



HARRIS TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2009, the Harris Township Board of Supervisors established the Harris Township Open Space Committee. The Committee's mission is "to identify open spaces that are important to our ecosystem, are of particular scenic beauty, are significant agricultural and natural resources, improve our connection to our natural environment, improve our ability to live sustainably, and are important links with our historic and cultural heritage." In order to achieve this mission, the Committee has prepared this open space plan. The plan will examine the availability of open spaces within Harris Township. Criteria for prioritizing and acquiring important open spaces and greenways from willing sellers within the Township will be identified along with potential mechanisms for preserving these valuable community resources.

Current regulations already encourage the preservation of open space. Township code requires that any development over 5 units, within a residential zoning district, contain 0.05 acres of parkland per unit. When the area is zoned agricultural or forest, the open space requirements grow to 50% of the developed property. Additional provisions for Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) require a set aside of 30% of the area for open space, 50% of which is to be dedicated toward parkland.

The Committee authorized a survey, in the spring of 2010, which assessed public support for open space and the qualities of open space they would prioritize. Strong support was found for preserving open space both as a general idea and as implied by support for a property tax as an option for funding preservation. Ratings of qualities of open space indicated that respondents generally valued all qualities but favored preserving open space for principled reasons (preserving ecosystems and historical sites and preventing unwanted development) more so than increasing the land's functionality (providing recreation, increased accessibility, or connectivity between open spaces). However, their ratings indicated that they supported the latter reasons as well.

Harris Township is already blessed with a selection of parks, open spaces and bicycle paths. However, much of the open space near where people live is privately held and may not remain open in the future. Many of the trails people use to walk from place to place are similarly on private land and access in the future is not assured. Seven municipal parks serve the Township. Four of these, Country Place, Harpster, Kaywood and Nittany View are essentially neighborhood parks, primarily used by residents in the areas contiguous to them. Located in the Village of Boalsburg, Blue Spring Park is more of a community park, serving the entire Township. Eugene Fasick Park, located inside the Willowbrook development, also serves as a community park. The seventh park, Stan Yoder Preserve, is a unique facility, offering 15 acres of undeveloped land surrounded by walking paths and benches.

In addition to municipal parks, two other state properties provide open space in the Township. Over 15 square miles of Rothrock State Forest cover the southern half of the Township. For the most part, the Forest is separated from public streets by private land on the mountainside. Foot access is limited to a road through Galbraith Gap and a trail in Shingletown Gap. The grounds of the Pennsylvania Military Museum provide an expanse of over 50 acres of open space near the Village of Boalsburg.

Future growth within the Township will be guided by the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan and local land use regulations, including zoning and the Official Map. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) which establishes the area where most of the future growth within the Centre

Region will be encouraged to occur. Areas outside of the RGB in Harris Township are primarily agricultural and forested areas which contain zoning that provides for the use of rural clustering techniques to preserve rural areas within the Township. An Official Map is a land use planning tool that allows a Township to reserve for potential, future public use desirable streets, waterways, parks, hiking and biking paths, open space and other public facilities. Once adopted, the Official Map is a legal record of the location within a Township of these desirable infrastructure areas.

There are a variety of mechanisms available for the protection of open space in the Township. Each has its own unique set of advantages and disadvantages, which must be matched to the specific resource being considered for protection. None would be pursued without the willing and voluntary participation of the landowner. Among those available to the Township are:

- Fee simple purchase
- Lease/buyback
- Easements
- Regulation
- Altruism
- Bargain Sale
- Preferential tax treatment

Options for funding land acquisition include:

- Municipal taxes approved through a referendum
- The annual municipal budget process
- Fees-in-lieu of parkland dedication
- Grants
- Donations
- Partnerships
- Combinations of the above

The Open Space Committee recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

- Establish an Open Space Preservation and Acquisition Fund
- Develop relationships with other organizations interested in open space preservation
- Identify potential county, state and federal funding sources
- Develop a guide to potential benefits to landowners participating in open space preservation
- Allow the citizens of the Township, through a ballot referendum, to voice their opinion on financing a Conservation Fund through a 0.1 percent increase in the Township's Earned Income Tax Rate
- Review the subdivision and land development ordinances to include pedestrian/bike paths as a requirement in some zoning districts

In order to implement this plan, the Harris Township Board of Supervisors should establish an Open Space Committee to evaluate potential acquisitions, and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Committee would have a rotating membership of five persons, serving no more than two consecutive terms.

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INTRODUCTION

Harris Township has the second largest land base in the Centre Region (31.9 square miles) and the second smallest population (4,873 people in 2010) (US Census Bureau 2011). Almost half of this land lies within the Rothrock State Forest (15.2 square miles). The municipal population grew at a rate of 4.6% during the previous decade and if this rate continues would be over 5,099 by the end of the decade. This continued growth, accompanied by a limited number of areas available for development has raised concerns by the municipality's residents for the loss of open spaces.

This plan will examine the availability of open spaces within Harris Township. Criteria for prioritizing and acquiring important open spaces and greenways within the Township will be identified along with potential mechanisms for preserving these valuable community resources.

HARRIS TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

During its March 9, 2009 meeting the Harris Township Board of Supervisors established the Harris Township Open Space Committee to:

“Identify lands that should be considered for future preservation as open space or greenways in the Township. These areas will then be included in an open space plan, to be approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Committee will consider an array of preservation methods, including conservation easements and fee simple purchases by Harris Township. The Committee will provide recommendations on the establishment of a conservation fund through a referendum allowing a dedicated tax millage for open space preservation. An important component of their work is to solicit input from the community on preservation priorities and the level of funding needed to support the conservation fund. This will include speaking with various interest groups within the Township and holding a public meeting on these issues”

MISSION STATEMENT

The Open Space Committee's mission is “to identify open spaces that are important to our ecosystem, are of particular scenic beauty, are significant agricultural and natural resources, improve our connection to our natural environment, improve our ability to live sustainably, and are important links with our historic and cultural heritage.”

BACKGROUND

HISTORY

Harris Township was established in 1835, combining pieces of Ferguson, Spring, and Potter Townships (Centre County Historical Society, 2011). The communities of Boalsburg¹ and Linden Hall were founded in 1809 and 1847, respectively. These small communities faced little pressure from development, until the growth of the nearby Pennsylvania State University in the 1960s. As the University and associated technology industries grew, the Township became a desirable bedroom community for the region.

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

The Township is a second class municipality within Centre County, Pennsylvania. The Township is governed by five elected supervisors and operates under the guidance of the Second Class Township Code of 1933 (reenacted 1995). The supervisors appoint a variety of officers and advisory boards to help guide the governance. Planning within the Township is further guided by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Title 53). Additional guidance is provided by Centre County government and by the Centre Region Council of Governments.

GEOGRAPHY

Harris Township lies to the southeast of Nittany Mountain, occupying the area between Nittany and Penns Valley and extending southeast across Tussey Mountain and into the Rothrock State Forest. It is bordered to the north by College Township, to the east by Potter Township, and to the west by Ferguson Township. All of these lie within Centre County. Ferguson and College Townships are part of the Centre Region Council of Governments. To the south, the Township is bordered by Jackson Township, Huntingdon County.

Spring Creek has its origin in the Township and drains to the west. Major tributaries within the Township include Roaring Run, Galbraith Gap Run, and Cedar Run.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2010 census shows Harris Township to have 4,873 residents, distributed among 1,985 households. The median age is 44.8 years and there are 1,095 children (22.5%) under the age of 18 residing in the municipality.

¹ Originally designated Springfield and renamed Boalsburg in 1820 after one of the town's founding families.

CURRENT REGULATIONS

Township code requires that any development over 5 units, within a residential zoning district, contain 5 acres of parkland per 100 units (.05 acres per unit). The developer may elect to offer a fee in lieu of parkland at the rate of \$2,250 per unit which is to be applied to public recreation areas that will directly or indirectly benefit the future residents of the new development.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths that connect the development to parks or other areas of interest to future residents may be counted as parkland provided the right-of-way has a minimum width of 20 feet.

Linear parks with an average width of at least 75 feet are acceptable, provided they link to existing trails as identified by the Centre Region Planning Commission or if they run along Spring Creek or one of its principal tributaries.

When the area is zoned agricultural or forest and a lot is greater than 10 acres, the open space requirements grow to 50% of the developed property. There are no parkland requirements associated with rural zoning. The open space can be restricted to use by the residents of the new development.

Additional provisions for Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) require a set aside of 30% of the area for open space, 50% of which is to be dedicated toward parkland. Parkland in a PRD may be restricted to use by the residents of the new development.

REGIONAL SITUATION

Four documents reference the value and necessity of open space in the Centre Region and Centre County. These documents are:

- The Centre Region Comprehensive Plan: 2000
- Spring Creek Corridor Study. Phase I & II: A Rivers Conservation Plan, October 2001
- The Nittany and Bald Eagle Greenways Study: July 2002
- The Centre County Recreation and Greenways Plan: Adopted 2009

Each document, from different perspectives, discusses the value of preserving open space and elaborates on open space in Harris Township from its relationship to Spring Creek, the Centre Region or Centre County.

CENTRE REGION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2000

From the Plan, high priority is placed on these objectives:

- Maintain a low level of environmental pollution

- Provide open space near residential areas
- Protect neighborhoods from encroachment by non-residential land uses
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle trail connections between residential, employment and recreational areas.

Details of the long-range plan include outlying rural and agricultural areas recommended for preservation where important natural features, unique farmlands, and open space connections have been identified through the Plan development and review process. The Comprehensive Plan further elaborates on “Policies,” “Initiatives” and “Action.”

Land Use: Policy “A” states that Harris Township should “Protect and encourage agricultural productivity outside the Regional Growth Boundary.”

Historic Preservation: Policy “A” encourages Harris Township to “Preserve the Centre Region’s historic resources and maintain regional community identity, history, and culture.”

Future Development Patterns: Policy “C” encourages Harris Township to “preserve areas that are currently in active, sustainable agricultural use.”

Environmental & Natural Resources: Policy “A” encourages Harris Township to “preserve steep slopes and existing topographic features of the Centre Region during the planning and development process;” Policy “D” encourages “protection of the quality of the Region’s water resources through efficient and effective land-use management;” and Policy “H” indicates “protection of the Bald Eagle Ridge, Mount Nittany, and Tussey Mountains.”

The Open Space Conservation & Preservation component of the Comprehensive Plan contains five policies, all of which relate to open space in Harris Township and include:

- Policy “A” – Coordinate the interconnected open-space system for the Centre Region based on existing permanent open-space resources, sensitive natural features and protected future development patterns
- Policy “B” – Encourage farm enrollment in the Agricultural Security Area Program and participation in the Agricultural Easement Program in appropriate locations.
- Policy “C” – Encourage the placement of conservation easements on significant regional natural or open space resources.
- Policy “D” – Develop cooperative strategies between the municipalities and private recreational and sports organizations to acquire land as regional sports facilities.
- Policy “E” – Develop, with the support of the Centre Region municipalities, municipal park plans, fee-in-lieu regulations and local tax financing strategies to acquire land within the Centre Region for open-space and recreational activities

SPRING CREEK CORRIDOR STUDY, PHASE I & II: A RIVERS CONSERVATION PLAN,
OCTOBER 2001

The goals of the Spring Creek Study are as follows:

- To protect and enhance the natural, historic, and scenic resources in the vicinity of Spring Creek
- To ensure that the resources in the Spring Creek watershed are available for the use and enjoyment of future generations
- To ensure that the public is informed about the corridor and engaged in its protection and enhancement.

Recommendations from the Spring Creek Corridor Study are grouped into 4 areas with further sub-categories. These recommendations are:

- 1) Conserve and protect water resources
 - Protect headwater sub-watersheds
 - Protect groundwater recharge areas
 - Establish a stream conservation corridor
 - Create a “ribbon of green”- riparian forest buffer
- 2) Conserve and protect historic and cultural resources
 - Acknowledge and inventory evidence of our past
- 3) Conserve and protect scenic resources
 - Conserve forested mountain slopes
 - Protect scenic travel corridors
 - Establish visual awareness of Spring Creek and tributaries
- 4) Establish and enhance recreational networks
 - Establish new destinations
 - Enhance recreational connections

Of significance to Harris Township in the Spring Creek Corridor Study are the following suggestions:

- Create a Spring Creek Headwaters Reserve at Rothrock State Forest to protect headwater tributaries of Spring Creek. Headwaters provide high-quality naturally filtered water for Centre Region residents
- Create forest gateways at Galbraith and Shingletown to provide easily accessible nature based opportunities.

- Cedar/Mackey's Run Scenic Corridor provides views of historic farms and streamside pastures, with forested Mount Nittany in the background.

NITTANY AND BALD EAGLE GREENWAYS STUDY: 2002

The Vision Statement of the Greenways Study is:

"To protect the water quality, scenic, and natural resources of the Lower Bald Eagle and Nittany Valleys and provide a network of access ways for non-motorized transportation and lower impact outdoor recreation for people who live, work or visit here."

A guiding principle of the Greenways Study is to, "Connect and protect areas and resources that are of value to the community and distinguish that Nittany and Lower Bald Eagle Valleys as a special place to live, work, or visit. These include the natural, landscape, cultural, and heritage sites; park; schools; populations centers; and places of commerce."

"The Nittany and Bald Eagle Greenways are a network of open-space managed for conservation and/recreational purposes. The network follows natural features of land and water. The greenways serve as links for natural areas, parks, cultural resources, historic areas, community destinations and population centers. Greenways can serve as wildlife corridors and may or may not be open to the public. Greenways can provide recreation opportunities featuring pathways for alternative transportation, fitness, wellness, and enjoyment. Greenways can be publicly and privately owned."

Land conservation and protection tools for greenways and open space acquisition are:

- Land Use Regulations
 - Land use regulations
 - Conservation Subdivision Design
 - Overlay Zoning Districts
 - Riparian Buffers
 - Transferable Development Rights (TDR's)
 - Purchase of Development Rights (PDR's)
 - Mandatory Dedication
- Open Space and Natural Areas Acquisition
- Conservation Options for Private Landowners
 - Land Donation
 - Bargain Sale of Land
 - Options to Buy
 - Access and Use Agreements
- Conservation Easements
 - Agricultural Conservation Easements
 - Forest Conservation Easements.

With respect to Harris Township, the Greenways Plan identifies three possible corridors/links to be considered: 1) Oak Hall to Boalsburg, 2) The Cedar Run Link, and 3) Spring Creek/Galbraith Gap Link with the Tussey Mountain Ridge Link.

CENTRE COUNTY RECREATION AND GREENWAYS PLAN: 2009

Vision Statement:

“Centre County is a model of resource conservation and outdoor recreation in Central Pennsylvania. The abundant natural and cultural resources, rural landscapes, access to public lands, municipal parks and an interconnected system of greenway and trails serve as the foundation for improved quality of life for people who live, work, and visit Centre County.”

Goals of the Recreation & Greenway Plan

- Utilize information and tools from the Greenway Plan
- Establish links to future Greenway networks and facilities in surrounding counties.
- Identify specific locations for wildlife viewing, scenic views and view sheds, and areas of historic significance.
- Guide feasibility studies and implementation that may develop out of recommendations of the Greenway plan.
- Ensure consistency with the Centre County Comprehensive Plan

Of importance to the Centre County Recreation and Greenway Plan is the emphasis placed upon “corridors” which serve to link various resources in the Plan. Three types of corridors are discussed, 1) Conservation, 2) Recreation and 3) Transportation. Of importance to Harris Township is a “Conservation Corridor” identified as an “Exceptional Priority Corridor 1-3 years” for Spring Creek.

Of value in the Plan are five easement documents helpful in considering development of open space projects. These documents are:

- Trail Easement
- Conservation Easement
- Riparian Forest Buffer Protection Agreement
- Fishing Access Agreement
- Water Quality Improvement Easement

DEMAND (NEEDS)

SURVEY RESULTS

Two surveys of residents were conducted. The first survey, conducted during the Spring of 2006 focused on the residents' perceptions of current open space, and by implications, their desires for open space. The second survey, conducted in the spring of 2010, focused on support for open space and the qualities of open space they would prioritize.

Survey 1: Summary

During the Spring of 2006, the Township conducted a survey of its residents. One component of that survey inquired as to their opinions on park and recreation issues in the Township. While there was general satisfaction with existing park resources, widespread concern was expressed for the rate of development and a corresponding loss of open spaces. Allied with this was a desire to secure walkable and bikeable linkages between our neighborhoods, villages, parks, and surrounding areas.

Survey 2: Summary

In 2010, strong support was found for preserving open space both as a general idea and as implied by support for a dedicated property tax millage as an option for funding preservation. Ratings of qualities of open space indicated that respondents generally valued all qualities but favored preserving open space for principled reasons (preserving ecosystems and historical sites and preventing unwanted development) more so than increasing the land's functionality (providing recreation, increased accessibility, or connectivity between open spaces). However, their ratings indicated that they supported the latter reasons as well.

Survey 1: Details

Residents were asked to indicate whether facilities in the Township were adequate, needed to be improved, or needed to be increased. Walking paths and bicycle paths were cited by 42% of the respondents as being inadequate (needing improvement or increase). This was the highest need expressed in the survey (Table 1). The next highest need was expressed for nature trails (35% inadequate). Overall, residents were satisfied with the provision of other recreation facilities (tennis courts - 22% inadequate, playgrounds - 20% inadequate, picnic tables - 15% inadequate, etc.).

TABLE 1. RESIDENTS RATING OF RECREATION FACILITIES.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Inadequate</i>	<i>Facility</i>	<i>Inadequate</i>
Walking Paths	42%	Ball Fields	13%
Bicycle Paths	42%	BBQ Grills	11%
Nature Trails	35%	Basketball	10%

		Courts	
Tennis Courts	22%	Volleyball Courts	8%
Playgrounds	20%	Soccer Fields	7%
Picnic Tables	15%	Bocce Court	5%
Pavilions	14%	Horseshoe Court	5%

Harris Township residents were also asked whether they agreed with a series of statements about recreation in the municipality. The results showed that people were relatively well satisfied with the quality and quantity of parks and recreation areas within the Township (Table 2). However there was significant concern about disappearing open space in the Township as well as for the need for connections between neighborhoods and to Tussey Mountain.

TABLE 2. ATTITUDES ABOUT RECREATION ISSUES.

	<i>Agree</i>
Parks are well maintained	96%
Satisfied with parks	90%
Sufficient recreation areas	89%
Open Space is threatened by development	88%
Connect neighborhoods	87%
Connections to Tussey Mountain	77%
Accessible for special needs people	82%
Dog park	37%

When asked to rate the quality of parks and recreation in Harris Township, a large majority of residents rated maintenance, availability and quality of the Township's parks as good or excellent (Table 3). However, only 40% felt that the provision of bike paths and sidewalks in the neighborhood could be rated as good or excellent. Once again, this shows the value residents place on walking and bicycling connections.

TABLE 3. RATING OF PARK AND RECREATION IN HARRIS TOWNSHIP.

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Rated good to excellent</i>
Park Maintenance	79%

Availability of parks	85%
Quality of parks	84%
Provision of sidewalks and bike paths in your neighborhood	40%

Overall, open space and greenery were important or very important to 81% of the respondents to the Township survey (Table 4). A clear majority favored the use of tax money to purchase and preserve open space.

TABLE 4. OTHER OPEN SPACE QUESTIONS.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Important</i>
Open Space and greenery	81%
Use tax money for open space	58%

Survey 2: Details

Overall 96% (+/- 2, 95% CI) of respondents thought Harris Township should preserve open space. Participants' definitions of open space coincided with the definition provided, which was, "a parcel of land that is predominantly undeveloped. The space can be public or private and can be small or large. Preservation of the space allows it to remain in its current state and enhancement of the space allows it to be adapted for common use."

Respondents indicated how important they perceived seven qualities of open space. These qualities were selected based upon the Committee's experience with the community, knowledge about the area, and reading qualities used by other townships. Respondents were asked to provide other qualities that could be considered. The qualities listed were primarily consistent with those listed in the survey. On average, respondents indicated that all qualities were at least moderately important (rating of 3; see Table 5). The pattern, however indicates that they thought it was most important to preserve space for principled reasons (preserving ecosystems, preventing development and preserving historic places) more so than functional reasons (recreation, connectivity and consistency with Township or regional plans).

TABLE 5. RATING OF IMPORTANT QUALITIES OF OPEN SPACE.

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Mean rating</i>
Preserving Ecosystems (e.g., wildlife habitats, protect drinking water, sensitive soils, wildlife habitats, special waterways, ag. lands, rock or forest features)	4.53
Preventing likely development (e.g., within the next 5 years)	4.07
Preserving Historic places (e.g., historic events/people, historic buildings.)	3.97

Providing Accessibility (e.g. from neighborhoods to open space)	3.69
Providing Recreation	3.60
Providing Connectivity (e.g., from one open space to another, such as one bike path to another or to other types of open space)	3.50
Being consistent with township or regional plans	3.50

Ratings ranged from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important)

Seventy-three percent of homeowners supported a dedicated property tax millage, should a conservation fund be established. Of the homeowners who indicated a preferred tax value, the most preferred tax option was 0.5 mills (see Table 5). If only those who supported taxes are examined, just over half were willing to pay 0.7, 1.0, or 1.5 mills. Many respondents may have selected the lowest tax amount to communicate that they are willing to pay taxes but prefer whatever option minimizes their taxes. Their specific preferences could change if concrete examples were provided for how the money would be spent or the amount of money needed for particular opportunities that may arise.

TABLE 5. TAX PREFERENCES

<i>Tax value</i>	<i>Percent</i>
0.0 mills	27%
0.5 mills	31%
0.7 mills	16%
1.0 mills	13%
1.5 mills	12%

Note: These percents exclude those who indicated “don’t know” to the tax option which could mean they either did not know whether they supported the tax option or they did not know what tax value they would prefer

SUPPLY

INVENTORY OF PROTECTED LANDS

Harris Township is already blessed with a selection of parks, open spaces and bicycle paths. However, much of the open space near where people live is privately held and may not remain open in the future. Many of the trails people use to walk from place to place are similarly on private land and access in the future is not assured.

MUNICIPAL PARKS

Harris Township has seven municipal parks (Table 6). Four of these, Country Place, Harpster, Kaywood and Nittany View are essentially neighborhood parks, primarily used by residents in the areas contiguous to them.

Blue Spring is more of a community park. People come from all over the Township to utilize the park. It is also used by other residents in the Centre Region. Not only does it have some unique features, such as the seasonal ice rink, but it is also the site of community events, such as the Memorial Day Race.

Eugene Fasick, located in the Willowbrook development, is used by residents of the Centre Region, as it hosts Little League games each year.

The Stan Yoder Memorial Preserve is a unique place. Its 15 acres offer a variety of undeveloped areas surrounded by walking paths and benches. A prime location for bird watching and other forms of nature study, the Preserve is visited by residents from all parts of the Township.

TABLE 6. HARRIS TOWNSHIP'S MUNICIPAL PARKS.

<i>Park</i>	<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Acreage</i>
Blue Spring	Basketball, ball fields, soccer field, ice rink, playground, pavilion	8
Country Place	Playground, half-court basketball	4.1
Eugene Fasick	Playground, bocce court, horseshoes, ball field, pavilion, basketball court, nature trail	18.3
Kaywood	Playground, basketball court, ball field	10
Nittany View	Pavilion, playground, walking path, ball field, soccer field	9
Stan Yoder Memorial Preserve	Walking paths, nature trail	15
Harpster Park	Walking paths, benches, landscaped areas	4

STATE FORESTS

Over 15 square miles of Rothrock State Forest cover the southern half of the Township. The State Forest offers a wide variety of recreation opportunities, including hunting, hiking, bicycling and nature viewing. For the most part, the Forest is separated from public streets by private land on the mountainside. Foot access is limited to a road through Galbraith Gap and a trail in Shingletown Gap.

OTHER PUBLIC LANDS

The grounds of the Pennsylvania Military Museum provide an expanse of over 50 acres of open space within the Township. The Museum's grounds include the Shrine of the 28th Infantry Division, commemorating the military service of regional residents during World War I and World War II. The grounds of the Museum have been used for many formal and informal recreation activities over the years. A popular walking area, the Military Museum also includes a nature trail, picnic pavilion and open fields. Many events are held on the grounds, including the Peoples Choice Festival of Pennsylvania Arts, Allegheny Mountain Region A.A.C.A. Car Show, Civil War re-enactments and World War II re-enactments.

The Centre Region Council of Governments has purchased a 68 acre tract near Oak Hall, a small portion of which lies within the Township. Planning for the development of this tract is underway.

The Centre Region Council of Governments also recently purchased Hess Field, a 21 acre softball facility. It contains four softball fields and is heavily used for league and tournament play.

EASEMENTS

There are several properties in the Township that have been preserved with conservation easements. The Potter Farm, in the northeast portion of the Township is protected through an 81 acre easement with ClearWater Conservancy and through a 107 acre agricultural easement through Centre County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program². The development rights to the 287-acre Nittany Farm, between Route 45 and Route 322 in the eastern edge of the Township, were donated to ClearWater by owner Galen Dreibelbis. Two other properties, Mountain Spring Farm, on the eastern end of the Township, and the Harding property, on the western end, have been proposed for agricultural easements.

TRAILS

Trail connections provide a way for residents to access and enjoy recreational areas, open space and population centers. With walking continuing to be one of the most popular activities for Township residents, the need for more trails and pathways has become obvious. As part of its open space preservation efforts, the Township hopes to create a network of trails that provide access between neighborhoods, to Rothrock State Forest and to outlying communities.

DEFINITIONS

There are many different classifications of trails. The following definitions are taken from *Trail and Path Planning: A Guide for Municipalities* published by the Chester County Planning Commission. The definitions are based on those used by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

² A small portion of the Potter Farm is located in Potter Township.

Trail - an off-road facility with a permanent alignment that is open to the general public and that is designed, constructed and maintained as part of a public park system used for a variety of non-motorized forms of travel, including walking, hiking, biking, cross country skiing or horseback riding.

Path - a facility that is designed, constructed, maintained and used primarily for one form of travel, such as a bicycle or walking path.

Bike Route - a roadway shoulder or low volume roadway used for bicycle transportation.

Traditional Hiking Route - a hiking pathway that has been used for many years, but that has not been constructed into a multi-use trail and is not maintained as part of a public park system.

EXISTING TRAILS

South Atherton Street Pathway - The South Atherton Street Pathway was constructed in the 1980s. It runs from the intersection of Warner Boulevard to the Township line (at Villa Crest Drive) and provides paved access for bicyclists and pedestrians to College Township and State College Borough. The pathway is maintained by Harris Township.

Pennsylvania Military Museum - The Military Museum features a large paved trail around the perimeter of its property. The trail is open to the public and is used by pedestrians, bicyclists and inline skaters. The path is maintained by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as part of the Military Museum's operations.

Rothrock State Forest - The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources maintains several hiking trails through the Rothrock State Forest. The state forest is located inside the Township and can be accessed through Bear Meadows Road. Harris Township worked in conjunction with ClearWater Conservancy to build parking access at the Galbraith Gap trailhead.

Linden Hall Rail Trail - An abandoned Pennsylvania Railroad bed in the Village of Linden Hall has become an informal rail trail, connecting the properties along the bed to a privately-owned park. The rail trail is privately owned and maintained.

Liberty Hill Development - The plans for the Liberty Hill community include an internal network of walking paths. These paths are to be constructed of crushed stone to comply with ADA requirements. The paths will be owned and maintained by the Liberty Hill Homeowners Association.

Shingletown Gap - The State College Borough Water Authority allows access from its reservoir area into Rothrock State Forest.

FUTURE GROWTH POTENTIAL

Future growth within the Township will be guided by the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan and local land use regulations including Zoning and the Official Map. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) which establishes the area where most of the future growth within the Centre Region will be encouraged to occur. This RGB contains the area within Harris Township which is planned for public sewer and water service and is zoned for future growth. Areas outside of the RGB in Harris Township are primarily agricultural and forested areas which contain zoning that provides for the use of rural clustering techniques to preserve open space within the Township.

OFFICIAL MAP

An Official Map is a land use planning tool that allows a Township to reserve for potential, future public use desirable streets, waterways, parks, hiking and biking paths, open space and other public facilities. Once adopted, the Official Map is a legal record of the location within a Township of these desirable infrastructure areas. The Official Map also sets out a procedure that specifies under what circumstances and when a township can purchase these identified areas. A township can purchase a property identified on the Official Map when the landowner of the property officially notifies the township that he intends to build on or develop the property. In this situation, a township has the first right to buy the property and has one year in which to purchase the property. If a township does not take action within the one year period, the reservation of the property for public use lapses.

The goals of Harris Township's Official Map as it relates to open space are: (1) to provide the ability to bicycle or walk from State College to Rothrock State Forest and (2) to provide walkability between neighborhoods. Harris Township adopted its Official Map, which included these goals, in December 2008; a copy is attached as Appendix A.

POTENTIAL ACQUISITIONS

Harris Township's Official Map identifies several tracts of land, bike and pedestrian paths that should be considered for future acquisition. While the Official Map process requires waiting until the identified property is proposed for development, the Township does not have to wait for development plans to be submitted to acquire the identified properties. Instead, acquisition may be pursued now if there is a willing seller and the lands are judged to be of sufficient significance to warrant such action.

The use of the Official Map to designate future open space and pedestrian and bicycle trails does not preclude the Township from considering other lands for acquisition, in accordance with the criteria described in detail later in this plan.

Future open space tracts are identified in Table 7 below.

TABLE 7. FUTURE OPEN SPACE IDENTIFIED ON THE OFFICIAL MAP.

Item No.	Description
No. 12	Provide parkland on the R-2 Aikens tract that is adjacent to the existing Country Place Park.
No. 16	Provide parkland on the McShea property that connects to the Fasick Tot Lot.
No. 18	Provide parkland on the Rockey Farm adjacent to the existing Kaywood Park.
No. 21	Provide a park along the edge of the Harris Acres and Fairfield neighborhoods, currently the Hendricks property.
No. 26	Add the former Boalsburg Elementary School as parkland.
No. 27	Provide a park along Route 45 near the Rittenhouse properties.
No. 29	Provide parkland including the lower pond and land on the adjacent KBBH property.

Future pedestrian and bicycle paths are identified in Table 8 below.

TABLE 8. FUTURE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PATHS IDENTIFIED ON THE OFFICIAL MAP.

Item No.	Description
No. 5	Pedestrian connection between Blue Spring Park and Yoder Preserve.
No. 6	Bikepath along Warner Boulevard connecting to the South Atherton Street bikepath.
No. 7	Bikepath from the Military Museum to Ashworth Woods and Liberty Hill.
No. 8	Path across Route 45 at the wooded lot that will connect to the proposed parkland in the Fairfield subdivision (No. 21).
No. 9	Trail connection from the Yoder Preserve to the end of West Crestview Avenue.
No. 11	Access to Rothrock State Forest from the end of Academy Street.
No. 17	Path from Kaywood to the new Oak Hall Regional Park
No. 22	A trail between Aspen Heights and a proposed new park on the Rockey Farm.

No. 23	Trail along the boundary of the Rockey property and the Kaywood development from Route 45 to Linden Hall Road.
No. 24	A trail from the end of Torrey Lane to the Galbraith Trailhead.
No. 28	A greenway connection from the Country Place development to the Harvest Fields property.

PROTECTION STRATEGIES

There are a variety of mechanisms available for the protection of open space in the Township. Each has its own unique set of advantages and disadvantages, which must be matched to the specific resource being considered for protection. None of these strategies could be pursued without a landowner who is a willing participant in the process.

FEE SIMPLE PURCHASE

Land for open space and greenways may be purchased like any other piece of property. A contract is negotiated with a willing seller and a fee simple purchase is arranged. Funds may come out of general revenues, from a dedicated tax, municipal bonds, or a capital campaign.

There are a number of state programs that will finance all or part of the land planning, acquisition, and/or development. Some, like the DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships, require up to a 50% match of funds or in-kind services.

LEASE/BUYBACK

This acquisition method involves the sale of property with a provision that allows the original owner to lease all or a portion of the tract for private use. This allows the landowner to sell the property, yet retain the right to continue using the property. The seller receives a lump sum of cash and is no longer obligated to pay taxes on the land. Meanwhile the purchaser has a temporary income stream that can offset any liabilities incurred in the land purchase.

EASEMENT

Conservation easements allow landowners to sell the development rights to their land. By this process, they reduce the residual value of their property and thereby their tax liabilities. Easements may also be obtained allowing public access along corridors within or on the edge of properties. Unless these are granted in perpetuity, the access might be lost in the future.

REGULATION

Through land use regulation, a municipality may limit the uses for specific types of land. Such things as the Ridge Overlay District ordinance or strict farm-land development regulations can limit the loss of open space.

ALTRUISM

Landowners may want to deed their land over to the Township, thereby obtaining substantial tax benefits as well as leaving a permanent legacy. Such donations should be done only after the landowner consults with their tax advisor.

BARGAIN SALE

A landowner may choose to sell land to the Township at a less than fair market price. In this manner, they can take cash out of their land holdings while obtaining tax benefits on the difference between the sale price and the fair market value.

PREFERENTIAL TAX TREATMENT

Act 419 allows land owners to receive a tax reduction based upon the use of their land as opposed to the open market value. Land enrolled in the program is preferentially assessed based upon its use being limited to agriculture or as a forest reserve. The land must be freely open to the public for outdoor recreation or enjoyment of its scenic or natural beauty. The program does not guarantee that the land must stay in that use, but does require that the landowner pay back taxes, with interest, if they wish to change its use.

FUNDING OPTIONS:

OPTION A: MUNICIPAL TAXES APPROVED THROUGH A REFERENDUM

A voter referendum is a tool that Harris Township can use to dedicate either a property tax or earned income tax increase for the acquisition of open space. A referendum asks the voters if they are willing to increase their property or earned income taxes for open space. A referendum (also known as a plebiscite or a ballot question) is a direct vote in which an entire electorate is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal.

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association reports that, “a conservation referendum is a highly successful mechanism for raising money that is dedicated to a specific conservation.” The Association notes that between 1998 and 2007, there were 120 local ballot measures in Pennsylvania, with 94 approved by voters, a 78% approval rate.

The authority to conduct the referendum and incur electoral debt is found in both Pennsylvania’s Act 153 of 1996 (which amended the Open Space Lands Act, Act 442 of

1967) and the Local Government Unit Debt Act. If a referendum is carried out pursuant to Act 153, the money will need to be spent under the rules laid out in Act 153. Some municipalities have decided to hold open space bond referenda under the more general authority of their municipal codes and the Local Government Unit Debt Act, instead of Act 153.

The method for placing a referendum question on a ballot is set forth in the Pennsylvania Election Code (P.L. 1333, No. 320). First, the governing body must pass an ordinance to have the question placed on the ballot. For tax measures, the ordinance is then filed with the county board of elections at least 13 Tuesdays before the next primary or general election. The question for approval of a dedicated tax must be phrased with the following words:

“Do you favor the imposition of a [describe the tax in millage or rate] by [local government unit] to be used to [purpose]?”

For a debt referendum, the question must be submitted to the county board of elections at least 45 days in advance of the election and be phrased substantially as follows:

“Shall debt in the sum of [amount] dollars for the purpose of financing [describe purpose] be authorized to be incurred as debt approved by the electors?”

It is also necessary to publish election notices in local newspapers and legal journals beginning no earlier than three weeks before the election, but no later than two weeks before the election.

For both tax and debt referendum questions, the purpose should be described carefully so that the intent is clear to the voters and so that it authorizes all of the intended activities. An example might be “... for the acquisition of land and conservation easements for open space, recreation and the preservation of farmland.”

Harris Township has experience in using a referendum to fund public projects. In 1993, residents were asked to consider a proposed referendum that would increase property taxes by .3 mills to support fire services through the Boalsburg Fire Company. The voters approved the referendum 60% to 40%.

OPTION B: MUNICIPAL TAXES THROUGH THE ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS

Using the annual budget process the Harris Township Board of Supervisors can annually include in the Township’s budget a fixed line item to fund open space acquisition. This appropriation could occur in a manner similar to any other recurrent expense incurred by the Township.

A concern with this funding option is that the annual budget may vary from year to year depending on the financial condition of the Township and the changing values of the elected officials who hold office over time. Based on this variability, achieving the required predictability associated with funding of long term debt for open space acquisition may be a challenge.

OPTION C: FEES-IN-LIEU OF PARKLAND DEDICATION

Local planning and zoning is governed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The MPC permits local governments to offer developers a choice between a monetary or land contribution for park development. The choice belongs to the developer.

Under the MPC, Harris Township has adopted a parkland fee-in-lieu ordinance that requires property owners who are developing five or more residential units to dedicate parkland or make a payment in lieu of parkland. This ordinance does not apply to commercial or industrial zoned properties. A recent application of this ordinance was the Elksview development where the property owner opted to make a monetary contribution instead of a dedicating land.

OPTION D: GRANTS

Grants play an increasingly important role in open space protection efforts. Funding sources include federal and state agencies, private foundations, community foundations, and even local corporations. A key to obtaining grant funds for open space is to match the goals of a local open space project to the larger objectives of a particular funder. A winning proposal will fulfill both the agency's and the funder's objectives vis-à-vis open space protection. This is where a well-conceived needs assessment can pay off: funders want to see a project's connections to local and regional priorities, as well as wide-ranging public and environmental benefits. Grant proposals that are developed only to meet the funder's interest only satisfy one side of the funding equation.

Grants for open space protection are highly competitive. Having a staff person or a consultant who is familiar with both funding sources and writing grant applications can improve Harris Township's chances of success. In addition, Harris Township can increase the competitiveness of its grant applications by providing a local match to the grant in the form of cash, land or in kind services.

OPTION E: DONATIONS

Voluntary donation of conservation easements is an excellent method of open space and natural resource protection. The landowner who donates a conservation easement permanently protects the land, while retaining ownership and enjoyment of the property. In many cases a conservation easement may provide estate planning benefits. While there is no automatic requirement for public access to conservation easement properties, some easements for riparian fishing or bike trails etc. may provide public access to the easement area for appropriate users.

The public benefits because areas with important open space resources are permanently protected without additional regulation and without cost to the Township. Any loss in taxes is offset by the reduced need for services.

Private residents who choose to dedicate land to the Township's open space purposes could take advantage of a number of benefits.

- **Bargain Sale:** Property is sold at less than fair market value by identifying the acquisition as part donation and part sale. There may be tax benefits to the seller for the donated value, as well as a reduced cost to the Township.
- **Conservation Easements/Development Rights:** A partial interest in the land is transferred to the County or Township by donation or purchase. The property owner retains full ownership of the land, but future development is restricted. The owner may receive some income tax and estate tax benefits.
- **Life Estate:** The land is sold to the Township, and the owner may continue to occupy the residence and a portion of the property for the duration of the owner's lifetime.
- **Donation:** There are certain tax benefits available to a landowner associated with land donation.

OPTION F: DEVELOP PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

Harris Township may optimize the funds available for open space acquisition by partnering with other agencies when their land acquisition goals are complementary.

Through the development of partnerships with other groups the Township's open space acquisition funding can be interwoven with municipal, state, federal, nonprofit, or philanthropic funds.

Potential partners include: ClearWater Conservancy, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Centre County Conservation program.

OPTION G: INCORPORATE OPEN SPACE CONCEPTS INTO TOWNSHIP PLANNING AND ZONING DOCUMENTS

Proposal A: Review the Harris Township Official Map to ensure that all desired trails and future open spaces are identified.

Proposal B: Review applicable Township ordinances to ensure that trails are considered to be an approved community-wide facility that is eligible to receive in lieu funding.

Proposal C: Work cooperatively with developers to partner in the acquisition of open space.

Proposal D: Review the Harris Township subdivision and land development ordinances to include pedestrian/bike paths as a requirement in some zoning districts.

OPTION H: COMBINATION OF OPTIONS

Many of these funding options may be combined, giving the Township greater flexibility in its efforts to preserve open space. For example, conservation funds may be used to provide the required matching funds for state grants or fee-in-lieu might be combined with the resources of a partner organization to preserve an important piece of open space that also provides significant recreation amenities for residents of the new development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Open space is important to the residents of Harris Township. As the Township continues to grow, the opportunities to preserve open space and greenways are dwindling. However, open space is land and land costs money - significant amounts of money in a growing area such as Harris Township. Nor, is the price going to go down. There are a variety of mechanisms available to acquire these areas. No one method will be appropriate for all situations.

The Harris Township Open Space Committee recommends that the Harris Township Board of Supervisors consider endorsing the following strategies to advance the efforts to acquire open space:

STRATEGY 1:

The Township should establish an Open Space Preservation and Acquisition Fund. The purpose of the fund shall be exclusively to implement the Township's open space preservation and acquisition program. Deposits into the fund may include township revenues, bond funds, grants and gifts. Interest accrued by monies deposited in the fund shall be credited to the fund. In no event shall monies deposited in the fund be transferred to any other fund or account.

STRATEGY 2:

Establish relationships between the Township and other organizations with an interest in open space acquisition.

STRATEGY 3:

Authorize Township Staff to identify potential county, state, and federal funding sources for open space acquisition.

STRATEGY 4:

Authorize Township Staff to identify, in a clear and concise manner, the benefits to the landowner of selling or giving land or granting an easement. Staff could then use this

information to actively encourage and facilitate the donation of voluntary conservation easements consistent with the Open Space Plan.

STRATEGY 5:

Initiate steps to plan, fund and conduct a referendum to raise the Township's Earned Income Tax rate 0.1 percent to be included on the November 2012 ballot.

A conservation referendum is a highly successful mechanism for raising money that is dedicated to a specific conservation purpose. Open space of agricultural, recreational, natural, scenic, historic and/or cultural importance to a community can be protected using funds approved by voters in a primary or general election. If a local government hasn't exceeded its taxation or debt limits, voter approval of funding for conservation projects isn't necessary. Nevertheless, a referendum can be highly desirable because the referendum will serve to permanently dedicate the proposed tax or bond revenue to the conservation purpose described in the referendum.

Cities, boroughs and townships in Pennsylvania are permitted to levy dedicated property, earned income and real estate transfer taxes for land conservation with the approval of a simple majority of voters through a ballot measure. State law does not provide this authority to counties. Both county and local government units in Pennsylvania may issue bonds with the proceeds dedicated to conservation projects with the approval of a simple majority of voters.

Actions that should occur are:

- Decide what campaign costs may be involved (polling, mailings, postage, signs, etc.) and develop a preliminary budget
- Organize a campaign committee (in order to raise and spend funds in support of a ballot measure this committee must be registered with the county board of elections as described below); enlist volunteers and appoint area or activity captains.
- Appoint a campaign committee chair and treasurer.
- Recruit a well respected "local champion" to serve as primary spokesperson.
- Prepare a timeline and schedule of tasks, assign responsibilities; enforce the timeline.

STRATEGY 6:

According to the Pennsylvania Land Trust, gaining strong public support for the referendum is critical. Voters deserve the right to know what their money will be used for and how much it will cost them. A campaign must explain clearly what is being proposed and how individuals and interest groups will benefit. Most likely, this will mean communicating several key messages through different channels and to different targeted audiences. To help with this effort, local organizations, such as environmental and watershed groups, municipal environmental advisory councils, planning commissions, park and recreation boards, athletic leagues, farming groups, senior citizen groups, "enlightened" builders,

financial experts and local leaders should be engaged. Support should also be solicited from the school board.

STRATEGY 7:

Review the Harris Township subdivision and land development ordinances to include pedestrian/bike paths as a requirement in some zoning districts.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING OPEN SPACE TO PRESERVE

Criteria for selecting spaces to preserve were derived from the residents' ratings of qualities of open space in the 2010 survey. Specifically, we propose that properties under consideration be first rated according to the extent to which they fit the qualities specified noted in Table and second, be weighted by a value derived from residents' ratings of the qualities in the Spring 2010 survey. In this manner, two or more properties can be compared as to the extent to which they should be prioritized.

TABLE 9. CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZING POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS.

Criteria	Weighted Value	High Rating (2 points)	Medium Rating (1 point)	Low Rating (0 points)
Ecosystem-including the following: Sensitive Soils; Wildlife Habitat; Forest Lands; Watersheds; Ag Land; and/or Geological Features	4.53	3 or more of the following: sensitive soils, wildlife habitats, forest lands, watersheds, ag lands, and/or geological features	1 or 2 of the following: sensitive soils, wildlife habitats, forest lands, watersheds, ag lands, and/or geological features	No sensitive soils, wildlife habitats, forest lands, watersheds, ag lands, and/or geological features
Likelihood of Development	4.07	Development likely in next five years	Development likely in 5-10 years	No development likely in next 10 years
History	3.97	Historically significant features	Historic features or building remnants	No historic features
Accessibility	3.69	Provides easy access from multiple neighborhoods	Good access from at least one neighborhood	No access

Recreation	3.60	Adds significant parcel to public recreational lands	Adds to public recreational lands	No change to public recreational lands
Connectivity	3.50	Connects existing or proposed recreational area or trails	Extends existing or proposed trails	No trail possible on property (no connections)
Consistency with Township/Regional Plans for Preservation	3.50	Identified on Harris Township Official Map or other Township plans	Identified in Centre Region Comp Plan, Centre County Comp Plan or Centre County Greenways Plan	Not specifically referenced in any municipal, regional or county plans

In addition to the criteria to evaluate land, the Committee also developed criteria that could be used to evaluate potential trail and greenway connections. The criteria uses the weighted values from the 2010 survey.

Table 10. Criteria for prioritizing potential open space acquisitions.

Criteria	Weighted Value	High Rating (2 points)	Medium Rating (1 point)	Low Rating (0 points)
Trail qualities include the following: panoramas, vistas, water features, views of historic features, and wildlife viewing areas	4.53	3 or more of the following: panoramas, vistas, water features, views of historic features, and wildlife viewing areas	1 or 2 of the following: panoramas, vistas, water features, views of historic features, and wildlife viewing areas	No panoramas, vistas, water features, views of historic features, and wildlife areas
Likelihood of Development	4.07	Development likely in next five years	Development likely in 5-10 years	No development likely in next 10 years
Traditional Use	3.97	Was in use over 25 years ago	Has been used in recent time (<25 years)	No traditional use

Connectivity	3.69	Connects existing or proposed recreational area or trails	Extends existing or proposed trails	No connectivity
Accessibility	3.50	Over 50 housing units within 1,000 yards	Between 10 and 50 housing units within 1,000 yards	Under 10 housing units within 1,000 yards
Consistency with Township/Regional Plans for Preservation	3.50	Identified on the Harris Township Official Map or other Township plans	Identified in the Centre Region Comp Plan, Centre County Comp Plan or Centre County Greenways Plan	Not specifically referenced in any municipal, regional plans

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

The Harris Township Board of Supervisors should establish an Open Space Committee to implement the Open Space Plan, evaluate potential acquisitions, and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Committee will have five members.

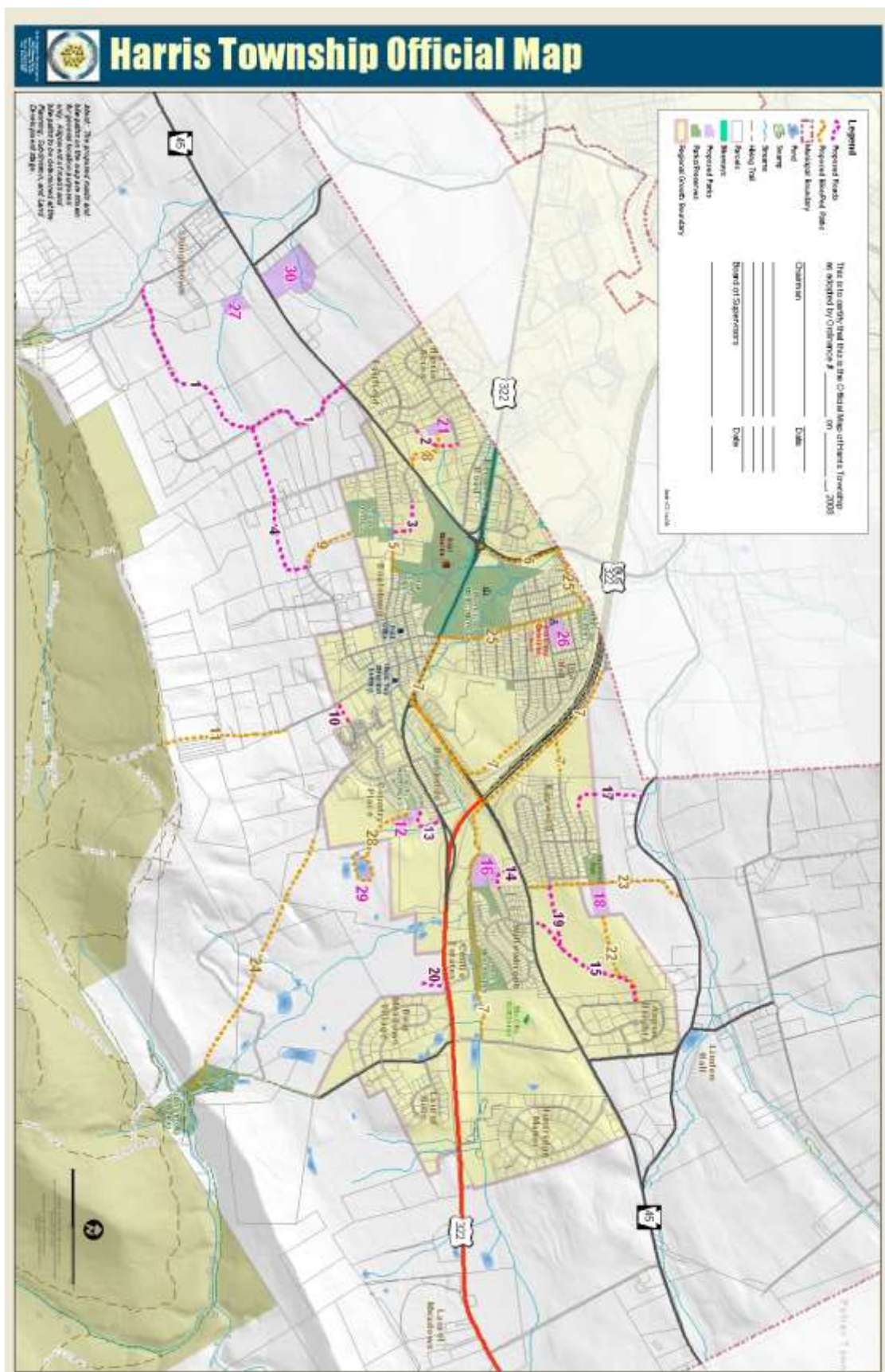
Initially, two will be appointed for a three-year term, two for a two-year term, and one for a one-year term. Thereafter, members will serve three-year terms. Members will serve no more than two consecutive terms and be eligible for reappointment one year after the end of their last term. The Committee will draw up its own bylaws, subject to the approval of the Board of Supervisors.

REFERENCES

Centre County Historical Society. 2011. Centre County's Townships and Boroughs.
<http://centrecountyhistory.org/history/countytour.html>. Accessed February 12, 2011.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2011. Census 2000 & 2010 Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File.

APPENDIX A – THE OFFICIAL MAP



APPENDIX B – PENNSYLVANIA GRANT PROGRAMS

PENNSYLVANIA GROWING GREENER

Growing Greener I and Growing Greener II funds are distributed among four state agencies: the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to administer watershed restoration and protection and abandoned mine projects; the Department of Agriculture (DA) to administer farmland preservation projects; the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for state park renovations and improvements; and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PennVEST) for water and sewer system upgrades. The total dollar commitment to the Growing Greener Program was doubled from \$645 million to \$1.3 billion and extended through 2012 by a permanent dedication of a new \$4/ton municipal waste disposal fee to Growing Greener.

The four agency Growing Greener Grant Programs are described below:

PENNSYLVANIA DEP GROWING GREENER GRANTS (DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION)

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is authorized to administer nearly \$547.7 million in Growing Greener Grant funds. Eligible projects coordinated by this agency include watershed restoration and protection, abandoned mine reclamation and abandoned oil and gas well plugging projects. Watershed projects must entail the organization of a watershed group, watershed assessment, development of a watershed restoration or protection plan, implementation of a watershed restoration or protection plan, or demonstration, environmental education, and outreach projects. Any Pennsylvania county or local governments, authorities, conservation districts, watershed associations and other nonprofit groups may apply. Matching funds are not required but are encouraged.

PENNSYLVANIA DCNR GROWING GREENER GRANTS (DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES)

The Pennsylvania DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) is a combination of several funding sources and grant programs, including Growing Greener. The C2P2 contains the following grant components: Community Recreation, Land Trusts, Rails-to-Trails, Rivers Conservation, Snowmobile/ATV, Heritage Parks, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Recreational Trails. Except for the Heritage Parks grants, all other components have been combined into one annual application cycle (generally late summer/early fall), and use a single application format and process with one grant manual and one set of application forms. Applications selected for federal LWCF funding require some supplemental information to enable submission of the application to the National Park Service (NPS). Generally, all components require a match, usually 50 percent of cash or in-hand contributions.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE GROWING GREENER GRANTS
(DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE)

Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program has allocated Growing Greener II funds for the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program. The program was developed in 1988 to help slow the loss of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses. It enables state, county and local governments to purchase conservation easements, also called development rights, from owners of quality farmland.

PENNVEST (PENNSYLVANIA INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
AUTHORITY)

Pennvest has a number of programs that can aid municipalities seeking to preserve open space. The Authority's principal responsibility is to aid communities by funding sewer, storm water and drinking water projects through grants and low interest loans. In particular, projects intended to protect watersheds may also have important open space benefits for the communities. The Department of Environmental Resources will direct Growing Greener applications to Pennvest, when they are not able to accommodate requests with available funds. In addition, Pennvest receives funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The Authority also funds non-point source projects. Both their Brownfield Remediation and Redevelopment program can be used for parks, greenways and open space preservation and creation. Their Greyfield program can also have significant open space benefits.