

O'HARA TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

1. Previous Planning Efforts
2. Early History and Settlement Patterns
3. Demographic Analysis
4. Housing and Households
5. Socio-Economic Profile
6. Educational Opportunities
7. Transportation and Circulation
8. Government and Community Facilities
9. Current and Future Land Use
10. Development Constraints (Natural and Historic Resources)
11. Citizen Participation
12. Implementation Plan

Appendix A - Mapping Products

PREFACE

This planning document is a continuation of O'Hara Township's commitment to providing a foundation for positive growth at all levels of municipal interaction for persons and businesses with investments in the community. It represents nearly two (2) years of data gathering, analysis, discussion, public and private sector input and the articulation of community goals and objectives, which, when achieved, will affect quality of life issues for property owners in the Township.

The consideration of the community's role within the region, its assets and deficiencies, its past successes and initiatives, its governance, its neighborhoods, and the management of growth and development throughout a rich history, is at the core of this summary of the Comprehensive Plan document. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, requires that local planning efforts include ten (10) work elements which reflect the location, timing and character of development in a community. Each component relates to the others and together they should be considered as integral pieces of a comprehensive effort to solve problems and to achieve community-wide goals. Each required work element and several related issues of concern to O'Hara Township officials, including a fee-in-lieu-of-dedication program and the preparation of a specific plan focusing on the Freeport and Old Freeport Road corridors, have been summarized with key points noted.

Chapter 12 of the master plan document is included in its entirety and functions as the Township's Implementation Plan. This final component of the plan document was crafted at the direction of the Steering Committee and represents strategies, legislative activities, findings and conclusions, and directory goals with both broad based and incremental objectives. This is the action plan requiring continuous monitoring by Township staff, Planning Commission members and elected officials in order to effectively guide the community through build-out.

Mapping products were selected from the master plan document, which convey the essential character of O'Hara Township's natural and man-made environments. Thematic maps supporting the narrative text were chosen to reinforce key findings and to provide a context for future community planning efforts. Further interest in issues discussed and analyzed within the master document is encouraged through the utilization of the CD included with this Executive Summary, the contents of which include the entire 300-plus page document with text, attendant graphics, tables and digital mapping products. The Township is well-positioned to maintain its assets, address its deficiencies, strengthen its tax-base and to provide a diverse community with both residential and business opportunities for existing and future residents.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

1983 PHASE I, EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

In the early 1980's, O'Hara Township created a Long Range Planning Committee to evaluate the existing natural and man-made environment in their community. The Long Range Planning Committee in conjunction with the O'Hara Township Planning Commission retained a consultant to assist them in the preparation of Part 1 of an O'Hara Township Comprehensive Plan, titled "Existing Conditions Report." This planning document consisted of approximately one hundred and thirteen (113) pages of text, twelve (12) maps and twenty-two (22) tables and provided a broad based perspective on socio-economic issues at the local and regional level, physiography, potential land use, access, utilities and services, and parks and recreation. A summary of the research data with conclusions was also included and provides the background for this synopsis.

The role of the citizen planner has increased significantly in the last quarter century and a review of past planning initiatives provides continuity and a context for future planning efforts. At the time the Existing Conditions Report was prepared, certain relevant trends and characteristics were identified and discussed. O'Hara Township's population grew by sixty percent (60%) (5,768 persons to 9,233 persons) between 1950 and 1980, an average sustained rate of growth of two percent (2%) annually. The associated housing construction trends, however, resulted in site preparation activities which have since proven to be costly to private property owners and to the Township. A realization that past development practices was not sensitive to the physiographic characteristics of land in the Township resulted in policy changes at the local level aimed at mitigating documented impacts.

During this same post World War II expansion, the Regional Industrial Development Corporation began developing infrastructure to support light industrial, research and development, distribution and office facilities on lands formerly owned by Allegheny County and used as the Allegheny County Workhouse and Farm. While this regional commerce park provided full-time jobs for more than eight thousand (8,000) workers during its formative years, the same site development practices associated with widespread residential development were followed, producing similar environmentally related problems.

The 1983 Existing Conditions Report suggested that difficulties related to developing the remaining seven hundred and fifty (750) acres of land in O'Hara Township (half of which is constrained by the presence of steep slopes) would require more diligence and careful planning in order to avoid the

environmental problems caused by past land disturbance activities. Preferred development in this “holding area” in the northwest quadrant and associated development scenarios would be the subject of the current land use work element which was a section in that report. While the issue of “build-out” and the depletion of the remaining developable land in the Township was not specifically addressed, concern was raised a quarter of a century ago about the pattern of development in the community. These general concerns became the impetus for the drafting of more focused land use and land development standards in the 1990’s.

Another issue raised in the 1983 Phase I report was the cumulative effect of increased numbers of Township residents reaching retirement age in the ensuing decades. Fixed incomes mean decreased tax revenues which in turn mean less overall revenue for the provision of community services. The point was made that most of the Township’s recreation facilities were designed for school-aged children and young adults, while the Township’s population is aging in place. A recently completed Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Plan has addressed the long term recreation needs of Township residents which provides a more balanced, age sensitive local recreation program.

Generally, the demographic trend identified in the 1983 Existing Conditions Report has remained a concern. Revenue streams from Act 511 taxes have been in decline, but the socio-economic factors have changed, mitigating to some extent, the loss in overall tax revenues. The entry into the regional work force of a higher percentage of married women was an emerging trend twenty-five (25) years ago and is accurate in terms of present day labor force characteristics. Between 1970 and 1980, married women in the regional labor force grew from twenty-eight percent (28%) to forty-three percent (43%). Local tax revenues from these additional wage earners have offset to some degree, the exit of retirees from the job market. Related issues, as discussed, were the decisions by working women to have children later during the child-bearing years and to have smaller families. This socio-economic shift gave rise to service sector expansions in terms of child-care and individual property maintenance.

As the light industrial base, both regionally and locally was developing, the need for convenient goods and services resulted in the occurrence of commercial corridors along Freeport Road and Old Freeport Road. While opportunities to spend disposable income at newly developed regional shopping centers in emerging suburban communities increased during the 1960’s, some areas developed with a wider variety of neighborhood scaled businesses. This was true of the commercial areas which evolved in O’Hara

Township. The Freeport Road corridor, a three-quarters (3/4) mile commercial strip, accommodated approximately one hundred and forty (140) businesses in 1983. New development patterns based on the tenets of “smart-growth” and the recommendations of the Brookings Institute Report released at the turn of the new century are currently being championed by a wide variety of planning and economic development agencies. The urban sprawl that occurred along high volume transportation corridors during the formative period of expansion after World War II has been reexamined in terms of access, circulation, scale of development, aesthetics and impacts on public utilities.

Given the findings and identification of development trends in the 1983 Existing Conditions Report, lessons have been learned. O'Hara Township has established a long range planning and growth management program which has produced a sustainable community. Elected officials have reacted to external development pressures effectively and the on-going evaluation of short and long term socio-economic cycles has provided a pro-active framework for adjustments to specific development standards necessary to achieve accepted community-wide goals. There were five (5) principles outlined in the Phase I Existing Conditions Report that bear repeating and are included in this synopsis. They are as follows:

- *Willingness to recognize that future conditions cannot be assumed to be merely an extension of past trends.*
- *Development of flexible planning approaches that address current needs but do not preclude changes and adaptations to future conditions.*
- *Less emphasis on long range “ultimate” plans and more emphasis on short range, incremental planning efforts. For example, instead of planning a large sewage treatment system, development of a series of smaller systems that eventually link together.*
- *Recognition that land resources are becoming scarcer and more valuable and, therefore, should be used more carefully than in the past. There should be a maximum effort to accommodate land development where it is most feasible, thus preserving areas where it is least suitable.*
- *Establishment of reasonable growth objectives that allow for phased expansion of community facilities and services, which will not strain municipal financial resources, especially in an area of fiscal uncertainty.*

Planning at the local level is a dynamic process. It starts with an examination of information from a variety of sources and relies on the efforts of people committed to improving their communities. By keeping a perspective on the forces which helped to shape the character of O'Hara Township that process will continue to benefit present and future residents.

OCTOBER 1993 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, PART II

KEY ATTRIBUTES

In the fall of 1993, O'Hara Township adopted a planning document which evolved from several years of research, discussion and public input. The baseline data used was actually compiled for use in the 1983 Part I Existing Conditions Report, in addition to the 1990 Decennial Census data and primary data sources available during the preparation of the document titled *Comprehensive Plan, Part II*. The latter document is the subject of this review and narrative, and provides continuity for O'Hara Township's continuing planning and growth management efforts.

Part II consists of approximately sixty-one (61) pages of text, eight (8) maps, several graphics and about eighteen (18) tables and charts with summary statistical data. In the Introduction to Part II, the consultant identifies eight (8) issues of concern to local residents and Township officials, which are the result of both external and internal growth pressure. As communities evolve, planning objectives change to meet new challenges. The characteristics of any community's population shifts as local and regional socio-economic factors affect the decision-making process. In addition to employment opportunities and home ownership, quality of life considerations are high on the priorities list of household residents. This is where planning at the community level can be invaluable.

Part II of the 1993 O'Hara Township Comprehensive Plan frames the concerns and challenges as follows:

1. The shortage of easily usable land for future growth;
2. The intensification and adaption of land uses in the Freeport Road corridor;
3. Regional traffic problems in the Freeport Road corridor;
4. Reclamation of the river frontage;
5. Environmental protection of the sensitive hills, valleys, and wetlands of the Township;
6. Preservation of housing values and elimination of poor housing conditions;
7. The gaining of O'Hara's families; and
8. The provisions of all appropriate public services to residents in future years.

These concerns relate to the impacts of continuing development over a period of a half of a century. Most are inevitable and some are public policy issues. At this point, fifteen (15) years later, many of the challenges identified in 1993 are still pressing and require the Township to focus its resources on new options and new solutions. On the other hand, some of the concerns are being addressed through the consistent administration of zoning and subdivision and land development regulations, which includes a thorough review and approval process focusing on the environmental impacts and performance characteristics of development proposals.

DATA SUMMARIES

The 1993 Comprehensive Plan begins with a description of a fragmented geographic area which consists of four (4) subareas, each a part of O'Hara Township. While each of the two (2) largest land areas (Eastern O'Hara Township about 3.3 square miles and Western O'Hara Township about 3.5 square miles) exhibit different settlement patterns due to the timing of development, regional access and available public utilities provided the impetus for the interest in the river terrace areas. An Existing Land Use Map prepared in conjunction with the Part II plan document indicates that most steep sloped areas (25% or greater) had been left undisturbed or supported forests. The development potential on these lands is compromised by the natural features and usability is diminished. At that point in O'Hara Township's evolution, most of the accessible areas had been targeted leaving land with environmental constraints as a large part of the community's inventory of undeveloped land.

This characteristic presents the current Town Council with a difficult decision in terms of guiding growth into preferred areas. While "infill" development is consistent with the tenets of smart growth, a review and realistic assessment of the development potential of the remaining land is a logical activity in the preparation of the Township's "build-out" plan. There are at least two viable options; one is to consider narrow redevelopment and infill strategies and one is to introduce public utilities into undeveloped areas, some with physiographic constraints. While the latter option is more aggressive, there is no guarantee either will result in expanding the local tax base. This section of the Part II Comprehensive Plan makes a good case for low-density residential development on lands with recognized constraints, however, recent reports produced by the Penn State Agricultural Extensions on tax revenues generated from both residential and nonresidential development, indicate that in terms of service delivery, residential development actually impacts local budgets negatively. A third option, mixed-use development, could be implemented with overlay or village district zoning, and is also worth considering given the limited amount of developable land remaining.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In 1993, demographic trends indicated a stable population of about nine thousand (9,000) residents over the previous thirty (30) year period between 1960 and 1990. These decades represent O'Hara Township's peak sustained population. The most significant growth rates occurred in the 1950's at more than 5% annually. When compared to the official year 2000 figure of eight thousand, eight hundred and fifty-six (8,856) persons (at least one source, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, puts that number lower and projects declines through 2025), what is clear is that in the second half of the 20th Century, the community's population reached its highest point and declines are expected through buildout at the end of the second decade of the new millennium. In 1993, the pending population loss was discussed in terms of lower birth rates, smaller family size and outmigration for employment opportunities following the collapse of the steel industry within the region in the early 1980's. All three (3) factors are still affecting the Township's population although a shift from manufacturing to health services and research and development has occurred in the economic sector. The forecast at that point in the Township's evaluation was a population peak of over ten thousand (10,000) persons by the year 2010, while the current

projections by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission is for a population of approximately seven thousand and twelve (7,012). This disparity is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Population Characteristics and Projections. Smaller household sizes are due to a number of factors including the proliferation of two (2) working householders, and a jump in the median age because of an increasing number of “empty-nesters.” In addition, the attraction of lower taxes and land prices in burgeoning rural areas, and shifts in regional employment trends have affected O'Hara Township's population projections.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Between 1980 and 1990 O'Hara's labor force in the service sector, trade and manufacturing categories decreased overall by about 8.7%, however unemployment fell from 6% to 2.9%. These data sets may reflect an increase in the number of persons retiring, pursuing part-time employment, or becoming self-employed. Median family incomes increased by more than 80% during the same period as compared to an increase of almost 110% in Fox Chapel and about 65% for all of Allegheny County. The 1993 document text comments that the median family income and median home values reported in Fox Chapel in 1990 was among the highest reported for any community in Pennsylvania.

With the decline of steel making and primary metal fabrication County-wide in the early 1980's, the labor force locally and regionally experienced a major shift from manufacturing to services, trade and technologies. However, the 1990 Part II Plan indicates that the percentage of adults with both high school and college diplomas in O'Hara Township was higher than Allegheny County but significantly lower than Fox Chapel. This characteristic of the local labor force provided a smoother transition than that experienced by traditional blue-collar mill towns. In fact, the mix of technical and light industrial uses in O'Hara as opposed to the heavily residential character of Fox Chapel was identified as the reason for the separation of the two municipalities. The development of the Regional Industrial Development Corporation's property in O'Hara Township, beginning in the 1950's, was an example of earlier shift from heavy industry supported by rail and river access to more commerce oriented industry supported by truck and automobile access. Prime industries at both the County and local level were still manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and professional services through the early 1980's.

The historical development pattern that emerged in O'Hara Township began with river transportation. Canals and inclined rail systems provided a means of moving goods and people from Pittsburgh to other destination hubs in the region. This early infrastructure along the north bank of the Allegheny River provided development opportunities in O'Hara Township and drove both residential and industrial growth throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Canals eventually gave way to railroads as the primary method of transportation and forests were cleared to produce fuel for early iron furnaces. River terraces were eventually developed for steel and glass manufacture and also supported small residential enclaves where workers lived. These small scale developments gave O'Hara Township a mixed use heritage composed of residential settlements and specialty industries in contrast to communities along the other river valleys in the region where large tracts of land were assembled for the manufacture of steel.

Farms and pastoral estates dominated higher elevations and attracted industrialists looking for home sites well into the 20th century.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

With the conversion of the County Workhouse property in the 1960's to a regional industrial/commerce park, arterial roadways replaced rail travel and stimulated additional development. Commercial businesses supporting the residential settlements and neighborhoods evolved, providing once again, a mix of land use which resulted in the development of multi-family housing and institutional facilities. As O'Hara Township grew into its current suburban residential form, the 1993 Part II Plan identified the following characteristics:

1. Ample and fairly uniform lots, curvilinear streets adopted to the topography and not forming a rectilinear grid;
2. Reasonably uniform front yards, side yards, and rear yards;
3. Reasonable uniformity of housing types designed to serve a traditional nuclear family (working father, home-keeping mother, school children, but no grandparents);
4. Exclusion of commercial and industrial uses from areas near residential subdivision.

The author points out that the development pattern that resulted from factors identified during the last periods of expansion in the 19th and early 20th centuries, is expected to change rapidly in the decade ahead. The plan cites changing demographics, environmental standards and the lack of developable land as future issues facing the Township. With new versions of "families," single parent households, working couples without children, retired couples or sole occupants, housing demands have and will change. In addition, land remaining for development will need to be engineered more carefully due to physiography and the lack of public utilities. Property maintenance in older residential neighborhoods was also identified as a concern related to the community's available housing stock.

Commercial development which occurred in the Freeport-Old Freeport Road corridors was characterized as poorly planned, rapid growth, resulting in traffic congestion and limited accessibility. In 1993, a continued demand for retail, office and service uses was projected although that demand has dissipated somewhat due to traffic circulation problems which need to be addressed through the provision of off-site transportation improvements. Private sector investment, at some level, is still likely to occur however, in-depth market analysis and cost/benefit formulas will precede future land development proposals, given the limited amount of land available for nonresidential development. Riverfront land is recognized as a marketable asset in a County with more than ninety (90.5) miles of rivers and 2,000 miles of streams. The opportunity for riverfront development was provided for in the most recent zoning ordinance revisions and several developments have taken advantage of this community resource.

Land available for light industrial uses is limited to the RIDC property which, at build-out, is projected to provide for between eight thousand and ten thousand (8,000-10,000) full and part-time jobs. The intensity of development on this site has become an issue of concern as home-sites have been approved

in close proximity to this industrial park. Required perimeter bufferyards and performance standards relating to exterior light, separation of vehicular traffic, stormwater management and other use characteristics have been adopted to lessen impacts and will need to be monitored as development is approved. The 1993 Part II Comprehensive Plan characterizes the RIDC uses as corporate offices, distribution warehousing, and high tech industries as opposed to manufacturing and processing uses. This category of land use generates a higher percentage of truck traffic and vehicular traffic in general than moderate density residential uses that developed on the eastern side of O'Hara Township. Site design standards, if applied consistently, can provide support for this mix of uses, to an extent, although certain characteristics of each use category are incompatible. The remaining "infill" development in close proximity to the RIDC property will need to be carefully designed and engineered to mitigate the perceived negative impacts of a nonresidential destination site.

The use of public and semi-public land uses was also discussed in the Part II Comprehensive Plan document. An estimated six hundred and forty (640) acres of tax-exempt land, mostly developed, was listed. These institutional and recreational lands accommodate Fox Chapel Area School District facilities, a VA hospital, municipal authority and County owned property. Services provided by the agencies which own and maintain these lands benefit Township residents as well as residents within the region and the loss of tax revenues from these uses is not a significant issue given their function.

TRANSPORTATION

With the extension of the Allegheny Valley Expressway (State Route 28) through O'Hara Township in the 1960's, access to Pittsburgh's northeastern employment centers and urban assets was enhanced. Every suburban arterial roadway constructed to provide access to developing areas in the Township intersects with State Route 28 or with State Route 8 at some location within the community. While Freeport Road still provides the primary access to local commercial areas and functions as the main street in several adjacent Boroughs, there are few transportation links between neighborhoods in O'Hara Township and neighborhoods in Fox Chapel Borough. This lack of interconnectivity is anomalous in the region and tended to isolate residential areas from each other resulting in a disjointed interior circulation pattern.

While regional access was enhanced with interchanges between SR 8 and I-279, I-579 and the Parkway East (Penn Lincoln), the configuration of site specific local streets which provide access to individual home sites were not developed with links to adjacent developing tracts. The 1993 Part II Comprehensive Plan states that this characteristic of the local transportation network is safer overall due to the isolation of these neighborhood street systems, which discourage alternative routing and "short cuts." Some communities see this isolation and lack of connectivity as a detriment to emergency service delivery and a shared slice of community.

In 1989, the traffic volume on Freeport Road was reported at 1,460 vehicles during a Saturday afternoon (2:00 to 3:00 p.m.) peak hour. Traffic volumes on Fox Chapel Road were reported at 1,005 vehicles during the same peak hour. The text states that while the p.m. weekday peak hour is usually the

period when the highest number of trips are counted, in O'Hara Township that period ranks second. In any event, the numbers given in 1993 were significantly lower than the AADT (Annualized Average Daily Trips) reported by PennDOT in 2008. Projected traffic volumes for the year 1995 were estimated at 1,755 on Freeport Road and 1,456 vehicles on Fox Chapel Road. These numbers represent a 20% increase and a 45% increase in traffic volumes respectively, over a six (6) year period, 1989 to 1995. The source of these data is not identified, but increases of this magnitude suggest that either developments of regional impacts was introduced or that alternate routes which were part of the regional transportation network were no longer available, forcing vehicles into the Freeport Road corridor. A normal background traffic growth of between 1% and 2% annually would result in traffic volumes in the 6% to 10% range over a six (6) year period. An increase of 45% is far beyond the statistical range for projected growth in traffic volume.

Compared to these data the AADT numbers provided by PennDOT for the subject roadway segments in 2008, and the 1989 study and 1995 projection are a level of magnitude lower. According to PennDOT, Annualized Average Daily Trips on Freeport Road to the east of the Fox Chapel Road intersection totaled just under 11,700 (11,693 AADT) and average daily trips on Fox Chapel Roads north of the Freeport Road intersection totaled more than 24,000 while trips north of the SR 28 intersection totaled more than 26,000 (26,286 AADT). The disparity in these traffic volume numbers can be interpreted in different ways. If the 1989 and projected 1995 statistics were inaccurate, the need to alleviate congestion through the provision of capacity improvements would be understated. Or if the 2008 AADT numbers are inflated, which seems doubtful as PennDOT was the source, then these two (2) transportation facilities present an immediate concern for future access and circulation to O'Hara Township. Clearly, intersections in both corridors are operating at low or failing levels of service, but options for mitigation have not been identified locally, and at a point in the near future, fundable options may cease to exist. The 1993 plan states that a public-private consortium coordinated by the then Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission (now SPC) had begun to look at solutions. This issue will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 7 of the current plan.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Part II lists four (4) broad areas of concern to Township residents: first, the quality of development; second, the environment; third, traffic; and fourth, services and facilities. While these concerns are common to most growing communities, O'Hara Township has been proactive from the outset of the formative periods of growth in addressing recognized impacts. In 1993, with less land available for development and increasing County and State environmental controls, the Township sought to broaden its protection of land with sensitive environmental features. A comprehensive package of zoning amendments with an emphasis on performance standards, use characteristics and submittal requirements was completed in the mid-1990's. The focus of these amendments was to support the approval of sustainable development through the consistent application of design criteria. Subdivision and land development standards were revised in the mid-2000's to require additional information on development impacts associated with proposed site improvements. Once again, the Township's concern for environmental issues was the impetus for the adoption of broader submittal requirements.

Establishing community development objectives facilitates the drafting of regulatory documents which are designed to reach goals. Planning without implementation strategies is useless and O'Hara Township's planning efforts have been fairly effective. While broad areas of concern and generally accepted remedies were provided in the 1993 Part II document, a more specific menu of actions, policies and legislative initiatives are called for as O'Hara Township moves toward build-out following its peak population years. Realistic solutions to specific problems and deficiencies buttressed by the support of property owners and taxpayers will result in an effective local planning program. Consensus building is key to the achievement of local planning objectives because if stated objectives are viewed as sympathetic to special interests, the credibility of the entire planning program is suspect.

The current planning effort will move from general recommendations included in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan to specific actions. Clearly both the impact of the natural environment and traffic congestion are still core issues of concern as the Township evolves. Infill housing with designed bufferyards or natural buffers is suggested where public utilities and access from local streets are available. This projected residential trend makes no distinction for the types of housing needed as demographics change. Preferred options and development models need to be identified during the current plan preparation work. In the opening narrative of the Part II document, certain infrastructure and land use characteristics were identified and they are still relevant today with regard to the location and site design features of residential developments in the Township. The growth management and redevelopment options recommended by the Planning Commission and Long Range Planning Committee will affect quality of life issues into the next decade as a larger percentage of the Township's population reaches retirement age.

Land use based on physiographic characteristics is described as "river terrace" and revenue ridges and valleys. Commercial and industrial development occurs to the south of SR 28 while residential development in separately identifiable areas with site specific circulation networks, occurs north of the SR 28 corridor. The RIDC Park occurs as a distinct, geographically buffered development with specialized light industrial uses and an integrated circulation system. These distinct areas of development are described as "specialized use neighborhoods" which evolved during the Township's suburban transition following World War II.

In the older settled areas along Old Freeport Road mixed land use is a result of a early settlement patterns. While that corridor has changed significantly, a less homogeneous mix of uses is still evident. Montrose Hill and Pleasant Valley are also identified as examples of diverse neighborhoods as is the area adjacent to the Saxonburg Boulevard corridor. The authors of the Part II Plan state that by the early 1990's most of the "easily usable vacant land" have been developed. Further, the plan document states that the northwest quadrant lacks adequate infrastructure and the lack of transportation capacity and safety improvements in the Old Freeport Road corridor makes both areas less attractive.

A series of twelve (12) land use goals were identified in the Part II Plan based on the existing conditions analyses. They are as follows:

1. Preservation of the wooded residential character of the community;
2. Improvement of the visual appearance of the Freeport-Old Freeport Road commercial core;
3. Protection of residential neighborhoods by adequate buffering through maintenance of wooded slopes, or through the planting of new landscape buffers;
4. The prevention of commercial or industrial intrusion into residential areas;
5. The protection of residential streets from through traffic, while avoiding the unnecessary creation of dead-end streets;
6. Incentives for developments which provide open space, retain woodland, and protect slope areas and other features of the natural environment;
7. Prevention of undue damage to the natural environment from the removal of foliage or by excessive grading;
8. Steep slopes to be used only if geotechnically sound;
9. Use of steep slope areas for passive recreation;
10. Reclamation of derelict land when new development meets other community goals;
11. Restricting the location of developments which generate heavy traffic to land having access to thoroughfare; and
12. Restricting industrial traffic to major thoroughfares.

As O'Hara Township moves toward build-out, this list should be gleaned for relevance and policy consistency. A priority list should be generated by the Planning Commission and Long Range Planning Committee where specific strategies have been identified. Riverfront development with an emphasis on public access is such a policy and both small scale commercial and planned residential development with recreational amenities, can take advantage of Allegheny River assets.

Specific targets for possible redevelopment or an expansion of land use options include the Margery Drive area and Pleasant Valley. Both areas have been compromised by their proximity to high-volume roadways and in the Pleasant Valley area to natural feature constraints. With Margery Drive, the recommendation is to consider a set of commercial use options which also protects property owners who wish to maintain residences in the area. The addition of open space, pedestrian access to abutting commercial areas, and stream rehabilitation are recommended in respect to the Pleasant Valley neighborhood. These objectives could still be viable fifteen (15) years later and will be a part of the Township's future land use plan. Options to be considered include a Business Transition Overlay District and an "adaptive reuse" conditional use category to be added to the zoning text as necessary. The Part II Plan recommendations stress the input of the twelve (12) property owners most affected by regulatory amendments related to land use.

In terms of housing, community goals reflect a protection of the status quo where residential neighborhoods have provided the foundation of values held in high regard by community residents. Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) are identified as appropriate residential development options for

O'Hara Township because of the design components which permit a developer to preserve areas with environmental constraints as open space while clustering home sites in a variety of configurations on land within a single tract needing less disturbance and preparation. Given the topographic and stormwater issues related to development in the northwest quadrant, a well-planned residential neighborhood with a curvilinear interior street pattern, accessible open space and preferred active or passive recreational amenities seems to be a good fit.

O'Hara Township's transportation network evolved with a reliance on use by automobiles. The inference is that "T" intersections occurred less frequently than margining intersections due in large part to topographic constraints. While traffic volumes on rural collector roadways are not nearly as high as arterials or urban collectors, the design standards for such roads are also less stringent. The lack of drainage facilities to accept stormwater from cartways, deficient lane widths, and vertical and horizontal curvature characteristics are such that as formerly rural areas experience increased subdivision activity, the supporting infrastructure can be overwhelmed. The 1993 Plan suggests that certain arterial roadways, specifically SR 28, function as by-passes in older settled areas. Further, the reduction of conflicts in traffic movements through the design of limited access roads permits a more efficient movement of high volumes of traffic. The review of traffic impacts from development is an important aspect of the Township's review and approval process.

A Major Thoroughfare Plan which identifies a hierarchy of roads based on five (5) categories is provided. Collector roads include Saxonburg Boulevard, Dorseyville Road, Kittanning Road, Squaw Run Road, Hunt Road, Guyasuta Road, Field Club Road, Fox Chapel Road, Delafield Road, Alpha Drive, and Powers Run Road. These transportation facilities provide the interior circulation network in the Township and intersect with each other or with the arterial roads in the southern tier which parallel the Allegheny River. The plan proposes no new links to the existing network, nor any major transportation improvements. There is no discussion of current levels of service at key intersections, and that data, plus current traffic counts can aid decision-makers as they grapple with current and future circulation issues. An observation regarding the conflict at Conrail's rail line with vehicle traffic in O'Hara Township due to the lack of a grade separation points to a prominent deficiency in the overall regional as well as local traffic pattern.

Sanitary sewerage service is not available in portions of the East Little Pine Creek Basin, described as an approximate area of eight hundred and eighty two (882) acres, north and west of Dorseyville Road. Alcosan (Allegheny County Sanitary Authority) provides effluent treatment to all other Township areas services. Line extensions to the Field Club and Timber Ridge Roads areas were in the planning stage in 1993. The economics of extending public sanitary sewerage service into the remaining unsewered areas involves a cost-benefit analysis, and a review of on-lot system failures. The public health issue dictates, to some extent, whether remedial sewer line projects are funded, but unit costs per household for tapping and connecting fees are also a factor.

Three (3) separate public water distribution authorities serve developed areas in O'Hara Township. The Hampton Township Municipal Authority, which purchases water from the Shaler Water Company, West View Water Authority and the City of Pittsburgh provides service to the Pleasant Valley and Saxonburg Boulevard areas. The Fox Chapel Water Authority provides service to the eastern half of O'Hara Township and areas east of Slitz Run and north of Dorseyville Road on the western half. The Allegheny River is its water source. The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority provides service in the Old Freeport Road corridor. While the Part II Plan indicates that adequate water supplies for domestic and commercial usage is a requirement for development approval, there is no discussion of planned upgrades to components of each Authority's distribution and treatment facilities. A current inventory of the water distribution infrastructure and related maintenance activities since the early 1990's will be provided in Chapter 8, Government and Community Facilities, of the current plan document.

The Township's Park and Recreation Department operates, maintains, and programs activities on nineteen (19) parcels of land totaling approximately two hundred and fifty (250) acres. These include five (5) developed parks, thirteen (13) passive areas and a 5.5 acre island (Six Mile Island) in the Allegheny River. Table 17 of the 1993 Part II Plan lists the parks and facilities, some of which were secured through density transfer options. Private recreation facilities include the Boy Scouts of America Guyasuta Reservation, three (3) marinas and yacht clubs, and two (2) private swim clubs. These recreational lands are characterized as having been designed for children and younger adults and the Township's changing demographics resulted in revised recommendations in the recently completed Parks, Recreation and Open Space study to meet those needs as the Township's population ages in place. Standards for recreational needs by population have been established by Federal and Commonwealth guidelines and the Township has been pro-active in meeting those standards. A recent trend toward the use of trails for preferred recreational activities such as walking, jogging, and bicycling is discussed in the Part II Plan and the recommendation is to plan and develop additional trails linking recreational areas within the municipal boundaries as well as with adjacent municipalities.

Community objectives regarding growth management endorses the Planned Residential Development (PRD) template as a model. As stated in previous sections of the 1993 Plan, environmental concerns relating to land use, specifically site preparation activities, require a comprehensive review for compliance with local regulatory provisions. The author proposes alternative design options which are more flexible and include an assessment of environmental impacts of "performance zoning" to dictate the intensity of development permitted. This type of regulatory approach relies on use characteristics to determine compliance with a variety of design and construction standards. The author also suggests that environmental advisory councils, design review committee, and local business committees could play a role in administering a growth management program. Future requirements based on what the author says are "needlessly high standards" will add to the cost of development "without adding an increased measure of safety or health." With the enforcement of any land use regulations, standards must be reasonable and be linked to the objectives outlined. Pennsylvania's long history of property rights has provided a volume of land use case law which attempts to balance private versus public interests.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the 1993 Part II Comprehensive Plan, there is the theme of planning before acting. The thematic commentaries, data summaries, recommendations and general strategies for achieving recognized community-wide objectives, stress the need to do thorough review. While there are few specific recommendations for either legislative action or capital improvements programming, the plan document functions as the foundation for public policy debate and informed decision-making. The next logical step in O'Hara Township's planning process is to evaluate those policy recommendations and to craft a specific set of strategic actions designed to address issues raised in the document. The key is to build a consensus of support to address those qualities of life in O'Hara Township that residents and business owners embrace, and attempt to sustain those qualities while preparing for build-out. Planning is the identification of options and the recognition of consequences given certain choices. As O'Hara Township's community leaders act in the best interests of their property owners and taxpayers, it is more important than ever to have a plan which respects every resource available.

Executive Summary

Chapter 2: Early History

O'Hara Township's early and more recent history and that of the region have continually shaped the Township's present character, assets, and unique municipal boundary configuration. The Township's History Committee has compiled a publication entitled "Portrait of an American Community: O'Hara Township, PA," which is a tremendous resource. Major benchmarks in the early history of the O'Hara region, include the County Workhouse and farm property, which was developed into the Regional Industrial Development Corporation Park. In addition, the incorporation of adjoining municipalities from land originally included in the O'Hara Township subregion to form the present configuration of O'Hara Township's boundaries represented the diversity of early industrial impacts on areas being settled.

Executive Summary

Chapter 3: Demographic Analysis

The Comprehensive Plan analyzes demographic trends and population characteristics in O'Hara Township, examining the ages, numbers of people, and changes at the household and Township level. Recognizing that planning for the Township's future requires an understanding of who lives and is expected to live in the Township, the analysis includes population projections through 2020. State law and good planning practice link land use plans, including zoning, transportation, and recreation to the needs of current and expected residents.

The following summarize key findings of existing population.

- 1. Families with school aged children form a significant part of the population while fewer single, young adults live in the Township.** Persons in the 22 to 29 age range represent one third of the total population in O'Hara Township, compared with the same age range in Allegheny County. At the same time, school aged children ages 18 and younger, constitute 27% of the population in O'Hara versus 23% of the County's population. More than one third of O'Hara's residents are between 35 and 54 years of age.
- 2. The Township has a stable resident population.** According to the US Census 2000, only 25% of O'Hara residents resided in a different house or dwelling unit in 1995. (29% in Fox Chapel). The percentage of such residents in surrounding Boroughs was greater than one third of the residents. This indicates a stable population which is aging in place.
- 3. Residents have a comparatively high rate of education.** 54% of adult residents have a bachelor's or four year degree education and 28% have a graduate or professional degree.

Several other factors were also examined. Median income of Township households was \$67,725 in 1999, as per the 2000 US Census. Incomes were highest, approximately \$90,000 per year, where the householder was between 45 and 50 years of age. Those 65 years and older had a median income of less than \$40,000 per year. 94% of residents were listed as "white" or Caucasian in the 2000 Census. Six percent were listed as Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian or Pacific Islander, half of which were listed as Asian or Pacific Islander. These proportions remained similar to those cited in the 1990 Census.

Population Projections

Past and present information were examined using the 1990 and 2000 Censuses, SPC forecast cycles, as well as school district enrollment data. Future projections were made using an age-cohort method. This method factors in birth and death rate data by gender combined with migration data, to determine the net increase or decrease in each five-year age cohort.

Table 3-12 shows migration information by age-cohort. Since there was some variations in the migration numbers by gender, Table 3-12 shows the average migration between the two genders. Therefore, total

migration for each cohort is twice that shown in the table with a total net outmigration of 150. An exercise was conducted where birth and death rates were applied to the 1990 population and progressed to 2000, producing the number of residents expected where no residents in each cohort move into or out of the community. The resulting analysis shows the portion of people above or below this number, respectively showing the number of individuals assumed to move into or out of the Township. The migration data and resulting population projections indicate the following:

1. **Young families with elementary school aged children have steadily moved into the Township over the past twenty years.** Between 1990 and 2000, the largest net increases were within the ages 5 to 9 and ages 35 to 39, at 204 and 424 respectively. Recent enrollment data from the State Department of Education for the Fox Chapel Area School District were analyzed and found that the projected trend and continued migration rates were reasonably close to the enrollment data.
2. **Young adults are moving out of the Township.** Those between the ages of 20 and 29 comprised the largest number of people moving out of the Township. It is estimated that 660 residents estimated to have moved between 1990 and 2000.
3. **Those moving into new construction are living in households with fewer people.** Related to the migration assumptions, the number of new construction households was compared to the net change in population. An analysis determined that new construction likely housed an average of 2.37 residents per unit as opposed to 2.87 in 1990 and 2.64 in 2000. Conversely, it is assumed that younger families with school aged children are replacing older families in existing housing, as discussed earlier.
4. **The future number of seniors living in the Township depends on the availability of affordable housing choices.** Some loss or net outmigration of seniors is indicated in Table 3-12 while approximately 100 of those aged 75 to 79 are assumed to have moved into the Township from 1990 to 2000. Given the limited number of existing housing choices for seniors and the average cost of new construction, mainly condominium housing, choices for seniors are limited. Data show that the outmigration of seniors is somewhat significant for recent retirees (ages 60 to 64, however new construction in the early part of the decade has provided additional housing options for seniors).

The population was projected through the year 2020 to decrease from 8,618 people projected in 2005 to 7,622 residents. This is a minor loss because the in-migration of younger families may offset the continued trend of smaller households and population loss in the area overall.

A second scenario assumed additional residents based on new construction that has occurred and assuming a reduced but constant rate of construction (50% reduction) through 2020. The analysis resulted in projected 9,392 residents in 2005 and 9,337 residents in 2020. Therefore, the continued moderate construction of new units will result in a stable population, markedly contrasted with expected population

losses in the region. Lastly, the number of existing housing sales coupled with the decision or ability of seniors to move into alternative housing or to “downsize” will determine future population increases as most are due to the introduction of younger families moving into existing housing.

Executive Summary

Chapter 4: Housing

Chapter 4, Housing and Households, examines:

- General Characteristics of Housing and Householders ,
- Local Housing Market, and
- Summary and Trends.

An examination of existing housing and future housing needs is crucial to future land use planning and zoning within the Township to ensure that the Township provides for the needs of current and future residents. Factors to be examined include housing condition, affordability, the local housing market, and potential threats to the stability of the housing stock.

An analysis of housing in the Township was conducted using Census Data and sales data from the Western Pennsylvania Multi-List Service. Housing trends were examined Township-wide and at the census block group and, in some cases, street level.

General Characteristics of Housing and Householders

1. One third of all households are comprised of families (meaning they consist of two or more individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption) with children under the age of eighteen, with roughly another third are married couples with no children. The remaining third consists mainly of individuals living alone.
2. O'Hara has many traditional suburban subdivisions on cul-de-sacs that form much of the Township's character and encompass much of its visible landscape.
3. However, nearly half of the homes in O'Hara were built prior to 1959. A comparatively older neighborhood is located near, and as an extension of Blawnox. This neighborhood has the lowest per capita income in the Township and greatest number of seniors over age 65 (next to the block group containing The Mews). The oldest median year of housing construction is found within a traditional neighborhood originally located in Aspinwall and extending from Aspinwall. (Block Group 3 in Western O'Hara)
4. O'Hara, much like neighboring Fox Chapel, possesses a very high percentage of owner-occupied housing units at 92.2%. While age is not an outstanding factor, predictably greater percentages of younger and older householders occupy rentals in contrast with owner occupied units. Median income is less, but not substantially less, in light of per capita income and smaller size of households.

5. In the year 2000, 121 of the 251 rental units were single family detached homes scattered throughout the Township with a slight concentration in the southwestern area of the Township. Median contract rent in the Township was \$548.
6. Vacancy within the Township was comparatively minimal with no significant concentration of vacant housing.

Local Housing Market

Current housing demands were examined through both Census and Western Pennsylvania Multi-list Service data (MLS). The MLS is used by Realtors to search and sell real estate in the Western Pennsylvania region and provides a current and historical perspective of housing sales in the region.

1. O'Hara experienced a ten percent increase in the average sales price of existing homes as opposed to two percent reported nationwide by the National Association of Realtors during the mid-2000's. Average sales prices in O'Hara increased by approximately \$20,000, after adjusting for inflation from 2004 to 2006 where the average sales price was \$242,180. The time on market was on par with that of surrounding communities and suggests a healthy market for existing single family housing stock.
2. Slight concentrations of housing sales (examined in 2006 to 2008) occurred on Cornwall and Sunridge Drives, and on Woodshire Drive near Delafield.
3. The average sales price of condominium units in the community in 2006 was \$367,332 for 14 units, half of which were within The Mews. Excluding The Mews, the average sales prices of the seven other units sold that year was \$480,429. These units were an average of eight (8) years old.
4. Construction of single family homes averaged 22 units per year from 2000 to 2007 and averaged 24 such units per year throughout the 1990's.
5. As of December of 2007, all "new construction" multi-family units for sale were located within Chapel Harbor consisting of midrise condominiums priced from approximately \$450,000 and upward to \$700,000 in Western O'Hara near the riverfront. Units in other new developments, whether condominium or single family detached, have ranged from \$300,000 to over \$500,000. Recent sales of new construction have been minimal.
6. As discussed in Chapter 3, Demographic Analysis, young adults in their 20's or early 30's continue to leave the Township which may indicate a need for affordable housing. Using Housing and Urban Development standards based on median income, the price of an affordable home in O'Hara was calculated to be \$157,000 which may be met within rental units as a bridge to homeownership. Units like The Docks are emerging, but are comparatively upscale and expensive.

7. Lastly, transitional neighborhoods such as Margery Drive and the homes fronting Fox Chapel Road were evaluated as currently zoned residential. Upon closer examination and it was found that sales prices were comparatively lower and time on market comparatively longer, illustrating decreased demand for residential use.

Future Construction

An analysis of available land conducted as part of the comprehensive planning process found over 200 additional units could be approved and constructed on vacant tracts throughout the Township, primarily located in the northwestern part of the Township. The majority were assumed to be single family units. An estimated 217 units were approved in Chapel Harbor and may be revised based on market trends. Essentially 400 to 500 units may be constructed prior to full build-out of the Township.

Conclusions

- Families with children remain a significant part of those occupying housing units combined with the predominant stability of the single family detached home.
- Existing housing and neighborhoods remain stable and highly marketable in terms of value despite the aging of those subdivisions built out in the 1950's and 1960's this, however, may require some attention.
- Current trends for housing in the Township indicate a demand for comparatively higher priced houses and maintenance free living such as townhouses and patio houses. This trend is occurring along the riverfront and in northwestern O'Hara.
- The lack of young adults and some outmigration of seniors suggests unmet demand for affordable and/or maintenance free housing within the Township for these age groups.
- Sales data within certain neighborhoods near commercial centers and main corridors suggest the need for flexible zoning to improve or maintain property values and protect the integrity of residences while permitting low impact commercial options.
- Given construction trends, existing approvals, and future build-out projected, the Township may expect moderate housing construction growth for the next twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) years.
- The typical household in O'Hara is summarized as follows as per the analysis in Chapter 4:

“The typical household in O'Hara consists of either middle-aged married couples whose children have left, or families with children under the age of 18. One or more members of the household work in a 'white collar' or managerial position and commute alone to work approximately 25 to 30 minutes away. The typical family has lived in the Township for more than five years in a single

family home valued at \$240,000. The family owns its home and pays \$1,600 or 25 percent of their gross monthly income to the mortgage. Yearly income of the household is \$78,000.”

Executive Summary

Chapter 5: Socio-Economic Profile

The Socio-Economic profile supplements the housing, demographic, and land use chapters by further developing an understanding of who lives in O'Hara Township, their employment, incomes, and commuting patterns. Also, incomes, homeownership, and general socioeconomic data impact the Township's revenues and expenditures. An analysis of the Township revenue and expenditures was conducted.

Socio-Economic Profile

1. As of 2000, slightly over a third of Township residents were employed in the Education, Health, and Social Services fields.
2. A significantly greater amount of Western O'Hara residents were employed in the retail sector than Eastern O'Hara residents.
3. According to the 2000 Census, 15% of O'Hara Township workers were self-employed. One fourth of Fox Chapel's workers were self-employed. Both communities had a significantly greater proportion of self-employed persons when compared to the other communities in the region.
4. While regional trends are toward a continued decrease of employment opportunities in manufacturing or retail sectors, approximately one fifth to one fourth of O'Hara's workforce remains employed in these sectors.
5. Only ten percent of residents living in the Township worked within the Township in 2000, down from sixteen percent in 1990. The average commuting time for residents to work is 25 minutes.

Revenues and Expenditures Trend

1. Total revenues available to O'Hara Township between the years 1998 and 2005 increased by about 39%.
2. Between 1998 and 2005, taxes per capita increased from \$445 to \$606 or approximately thirty-five percent (35%), while revenue per capita rose from \$660 to \$955, an increase of approximately forty-three percent (43%) (calculation of per capita tax and revenue does not include Township property taxes).
3. These key statistical benchmarks indicate a stable local economy which has kept pace with inflationary factors and has been able to provide revenue streams for the delivery of local services.

4. Expenditures on parks and recreation which represent a commitment to Township residents of all ages have increased from \$214,563 in 1998 to \$328,245 in 2005 or about fifty-two percent (52%).
5. Wage and related Act 511 Taxes account for 40% of revenues. Given the continued influx of working families who remain within Township long-term and relatively high incomes overall, wage tax income is assumed to increase at a rate above inflation.
6. Even after adjustment for inflation and millage increases, the revenues from real estate taxes remained stable between 2001 and 2005, due in part to new construction and a stable housing and commercial real estate market.
7. Within the 15238 Zip Code, employment increased both in terms of numbers and in terms of wages (after adjustment for inflation) between 1998 to 2006 according to ZIP Code Business Pattern data.

Conclusions

1. Jobs available in the Township have increased in number and wages. However, only ten percent of working residents are employed within the Township which may be due to housing affordability and choices within the Township.
2. Tax incomes remain stable and/or above inflation, unlike in many surrounding and similar communities. Maintenance of reserves will help to stabilize taxes when such trends level off or revenues decrease.
3. Employment is diverse but trends toward service oriented sectors.

Executive Summary

Chapter 6: Educational Opportunities

Chapter 6 lists the various educational opportunities available to Township residents including public and private schools and universities. The stability of enrollment in the Fox Chapel School District coupled with the related stability of spending per student help to ensure that the Fox Chapel School District will continue to be an asset to the Township, attracting renewed interest in existing neighborhoods as families move into the Township and providing quality educational opportunities for residents. Trends highlighted in Chapter 3, Demographics, help to support this assumption. Public school opportunities are supplemented by a diverse selection of private schools and universities.

Executive Summary

Chapter 7: Transportation

Chapter 7, Transportation, examines:

- Classification and character of existing roadways.
- Existing and projected deficiencies
- Projects to mitigate deficiencies.

Several unique transportation factors exist that pose opportunities and challenges to transportation and overall land use planning in O'Hara Township. Such factors include:

- Presence of a regional employment center (RIDC Park).
- SR 28 as a regional arterial.
- Commercial strip development along Freeport and Old Freeport Roads.
- North-South major collectors that bring regional traffic as well as supply access to local neighborhoods.

Classification and Character of Existing Roadways

1. The transportation network in O'Hara Township evolved from access to two (2) regional arterials, PA 28, the Allegheny Valley Expressway, and SR 1001, Freeport Road, which, in their current configuration, were constructed on the northern shore of the Allegheny River Valley during periods of growth following World War II and again during the 1960's.
2. Four (4) suburban collector roadways owned and maintained by the Commonwealth, Saxonburg Boulevard (SR 1013), Dorseyville Road (SR 1003 segment maintained by Allegheny County), Kittanning Pike (SR 1003), and Powers Run Road (SR 1009) provide access to the arterial roadways along the southern perimeter of the Township on both the eastern and western areas of O'Hara Township. These in turn provide direct access to local neighborhoods or subdivisions in O'Hara Township.
3. At present, the Township maintains 40.42 miles of streets and roads, while PennDOT maintains 22.40 miles of road and Allegheny County maintains 3.12 miles of road.
4. The Kittanning Pike and Dorseyville Road on the west and Powers Run Road on the east function as the primary residential collectors and carry a range of daily traffic between 2,000 and 6,000 vehicles.
5. In addition to these residential collector roadways, Saxonburg Boulevard in the northwestern quadrant of the Township carries traffic volumes in the 6,000 to 12,000 vehicle range along different segments. While a higher percentage of pass-through traffic is carried on this collector, Dorseyville Road which carries in the 2,000 to 6,000 vehicle trip ranges, provides access to

residentially developed areas abutting Fox Chapel Borough. Both Field Club Ridge Road and Field Club Road in the northeast also provide access primarily to residentially developed areas and are locally owned and maintained.

6. As discussed earlier in this work element, the transportation facilities carrying the highest traffic volumes are all situated along the north shore of the Allegheny River, in the southern tier of O'Hara Township. State Route 28, or the Allegheny Valley Expressway, which follows the Allegheny River Valley, including the bend on the eastern half of the Township. Through the western and central areas of O'Hara Township this arterial roadway carries a range of between 24,000 and 33,000 thousand average vehicles daily, and is a major commuting highway.

Existing and Projected Deficiencies

The Township's Traffic Engineer was requested to analyze existing traffic movements within the Old Freeport Road/Freeport Road corridors and linking segments, in order to provide options for future transportation improvements designed to manage traffic movements. As continued development and redevelopment of the Township's commercial corridor occurs, both capacity and safety improvements are necessary.

1. Wooster and Associates utilized existing studies and also assessed the following manual turning movements between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm:
 - Freeport Road and Fox Chapel Road / Old Freeport Road
 - Freeport Road and Route 28 Ramps / Fairview Avenue
 - Old Freeport Road and Chapel Harbor Drive
 - Old Freeport Road and Riverfront Drive
 - Zaenger Drive and Chapel Harbor Drive
2. In addition to the manual turning movement counts, Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATRs) were installed at several locations throughout the study area. The ATRs were programmed to identify volume, class, and vehicular speeds. ATRs were installed at the following locations:
 - Freeport Road Eastbound and Westbound – east of Oak Hill Road
 - Old Freeport Road Eastbound and Westbound – east of Riverfront Drive
 - Freeport Road Spur – east of the split approach to Freeport Road
 - Freeport Road Spur – merge to Freeport Road westbound
3. Analyses show that all of the individual lane groups, intersections approaches, and overall intersections currently operate at LOS D or better (an acceptable level) during both the AM and PM peak hours. Analyses of the Design Year 2020 Conditions show that several lane groups and approaches are anticipated to degrade to LOS E as a result of background traffic growth as well as the completion of the Chapel Harbor and Yacht Club Village developments. Specifically, the

following lane groups / approaches are anticipated to operate at poor or failing Levels-of-Service under Design Year 2020 Conditions:

- Fox Chapel Road and Route 28 Southbound Ramps
 - Eastbound Approach – LOS F
 - Northbound Left Turns – LOS E
 - Fox Chapel Road and Route 28 Northbound Ramps / Retail Driveway
 - Eastbound Left Turns – LOS E
 - Freeport Road and Fox Chapel Road / Old Freeport Road
 - Southbound Left Turns – LOS E
4. The remaining study intersections are anticipated to operate at LOS C or better under Design Year 2020 Conditions.

Projects to Mitigate Deficiencies

1. The Wooster Report recommended the addition of one lane on Fox Chapel Road to the area between Fox Chapel Road and Route 28 Southbound Ramps and Fox Chapel Road and Route 28 Northbound Ramps / Retail Driveway. The addition of one lane would allow recommended dual turning lanes serving the ramps at the ends of this segment of Fox Chapel Road. The recommended widening would require replacement of the overpass bridge of Route 28. The report suggested that the Township explore State and Federal funding options.
2. The second and more immediate mitigating measure suggested is the relocation of Old Freeport Road to an intersecting point with Freeport Road approximately 750 feet east of the current intersection. The elimination of one approach to the Fox Chapel/Freeport Road Intersection would allow that intersection and the new intersection to function at acceptable levels of service. More importantly, abandonment of the segment of Old Freeport Road would encourage redevelopment of the adjoining strip development and may allow for streetscape improvements and limited access along Freeport Road.

Conclusions

1. As operational levels-of-service at the key intersections studied are projected to decline, the relocation of a segment of Old Freeport Road (as shown on the aerial included in this work element) could buy time to secure long-range funding for the major transportation improvement projects identified.
2. In order to accomplish the planning objective this initiative aims to achieve, an Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement between Allegheny County and O'Hara Township should be discussed and prepared for the vacation of a 750 linear foot segment of Old Freeport Road. All parties to this action would have to agree to criteria established in order for redevelopment to proceed as

anticipated, including the installation of a signal at the new intersection of Old Freeport Road with Freeport Road.

3. A review of existing rights-of-way and a PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit for the signalized intersection will be required. With the Township discussing the preparation of a Specific Plan for the immediately surrounding area, as authorized by Article XI, Section 1106 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, alternative land use options, dimensional standards, flexible development exactions, and review and approval procedures can be adopted to support the achievement of this transportation/land use goal.

Executive Summary

Chapter 8: Government and Community Facilities

Chapter 8, Government Facilities, summarizes Township facilities and contacts including police, public works, and roads as well as public and semi-public facilities including educational, religious, and group residential facilities such as nursing homes. This Chapter also provides a detailed summary of recommendations and capital improvements suggested by the Township's Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan and Trail Feasibility Studies.

Reference to Chapter 9, Current and Future Land Use, also examines the implementation of these studies through land dedication requirements for open space and recreation to serve new plans. Revenue and expenditures related to parks and recreation opportunities are also examined in Chapter 5, the Socio-Economic Profile, with recommendations for on-going implementation through the provision of parks facilities, either acquired by or managed through the O'Hara Township administrative staff.

Executive Summary

Chapter 9: Current and Future Land Use

Chapter 9, Current and Future Land Use, examines:

- Summary of Current Zoning Scheme
- Commercial Uses of Land and Trends
- Consumer Expenditure Analysis
- Open Space and Recreation Needs

Chapter 9 reviews existing land uses and recommends future land uses implemented through several flexible zoning techniques and performance standards. Chapter 9 also examines conceivable future land uses through market analysis to project redevelopment scenarios. References to other applicable chapters such as Housing are cited. Implementation strategies include adoption of a Specific Plan to manage and encourage innovative development near the Route 28 Interchange and Freeport and Old Freeport Road corridors.

Summary of Current Zoning Scheme

1. Currently, the Township is divided into seven (7) zoning districts, two (2) of which (Conservation District 1 and Conservation District 2) are areas where environmental constraints limit the viable options for development. R-1, R-2, and R-3 represent residential designations with multifamily housing permitted in R-3 and R-1 and R-2 primarily devoted to single family detached housing.
2. Most of the undeveloped residentially zoned land, in excess of 600 acres, is situated in the northwestern quadrant of O'Hara Township and is zoned R-2.
3. Nearly 700 acres of land is zoned as Suburban Manufacturing (SM) most of which are located in RIDC Industrial Park with the remainder bordering the Allegheny River where the Riverfront Planned Unit Development (RPUD) has been utilized to promote mixed use development through the planned residential development approval process. Some retail uses are permitted typically when considered ancillary to office park or manufacturing uses.
4. Approximately 47 acres of land is zoned as the Commercial District (C) and located mainly along Freeport Road and bordering parts of Fox Chapel Road south of the Route 28 Expressway. This comprises approximately one percent of land within the Township.

Commercial Uses of Land and Trends

1. The local ZIP Code data, available through the US Census, indicate a shift from small to mid-range establishment sizes, especially when compared to the business services offered. Particularly, the percent or proportion of those establishments with a range of ten to nineteen employees increased

by seventeen percent (17%) as compared to an approximately four percent (4%) increase in that category at the County level between the years 1998 and 2006. The change may represent growth of existing firms or the introduction of new firms. An examination of the detailed industries in those categories that experienced marked increases indicates that the largest increases occurred in categories such as Health Care and Social Assistance as opposed to solely retail establishments and restaurants. Therefore, while further analysis is necessary, a comparison of County level and local level data supports the observation that a general trend toward smaller establishments locating within the area, namely in RIDC Park, is occurring.

2. A questionnaire distributed by the Township to each household, yielded the following results regarding services or businesses most needed for the Township's residents and local consumers according to the percentage of respondents identifying the specific use categories:
 - Retail Uses were noted as follows: Electronics/computer (5), department (3), grocery/Whole Food (38), clothing (15), shoe (5), drug store/pharmacy (5), bakery (7), convenience stores (3).
 - Hardware or similar stores were noted and included national stores: Hardware (72 total replies), Busy Beaver (25), Lowes (9), Home Depot (10)
 - Restaurants: Restaurant (60), Dining (1), Fast food (2), takeout (1), diner (1)
3. With regard to restaurants, department stores, and retail, 32 responses contained words such as "upscale" and "high-end" when listing the types of businesses needed. Respondents indicated a desire for specialized and comparatively high end shops, department stores, and restaurants juxtaposing them to the current array of businesses located in the business district corridor.
4. In summary, the following trends are apparent:
 - Portions of RIDC Park are transitioning to smaller and more traffic intensive establishments including personal services and medical facilities.
 - The Freeport Road Corridor, while experiencing a healthy maintenance of retail based businesses and small offices, trending is also to smaller establishments, which presents opportunities and challenges regarding utilization of older strip centers, parking, and interior circulation due to excessive curb cuts on Freeport Road.
 - The area near the SR28 interchange, now zoned residential, may require utilization of mixed use zoning or some performance based zoning that offers options other than single family residential detached homes, the demand for which has decreased.
 - Relative to the current economy and surrounding municipalities, demand for new housing in O'Hara persists. The remainder of contiguous and comparatively large-scale vacant tracts lies within the Northwest part of O'Hara.

Consumer Expenditure Analysis

1. Given resident input gained from the questionnaire, the following uses, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistic Consumer Expenditure Survey were examined:
 - Apparel and Services (definition includes mainly stores devoted primarily or entirely to the sale of clothing)
 - Food at Home (defined as a grocery store)
 - Food Away from Home (restaurant)
2. By comparing the median household incomes in O'Hara and neighboring Fox Chapel against the expected annual household expenditures on the above items it was determined that three (3) average sized apparel stores and dozens of restaurants and grocery stores would be supported. While spending habits and nearby competing uses are assumed to temper the numbers, the exercise demonstrated that considerable unmet demand for desired services or establishments does exist. Incentives for consolidation and redevelopment of existing commercial strips may aid in meeting these demands.

Open Space and Recreation Needs

1. The Township's Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, adopted in 2003, outlines deficiencies in open space and recreational facilities as per National Recreation and Park Association standards.
2. The Plan noted a deficiency in Community Parks and a slight deficiency in Neighborhood Parks. In short, new housing will create further deficiencies and require additional facilities.
3. The Township may wish to consider adoption of mandatory land dedication or fee in lieu of land dedication which is authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.
4. An examination of the values of vacant land, the amount of land required per household based on the household size by the type (single family, townhouse, and apartments), and the associated amount or fee in lieu of required to purchase such land. The fee in lieu of dedication option is a resource payable collectible prior to subdivision recordation and would apply only to those plans submitted after adoption of the required ordinance.
5. The preliminary calculation suggests a fee of \$1,200 for each single family detached house, \$800 for townhouses and carriage houses, and \$600 for apartment style dwelling units.

Conclusions and Implementation Strategies

1. The preservation of wooded hill sides and steep slopes should be encouraged as the remaining residential vacant land in the Township develops. This may be encouraged by streamlining the approval process and promoting planned residential development and clustering options utilizing development models.

2. Drafts of ordinances implementing the fee-in-lieu and land dedication provisions will aid in preservation of open space and provision of adequate land for recreation.
3. Excessive curb cuts and underutilized traditional strip centers in the area of Freeport Road along with aging and underutilized single family residences in the vicinity of the Route 28 Interchange demonstrate the need for zoning alternatives in these areas. Secondly, the plan research demonstrates pent up demand for additional establishments. Lastly, as discussed in Chapter 7 there is a need to cooperate with the County in the relocation of Old Freeport Road 750 feet east of the current intersection with Fox Chapel Road, providing additional opportunity for redevelopment and improvement of the level of service of the adjoining intersections. The Township should use a Specific Plan, as authorized in Article XI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, to synchronize the timing of capital improvements, pedestrian connections, landscaping, and future public road construction to both streamline the process for property owners and better ensure coordinated and compatible redevelopment within the area.
4. RIDC Park has experienced recent development or transition to smaller establishments that are often more traffic intensive. The Township may wish to strengthen on-site traffic improvements in its subdivision ordinance and through conditional use requirements for particular uses, to help minimize the effects.

Executive Summary

Chapter 10: Development Constraints

Chapter 10 focuses on environmental assets as well as direct constraints to development. Direct constraints to development include steep slopes within undeveloped areas which are briefly described within the Little Pine Creek and Powers Run Watersheds and are described in greater detail in summaries of past planning efforts described in Chapter 11.

Almost all of the developed areas in the Township have access to public utilities. Sanitary sewers have been extended into all but the northernmost lots on both sides of the Township and follow existing road and street rights-of-way to the extent possible. Public water distribution systems have been introduced in these same rights-of-way and also provide residual pressure to hydrant systems for fire protection.

Stormwater management facilities, or storm sewers, are also generally available in developed areas and have been required in new developments, whether residential or nonresidential since the 1970's. The northwestern quadrant where the largest undeveloped area in the Township remains, is the exception as the need for public utilities has not emerged to support development activities at this point.

Chapter 10 cites related work and research done by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Three Rivers Conservation Plan of March 2004. The plan focused on riverfront properties and adjacent land forms and was prepared for Allegheny County. Excerpts from the Conservation Plan relative to land in O'Hara Township are enumerated in Chapter 10 including an examination of current riverfront conservation zoning employed by the Township and points planned for public fishing access to the Allegheny River.

Several Bio-Diversity Areas exist within the Township, including areas along the Allegheny River, the Camp Guyasuta Area with mature tree canopies, and Campbell Run Slopes with wooded slopes and unique ferns and undergrowth.

The Natural Areas Map depicts those areas presenting the most apparent natural assets within the Township. Forested areas, namely on steep slopes, are shown, as are other land cover features as well as "blue-line" streams and related hydrographic elements noted on the USGS survey maps. Plateaus and fields exist on parcels slated for future development on the Future Land Use Map. The natural areas indicated on those parcels present opportunities for preservation of greenway connections where cluster and Planned Residential Development options are utilized.

Methods of preservation within future development are discussed in Chapter 9, Current and Future Land Use.

Executive Summary

Chapter 11: Citizen Participation

Chapter 11, Citizen Participation, examines:

- Past Planning Efforts
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Community Survey

Past Planning Efforts

Chapter 11, Citizen Participation outlines previous planning efforts, namely the 1983 Phase I, Existing Conditions Report and the October 1993 Comprehensive Plan, Part II. Given the findings and identification of development trends in the 1983 Existing Conditions Report, lessons have been learned. O'Hara Township has established a long range planning and growth management program which has produced a sustainable community. Elected officials have reacted to external development pressures effectively and the on-going evaluation of short and long term socio-economic cycles has provided a proactive framework for adjustments to specific development standards as necessary to achieve accepted community-wide goals. There were five (5) principles outlined in the Phase I Existing Conditions Report that bear repeating and are included in this synopsis. They are as follows:

- Willingness to recognize that future conditions cannot be assumed to be merely an extension of past trends.
- Development of flexible planning approaches that address current needs but do not preclude changes and adaptations to future conditions.
- Less emphasis on long range "ultimate" plans and more emphasis on short range, incremental planning efforts. For example, instead of planning a large sewage treatment system, development of a series of smaller systems that eventually link together, should be considered.
- Recognition that land resources are becoming scarcer and more valuable and, therefore, should be used more carefully than in the past. There should be a maximum effort to accommodate land development where it is most feasible, thus preserving areas where it is least suitable.
- Establishment of reasonable growth objectives that allow for phased expansion of community facilities and services, which will not strain municipal financial resources, especially in an era of fiscal uncertainty.

A series of twelve (12) land use goals were identified in the Part II Plan based on the existing conditions analyses. They are as follows:

1. Preservation of the wooded residential character of the community;
2. Improvement of the visual appearance of the Freeport-Old Freeport Road commercial core;
3. Protection of residential neighborhoods by adequate buffering through maintenance of wooded slopes, or through the planting of new landscape buffers;
4. The prevention of commercial or industrial intrusion into residential areas;
5. The protection of residential streets from through traffic, while avoiding the unnecessary creation of dead-end streets;
6. Incentives for developments which provide open space, retain woodland, and protect slope areas and other features of the natural environment;
7. Prevention of undue damage to the natural environment from the removal of foliage or by excessive grading;
8. Steep slopes to be used only if geotechnically sound;
9. Use of steep slope areas for passive recreation; Reclamation of derelict land when new development meets other community goals;
10. Restricting the location of developments which generate heavy traffic to land having access to thoroughfares; and
11. Restricting industrial traffic to major thoroughfares.

Throughout the 1993 Part II Comprehensive Plan, there is the theme of planning before acting. The thematic commentaries, data summaries, recommendations and general strategies for achieving recognized community-wide objectives, state the need to do a thorough review. While there are few specific recommendations for legislative action or capital improvements programming, the plan document functions as the foundation for public policy debate and informed decision-making. The next logical step in O'Hara Township's planning process is to evaluate those policy recommendations and to craft a specific set of strategic actions designed to address issues raised in the document. The key is to build a consensus of support to address those qualities of life in O'Hara Township that residents and business owners embrace, and attempt to sustain those qualities while preparing for build-out. Planning is the identification of options and the recognition of consequences given certain choices. As O'Hara Township's community leaders act in the best interests of their property owners and taxpayers, it is more important than ever to have a plan which respects every resource available.

Stakeholder Interviews

Dr. Anne E. Stephens, Superintendent of the Fox Chapel Area School District, was interviewed. She confirmed continued growth of the student population in O'Hara Township despite Department of

Education projections showing decreases. She also highlighted common transportation concerns such as the intersection of Fox Chapel Road and Freeport Road. She observed that the tax base overall does not appear to be moving “up or down.”

Community Survey

In the spring of 2008 the O'Hara Township Long Range Planning Committee put together a community survey designed to illicit input from residents, while gauging attitudes on issues of concern, and gathering localized information which supports recommendations for future implementation efforts. A total of 3,727 surveys were mailed to households in the Township, 2,180 going to neighborhoods in Eastern O'Hara and 1,547 to Western O'Hara. There were 1,039 surveys returned, or about twenty-eight percent (28%), which provides recognizable statistical validity to the response. Of the total number of surveys returned, a response rate of 30.4% was calculated from recipients in the East O'Hara census tracts and 24.3% from recipients in the West O'Hara census tract, based on the total number of households surveyed.

A summary report of survey responses was prepared for review by members of the Long Range Planning Committee and is included in this Chapter for reference. Township residents commented most frequently to neutrally worded statements in the survey, where responses options reflected an attitude about the statement's content. However, throughout the survey instrument, respondents were specifically asked for input. In addition, residents were asked to prioritize a menu of selected response options which functions as a preference barometer in the context of the topic surveyed. The highest concentration of non-response errors occurred with these topical components due to the repetition of high or low numbers which respondents used to indicated preferences.

Themes emerged from an analysis of the survey responses to open option questions and they were segregated based on written comments into five (5) broad topics and one (1) specific retail category. This was the format of the summary report, color-coded for quick reference. The following broad themes received the highest number of responses: recreation, transportation, restaurants, retail and medical, with hardware as a preferred specific category eliciting significant response. Comments were not categorized as positive or negative, rather recorded as provided on returned surveys.

Slightly more than half (50.4%) of all respondents to the community survey indicated they have lived in O'Hara Township for more than twenty (20) years, with another nineteen percent (18.9%) indicating residency for a period of between eleven and twenty (11-20) years. Nearly seven (7) in ten (10) respondents (67.9%) had no children under eighteen (18) years of age in their household (Questions Number 1 and 2).

On the use of public transportation, a greater percentage of respondents (57%) indicated a preference for private vehicle use versus public transportation (40.9%) (Question Number 3).

Question Number 4 asked for responses from residents to five (5) issues affecting daily living: traffic safety, pedestrian safety, crime, aging infrastructure, and deteriorating housing. A sixth option was “Other” which

provides respondents with an open-ended opportunity to add a new concern or observation. Respondents were asked to assign a value of one through six (1-6) to each issue with "1" as the issue of most concern. It should be noted that a higher percentage of residents did not assign any value to the response option (No Answer) than assigned a value of one through six (1-6).

A great majority of respondents (94.7%) agree that consumer staples such as food and clothing are available locally (Question Number 5).

Housing options was the topic in Statement Number 6 of the Community Survey. Rental housing was the least preferred (49.3%), while affordable housing for both seniors and young families (25.1% and 25.2%) received the highest percentage of "Most Needed" responses. Again, it should be noted that the "No answers" option received the highest percentage of responses other than the rental housing option, to each type of housing provided.

Question Number 7 was an open-ended opportunity for residents to offer suggestions as to what services or businesses are needed. A hardware store or home improvements facility was the overwhelming preference.

A great majority of respondents (89.5%) also agreed that the preservation of open space and natural areas is of prime importance in future residential development (Question Number 8).

Question Number 9 functioned as a focus issue exercise and provided discussion points for the drafting of community goals and objectives. Schools (43.5%) and property values (27.4%) received the highest percentage of high value rankings (1 through 8, with 1 being the most positive), while road maintenance (9.6%) and government services (6.2%) received the lowest percentage of high value rankings. These perceptions were confirmed by the high percentage of lower value rankings (6 through 8) received for road maintenance and government services, versus the low percentage of lower rankings received for schools and property values.

A little more than sixty percent (60%) of respondents indicated they would be interested in attending a planning oriented town hall meeting (Question Number 10). An open house was conducted in November of 2009 and provided Township residents with materials, graphics, mapping products, and implementation options to convey the key recommendations that evolved from the planning process.

O'HARA TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Development Plan

Chapter 12 – Implementation Plan

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The effectiveness of local municipal planning is directly related to the efforts of the participants to achieve the goals and community objectives that evolve from the actual planning process. As the planning document is being prepared, information from a variety of primary and secondary data sources is assembled, analyzed and put into the local government context. As issues are identified based on what has become known as a SWOT analysis for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, consensus building begins. In support of the statistical data, thematic digital mapping products based on geo-rectified data files are produced. These mapping products have become widely available on the Internet for more general analysis and by utilizing geographic information system software, digital cartographic products at smaller scales and with significant increases in accuracy are an integral part of any local planning process.

As discussed in Chapter 11, Citizen Participation, the Long Range Planning Committee for O'Hara Township prepared a household survey early in the planning process, in order to solicit input on issues of concern from Township property owners and taxpayers. A total of 3,726 surveys were mailed to addresses in O'Hara Township by zip code and 1,039 surveys were returned, representing about a twenty-eight percent (28%) response rate, which is considered statistically valid. The true value of any attitude survey instrument lies in the identification of consensus issues and the comments supporting those issues. In Chapter 11, an analysis of the survey responses follows the survey instrument and statistical summaries of each element. The analysis provided impetus to explore options and resolve issues that were identified and resulted in the preparation of more detailed technical reports.

In large part, the community survey responses indicated that the current planning and growth management program and administrative professionals are in synch with the planning philosophy of the elected officials. O'Hara Township has a history of local planning activity and has demonstrated a willingness to devote resources to problem-solving efforts involving sometimes controversial development proposals. There has been a continuity and consistency in a review and approval process that encourages discussion from a variety of perspectives and interests. This plan update has attempted to address both long term and immediate concerns through the preparation of a number of technical reports and goal planning which focus on those issues of concern which will most directly affect Township residents as the community moves toward buildout.

Much of the effort directed by the Long Range Planning Committee has involved the relationship between housing options and the characteristics of the Township's population, a balanced tax base which would support the costs of municipal service delivery, a strategic planning initiative to facilitate the development and redevelopment of the Township's commercial corridor, and a recognition that many characteristics of the Township's development pattern should be maintained. The socio-economic profile in Chapter 5 provides an analysis of statistical data relating to local employment, occupation trends, household finances, local revenues and expenditures and household economics. This work element demonstrates that O'Hara Township has evolved into a fiscally stable community with long term sustainable assets and human resources. The outlook is positive, given local government's efforts to achieve the goals identified in this plan document.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The articulation of community-wide goals and objectives is an attempt to bring the data collection, discussions, analyses and commentary generated during an eighteen (18) month planning process, into focus in order to guide O'Hara Township through its build-out phase. Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code provides a requirement for plan components. The ten (10) general work elements outlined in Chapter 1 provide municipalities and groups of municipalities with the framework for the efficient development of land within their municipal boundaries. Further, the location, character, and timing of development which relates directly to the plan for future land use and which in turn involves an analysis of the amount, intensity and character of projected land use, is of chief concern to a community planning for its future. In addition, the local and regional transportation and circulation network relates directly to employment opportunities, future development options, and access to community facilities. These two aspects of local planning efforts have direct impacts on the quality of life in any community. The O'Hara Township Long Range Planning Committee has focused on those aspects of community development recognizing that the character of the community as it evolves toward buildout will be influenced by the core issues of land use and transportation.

In addition to the formal plan elements, recommendations, comments, summary conclusions and support for a specific plan is included in this planning document. The following broad or long-range goals are supported by short-range objectives which incrementally provide for the achievement of the broader community goal, and are presented by work element in this planning document. The consensus is that the goal statements that follow are on-going policy directives which can be considered effective during the next eight (8) to ten (10) year period, and that the actionable objectives which are linked to the goal can be accomplished in three (3) to five (5) year increments in support of the long-range goal.

CHAPTER 2 – EARLY HISTORY AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

GOAL: CONTINUE TO MONITOR DEVELOPMENT SITES WITH AN HISTORICAL LINK TO PERSONS OR PLACES, IDENTIFIED AS IMPORTANT TO THE TOWNSHIP'S HERITAGE

Objective 1: Refer to "Portrait of an American Community: O'Hara Township, PA," 2008, as a source for historical facts.

Objective 2: Continue to promote recognition of the Township's history within the region, through references in a Township newsletter.

CHAPTER 3 – DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

GOAL: PROVIDE FOR RESIDENTIAL USE OPTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE ALL FUTURE RESIDENTS AS POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS CHANGE

Objective 1: Support in-migration of young families through promotion of local recreational and educational opportunities.

Objective 2: Monitor percentage of over-65 population by Census tract.

Objective 3: Monitor characteristics of the population in existing neighborhoods as infill development occurs.

Objective 4: Provide performance incentives such as density bonuses to support construction of comparatively affordable housing for young adults and seniors.

CHAPTER 4 – HOUSING & HOUSEHOLDS

GOAL: PROVIDE FOR A PRO-RATA SHARE OF DWELLING TYPES IN RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE ZONING DISTRICTS

Objective 1: Review current residential use provisions in the Zoning Ordinance as they relate to future housing needs.

Objective 2: Determine the Township's fair-share of multi-family residential development opportunities.

Objective 3: Base future planning objectives, zoning district designations, or neighborhood improvement districts, on the boundaries of recognized neighborhoods.

Objective 4: Establish contact list with neighborhood associations to facilitate communication that furthers the objectives of this plan and helps to monitor neighborhood conditions, blight, poverty, and needs.

GOAL: MAINTAIN THE HOUSING STOCK AND RESIDENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF O'HARA'S EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

Objective 1: Sustain property values by ensuring that existing housing stock is maintained.

Objective 2: Ensure the maintenance of rental housing, namely single family detached units through the consideration of a rental licensing program.

Objective 3: Consider establishing a home and neighborhood improvements recognition program to promote sustainable property values in older neighborhoods.

GOAL: ENSURE THE VITALITY OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH THE MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND NEW INFILL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Objective 1: Develop policy by which the Township may participate cooperatively with property owners in the installation, repair or ongoing maintenance of neighborhood improvements including lighting, common areas, sidewalks, and landscaping by utilizing a Neighborhood Improvement Program, such as Block Group 2 in Eastern O'Hara Township.

Objective 2: Promote the construction of new housing choices compatible with existing housing in neighborhoods by reviewing the zoning ordinance to ensure that performance standards help to promote or encourage "infill" construction and that existing provisions do not discourage that investment.

GOAL: PROVIDE HOUSING CONFIGURATION OPTIONS FOR THE FULL RANGE OF O'HARA'S PROJECTED BUILD-OUT POPULATION, FROM YOUNG ADULTS TO SENIOR CITIZENS

Objective 1: Utilize Planned Residential Development, Traditional Neighborhood Development and Preferred Development Models to promote performance standards that encourage the provision of housing at a level affordable to senior citizens as well as young adults.

Objective 2: Draft standards to encourage the types of housing that provide for the needs of such populations, namely senior citizens who may require low maintenance and one level living.

Objective 3: Ensure achievement of the goal by promoting the adherence of zoning, subdivision, and specific plan housing option standards to State and Federal fair housing policies, specifically the Federal Fair Housing Act and subsequent amendments.

GOAL: PERFORM TARGETED CODE ENFORCEMENT BY CONDUCTING AN INVENTORY OF HIGHER RISK NEIGHBORHOODS AS IDENTIFIED WITHIN CHAPTER 4, HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLDS

CHAPTER 5 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

GOAL: SUPPORT A BALANCED MIX OF DEVELOPMENT TO KEEP RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAXES MANAGEABLE

Objective 1: Monitor number of households on fixed incomes.

Objective 2: Participate in multi-municipal service delivery programs to reduce per capita costs.

Objective 3: Continue to participate in COG related bulk acquisition programs.

Objective 4: Assess the impact of introducing public water and sanitary sewerage facilities into the northwest quadrant of the Township.

Objective 5: Maintain current level of reserve funds in the annual budget and increase funds when possible to supplement wage and real estate taxes revenues for municipal service delivery, based on projections for continued growth.

GOAL: THE TOWNSHIP SHOULD UTILIZE THE ECONOMIC ANALYSES WITHIN THIS PLAN AS A MARKETING TOOL TO DEMONSTRATE AN ADEQUATE MARKET TO POTENTIAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE FREEPORT AND OLD FREEPORT ROAD CORRIDORS

GOAL: THE TOWNSHIP, PRESENTLY HAVING SUFFICIENT CAPITAL RESERVES, SHOULD CONTINUE THIS POLICY IN ORDER TO PLAN FOR FUTURE DECREASES IN WAGE TAX AS THE INFLUX OF MID TO UPPER INCOME FAMILIES REPLACING THE HOUSEHOLDS OF SENIORS EVENTUALLY SUBSIDES OR WHERE SERVICE DEMANDS OF SUCH RESIDENTS INCREASE

CHAPTER 6 – EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL USES, RETRAINING FACILITIES AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS PROVIDED BY PUBLIC AGENCIES AND PRIVATE INTERESTS

Objective 1: Maintain liaison with the Fox Chapel School District regarding student enrollment projections.

Objective 2: Encourage the development of new industries and research facilities which promote low impact environmental characteristics.

CHAPTER 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

GOAL: REQUIRE THAT ANY EXPANSION, CONSTRUCTION, OR DOCUMENTED BASE LEVEL INCREASES IN TRIP GENERATION IMPACTING ADJACENT INTERSECTIONS BY PROPOSED EXPANSIONS TO EXISTING ESTABLISHMENTS OR NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT, PARTICIPATE IN A TOWNSHIP-WIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Objective: Draft standards for transportation oriented developments for inclusion in the current Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

GOAL: ENCOURAGE SUSTAINED FUNDING OF PLANNED TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH IMPACT-BASED FUNDING AND USER-BASED CONTRIBUTIONS, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WHICH SHOULD BE EVALUATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED AND THE TIMING AND SCOPE OF ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENTS:

OBJECTIVE 1: Consider creation of a transportation partnership district coinciding with the boundaries of the specific plan, namely the interchange area with Route 28 and Freeport and Old Freeport Road corridors.

OBJECTIVE 2: As an alternative to Objective 1, consider reciprocal user fees as development exactions in exchange for development beyond that typically authorized in the base district, notably the C District. Developments generating comparatively greater number of trips may be authorized where fees subsidizing district-wide improvements are paid. The preceding is designed to act as a form of performance zoning, where such fees are not required at the base level and a fair share of such establishments are provided for elsewhere in the Township.

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage the creation of neighborhood improvement district standards to fund and maintain both pedestrian and vehicular improvements by providing a local match of dollars and/or services for shared improvements.

GOAL: EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZE MIXED USE PARKING REQUIREMENTS WHERE A PROPORTION OF PARKING SPACES ARE "DOUBLE-COUNTED" DEPENDING ON THE PEAK USE OF THE ESTABLISHMENTS SUCH AS RESTAURANT VERSUS OFFICE

Objective 1: Parking studies by the Urban Land Institute or the Institute of Transportation Engineers should be referenced.

GOAL: EXPLORE COOPERATION WITH RIDC PARK PROPERTY OWNERS AND ASSOCIATIONS INCLUDING COORDINATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE PARK

Objective: Consider establishing a Business Improvement District which permits implementation through private contributions and/or site planning that may reduce traffic including staggered work hours or ride sharing programs.

GOAL: CREATE A STREET CLASSIFICATION MAP TO BE UTILIZED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ORDINANCES AND FUTURE TRANSPORTATION, DENOTING LOCAL, COLLECTOR, AND ARTERIAL STREETS

GOAL: UTILIZE MITIGATIONS PROPOSED IN THE WOOSTER AND ASSOCIATES TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ANALYSIS, SEPTEMBER 2009, AS TRANSPORTATION COMPONENT OF A SPECIFIC PLAN FOR THE SR 28 INTERCHANGE AREA AND FREEPORT ROAD CORRIDOR

CHAPTER 8 – GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL: CONTINUE TO OPERATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WITH TAXPAYER INPUT

Objective 1: Prepare a semi-annual newsletter to apprise taxpayers of local initiatives.

Objective 2: Pursue intergovernmental cooperation agreements with adjacent communities where benefits to O'Hara Township residents can be demonstrated.

GOAL: UTILIZE THE TOWNSHIP'S TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY, 2005, PROJECT IMPLEMENTATIONS SECTION, TO CONNECT THE INVENTORY OF GREEN AREAS TO SERVE AS A GUIDE FOR MANDATORY LAND DEDICATION LOCATIONS

Objective 1: This access should serve as a policy guide to the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, and Council.

GOAL: SUPPORT THE MAINTENANCE OF IDENTIFIED GREENWAYS THAT PROVIDE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL FACILITIES, AND PROTECT BIO-DIVERSE AREAS, STEEP SLOPES, AND RIPARIAN CORRIDORS.

OBJECTIVE 1: Include purchase of trail easements as public capital improvements which may be funded, in part, by fees in lieu of land dedication.

OBJECTIVE 2: Encourage conservation and preservation of greenways areas through the cluster development option and local regulatory protection of steep slopes and riparian buffers by the enforcement of environmental performance standards.

GOAL: ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH PROPOSED HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS TO PROMOTE GREENWAY CONNECTIONS AND CONTINUITY, ENSURE PRIVATE MAINTENANCE OF COMMON AREAS, AND PRESERVATION OF WOODED SLOPES

Objective 1: Review proposed Homeowner's Association documents for references to community-wide recreation goals and security of long-term maintenance of semi-public or common facilities such as lighting, private sidewalks, and landscaping.

GOAL: UTILIZING CENSUS DATA, TARGET AREAS FOR INCOME SURVEYS AND POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING OF STREET REPAVING OR RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS (AREAS SUCH AS BLOCK GROUP 2 IN EASTERN O'HARA NEAR BLAWNOX) AND ATTEMPT TO GAIN FUNDING THROUGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY'S CDBG PROGRAM

GOAL: ADOPT RELATED MANDATORY LAND DEDICATION REQUIREMENTS, OR FEES-IN-LIEU-OF-DEDICATION, AS PER 503(11) OF THE MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE AS AN IMPLEMENTING TOOL OF THE RECREATION PLAN AND THIS PLAN

GOAL: GIVEN RECENT GAINS IN YOUNGER FAMILIES, A STABLE POPULATION OF YOUTH WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP AND FOX CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND RELATED DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, THE TOWNSHIP SHOULD UTILIZE THE STANDARDS OF ITS COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN TO UPDATE SUCH FACILITIES BASED ON POPULATION NEEDS

Objective 1: The inventory or facilities should be used as a capital improvements plan addendum to which fees-in-lieu of recreation are paid.

CHAPTER 9 – CURRENT AND FUTURE LAND USE

GOAL: PREPARE PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT DESIGN STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL AND NONRESIDENTIALLY ZONED INFILL PROPERTIES

Objective 1: Monitor interest in selected tracts with development potential through staff generated community development activity reports.

GOAL: DRAFT NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE LAND (MINOR) DEVELOPMENT LANGUAGE FOR INCLUSION IN THE CURRENT SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Objective 1: Protect existing developed property from impacts of proximity development by drafting site specific design standards.

Objective 2: Provide an efficient review and approval process for new small-scale commercial land development and expansion of existing facilities.

Objective 3: Review current zoning district use provisions for Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code consistency and revise ordinance text consistent with plan recommendations.

GOAL: MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN INCLUDED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN, EVALUATE ACHIEVEMENT OF SHORT-TERM AND MID-TERM PRIORITIES

GOAL: IDENTIFY A "POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS" IN ORDER TO GUIDE NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO PREFERRED AREAS WHERE UTILITY EXTENSIONS, ACCESS AND SITE PREPARATION COSTS ARE ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Objective 1: Consider a "traditional neighborhood development option" for the Margery Drive neighborhood within the context of a specific plan.

Objective 2: Draft an adaptive reuse option, as a change-of-use policy for insertion into the Zoning Ordinance.

Objective 3: Draft site design standards which buffer structures from transitional characteristics on adjacent properties.

Objective 4: Link neighborhood scale land development provisions from previous planning efforts.

Objective 5: Draft standards for mixed use hamlet and village models within the current zoning district provisions, as a flexible development option.

GOAL: REVISE PRD-3 STANDARDS AS APPLICABLE TO PROPERTY IN THE R-3 DISTRICT TO INCLUDE A TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT FORM OF PRD WITH LESSER MINIMUM SITE SIZE, BUILDING ORIENTATION AND SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS WHICH ENCOURAGES REDEVELOPMENT IN OLDER, ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS

GOAL: ENCOURAGE UTILIZATION OF REVISED PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS WITHIN THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND TREAT PRDs AS PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT MODELS

Objective 1: Reduction of minimum site size of PRD-2 (as permitted in R-1 and R-2) from twenty (20) contiguous acres to ten (10) contiguous acres.

Objective 2: Allow PRD-2 to access local streets (versus arterial or collector) if the average net density, as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, does not exceed the density permitted in the underlying district.

Objective 3: Allow for slight reduction in minimum lot width for the lot averaging PRD option where overall density is not increased.

Objective 4: Authorize major subdivisions as conditional uses in R-1 and R-2 while lot averaging and PRD-2 remain as permitted uses. Related conditions should include definition of extraordinary impact, such as impact on slopes and landslide prone areas. Options encouraging clustered dwelling sites with related preservation of open space, greenways, and natural features should be provided for by lowering the acreage thresholds often associated with alternative forms of development and streamlining the approval process.

GOAL: REVIEW AND ASSESS A MAXIMUM BUILDING SIZE IN THE C DISTRICT IN LIGHT OF MODERN STANDARDS, PARKING, ACCESS, AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT TO ADJOINING FREEPORT AND OLD FREEPORT ROADS

Objective 1: Create a transitional district that provides for small scale mixed uses, building size maximums, a variety of preferred residential uses, pedestrian linkages, and performance standards to encourage preservation of

existing structures within the areas of South Margery Drive, portions of Old Freeport Road, and the PennDot maintenance facility property.

Objective 2: Include standards for all conditional uses in the SM District that require onsite traffic improvements, where required to maintain or achieve minimum levels of service.

GOAL: PROVIDE FOR REASONABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MINERALS, INCLUDING OIL AND NATURAL GAS

OBJECTIVE 1: Protect Township transportation assets from the impacts of natural gas and extractive industry resource development through amendments to current zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance provisions.

OBJECTIVE 2: Examine current surety policies and access standards, and revise if necessary, where impacts of such operations warrant revision, assuming that extractive industries are treated in the same manner as other uses of similar impact.

GOAL: PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL AREAS WITH ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS.

OBJECTIVE 1: Utilize land use regulatory tools to promote preservation of natural areas in proposed developments, where such areas are identified in the Allegheny County Natural Heritage Inventory.

OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure preservation of natural areas in open space through cluster or conservation subdivision standards to include easements and covenants in favor of the Township, a homeowner's association or the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

OBJECTIVE 3: Establish and maintain a database of private lands and open spaces preserved through the development approval process for use in monitoring recreational opportunities for a segment of the Township's population.

STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

Through the development of its comprehensive plan, O'Hara Township has studied and made policy recommendations intended to ensure that the ongoing character of existing development, redevelopment, and new developments are compatible with the character of existing or foreseeable development in adjoining municipalities. Particularly, the impact of planned commercial, residential, and mixed use development are addressed within this statement.

The plan encourages the maintenance of the character and intensity of existing development within RIDC Park which is compatible with proximate uses and lands in adjoining municipalities. The plan encourages pedestrian friendly development with reciprocal access easements, consolidation and redevelopment of lots, landscaping and buffering, limitation of curb cuts, and provision of neighborhood scale uses along the Freeport and Old Freeport Road corridors that are compatible with the adjoining

commercial districts in Aspinwall and Blawnox. Such development will be compatible with The Waterworks Mall in the City of Pittsburgh and the business center of Sharpsburg.

The plan encourages compatible infill development within traditional residential neighborhoods, particularly those bordering similar neighborhoods in Blawnox. The plan encourages continued maintenance and viability of the existing single family plans that border similar uses within Fox Chapel Borough. The plan encourages the use of cluster and Planned Residential Development within undeveloped areas of the Township, primarily in the northwest. Use of such tools ensures adequate buffering of future development from adjoining lands, primarily in residential land uses in Shaler and Indiana Townships.

While not immediately adjacent to Fox Chapel, development at the interchange of Route 28 and Fox Chapel Road will impact the gateway to both Fox Chapel Borough and O'Hara Township. Mixed use development through implementation of a Specific Plan is encouraged. This plan will facilitate access, circulation, aesthetics, redevelopment of underutilized and deteriorating single family residences, and support sustainable development. The preceding is planned to provide a positive improvement to this gateway area and positive impacts to both communities.

Adoption of a Specific Plan, of which a cooperative implementation agreement is required with Allegheny County, will best ensure compatibility with the Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan, Allegheny Places, as adopted in 2008. In particular, the Specific Plan aims to manage development and redevelopment in the Freeport and Old Freeport Road Corridors and Route 28 Interchange. This area is best referenced as a "corridor place" within the Allegheny Places. The anticipated standards of the Specific Plan will address access, management, encourage mixed use development, and interconnectivity as encouraged by the following recommendation in Chapter 4 of Allegheny Places:

"The intent of Corridor Places is to break away from the old pattern of strip development. They will be planned instead as nodes or hubs, with a gridded street network that interconnects uses and has limited access points on existing major roadways."

The County Plan specifically references "lack of access management strategies" and references an evaluation of County-owned roads. Each item is addressed within the recommend holistic approach taken by a Specific Plan which will in turn address Old Freeport Road, a County-owned road, and will manage access along the key corridors.

In summary, the plan recommendations are compatible with existing and anticipated land uses in adjoining municipalities, and are not only compatible with, but will actively further the recommendations of Allegheny County's Comprehensive Plan, Allegheny Places.

SPECIFIC PLAN

A key planning initiative that evolved during the discussions concerning future land use and transportation issues involve the preparation of a specific plan for the area surrounding the SR 28

interchange with the Freeport Road corridor and Fox Chapel Road. Separate technical reports were prepared by Township consultants to assess the transportation/circulation issues and the potential development and redevelopment of land in the township's commercial corridor. The appropriate mix of land uses, flexible development options and transportation oriented design standards were reviewed in the context of establishing a geographic planning unit utilizing the authority granted through Article XI, Section 1106 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

This initiative would be the subject of an agreement between Allegheny County and O'Hara Township to implement the recommendations included in comprehensive plans adopted by both governments. The components of the agreement will be consistent with the following Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code provisions:

SECTION 1106. SPECIFIC PLANS.

**ARTICLE XI, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATIVE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENTS
(PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE)**

- (a) *Participating municipalities shall have authority to adopt a specific plan for the systematic implementation of a county or multimunicipal comprehensive plan for any nonresidential part of the area covered by the plan. Such specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams and implementing ordinances which specify all of the following in detail:*
- (1) *The distribution, location, extent of area and standards for land uses and facilities, including design of sewage, water, drainage and other essential facilities needed to support the land uses.*
 - (2) *The location, classification and design of all transportation facilities, including, but not limited to, streets and roads needed to serve the land uses described in the specific plan.*
 - (3) *Standards for population density, land coverage, building intensity and supporting services, including utilities.*
 - (4) *Standards for the preservation, conservation, development and use of natural resources, including the protection of significant open spaces, resource lands and agricultural lands within or adjacent to the area covered by the specific plan.*
 - (5) *A program of implementation including regulations, financing of the capital improvements and provisions for repealing or amending the specific plan. Regulations may include zoning, storm water, subdivision and land development, highway access and any other provisions for which municipalities are authorized by law to enact. The regulations may be amended into the county or municipal ordinances or adopted as separate ordinances. If enacted as separate ordinances for the area covered by the specific plan, the ordinances shall repeal and replace any county or municipal ordinances in effect within the area covered by the specific plan and ordinances shall conform to the provisions of the specific plan.*
- (b) (1) *No specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with an adopted county or multi-municipal comprehensive plan.*

- (2) *No capital project by any municipal authority or municipality shall be approved or undertaken, and no final plan, development plan or plat for any subdivision or development of land shall be approved unless such projects, plans or plats are consistent with the adopted specific plan.*
- (c) *In adopting or amending a specific plan, a county and participating municipality shall use the same procedures as provided in this article for adopting comprehensive plans and ordinances.*
- (d) *Whenever a specific plan has been adopted, applicants for subdivision or land development approval shall be required to submit only a final plan as provided in Article V, provided that such final plan is consistent with and implements the adopted specific plan.*
- (e) *A county or counties and participating municipalities are prohibited from assessing subdivision and land development applicants for the cost of the specific plan.*

A significant advantage to the drafting and adoption of a specific plan is that the Township can establish a unique menu of uses, dimensional standards, review and approval criteria and planning objectives, which are different and apart from regulations in place in any other zoning district. The study area should be treated as a distinct planning unit with its own strengths and development constraints. In addition, based on the community survey responses, uses preferred by Township residents can be provided for in this area as uses by right and made attractive to private sector interests through the establishment of unique standards consistent with the objectives of the Township's comprehensive plan.

In terms of implementing the intergovernmental cooperative agreement, several strategic actions have been identified for the preparation of a specific plan and the drafting of unique standards for access, buffering, signage, site design and use options, in the area covered by the specific plan. The ability to craft unique regulations applicable to development proposals submitted for land situated within the specific plan study area is a good fit for O'Hara Township and addresses a variety of concerns which have developed over the years. Recommended strategic actions associated with this element of the implementation plan, are as follows:

1. Review and assess a maximum building size in the current C District in light of state-of-the-art standards, parking, access, and access management to adjoining Freeport and Old Freeport Roads.
2. Require that any expansion, construction, or determined threshold of percent increase in trip generation by proposed establishments or land developments participate in a corridor overlay.
3. Corridor design guidelines or standards should be developed that requires landscaping, minimization of access points, sidewalks or contribution of a fee-in-lieu of sidewalks or dedication of pedestrian easements in lieu of sidewalks.
4. Section 72-14.113 of the Zoning Ordinance should be revised to include twenty percent (20%) increase in trip generation as well as building size. The current section requires that parking for an entire area be provided at current standards if building expands twenty percent (20%) or

- more. Performance standards in the specific plan area may provide for an access management approach to development and redevelopment activities.
5. Expressly authorize mixed use parking requirements where a proportion of parking spaces are “double-counted” depending on the peak use of the establishments such as restaurant versus office. Reference parking standards from studies prepared by the Urban Land Institute or the Institute of Transportation Engineers.
 6. Incorporated a menu of use options that provides for small scale mixed uses, building size maximums, a variety of residential uses, pedestrian linkages, and performance standards to encourage preservation of existing structures within the areas of South Margery Drive, portions of Old Freeport Road, and the PennDOT maintenance facility property.

SUMMARY

O'Hara Township has evolved into an economically stable, diverse community with core values attractive to blue collar and professional sectors. It has been well managed and responsive elected officials have provided desired amenities and infrastructure which have contributed to a steady increase in land valuation. As the remaining developable land is scrutinized for development, consideration of how to sustain revenues in order to cover costs associated with the delivery of services is appropriate. There are issues concerning the Freeport Road commercial corridor, traffic congestion, upgrading aging public utility systems in older developed areas, stormwater management and preserving open space, which have been addressed as the need arises. This planning document serves as a palette of options available to community leaders to enter the latter stage of community development with a plan to sustain the quality of life taxpayers have come to expect from investing in O'Hara Township's future. Past practice has proven that a respect for diverse opinions and a willingness to make timely decisions can and must be the key to achieving the community's goals.