



# SEWICKLEY Township

Westmoreland County

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

“Our Vision, Our Future, Our Community”

Prepared by:  
Sewickley Township Steering Committee

Technical/Facilitation Assistance by:  
Pashek Associates, Ltd.

July 2002

  
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ASSOCIATES  
a pennsylvania corporation

# Sewickley Township

## Comprehensive Plan

This study has been prepared by the project steering committee, with technical assistance provided by Pashek Associates, Ltd.

Pashek Associates acknowledges the contributions for the following groups:

- The project steering committee provided invaluable energy, dedication, and hard work.
- The citizens of Sewickley Township contributed essential input and support.

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## Introduction



Sewickley Township is approximately 30 miles from Pittsburgh and has close proximity and easy access to Route 30, Route 51, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and I-70. Its ideal location allows distribution of goods to Washington DC, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Chicago.

Its immediate municipal neighbors are the townships of North Huntingdon to the north, South Huntingdon to the south, Hempfield Township and Madison Borough to the east, and Rostraver Township to the west.

### 2. Brief History

Sewickley Township derives its name from an Indian name for "Sweet Water," and it incorporated with the State of Pennsylvania in 1835<sup>1</sup> as an important coal-mining center that supported the growing steel industry in the region. Its early development coincided with the emergence of railroads, which significantly enhanced mine activity. The principal coal complexes included the Hutchinson Mine, the Herminie Mines including the Ocean Mine, and the Ayers Hollow Mine. These complexes were served primarily by Pennsylvania Railroad-one of the US' first railroads-that carried the coal to the steel mills in McKeesport, Duquesne, and elsewhere. Coal-mining activity supported numerous businesses in the township villages as well as a five-mile Herminie-Irwin streetcar line that included a stop in Rillton (the line was discontinued in late 1930s and the tracks were uprooted in the mid-late 1970s.) In the 1930s, the coal industry began to wane as the Herminie Mills shut down in 1939. The industry's recession continued through to 1973, when Hutchinson, the last of the major coal mines, closed down<sup>3</sup>. Most of the major mine complexes are either imploded or in disrepair.

### 1. Overview

Sewickley Township comprises the five primary villages of Herminie, Rillton, Hutchinson, Lowber, and Whyles. It sits on the western edge of Westmoreland County along the east bank of the Youghigheny River.

Pennsylvania Railroad was very busy during the Second World War, which mitigated the number of layoffs at the Herminie Complexes-the Pitcairn Railyard was a center for repairing, rebuilding, and salvaging trains and was at one time the largest railyard of its kind in the US. PA



Railroad also had a transfer area within proximity to Sewickley, providing additional employment opportunities. Though many of the Railroad's ventures are still operating, they are relatively scaled back compared to earlier years.

During and following the Second World War, US steel mills provided employment opportunities for Sewickley citizens, whom commuted to the McKeesport, Duquesne, Braddock, and Homestead works. As the mills began to close in the 1970s and early 1980s, the impact on Sewickley Township was severe, though not as much as other areas in the region. Their economy was relatively diverse and better able to weather the shocks of the mill closures.

The arrival of Westinghouse, after the Second World War, was a significant asset to Sewickley's economy. It set up both an electricity plant and an air brake plant (for trains, trolleys, trucks, etc.) in the Township and in the mid-1950s, it built the world's first nuclear plant to be used for public use and energy/electricity generation<sup>4</sup>.

Throughout the years, the Township has kept its traditional/agricultural

base intact. Indeed, agriculture and agri-business helped Sewickley Township mitigate many of the region's hardships during the 1980s and 1990s, with the event of the mill closures. A significant majority of land use in the Township is either agricultural or open space/wooded areas.

### 3. Present

Sewickley Township has not, as of yet, been affected by suburban development as have most of its municipal neighbors or rural stretches of Highway 30. Residential patterns are clustered in the Township's villages along with scattered pockets within the Township.

Sewickley Township has important decisions for its future. Many citizens who attended the public input meeting on September 27, 2001, identified a need to encourage growth in the area, but they worried of the developmental impacts-physical, economic, and social-that may undermine the very qualities that make Sewickley Township a special place. Sewickley Township has a rich history of coal mining and the township would like to keep this legacy intact, as it is an integral feature of the Township's sense of place.

Figure Intro-1. Historical Features of Sewickley Township



Sewickley Township has neither legally binding zoning ordinances nor a land-use code enforcement mechanism. Residential development is reviewed only when there is a subdivision proposed. The Sewickley Township Planning Commission drafted the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance in March 1990, which defined the general guiding principles that would govern further subdivision developments. Subdivision builders must obtain a building permit from the municipality, but the process is fairly straightforward and there is little engineering review preceding a new development. There is a checklist for subdivision builders including, but not limiting to, front footage standards from highways, setbacks, driveway permits, feasibility studies of a septic sandmound on site and subsequent code compliance, and water drainage.

While these general principles of the Subdivision Plan have been reasonably observed and respected by new developments, levels of population growth and development activity have been slow since the 1960s-between 1990 and 2000, Sewickley's population declined<sup>5</sup>, as did a better part of south western Pennsylvania. Sewickley Township also has public infrastructure issues that are prohibitive of the kind of sprawling development occurring in neighboring areas. Approximately 60 percent of Township homes are served by water, as provided by the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County<sup>6</sup>. For the remaining 40 percent of homes, water comes either from private wells or cisterns [water-holding tank stored below/above ground, and water is trucked in.] A majority of the water lines are within the five villages and do not extend to undeveloped farmland areas. Much of the land is not farmed anymore and is just open fields. Currently, there is no public sewage system as all residences and businesses are required to put sandmounds in place. Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection has concerns about present and future impacts that sandmounds and septic tanks may have on water tables and have discouraged extensive development without alternative sewage systems in place. As many home builders would be forced to fund capital

infrastructure improvements on their own, subdivisions have tended to locate elsewhere. The level of market activity has been manageable, enabling Sewickley Township to work with individual subdivision developers on a closer, more personable basis, without the need of a zoning ordinance or enforcement officer.

Figure Intro-2

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

*A comprehensive plan provides a vision for the community's future, by...*

- *scanning relevant information about physical, social, and economic features.*
- *developing a consensus about how to develop or redevelop.*
- *providing recommendation and initiatives to achieve goals of the Township.*
- *Addressing all items required by Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code.*
- *Providing a rationale for developing land use tools, such as ordinances.*

#### 4. Planning Process

#### Introduction

The basis of Sewickley Township's Comprehensive Plan, like any effective plan, arose from a wide public input process. In the beginning, the Township Steering Committee sought insights and recommendations from key community stakeholders such as education figures, business owners, and farmers/landowners. This dialogue enabled the Plan to have greater grounding in current realities and the Township's most pertinent issues, now and later. More importantly, a public input meeting was held on September 27, 2001, for the purpose of identifying key issues, concerns, and opportunities within Sewickley Township.

Figure Intro-3

*Based on the public input meeting, high priority issues include:*

A tax base is important - some economic development is needed.

Need for additional police services (currently use state police).

Keep Sewickley Township rural. Keep growth to a minimum. Protect the farmlands.

Control growth.

Evaluate and improve the road conditions. Address road maintenance.

Develop appropriate zoning to avoid unwanted land uses - to slow growth.

Use zoning to regulate unwanted businesses. Consider developing a full ordinance.

Need for sewage management

Avoid what happened in North Huntingdon (unplanned growth). Learn what to avoid from North Huntingdon

Clean up streams (specifically Sewickley Creek)

Clean up illegal dumping

Support the public library



The Planning Commission chose to develop this plan using a process that is founded on open communication and citizen participation. The involvement of residents, staff, and stakeholders allowed for the most pertinent issues facing the Township to be identified at the start of the project. It is the expressed intent of the plan to define a community-based vision for the future of the Township. A vision will be developed to guide land use, housing, park system development, and governmental operation decisions over the next ten years. In order to provide Sewickley Township with a useful tool for effectively managing change, this plan has been organized around three sections of information.

(1) Section I, Situational Profile This section answers the question "Where are we now?" This part contains a summary of strengths and weaknesses and presents pertinent background data collected during the inventory and analysis phase of the plan.

(2) Section II, Creating the Vision This section answers the question, "Where do we want to be?" It presents a community identified vision, goal statements, and concludes with a graphic plan for future land use.

(3) Section III, Strategies for Action This section answers the question, "How do we get there?" It sets forth detailed strategies for implementation of the vision, goals and concepts outlined in the graphic plan.

Figure Intro-6 (on the next page) provides an overview of the "strategic planning process" used to develop the Comprehensive Plan and outlines the components that comprise the plan.

Figure Intro-4

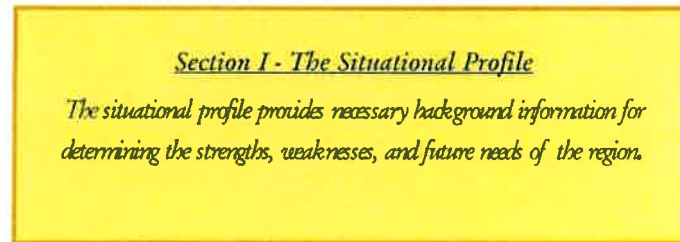


Figure Intro-5

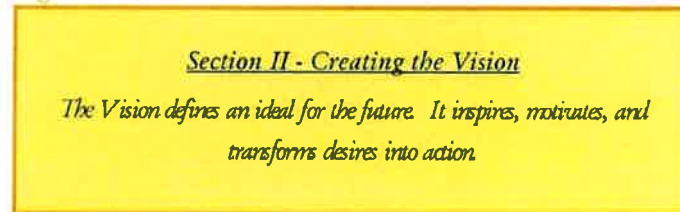


Figure Intro-6

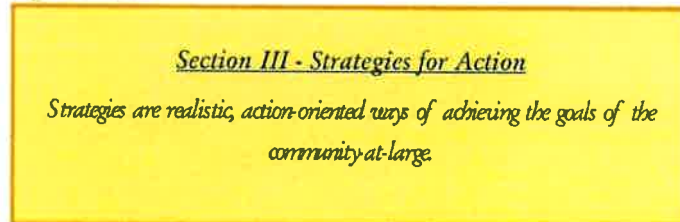
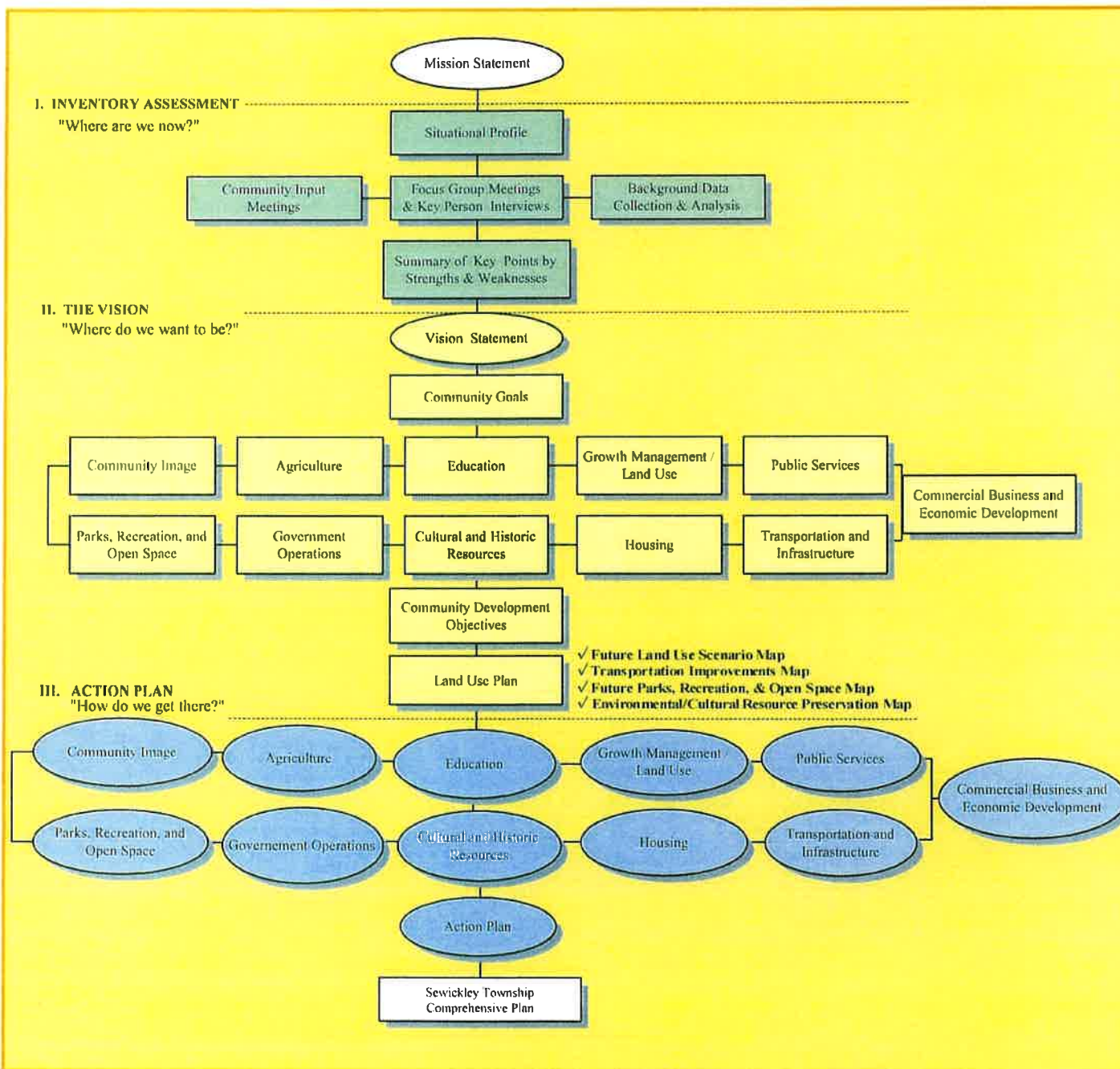


Figure Intro 7



Below is the mission statement that was developed by the Sewickley Township Smart Growth Committee. The group developed this statement to form consensus on the purpose of this planning effort.

Figure Intro-8

*The Mission of the  
Sewickley Township Comprehensive Plan  
is to Serve as a Guide to...*

---

- *Encourage development while preserving the rural character of the community.*
- *Determine where and what type of growth will be appropriate for the Township and designate appropriate land uses and infrastructure for those areas.*
- *Identify which agricultural, environmental, cultural, and historical resources should be preserved and enhanced.*

## Footnotes

- 1 - History of Sewickley Township, pp.12, John J. Wilson.
- 2 - Interview with Board of Supervisors Chairman.
- 3 - Virtual Museum of Coal Mining in Western Pennsylvania, *A Publication of the 20th Century Society in Western Pennsylvania*.
- 4 - Interview with Town Supervisor - Elect.
- 5 - US Census, 2000 [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).
- 6 - Interview with steering committee members.
- 7 - The Sewickley Township Steering Committee, along with the three-member Board of Supervisors, consists of the Planning Commission, the Recreation Board (the Parks Committee and the Recreation Committee) the Cultural Commission, the Municipal Authority Board, and the representative of a Yough District School Band.





## Section I

“Where are we now?”

### “Where are we now?”

The Situational Profile provides an inventory and assessment of the existing conditions within the region. It serves as an important beginning point for the planning process.

The main topics reviewed to compile this section include existing land use, environmentally sensitive areas, utility service areas and facilities, parks and recreation information, cultural and historic resources, population/socio-economic factors, a housing inventory, and transportation and circulation information.

Key points from the background information have been extracted and are listed as either a strength or weakness in this section. It is important to note that classification of key points by strengths and weaknesses is neither a positive nor a negative. This process is neutral. It shows areas that can be enhanced and improved within the community. It also identifies areas for improvement such as increasing park and recreation opportunities or better utilizing shared services or equipment by strengthening existing intergovernmental relationships.

For ease of reference, the strengths and weaknesses have been organized by the following topics:

1. General Existing Land Use Analysis
2. Cultural and Historic Resources
3. Environmental and Natural Resources
4. Public Facilities and Services
5. Socio-Economic and Housing Profile
6. Transportation and Traffic Profile
7. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Profile
8. Government Operations Profile

Figure I-1

SITUATIONAL PROFILE	
Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Existing Land Use	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present landscape has not yet been affected by suburban development occurring in neighboring municipalities.</li> <li>• Township's traditional rural character is an asset.</li> <li>• A wide variety of businesses in the Township.</li> <li>• Residential villages enhance the Township's sense of place.</li> <li>• A wide variety of homes; old, new, multi-family.</li> <li>• Variety of affordable housing.</li> <li>• Housing setbacks provide neighborhood consistency, continuity.</li> <li>• Good relationship between municipal planning and home builders.</li> <li>• Close proximity to rivers and streams.</li> <li>• Proximity to many significant state roadways-Routes 30 &amp; 51, I-70, and the PA Turnpike.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of pedestrian facilities at key locations in the Township.</li> <li>• Some vacant housing was identified, as were various vacant religious, commercial, and public structures.</li> <li>• Parking shortages for some businesses.</li> <li>• Upgrade and maintenance of existing housing and commercial structures needed.</li> <li>• Decline in agricultural industry.</li> <li>• Presence of graffiti on some structures.</li> <li>• Some junkyards and auto piles are located near and among residential areas.</li> <li>• Open sewage leading to strong odors and health concerns in many residential areas.</li> <li>• Lack of a land-use enforcement mechanism.</li> <li>• Research any other environmental issues/concerns in Township? Westinghouse accident ... anything left over? Landfill contamination?- Check.</li> </ul>

Section I

"Where are we now?"

Figure I-2

Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Cultural and Historic Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Township's historical legacy is valued by citizens, who wish to preserve it.</li> <li>• Many historic buildings and structures, including, but not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Old Log Cabin in Rillton where George Washington slept.</li> <li>- Still-standing coal mine structures.</li> <li>- Several churches and denominational diversity.</li> <li>- Close to twenty cemeteries, including the Old Quaker and Old Mars Hill cemeteries.</li> <li>- Stores and public structures built during the coal-mining era of the late 19th &amp; early 20th century; e.g. the old Herminie Jail.</li> <li>- Many traditional one-room schoolhouses.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Core of historic, traditional businesses and business districts; e.g. Slovenian Tavern, Moose Hall, K-Vay's Restaurant.</li> <li>• Faith institutions enhance sense of community, hosting potluck dinners, community fundraising drives, and similar social functions.</li> <li>• Public Library commonly used community asset:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 150 new members annually.</li> <li>- Hosts several programs, such as children's summer reading programs, Book-of-the-Month clubs, et al.</li> <li>- Newly implemented bar-code system, enabling local access to larger inter-library loaning network.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Initiatives to expand diversity of leisure activities, such as development of community theater and orchestra.</li> <li>• Trust fund exists for the Library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No mechanism in place to maintain historic and cultural resources.</li> <li>• Library's budget limitations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need renovations of water, electric, and heating systems.</li> <li>- Heating assumes disproportionate portion of library's overhead costs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lack of diversity of leisure activities for young people; changing demographics.</li> <li>• Budgetary limitations for developing desired community leisure initiatives.</li> </ul>

Figure I-3

Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Environmental and Natural Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large percentage of agricultural land and open space.</li> <li>• Agricultural diversity of crops.</li> <li>• Many streams, hills, open spaces provide access to outdoor leisure activities.</li> <li>• Iron deposits in streams, potential for recycling.</li> <li>• Studies dealing with sewage issues in process.</li> <li>• Township is taking beginning steps to clean-up junkyards.</li> <li>• Citizens renovating homes in old coal towns.</li> <li>• Garbage collection will be mandatory with affordable rates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mine-water pollution in streams, e.g. Little and Big Sewickley Creeks, neighboring soils.</li> <li>• Sewage impacts on Township groundwater; health concerns exist.</li> <li>• Junkyard rust seeping into soils.</li> <li>• Illegal dumping.</li> <li>• Limited soil types in pockets of Township that limit development.</li> </ul>

**Section I**  
"Where are we now?"

Figure I-4

Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Public Facilities and Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most public services can be found within the Township.</li> <li>• Current sewage system discourages sprawl-type of development.</li> <li>• Fire services closely connected, active in the community.</li> <li>• Schools considered to be a strength; student SAT scores and graduation rates are improving.</li> <li>• Communications between the School District and the Township are improving.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgetary limitations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Across-the-board service constraints.</li> <li>- Low tax base.</li> <li>- No local police force.</li> <li>- Escalating school costs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Volunteer fire/rescue services limited resources and capacity.</li> <li>• No public sewage systems.</li> <li>• Communications infrastructure is limited (telecommunications, internet access, etc).</li> <li>• District image could be improved.</li> </ul>



Figure I-5

Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Socio-Economics and Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Township is a friendly community, good for young families and children.</li> <li>• Strong sense of community, accountability.</li> <li>• Westinghouse is economic asset.</li> <li>• Wide range of small, home-based businesses.</li> <li>• Range and availability of affordable housing stock.</li> <li>• Increases in remodeling and renovating homes.</li> <li>• High rate of home ownership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Township lacks a drug store.</li> <li>• Industry is wanted in the Township.</li> <li>• Key industries are in moderate decline.</li> <li>• Not many new homes built in the Township.</li> <li>• Low community tax base.</li> <li>• Population in slight decline from previous census.</li> <li>• 150 vacant housing units<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>• Abandoned railway.</li> </ul>

Section I  
"Where are we now?"

Figure I-6

Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Transportation and Traffic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to Pittsburgh, Route 30, Route 51, Route 70, and the PA Turnpike - this location allows distribution of goods to Washington DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Chicago.</li> <li>• Scenic roads enhance rural appeal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patched pavement along several stretches of road, in town of Lowber. Derr Road and a portion of Bells Mill Road have poor pavement condition. Scott-Haven Road is in very poor condition and requires constant maintenance.</li> <li>• High traffic, lack of capacity along Irwin-Herminie road.</li> <li>• Some public transportation in Herminie and Rillton.</li> <li>• Dangerous intersection at Madison Avenue and Irwin-Herminie Road (Highland Avenue); limited sight distance and poorly placed stop sign.</li> <li>• Access to the Turnpike is difficult to find.</li> <li>• Lack of a North-South connector between Route 30 and I-70.</li> <li>• Roads are narrow in some sections.</li> <li>• Roads generally lack shoulders.</li> <li>• Some downward hills encourage higher speeds.</li> </ul>

Figure I-7

Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation Center serves many functions: Basketball Gym, the Public Library, hosts community events, and public forums.</li> <li>• Rents help sustain the Recreation Building.</li> <li>• Crabapple Swimming Pool renovation.</li> <li>• New playground equipment at Crabapple Park.</li> <li>• Crabapple founded and partially sustained through a private trust.</li> <li>• Planned renovations of Crabapple Pavilions, which command and collect rents.</li> <li>• A large number of ball fields exist which are well maintained.</li> <li>• There are playgrounds near schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget constraints for Recreation Center; support from business community is decreasing.</li> <li>• Limited amount of small playgrounds for children.</li> <li>• Need for more active recreation facilities.</li> <li>• Limited recreation facilities in certain locations such as Rillton and Hutchinson.</li> </ul>

**Section I**  
"Where are we now?"

Figure I-8

Strengths...	Weaknesses...
Government Operations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Township enjoys informal cooperation with neighboring municipalities, regarding resource lending, etc.</li> <li>• Good relations between the Board of Supervisors and Advisory Committees.</li> <li>• Advisory Committees each have specialized focus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited revenue base.</li> <li>• Greater public awareness and participation throughout decision-making process is desired.</li> <li>• Improve communications infrastructure within the Township and municipal officials.</li> <li>• More systematic cooperation, information and resource sharing, and coordinated service relationships with neighboring municipalities.</li> <li>• No mechanism to enforce ordinances.</li> <li>• Limited municipal staff, resources, and government structure.</li> <li>• Negative mind-set about the public benefits of taxes.</li> </ul>

## Future Land Use Highlights



**VILLAGE NITRIGIS** - Designating growth areas and encouraging development in small town neighborhood design guidelines. Designation will allow flexibility for commercial pockets or a mixed use main street.

### NEW COMMERCIAL TOWN CENTER

Designates medium size businesses. The include destinations that include restaurants, shops, open spaces, plazas and other amenities. The design will encourage pedestrian linkages from one destination to another and encourage more or less of buildings (on the periphery).

### IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

Will allow easy access and transport of people and services from one destination to another. Improvements also connect to destinations and key transportation routes.

### INTERCONNECTED GREENWAY CORRIDORS

Will allow easy access to resources and protect and preserve natural systems for agriculture and sustainable environment. Intended to also preserve character/beauty of Sewickley Township and allow for trail development.

### PRESERVE PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND

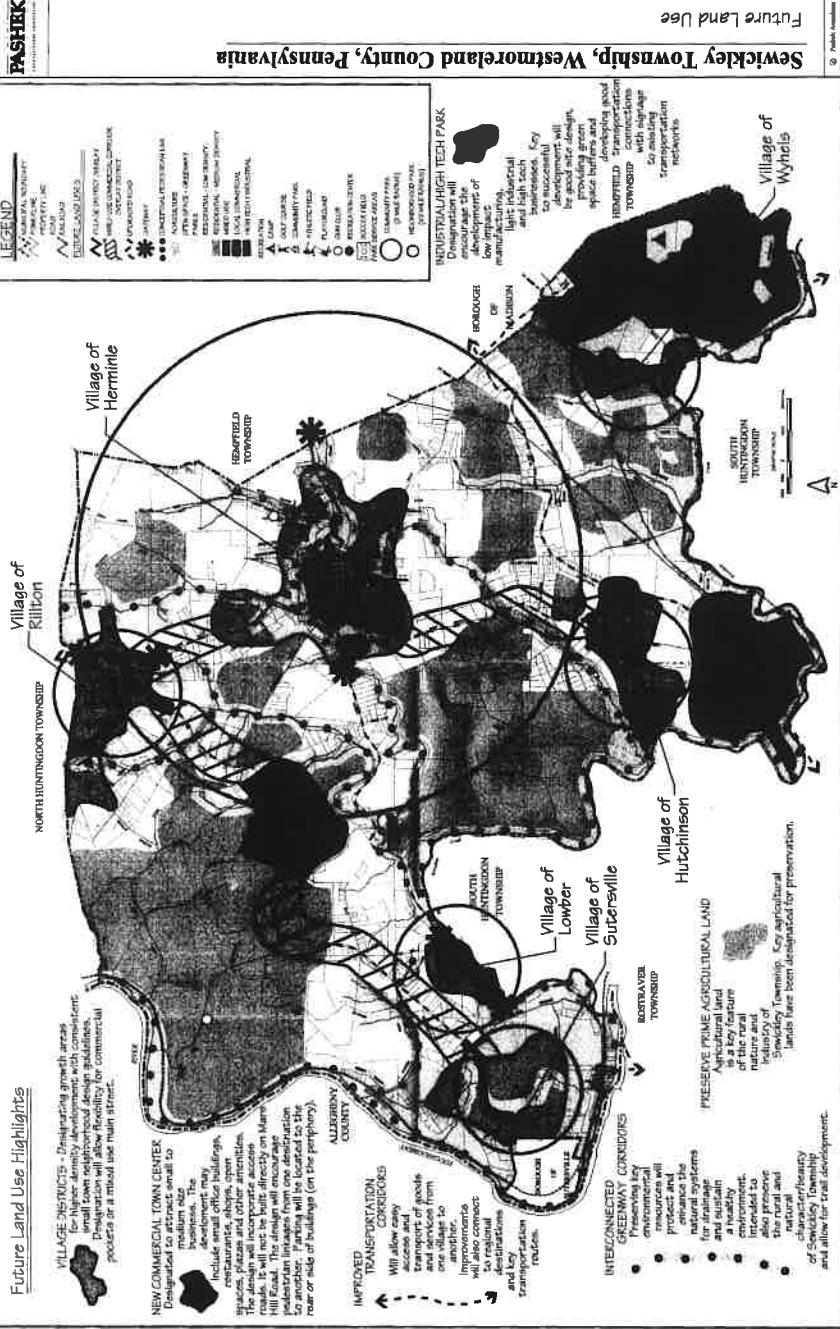
Agricultural land is a key feature of the rural nature and industry of Township. Key agricultural lands have been designated for preservation.

## LEGEND

- ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES**
  - SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP
  - ALLEGANY COUNTY
  - WYOMING COUNTY
  - WYOMING COUNTY
  - WYOMING COUNTY
- ROADS**
  - PAVED ROAD
  - UNPAVED ROAD
  - RAILROAD
- WATER BODIES**
  - LAKE
  - RIVER
  - CREEK
- LAND USES**
  - RESIDENTIAL - LOW DENSITY
  - RESIDENTIAL - MEDIUM DENSITY
  - RESIDENTIAL - HIGH DENSITY
  - COMMERCIAL - GENERAL
  - INDUSTRIAL - LIGHT
  - INDUSTRIAL - MEDIUM DENSITY
  - INDUSTRIAL - HIGH DENSITY
  - AGRICULTURAL
  - FORESTED
  - WETLANDS
  - WATERBODIES
- POINTS OF INTEREST**
  - AMUSEMENT PARK
  - SPORTS FIELD
  - RECREATION CENTER
  - UNIVERSITY
  - GOVERNMENT BUILDING
  - RELIGIOUS BUILDING
  - EDUCATIONAL BUILDING
  - INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
  - COMMERCIAL BUILDING
  - RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
  - WATERBODIES
- INDUSTRIAL HIGH TECH PARK**
  - Designation will encourage the development of low impact, high tech manufacturing.

## FASHEK

## Future Land Use



# KEY TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

- 1 JOSEPH WICKER'S FUNERAL HOME
- 2 CENTENNIAL CHRYSLER
- 3 HAZARD'S GREENHOUSE
- 4 M & J TAX SERVICE
- 5 COUNTRY CARE HOME HEALTH SYSTEMS
- 6 FELDES AUTO SERVICE
- 7 COMMERICAL SERVICE CO
- 8 CHAMBERG DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
- 9 LARRY J. J. TILLOTSON & WALL COVERING CO
- 10 K. VAY'S RESTAURANT & CATERING
- 11 S & J GLE CO
- 12 FENNEL SPECIALIZED AUTO PARTS
- 13 DAVIS HEAVY EQUIPMENT REPAIRS
- 14 FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF HERMISTON
- 15 SUTHERVILLE LUMBER CO
- 16 CONK'S OF PENNA
- 17 WPA FAMILY MEMORIAL ASSOC
- 18 DILL'S DANDY DOLLAR MARKET
- 19 FLYNN HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
- 20 BASIC CARBIDE CORP
- 21 WESTRICHHOUSE WALTZ VILL SITE
- 22 CHATTAWAY ACRES
- 23 VICTORY RESIDUAL ASSOC

## Section I

"Where are we now?"

## Mapping I-1:

Existing Land Use

## LEGEND

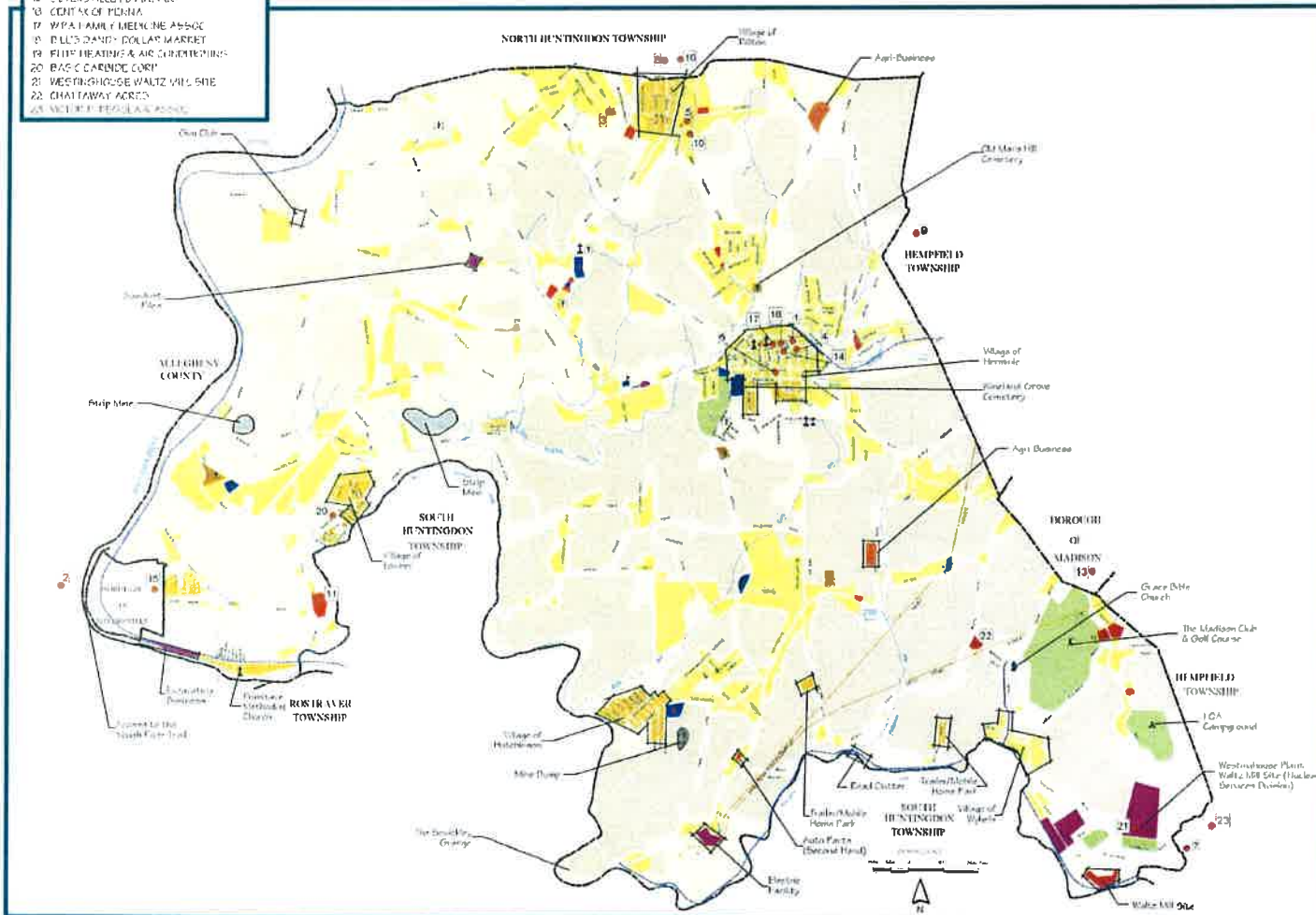
- MOUNTAIN BOUNDARY
- POWERLINE
- PROPOSED LINE
- RAILROAD

### EXISTING LAND USES

- WATER
- PARKS & RECREATION
- CEMETERY
- AGRICULTURE
- RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY
- RESIDENTIAL - MEDIUM DENSITY
- RESIDENTIAL - MIXED USE
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- HIGH-TECH
- AGRIC. BUSINESS
- POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE OR WOODED AREA

### LANDMARKS

- MUNICIPAL PLAYS
- FIRE STATION
- SCHOOL
- POST OFFICE
- CHURCH
- CEMETERY
- BUSINESS (Refer to Key to Local Businesses)
- MISS
- GOLF COURSE
- CAMPING





# 1. General Existing Land Use Analysis *(refer to map on page 18)*

Sewickley Township's rural landscape consists predominantly of rolling hills with open space, wooded areas, agricultural land with scattered pockets of residential homes, mobile home parks, and the five older villages of Herminie, Rillton, Hutchinson, Whyles, and Lowber, which serve as four focal points to the community. Commercial businesses are dispersed throughout the Township, many of which are home operated, and there is not a central business district. The largest employer in the Township is the Westinghouse-Waltz Mill Site<sup>2</sup>, which is located in the southeast corner. Old churches, barns, recreation facilities, and cemeteries highlight the Township's rural landscape.

## a. Sewickley's Villages



The village of Herminie is the largest of the five villages and has a main street with commercial and civic buildings. The village has a grid street network and consists mostly of single family, two-story, residential homes built during the turn of the century. They are affordable and are good starter homes. Sidewalks accompany some of the streets and there is on-street parking. Some of the roads and sidewalks are in need of repair. Not many street trees or landscaping were noted, and a few vacant homes were spotted in this area.

The villages of Rillton, Lowber, Whyles, and Hutchinson are similar in that they are primarily older residential neighborhoods laid out in a grid design with sidewalks for pedestrians. Most of the homes appear to have been built before the 1940's and are two stories with a front porch and contain siding. The traffic and parking patterns are not clearly defined because the roads are not marked; this adds to the community's rural feel. This rural feel is a definite asset to the community, as it's rural/frontier contributes to the Township's strong sense of community as well its unique sense of place. Many parents feel that the Township is a good place to raise a family. Most of the villages have a small

playground area.

## b. Residential Areas



Besides the villages of Herminie, Rillton, Hutchinson, Whyles, and Lowber, there is a variety of scattered residential homes throughout Sewickley. They consist of farm homesteads, mobile home parks, and new and older homes, alluding to a variety of affordability levels. There are a couple of newer neighborhoods where the setbacks are consistent making the neighborhood more uniform. In the rural areas, many of the homes have long setbacks and some cannot be seen from the roads. Many of the rural roads are narrow, gravel, and some are not signed. Also, several vacant homes and barns were identified within the Township.

## c. Commercial



There is a variety of commercial and home businesses scattered throughout the Township. Many of the businesses are automobile and agricultural related. A sign designating the type of business operating within the home accompanies many front yards. There are a handful of sit-down restaurants in the Township, which are primarily in Herminie. The larger business/employer found in the community was the Westinghouse Plant, Waltz Mill Site, Nuclear Services Division. Other significant employers in the Township include the Menasha Paper Mill,

## Section I

"Where are we now?"

located near the Waltz Mill site, and the Basic Carbide Corporation, located just south of Lowber.

#### **d. Churches**



Several faith institutions were identified throughout the Township, including a vacant church. They consisted of the following: United Methodist Church, St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, St. Edwards Catholic Church, New Mars Hill Baptist Church, Primitive Methodist Church, Sewickley Presbyterian Church, the Non-Denominational "The Church," and the House of Faith.

#### **e. Open Space and Agricultural Land**



Much of the land on the western side of the Township consists of open space and wooded areas. The topography consists of steeper hillsides and valleys. There are pockets of agricultural fields on some of the flatter pieces of land.

The eastern side of the Township has a vast amount of agricultural land surrounded by wooded areas. The topography consists of rolling hills (not as steep as the western side) with pockets of wooded areas.

The agricultural industry consists of some livestock, dairy production, and tree farms, but primarily cropland (corn, wheat, clover, soybeans, and hay among various others.)

#### **f. Rivers and Streams**



Sewickley Township has many streams and creeks. The Youghiogheny River, forms the Township's western boundary. Big Sewickley Creek constitutes the southern boundary. The central section of the Township comprises many creeks and streams. Little Sewickley Creek flows in from Hempfield Township, curves around Herminie Village, and continues west toward Big Sewickley Creek, collecting three streams on its way. In the southeastern corner of the Township, the Pinkerton and Kelly Runs feed Big Sewickley Creek.

#### **g. Additional Information**



Several junkyards and used auto piles were located throughout the Township. In some locations there was graffiti on structures. There also was a smell of sewage in some locations, which may mean there are malfunctioning septic systems.

#### **h. Review of Existing Land Use Regulations**

As mentioned in the introduction, the Township currently has no municipal zoning enforcement officer, nor a municipal-wide zoning ordinance, to oversee future land uses. There are ordinances for the development of subdivisions' and mobile home parks', which define design standards and regulatory requirements as well as non-compliance

#### **Section I**

"Where are we now?"

remedies. As described earlier, overseeing and working with subdivision developers has thus far been a smooth process, due partially to the lack of population growth and housing market activity<sup>5</sup>.

Although a zoning ordinance is not in place, a reasonable zoning ordinance and various land use tools ensure future developments' compatibility with the existing environment. While many recognize the need for a zoning/land use mechanism, many property owners in the Township have concerns about zoning's effect on determining future land uses that may or may not conform to their needs, or those of the community as a whole. Members of the Township Steering Committee reinforced the importance of receiving as much public input as possible to determine a course of community-desired slow growth and to create a zoning ordinance that works for everyone. Ideally, the zoning ordinance would be one that: offers a reasonable set of options to individual property/land owners; takes into account the needs and likely land use demands in the future; is both broadly flexible and clearly defined in its legal language.

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## Section I

"Where are we now?"



## 2. Cultural and Historical Resources

Sewickley Township has a rich history rooted in the coal mining industry<sup>4</sup>, as alluded during the introduction. The Township also has a strong traditional, agricultural heritage. Indeed, agriculture and agribusiness remain significant elements of the Township's economy and natural environment. There are several important buildings in the Township containing historic value. The Township is even the birthplace of two U.S. Senators, Edgar Cowan (1861-1865) and Joseph Finch (1934.)<sup>5</sup> Both of these heritages are highly valued in the Township, and would prefer the planning process, as with future residential developments, to be mindful of the Township's history and heritage.

### a. Historic Buildings

Old coal mines dot the Sewickley landscape. Each of the mine sites has some remaining structures, though most of the operational structures have been removed or demolished. Such sites include the Ocean No. 1 (Herminie) Mine<sup>6</sup>, the slope entry mines at Hutchinson<sup>7</sup> and Magee<sup>8</sup>, and the Ayers Hollow Mine.

The Herminie Mining Complex is located between the Little Sewickley Creek and Church Street. Surviving structures include the supply house, the powerhouse, the lamp house, and the mule barn. The boiler house, engine house, tipple, a garage, sand house, two water towers, and other smaller associated buildings have been demolished. The supply house is a common-bond redbrick building. A tall one-story structure contains a gable roof, riveted steel roof trusses, supported on brick pilasters, and a stone foundation covered with a cement mortar. The powerhouse also contains common-bond redbrick walls (painted yellow) and riveted steel roof trusses. The lamp house contains brick walls; however, they have been covered with a cement mortar. The one-story building contains a hipped roof, covered with slate. The mule barn is also a common-bond redbrick building, which is one-story tall. A date stone on the east facade proclaims the date of construction, "1918."

Magee Mine, or as the locals called it "Maggie Mine," at Yukon is located on the northern border of Sewickley Creek in Sewickley Township and the former Yukon Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad. A number of distinctive stone buildings remain in place though they are abandoned and deteriorated.

Herminie has retained fifty-five of the mine's company-built houses. These are situated in three single rows bounded by Sewickley and

Church Streets, and First and Seventh Streets, as well as one semi-circle of ten houses east of Church Street. In addition, the town retains its company store (currently the Dandy Dollar Store), its old post office, and its coal company jail<sup>11</sup>.

The old Herminie Jail was frequently mentioned. It is a traditional, one-room jail located along a hillside. During the Centennial Celebration, people got put into jail for fun. The building is old, but still in functional condition<sup>12</sup>.

Rillton contains an old log cabin where George Washington slept. The cabin is still standing, but it is in poor condition and structurally unsound. In its present state, it would not be completely safe to walk around in<sup>13</sup>, nor likely to be viable as a draw for visitors. One Steering Committee member remarked that the cabin may have to be torn down and rebuilt according to the original plans, but it was not known whether the original plans were still available.

The Sewickley Grange Hall is still in use. The one-room building hosts such events as tractor pulls and county fairs, the latter event lasting one week. The Sewickley Grange Hall also serves as a meeting hall where Sewickley Township farmers periodically convene.

There were at one time thirty different traditional one-room schools located throughout the Township, all of which have either closed down or suffered permanent structural damages. Many of these schools are in marginal condition<sup>14</sup>, but they are still structural sound and remediable.



### b. Older Businesses

The coal mines supported a number of taverns in town, though many of them have either closed down or been sold. Slovenian Hall is an older, miner's tavern and is still currently open. In years past, Slovenian Hall staged Polka concerts nearly every weekend and drew many

## Section I

"Where are we now?"





patrons from throughout the area, including the adjacent Townships. Its position as a regional focal point has ebbed in recent years, as older patrons stopped coming as frequently and polka bands gave way to more contemporary bands that had greater appeal to younger crowds. The Moose Hall is still open, as is the local VFW tavern; both of these taverns remain popular places to meet. Palace Lunch is the site of Herminie's old general store.



#### c. Places of Worship

Several faith institutions were identified throughout the Township, including a vacant church in Lowber. These institutions include the following: United Methodist Church, St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, St. Edwards Catholic Church, the Grace Bible Church, the Primitive Methodist Church, the New Mars Hill Baptist Church, the Sewickley Presbyterian Church, and the House of Faith. New Mars Hill Baptist church possesses a unique, country charm and hosts potluck dinners, strawberry festivals, and other events such as spaghetti dinners and recipe book sales. St. Edwards probably hosts the most events<sup>14</sup>. The Church hosts annual summer picnics, as well as some 'oldies' dances. The United Methodist Church sells coupon books, via its youth groups. This church also hosts picnics in the summer, coupon book sales in October, and various community fundraisers throughout the year. The Methodist Church has dances on New Year's Eve and Halloween.



#### d. Cemeteries

There are close to twenty cemeteries within the Township, including the Wineland Grove and Old Mars Hill Cemeteries, located at opposite edges of Herminie Village. The Old Quaker Cemetery has historic value also.



#### e. Public Library

The Public Library, located within the Township's Recreation Center, is a major community asset. On its shelves are 13,000 books, 230 videos, and miscellaneous multi-media. The library gets 150 new members every year; there are currently over 2,660 card-holding members, and an annual 9,300 patrons per year, who last year checked out over 10,000 items<sup>14</sup>.

In 1994, the library underwent an indoor renovation. Some difficulties persist, as the water, electric, and heating systems were not part of the renovation. Indeed, heating assumed a significant portion of the library's overhead costs in 2000.

The Library holds several programs, including summer reading programs for children and teenagers, Book-of-the-Month clubs, Head Start programs, and other community programs. The library is

#### Section I

"Where are we now?"

currently working on acquiring computers and the Internet in the next few years, and is working on a grant proposal to the State. Its newly implemented bar-code system enables the library to become part of a larger inter-library loan system<sup>17</sup>.

The Library is currently in financial difficulty. Changes in regulations caused technical prohibitions to receiving direct state funding for local libraries [regional libraries are eligible for state funds]. In order to qualify for state assistance, a library must have an annual budget equivalent to \$5 per capita. The library's budget for year 2000 was \$15,763. With a population of 6,230, the per capita spending equaled \$2.53, just over half of the required minimum<sup>18</sup>. As a result of these changes, the library was nearly forced to close, but was kept open by aggressive fundraising intervention on the part of Township citizens<sup>19</sup>.

#### **f. Cultural Commission**

The Cultural Commission was formed one year ago. Its primary motivation is to expand and diversify leisure activity in the Township for young adults; its goals include establishing a community theater and orchestra<sup>20</sup>. Due to Municipal budget limitations, the Cultural Commission does not draw from the budget and must raise funds through a variety of means. It set up and sponsored Light Up Night last winter, it sold wood print drawings during community craft shows, and held a children's drama called "Storybook Breakfast," which was well attended. It would like to arrange for a Dinner Theater, in partnership with Westmoreland Community College. The Board of Supervisors encouraged the Commission to apply for non-profit status and write proposals for community development grants from the State. Its initial grant request was denied for the time being<sup>21</sup>.

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#### **Section I**

"Where are we now?"

**Section I**  
 "Where are we now?"

**Mapping I-2:**  
 Cultural and Historical  
 Resources

**LEGEND**

- MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
- POWERLINE
- PROPERTY LINE
- ROAD
- RAILROAD
- CHURCH
- CEMETERY
- SCHOOL
- SITE

FEATURES TO BE IDENTIFIED BY THE STUDENT

**KEY TO FEATURES**

**CHURCHES**

- 1 UNITED METHODIST
- 2 ST. MARY'S BYZANTINE CATHOLIC
- 3 ST. EDWARD'S CATHOLIC
- 4 SEWICKLEY PRESBYTERIAN
- 5 SEWICKLEY UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
- 6 PRIMITIVE METHODIST
- 7 NEW MARS HILL BAPTIST
- 8 GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
- 9 NEW HOPE BAPTIST
- 10 WINLAND GROVE M.E. CHURCH

**CEMETERIES**

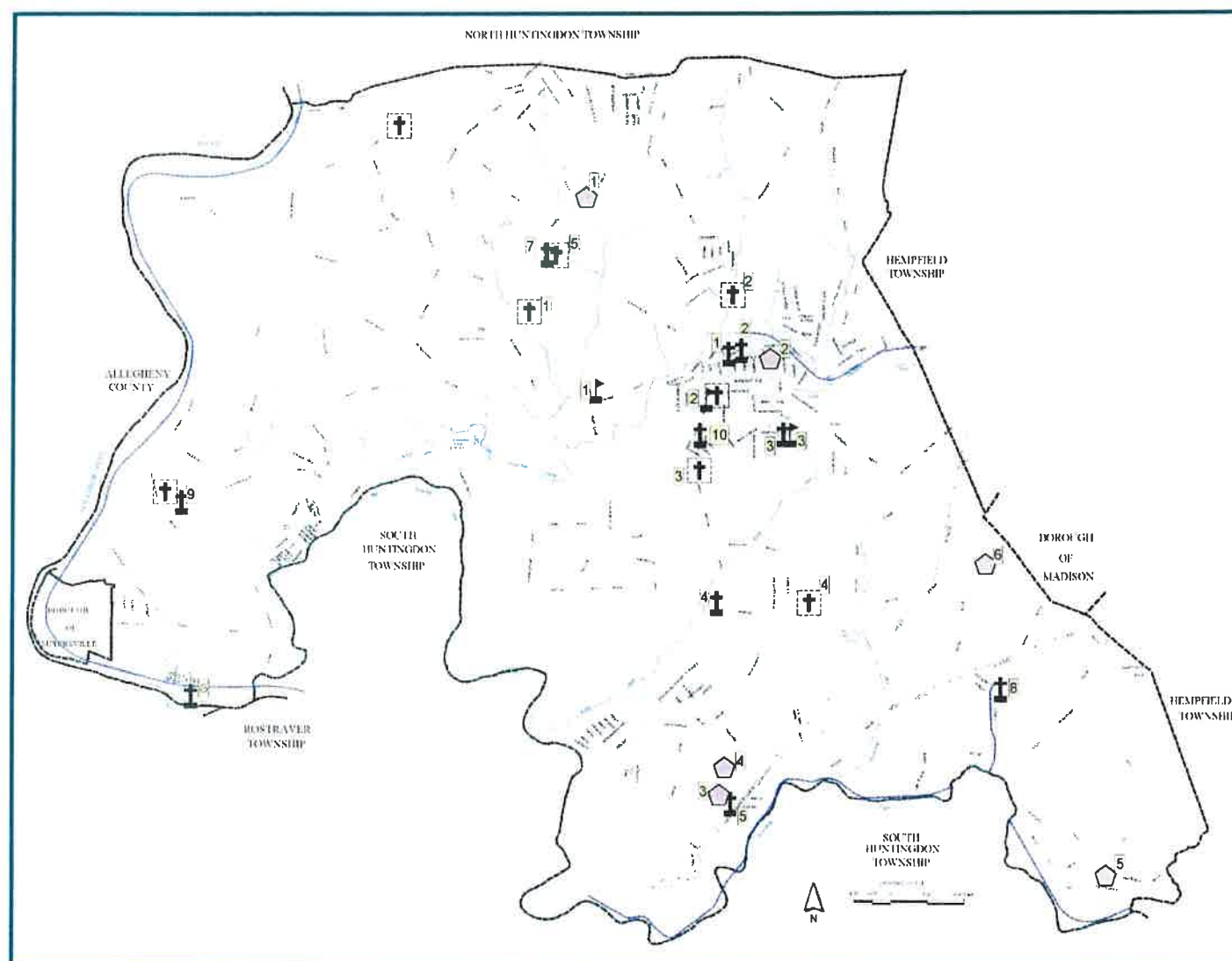
- 1 QUAKER CEMETERY
- 2 OLD MARS HILL
- 3 WINLAND GROVE
- 4 APPLE MILL

**SCHOOLS**

- 1 YOUGH HIGH SCHOOL
- 2 HW GOOD ELEMENTARY
- 3 ST. EDWARD'S CATHOLIC

**SITES**

- 1 MCGREW HOUSE (OLD LOG CABIN)
- 2 OLD HERMINIE JAIL
- 3 BELLO MILL (COVERED BRIDGE)
- 4 SEWICKLEY GRANGE HALL
- 5 WALZ MILL SCHOOL HOUSE
- 6 BENFORD SCHOOL HOUSE



### 3. Environmental and Natural Resources *(Refer to map on page 28)*

This section looks at Sewickley Township's environmental issues, assets, and constraints. Of particular focus are the Township's agricultural/mineral assets, the present sewage system, and mining impacts.

As mentioned in earlier sections, the **agricultural industry** consists of some livestock and tree farms, but there is a primary focus on crops. Crops include, but are not limited to, corn, wheat, clover, soybeans, and hay. There are also pig farmers along with dairy farmers, the latter working with major dairy companies in the region<sup>21</sup>. Conservation of agriculture has been identified as a high priority.

**Sewage** has become a concern in the Township per environmental impacts on groundwater and soils. Indeed, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Environmental Protection Agency have mandated alternatives to traditional sandmound disposal systems. The hub of Township, Herminie, consists of the double-company houses built in 1800s, which did not construct proper sewage mechanisms. There is open sewage flow in Herminie and in other areas when sewage effluents run into the creeks. In addition, there are possible malfunctioning septic systems.

The Township's **Coal Mines** have had discernible environmental impacts. Many of the mines emitted pollution into Little Sewickley and Big Sewickley Creeks, giving the creeks an orange-brown color. Along with impacts on water, the mines had past impacts on local air quality. Many of the villages, and their individual homes, look coal-patched. These villages not only project an undesirable image, but there are public health issues as well.

There are iron deposits in the streams that have yet to be mined. Though such deposits have the potential to be very profitable, there are inherent environmental risks in uncovering these deposits.

The study area contains various **limiting soil types** for home building, parkland development, disposal of effluent from septic tanks and sewage lagoons, landfill sites, and street provisions. The most severely limited types are outlined in the following map (Mapping I-1). The most prevalent limitations in the Township are strip mine contaminated areas, steep slopes (12 to 80 percent), flooding areas, stony loams and proximity to bedrock, and silt loam soils that have significant erosion concerns. Each of the indicated areas has one or more of these limitation types. As indicated, there is a particular concentration of

such soil types in the northwestern part of the Township, along the banks of the Youghigheny River, although there are pockets of limited soil clusters scattered throughout the Township.

Listed below are those soils that are classified as having severe limitations for home site locations with basements (three stories or less)<sup>22</sup>:

Miscellaneous environmental issues include the presence of junkyards [impacts of rust seeping into the ground] and graffiti. The junkyards, according to one Steering Committee member, appear to be self-contained and have minimal environmental impacts.

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#### Section I

"Where are we now?"

Figure I-9: Soils

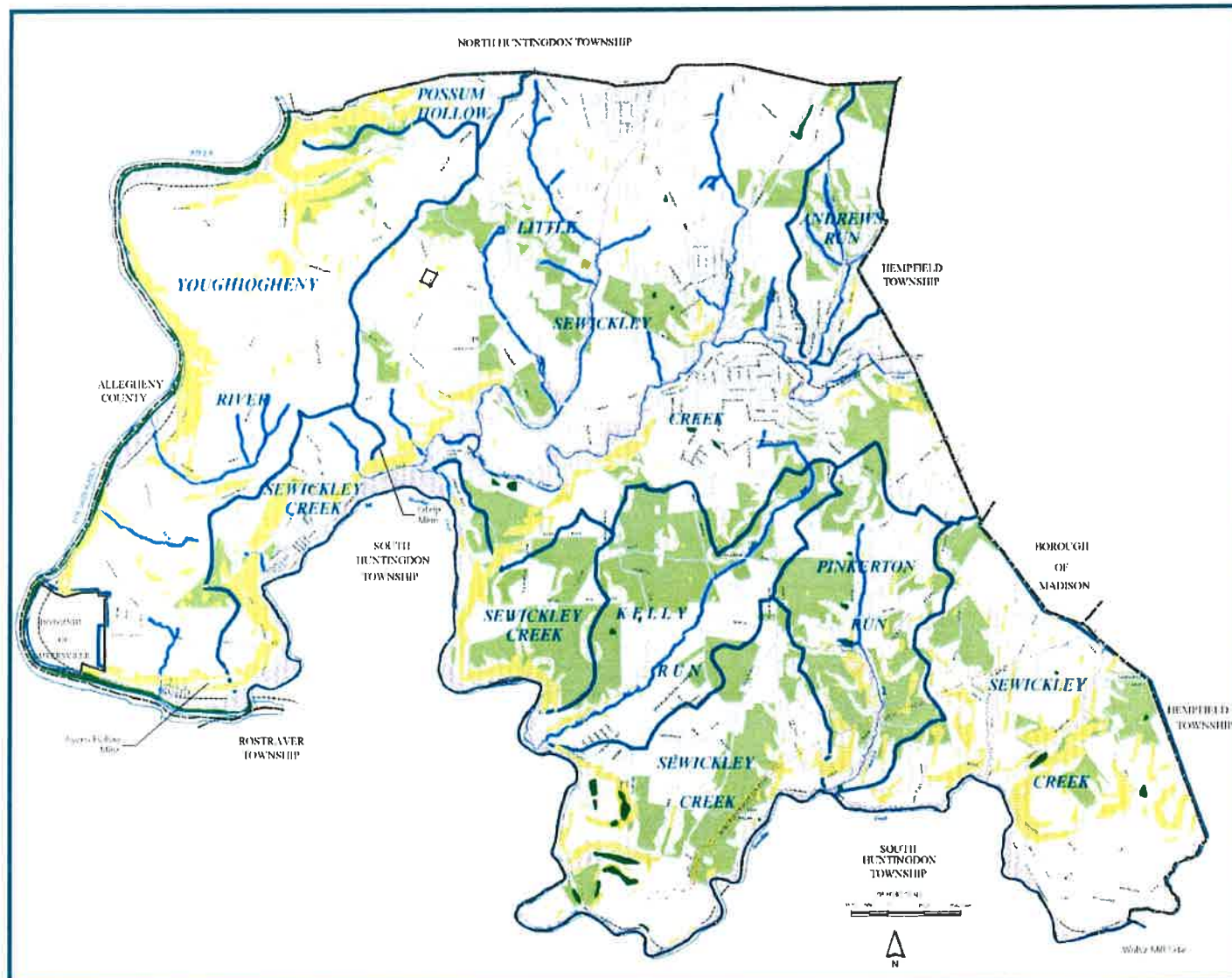
• BrB2 (Brooke silty clay loam)	-- 2-4 feet of soil above bedrock. Slight erosion and slope.
• DaB-DaD2 (DeKalb channery loam)	-- 2-4 feet of soil above bedrock. 5%-30% slope.
• DbB-DbF (DeKalb very stony loam)	-- 2-4 feet of soil above bedrock. 0%-30% slope.
• GsD2 (Guernsey silt loam)	-- Soil is moderately eroded. 15%-25%.
• Ln-Ls (Lindside silt loam)	-- Floodplains subject to severe flooding; Ls has acidity.
• Md (Mine dump)	-- Slope
• Mm (Mine wash)	-- Flooding.
• Pu (Purdy silt loam)	-- Severe, high water table.
• SmD-SmF (Strip mine spoil)	-- Spoiled areas. 8%-75%.
• TrA (Tygart silt loam)	-- Seasonal high water table.
• WhF (Weikert soils)	-- 30%-60% slope.
• WkF (" very rocky silt loam)	-- 40%-100% slope.
• WmD2-WmD3 (West silt loam)	-- Moderately to severely eroded. 20%-30% slope.
• WmE2 (West silt loam)	-- 30%-40% slope. Moderately eroded.
• WtD2-WtD3 (Wharton silt loam)	-- 15%-25% slope. Moderately to severely eroded.



## Section 1

### "Where are we now?"

### **Mapping I-3:** Environmental and Natural Resources



## 4. Public Facilities and Services

The following section is an inventory of Sewickley Township's current municipal service capacity. Along with examining each of the listed facilities and services, this section will look into priority areas, partnerships with other municipalities, and other service provisions.

As the Township has budget constraints that preclude provision of many needed services, it is essential to narrow focus to priority services. Such services include, but are not limited to, the extension of water lines and the implementation of a new sewage system, the maintenance and upgrade of its roads, and donations for the public library.

### a. Public Facilities

Schools: Yough Senior High School  
H.W. Good Elementary School  
St. Edward's Catholic School

Fire Departments: There are four fire departments within Sewickley Township. The Sewickley Volunteer Fire Company has stations in Herminie, Lowber, Rillton, and Hutchinson.

Ambulance: Sewickley Township's Ambulance Service just merged with Rescue 8 and is located on Oak Street in Herminie

### b. Other Public Services

Water: Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County

Police: State Police patrol the area. There is not a local police force.

Electric: Allegheny Power

Gas: Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania

Garbage Provider: CBF Incorporated / Superior Services Inc.

Tax Collector: Real Estate Tax Collector -Linda Harvey located at 2 Bank Plaza, Herminie.

Sewage: No areas within the Township have sewage. There are a variety of septic systems that are used including small flow treatment plants, sand mounds, and pipes.

### c. Schools



The Yough School District spans an area of 80 square miles and shares some of its district with neighboring municipalities. The district relies primarily on local property taxes for its funding. Its annual budget is close to \$20 million dollars and assumes a significant portion of the Township's public infrastructure expenditures

**Yough Senior High School** currently has an enrollment of 840 students, spanning the freshman and senior classes. For the year 2000, the school's drop out rate was just under 2 percent, which is low, and the school's average SAT score was 979, which is high, 82 percent of high school graduates either went into higher education (77 percent) or into the military (5 percent)<sup>24</sup>. Many of those attending college attended the two local junior colleges, Westmoreland and Allegheny, though Yough High School graduates most often attended Westmoreland and stayed close to home. The school's teaching staff is experienced and many of the teachers have been with the district for ten or more years. The relationship between the teachers, the administration, and the school board was described as being very good. Retirements have become an issue with the school, as there have been twenty retirements in the last two years, and about half of the current teachers will reach retirement age in the next five to seven years<sup>25</sup>.

### c. Fire Services

There are four fire departments within the Sewickley Township. The Sewickley Volunteer Fire Company has stations in Herminie, Lowber, Rillton, and Hutchinson. Herminie has about thirty volunteers, and both Rillton and Lowber have twenty volunteers. Hutchinson has about six<sup>26</sup>. Each of the firefighters has gone through independent rescue and emergency medical training on his/her own time and resources. The firefighters acquire their resources via festivals and various fundraising events. The Township municipality donates \$2,000 cash annually to the Sewickley Volunteer Company, which is deducted

## Section I

"Where are we now?"

from the insurance that the Company owes the Township. Currently, the number of volunteers has declined in recent years, as many firefighters have aged, moved out of the area, or developed other interests<sup>27</sup>. The number of volunteers and the availability of resources is the primary concern for the Company's sustainability.

#### **d. Rescue Services**

Sewickley Township's Ambulance Service merged in the fall of 2001 with Rescue 8 from North Huntingdon, and is currently located on Oak Street in Herminie. The rescue service is part paid and part volunteer, and leases space from the municipal Township buildings for \$1 per year, though the Service must pay for its own equipment and maintenance. The Township gave \$3,500 to the ambulance service last year. As for the effects of the merger, it has been too short a time to discern meaningful impacts thus far.

The nearest hospitals are in Jeannette, which is on Route 30, and in Greensburg. Dr. Boone services Sewickley Township. Monsour Hospital has a clinic in Herminie.

#### **e. Police Services**

Sewickley has no municipal police force. All law enforcement and area patrol is provided by the State Police. Westmoreland County Sheriffs Department has very little presence, in car or on the beat, in the Township. Public safety and crime prevention is increasingly becoming an issue. The Township has been experiencing some problems with drug use, which has contributed to property and auto thefts<sup>28</sup>.

Response time is among the concerns mentioned about the Township's lack of a police force; one local citizen claimed that it took the State Police over an hour to arrive on the scene. There has been some discussion of trying to pursue contracts for police services from North Huntingdon and other surrounding Townships, but thus far this has not resulted in sharing police services.

#### **f. Public Utilities**

The provision of utility infrastructure is a primary focus of the Township at the moment. The Public Utilities Map on page 31 shows the current and proposed water and sewer service areas for the Township. The Township receives its water from the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County, which serves about over 85 percent of Township residences; the other 15 percent rely on private wells or cisterns<sup>29</sup>. Many of the latter areas are lands that are not currently

farmed or are some distance from the main roads. In 2000, the Township put in 1.5 miles of water lines and an additional 3-4 miles in 2002, which provides public water to 120 houses. For these provisions, the Water Authority receives \$25 per month/household in order to subsidize pipe installations, but the state provided grants for assistance<sup>30</sup>. The Township used municipal employees to cut costs.

Sewickley Township is currently not served by a public sewer system and relies on septic tanks and sandmounds for sewage treatment. According to the Pennsylvania Act 537 Sewage Facilities Program, all municipalities are required to develop and implement an official sewage plan that addresses their present and future sewage treatment and disposal needs. To that end, two sewer authorities have been established to create and oversee the implementation of sewage plans for existing and future development in the Township. The first is a partnership between Sewickley Township and Sutersville Borough. The Sewickley-Sutersville Joint Sewer Authority will be responsible for the proposed public sewer service in Sutersville Borough and extending into portions of Sewickley Borough. The Sewickley Municipal Sewer Authority will oversee the proposed service in the Villages of Rilton and Herminie, which will receive the initial sewer lines<sup>31</sup>. In addition, there are proposed plans to connect the Sewickley Municipal Sewer Authority and the Westmoreland Sewer Authority within the next three to five years.

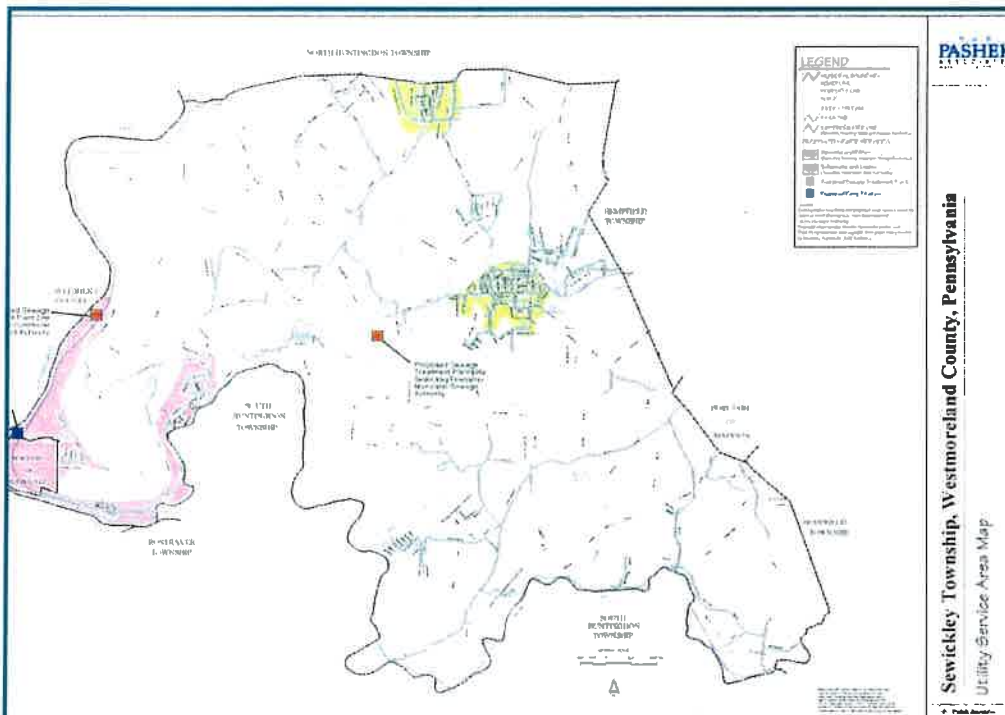
### **Section I**

"Where are we now?"



**Section I**  
 "Where are we now?"

**Mapping I-4:**  
 Public Utilities





**g. Property Taxes & Collection**

As previously mentioned, the Township currently has a property mill rate of five that was set in 1992, when the mill rate was four. For the year 2000, the Township collected \$235,000 in revenue, which fell behind inflation". Much of the budget goes to Westmoreland County and the Yough School District. The Yough School District millage is set at 60.25. Valuation assessments are based on 40 (or 25% - need to check) percent of a home's market price, though assessments were last made in 1973. There has been consideration of a reassessment soon".



## 5. Socio-Economic & Housing Data:

The purpose of this section is to provide demographic information about the population, economic condition, and households within Sewickley Township. Understanding the socio-economic trends will help to project the future population, housing, and economic conditions, which may affect growth patterns within Sewickley Township. This analysis includes information obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Pennsylvania State Data Center. The U.S. Census has only publicized population information based on the 2000 Census. The additional 2000 Census information will be incorporated into this report once it becomes available this year.

This section is comprised of the following information:

- a. Total Population (2000 Census)
- b. Ethnic Make-Up (2000 Census)
- c. Age Cohorts (2000 Census)
- d. Educational Attainment for Ages over 25 (Penn State Data Center - 1990)
- e. Employment and Occupational Characteristics (Penn State Data Center - 1990)
- f. Income and Poverty Rates (Penn State Data Center - 1990)
- g. Household Characteristics (2000 Census)
- h. Units/Structure (Penn State Data Center - 1990)
- i. Average Household Size (2000 Census)
- j. Housing Occupancy (2000 Census)
- k. Housing Tenure -- Owner and Rental Rates (2000 Census)

In some cases, the information has been organized so that Sewickley Township is compared to the surrounding municipalities of Hempfield Township, Madison Borough, North Huntingdon Township, South Huntingdon Township, Sutersville Borough, West Newton Borough, Penn Township, and to Westmoreland County as a whole. The comparison helps in understanding the relationship of Sewickley Township to the surrounding areas and the similarities and differences.

### a. Population Characteristics

The population of Sewickley has decreased by a fraction of a percent, see Table I-1. Sewickley experienced a population decrease from 1990 where there were 6,642 people, to the 2000 census where there were 6,230 people. The trend for the region around Sewickley is either decreasing or remaining stable except for North Huntingdon Township, which experienced a slight increase in population of .03 percent. The population for the area generally has remained stable as the downward trend is very small, measured in fractions of percentages.

#### Section I

"Where are we now?"

Table I-1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Total Population			
	1990	2000	% Change
Sewickley Twp.	6,642	6,230	- 0.06
Hempfield Twp.	42,609	42,721	0
Madison Borough	539	510	- 0.06
North Huntingdon Twp.	28,158	29,123	0.03
South Huntingdon Twp.	6,352	6,175	- 0.03
Sutersville Borough	755	636	- 0.19
West Newton Borough	3,152	3,083	-0.02
Penn Twp.	15,945	19,591	18.6
Westmoreland County	370,321	369,993	0

## b. Ethnic Characteristics

The ethnic makeup of Sewickley and the surrounding area is majority white, see Table 1-2. Sewickley is 99 percent white, 0.2 percent African American, 0.2 percent American Indian, 0.2 percent Asian, and 0.6 percent Hispanic. This is consistent with the trend for this region where the ethnic makeup of Westmoreland County is 96 percent white.

**Section 1**  
"Where are we now?"

**Table 1-2**

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000**

<b>Ethnic Characteristics</b>					
	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
Sewickley Twp.	6,167 99.0%	10 0.2%	11 0.2%	10 0.2%	36 0.6%
Hempfield Twp.	39,670 97.4%	451 1.1%	33 0.1%	341 0.8%	154 0.4%
Madison Borough	507 99.4%	0	0	1 0.2%	0
North Huntingdon Twp.	28,780 98.8%	92 0.3%	12 0.0%	113 0.4%	120 0.4%
South Huntingdon Twp.	6,053 98.0%	56 0.9%	7 0.1%	5 0.1%	23 0.4%
Sutersville Borough	633 99.5%	2 0.3%	0	0	1 0.2%
West Newton Borough	3,006 97.5%	35 1.1%	5 0.2%	7 0.2%	13 0.4%
Penn Twp.	19,310 98.6%	74 0.4%	17 0.1%	88 0.4%	86 0.4%
Westmoreland County	357,325 96.6%	7,446 2.0%	327 0.1%	1,920 0.5%	1,869 0.5%

### c. Age Cohorts

As seen in Table I-3, approximately 78 percent of the population is over age 18, which is consistent with Westmoreland County. Sewickley Township differs from the County in that it has a lower percentage of seniors over the age of 65 (Sewickley Township - 16.9 percent, Westmoreland County - 18.3 percent.) In addition, Sewickley Township has a lower percentage of school age children, ages 5-19, as compared to Westmoreland County (Sewickley Township - 17.9 percent, Westmoreland County - 19.0 percent.) There seems to be a high percentage of young adults to middle aged persons within the Township and this is true with Westmoreland County as well. Due to the way the 2000 Census breaks down their age cohorts, it was not possible to aggregate the age groupings consistently. Therefore, it is difficult to compare one age cohort to another.

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"Where are we now?"

**Table I-3"**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Cohorts	< 5	6-19	20-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Under 18	Over 18	Total Pop
<b>Sewickley Township</b>	311 5.0%	1,117 17.9%	1,029 16.5%	1,028 16.5%	954 15.3%	664 10.7%	1,052 16.9%	1,361 21.8%	4,869 78.2%	6,230 100%
Hempfield Township	1,918 4.7%	7,562 18.6%	6,256 15.3%	6,424 15.8%	6,809 16.7%	4,516 11.1%	7,236 17.7%	8,317 20.4%	32,404 79.6%	40,721 100%
Madison Borough	15 2.9%	86 16.3%	78 15.3%	71 13.9%	102 20.0%	63 12.3%	95 18.7%	87 17.1%	423 82.9%	510 100%
North Huntingdon Township	1,533 5.3%	5,401 18.5%	4,362 15.0%	4,856 16.7%	4,574 15.7%	3,228 11.1%	5,169 17.7%	6,343 21.8%	22,780 78.2%	29,123 100%
South Huntingdon Township	316 5.1%	1,125 18.2%	1,078 17.5%	1,020 16.5%	926 15.0%	672 10.9%	1,093 16.8%	1,323 21.4%	4,852 78.6%	6,175 100%
Sutersville Borough	26 4.1%	114 17.9%	117 18.4%	88 13.8%	70 11.0%	74 11.6%	147 23.1%	126 19.8%	510 80.2%	636 100%
West Newton Borough	146 4.7%	586 19.0%	540 17.5%	470 15.2%	462 15.0%	222 7.2%	1,197 21.3%	657 21.3%	2,426 78.7%	3,083 100%
Penn Township	1,208 6.2%	4,509 23.0%	2,602 13.2%	3,647 18.6%	3,302 16.9%	1,868 9.5%	2,455 12.5%	5,340 27.3%	14,251 72.7%	19,591 100%
<b>Westmoreland County</b>	19,175 5.2%	70,367 19.0%	59,125 16.0%	59,467 16.1%	55,925 15.1%	38,153 10.3%	67,781 18.3%	81,230 22.0%	288,763 78.0%	369,993 100%

#### d. Educational Attainment

Table I-4 illustrates the educational attainment for Sewickley Township and the surrounding areas from the 1990 census. This data is relevant to those 25 years of age and over. When compared to Westmoreland County, Sewickley has a higher percentage of people over the age of 25 who have less than a high school diploma, 26.7 percent, while a smaller score, 73.3 percent graduated from high school. In Sewickley, 15 percent of the adult population over the age of 25 has a college education. The range for the region surrounding Sewickley is 17.1 - 33.2 percent have less than a high school diploma, with North Huntingdon Township and Sutersville Borough respectively having the lowest and highest percentages. North Huntingdon Township has the highest percentage of high school graduates, as well as the highest percent of college graduates.

#### Section I

"Where are we now?"

Table I-4

Source: Pennsylvania State Data Center

1990 Educational Attainment for Ages 25 and Over			
	Less than High School Diploma	High School Graduate	College Graduate
Sewickley Twp.	26.7%	73.3%	15.0%
Hempfield Twp.	20.3%	79.7%	25.5%
Madison Borough	22.7%	77.3%	22.2%
North Huntingdon Twp.	17.1%	82.9%	23.8%
South Huntingdon Twp.	25.3%	74.7%	13.6%
Sutersville Borough	33.2%	66.8%	12.7%
West Newton Borough	22.3%	77.7%	15.0%
Penn Twp.	17.7%	82.3%	28.9%
Westmoreland County	22.3%	77.7%	15.4%

## e. Employment and Occupational Characteristics

### Section I

"Where are we now?"

Employment and occupational characteristics are illustrated in Table I-5. In Sewickley Township, most of the employment is within the service industry, 28.6 percent. The most popular occupation in Sewickley is in sales and support, with 28.5 percent of the population employed in that particular occupation. This mirrors the County as a whole, with 20.1 percent of its employment in manufacturing, and 31.9 percent in the service industry. Except for Madison Borough, the most popular occupation is sales/service. Madison has 33.9 percent of its population employed in management positions.

Table I-5<sup>15</sup>

Source: Pennsylvania State Data Center

Employment and Occupational Characteristics 1990								
	Employment		Occupation					
	Manufacture.	Service	Management	Sales / Support	Service	Farming	Craft / Repair	Labor
<b>Sewickley Twp.</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>
Hempfield Twp.	17.5%	30.8%	27.5%	35.7%	11.3%	0.7%	10.6%	14.3%
Madison Borough	12.6%	34.4%	33.9%	22.6%	7.5%	2.9%	17.2%	15.9%
North Huntingdon Twp.	18.9%	33.0%	26.7%	34.8%	12.6%	0.7%	13.2%	12.0%
South Huntingdon Twp.	18.4%	26.0%	19.1%	27.5%	13.9%	2.9%	16.8%	19.9%
Sutersville Borough	19.5%	29.8%	19.1%	28.2%	17.2%	0.8%	19.1%	15.6%
West Newton Borough	16.7%	32.0%	21.4%	27.3%	18.3%	0.6%	15.5%	16.9%
Penn Twp.	20.2%	33.0%	29.2%	31.4%	13.3%	1.2%	11.9%	13.0%
Westmoreland County	20.1%	31.9%	24.6%	31.3%	13.6%	1.3%	12.6%	16.6%



## f. Income and Poverty Rates

Table I-6 shows Sewickley Township in relation to other municipalities in the area, and to the County. Sewickley Township has one of the lowest per capita incomes at \$10,852. It is in the bottom third when comparing the household and family median incomes, (\$22,748 and \$28,034 respectively.) Sewickley's percentage of families in poverty is slightly above average at 11.1 percent. Madison Borough, North Huntingdon Township and Hempfield Township have the lowest percentages of families in poverty. Sewickley Township is closer to the regional income averages than to those of the county.

**Section I**  
"Where are we now?"

Table I-6

Source: Pennsylvania State Data Center

1990 Income and Poverty Rates				
	Per Capita	Household Median	Family Median	% Families in Poverty
<b>Sewickley Twp.</b>	<b>\$10,852</b>	<b>\$22,748</b>	<b>\$28,034</b>	<b>11.1</b>
Hempfield Twp.	\$13,359	\$29,856	\$34,708	5.6
Madison Borough	\$12,466	\$27,500	\$31,912	4.6
North Huntingdon Twp.	\$13,405	\$32,066	\$35,959	4.7
South Huntingdon Twp.	\$11,685	\$24,898	\$29,347	9.0
Sutersville Borough	\$9,690	\$19,850	\$24,107	18.6
West Newton Borough	\$10,407	\$18,949	\$23,726	15.3
Penn Twp.	\$13,570	\$33,219	\$36,886	3.1
Westmoreland County	\$12,612	\$25,736	\$31,360	8.6
Average for region	\$11,810	\$25,200	\$29,894	9.6

## g. Household Characteristics

Table I-7, illustrates Sewickley closely mirrors Westmoreland County in terms of family households (71.6 percent,) non-family households (28.4 percent) average household (H.H.) and family size (2.47 and 2.96) respectively. The region surrounding Sewickley Township has a larger range with family households (63-76.9 percent,) Non-family households (23.1-37 percent.) Madison Borough has both the smallest average household size and smallest average family size of 2.33 and 2.74 respectively.

Table I-7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Household Characteristics			
	Total Households	Family Households	Non-Family Households
Sewickley Twp.	2,519 100%	1,803 71.6%	716 28.4%
Hempfield Twp.	15,997 100%	11,601 72.5%	4,548 28.4%
Madison Borough	219 100%	159 72.6%	60 27.4%
North Huntingdon Twp.	11,216 100%	8,623 76.9%	2,593 23.1%
South Huntingdon Twp.	2,461 100%	1,841 74.8%	620 25.2%
Sutersville Borough	267 100%	182 68.2%	85 31.8%
West Newton Borough	1,318 100%	830 63%	488 37%
Penn Twp.	5,486 100%	4,630 84.4%	856 15.6%
Westmoreland County	149,813 100%	104,597 69.8%	45,216 30.2%

## Section I

"Where are we now?"

## h. Units Per Structure

### Section I

"Where are we now?"

Table 1-8 displays the number and percentage of units and structures for Sewickley Township and surrounding municipalities\*. Sewickley Township has the smallest percentage of 1-unit detached dwellings (68.9 percent,) and conversely has a larger than average percentage of 1-unit attached dwellings (7.0 percent.) Except for South Huntingdon Township, at 16.7 percent, Sewickley has the highest percentage of mobile homes, trailers, or other dwellings at 15.6 percent. Dwelling trends for the region are illustrated with 1-unit detached housing being the most populous, followed by 2-4 unit housing, and mobile/trailer and other being the third.

Table 1-8

Source: Pennsylvania State Data Center

Units in Structure, 1990							
	1-Unit Detached	1-Unit Attached	2-4 Units	5-9 Units	10 or more Units	Mobile home, trailer, other	Total
Sewickley Twp.	1,848 68.9%	188 7.0%	193 7.2%	29 1.0%	1 0%	421 15.6%	2,680 100%
Hempfield Twp.	11,953 74.2%	499 3.1%	457 2.8%	307 1.9%	846 5.2%	2,038 12.6%	16,100 100%
Madison Borough	185 89.3%	2 0%	3 0%	1 0%	0 0%	16 7.7%	207 100%
North Huntingdon Twp.	9,099 86.8%	208 1.9%	363 3.4%	129 1.2%	322 3.0%	352 3.3%	10,473 100%
South Huntingdon Twp.	1,961 76.6%	36 1.4%	124 4.8%	6 0.2%	2 0%	428 16.7%	2,557 100%
Sutersville Borough	240 75.4%	5 1.5%	26 0.6%	5 1.5%	5 1.5%	37 11.6%	318 100%
West Newton Borough	1,039 71.5%	21 1.4%	186 12.8%	31 2.1%	130 8.9%	46 3.1%	1,453 100%
Penn Twp.	5,158 91.5%	48 0.8%	140 2.5%	25 0.4%	1 0.0%	268 4.8%	5,640 100%

## k. Housing Tenure

In addition to having a higher percentage of occupied units, Sewickley Township has a higher percentage of owner occupied units than Westmoreland County. Both are positive aspects about the Township.

### Section I

"Where are we now?"

Table I-11

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Housing Tenure		
Sewickley Township	2,051	468
	81.4%	18.6%
Hempfield Township	13,500	2,497
	84.4%	15.6%
Madison Borough	179	40
	81.7%	18.3%
North Huntingdon Township	9,956	2,497
	88.8%	11.2%
South Huntingdon Township	2,061	400
	83.7%	16.3%
Sutersville Borough	214	53
	80.1%	19.9%
West Newton Borough	898	420
	68.1%	31.9%
Penn Township	4,992	494
	91.0%	9.0%
Westmoreland County	116,849	32,964
	78.0%	22.0%

## i. Average Household Size

The average household size for Sewickley Township is 2.41 persons per unit. This is lower than the average for Westmoreland County, which is 2.93 persons per unit.

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"Where are we now?"

Table I- 9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Average Household Size	
Sewickley Township	2.47 Persons/Unit
Hempfield Township	2.43 Persons/Unit
Madison Borough	2.33 Persons/Unit
North Huntingdon Township	2.56 Persons/Unit
South Huntingdon Township	2.51 Persons/Unit
Sutersville Borough	2.38 Persons/Unit
West Newton Borough	2.31 Persons/Unit
Penn Township	2.91 Persons/Unit
Westmoreland County	2.93 Persons/Unit



## j. Housing Occupancy

Compared to Westmoreland County, Sewickley Township has a higher percentage of occupied housing units and a lower percentage of vacant housing units.

### Section I

"Where are we now?"

Table I-10

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Housing Occupancy			
	Occupied Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units	Total Housing Units
Sewickley Township	2,519	150	2,669
	94.4%	5.6%	100%
Hempfield Township	15,997	802	16,799
	95.2%	4.8%	100%
Madison Borough	219	6	225
	97.3%	2.7%	100%
North Huntingdon Township	11,216	362	11,578
	96.9%	3.1%	100%
South Huntingdon Township	2,461	124	2,585
	95.2%	4.8%	100%
Sutersville Borough	267	10	277
	96.4%	3.6%	100%
West Newton Borough	1,318	92	1,410
	93.5%	6.5%	100%
Penn Township	5,486	154	5,640
	97.3%	2.7%	100%
Westmoreland County	149,813	11,245	161,058
	93.0%	7.0%	100%

\*Compared to adjacent municipalities.

## 6. Transportation and Traffic Analysis *(See map on Page 46)*

In coordination with the existing land use character analysis of Sewickley Township, a transportation analysis was also completed by Herbert, Rowland and Grubic, Inc (HRG). The goal of the transportation analysis is to evaluate the existing roadway network in terms of condition. This evaluation is then used to prioritize roadways and intersections in need of general improvements. *A glossary of transportation terms used in this section is included in Appendix B.*

The basis of the transportation analysis consisted of a field view of the existing transportation network, which was completed on August 14, 2001. The field evaluation was supplemented by traffic volume, accident information and roadway classification information provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) Engineering District 12-0. The methodology of the analysis and the results of the transportation evaluation are summarized in the following sections.



**a. Existing Transportation and Circulation Network**

The study area includes Sewickley Township in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Regionally, the Township is in close proximity to the PA Turnpike (I-76), Interstate 70 (I-70), and State Route 30. I-70 transverses through the southern tip of the Township with an interchange inside the Township limits. I-70 provides regional access to I-79 in Washington County to the west and the PA Turnpike in New Stanton to the east. The PA Turnpike runs parallel to the eastern Township border. Within close proximity, the Irwin Interchange (Exit 7), is approximately 5 miles northeast of the Township and the New Stanton Interchange (Exit 8), is approximately 8 miles southeast of the Township on I-70. Route 30 lies north of the Township border and provides access to the Turnpike at the Irwin Interchange in addition to

providing access to the east into Greensburg.

Locally, the roadway network is primarily comprised of rural collectors and local roads. In general, Sewickley Township lacks a north-south connector to the interchange with I-70 to the south and to Route 30, north of the Township. Roads providing access through the Township include Mars Hill Road from the southwest to northeast and Lowber Road and Madison Road from west to east. The I-70 interchange lies in the southeastern corner of the Township and these roadways do not provide access to this area. West Newton Road provides limited access from the north but does not extend to the interchange area. Waltz Mill Road does provide access directly into the I-70 interchange but quickly travels outside of the Township border and into the neighboring Township of Hempfield.

### **b. Roadway Classification**

Functional classification is used in this analysis to categorize the roadways in the Township according to their function. Primarily roadways serve two functions, mobility (the ability to go from one place to another) and access (the ability to enter adjacent property). The roadway's functional classification is based on the degree to which the roadway is used for these two functions. The classifications are further divided into Urban and Rural roadways. For the purpose of this study, the roadways will be classified into the following four categories.

**Arterials** provide for high mobility and limited access. Arterials generally convey between 10,000 and 25,000 average daily traffic (ADT). These roads connect urban centers and convey traffic for distances over one mile. Arterials often connect urban centers with outlying communities and employment. The roadway design is usually four to five 12-foot lanes with 8 to 10-foot shoulders and medians and design speeds of 40 to 60 mph. PENNDOT further classifies Arterials as Principal and Minor.

**Major Collectors** are intended to provide for a greater degree of mobility than for land access. Collectors generally convey traffic for medium travel distances (generally greater than one mile) and convey between 1,500 and 10,000 ADT. Collectors serve motorists between local streets and arterial roads. The roadway design is two 12-foot lanes with 8 to 10-foot shoulders and design speeds of 35 mph.

**Minor Collectors** provide for equal amounts of mobility and land access. These roadways serve as major circulation roads. Minor collectors are two 11 to 12-foot lanes with 4-10-foot shoulders and design speeds of 30 mph.

### **Section I** "Where are we now?"



**Local Roads** are intended to provide immediate access to adjoining land uses. Local roads are intended to only provide for transportation within a particular neighborhood, or to one of the other road types described. Local roads are generally 20 to 22 feet wide with 2 to 8 foot shoulders or curbing and design speeds of 25 mph.

From the field view and the supplemental information provided by the Township and PENNDOT, the following summary showing the classification of the existing roadways and intersections within the study area was compiled. Any existing deficiencies noted during the field view are also described. A graphical representation of the existing transportation system is included on the Transportation Issues Map.

The roadway volumes and classifications for the existing state roadways in the Sewickley Township have been summarized in Table I-12.

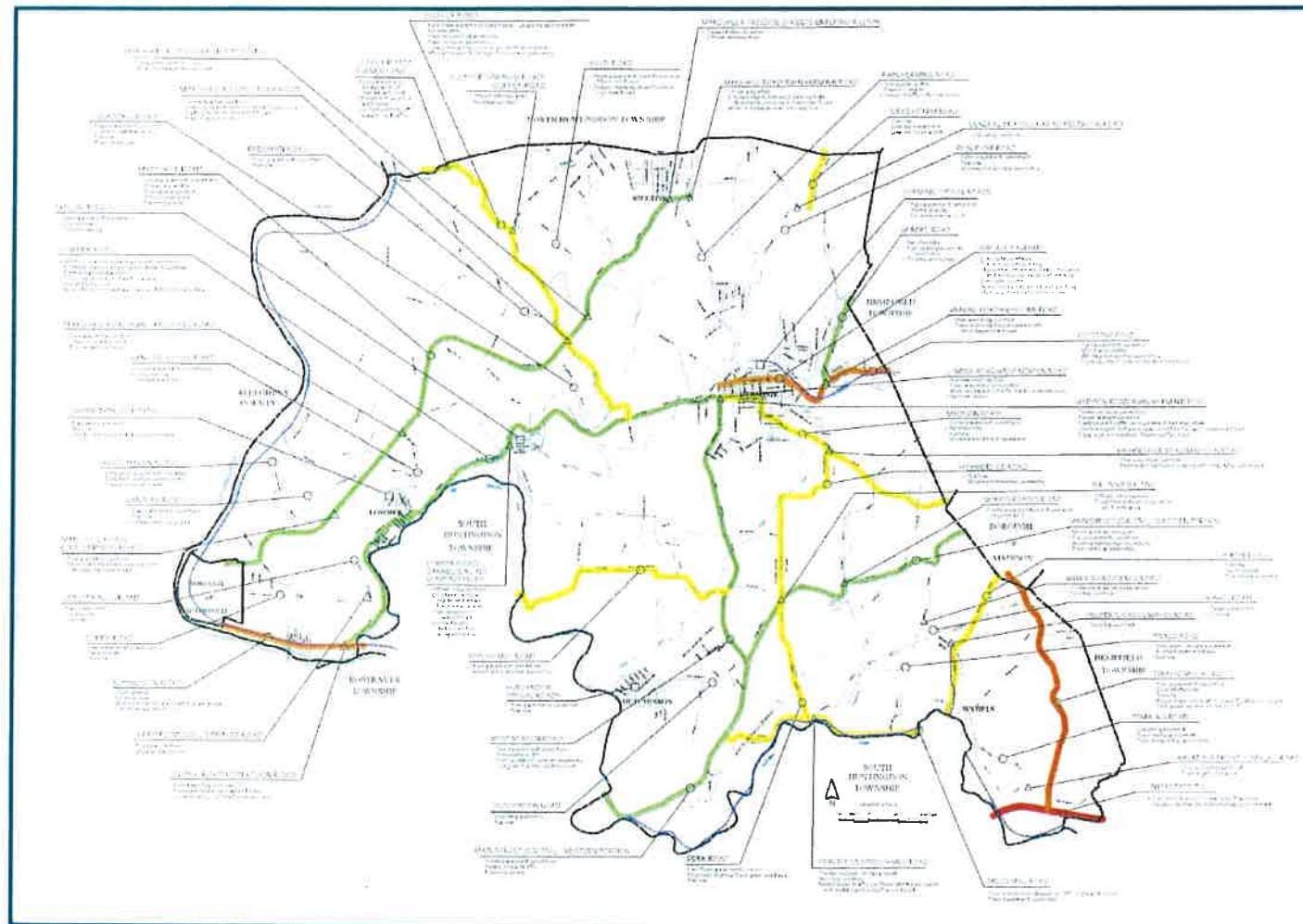
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## Section I

"Where are we now?"

**Section I**  
 "Where are we now?"

**Mapping I-5:**  
 Transportation Issues



- LEGEND**
- MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
  - POWERLINE
  - PROPERTY LINE
  - RAILROAD
  - ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS
  - INTERSECTION CHARACTERISTICS
  - VILLAGE TYPICAL ROAD CONDITIONS
  - PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROAD
  - MINOR ARTERIAL ROAD
  - COLLECTOR ROAD
  - LOCAL STATE ROAD
  - LOCAL OR COUNTRY ROAD

Table I-12

Source: PENNDOT District 12-0, August 2001

State Roadway Volumes and Classifications							
Street Name	Classification	State Route Number	Segment Number	Count Location	Average Daily Traffic (ADT)	% Trucks	Width
Interstate 70	Rural Principal Arterial-Interstate I	70	535-545	N/A	18,916	23%	48'
Keystone Rd / Sewickley Ave	Urban Min Arterial 16	3018	30	East of Perry Hwy	5,108	5%	20'
	Rural Minor Arterial 6		20-Oct	West of Wendel Rd			30'
Robertson Rd	Urban Min Arterial 16	3039	50	N/A	3,097	5%	16'
Waltz Mill Rd	Rural Minor Arterial 6	3037	160-180	N/A	6,669	9%	16'
Rillton-Sutersville Rd / Mars Hill Rd	Rural Major Collector 7	3045	20-110	N/A	3,406	9%	23'-25'
West Newton Rd	Rural Major Collector 7	3057	Oct-40	SR 136 to SR 3016	2,868	5%	22'
Main St (Rt. 136)	Rural Major Collector 7	136	100-190	N/A	2,500	5%	22'
Wendel Rd	Urban Collector 17	3069	20-Oct	N/A	5,247	4%	22'
Lowber Rd / Madison Rd	Urban Collector 17	3016	Oct-80	SR 3039 – SR 3057	3,946	14%	16'
	Urban Local 19		90-130	SR 3057 to Township Line		5%	16'
Bells Mill Road	Rural Local 9	3012	30-40	SR 3061 – SR 3059	214	9%	18'
Yukon Rd			60-80	SR 3059 – SR 3037	958	9%	17'
Huntingdon Rd	Rural Local 9	3014	10	N/A	1,529	9%	20'
Dick Station Rd / Guffey Rd	Rural Local 9	3047	Oct-60	At SR 3045	1,243	5%	16'
Yukon Rd	Rural Local 9	3012	10	N/A	467	9%	16'
Apples Mill Rd	Rural Local 9	3041	60-90	West of SR 3057	639	9%	
Derr Road / Highberger Rd /	Rural Min Collector 8	3061	70-72	At SR 3012	1,089	9%	16'
	Rural Local 9		72-110	SR 3012 – SR 0136	169	9%	16'
Turkey Farm Rd	Rural Local 9	3065	10	N/A	182	9%	16'