

# CHAPTER THREE: GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

## SECTION 3: LAND USE PLAN

The land use plan establishes policy regarding the location and intensity of different land use types. The Future Land Use Map (Figure 3.3.3) illustrates how these policies are to be accommodated on the ground. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that we plan for the next ten years, but that is a minimum requirement, and we have chosen to continue our past practice of looking farther. This plan therefore considers how we may accommodate anticipated growth through the year 2040, including but not limited to additional residents.

**Figure 3.3.1 - Population**

	2010 Census	2020 Census	2030 Projection	2040 Projection	2050 Projection
<i>West Whiteland Twp.</i>	18,274	19,632 + 7.4%	26,104 + 33.0%	26,845 + 2.8%	27,477 + 2.4%
<i>Chester County</i>	498,886	534,413 + 7.1%	586,300 + 9.7%	620,391 + 5.8%	645,673 + 4.1%

SOURCES: Chester County Planning Commission, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, U.S. Census Bureau.

Our land use plan is based upon policies that were established by the Comprehensive Plan of 1995; updated by the Lincoln Highway and Whitford Road Corridors Plan, which was adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in 2015; and augmented by a study of the Exton Crossroads area conducted by the Urban Land Institute in October 2020. The 1995 Plan used figures from the 1990 census, when the Township had a population of 12,403. Even though that Plan recognized that West Whiteland was poised for significant growth, it projected a 2020 population of only 17,060 - considerably less than the 19,632 residents counted in the 2020 census.

As shown in Figure 3.3.1, the Township grew a bit more rapidly than the County as a whole between 2010 and 2020, and both outstripped the state growth rate of 2.4% over the same period: southeastern Pennsylvania continues to be the fastest-growing part of the state. The projections anticipate very rapid increases in population through the 2020's, tapering off during the 2030's. Once again, we find ourselves in a period of growth and are reminded of the challenge presented by the need to balance that growth with the desire to preserve the character of our neighborhoods.

Residential development is only one aspect of growth. Since Europeans first settled here in the eighteenth century, the area that is now West Whiteland has been the site of economic activity as well as a corridor for overland travel. This combination of uses assured that the Township never became a mere "bedroom community" but always featured a mix of land uses and activities that have resulted in it being the suburban center that it is today. The 1995 Plan anticipated that the Township would soon be "built out;" that is, that the time was coming when there would be no large areas of land left for development and open and green spaces would be preserved only if we were intentional about it. That time has now arrived, yet we continue to grow, and our growth is affected by a variety of factors:

- When the 1995 Plan was adopted, the Township’s position as a **retail hub** seemed unassailable. Exton Square was the only regional shopping center between King of Prussia and Lancaster, the Whiteland Towne Center and Fairfield Place sub-regional centers had just opened, and by 2000 Exton Square had completed a massive expansion that added three major department stores to what was once a single-anchor mall. 1995 was also the first year that you could buy books (and only books) from a company called Amazon using a personal computer connected to something called the “internet.” It is hard to overstate the impact of Amazon and the e-tailers that followed as well as of the internet generally upon the retail landscape. Communities everywhere are now promoting the redevelopment of once-thriving malls and retail centers, re-thinking how much land is needed for retail uses.
- The suburbs have long provided a way for people to have well-paying jobs in an urban setting while enjoying the quieter, greener environment of the countryside. The term “**quality of life**” came to be used to describe the balance of convenient access to jobs, housing, shopping, good public schools, open space, and entertainment desired by many. West Whiteland residents enjoy a high quality of life, but we must take care to keep these benefits, lest we be a victim of our own success.
- Running through the center of the Township, the Chester Valley has long provided a convenient path for east-west travel by early roads like the Lancaster Turnpike (now Lincoln Hwy.), important railways that included the “main line” of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and - more recently - the Exton by-pass and the Chester Valley Trail. This variety of **transit options** continues to be a defining characteristic of the Township - perhaps too much so, as many residents are concerned about the volume of traffic on our major roads. Much of this traffic neither originates nor ends in the Township, so Township planning policy is not an effective means of reducing its volume. However, we can plan to reduce our residents’ reliance upon private cars through traditional mass transit (i.e., fixed-route busses and trains), new ride-share services like Lyft and Uber, and bicycle and pedestrian paths that are not just recreational but also provide access to shops, restaurants, and workplaces. Cars are changing too: electric and hybrid vehicles are increasingly common, and several manufacturers have announced dates by which they will cease production of gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles. As fast-charging stations replace gas stations, we must consider their infrastructure needs, even as we celebrate the removal of underground tanks holding thousands of gallons of petroleum products. Proponents of fully autonomous vehicles have so far been over-optimistic about the technology, but road vehicles have an increasing amount of driver assists, and autonomous drones capable of carrying packages and people through the air are in development. Both have the potential to affect road design, parking demand, and access considerations.
- **Housing** dominates the West Whiteland landscape beyond the Exton Crossroads and Lincoln Highway Corridor. As one would expect in a suburban community, we have a lot of single-family detached homes in a variety of sizes and styles; however, even as far back as 1990, this type of housing accounted for only about 55% of the stock with townhouses and apartment buildings making up the rest. We expect that there will always be a market for freestanding homes with spacious yards - especially among households with school-aged children - but we are witnessing a growing trend toward townhouse communities and apartment buildings at higher price points. Developers tell us that there is strong demand for luxurious, well-appointed homes with minimal maintenance responsibilities for the resident. As the “baby-boomers” (those born between 1945 and 1964) continue to age and to retire from the work force, we expect

that we will see increasing demand for housing to accommodate age-related needs. This will not only affect the physical aspects of housing (e.g., smaller homes with less required maintenance), but regulatory issues, such whether to allow semi-independent dwellings, or “accessory units,” within single-family homes for use by an aged family member or a caregiver.

- The current upward trend in the average global temperature was once described as “global warming,” but it was found that the trend was not consistent in all locations, and that related impacts on weather and climate were more complex. As a result, the more comprehensive term “**climate change**” is now the preferred term. The most noticeable impact of climate change in West Whiteland is an increase in the frequency of severe weather, particularly rainstorms. Although the average number of inches of rain that we get in a year remains generally consistent, we are experiencing more frequent intense storms that overwhelm the existing network of streams and man-made stormwater facilities, resulting in flooding. This affects land use planning in that we need to be more diligent than ever in enforcement of our stormwater management regulations and in restricting the development of floodplains and other flood-prone lands that would raise flood elevations or be detrimental to the public in some other way. Assuring the security and resiliency of our infrastructure during and following severe storms is also critical. Underground systems - like the public water supply and sewer networks - are already well-positioned from this perspective. Above-ground systems - including electric distribution, roads, and railroads - need to be designed to withstand the effects of severe weather. Preserving and enhancing tree cover, green spaces, and wetland areas can mitigate the impacts of extreme heat and intense storms.
- In March 2020, the Township experienced the first effects of the **COVID-19 pandemic** as most shops, schools, and workplaces shut down for a time. People quickly learned internet and telephone applications for shopping, education, working, socializing, entertainment, and general communication. As of this writing, the most severe restrictions have eased, but we are still living with some of the effects. While we look forward to more and more in-person interaction, we expect that some of the changes forced by the shut-downs only accelerated trends already in motion and will be part of a “new normal,” post-COVID. Many found that they could work from home and be just as productive as at an office. This suggests that the demand for office space and business parks may drop still further, even as new home designs begin to incorporate intentional work-from-home spaces rather than a perfunctory “home office” niche. Our outdoor recreational spaces found new users and increased popularity. More restaurants provided outdoor dining - in some cases nearly year-round - along with increased take-out and home-delivery options. Retailers also offered home-delivery to a greater extent than they had before. Some retailers adapted restaurants’ take-out concept to “BOPIS,” or, “**By On-line, Pick-up In Store.**” If these adaptations turn out to be permanent, they will affect the demand for recreational spaces and business offices; retailers and restaurants may need less indoor space for on-site customers and more outdoor space for delivery services and customers picking up orders; and mass-market retailers like Target, and Walmart may find that their stores can be smaller even as they construct ever-larger warehouses to compete with on-line retailers.

## General Description

The 1974 Comprehensive Plan marked out the Exton Crossroads - the intersection of Lincoln Hwy. and Pottstown Pk. - as the most appropriate place for the densest development in the Township. As shown on the 1974 Land Use Map (Figure 3.3.2), the Crossroads was to be a “commercial core” while the Lincoln Hwy. corridor would be for “industrial” use and all the remaining land for “residential” use: “medium density” surrounding the northern end of the commercial core and between Burke and Ship Rds. south of it. The 1995 Comprehensive Plan revised this policy to make the Crossroads a “town center” with a mix of uses, not just a commercial area. That Plan stated that the Town Center would be “...a mechanism for accommodating certain types of commercial and residential development expected over the next ten to twenty years while controlling the impacts of this development on established residential neighborhoods and on the major open space area in the township.”

The zoning regulations that implemented the Plan - and which are largely still in effect - promoted this policy by allowing a wide variety of residential and non-residential uses in the area around the Crossroads and somewhat less dense non-residential development along the Lincoln Hwy. Corridor - although some residential areas were allowed at the eastern and western edges of the Township. The parts of the Pottstown Pk. Corridor beyond the Town Center are flanked by medium-density residential areas, and the remaining outer corners of the Township are lower density residential areas and open space.

The “Lincoln Highway and Whitford Road Corridors Plan” was a 2015 amendment to the Comprehensive Plan that refined earlier policy: it was clear that the demand for office and light industrial space along the Lincoln Hwy. corridor anticipated in 1995 was not going to materialize, but there was increasing pressure for higher density residential areas. The 2015 amendment responded to this by retaining the policy of mixed-use development for the Crossroads and industrial development for the existing business and industrial parks along Lincoln Hwy. and Whitford Rd. in the western part of the Township, but it added places where higher density residential areas could be accommodated along Lincoln Hwy. in the eastern part. While it called for some different uses of land, what remained intact was the idea that the Crossroads and Lincoln Hwy. corridor were where higher density development belonged, preserving and supporting the lower density residential areas in the outer corners.

The Township had long promoted sidewalks and recreational trails for both pedestrian and bicycle use, but the opening of the Chester Valley Trail through the center of the Township and its nearly instantaneous popularity brought this policy into the forefront. People started to realize that trails were not only recreational but could be used for travel: you could GO somewhere on a trail. The Township amended the Comprehensive Plan again in 2019 to include a Township-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Using the Chester Valley Trail as its foundation, the Township’s plan shows extensions and additions to the sidewalk and trail networks along with critical connections. While the recreational benefits are clear, the Plan seeks to enhance the trail network so as to provide an alternative means of transportation such that residents can travel to work or other attractions without needing a car - an attractive option when the roads are congested.

By the late 2010’s, retail activity was declining, and several significant residential projects were constructed in the Crossroads area, continuing the transformation to a mixed-use area first envisioned in 1995. The Township recognized that this shift in demand and development type presented a once-in-a-generation opportunity to plan for a renewed Exton Crossroads.

In October 2020, a Technical Assistance Panel convened by the Philadelphia chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) at the invitation of the Township completed a report called “The Crossroads: Developing a Unique Town Center Identity.” The conclusions of the Report supported the long-standing policy of having the Crossroads be the focus of development in the Township and provided practical recommendations for enhancing the sense of place and overall ambiance of the area around the Crossroads.

Our population has grown by nearly 60% since the 1995 Plan was adopted; the 1995 Plan also predated the completion of the Exton By-Pass, the expansion of Exton Square, the creation of Exton Park, and the technological revolution enabled by the internet and smart phones. Despite these profound changes, the basic development model for the Township has served us well and we see no reason to change it: the Exton Crossroads and immediately surrounding area is our “Town Center” and is best suited to accommodate a mix of uses at the highest density allowed in the Township; the Lincoln Hwy. corridor will provide for a mix of office, retail, light industrial, and residential uses at a somewhat lower density; the Pottstown Pk. corridor provides access to medium-density residential areas; and outer corners will be set aside for lower-density residential areas as well as the most significant open space and recreational spaces. The Future Land Use Map (Figure 3.3.3) illustrates this policy in more detail and is based upon the Land Use Plan from the 1995 Comprehensive Plan as amended by the 2015 Lincoln Highway and Whitford Road Corridors Plan. Policies for the provision of space for various uses are little changed since 1995:

### **Residential**

- Existing lower-density residential neighborhoods in the outer corners of the Township will remain generally as is, although compatible residential infill will be permitted.
- Multi-family (apartment) buildings, single-family attached homes (townhouses and carriage homes), and smaller-lot single-family detached homes will be accommodated in and adjacent to the Town Center, along the Lincoln Hwy. and Pottstown Pk. corridors, and in areas within walking distance of rail stations.

### **Retail**

- Focused on the Town Center.
- Limited neighborhood retail areas.

### **Office**

- Expect demand for new office space will be limited, but maintain and support existing campus-type office developments along Lincoln Hwy. east and west of the Town Center, southeast of the U.S. Route 202 interchange, and around the intersection of Valley Creek Blvd. and Swedesford Rd.
- Accommodate within Town Center as part of desired mix of uses.

### **Industrial**

- Support existing industrial areas: heavy industry along Clover Mill Rd. and light industry along National Rd., the west end of Commerce Dr., and in the Oaklands Corporate Center.

## Open Space

- Support development of open and recreational spaces available to the public, including Exton Park and the smaller public parks.
- Require permanent open, recreational, and green spaces as part of new development (both residential and non-residential).
- Prohibit development of environmentally sensitive lands, including but not necessarily limited to FEMA-designated flood hazard areas, wetlands, and steep slopes.

Please note that Figure 3.3.3 is not intended to be a strict representation of the twenty-year build-out but an illustration of the areas in which different land uses are supported by the policies of this Plan.

## Exton Crossroads

The Land Use Plan promotes a mix of office, retail, residential, institutional, and open space uses in each quadrant of the Exton Crossroads area. This provides a clearly defined, single location in the Township for the most intensive kinds of uses, configured in such a way as to increase opportunities for “one-stop” patronage of several kinds of facilities, reduced rates of auto-trip generation, and increased opportunities for pedestrian circulation. Basic principles for the Crossroads area are:

- Each quadrant provides a mix of retail, office, residential, institutional, and open space uses, with good physical connections among uses in each quadrant to encourage a “walking downtown” pedestrian-oriented environment within each quadrant. This policy was first articulated in the 1995 Comprehensive Plan and was also recommended by ULI in their 2020 Report.
- Improve connections among the quadrants. The 1995 Plan promoted a “Town Center Loop” road connecting the quadrants, with the possibility of shuttle bus service operating from quadrant to quadrant. With the completion of Waterloo Blvd. and Commerce Dr., this loop now exists and even includes the possibility of an extension west of Whitford Rd. to include the new J Creekside and Waterloo Reserve communities. The 1995 Plan also noted that pedestrian bridges over Pottstown Pk. would connect the eastern quadrants to those on the west side of this principal arterial road. While such bridges would be ideal - especially for the Chester Valley Trail crossing - their cost would be significant, and a handicapped-accessible design could require more space than is available. Even so, we remain open to this possibility.
- The 1995 Plan promoted structured parking in the interest of reducing the land area given over to parking. This remains a valid course of action, particularly if the structure accommodates other uses, but the increasing prevalence of ride-sharing services, retailers’ provision of take-out and BOPIS options, and ability to walk or use a bicycle for shorter trips suggest that the overall demand for parking may be falling. While sufficient parking must be available to serve residents and business patrons safely and without undue congestion, creative alternatives to the construction of extensive surface parking lots are welcome.
- Improvements to Lincoln Hwy. in the Town Center area to provide character more like a landscaped boulevard. Improvements may include increased setbacks, underground

electrical utilities, shared driveways and parking lots, revised signage and lighting, and more landscaping.

By establishing a mixed-use Town Center, the 1995 Plan sought to address land use and traffic problems caused by the proliferation of auto-dependent retail uses at the Exton Crossroads as well as along Lincoln Hwy. and northward along Pottstown Pk. towards the boundary with Uwchlan Township. These were valid points, but a thriving Town Center will not in itself resolve traffic problems and is likely to generate additional traffic. However, a Town Center that emphasizes walkability and aesthetic quality is bound to be more visually appealing than a landscape designed to prioritize automobiles. As in the 1995 Plan, the current Future Land Use Plan establishes a clear perimeter to the Town Center and promotes the addition of office, residential, and institutional uses to the existing retail activities in the interest of providing a balanced land-use mix, reducing the need to use a car for all trips, and creating an opportunity to improve the character, image, and quality-of-life of the community.

This latter point is a key aspect of the Plan. On the ground, the Township borders aren't obvious: the township blends seamlessly into the adjacent municipalities. The center of the community is not clearly defined either: "Exton Crossroads" is a well-known location in the region, and the construction of Main Street at Exton has helped provide a clearer sense of place - particularly with the addition of the Township Building and residential areas - but other nearby community facilities (the post office and the library, for example) are more isolated and do not contribute to making a clear center for the community. The Plan proposes that the existing uses in each of the quadrants defined by the Exton Crossroads be augmented with new elements to make a place that acts as a magnet for Township residents and visitors alike, while providing a recognizable emblem of the Township.

The Future Land Use Plan addresses land uses at a general level. The 1995 Plan noted that their recommendations for the Town Center required a more detailed examination of the circumstances and potentials of the Crossroads area and called for the preparation of a more-focused Town Center Plan. The 2020 ULI Report was the first step in creating such a plan and was able to assess the impact of the many changes to the Crossroads area since 1995. That Report also generate a number of recommendations that need to be addressed as we move toward the creation of a vibrant, welcoming Town Center.

### **Beyond the Town Center**

The Future Land Use Plan accommodates less intense land uses outside the Town Center, with an emphasis on conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, selective infill of residential neighborhoods, low- and medium-density housing, and low-intensity business park and light industrial uses.

Conservation of environmentally sensitive areas includes the protection floodplains (or "flood hazard areas"), wetlands, steep slopes areas, and woodlands. The Future Land Use Plan shows how the web of FEMA-designated flood hazard areas can provide the backbone of a permanent open space network extending throughout the community, connecting parklands, environmental features, utility and transportation corridors, and a golf course. The 1995 Plan was understandably concerned that the growing population continue to have access to open space areas. This concern was addressed in a significant way with the acquisition by the Township and Chester County of approximately 700 acres of land from the Church Farm School, creating what is now Exton Park. Smaller Township parks like Boot Road Park, Catov

Park, and Roscioli Park now provide recreational and open space areas in other parts of the Township. In combination with privately owned areas of permanent open space - as are required for most residential developments - the Township is now in the enviable position of having fully 20% of its area in protected open space.

## **Residential Uses**

The Future Land Use map classifies residential areas according to gross density limits rather than by specific housing types to increase flexibility in responding to natural site conditions, recreational needs, and market demands for a range of housing types and site sizes

Residential infill describes the sensitive integration of new dwellings into the Township's existing fabric, including the addition of compatible residential development on vacant and undeveloped parcels in existing neighborhoods.

In general, low-density development characterizes most of the residential areas, reflecting their existing character and indicating Township continuing support for these neighborhoods into the future. The Town Center area, on the other hand, where retail services, transit, community facilities, and jobs are all potentially within walking distance from residences, is designated as the most appropriate location in the Township for higher residential densities. Medium density residential uses, which we expect will be townhouses and single-family homes on smaller lots, are closer to the Town Center and to major roads than the low-density areas.

## **Industrial Uses and Business Parks**

The areas shown for these uses on the Future Land Use map are essentially those that have been in such use for some time: the Lincoln Hwy. corridor between Ship Road and the Church Farm School, the area west of the Town Center to the East Caln Township line, and around the U.S. Route 202 expressway.

Traditional "heavy" industry - things like large-scale manufacturing and processing of raw materials - is largely absent from the Township, and economic trends indicate that we are not likely to see its return. In contrast, space for "light" industrial uses - including things like assembly, electronics, warehousing, and the office and administrative functions that go with them - remains in demand. The demand for warehouse and storage space is especially strong due to the proliferation of on-line retail and the dispersed hubs they require to meet their delivery commitments. This category also includes things like data centers and server farms that did not exist in 1995. Regulations historically required these uses to be separated from residential areas due to their smoke and noise. The industries we have in the Township today are not "smokestack" operations, although noise remains a concern in some instances. More commonly, we seek to mitigate the impacts of lighting, traffic, and aesthetics. For these reasons, these uses are best accommodated in locations with easy access to expressways and/or rail lines and away from densely developed mixed-use areas where we want to create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment.

## **Commercial Uses**

As previously noted, the commercial landscape has changed radically since we adopted the 1995 Plan: less than twenty years after its dramatic expansion, two of the four department

store anchors at Exton Square mall are gone - although due to national trends more than local conditions. The sub-regional centers like Exton Plaza, Fairfield Place, Festival at Exton, and the Whiteland Towne Center have fared better, and the mixed-use Main Street at Exton appears to have assumed the regional landmark status once enjoyed by Exton Square.

The 1995 Plan envisioned the Town Center as a blend of different uses, accommodating office-commercial, retail-commercial, high-density residential, institutional, hotel, and open space elements that would allow for the “...internalization of automobile trips, leading to a reduction in overall trip generation...” as well as preventing Lincoln Hwy. from becoming a relentless strip of unremarkable, automobile-centric development. Although one may question whether any automobile trips have been “internalized,” this policy has clearly been successful in supporting a more distinctive center. For this reason, this Plan continues to promote the Town Center as the preferred focus for the highest density of development allowed in the Township. We may yet see a moderation of traffic as more residents move into the Town Center’s new apartment buildings and take advantage of the growing network of sidewalks and trails, including a new bicycle-friendly connection to Exton train station. And while Exton Square may now be but a shadow of its former self, its owners have declared their commitment to the site and to its transformation to something worthy of what is arguably the most important crossroads in Chester County.

Outside of the Town Center, commercial activity is to be accommodated at the Festival at Exton shopping center and in a handful of neighborhood centers. These smaller centers are consistent with the Town Center concept. Local services providing day-to-day needs for Township residents should be convenient and, for people living in the outer corners of the Township, access to those services should not always require a trip to the Town Center.

### **Institutional Uses**

As we are the Crossroads of Chester County, it is not surprising that many institutions want to make their home in the Township. While we welcome the schools, libraries, houses of worship, and government services that comprise this category, they are often non-profit organizations and therefore tax exempt: their contribution to the character of the Township needs to be balanced against the cost of providing them with public services and revenue lost by not accommodating a tax-paying entity in their place.

We do not have a designated zoning district for institutional uses, choosing instead to accommodate them in a variety of appropriate districts through an “institutional overlay” district. We will maintain this policy going forward. The institutional uses shown on the Future Land Use map are a combination of lands already in institutional use and of places where additional such uses may be accommodated. As already noted, institutional uses are also appropriate in the Town Center.

### **The Future Land Use Map: Categories of Use**

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 3.3.3) is not the same as a Zoning Map. The Future Land Use Map is an illustration of how we expect the Township to look - or how it could look - twenty years from now. In contrast, the Zoning Map is one tool to help us get there; it may be viewed as an intermediate step between what exists now and what is shown on the Future

Land Use Map. Put another way, the Future Land Use Map is a policy statement; the Zoning Map is a legally enforceable document.

The categories on the Future Land Use Map do not all have equivalent zoning districts. For example, there is no geographically defined zoning district for institutional uses, but we know where they are and where we would like them. Even so, there is a clear connection between these maps. If the Zoning Map is a tool to help achieve the policy illustrated in the Future Land Use Map, then it follows that the Zoning Map is a step along the way toward the realization of the policy and that the Zoning Map will change over time as we get closer to achieving that policy. Therefore, Future Land Use Map is particularly useful when we consider amendments to the Zoning Map. The categories shown on the map include the following types of development.

- **NATURALLY CONSTRAINED LANDS** - This is not intended to be a geographically defined zoning district, but the category shows the anticipated impact of policies to limit development of environmentally sensitive areas. These areas include, but are not limited to, FEMA-designated floodplains, other floodplain areas, wetlands, and lands with slopes of 25% and more. Only a tiny handful of the lots in the Township are entirely constrained. In most cases, constrained lands occupy only a portion of otherwise developable lots, and we expect that these constrained areas will be maintained as undeveloped and unimproved portions of those lots.
- **LDR LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL** - The 1995 Comprehensive Plan defined this category as residential development at a density of not more than two dwelling units per developable acre<sup>1</sup> (2 du/da). This remains an appropriate density for this category, which we intend to consist primarily of single-family detached homes; however, accessory dwelling units within single-family homes and attached housing (like carriage homes) may be appropriate in some settings, provided that the density remains at or below 2 du/da. Non-residential uses should be limited to small-scale home occupations and in-home businesses that do not detract from the residential character of the neighborhood.
- **MDR MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL** - The 1995 Comprehensive Plan defined this category as residential development with a density between 2 du/da and 4 du/da. Again, we find that this remains an appropriate density for this category. Suitable housing types include single-family detached homes, carriage homes, and townhouses; some flats (also known as maisonettes or over/under units) may be accommodated, provided that the density of 4 du/da is not violated. Multi-unit dwellings (i.e., apartment buildings with the individual dwellings accessed from an interior corridor) are not necessarily prohibited, but they must be carefully sited to maintain the overall character of the neighborhood and should be conditioned upon the provision of significant permanent open space. As with the LDR, non-residential uses are to be limited to home occupations - although these may be more strictly controlled in light of the higher density of residences. Many of the existing communities in the MDR area include open space areas, a concept that we continue to support.
- **HDR HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL** - The 1995 Comprehensive Plan envisioned this as residential development between 4 du/da and 8 du/da in the form of townhouses and

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<sup>1</sup> The developable acreage of a property excludes FEMA-designated floodplains, wetlands, easements, rights-of-way, and areas with a slope of 25% or greater. The term is defined in the Township's Zoning Ordinance.

apartment buildings. While we continue to support this density for the areas in this category, we note that there is little if any developable land left in these areas. At this density and without the open space required in the MDR areas, the character of this use feels more urban and therefore more suitable for the Town Center area.

- **OR OFFICE and RESIDENTIAL** - This category was established as part of the 2015 amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Prior to that time, this area was set aside for light industrial and office uses, but changing market conditions resulted in the land remaining undeveloped or under-developed. The 2015 amendment proposed this combination of uses to promote higher-density housing (generally equivalent to the MDR described above) in proximity to the existing office and light industrial employers in the Whiteland Business Park, noting that these uses are conducted such that they would have little if any adverse impact upon nearby residents.
- **NC NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL** - The 1995 Plan envisioned these areas as small, neighborhood-oriented commercial areas where residents could access day-to-day services and retail without going to the larger commercial areas along Lincoln Hwy. This achieved only moderate success, so the areas shown here in this category are a bit smaller than in the 1995 Plan and indicate areas of existing commercial use.
- **OCR OFFICE COMMERCIAL RETAIL** - This is another category from the 2015 Plan, established to support the evolution of the Lincoln Hwy./Whitford Rd. intersection into a mixed-use center distinct from and subsidiary to the Exton Crossroads. This use is similar to the OR category described above, but it is meant to accommodate retail uses (such as the Festival shopping center and retail uses currently found along Lincoln Hwy.) in lieu of light industrial operations. Like the OR category, the residential component is meant to have a density and character similar to the MDR category.
- **IBP INDUSTRIAL and BUSINESS PARK** - The 1995 Plan had separate categories for “general industry” and “business park.” Historically, West Whiteland had few manufacturing operations and was never what one would describe as an industrial community. Given global trends and the infrastructure needs of heavy industry and large-scale manufacturing, we are not likely to attract interest from any such operators that may be scouting new locations. Even so, we wish to support the industries that we have and provide space for them that minimizes the potential for conflicts with other uses. We have combined the 1995 categories because we recognize that most of our manufacturers conduct their operations in completely closed buildings, they have minimal outdoor storage, and they often have extensive administrative sections such that the overall impact of the operation upon the neighborhood is similar to an office building. We also have determined that these locations are best suited to accommodate larger warehouses, logistical centers, and technical infrastructure (like server farms): growth industries looking for space.
- **INS INSTITUTIONAL** - Institutional uses are a critical part of a community, providing essential services and support to our residents and businesses. They include government offices; emergency services like police, fire, and ambulance response; schools; houses of worship; hospitals and clinics; and some residential arrangements, like long-term and continuing-care facilities and some religious communities. The Zoning Ordinance accommodates institutional uses through “overlay” provisions. That is, there is not a single district designated and defined for these uses, but they are allowed in a number of districts, subject to stated criteria such as minimum lot size, the provision of specified utilities, and road access. The institutional areas shown on

the Future Land Use map indicate existing uses as well as areas where additional institutional uses are appropriate.

- **TCMU TOWN CENTER MIXED USE** - This category is the area surrounding the Exton Crossroads - the intersection of Lincoln Hwy. and Pottstown Pk., also known as PA Route 100 - and illustrates the continuation of the Township's long-standing policy of accommodating our highest intensity of development at this location. The intent is to allow a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, recreational, and office uses designed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel such that residents and patrons have options for getting around in addition to getting into a car. A mixture of uses on lots and even within buildings is not merely permitted but is encouraged. At the same time, the naturally constrained lands are to be retained in a naturalistic (if not truly "natural") condition, facilitating climate resilience and providing green corridors through an otherwise densely developed area. Single-family detached homes are not encouraged here (note that the nearby Whiteland Crest neighborhood is not included in this category); instead, the highest density multi-family residential uses are permitted in structures that may be as tall as six stories. Quite intentionally, we do not specify a maximum density for this category. Residential density will instead be controlled through Zoning standards limiting building height and lot coverage as well as requiring setbacks from streets and property lines along with improved open areas and public amenities. We anticipate that residential density will exceed the 8 du/da allowed in the HDR category. In addition, non-residential uses will be accommodated at a scale and intensity that will facilitate walkability, and development will be required to promote a positive pedestrian experience, providing safe, landscaped sidewalks, structures to provide protection from rain and sun, and visually interesting, high-quality architecture. Bicycle routes connecting to the Chester Valley Trail will further reduce reliance on motor vehicles. While this category allows *many* uses, it will not be open to *all* uses. Activities such as data centers and server farms that are conducted in large windowless buildings that discourage pedestrian interaction will not be allowed; other activities like warehousing and large-scale manufacturing will be prohibited not only due to the appearance of their large, pedestrian-unfriendly buildings, but also because they generate a lot of truck traffic, making them even more incompatible with pedestrians.
- **OSR OPEN SPACE and RECREATION** - Like the institutional category, these uses are not intended to be a designated zoning district, but we recognize that open spaces are essential to our quality of life. This category includes existing areas of permanently preserved open space, like the Township and County-owned parks, along with major privately owned spaces that we expect will remain open for the next twenty years. Examples of such private spaces include the Whitford Country Club near the border with East Caln Township and the diagonal swathe of PECO-owned lands occupied by the large electric transmission lines in the southern part of the Township. The Future Land Use Map does not show permanently preserved green space within residential developments since they are ancillary to the residential use of their lots. However, these spaces are crucially important as they are the most accessible green spaces available to thousands of our residents and they constitute a significant percentage of our protected open space lands. The Open Space Map (Figure 3.3.4) provides a better illustration of these lands.
- **T TRANSPORTATION** - This category includes roads, railroads, and facilities dedicated to transportation, such as our two train stations; there are no airports in the Township. Transport facilities that are accessory to some other use - such as SEPTA

bus station at Exton Square shopping center - do not appear as it is subsidiary to the principal use. Similarly, we expect that facilities to accommodate transportation options now in development - such as aerial drones and taxis - will be provided as accessories to other uses and not as a stand-alone facility. This area may also provide for uses such as billboards that need to be adjacent to roads or railroads; however, these will be strictly regulated through the Zoning Ordinance to minimize their impact upon nearby properties.

DRAFT

# DRAFT Future Land Use Map


WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

## Map Features

 Naturally Constrained Land

## Future Land Use


 LDR Low Density Residential

 MDR Medium Density Residential

 HDR High Density Residential

 OR Office Residential

 NC Neighborhood Commercial

 OCR Office Commercial Retail

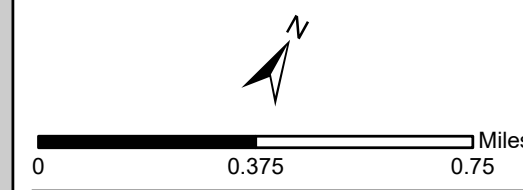
 IBP Industrial & Business Park

 INS Institutional

 TCMU Town Center Mixed Use

 OSR Open Space & Recreation

 T Transportation



Prepared by: West Whiteland Township, 2022  
Data Source: Chester County DCIS, 2022

UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP

EAST CALN TOWNSHIP

EAST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP

EAST BRADFORD TOWNSHIP

WEST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP

EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP