
OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES PLAN

**EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP
CHESTER COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA**

1992

RETTEW Associates, Inc.

EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

December 1992

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Robert J. Megay, Chairman
David K. Leinbach, Vice-Chairman
Douglas E. Kulp, Supervisor

Debra K. Batchelor, Secretary-Treasurer

Prepared by:

RETTEW ASSOCIATES, INC.

**3020 Columbia Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In addition to the Board of Supervisors and Staff, the following individuals and organizations were of immeasurable value to the authors during the preparation of this Plan. Without their guidance and input, the final document would not have matched the park and recreation needs of East Coventry Township residents.

- East Coventry Study Committee

Chris Moore-Milne, Park and Recreation Committee
Kathryn V. Alexis, Park and Recreation Committee
Nancy Smith, Park and Recreation Committee
Martin C. Jones, Park and Recreation Committee
Wayne Shych, Park and Recreation Committee
Mark Elliott, Park and Recreation Committee
Linda Bauer, Park and Recreation Committee
Raymond Nester, Planning Commission
David Leinbach, Township Supervisor

- Chester County Planning Commission

- Completion of this Plan was funded, in part, through a grant from the Chester County Heritage Park & Open Space Municipal Grant Program, administered by the Chester County Planning Commission.

We offer a special note of gratitude to all residents of who provided input, especially those who attended public meetings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Resolution of the East Coventry Township
Board of Supervisors

Acknowledgement

	PAGE
I. Introduction	I-1
A. Purpose of the Plan	I-1
B. Uses of the Plan	I-3
1. Advisory	I-3
2. Legal	I-4
3. County, State, or Federal Funding	I-4
C. Method of Study	I-5
D. Public Parks and Recreation Services: Benefits, Definitions, and Roles	I-6
1. The Importance of Providing These Services	I-6
2. Definitions and Roles	I-8
3. Providers of Park and Recreation Services	I-9
II. Community Background Information	II-1
A. Community Description	II-1
1. East Coventry Township	II-1
2. Government Organization	II-2
3. Regional Planning Organization	II-6
4. Municipal Budget	II-6
5. Land Use and Planning Policies	II-9
6. Existing Land Use Patterns	II-9
7. Existing Land Use Regulations	II-11
B. East Coventry's Demographic Profile	II-13
1. Population Trends	II-14
2. Socioeconomic Characteristics	II-14
3. Housing Patterns	II-16
4. Population Growth and Projections	II-17
5. Planning Implications	II-18

	PAGE
III. Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives	III-1
IV. Environmental Resources Plan	IV-1
A. Inventory and Open Space Needs Assessment	IV-1
1. Water Resources	IV-1
2. General Water Resource Protection Strategies	IV-6
3. Land Resources	IV-8
4. General Land Resource Protection Strategies	IV-10
5. Woodland Resources	IV-12
6. General Woodland Protection Strategies	IV-13
7. Wildlife Habitats	IV-13
8. Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resources	IV-14
9. General Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resource Protection Strategies	IV-17
10. Protected Municipal Lands	IV-17
B. Evaluation of Needs	IV-20
1. Comparison with Planning Documents and Zoning	IV-20
2. Water Resources	IV-21
3. Land Resources	IV-22
4. Woodland Resources	IV-22
5. Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resources	IV-22
6. Township Zoning Districts	IV-22
C. Preservation Techniques for Natural Areas and Open Space	IV-25
1. Open Space Preservation Techniques	IV-25
2. Growth Management Policies and Land Use Controls	IV-27
D. Recommended Township Actions	IV-30
1. Acquisition and/or Easement Priorities	IV-30
2. Proposed Zoning and Regulatory Changes	IV-31
V. Citizen Involvement	V-1
A. Study Committee	V-1
B. Public Meeting	V-1

	PAGE
VI. Park and Recreation Facility Analysis	VI-1
A. Standards	VI-1
B. Existing Conditions	VI-3
1. Regional/Sub-Regional Parks	VI-3
2. Community Parks	VI-4
3. Neighborhood Parks	VI-6
4. Greenways	VI-7
5. Privately-owned Parks or Recreation Facilities	VI-8
C. Analysis	VI-9
1. Township-Wide	VI-9
2. Community Parks	VI-9
3. Neighborhood Parks	VI-12
4. Greenway System	VI-15
5. Recreational Facilities	VI-16
D. Acquisition and Facility Development Action Plan	VI-18
E. Maintenance of Township Parks	VI-21
1. Purpose of Good Park Maintenance	VI-21
2. East Coventry's Present Maintenance Program	VI-22
3. Maintenance Issues to Consider for Future Parks	VI-24
VII. Recreation Programs	VII-1
A. Inventory of Programs	VII-1
B. Analysis of Available Programs	VII-5
C. General Program Recommendations	VII-6
VIII. Administration of the Park and Recreation System	VIII-1
A. Current Practices	VIII-1
B. Recommended Administrative Improvements	VIII-3

	PAGE
IX. Expenditure Analysis	IX-1
A. Expenditure History and Comparison	IX-1
B. Potential Sources of Funding	IX-5
C. Mandatory Dedication of Park Land	IX-8
X. Plan Implementation	X-1
A. Summary of Key Recommendations	X-1
B. Plan Recommendations - Planning and Administrative Issues	X-6
1. Environmental Resource Protection Preservation	X-6
2. Park and Greenway Development	X-7
3. Park Maintenance	X-8
4. Recreation Program Development	X-8
5. Park and Recreation Board Administration	X-9
6. Financial Planning	X-9

List of Tables

1. Township Funding For Recreation	II-8
2. Population Trends	II-14
3. Socio-economic Characteristics	II-15
4. Housing Patterns	II-16
5. Regional Population Trends and Forecasted Growth	II-17
6. Critical Township Open Space Areas	IV-32
7. Appropriate Preservation Techniques for East Coventry	IV-33
8. Chester County Park Standards	VI-3
9. Projected Community Park Land Needs	VI-10
10. Projected Neighborhood Park Land Needs	VI-12
11. Recreation Facility Needs	VI-17
12. Acquisition and Facility Development Action Plan	VI-18
13. Park Equipment	VI-23
14. Five-year History of Park and Recreation - Expenditures and Revenues	IX-2
15. Comparison of Spending	IX-4
16. Capital Project Implementation Schedule	X-3
17. Summary Chart by Year	X-5

List of Figures

1.	East Coventry Township Organizational Chart	II-5
2.	East Coventry's 1990 Budget--Distribution of Revenues for Services	II-8
3.	Developing Township Direction	III-1
4.	Sample Written Program Plan	VII-9

List of Maps

	PAGE	
1.	Land Use	II-12
2.	1980-1990 Percent Change of Total Population	II-20
3.	Geology and Watershed Boundaries	IV-3
4.	Natural Conditions	IV-4
5.	Prime Agricultural Soils	IV-9
6.	Significant Woodlands	IV-11
7.	Scenic Roads and Views	IV-15
8.	Recreation/Open Space Framework	IV-18
9.	Agricultural Security Areas	IV-19
10.	Parks in the Area	VI-2
11.	Recreation Planning Districts	VI-10
12.	Final Recommendations	X-3

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Plan

In 1986, East Coventry Township completed its first Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. Initially, this plan's primary focus was to secure and develop recreational resources along the Schuylkill River, but went beyond this task. Planning efforts were expanded to include an evaluation of the overall recreational needs and interests of Township residents. The 1986 plan provided a starting point and a prioritized list of projects for the Township to pursue over the next five years.

Five years have passed and an update of the 1986 plan is essential. Several of the planned projects have been completed, the Township's Park and Recreation Committee has changed, and the Chester County Heritage Park and Open Space Grant Program became available. Partial funding for a plan update was provided from the County's grant program. By receiving County funds, this required expanding the scope of the 1986 plan to include a stronger emphasis on preservation of the Township's environmentally sensitive resources.

Chester County's planning grants are considered the key to the County's long-term open space and park land preservation goals. By providing this grant to East Coventry, the County is ensured that the Township will:

1. Increase awareness of East Coventry's existing environmental framework to guide preservation efforts of environmentally sensitive areas.
2. Increase awareness of East Coventry's long-term park and recreational facility needs.
3. Develop a plan to preserve open space through regulatory action.
4. Develop a "blueprint" to preserve its natural, scenic, and historic resources for future generations.

As a "blueprint", this Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan (subsequently called the "Plan") provides a step-by-step approach to develop future public parks and recreation services and preserve sensitive resources. This approach starts with getting residents involved through a study committee. Through the planning process, committee members increase their knowledge of the Township's current resources, the types of regulatory action, the variety of services municipalities can offer, and how to develop or provide these services effectively. Then, with this expanded knowledge, the committee formulates Township goals and establishes priorities to meet expressed needs.

The final step is for the Township to follow the outlined strategies, review the Plan's recommendations on a yearly basis, and make modifications when appropriate. Township initiatives will require updates to reflect shifting needs, priorities and economic conditions. The Plan needs to be flexible and change with these conditions. Continual use of the Plan will enable the Township to achieve its goals and direct financial resources towards services and facilities that meet the present and future needs of residents.

Uses of the Plan

This document functions in both an advisory and legal capacity and may help to acquire future county, state, or federal funding.

Advisory

A plan is only useful and worth the volunteer time that was required to develop it when read, referred to, and followed. Every person involved with providing parks and recreation services or reviewing proposed developments should read this Plan at least once and understand its contents. The Park and Recreation Committee members will want to bring the Plan to every meeting and refer to it when developing yearly objectives, new policies, capital and operating budgets, and programs. Also, the Committee should include a review of the Plan's contents as part of its new member orientation program.

By knowing the Plan's contents, it can be easily referenced when faced with controversial decisions. The Plan represents an educational and consensus building process for the Study and Park and Recreation Committee members, elected officials, special interest groups, and residents at large. The Plan's recommendations result from tough choices and compromises among groups with differing goals and interests. When residents or special interest groups request additional facilities or funding, the Park and Recreation Committee should reference this Plan, then advise the Board of Supervisors on the appropriate response.

Another advisory function is to serve as a reference document when reviewing new subdivision plans for open space requirements or environmentally sensitive areas. The Plan identifies areas of the Township in need of open space or new facilities and also indicates the location of sensitive resources. When a new residential development plan is proposed, the Park and Recreation Committee and/or Planning Commission should reference the Plan to evaluate any adverse impact on these resources and for the recommended course of action.

Legal

The plan can serve a legal function, once adopted by the Township. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act No. 247 of 1968 as reenacted and amended by Act No. 170 of 1988, provides planning requirements that can be adopted by local municipalities. The MPC stipulates that planning documents and ordinances must be adopted by the municipality to provide a defensible basis for sound decision-making regarding land use. MPC Section 503(11) provides municipalities the authority to require a developer to dedicate public land for park and recreation purposes. In order to require dedication of land, that is forcing the developer to turn over common open space as a condition of final plan approval, the municipality must first meet these general obligations:

- The governing body must have an adopted recreation plan that defines principles and standards for determining developer obligations.
- The recreation plan should provide direction to ensure that the amount and location of land or fees bear a reasonable relationship to future residents of the proposed development.
- The municipality must adopt a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance that reflects the recreation plan's principles and standards and includes definite standards to determine the open space or fee requirements.

County, State, or Federal Funding

Chester County requires that municipalities must complete an open space, recreation, and environmental resources plan to be eligible for acquisition or park development grants. Generally, when applying for grants, information is requested on why a municipality is seeking funding and for what purpose. This Plan provides a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP identifies needed land acquisition purchases and/or new facilities. Using this Plan as a reference, and including copies of relevant sections, demonstrates to the funding source that the request has been thoroughly reviewed and is supported by Township officials and residents.

Method of Study

The Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan consists of ten specific sections that document the planning process and final recommendations. Here is an overview of the Plan's chapters.

Chapters 1 - 3

The first three chapters provide background information on the Plan and the Township.

Chapter 4

This chapter's primary purpose is to develop a preservation plan for the Township's environmentally sensitive resources. The resources are identified, mapped, evaluated, and prioritized by importance to the Township's natural or cultural heritage. Preservation strategies are then proposed for the most significant resources.

Chapter 5

This chapter documents input received from the study committee, residents, and special interest groups.

Chapters 6 - 8

Three critical Township issues were evaluated in these chapters. Evaluated issues included needed recreational facilities, programs, and administrative practices. Present conditions were summarized then compared with resident input and common park and recreation practices. An action plan or recommendations conclude each chapter and serves to narrow the gap between present and desired conditions.

Chapter 9

This chapter determines potential capital and operating costs for implementing action plan directives. Also provided is a method-of-funding list. Each action plan directive is accompanied by a suggested funding method.

Chapter 10

The final chapter takes all action plans, with accompanying recommendations, and analyzes where the Township should concentrate its efforts. Recommended actions are put in priority order and placed in a five-year strategic plan. A final implementation schedule provides the "blueprint" for the Township to concentrate on high priority issues first.

Public Open Space, Park, and Recreation Services

The Importance of Providing These Services

In 1987, the President's Commission on American Outdoors canvassed the nation to meet with key community leaders. Their mission was to determine the impact of public parks and recreation services and to provide direction for needed federal, state, and local initiatives. The Commission found that Americans benefit from recreational opportunities in many ways. Below is a summary of key findings, many of which are also important to East Coventry residents.

- **Recreation contributes to one's health and wellness.**

"Health is the primary reason American adults say they engage in outdoor recreation. Healthy people constitute a productive work force, effective armed forces, and a motivated citizenry. Americans spent \$355 billion, or about \$1,500 per capita, on health care in 1983. If increased recreation participation could reduce that figure by just five percent, the national savings would amount to more than \$15 billion."

- **Recreation enhances environmental quality.**

"Recreation has helped stimulate our efforts to maintain and enhance the quality of our environment...As early as the late 1800s, Frederick Law Olmsted planned major park systems in Boston, Chicago, and several other cities as large green areas that were 'lungs of the city.' Trees and open spaces reduce air pollution."

- **Recreation is vital to the prosperity of our families and children.**

"There is little statistical evidence that the families who play together, stay together; however, the public believes it. In one study, healthy, functioning families said that they strengthen family ties by doing things together outdoors...Children depend on safe, available places to play. Children also need open spaces to roam and explore wild lands. Parents, participants, and organizers recognize the value of camps and youth organizations serving as character builders for youth."

- **Recreation helps prevent crime.**

"We moved 21 years ago into a neighborhood that was considered very run down. As you had the beginning of gentrification, resentfully stones would be thrown. We built a small park--basketball court, some benches, a place where you could at least throw some balls around. The stone throwing stopped. That's why I'm convinced, firsthand, that there's a direct relationship. You don't throw stones when you've got balls to throw around." Arthur J. Holland, Mayor, Trenton, New Jersey

- **Recreation programs lead to civic pride and social unity.**

"Community leaders use recreation programs and outdoor settings as means to accomplish other community goals." Community-wide special events bring residents to public places where they can get to know each other and celebrate community "success stories" that target improving the community's quality of life.

- **Outdoor places foster a spirit of belonging among generations.**

"Outdoor settings offer heritage--a connection among individuals and among communities across time. A connection between generations--"the search for points of continuity" -- is a strong underlying theme in societies undergoing rapid change."

- **The outdoors is habitat for plants, animals, and people.**

"Wildlands preserve a variety of plants and animals that may be essential for human survival. Species as yet unknown or unresearched may hold the key to future food, medicine, and fibre sources."

- **The outdoors is an investment in our education.**

"The outdoors is a learning environment for many professions. Bill Gilbert, a writer for **Sports Illustrated**, informed the commission that "just messing around" in outdoor space is important, especially for children, to learn about nature and develop respect for it."

For small municipalities to assume the challenge of trying to solely meet all these potential benefits would be beyond their resources. Municipalities must focus their efforts, evaluate what is already being provided by other agencies, and concentrate their resources (both people and financial) on what they can do well.

Definitions and Roles

Generally, people tend to interchange park and recreation related terms and have a limited understanding of all the different agencies that provide park and recreation services. Provided in this section, are definitions of four commonly used terms throughout the Plan and a summary of the roles of various agencies in and around East Coventry Township that are already providing facilities and services.

Open Space

In the broadest terms, open space is all undeveloped areas of the Township. This can include agricultural land, woodlands, stream valleys, public parks, golf courses, and tree nurseries. Primarily, this Plan focuses on public open space, land that is available for public use and recreation without an admission fee, and any open space areas that contain environmentally sensitive resources regardless of ownership.

Parks

Public parks come in all sizes, from 1/2 acre tot lots to 1,000 acre state parks. Parks are places where people go to pursue leisure activities and can include passive or active settings. The County's parks primarily promote passive recreational experiences and include hiking trails, picnic areas, and camping facilities. Local municipalities provide smaller parks, closer to home, and with more emphasis on active facilities such as fields, courts, and play areas.

Recreation

Recreation is activity that residents do at parks and community facilities. This activity can be active or passive in nature. Active recreation tends to be associated with specific facilities, often is group-oriented, and includes activities such as baseball, soccer, swimming, or tennis. Passive recreation can be performed alone and typically includes less intense or strenuous activities such as picnicking or fishing. Public recreation is an activity sponsored by a public agency such as a municipality or school district.

Environmental Resources

These resources are ones that contribute to a municipality's natural, cultural, or historic heritage. Most will be natural including resources like wetlands, woodlands, and stream valleys, but a few may be man-made such as scenic roads or historic sites.

Providers of Parks and Recreation Services

Many agencies, from public to private, provide recreational opportunities for East Coventry residents. Residents picnic at Towpath Park, fish along the Schuylkill River, play soccer at East Coventry School, and most users probably do not know who owns or maintains these facilities. Ownership of a park or a facility is not that important to a user. However, it should be for the Township. To avoid duplication of services and inappropriate use of local tax resources, the Township should know what agencies are already providing facilities and services and have a general understanding of each agency's role. Once these agencies are identified, then the Township can determine what present needs are not being met and plan for additional services to fill the void. The Township could become the sole provider of these new services or develop cooperative partnerships with identified agencies.

Traditionally, there are four levels of government that provide parks and recreation services. Also, public schools and private agencies play important roles. In theory, if each agency assumes its appropriate role, the park and recreation needs of Township residents would be met without duplicating services. Should the Plan find that one or more agencies is not fulfilling their role or has atypical roles, this will need to be considered when finalizing the Township's future goals.

Federal government

The role of the federal government is to preserve nationally significant natural, cultural, and historic resources. Examples include Yellowstone, Valley Forge National Battlefield and the Delaware-Lehigh Canal. Because these resources are of "national significance", and not always located near population centers, federal parklands tend to be "destination-oriented." People travel considerable distance to visit these parks and many stay for several days. Another role is to provide technical assistance and funding to state and local governments.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The role of the Commonwealth is to preserve and manage natural, cultural, and historic resources of state-wide significance. Recreational areas tend to go beyond the financial and management abilities of county or local government and often cross political boundaries. Such areas include state game lands, state parks, and state forests. The Commonwealth also develops the State Recreation Plan, a five-year action plan for state agencies, and provides funding to local governments for planning and park land acquisition and development.

County Government

Chester County's Open Space and Recreation Study (1982) provides the County's role. According to the study, its role is to:

"...provide a system of parks and recreation facilities within easy reach of all County residents, yet designed to serve several or more municipalities at once. County park facilities augment those provided at the state and local governmental levels. County parks tend to be group-oriented...have a day-use emphasis...and may center on a single specialized recreational resource such as a golf course. County government also has an important role in providing technical assistance to local governments." (p. 3-4)

Municipal Government

Chester County's Open Space and Recreation Study also identifies these roles for municipal governments in the County:

"The role of individual municipal governments is to meet the day-to-day park and recreation experiences of their residents close to home. This is usually

accomplished through the provision of a system of neighborhood and community parks." (p. 3-4)

Typically, municipal parks tend to emphasize active recreation experiences and include playgrounds, courts, and fields, but interest in more passive areas and linear parks is growing. Linear parks are natural or man-made corridors that provide various modes of recreational travel like walking, biking, and horseback riding.

Municipalities are not expected to provide all recreation programs, but can work with community groups and non-profit agencies to help make their efforts more effective. Programs can include summer recreation, arts and crafts, sports leagues, tennis lessons, and special events.

Private Sector

The role of the private sector is to supplement recreational facilities and services provided by government agencies. Within each municipality exists a variety of private sector providers. School district, YMCA/YWCAs, churches, and commercial businesses such as bowling alleys are typical examples. While school districts are publically funded, recreation lands and facilities are not always available for public use. Many encourage use, but providing facilities and programs is not their primary purpose. School facilities tend to be active and youth-oriented with an emphasis on athletic fields, tennis courts, and playgrounds.

Private agencies tend to serve a limited clientele that has to be able to pay or be a member of the agency. Often, local governments form public-private partnerships with these agencies to stretch limited resources, meet special needs, increase public recreation opportunities, and avoid duplicating roles.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Community Description

East Coventry Township

East Coventry Township is located in northeast Chester County in southeastern Pennsylvania. The Township, eleven square miles in area, is contiguous to North Coventry Township to the northwest, South Coventry Township to the west, and East Vincent Township to the south and southwest. The Schuylkill River forms its northern boundary. The Township is within 20 miles of the boundaries of six neighboring Townships and the available transportation network provides residents easy access to Pottstown, Norristown, and Philadelphia's northwest suburbs.

The recorded history of East Coventry begins in 1841 when it was known as "Coventry" and divided into North and South Coventry. Officially formed in 1844, East Coventry was carved out of North Coventry. The new Township's population, in 1850, was counted at 1,228 residents.

During the next 100 years, there was little change in the Township except that the grist mills were no longer in operation along Pigeon Creek and barges no longer followed mules along the Schuylkill Canal's tow-paths. In appearance, it was still a rural community, and its population remained almost static, with the census showing an increase of only 271 inhabitants during this period. Between 1850 and 1940, the population grew by just 76 residents.

The post war years saw more rapid change, due in some degree to the industrial growth of Pottstown and the modern pattern of exodus from city to suburb. By 1960, the Township's population nearly doubled to 2,183 residents, and by 1990 doubled again to 4,450 residents. Economic conditions and the lack of public sewer and water has slowed the Township's growth. The Township's population from 1980 to 1990 was 10% less than the average percent of growth

in Chester County. By 1990, growth had halted and minimal growth is expected until, and if, the Township receives public sewer and water facilities.

East Coventry Township is a rural community comprised primarily of farmland and single family residential areas. As with most rural areas, past growth concentrated along the regional highways, especially in the vicinity of their crossroads. This pattern developed the neighborhoods of Parker Ford, Snowdenville and Brownbacks. While, the Chester County Open Space and Recreation Study (1982) predicted the eventual suburbanization of the Township by 1990, this has yet to occur. Agriculture and single family houses on large lots still remain the predominant land use in East Coventry.

Government Organization

East Coventry is a Township of the second class, governed by a three-member Board of Supervisors who are elected at large for a six year term. Terms are staggered with one member elected every two years. The present members of the Board have varied years of experience in managing municipal government with lengths of service ranging from 3 to 27 years.

The Board's responsibilities are derived from various state laws such as the Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code and the Municipalities Planning Code. The Board oversees all functions of the Township, including park planning and maintenance. It is responsible for planning, improving, and maintaining Township parks; providing recreation services, and establishing park and recreation policies. Also, the Board has the final authority with the subdivision and land development process; therefore, can enact ordinances to protect environmentally sensitive resources and require the dedication of public open space.

All recommendations from its appointed committees (the Park and Recreation Committee, Planning Commission, and Zoning Hearing Board) are referred to and evaluated by the Board for a final decision. Furthermore, funding for parks and recreation services is authorized by the Board. The Township holds public meetings once a month to facilitate communication with

Township residents. Special committees, such as this Plan's study committee, are another example of how the Township seeks to involve residents and address their concerns.

To assist the Board with the day-to-day operations of its government, the Board hires Township staff and appoints committees. Those relevant to this Plan include a:

- Full-time Secretary-Treasurer
- Full-time Township Clerk
- Road department, staffed with a crew of two full-time employees supervised by a Roadmaster. Two part-time seasonal employees are hired during the summer months.
- Police department, staffed by three, under the direction of the Board of Supervisors.
- Park and Recreation Committee
- Planning Commission
- Zoning Hearing Board

Figure 1 illustrates how the Township is organized. General descriptions of staff and committee roles and responsibilities are provided below.

Township Staff

All staff operate out of the municipal building, completed in 1988. This building, located on Ellis Woods Road, includes the general administrative offices, the police department, a conference room, and a public meeting room.

The Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for the maintenance of Township records and ensuring that the problems and concerns of residents are attended to or brought to the attention of the proper official. The Secretary-Treasurer prepares meeting agendas and financial reports, pays bills, and is the key contact person for residents to call regarding the Township's services. The Secretary-Treasurer is assisted by the Township Clerk. This clerk provides assistance with daily operations and general office procedures.

The Road Department is responsible for the maintenance of Township property, including Towpath Park. While this department has typical responsibility for Township roads and bridges, it also conducts all required upkeep on Township grounds. These duties include mowing and manicuring of Township owned open space and park land, general repair of facilities at Towpath Park, and trash collection.

The Police Department enforces the laws of the United States, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Ordinances of the Township. Officers patrol Towpath Park to ensure that park users comply with the Township's park ordinances.

Park and Recreation Committee

The Park and Recreation Committee consists of seven residents appointed by the Supervisors. First established as a five member Ad-hoc Recreation Committee in 1984, its purpose was to advise and recommend regulations and uses for Township owned recreation areas. Between 1984 and 1986, the Committee was actively involved in developing the first park and recreation plan and Towpath Park. Following the completion of this park's current facilities, the committee's initiatives were limited for two years. In 1988, several new members were appointed and the committee's efforts increased. This rejuvenated committee began Park Day, an annual community event held at Towpath Park, and a now very popular yearly activity. The present Committee continues to organize Park Day, but also has assumed additional responsibilities. A recent Committee responsibility is participation on the study committee that is assisting with the completion of this Plan. The Committee meets monthly and members serve a five-year term.

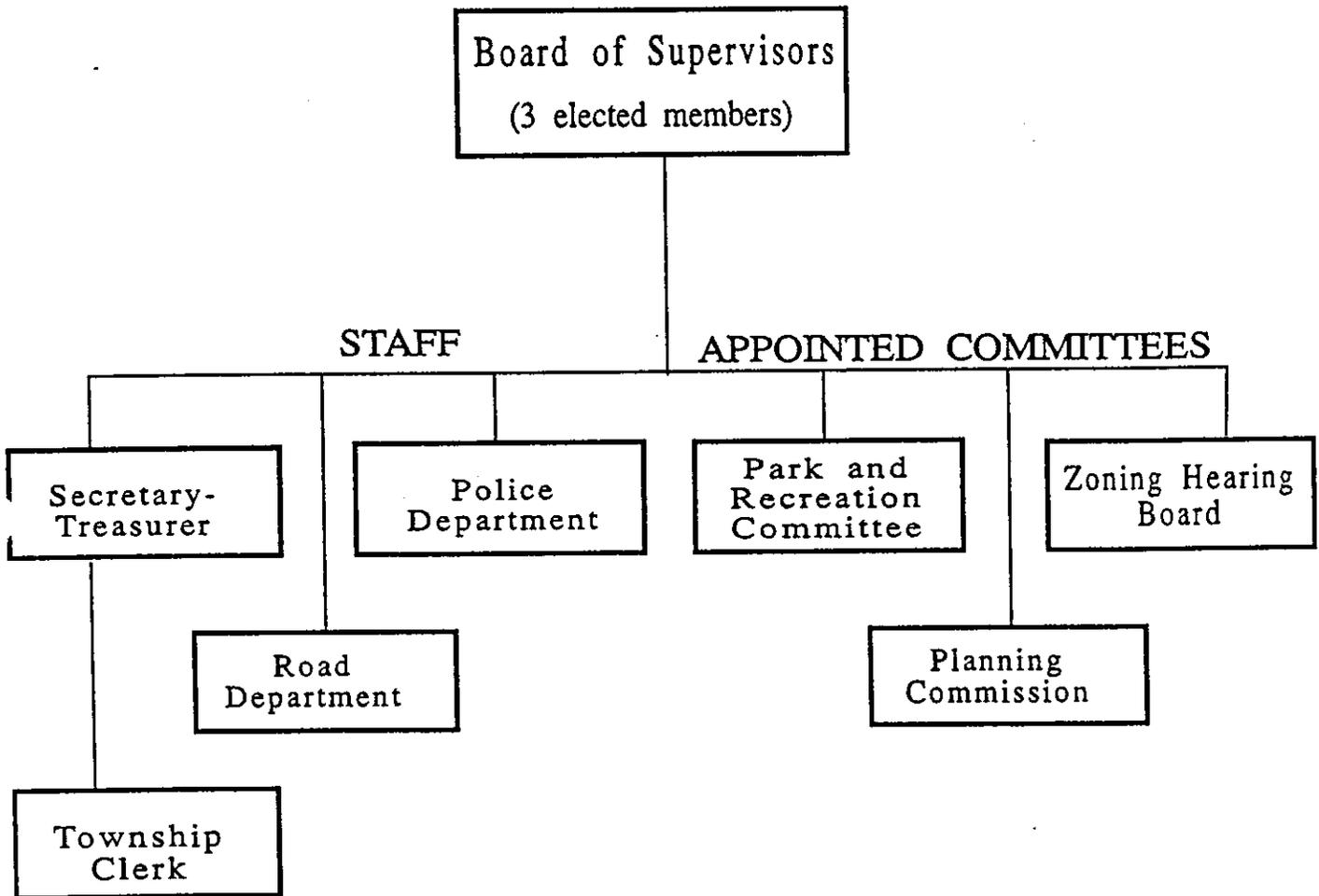
Planning Commission

The Planning Commission consists of five residents appointed by the Supervisors for a four-year term. They meet monthly and duties include the review of all subdivision and land development plans and submitting recommendations on these items to the Board of Supervisors.

Figure 1

EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP

*Organizational Chart



* NOTE: This is not a chart for the entire Township, but for the Park and Recreation Committee. The chart depicts those committees or Township staff that may be involved or impacted by the future open space preservation and recreation planning initiatives. Those not involved, such as the municipal authority or tax collector, are not shown.

Regional Planning Organization

Eight Townships and one Borough of northern Chester County joined together to form the Federation of Northern Chester County Communities. This regional planning group currently consists of East Coventry, East Pikeland, East Nantmeal, East Vincent, North Coventry, South Coventry, and West Vincent Townships and Spring City Borough. The Federation of Northern Chester County Communities coordinates plans and development efforts between member communities. East Coventry joined the Federation in 1987. Activities of the Federation have included sponsoring field trips and providing presentations on planning issues and techniques, publication of a Regional Comprehensive Plan, adoption of a Regional Land Use Plan and provide regional coordination of the French Creek Scenic River Study. The Federation also prepared the Water Resources Management Study of 1988, the Surface Water Runoff Study of 1991 and developed local Scenic River Management Guidelines. The Water Resources Management Study identifies critical watersheds of the Federation area, the Pigeon Creek, Stony Run, Northern and small portions of the Southern and French Creek watersheds are within East Coventry. The study further identified areas of soil and contamination potential of water resources. Areas of moderate to high risk of contamination could be protected by targeting these areas of the Township for passive park facilities, which would reduce the stresses of development on the water resources.

Municipal Budget

A significant portion of the management of any Township involves raising and spending public funds to perform municipal services. The Board of Supervisors prepares a yearly plan, in the form of a budget, that allocates these funds. The Township's general fund takes in projected revenues to cover budget expenditures. The Township receives most of its revenues from these taxes: real estate, per capita, real estate transfer, earned income, and liquid fuel. Other non-tax revenues include items such as licenses, interest earnings, fines, and charges for services. In

1990, the Township expended more than half of its budget on police protection, general government (administration) and highway maintenance. Figure 2 shows how the budget is divided.

The Township is free from bond indebtedness. Debt consists of a bank loan for construction of the Township building. The Township's borrowing capacity for 1990 was \$1,444,330. The Township's current millage rate is 11 mils. The maximum rate allowed under State regulations is 14 mils. Rates in excess of 14 mils have to be approved by the State. The Township allocates 1 mil of tax revenue per year for capital expenditures. One mil of tax equals about \$15,125 annually.

Park and Recreation Expenditures

As Figure 2 indicates, the Township does fund public parks and recreation services. A five-year history of Township funding for these services as a percent of the Township's total expenditures is provided in Table 1. Later in the Plan, following the development of preliminary recommendations, the present level of funding is analyzed to determine if it is sufficient to implement the Plan's recommendations.

An evaluation of the Township's park and recreation expenditures shows that most services have been included under the "Culture/Recreation" category. Funding for Towpath Park's maintenance is absorbed in the Township's "Highway" category. Regardless of the category, all expenditures have been budgeted under the Township's operating budget. To date, capital improvements for parks and recreation projects have not been budgeted under the Township's capital reserve fund.

Figure 2
East Coventry's 1990 Budget – Distribution of Revenues for Services

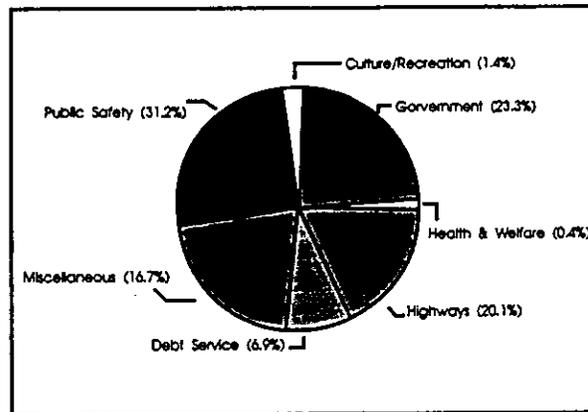


Table 1
Township Funding for Recreation

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992*
Total General Fund Expenses (\$)	295,787	465,266	549,137	522,751	573,763	596,908
Total Culture/Recreation Expenses (\$)	1,488	1,696	17,282	7,395	3,158	11,320
Recreation % of Total Expenses	0.5%	0.4%	3.1%	1.4%	0.6%	1.8%

*Proposed budget, not actual.

Revenues

Prior to 1988, the Township's primary source of revenue was its real estate tax. Receiving from the School District its 50% share of the earned income tax in 1987, resulted in this source surpassing the real estate tax. The amount generated by the earned income tax continues to grow; whereas, the real estate tax has stabilized. These are the Township's two primary revenue sources, generating over 84% of total revenues. The real estate transfer tax (1/2%) and a \$10 per capita tax produce the other tax revenues. A requested donation to rent the pavilion is the only source of revenue collected for parks and recreation purposes.

Land Use and Planning Policies

Several existing documents were used to evaluate present land use policies and prepare this Plan. These include the Township's Comprehensive Plan (1966), Zoning Ordinance (1990) and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (1988). When planning to preserve open space and environmentally sensitive areas, a review of these present land use patterns and policies is essential for these reasons:

1. To compare the future open space network to present land use and zoning. This comparison will identify natural resources such as steep slopes and wetlands that would not be protected by current policies if development occurred.
2. To improve present ordinances so that the Township's wetlands, endangered species, steep slopes, historic resources, and high quality watersheds and streams are protected.
3. To determine where future growth will occur and if there is sufficient park and open space land for present and future residents.
4. To evaluate current ordinance provisions that permit the Township to accept public open space for compliance with the Municipalities Planning Code and conformance with the Township's open space goals.

Existing Land Use Patterns

For the 1986 plan, land use was inventoried and mapped to assess recreation needs and opportunities in the Township. Map 1 depicts the Township's land use as of 1985 by eight categories: agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, utilities, institutional, public, and vacant. Generally, land use has changed very little in six years. The following conclusions can be drawn by reviewing this map:

1. The Township's predominant land use is agricultural, occupying well over half of the land area.
2. Single-family housing on large lots is the predominant residential land use in the Township. The majority of the Township's growth since the 1950's has occurred outside of the traditional neighborhoods and villages. Residential development has been dispersed throughout the Township. The nature of recent residential

development is characterized by relatively large-lot zoning, which has resulted in increased reliance on the automobile and the lack of nearby services (such as retail centers). This has encouraged a decentralized residential development pattern, known as "suburban sprawl." One result is the relative dilution of the identity of the existing villages.

3. The Township's primary high density residential land use is found in the traditional village core of Parker Ford. It consists of about 50 structures--mostly twin and single-family houses--clustered in the east corner of the Township along Old Schuylkill Road. There is also a large apartment complex located in northeastern East Coventry. Current zoning permits medium and high density residential development in that portion of the Township which lies south of PA Route 724 and north of Spring Creek and Pigeon Creek.
4. The majority of the Township's industrial and commercial businesses are located north of Route 724. Commercial uses are confined to two properties at Brownbacks (intersection of Rt. 23 and Bethel Church Road), and the Parker Ford area along Route 724. Several industrial uses, are situated along Route 724 and between this route and the Schuylkill River.
5. Institutional uses consist of the East Coventry Elementary School, the Ridge Fire Company along Route 23 and a number of churches and cemeteries.
6. Utilities crisscross the Township and consist of Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO) rights-of-way and a large parcel immediately across the river from the Limerick Generating Station.
7. Public land is owned either by the Township or the State. The Township owns three properties along the Schuylkill River that have been preserved in their natural state. One of these properties, Towpath Park, contains a picnic area and volleyball court. The Township also owns public land, around its municipal building, that is centrally located to most residents. Presently, most of this site is open space and does not contain recreational facilities. The Commonwealth owns two large desilting basins on the Schuylkill River that have potential recreational use.
8. There exists a few pockets of "vacant" land throughout the Township. For a rural community, "vacant" means absence of structural development and does not refer to economic productivity.

Existing Land Use Regulations

Land use in East Coventry Township is regulated by the Township's Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development ordinances. The Township's Zoning Ordinance was enacted in 1985 and last amended in 1990. Under present zoning, there are eight districts.

Park development can occur in any of these districts except for neighborhood commercial and commercial districts. Park development is specifically not permitted in the neighborhood commercial district. For the commercial district, indoor recreation facilities such as a movie theater, health club, and bowling alley are permitted uses. Any other type of indoor recreation facilities would be permitted only as a Special Exception.

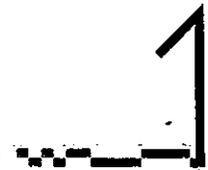
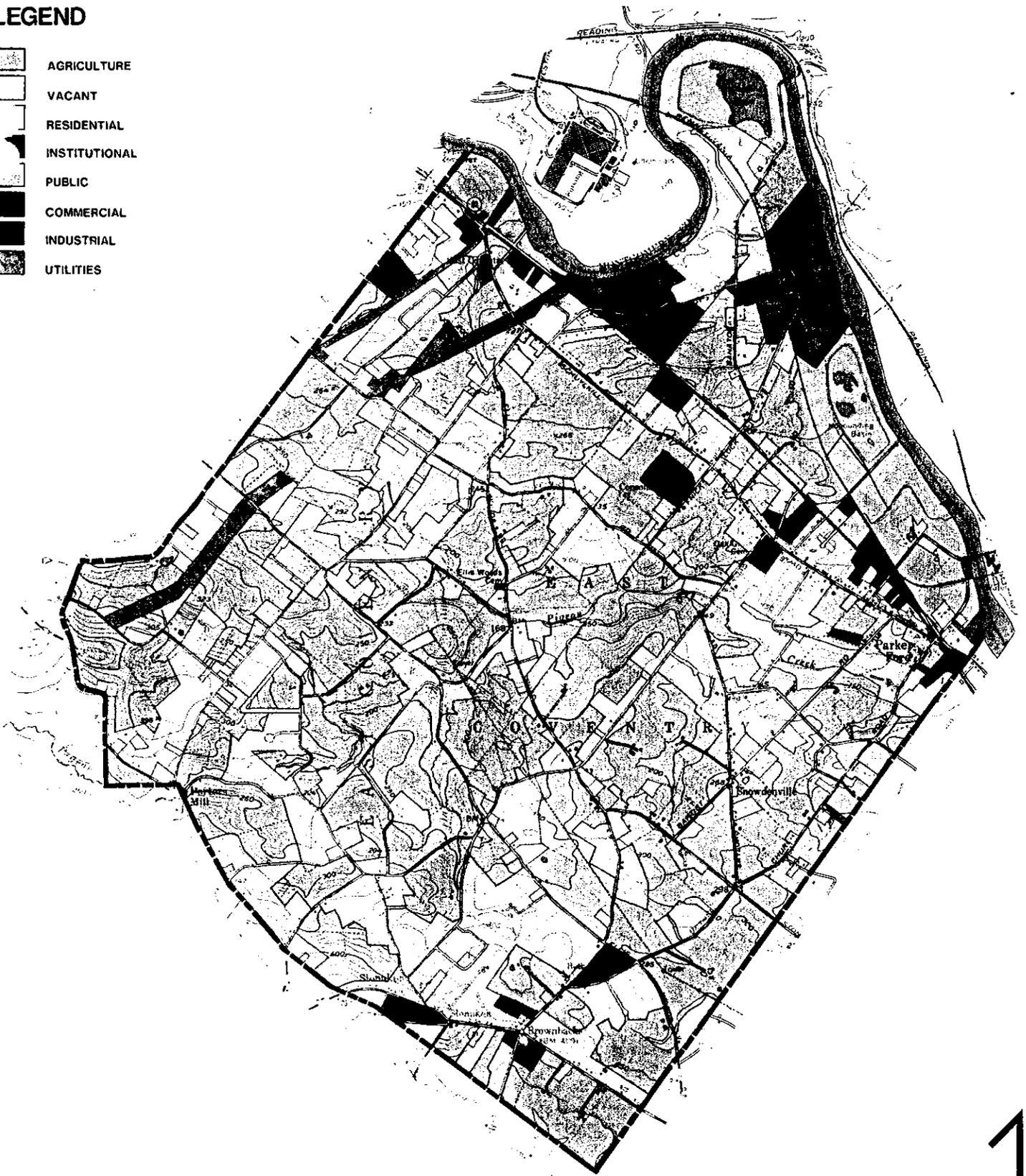
In floodplain overlay districts, permitted parks depend on the underlying zoning district. Otherwise, parks are permitted as long as they do not adversely affect the flooding potential of the stream.

The Township's Zoning Ordinance contains the following provisions to protect natural and cultural resources or provide recreation amenities:

- An overlay floodplain district that restricts development within the 100-year floodplain and/or areas which are subject to periodic flooding.
- In the R-3 district, a "cluster zoning" provision is permitted for single-family detached units. Selecting this type of zoning requires a minimum of five acres of open space, 60% in a condition suitable for active and passive recreational use. Additionally, a minimum parent tract size of 25 acres is required.
- In R-2 and R-3 districts, developers are required to provide recreational areas such as playgrounds and tot lots, in any development proposing a mixture of dwelling types and exceeding a total of fifty (50) units.
- In R-2 and R-3, developers are required to preserve or incorporate natural features such as woods, streams and open space areas into the development plan.
- For stream bank protection, no portions of on-lot disposal systems are permitted within 100 feet of the bank.

LEGEND

-  AGRICULTURE
-  VACANT
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  INSTITUTIONAL
-  PUBLIC
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  UTILITIES



MAP 1 Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA LAND USE

CEE JAY FREDERICK ASSOCIATES • DESIGN AND PLANNING CONSULTANTS • WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA 19382

This project was prepared with the aid of the Chester County Planning Commission, which is the Pennsylvania State Planning Office. The project was also supported by the Department of Public Safety, Planning and Conservation.

SPRING 1986

- A conservation plan is required and approved prior to the issuance of a building permit. The plan may be very simple, primarily showing stormwater run-off and sedimentation and erosion control.

Provisions provided within the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance include:

- Recreation areas are required wherever deemed appropriate by the Supervisors. If required, provisions need to be made for suitable open space for parks, playgrounds, and other recreational use. Due consideration needs to be given to preserving natural features such as large trees, woods, waterways, scenic points, historic spots, and to the Township's Comprehensive Plan.

East Coventry's Demographic Profile

The allocation of municipal resources for open space, parks, and recreational opportunities requires an evaluation of all present and future population groups that will receive these services. This includes both the population as a whole, projected trends and special population groups. When providing park and recreational facilities, knowing the location and distribution of Township residents and where growth will occur, helps to evaluate where the Township needs to purchase additional open space or provide facilities. Areas experiencing more growth, without publicly owned open space, would be considered a high priority area for future Township land acquisition efforts.

The Township also needs to evaluate the extent and general location of special population groups. Special populations could include minorities, senior citizens, the disabled, or persons living below the poverty line. These populations continue to grow, and generally, their recreational needs remain unmet. Establishing a "demographic profile" for the Township helps ensure that future funds are distributed throughout the Township, especially in areas with special populations or lacking sufficient open space. This section summarizes demographic information for past and proposed population growth and the socio-economic composition of Township residents.

Population Trends

Growth in the Township was prevalent until 1980, currently the influx of new residents has slowed. Also, as with most communities, the Township's population is aging. Over the past decade, the number of children under the age of 18 has decreased while the number of persons over 65 has increased. The Township has a higher percentage of persons over 65 than compared to the County's 10.9% and its surrounding municipalities. The recreation needs of residents tend to change with age, and the Township may need to expand its program and facility offerings to better serve its older residents. Table 2 reveals the population changes that have occurred between 1980 and 1990. The 1990 Census reported that 2,284 persons (51.3% were female and 2,166 persons (48.7%) were male.

Table 2
Population Trends

Population Characteristic	1980	1990
Total Population	4085	4450
% of growth	24.4%	8.9%
% under 18 years	27.6%	23.9%
% 18-64 years	59.3%	60.2%
% 65+ years	13.1%	15.9%
Median Age	35.3 yrs.	37.9 yrs.

Socio-economic Characteristics

One of the 12 critical issues in the 1986-1990 Pennsylvania Recreation Plan that recreation providers will face over the next ten years is addressing the needs of special populations. Special populations could include minorities, senior citizens, the disabled, or persons living below the poverty line. There is increasing concern that as these groups continue to grow, their access to public facilities is becoming more restricted, since they are less able to afford public

"play". Therefore, especially later in this Plan when funding sources are evaluated, it is important to know the financial ability of Township residents to pay to use park facilities and participate in recreation services.

While the Township may have fewer special populations than urban areas, all of these types of residents currently live in the Township. Determining the extent of these groups is done by examining available U.S. Census Data on existing socio-economic conditions. Table 3 compares the Township's income, education, and housing and racial demographics with Chester County.

Table 3
Socio-economic Characteristics

Characteristics	East Coventry	Chester County
1987 Per Capita (Est.) Median Household Income	\$13,584	\$15,576
1979 % of persons below poverty level	4.1%	6.4%
1990 % of Housing Units w/1 unit detached or attached	84.5%	76.3%
w/more than 2 units	15.5%	23.7%
1990 Median value of owner occupied units	\$140,200	\$155,900
1990 Persons per Household	2.81	2.73
% of minorities	0.8%	8.4%
1980 % of High School Graduates	75.6%	76.4%
1980 % of College Graduates	18.8%	26.3%

Sources: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990 and Pennsylvania State Data Center

Summary of Comparison: In many respects, East Coventry displays similar characteristics to many Chester County municipalities. As with most of Chester County, the majority of Township residents own their own homes, experience a fairly high standard of living, and are well educated. The few areas with higher density housing are neighborhoods that warrant increased availability of open space and recreational facilities. As compared to the County and its surrounding municipalities, the 1990 medium value of its housing is slightly less than the County and even far less than many of its surrounding municipalities (ex. W. Vincent @ \$235,200). This suggests that East Coventry's may still contain some affordable housing as compared to the more affluent areas of the County. The Township is most dissimilar to the County in its ethnic composition.

Housing Patterns

Table 4 shows that the Township's total housing units have doubled since 1960. As mentioned previously, housing in East Coventry Township overwhelmingly consists of single-family detached units. Of the 1,559 total units recorded in the 1990 Census, only 268 were multi-family structures. Housing is generally characterized by farm houses (both associated with active farms and on smaller subdivided lots) and by large lot subdivisions. Multi-family housing is found in the form of twin units in Parker Ford Village and apartment complexes in the north end of the Township along Rt. 724. An Historic Sites Survey conducted in 1981 revealed that about 250 houses in East Coventry are at least 50 years old. Most of these consist of farmhouses and the 42 houses that make up Parker Ford Village.

**Table 4
Housing Patterns**

	1960	1970	1980	1990
Total Occupied Housing Units	657	986	1347	1527
Population per Unit	3.32	3.33	3.03	2.81

Source: U. S. Census: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990

Population Growth and Projections

The Township's population grew very little during its first 100 years; however, the post-war years were marked with more rapid change. The population nearly doubled by 1960 (2,183) and again by 1980 when the U.S. Census recorded 4,085 Township residents. During this time, the Township's growth rate was significantly higher than rates experienced by both Chester County and the northern region as a whole. For example, between 1970 and 1980, East Coventry grew by 24%, while the region increased by 10.1% and the County by 14%.

In the 1980's the Township's growth slowed to a more manageable pace. Between 1980 and 1990, an 8.9% increase had occurred, while the County grew more rapidly at 18.9%. Over these ten years, it is also worth noting that the northern region was surrounded by rapid growth from most directions. Map 2 illustrates the percent of population growth between 1980 and 1990 within a 15 mile radius of the Township.

The Township's 1986 Park and Recreation Plan noted that the Chester County Planning Commission projected the Township's population to increase 685 residents by 1990. (Planning Bulletin, No. 28, Dec. 1985) According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the actual increase was 365. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has made population forecasts for Chester County and its municipalities through the year 2010. By the year 2000, the forecast calls for the Township to grow to 4,870 or an additional 9.4%. Table 5 compares past and forecasted growth for the region and the County.

Table 5
Regional Population Trends and Forecasted Growth

	U.S. Census 1980		U.S. Census 1990		Forecast 2000	
	Pop.	Change	Pop.	Change	Pop.	Change
East Coventry Twp.	4,085	24.4%	4,450	8.9%	4,980	11.9%

Northern Chester County*	26,168	9.6%	29,181	11.5%	32,350	10.9%
Chester County**	316,660	14.0%	376,396	18.9%	425,800	13.1%

*Northern Chester County includes East Coventry, East Nantmeal, North Coventry, South Coventry, Warwick, West Vincent, East Pikeland townships, and Spring City.

**In 1987, the County's 1990 population was forecasted at 358,790, 5% less than the actual. Using the forecasted numbers, County-wide growth was projected to grow 9.6% between 1990 and the year 2000.

One final issue is the potential impact of the Phoenixville Spur that will provide much quicker access to rapidly growing northern Montgomery County. This growth is occurring from the recent location of major office developments, which may result in thousands of new jobs. The possibility exists that easier access from the Phoenixville Spur to this employment center may result in "spill over" growth into East Coventry Township.

Planning Implications

Generally, over the past five years, funding for public parks and recreation services has been inconsistent. Township support has fluctuated from a low of 0.4% of the Township's total general fund expenses to a high of 3.1%. This fluctuation is geared to current needs. Presently, the Township's budget appears healthy and could support a reasonable increase in funding for land acquisition, facility development, and recreation services.

The Township's Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development ordinances contain several provisions to protect natural and cultural resources or provide recreation amenities. However, some ordinances are very general with potential for varying interpretations. Others provide

little incentive or are not practical for the developer to select that zoning option. The Municipalities Planning Code provides the Township with the authority to develop more stringent ordinances for issues such as stream bank protection, wetlands, and mandatory dedication.

Most residents own homes surrounded by ample yard space. A few areas of higher density exist where yard space is more limited. With an abundance of open space, considerable potential remains for the Township to acquire high priority properties and provide sufficient open space where it is most needed.

1980-1990 PERCENT CHANGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



LEGEND	
	GREATER THAN 20%
	10% - 20%
	LESS THAN 10%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS

The Township is fairly homogeneous and the needs of special populations may be less of an impact than in the County's more urban areas. However, East Coventry's elderly population continues to grow and the provision of facilities and services for this age group will increase in importance.

East Coventry's moderate growth through the 1980's and virtual halt of growth into the early 1990's is somewhat unusual for northeastern Chester County. This is primarily a reflection of the economy and the lack of large landholdings, public utilities, and easily accessible transportation routes in the Township. However, development patterns in this area suggest that the Township should not consider its lack of growth to be a continual trend. This slower growth period affords the Township at least two-to-three more years to upgrade its ordinances, implement protection strategies for its environmentally sensitive resources, and acquire identified open space properties.

PHILOSOPHY, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

A technique that can help a municipality, specifically its committees and staff, function more effectively is to establish a philosophy, goals, and objectives for its various municipal roles. These were developed to help the Township allocate resources to preserve open space and environmentally sensitive resources, acquire and develop parks, and provide recreation services.

All three terms (philosophy, goal, and objective) are distinct terms used to describe a municipality's intended actions at various levels of abstraction. They begin with a very general conceptual end and move toward greater specificity down to needed actions. Figure 3 illustrates how each level is linked to the one above and below.

In 1986, the Park and Recreation Committee developed its first set of goals and objectives. These have been evaluated to reflect the changing needs and concerns of Township officials and residents. The Township's revised and expanded philosophy, goals, and long-range objectives are provided below. Chapter 10 provides the short-term objectives and suggests a process to develop action steps for each objective.

Philosophy Statement

"It is the philosophy of East Coventry Township to enhance the quality of life in the Township by preserving its natural resources and providing public recreation opportunities."

Figure 3
Developing Township Direction



Township Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Establish an open space system for the entire Township which preserves exceptional land and water resources for public passive recreation, for conservation of unique scenic and historic areas, and for protection of wildlife habitats.

Long-range Objectives:

- Identify, map and develop an inventory of East Coventry Township's natural resources (water resources, woodlands, steep slopes; scenic, cultural, and historic resources, etc.).
- Use this natural resources inventory in the planning and development process, particularly for future subdivisions or land developments.
- Evaluate present land use policies, examine potential open space conservation options, and revise present policies or develop additional ones to preserve and protect the Township's identified natural areas.
- Evaluate identified natural resources to determine high priority natural areas for the Township to seek public easements or acquire.

Goal 2: Develop a park system, with an emphasis on passive recreation, that provides areas and facilities to meet the recreational needs of all Township residents and also preserves natural areas.

Long-range Objectives:

- Plan for future parks so that there is sufficient Township-owned park and recreation land to meet present needs and keep pace with expected growth.
- Establish a greenway system along the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek and its tributaries that first focuses on stream and wildlife preservation, and then on developing trails.
- Coordinate the acquisition of park and recreation land with other natural resources protection programs.

- Identify areas in the Township in need of passive neighborhood parks.
- Explore possible locations for a future community park.

Goal 3: Promote community involvement and increase public awareness of the value of open space, environmental resources, and recreation.

Long-range Objectives:

- Promote the public image of the Park and Recreation Committee as the principal advocate for preserving open space and providing recreational opportunities.
- Increase the Township's public awareness concerning the Park and Recreation Committee, available park facilities, and preservation initiatives through public relations efforts.
- Gauge public opinion concerning open space issues and recreation needs through public meetings and citizen surveys.
- Sponsor periodic recreation programs at municipal park and facilities to encourage and promote public use and awareness of the Township's natural resources.

Goal 4: Coordinate open space preservation and recreation initiatives with other agencies and neighboring municipalities.

Long-range Objectives:

- Develop, coordinate, and maintain efforts with neighboring municipalities on regional open space and recreation issues and concerns.
- Encourage public/private partnerships to enhance recreational opportunities and services.
- Work with the school district to develop recreational facilities and programs.

Goal 5: Expand the Township's park and recreation facilities and services utilizing effective administrative and fiscal planning.

Long-range Objectives:

- Develop a realistic budget to fund acquisition of lands for future parks, trails and open space areas, develop recreational facilities, and operate Township parks and services.
- Identify and seek out alternative tax sources of funding for acquisition and capital improvement projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES PLAN

Inventory and Open Space Needs Assessment

Natural, historic and cultural resources all add to the interest an area holds, and contribute to the quality of life experienced by Township residents. As urban areas proliferate, we lose these special areas. Urbanization tends to make communities more homogenous, with fewer special and individual characteristics. In order to help maintain the biological, scenic and cultural diversity in East Coventry, the Township's special and unique resources were inventoried. General protection strategies to preserve areas of greatest environmental benefit to the Township or ones that are the most representative of the Township's natural or cultural heritage are provided throughout this chapter. Following this general discussion, specific preservation techniques are provided and those appropriate for the Township identified.

The inventory of natural resources within East Coventry began with an analysis of available information. Information was obtained from USGS quadrangle and National Wetland Inventory maps on rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands and forests. Aerial photos were obtained from the Chester County Planning Commission. These were analyzed to find additional areas, and to begin assessing the quality of the natural resources identified. Finally, field studies were conducted on areas which appear to be of highest quality, and offer the greatest potential for resource protection and/or passive recreation.

Water Resources

Valuable water resources exist in East Coventry Township. These are broken down into the following five categories: watershed boundaries, wetlands, open water resources, floodplains, and aquifers and headwaters. Together, these resources help maintain the quantity and quality of ground and surface water supplies, channel stormwater, provide plant and wildlife habitat, and add visual interest to areas. Identifying the Township's water resources began with a review of collected data. Then, an estimate of their natural quality was determined by examining the

aerial photos. A trained photo interpreter can identify specific types of wetlands, and estimate the degree to which they have been altered by human activities or invaded by non-native plant species. Pennsylvania designates water quality criteria for all perennial streams in the Commonwealth. These criteria are listed in Chapter 93 of the Pennsylvania Code. The water quality designation for streams within East Coventry was determined. Finally, site visits were made to examine selected water resources to determine which of the examples were of high quality.

The analysis of collected data and field investigations produced these findings:

Watershed Boundaries: Watershed boundaries separate drainage basins of streams and must be evaluated when considering protection measures for high quality streams. The Township's watersheds, as shown on Map 3 include the Schuylkill River, Pigeon Creek, French Creek, and Stony Run watersheds. All are classified by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) as having high quality trout stocking waters. Approximately 70% of the Township lies within the Pigeon Creek watershed. The southern 10% of the Township drains into Stony Run. The remainder of East Coventry Township, north of the Pigeon Creek drainage, drains into the Schuylkill River.

River/Stream Corridors: The major water resource in East Coventry Township is the Schuylkill River. This tributary to the Delaware River stretches approximately 9 miles along the Township's north to northeast boundary. The River is listed as a Warm Water Fishery, Migratory Fish (WWF-MF) water.

All of the streams in East Coventry are tributaries of the Schuylkill. Pigeon Creek drains most of the Township. Pigeon Creek enters the Township near the west corner, and flows east to Parker Ford, where it joins the Schuylkill. Pigeon Creek is listed as a High-Quality Trout Stocked Fishery (HQ-TSF).

Three small streams drain the northwestern portion of the Township. These unnamed tributaries of the Schuylkill River are also listed as HQ-TSF streams. Map 4 identifies these corridors.

Stream Orders: Stream ordering is a hierarchical structure which describes a stream's relative size and landscape position. Head water streams are 1st order. Two 1st order streams join to form a 2nd order stream, and so on. All of the streams in the Township lie within the Schuylkill River watershed. The Schuylkill River is a 4th order stream. Pigeon Creek is the next largest stream in East Coventry Township. Pigeon Creek is a

PROTECTED USE DESIGNATIONS

AQUATIC LIFE
 TROUT STOCKING: ALL WATERSHEDS IN TOWNSHIP
 WARM WATER FISHES: SCHUYLKILL RIVER
 MIGRATORY FISHES: SCHUYLKILL RIVER

SPECIAL PROTECTION
 HIGH QUALITY WATERS: ALL WATERSHEDS IN TOWNSHIP

Source: Chapter 93, Water Quality Standards, Pennsylvania Department Of Environmental Resources.

LEGEND

GEOLOGY

Rb - BRUNSWICK FORMATION
 Rd - DIABASE
 Rhc - HAMMER CREEK CONGLOMERATE
 Ri - LOCKATONG FORMATION

Source: Atlas Of Preliminary Geologic Quadrangle Maps, Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 1981.

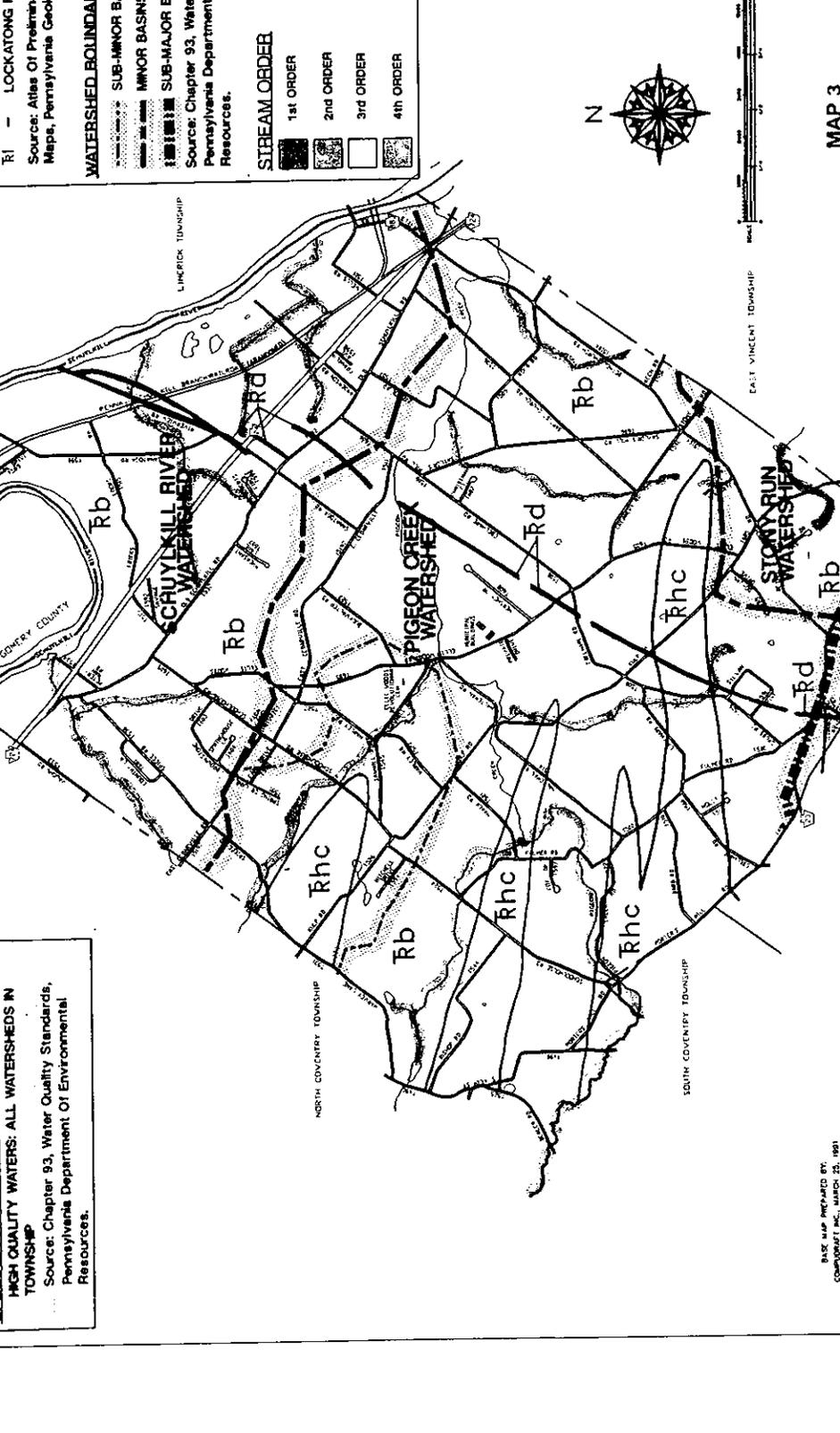
WATERSHED BOUNDARIES

Sub-Minor Basins
 Minor Basins
 Sub-Major Basins

Source: Chapter 93, Water Quality Standards, Pennsylvania Department Of Environmental Resources.

STREAM ORDER

1st ORDER
 2nd ORDER
 3rd ORDER
 4th ORDER



MAP 3

GEOLOGY AND WATERSHED BOUNDARIES
 EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP
 CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

BASE MAP PREPARED BY
 COMPUART INC., MARCH 23, 1981

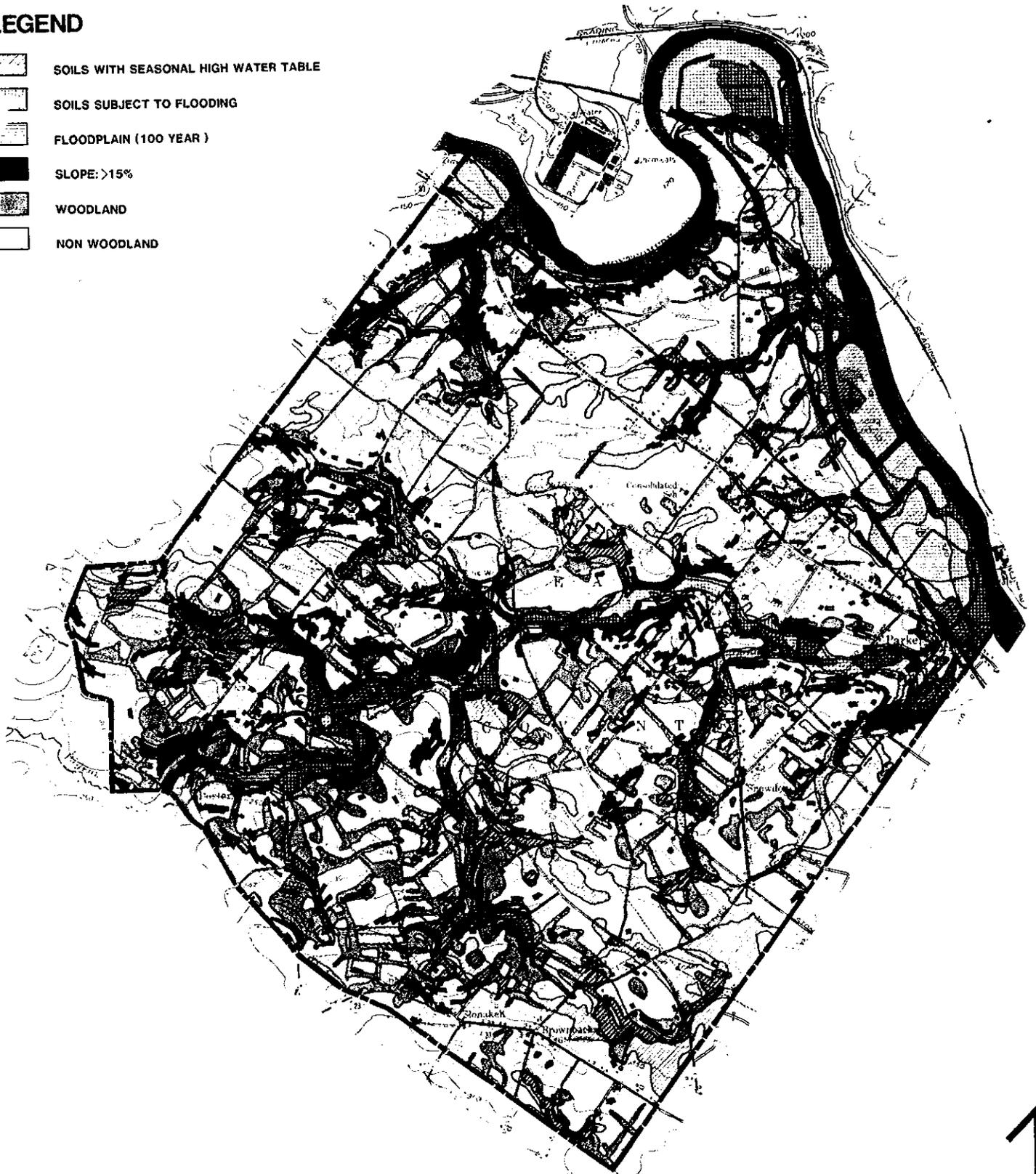
PAIR, RELOCATION AND OPEN SPACE
 INFORMATION PREPARED BY:

RETTEW
 Associates, Inc.
 1001 SOUTH 10TH STREET
 SUITE 200
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104

JANUARY 3, 1982

LEGEND

-  SOILS WITH SEASONAL HIGH WATER TABLE
-  SOILS SUBJECT TO FLOODING
-  FLOODPLAIN (100 YEAR)
-  SLOPE: >15%
-  WOODLAND
-  NON WOODLAND



MAP 4

Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan

EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

NATURAL CONDITIONS

CEE JAY FREDERICK ASSOCIATES • DESIGN AND PLANNING CONSULTANTS • WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA 19382

SPRING 1986

The project was financed with funds from East Coventry Township and a matching grant provided by the Pennsylvania Recreation Improvement and Rehabilitation Act Program as administered by the Department of Community Affairs, Office of Recreation and Conservation

2nd order stream as it enters the Township from the west, and becomes a 3rd order stream near Fulmer and Maack Roads. Several 1st order tributaries enter Pigeon Creek in the central and eastern parts of the Township.

Wetlands: Wetlands include emergent wetlands; areas of saturated soils in which the dominant plants are grasses, rushes and sedges; and forested wetlands, in which the dominant species are trees and shrubs. Wetlands have become recognized as important components of the natural landscape for both fish and wildlife protection as well as other areas of water management. Maintaining water quality, filtering pollution, removing sediment, and aiding in flood control are just a few of their many attributes. While there appear to be no wetlands in the Township which meet the criteria for exceptional value wetlands, there are some which are important regionally. The Township's wetlands are concentrated along the drainages of the streams. Several forested and emergent wetlands lie along Pigeon Creek, particularly near the west corner of the Township. Emergent wetlands are found interspersed within some of the forested stands, and in some cleared areas. Interesting emergent and shrub-dominated wetlands are found in ponds along the old canal route, adjacent to Towpath Park. Disturbed, but interesting wetlands also exist in the two old coal basins along the Schuylkill River.

Ponds: Twenty-two ponds were found on the National Wetland Inventory maps. These are all small farm ponds, ranging in size from approximately 1-3 acres. One large, shallow pond was found in the southern-most coal basin. All of the ponds, except for the one in the coal basin, appear to be privately owned. Proper pond management also helps protect the quality of the Township's water resources.

Floodplains: Extensive floodplain areas exist throughout the Township. These areas include tributaries and land adjacent to the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek. Due to the extent of floodplains, it is imperative to protect these areas for the safety of Township residents as well as for their natural and aesthetic values. Map 4 identifies these areas.

Aquifers and Headwaters: Protecting the Township's water resources also requires an evaluation of existing physical characteristics which affect groundwater and surface water quality. Soil and geologic characteristics, like aquifers, generally dictate groundwater quantity and the extent of protection from surface contaminants. Aquifers are geologic formations with various layers that transmit water. Likewise, headwaters of a stream, the uppermost portion near its source, represent the baseline water quality which is typically degraded downstream.

In the Township, areas adjacent to the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek and its tributaries have the greatest risk of surface water contamination due to soils with shallow depth to bedrock, poor permeability, or alluvial characteristics. Additionally, as shown on Map 3, several areas are underlain by narrow bands of the Locketong Formation and Diabase with aquifers which typically have poor quality due to a shallow circulation

system and low porosity. Well yields in Diabase are also typically very low. The majority of the Township is underlain by the Brunswick Formation and the Hammer Creek Conglomerate, both of which provide greater groundwater protection and yields than Diabase and the Lockatong formations.

The headwaters of the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek are not located in East Coventry Township. However, it is important for the Township to promote the protection of the Pigeon Creek headwaters and its tributaries located in North Coventry, South Coventry, and East Vincent townships.

General Water Resource Protection Strategies

All of these water resources are important to the water quality in the Township. Some protection is offered to water resources by the federal and state governments while others can be enacted or promoted at the local level. Below is a summary of these general strategies, more specific local strategies conclude this chapter.

Federal, State, and Local Regulations: Both state and federal regulations prohibit placing fill or significantly altering the flow of rivers, streams and wetlands. State and federal regulations also limit the type and quantities of effluent which may be discharged into streams. State regulations prohibit the discharge of silt, and its attendant nutrients, into streams. Finally, federal floodplain regulations limit the degree of development in designated floodplain areas. Regulated floodplains and flood prone soils are protected by a Water Hazard Article within the East Coventry Zoning Ordinance. While these regulations at the federal, state and local levels offer some protection to streams and rivers, none of these measures are truly adequate to protect the wetland resource.

Stream Classifications: Several of the streams in the Township are listed as high quality, trout stocked fisheries. These streams have mandated water quality criteria which are higher than most. Such standards will limit the type and amount of discharge permitted in these streams and therefore offer some protection.

Designating Stream Corridor Buffers: The protection afforded to streams might be increased by identifying valuable stream corridors, and assessing the degree of protection currently offered. Stream corridor protection areas should be broad enough to offer real protection to the stream from sediment runoff. True stream protection can only be obtained by protecting entire watersheds, and for many reasons this may not be feasible. Many State Scenic River Programs designate 100 to 150 foot wide corridors along their

streams for protection. These buffers seem to offer a reasonable compromise between total watershed protection and simple floodplain protection.

While not a scenic river, Pigeon Creek currently has good water quality, and several scenic areas. A 100 to 150 foot buffer should be established along Pigeon Creek, to offer better protection to this fragile resource. It is especially important to protect the remaining wooded areas along Pigeon Creek. A buffer would also be appropriate for the unnamed stream which drains the northwest corner of the Township. This stream flows to the Schuylkill at Towpath Park. If proper easements were acquired, these stream corridors could serve as the basis for a greenway system. A 200 foot buffer is currently mandated by Township regulations along the Schuylkill River. Reforestation within this buffer would be especially beneficial along the Schuylkill. By establishing a greenway along both the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek corridors, this interconnecting greenway system would not only provide recreational opportunities, but also function to protect water quality in the adjacent streams.

Cooperative Efforts with Farmers: Most of the Township's streams flow through agricultural lands. Farmers frequently allow cattle to freely roam in streams. While perhaps pleasant for the animals, cattle stir up bottom sediments, frequently defoliate stream banks, and pollute streams with manure. The Township should encourage cattle and sheep farmers to fence off their streams, and limit their access.

Other agricultural practices can have detrimental effects on stream quality. Runoff from fields, barns and pens can contain large concentrations of nutrients, pesticides and herbicides. Many of these substances can be intercepted by vegetative strips planted along streamsides. Grasses, shrubs and trees can be planted alone or in combination to serve as living filters. Trees planted along stream banks also offer cooling shade important for cold water fishes. Plantings can also serve to enhance open space areas.

Wetlands Protection: Wetlands are currently protected by state and federal regulations under the Federal Clean Water Act and the State Dams and Waterways Management Act. Both of these acts require permits for most activities which result in depositions of fill in wetlands. Neither provides absolute protection to the resource.

While these regulations require those who build on wetlands to delineate wetland boundaries and obtain permits for activities which disturb wetlands, they offer little real protection. Fills are allowed right up to the delineated boundary. These fills, though perfectly legal, often result in the eventual destruction of the wetland. True wetland protection can be enhanced by adopting an ordinance requiring suitable buffer areas around delineated wetlands. Such an ordinance, while beneficial, would be controversial. A less controversial measure would be for the Township to revise its Subdivision and

Land Development Ordinance to effectively protect wetlands during grading and construction activities.

The best protection method for wetlands is preservation through acquisition. Acquisition efforts should strive to acquire enough area to protect the entire wetland and a suitable buffer. Provided adequate buffers are acquired, acquisition allows complete control over the wetland. The Township's most regionally significant natural wetlands occur along Pigeon Creek. A fairly large emergent wetland lies at the intersection of Porters Mill and Pigeon Creek Roads. This wetland, and some of the surrounding upland, could serve as the anchor for a trail system along Pigeon Creek. An interesting emergent and shrub wetland was found along Schoolhouse Road, north of the intersection of Schoolhouse and Sawmill roads. This area would make an appealing passive park.

As mentioned in the inventory, additional regionally significant wetland areas exist within the abandoned coal basins along the Schuylkill River. While not natural, these areas harbor a variety of wetland species. During a field visit, both emergent and shrub wetland areas were found. Some of these wetlands may have developed as a result of the dumping activities, and are therefore artificial. Most of the basin areas have been disturbed by dumping and vehicle travel. Still, the basins offer a chance to preserve dwindling wetland habitats. Acquisition of these basins, from DER by either the County or the Township, would allow protection and enhancement of these areas.

Pond Management: The ponds in the Township are all privately owned. Attempting to legislate proper pond management may give the appearance of encroaching on private property rights. Still, pond management can affect water quality of the streams and aquifers which receive pond waters. Proper pond management will protect the water resources of the Township.

Land Resources

For the purposes of this Plan, important land resources include steep slopes and prime agricultural soils.

Steep Slopes: Slopes in excess of 15 percent are shown on Map 4. Areas with steep slopes are predominately located along the banks and tributaries of the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek. These areas should be protected from significant land development to avoid the potential adverse effects of unstable structures, landslides, erosion, sedimentation, and surface water and groundwater degradation.

LEGEND

PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS*
 (SOURCE: SOIL SURVEY OF CHESTER COUNTY, USDA-SCS, 1985)
 * INCLUDES ALL PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS WITH CAPABILITY CLASSES 1-III AS DEFINED BY THE USDA-SCS



BASE MAP PROVIDED BY:
 COMPUART, INC. MARCH 23, 1991
 PARK, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE
 INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

RETTEN
 Associates, Inc.
 1703 MARKET STREET, SUITE 200
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102

JANUARY 3, 1992

MAP 5
PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS
EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



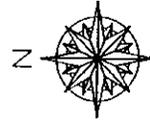
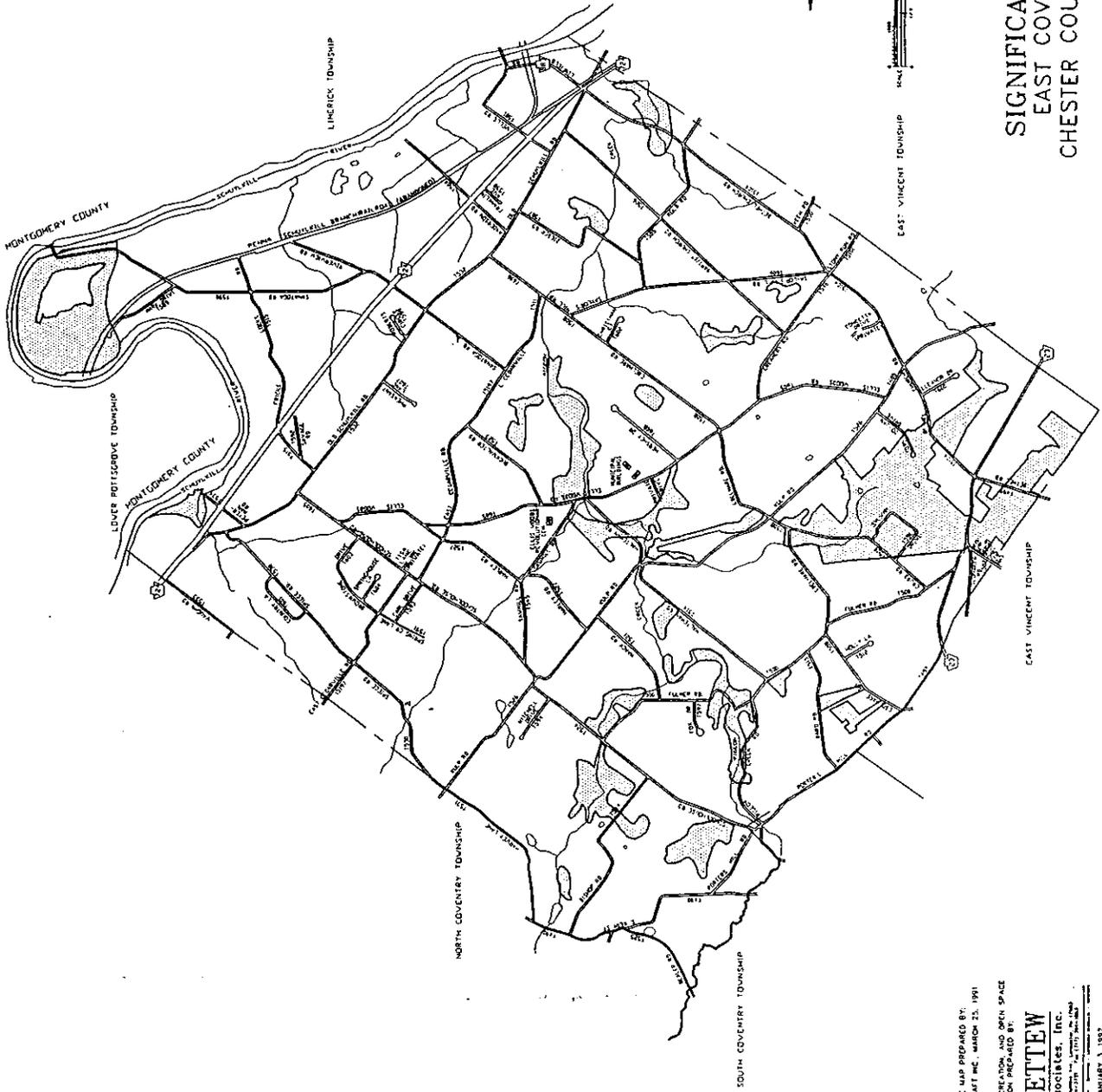
Prime Agricultural Soils: Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is the land that is best suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and water supply needed to economically produce a sustained high yield of crops when it is treated and managed using acceptable farming methods. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment (USDA-SCA, 1985). Map 5 contains the Township's prime agricultural soils based on the criteria and maps established by the USDA's Soil Conservation Service. Roughly two-thirds of the Township's land area is comprised of either Class I or Class II prime agricultural lands. Developing these areas to other uses will increase pressure on marginal lands such as steep slopes and floodplains which are more susceptible to erosion, generally less productive, and difficult to cultivate.

General Land Resources Protection Strategies

The conservation of steep slopes and prime agricultural soils can be achieved through the strengthening of land use regulations.

Restrictions on the placement of on-lot sewage disposal systems are currently enforced by DER. On-lot sewage disposal systems can not be located on slopes greater than 25 percent for subsurface systems or 12 percent for elevated sand mound systems. However, DER does not regulate the placement of structures on steep slopes. To conserve steep slope areas, a municipality must develop effective zoning ordinance provisions which will direct growth to more suitable areas. A variety of techniques may include a steep slope overlay district, creation of a conservation zoning district, and/or cluster/open space provisions.

A municipality can also conserve prime agricultural lands through zoning ordinance provisions. The most common technique is the creation of an effective agricultural zoning district which significantly limits the development potential of a tract based on the size of the parent tract. Effective agricultural zoning will direct growth to better suited areas of the municipality and prevent the fragmentation of large agricultural tracts. Other zoning techniques include provisions for cluster/open space, planned residential development, and the transfer of development rights. Additionally, the Township should continue to promote the preservation



MAP 6
SIGNIFICANT WOODLANDS
 EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP
 CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

BASE MAP PREPARED BY:
 COMPGRAF INC., MARCH 25, 1981
 PARK, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE
 INFORMATION PREPARED BY:
RETTEW
 Associates, Inc.
 2000 Commerce Center, University City, PA 19104
 JANUARY 3, 1982

of prime agricultural lands through the Agricultural Security Areas Program and encourage conservation easements and deed restrictions. To effectively preserve land through this program, conservation easements must be donated or purchased for a term of 25 years or in perpetuity.

Woodland Resources

Map 6 reveals that the majority of the Township has been deforested, with forested stands converted to agricultural use. Approximately 432 acres of woodland patches, at least 5 acres in size, are left in the Township. Since woodlots less than 5 acres in size were not evaluated, the 432 acre figure is clearly an underestimate of the total acreage on which stands of trees grow. Most of these remnant acres are in small, scattered and fragmented blocks and located along the creeks and streams. The largest single block of woodland occurs in the area of Sylvan Drive. Unfortunately, this was disturbed more than 20 years ago by a small development of single family houses. The remaining stand still comprises almost one-quarter of the total woodland acreage in the Township. The Township's average woodlot size is approximately 21.6 acres, with a range of less than 1 acre to approximately 125 acres. Current research indicates that even the average woodlot size is far below the minimum acreage required to protect interior forest habitat. However, most of the stands are on private land, and could not be thoroughly inventoried in this study. A cursory analysis indicates that the majority are young, second growth woods.

These small, young stands need time and proper care. Some level of preservation should be sought for the 125 acre tract near Bethel Church. These woods have been disturbed by the existing development, and are owned by several individuals. Still, they represent the largest wooded block left in East Coventry and their preservation would protect the headwaters of the southeast tributary of Pigeon Creek. Also, an interesting and maturing stand of woods was found at Grubb and Ebelhare Roads. While this stand is small, it appeared more mature than many others seen in the Township.

General Woodlands Protection Strategies

Wooded areas are scarce within the Township. The remaining woodlands should be protected to maintain biodiversity within East Coventry. In general, forested resources are not well protected. There are no state laws which prohibit logging on most of the landscapes common in the Township. Logging activities are somewhat restricted in wetlands. Woods located on steep slopes might be offered some form of protection since logging may be not economically feasible in these areas. Floodplain woods are marginally protected through restrictions on development.

The Township can help protect forests by encouraging participation in Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry's Forest Stewardship Program. This program allocates state and federal funds to private land owners who wish to responsibly manage woodlots on their property. The program reimburses part of the cost of hiring a forester or other appropriate resource professional to develop an appropriate management plan. These are typically not designed to maximize timber harvest value, rather the goal of these stewardship plans is to maintain structure and diversity, both within the individual stand and in the region as a whole. As such, they contribute to the protection of the open space resource of an area.

Wildlife Habitats

The landscape of East Coventry Township is highly fragmented. Woodlands are small and generally isolated from each other. Wetlands in the Township are also small, but tend to be better connected to each other by the creeks and streams. The small, fragmented nature of natural areas in East Coventry limits the wildlife potential of the Township. Such a fragmented landscape tends to favor generalist species, at the expense of those with more specific habitat requirements. No populations of rare, threatened or endangered species were found during a review of data managed by the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory. Likewise, the Township was unable to identify locally important vegetation.

Wildlife habitat within the Township is limited. In general, habitat is available only for those species with wide tolerances, referred to by ecologists as generalists. Common, readily adaptable species such as deer do quite well in fragmented habitats such as those available in the Township. Perhaps the highest quality habitats occur in Pigeon Creek and the other cold water streams. These streams generally harbor better populations of fish and invertebrates than do warm water fisheries. Generally, water quality is the most critical habitat component in streams. Implementing suggested protection strategies for water resources and woodlands will help ensure that wildlife habitat is maintained in East Coventry.

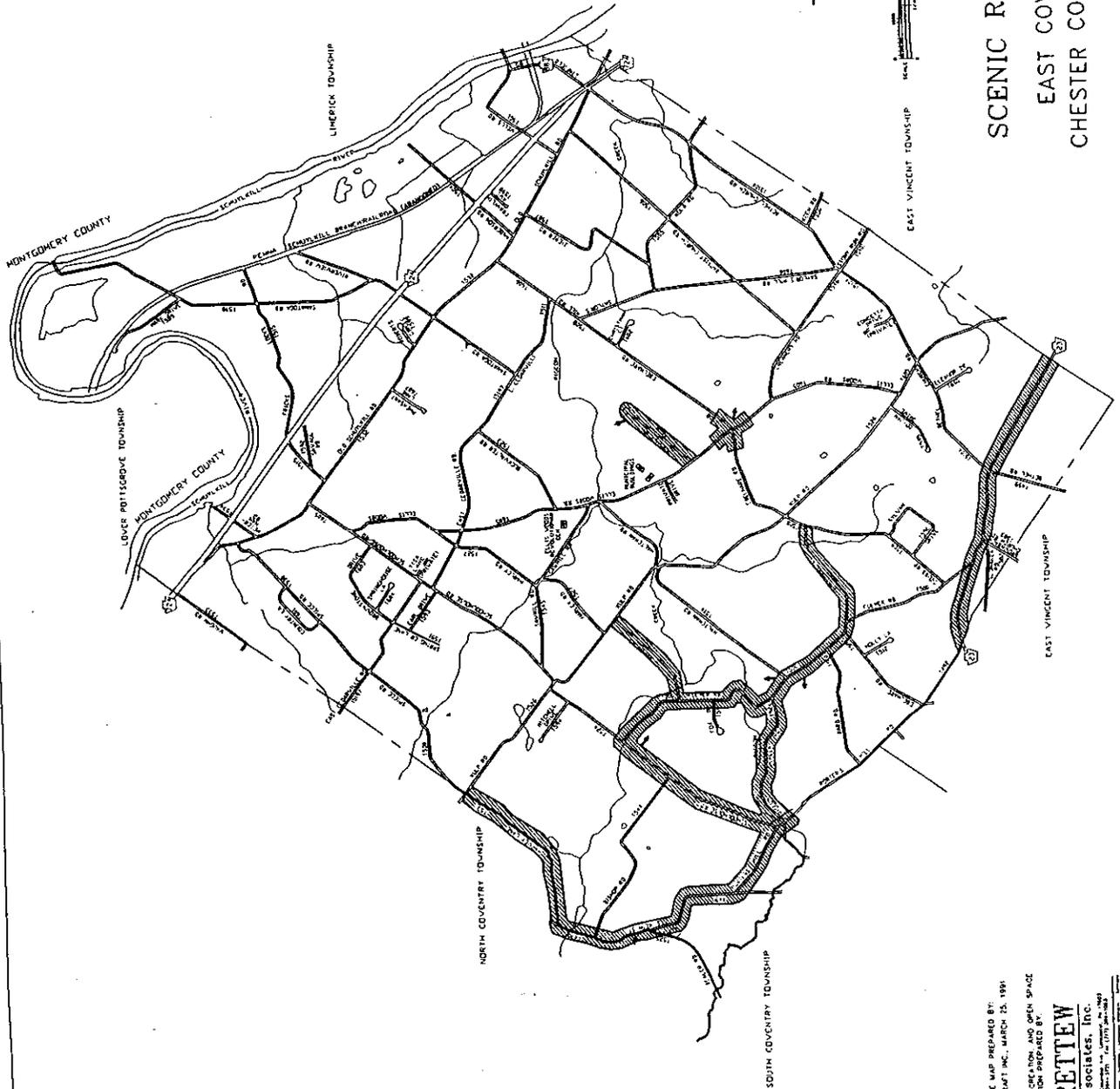
Scenic, Historic and Cultural Resources

Defining a scenic view or road is clearly highly subjective. In general, an attempt was made to find panoramic views of larger portions of countryside. Potential scenic roads were chosen largely at the suggestion of the Study Committee members, and subjectively evaluated for visual interest. Unfortunately, the cooling towers for the Limerick Generating Station intrude on these views in many locations.

Map 7 identifies several potential scenic roads and views in the Township. Views into the hills of adjacent townships are available along Fulmer and Pigeon Creek Roads and Rt. 23. Another vista is available looking south at Schoolhouse Road, near the intersection of Mitchell Drive.

From the end of Hershey Drive, one can look north over the Township to the Schuylkill, but again much of this view is dominated by the cooling towers of the Limerick Generating Station. Views of the hills to the south and west can be seen from Fulmer Road. PA Route 23, Elbelhare, Pigeon Creek, Maack and Fulmer roads all have scenic sections.

When comparing to the Township's functional classification system within its Comprehensive Plan, the scenic roads shown on Map 7 are classified as as follows:



LEGEND

- SCENIC ROAD
- EXCEPTIONAL VIEW



MAP 7
SCENIC ROADS AND VIEWS
EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

BASE MAP PREPARED BY:
 COMPIGRAFT INC., MARCH 15, 1991
 PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE
 INFORMATION PREPARED BY:
RETTEW
 Associates, Inc.
 400 South 10th St., Suite 200
 Lancaster, PA 17302
 JANUARY 3, 1992

Scenic Road

Hershey Drive
Ebelhare Road
Ellis Woods Road
Harvey Lane
South Keim Street
Porters Mill Road
Schoolhouse Road
Fulmer Road
Pigeon Creek Road
PA Route 23

Road Classification

Not Classified
Feeder/Local
Collector
Feeder
Collector
Collector
Feeder
Local/Feeder
Local
Major Highway

As presented in Map 7, scenic roads and vistas are predominantly located within the southeastern half of the Township. These scenic roads and views should be protected from significant strip development along road frontages.

There are two historic districts listed by the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission within East Coventry Township and include Parker Ford and Fricks Lock. The Ellis Woods Cemetery is a Revolutionary War cemetery with local historical interest. An Historic Sites Survey conducted in 1981 revealed that about 250 houses in East Coventry are at least 50 years old. Forty-two of these comprise the historic village of Parker Ford. Map 8 shows the Township's historic resources.

In December, 1986, John Milner Associates, Inc. documented the architectural and historical value of the Fricks Lock district for PECO. The Fricks Lock district consists of approximately 18 acres along the Schuylkill River. Within the district are 23 buildings and eight structures that comprise a largely intact agricultural hamlet, spanning a period of approximately 180 years from 1757 to 1937. The district's buildings and structures provide an excellent example of the local evolution of rural domestic and agricultural architecture. In addition, this district is also

significant because of its role as a small commercial center that served the local agricultural population and boatmen traveling on the Schuylkill Canal. (Milner Associates, Inc., 1987)

East Coventry Township has a high level of probability of archaeological resources. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) has established an inventory of archaeologically sensitive areas. Due to the confidential nature of this inventory, the PHMC is unable to produce township-wide sensitivity maps of known archaeological sites.

General Protection Strategies for Scenic, Historic and Cultural Resources

Scenic, historic, and cultural resources largely contribute to the rural character of East Coventry Township. If these resources are not adequately protected, the Township's rural character will ultimately become diluted. Adequate protection of these resources requires identifying those areas in need of protection and a zoning ordinance which effectively protects the resources based on the findings of this Plan. This type of approach should direct growth to compact areas where adequate infrastructure is available or planned. Historic areas could be protected through the creation of a historic zoning district. Typically, such districts address architectural standards for new structures and alterations to existing structures as well as other requirements aimed at preserving the historic integrity of an area. Cluster/open space zoning provisions could be used to decrease the visual intrusiveness of land developments and to protect scenic views. To the greatest extent possible, new structures should be directed away from exceptionally scenic rural areas or ridges.

Protected Municipal Lands

Map 8 reveals the Township's recreation/open space framework. Generally, lands which are substantially protected from land development include more than 60 acres owned by the Township, two impounding basins totalling 187 acres owned by the Commonwealth, 14 acres owned by Owen J. Roberts School District, considerable acreage owned by PECO along the

LEGEND

-  BOAT/CANOE ACCESS
 -  TRAIL CORRIDOR
 -  RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY
 -  RAILROAD ABANDONMENT
 -  DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS
 -  RECREATION FACILITIES
 -  AGRICULTURAL SECURITY LAND
 -  PECO LAND & TRANSMISSION LINE*
 -  TOWNSHIP LAND
 -  STATE LAND (IMPOUNDING BASIN)
 -  MEDIUM-HIGH RESIDENTIAL ZONING
 -  STREAM VALLEY PRESERVATION
 - SCHUYLKILL CANAL**
 -  CANAL
 -  AQUEDUCT
 -  LOCKS
 - HISTORIC RESOURCES**
 -  SITES
 -  DISTRICTS
- *SOURCE: CHESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION



MAP 8

Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan

EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

RECREATION/OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

CEE JAY FREDERICK ASSOCIATES • DESIGN AND PLANNING CONSULTANTS • WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA 19382

The project was financed with funds from East Coventry Township and a matching grant provided by the Pennsylvania Recreation Improvement and Rehabilitation Act Program as administered by the Department of Community Affairs, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. **SPRING 1986**

(

River, and areas within the 100-year floodplain. The perpetual protection of the basins, owned by the Commonwealth, are currently in question. The Commonwealth is seeking to sell these properties and there is a possibility that Chester County may be interested in purchasing at least one of the basins.

There are no conservation easements or specific lands protected by existing municipal ordinances. However, as of March, 1992, 23 property owners have preserved 1,290 acres by including their properties within agricultural security areas. Map 9 identifies properties part of this program. It is anticipated that conservation easements will result as an extension of this program. As discussed under historic resources, both Parker Ford and Fricks Lock villages are registered historic districts. Several utility transmission easements divide the Township; the majority are owned by PECO. PECO's north-south and east-west easements have overhead transmission lines that extend mostly through the Township's farmland. AT&T owns an easement in the eastern part of the Township for a subsurface line.

Evaluation of Needs

The previous sections of this chapter identified the Township's natural resources and general protection strategies. Next, it is important to analyze the relationship between these natural resources and current protection measures to identify which ones are vulnerable to disturbance. This began with a comparison to various planning documents, followed by evaluating each type of natural resource.

Comparison with Planning Documents and Zoning

East Coventry Township's Open Space network includes the potential greenways along the banks and tributaries of the Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek, prime agricultural lands, two coal basins, Ebelhare Woods, several locally significant wetlands, Township and School District owned public open space, two historic districts, and identified scenic views and roads.

When comparing the open space network to the 1988 Chester County Land Use Plan, the network would provide needed greenway linkages between the "Suburban Development" and "Development Reserve" areas. The proposed and existing parks would satisfy the needs of a rural municipality. Based on the County's Plan, prime agricultural soils would be impacted by residential growth within the "Suburban Development", and "Development Reserve", and "Rural Development" areas.

The proposed Land Use Map within the 1966 East Coventry Township Comprehensive Plan shows "Open Space" areas which include the potential greenways and coal basins of the open space network. The Township's Zoning Map shows these same areas within the "Floodplain" overlay district. The Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance show extensive areas planned for residential growth which, if realized, would adversely affect prime agricultural soils.

Water Resources

High Quality Streams and Watersheds: The greatest threat to the watersheds of the Schuylkill River and its tributaries is the existing and future commercial and industrial land uses. Likewise, residential growth is the most significant factor which will affect the remaining high quality watersheds of the Pigeon Creek, French Creek, and Stony Run. Existing municipal land use regulations offer some portions protection from these potential adverse effects.

Floodplains: Floodplains are substantially protected through existing federal, state, and municipal regulations.

Wetlands: Federal and state regulations currently offer limited protection from encroachments. Wetlands protection could be improved through land use regulations which would require adequate buffers and development standards.

Aquifers and Headwaters: There are very few areas in the Township that are underlain by aquifers highly susceptible to groundwater contamination. The Lockatong Formation and Diabase contain aquifers with poor quality and low yielding wells and are found in very limited portions of the Township. Since there are no headwaters in the Township, the sources of high quality streams were not evaluated for vulnerability.

Land Resources

Steep Slopes: Areas with slopes between 15 percent and 25 percent are the most vulnerable. There are no municipal regulations that address developing areas with steep slopes. However, some of the Township's steep slopes are located within, or adjacent to, floodplains and have limited access. This provides a certain degree of protection.

Prime Agricultural Soils: Residential growth represents the greatest threat to farmland. Prime agricultural soils are vulnerable to disturbance due to the lack of conservation easements and the absence of effective agricultural zoning in the Township.

Woodland Resources

The Township's few remaining woods are essentially unprotected from disturbance. The Township does not have any land use regulations which address the disturbance of vegetation or which prohibit the planting of species which could be detrimental to local habitats.

Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resources

Currently, the Township's scenic, historic, and cultural resources are essentially unprotected. Although, the Township is not currently experiencing significant growth pressures, current zoning provides limited protection of these resources from new land developments.

Township Zoning Districts

East Coventry Township's zoning ordinance and map conflicts with the final recommendations for the Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan. Throughout the

Environmental Resources Plan, Chapter IV recommendations are made for changes to the East Coventry Township zoning ordinance which will enhance the preservation and protection of important environmental resources in the Township. The zoning districts of the Township's 1990 zoning ordinance are as follows:

- FR Farm/Residential District - This district's intent is to provide for and protect viable areas for agricultural uses. Minimum lot size ranges from 3/4 to 2 acres depending on existence of public water and sewer.
- R-1 Residential District - This district provides for low density, single-family detached housing. Minimum lot sizes ranges from 3/4 to 1½ acres depending on existence of public water and sewer.
- R-2 Residential District - This district provides for low density residential development not exceeding an average of four dwelling units per acre where public sewer and water services can be provided.
- R-3 Residential District - This district provides for medium density residential development not exceeding an average of six dwelling units per acre where public sewer and water services can be provided. This district does provide for single-family detached cluster residential development.
- NC Neighborhood Commercial District and C Commercial District - These districts provide for the retail shopping needs and personal service needs of Township residents.
- LI Limited Industrial District and HI Heavy Industrial District - These districts provide for industrial operations. Minimum lot area is 3 acres.
- Flood Plain District - The intent of this district is to prevent the loss of property and life, the creation of health and safety hazards, the disruption of commerce and governmental services, the extraordinary and unnecessary expenditure of public funds for flood protection and relief.

The significant differences between the East Coventry Township zoning map and the final recommendation of this Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resource Plan are listed below:

Water Resources

- The LI Light Industrial District, designation in the area of the existing coal basins along the Schuylkill River does not require a buffer area between industrial development and these significant environmental resources.
- It is probable that future residential growth will occur in a decentralized manner throughout the R-1, R-2, R-3, and FR zoning districts. This form of growth, in the long term, will most likely result in adverse effects on the quality of streams as well as other sensitive natural resources identified within this plan.

Biotic Resources

- There is no steep slope overlay district provision within the ordinance to protect slopes greater than 15%.
- Significant wooded areas identified for protection and preservation are located within the R-1 Residential District. Residential development currently permitted may adversely impact these resources.

Scenic Historic and Cultural Resources

- LI Light Industrial, HI Heavy Industrial, and CI Commercial/Business Campus Districts contain elements of significant historic and cultural importance. Establishment of commercial and industrial developments in these areas will not be sensitive to character and setting of the resources.
- FR Farm/Residential District does not provide for cluster zoning to decrease the visual intrusiveness of land development and protection of scenic views.

Preservation Techniques for Natural Areas and Open Space

Along with establishing greenways along Pigeon Creek and the Schuylkill River, there are several natural areas which the Township should focus its preservation efforts. Acquisition is the best form of protection, but not always realistic or possible. There are a wide range of alternative control measures which can be applied to protect open spaces and environmentally sensitive resources. This section features the variety of open space preservation techniques as well as growth management policies and land use controls that have been used successfully by other communities.

Open Space Preservation Techniques

In June of 1978, the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs (DCA) published *A Guide for Pennsylvania's Environmental Advisory Councils* which identifies a variety of open space preservation techniques. The following is an excerpt from this report:

1. Outright Acquisition - Acquisition of the fee simple title to land is the route often taken when public access and use is intended. (For the Township, several high priorities areas have previously been identified.)
2. Donations - Because the tax laws provide economic incentives to those donating, in part or in whole, land to public or charitable bodies, this route should not be overlooked for protecting environmentally sensitive areas and obtaining parkland. (The Heyser Tract was donated to the Township.)
3. Easements - The title to land consists of many rights which can be bought and sold separately. In the case of fee simple acquisition, all the rights are acquired. However, where the interest is to protect a trail, for example, acquiring an easement for given rights, such as controlling the removal of vegetation, and permitting public access, may well be sufficient. Another use of an easement might be to buy from an individual landowner the right of permission to use a portion of his land for temporarily storing occasional storm water runoff. Properly developed easements are excellent tools for protecting stream corridors, establishing greenways and trails, and protecting wetlands and ponds.
4. Deed Restrictions - A deed restriction limits in some way the use of a piece of land. Examples include restrictions on removing vegetation, altering a stream's course, requiring that specified portions of a parcel remain undeveloped, etc.

Municipalities have the power to acquire land, insert restrictions in the land, and then sell the land. This can be used to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Similar to this is the process of acquiring land, inserting use restrictions in the deed, and then leasing it back to the original land owner or to some other person. Deed restrictions are useful in protecting wetlands within new subdivisions. These restrictions alert the property buyer to the presence of wetlands, and the need to seek permits for activities which may encroach on them.

5. Tax Incentives - Under Acts 515 of 1966 and 319 of 1974, land owners may covenant with counties to keep their lands in certain uses (open space, farm, forest reserve, water supply) and in return receive reductions in tax assessments.
6. Installment Purchase - Installment purchase is an acquisition in which a purchaser negotiates a per acre price with the owner and agrees to buy a specified number of acres per year. The owner is relieved of real property tax responsibilities, commencing at the time the agreement is made. The owner may choose to remain on his land until all is sold and paid in full. This approach allows property to be purchased under agreement without large initial capital expenditures.
7. Lease/Options - Long Term Lease with Option to Buy involves the negotiation of a lease price with the owner and includes conditions for use and eventual purchase of the property. This technique permits initial use control of the property without initial purchase.
8. Purchase & Resale - Purchase & Resale is a technique in which land is purchased by a party desiring to restrict its future use and resold only under conditions or restrictive covenants established by the party reselling the land. After resale, the party which originally purchased the land for the sole purpose of restricting its use is relieved of continuing ownership and maintenance responsibilities. Also, the land is then taxable and offers revenues to public bodies for land purchases in other strategic areas.
9. Condemnation - Condemnation through the right of eminent domain provides governmental jurisdictions with the right to acquire land for a well-defined public purpose. Eminent domain could include full property rights or the acquisition of easements and leases. Condemnation involves the determination of a fair market value for the property and a clear definition of the public purpose for which it is being condemned. (In 1992, Second Class Townships were granted the authority to condemn property for public park land.)

10. Exchange of Land - Land exchange means trading the ownership or control of land between one owner and another to obtain mutual benefit, especially in cases where publicly-owned land to be exchanged is in a prime location and very accessible for private commercial development. Land exchange is an effective implementation tool in some other states and offers much potential where large tracts of public and private land exist.

Growth Management Policies and Land Use Controls

Several growth management policies and land use controls may be used to protect open space. These tools include specific protection strategies and zoning regulations. The policies and controls that may be beneficial to East Coventry were reviewed, and are outlined below.

Agricultural Preservation: The protection of prime agricultural land is one of the expressed purposes of zoning, as regulated in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Section 604). Prime agricultural lands should be preserved through effective agricultural zoning techniques which protect large tracts from significant fragmentation resulting from subdivision. In addition to adopting effective agricultural zoning, the Township should continue promoting its Agricultural Security Program and encourage conservation easements and deed restrictions. Farmland preservation will also help protect valuable wetlands and wildlife habitat located in agricultural areas as identified by this study.

Infill Development: Ideally, growth should occur in a compact manner around a focal point where adequate infrastructure are available. However, in East Coventry Township, "pockets" of growth have occurred in a rather sporadic fashion throughout the community. Through its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance the Township should promote infill development within its existing villages and planned growth areas where public utilities are planned. In East Coventry this technique might be used to direct development toward the area around State Route 724.

Cluster Development: Cluster development allows a variation from the minimum lot size required by conventional zoning provided that the total tract density does not exceed that which would be permitted by conventional zoning without clustering. The remaining land which is not developed must be preserved as open space.

The Township could permit cluster development in residential zoning districts which contain environmentally significant areas identified by this study. Cluster provisions should also include appropriate buffer requirements for each natural resource which is intended to be protected.

Planned Unit Development: Planned unit development (PUD) is a flexible zoning technique which is designed to encourage innovations in residential and nonresidential development by evaluating the entire tract of land rather than establishing uniform regulations for each lot in a subdivision. Cluster development is the most simplistic form of a PUD. At a larger scale, a PUD may include a mixture of housing types as well as a neighborhood shopping center. In addition to promoting improved development, this technique is intended to direct development to the most appropriate portions of the tract and to preserve open space.

Transfer of Development Rights: The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) was amended in 1988 to authorize municipalities to utilize the transfer of development rights (TDRs). The purpose of a TDR system is to direct development to those areas of the municipality which are targeted for growth while providing a compensation mechanism for property owners who chose to sell their development rights to developers.

The TDR concept is founded upon the ability to separate the right to develop property from the entire set of rights which accrue to a property owner. During a TDR transaction, the right to develop land is separated from the remaining property rights, and sold to an individual who may then exercise those rights by building an increased number of dwellings in an area where such density would not otherwise be permitted. The municipality typically establishes a sending area and a receiving area for the transfer of development rights. Open space is preserved in the sending area by deed restrictions on properties which no longer carry development rights.

TDRs are sometimes cumbersome to develop. A viable system must preserve open space and still be economically viable for developers and property owners. Still, properly developed TDRs can successfully direct development away from sensitive areas.

Overlay Zoning: Overlay zoning enables municipalities to establish regulations for specific natural resources which are supplemental to the requirements of the underlying zoning district. East Coventry's natural features such as woodlands, steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands could be protected through overlay zoning techniques.

Official Mapping: Article IV of the MPC enables municipalities to adopt an official map of all or a portion of the municipality. This map must show all land which is slated to be acquired by the municipality for public land within one year of the adoption of the map. This tool could be used by municipalities interested in purchasing land for public parks or the preservation of open space.

Mandatory Dedication of Land: Section 503(11) of the MPC enables municipalities to require the mandatory dedication of land from developers for park and recreational purposes. Municipalities must adopt a recreation plan which supports the dedication standards contained in the subdivision and land development ordinance.

This technique could be used to protect environmentally sensitive areas which are subject to residential growth pressures. By adopting this Plan and revising its ordinances, the Township could find mandatory dedication a useful tool to acquire identified natural areas and greenways and, upon agreement with the developer, develop recreational facilities.

Recommended Township Actions

Acquisition and/or Easement Priorities

Preserving Pigeon Creek and its tributaries and the Township's four mile stretch of the Schuylkill River are East Coventry's top priorities. The Township intends to identify present landowners along these water resources and work closely and cooperatively with them to, at a minimum, acquire public easements. Whether actual trails are developed, where they are located, and their width will be determined on a case-by-case basis and on the existing natural resources and wildlife.

There are several natural areas in East Coventry important to maintaining the Township's natural and cultural heritage and, therefore, warranting acquisition attempts. Except for the Sylvan area woods, the five remaining areas shown in Table 6 are those most appropriate for acquisition by the Township, based on their natural features and passive recreation potential. Sylvan woods is an important area to the Township, but it more appropriately preserved through conservation zoning. Table 6 is not a priority list. Township attempts to acquire their areas will be contingent upon the owners' willingness to sell, the requested price, the availability of funds, and other variables.

The coal basins represent a special case. These areas have potential to be acquired fairly inexpensively. However, their use as coal dumping areas indicates environmental problems may lead to increased, unexpected costs. Therefore, the County may be the more appropriate agency to acquire these basins rather than the Township. The County's parks are generally passive in nature. The County Department of Parks and Recreation has worked cooperatively with host municipalities when developing new parks and would do the same in East Coventry. Regardless of ownership, an environmental site assessment should be performed for each basin before acquisition is considered. Severe dumping or other contamination problems uncovered in an assessment could easily make acquisition of these areas unattractive.

Proposed Zoning and Regulatory Changes

Many of the Township's other important natural resources cannot be preserved through acquisition or easements. Therefore, the Township must develop and implement land use controls which effectively protect the valuable resources identified in this Plan. The Township should consider the following recommendations:

1. Update the Township's 1966 Comprehensive Plan to more accurately reflect conservation needs, infrastructure, and the desired form of growth which will enhance the community's character.
2. Through comprehensive planning and zoning, direct growth to compact areas where adequate infrastructure and services exist.
3. The Township's zoning provisions for cluster development should be revised to incorporate techniques which will preserve natural resources and encourage its use. Under current zoning, there is little if any incentive to utilize cluster development. Effective cluster/open space provisions would require a developer to preserve natural resources such as scenic views, soils which are not well-suited for on-lot sewage disposal, prime farmland, and steep slopes which are identified in this Plan. Conservation easements could be placed on the open space land and then sold to an adjacent farmer for agricultural purposes. Cluster/open space provisions should provide a clear incentive for the developer and could even be made mandatory.
4. In order to protect prime agricultural soils and productive farms, the Township should create effective agricultural zoning. Current zoning does not adequately direct residential growth to desired locations. Without public water and sewer, the most significant difference between the requirements for single family detached dwellings in the Farm Residential District and the R-3 District is the minimum lot sizes of two acres and one acre, respectively. There is a wide variety of effective agricultural zoning techniques. Many municipalities utilize a "sliding scale" approach which permits a certain number of residential subdivisions based on the size of the parent tract. Additionally, a minimum and maximum lot size is typically established.
5. The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to protect areas with steep slopes and soils which are highly susceptible to erosion. Such provisions will help protect the Township's high quality streams from the adverse affects of increasing sedimentation caused by earth disturbances.
6. Due to the extent of high quality watersheds, the Township should strengthen its stream bank protection standards to provide an adequate buffer area, preferably 100-150'.

Certain uses, which could cause adverse effects on water quality, should not be permitted within this buffer area.

7. The Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance should be revised to specifically address wetland protection during the grading and construction phases of development. To avoid encroachments during these phases, wetland delineations must remain highly visible on the site.
8. The Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance requirements for developer contributions of public open space contributions should be revised to conform to the MPC. The present requirements are very vague and could be successfully challenged by a developer. Ordinance requirements and standards for open space contributions or requests for alternatives to open space should also be consistent with the recommendations of this Plan. Suggested requirements, standards, and guidelines are featured in Chapter 10.

Table 6
Critical Township Open Space Areas

Natural Resource	General Location	Description
Schoolhouse Rd wetland	Schoolhouse Rd. north of Sawmill	Emergent and shrub wetland and potential anchor for the Pigeon Creek greenway.
Pigeon Creek wetland	Pigeon Creek and Porters Mill area	Emergent wetlands along Pigeon Creek and potential anchor for the Pigeon Creek greenway.
Old Schuylkill Canal wetland	Along the Schuylkill River, in the ponds along the old canal route	Emergent and shrub-dominated wetland
Ebelhare Road woods	Ebelhare and Grubb Roads area	Small but mature stand of second-growth woods. An oak dominated stand appears to be healthy, mature, and free of non-native, invasive species. Also a potential anchor for the southern extension of the Pigeon Creek greenway.
Sylvan woods	Sylvan Drive area	Last remaining large tract of woods, though still is somewhat fragmented.
Coal basins	Two locations along the Schuylkill River	Two abandoned coal dumps, both large areas with wetland and upland communities

Table 7
Appropriate Preservation Techniques
For East Coventry

CLASSIFICATION OF PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES FOR NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE	Water Resources		Land Resources					Wildlife Habitat	Scenic	Historic	Cultural
	Wetlands	* Open Water	Prime Ag. Land	Woodland	Steep Slopes						
I. Preservation Through Deed or Ownership											
A. Acquire/Purchase											
1. Outright Acquisition	X			X			X			X	
2. Donations	X			X			X			X	
3. Installment Purchase	X			X			X			X	
4. Lease Options	X			X			X			X	
5. Purchase & Resale	X			X			X			X	
6. Condemnation	X			X			X				
7. Exchange of Land	X			X			X			X	
B. Non-Purchase											
1. Easements	X					X					
2. Deed Restrictions	X			X			X			X	
3. Tax Incentives	X						X			X	

CLASSIFICATION OF PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES FOR NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE	Water Resources		Land Resources					Historic	Cultural
	Wetlands	Open Water *	Prime Ag. Land	Woodland	Steep Slopes	Wildlife Habitat	Scenic		
II. Zoning/Subdivision & Land Development Ordinances									
A. Effective Agricultural Zoning			X					X	X
B. Infill Development			X					X	X
C. Cluster/Open Space Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
D. Planned Unit Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
E. Transfer of Development Rights	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
F. Overlay Zoning	X	X			X				
G. Mandatory Dedication of Land	X	X		X	X	X			
H. Resource-Based Regulations (ex: Wetlands Ordinance, etc.)	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
III. Existing Regulations									
A. Federal	X	X				X			
B. State	X	X				X			
C. Township		X							

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Citizen involvement is the most critical component of the open space and recreation planning process. The extent residents are involved is often the difference between a plan that is used and one that is shelved. When residents, elected officials, and special interest groups are involved in the process, they feel a sense of ownership and are more anxious, vocal, and willing to assist with implementing a plan's recommendations. Experience indicates that when significant citizen involvement takes place throughout the planning process, implementation often begins earlier and is more complete.

East Coventry used two techniques to involve its residents, developing an active study committee and holding a public meeting.

Study Committee

At the outset of this Plan, nine members were appointed to a Study Committee that would serve in an advisory capacity. Committee members included six representatives from the Park and Recreation Committee, a Township Supervisor, and the Chairman of the Planning Commission. A ninth resident who is also an employee of the School District joined the Committee about halfway through the process. In November, 1991, the Committee held its first meeting with its selected consultant and then continued to meet on a monthly basis. After eight meetings, the Plan was accepted by the Committee and referred to the Board of Supervisors for final review and adoption. Committee members were very interested in the process, actively participated in meetings, and attended very regularly.

Public Meeting

On May 7, 1992, the Committee invited residents to attend a public meeting. The meeting's purpose was to inform residents of the Plan's purpose and to present preliminary

recommendations. Members concurred that they wanted residents to express their opinions and voice their concerns, prior to the Plan's referral to the Board of Supervisors and an official public hearing. Though well advertised by the local press, the meeting was only attended by eight residents and two reporters from local newspapers. While the attendance was disappointing, in recent years, public meetings have not been well attended for most municipalities. Only controversial and strongly opposed issues tend to draw considerable numbers of residents to meetings. Since an informative news article was in the Pottstown Mercury just days before the meeting, Committee members assumed that there would not be strong opposition to the Plan's proposed recommendations.

Those residents who attended were truly concerned about the Township and attended to vocally support the need for preservation of East Coventry's quality of life and natural resources. Some were also present to hear more about future parks and recreational facilities. Attendees seemed more inclined to listen rather than request services or facilities. The only expressed concerns about tentative recommendations involved the proposed Pigeon Creek and Schuylkill River greenways. Greenway-related questions included how the Township was going to establish them, cost for acquisition and development, and the width of proposed trails. One resident, while not vocally opposed to the greenway concept, voiced his concern about the wildlife along the Creek and the negative impact of hikers on nesting areas. Another resident expressed skepticism that the Township would be able to keep dirt bike riders off any developed trails. The meeting ended on a very positive note with attendees supportive of the Plan's proposed concepts and recommendations. Appendix A includes news releases on this meeting.

PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS

Standards

The Chester County Open Space and Recreation Study provides suggested standards for evaluating the park land and recreation facility needs of East Coventry. These standards serve as a guide to identify Township-wide needs as well as determine which neighborhoods have sufficient public park land and which ones have a deficiency. The standards are based on population, and are applied to the current (1990 U.S. Census) and the Township's forecasted year 2000 population (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission). In addition, the County also provides different open space standards for four types of settlement patterns. The Township's 1985 Recreation and Open Space Plan noted that the Township just qualified for the County's "rural" category. Considering projected developed density, however, the 1985 Plan applied the standards from the "rural-suburban" category. This Plan continues to use the County's "rural-suburban" standards to project future needs.

Throughout Chester County, there are a variety of different types of parks ranging from neighborhood parks to large state parks. The County places these parks into five classifications: regional, subregional, community, neighborhood and urban-residential. In general, regional and subregional parks are provided at the State and County levels while community, neighborhood and urban-residential parks are provided at the municipal level. Table 8 highlights common features for each type of park. Map 10 identifies all regional, sub-regional, community, and neighborhood parks or school facilities outside of the Township. These parks can be used by Township residents if they are willing to travel.

MAP PARKS IN THE AREA

CLASS A
Permanent open space with public access guaranteed.

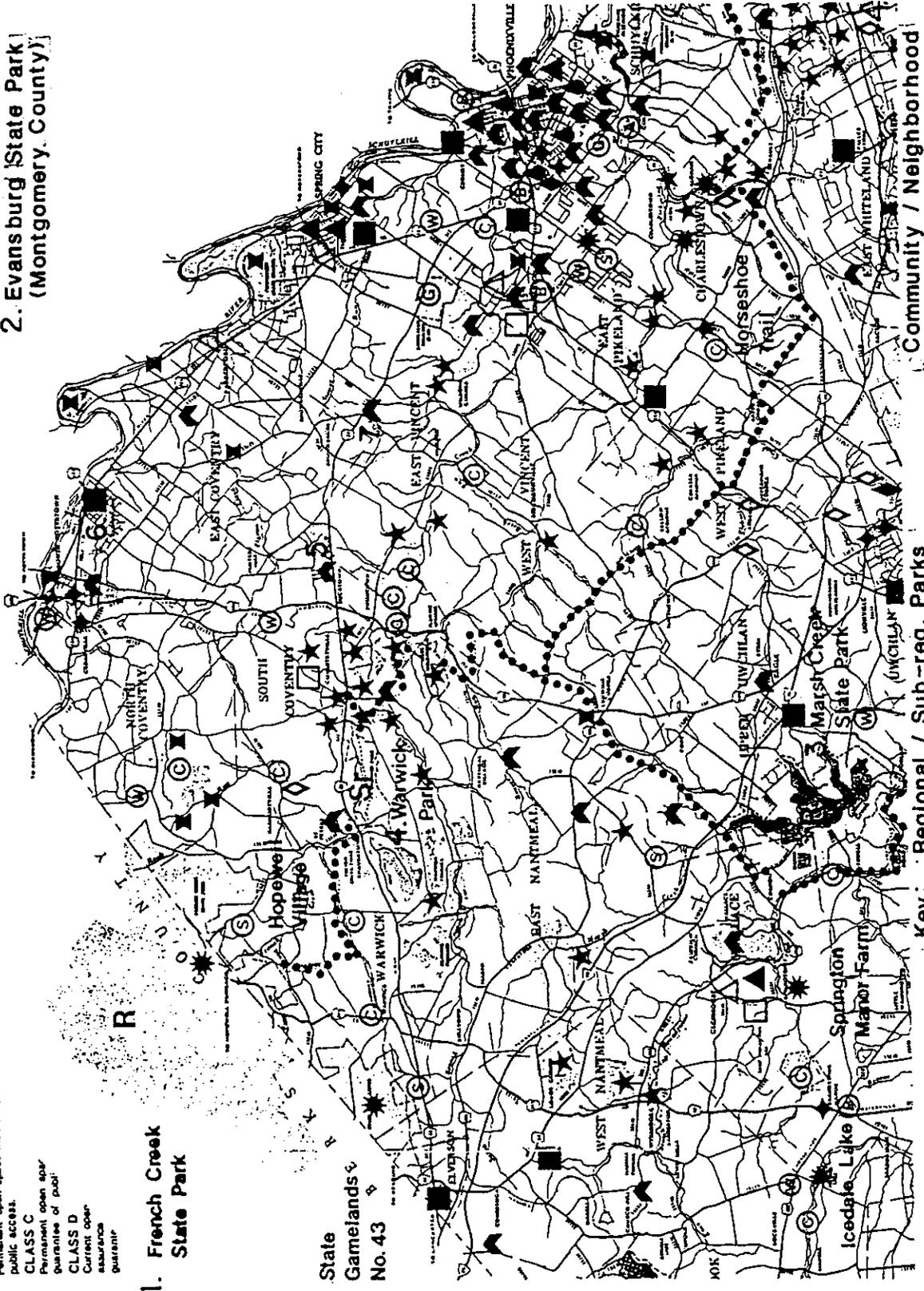
CLASS B
Permanent open space with limited public access.

CLASS C
Permanent open space guarantee of public access.

CLASS D
Current open space assurance guarantee.

1. French Creek State Park

State Game Lands No. 43

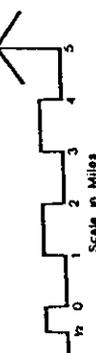


2. Evansburg State Park (Montgomery County)

USE	CLASS	LEGEND
REGIONAL PARK	A	[Symbol]
SUBREGIONAL PARK	B	[Symbol]
DEVELOPED COMMUNITY PARK	C	[Symbol]
UNDEVELOPED COMMUNITY PARK	D	[Symbol]
DEVELOPED NEIGHBORHOOD PARK		[Symbol]
UNDEVELOPED NEIGHBORHOOD PARK		[Symbol]
URBAN RESIDENTIAL PARK		[Symbol]
SPECIAL PURPOSE PARK		[Symbol]
SCHOOL		[Symbol]
DEVELOPED HOA LANDS		[Symbol]
UNDEVELOPED HOA LANDS		[Symbol]
APARTMENT COMPLEX		[Symbol]
CONSERVATION LANDS		[Symbol]
TRAIL		[Symbol]
ATHLETIC CLUB		[Symbol]
BALLFIELDS		[Symbol]
CAMP OR CAMPGROUNDS		[Symbol]
GOLF COURSE		[Symbol]
SPORTSMEN'S CLUB		[Symbol]
SWIM CLUB		[Symbol]
OTHER		[Symbol]

NOTE:
Tinted land areas are 100 acres.
Symbol location, especially in urban areas, may be approximate.

The boundaries of parks and recreation areas shown on this map are for information only and do not constitute a guarantee of any kind. The boundaries are subject to change without notice and are not intended to be used for any other purpose.



Prepared by Chester County Planning Commission and Roger White Inc., Planners and Landscape Architects, January 1982

Key: Regional / Sub-reg. Parks

- 1 = French Creek
- 2 = Evansburg
- 3 = Marsh Creek
- 4 = Warwick

Community / Neighborhood Parks / Facilities

- 5 = Owen J. Roberts High School
- 6 = Kenilworth Park
- 7 = E. Vincent Elen. school

Table 8
Chester County Park Standards

Park Type	Acreage Standard	Min. Size	Service Radius	Service Area	Max. Pop.
Regional Park	20a/1,000	1000a	30 m/1 hr. drive	2800 sq. miles	none
Subregional Park	8.5a/1,000	100a	7.5 m/15 min. drive	177 sq. miles	100,000
Community Park	4.5a/1,000	20a	2.5 m/5 min. drive	20 sq. miles	25,000
Neighborhood Park	3.5a/1,000	5a	½ m/12 min. walk	1 sq. mile	5,000

Key: a/1000 = acres/1000 persons
 a = acres

Source: Chester County Open Space and Recreation Study, 1982.

Existing Conditions

Regional/Sub-Regional Parks

Regional parks are large scale park preserves that serve an area greater than one county. French Creek, Evansburg, and Marsh Creek State Parks are within a one hour driving distance for Township residents. All three parks provide a variety of recreational opportunities, passive in nature, and include biking, hiking and nature trails, picnic and play areas, and fishing. Both French Creek and Marsh Creek Parks feature swimming areas. In addition, French Creek offers camping accommodations while both Evansburg and Marsh Creek have youth hostels for overnight accommodations.

More accessible to Township residents is Warwick County Park, a subregional park. This type of park fills the gap between regional and community parks. Within 15 minutes driving time for Township residents, Warwick Park can be used by residents on a daily basis. Available facilities include hiking, biking, equestrian, and nature trails; camping, fishing, and picnic and play areas. The County's Open Space and Recreation Study projected that Warwick Park's 433 acres will continue to provide East Coventry residents with more than adequate sub-regional park acreage through the year 2000. Over the past ten years, the County has been looking elsewhere for its future land purchases, in specific on its eastern border, below East Vincent Township. However, there is growing interest at the County level for the purchase of land along the Schuylkill River. This may prompt the County to purchase land for an additional County park closer to Township residents. The following provides the specific acreage and location of these regional and subregional parks:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>Acreage/Location</u>
DER, Bureau of State Parks	French Creek	7,339-acre park developed around three lakes along the Berks/Chester County border.
DER, Bureau of State Parks	Evansburg	3,349-acre park located along Skippack Creek in Montgomery County.
DER, Bureau of State Parks	Marsh Creek	1,705-acre park developed around the 535-acre Marsh Creek Lake in Chester County (Upper Uwchlan Twp.)
Chester County	Warwick	433-acre park in Warwick Twp., east of the Township of Rt. 23

Community Parks

At the local level, some Chester County municipalities provide community parks. As shown in Table 8, these parks can serve an entire community of 25,000 residents and, as recommended by the County, should be a minimum of 20 acres. A community park's primary function is to

provide a local place for organized, group activity as well as opportunities for individual sports and exercise. These parks tend to emphasize active recreation and are more developed than neighborhood parks. Athletic fields for competitive play, lighted tennis courts, swimming pools, age-segregated play areas, and pavilions suitable for group picnics are often typical facilities. Community parks are ideal for community-wide special events and more organized recreation programs.

Large school sites, at the middle and high school level, often have a variety of typical community park facilities. These athletic fields, courts, and indoor facilities represent resources that can enhance available recreational opportunities. Purchasing land next to a school can lead to developing joint school/park complexes and maximum use of publicly-owned facilities.

By the County's standards, East Coventry owns land appropriate for a community park, but this land has not been developed. The Township's largest property, the Heyser Tract, is a 32.6-acre site that is leased out for farming. Township athletic teams seeking fields or residents interested in playing tennis can use facilities at the Owen J. Roberts High School or North Coventry Township's Kenilworth Park. The following lists specifics on these facilities:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Acreage/Location/Facilities</u>
Township	Heyser Tract	32.6-acre site along the Schuylkill River, but undeveloped.
Owen J. Roberts School District	High/Mid. Schools	70-acre school complex located in South Coventry Twp. Facilities include: auditorium, 2 gymnasiums, athletic stadium with a track, 3 baseball fields, 1 hockey/soccer field, 4 tennis courts, and indoor swimming pool.
N. Coventry Twp.	Kenilworth	22-acre site with facilities including: 2 tennis courts, 3 baseball fields, playground, 1 basketball court, lake, picnic areas, and a maintenance/storage building.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are a second type of commonly owned municipal park. These provide open spaces and recreational facilities close to home. The County recommends that these parks be at least five acres in size and within walking distance of area residents. Facilities for active recreation and children tend to be the emphasis. Examples include: sitting areas for adults and parents with young children, play areas for children, and open areas for limited organized sports and games.

Also, this type of park can provide a focus for the social life of the neighborhood. Activities will vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. Fairs or "Block Parties" may be important park functions in one neighborhood; recreational volleyball or informal games important to another.

Currently, East Coventry does not own the "typical" neighborhood park. Towpath Park, a 7.5-acre park located along the Schuylkill River, meets the suggested five acre minimum, but is not located within a neighborhood. The park's size dictates its placement under the neighborhood park classification. The Township also owns these two undeveloped tracts: 1) the Wade Tract, a 6.8 acre tract along the Schuylkill River; and 2) a 17.9 acre tract at the Township's municipal building with approximately three acres used for the building and parking lot. Other facilities functioning as neighborhood parks include these two Owen J. Roberts Elementary Schools: East Coventry and East Vincent Elementary Schools. Below are specifics on these facilities:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Acreage/Location/Facilities</u>
Township	Towpath Park	7.5-acre park along the Schuylkill River with picnic pavilion and grills, grass volleyball court, boat launch, and walking path.
Township	Wade Tract	6.8-acre wooded and undeveloped tract along the Schuylkill River.

Township	Municipal Bldg.	17.9-acre tract, with 3 acres developed for the building and parking lot. The rest is undeveloped, with some acreage mowed and the remainder is partially wooded.
East Coventry	School Grounds	14.6 acres site with outdoor facilities available for public use. Currently under renovation, but planned facilities include a new playground, two-four soccer fields, and a gymnasium.
East Vincent	School	20-acre site with outdoor facilities available for public use. Facilities include a playground and a recreational field.

Greenways

A relatively new term for this type of park, "greenways" are linear corridors of open space that provide non-motorized access to parks, link neighborhoods with parks and schools, connect to longer County-owned greenways, and provide "close to home" recreational opportunities for biking, walking, horseback riding, and cross country skiing. Greenways can occur along stream valleys, ridge tops, utility rights-of-way, and abandoned rail lines. No quantitative standards have been developed to determine acreage needed for greenways. The length and width of the greenway depends on what is necessary to protect the natural resources and/or provide maximum recreational use.

East Coventry has an extensive network of greenways, specifically equestrian trails, throughout the Township, but they are all privately owned. There is an abandoned railroad right-of-way paralleling the river from Parker Ford to the far north Township line. The present ownership of this line is unknown. The County has explored acquiring this line, but ownership complications have impeded these efforts. The acquiring of this line, once developed, would greatly enhance available recreation opportunities. Utility rights-of-way transverse the Township from north to south. From east to west, is Pigeon Creek and its tributaries. The existence and location of these two resources provide excellent opportunities for circuitous greenways throughout the Township.

Privately-owned Parks or Recreation Facilities

Privately-owned facilities supplement available public facilities. Within many municipalities, exists a variety of private sector providers including churches, commercial businesses such as bowling alleys and fitness centers, YMCA/YWCA, golf courses and a gun club.

There are no commercial businesses in the Township that provide any form of recreation. The closest golf course is the Kimberton Country Club, in East Vincent Township. There are five churches in the Township, with several that have either fellowship centers or athletic fields.

Analysis

Township-Wide

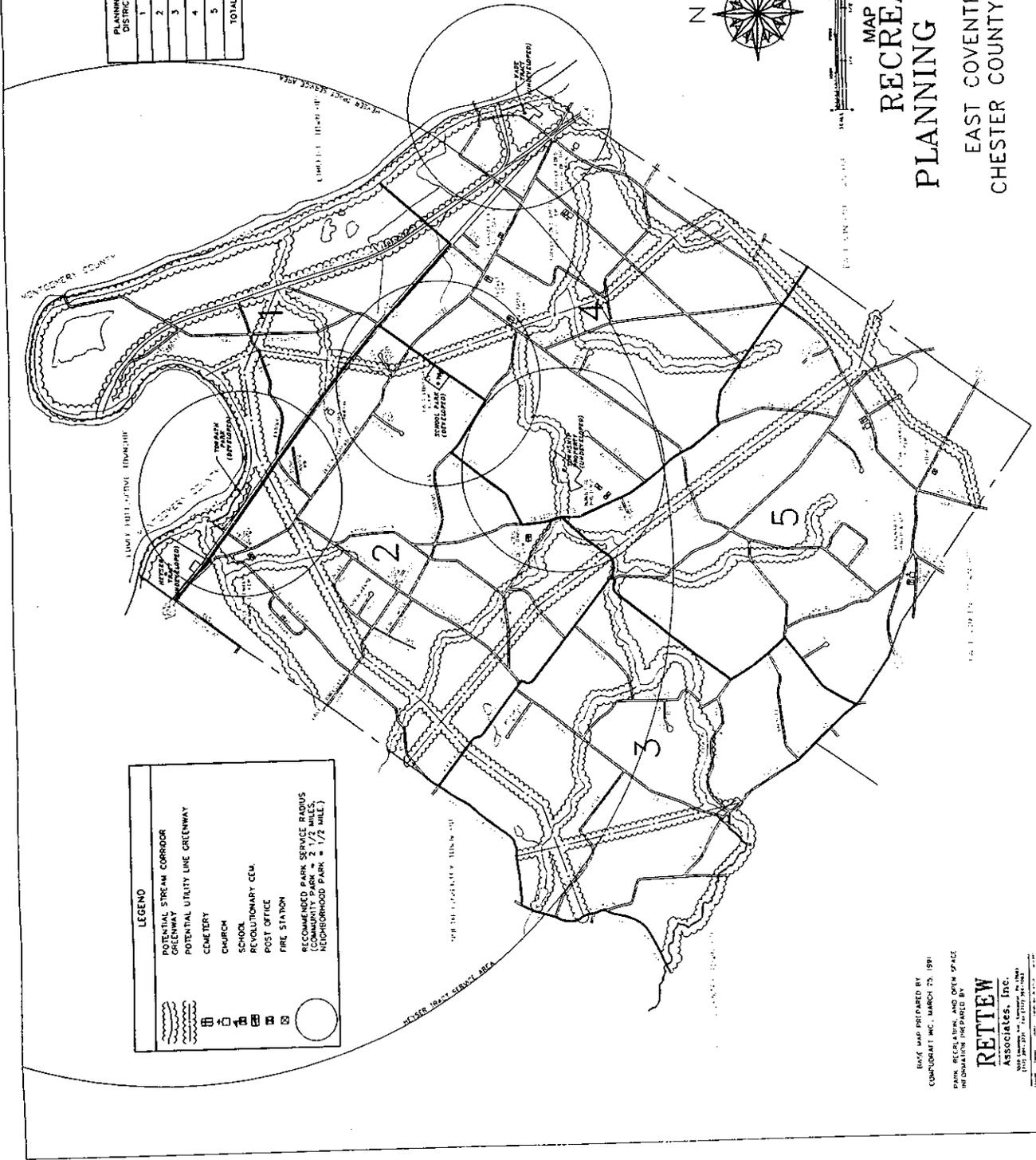
At rural densities, recreational needs are mostly satisfied onsite and open space needs by the mere existence of a predominately agricultural landscape. In the 1980s East Coventry Township recognized that its community was changing and there was a definite need to preserve open space and provide recreational opportunities. In 1978, the Township acquired the "Wade Tract"; its first tract of potential park land along the River, just east of Parker Ford Village. Also along the River but at the north end of the Township is the Heyser Tract, acquired in 1982, and the Zimmerman Tract, acquired in 1985. By 1989, the Zimmerman Tract (now known as Towpath Park) was developed into the Township's first park. Lastly, during the 1980's, the Township completed its municipal building. Surrounding and behind this building is almost 15 acres available for future recreational use.

A comparison of the Township's total park land acreage with the County's combined community and neighborhood park land standards suggests that the Township exceeds the County standard through the year 2000. For the Township's forecasted year 2000 population of 4,870, it presently owns 61.8 acres. This is 22 acres over the County's suggested standard of 8 acres per 1,000 residents (4.5 acres for community parks and 3.5 acres for neighborhood parks.) However, except for the 7.9 acres at Towpath Park, the remaining land is undeveloped with some areas not suitable for active recreation and one large tract not centrally located to most residents. The following is a more detailed analysis of community and neighborhood park land needs. Map 11 identifies the location and illustrates the service radius of public parks and recreational areas that are owned by either the Township or the Owen J. Roberts School District.

Community Parks

A comparison of the County's standards with the Township's current recreational facilities shows that the Township is lacking a developed community park. While Towpath Park is functioning

PLANNING DISTRICT	1980 U.S. CENSUS POPULATION	CHESTER COUNTY RECOMMENDED PARK SPACE PER ACRE
1	213	1.0 ACRES
2	1398	4.9 ACRES
3	628	2.2 ACRES
4	1387	4.7 ACRES
5	854	3.0 ACRES
TOTAL	4450	15.8 ACRES



MAP 11
**RECREATION
 PLANNING DISTRICTS**
 EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP
 CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

LEGEND	
	POTENTIAL STREAM CORRIDOR
	GREENWAY
	POTENTIAL UTILITY LINE GREENWAY
	CEMETERY
	CHURCH
	SCHOOL
	POST OFFICE
	FIRE STATION
	RECOMMENDED PARK SERVICE RADIUS
	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK (1/4 MILE)
	RESIDENTIAL PARK (1/2 MILE)

BASE MAP PREPARED BY
 COMPIPLANET INC. MARCH 15, 1981
 PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE
 INFORMATION PREPARED BY
RETTEW
 Associates, Inc.
 1000 JEFFERSON AVENUE
 PITTSBURGH, PA. 15222
 JANUARY 3, 1992

more like a community park, it is limited in size and is at the far end of the Township. Table 9 describes the community park land needs through the year 2000.

The undeveloped Heyser Tract is the 32.6 acres of Township owned park land identified in Table 9. Conceptually, this tract meets the County's suggested minimum community park acreage of 20 acres and its terrain is well suited for the development of active recreation facilities. As one of the Township's few remaining properties over 20 acres in size with slopes less than 5%, the Heyser Tract's development costs would be significantly less than areas with steeper terrain. The disadvantage to developing a community park here is that it is not very accessible to most Township residents. Located in the far north corner of the Township, the Heyser Tract is surrounded by land zoned either commercial or light industrial. Also, as Map 11 illustrates, developing a community park at this location would not easily serve residents living in the southern half of the Township. Residents living in this area would have to travel further than the recommended 2.5 miles or 5 minute drive.

The available open space at the Township's municipal building is a more appropriate location for a community park. The advantage of this site is that it is centrally located to all Township residents. But, available acreage is less than 15 acres in size (five acres under the 20 acre minimum) and the site contains some development restrictions like steeper slopes, possible wetlands, and a floodplain area along Pigeon Creek.

Table 9
Projected Community Park Land Needs

Year	Total Population	County Recommended Standard	Present Township Land
1990	4,450	20 acres	32.6 acres
2000	4,870	22 acres	32.6 acres

Over the next five years, the Township should consider these opportunities to provide residents with a community park:

- **Explore the best use of the Heyser Tract.** The Heyser Tract is not in an ideal location for a community park, but its terrain is most suitable for developing active recreation facilities. This tract is also the only Township-owned property received through a donation and, therefore, could be sold without any restrictions on future use. In addition, the possibility exists that the Township may need 3-5 acres of this tract, along the North Coventry Township border, for expansion of the area's sewage treatment facilities. At a minimum, regardless of future use, 15-20 acres along the River should remain in Township ownership for future development of a greenway that connects to Towpath Park.

Developing a community park at the Municipal Building would be more centrally located, and possibly better meet community park needs. The Township, however, may find that land acquisition costs are too prohibitive and/or purchase options limited. The Township needs to further evaluate these provided options to determine the best site to develop a community park.

- **Investigate the possibility of purchasing land, preferably around or behind the Municipal Building, to expand available recreation acreage.** However, the Township needs to research if there is an agreement with adjacent property owners on the future use of this open space and determine if any land is suitable for development of active recreational facilities.
- **Evaluate any undeveloped acreage around East Coventry Elementary School property for possible expansion of this site into a school-park complex.** While already functioning in this capacity, even after renovations are completed, available recreational facilities are limited. This location is not centrally located to the entire population, but is accessible to the Township's more populated areas.

Neighborhood Parks

Similar to community park land, East Coventry is fortunate to possess adequate neighborhood park land, but this land is concentrated in certain neighborhoods and most is undeveloped. Worth noting is that one of the Township's goals is to develop a park system with an emphasis on passive recreation experiences. At the neighborhood level, the Township envisions natural open space areas along Pigeon Creek with some benches, trails, and picnic areas. Table 10 provides the first step to assessing neighborhood park needs. This table highlights present and future needed neighborhood park land. The second analysis step divides the Township into planning districts. Map 11 shows these districts and identifies existing parks and their service radius.

Table 10
Projected Neighborhood Park Land Needs

Year	Total Population	County Recommended Standard	Present Township Land
1990	4,450	16 acres	29 acres
2000	4,870	17 acres	29 acres

This comparison suggests that the Township does not lack total land for neighborhood parks, but a review by planning district shows that the land is not evenly distributed. To further evaluate this condition, the next section describes the neighborhood park needs for each of the five planning districts. Since the table above projects little difference in neighborhood park needs between 1990 and the year 2000, only the 1990 population is provided for the analysis.

District 1

This neighborhood, located in the northeast portion of the Township between Rt. 724 and the River, once contained residents who lived in Fricks Lock Village. Now owned by the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO), the remaining 18 acres contains historical remnants of an 19th century agricultural hamlet. This district is the least populated area since the majority of the land is either owned by the State or PECO.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Chester County Recommended Neighborhood Park Land</u>	<u>Township Owned</u>
1990	213	< than 1 acre	7.5

Presently, there is sufficient neighborhood park land for this district. Most of the land is zoned commercial and industrial and few new residents are anticipated. However, this area contains frontage along the River. For years, the Township has been seeking to form a linear greenway from the Heyser Tract to the Wade Tract. **In this district, creating this greenway and working with interested parties on the restoration of Fricks Lock Village should be top priorities.**

District 2

Also located in the north, this district is bound by Rt. 724 on the northeast, Kulp Road on the southwest and Buckwalter Road to the east. It contains no official neighborhoods, but mostly large lot subdivisions.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Chester County Recommended Neighborhood Park Land</u>	<u>Township Owned</u>
1990	1,398	4.9 acres	0

This district is the most populated of all districts, without a Township-owned neighborhood park. The entire district is zoned residential and one of two districts with growth potential. Discussions are currently underway on servicing this area with public sewers from North Coventry's sewage treatment plant. Concerning neighborhood parks needs, residents living along Rt. 724 can easily access Towpath Park. Those living in the south have access to facilities at the East Coventry Elementary School. However, present and future residents living in the potential growth area are outside the service area of both these neighborhood facilities. **The Township should acquire five acres of land along Schoolhouse Road, possibly connecting to the potential Pigeon Creek greenway. With active facilities available at the school, a passive park is very appropriate.**

District 3

Located in the western portion of the Township, this District is bound by Kulp Road on the northwest, South Coventry to the south, and Halteman Road to the east.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Chester County Recommended Neighborhood Park Land</u>	<u>Township Owned</u>
1990	628	2.2 acres	0

District 3 does not possess any neighborhood park land, churches, or school facilities. But, it is rich in natural resources. The area contains the majority of the Township's remaining woodland and some of the most scenic sections of Pigeon Creek and its tributaries. Most of the district is agricultural with some residential homes closer towards the South Coventry border. **This Township should acquire a passive park along Pigeon Creek, possibly where it splits. With a greenway along the creek, a 2-5 acre tract could serve as the western "trailhead" for residents to access the greenway.**

District 4

From the central to the east portion of the Township is its fourth district and the village of Parker Ford. The district is bounded by the River on the east, Ellis Woods Road to the west and Sanatoga Road to the north.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Chester County Recommended Neighborhood Park Land</u>	<u>Township Owned</u>
1990	1357	4.7 acres	21.7

This district contains ample neighborhood park land, but no facilities. Both the open space at the municipal building and the undeveloped Wade Tract are contained here. While this is the second largest district in the Township and contains an area that may receive public sewers within ten years, sufficient land is currently available to meet present and future needs. **The Township should consider evaluating the Wade Tract's previously proposed development plan and, at a minimum, develop the area into a "trailhead" to access the proposed trails along the River or along the abandoned railroad right-of-way. If there is interest in developing active facilities, the development of a community park at the Municipal Building would easily serve the people living in this district.**

District 5

To the south is District 5. Halteman Road bounds the district to the north, Ellis Woods-Creamery roads to the east and East Vincent Township to the south. The district contains the villages of Snowdenville and Brownback.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Chester County Recommended Neighborhood Park Land</u>	<u>Township Owned</u>
1990	854	3 acres	0

The central portion of this district is primarily agricultural and zoned farm residential. Residential areas are more heavily concentrated along the Township's southern border with East Vincent Township. No public sewer is proposed and the district is not expected to grow. This district contains no neighborhood park land, but people living to the north could easily access a community park constructed at the Municipal Building. **While a lower priority, the Township should consider purchasing a small open space area within the woodlands around Pigeon Creek's southern tributary. A "trailhead" in this location would provide access to the greenway for these residents.**

Greenway System

While potential greenways have been discussed throughout, they have been discussed generally. Provided here is a list of potential greenways that will need to be evaluated further and prioritized in the action plan.

- **The Schuylkill Canal:** Much of the canal, originally developed in 1824 but abandoned by the turn-of-the-century, is still intact along with significant remains of locks at Fricks Lock and Parker Ford. The aqueduct where the canal crosses Pigeon Creek is also still intact. This presents opportunities for the development of biking/jogging trails and for interpretive exhibits and selective restoration of the canal network.
- **The abandoned Pennsylvania Railroad:** A portion of this railroad, east of Parker Ford has been acquired by the County. It is believed that most of the line, west of Parker Ford, is owned by Conrail. PECO leases some of the property that contains a portion of the line; however, a County representative informed the Township that the lease does not permit subletting. Acquisition of the rail line is complicated. To preserve this line, the Township will need to work closely with the County and the Schuylkill River Greenway Association

(SRGA). Both these agencies would like to see that this right-of-way is acquired and preserved to help connect the developing Schuylkill River Greenway between East Vincent and North Coventry townships.

- **A greenway along the River:** The goal of the SRGA is to create a walkway the length of the entire river interspersed by parks, picnic and camping sites, and fishing and boating access areas for canoeing, sailing, and rowing. In addition, SRGA is seeking to restore historic landmarks along the river and control pollution. The Township is fortunate to have almost four miles of river frontage, with one riverfront park already helping SRGA achieve its goal. Most of the land along the River is in either public or semi-public ownership. There are less than 10 individual property owners.
- **Pigeon Creek and its tributaries:** Most of the Township's pristine natural resources follow this creek. The Township's 1966 Comprehensive Plan referred to these areas as "drainage channels" of "unbuildable land which could, by means of dedication from developers, become the skeleton of a park system of connecting trails and corollary small recreation areas."
- **Utility easements:** Several easements divide the Township with the majority owned by PECO. PECO's north-south and east-wide easements have overhead electrical lines that extend mostly through the Township's farmland. AT&T does have a below ground easement in eastern East Coventry, east of Bethel Church Road, that extends north to the River. PECO's easements offer the Township a potential opportunity to link Pigeon Creek and its tributaries in a more circuitous route.

Recreational Facilities

The County's 1982 Study also provides standards for specific recreational facilities. These standards tend to be less useful than the County's open space and park land standards. Recreation interests change easily. Interest in specific activities could wane within a couple of years or even less. In many communities, use of tennis courts is a good example of why these standards are not always applicable. In the 1970's, open courts were hard to find, but by the mid-1980's many communities had courts that were barely used. The Township should consider constructing facilities that can be adapted to other uses or have survived prolonged interest.

Table 11 compares the County's standards with the Township's forecasted year 2000 population and then, with recreational facilities owned by either the Township or the School District. A review of available facilities shows that all but the volleyball court are available on a limited basis. At Owen J. Roberts High, three baseball fields and four tennis courts are available, but can also be used by residents from six other townships. The High School also offers a stadium that provides the area's premier football field for interscholastic competition. The renovated East Coventry Elementary School will have at least the required two soccer fields. When considering these available school facilities, outdoor basketball courts are the one type of facility that is not provided in the Township by any agency. Also, trends across the State suggest that most likely, within the next few years, residents will request the Township to develop athletic fields, probably for softball and soccer use. At a minimum, the Township should set aside suitable open space in the event residents express more support for a developed community park.

**Table 11
Recreation Facility Needs**

Facility	County Standard	Township Needs by Year 2000	Present Township Facilities	School District Facilities
Baseball/Softballs Fields	0.5/1000	2	0	3*
Football Fields	0.4/1000	2	0	1*
Soccer Fields	0.5/1000	2	0	2
Basketball Courts	0.4/1000	2	0	1* (indoor)
Tennis Courts	0.5/1000	2	0	4*
Volleyball Courts	0.3/1000	1	1	0
Swimming Area	0.2/1000	1	0	1* (indoor)

*These school facilities are not located in the Township, but within a 10 minute drive of most residents.

Acquisition and Facility Development Action Plan

Several recommendations for future Township action have been contained throughout previous chapters. Table 12 summarizes these recommendations and provides a suggested time frame for completion. Chapter 10 takes this information further and includes a cost opinion for each recommendation and determines which ones should occur first, second, third, etc.

Table 12
Acquisition and Facility Development Action Plan

Proposed Recommendation	Time Frame	Possible Cooperative Agency/Resource
Towpath Park (Twp. owned):		
•Develop a playground near the picnic area.	1992	Apply for County funding -- Nov. 1, 1992
•Improve landscaping around the entrance sign and turn sign for more visibility.	1992	Public Works/Boy Scout Project
•Replace deteriorating split rail fencing.	1992	Public Works Project
•Provide interpretative signage (what is Towpath Park, history of the area, etc.)	1993	SRGA (Heritage Park Program)
•Correct erosion problem along the riverbank.	By 1994	DER
•Evaluate the park for compliance with ADA and make needed accessibility improvements.	1992-3	
•Install more permanent restrooms and a drinking fountain.	1994	

Proposed Recommendation	Time Frame	Possible Cooperative Agency/Resource
<p>*Wade Tract (Twp. owned):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop into a passive park. •Conduct a wetlands delineation and revise the master site plan. •Locate suitable property, either on or off-site for a small parking area. •Develop a boating/canoe access point. •Develop a picnic area. •Develop a nature study area/trail. <p>*This site may be needed for a sewage treatment facility, therefore no action is recommended on this tract until the Township's 537 Plan is complete and adopted.</p>	<p>No probable action until 1993.</p>	<p>PA Fish Commission</p>
<p>Heyser Tract (Twp. owned):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continue working on connecting Towpath Park and the Heyser Tract along the River. •Confirm the need for 3-5 acres for the sewage treatment facility (537 Plan final recommendations needed). •In conjunction with the recommendation below, evaluate further to determine if this is the best location for a community park. •If confirmed as a community park, develop a master site plan. 	<p>on-going</p> <p>1993</p> <p>1993</p> <p>1994-5</p>	<p>The Coventry Soccer Association has expressed its willingness to work with the Township to develop a community park with soccer fields. Some soccer organizations in Chester County have been willing to develop and maintain fields.</p>
<p>Municipal Building Property (Twp. owned):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Investigate possible acquisition of land adjacent to or behind this property. •Develop a master site plan to determine the most appropriate use of site. 	<p>1993</p> <p>1994</p>	<p>As mentioned above, area athletic associations may be willing to work with the Township on this project.</p>

Maintenance of Township Parks

Purpose of Good Park Maintenance

When residents visit a public park, they should be able to recreate in a clean and safe environment. Residents do not want to be inconvenienced by a restroom that has not been cleaned or a ballfield that someone never got around to mowing. Successfully providing public parks depends on good maintenance practices. If the Township ignores its maintenance responsibilities, it loses the public's trust and becomes more susceptible to lawsuits. Continuing to perform good park maintenance practices and an effective maintenance program is essential prior to the Township's acceptance of additional open space and facilities. Maintaining one passive park is less demanding and costly than maintaining more developed parks scattered throughout East Coventry.

MAINTENANCE is the routine reoccurring work which is required to keep a facility in such condition that it may be utilized in its original or designed capacity. REPAIR is the restoration of a facility equivalent to its original capacity. A municipality that is properly maintaining its facilities prevents the need for repairs and is more likely to achieve these results:

1. *Greater Public Trust:* When a municipality purchases land or develops a park, most use tax dollars to cover the costs. East Coventry's residents have entrusted the Township to take care of the property. Good maintenance helps develop public trust, and in turn, more support for public parks.
2. *Public Support of Capital Investments:* Considerable tax dollars and volunteer efforts developed Towpath Park. This represents a large investment. Often, if the public sees that a municipality has done a good job with existing parks, then residents and businesses are more willing make donations toward increasing available public recreation opportunities.
3. *Increased Public Safety:* Rules, regulations, and policies need to be established to aid maintenance efforts. For example, some municipalities regulate the use of athletic fields. When policies are developed, they need to be enforced. Overusing fields can impede maintenance efforts and create unsafe conditions.

- 4 *Decreased Vandalism:* The best way to prevent vandalism is to eliminate evidence of the act as quickly as possible. Prompt attention to vandalism tends to decrease more vandalism. If you let a park deteriorate, users will help you.
5. *Increased Revenue:* People will be more willing to pay for quality if they know they are going to get their money's worth.

East Coventry's Present Maintenance Program

Considering that Towpath Park was the Township's first public park, maintenance has been excellent. Throughout the planning process, no negative public or written comments were received. Park and Recreation Committee members are pleased with current efforts. Field visits also reinforced that this park is well maintained. Since the park opened in 1988, there has only been one incidence of vandalism. However, any maintenance program can be improved. The observations and recommendations provided are designed to enhance a good system so that the Township is better prepared to expand its maintenance efforts when needed.

Employees: The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of all publicly-owned open space, including Towpath Park. This department consists of a Roadmaster and two full-time and three part-time employees. Primarily this crew is responsible for maintaining the Township's 42 miles of roads. In addition, this crew preforms special projects at the park and mows the open space around the Municipal Building. Park projects include repairing the fencing, cutting down dead trees, clearing brush, and installing park amenities like the volleyball court.

Towpath Park's day-to-day maintenance is performed by a part-time employee who works from April through late September. This dedicated employee works about 15 hours per week. His duties include all mowing and trimming, cleaning the pavilion, and picking up trash. He obtains needed equipment and supplies at the Municipal Building and transports these to the park.

Regular visits are made to the park and a daily log book of park work performed is kept. During these visits, the Foreman checks for any hazards and ensures that the park has not been misused or vandalized. Since this is a passive park, with the Schuylkill River as its primary attraction, the need for more extensive maintenance and risk management practices has not been necessary. The park's facilities including a pavilion, volleyball court, and boat ramp do not require the same level of documentation and maintenance as would ballfields and playgrounds.

Major Maintenance Equipment: Table 13 lists the major equipment the Township has available for park work. The age and the purpose of each item is also noted.

**Table 13
Park Equipment**

Park Maintenance Equipment	Age	Equipment Purpose
930 John Deere Mower (front-end, 6' deck)	3 years	General mowing of park and open space areas.
1 John Deere Push Mower	4 years	Available for areas inappropriate for the 930 John Deere Mower
1 Weedeater	4 years	Trimming
4 Chainsaws	1-4 years	Removing dead trees at Towpath Park
3 Dump Trucks Ford GMC	10 years 4 and 10 years	Shaping Towpath Park's entrance and parking area
1 Front-end Loader	5 years	Clearing Towpath Park's boat ramp
1 Grader	20 years	Shaping Towpath Park's entrance and parking area

Maintenance Issues to Consider for Future Parks

Towpath Park's part-time maintenance employee is dedicated to the park, but most likely will not want the increased responsibility of also maintaining any new parks the Township acquires or develops. Therefore, the Township needs to consider that further development of Towpath Park or developing any new parks, may require additional seasonal help. This is just one issue that the Township will need to consider when it expands its park and recreation role. Following are recommendations that provide direction for proactively addressing maintenance needs when considering future development.

1. **The Township should develop forms or checklists to facilitate easy documentation of park work.** When a playground is added to Towpath Park, the Township should conduct weekly safety checks and document findings. This could be done by Public Works or a Park and Recreation Committee member. The Township should keep this completed form on file at the Municipal Building in the event of a playground accident. Other suggested documentation measures include:
 - a. Results of vandalism and events that generate the need for repairs. (Document when the event occurred and when repairs were made.)
 - b. Bi-annual audits of the park conducted by the appropriate Township staff and members of the Park and Recreation Board Committee. An audit in the spring to prepare for increased use and in the fall for budget purposes is recommended.
 - c. Documented maintenance standards such as trash removal and mowing schedules.
 - d. Daily log reports including work performed and the number of hours needed to complete the tasks. Documenting needed work is helpful for budget purchases to project the need for additional personnel when developing new parks.
2. **Design and construct your new facilities with maintenance considered at the outset.** Maintaining Towpath Park is costing the Township approximately \$4,000 per year for personnel and supplies. The additional passive parks that the Township is considering for the future will likely require no more than this amount for each 5 acre park. However, if the Township decides to develop a

more active park, then maintenance needs may be greater. For example, assuming that 20 acres was developed into athletic fields at the Heyser Tract, just its mowing costs would be greater than \$4,000. Maintenance costs can be offset by developing cooperative relationships with athletic associations that desire to use the fields.

3. **Use quality materials; low bids can create problems later.** Low bids should be scrutinized to ensure that they meet your specifications. For example, a low bid for playground equipment may not meet current safety guidelines or be accessible to the disabled.
4. **Provide training opportunities for your maintenance employees on turf management, facility maintenance and construction, landscaping, etc.** Many municipalities have found that it is more cost effective to install some park facilities and amenities than contract out the installation and pay prevailing wages. Municipal employees with construction and landscaping experience and training are real assets to expediting park enhancement projects. Attending training seminars helps employees improve their skills and keeps them up to date on the latest technologies.
5. **Ask your users how you are doing.** When groups rent your pavilion, send them a follow-up card requesting feedback on cleanliness of the park, available equipment, courteous staff, etc. This is an excellent public relations tool that also lets the Township know about potential park problems.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Inventory and Analysis

In general, there are few organizations providing any types of recreation programs solely for East Coventry residents. Except for scouting groups, all other agencies offer programs with a regional focus. The demographics of the area warrant this marketing approach. Except for North Coventry, East Coventry and its neighboring townships all have populations less than 5,000. No one municipality has a population base that will attract sufficient participants to justify a program. Furthermore, as a small and fairly rural community, East Coventry relies on the efforts of its volunteer Park and Recreation Committee to provide public recreation programs. The committee's ability to provide programs is limited by time and expertise. This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of the few programs that are available and concludes with general programming recommendations for future East Coventry Park and Recreation Committee action.

Inventory of Programs

The following inventory has been organized into these age groups: preschool, youth, adult, and senior citizens. Three additional types of programs are discussed that tend to be available for all ages and include special events, aquatics, and arts.

Preschool: Except from nursery schools and day care centers, no organizations or businesses providing recreational programs for children under the age of 5 were identified.

Youth Sports: There are more opportunities for younger Township residents to participate in sports than any other type of recreational activity. Two area athletic associations are primary sponsors and include:

Coventry Soccer Association -- Serving municipalities in the Owen J. Roberts School District, this association provides a comprehensive soccer program for boys and girls ages 6-14. A more competitive travel team program is available for older youth, ages 10-19. Both spring and fall soccer programs are available. East Coventry Elementary School is a heavily used site for participants to practice this sport. Games are played at fields in North Coventry Township.

Coventry Little League Association -- School District residents are served by a comprehensive baseball/softball program for both girls and boys, ages 6 to 15. Since there are no baseball or softball fields in the Township, all games are played in surrounding municipalities, particularly North and South Coventry townships. Currently, more than 600 participants are involved with this program. Numbers were not available on East Coventry participants.

Norchester Optimists Club - This club provides organized sports for children and youth in northern Chester County. They sponsor football, baseball, softball, wrestling and basketball athletic leagues. The Norchester Optimists Club has a club committee which is dedicated to fundraising to supplement participants fees which do not cover all of the costs involved in the athletic leagues.

North Coventry Softball - North Coventry Softball is an independent adult softball league with 15 teams of approximately 15 players each. All league games are played in North Coventry Township during a May to August season.

Norchester Red Knights Football - The Norchester Red Knights Football League is associated with the Bert Bell nation football association. The league has approximately 225 players on 14 teams. The league is self supporting through fund-raisers and league fees which are \$35 per child or \$45 per family. League fees support only about 25% of the cost of fielding each player. The Norchester Red Knights Football has an annual operating budget of \$30,000. The League play their games at North Coventry Elementary School.

Coventry Basketball - The Coventry Basketball League serves boys and girls in grades three through eight. Three different Owen J. Roberts School District gymnasiums are used for league play. About 140 children participate in the league from December through February. Obtaining use of gymnasiums facilities is an ongoing problem and has caused the league to turn away children who want to play. The Coventry Basketball League is self-supporting through the \$20 registration fee per child.

Youth

Scouting:

There is a scouting group available for both sexes and different ages in the Township. Typical activities include community service projects, camping, special events, and learning new hobbies and skills. Troops for boys include Cub Scout Pack 157 for 1st through 5th graders; Boy Scouts for 6th graders and up; and for girls Daisy (Kind.), Brownies (1st-3rd grade), Junior (4th-6th grade), Cadet (7th-9th grade), and Senior (9th-12th grade) Girl Scouts.

*Youth
(Other):*

Information was also received that the French Creek Elementary School PTA (Warwick Township) sponsors a summer recreation program for the district's elementary school students.

The School District sponsors summer programs for students, grades 6th-12th, that include visiting artists and musicians, and seminars.

Adults:

The primary provider of adult activities in the Township is the Owen J. Roberts School District through its Adult School. A variety of educational and hobby-oriented activities are available. The coordinator, however, does not offer sports-oriented activities like basketball leagues, aerobics, and volleyball. Sessions are offered in the fall and winter with courses varying in length depending on the program. Activities vary with the season and program response. For example, in the Fall 1991 brochure, almost 29 of the 60 programs offered were new. Fees vary from \$15-\$45, depending on a program's length and needed supplies. Below is a list of programs offered during the Fall of 1991.

Arts -- Basic Drawing

Crafts -- Chair Caning, Tinsmithing, Flower Arranging, Basic Floral Design, Basketry, Cake Decorating, Papermaking, and Quilting

Education -- Computer Classes, Blueprint Reading, Refresher English and Math, German, SAT Preparation, Speedwriting, Typing, Accounting, Introduction to Psychology, Engineer-in-Training Review, Coaching the Mature Driver, Premarital Agreements, College Education Funding, Family Budgeting, Genealogy, Money Management, Signing Exact English, Reincarnation, and Tax Reduction Strategies

Hobbies -- Football for Women, Joy of Juggling, Banjo, Beginner Sewing, Bridge, Hot Air Ballooning, Watergardening, Antiques, The Magic of Plants, Woodworking, Cooking, Creative Color Darkroom, Cake Decorating, and Winemaking

Self-Improvement -- Color Image and You, Finishing Touch, and Wardrobe Planning

Other -- Ballroom Dancing, Massage, and Yoga

Information was also received that at the East Coventry Elementary School there is a Men's Recreational Basketball night held throughout the school year at least once a week. There is no fee charged and the activity is organized by a resident of the Township.

*Senior
Citizens:*

All of the programs sponsored by the Adult School are open to seniors. Except for one or two programs, none were specifically for senior citizens. A few Township churches may be offering programs for its senior members, but this information was not available.

*Special
Events:*

The Parkerford Women's Club is very supportive of Township activities and interested in community service projects. For the Township, this club offers or co-sponsors several special events. These include:

Park Day -- Generally, the first Saturday in June, the Park and Recreation Committee works with this club to host the annual Park Day at Towpath Park. Park Day is sponsored to encourage residents to visit Towpath Park and have some family fun. 1991's event featured free hot dogs and birchbeer, game booths, face painting, and a National Guard display. Sponsored annually since 1989, the event draws from 200-400 attendees.

Easter Egg Hunt -- The club sponsors this annual event, usually held at the East Coventry Elementary School.

Children's Programs -- The club sponsors two, one-hour childrens' programs held at Towpath Park during the summer months on a weekday morning. Programs are family-oriented, usually a play, magic show, or storytelling. Refreshments are provided after the event.

Bike Rodeo -- In conjunction with the Township's Police Department, the club helps provide this event. The rodeo is for school-age children and is held on a Saturday in the spring.

Aquatics:

The Owen J. Roberts School District sponsors a comprehensive aquatic program throughout the school year. Participants must be residents of the district and varying fees are charged. Activities include:

Recreational swimming -- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings, 7-10:00 p.m.

Children's swimming lessons -- Monday through Friday evenings, 5:30, 6:00, and 6:30 sessions

Exercise -- Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7-9:00 p.m. with one hour of exercise in the gym and one in the pool

Other courses like lifeguard training and diving clinics are sponsored depending on interest.

Friends of the Arts:

A non-profit organization, the Owen J. Roberts Friends of the Arts was organized to achieve these five objectives:

1. To promote the truth that the arts belong to all people.
2. To actively encourage the strengthening and expansion of the related arts in the schools and the community.
3. To provide high quality programs for the total community which will enrich their lives.
4. To foster an awareness and encourage appreciation of human achievement evident in the arts.
5. To encourage individual and community support of the arts.

This organization sponsors a variety of assemblies at the schools, field trips, a children's concert series, craft shows, scholarships, bus trips, art classes, and contests.

Analysis of Available Programs

Generally, available programs appear to be quite limited, particularly for preschoolers and senior citizens. This is not uncommon for small, rural communities. However, without a needs assessment or survey of residents it is difficult to access what residents would like the Township to offer, if anything. During this planning process, residents did not come forth and express the need for additional public programs as a high priority. The following observations, therefore, are more speculation based on experience with similar communities and discussions with representatives from the organizations mentioned above.

While the Adult School provides a very comprehensive program, the present coordinator has experienced difficulties attracting School District residents. Almost 70% of participants come from the Phoenixville, Spring City, and Pottstown areas. She has not been able to determine why district residents are not interested.

Several other observations can be drawn from this inventory.

1. Though there are no Township athletic associations, Township youth can participate in both Coventry Little League and Coventry Soccer's program. These organizations are most likely meeting the youth baseball and soccer needs of the area. However, the inventory did not produce any youth programs during the winter months, particularly basketball or indoor soccer.
2. Summer recreation programs for Township youth appear to be limited unless residents are willing to travel to the French Creek Elementary School.
3. The Adult School provides a very comprehensive selection of classes and lessons. However, it does not provide more active-oriented activities like aerobics, basketball, and volleyball. The coordinator has purposely not provided such programs so as not to compete with area sports organizations. Except for youth sports, this inventory did not produce any organized sports activities for adults in the Township. Organized adult sports such as softball and baseball leagues are available in North Coventry.
4. With a growing senior population, and essentially no programs provided for this age group, this may be an age group that would benefit from public recreation opportunities.
5. There is a good selection of area special events provided by the Township, Women's Club, and Friends of the Arts.

General Program Recommendations

Throughout this planning process, no residents nor Study Committee members advocated that increasing public recreation programs is a high priority. While Park and Recreation Committee members would like to see more programs offered, the time and ability of its members are limited. Over the next few years, preservation of land and implementing park acquisition and development projects will probably consume the Committee's efforts. However, in the event members's interests or Township needs change, there are several initiatives that the Committee could take to begin developing a more comprehensive recreation program. These initiatives include:

1. **Conduct a needs assessment (survey) of residents to gauge public opinion on whether residents want programs and what they would like to see offered.** Such a survey was not done as part of this Plan. There may be residents interested and supportive of additional programs, but this was never brought to the Study Committee's attention.
2. **Meet with the School District's Adult Education Coordinator to evaluate the possibility of working through the District to increase active recreation programs.** As an unwritten policy, this coordinator has stayed away from offering adult recreation programs so that the district does not compete with area park and recreation boards, athletic associations, private business, etc. Possibly in the district as a whole there are sufficient adult sports, leagues, and exercise programs but they do not appear to be available in East Coventry. Further investigation and discussion is needed with this coordinator to analyze how the Township and the district could expand program offerings at East Coventry Elementary School.
3. **The Township should meet with both North and South Coventry and East Vincent townships to discuss expanding regional programs and services.** All of these municipalities rely on volunteers to provide park and recreation services. By working together, area park and recreation committees may be able to accomplish far more. Ideally, developing a Regional Recreation Department for the area would provide the means to hire a full-time staff person. This staff person could provide regional programs as well as staff support to help participating municipalities implement their plans. The Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, through its Recreational Rehabilitation and Improvement Act (RIRA) Program offers a Circuit Rider grant component that provides funding to hire a staff person that would administer a regional department.
4. **The Township should consider starting a summer recreation program.** The first issue that needs to be resolved is to receive more information on what type of program is being held at French Creek Elementary School. A Park and Recreation Committee member may want to contact the school and visit the program this summer. If this is working successfully, possibly the program could be expanded to East Coventry Elementary School. Many park and recreation boards offer successful summer recreation programs. With a good director, the program does not require considerable volunteer time.

Typically, summer programs run seven weeks, from the end of June to early August. Some are offered only in the morning and others are all day. Activities include arts and crafts, group and individual games, special events, bus trips, guest speakers, etc. The summer events that are currently offered at Towpath Park could be incorporated into the program. A growing number of communities

charge a nominal fee for the program and some even charge a sufficient registration fee that covers all expenses.

5. **New program ideas proposed to the Park and Recreation Committee by members or interested residents should be well conceived.** Completing a program plan form helps ensure that all issues are covered before the event is held and also provides a written record for future Committee members to organize the event. The Township should keep a file on all sponsored programs. The file should include this form, received publicity, budget information, and an evaluation of the program. If members change, at least new members have a "papertrail" to follow. The Committee could begin this process by starting with this year's Park Day. Figure 4 offers an example of a program plan.

**Figure 4
Sample Written Program Plan**

Date: _____	
Proposed Activity: _____	Program Title: _____
Purpose of the Program (Desired Outcomes):	
1.	
2.	
Program	
Date(s): _____	Time: _____ Location: _____
Publicity:	
Posters--date up:	
Press Release Dates:	1.
	2.
	3.
Other possibilities (letters, group contacts, meetings, radio, TV, etc.)	

Expected Number of Participants: _____	Average Age of Participants: _____
Schedule of Events (Description): _____	

Equipment Needed: _____	

Staff/volunteer Needs: _____	

Budget	
Expenses:	Revenues:
Personnel \$ _____	Participant fees: \$ _____
Program Supplies \$ _____	Tax support: \$ _____
Facility/Equipment Rental \$ _____	Donations: \$ _____
Publicity \$ _____	Other: \$ _____
Projected Costs: \$ _____	Projected Revenues: \$ _____
Cost to participant: \$ _____	

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Administrative Practices

Evaluating the Township's park and recreation administrative functions required a review of present policies and procedures, personnel practices, public relations efforts, and cooperative relationships with other organizations. Since the Township does not have any staff that performs solely park and recreation functions, the analysis of personnel practices focuses on the initiatives of East Coventry's Park and Recreation Committee. Following this review, suggestions are provided to help the Township expand its park and recreation services in an effective and efficient manner.

Current Practices

Personnel: The overall administration of park and recreation services begins with the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The BOS authorizes the hiring of any full-time or part-time personnel. The Secretary-Treasurer, a full-time employee appointed by the BOS, is the primary staff person responsible for administering the Township's day-to-day services, including park and recreation activities. Any issues that the Park and Recreation Committee would like addressed by the BOS are first directed to the Secretary-Treasurer. This staff person also handles the advertising of the Committee's monthly meetings and any other administrative issues requested by the Committee. As discussed in the maintenance section, the Road Crew Foreman is also responsible for the daily maintenance of Towpath Park.

East Coventry Park and Recreation Committee: In 1984, the BOS appointed five members to serve on an Ad-Hoc Recreation Committee. This Committee's purpose was to develop the Township's first park and recreation plan and Towpath Park. Typically, ad-hoc committees are only organized for a specific task and then, disbanded when the task is completed. The Recreation Committee was never disbanded and has continued to perform essential services for the Township since its creation. There is no record that the Township converted this Committee's ad-hoc status to an "official" Township committee appointed by a resolution or ordinance.

While on-going efforts and new initiatives have varied over the years, since the Fall of 1991, the development of this Plan has consumed the members' time. Membership has also increased to seven members who serve a five-year term. The present membership of the Committee is representative of East Coventry. There is a mixture of men and women with varying ages and interests. Lead by two members who are appointed co-chairpersons, the Committee has elected to function fairly informally. Agendas are not normally provided for its meetings nor has the Committee developed any by-laws. An appointed secretary takes meeting minutes and these are distributed to the BOS.

Policies and Procedures: The Township has few established park and recreation-related policies or procedures. Most recreation activities are sponsored very informally without the assessment of fees and charges. If groups wish to reserve the pavilion at Towpath Park, they can do so by completing a form. A \$25.00 donation is required for this reservation. Groups interested in playing volleyball can borrow a net at the Township building. To ensure the net is returned, the Township requires a \$50.00 refundable fee. Other Committee activities like Park Day and the two summer special events at Towpath Park are open to the general public and interested attendees do not need to register with the Township prior to attending.

Publicity: Park and recreation-related publicity is handled by the Park and Recreation Committee members or the Secretary-Treasurer. Sometimes the Committee's secretary publicizes events, but often this is handled by the member responsible for a specific project. The Committee advertises its activities in local newspapers and, for Park Day, distributed flyers throughout the community.

Coordination with Community Groups: Prior to developing this Plan, the Parker Ford Women's Club was the primary group that assisted the Committee with its recreational programs. The recent planning process precipitated the need to expand communication to area athletic associations, the Owen J. Roberts Adult Education Coordinator and local scout troops.

Recommended Administrative Improvements

Since 1984, the Park and Recreation Committee's number of accomplishments has fluctuated. The development of Towpath Park was a very exciting Township project and maintained the interest of appointed Committee members for several years. Following the completion of this park's projects, the Committee appeared to have lost its focus and several of its more dedicated members. In the late 1980's, more interested members were appointed and this renewed enthusiasm lead to the development of Park Day. All members were appointed to this Plan's Study Committee and attendance has been excellent.

Volunteer park and recreation boards or committees function best when they have a purpose and support from their elected officials. Most residents who are willing to volunteer their time are busy people with little interest in "wasting" time. As long as their time is well spent, they will continue to be a vital and productive committee member. Also, in general, many board members get very frustrated when projects appear to move extremely slowly or they perceive that elected officials do not support their efforts. The most effective park and recreation boards tend to be ones that know their purpose, are working on specific projects, and are supported by interested elected officials. A show of interest by elected officials does not necessarily mean that they must increase funding, often their periodic attendance at meeting is sufficient.

Implementation of this Plan will be the Park and Recreation Committee's next challenge. Results can be forthcoming if the Committee continues to establish its direction and works together on common goals. To assist with these efforts, there are specific administrative tasks, successfully implemented by many park and recreation boards, that East Coventry's Park and Recreation Committee can initiate to help increase its effectiveness. These include:

- a. Develop a set of by-laws that states the Committee's functions, the roles and responsibilities of its officers, how committees are created, and how members are appointed or removed.

- b. To give this Committee the same status as its Planning Commission or Zoning Hearing Board, the Township should pass a resolution or ordinance that officially appoints a Park and Recreation Board and defines its general duties.
- c. The appointed Committee secretary should keep a monthly meeting attendance record and, at the end of the year, provide a report on each member's record. If a member has had poor attendance, a Committee member should be appointed to contact this individual to determine his or her continued interest. Members who lose their interest or can no longer fulfill their Committee roles and responsibilities should be replaced by new ones.
- d. When needed, the Park and Recreation Committee should establish project sub-committees. The Plan contains extensive recommendations from further development of Towpath Park to developing a network of greenways. Each project will take time. In order to accomplish multiple projects, the Committee could establish one or two sub-committees. For example, to begin establishing the Pigeon Creek greenway, the Committee could appoint three members. These members would meet when needed, preferably separate from the regular monthly Committee meetings, to develop a strategic plan for this greenway development to occur. The Greenway Committee would then present its findings or recommendations to the entire Committee for its final recommendation to the BOS.
- e. To help increase Committee accomplishments at its monthly meetings, one of the co-chairpersons could be appointed to develop a meeting agenda. Members who wish to discuss new items, should contact this individual before the agenda is distributed. If the agenda is too full, then this issue should be moved to the next month. At monthly meetings, new business that is not on the agenda should also not be discussed, but set aside until the next meeting.
- f. Periodically, the Committee will have vacancies and should look for prospective members who would bring a different orientation or contribution. For example, a resident affiliated with one of the area's athletic associations would be a good addition.
- g. When new members are appointed, one member should be appointed as his or her "mentor." A mentor's responsibilities could include providing a tour of Towpath Park, and a general review of this Plan and Committee responsibilities.

- h. On an annual basis, preferably at the January meeting, the Committee should review what it accomplished the previous year and develop new objectives. These objectives should be realistic and specifically identify when they are to be completed and by which member.
- i. The Committee should keep the BOS informed. Some boards do this by appointing a representative who attends the BOS's monthly meetings, reports on the Board's activities, and presents requests or issues that require Township action. Another method is to continue having a liaison from the BOS who attends the Committee's monthly meetings. The appointment of a supervisor to this Plan's Study Committee was extremely beneficial to ensuring that the Plan's recommendations would be better received by the entire BOS.
- j. The Park and Recreation Committee should NEVER FORGET WHO ITS CUSTOMERS ARE. Members should take the time to talk to residents, neighbors, and friends and ask them what they like or dislike about the Township's parks and recreation services. Committee members should be ambassadors of the Township's park and recreation system and also work with community groups to keep the channels of communication open.

Several other general recommendations include:

1. *Develop a network of area park and recreation boards within the Owen J. Roberts School District that meet on a regular basis.* During the public hearing, representatives from East Vincent's Park and Recreation Board attended and expressed their willingness to work with East Coventry on joint park and recreation projects. This could be easily facilitated by the developing of a Regional Recreation Coalition. One member of each local park and recreation board could be appointed to meet with this coalition on a quarterly basis. Possibly with the assistance from the Chester County Department of Parks and Recreation or Planning Commission, County staff could help organize the group and define its purpose.

Also, the requirements of this Plan are extensive and implementation efforts would greatly benefit from the on-going expertise of a professionally trained park and recreation staff person. Some smaller municipalities throughout the State have joined together to fund a full-time park and recreation staff person who provides administrative and technical assistance to several local municipalities within one school district. This staff person could help administer and develop open space preservation policies, expand program offerings, coordinate the activities of the local park and recreation boards, develop the park and recreation budget, inspect facilities, write grant applications, and solicit donations.

2. *Park and Recreation Policies Should be Recommended by the Park and Recreation Committee.* Just as a reminder, all policy-related issues, park and recreation-related complaints, resident concerns, and new projects should be referred first to the Park and Recreation Committee for its review. Any such issues that are brought up at a BOS meeting should be referred to the Committee before any Township action is taken.
3. *Continue to Improve Communication with Community Groups.* The Park and Recreation Committee needs to keep informed about local community groups that are providing recreation programs. By improving these relationships, particularly with area athletic associations, the Township may benefit from their assistance when it is ready to develop a more active recreation oriented community park. Efforts need to be coordinated so that they are not duplicated unnecessarily.
4. *Park and Recreation Board Members Should Become a Member of the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, Inc. (PRPS).* PRPS is a non-profit advocacy group for park and recreation concerns in the State. By becoming a member, the Committee will receive a quarterly publication with timely information on park and recreation topics, periodic mailings on upcoming workshops, and be eligible for lower costs to attend one-day workshops or its annual conference. Every other year, PRPS holds its annual conference in Lancaster. The close proximity of this conference provides an excellent opportunity within a short driving distance for Committee members to meet other volunteers with similar interests and attend sessions that are provided specifically for volunteer board members. Many larger communities, once very similar to East Coventry, have already developed their parks and started programs. By talking with their representatives, Committee members can bring back new information that could greatly assist local initiatives.

EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS

Expenditure History and Comparison

Two techniques were used to provide an indication if East Coventry Township is providing funding sufficient to meet the needs of its residents. Techniques used evaluated past funding trends, and compared East Coventry to other similar municipalities in Chester and County. This analysis concludes with a recommended operating budget for the Township to provide desired parks and recreation services. To supplement the Township's budget, alternative sources of tax revenue are provided along with a recommended process for the Township to develop a successful mandatory dedication program. While development has been minimal in the Township for the past several years, this program should be in place in the event any new subdivisions are submitted.

Past Funding Trends: Table 14 reveals East Coventry's culture and recreation budget over the past five years. A review of this data reveals several trends. These include:

- The Township's financial support has fluctuated from a low of \$1,696 to a high of \$17,282. This fluctuation possibly indicates that the park and recreation budget has been very project oriented. When the Park and Recreation Committee was active and requested funds, the Supervisors provided some financial support.
- The Township's record keeping of park and recreation expenditures has improved. Park Day expenses were separated from the more general equipment and supplies category. This provides the mechanism for the Committee to better track how much they have allocated and how much was spent.
- For programs, the Township has been willing to increase its support. Funding for the summer program has doubled since 1989 and the Supervisors were also willing to increase funding for Park Day.
- 1989 was the only year that the Township budgeted for capital improvements.

Table 14
Five-Year History of Park and Recreation
Expenditures and Revenues

Budget Year	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992*
Summer Programs (\$)	na	250	265	375	500
Egg Hunt (\$)	na	750	750	800	800
Cornerstone of the Arts Contribution (\$)	na	250	250	250	250
Equipment supplies (\$)	na	4,494**	1,233**	500	500
Improvements (\$)	na	-0-	4,567	-0-	5,000
Portable toilet rental (\$)	na	385	330	385	450
Capital Constr. pavilion (\$)	na	11,153	-0-	-0-	-0-
Park Day (\$)	na	na	na	538	700
Open Space Plan update (\$)	na	na	na	310	3000
Electricity (\$)	na	na	na	na	120
Total Operating Budget (\$)	1,696	17,282	7,395	3,158	11,320

na = not available

*Budget years 1988 through 1991 are for actual expenditures while 1992 is the Township's proposed budget.

**Includes Park Day expenses

Comparison to Other Municipalities: A review of municipalities in Chester County revealed that there are numerous second-class townships similar in population to East Coventry. Thirteen townships were selected to analyze how supportive East Coventry has been for park and recreation services as compared to other similar municipalities. Populations ranged from a low of 3,922 residents to a high of 6,143.

Generally, in 1990, East Coventry provided far more funding than most of the identified municipalities. For the Township's population and very low total operating budget (as compared to others), the Township's elected officials have demonstrated its support. Table 15 provides this comparison from which these additional conclusions can be drawn:

- In 1990, East Coventry provided more than \$4,000 less than the average funding for identified municipalities. When considering the median amount of 1990 expenditures as compared to the mean (average), East Coventry provided substantially more funding, \$7,395 as compared to \$3,656. Sometimes the median statistic is more realistic since the extreme numbers are not averaged into the calculation. Valley Township's contribution of \$75,059 pulled up the average considerably.
- Out of compared municipalities, East Coventry had the lowest 1990 total operating budget for municipal services, but provided far more financial support for parks and recreation services than most municipalities.
- While East Coventry is below the average for per capita spending on parks and recreation, there are only four municipalities that have a higher appropriation. These are Upper Uwchlan, East Pikeland, Valley, and Honey Brook Townships.
- While not shown on the data, this same report revealed that only Upper Uwchlan provided capital funds for parks and recreation projects in 1990. Its capital appropriation was \$5,550.

Summary of Comparisons: Based strictly on Table 15's comparison, the Township's current operating budget is above the typical Chester County second class township with a population of approximately 4,500 residents. However, the budget year analyzed (1990) was prior to Chester County's grant program. At that time, it was obviously not uncommon for some municipalities to provide little or no funding for parks and recreation services. Through this grant program, however, County residents and municipalities appear to be more interested and supportive of increased preservation efforts and park and recreation services. The Township is already ahead of many municipalities and has anticipated its residents' needs. Therefore, the Plan recommends that the Township should continue concentrating on what it wants to accomplish for its residents and provide sufficient operating monies to support capital

improvement initiatives. Maintaining a more stable source of funding for a park and recreation operating budget from \$10,000 to \$15,000 is recommended. This does not include capital expenditures.

The Park and Recreation Board will also be exploring the possibility of obtaining an agreement from the Board of Supervisors to carry-over monies that were not spent from one year to the next. Presently, unspent monies are "lost" from one budget year to the next.

Table 15
Comparison of Spending

Municipality	1990 Population	1990 Park and Recreation Exp. (\$)	1990 Total Operating Budget (\$)	1990 P&R Expenditures as a % of Op. Budget	1990 Parks and Recreation Per Capita (\$)
E. Fallowfield	4,433	4,773	586,600	0.8	1.08
E. Marborough	4,781	3,000	750,727	0.4	.63
E. Pikeland	5,825	25,046	884,419	2.8	4.3
E. Vincent	4,161	675	620,284	0.1	.16
Honey Brook	5,449	22,759	546,903	4.2	4.18
Kennett	4,624	4,312	735,759	0.6	.93
London Grove	3,922	-0-	626,972	0	0
New Garden	5,430	1,950	1,098,431	0.2	.36
Schuylkill	5,538	-0-	928,783	0	0
Upper Uwchlan	4,396	19,890	990,669	2.0	4.5
Valley	4,007	76,059	1,439,434	5.3	18.98
W. Brandywine	5,984	1,600	1,059,619	.15	.27
W. Caln	6,143	-0-	681,100	0	0
East Coventry	4,450	7,395	501,057	1.5	1.66
Average (Median Score)	4,939	11,961 (3,656)	817,911 (743,243)	1.29	2.4

*Source: Department of Community Affairs, Local Government Financial Reports, 1990.

Potential Sources of Funding

Considering that East Coventry is still a small and fairly rural community, its ability to raise considerable local funds is limited. While the Township is committed to providing quality municipal services and responding to the expressed needs of its residents, there are budget limitations. This is an issue that the Township will have to explore further. Many municipalities have resorted to securing alternative sources of funding to partially cover operating costs and assist with the need for large capital expenditures. This resourcefulness has enabled these communities to increase services without placing a strain on their municipal budget or increasing taxes. Provided below are examples of various sources of funding that are currently being tapped throughout Pennsylvania. Examples range from sources that can offset operating costs to ones for capital improvements.

1. User Fees and Charges

Over the past ten years, an increasing number of municipalities have begun to charge nominal fees for participation in recreation programs or use of park facilities. Most municipalities with full-time park and recreation professionals are charging fees for some programs and requiring non-residents to pay a higher fee. The advantages to charging fees are that they offset operating and maintenance costs, and allow municipalities to expand their recreation program offerings, control program enrollment, and project an image of fiscal responsibility. Many park and recreation departments have also found that by instituting a fee-base system, participants take the programs more seriously and attendance increases.

There are several ongoing concerns or disadvantages to charging user fees. These include: 1) only people who can afford to pay the fees can participate; 2) programs are offered just because they make money; 3) municipalities begin to offer programs that compete with the private sector; 4) residents feel they are being double taxed; and 5) additional administration costs may offset the assessing of fees. Some communities have addressed the greatest concern, concern #1, by awarding scholarships or providing "Recreation Passes." For residents receiving food stamps or other government subsidizes, the Township could provide a pass that provides free access to recreation programs.

Presently, the Township only collects a donation for use of Towpath Park's pavilion. No fee is assessed for any of the summer activities. If the Township would like to initiate additional recreation programs, the Park and Recreation Committee should research the possibility of charging a nominal fee to offset program costs.

2. Rental Fees

These are payments made for the privilege of exclusive use of public facilities. Examples include community garden plots, picnic kits, party rooms, paddle boats, etc. Many communities develop picnic kits and rent these to groups reserving their park pavilions for a \$5.00 to \$10.00 fee.

3. Sales Revenue

These are revenues received from the operation of concessions or other types of retail operations. Possibly on Park Day, the Committee could sell merchandise (t-shirts, hats, souvenirs) and food items to recycle proceeds to develop its greenway along the River. Park Day would be an excellent opportunity to educate the public on the value of the greenway and develop increased public support.

4. Financial Support from Area Businesses

A very simple public relations brochure could be developed and distributed to local civic groups, athletic associations, and Township businesses to show what the Township provides and what improvements are needed. This brochure could be a summary of the Plan's recommendations or even a promotional flyer for each desired park project. Businesses could select the project that is of most interest to owners or their employees.

Park and recreation boards are often more successful than elected officials at securing such funding. To solicit funds, members should meet with business leaders, present the available projects, and discuss the potential for a general park donation or construction of a specific facility. Credit should be given to all businesses that donate funds by publicizing in the local newspapers. Placing contributors on a park sign is another popular method.

5. Gift Catalogs and Tree Planting Programs

Similar to the above discussion (#4), donating a tree in memory of a loved one or developing a gift catalog program are two popular methods that municipalities

have used to solicit needed park improvements. The difference to #4's source is that this method can more specifically target individual residents using less resources. Some residents may be willing to buy a park bench or plant a tree. Both #4 and #5 require active promotion and solicitation by park and recreation board members. Placing brochures in a municipal building will not generate interest. Boards have to market and promote these programs throughout their communities.

6. County and State Funding

While receiving county and state funding is not easy, there are still monies available. Through the Chester County's Heritage Park and Open Space Grant Program, two funding rounds per year (November and May) have been advertised since 1991. The Township needs to be cognizant that this source of funding could be limited. If the Township could raise the 50% match required, the Committee should pursue a much larger park development or acquisition grant during 1993 or 1994.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs still funds park and recreation projects through its Recreational Improvement Rehabilitation Act (RIRA) Program. This program was the source of funding to develop some of Towpath Park and the first park and recreation plan. Most likely, funds will continue to be available, with open application periods occurring in the Fall. When pursuing RIRA funds, communities that submit applications for creative projects with private sources of funding, intergovernmental cooperation, and demonstrating a strong community need are more likely to be selected. The greenway development project or acquisition of park land would be appropriate projects for the Township to seek RIRA funds.

The Department of Environmental Resources (DER) provides funding for tree planting and training through its America the Beautiful Urban and Community program. Funding opportunities occur twice a year, usually in the spring and fall. Administered by DER's Bureau of Forestry, this program can mobilize the community to get involved with a park project. This type of grant would enable the Township to perform needed landscaping at a nominal cost while also providing on-site training for park maintenance staff.

Mandatory Dedication of Park Land

One mechanism that many municipalities use to ensure that future residents have adequate park and recreation opportunities is to require developers to dedicate public open space within proposed developments. While the Township does have a very general provision in its Subdivision and Land Development ordinance, the current language does not meet the most recent amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Many municipalities that were not prepared for growth to occur in the 1980's lost a tremendous opportunity to receive open space or a recreation contribution because its ordinances and plans were not up to date. It is therefore essential for the Township to expediently enact a mandatory dedication ordinance following the adoption of this Plan. The ordinance, in combination with the Plan, provides the mechanism by which the Township only has to accept land that meets its standards and criteria and can discuss with developers alternative options to an open space contribution.

In 1989, the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act. No. 170 of 1988* went into effect. This legislation provides municipalities with the authority to require the dedication of public land for recreation purposes. To comply with this legislation, the Township must meet these requirements:

1. Adopt a recreation plan that establishes open space standards and park service areas, identifies areas in need of open space, and includes a capital improvement program.
2. Develop a mandatory dedication ordinance that contains definite standards for determining the portion of a development to be dedicated and the amount of any fee to be paid in lieu of land.
3. Create a separate interest bearing account for the placement of any collected fees.

By officially adopting this Plan, the Township complies with the first requirement. Mandatory dedication requirements and standards are recommended below.

Calculating Land Requirements: One popular method to determine how much open space should be required in a subdivision is through a per dwelling unit calculation. The Township has established a goal of providing 8 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. To derive a per unit calculation, the 1,000 population figure is divided by the Township's 1990 U.S. Census average household size of 2.81. The following calculation results:

$$1,000/2.81 \text{ persons per dwelling unit} = 356 \text{ dwellings}$$

Dividing this number by the desired 8 acres per 1,000 residents goal yields this amount of land:

$$8 \text{ ac.}/356 \text{ dwellings} = .02 \text{ acres}$$

Therefore, on a subdivision of 50 homes, this .02 acre requirement would net 1 acre of park land.

The Township needs be aware that it will require a very large subdivision (250 units) to meet the Township's desired 5-acre neighborhood park size. Without public sewer and considering the Township's current zoning and available large tracts of land, this large of a subdivision is unlikely. With smaller subdivision, the Township will want to pursue other alternatives such as accepting desired wetlands and floodplain along Pigeon Creek, a fee contribution or construction of facilities.

Fee Calculations: As an alternative to land dedication, the developer can pay a fee. This approach can only be used in those instances where the developer agrees to the alternative. The Township can not deny a subdivision plan if the developer refuses an alternative to open space dedication. To convert the open space requirement to a fee, the Township should require the fair market value of the land to be dedicated. Using the above example, for a 50-unit subdivision, the developer should provide the Board of Supervisors with an appraisal of the 1.0-

acre parcel. Therefore, if the land was appraised at \$30,000 per acre, then the Township would accept this amount as its fee in lieu of the land dedication.

Ordinance Provisions: Following adoption of this Plan, the Township should consult with its Solicitor and Engineer on the development of an ordinance that will assist with implementing the recommendations of this Plan. Specific language should follow the Township's general ordinance format. Conceptually, the ordinance should contain these provisions:

- a. That the subdivision should comply with the East Coventry's Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan and updates with regard to size and distribution of recreation areas.
- b. The specific size of the residential subdivision for which this ordinance would apply. Some municipalities require mandatory dedication for every subdivision, regardless of whether it creates two units or 100. The Township should review the "typical" subdivision request. A subdivision proposing three (3) new dwelling units is a suggested requirement.
- c. The type of land the Township will accept. This is especially critical to ensure that the Township receives open space that is conducive to its established park and open space standards. The Plan recommends that the proposed open space dedication meet these requirements:
 - Is a minimum of 2 acres in size, contiguous in shape, and has suitable topography and soil conditions for developing recreational facilities.
 - Easily and safely accessible from all areas of the subdivision with direct access to (frontage on) a public street. No roadways should traverse the site.
 - Maximum of 25% can consist of floodplain, slopes greater than 15%, wetlands, or other features that render the lot undevelopable. (The Township could accept more if the property was in a desired location for public open space.)

- d. Fee collection procedures and allocation of funds. When the developer is required to pay, the fee varies considerably across the State. There are three typical methods; one, as a condition of final approval; two, when 50% of building permits have been requested; or three, a fee is paid per building permit. The first method is recommended, but often is not well-received by the development community. This approach provides the funds upfront to begin the process of developing facilities. Also, it is much easier to track. Tying the fee to building permits can be an administrative burden.

The ordinance should state that fees will be placed in a separate, interest bearing account according to this Plan's established planning districts. Funds collected in one district and interest earned should be used for recreation projects in that district. Also, the Township needs to utilize any collected fees within three years of payment.

The ordinance should state how the fees will be used. This could simply be an agreed upon capital project from this Plan's five-year capital improvement program or for acquisition of land in high need areas (along Pigeon Creek or the River).

- e. Provisions for other alternatives. Upon agreement with the developer, private reservation of land and construction of facilities are also acceptable alternatives. Probably creating home owners associations is not in the best interests of the Township, but constructing facilities such as trail heads and paths may be most appropriate in some locations. If the Township promotes this option, the developer should present a sketch plan of such facilities, receive the Township Engineer's approval, and provide a construction cost estimate. Some communities have also placed in their ordinance specific facility standards for this option.
- f. Approval by the Park and Recreation Committee. To ensure that this Committee is not "forgotten" in the subdivision review process, as a condition of approval, the proposed requirement must meet the approval of the Park and Recreation Committee. Often, developers have to go before such boards to present their proposal and work out any compromises. This is not an unreasonable request and is in the best interest of the Township. The Park and Recreation Committee knows this Plan and what improvements are needed.

Lastly, successful use of mandatory dedication requires communication between the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and the Park and Recreation Committee. The Township needs to ensure that the submitted plans comply with its ordinance at time of preliminary approval and that the recreation option the developer is proposing is in the best interests of the Township. The Township should only accept land that meets its ordinance requirements and this Plan's recommendations. Allowing a developer to provide less than adequate land or in areas not appropriate will not provide the Township with what it needs and often creates future maintenance problems in the future. The Park and Recreation Committee should be an integral part of this process and on the distribution list of new subdivision submittals.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Summary of Key Recommendations

Chapters IV, VI and VIII contain recommended Township actions on a variety of services. Summarized in this chapter are the Plan's top recommendations. An implementation schedule, with suggested funding sources for capital projects, provides a specific timetable for the Township to follow. A general discussion of other Plan recommendations follows. For more specific information on provided recommendations, refer to Table 12 and text discussions contained throughout the Plan. This schedule and recommendations should be reviewed prior to preparing annual budgets and establishing annual objectives. Most likely, modifications will be necessary to ensure that the Plan is a flexible document; one that is able to adapt to changing economic conditions, personnel, and most importantly, the needs of Township residents.

Implementation Schedule: For capital projects, the cost estimates are based on the Township contracting out the work and paying prevailing wages. Most likely, some of the costs will appear high when compared to the development of Towpath Park. If the Township elects to perform some of the work as it did with Towpath Park, then additional projects could be completed and the capital improvement program accelerated. The Plan projects that if the Township was required to contract all needed improvements, total costs would require approximately \$308,000. Phasing these improvements over a five-year period would require an average of \$61,700 per year, with possibly \$34,400 needed each year from the Township's general fund. The Township does set aside 1 mil of tax revenue per year for capital expenditures. This amounts to about \$15,125 annually. On a yearly basis, the Park and Recreation Board should submit a capital request to the Board of Supervisors early in its budget development process to be considered as a recipient of this funding.

When the Study Committee evaluated its priorities, members determined that the Township would place a higher emphasis on land acquisition for passive parks and the development of a

greenway system throughout the Township rather than on park development. Map 12 provides a comprehensive list of this Plan's recommendations with the top priorities noted. Projects in priority order include:

1. Completion of park projects at Towpath Park.
2. Acquisition of easements along the Pigeon Creek and Schuylkill River for greenways.
3. Acquisition of 2-5 are passive parks in Districts 2, 3, and 5.
4. Acquisition of community park land more centrally located to Township residents, possibly near the present municipal building.

The Study Committee elected to consider only minimal development of a community park at this time. During the planning process, limited public input was received from residents desiring more active recreational facilities. Possibly with increased communication with area athletic associations, demand for athletic fields, in particular, will grow. The Study Committee did not expect this to occur for several years and were more concerned about the need to acquire open space and potential land for a community park.

RECREATION PLANNING DISTRICT 1

Commutability Specific Resource Recommendations:

- Preserve and protect the old Straight Creek watershed.
- Preserve and protect the low and middle ridge of the ridge.
- Work cooperatively with identified agencies to restore FISH LIPS.

Recreation Recommendations:

- Create a park, or more parks, along the Straight Creek watershed.
- All Township Parks, and a neighborhood and neighborhood park, are to be developed along the ridge.
- Community park use of the proper tract in a community park.

RECREATION PLANNING DISTRICT 2

Commutability Specific Resource Recommendations:

- Preserve the Straight Creek watershed.

Recreation Recommendations:

- Create a park, or more parks, along the Straight Creek watershed.
- All Township Parks, and a neighborhood and neighborhood park, are to be developed along the ridge.
- Community park use of the proper tract in a community park.

RECREATION PLANNING DISTRICT 4

Commutability Specific Resource Recommendations:

- Preserve and protect the old Straight Creek watershed.
- Preserve and protect the low and middle ridge of the ridge.
- Work cooperatively with identified agencies to restore FISH LIPS.

Recreation Recommendations:

- Create a park, or more parks, along the Straight Creek watershed.
- All Township Parks, and a neighborhood and neighborhood park, are to be developed along the ridge.
- Community park use of the proper tract in a community park.

RECREATION PLANNING DISTRICT 3

Commutability Specific Resource Recommendations:

- Preserve the Pigeon Creek Watershed.
- Preserve and protect the low and middle ridge of the ridge.
- Work cooperatively with identified agencies to restore FISH LIPS.

Recreation Recommendations:

- Create a park, or more parks, along the Pigeon Creek watershed.
- All Township Parks, and a neighborhood and neighborhood park, are to be developed along the ridge.
- Community park use of the proper tract in a community park.

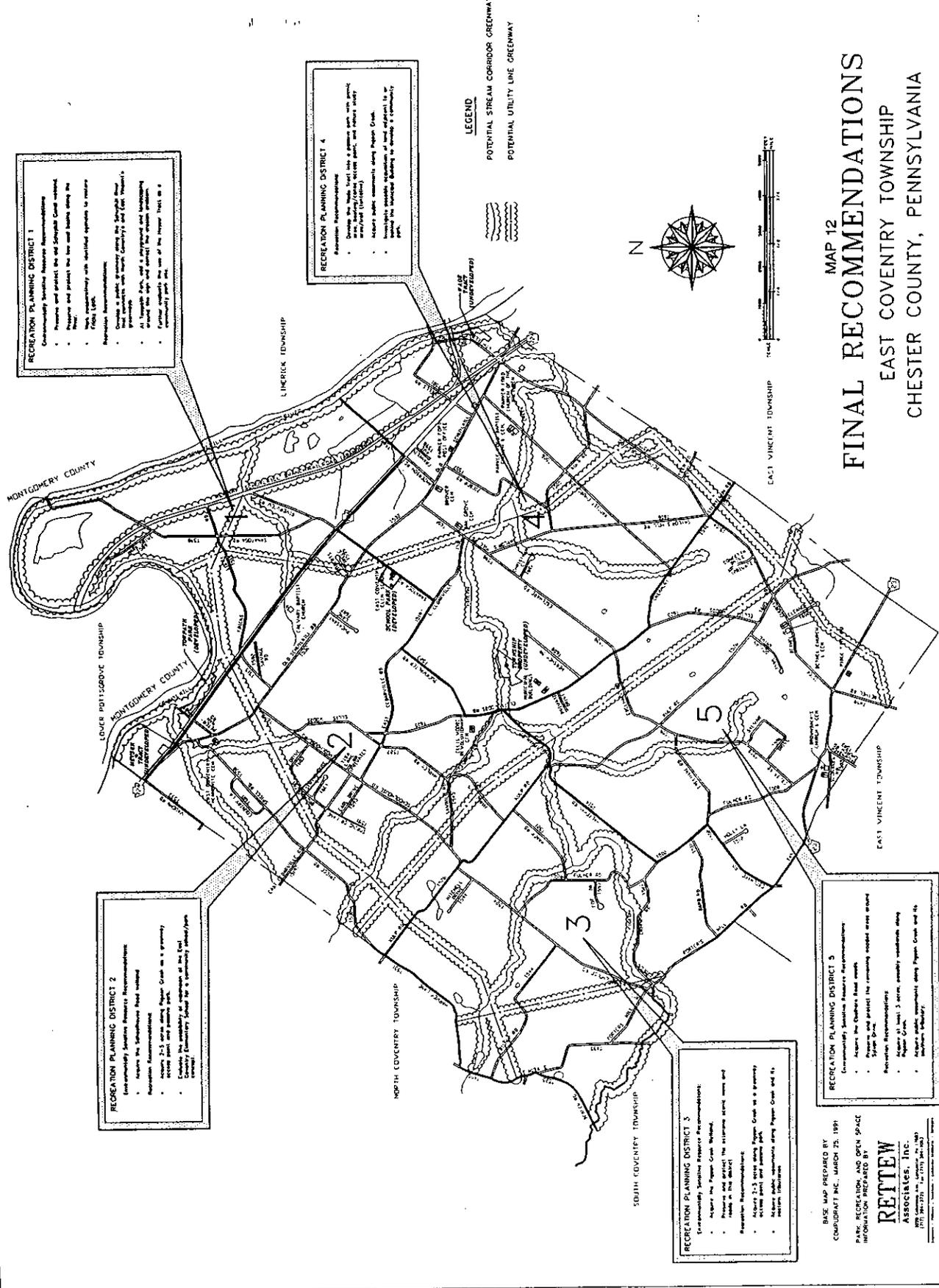
RECREATION PLANNING DISTRICT 5

Commutability Specific Resource Recommendations:

- Preserve the Straight Creek watershed.

Recreation Recommendations:

- Create a park, or more parks, along the Straight Creek watershed.
- All Township Parks, and a neighborhood and neighborhood park, are to be developed along the ridge.
- Community park use of the proper tract in a community park.



MAP 12

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

BASE MAP PREPARED BY
 COMBUSTANT INC., MARCH 25, 1991

PARK, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE
 INFORMATION PREPARED BY
RETTEW
 ASSOCIATES, INC.

1000 LANTANA DRIVE, LANTANA, FL 33462
 (407) 885-1100

JANUARY 3, 1992

**Table 16
Capital Project Implementation Schedule**

District	Project Description	Cost	Year	Funding Source
1	Towpath Park •Develop playground.	\$20,000	1992	Chester County Small Projects Grant and \$5,000 Twp. funds
1	Towpath Park •Turn sign and add landscaping around sign.	\$ 500	1992	Township funds or donation for materials, installation scout program.
1	Towpath Park •Comply with ADA by adding hard surface path from parking lot to pavilion and adding handicapped parking sign.	\$ 1,000	1993	Township Road Dept. is planning on performing this task.
1	Towpath Park •Add Interpretative signage	\$ 500	1993	Township funds or donations.
1	Towpath Park •Install more permanent restrooms such as pre-fab. holding tank and install an accessible drinking fountain.	\$10,000	1994	Township funds or donations.
2	Wade Tract Planning: •Wetlands Delineation (\$2,500), Survey (\$1,000) and Master Site Plan revisions for passive park development (\$3,000).	\$ 6,500	1995	Township funds
2	Wade Tract development: •Paths: 5'wide x 1500 lf = \$9,100 •Site amenities (benches, trash receptacles, sign) = \$5,000 •Boardwalk footbridge through wetlands = \$5,800 •Small picnic shelter and amenities = \$15,000 •Parking area (15 spaces, gravel) = \$15,000 •Boat ramp = \$13,000	\$ 63,000	1996	50% Township funds supplemented by state or county grant.
2	Heyser Tract Planning: •Master Site Plan for Community Park (survey plus plan)	\$ 15,000	1994	Township Funds

**Table 16 (Cont.)
Capital Project Implementation Schedule**

District	Project Description	Cost	Year	Funding Source
4	<p>Municipal Building Property</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land acquisition 10 acres, some floodplain and wetlands @ \$2,000/acre Developable property @ \$30,000/acre <p>● Master Site Plan (20 acres, existing property, plus added property, survey plus plan)</p>	<p>\$100-150,000</p> <p>\$12,000</p>	<p>1993</p> <p>1994</p>	<p>Township funds and pursue county and/or state grants.</p>
2,3,5	<p>General land acquisition contingency fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquire 2-5 acres in Dist. 2 ● Acquire 2-5 acres in Dist. 3 ● Acquire 3 acres in Dist. 5 <p>\$1500-\$2000/acre for wetlands/floodplain, less developable property along Pigeon Creek</p>	<p>\$25,000</p>	<p>1993-1996</p>	<p>Funds should be set aside in a contingency fund. If development occurs, mandatory dedication could be a source.</p>

Table 17
Summary Chart by Year

Project Description	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Towpath Park	\$20,500 (playground)	\$ 1,500 (signage)	10,000 (restrooms)		
Municipal Building Property		\$125,000		\$ 12,000 (design)	
Heyser Tract			\$15,000 (design)	\$30,000 (phase 1)	
Wade Tract				\$ 6,500 (design)	\$63,000 (develop)
General Land Acquisition		\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250
Total	\$20,500	\$132,750	\$31,250	\$54,750	\$69,250
Alternative Sources	\$15,000	\$ 65,625	\$ 3,125	\$18,125	\$ 34,625
Twp. Share	\$ 5,500	\$ 67,125	\$28,125	\$36,625	\$34,625

Plan Recommendations Planning and Administrative Issues

Environmental Resource Protection and Preservation:

- In 1993, the Planning Commission should update the Township's 1966 Comprehensive Plan to more accurately reflect conservation needs, and the desired form of growth which will enhance the community's character.
- Following completion of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission should amend its Zoning Ordinance to implement these recommended open space regulatory actions:
 - A cluster zoning provision that provides a clear incentive for developers and preserves greater open space and environmentally sensitive areas.
 - The creation of effective agricultural zoning that directs residential growth to desired locations.
 - The increased protection of areas with steep slopes and soils which are highly susceptible to erosion.
 - The strengthening of the Township's streambank protection standards to provide an adequate buffer area.
- Also, following the Comprehensive Plan update, the Planning Commission should amend its Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to include:
 - Revisions to address wetland protection during the grading and construction phases of development.
 - Revisions to update the Township's mandatory dedication ordinance and bring it into compliance with this Municipalities Planning Code as well as recommendations of this Plan.
- The Township should acquire through fee simple acquisition or mandatory dedication, the environmentally sensitive parcels identified through this planning process.

Park and Greenway Development:

Most park development issues were addressed in the previously provided capital improvement program. There remain, however, several more administrative issues that will impact the development program and these are provided below.

While the Park and Recreation Committee will be primarily responsible for these recommendations, active participation by the Board of Supervisors will be an asset especially for more controversial development and land acquisition issues.

- The Township should investigate further whether additional land can be acquired in the vicinity of the Municipal Building or East Coventry Elementary School for a more centrally located community park.
- The development of the proposed Schuylkill River and Pigeon Creek greenways most likely will be controversial and challenging. To initiate this process, the Township should proceed slowly and consider these recommendations:
 - Prior to acquiring any greenway areas, the Township should initiate a public relations campaign to inform residents of the Park and Recreation Committee's greenway vision, the benefits of greenways, and how it intends to work cooperatively with adjacent property owners.
 - Greenway initiatives should begin with the Schuylkill River first and develop in stages. Initially, the least publically sensitive areas should be pursued. For example, a considerable portion of the Schuylkill River is already in public ownership. The Township will probably find negotiations with the State and PECO much more successful than with residential property owners.
 - When considering a potential area for a greenway easement or acquisition, the Township should contact adjacent property owners and meet with them to hear their concerns and answer their questions.
 - The first developed greenway should be highly publicized and promoted to help convince any skeptics and particularly reluctant neighbors to cooperate on future greenway projects.
 - Land should be acquired through the cooperation and support of adjacent property owners and not through eminent domain.
 - Greenways should remain very natural with little or no development except in appropriate areas. When developing greenways, protecting the area's present wildlife and wildplants should be a top priority.

Park Maintenance:

These recommendations should be implemented by the Township's Park and Recreation Board in cooperation with the Road Department:

- Develop checklists to facilitate easy documentation of performed park maintenance work and safety checks.
- Conduct bi-annual audits of Towpath Park and any future Township park facilities.
- Design and construct new facilities with maintenance needs considered at the outset.
- Provide training opportunities for park maintenance employees on turf management, facility maintenance and construction, landscaping, etc.
- As new land is acquired and developed, hire sufficient park maintenance staff to properly maintain the park land.

Recreation Program Development:

The following should be implemented by the Township's Park and Recreation Committee:

- Conduct a needs assessment of residents to gauge public opinion on whether residents desire programs and, if so, what types of programs would they like to see offered.
- Meet with the School District's Adult Education Coordinator to evaluate the possibility of working with this coordinator to increase active recreation programs.
- Meet with both North and South Coventry and East Vincent townships, at least on a yearly basis, to discuss expanding regional recreation programs and services.
- Investigate starting a summer recreation program.

Park and Recreation Board Administration:

These are highlights of recommendations that are designed to help the Park and Recreation Committee function in a more effective and efficient manner and should be implemented by this entity:

- Request the Board of Supervisors to pass an ordinance that officially appoints a Park and Recreation Board and defines its general duties.
- On an annual basis, review what recommendations have been implemented from the Plan, and develop new objectives for the upcoming year.
- When needed, establish project sub-committees to work on specific projects.
- For monthly meetings, develop a meeting agenda.
- When filling vacancies, look for perspective members who will bring a different orientation or contribution to the Committee.
- Keep the Board of Supervisors informed of Committee activities.
- Develop a network of area park and recreation boards within the School District that meet at least on a quarterly basis.
- Strive to improve communications with community groups, particularly area athletic associations.

Financial Planning:

The Park and Recreation Committee will need to work closely with the Board of Supervisors to implement these recommendations:

- Provide an annual operating budget that keeps pace with land acquisition and capital development projects.
- Based on current development recommendations, the Township should provide a more stable source of funding of about \$10,000-\$15,000 per year.
- The Park and Recreation Committee should submit high priority projects to the Board of Supervisors for funding consideration under its capital improvement budget (1 mil that is set aside for this purpose).

- The Park and Recreation Committee should investigate further the suggested alternative sources of revenue and develop sources that are viable options.
- The Park and Recreation Committee should apply for appropriate county and state grants whenever there is an open application period.