



Planning Context

2.1 Historic Overview & Regional Influences on Development



Whitpain Township, founded in 1701 is one of the oldest townships in Montgomery County. In 1777, George Washington spent time in the Township during the Revolutionary War when he stayed at the Dawesfield estate on Lewis Lane. Dawesfield is now listed on the National Register for Historic Places and is the most historically significant site in the Township. By 1800, Whitpain had grown to a population of 771 people. As Whitpain grew, several smaller communities within the larger Township were settled and prospered. These villages included West Ambler, Centre Square, Blue Bell, Broad Axe, Custer, Franklinville, Washington Square, and Belfry. As the Township evolved to where it is today, home to almost 19,000 residents, some of these villages flourished more than others. Today the Village of West Ambler, Blue Bell, Broad Axe, and Centre Square remain as significant communities in the Township.

The Township's population grew at its highest rate during the 1950's and continued to see consistent growth until the year 2000 when it became nearly built-out. Over this time, Broad Axe Village, Blue Bell Village, and Centre Square Village developed into commercial and retail hubs that provide a good mix of businesses, community services, and recreational opportunities that have attracted residents and visitors to Whitpain. West Ambler is a historically industrial community with a mix of high

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density residential properties, low use industrial sites, unique natural resources and remnants of its industrial past. The West Ambler neighborhood is close in proximity to downtown Ambler, which is a popular location for shopping, dining, and entertainment located in Ambler Borough.

The Township's strategic location in the Philadelphia metropolitan area has influenced its extensive development over the past decade. The Township is located several miles from the western border of Philadelphia and has nearby access to area highways such as the Pennsylvania Turnpike and Route 476 making access via automobile to Center City Philadelphia relatively easy.

Additionally, the Wissahickon School District has become known as one of the top public school districts in the state, which has added to the appeal of Whitpain and attracted residents and businesses to the area. Whitpain has developed into a residential community with over 50% of its land use residential.

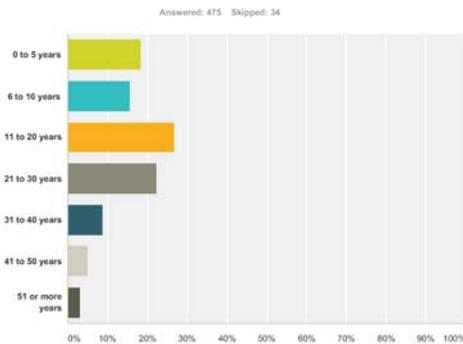
Understanding the history, community, economy, physical features, and other prominent elements of Whitpain Township is important when planning for its future needs and growth. The remainder of this chapter discusses important trends and characteristics of the Township, factors that influenced the recommendations and implementation strategies of this plan.

2.2 Community Internet Survey

Online Community Survey

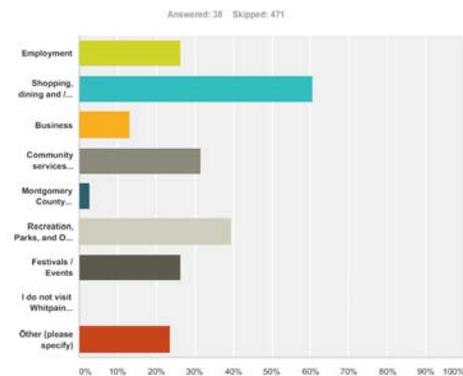
Whitpain residents and surrounding residents, and people employed by Whitpain were asked to participate in an online community survey about their perception of the existing state of the Township and their vision for the future of Whitpain. The survey was open to the public from January 2015 through

Q2 If you are a resident of Whitpain Township, how long have you lived there? (Please disregard if you are not a resident of Whitpain Township)



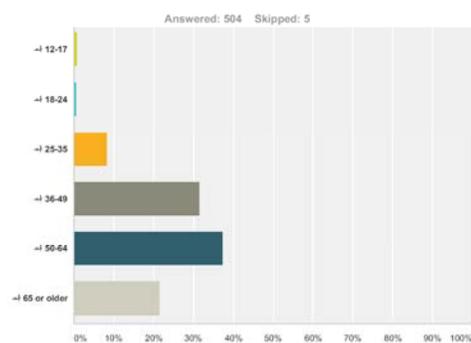
Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

Q3 If you are not a resident of Whitpain Township, what are the primary reasons you visit Whitpain Township? Check all that apply. (Please disregard if you are a Whitpain resident.)



Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

Q5 What category below includes your age?



Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

August 2015. The survey received 509 total responses. Results of the community survey are summarized below. Complete results of the survey are located in the appendix of this report.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Of the 509 respondents, nearly 92% were Whitpain residents. The next highest residencies of those that responded include Ambler Borough (2.0%) and Upper Gwynedd Township (1.2%). Of the respondents that are Whitpain residents, 27% have lived in the Township for 11 to 20 years. 22% of residents that responded to the survey have lived in the Township for 21 to 30 years.

Those respondents that are not Whitpain residents were asked to select primary reasons that they visit Whitpain Township. Of those respondents, 61% selected shopping, dining and / or retail, 39% selected recreation, parks and open space, and 26% selected employment. These responses help identify the main attractions of Whitpain to those who do not live there.

Regarding the ages of those who responded to the survey, 37% were in the 50-64 range while 32% were in the 36-49 range.

Transportation

Regarding public transportation use, over 90% of the survey respondents indicated that they never use the SEPTA public bus system. In terms of the nearby regional rail system, the most frequently used station is the Ambler Station where 60% of the respondents use the station to some extent. The other nearby stations are the Penllyn Station, Gwynedd Valley Station, and Fort Washington Station which all received a very low percentage of respondents who use these stations. The results indicate that there is much room to enhance the public transportation ridership in the Township. Improved trail linkages

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to transit centers and bus stops, community shuttles to mass transit, and coordination with SEPTA to improve bus routes and transit facilities are just some of the things that the Township should consider. Additional data about commuting by workers of Whitpain are discussed later in this chapter.

When asked about the most congested intersections in the Township, over 87% of respondents felt that the DeKalb Pike and Skippack Pike intersection is the most congested. Other intersections receiving a high amount of responses include Skippack Pike and Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike (33%) and the Skippack Pike and Butler Pike intersection (30%). The Township has many potential transportation improvement projects that are part of its Act 209 Plan. These improvements are discussed later in this report.

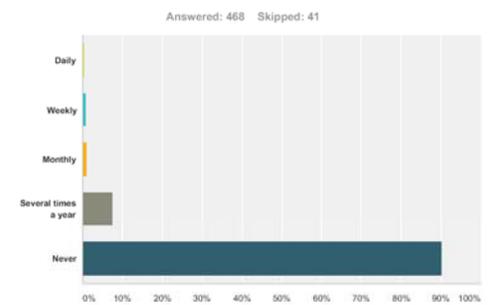
In terms of bicycle and pedestrian mobility, over 80% of respondents indicated that there are destinations they would like to walk to but cannot do so due to a lack of pedestrian facilities. 70% of the respondents reported the same about bicycle facilities in the Township. The results indicate that there is a desire for improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Township.

Resident Satisfaction and Future Priorities

When asked about the top five things that respondents like most about Whitpain Township, responses are follows:

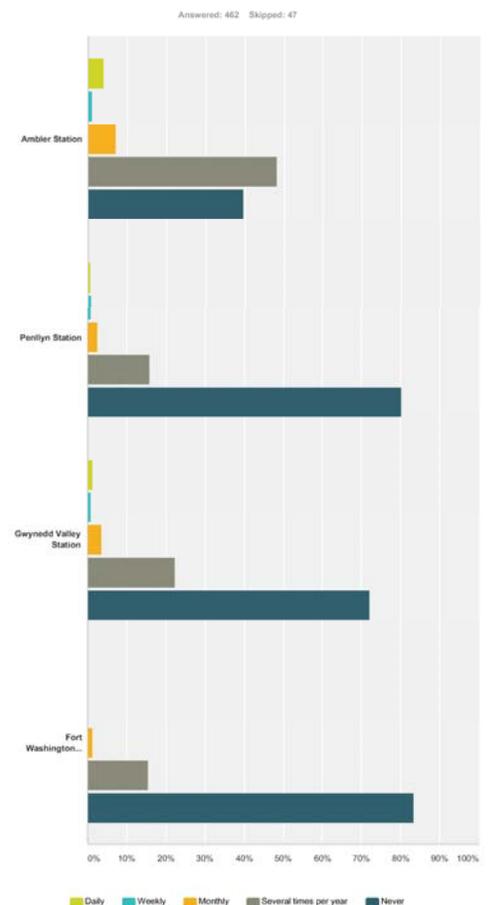
1. Location
2. Schools
3. Shopping and dining opportunities
4. Balance of taxes and services
5. Availability of open space, parks, and recreational facilities

Q20 How often do you utilize the SEPTA public bus system in Whitpain Township?



Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

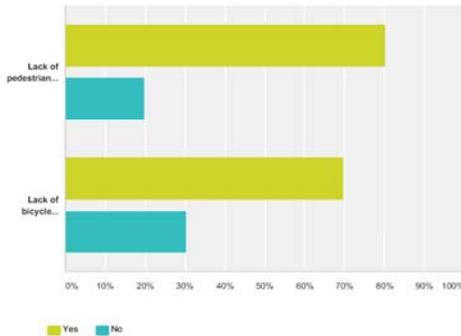
Q21 How often do you utilize the SEPTA regional rail system near Whitpain and which station(s) do you use?



Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

Q16 Are there destinations in Whitpain Township that you would like to walk or bike to but feel you cannot safely do so because of a:

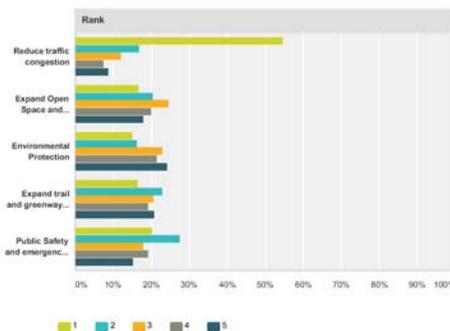
Answered: 450 Skipped: 59



Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

Q26 Rank from 1 to 5 how you think Whitpain Township should allocate their resources? (1 = High Priority, 5 = Low Priority)

Answered: 428 Skipped: 81



Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

When asked about the top five most important issues affecting the quality of life, the survey respondents indicated that the five highest priorities are as follows:

1. Traffic
2. Crime / Public Safety
3. Walkability / Bike Trails
4. Open space, parks, & recreational Facilities
5. General Appearance of Buildings and Streetscapes

Similarly, when asked how Township officials should allocate their resources, the order of responses was:

1. Traffic
2. Crime / Public Safety
3. Recreation / Parks / Open Space
4. Environmental Protection
5. Redevelopment / Revitalization

2.3 Population, Employment & Housing

The most current data available from the US Census, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), and other sources are used in this analysis. In certain cases, data from the 2010 US Census is used to provide a comparison to 2000 figures. Census, estimate and projection data used in this plan have been collected from the past few years, creating a “snapshot” of existing conditions in the Township.

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Population

Like other suburban communities, Whitpain saw tremendous population growth in the post-World War II years, increasing by almost 140% between 1950 and 1960. The population continued to grow by at least 25% per decade between 1960 and 1990. This trend then shifted as the population grew by 18% between 1990 and 2000 to 18,562 and by only 2% between 2000 and 2010 to 18,875. Population projections show single digit growth per decade between 2010 and 2040 (Table 2-1). This is in line with Countywide projections as Montgomery County is expected to grow by single digits per decade as well.

Looking at the surrounding municipalities, Upper and Lower Gwynedd, like Whitpain, experienced a lower level of population growth between 1990 and 2000 than in the previous decade. Other townships, like Plymouth and Whitemarsh, went from a decline in population throughout the 1980s to a population increase in the subsequent decade. East Norriton and Ambler experienced a decline in population between 1990 and 2000 and Worcester saw population jump over 66% in the same decade. Like Whitpain, the majority of adjacent townships saw single

Table 2-1
Population Trends and Forecasts: 1940-2040

Year	Whitpain Township		Montgomery County	
	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
1940	2,451		289,247	
1950	3,063	25.0%	353,068	22.1%
1960	7,331	139.3%	516,682	46.3%
1970	9,295	26.8%	623,799	20.7%
1980	11,772	26.6%	643,621	3.2%
1990	15,673	33.1%	678,111	5.4%
2000	18,562	18.4%	750,097	10.6%
2010	18,875	1.7%	799,874	6.6%
2020	19,134	1.4%	823,564	3.0%
2030	20,034	4.7%	873,361	6.0%
2040	20,293	1.3%	894,486	2.4%

Sources: US Census, DVRPC (forecasts)

digit population growth between 2000 and 2010. Exceptions were Upper Dublin, which saw population decrease by 1% and Worcester, whose population increased by 25%. Table 2-2 shows actual population comparisons across the region between 1980 and 2010.

Population Characteristics

In the decade between 2000 and 2010, Whitpain’s population became more diverse (Table 2-3). The African-American population increased by 0.5%, the Asian population went up by almost 3% and the population of other (Non-White) races increased by 0.5%.The White population went down by 4%. This mirrors population changes in the County as a whole as Montgomery County has become more diversified in the first decade of the 21st Century.

**Table 2-2
Regional Population Comparison: 1980-2010**

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Upper Gwynedd	9,487	12,197	14,243	15,552
Lower Gwynedd	6,902	9,958	10,422	11,405
Ambler	6,628	6,609	6,426	6,417
Upper Dublin	22,348	24,028	25,878	25,569
Whitemarsh	14,985	14,863	16,702	17,349
Plymouth	17,168	15,958	16,045	16,525
East Norriton	12,711	13,324	13,211	13,590
Worcester	4,661	4,686	7,789	9,750
Whitpain	11,772	15,673	18,562	18,875
Montgomery County	643,621	678,111	750,097	799,874

Sources: US Census, DVRPC

In the years between 2000 and 2010, the population of Whitpain has become older, with the median age going up by 4 years from 41 to 45. Much of this increase in median age can be attributed to the increase in residents aged 45 and

Table 2-3
Racial and Ethnic Composition: 2000-2010

Race/Ethnicity	Whitpain Township				Montgomery County			
	2000 Pop	%	2010 Pop	%	2000 Pop	%	2010 Pop	%
White	16,021	86.3%	15,450	81.9%	648,510	86.5%	649,021	81.1%
African-American	870	4.7%	982	5.2%	55,969	7.5%	69,351	8.7%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	12	0.1%	10	0.1%	848	0.1%	1,174	0.1%
Asian	1,452	7.8%	2,049	10.9%	30,191	4.0%	51,565	6.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	6	0.0%	255	0.0%	296	0.0%
Other	42	0.2%	133	0.7%	5,598	0.7%	12,947	1.6%
Two or More Races	165	0.9%	245	1.3%	8,726	1.2%	15,520	1.9%
TOTAL	18,562		18,875		750,097		799,874	

Sources: US Census

older. Residents aged 45 to 54 are the largest age group, consisting of 17% of the population. This is followed by residents aged 55 to 64, who make up almost 15% of the population. The elderly population has also increased, with the number of residents aged 65 to 74 going up 1.5% between 2000 and 2010 and residents aged 75 and up increasing by 2%. See Table 2-4 for Whitpain’s Age Distribution.

Table 2-5 shows that Whitpain has the highest median household income compared to the surrounding townships at \$108,000 (in 2010). This is followed by Upper Dublin, which a median household income at \$107,300 and Worcester at \$106,000. Whitpain has a higher median household income than Montgomery County as a whole, which is at \$76,400. Most of the surrounding townships saw poverty levels rise between 2000 and 2010, most likely as a result of the economic recession, but Whitpain’s poverty level decreased by about 1% in that time frame.

The educational attainment of Whitpain is comparable to most of the surrounding townships, that of a highly educated

Table 2-4
Population by Age - Whitpain

Age Group	2000	2010
Under 5 Years	6.1%	4.8%
5 to 14	14.8%	13.5%
15 to 24	9.2%	10.0%
25 to 34	10.0%	9.3%
35 to 44	17.1%	12.5%
45 to 54	16.7%	16.9%
55 to 64	11.3%	14.6%
65 to 74	7.6%	9.1%
Over 75 Years	7.3%	9.4%
Median Age	41.1	45

Source: US Census

Table 2-5
Median Household Income/Poverty Comparison

	Med Household Income		% of Pop. Below Poverty Level			
	2000 [^]	2010	1980	1990	2000	2010
Upper Gwynedd	\$93,031	\$94,613	2.3%	1.3%	1.9%	2.5%
Lower Gwynedd	\$97,315	\$96,513	2.8%	3.1%	2.7%	3.7%
Ambler	\$61,535	\$57,340	5.5%	2.8%	5.5%	8.1%
Upper Dublin	\$104,830	\$107,285	3.4%	3.3%	3.0%	3.5%
Whitemarsh	\$102,916	\$102,316	3.2%	1.5%	2.9%	6.5%
Plymouth	\$70,769	\$68,598	3.5%	2.9%	4.3%	4.2%
East Norriton	\$79,233	\$73,019	1.8%	1.8%	2.9%	6.2%
Worcester	\$101,044	\$105,930	3.5%	2.5%	1.7%	1.7%
Whitpain	\$116,401	\$108,180	3.7%	1.9%	3.1%	2.2%
Montgomery County	\$79,617	\$76,380	4.7%	3.6%	4.4%	5.6%

Sources: US Census, 2006-10 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

[^]Income from 2000 Census adjusted to 2010 dollars using CPI via Social Explorer

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residential base (Table 2-6). Almost 59% of residents have at least a Bachelor's. Only Lower Gwynedd, Upper Dublin and Whitmarsh have more residents with at least a Bachelor's degree. Moreover, only Lower Gwynedd and Upper Dublin have more residents with Graduate degrees. 28% of Whitpain residents have graduate or professional degrees.

Employment

According to the 2007 Economic Census, the highest grossing industries in Whitpain are Professional, Scientific and Technical Services with revenues of \$791.7 million and 222 establishments; Wholesale Trade with revenues of \$238

Table 2-6
Educational Attainment for Residents Over 25 Years of Age (2012)

Educational Attainment	Whitpain	Upper Gwynedd	Lower Gwynedd	Ambler	Upper Dublin	Whitmarsh	Plymouth	East Norriton	Worcester
No High School Diploma	4.0%	5.0%	2.2%	9.0%	3.2%	3.1%	8.3%	7.3%	3.4%
High School Graduate	18.5%	21.0%	16.9%	26.7%	15.7%	16.4%	26.5%	28.7%	18.4%
Some College, No Degree	13.1%	14.0%	15.3%	22.9%	12.2%	13.7%	17.9%	17.3%	14.1%
Associate's Degree	5.7%	7.8%	4.3%	5.6%	4.5%	6.1%	6.1%	7.6%	8.2%
Bachelor's Degree	30.9%	32.8%	31.4%	21.0%	34.5%	34.2%	24.5%	24.8%	30.0%
Graduate or Prof. Degree	27.9%	19.4%	29.9%	14.8%	29.9%	26.5%	16.6%	14.3%	25.8%
Residents with at least High School Diploma	96.0%	95.0%	97.8%	91.0%	96.8%	96.9%	91.7%	92.7%	96.6%
Residents with at least Bachelor's Degree	58.7%	52.2%	61.3%	35.8%	64.4%	60.7%	41.1%	39.1%	55.9%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

million and 37 establishments; Retail Trade with \$211.1 million in revenues and 60 establishments; and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services with \$191.4 million in revenues and 81 establishments. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services also employs the largest number of workers with 2,800 paid employees in this industry (Table 2-7).

Also according to the 2007 Economic Census, Whitpain has the

**Table 2-7
Top Industries-2007**

NAICS Classification	No of Employer Establishments	Employer Value of Revenues/ Receipts	Annual Pay-roll	No. of Paid Employees
Professional, scientific and technical services	222	\$791,733,000	\$248,047,000	2824
Wholesale Trade	37	\$238,037,000	\$22,096,000	326
Retail Trade	60	\$211,083,000	\$23,612,000	882
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	81	\$191,383,000	\$88,840,000	2378
Health care and social assistance	73	\$162,791,000	\$67,147,000	1969
Real estate and rental and leasing	42	\$93,856,000	\$24,668,000	581
Accommodation and food services	57	\$40,467,000	\$11,422,000	844
Other services (except public admin)	52	\$29,631,000	\$8,677,000	384

Source: US Census - 2007 Economic Census

Note: Complete data on the Information industry not available

**Table 2-8
Business Comparison (2007)**

NAICS	Whitpain	Upper Gwynedd	Lower Gwynedd	Ambler	Upper Dublin	White marsh	Plymouth	East Norriton	Worcester
Total	676	285	309	202	694	464	752	364	168
Professional, scientific and technical services	222	62	78	53	196	106	169	54	38
Percent of Total	32.8%	21.8%	25.2%	26.2%	28.2%	22.8%	22.5%	14.8%	22.6%
Health care and social assistance	73	45	45	23	108	51	81	57	17
Percent of Total	10.8%	15.8%	14.6%	11.4%	15.6%	11.0%	10.8%	15.7%	10.1%

Source: US Census - 2007 Economic Census

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third largest number of establishments (676) among its adjacent townships (Table 2-8). Only Plymouth (752) and Upper Dublin (694) have more establishments. Whitpain has more establishments in its leading industry, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (222) than any of the adjacent municipalities. Moreover, this industry makes up 33% of all establishments in the Township. Looking at another top tier industry, Health Care and Social Assistance, Whitpain is third (73) among nearby townships in terms of number of establishments. Only Upper Dublin (108) and Plymouth (81) have more health care establishments.

Most likely as a result of the economic downturn, Whitpain lost 791 jobs between 2000 and 2010 after growing by 14% between 1990 and 2000. DVRPC forecasts show jobs rebounding between 2010 and 2040 (up 7.5%) but not to the degree that they grew between 1990 and 2010 (up 9.4%) as shown in Table 2-9.

Whitpain has the highest percentage of residents working within their place of residence compared to its adjacent townships. 18%, or 1,717 out of 9,652 workers living in Whitpain work within

Table 2-9
Employment in Whitpain (1990-2040)

Data	Year	Employment
DVRPC Counts	1990	17,316
	2000	19,731
	2010	18,940
Forecasts	2020	19,200
	2030	20,103
	2040	20,363
Change 1990-2010		9.4%
Change 2010-2040		7.5%

Source: 1990-2010 data were acquired from the US Census via DVRPC (2000, 2007 & 2013, respectively), while 2020-2040 forecasts were acquired from DVRPC (2013)

Note: Data from 2010 and forecasts from 2020-2040 were compiled by DVRPC using the National Establishment Time-Series (NETS), which provides numbers that differ from the US Census

the Township (Table 2-10). These resident workers are mostly employed in Management, Business, Science and Arts occupations (59%), followed by Sales and Office jobs (26%) and Service related jobs (7%). When looking at other townships where a significant percentage of residents work within their place of residence, we see trends based on these municipalities being seats of local government or centers of high employment that help their numbers surpass Whitpain’s resident worker figure. Doylestown and Norristown, for example, have 29% and 24% of their residents, respectively, working in their places of

Table 2-10
Place of Employment for Workers Over 16 Years of Age (2012)

	Total # of Workers Living in a Location	Worked in Place of Residence	Worked Outside Place of Residence	% of Residents Working in Place
Whitpain	9,652	1,717	7,935	17.8%
Upper Gwynedd	7,832	1,281	6,551	16.4%
Lower Gwynedd	5,071	727	4,344	14.3%
Ambler	3,280	556	2,724	17.0%
Upper Dublin	12,789	2,024	10,765	15.8%
Whitemarsh	8,759	1,251	7,508	14.3%
Plymouth	8,293	1,402	6,891	16.9%
East Norriton	7,089	684	6,405	9.6%
Worcester	4,848	763	4,085	15.7%
Tredyffrin	14,790	3,301	11,489	22.3%
Warminster	15,197	3,047	12,150	20.1%
Norristown	16,525	3,897	12,628	23.6%
Doylestown	4,241	1,214	3,027	28.6%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-11
Daytime Population (2012)

Population*	18913
# of Jobs in Township*	16458
Daytime Population^	25719

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

* Data taken from ACS and differs from data taken from 2010 Census and DVRPC estimates, respectively

^Calculation prepared using formula created by US Census

(<https://www.census.gov/hhes/commuting/data/calculations.html>).

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residence. This could be attributable to these municipalities being the county seats for Bucks and Montgomery Counties, respectively.

Looking at all workers, not just those living in the Township, Whitpain attracts a population of employees that is 1.4 times the Township population. According to calculations for daytime population provided by the U.S. Census, Whitpain attracts a daytime population of 25,719 on an average weekday as shown in Table 2-11.

Commuters in Whitpain overwhelmingly use their car, truck or van to get to work (Table 2-12). 83% of commuters travel by this means, which is line with Montgomery County as a whole (80%). 5% of commuters use public transportation, also in line with County figures (5%). One reason more commuters don't use public transit is probably due to the presence of Skippack and DeKalb Pikes, principal arterials that traverse the Township and provide accessibility to nearby municipalities. Moreover, the I-276 and I-476 Interchanges are right outside the Township, providing commuters access to points across the region and beyond.

Table 2-12
Commuting to Work (2012)

Transportation Mode	Percentage of Workforce	
	Whitpain	Montgomery Co
Car, truck or van-drove alone	83.2%	79.6%
Car, truck or van-carpooled	6.1%	7.4%
Public transportation	5.0%	4.9%
Worked at home	5.0%	4.3%
Other means (taxi, bike, motorcycle)	0.4%	0.8%
Walked	0.4%	3.0%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Both Whitpain and Montgomery County have about the same

percentage of commuters who have a 10-19 minute commute to work (24.5% and 25% respectively). Montgomery County also has about 4.4% more commuters with a 10 minute or less travel time. On the flip side, Whitpain has 1% more commuters with a 90 minute or more work travel time (Table 2-13).

Table 2-13
Travel Time to Work (2012)

Travel Time	Percentage of Workforce	
	Whitpain	Montgomery Co
Less than 10 minutes	7.2%	11.6%
10-19 Minutes	24.5%	24.9%
20-29 Minutes	20.7%	18.1%
30-39 Minutes	17.8%	17.0%
40-59 Minutes	15.7%	15.4%
60-89 Minutes	6.0%	6.6%
90 Minutes or more	3.1%	2.1%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

With regards to vehicle ownership, 5% of Whitpain households don't own an automobile. Of the 362 households without a car, 58% are in renter-occupied units. Most of the households in the Township, however, own a car, and a majority of those own 2 vehicles (51% of households). Of the 3,764 households with 2

Table 2-14
Vehicles Available by Household/Housing Unit (Estimate)

	Total		Owner-Occ Units		Renter-Occ Units	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total	7,440		6,031	81.1%	1,409	18.9%
No Vehicle	362	4.9%	153	2.1%	209	2.8%
1 Vehicle	1,676	22.6%	1,047	14.1%	629	8.5%
2 Vehicles	3,764	50.6%	3,303	44.4%	461	6.2%
3 or More Vehicles	1,638	22.1%	1,528	20.6%	110	1.5%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-15
Owner-Occupied Units vs. Rental Units

Housing Units	Whitpain				Montgomery County			
	2000	Percent	2010	Percent	2000	Percent	2010	Percent
Total	7,305		7,937		297,434		325,735	
Occupied	6,960	95.3%	7,462	94.0%	286,098	96.2%	307,750	94.5%
Vacant	345	4.7%	475	6.0%	11,336	3.8%	17,985	5.5%
Owner Occ	5,456	78.4%	5,768	77.3%	210,233	73.5%	225,001	73.1%
Renter Occ	1,504	21.6%	1,694	22.7%	75,865	26.5%	82,749	26.9%

Source: US Census 2000-2010

Table 2-16
Average Person Per Household

	All Units	Owner-Occ Units	Renter-Occ Units
Whitpain	2.53	2.67	1.93
Upper Gwynedd	2.49	2.65	2.02
Lower Gwynedd	2.28	2.56	1.60
Ambler	2.34	2.58	2.06
Upper Dublin	2.72	2.78	2.23
Whitemarsh	2.59	2.70	2.09
Plymouth	2.46	2.69	1.88
East Norriton	2.38	2.51	1.94
Worcester	2.68	2.89	1.39
Montgomery County	2.53	2.71	2.04

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-17
Year Householder Moved Into Unit

	2010 or later	2000-2009	1990-1999	1980-1989	1970-1979	Before 1970
Whitpain	5.2%	47.5%	23.0%	12.1%	6.2%	6.0%
Upper Gwynedd	9.3%	50.7%	19.5%	10.7%	5.6%	4.2%
Lower Gwynedd	7.6%	48.9%	21.8%	12.2%	4.3%	5.1%
Ambler	6.9%	52.2%	16.0%	10.7%	5.0%	9.3%
Upper Dublin	4.7%	37.6%	27.2%	15.2%	8.9%	6.3%
Whitemarsh	4.4%	44.4%	24.3%	12.2%	6.7%	7.9%
Plymouth	7.4%	43.5%	20.3%	11.4%	6.5%	10.9%
East Norriton	6.2%	46.4%	16.6%	12.4%	7.8%	10.5%
Worcester	3.7%	49.2%	27.7%	7.5%	5.1%	6.8%
Montgomery County	7.3%	48.5%	20.4%	11.0%	6.3%	6.5%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-18
Age of Housing Stock

Period Built	Whitpain	Montgomery Co
2010 or later	0.5%	0.2%
2000-2009	8.6%	8.9%
1990-1999	19.0%	11.2%
1980-1989	25.4%	11.3%
1970-1979	15.2%	13.1%
1960-1969	9.0%	12.5%
1950-1959	13.8%	17.0%
1940-1949	2.9%	7.0%
Pre 1940	5.5%	18.8%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-19
Median Housing Price (Owner-Occupied Estimates)

	Median Price
Whitpain	\$426,500
Upper Gwynedd	\$323,900
Lower Gwynedd	\$455,600
Ambler	\$250,000
Upper Dublin	\$394,200
Whitemarsh	\$372,100
Plymouth	\$309,700
East Norriton	\$269,400
Worcester	\$424,300
Montgomery County	\$296,000

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-20
Median Housing Rent

	Rent
Whitpain	\$1,740
Upper Gwynedd	\$1,478
Lower Gwynedd	\$1,808
Ambler	\$980
Upper Dublin	\$1,374
Whitemarsh	\$1,368
Plymouth	\$1,147
East Norriton	\$1,248
Worcester	\$1,003
Montgomery Co	\$1,102

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2. Planning Context

vehicles, 88% live in owner-occupied units (Table 2-14).

Housing

Table 2-15 shows that most of the housing units in Whitpain are owner-occupied, owing to the identity of the Township as being more auto-oriented. In 2010, 77.3% of units were owner-occupied while 22.7% were renter-occupied. This rental figure is up 1% from 2000, while the owner figure went down the same amount. This could be due to the housing crisis and subsequent recession in the late 2000s.

Looking at available housing data, we can surmise that the average household in Whitpain is about the same size (2.5 persons per household) as households in Montgomery County in general (Table 2-16). Moreover, most of the householders in Whitpain moved into their units between 2000-2009 (47.5%), which is also in line with the County in general (48.5%) as shown in Table 2-17. One notable difference between Whitpain and the County as a whole is that the majority of housing stock was built between 1980-1989 (Table 2-18), whereas for Montgomery County, the majority was built before 1940, owing to the fact of a populated region outside of Philadelphia that then became a growing suburb of the city.

The median housing price in Whitpain is \$426,500, which is the

Table 2-21
Units in Structure

Units	Number	Percent
1-unit, detached	4,695	59.0%
1-unit, attached	2,090	26.2%
2 units	39	0.5%
3 or 4 units	60	0.8%
5 to 9 units	178	2.2%
10 to 19 units	334	4.2%
20 or more units	553	6.9%
Mobile home	15	0.2%
Total housing units	7,964	

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

second highest among adjacent townships after Lower Gwynedd, which has a median housing price of \$455,600. Whitpain’s median housing price is also higher than the County as a whole, which has a median housing price of \$296,000 (Table 2-19). Median rents follow a similar pattern. Whitpain has the second highest among adjacent townships at \$1,740/month, with Lower Gwynedd having the highest at \$1,808/month. Whitpain’s median rent is also highest than the County as a whole, which has a median rent of \$1,102/month (Table 2-20).

The bulk of housing units in Whitpain are made up of 1-unit detached (59% of units) and 1-unit, attached (26.2%) structures. This is about 85% of all housing units. Multi-unit structures make up less than 15% of all housing units with structures of 20 or more units making up the majority at 7% (Table 2-21).

2.4 Recent Growth

Between 2011 and 2013, there were 90 residential units proposed for Whitpain. Even though this was the fourth highest number of proposed units among surrounding municipalities, it was far smaller than the top two, Whitmarsh and Plymouth, with 710 and 484 proposed residential units, respectively, owing to those municipalities’ higher densities, business and retail centers and proximity to I-276 and I-476. Ambler was the third

Table 2-22
Proposed Residential Units (2011-2013)

	Whitpain	Upper Gwynedd	Lower Gwynedd	Ambler	Upper Dublin	White marsh	Plymouth	East Norriton	Worcester	Montgomery County
2011	60	24	2	0	1	385	70	0	3	1,924
2012	2	2	0	36	6	67	410	0	4	2,027
2013	28	3	3	120	25	258	4	0	39	3,702
Total	90	29	5	156	32	710	484	0	46	7,653

Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission

Table 2-23
Proposed Nonresidential Square Footage (2011-2013)

	Whitpain	Upper Gwynedd	Lower Gwynedd	Ambler	Upper Dublin	White marsh	Plymouth	East Norriton	Worcester	Montgomery County
2011	10,017	41,524	52,596	21,360	0	2,500	15,130	0	0	1,561,335
2012	5,487	48,360	0	532	13,850	4,275	0	0	0	637,192
2013	46,030	0	15,086	0	25,944	161,825	83,978	0	9,427	2,019,609
Total	61,534	89,884	67,682	21,892	39,794	168,600	99,108	0	9,427	4,218,136

Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission

highest with 156 proposed units (Table 2-22). Also between 2011 and 2013, there was 61,534 square feet of nonresidential space proposed for Whitpain, which is in the middle among adjacent townships. Whitmarsh had the highest amount of proposed nonresidential space at 168,600 square feet (Table 2-23).

2.5 Transportation

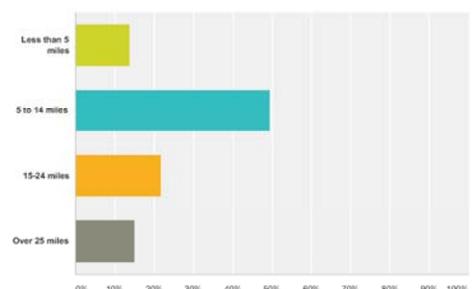
Online Commuting Habits Survey

A separate online survey regarding commuting habits was also made available to employees in Whitpain Township. The survey sought to get a general idea of where employees in Whitpain Township commute from, how they commute, and whether they would consider alternative means of commuting. Employees from the following local businesses received the survey.

- Wissahickon School District
- Montgomery County Community College
- Aetna
- Unisys

Q5 How far is your commute?

Answered: 555 Skipped: 1



Refer to Appendix for full sized survey results

2. Planning Context

- Normandy Farms
- Sunrise at Blue Bell
- Blue Bell Place

The survey received 556 responses. Of the respondents, the majority (35%) indicated that their commute is between 15 and 30 minutes. A large majority of the respondents travel less than 25 miles to work indicating that most workers are relatively local. Nearly 50% of the respondents travel between 5 and 14 miles to work in Whitpain. 22% of the respondents travel 15-24 miles. In terms of the specific areas that workers are commuting from, Table 2-24 lists the top 15 residencies by zip code.

Regarding commuting alternatives, nearly 97% of respondents indicated that they drive alone. When asked what barriers prevent them from using alternative transportation, the highest response (52%) was that respondents need their automobile for work or other purposes. 49% of respondents indicated that they live too far away to ride a bike, 38% indicated that there is no access to transit near their homes, and 34% indicated that there are no safe routes to bike or walk between their home and place of employment. While some of these challenges will be difficult to overcome, Whitpain should seek to improve opportunities for alternative transportation in the Township as well as to educate workers to the benefits of alternative transportation. Additionally, working with adjacent municipalities to develop regional trail networks and pedestrian facilities will help influence those who may not otherwise use alternative transportation.

Roadway Functional Classification / Ownership / Bicycling

There are ten primary state-owned roads within Whitpain (Table 2-25). State-owned roads are owned and maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). PennDOT is responsible for repairing potholes and maintaining

Q9 Which of these barriers prevent you from considering and alternative mode of commuting (select all that apply).

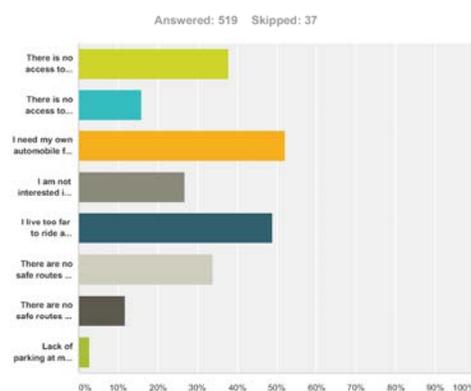


Table 2-24
Residency of Whitpain Workers (by Zip Code)

Zip Code	Total Respondents	Location
19422	45	Blue Bell
19446	41	Lansdale
19002	28	Ambler
19454	26	North Wales
19403	25	Norristown
19438	20	Harleysville
19462	17	Plymouth Meeting
19426	16	Collegeville
19038	15	Glenside
19401	12	Norristown
19406	12	King of Prussia
18974	10	Warminster
19090	10	Willow Grove
18914	8	Chalfont
19473	7	Schwenksville

Table 2-25
State Roads in Whitpain

Road	Route Number
Township Line Rd. (southern border)	State Route 3001
DeKalb Pike	U.S. Route 202
Swede Road	State Route 3008
Skippack Pike	State Route 0073
Morris Road	State Route 2001
Plymouth Road/ School Road	State Route 2016
Penllyn Blue Bell Pike	State Route 3003
Stenton Avenue	State Route 3003
Walton Road	State Route 3012
Norristown Road	State Route 3001

Sources: PennDOT, Penn State University

signs and pavement markings on these roads. PennDOT also resurfaces these roads on a regular cycle, typically every seven to ten years.

Whitpain is also served by one limited access highway- Interstate 476 (PA Turnpike Northeast Extension) which traverses the Township and is generally oriented to serve north-south traffic.

I-476 is a major north-south roadway in Philadelphia’s western and northern suburbs and is also a major road to points in Northeastern PA like Allentown, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton and further north into New York. I-476 has one full service interchange that serves Whitpain immediately south of the Township in Plymouth Meeting. This interchange also provides access to I-276 (PA Turnpike) and the Blue Route segment of I-476, which traverses the western suburbs.

In addition to these state-owned roads, Whitpain owns and maintains a network of local streets. A sampling of roadway

2. Planning Context

types shows that Whitpain contains roads comprised of many classifications. DeKalb Pike and Skippack Pike, for example, are principal arterials. Arterials are roads which provide the highest level of service at the highest speed for long distances. Another type of arterial is a minor arterial and examples of these are Morris Road and Township Line Road (south). Plymouth Road/School Road and Walton Road from Skippack to Stenton Avenue are major collectors. Collectors are roads that provide a lower level of service than arterials at a lower speed for a shorter distance. They “collect” traffic from local roads and help to channel them to arterials. A bulk of Whitpain’s roadways are composed of local roads which connect the different neighborhoods of the Township and provide movement within these communities.

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes vary greatly throughout the Township. As expected, the highest volumes occur on the roads with the highest functional classification: Certain sections of Skippack Pike see between 12,000-16,000 vehicles in average annual daily traffic and certain segments of DeKalb Pike see about 24,000 vehicles in daily traffic. Minor arterials can also see heavy volumes as well as smaller loads. For example, Penllyn Blue Bell Pike between Township Line Road (south) and Stenton Avenue sees about 3,000 vehicles in daily traffic and between Hoover Road and Skippack Pike, sees 11,000 vehicles. Looking at other roads, North Wales Road between Township Line Road (south) and Skippack Pike sees 7,000 vehicles in daily traffic and Township Line Road (south) between Swede Road and Winchester Drive sees 14,000 vehicles in daily volume.

Public Transit Service and Facilities

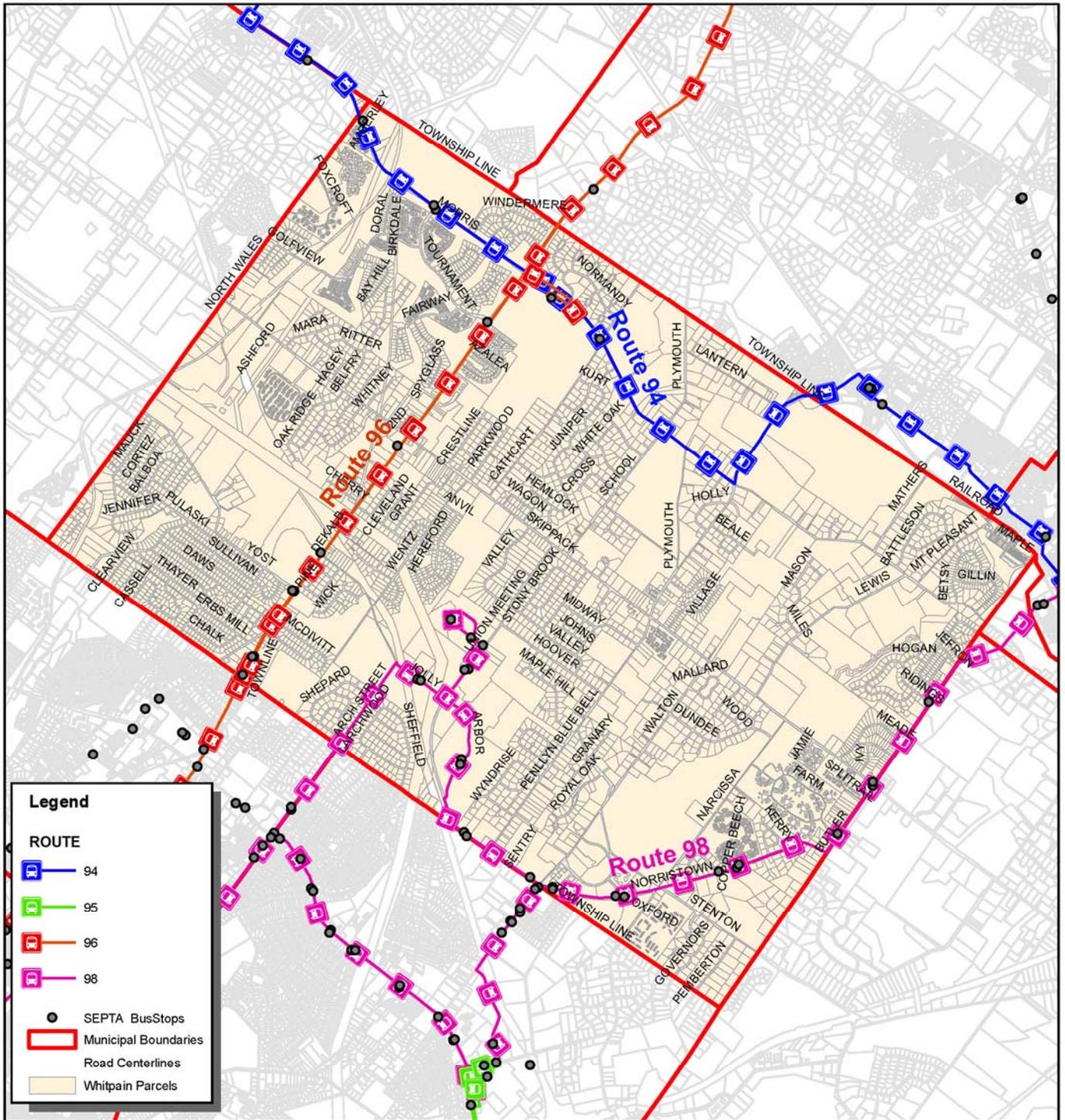
Public transit provides an environmentally friendly and reasonably priced means for Whitpain residents to reach many destinations in Montgomery County and beyond. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the transit provider in the Philadelphia region, serves Whitpain through two distinct modes of transit: bus (Routes 94, 95, 96 and 98) and Regional Rail (Lansdale/Doylestown Line) via stations immediately outside Whitpain to the north.

These routes connect with the City of Philadelphia to the southeast, Conshohocken to the south, Norristown to the west, Lansdale and Doylestown to the north and Willow Grove to the east, all with various destinations along each route.

Bus

SEPTA provides bus service to Whitpain via 4 routes. The 94 bus is a north-south route originating from the Chestnut Hill West station in Philadelphia, continuing north along Bethlehem Pike through Flourtown and Ambler, continuing along Pen Ambler Road and entering Whitpain on Penllyn Blue Bell Pike and Morris Road, heading north on West Point Pike into Lansdale and terminating at the Montgomery Mall. Major destinations along the route include Chestnut Hill Hospital, Chestnut Hill College, Morris Arboretum, Flourtown Shopping Center, Fort Washington State Park, Northwestern Institute of Psychiatry, Germantown Academy, Montgomery County Community College, Merck, Montgomery Commons Shopping Center, Sandy Brooks Plaza Shopping Center and Montgomery Mall. Connections available along Route 94 include 8 bus lines and the Chestnut Hill West Line at Chestnut Hill West Station, the Chestnut Hill East Line at Chestnut Hill East Station and the Lansdale/Doylestown Line at Fort Washington, Ambler, Penllyn and Pennbrook Stations.

Figure 2-1: Whitpain Bus Routes

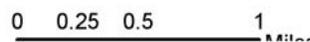


BUS ROUTES

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

SC# 14083.10



Route 94 has a peak fleet of 3 vehicles. It serves 634 weekday passengers and 187,660 annual passengers. The weekday AM peak frequency is a bus every 30 minutes and PM frequency is every 60-90 minutes. Route 94 is ranked 31st out of SEPTA's 46 Suburban Transit routes in terms of daily ridership.

Route 95 is a north-south route that originates at Gulph Mills Station in Gulph Mills, travels along Swedeland Road, passes through the Conshohockens along Route 23 and Fayette Street, turns along Ridge Pike and Germantown Pike passing Plymouth Meeting Mall, going up Walton Road and entering Whitpain along Norristown Road, continuing up along Butler Pike, passing through Ambler down Bethlehem Pike and traversing Fort Washington via Pennsylvania Avenue, then going north along Fitzwatertown Road terminating at Willow Grove Park Mall. Major destinations along the route include Glaxo Smith-Kline, Renaissance at Gulph Mills, the *Inquirer* Plant, PECO Gas Operations, Whitemarsh Plaza Shopping Center, Plymouth Square Shopping Center, Market Place at Plymouth Shopping Center, Metroplex Shopping Center, Plymouth Meeting Mall, Plymouth Meeting Executive Campus, Sentry Park Office Center, Wings Field, Fort Washington Office Center and Willow

Table 2-26
Ridership for Public Transportation Routes Serving Whitpain*

Route	Peak Vehicles	Weekday Passengers	Annual Passengers	Weekday AM Peak Freq (Min)	Weekday PM Peak Freq (Min)	Rank for Week-day Ridership [^]
94	3	634	187,660	30	60/90	31/46
95	6	656	185,650	60	60	30/46
96	6	1,686	499,060	30	30	13/46
98	3	1,096	324,420	30	30	23/46
Lansdale/ Doylestown Line	40	16,343	4,657,647	15	15	2/13

Source: SEPTA FY 2015 Annual Service Plan; SEPTA Route Statistics 2014

*Passenger number represent total ridership for the entire service line and include areas inside and outside Whitpain

[^]Bus ranks are for all Suburban Transit routes and Rail rank is for all Regional Rail routes

2. Planning Context

Grove Park Mall. Connections available along Route 95 include 13 bus routes, the Norristown High Speed Line at Gulph Mills Station, the Manayunk/Norristown Line at Conshohocken Station and the Lansdale/Doylestown Line at Ambler, Fort Washington, Oreland and North Hills Stations.

Route 95 has a peak fleet of 6 vehicles. It serves 656 weekday passengers and 185,650 annual passengers. The weekday AM peak frequency is a bus every 60 minutes and PM frequency is also every 60 minutes. Route 95 is ranked 30th out of SEPTA's 46 Suburban Transit routes in terms of daily ridership.

Route 96 is a north-south route that originates at the Norristown Transportation Center, travels north along Pine Street and DeKalb Pike, entering Whitpain at DeKalb and Township Line Road, continuing north through the Township, turning left at Sumneytown Pike, turning north on North Wales Road and traversing Montgomery Mall before coming back south and terminating at Lansdale Station. Major destinations along the line include Norristown State Hospital, Elmwood Park Zoo, Astor Shopping Center, Northtowne Plaza Shopping Center, Mercy Suburban Hospital, Norriton Square Shopping Center, East Norriton Crossing Shopping Center, Whitpain Shopping Center, Center Square Plaza, Montgomery County Community College, Gwynedd Mercy University, Gwynedd Mercy Academy and High School, Montgomery Plaza, Montgomery Mall and DeSales University. Connections available along Route 96 include 9 bus lines, the Norristown High Speed Line, the Manayunk/Norristown Line at Norristown Transportation Center and the Lansdale/Doylestown Line at North Wales and Lansdale Stations.

Route 96 has a peak fleet of 6 vehicles. It serves 1,686 weekday passengers and 499,060 annual passengers. The weekday AM peak frequency is a bus every 30 minutes and PM frequency is also every 30 minutes. Route 96 is ranked 13th out of SEPTA's 46 Suburban Transit routes in terms of daily ridership.

Route 98 is an east-west route that originates at the Norristown Transportation Center, travels north through Norristown, turns right on Johnson Highway, then continues north along New Hope Street and enters Whitpain along Arch Road and turns on Jolly Road to meet up with Union Meeting Road, traveling east along Township Line Road, then moving south on Walton Road and terminating at Plymouth Meeting Mall. Major destinations along the route include Norristown State Hospital, Elmwood Park Zoo, Astor Shopping Center, Northtowne Plaza Shopping Center, Henkles & McCoy, Unisys, Sentry Park Office Center, Plymouth Meeting Executive Campus and the Plymouth Meeting Mall. Connections available along Route 98 include 12 bus lines, the Norristown High Speed Line and the Manayunk/Norristown Line at Norristown Transportation Center.

Route 98 has a peak fleet of 3 vehicles. It serves 1,096 weekday passengers and 324,420 annual passengers. The weekday AM peak frequency is a bus every 30 minutes and PM frequency is also every 30 minutes. Route 98 is ranked 23rd out of SEPTA's 46 Suburban Transit routes in terms of daily ridership.

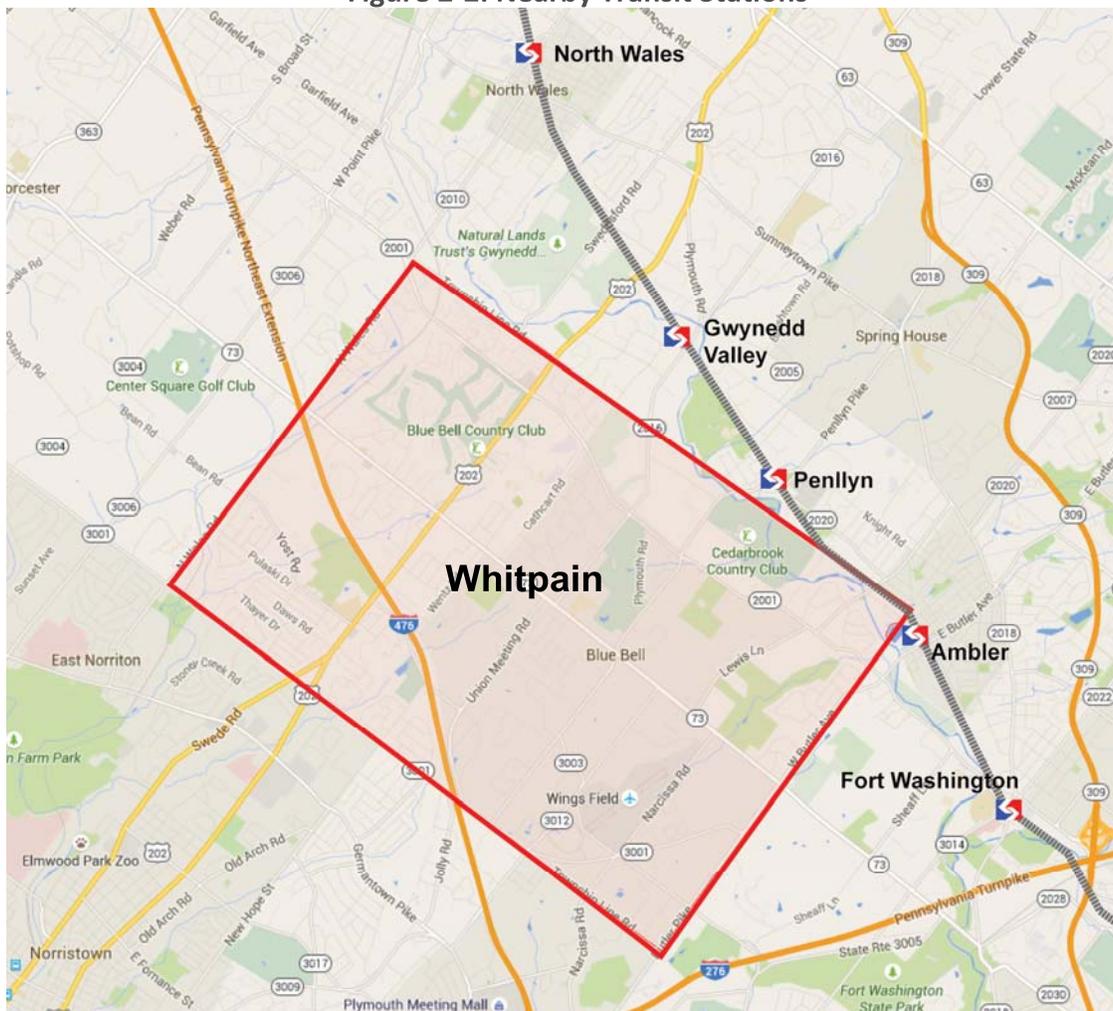
Regional Rail

The closest rail stations to Whitpain include the Ambler Station in Ambler Borough, the Penllyn Station and Gwynedd Valley Station in Lower Gwynedd Township, and the Fort Washington Station in Whitemarsh Township. These stations provide the Township with direct passenger rail access to Philadelphia via the Lansdale/Doylestown Line.

In terms of daily average weekday ridership, the Lansdale/Doylestown Line ranks 2nd out of SEPTA's 13 regional rail lines with an average of 16,343 weekday riders and 4,657,647 annual passengers. Annual vehicle hours traveled is 119,376 hours and annual vehicle miles traveled is 3,167,589. The line has a fleet of 40 vehicles during peak hours with trains running every 15

2. Planning Context

Figure 2-2: Nearby Transit Stations



minutes during the AM and PM peaks on weekdays and every 60 minutes on weekends.

Ambler Station

Ambler Station has 619 parking spaces, with the permit spaces usually full to capacity. The station also has 2 bike racks that can handle 10 bicycles. The station is handicap accessible. Ambler Station ranks 17 of 153 SEPTA regional rail stations in terms of ridership. The station has approximately 1,017 boardings and 816 alightings every weekday. SEPTA serves Ambler with 37 inbound trips to Center City on weekdays and 37 outbound to Ambler trips. On weekend and major holidays, SEPTA serves Ambler Station with 17 inbound and outbound trips on an hourly basis.

Penllyn Station

Penllyn Station has 55 parking spaces, which are usually full to capacity, as well as 2 bike racks that can accommodate 4 bicycles. The station is not handicap accessible. Penllyn Station ranks 107 of 153 SEPTA regional rail stations in terms of ridership. The station has approximately 216 boardings and 182 alightings every weekday. SEPTA serves Penllyn with 33 inbound trips to Center City on weekdays and 34 outbound to Penllyn trips. On weekend and major holidays, SEPTA serves Penllyn Station with 17 inbound and outbound trips on an hourly basis.

Gwynedd Valley Station

Gwynedd Valley Station has 118 parking spaces, which are usually full to capacity, as well as 3 bike racks that can handle 6 bicycles. The station is not handicap accessible. Gwynedd Valley Station ranks 109 of 153 SEPTA regional rail stations in terms of ridership. The station has approximately 210 boardings and 237 alightings every weekday. SEPTA serves Gwynedd Valley with 37 inbound trips to Center City on weekdays and 36 outbound to Gwynedd Valley trips. On weekend and major holidays, SEPTA serves Gwynedd Valley Station with 17 inbound and outbound trips on an hourly basis.

Fort Washington Station

Fort Washington Station has 369 daily parking spaces and 205 permit spaces, which are usually full to capacity. The station also has 3 bike racks that can accommodate 5 bicycles. This station is a handicap accessible station. Fort Washington Station ranks 13 of 153 SEPTA regional rail stations in terms of ridership. The station has approximately 1,108 boardings and 945 alightings every weekday. SEPTA serves Fort Washington with 38 inbound trips to Center City on weekdays and 37 outbound trips from Center City to Fort Washington. On

2. Planning Context

weekend and major holidays, SEPTA serves Fort Washington Station with 17 inbound and outbound trips on an hourly basis.

Airport

Wings Field is a privately-owned general aviation airfield located on Narcissa Road. It has been in operation since the 1930s and provides charter plane services, pilot training, aircraft rentals and sales, freight and ambulance services and cargo services. 100 single-engine aircrafts are kept at the field along with 6 multi-engine aircraft, 3 jet aircrafts and 2 helicopters. Wings Field has one runway and in the 12 month period ending in March 2014, it had approximately 30,500 general aviation operations, which includes takeoffs and landings. Wings field is categorized as a reliever airport regulated by the FAA to relieve congestion at commercial service airports like Philadelphia International.

According to the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, Wings Field is the only airport in the County in which the total number of operations has not dropped since 1995. In general, aviation plays an important role in the economy of Montgomery County and Whitpain should continue to support the operations at Wings Field. Airports in the county serve as locations for flight training, recreation, transport of corporate business travelers, and emergency medical transportation operations.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Whitpain Township has a proposed trail system as outlined in Whitpain's Trail Network Plan/Core Connector Plan. This trail plan identifies several of the existing trails in the Township and proposes others such as the Route 202 trail, Liberty Bell Trail, Core Connector Trail, Prophecy Creek Trail, and a trail along the PECO right of way. The existing trails in the Township include the Green Ribbon Trail and Wings Field Trail. Several other local trails in the Township are not shown in the trail plan.

Figure 2-3: Circuit Map



These include trails within Wentz Run Park, Crossways Preserve, Briar Hill Preserve, Prophecy Creek Park, and Camp Woods Preserve.

The Green Ribbon Trail begins at Parkside Place Park in Upper Gwynedd Township and ends at Stenton Avenue in Whitmarsh Township covering a length of 12.6 miles. The trail enters Whitpain in the northeastern corner of the Township as it passes from Lower Gwynedd to Whitmarsh. The trail provides access to many parks and natural areas. Portions of the trail are managed and maintained by the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association.

In 2013 Whitpain Township opened the Wings Field Trail along

2. Planning Context

Narcissa Road. This one mile multi-use trail extends from Skippack Pike to the intersection with Stenton Avenue and Norristown Road and provides a path for bikers, walkers and runners along the edge of Wings Field. It also provides a connection to Prophecy Creek Park at the north end of the trail.

The Route 202 trail is to be constructed as part of the Route 202 roadway improvement project to be completed by PennDOT. This project includes widening of Route 202 throughout its entire length of in Whitpain Township along with necessary traffic signal upgrades, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. The route 202 trail will connect Whitpain to its neighbors, Lower Gwynedd and East Norriton. The trail will also link important destinations along the corridor such as Montgomery County Community College, Centre Square Village, Blue Bell Country Club, and Centre Square Park. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the year 2020.

The Liberty Bell Trail is a multi—county proposed regional trail that, when complete, will link the Schuylkill River Trail in Norristown to the Saucon Rail Trail in the Borough of Coopersburg, Lehigh County. The trail is proposed to run through the western side of Whitpain Township along the former Liberty Bell Trolley line. The Liberty Bell Trail is part of “The Circuit” which is a 750 mile network of existing and planned trails in the Philadelphia region. Trails identified as part of “The Circuit” receive priority in terms of funding opportunities.

The Core Connector Trail is a Township proposed trail that would connect the Green Ribbon Trail and Lower Gwynedd Township to Township Line Road South and Plymouth Township. The trail would also link several important Township destinations such as Crossways Preserve, Montgomery County Community College, Wentz Run Park, the Whitpain Township Municipal building, and Arborcrest Corporate Campus. It is anticipated that construction of the core connector trail will begin

in 2015.

Other trails shown on the Township trail plan include the Prophecy Creek trail which is proposed to connect Prophecy Creek Park and Briar Hill Preserve to the Green Ribbon Trail. The PECO Trail is proposed along the existing PECO right of way to link the Core Connector Trail to the Liberty Bell Trail.

When completed, these proposed trails in conjunction with those that already exist would provide the Township with a good core trail system. The trail plan, however, does not provide direct connections between the four villages and does not provide links to some recreational areas, open spaces, and historic sites throughout the Township. Additionally, much of the Township lacks sidewalks which will make it difficult for residents to access these proposed trails. Safe pedestrian connections from residential areas should be further examined as well as on-road bicycle routes.

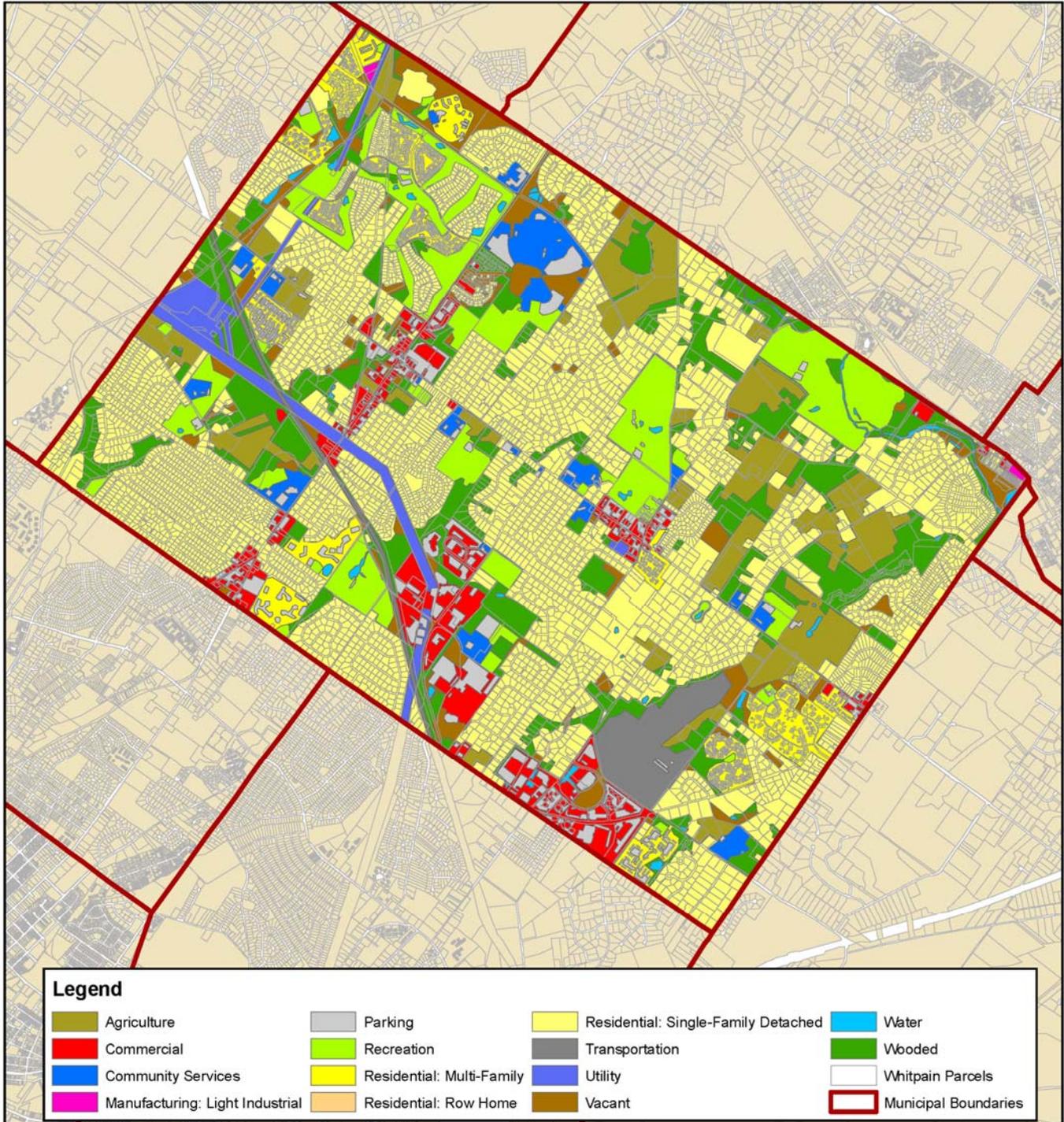
Scenic Roadways

Scenic township roads are important township resources worthy of preservation. Scenic roads are identified by the aesthetic views they provide and the unique character of adjacent elements including but not limited to unique and interesting vegetation, historic buildings and bridges, unique natural features and water features, significant woodlands, and village streetscapes. Scenic roads in Whitpain Township as identified in the Whitpain Township Open Space Preservation Plan 2005 Update are separated into first priority and second priority roadways. These scenic roadways are listed below.

First Priority Scenic Roads (Low volume roads with little or no improvements)

- Plymouth Road (south of Morris Road)

Figure 2-4: Whitpain Land Use Map

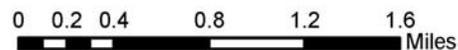


LAND USE

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

SC# 14083.10



- Lewis Lane
- Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike (Township Line Road South to Stenton Avenue)
- Lantern Lane
- Boehm's Church Road

Second Priority Scenic Roads (Medium to high volume roads with limited improvements)

- Morris Road (from westerly edge of Normandy Farm wall to Butler Pike)
- Plymouth Road (north of Morris Road)
- Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike (Stenton Avenue to Butler Pike)
- Skippack Pike (School Lane to Butler Pike)
- School Lane

2.6 Land Use

Figures 2-4 and 2-5 show the distributions and locations of Whitpain's various land uses. The most prevalent land use is Residential: Single-Family Detached, which comprises 45% of the Township. Single-family neighborhoods and developments are scattered throughout Whitpain and abut most of the other uses. This use is followed by Wooded, Recreational and Agricultural lands, which together make up 30% of Township land use. This owes to the desire of the Township to provide parks and recreational space for active and passive uses and the importance of preserving existing farming. Commercial use makes up 4% of Township land use and is mainly concentrated along the DeKalb Pike corridor, the village centers of Center

2. Planning Context

Figure 2-5: Whitpain Land Use Percentages

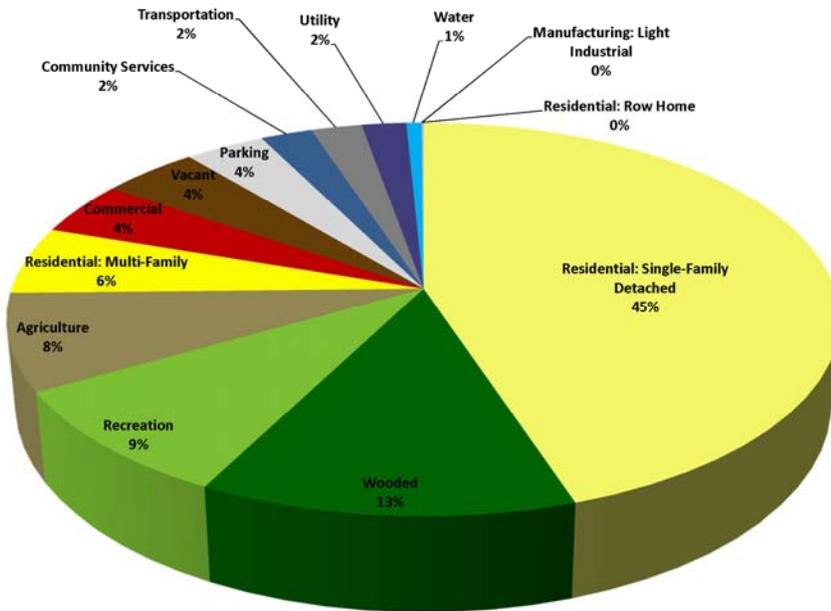


Figure 2-6: Broad Axe Valley Existing Conditions

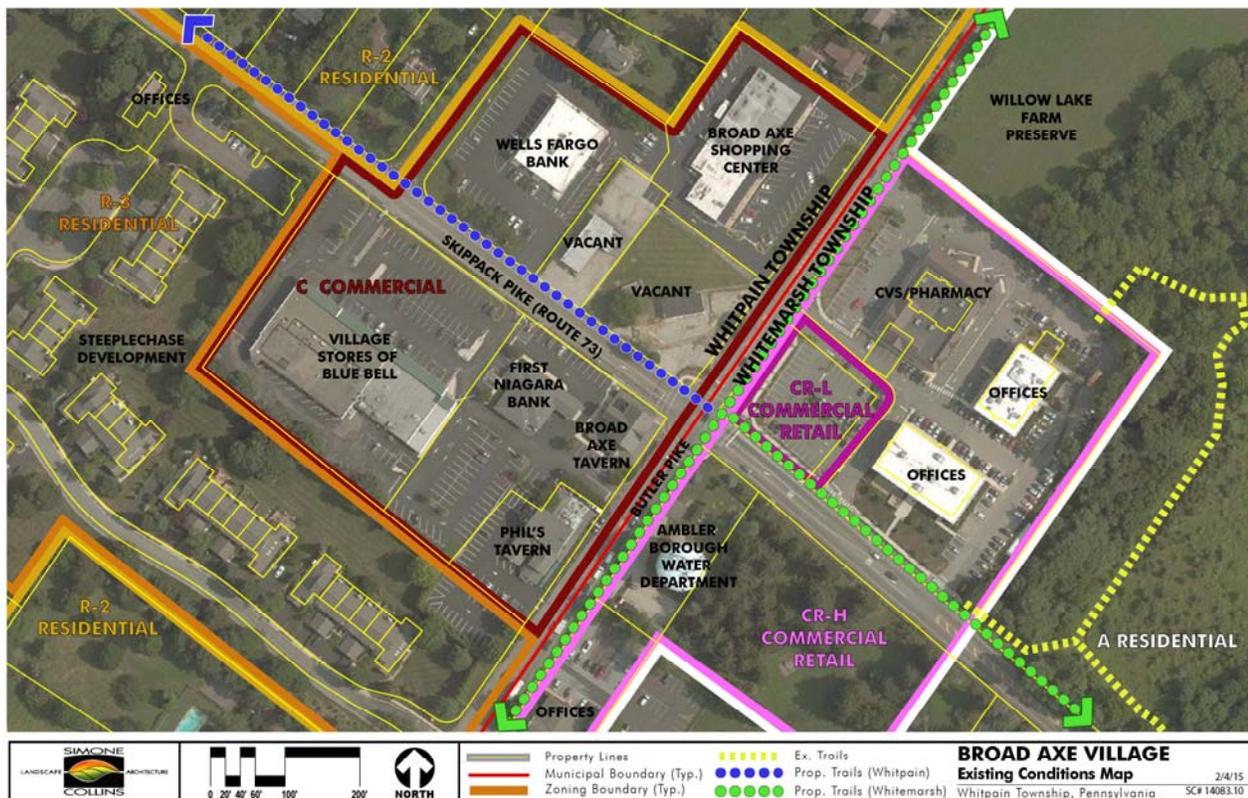
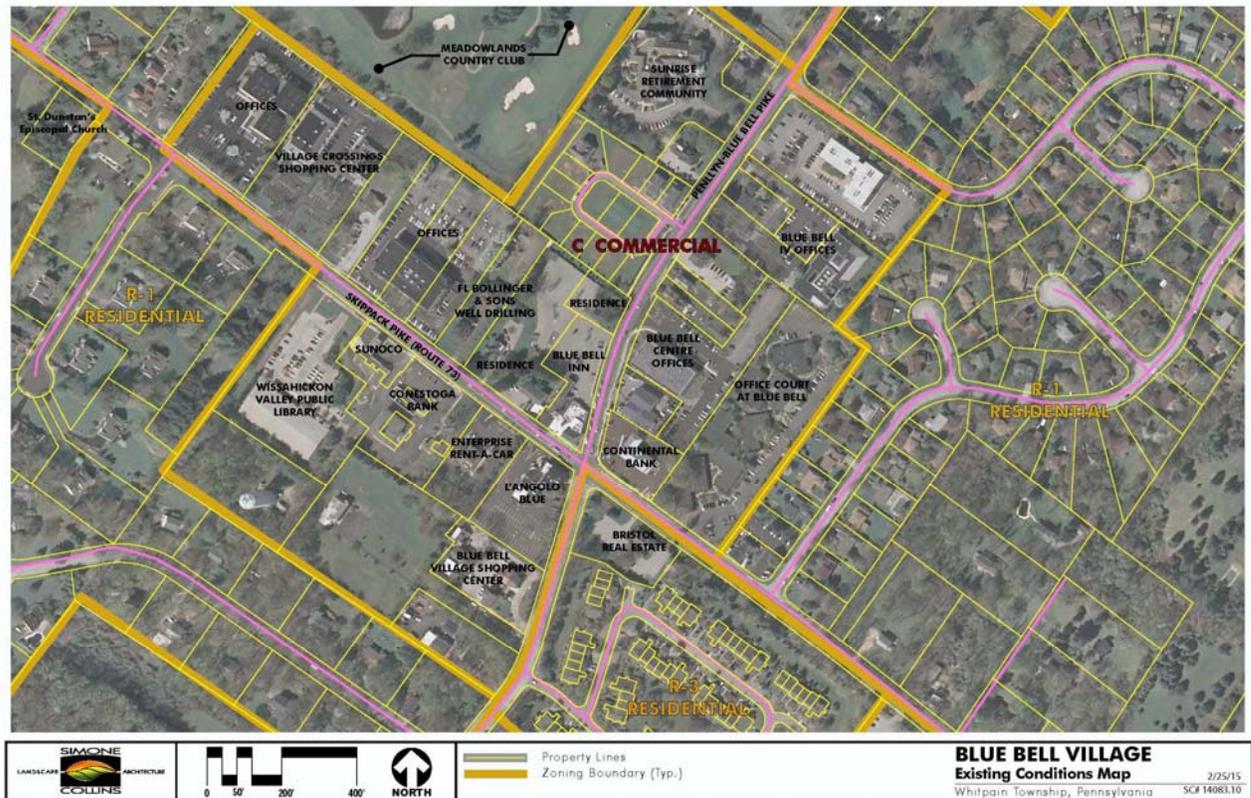


Figure 2-7: Blue Bell Village Existing Conditions



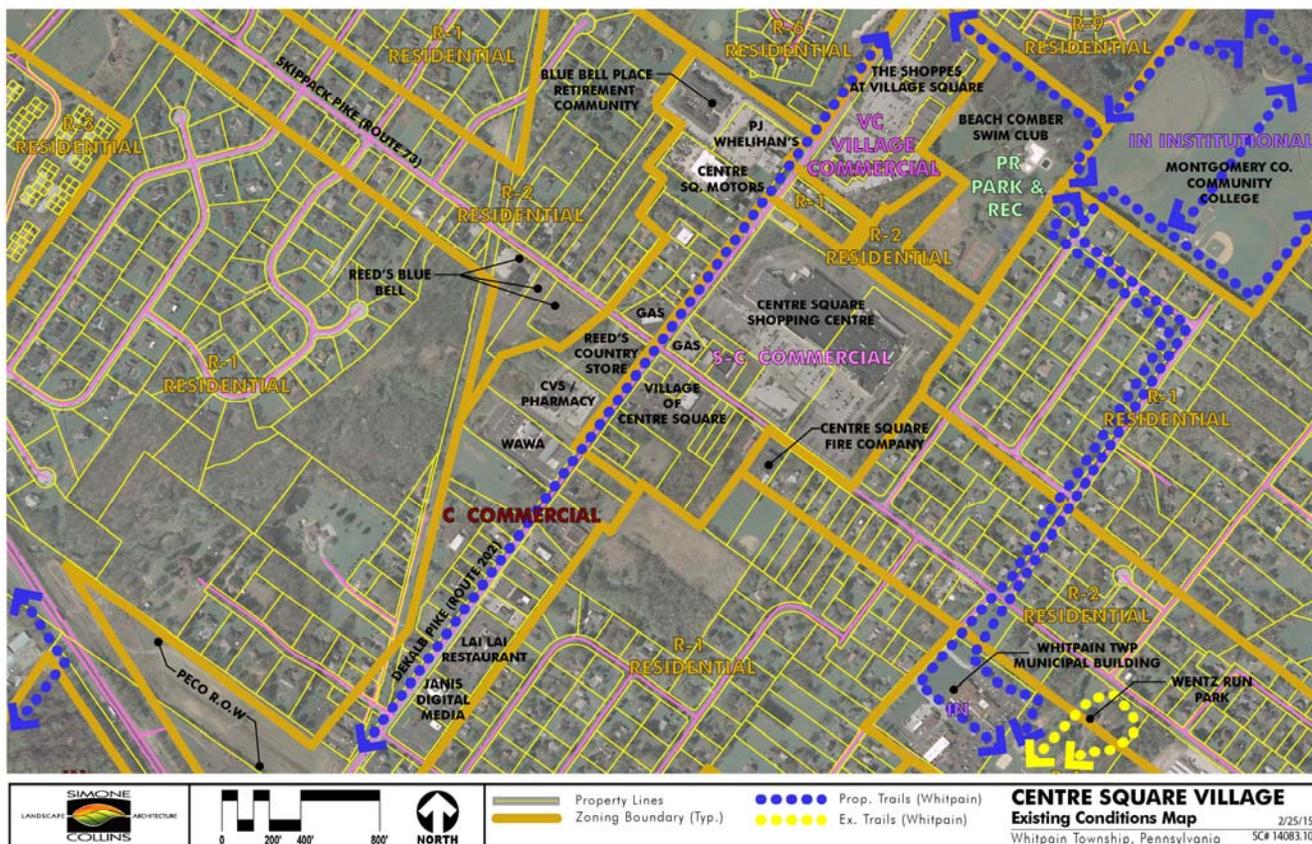
Square, Blue Bell and Broad Axe and the businesses along Union Meeting Road and Norristown Road.

Figure 2-5 indicates that 45% of the township is single family detached residential. This number is unchanged from the previous comprehensive plan in 2006. Wooded, recreation, and agricultural lands make up 30% of the township. These lands make up most of the township open space which was calculated to be 28% of the township in 2006. The remaining 25% of the township is composed of primarily high density residential, commercial, utilities, parking, vacant lands, transportation facilities, community services, and water.

Broad Axe Village

Broad Axe Village is located at the intersection of Skippack Pike

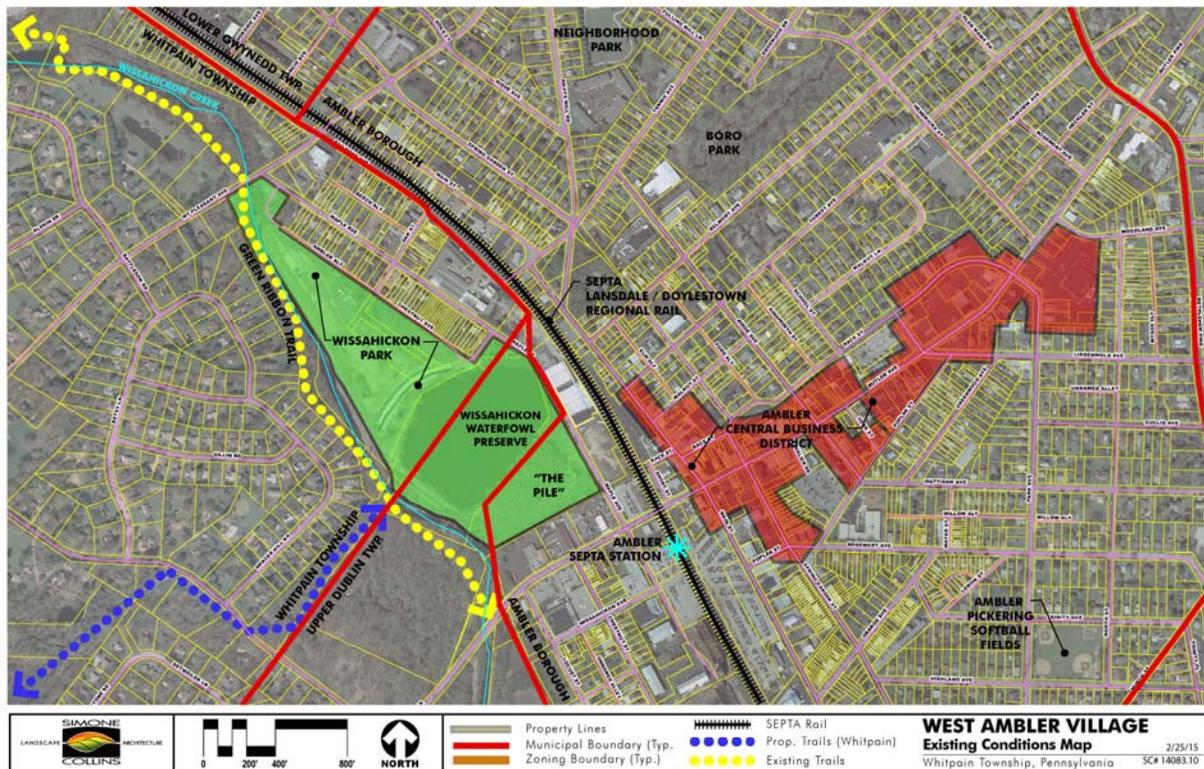
Figure 2-8: Centre Square Existing Conditions



(Route 73) and Butler Pike in the far eastern portion of the Township. The municipal boundary runs along Butler Pike effectively bisecting the village. Properties on the eastern side of Butler Pike are part of Whitmarsh Township and properties west of Butler Pike lie in Whitpain. The center of the village is defined by two small strip retail centers and the recently renovated Broad Axe Tavern which sits directly on the corner of Skipack Pike and Butler Pike. The tavern dates back 1681 and its historical significance is reflected in its architecture. The Broad Axe Village serves as a prominent gateway to Whitpain Township from municipalities to the east. The Township should capitalize on this prominent location by implementing gateway elements. Please also refer to the existing conditions map, Figure 2-6.



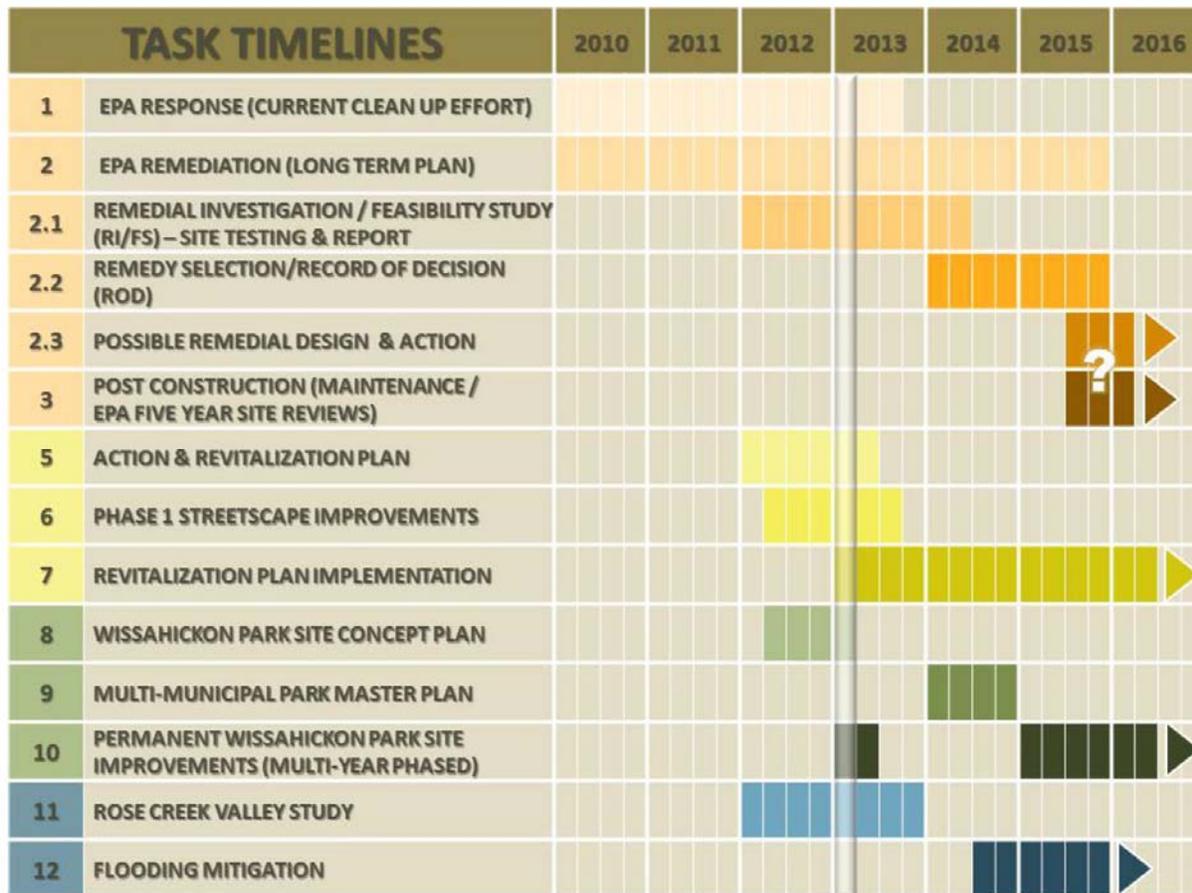
Figure 2-9: West Ambler Existing Conditions



Blue Bell Village

Blue Bell is actually considered a census designated place having an approximate population of 6,067 according to the 2010 census. The village was originally named Pigeontown until it was renamed Blue Bell in 1840. The center of the village is zoned as a commercial district and is located at the intersection of Skippack Pike (Route 73) and Penllyn Blue Bell Pike. The central village includes a mix of office and retail uses and is characterized by several historically significant buildings that sit very close to the adjacent roadways leaving little room for pedestrian travel around them. These buildings are occupied by the Costello's restaurant and the Blue Bell Inn restaurant, which was established in 1743. Other uses in the central village area include several banks and stand alone retail buildings, Blue Bell Shopping Center, Village Crossings Shopping Center, several office buildings, the Wissahickon Valley Public Library, and the

Figure 2-10: West Ambler Implementation Timeline



Sunrise Retirement Community. Surrounding the central business area of Blue Bell are primarily residential developments as well as the Meadowlands Country Club. The Township should make efforts to improve walkability from the surrounding residences to the central business district. Existing sidewalks and pedestrian facilities in the village are sporadic and not continuous. Please also refer to the existing conditions map, Figure 2-7.

Centre Square Village

The Centre Square Village is located at the Skippack Pike (Route 73) and DeKalb Pike (Route 202) intersection one of the most prominent and heavily traveled intersections in Whitpain. The village is Whitpain’s primary commercial hub with several large shopping centers and many stand alone retail uses (Figure

2-8).

There are currently redevelopment plans in progress for The Village of Centre Square Shopping Center which is located at the southeast corner of the intersection. It is anticipated that this new development will utilize approximately 22 acres and will include over 115,000 square feet of building space. The plan includes large and small retail, restaurant, and bank uses, and about 5 acres of permanent open space to buffer it from the surrounding residential areas. Associated with this development is a proposed Community Shopping Center Overlay zoning district.

Other important uses in close proximity to the village include the Blue Bell Retirement Community, Beach Comber Swim Club, Montgomery County Community College (MCCC), the Whitpain Township Municipal Building, Wentz Run Park, Blue Bell Country Club, and Centre Square Park. The Township should focus on pedestrian connections from these locations to the commercial center of the village. Additionally, it is recommended that the Township encourage future village uses that would serve the MCCC students and faculty. There are several underutilized parcels in the village where the Township should focus its redevelopment efforts. Please also refer to the existing conditions map, Figure 2-8.

West Ambler Village

West Ambler Village is located in the far northeastern corner of the Township adjacent to Ambler Borough, Upper Dublin Township, and Lower Gwynedd Township, and the Wissahickon Creek. The village primarily consists of high density single family residential properties with a mix of industrial and recreational uses. The neighborhood has been subject to major environmental contamination due to a history of asbestos manufacturing, flooding, and aging infrastructure which has

2. Planning Context

depressed property values of the area.

The primary contributor to West Ambler's environmental contamination issues is the 37.64 acre Bo-Rit Superfund site which lies on the Wissahickon Creek. The site, which is currently subject to an EPA emergency response in order to cleanup the contamination, consists of three areas: Wissahickon Park (17.73 ac), Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve reservoir (14.0 ac), and the "pile" site (5.91 ac) in Ambler Borough. In 2012, the Township completed a Revitalization and Action Plan for the village. The timeline below updates the status and anticipated completion for the action items recommended in the report. Please also refer to the existing conditions map, Figure 2 -9.

EPA remediation efforts are expected to be completed in 2016 with any needed post remedial action to follow. Five year reviews will be conducted to identify any needed maintenance and to monitor the site for any signs of reemerging contamination. Implementation of the Revitalization and Action Plan including permanent improvements at the Wissahickon Park site are anticipated to continue beyond 2016. Specific recommended improvements of the Revitalization and Action are listed in the chart on the facing page.

The Township has already begun to make progress toward implementing these recommendations. The traffic and stop sign improvements have been completed as have portions of the recommended streetscape and roadway improvements. Additionally, a development of four townhomes has been proposed in the village by a private developer.

2.7 Community Facilities & Services

Education

All of Whitpain Township is located in the Wissahickon School District. Whitpain residents of grade school age attend the schools of the Wissahickon School District along with students from Lower Gwynedd Township and Ambler Borough. Also located in the township is the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's St. Helena School located at DeKalb Pike and Yost Road that serves Pre-K to 8th Grade students. The public elementary schools in Whitpain include Stony Creek Elementary School located at Yost Road and Creek View Lane, Blue Bell Elementary School at Skippack Pike and Symphony Lane and Shady Grove Elementary School at Skippack Pike and Lewis Lane. All Wissahickon students attend Wissahickon Middle School and Wissahickon High School in Lower Gwynedd. Enrollment in the School District has declined slightly since 2007-08, from 4,540 students to 4,437 students in 2013-14 (Table 2-27).

The Wissahickon School District is ranked among the top 25 districts in the state based on state test scores, graduation rates and student attendance. In addition, Wissahickon High School is ranked among the top 10 high schools in the state. Compared to neighboring school districts, Wissahickon is third in spending at \$18,531 per student (Table 2-28).

Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) has its main campus in Whitpain on DeKalb Pike. MCCC offers 5 associate degrees in over 100 programs as well as certificate of completion programs. MCCC has 190 full-time faculty and enrolled 13,122 full time undergraduate students in 2013. In addition to being home to 4 grade schools and MCCC, Whitpain also has numerous preschools, nursery schools and early childhood learning centers.

**Table 2-27
Wissahickon School District Enrollment (2007-2014)**

School Year	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Total
2007-08	1,979	1,085	1,476	4,540
2008-09	1,946	1,087	1,474	4,507
2009-10	1,922	1,082	1,477	4,481
2010-11	1,965	1,051	1,456	4,472
2011-12	1,932	1,038	1,458	4,428
2012-13	1,972	1,011	1,453	4,436
2013-14	1,997	1,028	1,412	4,437

Source: PA Department of Education

**Table 2-28
Comparison with Neighboring School Districts (2012-13)**

District	Total Education Spending	Spending P/ Student	Instruction as % of Total Expenditures	Enrollment
Wissahickon	\$82,205,348	\$18,531	63%	4,436
North Penn	\$202,851,806	\$16,036	63%	12,650
Upper Dublin	\$80,692,404	\$18,788	57%	4,295
Colonial	\$91,936,079	\$19,603	64%	4,690
Norristown Area	\$123,904,173	\$17,550	63%	7,060
Methacton	\$91,855,132	\$18,064	58%	5,085

Source: OpenPAGov.org

Township Administration

Whitpain Township administrative offices are located at 960 Wentz Road. The Township is governed by a 5-member Board of Supervisors who are elected at-large and hold their positions for 6-year terms. The Supervisors designate resident volunteers to the Township’s boards and commissions and also appoint the Township Manager.

Administration in Whitpain runs under the Council-Manager format with the appointed Township Manager being the chief administrative officer of the Township. He/she enforces the

policies set forth by the Board of Supervisors and is responsible for the administration of the departments that perform the day-to-day Township operations. In addition, the Manager prepares and presents the preliminary budget to the Board of Supervisors.

Other elements of Township administration include boards and commissions made up of resident volunteers who advise the Supervisors and numerous departments that carry out daily functions. Whitpain's boards and commissions are the Board of Appeals, Parks & Open Space Board, Planning Commission, Shade Tree Commission and Zoning Hearing Board. The departments consist of Code Enforcement, Engineering, Finance, Fire Prevention, Parks and Recreation, Police and Public Works.

Public Safety And Emergency Services

The Police Department is staffed by 30 full-time officers, 8 non-uniform and 1 part-time employees. The department is split into 3 divisions: Patrol, Investigative and Administrative. The Patrol Division consists of 1 lieutenant, 4 sergeants, 4 officers-in-charge, 11 patrol officers (1 spot is currently vacant), 4 traffic officers and 1 part-time crossing guard. The Investigative Division consists of 1 supervisor and 2 detectives and the Administrative Division consists of 1 lieutenant, a dispatch supervisor, 5 dispatchers, a file clerk and public relations officer. The department is run by a police chief and also employs an administrative assistant/network administrator.



West Side Court, West Ambler

The Centre Square Fire Company provides the primary fire and rescue services for Whitpain. The Fire Company was founded in 1913 and currently operates out of a station at 1298 Skippack Pike near the intersection with Route 202. The Fire Company remains mostly volunteers with three full time employees.

Emergency Medical services in Whitpain are provided by The

2. Planning Context

Second Alarmers Rescue Squad and Association of Montgomery County. The Second Alarmers operate out of a building adjacent to the Whitpain Township Administration building.

The primary issue affecting Township's emergency services is traffic congestion. Heavy traffic in Whitpain greatly hampers the response times of the Township's emergency services during peak travel hours.

Library

The Wissahickon Valley Public Library is located at 650 Skippack Pike. The library serves Whitpain Township, Lower Gwynedd Township and Ambler Borough. The library Board of Trustees is comprised of nine members, two trustees appointed by each municipality and three members appointed by the Wissahickon School Board. The Wissahickon Valley Public Library also has a second branch that is located in Ambler Borough.

Recreation

Whitpain Township has a good system of park and recreation facilities. The Township maintains five active recreation parks including Wentz Run Park, West Side Park, West Side Courts, Stony Creek Sports Park, and Centre Square Park. The Township also maintains several more passive recreation parks. These include the Armentrout Preserve, Erbs Mills Park, and Prophecy Creek Park. There are also many more privately owned recreation facilities in the Township. The Township park system and other recreation areas are discussed in detail in the Protected Lands section of this chapter.

Public Sanitary Sewage Services

All developments in the Township are required to have adequate sewage disposal and treatment, either by an individual on-lot sewage treatment system or through the public sewer system. The Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537), enacted on January 24th 1966 (revised in 1974), is intended to prevent future sewage disposal issues by ensuring municipalities have adequate sewer service to meet present and future demands. Act 537 requires municipalities to develop comprehensive plans that address existing sewage disposal issues, plan for future needs of the community. In Montgomery County, multiple regulatory agencies are involved in Act 537 process including DEP, Delaware River Basin Commission, Montgomery County Planning Commission, and the Montgomery County Health Department.

A large majority of Whitpain Township is serviced by a public sewer system. Approximately half of the Township is serviced by the East Norriton—Plymouth—Whitpain Treatment Plant owned and operated by the East Norriton—Plymouth—Whitpain Joint Sewer Authority. The treatment facility is located on Ross Street in Plymouth Township just east of the East Norriton border. The treatment plant's capacity is currently 8.1 million gallons per day. A large area in the northern and eastern portion of the Township is serviced by the Ambler Wastewater Treatment Plant operated by Ambler Borough. This treatment plan has capacity of 6.5 million gallons per day. Other smaller areas of the Township are serviced by the Upper Gwynedd Township, Whitemarsh Township, and Plymouth Township systems. Properties in the Township not serviced by public treatment plants are few. These properties are serviced by on-lot treatment facilities such as a drip irrigation field or aerobic tanks.

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Within the Township, the Whitpain Public Works department manages and maintains infrastructure that includes 113 miles of sanitary sewer piping, 2,568 manholes, 7 pumping stations, and 3 meter facilities. The Township is constantly monitoring this aging infrastructure as many facilities are reaching the end of their expected lifespan.

Public Water Service

Whitpain Township is serviced by three public water service providers each with specific service areas delineated. North Wales Water Authority primarily serves the northern and eastern portions of the Township. Ambler Water Authority services a small area in the eastern corner of the Township and Pennsylvania American Water services the western and southern areas of the Township.

Other Utilities

A large overhead electric transmission line owned by the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO) runs through Whitpain's southwestern corner from Plymouth Township to Worcester Township. The linear property is approximately 300' in width across its entire length which provides opportunities for future secondary uses such as off road trail connections to adjacent municipalities, residential areas and other planned trails. A proposed trail alignment along the PECO property has already been proposed in the Township's current trail plan. Design and implementation of this trail link will need to be coordinated and agreed upon with PECO.

A petroleum gas transmission pipeline also traverses the Township. The pipeline runs from Lower Gwynedd Township to the north, through Montgomery County Community College property, across Route 202 and Route 476 and then southwest into East Norriton Township.

2.8 Natural Features

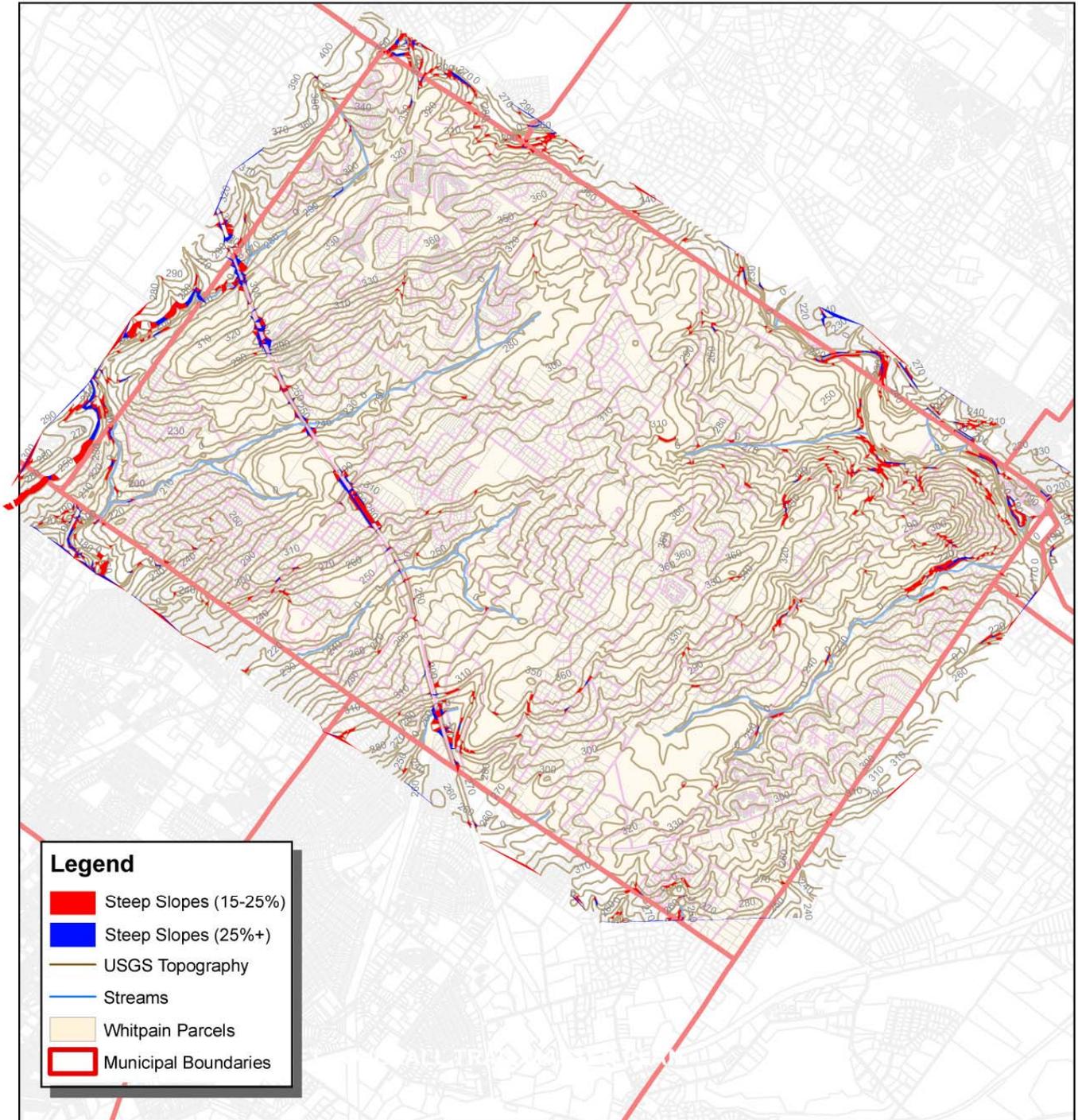
Topography

Elevations in Whitpain Township range from approximately elevation 180 to approximately elevation 360. The land in the Township generally drains to one of the four major streams in the Township. Stony Creek and Mermaid Run lie in the western portion of the Township and Prophecy Creek and the Wissahickon Creek lie in the eastern portions of the Township. The lowest elevations of the Township are in the far western corner in the area of Stony Creek and the far eastern corner of the Township in the area of the Wissahickon Creek. The highest elevations are generally located in the central portions of the Township near the Skippack Pike and Penllyn Blue Bell Pike intersection and in the northern corner of the Township near Normandy Farm and the Blue Bell Country Club. The steepest slopes are in the eastern corner near the Wissahickon Creek.

Soils

According to the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, the dominant soil type is Urban land-Udorthents, shale sandstone complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes (UusB). This soil type makes up 20.6% of Whitpain's soils and is primarily found on uplands and ridges. This soil is comprised of sandstone and shale and is not considered a hydric soil. This soil is found sporadically throughout the Township with the largest contiguous areas located in the northern and western portions of the Whitpain. The next most dominant soil type is Lawrenceville silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes (LeB) which makes up 8.5% of the Township. This soil type is also found on uplands. The soil is found in small pockets throughout the entire Township. Other prominent soil types in the Township include Lawrenceville silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (8.2%) and Urban Land-Lawrenceville complex, 0 to 8

Figure 2-11: Whitpain Steep Slopes



STEEP SLOPES

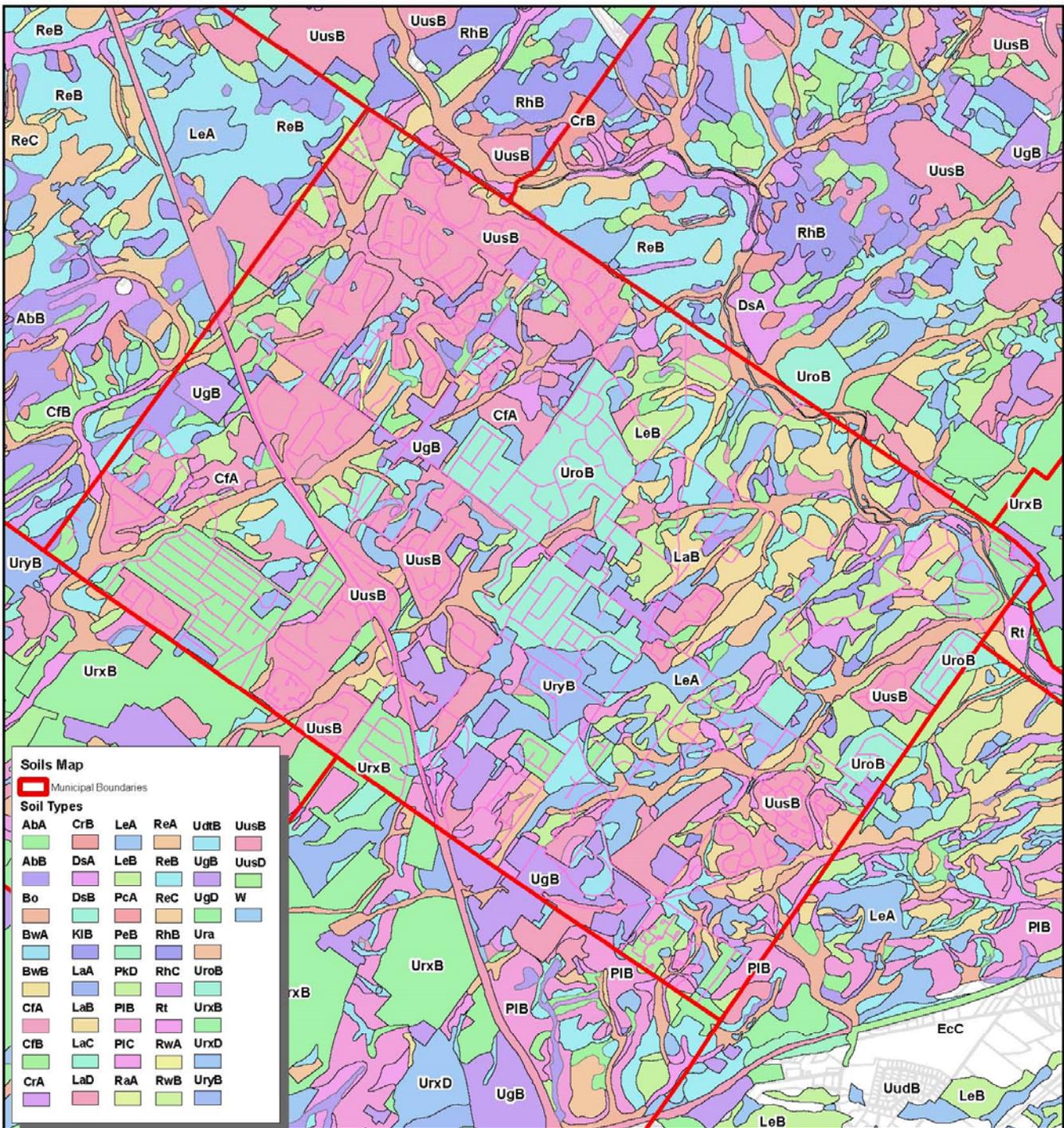
WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

SC# 14083.10



Figure 2-12: Whitpain Soils Map



SOILS MAP

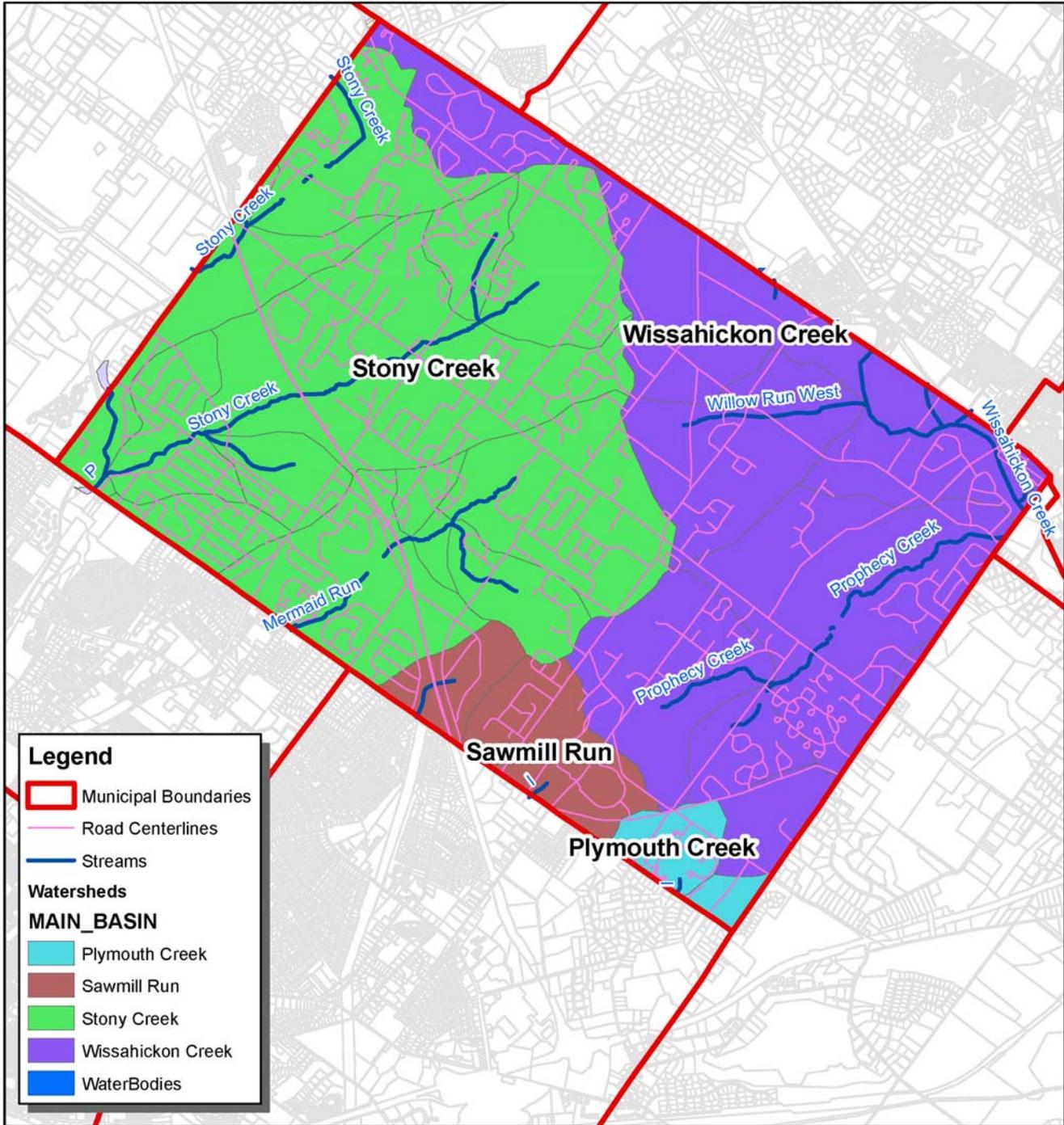
WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

SC# 14083.10



Figure 2-13: Whippain Watersheds



WATERSHEDS

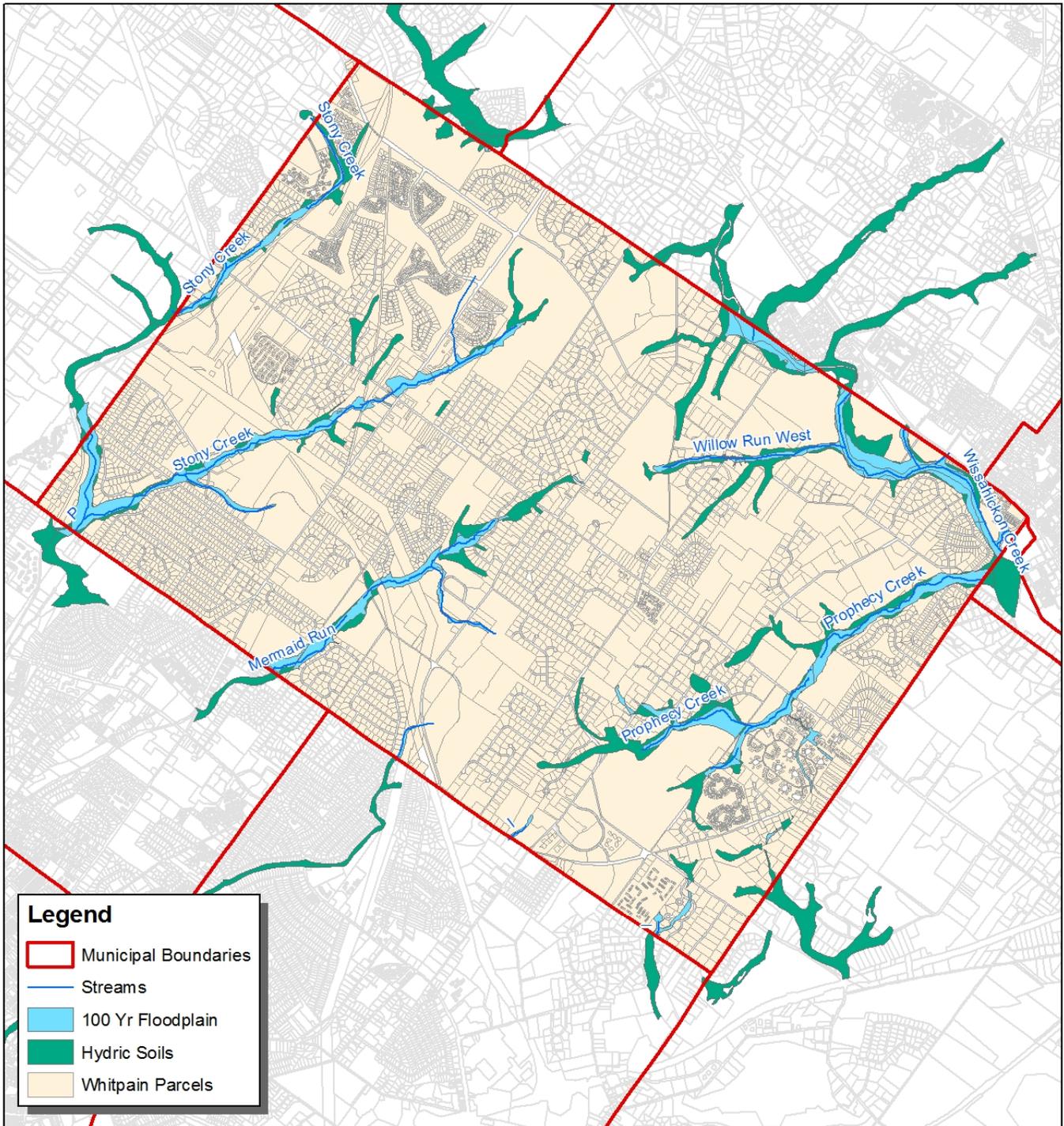
WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Figure 2-14: Whitpain Hydric Soils & Floodplains Map

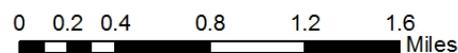


HYDRIC SOILS & FLOODPLAINS

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

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2. Planning Context

percent slopes (7.8%). The most limiting soils in terms of development are located primarily around streams and in the eastern portion of the Township where soils have steeper slopes, shallow depth to bedrock and a shallow depth to water table. Please refer to Figure 2-12 for soil types in Whitpain Township. Descriptions of soil types are shown in the appendix of this report.

Hydrology

The major streams within the Township are Stony Creek, a tributary to Stony Creek, and Mermaid Run which drain to the west and Prophecy Creek, Willow Run West and the Wissahickon Creek which drain to the east. Plymouth Creek and Sawmill Run lie in the far southern corner of the Township and drain to the south. These streams make up the four main watersheds in the Township which are the Stony Creek watershed, Wissahickon Creek watershed, Sawmill Run watershed, and the Plymouth Creek watershed (Figure 2-13).

Wissahickon Creek

The headwaters of the Wissahickon Creek are located north of Whitpain in north central Montgomery County. The stream runs approximately 23 miles to its confluence with the Schuylkill River in northwest Philadelphia. The final 7 miles has been named the Wissahickon Gorge as the creek drops approximately 100 feet in elevation over this length. The Wissahickon Gorge is preserved within Philadelphia's Fairmont Park and has become an attraction for its geography, recreational trail opportunities, and historic mill dams.

While much of the Wissahickon Creek lies within or adjacent to parkland, recent urban development has begun to cause strain on the stream from increased stormwater runoff and wastewater discharge. The Wissahickon Creek watershed consists of approximately 64 square miles covering 15 municipalities in both



Wissahickon Creek

Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties. The watershed area hosts approximately 160,000 residents. The Wissahickon Creek is classified by PADEP as a trout stocking fishery / migratory fishery (TSF/MF).

Within the watershed there are multiple organizations and volunteer groups involved in protection and enhancement of the creek. One of the major contributors is the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association (WVWA) which is a non-profit land trust founded in 1957 to protect the quality and beauty of the creek. Several of the WVWA priorities include land preservation and protection, water quality enhancement, preservation and restoration of suburban wilderness, and the creation of awareness and education of the watershed. Within Whitpain Township, WVWA owns and manages multiple properties in the vicinity of Wissahickon Creek and its tributaries, Prophecy Creek and Willow Run.

Prophecy Creek

Prophecy Creek is a tributary of the Wissahickon Creek. The headwaters of Prophecy Creek are located south of the Wissahickon Creek adjacent to Wings Field. North of Wings Field, the creek is surrounded by Prophecy Creek Park and Briar Hill Preserve. Because these areas are preserved open space, Prophecy Creek is known to have some of the best water quality in the Wissahickon watershed. The water quality of Prophecy Creek is monitored by the WVWA. The Manor House at Prophecy Creek Park is a popular wedding venue located on the creek. The venue provides picturesque views of the creek and is a symbol of the area's history. Prophecy Creek empties into the Wissahickon Creek in Upper Dublin Township just beyond Whitpain's northeastern border.

2. Planning Context

Stony Creek

Stony Creek is located in the Schuylkill River watershed. The creek begins just beyond the northwestern border of Whitpain Township and flows south through Calvert Hurdle Park, East Norriton Township Park, and Norristown Farm Park in East Norriton and West Norriton Townships before emptying into the Schuylkill River in Norristown. A tributary to Stony Creek begins near the intersection of Route 202 and Route 73 and flows south through Centre Square Park until it empties into Stony Creek in the southeastern corner of the Township. Stony Creek is classified by PADEP as a trout stocking fishery / migratory fishery (TSF/MF). Mermaid Run is a tributary of Stony Creek and originates in the center of Whitpain Township. Mermaid Run flows south through Mermaid Lake and empties into Stony Creek just east of Norristown Farm Park.

Sawmill Run

Sawmill Run originates near the southern border between Whitpain Township and Plymouth Township. The stream flows south through Plymouth Township and empties into the Schuylkill River in Norristown. A small portion of Whitpain's southeastern corner is located in the Sawmill Run watershed.

Plymouth Creek

Plymouth Creek originates just south of Whitpain Township. The creek flows south through Plymouth Township and empties into the Schuylkill River in Conshohocken. A small drainage area in the far southeastern corner of Whitpain Township lies in the Plymouth Creek watershed.



Floodplains and Hydric Soils

Floodplains and hydric soils are found along the above mentioned streams in the Township (Figure 2-14). Hydric soils are typically unsuitable for development. These soils have a

shallow depth to saturated soils limiting the ability for stormwater infiltration and increasing the possibilities of flooding. Within Whitpain Township hydric soils are primarily located around riparian corridors. These areas are primarily recommended for open space, passive recreation, and wildlife habitats.

A 100-year flood is a flood that statistically has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. The 100-year floodplain as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) represents the area of land in that would become inundated by the 100-year flood. FEMA utilizes the 100-year floodplain line to implement the National Flood Insurance Program which is intended to reduce the impact of flooding on private and public structures.

The Whitpain Township Floodplain Conservation District ordinance regulates development within floodplains. Ideally riparian corridors and floodplains should be kept in their natural state to increase groundwater infiltration and filter pollutants. Stormwater management best practices and riparian corridor enhancements can also reduce potential dangers to public health by enhancing the quality and reducing quantity of the water. The importance of proper stormwater management and some of these best management practices are discussed below.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater is water that originates from a precipitation event or snow and ice melt. Some of this water is absorbed into the ground where it filters out pollutants and is returned to aquifers of streams. In developed areas, impervious surfaces such as parking lots, sidewalks, building rooftops, and driveways prevent stormwater from being absorbed into the ground. Stormwater management is the process by which this runoff is collected through various facilities such as inlets pipes, basins, rain gardens, cisterns, swales, and infiltration systems.

2. Planning Context

Stormwater management compensates for flooding that may occur due to the addition of impervious surfaces found in developed areas. Stormwater management mitigates pollution that may be collected from impervious surfaces such as parking lots or driveways. By mitigating possible flooding, stormwater management facilities also reduce the potential erosion and sedimentation issues and damage to structures such as buildings, roads, or bridges.

Whitpain Twp. is considered to be a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) which is a system of stormwater conveyances including but not limited to streets, ditches and pipes. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer systems are:

- owned by a municipality having jurisdiction over disposal of sewage, industrial wastes, stormwater or other wastes;
- designed or used for collecting or conveying stormwater;
- not a combined sewer (i.e., not intended for both sewage and stormwater); AND
- not part of a publicly owned treatment works (POTW).

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems are subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. NPDES Permits for MS4s requires implementation of a stormwater management program of Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce the discharge of pollutants to water resources. Minimum control measures include:

- Public education and outreach
- Public involvement and participation
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site runoff control
- Post-construction stormwater management in new

development /redevelopment

- Pollution prevention & good housekeeping for municipal operations /maintenance

Stormwater management has become one of the major sustainability efforts in the Township. The Township has implemented a storm drain stenciling program that marks all stormwater inlets with a “*No Dumping Drains to Creek*” stencil. The stencils are in place to educate the public about the need to prevent trash from entering the storm inlets in order to reduce pollution of the local streams and water supply.

Additionally the Township has retrofitted several stormwater basins to help improve the water quality of the Township’s watersheds. The basins’ outlet structures and flow channels were modified and appropriate vegetation such as grasses shrubs and trees planted to improve pollution reduction and provide a more natural appearance.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

The United States Environmental Protection Agency defines a TMDL as “a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and an allocation of that load among the various sources of that pollutant.” Whitpain Township is currently in the process of updating its strategic plan for the Wissahickon Creek TMDL in order to comply with Federal regulations. The TMDL plan will include the installation of stormwater BMP’s including but are not limited to storm water basin retrofits, streambank rehabilitation and street sweeping to address the sediment loadings on the Wissahickon Creek. It is anticipated that the overall program to take between 15 to 25 years to fully implement with an overall cost estimated to be at least several million dollars.

Woodlands and Vegetation

Wooded areas and tree cover can have many benefits to a community as they can serve as a means of stormwater management, support important animal habitats and can provide excellent recreational opportunities for the local community. Tree cover around riparian areas help improve water quality by cooling water, filtering sediments, and preventing erosion. Wooded lands make up approximately 13% of the Township, the second highest land cover behind only single family detached residential. Much of the existing wooded land in the Township is located within stream corridors. Other pockets of wooded areas exist in the areas of Route 476, Wentz Run Park, Armentrout Preserve, Crossways Preserve, Cedarbrook Country Club, Briar Hill Preserve, Centre Square Park, as well as other smaller clusters throughout the Township (Figure 2-15).

The Township's total Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) was recently calculated by Davey Resource Group in 2012. The UTC includes tree canopy coverage from wooded lands as well as individual trees on both public and private lands in the Township was recently calculated to be 43.0% (3,537.64 acres). The average UTC for metropolitan areas as recommended by American Forests for cities east of the Mississippi River is 40.0%. The potential UTC for Whitpain Township was calculated to be 80.4%. This area is a sum of the current Township canopy tree canopy plus its pervious land cover. This potential UTC is as an ambitious goal for the Township. The report recommends that the township prioritize the protection of its existing tree canopy, look for opportunities to correct imperious surface to tree planting area, and increase the planting of riparian areas. For more information on the study please visit www.whitpaintownship.net/pds/tree.canopt.pdf



Wentz Run Park

Urban Tree Canopy Report

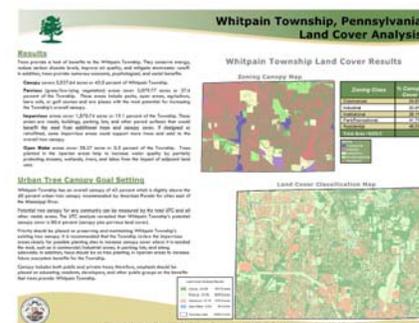
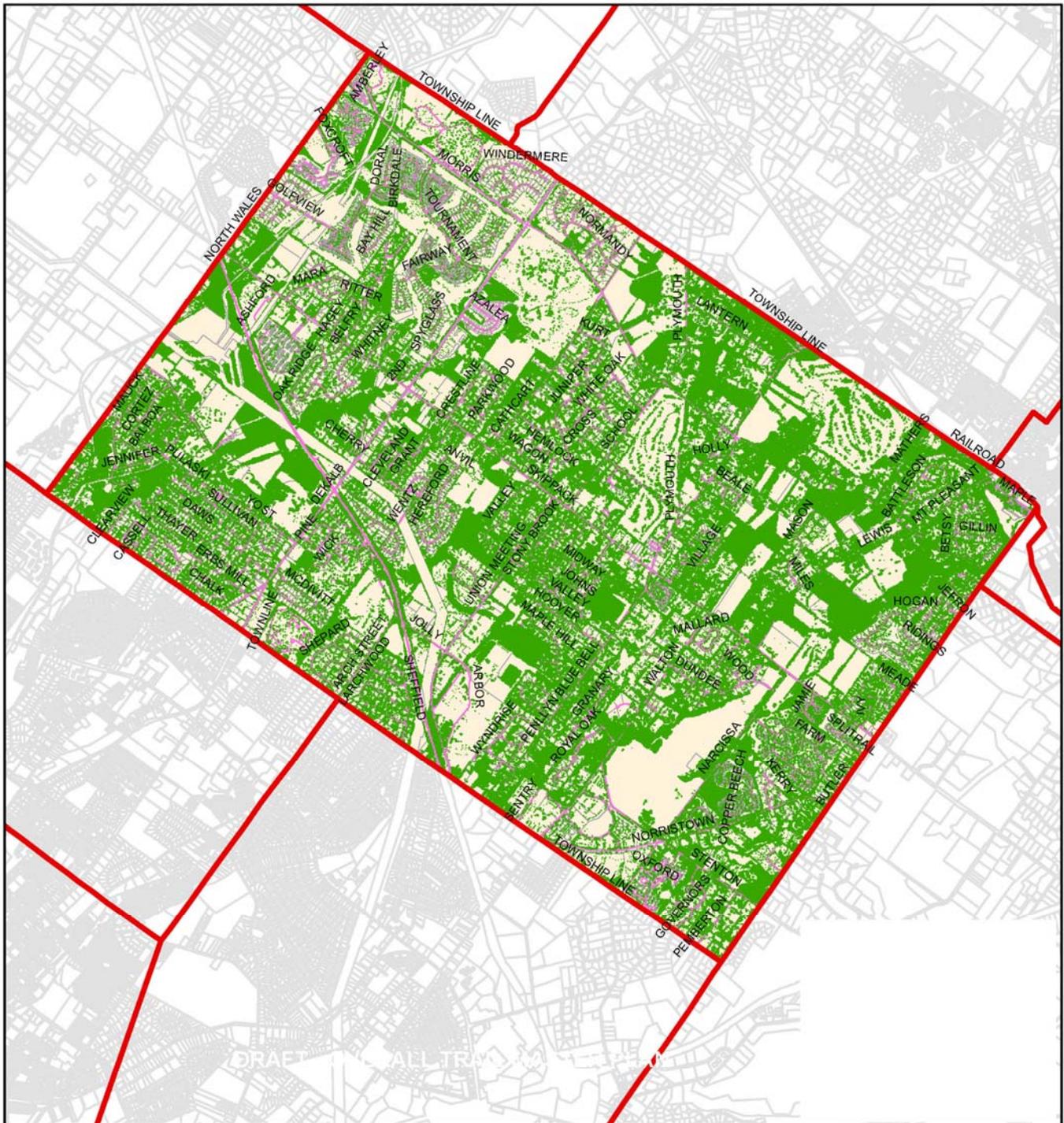


Figure 2-15: Whitpain Vegetative Cover



VEGETATION

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 MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
 SC# 14083.10

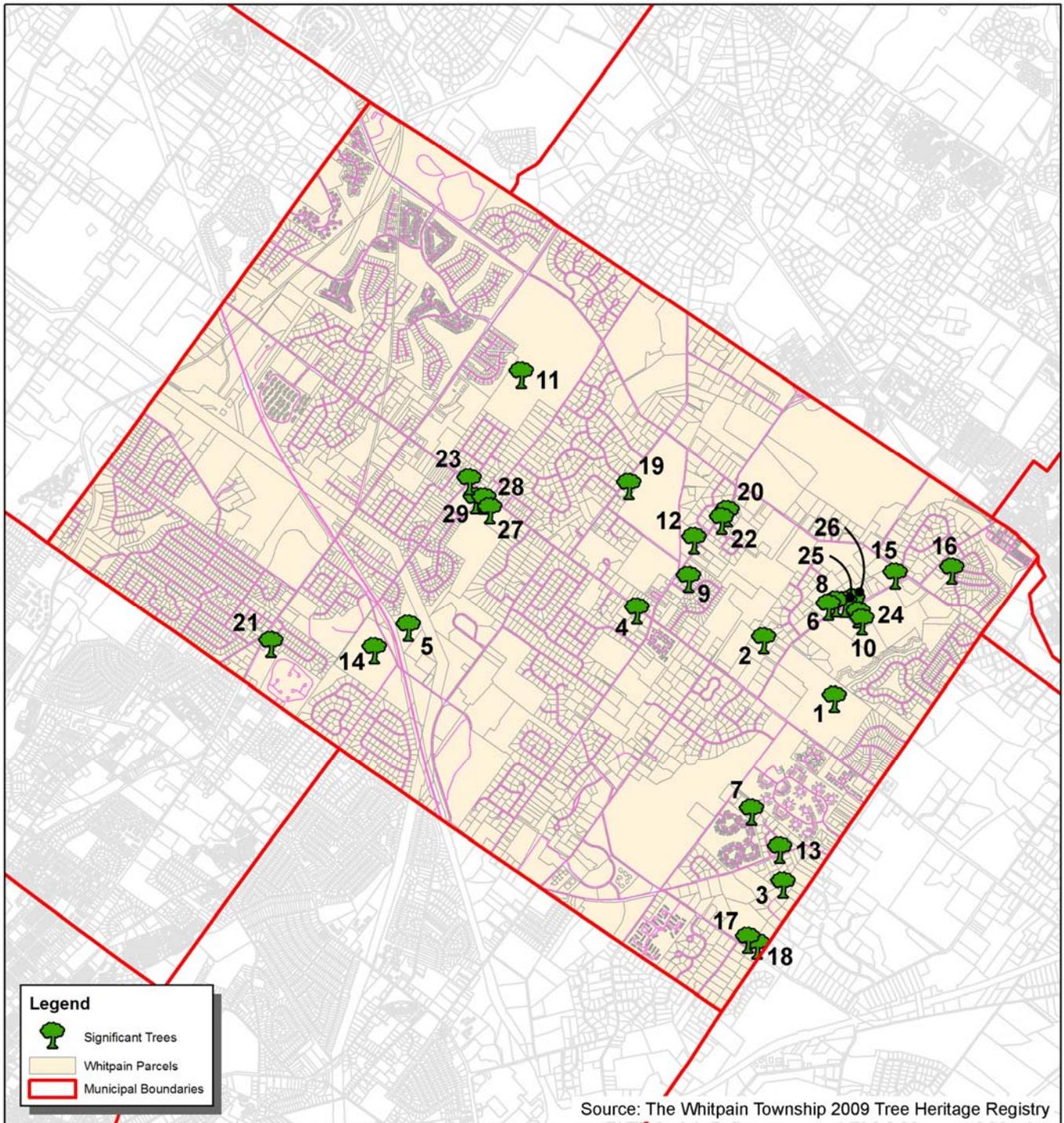
0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 Miles

Table 2-29
Significant Trees

Key	Tree Species	Location
1	Sycamore	Prophecy Creek Park
2	Red Oak	795 Lewis Lane
3	White Oak	1301 Butler Pike
4	Sycamore	630 Skippack Pike
5	Pignut Hickory	Wentz Run Park
6	Osage Orange	525 Lewis Lane
7	White Oak	1200 Narcissa Road
8	Copper Beech	525 Lewis Lane
9	Sycamore	760 Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike
10	Sycamore	560 Lewis Lane
11	Pin Oak	Montgomery Co. Community College
12	Ash	515 Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike
13	Black Cherry	225 Kerry Lane
14	Norway Spruce	Mermaid Lake
15	American Elm	353 Lewis Lane
16	Butternut	19 Betsy Lane
17	River Birch	Oak Lane Day School
18	Sycamore	Oak Lane Day School
19	Copper Beech	510 School Road
20	Red Oak	560 Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike
21	Sycamore	1664 DeKalb Pike
22	White Oak	590 Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike
23	Ash	Skippack Pike & Wentz Road
24	Eastern Hemlock	560 Lewis Lane
25	Tulip Poplar	525 Lewis Lane
26	Swamp Maple	525 Lewis Lane
27	Shagbark Hickory	Wentz Run Park
28	Red Oak	Wentz Run Park
29	Ironwood	Wentz Run Park

Source: *The Whitpain Township 2009 Heritage Tree Registry*

Figure 2-16: Whitpain Significant Trees



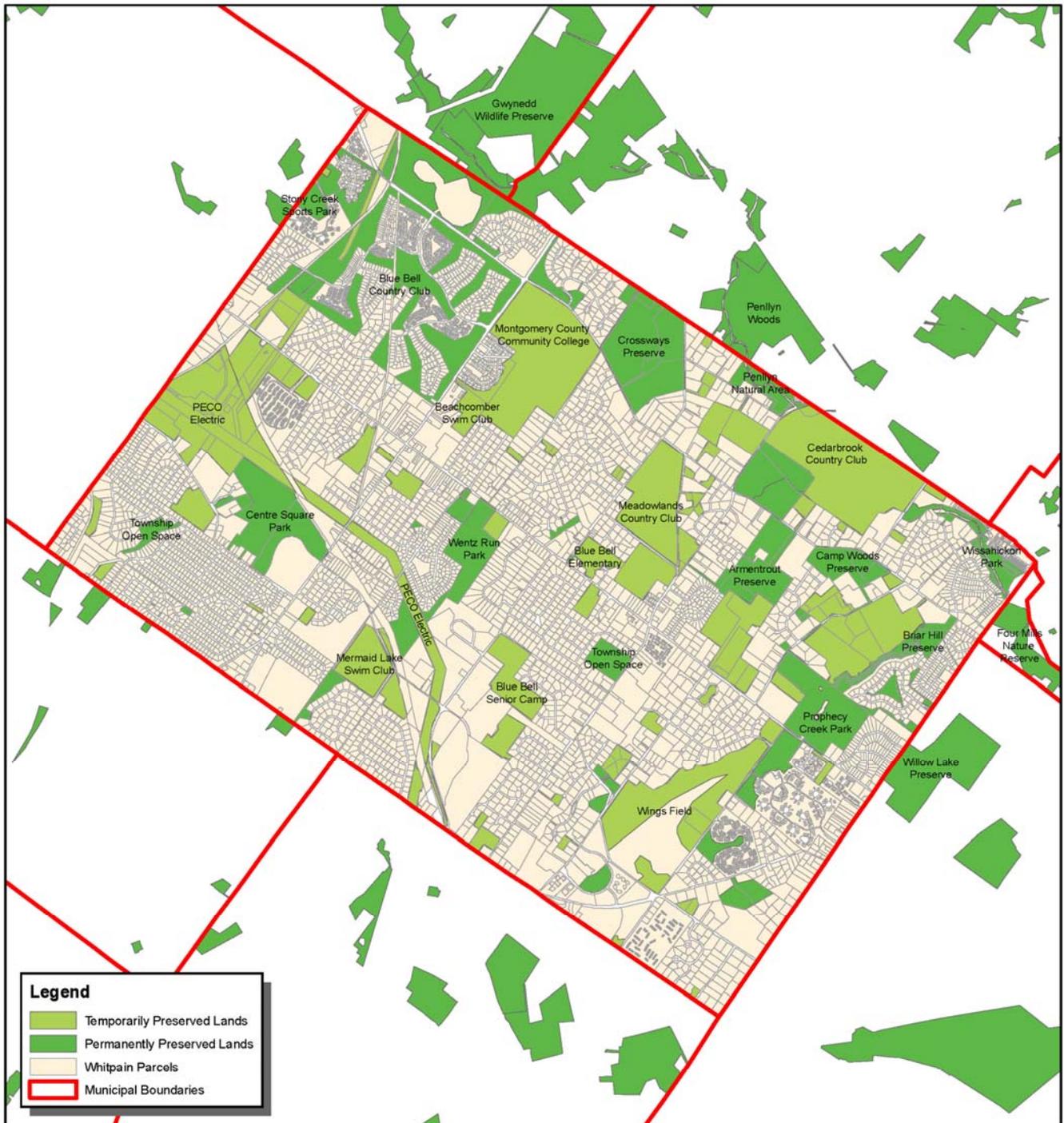
SIGNIFICANT TREES

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

SC# 14083.10



Figure 2-17: Whitpain Protected Resource Map



Legend

- Temporarily Preserved Lands
- Permanently Preserved Lands
- Whitpain Parcels
- Municipal Boundaries

PROTECTED LANDS

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
 SC# 14083.10

0 0.3 0.6 1.2 Miles




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In 2009 the Whitpain Township Shade Tree Commission developed a heritage tree registry that identifies 29 trees in the Township that are considered highly important and a priority for preservation. These trees are either Pennsylvania Champion trees, Pennsylvania Champion candidates, or identified as having significant size, age or being a rare and unusual species. The general location of these significant trees are identified in Figure 2-16 and are described in Table 2-29.



Trails at Centre Square Park

Whitpain was also recently named a 2014 tree city by the Arbor Day Foundation. The designation recognizes Whitpain's commitment to urban forest management, environmental improvement, and a high level of tree care. The Township has held this prestigious designation for 20 consecutive years.

2.9 Protected Lands

The 2005 Open Space Preservation Plan for Whitpain Township identifies the many permanently and temporarily preserved lands in the Township. These land include Township owned parks and open space as well as lands permanently preserved by the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, lands protected through restrictive covenants, utility owned lands, schools, and other recreation facilities.

Township Lands

Wentz Run Park

Wentz Run Park is located directly adjacent to the Whitpain Township building. The park is 50 acres in size and has many athletic facilities and park amenities including three baseball/softball fields, two soccer fields, two basketball courts, four tennis courts, a 1.75 mile walking trail, one sand volleyball court, two horseshoe pits, a tot lot, a gazebo, a concession stand with restrooms, a picnic pavilion, and parking areas. The park is

2. Planning Context

home to many of the Township's youth and adult recreation leagues.

Centre Square Park

Centre Square Park opened in September of 2015. The park is 96.3 acres and includes seven sports fields, a dog park, walking trails, a sophisticated above and below ground stormwater management system, a state of the art irrigation system, and parking facilities. The Township is currently in the process of applying for funding to design and construct a series of nature based playgrounds throughout the park.

Stony Creek Sports Park

The Stony Creek Sports Park is 11.65 acres in size and is located on North Wales Road in the northwestern portion of the Township. The park features a full sized roller hockey rink, a basketball court, a playground, one full sized multi-purpose athletic field, and associated parking facilities. The hockey rink, basketball courts, and multi-purpose field all contain lighting to accommodate evening activities.

West Side Park

This park, opened in 1995, is located in the West Ambler neighborhood at the intersection of West Maple Street and Oak Street. The small 0.12 acre park is a tot lot that contains a multiuse play structure, swings, and two spring riders for children up to age 10.

West Side Courts

The West Side basketball courts are also located in the West Ambler neighborhood at the intersection of West Maple Avenue and Mount Pleasant Avenue. The small facility contains two basketball hoops.



Armentrout Preserve

The Township parks department also maintains several other open spaces primarily used for passive recreation. These include Armentrout Preserve, Erbs Mill Park, Prophecy Creek Park.

Armentrout Preserve

Armentrout preserve is a 66 acre natural area located on Beale Road off of Penllyn Blue Bell Pike. The land was acquired in 1997 through a grant from the Montgomery County Open Space program. 20 acres of the tract are owned by the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association while the remainder is preserved by Whitpain Township. Whitpain Township takes responsibility for maintenance of the preserve which contains Willow Run, a small tributary to the Wissahickon Creek. The land includes both woodland and farm features that serve as a habitat for many important plant and wildlife species. The preserve also contains several unpaved loop trails for walkers and horseback riders. The trails link to other trails within the nearby Camp Woods Preserve. Picnic tables, interpretive signage, and a gravel parking area are also features of the park. Armentrout Preserve is adjacent to Camp Woods Preserve and just northwest of Prophecy Creek Park and Briar Hill Preserve.



Prophecy Creek Park



Pedestrian Bridge at Prophecy Creek Park

Erbs Mills Park

Erbs Mill Park is a small 2.1 acre park located at the intersection of Erbs Mill Road and Thayer Drive. The park is a neighborhood park that features a large open lawn area for multipurpose activities, several benches, trash receptacles, and a mowed stormwater management detention basin. The park is surrounded by several type of shade and evergreen trees and is surrounded entirely by residences.

2. Planning Context

Prophecy Creek Park

The primary access to the 82.4 acre Prophecy Creek Park is located at the intersection of Skippack Pike and Narcissa Road. The access road leads to a parking area utilized by the Manor House at Prophecy Creek Park which uses the natural beauty of the park to create a picturesque setting for weddings and events. The Manor House estate and barn serve as a symbol of the Township's history. The Manor House is located just adjacent to a pond that is fed by the Prophecy Creek, which meanders through the park before it connects to the Wissahickon Creek. The remainder of the 82.5 acre property is meadow and successional fields which are maintained by the Township as needed. Prophecy Creek Park also contains the largest sycamore tree in Whitpain. The tree was planted in 1736 and was recognized in 2009 as a Pennsylvania Champion Tree.

Prophecy Creek Park is open to residents from dawn to dusk however it does not currently provide any trails for visitors. Trails have been proposed throughout the park as part of the park master plan completed in 2009. The Township trails master plan completed in 2013 also proposes a connection through Prophecy Creek Park from the Wings Field Trail to Briar Hill Preserve and the Green Ribbon Trail. The park also includes a portable toilet and a water fountain near the parking area. The park is directly south of Briar Hill Preserve.

Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association (WVWA) Lands

Briar Hill Preserve

Briar Hill Preserve is made up of several pieces of land totaling approximately 48.1 acres in size. The preserve, owned and maintained by the WVWA contains mostly wooded uplands along with meadow, wetlands, and floodplain. Prophecy Creek runs through the preserve providing important plant and wildlife

habitats. The visitor access to the preserve is from Prophecy Creek Park to the south. The preserve contains two compact earth loop trails for visitors. Visitors must use restroom and parking facilities at the adjacent Prophecy Creek Park.

Camp Woods Preserve

Camp Woods Preserve is a 68 acre area of land located off of Morris Road just west of Lewis Lane. The land is entirely wooded and is one of the largest remnant of northern deciduous forest in the region. The preserve home to many native plant species and has great natural beauty and contains several loop trails for visitors. Access to the preserve is via a parking area on Mason Drive and also from trails within the adjacent Armentrout Preserve. Camp Woods preserve is also historically significant as it was given its name during the Revolutionary War following the Battle of Germantown in 1777 when the Continental Army encamped in the area. The nearby Dawesfield estate (Camp Morris) served as George Washington's headquarters and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Crossways Preserve

This 57 acre property was acquired by WVWA in 1997. The preserve is located off of Cathcart Road between Morris Road and Township Line Road North. Crossways Preserve contains one of the highest number of native plant species of all the WVWA preserves and is home to many species of birds, insects, amphibians, and other wildlife. The property includes a 1.5 mile walking and equestrian trail for visitors. A small parking area is located at the end of the preserve's access road located off of Cathcart Road. Crossways preserve is just west of Penllyn Woods in Lower Gwynedd Township and north of the Meadowlands Country Club.

2. Planning Context

Penllyn Natural Area

Penllyn Natural Area is a 25.6 acre area of land that is primarily wooded and riparian habitat. The preserve is located on the Wissahickon Creek on the northern boundary of the Township adjacent to Penllyn Woods in Lower Gwynedd Township. The only available visitor parking is along the shoulder of Penllyn Blue Bell Pike across from Cedarbrook Country Club. The preserve contains a loop trail and a short section of the Green Ribbon Trail.

Blue Bell Country Club

Blue Bell Country Club is an 18 hole golf course with a driving range and full service club house. The golf course was developed as required deed restricted open space as part of the surrounding gated community development. The surrounding residential community consists of 849 town, carriage, and single family homes. Residents of the community have access to Homeowner's association land consisting of the golf course dining facilities, as well as six tennis courts, a fitness center, a 25 meter swimming pool, and a community center. The club's homeowner's association is currently in the process of building a new recreation facility for private use by residents of the gated community.

Meadowlands Country Club

Founded in 1950, Meadowlands is an 18 hole golf course on approximately 125 acres off of Plymouth Road, Morris Road, Boehms Church Road, and School Road. Other amenities include tennis courts, dining facilities, a swimming pool, and a playground. The Meadowlands property provides a scenic woodland habitat, attractive viewsheds, as well as the headwaters of Willow Run, a tributary to the Wissahickon Creek. The property provides an important piece of open space within

the Township

Homeowners Association Lands

Some land in the Township has been permanently dedicated by developers to meet open space requirements for residential subdivisions. This common open space is intended to be shared by owners of the residential community. In these cases, homeowner's associations (HOA's) are established to maintain and oversee the common space.

Temporarily Protected Lands

Temporarily protected lands are lands that currently serve as open space but could be developed in the future due to a change in property ownership or other circumstances that Whitpain Township cannot control. Examples of temporarily protected lands in Whitpain include golf courses, private recreation facilities, Wings Field, school properties, and utility owned lands.

Private Recreation Facilities

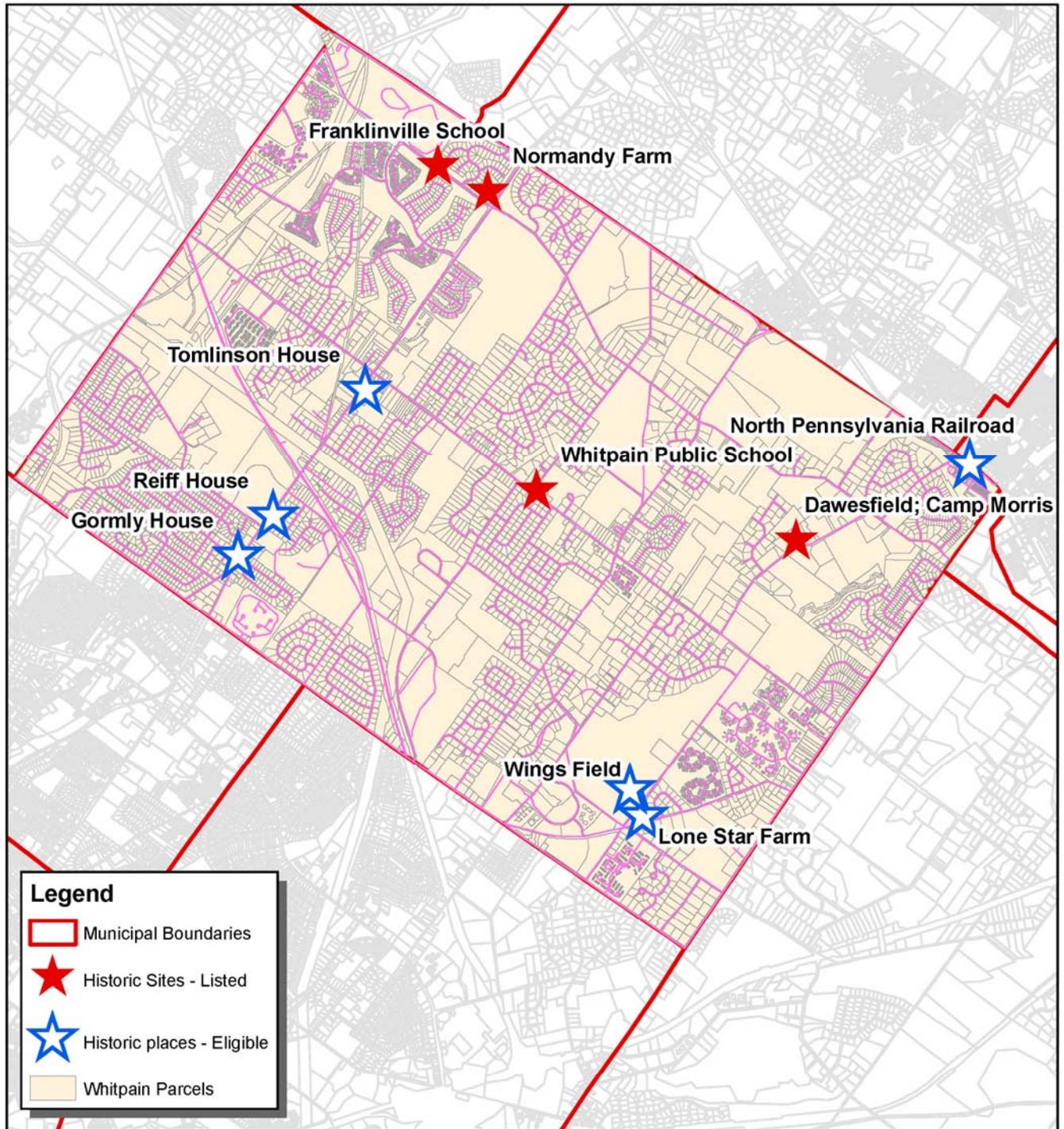
In addition to the Meadowlands Country Club and Blue Bell Country Club, Whitpain Township has two other golf courses: Cedarbrook Country Club (188 acres) and the Mermaid Lake Golf Club which is a 9 hole, par 3 course. The Cedarbrook and Mermaid Lake are currently zoned as Park and Recreation.

Other private recreation facilities in Whitpain include swim clubs, day camps, senior camps, and private sports fields. Many of these facilities provide some undeveloped open space are also zoned park and recreation.

School properties

While not technically open space, schools do provide informal "open space". Wissahickon School District properties in Whitpain include Blue Bell Elementary School (19.97 Ac.), Shady Grove

Figure 2-18: Whitpain Historic Resources



Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Historic Sites - Listed
-  Historic places - Eligible
-  Whitpain Parcels

HISTORIC SITES

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

SC# 14083.10



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Elementary School (25.48), and Stony Creek Elementary School (22.93 Ac.). Private Schools include St. Helena's (35.0 Ac.), Centre Square Montessori Schoolhouse (1.33 Ac.), and Montgomery County Community College (183.75 Ac.). All of these schools have some open space and recreation facilities available to the community.

Wings Field

Wings Field is located on approximately 217 acres with a portion of the property utilized for aviation facilities and much of the remaining land undeveloped. The air field is privately owned and operated. While the undeveloped lands are not publically accessible, they do provide open land "benefits" to residents.

PECO owned lands

As mentioned earlier in this report, PECO owns a large stretch of property in the southwestern side of the Township that accommodates their overhead transmission lines and associated substation. This land could provide opportunities for the Township to incorporate trail connections from the nearby residences to adjacent municipalities other trails in the area. Again, while not official open space, the PECO expanses do provide green areas with long views across the Township.

2.10 Historic Resources

Whitpain Township is one of the oldest municipalities in Montgomery County and its' history is symbolized by the four remaining villages of Broad Axe, Blue Bell, Centre Square, and West Ambler. These villages have thrived for hundreds of years and represent the foundation of the community's character.

Aside from the rich history of the Township's four villages, Whitpain also has four individual properties listed on the National Register, which is an official list of the Nation's historic places

2. Planning Context

worth preserving. These properties are listed in Table 2-30.

The Township also has six properties identified as eligible for the National Register. These properties are listed in Table 2-31. The Franz House, which was located at 811 DeKalb Pike was eligible for the National Register but was recently demolished. Locations of listed properties and eligible properties are shown on the Whitpain Historic Resources Map, Figure 2-18.

Table 2-30
Resources Listed on National Register

Resource	Address	Year Built
Franklinville School	1701 Morris Road	1858
Whitpain Public School	799 Skippack Pike	1895
Normandy Farm	1451 Morris Road	1832
Dawesfield; Camp Morris	Lewis Lane	c1735

Source: National Register of Historic Places

Table 2-31
Resources Eligible for National Register

Resource	Address	Year Built
Lone Star Farm	274 Norristown Road	C1800; c1930
Reiff House	1410 DeKalb Street	1860; 1890
Tomlinson House	956 DeKalb Pike	1853
North Pennsylvania Railroad	-	1853; 1857
Wings Field	1501 Narcissa Road	c1927
Gormly House	1597 DeKalb Street	1910; 1940

Source: National Register of Historic Places

In all, Whitpain has 87 historically significant resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places database. Some of these resources are not eligible for the National Register and some have already been demolished. The complete list of these historic resources in the Township can be found in the appendix of this report. The Township should continue to protect the remaining resources and encourage adaptive reuse of these facilities where feasible. Where these historic resources cannot be saved, the Township should make efforts to look for and record date stones during demolition.

2.11 Energy and Resource Conservation / Sustainability

Whitpain Township has strived to be a leader of sustainability and energy conservation. The Township has recently appointed their first ever sustainability coordinator who will continue to lead the efforts to find ways the Township and its residents can reduce energy consumption and costs while it protects the environment. The Township received a sustainability award from the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association (GVFTMA) in September, 2014. Whitpain Township was one of only four municipalities to receive the award. The award recognizes Whitpain Township for its efforts in transportation demand management.

Stormwater management represents one of the other major sustainability efforts in the Township. Recent stormwater management efforts such as basin retrofitting and stormdrain stenciling are discussed in the stormwater management section of this report.

Light emitting diodes (LED) have become a standard in the lighting industry as they provide longer life and higher energy efficiency than traditional incandescent lighting. The Township

2. Planning Context

has begun to gradually upgrade their traffic signals to LED bulbs to capitalize on their energy saving benefits.

The Township should evaluate their zoning ordinances to ensure that they promote and encourage future development that utilizes sustainable and energy saving practices such as Leadership in Energy Efficient Design (LEED) criteria. The Township should also enhance their community outreach and education of residents about energy saving and sustainable practices.

Despite these achievements and efforts towards a sustainable community, the Township currently does not have a formalized sustainability plan that would document its sustainability goals and objectives and make them available to the community.

2.12 Municipal Government / Finance

Whitpain Township funds its services and government through the use of a General Fund and a capital reserve fund. Revenue for the general fund is derived from four major sources: earned income tax, real estate tax, local services tax (EMS), and deed transfer tax. The Township does not assess a business or mercantile tax. In terms of property tax rates, Whitpain Township charges a total millage of 3.20 which, based on the average residential assessment of \$226,000 equates to an average township tax bill of \$723 or \$60.25 per month. The Township uses this revenue to fund services such as police and fire protection, emergency medical services, road maintenance, emergency management and response, engineering services, code enforcement, land use/planning/zoning control, environmental protection, staff counselling, and parks and

open space management. Whitpain Township’s millage rate is the 5th lowest in Montgomery County.

The total local tax bill, based on an average residential assessment of \$226,000 is broken down in Table 2-32.

Regarding Whitpain’s General Fund budget, the projected gross revenue for 2015 is \$13,089,682 which is consistent with the 2014 revenue of \$13,179,167. The Township’s Capital Reserve Fund had a 2015 beginning balance of \$7,147,194. Budgeted capital expenditures for 2015 equaled \$6,640,900 and include \$2,050,000 worth of bridge and road construction projects as well as sidewalk improvements in West Ambler and regional water quality enhancements.

Table 2-32
Total Local Tax Bill

Entity	Millage	Dollar Amount
Wissahickon School District	17.925	\$4,051
Whitpain Township	3.20	\$723
Montgomery County	3.152	\$712
Total		\$5,486

Source: Whitpain Township