Facilities

Township Facilities

In addition to all of the Township facilities noted above, Abington has a public works complex off of Arbuta Road. This facility contains all of the operations of the Highway Department and serves as Abington's main drop-off center for recycling. It also is the main service and storage area for Township vehicles and equipment including: 10 recycling trucks, 23 pieces of snow-removal equipment, street pavers and rollers, and street sweeper.

The Township Building (1176 Old York Road), constructed in 1925, enlarged in 1955, and renovated in 1996 along with parking improvements, is the main center of governmental operation. The building houses the departments of Code Enforcement/Land Development and Engineering as well as the Tax Office; Fire Marshal's office; general administrative offices; and two meeting rooms. The Police Station (1166 Old York Road) was originally constructed in 1955; the building was connected to the Township Building in 1971. A training annex was constructed in 2000 on Florey Lane next to the Fire Training facility.

Health Care

Two major hospitals provide not only Abington Township, but surrounding communities' state-of-the-art hospital services and outstanding health care. Both Holy Redeemer and Abington Memorial Hospitals have undergone continuous expansion and upgrading which has kept them at the forefront of medical care. Holy Redeemer Hospital, operated by the Sisters of the Holy Redeemer, is located on a twenty-one acre complex off Huntingdon Pike in Meadowbrook. The hospital offers 310 patient beds and a physician staff of 300. Abington Memorial Hospital, a teaching hospital, is located on a twelve acre complex in the heart of Abington (off of Old York Road). The facility provides beds for 512 patients and has a physician staff of 506.

Together, these hospitals provide medical assistance far beyond the types generally provided by a community hospital. Areas of specialization include: intensive and coronary care, internal medicine, cardiology, neuro-and thoracic

surgery, laser and micro surgery, oncology (cancer), sports medicine, prenatal testing, reproductive sciences (infertility, in vitro fertilization), neonatal intensive care, fetal surgery, pediatrics, human performance laboratory, out-patient surgery, ambulatory care, home care and hospice, sleep disorders, lithotripsy, CT and MRI scanning, nuclear medicine, psychiatric care, and emergency/trauma care. A helipad for emergency air transport is also located at Abington Memorial Hospital.

The Abington Township area also benefits from the services of over 280 physicians, drawn from many different areas of medical specialization. In addition, over 70 dentists practice in the area. Six centers in Abington Township specialize in care for the elderly (nursing homes) including: Township Manor Convalescent and Nursing Center, Roslyn Nursing and Convalescent Home, St. Joseph's Manor, Edgehill Nursing Home and Rehabilitation, Rydal Park Medical Center and Sunrise of Abington. Together, these centers provide over 780 beds.

Religious Facilities

Abington Township is represented by all, or most all, major denominations and faiths and is home to over 45 places of worship.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries in Abington Township cover over 410 acres (or 4%). At first glance, these cemeteries seem to be mostly developed and utilized, yet future capacity still exists. For example, statistics from the Hillside Cemetery Company show more than 132,000 available and unsold burial plots; the company indicates this is sufficient for 575 to 700+ additional years.

Chapter 6

TRANSPORTATION AND THOROUGHFARES

Introduction

Transportation facilities are the “life blood” of a community. As such, they are paramount to a community’s continued growth and prosperity. A transportation system should be designed to meet the differing mobility needs of residents, businesses, emergency services (police, fire, medical services), and commuters alike. The system needs to consider individual automobile/truck transportation and public transit, as well as pedestrian travel.

Abington Township is served by an extensive network of township streets, county roads, and state highways. As an important and growing member of the Philadelphia metropolitan area, Abington Township has had to struggle with increasing traffic congestion and time delays, road hazards, and inadequate off-street parking. Moreover, the shift to inter-suburban travel (as described in Section B of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan) has dramatically increased usage of major Township thoroughfares such as York, Easton, and Moreland Roads. In addition to roadways, rail transit is and will continue to be of major importance to many city commuters. Increasingly health-minded and environmentally conscious residents also desire facilities for pedestrian travel (bikeways and sidewalks).

An important part of the overall comprehensive plan for Abington included this study of the Township’s transportation facilities and thoroughfare system. While not a comprehensive “traffic study or plan,” the report included herein serves as the initial step in arriving at an overall plan. This section will: 1) assess the adequacy of the current transportation system, and 2) determine the capability of the system to meet future needs. Information for this section was compiled from the 1964 and 1977 Comprehensive Plans for Abington Township. More importantly, the Township retained the engineering/transportation planning firm of McMahan and Associates (of Willow Grove, Pennsylvania) to assist in this effort. A detailed report including maps, traffic counts and other supportive data, analysis of hazardous intersections, general discussions, traffic projections, recommended improvements, and summary is an addendum to the 1992 Comprehensive Plan. Please refer to the report for a more thorough discussion concerning transportation and thoroughfares.

Private Transportation (Automobiles/Trucks)

Previously, the Township’s 1964 and 1977 Comprehensive Plans set forth a functionally differentiated system of highways and roadways. Four basic types of highways were set forth: major arterials designed as inter-regional routes in the State Primary System; primary streets designed to serve as inter-community

connector streets in the State Secondary System; Township secondary or feeder streets designed to collect and distribute traffic within Abington; and local resident streets. The purpose of classifying highway types is to establish right-of-way/pavement widths and other design standards in accordance with the function of the highway and the projected volume of traffic it will carry. Refer to Table 30 in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan for current street classifications.

Major Arterials

The major arterial system of Abington Township connects the major centers in the area, transports the highest traffic volumes, accommodates the longest trip desires and carries a high proportion of the total vehicle miles traveled in the area. Earlier Township plans called for rights-of-way in accordance with State Highway Standards of 80 to 100 feet for major arterials. Often the recommended rights-of-way cannot be realized in every case; however, these standards are to be applied through the subdivision/land development regulations whenever new development is proposed along major arterials. Several of the major arterials in the Township are urgently in need of highway improvements as they currently handle traffic volumes in excess of what the roads were originally designed to handle. State Highway Department standards for traffic capacity of major arterials is approximately 37,100 vehicles per day for four-lane arterials at a Level of Service E. Yet, the study by McMahan demonstrated volumes in excess of 15,000 vehicles/day on some of these arterials including Huntingdon Pike at 23,200 ADT; Moreland Road (Rt. 63) at 18,000 ADT and Old York Road (Rt. 611) at 35,000 ADT.

Primary Streets

Rights-of-way of between 50 to 80 feet are recommended for primary streets to handle the State Standard capacities of 16,200 vehicles per day at a generalized level of Service E. Many of the Township's primary streets only have rights-of-way of 33 feet, yet carry from over 8,000 vehicles per day to 14,650 per day. Of the 15 roadways studied by McMahan, these are a few of counts found: Susquehanna Road at 12,900 to 14,650; Jenkintown Road at 14,650 and The Fairway at 11,800. However, Levels of Service will vary with the individual physical characteristics of each roadway.

Secondary Streets

Table 30 in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan lists roads in Abington's secondary (or collector) street system. These roads, according to State Standards, have a capacity of 2,500 vehicles per day and should have rights-of-way between 50 to 60 feet. In the McMahan study, we find existing traffic volumes range from 3,900 vehicles per day on Shady Lane to 5,850 vehicles per day on North Hills Avenue (portion) to 9,500 vehicles per day on Highland Avenue.

Residential Streets

Local residential streets, which make up the bulk of the highway system in Abington, provide access from individual homes to collector streets. With standard carrying capacities not exceeding 500 vehicles per day, the recommended right-of-way is 50 feet.

Intersections

The transportation study by McMahon and Associates stated that while roadways throughout the Township “are important in providing carrying capacity to accommodate travel demands, it is generally at the intersections of the various roadways where conflict and congestion develops.” The Transportation Study performed by McMahon & Associates studied 13 intersections identified by Abington Township as being the most critical. They compared movement at the intersections with standards of the “Highway Capacity Manual which rates the “Level of Service” for intersections and assigns them a grade ranging from A to F (A being the least delay and congestion, F being the very worst).

The study performed by McMahon and Associates showed 9 of the 13 intersections functioning at a ‘Level of Service F’ during one or more hours during peak travel including the intersections of: Susquehanna Road/York Road, Susquehanna Road/Highland Avenue, Susquehanna Road/Washington Lane, Susquehanna Road/Maple Avenue, Moreland Road/York Road, Moreland Road/Fitzwatertown Road, Fox Chase Road/Cedar Road, Edge Hill Road/Jenkintown Road and Edge Hill Road/Limekiln Pike. Moreover, the study showed trouble at other intersections (Jenkintown Road/Meetinghouse Road, Jenkintown Road/Washington Lane, Township Line Road/Meetinghouse Road, Township Line Road/Church Road, Easton Road/Woodland Road, and Fitzwatertown Road/North Hills/Woodland Road) which warrant future study. The remaining intersections described in the report should also be improved as indicated in the report.

McMahon & Associates also studied accident records for roadways and intersections; their review indicated the approximately 38 intersections in the Township have had more than 10 accidents over three years (1988-1990). The intersections found to have had the highest number of accidents include: Old York Road/Susquehanna Road, Old Welsh Road/Old York Road, and Highland Avenue/Susquehanna Road (all of these intersections recorded 40+ accidents in the same three year period). Improvements at hazardous intersections (such as signalization, striping) could reduce the number of accidents. The McMahon study includes suggested capital improvements to study roadways and intersections to make them safer and more efficient. The study also identifies methods to improve the existing and future functioning of these intersections including separate turning lanes, traffic signal improvements and installation of new traffic signals.

Please refer to the McMahon report in the appendix section of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan for additional information.

Public Transit

Since inception, Abington Township zoning has provided for large areas of high-density suburban development in city grid block fashion. As the Township approaches the ninety-seven percent build-out marker, the effects of high-density development are certainly taking a toll in the form of congested roadways, backed-up intersections, long travel times for relatively short distances, and a host of related traffic issues such as numerous stop signs, and low-speed alternative routing when delays occur on primary collector roads and arteries. Adding to the internally generated traffic, Abington's State and County-owned arterial highways bring an estimated one hundred thousand pass-through vehicles per day onto the highway system.

Given that there is little financial likelihood of correcting deficient intersections through intersection redesign and widening, or to create new collector roadways that share vehicle load, one of the best hopes for traffic volume stability may rest with public transportation modes. To this end, there are a number of public transit opportunities for the Township to pursue in the coming years:

Public transit can provide an economical travel alternative to a wide variety of destinations such as entertainment, recreation, shopping, and employment. Abington Township is fortunate to have a variety of public transit facilities and services, with six train stations, several major north/south bus routes, and a Township-supported Link Bus system designed to service targeted population groups. During the past ten years between the 1990 and 2000 census, use of public transportation in Abington has increased by 13.3 percent. Utilization of train stations in Abington has increased in similar proportion with the exception of the Roslyn Station, which has declined slightly since 1990. While this increase is an encouraging statistic, overall usage does not appear to be headed back toward the much larger usage occurring in the 1980s. The goal of the Township's Public Transit Plan is to account for the current state of affairs, and to analyze what may be done to encourage greater use of public transportation.

1. Consider a targeted marketing campaign to promote awareness and use of the public transportation modes available within the town. Such markets would include students, the elderly, low-income families, and the handicapped. Extend the campaign to include the convenience factor for middle-income families and reverse commuters.
2. Work in partnership with SEPTA and state agencies to develop improvement plans for access, physical conditions and safety at all train stations within the town. The goal of the program would be to increase use of the mode through change of perception and the attractiveness of the facility. Such planning would include new lighting standards to increase visibility in the early morning and evening use, single-seat bench arrays to

improve comfort, toilet facilities, bike racks to provide for modal variation, and video cameras to help increase the feeling of safe environment.

3. Consider zoning ordinance changes to allow life and vitality back into the train station experience, permitting such uses as coffee shops, snack bars, newspaper shops, mail services and the like. Multi-functionality has always proved practical in promoting use.
4. Recent observations of the Meadowbrook, Rydal, Roslyn and Ardsley train stops have shown that parking space capacity is virtually at one hundred percent occupancy during weekdays, which suggests that a limiting factor of the current rider counts is the amount of available parking. Abington Township should petition the County and Regional Planning Commission for a re-evaluation of recent massive spending campaigns to increase parking only at stations where rider count is already high such as with the Glenside Station. Its newly planned 900 space parking deck may only make parking easier for the 800 passengers already utilizing the station. More evenly spreading improvement dollars over multiple stations already at parking capacity would enhance this transit mode for Abington Township. The Glenside Station and Wyncote Station parking enhancements have been placed on SEPTA's Capital Improvement List, with groundbreaking expected in late 2013 or 2014.
5. In similar fashion to the train mode, the Township should reconsider a new approach to bus shelters. At present, bus shelters are deployed only where a private company determines that there is sufficient visual traffic to warrant a national advertisement. While an improvement over no shelters, the resulting structure is usually only capable of containing two or three users, which are not afforded good protection from the elements during inclement weather. The result is a sporadic pattern of bus stops, many without shelter at all, and undersized structures not conducive to use. Better facilities would attract more users.
6. The Township should consider a partnership with major institutions in the community which seem to generate a large amount of vehicular traffic, such as Abington Memorial Hospital, Penn State Abington, and the Abington School District, and develop an action plan which would reduce the automobile as a preferred mode of transit. Such a program could make use of incentives offered by the institutions to the drivers, for use of public transit modes.
7. The Township could consider use of incentive programs to encourage both residents and reverse commuters to favor the public transportation modes over private vehicles. Such incentives could include a rebate using liquid fuel tax dollars, or reduction in other taxes due for proven use of public transit modes in daily commuting to and from work, and various forms of

leisure traveling. The concept would be a reverse user tax program which would promote conservation of the private vehicle wherever and whenever possible.

8. The Township should consider a plan to work with SEPTA and the Regional Planning Commission to improve east/west bus transportation within the Township. While it is fairly convenient to travel in the north/south directions within Abington, east/west transit is much more difficult, and consequently so is a user's journey to one of the train stations. Bus routing along all of Jenkintown Road, Mount Carmel Avenue, and Susquehanna Road could be developed to promote east/west travel.
9. The Township operates Abington/Cheltenham Transit Bus in an effort to provide local transportation to targeted segments of its population. Since State funding for its operation has been declining over the years and operational costs have been increasing, the Township was forced to reduce daily service to every other day, in a shared funding program with Cheltenham Township. Planning should be undertaken to encourage expansion of this bus service through private/public partnerships. With several community institutions and elderly living facilities in the town running similar bus shuttles, the opportunity for consolidation and mutual benefit scheduling seems ripe.
10. To help fund all of the public transit programs suggested in this plan, the Township could consider application of a portion of tax-in-lieu funds for such endeavor, and/or application of a portion of the new occupational privilege tax increase now permitted under state law.
11. The Township should review its policies regarding housing development on remaining and redevelopment sites within a quarter to one half mile from train stations, and develop zoning standards which promote higher density housing within this area, and develop standards which promote transit-oriented development. Such planning would entail a review of the Township's Mixed Use zoning, and possible rezoning of similar qualifying sites not currently zoned as such.
12. Finally, the Township should consider how it can promote the County's plan to deploy Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in the public transit experience. This would essentially focus on GPS technology to promote real-time transport information for public transit riders, and the concept of preemption devices for buses, at least under some controlled protocols.

For more information on public transit travel statistics, future transit planning projects affecting the greater Abington region, and other goals and recommendations being advanced by SEPTA, the Montgomery

County Planning Commission, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, please consult Chapter Seven - Public Transit of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan.

Pedestrian Transportation

Pedestrian transportation systems (such as sidewalks and bikeways) are an important, although often overlooked, component of a community's transportation plan. Naturally, it is important to provide safe walkways for children on their way to school or others walking to shopping areas, etc. With the advent of the health and fitness craze, more people are enjoying "health walking", jogging, and biking. Moreover, many now choose pedestrian travel for the home-to-work commute.

Abington Township lacks a complete and integrated system for pedestrian travel. While sidewalks exist adjacent to approximately 80% of the streets, the eastern portion of the Township only provides sidewalks along 30-35% of the streets. The issue is one of public safety; sidewalks separate pedestrians from traffic and keep them out of harm's way. In terms of safety, three areas with the most pressing need for sidewalks include: alongside Edge Hill Road (from Easton to Jenkintown Road), Welsh Road (from Fitzwatertown Road to Easton Road) and Fox Chase Road (from Forrest to Cedar Roads).

Though sidewalks are provided for by the Township's subdivision/land development ordinances, a developer may petition the Board of Commissioners for a waiver of this requirement. In many development reviews during Abington's recent past, such waivers have often been granted. Moreover, where sidewalks are required they are often allowed to end at the entrance to a subdivision. Thus, the Township's failure to look at the "whole picture" is largely responsible for a sidewalk system which lacks unity and completeness.

Bikeways

Bike trails, for the most part, do not exist in Abington. A bikeway facility may be a shared travel lane with motorized vehicles, a facility parallel to a highway or on a separate path which may be shared with pedestrians. Limited recreational bike facilities do exist within Alverthorpe Park and are heavily utilized. However, there are no established intra-township bicycle routes. Heavy traffic volumes, narrow roadways, and a lack of paved shoulders make bike travel (as a mode of transportation) within the Township very dangerous. Consequently, many people are forced to refrain from bicycling despite their desire to choose this form of transportation, or simply to engage in recreational bicycling. During Township-side public hearings to discuss community facilities and recreation, many residents voiced complaints regarding the lack of bikeways in Abington and asked that consideration be given to their future development as a part of community facility, transportation, and recreation planning.

Chapter 7

RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

Listed below is an evaluation of the existing and proposed development in Abington Township and existing and proposed development plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities.

Cheltenham Township

Cheltenham Township has prepared a *Comprehensive Plan Draft July 2004*. The *Comprehensive Plan Draft* contains the following reference regarding correlation with Abington Township:

“Abington’s most recent comprehensive plan was adopted in 1992, which followed their 1977 comprehensive plan. Abington’s Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan was adopted in 1995. Abington’s proposed land use map has a number of land uses along its southern border with Cheltenham. Land uses include mostly high density residential, some commercial, and a few apartments. Abington is also participating in the Tookany Creek Watershed Management Plan with Cheltenham and surrounding communities. Cheltenham and Abington’s Economic Development committees are currently coordinating in addition.”

Cheltenham Township borders the entire southerly boundary of Abington Township (along with the Borough of Jenkintown). In most respects, Abington has been built out along its boundary with Cheltenham. The existing development in most instances is compatible with the existing and proposed land use patterns in Cheltenham Township. Along the westerly section of the SEPTA railroad a sliver of industrial zoning and land use exists on the Cheltenham side of the township line, whereas on the Abington side existing patterns are largely residential in nature - either high density single family, twins, or apartment office. The relationship along Township Line Road (Route 73) is largely single family residential of medium density or high density, which is virtually identical in both Abington and Cheltenham. An exception would be the stretch between McKinley and Cheltenham Village where Elkins Park Hospital (formerly Rolling Hill Hospital) occupies frontage between Jenkintown Road and Church Road on the Cheltenham side, whereas single family residential or limited commercial exists and is recommended to continue on the Abington side of Township Line Road. Township Line Road (Route 73) functions as a major arterial roadway from Philadelphia along the boundary with Abington and Cheltenham through Jenkintown to Easton Road. The residential land use patterns along this section of roadway have long been established, but there is pressure at major intersections such as Old York Road for changes in land use to either higher density residential

or commercial/office. The area immediately west of Jenkintown Borough between the SEPTA R3 rail line and Highland Avenue is proposed as Planned Industrial to reflect existing land use patterns on the Abington side of the SEPTA rail line which forms the boundary with Cheltenham. On the Cheltenham side land uses of medium density residential along with some existing industrial uses are proposed.

Cheltenham Township has also prepared a *Township Community Revitalization Plan*, March 19, 2002. This Plan addresses the assessment of community needs and recommended initiatives which are divided into two study areas. One of these, Glenside consisting of Census Tract 2026.03, is contiguous to Abington Township. Four areas of community needs are identified for Glenside (Glenside straddles both Abington and Cheltenham but the report focuses only on the Cheltenham portion):

- Economic development. The most significant need is to enhance the local business district.
- Infrastructure. The second most significant need is to upgrade its aging infrastructure, which is typically 50 to 75 years old. Upgrades would include: increased parking, improved streetscape features in commercial areas; make roadways safer; narrow traffic lanes; increase the number of trees lining the streets in neighborhoods; improve pedestrian safety; and improve the management of stormwater.
- Public safety. Public safety concerns are less of a problem. Needs include: intersection safety improvements at Easton Road and Limekiln Pike; theft prevention policies along Easton Road; management of loading and unloading zones; congestion management along Easton Road; and pedestrian crosswalk improvements.
- Housing. The housing stock within Glenside is generally in excellent condition considering its age. Real estate conditions in the neighborhood remain stable in most areas. The study suggests public investment in stormwater management infrastructure in order to address an increased pattern of flooding and related damage to housing.

The Glenside Action Plan (follows page 12) includes the following activities adjacent to the Abington Township municipal boundary:

1. Roberts Avenue initiatives.
2. Town green.
3. Farmers' market and restaurant.
4. Parking structure.

5. Landscaped median beginning at Glenside Avenue.
6. Crosswalk enhancement and crosswalk signal at Glenside Avenue and Easton Road.

Jenkintown Borough

Jenkintown Borough is a small compact highly developed municipality. Abington Township surrounds this community on three sides, with Washington Lane being the largest perimeter road on the easterly side and the R3 SEPTA rail line which divides the Township from the Borough occupying most of the westerly boundary of the Borough.

Jenkintown has no current comprehensive plan but has prepared a Revitalization Plan published in April 2002, which is the document most used for land use planning. Existing land use patterns along the perimeter of the Borough of Jenkintown are largely single family residential in nature which are compatible with existing and proposed development plans in Abington Township. The exception would be along Washington Lane, where the development on the Borough side is attractive single family development with a day care center, while on the Township side the property is zoned and occupied by the campus of Abington Friends School. While this is an institutional use, it is an attractive and compatible use for the neighborhood.

South of Greenwood Avenue Abington exists and is proposed for commercial/apartment mixed use development which has become known as the Foxcroft complex of buildings along with a 9 hole golf course. The Borough side of this boundary is zoned and utilized for single family detached dwellings for the block between Greenwood Avenue and Old York Road. There may be some conversion possibilities to office use for these Jenkintown lots but they remain significantly disparate uses from those existing and recommended in Abington. Abington has maintained requirements for buffers and transitional uses between the Borough and the Foxcroft complex.

Jenkintown has recently completed a Revitalization Master Plan, April 2002. The Revitalization Plan focuses on Jenkintown's central business district with a goal of "to revitalize Jenkintown Borough and recover its former reputation as a regional destination". The Jenkintown Community Alliance, a non-profit organization, was formed to create a "vibrant, diverse, and economically strong business district". While there are no specific recommendations dealing with Abington Township, the report establishes a wide range of revitalization goals and strategies to create a Revitalization Master Plan for the Borough. Naturally, a strong and revitalized Jenkintown will have a very positive influence on a number of Abington residential neighborhoods such as those residences along Cloverly Lane, Rydal Road, Washington Lane, etc., which are closely associated with the

Borough; as well as the 800 Township residents who are reported to work in Jenkintown Borough based on the Bureau of the Census 2000.

Lower Moreland Township

Lower Moreland Township does not have a comprehensive plan. However, the uses which exist along its boundary with Abington which include Moreland Road east of Huntingdon Pike and then a boundary undefined by manmade landmarks consist of low density residential existing and proposed in Abington which is compatible with the existing development of low density single family lots in Lower Moreland Township. The 1995 Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan states that:

“The obvious facility and resource which affects both Abington and Lower Moreland Township is Lorimer Park and the proposed County Pennypack trail”.

Rockledge Borough

Rockledge Borough is among the smaller communities in Montgomery County. It is surrounded on three sides and nestled in the far easterly edge of Abington Township. The remaining boundary of Rockledge is with the City of Philadelphia.

The Borough has a 1973 Comprehensive Plan and is currently working on an update. The southerly portion of Rockledge borders and includes portions of Lawnview and Montefiore Cemeteries in Abington Township, which are used and recommended for continuous open space use. This development is compatible with the contiguous portion of the Borough of Rockledge.

The Montgomery County Planning Commission advises that:

“In addition to a Comprehensive Plan Update, the Rockledge Open Space Committee is currently writing the new Rockledge Open Space Plan. Of particular interest for Abington is the DRAFT high-priority goal of establishing a part of the planned Pennypack County Trail, specifically the linkage from Rockledge to Lorimer Park over Shady Lane (and perhaps to Rhawn Street in Philadelphia). Additionally, the Committee proposes linking Rockledge Borough trails to an Abington trail at Fox Chase Road and Cedar Road, and extending a trail to Rockledge Avenue and Shady Lane.” (Michael Narcowich, December 14, 2004)

Springfield Township

Springfield Township abuts Abington Township along the northwestern edge for a very short distance of approximately 1,280 feet (one-quarter mile). The narrow strip of land adjacent to Springfield Township is zoned and used as high density residential on the south side of the SEPTA railroad. The north side of the railroad, which includes the North Hills station and the SEPTA R8 line from Doylestown, is used and recommended for commercial development.

Springfield has adopted a 1998 Update to its 1968 Comprehensive Plan. This plan includes the following statement:

“There is some compatibility between Springfield’s plan and Abington’s planning. In particular, Springfield’s strategic land use plan identifies office campus and mixed use development as possible alternative land areas for North Hills Country Club, either of which would compliment Abington’s proposed land uses.” (Page 108)

The existing land use in Springfield Township has for many years and continues to be North Hills Country Club. The presence and continuation of this use would be compatible with existing and proposed development contemplated for Abington Township based on the 1992 Proposed Land Use Map.

Upper Dublin Township

Upper Dublin Township forms the far westerly boundary with Abington Township for a distance of approximately 3.3 miles. A large stretch of this boundary is formed by North Hills Avenue (the north and south sections) and Fitzwatertown Road. The Upper Dublin Township Comprehensive Plan is from the 1970s and the Township Planning Department advises it is not utilized. However Mr. Rick Barton, Director of Code Enforcement, advises that there are individual strategic planning documents that have studied various portions of the Township and the one having the greatest impact on Abington would be the plan dealing with Pennsylvania Avenue. In addition, the Township is currently updating its Open Space Plan. The plan recommends three linkages to Abington: a bike trail on Susquehanna Road, connecting to the Roslyn Park Trail, a walking trail along the Sandy Run Creek; and a walking trail or sidewalk from the Woodland Road/Fitzwatertown Road intersection to the proposed Abington Trails/United Neighbors Pathways.

The 1992 Proposed Land Use Map for Abington Township suggests that virtually the entire length of Abington which borders on Upper Dublin Township be used as high density residential. In this case, the use is almost entirely pre-existing single family detached dwellings. There is a very small strip of recreational open space which borders the Abington incinerator site in Upper Dublin Township. Existing and proposed development in Abington is compatible with existing and proposed development and recommendations for the contiguous portions in Upper Dublin Township.

In addition, the 1995 Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan states that:

“Upper Dublin Township has identified the development of the Sandy Run Greenway as its highest priority. This greenway initiative will tie into Abington’s Sandy Run Greenway as well and connect Upper Dublin to Abington’s greenway network which accesses parks and open space. Upper Dublin has also recommended a stream corridor protection ordinance. This initiative will be complimented along common water resources by the stream protection strategies proposed by Abington Township.”

Upper Moreland Township

Upper Moreland’s last Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1969. The Township Manager’s office advises the Comprehensive Plan provides interesting background information but is no longer used as a strategic land use document for decisions concerning future land use. Upper Moreland Township borders Abington Township along Moreland Road for most of its length. The balance is the residential development at Country Club Drive and Huntingdon Valley Country Club golf course. Abington Township’s 1992 Proposed Land Use Map recommends in effect a continuation of existing land use patterns which along Moreland Road result in commercial land uses between Old York Road and Clarke Road and exhibit a compatible relationship of medium to high density residential along the balance of the common boundary. The existing and proposed development in Abington is compatible with the existing development contiguous in Upper Moreland Township.

The *Willow Grove Revitalization Plan* was published in January 2003. Its main purpose is to help downtown Willow Grove to continue to evolve, and may again become a quality town center. The Willow Grove Revitalization Area borders Abington Township along Moreland Road between Park Avenue and Nash Street. The Plan acknowledges that “the retail centerpiece of the greater Willow Grove commercial district is the Willow Grove Park Mall, which is located in Abington Township. Of the 91 total retailers which occupy the remainder of greater Willow Grove, 66 are located in Upper Moreland Township (56 within the Willow Grove Revitalization and Redevelopment Area). The remaining 25 are in Abington.” The study states there is no significant retail vacancy in the greater Willow Grove commercial district.

A preliminary preferred concept has been approved by the Upper Moreland Township Board of Commissioners (see map on page 29). A summary of the development regulations is listed below:

1. Recommended changes to the “CC District”:

- a. Make legislative intent clear and more specific, describing the kind of place that is desired:
 - Development should be pedestrian in scale.
 - Building should be oriented toward street.
 - Parking should be located to the rear of buildings.
 - Buildings should have first floor retail and upper floor office or apartments.
 - Streets and intersections should be improved with pedestrian-oriented amenities.
 - b. Do not permit auto-oriented uses, such as fast food and service stations.
 - c. Revise suburban-style area and bulk requirements:
 - Reduce deep setback to zero so buildings address the street.
 - Consider a “build-to” line instead of a setback line.
 - Insist on a minimum building-street frontage requirement.
 - Include illustrations and diagrams.
 - d. Include urban design standards:
 - Pedestrian (not auto) - scale design.
 - Building, facade articulation and building openings to add visual interest.
 - Sign placement and size.
 - Provide streetscape improvements.
2. Recommended changes to land development:
- a. Control the design and development of critical elements of the townscape, such as:
 - Block size.

- Street width.
 - Intersection angle.
 - Driveway location.
 - Sidewalks.
 - Streetscape/pedestrian amenities.
- b. Existing design standards are largely not supportive of the development of a town center:
- Very large block sizes (500' - 1,200') are allowed (should be 250' maximum).
 - Streets requirements are overly wide and cul-de-sac streets are permitted.
 - Widening and channelization at intersections is encouraged (very anti-pedestrian).
 - Intersection angles of less than 90 degrees are permitted.
 - Wide intersection radii are permitted (also anti-pedestrian).
 - Narrow sidewalk widths are permitted (4').
 - No requirement for pedestrian lighting.
- c. Recommendation - Adopt a separate set of urban design guidelines for the redevelopment area.

City of Philadelphia

Philadelphia forms the easterly boundary of Abington Township with the exception of Rockledge Borough. The boundary consists of pre-existing residential development for much of its length and the permanent open space of Lorimar Park/Pennypack Valley Park which straddles both sides of Pennypack Creek through Abington and Philadelphia as well. The existing and proposed development in Abington is compatible with the existing development plans in the contiguous portions of the City of Philadelphia. It should be noted that Fox Chase Cancer Center situated along Cottman Avenue adjacent to the Abington Township boundary continues to expand as it becomes a preeminent cancer care center in the region. There may be traffic and transitional buffer issues along the boundary line which both Abington and Philadelphia should evaluate.

Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan

The Vision Plan for Montgomery County, adopted in 2004 is intended to provide a vision for the County for the year 2025. Listed below are observations or recommendations specifically relevant to Abington Township.

Willow Grove is identified as one of three regional centers in Montgomery County (they are all located along the Pennsylvania Turnpike). The other two are Norristown and King of Prussia. These centers provide a variety of civic, retail and employment roles.

Abington is considered a mature township, as are its immediate neighbors: Cheltenham, Lower and Upper Moreland, and Springfield Townships.

Over the past twenty years Montgomery County's roads, especially its highways, have absorbed huge volumes of traffic. Traffic on the County's ten highest volume roads more than doubled from 1979 to 1999. Route 611 is identified as a major County highway. During the same period bus ridership in the suburbs has declined.

Montgomery County has a diverse economy. In 2000, Montgomery County had an estimated 491,000 jobs, second only to Philadelphia in southeastern Pennsylvania. However, Montgomery County leads the region with a ratio of 0.67 jobs per resident. Over the past thirty years Montgomery County's number of jobs has increased 60%, compared to Philadelphia's 22% loss. The diverse economy has many businesses such as: Pharmaceuticals and health care; mutual fund and insurance businesses; services, parts, and products to other businesses; computer services, management services, electronic parts, and office furniture. This diversity in employment allows the County to weather downturns in specific industries. Montgomery County has a large number of scattered employment centers, mostly near highway interchanges. The central part of Abington, basically along both sides of York Road (Route 611) and no doubt influenced by large employment at Abington Hospital, Penn State Ogontz, and numerous retail and office complexes, is ranked as among the twelve largest employment centers in Montgomery County.

Montgomery County has a very diverse housing stock, ranging from urban rowhouses and apartment buildings to suburban subdivisions and rural farmsteads. However, even though housing stock is diverse single-family detached homes predominate. They account for over 60% of the approximate 34,000 new homes constructed during the 1990s in Montgomery County. According to the County, housing is more affordable today than it was ten years ago. The County provides many housing and care options for older residents. Recently, there has been a surge of interest in age-restricted communities in the County, and a variety of age-restricted apartment, townhouse, single-family

detached, and mobile home communities have been built around the County in recent years.

Some market trends Montgomery County faces include:

- 107,000 more people by 2025;
- 55,000 more homes by 2025; and
- 77,000 more workers by 2025.

In determining its vision for the County in 2025 the County Planning Commission conducted a survey in 2001. The four issues that were given the highest priority for action were:

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

The County contends existing major development centers are a natural place for continued development, redevelopment, and revitalization. In 2025, these centers will remain focal points for the County but will be more accessible with integrated and attractive development. The County Comprehensive Plan identifies two major development centers at the perimeter of Abington - and partially within the Township boundaries - which are described as follows:

- Jenkintown:

This center is focused around the Borough of Jenkintown but includes large retail, office, and apartment uses in neighboring townships. In the future, the area will have more specialty retailers, restaurants, and entertainment uses, while becoming more pedestrian friendly.

- Willow Grove/Horsham:

This center is anchored in Willow Grove by a mall and other shopping centers and in Horsham by a number of significant employers. In the future, this area will have expanded public transportation, better access to the Turnpike, a better mix of uses in each area, and revitalized commercial areas.

The County Comprehensive Plan identifies the following major land use concerns for mature suburbs:

- Require compatible infill development.
- Keep neighborhood open space.
- Enhance mixed-use downtown areas.

While the County Comprehensive Plan has a transportation vision consisting of more than thirty-two current or potential major road improvements, none of these are scheduled for Abington Township.

In towns and residential areas, slower traffic, more walkable streets, and more attractive neighborhoods are recommended through the use of traffic calming, which includes narrower streets, speed tables, roundabouts, rumble strips, and similar devices. It should be noted that the Glenside area of Abington Township - Keswick Avenue - is shown as an example of such traffic calming measures. The County Comprehensive Plan establishes forty-eight goals, many of which apply to all areas of the County. Some of these goals are more appropriate for rural undeveloped sections of the County and some pertain to developed, built up areas such as Abington Township. Some of these goals are particularly appropriate for Abington, including a statement of actions that may also be appropriate. Some of these goals are listed below, using the number as it appears in the Draft Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County:

1. Goal 2, Work together to identify and resolve problems and Goal 4, Identify and address problems at the most appropriate level.

These goals pertain to Abington, particularly in the areas of watershed protection and transportation improvements. Multi-municipal planning and working with neighboring communities to resolve common problems are appropriate steps for these issues of concern.

2. Goal 6, Enhance older developed areas.

For Abington, this would include sections along Easton Road, Old York Road, and some neighborhoods adjacent to Willow Grove. Steps that could be taken are:

- a. Improve transportation access and movement to and within older developed areas.
- b. Direct government buildings, private offices, and small-scale retail developments towards existing Main Street areas.
- c. Quickly rehabilitate any rundown or vacant homes.
- d. Encourage compatible mixed-use developments that create a more vibrant streetscape.

- e. Protect residential neighborhoods from potential negative impacts.
 - f. Rehabilitate, reuse, and preserve historic buildings.
3. Goal 9, Ensure compatible development in residential neighborhoods.
- a. Abington is largely residential and when infill development occurs in or near existing neighborhoods there are concerns about impacts. However, the potential impacts can be mitigated with good design and land use regulations.
 - b. Direct retail space and industrial operations to locations that have minimal impact on neighborhoods and that can be properly buffered. Create transitions from high density areas, such as shopping centers, by allowing compatible uses such as small-scale office, low intensity institutional buildings, and other residential uses.
 - c. Encourage infill development to match the scale and character of nearby residences.
 - d. Use traffic calming to slow down traffic on residential streets.
 - e. Preserve unique features found on undeveloped land in existing neighborhoods such as a wooded grove or picturesque barn.
 - f. Control the height, location, shielding and intensity of outdoor lights.
4. Goal 11, Preserve large interconnected areas of significant open space.
- a. Purchase land and development rights.
 - b. Implement cluster zoning and resource protection ordinances.
 - c. Create open space plans that show larger pattern of open space that should be preserved.
5. Goal 19, Manage traffic congestion.
- a. Improve problem intersections on major roads.
 - b. Interconnect traffic signals in both municipal and multi-municipal areas to a computer system that can adjust signal timing to reduce congestion.

- c. Limit the number of driveways directly connecting to major roads.
 - d. Limit strip commercial development.
6. Goal 33, Effectively manage flooding.
- a. Complete and implement stormwater management plans.
 - b. Encourage redeveloping properties to address previously unaddressed stormwater control.
 - c. Remove buildings from the floodplain that are not flood-proofed where feasible.
 - d. Remove existing impervious coverage and replace with landscaping or other pervious materials, where feasible.
 - e. Prohibit new development in floodplains.
7. Goal 42, Redevelop vacant and underutilized shopping centers.
- a. Limit the amount of land zoned for retail use so that existing shopping centers are used first.
 - b. Find new uses for obsolete shopping centers such as offices and fitness centers.
 - c. Replace some vacant and underutilized shopping centers with new mixed-use development that create a focal point for the community.

Chapter 8

LAND USE

Background

Of paramount importance to the Comprehensive Plan Report is the study of existing land use. Such a study was undertaken during the Spring of 1991. A parcel-by-parcel land use inventory was taken by means of field surveys, with comparison and supportive data provided through aerial photographs and Montgomery County land use (tax parcel) records. It should be noted that every effort was made to provide an accurate interpretation of the existing land use, however, some land use determinations could be open to question based on the surveyor's interpretations. General findings from the inventory are presented on the 2005 Land Use Map attached in the rear pocket of this report and are discussed in the following paragraphs

Development Trends

As referenced in the 1961 report entitled "*Physical Characteristics and Utilization of the Land in Abington Township*," (Abington Township Planning Commission and the Government Consulting Service of the University of Pennsylvania) land utilization within Abington Township has changed dramatically from the Township's early beginnings. In the early 1900s, population (and hence – development) was concentrated among a mere handful of centers (at Weldon, Abington, and various railroad stations). Remaining land was predominantly undeveloped or part of large estate holdings of mostly wooded land. By 1930, the Township was still largely undeveloped – approximately 2,500 acres (or 26.2%) was developed. The picture changed enormously by 1960 when approximately 78.7% of the Township (or 7,500 acres) became developed. Moreover, the type of development changed from solely residential in nature to a more complex mixture of uses including commercial, industrial, and institutional. Though there was some variety in the mix of land uses, land use was still predominantly residential (49%). During the next thirty years, land use continued to diversify such that by 1990, greater and greater proportions of land were brought into commercial, industrial, or institutional use. A look at Table 35 documents the changing face of Abington Township.

**TABLE 38
LAND USE CHANGE IN ABINGTON TOWNSHIP 1960-2005**

	1960		1990		2005	
	ACRES	%	ACRES	%	ACRES	%
RESIDENTIAL	4,680 A	(49%)	4,702 A	(49%)	4,661	49%
COMMERCIAL	225 A	(2%)	561 A	(6%)	570	7%
Office			124 A	(1%)		
Retail/Wholesale			437 A	(5%)		
INDUSTRIAL/UTILITY	255 A	(4%)	128 A	(2%)		
Industrial			35 A	(.4%)		
Utilities			93 A	(1%)		
PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC	1,294 A	(14%)	2,293 A	(24%)		
Institutional			665 A	(7%)	721	8%
Parks/Recreation			1,325 A	(14%)	1,379	15%
Cemetery			303 A	(3%)		
STREETS	1,025 A	(10%)	1,170 A	(12%)	1,182	13%
VACANT	2,040 A	(22%)	706 A	(7%)	403	4%
TOTAL	7,500 A	(78.8%)	8,814 A	(92.6%)	8,844	97%

.. Land Uses given in acres of land (rounded) and as a percentage of the total acreage (9,520 acres) of the Township.

Residential

Residential use constitutes the largest percentage of land use for a single category; nearly one-half of the land in Abington Township is devoted to residential use. According to the land survey tabulations, total residential land use has changed little (less than .5%) during the past 30 years. However, it is interesting to note that during the same time period, the total number of housing units increased dramatically. Portions of large estates (which were probably all inventoried as residential use) were sold off and developed for housing. Thus, it is not surprising that the overall percentage of residential land use did not change much.

In Abington Township, like other suburban communities, residential development is the predominant user of land. Thus, consideration of housing is paramount when planning for the future. It is the desirability of a municipality's housing stock (in terms of age, quality of construction, and price) which often sets the stage for growth and development of an area. The planners, therefore, felt that the subject of housing deserved special attention. Information offered here was

derived from a variety of sources, most importantly from Abington's own Department of Community Development (CDC). For more information on the subject of housing, the reader is encouraged to refer to the study entitled "Consolidated Plan 2005-2009", which is a study required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Housing

Housing is one of the most important elements in our lives and in our communities for a host of social, physical, and economic reasons. Abington Township is fortunate to have great diversity in its housing stock and hence, numerous choices to offer its residents. Previously it was mentioned that the actual number of dwelling units in Abington Township has steadily increased despite a declining population. Since 1940, the number of dwellings has increased by nearly 300% (from 5,592 to 22,116). The change noted over the last decade was a +5.4% increase in dwelling units; the Township population decreased by 4.9%. Some of the key attributes concerning the housing of Abington are noted below.

The predominant housing type in the Township is single family detached; in fact, this type constitutes 70% of the housing stock. The number of single-family homes has undergone relatively little change over the last decade; the percentage of single-family homes declined from 72% of the housing stock in 1980 to 71% in 1990. The preponderance of single-family housing is by no means indicative of an endless horizon of totally homogenous "cookie-cutter" type homes. Indeed, one of the greatest attributes of Abington is the great diversity found throughout the Township. Abington Township is rich in terms of its diversity in the age, racial composition, marital status, educational attainment, employment/occupation status, and wealth of its population; this is reflected in the diversity of dwellings. Residential areas contain homes ranging in size from small single story ranch homes, cottage houses and bungalows to stately historic manor homes. Peppered in-between is a wide variety of colonial, cape cod, and split level styles. A distinctly unique area of Spanish-style stucco homes may also be found in Abington's Hollywood section. Similar to the assortment available in housing types, property (lot) sizes and types vary greatly. Throughout the Township there exist properties of less than 5,000 square feet to over 5 acres, which change from flat to steeply sloping topography, and from predominantly cleared land to heavily wooded landscapes. During the last decade, the percentage of single-family, semi-detached or detached units remained constant at approximately 7.6%. Moreover, the number of buildings containing 2-4 dwelling units/structure and ones of 5+ units/structure remained relatively stable during this period (approximately 6.3% and 12% respectively). Whereas in 1980 the Township had no mobile homes, trailers, or similar dwellings, there have been additions of this housing type in the last 10 years; in 1990 pre-fabricated housing accounted for approximately .9% of the 1990 housing stock. In actuality, the type of housing referred to here is modular or manufactured housing which is permanent. It is an attractive alternative to

conventional stick-frame (or on-site) construction due to much lower costs, which is important with the skyrocketing cost of housing today.

Retirement housing for the elderly such as the Sunrise community at Susquehanna and Huntingdon Roads, and active adult housing for age 55 plus such as the Walnut Hill community currently under construction along Harpers Lane adjacent to Huntingdon Pike reflect specialized housing for the aging population.

Housing Characteristics

Abington is approximately 98% developed; therefore, it is imperative to maintain the existing housing stock. The current housing stock meets the needs of all income levels, though housing for lower income residents is limited. However, public housing units do exist, and Willow Grove Community Development Corporation provides housing for the “working poor”. The housing stock is diverse. Future new construction will be limited for obvious reasons; consequently, limited land supply will dictate higher costs in most areas of the Township and will ensure market-priced or above market price housing.

The number of occupied housing units has remained relatively stable; over 98% of all dwelling units are occupied. For comparative purposes this is higher than the occupancy rates for Montgomery County and the 5-County Metro Region. The ability to retain a low dwelling vacancy rate is important to the local economy and to the attractiveness of an area. Generally, a vacancy rate of between 3% to 5% is sufficient to provide necessary mobility, choice and renewal of the housing supply. Abington’s rate of 1.8% was significantly below this range which identifies a tight housing supply for a highly sought community. See Chapter 3 for discussion of current housing occupancy and tenure information as reported in the 2000 Census.

Economic Development and Revitalization

Expanding and maximizing the Township’s economic base will be its biggest challenge over the next ten years. Our Township will see an increasing gap between revenue generated by our residences and the revenue generated by businesses and industry. The Township possesses a few factors that can be built upon to achieve this goal and should provide a basis on which to start new economic development opportunities and enhance the ones we have. Our education/medical institutions, large retail/commercial properties and underdeveloped or future available parcels present new opportunities that should be developed through partnerships with these entities. Collaboration with our education/medical institutions could provide solutions and opportunities that both could continually build upon. Attracting new industries, infusing our Township with the intellect that could build a entrepreneurial movement and attracting the need for stable retail and office space are a few of the potential positive effects of

this collaboration. Building upon these factors should be a priority of the Township and if done in conjunction with these partners could create tax revenue, jobs and stability in the Township residency.

Expanding housing options should also be an avenue the Township should explore. Maintaining our current aging residents will only occur if other options are available to the existing population that would like to stay in the Township but no longer have the desire to maintain the properties or homes they live in. Age restricted housing in either one story semi-detached housing with a homeowner's association or multi-story condominium or apartment building could be developed in already dense neighborhoods as a component of a mixed use development along one of the Township commercial corridors.

The Township needs to establish goals and implementation strategies to revitalize, reinvent, and reinvigorate the Township's commercial corridors and major arteries. The Township should be proactive in its approach to find solutions that will stabilize these corridors and potentially present new ways to advance economic development in the Township. Many streetscape and traffic pattern initiatives for these corridors have been advanced since the last Comprehensive Plan, however, these solutions fall short of making regulatory and taxation changes that could plant the seeds for more sustainable development and economic development. These corridors represent, in many cases, the only view of the Township that commuters see. There are many areas along these corridors that could benefit from thoughtful master planning and revitalization tools. Considerable work needs to first be done at the state level to authorize tax incentive legislation at the local level, and Abington should take an active role in so doing.

The Economic Development Committee believes that the Township could prevent further decline or higher vacancy rates in our commercial areas by making a commitment to comprehensive economic development programs. This program would provide a full spectrum of ED services such as granting significant property tax abatement, business tax reductions, tax credits, grants, and loans. The EDC has also begun the process of implementing a Blight Ordinance for a portion of Old York Road south of Old Welsh Road and for a portion of Easton Road north of Susquehanna Road. The Blight Ordinance gives the Township some tools to provide property owners the ability to upgrade their properties. The Township will find itself in a constant struggle to compete for economic advancement not only with adjacent municipalities, but with municipalities within the same region. This competition will become more difficult to the municipalities that fail to see this trend and more importantly, fail to act when it is noticed.

Educational/Medical Institutions

Manor College

A growing institution with expanding programming, services and degrees in the business professions. It has reached out to the local community and is expanding its economic contributions to the Township.

Penn State Abington

Penn State Abington is currently engaged in developing a master plan for the future development and expansion of the campus. However, because of the constraints imposed by Zoning, the University has very little room to expand on the current property that it occupies. Therefore, the University is actively looking for partners to develop a recreation center, residences for students and faculty. A byproduct of these potential expansions could be the development of satellite facilities where specialized curriculum could be concentrated. This partnership could be built upon the already involved administration and faculty in Township affairs. Higher education and the economic development that could be associated with its success and expansion could be a valuable asset to the Township while developing a long term partner with similar goals.

Abington Memorial Hospital

Abington Memorial Hospital (AMH) continues to thrive and will also continue to need to expand. The hospital will have the need in the near future to expand both their medical offices and patient bed count. They currently have plans to add additional medical offices by expanding into the parking lot to the south of the Levy Pavilion. AMH has no plans to expand beyond its current borders to the east and the west but will continue to be interested in utilizing contiguous land to the north and the south so that it can accommodate the expanding and changing needs of their doctors, staff and patients.

The Township should continue its positive and collaborative relationship with the hospital and find ways to help the hospital thrive as it is a major asset along Old York Road and the Township in general. With the Old York Road Corridor Study commencing, the hospital should be seen as a key component to attracting viable commercial revitalization.

Holy Redeemer Hospital

Holy Redeemer Hospital (HRH) is a community hospital that services the need of the surrounding community. The hospital will have the need to upgrade some of its buildings over the next en years to keep up with changing technology and maintenance. They also have a desire to expand their development of housing for the disadvantaged women, children and the elderly. They worked closely with other municipalities to find ways to develop this type of housing with minimal impact to the surrounding neighborhoods. With Abington's growing elderly population, the Township should begin a dialog, with HRH, on potentially filling the needs of our community.

Large Retail/Commercial Properties

Willow Grove Mall (PREIT)

The development of the Willow Grove Mall provided the township some difficulties with its other retail areas. Since the development of the mall, the Township has been able to bounce back from this problem. The properties vacated by retailers that moved to the mall have been occupied and are currently stable. However, PREIT is currently involved in re-evaluating all of its traditional style malls and is creating models that will provide economic revitalization to their properties. The proposed expansion of the Willow Grove mall where Strawbridge's has vacated will provide the mall with a family destination place (i.e. theater, bowling, etc.) and restaurants that will attract shoppers and people looking for destinations that provide them with a multitude of activities. This type of expansion will enhance the economic development of the Township and certainly the mall, but without the coattails to create additional energy which could support other types of development; this could potentially create another round of difficulties for the Township's other retail areas.

Baederwood Shopping Center (Brandolini)

For the past year, the Township has been anticipating a plan to redevelop the Baederwood Shopping Center. A mixed use development that could have two or more of the following: retail, office and housing, has been the initial plan presented by the developer. Baederwood Shopping Center is a prime example of an opportunity where the Township and its collaboration with the developer could bear fruit beneficial to both parties. A mixed use development, if done with care and sensitivity, could enable the developer and the Township to produce a product on a property in an area already populated with higher density development. This type of mixed use redevelopment could provide the age restricted housing discussed early in this section with retail and access to public transportation and a major thoroughfare (Old York Road) through the Township. The potential of this type of development could be the infusion of pedestrian traffic, destination mode and retail revitalization needed within the Township

Noble Plaza Area

This area directly relates to the Old York Road Corridor and can not be overlooked. That being said, there are some inherent characteristics associated with this area that are worth considering. It is a public transportation node with bus and commuter train access as well as vehicular traffic on the Township's major artery (Old York Road) and tributary (The Fairway). This area is a gateway into the Township with the train bridge feature and the descending grade from both the North and South. This area could be further developed with a mixture of uses and the possible introduction of a residential component.

Underdeveloped and Future Opportunity Properties

Suburban Industrially Zoned Properties

One area of the Township that has become an issue without any prior consideration by the Township on the future use, are the parcels zoned Suburban Industrial (SI) and the buildings that occupy these properties. As we have witnessed recently with the former Williard Mechanical property, if the Township does not act proactively in discussing and/or planning of these properties then

unwanted results could occur. A vision generated by the Township could create a road map as to how regulatory changes and concept planning could handle the transfer of these zoned properties into revitalized economic centers.

Business Zoning Districts (PB, SC, TC, & MU)

These districts and their locations throughout the Township should be analyzed to create commonly used properties and provide complimentary businesses or uses instead of causing mismatched entities that struggle to coexist. Whereas businesses do not necessarily have a desire to be located in areas with other similar businesses, they do recognize that like and similar businesses are more desirable than businesses and/or uses that are a complete separation and counter-productive to their existence. The Township should review the district uses and rewrite or revise zoning districts to create economic viability by developing areas of complimentary uses.

Glenside/Weldon Property

Once the building projects of the school districts elementary schools are complete the Glenside/Weldon school will be vacant and potentially no longer needed for this use. The Township and the School District should partner in finding suitable adaptive reuses for this property that will bring additional vitality to this portion of Easton Road and the Keswick Village area. Age restricted housing with the recapturing of active park land would allow empty nester type residents in the area to remain in their neighborhoods and would give families a place to congregate and continue to build their strong community.

Expanding Housing

Through master planning and re-evaluation of property uses, the Township could seek solution to a growing issue of not enough suitable housing for our aging residents and future residents that are looking to be free of property maintenance. Through mixed use development and greater density allowances on properties struggling to coexist with high traffic areas and/or incompatible relationships between property and the surrounding fabric. These types of solutions could provide developments of retail, office and residential uses that could internally support itself to a degree while preserving what precious undeveloped land exists in the Township. Through design standards and active participation by the Township entities, these types of development could build new economic centers or advance others.

Commercial Corridors

Old York Road

The Township has hired a consulting team to develop strategies that will create a fabric which will develop sustainable economic and aesthetic revitalization. Details related to this corridor and its economic development potential will be a major aspect of the study.

Easton Road

The commercial areas that flank Easton Road present, in many ways, opportunities to transform into a town center along the lines of what the Township did at Keswick Village. Easton Road is occupied by small properties with locally owned Mom & Pop type businesses. Therefore, a sense of community already exists and provides energy to build a revitalization strategy. This corridor would benefit from a corridor study much like that being conducted for Old York Road. The study should be used to develop regulatory changes that will attract businesses to redevelop or enhance existing properties, create design guidelines to create some commonality to the redevelopment project that would further reinforce pedestrian utilization, develop implementation tools from tax cuts, grants, etc. to developers' or property owners' incentives who adhered to the guidelines developed for the corridors redevelopment.

The Township should support the current and future Five Year Comprehensive Plan for Easton Road already underway. This Plan is highly important to the future development of Easton Road and constitutes the core of work which the Township will apply to this corridor until the next Comprehensive Plan revision. This specific plan also provides the primary funding stream for implementation of improvements to the corridor and funding should remain available for the next decade.

The Township should focus attention on developing a Roslyn Community Complex and implementing existing guidelines for the Roslyn/Easton Road corridor via the various Land Development, Subdivision and Zoning Hearing Board cases which appear before the Township.

Future Strategies

As the revitalization program approached the ten year mark and the end of its primary mission, the Board of Commissioners has asked the Economic Committee to prepare recommendations for continued revitalization work. Since the initial undertaking was massive in scope, the next phase of commercial revitalization can be smaller in applied funding and overall commitment, but still needs to be carefully planned. Some of the issues that The Economic Development Committee should evaluate and prioritize include the following staff observations:

1. Identification of new Planning Districts to include those commercial areas omitted from the prior studies and analysis.
2. Expansion of existing revitalization districts to include portions or extensions previously omitted in the planning process.
3. A comprehensive maintenance and funding program for the established planning districts, to ensure that the value-added improvements are maintained to an acceptable level of satisfaction, and representative of their initial pristine and fresh appearance.

4. Since the Tax Abatement Program associated with the Revitalization Program will expire in 2010, decisions on its continuance and acceptance by the Abington School District must be pursued. New and more creative applications of this State provision must be explored for causation of some property-specific revitalization goals.
5. Reapplication of the Façade Enhancement grant programming, which achieved moderate success in its first generation format using Community Development funds and Federal Home Loan dollars, should be developed to ensure that continued improvement to semi-public space or private property frontage will keep pace with improvements to the public realm.
6. Coordination of the Committee's revitalization efforts with land development applications which have largely eluded adherence to or participation with the design guidelines set forth for planning districts.
7. Development of future zoning amendments that promote redevelopment in targeted areas or larger site-specific properties, either as a Special District Provision, or as a Redevelopment Overlay District, and design standards that are supportive of planned corridor enhancements.
8. A unified approach to gateway beautification and business corridor identification utilizing improved business signage criteria and improved standards for all business district signage including street, traffic, directional, informational, and cultural landmark signs.
9. Analysis and application of other traditionally recognized tools and strategies that foster economic development, such as the formation of Business Improvement Districts for tax reinvestment specific to the BID area, tax increment financing opportunities, and corporation or entities that specifically promote redevelopment in Abington Township. An analysis should be performed on the impact to the Township revenue should BID and TIF programming be implemented.
10. A strategy to match neighboring municipal competition in the economic development arena, which has included strong programs advanced by Jenkintown Borough and its Community Alliance in the area of Business Improvement District and Main Street programming; a comprehensive redevelopment program by Cheltenham Township, which includes an Economic Development Corporation, Main Street programming, and a large capture of State and County grant funding due to its greater eligibility for use programs; and an aggressive redevelopment plan initiated by Upper Moreland which completely redefines town center and planning principles for Rt. 611.
11. Incorporation of electronic technology to economic development strategies which provide for better data awareness, resource marketing,

advertising opportunities, and business promotion opportunities made available to businesses located in Abington Township.

12. A program of support for regional economic development and regional branding which might take the form of partnerships with neighboring municipalities, and/or area Chamber of Commerce initiatives. Such a program could make use of Regional Comprehensive Planning provisions under the MPC, which would allow for site-specific development plans to be pre-approved by the municipality and developed strictly in accord with that plan. Such an effort would also enhance grant application status for shared development projects, and would increase the likelihood for unified development, at least along major access corridors such as Old York Road – State Route 611.
13. Explore the long term future of economics with Abington Township and the general region, with focus on defining the strategies needed by the Township to remain competitive and to cultivate a viable economic base. Maintain a focus on connectivity with regional attractors such as the Willow Grove Mall and the Keswick Theatre.
14. Explore provisions for sustainable business promotion and supplemental improvements within those districts so inclined and which outline a strategy for continued funding and support of promotional programs left over from initial economic development and Main Street planning.
15. Define the future relationships between economic development and community development with respect to integration of mutual benefit areas such as projects similar to the newer State Elm Street Program, and how grants for such undertakings can be obtained through more comprehensive community planning.
16. The following is a list of goals and initiatives that the Township should consider for the next ten years:
 - Develop partnerships with our institutions and create methods that could use their focus and reputation to attract new industries, businesses and residents.
 - Evaluate zoning districts and the zoning map to develop nodes of similar and complementary uses so that these nodes can thrive and the businesses within them can support each other.
 - Master Plan large properties within existing zoning districts to develop potential regulatory changes and use classifications that will enhance the surrounding neighborhoods and the Township.
 - Create a dedicated, full-time position within the Township responsible for promoting the Township to potential business tenants, developing partnerships, and managing the ever-changing commercial areas, or

provide additional personnel to support the Economic Office already established to incorporate these and many other functions.

- Develop appropriate areas within the Township to promote mixed use development that includes a residential component that could retain our older residents or attract new and/or existing residents that desire less personal property maintenance.
 - Provide and promote tax incentives to local business so that they may use the tax dollars to invest in their business and properties.
17. Develop a separate Comprehensive Plan Module for Economic Development, similar in scope to the Park and Recreation Open Space Plan, which would constitute the unique Economic Development Planning Strategy for the Township, and provide specific action and direction for the EDC to apply comprehensively and Township-wide.
 18. The Township needs to develop economic strategies that parallel and are consistent with the Montgomery County Economic Comprehensive Plan.
 19. The Township should continue and expand participation in County economic programs such as Community Revitalization, and in State programs for economic development such as the KOZ and other Keystone initiatives.
 20. The Township must continue administration of its tax abatement program, loan opportunities, and the underwriting of its business improvement grant programs and expand opportunities where possible and practical.
 21. The Township should continue to support its current level of business promotion initiatives including programs like the Roslyn Valley Fall Festival and Car Show, and Holiday event programming, and consider additional event programming to promote business districts.

Future Land Use

Given the state of development in the Township, the Proposed Land Use Map from 1992 has been the prevailing land use guide. It has been updated to reflect evolving land uses and is now designated 2005 Land Use Plan. The 1992 Comprehensive Plan also stressed the importance for improved appearance, sign control and traffic access control along stretches of Old York Road and Easton Road in older sections generally north of Susquehanna Road.

Two land use maps are included for ready reference:

- 2005 Land Use Map
- Temporary Protected Lands Map (Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Plan, 2006)

Abington Township is faced with a similar challenge of most first ring suburbs in the northeastern part of the United States. The challenges we face are as follows:

- Revitalization of our commercial corridors
- Improve housing options to maintain the current and advance our current population
- Create guidelines which will enhance our commercial/industrial properties
- Create transition zones between our residential neighborhoods and commercial districts
- Build a level collaboration and partnerships to work with existing Township assets.

Commercial Corridors

1. Related to the master planning process the Township should develop overlapping methods to evaluate the changes in direction of our commercial corridors.
2. Introduce pedestrian friendly pathways to connect business.
3. Develop centralized parking to reduce the amount of impervious parking area for individual properties (specifically smaller properties).
4. Develop guidelines that will create continuity between properties (internal lot connections, pedestrian walkways, architecture and street treatment).
5. Create transitional connections to the residential neighborhoods that immediately abut these corridors.
6. Develop a way to connect uses of a property based on physical characteristics, neighbor commercial uses, and proximity to residential neighborhoods.
7. Create nodal destination (theaters, performing arts, and activity based businesses) that will enhance surrounding retail/commercial areas and also create a community gathering place.

Housing

1. As part of the master planning process the changing housing needs and environment should be a part of this ever-changing process.
2. Target development of housing that will encourage our aging residents to stay in the Township
3. Create a set of rules that will provide property owners additional options to improve their property which will also encourage methods that will enhance the neighborhood and minimize the effect on natural resources.
4. Develop tools that will enable current large building property owners to seek adaptive reuse options that will diversify the Township's housing stock

5. Develop design guidelines for small subdivisions so that the new homes constructed are not a complete departure from the vernacular of the neighborhood.

Commercial/Industrial

1. Master plan larger industrial properties that may be vacated and develop a plan that will guide a positive outcome for both the redevelopment entity and the surrounding neighborhoods.
2. Develop avenues that will encourage coordination and collaboration with our local institutions to develop properties that will benefit the Township population and the institutions.
3. Develop methods that will reward commercial/industrial property developer/redevelopers for preserving passive or active recreational open space.
4. Develop tools which allow a mixture of uses for properties by reducing the amount of land developed.
5. Create methods through zoning and/or design guidelines that will develop a better mesh between the connection of these types of properties and their residential neighbors.

Transitional Areas (Corridors/Residential)

1. Develop methods that create the transitions between commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods more seamless.
2. These connections should be created to attract neighboring residential areas to enter the commercial corridors in a more significant way than is currently developed.
3. Uses in these transitional areas should also allow the ability for a mixture of uses which encourage development that is sensitive to the residential scale and vernacular.
4. Transitional areas should also be used to control the ingress and egress of vehicular traffic between the commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods.

General

1. Develop tools that will provide property owners with the ability to alter their properties without vacating and/or moving out of the Township.
2. Identify specific properties that will pose a challenge in the future due to vacating of the current owner/tenant and sale of the property and the attempt to create tools that will guide a suitable/viable replacement for that property.

Historic Resources and Preservation

Our citizens repeatedly tell us, both in surveys and at meetings, that the reason they moved to Abington Township, and continue to live here, are its quality suburban ambience. The age of our buildings, (private homes, places of business, and institutions), span the centuries, from the founding of the colony by William Penn in the 1680s to today. Since the Township is almost completely built out, we need to preserve and enhance what we already have.

(It should be noted that sites are eligible for the National Register when they are 50 years old or older. Thus, a vast portion of the Township can be considered historic.)

Since the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, the following progress has been made:

1. In response to the first recommendation, a comprehensive list of 27 historic resources throughout the Township has been identified in the Open Space Plan (May 2006). Pages 19 and 20 of the Open Space Plan followed by a detailed map, discuss the following:
 - Three sites listed on the National Register
 - Fox Chase Farm (Mount Stanley)
 - Keswick Theater
 - Old Abington Township High School, 1888
 - One site which is eligible for the National Register
 - Abington YMCA
 - Twenty-five other sites which are historic in nature
 - Abington Friends Meetinghouse, School & Graveyard
 - Abington Presbyterian Church & Graveyard
 - Ardsley Station
 - Battle of Edge Hill Site
 - Council Rock in Lorimer Park
 - Glenside-Weldon Elementary School
 - Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary
 - Hollywood District
 - Keswick Theatre Business Area
 - Meadowbrook Farm
 - Meadowbrook School
 - Noble Station
 - Old Abington Area
 - Old Abington Junior High School
 - Old Ardsley Elementary School
 - Old Cedar Road Elementary School
 - Old McKinley School
 - Old Orthodox Meetinghouse
 - The Castle
 - The Grove Property

- Tyson Green & Tyson House
- Penn State Abington Campus
- Rosenwald Estate
- Satterthwaite House
- VFW Revolutionary War Graveyard Site

2. The other 1992 recommendations, numbers 2 through 6, have been on the back burner. Here are some points on why our reasoning has changed somewhat:

By law, the owner(s) of a property decide whether they want the site listed on the National Register. A key question is whether they can shoulder the expenses of repairs, restoration and/or maintenance using original materials. (For example, if a building has copper gutters and downspouts, these must be replaced with copper, not modern aluminum, which can be quite expensive.) Often the financial aspects are difficult.

The 1992 Comp Plan recommended instituting Historic Districts, which are very useful for halting neighborhoods in decline. They also are often used to create something to fill the void left by major industries which have closed thus throwing residents of a town out of work (think of 19th century industrial towns which have become tourist destinations). Neither scenario currently applies to Abington Township.

Because Historic Districts, with their Historical Architectural Review Boards (HARB), have such restrictive requirements, it has been decided over the years to support and assist any group of citizens who wish to apply for historic district status for their neighborhood. This is a grass roots/bottom-up approach. It is felt that imposing a top-down approach would be unworkable and possibly burdensome on homeowners. To date, no group has approached us on this.

Historic ambiance in business districts has been accomplished through economic development channels.

The Township staff and Historic Preservation Committee members have met, and continue to meet, with property owners who wish to explore National Register listing for their site. After providing information on how to go about this process, no owner so far has pursued this option.

3. The current cluster development ordinance has provision for preserving an historic building.
4. Abington Arts Center partners with other sources in preserving both Alverthorpe Manor and the Old Orthodox Meeting House. Both of these sites will require continued maintenance.

Since the 2006 Open Space Plan, a draft of a self-guided driving tour has been completed, but needs to be put into final form. The result would be a brochure detailing the history of various sites around the Township, including the 27 listed above plus additional material.

Additional problems and opportunities have been identified by the Historic Preservation Committee. We have a wonderful opportunity, by preserving what we have, for continuing to be the very desirable community we are known to be. Current national planning trends, called “The New Urbanism,” aim to recapture the air of older towns and communities - exactly what we now have in the Township.

However, one problem is that the percentage of developers who are local and live in the community is small. Those from outside the Township are unaffected by insensitive development and seem to have only one criterion, the profit motive. This ignores many facets which make our communities so desirable. Another problem is the current ominous trend toward “teardowns”. Properties in desirable suburbs are often purchased, the existing home demolished, and a new oversized structure built. This dwarfs adjacent homes, cutting off light and air, and can drastically change the character of a neighborhood.

Recommendations

1. Develop a “preservation ethic.”
 - a. We, as Commissioners, staff, members of volunteer committees, civic groups, etc., must constantly talk to citizens and developers about the desirability of preserving our lovely community.
 - b. Emphasize the necessity of adaptive reuse of old attractive buildings.
 - c. Emphasize to developers the need for sympathetic designs which blend nicely with existing buildings.
2. Educate everyone! Discuss the emphasis on preservation ethic in all Township meetings and in Township communication vehicles: calendar, newsletters, etc.
3. Continue to hold the line on zoning ordinance standards so that teardowns will not be oversized buildings on undersized lots. Maintain current height restrictions, building and impervious coverage standards.
4. Continue to provide support to residents who wish to list their property on the National Register.

5. Likewise, support community groups who may wish to obtain Historic District designation for their neighborhood. If they choose that route, establish an HARB.
6. Consider acquiring properties from the 25 Historic Resources list which make sense.
7. Continue partnering with the private sector for maintenance, projects, and acquisition of historic resources.
8. Explore the feasibility of establishing a demolition ordinance aimed at preserving historic resources.
9. Explore the establishment of an overlay historic district that was recommended in the Open Space Plan, (which gives an excellent discussion of the topic on pages 74-76). Especially interesting are the recommendations on:
 - a. Delay in demolition/conditional use
 - b. Guidelines for certain large-scale exterior improvements
 - c. Adaptive reuse for historic buildings
 - d. Façade easements
 - e. Pennsylvania Blue Markers Program
 - f. Gateway welcome signs
 - g. Design guideline pamphlets

Chapter 9

ZONING

Goals

The goal of zoning is to implement the vision expressed in master planning for the Township. As master planning is envisioned to be an ongoing, dynamic process, the Zoning Ordinance must provide for and encourage development that is innovative and addresses the needs of a changing population. This implies that updates of the Zoning Ordinance should occur more frequently than they have in the past.

The current Zoning Ordinance of May 9, 1996 (as amended) largely was based on determining the existing uses in a zoning district and codifying them as permitted or conditional uses in those districts. This, in most cases, led to a large overlap of permitted uses across the various districts, which in turn lessened the distinctiveness of each district. For example, the commercial Special Commercial and Planned Business Districts are very similar and include uses that do not compliment each other (a lumber yard, together with a medical clinic, a tavern/bar and an assembly plant in the case of SC).

Abington Township is a highly developed, highly diverse municipality that today is attractive both residentially and commercially; however, the current Zoning Ordinance is limited in directing future development in a more coherent manner than currently exists, especially in Mixed Use, Apartment/Office and Commercial districts. Nationally, old industrial and heavy commercial uses are giving way to residential, office and retail uses. The same trend needs to be encouraged in Abington to keep the Township competitive with surrounding municipalities.

The use of overlays is a possible method of directing redevelopment. For example, Abington has two distinct commercial corridors, along Easton Road and along York Road. Instead of breaking these corridors into distinct districts with fixed boundaries as currently exists, they simply could be designated as commercial corridors with multiple overlays providing the characteristics to be encouraged. Because two or more overlays could overlap, this approach could provide smoother transitions between areas that incorporate substantially different uses. Alternatively, instead of narrow, continuous strips, the existing corridors could be limited in length but expanded in breadth and integrated with the surrounding residential areas. This would create more Town Center areas

providing a cohesive integration of commercial and residential. The point here is that innovative methods of controlling and directing future growth are required rather than the current approach of fixed, static boundaries based in existing uses.

Any zoning changes need to maintain environmental standards with respect to wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes. The maintenance and possible creation of open space, as well as the preservation of historic resources in redeveloped areas also are requirements.

To these ends, the Zoning Ordinance needs to be revised with the following objectives:

1. Redevelopment should lead to higher and better uses relative to current uses.
2. Redevelopment should lead to each district having a more distinct character than currently exists.
3. Non-complimentary permitted uses in a district should be reduced to the maximum extent possible.
4. Areas of limited extent where significantly different or incompatible uses currently exist should be made more uniform through a change in zoning designation and/or a permitted use.
5. Improved buffering or transition zones between different districts should be established, especially between residential districts and those districts that have intense uses.
6. Greater availability of residential rental properties in clustered developments or in town settings should be encouraged.
7. The development of senior housing should be encouraged.
8. The expansion of town settings should be encouraged.
9. New permitted uses should be considered for old commercial/industrial areas where current uses are declining.
10. Creative mechanisms should be incorporated that permit and encourage the expansion in breadth and limitation in length of commercial corridor areas where such change will achieve the size necessary for destination areas to be developed.
11. The number of districts and the makeup of each district should be reviewed with the objective of consolidation and simplification.