

EXISTING LAND USE / LAND COVER

Growth and Development Overview

A community's growth and development is affected by a broad range of interrelating factors including such things as regional location, the transportation system, natural resources, land suitability for agriculture and development, available community facilities such as sewage disposal, condition of the general economy, local land values and real estate taxes. A change in one factor will in all likelihood result in a change in another factor, and the overall character of the community. In short, how a community's character has developed and how it will change into the future, are the result of a complex interaction of sometimes opposing forces ranging from no growth, exclusionary land use controls to unbridled commercial and residential development. Land use patterns in a community are the result of this complex interaction played out over the community's history.

The rural, scenic beauty of Damascus Township, Manchester Township, and Oregon Township are key factors affecting growth and development. Rural areas close to urban centers and with recreational appeal attract residents who can easily commute to work or who can be employed anywhere via the use of computers and telecommunications. Their access to high paying jobs has considerable effect on the local economy, land values and the cost of living for residents who rely on local employment.

Although population growth has not been significant in the past twenty years, the East Central Wayne County Planning Area holds great potential for development. The challenge in developing a multi-municipal land use plan for ECWC is to strike a balance for sustainable development. That is, to provide for the essential economic growth and development of the Townships and the area as a whole, while concurrently conserving its scenic and natural environment and particularly open land and natural resources, the very elements which have largely been the impetus for the area's past development.

Importance of Regional Location and Resulting Development Pattern

The significance of the effect of the Planning Area's regional location on local land use patterns cannot be overemphasized. Although agriculture and forestry

once were the principal elements of the ECWC's rural working landscape and economy, the importance of these natural resource based activities has declined. The development pattern which has taken shape in the three-municipality area in the recent past can best be characterized as scattered residential, with limited retail and service commercial development. There is really no well-defined commercial center in any of the Townships. The numerous children's summer camps in the Planning Area are another important element of the local landscape and economy. Looking to the future, there is obviously more than an ample supply of undeveloped land within the Planning Area which can be developed.

Given the relatively limited job opportunities in the ECWC area, it is obvious most employed persons living in the three municipalities travel to other areas of Wayne County, New York and the greater region for employment. Clearly, the ECWC Planning Area's economy and resultant land use and development pattern is inextricably linked to all of Wayne County and the region. ECWC has evolved and will likely continue to evolve into a community where the work force relies heavily on the greater regional economy for employment.

Without continued careful planning and growth management, the area's landscape and community character will be forever altered by haphazard development. Such development results from uncoordinated individual decisions by separate property owners. This *Comprehensive Plan* will serve to guide this set of independent decisions in a direction aimed at coordinated growth and development.

Growth vs. No-Growth and Need for Area-Wide Planning

As noted earlier, achieving a balance between growth and development and maintaining the Planning Area's quality of life, community character, and conserving its natural environment will be the land use challenge over the next ten to twenty years. The latest Census revealed that the Wayne County population on a whole increased by almost twenty percent between 1990 and 2000, and ECWC increased by almost twenty-two percent. The U.S. Census estimates another five percent increase for the County and six percent increase for ECWC through 2005.

DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP LAND USE / LAND COVER (WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING)						
Category	1959		2006		Change 1959 - 2006	
	Acres	% total	Acres	% total	Acres	%
Residential	722	1.4	2,985	5.8	2,263	313.4
Commercial (includes camps)	197	0.4	200	0.4	3	1.5
Industrial	5	<0.1	10	0.0	5	100.0
Transportation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Utilities	0	0.0	6	0.0	6	--
Religious	30	0.1	29	0.1	(1)	(3.3)
Government/Institution	6	<0.1	32	0.1	26	433.3
Recreation	0	0.0	6	0.0	6	--
Cropland	11,041	21.5	8,803	17.1	(2,238)	(20.3)
Farmstead	574	1.1	237	0.5	(337)	(58.7)
Pasture/Brush	11,895	23.2	7,173	14.0	(4,722)	(39.7)
Forest	25,939	50.5	30,643	59.6	4,704	18.1
Water	953	1.9	1,219	2.4	266	27.9
Mining/Extraction	20	<0.1	39	0.1	19	95.0
TOTAL	51,382	100.0	51,382	100.0	0	0.0

The ECWC increase represents some 1,270 new residents, and the long term effect can be significant in terms of the subdivision of new lots and the demand for community facilities and services. The need for adequate water supply and sewage disposal, soil erosion and sedimentation control, storm water management and the increase in traffic are all factors which must be carefully planned and managed as the ECWC area grows.

Many of these issues extend beyond municipal boundaries and can best be addressed through the cooperation of the municipalities in the Planning Area and region. The ECWC Planning Area's future land use, environmental quality and community character will evolve in response to the actions of community leaders and active citizens combined with the forces of the local and regional economy, and the demand for land and community facilities and services. The area's growth and development will be tempered by the land's physical limitations (e.g., steep slopes, poor soils, and wetlands) and should be guided by the application of traditional and innovative land use controls, open land preservation techniques and environmental regulations as part of the planning and development process.

The Commonwealth is a strong advocate of area wide planning conducted cooperatively by the local municipalities. This is evidenced by the high priority projects conducted cooperatively are given at the state level. The idea is that Damascus Township, Manchester Township and Oregon Township can avoid the impact of uncoordinated land use control decisions made independently and by other agencies involved in the growth and development management process. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code provides specific authorization for joint municipal planning and goes on to authorize cooperative municipal zoning, and establishes specific requirements for the adoption and administration of a cooperative municipal zoning ordinance. Cooperative zoning enables communities to locate particular land uses in the most appropriate locations in the area rather than providing for every type of use in each participating municipality.

Land Use Overview

Land use in ECWC is shown on the 1959 and 2006 Land Use/Land Cover Maps which accompany this Plan. The 2006 information was recently compiled by the Wayne County Department of Planning and it can be compared to the 1959 data to see the change in the

MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP LAND USE (WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING)						
Category	1959		2006		Change 1959 - 2006	
	Acres	% total	Acres	% total	Acres	%
Residential	173	0.6	842	2.9	669	386.7
Commercial (includes camps)	108	0.4	154	0.5	46	42.6
Industrial	0	0.0	8	<0.1	8	--
Transportation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Utilities	0	0.0	12	<0.1	12	--
Religious	11	<0.1	11	<0.1	0	0.0
Government/Institution	5	<0.1	11	<0.1	6	120.0
Recreation	0	0.0	120	0.4	120	--
Cropland	3,095	10.7	2,113	7.3	(982)	(31.7)
Farmstead	174	0.6	101	0.4	(73)	(42.0)
Pasture/Brush	5,375	18.6	2,794	9.7	(2,581)	(48.0)
Forest	19,379	67.2	22,034	76.4	2,655	13.7
Water	521	1.8	636	2.2	115	22.1
Mining/Extraction	0	0.0	5	<0.1	5	--
TOTAL	28,841	100.0	28,841	100.0	0	0.0

OREGON TOWNSHIP LAND USE (WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING)						
Category	1959		2006		Change 1959 - 2006	
	Acres	% total	Acres	% total	Acres	%
Residential	41	0.4	596	5.2	555	1,353.7
Commercial (includes camps)	32	0.3	41	0.4	9	28.1
Industrial	<1	<0.1	0	0.0	--	--
Transportation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Utilities	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Religious	4	<0.1	4	0.0	0	0.0
Government/Institution	<1	<0.1	1	0.0	0	0.0
Recreation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Cropland	3,226	28.0	2,349	20.4	(877)	(27.2)
Farmstead	190	1.7	107	0.9	(83)	(43.7)
Pasture/Brush	2,435	21.2	1,644	14.3	(791)	(32.5)
Forest	5,429	47.2	6,542	56.9	1,113	20.5
Water	143	1.2	218	1.9	75	52.4
Mining/Extraction	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	11,502	100.0	11,502	100.0	0	0.0

2006 LAND USE / LAND COVER (WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING)					
Category	Acres				% of Total ECWC 91,725-acre Land Area
	Damascus	Manchester	Oregon	Total	
DEVELOPED LAND					
Residential	2,985	842	596	4,423	4.82
Farmstead	237	101	107	445	0.49
Commercial	200	154	41	395	0.43
Industrial	10	8	0	18	0.02
Transportation	0	0	0	0	0.00
Utilities	6	12	0	18	0.02
Religious	29	11	4	44	0.05
Government/Institution	32	11	1	44	0.05
Recreation	6	120	0	126	0.14
Mining/Extraction	39	5	0	44	0.05
Total Developed Land	3,544	1,264	749	5,557	6.06
OPEN LAND					
Cropland	8,803	2,113	2,349	13,265	14.46
Pasture/Brush	7,173	2,794	1,644	11,611	12.66
Forest	30,643	22,034	6,542	59,219	64.56
Water	1,219	636	218	2,073	2.26
Total Open Land	47,838	27,577	10,753	86,168	93.94
TOTAL DEVELOPED AND OPEN LAND	51,382	28,841	11,502	91,725	100.0

Planning Area over the past five decades. The *Land Use/Land Cover Tables* include the 1959 and 2006 land use data and details on the extent of the changes.

Based on the County Planning Department data ECWC Planning Area includes some 143.3 square miles, which at 640 acres per square mile totals 91,725 acres. This represents about twenty percent of Wayne County’s 730-square mile area. Taken as a whole, the greatest changes in land use occurred in the residential and agriculture related categories. Residential land in all three Townships increased dramatically while agricultural land decreased. While some of the reduction in agricultural land can be attributed to conversion to residential, much, with the decline in

farming, has reverted to forest land.

In any case, the ECWC Planning Area remains largely undeveloped and can be expected to remain rural for many years. As shown in the *2006 ECWC Land Use/Land Cover Table* almost ninety-four percent of the three-township area is cropland, pasture/brush, forest or water, and only six percent has been developed. Nevertheless, the land development and population increases which are expected, unless adequately managed will have unwanted effects on the community.



River Road, Damascus Township



Cox's Store, Lookout, Manchester Township

Residential Land

When compared to other townships in Wayne County, residential development of larger land parcels involving multiple lots and the construction of new roads has been relatively limited in ECWC. Most such subdivisions in the Planning Area are found in Damascus Township, along with Reflection Lakes in Manchester Township. Other residences continue to be found throughout the Townships, primarily on lots which were taken piecemeal from larger agricultural parcels and which front on public roads. In any case, residential development accounts for some 4,400 acres or almost five percent of the total land area. In addition, farmsteads, which include the residences and agricultural buildings, account for another 445 acres or about 0.50 percent of the total. While the amount of residential land increased substantially between 1959 and 2006, it remains a very small proportion of the total land area. Although a number of lots remain undeveloped in the residential developments noted earlier, future subdivisions should be expected, either in the form of planned developments or lot-by-lot subdivision from larger parcels.

Commercial/Industrial

Taken as a whole, commercial and industrial land, along with recreation and mining/extraction land, within the Planning Area represents only a very small proportion of the total land area, estimated at 583 acres or less than one percent. As noted earlier, there is no real concentration of commercial development in the Planning Area, with a number of businesses located in traditional villages such as Lookout, Tyler Hill and Damascus. The improved portion of summer camps are also included in the commercial category. Oregon Township includes only two properties classified as commercial, one of which is a large summer camp and conference center.



Reflection Lakes, Manchester Township



Milanville Store, Damascus Township



Camp Equinunk, Manchester Township



Rutledge Repairs, Damascus Township

In addition, many small businesses are scattered throughout the area, ranging from retail and service establishments to campgrounds. Industrial land is very limited, totaling only eighteen acres, with one site in Damascus Township, Boyce Products Limited which manufactures cabinets, and one in Manchester Township, the Catskill Stone bluestone cutting operation. Two mineral extraction operations totaling forty-four acres are also located in the Planning Area, with Bedrock Quarries in Damascus Township and the Catskill Stone Quarry in Manchester Township.

As documented by the community surveys, many home occupations are also operating in the Planning Area, but given the nature of many such businesses which often have no exterior facilities, the number of such enterprises cannot be assessed using aerial photography which is the basis for the County land use analysis.



Bryn Mawr Camp and Conference Center, Oregon Township

Government/Institution, Religious, and Utilities

Taken together, the government/institution, religious, and utilities categories represent only a fraction (0.12% or 106 acres) of the total ECWC land area and include the Damascus Township and Manchester Township municipal and maintenance facilities, post offices, the National Park Service, fire companies, ambulance companies, school property, churches and cemeteries. Land which is government-owned but is not used for a governmental facility is included in another category. For example, the State Game Lands in Manchester Township and the Damascus Forest are included in the forest land cover category, and township parks are included in recreation.



Pleasant Valley Campsite, Manchester Township



Damascus School, Damascus Township



National Park Service, Damascus Township

There are no indications that the Planning Area will experience a significant increase in public and semi-public land any time in the foreseeable future, the greatest potential being the acquisition of land by the Game Commission. Having very little public and semi-public land does have obvious advantages and disadvantages. As the population increases and demand for public facilities and services mounts, an inevitable increase in taxes occurs. In areas with large amounts of public, non-taxable land, the municipality often has a more difficult time raising revenue for improvements. On the other hand, state-owned land, state parks and forest land for example, cannot be developed and therefore additional services are not demanded by new residents. Residential development and the school children accompanying it typically cost more in services than the tax revenue generated.

Open Land

Cropland, pasture/brush, and forest remain the primary land use types in ECWC, accounting for a total of almost ninety-four percent, or 86,168 acres, of the Planning Area. Cropland, used for field and forage crops, is generally associated with the better soils found in the sheltered valleys and lowlands along streams, and in some cases on more level hilltops. The cropland is used primarily for corn and hay, with only a few dairy operations remaining, along with a number of beef producers and horse farms, and totals some 13,265 acres or about 14.5 percent of the Planning Area. Pasture/brush accounts for 11,611 acres or 12.7 percent.



Chestnut Ridge Farm, Damascus Township



Riefler Farm, Oregon Township



Kellam Farm, Manchester Township



Kellows Pond, Oregon Township

The steeper hillsides and ridge tops are largely forested, along with stream bottoms and other land too wet or otherwise unsuitable for farming, with forest accounting for 59,219 acres or 64.6 percent. Much of the private forest land is managed for timber sales and is important to the local economy. Although agricultural land remains a critical part of the open space landscape, the importance of agriculture to the local economy has declined.

Potential for Development

East Central Wayne County holds great potential for further development. While it is true that many parcels and lots in platted subdivisions cannot be developed because of natural limitations such as poor soils, wetlands and steep slopes which make lots unsuitable for on-lot sewage disposal systems, the existing parcels in the three municipalities include a number of already subdivided lots which are suitable for home construction. The area also includes many larger parcels with acceptable soils that can be developed. Again, poor soils and steep slopes may

preclude the use of some areas, but the suitable land in ECWC could be developed into many more residential lots. The large private holdings will remain undeveloped only as long as adequate returns are realized from agriculture and forestry enterprises, or the land is sold to higher income owners. Tax assessments are also a vital factor in the overall equation of keeping land in agriculture.

In any event, the rate of development of new residential subdivisions and the improvement of existing lots in the area will be governed more by the demand for lots than by the paucity of land. Large scale development on the thousands of acres of privately held land will be limited by owner commitment to maintaining its current use and ability to pay the taxes based on agricultural and forestry returns, or higher incomes, compared to its value for development. The Townships must be prepared to manage whatever development is proposed by adopting, administering and updating the necessary land use management regulations.



Teeple Farm, Manchester Township