

CHAPTER 13

FUTURE LAND USE

One of the most important elements in the comprehensive planning process is the charting of the future land uses and growth boundaries. This chapter attempts to reflect the goals, objectives and policies for future land use, development, redevelopment and adaptive reuse within Muhlenberg Township. The documentation and recommendations contained within the previous chapters are utilized to support the rationale that was utilized to chart the future land uses and growth boundaries. The Future Land Use Map (Figure 15) will be utilized as a guide by Muhlenberg Township in considering future zoning ordinance and zoning map amendments. For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the design year for the Future Land Use Plan is the year 2020.

A. DESIGNATION OF FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Muhlenberg Township Future Land Use Plan (2020) proposes ten (10) separate land use classes, which have been derived after analyzing the community goals, objectives and policies identified in Chapter 2, as well as after conducting background research concerning natural features and resources, historical and cultural resources, demographics, community facilities and services, parks and recreation facilities, economic development, existing land use and development patterns, utility provisions, and transportation facilities. The following future land use categories are proposed:

- ❖ Low - Medium Density Residential
- ❖ Medium - High Density Residential
- ❖ Village Commercial
- ❖ Highway Commercial
- ❖ Limited Industrial
- ❖ Heavy Industrial
- ❖ Special Agricultural
- ❖ Public, Institutional and Municipal
- ❖ Conservation
- ❖ Rights-Of-Way and Easements

The Future Land Use Map for the year 2020 is depicted on Figure 15. The following text provides a description of each land use category.

LOW - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

This land use category reflects either existing land areas, which have been developed with low to medium density residential uses, or have the abilities to be developed with low to medium density residential uses. These areas are depicted as *yellow* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The following proposed residential zoning districts should be derived from this land use category and considered as part of a future update to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance:

R-1 Residential District: These areas contain low density residential uses, woodlands, steep slopes, stream valleys and agricultural land areas. Subdivision and land development activity should be limited based upon the existing road system, utility provisions and environmentally sensitive land areas. A significant amount of land remains undeveloped in the eastern portion of Muhlenberg Township, which could accommodate low density residential development.

R-2 Residential District: These areas contain medium density residential uses, stream valleys and agricultural areas, as well as public, municipal and institutional uses. Subdivision and land development activity should be encouraged as either infill development and to serve as a transition between areas of low to medium residential densities. A significant amount of land remains undeveloped in the central and western portion of Muhlenberg Township, which could accommodate low to medium density residential development.

The following land uses and provisional requirements are recommended for the R-1 and R-2 Districts.

LOW - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL					
Zoning Districts	Permitted Land Uses	Approval Requirements	Recommended Density / Lot Size	Utility Requirements	
				Sewer	Water
R-1	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	3 acres per lot	On-Site	On-Site
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	2 acres per lot	On-Site	Public
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	2 acres per lot	Public	On-Site
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	1 acre per lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	General Agricultural Uses	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Single Family Cluster Development	Conditional Use	1.5 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
R-2	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	3 acres per lot	On-Site	On-Site
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	2 acres per lot	On-Site	Public
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	2 acres per lot	Public	On-Site
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	8,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	General Agricultural Uses	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Single Family Cluster Development	Conditional Use	2.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Animal Hospital and Clinics	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Hospitals and Medical Centers	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Convalescent and Nursing Homes	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public

The permitted land uses, procedural requirements, maximum residential densities, minimum lot sizes, and basic utility requirements are recommended to provide guidance for future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance. Where determined appropriate by the designated officials, modifications, additions, omissions and revisions to this list should be made provided it meets the guidelines for low to medium density residential uses, as defined by this Comprehensive Plan.



MEDIUM - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

This land use category reflects either existing land areas, which have been developed with medium to high density residential uses, or have the abilities to be developed with medium to high density residential uses. These areas are depicted as *orange* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The following proposed residential zoning districts should be derived from this land use category and considered as part of a future update to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance:

R-3 Residential District: These areas contain medium density residential uses, woodlands, steep slopes, stream valleys and agricultural land areas, as well as public, municipal and institutional uses. Subdivision and land development activity should be encouraged as either infill development and to serve as a transition between areas of low to high residential densities. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by a road system and public utility provisions with sufficient capacities, while considering environmentally sensitive land areas. A significant amount of land remains undeveloped in the eastern portion of Muhlenberg Township, which could accommodate medium density residential development.

R-4 Residential District: These areas contain medium to high density residential uses, stream valleys and carbonate geological zones, as well as public, municipal and institutional uses. Subdivision and land development activity should be encouraged as either infill development, to provide opportunities for mixed use residential developments, and to serve as a transition between areas of medium to high residential densities. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by a road system and public utility provisions with sufficient capacities, while considering environmentally sensitive land areas. A small amount of land area remains undeveloped within existing residential developments in the northeastern portion of Muhlenberg Township.

R-5 Residential District: These areas contain high density residential and multi-family uses, as well as public, municipal and institutional uses. Subdivision and land development activity should be encouraged as infill development or for the logical expansion of existing high density residential areas. A small amount of land area remains undeveloped within existing residential developments in the southeastern portion of Muhlenberg Township.

The following land uses and provisional requirements are recommended for the R-3, R-4 and R-5 Districts.

MEDIUM - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL					
Zoning Districts	Permitted Land Uses	Approval Requirements	Recommended Density / Lot Size	Utility Requirements	
				Sewer	Water
R-3	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	8,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Semi-Detached Dwelling Units	By Right	3,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	General Agricultural Uses	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Single Family Cluster Development	Conditional Use	2.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Planned Residential Development	Conditional Use	4.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Convalescent and Nursing Homes	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Group Homes	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
R-4	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	6,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Semi-Detached Dwelling Units	By Right	3,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Two Family Detached Units	By Right	8,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Single Family Cluster Development	Conditional Use	4.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Planned Residential Development	Conditional Use	6.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Townhouse Unit Development	Conditional Use	6.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Convalescent and Nursing Homes	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
Group Homes	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public	
R-5	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	6,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Semi-Detached Dwelling Units	By Right	3,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Single Family Cluster Development	Conditional Use	6.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Planned Residential Development	Conditional Use	8.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Townhouse Unit Development	Conditional Use	8.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Apartments/Multi-family Units	Conditional Use	10.0 dwelling units/acre	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Group Homes	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public

The permitted land uses, procedural requirements, maximum residential densities, minimum lot sizes, and basic utility requirements are recommended to provide guidance for future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance. Where determined appropriate by the designated officials, modifications, additions, omissions and revisions to this list should be made provided it meets the guidelines for medium to high density residential uses, as defined by this Comprehensive Plan.

VILLAGE COMMERCIAL

This land use category reflects existing land areas, which have been previously developed with mixed uses containing commercial uses and medium to high density residential uses. These areas are depicted as *pink* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The following proposed zoning district should be derived from this land use category and considered as part of a future update to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance:

C-1 Village Commercial District: These areas contain low profile commercial uses as well as medium to high density residential uses within developed neighborhoods. Subdivision and land development activity should be encouraged as infill development. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by a road system and public utilities with sufficient capacities. Most of the land area within the Village of Hyde Park and Village of Temple has been previously developed with existing uses. Redevelopment or conversions should be considered to accommodate new business opportunities and enhance economic development opportunities within Muhlenberg Township.

The following land uses and provisional requirements are recommended for the C-1 District.

VILLAGE COMMERCIAL					
Zoning Districts	Permitted Land Uses	Approval Requirements	Recommended Density / Lot Size	Utility Requirements	
				Sewer	Water
C-1	Retail Business Establishments	By Right	10,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Business and Professional Offices	By Right	10,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Restaurants	By Right	10,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Personal Service Establishments	By Right	10,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Banks/Financial Establishments	By Right	10,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Funeral Homes	By Right	10,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	6,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Semi-Detached Dwelling Units	By Right	3,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Convalescent and Nursing Homes	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Animal Hospital and Clinics	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public

The permitted land uses, procedural requirements, minimum lot sizes, and basic utility requirements are recommended to provide guidance for future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance. Where determined appropriate by the designated officials, modifications, additions, omissions and revisions to this list should be made provided it meets the guidelines for village commercial uses, as defined by this Plan.



HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

This land use category reflects either existing land areas, which have been previously developed with high profile commercial uses, highway commercial uses and shopping centers, or have the abilities to support commercial development opportunities in the future. These areas are depicted as *red* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The following proposed commercial zoning districts should be derived from this land use category and considered as part of a future update to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance:

C-2 Shopping Center District: These areas contain high profile commercial uses within unified and centralized shopping centers, which provides opportunities to accommodate the regional needs of the residents within Berks County. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by an arterial road system and by public utilities with sufficient capacities. A significant amount of the land along Business Route 222 have been previously developed utilizing these guidelines. Redevelopment, interchange development or adaptive reuse opportunities should be considered to accommodate new business opportunities and to enhance economic development opportunities within Muhlenberg Township.

C-3 Highway Commercial District: These areas contain high profile commercial uses located along arterial highways, which provides opportunities to accommodate pass through traffic within this region of Berks County. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by arterial road with sufficient accessibility that does not limit mobility, and by public utilities with sufficient capacities. A significant amount of the land along Business Route 222 and Route 61 have been previously developed utilizing these guidelines. Redevelopment, interchange development or adaptive reuse alternatives should be considered to accommodate new business opportunities and to enhance economic development opportunities within Muhlenberg Township.

The following land uses and provisional requirements are recommended for the C-2 and C-3 Districts.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL					
Zoning Districts	Permitted Land Uses	Approval Requirements	Recommended Density / Lot Size	Utility Requirements	
				Sewer	Water
C-2	Retail Business Establishments	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Business and Professional Offices	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Restaurants	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Personal Service Establishments	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Banks/Financial Establishments	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Funeral Homes	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	6,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Semi-Detached Dwelling Units	By Right	3,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Shopping Centers	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Hotel and Motels	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public

C-3	Retail Business Establishments	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Business and Professional Offices	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Restaurants	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Personal Service Establishments	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Banks/Financial Establishments	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Funeral Homes	By Right	20,000 square feet/use	Public	Public
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	6,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Semi-Detached Dwelling Units	By Right	3,000 square feet/lot	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Hotel and Motels	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Office and Business Parks	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Medical Research Parks/Uses	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Commercial Water Resource Use	Conditional Use	10 acres	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Automobile Service Station	Special Exception	5 acres	Public	Public
	Automobile Sales	Special Exception	5 acres	Public	Public
	Animal Hospital and Clinics	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Wagering/Gambling Establishment	Special Exception	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public
Veterinary Hospital and Clinics	Special Exception	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public	

The permitted land uses, procedural requirements, minimum lot sizes, and basic utility requirements are recommended to provide guidance for future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance. Where determined appropriate by the designated officials, modifications, additions, omissions and revisions to this list should be made provided it meets the guidelines for highway commercial or shopping center uses, as defined by this Comprehensive Plan.

LIMITED INDUSTRIAL

This land use category reflects either existing land areas, which have been previously developed with high profile limited industrial uses and/or have the abilities to support industrial development opportunities in the future. These areas are depicted as *light purple* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The following limited industrial zoning district should be derived from this land use category and considered as part of a future update to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance.

I-1 Limited Industrial District: These vast areas contain limited industrial uses located along or within close proximity to along arterial highways and expressways, which provide employment opportunities for the residents within Berks County. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by a road system, rail service (if available) and by public utilities with sufficient capacities. A significant amount of the land near Hyde Park and Tuckerton have been previously developed utilizing these guidelines. Redevelopment, interchange development or adaptive reuse opportunities should be considered to accommodate new industrial opportunities and to enhance economic development opportunities within Muhlenberg Township.

The following land uses and provisional requirements are recommended for the I-1 District.

LIMITED INDUSTRIAL					
Zoning Districts	Permitted Land Uses	Approval Requirements	Recommended Density / Lot Size	Utility Requirements	
				Sewer	Water
I-1	Manufacturing	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Retail Business Establishments	By Right	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public
	Business and Professional Offices	By Right	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public
	Warehousing	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Wholesale and Distribution	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Fabrication and Finishing Establishments	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Adaptive Reuse	By Right	Variable	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Industrial Parks	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Hotel and Motels	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Office and Business Parks	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Medical Research Parks/Uses	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Commercial Water Resource Use	Conditional Use	10 acres	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Mobile Home Parks	Special Exception	5 acres	Public	Public
	Trucking Establishments	Special Exception	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Single Family Detached Units	Special Exception	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public

The permitted land uses, procedural requirements, minimum lot sizes, and basic utility requirements are recommended to provide guidance for future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance. Where determined appropriate by the designated officials, modifications, additions, omissions and revisions to this list should be made provided it meets the guidelines for limited industrial uses, as defined by this Comprehensive Plan

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

This land use category reflects either existing land areas, which have been previously developed with heavy industrial uses and/or have the abilities to support industrial development opportunities in the future. These areas are depicted as *dark purple* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The following heavy industrial zoning district should be derived from this land use category and considered as part of a future update to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance.

I-2 Heavy Industrial District: These vast areas contain heavy industrial uses located along or within close proximity to along arterial highways and expressways, which provide employment opportunities for the residents within Berks County. The heavy industrial uses are generally associated with certain nuisances (air, odor and noise), which by virtue of their character define their use as heavy industrial. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by a road system, rail service, and by public utilities with sufficient capacities. A significant amount of the land in the southern and central portion of Muhlenberg Township have been previously developed utilizing these guidelines. Redevelopment or adaptive reuse opportunities should be considered to

accommodate new industrial opportunities and to enhance economic development opportunities within Muhlenberg Township.

The following land uses and provisional requirements are recommended for the I-2 District.

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL					
Zoning Districts	Permitted Land Uses	Approval Requirements	Recommended Density / Lot Size	Utility Requirements	
				Sewer	Water
I-2	Manufacturing	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Retail Business Establishments	By Right	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public
	Business and Professional Offices	By Right	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public
	Warehousing	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Wholesale and Distribution	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Fabrication and Finishing Establishments	By Right	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Adaptive Reuse	By Right	Variable	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Industrial Parks	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Hotel and Motels	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Office and Business Parks	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Medical Research Parks/Uses	Conditional Use	5 acres	Public	Public
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Trucking Establishments	Special Exception	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Junk Yards or Salvage Yards	Special Exception	20 acres	Public	Public
	Solid Waste Disposal Facilities	Special Exception	20 acres	Public	Public
	Quarrying and Mining Operations	Special Exception	20 acres	Public	Public
	Adult Business/Entertainment Uses	Special Exception	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public
	Wagering/Gambling Establishment	Special Exception	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public
Veterinary Hospital and Clinics	Special Exception	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public	
Kennels	Special Exception	5 acres per lot or use	Public	Public	
Single Family Detached Units	Special Exception	1 acre per lot or use	Public	Public	

The permitted land uses, procedural requirements, minimum lot sizes, and basic utility requirements are recommended to provide guidance for future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance. Where determined appropriate by the designated officials, modifications, additions, omissions and revisions to this list should be made provided it meets the guidelines for heavy industrial uses, as defined by this Comprehensive Plan.



SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL

This land use category reflects either existing land areas, which have been previously developed with special agricultural uses, intensive agricultural uses and/or agricultural business operations. More specifically, the growing, processing, packing, storage, sale and shipping of mushrooms. These areas are depicted as *beige* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The following special agricultural zoning district should be derived from this land use category and considered as part of a future update to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance.

Sp-Ag Special Agricultural District: These concentrated areas contain intensive agricultural uses relative to the growing, processing, packing, storage, sale and shipping of mushrooms, which are located along collector roads or within close proximity to along arterial highways and expressways. These areas provide unique employment opportunities for the residents within Berks County. The special agricultural uses are generally associated with certain nuisances (air, odor and noise), which by virtue of their character define their use as special agricultural. The existing and/or proposed land uses should be served by a road system and by public utilities with sufficient capacities. If the existing special agricultural land use activities become abandoned or terminated by the property owners for a period of one (1) year, Muhlenberg Township should consider re-zoning the properties to accommodate either limited industrial uses (I-1 District) or residential uses (R-2, R-3 or R-4) Districts.

The following land uses and provisional requirements are recommended for the I-2 District.

SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL					
Zoning Districts	Permitted Land Uses	Approval Requirements	Recommended Density / Lot Size	Utility Requirements	
				Sewer	Water
Sp-Ag	General Agricultural Uses	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Mushroom Production Uses	By Right	2 acres per lot or use	Public	Public
	Single Family Detached Units	By Right	30,000 square feet/unit	Public	Public
	Two family Detached Units	By Right	30,000 square feet/unit	Public	Public
	Municipal Use	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Public Utility	By Right	Variable	Optional	Optional
	Institutional Uses	Special Exception	Variable	Public	Public
	Commercial Composting	Special Exception	10 acres	Optional	Optional
Intensive Agricultural Uses	Special Exception	10 acres	Optional	Optional	

The permitted land uses, procedural requirements, minimum lot sizes, and basic utility requirements are recommended to provide guidance for future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance. Where determined appropriate by the designated officials, modifications, additions, omissions and revisions to this list should be made provided it meets the guidelines for special agricultural uses, as defined by this Comprehensive Plan.



PUBLIC, INSTITUTIONAL AND MUNICIPAL

There are numerous public, institutional and municipal land areas within Muhlenberg Township. This land use category includes a variety of uses, facilities and services including: governmental; educational; recreational; religious and administrative. These land uses are identified as *blue* on both the Existing Land Use Map (Figure 9) and Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). There are 1,132.63 acres of land associated with public, institutional and municipal land uses, occupying 14.70 percent of the land area within Muhlenberg Township. Since these land uses are disbursed throughout Muhlenberg Township, it would not be advantageous to establish an independent zoning district for public, institutional and municipal uses. Therefore, these uses should be permitted either by right, special exception or conditional use within the underlying zoning districts to which they are located. Further, opportunities for expansion or creating new public, institutional or municipal uses should be considered by Muhlenberg Township.

CONSERVATION

Within Chapter 2 of this Comprehensive Plan, Muhlenberg Township established the following goals concerning subdivision and land development activity as it relates to the natural environment:

Direct residential growth, development and revitalization efforts by considering environmentally sensitive land areas, existing land uses, infrastructure, and the suburban characteristics of Muhlenberg Township.

Provide opportunities for commercial and industrial growth and development by considering environmental limitations, existing land uses, infrastructure, and the suburban characteristics of Muhlenberg Township.

Achieve and sustain a high quality natural resource system (water, biotic, land and air) to protect public health and safety, and support and protect a diversity of ecosystems.

In order to strategically implement these planning goals, future amendments to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance should consider establishing Conservation Overlay Districts in an effort to protect and enhance land areas, which may encounter certain physical limitations for development. The following Conservation Overlay Districts are recommended:

100-Year Floodplain Overlay District: These areas have been defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and are principally located along all of the major creeks and waterways of Muhlenberg Township. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has established minimum requirements, which prohibit new construction or substantial improvements to existing structures, fill or encroachments within the floodway. Figure 5 illustrates of this Plan illustrates the 100-year and 500-year floodplain, as established by the FEMA. The land areas located within the limits of the 100-year floodplain should be carefully planned and zoned with specific site parameters to permit the proper uses and land development activity. Additional documentation concerning floodplains, stormwater management and hydrological resource planning is contained within Chapter 3 (Natural Features and Resources) of this Plan.

Wetlands and Hydric Soils Overlay District: These areas includes land areas or water bodies that have been delineated as wetlands as part of the National Wetlands Inventory or have hydric

soil characteristics that are indicative of a wetlands area. These areas are illustrated on Figure 5 of this Plan. The land areas located within the limits of the 100-year should be carefully planned and zoned with specific site parameters to permit the proper uses and land development activity. Where necessary, additional site testing should be conducted by a qualified soil scientist to verify if the site is a wetlands area. Additional documentation concerning wetlands, hydric soils, high water table soils, stormwater management and hydrological resource planning is contained within Chapter 3 (Natural Features and Resources) of this Plan.

Steep Slope Overlay District: These areas include topographic conditions in which the vertical to horizontal relief exceeds twenty percent (20%) in slope in pre-development conditions. These areas have been generally defined and delineated on Figure 7 of this Plan. Where necessary, field verification should be conducted by a qualified professional to determine if the site does exceed a slope of 20 percent. Limiting development on steep slopes is important for preventing soil erosion, minimizing pollution of surface waters, reducing flooding, preserving stream banks, maintaining flows in headwaters, and minimizing the potential of on-site sewage malfunctions. The land areas associated with steep slope (over 20 percent in slope) should be carefully planned and zoned with specific site parameters to permit the proper uses and land development activity. Additional documentation concerning topography, geology and woodlands is contained within Chapter 3 (Natural Features and Resources) of this Plan.

Carbonate Geology Overlay District: These areas include geological formations associated with limestone and dolomite features, which have known carbonate geological characteristics. These geological formations are depicted on Figure 2 of this Plan. Where necessary a geotechnical site investigation should be conducted by a qualified professional to determine if the site is compatible for the planned use considering the potential for sinkhole development, subsidence, bedrock pinnacles and groundwater infiltration/contamination. Provisions for development and redevelopment of land areas associated with carbonate geological zones should be established to permit the proper uses and land development activity. Additional documentation concerning geology is contained within Chapter 3 (Natural Features and Resources) of this Plan.

The limits of the 100-year floodplain, wetlands and slopes exceeding 20 percent have been delineated as *green* on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15). The limits of hydric soils and carbonate geological formations have not been shown on the Future Land Use Plan since further site investigation should be required to verify the extent of such physical or natural features. The Conservation Overlay Districts are intended to serve as an overlay concept, which supplements but does not replace the existing or underlying zoning district regulations. In cases where Conservation Overlay Districts overlap, the more restrictive standards and specifications should apply to the site.

RIGHTS – OF – WAY AND EASEMENTS

There are numerous scattered sites with odd configurations within Muhlenberg Township, which are classified as easements or rights-of-way. These areas are vacant, but do occupy land for a specific purpose such as utilities and transportation. Most of these land areas are either owned or maintained by Muhlenberg Township, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and/or public utility companies providing service within Muhlenberg Township. These vacant parcels of land are identified as *white* on Figure 9 (Existing Land Use Map) and Figure 15 (Future Land Use Map). These rights-of-way and easements should continue to serve their primary land use function.

B. FUTURE LAND USE COMPOSITION (2020)

The following table provides the future land use composition for Muhlenberg Township for the design year of 2020, as portrayed on Figure 15 (Future Land Use Map).

MUHLENBERG TOWNSHIP FUTURE LAND USE COMPOSITION (2020)			
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	Future Land Use Color	Base Land Area (Total Gross Acreage)	Adjusted Land Area (Total Net Acreage)
Low to Medium Density Residential	Yellow	3,837.95 acres ⁽¹⁾	1,877.22 acres ⁽⁵⁾
Medium to High Density Residential	Orange	1,120.45 acres ⁽¹⁾	670.63 acres ⁽⁵⁾
Village Commercial	Pink	89.51 acres ⁽¹⁾	52.17 acres ⁽⁵⁾
Highway Commercial	Red	554.97 acres ⁽¹⁾	275.19 acres ⁽⁵⁾
Limited Industrial	Light Purple	1,295.81 acres ⁽¹⁾	767.42 acres ⁽⁵⁾
Heavy Industrial	Dark Purple	512.74 acres ⁽¹⁾	363.80 acres ⁽⁵⁾
Special Agricultural	Brown	251.57 acres ⁽¹⁾	151.27 acres ⁽⁵⁾
Public, Institutional and Municipal	Blue	1,192.48 acres ⁽²⁾	825.95 acres ⁽⁶⁾
Conservation	Green	1,529.15 acres ⁽³⁾	1,420.33 acres ⁽⁷⁾
Easements and Rights-Of-Way	White	1,298.87 acres ⁽⁴⁾	1,298.87 acres ⁽⁸⁾
<p><u>Notes concerning the calculations derived for the “Based Land Area” and “Adjusted Land Area”</u></p> <p>(1) Denotes that the total gross acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Low to Medium Density Residential, Medium to High Density Residential, Village Commercial, Highway Commercial, Limited Industrial, Heavy Industrial and Special Agricultural) includes the land area within the base category, plus land areas associated with Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses (floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes); and/or Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p> <p>(2) Denotes that the total gross acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Public, Institutional and Municipal) includes the land area within the base category, plus land areas associated with Conservation uses (floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes) and/or Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p> <p>(3) Denotes that the total gross acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Conservation) include the land area within the base category, plus land areas associated Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p> <p>(4) Denotes that the total gross acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Easements and Rights-of-Way) includes only the land area associated with Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p> <p>(5) Denotes that the adjusted land area or total net acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Low to Medium Density Residential, Medium to High Density Residential, Village Commercial, Highway Commercial, Limited Industrial, Heavy Industrial and Special Agricultural) includes the land area within the base category, but does not include any overlay uses or land areas associated with Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses (floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes); and/or Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p> <p>(6) Denotes that the adjusted land area or total net acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Public, Institutional and Municipal) includes the land area within the base category, but does not include any overlay uses or land areas associated with Conservation uses (floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes); and/or Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p> <p>(7) Denotes that the adjusted land area or total net acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Conservation) includes the land area within the base category, but does not include any overlay uses or land areas associated with Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p> <p>(8) Denotes that the adjusted land area or total net acres of land devoted to the future land use category (Easements and Rights-of-Way) includes only the land area associated with Easements and Rights-of-Way.</p>			
<p><i>Source: Hawk Valley Associates, P.C. and Muhlenberg Township (July 2003)</i></p>			

Based upon the information presented in the preceding table, the following observations can be made concerning the future land use characteristics for the year 2020:

1. The areas designated as “Low to Medium Density Residential” should occupy 1,877.22 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective residential development meeting the characteristics of this future land use category. In order to accommodate these uses, 3,837.95 acres of land should be zoned as “R-1” and “R-2”, which are further described within this Chapter. A significant portion (1,978.58 acres) of the R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts will be needed to accommodate other land uses devoted to Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses; and Easements and Rights-of-Way.
2. The areas designated as “Medium to High Density Residential” should occupy 670.63 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective residential development meeting the characteristics of this future land use category. In order to accommodate these uses, 1,102.45 acres of land should be zoned as “R-3”, “R-4” and “R-5”, which are further described within this Chapter. A significant portion (451.82 acres) of the R-3, R-4 and R-5 Zoning Districts will be needed to accommodate other land uses devoted to Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses; and Easements and Rights-of-Way.
3. The areas designated as “Village Commercial” should occupy 52.17 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective development meeting the characteristics of this future land use category. In order to accommodate these uses, 89.51 acres of land should be zoned as “C-1”, which is further described within this Chapter. A portion (37.34 acres) of the C-1 Zoning District will be needed to accommodate other land uses devoted to Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses; and Easements and Rights-of-Way.
4. The areas designated as “Highway Commercial” should occupy 275.19 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective commercial development meeting the characteristics of this future land use category. In order to accommodate these uses, 554.97 acres of land should be zoned as “C-2” and “C-3”, which are further described within this Chapter. A portion (279.78 acres) of the C-2 and C-3 Zoning Districts will be needed to accommodate other land uses devoted to Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses; and Easements and Rights-of-Way.
5. The areas designated as “Limited Industrial” should occupy 767.42 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective industrial development meeting the characteristics of this future land use category. In order to accommodate these uses, 1,295.81 acres of land should be zoned as “I-1”, which is further described within this Chapter. A fair portion (528.39 acres) of the I-1 Zoning District will be needed to accommodate other uses devoted to Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses; and Easements and Rights-of-Way.
6. The areas designated as “Heavy Industrial” should occupy 363.80 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective industrial development meeting the characteristics of this future land use category. In order to accommodate these uses, 512.74 acres of land should be zoned as “I-2”, which is further described within this Chapter. A fair portion (148.94 acres) of the I-1 Zoning District will be needed to accommodate other uses devoted to Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses; and Easements and Rights-of-Way.

7. The areas designated as “Special Agricultural” should occupy 151.27 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective industrial development meeting the characteristics of this future land use category. In order to accommodate these uses, 251.57 acres of land should be zoned as “Sp-Ag”, which is further described within this Chapter. A fair portion (100.30 acres) of the Sp-Ag Zoning District will be needed to accommodate other uses devoted to Public, Institutional and Municipal uses; Conservation uses; and Easements and Rights-of-Way
8. The areas designated as “Public, Institutional and Municipal” should occupy 825.95 acres of land and should accommodate existing, proposed and prospective uses meeting the characteristics of this future land use category, as described in this Comprehensive Plan. In order to accommodate these uses, 1,192.48 acres of land should be accounted for within other designated zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, C-1, C-2, C-3, I-1, I-2 and Sp-Ag). A portion (328.68 acres) of this category will be needed to accommodate other Conservation uses as well as Easements and Rights-of-Way.
9. The areas designated as “Conservation” should occupy 1,420.30 acres of land and should accommodate areas identified as floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes, as described in this Comprehensive Plan. In order to accommodate these uses, 1,529.15 acres of land should be accounted for in other designated zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, C-1, C-2, C-3, I-1, I-2 and Sp-Ag). A small portion (108.82 acres) of this land use category has already been utilized to accommodate existing Easements and Rights-of-Way.
10. The areas designated as “Easements and Rights-of Way” should occupy at least 1,298.87 acres of land in order to accommodate existing, proposed and prospective uses meeting the characteristics of this future land use category, as described in this Comprehensive Plan. In order to accommodate these uses, the total required area (existing and future) should be accounted for within other designated base zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, C-1, C-2, C-3, I-1, I-2 and Sp-Ag).



C. PLANNED GROWTH AREAS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

The Muhlenberg Township Future Land Use Map (Figure 15) recognizes both planned growth areas and conservation areas. Pursuant to Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Muhlenberg Township Comprehensive Plan must address the following elements:

- ❖ *A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including, but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development, that may also serve as a statement of community development objectives.*
- ❖ *A plan for land use, which may include provisions for the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use proposed for residence, industry, business, agriculture, major traffic and transit facilities, utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation, preservation of prime agricultural lands, floodplains and other areas of special hazards and other similar uses.*

Through the development of this Comprehensive Plan, Muhlenberg Township has sufficiently addressed these elements. The following text summarizes how the Future land Use Plan provides a balance of planned growth areas whole preserving the integrity of conservation areas.

Planned Growth Areas: These areas are depicted on the Future Land Use Plan 2020 as follows: low to medium residential uses (yellow); medium to high density residential (orange); village commercial (pink); highway commercial (red); limited industrial (light purple); heavy industrial (dark purple); special agricultural (beige); public, institutional and municipal (blue); and rights-of-way and easements (white). These planned growth areas are comprised of a proportionate balance to accommodate existing land uses, proposed and projected developments, community facilities, parks and recreational facilities, historical sites and transportation improvements.

Conservation Areas: These areas are comprised of floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes, which are depicted as the color green on the Future Land Use Plan 2020. It is anticipated that most of the planned growth areas will be developed as designated within the next 20 years. However, the conservation areas should remain undeveloped under future conditions. In addition, a portion of the land areas designated as public, institutional and municipal (blue) shall remain as undeveloped open space.

Special Overlay Zones: In addition to the planned growth areas and conservation areas portrayed on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 15), Muhlenberg Township should also consider special overlay zones in order to supplement the provisions of the underlying zoning classifications. These special overlay districts may include: the 5th Street Highway Overlay Zone; Route 222 Bypass Interchange Overlay Zone; Route 12 Bypass Interchange Zone; Historical Preservation Overlay Zone; and the Adaptive Reuse/Redevelopment Overlay Zone. These special overlay districts should be considered by Muhlenberg Township as part of a comprehensive update to the Zoning Ordinance and to supplement the general provisions of the underlying zoning classifications.

Although Muhlenberg Township is located within a suburbanized to urbanize setting, the Future Land Use Plan has been created to consider a balance of planned growth areas and conservation areas.

D. PLAN FOR HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Muhlenberg Township Future Land Use Map (Figure 15) recognizes appropriate land areas to accommodate existing, planned and projected residential development. These areas include low to medium density residential areas (yellow) and medium to high density residential areas (orange). Pursuant to Section 301(a)(2.1) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Muhlenberg Township Comprehensive Plan must address the following elements:

- ❖ *A plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.*

In order to accomplish this requirement, Muhlenberg Township should provide a “fair share” of housing, as determined appropriate by the MPC as well as through recent court challenges. In addition, Muhlenberg Township should develop a housing plan to consider fundamental issues such as affordability, diversity, architectural integrity, zoning, revitalization and rehabilitation.

FAIR SHARE ANALYSIS

The “fair share” principal is based upon the planning premise that each municipality is required to plan and implement land use regulations, which meet the housing needs for the range of all people who may desire to reside within that municipality. Although the MPC does not provide specific criteria on how the “fair share” obligations were to be achieved, the decision imposed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania court case of *Surrick v. Upper Providence Township*, 776 PA 182, 382 A2d 105 (1977) provided specific criteria on how municipalities must evaluate their “fair share” obligations. The decision in this case specified that a municipality must apply the following three (3) basic tests to demonstrate that it can satisfactorily provide a fair share of housing, as required by the MPC:

Test 1: Is Muhlenberg Township a logical area for growth and development?

Muhlenberg Township is a suburban municipality located to the north of the City of Reading. A considerable amount of the land area within Muhlenberg Township has access to major transportation routes and/or has the ability to be serviced by public utilities. Although certain land areas within Muhlenberg Township have physical or environmental limitations for development, a fair amount of undeveloped land has the capacity to be planned for subdivision and land development activity. Further, a significant amount of the remaining undeveloped land area is currently in the planning phases for future development. Therefore, Muhlenberg Township is located within a logical area for growth and development.

Test 2: Is Muhlenberg Township considered as a developed or developing community?

Between the years of 1960 and 2000, the population of Muhlenberg Township has increased by 48.84 percent, representing an average growth rate of 1.22 percent per year. This rate of growth is slightly more than the cumulative average of all of the municipalities within Berks County. Further, the amount of recent subdivision and land development activity revealed in Chapter 9 (Existing Land Use) would lead to the conclusion that Muhlenberg Township is a

progressive community with the potential to be built-out within the next 20 to 30 years. Therefore, Muhlenberg Township is considered as a developing community.

Test 3: Is the amount of land zoned for multi-family development disproportionately small in relation to the population growth pressure and present level of development?

This is a rather complex question, which has been considered throughout most of this Comprehensive Plan. The following points attempt to clarify the answer to this test:

- The amount of land area currently zoned and available for multi-family development has been proportionate to the population growth pressure within Berks County. The future residential densities prescribed for each of the proposed zoning districts should also provide opportunities for future growth, while providing a clear distinction between residential densities and protecting environmental features.
- Between years 1997 and 2001, Muhlenberg Township approved 46 subdivision and land development plan applications containing 463 total residential units, representing 5.15 percent of the total number residential units approved within Berks County over this time period. Of the 463 total residential units approved under these applications: 50.54 percent involved single family detached units; 32.83 percent involved single family semi-detached units; 16.63 percent involved townhouse or multi-family units.
- Between the years 1997 and 2001, Muhlenberg Township has issued 279 residential building permits of which: 54.12 percent involved single family detached units; 44.44 percent involved single family semi-detached units; 1.43 percent involved multi-family units.
- Over the past few years, Muhlenberg Township has approved or is considering the approval of approximately 688 new residential dwelling units including: 259 single family detached (37.6% of the total units); 70 semi-detached units (10.2% of the total units); 114 townhouse units (16.6% of the total units); and 245 apartment units (35.6% of the total). If the 688 new dwelling units are constructed and occupied over the next 20 years, Muhlenberg Township could experience a net increase of 1,624 new residents within its municipal borders bringing the total population to nearly 18,000 residents. This assumed rate of growth is further documented within Chapters 5 and 9 of this Comprehensive Plan.
- In order to comply with the objectives of Test 3, Muhlenberg Township should establish five (5) residential zoning districts to accommodate all residential land uses and residential densities. The proposed R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts should be capable of accommodating residential growth and development with low to medium densities. The proposed R-3, R-4 and R-5 Zoning Districts should be capable of accommodating residential growth and development with medium to high densities. These proposed residential districts are further described and portrayed within this Comprehensive Plan.

Based upon a review of the existing land use composition, recent residential construction activity, as well as the proposed subdivision and land development activity, it is apparent that

the housing supply within Muhlenberg Township is diversified and capable of accommodating all residential densities and income levels. This observation can be further supported by comparing the existing land use composition and housing stock of Muhlenberg Township to most of the municipalities within Berks County.

HOUSING DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY

Chapter 5 (Demographics) and Chapter 9 (Existing Land Use) of this Comprehensive Plan provide statistical documentation concerning the overall housing profile of Muhlenberg Township. This information provides a base overview of past and present housing trends that will be utilized to develop the rationale for housing diversity and affordability within Muhlenberg Township over the next 10 to 20 years.

In 1954, the Muhlenberg Township Planning Commission was appointed to review development plans and prepare municipal land use ordinances. Since that time, Muhlenberg Township has enacted a variety of plans and ordinances to guide and direct growth and development. The existing Zoning Ordinance provides numerous residential development options and opportunities throughout most of Muhlenberg Township. Over the past 40 years, the housing stock within Muhlenberg Township has doubled, providing homes to residents of all income levels. The diversity of the existing housing and development patterns are portrayed on Figure 9 (Existing Land Use, August 2002) and is further evident in the housing counts supplied as part of Census 2000, whereas: 66.0 percent of the housing supply is single family detached units; 27.5 percent of the housing supply is multi-family or townhouse units; and 6.5 percent include other forms of housing. This diversification could be attributed to a number of factors including topographic limitations, environmental constraints, utility provisions, infrastructure and transportation improvements, and suburban sprawl from urbanized areas.

In order to provide additional documentation to support the recommendations for housing and residential development, the following chart provides as comparison of the housing values of Muhlenberg Township, Berks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF HOUSING VALUES (2000)							
Municipality	Owner Occupied Units	Percentage of Housing Units within the Value Range					Median Value
		Less than \$100,000	\$100,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 to \$499,999	More than \$500,000	
Muhlenberg	5,000	48.7 %	48.7 %	1.7 %	0.8 %	0.1 %	\$ 101,500
Berks County	90,295	46.2 %	46.4 %	5.4 %	1.6 %	0.4 %	\$ 104,900
Pennsylvania	2,889,484	52.5 %	36.2 %	7.4 %	2.9 %	1.0 %	\$ 97,000

Source: United States Census Bureau (Census 2000); Berks County Planning Commission (October 2002)

Based upon the documentation concerning housing values presented within the previous chart, the following observations can be applied as supportive information in the development of a housing plan for Muhlenberg Township:

1. The standard deviation of housing values within Muhlenberg Township would indicate that the value of homes have generally supported low to moderate income levels in the past. This is particularly evident with the homes (62.4% of the total housing units) that were constructed prior to 1969.

2. The 2000 Census reported that the median value of homes in Muhlenberg Township was \$101,500, which is less than the median value of homes for Berks County and Pennsylvania.
3. Affordable housing is generally defined as housing available to rent or purchase at approximately 28 percent of the family income. The 2000 Census reported that the median family income in Muhlenberg Township was \$51,764 per year. Therefore, affordable housing within Muhlenberg Township would generally translate into a monthly mortgage or rental fee of \$1,210 per month. By utilizing conservative mortgage rate estimates (30 year term at a 6.25% fixed rate) and by applying \$350 per month for real estate taxes and insurance, a typical family should be capable of purchasing a home within Muhlenberg Township with a current median value of \$140,000. This current value should be applied to the existing housing stock with an appreciation factor of 2 percent per year.

Based upon a review of the existing land use and demographic composition, as well as the proposed subdivision and land development activity, it is apparent that the housing supply within Muhlenberg Township is diversified and capable of accommodating all residential densities and income levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

In order for Muhlenberg Township to properly maintain a sound and diversified housing supply that will meet the existing and future needs of all residents, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Continue to provide opportunities for residential growth and development. As part of this effort, Muhlenberg Township should consider and adopt five (5) zoning districts to specifically accommodate existing, proposed and projected residential land uses and densities. The land area that should be designated for R-1 and R-2 Districts are depicted as *yellow* while the land area that should be designated for R-3, R-4 and R-5 Districts are depicted as *orange* on Figure 15 (Future Land Use Plan). Further, the proposed land uses, lot sizes or densities, and basic utility provisions that should be required for each of the five (5) residential districts has been provided in greater detail within this Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Continue to provide opportunities for housing to meet all income levels. As previously stated within this Chapter, affordable housing within Muhlenberg Township would generally translate into a monthly mortgage or rental fee of \$1,210 per month. By utilizing conservative mortgage rate estimates (30 year term at a 6.25% fixed rate) and by applying \$350 per month for real estate taxes and insurance, a typical family should be capable of purchasing a home within Muhlenberg Township with a current median value of \$140,000. By applying a 2 percent appreciation factor per year, the average purchase price of a typical home within Muhlenberg Township could reach \$154,571 by the year 2008; \$170,659 by the year 2013; \$188,422 by the year 2018; and \$208,033 by the year 2023.
3. The five (5) residential districts should be capable of providing opportunities for all income levels. In order to maintain a balance in the cost of housing within Muhlenberg Township, existing homes with values of less than \$140,000 should be made available to prospective residents with low to moderate incomes, while existing or new homes with values more than \$140,000 should be made available to prospective residents with moderate to high incomes. The current values for affordable housing should be readjusted as demographic and housing data becomes available.

4. Promote infill development on existing residential lots within established neighborhoods. This concept could provide affordable housing opportunities on existing or nonconforming lots; maximize public utility services; utilize existing public roads; and increase the values of older homes. In order to promote this opportunity, zoning regulations and land development procedures should be more flexible to accommodate infill development.
5. Continue to exercise the conditional use and/or special exception process to ensure that new residential developments are planned in a harmonious and environmentally conscious manner. These procedures should be utilized for unique applications to enhance public notification to adjacent property owners; develop positive modes of communications between the applicant and municipal officials during the early planning stages; and to determine if the application meets the goals, objectives and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.
6. Continue to support the planning and development of retirement communities or other forms of elderly housing in the community. The population cohorts reveal that Muhlenberg Township has a relatively older population than other municipalities within Berks County. Therefore, it would be advantageous for Muhlenberg Township to strategically plan for an elderly population over the next 10 to 20 years. The zoning districts should provide opportunities for the planning and development of retirement communities, assisted living care facilities and nursing homes.
7. Continue to support the establishment of successful neighborhood organizations and homeowners associations. As residential developments are planned, improved and occupied, it is sometimes vital to enact special guidelines, covenants, restrictions, agreements and bylaws for overall best interest of the community. If properly regulated, these controls assist with maintaining the health, safety and general welfare of the community while enhancing property values.
8. Continue to place a high priority on the enforcement of all housing and property maintenance codes. Muhlenberg Township has excelled with this task by employing qualified personnel and consultants to administer regulations pertaining to zoning, property maintenance, housing, and other code provisions. By enforcing these provisions, the housing supply (owned and/or rented) should be inspected and sufficiently maintained from the time it is constructed through the next transfer of title.
9. Promote the revitalization and rehabilitation of housing units in locations where maintenance and property values are declining. Muhlenberg Township should conduct a survey to identify housing units or residential neighborhoods that have special needs. By developing a database of housing conditions, Muhlenberg Township should be more capable to solicit assistance from county, state and federal officials for revitalization and rehabilitation projects.

Based upon a review of the existing land use composition, recent residential construction activity, as well as the proposed subdivision and land development activity, it is apparent that the housing supply within Muhlenberg Township is diversified and capable of accommodating all residential densities and income levels.

E. READING REGIONAL AIRPORT OVERLAY ZONES

The Reading Regional Airport is located only 2,000 feet to the west of the Schuylkill River in Bern Township. The Airport provides a variety of aviation services including commuter airline and chartered service to the residents of Berks County and adjacent communities. In March of 1981, an Airport Zoning Map was created identifying a variety of features and zones including: runways, runway approach zones; transitional zones, horizontal zones; and conical zones. In addition, height limitations and land use restrictions were created to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the aircraft as well as those residents and building located on the ground. This overlay zones for the Reading Regional Airport should be maintained and identified within future updates to the Muhlenberg Township Zoning Ordinance.

F. BERKS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (*VISION 2020*)

The Berks County Comprehensive Plan (Vision 2020), as prepared by the Berks County Planning Commission, has been recently been adopted by the Berks County Board of Commissioners. The Future Land Use Plan for *Vision 2020* is generally consistent with the criteria established for the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 15) for Muhlenberg Township.