



*Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal
Comprehensive Plan
2009*



Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

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Wilmington Township Planning Commission

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Marjorie Walker
Kathy Lane
John Richardson

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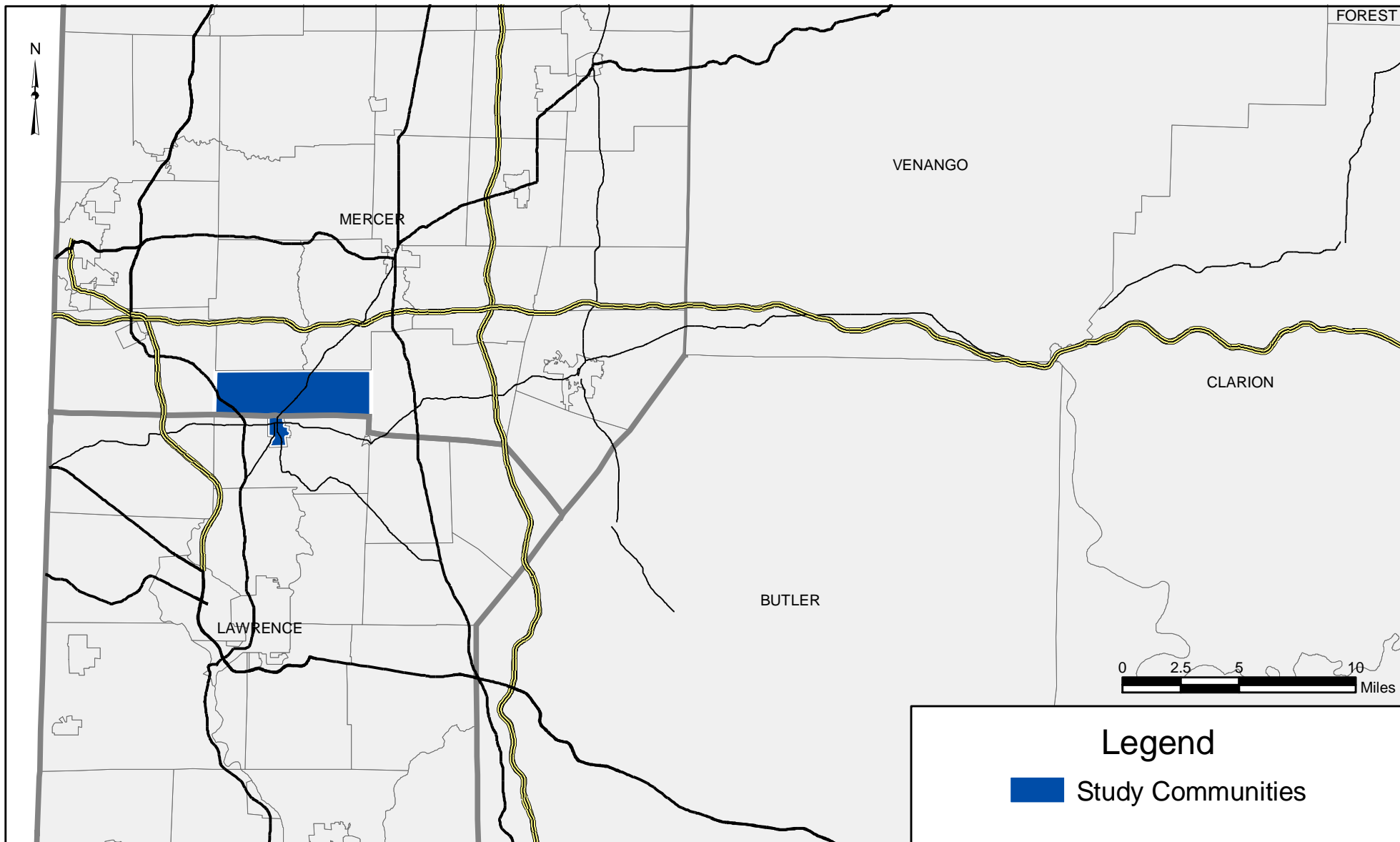
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Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
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Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal Plan

Demographics



Introduction

Demographics is the study of people, using statistics to generally describe the population. While demographics are hopeless in trying to draw the picture of an individual, they are useful in giving one a basic idea of a community's population. It highlights not just information such as age, race, and gender, but also ancestry, income, and housing data. And, it is essential information for those involved in the planning process.

Population

Looking at the population in the study municipalities of New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township, Mercer County, one sees that, in recent years, the population has been declining. But that has not always been the case. Both communities were growing during the 1960s and 1970s. Then, in the 1980s, a severe economic disruption affected much of the manufacturing regions of the nation, deemed to be the rust belt, as businesses boarded up and left. In many areas of western Pennsylvania, even the 1990s, hailed as a prosperous time, were days of dislocation and hardship. Table D-1 displays the ebbs and flows of the local population since 1960.

Table D-1: Population 1960-2000					
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Pennsylvania	11,319,366	11,793,909	11,863,895	11,881,643	12,281,054
Lawrence County	112,965	107,374	107,150	96,246	94,643
Mercer County	127,519	127,175	128,299	121,003	120,293
New Wilmington Borough	2,203	2,721	2,774	2,706	2,452
Wilmington Township	715	812	1,073	1,177	1,105
Source: U. S Census Bureau					

The population of both Mercer and Lawrence counties has been declining since 1960, as the heavy industries the region depended upon left for a variety of reasons. New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township were both insulated from this trend, to some extent. Westminster College and the Amish community are just a few of the factors that kept the study communities growing. However, in the 1980s, the Borough saw a small population decline and it increased during the 1990s. The Township had brisk population growth in the 1980s, contrary to the more macro trends in the region. The steady growth Wilmington Township had witnessed

since 1960 stopped in the 1990s, though the community's population was still greater than it was in 1960.

Should this population decline be a worry to local officials? The obvious answer is yes, but then the next question is to what extent should community leaders be concerned? For each community, there were very different reasons for the population decline in the 1990s. In New Wilmington Borough, the decline was mainly contained in the group quarters population sector. In fact, the population outside of those living in group quarters declined by just one person in the 1990s in the Borough. The loss of residents in group quarters, which includes Westminster College's dormitories and fraternities as well as the residents of the Borough's two large nursing homes, declined from 1,390 to 1,137, a net loss of 253 residents. This was primarily due to a drop of 229 students from the various living accommodations offered by Westminster. Over the same period, New Wilmington had a net natural decline (where deaths outnumber births) of 346 persons. Given the large population of residents in the two nursing facilities (the Overlook and the Shenango Home), this net natural decline is abnormally high for New Wilmington. Still, in the 1990s, while the Borough witnessed a population decline of 254 persons, it saw a net in-migration of 92 persons $[(-254) - (-346) = +92]$.

Wilmington Township is just the opposite of the Borough. It had a net natural increase (more births than deaths) during the 1990s of 118 persons. With a total population decline of 72 residents means a total net out-migration of 190 persons occurred in the decade.

Gender

Typically, one finds that there are slightly more women than men in a community, even though that is not the way it starts when we are born. Usually, at birth, the ratio is roughly 51 boys versus 49 girls out of 100 births. For the total population, the ratio is roughly reversed. In Pennsylvania, in 2000, the total population was split 48.3% male, 51.7% female. This divide is close to the National norm. In Wilmington Township, the split is somewhat more pronounced, with women representing 53.7% of the population and men only 46.3 percent. While a bit beyond what one would typically find, it is not at all unusual. But, this is far closer to the norm than the situation in New Wilmington Borough. In the Borough, 61.8% of the overall population is female and only 38.2% male. There are two factors that impacted this ratio in 2000: Westminster College students in group quarters and residents in the nursing homes in the Borough. In college housing, the split is 658 women to 307 men; and in the nursing homes, there are 134 women to 32 men. The total difference between men and women in group quarters, overall, is 343 to 794, or 451 more women than men. If the group quarters population is subtracted from the overall New Wilmington population, the ratio is 45.2% male to 54.8% female, still decidedly far more female to male, but much less than in the population of the Borough, as a whole.

Race and Hispanic Origin

Both municipalities are primarily white in racial composition with in excess of 98% of the population Caucasian at the time of the 2000 Census. Similarly, both communities had less than one percent of their population claiming an ethnicity of Hispanic/Spanish origin. Neither race nor Hispanic origin has a significant impact on either Wilmington Township or New Wilmington Borough.

Households

Another measure of population trends is to look at the number of households in the community. A household is defined as one or more persons living at a dwelling unit, an individual address. An important specialized household is the family household which is defined as two or more persons residing in a single dwelling unit who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

The reason that household information is so important, especially today, is that, in many communities, the population has remained or even declined, but the number of housing units has increased. As the quantity of housing stock increases, so does the quantity of infrastructure and services needed to maintain the status quo in the community. With more developed properties come more taxes and utility fees. Residential development generates excitement in communities. However, it is typically found that residential development cost communities more than the revenues they generate. This is not to say that residential development is good or bad, just that a community needs to be aware of the situation and plan accordingly.

Table D-2: Households, 1990 and 2000

	Pennsylvania	Lawrence County	Mercer County	New Wilmington Borough	Wilmington Township
1990					
Households	4,495,966	36,350	45,591	593	371
Family Households	3,155,989	26,779	33,275	355	306
Single-Mother Households	507,008	3,916	4,674	47	15
Non-family Households	1,339,977	9,571	12,316	238	65
Single-Person Non-Family Households	1,150,694	8,806	11,221	203	60
Single-Person Non-Family Households 65+ Years	526,264	5,040	5,997	111	32
2000					
Households	4,777,003	37,091	46,712	577	380
Family Households	3,208,388	25,886	32,387	324	299
Single-Mother Households	554,693	4,269	5,094	52	22
Non-Family Households	1,568,615	11,205	14,325	253	81
Single-Person Non-Family Households	1,320,941	10,032	12,597	203	75
Single-Person Non-Family Households 65+ Years	555,374	5,351	6,169	87	41

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Even though both counties lost population between 1990 and 2000, they witnessed an increase in households. The Commonwealth, which had a 3.4% population gain in the 1990s, had a 6.3% increase in households. The reason for this is that the typical household, nationwide, has decreased in size due to a variety of factors, including fewer children being born, older median age, the increasing numbers of divorced and separated persons, and people wanting their own residences, not living with extended family members.

In Wilmington Township, this trend is evident. Even though the municipality lost 72 residents, or 6.1%, in the 1990s, the number of households grew by nine, an increase of 2.5 percent. The average household size decreased from 3.17 persons in 1990 to 2.91 persons in 2000. It should be noted that both of these values are nearly as large as the Statewide average family size for the respective Census. This is an indication of the influence of the Amish community in the Township with their larger family sizes. Also, the relatively small number of single-parent

families and non-family households contribute to the large household size. The vast majority of non-family households are universally single person. Again, the small number of these types of households is an indication of the impact of the large family orientation of the Amish.

In New Wilmington Borough, the household trend in the 1990s was at odds with statewide and national ones. While the resident population declined in the Borough by just one person, the number of households declined instead of the expected rise. In fact, this occurred even though the number of non-family households increased by 15, or 6.3 percent. The average household size grew from 2.22 persons in 1990 to 2.28 in 2000. In all actuality, even with this growth during the decade, the typical household in the Borough is still smaller than the 2.48 persons typically found.

Population Projections

One of the primary reasons to look to past information is to try and discern what will occur in the future. This holds for demographics as well as any other subject. Information such as population, natural increase or decrease, gender distribution and migration all have an input into mathematical models for future population trends. From this information, local officials can then address comprehensive plan issues such as future land use, public utilities and facilities, transportation needs, and housing.

The projections are done in five-year increments, with the useful limit to this model roughly thirty years. The larger the community, the better this model predicts future population trends. Both of the study communities are relatively small, but are large enough to run the calculation. The projections for Wilmington Township are fairly straight forward, especially since none of the residents live in group quarters. By using the population distribution for the 2000 Census, along with Mercer County specific survival and fertility rates and a variety of migration scenarios, one can calculate projections for the Township until the year 2030.

Table D-3: Wilmington Township Population Projections							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Scenario 1	1,105	1,127	1,145	1,159	1,176	1,194	1,207
Scenario 2	1,105	1,100	1,090	1,077	1,067	1,057	1,044
Scenario 3	1,105	1,121	1,132	1,140	1,151	1,162	1,169
Source: U. S. Census, Pennsylvania Department of Health; consultant calculations							

The first scenario represents no net migration—what would happen to the Township’s population given its population distribution in 2000 and the Mercer County survival and fertility rates based on data from 2000 to 2004? During this five-year period, Wilmington Township saw a net natural increase of 70 persons, which is the same as what the zero net migration model shows as the population increases by the year 2020. Obviously, this model is showing that the local fertility rate for the first part of the decade is far greater than the Mercer Countywide number that was used in the calculations. Unfortunately, one cannot generate a specific municipal fertility rate for a community as small as population as either Wilmington Township or New Wilmington Borough from the State’s vital statistics data.

The second scenario represents a migration rate the same as the Township experienced during the 1990s. A modest decline of population is shown using this scenario. Again, given the fact that the most recent data shows that the County fertility rate understates the current local

situation, one would expect that there would be no real movement in the Township's population from 2000 to 2030.

The final scenario calculation represents a combined migration rate for both the Borough and the Township. It projects a very modest population increase over the thirty years of the series.

Which of these projections is most likely? As stated earlier, a net natural increase has occurred in the first several years of the decade. From 2000 to 2005, that was 90 persons, or 15 per year, or 150 per decade. Also, from building permit data, Wilmington Township has been averaging ten new housing units per year. Of these, 5.5 per year were traditional single-family homes while the other 4.5 were single-floor duplexes/townhouses geared for "empty nesters." (The first two phases of this project are now completed. A final phase is scheduled to be built when the New Wilmington sewage disposal system can accept new customers.) If the single-family data is extrapolated for the decade and the actual duplex units built were added to this total, it would indicate that Wilmington Township is looking at roughly 73 new dwelling units in the 2000s. With modest average household sizes (2.5 persons per single-family home, 2 persons per duplex), the municipality is looking at new housing for roughly 175 persons. Since the single-family housing is being constructed on a contract basis and is not speculative in nature, one can assume most, if not all, of the new dwelling units are occupied. Given these trends, all of the statistical projections underestimate future population growth.

For New Wilmington Borough, the process is much more difficult. For all practical purposes, the household population will be the only segment of the Borough's population contributing to births. Most of the students of Westminster College are single and living in the dormitories or at fraternity houses. Any children born of the student population will, in all likelihood, be as transient as their parents with the possible exception of local residents enrolled in the school. So, the students in group quarters need to be excluded from the projection series. Also, one must be aware of the elderly group quarters population at the nursing homes in the community. The Overlook and the Shenango Home are essentially commercial enterprises. To continue doing business, they must keep their beds full, effectively skewing the death statistics for the Borough. Again, this must be counted for when calculating the projection series. In other communities, this would not significantly impact the calculations. In New Wilmington, nearly 7% of the overall population is in institutional group quarters (nursing homes) and most of these persons are 65 years or older.

Table D-4: New Wilmington Borough Population Projections

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
SPC Scenario	2,452	2,441	2,462	2,510	2,590	2,692	2,823
Scenario 1	2,452	2,452	2,442	2,406	2,365	2,353	2,325
Scenario 2	2,452	2,443	2,426	2,385	2,339	2,322	2,289
Scenario 3	2,452	2,482	2,492	2,476	2,452	2,457	2,447

Source: U. S. Census, Pennsylvania Department of Health, SPC, consultant calculations

Lawrence County is a member of the SPC (Southwest Planning Commission). One of the many functions that it performs for its constituent communities is to calculate population projections. As the primary transportation planning organization for the region, this is an important tool for the SPC itself and not just the municipalities it serves.

In its projection series for New Wilmington Borough, the SPC assumes that the group-quarters population will remain at 1,137 persons, as reported in the 2000 Census, a reasonable

supposition. Through the 2000s, there is not a big change in the Borough's population in this projection series. However, after 2010, the projection begins to accelerate; and by 2030, the series is predicting the Borough will have a population of 2,823, an increase of 14.7% over those twenty years. More importantly, the number of households in the Borough is to increase from 577 in 2000 to 684 in 2030, an increase of 107 units. The SPC projection shows a continuing increase in average household size from 2.28 persons to 2.46 persons. Since 2000, only three single-family homes have been constructed in New Wilmington. Additionally, 50 new units in the "Shenango on the Green" complex have been added, which is geared for empty nesters and retired persons. It is conceivable that this population scenario could be achieved, but it will be difficult, especially the increase in household size.

In the first scenario calculated by the consultant is the zero net migration series. In this model, as with the other two created by the consultant, the college population and the in-migration of elderly into the Borough's nursing homes are taken into account. Not doing so would short the population of the community from a constituency that is known to exist and to be of a fixed size. This series shows that the population will remain fairly steady until 2010 and then a small decline will occur after that. This is mainly due to the shrinking size of women of child-bearing age who are not students at Westminster College. This trend is consistent in all three scenarios. By 2030, the household population of the Borough is projected to decline by approximately 127 persons, or just shy of 10 percent. Overall, the decline is 5.2 percent.

In the second scenario, the migration rate for the two communities is combined. Again, in the first ten years of the projection, there is little change in the population. After that, it accelerates a bit more than the no net migration model, ending with a loss of 163 persons, or 6.6 percent.

The final series is based upon the net in-migration for the Borough in the 1990s after allotting for changes in the group quarters population. This model shows that New Wilmington Borough will maintain a population in a very narrow range from 2000 to 2030. Given a variety of factors, including recent births and deaths, new residential construction and others, it is felt that this scenario best approximates what will occur in the Borough for the foreseeable future, if not fully until 2030.

In summary, Wilmington Township should expect to see some modest population gains over the time period of 2000 to 2030, in the neighborhood of 10 percent. However, if the municipality were to witness an increase of up to 20% over this timeframe, local leaders should not be surprised. In New Wilmington Borough, the most likely scenario is that the population should remain constant over this time period. There are two caveats to this assumption. First, that the group quarters population, which has been volatile in recent past, remains consistent. Secondly, that no large residential developments like Shenango on the Green are undertaken. However, initial discussions have occurred between Westminster College and the developer of Shenango on the Green to explore a project along Route 158 in the south of the Borough. If it goes forth, such a project will impact not only New Wilmington's population, but its public utilities infrastructure.

Income

There are three primary ways to quantify income data in the U. S. Census: median household income (MHI), median family income (MFI), and per capita income (PCI). All three have their

own usefulness as well as limitations. Together, they can bring a clear picture of the economic health of the community.

Census income data is collected from the year prior to the count itself. The Bureau wishes to have actual income data as opposed to the respondents providing estimates of what they will earn in the remaining months of the census year. Therefore, the 2000 count records 1999 income data, and 1990 data has the 1989 income figures. However, one cannot compare 1989 income data directly to 1999 income data due to the impact of inflation. A 1989 dollar could purchase more than one from 1999. Therefore, the income data needs to be adjusted so a true comparison can be made. The data for this calculation comes from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) information found at a variety of Federal government websites. The consultant used the Minneapolis Federal Reserve web page. Both the 1989 and 1999 income figures were converted into 2007 dollars, the most recent year available, giving the users of this report the best point of comparison for the income data sets.

There are three income measures that the Census Bureau primarily uses. The first is median household income, which measures the typical income for all households in a specific community. In most communities, this provides a fairly good model of the typical household's purchasing power. The next data set is median family income, which is specifically for all of the family household types. Since families are the major building blocks of community, income health in this sector is important. The final income statistic is per capita income. This measure takes the total income of the measured area and divides it by the total number of people over 15 years of age.

Table D-5: Income Data, 1989 – 1999			
	Pennsylvania	New Wilmington Borough	Wilmington Township
MHI			
1989	\$29,069	\$29,115	\$25,560
1989 (2007 \$)	\$48,597	\$48,674	\$42,731
1999	\$40,106	\$36,734	\$36,608
1999 (2007 \$)	\$49,904	\$45,696	\$48,040
% of PA MHI		91.6%	96.3%
MFI			
1989	\$34,856	\$38,500	\$26,687
1989 (2007 \$)	\$58,271	\$64,363	\$44,615
1999	\$49,184	\$56,736	\$45,417
1999 (2007 \$)	\$61,200	\$70,597	\$55,512
% of PA MFI		115.4%	92.3%
PCI			
1989	\$14,068	\$8,869	\$10,177
1989 (2007 \$)	\$23,519	\$14,827	\$17,014
1999	\$20,880	\$12,749	\$17,719
1999 (2007 \$)	\$25,891	\$15,864	\$22,048
% of PA PCI		61.1%	84.9%
Source: U. S. Census Bureau; U. S. Federal Reserve			

The real value of these three income measures increased in the Commonwealth between 1989 and 1999. MHI rose by 2.7% in real terms, MFI increased by 5.0% and PCI saw the biggest gain of 10.1% over that 10-year time span. Wilmington Township experienced a similar pattern, with increases in all of the income categories. The Township's MHI jumped 12.4%, the MFI

increased by an extremely robust 24.4%, and the PCI witnessed the largest increase at 29.6 percent. For New Wilmington, the trends are all over the place. Again, the influence of the student and nursing home populations can be seen in the income numbers. The median household income in the Borough declined in terms of real dollars between 1989 and 1999, going from on par with the statewide norm to a bit less than 92% of the State's. This is due to the increase in non-family households, both in absolute and relative terms in the municipality. At the same time, the MFI income increased in real terms by 9.7%, coming in at 115.4% of Pennsylvania's mark. And with per capita income, New Wilmington saw growth during the 1990s in this category, 7.0% in real terms, yet still lagged the State by a large margin. The Borough's 1999 PCI was just 61.1% of the Commonwealth's. The reason for this is the large percentage of students in the Borough's population who have little to no income.

Poverty

While the income numbers for both the Township and the Borough indicate economic health of the overall community, it is, nevertheless, important to look at the poverty statistics from the 2000 Census. As with income, there are three areas one typically looks at to get a feel for the poverty situation in an area: the individual poverty rate, the number of families in poverty, and also the specific number of single-mother families in poverty. Again, as with the income data, the statistics in the 2000 Census are based on 1999 income data.

In Pennsylvania, in 1999, 11.0% of individuals lived below the poverty line—a bit better than the national mark of 12.0 percent. Just 7.8% of the State's families were in poverty at that time. However, the statistics for single-mother families were not as favorable, with almost one in four of these households being below the poverty threshold.

For New Wilmington, the percentage of persons living in poverty in 1999 was 15.2%, which, given the large relative student population in the municipality, is not as high as one might expect. Backing this supposition up is the family poverty rate for the Borough of just 4.2 percent. The percentage of single-mother families living in poverty in New Wilmington in 1999 was 30.3%, which is higher than one would like. However, given that there were only 52 single-mother families in 2000, that means only 16 were below the poverty line.

In Wilmington Township, the poverty numbers are a bit more concerning. For individuals, the poverty rate in 1999 was 16.5%, or one-and-one-half times the Statewide norm. Family poverty was 10.8%, about 40% above the typical rate for Pennsylvanian families. The lone bright spot is the low rate for single-mother families where just three (14.3%) of the 22 such families living below the poverty line.

What is at the heart of the high poverty statistics for Wilmington Township? The answer possible lies in the distribution of jobs in the Township. Of the 477 persons employed in 2000, 35 specifically were farmers, more than five times the Statewide norm in a state where agriculture is its biggest industry in terms of dollars. The Amish make up a big percentage of the farming community in Wilmington Township. And the amount of income generated by family farms, especially small ones, has been shrinking for quite a while. Indeed, large numbers of Amish are augmenting their incomes in non-agricultural fields. It is likely that the relatively high percentage of farmers in the Township combined with large family size skewed the poverty rates in the community.

Housing

Census Data

Median home value (MHV) is a measure of a home's worth as reported to the Census Bureau by the homeowner. In both New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township, the MHV is well above what is typically found in Pennsylvania. In 2000, the MHVs were \$119,000 and \$115,200, respectively, with the State's being \$97,000. The important factor is whether such home prices are affordable for the average resident of the area. A simple way to measure this is to examine the ratio of MHV to MHI with values of the 2.5 or less indicating that homeownership is affordable.

In New Wilmington Borough, this ratio, the housing affordability index (HAI) in 2000 was 3.24, while in the Township, the value was 2.98, based on the MHI. In both cases, homes would be considered expensive for the typical household in municipalities. If using family income, the more typical home purchasing household type, one finds that the HAI in the Borough in 2000 was 2.10 and in Wilmington Township it was 2.53. Using this measure, for the typical family in New Wilmington, homeownership is a fairly affordable option. In the Township, again for families, while the HAI is over 2.5, it is not significantly over that threshold. Homeownership at that time should not have been a significant burden to the typical Wilmington Township family.

As for rental costs, the median contract rent for New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township in 2000 were \$495 and \$478 per month, respectively. As a percentage of the MHI, these rates were 16.2% and 14.9% of household income, above the 12.5%, which is usually considered affordable for a renter. Again, looking at this percentage in terms of the MFI, the rents represented 10.5% and 12.6% of the family incomes in the two municipalities.

Table D-6: Housing Units – 2000		
	Borough	Township
Total	611	392
Owner (%)	329 (57.0%)	308 (81.1%)
Renter (%)	248 (43.0%)	72 (18.9%)
Vacant (%)	34 (5.6%)	12 (3.1%)
<i>Source: Census 2000</i>		

These figures are quite normal in western Pennsylvania. The percentage of homeownership in townships is high, while in urban areas, a greater proportion of rentals are seen. This is especially true in college towns such as New Wilmington.

In the Borough, about two thirds of all dwelling units are single-family homes. "Multiple" dwelling units, which include duplex units and a variety of townhouses and apartments comprise the balance. Since the year 2000, there has been virtually no single-family residential



Shenango on the Green

construction within the Borough. Only three such structures have been built since 2000. Instead, residential development has occurred in the form of multi-family construction. The most significant developments in Borough have been Shenango on the Green (50 units) and the Berlin Village student housing complex of Westminster College.



The former facility—Shenango on the Green—is designed for retirees and is on the same campus as the Shenango Presbyterian Home. It is currently at full capacity. Conversely, Berlin Village is the new style of college housing. It is set up as townhouses with four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, and common living areas. Currently, the college has 15 such units and expects to add two more clusters in the future.

In the Township, a significant number of new housing units have been constructed since 2000. There has been a fairly even mix of units built. Approximately two dozen single-family homes were constructed, as well as a similar number in the Wynfield Commons development. However, these units have a single-family look and feel, since they are one-story, scattered duplexes.

The single-family units had little impact on the local housing market. They were all built specifically by the owner/occupant of the unit. The three large complexes, on the other hand, had significant impacts on the local real estate conditions. Wynfield Commons and Shenango on the Green both targeted a similar market demographic—older married couples looking for a residential unit that is easier to maintain than their traditional tract home, with a large number of the occupants coming from the local area, in general, and the Borough, in particular.

For quite some time, New Wilmington had a large number of homes for sale. Fortunately, by the spring of 2008, many of the excess capacity had been absorbed. Both the Borough and the Township appear to have missed the worse of the housing downturn. Then again, neither community seemed to have grown during the boom.

The Berlin Village complex also affected the local real estate market, specifically rental properties. A small, but constant, portion of Westminster College students would take apartments near campus and in downtown New Wilmington. Since the opening of Berlin Village, this segment of the market has decreased. Only recently has the renter vacancies returned to historic levels.

One concern that appears in both rural and older urban communities is housing quality. One would assume that with the 2000 Census data indicating median home prices in the two municipalities being significantly higher than State-wide norms, housing quality would not be an issue. A survey of housing units in the Township and Borough confirmed this assumption. In fact, there are no pockets of housing delay in either municipality, only a few scattered problem units, and most of those are in need of only minor rehabilitation.

Other Economic Data

Every five years, in years ending in 2 or 7, the Census Bureau conducts an Economic Census. The survey forms for the 2007 survey were due to the Bureau in February 2008, with results being published in 2009 and 2010. The most recent survey that has data for business and industry was from 2002. The smallest level that this data is available for are census places, municipalities, of 2,500 persons or larger. Neither municipality reaches this threshold. Given the makeup of both Wilmington Township—an agricultural community—and New Wilmington Borough—a college town—the data for Mercer and Lawrence counties would not provide useful information for the region.

The case is similar for employment data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. It, too, supplies countywide data that may or may not provide a useful look at local economic conditions. The most recent yearly unemployment rate is from 2007. Mercer County's rate stood at 5.1% for that year, while in Lawrence County, it was 5.6 percent. Given the history for the two counties over the last quarter of a century, these unemployment rates are quite good. Still, both lagged the Statewide mark of 4.4% in 2007, as they have ever year since 2000. Given the other income data presented earlier, namely income statistics and home values, one can safely assume that the Borough and Township enjoy employment rates at least as good as both counties, if not better.

Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal Plan

Natural and Historic Resources



Introduction

One data set for the background report that is becoming increasingly important is the survey of natural and historic resources. This is true for many reasons. First is the information this data reveals about where development should occur and, just as important, where it should not. Secondly, it highlights attributes to the community, that local residents often may take for granted, that should be preserved. It also points out assets that can be exploited. Finally, as with the other aspects of the background report, it gives local officials an idea of the appropriate scale of projects for the community.

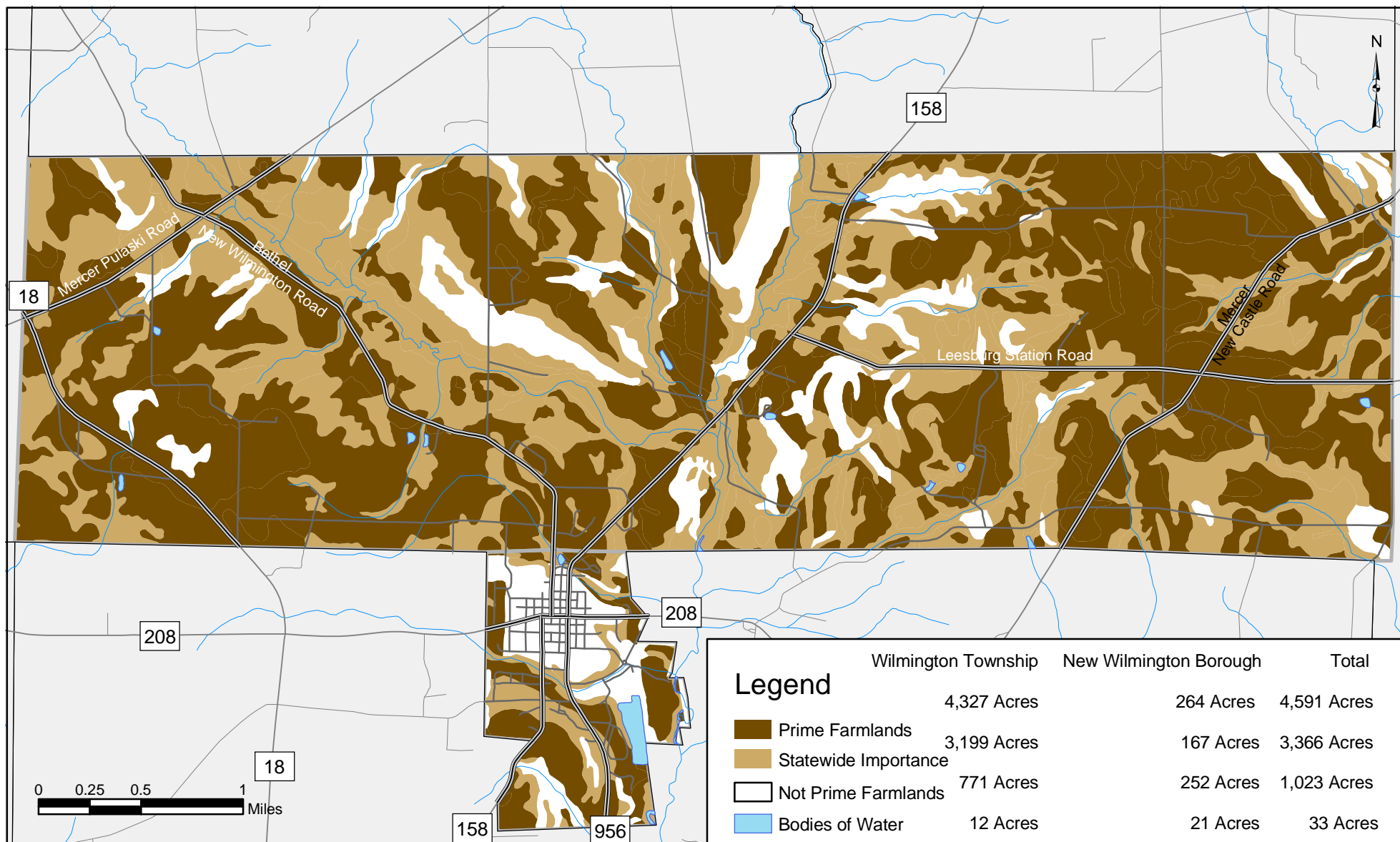
Physical Resources

Perhaps the most basic of the physical resources of a community is the earth itself, the soils, and topography of the place. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has, for decades, been charged with surveying the Nation's soils, enabling analysis of this asset in a community. Today's computer mapping tools make the process even simpler, allowing even small municipalities like New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township the ability to have a deep understanding of local conditions.

Prime Farmland Soils

During the administration of Governor Tom Ridge, an increased emphasis was placed on the preservation of farmland, particularly those with rich, fertile soils. These prime farmlands were recognized as irreplaceable assets that were often being converted into residential and commercial developments. The various traits that make land ideal for farming, little to no slope, deep and well drained, also are those developers' prize. Additionally, active farmlands are cleared of trees and heavy vegetation, as well as other impediments to development, such as large stones and boulders. Huge chunks of farmlands in southeastern Pennsylvania and around other urban areas were becoming homes and big-box stores, sacrificing much fertile land that had once been America's bread basket. Governor Ridge's policy demanded that in the planning process, communities plan for the preservation of farmlands, especially those with the best quality soils.

When looking at Map 2, Prime Farmland Soils, one sees that both the Township and Borough have large tracts of both prime farmland soils and soils of State-wide importance. These are soils that are similar to the prime farmland soils but are not quite as level or deep. These two soil



Map 2 - Prime Farmland Soils
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

classifications represent over 90% of Wilmington Township's overall land area and, in excess, 60% of the Borough's. Most of the areas in New Wilmington deemed as not prime farmland soils are in the more densely developed urban core of the municipality. In fact, these soils are specifically defined as urban.

In New Wilmington, there is still a small amount of agricultural activity, both in the northeastern corner as well as the southern border of the Borough. Even though agricultural lands represent roughly one eighth of the land area of the municipality, it is not significant to New Wilmington. In the Township, however, agriculture is very important. Extensive amounts of Wilmington Township are actively farmed. It is so important to the local residents that they have established in conjunction with the Township Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs). Map 3 shows areas in the agricultural security program as of the end of 2007.

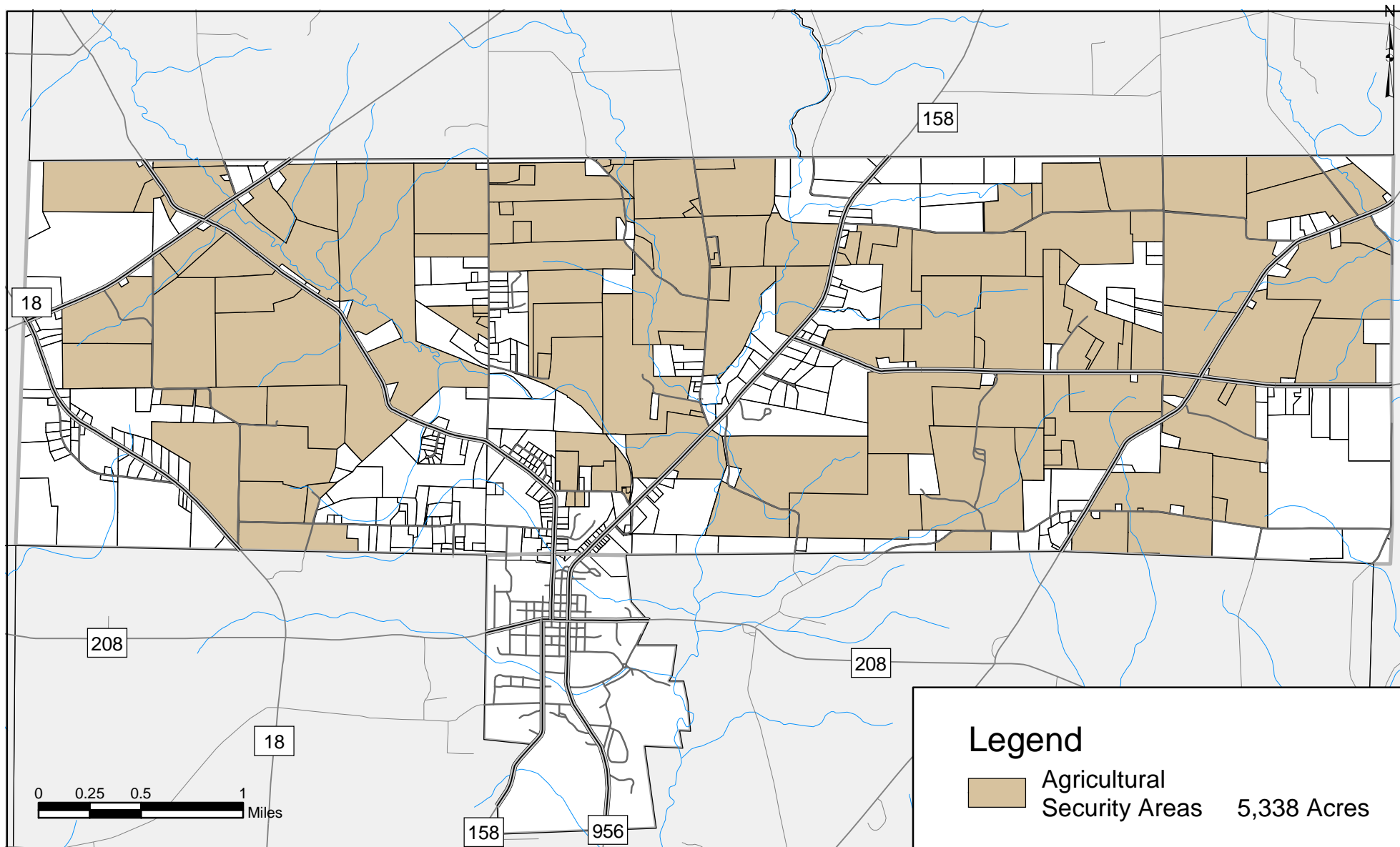
Hydric Soils, Wetlands, and Floodplains

Not long ago, hydric soils, wetlands, and floodplains were considered impediments that could, and should, be overcome. Enough fill and drains could remove excess water from hydric soils, channels cut to drain wetlands, and dams built to control stream flows. Today, the true importance of these natural features has been recognized. The water-cleansing properties of wetlands have made them something to be prized. Similarly, the importance of the flooding process has been appreciated. While not much, if any, development has happened in surviving wetlands, it often encroaches into floodplains. Throughout history, man has settled near streams and, by extension, in floodplains. In the past, it was most frequently for practical or economic reasons. Today, it is most often for aesthetic or recreational wants.

There are a little more than 200 acres of wetlands in the two municipalities—less than 2.5% of the total land area (see Map 4). A large portion of these are located along the Main and West Branch of the Little Neshannock Creek. Two large Palustrine (fresh water) forested wetlands lie just east of PA 18, in the western portion of Wilmington Township, totaling 42 acres, which are over 20% of the study area's total wetlands. Another such large wet woodland lies along the northern border of the Township. The remainder of wetlands not located along the creeks, or the aforementioned areas, are small and scattered.

Floodplains comprise 312 acres of the two municipalities, some of which encompass defined wetland areas. Again, they are predominately located along the Little Neshannock and its main tributaries, including McClure's Run in New Wilmington. Fortunately, very little development has happened along the floodplain areas of these streams. Much of the length of the waterways is still forested. If the floodplains are running through areas that are developed, more often, they are through farm fields. The only significant stretch of floodplain that traverses urban development is McClure's Run. Even so, it poses little, if any, threat to structures along its length.

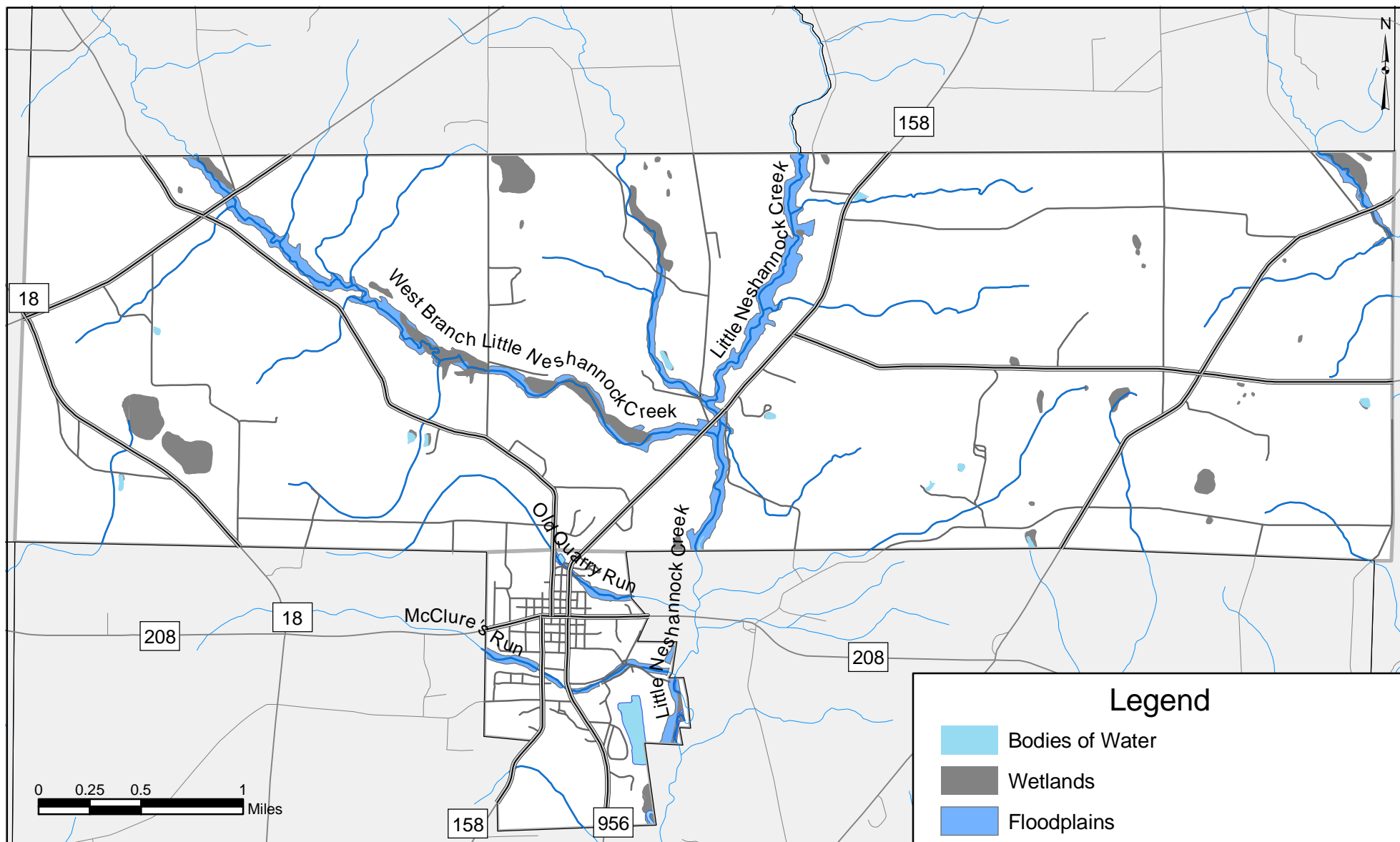
Hydric soils (Map 5) are ones where water plays an important part in its composition. They are frequently wet, even in dry times. While not wetlands themselves, wetlands exist in hydric soils. Construction is difficult on such soils and should be avoided. With 1,190 acres of the two municipalities having soils hydric in nature, roughly one eighth of the study area is not ideal for residential, commercial, or industrial construction. Much of these hydric lands are currently either forested or in agricultural use. Given current trends, hydric soils should not have significant adverse impact for future development plans.



Map 3 - Agriculture Security Areas (ASAs)
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

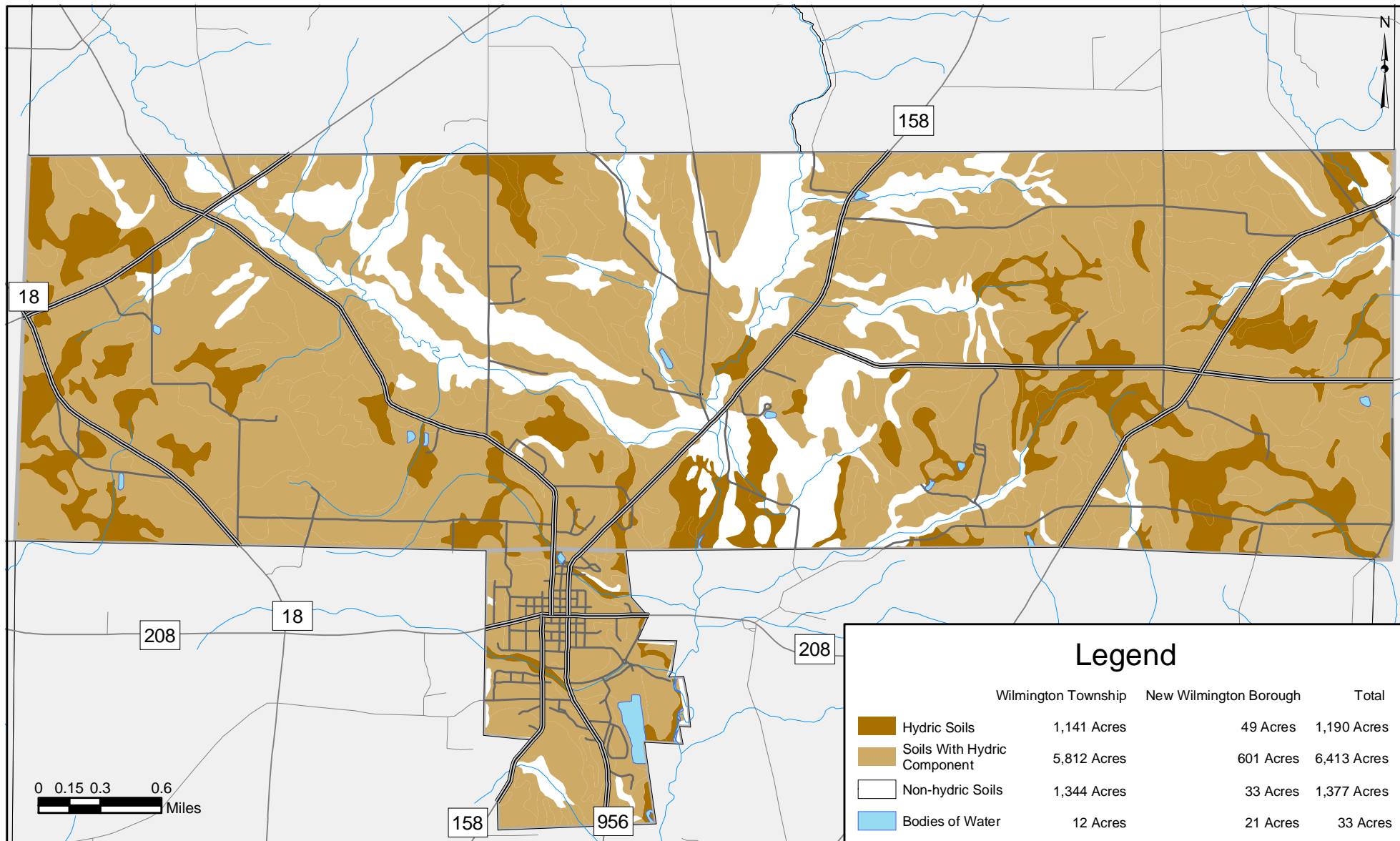
Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Map 4 - Wetlands and Floodplains
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983



Map 5 - Hydric Soils
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Roughly two thirds of the two municipalities have soils with a hydric component in them. When the USDA surveyed the soils, they classified them by the dominant soil type in that area. Usually, mixed in were similar soil types, representing just a few percent of the total. Such is the situation with the soils that possess a hydric component. Typically, the component is just 2% to 5% of the overall soil. These soils should not significantly impact development.

Slopes

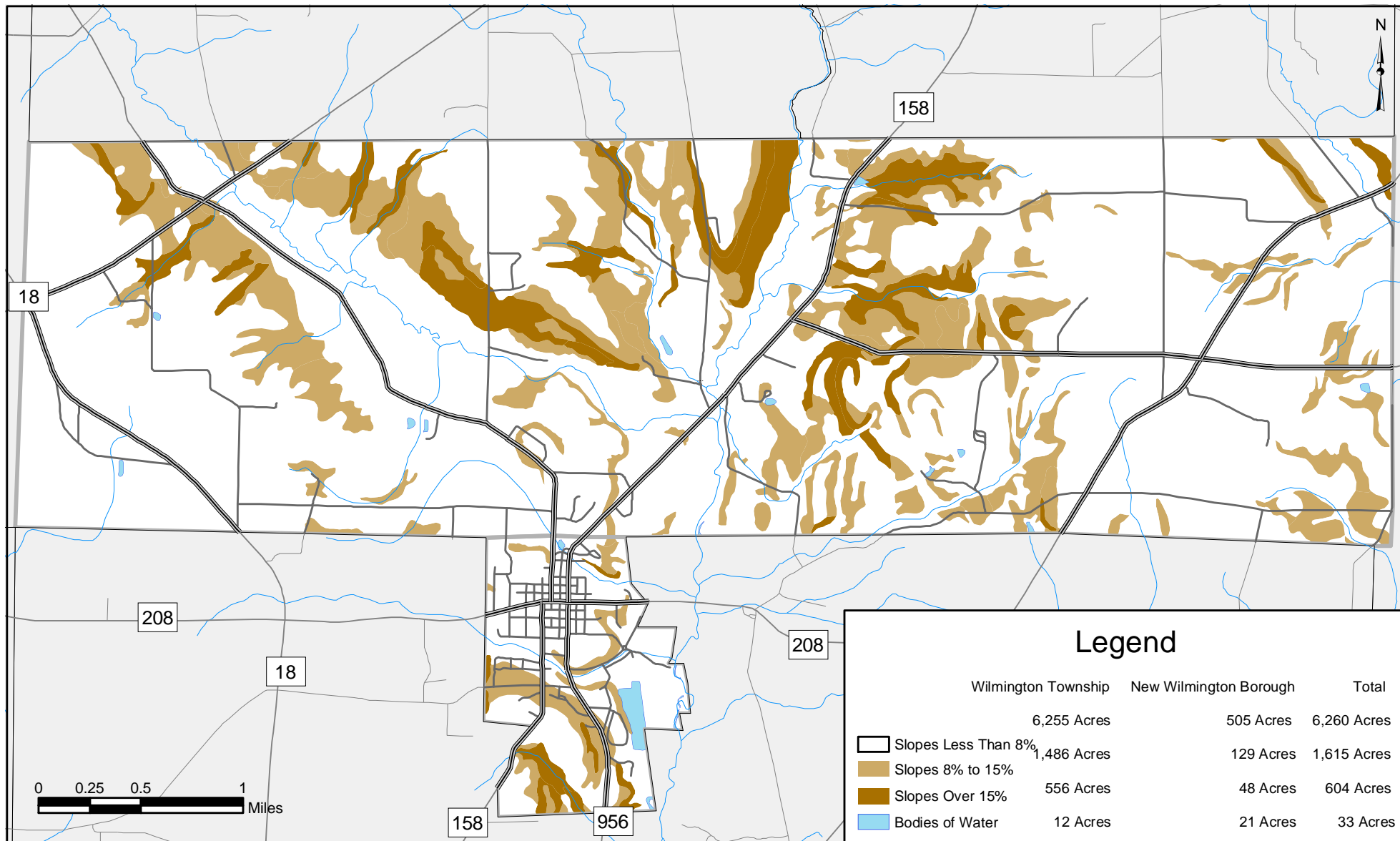
The slope of land is one of the most important development constraints that confront western Pennsylvania communities. Due to a variety of local conditions, including average precipitation, development on slopes of 15% or greater is difficult. It is by no means impossible. In fact, development routinely occurs in areas with slopes well in excess of 15 percent. These areas also typically have far less precipitation a year than found in this region. Development on steeper slopes concentrates the impact of stormwater runoff. This increases the impact of water-caused erosion not only on the developed property, but those downstream/downhill of the development.

Severe slopes (Map 6), those 15% or more, are not a big concern in the study area. Just 604 acres are in this classification—6.7% of the two municipalities. More than two thirds of the region has slopes of 8% or less. With the large amount of prime farmland soils in the region, which cannot have a slope in excess of 8%, this is not a surprise. With the amount of easily developable land in Wilmington Township and New Wilmington Borough, there is no real pressure to use lands with slopes 15% or greater.

On-Lot Septic Limitations

While larger portions of the population in Pennsylvania have sewage treatment addressed by public systems, this is concentrated in urban areas such as New Wilmington. Virtually all of the land area in Wilmington Township is not sewered, meaning that on-lot sewage disposal is the norm for most residents. And unfortunately, due to local social conditions, it is not always the easiest to accomplish. As shown on Map 7, only 137 acres in the Township (less than 2%) has land with moderate limitations for on-lot disposal systems. There are no areas in Wilmington Township where the soils have slight limitations. The remaining 98%+ of the soils have severe limitations for on-lot disposal.

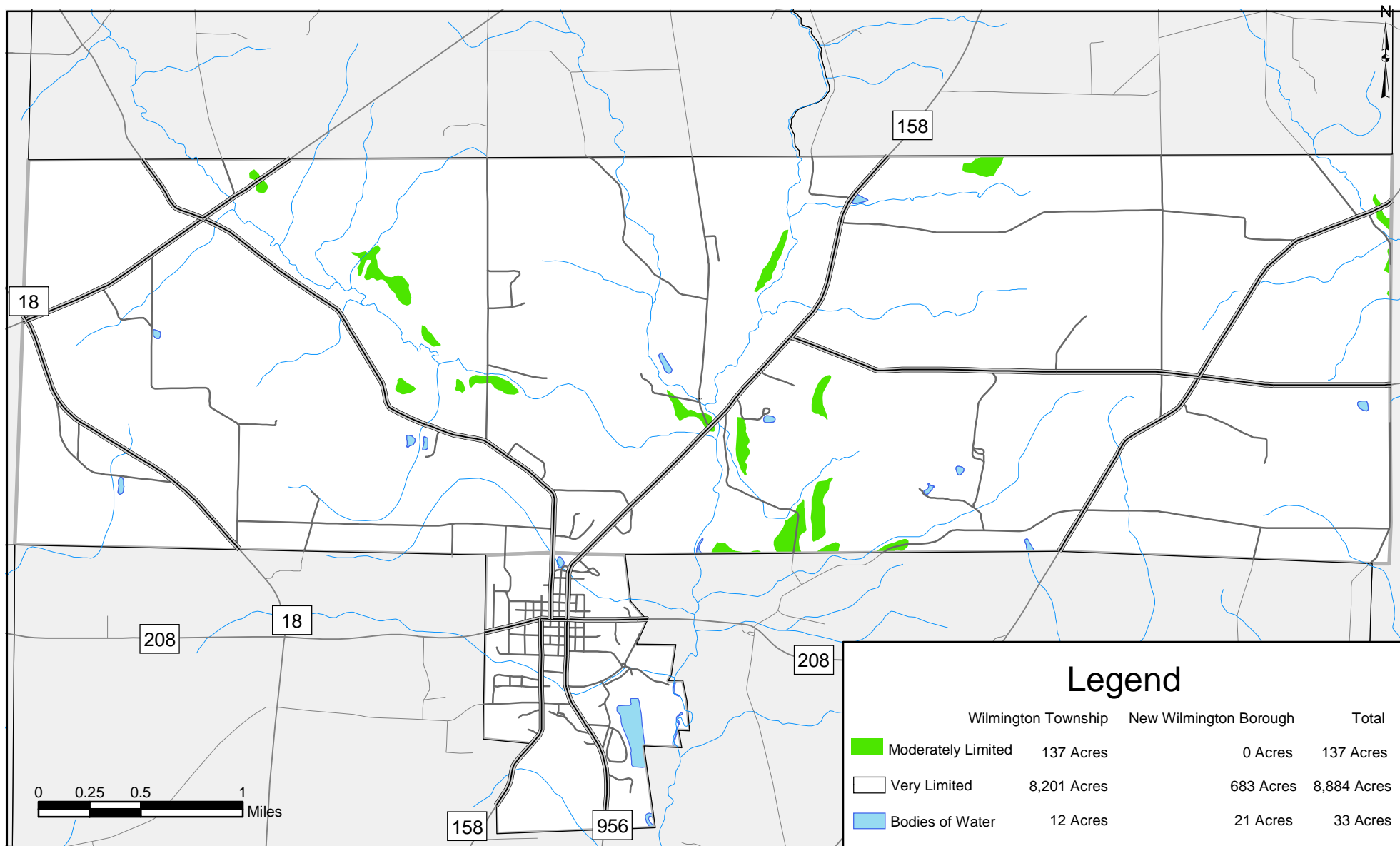
Due to the generalized nature of the soil survey data, this does not mean that on-lot sewage disposal is impossible in Wilmington Township. It means, however, that someone developing a parcel will need to coordinate with the local sewage enforcement officer (SEO) and perhaps an engineer when preparing their plan. Because of this limitation, most residential development will be low density (one acre or larger lots), while non-residential development will probably be limited in intensity.



Map 6 - Severe Slope Considerations
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Map 7 - On-lot Sewage Disposal Suitability
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Historic Resources

Wilmington Township, Mercer County, was first established in February 1846, and incorporated all of its current territory, New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township, Lawrence County. In 1849, Lawrence County was formed from portions of Mercer and Beaver counties, resulting in the split into the two townships. New Wilmington Borough, which first was platted in 1824, officially became a borough in 1873. It was formed from land that had been part of Wilmington Township, Lawrence County.



One of the most notable institutions in the region, not just the study area, is Westminister College. Founded in 1852 by the Presbyterian Church, Westminister College was one of the first schools in the region to be co-educational, granting degrees to women shortly thereafter. Westminister provides a touchstone for the history of the region, and not just with historic structures such as Thompson House, which was listed on the Historic Register in 1985, or the campus in general, which became eligible for the Register in 1999. The college is a living history book for the community as a result of the tight town-and-gown relationship that exists.

Another location that is eligible for the Historic Register is the Overlook Medical Clinic. This longtime facility specializes in nursing homecare, particularly for the elderly. Its campus and iconic main building are situated on a hilltop, overlooking the Borough and the entire Little Neshannock valley.

A final historic and cultural asset in the study area that should be mentioned is the Amish community. Integral to both New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township, the Amish provide a glimpse back into rural life as it existed in the mid to late 1800s. Though they have added many more modern practices throughout the years, the presence of the Amish has helped preserve many old-time practices, such as canning, chair caning, and quilting, in not only their community but in the “English” one as well.

Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal Plan

Land Use



Introduction

This section is comprised of three basic elements. The first describes the land use ordinances, which apply to the Borough of New Wilmington (Lawrence County) and Wilmington Township (Mercer County). This will include a basic review of the local ordinances and a composite map of the zoning districts found in the two communities.

The second is a presentation of current land uses within these municipalities. This was completed by using both aerial photographs and by field work.

The final section provides analysis of land-use patterns and the relationship between the built environment and the respective zoning maps.

Land Use Ordinances

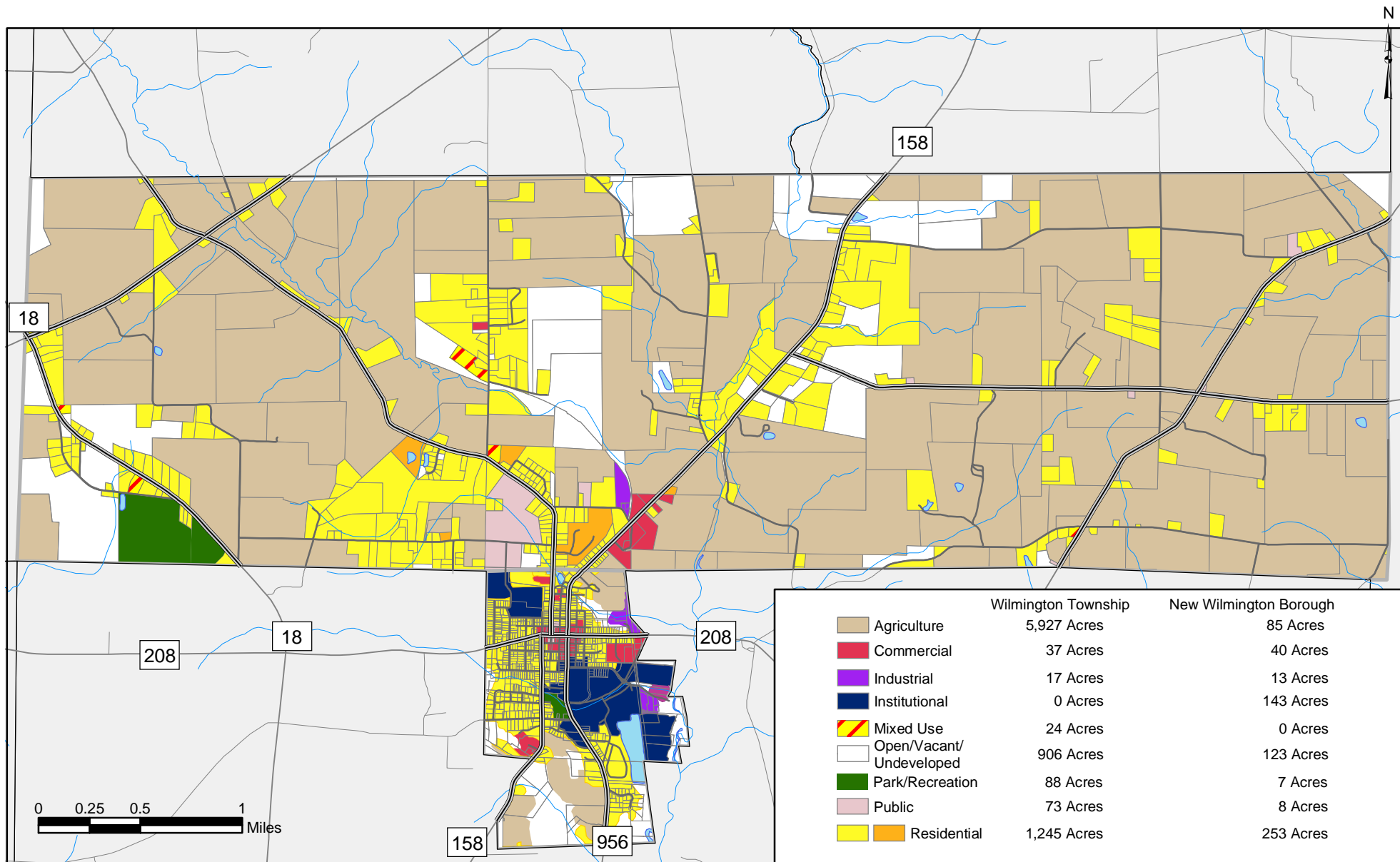
In the Commonwealth, local land-use controls are enabled through the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (PaMPC or MPC), which is the primary planning law of the State. Adopted in 1968, this law replaces a mixture of planning laws contained in the various municipal codes. Since 1968, the MPC has been amended several times—the most significant changes occurring in 1988 and 2000.

Zoning

These regulations can be best described as “the delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing, and size of land and buildings” (*The New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions*, Moskowitz and Lindbloom, CURP2004). Both municipalities have zoning ordinances. The current Borough ordinance was adopted in 1983, while the Township’s was adopted in June of 1996.

New Wilmington Borough

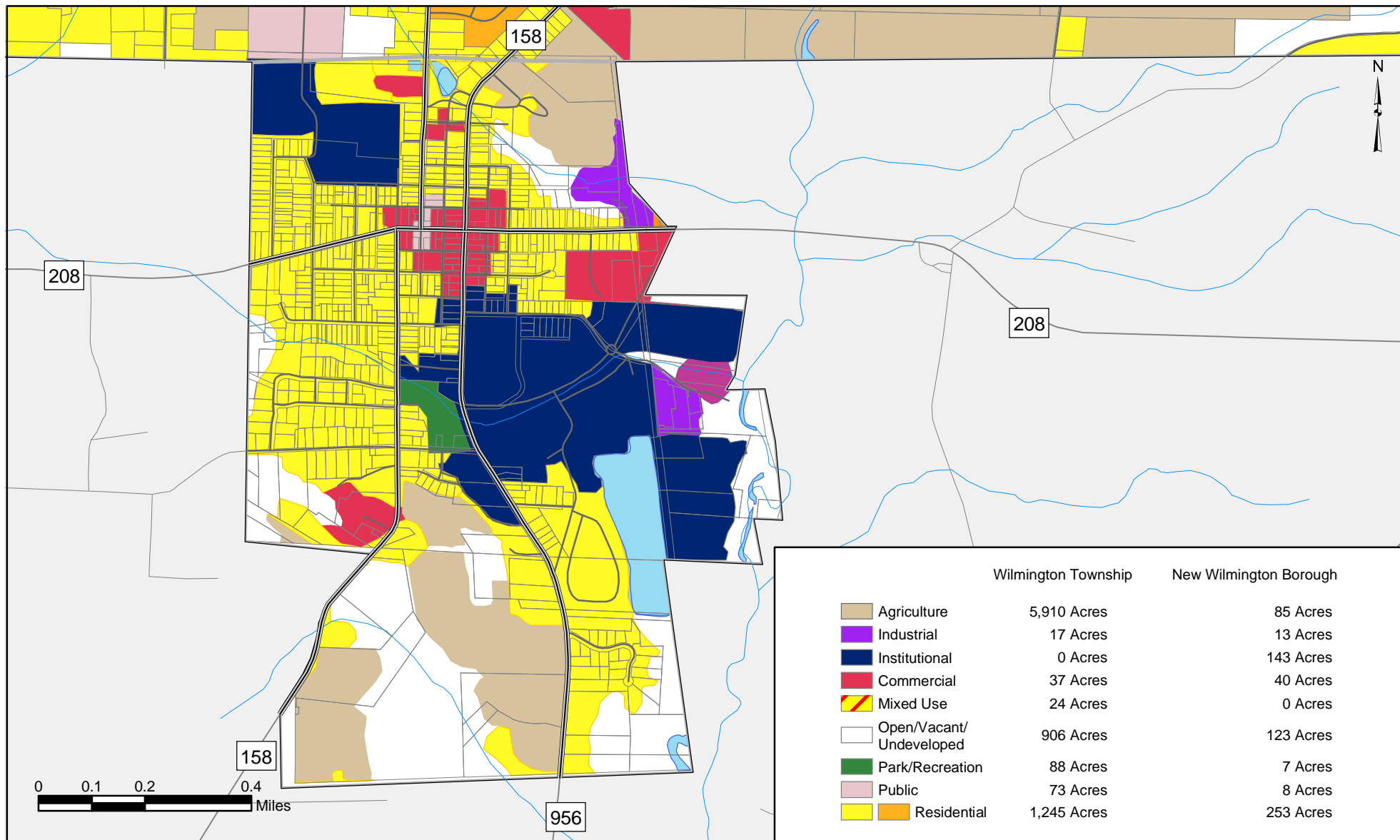
The New Wilmington Borough Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1983, with several amendments since then. Principal amendments were in 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2001. The ordinance is part of the Borough’s Code of Ordinances and designated as Chapter 275. It contains seven articles and about forty pages.



Map 8 - Current Land Use
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

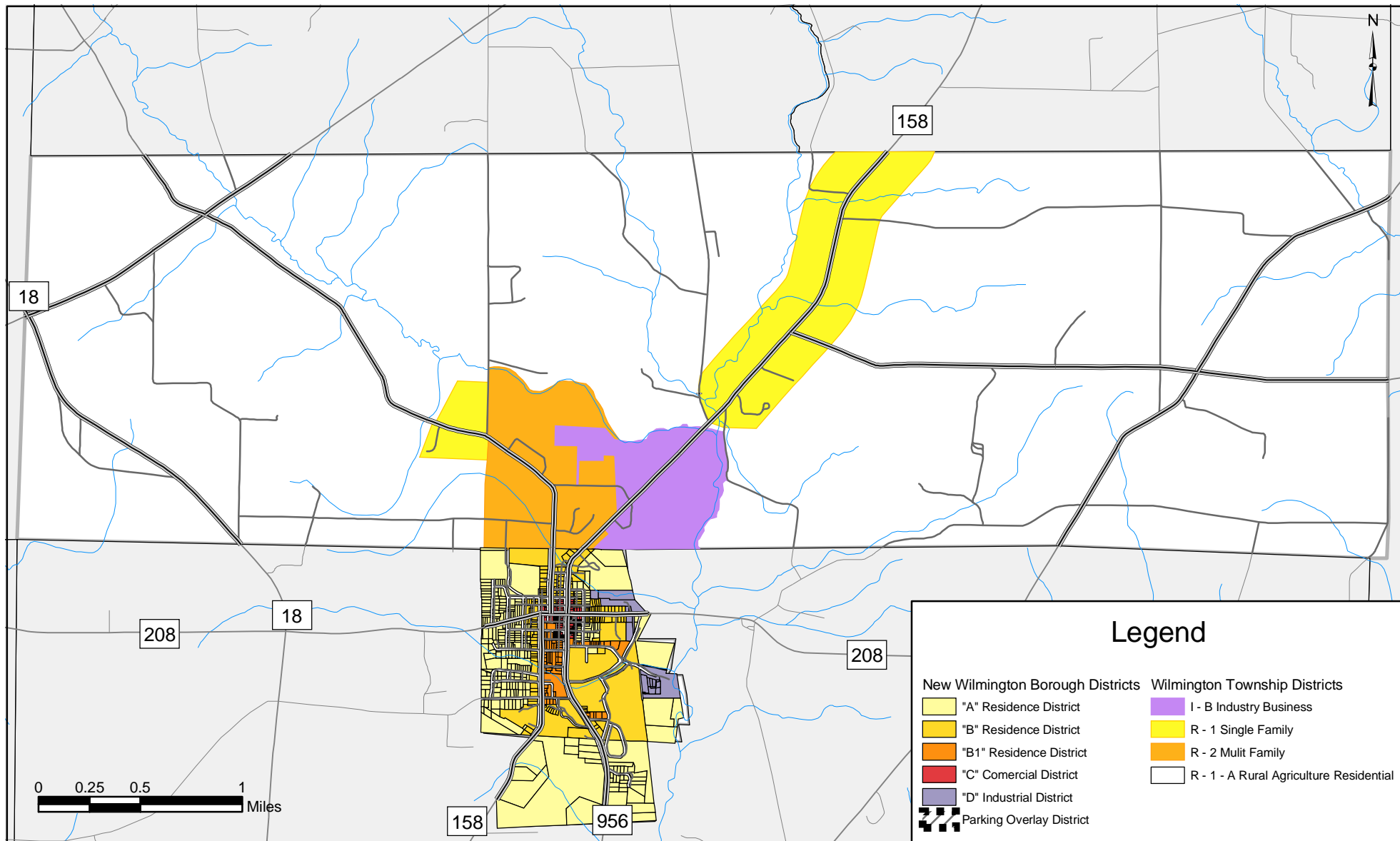
Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Map 8A- New Wilmington Detail Current Land Use
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

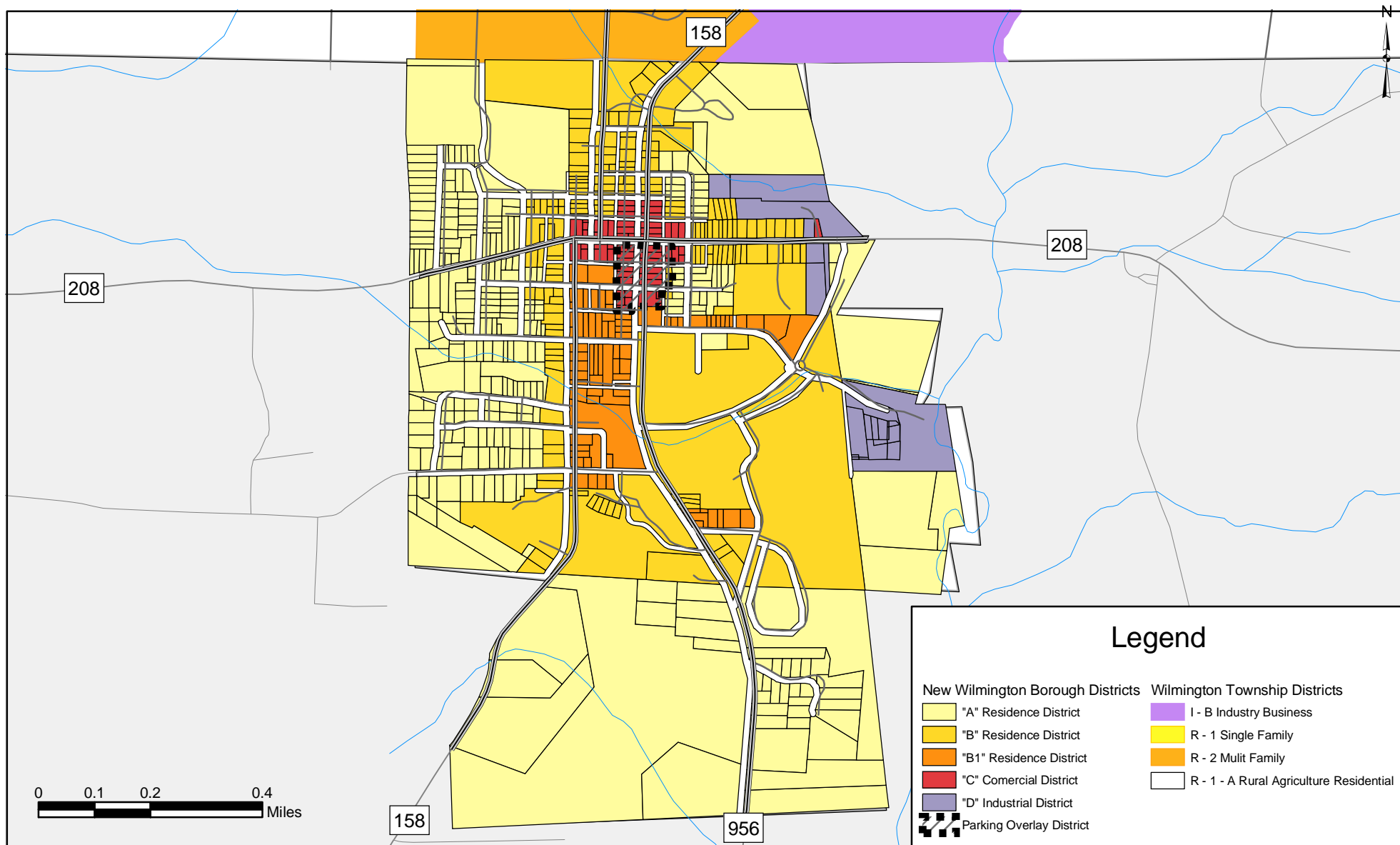
Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983



Map 9 - Combined Zoning District Map (Unofficial, for information only)
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Map 9A - New Wilmington Detail Zoning District Map (Unofficial, for information only)
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Table A of the ordinance establishes three residential districts, one commercial, and one industrial. These are briefly described as follows:

A – Residence: This is a typical western Pennsylvania residential district, primarily designed for single-family dwellings, parks, churches, and similar uses. Schools are included as a special exception. Though “on-lot” sewage is allowed, the Borough is practically fully serviced by sanitary sewer lines. Lot sizes are 10,000 square feet, with a minimum lot width of 75 feet. A minimum lot would be approximately 75 feet by 133 feet. This district allows residential density of about 4.4 dwelling units per net residential acre.

B – Residence District: This district allows for the same pattern of uses as the “A” District, but includes two-family dwellings as a permitted use and multi-family dwellings, funeral parlors, and home occupations as special exceptions. Lot size is 7,500 square feet, and minimum width is 65 feet, yielding a lot of approximately 65 feet by 115 feet in depth. Single-family density is 5.8 dwelling units per acre, two-family 8.7 units per acre, and the density for traditional multi-family units is the same. However, elderly housing developments are allowed to have a density of 15 units per net residential acre (approximately one family per each 2,900 square feet of lot).

B-1 District: This district has the same density provisions as the B – Residence District. The primary difference is B-1 allows more uses. In the B-1, fraternity/sorority houses, bed and breakfast, professional offices, nursing homes, and similar activities are permitted.

C-Commercial District: The C-Commercial District allows 13 permitted uses, 1 conditional use, and 9 special exceptions. This is a normal all-purpose commercial area. It allows residential uses, due to the mixed-use nature of the area. This is the area where adult use businesses are permitted. Lot size is 10,000 square feet, with a minimum width of 60 feet. Because of the presence of two public parking lots and practical limitations, businesses in the designated “Downtown” area are exempt from parking requirements.

The I-Industrial District has three permitted uses and one special exception. The minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet with 150 feet required width (150 feet by 267 feet).

Allowable building height in the Borough varies from 35 feet in the residential districts to 45 feet for the commercial districts. To further analyze this ordinance, a minimum lot for each district was drawn. To determine these lots, the minimum width was divided into the lot size to obtain lot depth. The required setbacks were determined, and a “buildable area” determined. This area was then compared to the permitted maximum lot coverage. In the B, B-1, and the C Districts, the available buildable area of a minimum lot did not allow for the maximum lot coverage. The B and B-1 Districts allow for 40% lot coverage, some 3,000 square feet. However, on a minimal 65 foot by 116 foot lot, only 2,520 square feet of lot can be covered. For a C District lot, some 75% in lot coverage is allowed (7,500 square feet). On a minimum lot, when yard spaces are applied, only 6,680 square feet of buildable area is allowed. Neither shortcoming is dramatic, but should be considered.

Conversely, the buildable area in the I-Industrial District is over 26,000 square feet, more than the 40% coverage permits.

As is the case with such ordinances, which include many vestiges from regulations now fifty years old, some provisions are dated and some internal inconsistencies exist. Also, if the MPC continues to evolve from amendments, there are always some minor updates that are warranted.

Wilmington Township Zoning Ordinance

This ordinance has 19 articles, with over 90 pages. Adoption is dated June of 1996, replacing the 1982 regulations. There are four districts in this ordinance:

The Rural Agricultural/Residential “R-1-A” District has some 17 permitted uses, 8 accessory uses, and 1 conditional use. The primary uses are single-family residential and agricultural uses. The conditional use is a residential dwelling used for “agricultural labor.” The minimum lot size for on-lot septic systems is 40,000 square feet, or about 1.09 dwelling units per acre. Where sanitary sewer systems are available, the lot size can halve to 20,000 square feet, or about 2.18 dwelling units per acre. The minimum lot (40,000 square feet) would be 150 feet by 267 feet, and 10,000 feet coverage allowed.

In the R-1, Single-Family District, some 17 uses are permitted. There is 1 conditional use and 8 accessory uses. This district is slightly more restrictive than the R-1-A District, yet it does permit a few additional “urban” uses, such as schools and group homes. The basic lot standards are similar to the R-1-A, except the side yard standard is 15 feet, rather than 25 feet; lot coverage is similar, at 25 percent.

The R-2 District is described as a multiple-family residential zone. There are 22 permitted uses, which include single-family, duplex, and multiple-family dwellings, with a full range of agricultural uses, schools, hospitals, and childcare centers. Once more, group homes are allowed as a conditional use. Lot sizes are 40,000 square feet for single-family and two-family dwellings for on-lot septic systems. Multi-family developments require a 5-acre parcel. Where central sewage is available, 20,000 square feet is allowed, but, again, a 5-acre lot for multi-family developments is required, with a requirement of 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit.

The I-B District is the industrial/business district. It has the greatest variety of uses of any district, allowing residential, agricultural, business, and industrial uses. In all, the I-B District has 36 permitted uses, 7 conditional uses, and 10 accessory uses. With the exception of mobile home parks and group homes, all other uses can be exercised here. Essentially, the lot configurations are the same as the prior zones.

Comments on Lots and Lot Coverage

Assuming a 50-foot road right-of-way, the typical front yard setback is 50 feet for R-1-A and R-1 Zoning District lots. Either interior or corner lots (170 feet of width is required) would yield sufficient buildable area to allow for permitted lot coverage (10,000 square feet). Conversely, in sewered areas, an internal minimum building lot yields approximately 4,800 square feet, slightly under the permitted 5,000 square feet. On corner lots, a lot of approximately 170 feet by 118 feet is seen. Depending on lot configuration, the likely “buildable” area is 85 feet by 33 feet, or about 2,800 square feet, well under the 5,000 square foot allowance.

In the R-2 District, for single-family units, a 100-foot lot width is required (100 feet by 400 feet). The buildable area would be 50 feet by 315 feet, yielding much more than the allowable 12,000 square feet of coverage. Conversely, where the lot is configured for sewer areas, the buildable area for a 20,000 square foot lot is just under the permitted 6,000 square feet by 250 square feet. Similar lot configurations are in the I-B Zone.

In all, these lots are large enough for anticipated development. However, in some instances, they do not work as well when reduced from 40,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet. In addition, the allowable coverage for residential uses (25% to 30%) is high for rural zoning. Finally, the lot coverage for commercial use in the I-B District should be reconsidered. Historically, for retail uses, parking (including aisle space, etc.) consumes about 60% of the lot—not 50 percent. Overall, this appears to be a relatively modern ordinance, though it lacks some contemporary considerations (drive-through businesses) and mandated uses (no-impact home-based businesses and forestry).

Some individual zoning regulations appear somewhat complex and perhaps some simplifications of provisions would be appropriate. Section 500 of the ordinance contains provisions for various types of residential uses. Some of these requirements should be revisited, especially 501.1(3) and sections 501.2(d) and (e), due to similar regulations under the State-mandated building code.

Another item of interest is the need to develop specific criteria for conditional uses (hospitals, multi-family dwellings, duplexes). Also, some of the provisions of Section 503.6 may be troublesome if dealing with persons qualified as handicapped under Federal legislation.

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDOs)

Both municipalities are covered by subdivision and land development ordinances. New Wilmington Borough has its own regulations, while the Township's falls under Mercer County's.

The Borough's SALDO was adopted in December of 1967—a year prior to the adoption of the PaMPC. As such, most of its administrative provisions are inconsistent with the MPC. In addition, though many of the ordinances design provisions are quite acceptable, other elements are less detailed and have outdated references. For example, DEP now covers public water and sewer approval at the State level, not the Department of Health. Finally, the ordinance does not have a land development section.

Because of its age and inconsistencies with current practice, the existing ordinance should be replaced.

As stated earlier, the Township falls under the Mercer County SALDO, which was adopted in 2006. Minor subdivisions are 10 lots or less, with no public improvements.

This is a modern regulation and covers:

- Subdivision plans
- Land development regulations
- Mobile home park regulations
- RV parks
- Communications towers

- Administration, enforcement, and improvement guarantees

At this time, the current regulations appear to be adequate for the Township. If development levels increase, a separate ordinance may be warranted.

Current Land Use (Map 8)

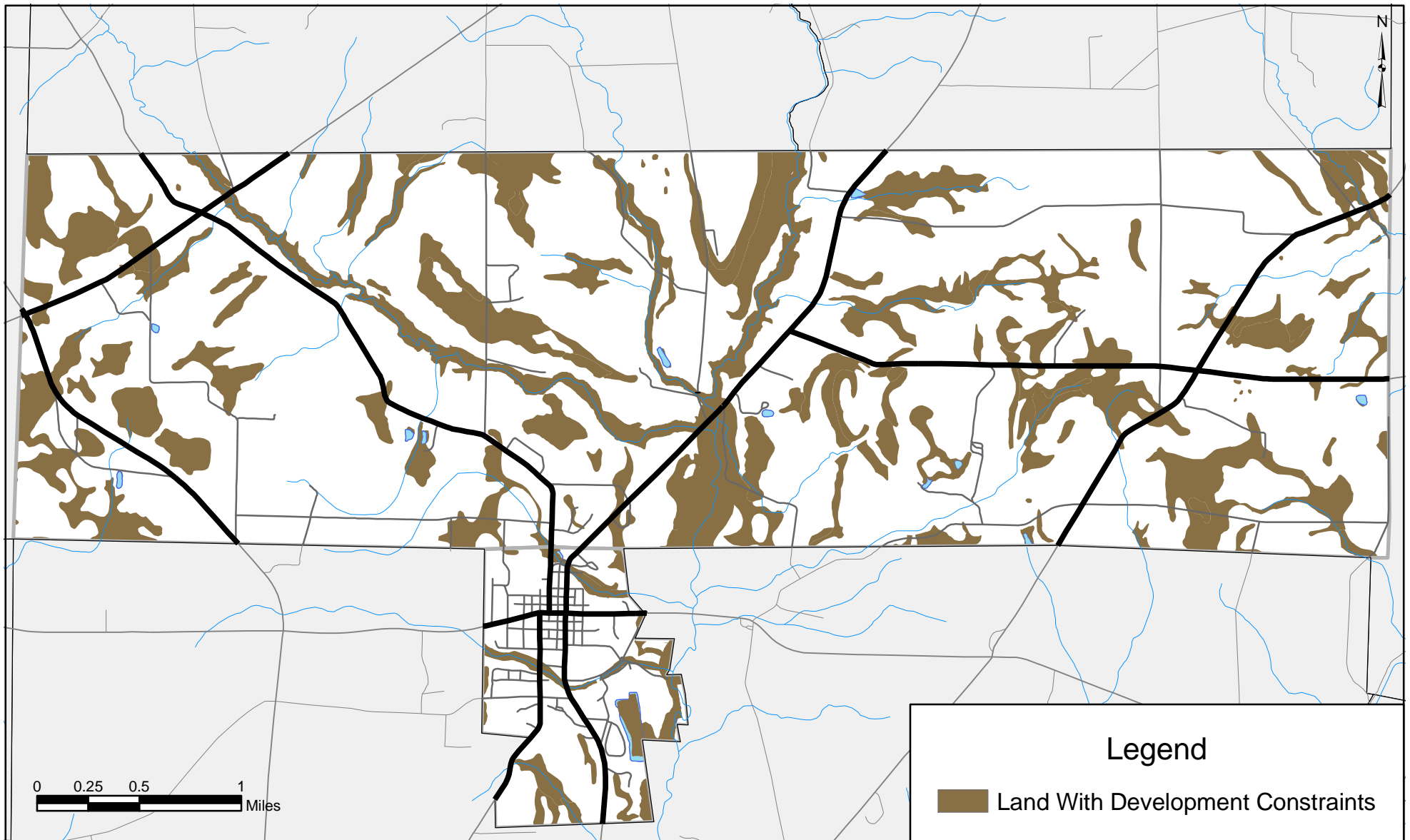
In New Wilmington Borough, the initial impression is that most of the municipality's land is currently in use, that there are no significant parcels left to be developed. That is not quite true. In addition to approximately 115 acres of agricultural lands in the Borough, there are also roughly 123 acres of wooded and open undeveloped property. Some of these lands have development constrictions, including steep slopes and other limiting factors. However, overall in New Wilmington, roughly 100 acres could readily be developed, and all of this land would have access to public water and sewer.

Currently in the Borough, approximately 261 acres are included in residential land uses. This includes traditional single-family and multi-family residences, vacant residential lands, residential and commercial mixed-use structures and Westminster College fraternities. There are 40 acres of land dedicated specifically to commercial uses and 13 acres given to industrial based activities. One largest category of used land in the Borough is that under the control of the various public and non-profit entities in the municipality. This group includes the local government itself, the Wilmington Area School District, local churches, and Westminster College. A total of 113 acres are in this category, with the School District and the College controlling the vast majority of this land. Lands public in nature represent roughly 16% of New Wilmington's 744 total acres. And this does not include Brittain Lake and much of the agricultural and undeveloped lands that Westminster owns. When these are considered, over 40% of the community's land area is tax exempt. In most communities, such a large portion of the prime, developed land not on the tax rolls would be a significant problem. However, since New Wilmington is the electric provider, it is able to sidestep this potential revenue shortfall.

Surprisingly, in Wilmington Township, far more of the land is developed than what is vacant. The very active agricultural economy uses 5,910 acres, 71% of the municipality's available land. The next largest land use are the residential uses encompassing approximately 1,240 acres or 15% of Wilmington Township's total land area. Of the rest of the land area, the bulk is open/wooded/undeveloped in nature, totally 910 acres (11%). Though most of the residential development is near the Borough, it also tends to follow the State highways and major Township roads, including Cowden, Auction, Orchard, Bend, and Means roads. There are small amounts of public, recreational, commercial, and industrial lands in Wilmington Township, probably totaling 233 acres, less than three% of the Township combined. Nearly one third of this total is contained within two properties, the Borland Golf Course and Doubletree Driving Range, both located along Route 18 in the southwestern portion of the Township. See Map 8 for the current land uses in both municipalities.

Potentially Developable Land

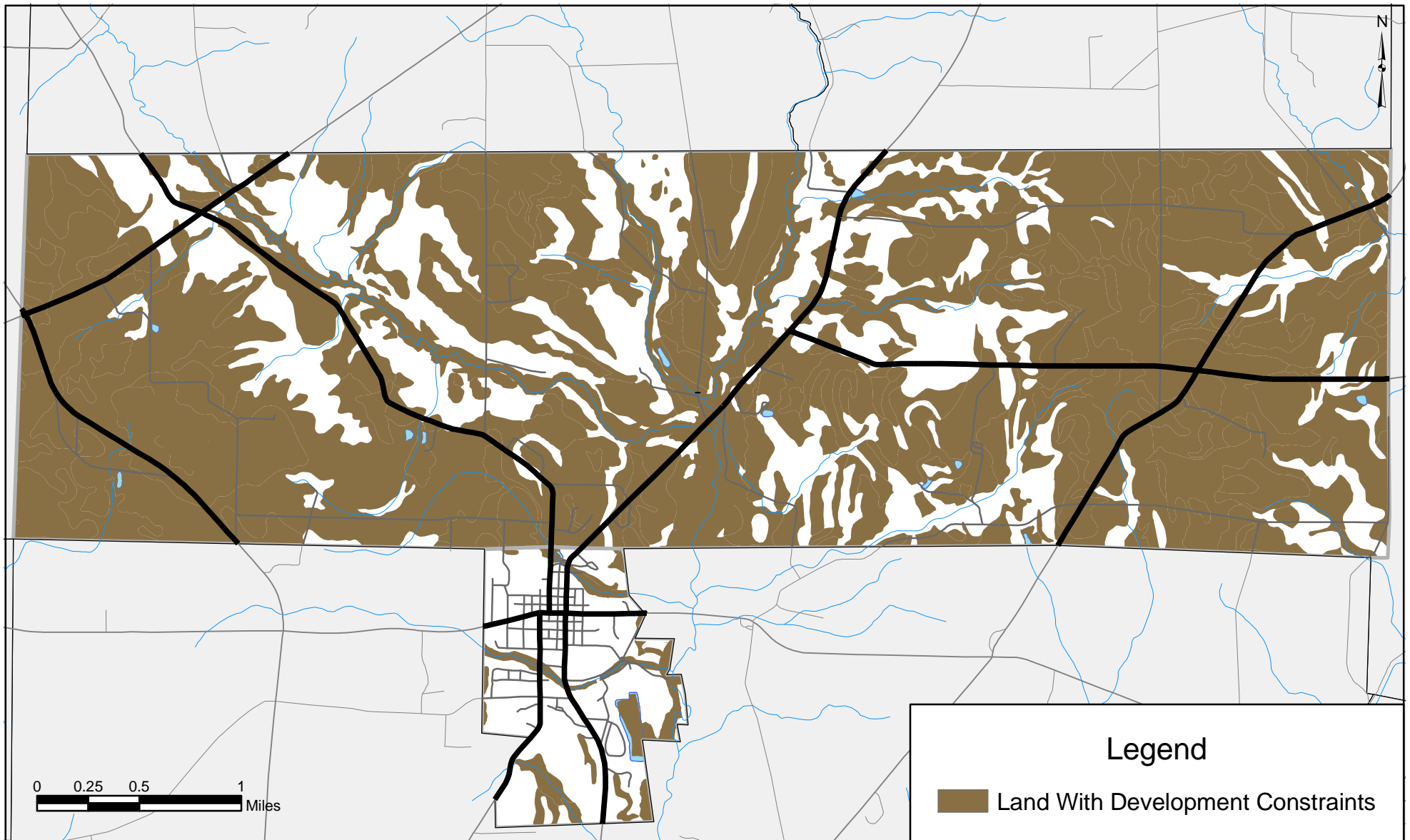
When considering future development in the two municipalities, there are several different restrictions that must be considered related to the physical conditions in the study area. Areas which are already developed can readily be redeveloped without much of a problem. There are



**Map 10 - Development Constraints - Wetlands, Steep Slopes(+15%),
Hydric Soils, 100 Year Floodplains and Biodiversity Areas**
Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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**Map 11 - Development Constraints - Wetlands, Steep Slopes(+15%),
Prime Farmlands, Hydric Soils, 100 Year Floodplains and Biodiversity Areas**
Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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no significant brownfields (former industrial lands with possible to probably contamination issues) in the region, unlike in some of the neighboring municipalities. Instead, hindrances to development stem from conditions of the terrain: steep slopes (greater than 15%), lands within the 100-year floodplain or wetlands, and hydric soils. Also of consideration is that along the Little Neshannock is an identified biodiversity area. Map 9 shows the extent of these lands within the Township and Borough. There is one other major consideration as a development constraint. In some areas, prime farmland soils, though deemed important by outside forces, are not as valued by the local citizenry. For a variety of reasons, farming is not of significant importance, and former farms are being sold for other activities. Not so in Wilmington Township. Map 10 shows the developable land (in white) if the prime farmland soils are added to the constraint mix. This significantly reduces the amount of developable area in the Township. However, if one looks at Map 8 with current land use and realizes that in the time horizon of this Plan, very little of the agricultural land will change to another land use. Map 10 is perhaps the way to look at future development in the community.

Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal Plan

Community Facilities



Introduction

The area of local government which most citizens can identify with is the community facilities and services that are provided. This is for a multitude of reasons. First, these are the identifiable ways that local taxes and fees are used. Public parks, police protection, sewer and water service, and road maintenance are all activities of local government that people see, use, and expect. It is always a tough balancing act for a community as to what it provides and what it does not. How much will a service or facility cost versus the impact to the typical resident is the question government must ask itself. Additionally, the community must understand the level of service that can be provided with respect to what is demanded by the citizens. Often, it is better not to have a service at all if it cannot meet the expectations of local residents.

Parks

The New Wilmington Borough Community Park, located between Market Street and New Castle Street along McClure's Run, is an extensively used facility. Among the various attractions are a ball field; basketball, and street hockey courts; playground equipment; the Borough pool; a large enclosed picnic shelter; as well as a smaller, open-air structure. The local Boys Scouts also have a facility in the park that provides both a center for their activities as well as storage for equipment. The park provides recreation opportunities for both young and old. Regular upkeep has ensured the quality of most of the facilities, including the pool that recently had a major overhaul. The ball field has, at various times, been used for little league play and practice and "Pop Warner" football practice. Currently, it is used for girls' softball. In addition to the main park facility, the Borough has mainly undeveloped lands on the west side of New Castle Street, bordered by Carol Drive and McClure's Run. Primarily mowed grass, there is a sand volleyball court on this site. The Borough has retained Pashek Associates to prepare a park/recreation plan for the facility. Currently, Pashek Associates is developing a Park Master Plan for the Borough. Its recommendations will be those for this Plan.

Wilmington Township does not currently have a municipal park, though it has a concept plan for one on land owned by the Township next to the Municipal Building. The desire is that the park be developed over a number of years for the benefit of the residents.

There are no State or County parks in either municipality, nor are there any other public recreation lands such as State Game Lands. The nearest State facilities are McConnell's Mills

State Park, Moraine State Park, Goddard State Park, and the Shenango Reservoir. All provide a variety of activities, including, but not limited to, boating, fishing, hiking, and camping.

Westminster College has a number of recreation facilities that can be accessed by non-students/faculty/staff. Some, such as the tennis courts at the College, are available without charge for use by the general public. Other facilities that are open to the public have a nominal fee attached to them for use.

Cultural and Educational Resources

The municipalities are blessed by both the Wilmington Area School District and Westminster College. They provide quality educational opportunities and have numerous attributes that benefit the community.

Wilmington Area School District

The Wilmington Area School District main campus, located in the northwestern corner of New Wilmington Borough, is comprised of the middle/high school complex, the New Wilmington Elementary School, the District Administrative Offices, and the District's sports fields. It has an excellent academic tradition that makes the region attractive to those looking to settle in the area. The District has also long partnered with Westminster College in an effort to expand the opportunities available to its students.



Enrollment has steadily declined over the past five years. In 2003-2004, there were 1,576 students enrolled and in 2007 to 2008, 1,488. Though only a 5% decline, this trend is expected to continue. The Pennsylvania Department of Education projections forecast a 10.5% decline by 2017-2018. Such decreases are typical in western Pennsylvania. The District indicates a contraction in class sizes, especially with elementary school students, and is considering closing East Lawrence Elementary School in Plain Grove Township. Some improvements to its main campus for increased classroom space and cafeteria facilities are being discussed.

Westminster College



Westminster is one of the top small liberal arts colleges in the United States. Current enrollment is approximately 1,500 students combined between the undergraduate and graduate levels. It routinely ranks high in most surveys, including that of *U. S. News* and *World Report*. Offering over 30 majors and 8 “pre-professional” programs, Westminster remains a viable small college. In fact, it noted on its website that applications for the current term set a record. This was partially due to a more aggressive recruitment campaign. In addition, college officials see a more competitive future as the number of high school graduates in its prime market area drop.

Westminster is in the midst of a physical development program. Recent developments include renovations to its football field and the construction of the “Joe Fusco” plaza. It also constructed two

blocks of townhouse-type student apartments on its campus. Future development includes the renovation of Patterson and Hoyt halls as well as two additional student apartment facilities. The apartments will be located near the recently constructed units on main campus. Finally, it must be noted that the school has a rambling 300-acre picturesque campus, including a small manmade lake (Brittain) and a naturalized stream (McClure Run).

As previously mentioned, the college has a very open relationship with local resident with respect to use of its facilities. However, the college offers more than just recreational facilities. McGill and Mack libraries are valuable assets to local residents, offering both leisure reading and scholarly works. Frequently, the art of national and local artists, staff, and students is on display at the library, the art gallery, and other locations on campus. Will Orr Auditorium is the home of the Celebrity Series, which is renowned for the quality of the productions it hosts. In addition, the Fourth of July fireworks attracts roughly 10,000 visitors each year for an evening of music and celebration.

With some 400 employees and 1,500 students, Westminster is also a local economic engine. Its payroll is nearly \$20 million, and the operating budget is \$53 million plus. The college estimates its local economic impact at just under \$100 million.

Community Utilities

New Wilmington Borough is the municipality's electric provider. Though this practice is not common, it works well for the community. With a large amount of tax-exempt Borough land, property taxes are an inefficient instrument for local government to raise needed revenues. It would also be perceived as unfair. With the Borough being in the electric business, it sells this product to all within the borders of the municipality at a rate to ensure that local government is adequately funded. Local citizens benefit from this system since it helps keep their property taxes relatively low. New Wilmington landowners only pay Lawrence County and Wilmington Area School District property taxes. For the tax-exempt entities, electricity is something they have to pay for to stay in existence.

The Borough's substation is located just south of East Neshannock Avenue near the border with Wilmington Township, Lawrence County. This facility was upgraded and modernized about seven years ago. It receives bulk electricity from American Municipal Power-Ohio (AMP-Ohio) for redistribution. New Wilmington Borough employees and equipment are used for routine maintenance and repair of the local electrical infrastructure. The current priorities for the Borough with regard to the electrical infrastructure is upgrading of overhead lines for the residential customers as well as the underground service found on the Westminster College campus.

Since 1979, the Borough also provided its own cable television service. Through the years, there have been numerous upgrades, with the most recent accessing satellite dish technology. This also

enabled the Borough to offer broadband internet service as well. Recently, the Borough Council has agreed to sell the system to a commercial cable operator. While in the 1980s and even the 1990s it was possible for a small entity such as New Wilmington to keep up with technology and changes in the cable/satellite telecommunications industry, in recent years it has become increasingly difficult and expensive. The transfer from the Borough to Armstrong Cable took place at the beginning of October, 2008 with the change of signals happening on November 1, 2008. In addition to the cable service, Armstrong offers broadband internet and phone service for Borough customers. Borough residents can also receive DSL high-speed internet service from Verizon through that company's telephone lines.

Water and Sewer Services

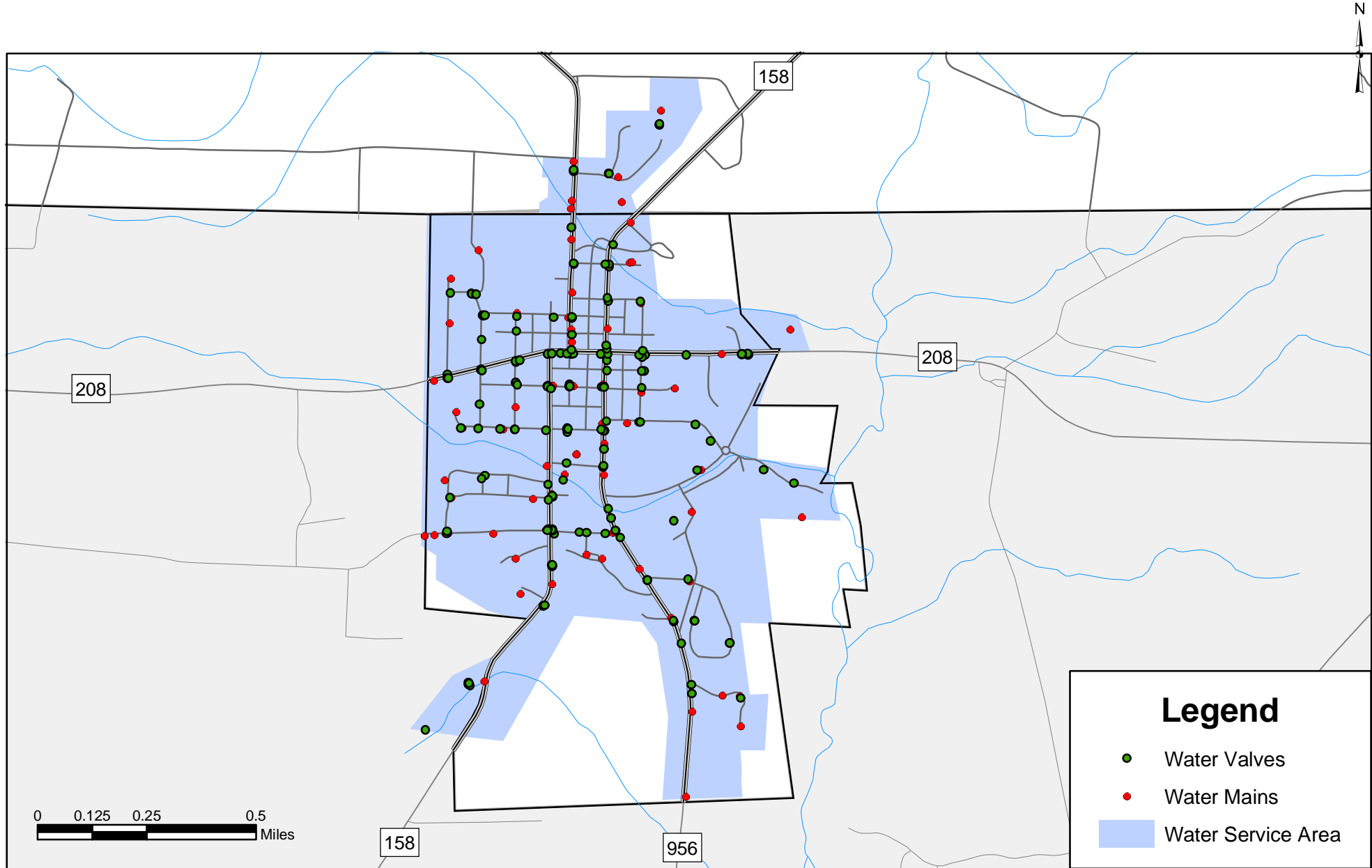
Water

The New Wilmington Municipal Authority provides water service for the Borough and some nearby Township users. This is an "operating" authority, and it maintains its own financial records and pays for its expenses. Income is also separate from the Borough. The current arrangement is for Borough maintenance employees to act as the water "crew" completing repairs, doing maintenance, and even completing minor projects. Major projects are done by contractors. Equipment is typically shared by the Borough with the Authority. The Authority does facility maintenance and repairs in the Township via Borough crews. The Authority then reimburses the Borough for its workers' time on an hourly rate basis.

The water is supplied by Aqua Pennsylvania Water Company's Shenango Valley Division headquartered in Hermitage. The water source is the Shenango River, with the Borough's take points just off Route 208, west of the Borough line. There are two, four-inch lines. According to the 2007 water report, the water which Aqua Pennsylvania supplies to the Borough is in compliance with all regulated substances. The water is stored in two tanks, each capable of containing 500,000 gallons for distribution throughout the community. The usage varies, from roughly 170,000 gallons per day (gpd) in the summer to a high of 350,000 gpd in the winter. This is because of the impact of Westminster College on the local population. The Borough also provides water service to 65 water customers in Wilmington Township, Mercer County.

Aqua and the Authority have recently concluded a 30-year agreement which will allow Aqua to "wheel" water through the Borough system to expand Aqua's service in the Township. Under the agreement, any improvements the Borough Authority would need to make for Aqua would be repaid by Aqua. In addition, certain distribution improvement fees of Aqua would be for the Borough.

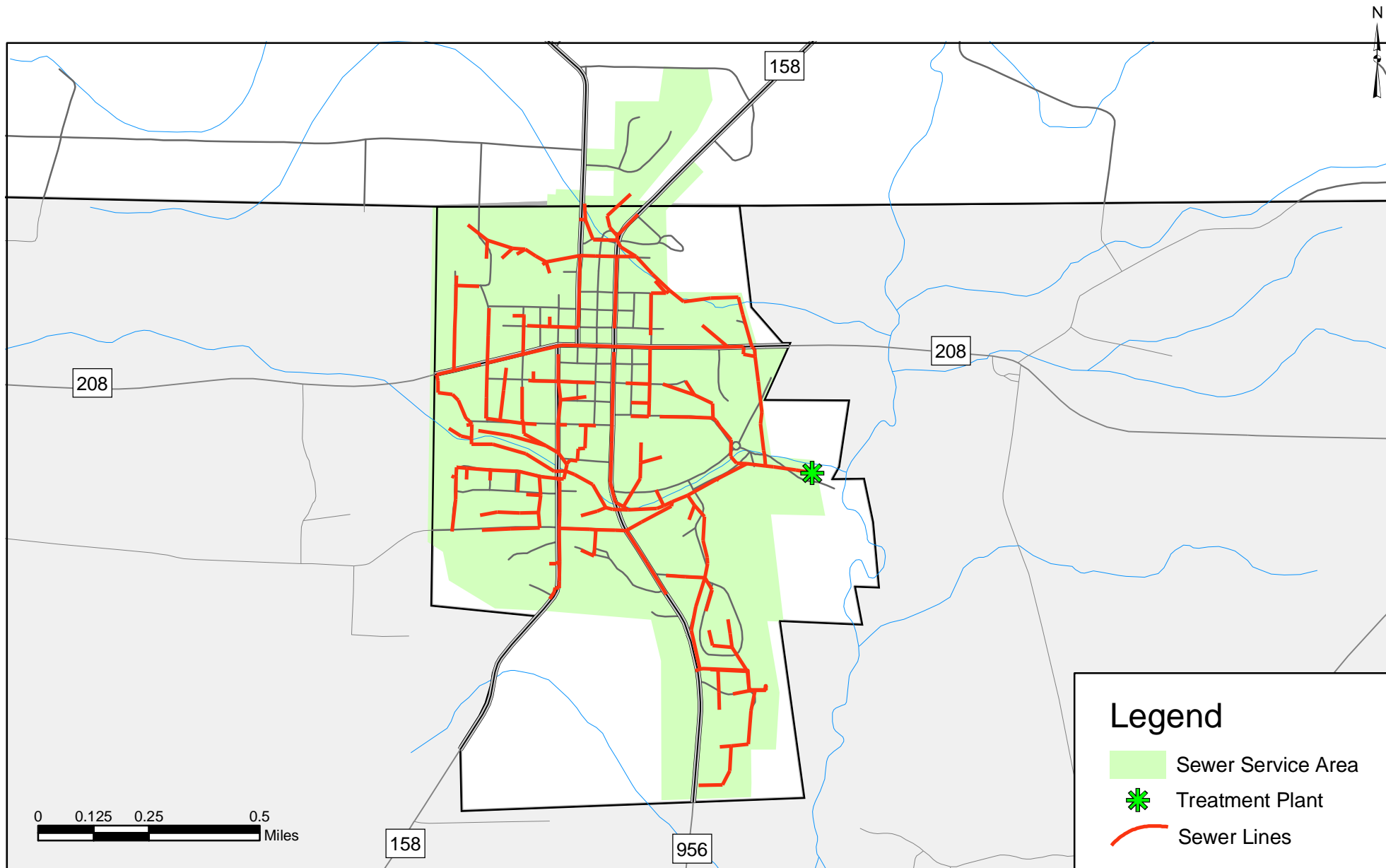
Over the past few years, the Authority has replaced undersized lines and extended an 8-inch line to Victory Christian in Wilmington Township, Mercer County. According to the Authority, the current system looks on 8-inch lines as a minimum, with 12- and 16-inch lines required. Short-term improvements include lines on Short Street and Gateway, with Aqua to replace a line on North Mercer Street.



Map 12 - New Wilmington Detail Water System
Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Map 13 - New Wilmington Detail Sewer System
Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Sewer



The sewer system is directly owned and operated by the Borough. It accepts flows from the adjoining townships, but they are responsible for line maintenance. Wilmington Township, Lawrence County (60,000 gpd) are near their input limits. However, Wilmington Township, Mercer County is using just one third of its 24,000 allotment. The current plant has a capacity of 564,000 gpd.

The Borough is in the process of completing an Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan with HRG

Engineering, from Hermitage. Their recommendations should be forwarded to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for approval soon. The system handles most of New Wilmington (only three properties in the Borough have on-lot systems) and Wynfield Condominiums and five other residences in Wilmington Township, Mercer County, which are included in the comprehensive plan's study area as well as a large part of Wilmington Township, Lawrence County. The Borough plant was recently cited by DEP for being in violation of its organic loading capacity. The Act 537 Plan has been accepted for review by DEP as part of the Borough's "Corrective Action Plan" to resolve the violations. HRG believes that this is due to an unusually flat stretch of pipe leading to the plant that is allowing for an increase of organic loadings. The Borough and HRG have collectively been running flow tests on the conveyance system to determine if there is inflow of ground and/or stormwater into the system as well as if effluent is leaking from the collection pipes. The Borough has recognized its infiltration (groundwater) and inflow (surface drains), or I&I, problems for some time. In a typical year, they may devote up to \$100,000 to remediate leaky pipes or illegal inflow. If the proposed 537 Sewage Facilities Plan is approved, a new sewage treatment plant is scheduled (about \$6 million).

Police and Safety Services

Police

New Wilmington Borough provides police service mainly for the Borough but also provides limited service to both Wilmington townships. This service is under an agreement to provide backup for the Pennsylvania State Police. The Borough receives some traffic fine income from the townships for its services. The department consists of a chief, three full-time officers, one part-time officer, and is seeking to add another full-time officer. The Borough has three police vehicles, all Dodge Durangos. Given the current costs of operating these cars, the Borough is looking to sell one. The department is also currently investigating the Safe Pathways to School program.

Safety Service

The New Wilmington Volunteer Fire Department, headquartered in the former Borough Building on High Street, serves both municipalities with fire and emergency medical services. The Borough retains ownership and assists in paying utility costs as well as providing workman's compensation insurance for the fire fighters. The department has pumpers and brush trucks. Though in decent condition, one pumper will need replaced in the next five years. The department would like to purchase a ladder truck but lacks the funds and storage capacity.



The department's major fund-raising event each year is also one of the community's iconic social events, the Fireman's Auction. In the early fall, typically the first weekend of October, the Auction consists of both a sale of donated smaller items during the day and an auction of larger ones during the evening.

Municipal Buildings and Equipment



The Wilmington Township Municipal Building is located on Auction Road between PA 158 and the New Wilmington-Bethel Road. The complex includes an area for offices and a large meeting room used for conducting Township business. In addition, the meeting room area has a small kitchen facility, enabling it to be used by residents for gatherings and parties. Also in this same building is garage/workshop space for storage and maintenance of Township vehicles and equipment. Also on the municipal building grounds are storage areas and other outbuildings for the supplies that Wilmington Township

needs, primarily for road maintenance.

The vehicle fleet for the Township includes two large dump trucks primarily intended for both winter and summer maintenance. While good sized, these trucks do not require the operators to have a CDL rating. Given the small population size of Wilmington Township, this allows for a larger number of persons who can operate these vehicles. One of these two vehicles is nearing the end of its useful life and will need replaced in the foreseeable future. Additionally, a truck that



formerly saw service in the Army is part of the Township's fleet. Also of importance to the municipality are two tractors, one of which is a mower and the other that has high-lift capabilities.

New Wilmington Borough has several buildings that it owns and maintains. These include the Borough Building which holds the municipality's offices, meeting room, and police department. It is located along High Street, just north of the former Borough Building. The Borough also has two maintenance complexes. The first is located in the downtown and the other is on the outskirts, by the sewage treatment plant.

The Borough also has a number of service vehicles. With it being not only a municipality but also a utility provider, some of these are specialized. The current inventory includes two 40-foot bucket trucks used to service the electrical system. Additionally, there is a line truck that is instrumental in setting replacement utility poles. The bucket trucks are from 1987 and 1999, while the line truck is from 1993. For the streets, there is a new dump truck as well as three smaller one-ton trucks. For general use by the maintenance department are smaller pickup trucks, a sewer jet truck for cleaning the sanitary sewer lines, and a leaf pickup truck. Other equipment includes a John Deere 310 backhoe and two Toro-riding mowers. At this time, the vehicle replacement needs include a new line truck, a new bucket truck, and one of the three one-ton trucks.

Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal Plan

Transportation

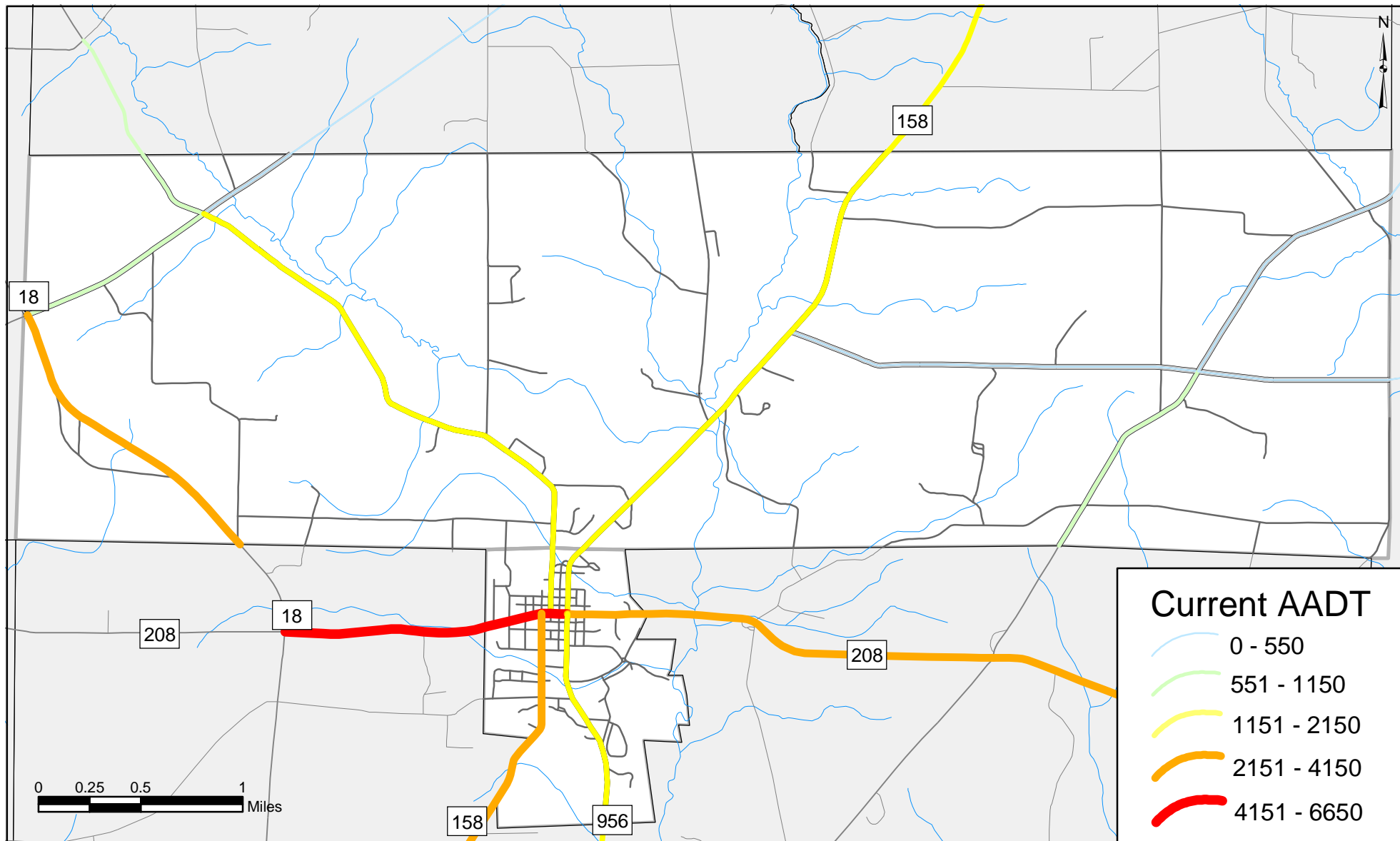


State Roadways

Currently, only two projects are on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the study area; both are in New Wilmington Township. Two bridges on Route 158, located over the Little Neshannock and West Branch of the Little Neshannock, are just north of New Wilmington Borough. They have been deteriorating for some time, especially the guide-rail structures. Both bridges will be reconstructed in 2010, at the same time.

In 2006, Route 208, through New Wilmington Borough (West and East Neshannock Avenue) has undergone extensive renovation, including upgrades to the storm sewer lines and catch basins. Route 18 in Mercer County was resurfaced in 2000 and is in reasonable condition. Though Route 158 has been resurfaced more recently (2002 in Wilmington Township and 2007 in the Borough), both areas again need attention. In the Township, there is extensive deterioration, especially along the seams in the asphalt. The worst of these areas were addressed in the spring of 2008 with lane-wide resurfacing. Though not a full resurfacing of Route 158, the road is now much safer for vehicular traffic. Areas of the Bethel-New Wilmington Road (SR3011) were similarly resurfaced. In New Wilmington, an oil-and-chip surface was used on Route 158 save for the two blocks between Market and New Castle Streets. While some effort was made to fill in the worse of the potholes, cracks, and ruts, the chip-and-dip resurfacing will only last for a few years at best. This is particularly true given the traffic volumes on the road south of Route 208.

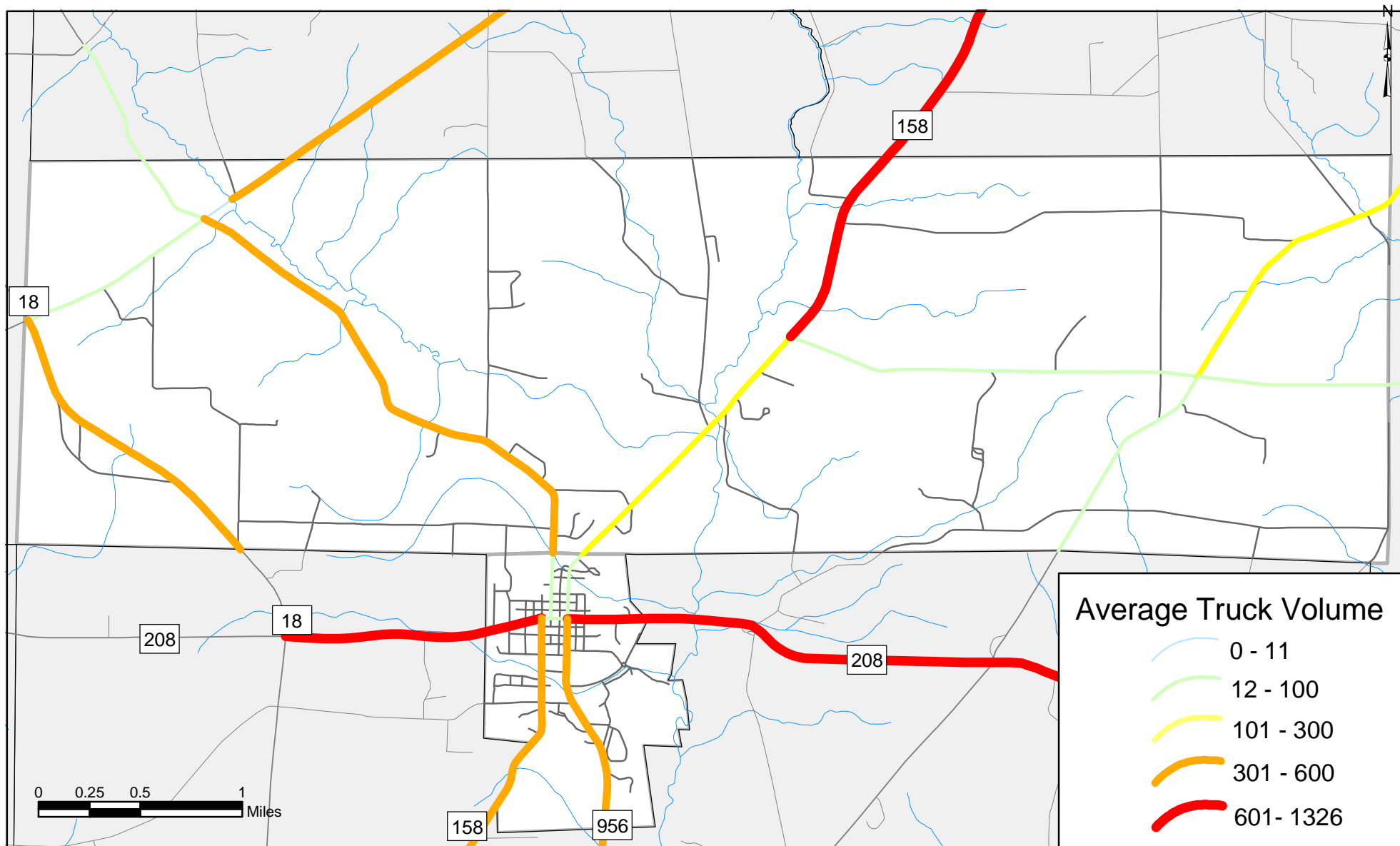
Traffic volumes on local roads are by no means excessive, but should be noted. The two blocks between Market and New Castle streets along West Neshannock Avenue are the heaviest traveled in the study area. According to the most recent (January 2009) PennDOT data, some 6,650 vehicles pass through this stretch of road each day. (It should be noted that in previous releases of this data, the true volume was underreported.) Most of this traffic is a result of Route 208, locally a relatively important road. It typically carries over 5,300 vehicles daily between Route 18 in Wilmington Township and New Castle Street and in excess of 4,100 vehicles east of Market Street. Route 158 north of Neshannock Avenue (Market Street) has approximately 2,100 vehicles per day, a bit more than High Street (PA SR1001) which carries 2,000 cars and trucks daily. Route 158 south (New Castle Street) has a far greater traffic burden, with 3,550 trips daily,



Map 14 - Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)
Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

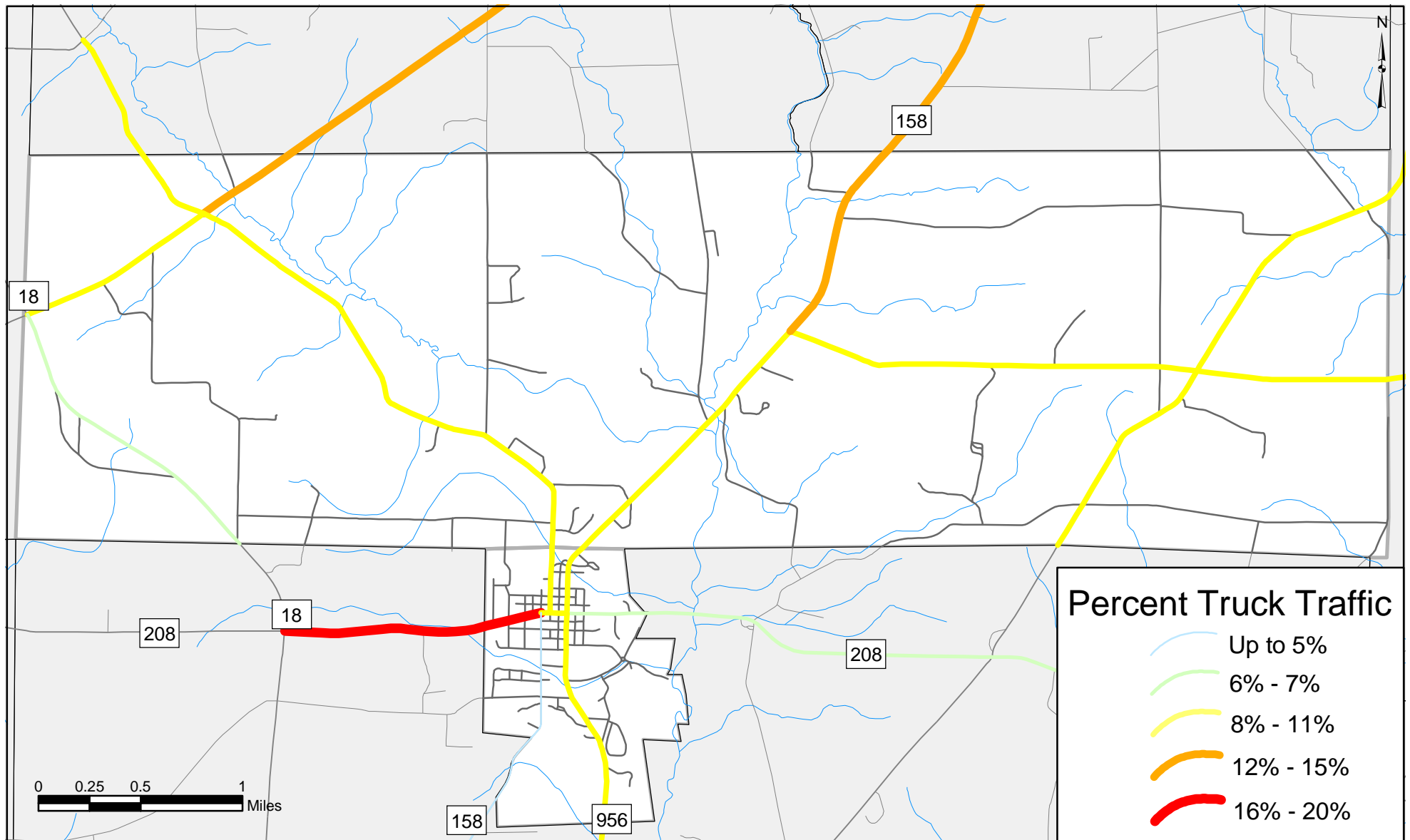
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Map 14A - Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) - Truck Volume
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2009,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Map 14B - Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) Truck Percentage
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2006,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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while traffic on Route 956 south of Neshannock Avenue (Market Street) carries just over 1,600 vehicles on a typical day.

In Wilmington Township, the traffic flows on the three main State highways—Route 18, Route 158, and SR 1001 (Bethel New Wilmington Road)—remain fairly consistent along their lengths. Route 18 has 3,500 vehicles per day; Route 158 has, again, roughly 2,100 for most of its cartway in the Township; and the Bethel New Wilmington Road carries again 2,000 cars and trucks most of its length. The other State roads in Wilmington Township carry less than 1,000 vehicles per day.

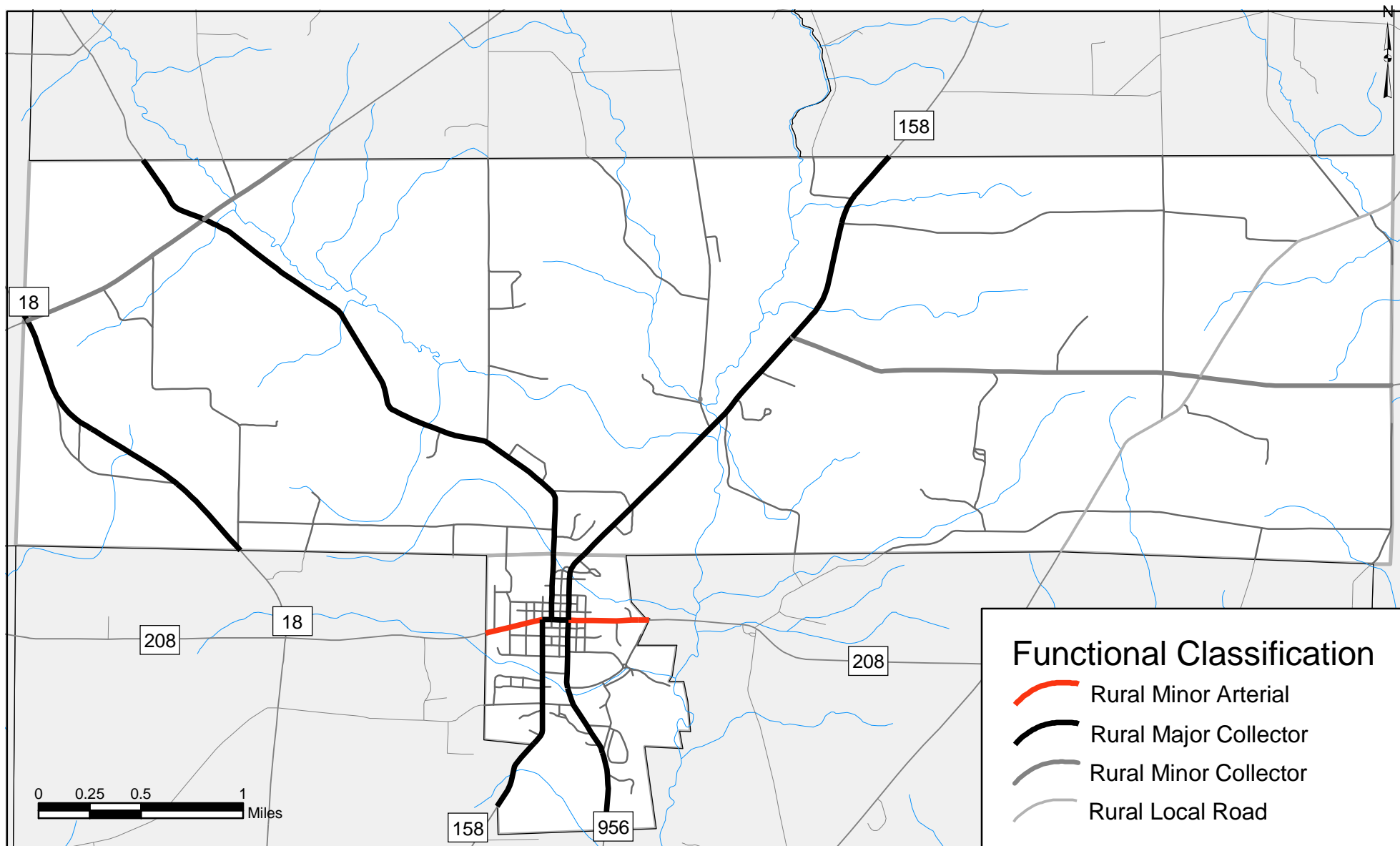
Increasingly important to municipalities is the amount of commercial/industrial truck traffic local roads carry. It is important not only in quality of life issues (excessive noise, diesel exhaust, vibrations of structures near the roadway) but also to the safety and longevity of the highway itself. Again, as with overall traffic, Route 208 has the most truck traffic, both in absolute and percentage terms. Of the 5,300 vehicles on Route 208 daily west of New Castle Street, more than 1,300 are trucks. In other words, one in four vehicles on this stretch of road is a commercial truck. The eastern section of Route 208 takes a similar pounding. Other than the eastern portion of the Pulaski-Mercer Road (SR 3007), no other State road has more than 11% of its AADT as heavy vehicle traffic. Still, even on the Pulaski-Mercer Road, this is not a significant concern. It only has 400 vehicle trips per day, and 15% were trucks.

The functional classes of the local highways back up the AADT number. Route 208 is classified as a minor rural arterial, which means that it is a prime road between the larger villages and boroughs in the region. Given the statistics discussed already, it appears that Route 208 is fulfilling this role quite well. Routes 18 and 158 are both major rural collectors, used to take traffic from the smaller collectors and local roads to the various arterial and interstate roadways. Route 956 and the Bethel-New Wilmington Road also function in this manner, but with a smaller capacity than the other two roads.

Local Roadways

Both municipalities actively address road conditions in the communities using State Liquid Fuels moneys. In Wilmington Township, in 2008, the local roadways under consideration for maintenance during the summer construction season are: Cowden Road, Auction Road, Angel Road, Orchard Road, Means Road, and Bend Road. These are some of the most traveled Township roads, acting effectively as collectors, funneling local traffic to the State highways. Cowden Road effectively connects Route 18 with the Bethel-New Wilmington Road provides access to the Wilmington Area School campus and the Victory Christian Center, a large local church. Meanwhile, Auction Road serves a similar function between Route 158 and the Bethel-New Wilmington Road. These two roads, and the others, are essential for the day-to-day life of many Township residents. Their maintenance is critical.

In New Wilmington Borough, five roads were initially targeted in 2008 for maintenance. These included Park Street, Catherine Street, Waugh Avenue, Meadowbrook Drive, and Carol Drive. This was amended before the project began to be just Park Street, Catherine Street and Waugh Avenue. The reason for this was that Waugh needed extensive rehabilitation of the curbing. Meadowbrook and Carol drives were tentatively rescheduled for resurfacing/repairs in the summer of 2009. These streets are all primarily residential in nature, mainly to transport local residents directly to the State highways.



Map 15 - Highway Functional Classification
 Wilmington Township (Mercer County), New Wilmington Borough
 Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan

Source: Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT), 1998, 2001 and 2008,
 U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2005
 Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, North American, 1983

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Mass Transit

The New Castle Area Transit Authority (NCATA) serves mass transit for the area. Route 75, which travels PA 18 from New Castle to PA 208, ends eventually at the Prime Outlets, Grove City, Springfield Township, in Mercer County. This route has a timed stop at Wagner Motors, at the corner of PA 208 and Market Street. Typically, on the outward-bound run, the bus will initially turn north at the intersection and travel to the parking lot at New Wilmington Auction Barn. There, it will turn around, return to the Market Street and Route 208 intersection, and turning east to continue to Volant and outlet mall. It reverses this process on its return trip to New Castle.

This route is particularly useful to the Amish. The primary reason for the stop at the Auction Barn in Wilmington Township is to pick up the Amish at a place where they can leave their horse and buggy. Route 75 takes its passengers past the commercial corridor on PA 18 in Neshannock Township and in New Castle. At the end of the run, riders can transfer to the other commercial areas in the region.

Additional transportation service is provided by A.C.T.S. (Allied Coordinated Transportation Services). This is a portal to portal service geared for the elderly, the ill, and infirmed. As with most of these services, the A.C.T.S. office in New Castle should be contacted to schedule the trip. Fees for the rides vary, depending on the type of trip, the client's age and other factors.

Aviation

There are no airports or heliports in the study area. Both New Castle and Grove City have small, hard-surface airports, which primarily offer private and recreational aviation facilities. The nearest commercial aviation gates are located at the Chess Lamberton field in Venango County. Currently, there is no regular commercial service at the Youngstown Regional Airport. For major air travel, individuals must travel to Pittsburgh International, Cleveland Hopkins, or Erie's Tom Ridge field.

Bus Lines and Train

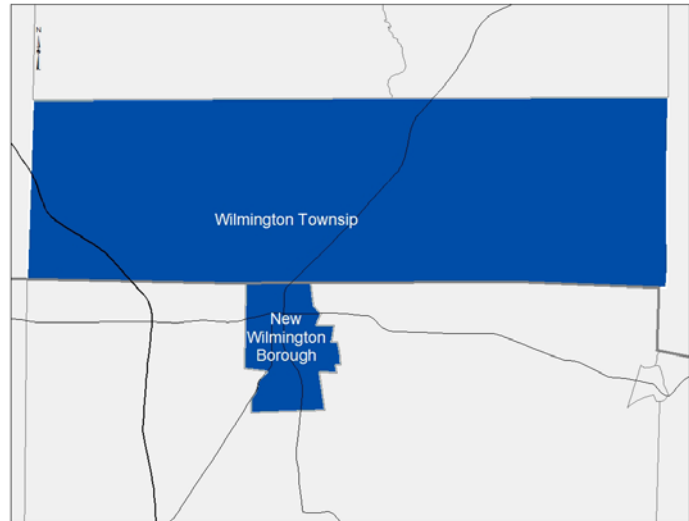
The New Castle Area Transit Authority (NCATA) offers routes to and from Pittsburgh, Monday through Friday. Departures from New Castle occur between 4:35 a.m. and 6:35 a.m., and 2:15 p.m. to 4:05 p.m. Return trips depart from Pittsburgh between 6:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. The fare is \$3.00 one way. Additionally, it is also the only current scheduled bus service to Pittsburgh. Neither Greyhound nor the Trailways system offer bus service to New Castle or New Wilmington, as they did previously.



The NCATA bus to Pittsburgh ends at the Amtrak station in the city. This is the most convenient location for most local travelers, though Alliance, Ohio is physically closer. Erie also has an Amtrak station.

Wilmington Area Multi-Municipal Plan

Goals and Objectives



Statements of Plan Purpose

In preparation of the Comprehensive Plan for New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township, certain realities were quickly discovered and became important guideposts for the development of the goals and objectives for the communities. These are:

1. The two municipalities should not merge into one entity. While both are relatively small in population, they are also very different municipalities with very different needs. In fact, a combination of the two would be unworkable and result in a municipality that would be inefficient, unmanageable and constantly at odds with itself. Such a move would ruin the solid, professional relationship that exists between the current municipal governments.
2. While the two communities should not merge, they should explore areas where the combining of services and cooperation in governance would be a benefit to the study area. Given the small size of both, a combination of purchasing power can be used to reduce costs to both. Coordination in such activities as land use regulation can help target development to the most appropriate areas in the two municipalities.
3. The importance in preserving the quality of life residents currently enjoy and desire. New Wilmington Borough wishes to retain its small, rural college town atmosphere. The Borough has quiet residential neighborhoods that one associates with small town living. Additionally, it serves as a local hub with an active downtown and provides needed services such as health care those who live in the area. Wilmington Township is an agricultural community. It has an active farming industry. In fact, nearly three quarters of the Township's land is actively involved in agriculture.

Thus, the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan have been designed in a way to support these concepts. They will be enumerated here and form the basis for the individual plan elements where specific actions and programs will be detailed to provide a pathway to achieving these community desires.

Land Use

Both municipalities will actively continue their regulation of land uses in the community to ensure not only the quality of development but also preservation of the character of both. The overall objectives of this active land use regulation are to:

1. To preserve and protect the health and well being of local residents.
2. To preserve the local quality of life. Specifically, this is the agricultural lifestyle of Wilmington Township and the residential small town character of New Wilmington Borough.
3. To protect the property values and rights of landowners.
4. To provide a concise framework to ease the development of land.

To achieve these ends, the following projects/policies are proposed

- Explore land use sharing between the two municipalities. Identify uses that are best suited for one community and not the other. For example, Wilmington Township is better suited for future agricultural development while New Wilmington is the logical place for downtown commercial uses.
 - To facilitate land use sharing, update and coordinate the zoning ordinances. The finished ordinances should have similar use definitions and standard to allow the land use sharing to occur.
 - Have a single person be the zoning officer/subdivision and land development administrator for the two municipalities. Since Wilmington Township is governed by Mercer County's subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO), the administrator would not apply to the Township. The purpose is to both insure consistency in implementation in these land use ordinances and a possible cost savings to the communities.
 - Define a rural resource area for Wilmington Township. This area would be focused on preserving the agricultural use of land and lifestyle which is predominant in the Township.
 - Define a new Institutional zoning district in the Borough for Westminster College, the Wilmington Area School District campus, and the Overlook campus.
 - Explore a future transferable development rights (TDR) program for Wilmington Township to help preserve agricultural land. One possible way to implement this program would be to sell development credits to allow for denser development on parcels in the Industrial/Commercial District of Wilmington Township.
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- Reduction of the R-2 Residential District in Wilmington Township. Also, the R-1 Residential District along PA 158 from just north of the Little Neshannock Creek north to the Township border.
- If an historic district is identified in downtown New Wilmington, add a traditional neighborhood development (TND) overlay district to the zoning ordinance. This will help the Borough preserve the look and feel of historic areas of the community while giving property owners a palate of options for consideration.

Natural and Historic Resources

It is increasingly clear that our resources are becoming scarce, are threatened or are being wasted. The natural environment is integral to the identity of the two municipalities from the acre after acre of farm fields in Wilmington Township to the Little Neshannock and McClure's Run. The same can be said of the historic resources in the two municipalities, such as the Overlook and Westminster College's central campus and its iconic Thompson House. Perhaps most important is the living history that is a vital part of the region, our Amish community.

- Recognize the importance of the continued stellar upkeep of the local properties associated with the Historic Register – the Overlook, Thompson House, and the Central Campus of Westminster College.
- Preserve the agricultural use of land and lifestyle in Wilmington Township. Continue the Agricultural Security program already in place and explore ways to buy development rights to keep the land from being developed (the TDR program is a sample method).
- Identify and preserve the Little Neshannock biodiversity areas.
- Explore creating an historic district in downtown New Wilmington.
- If a historic district is created in downtown New Wilmington, create a TND zoning district with guide book to preserve the downtown's unique character.

Housing

New Wilmington Borough and Wilmington Township are quite unique in western Pennsylvania. Both have a high quality of housing throughout the majority of community. While individual small pockets or even just singular examples of distressed housing do exist, the problems found in many nearby municipalities do not exist here. That is the reason why it is so very important that the Township and Borough must remain vigilant in their efforts in maintaining the local quality of life.

- Continue to explore and implement the "Safe Routes to School" program.
 - Since there will be individuals of modest means who may need assistance in housing rehabilitation, have information available for these homeowners as to where to obtain this assistance.
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- Both municipalities adopt the same property management code and jointly hire an outside inspector to administer this ordinance. This ordinance should include sidewalk standards for New Wilmington Borough.

Community Facilities

The most visible of governmental activities must be maintained and executed with the same quality and attention to detail as they have always been in both communities. Where practical, the two local governments should explore the best ways available to share facilities, equipment and costs to make the most of limited resources.

- New Wilmington Borough adopts/implements the new Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan.
- Wilmington Township assesses the amount of sewage effluent capacity it has available based on current users and existing commitments. After this, a determination of how much capacity will be needed for future growth. If significant infrastructure extensions are needed in the Township, an Act 537 Plan will be needed. Areas of interest/concern are the Valley View development, a Victory Christian Center residential development and commercial/light industrial development along PA 158.
- If water is extended by Aqua along Cowden Road from PA 18 east toward the Bethel-New Wilmington Road, extend sewer service along this road.
- Water and sewer infrastructure should not be extended to any other areas of the Township at this time to preserve the agricultural lifestyle.
- Develop both municipal parks master plan recommendations. Explore possible trail link between the parks and a proposed County bikeway/rails to trails project.
- Establish an equipment sharing agreement either with each other and/or with members of local Councils of Governments.
- Establish a buying agreement either with each other and/or with members of local Councils of Governments for other supplies.
- Replace existing streetlights with LED bulbs in New Wilmington Borough for energy savings.

Transportation

The most difficult aspect of transportation planning for communities with small population is the fact that they are small communities. Traditionally, larger, more urban areas get a larger share of Federal and State transportation dollars. Then again, maintenance of local roads has a relatively greater importance. In many respects, local roads are an extension of local government's community facilities. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Township and Borough to make the most of their local budgets.

- Coordinate between the two municipalities on road improvements, up to and including packaging road improvement projects for the two municipalities in one bid package.
- Create full berm/Amish buggy lanes on Cowden Road to both save wear on the main cart path and increase ease of both motorized and horse-powered transportation.
- Work with the New Castle Area Transit Authority to preserve the Grove City Outlets buss route for the convenience of both low income persons and the Amish.
- Encourage PennDOT to regularly (annually) repave the berm on PA 158 and the Bethel-New Wilmington Road.
- Work with Mercer County to have the Bethel-New Wilmington Road improved to PennDOT's 3-R standards.

Economic Development

Though the two communities currently enjoy a good economic condition, the macroeconomic climate is far more problematic. As such, the local governments must do all that is practical to protect and enhance the economic assets they currently possess.

- Proceed with a downtown revitalization program for New Wilmington Borough's business district. This process should work hand in hand with the historic district process.
- Work to enhance tourism in the community through several avenues:
 - Agricultural tourism, especially with respect to the Amish community.
 - Shopping.
 - If historic classification is received, this would be another marketing tact.
- Install public men's and women's restrooms in downtown New Wilmington to make the community more tourist-friendly.
- Find facilities to make easier for bus tourism including parking areas for buses and dining/banquet facilities.
- Ensure the proper infrastructure is available in commercial and industrial districts in both communities including water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications and broadband access.