

Overview

The Murrysville Comprehensive Plan attempts to develop a conceptual framework for “responsible” growth. To achieve such growth, the Plan seeks to balance the factors that impact “quality of life” such as the capacity of land development, public services and facilities, natural resources and community character. The Plan considers the trade-offs between the type and amount of future development and the need for responsible fiscal, environmental and infrastructure management.

In doing so, the Murrysville Comprehensive Plan provides a basis for a decision-making framework for the issues involved in the Municipality’s future development. It establishes objectives and plans to serve as strategic land use planning guidelines and forges a vision of the community’s future “build-out”.

Part One, Vision for the Future, opens with a description of Murrysville’s community vision and its objectives regarding future development. The next section details the Comprehensive Plan and its four major components: Land Use & Infrastructure, Thoroughfares, Public Facilities and Natural Resources. The major components are, essentially, the forces and systems that play the largest role in influencing municipal form. The conclusion of Part One summarizes Murrysville’s future and discusses the implications for neighboring municipalities.

Community Vision

Over the past several decades, Murrysville, like other places in the Commonwealth, has undergone a transformation from a primarily rural area to an area with a more suburban character. Such suburbanization can bring new challenges and problems such as increased traffic congestion, loss of farmland, woodlands and open space, groundwater contamination, overburdened schools and public services, increased costs for public services and a loss of community and cultural values.

Because trends indicate that the population of Murrysville will continue to grow, it is extremely important that future growth be directed in a way that preserves the qualities that make Murrysville a desirable place to live. At the same time, future development presents an opportunity to improve community shortcomings. To this end, the Murrysville Planning Commission and Steering Committee have worked to prepare a Comprehensive Plan built upon a foundation of consensus and shared vision.

This shared vision describes the fiscal, environmental and social responsibility that Murrysville will practice as it manages issues such as infrastructure, sensitive natural areas, development patterns and housing. The essence of the Comprehensive Plan, and the community vision that it details, is a responsible future for Murrysville.

Goals and objectives for the Murrysville community focus on seven main themes:

- Local Government
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Transportation

- Environmental Values
- Recreation and Open Space
- Land Use

Within each of these themes, the Murrysville Planning Commission and Steering Committee have identified a series of objectives. Objectives are statements of directives concerning Murrysville's future development as it relates to each of the identified themes. Murrysville's objectives describe how the community wishes to grow, develop and define itself in the future.

Community Objectives

Local Government

1. Plan for change in Murrysville in a manner that will protect, preserve, enhance and balance the environmental, economic, social, cultural and aesthetic values desirable in a predominately rural atmosphere.
2. Ensure that public services and facilities necessary to enhance public health, safety and welfare meet the needs of a growing community.
3. Promote meaningful citizen participation in all aspects of local government.
4. Promote greater inter-municipal cooperation in planning for the future of the region.

5. Promote realistic opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation in providing public services.
6. Diligently seek outside funding for full or partial support of necessary programs.

Housing

7. Provide suitable areas for a variety of housing choices in type, affordability, scale and size (single-family dwellings, double dwellings, multi-family, townhouses and senior citizen housing, both assisted and independent living).
8. Provide and encourage areas for higher densities only where appropriate.
9. Provide low-density housing where appropriate.
10. Establish rural housing densities that promote preservation, where appropriate.
11. Preserve historical properties by either private or public means.
12. Promote cooperation with other municipalities, school districts and agencies in the region, whenever possible, to address major issues related to housing.

Economic Development

13. Limit the number of light-industrial uses to the areas that are capable of providing the sufficient infrastructure to support these uses.
14. Promote and support commercial development in areas that are capable of providing sufficient infrastructure to support these uses.
15. Promote the economic viability of the existing and newly identified commercial and industrial districts.
16. Promote municipal support of “sustainable” economic development proposals.
17. Establish means and methods to mitigate negative financial impacts on public services or facilities, which might be caused by new development.

Transportation

18. Encourage and promote cooperation with surrounding municipalities and the Commonwealth in the development of transportation planning for the Murrysville Area.
19. Along all major thoroughfares, require any new development in the Murrysville Area to provide a buffer of open space or screening between the thoroughfare and the development.

20. Establish means and methods to mitigate through traffic in residential areas.
21. Encourage the Commonwealth to undertake a regional traffic systems study to identify any necessary improvements to hazardous intersections and the congestion created on Routes 22, 286 and 380
22. Examine on-street parking designs and uncoordinated traffic signals, which may hinder traffic flow.
23. Encourage a circulation system designed to permit ease and safety of pedestrian and bicycle movement.
24. At a minimum, ensure that roads and highways comply with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's standards.
25. Ensure that all transportation projects are not detrimental to the environment.

Environmental

26. Preserve the present character of Murrysville by continuing to concentrate commercial, industrial and residential development in areas where they already exist and in those areas where the land meets the specific use requirements.
27. Discourage development on environmentally sensitive lands including, but not limited to, areas of steep slope, aquifer recharge areas, former mining areas, woodlands, agricultural lands, wetlands and floodplains.

28. Provide for compatible uses in floodplain areas (open space, parks and recreation, etc.).
29. Review storm water management control and erosion and sedimentation control practices for adequacies.
30. Continue to support and improve current recycling efforts to a minimum of 25 percent of gross refuse tonnage.
31. Establish means and methods to mitigate potential negative environmental impacts on new development.

Recreation and Open Space

32. Provide an adequate amount of convenient recreational, open space and natural areas for the residents of the Municipality of Murrysville.
33. Recognize the needs of both active and passive recreation in the design and maintenance of recreational and open space areas.

Land Use

34. Establish “Growth Management” Areas within the Municipality that designate areas where development is encouraged to occur and areas where development is discouraged.
35. Ensure that development is consistent with the preservation of sensitive uses and areas within the Municipality through land-use controls.
36. Clarify, review and update existing zoning and subdivision ordinances, as needed, in order to assure that the users can understand and comply with them.
37. Create incentives for developers to locate new development in designated growth areas.
38. Revise land use ordinances in a manner that implements the plans and policies established by the Comprehensive Plan.
39. Revise land use regulations in a manner that makes them more easily understood by users.

Plan Components

The Municipality of Murrysville, due to its increasing population and land development, has concerns about its community character shifting from a primarily rural community to a suburban extension of Pittsburgh and Greensburg. In addition to the changes these shifts make on the community's "sense of place", the citizens of Murrysville are concerned about a range of growth problems, such as increased traffic congestion, costs and quality of public services, public education and loss of farmland, which results from development.

In order to address the impacts of development, the Comprehensive Plan examines Murrysville under its "build-out" conditions. Build-out occurs when all of Murrysville's currently vacant undeveloped and underutilized land is fully developed. In order to plan for a responsible future, the build-out condition described in this Plan carefully optimizes future land use patterns, public costs, municipal revenues, natural resource protection, civic amenities, infrastructure improvements and community character in relation to one another. The balance of these resources is based on a thorough understanding of the community's capacity to support future development.

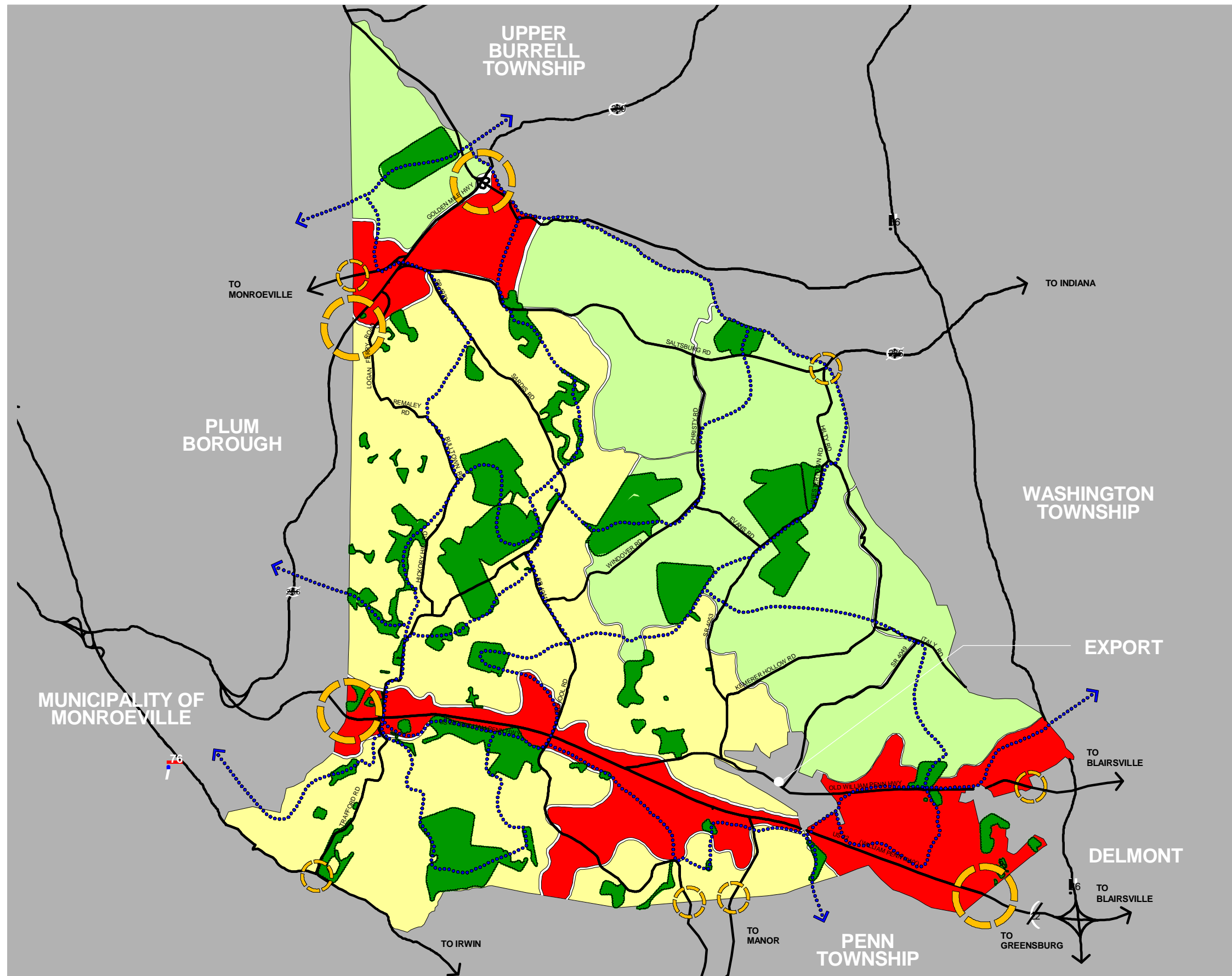
Murrysville's quality of life is dependent upon a balance between all components of the Comprehensive Plan. The first two major components, Land Use and Infrastructure and Thoroughfares, define the physical structure of the community. These components, essentially the roadways, land uses, water and sewer systems,

establish the community's organization and efficiency and in a large measure also affect the cost of government.

The final two components of the Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities and Natural Resources, are aspects that add amenities and richness to Murrysville. These components distinguish Murrysville from other communities of similar populations or land use activities. They help to add a unique identity to life in Murrysville that cannot be easily replicated in any other location.

Murrysville's Comprehensive Plan aggregates these four major components and the supporting inventory and analysis material that is presented in the appendices. Each of these major components impact the Comprehensive Plan and influence one another. For instance, a community's quality of life is dependent upon the mix and placement of land uses, such as residential, commercial and industrial areas. However, land use decisions are highly dependent upon the traffic network, community services and natural features of any given location.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a long-term picture that organizes and optimizes the issues of all the components and their impacts on each other. The Comprehensive Plan Map (see Figure 1) is a representation of aspects of the major components including general land use character, roads, community gateways, parks, open space and the proposed trail corridor. This map helps to illustrate the reality that the Comprehensive Plan is based upon a combination of factors. Together these factors form an integral Plan that balances community needs and available resources.



LEGEND

- Roads
- Existing Parks, Reserves, Open Space, Golf Courses, Hunting/Sportsmen's Clubs and Greenspace
- Trail Corridor
- Major Gateway
- Minor Gateway

General Land Use Character

- Agriculture and Woodland Areas
- Non-Residential/Mixed Use Areas
- Residential Areas

NORTH

0 2000 4000 Feet

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 1

Land Use and Infrastructure Plan

The Land Use and Infrastructure Plan directs future land uses and infrastructure expansion into areas that complement existing development. In addition, the land use recommendations made in this Plan recognize the physical and natural limitations to the land, access to transportation and other infrastructure and real estate market-based factors. The currently vacant, undeveloped and underutilized land within the Municipality was evaluated to gain an understanding of each parcel's physical limitations to support future development. Attention was given to expanding the current mix of residential and non-residential uses in order to provide a greater diversity of land uses and strengthen the community's fiscal base. In addition, efforts were made to cluster complementary uses in order to minimize the need for automobile trips. The Land Use and Infrastructure Plan addresses the character and intensity of each land use. The general location of each land use element is also described.

The Land Use and Infrastructure component has been developed in conjunction with, and is dependent upon, the other components of the Comprehensive Plan. To best describe the variety of land uses and the infrastructure implications, the Land Use and Infrastructure Plan separates Murrysville into eleven districts. Each district is composed of a combination of existing development and vacant, undeveloped land. District boundaries were determined based on internal similarities in the type and intensity of land use and character and the prominent natural features such as valleys and streams. The Land Use and Infrastructure Plan (see Figure 2) shows land use districts, predominant land use characteristics of

the eleven land use districts and the future service area of the public sanitary sewer system.

Land Use

Following a general overview of the Municipality's residential and non-residential uses, a description of the land uses proposed in each of the Land Use Districts under build-out conditions is detailed.

Residential

Currently housing, specifically single-family housing, is the dominant land use in Murrysville. The community's strengths, including an excellent school district, responsive local government, lower tax rates than neighboring Allegheny County and natural beauty, have made the area very attractive to residents. The existing housing stock in Murrysville can be generally characterized as diverse, well-maintained and having high resale values. Most homes are owner-occupied, single-family residences.

The Comprehensive Plan seeks to draw from these residential strengths while broadening the diversity of housing types and protecting agricultural and woodland areas. Housing options, particularly for seniors, young people and starter families, are currently limited. This is due to the community's lack of rental units, condominiums, townhouses, and moderately-priced (approximately \$150,000 in 2001 dollars) single-family homes.

Future residential development and/or redevelopment should respect Murrysville's existing character. The combination of both

existing and future residential areas should provide a greater diversity of housing options and ownership/rental opportunities.

The residential land uses in the Comprehensive Plan are designed to help protect the existing agricultural and woodland areas by allowing reduced development intensity in these areas. In combination with other factors, this is intended to promote the continued use of active agricultural areas and privately-owned woodland open space. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan encourages a variety of other low-density districts including very low, rural residential districts and a low-density residential district.

In coordination with the range of low density, residential districts, Murrysville has recognized that it can benefit socially, fiscally and environmentally from having moderate and high density, residential districts. These more intense residential land uses allow for a range of housing options including single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments.

Non-Residential

Currently only a small proportion of Murrysville's land use is comprised of non-residential development. As a result there are limited employment opportunities within the Municipality. Residents are typically required to commute to other communities for their jobs.

The Murrysville Comprehensive Plan attempts to broaden the community's economic base by increasing the amount and variety of non-residential uses. Additional non-residential development within the community can employ Murrysville residents and may,

therefore, meet the community objective of minimizing dependency on vehicular travel by dramatically decreasing commuting distances.

Murrysville's future non-residential development will include a diversity of land uses such as light industrial, office parks, highway commercial, neighborhood commercial/office and areas that mix multiple uses. These proposed mixed-use developments will blend commercial, office and residential space into a unified development so that visitors and residents are likely to utilize several of the development's offerings. One of the many benefits of this type of development is that the need for multiple car trips is minimized.

The Comprehensive Plan expands the quantity and variety of non-residential uses. Placement of these uses is generally clustered in areas of current non-residential development, i.e. along Golden Mile Highway and Route 22 corridors. These locations benefit from neighboring non-residential uses, accessibility and/or visibility from highways and infrastructure services.

Land Use Districts

District 1: Northern Tier District

The Northern Tier District, a small area at Murrysville's northernmost point, currently contains wooded, rugged terrain with numerous undeveloped parcels. In addition to the vacant land, the District has some active agriculture, low-density residential lots and a golf course. Due to the District's variable, often steep, topography and its limited access to infrastructure, very few changes to the existing character are proposed. Designation of the

land as woodland with very low-density housing allowances will help to preserve the pristine woodland and scenic vistas this District has to offer.

District 2: Golden Mile Highway District

The Golden Mile Highway District includes land between and adjacent to Routes 380 and 286 to the west of their intersection in the Municipality. To the east of this intersection, the District contains land bounded by Routes 380 and 286 (see Figure 2). The Golden Mile Highway District has a long history as one of the original settlement areas in the Municipality. Today it contains busy intersections of several major roads: Route 286, Route 380, Logan Ferry and Sardis Roads. Current land uses include the Murry Ridge Corporate Center, a few small commercial uses and many vacant or large residential lots.

Future development in this District should take advantage of the access and visibility of the major roadways. Extension of existing potable water and sanitary sewer lines to service the entire District will allow for non-residential and higher density residential development. Additional light industrial uses in the vicinity of the Murry Ridge Corporate Center, as well as a major mixed use development north of Sardis Road, are recommended. In addition, the ease of access to transportation and nearby non-residential amenities make this District an excellent setting for high density residential housing. This high density housing, featuring a mixture of single-family, duplex and townhomes or apartments, can also provide some affordable housing for Murrysville.

District 3: Townsend Park District

Although just south of the Golden Mile Highway District, the Townsend Park District has a very different character. This district currently consists primarily of low-density neighborhoods, preserved open space and active agriculture. Future development should preserve the existing character of the District through use of the currently vacant parcels as agricultural and rural residential areas. The addition of a neighborhood park between Logan Ferry and Sardis Roads in the northern vicinity of the District as proposed in the Municipality of Murrysville Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) will provide a recreational focal point for future, very low density housing in the District. All of these new uses will minimize the additional traffic demand on the Municipality's major north-south roadways, Sardis and Bulltown Roads.

District 4: Central District

The Central District encompasses a large percentage of Murrysville's existing development and a small proportion of the community's vacant land. The vacant land, primarily in the District's eastern section, will be used for rural, low density and moderate density residential development. The locations of specific developments complement the existing neighborhoods, topography and roadways. The moderate density residential housing, a mixture of single-family and duplex homes, should be considered along the southern portion of Hills Church Road. This location provides convenient transportation access and is currently serviced by or is directly adjacent to an existing public sewerage service area. In addition, this location is within one half mile from

Old William Penn Highway and the non-residential services the road provides.

Amenities in this District, such as the Sloan Elementary School, the Municipal Building, places of worship and several small to mid-sized parks and recreation areas, will provide attractive features for new residential growth. New neighborhoods should be built to reflect the scale and density of their adjacent, established neighborhoods. As this residential “infill” occurs, the Municipality should exercise care to ensure that adequate space for recreation, cultural and civic amenities remain. For example, the addition of the three new neighborhood parks proposed for this District within the Municipality of Murrysville Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) will provide additional recreational opportunities for new and existing residents. In addition, the Franklin Regional School District has indicated that future school expansion projects are likely to be concentrated in the vicinity of the Sloan Elementary School.

District 5: Ashbaugh Hills District

The Ashbaugh Hills District, located in the north-central portion of the Municipality, is designated woodland to preserve the forested, rolling hills and scattered single-family residential homes. This District has natural beauty, but limited access and capacity for transportation, sewer and water infrastructure.

District 6: Farms and Meadows District

Although less steeply sloped, the large Farms and Meadows District shares a similar character to its Ashbaugh Hills District

neighbor. The District's large areas of vacant land should be designated for agricultural land use. Agricultural use complements the existing areas of active agriculture, wooded lands and recreation space and protects the Agricultural Security Area parcels in this District. The addition of the three new neighborhood parks and the new community park proposed by the Municipality of Murrysville Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) for this District will serve the residents within this District and those in its more densely developed Central District and Route 22 Corridor District neighbors. Murrysville currently has a purchase agreement to acquire 305 acres along Wiestertown Road to be used for the new community park for the Municipality. This park is referred to as the "Proposed Municipal Park" within this document.

District 7: Eastern District

The Eastern District, currently sparsely populated, will be predominately woodland in character. Maintenance of the District's current character will conserve its existing woodlands and natural beauty and will not require costly expansion of services to the District.

District 8: Route 22 Corridor District

This large District spans from the western to the eastern boundaries of the community along Route 22 and Old William Penn Highway. The Route 22 Corridor District provides the most suitable location within Murrysville for both regional-scale and neighborhood-scale non-residential uses.

The western end of the District contains Murrysville's primary commercial area. The area has a mixture of small commercial, industrial, institutional and residential uses. This area is largely built-out but will benefit from the recommendations of the Murrysville Streetscape Plan (1999). Improving pedestrian access and the relationships between buildings as well as redeveloping underutilized parcels will improve this area's appearance and function.

The central and eastern sections of the Route 22 Corridor District currently contain large vacant areas, some active, low intensity agricultural areas, small commercial uses and industrial parcels including the Murrysville Business Park/Corporate Center and the White Valley Industrial Park. In addition, some small lot, residential parcels are currently located along Old William Penn Highway and the eastern Municipal border.

Proposed build-out development includes some residential uses, but primarily consists of non-residential development in the currently vacant areas. Non-residential development, both regional- and neighborhood-scale, is clustered along South School Road (approximately the first $\frac{3}{4}$ mile), at the intersection of Route 22/Harrison City Road and along the north side of Route 22 between Export and Delmont. Office park and neighborhood office/commercial uses are proposed along both sides of South School Road within the area designated as part of District 8 (see Figure 2) to complement and service the surrounding residential areas. Targeting currently vacant land towards low density and moderate density residential development will expand the existing residential areas that can benefit from the non-residential uses in this area. The addition of the two new neighborhood parks

proposed in the Municipality of Murrysville Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) for this District will provide additional benefits to the new housing proposed for the District.

Highway commercial development proposed along Route 22 in the vicinity of Harrison City Road will be able to take advantage of the road's regional traffic patterns. Meanwhile, neighborhood-scale office/commercial and mixed use development to the east of Export along Route 22 will serve both Murrysville and Export residents. New, moderate density, residential development is proposed for the south side of Route 22 in this vicinity to accommodate employees and patrons of the adjacent non-residential development. The final non-residential development proposal, an office park area to the north of Route 22 near the Municipal border with Delmont, can add additional employment opportunities for the community.

These development proposals complement the District's existing diverse character and best utilize the established infrastructure and the visibility provided by Route 22. The character of this build-out condition will both preserve and enhance the portions of the two original Murrysville settlement areas that are a part of this District, Murrysville Village and White Valley.

District 9: South School Road District

The South School Road District will remain largely residential in nature. Rural and low density residential development should be encouraged on the currently vacant parcels in this District. The District's established neighborhoods will buffer new development

from the more intense residential development in neighboring District 8.

District 10: Pleasant Valley District

The Pleasant Valley District currently consists of vacant lands, parks (both existing and under construction) and active agriculture with some small clusters and scattered parcels of large lot single-family homes. The currently vacant land should be developed as rural residential and agriculture in build-out. These new residential areas will benefit from the services provided within the District and within the neighboring Route 22 Corridor District.

District 11: Trafford Road District

Existing development in the Trafford Road District is primarily residential, consisting of a mixture of older, established and recently constructed neighborhoods. New, rural residential development should be placed on vacant land near the Pleasant Valley District border. This will serve as a favorable, physical and visual transition between Pleasant Valley's rural nature and that of the Trafford Road District's higher density character.

Infrastructure

In addition to land use, the Land Use and Infrastructure Plan also indicates future infrastructure in terms of major roads and the extent of public water and sewer service areas. Murrysville households are served with public water from the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County (MAWC) and with public sewage from the Franklin Township Municipal Sewage Authority (FTMSA).

The majority of Murrysville homes are connected to the potable water and sanitary sewage systems. Both the MAWC and FTMSA currently have additional capacity that could be used to serve future development. The FTMSA recently renovated the Meadowbrook Road Wastewater Treatment Plant and has planned additional improvements to the Plant.

Although approximately 80 percent of Murrysville homes receive public sewer service from the FTMSA, less than 30 percent of Murrysville's land area is currently serviced by the FTMSA. Generally speaking, homes with public sewer service are concentrated within the western portion of Murrysville and along the Old William Penn and Route 22 corridors. The remaining 20 percent of existing Murrysville homes rely on on-site septic systems for their sanitary waste and approximately 20 percent of Murrysville homes use private wells for their potable water supplies.

On-site septic systems will also be used under build-out conditions in some areas of Murrysville. Public sanitary sewer expansion is not economically feasible in areas of very steep terrain and/or very low density development. Septic systems are a practical and reasonable alternative for treating sanitary wastes in these areas. However, the Municipality should adopt and enforce standards to prevent groundwater contamination.

Within the lowest density residential developments, those areas designated as agriculture, woodland and rural residential, the extension of sanitary sewer lines should be constrained. Without public sewer service, lots in these districts will need to be very large to accommodate septic tanks and fields. The Municipality will want

to carefully evaluate whether public water should be expanded to these low density developments based on the number of potential users and, therefore, the economic feasibility. Additional enforcement of large lot sizes in these districts helps to support land use objectives of promoting existing agricultural use and preserving sensitive lands.

In keeping with this strategy, the extension/expansion of public sanitary sewer service is not recommended for the lowest density Land Use Districts: 1, 5, 6 and 7. In addition, as shown on the Land Use and Infrastructure Plan (see Figure 2), sewer lines should not be extended into the lowest density portions of Land Use Districts 3, 9 and 10. The Municipality, on a case-by-case basis, should determine the feasibility of extending public water service in these areas.

The remaining Land Use Districts consist of higher density residential areas and/or non-residential development. Extensions of the public water and sewer systems to serve these areas are more economically feasible and practical. These extensions are in keeping with the vision of the Comprehensive Plan and should occur concurrently with development.

Thoroughfare Plan

The Thoroughfare Plan is a graphic representation of the community's plan for movement. The Thoroughfare Plan (see Figure 3) defines Murrysville's primary road network and establishes the maximum desired capacity, in terms of the number of travel lanes, for each of the primary roads. The desired maximum number of travel lanes reflects the community's anticipated build-out potential of approximately 30,000 residents. The number of travel lanes also describes, in a general manner, the preferred physical and visual character for each particular roadway segment. In general, the community seeks to minimize the need for additional roads and traffic lanes as reflected on the Thoroughfare Plan. Specific objectives and policies give additional guidance on the design and visual appearance of Murrysville's roadways.

Currently all of the primary roadways in Murrysville are two lane roads (one lane in each direction) with the exception of Golden Mile Highway (Route 380) north of Saltsburg Road and Route 22. North of Saltsburg Road, Golden Mile Highway is a four-lane roadway with a barrier separating the directions of traffic. Route 22 (William Penn Highway) changes in character over the length of Murrysville, but is primarily a three lane roadway including a center turning lane.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has undertaken two projects impacting Murrysville that will be completed within the next few years. Golden Mile Highway (Route 286) between Route 22 and the Route 286/Route 380 interchange will be widened to four lanes with the possibility of a fifth (turning)

lane or median. PennDOT will also be widening Route 22 within Murrysville to four lanes separated by either a curb or median. This latter project anticipates intersection improvements at Route 22 and School Road South. These future PennDOT changes are reflected on the Thoroughfare Plan.

In addition, as part of the comprehensive planning process, Murrysville has anticipated widening the upper section of School Road South between Route 22 and the hill to four lanes as shown on the Thoroughfare Plan. These future roadway improvements maintain the general integrity of the current roadway network while providing allowances for increases and enhancements to traffic flow in the future.

The Land Use and Infrastructure Plan was designed in concert with the Thoroughfare Plan in order to balance the build-out condition with infrastructure limitations. Developments were strategically located in vacant areas where the roads are capable of handling more traffic than they currently carry. The amount and intensity of the new development was balanced to minimize overburdening the adjacent roads and reducing their “Level of Service” to unacceptable ratings. The common threshold of acceptability is a Level of Service rating of “D” on an “A”-“F” scale. In general, acceptable to excellent Level of Service ratings are maintained on most of the roadways of the Thoroughfare Plan during build-out.

However, several roads including Saltsburg Road west of the Route 286/Route 380 interchange, Sardis Road, North School Road, Trafford Road, Route 22 and Old William Penn Highway will likely experience increased congestion as development in these areas approaches build-out. Such increased congestion may produce

traffic delays that the community is unwilling to accept. As a result, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that community-wide transportation analysis and traffic mitigation plans be required for all rezoning applications and as a part of the development approval process for developments located on these critical roadways. Analysis and mitigation plans can assure that the Thoroughfare Plan will continue to provide for an acceptable plan for movement.

As with other infrastructure, roadway improvements should be coordinated with land use decisions. The Thoroughfare Plan establishes the plan for the primary roadways in Murrysville. In addition to these changes, Murrysville can implement roadway improvements through measures such as widening roadway land and shoulder widths to current PennDOT standards throughout the Municipality and making light signalization improvements as needed. These changes, assumed in the computer-based build-out traffic modeling, are likely to provide modest improvements to traffic flows for the overall traffic network at considerable cost to the community's appearance.

In addition to improving flow over the traffic network, a study should be carried out to identify appropriate locations and means of calming traffic. "Traffic calming" consists of intentionally slowing traffic flow, such as in the vicinity of a school or area of heavy pedestrian travel, due to concerns such as safety and noise. Methods of calming traffic include narrowing streets or intersections via on-street parking, planting street trees or constructing barriers. A coordinated system of traffic calming measures can be coupled with efforts to improve pedestrian and bike travel as well as fixed-schedule public transit within the Municipality.

Figure 4: Public Facilities Plan

Public Facilities Plan

The Public Facilities Plan, in combination with the Natural Resources Plan described in the following section, are the components of the Comprehensive Plan that add a rich uniqueness to life in Murrysville. Public facilities enhance the community's character and quality of life by adding vitality to its matrix of land uses.

The Public Facilities Plan (Figure 4) details current places of worship, cemeteries, schools, municipal buildings, the library, police, fire and emergency medical service (EMS) stations and potential future service areas for both fire and EMS coverage. The quantity, location and service areas of all of these Public Facilities are highly dependent upon the population and the patterns of land use. As the population increases or the land use patterns shift, it becomes necessary to re-evaluate the services that are provided and the means of funding such civic improvements or enhancements.

Fire and EMS Protection

As denoted on the Public Facilities Plan, there are developing areas of the Municipality that will need faster response times than can be provided by the current locations of the fire and EMS stations. To meet fire insurance standards, service must be expanded in the sections of the northern, eastern and southern areas of the Municipality shown with dots on Figure 4. EMS service must expand in sections of the northern, southern and eastern borders of Murrysville as illustrated by the yellow area on Figure 4. This extension of services is likely to require both a new fire station

and at least one additional EMS station or relocation of the current stations to address the deficiencies. Although not warranted at this time, awareness of future needs can help Murrysville plan pro-actively, perhaps through designating locations for the stations on a future “Official Map” or working to cooperatively plan with neighboring municipalities.

Schools

The condition, quality and costs of public schools are a major concern to residents of Murrysville. Increasing population has the potential to bring increasing school taxes and the over-crowding of existing schools. Within the last five years the Franklin Regional School District has undertaken several major capital improvement projects including the Newlonsburg Elementary School and the Senior High School. The capital expenditures needed for these projects, as well as more routine technology upgrade and capital improvement projects were factored into the Build-out Analysis evaluated for each of the Future Land Use Scenarios (see Appendix E for more explanation).

The Land Use and Infrastructure Plan contains a mix of residential and non-residential uses that yields optimized school revenues at Murrysville’s build-out. The land use mix and intensity has been conceptually balanced to assure that the schools will be able to maintain their current level of service, including the student to faculty ratio. However, in order to take fiscally responsible actions, the Municipality and Franklin Regional School District will need to work together to ensure that periodic major capital expenditures do not overburden tax revenues.

As school expansions or additions are needed, they should be located in the vicinity of existing school facilities. Because the developable land within the Franklin Regional School Complex has been nearly expended, the Franklin Regional School District has indicated that new development will be concentrated in the area of the Sloan Elementary School unless additional land is acquired. Locating additional facilities in the Sloan Elementary School area will allow for increased efficiency and a reduction of operating costs for factors such as transportation (busing) and other services that can be shared among the schools. However, because the primary traffic access for school expansion in the Sloan Elementary School area will be along Sardis Road, careful studies and planning will need to occur in conjunction with development in order to minimize the traffic impacts on Sardis and School Roads. In order to promote non-automobile travel to the area, future schools or expansions should be linked to the surrounding neighborhoods with sidewalks and trails whenever practical.

Community Gateways

The Public Facility Plan also indicates community gateways. The creation of recognizable community entrances or portals through details such as signage, landscaping, lighting or specific architectural design standards, can be integrated into the design of the Municipality's peripheral primary road interchanges and intersections. The inclusion of such measures has the capability of introducing the Municipality to visitors and instilling a sense of pride in Murrysville residents and employees.

Potential major gateways, indicating the community's main portals, are:

1. South Golden Mile Highway(Route 286 at the western Municipal boundary);
2. West William Penn Highway;
3. East William Penn Highway; and
4. North Golden Mile Highway.

In addition, minor gateways may occur along less traveled roads and intersections. Potential minor gateways are:

1. West Saltsburg Road;
2. Trafford Road;
3. School Road South;
4. Harrison City Road;
5. Old William Penn Highway; and
6. East Saltsburg Road.

Major and minor gateways would establish a unique identity for the community and would also provide visible landmarks. Gateway designs should complement the character and quality of Murrysville's other amenities.

Figure 5: Natural Resources Plan

Natural Resources Plan

The final component of the Comprehensive Plan, the Natural Resources Plan, is illustrated on Figure 5. This Figure shows the locations of existing parks, open space and trails and proposed neighborhood and community parks, riparian buffers and trail corridors. These are features that are very important to Murrysville residents and visitors. Murrysville residents take pride in the preservation of green space. They enjoy their parks and beautiful, natural vistas and they want them preserved for future generations because they believe these things add value to their quality of life.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space areas provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, conserve existing woodlands, define scenic vistas and improve groundwater recharge and stormwater management through decreased surface run-off. The Natural Resources Plan details existing parks and open spaces, neighborhood and community parks and trails that were proposed in the Municipality of Murrysville Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000). The proposed new parks were designated, based on spatial analysis, to evaluate the service areas of the existing facilities and the residential land use patterns. Placement of the proposed parks was coordinated with plans for a Municipal-wide greenway and open space plan (see the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) for greater detail). The locations of the new neighborhood parks were planned to correct current deficiencies in established residential areas and to serve new residential developments. The designation of new parks and trail corridors allows the Municipality to maintain its current high levels of per capita open space and also plan for its

future needs. Murrysville should continue to surpass the national average by maintaining its current park land to resident ratio, in accordance with the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan.

In general, the neighborhood and community parks proposed in the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) and detailed on the Natural Resources Plan are consistent with the Land Use and Infrastructure Plan. The nine neighborhood parks and one community park proposed in the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) are located within Land Use Districts 3, 4, 6 and 8 and were discussed within the individual Land Use District descriptions. Murrysville currently has a purchase agreement to acquire 305 acres in the eastern part of community along Wiestertown Road to be used as the proposed community park. The purchase is expected to be completed by the Summer of 2002. As a result, this land has been designated as park space known as the "Proposed Municipal Park" on maps, charts and text in this Comprehensive Plan document.

Trails and Riparian Buffers

Murrysville will benefit from the system of interconnecting trails and the riparian buffers proposed in the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000) and incorporated into the Natural Resources Plan. Trails, for pedestrians, bicyclers and roller-bladers, will help to connect the community's parks, public open space areas, public schools, residential neighborhoods and employment centers. Moreover, the proposed trail corridors will connect Murrysville to regional amenities located in adjacent municipalities. As the trail system expands, Murrysville should provide strategically located parking/trailhead facilities.

There are several beautiful watercourses in Murrysville including Turtle Creek, Lyons Run and Haymaker Run. As denoted on the Natural Resources Plan, the Comprehensive Plan recommends placing a protective buffer around several of the watercourses.

Flood Prone and Wetland Areas

To minimize private property damage, maximize public safety and educational opportunities and to prevent the loss of ecological assets, future development within flood prone and/or wetland areas should be discouraged. Whenever possible, these lands should be secured and used as passive recreational and/or open space in keeping with the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000).

Prime Agricultural Land

Prime agricultural soils make up approximately 10% of the soil cover in Murrysville and are scattered throughout the community (see Figure 14). Murrysville seeks to act responsibly by encouraging active agriculture within the community and, therefore, has several parcels designated as part of Murrysville's Agricultural Security Area. In balancing the various issues to create the Land Use and Infrastructure Plan, the majority of the Agricultural Security Area parcels were incorporated into Land Use Districts with an agricultural focus. This strategy preserves these prime areas for continued active agricultural use.

Steep Slopes

Murrysville's beautiful rolling, wooded hills also create steep slope areas. Development on gradients of over 25% is generally not considered practical or sustainable and even construction on

slopes of over 15% often require special development considerations. In addition, the Upshur and Vandergrift Soil Series present on steep slopes in the northern and eastern portions of Murrysville are particularly susceptible to landslides. These soils are typical of the “red beds” in the Pittsburgh region; the heavy clay deposits of “red bed” outcrops are structurally altered by water saturation and may slide or slump. As a result, the Municipality’s future development should minimize the extent of development on these poor, unstable soil areas. The strategy of the Land Use and Infrastructure Plan was to concentrate development on gently sloping or level terrain. The remaining steep slopes and their mature woodlands can be preserved through designation as very low density, residential districts or as parks, open space or trails in accordance with the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (2000).

Mining Areas

Abandoned mines are scattered throughout Murrysville, particularly in Districts 7, 8 and 9. These mine areas can create issues that impact safety, health and welfare because of such things as vertical openings, open shafts, dangerous embankments and/or walls and refuse piles. As a result, applicants for development projects that are situated in previously mined areas shall provide geo-technical analysis of undermined areas as based on Bureau of Mines mapping and local information or site inspection. These development projects should be carefully reviewed to assure that public safety is not compromised and damage to adjoining private property is minimized.

Regional Relationships

Murrysville's future is an exciting one that boasts of a sustainable continuation of many of the Municipality's current strengths, such as attractive neighborhoods, a strong school system, a responsive public government and its rural character. In addition, Murrysville will responsibly enhance the existing character of the community with the preservation of active agriculture and woodland areas, a greater diversity of non-residential development, a larger mixture of housing options and a more extensive park and trail system. Under these build-out conditions, Murrysville's land use, infrastructure, facilities and services are carefully optimized to create a positive balance between taxes and public operating costs.

The implications of this "Vision for the Future" for Murrysville are discussed throughout this document and are perhaps best captured in the Policies and Actions detailed in the following section. Worthy of mention, however, are also the implications that Murrysville's Plan will have on its surrounding municipalities, Westmoreland County and neighboring Allegheny County.

The Murrysville Comprehensive Plan has defined a practical strategy with which to develop a responsible community. This vision requires that the Comprehensive Plan's objectives, components and policies be carefully formulated to balance one another. This balance is based not only on *internal*, or municipal, factors but also considers *external*, or regional, factors. The principal regional factors include adjacent land uses and traffic improvements.

Adjacent Land Uses

The future land uses defined by the Comprehensive Plan reflect the region's market realities and are compatible with the existing land use patterns of the Municipality's immediate neighbors. Residential uses adjoin the majority of the boundaries with Plum Borough, Monroeville, Penn Township, Export, Delmont, Washington Township and Upper Burrell Township. Non-residential uses have been concentrated into the corridors and areas where similar uses currently exist. These areas abut Plum Borough and Upper Burrell Township along Golden Mile Highway and Saltsburg Road and Monroeville, Export and Delmont along Route 22 and Old William Penn Highway.

Traffic Improvements

The traffic improvements needed to support Murrysville's build-out are dependent upon PennDOT (Routes 286 and 22) improvements. Given these planned improvements, the Comprehensive Plan designates land uses that optimize road capacity and traffic flow within Murrysville. However, these transportation corridors also travel to adjacent communities. As a result, Murrysville needs to coordinate with its neighbors to assure that corridor development within the adjacent municipalities won't negatively impact the optimized traffic flow within Murrysville's municipal borders. At the same time, a coordinated regional transportation planning process can alleviate the traffic implications of Murrysville's build-out plans on its neighbors.