

**Agenda
Planning Commission
January 17, 2017**

- 1. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2. Minutes of November 15, 2016**
- 3. New Business**
- 4. Old Business**
 - A. Comprehensive Plan Update**
- 5. Adjournment**

Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2016

The monthly meeting of the New Britain Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Michael Stanislaw at 7:30 PM. Planning Commission members present were Dr. Michael Parke, Mr. Richard Moxey, Mr. Rick Eggleston, Mr. David Holewinski, Ms. Loren Frasco, Mr. Robert Binkley and Ms. Margaret Remmey. Also present were Mr. Mark Hintenlang, Mr. Sam Bryant and Mr. Matt Walters. Not present was Mr. Karl Dieterichs.

Minutes of October 18, 2016: Mr. Holewinski made a motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2016. The motion was seconded by Dr. Parke and was unanimously approved.

New Business:

Review of Kirk Land Development Application: Mr. Bryant displayed the plans on the projector. Mr. Hintenlang and the BCPC have reviewed the plans and both have a number of recommendations/comments. Mr. Bryant stated that based on the current plans this project will have to go before the Zoning Hearing Board. He also stated that on November 10, 2016 the Borough received a letter from Project Manager Douglas A. Waite of Gilmore and Associates stating that Mr. Kirk has waived the 90 day review period.

Resident Mr. Chris Clappier voiced his concerns about Mr. Kirk putting in additional driveways. Mr. Lorraine Moxey voiced her concerns about the proposed driveway going in on the other side of the barricade which would have trucks driving through the neighborhood on both Matthews Avenue and Aarons Avenue. She believes access should only be from Sand Road. Residents Ms. Judy Ebber and Mr. Tom Walker also voiced their concerns about large trucks driving through the neighborhood. Mr. Stanislaw stated the Planning Commission can only make recommendations and cannot dictate how someone runs their business. Mr. Clappier stated he is concerned about how this plan will work with a neighborhood being so close to the industrial area. He suggested some kind of buffer between the two. Mr. Binkley asked if Mr. Kirk will be required to hook up to public water. Mr. Hintenlang stated that with the new ordinance, yes he will. Mr. Holewinski stated this project has to go through Zoning Hearing before coming back to the Planning Commission.

Old Business:

Review of Sign Ordinance: Mr. Bryant stated reviewing the details of the sign ordinance was initiated when Council questioned sign size regulations for the American Heritage Federal Credit Union sign. Mr. Binkley stated there is now more attention to “dark sky” regarding externally lite signs. Mr. Hintenlang stated internally lit signs would shine more light into neighboring properties. Ms. Frasco stated her concerns that illuminated signs will drastically change the look of the Borough. Mr. Moxey suggested limiting the brightness of lite signs. Mr. Binkley suggested reviewing other municipalities’ sign ordinances. After a lengthy discussion Mr. Bryant stated he will take these suggestions to the solicitor to come up with a revised ordinance.

Comprehensive Plan Update: Mr. Stanislaw stated that with the help of the BCPC the Comprehensive Plan review began in 2014. This review was put on hold when the Borough started working on the Main Street Plan. Mr. Walters stated that per MPC regulations the Comprehensive Plan must be updated every 10 years, so the updated plan must be completed by September 2017.

Mr. Stanislaw stated that originally there was a list of 12 goals for the Comprehensive Plan and it was determined that most of these goals have been met in the update. Some of those goals were: to protect and enhance the natural look of the Borough, to create harmony between industrial and residential properties, to create a pedestrian oriented Butler Avenue, to create a main street streetscape, to support industrial development, to continue to preserve historic resources, to create open space for the enjoyment of Borough residents, to provide a safe water supply and stormwater management, to maintain safe and efficient traffic flow and to work with adjacent municipalities in design and development.

Mr. Walters stated that he and Ms. Lynn Bush will include highlights from the Main Street Plan and make reference to it, but will not include the entire plan in the updated Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Walters also stated that he will have a few of the revised chapters ready for next month's Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Moxey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Holewinski and the meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie Gamble

Introduction

Process • New Britain Borough's first comprehensive plan was prepared in 1969 and guided the Borough's planning and zoning decisions for nearly 40 years until it was updated in 2007. During that time period, 1969 through 2007, significant changes had occurred in the central Bucks County area. Since the 2007 update the both the internal and external circumstances of the Borough have changed and will continue to have an impact including the opening of the US 202 Parkway in 2012, the expansion of programs and granting of university status for Delaware Valley University, and a borough focus on revitalization efforts. In late 2016, the Borough set out to update its comprehensive plan to improve the resident quality of life and provide policies to address the future development of the borough. The plan update also brings together other borough plans and studies such as the New Britain Borough Main Street Study (2016), Tri-Municipal Master Trail and Greenway Plan (2010), Butler Avenue Revitalization Strategies (2009), and New Britain Community Bike and Hike Master Plan (2009).

Guidelines for Planning Established by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grants the power to municipalities to prepare comprehensive plans through its Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). With this power comes the responsibility of complying with the Code's provisions for plan content and with other guidelines for community development that have been established by other laws and court decisions. Each municipality must protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents. The comprehensive plan can provide a foundation for a municipality's ordinances that provide this use of power.

Role of the Comprehensive Plan • Although New Britain Borough has little vacant land for new development, the comprehensive plan is an important guide for several reasons:

- It can be used to help local officials make decisions about changes in land use patterns;
- It guides and encourages redevelopment of underutilized areas.
- It serves as a basis for evaluating and revising, where needed, the local ordinances which control land use and development;
- It can be used as a mechanism for identifying problems in the community which may require attention from the local government;
- It provides long-term direction for short-term actions and advocates a vision for the future.

How the Plan is Organized • The plan is divided into chapters, each addressing one or more of the required plan elements of Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, which governs the preparation of municipal comprehensive plans. Plan elements include Housing and Residential Areas, Natural Features, Nonresidential Development and Economic Activity, Historic Preservation, Parks and Recreation, Community Services and Facilities, Circulation, Compatibility with Surrounding Communities, and Implementation. Appropriate goal statements will be restated in the discussion of each plan element to re-emphasize the overall vision of the comprehensive plan update.

Several topics will require special emphasis. Among them:

- Butler Avenue Corridor and Implementation of the Butler Avenue Main Street Plan
- Economic Strength of Borough Businesses
- Protecting Quality of Life
- Enhancing and Assuring Fiscal Strength of Borough
- Safety of Water Supply
- Capacity of Wastewater Disposal
- Protection of Historic Buildings and Areas
- Develop long-term vision and plan for the nonresidential areas along Bristol Road

Each of these topics will be discussed in further detail within the appropriate plan element.

Recommendations

The New Britain Borough Comprehensive Plan provides a direction for the borough for the next ten years. This direction can be summarized into a list of recommendations and policies.

Goal 1. Preserve the residential neighborhoods of the borough and accommodate a mix of housing types.

- Continue to provide adequate services to stable residential areas (e.g., police and protective services) and to adequately maintain public facilities serving these areas (e.g., roads and sidewalks).
- Avoid zoning changes which would allow for disruptive nonresidential intrusions into residential neighborhoods or that would undermine the protection of the historic core of the Borough.
- Encourage use of the Mixed Use Overlay District in the University Village Area.
- Examine the goals for the Historic Village section of Butler Avenue, as found in the Butler Avenue Main Street Study, and determine what ordinance changes are needed to implement the plan.

Goal 2. Protect the natural features of the Borough.

- Preserve stream valleys for open space to protect floodplains, steep slopes, and woodlands. In particular the small area along the Neshaminy adjacent to the Nature Preserve should be protected from future development.
- Require protection of woodlands through woodland protection standards in the zoning ordinance and tree protection requirements in the subdivision and land development ordinance; consider different standards for areas zoned for nonresidential development.
- Require the protection of wetland areas.
- Restrict development of steep slopes through zoning regulations to avoid erosion and stormwater problems and to preserve natural topography.
- Restrict development in floodplain areas through zoning regulations.
- Consider changes to the lighting provisions of the zoning ordinance to promote “dark-sky” principles.
- Encourage pre-application meetings between applicants and borough officials to get an understanding desired outcomes before full-scale engineering takes place. Require the submission of a site analysis to get an understanding of site conditions.

Goal 3. Work toward implementation of the Butler Avenue Main Street Study. Support and encourage the improvement of existing commercial areas and industrial areas and encourage mixed use and transit-oriented development for underutilized or redeveloped sites. Encourage a pedestrian-friendly corridor along Butler Avenue in accordance with the Butler Avenue Plan.

- Make changes in the zoning and subdivision/land development ordinances to implement the Butler Avenue Study for the three study segments: University Village; Historic area; and Town Center area.
- Plan for shared access, coordinated lights, signage, landscaping, and other improvements along the Butler Avenue corridor.
- Restrict parking areas to the sides and the rears of buildings to help further reduce visual clutter and take advantage of the shorter building setbacks commonly found on lots along the Butler Avenue corridor.
- Reinforce a local identity and sense of place by creating gateways along Butler Avenue at the entrances to the borough.
- Wherever possible, bury the overhead power lines.
- Examine the uses permitted by the zoning ordinance and amend as needed to ensure that standards are up to date and provide the best guidance and protection for the borough; add new uses that have emerged since the zoning ordinances was prepared; ensure that the Municipalities Planning Code and zoning case law are accurately respected in zoning standards. Some uses that should be examined are:
 - Small cell tower facilities
 - Signs
 - Fueling stations
 - Residential dwelling types; recovery houses
 - Lodging – “Airbnb”
 - Breweries, wineries, distilleries

Goal 4. Support the existing businesses and industries and work toward minimizing the conflicts between the nonresidential areas and surrounding residential areas.

- Establish zoning controls for industrial areas with frontage on Butler Avenue to ensure that redevelopment occurs in a manner consistent with the vision for this road, by restricting vehicle-oriented commercial uses and by requiring streetscape elements such as sidewalks and street trees.
- Support the existing businesses and industries and recognize their value in contributions to jobs, tax base, and quality of life.

Goal 5. Preserve and enhance the borough's historic, cultural, and scenic resources.

- Consider the pros and cons of applying for historic district status under the authority of the Historic District Act (Act 167) through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and appointing a historical architecture review board to protect the integrity of local historic resources.
- Permit uses of historic buildings which would not be permitted in buildings without historic significance. Options for additional uses include the following: bed-and-breakfast or inn; offices; museum or nature center; or residential conversions to allow for apartments within the structure.
- Adopt design guidelines, which can be helpful in carrying out a vision of what a community should look like in the future, especially in areas of historic significance.

Goal 6. Provide for the enjoyment of open space and recreational opportunities for all residents.

- Participate in and support the cooperative development of the Tri-Municipal Master Trails and Doylestown Bike & Hike Plan. Apply for funding opportunities to implement the recommendations of the plan.
- Publicize and support use of the Wilma Quinlan Nature Preserve, Covered Bridge Park, and Orchard Park.

Goal 7. Promote the adequate provision and accessibility of community facilities and services in cooperation with the public, government agencies, and community service providers.

Goal 8. Develop a strategy to provide for safe water supply, adequate wastewater disposal, and sound stormwater management.

- Address wastewater disposal needs of residents and work with wastewater disposal authorities to ensure businesses will be able to tie-in to the existing sewerage system.
- Examine the public water system and determine if extensions are desirable, considering factors such as fire protection, water quality, and costs to residents.
- Continue to enforce the standards developed in the Neshaminy Creek Stormwater Management Plan aimed at providing control measures for post-construction stormwater runoff in accordance with the NPDES.

Goal 9. Work toward a development pattern compatible with those in surrounding communities and which respects the plans adopted by county.

- Continue to watch for new planning initiatives and land use regulations in adjacent municipalities and the county. Coordinate with appropriate agencies.

- Continue work with Doylestown Township on the development of Butler Avenue and the Delaware Valley University area.

Goal 10. Ensure a safe and efficient transportation network considering not only traffic flow but also the protection of residents and neighborhoods from the adverse effects of traffic. Always consider public transportation, pedestrians and bicyclists in transportation planning.

- Encourage the sharing of driveways and the use of side streets for access along Butler Avenue for traffic flow and safety.
- Cooperate with Chalfont Borough, New Britain Township, and PennDOT to extend Bristol Road to Ferry Road which will improve the circulation in the area.
- Provide sidewalks or pedestrian paths everywhere.
- Develop a multi-use path along the Butler Avenue corridor that would connect with Doylestown's multi-use path. Ensure the development of a bikeway or other trail linkage will be done in accordance with the recommendations of regional bike and hike programs.
- Require property owners to install sidewalks when a change of use or development takes place.

Goal 11. Consider the effect of land use and planning decisions on all aspects of borough life: impact on the business community, impact on residents, fiscal impacts, environmental impacts, traffic and safety, and overall quality of life.

Land Use

Regional Land Use

New Britain Borough is located within the Central Bucks Region¹ which contains both rural and suburbanized areas and is the transitional area between the Upper and Lower Bucks regions. The total land area for this region is almost 150,000 acres, equating to roughly 30 percent of the County's total area. This region is considered the most geographically diverse in the County due to development patterns ranging from urban (Boroughs), to suburban, to rural. It contains more land devoted to single-family residential, government and institutional, and park, recreation, and protected open space than either Upper or Lower Bucks County.

During the last 25 years, land use trends within Central Bucks are highlighted by a loss of agricultural and undeveloped lands that have resulted in increases in the categories of single-family residential, park, recreation and protected open space, and commercial uses.

Borough Land Use

New Britain Borough contains over 1.22 square miles (approximately 782 acres) of land. The table below provides a snapshot of land use acreages within the study area in 2016, and Map __ shows the 2016 parcel-specific land use for the study area.

Table __. 2016 Land Use Characteristics

Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage
Single-Family Residential	361.8	46.3
Multifamily Residential	12.7	1.6
Rural Residential	13.7	1.8
Industrial	43.4	5.6
Commercial	111.2	14.2
Government and Institutional	60.5	7.7
Park, Recreation, and Protected Open Space	60.6	7.8
Transportation and Utilities	89.6	11.5
Vacant	21.7	2.8
Approved Mixed Use Development	7.1	0.9
Total	782.3	100.0*

*Total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Almost half of the Borough is dedicated to single-family residential land use. Single-family residential land use contains single-family detached dwellings on lots less than 5 acres. Single-family residential uses are located on both sides of Butler Avenue in the central and eastern parts of the Borough. Multifamily land use comprises about 1.6 percent of the total Borough acreage. Rural residential land use is land use not in agricultural production but contains a single-family detached dwelling on a lot 5 acres or greater.

¹Central Bucks Region includes Buckingham, Doylestown, New Britain, Newtown, Northampton, Plumstead, Solebury, Upper Makefield, Upper Southampton, Warminster, Warrington, Warwick, and Wrightstown townships and Chalfont, Doylestown, Ivyland, New Britain, New Hope, and Newtown boroughs.

Rural residential land use comprises only 13.7 acres located on the north side of East Butler Avenue west of its intersection with Sandy Ridge Road. Industrial land use comprises 5.6 percent of the Borough and is located along Shady Retreat Road in the east part of the Borough and on both sides of the rail line in the southwest part of the Borough.

Commercial land use, which makes up 14.2 percent of the Borough's land use, is located along both sides of Butler Avenue in the western and eastern parts of the Borough.

Transportation and utilities land use has about 89.6 acres, government and institution has about 60.5 acres, and park and recreation land use has about 60.6 acres. Transportation and utilities land use are located throughout the Borough, the vast majority within right-of-ways.

Government and institutional land use generally consist of Delaware Valley University to the east, municipal buildings in the center, and Pine Run Elementary School to the west. Park and open space lands consists of Covered Bridge Park, Quinlan Nature Preserve and smaller open space and recreation areas associated with residential developments. Vacant land uses consist of several parcels in the southwest and northeast parts of the Borough. The Borough contains no agricultural land use.

Underutilized and Vacant Land

Development and redevelopment of several vacant and underutilized² parcels remains a distinct possibility in the coming years. Larger vacant and underutilized parcels are located in the Light Industrial zoning district in the southwest part of the Borough, although most of the land in this area has active uses. The remaining vacant land is located in residentially zoned areas spread throughout the central and eastern parts of the Borough. Industrially zoned land is not as likely to undergo development as residentially zoned land, due to the continued demand for new housing and the decline in the manufacturing sector of the economy.

However, changes in zoning from industrial to a residential district would encourage the development of larger vacant and underutilized parcels, if the sites are generally clean of contamination or other restrictions and the redevelopment of the property makes economic sense. Infill residential development will occur on vacant properties within residential zones and on larger residential properties that are subdivided into smaller residential lots. In addition, a few vacant parcels have resource restrictions that may limit their development potential. For example, two vacant lots between Cedar Drive and Vine Street on the north side of Butler Avenue contain a section of Cooks Run. These and properties with similar restrictions are not as likely to be developed.

² Partially vacant property or property which is not being used at full capacity.

Introduction

Process • New Britain Borough's first and only comprehensive plan was prepared in 1969 for the Borough and has guided local planning and zoning decisions for more than 30 years. With the significant changes that had occurred in the central Bucks County area during this period, the borough set out to update its comprehensive plan to improve the resident quality of life and provide policies to address the future development of the borough.

Guidelines for Planning Established by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania •

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grants the power to municipalities to prepare comprehensive plans through its Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). With this power comes the responsibility of complying with the Code's provisions for plan content and with other guidelines for community development that have been established by other laws and court decisions. Each municipality must protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents. The comprehensive plan can provide a foundation for a municipality's ordinances that provide this use of power.

Role of the Comprehensive Plan in a Developed Community • Although New Britain Borough has little vacant land for new development, the plan is an important guide for several reasons:

- It can be used to help local officials make decisions about changes in land use patterns;
- It serves as a basis for evaluating and revising, where needed, the local ordinances which control land use and development;
- It can be used as a mechanism for identifying problems in the community which may require attention from the local government;
- It provides long-term direction for short-term actions and advocates a vision for the future.

How the Plan is Organized • The plan is divided into chapters, each addressing one or more of the required plan elements of Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, which governs the preparation of municipal comprehensive plans. Plan elements include Housing and Residential Areas, Natural Features, Nonresidential Development and Economic Activity, Historic Preservation, Parks and Recreation, Community Services and Facilities, Circulation, Compatibility with Surrounding Communities, and Implementation. Appropriate goal statements will be restated in the discussion of each plan element to re-emphasize the overall vision of the comprehensive plan update.

Several topics will require special emphasis. Among them:

- Route 202 Commercial Corridor
- Water Supply and Sewerage Systems
- Provision of Public Services
- Protection of Historic Buildings and Areas

Each of these topics will be discussed in further detail within the appropriate plan element.

Vision for the Future of New Britain

The following goal statements make up the collective vision of how New Britain Borough should develop and function as a community. These goal statements articulate the ideals that this plan strives to attain. Each goal statement is repeated at the beginning of the appropriate plan element section.

- Goal 1.** Preserve the residential character of the borough and accommodate a variety of housing types.
- Goal 2.** Protect and enhance the natural features of the Borough.
- Goal 3.** Support and encourage the improvement of existing commercial areas; allow for growth of commercial uses only in areas where they complement existing commercial developments and do not detract from residential neighborhoods.
- Goal 4.** Encourage the creation of a pedestrian-friendly corridor along Route 202 rather than a collection of highway-oriented commercial uses.
- Goal 5.** Support the existing industrial development and work toward minimizing the conflicts between the industrial areas and surrounding residential areas. Support the development of activities that contribute to the tax base.
- Goal 6.** Preserve and enhance the borough's historic, cultural, and scenic resources.
- Goal 7.** Provide for the enjoyment of open space and recreational opportunities for all residents.
- Goal 8.** Promote the adequate provision and accessibility of community facilities and services in cooperation with the public, government agencies, and community service providers.
- Goal 9.** Develop a strategy to provide for safe water supply, adequate sewage disposal, and sound stormwater management.
- Goal 10.** Ensure a safe and efficient transportation network considering not only traffic flow but also the protection of residents and neighborhoods from the adverse effects of traffic. Provide adequate consideration to public transportation and pedestrians.
- Goal 11.** Work toward a development pattern compatible with those in surrounding communities and which respects the plans adopted by county.
- Goal 12.** Make the plan useful by including methods for implementation and by addressing specific issues of concern to local officials.

Community Background

Regional Setting

New Britain Borough began as a large village in New Britain Township. Incorporated in 1928, New Britain Borough stretches along Route 202 for about 2¾ miles between Chalfont Borough and Doylestown Borough. Its northern border extends to Covered Bridge Park on Keeley Avenue; its southern border roughly extends along Cooks Run to the west and the R5 commuter line to the east.

Route 202 is the major transportation route through the borough. Running east-west, Route 202 connects New Britain to areas east in Bucks County and areas west in Montgomery County. Bristol Road enters the borough from the south at its western border, terminating with Route 202. In the center of the borough, Tamenend Avenue cuts across 202. Tamenend becomes Almshouse Road as it leaves the borough to the south, briefly entering New Britain Township before moving into Doylestown Township. Adjacent to Tamenend on the north side of 202, Keeley Avenue connects New Britain Borough to Ferry Avenue in New Britain Township. The SEPTA R5 commuter rail line runs through the south part of the borough and connects Bucks and Montgomery county communities with the City of Philadelphia. Stations located along the R5 route in Bucks County include Doylestown Borough (the terminus of the line), Delaware Valley College, New Britain Township, and Chalfont Borough. Doylestown Township's station is located just south of the borough's border on Tamenend Avenue.

Population and Demographic Trends

New Britain Borough and its surrounding municipalities grew by about 4,200 housing units and 12,000 people between 1990 and 2000. Municipalities in the region undergoing the most growth include Warrington and Doylestown townships, with gains of 5,400 and 3,100 people, respectively.

The population of New Britain Borough increased by roughly 44 percent between 1990 and 2000, from 2,174 to 3,125 persons. But during this period there was only a 12 percent increase (102 units) in the number of housing units in the borough. This large population increase is due the counting of groups of residents in institutional settings. Residents of Delaware Valley College and Foundations Behavioral Health facilities are now counted as residents of New Britain Borough. In 1990 the Census counted no one in a group setting in New Britain Borough.

Table 1. Housing and Population, New Britain Borough and Nearby Communities

Municipality	Housing			Population		
	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	Change
New Britain Borough	828	930	102	2,174	3,125	951
New Britain Township	3,284	3,969	685	9,099	10,698	1,599
Chalfont Borough	1,144	1,404	260	3,069	3,900	831
Doylestown Township	4,857	6,200	1,343	14,510	17,619	3,109
Warrington Township	4,458	6,314	1,856	12,169	17,580	5,411
Total	14,571	18,817	4,246	41,021	52,922	11,901

Because of this change in where Delaware Valley College is counted, the borough's median age also dropped, from 35.8 years in 1990 to 27.6 years in 2000. Countywide, the median age increased from 34 years to 37 years in the past decade. Household size has been declining nationwide in recent years due to a number of factors: later family formation, declining birth rates, rising divorce rates, and more young people and older people living alone. New Britain's average household size fell from 2.76 persons per household in 1990 to 2.58 persons per household in 2000 (as shown in Table 2).

Since the 2000 Census, Delaware Valley College has constructed two residence halls. Foundations Behavioral Health is planning to construct additions that would add a few patient beds. The addition of the residence halls may or may not have an effect on the demographic profile of the borough because they are located on the border of New Britain Borough and Doylestown Township and residents could be counted in either municipality.

The construction of these facilities would only cause a small increase in service demands to borough. Foundations is proposing to increase its resident population by about 26 people (assuming full capacity). The new residence halls at Delaware Valley College have about 300 beds. The college provides its own campus security, but could still require local law enforcement to handle certain incidents. Fire protection would be provided by the Chalfont Fire Company and Doylestown Fire Company. Sewer and water service to the college is provided on-site.

New Britain Borough has 912 households. Of these households 670 of them are considered family households. Of the family households, 555 are married-couple families. The average family size in New Britain Borough is 3.01 persons. Under nonfamily households, the number of householders living alone increased from 129 in 1990 to 204 in 2000.

Table 2. Demographic Changes Since 1990

Characteristic	1990	2000
Total Population	2174	3125
Median Age (years)	35.8	27.6
Median Household Income	\$49,145	\$60,029
Households*	788	912
Family Households**	636	670
Married Couple Families	564	555
Nonfamily Households***	152	242
Householders Living Alone	129	204
Persons in Group Quarters	0	772
Average Household Size	2.76 persons	2.58 persons
<u>Average Family Size</u>	<u>3.08 persons</u>	<u>3.01 persons</u>

Source: U.S. Census

* A household is an occupied housing unit.

** A family household is a household with two or more individuals related by marriage, birth, or adoption.

***A nonfamily household is a household with a group of unrelated individuals or a person living alone.

Socio-economic data released from 2000 Census reveal that the residents of New Britain Borough are very similar to the residents of Bucks County. The median household income for New Britain is \$60,029, slightly higher than that of the entire county (\$59,727). About 91 percent of New Britain residents over age 25 have obtained a high school diploma and 35 percent a bachelor’s degree. While 89 percent of Bucks County residents have received a high school diploma, over 31 percent have received their bachelor’s degree. However, New Britain Borough has a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing (87.6 percent) than the county as a whole (77.4 percent).

Population Forecast

A population forecast—sometimes called a projection—is a numerical estimate of future conditions that is based on existing conditions and trends. Population forecasts are useful in helping a municipality plan for future needs such as park and recreation facilities, emergency services, and senior services. In 2002 the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission issued its population forecasts for the 5-county region it serves, including New Britain Borough. The DVRPC bases its forecasts on data from the 2000 U.S. Census. The population forecast for New Britain Borough is as follows:

Table 3. Population Forecast, New Britain Borough, 2005–2025

2000 Population	2005 Forecast	2010 Forecast	2015 Forecast	2020 Forecast	2025 Forecast
3,125	3,150	3,090	3,010	2,950	2,830

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

The population of the borough is projected to decline slightly over the last four forecast periods. Given the small amount of development potential of the borough and recent declining trend in average household size both across the county and in the borough, it is likely that DVRPC’s forecasts will hold true for the coming years, unless the Census counts the students in the new residence halls as residents of the borough. Thus, a significant expansion in population-based community services will not be needed—especially since Delaware Valley College has its own system of community services—unless sizable, unanticipated growth occurs.

New Britain Borough contains over 1.22 square miles of land. Land use can be described as the purpose for which land or buildings are used. Table 4 provides a snapshot of land use acreages within the borough in 2005 and Figure 1 shows 2005 parcel-by-parcel land use.¹

Table 4. 2005 Land Use Characteristics

Land Use	Acreage	Percentage*
Single-Family Residential	366.7	46.9%
Multifamily Residential	23.8	3.0%
Rural Residential	13.8	1.8%
Mining & Manufacturing	60.8	7.8%
Commercial	76.0	9.7%
Transportation & Utilities	76.4	9.8%
Government & Institutional	65.4	8.4%
Parks, Recreation, Open Space	57.9	7.4%
Vacant	41.2	5.3%
Total	782.0	100%

*Total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Almost half of the borough is dedicated to single-family residential land use. Single-family residential land use contains single-family detached dwellings on lots less than 5 acres. Single-family residential uses are located on both sides of Route 202 in the central and eastern parts of the borough. Multifamily land use comprises about 3 percent of the total borough acreage. Rural residential land use is land use not in agricultural production but contains a single-family detached dwelling on a lot 5 acres or greater.

Rural residential land use comprises only 13.8 acres located on the north side of 202 west of its intersection with Sandy Ridge Road. Mining and manufacturing land use comprises 7.8 percent of the borough and is located along Shady Retreat Road in the east part of the borough and on both sides of the rail line in the southwest part of the borough.

Commercial land use, which makes up 9.7 percent of the borough's land use, is located along both sides of Route 202 in the western and eastern parts of the borough.

Transportation and utilities land use has about 76.4 acres, government and institution has about 65.4 acres, and park and recreation land use has about 57.9 acres. Transportation and utilities land use are located throughout the borough, the vast majority within right-of-ways.

Government and institutional land use generally consist of Delaware Valley College to the east, municipal buildings and the Paul N. Detwiler School in the center, and Pine Run Elementary School to the west. Park and open space lands consists of Covered Bridge Park,

¹ For 2005 land use mapping and statistics, subdivision and land development proposals that had received a building permit at the time of plan production was considered constructed or subdivided and the parcel and its respective acreage was included in the appropriate land use category.

Groner property, and Quinlen Nature Preserve and smaller open space and recreation areas associated with residential developments. Vacant land uses consist of several parcels in the southwest and northeast parts of the borough. The borough contains no agricultural land use.

Underutilized and Vacant Land

Development and redevelopment of several vacant and underutilized² parcels remains a distinct possibility in the coming years. Larger vacant and underutilized parcels are located in the Light Industrial zoning district in the southwest part of the borough, although most of the land in this area has active uses. The remaining vacant land is located in residentially zoned areas spread throughout the central and eastern parts of the borough. Industrially zoned land is not as likely to undergo development as residentially zoned land, due to the continued demand for new housing and the decline in the manufacturing sector of the economy.

However, changes in zoning from industrial to a residential district would encourage the development of larger vacant and underutilized parcels, if the sites are generally clean of contamination or other restrictions and the redevelopment of the property makes economic sense. Infill residential development will occur on vacant properties within residential zones and on larger residential properties that are subdivided into smaller residential lots. In addition, a few vacant parcels have resource restrictions that may limit their development potential. For example, two vacant lots between Cedar Drive and Vine Street on the north side of Route 202 contain a section of Cooks Run. These and properties with similar restrictions are not as likely to be developed.

² Partially vacant property or property which is not being used at full capacity.

Housing and Residential Areas

Goal 1. Preserve the residential character of the borough and accommodate a variety of housing types.

Housing Supply

There were 828 houses in the borough in 1990, and 930 housing units in 2000. These figures indicate a steady increase in the number of dwelling units since 1960, although the rate of increase in each decade has been slowing.

Table 5. Housing Units in New Britain Borough, 1960–2000

Year	Housing Units	Increase
1960	329	-
1970	524	195
1980	711	187
1990	828	117
2000	930	102

Source: U.S. Census

The borough is not expected to grow substantially in the coming years, but some increase may be expected as the few remaining vacant lands are developed. Given the limited amount of vacant land available in residentially-zoned areas (about 14 acres), New Britain is not expected to exceed 1,000 housing units by the year 2010.

Housing Types

The mix of housing types in the Borough includes single-family detached housing, townhouses, apartments and mobile homes. New Britain Borough's housing stock consists mostly of single-family homes, which are located throughout the borough, with the exception of the western areas. The townhouse and apartment units include those in the Mews on Bristol Road and the Carousel Pointe development. Mobile homes are located in the Colonial Heritage mobile home development between Old Butler Pike and Shady Retreat Road at the eastern end of the Borough.

Table 6. Estimate of Housing Units by Type in New Britain Borough, 2000

Housing Type	Units	% of Total
Single-family detached	609	65.5
Twins or Duplexes	9	1.0
Mobile homes	53	5.7
Single-family attached (townhouses)	225	24.2
Multifamily (apartments)	34	3.7
Total	930	100.0

Source: US Census, 2000

Recommendations for Residential Areas

Residential areas in New Britain Borough can be divided into three general categories: Stable Residential Areas off Route 202, Stable Residential Areas along Route 202, and Mixed Areas along Route 202.

Stable Residential Areas off Route 202 • These are areas that have been developed as neighborhoods over the years and are zoned R-1 Residential. Except for the normal transition of such neighborhoods from young populations to older populations and back to younger families, there is no reason for the character of these areas to change.

The borough has three primary responsibilities with respect to these areas to ensure that they continue to be well-maintained, stable residential areas:

- Continue to provide adequate services to these neighborhoods (e.g., police and protective services) and to adequately maintain public facilities serving these areas (e.g., roads and sidewalks);
- Continue to enforce applicable zoning and building regulations;
- Avoid zoning changes which would allow for nonresidential intrusions into these neighborhoods.

Stable Residential Areas along Route 202 • Route 202 through New Britain Borough contains a mix of land uses, although there are several areas which are dominated by residential uses and stable residential neighborhoods with few intrusions from nonresidential uses. Two areas in particular have an established residential character: the area between the intersections of Heritage Lane with Route 202 and Lenape Drive with Route 202; and the eastern end of the north side of Route 202 closest to Doylestown Township.

Zoning districts in these areas include R-1 Residential and Village Historic districts. R-1 Residential district permits single-family detached dwellings, public recreation facilities, cemeteries, governmental offices, and temporary and accessory uses by right; bed and breakfasts, places of worship, schools, and utilities are permitted by special exception. Village Historic district permits single-family detached dwellings, public recreation facilities, cemeteries, places of worship, governmental offices, and temporary and accessory uses by right; accessory apartments, bed and breakfasts, funeral homes, libraries or museums, residential conversions, schools, and utilities are permitted by special exception. These districts permit uses that are compatible with the existing residential character of the area.

The following policies are recommended for this area:

- Retain the residential character of Route 202 in the identified areas above.
- Changes of zoning from residential to nonresidential uses shall be avoided, except where compatible uses might provide good buffers for residential areas.
- Continue to allow for home occupations and home offices in these areas.

Mixed Areas along Route 202 • There are a few areas where residences are located in the midst of or across the street from commercial activities and are affected by the nearby nonresidential uses due to traffic, commercial lighting, and signs. These areas are located in

the C-2 Commercial and C-3 Office Commercial zoning districts. Uses permitted by right in the C-2 district include banks, cemeteries, community centers, private recreational facilities, single-family dwellings, restaurants, hotels, nurseries, offices, churches, retail stores, and schools. The C-3 district is more limited, permitting only cemeteries, single-family dwellings, offices, churches, and public recreational facilities.

The following policies are recommended for this area:

- The borough should maintain the C-2 and C-3 districts allowing for the natural conversion of residential uses to nonresidential uses when economically feasible.
- Carefully planned landscaping and control of lighting and signage should be enforced to limit impacts to adjacent residential properties.

Natural Features

Goal 2. Protect and enhance the natural features of the Borough.

Background

Although the Borough is largely developed, with only a few vacant parcels of land, the limitations imposed by the natural environment on future development and on the expansion of existing structures should be respected. Communities have become increasingly aware of the importance of natural features in the land use planning process. Flooding, water pollution, soil erosion, and the loss of trees are a few of the consequences of permitting development without regard to the natural environment.

The primary elements of the natural landscape which require protection are:

- the floodplain and stream valleys of the Neshaminy Creek and Cooks Run
- wetlands
- wooded areas
- steep slopes

Floodplains and Stream Valleys

Floodplains serve primarily to accommodate floodwater during periods of heavy precipitation. They contribute to groundwater recharge, and because of the natural vegetation associated with them, to soil erosion and sedimentation reduction, wildlife protection, and healthy stream conditions.

The Borough participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, which is designed to reduce flood hazards through floodplain regulation. The floodplain areas mapped by the National Flood Insurance Program are located along the Neshaminy Creek and Cooks Run. The Borough's regulations prohibit grading, filling or development in floodplain areas. The borough does not have riparian buffer zone requirements which would prohibit development within a certain distance from a streamside.

Wetlands

State and federal authorities, under the federal Clean Water Act, have adopted regulations designed to protect wetlands because of their value to the protection of water quality, provision of animal habitats, and their ability to absorb floodwaters. Wetland areas are subject to federal regulations, as administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and state regulation by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Areas of hydric or wet soils are located throughout the borough. These soil types have become important indicators of wetlands areas.

Soil type is one of three indicators of wetlands, the other two being the presence of wetland vegetation and hydrology -- the saturated soil conditions and the drainage characteristics. The definition of wetlands used by the Corps of Engineers is:

Those areas that are inundated and saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, including swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.

The zoning ordinance prohibits the altering, regrading, developing, filling, piping, or diverting of wetlands except as authorized by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The borough does not have a wetland buffer requirement which would limit the amount of disturbance permitted within a certain distance from the edge of the wetland.

Woodlands

Large undisturbed wooded areas in the borough exist along the stream corridors (Neshaminy and Cooks Run); within the open space of the Carousel Pointe development; within the Nature Preserve along Matthews Road; on a vacant parcel adjacent to the Nature Preserve; and on the wooded portion of Covered Bridge Park.

Woodland areas play an important role in maintaining the balance and health of the environment by:

- reducing water runoff and soil erosion on slopes
- helping to prevent water pollution by minimizing the sedimentation of lakes and streams
- stabilizing stream banks
- contributing to a more pleasant climate by adjusting the amount of dust and humidity in the air, providing shade, and reducing strong winds
- serving as wildlife habitats and land use buffers
- adding interest, variety, and beauty to the landscape
- providing shade to keep the water temperature low in streams, thus helping to maintain the aquatic life in streams.

In a community like New Britain Borough where little vacant land exists for new development, the protection of individual trees or areas of trees becomes important because of their environmental, aesthetic, and recreational benefits. The zoning ordinance permits no more than 20 percent of any forest and its understory from being cleared or developed. Trees measuring 16 inches or more in diameter shall be preserved or shall be replaced where preservation is not feasible. For every tree which exceeds 16 inches in diameter that is removed, replacement trees with a minimum diameter of 3 inches shall be planted on the site so that the total diameter-inches of replacement trees is equal to one-half the total diameter inches of trees removed.

Tree Protection

The subdivision and land development ordinance requires the protection of woodlands and large specimens of trees from mechanical injury during construction. Tree protection areas are required to be delineated on the site plans, with the applicant required to provide a 48-inch high fence placed along the boundary of the tree protection area that shall be maintained until all work is completed. Grade changes, excavations, and vehicles and equipment are not permitted to intrude upon the tree protection area and trees shall not be used for roping, cables, signs, or fencing.

Topography

Insensitive development on steep slopes can cause excessive soil erosion and reduced water quality. For instance, removing natural vegetation and other groundcover through clearing and grading leaves soil exposed to the elements and susceptible to erosion by wind and stormwater. When the ground is dry, wind can pick up soil dust and deposit it elsewhere. Stormwater that runs directly over bare soils, picks them up, and moves them downhill toward waterways and waterbodies. Erosion is detrimental to both the site from which the soil is removed and the location where the sediment is deposited. Sites being eroded are depleted of valuable topsoil. Sites receiving runoff are subjected to sedimentation and an influx of nutrients. Sedimentation is the leading pollutant of Pennsylvania's waterways, reducing channel capacity, water clarity and quality, fish populations, and aesthetics. Development on steep slopes can also require greater borough expenditures for road maintenance and repair and destroy the natural topography and drainage patterns. For these reasons, the borough regulates the amount of development which can occur on steep slopes through its zoning ordinance.

The limited areas of steep slopes in New Britain Borough are located along the stream valleys which, because these areas are also affected by floodplain restrictions, are unlikely to be developed. The reasons for restricting disturbance on the few remaining sloped areas justify their continued protection under the zoning ordinance.

Recommendations for Resource Protection

Preserve stream valleys for open space • Because many of the areas which have natural restrictions on their use for development (steep slopes, floodplains, and woodlands) are concentrated in the two stream valleys, consideration should be given to preserving these areas as permanent open space. In particular the small area along the Neshaminy adjacent to the Nature Preserve should be protected from future development.

Floodplain Areas • Restrict development in floodplain areas through zoning regulations. Preserve the stream valleys from development as a means of protecting not only floodplains but also steep slopes and wooded areas.

Riparian Buffer Zone • A riparian buffer zone is the normally vegetated or wooded area occurring along a streamside, which is protected from disturbance by ordinance. Generally, the larger the buffer, the more it is able to protect the watercourse and species that depend on

it. Riparian buffer zones can help maintain water quality, reduce flooding impacts, and protect species habitat.

Woodlands • Continue to require protection of woodlands through woodland protection standards in the zoning ordinance and tree protection requirements in the subdivision and land development ordinance.

Wetlands • Continue to require the protection of wetland areas. Development plans are required to show soil types. Any areas which are designated as hydric soils require further investigation by a potential developer to show that no wetlands will be disturbed. Establish buffer zones around wetlands that allow only a minimum disturbance within the buffer zone. Wetland buffers help protect wetlands from the indirect impacts of grading, changes in hydrology, and loss of protective vegetation.

Steep Slopes • Restrict development of steep slopes through zoning regulations to avoid erosion and stormwater problems and to preserve natural topography.

Preapplication Meetings • Encourage preapplication meetings between applicants and borough officials to get an understanding of desired outcomes before full-scale engineering of a proposed development takes place. Pre-application meetings, such as those held by the borough planning commission, encourage good site planning by ensuring that all development occurs in a manner that respects the natural environment and the cultural features that are important to the site, the surrounding area, and the borough.

Site Analysis • Require the submission of a site analysis to get an understanding of site conditions. A site analysis would be required to provide a comprehensive analysis of conditions on the proposed development site and areas within 500 feet, showing topography, natural drainage patterns, vegetative cover, soils and geology, historic buildings or sites, viewsheds/scenic views, pastureland and cropland, areas identified by the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory, solar access and orientation, and other features on and of the site. Narrative would be provided to indicate ways in which the applicant would respect the existing valuable resources described in the site analysis.

Enforce Zoning Requirements • Continue to enforce the zoning ordinance requirements for the identification of all important natural features so that the Borough can be assured that these are being protected.

Nonresidential Development and Economic Activity

Commercial Areas

Goal 3. Support and encourage the improvement of existing commercial areas; allow for growth of commercial uses only in areas where they complement existing commercial developments and do not detract from residential neighborhoods.

The borough has two types of commercial development located within several commercial areas: a planned shopping center development and individual commercial establishments fronting on Route 202. The shopping center development is located at the Town Center complex; most of the individual commercial establishments are located along Route 202, primarily at the ends of the borough.

Shopping center development is confined to the SC Shopping Center zoning district (the Town Center complex). Commercial development elsewhere is either the result of commercial zoning that enabled such development or is the result of long-standing commercial uses put in place before the Borough enacted any planning or zoning legislation. This plan recommends that the commercial activities continue to be contained within the areas presently designated for commercial usage. The Land Use Map shows that large segments of Route 202 are dominated by residential uses, and this plan recommends that the pattern be continued.

The borough zoning ordinance allows for several different types of commercial districts. These are the C-1 Commercial District, C-2 Commercial District, C-3 Office Commercial District, HC Historic Commercial District, and SC Shopping Center District. Uses permitted by right in the C-1 district include banks, cemeteries, community centers, private recreational facilities, single-family dwellings, restaurants, nurseries, offices, churches, retail stores, and schools. The C-2 district is virtually the same, except hotels are permitted as well and the minimum lot size is 15,000 square feet instead of 40,000 square feet. The C-3 district is more limited, permitting only cemeteries, single-family dwellings, offices, churches, and public recreational facilities. The HC Historic Commercial District permits single-family dwellings, craft villages, libraries and museums, offices, public recreation facilities, and repair shops. The SC Shopping Center District is intended to provide for retail and service uses in a coordinated shopping center. Permitted uses include banks, beer distributors, private recreation, convenience stores, daycares, restaurants, offices, repair shops, retail stores, shopping centers, commercial schools, and state liquor stores.

Commercial Areas: Analysis and Recommendations

In developing recommendations for future commercial usage in the borough, the distribution of commercial activities along Route 202 was examined to determine whether or not an expansion of commercial areas was justified or desirable.

The Route 202 corridor can be divided into four segments (see Figure 2: Commercial Areas Analysis)

- Area 1 - Bristol Road to Lenape Road
- Area 2 - Lenape Road to Beulah Road
- Area 3 - Beulah Road to Shady Retreat
- Area 4 - Shady Retreat to end of Borough

Area 1 • Area 1 is already committed to nonresidential uses and little change is anticipated. The Town Center lies on the north side of Route 202 and is zoned SC Shopping Center. A few parcels on the north side are zoned C-2 Commercial, with the remainder zoned R-2 Residential and E-I Educational Institutional. On the opposite side of Route 202 from the Town Center, there is an abrupt transition between commercial and residential uses at the point opposite Lenape Drive's intersection with Route 202, where there is a residence next to a gas station. Zoning on the south side of Route 202 in Area 1 is C-1 Commercial.

No changes are recommended in the basic land use pattern along Route 202 in Area 1. The commercial nature of Area 1 has been set by the shopping center (Town Center) on one side and by the individual commercial uses on the other side. Between the shopping center and the end of the borough are several large institutional uses (a church and school), some commercial uses, and the Carousel Pointe condominium/apartment development. However, this plan recommends several specific changes to the zoning ordinance regarding the districts of Area 1. These are discussed below.

The C-1 Commercial zoning district permits Automotive Service Stations, which does not specifically exclude the sale of retail items. Convenience Store is only permitted in the SC Shopping Center district. The borough should consider providing standards for the inclusion or exclusion of retail sales with Automotive Service Stations. Should the borough include retail sales with this use, a limit on the amount of space devoted to retail sales should be included.

Retail Trade and Services, which is permitted in the C-1 and C-2 Commercial districts, the SC Shopping Center district, and the LI Light Industrial district, permit up to 10,000 square feet of floor area. Retail uses, such as pharmacies, could locate in these districts under this use. Chain drug stores can dominate key locations in smaller communities, adding traffic and diminishing the aesthetics of the corridor. One way of controlling these types of uses is to provide additional bulk requirements, such as maximum building size. The average size of buildings in the C-1 district in this area is around 2,700 square feet. The borough may consider a standard somewhat larger than this amount to ensure that new buildings are of a size similar to the existing buildings in this area.

The borough should consider reducing the front yard setback requirements of the C-1 and C-2 districts to more closely match the existing building locations. Buildings in the C-1 district are located an average of 37 feet from the road right of way and buildings in the C-2 district are located an average of 21 feet from the road right of way. The C-1 district has a front yard setback requirement of 50 feet and the C-2 district has a setback requirement of 35 feet. Reduced setbacks will provide a more consistent look for commercial uses on the corridor and create a sense of enclosure. The buildings and street trees are the "walls" for the "room"

of Route 202. If a building is located significantly further back from the road, it creates a hole in the wall of the room and the area loses its sense of enclosure and composition.

The borough should also establish drive-thru requirements for uses other than banks and eating places. For example, pharmacies often incorporate drive-thrus in new buildings to accommodate the convenience of their customers.

Some of the existing commercial uses in Area 1—including some of those which were put in place without oversight from borough planning and zoning policies—could be upgraded in order to make them more compatible with nearby residences and to improve their appearance. This becomes the responsibility of individual landowners. The borough's only leverage comes when an application is made for a change in use or an expansion of a use. For these reasons, the borough should:

1. Require that all applications for change in use or expansion of uses go through the procedures to obtain land development and zoning approval so that the borough can review what is proposed and have a record of what is proposed;
2. Require that all necessary improvements, such as buffering, landscaping, etc. be provided as a condition of the granting of approval for a change in use.

Area 2 • Area 2 is primarily residential, with only a few offices located within this area. This area also contains several historic buildings which should be encouraged to be preserved.

The borough wishes to preserve the residential character of Area 2. Although there are a few office establishments within this area, the overwhelming character of the area is residential, and it is the policy of this plan to protect that.

The major recommendation for Area 2 is the preservation of the historic area at the intersection of Tamenend Avenue and Route 202 encompassing the church and small concentration of the oldest buildings in the Borough. The borough may also consider the development of design guidelines for these areas, which can help carry out a vision of what the area can look like in the future and help protect the historic context of existing buildings. (See Historic Preservation, Design Guidelines).

Area 3 • Area 3 has commercial uses on the south side of 202 (zoned C-2 Commercial) but is primarily residential on the opposite side (zoned C-3 Office Commercial). The C-3 zoning designation makes sense because the permitted uses would be low intensity uses (such as professional offices, antique shops, etc.) and low traffic generators, and Cooks Run flows behind these five lots, separating them from the residences on Cedar Lane.

The character of Area 3 has been determined by the commercial uses along Route 202 between Beulah Road and Shady Retreat Road, primarily on the south side of Route 202. These establishments, most of which are located in separate freestanding structures, include a mix of uses with no cohesiveness as a commercial area. Shoppers generally have a single destination within this area and do not visit several shops in a single trip. Behind these commercial activities is the concrete plant.

The character of this commercial area could be further enhanced and distinguished through new zoning requirements or design guidelines. (See Historic Preservation, Design Guidelines). The five lots on the north side of Route 202 are older buildings that have the potential to be converted to offices. The borough may also want to consider providing for more uses in this district (e.g., small commercial retail) to further encourage the reuse of these buildings. The buildings on these lots are located an average of about 16 feet from the road right of way, which is less than the required 35-foot setback of the district. The borough should consider adding other standards to the district, such as maximum building size, reduced setbacks, and rear parking requirements.

The plan recommends the following for Area 3:

1. The commercial designation for this area should be limited to specific types of commercial activities. Uses such as service stations, auto repair and car washes, pharmacies, and drive-in eating places should not be permitted in this area;
2. Provisions should be made for apartments in conjunction with commercial and office uses so that additional living quarters can become part of this area;
3. Explore the possibility of providing for new uses in the C-3 Commercial District to encourage the reuse of existing residential buildings. Add other zoning standards, such as maximum building size and rear parking requirements. Reduce the front yard setback requirements of the district.

Area 4 • Route 202 between Shady Retreat Road and the end of the Borough; this stretch of Route 202 is a mix of commercial and residential uses, with some offices. There are some problems which have been identified with this area:

- Inadequate parking for some uses
- No opportunities for pedestrian circulation
- A concern about aesthetics
- A general desire to upgrade some of the commercial uses
- The area does not now function as a cohesive area; people do not stop and patronize several places in one trip.

The area is a mix of R-1 Residential, LI Light Industrial, C-2 Commercial, and C-3 Office Commercial zoning. Delaware Valley College is zoned College/University. Most of the commercial uses are highway-oriented commercial uses. There is potential in the area for commercial uses due to the proximity of the college and its highway location. The old Lower State Road provides rear access to the properties on the south side, although the road area is privately owned. There is adequate space behind the properties on the south side of Route 202 to provide off-street parking, as needed for future expansion.

The area between old Lower State Road and the railroad tracks is owned by the college and is zoned for commercial use by Doylestown Township. There is an intermittent stream here as well as floodplain soils which limit its development potential. The area closest to Shady Retreat Road could potentially be used, but the soils farther from the road are wet.

The following policies are recommended for Area 4:

1. The types of commercial uses should be limited in this area by continuing the restricted commercial zoning designation. More intense commercial uses, such as service stations, car washes, pharmacies, convenience stores, and drive-in restaurants, should be prohibited in this area. The existing uses can remain, but new uses which would have a detrimental effect on the residences should not be permitted.
2. Where owners plan to expand a use or to change a use, the borough should require that the required buffering and landscaping be provided as a condition of granting approval.
3. Where changes or expansion are proposed, the borough should require that parking be located to the rear or side to improve the appearance of Route 202.
4. The zoning ordinance should permit apartments as part of individual commercial structures (e.g., a new use, Dwelling in Combination with a Business).
5. Tax parcel 25-9-78, which holds a small motel, is split-zoned between R-1 Residential and C-2 Commercial. The borough should rezone the R-1 portion of the parcel to C-2 to eliminate this split zoning.

Corridor Planning and Development

Goal 4. Encourage the creation of a pedestrian-friendly corridor along Route 202 rather than a collection of highway-oriented commercial uses.

The relocation of Route 202 traffic onto the proposed US 202 Parkway will provide an opportunity for the borough commercial area to develop as a unified corridor. In its current state there is little sense of place along the Route 202 corridor. The current function of the corridor is simply to move traffic efficiently and provide access to adjacent parcels. With proper design they can be unifying elements that can make a powerful visual statement and bring the two sides of the streets together as a boulevard. The appearance of the corridor can be improved by landscaping, access improvements, and coordinated signage. Trees can frame the corridor and link the two sides together. Access improvements to coordinate driveway access points would enhance safety. Coordinated signage could improve aesthetics and lessen confusion for passing motorists.

Traditional strip type development is found along several portions of Route 202. These areas are characterized by the following:

- numerous freestanding signs
- few pedestrian improvements
- above-ground utilities and lighting
- large areas of unscreened parking
- numerous poorly delineated, poorly defined, and irregularly spaced curb cuts

The result is an uncoordinated and unplanned provision of improvements both public and private. Route 202 presents both visual and functional problems. Visually, it lacks a sense of organizational structure that reflects on the image of the community. It is difficult to tell you've entered a new municipality. The uncoordinated signage is unappealing, with signs competing with one another for attention. There are no markers to indicate that New Britain is a place that deserves the attention and respect of drivers moving along Route 202.

Functionally, these corridors are hazardous for drivers. They contain poorly marked driveways, inadequate turning lanes, and poorly designed on-site circulation. There is also little in the way of landscaping to buffer parking lots from adjacent uses and poor circulation signage. Corridors that are poorly maintained and designed leave visitors and residents with the impression that the community does not value its appearance. The solution involves planning for shared access, coordinated lights, signage, landscaping, and other improvements. The borough should also consider limiting parking areas to the sides and the rears of buildings to help further reduce visual clutter and take advantage of the shorter building setbacks commonly found on lots along the corridor. To provide flexibility in the application of such a requirement, these provisions should be placed in the subdivision and land development ordinance or be applied in the zoning ordinance at the discretion of Council.

Gateways

A number of communities in Bucks County, such as New Britain and Northampton townships, have built gateway structures along the road at the entries to their communities. They involve signage, plantings, and in one case, a fountain and seating. These features provide a sense of entry and transition from one area to another. They reinforce a local identity and sense of place. For instance, a sign with landscaping and trees may be constructed along Route 202 at the entrances to the borough. This would provide drivers with the sense that they are entering a real community and should understand and appreciate the place they are passing through or visiting.

Industrial Development

Goal 5. Support the existing industrial development and work toward minimizing the conflicts between the industrial areas and surrounding residential areas. Industrial areas along Butler Avenue should be compatible with the vision for Butler Avenue that has been established, by establishing a "Main Street" streetscape and prohibiting auto-oriented commercial development.

The Borough has several areas devoted to industrial development. Business and industrial establishments are located along the SEPTA rail line, with access provided by South Sand Road, Tamanend Avenue, and West Matthews Avenue. Another industrial site is located at Butler Avenue and Shady Retreat Road. In most parts of the borough these industries function successfully and add to the tax base and the employment opportunities. About 61 acres of land are devoted to industrial use.

Three issues have been identified in association with industrial development that will need to

be addressed in the coming years. First, there is a conflict between the industrial activities on West Matthews Avenue and the residences in that area. This conflict exists despite a sizable vacant area lying between the industries and the nearest residence. Any future expansion, change in use, or alteration for industries should be permitted only where accompanied by the installation of planted buffer yards, as required by the zoning ordinance.

Second, the vacant industrially zoned property at the corner of South Sand and West Matthews avenues, adjacent to the Nature Preserve, should be developed in a manner which preserves the stream valley at the rear of the property. The Borough ordinance requires protection of natural features: trees, slopes, and floodplains in this area.

Third, the industrial complex at Shady Retreat Road and Butler Avenue occupies a large area and is one of the borough's oldest businesses. This property has substantial frontage along Butler Avenue. Changes to this site, if they occur in the future, should be guided by the Borough goal of establishing a "Main Street" character to Butler Avenue. The components of this include: establishing sidewalks and street trees; prohibiting highway-oriented, vehicle-dependent uses; and avoiding strip commercial development or shopping centers.

Historic Preservation

Goal 6. Encourage preservation of historic structures and areas.

Historic Structures in the Borough

The older structures in the borough are located along Butler Road (Route 202), near the intersection of Almshouse Road and Route 202 (where the original village was located), areas along Matthews and Aarons avenues, and along Iron Hill Road. A survey of properties which are more than 50 years old was completed in 1989 by the Bucks County Conservancy (now Heritage Conservancy). The oldest property identified is a farmhouse from 1750, which is located on Butler Avenue, across from Lamp Post Road. Many of the buildings deemed to have historic interest date from the mid to late 1800s. There are a large number of buildings from the early 1900s—particularly along Route 202 between Shady Retreat Road and Iron Hill Road—that have been converted to other uses and have limited historic value to the borough.

Protection of Historic Areas and Buildings

The protection of historic areas and buildings has been approached in two ways in Pennsylvania: the formation of historic districts which are certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and within which the local government has some control over external building changes; and the preservation of individual historic buildings or landmarks, such as old mills, houses, farms, or barns, through special zoning provisions.

The formation of an historic district is best used where there is a core of older buildings which are more or less intact. This approach is based in law on the Pennsylvania Act 167, the Historic Districts Law, which enables municipalities to set up historic and architectural review boards. A local historic district ordinance designates an area containing historic structures and protects by limiting the type of alterations that may be made to existing buildings, reviewing proposed demolitions, and ensuring compatible design of new construction.

Historic districts created under the authority of the enabling legislation, Act 167, are not zoning districts; the review process is a procedure separate from zoning concerns. All areas proposed for a historic district must be certified as having historic character by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Act 167 also requires the appointment of a historical architecture review board (HARB), which reviews and advises the governing body about any alterations within the district. The governing body then decides whether to approve or deny the proposal.

With a survey of local historic resources already completed, the process of applying for historic district certification is essentially underway. The next steps would involve applying for historic district status through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and appointing a historical architecture review board. A historic district would allow much greater control over the design choices of individuals wishing to modify their buildings or

construct new buildings. Some residents, however, may feel that a historic district gives too much control over the decisions of property owners. The borough must also consider whether it would be able to undertake the required administration of the proposed district.

Historic preservation overlay zoning can allow for additional uses within historic buildings in order to encourage the continued use rather than demolition. The approach is based upon the language in the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) which lists as one of the purposes of zoning the “regulation of places having unique historical or patriotic interest or value.” Under this approach, an historic zoning district is created to which special provisions apply. Commonly, this approach allows for uses of historic buildings which would not be permitted in buildings without historic significance. Options for additional uses include the following: bed-and-breakfast or inn; offices; museum or nature center; or residential conversions to allow for apartments within the structure.

Historic preservation overlay ordinances can also require local historic commissions to review proposed demolitions and alterations to historic structures, require the preparation of impact statements for proposed subdivisions and land developments, and require the placement of buffering adjacent to historic properties. However, the extent to which zoning regulations may be used to preserve historic resources is limited. Historic buildings derive their character not only from the setback and bulk regulations that zoning can control but also from the materials used to construct them and the design and pattern of their façade. The MPC does not authorize the regulation of the design of development through zoning.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines can be helpful in carrying out a vision of what a community should look like in the future, especially in areas of historic significance. They describe and illustrate preferred design approaches to builders and developers to give them a better sense of what the community is looking for. In Pennsylvania design guidelines must be voluntary; municipalities cannot mandate the design of a building.

A design guideline will usually consist of a one- or two-sentence statement that describes a preferential treatment of a specific aspect of the design of a building or site. For instance, a design guideline might specifically address entryways: “Solid or residential-type doors with small areas of glass should be avoided. Openings containing double entry doors should be retained.” Another might address street character: “Entrances, porches, balconies, decks, and seating should be located along the street edge to promote pedestrian use of the street edge.” Such guidelines, especially when illustrated, can be helpful in maintaining the character of the community. Design guidelines are also useful when coordinated with the requirements of a historic district. Residents easily recognize what is encouraged and what is discouraged when making design choices, avoiding conflict with the historical architecture review board.

One community concerned with the design of infill development, reuse, and rehabilitations is Doylestown Borough. The borough has developed a set of design guidelines to guide builders and homeowners toward more compatible design decisions. But New Britain Borough must take care in forming their design guidelines. Design guidelines cannot be merely copied from other communities that have different locations, climates, growth pressures, histories, and architectural characters.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Goal 7. Protect and enhance the open space in the Borough

Background

The borough has two areas of public open space under Borough control and other public and quasi-public areas which are available for use by Borough residents. Table 6 lists the areas and facilities available to the borough, including both those in the borough and those in surrounding areas which are available to borough residents.

Table 7. Parks and Open Space in New Britain Borough

Facility	Acreage	Description
Carousel Point Open Space	17.0 acres	Passive recreation: owned by Carousel Point Homeowners' Association and available for use by Carousel Point residents.
Covered Bridge Park	14.0 acres	Active recreation: facilities include playground equipment and picnic areas.
Delaware Valley College		College: associated facilities for outdoor basketball; football field; passive recreation areas. (Semi-public).
Groner Property	4.0 acres	Passive open space.
Quinlan Nature Preserve	14.8 acres	Passive recreation: trails and nature study; access to creek.
Pine Run Elementary School	17.5 acres	School: associated facilities for recreation include baseball and basketball.
Unami Trail and New Britain Mews	4.5 acres	Active recreation: informal play area owned by the New Britain Mews Association and for use by residents.

New Britain Borough Open Space Plan

In 2000 New Britain Borough developed an open space plan to qualify for Bucks County's Municipal Open Space Program funding. This plan's process consisted of a land use and demographic profile, an inventory of vulnerable and natural areas, an inventory of existing open space resources, and a statement of open space goals. The plan concluded with a chapter on the plan's findings, recommendations, and action steps, several of which form the recommendations at the end of this chapter.

The borough has indicated its intent to purchase an easement on the Covered Bridge Park through the Bucks County Municipal Open Space Program to ensure that it remains as open space in perpetuity.

Tri-Municipal Master Trails Plan

The Tri-Municipal Master Trails Plan is a cooperative effort among the communities of New Britain Borough, New Britain Township, and Chalfont Borough. The three municipalities have entered into a formal intergovernmental agreement to plan a linked system of trails. A committee will be formed composed of representatives of the three municipalities, local schools, and the Lenape Valley Recreation Council. Once the plan is completed, it will be adopted as part of each municipality's comprehensive and open space plans. The completion of this plan will help secure funding for the completion of proposed trail links and improvements.

A map showing linkages through the three-municipality region has been developed. Local proposed linkages include Butler Avenue (202), a linkage along the Neshaminy Creek at the Wilma Quinlan Nature Preserve, connecting west to Lenape Landing and Unami Middle School, and a linkage along the south side of Pine Run, connecting Covered Bridge Park to Forrest Park to the west and Iron Hill Road to the east. Proposed linkages are also shown along Sandy Ridge Road and Iron Hill Road where they connect to Butler Avenue and along Shady Retreat Road. No specific recommendations have been developed to determine the trails' width and form (e.g., bikepath, bikeway, or sidewalk). The Circulation and Transportation section further identifies areas in the borough that are in need of sidewalks. Some of these identified areas overlap with the linkages recommended above.

Recommendations for Park, Recreation, and Open Space

1. Covered Bridge Park - This park is owned and maintained by the New Britain Civic Association and helps to meet the need for park and recreation facilities for the Borough. It is important that this be preserved as permanent recreational land. The Borough plans to assist in its preservation through purchase of an open space easement.
2. Open Space - Give consideration to preserving additional open space in the Borough through participation in the Bucks County Municipal Open Space and Natural Areas Preservation Programs. Priority should be given to threatened and other undeveloped land as detailed in New Britain Borough's Open Space Plan. The land next to the nature preserve is one of the few open and natural sites left in the borough. Some or all of it should be preserved, either through the development process or by acquisition.
3. Trail Planning - Participate in and support the cooperative development of the Tri-Municipal Master Trails Plan. Apply for funding opportunities to implement the recommendations of the plan.
4. Nature Preserve - The nature preserve, named for former Borough councilwoman and civic leader Wilma Quinlan, includes a series of loop trails which provide walking paths through the woods and fields. Two fields are mowed seasonally; bird

nesting areas have been established. The paths and trails are maintained by the borough. The following are recommendations specific to the nature preserve:

- There should be an effort to publicize and increase use of the nature preserve. This could be accomplished through a borough newsletter, coordination with the public schools, or contact with local conservation groups.
- The use of the stone parking area should be encouraged by placing signs at the entrance on Matthews Avenue.
- Maintain the native vegetation through the clearing of vines and multiflora rose. This can be accomplished through volunteer efforts using civic groups or Scout troops.
- Access to the Neshaminy Creek (North Branch) exists from the loop trail, but is limited to a few narrow openings in the woods. Some modest improvements in the access to the creek would enhance the use of the area.

Community Services and Facilities

Goal 8. Promote the adequate provision and accessibility of community facilities and services in cooperation with the public, government agencies, and community service providers.

The responsibilities of borough government have grown as the population increased. Not only are there more people to serve, there are new responsibilities that government must take on as the community increases in size and sophistication.

Police Protection

The borough has a police force which serves the community. Its headquarters is in the original borough building on Keeley Avenue. The police department has four full-time and six part-time officers. The borough is continuing to look at ways to provide efficient protection and service.

Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by the Chalfont Fire Company and Doylestown Fire Company located in Chalfont and Doylestown boroughs, respectively. The borough collects 1.25 mils in property taxes to fund fire protection.

Emergency Services

Ambulance service companies are either operated privately or through a hospital, fire company, or civic association and are not directly associated with particular municipalities. Ambulance services can be divided into basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS). Basic life support services can include first aid and basic pre-hospital patient care and transport. Advanced life support includes enhanced pre-hospital care consisting of adjunctive equipment, administration of medication and fluids, and condition stabilizing treatment. Central Bucks Ambulance and Rescue Unit is located on East Street in Doylestown Borough and provides both ALS and BLS to New Britain Borough 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Central Bucks Ambulance also provides paratransit services to the community. The Chalfont Fire Company provides BLS to the borough. Emergency service to the borough appears adequate. New Britain Borough collects 0.5 mils in property taxes to fund emergency services.

Hospitals

The nearest hospital is east of the borough in Doylestown Township. Doylestown Hospital is a regional facility whose areas of focus include cardiology and cardiovascular surgery, maternal-child health, emergency medicine, critical care, cancer care, interventional radiology, orthopedics, gastroenterology, pulmonology, urology and rehabilitation.

Foundations Behavioral Health is located along Route 202 in the east part of the borough. Foundations is an accredited, non-profit facility specializing in the care of troubled kids and

their families. Foundations provides psychiatric hospitalization, residential treatment, partial hospitalization, outpatient clinic, and wrap-around services, as well as an alternative school for junior high and high school students.

Road Maintenance

Road maintenance is provided with some part-time Borough employees and through contractual arrangements with New Britain Township and private contractors.

Government Facilities

The borough constructed a borough hall located on Keeley Avenue which accommodates government offices. Across the street the old borough hall houses the police department and municipal meeting rooms. Borough staffing is adequate.

Schools

The borough has one public school, Pine Run Elementary School. The former Paul N. Detwiler School held special kindergarten classes. These classes are now held at Butler Elementary in Chalfont Borough. No additions are planned for Pine Run Elementary.

Recommendations

1. The Borough Council should be kept aware of any need for additional borough government services, such as code enforcement or police protection, by periodically reviewing the staff needs with the borough manager.
2. The Planning Commission should examine the Borough program for road maintenance to determine if modifications should be made.
3. The borough should continue to examine the possibility of sharing or merging police protection services to reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

Wastewater Disposal, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management

Goal 9. Develop a strategy to provide for safe water supply, adequate sewage disposal, and sound stormwater management.

Wastewater

The disposal of sewage or wastewater is handled in most of the borough by public systems. Service is provided by the collection/conveyance system of the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority and treatment occurs at the Chalfont-New Britain Township Joint Sewage Authority treatment plant on Upper State Road. Public sewerage exists in most of the borough. The areas where public sewerage is not provided rely on on-site disposal systems. Generally, areas with on-site disposal systems are located along Route 202 in the west part of the Borough, along the west side of Sand Road, and a few parcels between Iron Hill Road and Evergreen Avenue in the east part of the borough. No system failures or problems are known to exist with the on-lot systems located in these areas.

At one time the *Neshaminy Basin Sub-Region II 201 Facilities Plan* projected that most of the Borough will have public wastewater systems. The mechanism by which sewers are to be installed in the borough is not specified. The unsewered areas are already developed. The major concern regarding on-lot disposal systems is the potential for groundwater pollution due to malfunctioning septic systems.

The Borough should make sure that changes in land uses or businesses in areas with septic systems have Bucks County Health Department approval for the septic system as a condition of borough approval. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will require borough involvement in new nonresidential activities proposing to use septic systems, requiring the borough to be a co-permittee and requiring back-up areas for wastewater disposal.

Several municipalities in Bucks County, such as Doylestown Township, have adopted an OLDS management program, providing residents with education on the maintenance of these systems. On-lot subsurface sewage disposal systems (OLDS) require minimal routine maintenance to ensure proper operation. This maintenance is normally limited to periodic pumping of the septic tank. However, many times OLDS are inadequately maintained because of unknowledgeable property owners, poor record keeping, or negligence. An OLDS program is a preventative method used to reduce the potential malfunction of a system and can help maintain the quality of water resources in the borough.

The initial step in ensuring proper maintenance of OLDS would be to disseminate educational and informational material regarding OLDS maintenance to property owners. But to thoroughly ensure OLDS are maintained properly, the borough could develop an OLDS management program and ordinance which requires periodic inspection, monitoring, and pumping out of OLDS. Under such a program and ordinance, the borough may wish to be involved in the actual inspection and monitoring of the OLDS and provide contract

pumping and waste disposal of the OLDS or require the issuance of the OLDS management permits to property owners based on their providing proof of inspection, monitoring, and pump-out to the borough.

A mitigating factor for future tie-ins to sewerage is the lack of capacity at the Chalfont-New Britain Township Joint Sewage Authority treatment plant. The plant is accepting no new hook-ups or increases in sewer flows. As a result, some commercial and industrial development has been held up and businesses may be forced to make use of holding tanks as a short-term solution. The Borough has addressed this possibility by adopting a holding tank ordinance to ensure the proper storage, transport, and disposal of wastewater that would be generated by these businesses.

Water Supply

The supply of water to borough residences and businesses is provided in two ways: public water and individual on-lot wells. The two public water systems that serve the borough are the Chalfont Water Department, which provides water to the New Britain Mews development on Bristol Road, and the North Penn Water Authority, which serves the Carousel Pointe development, the Town Center Complex, and the Briarwood residential area. There are also two small water systems that serve the Colonial Mobile Home Park and Delaware Valley College.

The rest of the borough relies on groundwater from individual wells. The supply of water depends upon the underlying geology, which is the Stockton formation. This geologic formation typically yields moderately good water supply, but there is significant variation within the formation. While water supply does not appear to be a problem, the Borough Planning Commission should examine the current public water system and determine if extensions are desirable as well as monitor any problems that may come about with on-site wells. The borough should consider factors such as fire protection, water quality, and costs to residents.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff is the term for rainwater that moves over the ground during and immediately following a rainfall event. The area or land through which stormwater runoff drains is referred to as a watershed. In a watershed undergoing land development and urban expansion, the amount of stormwater runoff following a rainfall event can increase dramatically.

This is due to the amount of impervious land created by development and the accompanying reduction of natural grassy or wooded areas. Impervious surfaces are created when the natural landscape is covered by solid pavement, rooftops, and buildings that do not allow stormwater runoff to penetrate. Rather than soaking into the ground (or infiltrating), stormwater rapidly flows over it.

Increases in impervious surfaces are why we get increased amounts (volume) and speeds (rate) of runoff that are responsible for some of the localized flooding and drainage problems. As development increases in a watershed, so do the problems of dealing with greater quantities of stormwater runoff. Failure to properly manage this runoff can result in more

flooding; greater stream channel erosion; siltation and sedimentation; and a reduction in groundwater recharge. These problems occur on a regional and watershed level and cannot be addressed by individual municipalities.

Recognizing the need to address this serious and growing problem, the Pennsylvania General Assembly enacted the Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Act (P.L. 864, No.167, October 4, 1978). Act 167 required DEP to designate watersheds and establish guidelines so that stormwater management plans which addressed management issues on a watershed basis could be prepared by the local counties throughout the state. Act 167 gives the responsibility to counties for preparing the stormwater management plans and developing ordinance language. Municipalities must adopt these stormwater criteria to manage stormwater runoff from new development and its impact on water quality.

In 2002, the Bucks County Planning Commission began to prepare a Scope of Study to update the Neshaminy Creek watershed plan, which will be completed in 2007. When the update study is complete, technologically newer, more stringent standards for the protection of water quality and groundwater recharge will be addressed. The borough can anticipate adopting these newer standards, and should look towards areas in the municipality where development or redevelopment may occur. In this way, they can begin to work with the developers in the community to open dialogue regarding the use of best management practices that will be required in the near future.

NPDES Phase II Stormwater Regulations

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) is a two-phase federal program created as an outgrowth of the Federal Clean Water Act (1972), which attempts to establish local regulations creating a nationwide reduction of the pollutants found in our nation's waterways. The purpose of the program is to reduce pollution, promote and require better stormwater management, and educate the public about water pollution. This program was amended in 1987 to include stormwater discharge regulations. The first phase of the NPDES program was established in the early 1990s, and targeted large communities and industrial facilities.

These entities were required to obtain permits from the state which enforce good housekeeping practices on-site and a reduction of hazardous materials kept on the premises where they could be washed off the site by rainfall and enter local waterways. This latest phase of the NPDES program, Phase II (2003), is aimed at smaller urban communities, as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) based on US Census data. Small urban areas are referred to as "MS4s" (MS4 = Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) must obtain a state permit showing how they intend to manage pollution in the municipality.

In accordance with the goals of the NPDES program, small communities, including New Britain Borough, must develop a stormwater management program that includes six minimum control measures. These measures include public education and outreach, public participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, and construction and post construction runoff control and pollution prevention. Thus far, New Britain is in compliance with this program; in fact, the borough has adopted a new stormwater management ordinance aimed at providing control measures for post-construction stormwater runoff. The

development of this ordinance is in accordance with existing Act 167 guidelines and goals and merges critical stormwater management issues, including groundwater recharge, under the comprehensive umbrella of water resources protection.

Recommendations

1. The Borough should address the water supply and wastewater disposal needs of residents.
2. The Borough should work with wastewater disposal authorities to ensure businesses will be able to tie-in to the existing sewerage system. Consider an On-Lot Disposal System ordinance.
3. The Borough Planning Commission should examine the current public water system and determine if extensions are desirable. The borough should consider factors such as fire protection, water quality, and costs to residents.
4. Adopt newer standards developed from the Neshaminy Creek Stormwater Management Plan, scheduled to be completed in 2007. Incorporate the new standards into existing borough ordinances based on NPDES program requirements.

Circulation and Transportation

Goal 10. Ensure a safe and efficient transportation network considering not only traffic flow but also the protection of residents and neighborhoods from the adverse effects of traffic. Provide adequate consideration to public transportation and pedestrians.

Route 202

The primary road in the Borough's street system is Route 202—Butler Avenue—which runs through the length of the borough and forms the spine of the borough. The road serves several commercial areas but is also a residential street along much of its length. Because of the high level of traffic, the Borough has been subjected to pressure to allow for nonresidential activities in traditionally residential areas.

A new U.S. Route 202 Parkway is proposed to be built south of the present alignment, through Doylestown Township. Originally, this parkway was to be a four-lane expressway but, due to concerns from affected communities and state-level financial considerations, plans for the expressway were paired down to a two-lane, at-grade road. A task force composed of representatives from each of the study area municipalities, planners from Montgomery and Bucks counties, state and federal officials from the study area, and PennDOT collaboratively developed and refined the parkway concept into one that all the task force members, including New Britain Borough's, could support. The parkway is projected to more than double the traffic carrying capacity of existing Route 202 as well as offer local roadway improvements. The Borough supports construction of the parkway as well as future expansions. Any decrease in traffic volumes along Butler Avenue would be a welcome change in New Britain.

Elements of the proposed US 202 Parkway include:

- The operating speed will be 40 mph.
- Connections to the parkway are to take place at Lower State Road, Bristol Road, Limekiln Pike and County Line Road in Bucks County. A round-about is planned for the Bristol Road connection.
- Overpasses are to be built at Pickertown Road, Almshouse Road, Wells Road, and New Britain Road in Bucks County.
- From Welsh Road to Horsham Road the roadway will have four 11-foot travel lanes and a 5-foot bike lane and shoulder on each side. From Horsham Road to Route 611 the parkway will consist of two 11-foot travel lanes and a 5-foot paved shoulder.
- A 12-foot multi-use trail will be provided within the right-of-way of the parkway. Where bridges are located, the trail will be located on separate or cantilevered bridge structures designed to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
- PennDOT will purchase the entire right-of-way as limited access; no access to private properties will be available from the parkway.

This Plan assumes that traffic volumes will continue to grow along Butler Avenue in the coming years. However, the increase in traffic will not in itself justify a change in land use from residential to nonresidential where the area is currently devoted to residential uses. The plan also assumes that the parkway, if completed, will benefit the borough by reducing traffic loads and enhancing the residential areas along Butler Avenue.

The other important element in planning for Butler Avenue is the control of driveway access directly onto the highway. Because of the concerns of traffic flow and safety, the borough should use its regulations to encourage the sharing of driveways and the use of side streets for access. The road is under the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation which has the power to grant driveway permits in accordance with borough regulations. The borough should encourage the coordination of driveway access onto Route 202.

Bristol Road

The borough has reserved the right-of-way for the extension of Bristol Road from Route 202 to the edge of the borough. By cooperating with Chalfont Borough and New Britain Township, which has also reserved right-of-way on its side, Bristol Road can be extended to Park Avenue which will greatly improve the circulation in the area. This project is on PennDOT's Transportation Improvement Program (or TIP) and is programmed for construction in 2008. This project will be included as part of the Route 202 Parkway program.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Sidewalks have been provided only in the newer subdivisions of the borough. The developments north of the Town Center have sidewalks on both sides of the street. There is a short segment of sidewalk along Butler Avenue in front of the church at Almshouse Road. Except for these areas, pedestrians use the side of the road or the road itself for walking.

This plan recommends that sidewalks be added to certain areas of the borough to allow for pedestrians to move safely without interference from vehicles. The areas in which sidewalks or pedestrian paths should be provided are:

- From the railroad station to Butler Avenue
- Along Butler Avenue (south side) between the Town Center and Almshouse Road;
- From the Carousel Point development, through the Pine Run School and the Lenape Valley Presbyterian Church property, to the Town Center complex;
- Along Keeley Avenue to Covered Bridge Park;
- The area in front of Delaware Valley College, connecting to Doylestown Township and Doylestown Borough's bike/hike path.

The addition of sidewalks in limited areas along Butler Avenue will provide a different character to the area, making it seem less like a highway and more like a neighborhood or town area. In addition, it is recommended that the borough investigate the possibility of developing a bikeway along the Butler Avenue corridor that would connect with Doylestown's bike path mentioned above. This bikeway could take the form of a bike lane,

which is an established lane on the roadway that is designated with signage and striping, or a bicycle route, which makes use of the existing road surface. The development of a bikeway or other trail linkage should be done in accordance with the recommendations of the Tri-Municipal Master Trails Plan that is being developed by New Britain Borough, Chalfont Borough, and New Britain Township.

The implementation of the sidewalk plan will require the cooperation of the borough and property owners. Within the proposed village historic district, the installation of sidewalks can be a requirement for the additional uses proposed. The borough could use Community Development funding for sidewalk installation. The borough can require property owners to install sidewalks where it is deemed that they are necessary.

Another option is the Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School programs, which are infrastructure improvement programs aimed at the pedestrian environment and are available through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The Home Town Streets program is designed to benefit downtown areas in municipalities. Eligible projects include sidewalk improvements, planters, benches, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, bus shelters, traffic calming, bicycle amenities, kiosks, signage and other similar elements. The Safe Routes to School program is designed to promote safe walking routes to school. Eligible improvements include sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes or trails, traffic diversion improvements, or curb extensions. Community-wide sidewalk or signal improvements are not eligible, only specific routes to schools are eligible. The maximum grant from the program is \$1,000,000 and a 20 percent local match is required.

Recommendations

1. Continue to support the US 202 parkway.
2. Investigate ways to provide sidewalks where needed. Develop a bikeway along Butler Avenue. Connect sidewalks and bikeway along Butler Avenue to Doylestown Borough's bike path and walking trail.
3. Work with PennDOT and adjacent municipalities to construct the Bristol Road extension.

Compatibility with Surrounding Communities

Goal 11. Work toward a development pattern compatible with those in surrounding communities and which respects the plans adopted by county.

The planning and zoning policies of the surrounding municipalities have been reviewed and considered in making recommendations for the Borough. Map 8 shows the zoning in Doylestown Township, New Britain Township, and Chalfont Borough at the common boundaries with New Britain Borough. The land uses at the borders appear to be compatible with existing and proposed borough development.

Doylestown Township

The northern edge of the borough borders Doylestown Township. At the eastern end, the mobile home development in the borough abuts the mobile home district in the township. Shady Retreat Road separates residential development in the borough from single family residential development in the township. This pattern continues along the northern edge of the borough until the area around Covered Bridge Park, where the allowed density in Doylestown Township changes to one house per two acres.

The borough also abuts the township within the Delaware Valley College property. There is a triangle of township land lying between the railroad tracks and the College which is zoned for commercial use. It has frontage on Route 202. There are no areas of conflict where borough development and township development are incompatible.

New Britain Township

New Britain Township lies along the northwestern edge of the borough, adjacent to some of the newer residential developments in the borough. New Britain Township zoning calls for residences on 2 to 5 acre lots. This would appear to be compatible with borough development.

On the southern side of New Britain, the New Britain Township zoning calls for a mix of housing types and planned residential developments, with a density of up to 5 dwellings per acre. On the Borough side lie the low density residential areas along West Aarons Avenue, the nature preserve, a vacant wooded parcel, and the Mews development. This would appear to be the area of greatest potential conflict, since the borough development is low density while the township has allowed for relatively high density. The Neshaminy and Cooks Run form a good divider between the two municipalities and the floodplains will create a significant separation between the borough development and potentially high density township development.

Chalfont Borough

Chalfont Borough lies to the west of New Britain Borough, where the boundary line is formed by Bristol Road. Chalfont allows for commercial development in the area near Route 202 and residential development in the area below Route 202, opposite the Mews development in New Britain.

Most of the land use patterns and relationships have been established and are long-standing. There is nothing within the proposed changes for New Britain Borough which would appear to cause concern in neighboring municipalities.

Bucks County Comprehensive Plan

The recommendations for the Borough reflect the County policies on land use planning and development in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code. No conflict with county planning policies has been suggested or is anticipated.

Relationship Among Plan Elements

Goal 12. Make the plan useful by including methods for implementation and by addressing specific issues of concern to local officials.

The central theme in the Plan is the protection of the Borough as a residential area, and all other goals and suggested actions support this. Although the plan is separated into sections based upon the goals of the Borough, each plan element supports and relates to the others. The recommendations dealing with commercial activities suggest not only an enhancement of those areas but the establishment of guidelines which will allow borough residents to continue to live securely in areas which are affected by nearby commercial uses. The transportation and circulation policies are geared to protect public safety and to enhance the neighborhoods of the borough. Policies addressing natural features preservation are designed to protect elements of the natural landscape, such as trees, and to protect the Borough residents from the impacts that result from ignoring natural features and natural processes. These include flooding, groundwater contamination, soil erosion, stream pollution, and deterioration of the visual environment. The Plan looks ahead to the potential future needs of borough residents by examining the public facility requirements to be expected over the next ten years.

Recommendations

The New Britain Borough Comprehensive Plan provides a direction for the borough for the next ten years. This direction can be summarized into a list of recommendations and policies, which are divided into four implementation periods: short term (1-2 years), mid term (3-5 years), long term (6-10 years), and ongoing.

Housing and Residential Areas

Goal 1. Preserve the residential character of the borough and accommodate a variety of housing types.

- Continue to provide adequate services to stable residential areas (e.g., police and protective services) and to adequately maintain public facilities serving these areas (e.g., roads and sidewalks).
Time period: Ongoing
- Continue to enforce applicable zoning and building regulations.
Time period: Ongoing
- Avoid zoning changes which would allow for nonresidential intrusions into stable residential neighborhoods.
Time period: Ongoing
- In stable residential areas along Route 202, avoid changes of zoning from residential to nonresidential uses; consider zoning changes that might provide good buffers for residential areas (such as private offices).
Time period: Mid Term
- Continue to allow for home occupations and home offices in stable residential areas along Route 202.
Time period: Ongoing
- Maintain the C-2 and C-3 districts in mixed areas along Route 202, allowing for the natural conversion of residential uses to nonresidential uses when economically feasible. Enforce landscaping and control of lighting and signage to limit impacts to adjacent residential properties.
Time period: Ongoing

Natural Features

Goal 2. Protect and enhance the natural features of the Borough.

- Preserve stream valleys for open space to protect floodplains, steep slopes, and woodlands. In particular the small area along the Neshaminy adjacent to the Nature Preserve should be protected from future development.
Time period: Mid Term
- Establish riparian buffer zone ordinance to protect the normally vegetated or wooded area occurring along a streamside.
Time period: Mid Term
- Continue to require protection of woodlands through woodland protection standards in the zoning ordinance and tree protection requirements in the subdivision and land development ordinance.
Time period: Mid Term
- Continue to require the protection of wetland areas. Establish buffer zones around wetlands that allow only a minimum disturbance within the buffer zone.
Time period: Short Term
- Restrict development of steep slopes through zoning regulations to avoid erosion and stormwater problems and to preserve natural topography.
Time period: Ongoing
- Restrict development in floodplain areas through zoning regulations.
Time period: Ongoing
- Encourage preapplication meetings between applicants and borough officials to get an understanding desired outcomes before full-scale engineering takes place.
Time period: Short Term
- Require the submission of a site analysis to get an understanding of site conditions.
Time period: Short Term
- Continue to enforce the zoning ordinance requirements for the identification of all important natural features so that the Borough can be assured that these are being protected.
Time period: Short Term

Nonresidential Development and Economic Activity

Commercial Areas

Goal 3. Support and encourage the improvement of existing commercial areas; allow for growth of commercial uses only in areas where they complement existing commercial developments and do not detract from residential neighborhoods.

- In the area from Bristol Road to Lenape Road along Butler Avenue, require that all applications for change in use or expansion of uses go through the proper procedures for obtaining a zoning permit so that the borough can review what is proposed and have a record of what is proposed;
Time period: Ongoing
- In the area from Bristol Road to Lenape Road along Butler Avenue, consider providing standards for the inclusion or exclusion of retail sales with Automotive Service Stations. Limit the amount of space devoted to retail sales;
Time period: Short Term
- In the area from Bristol Road to Lenape Road along Butler Avenue, provide additional bulk requirements for Retail Trade and Services uses, such as maximum building size, in the C-1 and C-2 Commercial districts.
Time period: Short Term
- In the area from Bristol Road to Lenape Road along Butler Avenue, consider reducing the front yard setback requirements of the C-1 and C-2 districts to more closely match the existing building locations.
Time period: Short Term
- In the area from Bristol Road to Lenape Road along Butler Avenue, establish drive-thru requirements for uses other than banks and eating places.
Time period: Short Term
- In the area from Bristol Road to Lenape Road along Butler Avenue, require that all necessary improvements, such as buffering, landscaping, etc. be provided as a condition of the granting of a zoning permit for a change in use;
Time period: Ongoing
- Consider creating an historic district near the intersection of Almshouse Road and Route 202 encompassing the church and small concentration of the oldest buildings in the Borough.
Time period: Mid Term
- Prohibit uses such as service stations, auto repair and car washes, pharmacies, and drive-in eating places in the Beulah Road to Shady Retreat area along Butler Avenue.
Time period: Short Term

- Create provisions for apartments in conjunction with commercial and office uses so that additional living quarters can become part of the Beulah Road to Shady Retreat area along Butler Avenue.
Time period: Short Term
- In the Beulah Road to Shady Retreat area, explore the possibility of providing for new uses in the C-3 Commercial District to encourage the reuse of existing residential buildings. Add other zoning standards, such as maximum building size and rear parking requirements. Reduce the front yard setback requirements of the district.
Time period: Mid Term
- In the area of Shady Retreat to end of Borough along Butler Avenue, the types of commercial uses should be limited by continuing the restricted commercial zoning designation. More intense commercial uses, such as service stations, car washes, pharmacies, and drive-in restaurants, should be prohibited in this area.
Time period: Short Term
- In the area of Shady Retreat to end of Borough along Butler Avenue, where owners plan to expand a use or to change a use, require that the required buffering and landscaping be provided as a condition of granting approval.
Time period: Ongoing
- In the area of Shady Retreat to end of Borough along Butler Avenue, where changes or expansion are proposed, require that parking be located to the rear or side to preserve the appearance of Route 202.
Time period: Mid Term
- Amend the zoning ordinance to permit apartments as part of individual commercial structures (e.g., a new use, Dwelling in Combination) in the area of Shady Retreat to end of Borough along Butler Avenue.
Time period: Mid Term
- Eliminate the split zoning of tax parcel 25-9-78.
Time period: Short Term

Corridor Planning and Development

Goal 4. Encourage the creation of a pedestrian-friendly corridor along Route 202 rather than a collection of highway-oriented commercial uses.

- Plan for shared access, coordinated lights, signage, landscaping, and other improvements along the Route 202 corridor.

Time period: Mid Term

- Consider limiting parking areas to the sides and the rears of buildings to help further reduce visual clutter and take advantage of the shorter building setbacks commonly found on lots along the 202 corridor.

Time period: Mid Term

- Reinforce a local identity and sense of place by creating gateways along Route 202 at the entrances to the borough.

Time period: Long Term

Industrial Development

Goal 5. Support the existing industrial development and work toward minimizing the conflicts between the industrial areas and surrounding residential areas. Industrial areas along Butler Avenue should be compatible with the vision for Butler Avenue that has been established, by establishing a “Main Street” streetscape and prohibiting auto-oriented commercial development.

- Require any future expansion, change in use, or alteration for industries only where accompanied by the installation of planted buffer yards.

Time period: Ongoing

- Ensure the vacant industrially zoned property at the corner of South Sand and West Matthews Avenues, adjacent to the Nature Preserve, is developed in a manner which preserves the stream valley at the rear of the property.

Time period: Long Term

- Establish zoning controls for industrial areas with frontage on Butler Avenue to ensure that redevelopment occurs in a manner consistent with the vision for this road, by restricting vehicle-oriented commercial uses and by requiring streetscape elements such as sidewalks and street trees. This goal should be advanced with Goal 4, Corridor Planning.

Time period: Short Term

Historic Preservation

Goal 6. Preserve and enhance the borough's historic, cultural, and scenic resources.

- Consider applying for historic district status under the authority of the Historic District Act (Act 167) through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and appointing a historical architecture review board to protect the integrity of local historic resources.

Time period: Mid Term

- Permit uses of historic buildings which would not be permitted in buildings without historic significance. Options for additional uses include the following: bed-and-breakfast or inn; offices; museum or nature center; or residential conversions to allow for apartments within the structure.

Time period: Mid Term

- Consider the development of design guidelines, which can be helpful in carrying out a vision of what a community should look like in the future, especially in areas of historic significance.

Time period: Mid Term

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Goal 7. Provide for the enjoyment of open space and recreational opportunities for all residents.

- Preserve Covered Bridge Park as permanent open space.
Time period: Short Term
- Consider preserving additional open space in the Borough through participation in the Bucks County Municipal Open Space and Natural Areas Preservation Programs. Priority should be given to threatened and other undeveloped land as detailed in New Britain Borough's Open Space Plan.
Time period: Long Term
- Preserve the land next to the nature preserve through the development process or by acquisition.
Time period: Mid Term
- Participate in and support the cooperative development of the Tri-Municipal Master Trails Plan. Apply for funding opportunities to implement the recommendations of the plan.
Time period: Long Term
- Publicize and increase use of the Wilma Quinlan nature preserve through a borough newsletter, coordination with the public schools, or contact with local conservation groups.; encourage the use of the stone parking at the preserve by placing signs at the entrance on Matthews Avenue; maintain the native vegetation through the clearing of vines and multiflora rose.
Time period: Short Term; Mid Term

Community Services and Facilities

Goal 8. Promote the adequate provision and accessibility of community facilities and services in cooperation with the public, government agencies, and community service providers.

- Periodically review the staff needs with the borough manager to keep aware of any need for additional borough government services, such as code enforcement or police protection.

Time period: Ongoing

- Examine the Borough program for road maintenance to determine if modifications should be made.

Time period: Short Term

- Examine the possibility of sharing or merging police protection services to reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

Time period: Mid Term

Wastewater Disposal, Water Supply, and Stormwater Management

Goal 9. Develop a strategy to provide for safe water supply, adequate sewage disposal, and sound stormwater management.

- Ensure that changes in land uses or businesses in areas with septic systems have Bucks County Health Department approval for the septic system as a condition of borough approval.
Time period: Ongoing
- Address wastewater disposal needs of residents and work with wastewater disposal authorities to ensure businesses will be able to tie-in to the existing sewerage system.
Time period: Ongoing
- Consider the development of an on-lot subsurface sewage disposal system management program (OLDS).
Time period: Long Term
- Examine the current public water system and determine if extensions are desirable, considering factors such as fire protection, water quality, and costs to residents.
Time period: Long Term
- Adopt newer standards developed from the Neshaminy Creek Stormwater Management Plan, scheduled to be completed in 2007. Incorporate the new standards into existing borough ordinances based on NPDES program requirements.
Time period: Mid Term
- Continue to enforce the newly adopted stormwater management ordinance aimed at providing control measures for post-construction stormwater runoff in accordance with the NPDES.
Time period: Ongoing

Circulation and Transportation

Goal 10. Ensure a safe and efficient transportation network considering not only traffic flow but also the protection of residents and neighborhoods from the adverse effects of traffic. Provide adequate consideration to public transportation and pedestrians.

- Encourage the sharing of driveways and the use of side streets for access along Route 202 (Butler Avenue) for traffic flow and safety.
Time period: Ongoing
- Cooperate with Chalfont Borough, New Britain Township, and PennDOT to extend Bristol Road to Ferry Road which will greatly improve the circulation in the area.
Time period: Long Term
- Provide sidewalks or pedestrian paths as recommended in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation section of the plan. Where appropriate, use Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School funding.
Time period: Long Term
- Investigate the possibility of developing a bikeway along the Butler Avenue corridor that would connect with Doylestown's bikepath. Ensure the development of a bikeway or other trail linkage will be done in accordance with the recommendations of the Tri-Municipal Master Trails Plan.
Time period: Long Term
- Require property owners to install sidewalks when a change of use or development takes place.
Time period: Ongoing
- Continue to support the US 202 parkway.
Time period: Long Term

Compatibility with Surrounding Communities

Goal 11. Work toward a development pattern compatible with those in surrounding communities and which respects the plans adopted by county.

- Continue to watch for new planning initiatives and land use regulations in adjacent municipalities and the county. Coordinate with appropriate agencies.

Time period: Ongoing

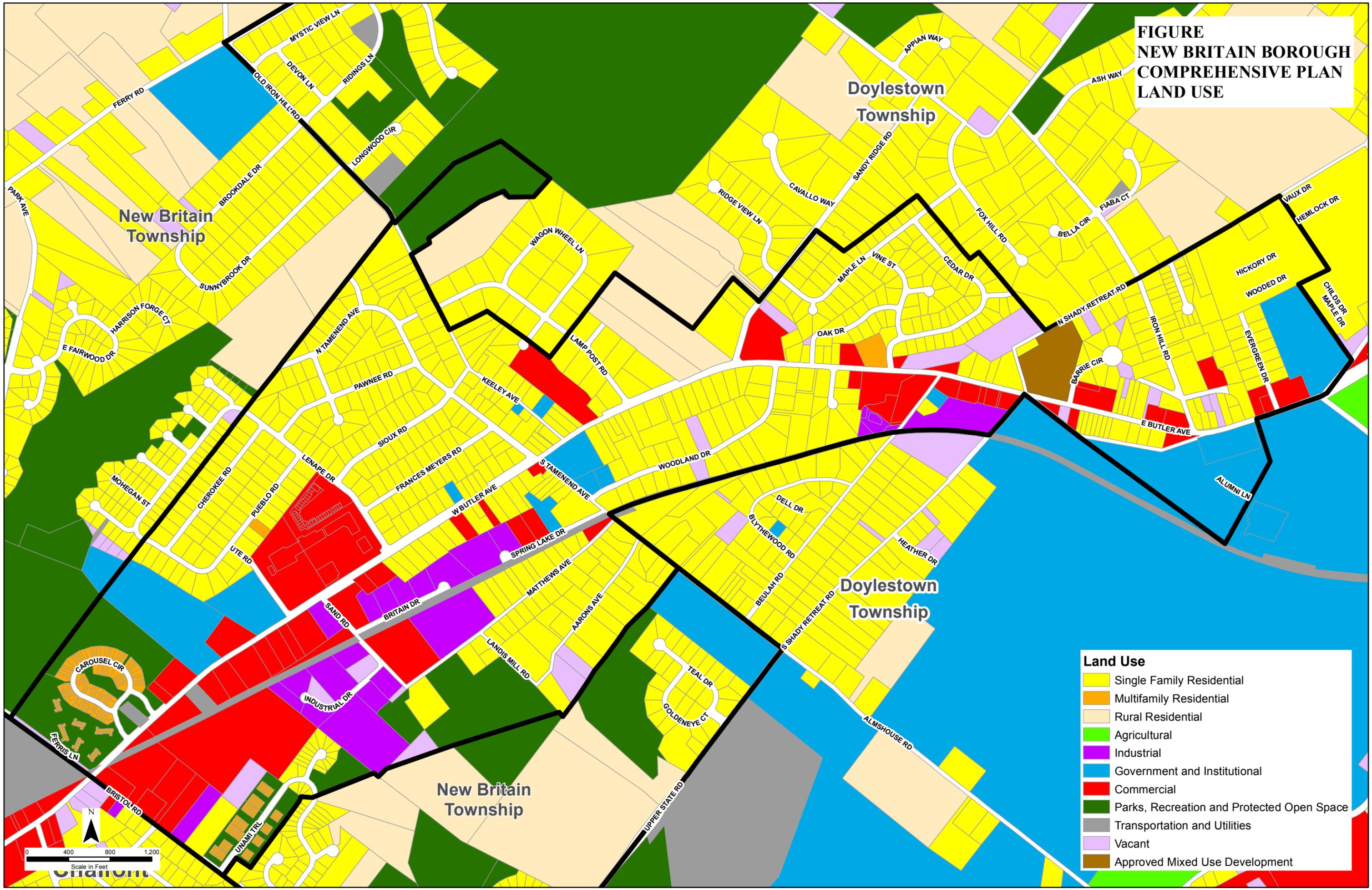
Relationship Among Plan Elements

Goal 12. Make the plan useful by including methods for implementation and by addressing specific issues of concern to local officials.

- Continue to monitor the plan's progress and, when appropriate, use the plan as a decision-making tool when questions arise about land use policy.

Time period: Ongoing

**FIGURE
NEW BRITAIN BOROUGH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LAND USE**



Land Use	
	Single Family Residential
	Multifamily Residential
	Rural Residential
	Agricultural
	Industrial
	Government and Institutional
	Commercial
	Parks, Recreation and Protected Open Space
	Transportation and Utilities
	Vacant
	Approved Mixed Use Development

0 400 800 1,200
Scale in Feet

