

CHAPTER 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Introduction

This chapter will address the current state of the physical characteristics of the Township. Characteristics such as soil types, topography, hydrology, geology, and biotic resources all combine to have created the way the Township has evolved and the way it appears today. Each element has played a role in shaping the Township, either as a constraint or as an enhancement. The pattern of development that has occurred over the recent centuries is the result of human activities which, to varying extents, have affected the range of physical characteristics.

Much of the material included in this Chapter was addressed in the Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, prepared by Robert E. Bartmann, AICP, and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of East Pikeland Township on July 20, 1993. The Environmental Resources documented in that study are stable in nature and will be summarized here, as they relate to the land planning process.

Topography

The varied topographic features of the Township lie within a range between 82 feet and 472 feet above sea level. The low elevation can be found along the Schuylkill River, while the highest point is a hill near the boundary with West Vincent Township at the opposite end of the rectangle that forms the Township. Between those two points are valleys, ravines, ridges and isolated hills. It is these features that not only make up the general land forms, but also the surface waters which flow through the Township. The topographic features can be seen on Figure 3.1, Topography. In a broad sense the Township can be seen as being divided into three drainage basins, created by Pickering Creek, French Creek and the Schuylkill River, from southwest to northeast. Pickering Creek falls approximately 20 feet from its entrance point in the Township to its point of exit into Charlestown Township, passing through a broad floodplain. French Creek and its drainage area occupy about half of the central portion of the Township and fall about 35 feet, also passing through a broad floodplain. The Schuylkill River borders the northeast end of the Township and drops only 8 feet over the 1.5 mile distance. Beyond the initial banks of 6 to 10 feet is a gentle rise to the alignment of the Conrail Railroad. Beyond this point is Stony Run, which flows into the Schuylkill River near the Township border with Phoenixville.

When the topography creates slopes greater than 15%, they are considered to be steep slopes. For mapping purposes, a range of 15% to 25% is generally depicted in this way and has been shown on the accompanying Figure 3.2, Steep Slopes. These areas offer development constraints in two forms. First, the soils on such slopes are generally very unstable and subject to erosion. This situation is harmful to the watercourses at the bottom of the slopes, due to stream sedimentation, loss of aquatic habitat, and diminished flood storage capacity. The second constraint to development is the difficulty in installing and maintaining systems and utilities, such as roads and public sewers. While there are technical solutions to engineering problems encountered on slopes, it is generally advisable to avoid development of such land and allow it to remain in a natural state. These areas can form the backbone of an open space system which preserves the scenic qualities and provides passive recreation.

Approximately 83% of the Township area is of less than 15% slope, with about 11% falling within the range of 15% to 25%. Most of the land that is flatter than 15% can be found in the central area and in the Pickering Creek valley. The balance, or 6%, of the Township has slopes greater than 25%. The steep slopes are, for the most part, located along stream and river courses and in the hills of the southwestern area of the Township. Correspondingly, slopes of less than 2% can be difficult to develop due to the inability to properly drain a site. Such areas make up only about 9% of the Township and often are associated with unstable soils and wetlands.

Hydrology and Surface Waters

From a regional perspective, the Township is within the Delaware River drainage basin and the Schuylkill River sub-basin. Within the Township, French Creek and its tributaries occupies almost half of the land area. The southwestern quarter of the Township is made up of the Pickering Creek watershed and Pigeon Run. The northeastern quarter is drained by Stony Run and tributaries such as Spring Hollow Run and Kulp Run. Very little of the Township actually drains directly into the Schuylkill River. Each of these drainage basins is made up of an entire hierarchy of watercourses, progressing down in scale to intermittent streams. See Figure 3.3, Hydrology and Surface Water. It is worth noting that the topography of East Pikeland Township is such that the headwaters of most of the streams in the Township originate outside its boundaries and are, therefore, subject to conditions beyond local control. Factors such as development regulations that do not adequately protect the stream corridors could have an adverse affect on local stream quality. For this reason, as well as others, it is important that the Township utilize all opportunities to coordinate planning with adjacent and nearby municipalities.

Besides flowing and intermittent streams, another water feature is ponds, of which there are about 35 in the Township. All but one are man-made and they range in size from near 3 acres to about 35 feet in diameter. Many of the ponds replaced wetlands, which are more efficient at conserving the environment. Ponds are used for a variety of uses, the least of which is probably flood control. They do, however, provide great scenic quality to the Township's character.

It is difficult to discuss watercourses and topography without addressing flooding. Causes of flooding are extreme amounts of precipitation, the ability of the soils to absorb moisture and the amount of impervious surfaces causing runoff. Another major factor influencing flooding is the configuration of the stream basin and its ability to accommodate an increase in volume of water on a temporary basis. Flooding has been quantified into a degree of probability that a given watercourse will flood and by how much. It is usually referred to as the probability of a flood occurring during a given period of time, such as a one hundred year flood being historically likely to occur once every hundred years. It is possible to delineate the boundaries of a stream during a flood of a determined magnitude and this is called a floodplain. The topography near the stream and the volume of water entering the area in question together determine the floodplain boundaries.

It is typical to find that 100 year floodplains are determined for most watercourses of reasonable size and land use regulations restrict or limit development in them. The mapping of floodplains is managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The effects of flooding can only be partially controlled, due to the irregularities of weather systems. However, the conservation of designated floodplains with minimal intrusion from development will enhance the stream basin's ability to store flood waters and discharge them gradually. Obviously, upstream conditions, which may or may not be under local jurisdiction, play a role in flood management. Quantitatively, about 9.5% of the Township is located within designated 100 year floodplains. The most extensive system is that of French Creek and its tributaries with about 210 acres. The smallest system is that of Stony Run with 59 acres.

The purpose of floodplain regulations is the protection of life and property within flood prone areas. Prohibiting new development and limiting the expansion of existing development within floodplains, including the avoidance of filling in floodplains can accomplish this. Beyond the floodplain boundaries, rapid runoff is a major contributor to flooding situations. This is a factor that a municipality can control through land use regulations found in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. Requirements for new construction and improvements to existing development should encourage the

establishment of dense planting areas, limiting the extent of impervious areas, preserving vegetation on steep slopes, retaining wetlands, and managing stormwater runoff from farms and other development.

The surface waters of East Pikeland Township offer a variety of benefits to residents, notwithstanding the floodplain values discussed above. While the streams are, for the most part, of a size that does not support boating, fishing is a popular activity, especially on French Creek. Their scenic value as part of an outdoor experience is significant. The Schuylkill River offers a broad range of recreational opportunities, well beyond that of the interior streams. Fishing, canoeing, power boating, and water skiing all occur regularly on the river. In general, the water quality of the Township's streams is good and that may be attributed to the enforcement of land use regulations in the region and improvements to on-site sewage disposal systems.

Geology and Groundwater

The geology of East Pikeland Township has greatly influenced the pattern of the topography, stream valleys, and development. The characteristics of the geology have a pronounced affect on the storage capacity of underground water resources, the capacity to absorb or shed surface water, the properties of some soils, structural support of buildings and roads, and the ability to excavate for utilities, roads and buildings. There are nine different types of rock found within the Township and these are illustrated on Figure 3.4, Geological and Groundwater Resources.

Of the nine types of rock, there are three general categories; sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic. Sedimentary formations, which make up about 62% of the Township area, are comprised of sand, mud and calcium carbonate deposits resulting from river and sea waters 180 to 200 million years ago. The layered material remaining was gradually compacted into soft rock formations, such as sandstone, mudstone and shale. Igneous rock formations make up only about 8% of the Township and were formed 600 million years ago when molten magma from the earth's interior was forced to the surface under great heat and pressure to form hard and dense rock, such as granite. Metamorphic rock formations occur on about 30% of the Township. This formation is the result of the reforming of sedimentary and igneous rocks under pressure and heat. Locally, it takes the form of a gneiss, primarily formed from igneous rock.

In the most general of terms, the Township is divided into two zones geologically. In the area southwest of Cold Stream Road igneous and metamorphic rocks predominate. The rest of the Township is made up of sedimentary rock formations. This division of rock formations has the effect of

making the southwest area, where igneous and metamorphic rock predominates, subject to steeper, less worn hills, thinner soils and different vegetation. The hills found elsewhere in the Township are more undulating, with moderate slopes and deeper soils more conducive to agriculture. Of additional interest are the metamorphic rock formations southwest of Coldstream Road. A predominant type of this rock is granitic gneiss, which has great capacity to hold ground water.

There is a very strong connection between geology and groundwater, for it is the structure of the geology that contains waters held in the various formations. Other factors involved in a discussion of ground water are interconnectivity of ground water cells, recharge of water, and quality and quantity of water available for use. Except for a relatively small area of the Township which is served by public water supplies, the remainder of the residences and businesses are dependent on wells on-site for water supplies. In addition, the ability of the geology of the Township to store and supply water is quite variable.

The interconnectivity of ground water cells or aquifers is not a subject that is well documented, given the remoteness of the subject and the source of data being well samples. Fractures within geologic formations of varying sizes and layers between formations where smaller particles are found can be areas where water is stored. The fractures may interconnect water aquifers. The concern here is that the infiltration of one aquifer with contaminants from the surface may cause adjacent or nearby aquifers to also become contaminated. It would be serious enough for one particular aquifer to become unusable for domestic water purposes, but the uncertainty of how such contamination might affect other aquifers is potentially consequential. Land use practices, chemical storage techniques, and stormwater runoff procedures all become extremely important in protecting the quality of water in underground aquifers.

A related issue is ground water recharge. Recharge is the replacement of water into underground aquifers from above ground sources. Typically, this occurs when precipitation strikes the earth surface and is absorbed by the soil. Eventually, the water would percolate through the layers of soil and geology into formations that have the capacity to store volumes of water. It is from these volumes that wells would extract water for various uses. This is a cyclic process and depends on a balance of water being recharged with that being withdrawn. There are, however, many factors which make the balance very difficult to maintain, not the least of which is the inability to know precisely where aquifers are and how much water they contain. One factor that can be controlled to a great extent is that of how and where water reenters the soil. As development occurs, impervious surfaces increase, which prevent the

precipitation from entering the soil where it falls, but also transfers the recharge to another point, concentrating it. This has the effect of causing erosion in the process. Frequently, the runoff will travel into streams and larger surface water bodies, possibly without ever entering the soil before it drains to major water bodies. The effect is to withdraw water from wells in a given geographic area and have the replacement recharge occur elsewhere, potentially causing the aquifer to be depleted. Concentrations of development and great amounts of impervious surface need to be countered with techniques which retain runoff as close to its source as possible and in areas that are conducive to recharge. It does no good to store runoff over a geologic formation that is relatively impervious. In the case of large lot, low density development, opportunities usually exist for the runoff to enter the soil, especially if vegetation is present which will stabilize the soil surface. As the ratio of impervious cover increases, it comes more important to exercise ways to retain water for recharge. When the area of concern becomes regional or when the area is served by a public system, the solutions to recharge also become regional. In the case of East Pikeland Township where density is relatively low, localized areas, particularly in the central Township, need to be concerned about recharge of ground water.

The quality of ground water is also extremely important to a Township dependent on on-site water resources. Contamination of an aquifer is obviously to be avoided, but sources of contamination are not always as dramatic as an overturned tank truck carrying toxic chemicals. Many incidences of activity on the surface can cause slow degradation of ground water. Agricultural activities are often singled out as a contributing source of contamination, because of the concentration of nitrates found in animal waste and the use of chemical fertilizers. Much is known about agricultural practices that minimize the potential for aquifer degradation. Additional sources may include residential lawn fertilizing, failing underground storage tanks for petroleum and other products, failed utility pipes, improper commercial and industrial operations or road salting. Most of the situations that could result in contamination are the subject of land use regulations, building codes, and environmental laws. Of course, enforcement and monitoring become extremely important if avoidance of contaminated ground water aquifers is to be accomplished.

Soils

The surface layer of the geologic strata is usually soil. It often takes the form of a granular composition from the underlying rock formation, but can also be transported to an area by wind or water. And, in some cases, human intervention can be a factor. Of concern to this Comprehensive Plan are the properties of the soils that engender them to some uses and provide limitations for others. Examples of characteristics which are important are the depth to

bedrock, seasonal high water table, and frequency of flooding, all of which determine how suitable a soil is for the establishment of an on-site sewage system. Other structural characteristics may determine the ability of the soil to support building foundations or roads. Soils that are conducive to agriculture are shown on Figure 3.6, Soil Classifications, of which Class I, II and III are considered prime agricultural soils. These soils have the ability to sustain crop growth and resist erosion. A generalized map of all soil types is provided as Figure 3.5, Soil Resources.

Most of East Pikeland Township's soils are not subject to erosion, due primarily to the fact that much of the original geologic formations are already eroded. Gentle slopes and many flat areas have been created and, in some cases, underlying rocks exposed. The retention of these soils can be achieved by preserving vegetation, limiting soil disturbances from agriculture and construction, and controlling runoff. Several areas of the Township have particular circumstances involving soils that warrant some concern. Some upland soils in the Township have a shallow depth to bedrock, resulting in moisture evaporating before recharging into the aquifer. These soils are subject to drought and can also be difficult to excavate for construction. An example of this situation is found in several areas of the northeast section over the Lockatong geological formation, as shown on Figure 3.4. In this case, only 10" to 20" of soil exists, making the establishment of vegetation very difficult. This area should remain undisturbed as much as possible.

Another example of a type soil with specific characteristics are the wetland soils or hydric soils. These soils are known for their high water table, seasonal flooding potential, and ability to hold large quantities of water. For obvious reasons, these soils are difficult to develop and should be retained for their beneficial qualities. Besides supporting a vegetative community providing much animal habitat, the soils have the ability to absorb large volumes of water in flood conditions and release it slowly during dryer weather.

Agricultural soils in the Township, as well as in most areas, present a conflict for land planning. While the best agricultural soils have high productivity rates, they are also the soils that are best suited for development. It is generally acknowledged that agriculture as a land use and an industry is the historical predecessor to development, particularly in rural areas, such as East Pikeland Township. As the area developed and populations increased, the development generally occurred on land that had been in agricultural production. That trend has not ceased, and land areas devoted to agriculture decline annually. Agricultural preservation is now a cause supported by many, for a variety of reasons, including food production, scenic values, and open space aspects. The dilemma facing decision makers is how best to accommodate growth that

is expected to occur, while preserving the amenity of agriculture. One possible course, as proposed in the Open Space Plan, would be to focus agricultural preservation efforts on Class I and II soils. In many areas, Classes I, II and III are considered as “prime” agricultural soils, but, because of the abundance of the three types, Chester County chooses to consider only I and II as “prime”. The location of the soil classes are shown on Figure 3.6, Soil Classifications. Conversion of agricultural lands at or below Class III could be considered more readily than others, because of lower productivity. The following table provides the quantities of the different Classes:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Township Percentage</u>
Class I and II	3026	53.6
Class III	1849	32.8
Class IV to VII	676	12.0
Surface Water	94	1.7
Total	5645	100.0%

Source: Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan.

Biotic Resources

These resources are made up of the vegetation and wildlife of the Township. At the time of the Open Space Plan preparation, 1993, it was found that 78% of the Township’s area was in a cultivated environment. Essentially, this means that close to 20% or less of the area today in the Township is not in cropland, tree farms, pastures, lawns, maintained landscapes, paved or barren areas. The remaining area is in a natural vegetative state. Only a small percentage of these woodlands are in a state of natural succession. Most are abandoned farm fields that are returning to a naturalized environment. For the locations of these resources see Figure 3.7, Biotic Resources.

The woodlands found along the Schuylkill River, French Creek and Pickering Creek are a mixture of regenerative trees and understory vegetation. The sources for most are seeds that have washed downstream. The trees consist of black cherry, box elder, silver maple, black birch, sycamore, and tulip trees. To a lesser extent are found white ash, red (river) birch, black locust, red maple, Norway maple, Osage orange, and American basswood. Typical understory includes high bush honeysuckle, bladder nut and spice bush shrubbery, with honeysuckle and poison ivy groundcover. The upland woodland consists of a mixture of hardwoods and softwoods, such as black oak, white ash and beech trees. Also found are white oak, pin oak, red oak, black locust , red maple, and

shagbark hickory. There are not many very large trees in the woodlands of the Township due to past timbering practices and the selective cutting of certain species for specific uses. Almost all of the evergreens to be found in the Township are the product of cultivation. Besides the landscape utility of evergreens introduced into developed areas, there are also some plantation trees, grown for Christmas trees and landscaping. The few naturally occurring evergreens are found in small areas on bluffs overlooking the French Creek and these are hemlocks.

For woodlands to serve effectively as habitat, certain conditions must be present. The woodland must be of a size and shape, such that 250 feet to 300 feet of depth from cleared areas occurs, so that a pattern of sunlight, air movement, moisture, and understory vegetation take on the characteristics of a forest. Of the woodlands in East Pikeland Township, it is estimated that only about 500 acres qualifies as deep woods habitat. A vegetative feature that is the opposite of woodland is hedgerows. These narrow bands of vegetation occur along roads or at the edges of fields. They are very effective at moderating winds, thus reducing wind erosion and reducing water evaporation of agricultural soils. Hedgerows are also able to provide food and cover for small birds and mammals.

A significant portion of the Township is classified as maintained landscape. In 1993, about 38% of the land area was in some form of maintained condition, such as residential yards, businesses and institutions comprised of primarily turfed areas. When these areas are added to the paved roads and parking lots, they total 43% of the Township. This trend continues and the percentages are probably slightly higher today. As growth occurs in the Township, areas to accommodate such growth either comes from farmland or woodland. Thought should be given to the value of woodlands in the Township, much as agricultural lands are a part of the character of the area. Whenever possible the Township should encourage the preservation of its woodlands, knowing that the conditions that create a forest are not just its size but the time it takes to evolve.

One of the beneficiaries of a healthy wooded environment is wildlife. Significant numbers of animals such as white-tailed deer, raccoon, skunk, squirrels, and other mammals reside in the Township. The rivers, creeks and streams are habitat for a variety of fish and waterfowl. The Township is fortunate to have a variety of waterbody types which support a vast community of wildlife. There is no inventory of wildlife species for the Township, due primarily to the exhaustive nature of such a year round study. However, the existence of habitat types and observations lead one to conclude that there is significant wildlife activity in the less disturbed areas. It would, of course, be greater with more natural areas to

serve as habitat. Historically, man has played an active role in shaping the appearance of the area, from agricultural practices to lawn landscaping to filling wetlands. All of these activities have played a role in diminishing the wildlife communities. One aspect of wildlife habitat that suffers considerably when development encroaches is wildlife corridors. For most wildlife, a single area of habitat is seldom all that is occupied, with movement occurring for feeding, breeding, and hibernating. The value of these corridors becomes highly compromised when human intervention begins to occur in the area. Habitat areas may be diminished and affect the wildlife population, without eliminating it. However, the interruption of wildlife corridors can cause the elimination of sectors of wildlife, or, at the least, conflicts with developed areas. An example of this is the grazing of deer on residential lawns. Often, the establishment of wildlife corridors can occur on lands that would be undevelopable, but an effort needs to be made to provide such lands that link to known existing corridors.

Scenic Resources

East Pikeland Township has developed in such a way that numerous visual images are present. The rural, agrarian farms and houses established over the past several centuries are yielding to suburban expansion of housing developments and the commercial influx that follows. Presently, there is evidence of all three of these impressions in the Township. And, of course, the scenic values continue to change as new elements are added and existing ones age.

The accompanying Figure 3.8, Scenic Resources, illustrates the variety of scenic elements found in the Township. The terrain created by the stream valleys and ridges provide numerous points where vistas and views originate. It is probably no coincidence that most of the vistas occur in the southwestern half of the Township, an area characterized by low density, rolling hills and farmland. The northeastern half of the Township is characterized by more suburban and urban influences, due in part to its proximity to the boroughs of Spring City and Phoenixville. Also prevalent in the area are concentrations of commercial activity along the roadsides. One feature that is consistent throughout the Township is the positive presence of the stream valleys. Although their width and development encroachment varies, they tend to be strong visual elements in the community. This is yet another reason to support preservation and conservation efforts through land planning policies and regulations.

The Open Space Plan of 1993 provides an extensive list of scenic views and landmarks. Of note is the observation that not all vistas will remain unchanged over time. Where significant ones do exist, effort should be made to preserve

the view as much as possible, but the area within any given view, or a viewshed, is often not under the control of the municipality. While most vistas tend to be positive, landmarks vary from positive to negative, as shown on the exhibit. Fortunately, positive landmarks are still numerous, and are characterized by steeples, bridges, villages and farmsteads. Negative landmarks are found, unfortunately, in areas of more recent development, such as the intersection of Routes 23 and 724 and the PECO power plant. Although some elements of the visual scene are impossible to avoid, an awareness of how they can affect the community image should be considered as the Township views new plans for development.

Scenic roads are a visual element in the Township that may be as strong as the stream corridors, if only because many are used daily by residents. The nature of roads is such that historically they followed the pattern of property ownership rather than the topography. In many cases, the roads are in conflict with the terrain and tend to be straight connections between points. Where roads adapt to the contours of the land, they tend to have more scenic appeal. This may also be because they are usually minor, less traveled roads. The negative visual attributes of a long, straight road is compounded when it becomes developed with retail, service and industrial uses, which is often the case of roads with high volumes of traffic. The Open Space Plan provides a list of road segments and their qualities range from the positive to the negative.

The qualities of a road that effect its scenic image are both the road alignment itself and its surroundings. The design of new roads tends to be utilitarian, which is partly understandable given the immense volume of traffic many roads are expects to carry. However, the visual impact that a road has on the community should not be underestimated. Consideration should be given to the aesthetics of the road and the roadside. These concerns apply to larger roads primarily, which are not frequently constructed. The same concerns relate to the development of new roads in a proposed subdivision or a shopping center. East Pikeland Township may have an opportunity to exercise design concerns over the long-planned Route 113 Phoenixville Bypass in the northeast corner of the township. Alternative routing of this corridor is currently under review, which would provide an alternative realignment. This proposed road has been shown on maps for a considerable time and is still proposed to connect the Phoenixville area with Routes 23 and 724. As has been recommended elsewhere in this study, every effort should be made to participate on planning and design committees so as to have an influence on the engineering as well as the aesthetics of the road.

Land Resources

Land is the commodity of a municipality such as East Pikeland Township. Barring unforeseen natural events, the Township has the ability to control to varying extents the development of its land. Much of the development fabric has been established over a long period of time and is not subject to modification. Where control does exist is in the way new development occurs and the way existing development is maintained. A major issue for the Township is the interface between the older rural development and the newer suburban development. These two development forms have been blurred and blended over the years, to the detriment of a visual identity for either. As growth pressures continue, it will be necessary to distinguish between the two and to maintain a green landscape. One way to avoid this situation is to encourage the concentration of development in areas already committed to such development and do it in a form that consumes as little of the land as possible. The retention of a rural landscape in East Pikeland Township will only occur if suburban sprawl does not consume the open and agricultural lands.

Figure 3.9, Potential Conservation Lands, identifies areas of the Township that have qualities worthy of preservation. The more obvious qualities are wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes and land currently under some form of preservation. Additionally, areas characterized by woodland and hedgerows are potential preservation targets. A third category, fields containing views, are also identified and have been discussed earlier. When opportunities are present to protect such fields, they should be taken, since, to a great extent, it is these visual elements that form the image of a rural community. The exhibit depicts a pattern of conservation lands that tends to fall into the three sectors of the Township. The Pickering Creek sector contains the bulk of areas subject to conservation, due to the presence of many natural features and retention of rural density. The central or French Creek sector has absorbed most of the suburban development of recent time and has a confined, but still prominent, stream corridor. The Schuylkill River sector in the northeast has numerous open fields and several small stream corridors. It is this sector that has been proposed to absorb much of the growth expected in the Township between 2000 and 2020, due not only to the availability of land but also to the presence of nearby urban areas with a developed infrastructure.

The protection or preservation of lands can occur in several ways. Lands subject to slopes, wetlands, etc. are regulated by zoning codes which severely limit their ability to be developed. Although these regulations are initially effective, the areas adjacent can often be an impact. Ideally, transition zones should be located adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas. The ownership

of land is an important factor in its conservation. If a parcel is owned by a municipal government or an institution, there is reasonable probability that it can be conserved, as part of a long term preservation plan. Lands held in private ownership, however, require the willingness of the owner to place limitations on the land restricting or limiting its development potential. Various forms of easements and restrictions can be applied to the deed of a parcel by the owner. This can be done in an effort to conserve a sensitive parcel out of an obligation to perpetuate its environmental or scenic quality. In some cases, an owner can be convinced to apply such restrictions for compensation.

Summary

The physical characteristics of East Pikeland Township are quite varied and have to a great extent formed the appearance of the Township today. The topography, as it has been contoured by geology and drainage, has divided the Township into three sectors. These sectors are further reinforced by the development pattern that man has applied to the land. This Comprehensive Plan acknowledges these patterns by proposing to reinforce the existing patterns, conserve significant open space and allow growth to occur where infrastructure exists.

To that end, the southwestern sector, identified by the stream valley of Pickering Creek and low density rural development, has been proposed to retain its rural character through the conservation of natural features and the direction of growth to other areas of the Township. This area has retained its rural character more so than the balance of the Township. The central sector has evolved into a suburban community with commercial and employment centers. It is bisected by the stream valley of French Creek, which is a valuable open space corridor in this otherwise developed area. Opportunities exist within this sector for infill development. The northeastern sector, characterized by several smaller stream corridors and the Schuylkill River, contains generally flatter terrain and variety of land uses. This area is more urban in character than the rest of the Township due to the proximity of two adjacent boroughs. Much of the projected growth in coming decades should be encouraged in this sector in forms that are compact and make efficient use of infrastructure.

It is the existing conditions of the Township which have provided pattern to past development and will guide growth in the future. With careful preservation of the amenities and natural features of the Township, the character of the past can be perpetuated into the future.