

DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT REPORT

TO SUPPORT THE REQUEST TO AMEND HARRIS
TOWNSHIP'S AGRICULTURAL ZONING DISTRICT
REGULATIONS SO THAT DENSITY COULD BE
INCREASED BY MORE THAN 50 EQUIVALENT
DWELLING UNITS WITHIN THE REGIONAL GROWTH
BOUNDARY/SEWER SERVICE AREA

REPORT PREPARED BY PENNTERRA ENGINEERING, INC. AND
THE LOCAL PLANNER ASSIGNED TO HARRIS TOWNSHIP BY
THE CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

JULY 1, 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

Harris Township has proposed to amend its Agricultural (A, Ag) Zoning District regulations so that, exclusively where that district lies within the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB)/Sewer Service Area (SSA) delineated by the *Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan*, the maximum permitted number of dwelling units per acre would increase to 2.0. Under the existing regulations, the allowable dwelling unit density is 1.0 dwelling unit per acre.

There are four tracts in Harris Township that are zoned Ag, lie within the RGB/SSA, and at least 10-acres in size. The largest of the four tracts under review is the 119-acre Rockey Tract located along Earlstown Road (SR 45) to the east of the Kaywood Subdivision, west of Aspen Heights, and north of Willowbrook Estates. The other three tracts total 41 acres, and are located along Boal Avenue (SR 322). The impact of the proposed amendments to the Ag District could result in a total of 320 dwelling units on the four subject tracts, whereas as 159 dwelling units are possible under the existing regulations, which is an increase of 161 dwelling units.

Since the amendments could increase density within the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB)/Sewer Service Area (SSA) by more than 50 Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDU's), the proposed amendments to the Ag District's regulations necessitate a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) study as defined by the Implementation Agreement for the *Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan*. This DRI has been prepared for presentation to the Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) and the COG General Forum. Since the four tracts currently lie within the RGB/SSA, any recommendations on the proposed amendments from either the CRPC or the General Forum will be advisory.

"For DRIs that propose a rezoning or zoning text amendment that results in an increase of 50 or more EDUs within the RGB/SSA, the General Forum recommendation will be advisory in nature. The authority for zoning decisions will remain with the host municipality. The goal of regional review of these proposals will be to identify issues or concerns related to the proposed zoning change, and to generate dialogue among the Region's elected officials that may result in design approaches to address these issues."

- Implementation Agreement for the *Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan*, page 5, Section iii, dated August 16, 2006

This DRI was prepared with assistance from the Centre Region Planning Agency who provided the template for this report with the Patton Township DRI dated July 26, 2007. Given that Patton Township proposal was similar in scope with regards to the nature of the agricultural zoning district amendments as well as the additional number of dwelling units possible, many of the conclusions reached in the Patton Township DRI are similar.

One key difference between proposed amendments is that Harris Township may include a component for affordable housing and/or neighborhood commercial. Development incentives for such components could take the form of open space reductions. Two other differences are that Harris Township does not use a yield plan to determine the number of lots that can be created in Ag, and the increase in allowable dwelling unit density is proposed as 2.0 rather than 1.6.

The proposed density is less than that for the single-family residential district (R-1). As such, the proposed density could be viewed as a transition between Ag District lands outside of the growth boundary and higher density development within it. The Location Map presented in **Appendix A** shows that the four tracts are located adjacent to developed residential tracts and represent an in-fill for development.

As required by the Implementation Agreement, this report examines the potential impacts of the Board's proposed changes to the Ag District regulations on the area's sewer system, water system, transportation network, public transportation network, emergency service providers, environment, schools, adjacent land uses, local government finances, and quality of life. It concludes that most of the potential negative impacts of the proposed amendments can be mitigated with the proper design of the development. Any remaining negative impacts are relatively minor to neighboring property owners, other Township residents, the environment, or the Centre Region as a whole.

This DRI was initially prepared on July 1, 2008 assuming an additional 115 dwelling units could result from an amendment to the Township Ag District regulations, which is based on the net acreage of each tract with consideration given to the limiting physical features of each tract. CRPA commented in the completeness review of the July 1 draft that the gross tract acreage should be used. The benefit is a conservative analysis. As a result, the revised report was drafted to identify the impacts of 161 additional dwelling units, and additional comments were requested from the local sewer, water, and emergency service providers as well as the school district. A revised study on the transportation network was also completed.

This report concludes that the Centre Region will continue to grow at the current rate regardless of whether or not the amendments to the Ag District are approved. As such, the impacts of growth will be incurred regardless. The four tracts that would benefit from the Ag District amendments are not only within the current growth boundary, but represent an in-fill to existing developments. Therefore, it makes sense to designate these areas for the additional growth for the purpose of reducing the demand for development and sprawl outside of the growth boundary, and using the existing infrastructure more efficiently. The Supervisors previously endorsed these concepts when they – as well as the elected officials of every other municipality in the Centre Region – adopted the *2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan*.

THE APPLICANT AND THE INVOLVED PROPERTIES

Through this Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) process, Harris Township is proposing to amend its own zoning regulations, and is, therefore, the applicant. The Township’s contact information is below.

Applicant: Harris Township
 224 East Main Street
 Boalsburg, Pennsylvania 16827
 Phone: (814) 466-6228

Contact Person: Amy Farkas
 Township Manager
 224 East Main Street
 Boalsburg, Pennsylvania 16827
 Phone (814) 466-6228

There are four tracts in Harris Township that are zoned Ag, lie within the RGB/SSA, and at least 10-acres in size. As shown in **Table 1**, these tracts total roughly 161 acres.

Table 1: The Four Subject Tracts for the Harris Township DRI

Property Owner	Municipality	Tax Parcel Number	Parcel Size in Acres	Location
Rockey Family Trust	Harris Township	25-4-71	119.28	Adjacent to Kaywood & Aspen Heights
Yocum, Scott L. & Glenda C.	Harris Township	25-408-34	16.8	Adjacent to Huntridge Manor
Huber, Stephen S., Jr. & Jane et al	Harris Township	25-412-44	11.45	Adjacent to Bear Meadows
Nease, Ardalene B.	Harris Township	25-412-100	13.74	Adjacent to Boalsburg Industrial Park
TOTAL			161.27	

The mapping in **Appendix A** provides additional details about the location of each one of these tracts. A general description of the location and terrain is provided below:

- **Rockey** – The Rockey tract is located along Earlystown Road (SR 45) to the east of the Kaywood Subdivision, west of Aspen Heights, and north of Willowbrook Estates. It is approximately 119.28 acres in size, and is primarily tilled with a tree mass along the northern perimeter. The terrain includes a gradual slope of up to approximately 10% with a high point along the western perimeter near the Kaywood Subdivision. A majority of the tract drains towards Earlystown Road.
- **Yocum** – The Yocum tract is located along Boal Avenue (SR 322) to the south and west of Huntridge Manor and to the east of the Elk’s Country Club. It is a

16.8-acre tract with a single-family residence and apartment both of which are served with on-site septic systems. Spring Creek runs from east to west through the center of the tract with FEMA delineated floodplain. It appears from mapping that any wetlands areas on the tract are contained within the FEMA floodplain. Ground slope is moderate to steep on both sides of Spring Creek with steep slope areas (> 25%) noted along the southern boundary adjacent to SR 322.

- **Huber** – The Huber tract is located at the intersection of Boal Avenue (SR 322) and Bear Meadows Road (SR 2001). It is an 11.45-acre tract with an existing single-family residence and barn structure located on the upper or southern portion of the tract. The lower portion of the tract contains some steep slopes and three ponds, which are identified on National Wetlands Inventory Mapping as permanently flooded.
- **Nease** – The Nease tract is located on Boal Avenue (SR 322) near the Boalsburg Technology Park and opposite SR 322 from the multi-family section of Willowbrook Estates. It is a 13.74-acre tract with an existing single-family residence and barn structure located near the western boundary of the tract. The eastern half of the tract is tilled and has a ground slope of less than 8%. Galbraith Gap Run runs from south to north through the western half of the tract flanked by four ponds. This section of Galbraith Gap Run contains FEMA delineated floodplain.

EXISTING AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT REGULATIONS

(This section was prepared by D.J. Liggett of the Centre Regional Planning Agency)

As proposed, the zoning amendment would retain all of the rural clustering requirements of the existing Agricultural (A) zoning district regulations ***for lands located outside of the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area***. These include:

- All tracts of 10 acres or more must utilize the rural clustering requirements.
- No more than 50% of the total tract may be developed. At least 50% of the tract must be preserved as permanent open space.
- Single-family detached, single-family semi-detached, single-family attached, two-family detached, or two-family semi-detached dwellings are permitted.
- Minimum lot sizes, yard setbacks, and maximum height requirements may be reduced to those applicable in the Single-Family Residential (R-1) or Two-Family (R-2) zoning districts.
- Zero lot line dwellings are permitted.
- The total number of dwelling units permitted on the tract is based on the sewage disposal capacity of the developable portion of the tract, and the extent and locations of environmentally sensitive areas such as steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains, as identified on the Natural Resources Map adopted in the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan.
- Density may not exceed the maximum number of single-family detached dwellings allowed under the Agricultural zoning district regulations (one dwelling per acre).
- Parent tracts that are 10 acres or more may subdivide as many as two residential lots without compliance to the rural clustering requirements.
- No further subdivision of the two lot exemptions is permitted.

HARRIS TOWNSHIP'S PROPOSED CHANGES

(This section was prepared by D.J. Liggett of the Centre Regional Planning Agency)

The proposed zoning amendment would change the rural clustering regulations for land zoned Agricultural (A) ***within the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area***. The amendment provides an opportunity to blend rural and suburban design elements on lands in the Agricultural zoning district where public sewer is available. The availability of public utilities enables the development of a transitional residential area between higher density zoning in the existing residential areas and the lower density development typically found on Agricultural lands with no such public utilities. A copy of the DRAFT zoning amendment has been provided. The proposed changes include:

- The total number of dwelling units which may be placed on the tract shall be based on the extent and locations of environmentally sensitive areas such as steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains, as identified on the Natural Resources Map adopted in the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan.
- In no case shall density in such developments exceed two (2) dwelling units per acre.
- No more than 70% of the total tract may be developed. At least 30% of the tract must be preserved as permanent open space.

In addition to these three changes, the Harris Township Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors are considering further amendments to the zoning regulations to incorporate workforce housing and a small neighborhood commercial use. Discussions about the specific language and details of these potential additions to the zoning amendment are ongoing.

For example, the final zoning amendment may specify that the reduction in open space will be offered as an incentive, in exchange for the development of workforce housing. This language would not result in an increase in density, but would reduce the sales price of a percentage of the proposed homes. The neighborhood commercial component, if added to the final zoning amendment, would allow for a small commercial use that would have little or no impact beyond what is presented herein. These potential changes are still being considered by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. As a result, they are not reflected in the DRAFT zoning amendment that is included as part of this Development of Regional Impact report.

The overall density effect of these changes is that as many as 320 dwelling units could be built on these four tracts whereas as 159 dwelling units could be built there under the existing regulations as presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: The Additional Number of Dwelling Units Permitted Per Tract with the Proposed Agricultural District Amendments

Property Owner	Tax Parcel Number	Parcel Size (Ac)	Location	Existing Ag Yield	Proposed Ag Yield
Rockey Family Trust	25-4-71	119.28	Between Kaywood & Aspen Heights	119	238
Yocum, Scott L. & Glenda C.	25-408-34	16.8	Adjacent to Huntridge Manor	16	33
Huber, Stephen S., Jr. & Jane et al	25-412-44	11.45	Adjacent to Bear Meadows	11	22
Nease, Ardalene B.	25-412-100	13.74	Adjacent to Boalsburg Industrial Park	13	27
TOTAL		161.27		159	320

IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HARRIS TOWNSHIP’S AGRICULTURAL ZONING DISTRICT

The next ten sections of this report will examine the potential cumulative impacts of the proposed amendments to Harris Township’s Agricultural (A, Ag) District regulations on the region’s sewer system, water system, transportation network, public transportation network, emergency service providers, environment, schools, adjacent land uses, local government finances, and quality of life. For each subject area, the impacts that will be addressed are those generated by the development of the four identified tracts within the RGB/SSA under the proposed Ag District regulations at the permitted density of two dwelling units per acre relative to the base condition of one dwelling unit per acre.

It should be noted that since the proposed amendments are for Ag District within the Regional Growth Boundary/Sewer Service Area, the new regulations would apply to any Ag District lands that are added to the RGB/SSA in the future. Any future expansions to the RGB/SSA would require the unanimous approval of all six Centre Region municipalities, as well as the preparation of a separate, new Developments of Regional Impact report. This new DRI report would investigate the potential cumulative impacts of the RGB/SSA expansion at that time. As such, it is unnecessary to evaluate the impacts of the proposed amendments any more than the four subject tracts currently within the RGB/SSA.

SEWER COLLECTION, CONVEYANCE, AND TREATMENT SYSTEM

If the four subject tracts were developed under the existing Ag District regulations, the yield would be approximately 159 dwelling units (DU), or 27,825 gallons per day (GPD), which is calculated as 159 DU times 175 GPD. If developed under the proposed amendments to the Ag District, there would be 320 dwelling units or 56,000 GPD. Under either scenario, the *Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan* would require sewage collection and treatment services from the University Area Joint Authority (UAJA). This

section will address the impacts of this potential increase of 28,175 gallons of sewage per day on the UAJA system.

Cory Miller, Executive Director of the University Area Joint Authority, was contacted for comment on the impact of the proposed changes to the Ag District to UAJA. Mr. Miller's full response can be found in **Appendix C**. The cost of extending public sewer service to the subject tracts can range from relatively minimal in the case of the Huber Tract where public sewer is located on adjacent public streets to relatively expensive in the case of Yocum Tract where a public sewer extension in the manner described by Mr. Miller could cost over \$250,000 with the need for a pumping station, bore cut under SR 322, and a force main extension along an existing road shoulder. In any event, it is the Developer's responsibility to provide the necessary improvements through the approval of designs by UAJA.

Cory Miller's analysis of is summarized below.

Rockey Tract (Tax Parcel 25-4-71): Sewer service would likely be to the Aspen Heights lift station. The Aspen Heights station does not have sufficient capacity for the existing density or the proposed density, thus requiring expansion of the capacity at the developer's expense. The interceptor sewers to the treatment plant have sufficient capacity for the proposed increase in density.

Yocum Tract (Tax Parcel 25-408-34): No access to sewer. Closest sewer is at Bear Meadows Village. This would require a lift station, a boring under Route 322, and a substantial length of force main all installed at the developer's expense. This is most likely not cost effective. While there was noted a sewer easement to Rosslyn Road, it is unlikely that a grinder pump at a home on the Yocum tract would be able to overcome the head in the Huntridge Manor grinder pump system.

Huber Tract (Tax Parcel 25-412-44): Sewer service would be through Bear Meadows Village. The upper portion of the tract may be able to reach the sewer by gravity. However, there would need to be an easement obtained to get access to the sewer. The lower portion of the tract would require a lift station. Sewer service is most likely not cost effective.

Nease Tract (Tax Parcel 25-412-100): Sewer service would be on the north side of Route 322. This requires a bore under the highway, and possibly one or more bores under the stream.

In general, the conveyance and treatment capacity of the University Area Joint Authority is adequate to serve these additional units (*end of comment*).

It is unlikely that other tracts within the vicinity of the four subject tracts could benefit from centralized sewage facilities for the purpose of addressing a failed or failing on-lot septic system. All adjacent tracts within the sewer service boundary are currently served with public sewer, which include Kaywood, Aspen Heights, Willowbrook, Huntridge Manor, Bear Meadows Village, and most, if not all, of Laurel Hills. The Aikens Tract located between Bear Meadows Village and the Nease Tract is undeveloped and outside of the sewer service boundary. The Lingle Farm located to the north of the Rocky Tract is also located outside of the sewer service boundary.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

If the four tracts were developed under the existing Ag District regulations, they would yield approximately 159 dwelling units. If developed under the proposed amendments to the Ag District, the yield would be approximately 320 dwelling units. Under either scenario, a request for water service from the State College Borough Water Authority (SCBWA) is probable. Given that a dwelling unit uses between 150 and 175 gallons of water per day, the proposed amendments could increase the demand for water on the four tracts from between 23,850 and 27,825 gallons per day under the existing regulations to between 48,000 and 56,000 gallons per day under the proposed amendments.

Max Gill, Director for SCBWA, was contacted for comments on the increased demand to the water system. The full response is provided in **Appendix D**. To summarize, SCBWA stated that the four tracts could be served at the proposed 2.0 units-per-acre density by extension of existing waterlines under standard waterline agreements. The letter from SCBWA also states that since combining the Harris Township and State College water systems in 1995, there have been major system upgrades in Harris Township. There are no areas that will have low water pressure.

Steve Albright, Assistant Director for SCBWA, further commented in a telephone interview that the waterline along Route 322, which would serve the Nease, Huber, and Yocum tracts, has a 12-inch diameter. The water main in the Kaywood Subdivision where the Rockey Tract is likely to extend service is 8-inches in diameter, and is a looped water system.

In general, the fire flows for hydrants within the vicinity of the four subject tracts exceed minimum requirements. The minimum values reported by SCBWA near any of the four subject tracts were along Roundhill Road with fire flows at 1130 gallons per minute (GPM) at a residual pressure of 45 pounds per square inch (PSI). Hydrants would be considered inadequate if fire flows were less than 500 GPM or residual pressure was less than 20 PSI.

Under standard waterline agreements as referred to in Mr. Gill's correspondence, water system extensions are at the responsibility of the Developer to include the cost of hydrants, meter pits, and valves.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Douglas A. Hill, P.E. of David E. Wooster & Associates was contacted for comment on the increased number of average daily and peak hour trips that would be created with the proposed Ag District amendments. Mr. Hill was also asked to comment on the potential impact of the increased number of trips on the Region's transportation network. The full response is provided in **Appendix E**. A summary is provided below.

Per the information you provided, the highest total number of units permitted under the current Agriculture (A) Zoning for the four tracts above is **159 units**. The proposal is to permit a higher density of residential development within the tracts through rezoning. According to your information, the highest total number of units that could be developed

within the tracts above with the proposed rezoning is **320 units**. A breakdown by tract is as follows:

<u>TRACT</u>	<u>UNITS UNDER EXISTING ZONING</u>	<u>UNITS UNDER PROPOSED ZONING</u>
Rockey	119	238
Yocum	16	33
Huber	11	22
Nease	13	27
TOTAL	159	320

The forecasted trips to be generated by the tracts above under the current zoning and under the proposed zoning were determined using the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) publication entitled *Trip Generation*, Seventh Edition, 2003. Land Use Code (210), *Single-Family Detached Housing* was used. Table I provides a summary of the projected trip generation of the tracts listed above given the densities you provided.

**Table I
Forecasted Trip Generation Summary
Harris Township Development of Regional Impact**

TIME PERIOD	FORECASTED TRIP GENERATION		
	IN	OUT	TOTAL
<i>EXISTING ZONING – 159 Units</i>			
Weekday 24 Hour	797	797	1,594
AM Peak Hour	30	91	121
PM Peak Hour	103	60	163
<i>PROPOSED ZONING – 320 Units</i>			
Weekday 24 Hour	1,516	1,516	3,032
AM Peak Hour	58	175	233
PM Peak Hour	192	113	305

Based on the calculations, the proposed rezoning is anticipated to result in an increase of 1,438 trips per day, and an increase of 142 trips during the highest peak hour (PM peak hour).

A general rule of thumb in the traffic engineering industry is if a development is projected to generate 100 or more peak hour trips, a traffic impact study should be performed. Some municipalities within the Centre Region use a peak hour trip benchmark of 75 trips

for consideration of a traffic study. Using these benchmarks, the tracts above would require a traffic impact analysis under either zoning scenario.

The analysis above assumes all tracts develop at the same time as part of one project. If each tract above was developed independently, it is our opinion that the Yocum, Huber, and Nease tracts would not require Traffic Impact Studies, as they include a very small number of units for either zoning scenario. The only item that would be required for these tracts individually would be the acquisition of a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, which would include a sight distance evaluation, traffic control evaluation, and other design elements.

As an editorial note, any tracts within the Harris Township Corridor Overlay District require a Traffic Impact Study for development regardless of the number of units or lots proposed. It is also noted that previous Traffic Impact Studies submitted to Harris Township have previously noted that mitigation measures are necessary to improve existing and forecasted deficiencies at the intersection of Boal Avenue (S.R. 3014) and Earlstown Road (S.R. 45) as well as the intersection of S.R. 322 and Bear Meadows Road.

All four of the subject tracts would have impacts on the Commonwealth's road network. The Rockey Tract would most likely propose driveway access Earlstown Road (S.R. 45), the Nease and Yocum tracts would access S.R. 322 and the Huber Tract would access Bear Meadows Road (SR 2001). It is the responsibility of the Developer to obtain necessary permits from PennDOT as a condition of Township land development approval.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are a key component to the transportation infrastructure to the community. An inter-municipal or regional hike/bike path does not currently exist in the vicinity of the subject tracts. Sidewalk systems that interconnect with existing developments can be encouraged as well as future development on adjacent tracts with provisions for sidewalk easements and right-of-ways.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) is the Centre Region's key provider of public transit services. In preparing this report, PennTerra Engineering contacted CATA through CRPA Planner, Gregory M. Kausch who issued the comments outlined below on CATA's behalf. This letter is presented in its entirety in **Appendix F**, and summarized below.

1. CATA supports the proposed amendment to increase the maximum permitted number of dwelling units per acre to 2.0 within the Ag Zoning District. In general, increased density of development helps to support transit services that are more efficient, effective, and productive, all other factors being equal.
2. Moreover, the specific locations of the parcels that would be impacted by this proposed zoning amendment is a key factor in our support of the amendment.

All parcels that would be impacted by this proposed zoning amendment lie within the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) / Sewer Service Area (SSA) as delineated by the Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities plan. Of these, three of the parcels – the Rockey, Huber, and Nease tracts – also lie within or immediately adjacent to the service area of the current CATA “B” Route. The fourth parcel – referred to as the Yocum tract – is situated in reasonably close proximity to the current CATA “B” route.

Therefore, in accordance with comment #1, additional density in these specific areas should help to support the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of existing CATA services.

3. It should also be noted, however, that density of development is but one of many factors that influence the potential success of transit service within any given area. As this particular portion of Harris Township continues to develop – irrespective of whether this proposed zoning amendment is ultimately adopted – CATA would strongly recommend that close attention be paid to other development attributes that contribute to successful transit service. These include, but are in no way limited to a street network that is thoroughly and thoughtfully interconnected, and complementary bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Accordingly, CATA stands ready to work with developers and property owners to facilitate good transit access and circulation.
4. Consistent with comment #3, CATA would like to reserve the opportunity for further comment on potential transit amenities and other transportation elements as individual land development plans are submitted for parcels within the A-1 Zoning District.

CATA currently provides nine trips to the Bear Meadows Village area on weekdays and four trips on weekends. Bus schedules and the frequency of trips are periodically analyzed to address changes in ridership to include new developments for service.

IMPACTS ON EMERGENCY SERVICES

Police: The four tracts would receive police protection from the State College Borough Police Department who has a service contract with Harris Township. Police Chief Thomas R. King was contacted for comment with regards to potential increases in police personnel and equipment that might be necessary to protect an additional 161 dwelling units than allowed under current zoning. Chief King’s response is presented below, and the original correspondence presented in **Appendix G**:

As you know, the State College Police Department provides full police services to Harris Township through a contractual agreement. We have provided police services to Harris Township since 1981.

As requested, I have reviewed the documents you sent to me and received on June 11th and July 9th regarding Harris Township's proposal to amend its Agriculture (A-1) Zoning District regulations to permit a maximum of 2.0 units per acre where the districts lie within the Regional Growth Boundary. The phone conversation you and I had on June 19th helped clarify or confirm my understanding of the request.

Based on your estimation, the proposal could result in an increase of 161 more homes than allowed under current zoning. While it is unlikely an increase in 161 homes would result in a noticeable increase in the level of police service required in Harris Township, in part it could depend on the type of housing developed. If apartment buildings are permitted in this revised zoned area, some modest increase in the level of police services in Harris Township could occur. Clearly, owner occupied housing generates significantly fewer number of calls for police service than apartment buildings. Other than the caution about apartment building housing, the potential net increase of 161 homes across the four tracts of land is unlikely to impact the level of police service required in Harris Township.

Fire: The four tracts would receive fire protection from the Boalsburg Fire Company. Fire Chief Chris Dry was contacted for comment with regards to potential increases in fire personnel and equipment that might be necessary to protect an additional 161 dwelling units than allowed under current zoning as well as comment on response times and any concerns the Fire Company might have regarding access to these sites. Chief Dry's response is presented below, and correspondence letter provided in **Appendix G**:

1. The infrastructure is already in place in the area of these proposed four (4) tracts. There should be no problem meeting the hydrant flows for the ordinance. The fire company prefers that all hydrant systems be looped.
2. The proposed 320 units would be expected to generate approximately eight (8) additional incidents annually. This number of calls does not present a significant impact on the Boalsburg Fire Company.
3. All ordinances should be strictly enforced. No variances should be granted (examples: Building Setbacks, Cul-de-sac Lengths, Design, Building Density, and Interconnection between developments whenever possible).

In closing, these four (4) tracts of land should have little impact on the Boalsburg Fire Company as long as current ordinances are enforced.

Ambulance: The four tracts would receive ambulance protection from CentreLink Emergency Management Services (EMS). The CentreLink EMS Director Scott Rawson was contacted for comment with regards to potential increases in emergency personnel and equipment that might be necessary to protect an additional 161 dwelling units than allowed under current zoning. Mr. Rawson stated by telephone interview that the impacts of the proposed Ag District amendments would have a minimal impact on CentreLink EMS.

In conclusion, it does not appear that the potential new homes that could be added with the proposed amendments will cause any substantial problems with the Centre Region's emergency service providers – provided that the involved development is properly designed.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section will analyze the environmental impacts of increasing the maximum permitted density on the four tracts from one dwelling unit per acre to two dwelling units per acre with respect to the soils, floodplains, wetlands, natural heritage areas, steep

slope areas, vegetation, farmland, groundwater quality, surface water quality, stormwater runoff, and light pollution.

- **Soils, Geology, Floodplains, and Wetlands:** The natural features of the four tracts based are provided in **Table 4** with references to the source of information.

Table 4: Soil Series, Floodplain, and Wetlands on the Four Subject Tracts

Tract	Primary Soil Series ¹	Floodplain ² (Acres)	Wetlands ³ (Acres)	Total Area of Floodplain & Wetlands (Acres) and % of Tract Size
Rockey	Hagerstown Hublersburg Nolin Opequon	None known	None known	0 (0%)
Yocum	Clarksburg Hagerstown Melvin Millheim Opequon	2.8	Contained with floodplain	2.8 (16.7%)
Huber	Dunning Murrill Nolin Weikert	None known	1.8	1.8 (15.7%)
Nease	Andover Murrill	2.7	1.1	3.9 (28.4%)

Information Sources:

1. Soil Survey of Centre County, Pennsylvania dated August, 1983
2. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map for the Township of Harris as revised December 16, 2003.
3. National Wetlands Inventory mapping from quadrangles for Centre Hall, PA and State College, PA.

Soils: The Soil Survey shows some soil types that could be a concern to development. Of note, soils in the Andover and Nolin series, as two examples, tend pose a risk to dwellings with basements, according to the Soil Survey. Within the applicable zoning districts, Harris Township Ordinances do not restrict development on these soils.

Floodplain and Wetlands: The noted information sources show that three of the four tracts are subject floodplain and wetlands regulations. Detailed studies with qualified experts were not completed for this study. The tracts might be impacted more extensively than noted. Harris Township Zoning Ordinance Article VII Section 1 regulates development in floodplain and wetland conservation areas.

Geology: It should be noted that due to the Karst topography of the Centre Region, nearly every tract is prone to sinkhole formations.

The proposed changes to the Ag Zoning District would not necessarily impact any of these natural features. The floodplain on the Yocum and Nease tracts as

well as the wetland or pond areas on the Huber and Nease tracts could be incorporated into the required open space.

- **Natural Heritage Areas:** According to the *Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory* (updated December 31, 2002), Harris Township has several Biological Diversity Areas (BDA) as presented in **Appendix H**. All BDAs with the exception of the Linden Hall Park BDA are located within managed areas of Rothrock State Forest.

From review of the map for the Harris Township Natural Heritage Inventory, none of the four tracts in this study are located in or near BDAs. The Nease Tract is, however, the nearest property to an Audubon Society Important Bird Area, which appears to run along the base of Tussey Mountain.

- **Steep Slope Areas:** The 2000 *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan* recommends prohibiting development on land with slopes greater than 25%, and discouraging development on land with slopes between 15% and 25%. The Yocum tract has steep slopes along the southern portion of the tract adjacent to SR 322 and moderate slopes of greater than 15% to the north of Spring Creek. The Huber and Nease tracts have small pockets of steep slopes around the ponds. Finally, the Rockey tract does not appear to have steep slope, but has some moderate slopes of greater than 15% near the northern property line.

As long as it is encouraged that steep slope areas (25% or greater) are placed in open spaces, it is not believed that the proposed regulatory changes will have an impact on the Township's natural steep slope areas. An increase in the permitted density on the four tracts could reduce the development pressure on larger steep slope areas outside of the Regional Growth Boundary.

- **Vegetation and Farmland:** The Rockey tract is primarily used for agriculture as well as approximately half of the acreage available to both the Yocum and Nease tracts. Therefore, some farmland would be lost if these parcels were developed under either the existing or the proposed Ag District regulations. Approximately, half of the Huber and Nease tracts are wooded, but in areas that cannot be developed due to wetlands and/or floodplain. It could be reasoned that additional vegetation would be lost by reducing the open space requirements from 50 to 30%.

As stated in the Patton Township DRI, it is not the policy of the *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan* to protect all forest and farmland – especially inside of the Regional Growth Boundary. An increase in the permitted density on the four tracts could reduce the development pressure on other forested or farmed land outside of the RGB – where forests and farmland are intended to be given more protection.

- **Groundwater Quality, Surface Water Quality, and Stormwater Runoff:** Under Harris Township Stormwater regulations, any increase in the rate of stormwater runoff after development is prohibited. As such, the proposed amendments should have no impact on stormwater runoff rates or on the resulting surface water quality.

- **Light Pollution:** It is believed that the proposed change in density between the existing and the proposed Ag District regulations will not produce a significant amount of light pollution to the night sky. Harris Township regulates residential lighting in the Zoning Ordinance with Article VII Section 6.

In conclusion, many, if not all, of the environmental concerns related development of the four tracts under either the existing or the proposed Ag District regulations could be addressed through the use of required open space. It could, however, be argued that the existing regulations, which require 50% open space allow more flexibility than the proposed ones which would require 30%. It is our understanding the environmentally sensitive areas cannot be developed even if in excess of minimum open space requirements.

As stated in the Patton Township DRI, increasing the maximum permitted density within the Regional Growth Boundary will reduce development pressure on more environmentally sensitive lands outside of the RGB. Furthermore, it will reduce sprawl – one of the greatest environmental threats facing the Centre Region.

IMPACTS ON THE STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ed Poprik, Director of the Physical Plant for the State College Area School District (SCASD), was contacted for comment on the impact of the proposed changes to the Ag District to the SCASD for a projected increase of 118 pupils. The response of Mr. Poprik is summarized below. The entire response is included in **Appendix I**.

Mr. Poprik's analysis indicates it would be fair to project that 104 to 117 students would be generated from 161 units. When analyzing this data, it is important to note that this represents students across a range from birth to 18 years. Consequently, this data would suggest 6-7 students at any given age would be generated by this proposal.

The 2008 demographic analysis further projects that enrollment in grades K-5 in Boalsburg and Panorama Village Elementary Schools could be expected to decline by 19 students, or roughly 3 per grade, during the years 2007-2017. With this data, it would be fair to assume that this development alone would have little net impact in that portion of our district. However, district enrollment is impacted by many developments across the five municipalities, so even small increases when multiplied by numerous developments could have significant impact on the capacity of district buildings and could through this cumulative effect trigger additional building needs.

With regards to the fiscal impacts to the School District, Mr. Poprik commented in a phone interview that it is better to focus growth in areas that are currently near the existing schools to minimize bus transportation costs.

The school district currently provides bus service to the areas of the four subject tracts. If the subject tracts are developed, Mr. Poprik commented that bus schedules would be revised as needed to accommodate.

IMPACTS ON ADJACENT LAND USES

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed Ag District amendments on adjacent properties. The impacts are evaluated based development under existing regulations, which allow for a total of 159 dwelling units and require 50% open space, against proposed regulations, which would allow 320 dwelling units and require 30% open space.

Rockey Tract: The 119-acre Rockey Tract is located between the Kaywood Subdivision and Aspen Heights on Earlstown Road (SR 45), and across SR 45 from Willowbrook Estates.

Under the current zoning, it is estimated that 119 dwelling units could be created on the Rockey Tract. The proposed zoning would result in an estimated 238 dwelling units per acre.

Description of Land Uses Adjacent to the Rockey Tract:

- *Kaywood Subdivision (to the west):* A subdivision in the Township's Single-Family (R-1) and Two-Family (R-2) Zoning Districts consisting of 190 dwelling units. These totals include the 22 lots created along SR 45 as the Reish Subdivision in the late 1940s. The Kaywood and Reish subdivisions are served with public water and sewer. The sewer service in Kaywood is provided with a centralized pump station.
- *Aspen Heights (to the east):* A subdivision in the Township's Agricultural Zoning District consisting of 35 single-family detached dwelling units on 70.75-acres. Aspen Heights is served with public water and sewer. The sewer service is provided with a centralized pump station.
- *Willowbrook Estates (to the south):* A planned development located in both the Township's Single-Family Residential (R-1) and Multi-Family (R-3) Zoning Districts. With the recent approval of Elksview Townhomes, all of the vacant land in Willowbrook Estates is developed with a total of 314 dwelling units on 103.88-acres. Willowbrook Estates has 18.45-acres of open space to include Fasick Park.
- *Lingle Tract (to the north):* This tract is in the Agricultural Zoning District and used for agricultural purposes. It is located outside of the regional growth boundary/sewer service area.

Yocum Tract: The 16.8 Yocum Tract is located on State Route 322 between the Elks Country Club and Huntridge Manor. The section of Huntridge Manor to the north of the Yocum tract is developed with single-family detached homes, and the section to the east is identified as Open Space Lot 48 for Huntridge Manor.

Under the current zoning, it is estimated that 16 dwelling units could be created on the Yocum Tract. The proposed zoning would result in an estimated 33 dwelling units.

Description of Land Uses Adjacent to the Yocum Tract:

- *Huntridge Manor (to the north and east):* A subdivision in the Township's Agricultural District consisting of 45 single-family dwelling units on 106.8-acres. Huntridge Manor is served with public water and sewer. The sewer system consists of individual grinder pumps. Huntridge Manor has 26.7-acres of open space, which represents 25% of the tract.
- *Elks Country Club (to the west):* The Elks Country Club is an 18-hole golf course with recreational and dining facilities.

Huber Tract: The 11.5-acre Huber Tract is located at the intersection of Boal Avenue (SR 322) and Bear Meadows Road (SR 2001). Bear Meadows Village is located to the south and west of the Huber Tract and Laurel Hills Subdivision is located to the east across Bear Meadows Road. The Elks Country Club is located to the north across Boal Avenue.

Under the current zoning, it is estimated that 11 dwelling units could be created on the Huber Tract. The proposed zoning would result in an estimated 22 dwelling units.

Description of Land Uses Adjacent to the Huber Tract:

- *Bear Meadows Village (to the north and west):* A subdivision located in the Township's Agricultural District consisting of 45 single-family detached units on 106.8-acres. The subdivision is served with public water and sewer.
- *Laurel Hills Subdivision (to the east):* A rural preservation subdivision in the Township's Agricultural Zoning District consisting of a total of 48 dwelling units on 75.43-acres. Of these dwelling units, 14 were approved in Phase 1 and Phase 2 Section 1 as single-family detached dwellings with on-site sewage systems. In Phase 2, 24 lots for single-family detached homes were approved with public sewer. Lot 26 recently received preliminary plan approval for 10 single-family detached units in a condominium setting with public water and sewer. A total of 30.85-acres of open space are provided, representing 40% of the tract.
- *Elks Country Club (to the south):* The Elks Country Club is an 18-hole golf course with recreational and dining facilities.

Nease Tract: The 13.7-acre Nease Tract is located on Boal Avenue (SR 322) adjacent to the Boalsburg Technology Park.

Under the current zoning, it is estimated that 13 dwelling units could be created on the Huber Tract. The proposed zoning would result in an estimated 27 dwelling units.

Description of Land Uses Adjacent to the Nease Tract:

- *Willowbrook Estates (to the north):* A planned development located in both the Township's Single-Family Residential (R-1) and Multi-Family (R-3) Zoning Districts. With the recent approval of Elksview Townhomes, all of the vacant land

in Willowbrook Estates is developed with a total of 314 dwelling units on 103.88-acres. Willowbrook Estates has 18.45-acres of open space to include Fasick Park.

- *Aikens Tract (to the east and south)*: The Charles Aikens Tract is located in part in the Ag Zoning District, in part within the Forest Zoning District, and entirely outside of the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB)/Sewer Service Area (SSA). The tract is undeveloped.
- *Boalsburg Industrial Park (to the west)*: Commonly referred to as the Boalsburg Industrial Park, plans are currently under review with the Township for subdivision and development of this area. The section of the Boalsburg Industrial Park adjoining Nease is a 5-acre vacant tract zoned Commercial (C-1) to be served with public water and sewer.

Conclusion: Three of the four tracts are bordered on at least two sides by existing residential developments, and in some cases bordered on one side by an agricultural use. In other cases, adjacent land uses, such as a golf course, seem compatible to a higher density residential development than currently allowed. As such, these four tracts represent in-fills to development, and appear to meet the goals of the Township in terms of providing a transition between Ag District lands outside of the growth boundary and higher density development within it.

The potential impacts on adjacent land uses of developing the four tracts under the proposed amendments could be greater than the potential impacts of developing the same lots under existing regulations. Traffic, view sheds, and wildlife could be impacted more by 320 dwelling units with a minimum 30% open space than by 159 dwelling units with a minimum 50% open space requirement. It is anticipated that proper design can mitigate these impacts. In cases, such as the Nease, Huber, and Yocum Tracts where environmental constraints might exceed a 30% open space requirement, the number of dwelling units is likely to be less than projected.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HARRIS TOWNSHIP'S AGRICULTURAL ZONING DISTRICT

Fiscal Impact Analysis of the Proposed Amendments: PennTerra Engineering prepared a Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) of the proposed amendments to the Agricultural District. This analysis estimated the financial impacts on Harris Township and the State College Area School District of permitting an additional 161 dwelling units on the four tracts with the proposed Ag District amendments. The analysis does not estimate the impacts of the 159 dwelling units that are already permitted on the same four tracts.

PennTerra used a model presented in *Costs and Revenues of Residential Development: A Workbook for Local Officials and Citizens* – a 2000 Penn State Cooperative Extension publication by Professors Timothy W. Kelsey and Martin Shields, and recommended for this DRI report by the Centre Regional Planning Agency. Note that this model uses a

simple per capita multiplier method, and assumes that the costs and revenues accrued by the 161 dwelling units will be similar to the costs and revenues accrued by any other comparable 161 single-family dwelling units in Harris Township. The analysis assumes that any required upgrades to the sewer or water system will be paid for by the developer.

The FIA is presented in its entirety in **Appendix J** with additional supporting data. This analysis assumes or estimates the following:

- Of the 161 additional dwelling units permitted, 65% will be single-family dwellings with three bedrooms, and 35% will be single-family dwellings with four bedrooms. It is assumed that affordable units will have three bedrooms, and further assumed that 20% of the total number of units will meet the criteria of affordable.
- The average number of residents per dwelling unit will be 2.51 for three-bedroom houses and 3.31 for four-bedroom houses.
- The typical household in the State College Area School District generates 0.729 school students according to a demographic analysis dated May 12, 2008 and referenced in the SCASD correspondence from Ed Poprik dated June 18, 2008.
- For property tax revenue estimates, the following expected sale prices are assumed at \$190,000 for the affordable units, \$290,000 for a single-family dwelling unit with three bedrooms, and \$330,000 for a single-family dwelling unit with four bedrooms.

The FIA in **Appendix J** estimates that the 161 additional dwelling units that could be built if the proposed amendments are enacted would have a negative annual fiscal impact of \$47,422 on Harris Township, and a negative annual fiscal impact of \$751,918 on the State College Area School District (SCASD).

School District Impacts: The negative fiscal impact on SCASD was expected. Single-family dwelling units generate more pupils per unit, and consequently greater educational costs per unit than any other land uses. It is reasoned that an impact to the school district will occur regardless of whether the Ag District amendments to increase the allowable density to 2.0 are approved or not. If not approved, then an additional 161 dwelling units will develop elsewhere in the Township, and potentially require additional costs for school transportation.

Township Impacts: The negative fiscal impact on the Township was not unexpected. By including affordable units, the Township is making a conscious decision to open its doors to families that otherwise would not be able to own a home within Harris Township. The Township has become increasingly economically stratified in recent years, which makes the affordable units important to the overall health of the community. This intangible benefit does not translate well to the workbook used to assess impacts.

Intuitively, an increase in allowable density results in a more efficient use of infrastructure and less of per capita costs to the Township. With a density of 2.0 dwelling units per acre and 30% open space requirement, there could be 320 dwelling

units on 161-acres. For the same 320 dwelling units to develop under the current ordinance, which allows 1.0 dwelling unit per acre and requires 50% open space, the acreage impacted would increase from 160- to 320-acres, resulting in a 50% increase in infrastructure to maintain. This economy-of-scale does not translate to the FIA when consideration is given to the following:

The municipal cost increases in Step 6 through 8 assume that the existing cost per resident will remain proportional to the number of new users. The overall per capita costs to the Township identified in Steps 6 through 8 should decrease with an increase in density with consideration for the following:

- Step 6: Any new roads created to support a higher density of new users should reduce the overall cost for maintenance per resident. This assumption would also apply to the maintenance stormwater systems, water and sewer mains.
- Step 7: As stated by the police, fire, and emergency service providers, the increase in density will not result in the need for additional equipment or personnel.
- Step 8: Unless additional personnel is required at the municipal office to support a higher density, administrative costs per capita are assumed to decrease.
- As stated by CATA, public transportation networks operate more efficiently with higher density developments.

Economic Analysis of the Proposed Amendments: This section evaluates the effects of the proposed zoning amendments on the economy and other areas of the Centre Region. Relative to large retail center with potential economic impacts on other businesses, the regional impacts of zoning amendments to allow for an additional 161 dwelling units are considered minor.

Amending the Ag District to allow 320 dwelling units where 159 are permitted under current zoning could have a small positive impact on the regional homebuilding industry. On the other hand, the 161 additional units could have a small depressing effect on the regional housing market. This impact is considered minor due to the rate at which homes are built, which is dictated, in large part, by demand.

As noted in the Patton Township DRI, the Centre Regional Planning Agency staff could find no studies that suggest that, at the density and open space levels proposed, the Ag District changes would have a negative impact on the values of adjacent properties. This is especially true when one compares the densities and open space that is permissible now with the densities and open space that are proposed to be permissible with the Ag District amendments.

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES AND THE CONSISTENCY OF THIS PROPOSAL WITH SMART GROWTH PLANNING CRITERIA

The purpose of this section is to evaluate proposed amendments to Harris Township's Ag District relative to the quality of life in the Centre Region. The evaluation will consider the consistency of this proposal with the 2000 *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan*.

The amendments propose is to increase the permitted density of lands located within the Regional Growth Boundary/Sewer Service Area (RGB/SSA). Under the existing regulations, the maximum densities permitted on the four Ag District properties located within the RGB/SSA are estimated at approximately one dwelling unit per acre. The proposed amendments would increase this maximum to two dwelling units per acre. Although this proposed density would allow an additional 161 additional dwelling units, the density remains less than the maximum densities permitted in other Harris Township residential districts within the RGB/SSA.

As identified in the Patton Township DRI, increasing the permitted density of lands within the RGB/SSA serves two purposes: it more efficiently uses infrastructure and it reduces sprawl. The 2000 *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan* directly speaks to each one of these purposes in its second and third overarching goals on page 7, as follows:

2. Direct the majority of future growth to areas within the Regional Growth Boundary so that new development can be efficiently served by public utilities, services, and transit.
3. Preserve and enhance the low-density community character in the rural areas located outside of the Regional Growth Boundary.

The 2000 *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan* drew the RGB to include areas that either have or programmed to have infrastructure. On the other hand, the RGB was drawn to exclude areas where utilities would require expensive upgrades and/or inefficient use. Concentrating development within the RGB to foster the efficient use of infrastructure is stated on page 87 of the Community Facilities section. Page 32 of the Land Use section reiterates the theme again in a manner that particularly speaks to the Rocky Tract as a site located between two existing residential communities.

Encourage residential in-fill development near established neighborhoods, villages, and planned communities in order to improve and expand parks, hike/bike trails and reduce the costs of sprawl development.

Page 55 of the Future Development Patterns speaks to the concentration of development within the RGB in more detail than any other part of the *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan*.

Implement a Regional Growth Boundary for the Centre Region: Identify a Regional Growth Boundary within which intensive development is encouraged and suburban sprawl is minimized in the outlying areas. Locate future expansion areas where growth can be provided with cost-effective and efficient public services. Provide high-quality public water, sewer, and transportation services within the

Regional Growth Boundary at a reasonable cost. Encourage orderly development consistent with adequate and efficient provisions of public services that do not burden the community.

Only a few undeveloped tracts in Harris Township lie as close to existing infrastructure as the four tracts in this study. Aside from the efficient use of infrastructure, concentrating development within the RGB reduces sprawl beyond the boundary. Not only was the RGB drawn to exclude lands where infrastructure could *not* be efficiently provided, it was also drawn to largely exclude environmentally sensitive lands, farmland, attractive landscapes, and other undeveloped areas worthy of preservation. The Comprehensive Plan speaks to preserving these areas at lower densities than those found within the RGB via “village and rural preservation regulations” (page 59), the exclusive use of on-lot or community on-lot sewage disposal systems (as opposed to UAJA lines), and determining the “development carrying capacity of a site” with “on-lot sewage disposal system needs” – as the rest of the Ag District does (page 87). As was noted in the Environmental Impacts section of this report, increasing densities within the RGB spares more sensitive lands outside of the RGB from the impacts of sprawl – the greatest environmental threat facing the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, let alone the Centre Region.

The proposed amendments to the Ag District would improve the quality of life of the Centre Region by fostering the efficient use of infrastructure and reducing sprawl – both goals strongly, clearly, and repeatedly supported by the 2000 *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan* – a document adopted by every municipality in the Centre Region. The Comprehensive Plan, however, does not permit every proposed increase in density with the RGB. Such proposals must be balanced against “municipal objectives for neighborhood and environmental quality, and traffic management; and to meet the needs of continued residential, retail, and industrial growth.” (Page 32) Harris Township feels that by setting the maximum permitted density at 2.0 units per acre, and by requiring that at least 30% of the development remain as open space, the proposed amendments balance the benefits of concentrating growth against neighborhood quality of life, transportation, and environmental needs.

A bullet summary of the improvements to the quality of life analysis is as follows, which is provided with guidance from the Halfmoon Township DRI prepared by CRPA:

- Agricultural preservation through comprehensive and focused development in a central location, while preserving the pastoral low density country character in the remaining portions of the Township.
- Serve future development more efficiently by drastically reducing the demand for costly water, sewer, transportation and transit infrastructure and maintenance of these facilities.
- Provide potentially for affordable workforce housing for all socioeconomic levels and assist in reducing a documented regional and County need.
- Encourage potentially compact, mixed-use, pedestrian scale and bicycle friendly neighborhoods, with various residential, commercial and possibly even some future employment opportunities.
- Encourage residential development in the path of growth, near established neighborhoods and planned communities in order to expand and provide for parks, pedestrian, hike and bike facilities.

- Provide potentially for additional parkland and open space areas and a broad range of recreational opportunities.
- Provide for land uses such as mixed use, commercial, office and employment uses in order to shift some of the current Township tax burden from predominantly single family residential, to other uses that pay more in taxes than they require in municipal services.

CONCLUSION

The Harris Township Board of Supervisors proposed to amend the Agricultural District regulations as described above (under “Harris Township’s Proposed Changes”) for several reasons.

- The proposed density is less than that allowed in the single-family residential district (R-1). As such, the proposed density could be viewed as a transition between Ag District lands outside of the growth boundary and higher density development within it.
- The Township felt increasing the permitted density of the Ag District parcels within the RGB/SSA would help to concentrate the Centre Region’s growth, lessen the demand for development and sprawl outside of the growth boundary, and use existing infrastructure more efficiently.

Ten sections of this report examined the potential impacts of the proposed Ag District amendments to allow for an additional 115 dwelling units on the sewer system, water system, transportation network, public transportation network, emergency service providers, environment, schools, adjacent land uses, local government finances, and quality of life. The following is a summary of these sections.

- **Sewer Collection:** No issues were identified with the UAJA conveyance or treatment system. However, each tract presented unique considerations for sewage collection, such as a need for additional or upgrade to an existing pump stations. The cost of any upgrades to the collection system would belong to the Developer.
- **Water Infrastructure:** The proposal will not significantly impact the State College Borough Water Authority or its system. Several water system upgrades have been completed to improve water flow and pressure. As a result, fire flows in the areas of the subject tracts are believed to exceed minimum requirements.
- **Transportation Network:** The projected increase in average daily trips on a weekday is estimated at 1,438 and 142 additional peak hour trips. The impacts would need to be assessed with a Traffic Impact Study, which would be required of each tract either due to the number of units proposed on location within the Township Corridor Overlay District.

- **Public Transportation Network:** CATA supports the proposed amendments, as increased densities typically foster the efficient, effective, and productive operation of transit.
- **Emergency Services:** No substantial problems with the Centre Region's emergency service providers provided that the involved development is properly designed.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Most of the environmental impacts could be mitigated through the creative use of the required open space. It is reasoned that increasing the maximum permitted density for Ag parcels within the Regional Growth Boundary will reduce development pressure on more environmentally sensitive lands outside of the RGB. Furthermore, it will reduce sprawl – perhaps the greatest environmental threat to the Centre Region.
- **Adjacent Land Uses:** Traffic, view sheds, and wildlife could be impacted more by 320 dwelling units with a minimum 30% open space than by 159 dwelling units with a minimum 50% open space requirement. It is noted that proper design can mitigate these impacts.
- **Township Fiscal Impacts:** A fiscal impact analysis (FIA) performed for this report (in **Appendix J**) estimated that the 161 homes that could be built if the proposed amendments are adopted would have a negative annual fiscal impact of \$47,422 on Harris Township. The overall per capita costs to the Township, however, are reasoned to decrease with an increase in density.
- **School District Fiscal Impacts:** The same FIA estimated that the 115 homes would have a negative annual fiscal impact of \$751,918 on the State College Area School District.
- **School District Population Impacts:** The additional students that would be generated if the proposed amendments are adopted and all 161 dwelling units were built would not little net impact on this section of the School District, but the cumulative impacts of development must also be considered.
- **Quality of Life:** The proposed amendments to the Ag District would improve the quality of life of the Centre Region by fostering the efficient use of infrastructure and reducing sprawl – both goals strongly, clearly, and repeatedly supported by the 2000 *Centre Region Comprehensive Plan*.

Most of the potential negative impacts of the proposed amendments can be mitigated with the proper design of the development and use of required open space. Relative to the impacts of development under existing regulations, most of these impacts are minor. The difference in the number of dwelling units permitted is only 161 dwelling units on 161 acres on four tracts in the Township.

It is believed that the Centre Region will continue to grow regardless of whether or not the amendments to the Ag District are approved. As such, the impacts of growth will be incurred regardless. The four tracts that would benefit from the Ag District amendments are not only within the current growth boundary, but represent an in-fill to existing

developments. Therefore, it makes sense to designate these areas for the additional growth for the purpose of reducing the demand for development and sprawl outside of the growth boundary, and using the existing infrastructure more efficiently. The Supervisors previously endorsed these concepts when they — as well as the elected officials of the other five municipalities in the Centre Region — adopted the *2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan*.

The regional benefits of responsibly increasing density within the Regional Growth Boundary are substantial. Since the RGB was drawn to include lands either with existing infrastructure or to which infrastructure could be easily extended, and drawn to exclude lands that are either environmentally sensitive, intended for agricultural production, or better suited for low-density rural development or preservation, then it can be reasoned that concentrating development within the RGB both fosters the efficient use of infrastructure and reduces development pressure on less appropriate locations. This, in turn, slows sprawl—which represents a significant environmental threat to both the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a whole, and the Centre Region.

The *2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan* strongly supports the concept of increased density within the RGB. The Plan states that future growth should be directed to areas within the Regional Growth Boundary that can be efficiently served by public utilities, infrastructure, and transit. In addition, the *2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan* advocates a more compact development pattern, where appropriate public services exist, to minimize sprawl and preserve open space and farmland in rural areas of the Township.

Harris Township recognizes that such increases in density must be balanced against neighborhood, environmental, traffic, and economic sustainability concerns. By setting the maximum permitted density at two units per acre, and by requiring that at least 30% of the development remain as open space, Harris Township believes that the proposed amendments for land use changes within the RGB balance the benefits of concentrating growth with the needs of the community and the environment.