

**CHESTER
CITY
VISION
2000**

**Section Four
Land Use**



Comprehensive Plan & Economic Development Strategy 1994

SECTION FOUR

LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The existing land use map (Figure LU-1) provides an overview of the present patterns of development in Chester City. Usually, the character of an established community such as Chester City is determined to a large extent by the uses to which the many different parcels of ground in the city are currently devoted. In Chester, the land use patterns are very similar to those of other established urban areas. For example: residential land use is densely populated; commercial is concentrated in Central or Downtown Business areas; industrial areas are generally located along the waterfront, and have deteriorated as a result of old age, underutilization and lack of new reinvestment; and mixed land uses and tax-exempt properties are frequent.

Chester City is relatively small for a city. It covers only 4.8 square miles of land area. The city is almost fully developed with residential, industrial, commercial, recreation and institutional uses. These uses are necessary and should fit into a functional pattern so the city can provide a clean and safe place for its inhabitants to live, work and play.

This element of the Comprehensive Plan will inventory existing land uses city

wide, assess their functional relationship, the rules and regulations that govern them and make recommendations for changes if necessary.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Residential is the predominant land use in Chester, covering approximately 55% of the city's land area. The residential density ranges from less than 9 units per acre to over 18 units per acre. Low density residential use, ranging from 0-13 units per acre and consisting of single family detached and twin family dwellings, are located primarily in Planning District One, north of I-95.

The residential land use in a band between I-95 and the AMTRAK right-of-way extending through Planning Districts Two, Three and Five, consists of a variety of residential types and densities. In Planning District Two, the residential land use is relatively high density consisting of row houses on small lots, large residential buildings converted to apartments, and a pair of high rise buildings for the elderly. In Planning District Three, the residential land use is characterized by a high percentage of row houses. Twin dwellings, garden apartments and public housing units are

also settled in this District. Residential land use in Planning Districts Three and Four is characterized by row houses and twins on very small lots and apartments at very high densities, including both public and private units.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial uses cover approximately 4% of the city's land area and are located throughout the city, but they are heavily concentrated in the Central Business District (CBD). The commercial use in the CBD consists of a variety of retail stores, banks, restaurants, professional offices and personal service stores. The professional office buildings include the GSA Federal office building, City Hall and City Hall Annex buildings for city services, utility company offices and several private office buildings.

Other commercial uses that serve the shopping need of the immediate neighborhoods are located on street corners in the form of small "mom and pop" stores (micro enterprises) and in small commercial strip centers along major streets. In Planning District One, commercial strip centers are located along Rt. 352 and Providence Road. Small food and variety stores are located at various street intersections throughout the area. In Planning District Two, the Central Business District, and stores along Morton Avenue and at some street intersections, respond to shopping needs for this area. In Planning District Three and Five there are strip shopping centers along 9th street. In Planning District Four the major commercial areas are small stores located at various street intersections.

The professional offices are primarily located in and around the Central Business District in Planning District Two including

the Federal Building, city services and medical offices. Other medical professional office buildings are located in a cluster in the vicinity of Providence Avenue and 22nd street in Planning District One. Several professional type office uses including real estate and health services are located along 9th street in both Planning Districts Three and Five.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

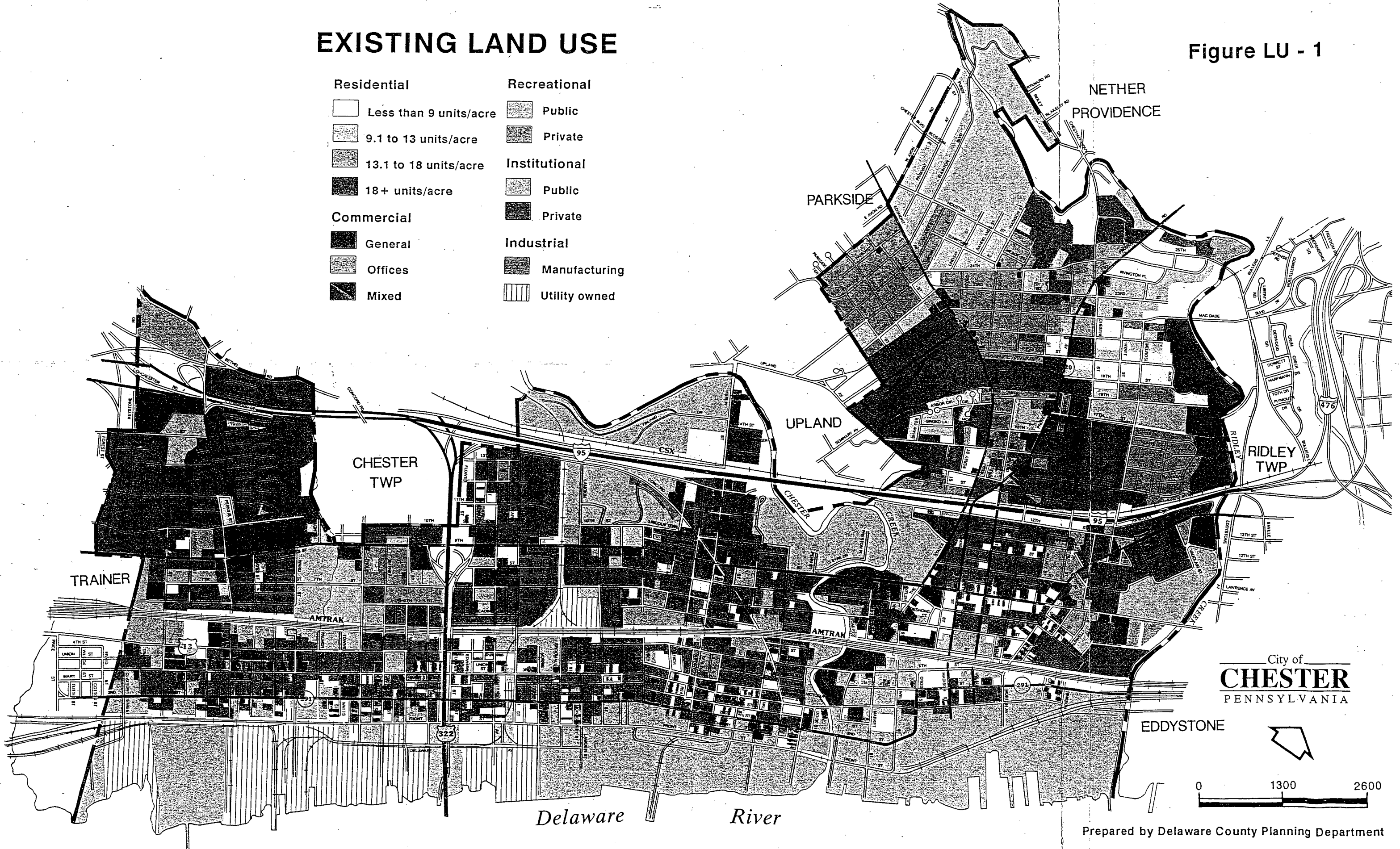
Industrial land use covers approximately 22 percent of the city's land area. These industrial uses can be placed in four categories: heavy manufacturing, light manufacturing, utility operated industry and service type industry. Most of the city's industrial land is located in a corridor extending westerly from Ridley Creek to Trainer Borough and between the Amtrak rail line and the Delaware River. Situated immediately south of 2nd street is the heavy industry and utility companies' area. Other industrial land in the form of light manufacturing is located in the far north western corner of the city in Planning District Five and in the eastern section in Planning District One in the vicinity of 25th street and Ridley Creek. A cluster of industrial uses is also located in Planning District Two along Chestnut Street and Morton Avenue.

Although industrial land use is located in other parts of the city, it dominates the waterfront. Historically, industrial users were located close to the water to use the river for bulk goods' transportation or as a source for industrial equipment coolant. The land located immediately south of the Conrail railroad line is exclusively industrial except for a small parcel under the Commodore Barry Bridge, which is being used for water related recreational use including boating and fishing.

EXISTING LAND USE

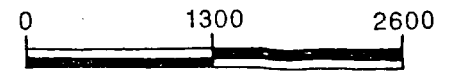
Figure LU - 1

Residential	Recreational
Less than 9 units/acre	Public
9.1 to 13 units/acre	Private
13.1 to 18 units/acre	Institutional
18+ units/acre	Public
Commercial	Private
General	Industrial
Offices	Manufacturing
Mixed	Utility owned



City of
CHESTER
PENNSYLVANIA

EDDYSTONE



Prepared by Delaware County Planning Department

RECREATIONAL LAND USE

Just over 8% or 267 acres of the city's land area is devoted to outdoor recreation. All outdoor recreational land is inventoried in the city's recently completed parks and recreation study titled "Recovery Action Program". Outdoor recreation is provided in the form of parks, ball fields and playground equipment for toddlers.

Table LU-1 identifies all the major outdoor public facilities. Chester Park, located in Planning District One is one of the city's largest parks. The facilities at this park include ball fields, tennis courts, picnic areas and playground equipment. The

other public park in this district is Washington Park. This park is also equipped with playground equipment. Other forms of recreation in this district are gymnasiums that are owned by the school district and not open to the public on a daily basis.

In Planning District Two, the major recreational facilities are Sun Village Park and Deshong Park. Sun Village is oriented for outdoor activity while Deshong has a museum which is available for community meetings, art exhibits and other cultural type activities. The YWCA is also located in this district. Currently the "Y" has the only swimming pool operating in the city on a year round basis. Other facilities in

**TABLE LU-1
CHESTER CITY**

MAJOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

PLANNING DISTRICT	PARK SITE	SIZE (Acres)	FACILITIES
ONE	Chester Park	71.96	A,P,PE,PA,PF,GC,B
	Washington Park	13.00	PA,PE
TWO	Sun Village Park	28.3	A,PF,PE,PA, PF,GC,B
	Deshong Park	15.8	A,P,PF
THREE	Crozer Park	49.4	A,P,PF
	Showalter School	23.0	A,PF
FOUR	Commodore Barry/ Delaware River Access	4.00	BL,F
	Memorial Park	21.2	A,P,PE,GC,PF,B

KEY:

A - Active

P - Passive

PE - Playground Equipment

PA - Picnic Area

B L - Boat Launch

GC - Game Court

B - Shelter or Building

SP - Swimming Pool

PF - Play Fields (Baseball, Football)

F - Fishing

SOURCE: Recovery Action Program, Carter Van Dyke Associates

the district include a private little league field and several small vest pocket parks. The major recreational facility in Planning District Three is Crozer Park. Crozer Park is the city's largest park.

The major facilities are ball fields for little league games and other fields for the public's general use. This park is situated on the north side of I-95 and is virtually separated from most city residents. The Showalter Athletic field is located in this district but is restricted in use during school hours. The YMCA, recently purchased by the city is in the process of being rehabilitated as a community center. Once this is complete the city will have another indoor pool to go along with the pool at the YWCA. There are also eight (8) neighborhood play areas with play equipment (some in disrepair) located in this district.

The only water-related recreational facility in the city is located in Planning District Four. This facility is used for boat launching and fishing. Most of the small boats launched at this facility are by non-city residents. Other recreation provided for the residents in this part of the city is provided by small neighborhood parks and a community center.

In Planning District Five, Memorial Park provides most of the recreational area for residents in this part of the city. This park is equipped with ball fields, play equipment and a volley ball area. There are also seven small vest-pocket parks located in this district.

INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE

The city contains a wide range of public and private institutional uses. Institutional

use covers approximately 8.3% of the city's land area. Widener University, the city's major institution, is located north of I-95 in Planning District One. Widener is the city's second largest employer and creates a positive anchor which tends to stabilize adjacent land uses.

The city's other major institutional use is Community Hospital (formerly Sacred Heart Medical Center) located in Planning District Five. Community Hospital is a full service hospital and is the city's third largest employer. Other institutional uses, both private and public, include schools, churches and cemeteries located throughout the city. In fact some of the more recent churches have taken over some of the abandoned stores along major streets.

VACANT LAND

Chester is a relatively built-up community. Currently only 2.7% of the land is vacant and potentially available for some type of development. Vacant land in the city is usually the result of buildings being lost through fires or significant deterioration and the lots subsequently being cleared. These parcels are often small and scattered among structures in good physical condition and among both industrial and residential structures in various levels of deterioration. In addition, private ownership of these parcels presents many obstacles for future development, especially when the owners have abandoned the property in lieu of paying taxes. For the purpose of identifying areas for reinvestment we have identified lots and buildings that are vacant/or underutilized. Further evaluation of each parcel in regards to its site limitations would determine the development potential for each parcel. (See Figure LU-2) Properties identified are as follows:

Planning District One

1. A property owned by Mellon Bank is approximately 2.2 acres. It is vacant and is located on Chestnut Parkway.
2. A property owned by Pennsylvania Properties Inc., (Gaster Property) is a 3.3 acre parcel with a partially finished high rise building. This property is located on Chestnut Parkway.
3. A 3.2 acre vacant parcel owned by the Chester Redevelopment Authority is located at MacDade Blvd. and 22nd Street.
4. A vacant 4 acre parcel owned by Michael Cannon is located on E. 24th Street.
5. A Chester Redevelopment Authority property consisting of 1.7 acres is located on Edgmont Avenue south of 15th Street.
6. A property located on Edgmont Avenue across from Howard Johnson's is approximately 2 acres and is partially vacant with a building.

Planning District Two

7. A series of properties consisting of industrial, commercial and residential uses is located along the I-95 northbound off-ramp west of Avenue of the States. These properties range from vacant industrial buildings to underutilized commercial space. Properties assembled together total approximately 2.5 acres.
8. This area consists of a mixture of underutilized industrial use, dilapidated residential buildings, commercial use and vacant land. The area is bounded by 12th Street, Morton Avenue, 9th Street and Potter Street, Rose Street and Chestnut Street, and consists of approximately 10 acres. Multiple owners are involved.

9. This area consists of a mixture of vacant land and abandoned structures, office use, commercial and institutional use. The area is bounded by E. 9th Street, Madison Street, 6th Street and consists of approximately 4 acres.

10. This area consists of a mixture of industrial, commercial, residential and vacant land. The total area involves multiple property owners and is approximately 13 acres.

11. Steven Ponns & Thomas Spears's property consists of 1.6 acres and is located on E. 5th Street.

12. A vacant parcel of ground consisting of multiple owners totaling approximately .6 acres is bounded by Upland, E. 5th Street, Madison Avenue and Amtrak/SEPTA Commuter Line.

13. A series of vacant properties owned by various owners consisting of 1.4 acres is located on E. 4th Street.

14. A vacant property consisting of 1.3 acres is located on E. 5th Street.

15. A Chester Parking Authority property is a non-used parking lot consisting of 3.6 acres located on W. 7th Street.

Planning District Three

16. The Chester Materials Inc. property is approximately 4.7 acres and is located on W. Front Street.

17. Riverbridge Industrial Center is owned by Delaware County. The property has a deep water pier and it consists of approximately 55 acres. It has a series of buildings located on the site with areas being used for light industry. This property is located on W. Front Street.

18. The former city Resource Recovery site consists of approximately 22 acres. This site was assembled for a resource recovery facility, however it was never approved and is now potentially available for development. This property is bounded by Flower Street, W. 2nd Street, Pennell Street and the Conrail Tracks.

19. Fifty contiguous properties located north of I-95 and west of Kerlin Street consist of approximately 14 acres. This is a former subdivision in which 50 lots were sold to various owners. Part of this subdivision is being used as a ball field considered part of Crozer Park.

Planning District Four

20. This property consists of several parcels owned by various property owners and is approximately 22 acres. It is bounded by Flower Street, Amtrak/SEPTA Commuter Line, Tilghman and 2nd Street. Land use consists of a mixture of vacant lots, dwelling units, commercial and institutional uses.

21. One PECO Energy owned site is a 9 acre parcel located on the Delaware River. It is a vacant site with the former West End Boat Club located on one side and the city's public river access park located on the other side.

22. A second PECO Energy site is the former West End Boat Club which is approximately 4.3 acres with a building located on the site.

23. A third PECO Energy site consist of 16 acres and is part of a 53 acre parcel located on the Delaware River.

LAND USE ANALYSIS

Land use is a vital component in determining the livability of a community. In preceding sections it was indicated that the city of Chester has declined in terms of population, housing and employment during the last four (4) decades. The existing land use pattern may have contributed significantly to these conditions.

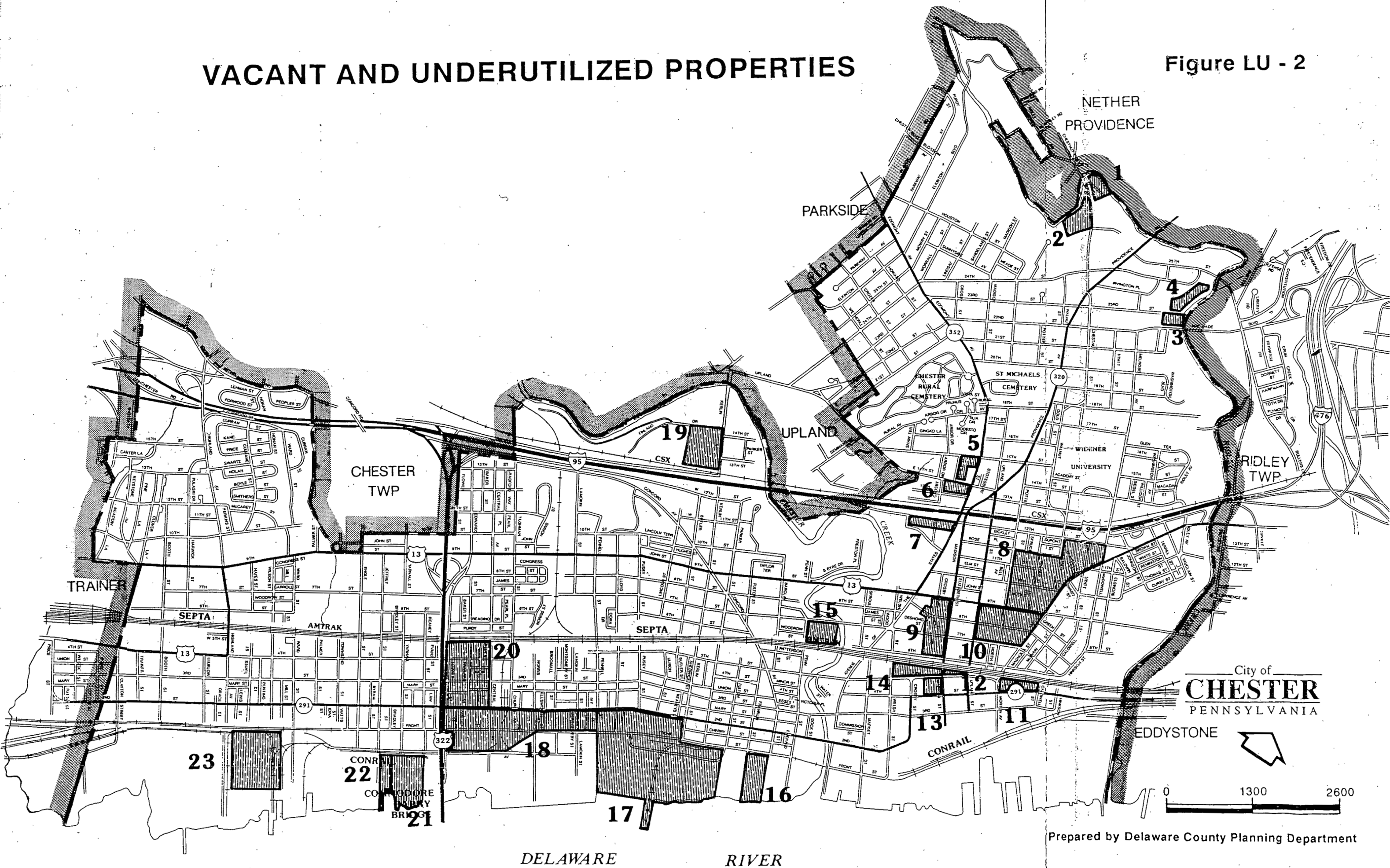
Chester City presents a mixture of dysfunctional land uses in many areas of the city. The major land uses including residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreation are not working together as they should to provide a functional relationship. In some areas, residential is intermingled with industry and in these cases we often find conflict and deterioration. The areas that display the most conflict are located south of the SEPTA-AMTRAK commuter line (Figure LU-3). Other land uses that have created conflict are the numerous auto repair shops located in residential areas where personal service shops, laundromats or food stores would be more appropriate. Where industry and heavy commercial uses are absent from the residential areas, the residential areas are better maintained and in generally good condition. This portion of the Chester Comprehensive Plan will fully evaluate the land use patterns by Planning District and discuss major issues and opportunities for each district. Goals and recommendations on a citywide basis will be presented at the end of this section.

A. PLANNING DISTRICT ONE

Land use in this district is fairly stable. It provides a relatively even distribution of single family units, row houses and apartments throughout the district. Commercial uses are generally located along major streets or at intersections which appear to

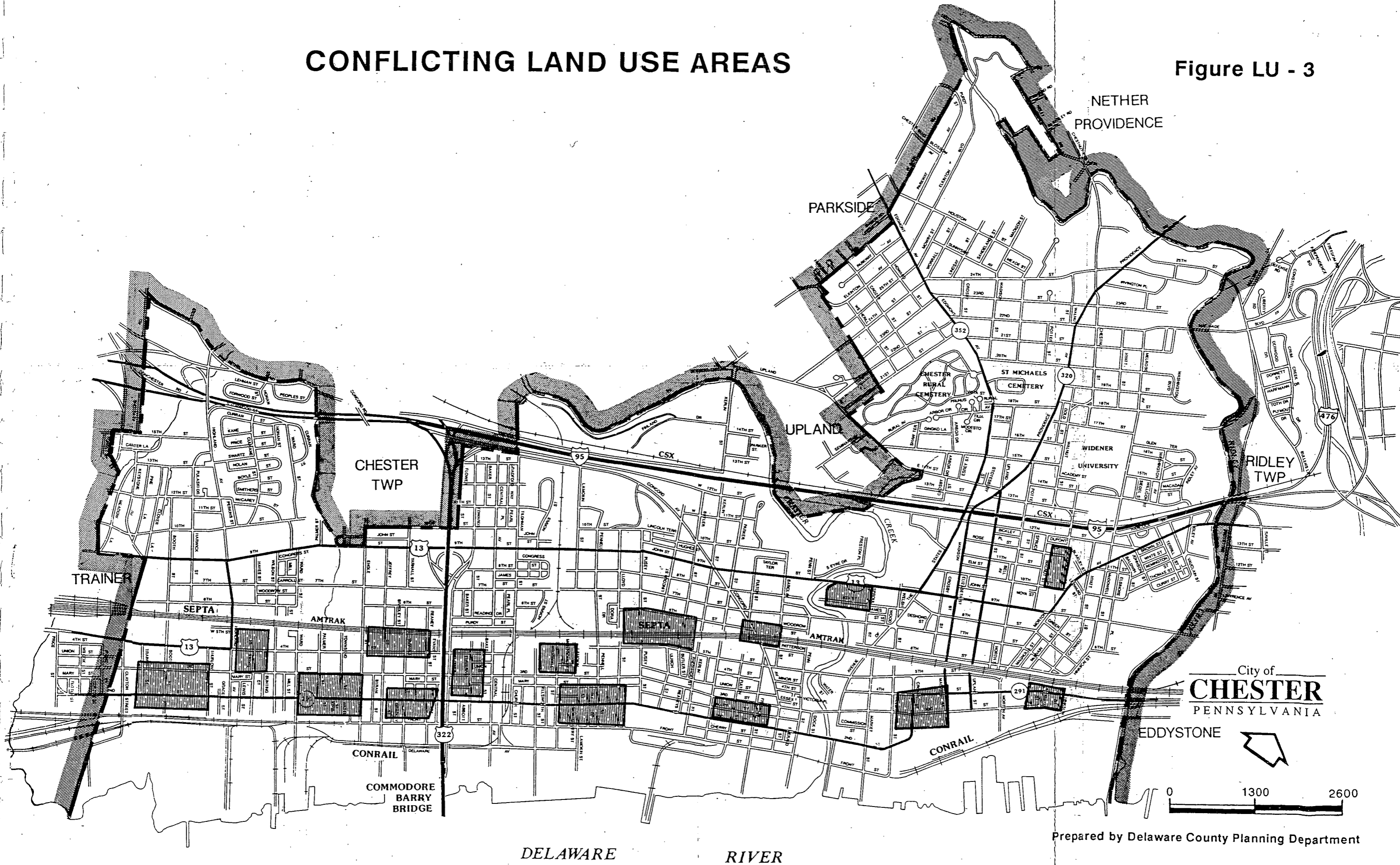
VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES

Figure LU - 2



CONFLICTING LAND USE AREAS

Figure LU - 3



be suitable locations for these type of uses in an urban environment. Industrial uses are relatively absent from this district except for one establishment located at the far northeast corner along Ridley Creek and one establishment located in the far southwest portion along the Chessie Railroad tracks. Delaware County stores voting machines in a building located on 23rd Street. This building is inactive for most of the year unless there is an election.

1. Residential

The residential land use in this district is relatively stable and generally at a lower density than the rest of the city. Single family detached units and semi-detached units built after 1940 have been maintained and are in good condition. The row houses built a little later are also well maintained and are in relatively good condition. The income level and age of housing units appear to reflect the overall conditions of the area. The residents in this area have the highest level of income in the city and the houses are not as old in this part of the city compared to the areas south of I-95.

Garden type apartment buildings in this district are relatively new compared to other apartments in the city. They are well-maintained and generate a higher rent than units located in other parts of the city.

These units were built within the last twenty years and are provided with off-street parking, adequate set-backs from the roads and a landscaped visual screen between adjacent uses. The older apartments in other parts of the city, built prior to 1940, were built very close to the road, lacked adequate off-street parking and did not screen out uses that were incompatible. In those areas we find blight and properties that are not well-maintained. Planning

District one is relatively free of the deficiencies of these older units.

2. Recreation

Chester Park (71.96 acres) and Washington Park (13 acres) provide out-door recreational activities for the residents not only in this district but in other parts of the city as well. Both parks are equipped with a variety of facilities (Table LU-1). The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) recommended standards for open space and recreation for an urban area such as Chester are 6 acres of recreation land for every 1000 residents. The 1990 population count for this district was 12,875 persons. Based on DVRPC'S formula, Chester Park and Washington Park could accommodate approximately 14,000 persons. Thus, Planning District One has more than adequate land area devoted to open space and recreation.

Land devoted to park and recreation, both active and passive is of considerable importance to the residents of not only this district but the city as well. The distribution of recreational facilities is more fully discussed in the Community Facilities section of the Comprehensive Plan.

3. Commercial

Commercial uses in this district are located along Rt. 352 and Rt. 320. Other commercial uses are located at various intersections. The stores generally located in the neighborhoods are convenience or food stores.

Because of their location in relation to access and adjacent land uses they do not present conflicts and function well in an urban environment. The stores located along Rts. 352 and 320 are strip commer-

cial centers and usually service customers from inside and outside the district. These stores because of their location serve two functions. The first is that they front on a major street and provide a buffer from the noise and traffic for the residential uses located on minor streets. The second is that patrons visiting these stores from outside the area do not have to travel along the minor streets through residential areas thereby creating congestion.

4. Industrial

Industrial uses are relatively absent from this district. Although there are several areas currently being utilized for industrial uses, they have not had a negative impact on the community. For example, the warehouse which stores the voting machines is inactive for most of the year and therefore does not generate traffic that usually creates congestion and a nuisance for the residential environment. The other industrial areas are separated from the residential areas by physical barriers and screening.

5. Institutional

Institutional land use in this district includes Widener University, The Blind Center, personal care facilities, schools, churches, and cemeteries.

Widener University is a major anchor in this district. Its presence has helped to stabilize property conditions and values in this district. Widener is also significant because it can serve as an magnet for other uses that generally tend to locate around major universities. For example, many students and professors seek temporary and permanent housing respectively. Other uses that might be attracted by a university setting include research institutions, restau-

rants and specialty shops. Future land devoted to institutional and related uses should be consistent with the city's long range planning effort.

Churches in the area provide several community services. These services include thrift shops, child care and private schools. Although there does not seem to be a need to expand their land area, these uses should be situated in the community so they do not create conflict with adjacent residential land. Adequate design standards should be incorporated in the zoning ordinance to require appropriate set-backs and off-street parking requirements.

6. Major Issues

Although the land use in Planning District One is relatively stable, there are certain major issues, opportunities and concerns that have been identified through the evaluation and assessment of the existing conditions related to how land is used.

a. Residential Stability

Issues

- As indicated above, the residential land use in this district is relatively stable. However, as things change and residential structures get older they require major maintenance to retain their integrity. Also in many cases when non-compatible land uses are permitted adjacent to residential areas through zoning changes or variances, this indicates that there may be a deficiency in the land use policies. Land uses located adjacent to uses of different character without proper screening or buffering will create conflict and will cause an area to decline.

Opportunities

- Although most of the housing units in this district are structurally sound, they are getting older and are often occupied by older, lower income residents. There are, however on-going maintenance assistance programs for low to moderate income elderly to assist in making needed repairs.
- Early warning signal systems could be enacted to identify areas lacking maintenance or in danger of encroachment by non-compatible land uses.

Potential Strategies

- Maintain a strong code enforcement effort to prevent physical deterioration from becoming a major problem in this district.
- Market programs that provide assistance in making physical repairs to homeowners that are in need. Programs that should be marketed are the Community Development Block Grant Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program and the HOME Grant Program.
- Identify areas that are showing peeling exterior paint, broken sidewalk and curbs as target areas for immediate assistance.
- Encourage buffering and other means of separation from non-compatible uses.

b. Widener University

Issues

- Widener University is a major institutional use in the city as well as a major employer.

- Area residents periodically raise concerns involving future encroachment into surrounding neighborhoods and the type of uses that might be developed.

Opportunities

- A major university can be a positive influence for the city in its revitalization efforts. In terms of creating jobs and providing outreach programs in the areas of education, economic and community development, Widener has been and can continue to be very beneficial to Chester and its residents.
- Widener can also serve as a factor in attracting desirable new uses to the general area.

Potential Strategies

- To resolve the issues involving any future expansion and development for Widener, an opportunity exists to address these concerns through the development of a University Zoning District. The proposed district should include provisions that would accommodate Widener University needs and at the same time permit development to take place without creating a negative impact on the surrounding area.
- Formation of a Task Force to respond to both Widener University and neighborhood concerns.

c. Vacant and Underutilized Properties

Issues

- Vacant and underutilized properties are a major concern because they contribute to the erosion of a community's tax base and create eyesores if the property is not well-maintained and kept free of trash.

Opportunities

- The Gaster property located along Chestnut Parkway and consisting of 3.3 acres has a partially finished high rise building located on it. This building has been left standing for over two decades without any attempt to finish it. Located across the street is a vacant parcel consisting of approximately 2 acres. Although these parcels are not contiguous, they do present an opportunity for additional development. The characteristics of this area and the access would tend to support residential uses at a density of up to 13 units per acre.

- Two other vacant parcels that present opportunities for development are located at 15th Street and Edgmont Avenues across from Howard Johnson Hotel and Restaurant (Figure LU-2). These properties have frontage on a major highway and are within a 100 feet of a proposed I-95 southbound on-ramp. Because of the adjacent land uses, direct frontage on a major highway which carries large volumes of traffic, and close proximity to an Interstate highway, these properties would be more suitable for a high intensity use which has the capacity to generate significant employment. These properties are discussed in more detail in the Economic Development Strategy Section.

Potential Strategies

- To address the Gaster property the city should start a dialogue with the current owner to discuss concerns related to the redevelopment of the property. Because of its current location and existing characteristics of the area the discussions should be focused around residential development. The city should identify incentives through zoning and tax abatement programs to encourage the owner to move forward with completing this project.

- The properties located at 15th & Edgmont are serviced by a major arterial and will soon have access to an Interstate highway. Land use for this property should take advantage of an existing infrastructure that has the capacity to move traffic out of the area without creating conflict and congestion on other minor residential streets. This property is fully discussed in the Economic Development Strategy.

d. Chester Park

Issues

- The park is 71.96 acres and is often considered a local community park. With the capacity to serve 300 persons per acre based on the standards recommended by DVRPC, Chester Park represents a technical surplus of park and recreational land use for its limited perceived service area.

- It has been reported that much of the playground equipment is broken or missing and the ball fields need regrading to fill small holes and gullies.

Opportunities

- Chester Park could be considered as a sub-regional park and could develop enhanced facilities that could result in regional use of the park.

- Residents and community organizations could identify areas of need (e.g. missing baskets on backboards, broken swing chains, etc.)

Potential Strategies

- Explore programs that utilize the park to its full potential without overburdening the city with additional maintenance and operational cost.

- Identify funds through state and federal programs to assist in capital improvements, maintenance and repair of equipment.
- Explore other options for future use of the park in relation to passive and active use. A full discussion of Chester Park will be in the Community Facilities section of this plan.

e. I-95 Southbound Ramp

Issues

- Although this is primarily a transportation issue, it will have a significant impact on surrounding land uses.
- The ramp location will be in an area that is characterized by mixed land use.

Opportunities

- This ramp presents an opportunity to provide immediate access to an Interstate Highway from a major arterial.
- Land use adjacent to this major intersection should be of high intensity to take advantage of the major access points and to discourage use that would be adversely impacted by large volumes of traffic.

Potential Strategies

- The city should target this area as an area suitable for high intensity development.
- Zoning districts with proper standards should be developed to guide development in this area. This proposed I-95 southbound ramp to be located on Edgmont Avenue will be discussed in the Transportation Section and the Economic Development Strategy Section.

B. PLANNING DISTRICT TWO

This area typifies a city in decline. It is experiencing many problems associated with changing land uses, a declining business district, vacant lots and underutilized residential and industrial buildings. However, despite the problems that have blighted this area, the trends in this portion of the city can be reversed and opportunities for redevelopment and adaptive reuse of the underutilized buildings can be identified.

1. Residential

To a large extent, significant residential deterioration has occurred throughout this district except for the Sun Village neighborhood. The overall quality of residential land use in this district has been devastated by vacant and deteriorated residential buildings.

Most of the residential units in this district were built prior to 1939 and require frequent maintenance. Because most of the residents living in this district are below poverty level, the necessary maintenance on these units is often not performed, thus the units deteriorate. There are target areas in this district that present an opportunity for redevelopment of new residential units ranging from 9 to 18 units per acre. One area in particular, bounded by Madison Street, 9th Street, Walnut Street and 12th Street, presents an opportunity for residential rehabilitation and infill development.

Although single-family row houses occupy most of the residential land use in this district, the densities of 18 units per acre equal the densities often found in multi-family developments.

Apartments in multi-family complexes, such as garden type apartment buildings are relatively absent from this district. Most of the

single family units have been converted to apartments and are now experiencing the impact of accommodating more people than what the units were designed for.

2. Recreation

Recreation in this district is provided by Sun Village Park in the eastern portion and Deshong Park in the western portion of the district. The YWCA, a community building, provides several indoor activities and a swimming pool. There is also a little league field and several small vest pocket parks located in this district. Deshong Park (15.8 acres) and Sun Village Park (28.3 acres) total 44.1 acres of outdoor recreation area. (See Table LU-1)

DVRPC recommended standards for open space and recreation for urban areas are 6 acres of recreational space for every 1000 residents. The 1990 population count for this district was 6,229 residents. Based on DVRPC's formula, these two parks could accommodate approximately 7,000 residents indicating more than sufficient recreational area. What is lacking in this district as well as other parts of the city is adequate year round indoor recreational facilities. Facilities such as swimming pools, movie theaters, libraries, game rooms and other indoor activities.

3. Commercial

The major shopping area for this district as well as for the city is the Central Business District (CBD). The Chester CBD was once a thriving commercial hub serving the primary shopping needs for city residents as well as shopping needs for adjacent communities. The CBD is now in decline with many of the buildings showing physical deterioration and poor maintenance while others are either vacant or boarded up.

Several factors have contributed to the decline of the CBD: significant population loss during the past 40 years; changing shopping habits; persons with transportation and adequate income now shop at the malls in surrounding municipalities; and public safety concerns have discouraged many shoppers from coming into the area.

To rebuild the CBD, new strategies are needed to address these problems. There are opportunities to be more creative in promoting the CBD and introducing new programs for facade improvements, security and technical assistance. In addition, residential units located over the stores, as a means to bring more activity to the area, should be explored. A more detailed discussion of issues and opportunities for the CBD are located in the Economic Development Strategy Section.

Vacant parcels surrounding the CBD also contributed to the decline of the district. These vacant parcels do, however, provide an excellent opportunity for attracting new land uses that complement the business district. Some of these uses could be offices and restaurants. The federal office building at 7th and Crosby Streets could be a focus to attract other government office uses into the area. A government office district which could accommodate federal, state and local offices would enhance revitalization of the CBD and surrounding areas by bringing people and new life to a currently vacant area. A proposed Government Office District is discussed in more detail in the Economic Development Strategy.

4. Industrial

Industrial land use in this district is mostly located between Fourth Street and the river. Further inland on the north side of the SEPTA-AMTRAK railroad tracks, industri-

al use is scattered on various parcels. The buildings that are creating conflict with residential uses are partially vacant and underutilized. The combination of age, lack of off-street parking and changes in the physical and location needs of modern industries has diminished the attractiveness of the industrial buildings in this area.

Modern light industrial uses, with more workshop and assembly type operations, require more efficient buildings, with lower ceilings and adequate space for expansion. The existing buildings would require major rehabilitation to attract new industrial users, but the cost for such improvements is high. Therefore, other options, such as demolition and adaptive reuse for uses other than industry should also be explored.

The industrial land use along the river includes Scott Paper Company and the vacant Penn Ship Company's property. The Penn Ship Company's property is approximately 90 acres and is vacant and underutilized.

Currently, the owner of the Penn Ship Company has sold approximately 16 acres to the State of Pennsylvania for a State Correctional Facility. Although the city will lose 16 acres of industrial land it will be gaining an active use on property that was previously underutilized. When developed, this activity has the potential to encourage development of vacant parcels surrounding this site with highway oriented uses. In other areas of the State where prisons have been constructed, commercial uses such as fast food restaurants, motels and gas stations have followed. Areas adjacent to the prison should be properly zoned to accommodate and guide the anticipated growth of new highway oriented commercial use.

This also presents an opportunity for the improvement of Rt. 291. Since this area is the gateway into Chester's Waterfront from the east, which includes the Philadelphia International Airport, an opportunity exists for uses that utilize air travel on a frequent basis.

The Penn Ship Company is also currently negotiating with a Virginia ship building company to purchase most of the remaining portion of the site. If this deal is finalized, the Chester waterfront could again become one of the major employers in Delaware County. As new jobs are generated from this site and the prison, other opportunities will be generated in new commercial and residential development.

5. Institutional

Institutional use in this district consists of churches located throughout the area. Churches range from elaborate historically significant buildings to storefronts.

In an urban environment like Chester, it is anticipated that some churches will locate in vacant storefronts or in some cases, former residential dwellings. Because churches are involved in providing services to the elderly, poor, the homeless and other residents in need, the zoning ordinance should be provided with certain design standards so the location of churches and similar uses do not create conflict in the immediate neighborhoods.

6. Major Issues

For the most part, the land use in this district depicts a city in decline. Issues that require discussion are:

a. Residential Stability

Issues

- In-fill development, new construction, maintenance and modernization are the major factors for acquiring residential stability in this district.
- Most of the housing in this district was built prior to 1940 and will generally require major maintenance to remain functional.
- Vacant, abandoned structures have caused the quality of the residential land use to decline. These type of units are scattered throughout this district.

Opportunities

- While many of the housing units in this district are old and have deteriorated, they are still relatively sound. With adequate repairs such as weatherization, heating and roofing, these units can be brought back to livable conditions.
- At least two areas in Planning District Two appear suitable for major housing rehabilitation and new infill residential development. These two areas are bounded by Walnut Street, 9th Street, Madison Street and Twelfth Street, and by Potter Street, 7th Street, Madison Street and 9th Street. Some portions of these areas that have dilapidated housing intermingled with vacant parcels should be cleared and made available for new residential development.
- Non-profit housing rehabilitation agencies including the Community Action Agency of Delaware County, Inc., Better Housing for Chester, Chester Community Improvement Project, and other for-profit organizations can play an important role in the renovation of existing housing in the area.

- Many vacant parcels are owned by the Chester Redevelopment Authority and other government agencies. These buildings and parcels could be rehabilitated or reused for new construction.

Potential Strategies

- Target neighborhoods that are showing early signs of decline and introduce homeowners to programs that are available for assistance. The programs that would be actively marketed in this area are:
 - Weatherization Assistance Program
 - HOME Program
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
 - Emergency Repair Program
 - Inventory vacant structures and recommend course of action
 - Initiate code enforcement action for units that are identified as deteriorating.
 - Assemble vacant parcels to create meaningful size parcels for potential development.
- Increase the use of condemnation to acquire properties that may hinder reinvestment. The Redevelopment Authority's and/or the city's power of eminent domain should be used in areas where it will benefit the public and initiate new development.

b. Deshong Park

Currently the Deshong Park contains ball fields, an arboretum, a former mansion and a museum building. The museum currently serves as a community building and cultural center. The ball fields are sometimes used

for active recreation and for picnics for various groups in the city. Over the last couple of years the park has been faced with several development options. These options typically retained the museum in their plans, but utilized other areas of the site for buildings and parking areas. No development option is being actively considered at this time.

Issues

- The Deshong Park is currently owned by Delaware County, but it is not a County Park and does not receive county funds for maintenance and operation.
- The museum is in fair condition but will need to implement a maintenance schedule to maintain its integrity. Recent clean up of the arboretum and the museum grounds have enhanced the site's overall physical appearance. The mansion is in relatively poor condition and will continue to deteriorate if maintenance on the roof, painting to protect the exterior, and plumbing and electrical upgrading is not performed.
- The property has real potential for incorporating other uses with the existing recreational and cultural programs.

Opportunities

- Currently the property is used by a non-profit community organization. Although the property is owned by the county and located in the city neither provide direct funding for its operation and maintenance. Resolution of the long term ownership issue so operation and maintenance of the property can be clearly defined is needed.
- Determine how the property can best incorporate other options with recreational and cultural programs. An opportunity exists to combine the vacant northern por-

tion of the park with vacant, underutilized commercial property to the north for an I-95 related development project. Further discussion of this effort can be found in the Economic Development Strategy section.

Potential Strategies

- Review options to determine whether the park can best benefit the city and its residents through either a private or public ownership approach.
- Fully explore the benefits of utilizing a portion of this property in combination with adjacent properties for tax ratable uses. All concepts would include the preservation and continued maintenance of the museum and the arboretum.

c. Business District

Issues

- The decline of the CBD is probably linked with several factors. These include: loss of population; shift from middle income to low-income population; changing shopping habits; development of new malls in adjoining community; and public safety perceptions.
- Many stores are vacant and there is an uneven mix of the type of retail, professional office and service type offices in the district.

Opportunities

- Develop a strategy for improvement with possible assistance from the Main Street Program operated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Opportunities for new retail activity in existing buildings.

Potential Strategies

- Prepare a detailed physical and market analysis of the Business District. Invite proposals from consultants who specialize in revitalization of Central Business Districts. See the Economic Development Strategy Section for more discussion of this issue.
- Identify reuse potential for vacant and underutilized areas in and around the CBD. Investigate the potential for converting second floors of the stores for residential use.

d. Rt. 291 Corridor

Issues

- Rt. 291 is on PA DOT's 12 year improvement program to be widened and improved from Ridley Creek to 4th and Price Streets in Trainer Borough.
- Once this road is widened it will generate new opportunities along the road.
- It serves as a major access road for industries along the waterfront.

Opportunities

- Many vacant and underutilized properties are located along this road which would be suitable for new development and redevelopment once the road is improved.
- Potential exists to create an industrial parkway with new signs, lighting and trees which would enhance the image of Chester's waterfront land.

Potential Strategies

- Develop new and revised zoning districts to promote various types of waterfront

development, industrial parks and mixed use development.

- Parcel remnants from the widening acquisition process should be assembled by the city into usable development lots.
- The city should be prepared to use its eminent domain powers and/or those of the Chester Redevelopment Authority to assemble parcels for eventual development.
- Establish an inventory of available vacant and underutilized sites for marketing purposes. The list of available sites would allow the city to respond to developers questions relating to a variety of sites for waterfront or light industrial type development.

e. Chestnut Street/Morton Ave. Corridor

Issues

- This area has experienced decline because of loss of manufacturing jobs.
- Many buildings are now vacant or underutilized and difficult to market because of age and mixed land use that is not conducive to industrial development.

Opportunities

- This area has direct access to an Interstate highway (I-95) and is in close proximity to the Blue Route (I-476) and Philadelphia International Airport.
- Vacant parcels and acquisition remnants, combined with underutilized buildings can be assembled to create significant size parcels worth reinvestment.
- Easy access to the Blue Route and to other markets outside of Chester, at one end, and

to the waterfront at the other end, give this corridor significant development potential.

Potential Strategies

- Develop a revitalization strategy for the Chestnut Street/Morton Avenue Corridor.
- Address the problems of mixed uses that have created conflicts and contributed to the decline of the area. Revise the zoning ordinance to create provisions that would protect non-compatible uses from one another.
- Identify financial incentives that could be utilized to spur reinvestment along Morton Avenue.
- Develop available land inventory for inquiries related to uses that would complement the construction of the new State Correctional Facility.

C. PLANNING DISTRICT THREE

This district is characterized by industry located to the far south bordering the river and park land to the far north, with an assortment of land uses in between. Some of the key land use issues in this district include: future land use along the Rt. 291 Corridor; vacant and deteriorated properties; The William Penn Housing Project; Crozer Park; and, the former YMCA property.

1. RESIDENTIAL

Residential uses in this district are characterized by a mixture of single family detached homes, twins, row houses, apartments and a public housing complex. The condition of the residential land uses ranges from well-maintained and stable to poorly maintained and blighted. Residential units located in the southern portion of the district

are in the most serious distress. In addition, Rt. 291 carries large volumes of truck and automobile traffic which constantly generate noise, vibration and fumes. The conditions generated from industry, heavy commercial and major roads make these areas less desirable for residential use. The effect of this land use conflict is evident in the many vacant lots and deteriorated buildings that were once in active residential use.

Vacant and abandoned structures are a major problem not only in this district but throughout the city. Several important factors have impacted the housing conditions in this area. The proposed reconstruction of Route 291 has had a significant impact on the residential land use along the highway. Many residents anticipated that Penn Dot was going to purchase their property for the widening of Route 291. Because of this, these properties received minimal maintenance and began to deteriorate. Another factor is that many houses in this district were built prior to 1939 and are over 50 years old. These houses require maintenance at regular intervals for them to remain stable and in livable condition. Many residents in this area are on fixed incomes or living at the poverty level and cannot afford the yearly maintenance cost of their housing units.

Many other structures, when they became vacant or abandoned for one reason or another, were not properly sealed to protect them from the elements and unlawful entry. Thus, these units were subject to fires and vandalism while others deteriorated through the lack of maintenance and had to be demolished because of dangerous conditions. Throughout this area, streets are now lined with houses either vacant and in blighted condition, or vacant and severely deteriorated.

This situation presents an opportunity for

this area to be redeveloped with new or rehabilitated housing units. In the case where the land fronts on a major road (e.g. Route 291) or is located adjacent to heavy commercial or industry, the future land uses should be focused on high density residential in large buildings with a buffer or highway oriented commercial/office use that would serve as a buffer for residential areas at a lower density.

For example, if the south side of Rt. 291 is developed with light industry and heavy commercial and Rt. 291 carries large volumes of traffic, then the north side of Rt. 291 would be less conducive to single family rows or twin housing units. The exterior area of a single family house in an urban neighborhood is part of the functioning space. Exterior activities include porch sitting, talking to neighbors and children playing on the sidewalk. More compatible uses would be highway commercial or multi-family in garden apartments. These uses do not include outdoor activity as a major function to their mode of being. Also, off-street parking in front of buildings and greater set-backs would lessen the noise, vibration and busy activity generated from the highway and light industrial uses.

The other major land use issue in this district is the William Penn public housing complex. Currently, the William Penn complex consists of 21 buildings containing approximately 291 units. Most of the units are in poor condition. In addition, the density is very high and the complex does not provide adequate active or passive recreational activities for the residents.

Because of the poor condition of the William Penn Complex, it has had a negative impact on adjacent uses and has discouraged reinvestment on nearby vacant parcels or rehabilitation of nearby vacant

structures. Instead, the vacant parcels serve as trash collectors and the vacant structures deteriorate from lack of maintenance.

The Chester Housing Authority has recently prepared a comprehensive plan with an overall physical and management improvement strategy. This plan has introduced many concepts for improving the complex's physical conditions.

Once the William Penn Complex is improved with buildings, sidewalk and street repairs, the negative impact on adjacent vacant parcels will diminish and they will become more marketable. Uses such as infill neighborhood commercial to serve the residents in William Penn would be compatible. Also multi-family in garden type apartments would be suitable.

2. COMMERCIAL

This district was developed with commercial areas along 2nd and 3rd Streets, Concord Road and Kerlin Street with many small convenience stores located on street corners at the end of residential row houses. However, during the last four decades, many of these stores have closed. Commercial land use has been affected by a variety of local trends: population loss in significant numbers has caused the closing of many stores on the major traffic routes; a shift from middle income population to a low income population which does not have the disposable income to support comparison type retail stores, and the physical decline and deterioration of the residential community including the William Penn Housing Project.

It is unlikely that commercial land use will return to its historic patterns when stores

lined 3rd Street and attracted not only patrons from adjacent neighborhoods, but patrons passing through the city. Because of changing trends and shopping habits, future commercial uses may address the needs of the community better if they were located at district nodes around the intersection of 9th and Kerlin Streets, along 9th Street and on the north side of 2nd Street.

3. RECREATION

The major issues pertaining to recreational land use in this district are location, accessibility and adequacy of facilities.

The major recreational facility in Planning District 3 is Crozer Park. Currently this park is separated from the city by I-95. Off and on-ramps for I-95 are located south of the park entrance. Access to the park by foot is inconvenienced by the heavy vehicular traffic traveling to and from I-95. Also because of the traffic and distance, residents south of 9th Street seldom walk to the park. Visits to the park are usually by vehicle.

The major facility at the park is ball fields. The swimming pool was recently eliminated because of unsafe conditions. Although the ball fields are public, a portion of the fields is located on private property. This area includes a 50 lot subdivision that was approved for residential development a few decades ago.

A major issue regarding Crozer Park is whether the entire park should continue to remain in the park and recreation system. The park is 49.4 acres and is classified as a community park. DVRPC recommended standards for open space and recreation for urban areas are 6 acres of recreational space for every 1000 residents. The 1990 population count for this district was 7,933

residents. Based on DVRPC's formula, Crozer Park could serve a population of over 8,000 persons. This excess allows for the consideration of alternative uses for portions of Crozer Park.

The city recently purchased the former Eyre Drive YMCA for a community center. This land, currently designated for recreational purposes, is adjacent to the high school grounds and is suitable to be used continually for recreational purposes. In fact the pool and other indoor activities would help lessen the demand for indoor recreational needs throughout the city.

4. INDUSTRIAL

The industrial land use in this district is located along the river and further inland along the SEPTA-AMTRAK railroad tracks. Industrial land in this district is generally underutilized. Most of the industrial buildings located inland are adjacent to residential land use and have created conflict. In many cases, these buildings are vacant or underutilized and will have a difficult time attracting new users because of obsolete buildings with little opportunity to expand and poor access for industrial use. These buildings should be considered for adaptive reuse, including residential opportunities utilizing tax credit programs and other incentives.

The industrial land use along the river presents many opportunities. The Riverbridge Industrial Center complex is comprised of approximately 55 acres with partially vacant buildings and vacant land for potential new construction. The property is also equipped with a pier, which although in a deteriorated condition, presents an opportunity for redevelopment.

It is likely that most of the industrial land

located along the waterfront in this Planning District will remain in some form of industrial use, especially land owned by Scott Paper, Philadelphia Quartz, Chester Water Authority and some portions of the PECO Energy property.

5. INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional use in this district is characterized by Chester High School and the Showalter Middle School. Both schools devote land to recreational fields that is available for residents in the immediate neighborhood after school hours.

Other institutional uses in this district include churches scattered throughout the district. Churches play an important role in an urban environment. For example, most ministers become involved in dealing with the social problems associated with a low income area. They provide space in their churches for community activity and other programs designed to improve the life of local residents.

Because many churches are occupying store fronts the zoning ordinance must provide adequate provisions to allow the churches to function, but to also protect the community from traffic and congestion.

6. MAJOR ISSUES

This section of the city like the others is experiencing problems such as decline in population, deteriorated properties and a highway that has been scheduled to be improved for the past 20 years. All of these problems have had a negative impact on the land use in this district. Several key land use issues have been identified and are worthy of discussion. They are:

a. Residential Stability

Issues

- As mentioned in the previous planning districts residential stability is one of the most visible indications of a neighborhood's status. If the residentially zoned land is vacant and scattered with deteriorated structures then that is a visible sign of decline.
- This district's residential land use consists of aged housing units with many residents financially unable to make repairs.
- Residential land use located south of the SEPTA-AMTRAK railroad line is scattered with vacant and deteriorated structures.
- Residential land uses along 2nd and 3rd Streets are intermingled with non-compatible uses such as auto repair shops and heavy industrial buildings.

Opportunities

- Many properties that are old can be maintained with financial and technical assistance. Various programs are available to assist residents unable to make repairs because of their financial status.
- Many housing units continue to be abandoned. This problem needs to be approached in conjunction with other neighborhood improvements, such as street and sidewalks repairs, commercial area revitalization and job training programs.
- One specific opportunity for a program of housing improvements is for the city to focus targeted revitalization effort on areas that are adjacent to areas being targeted for

renovation by non profit groups like Community Action Agency (area centered on 2nd Street and Ellsworth Street).

Potential Strategies

- Target programs to help improve the quality of renter-occupied housing. Privately-owned rental housing is approximately 40% of the city's housing inventory.
- Target city sponsored housing rehabilitation efforts and related infrastructure improvements in areas that are currently the focus of efforts by other non-profit or private sector initiatives to enhance and expand the impact of these initiatives.

b. Rt. 291 Corridor

Issues

- Rt. 291 is a major arterial highway providing access to the industrial properties along the waterfront. Currently this road is proposed to be improved to a five lane highway.
- Once this road is improved it will have a significant impact on the existing properties fronting on it.
- The improvement of this road is discussed in more detail in the Transportation and Economic Development Strategy sections of this plan.

Opportunities

- As a result of improvements to Route 291, properties that are currently vacant and underutilized will become much more marketable.
- The widening of Route 291 provides a unique opportunity for changing the image

in Chester's major industrial area. The improvement of this road will generate new interest in cleaning up the area and removing some eyesores that have hindered reinvestment.

- An opportunity also exists to create a signature road with new signs, trees and landscaping. An "Adopt a Highway" Program can provide ongoing support for maintaining the quality of this new facility.

Potential Strategies

- Expedite the improvement of Rt. 291 from Ridley Creek to Price Street. Reconstruction of Rt. 291 will reinforce reinvestment in the area.
- Develop new and revised zoning provisions to support and guide new development.
- Parcel remnants from the widening acquisition process should be assembled by the city into usable development lots.

c. Vacant Parcels & Deteriorated Properties

Issues

- Widespread abandonment of properties has created eyesores and discouraged reinvestment in the area.
- Many vacant parcels are owned by the city government and/or other public entities and should be programmed for return to tax ratable status.
- Many vacant properties are scattered throughout areas with sound structures. As the vacant lots fill up with trash, both the aesthetics and the physical integrity of the block is damaged.

- Deteriorated properties have been left to become nuisance properties. These properties, if not sealed properly, tend to invite vandalism which usually encourages abandonment of more properties.

Opportunities

- Currently, vacant properties are a result of buildings that have burned down or been demolished because of unsafe conditions. Often, the owners abandon the properties when they become tax delinquent. These properties are suitable for redevelopment once titles to the properties are cleared.
- The former Resource Recovery Site consists of numerous properties, some with structures and some vacant. Most of these properties have been assembled under limited ownership.

Potential Strategies

- Develop a program to inventory all vacant and abandoned properties. This would enable the city to target and gain control of key properties. Vacant lots of insignificant size would be cleaned and turned over to neighborhood organizations for urban garden programs. If vacant lots can be assembled to create developable parcels, they could then be marketed for development.
- Neighborhood organizations can be utilized to identify recently vacated properties by creating a vacant property hot line.
- City government agencies should review their property inventories to identify surplus properties.
- Create an early warning system to identify properties that are in need of maintenance. Owners of these properties could be

informed of various programs to assist them in repairs.

- Encourage the disposition of the Resource Recovery Properties to a potential developer.

d. Crozer Park

Issues

- A portion of the park facilities is located on private property. Over the years additional ball fields were located on vacant property that is not owned by the city.
- The park is separated from the City by I-95 and the access ramp is in close proximity to the parks entrance.
- The park size is more than what is necessary to serve the population in this district.

Opportunities

- The park because of its size could be considered sub-regional and programmed for more facilities that would attract events from outside of Chester.
- If some or all of the park is considered as surplus, it could be considered for uses other than open space and recreation.
- The close proximity to an Interstate highway could support a use of higher intensity than recreation.

Potential Strategies

- Develop a needs list of community residents to determine if this park, considering its location, could satisfy those needs.
- Survey the property to determine if ball fields have encroached on private property.

If this is the case, the ball fields should be relocated.

- Explore other options for future use taking into consideration the park's poor location relative to its potential users, the city's limited recreation maintenance budget and the surplus of park and recreational land in the city. The Economic Development Section of this plan discusses the potential for light industrial use of some of this site.

e. William Penn Housing Project

Issues

- The William Penn Housing Project has been identified as a project in need of major design and repair.
- The dilapidated conditions have had a negative impact on the surrounding land use and discouraged private reinvestment in vacant or underutilized properties.
- Chester Housing Authority has recently completed a comprehensive plan for the purpose of requesting funds to make major improvements to the project.

Opportunities

- Implementation of the recommendations of the CHA comprehensive plan would be the first line of action in revitalizing this housing project.
- Improvements to William Penn Housing project would encourage cleaning up the vacant lots adjacent to the project, thus, making them more attractive for reinvestment.

Potential Strategies

- Support the funding requests for the

improvements to the William Penn Project. The city should support every effort to see that CHA receive funds for not only this project but others as well.

- Identify incentives for potential redevelopment of vacant and underutilized adjacent properties.
- Encourage new commercial development to respond to local shopping needs of the community.

D. PLANNING DISTRICT FOUR

This district, along with planning districts two and three, reflects a city in decline. Historically, the area has been a mix of industrial, commercial and residential land uses situated in an area between the river and the SEPTA-AMTRAK railroad tracks. Over the years the residential land uses have felt the impact of being located next to industry without adequate buffers. The result is abandoned, dilapidated structures.

1. RESIDENTIAL

Residential land use in this district consists of twins, rows and multi-family apartment units. Some apartments are in free-standing buildings and some are located over commercial uses along 3rd Street. Many of the residential units located adjacent to industry and along 2nd Street are in poor condition. This pattern is evident throughout the city. Residential uses located along major highways and adjacent to industry or heavy commercial uses without adequate buffering are usually blighted and in a dilapidated condition. However, those areas that consist of vacant lots and deteriorated structures present opportunities for redevelopment.

Past trends permitted residential land uses

to be located next to heavy commercial and industrial uses without adequate screening. In most cases, the parking of employees and the noise from trucks and other traffic had a negative impact on residential land uses. The residential buildings were soon abandoned by residents seeking to get away from the nuisance generated by the industry. Those properties could not attract new users and soon began to deteriorate from lack of maintenance.

This district, during the last decade has lost a significant amount of housing through demolition. The properties were never replaced with new residential uses, so they are either vacant or have been converted to industrial use.

2. RECREATION

This district lacks major areas of land devoted to recreational use. Recreational use is provided by small community parks and centers. The major recreational facility in this district is the city's public boat launch. This is the only public boat launch in Delaware County and it attracts visitors, not only from the county, but from out of state as well. On weekends boat trailers have been spotted with license tags from New Jersey and Delaware. Local residents who do not own water craft still visit the site for sight-seeing or fishing. Memorial Park (Planning District 5) is located in close proximity to this area and is available for use by residents in this district.

There are scattered vacant parcels in this district, but only two appear desirable and feasible for additional recreational land. Both parcels are owned by PECO Energy and are located along the river. The first parcel is the former West End Boat Club. The property has a building located on it that was a former club house. Boat launch-

es and a pier are available from this site. The other parcel is vacant and is situated between the city's boat launch and the West End Boat Club site. These two properties present a good opportunity for expanding the public boat launch and providing more water related or dependent uses. This concept would also increase public access to the water edge.

3. COMMERCIAL

Commercial land use in this district is limited to "mom and pop" stores (micro enterprises) at corners of row houses and occupying the first floor of some structures with residential use on the top floor. Most shopping needs for the residents in this district are met elsewhere. Along 3rd Street there are several vacant properties, but it is not anticipated that retail commercial will locate there because of the lack of concentrated residential area that would support it. Along 2nd Street (Rt. 291) highway oriented commercial use should be encouraged on the north side of the road to take advantage of the widened highway. It would also help to prevent the encroachment of industry further inland and to shield some of the residential properties from the new trash facility and the DELCORA water treatment facility.

4. INDUSTRIAL

Currently, industrial use is the predominant land use in this district. In fact, more than 50% of the land use in this district is occupied by industries. Industry is located along the river, along the SEPTA-AMTRAK railroad tracks and intermingled with residential uses on 2nd Street.

Most of the industrial land located along the river is owned by PECO Energy. Over the years PECO Energy has assembled

large parcels of ground along Chester's Waterfront for their future use. However, most of the land is currently vacant or underutilized. Some property owned by PECO Energy may offer other opportunities. For example, the former West End Boat Club and the adjacent vacant properties would be suitable for a more intense use whether for strictly recreational purposes or for some commercially oriented water related use. Other industrial uses in this area include the DELCORA treatment plant and the Westinghouse Resource Recovery plant. Both of these uses are relatively stable and will remain at these locations. Concerns have been raised, however, regarding the cumulative environmental effects of the waste treatment facilities that have clustered in this area. Future expansion of those land uses should be discouraged whenever they are located adjacent to established residential areas. In addition, more specific controls are needed in the zoning ordinance and other municipal regulations to insure that such uses will not be injurious to adjacent neighborhoods.

5. INSTITUTIONAL

The institutional land use in this district is limited to churches scattered throughout the community. Churches play an important role in life of community residents. They provide important social programs and services. For example, some of them provide child care, private schools, an alternative to the public education system and indoor space for community activities.

Churches are located in vacant residential buildings and in vacant commercial buildings. Zoning amendments should be enacted to guide them in areas where they will not create adverse impacts on adjacent land uses. For example churches should not be permitted to locate in a single family unit in

the middle of row houses on a minor residential street. The street or house was not designed to handle the additional persons generated by church services.

6. MAJOR ISSUES

Over the last decade this district has experienced all the factors contributing to urban blight. To reverse this condition it is vital that the following key land use issues are discussed.

a. Residential Stability

Issues

- The area has been losing housing at an alarming rate. Most of the units lost have been through abandonment and subsequent deterioration.
- The housing stock in this district has aged and is in need of major repairs and maintenance.

Opportunities

- Many vacant lots and structures offer opportunities for in-fill development and rehabilitation of housing units still in structurally sound condition.
- Where feasible, vacant parcels should be assembled to create lots of reasonable size for new construction activities.
- Abandoned properties need to be sealed to prevent them from deteriorating to the point where they need to be demolished.

Potential Strategies

- Initiate a program to identify properties that are abandoned and vacant. This can be done through an abandoned property hot line. Community organizations and neigh-

bors would notify city officials as properties become vacant.

- Encourage non-profit housing agencies to participate in the rehabilitation of vacant but structurally sound structures.
- Identify incentives that would encourage builders to build new single family or apartment units on ground that has been assembled and cleared for new construction.
- Maintain a strong code enforcement effort to ensure that properties that need maintenance and repairs are brought into compliance with city codes.

b. Rt. 291 Corridor

Route 291 is programmed to be improved to five lanes on PennDOT's 12 year improvement program.

Issue

- Route 291 is a major arterial providing access from the east end of the city to the west end.
- Land use along Route 291 has changed from mixed, including residential, commercial and industrial to predominantly industrial.
- Many property owners have not maintained their property in anticipation of a PennDOT purchase.

Opportunities

- Route 291 is an alternative access route to I-95 carrying traffic in a north/south direction.

- This road when widened will relieve traffic congestion and eliminate hazardous turning movements for large trucks.

- A fully widened Route 291 would leverage public investment and make vacant parcels more attractive to private reinvestment.

Potential Strategies

- Identify and assemble remnants of land after acquisition of right-of-way has been completed.

- Develop and implement new zoning provisions to support and guide new development in the Route 291 Corridor.

- Identify programs that will assist property owners on the north side of Route 291 in making further improvements to deteriorated properties.

c. Vacant and Deteriorated Properties

Issues

- Vacant and deteriorated properties are a visible indication of a community in decline. These properties contribute to disinvestment in the area.

- Many vacant properties are the result of demolition. These properties could be saved if they were sealed and protected from inclement weather and vandalism.

- Commercial and industrial properties, once they become vacant, are usually neglected and become eyesores for the community.

Opportunities

- Assemble vacant properties for redevelopment.
- Rehabilitate deteriorated properties that are still structurally sound.
- A clear opportunity exists for housing improvement in areas that are currently experiencing rehabilitation.

Potential Strategies

- Target programs to help improve commercial or industrial buildings that are vacant and deteriorated.
- Support programs to help improve the quality of residential land use by initiating an early warning system and identifying programs which offer financial assistance.
- Organize community groups to utilize vacant properties for gardening for the purpose of discouraging dumping on vacant parcels.
- Encourage in-fill development for residential blocks that have vacant lots.

d. Conflicting Land Use

Issues

- Industrial land use is intermingled with residential land use without proper screening.
- Industrial uses located adjacent to residential development usually do not have the space to expand. In many cases they do not want to increase the intensity of the area by adding more deliveries or hiring additional employees without adequate off-street parking.

- Residential owners tend not to maintain their property because of the negative influence of the general nuisance created by traffic and noise.

Opportunities

- Eliminate the negative impact by requiring buffering and other type screens to separate non-compatible uses.
- Limit the negative impacts of incompatible uses through strict code enforcement.
- Revise the zoning ordinance to strengthen performance standards for light industrial areas adjacent to residential areas.

Potential Strategies

- Develop zoning performance standards for non-residential districts within close proximity to residential areas. (i.e. off-street parking, appropriate buffers for noise, fumes, etc.)
- Rezone areas favoring the predominant use to prevent non-compatible uses from expanding through reuse of vacant structures.
- Initiate permit parking to prohibit employees from parking in front of residential structures for long periods of time.

e. Public Boat Launch

Issues

- The only public boat launch in the county, Chester's Public Boat Launch attracts out of city visitors.
- The major recreational facility for this

part of the city is sandwiched between two vacant industrial properties.

- Access to the property passes vacant properties that are not maintained and which are sometimes used for dumping.

Opportunities

- To expand the facility and provide additional public access to the water. Property adjacent to this site is vacant and is owned by PECO Energy.
- Many people from out of the city visit this site. There is a good opportunity to improve the visual aesthetics of access to the site and help improve the image of the city.
- Because of the heavy use for boating and fishing, other business opportunities could be developed to complement the boat launch or service the visitors.

Potential Strategies

- Enter into a dialogue with PECO Energy for the purpose of determining the availability and cost of adjacent vacant parcels.
- Identify federal and state programs for acquisition of waterfront land for recreation and site improvements.
- Enforce the clean-up of properties leading to the boat launch by offering adjacent property owners use of city equipment and trucks and/or through strict code enforcement. Alternatively, acquire and develop an attractive entry corridor to the boat launch area.

f. Waterfront Development

Issues

- A large portion of the waterfront property in this district is vacant or underutilized. These parcels of ground are currently owned by PECO Energy.
- Many urban communities across the country have rediscovered their waterfront land and have recognized it as an urban amenity which can accommodate both water and non-water dependent uses.

Opportunities

- Vacant waterfront properties can be used for tax generating uses to benefit the revitalization process in the city.
- Many developers consider waterfront properties as "hot" real estate. If constraints such as railroad right-of-ways, including the tracks and utility related facilities are resolved, the cost for improvement does not have to be prohibitive.
- Potential exists to develop waterfront properties with a range of tax producing projects including: commercial recreation, retail commercial, office and water-related industry.

Potential Strategies

- The city should enter into negotiations with PECO Energy to consider developing a master plan for their property along the waterfront. All portions of the property not considered vital to PECO Energy's energy production operations should be considered available for development of the master plan recommendations.

- Identify federal and state programs that encourage and provide financial support for site improvements, acquisition and control of riparian water rights, and public access to waterfront properties.

- Creation of a new waterfront zoning district with appropriate uses and site design requirements would permit orderly development, while maintaining protection for adjacent properties uses.

g. Environmental

Issues

- A variety of waste treatment facilities are located along the river in this district.

- Many residents feel that some of these facilities are adverse to residential living because of traffic, noise, smell and the discharge of particles into the air.

Opportunities

- To eliminate conflicting land uses and provide for a more homogenous environment.

Potential Strategies

- Establish new zoning and building regulations that include provisions for controlling the use and location of waste treatment facilities with provisions for strict performance standards regarding their operations.

- Include in the permitting process provisions for adjacent property owners to be notified of the type of use proposed and the meeting dates during the preliminary review period at which the proposed use will be discussed.

- Develop options that would provide immediate buffers between conflicting land uses.

E. PLANNING DISTRICT FIVE

Land use in this district is characterized by high density residential. Singles, twins, row houses and three public housing developments make up the residential character in this district. Community Hospital, another major land user, provides vital health care and is a major employer in the city. The area shows some signs of decline with the loss of population and housing units, but there are also signs of revitalization and reinvestment.

1. RESIDENTIAL

The three public housing projects and other high density apartments dominate the residential land use and have had a significant impact on other uses. Many of the public housing units are in poor condition. They have many interior problems but the exterior blight and deterioration have spilled over into adjacent residential land uses.

Typically, we have associated blighted conditions with the mixing of residential, industrial and heavy commercial uses. However in this area these blighted conditions are caused primarily by a lack of maintenance.

Three public housing projects including the Ruth L. Bennett Homes, McCaffrey Village and Lamokin Village, make up the public housing units in this district. Built around the early 1940's, these units have had major maintenance problems and are in a deteriorating condition. To some magnitude, the blighted conditions of the public housing units have spilled out into adjacent neighborhoods.

The Chester Housing Authority has recently completed a five year Improvement Plan for all public housing units in the city.

Once funding for these projects is received, the revitalization process will commence. As the blighted conditions spilled over into adjacent neighborhoods, the renovation of these units will have a positive impact and will tend to reverse the trend toward blighted conditions in the surrounding areas.

The Community Action Agency recently purchased the Flower Manor Apartment Complex and has completely renovated a blighted, deteriorated 68 unit apartment community. This project has significantly improved a large portion of the residential land use in this district.

Many of the privately owned row and twin houses were built prior to 1940 and are beginning to show signs of needed repair and maintenance. Yet there are other twins and rows that are in very sound condition which brighten up their neighborhoods.

The privately owned units that are not maintained are usually rental units or units owned and occupied by owners on fixed income. These homeowners usually do not have the financial resources to provide regular maintenance on their units.

2. RECREATION

Memorial Park provides the major recreational opportunities for the residents in this area. The park is equipped with ball fields, play equipment and game courts. The park is frequently used by residents from all over the city for picnics, special events and general play activity. The park should remain as a top priority in the park system for maintenance and equipment replacement. Other areas for recreation are provided by small vest-pocket parks and tot lots located on the public housing projects property. These parks are not ade-

quately maintained, and most of the play equipment is either broken or missing. Thus, the residents develop make-shift equipment, for example baskets are nailed to street lights and telephone poles; and streets are marked with paint for other urban type street games. Often, these activities contribute to deterioration and blight of the neighborhoods when trash is created and the area becomes too congested to accommodate the number of people using the area.

3. COMMERCIAL

Commercial land use in this district consists of strip commercial centers along Ninth Street and convenience stores located on street corners. These commercial uses provide a needed service in the neighborhood. Because vacant land is limited it is unlikely that commercial use will expand in this district to any significant degree. Areas that would be suitable for new commercial activity would be in the vicinity of 9th Street and Highland Avenues and along Ninth Street if a demand is generated.

Community Hospital is located on Ninth Street. Generally, professional offices for doctors associated with the hospital are attracted to the same area. There appears to be no plans to provide such uses at this time, but if it occurs, it should be guided through proper controls in the zoning ordinance, especially regarding off-street parking and adequate screening for residential uses.

Commercial land use is concentrated along Ninth street, a principal arterial. The commercial uses formed in strip shopping centers, include, food, drug, and personal service shops. Other commercial uses are located in the residential areas on intersec-

tion corners. These stores usually are convenience "mom and pop" stores, providing every day needs to the immediate neighborhood.

Various car repair shops, located in between the shopping center stores along Ninth Street, house vehicles in various conditions in the front of their buildings. These uses present a blighted condition to an area that is normally well-maintained. Buffer requirements and provisions to prohibit storing of vehicles in front yards would improve the appearance of the area.

4. INDUSTRIAL

There are several industrial establishments located in this district, but they do not appear to create any adverse impact on adjacent land uses. Future expansion of those land uses should be discouraged because they are located adjacent to established residential areas. More specific control is needed in the zoning ordinance to insure that otherwise desirable small businesses will not be injurious to the neighborhoods.

5. INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional land uses in this district include Community Hospital, William Penn Elementary School, Washington Elementary School and the Pulaski Middle School. Other institutional uses include churches located in various residential neighborhoods.

Community Hospital fronts on 9th Street, a major arterial and is a major land use in this district. This present location appears satisfactory and there are no plans to expand its operations. The area is currently zoned R-3 residential. New zoning amendments

should be developed to guide any future expansion and regulate any adverse conditions such as noise, glare and traffic that might impact adjacent residential areas.

6. MAJOR ISSUES

This district is relatively stable although there are signs of deterioration especially within the multi-family community. It is unlikely that there will be significant change in the land use in this district, but there are important issues that need further discussion. They are:

a. Residential Stability

Issues

- Approximately 60% of the public housing units in the city, including the scattered sites, are located in this district. Generally the public housing units are in poor condition.
- Much of the single-family housing stock in this district is old, but structurally sound.

Opportunities

- CHA is in the process of starting a major rehabilitation project for all public housing units. Once this project begins there will be opportunity for rehabilitation in adjacent areas.
- Potential exists to attract for profit firms and non profit agencies to assist in repairing deteriorating single family housing units.
- The renovation of the housing units in this area will generate additional new reinvestment.

Potential Strategies

- The city should support and encourage the swift completion of CHA renovation efforts on all their public housing units.
- The city should support an effort to target new housing rehabilitation around the public housing units. This effort should include encouragement to build new housing on vacant lots and new commercial activity.
- Areas that are beginning to show signs of decline should be targeted for technical and financial assistance.

b. Memorial Field

Issues

- This is a major recreational facility not only for this district, but for the entire city.
- Proper maintenance and upkeep of the fields and playgrounds should be the city's recreation priority.

Opportunities

- Memorial Park provides an opportunity to continue to provide active recreation facilities for the residents of this district and surrounding neighborhoods. This park is actively used by residents for city wide programs. Funds for capital improvements should be programmed for those projects in need.
- The city should take advantage of community interest in recreation by identifying the programs and facilities that are in demand.

- The city should utilize the assistance of community organizations for local clean-up and policing of the park area.

Potential Strategies

- Identify and program adequate funds to repair and replace missing equipment. Priority should be given to the equipment that is more frequently used.
- Support the implementation of the recommendation outlined in the 1991 recreation study by Carter Van Dyke Associates.
- Support the creation of an "Adopt A Park" program by neighborhood groups and private businesses and utilize community efforts to clean up at regular intervals and survey equipment in need of repairs.

c. I-95 Ramps at 9th Street

Issues

- There is a real need to provide better access from I-95 to the riverfront corridor in the western part of the city.
- Improved access will have a beneficial impact on the land uses from I-95 to Rt. 291 via Flower Avenue.

Opportunities

- Encourage revitalization and improvement of land uses from 9th Street to the riverfront corridor.
- Relieve traffic congestion on local residential streets and protect the integrity of those neighborhoods.

Potential Strategies

- Encourage the Delaware County Planning Commission to upgrade this improvement on the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's 12 year Capital Improvement Program.
- Follow up with State Legislators to make sure proper funding is available.
- Amend zoning ordinance to guide and control development north of 9th Street so impacts and acquisition cost could be kept at a minimum.
- The city should maintain control of any parcels that might be part of the ramp right of way and should seek any opportunity to gain control of additional right of way to speed the development process.

d. Public Housing

Issues

- Public housing has deteriorated over the last two decades and has lacked proper maintenance.
- Approximately 60% of the public housing located in the city is located in this district.
- The condition of the public housing has had a negative impact on adjacent land uses by discouraging reinvestment in the area.

Opportunities

- Public housing is an important resource for low-income households. CHA should provide maintenance to all their units to keep them in compliance with housing codes.

- An opportunity exists for CHA to encourage home ownership and to sell units in their scattered site inventory. This would allow CHA to purchase more sites, train tenants in the apartments to operate a single family house and ultimately transition them to home ownership.

Potential Strategies

- Continue to support CHA in receiving funds from HUD to repair and bring existing units into compliance with housing codes.
- Encourage the sale of scattered sites to tenants through a lease-purchase concept.

e. 9th Street Corridor

Issues

- 9th Street is a major arterial that carries traffic through the city in an east west direction.
- Land uses along 9th Street are mixed with residential, commercial and institutional uses present. These uses have remained relatively stable over time.

Opportunities

- The 9th Street Corridor can be strengthened in its role as the major source of commercial shopping needs for the residents in this district.
- An opportunity is also available to support Community Hospital and identify areas suitable to related medical facilities.

Potential Strategies

- Identify programs that would support physical improvements to existing commercial strip centers. These improvements would include facade renovations, signage, lighting, and curb and sidewalk repairs.
- Locate areas that are suitable for professional office uses that would complement the hospital.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to permit compatible land uses with proper standards regulating off-street parking, setbacks, screening, etc.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Land uses in the five planning districts range from stable to blighted and deteriorated conditions. Through an in-depth data collection and analysis process much of the deterioration and blight was determined to be as a result of: conflicting land uses; uses located in areas not conducive to their major function; inadequate access; inefficient land use policies; and, a population that has changed from a mix of mid-income and low-income to predominantly low-income. In the face of these problems, however, this land use plan has been developed with the belief that the tide of city-wide decline and distress can be reversed with proper tools and guidance. To this end, the Land Use Plan is guided by these goals and objectives:

GOAL: Encourage a desirable mix of land uses in the city by minimizing incompatible and conflicting adjoining uses.

Objective 1: Control new development through improved zoning and subdivision

ordinances with special emphasis on buffering, area and bulk requirements, permitted uses, and design standards.

Objective 2: Encourage land and building development which provides protection of adjoining areas from smoke, noise, air pollution, and other nuisances through establishment of strong performance standards.

Objective 3: Discourage the intrusion of land uses that are contrary to existing uses and disrupt stable residential environments and negatively affect neighborhood quality.

GOAL: Preserve and encourage various types of commercial, retail, and office use with a primary emphasis on convenience and attractiveness for both residents and outside visitors.

Objective 1: Strengthen existing commercial areas where appropriate, and refurbish dilapidated structures.

Objective 2: Encourage new growth in more planned centers of high intensity so as to enhance shopping convenience and reduce traffic and parking problems.

Objective 3: Provide for office growth in suitable locations in the city in such a manner as to encourage local employment while creating a pleasant and aesthetic environment.

GOAL: Promote and encourage mixed uses within the Central Business District.

Objective 1: Promote a mix of retail, service, cultural, and recreational uses within the designated Central Business District.

Objective 2: Strengthen the retail core through programs designed to encourage building rehabilitation, facade renovation, and improved pedestrian amenities such as lighting, benches, handicapped access ramps, and trash receptacles.

Objective 3: Establish and maintain the Avenue of the States corridor as the Central Business District by creating a hierarchy of uses for the buildings, with retail uses occupying the ground floors and a mix of apartments, retail, and offices occupying the upper floors.

GOAL: Promote and encourage industrial, office and commercial developments in areas where appropriate.

Objective 1: Encourage the assemblage of smaller parcels of land to create developable areas for well-planned commercial or industrial development.

Objective 2: Develop or improve vacant and underutilized lots and buildings in areas where offices, commercial and industrial development is most suitable.

Objective 3: Encourage development of planned industrial parks which provide protection of residential areas from smoke, noise, air pollution, and other nuisances.

LAND USE PLAN (RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM)

The future land use map (Figure LU-4) identifies recommended land use changes for the city of Chester. Chester currently exhibits a mixture of land uses that over the last four decades has contributed to a severe loss in population, housing and jobs

for the community. However, Chester City is similar to many other urban areas that have been successfully revitalized. The basic components for successful redevelopment are present and it is important to recognize that the rebuilding process is long term. The positive attributes are here.

This plan should be used as a guideline for recommended changes that can take place within selected areas of the city.

The land use map depicts the following districts:

1) RESIDENTIAL

- R-I
- R-II
- R-III

2) COMMERCIAL

- Central Business District (CBD)
- Highway Oriented
- Mixed Use (MXD)
Residential/Commercial
- Mixed Use (MXD) -
Commercial/Industrial
- Neighborhood/Professional Office
- Office-High Intensity

3) INDUSTRIAL

- Light
- Heavy

4) WATERFRONT

5) RECREATION

6) UNIVERSITY

7) INSTITUTION

The factors that were used to determine the recommended land use patterns were: existing conditions and trends, access, location and functional efficiency.

RESIDENTIAL

Chester City is predominantly a residential community, densely populated and characterized by a variety of housing types. Because of Chester's historical background of providing shelter for a diverse population in an urban setting, its land use should remain predominantly residential. However, over the last four (4) decades the land area in active residential use has declined significantly. Residential land use has diminished because dwelling units were lost through fires, demolition, and encroachment of non-compatible uses. Since the city will be dealing with these existing conditions, it will have to be creative in combating the various factors that have contributed to its diminishing housing stock. Several strategies should be developed including: revisions to the zoning ordinance text and map; development and utilization of innovative programs to monitor maintenance and abandonment; and, identification of new funding techniques and sources for housing rehabilitation and new housing construction.

Residential land use should be concentrated into three districts. They are:

- **RESIDENTIAL I.** This district should permit single family detached dwellings and twin-family semi-detached dwellings at a maximum density of nine (9) dwelling units per acre and less. Churches, schools or related uses would be permitted in this district if they satisfy certain performance standards such as: setbacks, buffers, off-street parking, etc. Other non-residential uses would be excluded. These areas would have access to minor local streets. The Residential I area would be located in the northeast portion of the city, where the predominant use is currently single family

detached units and twin family semi-detached units at a density not exceeding nine units per acre.

- **RESIDENTIAL II.** This district would permit single family detached units, twin-family semi-detached and row houses at a density range from 9.1 to 13 units per acre. The same uses permitted in the R-I District would also be permitted in this district. Commercial uses would be permitted in the form of small convenience stores at intersections to serve the residences of the immediate neighborhoods. Access for this district would be restricted to minor residential streets. Those areas would generally be located throughout the city as depicted on Figure LU-4.

- **RESIDENTIAL III.** High-rise and garden apartments at densities exceeding 13 units per acre would be permitted in this district. Uses in the Residential II District would be permitted in this district. These areas would typically have direct access to collector streets and would be located in the areas depicted on Figure LU-4.

COMMERCIAL

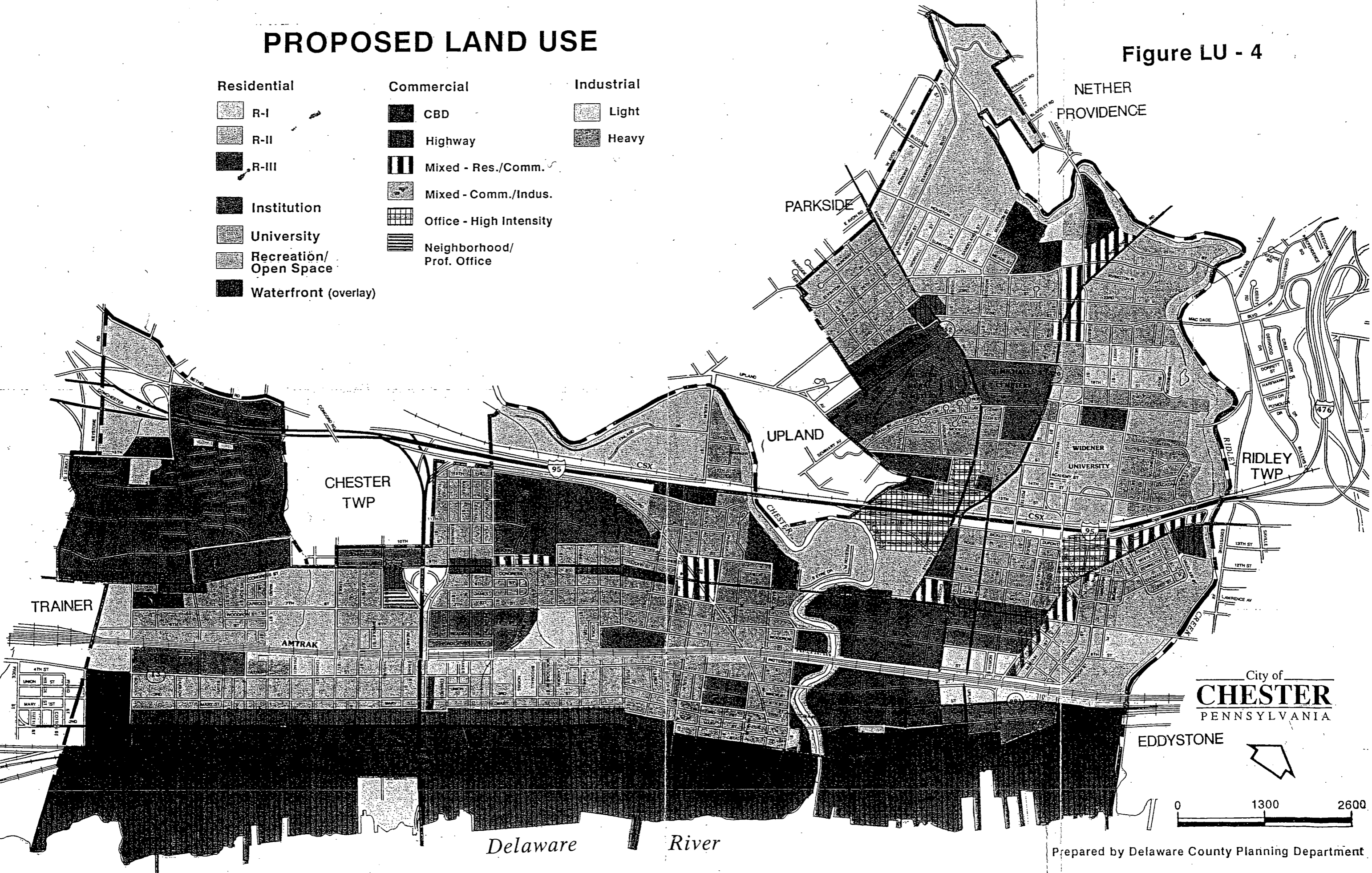
During the last four (4) decades, Chester City's commercial areas have declined through the loss of many businesses. Some of the factors contributing to these losses include: inadequate access, poor location, changing shopping habits, changing population and the location of regional malls a short distance from the city. The CBD and scattered retail sites have both suffered.

The CBD which was once a regional shopping area for people who shop for comparison goods such as apparel, furniture, jewelry, etc., now provides a more restricted variety of goods to meet the local citizens

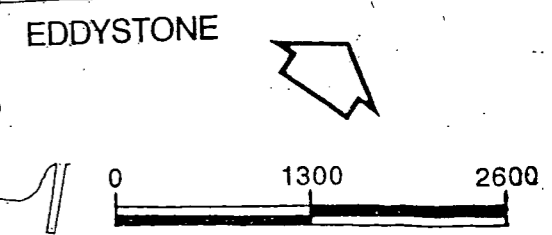
PROPOSED LAND USE

Figure LU - 4

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Residential | Commercial | Industrial |
| R-I | CBD | Light |
| R-II | Highway | Heavy |
| R-III | Mixed - Res./Comm. | |
| Institution | Mixed - Comm./Indus. | |
| University | Office - High Intensity | |
| Recreation/
Open Space | Neighborhood/
Prof. Office | |
| Waterfront (overlay) | | |



City of
CHESTER
PENNSYLVANIA



needs. The commercial areas in neighborhoods are often not very functional and frequently do not offer convenient service to the community.

The plan recommends six Commercial Districts: a Central Business District for the purpose of providing a regional shopping area, which is served by public transportation; two mixed use districts, which would be used as a transition zone to link commercial with residential and industrial, and, a highway oriented commercial district to accommodate commercial strip centers along major highways, an office/high intensity district and neighborhood/professional office district.

- **CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD).** The CBD should generally remain in its present location. The CBD is the core of the city's commercial areas and should permit a variety of commercial, office, and amusement type activities. Strategies should be developed to encourage physical improvements and the development of incentives to attract residents from in and out of the city to the CBD. Essentially, this can be attained by strengthening the mix of retail service and office use within. In the CBD, residential use would be permitted over stores.

- **HIGHWAY ORIENTED COMMERCIAL.** The highway oriented shopping areas will essentially serve a dual purpose. The first purpose would be to provide for commercial operations that can serve the shopping needs for neighborhoods and through traffic. Some of the stores would include supermarkets, laundromats, video stores, housewares, appliances, etc. The second purpose this district could serve is to act as a buffer district. It would actually provide a buffer between residential dis-

tricts, and incompatible uses or activities such as a major highway carrying large volumes of traffic or a heavy commercial or high intensity use. This district is recommended to be located along major arteries.

- **MIXED USE — COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL.** This district is intended to provide opportunities, under special conditions and standards, for commercial, office, and high density residential development that is situated to take advantage of a market that is stagnant and undecided. The most desirable location would be along major arterioles or in areas that are experiencing a conflict of uses. Commercial and residential would be the primary uses with professional offices as a secondary use. For example, if the adjacent uses are predominately residential, then the commercial uses would be in the form of specialty shops including retail and service. If the adjacent area is predominately heavy commercial or light industry then the primary use would be commercial that could feature indoor recreation, such as indoor theater, bowling lanes, etc. It is further intended that these uses incorporate essential site design and access management features to avoid a proliferation of individual uses and access points along the major highway. This district is recommended in the form of nodal centers at Providence Road and 22nd Street, Kerlin and Ninth Streets and along portions of Morton Avenue.

- **MIXED USE — COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL.** The intent of this district is to provide flexibility and opportunities for non-residential development in areas that are in transition. The primary uses would be commercial and light industry. Professional offices would be a secondary use. Residential use would not be permitted in this district. Areas in the city that are

experiencing conflict because houses are too close to industry would be appropriate for this district. This district would permit industrial development with strong performance standards and appropriate buffering. It is further intended that these uses incorporate essential site design and access features to avoid conflict in the immediate area. The district is recommended to be located in the areas bounded by Kerlin Street, Union Street, Penn Street and 2nd Street and along the north side of Fourth Street between Wilson and Palmer Street and between Chestnut Street and Walnut Street south of 12th Street.

• **NEIGHBORHOOD/PROFESSIONAL OFFICE.** The intent of this district is to permit professional office use in areas that are predominately residential. These uses are more of a support to the residential environment than a problem, provided that they are subject to specific controls related to buffering, off-street parking and landscaping. The uses permitted would include doctor's, dentist's offices, etc.

• **OFFICE USE-HIGH INTENSITY.** This district would permit the city to utilize its attributes related to transportation access and proximity to major markets and an international airport. The district would permit professional office use in mid to high rise buildings. The land use would be permitted only in areas that have direct access to a major arterial and within close proximity to an on or off ramp of an Interstate highway. The purpose of this is to be able to collect large volumes of traffic and move it out of the area quickly without having to go through residential neighborhoods. The city has a great opportunity to utilize this district on several vacant parcels and an area that is mixed in character and satisfies this criteria. The selected target

areas would be the portions of the Chestnut Street/ Morton Avenue Corridor and areas adjacent to I-95 and Rt. 352.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial land use is generally located along the waterfront but other industrial land uses are located further inland in some residential neighborhoods.

• **LIGHT INDUSTRIAL.** The industrial areas north of Rt. 291 are generally located in residential areas and have created conflicts and are a contributing cause to the decline and deterioration of these areas. If industrial uses are to continue in these areas, then better design standards and performance standards (e.g. -lot coverage, off-street parking and buffering) will be needed to eliminate the adverse conditions for adjacent non-compatible uses. All industrial areas north of Rt. 291 should be classified as light industry.

The light industry district would permit such uses as general offices, light manufacturing, assembly, wholesale distribution, and similar light industrial-type operations, as well as flex-space type facilities. Portions of the Crozer Park area may be suitable for this district because of the close proximity of the I-95 interchange. The discussion of Crozer Park continuing as a full open space and recreation area is discussed in the Community Facilities and Economic Development Strategy Sections.

• **HEAVY INDUSTRIAL.** Since most of the waterfront is occupied by heavy industrial uses, Rt. 291 would serve as a natural buffer and the area south of Rt. 291 could continue to be designated as the city's major industrial area permitting such uses as industrial parks, warehousing and distri-

bution centers, airport related uses and free standing industrial and manufacturing buildings.

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Waterfront locations are also prime for uses other than industrial. Several properties along Chester's waterfront are either vacant or underutilized. Because of the potential interest and opportunity for use of the waterfront property for other than industrial uses, it is recommended that a new Waterfront Development District be created to operate as a "Floating Zone" or "Overlay District".

This district would be located adjacent to a major waterway such as the Delaware River. The purpose would to allow other options to be considered. The types of uses permitted in this district could include: mixed use office, retail buildings, high density residential (high-rise building), recreation, (marinas, fishing, parks) and water related commercial activity (boat storage, sale, repair) and a waterfront festival market (restaurant, shopping, amusements, ferry stop). Areas suitable for this district could emerge anywhere along the waterfront. For this reason the Waterfront Zoning District should be established as a "Floating Zone" or an "Overlay District". Either of these two zoning techniques would allow the basic industrial zoning to remain in effect but would allow for innovative waterfront uses under specified conditions.

RECREATION

The city's recreational area is accessible to most city residents, however some areas are separated from the bulk of the population by a major obstacle - I-95. Crozer Park is located on property that might better be used as a high intensity or light industrial use. A major portion of the park could be relocated. Some of the ball fields that are located on a portion of private property could be relocated to the lower section of the park fronting on Chester Creek. Other facilities in the park would be relocated to a more centralized location such as a new Eyre Park recreation center. Additional recreational area could also be created in the central part of the city on some underutilized and vacant industrial sites.

INSTITUTIONAL

The major change in the institutional land use would be to create a University District specially designed to address Widener University and surrounding neighborhood concerns.

UNIVERSITY

This district will be located in the area where Widener University's buildings and facilities are functioning. The district should include permitted uses related to educational and recreational activities.

The proposed land use map (Figure LU-4) identifies recommended land use changes for future physical development of the city. Together with the various specific implementation activities, the land use plan provides a means of attaining the vision for development and redevelopment of the city's land.

LAND USE POLICIES

Land use policy is concerned with defining the broad goals and strategies of how land should be used in a community to its highest and best use. In the City of Chester it is clear that the traditional land development process has not led to fully satisfactory land use patterns. Chester's existing land use has a significant number of areas with conflicting uses (Figure LU-2), deterioration and blight. There is a strong need for good land use planning, new regulations and reform in the process of determining appropriate land use patterns in Chester.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (ACT 247) commonly referred to as the "MPC", empowers the city of Chester with the authority to plan for community development and to govern such development. Other legislation which allows the city to establish land use policy is the 3rd Class City Code and the Home Rule Charter. The primary tools used by the city to regulate and guide land development include but are not limited to: the comprehensive plan; the zoning ordinance; the subdivision and land development ordinance; the building code; and eminent domain.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The comprehensive plan is the primary planning vehicle for land use planning, while zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and other ordinances provide the community with the implementation component. All of these documents are authorized under the MPC.

The comprehensive plan contains mid/long range goals intended to guide the growth and development of a community.

It includes analysis, recommendations and proposals for the community's population, economy, housing, transportation, community facilities and land use.

Over the years Chester has had many plans prepared defining the goals and strategies of how it should be developed. Several of the major plans include: Central Business District Plan, 1965; Comprehensive Plan, 1972; Downtown Central Study Area, 1973; Riverfront Study Area, 1974; and Riverfront Extension Study Area, 1975. All of these plans developed good strategies on how Chester's land should be used based on existing conditions and trends of the early to mid 1970's. Twenty years have passed since the city's last comprehensive plan was prepared and the character of its land use has changed markedly. The city is no longer the employment and shopping hub of Delaware County; the racial composition has changed and the overall population has declined significantly. Housing and industrial buildings have aged. All of these changes dictate that the city take another look at their goals and strategies for future development of the city. The development and adoption of this Comprehensive Plan is the first step in the process of redefining the city's goals. It clarifies what has happened and why, and provides some insight into the opportunities for the future. It also serves as a guide for revisions to the city's zoning ordinance and its other regulatory tools.

ZONING ORDINANCE

The zoning ordinance is a major implementation component and one of the primary tools for deciding what land use will be developed, at what density, on what parcel of ground. The city's zoning ordinance is intended to separate land uses and pro-

vide adequate provisions so that each property might reach its highest and best use without interference from adjacent uses. The city's current zoning ordinance, dated 1980 with subsequent amendments, is obsolete and failing to accomplish this objective effectively.

The city's existing zoning ordinance divides Chester into eleven (11) zoning districts with restrictions upon the use of property in each district. The districts include: five (5) residential districts; three (3) commercial districts; and three (3) manufacturing districts. Since the zoning map and text were adopted, there have been numerous changes in the use of parcels in each district. Those areas changed because of changing trends and conditions. However, there have been no changes to the zoning ordinance to address the problems that have developed as a result of changing land use patterns. The city's ordinance should be revised to include new standards and guidelines for promoting and facilitating a coordinated and practical use of land. The city's revised zoning ordinance should be based on the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Subdivision regulations, unlike a zoning ordinance, control how a use or activity relates to the land upon which it is located. The major purposes of subdivision regulations are: to provide adequate sites for development and public use; to maintain reasonable and acceptable design standards, and to coordinate public improvements with private development interest.

In Chester, there are many existing areas where the current land uses do not have adequate access and site improvements

have not adequately buffered uses that are not compatible with one another. An effectively administered set of subdivision regulations can help avoid adding to this problem.

The city of Chester's subdivision ordinance was enacted in 1965 with subsequent amendments. The current ordinance is obsolete and is not consistent with other city land development controls. The current ordinance makes cross references to the MPC, 3rd class code and to the zoning ordinance. This process makes the entire review process cumbersome for the reviewing agency and the applicant. The ordinance should be more streamlined and self contained with specific provisions so the owner/developer is knowledgeable of what is required for review and the approval agency can make the right decision based on provisions of the ordinance. This ordinance should be revised to satisfy all the provisions in the MPC and to be consistent with the city's other land use controls.

BUILDING CODE

Another tool the city uses to regulate land use is the building code. The city currently uses two versions of the National BOCA Code to regulate the construction of buildings. The 1981 version is used for new construction only and the 1987 version is used for renovations to existing properties. The purpose of the building code is to control all matters concerning the construction, alteration, additions, repairs, removal, demolition, use, location, occupancy and maintenance of all buildings. This code also makes cross references to the subdivision regulation, zoning ordinance and the MPC.

City officials are now in the process of reviewing the 1990 National BOCA Code, contemplating adopting this version for both renovation and new construction. Adoption of a single modern building code for all construction activity is strongly recommended to simplify the regulatory process for all concerned.

EMINENT DOMAIN

Although the zoning ordinance, a form of police power, is the major tool for land use control in the city, another source of municipal authority that relates to land is eminent domain. Eminent domain allows the city government to take private land for public benefit after providing the owner with just compensation. Eminent

domain can be very beneficial during a revitalization process in a city like Chester. In cases when land owners do not willingly agree to sell land required for a public purpose, the city can use the option of eminent domain.

SUMMARY

The primary sources of Chester City's authority to plan and regulate the use of land are the comprehensive plan, the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, the building code and eminent domain. A new Comprehensive Plan has been developed but the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations remain obsolete and inconsistent and need to be revised and a single, modern building code should be adopted.