

OPEN SPACE PLAN



**AMBLER
BOROUGH**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

— 2006 —

AMBLER BOROUGH OFFICIALS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

BOROUGH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Anita O'Hara Pieri, President
George Pasceri, Vice-President
Richard Taylor
Anthony Isabella
Paul Dooley
John Pugliese
Louis D. Orehek
Tom Kenney
Judy Baigis
Charles Wahl

MAYOR

Charles Wahl

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Karen Kieser, Chairperson
Mary Aversa
George Benigno
Marita Bondi
Homer Elliott
Steven Ware

BOROUGH MANAGER

Rocco Wack



SEAL, BOROUGH OF AMBLER

The Borough's seal is comprised of elements of historic significance to the development of Ambler. These include (clockwise, from top) Lindenwold, the estate of Dr. Richard Mattison of the Keasbey & Mattison Company; a mill; the Keasbey & Mattison Company Boiler Plant; and the Railroad.

Cover Photograph: Rose Valley Creek, Borough Park

Inset: Knight Park

AMBLER BOROUGH

OPEN SPACE PLAN

2006

This report was partially funded by
The Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program

Montgomery County Planning Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	COMMUNITY PROFILE
1	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
3	REGIONAL SETTING
3	EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS
3	Residential
3	Commercial/Office
3	Industrial
3	Institutional
6	Parks/Recreation
6	Utilities
6	Undeveloped Land
7	Conclusion
7	COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS
7	Population Trends
7	Population Classification
8	Age
9	Income
9	Special Needs Groups
10	Education
10	Household Types
11	Housing Types
12	Employment and Labor
12	Occupations
12	Employment Forecast
12	Major Employers in Municipality
13	STATUS OF RELEVANT PLANS
13	Comprehensive Plan, Ambler Borough
14	Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan– Ambler Borough
14	Ambler Valley Green Legacy Study
14	Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey of Ambler Borough
14	Tannery Run Preliminary Stormwater Assessment

CHAPTER 2	GOALS & OBJECTIVES
17	THE 1994 OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PLAN
18	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2005 OPEN SPACE PLAN
18	Preserve Sensitive Natural Features and Reduce Flooding
18	Improve Public Access to Existing Parks and Open Space
19	Aesthetic Improvements
19	Preserve and Enhance Historic Resources
20	Create or Improve Recreational Facilities
CHAPTER 3	EXISTING PROTECTED LAND
21	PERMANENTLY PROTECTED LAND
21	Municipal Open Space
25	TEMPORARILY PROTECTED LAND
25	Private
25	Institutional
25	Other
25	Conclusion
CHAPTER 4	INVENTORY OF POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE RESOURCES
27	GEOLOGY
28	TOPOGRAPHY
28	Steep Slopes
29	SOILS
29	Hydric Soils
29	Alluvial Soils
30	SURFACE WATERS AND HYDROLOGY
30	Watersheds and Stream Corridors
31	Floodplains
31	Wetlands
31	VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE
31	Woodlands
32	SCENIC ROADS AND VISTAS
34	HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
34	Sites Eligible for the National Register
36	Selected Historic Resources
38	Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey of Ambler Borough
CHAPTER 5	POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE LINKAGES
39	BOROUGH PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES
39	Borough Loop Trail
42	Rose Valley Creek Trail
42	Borough Park—Ricciardi Park Linkage
42	South Maple Avenue—Church Street Linkage
43	LINKAGES TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES
43	Connection to Green Ribbon/Wissahickon County Trail
43	County Trail System
43	Butler Avenue Link
43	Mt. Pleasant Avenue Link
43	Connections to Upper Dublin Parks and Loch Alsh Reservoir
45	Connections to Lower Gwynedd and Pen Ambler Park
45	Connections to Whitpain
CHAPTER 6	ANALYSIS OF UNPROTECTED RESOURCES
47	HISTORIC RESOURCES
48	SCENIC RESOURCES
48	PRIORITIZATION OF AREAS FOR PRESERVATION
48	Highest Priority Areas
48	High Priority Areas
48	Priority Areas

CHAPTER 7	EVALUATION OF GROWTH AREAS
51	POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS
52	AMBLER'S FUTURE GROWTH AREAS
53	VULNERABLE AREAS
53	RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT POTENTIAL
CHAPTER 8	EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS
55	RECREATION STANDARDS
55	THE SELECTION OF A STANDARD
56	PARK TYPES
58	EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES
60	Passive Open Space
60	RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
CHAPTER 9	EVALUATION OF COUNTY AND ABUTTING MUNICIPAL PLANS
61	COMPARISON TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY LAND USE PLAN AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
62	Land Use
62	Open Space, Natural Features, and Cultural Resources
62	Transportation
62	Community Facilities and Utilities
63	Economic Development
63	Housing
63	RELATION TO PLANS OF ABUTTING MUNICIPALITIES
63	Upper Dublin
64	Lower Gwynedd
64	Whitpain
CHAPTER 10	ACQUISITION EVALUATION
65	EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS
65	NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION
66	RECREATION AREAS
66	HISTORIC RESOURCES
66	ACQUISITION METHODS
66	Fee Simple Acquisition
68	Easements
68	Installment Buying
68	Long Term Lease with Option to Buy
68	Mandatory Dedication
68	Purchase and Lease-Back
68	Purchase and Resale
68	Leasing
69	Eminent Domain
69	Land Trusts and Conservancies
69	Land Exchanges
69	Voluntary Agreements
69	Purchase of Development Rights
69	Right of First Refusal and Purchase Option
69	Life or Term Estates
70	Donations and Bargain Sales

CHAPTER 11 OPTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS

71 **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**
 71 Park and Open Space Creation
 71 Gateways
 72 SAAC Property
 72 Community Gardens
 73 Park and Open Space Enhancement
 73 Borough Park
 73 Knight Park
 73 Tree Planting
 73 Environmental Enhancement
 73 Stream Dechannelization
 73 Floodplain Restoration
 74 **HERITAGE RESOURCE CONSERVATION**
 74 Historic Resource Protection Goals
 74 **MUNICIPAL TRAIL AND PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT**
 74 Borough Loop Trail
 75 Trail Connections to Neighboring Municipalities

CHAPTER 12 RECOMMENDATIONS: NON-ACQUISITION PROTECTION METHODS

77 **INCENTIVE ZONING**
 77 **NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION ORDINANCES**
 77 Floodplains
 78 Stream Corridors
 78 Wetlands
 78 Ground Water
 78 Steep Slopes
 79 Woodlands
 79 Donations of Properties for Permanent Open Space
 79 Historic Preservation Ordinances

CHAPTER 13 IMPLEMENTATION

81 **BACKGROUND**
 86 **FUNDING SOURCES**
 86 Montgomery County Open Space Grants
 86 Montgomery County Community Revitalization Program
 86 Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
 86 Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
 87 Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund
 87 Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
 87 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
 87 Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
 87 Safe Routes to School
 87 Hometown Streets
 88 Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
 88 Transportation and Community Development Initiative
 88 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
 88 Transportation Enhancement Program (TE)
 88 National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
 88 PECO Energy Green Region Open Space Grant Program
 89 Delaware Estuary Grants Program
 89 Watershed Action Grants
 89 Watershed Resources Education Network
 89 General Revenue Funds and Bond Issue
 89 Donations

CHAPTER 13 IMPLEMENTATION (CONTINUED)

90	SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA LAND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS
90	Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust
90	Brandywine Conservancy
90	Conservancy of Montgomery County
90	Heritage Conservancy
91	Lower Merion Conservancy
91	Montgomery County Lands Trust
91	Natural Lands Trust
91	North American Land Trust
91	Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy
91	Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

- 4 Figure 1.1 Regional Setting
- 5 Figure 1.2 Existing Land Use Map
- 6 Figure 1.3 Existing Land Use Comparison Table (1994-2004)
& Existing Land Use Chart
- 7 Figure 1.4 Population Classification
- 8 Figure 1.5 Age Profile
- 9 Figure 1.6 Income Levels
- 9 Figure 1.7 Special Needs Groups
- 10 Figure 1.8 Education Level
- 10 Figure 1.9 Household Types
- 11 Figure 1.10 Housing Types
- 12 Figure 1.11 Labor Force by Occupation
- 13 Figure 1.12 Employment (Past and Forecast)
- 13 Figure 1.13 Major Employers

CHAPTER 3 EXISTING PROTECTED LAND

- 22 Figure 3.1 Existing Parks & Open Space
- 23 Figure 3.2 Permanently Protected Land in Borough
- 24 Figure 3.3 Plan for Pen Ambler Park

CHAPTER 4 INVENTORY OF POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE RESOURCES

- 28 Figure 4.1 Steep Slopes, Wooded Areas
- 29 Figure 4.2 Hydric & Alluvial Soils
- 30 Figure 4.3 Sub-Watersheds of the Wissahickon Creek
- 31 Figure 4.4 Wetlands
- 33 Figure 4.5 Scenic Views & Roads
- 35 Figure 4.6 Historic Resources
- 37 Figure 4.7 Historic Map of Ambler, 1877

CHAPTER 5	POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE LINKAGES
40	Figure 5.1 Trail Map
41	Figure 5.2 Sidewalk Network Gaps
44	Figure 5.3 Proposed County Trail Network
CHAPTER 6	ANALYSIS OF UNPROTECTED RESOURCES
49	Figure 6.1 Vulnerable Natural Resources
CHAPTER 7	EVALUATION OF GROWTH AREAS
52	Figure 7.1 Population Projections
52	Figure 7.2 Employment Projections
53	Figure 7.3 2025 Housing Unit Demand
54	Figure 7.4 Potential Growth and Revitalization Areas
CHAPTER 8	EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS
56	Figure 8.1 Minimum Open Space Needs
57	Figure 8.2 Open Space Service Areas
58	Figure 8.3 Open Space Area Inventory
59	Figure 8.4 Recreation Facility Needs
CHAPTER 10	RECOMMENDATIONS: ACQUISITION
67	Figure 10.1 Acquisition Recommendations
CHAPTER 11	OPTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS
74	Figure 11.1 Parcels Affected by Recent Flooding
CHAPTER 12	NONACQUISITION RECOMMENDATIONS
80	Figure 12.1 Nonacquisition Recommendations
CHAPTER 13	IMPLEMENTATION
82	Figure 13.1 Implementation Advisory Groups
83-85	Figure 13.2 Implementation Tables

CHAPTER 1

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Community Profile Chapter of the Ambler Borough Open Space Plan is designed to provide residents, planners and officials the necessary background information to make well-informed decisions regarding the future preservation of natural and cultural resources within their community. It consists of three parts: 1) the Community Context section, which examines the community's historical background and regional setting, 2) the Existing Land Use Analysis, which details the use of each property in the Borough, and 3) the Community Demographic Analysis, a study of the demographic trends in Ambler Borough.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Adapted from "Montgomery County: the Second Two Hundred Years," 1983, and "Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey of Ambler Borough", 1999.

Ambler Borough, an area rich in historical significance, has contributed greatly to the growth of Montgomery County and the Philadelphia region. In 1716 the Harmer Brothers (William & George) purchased a 408-acre tract from William Penn that included land that now comprises Ambler Borough, with the exception of one acre at Rose Valley and structures along Church and Main Streets that were annexed from Upper Dublin in 1943.

The first road built in Ambler was confirmed in the court in 1730; it is now known as Mt. Pleasant Avenue. It connected Harmer's Mill with the North Wales Road (now Bethlehem Pike). Present-day Butler Avenue

was originally confirmed in the court in 1739. It derived its name because it led to Butler's Mill in Chalfont, Bucks County.

Ambler was originally known as the village of Wissahickon. The village's original inhabitants were primarily of English and Welsh descent. Wissahickon village developed around Butler Avenue and Bethlehem Pike, at what was known as "Gilkey's Corner".

Some time before 1778, Andrew Gilkinson opened an inn at the intersection serving farmers shipping their goods to Philadelphia via Bethlehem Pike. A tannery was also located at the intersection. The creek which passes near the site of the former tannery became known as "Tannery Run" (and nicknamed "Honey Run" because of the pungent odors from the leather works).

Originally milling was the principal industry in the Borough. At its peak there were nine mills in or near the Borough, including the following within the Borough itself:

- The fulling mill, Main Street and Tennis Avenue
- The clover mill, later a sawmill, Butler Avenue and Spring Garden Street
- Reiff Mill, now at 302 Butler Avenue
- Thomson Mill, on Mt. Pleasant Avenue west of the railroad.

In 1855 the North Pennsylvania Railroad was completed to Gwynedd and the railroad became the new focal point of the village. The railroad station was increasingly used by farmers to ship their agricultural products.

In 1856 a catastrophic railroad accident occurred between the Camp Hill and Wissahickon (Ambler) stations. Sixty people were killed instantly and others died later of injuries sustained in the accident. Mary Johnson Ambler, a resident of Wissahickon, was one of the first to respond to the accident. She cared for the injured and directed the removal of the dead. She made her home, still located on Main Street and Reiff's Mill Road, into a temporary hospital. Railroad officials renamed the Wissahickon station "Ambler" in her honor in 1869. The Borough of Ambler was incorporated on June 16, 1888.

The first housing development in Ambler was planned by Jonathan Lukens on Main Street

northwest of Butler Avenue around 1868. The development was located there because of its proximity to the railroad. Lukens laid out cross streets for the development (Walnut, Race, and Forest) and also a street parallel to Main (Spring Garden Street).

In 1881 Henry Keasbey and Richard Mattison moved their pharmaceutical business to Ambler. The Keasbey & Mattison Company became a dominant force in the Borough's development and the largest manufacturer of asbestos in the world.

The Keasbey & Mattison Company affected many changes in the Borough. The company built four hundred homes to house its workers, many of which survive today and are among the most historic and attractive in the Borough. Many of the Borough's roads were constructed at this time, and Dr. Mattison had electric street lights and a water system installed. Dr. Mattison also built offices and shops; and built the Borough's first library, and first opera house (1890).

The Italian-American population of the Borough increased greatly during the 1900s when Dr. Mattison imported stone masons from Italy for home and church construction. Italians had earlier been drawn to the Borough to help construct railroad and trolley tracks. The Keasbey & Mattison Company brought African-Americans to Ambler from West Virginia to work in the less desirable "wet" section of the asbestos plant. They settled primarily in south and west Ambler.

Keasbey withdrew from the partnership in 1927. In 1931, during the Great Depression, Dr. Mattison was forced to sell the company due to financial difficulties. The industrial facility passed into the hands of various owners, but the manufacture of asbestos products continued until 1981. By that time a greater understanding of the public health risks of asbestos had developed. The 25-acre asbestos waste piles that had accumulated over the years of asbestos manufacturing were declared superfund sites. In 1993 the EPA completed a cleanup of the site and in 1996 it was removed from the Superfund list.

Ambler's commercial district, like so many other Boroughs and towns around the nation, had begun to decline by the 1980s. However, Ambler has confronted this challenge, and has under-

taken revitalization programs focusing on its main street area (Butler Avenue). Revitalization has made the streetscape more attractive, added parking facilities, restored the Ambler Theater, and generally improved the economic health and image of the central business district. The Borough has also adopted plans to revitalize the former industrial areas along the rail corridor, and has preserved and expanded Borough parks. Ambler has always had the character and attractiveness of a small town. Its history, people, and plans ensure it will remain so into the future.

REGIONAL SETTING

Ambler Borough is a .89 square mile community located in eastern Montgomery County, surrounded by the Townships of Upper Dublin, Whippany, and Lower Gwynedd, as indicated in Figure 1.1. Its regional location places it close to Philadelphia and several major employment centers in Montgomery County, such as Fort Washington, Willow Grove, Plymouth Meeting, and King of Prussia.

Convenient access to these and other areas is made possible by several major roads, including Butler Pike, which extends northeast to Horsham Township and southwest to Conshohocken and Plymouth Meeting. Bethlehem Pike and PA309 provide access to Montgomeryville and Bucks County to the north. Bethlehem Pike accesses Fort Washington State Park and Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill neighborhood to the south; PA309 connects to the section of Philadelphia south of Cheltenham. Public transit service is available via SEPTA's 94 bus (Chestnut Hill to Montgomery Mall), 98 bus (Willow Grove to Norristown), and R-5 Regional Rail (providing service to stops including Philadelphia, Jenkintown, and Lansdale).

Major natural features in the Borough include the Tannery Run, which extends the length of Butler Avenue; Rose Valley Creek, located east of Tennis Avenue; and Stuart Farm Creek in the extreme southern tip of the Borough. All three flow into the Wissahickon Creek just southwest of Ambler in Upper Dublin. Major Borough parks or preserved land include Borough Park (along the Rose Valley Creek), Ricciardi Park, Pickering Field, and Knight Park. There is a significant concentration of woodlands on privately-owned land along the Rose Creek.

Significant natural features proximate to the Borough include the Wissahickon Creek and surrounding woodlands, Loch Alsh Reservoir (Upper Dublin), Pen Ambler Park (located in Lower Gwynedd but owned jointly by Ambler and Lower Gwynedd), and Fort Washington State Park (Whitemarsh).

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

The Existing Land Use Analysis is the second part of the Community Profile Chapter for the Ambler Borough Open Space Preservation Plan. This analysis focuses on the current land uses within the municipality, enabling a more in-depth focus of municipal land use patterns. In addition to the Existing Land Use Map (Figure 1.2), Figure 1.3 details the acreage of each category and the percent change from 1994 to 2005. The assigned land use categories are derived from board of assessment parcel data. These numbers are useful in understanding changes in land use patterns and help to identify potential open space and/or recreational needs.

RESIDENTIAL

The Borough of Ambler has traditionally contained a mixture of numerous land use categories. However, residential land uses are by far the largest category, as shown in Figure 1.3. This figure shows that more than half of Ambler's land is used for residential purposes.

COMMERCIAL/OFFICE

Commercial and office uses comprise approximately 8 percent of the Borough. Most of these uses are centered on Butler Avenue or Main Street.

INDUSTRIAL

Approximately five percent of Ambler's land is currently or most recently used for industrial purposes. This includes land utilized for construction businesses, auto-service uses, and manufacturing (including plastics and gaskets). It also includes land formerly used for manufacture of asbestos-related products.

INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional uses comprise seven percent of the Borough. Such uses include government facilities (e.g., Borough hall, post office, fire station, library, Borough

Figure 1.1
Regional Setting

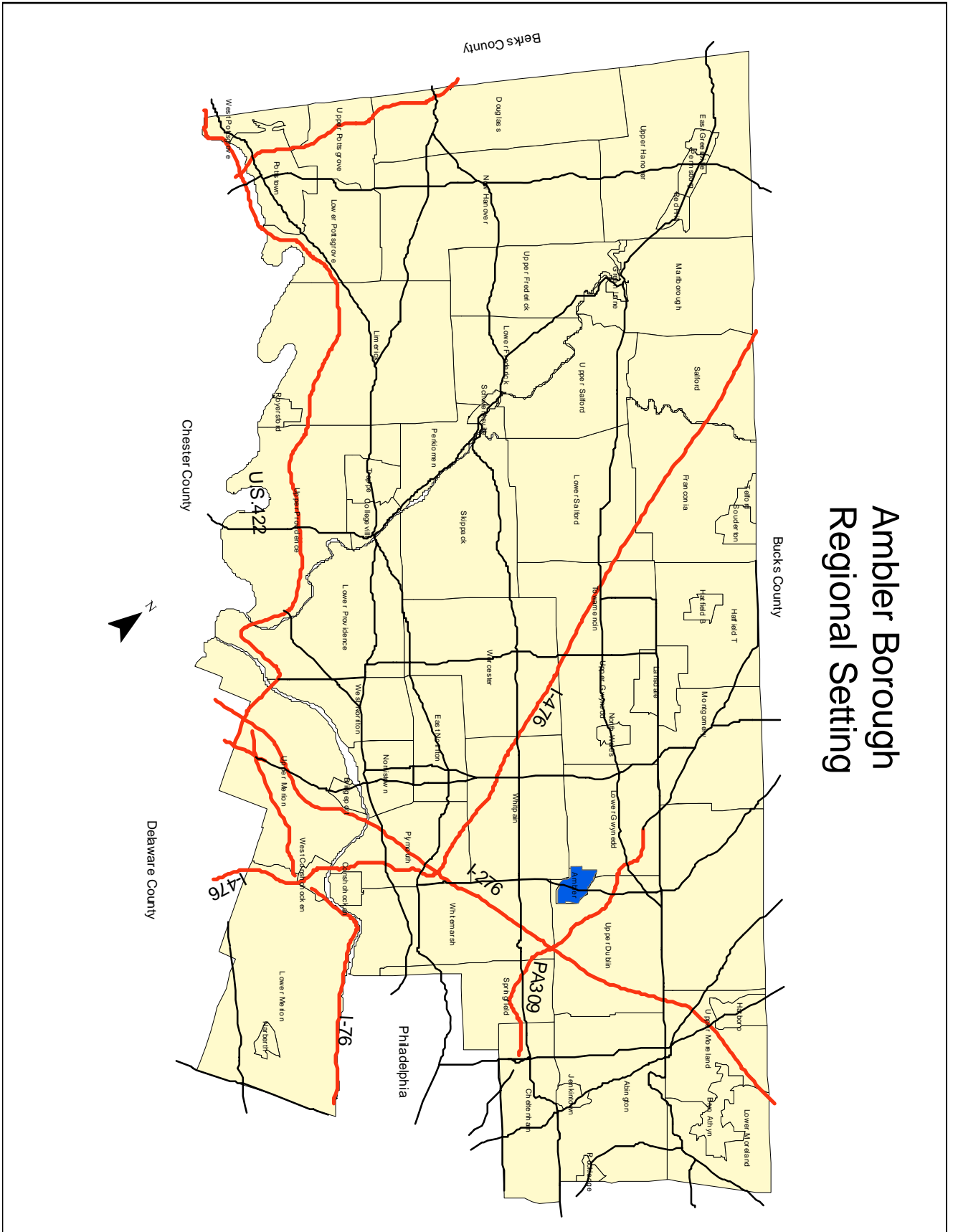
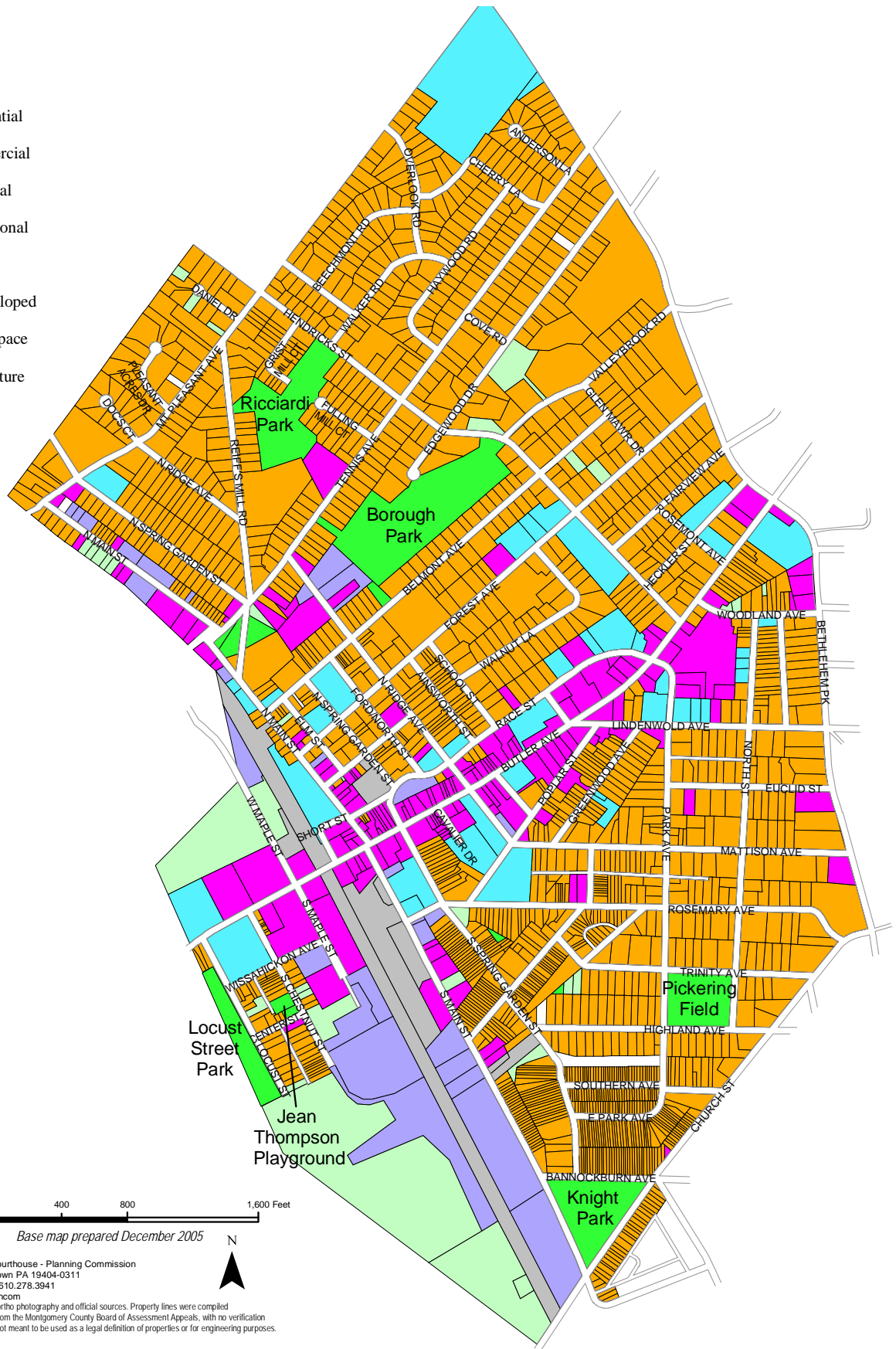


Figure 1.2
Existing Land Use Map

Legend

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Utilities
- Undeveloped
- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water



MCPC

Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom

This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

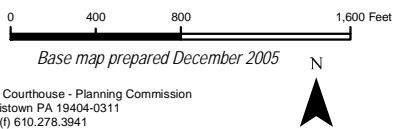
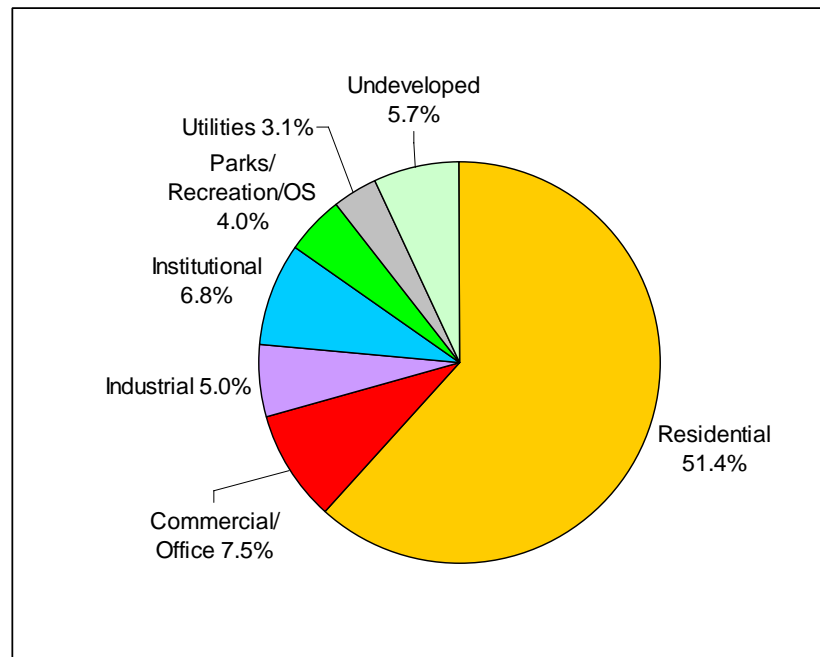


Figure 1.3
Existing Land Use Table

Land Use	1994		2005		% Change
	Acres	% Total	Acres*	% Total	1994-2005
Residential	273	59.5%	280	51.4%	2.6%
Commercial/Office	36	7.8%	41	7.5%	13.9%
Industrial	30	6.5%	27	5.0%	-8.9%
Institutional	61	13.3%	37	6.8%	-39.3%
Parks/Recreation/OS	N/A	N/A	22	4.0%	N/A
Utilities	8	1.7%	17	3.1%	109.0%
Agriculture	N/A	0.0%	0	0.0%	N/A
Water	N/A	0.0%	0	0.0%	N/A
TOTAL DEVELOPED	408	88.9%	514	94.3%	26.0%
Undeveloped	51	11.1%	31	5.7%	-39.1%
Total Acreage*	459	100%	545	100%	18.7%

Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission Land Use Maps

*Discrepancies due to digitization of parcel information



maintenance facility), schools, assisted living facilities and religious institutions.

PARKS/RECREATION

Approximately four percent of the Borough consists of parks and recreational activity areas. This category includes community parks and public open space, sports fields, and playgrounds.

UTILITIES

Utilities make up about three percent of the Borough’s land area. This category includes the rail corridor and SEPTA parking lot, as well as land owned by power companies.

UNDEVELOPED LAND

Approximately six percent of Ambler’s land is undeveloped. Most of this area is located on or near the asbestos

waste mounds. These sites lie at the end of Locust Street and along West Maple Street, and border Upper Dublin and Whitpain.

CONCLUSION

Since the last Open Space plan for the Borough was completed in 1994, Ambler has not changed much from a land use perspective. One of the most significant changes was the increase in developed land, from 89 to 94 percent. Significant changes also occurred in specific land use categories, including utilities, institutional, and commercial/office land use categories. This is mainly due to reclassification of such parcels. The amount of land in parks and recreation use was not tabulated in 1994; this category now makes up four percent of the Borough’s land.

COMMUNITY
DEMOGRAPHIC
ANALYSIS

The Community Demographic Analysis consists of information relating to Ambler’s population, housing, and economics. With few exceptions, the source of the information is the decennial U.S. Census and other reports of the Census Bureau.

Demographic characteristics provide insight when planning for open space preservation and recreational development. They can assist in determining not only how much land should be preserved, but also where. Additionally, this information can further assist a municipality in determining what type of recreational facilities, if any, should be placed in the preserved land.

POPULATION TRENDS

The rate of municipal population change (relative population increase or decrease) is an important measure of the magnitude of population change that has occurred over time. Figure 1.4 shows population trends in the Borough.

In 2000, the Borough’s population was 6,426, a decline of 2.8 percent since 1990. This continued a long-term trend of declining population since a peak Borough population of 7,800 was reached in 1970.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) serves as the region’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Among other reports, it provides population and employment forecasts through the year 2025. These projections will be addressed in further detail in Chapter 7. According to these reports, during the next 20 years the population of Ambler Borough is projected to increase by approximately 1,000 people (over 15 percent) to 7,420. In general, projections are based on several factors, including past levels of and anticipated development, proximity to employment centers, available land, and public facilities (particularly sewers).

POPULATION CLASSIFICATION

Population classification refers to those segments of the population either in households or in group quarters (institutions). Figure 1.4 shows that more than 95 percent of the Borough’s population continues to reside in households. Between 1990 and 2000 the proportion of residents in group quarters increased from 3.0 percent to 4.3 percent.

Figure 1.4
Population Classification

Population Type	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990 to 2000
Household Population	6,411	97.0%	6,149	95.7%	-4.1%
Group Quarters Population	198	3.0%	277	4.3%	39.9%
Total Population	6,609	100%	6,426	100%	-2.8%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

AGE

A community's age profile over time can be an important measure of growth and change. Among other things, shifts in the distribution among age groups can have significant impacts on the provision of social services, housing, school enrollments, park and recreation needs, and the labor force. Figure 1.5 summarizes changes in the Borough's age profile from 1990 to 2000. It shows the median age in the Borough increased from 34.3 to 37.3. The fastest growing age groups were: school-age children

(5-17), middle-aged adults (35-54), and the elderly (75+ years). The Borough's population decreased in the following age groups: young children (0-4), young adults (18-34), and older adults (55-74). Since the Borough has a large proportion of residents between the ages of 25 and 44, the number of new children born to parents in the Borough may increase in coming years. This in turn may increase the demand for education services and active recreation facilities.

Figure 1.5
Age Profile

Years of Age	1990		2000		% Change 1990-2000
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	
0-4	469	7.1%	407	6.3%	-13.2%
5-17	913	13.8%	1,110	17.3%	21.6%
18-24	619	9.4%	448	7.0%	-27.6%
25-34	1,400	21.2%	1,047	16.3%	-25.2%
35-44	890	13.5%	1,105	17.2%	24.2%
45-54	616	9.3%	671	10.4%	8.9%
55-64	650	9.8%	507	7.9%	-22.0%
65-74	545	8.2%	504	7.8%	-7.5%
75+	507	7.7%	627	9.8%	23.7%
Total	6,609	100%	6,426	100%	-2.8%
Median Age	34.3		37.3		

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

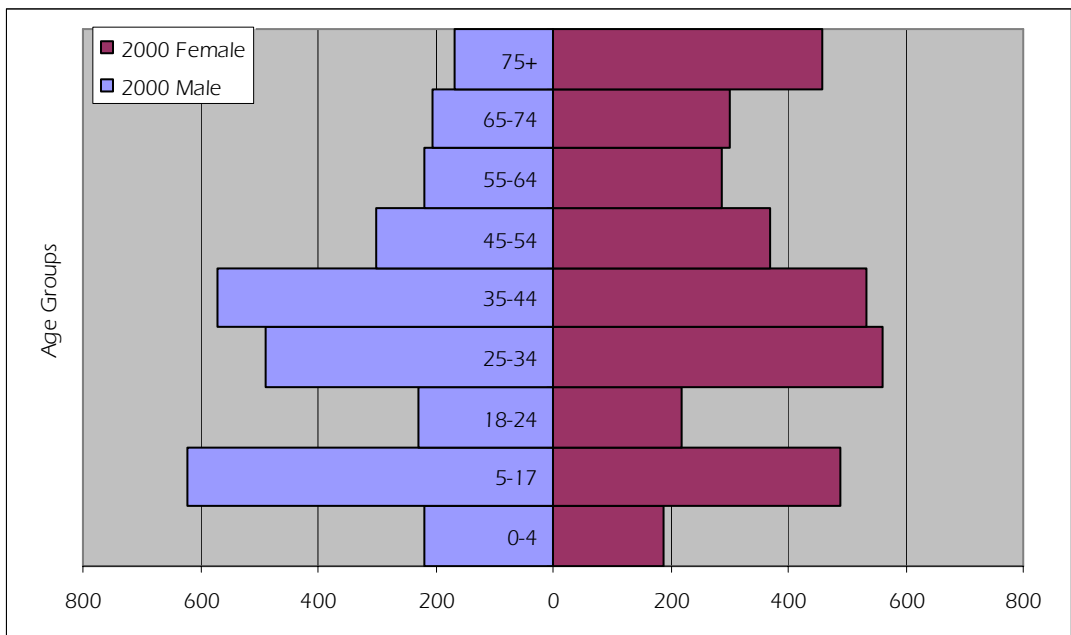


Figure 1.6
Income Levels (1999 \$s)

Income	1989	1999	% Change (unadjusted)	% Change (adjusted for inflation)
Per Capita	\$15,778	\$21,688	37.5%	2.6%
Median Household	\$35,730	\$47,014	31.6%	-1.8%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

INCOME

Figure 1.6 shows changes in per capita and household incomes for 1989 and 1999 (in 1999 dollars). Among other factors, changes in income reflect the state of the economy overall (recession or growth) and social changes such as the maturation of the baby boom generation (expanded labor force).

Per capita income is a per person average computed for every man, woman, and child in a given area. Per capita income also accounts for persons living alone, a growing segment of the population that is excluded from family income tabulations. As the percentage of the population earning income has increased, so has the per person average. In Ambler, per capita income was \$22,000 in 1999, a 38 percent increase since 1989. When adjusted for inflation, the increase was 2.6 percent.

Median household income refers to the income of the primary householder and incomes from all other persons over the age of 15 in the home, regardless of their relationship to the householder. Because households of unrelated individuals can be a fairly large proportion of all households, this measure may be a better indicator of the typical

income for an area than the family income measure. Also, since many households consist of only one person, this measure is usually lower than median family incomes. Ambler’s median household income grew 32 percent from 1989 to 1999 to just over \$47,000 (however, when adjusted for inflation, the median household income declined by 2 percent).

SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

Certain groups within Ambler Borough have special needs that should be considered in determining how much open space is needed, the type of open space that is needed, and the specific design of the open space development. In particular, the very young, the very old, those with incomes below the poverty level, and people with disabilities have special needs that will affect the need for and development of open space. Because definitions of persons with disabilities have changed between the 1990 and 2000 censuses, a direct comparison for these groups could not be made. However, in 2000 approximately 16.6 percent of Ambler’s population between the ages of 16 and 64 had some type of disability. Over the past decade, the number of people over age 65 has increased by nearly 8 per-

Figure 1.7
Special Needs Groups

Special Needs Groups	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Persons 16-64 with Disabilities			1,065	16.6%	N/A
Persons 16-64 with Mobility and Self Care Limitations	161	2.4%			N/A
Over 65 Years of Age	1,052	15.9%	1,131	17.6%	7.5%
Under 18 Years of Age	1,382	20.9%	1,517	23.6%	9.8%
Income Below Poverty Level	177	2.7%	340	5.3%	92.1%
Total Population	6,609		6,426		-2.8%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

Figure 1.8
Education Level

Education Level	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Less than 9th grade	360	7.8%	331	7.4%	-8.1%
9th through 12th grade, no diploma	606	13.2%	478	10.7%	-21.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,638	35.6%	1,335	29.9%	-18.5%
Some college no degree	724	15.7%	839	18.8%	15.9%
Associate degree	191	4.1%	246	5.5%	28.8%
Bachelor's degree	690	15.0%	872	19.5%	26.4%
Graduate or Professional degree	394	8.6%	360	8.1%	-8.6%
Total Population 25 Years of Age and Over	4,603	100%	4,461	100%	-3.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

cent, while the number of people under age 18 has increased by nearly 10 percent. The number of people with incomes below the poverty level has virtually doubled (a 92 percent increase).

ing a high school diploma or equivalency also increased to 81.9 percent, higher than the national average of 80.4 percent but below the county average of 88.5 percent.

EDUCATION LEVEL

Residents of Ambler are generally more educated than the national average, but not as educated as the Montgomery County average. Of Ambler residents 25 years of age and older, the proportion having a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree increased to 27.6 percent by 2000, which is higher than the 2000 national average of 24.4 percent but lower than the county average of 38.8 percent. The proportion of Ambler residents 25 and older possess-

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

A household profile is defined by the Census Bureau as a person or persons occupying a single housing unit. A household can be broken down into two categories. A family household is two or more related persons living in a single housing unit, and a non-family household is occupied by a single person or a group of unrelated persons. Nationally, as well as locally, households are changing. There has been an overall increase in non-family and single person's

Figure 1.9
Household Types

Household Types	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990 to 2000
Married Couples with Children	588	23.0%	512	20.4%	-12.9%
Married Couples with No Children	704	27.5%	634	25.3%	-9.9%
Single Parent	163	6.4%	239	9.5%	46.6%
Other Family	227	8.9%	215	8.6%	-5.3%
1 Person Non-Family Households	709	27.7%	757	30.2%	6.8%
2+ Person Non-Family Household	170	6.6%	153	6.1%	-10.0%
Total # of Households	2,561	100%	2,510	100%	-2.0%
Average People per Household	2.50		2.45		-2.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

households since the 1970's. Fragmentation of the family unit through divorce, death of a spouse, or children leaving home to form their own households has contributed to an increase in the number of households and a decrease in the size of households. For example, Figure 1.9 shows that single-parent households in Ambler have increased by nearly 47 percent between 1990 and 2000. Ambler has also seen one-person non-family households increase by nearly 7 percent. The traditional household of married couples with children account for only one in five households (20.4%) in the Borough.

The average household size is the number of persons in households divided by the number of occupied housing units. This too has seen a national decline as households continue to diversify. Ambler has seen the average household size decrease modestly from 2.50 people in 1990 to 2.45 in 2000.

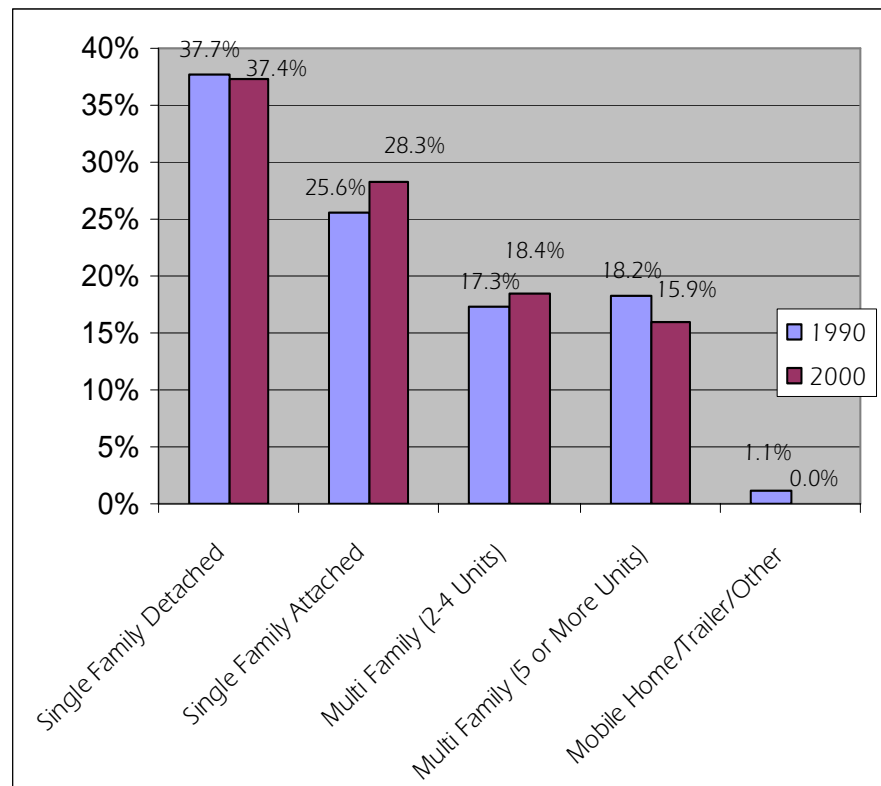
HOUSING TYPES

Figure 1.10 shows a breakdown of the residential land use category by housing types. Although there is a predominance of single-family detached dwellings, a range of housing types is available.

Figure 1.10
Housing Types

Housing Types	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Single Family Detached	990	37.7%	973	37.4%	-1.7%
Single Family Attached	674	25.6%	737	28.3%	9.3%
Multi Family (2-4 Units)	456	17.3%	480	18.4%	5.3%
Multi Family (5 or More Units)	479	18.2%	415	15.9%	-13.4%
Mobile Home/Trailer/Other	30	1.1%	0	0.0%	-100.0%
Total Housing Units	2,629	100%	2,605	100%	-0.9%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.



EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR

As used here, employment figures refer to the number of jobs (not workers) in a given area, and can serve a variety of purposes. As one aspect of the economy, they serve to inform the public of current and anticipated future economic conditions and may serve as decision-making input for current and potential employers and investors in the region. Because an area's growth and activity is related to its economy, employment data can also be tied to land use and transportation planning.

In recent years, Montgomery County has experienced a significant change as it has gone from being principally a bedroom suburb for Philadelphia commuters to an area that is a major source of jobs. The county's central location in the region and its major road network that permits direct access from surrounding counties are major reasons for this transformation. Evidence of this is found in the office, industrial, and commercial development in Fort Washington, Plymouth Meeting, King of Prussia, and Willow Grove— areas easily accessible from Ambler.

OCCUPATIONS

The types of occupations held by residents in 1990 and 2000 are shown in Figure 1.11. The wide range of occupations listed have historically been classified as being “white collar” (managerial), “blue collar” (operative), or “other” (farm workers). Although this has generally been a useful distinction in terms of income,

educational requirements, etc., the lines of distinction have become less marked as the nation's economy has moved from being industrially based to information and service based. This change is evident nationally with the proportion of the U.S. labor force in white collar jobs increasing from 37 percent in 1950 to 60 percent in 2000. Approximately 84 percent of Ambler's working residents held white-collar jobs in 2000. Due to this shift, the census has implemented a new system for compiling labor force statistics, making it difficult to draw a comparison between categories from 1990 and 2000.

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

As with population, the DVRPC provides employment forecasts for the area. Employment is projected to increase from approximately 2,700 jobs in 2000 to 2,837 jobs in 2025, representing an overall increase of 5.1% percent over 25 years (see Figure 1.12).

MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN MUNICIPALITY

The major employers in Ambler include a variety of industries, the largest of which employs 259 people. Industries represented include assisted living, government, retail, manufacturing, engineers, construction, and other contractors. Many of the employers in Ambler are small retail or office businesses occupying space on Butler Avenue or Main Street.

Figure 1.11
Labor Force by Occupation

Occupation	2000	
	Number	% Total
Management	485	14.9%
Professional	749	23.0%
Sales	381	11.7%
Clerical/Office	558	17.2%
Construction	206	6.3%
Production/Transportation	307	9.4%
Farming	0	0.0%
Services	567	17.4%
Total	3,253	100%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

STATUS OF RELEVANT PLANS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AMBLER BOROUGH

The primary existing planning document for the Borough is its 2001 Comprehensive Plan. The

2001 plan is based on 1990 census data and analyzes demographics, housing, transportation, community facilities, economic conditions, revitalization, and existing and potential land uses. Unlike

Figure 1.12
Employment (Past and Forecast)

Year	Total Employment	Years	% Change
1990	3,328	1990-2000	-18.9%
2000	2,700	2000-2010	3.3%
2005*	2,704	2010-2020	1.2%
2010*	2,788	2000-2025	5.1%
2015*	2,807		
2020*	2,821		
2025*	2,837		

*Source: DVRPC Forecasts

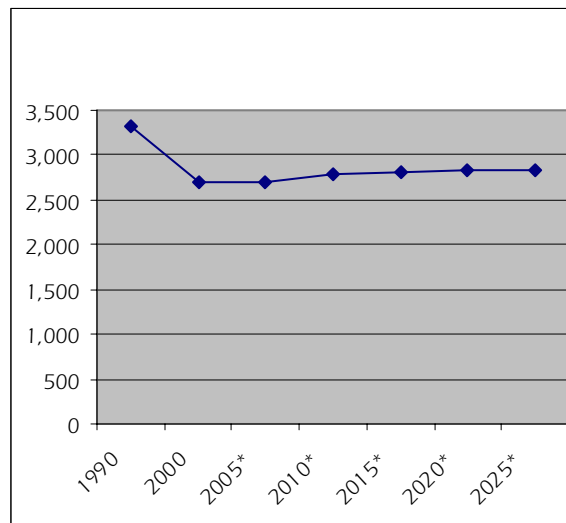


Figure 1.13
Major Employers

	Employer	Industry	Employees
1	Artman Lutheran Home	Assisted Living	259
2	LTK Engineering	Engineers	106
3	Gessner Products	Plastic Retail & Restaurant Products	92
4	U.S. Post Office	Government	70
5	Acme Markets	Retail	54
6	Caddick Construction	Construction	53
7	Ambler Borough	Government	51
8	St. Anthony Church	Religious Institution, School	48
9	Air Vent Systems	HVAC	43
10	McDonald's Restaurant	Restaurant	42

Source: Borough of Ambler, 2004

a plan for a less developed community, a plan for a developed community like Ambler is less concerned with shaping future growth and development through comprehensive land uses decisions than it is with maintaining and improving upon existing conditions.

**OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN
AMBLER BOROUGH**

Prior to the adoption of the comprehensive plan, the first Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan was developed in accordance with the Montgomery County Open Space Preservation Program Guidelines and adopted in 1994. For the past ten years it has served as a guide for Borough open space preservation activities, enabling the Borough to use its open space acquisition funding allocation included in the County Program. This plan serves as the basis for this 2004 update, and contains many of the same sections. Among the key recommendations from this plan were:

- Preserve the Rose Valley Creek, Tannery Run, and selected open space.
- Provide additional open space. Areas of focus include land along the Rose Valley Creek and Tannery Run, neighborhood-level open space in south Ambler and north of Butler Avenue, and land suitable for another ball field. Additional recreational facilities are also desired.
- Link the Borough’s open space areas, and explore connections to the Wissahickon Trail and other regional links.
- Develop new shade tree planting program.
- Enhance gateways to Borough.

As part of the update of this plan, these and other recommendations were reviewed in detail as part of an audit process.

AMBLER VALLEY GREEN LEGACY STUDY

Another existing planning document pertaining to Ambler-area open space and environmental resources is the “Ambler Valley Green Legacy: A Watershed Planning and Revitalization Study”. This plan was prepared by the Temple University Landscape Architecture Class of 2002, with Professor Edgar David. The plan examined a part of the Wissahickon

Creek watershed that included Ambler Borough and parts of Upper Dublin, Whitpain, Lower Gwynedd and Whitemarsh Townships.

The goals of the project were to improve ecological resources, facilitate smart growth, and enhance connections among communities. The first part of the plan defined the status and issues in the Ambler Valley watershed, which included the following sub-watersheds in Ambler: Rose Valley Creek, Tannery Run, Stuart Farm Creek, Pickering Field, and the Northeast Tributary. The second part of the plan delineated specific strategies for dealing with each sub-watershed’s unique problems. In the third part of the plan the conservation site design phase developed designs that can be implemented to achieve natural resources conservation and economic development. The class that prepared the report was advised by representatives from local governments and regulatory agencies, local watershed and advocacy groups, and academia.

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF AMBLER BOROUGH

This survey was conducted in 1999 by the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and the Conservancy of Montgomery County. It surveyed properties that were built prior to 1940 to determine if each property could potentially be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and whether each property would contribute to a National Register Historic District,

The survey was conducted by volunteers, using Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey forms, photography, and field observations. Technical assistance was provided by a consultant, who answered questions from volunteers, reviewed all survey forms, determined architectural style and National Register evaluations, and prepared the final report and evaluations.

TANNERY RUN PRELIMINARY STORMWATER ASSESSMENT

In 2005 the Montgomery County Planning Commission, acting at the request of Ambler Borough, completed a preliminary analysis to study the Tannery Run watershed and quantify the increase in stormwater due to land development over the past 30 years (based on most recent available data, from 1965 – 1995).

This assessment sought to identify the causes of flooding in the Tannery Run watershed. It dis-

cussed how severe flooding may be due to upstream development that overwhelmed the conveyance system in the Borough, much of which was built prior to upstream development. These facilities were not necessarily designed to take into account timing, convergence of peak stormwater flows, or water quality issues since these considerations were not typically addressed during development until recently.

The study recommended a cooperative effort between the Borough and townships in the watershed be formed to produce an engineering study of the volume and timing of stormwater flows in the larger watershed, similar to this (more focused) assessment of Tannery Run. Such a larger effort would study the Rose Valley Creek, Stuart Farm Creek, and Tannery Run; and should identify new and retrofit solutions that properly manage the timing and volume of stormwater flows in the Borough and Townships.

CHAPTER 2

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

THE 1994 AMBLER OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PLAN

Ambler Borough completed the Open Space and Environmental Resource Plan in 1994. At that time a series of goals and objectives were developed to address issues regarding the preservation of open space and the protection of environmental resources. As a part of the update process required by the Montgomery County Open Space Program, Ambler has evaluated its previous goals and objectives to address whether the goals are still valid and to evaluate why some of the last plan's recommendations were not implemented. Below are listed the previous goals and objectives with accompanying explanation of their status.

- **GOAL:** Preserve selected remaining open space and protect the Rose Valley Creek and Tannery Run by acquiring land along those waterways.

STATUS: The Borough is planning to purchase a site on Locust Street with a playground, basketball court, green space, and benches.

The Borough was not able to acquire land proposed for acquisition in the 1994 plan. The most important acquisitions, according to the 1994 plan, included land along the Rose Creek and Tannery Run (including a Borough Park extension), in the former industrial corridor in south Ambler, and in West Ambler to

serve as a buffer between residential and nonresidential uses.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTION: The Borough's priorities for open space acquisition still include land along the Rose Creek and Tannery Run.

- **GOAL:** Link open space areas.

STATUS: The proposed trail linkages have not been implemented. These include (1) a loop trail linking some or all of the Borough's parks, (2) increased access to Ricciardi Park from surrounding streets, and (3) a connection to the Wissahickon Creek and (future) Wissahickon trail.

- GOAL:** Preserve scenic resources.

STATUS: The following projects were implemented: a new shade tree planting program was established; the entrance-way to the Borough at Butler Avenue and Bethlehem Pike was enhanced with decorative paving, attractive street lights and traffic signal poles; private beautification was facilitated along Butler Avenue by the National Main Street Program.
- GOAL:** Secure land suitable for another ball field and provide additional recreation facilities.

STATUS: The Borough finalized an agreement for access to a ball field at Pen Ambler Park in Lower Gwynedd. The Borough provided additional recreational facilities at Ricciardi Park, including a walking trail, playground equipment, and picnic benches.



Pedestrian Footbridge, Borough Park

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2005 OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Open Space Committee has evaluated the goals and objectives of the previous plan and revised them to reflect what was discussed during the audit process. This section will serve as the framework for Ambler's plan for open space preservation and protection of natural resources. Goals are provided regarding retention of open space, enhancement of existing facilities, coordination of open space, and protection of natural and cultural features followed by a series of objectives. Action items related to these goals and objectives will be created

throughout the open space planning process and included in the recommendations and implementation chapters of this plan.

GOAL: PRESERVE SENSITIVE NATURAL FEATURES AND REDUCE FLOODING

OBJECTIVE:

- Protect sensitive natural features

Action Steps:

Use fee simple acquisition or obtain easement to protect areas of sensitive environmental features:

- Along Rose Valley Creek
- Along Tannery Run
- Along other Borough creeks
- Woods north of Borough Park in Rose Valley

- Reduce and mitigate effects of flooding:

Action Steps:

- Purchase areas prone to flooding in Borough
 - Jointly acquire land with upstream municipalities for stormwater management (and use as park or recreation area)
 - Dechannelize streams where practical to return them to their natural state:
- #### Action Steps:
- Reduce impervious coverage to increase absorption of groundwater and reduce flooding
 - Allow the restoration of riparian buffers, which filters runoff and improves water quality
 - Slows water speeds, thus reducing erosion in non-channelized areas, reducing temperatures and allowing restoration of natural aquatic habitats.

GOAL: IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS TO EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish trails or greenways to link existing Borough parks and open space.

Action Steps:

Investigate easement or fee simple purchase of land to facilitate access in the following areas:

- Borough Loop Trail
- Rose Valley Creek Trail
- Between Ricciardi Park and Borough Park

- South Maple Avenue to Church Street
- Establish linkages to parks, trails, and natural areas outside the Borough.

Action Steps:

Investigate easement or fee simple purchase of land to facilitate access in the following areas:

- To the Wissahickon Creek (and future County Trail) possibly via Butler Avenue, Tannery Run, Stuart Farm Creek, the Rail Corridor, and/or Mt. Pleasant Avenue.
- To Pen Ambler Park
- To Sheeleigh Park & Playground, Loch Alsh Reservoir (and potentially Temple Ambler)
- To Veterans Memorial Park on Highland Avenue
- To Lower Gwynedd Township Trails (Pen Ambler Road, Hendricks St/Knight Rd, Cedar Lane)

GOAL: AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENTS

OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance gateways to Borough with some of the following elements: signage, trees, landscaping, pedestrian amenities, attractive lighting, crosswalks and pavement treatments

Action Steps:

Enhance the following locations:

Primary gateways are proposed for the following locations:

1. The intersection of Butler Avenue and Bethlehem Pike.
2. On Butler Avenue near the Wissahickon Creek bridge.
3. The train station.

Secondary gateways are proposed for other locations:

1. Along the Borough's side of Bethlehem Pike. This could include signs directing people to Ambler's central business district, and might include signs at the intersections with Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Tennis Avenue, Lindenwold Avenue, and Church Street.
2. Mt. Pleasant Avenue, at the intersections with Hendricks Street, North Main Street, and North Spring Garden Street.
3. The intersection of Highland Avenue and Church Street.

GOAL: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE HISTORIC RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE:

- Preserve and enhance sites of historic significance in the Borough and tell their story.

Action Steps:

Use signage to identify and explain the significance of key sites; link sites to a Borough loop trail; consider purchasing property of special historic importance to the Borough. Just a few of these sites of significance include:

1. Mary Ambler homestead, Main St. & Reiff's Mill Rd. (1715, 1765, 1831)
2. Ambler Railroad Station, Butler Ave (1888)
3. Keasbey & Mattison Garage (Butler Ave & Chestnut St., 1875-1880)
4. Evan Ambler House & Store (Butler Ave. & Main St., 1840-1850)
5. Wyndham Hotel (Butler Ave. & Spring Garden St., 1893)
6. Deck's Hardware (Main St. & Race St., 1880)
7. Henry Keasbey House (Mt. Pleasant Ave, 1880-90)

OBJECTIVE:

- Establish a regional connection among historic sites.

Action Steps:

- Use informational and directional signage, and literature with maps and historic information to tell the story and direct interested parties to historic sites in the region. This would make it possible to easily drive or bike to visit sites of local historic importance in and near the Borough. This connection would establish an informal but useful link among some of the most historic sites in Ambler and other regionally significant sites, such as Highlands, Hope Lodge, and Fort Washington State Park in Whitemarsh; and historic districts in North Wales, Plymouth, and Whitemarsh.
- Coordinate with Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, the local municipalities, The Highlands Historical Society (caretaker of the Highlands) the Depart-

ment of Conservation and Natural Resources (caretaker of Fort Washington State Park), and Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (caretaker of Hope Lodge).

- Improve Knight Park with a building housing bathrooms and a multiuse facility.

GOAL: CREATE OR IMPROVE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE:

- Provide for community gardens.

Action Steps:

- Acquire property for community gardens
- Design and manage gardens in conjunction with advice from Pennsylvania Horticultural Society & Montgomery County Cooperative Extension

- Provide pocket parks—

Action Steps:

The Borough should acquire pocket parks as the opportunity presents itself. Part of the SAAC property (former Forest Avenue School) consists of a parking lot. Purchase of part of the parking lot could enable the Borough to convert it to a pocket park with a modest recreational area consisting of athletic courts or a green area.

- Improve recreational facilities—

Action Steps:

- Improve Borough Park by constructing trails and a footbridge, by restoring stream banks, and constructing environmental education signage.



Establishing a Community Garden is a Goal of the Open Space Plan

CHAPTER 3

EXISTING PROTECTED LAND

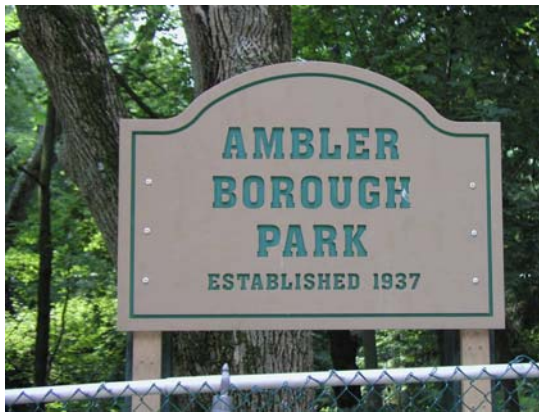
A key component of the open space plan is a review of existing protected land. An inventory of existing conditions, along with an assessment of future needs, is necessary for formulating many of the plan's goals and objectives. Existing protected land refers to land preserved for active or passive recreation use and/or for environmental conservation purposes. In addition to municipally-owned areas, it can include land preserved by private conservation groups, farmland, schools sites, and private open space preserved as part of residential or non-residential development.

This chapter identifies existing open and recreational land in municipality and separates it into two categories of protection - permanently and temporarily protected land. The latter category makes an important contribution to the overall recreation base of a community by preserving open space, conserving significant natural features, and/or providing recreation facilities that do not require municipal involvement in maintenance. However, temporarily protected land can easily be lost. In evaluating open space needs, this distinction is important, as is the goal of increasing the amount of permanently protected land so that future generations can also benefit from open space.

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED LAND MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE

Ambler Borough's existing system of parks and open space is comprised of various active and passive open space areas. There are seven parks or open space areas in Ambler Borough (Locust

Street Playground is counted in this total; it is currently in the process of being acquired). The Borough jointly owns Pen Ambler Park with Lower Gwynedd, and Ambler Borough Water Depart-



Borough Park



Ricciardi Park

ment owns Loch Alsh Reservoir in Upper Dublin. All of these parks are available for use by Ambley residents.

The parks comprise a total of 62 acres of land. Of these, five parks (comprising 21 acres) are currently configured for active recreation. The active open space includes amenities such as baseball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, basketball courts, a shuffleboard court and a multipurpose field. Soon Pen Ambley Park (19 acres), jointly owned by Ambley and Lower Gwynedd, will be improved with recreational amenities (See Figure 3.3). Active recreation facilities planned for Pen Ambley Park include a baseball field, basketball courts, and playground.

Each park and open space area in the Ambley park and open space system, active or passive, offers community residents important recreational opportunities, scenic amenities, or both. Following are the parks and open space areas in the Ambley Open Space system:

Figure 3.1
Existing Parks & Open Space

Park/Open Space Area	Size (Acres)
Loch Alsh Reservoir	21.0
Pen Ambley Park	18.7
Borough Park	9.0
Ricciardi Park	5.1
Knight Park	3.7
Pickering Field	2.8
Locust Street Playground	0.8
Reiff's Mill Open Space	0.5
Jean Thompson Playground	0.4
Total Parks/Open Space	61.8

Outside the Borough, there are five nearby recreation areas to note:

- Loch Alsh Reservoir, part of the Upper Dublin Township Parkland system, owned by Ambley Borough.
- Pen Ambley Park in Lower Gwynedd Township. Ambley Borough and Lower Gwynedd Township jointly own this park.

The others are not owned by the Borough but are accessible to Borough residents. They are:

- Sheeleigh Park, Upper Dublin
- Highland Avenue Park, Upper Dublin
- Fort Washington State Park, Whitmarsh

In addition, the former industrial reservoir on West Maple Avenue (located in Ambley, Upper Dublin, and Whitpain) was recently purchased by the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association. Ambley recognizes the former reservoir could enhance the general quality of life in the area, and contribute to the Borough's economic vitality.

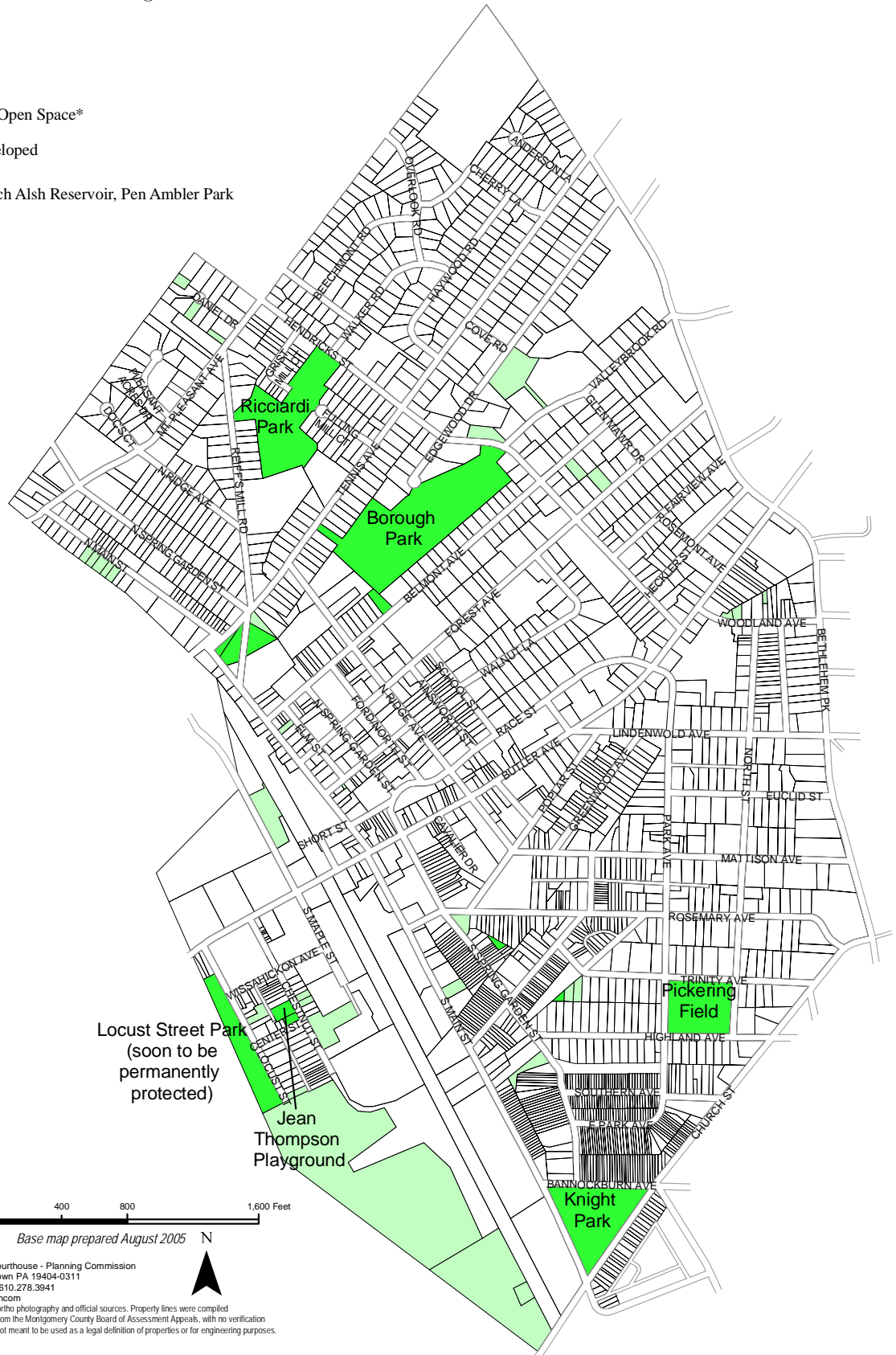


Figure 3.2
 Permanently Protected Land in Borough

Legend

- Public Open Space*
- Undeveloped

*Not Shown: Loch Alsh Reservoir, Pen Ambler Park



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom
 This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

Figure 3.3
Plan for Pen Ambler Park

PEN-AMBLER PARK
LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA



DESIGNED BY: **DEPALLO DESIGN & PLANNING, LLC**
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND LAND PLANNING

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

PRIVATE

Twenty-nine acres of temporarily protected land is in private ownership in the Borough. This land includes land containing the remediated asbestos piles along the Borough's southwestern boundary and the adjacent Locust Street Playground, the Bo-Rit site on West Maple Street, and scattered smaller areas. There is no public access to the remediated asbestos piles; however, the mounds do serve as passive open space; acting as a natural-vegetation buffer for South Ambler. It should be noted there is little concern these sites will be developed in the foreseeable future due to their environmental constraints.



Locust Street Park

Locust Street Playground includes a basketball court, benches, and green space, and is currently being made available to Borough residents by Interspec Corporation. The Borough is in the process of acquiring this parcel in the near future to permanently preserve it as a park. The acquisition of the park by the Borough will prevent that land from being developed and will ensure Borough residents may continue to utilize that space in the future.

INSTITUTIONAL

Ambler has temporary open space provided by Borough institutions. The public Elementary School at Mattison Avenue and Poplar Street provides approximately half an acre of open space in the form of a playground and multipurpose courts.

OTHER TEMPORARILY-PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

There is other temporarily protected open space in the immediate vicinity of Ambler. The closest includes the Wissahickon School District land in Lower Gwynedd located just to the northwest of the Borough; St. Mary's Villa for Children (formerly Lindenwold, the estate of Richard Mattison) located across the street from the Borough on Bethlehem Pike; and Germantown Academy, located to the south of the Borough.

Temporary open space differs from parks and open space owned by the Borough because it may not remain open forever. Land use decisions for schools are not made by Ambler Borough. Therefore, as enrollment patterns in the region change, schools could be closed. When schools are closed, often they are used for other purposes, including offices or apartments, and the recreational and open space is lost.

Despite its temporary nature, these sources of open space are still important as they offer a greater range of choices to meet recreational needs. Temporary open space in Ambler adds an aesthetic quality to the Borough by opening up views and providing some relief to the largely developed landscape.

CONCLUSION

In total, Ambler Borough has a significant amount of protected land within the Borough's boundaries or owned by the Borough outside its boundaries, with 90 acres being either permanently or temporarily protected. This land provides Borough residents with many opportunities to enjoy all that open space can offer – recreation, tranquility, beauty, and a sense of community.

CHAPTER 4

INVENTORY OF POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE RESOURCES

A key component of the open space plan is a review of existing protected land. An inventory of existing conditions, along with an assessment of future needs, is necessary for formulating many of the plan's goals and objectives. Existing protected land refers to land preserved for active or passive recreation use and/or for environmental conservation purposes. In addition to municipally-owned areas, it can include land preserved by private conservation groups, farmland, schools sites, and private open space preserved as part of residential or non-residential development.

GEOLOGY

Except for surface outcrops, bedrock geology is unseen, and as a result its influence on natural features is not always acknowledged. However, the influence is both strong and pervasive, for bedrock geology is the foundation of an area. Bedrock, along with the hydrologic cycle, is responsible for the changes in elevation, steep slopes, location of watercourses, and orientation (orientation, in turn, will influence vegetative communities, soils, and availability of sunlight). The bedrock or parent material has a great influence on the type of soil formed. For example, hard, igneous bedrock has resulted in soils with a

high stone and boulder content. Groundwater yield differs from one bedrock formation to the next. In Montgomery County, the difference ranges from under 1 gallon per minute (gpm) to over 30 gpm.

Montgomery County is located in the Triassic Lowland and Piedmont Upland section of the Piedmont Physiographic Province. The Triassic Lowlands are primarily red shales and sandstones, with intrusions of diabase. Four formations - Stockton Sandstone/Conglomerate /Shale, Lockatong Argillite/Shale, Brunswick Shale/ Sandstone, and diabase - comprise the Triassic

Lowlands. The formation underlying Ambler is Stockton Sandstone/Conglomerate/Shale. This formation is primarily light gray to red coarse sandstone, which tends to form ridges resistant to weathering. The groundwater resources in this formation are the best of any formation found in the county. This rock is a good source of brick, floor tile, and sintered aggregate material.

TOPOGRAPHY

STEEP SLOPES

Slope, or frequency of change in elevation, is an important environmental condition. When expressed as a percentage, slope is defined as the amount of change in vertical elevation over a specified horizontal distance. For example, a three foot rise in elevation over a one hundred foot

horizontal distance is expressed as a three percent slope. These changes in elevation throughout a community contribute a great deal to its appearance and natural diversity.

This is especially true of the steep slope areas of a community, which also cause limitations to development. The slope and soils present on steep slopes are in balance with vegetation, underlying geology and precipitation levels. Maintaining this equilibrium reduces the danger to public health and safety posed by unstable hillsides.

Steep slopes often have a combination of vegetation, climate, soil and underlying geology that differs from the surrounding area. Frequently this means that the environmental sensitivity of the steep slope are different as well. Susceptibility to erosion and mass movement may be greater than the surrounding area, especially if vegetation is removed. Increased runoff and sedimentation from disturbed slopes require increased public expenditure for flood control and stormwater management. Also, different species of plants and the associated wildlife that depends on these plants may be present only on the slopes, creating unique recreation opportunities.

Overall, Ambler is characterized by gently rolling terrain that slopes to the southwest with elevations ranging from 170 to 310 feet above sea level. Soil types from the Soil Survey provide a general indication of the presence and location of the steepest areas. The steepest slopes (over 15%) exist along Rose Valley Creek between Bethlehem Pike and North Ridge Avenue. Other fairly steep areas exist in the area bounded by Woodland Avenue, Rosemont Avenue, Walnut Lane, and Race Street. Man-made steep slopes are located at the environmentally remediated sites in south Ambler.

There is also a concentration of moderate to steep slopes from the Wissahickon Volunteer Fire Company east and northeast, including the intersections of Hendricks Street and Heckler Street, and Butler Avenue and Rosemont Avenue.

A large portion of the Rose Valley Creek has been preserved as public open space in Borough Park. A further preservation opportunity appears to exist a short distance upstream from Borough Park, where an undeveloped parcel lies on Edgewood Drive. This should be considered in the Borough's open space preservation planning.

Figure 4.1
Steep Slopes, Wooded Areas



SOILS

Soils are a natural assortment of organic materials and mineral fragments that cover the earth and support plant life. The composition of soils changes slowly over time, due to weathering of rock and activity of soil organisms. As a consequence, soils vary with respect to depth to bedrock, depth to groundwater, color, mineral characteristics, fertility, texture, and erodibility. One of the most influential natural features, soils are a result of the hydrology and the weathering capacity of the underlying geology in a given area. They are also influenced by the orientation of the land and the types of vegetation that grow in them. Conversely, the type of soil influences the vegetative cover of the land, which effects the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater, wildlife diversity, rates of erosion, and the aesthetic quality of the landscape.

Figure 4.2
Hydric & Alluvial Soils



Though soils are diverse, soil scientists have classified the soils found in Montgomery County into several groups called soil series. Soils listed within the same series will display similar subsurface characteristics. The surface characteristics of soils within a particular series can vary in slope, degree of erosion, size of stones, and other easily recognizable features.

The majority of the soils in and around Ambler are classified as fill or “made land” of Triassic Shale origin. Made land is simply areas where earth-moving during development has removed or altered the characteristics of the original soils.

In addition to the soil mapping units, soils can also be divided into prime and important agricultural soils, hydric components, and alluvial soils. The groups of soil pertinent to the Borough are described below.

HYDRIC SOILS

These are periodically wet soils in an undrained condition that often support the growth of wetland vegetation. Since not all hydric soils are found in undrained conditions, not all hydric soils exhibit wetland vegetation. Hydric soils that have been drained for agricultural use is one example of this. As a result, soils with major hydric components are a conservative indicator of wetlands.

The Borough’s main area of hydric soils is located along the Rose Valley Creek northeast of North Ridge Avenue. There are also areas of hydric soils along Stuart Farm Creek west of South Main Street, along a small tributary to the Wissahickon the rail corridor abutting Upper Dublin, and along Mt. Pleasant Avenue near Bethlehem Pike. The part of these areas within Borough Park are already preserved. Although the hydric soil area near Bethlehem Pike is very small and in a developed area, the Borough could consider preserving the relatively small, undeveloped portions of hydric soil areas in the rail corridor.

ALLUVIAL SOILS

Alluvial soils are frequently, but not always, located within a floodplain. They have been deposited by flowing water and are not stable as a result of their texture and composition. The presence of alluvial soils is only one indicator of a floodplain. Changes in the tributary drainage area or slope of the adjacent stream may create a

floodplain that is either larger or smaller than the area of alluvial soils. Also, alluvial soils do not indicate the probability of recurrence of a flood (for example, a 100 year flood). An important aspect of alluvial soils is that they often form aquifer recharge areas. In Ambler, alluvial soils and hydric soils overlap completely.

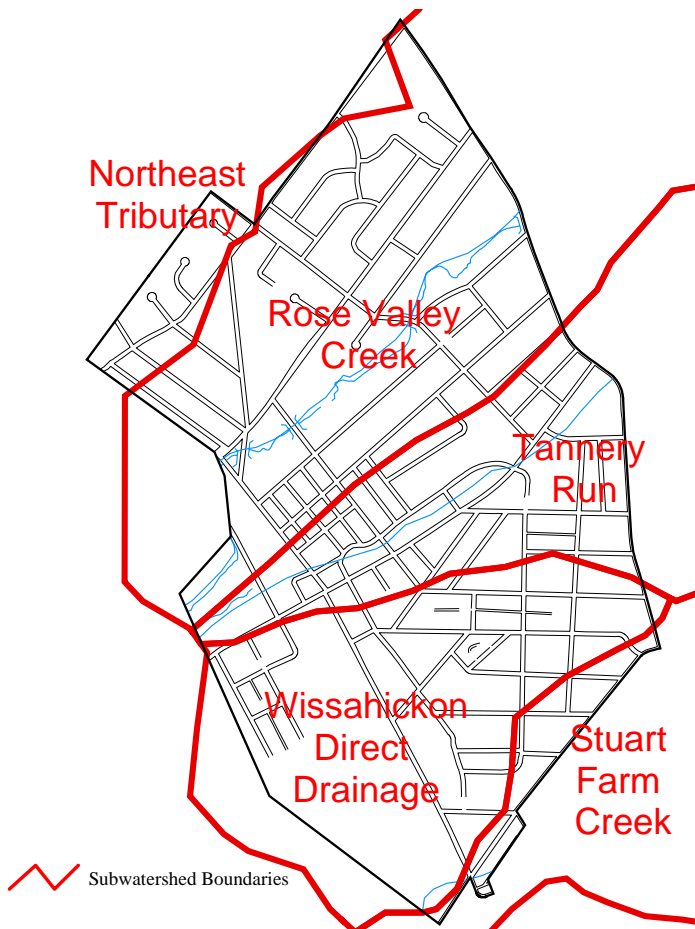
In general, soils that are saturated with water at or near the ground surface, particularly during certain times of the year, are considered to have a high water table. As would be expected, such areas often exist near water bodies and watercourses and may be part of wetlands. Because of wetness, these soils present a major constraint for development wherever on-site subsurface sewage treatment is utilized, as in many rural areas, since treatment depends largely on adequate water percolation through the soil. In Ambler this is not an issue since most of the

Borough is sewered, and such soils exist only in limited areas (Figure 19).

SURFACE WATERS AND HYDROLOGY

Water is a valuable resource, consumed by people and industry, enjoyed at recreation facilities, employed in the assimilation of treated sewage, and integral to the landscape. The average rainfall in the county varies from 43 inches near City line Avenue to 47 inches in the vicinity of the Green Lane Reservoir. It should be noted that in any given year, annual precipitation can vary from the average by as much as ten inches. Generally speaking in a natural setting, 25 percent of precipitation becomes direct runoff, 50 percent evaporates or is transpired by plants, and 25 percent replenishes groundwater.

Figure 4.3
Sub-Watersheds of the Wissahickon Creek



Rose Valley Creek

The surface water that falls on or is carried through Ambler affects the topography, soils, vegetation, and groundwater and comes from two natural sources: direct runoff and groundwater. A third, manmade source, may also contribute to stream flow: effluent from sewage treatment plants, which tends to dampen the variation between high and low flow periods.

WATERSHEDS AND STREAM CORRIDORS

The Borough drains toward the Schuylkill River, as does the major portion of the county. This occurs within the Wissahickon Drainage Basin, which also covers parts of Upper Gwynedd, Lower Gwynedd, Upper Dublin, Whitmarsh, and Whitpain Townships and the Borough of North Wales. This basin is comprised of a series of smaller basins (see Figure 4.3), including the

Tannery Run, Rose Valley, Stuart Farm Creek, and Northeast Tributary sub-basins (the Northeast Tributary sub-basin lies in the northwest portion of Ambler, near Mt. Pleasant Avenue).

Because basins are usually larger than one community, an interrelationship exists whereby municipalities that are upstream contribute surface water flow to Ambler, while those downstream receive the Borough's flow. With this in mind, the Borough should aim to maintain the natural conditions of its drainage system, such as through preservation of open space along watercourses.

FLOODPLAINS

The 100 year floodplain is a feature that will affect the health, safety, and welfare of Ambler residents. Much of the time, it is dry. During storms, however, the floodplain stores and conveys floodwater. Development within the floodplain reduces the carrying capacity and increases the height and destruc-

tive ability of floodwater. In addition to carrying flood waters, the floodplain and stream corridor serve other important functions. The condition of the stream corridor itself is important in minimizing erosion and water pollution, protecting water quality (temperature and velocity), and providing animal habitat and recreation opportunities.

Floodplains lie along each of the Borough's creeks and are shown in Figure 4.4. Currently, the Borough has floodplain regulations that can help protect affected areas. Further, existing open space along Rose Valley Creek permanently protects a sizable area of floodplain. Additional open space preservation of floodplain areas should be pursued.

WETLANDS

Groundwater behaves much like surface water, flowing like a stream, only much slower. Groundwater is tapped as a source of drinking water and for industrial purposes where surface water is unavailable.

Groundwater replenishment occurs slowly, as precipitation and in some cases stream water seeps through the soil, down to the aquifer. Open, undisturbed land is essential to groundwater recharge, since vegetation serves to retain precipitation where it falls, allowing it to soak into the soil rather than run off the surface. Impervious surface from development prevents infiltration of precipitation.

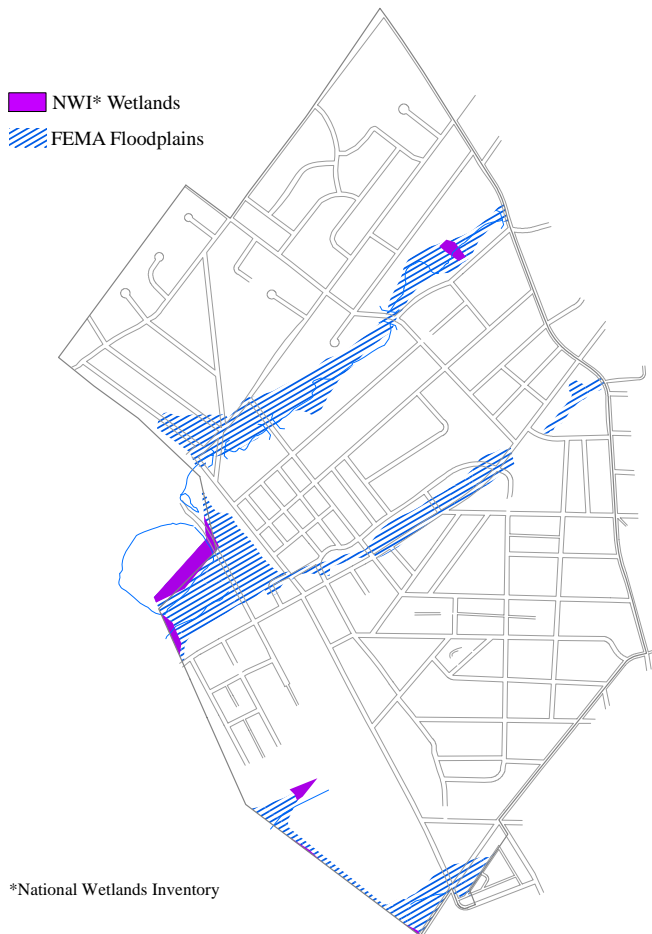
The Ambler Borough Water Department operates a public water supply system that services the entire Borough as well as portions of Upper Dublin Township. The source is groundwater from ten wells in scattered locations and a spring in Whitmarsh. A total of four million gallons is stored in two standpipes and an elevated tank. The Borough also maintains interconnections with other water suppliers (North Wales Water Authority and Philadelphia Suburban Water Company) to send or receive water in emergency situations.

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

WOODLANDS

The original vegetation of Montgomery County was a dense forest of hardwoods which covered over 99 percent of the county. Oaks were the dominant species, but chestnut, tulip poplar, hickory, ash, red maple, and dogwoods were also present. Several

Figure 4.4
Wetlands





Floodplain and Woodlands Along Rose Valley Creek, Borough

hundred years of clearing and cultivation, and in more recent times the rapid development of houses and commercial facilities, have reduced woodlands to a shadow of their former extent. The principle types of woodlands remaining in the county are:

Red Oak - About 60% of all remaining woodlands. Northern Red Oak is predominant, but Black, Scarlet and Chestnut Oak are also abundant.

Ash/Maple/Elm - About 19% of all woodlands. Local mixtures will vary, and include minor species, such as the Slippery Elm, Yellow Birch, Black Gum, Sycamore, and Poplar.

Eastern Red Cedar - 18% of the county's wooded acres are covered with this species and associated species: Gray Birch, Red Maple, Sweet Birch, and Aspen.

Sugar Maple/Beech/Yellow Birch - The remaining three percent of woodlands is comprised of this association. Associated species include Red Maple, Hemlock, Northern Red Oak, White Ash, and Tulip Poplar.

Woodlands and hedgerows serve many purposes, both functional and aesthetic. Woodlands prevent erosion, provide habitat for wildlife, provide buffers for creeks, and offer recreational opportunities for residents. Hedgerows and wooded corridors also prevent erosion, and provide cover for wildlife movement, shelter, and migration.

The distribution of woodlands in Montgomery County can be described in three different patterns. Small, widely scattered stands can be found east of the central county ridge, often strung along alluvial soils. Long, linear stands along streams and on alluvial soils are typical in the central part of the county. Large forested blocks of land, often hundreds to thousands of acres in size, are found on ridges in the central and northern areas of the county.

Forested areas, however, are less common in the eastern part of the county. Many of the most significant stands in the area are located along the Wissahickon Creek and Fort Washington State Park.

Important woodlands in the Borough are found along the Rose Valley Creek, in an area adjacent to West Maple Avenue and the former reservoir, and in an area near the southeastern end of Locust Street (see Figure 4.1). The Rose Valley Creek woodlands contain a number of mature beech trees and part of the corridor is permanently preserved by Borough Park. However, the unprotected portions of the Rose Valley Creek woodlands should be considered for preservation; these areas also contain the creek and floodplain, alluvial and hydric soils, and steep slopes. The woodlands near the terminus of Locust Street may be effectively preserved because of proximity to an environmentally remediated area.

SCENIC ROADS AND VISTAS

Scenic resources are elements of the natural and/or built environment that stand out among all the attributes of a community. They tend to be the most pleasant and interesting places, such as historic sites, natural features like lakes or creeks, and recreation areas.

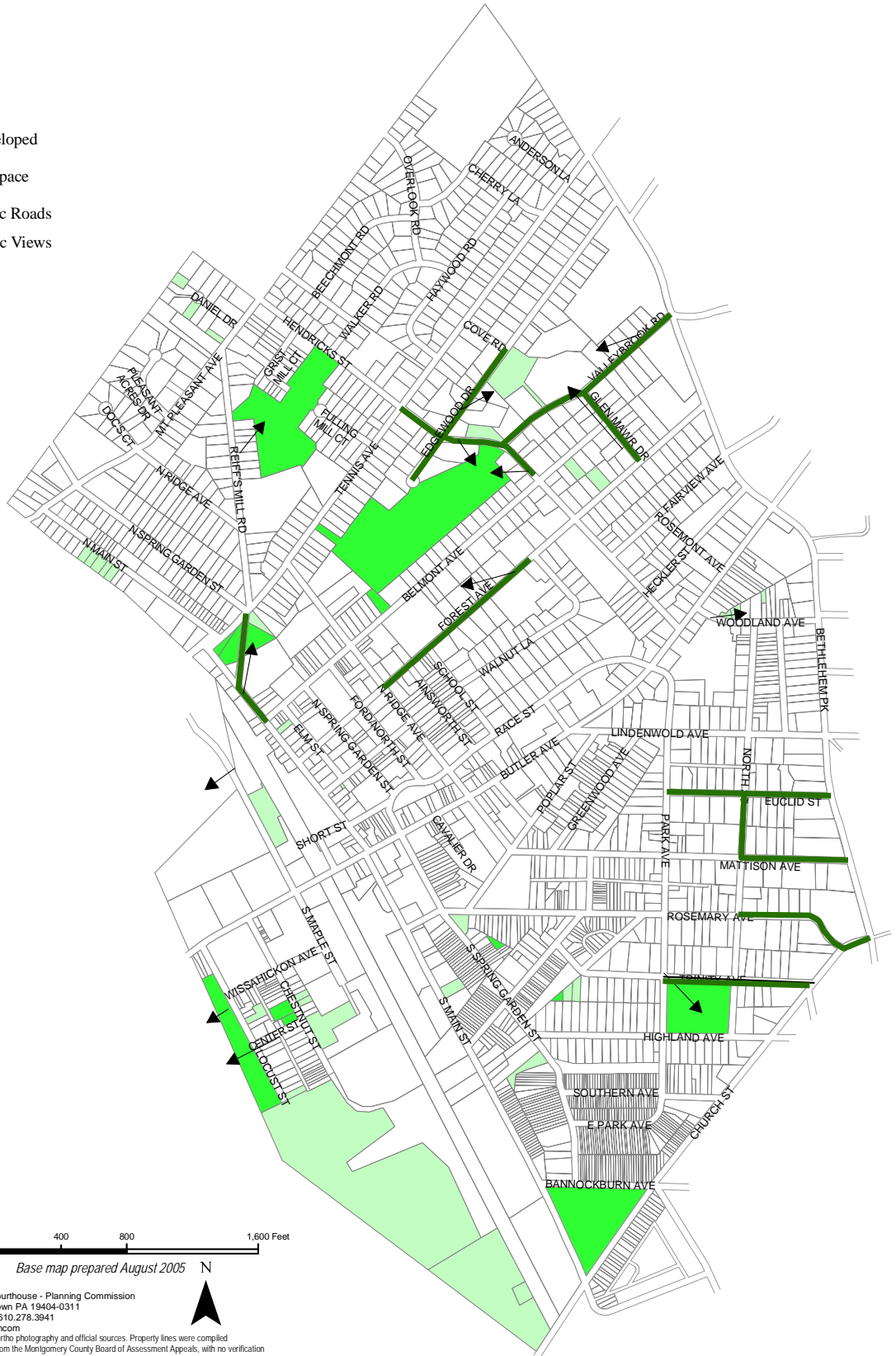
Although the process of identifying a scenic resource is largely dependent on the observer's own opinions and preferences, information collected from a community group, such as a planning commission, can provide a relatively broad inventory. Wherever possible, these areas should be preserved and linked to the community's open space and recreation system. Scenic resources in Ambler are summarized in Figure 4.5. The defining element or feature for each resource is noted.

Roadways with scenic attributes contribute to a community's open space system because they provide a way to view its scenic resources and in some cases also serve as recreation routes for

Figure 4.5
Scenic Views and Roads

Legend

- Undeveloped
- Open Space
- Scenic Roads
- Scenic Views



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom
 This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the dead. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

walkers, bicyclists, and joggers. A number of such roads exist in the Borough.

- **EDGEWOOD DRIVE** - Borough Park to Cove Road. This road segment follows the open space along Rose Valley Creek, and in particular Borough Park, providing views of the steeply sloped woodlands.
- **HENDRICKS STREET** - Belmont Avenue to Tennis Avenue. This part of Hendricks Street takes the traveler into the Rose Valley Creek area from high points at Belmont Avenue and Tennis Avenue. In both directions, it provides scenic views into the creek corridor and its water, woodland, and steep slope natural features. In addition to Borough Park, key to this view is existing open space on private property on the north side of the street.
- **VALLEYBROOK ROAD** - As its name suggests, this road follows a valley, specifically along Rose Valley Creek. The views here are nearly at creek level, rather than provided from surrounding ridges. The heavy woodlands along the creek corridor border the edge of the road in this area, providing a distinctive visual atmosphere for the observer.
- **GLEN MAWR DRIVE** - north to Valleybrook Road. The moderately steep slopes in this area provide pleasant views of the Rose Valley Creek corridor, particularly of the open space fronting on Valleybrook Road.
- **FOREST AVENUE**—Walnut Lane to Ridge Avenue. Starting at the top of the ridge near Walnut Lane, this road segment provides views to the north and west, toward Borough Park. Due to development along both sides of the road, no significant areas of open space exist, nor does it appear that any can be created at this time.
- **REIFF'S MILL ROAD**—Belmont Avenue to Tennis Avenue. This segment looks over the Rose Valley Creek, in the vicinity of the historic Mary Ambler house, with scenic views of surrounding woodland, Borough-owned open space, and to the west, a distant view of the former reservoir area.
- **EUCLID AVENUE**—Scenic elements of this road

are large mature street trees and large, older homes with some common architecture along the north side.

- **MATTISON AVENUE**—North Street to Bethlehem Pike. Large, mature street trees line both sides of this portion of Mattison Avenue, creating a tunnel-like effect of overlapping tree canopy. This consistent and unified appearance combines with the large older homes to create a very scenic atmosphere.
- **NORTH STREET**—Euclid Avenue to Mattison Avenue. This block contains good vegetation on both sides of the road, including mature trees, and ties in well with the Mattison Avenue block described above.
- **ROSEMARY AVENUE**—North Street to Bethlehem Pike. Like other blocks in this part of the Borough, the scenic quality of this area is tied to its large, mature street trees along the north side. This row of trees creates a pleasant visual guide around the corner to the intersection with Church Street.
- **TRINITY AVENUE**—Church Street to Park Avenue. These two blocks contain numerous mature street trees on the south side that create a consistent, unified appearance and lead into space views of nearby Pickering Field.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES





Since Ambler is an older, developed Borough, it has many historic resources located within its borders. The historic resources include four resources certified Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as well as other noteworthy homes, industrial and commercial buildings, and churches. Many of the historic structures in the Borough were built by the Keasbey & Mattison company (see “Historical Background”, Chapter 1). Figure 4.6 maps the location of historic resources described below.

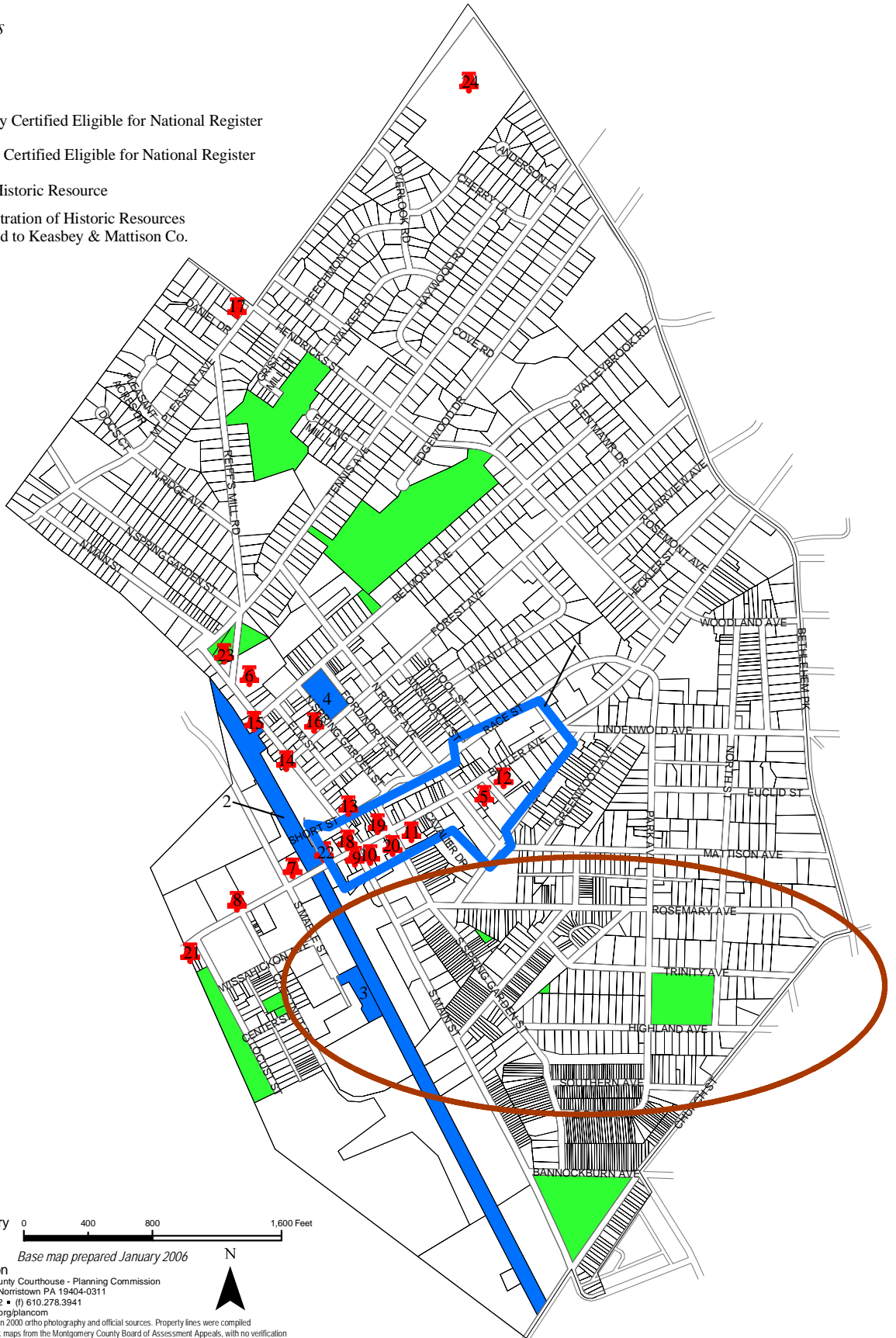
SITES ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Sites on the National Register are those that are considered nationally to be worthy of preservation on the basis of their historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance. In Ambler the following sites have been certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission as Eligible for the National Register:

Figure 4.6
Historic Resources

Legend

-  Property Certified Eligible for National Register
-  District Certified Eligible for National Register
-  Other Historic Resource
-  Concentration of Historic Resources Related to Keasbey & Mattison Co.



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom

Base map prepared January 2006

This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

1. The Ambler Borough Commercial Historic District (1-12 West Butler Avenue and 1-170 East Butler Avenue)
2. The former North Pennsylvania Railroad (Philadelphia to Bethlehem)
3. The former Keasbey & Mattison Boiler Plant, 201 South Maple Street
4. The former Forest Avenue School at 45 Forest Avenue (now the Senior Adult Activity Center)

SELECTED HISTORIC RESOURCES

The 1995 Open Space Plan noted some of the most significant historic sites in the Borough. They are:

rescue operations during the train wreck of 1856, Mary Ambler opened up the house as a temporary hospital for victims. In 1869 the North Pennsylvania Railroad changed the name of Wissahickon station to Ambler in her honor. The town was then named for her. The house



Former First National Bank of Ambler (1923)



Ambler Theatre (1928)

retains many early features such as pegged woodwork, a large fireplace, a bake oven, and an early well with pump. It is currently a private residence.

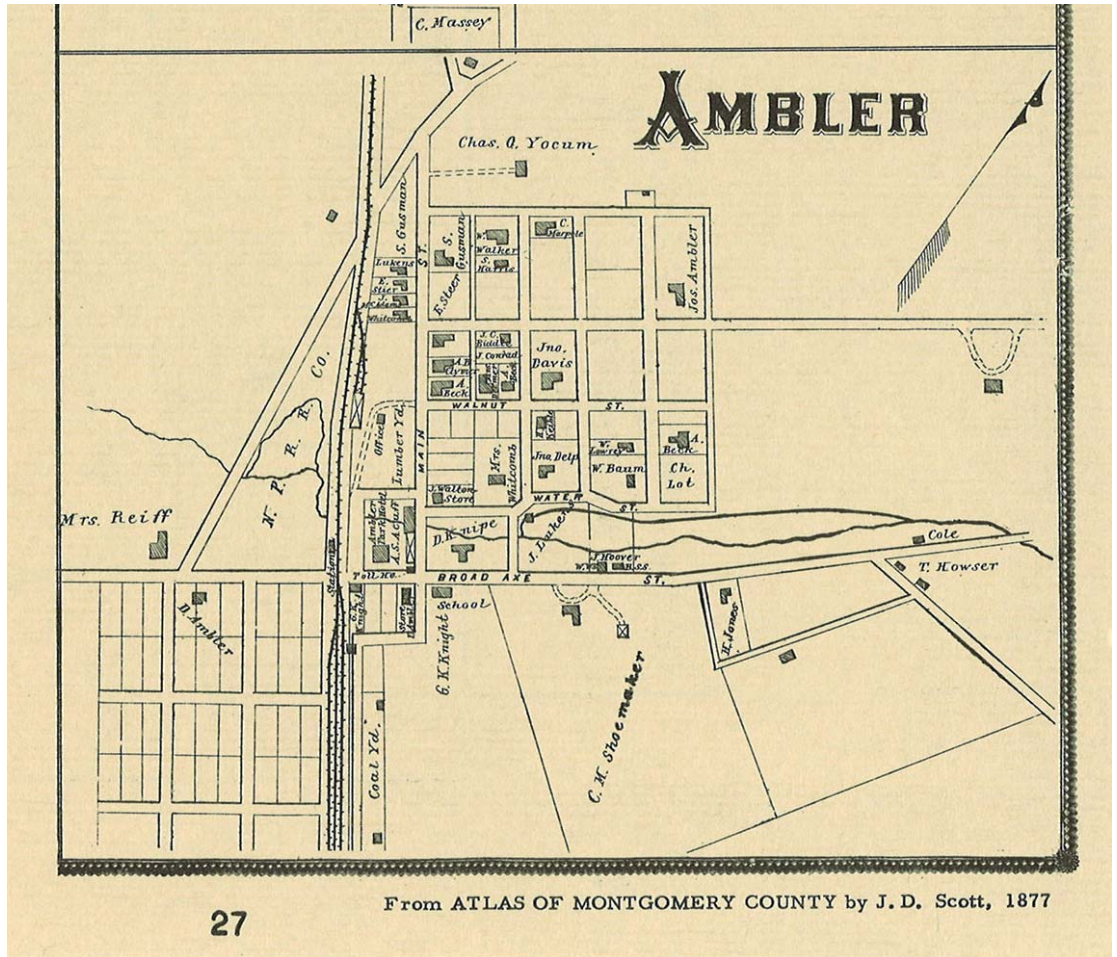
7. (Former) Ambler Southbound Railroad Station (Butler Ave.; one-story frame built 1888). It is currently used as a restaurant.
8. Keasbey & Mattison Co. Garage (Butler Ave. & Chestnut St.; 1-story brick built 1875-1880). Part of the Keasbey & Mattison indus-

5. Ambler Theater—108 E. Butler Ave. (1928). The 1,200-seat theater declined beginning in the 1970s. It, was elaborately restored and opened again for business in 2003.
6. Mary Ambler Homestead (Main St. and Belmont Ave.; 2.5 story stone, built 1715, 1765, 1831). This is the oldest standing house in the Borough. Assisting with



Former Keasbey & Mattison Company Garage (1875-1880)

Figure 4.7
Historic Map of Ambler, 1877



trial complex, this building originally housed company vehicles. Architecturally, the building is unique and probably was the work of local artisans. It's currently used for auto sales and repair.

9. Evan Ambler House and Store (Butler Ave. & Main St.; 2-story stone built 1840-1850). Hidden behind 20th century facades, this Victorian, mansard roof house was built by Evan Ambler, known as "Doc Ambler" because he was the seventh son of Andrew and Mary Ambler. He operated a general merchandise store.
10. Sunnyside Academy/Joseph Wilson's Store (Butler Ave. & Main St.; 3-story stone/frame built 1826). Built in the Federal architecture style, this building was constructed by merchant Joseph Wilson to house his general merchandise store. In 1870 the Ambler Post

Office occupied the store and the upper floors were rented to the Knight sisters, who operated a prestigious private boarding school until 1903.

11. Wyndham Hotel (Butler Ave. & Spring Garden St.; 3-story stone/frame built 1893). Built by John D. Cooper, the house contained 45 rooms (28 bedrooms) and is an example of Queen Anne Victorian architecture. A stable for 40 horses once stood in the rear of the property. Currently the building is vacant.
12. Ambler Post Office/Borough Hall (Butler Avenue and York Street; built 1939). Built in the Colonial Revival style, the post office was here from 1939 to 1990, when a new post office was constructed. It is now used as Borough Hall.
13. Deck's Hardware Store (Main St. and Race St.; 3-story frame built 1880). This building was

originally a tinsmith's shop owned by Harry Reed. J. Deck and Sons purchased the business and expanded it into hardware supplies around 1915. It remains in business.

14. Whitcomb House (Main St. opposite Forest Ave.; 2.5-story built 1840-1850). Built by Jonathan Lukens in the vernacular style of Victorian architecture, this house was part of the first commercial housing development in Ambler. In 1888 it was owned by the Whitcomb family. It is presently a private residence.
15. Jonathan Lukens Home (Main St. opposite Belmont Ave.; 2.5-story frame built 1840-1850). This house was built and owned by Jonathan Lukens, a pioneer in Ambler development. At various times, he owned a lumber and coal yard, sawmill, and clover mill and speculated in land and real estate. Today it is a private residence.
16. Korean Presbyterian Church (Forest Ave. & Spring Garden St.; stone built 1894). Formerly the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, this structure was built in the Victorian Gothic style.
17. Henry Keasbey House (217 Mt. Pleasant Ave.; 3-story stone built 1882). This Victorian house was the only Ambler residence of Henry Keasbey of Keasbey & Mattison Co. He resided here for only a short time before moving to France.

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF AMBLER BOROUGH

The Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey was completed by the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and the Conservancy of Montgomery County in 1999, with funding from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) and the Arcadia Foundation. The purpose of the survey was to identify those resources built before 1940 within the Borough of Ambler.

The survey recorded information about 912 historic resources and recognized the major influence Keasbey & Mattison had on the construction of housing and commercial buildings in the Borough. The report emphasized the architectural value of many of the Borough's structures, and noted there are examples of Colonial Revival, Beaux Arts, Italianate, Tudor, Victorian, Bungalow,

Craftsman, and Queen Anne architectural styles in the Borough.

The report's recommendations included establishing National Register and local historic districts. The report stated this would protect buildings from demolition and insensitive alterations and attract investors who can benefit from rehabilitation tax credits for renovating historic income-producing properties.

In addition to properties already mentioned in this chapter, some of the more notable properties the survey documented included:

18. Ambler Trust Company building, 1 West Butler Ave., 1917. Colonial Revival brick structure used as a bank from 1917 to c.1960. Now a house and garden accessory store.
19. Bell Telephone Exchange/Old Borough Hall, 31 E. Butler Ave. (1906-07). This Colonial Revival structure is now utilized for office space.
20. First National Bank of Ambler (1923), 30 E. Butler Ave. This building constructed in the Richardsonian vernacular style is now used as a professional office.
21. Reiff's Mill, 302-304 W. Butler Ave., 1731-47. Former colonial revival grist mill owned by Joseph Reiff, now twin residential units.
22. Northbound Ambler Railroad Station (1888). Now serves as miniature train store.
23. Lewis Ambler House (3 Reiff's Mill Road, at Main Street). This house, constructed 1844, and the .11 acre parcel it sits upon borders Borough public open space on the triangle of land bounded by Main Street, Reiff's Mill Road, and Tennis Avenue. It is currently in residential use.
24. Joseph Haywood House (250 North Bethlehem Pike)—Now the Artman Lutheran Home, this large, architecturally attractive house on Bethlehem Pike was constructed as the home of Joseph Haywood, an early Borough Councilman.

The report also noted the significance of 219 Race Street, c.1960, designed by renowned architect Robert Venturi.

CHAPTER 5

POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

An important aspect of open space is the accessibility of that space to community residents and to the region as a whole. This section of the plan identifies potential open space linkages that can tie together open space sites within the Borough and connect to open space in adjacent Townships. Such connections help form a more comprehensive open space system for residents and contribute to the creation of a more effective and enjoyable regional network. They can increase the accessibility of parks by allowing off-street pedestrian and bicycle access and can offer recreational opportunities in and of themselves as passive, natural recreational space. Examples of potential linkages throughout the County include stream valleys, sidewalks, abandoned rail lines, utility corridors, and similar linear features.

Identification of potential linkages on a regional level will help to contribute to Montgomery County's vision of a Countywide Trail System. Possible connections for Ambler Borough are described below and shown in Figure 5.1.

BOROUGH PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES

BOROUGH LOOP TRAIL

A Borough loop trail would link parks, open space, the central business district, historic resources, and other points of interest in Ambler. More specifically, this trail should link the following areas:

- Borough Parks: Ricciardi Park, Borough Park, Knight Park, Pickering Field, Jean Thompson Playground, Locust Street Park
- Wissahickon Creek and the future Wissahickon County trail

Figure 5.1
Trail Map

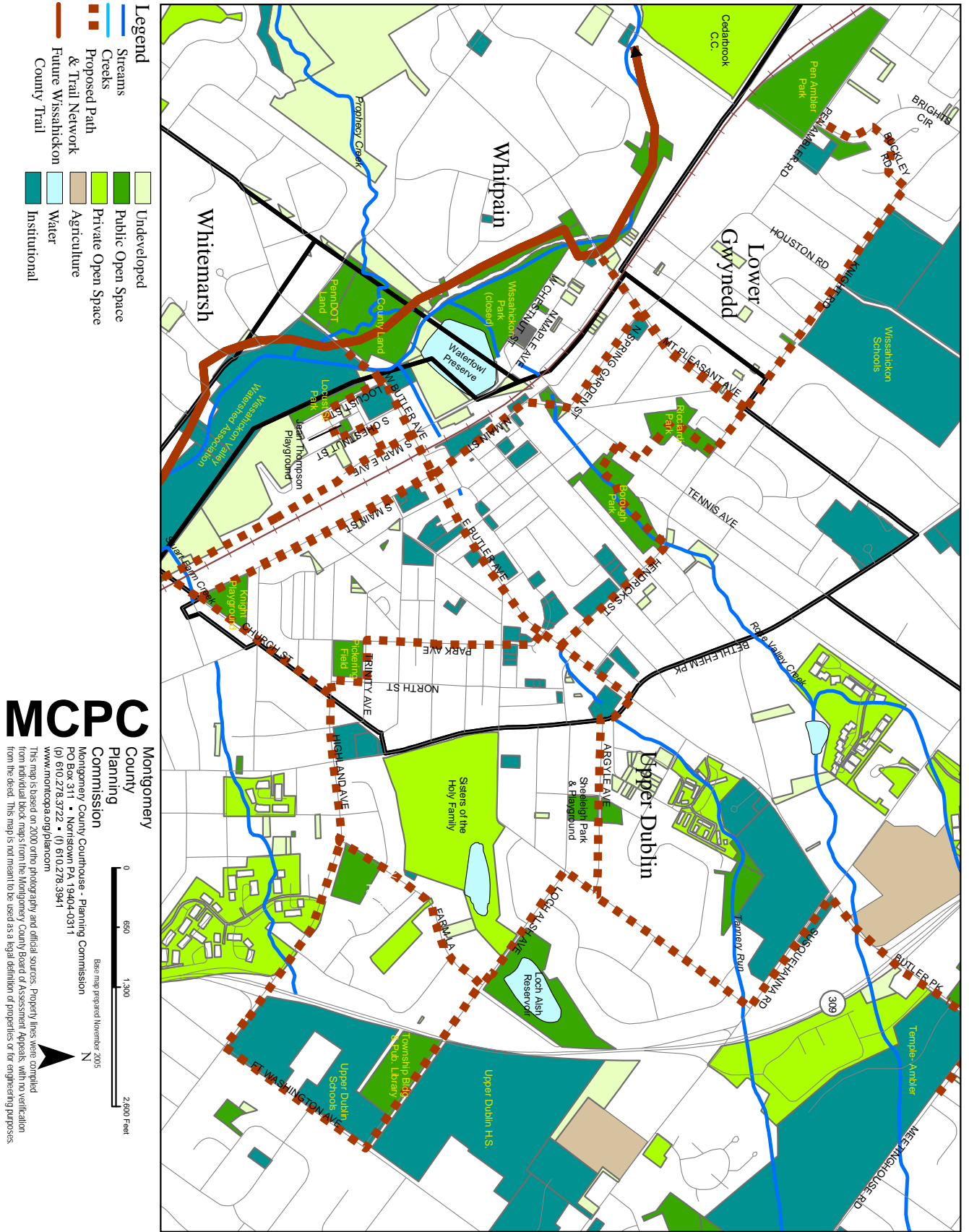

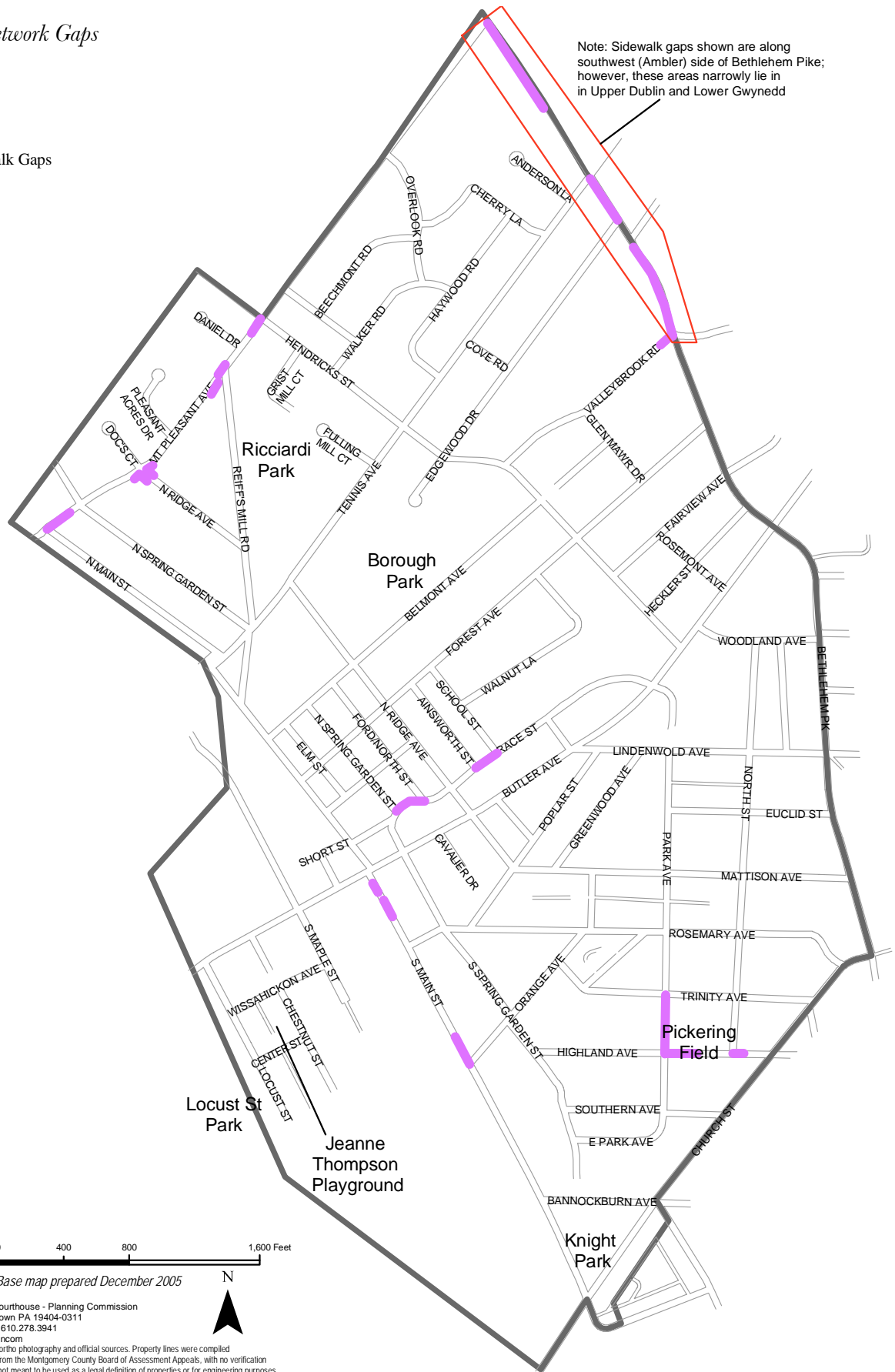


Figure 5.2
Sidewalk Network Gaps

Legend

 Sidewalk Gaps

Note: Sidewalk gaps shown are along southwest (Ambler) side of Bethlehem Pike; however, these areas narrowly lie in Upper Dublin and Lower Gwynedd



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom

0 400 800 1,600 Feet
 Base map prepared December 2005

N

This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

- Central business district (including businesses along Butler Avenue and Main Street)
- The Rail Corridor Revitalization Area
- Picturesque, historic neighborhoods. This includes attractive residential areas, the Butler Avenue Commercial District, and individual historic resources (e.g., the Mary Ambler House, the Henry Keasbey House, the Jonathan Lukens Home, and historic sites associated with the railroad and industry).

The Borough Loop Trail should include various improvements to help identify the route and provide a safe, enjoyable trail through the Borough. These improvements should include:

- Crosswalks—Such as stamped concrete or ladder-style painted crosswalks for best visibility and appearance. On some streets safety could be enhanced by installing signs alerting drivers to the crosswalk or by installing a blinking yellow light.
- Curb Ramps (handicapped accessible)
- Signage— This should identify the trail, provide directional and distance information to key points of interest, and provide maps. Signage should be designed attractively, using color, size, and materials compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and which does not detract from the appearance of surrounding neighborhoods.
- Sidewalks— Should be constructed or repaired along the trail route to fill in gaps in the sidewalk system or improve sidewalk conditions.
- Bollards—Attractively designed posts would protect Borough loop trail users from automobile traffic in areas of heavy traffic and where the sidewalk is very close to the street.

ROSE VALLEY CREEK TRAIL

The Rose Valley Creek corridor is an attractive natural area that contains most of the sensitive environmental features in Ambler Borough. These include floodplains, steep slopes, alluvial soils, hydric soils, and woods. The area south of Hendricks Street is preserved as part of Borough Park. However, in parts the area is overgrown with vegetation and

erosion has damaged sections of the bank. Anti-erosion measures could be implemented and a more defined trail could be constructed here.

BOROUGH PARK—RICCIARDI PARK LINKAGE

Borough Park and Ricciardi Park are the community’s two largest open space/recreation areas and are located in the same general area, separated only by Tennis Avenue and existing homes on that road. A closer link between the two parks using directional signage and sidewalk and crosswalk improvements along Tennis Avenue and/or Fulling Mill Court should be investigated. In addition, the acquisition of an easement from Tennis Avenue northwest to Ricciardi Park would help link the parks, making it easier and safer to walk from one to the other.



Ricciardi Park

SOUTH MAPLE AVENUE—CHURCH STREET LINKAGE

The land at the end of South Maple Street is currently proposed for development. The Borough supports having the developer provide land for and access to a trail linking South Maple Street and Church Street. If safety concerns related to crossing the railroad tracks at Church Street are adequately resolved, this would make it possible to expand the Borough Loop Trail by adding this section to it. This would improve access between the Rail Corridor Redevelopment Area and the part of the Borough near Knight Park. Rail Corridor residents would have better access to Knight Park’s facilities, and residents living near Knight Park would have better access

to Jeanne Thompson Park, Locust Street Park, and the Wissahickon Trail.

LINKAGES TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

CONNECTION TO THE GREEN RIBBON PRESERVE AND FUTURE WISSAHICKON COUNTY TRAIL

COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM

The County Trail system includes both existing and proposed trails (see Figure 5.2). It will allow trail users to connect to parks, schools, residential areas, and shopping districts across Montgomery County. It will also provide connections to trails in adjacent counties.

One of the proposed County trails is the Wissahickon Trail, a 12.5 mile trail which will extend the existing Green Ribbon Preserve Trail and will run from the Liberty Bell Trail in the north to Philadelphia's Fairmount Park in the south. The Green Ribbon Preserve Trail, an existing walking path along the Wissahickon Creek, runs from Stenton Avenue in Whitmarsh Township to a point near Lansdale Borough.

Connections accessed via the Wissahickon Trail include:

- Fort Washington State Park
- Wissahickon Valley Park
- Municipal parks such as Parkside Place in Upper Gwynedd
- Forbidden Drive Trail in Fairmount Park
- The future Liberty Bell Trail (linking Norristown with Bucks County at Telford)
- The future Cross County Trail (connecting the Schuylkill River at Conshohocken with the Penny-pack Creek near Bryn Athyn)

BUTLER AVENUE LINK

There are various points at which the Borough could establish a pedestrian linkage with the Wissahickon Trail (see Figure 5.1). One such linkage is via Butler Avenue.

This route connects to the future Wissahickon Trail by crossing the Butler Pike bridge in Upper Dublin just past the Borough boundary. This route could be improved easily with signage, and perhaps some attractive bollards to protect pedestrians from traffic on Butler Avenue. The Borough should investigate collaboration with Upper Dublin Township to consider improvements to the sidewalk over the Butler Pike bridge and consider constructing a sidewalk from the bridge to the Trail.

MT. PLEASANT AVENUE LINK

A link to the Wissahickon Trail utilizing Mt. Pleasant Avenue could also be arranged. This would cross the railroad and take pedestrians into Whitpain Township where it would meet the Wissahickon Trail. Coordination should be undertaken with Whitpain Township and the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association.

CONNECTIONS TO UPPER DUBLIN PARKS AND LOCH ALSH RESERVOIR

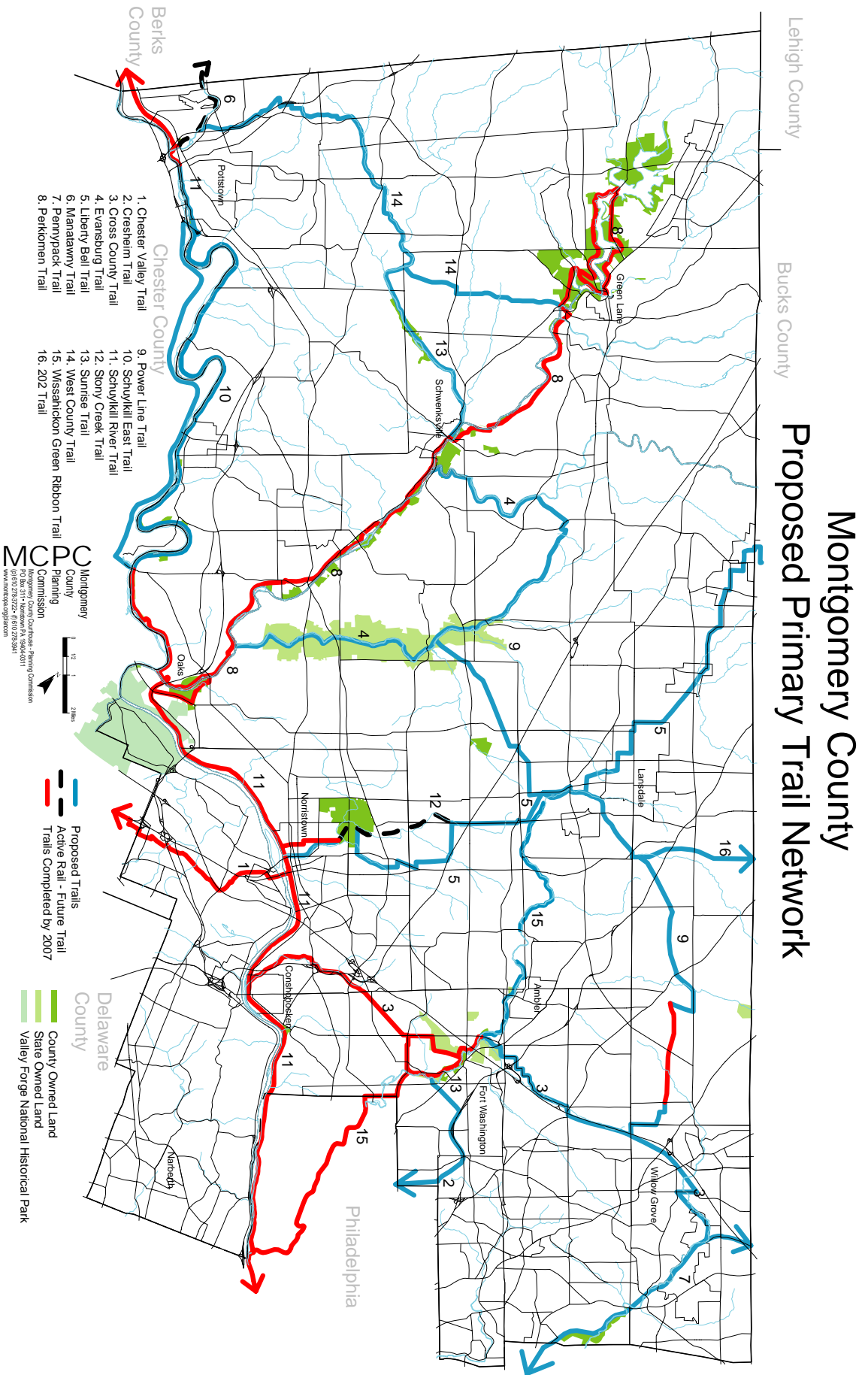
Ambler should also consider collaborating with Upper Dublin to establish linkages from the Borough to Loch Alsh Reservoir, Sheeleigh Park & Playground, Veterans Memorial Park (on Highland Avenue), and Upper Dublin High School. Such linkages would make it easier for Ambler residents to access all three parks, and could encourage more Upper Dublin residents to walk to Ambler's commercial business district.

One suggested route would cross Bethlehem Pike at the intersection with Butler Pike. This would



Wissahickon Creek/Green Ribbon Preserve

Figure 5.3
Proposed County Trail Network



utilize the existing traffic signal to facilitate pedestrian crossing. The trail could proceed down Bethlehem Pike one block to Argyle Avenue, where it would turn and pass attractive historic row-homes before reaching Sheeleigh Park & Playground. The trail could then use Loch Alsh Avenue to reach the Reservoir, which lies just a few blocks past the park. A connection to Veterans Memorial Park and Upper Dublin High School from the Borough



Sheeleigh Park, Upper Dublin



Loch Alsh Reservoir, Upper Dublin

would also be desirable. Trail users could reach these destinations from Ambler by crossing Bethlehem Pike at the existing traffic signal on Highland Avenue.

CONNECTIONS TO LOWER GWYNEDD AND PEN AMBLER PARK

The Borough recently collaborated with Lower Gwynedd Township to purchase Pen Ambler Park, located in Lower Gwynedd, less than half a mile outside the Borough. This park's location outside



Pen Ambler Park (soon to undergo improvements)

Ambler makes it crucial to ensure safe and convenient pedestrian access to reach the park from the Borough. A linkage to the park would extend northwest from Hendricks Street in Ambler (which becomes Knight Road in Lower Gwynedd). The trail route would then use Buckley Road and Brights Lane and would cross Pen Ambler Road to reach Pen Ambler Park. The trail would connect to the Wissahickon Public Schools and athletic fields. There are already sidewalks along part of this route, but the filling in of gaps in the sidewalk system, the addition of crosswalks and accompanying safety signage, and attractive directional and distance signage would make this link stronger.

Since this link goes through Lower Gwynedd and is a proposed Lower Gwynedd Township trail, it is recommended any such project be undertaken in collaboration with the Township, which in turn would benefit from gaining better trail access into the Borough and its parks and open space system. This trail would connect to a future Township Trail on Pen Ambler Road and a proposed Lower Gwynedd Township trail via Cedar Lane off Mt. Pleasant Avenue.

CONNECTIONS TO WHITPAIN

In addition to the Wissahickon Trail, there are other opportunities for trail connections from Ambler to Whitpain Township. These include linkages to the Armentrout Preserve, part of which is open to the public; the future Prophecy Creek Trail; Prophecy Creek Park; and land owned by Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association along Morris Road.

Whitpain is currently investigating the best use of Prophecy Creek Park; currently it is in a natural state and is mowed in some areas. Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association plans to construct a trail along

Prophecy Creek Park which would link Prophecy Creek Park with the Wissahickon Trail near Butler Pike. Although it is not currently open to the public, Wissahickon Park could also be a linkage in the future (pending a resolution of its environmental state).

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF UNPROTECTED RESOURCES

As outlined in Chapter Four, important vulnerable resources such as floodplains, woodlands, scenic views, and historic sites are found in the Borough. This chapter identifies areas where they are not permanently protected, proposes priorities for their future preservation, and establishes specific protection goals. Generally, the priority categories are based on the extent of resources found in a given area (particularly where a concentration exists), their location and contribution to community identity, and the open space goals established in Chapter Two. Figure 6.1 shows the locations of each site.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic sites are one important vulnerable resource in a community. Individually and taken together, they provide a link to a community's past and thereby can make a valuable contribution to its current educational, cultural, and social environment. In the case of historic structures, often their architectural significance and/or uniqueness create visual interest by contrasting with surrounding development. Of course, the number and type of historic resources varies from place to place, dependent largely upon the particular mix of political, social, cultural, and archeological factors.

At the national level, the National Register of Historic Places contains a record of properties considered

worthy of preservation. This list contains a number of sites in Montgomery County, such as Valley Forge National Park. Although there are none in Ambler, two sites and one district have been certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) as officially eligible for the National Register. These include:

- The Keasbey & Mattison Boiler Plant
- The Forest Avenue School (now the Senior Adult Activity Center)
- The Ambler Borough Commercial Historic District (1-12 West Butler Avenue and 1-170 East Butler Avenue).

At this time, the most comprehensive inventory of Borough sites has been compiled by the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and Conservancy of Montgomery County. The survey inventoried properties in the Borough constructed prior to 1940.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources are elements of the natural and/or built environment that stand out among the visual attributes of a community. They tend to be the most pleasant and interesting places, such as historic sites, natural features like lakes or creeks, and recreation areas.

Although the process of identifying a scenic resource is largely dependent on the observer's own opinions and preferences, information collected from a community group, such as a planning commission, can provide a relatively broad inventory. Wherever possible, these areas should be preserved and linked to the community's open space and recreation system. Scenic resources in Ambler are summarized below under the combined heading of roadways and views and are mapped in Figure 4.5. The defining element or feature for each resource is noted.

Roadways with scenic attributes contribute to a community's open space system because they provide a way to view its scenic resources and in some cases also serve as recreation routes for walkers, bicyclists, and joggers. A number of such roads exist in the Borough.



The Rose Valley Creek flows through sensitive environmental areas; however, not all of the creek is protected in the Borough.

PRIORITIZATION OF AREAS FOR PRESERVATION

HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS

- **LAND TO FACILITATE TRAILS AND ACCESS TO PARKS**– This includes land facilitating a link between Borough Park and Ricciardi Park, and land facilitating a link between South Maple Avenue and Church Street.
- **LAND PRONE TO FLOODING**– This includes land along certain parts of the Stuart Farm Creek, Rose Valley Creek, and Tannery Run (especially along the portions of the creeks near culverts where water tends to back up). Preservation of land in these areas can be used to restore floodplains, reduce flooding and minimize impacts of flooding by removing structures. For a list of specific parcels affected by recent flooding see Figure 11.1.]
- **STREAM BANKS**– Preserve and restore stream banks along any one of the Borough's creeks. This would reduce erosion, facilitate protection or re-establishment of riparian corridors (helping filter and reduce runoff, protect stream quality, and provide a corridor for wildlife). This might involve parts of the Rose Valley Creek not already protected by Borough Park and the Borough's open space on Reiff's Mill Road; protection of stream banks could serve to expand stream banks already protected in those areas.
- **WOODLANDS**– In Rose Valley located outside Borough Park. This may involve purchase of a conservation easement.

HIGH PRIORITY AREAS




- **HISTORIC RESOURCES**– Including buildings, other structures, and facades (including the Mary Ambler House). This may involve acquisition or purchase of conservation easements, or adoption of a historic preservation ordinance.

PRIORITY AREAS

- **ROSE VALLEY CREEK AND TANNERY RUN (DECHANNELIZE PORTIONS)**– Dechannelize portions of the Rose Valley Creek and Tannery Run not already underground.

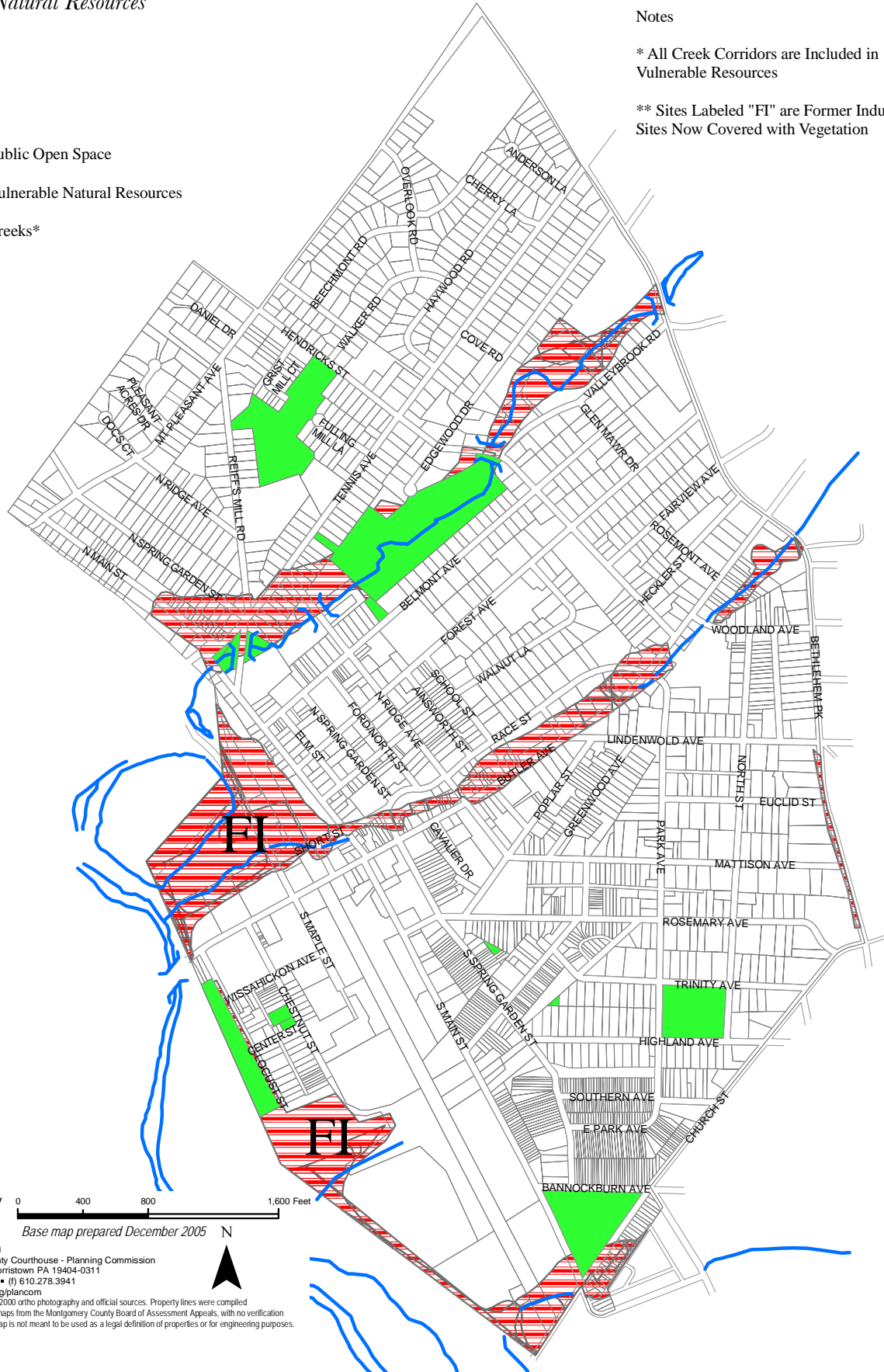
Figure 6.1
Vulnerable Natural Resources

Legend

-  Public Open Space
-  Vulnerable Natural Resources
-  Creeks*

Notes

- * All Creek Corridors are Included in Vulnerable Resources
- ** Sites Labeled "FI" are Former Industrial Sites Now Covered with Vegetation



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom

0 400 800 1,600 Feet
 Base map prepared December 2005



This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

CHAPTER 7

EVALUATION OF GROWTH AREAS

In addition to establishing open space preservation areas, it is important to identify areas that can accommodate any projected community growth. While virtually all of Ambler is built out, there is some room for both residential and non-residential infill development. This chapter examines the direction of population and employment changes expected in Ambler and evaluates whether the municipality needs to identify specific growth areas.

Revitalization opportunities are focused on the Rail Corridor and downtown commercial area. Strategies for Revitalization were described in the Redevelopment Area Plan for the Ambler Borough Rail Corridor (2003) and the updated Ambler Borough Revitalization Plan (2005). Infill development may also occur; this typically occurs on scattered residential and commercial properties where space permits. This chapter examines the amount of population and employment growth that is expected in Ambler and assesses whether the Borough can accommodate that growth under current zoning.

POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

By the year 2025, Ambler is projected to have a residential population of 7,420 persons, approximately 1,000 more than the Borough had in 2000 and an increase of over 15 percent (Figure 7.1).

In addition, it is expected to have about 2,837 people employed, an increase of 137 from 2000 (approximately 5 percent– see Figure 7.2). In addition, Ambler’s average household size is ex-

pected to decline, meaning even more housing units are required to support the growing Borough population (Figure 7.3). Zoning changes providing for high-density residential uses have been proposed, and others could be proposed in the future that would accommodate an increase of population on this scale. The Borough's growth areas (for both residential and nonresidential development) are indicated in figure 7.4.

New and existing residents will come to expect advances in the Borough, such as a revitalized downtown; and upgrades to housing, municipal facilities, and passive and active open space areas.

AMBLER'S FUTURE GROWTH AREAS

Future growth in Ambler is targeted to occur most intensely in the Rail Corridor Redevelopment Area, but infill development and revitalization are also expected to occur in the central business district. The map in Figure 7.4 shows potential Borough growth areas based on zoning districts which permit more intensive uses. Any future development in the Borough should be compatible with the character of surrounding areas and should aim to preserve existing natural features.

Figure 7.1
Population Projections

Year	Population
1990	6,609
2000	6,426
2005*	6,490
2010*	6,910
2015*	7,270
2020*	7,350
2025*	7,420

Years	% Change
1990-2000	-2.8%
2000-2010	7.5%
2010-2020	6.4%
2000-2025	15.5%

*Source: DVRPC Forecasts, 2005

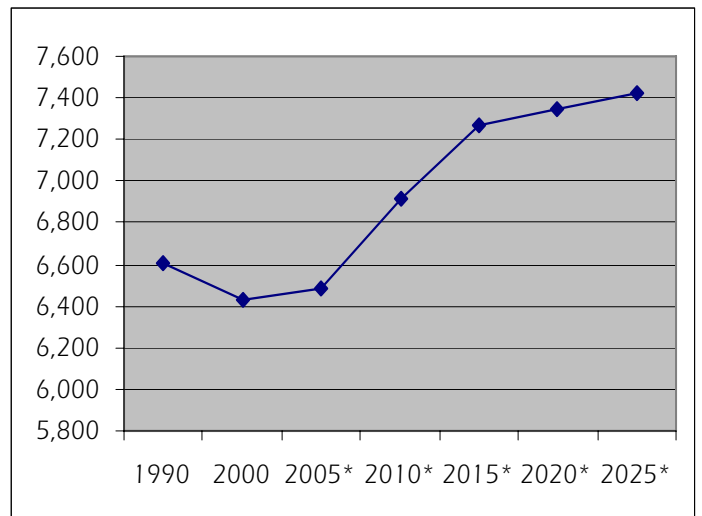


Table 7.2
Employment Projections

Year	Total Employment
1990	3,328
2000	2,700
2005*	2,704
2010*	2,788
2015*	2,807
2020*	2,821
2025*	2,837

Years	% Change
1990-2000	-18.9%
2000-2010	3.3%
2010-2020	1.2%
2000-2025	5.1%

*Source: DVRPC Forecasts

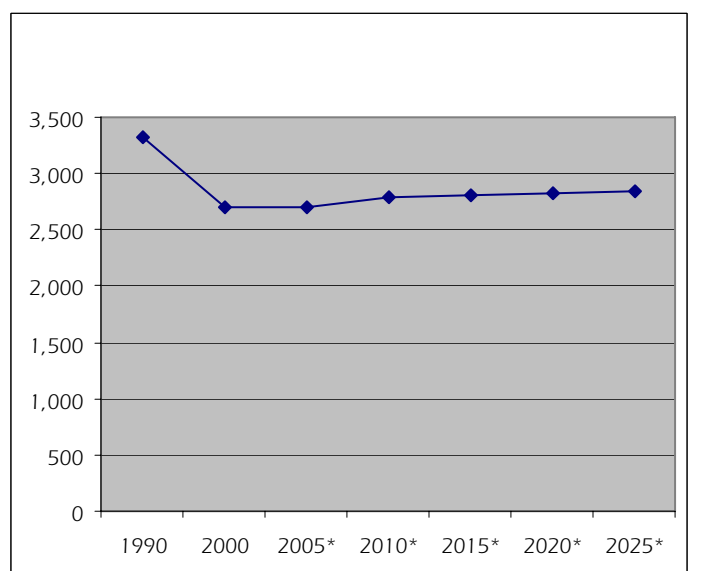


Figure 7.3
2025 Housing Unit Demand

Residential	2000
Existing Households	2,510
	2025
Projected Population in Households	7,100
Future Average Household Size	2.38
Projected Households in 2025	2,983
Vacancy Rate	2.2%
Total Future Housing Units	3,049
New Future Units Added	444

The projected population data used in this report is from 2005 DVRPC data, which was derived based on a variety of factors, including revitalization trends and expectations. The projected buildout for Ambler Borough was based not exclusively on housing units permitted under current zoning; rather it allows for the possibility that current zoning might change.

VULNERABLE AREAS **(LAND WHICH MIGHT BE DEVELOPED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT)**

The former Bo-Rit industrial site (a brownfield industrial site with asbestos waste totaling 6 acres) on West Maple Avenue is considered a vulnerable natural resource which might be developed because it abuts a bird sanctuary (the former industrial reservoir), it borders and buffers Tannery Run, and contains wooded areas. The land around Tannery Run on the opposite side of West Maple Avenue from the Bo-Rit site contains the Tannery Run, and is thus also a vulnerable area.

The two parcels of land on that side of the road total 3.9 acres and include the former Ambler warehouse. Most of those sites do not contain sensitive natural resources, however. Another area likely to be developed is at the end of South Maple Avenue on the property formerly owned by the Keasbey & Mattison Company. Developers have plans to construct condominiums on 9.2 acres of land in that location, and reuse the Keasbey & Mattison Boiler Plant building (on a one-acre parcel) for offices.

RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT POTENTIAL

Under current zoning, up to 368 units could be constructed on the 9.2 acre site currently proposed for condominiums. If the Keasbey & Mattison Boiler Plant building is redeveloped for residential uses, up to 68 units could be constructed on that site. It is always possible that zoning changes might permit housing in additional areas or at increased densities in the future.

Figure 7.4
Potential Growth and Revitalization Areas

Legend

 Growth Area



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom

0 400 800 1,600 Feet
 Base map prepared August 2005

This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

CHAPTER 8

EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS

RECREATION STANDARDS

This section of the plan examines the amount of existing public open space and types of recreation facilities in relation to current and expected future needs. Recreation-oriented organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommend that municipalities strive to meet their open space needs independently of other providers, such as schools and private developments. Therefore open space provided by quasi-public establishments is considered only peripherally. An analysis of recreational public open space considers how open space land is distributed in addition to showing if a deficit exists or will occur in the future. The results of the analysis should help guide decisions concerning future open space preservation and facilities planning.

THE SELECTION OF A STANDARD

The NRPA has developed national standards for recreation, parks, and open space (Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines; 1983). Its standards are widely accepted and used, although they should be viewed only as a guide for planning, not as absolute criteria. In addition, these standards mainly apply to recreational uses, rather than passive or natural open space (of which there is no standard minimum or

maximum). The commonly used standard is the population ratio method, or the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The NRPA estimates that a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of municipally owned and developed open space per 1,000 people is a useful guide. Generally speaking, the more densely populated an area is, the higher the ratio should be. Therefore a more developed municipality like Ambler might apply a

higher ratio than a rural municipality such as Worcester Township. The higher ratio would help compensate for smaller yards, and more people to serve with recreation facilities per square mile.

For the purposes of this plan, both the low and high ratios are used to create a range for evaluating existing conditions and to perhaps establish an acreage goal for the community. For example, the midpoint value of the recommended range may be a good target.

Further, the NRPA recommends that the developed open space consist of a core system of parkland, distributed among neighborhood parks and community parks. Each of these components are of a certain size, have a defined

"service area", and provide for certain uses (active and/or passive). Figure 8.2 shows a .25 and .5 mile service area for each public park. Most people are able and will walk between one quarter and one half mile to reach a destination. Open Space acreage in Ambler has been broken down and compared to the NRPA standards to determine if a particular need exists now or may develop in the future. Figure 8.1 shows the results of applying these standards.

PARK TYPES

As shown, Ambler's current total open space falls at the upper end of the recommended minimum acreage. This count includes Loch Alsh Reservoir in Upper Dublin, owned by the Ambler

Figure 8.1
Minimum Open Space Needs

Projected Population	2000		2010		2025	
	From	To	From	To	From	To
	6,426		6,910		7,420	
Range	From	To	From	To	From	To
Recommended Acreage (by NRPA standards)						
Community	32	51	35	55	37	59
Neighborhood	8	16	9	17	9	19
TOTAL	40	67	43	73	46	78
Existing Acreage						
Community	60		60		60	
Neighborhood	1		2		2	
TOTAL	62		63		63	
Difference						
Community	28	9	25	5	23	1
Neighborhood	-7	-15	-7	-15	-7	-17
TOTAL	21	-6	19	-11	16	-16

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; DVRPC; MCPC; NRPA; Gilmore & Associates

* Projected Population

Notes:

(1) Recommended Acreage - Range per 1000 persons as follows:

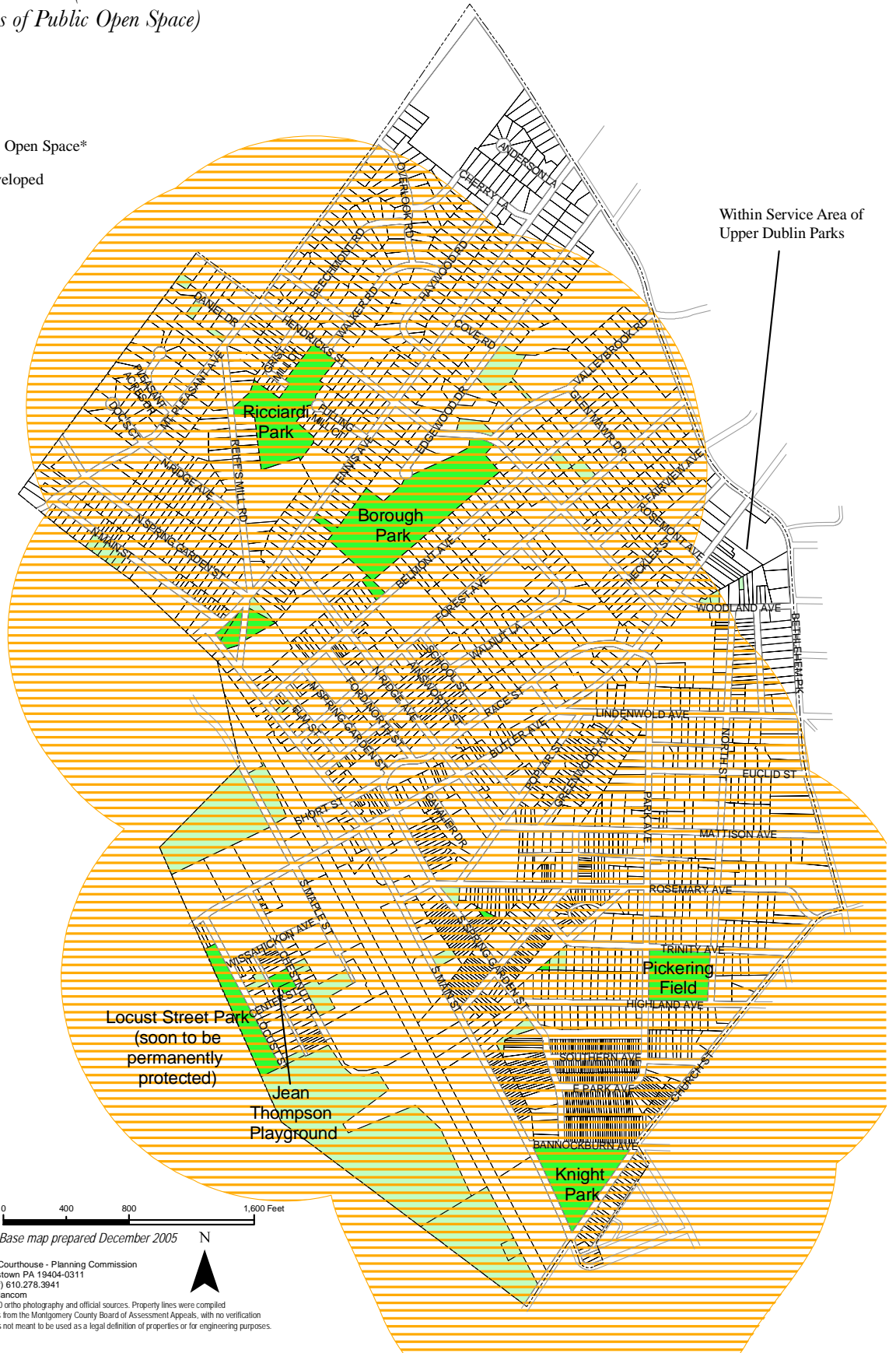
Community Level = 5.0 - 8.0 acres; Neighborhood Level = 1.25 - 2.5 acres; total= 6.25 - 10.0 acres

(2) Borough open space acreage will increase with acquisition of Locust St Playground (.8 acres)

Figure 8.2
*Open Space Service Areas (Land
 Within .25 Miles of Public Open Space)*

Legend

- Public Open Space*
- Undeveloped



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom
 This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

Water Department, and PenAmbler Park, located in and co-owned with Lower Gwynedd.

EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

Ambler’s parks can be placed into two main categories: Community-level and Neighborhood-level. Typical characteristics of community-level parks are large size (serving more than one neighborhood), a central location, a good range of facilities/ amenities (creek and woodlands corridor, ball fields, playground equipment, etc.), and parking. Most parks in the Borough meet the description for community-level parks, such as Borough Park or Pickering Field. As seen in Figure 8.1, the Borough meets the NRPA’s recommendations for amount of community-level park acreage; the Borough has 60 acres of community-level open space (Pen Ambler Park and Loch Alsh Reservoir are included in this calculation).

Neighborhood-level open space refers to smaller areas that serve a particular area of the commu-



Borough Park

nity (typically one neighborhood), a concentrated or limited population or specialized group such as elderly residents or young children, and provide for quiet, informal recreation as well as facilities for short term, frequent and active use. Good examples are playgrounds (such as Jean Thompson Playground), tot lots, and pocket parks (small green space within a highly developed area). The open space along Reiff’s Mill

Figure 8.3
Open Space Area Inventory

Name	Open Space Type	Acreage	Facilities/Amenities
Loch Alsh Reservoir	Community	21.0	Reservoir (Fishing, Hiking)
PenAmbler Park (under development)	Community	18.7	Baseball field, walking trail, 2 basketball courts, play equipment, amphitheater, picnic area
Borough Park	Community	8.9	Rose Valley Creek corridor, informal trails
Knight Park	Community	5.7	Play equipment, benches, picnic tables, 2 basketball courts, 1 baseball field, 1 multi-use court, 2 bocce courts
Ricciardi Park	Community	5.0	Walking trail, multi-use court, play equipment
Pickering Field	Community	2.9	3 baseball fields, 1 basketball court, play equipment
Reiff’s Mill Open Space	Neighborhood	0.9	Rose Valley Creek (channelized)
Locust Street Playground *	Neighborhood	0.8	Basketball court, benches, lawn
Jean Thompson Playground	Neighborhood	0.3	Benches, play equipment

* Acreage Estimate

Road also meets the description for neighborhood-level open space.

The Borough’s combined community-level and neighborhood-level open space (it’s total open space) lies at the upper end of the recommended range of total open space for a municipality of Ambler’s population, according to the NRPA. The Borough provided 62 acres of total open space, which will be increased to 63 acres with the addition of Locust Street Play-



Figure 8.4
Recreation Facility Needs

Pickering Field Ball Fields, Batting Cage, and Scoreboard

Standard Per 1,000 Pop.		2000 Population	2025 Population	Permanently Protected Facilities	2025 Deficit	Additional Facilities Accessible to Ambler Residents
		6,426	7,100			
		Recommended Facilities				
Basketball Courts	0.2	1.3	1.4	7		Sheeleigh Park, West Side Park
Tennis Courts	0.5	3.2	3.6	0	-3.6	Sheeleigh Pk, Wiss. Schools**
Volleyball Courts	0.2	1.3	1.4	0	-1.4	
Baseball/Softball Fields	0.4	2.6	2.8	5		Wissahickon Schools**
Soccer Fields	0.1	0.6	0.7	0	-0.7	Wissahickon Schools **
Football Fields	0.3	1.9	2.1	0	-2.1	Wissahickon Schools**
Running Track (1/4 mile)	0.1	0.3	0.4	1		Wissahickon Schools **
Swimming Pools	0.1	0.3	0.4	0	-0.4	
Playgrounds	0.6	3.9	4.3	5		Wissahickon Schools**
Picnicking Areas	0.2	1.5	1.7	2		
Multipurpose Fields	0.3	1.9	2.1	1	-1.1	Wissahickon Schools**
Nature Areas	0.2	1.5	1.7	2		Wissahickon Green Ribbon
Golf Courses	0.0	0.3	0.3	0	-0.3	

* Projected

** Available during non-school hours

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, MCPC; NRPA

ground. NRPA's recommendations for the year 2010 are for 43 to 73 acres to be provided.

Since the Borough is virtually built-out, creating a new community-level park within the Borough is unlikely. The addition of neighborhood-level open space however, including pocket parks, is more feasible. One example of this type of acquisition is Locust Street Playground, including a basketball court, benches, and grassy area. Pocket parks are most valuable in areas that are not conveniently served by existing sites because of distance or a natural or man-made barrier (such as train tracks).

The Borough will have three neighborhood-level sites (after the acquisition of Locust Street Playground), two of which are located in South Ambler (see service areas in Figure 8.2). Their location in South Ambler compensates somewhat for the lack of access to larger, community-level open space in that part of the Borough. Access from south Ambler to community-level parks in the Borough is somewhat restricted by the barrier formed by the railroad tracks. Neighborhood-level sites will account for 2.0 acres of permanently protected open space after the Locust Street Playground acquisition, which is below the 9 to 17-acre range recommended by the NRPA for 2010. However, the high level of community-level open space in and near Ambler makes the neighborhood-level open space critical primarily in areas farther away and with less access to open space, such as south Ambler and the northern tip of the Borough.

PASSIVE OPEN SPACE

Unlike active open space needs, there is no standard to determine how much public acreage to devote to passive open space. Currently, Ambler has 9 acres of passive open space at Borough Park, just under one acre at the Reiff's Mill public open space area, and approximately one acre as part of the Locust Street Playground parcel. A portion of Pen Ambler Park, located in Lower Gwynedd, will also be preserved so as to protect passive open space. Other passive open space, much of it remediated asbestos waste areas, exists under private ownership. This includes the "white mountains" along the Borough's southwestern boundary and the former Bo-Rit site adjacent to the reservoir.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Figure 8.4 summarizes the results of applying specific recreational facility standards to Ambler and compares the results to the supply of existing municipal facilities. It should be noted that some results shown as fractions are rounded up to a whole number; for example, .6 soccer fields means 1 soccer field should be provided. As can be seen, the Borough provides the recommended number of sports fields or amenities for the following recreational activities: baseball/softball, basketball, running track, playgrounds, picnic and nature areas. Borough residents may also utilize Wissahickon School District facilities during non-school hours. The School District provides facilities meeting sports and recreation needs in most other categories.

The Borough need not try to meet all of the NRPA standards by itself. Some of these needs are met by the Wissahickon School District or nearby municipal parks. For example, Upper Dublin's Sheeleigh Park provides tennis courts. Further, these are general guidelines. The demand for recreational facilities varies and there may even be a greater demand for athletic facilities of a certain type than indicated in Figure 8.4. The Borough should focus on realistic goals such as improving existing facilities, perhaps providing a facility not currently provided (such as a volleyball court). The Borough should also focus on establishing better pedestrian and bike connections to Loch Alsh Reservoir, PenAmbler Park, and athletic facilities on Wissahickon School District property.

CHAPTER 9

EVALUATION OF COUNTY AND ABUTTING MUNICIPAL PLANS

The preceding chapters primarily investigate the resources, needs, and opportunities that exist within the municipal boundaries of Ambler. With this information, recommendations can be made to effectively serve Ambler residents. However, the land use decisions that Ambler makes affect the larger region just as decisions made in neighboring municipalities affect Ambler. Therefore, this open space planning effort should consider surrounding planning efforts.

This chapter compares the recommendations of this plan with those in the County comprehensive plan and the comprehensive, open space, and revitalization plans of abutting townships. The intent is to prevent conflicts between plans and to encourage collaboration of efforts. By gaining an understanding of how Ambler's plan will fit into the larger open space and trail linkage picture, partners can optimize both the quantity and quality of future open space preservation and management.

COMPARISON TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY LAND USE PLAN AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Montgomery County is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. This plan will help guide the growth of housing, transportation, economic development, and natural & cultural resource management, through 2025 and beyond. Each of these factors could potentially bear great signifi-

cance on open space needs and opportunities in Ambler.

Within this plan is the Vision of the County in 2025. This Vision sets up four issues as the highest priority for action:

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

Ambler’s Open Space Plan addresses all of these issues by setting a future course for wise land use, increasing linkages and accessibility, clustering and diversifying growth, and preserving open space.

The draft version of the Comprehensive Plan lists 48 goals that describe and expand upon the Vision of the County in 2025. Several of these goals parallel those in this Open Space Plan, adding strength to the recommendations set forth here.

(CHAPTER 4 OF VISION PLAN)

- Guiding Vision
- Support Smart Growth and Preservation Efforts both Regionally and Locally
- Work Together to Identify and Resolve Problems and Concerns
- Implement Plans Effectively and Cooperatively
- Identify and Address Problems at the Most Appropriate Level - Local, Regional, Watershed, etc.

LAND USE

- Direct Development to Designated Growth Areas
- Enhance Older Developed Areas
- Preserve Rural Resource Areas
- Encourage Sound Land Use Planning and Design
- Ensure Compatible Development in Residential Neighborhoods
- Preserve and Create Community Identity and a Sense of Place

OPEN SPACE, NATURAL FEATURES, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Preserve Large Interconnected Areas of Significant Open Space
- Protect and Manage Wetlands, Streams, Steep Slopes, Woodlands, and Natural Habitats
- Create a Greenway System along Rivers, Creeks, and Other Sensitive Natural and Historic Features
- Develop a Countywide Network of Interconnected Trails
- Provide Park Facilities to Meet the Public’s Recreation Needs
- Preserve Farmland and Farming
- Protect Scenic Roads, Vistas, and Viewsheds
- Protect Historic Resources and Cultural Landscapes

TRANSPORTATION

- Manage Traffic Congestion
- Improve Transportation Safety
- Increase Opportunities to Take Public Transit, Walk, Ride a Bike, or Other Nonautomotive Transportation Means
- Move Goods Efficiently and Considerately
- Maintain Air Travel as a Transportation Option

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

- Focus Public Sewer and Water Improvements in Designated Growth Areas
- Restrict the Extension of Water and Sewer into Rural Resource Areas
- Provide Environmentally-Safe Sewer Facilities
- Provide Adequate Energy and Communication Utilities with as Minimal Negative Impact as Possible
- Provide Appropriate Solid Waste Disposal that has a Minimal Negative Impact
- Provide High-Quality Emergency Services and Health Facilities

- Integrate Educational and Cultural Facilities into Communities

WATER RESOURCES

- Provide an Adequate Supply of Water for Both Consumption and Natural Habitats
- Protect Water Quality
- Effectively Manage Flooding
- Create Attractive Stormwater Facilities that Control Flooding, Recharge Groundwater, and Improve Water Quality

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Maintain the County’s Diverse Economy
- Attract and Retain Business by Maintaining a High Quality of Life
- Create a Good Business Climate
- Retain a Skilled Workforce for County Businesses
- Support a Readily Available Workforce
- Revitalize the County’s Downtowns and Main Streets
- Adaptively Reuse Vacant and Underutilized Industrial Sites
- Redevelop Vacant and Underutilized Shopping Centers

HOUSING

- Provide Enough Homes to Meet Future Housing Demand
- Encourage a Variety of Housing to Meet the Needs of People with Different Ages, Incomes, and Lifestyles
- Maintain and Conserve Existing Homes and Neighborhoods
- Promote Walkable and Well-Designed Residential Developments
- Encourage More Units of Affordable Housing for County Residents
- Support Housing for People with Special Needs

At a site-specific level, the draft County Open Space, Natural Features, and Cultural Resources Plan identifies several open space areas worthy of protection in Ambler Borough. They include the Borough parks and playgrounds, streams and riparian corridors, and two properties and one district certified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (The former Keasbey & Mattison Boiler Plant, the former Forest Avenue School [now the SAAC], and the Butler Avenue Commercial District). There are also numerous natural features identified as being worthy of preservation just outside the Borough’s boundaries. The closest of these is the Wissahickon Creek and stream corridor (including the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association’s Green Ribbon preserve and the future Wissahickon County Trail); County parkland near Butler Pike and Morris Road, and scenic Morris Road.

RELATION TO PLANS OF ABUTTING MUNICIPALITIES

Three townships abut Ambler. The open space policies and other pertinent planning information of each township are summarized below. Adjacent, yet incompatible, land uses may result in conflicts while potential linkages could lead to cooperative partnerships between municipal neighbors.

UPPER DUBLIN

Upper Dublin Township shares a border of 2.7 miles with Ambler. Upper Dublin’s Open Space Committee was in the process of formulating their open space plan when this plan was being written.

Preliminary Township open space goals include designating a township trail. At this stage it appears Ambler’s proposed trail would be consistent with and connect well with Upper Dublin’s proposed trail.

As noted earlier in this plan, Ambler recommends connecting its trail to Upper Dublin at two locations: at Butler Avenue and at Highland Avenue. In Upper Dublin trails would link Sheeleigh Park & Playground, Veterans Memorial Park, Loch Alsh Reservoir, and Temple-Ambler. Based on discussions with a representative of the Upper Dublin

Open Space Committee these plans appear consistent with Upper Dublin's plans at this stage.

LOWER GWYNEDD

Ambler shares a border of 1.1 miles with Lower Gwynedd. At the time of this report's writing, Lower Gwynedd Township was also formulating its open space plan. Ambler's proposed path designation in Lower Gwynedd along Knight Road and Bright's Lane would connect the Borough to Pen Ambler Park. This is consistent with the Pen Ambler Park Master Site Plan, which was prepared by DePallo Design & Planning in 2002 for Lower Gwynedd and Ambler, and is consistent with Open Space Planning in the Township. The Township has also indicated it would likely support the recommendation in this open space plan for an enhanced pedestrian crossing of Pen Ambler Road, possibly including a flashing light on a pedestrian crossing warning sign, or a speed table.

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP

Ambler shares a border of one-third of a mile with Whitpain. At the time of this report's writing, Whitpain Township's open space plan was being prepared; the Township's Open Space Committee had mapped future recommended trail routes and prioritized parcels for acquisition. Of particular interest to Ambler is Whitpain's proposed trails along the Prophecy Creek linking Prophecy Creek Park and the Prophecy Creek Trail Corridor (much of which is owned by the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association) with the Wissahickon Trail near Ambler. These areas would be within a short walking distance of the Borough.

CHAPTER 10

ACQUISITION EVALUATION

The following recommendations are proposed acquisition recommendations. The areas mentioned are significant to the Borough due to their natural features, environmental conservation, or historic resource value. A number of methods are available to the Borough to protect these properties, including fee simple acquisition, preservation easements, purchase of development rights, and leasing which are described further.

EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The properties discussed have been evaluated based on the following criteria: location, distribution, balance of types, diversity, how it meets the needs and goals, creation of an overall network or system, linkages within and to outside Ambler, ability to acquire or protect, and current vulnerability.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Natural resource areas can be preserved through outright acquisition or purchase of conservation easements. Acquisition of areas containing floodplains are of particular importance since the

Borough experiences serious flooding in certain areas. Specific natural resource areas which might be protected by the Borough include:

- Land along the Rose Valley Creek—Borough Park has preserved an important segment of the Rose Valley Creek and the floodplain and riparian corridor surrounding it. It provides an area for passive recreation, protects the natural scenery, and serves as a potential wildlife corridor and habitat. By protecting the floodplain the park limits flood damage, and provides an infiltration area to reduce runoff and downstream flooding of Rose Valley Creek. By making additional purchases of land or easements along the Rose Valley Creek the

Borough would help ensure additional parts of this attractive natural corridor remain undeveloped, limiting flooding and providing potential areas for passive recreation

- Land adjacent to Tannery Run on Woodland Avenue—This parcel is currently private open space, and would be a useful addition to the Borough’s open space system to prevent further development along the often flooded stream.
- Joint acquisitions with municipalities upstream for flood mitigation. Such purchases would require a park, recreation, or passive open space component.

(Acquisition of floodplains by the Borough to remediate flooding should focus on land on parcels identified in Figure 11.1. Additionally, other properties may be identified at a later date).

RECREATION AREAS

- Pocket Parks– The Borough should acquire pocket parks as the opportunity presents itself.
- Part of SAAC property (former Forest Avenue School)- Most of this property consists of a parking lot. Purchase of part of the parking lot could enable the Borough to convert it to a pocket park with community gardens, an open green area, or a modest recreational area (with athletic courts).

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Many of Ambler’s significant historic structures could be demolished or renovated so the historic resource is lost forever. In order to protect these irreplaceable historic properties, the properties could be purchased, placed under a historic conservation easement, or purchased and resold with a restrictive covenant (see “Purchase and Resale”, p.67). Many of these properties were inventoried and mapped in Chapter 4. The Borough considers the following historic sites most worthy and most viable to protect via acquisition, conservation easement, or restrictive covenant:

- Mary Ambler House—This property is important to the Borough since it was the home of the Borough’s namesake, Mary Ambler, and is the oldest home still standing in the Borough. Furthermore it was associated with an historic event. This house served as the makeshift

hospital which Mary Ambler used to care for those injured in the great train wreck of 1856.

- Whitcomb House (Main Street opposite Forest Avenue; 2.5-story frame house build 1840-1850). This house was built and owned by Jonathan Lukens, a pioneer in Ambler development. At various times, he owned a lumber and coal yard, sawmill, and clover mill and speculated in land and real estate. Today it is a private residence.
- Lewis Ambler House (3 Reiff’s Mill Road, at Main Street). This house, constructed 1844, and the .11 acre parcel it sits upon borders Borough public open space on the triangle of land bounded by Main Street, Reiff’s Mill Road, and Tennis Avenue. It is currently in residential use.
- Joseph Haywood House (Bethlehem Pike)— Now the Artman Lutheran Home, this large, architecturally attractive house on Bethlehem Pike was the home of Joseph Haywood, an early Borough Councilman.
- Henry Keasbey House- 3-story Victorian stone structure on Mt. Pleasant Avenue (at Pleasant Acres Drive), built 1880-1890. This was Keasbey’s only residence within the Borough. He resided here only a short time before moving to France.
- Other historic resources in the Borough should be considered for acquisition, preservation easements or other preservation methods if they are noteworthy to the Borough for their architecture or association with significant persons, events, or builders.

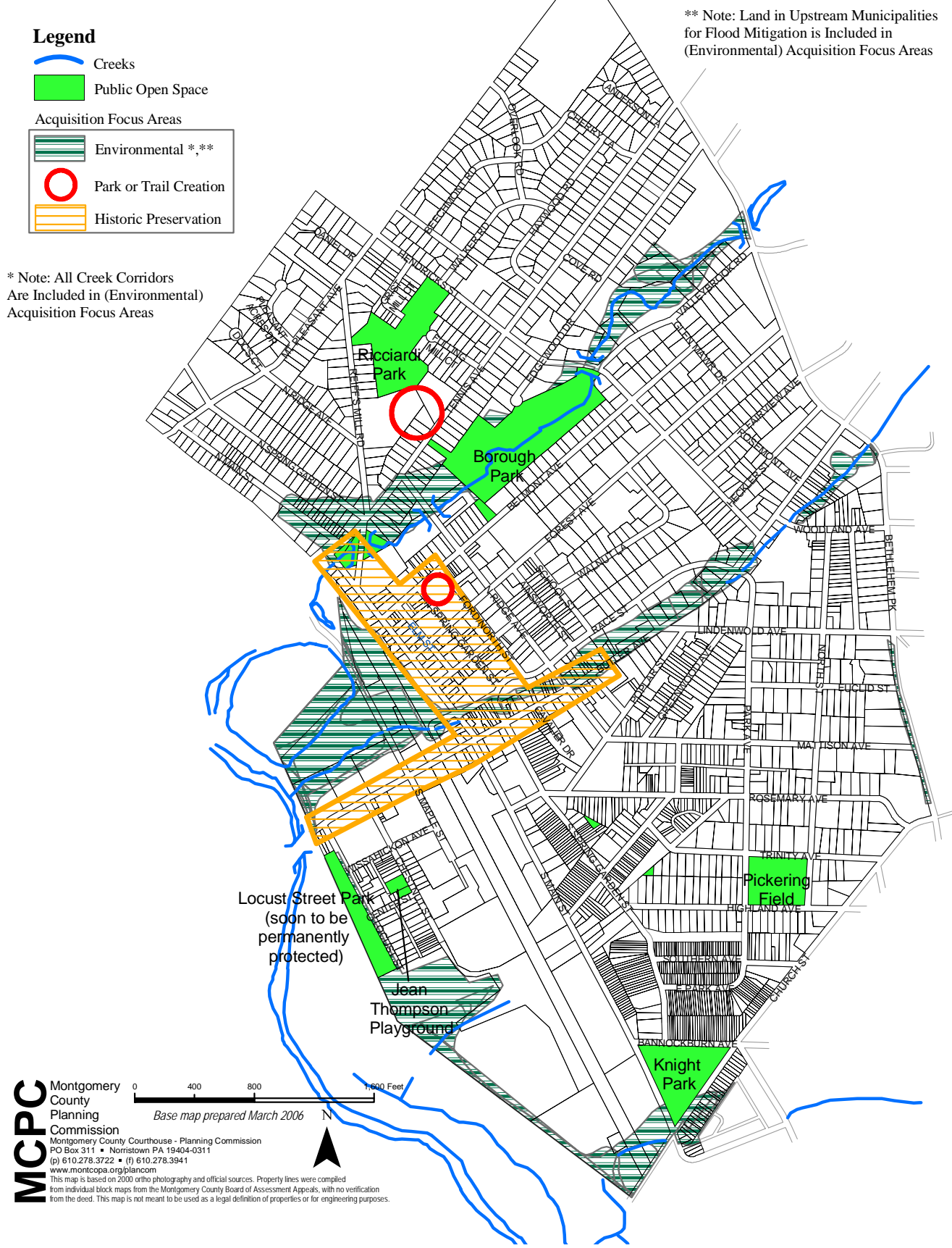
ACQUISITION METHODS

There are a number of ways a municipality can obtain land for open space. An overview of these alternatives is provided here to serve as a guide for the Borough’s future open space acquisition efforts. In the long term, all of these could conceivably be used by the Borough, although at any given time one or more may be more appropriate than others for acquiring a specific site. More generally, however, they indicate that the Borough can be flexible in its approach to implementing the plan’s goals.

FEE SIMPLE ACQUISITION

This option is the most direct way to acquire open space because it simply involves

Figure 10.1
Acquisition Recommendations



negotiating with a private landowner to arrive at a mutually acceptable purchase price and then completing the deal. The municipality then has free and clear title to the property, or fee simple ownership. Because it is usually a straightforward transaction, municipalities often prefer this approach, particularly for establishing a community park.

EASEMENTS

Easements are a successful way to save public funds, yet receive open space benefits. An easement is a limited right over land owned by another person (often a government entity or land trust). Legally, a person has the right to use his property subject to zoning laws, subdivision regulation, etc; however, the owner may sell his/her right to use the land in specific ways.

Conservation easements are used to preserve land with relatively low cost (without acquiring the whole property). The land remains privately owned and the easement involves the property owner voluntarily agreeing to donate or sell the right to develop the land. The property has a deed restriction on the property that is binding for future owners. It may require that there be no new buildings constructed or woodlands will be preserved and can result in tax breaks for owners.

Historic Preservation Easement or Façade Easements can be used to preserve the exterior of a historic building. Access easements allow access for the public to walk, hike, or ride bicycles along a specific area.

INSTALLMENT BUYING

With this method, the municipality agrees to purchase a set number of acres annually until the full parcel is acquired. In return, the full site is removed from the tax rolls when the initial agreement is signed. The owner may choose to remain on his/her land until it is completely sold and paid for. The advantage of this method is that benefits accrue to both the municipality and the landowner. For a municipality with limited funds, installment buying spreads the cost over a period of time. The landowner in the meantime is relieved of real property responsibilities when the agreement is signed.

LONG TERM LEASE WITH OPTION TO BUY

This method involves the negotiation of a lease price with a property owner and includes conditions for use and possible purchase of the property. The primary advantage is that it permits flexibility; if the property is not needed in the future for open space, it returns to the owner.

MANDATORY DEDICATION

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247) enables municipalities to require that residential development dedicate land or fees in lieu of land for public recreation. In order to do this, 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 land.

PURCHASE AND LEASE-BACK

Purchase and lease-back results in buying land and leasing it back to the owner in accordance with agreed-upon policies for the use and protection of the land. Its primary advantage is that it permits purchase of property before prices rise or before the property is lost to development. It also permits flexibility because once the land is purchased it can be used for another public purpose, sold, or exchanged for another parcel.

PURCHASE AND RESALE

This method is similar to purchase and lease-back, except that the land is purchased with the sole intent of reselling it under conditions or restrictive covenants. If the land is acquired at a low cost, the resulting profits help repay initial purchase costs and can be used to acquire additional land. Another advantage is that after resale, the municipality is relieved of ownership and maintenance responsibilities and the land is taxable.

LEASING

This method is a popular, relatively inexpensive way to acquire open space, especially if the

land is unlikely to be developed (for example, reservoirs and utility land). The term of the lease usually ranges from 20 to 50 years; at a minimum, a period should be established that is long enough to finance anticipated capital improvements. The owner of the leased land prescribes conditions and terms under which the land can be used and the lessee is required to carry liability insurance covering personal injury and property damage.

EMINENT DOMAIN

Eminent domain is the condemnation of land for a public use by due process of law. It must involve the determination of a fair market value for the property and a clear definition of the public purposes for which it is being condemned. Before exercising the right of eminent domain, a municipality should study the necessity of obtaining the particular site and the feasibility of acquiring it by other acquisition methods. Only if all other methods fail and the property is essential to an open space system should eminent domain be considered.

LAND TRUSTS AND CONSERVANCIES

Land trusts and conservancies are private, non-profit tax exempt trusts, usually organized by a citizen-supported, non-profit agency. Their funds can be used to provide open space and to preserve natural resources such as stream valleys. Administration and management of the land are the responsibility of the service agency. Private non-profits have an advantage in that they can often move faster to acquire property than can a government agency. Frequently a public-private partnership is formed whereby the private agency acquires land and then resells it to a government agency at a later date.

As noted previously, there are a number of existing conservation groups what will work with private landowners to conserve their land. However, such situations may or may not include provisions for public access. Because of this, a municipality should work closely with these organizations and landowners where public access is a goal. In this way, conservancies can function as an alternative method of acquiring open space.

LAND EXCHANGES

This method involves the trading of land between one owner and another to obtain mutual

advantages. An arrangement can be made between landowners to exchange land that serves their interests.

VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS

Voluntary agreements can be established between government agencies and owners of agricultural lands, industrial holdings, and utility lands for various purposes. They are strictly voluntary, with permission to use the land for public enjoyment in clearly specified ways. For example, a utility company might permit trail use of a power line right-of-way.

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

If the municipality is only interested in protecting land or designated features of a property without gaining the right for public access, then this method of acquisition of partial interests rather than full fee title in land is available. In essence, a municipality could preserve significant natural, scenic, historic, or cultural resources by purchasing a landowner's right to develop the property or otherwise alter the character of the features that are deemed worthy of protection.

RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL AND PURCHASE OPTION

These methods involve establishing an agreement which specifies that the land may be acquired by the municipality at a future date. A right of first refusal provides the municipality with the option to match an offered purchase price within a specified time period should a landowner receive a legitimate offer to sell. A purchase option is simply a right that the municipality holds to purchase the land by a specified date at a specified price. Both rights of first refusal and purchase option can be either donated or sold to the municipality.

LIFE OR TERM ESTATES

This technique involves the acquisition of land with certain restrictions attached to the deed. A municipality may be better able to negotiate the purchase of property if certain interests in the land are reserved for the benefit of the landowner. For example, a municipality could purchase land with all rights of ownership conveyed except the right

to occupy a house or a portion of the full property for a specified term (usually 25 years) or until the death of the landowner.

DONATIONS AND BARGAIN SALES

These methods of acquisition involve obtaining land at less than its full market value. Receiving donations of the full value of land is the least expensive way for a municipality to obtain land and can, in some instances, be a wise approach for a landowner to take to directly benefit from tax incentives and the shelter effects of charitable deductions. If a full donation of land is not possible or if the landowner has an immediate need for cash through sale, then a partial donation and bargain sale might be a prudent alternative. By selling land at a price that is less than its full value, a landowner can still receive tax benefits based on the difference between the fair market value of the land and its actual sale price. The primary benefit to these techniques is that a municipality acquires land at a lower cost while the seller obtains tax deductions.

CHAPTER 11

OPTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS

This chapter addresses optional plan recommendations for Ambler related to green infrastructure, heritage resources conservation, municipal trail and pathway development, and floodplain restoration.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

PARK AND OPEN SPACE CREATION

The Borough should acquire pocket parks as the opportunity presents itself. Although typically small, pocket parks can still provide a useful open space area by providing a scenic amenity, or serve as a place to walk one’s dog, play basketball, mingle with neighbors, or simply sit and relax.

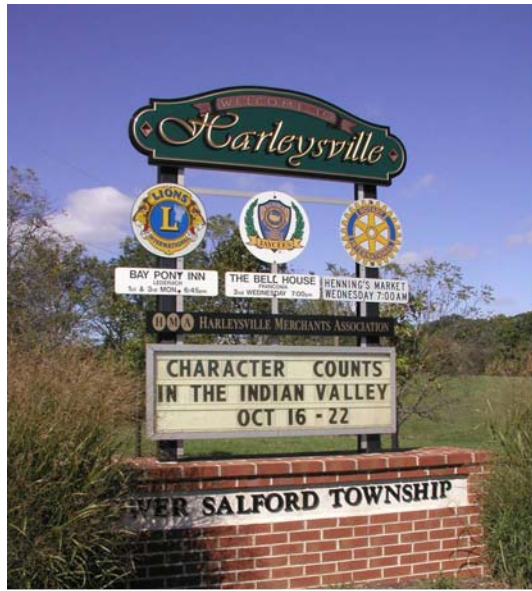
1. The intersection of Butler Avenue and Bethlehem Pike.
2. On Butler Avenue near the Wissahickon Creek bridge.
3. The train station.

Secondary gateways are proposed for other locations:

GATEWAYS

The Borough will create gateways at strategic locations. The Borough has applied for funding for this project through the County Community Revitalization Program. Should part or all of the project remain unfunded, the Borough will utilize open space funds to create gateways. Primary gateways are proposed for the following locations:

1. Along the Borough’s side of Bethlehem Pike. This could include signs directing people to Ambler’s central business district, and might include signs at the intersections with Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Tennis Avenue, Lindenwold Avenue, and Church Street.
2. Mt. Pleasant Avenue, at the intersections with Hendricks Street, North Main Street, and North Spring Garden Street.



Gateways and gateway signs such as these can help improve a municipality's image and strengthen community identity.

3. The intersection of Highland Avenue and Church Street.

These gateways could include some or all of the following elements: monument signs, freestanding signs, or banners welcoming people to Ambler; trees and other landscaping; attractive sidewalks, road, and crosswalk treatments; new ornamental lighting; and pedestrian amenities such as benches.

SAAC PROPERTY

One property which should be investigated for purchase is the part of the SAAC property (the former Forrest Avenue School) which consists of a parking lot. Purchase of part of the parking lot could enable the Borough to convert it to a pocket park with a modest recreational area consisting of athletic courts or green area.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Ambler should consider purchasing land for community gardens. Community gardens may provide an amenity for older Borough residents who might not find as much use for other types of parks such as those with



The Borough is Interested in Acquiring Land for Community Gardens.

recreation fields. Gardens could be designed and managed in conjunction with advice from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Temple Ambler Horticulture Program or Landscape Architecture Program, or the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension. A possible location for community gardens is the SAAC Property, where it could conveniently serve seniors using the SAAC.

PARK AND OPEN SPACE ENHANCEMENT

BOROUGH PARK

Ambler will enhance Borough Park; specifically, the Borough is interested in restoring stream banks, constructing trails along the creek, clearing vegetation, constructing a footbridge, or constructing educational signage to teach park users about the park's environmental assets (the Borough will investigate environmental education opportunities in conjunction with Temple Ambler).

KNIGHT PARK

Ambler will enhance Knight Park by constructing a building housing bathrooms and a multiuse room.

TREE PLANTING

The Borough plans to plant trees along Butler Avenue, Main Street, in Borough parks, and as part of proposed gateway enhancements (the Borough will also plant trees in these locations to replace trees that die).

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

The Borough seeks to acquire additional land to protect its sensitive natural features, particularly its stream corridors. In particular, the focus of this effort would be along Rose Valley Creek (to the northeast and southwest of Borough Park), along Tannery Run (near Woodland Avenue and Maple Avenue), Stuart Farm Creek, and the Wissahickon Direct Drainage area (by the D'Agostino property). The Borough. These projects would benefit from multimunicipal cooperation.

STREAM DECHANNELIZATION

The dechannelization of streams where they currently flow through concrete channels is one goal. This would help reduce erosion and flooding, and help restore a natural riparian corridor which filters runoff, improves water quality, and restores aquatic habitat in those

creeks as well as the Wissahickon Creek. Dechannelizing streams currently routed through underground pipes or channels is also a possibility.

FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION

During the process of defining goals for floodplain restoration, the county emergency services office should be contacted. Property owners in flood prone areas and other stakeholders such as emergency responders, PEMA, and the municipal engineer should be involved in the process.

The Borough identified properties for floodplain restoration primarily based on their history of flooding. Other criteria considered included:

- Proximity to other open space property
- Potential habitat value
- Impact on water quality
- Future open space use potential
- Location within a greenway

The Borough will investigate restoring the floodplain adjacent to the Rose Valley Creek, Tannery Run, Stuart Farm Creek, and Wissahickon Direct drainage area. Specific parcels in these areas which have a history of flooding are identified in Table 11.1. The Borough will investigate acquisition of land to mitigate or prevent flooding on these parcels, and additional land may be identified at a later date.

As detailed in MCPC's Tannery Run Preliminary Stormwater Assessment (2005), flooding in the Borough has worsened in recent years due to upstream development that overwhelmed the conveyance system in the Borough, much of which was built prior to that upstream development. These facilities were not necessarily designed to take into account timing, convergence of peak stormwater flows, or water quality issues since these considerations were not typically addressed during development until recently.

Many of the parcels identified in Figure 11.1 are subject to floodwaters which back up at the culverts channeling water under SEPTA's R5 tracks. Homes near these areas experience flooded basements, many of which are completely submerged during severe storms. Flooding is moderately less severe on the northern portion of the flooded homes on Church Street, where severe storms cause several feet of water to flood basements. The flooding of homes in Ambler has

Figure 11.1
Parcels Affected by Recent Flooding

Street	Address	Parcel Number
East Church Street	6	01-00-01300-00-4
	8	01-00-01297-00-7
	10	01-00-01294-00-1
	12	01-00-01291-00-4
	14	01-00-01288-00-7
	16	01-00-01285-00-1
	18	01-00-01282-00-4
	20	01-00-01279-00-7
	22	01-00-01276-00-1
	24	01-00-01273-00-4
	26	01-00-01270-00-7
	28	01-00-01267-00-1
South Main Street	401	01-00-02917-00-7
	403	01-00-02920-00-4
	405	01-00-02923-00-1
	407	01-00-02926-00-7
	409	01-00-02929-00-4
	411	01-00-02932-00-1
Race Street	4	01-00-04009-00-4
	6	01-00-04006-00-7
	8	01-00-04003-00-1
Tennis Avenue	40	01-00-05365-00-7
		01-00-05368-50-8 and
	44	01-00-05368-00-4
	48	01-00-05371-00-1
	52	01-00-05374-00-7
	56	01-00-05377-00-4
	60	01-00-05380-00-1
	South Chestnut Street	210
214		01-00-01030-00-4
216		01-00-01027-00-7
218		01-00-01024-00-1
220		01-00-01021-00-4
222		01-00-01018-00-7
224		01-00-01015-00-1
226		01-00-01012-00-4
228	01-00-01009-00-7	

Source: Borough of Ambler, 2005

required homeowners to replace various household appliances (heaters, hot water heaters, washers, dryers, or air conditioners) after every substantial storm.

HERITAGE RESOURCE CONSERVATION

HISTORIC RESOURCE PROTECTION GOALS

Preservation and enhancement of sites of historic significance in the Borough and telling their story is a goal of the plan. The Borough should consider the following methods to preserve and enhance historic resources:

- Erect signage to identify and explain the significance of key historic sites.
- Purchase historic conservation or façade easements, where feasible, on key properties from those identified on the historic resources list in Chapter 4.
- Establish a fund for historic restoration work of building facades done consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Promote heritage tourism in the region by the creation of maps and informational literature, and by establishing a trail connection among historic sites. The Borough will work with surrounding municipalities, landowners and historic societies to provide a connection between historic resources in Ambler and those in nearby municipalities, such as Lindenwold, the Highlands; Hope Lodge; and historic districts in Whitemarsh, Plymouth, and North Wales.

See Chapter 12 for more information on recommended non-acquisition methods of protecting historic properties.

MUNICIPAL TRAIL AND PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT

BOROUGH LOOP TRAIL

The Borough will establish a trail linking parks, open space, and other points of interest together. This trail will travel through parks and open space, and will use existing sidewalks (with enhanced crosswalks in some areas) while traveling along Borough streets. The Borough Loop Trail will connect to various points of interest outside the Borough as well.

TRAIL CONNECTIONS TO NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

The Borough Loop Trail will connect to various points of interest outside the municipal boundary, including:

- The Green Ribbon Trail/future Wissahickon County Trail
- Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association
- Pen Ambler Park
- Wissahickon Schools and nearby Lower Gwynedd trails (existing and proposed, such as existing trail on Knight Road and proposed trail on Cedar Lane)
- Sheeleigh Park and Playground
- Veterans Memorial Park, Highland Avenue
- Loch Alsh Reservoir
- Temple Ambler
- Prophecy Creek Park, using the future trail along the Prophecy Creek
- The Armentrout Preserve, Morris Road

For a map of acquisition recommendations, including park creation, historic acquisition focus area and environmental conservation acquisition focus area, see Figure 10.2.

For a map of nonacquisition recommendations, including park improvements, gateway creation, tree planting, and focus areas for protection of environmental and historic resources, see Figure 12.1.

For a map of proposed trails, see Figure 5.1.

CHAPTER 12

RECOMMENDATIONS: NON-ACQUISITION PROTECTION METHODS

While acquisition of open space is a priority for Ambler, there are other ways that land can be maintained as permanent open space without relying on funding sources. The techniques described in this chapter involve Zoning or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SLDO) provisions that would protect natural features or add additional open space. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what the Borough could include in its ordinances.

INCENTIVE ZONING

Communities can encourage developers through incentive zoning to provide public plazas, recreation facilities or amenities, and trails. The incentives are placed in specific zoning districts, and might allow a developer to get a higher height or density than otherwise permitted or a smaller lot size. The ordinances should be crafted to ensure the cost of providing the amenity does not exceed the benefit received from the incentive.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION ORDINANCES

The ordinances discussed below protect natural features such as floodplains, stream corridors, wetlands, groundwater, steep slopes, and woodlands.

FLOODPLAINS

Ambler has a floodplain protection ordinance. In the rest of the County, there are typically three types of floodplain restrictions. The first type, often common in the Boroughs, allows development

within the floodplain provided that buildings are floodproofed. The second type common in the County does not allow building within the floodplain. These ordinances protect properties from flood damage, protect the environment within the floodplain, and also reduces the possibility of raising the flood level. A third type of ordinance not only restricts development within the floodplain but also requires a minimum setback from the edge of the floodplain. This type of ordinance protects the unique wooded habitat, or riparian woodlands, of the floodplain.

Ambler has a floodplain conservation district somewhere between the first and second type of the ordinances discussed above. This ordinance does permit building within a floodplain, but for most uses only by special exception. It also requires that any use receiving a special exception or variance to build in the floodplain undergo floodproofing. In addition, the Borough's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance requires that plans for new construction in floodplain areas be submitted to the Montgomery County Conservation District for review and comment prior to the issuing of a building permit.

STREAM CORRIDORS

Since streams are one of the most important natural features of the Borough, and flooding is a serious problem in the Ambler area, the Borough should consider a stream corridor protection ordinance which goes beyond floodplain ordinances to protect the water quality of the stream in addition to plant and animal habitats. These ordinances have a minimum setback requirement from the stream

bank where no development can occur. A minimum setback of 75 feet from the stream bank, for example, would help stabilize the stream bank, control sediment, remove nutrients that would pollute the stream, moderate stream temperature, and preserve wildlife habitat. The area within the setback should be left in its natural state.

WETLANDS

In addition to federal and state governments, municipalities can regulate development that occurs on wetlands. Municipalities can prohibit development on wetlands and require wetlands to be shown on development plans. While developers can locate homes right next to wetlands (after receiving all the federal and state permits needed), such location might lead to future problems. Homeowners might decide to fill in the wet areas behind their home to have a more usable back yard. To prevent this, local municipalities can require a minimum building setback from wetlands. While federal and state regulations address only the filling of wetland and not the destruction of vegetation within the wetlands, municipalities can take the extra step and require the replacement of destroyed wetlands vegetation.

GROUNDWATER

An important step to protect groundwater is limiting impervious surface areas such as parking; in 2004 Ambler modified its zoning ordinance to extend impervious surface limitations to zoning districts which previously did not have limits. Groundwater can also be protected by stream corridor and other natural features protection ordinances.

STEEP SLOPES

Development on steep slopes, which are typically slopes of 15 percent or more, can be restricted or prohibited through steep slope ordinances. Development often is permitted on slopes of 15 percent to 25 percent if the minimum lot size is increased and/or the percent of the lot disturbed is limited. Some steep slope ordinances prohibit all development, although more typically development is prohibited on extremely steep slopes such as 25 percent or more.



Warning Sign along Rose Valley Creek

In Ambler a steep slope protection ordinance would likely focus on protecting steep areas in the Rose Valley Creek corridor (the area with the steepest naturally-occurring slopes in the Borough).

WOODLANDS

Protection of existing trees and woodlands can be accomplished with woodland preservation ordinances. Some ordinances provide minimum standards that must be followed during construction for trees that will remain. Other ordinances, when existing trees are preserved, allow developers to put up fewer street trees, buffers, or individual lot trees. Tree replacement is another requirement of some ordinances.

Ambler’s Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SLDO) is similar to the first of these types of ordinances mentioned above; it provides minimum standards for protecting vegetation during construction, but does not require tree replacement.

DONATIONS OF PROPERTIES FOR PERMANENT OPEN SPACE

Landowners can preserve their land by donating full title of their property or by donating their development rights to a nonprofit land conservation group. These two methods permanently preserve open space.

Landowners who donate development rights receive tax benefits; their land must be permanently restricted from future development. Land conservation groups that operate within Montgomery County and which receive donations include: the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, Montgomery County Lands Trust, the Natural Lands Trust, the Nature Conservancy, and the Conservancy of Montgomery County.

Some land conservation groups can also help local landowners develop some of their land while keeping the majority of it open and deed-restricted. This approach ensures that land is developed in a sensitive manner yielding the landowner some monetary compensation, while also preserving the most important environmental amenities on the site.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCES

While not directly related to open space preservation, historic preservation ordinances help save historic properties that add to the character of an area. There are a number of techniques that communities can use for historic preservation, a few of which are discussed here.

The zoning ordinance can encourage historic preservation by allowing historic buildings to have more uses than normally permitted in a particular district. For example, apartments, bed and breakfast establishments, artist studios or offices might be permitted in historic homes located in a single-family detached residential district.

Another option is the creation of a village ordinance or modification of an existing ordinance to give development bonuses for (1) preserving historic buildings, or (2) restricting the uses within a specified zoning district (such as the C-Commercial District in Ambler). Uses considered incompatible with an historic area, such as gas stations, might be excluded from these districts.

A third possibility is the creation of HARB (historic architectural review board) historic districts with approval of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). This approach is more restrictive than the previous approaches discussed. Once a historic district is created, municipalities have stringent control over design and preservation of facades. A HARB would need to be created to review all proposed changes to historic buildings.



Photo Credit: Ambler Main Street Program

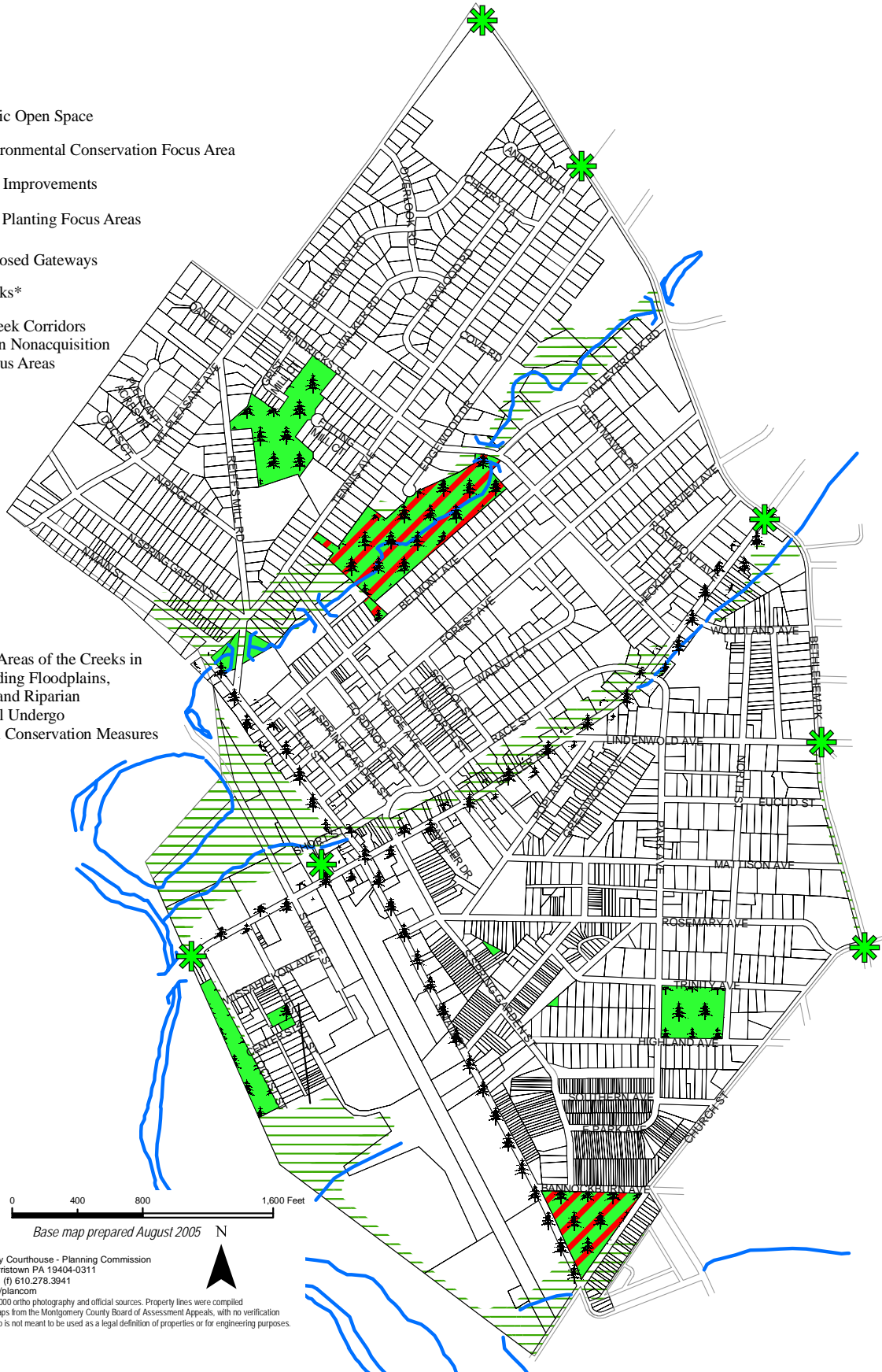
Figure 12.1
Nonacquisition Recommendations

Legend

- Public Open Space
- Environmental Conservation Focus Area
- Park Improvements
- Tree Planting Focus Areas
- Proposed Gateways
- Creeks*

* Note: All Creek Corridors Are Included in Nonacquisition Protection Focus Areas

Note: Critical Areas of the Creeks in Ambler (including Floodplains, Streambanks, and Riparian Corridors) Will Undergo Environmental Conservation Measures



MCPC Montgomery County Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
 PO Box 311 • Norristown PA 19404-0311
 (p) 610.278.3722 • (f) 610.278.3941
 www.montcopa.org/plancom

0 400 800 1,600 Feet
 Base map prepared August 2005 N

This map is based on 2000 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

CHAPTER 13

IMPLEMENTATION

BACKGROUND

This chapter discusses implementation, perhaps the most important part of the plan. Also included in this chapter is a list of potential funding sources and local conservation agencies. The implementation tables on pp.83-85 lists the goals of the Open Space Plan. These are divided into the following tables:

- Highest Priority (Starting in Years 1-3)
- High Priority (Starting in Years 2-5)
- Priority (Starting in Years 4-8)

Also listed in the tables are the proposed specific actions to achieve those goals, recommended advisory groups to Borough Council for each specific action, and potential funding matches. As the decision-making body of Ambler, Borough Council will be the responsible party on all projects.

Figure 13.1
Implementation Advisory Groups

Abbreviation in Implementation Tables	Group
AMS	Ambler Main Street Program
CMC	Conservancy of Montgomery County
EAC	Environmental Advisory Committee
LG	Lower Gwynedd
MCCE	Montgomery County Cooperative Extension
MCPC	Montgomery County Planning Commission
P&R	Parks & Recreation Committee of Borough Council (P&R)
PHS	Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
PC	Planning Commission
RC	Revitalization Committee
S	Borough Solicitor
STC	Shade Tree Committee
TA	Temple University—Ambler
UD	Upper Dublin
W	Whitpain
WVHS	Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
WVWA	Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association

Figure 13.2
Implementation Tables

Goal	Specific Action	Advisory Groups to Borough Council	Potential Funding Match	
HIGHEST PRIORITY (Starting in Years 1-3)				
Acquisition (Ongoing)	Land prone to flooding (for more information on land affected by flooding, see Figure 11.1)	S, EAC, PC	1. PECCO Green Region	
	Property for stream bank preservation and restoration	S, EAC		
Preserve Sensitive Environmental Features	Flood mitigation: preserve stream banks, floodplains, and riparian corridors in appropriate locations along Rose Valley Creek, Tannery Run, and Stuart Farm Creek (variety of techniques to be considered). This includes land along the Rose Valley Creek owned by the Betts', between Valleybrook Road and Edgewood Drive.	S, EAC	1. PECCO Green Region 2. Treewitalize	
Acquisition (Ongoing)	Part of SAAC Property (parking lot area). Potential Community Gardens, playing court and toilet. Investigate having PHS, MCCE, and Temple Ambler devise detailed plan. Alternative to fee-simple acquisition is easement. Create gardens and add benches.	S, PHS, MCCE, TA	1. PECCO Green Region	
Improve Access to Borough Parks and Open Space	Borough Loop Trail	P&R		
		Rose Valley Creek Trail		
		Access Trail Between Ricciardi Park and Borough Park	P&R	
		Trail from South Maple Avenue to Church Street	S, P&R	
		Historic properties	S, P&R	
Acquisition		S, W/H/S, CMC,		
Green Infrastructure	Gateways (including signs and landscaping)	P&R, PC, MCPC, RC	1. Transportation Enhancements 2. Community Revitalization Program	
Preserve Sensitive Environmental Features	Preserve Woodlands in Rose Valley	S, EAC	1. PECCO Green Region 2. Treewitalize	
Improve Existing Parks (Ongoing)	Borough Park: trails, natural amphitheater, footbridge, environmental education signage, clear invasive vegetation	Temple Ambler, EAC	1. McClean Contributionship (environmental ed.)	
Acquisition	Work with adjacent municipalities to acquire land for parks, recreation, and flood mitigation.	Temple Ambler, EAC	1. DEP Growing Geener 2. PECCO Green Region 3. Community Development Block Grants	

HIGH PRIORITY (Starting in Years 2-5)			
Goal	Specific Action	Advisory Groups to Borough Council	Potential Funding Match
Improve Access to Parks and Open Space Outside the Borough	Pen Ambler Park (1st priority within goal), Lower Gwynedd Township Trails, Wissahickon H.S.	P&R, Lower Gwynedd, Upper Dublin, Whippain, WVAWA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transportation Enhancements 2. Hometown Streets & Safe Routes to School 3. CMAQ 4. County Community Revitalization 5. Community Conservation 6. Partnership Program 7. First Industries Fund-Tourism 8. PA Infrastructure Bank 9. Transit Revitalization Investment District 10. Claniel Foundation 12. McClean Contributionship 13. PECO Green Region
	Wissahickon Creek & Trail, Wissahickon Watershed Association	P&R, Upper Dublin	
	Loch Aish Reservoir, Temple Ambler, Sheeleigh Park & Playground, Veterans Memorial (Highland Avenue) Park	P&R, Upper Dublin, Temple Ambler	
Preserve and Enhance Historic Resources	Prophesy Creek Park, Armentrout Preserve	P&R, Whippain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives 2. PHMC 3. Main St Program (Anchor Building Component) 4. County Community Revitalization 5. Elm Street
	Protect Properties with Historic Conservation Easements	WWHS, CMC, RC	

PRIORITY (Starting in Years 4-8)			
Goal	Specific Action	Advisory Groups to Borough Council	Potential Funding Match
Shade Tree Planting (Ongoing)	Butler Avenue, Main Street, Gateways, Borough Parks. Create program to purchase trees and plant them in yards of property owners along streets, provided property owners assume maintenance responsibilities.	STC	Elm Street: Save-A-Tree, Plant-A-Tree; Treevitalize
Preserve Sensitive Environmental Features- Stream Dechannelization	Dechannelize portions of Rose Valley Creek and Tannery Run (portions not already underground)	EAC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lower Gwynedd Township 2. Transportation Enhancements 3. Hometown Streets & Safe Routes to School 4. CMAQ 5. County Community Revitalization 6. Community Conservation 7. Partnership Program 8. First Industries Fund-Tourism 9. PA Infrastructure Bank 10. Transit Revitalization Investment District 11. Claniel Foundation 12. McClean Contributionship 13. PECO Green Region
Improve Access to Parks and Open Space Outside Borough	As time passes, consider whether proposed access to Pen Ambler Park via Knight Road and Brights Lane proves adequate; or whether it would be desirable to investigate establishing another link between Ambler and Pen Ambler Park via Pen Ambler Road. If so, Ambler would be willing to consider a trail in that location if Lower Gwynedd Township is also interested.	P&R	
Preserve and Enhance Historic Resources	Use Historic Markers to Identify Historic Sites and Tell Their Stories	AMS, WV/HS, CMC	
	Establish fund for restoration of historic building facades	AMS, WV/HS, CMC	
	Promote heritage tourism in Ambler area (maps, literature, trail connections)	AMS, WV/HS, CMC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PHMC 2. Elm Street Program Main Street Program: Downtown Reinvestment Component

FUNDING SOURCES

In addition to the funds allocated through the County Open Space Program, Ambler is eligible for funds from a variety of sources including grants, general revenue funds, bond issues, and donations (of cash, materials, or labor).

Ambler will pursue other grants available from Montgomery County, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and others. These grants can be used in conjunction with the County's Open Space grants to help defray the cost of the Borough's match. A sampling of possible grant sources is described below.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OPEN SPACE GRANTS (MCOS)

In 2003, a referendum to fund open space and green infrastructure projects was passed in Montgomery County. Known as the Green Fields/Green Towns Program, this funding was allocated to municipalities, private non-profit conservation organizations, and the county to preserve more open space and enhance the livability of existing communities throughout the county.

Ambler is eligible to receive a total of \$813,812 for open space acquisition and enhancement. This grant requires matching funds equal to 20% of project costs from the municipality. The county grants come with several conditions. The most important condition is that any land purchased with grant money must be permanently preserved as open space or for active recreation. Another condition is that Ambler must complete and adopt its Open Space Plan. This plan must be approved by the County's Open Space Board before grant money can be disbursed.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (MCRP)

Initiated in 2000, this program is intended to create a strategic, economic development program that will strengthen and stabilize the county's older communities for the long term. It helps these communities become more vibrant, livable, and attractive places. Funding from this competitive program is used for projects consistent with the Borough's Community Revitalization Plan.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DCNR)

DCNR manages a variety of grant and technical assistance programs concerned with a variety of issues. DCNR annually awards about \$30 million in planning, acquisition, and development grants for parks, recreation, rivers conservation, trails, greenways, and protection of open space and critical natural areas. Most DCNR grants require a 50/50 match. DCNR also provides pre-application workshops to assist applicants in the preparation of their application forms.

A priority goal of these programs is to develop and sustain partnerships with communities, non-profits, and other organizations for recreation and conservation projects and purposes. With this in mind, the Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) was established. It is a combination of several funding sources and grant programs, including the Commonwealth's Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (KEY 93, described below), the Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Act (Growing Greener, also described below), Act 68 Snowmobile and ATV Trails Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Recreational Trails component of the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-First Century (TEA-21).

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP)

The Growing Greener program has funded efforts to clean up Pennsylvania's rivers and streams, reclaimed abandoned mines and toxic waste sites, invested in new alternative energy sources, preserved farmland and open space, and developed watershed restoration programs. Thus far, Growing Greener has generated nearly \$1.50 in matching funds for the environment for every \$1.00 in state money. As the Growing Greener program evolves, it will focus on brownfield redevelopment, farmland and open space preservation, water quality improvements, enhanced state and community parks, and an upgraded fish and wildlife infrastructure. Growing Greener II will accomplish these goals while making critical investments in community revitalization and the promotion of the use of clean energy.

KEYSTONE RECREATION, PARK, AND CONSERVATION FUND

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Act was signed into law in 1993. It directs a portion of the state’s Real Estate Transfer Tax to the Keystone Fund, establishing a dedicated and permanent funding source for recreation, parks, conservation, and other programming. Grants from this program require a minimum 50% match from the recipient municipality or nonprofit organization. As of 2002, \$144 million had been granted to more than 2,100 projects. The demand on the Keystone Fund already outstrips resources by a 4 to 1 margin.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DCED)

The mission of DCED is “To foster opportunities for businesses and communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy, thereby enabling Pennsylvanians to achieve a superior quality of life.” Therefore there are several assistance and grant programs available to Pennsylvania municipalities. Often, local economic and community revitalization efforts are supported by the implementation of green infrastructure and open space plans. Below is a list of programs offered by DCED through which revitalization funds may flow to implement the recommendations described in this open space plan.

- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) - Provides grant assistance and technical assistance to aid communities in their community and economic development efforts.
- Community Revitalization Program (CR) - Provides grant funds to support local initiatives that promote the stability of communities.
- Main Street Program - This program provides assistance for revitalization planning and projects.
- Elm Street Program - Grant funds for planning, technical assistance and physical improvements to residential and mixed use areas in proximity to central business districts.
- Industrial Sites Reuse Program - Grant and low-interest loan financing to perform environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION (PHMC)

Many communities value their historic resources and work to preserve them for future generations. These resources can then be integrated into the open space network and cultural amenities of that community to enhance local image and aesthetics. The PHMC offers several programs that aid municipalities in these efforts.

- Certified Local Government Grant Program - Provides funding for cultural resource surveys, national register nominations, technical and planning assistance, educational and interpretive programs, staffing and training, and pooling CLG grants and third party administration.
- Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program - Funding for preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation.
- Pennsylvania History and Museum Grant Program - Funding under this program is designated to support a wide variety of museum, history, archives and historic preservation projects, as well as nonprofit organizations and local governments. There are 10 types of grants.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (PENNDOT)

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

This category includes projects for bicyclists and pedestrians that permit safe passage for children to walk or bike to school. This includes activities that enhance the transportation system through the construction of new facilities or the improvement of existing facilities to make them more usable for pedestrians and bicyclists. Some examples of eligible activities include: sidewalk improvements, pedestrian/bicycle crossing improvements, bike lanes, traffic diversion improvements, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In addition, this program may fund traffic calming measures to slow the speed of cars such as the following: curb extensions, bulb-outs, traffic circles, raised median islands, speed humps, textured or raised crosswalks. Funds cannot be used for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are solely for recreational use.

HOME TOWN STREETS

This category includes a variety of streetscape improvements that are vital to reestablishing our

downtown and commercial centers. These will include activities undertaken within a defined "downtown" area that collectively enhance that environment and promote positive interactions with people in the area. Projects may include sidewalk improvements, planters, benches, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, transit bus shelters, traffic calming, bicycle amenities, kiosks, community "gateway" plantings, signage and other visual elements.

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (DVRPC)

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The TCDI program is intended to assist in reversing the trends of disinvestment and decline in many of the region's core cities and first generation suburbs by:

- Supporting local planning projects that will lead to more residential, employment or retail opportunities;
- Improving the overall character and quality of life within these communities to retain and attract business and residents, which will help to reduce the pressure for further sprawl and expansion into the growing suburbs;
- Enhancing and utilizing the existing transportation infrastructure capacity in these areas to reduce the demands on the region's transportation network; and
- Reducing congestion and improving the transportation system's efficiency.

CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)

This program seeks transportation-related projects that can help the region reduce emissions from highway sources and meet National Clean Air Act standards. The program covers the DVRPC region of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania; and, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (TE)

Transportation Enhancements is a set-aside of Federal highway and transit funds, mandated by

Congress in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) for the funding of "non-traditional" projects designed to enhance the transportation experience, to mitigate the impacts of transportation facilities on communities and the environment, and to enhance community character through transportation-related improvements.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The program offers technical assistance only to nonprofit organizations, community groups, and local or state government agencies. Rivers and Trails technical staff offers the following types of assistance for recreation and conservation projects:

- Building partnerships to achieve community-set goals
- Assessing resources
- Developing concept plans
- Engaging public participation
- Identifying potential sources of funding
- Creating public outreach
- Organizational development
- Providing conservation and recreation information

PECO ENERGY GREEN REGION OPEN SPACE GRANT PROGRAM

PECO Energy, a subsidiary of Exelon, is currently involved in several environmental partnerships including "TreeVitalize," with DCNR, clean water preservation with The Nature Conservancy, and environmental education initiatives with the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education and Green Valleys Association. Green Region grants are available to municipalities in amounts up to \$10,000. The grants can be used with other funding sources to cover a wide variety of planning and direct expenses associated with development and implementing open space programs, including consulting fees, surveys, environmental assessments, habitat improvement, and capital improvements for passive recreation.

DELAWARE ESTUARY GRANTS PROGRAM

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation administers this grant program in cooperation with the Delaware Estuary Program, and other partner agencies. Grants range between \$5,000 and \$25,000, and larger amounts are awarded depending on whether the project relates directly to the action items of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Delaware Estuary or that would improve the Delaware Estuary.

WATERSHED ACTION GRANTS

These grants are awarded by the Conservation Fund for applicants in southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey for implementation of conservation plans. Grant awards are between \$2,000 and \$20,000 for projects that protect the watershed, improve water quality, or promote watershed stewardship.

WATERSHED RESOURCES EDUCATION NETWORK

The Watershed Resources Education Network offers grants related to water resource education and training.

GENERAL REVENUE FUNDS AND BOND ISSUES

Ambler has the option of using general revenue funds for open space and recreation purposes. It also has the option of issuing a bond to pay for the capital costs of parkland acquisition and development. The decision to pursue these options rests with Borough Council.

DONATIONS

Ambler should encourage donations from individuals, businesses, and groups to help pay for parkland acquisition, development, and tree planting. The donations may be cash, materials, or labor. Rockledge could organize special days during which local citizens and groups could gather to participate in implementing open space projects.

SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA LAND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

PENNYPACK ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION TRUST- PENNSYLVANIA LAND TRUST ASSOCIATION (PALTA) MEMBER

2955 Edge Hill Rd.
Huntington Valley, PA 19006
Counties where acquisitions completed:
Montgomery

Mission: The mission of the Trust and its membership is to protect, restore and preserve the lands of the central Pennypack Creek valley so that they * remain an enhancement to the quality of visitors' lives, * remain a vibrant and diverse natural landscape supporting native plant and animal life, and * become the standard of excellence for innovative restoration and stewardship practices to be shared with other individuals and organizations joined in common commitment to the environment.

Founded: 1970
Phone: (215) 657-0830
Email: djrpennypack@cs.com
www.libertynet.org/pert

BRANDYWINE CONSERVANCY- PALTA MEMBER

PO Box 141
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
Counties where acquisitions completed: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Montgomery, Philadelphia

Mission: The mission of the Brandywine Conservancy's Environmental Management Center is to conserve the natural and cultural resources of the Brandywine River watershed and other selected areas with a primary emphasis on conservation of water quantity and quality.

Founded: 1967
Phone: (610) 388-2700
Email: emc@brandywine.org
www.brandywineconservancy.org

CONSERVANCY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY- PALTA MEMBER

PO Box 28
Ambler, PA 19002-0028
Counties where acquisitions completed: Montgomery

Mission: The business and purpose of this organization shall be to advocate the preservation of historic and natural resources in Montgomery County to ensure their protection for future generations. The main functions of the organization shall be to identify and protect historic structures, open space and natural resources; sponsor educational preservation programs; conduct survey and planning studies; promote, assist with and accept conservation easements; and provide an information network and clearinghouse for preservation information for county residents, businesses, schools, municipalities and organizations.

Founded: 1990
Phone: (215) 283-0383
Email: cmcpreserve@hotmail.com

HERITAGE CONSERVANCY- PALTA MEMBER

85 Old Dublin Pike
Doylestown, PA 18901
Counties where acquisitions completed: Bucks, Montgomery, Susquehanna, York
Counties where acquisitions anticipated: Northampton

Mission: Heritage Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving our natural and historic heritage. Founded in 1958, it was concern for the rapid loss of open space in Bucks County which led to the formation of the Bucks County Park Foundation, known today as Heritage Conservancy.

Founded: 1958
Phone: (215) 345-7020
Email: hconserv@heritageconservancy.org
www.heritageconservancy.org

**LOWER MERION CONSERVANCY
PALTA MEMBER**

1301 Rose Glen Rd.
Gladwyne, PA 19035
Counties where acquisitions completed: Delaware,
Montgomery

Mission: The Lower Merion Conservancy acts to protect our area's natural and historic resources, open space, and watersheds for area residents and future generations. Through education, advocacy, and research, the Conservancy promotes collective responsibility for these resources.

Founded: 1991
Phone: (610) 645-9030
Email: admin@dragonfly.org
www. lmconservancy.org

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY LANDS
TRUST- PALTA MEMBER**

PO Box 300
Lederach, PA 19450
Counties where acquisitions completed:
Montgomery

Mission: " It is the mission of Montgomery County Lands Trust to permanently preserve land and to foster the wise stewardship of open space of our county by: Acquiring easements and encouraging donation of land to appropriate stewards. Helping to facilitate the creation of open space and natural amenities in existing communities. Promoting environmentally sensitive, sustainable development which preserves open space, significant natural resources and our unique sense of place. Providing educational programs that strategically advance its mission.

Founded: 1993
Phone: (215) 513-0100
Email: dflaharty@mclt.org www.mclt.org

**NATURAL LANDS TRUST- PALTA
MEMBER**

1031 Palmers Mill Rd.
Media, PA 19063
Counties where acquisitions completed: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia

Mission: Natural Lands Trust is a non-profit, regional land conservation organization working to protect the most critical remaining open lands in the greater Philadelphia region.

Founded: 1961
Phone: (610) 353-5587
Email: apitz@natlands.org www.natlands.org

**NORTH AMERICAN LAND TRUST-
PALTA MEMBER**

PO Box 1578
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
Counties where acquisitions completed: Chester, Delaware, Lancaster,
Montgomery

Founded: 1992
Phone: (610) 388-3670
Email: info@nalt.org www.nalt.org

**PERKIOMEN WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY- PALTA MEMBER**

1 Skippack Pike
Schwenksville, PA 19473
Counties where acquisitions completed:
Montgomery

Mission: The Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy is a nonprofit organization founded in 1964 by local citizens to combat pollution in the Perkiomen Creek and its tributaries. We provide an integrated approach to environmental issues of the Perkiomen Watershed area through environmental education, Watershed stewardship and conservation programs.

Founded: 1964
Phone: (610) 287-9383
Email: pwc@perkiomenwatershed.org
www.perkiomenwatershed.org

**WISSAHICKON VALLEY WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION- PALTA MEMBER**

12 Morris Rd.
Ambler, PA 19002
Counties where acquisitions completed:
Montgomery

Mission: Since 1957, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association has been the leader in protecting the open space of the Wissahickon Valley, in enhancing its water quality, and in educating people of all ages about environmental concerns.

Founded: 1957
Phone: (215) 646-8866
Email: wwww@aol.com: www.wwwa.org