

Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

Abington Township
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania



Abington Township

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN

June 2006

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

AN UPDATE

The Abington Township Board of Commissioners adopted the Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan in 1995 to guide the Township's future decisions on developing parks and preserving open space. The 1995 Plan was funded with grant assistance under the Montgomery County Open Space Program, a \$100-million bond initiative that since 1993 has permanently preserved extensive acreage and stimulated open space planning throughout Montgomery County.

In 2003, Montgomery County voters approved an additional \$150 million bond to continue preserving open space. This new initiative, called the Green Fields / Green Towns Program, also makes grants available for streetscape improvements, public plazas, gateway enhancements, flood-plain restoration, historic preservation and other activities. To be eligible for Green Fields / Green Towns funding, municipalities must first update their open space plans. Accordingly, this document updates Abington Township's 1995 Plan.

THE PLAN

This updated Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan includes the following five major parts:

Community Profile – an overview of the historic, physical, and demographic influences that shape development and conservation in Abington Township.

The Existing Parks and Open Space System – a description of existing protected lands and other aspects of the Township's parks, recreation, and open space system.

Needs Assessment – an assessment of park, recreation, and open space protection needs.

Goals and Objectives – a description of the goal and objective statements that are the basis for the Plan's recommendations.

Recommendations and Action Program – a detailed explanation of the actions endorsed in this Plan and a strategy for implementing these actions.

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COMMUNITY PROFILE

COMMUNITY PROFILE

PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY PROFILE

This chapter describes Abington Township's location in the larger region, its people, history and current development pattern. The community's existing preserved open spaces, historic and scenic resources, and natural features are also discussed as they relate to environmental preservation, potential future development and population growth.

REGIONAL INFLUENCES

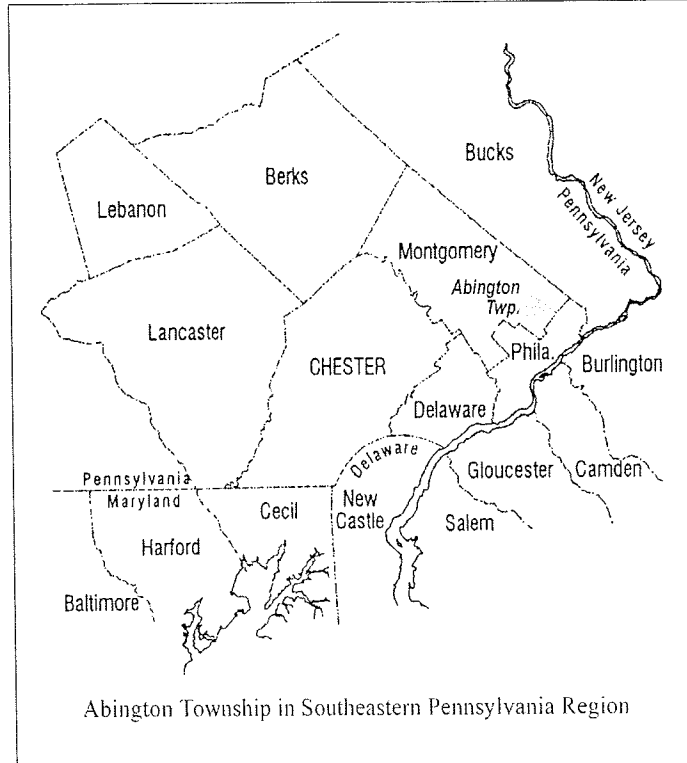
Important regional influences continue to shape growth in and around Abington Township. Montgomery County is the most populous county in the Delaware Valley and among the most affluent in Pennsylvania. The County contains several regional employment centers with a diverse and well-balanced economic base. The number of people that commute into Montgomery County for work each day far exceeds the number that leave the County daily for jobs elsewhere.

Since the mid 1960s, development in Montgomery County has sprawled westward from the established boroughs and Philadelphia bedroom suburbs that grew up following World War II. Growth in Montgomery County over the last thirty years has been concentrated in the County's central and western sectors rather than the eastern part of the County.

Though it is often thought of as a "bedroom community" of Philadelphia, Abington has evolved into a very diverse center of retail, wholesale, office, industrial, institutional, and residential land uses. A unique attribute of the Township is the existence of many distinct communities and neighborhoods.

While no longer considered a major growth center in Montgomery County, Abington Township will nevertheless retain an important position in the regional context. Available housing stock, excellent educational opportunities, high quality community services, and numerous recreational opportunities in an attractive setting continue to make Abington Township a highly desirable and liveable community.

Abington is adjacent to the City of Philadelphia and Rockledge Borough to the east, Cheltenham Township to the south, Upper Dublin Township to the west, and Upper and Lower Moreland townships to the north. The Township encompasses approximately 14.9 square miles or 9,520 acres of land. More than 19,000 parcels of land make up the Township.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Population

Abington Township's population as of the 2000 Census was 56,103, second only to Lower Merion among Montgomery County municipalities. Philadelphia suburbs, including Abington, grew rapidly during the middle of the 20th Century. However, over the last 20 years the Township's population has decreased by almost 3,000 residents. Today, Abington Township is an inner-ring suburb with little room for future expansion.

TABLE 1
TOTAL POPULATION
Abington Township and Montgomery County
1980-2000

Year	Abington Township			Montgomery County		
	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change
1980	59084	-	-	643371	19,291	3.1
1990	56322	-2,762	-4.7	678111	34,740	5.4
2000	56103	-219	-0.4	750097	71,986	10.6

Source: U.S. Census

Regional Population

Like Abington, Cheltenham Township and Lower Moreland Township each border the City of Philadelphia. And like Abington, each of these two inner-ring suburbs lost population between 1990 and 2000. In contrast, Abington's western neighbors both added population during the 1990's. Upper Moreland grew by 45.7% and Upper Dublin by 7.7% during the ten-year period.

**TABLE 2
POPULATION CHANGE
Abington Township and Adjacent Municipalities
1990-2000**

MUNICIPALITY	1990 Population	2000 Population	Number Change	Percent Change
Abington Township	56,322	56,103	-219	-0.4
Cheltenham Township	34,923	24,993	-9930	-28.4
Lower Moreland Township	11,768	11,281	-487	-4.1
Upper Dublin Township	24,028	25,878	1850	7.7
Upper Moreland Township	25,313	36,875	11562	45.7

Source: U.S. Census

Population Projections

The Montgomery County Planning Commission predicts that Abington's population totals will shrink slightly in the future. The County estimates the Township will decrease to 55,830 persons by 2015, a drop of 5% from the 2000 Census count. Between 2015 and 2025, the County projects that Abington will experience a slight loss in residents. The County Planning Commission expects Montgomery County as a whole to grow at a moderate but steady pace through 2025, mainly in the central and western sections of the County.

**TABLE 3
POPULATION PROJECTIONS
Abington Township and Montgomery County
2000-2025**

Year	Abington Township			Montgomery County		
	Projected Population	Number Change	Percent Change	Projected Population	Number Change	Percent Change
2000	56103	-	-	750,097	-	-
2005	56090	-13	-0.02	776,340	26,243	3.5
2015	55830	-260	-0.5	818,210	41,870	5.4
2025	55790	-40	-0.07	857,030	38,820	4.7

Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission

Persons By Age

The age breakdown for Abington Township's residents mirrors Montgomery County's in most respects. For example, the 35-54 year old group is the largest age cohort in both locations. However, Abington's status as an older community is also evident in this data. Persons 65 years and older make up 19.0% of the Township population but account for only 14.9% of all residents Countywide. As a result, Abington's median age of 40.6 years is somewhat higher than the County's median of 38.2 years.

**TABLE 4
PERSONS BY AGE
Abington Township and Montgomery County
2000**

AGE	Abington Township		Montgomery County	
	2000 Population		2000 Population	
	%	Number	%	Number
0 - 17	23.6	13,227	24.1	181,145
18 - 34	17.7	9,863	20.6	154,020
35 - 54	30.3	17,015	31.3	234,688
55 - 64	9.4	5,299	9.1	68,447
65+	19	10,699	14.9	111,794
TOTAL	100	56,103	100	750094
Median Age	40.6		38.2	

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Gender

There are no special conditions in either Abington Township or Montgomery County that have altered the traditional 50/50 balance between total males and total females.

**TABLE5
GENDER
Abington Township and Montgomery County
2000**

AREA	TOTAL POPULATION	Males		Females	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Abington Township	56,103	26,487	47.2	29,616	52.8
Montgomery County	750,097	362,554	48.3	387,543	51.7

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Household Types

Family households are those where the occupants are related by blood or marriage. Non-family households are comprised of unrelated individuals. Family households still account for the majority of all households in both Abington and Montgomery County but not to the extent they once did. In Abington, the number of family households decreased between 1990 and 2000, while the number of non-family households increased. Countywide, the number of family households increased during this same ten-year period but at a much slower rate than the increase in non-family households.

TABLE 6
HOUSEHOLD TYPES
Abington Township and Montgomery County
1990-2000

Household Type	Abington Township			Montgomery County		
	2000		% Change 1990-2000	2000		% Change 1990-2000
	Percent	Number		Percent	Number	
Family Households	69.8	15,136	-3.2	69.1	197,640	9.1
Non-Family Households	30.2	6,554	11	30.9	88,458	19.7
All Households	100	21,690	0.7	100	286,098	12.2

Source: U.S. Census

Persons Per Household

Abington's average of 2.6 persons per household in 1990 and 2.5 persons per household in 2000 was the same as Montgomery County's. Nationwide, average household size has continued to shrink since the 1970's. Later marriages, more divorces, fewer children, and more elderly households are the primary factors behind this trend.

TABLE 7
AVERAGE PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD
Abington Township and Montgomery County
1990-2000

Year	Abington Township	Montgomery County
1990	2.6	2.6
2000	2.5	2.5

Source: U.S. Census

Total Housing Units

Housing growth tends to mirror population growth. Because Abington is so densely developed, the Township's housing stock grew by only 1.1% during the 1990's. Reflecting its ongoing growth, the number of housing units in Montgomery County increased by 11.9% over the same ten-year period.

**TABLE 8
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
Abington Township and Montgomery County
1990-2000**

YEAR	Abington Township			Montgomery County		
	Housing Units	Number Change	Percent Change	Housing Units	Number Change	Percent Change
1990	22,129	-	-	265,856	33,287	14.3
2000	22,367	238	1.1	297,434	31,578	11.9

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Value

The median value of housing in Abington is significantly lower than Montgomery County's median due primarily to the Township's older housing stock. New, more expensive housing in growing areas raised the County median housing value to \$160,700 in 2000. Although still below the County average, Abington experienced a rise of 9.4% in the median value during the 1990's. Montgomery County's median value grew by 12.1% between 1990 and 2000.

**TABLE 9
HOUSING VALUE
Abington Township and Montgomery County
1990-2000**

VALUE	Abington Township			Montgomery County		
	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Median Housing Value	\$129,900	\$142,100	9.4	\$143,400	\$160,700	12.1

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Age

Housing age statistics clearly illustrate the history and status of growth in Abington. Over 92% of the Township's housing stock was in place prior to 1980. In contrast, one-quarter of Montgomery County's housing stock was built since 1980.

**TABLE 10
HOUSING AGE
Abington Township and Montgomery County
2000**

	Abington Township	Montgomery County
Total Housing Units	22367	297,434
Percent Built Before 2000	6.8	28
Percent Built Before 1980	70	52.9
Percent Built Before 1940	23.2	19.1

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Tenure

In 2000, owner-occupied housing, as opposed to rental housing, accounted for 79.3% of the total housing stock in Abington and 73.5% in Montgomery County. As an older developed community, Abington might be expected to have a higher proportion of rental units than Montgomery County. However, most Montgomery County boroughs tend to contain higher rates of rental units thereby skewing the Countywide totals. During the 1990's, Abington actually lost rental units, while Montgomery County's rental housing stock increased by 7.3%.

**TABLE 11
HOUSING TENURE
Abington Township and Montgomery County
1990-2000**

Housing Units	Abington Township		Montgomery County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1990: Owner Occupied	16,903	78.5	184,317	72.3
Renter Occupied	4,640	21.5	70,678	27.7
Total Occupied	21,543	100	254,995	100
2000: Owner Occupied	17,205	79.3	210,233	73.5
Renter Occupied	4,485	20.7	75,865	26.5
Total Occupied	21,690	100	286,098	100
Change in Owner-Occupied 1990-2000	302	1.8	25,916	14.1
Change in Renter-Occupied 1990-2000	-155	-3.3	5187	7.3

Source: U.S. Census

As seen on the accompanying Hydrology map, 100-year floodplains have been identified along Sandy Run, Tookany Creek, Meadow Brook, Jenkintown, and Pennypack Creek. The largest area of floodplain in Abington is found at the Meadowbrook Country Club property in the northeastern portion of the Township, where Robinhood Brook and Meadow Brook flow into Pennypack Creek. In total, Abington contains approximately 475 acres of 100-year floodplain.

Headwaters

Abington Township contains the headwaters of three major creeks, as well as several additional, unnamed tributary streams. Sandy Run, Tookany Creek and Jenkintown Creek all begin within Abington's borders. These streams then proceed southwestward, reaching either the Delaware or Schuylkill Rivers.

While protecting all streamside areas and watersheds is an important goal, the headwaters of streams are particularly sensitive from an environmental perspective. Chemical, biological, or thermal pollution at the headwaters affect the quality of the entire stream. It is therefore advisable that the sources of streams, whether they be fed from surface runoff or springs, receive special attention with regard to conservation.

The most effective method for protecting headwaters is ensuring that the surrounding runoff capture area is undeveloped, with ample vegetation in the form of ground cover and tree canopy. However, in a developed area such as Abington, totally natural headwater areas are impossible. Alternatively, the Township can protect headwaters as follows:

- Strictly enforce existing surface water setback provisions in the zoning ordinance.
- Consider acquisition or conservation easements on remaining vacant land, landowner willing.
- Protect, restore, or enhance natural vegetated cover on those remaining vacant areas.
- Educate, encourage, and provide incentive for headwater property owners to reduce impervious surface coverage. Examples include:
 - ▶ Minimizing parking lot size by ensuring the most efficient use of geometry.
 - ▶ Using pervious parking lots, such as gravel, geo-pavers, and pervious paving.
 - ▶ Minimizing driveway widths, and/or maintaining grass strips between the wheel tracks.
 - ▶ Minimizing the width of existing and proposed local roads. Many streets built in the mid-20th century are much wider than they functionally need to be.
 - ▶ Establishing guidelines for vegetated drainage/infiltration swales on properties and along side roadways, as an alternative to storm water sewers.



Example of a parking lot made with geo-pavers.

- ▶ Installing “green roofs,” whereby a typical impervious roof is replaced with a modest layer of soil, and planted with grasses and other ground cover plants. Green roofs are especially appropriate on the large roofs of “big box” stores.

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas defined by the presence of water, saturated soil conditions, and the growth of unique plants. Abington contains both forested wetlands and *emergent* wetlands which are dominated by grass or grass-like species. Wetlands are important groundwater recharge areas that support wildlife and fish, sometimes harboring endangered species such as the bog turtle. Wetlands also reduce flooding by slowing or detaining storm water. In the process, the wetlands filter impurities that might otherwise contribute to surface water and groundwater pollution. By federal law, wetlands may not be filled or built upon.

The Hydrology map shows wetland areas identified in the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) performed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These areas are identified based on reflectivity from aerial remote sensing images. As a result, only the most prominent wetlands are shown, and some wetlands are actually ponds. Hydric soil types can also approximate areas that may include wetlands. There are many other wetlands which would need to be identified by a qualified professional at the time any individual tract is considered for recreational development. Major concentrations of wetlands exist at the Meadowbrook Country Club in the northeastern portion of the Township. The largest of these wetlands is known as the Bethayres Swamp, a locally significant natural area that extends into Lower Moreland Township. Smaller wetlands can be found near the Township’s lakes and ponds.

Soils

Soil, a combination of organic materials and mineral fragments, supports and nourishes plant life on the earth’s surface. Soils in the United States are identified and classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Most soils in Abington Township are classified as *made land*, where development has permanently modified the original soil and, in some cases, covered the soil with impervious surfaces. Other soils in Abington would be considered ideal for agriculture if they were found in a rural setting. NRCS capability classes rate soils for their ability to host cash crops such as corn and soybeans. Capability classes I through IV are considered to be *prime agricultural soils*, and are found in many parts of the Township as shown on the Soils and Geology map.

Hydric soils are those soils that formed under the conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough to produce anaerobic conditions in the upper layer. Under anaerobic conditions, molecular oxygen is absent, promoting the growth of unusual vegetation. Indications of hydric soils include poor drainage, high water tables, ponding and frequent flooding. The most important implication of hydric soils is that they may contain wetlands which are off-limits for most development activities. In Abington hydric soils are found in linear bands along streams corridors especially along Meadow Brook.

Geology

Abington Township is located along the eastern edge of the Piedmont Province, the band of rolling hills that serves as a transition between the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the Appalachian Mountains. The *fall line*, where rivers become tidal estuaries and the coastal plain begins, lies only one mile to the east of Abington in Northeast Philadelphia. Abington contains two different divisions of the Piedmont Province. The Piedmont Uplands include Edge Hill and all land to the south of this ridge. Geology here consists of durable metamorphic rocks including Felsic and Mafic gneiss, Chickies quartzite, and Wissahickon schist. Abington's highest point of 465 feet above sea level is situated at the crest of Edge Hill in the Piedmont Uplands. Immediately north of Edge Hill is a narrow band of Piedmont Lowlands, a trench known as the Chester Valley. The trench begins in Abington and extends in a west-southwest fashion reaching King of Prussia, Downingtown, Coatesville, and finally Lancaster. The Chester Valley is a vein of limestone and dolomite that has eroded to a lower elevation than the surrounding rocks. Both limestone and dolomite are carbonate rocks that are susceptible to sinkholes, caves, and other *karst* features. This portion of the Chester Valley also contains circular areas of unconsolidated sand and clay. The largest sand and clay area underlies Hillside Cemetery on Susquehanna Road. The land north of the Chester Valley reverts back to Piedmont Uplands and their underlying metamorphic rocks. Geology types are shown on the Soils and Geology map.

Steep Slopes

The physical properties of bedrock and soil, combined with millennia of precipitation, have created the hills, valleys, and slopes of today. Steep slopes in Abington are generally the result of erosive action. The greatest concentration of steep slopes is found in the Pennypack Creek valley in eastern Abington Township. The seemingly gentle meanders of the creek have carved these slopes into the soil and rock over thousands of years. To the north, Edge Hill has several steeply-sloped sides throughout its course through the Township. Steep slopes are also found in smaller pockets throughout the Township especially near streams.

Steep areas have been categorized into slopes between 15% and 25% grade and slopes with 25% or greater grade based on widely-accepted land use planning practices. On slopes 15% to 25%, restrictions on development are usually recommended. Slopes greater than 25% are generally

recommended to remain as vegetated open space. The vegetation that grows on steep slopes is crucial in curbing erosion, slowing storm water runoff, and maintaining scenic value on slopes with high visual prominence. In many cases, steep slopes have remained wooded due to their lack of suitability for development. Some slopes, however, have little vegetation and are at risk of erosion. Large concentrations of steep slopes, especially ones near stream corridors, are often recommended to be included within a designated greenway corridor.

Woodlands

Originally, Abington was entirely forested with the exception of clearings that were cut or burned by the Lenni Lenape. Since the late 1600's, however, most land suitable for farming or settlement was cleared by Europeans. Woodlands that remain often coincide with steep slopes and frequently flooded areas. Other large woodland areas originally featured agricultural fields but have since reverted back to woodland, a common scenario in Philadelphia's inner-ring suburbs. The largest contiguous woodland in Abington surrounds Pennypack Creek in and around Lorimer Park. The steep slopes and floodplains here have discouraged clearing for development. Other significant woodlands are found behind the Meadowbrook Farm on Washington Lane, and in the Township's Alverthorpe Park and Ardsley Wildlife Area. Forest types are predominantly oak-hickory in the uplands, with bottomland forests containing elm, ash, red maple, and sycamore trees.

Woodland is an important natural resource in several regards. The root systems of trees and other woodland vegetation stabilize the soil, preventing erosion. Woodland is also a natural storm water control that absorbs, reduces, and slows surface runoff. During the warm months, tree canopies moderate air temperatures and stream temperatures, a benefit for humans, wildlife, and fish alike. In addition, the photosynthesis that occurs in leaves and needles transforms carbon dioxide into oxygen, improving air quality. Woodlands are also important wildlife habitats. Maintaining linear corridors of woodlands along streams helps to move wildlife to different areas, diversifying animal gene pools. Woodlands also add character and visual relief to the landscape.

Outstanding Natural Areas

The Pennsylvania Science Office of The Nature Conservancy prepared a Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) for Montgomery County in 1995. The NAI identifies critical areas of plant and animal habitat and also includes inherently unique natural and geologic features. Critical habitat areas are based on the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index (PNDI), a list of plant and animal species that are officially endangered, threatened, or of special concern on a federal, state, or local level. A biologist performs field work to find occurrences of these species locally. Any "hits of the species usually surrounded by a buffer area appear in the inventory.

Outstanding Natural Areas are grouped into two categories by The Nature Conservancy. Sites of *statewide* significance are identified for the protection of biological diversity. These sites contain exemplary natural communities and documented habitats for species of special concern. Sites of

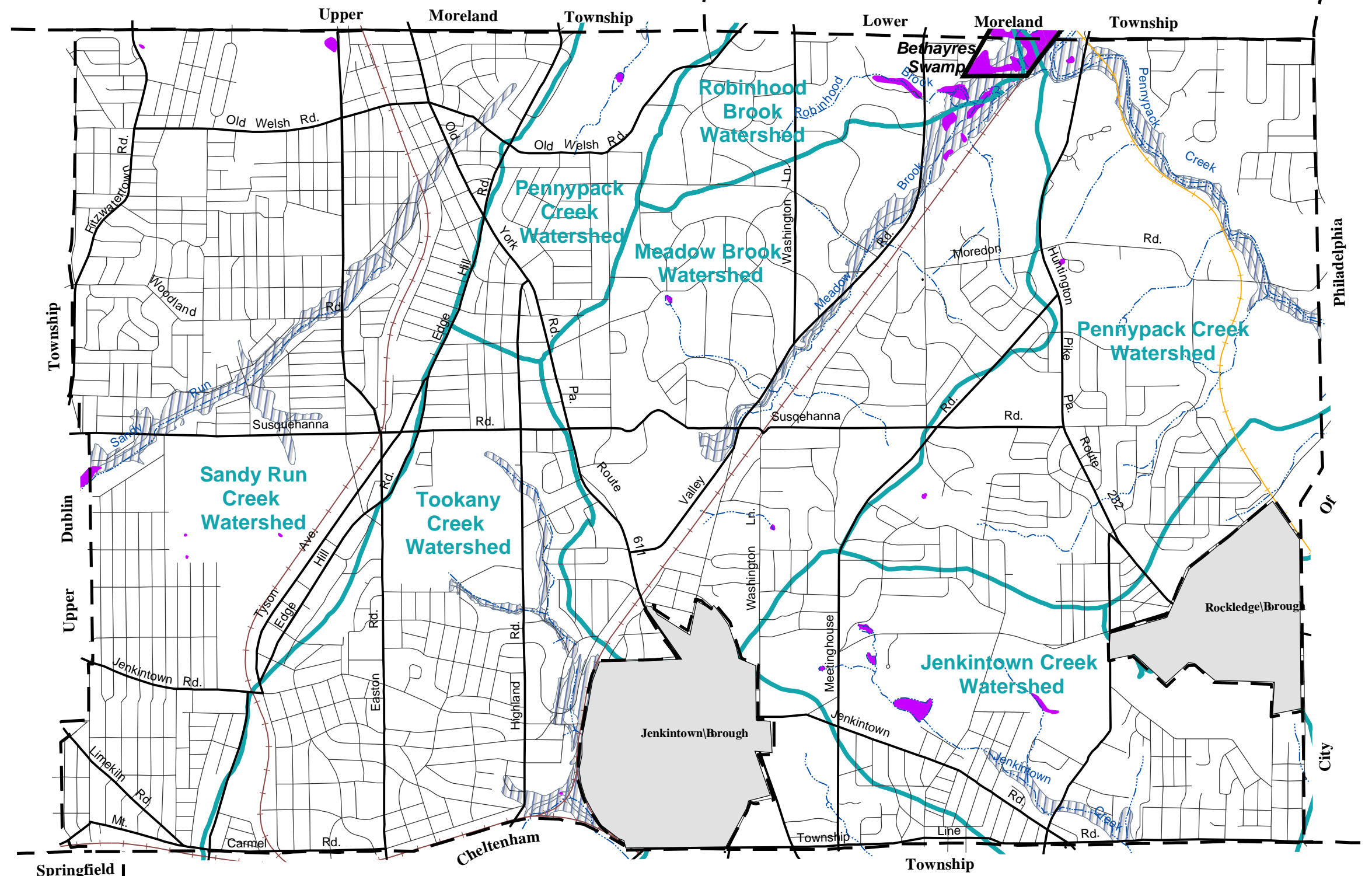
local significance are unique areas chosen because of size, diversity of wildlife and plant life, and water quality protection value. The NAI provides protection priority rankings within these two categories. Abington contains two natural areas of local significance: Bethayres Swamp and Big Oak Woods.

Bethayres Swamp, ranked as a high priority for protection, straddles the Abington / Lower Moreland border and is owned in part by the Meadowbrook Country Club. The swamp contains emergent marsh habitat vegetated with cattails and sedges as well as shrub swamp and floodplain forest habitats. The swamp is a haven for nesting birds including swamp sparrows, red-winged blackbirds, and wood ducks. The NAI indicates that Bethayres Swamp is one of the few marshlands in Montgomery County and could provide an excellent opportunity for environmental education. Bethayres Swamp appears on the Hydrology Map.





Big Oak Woods is contained entirely within Abington Township and is situated on both sides of Pennypack Creek. The site is ranked low in protection priority in part because it is already included within Montgomery County's Lorimer Park. Big Oak Woods is a mature native forest that provides an idea of how Abington looked prior to European settlement. Several red oak trees in the woods have diameters of three feet, giving this natural area its name. Mountain laurel and flowering dogwood thrive in the forest shrub layer. The NAI recommends maintaining a buffer around Big Oak Woods to prevent the encroachment of invasive plant species and to preserve the overall natural quality of the site. Big Oak Woods appears on the Steep Slopes and Woodlands map.

Abington Township Open Space Plan

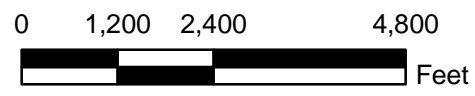
Montgomery County



Hydrology

-  Streams
-  Watershed Boundaries
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  Wetlands

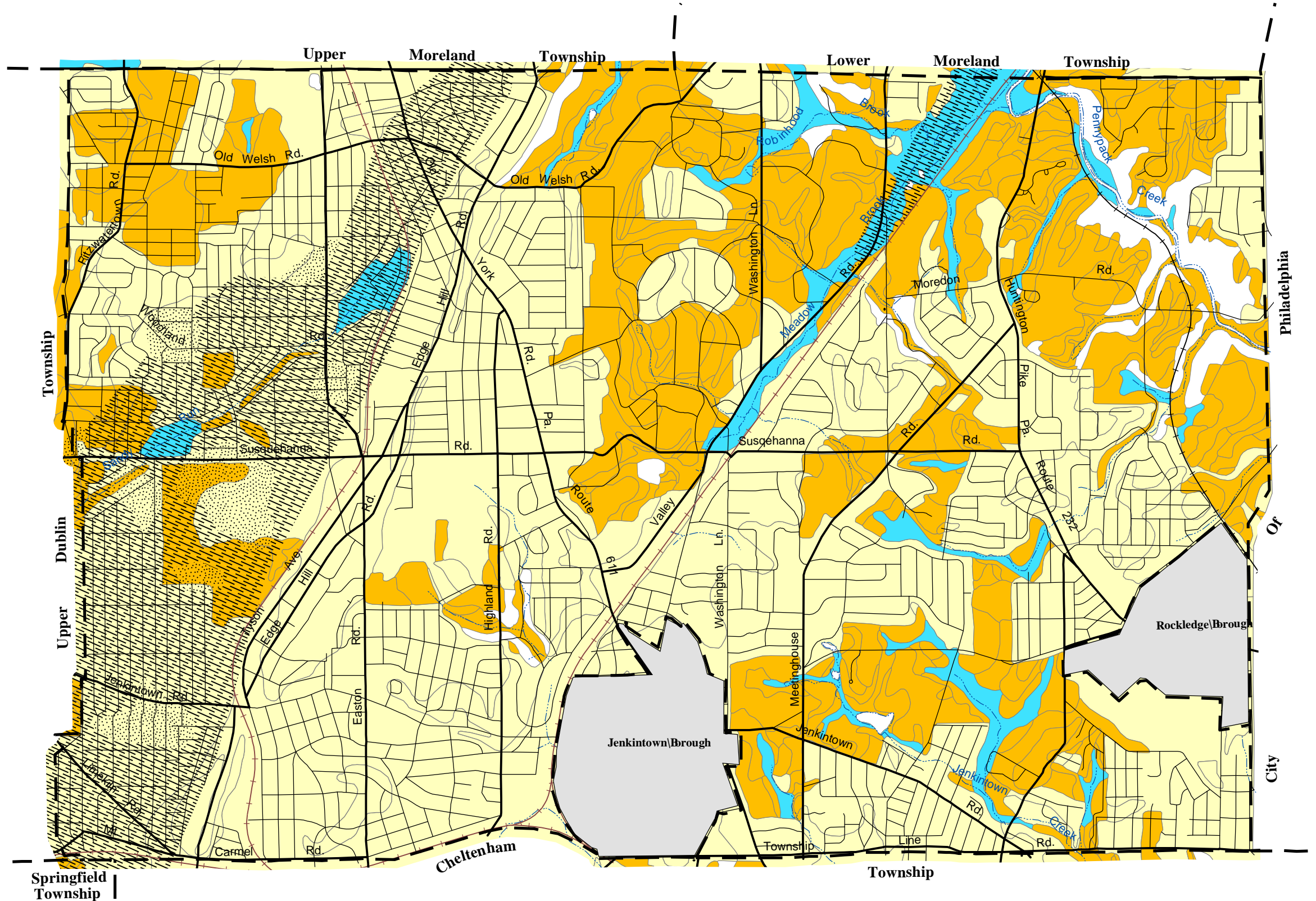
NOTE: More specific sub-watershed information can be found in the Tookany Creek Watershed Plan and the Sandy Run Watershed Plan.







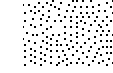
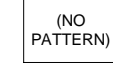
SOURCE: PASDA Site and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

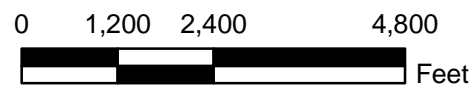
Abington Township Open Space Plan

Montgomery County



Soils & Geology

-  Hydric Soils
-  Prime Agricultural Soils
(Class I - IV)
-  Man-made Soils
-  Carbonate Geology
(Limestone, Dolomite)
-  Sand and Clay Geology
-  (NO PATTERN) Metamorphic Geology
(Gneiss, Quartzite, Schist)



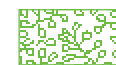



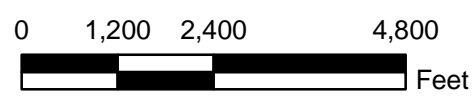
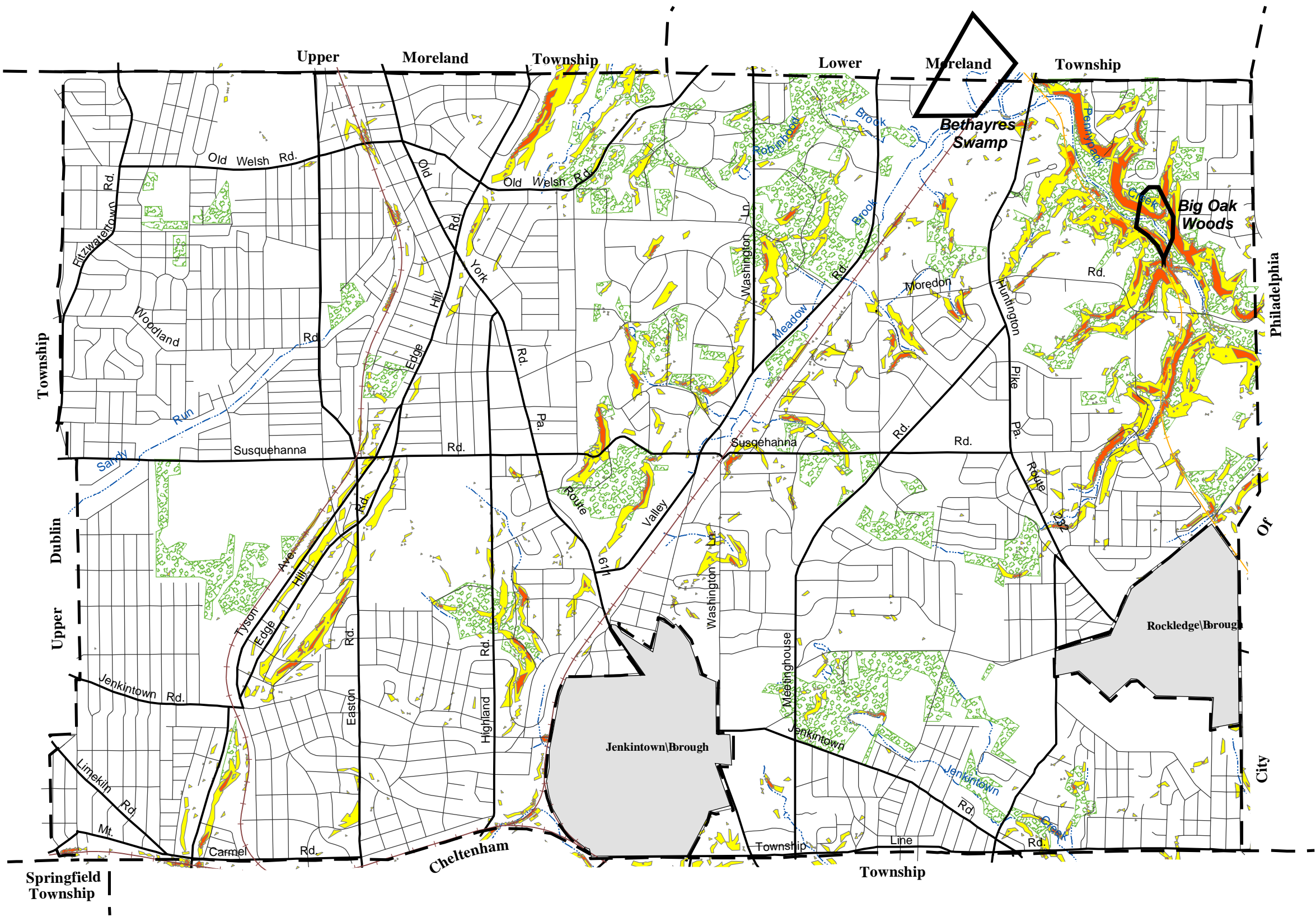
SOURCE: PASDA Site and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

Abington Township Open Space Plan

Montgomery County

Steep Slopes, Woodlands & PNDI Sites

-  Steep Slopes (15% - 25%)
-  Steep Slopes (25% and greater)
-  Woodlands
-  Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index (PNDI) Sites



SOURCE: PASDA Site and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Abington has seen more than three centuries of European settlement preceded by many more centuries of Native American activity. As a result, the Township contains a wealth of buildings, sites, and areas that help tell the stories of Abington. The accompanying Historic Resources map shows historic sites as well as broader historic areas. These resources include sites and districts on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as well as other sites significant to Abington's history.

The NRHP is an inventory of buildings, sites, structures and districts that are significant to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The NRHP coordinates public and private efforts to identify and protect these sites. The NRHP was authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is administered by the National Park Service. Properties are either *listed*, that is, officially included in the NRHP, or are *eligible*, in which case, the application process is underway. Placement of buildings and districts on the NRHP does not ensure protection from demolition or adjacent development. Rather, it is a recognition tool that may be enhanced with municipal regulations.

Abington contains three sites officially listed on the NRHP: *Fox Chase Farm* (Mount Stanley), the tudor-style *Keswick Theatre*, and *Old Abington Township High School* (1888) . Two additional properties are eligible for the NRHP:

- *Abington YMCA* - built between 1913-1915, still acts as Abington's YMCA today.
- *Hollywood Historic District* - consisting of unique housing designed in the style and fashion of Hollywood, California.

Other important historic sites in Abington that do not appear on the NRHP include the following:

- *Abington Friends Meetinghouse, School and Graveyard* - a restored 1697 meetinghouse, school, a Hicksite meetinghouse and the oldest such complex in Montgomery County.
- *Abington Presbyterian Church and Graveyard* - the oldest Presbyterian Church in Montgomery County, with the original building dating from 1712.
- *Ardsley Station* - old station building now reused for commercial purposes.
- *Battle of Edge Hill Site* - the area along Edge Hill where British and American troops fought in December of 1777, now Revolutionary War graves at VFW post on Jenkintown Road.
- *Council Rock in Lorimer Park* - The surrounding land, a gentleman's farm called Kings Oak, belonged to George Horace Lorimer, editor of the Saturday Evening Post and chairman of the board of the Curtis Publishing Company. He donated the land to Montgomery County as a park in 1937.
- *Glenside-Weldon Elementary School* - built in 1906 and doors opened in 1908. It was once both an elementary and a junior high, now the oldest existing school building within the Township
- *Hillside Cemetery* - contains many interesting old graves: Civil War drummer boy (14 years old), Lutheran orphans, German section from 1898.
- *Keswick Theatre Business Area* - a European-flavored shopping area.



- ***Meadowbrook Farm*** - owned by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, former home of Liddon and Alice Herkness Pennock. Flowers for weddings were provided to the White House.
- ***Meadowbrook School*** - once the school building of The Children's Village of the Seybert Institution.
- ***Noble Station*** - one of the few remaining old train stations in the Township.
- ***Old Abington Area*** - the original village of Abington, centered at the intersection of Susquehanna Road and Old York Road. Victorian and Sears catalogue housing on adjacent streets.
- ***Old Abington Junior High School*** - built between 1910's and 1930's, today exists as the School Administrative Building.
- ***Old Ardsley Elementary School*** - built between 1910's and 1930's, today exists as the Ardsley Community Center.
- ***Old Cedar Road Elementary School*** - built between 1910's and 1930's, today exists as the Ukrainian center.
- ***Old McKinley School*** - a rare example of a Horace Trumbauer-designed school.
- ***Old Orthodox Meetinghouse*** - after a schism in 1827, the Orthodox group left the Hicksite meeting and built this meetinghouse in 1836. It is architecturally more important than the large Hicksite meetinghouse and is in the exhibition "Silent Witness".
- ***The Castle*** - home of the Smith family of painters. Russell was noted for theater curtains for the Academy of Music, and Xanthus was well regarded for his Civil War scenes.
- ***The Grove Property*** - an 1830's house, carriage house, and several acres.
- ***Tyson Green and Tyson House*** - the Tyson limekilns provided materials for the mortar at Independence Hall.
- ***Penn State Abington Campus*** - formerly the Ogontz School for young ladies, with buildings by Horace Trumbauer. Amelia Earhart was a graduate.
- ***Rosenwald Estate*** - part of the Township-owned Alverthorpe Manor, and host to interpretive cultural programs.

The historic sites and areas described above appear on the accompanying Historic Resources map.

Abington Township Open Space Plan

Montgomery County

Historic Resources

-  Historic Sites
-  Historic Areas

Listed on National Register

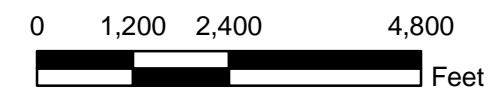
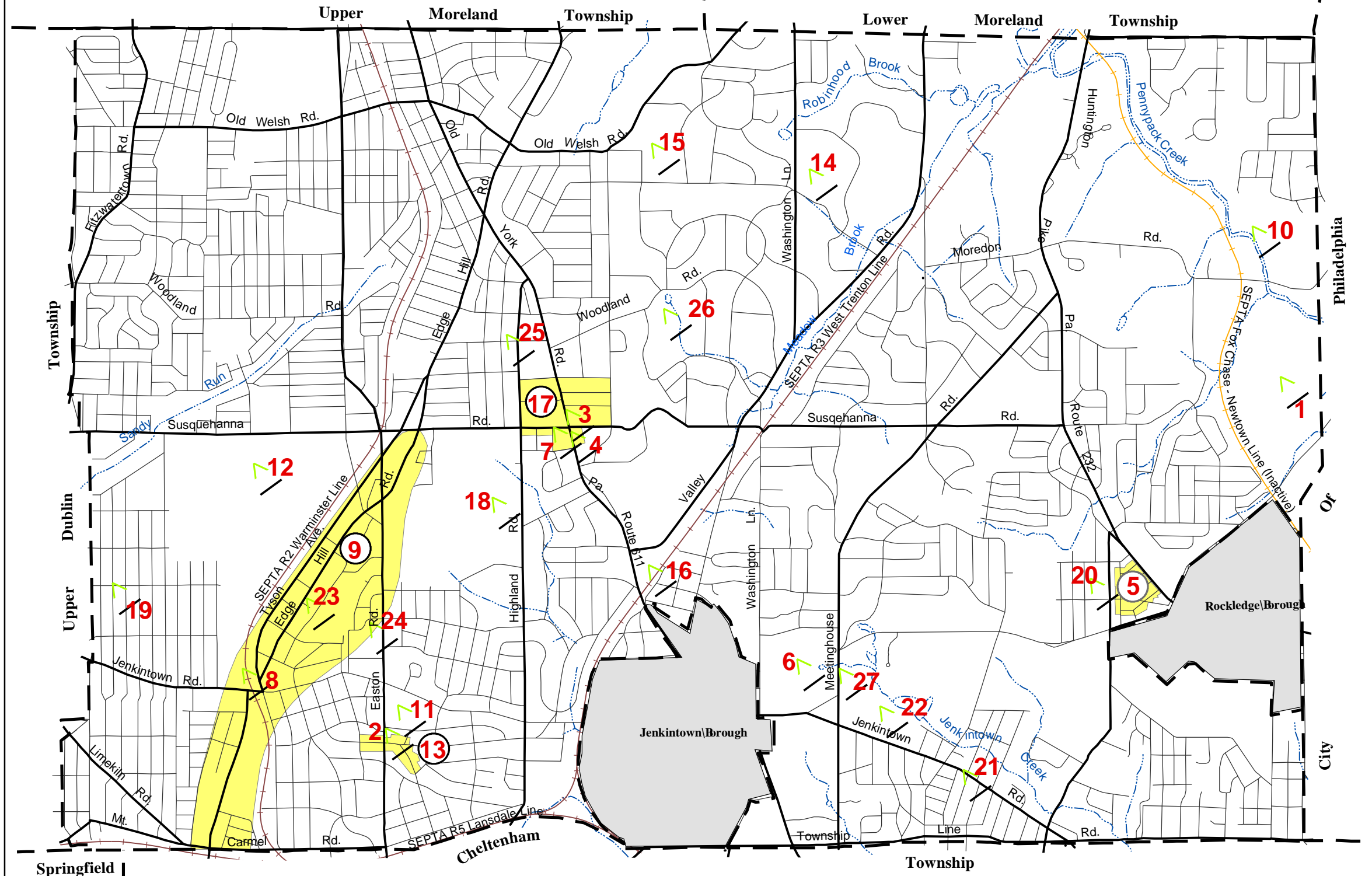
1. Fox Chase Farm
2. Keswick Theatre
3. Old Abington Township High School

Eligible for National Register

4. Abington Y.M.C.A.
5. Hollywood Historic District

Other Sites

6. Abington Friends Meetinghouse, School & Graveyard
7. Abington Presbyterian Church & Graveyard
8. Ardsley Station
9. Battle of Edge Hill Site
10. Council Rock In Lorimer Park
11. Glenside-Weldon Elementary School
12. Hillside Cemetery
13. Keswick Theatre Business Area
14. Meadowbrook Farm
15. Meadowbrook School
16. Noble Station
17. Old Abington Area
18. Old Abington Junior High School
19. Old Ardsley Elementary School
20. Old Cedar Road Elementary School
21. Old McKinley School
22. Old Orthodox Meetinghouse
23. The Castle
24. The Grove Property
25. Tyson Green & Tyson House
26. Penn State Abington Campus
27. Rosenwald Estate



SOURCE: Abington Township Historical Preservation Committee,
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

EXISTING LAND USE

Abington is a highly developed inner-ring Philadelphia suburb and one of Pennsylvania's oldest communities. The Township is dominated by its many residential neighborhoods and two major commercial corridors. Abington is also blessed with an extensive park system.

Crestmont, Ardsley, North Hills, Roslyn, and Glenside are older, densely settled, residential neighborhoods typical of most of the western section of Abington. While some of these areas also include mixed use vicinities, small single-family residential lots are the predominant use throughout. The eastern part of Abington is also mostly residential but tends to feature larger homes and lower density neighborhoods than the western part of the Township. The Meadowbrook, Rydal, and Huntington Valley sections of Abington are in the Township's eastern sector.

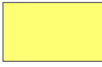





York Road (Route 611) and Easton Road are regional commercial corridors that each run in the north-south direction for the length of the Township. Nearly the entire stretch of both of these roads is lined with small, unplanned retail and service uses. The Willow Grove Park at Easton Road and Moreland Road along the northern boundary of the Township is a regional shopping center and major traffic generator. The SPS Technologies site off Highland Avenue at the southern end of the Township is Abington's only large industrial property.

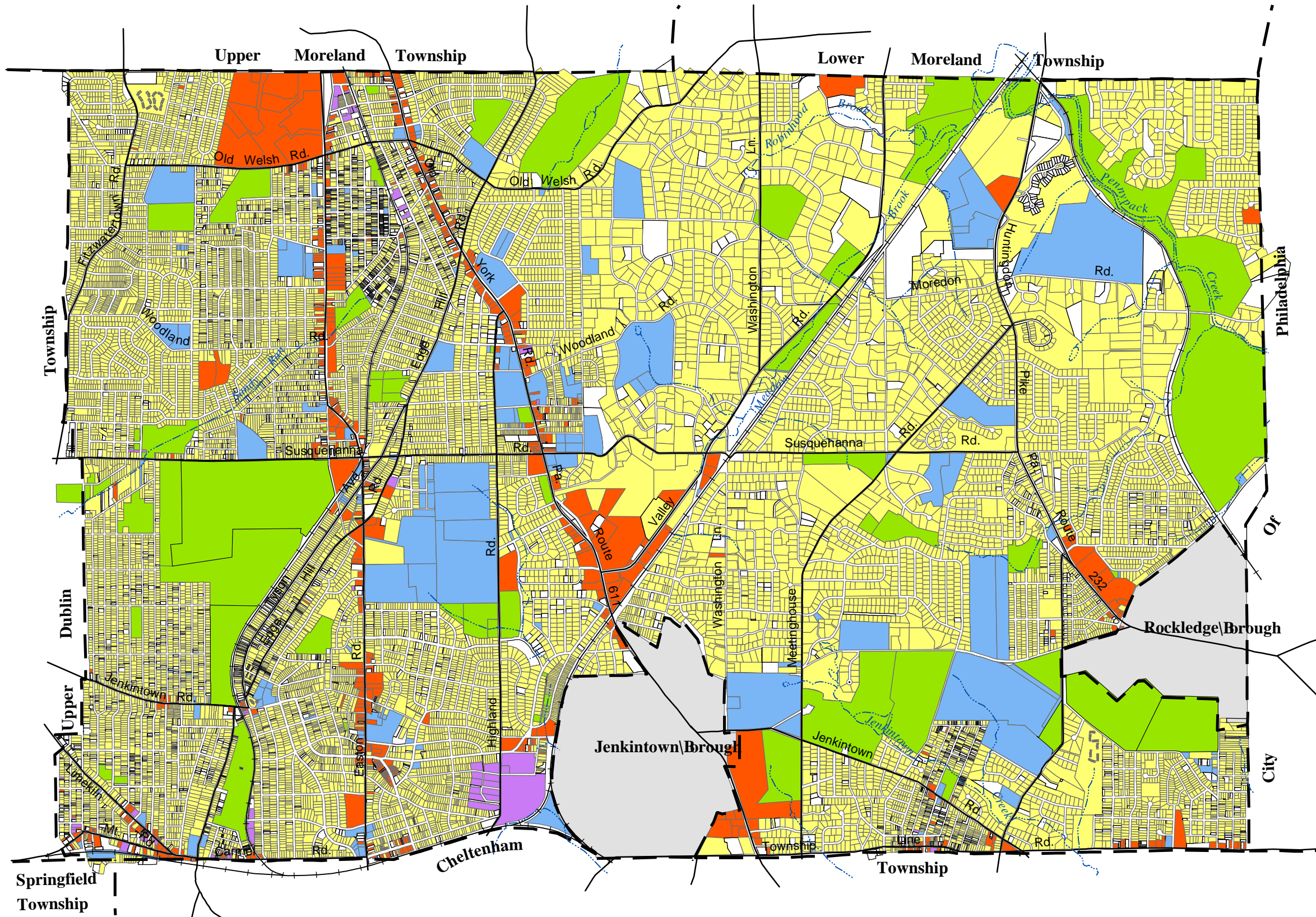
The Generalized Existing Land Use map that accompanies this narrative shows the numerous parks & open space sites that are the subject of much more detail later in this plan. Also shown on that map are the Township's other public/semi-public uses including schools, churches, and cemeteries, among other community-oriented properties.

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Abington Township Open Space Plan Montgomery County

Generalized Existing Land Use

-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Other Public/Semi Public
-  Vacant/Undeveloped



0 1,200 2,400 4,800 Feet



SOURCE: Abington Township GIS and Tax Records; Ambler, Frankford and Germantown USGS Aerial Photography.



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 Bethlehem Plaza • Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 • 610-865-0701

**THE EXISTING OPEN SPACE
AND RECREATION SYSTEM**

THE EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION SYSTEM

The existing open space and recreation system in Abington Township has three main components:

- *Preserved Lands* - Parkland, preserved open spaces, and other sites in Abington set aside for recreation or environmental protection including the athletic facilities and other amenities available at these sites.
- *Recreation Programs* - The primary organized recreation activities, especially athletics, available for Abington residents and others to join.
- *Administration* - How Abington manages, funds and operates its Township-sponsored recreation offerings, parks and other preserved open spaces.

This section of the plan provides an overview of each of these components.

PRESERVED LANDS

Abington's preserved lands, as identified below, are viewed as either permanently protected or temporarily protected, depending on whether they are likely to remain as open space or conceivably could be developed in the future. Montgomery County lands, lands owned by Abington Township, and homeowner association open spaces are considered permanently protected. Privately-owned properties such as country clubs, schools, and cemeteries are considered temporarily protected. Sites in the temporarily protected category can legally be sold and/or developed for other uses in the future.

The Preserved Lands map following this narrative shows site locations. Table 16 - Abington Township Open Space, Recreation Areas and Facilities Inventory summarizes the recreation facilities and related amenities that exist at each site.

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED LANDS

The various locations that are part of Montgomery County's park system typically complement municipal and privately-owned recreation sites by providing opportunities for hiking, biking, and other activities not related to competitive team sports. County parks emphasize trails, picnic areas, historic features and environmental amenities rather than ballfields and other active recreation facilities.

Map Key

County Lands

#1 (Map Key) Lorimer Park

Lorimer Park is the only recreation-related property in Abington owned by Montgomery County. It is a 277.7-acre site that features picnic facilities and 6.25 miles of trails with terrain that ranges from level to very steeply sloped. Fishing in the Pennypack Creek and horseback riding are also permitted in this park which is adjacent to Philadelphia's Pennypack Park.

Township Lands

Abington Township owns over 406.4 acres of community parks, neighborhood parks, undeveloped open spaces, municipal headquarters, and other recreation-related sites (such as libraries and recreation centers) that help meet the community's diverse leisure time needs.

#2 Abington Township Municipal Building

This property at York Road and Horace Avenue is the site of Abington's municipal offices and Police Department.

#3 Abington Township Public Library

The Abington Township Library is a full-service community library that includes a main site on York Road and a branch site in the Roslyn area (#23). These two libraries are each part of the linked Montgomery County library system. Abington Township Public Library is located along PA Route 611 (York Road), just south of Susquehanna Road near the center of the Township.

#4 Alverthorpe Park

At 121.6 acres, Alverthorpe is the largest Township-owned park. The park features baseball fields, tennis courts, a miniature golf course, a small 9-hole golf course, a wading pool, and a 5-acre man-made lake, among other recreation facilities. A group camping area, a loop trail, playground sites, and the Orthodox Friends Meeting House are areas of interest throughout the park. Alverthorpe Park also includes Alverthorpe Manor, a historic former residence that now houses the Township Bureau of Parks and Recreation offices, the non-profit Abington Arts Center, and the Jenkintown Branch of the Settlement Music School. Under Township policy, Alverthorpe Park is open to Abington residents only.

#5 Ardsley Community Center

The Ardsley Community Center is in a former school that was built in 1931. The Township has leased the site from the Abington School District since 1978. The building includes a gym and renovated classrooms that accommodate a variety of community activities. Abington Township

shares the building with a private day care center and a before/after school care program. This community center is two blocks southeast of Ardsley Park.

#6 Ardsley Park

Ardsley Park is a 9.4-acre community park with facilities for baseball, soccer, football, outdoor basketball and tennis. Ardsley Park is located on the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Maple Avenue near Susquehanna Road and Upper Dublin Township.

#7 Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary

Ardsley Wildlife is a 81.0-acre undeveloped open space on the south side of Susquehanna Road west of Easton Road. This is Abington's newest acquisition. It does not yet have any recreation improvements on-site.

#8 Baederwood Park

Baederwood Park is located next to the Abington High School Campus. It is a 16.1-acre natural wooded site with trails, a picnic area, and playground equipment. Baederwood Park is located on Highland Avenue.

#9 Boy Scout Game Preserve

The Boy Scout Game Preserve is a heavily wooded, 13.9-acre wildlife habitat with informal trails but no improvements. This game preserve is located along Valley Road.

#10 Briar Bush Nature Center

Briar Bush is an environmental education center that contains 12.0 acres of trails and diverse wildlife habitat. The Visitors Center on-site includes natural history displays, hands-on exhibits, office space, a library and a gift shop. In addition to trails, the site includes a small pond, a bird observatory, and a wildflower garden. A butterfly house is planned. Briar Bush Nature Center is located just northeast of Susquehanna Road along Edge Hill Road in the northern section of the Township.

#11 Conway Park

Conway Field is a 2.5-acre property with two baseball/softball fields that is located just over the Abington municipal boundary in Upper Dublin Township.

#12 Crestmont Park

Crestmont Park is a 19.4-acre property located along Old Welsh Road and Reservoir Avenue in the northeastern quadrant of the Township. It includes one baseball/softball field, two outdoor basketball courts, a playground, two regulation size pools, a kiddie pool, two tennis courts, a picnic area, ice skating, parking, restrooms, lighting, signage, and a shelter building. Approximately 9 acres of natural woodlands exist within this park.

#13 Edge Hill Woods

Edge Hill Woods is a natural area surrounded by residential communities. Benches mark the entrance way of an informal set of trails that are strewn throughout the 10-acre tract of land. The entrance way is located at Kelly Lane and Pleasant Avenue.

#14 Elk Street Tot Lot

Elk Street Park is a small, 0.3-acre neighborhood park. It has a small playground equipped for small children, a picnic table and several benches. A small stream along the edge adds to the landscape of the park. This neighborhood park is located along Elk Street between Geneva and Weldon Avenues in the northwestern part of the township.

#15 Ethel Jordan Memorial Park

Ethel Jordan Memorial Park is a 3.7-acre park that has a baseball/softball field and a playground. Signage marks the entrance to the park but no off-street parking is available. This park is located just off Jenkintown Road in the southeastern section of the township.

#16 Evergreen Manor Park

Evergreen Manor Park is situated on 12.0 acres adjacent to Willow Hill Elementary School on Phipps Avenue between Coolidge and Osbourne Avenues. It is a largely wooded area with a fenced playground.

#17 Fox Chase Manor Park

Fox Chase Manor is a highly wooded, 10.0-acre tract of land that is divided by Plymouth Creek, a tributary to Pennypack Creek. It is located a few blocks northwest of PA Route 232.

#18 Karebrook Nature Area

Karebrook Nature Area is a heavily wooded 16.8-acre tract of undeveloped land. It is located along Valley Road and Meadow Brook flows directly through the site.

#19 Madison Ave. Flood Management Area

This 1.5 acre tract along Sandy Run is on the western side of the Township. It is one of two areas where Abington Township acquired property and demolished the homes on-site to protect against further flood damage. (The other such area is #29.)

#20 Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary

Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary is on 0.7 acres directly across Washington Lane from Meadowbrook Farm near Lower Moreland Township. The site features wood chip trails, a variety of plant species and available seating to encourage birdwatching.

#21 North Hills Park

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

#22 Penbryn Park

Penbryn Park is an 18.6 acre multi-use site located off Limekiln Pike south of Jenkintown Road. The park includes several athletic fields, a regulation size pool, a kiddie pool, an ice skating rink and two playground areas.

#23 Rockwell Park

Rockwell Park is a 1.2-acre park at Rockwell Avenue and Stafford Avenue just west of York Road near Upper Moreland Township. The site includes a softball / Little League baseball field and picnic tables.

#24 Roslyn Branch Library

This branch library in the Roslyn section of the Township complements Abington's main library on York Road. It is located at 2412 Avondale Avenue.

#25 Roslyn Park

This 17.6-acre site along Sandy Run features several athletic fields and courts, and a walking path. The park borders the Roslyn Boys and Girls Club, an indoor recreation complex with a computer and game room and a big screen television. Dances for 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders are held there every other Friday night. The club also offers an after school program. The Club is located along Susquehanna Road very close to Upper Dublin Township.

#26 Roychester Park

Roychester Park is a 12.7-acre park located on Cleveland, Corinthian and Harding Avenues just off Edge Hill Road near Upper Moreland Township. This park has one lighted baseball field (90'), a baseball/softball field, a soccer field, two lighted basketball courts, a newly equipped playground, a picnic grove, 3 tennis courts, paved parking with security lighting, a community building, extensive grassy slopes, and the headwaters of Sandy Run.

#27 Rubicam Park

Rubicam Park, located on Prospect and Rubicam Avenues near Upper Moreland Township, is a 3.5-acre park. The park consists of a lighted basketball court and playground, parking, signage, and extensive flat grassy areas.

#28 Scott Park

Scott Park is a 0.5-acre open, grassy tract of land located just east of Rockledge Borough.

#29 The Grove Property

The Grove Property is 9.0 acres bounded by Nylsor Avenue and Pershing Avenue. It was formerly a flood control site. Most of the wooded area has been removed.

#30 Tyson Green

Tyson Green, a 0.3-acre site, is located across the street from Abington Memorial Hospital behind Highland Avenue. Signs designate the area for open space.

#31 Wanamaker Road Flood Management Area

This is a 0.9-acre tract along the headwaters of Tookany Creek just west of Jenkintown Borough. It is one of the two areas where Abington Township acquired property and demolished the homes on-site to protect against further flood damage. (The other such area is #18.)

Homeowner Association Lands

Four separate residential developments in Abington feature dedicated open space preserved in accordance with municipal zoning regulations and administered by homeowners' associations. These parcels are typically preserved with deed easements that stipulate the parcel shall remain undeveloped forever. The following acreage's represent the preserved areas.

#32 Rydal Green (37.8 acres)

#33 Rydal Waters (11.5 acres)

#34 Tall Trees (33.5 acres)

#35 Village of Valley Glen (15.0 acres)

#36 Walnut Hill (33.8 acres)

Conservation Easement

#37 Hallowell Tract (15.0 acres)

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED LANDS

Privately Owned Lands

An assortment of privately-held properties are part of the range of recreation opportunities available to Abington residents. Some of these are open to the general public, such as the Crosswicks Audubon Bird Sanctuary and the wooded Coates property. Others, including the country clubs and their golf courses, are only open to members and their guests. Strictly for-profit recreation businesses in Abington, such as health clubs, gyms, miniature golf facilities, etc. are not inventoried as part of this plan.

#38 Abington Fitness and Country Club (30.0 acres)

#39 Coates Property (10.0 acres of undeveloped woodlands leased by Abington Township)

#40 Crosswicks Audubon Bird Sanctuary (15.8 acres)

#41 The Horse Farm (12.6 acres)

#42 Huntington Valley Country Club (74.3 acres in Abington Township)

#43 Meadowbrook Country Club (83.7 acres)

#44 Meadowbrook Farm (23.0 acres)

#45 Rydal Country Club (1.0 acres)

#46 SPS Technologies Fields (6.7 acres)

#47 Ukranian Center (4.9 acres)

Cemeteries

Five burial grounds in Abington provide open space to help counterbalance the Township's highly developed environment.

#48 Ardsley Burial Park (30.6 acres)

#49 Hillside Cemetery Site (134.5 acres)

#50 Lawnview Memorial Park (55.9 acres)

#51 Montefiore Cemetery (49.8 acres)

#52 St. Mary's Cemetery (7.1 acres)

School Lands (Public and Selected Private Schools)

Several Abington School District sites play an important role in supplying indoor and outdoor recreation facilities for Abington residents. However, in scheduling these facilities, the School District gives first priority to scholastic uses, not general community uses. The private schools on the following list schedule their recreation facilities in the same way.

#53 Abington School District Administration Building

#54 Abington Junior High School

#55 Abington Senior High School

#56 Abington Friends School (private)

#57 Center School

#58 Copper Beech Elementary School

#59 Glenside - Weldon Elementary School

#60 Highland Elementary School

#61 Manor Junior College (private)

#62 McKinley Elementary School

#63 Meadowbrook School

#64 Overlook Elementary School

#65 Penn State Abington Campus

#66 Roslyn Elementary School

#67 Rydal Elementary School East

#68 Rydal Elementary School West

#69 St. Basil Academy

#70 Willow Hill Elementary School

#71 Memorial Field (School District-owned)

Abington Township Open Space Plan Montgomery County

Preserved Lands

Permanently Protected Lands

County Lands

1. Lorimer Park

Township Lands

2. Abington Township Municipal Building
3. Abington Township Public Library
4. Alverthorpe Park
5. Ardsley Community Center
6. Ardsley Park
7. Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary
8. Baederwood Park
9. Boy Scout Game Preserve
10. Briar Bush Nature Center
11. Conway Park
12. Crestmont Park
13. Edge Hill Woods
14. Elk Street Tot Lot
15. Ethel Jordan Memorial Park
16. Evergreen Manor Park
17. Fox Chase Manor Park
18. Karebrook Nature Area
19. Madison Ave. Flood Management Area
20. Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary
21. North Hills Park
22. Penbryn Park
23. Rockwell Park
24. Roslyn Branch Library
25. Roslyn Park
26. Roychester Park
27. Rubicam Park
28. Scott Park
29. The Grove Property
30. Tyson Green
31. Wanamaker Rd. Flood Management Area

Homeowner Association Lands

32. Rydal Green
33. Rydal Waters
34. Tall Trees
35. Village of Valley Glen
36. Walnut Hill

Conservation Easements

37. Hallowell Tract

Temporarily Protected Lands

Pprivately Owned Lands

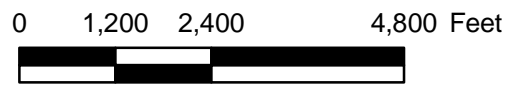
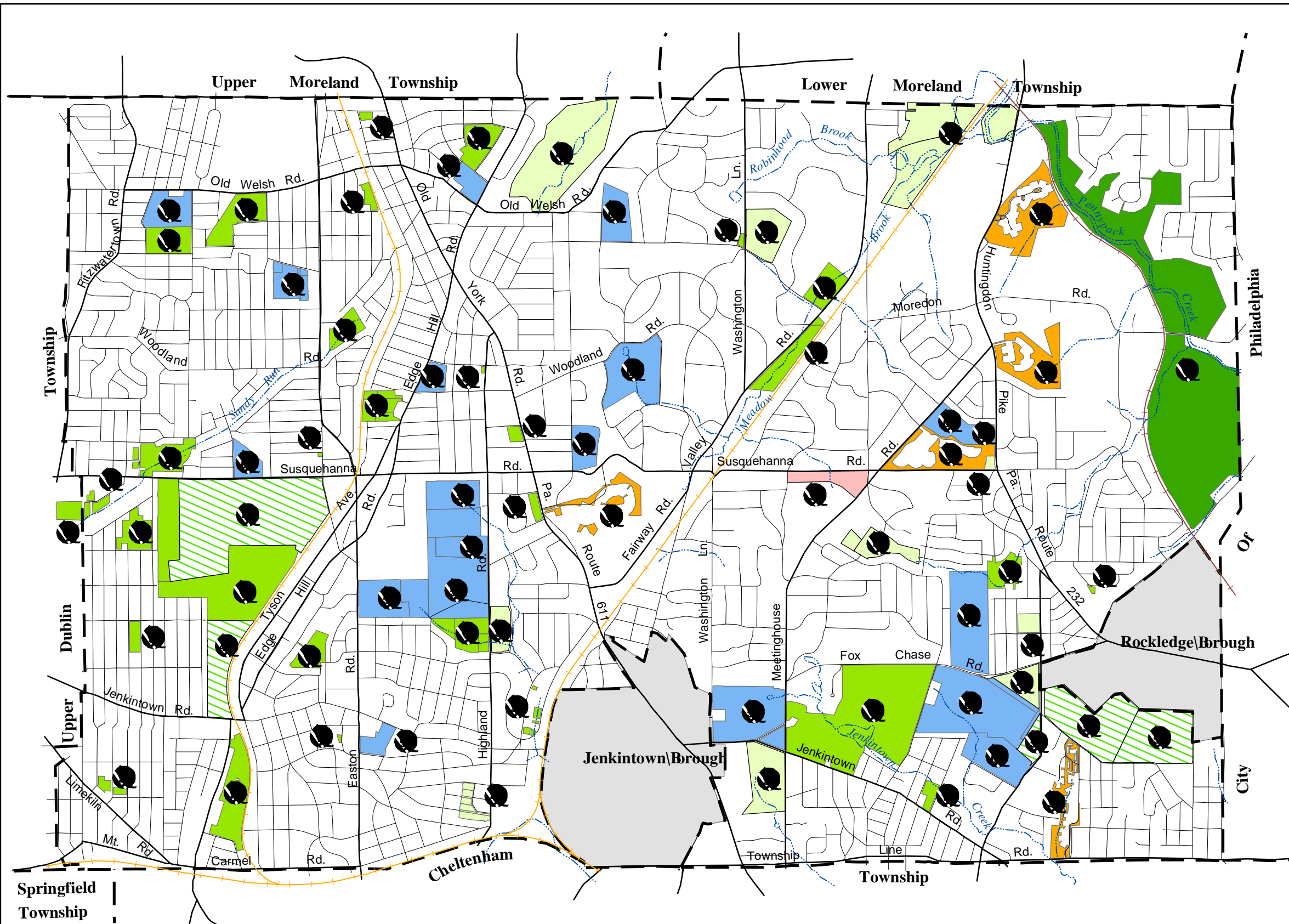
38. Abington Fitness & Country Club
39. Coates Property (leased by Abington Township)
40. Crosswicks Audubon Bird Sanctuary
41. The Horse Farm
42. Huntington Valley Country Club (part)
43. Meadowbrook Country Club
44. Meadowbrook Farm
45. Rydal Country Club
46. SPS Technologies Fields
47. Ukranian Center

School Lands

53. Abington School District Admin. Bldg.
54. Abington Junior High School
55. Abington Senior High School
56. Abington Friends School (private)
57. Center School (private)
58. Copper Beech Elementary School
59. Glenside-Weldon Elementary School
60. Highland Elementary School
61. Manor Junior College (private)
62. McKinley Elementary School
63. Meadowbrook School (private)
64. Overlook Elementary School
65. Penn State Abington Campus
66. Roslyn Elementary School
67. Rydal Elementary School East
68. Rydal Elementary School West
69. St Basil Academy (private)
70. Willow Hill Elementary School
71. Memorial Field (School District)

Cemeteries

48. Ardsley Burial Park
49. Hillside Cemetery
50. Lawnview Memorial Park
51. Montefiore Cemetery
52. St. Mary's Cemetery



SOURCE: Abington Township and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Local youth sports organizations, Abington Township and a variety of other organizations sponsor the recreation programs and activities available to the residents of Abington.

COMMUNITY SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

Sports organizations help keep communities vibrant and help residents with life-long growth through structured programs and peer interactions. Abington Township has a variety of sports organizations with participants ranging from 5 year olds to adults. Organized youth and adult sports are extremely popular in Abington. Well structured programs are available in all the major team sports including baseball, basketball, football, and soccer.

Abington-Roychester Baseball

Abington-Roychester Baseball has roughly 900 boys and girls ranging in age from 5-16. The season runs from April to July. Boys and girls are permitted to play either baseball or softball. The organization has experienced a steady enrollment throughout recent years. The organization plays and practices at several different parks around the Township including Roychester Park, Abington Junior High School, and Overlook Elementary School. The organization also uses facilities in other municipalities. Abington-Roychester Baseball would like to see improved maintenance at both the municipal parks it uses and at Abington Junior High School after the end of the scholastic baseball season. The organization also reports that it would benefit from having more fields available to use because of scheduling conflicts and overcrowding.

Abington Fall Softball

Abington Fall Softball is a men's slow-pitch softball league. The organization has approximately 10 teams with 15 players on each roster. The league plays the majority of its games at Penbryn Park. Due to overcrowding, they also play at facilities in different municipalities. The organization also reports that although Penbryn Park has not been recently upgraded, fields are still in playable condition. League enrollment has stayed steady over the past years with typically the same teams participating each year.

Abington Raiders Football & Cheerleading

Abington Raiders Football & Cheerleading belongs to the Bux-Mont Youth Football League. Football registers 190 boys from 5-13 years old. Cheerleading has 110 girls ranging in age from 5-15. Enrollment stays around the same each year, possibly fluctuating upwards but never falling

SOME OF ABINGTON TOWNSHIP'S OPEN SPACE RECREATION AREAS AND FACILITIES



Alverthorpe Park Miniature Golf Course



Alverthorpe Park's Lake and Picnic Pavilion



Ardsley Community Center



Ardsley Community Center Playground Area



Ardsley Park Playground Area



Ardsley Park Tennis Courts



Baederwood Park Play Area



Boy Scout Game Preserve



Briar Bush Nature Center



Conway Field Concession Stand and Batting Cage



Crestmont Park Playground



Crestmont Park Swimming Pool



North Hill Park's Dennis Dougherty Playground



Edge Hill Woods Seating Area



Elk Street Park Playground

SOME OF ABINGTON TOWNSHIP'S OPEN SPACE RECREATION AREAS AND FACILITIES



Lorimer Park Picnic Area



Marsden Soccer Field at Roslyn Park



Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary



North Hills Park Ballfield



Penbryn Park Basketball Court



Penbryn Park Swimming Pool



Rockwell Park Playground



Roslyn Park's Landscaped Welcome Sign



Roslyn Park Playground Area



Roslyn Park Walkway Entrance



Roslyn Boys and Girls Club



Roychester Park Basketball Courts



Roychester Park Community Building



Scott Park Identification Sign



Tyson Green Neighborhood Park

NOTE: An X is used instead of a number to note where a specific recreation opportunity exists at a site but is not quantified, such as picnic areas or playground equipment.

**TABLE 16
ABINGTON TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE RECREATION AREAS AND FACILITIES INVENTORY - 2005**

OWNERSHIP / NAME OF AREA / MAP NUMBER	SIZE (acres)	RECREATION AND SUPPORT FACILITIES														COMMENT / OTHER FACILITIES		
		Baseball Field (90')	Softball / LL Field (60')	Soccer / Football Field	Outdoor Basketball	Gymnasium	Outdoor Volleyball	Playground	Swimming Pool/Area	Tennis Court	Identification Sign	Pavilion	Picnic Area	Trails	Parking		Field Lighting	Restrooms
PERMANENTLY PROTECTED LANDS																		
COUNTY LANDS																		
1. Lorimer Park	277.7										X	X	X	X		X	X	Horseback riding permitted, fishing permitted in Pennypack Creek
Subtotal	277.7																	
TOWNSHIP LANDS																		
2. Abington Township Municipal Building	1.2													X		X		Township administrative offices, Police headquarters and meeting space
3. Abington Township Public Library	2.7									X				X		X		Meeting rooms available to the public
4. Alverthorpe Park	121.6	1	3	1	X			X	X	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Miniature golf, 9-hole golf course, man-made lake; "Residents Only" facility
5. Ardsley Community Center	3.9		1			X		X			X			X	X	X		T-ball field, asphalt playground, activity rm., class rms., leisure rm.
6. Ardsley Park	9.4		2	X	X			X		X	X			X	X			
7. Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary	81.0										X							Wooded / undeveloped
8. Baederwood Park	16.1							X			X	X	X				X	
9. Boy Scout Game Preserve	13.9										X		X					Wooded / undeveloped
10. Briar Bush Nature Center	12.0										X		X	X		X		Nature Sanctuary / Environmental Education Center
11. Conway Park	2.5		2	2							X			X	X	X		Batting cage, Steven E. Reynolds Memorial Bldg.
12. Crestmont Park	19.4		1	1	2			X	X	2	X		X	X	X	X	X	2 regulation pools, 1 kiddie pool, shelter bldg.
13. Edge Hill Woods	10.0										X		X					Wooded / undeveloped, informal trail, benches near entrance
14. Elk Street Tot Lot	0.3							X										Small stream along edge of park
15. Ethel Jordan Memorial Park	3.7		1					X			X							No parking
16. Evergreen Manor Park	12.0							X			X							Wooded / undeveloped w / adjacent tot Lot
17. Fox Chase Manor Park	10.0																	Wooded / undeveloped
18. Karebrook Nature Area	16.8										X							Wooded / undeveloped

below 300 participants. The majority of the players come from Abington Township while others come from Cheltenham, Springfield, Upper Dublin and Philadelphia. Abington Raiders is a traveling program. Home field is Alverthorpe Park with games played on either Friday night, Saturday or Sunday. The organization reports that it contributed substantial dollars towards lighting at Alverthorpe Park. Summer practices are held at Willow Hill Elementary School. The organization reports that when Overlook Elementary was reconstructed they lost playing space. They are now searching for more land and are also concerned about the field conditions which they rate as in need of more maintenance.

Ardsley - North Hills Athletic Association

Ardsley - North Hills Athletic Association provides baseball, softball and soccer to children ranging in ages from 5 to 16 years old. Baseball and softball are co-ed at the tee-ball level but separate thereafter. These two sports have a combined 700 athletes and play their home games at Conway Field on two 60-foot baseball/softball fields which are both lighted. Ardsley Park and fields in surrounding municipalities are also used. Enrollment has been steady in recent years.

Soccer is also provided by Ardsley - North Hills A.A. during both spring and fall seasons. Approximately 700 athletes participate in this program. Soccer is not played within the Ardsley and North Hills area because, according to the organization, there are no soccer fields available in this area. The soccer program accommodates players from 5 year olds (Under 7 league) to 16 year olds (Under 17 league). The organization reports that most of its soccer games are played in the outfields of existing baseball/softball fields in the surrounding municipalities and other parks within the Township. This causes the grass to become overused and worn, leading to safety concerns.

Cedarbrook Angels

Cedarbrook Angels are part of the eight-team Lower Montco League. They have an 18-player roster with boys ranging from 16-18 years old. This American Legion league team does not play within Abington anymore but still recruits Township residents. The Angels typically play at Cheltenham High School. The season runs from April to July.

East Abington Little League

East Abington Little League has approximately 300 participants from 5-14 years old. The 5-6 year olds play tee-ball and are the only coed team. After this age, the boys play baseball and the girls play softball. The teams play at Alverthorpe Park, both for practice and games. The organization reports that five fields are adequate for now but that two fields need additional maintenance. Their season lasts from March thru July. Since Little League has specified boundaries, the only ones eligible to play for East Abington are residents within the areas of East Abington, Huntington Valley and Rockledge. The organization reports that the only 90' field in Alverthorpe Park is used by many organizations and needs to be re-leveled to avoid safety hazards.

Glenside Youth Athletic Club

Glenside Youth Athletic Club provides a range of sports to residents of Abington Township and surrounding municipalities. Baseball and softball have a combined 400 participants from 5-16 years old. Approximately three-quarters of these players live in Abington Township while the rest are from Cheltenham Township. The baseball and softball leagues play at Glenside -Weldon Elementary School and Cheltenham School fields. The baseball and softball seasons last from April to July. The club believes there are not enough ball fields within the Township, particularly 90' fields with dugouts and a fenced outfield. In the organization's opinion, the fields it uses should be more consistently maintained.

Basketball is also offered by the Glenside Youth Athletic Club. During the winter months roughly 450 participants, ranging from 2nd grade through high school, play at the various local school facilities. While enrollment has recently been steady, in 2004-2005 enrollment had to be limited to Abington residents because the league's normal school location was closed for construction. A summer basketball camp is also held at Penbryn Park. This camp normally has about 200 participants grouped by age and skill level.

Glenside Youth Athletic Club also offers a boys and girls golf program for residents 9 years and older. This program normally has about 25 participants with both parents and children playing. . Local golf courses are used to accommodate this league.

Hunter Soccer Club

Hunter Soccer Club is one of the oldest soccer clubs in the Delaware Valley and one of the original founders of the Intercounty Soccer League over 40 years ago. It was started by John Hunter, a native born Scotsman with the love for soccer, who first showed area youth how to play the game at Abington High School fields.

The Hunter Soccer Club today incorporates approximately 875 boys and girls with 50 new players a year. Players range from 3 to 18 years old. There are 40 intramural teams and 25 traveling teams. For the intramural league, the 3-4 year olds are coed while the rest of the teams are split by gender. These games are played every Saturday at Penbryn Park from September to December. The traveling leagues play on Saturdays during the same fall months. Sunday games are now common due to scheduling problems. Spring season has teams but the majority of them are considered traveling teams and it is not as full as the fall season.

Hunter Soccer Club offers a summer camp situated at Penbryn Park. There are two different sessions both one week long. Participants from 6 to 13, both boys and girls. There is a limited enrollment for this camp. All teams within this organization play at a variety of fields including Penbryn Park, Abington Junior High School, Thomas Williams Fields (Cheltenham Township) and Renninger Fields (Cheltenham Township).

The organization reports that soccer fields are overused throughout every season. Field conditions then become degraded. The club acknowledges Abington Township's help, but would like to see higher maintenance levels in the future in the interest of the area's large youth soccer population.

Roslyn American Legion

The Roslyn American Legion team is part of the Lower Montco League, the same as the Cedarbrook Angels. Boys from ages 16-19 play on an 18-player roster. The season lasts from April to July. Roslyn American Legion plays at Roslyn Park's "A" Field. The club reports that time conflicts are manageable for facilities but that field maintenance is an issue, and that this has been an on-going concern.

Roslyn Boys and Girls Club

Roslyn Boys and Girls Club offers a wide variety of services to the community, not just the youth. For example, the clubhouse provides community meeting space for a variety of citizen-oriented functions. The Club also offers youth sports for residents of Abington Township and surrounding municipalities.

Baseball is offered to boys from the ages of 5 to 19 in varying levels of play. Girls can participate from 5-7 years old in the tee-ball and coach-pitch leagues. Intramural league play is offered to boys from the ages of 8 and 9. A travel program is then set up for a 12-15 player roster hosting boys from the ages of 9-16. The Jr. American Legion (13-15yr old boys) and American Legion (16-19 yr old boys) teams are part of the Lower Montco League. These two leagues are complemented by the Inter-Community Baseball organization for 10 to 15 year olds. All of these organizations play from March to July.

Soccer is offered through the Roslyn Boys and Girls Club. Boys and girls can experience play at all types of levels and age groups. Novice (6-7 year olds), intramural (5-10 year olds) and traveling (11-adult) can all play through the club's program. These seasons are staggered and offered in both the spring and fall. The soccer games are played at Marsden Field in Roslyn Park, located across the stream from Roslyn Park because it is one of the lighted parks within Abington Township. Soccer also plays at Conway Field (lighted), Copper Beech Elementary School, and Abington Junior and High Schools.

Permits are received through Abington Township and Abington School District. The club reports that indoor permits are excessively hard to secure and consequently they cannot have a basketball program due to overcrowding on existing indoor courts. Other concerns reported by the club include lack of maintenance on Township lands, lack of field space, and a degraded basketball court in between the fields of Roslyn Park (once used for street hockey now too degraded). The club also reportedly bought a tractor to maintain the ball fields and have volunteers help paint lines. One last major concern was that there are no public restroom facilities at Roslyn Park.

Whitemarsh/Springfield Women’s Softball League

Whitemarsh/Springfield women’s softball league is for women over 25 years old. It has flourished into 7 different teams, with 12-15 players each. Enrollment trends have stayed the same over the past few years, and the teams are spread all over eastern Montgomery County. The league uses two Abington Township sites and a field at Standard Press Steel. The softball season runs from the first week in May to the first week in August. This organization reports that they are satisfied with the availability and condition of the fields they use.

ABINGTON TOWNSHIP RECREATION PROGRAMS

Abington provides extensive regularly scheduled recreation programming and sponsors special events for people of all ages through the Township’s Bureau of Parks and Recreation. Programs related to natural history and environmental education are planned and operated by the Briar Bush Nature Center.

The Bureau of Parks and Recreation organizes its programming in two parts: programs for the Spring / Summer season, and programs for the Fall / Winter season. The wide range of recreation programs and special events listed in the Township’s 2004-2005 Fall / Winter Activity Guide and the 2005 Spring / Summer Activity Guide are summarized in the following two tables. Table 17 includes regular recreation programming and special events. Table 18 refers specifically to programs offered by the Briar Bush Nature Center.

**TABLE 17
Recreation Programs Offered by Abington Township**

Program	Location	Resident Cost
Spring / Summer		
• Women's Spring Tennis	Alverthorpe Park	\$35
• Emergency Aid: CPR & OAM for Infant, Child, and Adult	Fire Training Center	\$20 + \$6 for materials
• Adult Tennis Instruction	Abington Junior High	\$45
• Global Golf Women's Golf Clinic	Alverthorpe Park	\$65
• Senior Citizens Jamboree	Alverthorpe Park	\$5.50
• Women's Fall Tennis	Alverthorpe Park	\$35
• Golden Century and a Half Tennis Tournament	Alverthorpe Park	\$5
• Watercolor Painting	Ardsley Community Center	\$105
• Italian Classes	Ardsley Community Center	\$65
• Skyhawks Multi-Sport Camp	Alverthorpe Park	\$105

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

Program	Location	Resident Cost
• Skyhawks Soccer Camp	Alverthorpe Park	\$105
• Tiny Hawk	Alverthorpe Park	\$45
• Skyhawks Multi-Sport Academy	Alverthorpe Park	\$105
• Mini-Hawk Sport-N-Play	Alverthorpe Park	\$87
• Skyhawks Flag Football Camp	Alverthorpe Park	\$85
• Global Golf Snag (Beginner) Golf Camp	Alverthorpe Park	\$149
• Global Golf Snag (Beginner) Golf Clinic	Alverthorpe Park	\$65
• Global Golf Junior Golf Camp	Alverthorpe Park	\$149
• Aikido At Ardsley	Ardsley Community Center	\$45
• Little Ninjas	Ardsley Community Center	\$50
• Summer Playground Program	Penbryn or Crestmont Park	\$135
• Kinderland Camp	ACEC or Alverthorpe Park	\$75
• Art & Music in the Parks	Alverthorpe Manor or Ardsley Community Center	Art - \$45 Music - \$35 Both - \$75
• USA 123 Tennis Program	Abington Jr. High School	\$45
• Fun Day Camp	Willow Hill Elementary School	\$60
• Creative Theater Workshop	Ardsley Community Center	\$135
• Creative Theater Workshop for 5/6 Year Old	Ardsley Community Center	\$70
• Babysitting Workshop	Ardsley Community Center	\$20
• New York City Day Trip	New York City	\$30
• Washington, D.C. Day Trip	Washington, D.C.	\$30
• Hershey Track & Field Meet	Huntingdon Memorial Field	Free
• Alverthorpe Park Parent/Child Miniature Golf Tournament	Alverthorpe Park	\$10/Team
• West Side Story	Walnut Street Theatre	\$55/ticket
• Hooked on Fishing Derby	Alverthorpe Park	\$2
• Montgomery County Senior Games	Upper Dublin Parks & Recreation Department	
Fall / Winter		
• Ardsley Community Center Annual Halloween Party	Ardsley Community Center	\$5

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Program	Location	Resident Cost
• Gingerbread House Decorating Workshop	Ardsley Community Center Cafeteria	\$17
• Egg Hunt	Alverthorpe Park	Free
• The Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular	Radio City Music Hall	\$88
• Abington Days at the Phantoms	Spectrum -- 11/6/05 Wachovia Center -- 2/12/06	Tickets @ Parks & Rec main office
• Ski & Tubing Trips	Jack Frost Mountain Blue Mountain Camelback Mountain	Call for trip dates/fees
• Washington, D.C. Sightseeing Trip	Washington, D.C.	\$30 \$45/with Spy Museum ticket
• Aikido at Ardsley	Ardsley Community Center	\$45
• James Fox Basketball	Abington Jr. High School	\$45
• Little Ninjas	Ardsley Community Center	\$50
• Family 2-Ball Competition	Ardsley Community Center	\$5/team
• 2006 Winter Recreation Program	Basketball @ McKinley Floor Hockey @ Ardsley Community Center	\$30
• Children in Motion	Ardsley Community Center	\$60/5-6 yrs. \$80/7-11 yrs.
• Police Athletic League (P.A.L.)	Glenside-Weldon Elem. School Willow Hill Elem. School	
• Women's Personal Safety & Self-Defense	Ardsley Community Center	\$45
• Baby Boot Camp	Alverthorpe Park Bike House	\$75/6 wks. \$15/class

As part of its summer programming, Abington also offers swimming lessons and informal family swimming, provided participants purchase memberships at the Township's pool complexes. Abington owns and operates swimming pools at both Crestmont Park and Penbryn Park that are open seven days a week from mid-June to Labor Day. In addition, Alverthorpe Park features a wading pool for children 5 years old or younger at no charge.

Also not noted on the above table are the recreation activities available at the Ardsley Community Education Center. The center has a photo lab, cable television, a youth lounge and a game room. Classrooms and a gym with seating capacity for 400 to 500 persons are also available. The gym is used for concerts, dance recitals, organized sports, exercise classes and similar activities. It is also available for informal basketball on a drop-in basis anytime the center is open.

TABLE 18
Recreation Programs Offered in Abington Township Through the Briar Bush Nature Center

Program	Location	Resident Cost
Spring / Summer		
<u>Summer Camp 2005</u>		
• 2-3 Year Olds with Adult Nature Tots	Briar Bush Nature Center	\$55
• 4-5 Year Old Camps Earth Rangers	"	\$120
• 4 Year Old Camp Friends of the Forest	"	\$110
• K-1st Grade Camps Nature Detectives	"	\$120
• 1st-2nd Grade Camps Earth Keepers	Briar Bush Nature Center	\$235
• 2nd-3rd Grade Camps Nature Spies	"	\$235
• 3rd-6th Grade Camps Explorers	"	\$205-\$255
• 6th-9th Grade Camp Adventurers	"	\$396
<u>Children's Programs</u>		
• Preschool Pioneers	Briar Bush Nature Center	\$24/Series
• Magic Mornings	"	\$8/Class
• Nuts for Nature	"	\$24/Series
• Junior Birders Club	"	\$6/Class
<u>Adult Programs</u>		
• Leonard J. Buck Garden	Far Hills, NJ	\$43
• Daniel Boone Homestead	Birdsboro, PA	\$33
• Shenks Ferry Glen Wildflower Preserve	Conestoga, PA	\$42
• Cape May Skimmer	Cape May, NJ	\$69
• Grounds for Sculpture	Hamilton, NJ	\$43
• Cape May Dolphin and Whale Watch	Cape May, NJ	\$79
• Rockwood Mansion Park	Wilmington, DE	\$36
• Hershey Gardens	Hershey, PA	\$52
• Wetlands Institute	Stone Harbor, NJ	\$58
• Meadowlands Pontoon Boat Tour	Lyndhurst, NJ	\$65
• Bushkill Falls	Bushkill, PA	\$53
• Lakota Wolf Preserve	Columbia, NJ	\$60
• Yoga Classes	Briar Bush Nature Center	\$65/5 Classes or \$15/Class
<u>Members Only Ecotrips</u>		
• The National Aviary & Fallingwater	Western PA	\$379/dbl or \$507/single
• Virginia Beach	Virginia	\$685/dbl or \$888/single
• Owls Overnight	Central PA	\$160/dbl or \$202/single

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

Program	Location	Resident Cost
Fall / Winter		
<u>Children's Programs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magic Mornings • Pre-School Pioneers • Nuts for Nature • Junior Birders Club 	Briar Bush Nature Center " " "	\$8/Class \$18- \$24/Series \$18- 24/Series \$6-\$9/Class
<u>Great Escape Trips</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn Aboard the Strasburg Railroad • Cape May Skimmer • Crystal Caves • Liberty Science Center 	Strasburg, PA Cape May, NJ Kutztown, PA Liberty State Park, PA	\$78 \$69 \$46 \$71
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landis Valley Museum: Days of the Belsnickel • Yuletide at Winterhur • Doris Duke Gardens • Snow Geese Migration 	Lancaster, PA Winterhur, DE Somerville, NJ Merrill Creek Reservoir, NJ	\$68 \$57 \$56 \$38
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy of Natural Science - Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Exhibition and Behind the Scenes Tour • Morris Museum • Ashland Nature Center • Plumpton Park Zoo & Fair Hill NRMA 	Philadelphia, PA Morristown, NJ Hockessin, DE Rising Sun, MD	\$67 \$49 \$31 \$49
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leonard J. Buck Garden • Daniel Boone Homestead 	Far Hills, NJ Birdsboro, PA	\$43 \$33

In addition to the on-site activities listed in Table 18, the Briar Bush Nature Center provides extensive off-site programming for a contract fee to schools and other groups. This assists the Nature Center to raise revenues and helps to address the capacity limitations of the organization's small visitors center and 12-acre property on Edge Hill Road. In 2004, more than 65,000 visited the nature center. According to the Executive Director, the Briar Bush site is saturated. While the organization has prepared a Strategic Plan for Land Management, the site reportedly cannot accommodate more attendance without negative impacts to the property and its environmental amenities. Currently, more than 50% of the nature center's programming involves outreach activities that take place off-site.

OTHER RECREATION PROVIDERS

In addition to community sports groups and the Township, many other groups help meet the recreation needs of Abington residents. Among others, these organizations include the Abington School District, the Penn State Abington Campus, the Abington Police Athletic League, the Abington YMCA, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Abington Cultural Arts Center and several senior citizen groups.

RECREATION ADMINISTRATION

Recreation administration refers to how the Township plans and carries out its park, recreation and open space services. Sub-topics include management, maintenance and security, funding, and public communications as described below.

MANAGEMENT

Abington Township is a Pennsylvania township of the first class. The governing body is the Board of Commissioners. One commissioner is elected from each of Abington's 15 wards. Each commissioner is a member of one or more Board of Commissioners committees. While Abington does not have a park and recreation board, the Board of Commissioners' Public Affairs Committee is responsible for parks and recreation matters. Appointed advisory bodies relevant to this plan include the Planning Commission, the Environmental Advisory Committee, the Historic Preservation Committee, and the Shade Tree Commission, among others. Abington Township's staff is led by the Township Manager to whom all department heads report.

The Bureau of Parks and Recreation, which was established in 1962, is the Township department responsible for parks and recreation facilities and services. According to the Abington Township website, "*It is the goal of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation to provide essential park and recreation facilities and organized programs to enhance the quality of life for people who live in Abington Township*".

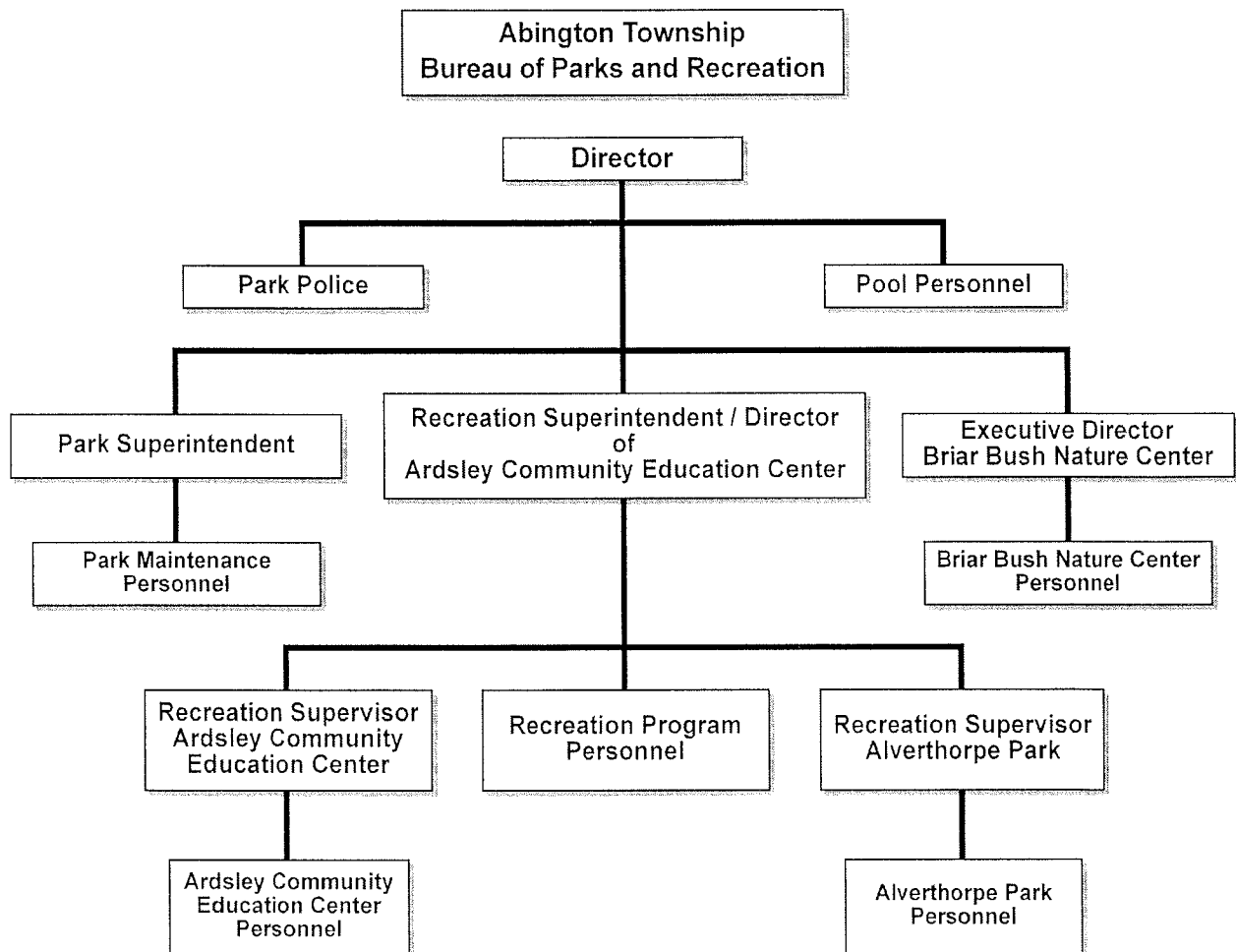
As shown on the accompanying organization chart, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation is headed by a Director who is responsible for the operation and management of all public parks and recreation services, including all Bureau personnel and financial matters. The Director also manages the Township's pools and oversees the Park Rangers in coordination with the Abington Township Police Department. The following management personnel report to the Bureau's Director:

- A Recreation Superintendent, who is responsible for planning and carrying out all recreation programming. The Recreation Supervisor also oversees operations at Alverthorpe Park and the Ardsley Community Education Center.
- A Parks Superintendent, who supervises all maintenance at Township recreation sites.
- An Executive Director, who is in charge of all planning and operations at the Briar Bush Nature Center.

Ardsley Community Education Center and Alverthorpe Park are each run by a Recreation Supervisor who reports to the Recreation Superintendent. As of December 2005, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation had 22 full-time employees. Two of these employees are funded in part by the Friends of Briar Bush. In addition to the Bureau of Parks and Recreation personnel, the Briar Bush Nature

Center is staffed by part-time and full-time persons funded by the Friends of Briar Bush. The Bureau typically hires additional part-time summer personnel to assist with recreation programming and park maintenance. Part-timers are also hired to assist with recreation programming in the Fall / Winter season. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation's offices are in the historic Alverthorpe Manor on the grounds of Alverthorpe Park.

Bureau of Parks and Recreation staff persons have held officer and membership positions in the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society. The Bureau actively participates in that organization's Program Exchange Network and in the Montgomery County Recreation Council. The Bureau emphasizes professionalism and encourages staff members to participate in professional training. Job classifications, formal job descriptions, and performance evaluations are regular parts of the Bureau's approach to personnel management and organizational development.



MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY

Park Maintenance

Through the Parks Superintendent, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation maintains all Township parks and all of the recreation facilities in those parks including Abington's swimming pools. Each summer, the Department of Public Works hires seasonal personnel to augment its full-time, year-round staff. While park maintenance in Abington involves many tasks, the primary focus is on maintaining playing fields, ensuring the safety of all recreation facilities, and keeping the parks attractive. Nearly all park maintenance work is completed in-house. Members of the maintenance crew are certified in various areas, such as pesticide application. Outside of grass mowing, few maintenance activities are let to private contractors. Examples include major tree work, resurfacing playing courts, and similar specialized tasks. According to their agreements with the Township, the groups that use the Township's athletic fields are supposed to pick up trash and, where needed, rake the fields when they are finished using them. However, the field users often do not follow through on these responsibilities.

The Parks Supervisor sends a weekly maintenance schedule to the Bureau Director. The Parks Superintendent reports that the park maintenance staff is well furnished with equipment by the Township and that the Township has reciprocal agreements with local golf courses and adjacent Townships to use equipment Abington Township does not own. All trucks, tractors and other maintenance equipment is stored at maintenance headquarters adjacent to Alverthorpe Park. Overall, the maintenance, appearance and condition of Abington's park system and recreation facilities is very good. Abington's park maintenance crew assists with snow plowing in the winter but otherwise spends all its time on park-related activities.

Park Security

Overall security in Abington Township is provided by the Abington Township Police Department. The Patrol Division of the Police Department regularly patrols Township parks. The Park Rangers staff (approximately 5 part-time personnel), under the supervision of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation Director and the Police Department, assists the police in the parks from April to October every year.

FUNDING

The Bureau of Parks and Recreation's proposed annual operating budget is prepared by the Bureau's Director with input from senior staff. The budget is then reviewed and approved by the Board of Commissioners. Operating funds allocated to the Bureau but not expended by the end of the year revert to the Township's general fund. The Township budgeted \$3.166 million for parks and recreation in 2005, as shown on Table 20. In 2005, parks and recreation accounted for 9.4% of

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

Abington's total operating budget. From 2001 through 2005 parks and recreation expenditures have increased at an average of 4.4% per year. The Township's overall operating budget has grown an average of 5.4% annually during that same period. Table 19 compares parks and recreation as a percent of all budgeted expenditures with the Township's other 2005 operating budget categories.

TABLE 19
Abington Township Operating Expenditures by Category
2005

Police	34.8
Refuse	16.7
Administration	16.4
Public Works	9.5
Parks & Recreation	9.4
Library	5.2
Fire	4.7
Code	2.3
Engineering	0.7
Emergency Management	0.2
	100%

TABLE 20
Abington Township Park & Recreation Expenditures
2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2005 %
Parks & Recreation Administration	\$ 628,380	\$ 630,074	\$ 699,798	\$ 724,284	\$ 750,517	23.7
Alverthorpe Park	149288	159873	161941	166605	166252	5.3
Ardasley Community Center	170881	165433	181437	191284	204190	6.4
Crestmont Pool	130099	143389	140158	142506	140753	4.5
Pembryn Pool	123612	123128	122158	134676	137763	4.4
Briar Bush Nature Center	349755	349987	374449	447584	477186	15.1
Activities & Special Programs	169603	142336	155940	177650	218532	6.9
Facilities Maintenance	776049	849891	873360	890971	930697	29.4
Ground Maintenance	76643	82331	105657	113118	116876	3.7
Security	16493	15059	20922	25167	23537	0.7
TOTAL	\$2,590,803	\$2,661,501	\$2,805,820	\$3,013,845	\$3,166,303	100

NOTE: 2001-2004 numbers are actual expenditures. 2005 numbers are budget figures.

Source: Abington Township

Buildings & Grounds Maintenance is the Bureau of Parks and Recreation’s largest expenditure category, accounting for 33.1% of the Bureau’s operating budget in 2005. Administration (23.7%) and Briar Bush Nature Center (15.1%) were the next highest amounts respectively. Fees from parks and recreation activities are budgeted to return \$1,026,054 in 2005, 3.1% of the Township’s total projected 2005 operating revenues. Table 21 shows the breakdown of projected parks and recreation revenues for 2005. The Bureau’s revenues are budgeted to cover 32.4% of operating costs in 2005.

TABLE 21
Bureau of Parks and Recreation
Budgeted Revenues By Source
2005

	Dollars	% of All Revenues
Penbryn & Crestmont Pools	\$ 285,000	27.8%
Briar Bush Nature Center	210574	20.6%
Ardasley Community Center	120480	11.7%
Alverthorpe	70000	6.8%
Other Recreation Programs	340000	33.1%
	\$ 1,026,054	100%

Abington Township has a five-year capital improvement program. Capital funds are allocated annually by the Township Board of Commissioners from bond revenues and other sources. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation reports that its capital spending has been on average \$120,000 - \$200,000 annually in recent years.

Public Communications

Abington Township makes a special effort to communicate information about its recreation services to residents, businesses, and visitors, primarily through the following channels:

- the Bureau of Parks and Recreation’s *Activity Guide* published twice per year,
- www.abington.org, the Township website,
- cable television channel 43,
- the Township’s *Newsletter* published four times per year,
- Briar Bush Nature Center’s *Briar Flyer* published four times per year,
- periodic public surveys, and
- periodic flyers sent to all schools to highlight certain recreation offerings.

POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

Abington has several creek corridors, including Sandy Run Creek, Robinhood Brook, Meadow Brook, Jenkintown Creek, Pennypack Creek, and unnamed tributaries. Many parts of these stream corridors serve as open space linkages because they flow through Township parks or, in the case of the Pennypack Creek, through Montgomery County's Lorimer Park. Other parts of these creek corridors run through developed private property and do not offer any real potential for trails or other greenways. The Township's floodplain regulations will continue to prevent inappropriate development on much of this land. However, most of this land offers very little potential to ever accommodate public access.

There are three linear rail corridors in Abington: SEPTA's R2 Warminster Line; R3 West Trenton Line; and the inactive Fox Chase-Newtown Line. Montgomery County has long proposed converting the Fox Chase-Newtown Line into a rails-to trails project. However, the line originates in Bucks County and the official County position there is to work for re-activating the rail line in the future. Consequently, trail planning along this corridor has stalled.

Abington has actively planned, sought funding for, and implemented trail linkages. Alverthorpe Park, Baederwood Park, and Penbryn Park are three Township-owned parks that feature multi-purpose trail loops. Trails have also been completed this year in Roslyn Park and Ardsley Park, two other Township-owned recreation sites. Abington constructed the Fox Chase Demonstration Trail along Fox Chase Road between Pond View and Roseland. Additionally, grant applications have been submitted and plans are moving forward for a trail loop in the Crestmont section of the Township.

The non-profit Citizens Trail Advisory Committee (CTAC) is a trail advocacy group that has partnered with the Township and community residents on several trail initiatives. CTAC is a member of the Pennsylvania Association of Non-Profit Organizations and part of the American Hiking Society's Alliance of Hiking Organization. The group has secured trail funding from state programs, private foundations and other non-traditional sources. CTAC's goal is to foster a system of trails for walkers, cyclists and runners throughout Abington. Towards this goal, the group continues to seek additional trail funds, sponsor trail educational/promotional activities, and plan for future trail links.

Based on extensive experience, both Abington Township and CTAC are sensitive to the need for working closely with local residents on all phases of trail planning, design and construction. The possibility of a trail along Cedar Road at the end of the existing Fox Chase demonstration trail is one future trail concept that has been proposed and is now under review by the Township, CTAC and area residents. The Township supports new trails in appropriate locations provided there is a consensus among affected neighbors that the proposed trail is a desirable addition to Abington's parks, recreation and open space system. The following map summarizes the current status of trails in the Township.

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Abington Township Open Space Plan

Trails

- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- ââââ Greenways Proposed by Montgomery County

Permanently Protected Lands

- County Lands
 1. Lorimer Park
- Township Lands
 2. Abington Township Municipal Building
 3. Abington Township Public Library
 4. Alverthorpe Park
 5. Ardsley Community Center
 6. Ardsley Park
 7. Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary
 8. Baederwood Park
 9. Boy Scout Game Preserve
 10. Briar Bush Nature Center
 11. Conway Park
 12. Crestmont Park
 13. Edge Hill Woods
 14. Elk Street Tot Lot
 15. Ethel Jordan Memorial Park
 16. Evergreen Manor Park
 17. Fox Chase Manor Park
 18. Karebrook Nature Area
 19. Madison Ave. Flood Management Area
 20. Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary
 21. North Hills Park
 22. Penbryn Park
 23. Rockwell Park
 24. Roslyn Branch Library
 25. Roslyn Park
 26. Roychester Park
 27. Rubicam Park
 28. Scott Park
 29. The Grove Property
 30. Tyson Green
 31. Wanamaker Rd. Flood Management Area

Homeowner Association Lands

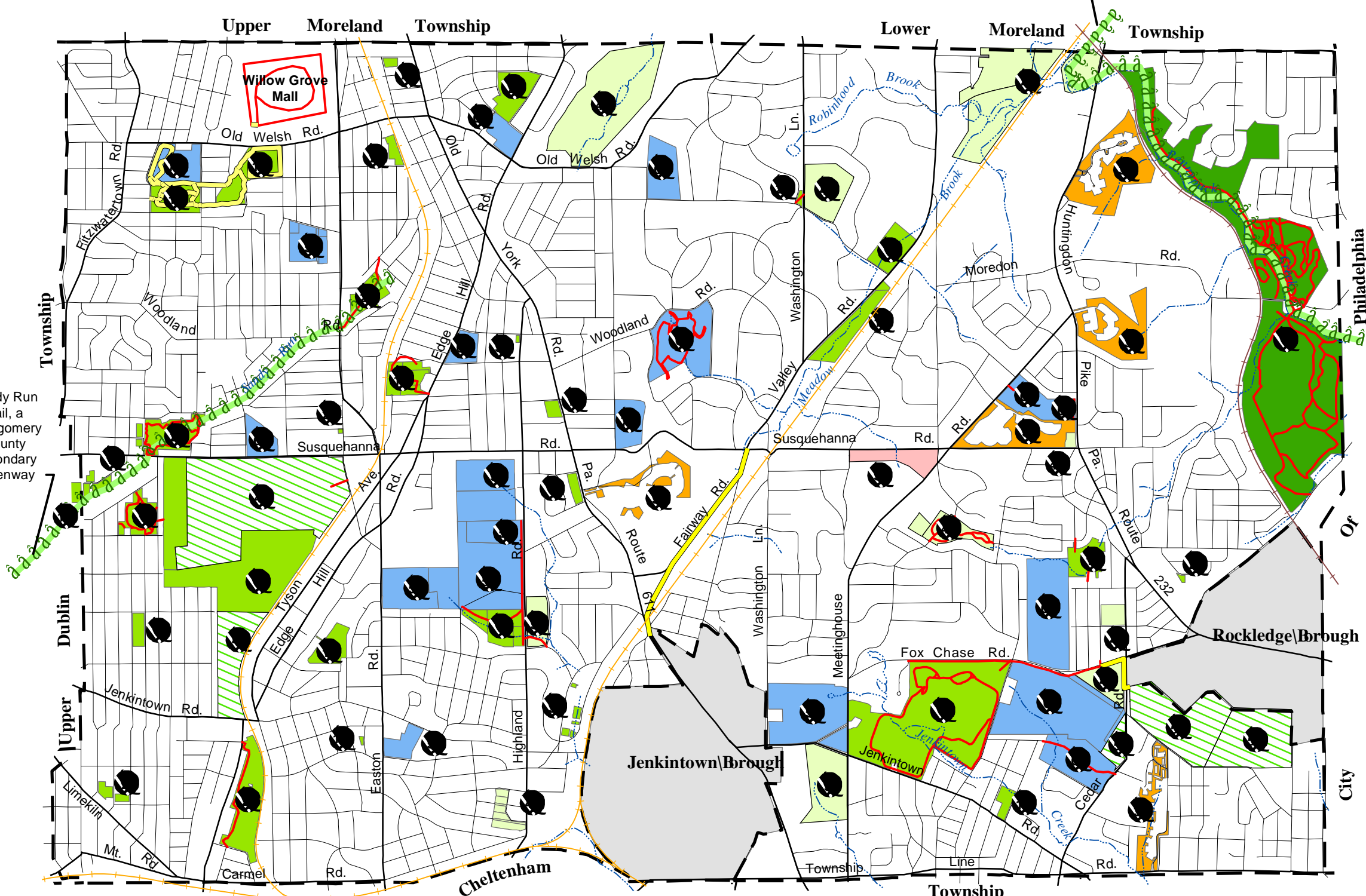
- 32. Rydal Green
- 33. Rydal Waters
- 34. Tall Trees
- 35. Village of Valley Glen
- 36. Walnut Hill

Conservation Easements

- 37. Hallowell Tract

Temporarily Protected Lands

- Privately Owned Lands
 38. Abington Fitness & Country Club
 39. Coates Property (leased by Abington Township)
 40. Crosswicks Audubon Bird Sanctuary
 41. The Horse Farm
 42. Huntington Valley Country Club (part)
 43. Meadowbrook Country Club
 44. Meadowbrook Farm
 45. Rydal Country Club
 46. SPS Technologies Fields
 47. Ukranian Center
 48. Ardsley Burial Park
 49. Hillside Cemetery
 50. Lawnview Memorial Park
 51. Montefiore Cemetery
 52. St. Mary's Cemetery
- School Lands
 53. Abington School District Admin. Bldg.
 54. Abington Junior High School
 55. Abington Senior High School
 56. Abington Friends School (private)
 57. Center School (private)
 58. Copper Beech Elementary School
 59. Glenside-Weldon Elementary School
 60. Highland Elementary School
 61. Manor Junior College (private)
 62. McKinley Elementary School
 63. Meadowbrook School (private)
 64. Overlook Elementary School
 65. Penn State Abington Campus
 66. Roslyn Elementary School
 67. Rydal Elementary School East
 68. Rydal Elementary School West
 69. St Basil Academy (private)
 70. Willow Hill Elementary School
 71. Memorial Field (School District)
- ▨ Cemeteries



SOURCE: Abington Trails Advisory Committee and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This chapter assesses Abington's open space, recreation and environmental resource protection needs by examining the following items:

- The community development and preservation approaches reflected in The Draft Abington Township Comprehensive Plan and the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance.
- How environmental resources are protected under Abington's current development regulations and the relative importance of these various resources to the Township's overall conservation strategy.
- How the amount of park acreage in Abington compares with National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines.
- The status of green infrastructure initiatives in Abington Township.
- How Abington followed through on implementing recommendations contained in the Township's previous Open Space Plan.
- The open space preservation planning initiatives that Montgomery County and adjacent municipalities are undertaking.

EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Township Board of Commissioners adopted Abington's current comprehensive plan in 1992. A draft comprehensive plan update has been prepared but it is still under review and not yet adopted. In addition to providing more current demographic information, the new draft comprehensive plan includes information that is now mandatory under the State Municipalities Planning Code but was not required when Abington adopted its 1992 comprehensive plan.

The new draft comprehensive plan update also recommends selected zoning changes in certain parts of the Township based on a review that the Township conducted in 2003 and 2004 of the current zoning ordinance in relation to existing land uses. The primary proposed changes recommend dividing the current M-Mixed Use District into two districts. Both of the proposed new districts (M1 and M2) would, to varying degrees, restrict the wide range of land uses now permitted in the current M-Mixed Use District. For example, personal services, retail shops, medical offices and a range of residential uses would still be permitted. However, uses such as hotels/motels, taverns, medical

clinics, theaters and emergency services would no longer be allowed in an effort to promote a more neighborhood-oriented environment with fewer high traffic-generating uses. The draft comprehensive plan also recommends zoning changes designed to better protect Abington's natural environment. These concepts are discussed later in this plan.

ZONING ORDINANCE

The following information summarizes the existing Abington Township Zoning Ordinance which the Board of Commissioners adopted in 1996. For each zoning district, the following items are noted:

- Name and purpose of the district
- Major uses permitted
- Minimum lot size and/or maximum permitted densities
- Minimum "green area" (unimpervious surface)

Residential Zoning Districts

R-1 Low Density District

Purpose: low density, single-family neighborhoods

Major Permitted Uses: single-family detached homes

Min. Lot Size: 1 acre

Min. Green Area: 75%

Note: A Land Preservation Overlay District (LPD) adopted in 1999 applies to all lots in R-1 that are 10 acres or larger. In summary, the LPD permits a wider range of home types on smaller lots provided 75% of the tract's gross buildable area is preserved as permanent open space. Revisions to these regulations are under discussion.

R-2 Low-Medium Residential District

Purpose: low density, single-family neighborhoods adjacent to or among one-acre districts

Major Permitted Uses: Same as R-1, but LPD uses only permitted by special exception

Min. Lot Size: 15,000 S.F.

Min. Green Area: 65%

R-3 Residential Medium District

Purpose: single-family homes on medium size lots

Major Permitted Uses: Same as R-1, but LPD uses not permitted

Min. Lot Size: 10,000 S.F.

Min. Green Area: 60%

R-4 Residential High Density District

Purpose: single-family homes on high density lots
Major Permitted Uses: Same as R-1, but LPD uses not permitted
Min. Lot Size: 5,000 S.F.
Min. Green Area: 45%
Note: 50% of gross buildable areas must be preserved as permanent open space.

Commercial Zoning Districts

TC - Town Center District

Purpose: small neighborhood-oriented single-family homes on high density lots
Major Permitted Uses: retail shops, personal care businesses, restaurants (except drive-ins) and apartments
Min. Lot Size: 10,000 S.F.
Min. Green Area: 10%

SC - Special Commercial District

Purpose: retail and services with a market area beyond the immediate neighborhood
Major Permitted Uses: a wider range of commercial uses than TC, including auto sales, supermarkets, shopping centers, lumber yards, distribution centers, and drive-in restaurants. No residential uses permitted.
Min. Lot Size: 10,000 S.F.
Min. Green Area: 20%

PB - Planned Business District

Purpose: large scale commercial activity that serves both local neighborhoods and surrounding communities
Major Permitted Uses: similar to SC, but apartments are permitted
Min. Lot Size: 15,000 S.F.
Min. Green Area: 20%

AO - Apartment/Office District

Purpose: combine high density residential uses with limited office/professional uses
Major Permitted Uses: a variety of home types including apartments, offices, hotel/motel/inn
Min. Lot Size: varies with use from small residential lots (5,000 S.F. for singles) to 15,000 S.F. for non-residential uses.
Min. Green Area: 45% to 60% depending on use

Special Zoning Districts

CS - Community Service District

Purpose: educational, medical, recreational, and religious uses on large lots
Major Permitted Uses: cemeteries, schools, places of worship, conservation/recreation
Min. Lot Size: 5 acres
Min. Green Area: 20% for lots that front on Route 611; 62% elsewhere

M - Mixed Use District

Purpose: a combination of residential and commercial uses, primarily in areas where this convergence already exists
Major Permitted Uses: a very wide range of commercial and residential uses
Min. Lot Size: 5,000 S.F. for single-family residential uses; 10,000 S.F. for apartments and non-residential uses
Min. Green Area: 45% for single-family residential uses; 25% for apartments and non-residential uses

SI - Suburban Industrial District

Purpose: industrial uses
Major Permitted Uses: a very wide range of storage, industrial, and distribution uses
Min. Lot Size: 1 acre
Min. Green Area: 25%

RC - Recreation Conservation

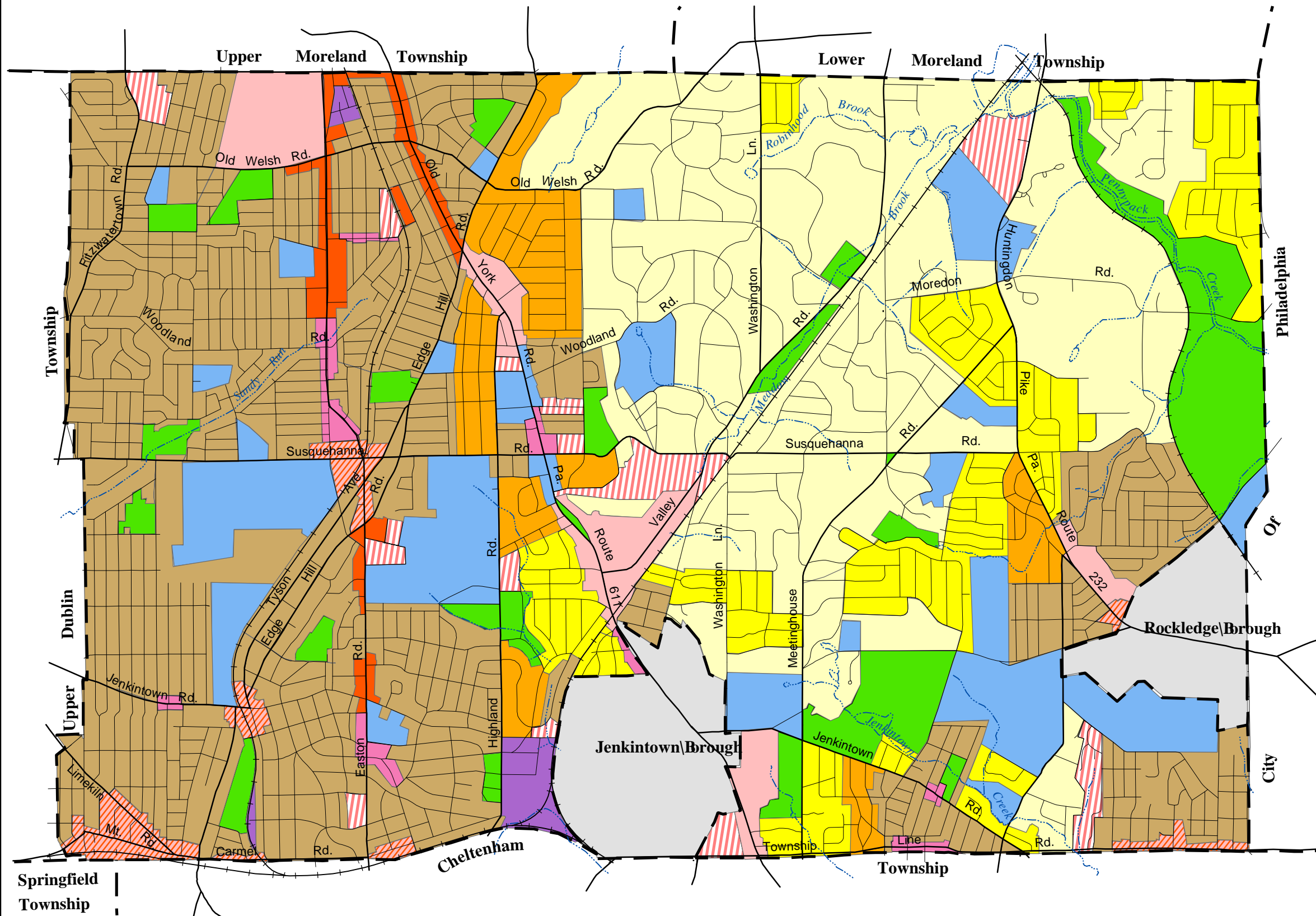
Purpose: protect natural resources and preserve open space
Major Permitted Uses: municipal uses, other park/recreation uses except amusement parks and indoor amusement centers
Min. Lot Size: 5 acres
Min. Green Area: 85%

Note: In addition to the Land Preservation Overlay District (LPD), the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance also has a Flood Plain Conservation Overlay District, and a Steep Slope Conservation.

Abington Township Open Space Plan Montgomery County

Existing Zoning

-  RC - Recreation/Conservation
-  R-1 - Low Density Residential
-  R-2 - Low-Medium Density Residential
-  R-3 - Medium Density Residential
-  R-4 - High Density Residential
-  AO - Apartment/Office
-  PB - Planned Business
-  SC - Special Commercial
-  TC - Town Commercial
-  M - Mixed Use
-  CS - Community Service
-  SI - Suburban Industrial



0 1,200 2,400 4,800 Feet



SOURCE: Abington Township



Recreation and Open Space Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 Bethlehem Plaza • Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 • 610-865-0701

VULNERABLE RESOURCES

Vulnerable resources in Abington include water-related resources, steep slopes, soils, woodlands and special habitat for local wildlife. Historic sites are also considered a vulnerable resource. The Township has evaluated these vulnerable resources according to the following criteria that Montgomery County developed to assess the importance of protecting specific natural features:

- concentration of resources,
- environmental protection function,
- importance relative to the Township's development and conservation goals, and
- contribution to community identity or cultural heritage.

Vulnerable resources in the Township are classified into one of the following two categories:

- First Priority For Conservation - areas that should be the focus of local conservation efforts through some combination of acquisitions, easements or enhanced regulations.
- Second Priority For Conservation - lands that would be desirable to preserve but which meet fewer of the criteria noted above than those designated as First Priority For Conservation.

The regulations that protect these resources from inappropriate development and the rationale for designating these resources as either First Priority for Conservation or Second Priority For Conservation are identified below.

FIRST PRIORITY FOR CONSERVATION

The following natural features in Abington are designated as First Priority Vulnerable Resources on the accompanying Composite of Vulnerable Resources map:

- Streams and 100-Year Floodplains
- Steep Slopes (15% grade and over)
- Woodlands
- Historic Sites

Streams and 100 -Year Floodplains

The Floodplain Conservation District in the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance is an overlay district. This means additional regulations apply above and beyond the regulations associated with the underlying zoning district. Abington Township further breaks down floodplains into four categories: floodway, floodway fringe, approximated floodplain, and special floodplain district. All four categories are restricted to agricultural uses or natural settings/preserves. The floodway (F1)

allows no use except where the effect of the proposed activity on flood heights is fully offset by accompanying stream improvements. The other three zoning districts have similar regulations that restrict and govern permitted activities. Abington considers floodplains a First Priority for Conservation because of the serious flooding the Township has experienced, especially along Sandy Run. As mentioned elsewhere in this plan, Abington has already acquired and demolished homes to establish floodplain management areas.

Steep Slopes

Abington's zoning ordinance classifies slopes of 25% or above as an overlay district. Under the Steep Slope Conservation Overlay District, certain uses are prohibited, including junkyards, on-site sewage systems, and extractive uses, among others. The greatest concentrations of steep slopes in Abington are along Pennypack Creek. Much of this is already preserved within Lorimer Park. There are also many steep slopes bordering Edge Hill Road. While steep slopes exist in other parts of the Township, they are not highly prevalent. However, because steep slopes are so sensitive to disturbance, Abington views them as a High Priority For Conservation.

Woodlands

Woodlands are widely distributed in Abington, especially in the central and eastern parts of the Township. Fortunately, several concentrations of woodlands are already preserved within existing parks. However, there are also sizeable wooded areas that exist on tracts with the potential to be further subdivided and developed. The Township's zoning ordinance or subdivision and land development ordinance do not regulate the percentage of existing wooded area that must be preserved on a tract proposed for development. However, the subdivision and land development ordinance encourages tree preservation by offering credit towards landscaping requirements when existing trees of certain sizes are preserved. Abington classifies woodlands as a High Priority for Conservation because of their multiple ecological functions, because they are scenic, and because they are vital to preserving the remaining vestiges of the Township's natural environment.

SECOND PRIORITY FOR CONSERVATION

The Composite of Vulnerable Resources Map designates the following natural features as Second Priority Vulnerable Resources:

- Outstanding Natural Areas (PNDI Sites)
- Historic Resources

Outstanding Natural Areas (PNDI Sites)

Abington has two outstanding natural areas recognized on the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index (PNDI): Big Oak Woods and Bethayres Swamp. Montgomery County ranks Big Oak Woods low as a protection priority because it is already preserved within the County's Lorimer Park. Bethayres Swamp is on private property. However, acquisition and/or a conservation easement on the property is being pursued by Pennypack Trust and Montgomery County.

Historic Resources

Abington's historic resources include properties on the National Register of Historic Places and properties eligible for it but not yet listed. As noted in the earlier section of this plan describing historic resources, there are also several historic properties in the Township with local significance that are not formally recognized. Abington does not have historic district zoning regulations under which a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) regulates exterior changes within a designated area of the municipality. Thus, the Township's historic sites are not protected in any significant way. Listing on the National Register means that a very minimal review must be conducted before federal funds can be spent in an area immediately adjacent to the listed resource. Other than this minor requirement, listing on the National Register is largely an honorary designation that does not protect historic resources from demolition or inappropriate exterior alterations. While Abington may enact historic district zoning sometime in the future, there is no formal proposal to do so under official consideration at this time.

USING THE VULNERABLE RESOURCE MAP

The map entitled Composite of Vulnerable Resources identifies the areas most in need of conservation from an environmental perspective. Those areas termed *First Priority* should be considered higher targets when the Township looks to buy land for preservation purposes. Areas of the Township designated *Secondary Priority* are also important but not considered as vulnerable as the *First Priority* resources.

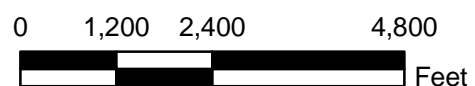
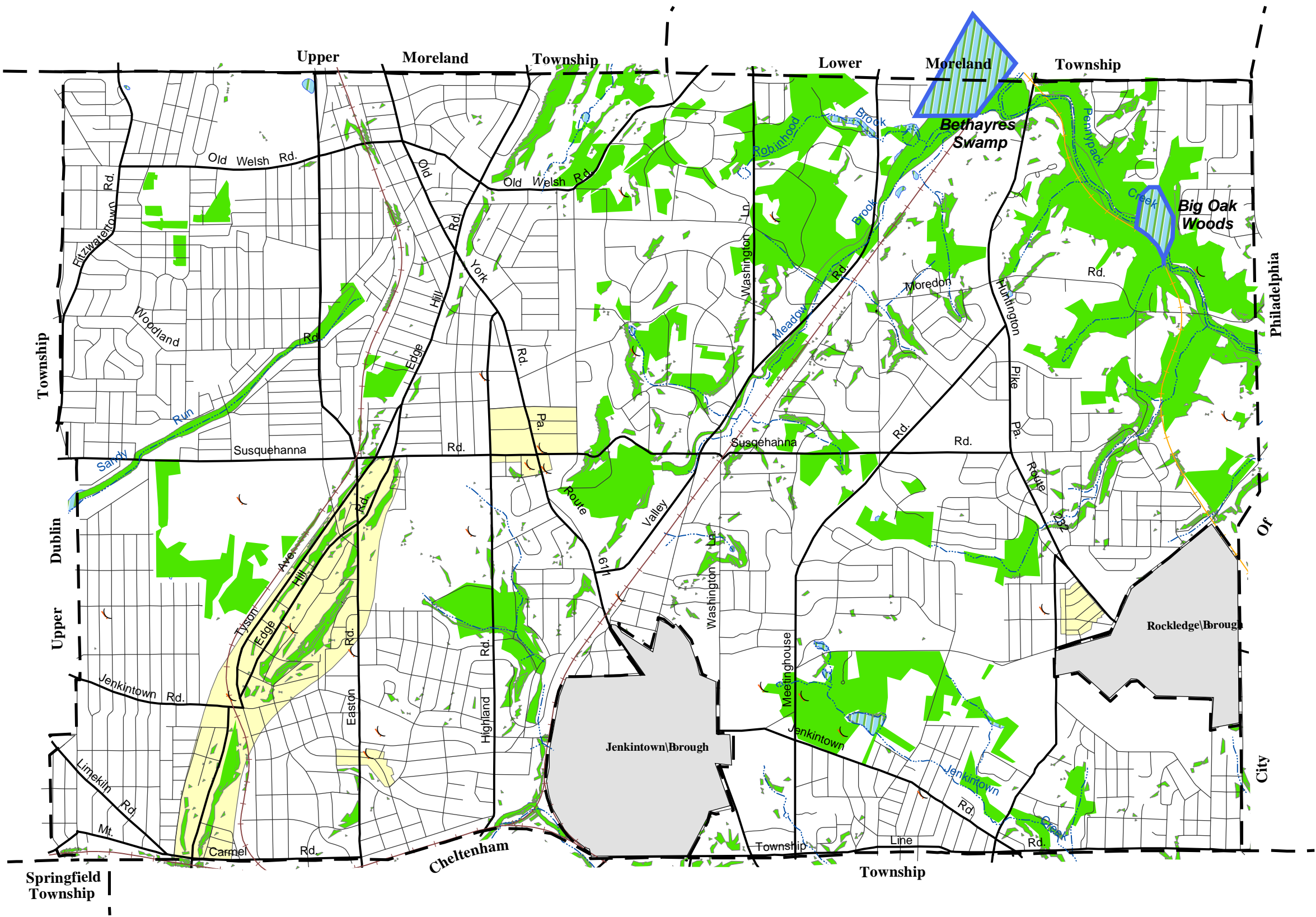
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Abington Township Open Space Plan

Montgomery County

Composite of Vulnerable Resources

-  **First Priority for Conservation**
Streams, 100-Year Floodplains, Steep Slopes (15% and greater), and Woodlands
-  **Second Priority for Conservation**
Wetlands & Outstanding Natural Resource Areas
-  **Historic Sites**
-  **Historic Areas**



SOURCE: PASDA Site and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES

One method of assessing the need for parkland in Abington Township is by using the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines that suggest how much parkland a community should have based on that community's population. NRPA has traditionally recommended that municipalities provide up to 10.5 acres of recreation land per 1,000 residents. NRPA's breakdown of these standard 10.5 acres are as follows:

**Table 22
NRPA PARKLAND GUIDELINES**

Type	Description	Suggested Acres Per 1,000 Residents
Community Parks	An area of intense recreation activity. Has a community-wide service area; typically includes a variety of athletic fields, courts and informal open space area. A "drive-to" site.	5 - 8
Neighborhood Parks	An area that serves the surrounding neighborhoods with open space and often with facilities such as basketball courts, children's play equipment and picnic tables. Users typically arrive either by car or by walking.	1 - 2
Mini-Parks	A very small open space or tot lot parcel that typically serves an area within a one-quarter mile radius or less. A "walk-to" site.	1/4 - 1/2

Source: NRPA, URDC

This NRPA analysis assesses the need for active-oriented parkland not passive-oriented parkland. Active oriented parks have athletic facilities and/or playground equipment. Passive-oriented parks are sites established primarily to preserve environmental amenities.

For this analysis, Abington School District lands in Abington Township are considered community recreation sites. Only 50% of the total acreage of each site is counted to recognize that the site's primary function is educational and not recreational. Nor does Abington Township have direct control over the use, administration, or scheduling of these lands.

One further clarification is needed. NRPA guidelines provide acreage standards for three types of parks: community parks, neighborhood parks, and mini-parks, all of which are defined in the table above. There are very few mini-parks in Abington. The nearest example would be the private homeowners association lands preserved within individual subdivisions. In Abington, these are typically owned and managed by homeowners associations.

NRPA guidelines give no recognition to passive open space sites designed to preserve environmental amenities. Nor do these guidelines take into account that demand for Abington's recreation facilities comes from residents of nearby municipalities who play in local sports leagues that use Abington's facilities, not just from Abington residents. In these two ways, NRPA guidelines tend to underestimate demand.

COMMUNITY PARK ACREAGE IN ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

The following are Abington's community park sites:

<u>Site</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Abington Library	2.7
Alverthorpe Park	121.6
Ardsley Community Center	3.9
Ardsley Park	9.4
Crestmont Park	19.4
Penbryn Park	18.6
Roslyn Park and Boys & Girls Club	17.6
Roychester Park	<u>12.7</u>
	205.9

Note: The undeveloped, recently acquired Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary is not included in this analysis.

The Montgomery County Planning Commission estimates that Abington Township's 2005 population is 56,090. At a recommended range of 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents, NRPA guidelines suggest Abington should have between 280.5 and 448.8 acres of community parkland. As tabulated above, Abington's actual community park acreage is far less. According to these standards, Abington needs nearly 75 acres of community parkland just to meet minimum NRPA requirements. Adding 50% of Abington School District's land (103.3 acres), brings Abington's community park acreage total to 309.2, which exceeds the low range of what NRPA standards call for in the Township (280.5 acres) but still falls short of NRPA's upper level community park standard for Abington (448.8 acres).

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK ACREAGE IN ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

<u>Site</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Baederwood Park	16.1
Conway Field	2.5
Ethel Jordan Park	3.7
Evergreen Manor Park	12.0
North Hills Park	3.2
Rockwell Park	1.2
Roslyn Branch Library	0.2
Rubicam Park	<u>3.5</u>
	42.4

NRPA neighborhood park guidelines call for 1 to 2 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents. At an estimated 2005 population of 56,090, this equates to 56.1 to 112.2 acres for Abington. As shown above, the Township has 42.4 acres of neighborhood parkland. Thus, according to NRPA, Abington has neighborhood park deficit of between 13.7 acres and 69.8 acres.

It is important to keep NRPA guidelines in perspective. NRPA no longer relies strictly on these guidelines because of the growing use of many parks by residents of two or more municipalities and the importance today of greenways and other non-sports oriented facilities. *Statistical guidelines are just one indicator. They should never be considered definitive.* NRPA parkland guidelines should be used only as part of a more comprehensive needs analysis that also considers local perceptions and preferences.

AUDIT OF PREVIOUS OPEN SPACE PLAN

The following is a summary of the progress Abington has made in implementing the major recommendations contained in the 1995 Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan. The recommendations are restated below and each one is designated as either Accomplished, still relevant or no longer relevant.

**TABLE 23
STATUS OF 1995 OPEN SPACE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

GOAL / RECOMMENDATION	ACCOMPLISHED	STILL RELEVANT	NO LONGER RELEVANT
GOAL 1: <i>To maintain parks and recreation as an essential community service in Abington Township.</i>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
• Strive to maintain the stable percentage of the Township's budget for operating the parks and recreation system.	X		
• The Bureau should continue to charge fees for programs and services.	X		
• The Township should institute a capital improvements program based upon this plan.	X		
• The Bureau should consider financing the capital improvements through a variety of avenues including the capital reserve fund, a bond issue, partnerships and grants.		X	
• Coordinate with the Planning Commission regarding linking recreation planning with community and economic development planning.		X	
• Establish a liaison on the Township's downtown advisory committee.	X		
• Formalized plans for maintenance and program management should be established.	X		

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

GOAL / RECOMMENDATION	ACCOMPLISHED	STILL RELEVANT	NO LONGER RELEVANT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to use the Public Affairs Committee to keep the Commissioners informed about parks and recreation. 		X	
GOAL 2: <i>Protect significant environmental, cultural, historic, and scenic resources.</i>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in conjunction with environmental, special interest groups and homeowners to protect environmental resources. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a re-vegetative program along the Sandy Run. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop test area of streambank stabilization techniques in a park. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand existing environmental education programs. 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand environmental education at additional park and open space sites throughout the Township. 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide homeowners information and/or sources of information on pond management. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the feasibility of acquiring the Hallowell Estate as a special use facility. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the potential adaptive reuse option for the Huntingdon Junior High School. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a master plan and a management plan for the Alverthorpe Manor. 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with historic interest groups to restore the Little Meeting House located within Alverthorpe Park. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a stream corridor buffer ordinance for areas along the Pennypack Creek, Meadow Brook, Robin Brook and Sandy Run. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop provisions for requiring a suitable buffer around delineated wetlands. 		X	
GOAL 3: <i>Protect open space for present and future generations.</i>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address park land encroachments by adjacent private homeowners. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete boundary line survey of all existing properties under the control of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to refine cluster regulations in Township Zoning Ordinance 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the mandatory dedication of land provisions. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to residents which define the incentives available to landowners for the preservation of open space. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of native plant materials. 		X	

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

GOAL / RECOMMENDATION	ACCOMPLISHED	STILL RELEVANT	NO LONGER RELEVANT
• Develop standard identification signs for Township parks, open spaces, greenways and facilities.		X	
• Hire an engineering firm with an environmental emphasis to study the drainage channel and floodplain of Sandy Run.	X		
• Determine the best method to stabilize the streambank.	X		
• Involve adjacent residents in the re-vegetation of Sandy Run.			X
• Hire an environmental consulting firm to develop a lake management program for the Alverthorpe Park lake.	X		
GOAL 4: <i>Coordinate parks and recreation efforts with public and private providers of human services and conservation initiatives.</i>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
• Target identified needs. Examples include services to the elderly, a community fitness program, and programs for middle school children.		X	
• Identify potential partners.		X	
• Coordinate with the Abington School District regarding cooperative programs and joint use of facilities.		X	
• Work with the Abington Community Task Force (ACT) in creating a proactive, safe, and caring community.	X		
• Develop a leisure service brochure.	X		
• Continue to provide youth recreational services and public awareness about them.	X		
• Collaborate with ACT on a cable video about alternative youth activities.	X		
• Work with neighboring communities on joint recreation programs.		X	
• Continue to participate in the Montgomery County Recreation Council.	X		
• Develop a working relationship with the Montgomery County Area Agency on Aging.	X		
• Formalize an Adopt-a-Park program.	X		
• Develop and implement a new Adopt-a-Park program as a pilot project in Crestmont Park.			X
• Coordinate with neighboring municipalities on regional greenway efforts.		X	
GOAL 5: <i>Provide parks and recreation facilities equitably to citizens throughout the community.</i>			

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

GOAL / RECOMMENDATION	ACCOM- PLISHED	STILL RELEVANT	NO LONGER RELEVANT
RECOMMENDATIONS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize the development of a parking area and the construction of a multi-purpose room to accommodate up to 50 people at the Briar Bush Nature Center. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop facilities within the existing popular parks by creating walking trails, small informal gathering/sitting areas, bocce courts, pavilions for and playing and small group activities, and small flower garden areas. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional softball and soccer fields to meet the demand for fields and allow fields to be rested on a rotating basis. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute a turf management program to enhance and maintain athletic fields. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand paths within existing parks and open spaces. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the recommended master plan on the eight identified greenways and secondary linkages. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate a public involvement program to involve citizens in the greenway concept. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with efforts of Montgomery County Planning Commission staff to develop linkages to proposed County trails (Lorimer Park). 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with efforts of adjoining municipalities to link greenways between municipalities. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the conversion of the Newtown Line to a rail-to-trail facility. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a sidewalk study that sets priorities for sidewalk implementation. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a street tree study that sets priorities for street tree planting. 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire additional acreage adjacent to existing mini-parks, if available. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a feasibility study to determine if the Township should develop a recreation center. 			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate all facilities of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation to determine if the ADA standards are met. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate all playground areas for compliance with the guidelines of CPSC. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Alverthorpe Park earlier to accommodate early morning park users. 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop site master plans which illustrate the long-term planned improvements and renovations proposed for each park and open space site. 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide two or three additional softball fields and one to two additional soccer fields. 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in tune to trends such as in-line skating / skate boarding and monitor the need for associated facilities. 		X	

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

GOAL / RECOMMENDATION	ACCOM- PLISHED	STILL RELEVANT	NO LONGER RELEVANT
• Improve existing play areas with new play equipment and additional playgrounds to be introduced throughout the system.		X	
• Improve the existing light standards in the parks by painting the standards.		X	
GOAL 6: <i>Provide meaningful and balanced recreation programs and services for all citizens.</i>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
• Adopt life-cycle stages in Abington Township for program planning and marketing.	X		
• Established goals and objectives for every program that is offered.		X	
• Consider direct mailing of program brochures three times per year.	X		
• Include target groups within the Township in the program planning process.		X	
• Conduct a regular assessment of the leisure preferences of the residents.		X	
• Evaluate recreation programs on an on-going basis.	X		
• Develop a sponsorship program for Township programs.		X	
• Establish working relationships with other providers of services such as the School District, social service agencies, and other community groups.	X		
• Continue to make registration as easy as possible by telephone or mail as well as by accepting credit cards.		X	
• Develop a complaint management system.	X		
• Continue to hire high caliber recreation leaders and instructors.		X	
• Provide training for recreation personnel.	X		
• Establish maintenance standards, practices, and schedules to ensure sparkling clean facilities.	X		
• Develop programs funded by fees and charges.		X	
• Base program fees upon the direct cost of offering the program plus a percentage to cover the indirect costs.	X		
• Continue to sell the discount tickets and the entertainment book.	X		
• Develop informational materials about parks and recreation for people new to the community.	X		
GOAL 7: <i>Increase public awareness of parks and recreation opportunities in Abington Township.</i>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
• Make three direct mailings of a recreation brochure per year.	X		

GOAL / RECOMMENDATION	ACCOM- PLISHED	STILL RELEVANT	NO LONGER RELEVANT
• Provide information to the business community about parks and recreation opportunities of interest to people who work in the Township.		X	
• Use the schools for selective distribution of promotional materials.	X		
• Determine potential mechanisms for advertising among client groups through a targeted mailing list.			X
• Enlist the support of the community for park improvements through a gift catalog.		X	
GOAL 8: <i>To support and enhance professional management and staffing for the parks and recreation system.</i>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
• Establish a maintenance management system.		X	
• Establish maintenance standards for all of the parks.		X	
• Maintain the current organizational structure.	X		
• Determine where enhancements could be made in the comprehensive personnel management system.	X		X
• Determine annual goals and performance standards.	X		
• Conduct annual performance appraisals.	X		
• Implement a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which illustrates the financial commitment to the Bureau's capital improvement projects.	X		

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE EVALUATION

Many Pennsylvania communities have invested in improving sidewalks, curbs, crosswalks, street lights, street trees and related amenities to make their business districts and neighborhoods more attractive and pedestrian-friendly. The Pennsylvania Department of Commerce and Economic Development's Main Street grants, and more recently, Green Infrastructure grants available through the Montgomery County Open Space Grant Program, have provided valuable funding assistance for these efforts.

Abington has completed many green infrastructure improvements during the last ten years. For this purpose, the Township has been successful in securing grant and loan funds from the following sources, among others:

- State funding through the Main Street Program and other state grant programs
- The Montgomery County Revitalization Program

- Montgomery County's 0% Infrastructure Loan Program
- Federal Home Loan Program

These outside funding sources have augmented revenues the Township has collected from its fees in lieu of tax program. Tax exempt institutions such as Penn State Abington Campus, Manor College, Holy Redeemer Hospital, and Abington Hospital pay a fee to the Township each year in place of the annual municipal real estate tax they would otherwise pay if they were not tax-exempt. Recently, these fees (which have been determined by negotiation) have amounted to approximately \$500,000 per year accruing to the Township. Abington's 15-member Economic Development Committee meets each month to set priorities on allocating these revenues and to provide guidance on revitalization matters in general. The Economic Development Committee includes members from several different professional disciplines and is appointed by the Abington Township Board of Commissioners.

In 1995, Abington mapped out a 10-year plan for revitalization activities. Revitalization activities were divided into two 5-year elements ending in December 2005. Accomplishments have included streetscape and related enhancements in several sections of the Township including Keswick Village, Roslyn, North Hills, portions of York Road, the Fairway area and others.

In addition, the Township, through the EAC and other community groups, has reclaimed significant green space near, or in, road rights-of-way. These actions have helped beautify the Township. Some of these small green spaces are owned by Abington Township. Others are owned by the State, SEPTA or other entities. Examples of these areas include the following:

- The Triangle (Huntingdon Pike and Cedar Road). This property has won the PHS.
- Greening and Maintenance Award.
- Roslyn Ridge (Susquehanna Road and Grovania Avenue).
- Katsura Korner (Fitzwatertown Road at Oklahoma).

Abington is preparing a new plan in 2006 to determine future revitalization activities. Likely revitalization activities in the near-term future are expected to include the following:

- Maintenance and renewal of work completed earlier.
- Signs pointing towards historic and cultural sites located off major corridors.
- Downtown way-finding signs.
- Enhancement of key gateway with landscaping, signage and related improvements.

Finding a suitable location for more off-street parking to serve the Keswick business and theater district is also an important revitalization goal. To address this problem, the Township would be interested in further discussion if the Abington School District's Glenside-Weldon School site becomes available due to the renovations and new construction that the School District undertook in other parts of the Township.

Ongoing revitalization activities in the Roslyn section are also envisioned in accordance with the 2002 Roslyn Revitalization Plan. Based on 2000 U.S. Census demographic and income data, Roslyn

is the only officially defined portion of Abington still eligible for Montgomery County Revitalization funds.

COMPARISON TO COUNTY AND ABUTTING MUNICIPAL PLANS

The Abington Township Open Space Plan is compatible with the open space planning goals of adjacent municipalities as well as those of Montgomery County. Each surrounding municipality has adopted its own open space plan to guide their future open space decisions. Montgomery County's Comprehensive Plan 2025, adopted in 2005, includes an open space component which recommends a county-wide network of multiple-use trails, natural greenways, and connected open spaces. Key recommendations from the County and adjacent municipal plans are summarized below.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Montgomery County Open Space Plan notes that the County's stream valleys contain the greatest overlap of sensitive natural features and should therefore be protected as greenways. The plan identifies the Pennypack Creek corridor as a *primary greenway* beginning in Horsham Township and extending 16 miles to the Delaware River in Philadelphia. The Pennypack Creek Greenway extends through Abington in the form of Lorimer Park. Upstream, the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust has assembled more than 700 acres of protected land in the Huntingdon Valley area which the County has identified as an *open space focus area*. Downstream, the Pennypack Creek valley is protected as Philadelphia's Pennypack Park and Fox Chase Farm.

The Montgomery County Open Space Plan has identified Sandy Run and Tookany Creek as *secondary greenways*. Sandy Run passes through Abington's northern quadrant while tributaries of the Tookany Creek extend into Abington's southern tier. For both streams, active efforts are underway to preserve additional land along these streams and build continuous trails that are sensitive to the riparian environment.

The County Open Space Plan also proposes a regional network of multiple-use trails. The Pennypack Trail, one of these proposed trail routes, would pass through Abington Township. In Abington and in the City of Philadelphia, this trail already exists in the form of Lorimer Park's streamside trail and the Pennypack Trail, respectively. The County proposes to continue the Pennypack Trail northward along SEPTA's inactive Newtown-Fox Chase passenger rail line, connect to the Pennypack Preserve in Lower Moreland Township and Bryn Athyn Borough, then onward to Bucks County. As of 2005, however, SEPTA has no plans to sell nor reactivate the abandoned railroad leaving its status in limbo.

The Pennypack Preserve is also the terminus of another proposed County recreation trail, the Cross-County Trail. From Bryn Athyn, this trail would roughly parallel the Trenton Cut-off freight railroad and Pennsylvania Turnpike westward to Fort Washington, Plymouth Meeting and Conshohocken. At Abington's northernmost corner in the Willow Grove area, the Cross-County Trail would be only

4/10 of a mile distant along Welsh Road. This nearby location is also the proposed terminus of the County's Power Line Trail which would proceed northwestward to Horsham and Lansdale.

The County Open Space Plan addresses enhancement and protection needs at existing County parks. The plan has the following to say about its *Lorimer Park* in Abington Township:

- Lorimer Park is a major contributor to the integrity of the Pennypack Creek Corridor ecosystem as well as one of several important open space connections between Bryn Athyn and the Delaware River.
- Parking demand is very high at the park, but adding additional parking might further stress the park's already-critical use level.
- An historic bridge crosses the Pennypack Creek at Old Huntingdon Pike at the park's northern end. This bridge should be preserved for its scenic value and for its potential to aid connections to Bethayres Swamp and Bryn Athyn along the proposed Pennypack Trail.
- Several adjacent properties should be considered for preservation to ensure the environmental integrity of the park: the Sisters of the Holy Redeemer property, the Boy Scout Camp portion of Lorimer Park, and several adjacent residential lots. These actions would also help to sustain the critically high deer population at Lorimer Park.

UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP

As of late 2005, Upper Moreland Township is nearly finished updating its 1996 Open Space Plan, continuing an active program of acquiring and augmenting open space throughout the Township. Since 1996, Upper Moreland has added seven new tracts to its open space collection and has increased the size of 16 existing open space sites. One of the expanded sites, War Memorial Park, is close to the Abington border along Davisville Road and the SEPTA R2 line. Pertinent recommendations in Upper Moreland's 2005 Open Space Plan include the following:

- Work with Montgomery County on acquiring easements or fee simple title to land along the Pennypack Greenway. These efforts will enhance the ecological integrity of the Pennypack Preserve in Bryn Athyn and Lower Moreland, as well as the remainder of the Pennypack Creek corridor.
- Develop Township trail spurs off of the proposed Cross-County and Powerline Trails. One such spur would leave the Cross County Trail near its eastern terminus in the Pennypack Preserve and connect to the aforementioned War Memorial Park near the Abington border.
- Adopt a riparian corridor ordinance and a revised landscaping ordinance to protect vegetation along stream corridors.

LOWER MORELAND TOWNSHIP

Lower Moreland shares significant portions of the Pennypack Preserve with Bryn Athyn Borough. The non-profit Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust (PERT) owns and maintains trails on 720 acres of protected open space along the Pennypack Creek in the two municipalities. The Township, whose Open Space Plan is due for completion in the beginning of 2006, supports the efforts of PERT. Together, the two entities wish to preserve additional land adjacent to Pennypack Preserve. One high-priority property considered for acquisition is within the Bethayres Swamp, a County-identified natural area that is shared with Abington Township.

Lower Moreland also supports efforts to develop a rail-trail on the inactive Newtown-Fox Chase line, in congruence with County planning initiatives. As stated earlier, this rail corridor is neither for sale nor slated for reactivation as a passenger line by SEPTA. Therefore, trail development along this corridor is postponed indefinitely.

Lower Moreland is also pursuing major streetscape enhancements along Philmont Avenue and Huntingdon Pike in an effort to facilitate pedestrian movement and create more greenery.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

The entire Pennypack Creek corridor in Philadelphia is protected as Pennypack Park. This 1600-acre linear park also contains a multiple-use trail along its entire length. The section of parkland immediately adjacent to Abington contains the Fox Chase Farm, an historic farm used for educational purposes. Pennypack Park is managed by the City's Fairmount Park Commission, and maintained by the city and a volunteer group, Friends of Pennypack Park.

In 2004, the City completed a Strategic Plan for the Fairmount Park system which includes Pennypack Park. A majority of the recommendations of this plan focus on park management, particularly in the streamlining of park leadership. However, some specific capital projects are recommended including an improved wayfinding and signage system, better linkages to surrounding neighborhoods, environmental and historical interpretation signage, and enhanced visitor facilities.

The City of Philadelphia has also embarked upon a major bicycle network program including a system of on-road bicycle lanes and off road paved paths. Just outside Abington, bicycle lanes can be found along Bloomfield Avenue, Rockwell Avenue, Hartel Avenue and Verree Road. Pine Road is considered a "bicycle-friendly network street" that will be considered for bike lane striping. Off the road network, the Pennypack Trail is a major east-west bicycle connection through Northeast Philadelphia. The trail will eventually provide access to the proposed East Coast Greenway, a paved, off-road multi-use trail stretching from Florida to Maine. The East Coast Greenway will be situated along the Delaware River waterfront in Philadelphia.

ROCKLEDGE BOROUGH

The Borough of Rockledge is pursuing several open space and trail linkages within its small territory. One major goal listed in the Borough's 2005 Open Space Plan is to create a walking path which would connect all of the Borough's parks and open spaces, as well as parks in adjacent municipalities. The most important linkage, according to the plan, is to Lorimer Park in Abington. This would be implemented by constructing a trail that exits the borough either at North Jarrett Avenue or at the SEPTA railroad tracks. Both options would require a safe crossing of Shady Lane. Rockledge hopes to cooperate with Abington Township, SEPTA, Montgomery County, and PERT in establishing this connection as soon as possible.

Another major goal of the Rockledge Open Space Plan is to make the Borough greener, with shade trees, streetscape enhancements, and attractive gateways.

CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP

Abington's longest shared border is with Cheltenham Township which finished its Open Space Plan in 2005. Cheltenham's greatest open space asset is the Tookany Creek corridor which is protected as a string of parks, golf courses, and educational institutions. The plan proposes to focus open space preservation efforts along the Tookany Creek Greenway. In particular, the plan recognizes that the highest priority sites are those which feature overlapping areas of floodplain, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, and hydric soils. The plan recommends preservation of 15 properties, 10 of which are located along the creek or its tributary streams. Two potential acquisitions, where Glenside Avenue crosses the Tookany Creek, are within 1/4 mile of Abington's border.

Another major initiative under the Cheltenham Open Space Plan is to create a continuous trail along the Tookany Creek Greenway, either through off-road trails or on-road sidewalk trails. The Tookany Trail system would also feature spur routes into nearby neighborhoods. The combined trail system would enter or come very close to Abington Township in four locations which are as follows:

- Along a tributary of Jenkintown Creek next to Church Road, connecting to Conklin Pool.
- Along Paxson Avenue where the SEPTA R3 and R5 rail lines diverge.
- Along Glenside and Easton Avenues near the Glenside Train Station.
- Along Limekiln Pike, Brooke Road and Carroll Avenue in the Edge Hill neighborhood.

JENKINTOWN BOROUGH

Jenkintown Borough is almost entirely built-out, so their open space efforts have focused on improving and "greenifying" public spaces, planting street trees, and pursuing physical improvements such as curb bulb-outs which facilitate pedestrian movement and safety. One recent, major

accomplishment was the beautification of Jenkintown's Town Square on Old York Road between West and Greenwood Avenues. The Borough does not have any designated sidewalk or other trails. Through their 2006 Open Space Plan, Jenkintown hopes to take a unique approach to open space planning that will suit the needs of their developed community.

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP

Abington shares only 1,280 feet of its border with Springfield Township. This short linear stretch consists of the North Hills Train Station on the SEPTA R5 line, and the edge of Springfield's North Hills Country Club. It is expected that these land uses will remain here, and that no additional open space acquisitions or trail development will occur in this area. Elsewhere in Springfield Township, the County's proposed Cresheim Trail will provide an additional link between Fort Washington State Park and Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill section. The trail will parallel the Fort Washington Expressway (PA Route 309) and Penn Oak Road within the Township.

UPPER DUBLIN TOWNSHIP

Upper Dublin's 2005 Open Space Plan identifies potential off-road and on-road trail connections, as well as opportunities for open space preservation, environmental protection, and historic preservation. Major recommendations near the Abington border include the following:

- Establish a trail along Sandy Run between the Abington and Springfield Township borders. This trail would help connect adjacent neighborhoods and would offer a connection to the Wissahickon Valley Green Ribbon Trail.
- Establish a "share-the-road" trail along Susquehanna Road throughout the length of the Township. This would connect to the proposed PennDOT bike lane along the same road in Abington Township.
- Restore floodplain areas throughout the Township including that of Sandy Run between Fitzwatertown Road and Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Acquire additional parkland and open space including along Sandy Run in the vicinity of Fitzwatertown Road and adjacent to Thomas Fitzwater Elementary School at School Lane and North Hills Road.
- Designate and protect viewsheds along designated scenic roads, including Jenkintown Road between Twining Road and the Abington Township border.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

□ *Existing conditions plus current and future needs are the basis for the following goals and objectives. These goals and objectives describe Abington's ambitions for:*

- *Preserving more open space and natural features,*
- *Improving the Township's park system,*
- *Developing new trail links,*
- *Enhancing the Township's green infrastructure,*
- *Creating new recreation program opportunities, and*
- *Refining how the Township administers its park, recreation, and open space system.*

PRESERVING MORE OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

Goal: Use a variety of techniques to preserve more of Abington's natural environment.

- Objectives:**
- Identify candidate sites for future preservation and acquire them as funding becomes available.
 - Strengthen protection of natural features vulnerable to development.

IMPROVING THE TOWNSHIP'S PARK SYSTEM

Goal: Continue to develop the Township's exemplary, top echelon municipal park system.

- Objectives:**
- Develop selected additional recreational facilities at appropriate existing parks to help meet active and other recreation needs.
 - Continue addressing needs for new park sites at both the community-wide and neighborhood levels.

DEVELOPING NEW TRAIL LINKS

Goal: Continue to coordinate with interest groups and neighborhood groups to plan and construct trails in locations where residents are receptive to these initiatives.

- Objectives:**
- Develop a trail system over time that will link parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit stops, and other Township destinations.

- Identify trail stewards to assist the Township in operating and maintaining trails as the trail system expands in the future.

ENHANCING THE TOWNSHIP'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Continue the green infrastructure improvements Abington has completed during the last ten years.

- Objectives:**
- Renovate older green infrastructure improvements as needed.
 - Extend green infrastructure improvements to community gateways and other locations.

CREATING NEW RECREATION PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Goal: Sustain and expand Abington's role as a leader in municipal recreation programming.

- Objectives:**
- Expand and improve recreation program opportunities for people of both genders and all ages.
 - Identify additional public and private partners to help plan and provide additional recreation programs.

REFINING HOW THE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTERS ITS PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Goal: Sustain Abington's position as a leader in managing, maintaining, funding, and publicizing its park, and recreation resources.

- Objectives:**
- Ensure municipal capital and operating budget allocations remain adequate to meet growing needs.
 - Continue looking for additional ways to publicize and promote the Township's park, recreation and open space services.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND
ACTION PROGRAM**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PROGRAM

□ *The previous chapters of this Plan describe demographic trends, land use patterns and the existing park and open space system. Vulnerable environmental resources and open space needs are examined. Goals and objectives are also provided that identify the Township's visions for open space, recreation, and environmental resource protection. The recommendations in this chapter describe how the Township hopes to fulfill these goals and the steps necessary to make these recommendations a reality. Six types of recommendations are described:*

- *Preserving more open space and natural features,*
- *Improving the Township's park system,*
- *Developing new trail links,*
- *Enhancing the Township's green infrastructure,*
- *Creating new recreation program opportunities, and*
- *Refining how the Township administers its park, recreation, and open space system.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVING MORE OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

1. Assemble a short list of high priority sites for potential open space acquisition.

Abington is an intensively developed inner ring suburb without much open space left. However, there are key estate properties, some institutional holdings, and other properties in the Township that would make valuable additions to Abington's park and open space system. This is particularly true in the eastern part of the Township which is developed at a much lower overall density than the portion of the Township west of York Road.

The Township needs to formalize a short-list of high priority sites that have been mentioned as possible open space acquisitions. The following Land Acquisition Possibilities map shows some of these tracts. Next, the Township should contact these property owners by letter and arrange follow up visits to explain the Township's interest in conserving all or a portion of these sites. Several other municipalities have used letters of this type to help make residents aware of the Township's interest in preserving land and refine the local pool of potential preservation sites. If the property owner is interested, further conversation could then focus on a range of conservation techniques that might be used from right-of first refusal and easements to acquisition or donation.

To evaluate the value of potential preservation sites in these locations and elsewhere in the Township, Abington should establish and refer to specific criteria. The Township should always retain the flexibility to respond to specific preservation opportunities that may arise. However, the following guidelines can help provide an objective look at the value and suitability of

spending open space funds on specific sites. The importance of individual criteria will change based on the use envisioned.

SIZE

Property is at least 10 acres in size, preferably larger

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Property is at substantial risk for development given its location, physical character and zoning.

WOODLAND VALUE

A significant portion of the property is wooded.

OPEN SPACE CONNECTION POTENTIAL

Property is adjacent to or nearby another public parkland or other preserved land.

WATERWAY LOCATION

Property is adjacent to a perennial stream.

ACTIVE RECREATION POTENTIAL (for potential active recreation sites only)

Property has open, well drained ground suitable for athletic fields.

OTHER CRITERIA

- special historic value
- special scenic value

2. Contact major institutions with substantial acreage to determine their potential interest in open space conservation.

Abington should supplement the activities recommended above with a more general outreach to local institutional uses such as private schools and others. There may be no immediate opportunity to acquire land from these entities. However, long range planning of this type could lead to obtaining a right of first refusal or other preferential position if and when one or more of these properties is considered for sale.

3. Acquire more property as needed to help reduce future flood damage.

According to a December 2004 Philadelphia Inquirer article:

“Eight major floods have hit the township since 1967. In the last decade, three major floods have invaded hundreds of homes, racked up millions in property damage, and caused the death of an elderly couple in 1996.....Township officials have spent \$12 million since 1996 to alleviate the problem: widening streams, installing culverts and retention basins, and condemning homes built in the floodplain.”

Together, Abington's several streams, highly developed land use pattern, and many neighborhoods constructed before flood protection standards were enacted make the Township particularly vulnerable to flooding. The Township acquired and razed homes in the Madison Avenue area to reduce flooding along Sandy Run and in the Wanamaker Road area to reduce flooding along Baeder Creek. Using a FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Fund grant and Township revenues, Abington has extended buyout offers to additional homeowners on Wanamaker Road and Baeder Road. However, the response has been slow, in part due to offering prices that some homeowners consider too low. The Township should continue to pursue these acquisitions in an effort to help to return the floodplain there to its natural state and prevent flood damage from future storms.

4. Strengthen the Township's steep slope protection regulations.

Abington Township zoning currently prohibits certain uses within areas that have slopes of 25% grade or greater. Because steep slopes are highly susceptible to erosion from construction activities, many other municipalities in the Delaware Valley and elsewhere have taken the added step of regulating development on slopes between 15% and 25% grade. One approach is to prohibit disturbance altogether on slopes of 25% or more (very steep slopes) and to minimize development on slopes in the 15% to 25% range (steep slopes).

To strengthen these regulations, Abington should require larger lots if a new principal building is proposed to be located on a steep slope. An even stricter variation would require larger lots for any parcel that even *contains* steep slopes, not just for lots where construction is proposed on steep slopes. In either case, one way to require larger lots where steep slopes are involved is to mandate, for example, 1.5-acre lots where 1.0-acre lots would normally be required. Another way of increasing the minimum lot size in these cases is to subtract (or "net out") the amount of steep slope land so that steeply sloped areas do not count towards meeting the required minimum lot size. The purpose of these recommendations is to encourage developers to plan construction activities on the more moderately sloped portions of a development tract thus minimizing steep slope disturbance.

5. Establish streamside buffer regulations.

Abington's zoning ordinance should require setbacks of 75 feet from the centerline of perennial streams within which vegetation cannot be disturbed and impervious surfaces are prohibited. Vegetative stream buffers slow down and filter stormwater runoff before it enters a waterway. They also provide shade to moderate stream temperatures which helps to preserve aquatic life. The extent of these setbacks should be clearly delineated by requiring that trees be planted along the setback boundary line. This will help prevent encroachment into the buffer area. Existing trees and vegetation should only be allowed to be removed if they are replaced by new trees and vegetation that serves the same purpose. Exceptions could be made for placing needed utilities within these mandated streamside buffers.

6. Revise the Township’s woodland protection regulations.

Abington’s subdivision and land development ordinance encourages developers to preserve trees within new developments by offering credit towards landscaping requirements whenever trees of a certain caliper are saved. A stronger approach would employ zoning regulations that require a certain percentage of trees on a site to be preserved. These regulations should then be augmented with provisions that better control clear cutting, tree cutting near streams, and tree cutting on very steep slopes. State law requires that forestry be permitted as a by right use in all areas and stipulates that forestry cannot be “unreasonably regulated”. However, Pennsylvania’s Commonwealth Court has upheld zoning regulations that control clear cutting and timbering on steep slopes and along creeks. As part of its erosion control and environmental protection strategies, Abington should prohibit clear cutting on areas larger than ¼ acre. Tree cutting should also be prohibited on: a) slopes of 25% grade or more; and b) within 50 feet of the top of the bank on each side of all perennial waterways.

Municipalities that have added woodland protection regulations have often also incorporated the following related concepts into their ordinances:

- A requirement for showing areas where trees of 6-inch caliper or greater exist on a site plan and areas where trees are proposed to be removed.
- The establishment of a tree protection zone in a 15-foot radius around trees of 6-inch caliper or greater. No construction activity is then permitted within this zone.
- A prohibition against removing more than 50% of any tract’s woodland cover, with exemptions for dead and diseased trees.

7. Mandate buffers around wetlands.

Abington should amend its zoning ordinance to require a 20 to 30-foot buffer around surveyed wetlands within which no buildings or paving can be located. Mandatory buffers will provide extra protection for these ecologically sensitive areas. At a minimum, the required buffers would keep construction equipment out of wetland areas. An alternative approach where wetlands are present would be to calculate building setback lines from the edge of wetlands rather than from property boundaries.

8. Establish a historic overlay zoning district.

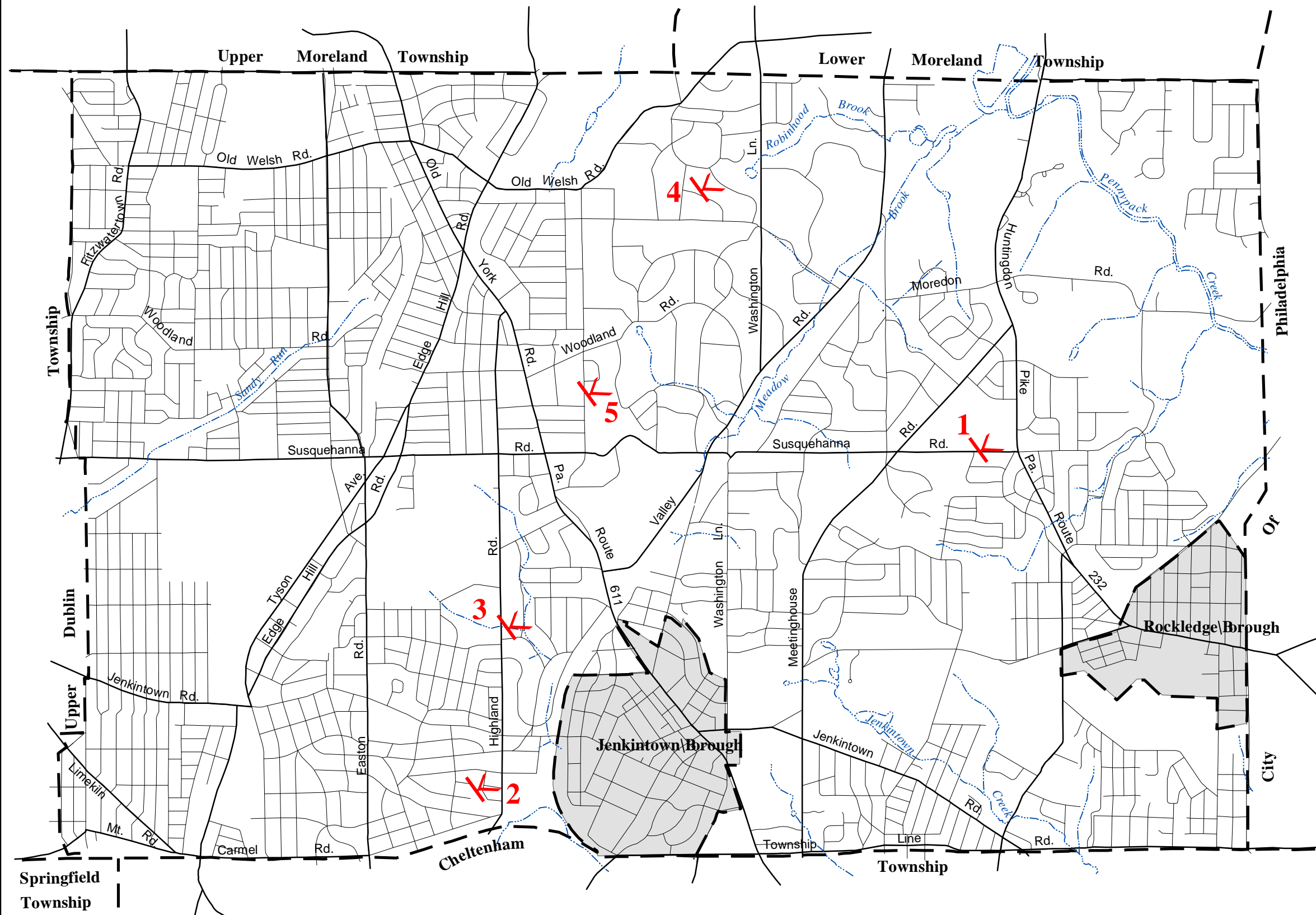
While historic resources are not, strictly speaking, *natural* features, conserving the Township’s man-made heritage is an important part of retaining Abington’s character and setting. As detailed in the Historic Resources section of this plan, Abington has two sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nine properties eligible for this designation, and several other sites with local historic significance. However, designation on the National Register is

Abington Township Open Space Plan

Montgomery County

Land Aquisition Possibilities

- K** Land Aquisition Possibilities
- 1** Rydal Green HDA Lands (portion)
 - 2** SPS Technology Fields
 - 3** Coates Property (currently leased)
 - 4** Jackson Property
 - 5** Memorial Field



0 1,200 2,400 4,800 Feet



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largely an honorary designation that offers no protection in law unless federal dollars are involved in an action that could affect the designated site. Nor does the Township have any regulations in place to help protect those sites identified as locally significant.

Short of acquiring historic structures with public funds, the strongest form of historic preservation that a Pennsylvania municipality can pursue is to establish a historic zoning district. Within these districts, exterior building alteration would have to be approved by a locally-appointed historic architectural review board (HARB). Before Abington could establish this district, the Township would need to complete a professionally prepared historic sites inventory and obtain state certification through the Pennsylvania Historic and Museums Commission. Most importantly, a strong consensus in favor of strict regulations would have to exist among the property owners being regulated.

Most of Abington's historic resources are not clustered within an area suitable for delineating specific historic district boundaries, nor has any local groundswell developed to date in support of strictly regulating an extensive list of building alterations. An approach more suitable to Abington would be to enact an historic overlay zoning district with regulations that apply to a specific list of designated historic sites located throughout the Township. As an overlay district, these regulations would apply in addition to the regulations associated with the site's underlying zoning district. Applicable regulations would:

- Require a delay in demolition period by making demolition of these structures a conditional use requiring approval by the Board of Commissioners
- Establish guidelines that regulate certain large-scale exterior improvements, such as changes to exterior wall and roof lines (not paint colors, window types, shutter styles, etc.).
- Within carefully defined limits, allow certain uses within historic properties that would otherwise be prohibited in residential areas (e.g. bed and breakfast, small crafts sales, small office use). These exceptions will hopefully extend the economic viability of historic properties and help avoid demolition.

Related techniques to help preserve historic resources would include the following:

- Promote the donation of historic facade easements (and associated tax advantages) to preserve key historic structures in the same way as rural municipalities promote the sale of agricultural easements.
- Expand local participation in the Pennsylvania Blue Markers Program. The Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission will fund Blue Markers for sites of statewide significance. Blue Markers for locally significant sites must be funded locally.
- Install historically appropriate welcome signs at key gateways to Abington including both ends of York Road.

- Use one of the many examples that exist of a design guidelines pamphlet identifying the essential do's and don'ts of proper historic rehabilitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE TOWNSHIP'S PARKS SYSTEM

1. Prepare a park master plan for the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary site.

Abington Township recently acquired the 81.0 acre Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary site on the south side of Susquehanna Road west of Easton Road. The property is adjacent to Hillside Cemetery. The property is sizeable and conveniently located. However, a park master plan is needed to determine what uses are most suitable given the site's vegetation, topography, and hydrological character.

Several different entities are liable to be keenly interested in using some portion of the property. (See recommendation about the Briar Bush Nature Center below.) The Township needs a master plan to guide the future development of this site. A master plan will help sort out these potentially competing demands and help ensure that the best use is made of the site's assets and constraints. A master plan will identify a phased program for developing the property in logical stages over a period of years. It will include a recommended layout and cost estimates for the following park elements:

- Trails and other facilities as desired
- Improvements to the internal pedestrian circulation system as needed
- Areas to be preserved in their natural state
- Guidance on recommended woodland maintenance practices

Pennsylvania DCNR 50/50 matching grants are available to fund park master plans and to assist in constructing improvements once the master plan is adopted. The Township should have a topographic survey and a wetland delineation completed for the site before beginning the master plan process to ensure the master plan yields meaningful results.

Note: While the focus should be on the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary site, master plans would be valuable to guide the future development and preservation of all of the Township's parks.

2. Finish surveying park boundaries to help prevent encroachment.

The Abington Township Bureau of Parks and Recreation is in the process of completing boundary line surveys for each of its land holdings. A major motivation for this effort is a

growing concern about neighbors adjacent to Township land encroaching on Township property. Either knowingly or unknowingly, property owners next to some Abington parks have constructed sheds, dug gardens, cut trees and carried on related encroachments on Township land that they have treated as part of their own property.

These activities raise the possibility that the Township could lose part of its land holdings through adverse possession. Adverse possession is a method through common law of gaining title to another party's land by using it continuously, in the open, for a period of years, and without challenge from the rightful owner. Abington can prevent this by:

- Finishing a boundary survey at each park;
- Marking the park boundaries in the field;
- Inspecting these boundaries for encroachment;
- Notifying encroachers to cease and desist; and
- Following through with legal action, if necessary.

3. Periodically pursue acquisition of the Ardsley Community Center.

Abington Township has leased space for the Ardsley Community Center from the Abington School District since 1978. Abington shares this former school building with a day care program and a before/after school care program. Abington has funded substantial leasehold improvements at the building. However, the School District has declined to consider Township offers to buy the property. Instead, a new long-term lease was recently signed to continue renting. The Township should periodically continue to pursue ownership of the site. Besides gaining equity from the property, ownership would allow the Township a freer hand in scheduling, improving and otherwise administering its community center site. In the meantime, Abington should continue monitoring maintenance and capital improvement needs at this community center.

4. Ensure all Township parks and open spaces have adequate signs.

Abington should replace park identification and rules signs at many of its parks due to age and deterioration. A standard sign design should be adopted and used at all Township sites, including undeveloped open spaces. While all parks have signs now, some undeveloped open space areas do not. The new signs should be installed at all locations. At the Township's preference, the new signs can be erected all at once or introduced over a multi-year period to spread out the cost.

Note: In a related matter, Abington should rename the Boy Scout Game Preserve along Valley Road. The name is a misnomer as the Scouts do not have any association with the site and the original rationale for the name is now unclear.

5. Dedicate part of the new Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary property for Briar Bush Nature Center.

The park master plan for the Township's newly acquired Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary property should accommodate space for the Township-owned Briar Bush Nature Center. Briar Bush is reportedly the most-visited nature center in the Delaware Valley. However, its overflowing 12-acre site cannot reasonably accommodate additional development without compromising its natural setting. In particular, Briar Bush has expressed the need for a log cabin to conduct environmental education. By agreement, Abington School District's contribution to acquiring the property entitles the School District to some use of the site. The Ardsley site would be a logical location for the School District to work cooperatively with Briar Bush Nature Center to provide more environmental study opportunities for its students.

6. Construct shade structures at the Township's summer camp locations and other parks.

The Abington Bureau of Parks and Recreation operates summer camp programs at Penbryn Park and Crestmont Park. The Township's Recreation Superintendent reports the need for structures at each of these sites that will provide more shade for both participants and camp counselors. Large canvas or plastic tent coverings suspended across four poles and open at the sides would fulfill this need. Other Township sites, such as Roslyn Park would also benefit from similar improvements. In addition to shade structures, trees and other plantings near Township playgrounds would also help provide more shade where shade is needed.

7. Continue investigating the feasibility of replacing wading pools with splash structures.

Abington has wading pools (kiddie pools) at Cresmont Park, Alverthorpe Park and Penbryn Park. The Township should continue to investigate the feasibility of replacing these pools with splash structures. Splash structures do not require lifeguards to monitor users because they have virtually no water depth. Capital expenditures would be needed to implement this remodeling. However, by switching to splash structures, Abington could save on operating costs at the same time as the Township adds new recreation opportunities. Splash structures at public pools are modeled after amenities found at private for-profit water parks. Spray features, water spouts, and zero grade entries are among the features that communities can offer at these locations. The renovations envisioned for Abington are at the simple end, rather than the elaborate end, of the many designs possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING NEW TRAIL LINKS

1. Finalize and implement the Crestmont Trail.

As described in the Potential Open Space linkages section of this plan, Abington Township has constructed trails in several of its parks. Trail segments also exist along Fox Chase Road and along Highland Avenue. Plans are moving forward for a trail in the Crestmont section that will connect Crestmont Park, Evergreen Manor Park, and Willow Hill Elementary School. The Crestmont Trail was planned with direct input from the residents of Crestmont. Abington's Trail Advisory Committee also participated. Once all funding is secured, the Crestmont Trail should move forward with engineering drawings, bidding, and construction as soon as possible. The Crestmont Area Recreational Pathway Design Projects document is the basis for this trail initiative and will continue to provide ongoing guidance.

2. Work with residents to plan and construct the Fairway Trail and the Fox Chase Trail extension.

The Trails map included in the Potential Open Space Linkages section of this plan shows a trail proposed for the Fairway between York Road and Susquehanna Road. A proposed trail is also illustrated that would be a short extension of the Fox Chase Trail. This extension would connect the existing trail on Fox Chase Road with the Horse Farm property, Lawnview Memorial Park, and Montefiore Cemetery via Cedar Road. Using the Crestmont trail process as a model, Abington Township should work closely with residents and other property owners in both of these locations to ensure these two trails are planned in accordance with direct community input. Once a community consensus is reached, the trails should proceed to design and construction.

3. Continue to build trails within selected Township Parks.

Roslyn Park, Ardsley Park, the Coates Property, Pennbryn Park, the Grove Property and Alverthorpe Park are Abington Township parks and open spaces that feature trails. The Township should complement these trails with trails at other park locations. The Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary site provides an opportunity to design trails before the park is developed. At passive parks, such as the Boy Scout Game Preserve and Karebrook Nature Center (among others), trails could be established without difficulty provided nearby property owners concur. The feasibility and desirability of retrofitting trails into the Township's active-oriented park sites should also be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Wood chip trails should be considered for paths through natural areas. Paved trails would be most suitable for other applications.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE TOWNSHIP'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Extend the Township's 10-year revitalization program that ended in 2005.

Abington best approach to enhancing the Township's green infrastructure will involve creating a new 5 to 10-year program through the Economic Development Committee to build on the work accomplished during the 10-year revitalization program that ended in 2005. The Township should continue funding these activities through the fees in lieu of real estate tax program. Under this arrangement, major institutions, such as hospitals and colleges, contribute funds each year to the Township in lieu of the real estate taxes from which they are exempt.

Recommended focus areas for future revitalization improvements:

- Complete the as-needed, ongoing renewal and maintenance of streetscape projects completed in previous years.
- Erect signs with a unified design theme that direct motorists to historic and cultural sites located off major thoroughfares.
- Design and implement gateway enhancements at major entrances to the Township, particularly on York Road and on Easton Road. These enhancements would feature welcome signs installed in a landscaped setting. New sidewalks, curbing, crosswalks, period street lights and street trees could also be added on the first block at each entrance.

2. Improve Tyson Green to create a small pocket park.

Tyson Green is a small (0.3 acre) open green space located just off York Road behind Abington Hospital at Highland Avenue and Keith Road. The site would make an excellent town center/ pocket park with only minimal improvements. In accordance with pre-design work done by Township staff, Abington should enhance the site with:

- A two-sided town clock
- Period lighting
- Benches
- Trash receptacles
- Landscaped planter beds
- A walkway of concrete or brick
- Shade Trees

The target audience for this park would be the many nearby employees and the residents from the immediate neighborhood vicinity. The park's main attraction would be as a pleasant place

to congregate. For example, workers may wish to eat lunch outdoors there or just engage in simple socializing. No recreation activities would take place on the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING NEW RECREATION PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

1. Establish a Township-sponsored tour of historic buildings in Abington.

Abington Township will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its incorporation in 2006 with a variety of Township-sponsored activities. A driving tour of historic buildings in the Township would complement the 100th anniversary theme and other activities planned. The Township should produce a brochure that identifies driving loops that feature sites of local historic interest. Earlier coordination between members of the Township staff and the Township's Historic Advisory Preservation Committee resulted in a preliminary draft of suggested driving loops. These include loops through the following locations:

- Jenkintown
- Rydal
- Meadowbrook
- Old Abington
- Noble
- Edge Hill
- Keswick
- Glenside

Sites of interest noted along these proposed driving loops included places of worship, graveyards, residential estates, homes of architectural interest, farmhouses, theaters, train stations, firehouses and other local attractions. The Township should update these ideas as appropriate, and produce a draft brochure for review and comment by Township elected and appointed officials.

2. Expand environmental education using the lake at Alverthorpe Park and its surrounding area.

A recommendation described above suggests earmarking part of the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary site for environmental education provided by the Briar Bush Nature Center. The Nature Center should also investigate using the lake at Alverthorpe Park for environmental education related to aquatic plant and animal life and other aspects of pond ecology. The Briar Bush Nature Center has a documented need for more space. The Nature Center can address part of this problem and, at the same time, help realize some of the potential that the lake at Alverthorpe has to play a larger role in Abington's recreational offerings.

3. Offer more non-sports activities that emphasize thinking, learning and creativity.

Abington has a first-rate recreation program system that offers a range of activities for many interests. The Township could further extend interest in its recreation programming by providing a wider spectrum of program opportunities. For example, more opportunities could be made available for males and females of all ages and a variety of interests, especially teens.

The following program categories are other examples of “TLC” activities, those that involve Thinking, Learning and Creativity. While Abington offers some of these already, others could be introduced or emphasized to a greater extent.

- arts and crafts
- mental and language arts
- camping, nature
- dance
- drama
- music
- service activities
- social recreation
- special events
- clubs, hobbies and collecting

The following are examples of specific program activities for consideration by local recreation programmers in addition to the Township. These activities also focus on non-sports recreation.

physical recreation

- frisbee golf
- field hockey
- volleyball
- exercise for seniors
- outdoor ice skating
- bocce for seniors
- sledding
- outdoor racquetball
- hiking
- horseshoes for seniors
- fitness program
- sand volleyball

hobbies, clubs, collecting,
special interest groups

- juggling
- miniature golf
- landscaping, gardening
- furniture refinishing
- auto mechanics
- woodworking
- toy making
- flower arranging
- dog obedience
- recipe swapping

the arts (music, dance,
drama, arts and crafts)

- music
- storytelling
- art appreciation
- quilting
- knitting, crocheting
- needlework
- ethnic art
- painting

service activities

- babysitting classes
- adopt-a-grandparent
- clean-up day at parks
- Arbor Day

social recreation

- hay rides
- garden walks
- picnicking

- | <u>nature, outing, camping,
interpretation</u> | <u>other events</u> |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nature study• fishing• birdwatching• animal tracking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• scavenger hunt• jump rope contest• talent show• puppet show• travel/tours• holiday activities |
| <u>mental and linguistic activities</u> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• bridge• chess• reading• discussion groups• lecture series• genealogy for seniors• nutrition | |

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFINING HOW THE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTERS ITS PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

1. Continue adequate budgeting for parks, recreation and open space.

Abington Township budgeted over \$3.1 million for parks, recreation, and open space operations in 2005, an amount that has grown by an average of 4.4% per year since 2001. In addition, the Board of Commissioners regularly allocates capital funds for recreation-related projects. These expenditures show that the Board of Commissioners is committed to maintaining a high quality of life in Abington. They also reflect the comprehensive park and recreation programming system the Township has developed and is continuing to develop. The Township should make every effort to sustain these funding levels in the future (and increase them appropriately) as residents' expectations and associated costs continue to grow. Beyond meeting just front line expenses, the Township's allocation for recreation should continue to include line items that encourage staff members to take advantage of training opportunities and participate in professional organizations.

2. Distribute the Bureau's Fall/Winter Recreation Guide by a general mailing.

The Abington Township Bureau of Parks and Recreation currently mails its Spring/Summer Recreation Guide to all Abington Township households. To circulate its Fall/Winter Recreation Guide, the Township distributes it through local schools and other channels. The Township should mail the Fall / Winter Guide just as it does with the Spring/Summer guide. This will heighten exposure to the Township's Fall / Winter program offerings and widen the pool of potential participants in the Abington's Fall/Winter recreation season.

3. Offer opportunities to register for Township-sponsored recreation programs on-line.

People who want to sign up for Abington Township recreation programs do not have the option of registering on-line. While program application forms can be downloaded, the forms must be mailed or dropped off after people fill them out. Abington is hardly alone in this regard. Nearly all municipalities in the region still handle registration this way. However, Plymouth Township, Montgomery County, began to offer on-line registration for selected programs in 2004. On-line registration promises to reduce paperwork and streamline the process. Once initial procedures are worked out, Abington Township should plan to begin e-registration as soon as possible.




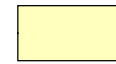


4. Increase mandatory dedication standards.

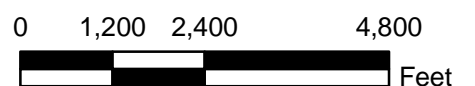
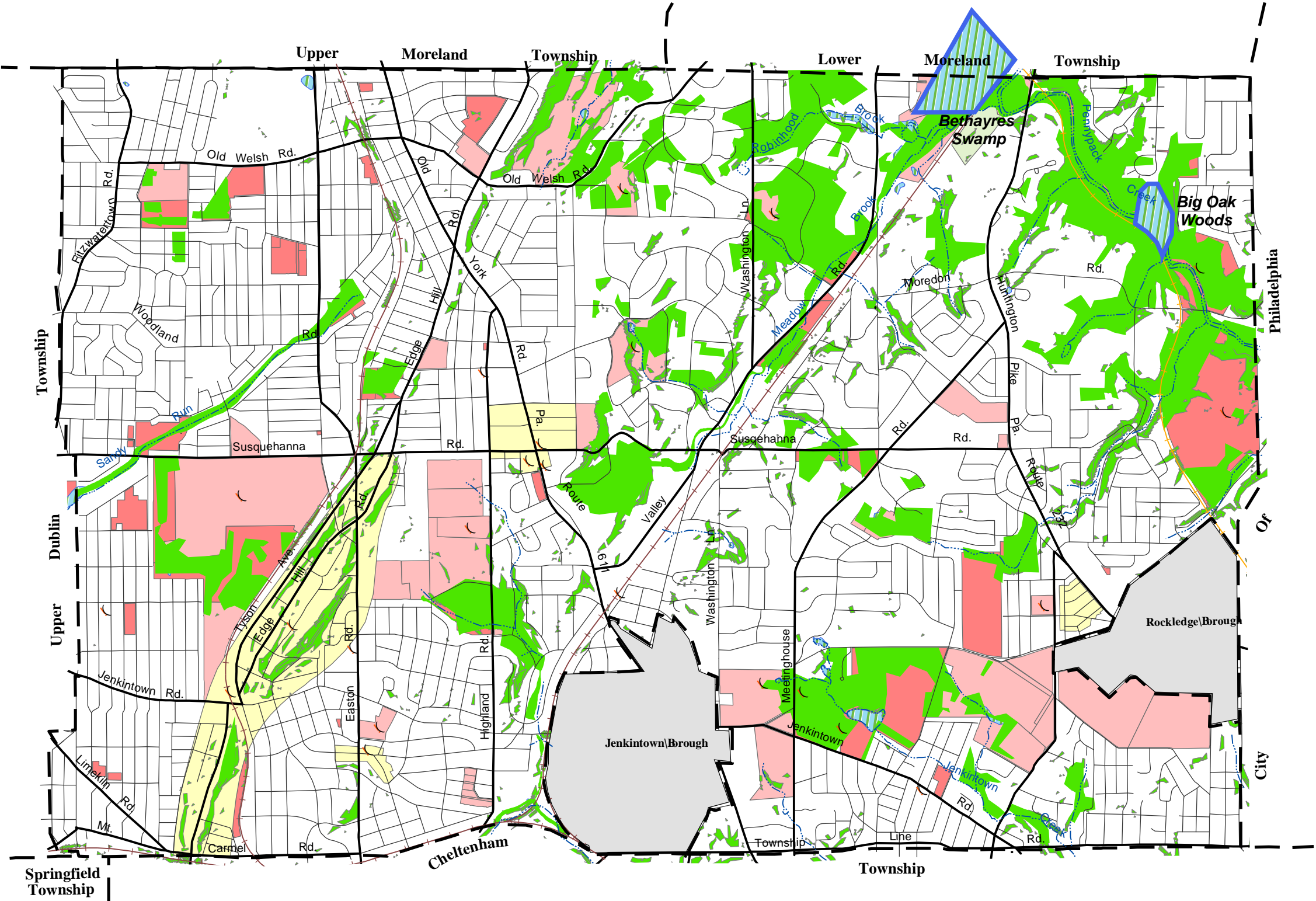
Under the Township's subdivision and land development regulations, applicants must dedicate 1,000 square feet per single-family unit proposed. Several Delaware Valley municipalities require more than this amount. Accordingly, Abington should increase its requirement to somewhere in the range of 1,300 to 1,500 square feet per unit. Abington should apply this same standard to other types of residential units instead of the requirement now used. The Township should also consider establishing mandatory dedication regulation that apply to non-residential uses above a designated size. Lastly Abington should ensure that its fee in lieu of dedicating land is up to date. The fee is supposed to reflect the value of the land for which it is being substituted.

Abington Township Open Space Plan

Montgomery County

Areas Affected By Recommendations

-  Streams, 100-Year Floodplains, Steep Slopes (15% and greater), and Woodlands
-  Wetlands & Outstanding Natural Resource Areas
-  Historic Sites
-  Historic Areas
-  Permanently Protected Lands
-  Temporarily Protected Lands



SOURCE: PASDA Site and Urban Research and Development Corporation.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following table summarizes each recommendation described in detail elsewhere in this plan. Suggested phasing and who should be primarily responsible for overseeing the implementation of each recommendation are suggested. Potential partners and funding sources are listed as appropriate.

**TABLE 24
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan**

RECOMMENDATION	SHORT RANGE (Years 1-3)	LONGER RANGE (Year 4 & Beyond)	RESPONSIBILITIES/ PARTNERS
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVING MORE OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES			
1. Assemble a short list of high priority sites for potential open space acquisition. (p. 71)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners
2. Contact major institutions with substantial acreage to determine their potential interest in open space conservation. (p. 72)		X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners
3. Acquire more property as needed to help reduce future flood damage. (p. 72)	X	X	Township Commissioners
4. Strengthen the Township's steep slope protection regulations. (p. 73)	X		Township Planning Commission
5. Establish streamside buffer regulations. (p. 73)	X		Township Planning Commission
6. Revise the Township's woodland protection regulations. (p. 74)	X		Township Planning Commission
7. Mandate buffers around wetlands. (p. 74)	X		Township Planning Commission
8. Establish an historic overlay zoning district. (p. 74)	X		Township Planning Commission Township Historic Preservation Committee
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE TOWNSHIP'S PARKS SYSTEM			
1. Prepare a park master plan for the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary site. (p. 76)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners
2. Finish surveying park boundaries to help prevent encroachment. (p. 76)	X	X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation
3. Periodically pursue acquisition of the Ardsley Community Center. (p. 77)		X	Township Commissioners
4. Ensure all Township parks and open spaces have adequate signs. (p. 77)		X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation

Abington Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

RECOMMENDATION	SHORT RANGE (Years 1-3)	LONGER RANGE (Year 4 & Beyond)	RESPONSIBILITIES/ PARTNERS
5. Dedicate part of the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary property for Briar Bush Nature Center. (p. 78)		X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners
6. Construct shade structures at the Township's summer camp locations and other parks. (p. 78)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation
7. Continue investigating the feasibility of replacing wading pools with splash structures. (p. 78)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING NEW TRAIL LINKS			
1. Finalize and implement the Crestmont Trail. (p. 79)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners, Township Planning Commission
2. Work with residents to plan and construct the Fairway Trail and the Fox Chase Trail extension. (p. 79)		X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners, Township Planning Commission
3. Continue to build trails within selected Township Parks. (p. 79)		X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners, Township Planning Commission
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE TOWNSHIP'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE			
1. Extend the Township's 10-year revitalization program that ended in 2005. (p. 80)	X		Township Commissioners, Township Economic Development Board
2. Improve Tyson Green to create a small pocket park. (p. 80)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners, Township Economic Development Board
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING NEW RECREATION PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES			
1. Establish a Township-sponsored tour of historic buildings in Abington. (p. 81)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners, Township Historic Preservation Committee
2. Expand environmental education using the lake at Alverthorpe Park and its surrounding area. (p. 81)	X	X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners, Briar Bush Nature Center
3. Offer more non-sports activities that emphasize thinking, learning and creativity. (p. 82)		X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFINING HOW THE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTERS ITS PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM			
1. Continue adequate budgeting for parks, recreation and open space. (p. 83)	X	X	Bureau of Parks & Recreation, Township Commissioners

RECOMMENDATION	SHORT RANGE (Years 1-3)	LONGER RANGE (Year 4 & Beyond)	RESPONSIBILITIES/ PARTNERS
2. Distribute the Bureau's Fall/Winter Recreation Guide by a general mailing. (p. 83)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation
3. Offer opportunities to register for Township-sponsored recreation programs on-line. (p. 84)	X		Bureau of Parks & Recreation
4. Increase mandatory dedication standards. (p. 84)	X		Township Commissioners, Township Planning Commission

IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES AND FUNDING SOURCES

There are a variety of effective techniques for preserving land and defraying the costs of park and open space preservation activities. In the following section, these suggestions are grouped into three main categories:

- Ways to Preserve Open Space
- Local Funding Sources
- State Grants for Parks, Recreation, Greenways and Open Space Conservation

Ways to Preserve Open Space

1. *Fee Simple Acquisition* - The most direct means of obtaining land for parks or greenways is through fee simple purchase. The main advantage of this procedure is that an entire parcel of land belongs to the municipality or other entity purchasing the land. In many situations, fee simple acquisition is the most appropriate manner by which to preserve land. However, the expense of fee simple purchase can sometimes exceed available funding sources. Abington has used fee simple acquisition to set aside open space and will continue doing so in the future.
2. *Condemnation* - Acquisition can occur by exercising the right of eminent domain where the public purpose is well defined, where fee simple acquisition is desired but not possible at a fair price and where the owner is reluctant to sell. It is prudent to view condemnation as a last resort when acquiring land for parks and/or greenways. No condemnation is planned or proposed in Abington Township.
3. *Purchase and Lease-Back or Resale* - In certain cases, it is appropriate for a municipality to purchase land in fee simple, place restrictions on the deed prohibiting certain uses (e.g.,

residential development) and lease it back to interested parties. One advantage of this method is that the municipality can purchase land for future use (before the price increases, perhaps prohibitively so) and, through leasing, recoup some or all of the purchase price. In this way, land is maintained as open space and can be developed as a park when future demand warrants. Resale of some or all of the land (after placement of deed restrictions) would maintain open space while also relieving the municipality of maintenance obligations and returning the land to the tax rolls. This is a technique Abington has not used to date.

4. *Conservation Easements* - Conservation easements are used to preserve land at a relatively low cost without acquiring it. With a conservation easement, the land remains privately-owned. The easement involves the property owner voluntarily agreeing to donate or sell the right to develop his or her land. The property owner agrees to place a restriction in the deed of the property, which then becomes binding on all future owners of the land. The easement can be written in many different ways to restrict or not restrict certain types of activities. Most conservation easements prohibit the construction of new buildings and cutting down woods. Often, the granting of a conservation easement can result in federal income tax and local property tax advantages to the property owner. This technique has not been used in Abington.

5. *Pedestrian Easements* - A conservation easement can also be combined with a “pedestrian easement” to allow the public the right to walk, hike and ride bicycles along a specific area, provided users follow pre-established rules. These easements can be particularly useful in connecting two or more greenway segments. Pedestrian easements may also be useful in establishing the Township’s trail system.

6. *Mandatory Dedication* - The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended) enables municipalities to require that residential developers dedicate land, or fees in lieu of land, for public recreation. Municipalities must have an adopted recreation plan and an adopted ordinance relating to mandatory dedication before land or fees can be accepted. The amount of land required must be related to the demand for recreation land typically created by new development. The required fee should reflect the fair market value of the amount of land for which the fee is being substituted. Abington has mandatory dedication regulations in place concerning both recreation land and fees.

7. *Donations* - Land sometimes is acquired through donations from private owners, organizations and corporations. Local governments should encourage land donations by pointing out benefits of such actions such as public relations values and federal income tax benefits. Prior to accepting a donation, a municipality should consider two things: first, it should analyze the location of the parcel and the anticipated development and maintenance costs. If the location is poor and/or projected costs will be excessive, the municipality should strongly consider accepting a fee rather than the land. Second, if the land is found to be suitable, the municipality should encourage the donor to provide an endowment fund along with the land to assist with

development and/or maintenance costs. Abington acquired open space through donation in the past.

Local Funding Sources

1. *General Revenue Funds* - Abington will continue to use general revenue funds for parks and open space preservation purposes.
2. *User Fees* - User fees are revenues collected directly from the people who use a program or facility. Certain offerings, such as an adult fitness program, can be run in a business-like fashion for greater efficiency and a fair distribution of costs. Care is needed to make sure that lower income families are not excluded because they cannot afford high fees. User fees should not be charged if it would be too costly or administratively burdensome to collect. Abington counts on user fees as a revenue source.
3. *Bond Issues* - Bond funds are monies borrowed to implement a pre-approved list of capital improvements. Bonds can either be general obligation bonds, which are paid back from general revenues, or they can be revenue bonds, which are retired from revenues generated by specific improvements. A bond issue can be appropriate to fund projects with a long life expectancy. Payments are spread over the many years during which project benefits will be enjoyed. The total cost of a project funded through a bond is higher, however, because of interest charges. The key is to time a bond issue when interest rates are lowest. Abington makes use of bond funding.
4. *Special Fundraisers* - Fundraisers are special purpose campaigns designed to solicit money from local households and businesses. Contributions are collected in tandem with a publicity campaign that focuses on the need and the public benefit associated with a particular improvement such as a new community park. Walk-a-thons, bake sales and other special events can be used to generate interest. Appeals to civic duty and the chance for businesses to get good publicity should also be emphasized. This technique has been applied in Abington Township.
5. *Fees In Lieu of Dedication* - The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended) enables municipalities to require that residential developers dedicate land, or fees in lieu of land, for public recreation. Municipalities must have an adopted recreation plan and an adopted ordinance relating to mandatory dedication before land or fees can be accepted. The amount of land required must be related to the demand for recreation land typically created by new development. The required fee should reflect the fair market value of the amount of land for which the fee is being substituted. Abington has mandatory dedication regulations in place concerning both recreation land and fees.

State and County Grants for Parks, Recreation, Greenways and Open Space Conservation

1. *Community Conservation Partnership Grant Program* - This program is the primary source of State aid for parks, recreation and open space initiatives in Pennsylvania. Applications are accepted once per year for 50/50 matching grants through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). It is a highly competitive program and total funds available are subject to year-to-year changes in the State's budgetary outlook. Major funding categories are as follows:

Planning and Technical Assistance

- **Planning Projects**
 - Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plans
 - Conservation Plans
 - County Natural Area Inventories
 - Feasibility Studies
 - Greenways and Trails Plans
 - Rails-to-Trails Plans
 - Master Site Plans
 - Rivers Conservation Plans
- **Technical Assistance Projects**
 - Education and Training
 - Circuit Rider
 - Peer-to-Peer

Acquisition Projects

- Park and Recreation Areas
- Greenways, Trails and Rivers Conservation
- Rails-to-Trails
- Natural and Critical Habitat Areas

Development Projects

- Park and Recreation Areas
- Greenways and Trails
- Rails-to-Trails
- Rivers Conservation

Federally Funded Projects

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Projects
- Pennsylvania Recreational Trails

2. *Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Enhancement Projects* - The Federal Inter-Modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) allocated approximately \$4.7 million per year for six years to Pennsylvania for use in Enhancement Projects. Enhancement Projects involve transportation-related activities outside of the traditional highway construction and mass transit projects. In 1998, Congress extended this program for another six years and substantially

increased the total funding available by enacting the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

The program is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) under a cooperative agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. Construction phases are eligible for 100% grant funding. 80% funding is offered for planning, design and acquisition. There are twelve funding categories for projects that “enhance the transportation experience”:

- Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
 - Safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists
 - Acquisition of scenic easements of historic sites related to transportation
 - Scenic or historic programs, including tourist and welcome center facilities
 - Landscaping or other scenic beautification
 - Historic preservation
 - Rehabilitation or operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals)
 - Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails)
 - Control and removal of outdoor advertising
 - Archaeological planning and research
 - Mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff or reduction of vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
 - Enhancement of transportation museums
3. *Pennsylvania Legislative Initiative Program* - This program provides wide discretion to many State legislators to award limited amounts of State funds for worthy projects in their home district. However, because the money can be used for such a wide variety of community-oriented uses, it cannot be counted upon as a regular source for park, recreation and open space funds. There are no specific guidelines regarding what types of projects can be funded, who may apply or the maximum amount that can be provided. The application process varies from district to district. State legislators can seek the grants annually. Traditionally, the best time to submit a request has been between January and June when the annual Pennsylvania State budget is being formulated.
4. *Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to Schools Program* - This PennDOT program offers funding for streetscape improvements (such as sidewalks, benches, street lights), for pedestrian improvements (such as crosswalks and other pedestrian crossings), for traffic calming measures and for bicycle trails and bicycle lanes. This program is primarily aimed towards improving roads that serve as main streets for older communities and villages. Requires a 20 percent match from other sources (such as local funds or other grants).
5. *Montgomery County Green Fields / Green Towns Program* - Montgomery County’s most recent bond issues for open space preservation (approved in 2003) will fund grants for a variety of

relevant activities, provided the municipality has updated its open space plan in accordance with the guidelines established by the County and administered by the Montgomery County Open Space Board:

Municipalities may apply for funding under the following municipal open space grant options subject to their eligibility: Acquisition Grants; Green Infrastructure Grants; Heritage Resources Conservation Grants; Trail and Pathway Grants; Farmland Preservation Grants; Flood Plain Restoration Grants; and Schuylkill River Greenway Grants. The Montgomery County Open Space Board will review each grant application. It is incumbent on the municipality to fully comply with all of the grant application requirements established by the Open Space Board. The Montgomery County Commissioners will make the final approval of grants. Payment for grants that involve acquisition of land or easements will occur at the settlement for the property once all of the conditions of grant approval have been fulfilled. Most other funds will be distributed after the successful completion of the work approved in other types of open space grants. Progress payments may be made in certain circumstances.

Under the Green Fields / Green Towns Program, Abington is eligible for \$2,955,549. Montgomery County will fund grants up to 80% of eligible project costs with Abington providing the remaining 20%. Abington can provide its share from municipal funds, state grants, private donations or any combination of these and other sources.