

MARCH 2005



AREA REVITALIZATION MOBILITY & INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR REUSE STUDY:

NORRISTOWN | PLYMOUTH | CONSHOHOCKEN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY



Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

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Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Created in 1965, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is an interstate, intercounty and intercity agency that provides continuing, comprehensive and coordinated planning to shape a vision for the future growth of the Delaware Valley region. The region includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties, as well as the City of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey. DVRPC provides technical assistance and services; conducts high priority studies that respond to the requests and demands of member state and local governments; fosters cooperation among various constituents to forge a consensus on diverse regional issues; determines and meets the needs of the private sector; and practices public outreach efforts to promote two-way communication and public awareness of regional issues and the Commission.



Our logo is adapted from the official DVRPC seal and is designed as a stylized image of the Delaware Valley. The outer ring symbolizes the region as a whole, while the diagonal bar signifies the Delaware River. The two adjoining crescents represent the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey.

DVRPC is funded by a variety of funding sources including federal grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Pennsylvania and New Jersey departments of transportation, as well as by DVRPC's state and local member governments. The authors, however, are solely responsible for its findings and conclusions, which may not represent the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
SECTION 1	3
Introduction	3
Current/Recent Studies and Plans	4
Planning Process	5
SECTION 2	7
Overview	7
Socio-Economic Profile	9
Land Use	12
Composite Zoning	16
Public Transit	20
Traffic Volumes	24
SECTION 3	27
Transportation Projects	27
Commercial Market	32
Current Developments	37
SECTION 4	41
Goals	41
SECTION 5	43
Assets, Problems & Needs	43
Assets	44
Problems	47
Needs	58
Proposed Land Use Changes	63
Descriptions for Proposed Land Use Map Legend	66
SECTION 6	69
Potential Funding Sources	69
Conclusion	73
APPENDIX	A1

LIST OF MAPS

1: Study Area	8
2: Existing Land Use	13
3: Composite Zoning	17
4: Public Transit	21
5: Traffic Volumes	25
6: Potential & Current Transportation Projects	29
7: Current Development Proposals & Projects	39
8: Proposed Land Use	67

LIST OF TABLES

1a: Population	9
1b: Population Change (in percentages)	10
2a: Employment	11
2b: Employment Change (in percentages)	11
3a: Land Use (in acres)	15
3b: Land Use (in percentages)	15
4a: Composite Zoning Classification Descriptions	16
4b: Composite Zoning Classifications by Municipality	19
5a: Commuting to Work 2000	20
5b: Commuting to Work 2000 (in percentages)	20
6: Study Area Transit Ridership 2003	23
7: Potential & Current Transportation Projects	27
8: Current Development Proposals & Projects	38
9: Study Area Assets	44
10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations	47
11: Study Area Needs & Recommendations	58

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1a: Downtown Norristown (present)	54
1b: Downtown Norristown (after)	55
2a: Ridge Pike (present)	56
2b: Ridge Pike (after)	57

All photos, except where noted, were taken by DVRPC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the *Area Revitalization, Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study* is to evaluate the planning issues facing three municipalities in southeastern Montgomery County that are experiencing a range of development and/or transportation-related changes and to recommend strategies to assist in their growth and to improve their existing assets. Conducted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), the *Reuse Study* is organized into two phases over Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005. Phase I is an examination of existing conditions and future development concerning land use and transportation in the study area. Strategies addressing the identified issues and recommendations to improve upon existing assets are offered. This report is the culmination of the activities conducted in the first phase. The subsequent phase will consist of two implementation projects derived from the report that were selected by the study area municipalities.

Over the last 40 years, different portions of the historically industrial study area have reflected the impact of disinvestments, revitalization efforts, development pressures and resurgence. Plymouth's industrial district has remained a steady presence in the study area. Ridge Pike is dominated by auto-related businesses, with popular big-box retail stores at the intersection with Alan Wood Road. The borough of Conshohocken was once in decline, but has been rejuvenated with new building and unprecedented growth in the past 20 years. Major investments resulted in a new office center with glass and granite towers overlooking the Schuylkill River, just outside of the study area, and highway construction has improved the borough's accessibility. Of the three municipalities, Norristown has been facing the greatest challenge in overcoming the problems that have plagued the area for decades. The problems of the Montgomery County seat expand across a multitude of issues, including a sluggish economy, higher crime and unemployment rate than surrounding municipalities, the recent threat of municipal bankruptcy (although averted) and a persistent negative perception that has been counteractive to attracting new businesses and development. However, the trend of lost opportunities and disinvestments has slowly begun to reverse itself, and recent efforts by both the public and private sectors have brought a new momentum for change.

The SEPTA R6 Regional Rail provides the study area's only direct rail service to Philadelphia, traversing along the Schuylkill River between downtown Philadelphia and Norristown. It makes one nearby stop in Conshohocken and three in Norristown, including the Norristown Transportation Center, an important transportation hub in the region. The study area suffers from traffic congestion, particularly at or near the three corners of the study area: at the intersection of Ridge Pike and Alan Wood Road; at the Matsonford Bridge; and in downtown Norristown. With new development proposed and underway, traffic volumes will likely increase. To help alleviate some of the traffic congestion while promoting sound development and enhancing the existing land use, a myriad of transportation projects have been proposed or are underway throughout the study area and beyond. These projects include an extension of Lafayette Street, creating a new interchange at the Pennsylvania Turnpike and providing greater accessibility into Norristown; an engineering study for Ridge Pike to determine roadway circulation, including the addition of a center lane; a feasibility study to consider the need for a new bridge across the Schuylkill River, somewhere between Norristown/Bridgeport and Whitmarsh/Lower Merion; and the ongoing assessment of

the Schuylkill Valley Metro, a regional public transportation project that will link Philadelphia to Reading, with proposed stations in Norristown and Conshohocken.

A number of developments, other than transportation, are also proposed. Although located outside of the study area, they will most likely have a significant impact on the existing uses and traffic circulation in the study area due to their close proximity and the types and intensity of development. The majority of these developments are housing and offices, mainly clustered near the river and the Matsonford Bridge in Conshohocken. Limited retail developments can also be found in one of the Conshohocken office developments and as part of the Main and Cherry Street garage project in Norristown.

A set of goals, along with the area's existing assets, form the basis for the recommended implementation strategies to address the area's needs and problems. They also form the basis for the recommended land use changes. These goals include:

- Ensure that the future development of the study area enhances the quality of life for residents while generating new economic activity without being a detriment to the livelihood of presently stable businesses.
- Maintain a coordinated system of roadways and multi-modal options that accommodates both local and regional traffic, facilitates the continued growth of desirable new development and that is responsive to the needs of the area residents.
- Support the transportation projects currently underway. Support may include maximizing and building upon the benefits that will be created by these transportation projects, through additional economic development, residential options, pedestrian linkages, streetscape improvements and public transit services and amenities.

The study area's problems and needs are described in separate charts and categorized under their respective issues: traffic congestion; local accessibility; socio-economic issues and images; development constraints; streetscapes; transportation project impacts; residents; regional and local amenities; and economic development. In some cases, subcategories were used to better define the specific issues at hand. Each corresponding recommendation is color-coded as short-term (immediately to two years), medium-term (three to five years) and long-term (six to ten years), in terms of its anticipated timeline for implementation, depending on their priority and expected level of ease or difficulty to achieve. A list of potential funding sources that the study area municipalities and the County may wish to pursue in order to help carry out the recommended strategies is also provided.

The second phase of the Reuse Study will build upon some of the information gathered for this report. The intent of the selected implementation projects is to further promote and fulfill the overall goal of the area: to present solutions that will strengthen the area's economic, residential, transportation and recreational attributes and amenities and to bring about a cohesive interaction between these elements and within each municipality.

SECTION

1

Introduction

The purpose of the *Area Revitalization, Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study* is to evaluate the planning issues facing three municipalities in southeastern Montgomery County that are experiencing a range of development and/or transportation-related changes and to recommend strategies to assist in their growth and to improve their existing assets. The project involved the active participation of the study area representatives from Plymouth Township, the Municipality of Norristown, Conshohocken Borough and the Montgomery County Planning Commission, as well as involvement from the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association (GVFTMA), Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). Funding was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), with matching funds from the County and the aforementioned municipalities.

Conducted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), the *Reuse Study* is organized into two phases over Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005. Phase I is an examination of existing conditions and future development concerning land use and transportation in the study area. Strategies addressing the identified issues and recommendations to improve upon existing assets are offered. This report is the culmination of the activities conducted in the first phase. The subsequent phase will consist of two implementation projects derived from the report that were selected by the study area municipalities.

The following describes the information contained in the various sections of this report:

Section One provides a brief background regarding current and recent studies being conducted related to the subject area. It also includes an explanation of the planning process for this study.

Section Two provides a general description of the study area, followed by analyses of various elements of the area relevant to the study: population; employment; land use; zoning; public transit; and traffic volumes.

Section Three discusses the transportation and development projects presently proposed and underway in or near the study area. An assessment of the commercial market is provided through an interview with a local real estate expert.

Section Four presents a list of goals that the affected municipalities and the County support for the future of the study area.

Section Five specifies the assets, problems and needs identified in the study area, accompanied by their corresponding recommendations. A separate subsection is dedicated to proposed land use changes.

Section Six concludes the report with a list of funding programs from various sources that the study area municipalities may wish to pursue in order to implement the recommendations described here.

Current/Recent Studies and Plans

A number of studies and plans have been completed or are underway by the study area municipalities and the County. The Montgomery County Planning Commission has been undertaking a multi-year effort to update the various components to their *Comprehensive Plan: Shaping Our Future* to guide the county to the year 2025. These components include a Transportation Plan, Housing Plan, Economic Development Plan, Land Use Plan and Open Space Plan.

Plymouth is currently in the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan, which was last adopted in 1990. Norristown had commissioned a borough-wide *Economic Revitalization Strategy* in the year 2000, to be followed by a *Redevelopment Area Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Area* two years later. In the same year, a revitalization plan with an emphasis on the downtown and riverfront area, *A Community at the Crossroads*, was developed for Conshohocken.

In January 2004 DVPRC produced a traffic study for Lafayette Street in Norristown, as requested by PennDOT. This study included an assessment of traffic volumes that may result from the construction of slip ramps connecting Lafayette Street with the Pennsylvania Turnpike. As this study was being conducted, consultants for Montgomery County continued with their engineering and environmental studies for the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvement Project. This project, as well as other transportation projects and studies, are further discussed in the next section, under Study Area Description.



This portion of the east side of Norristown's Main Street includes some scattered small businesses and a church among rowhomes and apartments.

Planning Process

DVRPC formed a Study Advisory Committee (SAC), consisting of representatives from the three local municipalities, the Montgomery County Planning Commission, the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association (GVFTMA), the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) (refer to **Appendix A** for a list of SAC members). The meetings provided a forum for an exchange of information and discussions of issues related to commercial and residential development, transit, traffic congestion, roadway construction and open space/recreation. A total of six meetings were held during Phase I of the study. Individual meetings with committee members and other agency representatives, such as the County's Redevelopment Authority, were held as needed. DVRPC staff also attended monthly meetings held by the Schuylkill Valley Transportation Coalition (SVTC), comprised of representatives from area municipalities and transportation organizations, that was established to discuss transportation issues relevant to the greater region to keep abreast of the issues impacting the Norristown-Plymouth-Conshohocken study area and to keep SVTC informed of study progress.

Data for this study was collected from these meetings, additional communication with SEPTA, site visits and in-house resources at DVRPC. Additionally, DVRPC contacted a local private developer to discuss his company's plans for the development of a large parcel in the study area and a real estate company for information regarding the commercial market in the study area. Attempts made through telephone calls and emails to obtain similar real estate information, including for the residential market, and to provide a wider industry perspective from different companies were unanswered. DVRPC presented the various data to the Study Advisory Committee for their review at the bi-monthly meetings throughout the study. Suggestions and comments by the SAC were noted and incorporated into this report.

Phase II, involving two implementation projects will be conducted in a similar format as the first phase, including a continuation of SAC meetings and input from SAC members.



SECTION

2

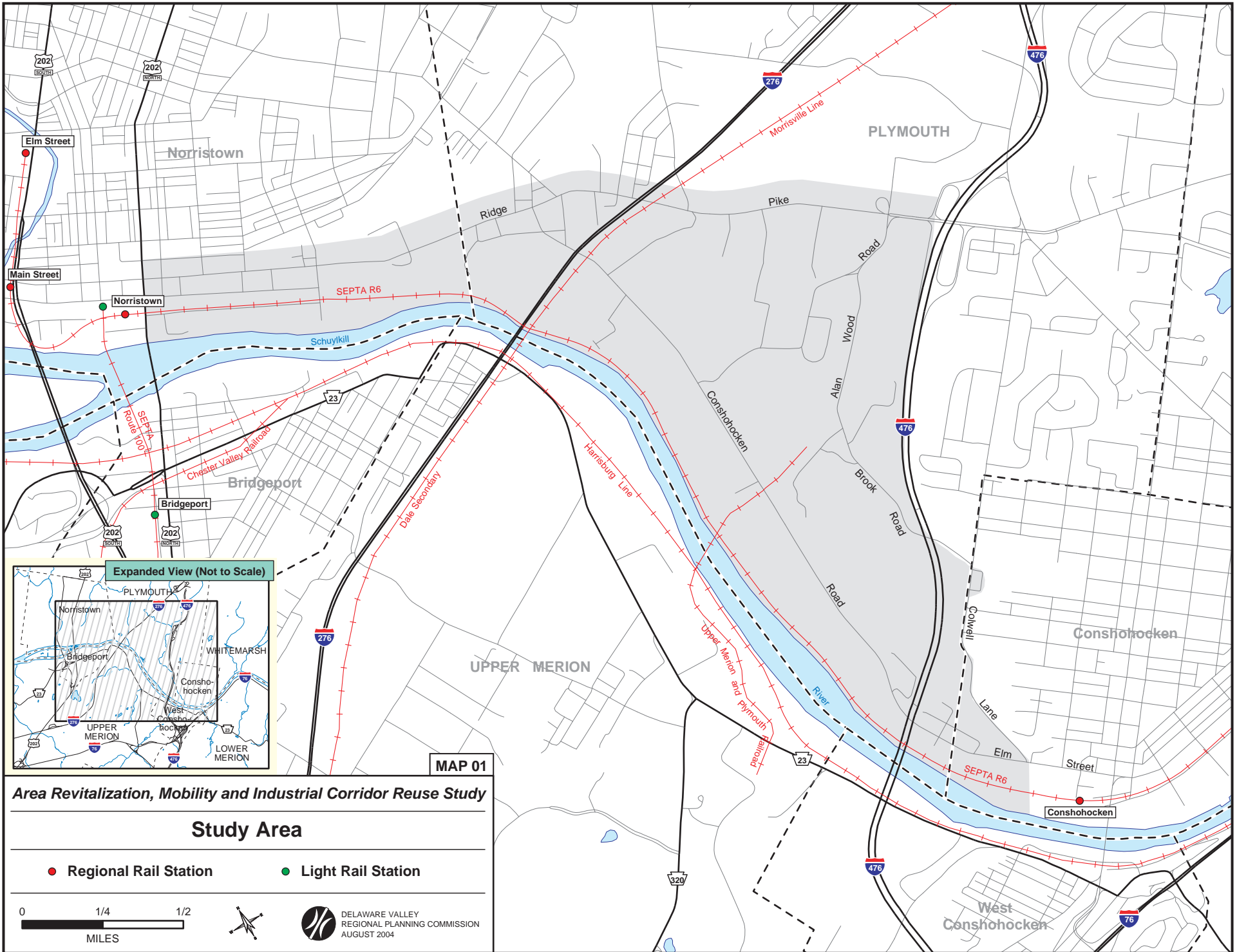
Overview

The study area lies within the jurisdictions of the three adjacent, but vastly different, municipalities of Plymouth, Norristown and Conshohocken, along the Schuylkill River (**Map 1**). While the meandering river defines the southern and part of the western boundary of the study area, Route 202 North/Dekalb Street in Norristown completes the rest of its western boundary, Main Street in Norristown and Ridge Pike in Plymouth delineate its northern boundary, and Interstate 476 (Mid-County Expressway) and Brook Road in Plymouth and Colwell Road and Colwell Lane in Conshohocken delineate its eastern boundary.

Over the last 40 years, different portions of the historically industrial study area have reflected the impact of disinvestments, revitalization efforts, development pressures and some resurgence. Plymouth's industrial district has continued to persist and has remained a steady presence in the study area. Greatly bolstered by its proximity to the Mid-County Expressway, the majority of the triangular study area in Plymouth is zoned for such use and is anchored by the sprawling ISG Plate (formerly Lukens Steel) production facility. However, Ridge Pike is dominated by auto-related businesses, including auto dealerships, and at the intersection of Alan Wood Road and Ridge Pike are popular big-box retail shops, including IKEA, Home Depot, BJ's Wholesale Club and Circuit City. The latter large, commercial expanse, called the Marketplace at Plymouth, has further fueled the economic base of the township since its construction two years ago and has created a new regional shopping destination, along with the inevitable traffic congestion that follows. Bordering the southern end of this development is a privately owned, 115-acre parcel that is currently vacant. The development of this land will play a crucial role in the future of the study area and, perhaps, the region.

Lafayette Street is lined with small industrial businesses to the north and the Regional Rail tracks and Schuylkill River Trail to the south.





MAP 01

Area Revitalization, Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study

Study Area

- Regional Rail Station
- Light Rail Station



The one-square mile that comprises the entire borough of Conshohocken was once in decline, but has been rejuvenated with new building and unprecedented growth over the past 20 years. Major investments resulted in a new office center with glass and granite towers overlooking the Schuylkill River, just outside the study area, and highway construction improved the borough's regional accessibility. Conshohocken has transformed itself as a destination for young professionals and new businesses. The plans for more development continue (refer to Current Development subsection). The adjacent residential study area, having remained largely unchanged except for the construction of four attached dwellings, may inevitably be impacted by the encroaching developments.

Of the three municipalities, Norristown has been facing the greatest challenge in overcoming the problems that have plagued the area for decades. Serving as the location of an array of governmental and social services, the problems of the county seat also expand across a multitude of issues, including a sluggish economy, higher crime and unemployment rates than surrounding municipalities, the recent threat of bankruptcy (although averted) and a persistent negative perception that inhibited attracting new businesses and development. However, the trend of lost opportunities and disinvestments has slowly begun to reverse itself, and recent efforts by both the public and private sectors have brought a new momentum for change. Norristown received a significant boost in early 2004 when the regional headquarters of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection relocated to Norristown (within a block of the study area) from Whitemarsh Township, bringing about 300 new workers to the downtown. Officials believe the area will be further bolstered by the future extension and improvement of Lafayette Street, providing a direct link into the downtown from a new interchange with the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Socio-Economic Profile

For the study area communities, **Table 1a** shows the 1990 and 2000 population and 2010 to 2030 forecasts. The corresponding percent changes are shown in **Table 1b**. While only a percentage of the total area of each Borough and Township is located within the study area, it is worthwhile to examine their total population, as their growth and decline affects and is affected by the study area.

Table 1a: Population					
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Conshohocken	8,064	7,589	8,050	8,820	9,500
Norristown	30,749	31,282	31,030	31,310	31,500
Plymouth	15,958	16,045	16,640	16,980	17,000
Total	54,771	54,916	55,720	57,110	58,000
County	678,111	750,097	797,990	838,700	878,440

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (1990, 2000) and DVRPC (2010, 2020, 2030 Forecasts)

	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2020	2000-2030
Conshohocken	-5.9	6.1	9.6	25.2
Norristown	1.7	-0.8	0.9	0.7
Plymouth	0.5	3.7	2.0	6.0
Total	0.3	1.5	2.5	5.6
County	10.6	6.4	5.1	17.1

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (1990, 2000) and DVRPC (2010, 2020, 2030 Forecasts)

The combined population of the three municipalities from 1990 to 2000 increased less than half a percent, with the population count hovering close to 55,000. A higher rate of growth is forecasted over the next twenty years, albeit not in large numbers. From 2000 to 2030, a 5.6 percent increase is forecasted, bringing the total population to 58,000. This rate of increase significantly lags behind the rise in population of the County, which includes but also extends beyond the study area municipalities, as the County is expected to experience a 17 percent increase within those three decades. The County's overall growth is due to the combination of its excellent regional highway and transit accessibility, developable land and steady job growth.

Analyzed individually, after a 6 percent decrease in population from 1990 to 2000, Conshohocken is expected to experience the greatest growth from 2000 to 2030, with an additional 1,900 residents for a 25 percent increase. This is not surprising given the continuing momentum in development in the borough (see Table 8, page 38). It is the only municipality in the study area that surpasses the County's forecasted population growth. Plymouth's population increase is more subdued, rising 6 percent in the forecasted 30 years, with a slight dip in its rate of growth from 2010 to 2020. Norristown's population is not expected to rise or drop significantly, remaining within the range of 31,200 to 31,500. If the municipality's efforts intensify at a greater rate than anticipated, its population growth may exceed the numbers in the table by 2030.

Below, **Table 2a** displays the municipalities' and county's 1990 and 2000 employment and 2010 to 2030 forecasts, with corresponding percent changes in **Table 2b**. As with the population data, these numbers reflect the entirety of each municipality, rather than the study area alone.

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Conshohocken	5,435	6,597	7,684	8,774	10,000
Norristown	18,003	15,053	16,261	17,220	18,200
Plymouth	19,460	20,845	23,943	26,961	30,300
Total	42,898	42,495	47,888	52,955	58,500
County	457,501	492,677	531,225	563,029	597,300

Sources: Census Transportation Planning Package (1990, 2000) and DVRPC (2000 – adjustments; 2010, 020, 2030 Forecasts)

	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2020	2000-2030
Conshohocken	21.4	16.5	14.2	51.6
Norristown	-16.4	8.0	5.9	20.9
Plymouth	7.1	14.9	12.6	45.4
Total	-0.9	12.7	10.6	37.7
County	7.7	7.8	6.0	21.2

Sources: Census Transportation Planning Package (1990, 2000) and DVRPC (2000 – adjustments; 2010, 020, 2030 Forecasts)

Jobs in the three-municipality area are expected to rise during each decade shown in the table, after a slight decline during 1990 to 2000. This decline is somewhat misleading, however, since Norristown is the only municipality that experienced a drop in employment while Plymouth and, very notably, Conshohocken increased in their number of jobs. The decline is also closer to the Delaware Valley region's employment growth rate of 0.9 percent than the County's 7.7 percent rate of growth. The three municipalities are forecasted to surpass the county in employment growth rate over the following 30 years, 37.7 percent compared to 21.2 percent.

Conshohocken's recent and continuing proliferation of office space along the Schuylkill River and the growing perception of the borough as a new office center in the region has resulted in a 21.4 percent job growth during 1990 to 2000 and an expected 51.6 percent job growth during 2000 to 2030, the greatest rate of growth among the three municipalities as well as

the county. Plymouth, however, leads in the number of jobs, with 30,300 forecasted by 2030. Norristown is expected to recover from its 16.4 percent loss in jobs during the 1990-2000 period, with a 20 percent increase by 2030. Undoubtedly, the relocation of the regional headquarters of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2004 helped boost the job figures for the county seat.

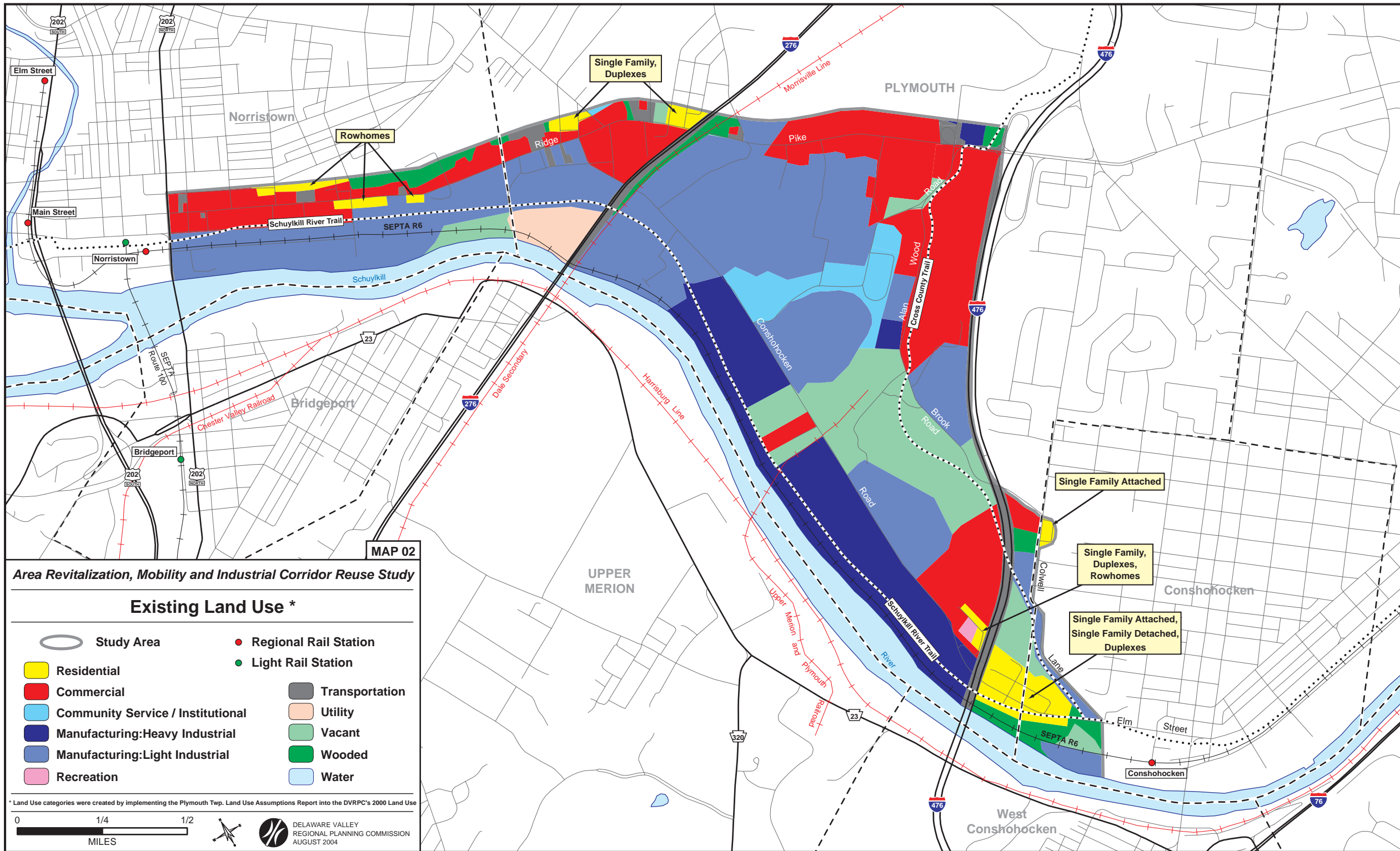
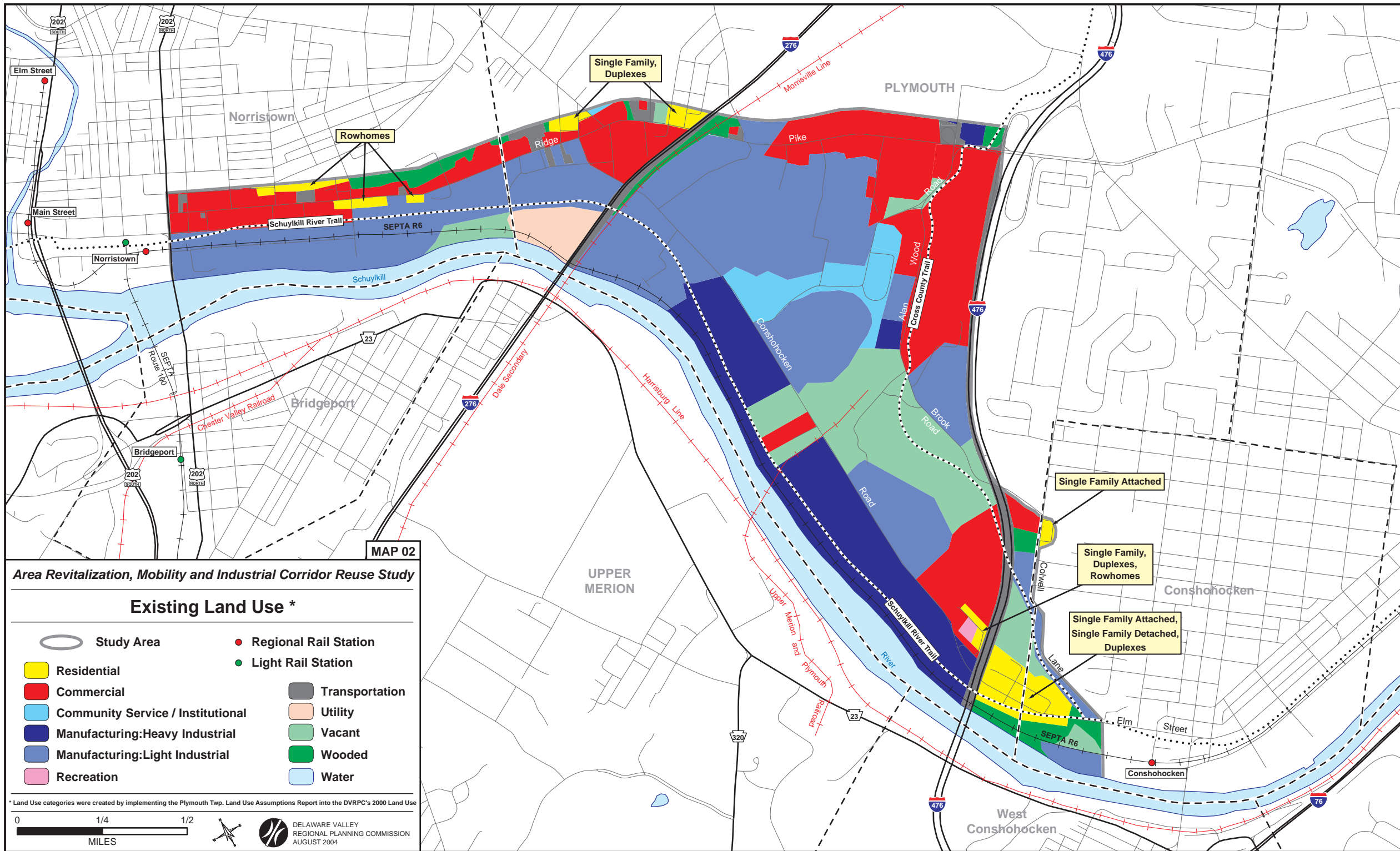
Land Use

Light manufacturing and commercial land use clearly dominate the study area as illustrated on **Map 2** and in **Tables 3a and 3b**. Comprising 435 acres, or 35 percent, of the land area, light manufacturing continues to be a significant component of the study area's economy. With the inclusion of heavy manufacturing, this type of use increases to almost 50 percent of the land area. Commercial activities, largely located along Main Street/Ridge Pike and Alan Wood Road, with a few exceptions, make up about 260 acres, or 21 percent, of the study area.

While a majority of the study area is dedicated to manufacturing and commercial uses, the residential portion is limited to only 44 acres, or 3.6 percent, of the land area. For the most part, all of the residences are situated near the boundaries of the study area, adjacent to other residential neighborhoods and developments located in each municipality. The rowhomes and apartments in mixed-use buildings that are located in or near the downtown area of Norristown are an important presence as the municipality moves forward in its revitalization efforts. They contribute to the mix of activities needed in a vibrant downtown and may provide a steady stream of consumer buying power for local shops.

Vacant land also comprises a prominent portion, with 136 acres, or 11 percent, of the study area. As mentioned in the Overview subsection, the future use of this land, particularly the large swath with frontage along Brook Road and Conshohocken Road, will play an influential role and impact the developments and traffic circulation of the surrounding area.

Recreation is another land use that is important to the study area. The Schuylkill River Trail that runs adjacent to the river and the completed portion of the Cross County Trail are represented on Map 2, but are not included in the land use numbers in Tables 3a and 3b due to technical constraints. While the omissions in the tables slightly underestimate the statistical numbers for recreational use, the existing trails should not be overlooked as part of the overall development of the area, especially with plans to improve the trails through multi-municipal cooperation.



BACKSIDE OF MAP 2



Table 3a: Land Use (in acres)

	Residential	Commercial	Community Services/ Institutional	Heavy Manufacturing	Light Manufacturing	Recreation*	Transportation	Utility	Military	Mining	Vacant	Wooded	Water	Total
Conshohocken	13	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	6	9	4	46
Norristown	8	49	0	0	92	0	2	1	0	0	9	10	19	190
Plymouth	23	212	39	171	329	1	49	17	0	0	121	17	21	1,000
Study Area Total	44	261	39	171	435	1	51	18	0	0	136	36	44	1,236
County	119,001	10,406	8,018	1,376	5,961	13,934	10,463	3,522	848	817	70,186	62,965	4,381	311,878

* Technical issues prevented the linear Schuylkill River Trail and completed portion of the Cross County Trail from being identified as recreational land use for both the study area and the County.

Source: DVRPC (2000) and Plymouth Township (January 30, 2004)

Table 3b: Land Use (in percentages)

	Residential	Commercial	Community Services/ Institutional	Heavy Manufacturing	Light Manufacturing	Recreation*	Transportation	Utility	Military	Mining	Vacant	Wooded	Water	Total
Conshohocken	28.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	19.6	8.7	100.0
Norristown	4.2	25.8	0.0	0.0	48.4	0.0	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	4.7	5.3	10.0	100.0
Plymouth	2.3	21.2	3.9	17.1	32.9	0.1	4.9	1.7	0.0	0.0	12.1	1.7	2.1	100.0
Study Area Total	3.6	21.1	3.2	13.8	35.2	0.1	4.1	1.5	0.0	0.0	11.0	2.9	3.6	100.0
County	38.2	3.3	2.6	0.4	1.9	4.5	3.4	1.1	0.3	0.3	22.5	20.2	1.4	100.0

* Technical issues prevented the linear Schuylkill River Trail and completed portion of the Cross County Trail from being identified as recreational land use for both the study area and the County.

Source: DVRPC (2000) and Plymouth Township (January 30, 2004)

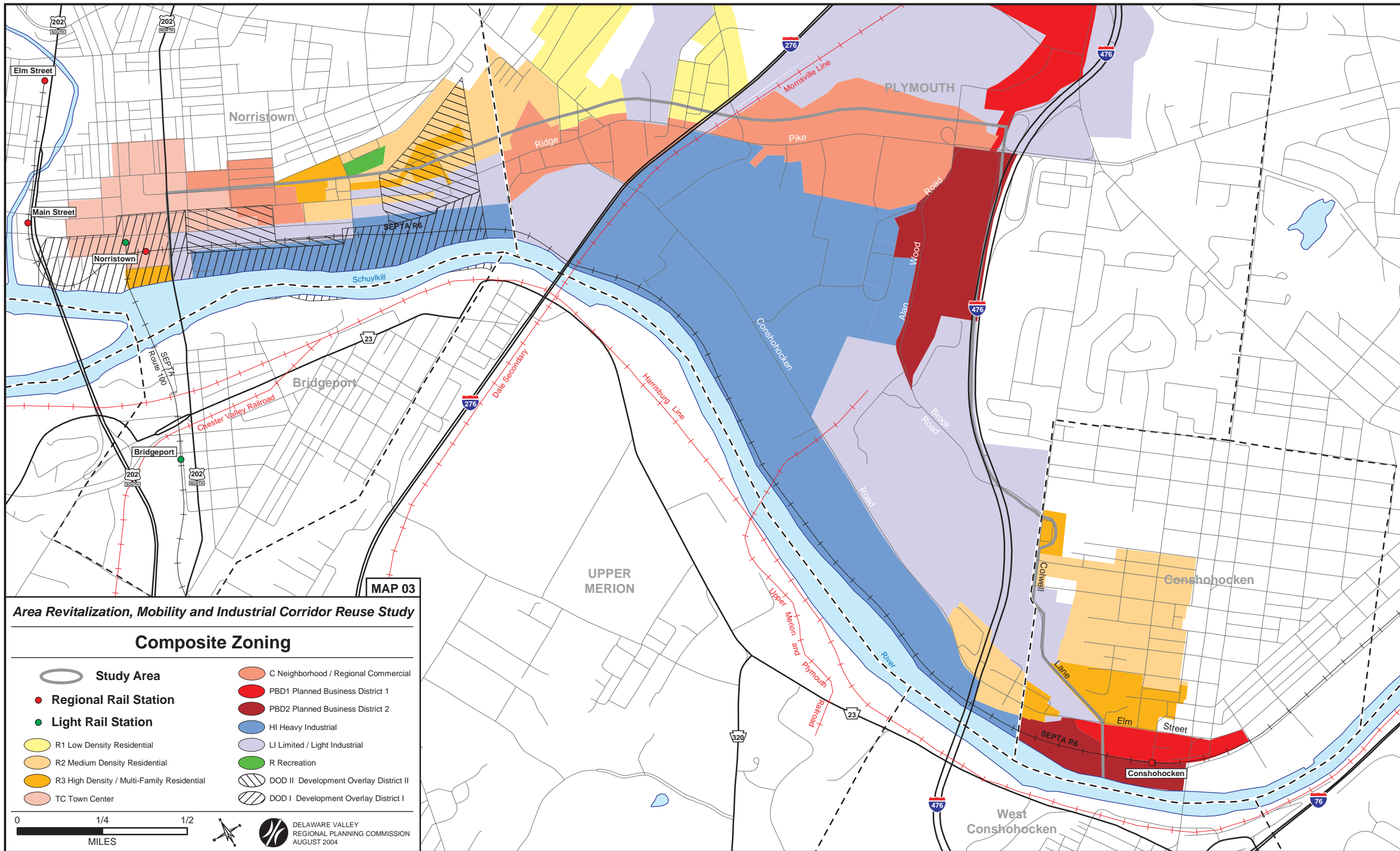
Composite Zoning

The twenty-two municipal zoning districts within the study area were reclassified under broader categories in order to provide a comparative basis for evaluation of the zoning of the three municipalities. **Map 3** illustrates these general categories, while **Table 4a** and **Table 4b** provide a corresponding list of the categories with descriptions and their original municipal districts, respectively.

Table 4a: Composite Zoning Classification Descriptions*	
Composite Zoning District	Description
R1	Low Density Residential – Intended for low-density, single-family suburban development. Only single-family detached houses are allowed, with a minimum lot area of 9,000 square feet.
R2	Medium Density Residential – Mainly single-family and two-family are allowed, with a minimum lot area of 4,000 square feet for single-family detached and 3,000 square feet for two-family detached.
R3	High Density/Multi-Family Residential – Intended for a diversity of housing types at relatively high densities, with a minimum lot area as low as 1,800 square feet.
TC	Town Center – Intended for a high density, mix of uses located in the downtown core of a community. With no minimum lot requirement, maximum building coverage may be as high as 100 percent for lots under 5,000 square feet and 90 percent for lots at or above 5,000 square feet.
C	Neighborhood/Regional Commercial – Intended for small-scaled commercial uses that serve local and/or regional consumers. Minimum lot area may range from 1,500 to 9,000 square feet.
PBD1	Planned Business District 1 – Intended for large-scaled office parks and commercial development. Non- nuisance uses, such as office, financial, institutional, retail, hotels, entertainment, recreation and residential, are permitted.
PBD2	Planned Business District 2 – Intended for large-scaled industrial and office parks and commercial development. In addition to uses permitted under PBD1, industrial uses are also allowed.
HI	Heavy Industrial – Intended for industrial uses that require extra mitigation regulations to minimize environmental impacts to surrounding areas.
LI	Limited/Light Industrial - Intended for low-impact industrial uses that pose minimal environmental impacts to surrounding areas.
DOD I	Development Overlay District I – Intended for a variety of uses at the highest intensity allowable. Permitted uses include retail, offices, institutional and educational facilities, restaurants, banks, hotels, recreation and multi-family residential.
DOD II	Development Overlay District II – Intended for the same variety of uses as in DOD I, but at a lesser intensity.

* The Recreation District shown on Map 3 is not included due to its location outside of the study area.

Source: DVRPC (based upon the zoning of study area municipalities) (2004)

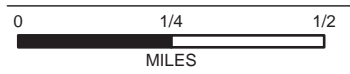


MAP 03

Area Revitalization, Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study

Composite Zoning

- Study Area**
- Regional Rail Station**
- Light Rail Station**
- R1 Low Density Residential**
- R2 Medium Density Residential**
- R3 High Density / Multi-Family Residential**
- TC Town Center**
- C Neighborhood / Regional Commercial**
- PBD1 Planned Business District 1**
- PBD2 Planned Business District 2**
- HI Heavy Industrial**
- LI Limited / Light Industrial**
- R Recreation**
- DOD II Development Overlay District II**
- DOD I Development Overlay District I**



BACKSIDE OF MAP 3



Table 4b: Composite Zoning Classifications by Municipality*		
Composite Zoning	Municipality	Municipal Zoning
R1 Low Density Residential	Conshohocken	N/A
	Norristown	N/A
	Plymouth	C Residential
R2 Medium Density Residential	Conshohocken	BR-1 Residential District One
	Norristown	R-2 Residential
	Plymouth	D Residential
R3 High Density/Multi-Family Residential	Conshohocken	BR-2 Residential District Two
	Norristown	GA Residential
	Plymouth	N/A
TC Town Center	Conshohocken	N/A
	Norristown	TC Town Center
	Plymouth	N/A
C Neighborhood/Regional Commercial	Conshohocken	N/A
	Norristown	N-C Neighborhood Commercial
	Plymouth	C Commercial
PBD1 Planned Business District 1	Conshohocken	SP-1 Specially Planned District One
	Norristown	N/A
	Plymouth	MUPD Mixed-Use Planned Development
PBD2 Planned Business District 2	Conshohocken	SP-3 Specially Planned District Three
	Norristown	N/A
	Plymouth	BP Business Park District
HI Heavy Industrial	Conshohocken	N/A
	Norristown	HI Heavy Industrial
	Plymouth	HI Heavy Industrial & RR Resource Recovery
LI Light Industrial	Conshohocken	LI Limited Industrial/Research
	Norristown	LI Light Industrial
	Plymouth	LI Limited Industrial
DOD I Development Overlay District 1	Conshohocken	N/A
	Norristown	UDO I Unified Development Overlay
	Plymouth	N/A
DOD II Development Overlay District 2	Conshohocken	N/A
	Norristown	UDO II Unified Development Overlay
	Plymouth	N/A

* The Recreation District shown on Map 3 is not included due to its location outside of the study area.

Source: DVRPC (based upon the zoning of study area municipalities) (2004)

Public Transit

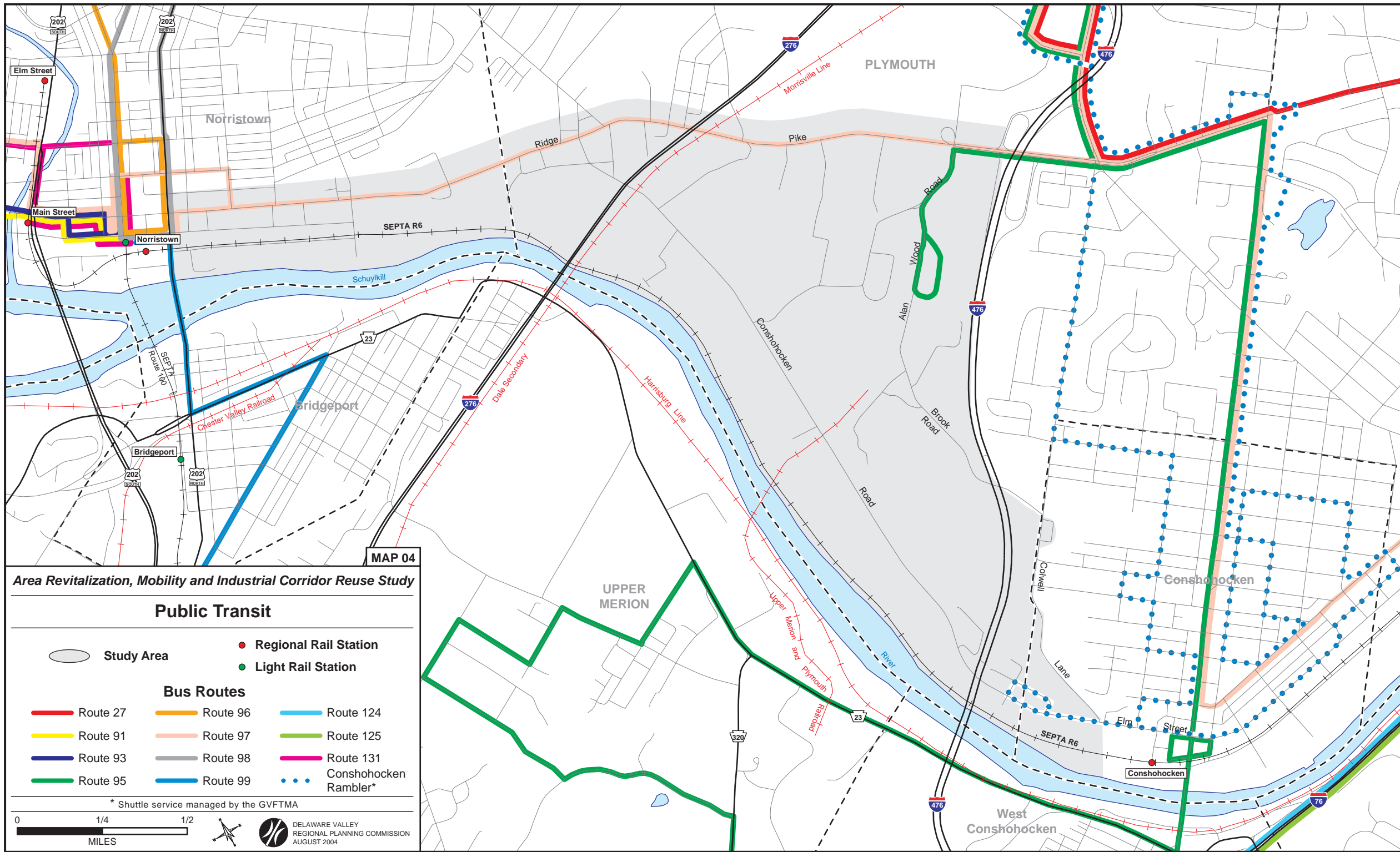
The method of commute for residents of the three municipalities reflects the areas' densities and public transit options. Norristown, being the most densely populated and providing a concentration of public transit routes, primarily located just outside of the study area (**Map 4**), leads the study area municipalities in its number and percent of commuters who either take public transit or walk to work (**Tables 5a and 5b**). With 8.6 percent choosing the train or bus to commute and 8.1 percent walking to work, Norristown surpasses the county proportions of 4.4 and 2.6, respectively, as well. Conshohocken residents use the borough's less accessible public transit services at roughly half the percentage of the county seat, although 5.6 percent walk to work. The suburban sprawl of Plymouth prevents this type of mobility, with only 2.2 percent of its population using public transit and 1.5 percent walking to their place of employment.

	Drive Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit	Walked	Other Means	Worked at Home
Conshohocken	3,157	524	178	235	51	61
Norristown	9,373	2,382	1,251	1,178	256	158
Plymouth	6,984	697	180	123	91	224
Total	19,514	3,603	1,609	1,536	398	443
County	305,924	31,393	16,555	9,963	2,460	13,537

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

	Drive Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit	Walked	Other Means	Worked at Home
Conshohocken	75.1	12.5	4.2	5.6	1.2	1.5
Norristown	64.2	16.3	8.6	8.1	1.8	1.1
Plymouth	84.2	8.4	2.2	1.5	1.1	2.7
Total	72.0	13.3	5.9	5.7	1.5	1.6
County	80.5	8.3	4.4	2.6	0.6	3.6
















Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)



Area Revitalization, Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study

MAP 04

Public Transit

-  Study Area
 -  Regional Rail Station
 -  Light Rail Station
- Bus Routes**
-  Route 27
 -  Route 91
 -  Route 93
 -  Route 95
 -  Route 96
 -  Route 97
 -  Route 98
 -  Route 99
 -  Route 124
 -  Route 125
 -  Route 131
 -  Conshohocken Rambler*

* Shuttle service managed by the GVFTMA



BACKSIDE

OF

MAP

4



Utilizing SEPTA data from 2003, **Table 6** provides the daily and annual ridership for the individual transit routes that serve the study area and its immediate surroundings. Transit routes serving the study area are located around the periphery of the area.

Table 6: Study Area Transit Ridership 2003			
SEPTA Route		Daily	Annual
27 CTD		3,441	1,134,525
91 FD		(Sat, Sun only)	5,140
93 FD		955	254,345
95 FD		625	152,880
96 FD		1,222	340,468
97 FD		688	189,516
98 FD		1,318	339,419
99 FD		1,528	442,329
124 VIC		1,235	367,999
124 FD		665	189,068
125 VIC		1,235	367,999
125 FD		665	200,021
131 FD		469	113,911
Total		14,046	4,097,620
Conshohocken Rambler (GVFTMA)		Daily	Annual
		10	2,884
SEPTA R6 (in- & outbound)	Weekday	Sat	Sun
Elm St.	639	181	208
Main St.	393	194	178
Norristown Trans. Ctr.	1,713	625	536
Conshohocken	811	272	194
Avg. Daily Totals	3,356	1,272	1,196
Avg. Annual	839,000	66,144	62,192
Total Transit Ridership		Daily	Annual
		19,880	5,067,840

Source: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (2003)

The area's only rail line, the SEPTA R6, traverses along the Schuylkill River between downtown Philadelphia and Norristown. It makes one nearby stop in Conshohocken and three in Norristown, including at the Norristown Transportation Center, an important transportation hub in the region. Weekday ridership at these stops averages 3,356 daily, while the figure drops to roughly 1,200 on weekends. The study area and its immediate surroundings are also served by 11 bus lines. The total daily ridership for the combined bus routes is 14,046.

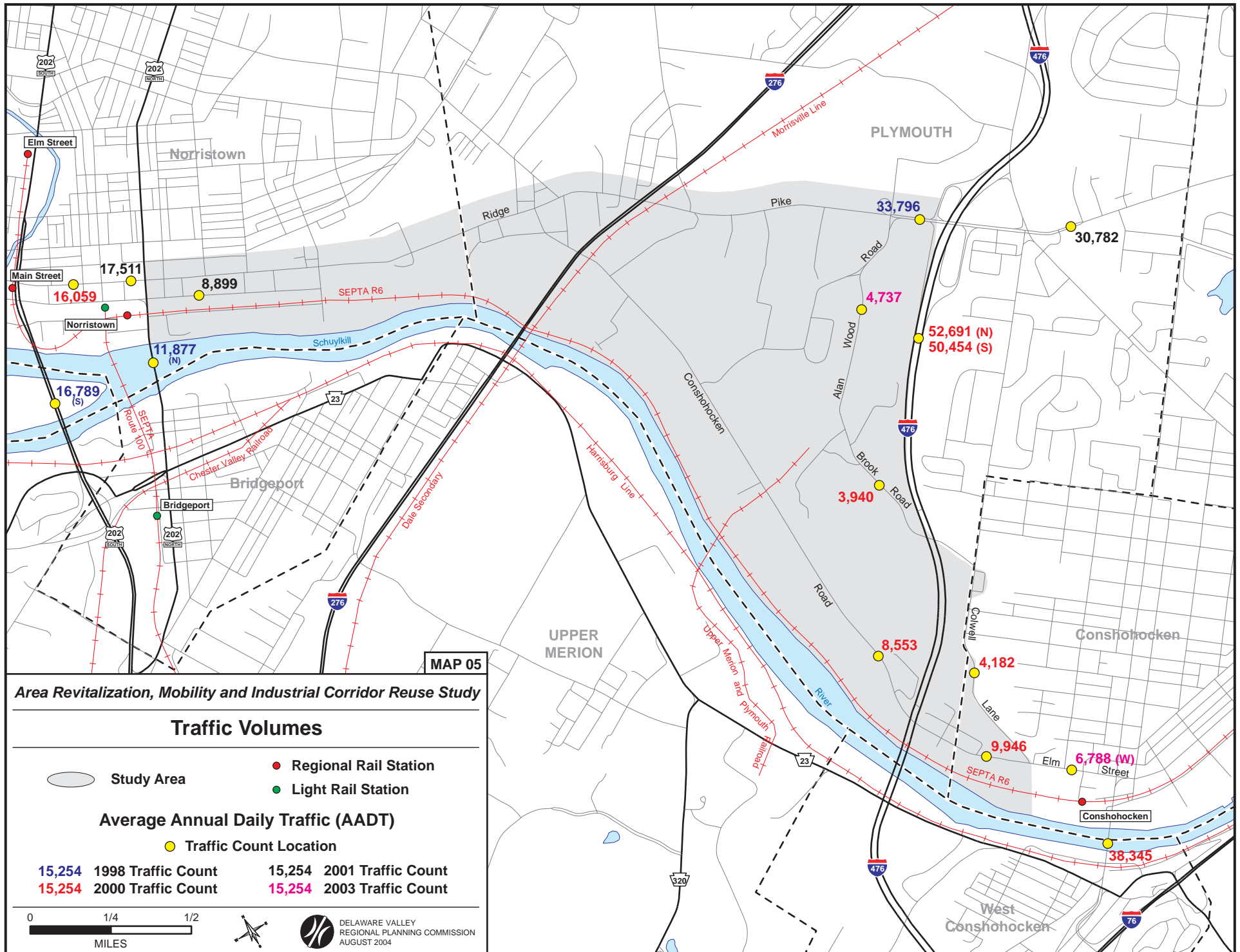
With the rail and bus routes located around the periphery, the majority of the study area is not served by transit. In an effort to provide some transportation to the residents in Connaghtown, as well as other parts of Conshohocken, the GVFTMA provides bus service that connects riders to local shopping destinations, such as the Metroplex Shopping Center. The Rambler's hours of operation are limited, as service is provided only hourly at each stop, between 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on weekdays and Saturdays. While the feasibility of the service had been in question, recent increase in ridership resulted in GVFTMA expanding service to the Plymouth Meeting Mall, at the intersection of the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the Mid-County Expressway.

Traffic Volumes

The study area suffers from traffic congestion, particularly at or near the three corners of the study area: at the intersection of Ridge Pike and Alan Wood Road; at the Matsonford Bridge; and in downtown Norristown. With additional development proposed and underway, traffic volumes will likely increase. **Map 5** provides some insight into the level of vehicular traffic affecting the study area. It is important to note that some of the AADT counts have probably risen since they were collected.



The accessible location and the presence of various types of land uses create a common mix of truck, commuter and shopping trips throughout the study area.



Location	1998 Traffic Count	2000 Traffic Count	2001 Traffic Count	2003 Traffic Count
Elm Street				
Main Street		16,059		
Norristown				
SEPTA R6				
SEPTA Route 107				
16,789 (S)	16,789			
11,877 (N)				
17,511				
8,899				
33,796				
30,782				
4,737				
52,691 (N) 50,454 (S)				
3,940				
8,553				
4,182				
9,946				
6,788 (W)				
38,345				



SECTION

3

Transportation Projects

To help alleviate some of the traffic congestion while promoting sound development and enhancing the existing land use patterns, a myriad of transportation projects have been proposed or are underway throughout the study area and beyond. These transportation projects are depicted on **Map 6**, based upon the Montgomery County Planning Commission's Crossroads Transportation Plan and updates provided by this study's SAC members; **Table 7** provides written descriptions of these projects corresponding to the numbers assigned on the map.

Table 7: Potential & Current Transportation Projects

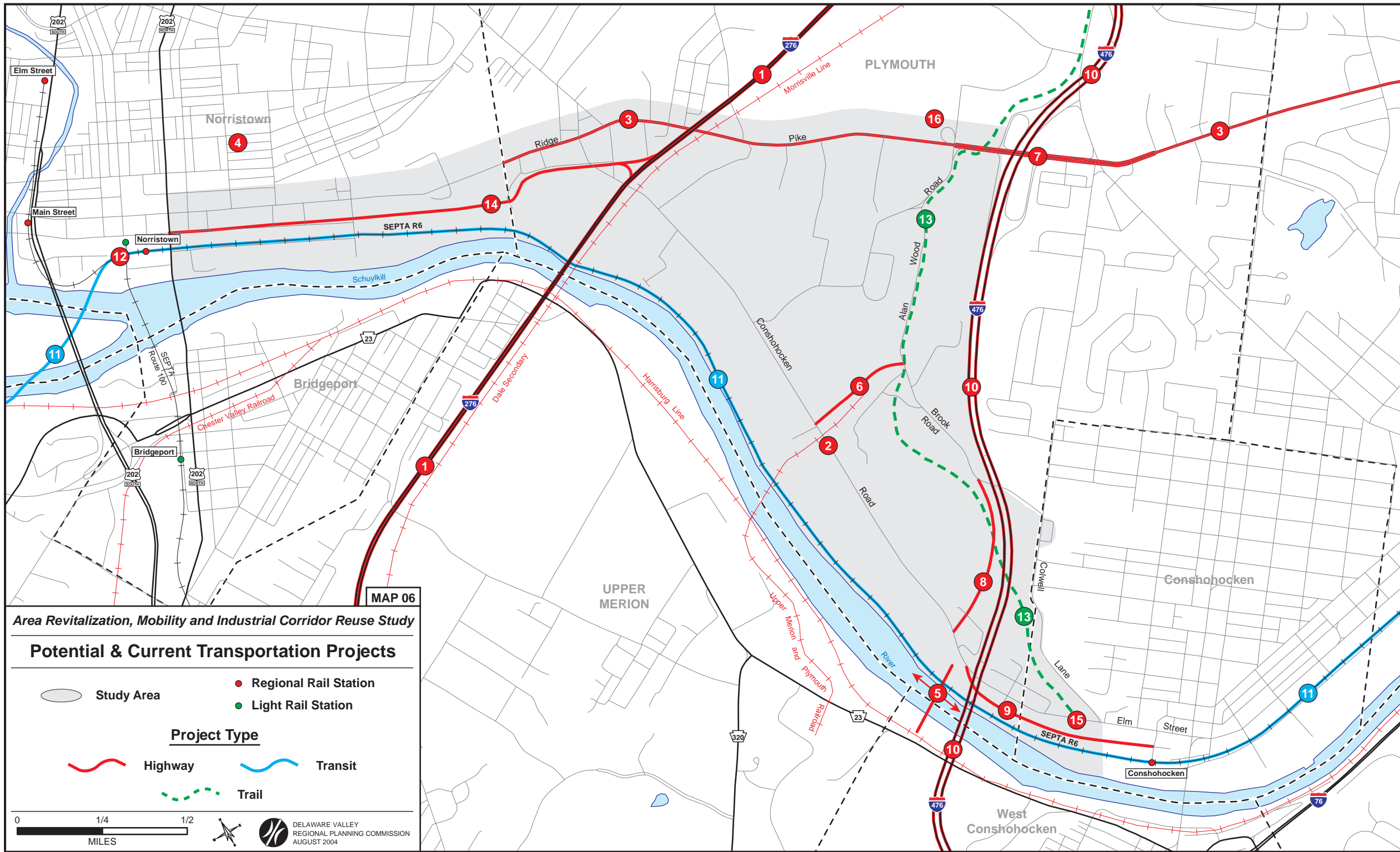
#	Project	Description	Status (03/05)
1	I-276 PA Turnpike (Norristown Interchange to Valley Forge Interchange)	Widen to 6 lanes.	Construction expected to be completed in summer 2006.
2	Conshohocken Road Bridges	Replace bridges over railroads.	Preliminary design underway.
3	Ridge Pike (Norristown Borough line to Philadelphia City line)	Reconstruct. Add center turn lane (Norristown to Butler section). Add turns at selected intersections.	Preliminary engineering underway.
4	Norristown Signal System	Upgrade signals at 32 intersections and integrate into a closed loop system.	Bidding process expected in 2005.
5	Schuylkill River Bridge (the line marked "5" on Map 6 is used only to denote that a study is proposed, rather than a specified project location for the bridge)	Construct a new bridge over the Schuylkill River (between Norristown/Bridgeport in the north and Whitemarsh/Lower Merion in the south).	Conceptual proposal. Included in DVRPC's Fiscal Year 2006 Work Program.
6	Alan Wood Road Extension (Conshohocken Road to Brook Road)	Construct new connector road.	Conceptual proposal.
7	I-476 at Ridge Pike	Signalize northbound on/off ramp and allow left turns to/from Ridge Pike.	Conceptual proposal.

Continued on next page.

Table 7: Potential & Current Transportation Projects (continued)

#	Project	Description	Status (03/05)
8	Brook Road Extension	Extend Brook Road parallel to I-476 to new intersection with Conshohocken Road.	Conceptual proposal.
9	Stoddard Street Extension (Conshohocken Road to Oak Street)	Construct new extended road along north side of SEPTA tracks.	Conceptual proposal.
10	I-476 Mid County Expressway (Chemical Road to I-76)	Reconstruction.	Preliminary design underway. Construction expected to begin in 3-5 years.
11	Schuylkill Valley Metro	Provide rail service from Reading to Philadelphia via Montgomery Crossroads.	EIS completed in 2001. Stalled for a period of time. PennDOT Task Force convened in 2004. Recommendations to be released in 2005. Funding for engineering being sought.
12	SEPTA Parking Expansion at Norristown Transportation Center	Construct 550 space parking garage, with terminal facility for bus service.	Construction expected to begin July 2005; to be completed in 2007.
13	Cross County Trail	Construct new trail from Schuylkill Trail in Conshohocken to Lower Moreland Township.	Portions have been completed by developers. Rest of trail expected to be completed to Fort Washington in 2007.
14	Lafayette Street Corridor Project	Construct electronic toll interchange at Conshohocken Road and PA Turnpike. Extend Lafayette Street to Conshohocken Road. Construct interchange from US-202 Dannehower Bridge to Lafayette Street.	Environmental studies to be completed in summer 2005.
15	Elm Street Bridge (over Plymouth Creek and Cross County Trail)	Partially remove and replace bridge.	Design underway.
16	Ridge Pike/Alan Wood Road Intersection Improvement	Replace jug handle with left turn lane(s) for cars traveling west on Ridge Pike onto southward direction of Alan Wood Road.	Spending for the design and engineering plan approved by Council.






Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission (2001); Plymouth Township, Norristown Municipality, Conshohocken Borough, DVRPC (2005)

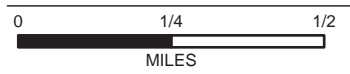


MAP 06

Area Revitalization, Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study

Potential & Current Transportation Projects

-  Regional Rail Station
 -  Light Rail Station
- Project Type**
-  Highway
 -  Transit
 -  Trail



DELAWARE VALLEY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 2004

BACKSIDE

OF

MAP

6



Several of the transportation projects will create a significantly larger impact on the study area than others. The Lafayette Street corridor project is intended to extend Lafayette Street, creating a new interchange at the Pennsylvania Turnpike and providing greater accessibility into Norristown. Along with this accessibility, the opportunity for economic development and redevelopment will be enhanced for the area.

In order to help alleviate some of the traffic congestion and improve circulation, an engineering study is being conducted for Ridge Pike. With commercial establishments stretching along both sides of the street, making turns from and onto Ridge Pike becomes potentially treacherous. Occasional pedestrians crossing the street add to the concern for safety measures implementation. The study will provide solutions to this current problem, including the creation of a center turn lane.

Recent heightened interest has developed regarding the study of a new bridge to be located somewhere between Norristown and Bridgeport in the north and Whitemarsh and Lower Merion Township in the south. DVRPC recently rated the study for inclusion in its Fiscal Year 2006 Planning Work Program, and political support is being actively pursued. The study would assess existing and future traffic on the regional level and evaluate the need for the construction of a new bridge between these locations. (The symbolic line labeled "5" on Map 6 is used to acknowledge the potential study area, rather than pinpoint the exact location of the bridge.)

The Schuylkill Valley Metro (SVM) is a regional transportation project that would traverse the study area, with a route that extends from Philadelphia to Reading. It would provide rail passenger service by utilizing existing tracks, and two of its proposed 34 stations would be located in Norristown and Conshohocken at the existing Regional Rail stations. This project originated in the 1990s. A Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement was completed in 2001, but its progress had stalled due to funding problems and operational issues. In 2004, a multi-agency task force was created through PennDOT to address these issues and to move forward with a more cost effective alternative. The report of the task force is expected in 2005.

Other important transportation projects that are less grand in scale, but which are intended to provide significant traffic relief or improved access include: new connector roads from Alan Wood Road and Brook Road to different points on Conshohocken Road to help disperse and re-circulate the existing and future traffic generated at the Marketplace at Plymouth and elsewhere, including the likely addition of commercial stores on the currently vacant nearby parcel; the construction of a parking garage with a capacity for 550 vehicles at the Norristown Transportation Center (though outside of the study area, this project will likely impact the county seat's downtown); and the completion of the Cross County Trail that will link to the Schuylkill River Trail and traverse in a northeast direction to Lower Moreland Township. In addition to the projects listed in the table, Conshohocken is currently considering an expansion of and improvements to their Regional Rail station to better accommodate more commuters.

Commercial Market

DVRPC attempted to contact real estate professionals to provide some insights on the commercial and housing markets in the study area. While most of the inquiries remained unanswered, Ms. Rose Penny, the Market Research Director from a regional office of Colliers L&A, offered her knowledge and observations on the commercial market. Her evaluation mainly focused on the study area, except the trash-to-steam plant on Alan Wood Road, and her retail analysis included all commercial establishments that are not considered office or industrial. What follows are her responses, with minor editorial changes, to questions posed by DVRPC in February 2004.

Norristown

- 1) *What is the vacancy rate for retail and offices, or other commercial spaces, in the study area?*

Overall commercial: 31.4%
 Office space: 34.6%
 Retail space: 55.4%
 Industrial space: 34.6%

- 2) *What is the turnover in rentals and ownership of property?*

There has been a higher turnover in rentals in the last two years, particularly for tenants leaving the market.

- 3) *What are the spaces renting for, by square foot? What are they selling for?*

Office rents: \$18.50-\$22.50 plus electric
 Industrial rents: \$4.50-\$5.50 triple net
 Retail rents: not available

Office sales: no recent sales in study area, but \$45.00-\$80.00 for other Norristown buildings
 Industrial sales: \$28.00-33.00
 Retail sales: \$60.00-\$80.00

- 4) *What is the breakdown of the different classifications of offices in the Norristown study area?*

Class	SF	%
A	100,000	28.5
B	139,137	39.7
C	111,292	31.8
Total	350,429	100.0

There are actually more Class C buildings in the Norristown market, but the percent is lower because these are smaller buildings. Conversely, there is only one Class A building, but this is a comparatively larger building which accounts for the higher percentage. The same is true of the office market in the Plymouth study area.

5) *Are the landlords mainly local?*

Yes.

6) *How do the spaces and desire for spaces in downtown Norristown compare to nearby communities?*

Because of a lack of new commercial construction, Norristown generally has a lower quality of space than neighboring markets, such as King of Prussia and Conshohocken. Demand, from an office standpoint, is driven by the Montgomery County Courthouse and the need to be near other County agencies. Unfortunately, with high vacancies in surrounding markets and the resulting decrease in rental rates, companies that do not have a specific need to be in Norristown have been able to “trade up” to higher quality spaces.

7) *What are the reasons given by those who want to move in or move out of the area?*

Reasons to move in: low cost space; proximity to County government

Reasons to move out: need for more modern space; need for more easily accessible location

8) *For those looking to rent or own property here, where else are they looking?*

Gulph Mills, Conshohocken and Plymouth Meeting

9) *What has been the trend (more/less vacancies; types of tenants; prices) in the last 10 and 25 years?*

Vacancy rates have increased in the last 10 years as former single tenant industrial and office buildings have been renovated and turned into multi-tenant facilities. Rentals rates have not increased significantly, but sale prices have increased. While we do not have a 25 year trend available for this market, it is likely that the vacancy rates have increased due to the loss of manufacturing companies.

10) *Where do you see the market heading in the next 10 and 25 years?*

This market has the potential to be revitalized in the next 10 to 25 years. Neighboring commercial markets such as King of Prussia will become increasingly built-out. Norristown currently has more affordable housing than other Montgomery County locations and may benefit from infill residential development as buildable land becomes scarce and municipalities adopt controlled growth policies. A residential renaissance is likely to help office and retail markets. Improvements to Norristown’s turnpike access and KOZ sites will also make the area more competitive in attracting business.

Plymouth

1) *What is the vacancy rate for the industrial area?*

Industrial space: 5.6%

With the exception of one or two smaller vacancies, this industrial area has remained solidly occupied.

2) *What is the turnover in rentals and ownership in property in the industrial area?*

There has been a minimal turnover due to significant increase in land values surrounding the Mid-County Interchange above what most industrial uses can justify. New office construction and hotel construction has limited any industrial opportunities from the King of Prussia/Conshohocken markets through the Mid-County Interchange area.

3) *How often do you get inquiries for Plymouth's industrial space and how does that compare to other nearby industrial spaces?*

We received inquiries almost everyday for the immediate Mid-County Interchange area. Germantown Pike and Ridge Pike, however, are not constructed or designed for "good" truck access to the Mid-County Interchange, if the location is a half mile or more distant. This has limited industrial (and office) development from Mid-County to Collegeville. The Route 422 corridor traffic at Oaks provides limited relief. Land zoned industrial in Conshohocken (former Lukens ground, for example) is being land banked for commercial development versus industrial.

4) *What about Ridge Pike (vacancy rate, turnovers, inquiries)?*

There has not been much turnover in rentals and only two buildings have changed owners in the last three to four years. One of these was Concelli's purchase of a warehouse building for storage. Inquiries are from wholesale distribution or service providers trying to get a location close to the Mid-County Interchange.



Industrial businesses comprise the majority of land use in the Plymouth study area. The large ISG steel plant is located in the southeastern part of Plymouth and has been a mainstay in the region.

- 5) *What are the properties going for in terms of prices in the industrial area and along Ridge Pike (vacant lots and those already built on)?*

United StorAll purchased four acres from Recycle Metals on Alan Wood Road, across from the driveway of the new IKEA, in excess of \$500,000 per acre to build a new self storage facility. IKEA's purchase from Auto Nation prior to that also was in the same price range.

Currently, no land on Ridge Pike is priced for industrial development. Additionally, the new slip-ramp for the Pennsylvania Turnpike, planned for Ridge Pike adjacent to the Turnpike overpass, will further reduce existing industrial uses at that location on Ridge Pike, close to the intersection of Ridge Pike and Conshohocken Road.

- 6) *Have you had non-industrial businesses ask about vacancies in the industrial area or non-auto businesses along Ridge Pike?*

Yes, numerous inquiries: approximately 20 percent are related to home and design uses; the remainder are wholesale distribution or service providers trying to get a location close to the Mid-County Interchange. Alternate locations at the I-476/95 convergence (Delaware County) do not provide dependable access to Mid-County and NE Extension markets due to I-476 congestion.

- 7) *What is the breakdown of the different classifications of offices in the Plymouth study area?*

Class	SF	%
A	90,000	22.7
B	174,095	43.9
C	132,109	33.3
Total	396,204	100.0

There are actually more Class C buildings in the Plymouth market, but the percent is lower because these are smaller buildings. Conversely, there is only one Class A building, but this is a comparatively larger building which accounts for the higher percentage. The same is true of the office market in the Norristown study area.

- 8) *What are the reasons given by those who want to move in or move out of the area?*

Reasons to move in: companies who need closer proximity to their customer market or their personnel residences without having to travel Interstate 476, 276 or 76 and contend with traffic delays

Reasons to move out: the only recent move out was Sharp Packaging, which reportedly moved from Conshohocken to Lehigh Valley for closer proximity to new executives' residences, a better labor market and avoidance of Ridge Pike traffic congestion, which required Sharp to hire local police to direct traffic on Ridge Pike at shift changes

- 9) *For those looking to rent or own property here, where else are they looking?*
The usual request is Mid-County (Plymouth and Conshohocken) east to Willow Grove. Industrial prospects avoid King of Prussia due to traffic congestion.
- 10) *What has been the trend in the last 10 and 25 years?*
In the last 10 years, there has been a conversion away from industrial to office/retail/hospitality. In the last 25 years, there has been a conversion away from industrial space, with the elimination of heavier industry that was based in the Conshohocken/Norristown corridor.
- 11) *Where do you see the market heading in the next 10 and 25 years?*
Provided that road improvements are made for better “feeder” route access to the Mid-County Interchange (similar to the Route 202/422/PA Turnpike project), denser development will continue around Mid-County for hi-rise office and retail. Multi-family development (similar to that planned for Bridgeport at the former Continental Business Center) will also continue. Commuter bus/rail, if implemented in Pottstown, etc., will provide some relief.

Traffic access for Conshohocken from I-476 or otherwise including new bridges will have to occur to provide relief for the Mid-County Interchange market.

Conshohocken

- 1) *What is the current vacancy rate of the nearby office developments (the office high rises)? Have you seen any changes lately?*
The vacancy rate for the high-rise office buildings (Four Falls and Tower Bridges) is currently 42 percent. The newest building, 300 Four Falls, added almost 300,000 of new space to the market during the last half of 2003. Although the building has signed four tenants in the last six months, there have been no deals over 25,000 square feet.
- 2) *What are the office spaces going for in terms of price? How do they compare to other nearby office spaces?*
Deals at 300 Four Falls and most of the Tower Bridge Buildings have been in the \$27-\$28 range with escalations. However, Eight Tower Bridge, which was completed in 2002 has remained substantially vacant, is signing deals in the \$23-\$24 range. These rates are higher than the rest of the Conshohocken market, where the renovation projects, such as Millennium, Quaker Park and Lee Park have deals ranging from the high teens to \$23 per square foot. The new buildings are also offering substantial tenant improvement allowances (up to \$45 per square foot). Class A space in Plymouth Meeting is leasing between \$23-\$28 per square foot.
- 3) *What are the reasons people give for wanting to locate their offices here or build offices here?*
Proximity to the I-476 and I-76, a location out of the congestion of the 202 corridor and quality of space.
-

Current Developments

The projects listed in **Table 8** are not situated within the study area (see **Map 7**), but will most likely have a significant impact on the existing uses and traffic circulation in the study area due to their close proximity, types and intensity of developments. The majority of these developments are housing and offices, mainly clustered near the river and the Matsonford Bridge in Conshohocken. As the occupancy rate of existing office space has not lived up to the expectations of developers, additional office construction has been tempered, and some are being replaced by residential construction. Limited retail developments can also be found in one of the Conshohocken office developments and as part of the Main and Cherry Street garage project in Norristown. The retail component of the garage will be located on the ground level in keeping with Norristown's revitalization efforts to create economic activity on the street. The parking component will accommodate the larger need for parking spaces anticipated with the future revitalized county seat compared with the current surface lot. The developments will generate more trips and potentially greater traffic congestion. The transportation projects discussed earlier should help alleviate this added congestion. Congestion may be further decreased if the Conshohocken Regional Rail station undergoes renovations (i.e., more parking spaces) to allow for greater use of the public transit system.

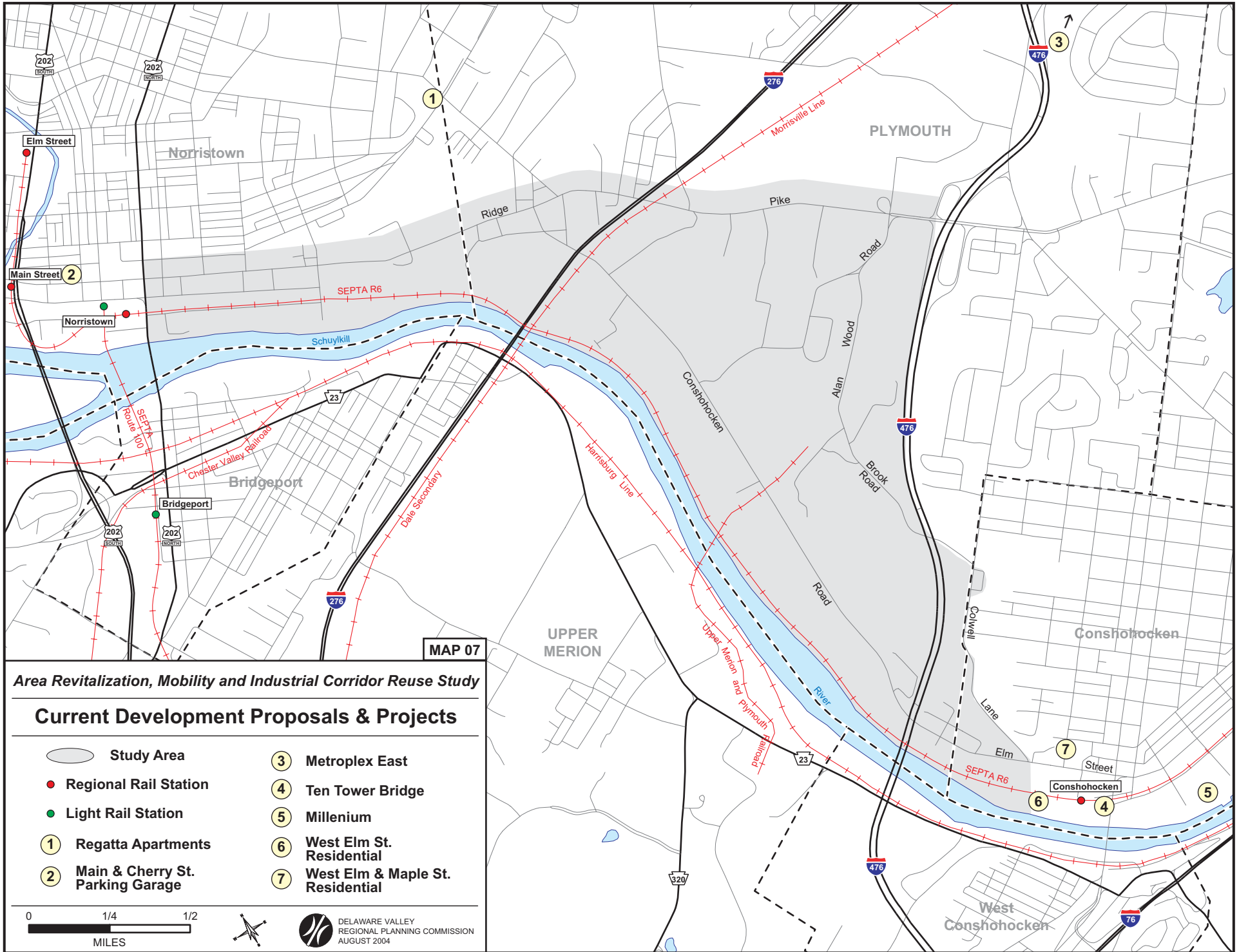
Connaghtown, at the Plymouth/Conshohocken border, is mainly a residential area consisting of older single-family homes and duplexes. One of the Class A office towers in Conshohocken can be seen in the distance.



Table 8: Current Development Proposals & Projects

#	Project Name	Developer	Description	Status
1	Regatta Apartments (Norristown)	Dewey Commercial	342 Townhomes/Apartments	Currently completing Phase 2 of 3
2	Main & Cherry Street Parking Garage (Norristown)	Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority; Municipality of Norristown	393 Parking Spaces; 1,900 SF Retail	Feasibility study completed; Funding underway
3	Metroplex East (Plymouth)	Brandywine Realty Trust	Phase 1: 125,000 SF; 5 stories tall @ 25,000 SF per floor. Phase 2: 339,000 SF; 12 stories tall @ 28,250 SF per floor. 6-Level Parking Garage with 1,651 spaces	Approved in phases
4	Ten Tower Bridge (Conshohocken)	Oliver Tyrone Pulver	130,000 SF Office	Approved; Open in 2007
5	Millennium Development (Conshohocken)	O'Neill Properties	1) Office/Retail – SF to be determined; 2) 375 Multi-family Units; 3) 1,000 Multi-family Units	1) Proposed; 2) Under construction; 3) Proposed
6	West Elm Street Residential (Conshohocken)	DR Horton, Inc.	387 Units	Approved
7	West Elm Street & Maple Street Residential Development (Conshohocken)	The Shaffer Group	22 Condominium Units	Completed; Leasing

Source: Plymouth Township, Norristown Municipality and Conshohocken Borough, DVRPC (2005)





SECTION**4****Goals**

Below is a set of goals, agreed upon by the SAC members, to help guide the future direction of the study area. These goals, along with the area's existing assets, form the basis for the recommended implementation strategies to address the area's needs and problems (refer to Assets, Problems and Needs subsections). They also form the basis for the recommended land use changes (refer to Proposed Land Use Changes subsection).

Ensure that future development in the study area enhances the quality of life for residents, while generating new economic activity, without being a detriment to the livelihood of presently stable businesses.

Ensure that future residential and office developments benefit a range of household incomes and business types (start-ups, established; small-, mid-, large-sized businesses).

Plan for the future growth of the study area's regional and local economy in conjunction with the recognition and/or preservation of its historical industrial past.

Establish a method and strategy for informational exchange to help ensure better integration of needs between the study area's citizenry, business communities and public agencies as well as to communicate ongoing revitalization/development efforts to the general public, within and outside the study area.

Establish a variety of public transit services and amenities that provide convenient and easily accessible options for study area residents and employees.

Maintain a coordinated system of roadways and multi-modal options that accommodates both local and regional traffic, facilitates the continued growth of new desirable developments and that is responsive to the residential needs of the area.

Provide aesthetically pleasing and functional streetscapes that take into account pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and drivers as part of the study area's revitalization efforts and/or continued development.

Establish a multi-municipal strategy for continuous riverfront development that would include passive and active recreation easily accessible and tailored for residents, nearby employees and visitors, without degrading the riverfront's environmental resources.

Support the transportation projects currently underway, including the Ridge Pike reconstruction and the Lafayette Street corridor extension and interchange with the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Support may include maximizing and building upon the benefits that will be created by these transportation projects through additional economic development, residential options, pedestrian linkages, streetscape improvements and public transit services and amenities.



New businesses are needed in downtown Norristown to attract a wider variety of consumers throughout the day and in the evening. Streetscape improvements may provide an incentive to businesses thinking of relocating into the area, as that will enhance the consumer's shopping experience.

SECTION

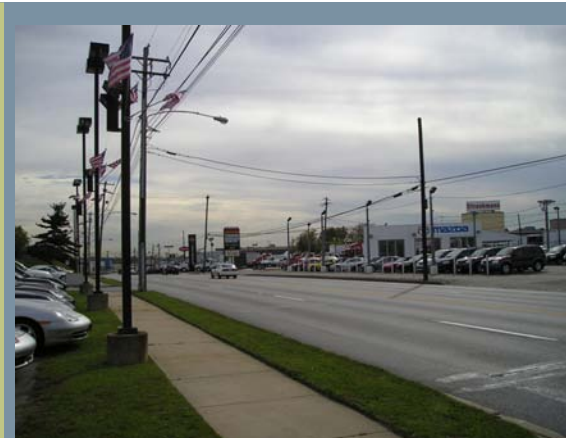
5

Assets, Problems & Needs

With over 1,200 acres between three vastly different municipalities, the study area has a variety of assets that attract businesses and residents, but also an assortment of problems and needs that require addressing for the purpose of achieving the area's stated goals. Among the study area's assets are: its regional accessibility via the highway and public transit systems; the Schuylkill River and existing recreational trails; a strong industrial economy in Plymouth; an office boom in Conshohocken; and a growing revitalization effort in Norristown. Some of these assets, however, are limited in scope, either due to the span of their locational reach (i.e., public transit access is limited or lacking in certain areas) or due to the extent of their features (i.e., recreational trails need additional attention to enhance user-friendliness) and, thus, are included in the problems or needs table below.

The problems described in this section refer to the existing conditions that pose difficulties for the study area municipalities, while the needs refer to the aspects of the study area that are not necessarily problems, but could use additional attention or improvements. Other problems identified in the study area include: traffic congestion; overcoming a negative image in order to attract new development (in the case of Norristown); development constraints of brownfields; the separation of regional and local needs; and streetscapes that sometimes restrict functionality and impede development. Needs in the study area include: assessing the overall impact of the transportation projects; preserving housing, including affordable units, amidst new commercial development; providing better pedestrian/bicyclist access; and anticipating and planning for potential change in the economy. Recommendations are suggested for the identified problems and needs.

Auto-dealerships make up a prominent portion of the businesses along Ridge Pike.



Assets

Table 9 summarizes the range of assets in the study area by various functional categories and describes each as they pertain to the relevant municipality or municipalities.

Table 9: Study Area Assets			
#	Municipality	Type	Description
1	Areawide	Regional Accessibility/ Highways	The study area is easily accessible by regional highways, with I-276 (Pennsylvania Turnpike) and I-476 (Blue Route) traversing through Plymouth and Route 202 traversing through Norristown. The City of Philadelphia is roughly 15 (Conshohocken) to 20 (Norristown) miles away from the study area and roughly 25 (Conshohocken) to 32 (Norristown) minutes away from the study area during peak hours.
2	Norristown	Regional Accessibility/ Public Transit	<p>The Norristown study area is well served by SEPTA Regional Rail R6, Suburban Trolley Rail 100, and Bus Routes 96 (DeKalb Street), 98 (DeKalb Street), 99 (DeKalb Street) and 97 (Main Street, Arch Street). In addition, three other Bus Routes (91, 93 and 131) run just north of the Norristown study area.</p> <p>Future rail service will include a stop along the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro.</p> <p>Commuters from the Transportation Center will benefit from a parking garage that is scheduled to open in 2007. This will possibly eliminate the Main Street Station.</p>
3	Plymouth	Regional Accessibility/ Public Transit	The Plymouth study area is served by SEPTA Bus Routes 97 (Ridge Pike) and 95 (Marketplace at Plymouth).
4	Conshohocken	Regional Accessibility/ Public Transit	<p>The Conshohocken Rambler, a bus service provided by the Greater Valley Forge TMA, provides hourly service to otherwise unserved local streets. Within the study area, it stops at the corner of Light and Old Elm streets. (Con: does not run on Sundays nor before 9:00 AM and after 4:00 PM on the other six days)</p> <p>Outside of the Conshohocken study area is the SEPTA Regional Rail R6 and Bus Routes 95 (Fayette/Butler streets) and 97 (Spring Mill Avenue and Fayette/Butler streets).</p> <p>Future rail service will include a stop along the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro.</p>

Continued on next page.

Table 9: Study Area Assets (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Description
5	Areawide	Future Regional and Local Accessibility and Amenities	A multitude of transportation projects are proposed or underway throughout the study area to address traffic congestion and circulation and pedestrian/bicyclist accessibility and recreation. (Please refer to the Transportation Projects subsection.)
6	Areawide	Regional and Local Amenities/ River and Trails	<p>The Schuylkill River, which is a designated National and State Heritage Area, borders the southwestern portion of the entire study area and beyond. The Schuylkill River Trail is developed along certain sections of the river, including the entire portion of the study area, and is open for pedestrians (and their pets), bicyclists and in-line skaters. The study area portion has the potential of becoming a more attractive and active corridor by improving its recreational amenities. The entire length of land along the Schuylkill River (over 100 miles) will eventually be developed into an uninterrupted trail.</p> <p>Additionally, other future trails that will be developed in the area are the Cross County Trail in Conshohocken, which will be a paved trail from the Schuylkill River Trail to Lower Moreland Township, and the Chester Valley Trail in Norristown, which already is a paved trail into Exton and will eventually extend into Downingtown, Chester County.</p>
7	Areawide	Regional and Local Amenities/ Historic Sites	The municipalities share an historical past as an industrial and commercial area, due to their proximity to Philadelphia and the Schuylkill River. In the areas particular to DVRPC's study, the structures still standing in Norristown attest to its past as do the industries in Plymouth and some of the residential areas, which were former housing for steel plant employees, along the Plymouth/Conshohocken boundary.
8	Norristown	Economic Development/ Existing and Potential	While the county seat still struggles with economic development, some significant efforts and progress have recently been made in the area, such as the Revitalization Plan and the location of the new DEP Southeast Regional Office (just outside of the study area). Furthermore, Norristown has taken steps to assist existing and future businesses by hiring a Business Development Coordinator for the municipality, providing historical lighting on Main Street, developing a wayfinding signage system and planning, with the county, for the Lafayette Street reconfiguration. Other past, but ongoing economic development efforts include the Greater Norristown Corporation, the borough's Small Business Assistance Center, facade improvement grant program for historic commercial and multi-family structures, and designated Enterprise Zone.

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Table 9: Study Area Assets (continued)			
#	Municipality	Type	Description
9	Plymouth	Economic Development/ Existing and Regional Shopping Destination	Plymouth's existing industrial area is home to a steady number of industrial companies, including ISG (formerly Luken Steel), Chemalloy, Powerline Packaging and JDM Material's Company as well as the Fire Academy and some professional offices and warehouses. Ridge Pike is dotted with auto-related businesses, and the Ridge Pike/Alan Wood area is home to a number of big-box retailers at the Marketplace, including IKEA and Home Depot. Just outside of the study area is the Metroplex, another big-box shopping center. (Con: major traffic congestion)
10	Conshohocken	Economic Development/ Existing	Conshohocken has experienced a boom in office development (though not fully occupied) near the Matsonford Bridge, including the ongoing Millennium project. This has brought in further private and public financial investments and tax revenue to a once declining borough. (Con: major traffic congestion) The Conshohocken study area is part of the borough's Riverfront Development Zone (Revitalization Plan) and the future Cross County Trail.

Source: DVRPC (2004)



The adjacency of the Schuylkill River provides a significant recreational and economic resource to the study area. The addition of a pleasantly usable and continuous trail strengthens this asset.

Problems

The problems described in **Table 10** include previously discussed problems, along with others, with recommendations to address each problem. These recommendations are categorized and color-coded as **short-term (immediately to two years)**, **medium-term (three to five years)** and **long-term (six to ten years)**, in terms of their anticipated timeline for implementation, dependent upon their priority and expected level of ease or difficulty to achieve.

Table 10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations

#	Municipality	Type	Problem	Recommendation
1	Areawide	Traffic Congestion	Though a variety of transportation improvement projects are either proposed or underway, the study area currently suffers from significant congestion due to its location, pass-through commuters, aging roadways and circulation system, and circuitous access through the study area. Some of these hot spots include the eastern end of Ridge Pike (as it narrows down with no left turn lane available to turn into Franklin Street, connecting to Lafayette Street), the Marketplace at Plymouth and nearby Metroplex (and the traffic leading to and from these centers) and the Conshohocken office development vicinity.	Besides the evaluation of traffic congestion for each project studied, the establishment of a formalized review committee (i.e., subcommittee of Schuylkill Valley Transportation Coalition) comprising the affected municipalities on an as-needed basis will help to address congestion issues on a regional scale. Along with the reconstruction or retrofitting of roadways, solutions to alleviate traffic congestion may include traffic resignalization, installation of new traffic lights or signs at busy or confusing intersections where they currently do not exist (Ridge Pike), new roadways on land being developed that allow for alternative through-routes (LFT Realty site; see Proposed Land Use Changes) and aggressive promotion of public transit usage (see below). (County, PennDOT, Norristown, Plymouth, Conshohocken, SEPTA)

Continued on next page.

Table 10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Problem	Recommendation
2	Plymouth & Conshohocken	Local Accessibility/ Public Transit	<p>The Plymouth study area is underserved by public transit. Besides the northern outskirts (SEPTA bus routes 97 (Ridge Pike) and 95 (Marketplace at Plymouth)), no other public transit makes stops in this area. This void eliminates the possibility of reducing private vehicular traffic as employees in the industrial area, visitors to the golf range and skatepark and residents along the Plymouth/Conshohocken boundary may take advantage of this service, if provided. The SEPTA Regional Rail R6 traverses Plymouth between its stops in Conshohocken and Norristown, and there is no Plymouth stop planned for the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro.</p> <p>As stated in the chart under Assets, the Conshohocken Rambler, while providing a service in an area that was ignored by transit, is limited in its hours of operation.</p> <p>While the SEPTA Regional Rail R6 Conshohocken stop is located near the study area’s residents, it is not convenient or safe for people who may wish to walk to and from this stop because of the vehicular traffic and lack of pedestrian-friendly streets in the area. In addition, those who are able to drive to the stop have to contend with a congested parking lot. The vehicular overflow that results encroaches upon area businesses and adjacent residential neighborhoods. The station itself is little more than a bus shelter and lacks adequate accommodations for its riders.</p>	<p>Establish a new SEPTA rail stop in Plymouth along the existing R6 line or the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro, with potential shuttle services to and from this stop. If enough interest is shown, the shuttle service may be funded by the businesses it would serve. Although a long-term proposal, the consideration of this stop needs to be presented to SEPTA as soon as possible due to the lengthy planning process this type of project would entail. (SEPTA, County, Plymouth, area businesses)</p> <p>The Rambler should undergo a trial period to determine if rescheduling its hours of operation will provide needed service for the area that it may not currently be meeting. To address added cost, as with the above strategy, businesses that benefit from the Rambler may be willing to help fund its operation. Consideration should also include extending direct service to the Marketplace, which would also increase the potential number of businesses willing to contribute financially to the Rambler’s operation. (GVFTMA, Conshohocken, Plymouth, area businesses)</p> <p>Alternatively, extension of the existing Route 95 bus line into the Conshohocken/Plymouth study area may be more efficient and better suited to accommodate potential riders on a more frequent basis and during hours not presently being serviced. (SEPTA, Conshohocken, Plymouth)</p>

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Table 10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Problem	Recommendation
3	Norristown	Socio-Economic Issues and Image	<p>Norristown has long-standing image issues among those who live in the county seat and those who do not (i.e., potential businesses and potential residents), posing a significant obstacle to its revitalization. It is a problem of both perception and reality. Some of the factors affecting the municipality's image are: proximity to and concentration of institutional, social service and judicial facilities, such as the county prison, Norristown State Hospital, shelters and drug treatment facilities; the constrained disposable income of its residents; its property tax rate that is one of the highest in the county; and the limited budget of the municipality, hampering Norristown's financial support toward infrastructure improvements, economic development programs and general revitalization.</p>	<p>Conshohocken has expressed interest in working with SEPTA to upgrade the Regional Rail station facilities. (SEPTA, Conshohocken)</p> <p>Establish a public ridership program that promotes the use of public transit and awards and provides incentives to employers with a percentage of workers who take public transit. This will help support the need and operation of a shuttle bus, the Rambler and/or an extension of the Route 95 line. (County, Plymouth, Conshohocken, SEPTA, GVFTMA)</p> <p>Norristown needs to aggressively maintain its current revitalization efforts, including self-promotion and the establishment of public-private partnerships. Without hindering the process of those that benefit the community, the municipality needs to monitor development that is occurring "organically" to ensure its compatibility with their stated goals (Redevelopment Area Plan, Economic Revitalization Strategy) and planned developments. Norristown's efforts to entice residents of higher-income should also include efforts to minimize the creation of enclaves and the separation of rich and poor. The municipality should also assist in creating a basis for interaction between its residents and its businesses/workers. Ideally, a significant percentage of its workers would relocate to the municipality to live. This can be aided by the establishment of a "live where you work" program that provides incentives to employees who change residency and/or employers who encourage their employees to relocate to Norristown.</p>

Continued on next page.

Table 10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Problem	Recommendation
				<p>Furthermore, incentives should be provided to encourage employers to hire qualified existing local residents, with additional consideration given to employers who also provide training to potential local workers. To stand out from other revitalization processes by other municipalities, Norristown, especially as the county seat, should develop creative initiatives that will provide a model for other communities. This form of leadership will help to improve its current lackluster image. (Norristown, residents, businesses, County, County Industrial Development Corporation)</p>
4	Norristown & Plymouth	Development Constraints/ Brownfields	<p>As communities that developed around manufacturing industries, the study area consists of some brownfields that are environmentally unsafe and take up land that may otherwise be used for something socially and economically productive. The current efforts to redevelop particular brownfield sites need to continue in order to maximize the study area's land use and quality of life.</p>	<p>To encourage redevelopment in existing brownfields, particularly in the case of Norristown, municipalities need to help alleviate the burden of environmental clean-up for those businesses with a genuine interest in redeveloping these sites, but which lack the financial means to shoulder the full expense of clean-up. Preparatory actions municipalities may engage in include testing for and assessing contamination and inventorying these sites for development-readiness. Aside from hiring experts to do the actual clean-up and the benefits available through the KOZ and Enterprise Zone designations in Norristown, municipalities may provide a combination of incentives for developers, such as partial funding for environmental clean-up, the donation (assuming government ownership) of the parcels for redevelopment and municipal recruitment of future tenants.</p>

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Table 10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Problem	Recommendation
5	Areawide	Development Constraints/ Lack of integration of regional and local needs	A clear delineation exists between development that addresses regional needs (commercial uses) and development that address local needs (residential uses). This may be less true for Norristown, and the potential for the integration of regional and local needs may be higher for this municipality due to the number of properties that may be redeveloped. Plymouth and Conshohocken, however, might also want to consider methods by which their residential areas will have better access to everyday conveniences.	<p>Municipalities may also try to come to an agreement with banks that will not penalize developers for the current contamination of these brownfield parcels. (Norristown, Plymouth, County, County Redevelopment Authority, State and Federal agencies)</p> <p>It would be beneficial for the clusters of residences in Plymouth and Conshohocken if the municipalities assess the possibility of including neighborhood-oriented businesses in the immediate area. If that is not possible, evaluation of the establishment of new pedestrian linkages to existing commercial areas (i.e., Fayette Street) as well as additional public transit service may be a viable substitute. The 100+ acres owned by Tornetta Realty Corporation may present opportunities for a mixture of development that serve both local residents and regional shoppers. Some collaboration between the developer and Plymouth may be needed. (Plymouth, Conshohocken, SEPTA, GVFTMA, private developers)</p> <p>Norristown's Redevelopment Area Plan proposes a greater mix of retail, restaurants, offices, culture and entertainment facilities, including a movie theater, convention center and hotel, within the study area. The proposed uses, if implemented as planned, will offer attractions for residents, employees and visitors and generate a downtown that stays "open" past normal work hours (see Illustrations 1a and 1b).</p>

Continued on next page.

Table 10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Problem	Recommendation
				<p>It would be additionally beneficial, however, if residential uses (as part of mixed-use and single-use buildings) had a greater presence in the downtown area, beyond what has been proposed. A glimpse of Norristown’s potential is recently evidenced via the surge in activity experienced by local businesses due to the employees working at the new DEP office building. (Norristown, County, County Redevelopment Authority, private developers)</p>
6	Areawide	Streetscapes	<p>The study area municipalities currently lack strong and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes. This is most pronounced in Norristown, where the density of commercial/retail properties is greatest and most in need of aesthetic enhancements to help in its revitalization. The roadway jurisdiction (state, county, local) can also present obstacles to street enhancements, if differing opinions between levels of government about the role of the facility are present.</p>	<p>Norristown needs to expand upon the streetscape improvement efforts they have and are currently undertaking and enforce its newly adapted design standards as new development arises. The potential prospects of big-named companies should not jeopardize the enforcement of these standards. Yet some flexibility at times may be needed, as Norristown needs to cultivate a reputation as a municipality friendly toward businesses. The formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) among the area businesses can help offset the labor and costs to the municipality, as the BID may take care of some of the streetscape issues, including cleanliness. (Norristown is currently conducting a BID feasibility study with funding through DVRPC’s TCDI program.) (Norristown, County)</p> <p>The engineering study to address access management issues along Ridge Pike needs to incorporate appropriate design standards that improve the urban design, land use and pedestrian accessibility of the corridor (see Illustrations 2a and 2b). These standards should also be incorporated into the County’s relevant comprehensive plan sections.</p>

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Table 10: Study Area Problems & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Problem	Recommendation
				<p>Although most of the existing businesses are geared toward vehicular traffic, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations should be considered for the businesses near Alan Wood Road (Regal Plaza, pizzeria, Marketplace, etc.) and for other types of businesses that may relocate on Ridge Pike. (Plymouth, County, State)</p> <p>While aesthetic improvements are not necessary to draw businesses into Plymouth’s already successful industrial area, attention to this issue will distinguish Plymouth as a community-sensitive township. It will also benefit the nearby residents and may better integrate with the riverfront trail/development. As industrial areas are not known for their aesthetically pleasing streetscapes, relatively small improvements can dramatically enhance the area. Recruitment of the area businesses to do their part will also boost their reputation. (A potential idea may be tastefully colorful designs or murals painted on the sides of buildings that face the street. Besides providing some vibrant colors to “soften” the area, it will also help bring a unifying element to this district.) (Plymouth, County, State, area businesses)</p> <p>Streetscape improvements in the Conshohocken study area should be tied into providing safer linkages between residents and the train station and businesses along Fayette Street. The borough’s zoning and subdivision/land development ordinances already require proposed and future developments to provide linkages to the riverfront. It will also be helpful if the borough’s future open space plan supports this type of improvement. (Conshohocken, County, SEPTA)</p>

Source: DVRPC (2004)



Illustration 1a: Downtown Norristown (present)

The county seat's downtown district lacks a clear boundary that distinguishes the area as a destination where a concentration of business and civic activities take place.

Photo: Brown & Keener Urban Design

**Illustration 1b: Downtown Norristown (after)**

Photo Simulation: Brown & Keener Urban Design

A combination of signage and streetscape improvements, along with crosswalk enhancements, can be used to signify a person's arrival to downtown Norristown. In addition to the destination signage overhead, directional signage at the corner provides visitors with an understanding of the existence, as well as location, of the different amenities in the area. Business owners can do their part by providing storefront facades that are visually stimulating. Color can be an important element throughout the downtown and incorporated in the signage, crosswalks and individual storefronts.

**Illustration 2a: Ridge Pike (present)**

Photo: Brown & Keener Urban Design

Ridge Pike is a typical example of a roadway whose businesses accommodate vehicular traffic, with most businesses set back behind parking lots and little provision for pedestrian use. At this particular corner, where Ridge Pike meets Alan Wood Road and where some non-auto retail businesses exist, more consideration to pedestrian use within individual lots and in public rights-of-ways will help facilitate less auto use between these types of establishments. In addition, cars will likely drive more cautiously, knowing that pedestrians may be crossing the street.

**Illustration 2b: Ridge Pike (after)**

Photo Simulation: Brown & Keener Urban Design

A few changes to Ridge Pike can provide greater functionality as well as a safer roadway for vehicular traffic and pedestrians. The above photo simulation provides some suggestions as to the types of improvements that can be implemented: enhanced greenery, intermittently dispersed trees along the roadway and planting strips at the curb; sidewalks that are setback from the driving lanes; a center turn lane for vehicles making left turns; signs that are easily visible for both pedestrians and drivers; and buildings, in cases of future construction, closer to the street, with parking relegated to the back of the lots.

Needs

The needs described in **Table 11**, as in the previous table, provides recommendations categorized and color-coded as short-term (immediately to two years), medium-term (three to five years) and long-term (six to ten years), in terms of their anticipated timeline for implementation, dependent upon their priority and expected level of ease or difficulty to achieve.

Table 11: Study Area Needs & Recommendations				
#	Municipality	Type	Need	Recommendation
1	Areawide	Transportation Projects Impact	Given the currently proposed and underway transportation projects (and the volume of truck traffic to the trash-to-steam plant), the overall and collective impact of these individual projects on the study area needs to be assessed.	Overall assessment may be conducted via a formalized review committee (i.e., subcommittee of Schuylkill Valley Transportation Coalition) comprising the affected municipalities on an as-needed basis. (County, PennDOT, Norristown, Plymouth, Conshohocken)
2	Areawide	Residences/ Preservation and Rehabilitation	Dependant upon their historical and architectural significance, some of the residential buildings in the study area need to be preserved through rehabilitation and maintenance, particularly in Norristown. The preservation of residences in Norristown is also important for its downtown revitalization, by providing shoppers and liveliness during hours where employees who reside elsewhere leave from work and encouraging a stable population for generations to come. Some of the residences in Plymouth and Conshohocken served as the housing for steel plant employees, attesting to the industrial heritage of the area. Conshohocken should help ensure that the present residents will not be threatened by the recent office development boom.	Norristown's recently adopted Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) design standards will serve to protect the architectural integrity of its buildings. Consistent enforcement of these standards needs to be practiced to help ensure fair and equal treatment among different redevelopment projects. Review of proposed work should be maintained throughout the progression of the projects to prevent deviations, particularly major deviations, of approved rehabilitation. As the proposed Redevelopment Area Plan undergoes implementation, Norristown needs to ensure that its lower-income residents are not driven away by market-rate housing to help achieve a truly mixed downtown area. (Norristown, County, State)

Continued on next page.

Table 11: Study Area Needs & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Need	Recommendation
				<p>Residential development in the Plymouth and Conshohocken study area has been limited, but the existence and potential changes to the small pockets of homes need to be addressed. The value of the land will likely rise as the riverfront is further developed, thus making the current residents vulnerable to displacement. An affordable housing clause will help maintain at least some of the dwellings in this area. Some aesthetic improvements would help strengthen the presence of the aging structures. (Plymouth, Conshohocken)</p> <p>An Historic Resource Survey conducted by Conshohocken in 1989 revealed two properties (359 W Elm St.; St. Mary's Rectory) to be potential resources.</p>
3	Areawide	Regional and Local Amenities/ River and Recreation	<p>The study area's adjacency to the Schuylkill River is only minimally being taken advantage of (Schuylkill River Trail). Pedestrian/bicyclist access enhancements and the provision of other recreational amenities will increase livability for the nearby residential areas, provide recreational opportunities for residents, employees and visitors and provide an environmentally healthy option that would, indirectly, boost economic development. Working with the County, a joint plan by the study area municipalities, as well as adjacent Schuylkill River municipalities, is needed to ensure a flow of passive and active activities that complement, rather than compete against, one another.</p>	<p>The county and study area municipalities, as well as other Schuylkill River municipalities, have begun discussion of a multi-municipal planning effort for the riverfront area. Public access is one of the major issues acknowledged by all parties that needs to be addressed. Connection with other trails is also a priority. (Schuylkill River municipalities, County, State)</p>

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Table 11: Study Area Needs & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Need	Recommendation
4	Areawide	Regional and Local Amenities/Bike Paths	In addition to the land along the Schuylkill River, assessment of additional or enhancement of existing bicycle paths and amenities is needed. Continuity and connection with other bike paths are required to ensure their usage.	The Montgomery County Transportation Plan outlines recommendations for primary and secondary bike routes throughout their jurisdiction. The primary bike routes recommended in the study area consist of routes along: Main Street/Ridge Pike, Dekalb Street and Fayette Street. The secondary bike routes recommended consist of routes along: Conshohocken Road/West Elm Street and Colwell/Brook/Alan Wood Road. (County, Norristown, Plymouth, Conshohocken, PennDOT)
5	Areawide	Local Amenities/ Historical Preservation	As industrial activity has played an instrumental role in the study area, it would be beneficial to maintain certain elements/structures that represent a piece of this history. Although out of the study area, an example are the lime kilns on Chemical Road, whose maintenance is a concern of the Plymouth Historical Society. Somewhat related, the name of this road was maintained because it reflects its historical significance.	As part of the Lafayette Street extension project, the consultant McCormick Taylor has created an inventory map of historical buildings and districts that has been reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Study area municipalities may wish to utilize this map to add other buildings and districts not covered by the Lafayette Street extension project. If municipal staff is unavailable, it may be worthwhile to request local historical societies or graduate planning schools to volunteer their time. The inventory should then be actively referred to when reviewing development proposals and other types of physical changes. (McCormick Taylor, County, Norristown, Plymouth, Conshohocken, historical societies or graduate planning schools)

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Table 11: Study Area Needs & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Need	Recommendation
6	Norristown	Economic Development/ Overall Revitalization	Norristown’s revitalization efforts are newly underway and still face many challenges. New businesses (preferably more small businesses that fit into the existing character of the downtown) are needed that cater to both employees and residents. Linkages between employees and office buildings, residents and their homes, future visitors to the downtown and waterfront area, businesses and transportation are needed. The execution of the recommendations from the borough’s Revitalization Plan and other plans will be a major undertaking, but, given its location, transit access, historical buildings and ambition, a major part of its foundation for revitalization is in place. Coordination, public-private partnerships and financial necessities during the revitalization process will need to be attained and maintained for the long-term.	<p>Assessment of economic development needs may include surveys to residents and business/employees (existing and potential) and charettes that involve these groups as well as developers. The later may help establish a mutual understanding between different parties of different and similar concerns and interests. (Norristown, residents, area businesses, developers)</p> <p>Given the concentration of businesses in the downtown area, Norristown may want to survey local businesses for the possible formation of a BID and assist in its establishment. It would also be helpful if agencies and non-profits that assist businesses, such as the Norristown Small Business Center, are relocated to the downtown area. This helps create an atmosphere of support for small businesses. If needed, streamlining the process by which developers get approval for construction will also be worth pursuing. (Norristown, area businesses)</p>
7	Plymouth	Economic Development/ Assessment of Future Higher Uses and Needs of Residents	While Plymouth’s economy is doing well, the township would benefit by assessing possible higher uses in the long-term future for its industrial area and Ridge Pike, in the event that businesses may start to struggle. This does not mean the elimination of thriving and profitable companies and may, in fact, result in little change. Assessment may result in some zoning amendments and lead to more coordination and stronger relationships with the private businesses. Needs of the residents of the Plymouth study area, such as accessibility to convenience shopping, should also be addressed.	It is recommended that Plymouth evaluate the feasibility of new uses and make necessary changes to its zoning ordinance based on this evaluation. Some possibilities include: expansion of more commercial-friendly businesses on Ridge Pike, near Alan Wood Road, that may complement the Regal Plaza; working with Tornetta Realty Corporation to include businesses that accommodate nearby residents as well as regional shoppers on their currently vacant land; collaborate with the County to develop the defunct quarry site to serve as a model of future new development in that area (even if the use remains industrial, the

Continued on next page.

Table 11: Study Area Needs & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Need	Recommendation
				<p>design of the parcel may showcase a better aesthetic that future development may be expected to follow); and reevaluate a better mix of uses in the northwestern end of Ridge Pike. (Plymouth, County, area businesses)</p>
8	Conshohocken	Economic Development/ Needs of Residents	<p>The nearby surge in office developments (and already-planned office developments for the future) virtually guarantees no shortage of higher-end office space. However, for the residents located in the study area, these office high-rises probably do not have a direct positive impact on them. As Conshohocken further plans for the development of its waterfront, it would be ideal to provide linkages and amenities that would benefit these residents as well as the office workers. In addition, the borough may want to assess the need for more convenience retail and local services for these residents.</p>	<p>A recently proposed amendment to eliminate a required split floor area ratio between office and retail/other permitted uses (80:20) in Specially Planned Districts was vetoed; unless a substitute provision that would strongly encourage retail/other uses in the Specially Planned District is instituted, it is recommended that the requirement be continued. The retail/other uses that may be established can benefit multiple users (office workers, residents and visitors to the riverfront). As currently permitted, the types of uses that would attract these multiple population segments include retail, restaurants, banks, and movie theaters. Other permitted uses (fitness center and community facility) would also be highly beneficial to the area. Due to its proximity to the Schuylkill River, it is particularly important that design standards are not compromised. To accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, entrances need to be easily visible and bicycle racks need to be available. Small lockers to accommodate equipment used by bicyclists will also encourage usage of the area by non-motorized users. (Conshohocken, developers)</p>

Continued on next page.

Table 11: Study Area Needs & Recommendations (continued)

#	Municipality	Type	Need	Recommendation
9	Areawide	Streetscape Improvements	The quality of a community's streetscape can influence the area's economic successes or failures by enticing businesses, shoppers and residents into the area. While Plymouth's industrial and commercial districts are doing well, it is still recommended that the township consider improvements to boost its streetscapes to minimize their existing "hodgepodge" landscape and to create a more unified design theme.	See Strategies under #6 Problems.

Source: DVRPC (2004)

Proposed Land Use Changes

Several factors formed the framework from which the land use changes on **Map 8** were recommended: the introduction of a greater combination of uses; the retention and enhancement of existing uses that have contributed positively to the community; and the integration of the proposed uses, taking into account the location and existing uses.

In order to facilitate the ensuing description of proposed land use changes, it is helpful to point out and provide some orientation to key areas that provide opportunities for improvement. The following provides a brief summary of these areas, with corresponding numbers illustrated on Map 8:

1. This area east of Conshohocken Road mainly consists of a vacant 105-acre parcel owned by LFT Realty, a local private developer. The smaller portion west of the road is either vacant or occupied by small light industrial offices.
2. The greater portion of this property is currently being utilized by a stone processing company. The lease for this County-owned land, however, is not being renewed.
3. This area, located in the center of Plymouth's industrial district, contains two parcels owned by the County: a Fire Training Academy that serves as the County's firearms training facility and a quarry that has ceased operation. Although not technically part of this report's proposed land use changes, the Academy is included on the map due to its expansion plans and its importance and presence among the new developments being suggested in this section.

4. The residential neighborhood of Connaghtown that originated as homes for steel plant employees is the primary occupant of this portion of the study area that straddles the Conshohocken/Plymouth boundary. New residential units are planned just outside of this area (see Current Developments).
5. Highway-oriented commercial businesses, mainly chain stores along with a few, small independent shops, dot this corner of the study area. A few offices and industrial businesses also occupy the area, including a lumber company located at a prominent lot facing Ridge Pike.
6. This area consists mainly of light industrial and auto-related businesses, nestled along the transitional area between downtown Norristown and the more widely known automobile businesses on Ridge Pike.
7. This area encompasses almost the entire portion of the Norristown study area, including the eastern portion of downtown and beyond, to the Norristown/Plymouth boundary and the Schuylkill River.

Recommendations are most pronounced in Plymouth, where a greater opportunity for change exists due to a few sizable and significantly located parcels of vacant and underutilized land. A new rail station in the middle of the Plymouth study area is recommended along the SEPTA R6 line, providing some distance from the train stops in Conshohocken and Norristown and situated in the newly proposed commercial and residential uses (Area 1 on Map 8). Convenience-type retail is also encouraged in the area surrounding the station. A mix of commercial and office development is recommended in the privately owned land east of the proposed station. Taking into consideration the big-box retailers LFT Realty would like to construct, but presenting some modifications to their plans, the businesses would be contained in a greater number of smaller buildings and provide a walkable and landscaped environment, with parking at various locations throughout. A new road connecting Brook Road and Conshohocken Road and beyond would be constructed to help circulate new and existing traffic. New residential development is recommended north of the proposed rail station, taking advantage of the riverfront view (Area 2). This also provides a more complementary use to the Schuylkill River Trail and a customer base for the new commercial activity nearby. Careful buffering between the dwellings and adjacent Fire Training Academy and currently defunct quarry would be an important element to make the new residential area livable (Area 3). The quarry would continue to serve as an area for light industrial use, given the limited land available for such uses in the county. As a County-owned parcel, however, it should serve as a model development to which new additions in the area will look to for design and environmental considerations.

To provide some economic boost and to highlight the heritage of the area, a small steel museum is proposed across from the ISG steel plant, near the existing residential area close to the Plymouth/Conshohocken boundary (Area 4). Infill is recommended for this residential area, including providing a limited number of neighborhood commercial that would be beneficial for its residents. The sliver of open space/recreation northeast of the residential area follows the Cross County Trail and floodplain.

An expansion of retail and restaurant uses is recommended at the Ridge Pike/Alan Wood Road intersection (Area 5). This is intended to serve a couple of functions: provide a continuation of related-commercial uses in a restricted setting, without eliminating the existing automobile dealers, and build upon and enhance the present uses, which includes a cinema and a few eating establishments, in this immediate area. The existing jug handle has been a confusing and potentially dangerous turn for people driving from Ridge Pike onto Alan Wood Road; the municipality and County has recommended that the construction of left turn lanes from Ridge Pike replace this jug handle. It is also recommended that additional businesses, similar to those already located in the area, be encouraged between I-276 and the Norristown/Plymouth boundary, with greater attention provided to aesthetics, including setbacks and ingress/egress provisions (Area 6).

Modifications recommended in Norristown are based upon the changes outlined in the borough's current Redevelopment Area Plan (Area 7). On the whole, the changes proposed in the Plan are maintained for this study, but with a few deviations. While two intensities of mixed-use are retained, the boundaries are slightly different and the Plan's Riverfront Mixed Use district has been incorporated into this study's Mixed Commercial/Residential areas. It is recommended that retail, restaurants and personal services be the greater focus along Main Street, while offices would be the dominant use along Lafayette Street. With a future interchange at I-276 to be implemented that connects with the extension of Lafayette Street, the additional opportunity for Norristown to showcase its downtown assets need to be maximized. A significant difference between the two sets of recommendations relates to the residential component in the Norristown study area. While Norristown is restricting the future residential units to be maintained and built in the area, DVRPC recommends that the residential component play a larger role and be incorporated in the downtown area, without dwarfing the commercial establishments, via single-use buildings as well as mixed-use buildings to bring a "round-the-clock" vitality to the area and to promote a greater interaction among the variety of future uses.

The future development of this privately-owned, 100+ acre parcel will have a significant impact on the surrounding industrial and residential areas.



Descriptions for Proposed Land Use Map Legend

The following provides an explanation of the different proposed land use categories used in **Map 8**:

High-Intensity Mixed Commercial/Residential: New and enhanced mix of retail, restaurants, professional offices, residential, service industries, institutional and entertainment in multi-use and single-use buildings. Along with the downtown area just west of this portion of the study area, the intent is to produce continuous activity throughout the day by encouraging the highest overall concentration of uses in the borough. The area and height requirements would be the same as those set forth in Norristown's Unified Development District I: no minimum lot area; building area may occupy 100 percent of lots under 5,000 square feet and maximum of 90 percent of lots 5,000 square feet or greater; and maximum floor area ratio of 4.5.

Medium-Intensity Mixed Commercial/Residential: New and enhanced mix of retail, restaurants, professional offices, residential, service industries, institutional, recreation and entertainment in multi-use and single-use buildings. Similar to the previous category, but less intense and development is more directly influenced by its closer proximity to the riverfront. In addition, the eastern portion is considered to be outside of the downtown area. The area and height requirements would be the same as those set forth in Norristown's Unified Development District II: no minimum lot area; building area may occupy 100 percent of lots under 5,000 square feet and maximum of 90 percent of lots 5,000 square feet or greater; and maximum floor area ratio of 2.0.

Retail/Restaurants: Additional retail and sit-down restaurants in an area where a limited number of entertainment, retail and eateries currently exist.

Commercial/Office: Infill non-retail commercial and professional offices in existing light industrial area west of I-276 in Plymouth. New retail, professional offices, personal services, restaurants and recreation/entertainment, with integration of open space along the Cross County Trail, in the southern mid-section of the study area.

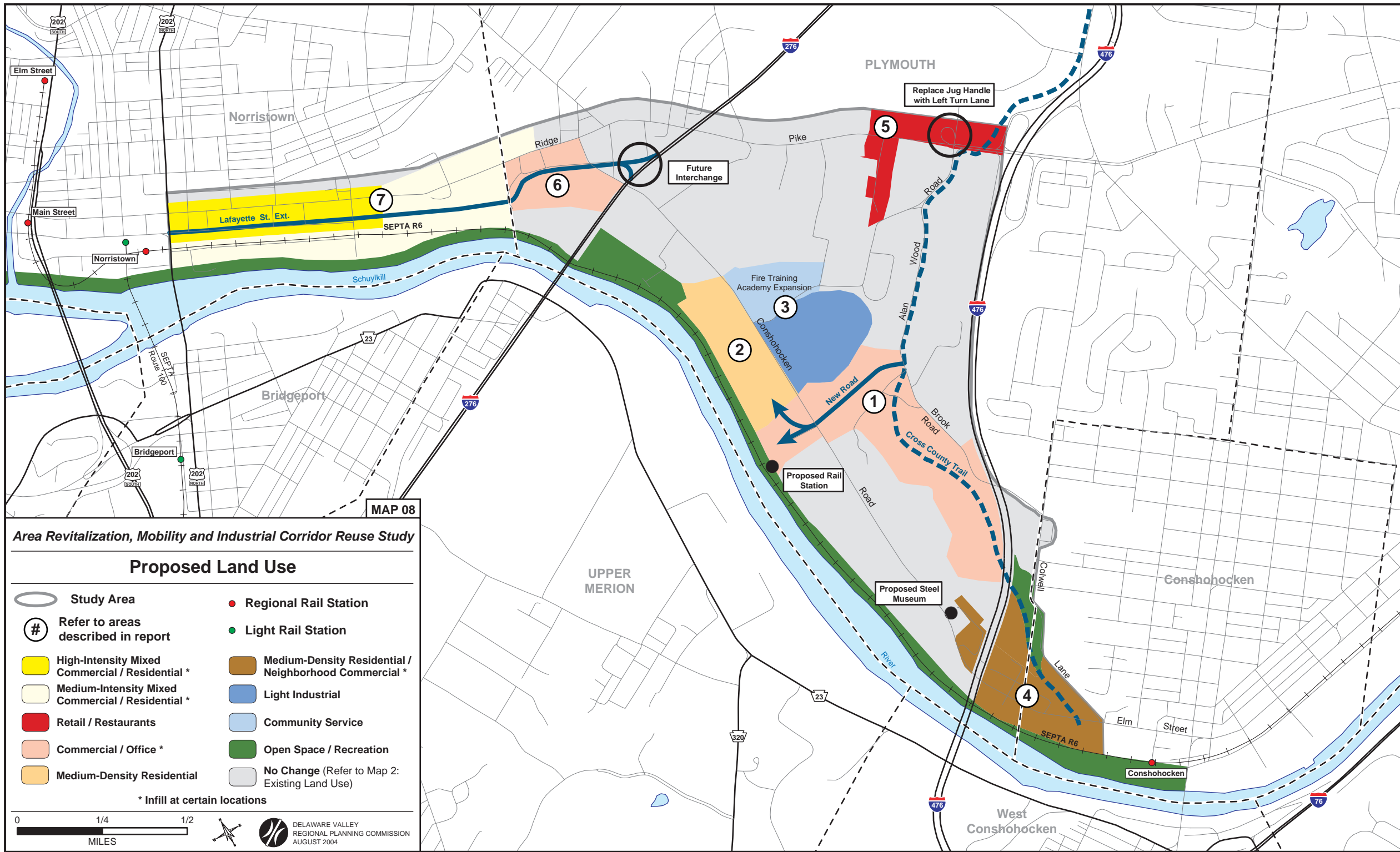
Medium-Density Residential: New single, detached and multi-family residential riverfront development.

Medium-Density Residential/Neighborhood Commercial: Infill and expand existing residential area with additional housing and limited new localized commercial businesses, such as convenience stores, small eateries and personal services.

Light Industrial: New light industrial use that would produce no or minimal intrusions to proposed neighboring residential and commercial/office developments.

Community Service: Expansion of existing Fire Training Academy.

Open Space/Recreational: Preservation, enhancement and improvement of open space and passive and active recreational opportunities.



MAP 08

Area Revitalization, Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study

Proposed Land Use

Study Area	Regional Rail Station
Refer to areas described in report	Light Rail Station
High-Intensity Mixed Commercial / Residential *	Medium-Density Residential / Neighborhood Commercial *
Medium-Intensity Mixed Commercial / Residential *	Light Industrial
Retail / Restaurants	Community Service
Commercial / Office *	Open Space / Recreation
Medium-Density Residential	No Change (Refer to Map 2: Existing Land Use)

* Infill at certain locations

0 1/4 1/2
MILES

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 2004

BACKSIDE OF MAP 8



SECTION**6****Potential Funding Sources**

Below is a list of potential funding sources that the study area municipalities and the county may wish to pursue in order to help carry out the recommended strategies discussed in this report. This is not an all-inclusive list, and it is recommended that other sources of funding be explored in addition to the programs listed below.

County/Local Programs***Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)***

The CDBG program provides financial assistance to entitlement communities for programs that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and eligible activities include housing rehabilitation, public services, community facilities, infrastructure improvement, redevelopment and planning. The municipalities of Norristown and Conshohocken administer their own CDBG program, while Plymouth Township applies for funding through the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Development (MCDHS). More information on the County-administered CDBG program may be found online at <http://www.montcopa.org/mcdhs/programs.htm>.

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)

The HUD-funded HOME program provides financial assistance to entitlement communities for the development of affordable housing that benefit low-income households. Eligible activities include tenant-based rental assistance, homebuyer's assistance, property acquisition, new construction and rehabilitation. As with the CDBG program, the municipalities of Norristown and Conshohocken administer their own HOME program, while Plymouth Township applies for funding through MCDHS. More information on the County-administered HOME program may be found online at <http://www.montcopa.org/mcdhs/programs.htm>.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF)

Funding from the AHTF may be used towards "any program or project duly approved by the County Commissioners which increases the availability of quality housing, either sales or rental, to any county resident whose annual income is less than the County median income" (MCDHS, 2003). The revenues for the AHTF are collected through state enabling legislation that allowed counties to double their existing recording fees of deeds and mortgages for the purpose of funding affordable housing. More information may be found at <http://www.montcopa.org/mcdhs/programs.htm>.

Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program

Funds are available through the County for municipal governments who have adopted an approved open space plan. The program provides financial assistance toward the significant open space acquisition, green infrastructure projects, heritage resource conservation, farmland protection, trail and pathway development, floodplain restoration and Schuylkill River Greenway projects. Application guidelines for this program may be found online at http://www.montcopa.org/plancom/OpenSpace/Documents/app_guide_mcd2003.rtf.

State Programs***Transportation Enhancements (TE)***

The federal TE program requires that Pennsylvania set aside 10 percent of its Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for projects that enhance local transportation systems. Eligible projects include bicycle and pedestrian trails, restoration of historic train stations, downtown streetscapes improvements, roadside beautification and preservation of scenic vistas. This program is administered by PennDOT. The selection of projects undergoes a two-tier process: an initial list of submitted projects are selected by DVRPC's member governments, through the commission's Regional Transportation Committee and with assistance from the Regional Citizens Committee and DVRPC staff; and a final list of projects to be funded is approved by the DVRPC Board and the Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission. More information about the TE program may be found online at <http://www.dvrpc.org/transportation/capital/te.htm>.

Community Revitalization Program

The Community Revitalization Program is administered by the State Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and provides grants to support local initiatives that promote community stability. Eligible projects include construction or rehabilitation of infrastructure, acquisition and rehabilitation of buildings, revitalization or construction of community facilities and purchase or upgrade of machinery and equipment. More information about this program may be found online at <http://www.inventpa.com/default.aspx?id=322>.



A series of rowhomes line a street in Connaghtown.

Housing and Redevelopment Assistance Program (HRA) (formerly Communities of Opportunity Program)

The HRA program is administered by DCED and provides funding for community development and housing activities. Eligible projects under the community development category include the rehabilitation or restoration of older or under-utilized buildings for reuse, extension of service through public rights-of-way that will have a beneficial impact on the community and acquisition and demolition of blighted structures when a reuse plan has been adopted. Eligible projects under the housing assistance category include the acquisition, rehabilitation and/or new construction of housing that results in homeowner or rental opportunities, provision of site improvements to support new construction of housing units, rehabilitation of owner-occupied residential properties and the acquisition of units for preservation. More information about the HRA program may be found online at http://www.newpa.com/program_10.html.

Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School Program

This program is intended to encourage reinvestment in and redevelopment of downtowns and to establish safe walking routes for children commuting to school. Eligible projects under Home Town Streets include sidewalk improvements, pedestrian/bicycle crossing improvements and off-street facilities, bike lanes, traffic diversion improvements and traffic calming. Eligible projects under Safe Routes to School include sidewalk improvements, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, transit bus shelters, traffic calming, bicycle amenities, community “gateway” plantings and signage. As with the TE program, the Home Streets and Safe Routes to School Program is administered by PennDOT, but the selection of projects is made under a two-tier process: the initial list of submitted projects are selected by DVRPC’s member governments, through the commission’s Regional Transportation Committee and with assistance from the Regional Citizens Committee and DVRPC staff; and a final list of projects to be funded is approved by the DVRPC Board and the Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission. More information may be found online at either http://www.dvrpc.org/transportation/capital/hts_srs.htm or <http://www.dot.state.pa.us/pennidot/Bureaus/CPDM/Prod/Saferoute.nsf>.

Infrastructure Development Program (IDP)

This program, administered by DCED, provides funding for infrastructure improvements necessary for eligible capital investments by the private sector. Grants are awarded for publicly-owned infrastructure improvements, and loans are awarded for privately-owned infrastructure improvements. Eligible projects include transportation facilities, clearing and preparation of land and environmental remediation, water and sewer systems, energy facilities, acquisition of land and buildings by private developers and construction of new multi-tenant buildings by private developers; the latter two are only applicable at former industrial sites that have not been used for at least six months or at former commercial sites that have not been used for at least a year. More information may be found online at <http://www.inventpa.com/default.aspx?id=292>.

Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP)

LUPTAP is administered by DCED and provides funding for land use planning activities, with priority given to county or multi-municipal applicants. Eligible projects include comprehensive community development plans and policies or individual plan components, environmental protection or physical development strategies, application of advanced technology, such as GIS, and training and education, as a participatory planning component of a planning program. More information on LUPTAP may be found online at <http://www.inventpa.com/default.aspx?id=345>.

New Communities Program

The New Communities Program consists of three separate programs: Enterprise Zone Program; Main Street Program; and Elm Street Program. The purpose of the DCED program is to integrate the revitalization of downtowns with that of industrial/manufacturing areas and to assist communities to become more desirable to a broad range of “New Economy” companies. Eligible projects include administrative support of business development in downtown and business park areas, downtown facade renovations, loan capital for property acquisition and improvements and equipment purchases and modernization. More information may be found online at <http://www.inventpa.com/default.aspx?id=326>.

Shared Municipal Services Program

Another DCED program, the Shared Municipal Services Program provides grants to projects that promote cooperation between municipalities to foster increased efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of municipal services at the local level. Eligible projects include shared technology initiatives, shared public works operations, shared code enforcement operations and shared motorized equipment. More information on this program may be found online at <http://www.inventpa.com/default.aspx?id=348>.

Industrial Sites Reuse Program (ISRP)

ISRP is administered by DCED and provides grants and low-interest loans for the purpose of environmental assessments and remediation at former industrial sites. More information on the program may be found online at <http://www.inventpa.com/default.aspx?id=291>.

Municipal Challenge Grant

This program from the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council (PUCFC) offers small grants to municipalities for the purchase and delivery of up to 50 trees (dependent upon the number of residents in the municipality) in public spaces and right-of-ways. More information on the Municipal Challenge Grant may be found online at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/grants.html#cig>.

Tree Improvement Grant

Another PUCFC program, the Tree Improvement Grant is intended to support tree care programs for street and park trees, including those along greenways. As with the Municipal Challenge Grant, the amount awarded depends upon the number of residents in the municipality. More information on this grant may be found online at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/grants.html#cig>.

Regional Program

Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI)

The TCDI grant program, administered by DVRPC, is intended to reverse the trends of disinvestments and decline in many of the region's Core Cities and first generation suburbs. Eligible projects must provide a clear transportation link and ability to encourage development and must fall into three main categories: Planning and Land Use Management; Reuse and Revitalization; and Transportation and Infrastructure. More information about TCDI may be found online at <http://www.dvrpc.org/planning/tcdi.htm>.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to address the land use and transportation issues affecting the tri-municipal study area and to provide recommendations that take into account the area's existing plans, assets and potential. As parts of the study area presently undergo significant changes, it is important to preserve or maintain those parts that contribute economic value and social livability to the area and to anticipate and plan for changes that may occur in the future due to limited developable land and to demand for particular types of uses.

In executing the recommendations in this report, various entities of the local, county and state governments will need to employ implementation strategies that require amendments to existing municipal planning or regulatory documents. In general, these documents include Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances, with some strategies requiring more than one of these documents to be modified to maintain regulatory consistency. Transportation-related implementation strategies may include access management provisions, park and ride programs, parking management programs, traffic impact fee ordinances, trip reduction ordinances and pedestrian/bikeway facilities design. Business-related implementation strategies may include economic development incentives, performance zoning and transfer of development rights. Residential-related implementation strategies may include planned residential developments and suburban center zoning. Other specific or more encompassing implementation strategies may include capital improvement programs, transit-oriented development, historic preservation planning, parkland dedications/fees in-lieu provisions and floodplain management.

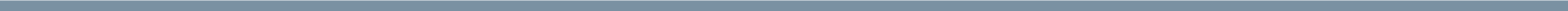
The second phase of the Reuse Study will build upon some of the information gathered for this report. DVRPC will conduct two implementation projects that were agreed to by the Study Advisory Committee and that will focus on specific issues in the study area (new and alternative transit services; feasibility of a new train station). The intent of the project(s) is to further promote and fulfill the overall goal of the area: to present solutions that will strengthen the area's economic, residential, transportation and recreational attributes and amenities and to bring about a cohesive interaction between these elements and within each municipality.



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P U B L I C A T I O N A B S T R A C T

Title: Area Revitalization, Mobility & Industrial Corridor Reuse Study: Norristown, Plymouth & Conshohocken

Publication No.: 05006

Date Published: March 2005

Geographic Area Covered: Plymouth Township, Municipality of Norristown and Conshohocken Borough in Montgomery County

Key Words: Land use, transportation, revitalization, redevelopment, economic development, recreation, zoning, streetscape, implementation strategies, multi-municipal planning

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to evaluate the planning issues in adjoining sections of Norristown, Plymouth and Conshohocken and to recommend strategies that will address the needs and problems of the area. Proposed recommendations address the issues of commercial revitalization, industrial use, housing, roadway reconstruction and circulation, public transit accommodations, recreational amenities and streetscape improvements. This report completes the first phase of the two-phase project; an implementation phase related to the study recommendations will follow.

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