ALBANY TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Berks County, Pennsylvania
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ALBANY TOWNSHIP
Berks County, Pennsylvania

Adopted February, 1993

The preparation of this report was financed in part through a SPAG grant from the PA Department of Community Affairs under the provisions of Act 74 approved August 4, 1991, as administered by the Bureau of Community Planning, Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.

Planning and Zoning Consultant
Urban Research & Development Corporation
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

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FOREWORD

Albany Township recognizes that planning is the way to achieve a better tomorrow. This Comprehensive Plan represents Albany Township government’s commitment to guide the future development and preservation of the Township and to enhance the current and future quality of life. Its value to the Township will be in evaluating each proposed change in the community. For every proposed change, there should be an affirmative answer to the question: "Does it conform with our Comprehensive Plan?", or "Does it carry out the objectives of this Plan?"

Albany Township Planning Commission
PLANNING FOR ALBANY'S FUTURE

The Albany Township Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and carrying out this Comprehensive Plan. The Township's Board of Supervisors adopt this Plan to guide the orderly growth and preservation of the Township.

The following were considered when preparing the Plan:

- the Township's strengths and problems today;
- how to preserve what is desirable and how to solve today's problems;
- how to handle changes we expect to happen;
- how to achieve actions we want to happen; and
- how to prevent changes we want to avoid.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS...A NEW COMMITMENT

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 of 1968 as amended by Act 170 of 1988, empowers townships and other municipal governments to plan and govern development by zoning and other public actions. Albany adopted a comprehensive plan in 1974. The Township revised its zoning ordinance and its subdivision and land development ordinance in 1986. In 1991, Albany Township government made a commitment to update each of these documents as well as to prepare a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, and an Official Map (the Official Map indicates areas to be preserved for proposed roads and other future public uses).

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan describes the Township's official policies for land preservation, development and future improvements (such as proposed parks). The policies are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map and described in this report. Local residents, businesses, community groups and Township government will implement these policies.

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for making decisions to best serve the interests of everyone living and owning land in Albany Township.

Several federal, state, county and local organizations were consulted to assist in preparing this plan. These include the following, among others: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Soil Conservation Service, PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Department of Environmental Resources, PA Department of Community Affairs, PA Historical and Museum Commission, Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County Conservancy and the Wildlands Conservancy.
IMPORTANCE OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A plan is only as good as the local commitment to the Plan and the ability to carry it out. Legal documents such as a zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance need to reflect the policies stated in the Plan.

Changes will occur from time to time. The Plan should be kept up-to-date and reflect circumstances which were not anticipated when the Plan was first prepared. The Plan should be reviewed on a regular basis.

CITIZENS AND THE PLAN

The Albany Township Planning Commission will help the Township Supervisors implement the Plan. The Supervisors and the Commission should know how residents feel about the Plan. Citizen participation and continuing support are necessary to consistently carry out the policies in the Plan during the 1990's and beyond.

FORMAT OF THE PLAN

The Albany Township Comprehensive Plan includes three (3) major parts:

1. Background For The Plan
2. A Plan For The Future
3. Action Program

The first part of the Plan is a summary of existing conditions and trends in the Township. The Plan for the Future describes how the Township can realize its development and preservation goals. The Action Program outlines actions Albany should take to ensure its Plan is put into practice.
BACKGROUND FOR THE PLAN -- MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS
This section of the Plan summarizes major findings in several subject areas:

- Regional Location
- Population Characteristics
- Housing Characteristics
- Economic Development
- Natural Features
- Existing Land Use Characteristics
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Circulation Characteristics

These findings have been used to prepare goals and initial recommendations.

**REGIONAL LOCATION**

Albany Township
Berks County, Pennsylvania

Albany Township is situated north of I-78 at the northern tip of Berks County. Albany is approximately 20 miles north of the City of Reading and 15 miles west of the City of Allentown. A significant portion of the Township is located on the Blue Mountain ridge. This ridge is part of the Appalachian Mountain chain which runs along the entire northern border of Berks County.
Albany Township contains 40.2 square miles. It is the second largest municipality in Berks County in terms of land area (Bethel Township is the largest).

Albany is bordered by Windsor and Greenwich Townships in Berks County on the south. The Schuylkill County Townships of East Brunswick, West Brunswick and West Penn are located to the northwest of Albany. Albany is bordered by Lynn and Weisenberg Townships, Lehigh County on its eastern side.

Setting

Albany is a picturesque, rural community. Mountains and woodlands dominate the western half of the Township, the area that contains the 1,630 feet high Pinnacle (highest point in Berks County). The eastern portion of Albany Township is largely agricultural and residential. The Boroughs of Hamburg and Kutztown on the south side of I-78 are the nearest densely settled population centers to Albany Township.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Total Population

The 1990 population of Albany Township was 1,547 according to the U. S. Census. This was an increase of 166 persons (12.0%) over the 1980 total of 1,381 persons. Berks County’s population increased by 7.7% overall during this same period. Thirty (30) of the County’s 75 municipalities had higher rates of growth than Albany over the 1980’s.

Albany added 483 residents over the 40-year period between 1950 and 1990. The Township lost persons during the 1950's. The 1970's were Albany's fastest growing years, as shown on the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Number Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1,064</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>- 45</td>
<td>- 4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,109</td>
<td>+ 90</td>
<td>+ 8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>+ 272</td>
<td>+ 24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>+ 166</td>
<td>+ 12.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: U. S. Census

The Berks County Planning Commission projects Albany Township will grow to 1,631 persons by 2000, a 5.4% increase over 1990. The Berks County projections have not been updated to reflect the 1990 Census. Albany will have slightly over 1,700 persons by the year 2000 if Township growth over the 1990's is similar to that experienced during the 1980's.
In 1990 the age category with the highest concentration of people for both Berks County and Albany Township was the 45-64 age group. The 75 years and over age category represents the smallest age group in the Township (62 persons). The smallest age category County-wide is the 0-4 age group. This comparison can be seen on the accompanying table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE DISTRIBUTION</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALBANY TOWNSHIP</td>
<td></td>
<td>BERKS COUNTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>+38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-17</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>+46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: U.S. Census
The previous table indicates that the population of Albany Township has grown progressively older between 1980 and 1990. The fastest growing age group for both Albany Township and Berks County is the 35-44 age group which increased 45% over the past 10 years. Within the same time frame, the 10-17 and 18-24 age groups have experienced the largest decreases in population in Albany Township and Berks County as a whole.

**Gender**

The distribution of males and females in Albany Township has remained stable (virtually 50/50) between 1980 and 1990: from 710 males and 671 females in 1980 to 756 females and 791 males in 1990.

**Race**

Whites represented virtually all of the population in 1980 with only one non-white person in the Township. The 1990 Census recorded 10 non-whites in Albany Township.

**Education**

In 1980, 60% of Albany’s population age 25 or older had graduated from high school; 14% graduated from college. This was consistent in 1990 with Berks County overall where 59% of the population age 25 or older graduated from high school and 11% graduated from college. The percentage of high school and college graduates from Albany Township has increased at a slightly faster rate than that of Berks County as a whole. 75% of the population of Albany Township had graduated from high school and 23% graduated from college in 1990.

---

**EDUCATION AND INCOME**

**Albany Township and Berks County**

**1980-1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ALBANY TOWNSHIP</th>
<th>BERKS COUNTY</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education Attainment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Persons 25 + Years Old and High School Graduates</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Persons 25 + Years Old with 4 + Years of College</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Median Household Income</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>$17,180</td>
<td>$17,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>$36,875</td>
<td>$32,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Per-Capita Income</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>$6,723</td>
<td>$7,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>$15,077</td>
<td>$14,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** U.S. Census
**Income**

The annual median household income in Albany Township was $36,875 in 1989. This compared to $32,048 for Berks County in 1989. Albany Township also had a larger per-capita income ($15,077) than that of Berks County (14,604) in 1989. These comparisons can be seen on the table on the previous page.

Income levels in Berks County doubled between 1979 and 1989. Albany Township reflects this increase. The annual median household income in Albany Township increased from $17,180 in 1979 to $36,875 in 1989. The Township’s per-capita income increased from $6,723 in 1979 to $15,077 in 1989.

**HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

**Household Size**

The average Albany household contained 2.79 persons in 1990. This is slightly larger than the County average of 2.56 persons per household. The Township’s 1990 average is smaller than its 1980 median of 2.93 persons. Later marriages, fewer children, more divorces and more elderly living alone caused a nationwide trend towards smaller households over the 1970’s and 1980’s.

**Total Housing Units**

Albany had 622 housing units, according to the 1990 Census. This is an increase of 99 units over the 1980 count, or an average of approximately 10 new units per year. This includes both new construction and apartments created within existing buildings.

**Housing Vacancies**

Some housing vacancies are needed to provide opportunities for mobility and housing choice. A vacancy rate of 3 to 5% is considered typical. According to the 1990 Census, there were 68 vacant housing units in the Township, a vacancy rate of 11%. This is similar to the 1980 tabulations where the Census reported 52 vacant units, for a 10 vacancy rate.

Albany’s high vacancy rate results from seasonal units that are occupied only part of the year. The Township’s 1990 vacancy rate drops to 5% when these units are excluded.

**Housing Ownership**

The 1990 Census reported that of Albany Township’s 622 housing units, 554 (89%) were occupied. Of these 554 occupied housing units, 431 (78%) were owner-occupied. This is higher than Berks County’s 1990 owner-occupied rate of 74%, but typical of very rural areas. In addition to 431 owner-occupied housing units, the Township also had 123 rental units in 1990, 22% of all occupied units.

**Housing Age**

52% of Albany’s housing units were built prior to 1940, according to the 1990 Census. This is indicative of the Township’s unique heritage. Only 40% of the County’s total units are of similar age.
Housing Type

Single family detached units (including mobile homes) accounted for 91% of all Albany Township units in 1990. Single family detached and mobile home units comprised 56% of all units County-wide. Remaining units in Albany consisted of 14 single family attached units and 34 units in 2 to 4-unit apartment structures.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regional Economy

Business conditions in Albany Township are affected by the national, state and regional economies. Albany is part of the Reading Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which includes all of Berks County. The Reading MSA is one of 15 labor market areas in Pennsylvania.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the Reading MSA was 7.3% for July, 1992. This was higher than the area’s 6.6% unemployment rate for December, 1991 but lower than both the State and National averages. The first table on the following page compares local unemployment statistics with those of the U.S., Pennsylvania and the State’s other labor market areas.

The next table shows employment changes in the Reading MSA (Berks County) by industry between July, 1991 and July, 1992. Service jobs increased by 11.9% during this period, more than any other employment sector. The Transportation sector and the Fire/Insurance/Real Estate sector were the only other employment categories to add jobs over the 12-month span. Wholesale trade (-8.5%) lost more jobs than any other sector between July 1991 and July 1992.

NOTE: Employment and unemployment data is not available for a single municipality of Albany’s small population.

Albany Township Economy

Albrights Mill and the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary currently are Albany’s largest employers. Albrights employs 12 to 15 people full-time. The Sanctuary carries a seasonal high of approximately 14 full-time and 6 part-time staff members. Agriculture is very important to Albany’s economy including both full-time farmers and those who also have other primary jobs. Livestock farms, tree nurseries and traditional crop farming are all found in the Township.

Albrights Mill, Bailey Logging and Trega Corp. (a small manufacturer of aluminum castings) are the community’s largest industrial firms. The Township’s retail/service sector is limited. The largest retail/service businesses in Albany are the Kempton Hotel (a restaurant) and the Hawk Mountain Bed & Breakfast Inn.
NATURAL FEATURES

Albany Township is well noted for its undeveloped lands, and natural beauty. Albany is a picturesque community of mountains, streams, woodlands and other open spaces. The area’s dramatic peaks and scenic valleys are a special source of local pride and a regional tourist attraction.

The Township’s natural features are described in the text and maps included in this section. Special consideration is placed on how and why these resources deserve special attention in planning for Albany’s future.

Geology

The geologic zones underlying Albany Township can be broken down into two groups: Silurian and Ordovician.

The Silurian, the oldest of the two formations, occupies the upper slopes of the Blue Mountains. The Silurian zone is composed of sandstones, quartzite and shale. Its groundwater yield is low compared with other geologic zones in Albany and throughout Berks County. Relatively few wells are drilled in this mountainous area.

The Ordovician zone underlies the remainder of the Township. This zone consists of several formations featuring gray shales, sandstones and some limestone. Ordovician formations are small to moderate suppliers of groundwater. However, fault or fracture areas in this zone can be reliable water sources. Two such fault lines run east to west through Albany Township.
Soils

Albany has many different soil types with a variety of soil features. Agricultural productivity and the suitability of soils for on-site septic systems are two important soil characteristics for comprehensive planning.

There are large areas throughout Albany where soils are located on steep slopes or otherwise too shallow, too stony or too poorly drained for on-site septic systems. Development should be minimized in these areas, unless central sewage treatment is provided by public sewers or by an approved private package plant system which serves a particular development. Soils most suitable for on-site waste treatment are concentrated in the southeastern sector of the Township.

Class I and Class II prime agricultural soils are another important planning consideration. These soils, which are found throughout the eastern portion of Albany, help indicate where the best farmland is located. Rapid development of agricultural land is a major concern in Berks County. Albany should continue to protect prime farmland if the Township hopes to preserve its rural heritage as growth pressures intensify in the future.

Steep Slopes

Albany’s steep slopes and scenic valleys are an important feature of the Township’s natural environment. The Blue Mountain ridge line in western Albany forms the boundary between Berks and Schuylkill Counties. Hawk Mountain, the Pinnacle, the Pulpit and Owl’s Head are located in this part of the Township. These scenic overlooks are well-known features of the Blue Mountain chain in the Berks County-Schuylkill County area.

There are extensive areas with slopes in excess of 15% and 25% located throughout Albany Township. Development should be discouraged on grades of this magnitude. Steep slopes are costly to build on and extremely sensitive to erosion caused by soil disturbance. The stony soils and thin topsoil layer found on most steep slopes also limit the feasibility of on-site sewage treatment.

Woodlands

There are vast areas of continuous forest cover in the steep western half of Albany. There are also large woodlands remaining in the other sectors of the Township. Deciduous trees such as maple, beech, oak and hickory are the prevalent species. Coniferous trees such as hemlock and pine are also common. Woodlands are important wildlife habitats. Trees provide scenic beauty and protect against erosion by stabilizing the soil. Albany should conserve woodlands by steering growth away from heavily forested areas and seeking to minimize trees cut during construction. The Township should encourage only proper timbering operations.

Hydrology

Major streams in Albany Township include Maiden Creek/Ontelaunee Creek, Kistler Creek, Pine Creek and Stony Run. The Township also contains the headwaters to the Hamburg Reservoir. There are minor ponds (mostly farm ponds) but no lakes in Albany Township. Areas of 100-year floodplain, hydric soils and alluvial soils parallel each of these watercourses and their tributaries. Wetland areas included
on the National Wetlands Inventory are scattered throughout
the central and eastern portions of the Township. Develop-
ment should be avoided entirely on 100-year flood channels
and wetlands. Suitability for development in the 500-year
floodplain should be determined on a property-by-property
basis. Special consideration should be taken to properly
place buildings and on-site septic systems on properties that
contain hydric soils and intermittent wet areas. Water
systems are prone to degradation through erosion, sedi-
mentation, toxic chemicals, sewage, fertilizers, dumping,
destruction of wetlands and loss of stream-side vegetation.
The cumulative effect of these impacts result in degraded
water supplies, flooding, loss of wildlife habitat, property
damage and decreased scenic and recreational values.

Stream protection is especially important in Albany Town-
ship. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental
Resources (DER) has designated Pine Creek as a High
Quality Cold Water Fishery from its source to the eastern
intersection of T-803. DER defines a High Quality Cold
Water Fishery as a stream or watershed that has particularly
clean water or other features that deserve special protection.
DER strictly limits permits for waste treatment plant to
discharge into High Quality Cold Water Fisheries.

Albany’s comprehensive planning should recognize the need
to preserve the Township’s waterways. We should be aware
that development activity along any waterway in the Town-
ship can potentially affect water quality downstream.

Animals and Plants of Special Concern

Albany Township has a diverse collection of plant and
animal wildlife. This is one of the area’s major attractions.

It is important to consider these resources in planning for the
Township’s future development and preservation.

There are no federally-listed endangered or threatened
species within Albany Township, according to the U.S. Fish
and Wildlife Service. However, there is one State-listed
species of special concern within Albany, Birds At Risk and
Mammals At Risk, according to State classification. Three
separate State agencies are charged with protecting
Pennsylvania’s wildlife:

- The PA. Department of Environmental Resources - plants
- The PA. Fish and Boat Commission - fish, reptiles and
  amphibians
- The PA. Game Commission - birds and mammals

These agencies and other conservation groups maintain the
Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) which
provides data on unique plants, animals and geologic
features in the State. The PNDI lists one endangered species
known to exist in Albany: the Least Shrew. Birds At Risk in
Albany include the Northern Harrier, Barn Owl, Barred Owl
Upland Sandpiper and Common Snipe. Mammals At Risk
include the Bobcat and Red-Back Vole.

The Berks County Natural Areas Inventory does not list any
natural communities, special plants or special animals found
in Albany Township. The Inventory cites Blue Mountain as
an area of Statewide significance for the protection of bio-
logical diversity. Pine Creek is listed in the Inventory as an
area of local significance. The Inventory names the River of
Rocks and the Hawk Mountain lookouts as outstanding
scenic geologic features. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, The
Appalachian Trail and State Game Lands 106 are included
on the Inventory as protected areas.
The preparation of this map was financed in part through a SPAG grant from the PA Department of Community Affairs under the provisions of Act 7A approved August 4, 1991, as administered by the Bureau of Community Planning, Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.
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ALBANY TOWNSHIP
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

SUITABILITY FOR ON SITE SEPTIC SYSTEM

SUITEABLE
MOST SUITEABLE
LIMITED BY SOIL DEPTH
LIMITED BY PERCOLATION

UNSUITABLE
WET SOILS
STONY SOILS
SOILS ON STEEP SLOPES

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SCALE IN FEET
0 1600 3200 4800 6400 8000
ALBANY TOWNSHIP
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

WOODLANDS AND STEEP SLOPES

- WOODLANDS
- SLOPES FROM 15% TO 25%
- SLOPES OVER 25%

The preparation of this map was financed in part through a SPAG grant from the PA Department of Community Affairs under the provisions of Act 7A approved August 4, 1991, as administered by the Bureau of Community Planning, Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.
EXISTING LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

Residential Land Use

Albany Township is 40.2 square miles in area and contains fewer persons per square mile than any other Berks County municipality. Most developed properties in Albany are single-family homes, many associated with farms. There are concentrations of housing in the villages of Kempton and Stony Run. Smaller clusters of residential development exist around the villages of Eckville and Trexler.

Albany has two residential subdivisions. The Kemptons consists of 18 single-family homes on lots of approximately 2 acres. White Oak Court is comprised of 6 single family units. Currently, the Township is reviewing a proposed residential subdivision where 10 single family units are planned. Albany has one grouping of mobile homes but no multi-family residential development.

Commercial and Industrial Land Uses

Albrights Mill, Bailey Lumber Company and Kempton Excavating are Albany's largest industrial companies. There is no concentrated area of industrial development in the Township. Retail/service establishments are limited to a restaurant in Kempton, a bed and breakfast inn and several smaller concerns including an accounting firm, a convenience grocer, a gun shop and several auto repair establishments, among others. Kempton and Stony Run are Albany's two small commercial villages. Both are located along Route 737 east of Route 143.

Public/Semi-Public Land Uses

Major public/semi-public uses in Albany include churches, cemeteries, schools and municipal properties. Historic churches and cemeteries are located throughout Albany Township. These include Frieden's Church, Zion's Evangelical Church, Snyder's Evangelical Cemetery and Salem Evangelical Church. Albany Elementary, located west of Kempton on Route 143, is the only public school in the Township. The Kempton New Church School near Kempton is Albany's only private school.

The Township’s maintenance building and the Kempton-Goodwill Fire Company of Albany and Lynn Townships are the community’s other major public/semi-public uses. These are both located along Route 143 just outside Kempton.

The 4,300 acre Hamburg Watershed property is located in Albany and Windsor Townships. Hamburg Borough owns this land, which encompasses the Hamburg Reservoir and surrounding area. The Reservoir supplies water to approximately 2,000 customers in and around Hamburg Borough.

Recreation, Conservation and Public Open Space

Major areas of Albany Township are devoted to recreation, conservation and public open space. The largest is the 2,000 acre Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, a wildlife preserve and natural studies area visited by over 60,000 people annually (not all of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary is located in Albany Township). The Lehigh Valley Astrological Society maintains an observatory on Pulpit Rock. The State Game Commission administers State Game Lands 106, the largest public open space in Albany. The Appalachian Trail crosses...
ALBANY TOWNSHIP
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

EXISTING LAND USE

- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- OTHER RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC
- RECREATION
- CONSERVATION

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC SITES
1. Schaumbach's Tavern
2. Trenner Historic District, Trenner Bridge
3. Brobst Gristmill
4. Daniel Berk Log House

This preparation of this map was financed in part through a SPAG grant from the PA Department of Community Affairs under the provisions of Act 74 as amended August 4, 1991, as administered by the Bureau of Community Planning, Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.
the northern, northwestern and western parts of the Township. The Kempton Rod & Gun Club occupies 126 acres near the base of the Pinnacle. The Kempton Community Recreation Center is the community’s only public recreation facility. The Community Center contains a large building used for basketball, receptions, special events and other indoor activities. Tennis courts, an outdoor stage, picnic tables, tot lot facilities and an area for tractor pull competitions are also situated on this property. Local residents should support this facility.

The Wanamakers, Kempton and Southern Railroad (a restored, steam-powered tourist line) is located adjacent to the Community Center just north of Kempton. This railroad is operated by volunteers along a 9-mile route from Kempton to Wanamakers west of New Tripoli.

Private Undeveloped Land

The majority of the privately-held undeveloped property in Albany Township is farmland. Agriculture is key to the local economy, an important part of the community’s heritage and must be preserved. The Township has taken an important step by establishing an Agricultural Security Area under State Act 149. In Albany, 106 property owners have registered 8,219 acres under this program, as of August 1991. Farms within the Agriculture Security Area are protected against certain regulations that constrain farming and eligible to have their development rights purchased by Berks County (though only very limited funds are available, at present, to acquire development rights). Designation of land as an Agricultural Security Area, involves no regulations or controls on private property, unless development rights are acquired.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural Heritage

Albany Township was incorporated in 1752 as one of the original 23 municipalities in Berks County. Albany has a rich, colorful history still very evident in the community today. Like most of Berks County, Albany Township’s first settlers were predominantly of German descent. Approximately 75% of the County’s inhabitants reported German origins in the first federal Census in 1790.

The Village of Kempton became Albany’s commercial center in 1874 when the Wanamaker, Kempton and Southern Railroad was established between Reading and Slatington in Lehigh County. Kempton quickly developed into an important shipping area for local farm products, particularly potatoes. Freight traffic ran until 1947 and commuter service was provided until 1962. This railroad subsequently developed into the Wanamaker, Kempton & Southern, a tourist, steam-powered line still in operation.

Albany today is justly proud of its Pennsylvania German culture. The community once had 12 one-room school houses. None of these one-room schools still operates; most have been converted to residential use. These former schools include Bolich’s, Clover Mills, Greenawald’s, Fetherolfsville, Heinly’s, Kempton, Miller’s, Mountain, New Bethel, Stony Run, Trexler’s and Wessnerville. There are also old churches in the Township with eighteenth century origins. Albrights Mill in Kempton is a living reminder of the several grist mills that once did a thriving trade in Albany.
There were several small villages in Albany Township that formed around the railroad, and local businesses such as logging, paint manufacturing and stone masonry. These villages include Albany, Eckville, Greenawald, Quaker City, Stony Run, Trexler and Wessnersville. The largest log home in Berks County still stands in the village of Trexler.

National Historic Sites

Albany Township has many properties worthy of historic recognition. Five sites in the Township are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These are identified below and located on the Existing Land Use map:

- **Schaumboch’s Tavern** - An early one and one-half (1½) story stone tavern which served the rural Blue Mountain Area. The tavern dates to 1760.
- **Trexler Historic District** - A scenic village founded in 1863. The major building is a large two-story log house dating to the late 18th century.
- **Trexler Bridge** - This is located within the Trexler Historic District. It is a Triple-Arch stone bridge connecting Route 143 with township road T805. It was built in 1841.
- **Brobst Gristmill** - A stone and log gristmill built in 1786 along Pine Creek near the base of the Pinnacle. Works removed, but architectural features of mill, dam and race can be seen.
- **Daniel Berk Log House** - A log house of early Huguenot settlers, built in two sections between 1760 and 1790.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Education

Albany Township is part of the Kutztown Area School District, which includes the Boroughs of Kutztown, Lenhartsville and Lyons, as well as the Townships of Greenwich and Maxatawny. Albany students in grades 1-6 attend Albany Elementary School, just west of Kempton on Route 143. Maxatawny Elementary in Maxatawny and Greenwich Elementary in Greenwich are the District’s other two elementary schools. Kutztown Junior High serves grades 7 and 8. Kutztown Senior High serves grades 9-12. These schools both are located in Kutztown Borough. The Kempton New Church School is the only private educational institution in Albany Township.

Capacity at the Albany Elementary School and other Kutztown School District facilities appears adequate for the next 2 to 3 years provided growth trends do not accelerate unexpectedly. The District will continue to re-evaluate enrollment trends to determine the adequacy of facilities beyond this time frame.

Water and Sewer

There are no public water or sewage treatment facilities in Albany Township. Water is provided from private wells and sewage is treated by on-site septic systems. Albany’s geology and terrain require careful siting to assure safe water and sanitary sewage treatment. There are no areas of large scale septic system failure in the Township though some problems have developed in the village of Kempton. There are no
current plans to extend public water or sewer facilities to Albany Township.

**Emergency and Maintenance Service**

The Pennsylvania State Police (Hamburg Station) provide limited police protection to Albany Township. The Kempton Volunteer Fire Company on Route 143 provides excellent fire protection to Albany Township. This fire company has a tanker truck and three pumpers. Approximately 50 persons are volunteer members. The Kempton Volunteer Fire Company has a firehouse in Kempton. Albany Township is served by a maintenance crew that includes 3 full-time and 2 part-time employees. The crew is responsible for road maintenance, plowing snow and related public works. The Township maintenance garage is on Route 143 just west of Kempton.

**Solid Waste**

Residents and businesses in Albany contract with private haulers to collect their solid waste. The Township does not license or otherwise regulate trash collection. Albany does not mandate recycling. However, there is extensive volunteer recycling in the community. Recycling collection centers are located at the nearby Greenwich Elementary School and at Routes 737 & 143 in Kempton.

**CIRCULATION**

Route 737 and Route 143 are the two major State roads in Albany Township. Both of these roads intersect Interstate 78 to the south. Route 737 terminates at Route 143 in Kempton. Route 143 continues northward to Route 309 near New Tripoli. Route 143 carries the highest volume of traffic in Albany.

As in many rural areas, Albany contains roads that are narrow and/or present driving hazards. The Pennsylvania State Police (Hamburg Station) report that State Route 737 and State Route 143 are the Township's most frequent accident locations. The Township should be aware of the need to upgrade selected roads as specific areas become more developed in the future.

The recently completed I-78 extension has reduced commuting time between Albany Township and New Jersey and made the Township more accessible to southern Lehigh and southern Northampton Counties. The I-78 improvements have brought Albany Township residents closer to a greater range of employment opportunities in the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton and Phillipsburg area.
MUNICIPAL FINANCES

The accompanying chart shows Albany Township's 1993 budget. State gasoline tax revenues reimbursed to the Township are the largest single source of Albany's revenues. Taxes are the second largest source. These taxes include the 8-mill Township property tax and the Township's share of the 1% earned income tax revenues that Albany divides with the Kutztown Area School District. The Township also shares its revenues from a $10 occupational privilege tax with the School District. Road maintenance costs are the Township's largest area of expenditure, accounting for 66% of all budgeted costs in 1993.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fund Balance, January 1</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenues:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licenses &amp; Permits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fines &amp; Forfeits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest, Rents &amp; Royalties</td>
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<td>Intergovernmental Revenues*</td>
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<td>Changes for Services</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous &amp; Other Revenues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenues &amp; Other Sources</td>
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<td>Total Revenues &amp; Fund Equity</td>
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<td>Expenditures:</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
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<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways, Roads &amp; Streets*</td>
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<td>66.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture-Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Expenditures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenditures &amp; Other Financing</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreserved Fund Balance, Dec. 31</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Albany Township 1993 Budget
*Includes $111,396 in State highway aid funds.
SUMMARY OF ASSETS AND CONCERNS

Albany's strengths and weaknesses form the basis for preparing a plan to guide Albany's future development and preservation. The plan should capitalize upon the Township's assets and identify ways to overcome or mitigate concerns. This is a logical approach to planning for the future. Albany's important assets and concerns are summarized below.

ASSETS

History and Culture are evident throughout Albany Township. The community's rural heritage and Pennsylvania German origins are very much alive in Albany.

Undeveloped Lands in agriculture and public open space are scenic and environmental resources in the Township.

Quality of Life is an attraction in Albany due to the area's natural beauty and rural atmosphere.

A Commitment to Plan future growth and to preserve unique local assets is an important feature present in Albany Township.

CONCERNS

Future Development changing Albany's landscape and rural lifestyle is the Township's primary planning-related concern. Scenic and agricultural areas are being developed throughout Berks County. Albany is experiencing some of this change. A challenge facing Albany is preserving the area's scenic and rural environment while accommodating new growth. The Township's rural setting provides much of its attractive charm.
A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE
A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

A COMMITMENT

Some growth is inevitable in Albany Township. The best way to control this growth is to plan for it. This Comprehensive Plan is a commitment to guide the future development and preservation of Albany Township. This is the heart of our planning efforts--planning today to achieve a better tomorrow.

GOALS – CHOOSING OUR DIRECTION

Planning today is far better than waiting passively for the future to happen. The following goals set the direction and tone for this Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use

- To continue selected, low density, rural-oriented growth that is consistent with the Township’s physical constraints on development.

- To provide land for a variety of housing types in at least one area of the Township if central water and central sewage systems would become available.

- To provide for desirable and environmentally safe commercial and industrial growth in selected designated areas.

- To conform with and accommodate planning and zoning decisions being made in adjoining municipalities.

Agricultural, Environmental and Open Space Preservation

- To provide for the continuation of farming and the voluntary expansion of Agricultural Security Areas.

- To preserve important natural areas in open space such as steep slopes, genuine wetlands, and flood channels.

- To encourage careful management of woodlands.

- To encourage the preservation of stream quality and appropriate watershed protection techniques.

Historic Preservation

- To support efforts to identify and preserve historic buildings.

- To maintain and commemorate Albany’s unique cultural heritage.

Economic Development

- To accommodate employment and tax generating uses that are compatible with the Township’s natural environment and with Albany’s zoning and subdivision regulations.
Circulation

- To target selected roads for safety improvements in cooperation with PennDOT.
- To ensure all roads are safe and meet specific design guidelines based on their purpose and projected traffic volumes.

Community Facilities and Services

- To continue to support the public safety efforts of the local fire company and the Township's maintenance personnel.
- To encourage development that can be accommodated without public water and sewage service. (Note: Albany Township does not encourage package sewage treatment plants.)

THE PLAN

The Plan enables the Township Supervisors, the Planning Commission, property owners and other residents to review current issues and proposals against a clear picture of what has been decided as the most desirable plan for the future character and physical development of Albany.

The test of each proposal affecting the use of land, roads and community facilities should be a question: "Does it conform with the Township's Comprehensive Plan" or "Does it carry out the objectives of the Plan?"

PLAN INTERRELATIONSHIPS

The Albany Township Comprehensive Plan addresses seven major topics:

- Land Use and Housing
- Agricultural Preservation
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Historic Preservation
- Economic Development
- Circulation
- Community Facilities and Services

These planning components are interrelated. Planning and capital programming actions taken in any one of these areas are likely to interrelate with one or more of the other planning components. This Plan was prepared accordingly.

ALBANY WITHIN THE REGION

Albany recognizes its future will be influenced by what occurs outside Township boundaries. The Albany Township Comprehensive Plan considers the Berks County Comprehensive Plan and existing and planned land uses in the municipalities that border Albany Township. This Plan recognizes the importance of coordinating with development and preservation decisions being made by Berks County and neighboring municipalities: Windsor and Greenwich Townships (Berks County); East Brunswick, West Brunswick and West Penn Townships (Schuylkill County); Lynn and Weisenberg Townships (Lehigh County).
Albany’s land use plan is generally consistent with The Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision. The Township’s proposed low-density residential area along Route 737 differs slightly from the County’s suggested conservation designation for this area. However, the Township will employ zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage only appropriate types and densities of development. The Township’s proposed planning areas surrounding Kempton will promote only village scale development, consistent with the County’s suggested Limited Development designation for this area.

Zoning designations are the best indicators of municipal development and preservation policies in the townships surrounding Albany. In many cases, municipal comprehensive plans are outdated or unavailable. As shown on the accompanying table, the current zoning classifications for land that adjoins Albany Township in adjacent municipalities is oriented towards conservation, agriculture and low-density residential development. These zoning designations are consistent with the future land use scheme for Albany Township proposed in this Plan.

### ZONING OF LAND ADJACENT TO ALBANY TOWNSHIP 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUNICIPALITY</th>
<th>ZONING DESIGNATION</th>
<th>MAXIMUM PERMITTED DENSITY FOR SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED HOMES*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Township, Lehigh County</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>1 home per 3 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weisenberg Township, Lehigh County</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1 home per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenwich Township, Berks County</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>1 home per 1½ acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor Township, Berks County</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>1 home per 5 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>1 home per 10 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>1 home per 2 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1 home per 10 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Penn Township, Schuylkill County</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>1 home per 10 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Assumes no public water or sewer.
LAND USE AND HOUSING

The Land Use and Housing Plan is the most important portion of this Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use and Housing Plan is intended to direct where different types and intensities of land uses are appropriate, and where areas should be preserved. This Land Use and Housing Plan will serve as a guide for revisions to the Township's zoning regulations.

Residential Areas

Albany Township is first and foremost an attractive and desirable place to live. This Plan designates four planning areas that provide land for a variety of housing types and densities. These categories are:

- Woodland Conservation - This is the area of Albany least suited for intensive development. In this area, the most wooded and steeply sloped portions of the Township would be encouraged to be preserved while permitting single family homes on a minimum of 5 acres. A minimum lot size of ten acres would be required where a developer proposes to place a driveway or building on a portion of a lot containing 15% to 25% slopes.*

- Buildings and driveways should be discouraged on all slopes in the Township over 25% except to allow for a maximum of 1 home on pre-existing lawful lots of record.

- Agriculture - This Comprehensive Plan encourages farmers to continue farming as long as they desire. Agriculture preserves open land, produces valuable food products, provides important jobs and family income, and retains a valuable link with Albany's heritage. Like the Berks County Comprehensive Plan, this Plan endorses the idea of saving farmland wherever possible. At the same time, the Township wants to ensure reasonable development options are available to all landowners, provided the sites are physically suitable for construction. The Township considered the cluster development technique very carefully in formulating this plan. The Agricultural Area is the most appropriate location for this type of development in Albany Township.

The proposed Agriculture Area is the Plan's largest area. Single-family detached homes would be allowed on minimum 5-acre lots. Ten-acre lots would be required to build on a portion of a lot containing 15% to 25% slopes. This area should allow homes to be clustered on smaller lots if the developer establishes adequate open space areas.

- Low Density Residential - This Comprehensive Plan directs concentrated growth to the vicinity in and around the villages of Kempton and Stony Run. This is consistent with the Township's current development pattern. The Low Density Residential area is designed to accommodate single family homes on a minimum of 2 acres per home.

- Medium Density Residential - The Medium Density Residential area is the portion of Albany Township designated to accommodate twins, townhouses, apartments and mobile home parks, in addition to single family homes. Municipalities must provide areas for all types of housing, according to the Pennsylvania Municipalities
Planning Code (Act 247, as amended). Setting aside a small part of the Township for a variety of housing types also establishes the potential for more choice in Albany's future housing market. The designated Medium Density Residential area of Albany has good access to I-78 with slopes reasonably suited for higher density development.

Residential development of the types provided for in the Medium Density Residential area cannot be safely served by on-site septic systems. Densities of up to 5 homes per acre could be accommodated in the Medium Density Residential area provided public water and sewer service are in-place.

Residential Development Guidelines

The Residential Land Use categories described above provide land for a variety of housing types and densities. This Comprehensive Plan assumes demand for housing in Albany Township will predominantly be demand for single family housing over the next 10 to 20 years. This is consistent with new homes built in the Township over the 1980's and early 1990's. The following residential development guidelines are the Township should employ in reviewing future residential subdivision applications.

- **Location** - Encouraging future residential growth to occur adjacent to existing neighborhoods where possible will help protect these homes from non-conforming development and allow efficient provision of public services, such as recreation and school busing.

- **Neighborhood Identity** - Housing should be laid out so that a sense of identity is established between neighbors. Neighborhood identity can be strengthened by layouts of roads, local recreation areas, open space surrounding developments, and by attractive landscaped signs at the entrances of developments.

- **Reverse Frontage/Interior Roads** - Whenever possible, driveways of homes should enter local roads instead of directly entering onto roads carrying through-traffic. This results in residential lots along major roads with their back or side yards facing the major street.

- **Homes Backing Onto Major Roads** - If a home has its back yard facing a major road, landscaped screening should be provided along the major road. This will provide privacy to the residents and attractive views along the road, while reducing the number of incompatible and unattractive fences being constructed immediately along the road.

- **Subdividing Land Along Major Roads** - If a residential area adjoins a major road, the subdivision should be required to incorporate the land along that road into the street system of the subdivision. If a thin lot along a major road is created, the owner could later claim it is only suitable for commercial uses.

- **Mid-Rise Buildings** - This plan does not provide for "high-rise" or "mid-rise" buildings, which mainly include buildings of more than 4 stories. These higher buildings would be incompatible with the character of the Township and cause difficulties for the area's volunteer fire company.

- **Different Housing Types** - Most residents prefer only single family detached houses be built immediately along-
side existing single family detached houses. If, in the future, townhouses or apartments are to be built on adjacent land, they should be set back from the single family homes and separated by landscaping.

- **Housing Rehabilitation** - No areas were identified where housing rehabilitation assistance is necessary. However, the Township Supervisors and Planning Commission can help to ensure land is made available for a variety of affordable housing types by enacting appropriate zoning, and subdivision and land development controls. This Land Use and Housing Plan will serve as a guide to updating these municipal regulations.

**Business Areas**

This Plan provides three locations for selected business development. These locations reflect the Township’s desire to expand local job opportunities without significantly increasing the amount of land in the Township devoted to commercial and industrial uses.

- **Village Center** - The Village Center areas encompass the villages of Kempton and Stony Run. These two areas are the focus of retail, service, office and government-related activity in the Township. Small retail, service, office and government-related uses in Albany should continue to be directed to Village Center areas. Single family detached homes (on minimum 1 acre lots) and twin homes (on minimum ½ acre lots) should also be permitted in these areas. All uses should be subject to the steep slope lot size regulations proposed in the Low Density Residential area.

- **Commercial/Light Industrial** - The Commercial/Light Industrial areas are designed to accommodate light industrial uses and commercial uses inappropriate for the Village Center, such as manufacturing, warehouses, gas stations and auto repair. The three locations for Commercial/Light Industrial uses in Albany Township are all located near the village of Kempton. Minimum lot sizes of 1 to 2 acres are appropriate for the types of uses envisioned in this area. Any intense commercial uses should be required to be setback from homes and screened from homes with evergreen trees and plants.

- **Agriculture/Landfill** - The Agriculture/Landfill area is the location in Albany Township where a landfill or other type of solid waste facility would be located (with State and Board of Supervisors approval), in the event such a use is ever proposed. The area’s convenient access along Route 143 and its relative separation from developed residential areas make the Township’s most appropriate location for a landfill or other type of solid waste facility. Agriculture and single-family detached homes are also recommended for this planning area.

**AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION**

Agriculture is the predominant land use in Albany Township. Historically, farming and farming-related businesses have been the Township’s most important economic activities. The Township recognizes some change is inevitable. However, preserving agriculture, wherever practical, is one of the objectives underlying this Comprehensive Plan. The current size of Albany’s Agricultural Security District (8,219 acres) suggests that agricultural preservation is important to
Township residents. Recommendations on how to continue and enhance local farms preservation efforts include the following. These focus on both protecting farmland and maintaining a strong local agricultural industry.

- Ensure that all areas in the Township continue to be zoned to permit crop farming and almost all other types of agriculture.

- Continue to encourage property owners to voluntarily join Albany's Agricultural Security Area.

- Seek to limit any future public water and sewer lines to selected areas in the Township's Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential areas.

- Ensure Albany's Congressman, State Senator and State Representative are well aware of Township residents' views on legislative proposals that affect farming.

- Consider additional setback requirements for residential subdivisions that are constructed adjacent to active farms. This will help minimize conflicts between farms and adjacent residential areas.

- Continue to support farm service organizations including the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Soil Conservation Service, County Conservation District, Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H, Granges, Farmers Associations and other such organizations in Berks County.

- Permit farm-based businesses in selected areas where agriculture is allowed in the Township (provided these farm-based businesses are not large volume, heavy traffic generating uses).

**NATURAL FEATURES AND OPEN SPACE**

Albany Township has significant open space and environmentally sensitive land features. The Township's steep slopes, flood-prone areas, woodlands, geology, soil characteristics and plants and animals of special concern are analyzed in the Natural Features section of this Comprehensive Plan. Careful management and conservation of open space and natural features is an important goal of this Comprehensive Plan.

**Guidelines for Protecting Sensitive Natural Features**

Land varies greatly in the amount of development that it can naturally support. Some land, such as flood-prone and very steeply-sloped land, should remain completely in open space. Other lands are physically suitable for moderate or intense development.

Development in Albany Township should only be allowed in a manner that carefully respects the natural features of the land. Environmentally sensitive lands should be preserved in public or private open space to maintain environmental balances. The table on the following pages provides guidelines on how important natural features can be protected.

**Guidelines for Protecting Open Space**

Open spaces serve many essential functions:
• Retaining area for farms and woodlots,

• Maintaining the natural environmental processes and balances, including ensuring adequate groundwater and high water quality,

• Providing an important aesthetic relief from built-up areas,

• Preserving areas of scenic beauty,

• Preserving lands that are not naturally suited for development,

• Providing land for active and passive recreation, both presently and in the distant future, and

• Preserving habitats for birds, fish and wildlife.

Methods of Preserving Open Space

Open space can be preserved in public ownership, private ownership or by a semi-public organization, such as an association of adjacent homeowners. The difference is how much use is allowed by the general public.

• Conservation Easements - can be used to allow private owners to continue to own and use their land, while selling or donating the right to develop it. The land is then maintained by its owner, without public expense. This method is significantly less expensive than public purchase.

• Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development Regulations - can also be used to preserve open space, especially on lands that are clearly physically unsuitable for building. For example, a higher overall average density might be permitted if a developer preserves key areas of a tract (such as the steep slopes and creek valleys) in some appropriate form of open space.

The Township should consider using revised mandatory land dedication requirements in its Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (within the limitations of the State Planning Code) and optional cluster provisions in its zoning ordinance to preserve key tracts of open space.
# ALBANY TOWNSHIP
## GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTING IMPORTANT NATURAL FEATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Natural Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Potential Problems If Not Protected</th>
<th>Strategies for Protection</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Steep Slopes            | Slopes of 15% have 15 feet of vertical change for every 100 feet of horizontal distance. Slopes of 15% and above require special consideration. | - Difficulty of maintaining and snow-plowing steep roads.  
- Higher costs of buildings.  
- High rate of septic system failures.  
- Increased erosion and runoff.  
- Winter driving hazards from steep roads and driveways.  
- Disturbance of scenic areas.  
- Loss of trees.  | - Use special precautions during building.  
- Case-by case consideration of clustering as a way to develop the most suitable land, while keeping steep slopes in open space.  
- Keep natural vegetation intact.  
- Preserve areas of 25%+ slopes in open space.  
- Require larger lot sizes in steep areas containing 15% to 25% slopes. |
| Groundwater             | Groundwater is stored underground after entering through the soil or seeping from creeks. Both private wells and central water systems are dependent upon groundwater. | - Polluted groundwater, especially in sinkhole areas.  
- Dry wells.  
- Reduced crop yields and restrictions on water use.  | - Control the percentage of lots covered by buildings and paving, to allow water to be absorbed into the ground.  
- Make sure all septic systems are designed and operated properly.  
- Avoid polluted stormwater runoff.  
- Avoid high volume withdrawals of groundwater.  
- Protect quantity of groundwater. |
| Floodplains             | Areas that are prone to flooding. | - Increased flooding in other areas.  
- Threats to important wildlife and bird habitats.  | - Consider prohibiting all structures and paving within the "100-year floodway", the actual main flood channel (in accordance with DER regulations).  
- Seek to preserve natural vegetation immediately adjacent to creeks. |
**ALBANY TOWNSHIP**  
**GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTING IMPORTANT NATURAL FEATURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Natural Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Potential Problems If Not Protected</th>
<th>Strategies for Protection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Wooded Areas            | Areas with numerous mature trees. | • Loss of important bird and wildlife habitats.  
                          |                          | • Loss of hunting areas.  
                          |                          | • Loss of air purification.  
                          |                          | • Increased erosion and runoff.  
                          |                          | • Loss of scenic resources.  
                          |                          | • Noise and incompatible development may become more noticeable. | • Prevent the unnecessary cutting of trees during building.  
                          |                          |                          | • Encourage sound woodland management practices.  
                          |                          |                          | • Seek replanting of forest that must be disturbed. |
| Shallow Depth to Bedrock| Areas with shallow soils, with bedrock close to the surface. | • Septic system failure. | • Avoid building in these areas. |
| Waterways               | Major streams in Albany include Maiden Creek, Ontelaunee Creek, Kistler Creek and Pine Creek. | • Loss of potential public recreation areas.  
                          |                          | • Threats to important bird, fish and wildlife habitats. | • Prevent soil erosion to avoid sedimentation of creeks.  
                          |                          |                          | • Follow PA. Department of Environmental Resources standards concerning farm runoff to prevent polluting creeks with pesticides and farm animal wastes.  
                          |                          |                          | • Require buildings and paving to be setback from creek banks; preserve natural vegetation.  
                          |                          |                          | • Control the peak rates of stormwater runoff from development to avoid increased flooding. |
| High Water Table Soils  | Soils that have a shallow depth to the seasonally high water table. | • Failed on-lot septic systems.  
                          |                          | • Flooded basements.  
                          |                          | • Disturbance of natural drainage and groundwater recharge.  
                          |                          | • Poor foundation stability changes. | • Preserve all genuine wetlands (bogs, swamp and marshes, etc.) in open space.  
                          |                          |                          | • Place on-lot septic systems and buildings outside these areas.  
                          |                          |                          | • Waterproof basements.  
                          |                          |                          | • Carefully design all drainage systems. |
Public open spaces can serve as recreation areas. However, many open spaces that should be preserved, such as lands on steep areas, are not suitable for active recreation, especially if these lands are in small parcels. It may be difficult for the Township to provide even the minimal maintenance and oversight that may be needed.

Where practical, the Township should consider requiring "homeowner associations" to oversee and maintain certain proposed adjacent open spaces that are a) not adjacent to existing public recreation areas, b) not suitable for active recreation and c) would require only the very lowest amounts of maintenance. The adjacent homeowners would have the most interest in properly overseeing the land because they would be living beside it.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Albany's history and cultural background are evident throughout the Township. The community's National Historic Register sites and other features of local historic significance are described in the Historic and Cultural Resources section of this Comprehensive Plan. Conserving these and other structures, sites and landscapes that are visible reminders of Albany's heritage is an underlying goal of this Comprehensive Plan.

Preserving Historic Albany

Berks County Planning Commission recently completed an inventory of National Historic Register Sites in the County. These are properties that are formally certified as having national historic significance. Albany's historic value extends beyond these structures. The community's rural landscape and central villages (primarily Kempton and Stony Run) are pristine examples of a historic farm-to-town development pattern that is no longer prevalent. The land use, agricultural preservation and open space preservation recommendations contained elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan are aimed at conserving Albany's rural landscape, farm economy and scenic character.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Land use policies in Albany are based on the concept of preserving the area's residential, agricultural and open space characteristics. Within this context, the Township should support the areas' farm economy and the growth of local cottage industries. Cottage industries should be small, home-based businesses, a desirable form of economic development in the Township.

CIRCULATION

Albany's road network should permit safe, efficient movement of people and goods. This network should be accessible and convenient. Roads have various functions; some roads are designed to expedite through traffic, while others mainly provide access to local residential areas. Roads can be classified by function according to the following categories:

Arterials - Roads that provide a rapid connection between populated areas, such as between Kempton and Krumsville.
Collectors - Roads that collect traffic from local residential areas and funnel it onto Arterials.

Local - Roads that provide direct access to residential areas.

This functional classification of roads has important implications. Rights-of-way should be wider and front yard setbacks greater on roads that carry higher traffic volumes. High volume roads should have more lanes and higher speed limits than local secondary streets. Albany's roads should be classified as follows:

Arterials

Route 143

Collectors

Route 737
Hawk Mountain Road
Mountain Road
Stony Run Valley Road
Kistler Valley Road

Local

All other roads

The Draft Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision contains the following guidelines concerning design features and the functional classification of roads. These guidelines are generally applicable to Albany Township.

### Highway Functional Classifications and Recommended Design Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>General Provisions</th>
<th>Right-of-Way Width (ft.)</th>
<th>Cartway Width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressway</td>
<td>- 55+ MPH&lt;br&gt;- Limited Access&lt;br&gt;- No Parking&lt;br&gt;- Noise Barrier/Buffer (where required)</td>
<td>Minimum 120; however, may be wider based on local conditions and design</td>
<td>- Minimum four 12' wide travel lanes with 10' wide shoulders capable of supporting heavy vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>- 35-55 MPH&lt;br&gt;- Some access controls to and from adjacent development&lt;br&gt;- Encourage use of reverse and side street frontage and parallel access roads&lt;br&gt;- No Parking</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>48-52 feet&lt;br&gt;- 12' wide travel lanes with shoulders in rural area and curbing in urban areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector</td>
<td>- 25-35 MPH&lt;br&gt;- Some access controls to and from adjacent development&lt;br&gt;- Parking permitted on one or both sides</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34-40 feet&lt;br&gt;- 12' wide travel lanes with stabilized shoulders or curbing&lt;br&gt;- 8' wide lanes provided for parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>- 15-35 MPH&lt;br&gt;- No access control to and from adjacent development&lt;br&gt;- Parking permitted on one or both sides</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28-34 feet&lt;br&gt;- with stabilized shoulders or curbing&lt;br&gt;- Cartway widths can be reduced based on intercity traffic patterns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Berks County Planning Commission
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Local road maintenance and stormwater management are the two primary community facilities and services provided by Albany Township. Albany has no public sewer or water facilities and does not have its own police force. The Township does not administer the Kempton-Goodwill Volunteer Fire Company of Albany and Lynn Townships.

Stormwater Management

Albany should establish a prioritized program of improvements needed for Township-owned storm drainageways. This will allow local drainage problems to be addressed in a systematic way as financial resources are available. The following principles should guide the Township’s review of stormwater management plans submitted as part of new subdivision and land development plans.

- Minimize grading changes and removal of natural vegetation.
- Carefully control storm water runoff so that development does not cause increases in the peak rates of runoff. This is usually accomplished by detaining peak runoff in detention basins so that it can be released gradually.
- Minimize the amount of land covered by buildings and paving to allow rainwater to naturally absorb into the ground instead of running off.
- Avoid development of steeply sloped areas.
- Keep natural drainage channels in open space.
- Setback all buildings and paving from creeks and drainage channels, and maintain a natural buffer strip along creeks.
- Use careful erosion control measures to prevent soil from choking aquatic life with sediment.

Township Facilities

The Township currently holds public meetings at the Kempton Elementary School and moves to the Goodwill Firehouse when larger quarters are required. This is adequate at the Township’s present size. When Albany reaches sufficient size, it may be necessary to establish a municipal building that combines meeting space, offices and a maintenance garage. This facility would best be located in or around Kempton.

Police Service

Albany’s arrangements with the Pennsylvania State Police to provide police protection are adequate for the present and foreseeable future. Options for sharing police service responsibilities with neighboring municipalities should be investigated in before Albany ever decides to undertake police security on its own.

Water and Sewer Service

Albany’s current policy on water and sewer service is to rely on private systems. The Township currently does not support the extension of public water and sewage facilities to Albany.
Park and Recreation Areas

The Albany Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, which is published as a separate document, contains recommendations for enhancing recreation opportunities in the Township. The recommendations contained in the Albany Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan are adopted by reference as part of this Comprehensive Plan. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan map is included on the following page.

Energy Management

Albany Township recognizes the need to conserve energy and preserve non-renewable resources. The Township Planning Commission should encourage developers to utilize the following techniques:

• Site homes on an east-west axis to maximize solar access and minimize heating.
• Use landforms such as steep slopes to deflect winter winds.
• Orient unheated buildings to buffer heated buildings from winter winds.
• Use darker colors to absorb more radiant energy from the sun.
• Use overhangs for shade control.
• Favor deciduous trees over conifers to provide more shade in summer and more sun in winter. Use conifers instead in areas where winter winds should be buffered.

These techniques respect the two basic principles of energy conservation: proper orientation to the sun and protection from the extremes of summer and winter weather. Township officials can save energy by monitoring municipal operations. Use of heating, ventilating, lighting and air conditioning should be energy-efficient at all Township property. Fuel conservation practices should be observed when operating municipal vehicles.

Official Map

The Official Map, prepared in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended), is a technique for designating proposed locations for new streets, street widenings, intersection improvements, parks and other municipal uses. The Official Map gives the Township the power to reserve all such designated lands for one year after they are proposed for development. The Township should prepare an Official Map to facilitate future public improvements as necessary.

Act 537 Plan

An Act 537 Sewage Facility Plan is a document that shows proposed public sewer service areas. Act 537 Plans also evaluate local stream conditions and the suitability of an area to accommodate on-site septic systems. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) requires all municipalities to have Act 537 Plans so that the Department can properly evaluate requests to construct new sewage systems or discharge treated effluent into local streams. Albany adopted the Berks County Water and Sewer Plan as its Act 537 Plan. However, this Plan is dated and does not specifically focus on Albany. The Township should prepare its own Act 537 Plan promptly.
ALBANY TOWNSHIP
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Existing Proposed

LOCALLY SERVING RECREATION AREAS

OTHER RECREATION AREAS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREAS*

* Includes 100-year Floodplain, slopes over 15% and Woodlands.

** This Plan recommends that Albany Township acquire the existing Kempton Community Recreation Center.

The preparation of this map was financed in part through a SPAG grant from the PA Department of Community Affairs under the provisions of Act 7A approved August 4, 1991, as administered by the Bureau of Community Planning, Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.
CONTINUING THE PLANNING PROGRAM

Planning objectives and recommendations should be continually reviewed and updated, as necessary. As part of the continuing planning process, the Township should expand its relationships with Berks County and its neighboring municipalities. Ongoing planning should have a regional outlook, not just a local perspective.

ACTION PROGRAM

Albany’s Plan is valuable because it makes recommendations on land use, historic preservation, agricultural preservation and a variety of other topics. The Comprehensive Plan contains recommendations for guiding future development and for preserving the Township. But, it is not a legislative document. There are four basic tools to help implement this Plan: (1) the zoning ordinance, (2) the subdivision and land development ordinance, (3) fire and building codes, and (4) the capital improvement program.

Zoning

Albany Township has had zoning since 1972. The zoning ordinance is a legal tool to regulate the use of land. Its regulations apply to: (1) permitted use of land, (2) the height and bulk of structures, (3) percentage of a lot that may be occupied, (4) yard setbacks and (5) density of development.

The zoning ordinance has two parts -- (1) a zoning map which delineates zoning districts, and (2) text which sets forth the regulations applied in each district along with general information regarding administration of the ordinance.

Albany should revise its zoning ordinance to conform with changing conditions in the Township, recent changes in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and to reflect the policies in this Comprehensive Plan.

Subdivision and Land Development Regulations

Albany has a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance which includes regulations to control the layout of streets; planning of lots; and the provision for utilities. The objectives of the subdivision and land development ordinance are to:

• Coordinate street patterns.

• Assure adequate utilities are provided that will not pollute streams, wells and/or soils.

• Reduce traffic congestion.

• Provide good design standards as a guide to developers and to the Township’s Planning Commission, Township Supervisors and Township Engineer.
Albany should revise its Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to conform with recent amendments to Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, to be compatible with the revised zoning ordinance and to help carry out the objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.

**Capital Improvement Programming**

The Township should enhance its practice of undertaking improvements to streets, stormwater systems and other major physical facilities. These capital improvements, which involve the expenditure of funds over and above those needed for normal operations and maintenance, should be prioritized over a three to five year period in the form of a Capital Improvements Program which is recommended to the Township Board of Supervisors.

A capital improvements program has many benefits:

- It helps assure projects are based on ability to pay and on a schedule of priorities determined in advance.

- It helps assure capital improvements are viewed comprehensively.

- It promotes financial stability by scheduling projects at proper intervals.

- It facilitates proper allocation of community resources.

Albany should annually update its capital improvements program and annual capital budget.

**Implementation Schedule**

Albany will begin implementing the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan immediately. A Township recreation plan, official map, zoning ordinance update and subdivision ordinance update are underway as of 1993. These are high priorities. The Township Planning Commission is responsible for preparing a draft of these documents for Albany residents and the Albany Township Board of Supervisors to consider. The Albany Township Board of Supervisors is responsible for officially enacting these documents. Albany has already secured grants from Berks County and the PA Department of Community Affairs to assist the Township fund these planning efforts.

The proposed Act 537 Plan, and capital improvement program should be the Township’s next priorities. These should be initiated in 1994 after the recreation plan, official map, zoning ordinance and subdivision update and subdivision and land development ordinance update are completed. Approximately $25,000 will be required to retain a professional planning/engineering consultant to prepare an Act 537 Plan. The Township Planning Commission and Township Supervisors should be able to prepare its own capital improvement program with a minimum of professional assistance.

**Role of the Albany Township Planning Commission**

The Albany Township Planning Commission has the lead role in assuring that this Comprehensive Plan is followed and updated as needed. The Planning Commission should periodically review the plan and recommend any changes to reflect current conditions and priorities in the Township.
The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code also gives the Planning Commission other responsibilities. At the request of the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission may:

- Make recommendations to the governing body concerning the adoption or amendment of an Official Map.
- Prepare and present a Zoning Ordinance to the Township Board of Supervisors and make recommendations on proposed amendments to it.
- Prepare, recommend and administer the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- Prepare and present a building code and housing code to the Township Supervisors.
- Prepare and present an environmental study to the Township Supervisors.
- Submit a recommended capital improvements program to the Township Supervisors.
- Promote public interest in, and understanding of, the comprehensive plan and planning.
- Make recommendations to governmental, civic and private agencies and individuals as to the effectiveness of the proposals of such agencies and individuals.
- Hold public hearings and meetings.
- In the performance of its functions, enter upon any land to make examinations and land surveys with the consent of the owner.

Role of the Albany Township Board of Supervisors

The Albany Township Board of Supervisors also plays a vital role in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Supervisors have the final decision on any action that requires an ordinance or expenditure of funds. The Supervisors should maintain a relationship of trust and confidence with the Planning Commission. The Supervisors and the Planning Commission should continually keep one another informed of important planning related matters in the Township. The Township can fully realize the goals of this plan only by continuing to plan and continuing to enforce zoning regulations and other land use controls.