

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan provides an overall guide and framework for the future development of the Joint Area. The Plan anticipates and accommodates a variety of opportunities for growth in the township and borough, while at the same time striving to protect the area's natural features and agricultural heritage. The Plan designates appropriate locations for all land uses expected to be in the Joint Area over the next ten to twenty years. The Plan also sets the stage for specific actions that are necessary by all the different kinds of decision-makers in the township, borough, school district, county, and State, in order to implement the Plan's recommendations.

This Plan must be used as a primary reference for evaluating and influencing future change in Centre Township and Centerport Borough. The procedures and actions in this chapter are provided, among other things, as the instructions for use of this Plan by the planning commissions, governing bodies, zoning hearing boards, and staffs of the two municipalities.

Adoption of the Plan

The first and most basic step in the implementation of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan is its official adoption by the Township Board of Supervisors and Borough Council. The Comprehensive Plan will then form the policy foundation for day-to-day decisions concerning development, as well as the framework for the zoning and subdivision ordinances that are the primary administrative tools for the control of growth and development in the Joint Area.

It is particularly important that the Plan be understood and endorsed by the officials of the township and borough. Without such understanding and support, the Plan will not be useful nor will it be followed. Since, under Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), the right of approval for subdivision and land development is (with limited exceptions) exercised by municipalities, it follows that successful implementation of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan relies to a very great extent on municipal follow-through on the ideas presented in the Plan. The identification of every planning commission, governing body, zoning hearing board, and municipal staff member with the recommendations of this Plan is a prerequisite for their implementation. If no one "signs on" to the

Plan, its recommendations can't be put into effect.

Amendments to Municipal Land Development Regulations

The Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan's recommendations with respect to land use, transportation, housing, community facilities, agriculture, cultural resources, natural features, and other areas of concern also provide a basis for changes to the development regulations for the two municipalities. Zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance changes are among the most significant implementing tools for the Plan, translating its sometimes broad concepts into specific regulations with which to guide future development.

Zoning Changes

Zoning of land use is the single most important legal tool available to the Township and Borough for management of growth and development. The Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance should be updated and revised to reflect the goals, objectives, and policies of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, and to effect its implementation. An updated Zoning Ordinance is the most efficient and effective device for ensuring that rezonings and subdivision and land development approvals are in conformance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan. A number of revisions to the current zoning ordinance are recommended to contribute to the implementation of the Growth Management Plan. These are summarized below.

A most basic change to the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance would be new regulations that correspond to and implement the clear differentiation between designated "growth" and "low-growth" areas presented in the Land Use Plan. At present, for example, the maximum intensity of development in the "R1 Farm District" is about 1½ dwelling units per gross acre (minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet) versus 2 dwelling units per gross acre (minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet) in the "R2 Suburban Residence District". As Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter 2 of the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan make plain, such minute distinctions are ineffective in establishing a pattern of development that is discernible from one district to the other. If there is to be a clear difference in the intensity of development between the designated growth area and the low-growth area, and the Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan's Growth Management Plan makes it clear there should

be, then there must be corresponding zoning district development regulations that will effectively fulfill the Growth Management Plan's intentions.

The content of such district regulations for low-growth areas can take a number of forms; these choices are outlined in Section 7 of Chapter 3. (The implications of various kinds of zoning alternatives for the "low-growth" areas of the Joint Area were looked at in some depth in the course of the Comprehensive Plan preparation. Some illustrations of zoning alternatives examined are shown in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.) Regardless of which form of these zoning options is pursued, it is essential that it recognize and reinforce the distinctions, in terms of overall intensity of residential development permitted, between tracts of land in low-growth areas versus tracts in the designated growth portion of the Joint Area.

Another important recommendation is to change the emphasis of the requirements in the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance's very-low, low, and medium residential zoning categories from minimum lot size requirements (for example, "minimum lot size 20,000 square feet") to overall density limits ("maximum density 2 dwelling units per acre").

The intention is to permit greater development flexibility, leading to increased preservation of sensitive environmental features, ensuring logical and effective transitions between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, providing a permanent open space and recreational resource for new residential developments, reducing areas susceptible to stormwater flooding, maintaining stable groundwater levels, maintaining wildlife habitat, providing amenity value for the community that can be a help in gaining high-quality development, and enhancing property values for bordering and neighboring dwellings.

The chief implementation tool for permitting this greater development flexibility is the availability of residential clustering development options in the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance for all *Low Density Residential* and most *Medium Density Residential* areas of the Joint Area identified in the Land Use Plan (see Section 3 of Chapter 3). As well, depending on the type of zoning regulations selected for the low-growth portion of the Joint Area, clustering options can be a key ingredient toward preserving agricultural use while simultaneously ensuring a more equitable distribution of the financial benefits of land development to property owners in the designated low-growth portion of the Joint Area (see Section 7 of Chapter 3).

As a corollary to the above points concerning overall residential tract density

limits, the Township and Borough may wish to consider changes to the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance that would embrace the concept of "developable" tract acreage, as opposed to gross acreage. Developable acreage may exclude floodplains and wetlands from consideration in determining base site area density calculations, and may also integrate consideration of a site's extent and type of steep slopes and woodlands in the calculation.

The present Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance has only an "R2 Suburban Residence District", permitting lot sizes of a minimum of 20,000 square feet, between the "R1 Farm District" and more intensive "R3 Urban Residence District". Given the Land Use Plan's recommended range of densities from 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre for *Medium Density Residential* areas, the "R2 Suburban Residence" type of district may need to be considered as two districts, one representing the more intensive end of the *Medium Density Residential's* range and the other the less intensive range.

Similarly, the Land Use Plan's recommended range of densities from 0.4 to 1 dwelling unit per acre for *Low Density Residential* areas probably should be reflected within the Centre Township/Centerport Borough Zoning Ordinance as two or more districts, one representing the more intensive end of the *Low Density Residential's* range and the other the less intensive range.

On the other hand, the inclusion of cluster development options along with by-right regulations within the district zoning texts for *Medium Density Residential* and *Low Density Residential* areas should allow for a range of densities to coexist within the same district, depending on the type of residential ("basic", "cluster", or "compact cluster") being pursued by a developer. As an incentive for developers to elect to use the cluster or compact cluster options small density bonuses may be offered within the respective district regulations.

Zoning Map Changes

The Land Use Concept (Figure 3.3.1) and Land Use Plan (Figure 3.3.2) define a growth area for the township and borough, including:

- The Borough of Centerport and the villages of Dauberville and Mohrsville for the greatest concentration and mix of land uses (*BC/VC* designation);
- Areas surrounding the borough and the villages for medium

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density residential development at about 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre (*MDR* designation);

- Low density residential areas, at about 0.4 to 1 dwelling unit per acre for the perimeter of the Centerport-, Dauberville-, and Mohrsville-centered growth areas. This would include the southeastern quarter of the Joint Area, the Shoey Road corridor (excluding the major agricultural-use conservation tract south of Shoey Road and west of the railroad), major portions of the Irish Creek Road corridor, and individual existing developments within the southwestern quarter of the Joint Area and along Tilden Road, at the Joint Area's extreme north end (*LDR* designation);
- Industrial areas at the general location of the former mushroom plant south of Centerport and between Dauberville and Mohrsville (*IND* designation);
- Institutional areas at the site of the former Centre Township Elementary School and at the 16-acre Township-owned site on Bucks Hill Road at Centerport Road (*INS* designation).

The zoning map for Centre Township/Centerport Borough should reflect these land use designations. Changes to the map, at the very least, would entail:

- Replacing the current zoning boundary line between the "R1" and "R2" districts with one that reflects the boundary between *A* and *LDR* as shown on Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2;
- Replacing the current zoning boundary line between "R2" and "R3" districts with one that reflects the boundary between *LDR* and *MDR* as shown on Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, including the creation of an area of *MDR* around Dauberville;
- Replacing the current zoning boundary line between the "R3" and "MC" districts with one that reflects the boundary between *MDR* and *BC/VC* as shown on Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, including the creation of an area of *VC* for Dauberville;
- Creating an area zoned for industrial use at the general location of the former mushroom plant south of Centerport;
- Creating an area zoned for institutional use at the site of the former Centre Township Elementary School and at the 16-acre Township-owned site on Bucks Hill Road at Centerport Road.

Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations are second only to the zoning ordinance as a tool for managing growth, especially in influencing the quality of new developments. These regulations detail the standards of any required improvements accompanying construction. The Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan makes several recommendations which affect street access and curb cuts, landscaping and open space, and other improvements. Adoption of these recommendations within the Borough of Centerport Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and the Centre Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance will implement better quality development. In addition, requiring Environmental Assessment Statements for major new land developments may now be warranted in the Joint Area.

Potentially wide-ranging changes to Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance standards are suggested by the Plan's recommendations with respect to *Borough/Village Center* areas. For these special identity areas, standards that are distinct from those appropriate in the rest of the Joint Area may be desirable. For example, a more pedestrian-oriented area should have road right-of-way and cartway widths that are different from for conventional areas, sidewalk requirements, tighter horizontal curve radii, and revised parking regulations and sight distance standards, similar to those outlined in the American Society of Civil Engineers, National Association of Homebuilders, and Urban Land Institute publication Residential Streets, 2nd ed. and increasingly followed in many municipalities trying to create more "pedestrian-friendly" neighborhoods.

The Township and Borough should also prepare "Ultimate Right-of-Way" maps for all roads in the township and the borough respectively. Ultimate rights-of-way shown for each street should be appropriate for its functional classification, projected traffic volumes, land uses of abutting properties, and general neighborhood or district character. These maps should be incorporated into the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances and all applicants for subdivision and land development approval should be expected to indicate a willingness to dedicate lands between the existing right-of-way line and ultimate right-of-way to the Township, Borough, or State in order to accommodate future road widenings. Ultimate Right-of-Way maps are a valuable long-range planning tool, appropriate to anticipate and accommodate road improvements that will be needed over time.

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Using the Plan

After official adoption of the Comprehensive Plan (as well as the zoning and subdivision ordinance revisions) the use of the Comprehensive Plan as a reference document on a frequent basis becomes the most important part of the Comprehensive Plan implementation program. Neither the Growth Management Plan nor the zoning and subdivision ordinances can completely anticipate or absolutely control the future growth of the Joint Area. Future development will be determined by day-to-day decisions made by the Township Board of Supervisors and Borough Council, the planning commissions, zoning hearing board, and municipal staffs, largely in response to proposals made by private developers. In each situation where the Township and Borough must respond to a specific development proposal, the Comprehensive Plan should be used as a reference to guide the Township and Borough in the evaluation of the proposal.

The natural resource maps, part of the Comprehensive Plan, are one of the first sources to be referred to in considering any development proposal. The maps should be able to identify potential problem areas. In some cases, the developer will be required to supply more precise information on the natural and manmade determinants of development suitability. The technical expertise of Township, Borough, County, and State agency staff and consultants will be needed to determine whether any potential problems so identified can be overcome.

The Land Use Plan should be consulted early in the review of any development proposal. If the proposed use corresponds to that shown on the Land Use Plan, the major issues will concern design considerations, technical questions, and guarantees of performance on the part of the developer. If the proposed use differs from that shown on the Land Use Plan, the proposal will require the most careful kind of scrutiny. Despite the effort to make the Growth Management Plan as "comprehensive" as possible, it is conceivable that uses will be proposed in the Joint Area over the planning period that do not fit comfortably into one of the eight use categories outlined in the Land Use Plan. It is critical that, in this event, both municipalities consider fully all of the planning implications of any such proposed uses.

A list of criteria that the planning commissions, governing bodies, and others may use in review of applications is included in this document (Appendix I). This tool may serve as a structure for review to ensure that all plans are treated with similar thoroughness and deliberation. Recommendations from the planning commissions to their respective governing bodies should refer to the

Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan

proposal's satisfaction or shortcomings with respect to the evaluation criteria along with any additional facts relating to the application.

There are a number of tools available, beyond the zoning and subdivision ordinances, for evaluating specific proposals and for controlling development. The ability of the Township and Borough to limit the extent and type of growth to areas defined by the Land Use Plan or by subsequent studies, is reinforced through prospective Township and Borough management of the central sewer system. Direction, extent, and type of growth may be effectively implemented through the combination of zoning and subdivision regulations, including new conservation standards for wetlands, woodlands, and steep slopes, and control of sanitary sewer service. Any extension of municipal sewer services should be conditioned on landowners' consent to the general land-use and zoning guidelines recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

Information Gathering, Processing, Storage and Retrieval

The Township and Borough methods for processing, storing, and retrieving information filed as part of applications for subdivision and land development approvals and rezonings should be computerized, coordinated, and systemized. Applications should be coded by number, with corresponding paper and computer-based files, including standardized forms for recording basic information such as the location and dimensions of the tract, the characteristics of the proposed development, and the application and review status. Submitted plans and other pertinent documents should be microfilmed and/or scanned and stored on computer files.

Planning commissions should ensure that they submit annual reports to their respective governing body, summarizing development activities in the municipality. The compilation and publication of the following data would be useful in documenting the character and quantity of change in the Joint Area over time and would be extremely useful in the day-to-day administration of its planning and zoning activities. The items recommended for inclusion in the report are:

- Population estimates
- School population
- Employment estimates

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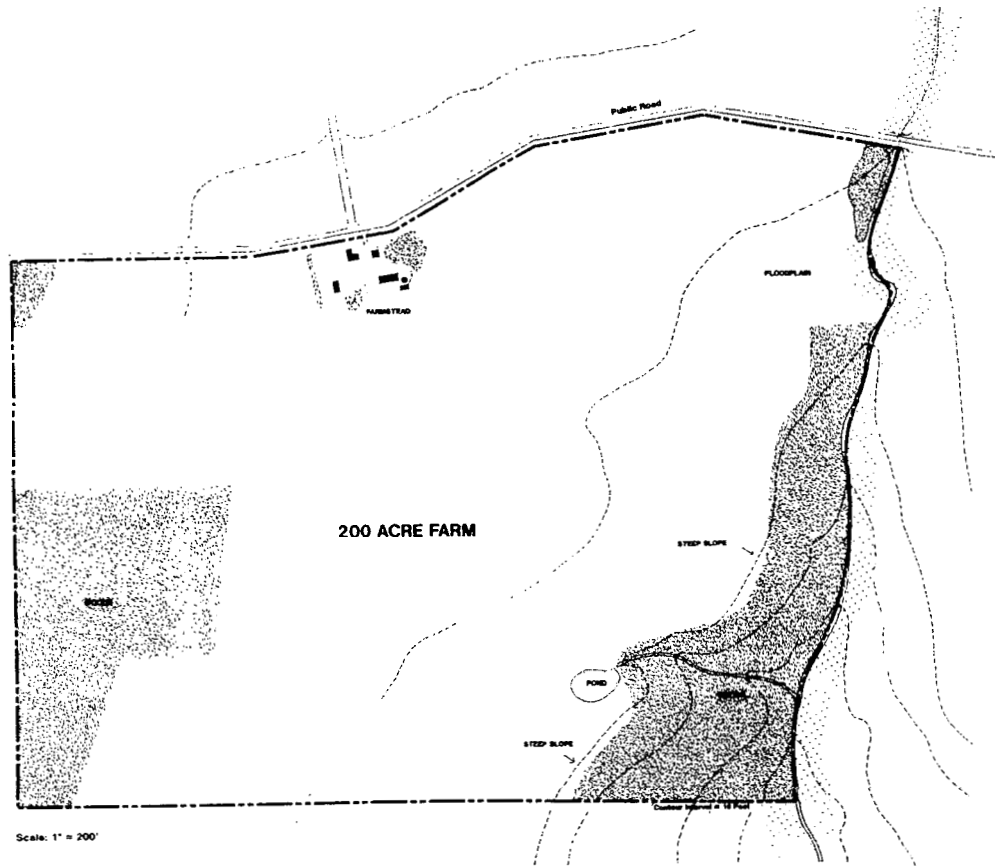
- Development activity summary (new development & redevelopment)
 - Residential development
 - New housing units, by type
 - Acres of residential development
 - Acres of private and dedicated open space
 - New nonresidential construction
 - Acres of new development by land use
 - Gross floor area by use
 - Changes of zoning

Planning Commission Annual Reviews

The planning commissions should, as an annual agenda item, formally review the annual long-range capital improvements program for the municipality to ensure that physical improvements that are being programmed are in accordance with the overall intent of the Comprehensive Plan. The review should also include consideration of items which are called for by the Comprehensive Plan. A formal review and recommendation concerning the long-range capital improvements program should be forwarded to the governing body prior to consideration of the adoption of the long-range capital improvements program.

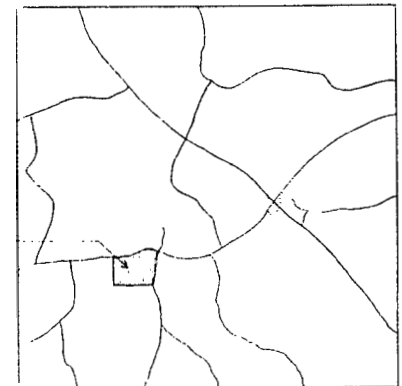
A second annual agenda item should be the Planning Commission Annual Plan, which should:

- Review the degree of accomplishment of the previous year's objectives;
- Summarize studies or projects finished or underway;
- Identify Comprehensive Plan recommendations that are planned to be addressed in the next year;
- Plan for future projects or studies, including issues that the Planning Commission intends to review or initiate and ordinances that require review.



Scale: 1" = 200'

Area of
Development



Area Map

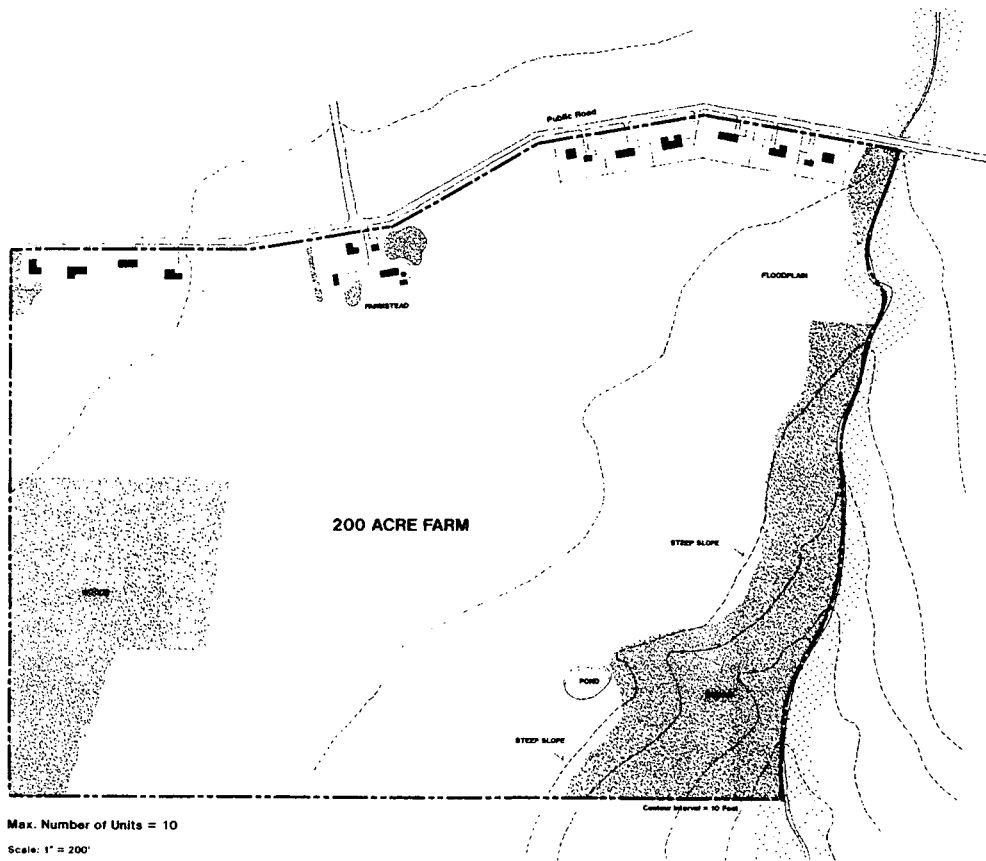
Rural Area
Existing Conditions

CENTRE TOWNSHIP / CENTERPORT BOROUGH JOINT
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



Norman Day Associates
Planning & Urban Design
1611 Walnut Street - 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103





Max. Number of Units = 10
 Scale: 1" = 200'

Basic Zoning - sliding scale agricultural zoning

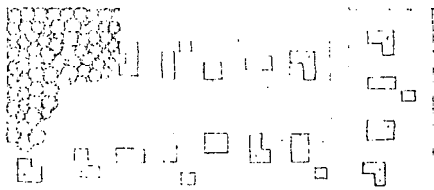
Size of Parcel		DU/Acre	Acre/DU
Less than 2 acres			
2 - 5 acres	1	0.5	2 - 5.00
6 - 10 acres	2	0.33	3 - 5.00
11 - 30 acres	3	0.27	3.67 - 10.00
31 - 60 acres	4	0.13	7.75 - 15.00
61 - 90 acres	5	0.082	12.2 - 18.00
91 - 120 acres	6	0.066	15.17 - 20.00
121 - 150 acres	7	0.058	17.29 - 21.43
151 - 180 acres	8	0.053	18.88 - 22.50
181 - 210 acres	9	0.05	20.11 - 23.33
211 acres & over	10	0.047	21.1

Rural Area
 Basic Agricultural Zoning

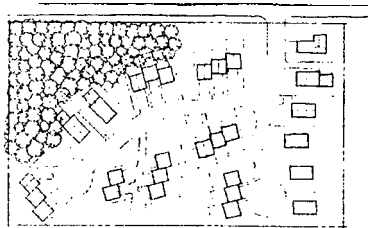
CENTRE TOWNSHIP / CENTERPORT BOROUGH JOINT
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



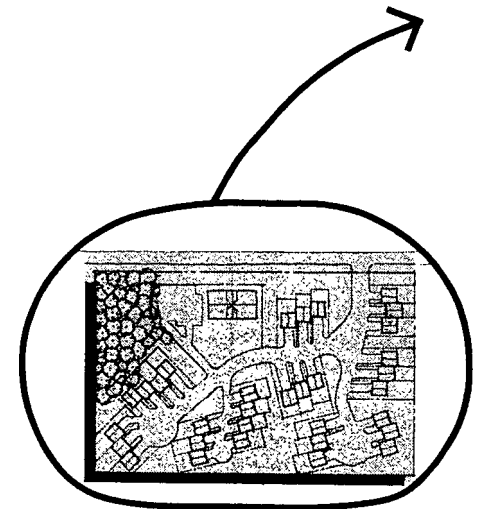
Figure 4.2



Cluster



Compact Cluster



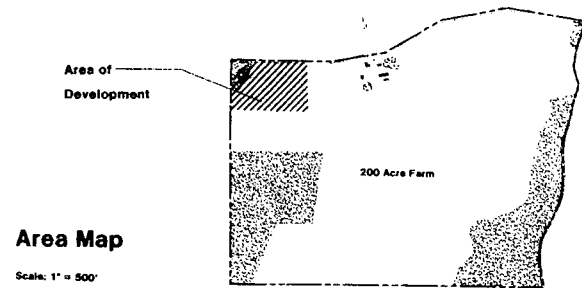
Transfer of Development Rights

	CLUSTER	COMPACT CLUSTER	TDR
MAX. PERMITTED DENSITY	0.83 DU/AC	1.4 DU/AC	2.5 DU/AC
SIZE OF PARCEL	12 AC/DU	7 AC/DU	4 AC/DU
MAX. NUMBER OF UNITS	16	28	36
MAX. DEV. AREA	1/2 AC/DU	1/4 AC/DU	0 AC

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES MATRIX

Rural Area

Single Farm Development



CENTRE TOWNSHIP / CENTERPORT BOROUGH JOINT
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION