

Chapter 2

LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

Land use is the single defining element of the character of a municipality. Land use also reflects the historic growth of a municipality, and further defines the service and infrastructure needs of that municipality. How East Goshen continues to develop towards build-out, and how it responds to future needs for redevelopment, are the defining characteristics of this Plan, and the recommendations of this Chapter form the framework for recommendations concerning natural and historic resource protection, transportation, and community facilities and services.

The land use recommendations contained in this Chapter are based on the established goal and objectives as identified by the Township. These are:

GOAL: Maintain East Goshen Township as a premier suburban residential community.

Objective 2A Promote redevelopment in commercial districts that enhances the character of the community.

Objective 2B Develop innovative design standards for future residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment that minimizes impact on the environment and maximizes preservation of open space.

Objective 2C Encourage higher density uses along major roads and highways.

Objective 2D Preserve and enhance the concept of a Town Center.

Objective 2E Encourage and support regional planning initiatives that promote best planning practices.

Recommendations

Objective 2A Promote redevelopment in commercial districts that enhances the character of the community.

- **Recommendation 2A-1** Designate commercial districts as redevelopment areas, and create incentives through zoning to redevelop existing business sites as well as vacant or underutilized properties.

DISCUSSION:

The Township currently has 4 commercial zoning districts. These districts list a variety of uses, with the most intensive uses allowed within the Planned Highway Commercial (C-4) district. The Government, Finance, and Office (C-5) district is the most restrictive and focused of the commercial districts, and is the most limited in terms of redevelopment opportunities. These districts are characterized by an uncoordinated appearance with a site-by-site approach to design.

A uniform master plan is needed to establish a preferred pattern for design of these commercial districts that reinforce a positive visual image for the Township.

The Land Use Plan Map categorizes these zoning districts as Planned Highway Commercial (PHC) and Town Center (TC). The Planned Highway Commercial category is intended to provide a unified and coordinate development appearance and mark increases in intensity with visual improvements to the streetscape. Elements of a unified appearance should include pedestrian linkages, access design and management, and sign regulations. The Town Center (discussed in further detail in Objective 2E) is a category intended to define the central core area of the Township and to create a theme or visual character that unites the central core. Changes to the associated commercial zoning districts are intended to improve the positive image of the Township, since the location of these districts provides the first visual representation of the Township.

STATUS OF CURRENT ORDINANCE STANDARDS: Zoning Ordinance

Access Control: access is limited to 1 access point for properties with less than 100 feet of frontage, and no more than 2 access points for each 300 feet of road frontage on any street. A common (shared) driveway is subject to the requirement of the Board of Supervisors upon determination of safety concerns.

Off-Street Parking: a minimum number of parking spaces are required by type of land use. A reduction of required parking is authorized through the conditional use process and with the inclusion of employment, customer, and other parking generation data that indicate a reduction is warranted.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2A-1-1** Develop Corridor Design Plans for commercial segments along West Chester Pike (Route 3), Paoli Pike, and Boot Road, including input from local business owners. These Corridor Design Plans should incorporate access management, landscaping, pedestrian/bicycle facilities, driveway access, signage, and lighting designs to create a unified design approach to these entry corridors.
- 2A-1-2** Publish recommendations of the Corridor Design Plans for future development of vacant and underutilized sites in the form of Design Guidelines.
- 2A-1-3** Consider adopting an Ordinance to capture any proposed additional public rights-of-way.
- 2A-1-4** Update the Township Zoning Map to agree with current zoning and land development ordinances.

- **Recommendation 2A-2** Adopt design standards that create unifying visual features within existing commercial districts, primarily through landscaping, access control, sign regulation, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.

DISCUSSION:

Building on the Recommendation 2A-1, this recommendation establishes specific design standards that implement some of the design parameters of the Corridor Design Plans, while also raising the bar on other design-related issues, including sign control and pedestrian/bicycle access and facilities.

STATUS OF CURRENT ORDINANCE STANDARDS:

Zoning Ordinance

Access Control: access is limited to 1 access point for properties with less than 100 feet of frontage, and no more than 2 access points for each 300 feet of road frontage on any street. A common (shared) driveway is subject to the requirement of the Board of Supervisors upon determination of safety concerns.

Off-Street Parking: a minimum number of parking spaces are required by type of land use. A reduction of required parking is authorized through the conditional use process and with the inclusion of employment, customer, and other parking generation data that indicate a reduction is warranted.

Sign Regulations: in commercial districts, individual properties are limited to 1 freestanding sign of 10 square feet and a maximum height of 14 feet, and wall signs to a maximum of 60 square feet; structures with more than one commercial use are limited to 32 square feet of wall sign, plus a freestanding sign of 10 square feet and a maximum height of 5 feet. Commercial districts also allow for window signs (maximum of 20% of window area) and 1 off-premises sign (billboard) of 20 square feet (freestanding) or 100 square feet (wall).

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

Pedestrian/Bicycle Accommodation: sidewalk may be required by the Board of Supervisors on a case-by-case basis.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2A-2-1** Provide greater flexibility in the use of common driveways, including providing design or use incentives that allow for business owners to redesign existing parking areas to create greater driving and access safety. Incentives could be tied to reductions in landscape buffer requirements, setbacks, or parking reductions.
- 2A-2-2** Establish a shared parking strategy that reduces the number of total parking spaces required for adjacent commercial and noncommercial uses. This strategy would incorporate a calculation that identifies peak hours of operation of adjacent uses, and uses this to identify the number of adjacent parking spaces that could be shared, thus reducing overall parking requirements.
- 2A-2-3** Re-examine existing minimum parking requirements and, using the most recent available parking generation data, reduce the amount of parking required.
- 2A-2-4** Encourage alternative paving of parking areas to include limited use of porous paving systems.
- 2A-2-5** Develop and approve a sign plan in accordance with a Corridor Design Plan.
- 2A-2-6** Review landscaping regulations to provide more flexibility in the design and improvement of nonconforming and combined sites.
- 2A-2-7** Consider increase in structure height in commercial districts to reduce impervious coverage and increase open space.

Objective 2B Develop innovative design standards for future residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment that minimizes impact on the environment and maximizes preservation of open space.

- **Recommendation 2B-1** Amend cluster design regulations to create a site design “blueprint” that defines future design parameters for new residential, commercial, and industrial development.

DISCUSSION:

The Township provides two options for subdivision development that incorporate the clustering of residential sites and the permanent protection of common open spaces at the individual site development level. Additional measures that should be considered include expanding the clustering concept to include new commercial and industrial development, and adjustment of the process to make clustering the required site development planning process, with the existing conventional design process a more complicated process (by way of the conditional use approval process). Other measures that could be included within the design process should reflect the new guide *The Cluster Subdivision Design Guide*, published by the Chester County Planning Commission.

STATUS OF CURRENT ORDINANCE STANDARDS:

Cluster design and open space design regulations are contained in the Zoning Ordinance for residential development. These methods are primarily authorized through conditional use approval in the Low Density Residential (R-2) and High Density Residential (R-4) Districts.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- **2B-1-1** Develop and adopt cluster design regulations appropriate to the Business Park (BP) district.
- **2B-1-2** Consider cluster design as a by-right development process, with the current conventional design process converted to a conditional use approval process.
- **2B-1-3** Consider raising the minimum common open space requirement to 50% for residential development, with a smaller percentage for commercial and industrial cluster development.
- **Recommendation 2B-2** Adopt design provisions that encourage flexibility for small lot infill opportunities, while maintaining the existing character of local neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION:

The Developable Lands Map (See Map B-2 in Appendix B, Existing Land Use Inventory) identifies over 100 sites around the Township that are either vacant or have the potential for additional development. Most sites are small lots within established subdivisions where existing development patterns, and zoning district regulations (especially in the Low Density Residential land use category, as shown on Map 2-1, and as regulated by the Low Density Residential (R-2) district), provide clear guidance for future development of these sites, and restrict incompatible development. Such development is termed “infill” development.

However, there are several sites identified on Map 2-1 which provide the opportunity for significant development. These sites are located within the Low Density Residential (LDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), and the Traditional Neighborhood (TN) land use categories. Development of these sites should identify and mitigate site limitations and constraints, and the potential for some incompatibility should be addressed prior to submittal of development plans.

STATUS OF CURRENT ORDINANCE STANDARDS:

Locations of these sites are within the Low Density Residential (R-2) and Medium Density Residential (R-3) districts.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2B-2-1** Encourage cluster development of Low Density Residential (LDR) areas that protects existing historic structures and natural resources.
- 2B-2-2** Review and revise the existing lot area, width, and yard regulations of the R-3 District to reflect the existing lot sizes within the district.

Objective 2C Encourage higher density uses along major roads and highways.

- **Recommendation 2C-1** Encourage multi-story development of commercial areas to create greater diversity of use.

DISCUSSION:

The Planned Highway Commercial (PHC) category and, to a lesser extent, the Town Center (TC) category, are the locations of primary commercial districts in the Township. Most of the properties are developed as single uses, with two-story buildings primarily used by office or multi-family uses, while commercial uses are developed as one-story buildings. In addition to showing flexibility on building heights, as given in Recommendation 2D-1 below, another way to increase density or intensity in these areas is to allow for additional principal uses on lots, or in the case of shopping centers, such as the Goshen Village Shopping Center (in the Local Convenience Commercial (C-2) District), allowing for multiple-story, multiple use developments incorporating residential uses on upper floors. The C-4 District permits the widest variety of commercial, business, and residential uses of the Township's commercial zoning districts.

STATUS OF CURRENT ORDINANCE STANDARDS:

The C-4 District currently includes a variety of commercial, business, and residential uses and intensities, as discussed above.

The Local Convenience Commercial (C-2) District incorporates the Goshen Village Shopping Center and the former Genuardi's supermarket. This district is similar to the C-1 District in terms of uses but allows for smaller lot sizes and additional flexibility in development.

One Principal Use Per Lot: uses are limited to one principal use per lot.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2C-1-1** Evaluate the restriction allowing only one principal use per commercial lot and revise C-4 district area and bulk standards to reflect additional potential uses and multi-use development.
- 2C-1-2** Consider an increase in structure height to reduce impervious surface and increase open space.

Objective 2D Preserve and enhance the concept of a Town Center.

- **Recommendation 2D-1** Hold a workshop to develop a unifying design concept for the Town Center.

DISCUSSION:

The Town Center is the focal point land use category in the Township, and is primarily defined by the central triangle formed by the intersections of Paoli Pike, Boot Road, and North Chester Road (Route 352). The Town Center is the central location for Township services and the East Goshen Elementary School. The Goshen Village Shopping Center, at the northwest corner, is one of two shopping centers in the Township. However, the Town Center is not a unified area, with a variety of building types and locations, some vacant sites, and a lack of cohesion.

Following the public design workshop, the Township should work to develop revisions to existing zoning regulations to combine the best features of the recommended design solutions to establish a regulatory framework that creates a consistent set of standards within the Town Center. Changes to zoning regulations could include the following:

- Establish design standards for sidewalks and pedestrian/bicycle trails to connect the Town Center with adjacent parks and historic sites, including the Township Park and trail and the Blacksmith Shop and Park.
- Modify sign regulations to create a unified set of signs for all uses around the Town Center.
- Create a Town Center landscape and entrance design program to create a unique visual representation of the Town Center.
- If public rights-of-way or publicly maintained trails are established in the public design workshop, the Township should prepare and adopt an Official Map and Ordinance to capture these future public areas. This greatly improves the ability of the Township to secure grant funding.

STATUS OF CURRENT ORDINANCE STANDARDS:

The Town Center is located in an area currently zoned *Low Density Residential (R-2)*, *Urban Residential (R-5)*, *Local Convenience Commercial (C-2)*, *Government, Finance, and Office (C-5)*, and *Business Park (BP)*. Each district varies in the types of uses permitted, area and bulk regulations, and in the general intent of the district to promote single family residential uses (R-2), to convenience commercial uses (C-2), office and financial services (C-5), to corporate office and research and development uses (BP).

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2D-1-1** Hold a workshop to invite members of the public, design professionals, business owners, community leaders, and public officials to develop a common design concept and parameters for the Town Center. This workshop should incorporate:
- Small group sessions with design professionals to identify the existing assets and concerns of the public;
 - Potential design solutions to unify the Town Center
 - Ordinance amendments to address the design recommendations
 - Design elements to consider include: the potential mix of land uses, access control issues, reuse opportunities, pedestrian/bicycle connections to the Town Center and Township Park, and site design standards.
 - Provide a growth plan to maintain the economic viability of the Goshen Village Shopping Center.

2D-1-2 Publish the results of the public design workshop in a summary report.

Objective 2E Encourage and support regional planning initiatives that promote best planning practices.

- **Recommendation 2E-1** Adopt revisions to the Township Zoning Ordinance to achieve consistency with adjacent Township Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Ordinances.

DISCUSSION:

Planning recommendations that are somewhat inconsistent with the recommendations of this Plan are taken from the comprehensive plans of adjacent townships, including the adoption date. See Map 2-1 for a visual orientation of East Goshen and adjacent township boundaries.

1. *Westtown Township* (2001): The primary inconsistency is an area designated Private/Semi-Public Open Space, adjacent to the Urban Residential (UR) category in East Goshen. The Private/Semi-Public Open Space category is a conceptual category designed to reflect best-case scenarios to preserve natural scenic and constrained areas through negotiation during the land development process. This area is also inconsistent with East Goshen in terms of existing zoning, and this should be mitigated by the reliance on clustering provisions with the Westtown zoning regulations.
2. *West Goshen Township* (2004): There are minor inconsistencies located at the southwest corner of East Goshen, where the Urban Residential (UR) category is adjacent to the Low Density Residential (LDR) category in West Goshen. This can be mitigated through buffering along the border during development or redevelopment.
3. *Willistown Township* (1997): The primary inconsistency is the area adjacent to Applebrook south to the southeast corner of East Goshen. This area is designated as Rural by Willistown, while East Goshen is designated Low Density Residential (LDR) with Applebrook identified as Planned Business, Research and Residential (PB). However, the Willistown area is already significantly permanently protected, and densities along the border are not significantly greater than in Willistown. The Applebrook residential areas are near the Bryn Mawr rehabilitation center, which is designated Suburban (Low Density).
4. *East Whiteland Township* (2001): There is only a minor inconsistency east of Hersheys Mill Road, and this the area adjacent to the Villa Maria Academy, which is designated Institutional (INS) and Open Space (OS), adjacent to areas designated Low Density Residential (LDR) in East Goshen. Visual assessment of any future development along the border would clarify additional requirements, such as woodland protection or additional buffering.
5. *West Whiteland Township* (1994): There are no inconsistencies with this Township.

A detailed zoning analysis is provided in Appendix A and is shown on Map A-3.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2E-1-1** Review the Zoning Ordinance for provisions to address incompatible land uses along the borders, and adopt revisions as needed.

- **Recommendation 2E-2** Continue participation in the West Chester Regional Planning Commission (WCRPC).

DISCUSSION:

The West Chester Regional Planning Commission (WCRPC) is the oldest regional planning organization in Chester County. Comprised of the municipalities of the West Chester Area School District (which includes East Goshen, West Goshen, West Whiteland, East Bradford, Westtown, Thornbury, Birmingham, and Pocopson Townships and West Chester Borough in Chester County and Thornbury Township in Delaware County), the WCRPC has undertaken many cooperative planning studies during its history. To remain a viable planning group, East Goshen should maintain its leadership role within the West Chester Region to direct the cooperative planning efforts of the Region and to address planning issues shared by the WCRPC's member municipalities.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2E-2-1** Continue to coordinate planning initiatives and studies with member municipalities in the WCRPC.
- 2E-2-2** Support development of a regional comprehensive plan.
- 2E-2-3** Support development of other regional initiatives of interest to East Goshen Township.

- **Recommendation 2E-3** Continue participation in the West Chester Area Council of Governments (WCACOG).

DISCUSSION:

The West Chester Area Council of Governments (WCACOG) was formed in 2003 by West Chester, East Bradford, East Goshen, West Goshen, Westtown, and Thornbury to address the following:

1. to provide a discussion forum to address regional issues affecting the COG's member municipalities;
2. to plan and coordinate regional approaches to local government issues;
3. to provide an opportunity for training of elected officials and municipal employees;
4. to undertake, coordinate and administer regionally-based programs of benefit to the COG's member municipalities, and
5. to regionally coordinate the purchase of goods and services.

The focus of the organization is to address planning issues and deal with other services and programs that are of need to the member municipalities. The WCACOG can provide an additional avenue for coordinated planning among these municipalities, especially as it relates to the provision of local services and coordinated decision making.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2E-3-1** Continue to coordinate services and training with member municipalities in the WCACOG.
- 2E-3-2** Advocate for the WCACOG to become a leading organization for the coordinated planning of services and decision making.

- **Recommendation 2E-4** Maintain consistency with **Landscapes** and coordinate planning efforts with Chester County.

DISCUSSION:

The 1996 Policy Plan of Chester County, *Landscapes: Managing Change in Chester County 1996-2020*, amended though 2003, breaks the County into three basic landscape types of Rural, Suburban, and Urban Landscapes with a Natural Landscape Overlay. The Landscapes applicable to East Goshen are summarized as follows.

Rural Landscapes include farms, farm related businesses, and villages, along with some scattered housing sites. They are predominant in the northern, western, and southern areas of Chester County. A very small portion of East Goshen along the border with Willistown Township is identified as Rural Landscape.

Suburban Landscapes include low to medium density subdivisions and related shopping centers and employment centers. They have developed rapidly and most extensively in eastern and central Chester County. Infrastructure and public services have been extended to accommodate residential subdivisions, shopping centers, office complexes and industrial parks that predominate this landscape. Almost the entire Township is identified as Suburban Landscape.

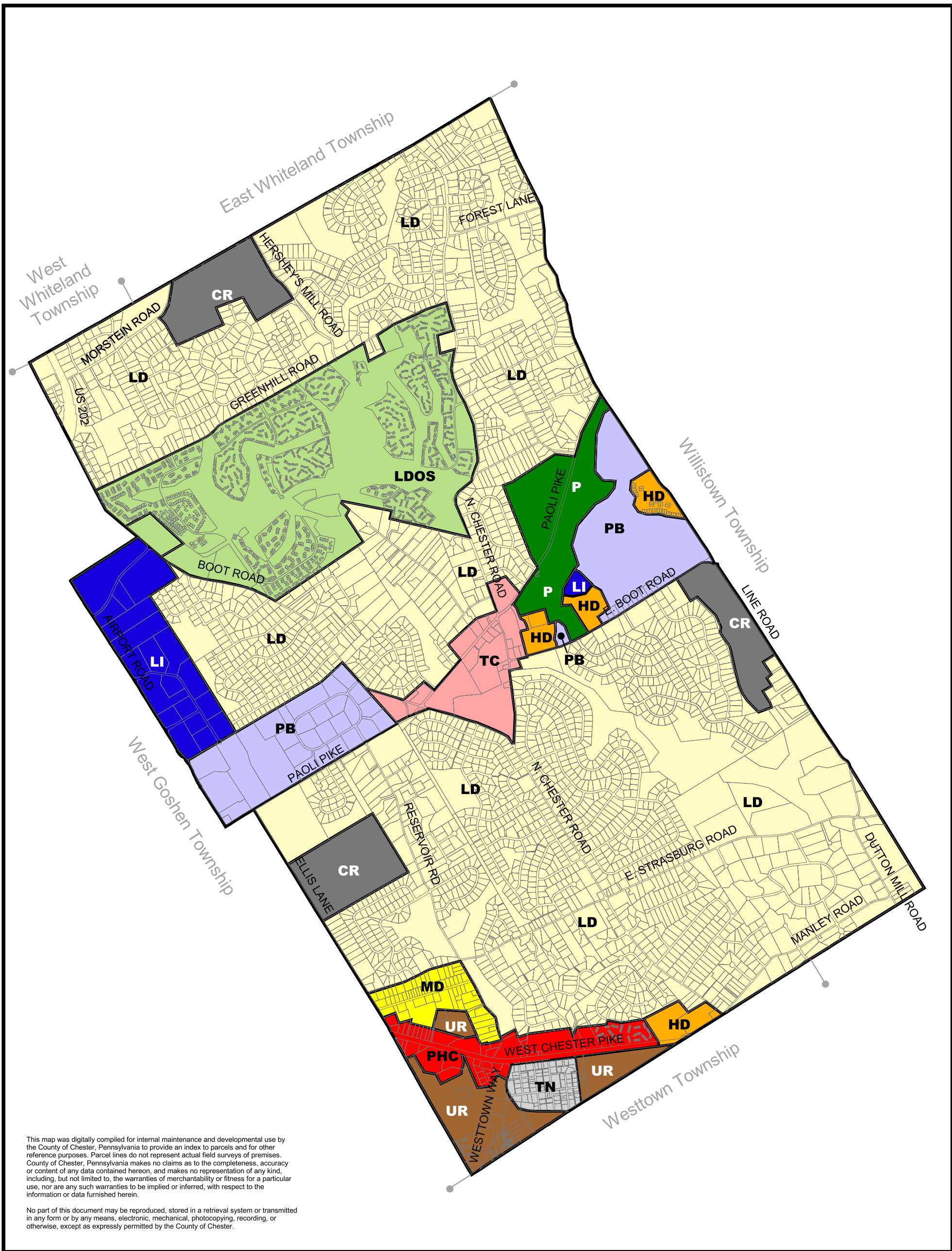
Natural Landscapes of Chester County are made up of woodlands, stream corridors, steep hillsides, ridge tops, wetlands, and marshes. These resources are permanent and essential elements of the physical environment and are the foundation for the livability of all landscapes. With the 2003 amendments to *Landscapes*, the Natural Landscape was revised as an Overlay Feature to identify the primary areas to consider for protection within the context of the base Landscapes (Rural, Suburban, and Urban). For the purposes of East Goshen Township, the Natural Landscapes are identified in fuller detail in Appendix D, Natural Resources Inventory, and recommendations for their protection are provided in Chapter 4, Natural Resources Protection Plan.

Landscapes designates the majority of the Township as Suburban Landscape, with a small portion along Line Road identified as Rural Landscape. This is consistent with this Land Use Plan in terms of the recommendations for clustering of residential uses along Line Road and the existing low density residential uses found there.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

- 2E-4-1** Continue to participate in the Vision Partnership Program (VPP) provided by the County to coordinate the development of consistent plans and regulations in keeping with the mandates of *Landscapes*.

(this page intentionally left blank)

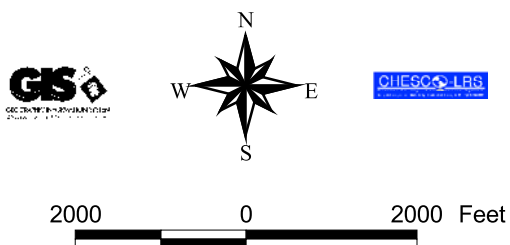


MAP 2-1

East Goshen Township

Comprehensive Plan

June 2005



Data Source: Municipal Border, Parcels - Chester County Bureau of Land Records, 1999; Roadways - Chester County Bureau of Land Records, 1992; Future Land Use Categories - East Goshen, 2003; Chester County Planning Commission, 2003.

Future Land Use Map

- LD - Low Density Residential (1 du/acre)
 - LDOS - LD Open Space Residential (1-3du/acre)
 - MD - Medium Density Residential (2-3 du/acre)
 - HD - High Density Residential (3-14 1/2 du/acre)
 - UR - Urban Residential (3-14 1/2 du/acre)
 - TN - Traditional Neighborhood
 - CR - Cluster SF Residential Development
 - PHC - Planned Highway Commercial
 - TC - Town Center
 - PB - Planned Business
 - LI - Light Industrial
 - P - Parkland
- BASE INFORMATION**
- Parcel Lines
 - Municipal Border

Surrounding Municipal Boundaries