

# *Borough of Chalfont* **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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Bucks County, Pennsylvania



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Prepared by:



2024

## **RESOLUTION No. 2024-04**

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF CHALFONT, COUNTY OF BUCKS, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, UPDATING AND AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE BOROUGH OF CHALFONT**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Chalfont, Bucks County, Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 301 (c) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code provides that municipal comprehensive plans be reviewed at least every ten (10) years and updated when needed; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Council and the Chalfont Borough Planning Commission have determined that the 2010 Comprehensive Plan is in need of updating; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Council entered into a written Planning Services Agreement with the Bucks County Planning Commission to provide consulting services to update the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bucks County Planning Commission prepared a Comprehensive Plan Update that includes an Introduction, Demographics, Principles 1-7, Maps, Summary of Recommended Actions and Implementation, and Appendices A & B ("Comprehensive Plan Update"); and

**WHEREAS**, the Chalfont Planning Commission held a public meeting on January 22, 2024, at which time it was recommended that the Comprehensive Plan Update be forwarded to the Borough Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Council approved the advertisement and dissemination of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update at a public council meeting held on February 13, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, copies of the Comprehensive Plan Update were sent to the County Planning Commission, the local school district and contiguous municipalities for review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough held a duly advertised public meeting on February 26, 2024, to present the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update at which time the public was given additional opportunity to appear and be heard, and the record was held open from February 14, 2024, to March 29, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Council held a public hearing on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update on April 9, 2024, at which time the Borough Council considered the comments received from the Bucks County Planning Commission, the Chalfont Planning Commission, the local school district, contiguous municipalities and the public.



**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, and it is hereby resolved, that the Borough Council of the Borough of Chalfont, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, does hereby approve the adoption of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update on April 9, 2024.


**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the present Resolution has been duly adopted by a vote of the Council of the Borough of Chalfont in public session duly convened on this 9th day of April, 2024.

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn M. Tremmel, Borough Secretary

**CHALFONT BOROUGH  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**By:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John R. Engel, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian D. Wallace, Mayor

# *Borough of Chalfont*

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## *Chalfont Borough Council*

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## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a document that serves as a general policy guide for the physical development of a municipality. The plan provides a blueprint for housing, land use, community facilities, and transportation. While not a legal document it serves as a guide for decision makers and forms the basis for zoning and other regulations. It is an explicit statement of a community's future goals and vision for use by the planning commission, council, private stakeholders, and regional, state, and federal entities. A comprehensive plan has a broad scope and examines the physical, social, and economic characteristics that come together to form what exists today and forms a foundation for decisions about the future.

The comprehensive plan identifies major characteristics of land use, recent developments, as well as opportunities and constraints that affect the Borough. The plan examines regional forces that impact the Borough and explains population changes and development trends. The plan also articulates the Borough's goals and objectives for the future that reflect community wants and needs. To achieve the future intentions, the plan examines past policies and land use controls, and presents recommendations for guiding growth and development toward desired outcomes.

The plan begins with an overview of demographics including recent population and housing trends. A statement of the community's growth principles is presented and each growth principle is supported by background policy analysis. Plan elements required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, such as natural resources and transportation, are discussed in support of growth principles. The final chapter, Implementation: Action Plan Summary, discusses the relationships among the plan elements so that the topics are linked into a package of integrated recommendations.

The Borough has a history of comprehensive planning with the last plan adopted in 2010 and previous efforts as far back as 1973. This update provides an analysis of existing conditions and develops recommendations for future action. The recommendations are based on strengths and opportunities currently found in the Borough, and build upon concepts presented in the previous comprehensive plans. The plan update also brings together other Borough plans and studies such as the *Chalfont Borough Open Space Plan Update (2009)*, *Tri Municipal Master Trail & Greenway Plan* and the *Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Update for the Chalfont-New Britain Township Joint Sewage Authority Service Area*.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At the core of a comprehensive plan are the values of the community and a vision of a better future. Comprehensive plans should articulate and express these ideas so that future policy choices are clear and consensus driven. The *Chalfont Borough 2024 Comprehensive Plan* provides a set of principles that will guide the plan's direction and recommendations. These principles function as both value statements and ideals that this plan strives to attain. The principles were developed based on responses from the community and business surveys sent out to residents and business owners as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, public discussions with the Borough Planning Commission, and findings of the Plan.

In October of 2022, an online resident survey was announced on the Borough website and each resident received notice of the survey through the mail. The resident survey helped provide a clear direction in the development of the plan principles.

In addition to the data collected on basic demographics, housing situation, transportation usage, park usage, and evaluation of community services, the survey provided several opportunities to answer open-ended questions, which gave insights into residents' concerns, values, and hopes for Chalfont. These questions included:

1. What do you love most about the Borough?
2. What would you like to see changed in the Borough?
3. Are there any businesses you would like to see in the Borough?

The answers were then analyzed by developing them into a "word cloud," a text analysis tool that shows a visual representation of words based on frequency and relevance.





Each of these emerging themes has a bearing on the principles and recommendations of Chalfont Borough's Comprehensive Plan. A comprehensive plan must reflect the values and opinions of the community to ensure outstanding issues are being addressed, and that the vision of the plan reflects the community's hopes and desires.

Together, with the results of the survey and input from the Chalfont Borough Planning Commission, the Plan's guiding principles were established. They will be used to guide the actions and decisions of the Borough so that community actions will protect the natural environment, respect existing neighborhoods, reflect the goals of the residents, enhance the endeavors of local business, and establish living and working environments that provide services and facilities needed for a healthy community. The following are principles that will be covered in more detail.

### 1. Improve Mobility

Traffic significantly impacts life in the Borough and was the issue mentioned most often in the Chalfont resident survey. Maximizing safety, efficiency, and comprehensiveness of

facilities for cars, pedestrians, and bicycles available to residents and workers is necessary for improving the quality of life, economic development, and recreation opportunities.

## **2. Conserve Natural Resources**

Successful communities protect the natural resources and processes that contribute to their health and character. These resources should be enhanced, where necessary, to ensure their integrity. Sustainable use of resources will be promoted in all development and activities including energy efficiency and renewable energy production.

## **3. Promote Business Vitality**

The Borough core provides goods and services in a small-town atmosphere. Encouraging organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring can strengthen business in the Borough. Strong local businesses in the core, and elsewhere in the Borough, ensure a healthy local economy.

## **4. Build and Maintain a Livable Community**

Community services and facilities such as police, schools, and community institutions make an area appealing to new and existing residents and serve as important assets. These amenities must be adequate to meet the needs of the community.

## **5. Provide Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

Parks, recreation, and open space provide for relaxation and enjoyment of the natural environment and are vital parts of a healthy community. The Borough has added significant acreage to its inventory of parks and open space and should foster the development of active and passive recreation facilities to meet the needs of residents of all ages.

## **6. Protect the Historic Core**

Chalfont Borough's historic core provides a distinct character and sense of place. This area should be protected with land use and design controls to enhance the quality of life in the present and to maintain it for future generations.

## **7. Promote Smart Growth**

New growth should be sensitive to its surroundings and make effective use of existing infrastructure such as water, sewer, and roadways. Existing structures should be adapted to

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new uses where possible to preserve resources and to minimize impact on the adjoining parcels.

### **What could Chalfont look like in 2035 if the Borough successfully promotes the guiding principles?**

- ❖ The entire community will be interconnected by multiuse trails. As a result, individual vehicle use will decrease due to the increased availability of alternatives such as walking and transit.
- ❖ Butler Avenue will become more community friendly with less through traffic and less congestion.
- ❖ New development will have minimal impacts on the environment, and the integrity of the environment will be improved.
- ❖ Borough businesses will thrive due to strong local demand and Chalfont will be seen as an attractive place to do business.
- ❖ Chalfont will be an inviting, desirable place to live due to exemplary community service and facilities, such as schools and Borough government.
- ❖ The Borough will have parks and recreation areas of high quality that are easily accessible to neighborhoods.
- ❖ The historic core of Chalfont will be a distinct place with attractive architecture, coordinated signage, and strong local businesses.
- ❖ New development in Chalfont will be more sustainable and will respect the history and environment of the Borough.





# DEMOGRAPHICS

The information in this chapter describes population and housing growth in the past and into the near future. An understanding of population and housing trends forms the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Population

According to the U.S. Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data, the previous two decades have been a period of steady growth for Chalfont. The Borough has experienced a slightly higher population growth rate than the County, which had a population increase of about 7.4% between 2000 and 2022.

Between 2000 and 2022, Chalfont Borough and its surrounding municipalities gained around 9,732 residents. Chalfont accounted for around 4% of this regional growth. The municipalities surrounding Chalfont, including New Britain Borough, New Britain Township, Doylestown Borough, and Warrington Township, have grown at varying paces. Of the surrounding municipalities, Warrington and New Britain Townships also exceeded the County growth rate and experienced the most growth, growing at 31.3% and 12.7%, respectively. Chalfont gained more residents than Doylestown and New Britain Boroughs. Doylestown Borough experienced minimal growth, adding 75 residents, and New Britain Borough experienced a decline in population.

Table 1 compares population change for Chalfont, its neighboring municipalities, and Bucks County.

**Table 1. Population Growth, Chalfont Borough, Surrounding Municipalities, and Bucks County, 2000–2022.**

Municipality	2000	2010	2022	Number Change 2000-2022	Percent Change 2000-2022
Chalfont Borough	3,900	4,009	4,259	359	8.4
Doylestown Borough	8,230	8,380	8,305	75	0.9
New Britain Borough	3,125	3,152	2,846	-279	-9.8
New Britain Township	10,698	11,070	12,260	1,562	12.7
Warrington Township	17,580	23,418	25,597	8,017	31.3
Bucks County	597,635	625,249	645,163	47,582	7.4

Sources: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010, 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018-2022

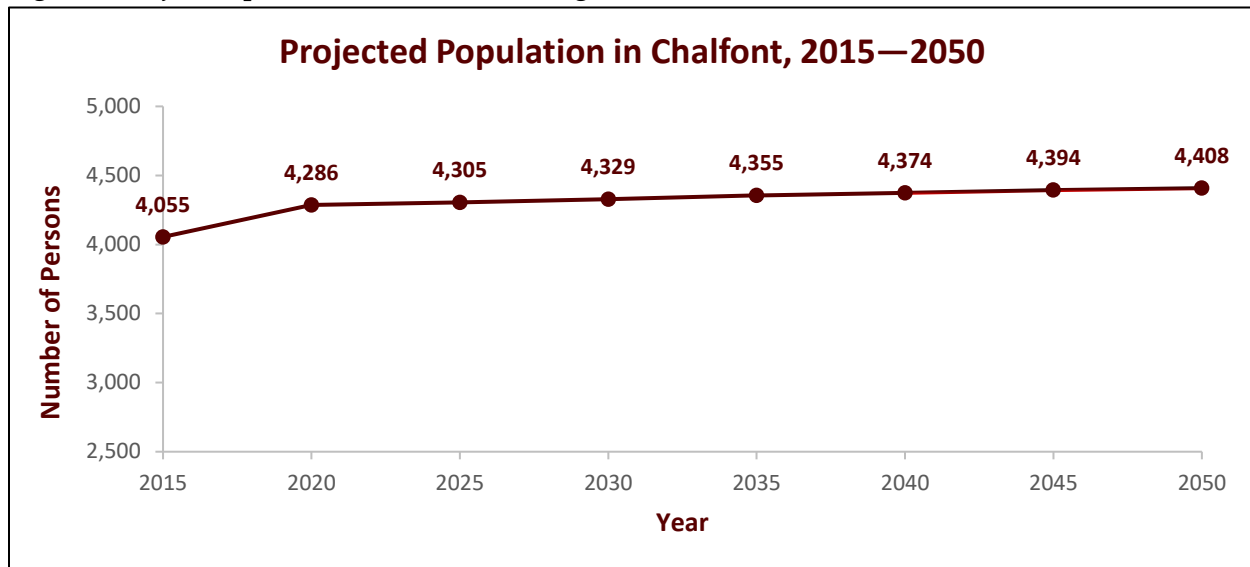
## Population Forecasts

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) estimates that the Borough's population will grow to 4,408 by 2050. This would be an increase of about 3% to the Borough's population.

Chalfont Borough's population and housing stock will grow in the future, although this growth is limited by the amount of land available for development. Future growth is based on the vision of Borough officials and residents, past development patterns, and policies on community facilities and land preservation.

Both the population and housing forecasts shown in Figure 1 indicate that growth will slow and level off in Chalfont. This is due to the declining amount of vacant land and changing household characteristics.

**Figure 1. Project Population in Chalfont Borough, 2015–2050**



Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Municipal Population and Employment Forecast 2015–2050



## Population Characteristics

### *Households*

In 2022, around 57% of households, or occupied housing units, were family households, and about 50% of households were married couple families. This is a decrease in household composition from 2010, where nearly 80% of households were family households and 63% were married couple families. Additionally, the average household size and average family size have declined since 2010.

Between 2010 and 2022, the median age of Borough residents has increased by about 3.8 years. Over the same time, the median household income has increased by nearly \$28,000. These changes in household characteristics demonstrate that Borough's population has started to shift toward a community that is older and living in nonfamily households.

**Table 2. Household Characteristics, Chalfont Borough, 2010–2022.**

Characteristics	2010	2022
Households	1,426	1,688
Family Households	1,138	958
Married-Couple Households	899	845
Nonfamily Households	288	730
Householders Living Alone	257	363
Average Household Size	2.81	2.52
Average Family Size	3.21	2.87
Median Age	37.9	41.7
Median Household Income	\$91,019	\$118,871

*Sources: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2006–2010 and 2018–2022*

## Age

Table 3 depicts the age cohorts of the Borough's population and how they have changed from 2010 to 2022. Most of the Borough's population is made up of young and middle-aged adults. The working age cohorts, ranging in ages from 15 to 59, make up for about 66% of the population. The remainder of the population is about 15% children aged 14 years and younger and about 19% adults aged 60 and over.

The Borough's population has slightly aged in the last decade and children made up less of the population in 2022 than in 2010. Though the number of children has decreased, the Borough saw an increase in the number of young adults and teenagers, which could potentially increase the number of children in the Borough in the coming decade, if these residents choose to remain in Chalfont and start families themselves.

**Table 3. Age Cohorts, Chalfont Borough, 2010–2022.**

Age Cohorts	2010		2022		Percent Change 2010-2022
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 5	201	5.0	175	4.1	-12.9
5 to 9	323	8.1	193	4.5	-40.3
10 to 14	349	8.7	283	6.6	-18.9
15 to 19	345	8.6	484	11.4	40.3
20 to 24	119	3.0	220	5.2	84.8
25 to 34	421	10.5	458	10.7	8.8
35 to 44	710	17.8	626	14.7	-11.8
45 to 54	543	13.6	607	14.2	11.8
55 to 59	255	6.4	418	9.8	63.9
60 to 64	260	6.5	250	5.9	-3.9
65 to 74	284	7.1	261	6.1	-8.1
75 to 84	135	3.4	157	3.7	16.3
85 and up	55	1.4	127	3.0	130.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,259</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6.5</b>

Sources: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2006–2010 and 2018–2022

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### *Education*

Borough residents aged 25 years and older generally exceed the County average of educational attainment. About 98% of Borough residents have at least a high school diploma. Approximately 63% of residents have at least a bachelor's degree. This number is 20% higher than the County average of 43% of residents with a bachelor's degree. Chalfont residents also have a higher rate of graduate degrees than the County average, with approximately 24% of Borough residents having at least a graduate degree.

**Table 4. Educational Attainment, Chalfont Borough and Bucks County, 2022**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Chalfont Borough</b>	<b>Bucks County</b>
Population 25 years and older	2,904	464,065
High school diploma and greater	98.3%	94.7%
Bachelor's degree and greater	63.0%	43.3%
Graduate degree and greater	24.0%	17.6%

*Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2018–2022*

### *Race*

Chalfont Borough remains a relatively homogenous area. According to the ACS data for 2022, about 91% of the residents were White, 4% were Asian, and 4% were two or more races. The Borough has a lower rate of Black and Asian residents than the County average with just 0.1% Black residents and 4.1% Asian residents. Additionally, the Borough has about 167 residents (3.9%) that have a Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. This is lower than the County average, which was 5.9% in 2022.

**Table 5. Population by Race, Chalfont Borough and Bucks County, 2022**

<b>Population by Race</b>	<b>Chalfont Borough</b>		<b>Bucks County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White Alone	3,893	91.4	540,421	83.8
Black Alone	4	0.1	25,143	3.9
Asian Alone	173	4.1	31,585	4.9
Some Other Race	29	0.7	15,260	2.3
Two or More Races	160	3.8	32,754	5.1
Total	4,259	100.0	645,163	100.0

*Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2018–2022*

*Occupation and Industry*

Of the 2,445 estimated workers in the Borough, 15% work in Service and 14% work in Sales and Office positions. A majority of employed residents work in Managerial, Professional, Science, and Arts occupations. As shown in Table 6, there has been an increase in residents who work in Managerial, Professional, Science, and Arts and Service occupations, and a decrease in residents who work in Sales and Office and Production, Transportation, and Material-Moving occupations.

Resident employment can also be broken down by industry. According to the estimates from the ACS, over 33% of employed residents work in the Educational, Health Care, and Social Assistance Services industry. A large driver of this employment could be the presence of Doylestown Hospital and Delaware Valley University. Located in Doylestown Borough, the hospital and all accompanying medical offices and services serve as a large regional employer. Other industries with a high number of resident employees include Professional, Scientific, Management, Administration, and Waste Management with 23% of resident employees and Manufacturing, with about 10% of resident employees.

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**Table 6. Occupancy and Industry, Chalfont Borough, 2010–2022**

<b>Occupation and Industry</b>	<b>2010 (percent)</b>	<b>2022 (percent)</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
Management, professional, science, and arts	45.9	62.7
Service	6.8	15.2
Sales and office	34.0	14.1
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	4.4	3.0
Production, transportation, and material-moving	8.8	5.0
<b>Industry</b>		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	0.0	0.0
Construction	5.5	1.8
Manufacturing	12.5	9.7
Wholesale Trade	2.7	1.0
Retail trade	9.5	7.5
Transportation, utilities, and warehousing	2.2	2.4
Information	1.7	1.1
Finance, insurance, and real estate	9.3	7.7
Professional, scientific, management, administration, and waste management	18.5	23.2
Educational, health care, and social assistance services	24.6	33.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	6.7	6.9
Other services, except public administration	2.5	1.0
Public administration	4.2	4.2
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>2,004</b>	<b>2,445</b>

*Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2006–2010 and 2018–2022*

## Place of Work and Travel to Work

Place of work and travel time data suggest that, although over 30% of Chalfont residents commute to jobs outside the County, many residents work in places near the Borough. Over 28% of employed residents travel less than 20 minutes to their place of employment. Approximately 24% of residents work in the Borough and only about 3% of residents work outside of Pennsylvania. These workplace characteristics differ from the county average, where only 6.4% of county residents work in their municipality of residence and over 11% of county residents work outside of Pennsylvania.

**Table 7. Place of Work for Residents of Chalfont Borough and Bucks County, 2022**

Place of Work	Chalfont Borough		Bucks County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Worked in...				
Municipality of residence	575	23.7	21,467	6.4
County of residence	1,625	67.0	204,638	61.5
State of residence	2,345	96.6	295,738	88.5
Out of state of residence	82	3.4	38,392	11.5
<b>Total workers (ages 16 and older)</b>	<b>2,427</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>334,130</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: ACS 5-year estimates 2018–2022*



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The 2022 ACS data indicates that about 47% of the commuters in the Borough have a commute time of less than 30 minutes. In 2022, about 9% of Chalfont commuters had a commute time of over 60 minutes, which is slightly lower than the 11% of commuters in Bucks County who had a commute time of over 60 minutes.

**Table 8. Travel Time to Work for Residents of Chalfont Borough and Bucks County, 2022**

Travel Time	Chalfont Borough		Bucks County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Total (ages 16 and older)</b>	2,427	100.0	344,130	100.0
Did not work at home	1,952	80.4	284,379	85.1
Less than 5 minutes	28	1.2	7,190	2.2
5 to 9 minutes	131	5.4	24,781	7.4
10 to 14 minutes	192	7.9	35,454	10.3
15 to 19 minutes	342	14.1	37,602	11.3
20 to 24 minutes	307	12.6	36,047	10.8
25 to 29 minutes	152	6.3	18,347	5.5
30 to 34 minutes	157	6.5	36,789	11.0
35 to 39 minutes	101	4.2	10,085	3.0
40 to 44 minutes	19	0.8	13,409	4.0
45 to 59 minutes	301	12.4	30,368	9.1
60 to 89 minutes	195	8.0	25,098	7.5
90 or more minutes	27	1.1	10,209	3.1
Worked at home	475	19.6	49,751	14.9
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	29.3	-	29.9	-

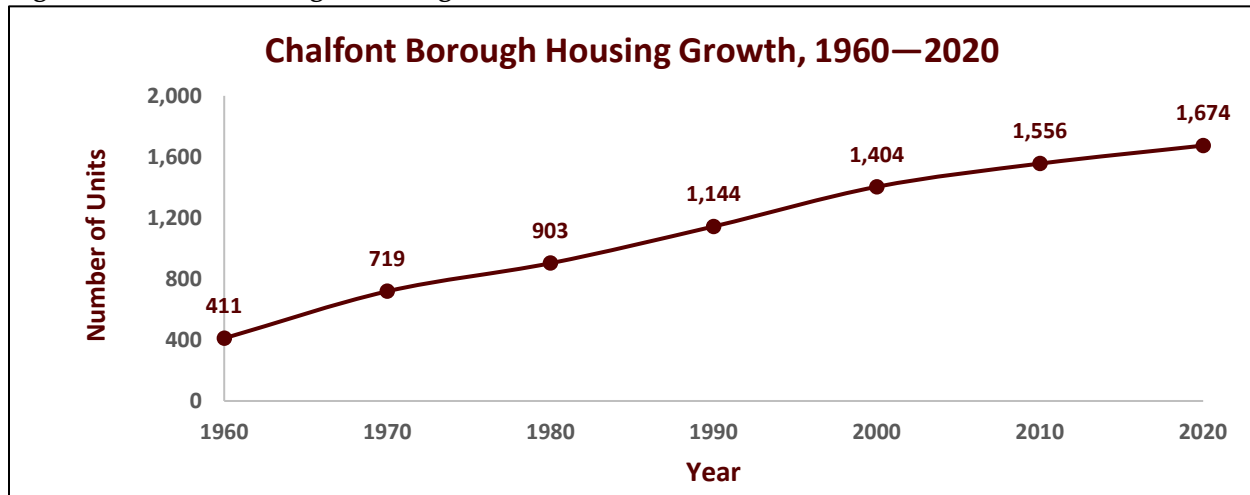
Source: ACS 5-year estimates 2018–2022

## Housing

In addition to population growth, Chalfont has continued to experience housing growth. According to Chalfont Borough records, since 2010, there have been 261 dwelling units constructed in the Borough<sup>1</sup>. These 261 dwelling units make up about 15% of the current housing stock in the Borough.

Due to a number of factors including availability of land and public sewer capacity, low interest rates, a quality school district, and an expansion of the Philadelphia metropolitan area, Chalfont's housing stock continued to grow between 2010 and 2020. According to the 2020 Census, during this period, the number of housing units increased by 7.6%. The rate of housing growth has slowed compared to previous decades, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Chalfont Borough Housing Growth, 1960–2020



Sources: U.S. Census 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020

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<sup>1</sup> The Census and American Community Survey data do not reflect all the units that were built during this time in Chalfont. The inconsistencies in the data may be attributed to data collection methods and dates of collection.

## Housing Types and Housing Choice

According to the 2022 ACS data, 8% of the Borough's housing stock has been constructed between 2010 and 2022. About 84% of the Borough's dwelling units were constructed prior to 2000.

**Table 9. Housing Age, Chalfont Borough, 2022**

Year Built	Number	Percent
2020 or later	28	1.6
2010 to 2019	107	6.3
2000 to 2009	140	8.2
1980 to 1999	551	32.3
1960 to 1979	423	24.8
1940 to 1959	350	20.5
1939 or earlier	108	6.3
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: ACS 5-year estimates 2018-2022*

## Housing Type

Chalfont contains a mix of housing types. While single-family detached dwellings represent the majority, there is a variety of other dwelling types. In 2010, single-family attached dwellings (townhouses), twins and duplexes, and multifamily dwellings accounted for 24% of the housing stock. By 2022, the same dwelling unit types accounted for about 35% of the Borough's housing stock. The increase in multifamily units reflects the completion of multifamily developments such as Patriot Station and Schoolhouse Meadows. Because the cost of attached housing tends to be less than the cost of single-family housing, this shift in the housing stock has broadened the range of housing prices in the Borough. The distribution of housing types has consequences for whether a home is owned or rented. Multifamily housing is more often rented than owned.

**Table 10. Housing Units by Type, Chalfont Borough, 2010–2022**

Housing Units by Type	2010		2022	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
Single-family detached	1,123	75.8	1,116	65.4
Single-family attached	183	12.3	243	14.2
Twins or duplexes	15	1.0	128	7.5
Multifamily	161	10.9	220	12.9
Mobile homes	0	0.0	0	0.0
Seasonal units	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2006–2010 and 2018–2022*

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The mix of housing options in Chalfont is broadly comparable to what exists in neighboring Bucks County municipalities and the County as a whole, and offers more variety than some. Chalfont, and all but one of its neighbors, and the County each have at least 60% of the housing stock in single-family detached units. Chalfont's share of multifamily units is higher than New Britain Township and New Britain Borough, but lower than Doylestown Borough, Warrington, and Bucks County as a whole. Table 11 compares the Borough's housing stock with those of neighboring municipalities and the County.

**Table 11. Housing Units by Type, Chalfont Borough, Surrounding Municipalities, and Bucks County, 2022**

<b>Housing Units by Type</b>	<b>Chalfont Borough (%)</b>	<b>Doylestown Borough (%)</b>	<b>New Britain Borough (%)</b>	<b>New Britain Township (%)</b>	<b>Warrington Township (%)</b>	<b>Bucks County (%)</b>
Single-family detached	75.8	38.8	65.2	65.1	63.4	63.8
Single-family attached	12.3	20.4	21.3	23.2	18.1	16.2
Twins or duplexes	1.0	4.3	2.3	1.5	1.6	2.2
Multifamily	10.9	36.5	3.4	9.4	16.7	15.9
Mobile homes	0.0	0.0	7.8	0.8	0.3	1.9
Seasonal units	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.01
<b>Total housing units (#)</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>4,166</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>4,605</b>	<b>9,481</b>	<b>255,599</b>

*Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018–2022*

## Housing Costs and Affordability

The cost of housing in Chalfont reflects a number of factors, including the convenient location relative to regional employment centers, the desirable character of the community and its school system, and the housing market. The following provides a summary of housing cost information for owner-occupied housing and renter-occupied housing.

### *Owner-Occupied Housing*

The 2022 ACS data estimates that of the Borough's 1,707 housing units, about 99% are occupied. Of the occupied housing units, 83% are owner-occupied and 17% are renter-occupied. This is a significant change from 2010, when only 8% of housing units were renter-occupied. In 2010, there was an estimated homeowner vacancy rate of 3.7 and a rental vacancy rate of 0. By 2022, the homeowner vacancy rate decreased to 1.1 and the rental vacancy rate was estimated to be 0.

**Table 12. Housing Occupancy and Tenure, Chalfont Borough, 2010–2022**

Housing Occupancy Status	2010		2022	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	1,482	100.0	1,707	100.0
Occupied housing units	1,426	96.2	1,688	98.9
Owner-occupied	1,318	92.4	1,406	83.3
Renter-occupied	108	7.6	282	16.7
Vacant housing units	56	3.8	19	1.1
Homeowner vacancy rate	3.7	-	1.3	-
Rental vacancy rate	0.0	-	0.0	-

Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2006–2010 and 2018–2022

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

According to the 2022 ACS data, the median value of owner-occupied housing in the Borough was \$412,200. This is higher than the County average of \$395,800. Around 78% of the owner-occupied housing was valued at over \$300,000. This is slightly higher than the County average, which had about 72% of owner-occupied housing valued at over \$300,000.

**Table 13. Value of Owner-Occupied Housing, Chalfont Borough and Bucks County, 2022**

Value of Owner-Occupied Housing	Chalfont Borough		Bucks County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Owner-occupied units	1,406	100.0	192,466	100.0
Less than \$50,000	41	2.9	5,046	2.6
\$50,000 to \$99,999	0	0.0	2,037	1.1
\$100,000 to \$149,999	72	5.1	2,750	1.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0	0.0	6,648	3.5
\$200,000 to \$299,999	183	13.0	38,373	19.9
\$300,000 to \$499,999	869	61.8	78,702	40.9
\$500,000 to \$999,999	228	16.2	51,775	26.9
\$1,000,000 or more	13	0.9	1,135	3.7
Median value	\$412,200	-	\$395,800	-

*Source: ACS 5-year estimates 2018–2022*



The median value of owner-occupied dwelling units increased by about 15% from 2010 to 2022. This is relatively consistent with the regional value of owner-occupied dwelling units. Each of the Borough's surrounding municipalities experienced the median value of their housing stock increase by at least 14% in the last decade.

**Table 14. Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing, Chalfont Borough, Surrounding Municipalities, and Bucks County, 2010–2022**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Median Value 2010</b>	<b>Median Value 2022</b>	<b>Change (number)</b>	<b>Change (%)</b>
Chalfont Borough	\$351,200	\$412,200	\$61,000	14.8
Doylestown Borough	\$379,100	\$489,000	\$109,900	22.5
New Britain Borough	\$266,000	\$358,200	\$92,200	25.7
New Britain Township	\$359,300	\$434,000	\$74,700	17.2
Warrington Township	\$392,000	\$486,000	\$94,000	19.3
Bucks County	\$321,500	\$395,800	\$74,300	18.7

*Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2006–2010 and 2018–2022*

Housing occupied by renters accounted for almost 17% of all Chalfont housing units in 2022. That figure represents a substantial increase from the 2010 figure of 7.6%. The increase in renter-occupied dwellings over the past 10 years in Chalfont was the highest increase in the immediate area. This increase in renter-occupied dwellings could be due to the completion of multifamily developments in the Borough.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

According to the 2022 ACS Data, the median rent for renter-occupied housing in the Borough was \$2,004. This is a significant increase from the median rent in 2010, which was \$1,142. Rents in the Borough are higher than the countywide average. Table 15 provides data on median rents and proportion of rental units for Chalfont, its surrounding municipalities, and Bucks County.

**Table 15. Median Rent, Chalfont Borough, Surrounding Municipalities, and Bucks County, 2010–2022**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Renter-Occupied Units 2010 (%)</b>	<b>Renter-Occupied Units 2022 (%)</b>	<b>Median Rent 2010</b>	<b>Median Rent 2022</b>
Chalfont Borough	7.6	16.7	\$1,142	\$2,004
Doylestown Borough	48.7	46.3	\$1,116	\$1,701
New Britain Borough	11.6	6.9	\$1,242	\$1,688
New Britain Township	11.7	15.6	\$1,528	\$1,846
Warrington Township	15.2	18.5	\$1,120	\$1,583
Bucks County	21.5	21.0	\$997	\$1,461

*Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2006–2010 and 2018–2022*

## Summary

When several population and housing statistics are examined together, certain patterns emerge. These patterns further define the character of the Borough and present a clearer picture of how the population will grow in the future as indicated below.

- Chalfont's population has had steady growth since 2000 with a population increase of 8.4% between 2000 and 2022. This is similar to population trends in Bucks County, which had a population growth of 7.4% during the same time period.
- The Borough has a median age of 41.7 and more than one-third of the residents are aged 35-54. If a large number of this cohort stays in the Borough and ages in place, there may be a need for increased senior services within the County. If they leave, there may be a significant housing turnover.
- The average household size has declined in Chalfont and Bucks County in line with national trends towards smaller households. With population growth and smaller households, demand for more dwelling units may be experienced.
- The percentage of persons employed in Services increased from 6.8% to 15.2% between 2010 and 2022. Management, Professional, Science, and Arts increased from 45.9% to 62.7%.
- Multiple industries, including Manufacturing and Construction, saw a decrease in employees from 2010 to 2022, while industries such as Educational, Health Care, and Social Assistance Services, saw an increase and are top employment sources for Chalfont.
- The overall demographic picture is that Chalfont residents are more educated and have greater household incomes than those of Bucks County as a whole. These factors drive demand for both public and private goods and services.
- The population in Chalfont grew in part because of the development of housing after 2000. Almost 300 units were built in the last 20 years. The vacancy rate is low for both owner-occupied and rental housing indicating a lack of supply and higher sales prices and rent.

## PRINCIPLE 1

### IMPROVE MOBILITY

Traffic significantly impacts life in Chalfont Borough. Maximizing safety, efficiency, and comprehensiveness of facilities for cars, pedestrians, and bicycles available to residents and workers is necessary for improving the quality of life, economic development, and recreation opportunities.



## TRANSPORTATION

The continued development and redevelopment of the Borough is dependent on the advantages that a well-functioning transportation system provides. Maintaining and enhancing the quality and efficiency of the streets, highways, and rail lines in the Borough will support economic development efforts. This chapter examines the existing transportation system in the Borough and provides analysis and recommendations for the various modes of transportation that serve it.

## TRAFFIC CIRCULATION SYSTEM

The major problems with the Borough's traffic circulation system are arterials which are at or above capacity due to large volumes of traffic which pass through the Borough, and the lack of straight and continuous state roads. Traffic generated in the Borough and through-traffic is

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

funneled onto the Borough's arterial roads, primarily Butler Avenue and Limekiln Pike/North Main Street.

Butler Avenue (Business Route 202) is a major east–west route for traffic passing through Bucks County. Although traffic volumes have been reduced since the Route 202 Parkway was completed in 2012, traffic volumes continue to be high through Chalfont along Butler Avenue during peak hours. Since the completion of the Route 202 Parkway, the Borough has been proactive and replaced all the traffic control systems with traffic adaptive control systems. These systems help ensure that green-light time is distributed equitably for all traffic movements, which increases the overall reliability of these intersections. The Borough should continue to monitor these traffic control systems to adjust signal timing to accommodate changing traffic conditions on Business Route 202.

Another issue with Business Route 202 is that the curb radii are insufficient at several intersections. This requires that vehicles move slowly to negotiate the turns. Tractor trailers must negotiate these intersections carefully and often disrupt traffic in the process. Unfortunately, it is difficult to correct these conditions due to the existing sidewalks and building locations.

Limekiln Pike/North Main Street, and Park and Sunset Avenues are major roads providing access through the Borough. However, these routes are not continuous, which necessitates travel on other roads. Traffic on Sunset Avenue traveling east must utilize a short portion of North Main Street to continue onto Park Avenue. Traffic traveling south on North Main Street must traverse Butler Avenue to continue south on Limekiln Pike. These breaks interrupt the flow of traffic and create congestion at the intersections. These breaks are caused by Neshaminy Creek and the SEPTA rail line, which makes providing a solution to these breaks cost-prohibitive.

Bristol Road is a minor arterial that runs from the southern end of Bucks County to Chalfont Borough. However, it terminates at Butler Avenue, which forces through-vehicles onto Butler Avenue, thereby adding to existing high volumes of traffic. Currently, PennDOT is designing the improvements needed to complete the Bristol Road Extension, which would continue the roadway from Butler Avenue to Park Avenue. The goal of the project is to eliminate trips on Butler Avenue and reduce turning movements at the Butler Avenue/North Main Street intersection. This project would reduce traffic congestion in the center of the Borough.

### TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

One of the key elements of the comprehensive planning process is a transportation program. The focus of a transportation program should be on transportation-related impacts of local land uses and a long-range traffic improvement strategy. This may be accomplished by periodically

monitoring and evaluating the conditions of the Borough's road system. Information collected through traffic counts, street maintenance, and accident reports are important resources for determining future street improvement projects.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is responsible for the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The regional TIP is updated every two years in coordination with PennDOT's Twelve Year Plan. The regional TIP lists all projects that intend to use federal and/or state funds for their engineering, right-of-way costs, and/or construction costs. DVRPC and its member governments prepare a program of projects that responds to the needs of the region and complies with federal and state policies.

In the October 2023 Draft DVRPC TIP, the only project programmed for funding in Chalfont Borough is the Bristol Road Extension Project. The project includes a two-lane extension of Bristol Road from Butler Avenue to Park Avenue. The project also involves constructing a bridge across wetlands, a widening of the Bristol Road/Butler Avenue intersection to provide turn lanes, and a widening of Park Avenue to add a turn lane at the intersection of Park Avenue/N. Main Street. This project is estimated to begin construction in the 2027 fiscal year.

### TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) enables the Borough to assess the impact of proposed development on the Borough's transportation system and ensure that proposed development does not adversely affect the transportation network. Any traffic problems associated with the site can be avoided by providing solutions before development. The Borough Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (Section 370-36) requires that traffic impact studies be submitted for residential subdivision of over ten units; commercial, office, and institutional buildings of 15,000 square feet; and industrial development with 50 trips or more. The Planning Commission may require any other subdivision, land development, zoning change, special exception, or conditional use application to be accompanied by a TIS.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) maintains daily scheduled train service on the Lansdale/Doylestown Regional Rail Line that runs through the Borough. The line passes through Chalfont on its route southward from Doylestown to Philadelphia. Currently, expansion of parking at the Chalfont station is not feasible due to lack of available land. To help promote rail use, the Borough should ensure that the pedestrian system in the Borough is

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

connected to the train station by completing all gaps in the pedestrian system which connect to the train station.

Other forms of public transportation available to Chalfont residents include the Doylestown DART West, which is a bus service along Butler Avenue. The Dart West provides service along Butler Avenue through New Britain Borough, Chalfont Borough, and New Britain Township. The Dart West connects with the Doylestown Dart at Delaware Valley University. In addition, Bucks County Transport, Inc., a private, nonprofit transportation agency, provides on-demand services to those over 65 years of age or those on medical assistance.

### TRAILS, PEDESTRIANS, AND BICYCLING FACILITIES

The opportunity to travel by foot and bicycle is important for both recreational purposes and for members of the community who do not drive. These modes of transportation also provide an alternative to the automobile. As the mandates of the Federal Clean Air Act are carried out, provisions for pedestrian and bicycle access in the suburbs will become increasingly important for future community planning. The Federal Transportation Bill, *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides a renewed focus for transportation planning. Federal transportation legislation places emphasis on alternatives to dependence on motor vehicles, and less attention is given to new highways and roads.

Providing a walkable environment is essential to efficient transportation. Every trip begins and ends with walking. Walking remains the cheapest form of transportation for all people, and the construction of a walkable community provides the most affordable transportation system any community can plan, design, construct, and maintain. Walkable communities are more sustainable and lead to more social interaction, physical fitness, and diminished crime and other social problems. Sidewalks will provide alternative methods to make certain needed trips, in addition to their use for exercise and recreation. It is important that sidewalks be provided in the higher density residential zoning districts and in nonresidential areas where walking should be encouraged as an alternative to driving. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of existing and proposed streets. Attention should be given to providing safe conditions along sidewalks and streets.

Through the provisions of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, the Borough can ensure new developments, both residential and nonresidential, are provided with sidewalks. The Borough should consider establishing sidewalks on arterial and collector streets where there currently are none, and providing connections to existing and future trails. Trail connections and the *Tri-Municipal Master Trails Plan* are discussed further in Principle 5: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.



In many communities, bicycle systems are important and much appreciated facilities. The subdivision and land development ordinance may be revised to include requirements for bicycle improvements, in addition to or in place of sidewalks, in appropriate areas. A bicycle plan may be prepared to determine the best routes to connect existing and anticipated developments with schools, shopping areas, parks and playgrounds, employment centers, and other key community locations.

Fortunately, the presence of stream corridors linking various portions of the Borough is conducive to the creation of a viable system of pedestrian/bicycle corridors. These corridors could link residential neighborhoods to the Borough core and outlying activity centers. The Borough is small enough that its core and outlying neighborhoods are within reasonable walking or bicycling distance from any given point. At present, it seems that apart from leisure functions in the parks and in neighborhoods, the greatest amount of pedestrian activity occurs in the Borough core and near the train station.

## CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

Context Sensitive Solutions is a proactive approach to transportation planning, design, and implementation that looks at the extensive context the transportation network plays in enhancing communities and natural environments, whether they be urban, suburban, rural, scenic, or historic. The concept involves asking questions first about the need and purpose of the transportation project, and then equally addresses safety, mobility, and the preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic, environmental, and other community values. Context Sensitive Solutions consists of a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach in which citizens are part of the design team. Support from stakeholders is received at the beginning of a project, rather than negotiating support as the project nears completion. Context sensitivity emphasizes the broad nature of solutions to transportation needs by focusing on enhancing the quality for transportation users, nearby residents and businesses, and the surrounding environment. The Borough should use a context sensitive design approach when roadways and bridges in the Borough are being considered for reconstruction or replacement.

## BUTLER AVENUE REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

The municipalities of Chalfont Borough, New Britain Borough, and New Britain Township have historically worked together to investigate and resolve common problems. One such common problem is Butler Avenue. In 2009, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) completed the *Butler Avenue Revitalization Strategies Study*.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The study recommends several principal strategies for Chalfont Borough. These strategies include applying streetscaping elements and creating shared parking arrangements for the businesses in the downtown area. The study also recommends introducing gateway treatments on the bridges on each side of the Borough to reinforce changes in the roadway environment and desired changes in land use along the corridor. In the conceptual plan, downtown sidewalk travel is enhanced by promoting the elimination of individual curb cuts to most properties and relocating parking to the rear of the buildings. As redevelopment occurs within the Borough, recommendations from the plan should be implemented, as appropriate.

### ESTABLISHING THE TRANSPORTATION/LAND USE CONNECTION

Land use patterns and intensity influence the roadway network. Likewise, the roadway network can influence land uses and development pressures. Just as new or expanded transportation systems create new access opportunities that attract new development, new development patterns create a need for additional transportation facilities.

This continuing cycle has been the traditional route by which most suburban areas have developed. Establishing the link between land use and transportation can provide numerous benefits for the community:

- Incorporating land use considerations into transportation planning can influence future development patterns and ensure that transportation facilities have adequate capacity to meet demand;
- Land use patterns that are matched to the transportation system can help relieve congestion and traffic on existing roads, which in turn reduces the requirements of constructing new transportation facilities;
- Providing the link between land use and transportation will reduce congestion, improve mobility, improve air quality, and preserve additional open space, all of which will help to create a more attractive and livable community.

The Borough should consider the transportation implications of decision changes regarding zoning and developments, and must coordinate these decisions with county, state, and regional governments.

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The efficiency of a roadway is diminished when vehicles gain access from points which are too close together, or are uncoordinated with each other or the general flow of traffic. Roadways function best when access is managed. Access management methods include reducing the number of driveways, combining access points, and aligning intersections. Aligning intersections minimizes potential conflict points, which are locations where vehicles must cross paths.

Access management is both a land use and traffic issue. It not only includes physical access improvements to minimize vehicular conflicts, but also calls for land use controls and incentives that are linked to the development policies of the community and the capabilities of the transportation system. The planning challenge is not merely how to provide driveways or how to design roadways, storage areas, or parking, the challenge is how not to limit new development to expedite traffic flow. Therefore, the Borough must consider the access requirements of businesses that may relocate in the area, as well as those vehicles traveling through the area.

The benefits of this technique are limited along Butler Avenue and in the Borough core because of the number of existing access points. Access to state roads, which is granted by a PennDOT highway occupancy permit, cannot be taken away. However, incentives such as a reduction in the number of required parking spaces could be offered to have landowners combine access driveways and share parking. Access points in new development along North Main Street and Sunset Avenue should be managed during the subdivision and land development approval process and any potential access issues should be coordinated with PennDOT.

## OFFICIAL MAP

Article IV of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) authorizes the use of an official map as a legal means for reserving sites a municipality has designated for future public facilities. An official map identifies areas of public interest and need for the purpose of reserving lands for public use. It can be used to implement the transportation network and other community facilities by focusing on one type of improvement, such as a street or parkland, or include a variety of public facilities. Development of land designated for public facilities on the official map may be delayed for up to one year from the time a proposal is submitted in order for the municipality to obtain the property. The adoption of an official map does not by itself establish a street, nor does it imply that the municipality has taken the land, that must still be accomplished through a mutual agreement, municipal purchase, or condemnation of the land through eminent domain procedures.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The preparation and adoption of an official map is an effective means of implementing major components of an access management plan. The Borough may use this technique to identify connections between individual parking lots on North Main Street and Butler Avenue and reduce curb cuts along the roadways. These parking lots may be connected with the coordination of adjacent property owners and when redevelopment takes place. Reduction in curb cuts will help to reduce traffic congestion on Butler Avenue and North Main Street.

### TRAFFIC CALMING

Traffic calming measures are mainly used to address speeding and high cut-through traffic volumes on neighborhood streets. These issues can create an atmosphere in which non-motorists are intimidated or even endangered by motorized traffic. By addressing high speeds and cut-through volumes, traffic calming can increase both the real and perceived safety of pedestrians and bicyclists and improve the quality of life within the neighborhood.

The role of physical measures in traffic calming is usually emphasized because these measures are self-policing. In other words, by utilizing speed humps and/or traffic roundabouts, motorized vehicles will slow down in absence of a police presence. Some potential traffic calming measures include speed humps, speed tables, chicanes, planted medians, roundabouts, and curb extensions.

Specifically, with the addition of the townhome community at the Reserve at Chalfont, traffic volumes on Hibiscus Drive and Lilac Lane have increased over the last several years. Given its position as a cut-through for traffic traveling between Butler Avenue and Bristol Road, this residential corridor needs traffic calming measures to help promote the safety of area residents. While previous efforts to limit traffic on New Jersey Avenue were accomplished by using a gate, this strategy had the negative impact of increased emergency vehicle response times. The traffic calming measures listed above would be able to safely accommodate traffic while increasing resident safety.

To initiate traffic calming, Chalfont Borough should develop specific policies regarding traffic calming. These policies should include the participation of any neighborhood that could be impacted by the addition of traffic calming measures. Some of the goals of a traffic calming program should include the following:

- Achieving safe, slow speeds for all vehicles;
- Improving the safety, and the perception of safety, for non-motorized users of local roads;
- Increasing roadway safety by reducing crash frequency and severity;

- Increasing the compatibility of all modes of transportation, specifically with pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Reducing cut-through vehicle traffic on local roads; and
- Reducing the need for traffic enforcement on local roads.

To guide the development of traffic calming measures, the Borough could develop and adopt a complete streets policy. A complete streets policy would set forth an official vision, design standards, performance measures, and implementation steps to establish sustained long-term development of traffic calming measures. Utilizing the traffic calming measures listed above, a complete streets policy helps achieve the goals of a traffic calming program. Complete streets policies create safe environments for walking and biking, while also directing new development to their main streets and downtown core.

A complete streets policy and subsequent traffic calming measures must be designed so they do not impede emergency access by police, fire, ambulance, or rescue personnel. Additionally, allowing for public participation during the designing of traffic calming facilities will help to ensure acceptance of these facilities.

## SUMMARY

Chalfont contains a network of local streets and arterial and collector roads, as well as a commuter rail line and bus line. Currently, the Borough experiences traffic congestion and high volumes of traffic at main intersections, particularly during rush hours. The problem is compounded by the lack of sufficient collector roads. The majority of traffic isn't generated from within the Borough itself, but from the outlying communities, which have grown over the past several decades.

An effective and efficient multi-modal transportation system is critical if Chalfont Borough is to continue to thrive as a desirable place to live and work. Recognizing congestion reduction and promotion of alternative means of travel as concerns, Chalfont should look toward the future by developing a context sensitive program that promotes the maintenance and improvement of the existing network. Policies should also be directed to continue support for the Bristol Road Extension Project.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Support completion of the Bristol Road Extension Project.
- Consider traffic impacts of land use planning decisions.
- Work on parking availability and pedestrian connections to the train station and Borough core by completing all gaps in the pedestrian system.
- Preserve rights-of-way for trails and pedestrian use.
- Encourage walking by requiring sidewalks or bike/hike paths as part of all new developments.
- Fill in sidewalk gaps and connections.
- Develop policies regarding traffic calming with special consideration given to the development of a complete streets policy.
- Use a context sensitive design approach when roadways and bridges in the Borough are being considered for reconstruction or replacement.
- Implement recommendations from the *Butler Avenue Revitalization Strategies Study* as redevelopment occurs within the Borough.

## PRINCIPLE 2

### CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES

*Successful communities protect the natural resources and processes that contribute to their health and character. These resources should be enhanced, where necessary, to ensure their integrity. Sustainable use of resources will be promoted in all development and activities, including energy efficiency and renewable energy production.*



Although much of the Borough has been developed, many natural resources have remained or been preserved and should continue to be properly managed by ecologically sound approaches for the benefit of future generations. Having an understanding of the natural resources of the Borough is crucial for making decisions concerning all land use planning and development. Conservation of natural resources helps to maintain the character of a place, helps to make it a desirable place to live, and enhances the sustainability of the community.

Important natural resources that should be protected and regulated in Chalfont are wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, and steep slopes. Other related topics of environmental concern for an urbanized municipality such as Chalfont would be air quality and water quality. As the world's climate changes natural features will help to mitigate negative impacts on the lives of residents.

Pennsylvania law, through its Constitution, planning code and case law, has made it clear that protecting the natural environment is a necessary and legitimate purpose of planning.



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Planning for sustainable development means taking into account:

- Equitable sharing of resources among current and future generations;
- Protecting and living within the natural carrying capacity of the land;
- Minimizing natural resource use; and
- Satisfying basic human needs.

A high-quality environment is an important goal for the Borough. Development without concern for the natural limitations and amenities of the land can be costly for people, as individuals and as taxpayers in the community. Development on flood plains and alluvial soils, and filling of watercourses can result in property damage and the loss of life due to increased flooding. The overuse of steep slopes and the stripping of woodland and vegetative cover can cause undue soil erosion and excessive sedimentation in natural drainage systems. The natural features of the Borough are discussed below and shown on Map 1, Natural Resources.

### GEOLOGY

Chalfont is underlain by three different geologic formations; Brunswick, Lockatong, and Stockton. The Brunswick formation is composed of red shale and sandstone and is located south of Butler Pike. Argillite of a gray to black color composes the Lockatong formation, which underlies the Borough center and extends southwestward as a band and is also located in the northernmost portion of the Borough. A band of the Stockton formation, which is made up of red and gray shales and sandstone, lies just north of the Borough center which runs east and west. These formations hold varying degrees of groundwater resources. The Brunswick formation yields 50 to 200 gallons per minute (GPM), the Lockatong formation yields 20 to 100 GPM and the Stockton formation yields 70 to 300 GPM.

The Borough's topography is caused by several faults under the surface and to a lesser degree the hardness of the underlying stone. The Chalfont fault passes under the Borough in an east-west direction roughly paralleling the railroad line. This fault extends from the Montgomery County line to Wycombe in Wrightstown Township. The slope at the north side of Sunset Avenue is related to this fault. The center of the Borough, at Limekiln Pike and Butler Avenue, is surrounded by smaller faults and results in slopes just south of Butler Avenue and east and west of Limekiln Pike. The Lockatong formation, which lies below the Borough center and the northern ridge, is composed of hard stone, which has eroded at a slower rate than the shales and sandstone of the surrounding areas. This is a major reason for the topography and elevation of the northern ridge and the Borough center.

## SLOPES

Chalfont is situated in the Piedmont Province, which is typified by gentle hills and slopes. The lowest elevations of the Borough lie along the stream beds of the branches of the Neshaminy Creek, which are approximately 260 feet above sea level. Several slopes rise above the west branch of the creek towards the west between 15 to 25%. The northernmost portion of the Borough is part of a ridge which rises to a point 393 feet above sea level. Slopes of 15 to 25% are located along the side of the ridge.

The *Bucks County Natural Resources Plan 1986* lists slopes which range from 8 to 15% as moderate slopes. Construction activity will produce moderate rates of erosion and sediment loading if not controlled. For slopes in the 8 to 15% range, construction employing proper engineering methods is possible. However, areas with grades exceeding 15% should be considered as sites more suitable for less intrusive or limited development, which disturbs less soil and leaves more land open and undisturbed.

Slopes of 15 to 25% grades are considered steep, and disturbed areas will yield heavy sediment loads, while very steep slopes over 25% grade produce heavy erosion and sediment loading when disturbed. Development of such areas could lead to many problems including building foundation instability, accelerated erosion, and runoff. Chalfont has no large areas of very steep slopes. However, as each site is developed, a slope analysis should be conducted to ensure proper grading and construction. The Borough zoning ordinance permits disturbance of 25% of slopes of 15-25% grade, and 15% of slopes of 25% or greater grade.

## SOILS

The primary soil group found in the Borough is the Abbottstown-Readington-Reaville Association.<sup>5</sup> This association is typified by nearly level and gently sloping, moderately deep, and deep, poorly drained to moderately well drained soils on uplands. Low ridges and valleys are oriented east-west. The soils formed in loamy and silty material that weathered chiefly from shale and sandstone.

Abbottstown soils are deep and somewhat poorly drained and are restricted in permeability. They have compact subsoil and a seasonal high-water table. Abbottstown soils are at the base of slopes, on side slopes, and on broad ridge tops. Readington soils are deep and moderately well drained. They are nearly level to sloping soils with a firm, moderately slowly permeable, silty

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<sup>5</sup> Soils data was obtained through the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service's Web Soil Survey (WSS).

clay loam subsoil. Reaville soils are moderately deep, are moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained, and have a seasonal high-water table. Reaville soils are on the tops and sides of ridges. Chalfont also has areas of Urban land. Urban land is highly built up with the original soil material disturbed or filled over. In Chalfont, the Urban land is underlain by shale bedrock. Minor soil categories include Bowmansville and Rowland soils along streams and floodplain areas. Klinesville and Penn soils are found on upland areas.

In recognition of the problems associated with soil erosion, the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances require the submission of an erosion and sedimentation plan as part of the preliminary land development process.

### WOODLANDS

The woodlands that exist in Chalfont add to the visual attractiveness of the Borough and provide a habitat for wildlife. The larger areas of woodlands in the Borough are mainly located on undeveloped parcels or are located where there are other natural resource restrictions which limit development. As with many urbanized municipalities, there are scattered vacant parcels, many of which contain woodlands, where infill development may occur. In the Borough, loss of woodlands could impact other environmentally sensitive areas. For Chalfont, this would be of importance particularly along the north and west branches of the Neshaminy Creek and Pine Run tributary. The North Wales Water Authority (NWWA) parcel (TMPs# 7-11-3-1 and 7-6-104) and the North Penn Water Authority (NPWA) parcel (TMP#7-11-3-2) contain significant woodlands.

Street trees are another element related to woodland resources in urbanized areas. Trees planted along streets and in parks are valued for aesthetic and environmental purposes. Furthermore, they screen out noise and aid in pollution abatement. These trees face threats of disease, damage from cars, improper maintenance, and careless removal. Disease prevention, treatment of illness, and removal must be done regularly to ensure the health of the trees. Because of the benefits they bestow and the role they play in the environment, it is important that trees be protected. The health of the Borough's street and shade trees is dependent on proper care.

The Borough zoning ordinance permits the removal of no more than 50% of any forested area on a site or 80% when associated with other protected resources during the development process. There are no other restrictions against tree removal by lot owners not associated with land development. The Borough should consider amending the zoning ordinance to restrict tree removal by property owners that is not associated with land development. The Borough should work with the NWWA and NPWA to preserve the woodlands on their lands.

Reforestation (the process of replacing trees that were removed) and afforestation (the process of planting trees where there were none) may be required as part of the land development and subdivision process. Planting of new trees along streets and in parks may be accomplished as part of a development process through Borough funds or by grants. The Borough should consider a tree planting policy and ensure that the list of trees appropriate for planting in the subdivision and land development ordinance includes only those that are native and not prone to disease.

## WETLANDS

The National Wetlands Inventory Map delineates the wetland areas (larger than 2 acres in size) in the central area of the Borough along the north and west branches of the Neshaminy Creek and Pine Run tributary. Typically, wetlands occur as marshes, swamps, and bogs. Often, they are saturated lands or areas that display a seasonal high-water table. The wetland areas in Chalfont Borough are along creeks or coincide with streams. Even in built-out and urbanized areas, wetlands are important. They help to improve water quality by filtering toxins. In addition, wetlands assist with groundwater recharge. Protection of wetlands is also essential because they act as natural retention basins for stormwater after storms. After a storm, the slow release of water helps to reduce the amount of flooding for the surrounding areas.

Wetlands are identified through field surveys conducted by professionals such as hydrologists and soil scientists, who determine their existence by analyzing vegetation, soils, and hydrology. The Borough requires wetlands delineations to be validated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Borough's zoning ordinance requires 100% protection of wetlands. Furthermore, any encroachment for approved dedicated roadways must have permits from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Wetland margins are also protected by permitting only 20% removal.

## WATERSHEDS AND WATER COURSES

A watershed or drainage basin is the area of land that drains water, sediment, and dissolved materials to a common outlet at some point along a stream channel. The Borough is part of the Neshaminy Creek watershed, which ultimately flows into the Delaware River. The subwatersheds are drained by either the north or west branches of the Neshaminy Creek.

As part of a larger watershed, the Borough is affected by activities and resources upstream beyond its boundaries and also affects communities downstream. These activities and resources must be managed on a regionwide basis. The Borough is involved in regional planning efforts to

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manage aspects of the watershed. Stormwater management and water supply are significant watershed issues that are addressed in “Principle 4: Build and Maintain a Livable Community.”

Riparian buffers are areas along stream banks. Stream corridor or riparian protection regulations prohibit clearing, grading, paving, and building structures except for essential uses within a designated setback from a stream. These requirements, known as riparian buffer standards, provide stream protection not provided by current ordinances. Preservation of natural vegetation will stabilize the stream bank, filter stormwater, help slow stream velocities, preserve the floodplain, and protect wildlife habitat. In a developed area such as Chalfont, a minimum width corridor can be established on private land and landowners can be encouraged to let streamside vegetation grow or plant additional vegetation.

Chalfont shares waterways with New Britain Borough and New Britain Township. The north and west branches of the Neshaminy Creek and Pine Run tributary provide a greenway for recreation and wildlife, and drainage for stormwater. The Borough may coordinate activities for recreation and natural resource protection to enhance the function of the creek in ways that will be greater than the sum of individual municipal actions. Linking this waterway as a continuous greenway will allow for recreation, wildlife, and natural resource enhancement. Coordinated activities, such as riparian corridor plantings, will benefit the individual site and the waterway throughout its length.

The *Upper and Middle Neshaminy Creek Watershed River Conservation Plan* (RCP) prepared by the Heritage Conservancy (1992) addresses both existing and future water resource issues, as well as providing a framework of sustainable management for the creek and the land in its watershed. Critical issues include flooding, water quality and quantity, wetland protection and restoration, river resource access, riparian corridor restoration, protection of cultural and historic areas, and land use planning. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources provides funding for planning and projects that would be consistent with recommendations of the RCP.

## FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are areas adjoining streams that accommodate floodwater. The floodplain is defined by the 100-year or base flood, which has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year. The floodplain includes floodways and flood fringes.

Floodway is defined as the watercourse channel and adjacent lands reserved to carry the base flood without cumulatively increasing the base flood elevation more than a designated height. One foot is the maximum increase allowed by the National Flood Insurance Program.

The flood fringe is part of the base floodplain outside of the floodway. Under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) obstructions causing any rise in the base flood elevations are prohibited. The flood fringe, on the other hand, may be developed under federal guidelines. However, structures must be elevated, or flood-proofed up to the base flood elevation.

Floodplain soils or alluvial soils indicate where flooding has occurred in the past. These soils are composed of a mix of other soil types that have eroded from the land and deposited along stream beds by storm waters. Sometimes, these soils appear in areas that have not been mapped under the NFIP, particularly smaller order streams. These soils are found anywhere flooding takes place and should be considered as part of the floodplain when the floodplain has not been mapped.

The *Chalfont Borough Zoning Ordinance* does not permit encroachment or coverage in streams, rivers, watercourses, ponds, flood hazard areas, or floodplain soils. The Borough's Flood Hazard Area Map is based on land delineated by the Flood Insurance Study for Chalfont Borough as performed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency/Federal Insurance Administration.

## WATER QUALITY

As an urban/suburban area, Chalfont Borough's streams may exhibit the types of water quality problems that are generally associated with automobile-dependent, residentially, and industrially developed communities. Nonpoint source pollutants stem from urban runoff, such as gasoline and motor oil on parking lots. Sidewalks, driveways, and other impervious surfaces cause stormwater runoff, which carries pollutants such as oil and grease. Runoff from residential yards contains herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers. Pollutants from both sources flow into storm drains, which in turn may affect the entire stream.

Furthermore, construction sites contribute to stream pollution by erosion and sedimentation carried in runoff washing into storm drains. The runoff transports suspended solids and other toxins that may harm organic and aquatic life in streams. Therefore, Chalfont Borough, like any urbanized community, must plan for water quality and remediation to address stream maintenance and stormwater collection systems.

## AIR QUALITY

Chalfont Borough lies within the Philadelphia-Reading-Camden metro area, which has been characterized as a nonattainment area because of unacceptable levels of ozone and fine particulate matter. The American Lung Association's (ALA) "2022 State of the Air" report looked at these two types of air pollution. During the latest three-year period, the Philadelphia-Reading-Camden metro area had an annual average of less than seven unhealthy high-ozone days — its fewest in

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at least two decades. The area saw an annual average of about 10 high-ozone days in 2017-2019, down from a high of over 70 in 1997-1999. Typical pollution that is experienced in the area may be attributed to regional industrial activity and motor vehicle emissions.

The Borough may consider action to reduce air pollution — including adopting climate action plans, buying electric vehicles for municipal fleets, and purchasing renewable and non-combustion electricity. On a household level, individuals and families can conserve electricity, avoid burning leaves, and biking or taking transit instead of driving gas-powered cars.

### BUCKS COUNTY NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

The Bucks County Natural Areas Inventory, updated in 2011, indicates that the Borough has two unique resources, the Forest Park woods and pond, and the Neshaminy Creek. The Forest Park site is classified as priority 4 and contains biological or ecological resources that are important at the local level. The site is part of a larger 25-acre area of mature and successional forest extending from the Pine Run Elementary School in New Britain Borough to the Pine Run tributary. The site includes a small manmade pond, which contains a rare plant, Capitate Spike Rush, which may have been introduced in sand that may have been brought to the site. Remnants of picnic benches and a former access road from the Forest Park Amusement Park remain. The Borough should discuss preservation of the site with the North Wales Water Authority.

The Neshaminy Creek in New Britain Township, south of the Borough, is classified as Priority 3 with local or county wide importance and contains a significant hardwood forest and seasonal wetlands. These resources extend into Chalfont at Twin Streams Park. These areas are protected as parklands by Chalfont Borough and New Britain Township.

### NATIVE PLANTS

Native plants are well adapted to local soils and conditions, support birds and other wildlife, help to create resiliency to the impacts of climate change for people and wildlife, protect water quality, and help restore the ecological balance.

Because they are adapted to the conditions of the local environment, native plants are the foundation of the region's biodiversity. Plant species such as swamp white oak and purple coneflower serve as a critical resource for birds as they provide essential food and shelter and help mitigate the challenging effects of our changing climate. Many species of insects have co-evolved with these native plants over time and are essential food sources for birds.



Additionally, by electing to use native plants in yards and public spaces, it allows for a decrease in use of fertilizers and pesticides, which in turn conserves significant amounts of water and reduces demands on energy.

Finally, native plants have been found to be more effective at controlling stormwater and can help contribute to the achievement MS4 requirements when integrated with green infrastructure such as rain gardens, bioswales, and riparian buffers.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Natural resource protection is an important issue in Chalfont that must be dealt with effectively and knowledgeably. Pennsylvania Act 148 permits municipal governing bodies to establish Environmental Advisory Councils (EAC) to advise local government agencies on matters dealing with protection, conservation, management, promotion, and use of natural resources. Duties of an EAC are defined by elected officials to meet local needs. The EAC may also assume the duties of a shade tree commission which may plant, remove, maintain, and protect shade trees on public streets and highways of the Borough. EACs can aid the Borough council in generating respect and appreciation of the natural heritage of the Borough. An EAC deals with environmental matters and can assist the council.



### SUMMARY

Chalfont Borough contains several critical areas that may be considered environmentally sensitive due their role in the local ecology. These areas are found primarily along the branches of the Neshaminy Creek which contain alluvial soils, wetlands, woodlands, and steep slopes. The Borough must also pay attention to the way energy and goods are consumed and disposed of, and the movement of people and goods. Other related topics of environmental concern for a Borough approaching the point where it is almost completely developed are air quality and water quality.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Develop policy and regulations for forestation and afforestation.
- Review tree list in subdivision and land development ordinance to ensure species are native and not prone to disease.
- Discuss protection of Forest Park woods with the North Wales and North Penn Water Authorities.
- Coordinate planning for the Neshaminy Creek and Pine Run Corridors with New Britain Township and New Britain Borough.
- Maintain natural resource protection standards in zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.
- Enact riparian buffer requirements to protect stream banks and manage stormwater.
- Consider amending the subdivision and land development ordinance to incorporate provisions encouraging the use of renewable energy systems and energy conserving building design, as authorized by the Municipalities Planning Code.
- Promote the use of native plants as the preferred planting scheme for required landscaping.
- Determine if an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) would be useful in meeting Borough goals.





## PRINCIPLE 3

### PROMOTE BUSINESS VITALITY

*The Borough core provides goods and services in a small-town atmosphere. Encouraging organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring can strengthen business in the Borough. Strong local businesses in the core, and elsewhere in the Borough, ensure a healthy local economy.*



Chalfont Borough has businesses which serve Borough and other local residents, as well as national and international markets. It is important to promote the health of local businesses because they benefit residents by providing necessary goods and services, and they contribute to the tax base. The Borough core at the intersection of North Main Street and Butler Avenue is home to numerous small locally owned businesses serving the community. Businesses are also found along the main arteries in the Borough along Butler Avenue and North Main Street. Small industrial firms are found along Hamilton Street and Oak Avenue.

#### BOROUGH BUSINESSES

The Borough contains retail, service, and institutional uses in the center of Chalfont—the area along Butler Avenue and along North Main Street south of the SEPTA rail line. Most of the Borough’s businesses are in small buildings, some of which are converted residences. There are also two small shopping centers. There are no fast-food franchises and only a few national chain stores. Most of the businesses are locally owned and operated, and serve local needs.

Many of the properties in the Borough core contain buildings that were built in the late 1800s in Victorian style. These lots have small parking areas in the rear and some of the buildings have

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second floor dwellings, which contribute to the character of the core. The uses and historic structures found there create a distinct focal point for the community due to the architecture and collection of small-town businesses. Businesses in the Borough core are located in buildings regulated by preservation ordinances to protect their historical integrity.

A business survey was sent to each business owner as a part of this Comprehensive Plan update. Business owner respondents predominately rated the climate for doing business in the Borough as good or very good. However, the biggest challenges business owners report facing include additional costs of doing business (including energy costs, healthcare, rent, personnel costs, etc.), attracting and retaining employees, traffic, marketing, parking, and attracting a new customer base.

Chalfont businesses must compete against those in other communities which may be better organized such as Doylestown and New Hope. These shopping areas have centralized management, a level of organization, and special events and marketing to draw customers.

When asked to list the most important things Chalfont Borough could do to improve their ability to operate a successful business, business operators chose improving traffic flow and traffic calming, pedestrian circulation, parking, and street beautification efforts such as street plantings, street cleaning, and lighting.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Center has developed the Main Street Four Point Approach® for downtown business revitalization: organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality. The National Trust provides assistance to communities that adopt a Main Street Program using their four-point program. Communities usually hire a full time Main Street director. Chalfont's core may be too small and resources insufficient for a full Main Street effort, however, the Borough can implement many of the other recommendations of the program. The following principles may be followed for revitalization programs to be successful.

- **Comprehensive:** A comprehensive approach is essential. A single focus on one program will not be successful. Complex challenges need complex solutions.
- **Incremental:** Basic, simple activities demonstrate that "new things are happening" in the commercial district. As public confidence in Main Street grows and participants' understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects can be tackled.
- **Self-help:** Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners to invest time and money in Main Street — the heart of their community.

- **Partnerships:** Public and private sectors must work together to achieve common goals of Main Street's revitalization. Each sector has a role to play, and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations.
- **Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets:** Every Main Street has unique qualities, like distinctive buildings and human scale, that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
- **Quality:** Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. Shoestring budgets and efforts copied from other communities may reinforce a negative image of the Borough core. Concentrate on quality projects over quantity.
- **Change:** Public support, business practices, and physical appearances must change in order to succeed.
- **Implementation:** To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding. Small projects at the beginning pave the way for larger ones as revitalization matures. Constant revitalization activity creates confidence and ever-greater levels of participation.

The Borough can encourage local leaders, planning agencies, economic development agencies, businesses, and individuals to apply the Main Street approach to what they are doing now. These people and organizations should view the Borough core as an asset to the community and as an area full of opportunity to renew the Borough's sense of identity, history, and place.

The local business association, the Chalfont New Britain Business Alliance, has a mission to share ideas, strengthen local businesses and ensure economic prosperity. The Alliance also creates an opportunity for business leaders to network and support the growth and development of Chalfont-based businesses. Its goal is to preserve the history and hometown integrity of Chalfont. This organization may play an important role in Borough core revitalization.

## ACCESS TO THE COMMERCIAL CORE

Access to Borough shops and restaurants, both from within and outside of the Borough, is a key component to having a thriving commercial core.

To help create a community that is attractive to both residents and visitors, the Borough adopted the Park Avenue TOD Overlay District at the intersection of North Main Street and Park Avenue in 2014.

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The goals of this TOD Overlay District include:

- Encourage innovative planning concepts which contribute to the village character and vitality of the community
- Provide for a mix of residential and commercial uses that will share infrastructure while promoting efficient traffic flow and increased pedestrian access and
- Establish and maintain market incentives and design guidelines that will attract new residents and businesses to the community.

This Park Avenue TOD Overlay District includes the Patriot Station housing development which provides apartments that are walkable to the SEPTA rail line, as well as many of the businesses within the Borough.

The Borough's 2010 Comprehensive Plan indicated a major issue confronting the Borough core is access and parking. The individual businesses in the Borough core have individual access points and parking in the rear of the buildings. This parking is not always visible from the street. Shoppers expect to find parking for businesses easily and may bypass a store if parking is a challenge. Connecting parking lots in the rear of the structures and providing signage for customer parking may facilitate parking for North Main Street businesses.

While visibility and connectivity of parking throughout the Borough's core remains an issue, the Borough has acted, both in planning and practice, to alleviate some of the issue.

In 2020 the Borough completed the *Chalfont Borough Parking Consolidation & Streetscape Plan* to address the issue of parking in the Borough's core. The plan indicates shared parking is almost non-existent in the Borough, and parking quality ranges from lots with clearly designed, lined, and well paved parking spaces to lots that are poorly paved and unlined.

In recent years, the Borough has added public parking for visitors of the Borough located at 101 N. Main Street. The lot includes designated spaces for SEPTA rail users as well. In addition to this parking lot, the Borough recently purchased a 1.17-acre parcel located along Kerns Avenue with the intention of creating a public parking lot. The lot is centrally located in the Borough across the street from Borough Hall. Though the lot will be accessible from both Butler Avenue and North Main Street, it does not have frontage along any of the main roads in the Borough. The Borough will need to ensure there is adequate signage so visitors are aware of its availability and location.

## PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is the process of creating quality places in which people want to live, work, play, and learn. Ensuring Chalfont's sense of place and vibrancy is a key part of economic development. Placemaking efforts can include:

- Preserving community character;
- Permitting and preserving mixed-use development in high activity areas;
- Improving Borough streetscapes and gateways;
- Preservation of local architecture, history, and culture;
- Ensuring the maintenance and health of the Borough's street tree canopy;
- Consistent property maintenance and code enforcement; and
- Providing appropriate zoning standards for nonresidential uses throughout the Borough.

## PRESERVING COMMUNITY CHARACTER

By incorporating placemaking techniques and using North Main Street as a community center rather than just a commercial hub, the Borough can enhance the sense of community.

Changes, such as providing more outdoor seating and dining opportunities, creating usable public space, or holding more community events on North Main Street can enhance the sense of community for residents while also highlighting local businesses in the Borough.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Municipal policies and regulations can affect businesses and their ability to compete in local, regional, and national markets. Borough practices and policies, from land use decisions and ordinances, to information distributed to business owners at Borough Hall, can affect the viability of the business area.

Several county-level agencies such as the Bucks County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC) are also engaged in economic development and can be helpful for business loans and site identification. BCEDC provides resources for local businesses including funding opportunities, events, and has an Interactive Zoning Map on their website which shows detailed

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interactive visual information on office and industrial sites, municipal jurisdictions, transportation, preserved open space, and zoning across the county. Keeping existing businesses is more important than trying to attract new ones, so it is important that the Borough works with and supports the business community.

### A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

This plan applies the term “sustainable” to resources or systems that can be maintained without compromising the needs of future generations, and in so doing, will conserve or restore an ecological balance and avoid depleting resources. A “sustainable economy” is one that retains strong local and regional businesses and encourages the growth of new businesses. It also encourages the Borough to retain and build productive partnerships with the business community, and in so doing, attracts sustainable business development. Also, encouraging residents and businesses to spend money locally keeps the local economy healthy and maintains investments in the local community.

Communities across the country are exploring ways to foster a business climate that promotes and prospers from “green” building and sustainable energy. The Borough can focus on ways that public and private “green” buildings and planning efforts, education, and technical assistance can reduce the climate, health, and cost impacts associated with expanding and operating the built environment.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Follow the recommendations of the National Trust Main Street Program.
- Encourage shared parking and managed access to parking facilities.
- Help to make local businesses successful by engaging them and understanding their needs.
- Provide adequate signage for new municipal parking lot and existing parking areas.



## PRINCIPLE 4

### BUILD AND MAINTAIN A LIVABLE COMMUNITY

*Community services and facilities such as police, schools and institutions make a community appealing to new and existing residents and serve as important assets. These amenities must be adequate to meet the needs of the community.*



Community facilities and services include utilities, schools, parks and recreation, hospitals, fire protection, police, and emergency services which serve the public and are owned either publicly or privately. These facilities and services are necessary for public health, safety and welfare, and provide for the quality of life expected in Chalfont Borough. Planning for these facilities and services should be interrelated and consistent with land use planning in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that municipal Comprehensive Plans include a plan for community facilities and utilities. This update of the *Chalfont Borough Comprehensive Plan* surveys the general adequacy of the community facilities and services which serve the Borough. Most of the facilities and services are analyzed with an objective standard. However, because of the nature of the service, police services must be judged in a more qualitative manner by the Borough council. The update also assists in the coordination, development, and maintenance of these facilities and services by providing an analysis of all facilities and services in a single document. If the Borough, or another organization, intends to expand or extend a facility or service, it is recommended that a comprehensive study of the facility or service be conducted.

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The following sections of the Plan deal with the facilities and services provided by or for the Borough:

Public Services and Facilities	Utility Services and Facilities
Borough Administration	Solid Waste Management
Public Works	Wastewater
Police Services	Water Supply
Fire Protection Services	Stormwater Management
Emergency Medical Services	Telecommunications
Health Care Facilities	
Library Facilities	
Educational Facilities	

Chalfont Borough is almost fully developed. The present facilities and services which serve the Borough are generally adequate. Management issues, such as staffing, funding, and maintenance are the primary concern. For areas where facilities and services may need to be expanded or extended to serve future growth, this chapter examines projected needs.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATION

The Borough’s administration building is located at 40 North Main Street in the center of the Borough. The Borough Hall houses the offices of the Borough manager, assistant to the manager, finance director, tax collector, and code officer. The building was constructed in 1920 as the Chalfont National Bank and was converted into the Borough Hall in 1984.

The Borough maintains regular office hours and open meetings to address the needs of residents. A website also provides information to residents and others about Borough activities, policies, and ordinances. The website also contains information about the Borough’s development policy, which includes the Borough's Comprehensive Plan. The Borough also communicates with residents through Facebook, “X” (formerly Twitter), and newsletters.

## PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining the Borough's streets, stormwater facilities, parks, open space areas, and Borough-owned buildings. The department is housed in a 20-year-old steel garage with offices in an attached former VFW social hall at the intersection of North Main Street and West Hillcrest Avenue. Approximately 15 miles of streets in Chalfont are owned and maintained by the Borough. The Borough Public Works superintendent administers the road maintenance program. The Borough conducts a paving program which results in paving two or three streets every other year. In addition to paving, Borough road maintenance responsibilities include maintaining traffic signals and Borough road signs, as well as removing snow and ice. Corrugated steel pipe installed in several developments is being replaced with HDPE piping which lasts considerably longer. Continuous renovation of streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure is necessary to maintain their condition and avoid costs for emergency replacement.

The Borough contains approximately five miles of roadways which are maintained by the state. Butler Avenue, North Main Street, Limekiln Pike, Bristol Road, and Sunset and Park Avenues are state routes which are owned and maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The Borough assists with maintenance in emergency situations.

The Public Works Department is also responsible for maintaining stormwater facilities and parks. The stormwater facilities in the Borough consist of storm sewers, which must be kept free of obstructions. The parks and open space areas require ongoing maintenance. As additional park and open space lands are acquired, the department workload will increase. Grass mowing in parks and open space is a labor-intensive task. Alternatives to turf are available, which require less maintenance. Meadows with native plantings may be attractive and draw species in decline, such as butterflies. Rising fuel and labor costs will necessitate efforts to reduce fuel usage and minimize labor and other costs. Some areas near homes are left unmown until neighbors raise concerns. Educational efforts for neighbors may increase acceptance of meadows.

Chalfont is served by utilities that need to access underground pipes and lines, and overhead wires in the municipal right-of-way. The Borough controls the opening and closing of streets for installation and maintenance of these utility facilities. To minimize costs to residents and disruption of utilities, the Borough and utility companies coordinate activities whenever possible.

## POLICE SERVICES

The Central Bucks Regional Police Department (CBRPD) provides 24-hour protection to Chalfont residents, as well as to Doylestown and New Britain Boroughs. The Borough joined the force in

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2016 and has benefitted from greater capabilities such as a K-9 unit, detectives, and highway safety programs. Training is essential to maintain a professional department that is responsive to new forms of crime and community needs. The police officers serving the Borough have exceeded the state mandated requirements for training in firearms, first aid, and CPR. The officers also receive ongoing instruction in other areas related to professional development. The CBRPD cooperates with other police departments in the Central Bucks Special Response Team, which is a multi-jurisdictional agency that responds to high-risk incidents in central and upper Bucks County. The Department recently became accredited by the Pennsylvania Chiefs Association, an honor granted to about 10% of police agencies in the state. Accreditation improves law enforcement and community relations, promotes self-evaluation, reduces risk and liability, and provides for improvements in methods of procedures. The CBRPD deals primarily with responding to resident calls and community concerns to maintain the quality-of-life in the Borough.

### FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

The Chalfont Chemical Fire Engine Company No. 1 responds to fire calls in the Borough and is located at 301 North Main Street. The company serves Chalfont as well as portions of New Britain and Doylestown Townships, and New Britain Borough. The staff consists of 38 volunteer firefighters, a chief, deputy chief, two battalion chiefs, four lieutenants, and ten fire police. The all-volunteer company responds to more than 300 calls per year and is aided by other nearby companies on multiple alarm calls and assists other companies when necessary.

The communities served by the fire company provide funding through a fire tax. The company auxiliary generates funds through craft fairs, rummage sales, bingo nights, and various food-related events.

Volunteers have become more difficult to attract due to lifestyle and required training demands. Member recruitment programs have been held to introduce the service to new community members, and required training has been revised to become more manageable.

The fire company's central location in the Borough places it in a good position to meet the Insurance Service Office (ISO) standards for fire protection. This national insurance industry service group recommends that suburban areas be within a 2.5-mile radius of a fire station with a first response engine. The entire Borough falls within a 2.5-mile radius of the fire station.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The Chal-Brit Regional Emergency Management Service provides emergency medical services to residents of Chalfont Borough 24-hours a day. The squad is based at 201 Park Avenue in adjacent New Britain Township. The ambulance corps has full-time paramedics on duty 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Volunteers answer calls when available.

The squad is obligated under state law to transport a patient to the nearest hospital unless a waiver is signed. Trauma cases, however, must be taken to the closest trauma center at Abington Hospital, or Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg in Bethlehem, or Grandview Hospital adjacent to Sellersville. Trauma cases are transported by Medevac helicopter or ambulance, whichever is fastest.

The Chal-Brit ambulance corps is equipped to provide Basic and Advanced Life Support. Basic Life Support involves basic first aid and transport. Advanced Life Support services are provided for calls involving cardiac arrest and trauma. A paramedic, trained and experienced in handling these types of cases, responds to these calls with advanced life support equipment. Adequacy of this service is evaluated by response time because the time interval between the initial call and arrival of service can make the difference between life and death. The benchmark response time is eight minutes or less because it ensures the highest level of survival for the patient. Due to the close proximity of the ambulance corps to the Borough, the Borough appears to be adequately served by both Basic and Advanced Life Support services. The services are funded by donations, a subscription plan, and insurance reimbursements. However, future changes in insurance reimbursements may affect services.

## HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Hospitals serve the immediate health care needs of a community by providing inpatient and outpatient medical and health care services. Long-term care facilities serve elderly patients who can no longer function independently, or who have a condition requiring skilled nursing care.

Three general hospitals and numerous long-term care facilities serve the health care needs of the residents of Chalfont Borough. Doylestown Hospital, east of Chalfont, is the closest facility. Central Montgomery Medical Center in nearby Lansdale Borough, and Grandview Hospital in West Rockhill Township are both within 10 miles of Chalfont. Health care for the elderly is available at nearby facilities such as Pine Run Health Center in New Britain Township, and Neshaminy Manor in Doylestown Township.

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Due to the aging baby boomer generation, an increase in the elderly population is projected. The elderly will either remain in their homes, move to more suitable residences such as age restricted housing, or need long-term care facilities. The need for long-term care may be addressed through alternative care methods to meet the medical and personal needs of many members of this population. These alternatives include adult day care, personal care facilities, continuing life care facilities, and in-home services.

### LIBRARY FACILITIES

The Bucks County Library Center (Center County), located in Doylestown Borough, is the closest branch of the Bucks County Free Library System. In addition to borrowing books, Chalfont Borough residents can participate in educational programs offered at the library. The library receives funding from the County and individual gifts.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of the State Library uses a standard of 1.5 currently useful items per person to determine the adequacy of a library's collection. The Bucks County Library Center, serving the Central Bucks area with an estimated population of 132,364 people in 2021, has 220,000 items (2022). Thus, the area's ratio of books per person, 1.6, is slightly more than the recommended standard. This is due primarily to the fact that this library is the central library for the entire County system. The County Library Center serves as a repository for materials which are available to all other Bucks County libraries.

### EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Schools have several important community functions. They serve not only as places for academic instruction, but also provide opportunities for social and physical development. Schools serving Chalfont Borough provide indoor and outdoor recreation areas, classroom space, and auditoriums, which are available for community use after school hours.

Providing school facilities is a dynamic process due to the fluctuating growth and decline of student populations. New requirements for handicapped accessibility and year-round school options also affect school facilities. As needs change, facilities may be expanded, rehabilitated, closed, or sold. Because of the important role schools play, the community must be aware of these facilities and the factors affecting them.

The schools serving Chalfont Borough are part of the Central Bucks School District, which also serves New Britain and Doylestown Boroughs and Buckingham, Doylestown, New Britain, Warrington, and Warwick Townships. Two elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools serve Chalfont Borough.



Enrollment projections indicate that enrollment was growing until about 2011 and has declined by approximately 1% every year since then. By 2025-2026 enrollment is projected to decrease by 1-3% annually.

Projected enrollment can be accommodated in the existing elementary, middle, and high schools. Children living west of North Main Street attend Butler Elementary School, Unami Middle School, and Central Bucks South High School. Students north of Butler Avenue and east of North Main Street attend Pine Run Elementary school, Tohickon Middle School, and Central Bucks West High School.

Central Bucks School District is funded primarily by local taxes. Real estate and earned income taxes are collected in the district and are augmented by state subsidies for special education and vocational technical training.

## SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Chalfont Borough Council adopted the Bucks County Municipal Waste Management Plan Revision on June 12, 2018. The plan, prepared by the county in 2018 as a state mandated update to the Bucks County Municipal Waste Management Plan of 1991, provides continued guidance for solid waste management responsibilities throughout the county to the year 2028. These responsibilities may be accomplished through municipal programs or through the regulation of private firms that collect and haul municipal waste.

Although Chalfont Borough is not required by state law to recycle, the Borough has taken on the responsibility of managing a curbside municipal waste collection and recycling program for its residents through a contract with a private hauler. The program provides for the collection of recyclable materials, including aluminum and steel cans, three colors of glass food and beverage containers, #1 - #7 plastic bottles, newspaper, magazines, catalogs, and junk mail, as well as yard waste (which includes leaves, garden residue, shrubbery, tree trimmings and similar material).

Residents are provided curbside collection for the recycling of leaf waste in the fall and spring, whereby residents may place their leaves at the curb in biodegradable paper bags for pick up. Yard waste is collected weekly from residents with regular trash pick-up.

The Borough has also taken the initiative to provide for the collection of cardboard from its residents. Working with its waste hauler, a dumpster has been placed at the Public Works building, located at 500 N. Main Street, in which residents and small businesses may place cardboard for recycling. Business owners in Chalfont Borough contract directly with private haulers for solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling services. Haulers deliver the collected

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waste for disposal at a landfill or waste-to-energy facility, while the recyclable components are delivered to recycling facilities in the region.

The Borough also participates in the Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program. This program provides the opportunity for residents to properly dispose of the hazardous component of the residential waste stream that should not be disposed in local landfills or waste-to-energy facilities.

The figures noted in Table 2 below, reported as part of the Borough's annual municipal recycling reports from 2018 to 2021, show the results of the efforts of the residents and businesses of Chalfont Borough. Over 1,067 tons of recyclable materials were diverted from the waste stream by Borough residents, along with an additional 920 tons of material from Borough businesses. The trend over time is one of an increasing amount of waste recycled in the Borough. The figures from 2020 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many municipalities across the county reported issues with getting reports from haulers, and many haulers were dealing with staffing shortages resulting in less pickups and less ability to report. Chalfont's 2020 data reflects this trend in addition to the overall lower data in 2021 compared to pre-pandemic tonnage.

Recycling efforts on the part of residents and businesses in Chalfont Borough will continue to help conserve limited landfill space and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the environment.

Table 2. Chalfont Annual Recycling

Year	Residential Recycling (Tons)	Commercial Recycling (Tons)	Total Reported Recycled (Tons)
2021	274.40	198.80	473.20
2020	49.00	219.40	268.40
2019	372.70	258.30	631.00
2018	371.30	244.20	615.50

Source: Municipal Annual Recycling Report

Although the state and the county have reached the goal set by the state to recycle 35% of the municipal waste stream, continued efforts on the part of each community are important to continue this success and possibly even increase this rate. Efforts at the municipal level to maintain resident involvement should continue.

A program to institute a commercial recycling program does benefit Borough businesses by reducing their waste streams, while at the same time increasing the rate and volume of recycling in the Borough. These continued efforts will further increase the diversion of materials from the



waste stream and these tonnages may be included on the municipal Act 101, Section 904, Recycling Performance Grant application, resulting in more grant funding to the Borough.

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT

All of Chalfont Borough is served by public wastewater facilities. Sewage generated in the Borough is collected by the Chalfont New Britain Township Joint Sewage Treatment Authority collection system and treated at the plant on Upper State Road in Doylestown Township. Although wastewater facilities in Chalfont Borough are adequate for the population served, several issues must be addressed to ensure adequacy into the future. Water conservation, inflow and infiltration, and sewer plant capacity are factors affecting public wastewater facilities. The Uniform Construction Code requires new construction to have water conserving plumbing devices. Retrofitting existing structures, and education of residents and business owners is also important in maximizing the benefits of water conservation.

### Water Conservation

Water conservation is an important issue in wastewater facilities planning because most water used in a household or business becomes sewage, which must be treated. Any water not used presents a savings in treatment costs. Since the 1992 regulations for water conservation were adopted in the Delaware River basin and included in the Uniform Construction Code in 2004, all new construction in the Commonwealth must be fitted with water conserving plumbing fixtures. Water conservation in existing buildings can be promoted by providing educational information about water conservation, including the use of devices such as low flow toilets and faucet aerators.

Because the Borough relies entirely on groundwater as a source, the issue of water conservation is particularly important because the groundwater used is not returned to recharge the aquifer, but rather exits the Borough through sewer lines. Thus, conservation of water not only saves money spent on treatment, but also helps to preserve essential groundwater resources.

### Inflow and Infiltration

During storms, runoff flows into the sewerage system through manholes and basement drains, and as the system ages, groundwater infiltrates the lines through cracks and seams. All flows in a sewer line are treated at the treatment plant; therefore, this extra flow, which does not necessarily need to be treated, is processed, resulting in unnecessary costs for Borough residents. Consequently, in order to reduce treatment costs, reducing infiltration and inflow should be done

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on a continuing basis. This effort not only reduces costs but has the added benefit of providing additional capacity in the collection system for new development.

### Capacity

The Chalfont New Britain Township Joint Sewage Authority completed construction of Phase III of the Authority's Treatment Plant Expansion and Upgrade Project, which began in May of 2016. In conjunction with the Phase I and II projects, this project improved the treatment plant's process capabilities, its operational and energy efficiencies, and provided major maintenance and replacements of various facilities in the plant to help ensure the long-term integrity of the treatment plant. The total cost of the Phase III project was approximately \$6.7 million. The combined cost of all 3 phases, which began in 2008, was about \$19 million. New capacity must meet new water quality standards due to new requirements by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The new standards are stricter and will likely raise the cost of sewage treatment.

## WATER SUPPLY

All residences and businesses in Chalfont Borough are served by Aqua Pennsylvania, a publicly traded water utility which also provides water to portions of New Britain Borough and New Britain Township. All of the water is pumped from five wells. Two of the wells are located in the Borough: one on Hellberg Avenue and another on Blue Jay Road. Two are in New Britain Borough along Butler Avenue and at Stephen Place, and one is along Park Avenue in New Britain Township. The water is stored in tanks at 500 North Main Street and at Dorset Way in New Britain Township. In emergencies, the Borough can utilize water from the North Wales Water Authority (NWWA) via an interconnection to the NWWA Forest Park treatment plant.

The Borough's water supply is sufficient for its needs and projected growth. However, two issues should be considered to maintain a quality supply of water: water resource protection and wellhead protection.

### Water Resource Protection

Protection of water resources involves management of the demand and supply for water. The use of water conservation devices, changes in water use habits, and changes in individual water consumption processes will extend the life of existing water supplies and alleviate the need for the development of new sources.

The management of water supply in Chalfont involves groundwater protection. Groundwater resources must be protected from contamination to ensure their quality and adequacy for the

future, and to enhance economic development. Another very important reason to prevent groundwater contamination is that once it is contaminated, it is very difficult and costly to clean up. New supply sources may also have to be found.

One of the most direct influences that Chalfont has over regulating activities that affect groundwater is the authority to regulate land use. A method to prevent water quality contamination involving the careful management of certain types of land use activities in and around public water supply wells is known as wellhead protection.

### **Wellhead Protection**

Wellhead protection is a comprehensive program to protect public water supply sources from man-induced contaminants that adversely affect the health of persons. A wellhead protection area is the area surrounding a public water supply well or wellfield both above and below ground, through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move toward and reach the well or wellfield.

The Federal Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1986 required the establishment of state Wellhead Protection Programs to protect public groundwater supplies. The goal of the legislation is to make sure that public water supply wells are not contaminated due to certain land use activities. Some municipalities in Pennsylvania have taken the initiative to protect their water supplies by developing wellhead protection programs, which protect limited geographic areas around wells and well fields that provide public water supplies. Because Chalfont Borough relies on groundwater for all of its needs, proper planning and water resource management, including groundwater pollution prevention, is critical to ensure the quality and quantity of future water supplies.

The *Bucks County Water Supply Plan and Wellhead Protection Study* identifies water supply problems and provides guidance to municipalities and public water purveyors regarding short and long-term courses of action to ensure adequate quantity and quality of the county's water supply. One important element of the plan is a model wellhead protection program recommended for adoption by municipalities. This program starts with an assessment of the land uses, zoning, soils, geology, and topography surrounding each municipal groundwater source. Next, wellhead contamination sources must be identified, and management tools must be identified and applied. A plan for the future, which addresses quality and quantity needs, as well as a contingency plan, is the final step.

Chalfont or Aqua Pennsylvania owns the area within a 100-foot radius around all its wells, but the water resources that contribute to the yield of the well come from a much wider area. The

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Borough should consider developing a wellhead protection program in conjunction with New Britain Borough and New Britain Township. All three municipalities have equal stakes in protecting the water resources that they all share. Incentive grant money may be available to the Borough from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for water supply planning and wellhead protection. Pennvest also has money available for water infrastructure facilities.

With Borough wells already located in developed areas, zoning land use controls should be used to prohibit high-risk uses near the wells that may threaten groundwater. The Borough may also require that potential threats be evaluated. One way to do this would be to require all applicants for underground storage tanks to provide a study proving that no negative impacts will be created upon wellheads and groundwater. Devices to mitigate spill risk may also be required. Implementation of wellhead protection will require coordination of efforts between the Borough and surrounding communities where well contribution zones cross municipal boundaries.

In addition, the Delaware River Basin Commission has established guidelines for the preparation of an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) that analyzes the inter-relationship of water quality and water availability for current and future water use to assist in assuring better integration of water resource protection in land use planning. Consideration should be given to investigating the benefit of pursuing the development of an IRP and the potential funding of such a plan in cooperation with Aqua Pennsylvania and New Britain Borough and New Britain Township.

### **Drinking Water Quality**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies the contaminants to regulate in our drinking water, and they set regulatory limits for amounts of certain contaminants. In turn, Aqua Pennsylvania uses EPA's maximum contaminant levels to ensure water quality.

There are some contaminants for which the EPA develops health advisories that do not have set regulatory limits. The health advisories provide technical information on health effects. PFOA and PFOS are included in those contaminants that have no regulatory limit but are associated with a health advisory. These chemicals are among a family of manmade chemicals that have been used for decades as an ingredient to make products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. They are also found in products used for firefighting at airfields and are extremely resistant to breaking down in the environment.

In 2009, the EPA published provisional health advisories for PFOA and PFOS. At the time they were established, these advisories were as follows; PFOS: 200 parts per trillion; and PFOA: 400 parts per trillion. In May 2016, EPA replaced the 2009 provisional advisories with new, lifetime

health advisories that combined the two chemicals and set a 70 parts per trillion health advisory level for both.

Aqua Pennsylvania conducts regular testing of the water sources in its service areas impacted by groundwater contamination from PFAS originating from nearby military bases. None of the wells serving residents of the Borough have levels of PFOA or PFOS exceeding the health advisory levels.

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Municipalities require the use of stormwater management facilities to reduce the potential downstream impacts that could be caused by the increased volume and rate of runoff from development. Chalfont Borough has a network of storm sewers which drain stormwater into nearby creeks. Newer developments have tied into the storm sewer system where it is available. Much of the stormwater is collected by stormwater management facilities, but little infiltrates into the ground to recharge the groundwater reserves.

The present storm sewer system channels water into pipes which discharge directly into the Neshaminy Creek and the north branch. This water is often polluted with materials it has picked up as it flowed over the ground, such as oil, chemicals, and silt. The storm sewer system has no filtering capabilities, and therefore this water enters the stream untreated. This problem can be ameliorated by the installation of water quality improvements such as oil/grit separators over inlets, regular street sweeping, and using salt-free roadway deicing.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), under Act 167 of 1978, requires that counties prepare watershed stormwater management plans. Chalfont Borough is in the Neshaminy Creek Watershed. In 2010, Bucks County prepared an updated *Act 167 Neshaminy Creek Watershed Stormwater Management Plan* to address the requirements of the Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Act. The plan encourages comprehensive stormwater management planning throughout the watershed that addresses the impacts of future development on the watershed. The plan also develops standards for municipalities to implement sound water and land use practices and ordinances to protect water quality, promote groundwater recharge, and control the amount of runoff that results from new development.

New requirements provided in the updated Act 167 plan assist in establishing more effective management of stormwater. The plan places an increased emphasis on maintaining water quality and groundwater recharge; controlling the volume of stormwater, rather than the rate of release; preventing downstream flooding and streambank erosion; and ensuring proper long-term operation and maintenance of stormwater facilities. Low-impact design and conservation

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development techniques must be considered for development sites. Design sequencing also must be followed to avoid sensitive areas on a site, minimize site disturbance, and minimize increases in runoff and impacts to water quality.

The Borough has adopted stormwater management ordinance provisions in accordance with the plan. The provisions regulate stormwater management for new development based on hydrologic and water quality criteria. The hydrologic criteria are based on the rate of flow from a site before development. Runoff release rate districts are established according to these flow rates. Water quality criteria are intended to reduce the detrimental effects of polluted stormwater runoff. Water must be detained so that sediment is released, and pollutants are filtered out before water leaves a site. Best management practices or stormwater management techniques are required to maintain water quality, maintain groundwater levels, and base flow of streams. In May of 2022, the Borough adopted an amendment to its standing stormwater management ordinance, which made revisions for consistency with DEP's 2022 Model Stormwater Ordinance.

The NPDES Phase II regulations require municipalities to develop a stormwater management program that meets state permit requirements and includes six minimum control measures: public education and outreach, public participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, and construction site and post-construction runoff control, and pollution prevention. Annual reports must be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to signify how the municipality is meeting incremental elements of the program. Chalfont Borough has begun monitoring and testing storm sewer outfalls that have flow during dry periods. The Borough has asked all residents to cooperate with the inspectors, as some outfalls are located on private properties. The Borough remains committed to, and engaged in, public education and outreach, and providing educational materials to residents.

Beginning in March of 2018, NPDES permit requirements for small MS4s<sup>1</sup> include the development of a Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP) for many communities. Previous regulations only required a PRP for communities within the Chesapeake Bay watershed area. A PRP requires a municipal stormwater program to identify and map all surface waters within their jurisdiction, and to identify all areas within the municipality which drain into those surface waters. Municipalities are then obligated to identify the locations where specific pollutants, such as

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<sup>1</sup>Polluted stormwater runoff is often transported to municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) and ultimately discharged into local rivers and streams without treatment. EPA's Stormwater Phase II Rule establishes an MS4 stormwater management program that is intended to improve the nation's waterways by reducing the quantity of pollutants that stormwater picks up and carries into storm sewer systems during storm events.

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-11/documents/fact2-0.pdf>.



phosphorous and nitrogen, are discharged into the surface waters (outfalls), and to develop strategies and best management practices for reducing the introduction of pollutants into surface waters.

Other required control measures, such as illicit discharge detection and elimination, and the operation, maintenance and inspection of municipally owned stormwater facilities are not the major issues that are typical in a small town, as there are few stormwater management facilities in the Borough. Nevertheless, facilities and infrastructure will be inspected on an ongoing basis, and the Borough will continue to comply with program requirements.

The Borough maintains several detention basins and has found maintenance to be costly. Stormwater management in most developments is by detention basins planted with grass. The Borough may benefit from a network of green stormwater infrastructure incorporated throughout the Borough. Such a network of stormwater management improvements has the potential to significantly lessen the burden on both the Borough's surface waters and existing network of stormwater management infrastructure to effectively manage stormwater for the future.

The difference between traditional stormwater management infrastructure and green stormwater infrastructure is that traditional infrastructure manages stormwater by collecting and conveying stormwater from a site to be treated and released elsewhere, while green stormwater infrastructure attempts to retain and treat stormwater on the site by using natural vegetation in a way that allows the water to be absorbed and filtered by plants. Green infrastructure can be both environmentally and economically beneficial, as it reduces both pollution and the need for traditional, often more costly, stormwater management systems.

On a larger scale, green stormwater infrastructure can include the restoration or preservation of wetlands and floodplains. On a smaller scale, this may include rain gardens, green roofs, rain barrels, planter gardens, street trees that absorb water, the use of porous paving materials, and vegetated detention basins.

Stormwater management planning should involve determining responsibilities for, and scheduling of maintenance for stormwater management facilities. Narrative or other descriptive information on any stormwater management facilities that details short and long-term operation and maintenance tasks, and the projected life span of the facility, should be provided for every stormwater facility constructed. This data is critical for the Borough to monitor the development and use of stormwater management techniques. Ensuring proper long-term operation and maintenance would aid in the municipality complying with federal and state requirements (e.g. NPDES II). Projected scheduling also allows budgeting time and funds to inspect, repair, or

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condemn facilities, if necessary, throughout their functional life span. The Borough should continue its regular maintenance program for stormwater management facilities and ensure that private facilities have a maintenance program as well.

### TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Telecommunication is the transmission of voice, video, or data between two points, and has become a significant part of our information-based economy and culture. Growth of the telecommunications industry has been driven by increasing advancement of technology and has resulted in greater business and consumer demand. As of 2020, the CDC Biannual Health Interview Survey reported that more than 60% of US household are using only cell phones. The Borough currently leases space to multiple cell phone providers for antennas located at 500 N. Main Street.

Many communities have started to realize that telecommunications will be an integral part of the municipal infrastructure just as water, sewer, and electric are now. Planning for telecommunication systems would allow for effective management of the right-of-way, public assets, universal service, economic development, and enhanced quality of life. The Commonwealth adopted the Small Wireless Facilities Development Act 50 of 2021, which permits these facilities in rights-of-way, except where utilities are underground. The Borough has zoning standards for cellular telecommunication facilities, which should be maintained and revised as necessary, and as new technologies emerge.

As the telecommunications environment matures, and as technology changes and service needs increase, more antennas and cables may be needed. As needs increase, more antennas and cables may be placed in the municipal right-of-way and on public structures. Coordinating service, such as collocation of antennas on the same structure, and providing fiber optic cable in shared trenches in the right-of-way gives the Borough management control, minimizes disruption and poor aesthetics, and may provide the Borough with an income source. The Borough should maintain its existing telecommunications regulations and be proactive in oversight of emerging technologies.

### SUMMARY

Community facilities, services, and utilities are necessary for public health, safety and welfare, and help provide for the quality of life expected in Chalfont Borough. Planning for these facilities, services, and utilities should be interrelated and consistent with land use planning in the Comprehensive Plan.



Because Chalfont Borough is almost fully developed, and the present facilities and services which serve the Borough are generally adequate, management issues, such as staffing, funding and maintenance are the primary concern. Future growth may necessitate more extensive studies of facility and service expansions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

#### **Borough Administration**

- Evaluate needs for storage and building renovations.
- Maintain streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure.
- Continue to coordinate capital improvements with utilities serving the Borough (PECO, Aqua PA) to minimize cost and disruption.
- Evaluate and implement energy source and saving alternatives for Borough offices and Public Works operations.

#### **Public Works**

- Coordinate street closures and trenching with utility providers.
- Examine ways to reduce fuel usage and minimize other costs.

#### **Police**

- Maintain communication and coordination with Regional Police department.

#### **Solid Waste Management**

- Continue to obtain information from businesses operating in the Borough to assure they have a recycling program in place.
- Continue to offer assistance to Borough businesses and institutions to review their recycling and waste management programs.

### Stormwater Management

- Promote infiltration of stormwater to recharge groundwater.
- Continue to enforce the recommendations of the *Neshaminy Creek Watershed Stormwater Management Plan*, as updated.
- Continue to ensure compliance with the NPDES program and file program reports.
- Explore the development of educational opportunities aimed at engaging the public around the importance of maintaining effective stormwater management practices, including the emerging use of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) practices.
- Establish regular maintenance program for stormwater management facilities.

### Water supply

- Amend zoning ordinance to prohibit high-risk uses which may impact wellheads from within a given radius of wellheads, or require devices to mitigate spill risk.
- Amend zoning ordinance to require an impact study for the location of uses which may threaten groundwater.
- Promote efficient use of water resources through conservation, infiltration, minimizing additional withdrawals, and reuse.
- Develop an Integrated Water Resource Plan in cooperation with New Britain Borough and New Britain Township in accordance with DRBC guidelines.

### Wastewater

- Coordinate efforts with Chalfont New Britain Township Joint Sewage Authority (CNBJSA) in upgrading and maintaining wastewater collection and treatment facilities to reduce costs and provide additional capacity.
- Provide information about water conservation for property owners and promote use of water conservation measures to minimize wastewater treatment costs.

## **Telecommunications**

- Coordinate the provision of telecommunications facilities which will provide for a desired level of service in Chalfont.
- Maintain existing telecommunication regulations and revise zoning standards to address emerging technologies as needed.
- Coordinate activities, such as sharing trenches, with utility providers.



## PRINCIPLE 5

### PROVIDE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

*Parks, recreation, and open space provide for relaxation and enjoyment of the natural environment and are vital parts of a healthy community. The Borough has added significant acreage to its inventory of parks and open space and should foster the development of active and passive recreation facilities to meet the needs of residents of all ages.*



Parks are places set aside for both active recreation (such as soccer, baseball, and tennis) and passive recreation (such as hiking and picnicking) in natural open space. Parks provide opportunities for recreational activities which relieve stress and enhance mental and physical fitness. The parks in Chalfont are shown in Map 2.

Chalfont Borough contains public and private recreational facilities and parks. Also, county and state parks are within a short drive. Only Borough parks and local school facilities are addressed here because neighborhood and community parks are the Borough's responsibility, and schools provide facilities for community recreation. The public parks and school acreage in Chalfont are shown in Table 3.

The Borough park system provides active and passive recreation areas. National standards<sup>2</sup> for parkland set a standard of 10 acres of recreation land per 1,000 people in a community. The Borough has parks and recreation facility acreage that exceeds the national standards.

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<sup>2</sup> The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) have established park and recreational facility standards which serve as guidelines in determining adequate levels of service.

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The majority of facilities and activities in the Borough parks provide passive recreation opportunities for youth and adults. There may be a need to provide more active recreation facilities for children and youth. However, not all recreation should be oriented toward the younger citizens of the Borough. Passive recreational opportunities for all ages can be expanded by providing natural areas and trails along the Neshaminy Creek. Facilities such as shuffleboard courts, chess tables, and horseshoe pits are all examples of activities the Borough can include in their parks that are inclusive of all residents regardless of physical ability.

Table 3: Borough Parks

Park	Acreage	Facilities
Strong Family Park	5.50	Playground, Basketball court
Bridgeview Park	1.10	Picnic area
Chestnut Street Park	5.80	Ball fields, trail
Holland Open Space	1.40	Open Space
Kelly Park	10.80	Trails
Krupp Park	0.50	Gazebo, bridge, trails
J. Michael Bishop Memorial Park	10.30	Trails
J. Clyde and Joan Derstine Memorial Park	15.59	Open space, trails
Swartley-Winkelmann Field	4.30	Ball fields
Twin Streams Park	22.50	Open space, trails
Unami Middle School	13.00*	Ball fields
<b>Total</b>	<b>90.79</b>	

\*The land available for recreation at school sites is counted as only half of the total acreage because generally half of the school property is used for buildings and parking lots, etc.

The Borough's population is projected to grow slightly in the future, but its age structure will change. The number of persons over 40 years of age will increase. The aging of the population will lead to a change in recreation needs. Although the Borough may have enough parkland in the future, some of the facilities within the existing parks are aimed at a younger population, and therefore may be inadequate for a population which is getting older. Even if the amount of parkland is sufficient, recreational needs of older residents cannot be entirely met by facilities oriented towards more active recreation. Passive and active recreation facilities that serve the needs of older residents will be required.

A community survey was sent to each resident as part of this Comprehensive Plan update. Several questions within the survey were relevant to parks, recreation, and open space facilities and services. When asked to choose their favorite places in the Borough, 54.6% of respondents included a park or open space as one of their favorite places.

Recreational and Cultural Opportunities were ranked third among the most important things to residents, and recreational opportunities were overall ranked good or mostly good among respondents. When asked about various Borough services, the Public Works/Parks and Recreation services were mostly ranked very good or good. Overall, most residents were strongly satisfied or satisfied when asked their opinion on open spaces, parks, and trails in the Borough.

The needs of the present and future population can be met with existing parks to a great extent. Many of the requested facilities such as trails and paths can be placed in open space where appropriate. New facilities requested by residents, such as playgrounds and athletic fields, should be considered.

Borough staff and various committee volunteers plan and administer community activities such as the Tri-municipal July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, 5K run, walks in the parks, and nature programs. These events and programs meet recreational needs and contribute to the Borough's sense of community and sense of place. These events and programs should be continued. Walking tours focusing on the historic architecture of the Borough should also be considered.

Trails are an important asset to enhance mobility and provide for recreation in a community. Trails have benefits such as property value enhancement, reduction of air pollution, and opportunities for active lifestyles. To maximize their effectiveness, trails should link activity centers such as the Borough core, schools, and parks. Trails should also link Borough centers to those in adjacent communities. Trails to other communities may be provided along streams with the use of easements, which do not involve the greater expense of land acquisition. The Borough is seeking funding to provide additional trails and actively participates in the Doylestown Bike and Hike Committee. This allows the Borough to coordinate with other municipalities to coordinate trail and pedestrian development throughout the area.

The Borough has trails identified in the *Tri-Municipal Master Trail & Greenway Plan (2010)*. The plan explores the opportunities and constraints of developing greenways and trails throughout the municipalities of Chalfont Borough, New Britain Borough, and New Britain Township. Trails are proposed along the north branch, west branch, and the main branch of the Neshaminy Creek, which will be part of a larger system that links adjoining communities. Since the last plan, a pedestrian bridge has been built over the north branch and trails along portions of the west branch have been built. Additionally, trails along the north branch have been proposed.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The Borough adopted *The Chalfont Borough Open Space Plan* in 1999 and did a partial update to the plan in 2009. The plan provides more details about open space and recreation facilities in the Borough and has the following objectives:

- Natural features and resource protection—Continue to protect important natural and environmental resources.
- Greenways—Preserve area along the Neshaminy Creek as a low-density area with greenway preserved along the creek edge in order to protect scenic views, floodplains, woods and wetlands, and to provide for recreational use.
- Links—Acquire open space that will complete linkages of permanently preserved recreation land open space and cultural resources adjacent to currently preserved areas allowing for improved access to residents.
- Historic and cultural significance—Recognize the importance of the Borough’s historic district as a destination and link in the Open Space/Greenway network.
- Social and recreational value—Continue to consider the social and recreational value promoted and supported by open space.
- Support for comprehensive planning—Preserve land and support actions that reinforce land use planning and open space goals.
- Workable and affordable implementation—Work with landowners in pursuing the best method of preservation for the Borough and the landowner.
- Integrated regional planning—Work with other neighboring municipalities to effectively plan and link open spaces.

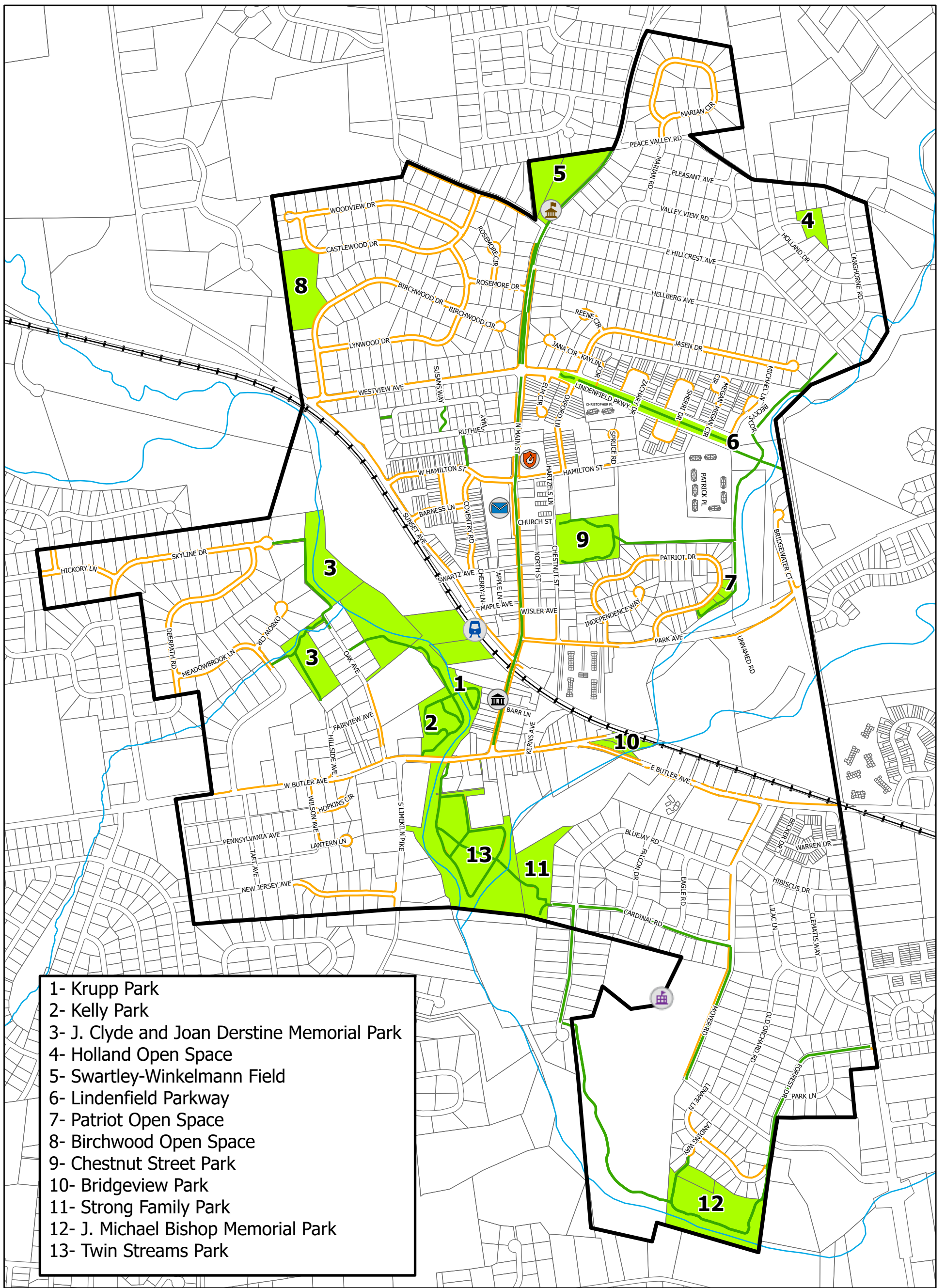
Since many of the Open Space Plan’s priorities have been met, the Borough may consider reviewing the plan and determining new open space goals and objectives and ensuring the current plan still reflects the needs of the Borough today.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Provide trails to link with those proposed in the *Tri-Municipal Master Trail & Greenway Plan*.
- Look into potential access easements along the Neshaminy Creek's and Pine Run tributaries.
- Interconnect trails within the Borough and the surrounding area to ensure a fully connected trail system for Chalfont.
- Review the *Chalfont Borough Open Space Plan* (1999) and determine if goals and objectives of the plan are still relevant to the Borough.

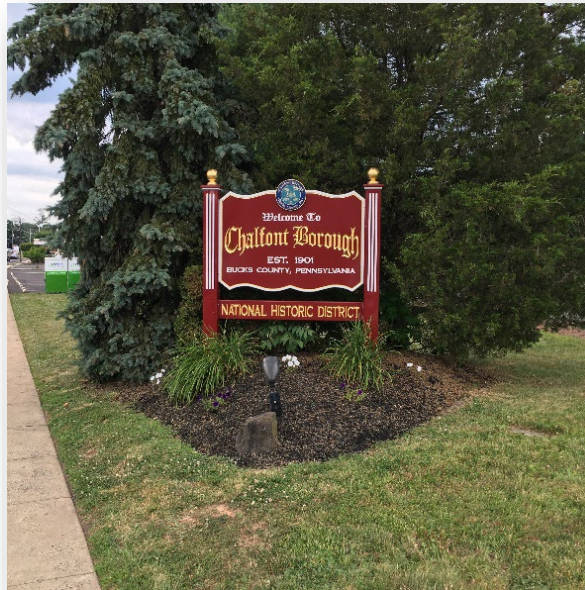




## PRINCIPLE 6

### PROTECT THE HISTORIC CORE

*Chalfont's historic core provides a distinct character and sense of place. This area should be protected with land use and design controls, and incentives to enhance the quality of life in the present, and to maintain it for future generations.*



Chalfont's historic core is comprised of a collection of historic buildings which create a distinct character for the entire Borough. To maintain this character, the buildings should be protected. While the core contains the greatest concentration of historic buildings, additional historic buildings may be found outside of the core. Older buildings are frequently better built with craftsmanship and materials that are rarely duplicated today. Each historic building represents a past investment for future generations. Maintenance and rehabilitation of historic buildings and neighborhoods also represent savings in terms of energy and materials. Well-kept historic buildings contribute to the vitality of a community and strengthen property values. Neglect or loss of historic buildings and structures would pose a significant threat to the identity of the Borough.

The presence of historic buildings in the Borough is evidence of its 200-plus year history. In the past, Chalfont was a small village along Butler Pike and Main Street surrounded by farms. Today, Chalfont is a maturing Borough with a historic core surrounded by residential subdivisions. It has a distinct character due to its topography, development pattern and the presence of historic



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

buildings and structures. The Borough started near the intersection of Main Street and Butler Avenue and grew outward along these arteries. The Borough's location is important not only as the intersection of two major arteries, but also because it was the location of Simon Butler's mill on the north branch of the Neshaminy Creek. The historic small-town character, however, is the most salient feature of the Borough's identity.

### PRESERVATION EFFORTS

To protect these historic resources, in November 1995 Chalfont Borough Council adopted a historic preservation ordinance in accordance with the Pennsylvania Historical District Act (PA Act 167 of 1961). The ordinance preserves the distinctive historic character within the district by establishing a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) which monitors alterations, additions, demolitions and new construction, and provides standards for review. The HARB oversees proposed changes, which include demolitions and new construction, makes recommendations to the governing body, which considers the approval of changes to buildings by means of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). A COA gives authorization for the demolition, alteration of, or addition to, a historic building or structure that is consistent with the historic district design guidelines and ordinance. The design guidelines assist property owners, general contractors, and design professionals with information to make appropriate design decisions to protect the historic building.

One of the criteria of a COA is the general design and arrangement of a building or structure and its impact on the historic aspect and nature of the historic district's adherence to the Chalfont Historic District Design Guidelines. Consistency with these criteria cannot always be judged because the HARB is consulted after land developments have been approved. The regulations in the HARB ordinance are triggered by an application for a building permit, not by an application for land development or subdivision. The HARB currently cannot review the building layout, massing, and articulation of buildings because land development plans show only building footprints and the building envelope. Because zoning ordinances for an urbanized Borough often have suburban standards, modern buildings are often setback from the road behind the front yard setback line. Older structures are set closer to the road because original roadways were narrower than modern roadways, which have been widened to meet traffic needs. This issue may be resolved by developing guidelines to address building layout, or by ensuring that dimensional requirements in the zoning ordinance are compatible with the existing historic building layout.

The Borough is also a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Certified local government status permits the Borough to participate directly in the National Register of Historic Place nomination process, access technical assistance

from the state Bureau of Historic Preservation for training and consulting, and apply for matching grants for planning, consulting, and education.

The Chalfont Historic District is comprised of a collection of historic buildings that represent the Borough's rich architectural history. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. The Chalfont Historic District qualifies for the National Register as a locally significant example of architectural styles from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The National Register, which lists the Chalfont Historic District, contains 144 total resources of which 123 are historic resources that contribute to the historic values of the district. National Register documentation for the Chalfont Historic District contains a detailed inventory of the properties in the district and has photographs of street views and individual buildings. A copy of the nomination can be found on the National Park Service's web site.

Outside of the historic district, there may be other historic resources that are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register. Those individual property owners are free to pursue this endeavor on their own.

## FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND GRANT PROGRAMS

Eligibility for listing on the National Register provides the opportunity for grants for historic preservation planning and construction projects.

Local preservation ordinances and guidelines are effective, however, they do not address the financial pressures that face owners of historic properties, such as costs for maintenance and replacement of aging systems. To be effective, preservation efforts should also address pressures that may conflict with historic preservation planning. Financial incentives and grant programs are ways local government and local financial institutions can encourage historic preservation.

The provision of financial incentives encourages private property owners to become involved in preservation efforts and invest in historic properties. Financial incentives may take the form of low interest loan programs and tax incentives from the state or federal government. Revolving loans provided by a local bank to a nonprofit organization may also assist with the cost of preservation. Banks get involved in preservation loans because of the positive community relations and profit potential. Local governments currently cannot offer tax incentives such as property tax abatement freezes or credits, except if the Pennsylvania General Assembly passes legislation that allows these types of tax relief. The availability of particular incentives depends on state enabling legislation.

A successful historic preservation incentive that has direct economic impact is the National Park Service's Federal Historic Tax Credit. This program requires that the building be listed on the

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

National Register, need substantial rehabilitation, and be converted to an income producing use. According to the 2021 Annual Report on Economic Impact of the Federal Historic Tax Credit, the program generated \$526,600,000 in total rehabilitation investment and created 8,560 jobs in Pennsylvania in 2021. In Bucks County, developers and property owners have used the historic tax credit with most of the projects concentrated in municipalities that have established historic preservation programs and are under redevelopment. These municipalities include the Boroughs of Doylestown, New Hope, Bristol, Newtown, Perkasie, Sellersville, Quakertown, and Yardley.

The federal historic preservation tax credit can be combined with the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and the New Market Tax Credit, which are tax credits that incentivize creation of low-income housing units, and incentivize investment in low-income areas and distressed communities, respectively.

Pennsylvania has its own historic preservation tax credit that is substantially the same as the Federal Historic Tax Credit, except that the amount of state tax credit is 25% of rehabilitation costs which can be increased to 30% if the project results in development of affordable housing units. The total tax credit is capped at \$500,000 per taxpayer, per year, and no more than \$5,000,000 dollars in tax credits are available in any given year.

These tax credits could be particularly valuable for Chalfont, which has some large buildings that may need to be adaptively reused. When these buildings become vacant, they become targets for demolition, which happened in the case of the demolition of the former Patriotic Sons of America Home. The St. James Lutheran Church at North Main Street and Park Avenue has been vacant since 2007 and could benefit from a historic preservation tax credit. The former church could perhaps be adaptively reused as a music venue, market, or as attainable housing. Historic buildings in Chalfont may also benefit from zoning relief for projects to convert and use historic buildings for income generating purposes, as well as from relaxed dimensional requirements. New uses could be granted by conditional use or special exception.

Various grant programs administered by the state and federal government, as well as private foundations, may be available for local preservation projects. The Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) at the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission has information regarding various available funding including the Keystone Historic Preservation Grants for planning and construction. The PA SHPO also administers the National Register nomination process, the CLG program, and the historic preservation tax credit programs.

## SUMMARY

Chalfont is a historic settlement in central Bucks County that served as a market and service center for nearby farms. Although the Borough has grown significantly from its early beginnings, it still contains distinctive properties of historical significance that recall earlier times and provide a sense of place.

The historic resources in Chalfont are valuable for how they contribute to the identity of the Borough. They are often taken for granted until they are threatened or disappear. Historic preservation efforts must occur before these important properties are endangered.

The Borough has several elements of a preservation program, but it does not have a historic preservation plan to give this program an overall direction. Changes to buildings within the historic district are regulated by the HARB, but resources outside the district are not protected. A concerted preservation effort using a number of tools that address preservation of resources throughout the Borough can help ensure the survival of the Borough's historic properties and help maintain its identity.

The key to a coordinated comprehensive preservation effort is a preservation plan which can be a component of the Borough's Comprehensive Plan or a separate document.

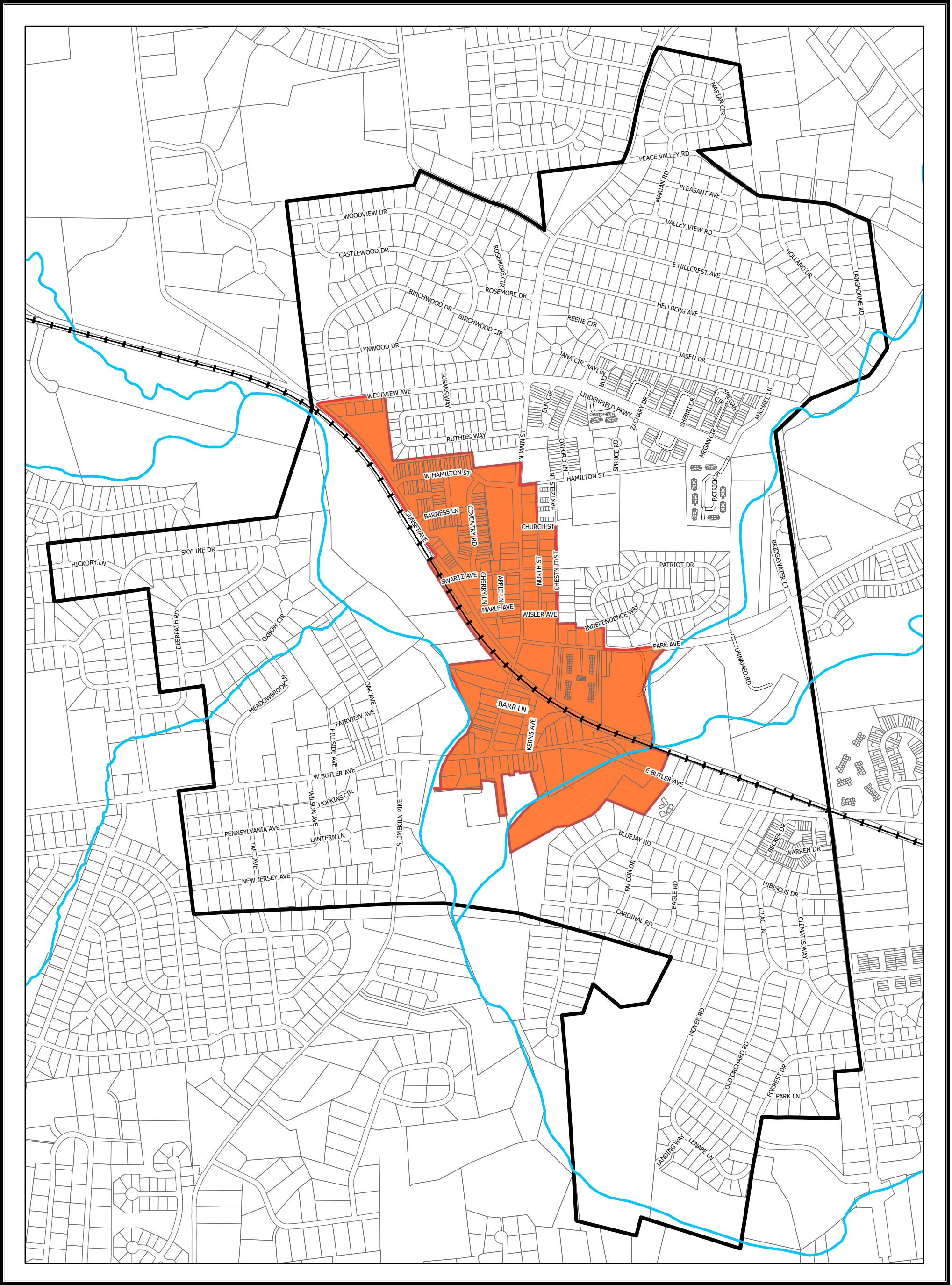
## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Develop a historic preservation plan for the entire Borough, which provides a background on historic resources and establishes effective methods to preserve historically significant features.
- Continue to coordinate actions of the Planning Commission and Historic and Architectural Review Board (HARB).
- Update the historic resource survey and identify areas to be included in the historic district regulated by HARB and identify individual buildings outside the district for protection.
- Investigate and implement methods of providing incentives for historic preservation to protect against the abandonment of large buildings in need of an alternative use.
- Promote community involvement in the Borough with an emphasis on preservation and cultural heritage.



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

- Review the Borough zoning ordinance to determine if the dimensional standards are compatible with the existing built environment and consider allowing additional uses that generate income for historic buildings.
- Amend the Historic District Ordinance to allow the HARB to be involved in the subdivision and land development process.



**BCPC**  
Bucks County Planning Commission



0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

 Chalfont Borough Historic District



**Map 3.**  
**Historic District**  
Chalfont Borough  
Comprehensive Plan Update

## PRINCIPLE 7

### PROMOTE SMART GROWTH

*New growth should be sensitive to its surroundings and make effective use of existing infrastructure such as water, sewer, and roadways. Existing structures should be adapted to new uses, where possible, to preserve resources and to minimize impact on the adjoining parcels.*



This principle focuses on “Smart Growth,” which promotes a concentration of development and diversity of uses. This approach guides development to reduce sprawl, preserve farmland and open space, conserve natural environments, utilize existing infrastructure, revitalize growth centers and older communities, and encourage alternative means of transportation such as walking and biking. Smart Growth is endorsed by many county and state governments, including Bucks County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Growth and development in the Central Bucks area has historically been concentrated in the boroughs and villages. Located at key transportation nodes, these communities absorbed the majority of residential, industrial, and commercial development, but during the latter part of the 20th century, traditional centers diminished as a variety of factors encouraged lower density growth in adjacent agricultural lands. With the advantages inherent in its existing traditional development pattern, Chalfont can maintain and improve its competitive advantage and attractiveness as a place to live.

### EXISTING LAND USE

The evaluation of existing land use is an important part of a comprehensive planning effort. Before beginning to plan for the future, it is crucial to know what land use patterns presently exist. Environmental and fiscal impacts of housing, infrastructure, and transportation alternatives can be better evaluated after understanding existing land use patterns. Existing land use patterns indicate how growth has taken place in the past, and show both opportunities and constraints for future planning efforts.

A review of existing land use in the Borough was completed and is presented on the Existing Land Use Map (see Map 5) and in the text that follows. This data was obtained from the Bucks County Planning Commission's land use inventory, interpretation of aerial photographs, field checks, and 2022 Bucks County Board of Assessment data. The data used is parcel specific and each of the Borough's 1,781 parcels has been assigned a land use code. Where a code was assigned in the county tax assessment records but no value for improvements was shown, the parcel is depicted as vacant.

The traditional center of the Borough is at the intersection of its main arteries—North Main Street and Butler Avenue. Historically, the growth of the Borough radiated outward along those arteries and along Park Avenue. In the 1950s and '60s residential development took place along the edges of the Borough as land became available for development. Since 1980, residential growth has taken place in the form of suburban-style residential subdivisions and planned residential developments on vacant and agricultural land north of the Borough center. In the 2000s new growth has taken place on brownfields and grayfields. Brownfields are those which may have been contaminated and grayfields are those which have been developed but fell into disrepair. As development sites diminish in our developed communities, builders will turn to sites which can be reused and redeveloped. These sites take advantage of the amenities that existing communities have to offer such as jobs, shopping, and transit.

### LAND USE TYPES

#### **Residential**

The predominant land use in the Borough is residential. In 2022, it covered 59.3% or 554.9 acres of the land. The majority of residential land is occupied by single-family detached housing units that cover 55.5% or 519.4 acres of the Borough's land. While most of the older homes in Chalfont are located along the major arteries, many of the recently built houses are in residential developments, which contain a single type of dwelling types with open space, such as Chalfont View that has all single-family detached units.



Multifamily residential housing (properties with more than three attached housing units) composes 3.8% or 35.5 acres of the Borough's land. This type of housing is found not only in the Borough's older single-family homes that have been converted into apartments, but also in the Lindenfield condominiums of Patrick and Christopher Places, and the townhomes of Chalfont Greene. School House Meadows and Chalfont Crossing townhomes are the newest multifamily housing developments.

### **Mixed Use**

Mixed land uses are found in the Borough center and consist of older structures with commercial uses, such as shops or offices, with residential apartments above the first floor. These uses occupied 0.7% or 6.7 acres of the Borough's land uses, and are found along North Main Street, and also along Butler Avenue east of North Main Street.

### **Commercial**

Commercial land use comprises only 5.29% or 49.4 acres of the land use in Chalfont. The commercial uses are located mostly along North Main Street and Butler Avenue. Professional services, restaurants, banks, and small retail stores characterize most of the commercial uses in the Borough. Concentrations of commercial uses are found at the Chalfont Village Square and Chalfont Plaza shopping centers, both of which have been constructed since 1990. A number of parcels along North Main Street and Butler Avenue have mixed commercial and residential uses.

### **Industrial**

Chalfont has 2.9 % or 27 acres of its land utilized for industrial land uses. The industrial land uses are located on the southeastern side of Hamilton Street, on the southeastern side of Park Avenue, and on the northeastern side of Oak Avenue, and are currently occupied by various light industrial or small commercial uses.

### **Institutional**

Government and institutional land uses occupy 6.7 % or 61 acres of the Borough's land area. These land uses are throughout the Borough and are typified by houses of worship, schools, and municipal and U.S. Government functions. The Chalfont Fire Company station was built on formerly vacant land.

### **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**

Parks and recreation, and deed restricted open space in the Borough make up 16.6% or 155.6 acres of land. The Borough has 75 acres of municipal parkland for active recreation. The Borough has created a link park along the Neshaminy Creek which is composed of J. Clyde and Joan Derstine Memorial, Kelly, Krupp, Twin Streams, and Strong Family Parks. Approximately 80 acres of land is open space for passive recreation and resource preservation. Some of the open space is part of residential subdivisions such as Shadow Ridge and Lindenfield. The Commonwealth of PA owns a parcel (24 acres) south of Sunset Avenue across the SEPTA rail line used for wetland mitigation related to the Route 202 Parkway construction.

### **Transportation and Utilities**

Transportation and Utility land uses occupy 54.8 acres or 5.9% of the land area of Chalfont. The predominant land uses in this category are the municipal streets, the SEPTA rail line which extends through the Borough, and the North Wales Water Authority.

### **Vacant Land**

Although 97% of the Borough is occupied, almost 26 acres or 2.8% remain vacant. The vacant acreage includes parcels in the central portion of the Borough, on the eastern side of the intersection of Hamilton and North Main Streets, several parcels adjacent to the intersection of Limekiln Pike and Butler Avenue, and lands west of the Forest Park Water Treatment Plant.

### **Agriculture**

There is no land in the Borough used for agriculture.

## SMART GROWTH

Smart Growth policy contains principles which guide development in a way that minimizes impacts, effectively use community assets, and conserves natural resources. Chalfont's existing development pattern is smart, but new development must be guided to fit this policy.

Principles of Smart Growth<sup>4</sup> include:

- Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

An integral component of any Smart Growth strategy is to provide quality housing for people of all income levels.

- Create Walkable Neighborhoods

Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore a key component of Smart Growth.

- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration

Growth can create great places to live, work, and play -- if it responds to a community's own sense of how and where it wants to grow.

- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

Smart Growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development and construction, which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation.

- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective

For a community to be successful in implementing Smart Growth, it must be embraced by the private sector.

- Mix Land Uses

Smart Growth supports the integration of mixed land uses (i.e., different compatible land uses such as residential and commercial development) into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live.

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<sup>4</sup> Smart Growth Network; [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas

Open space preservation supports Smart Growth goals by bolstering local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our communities' quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.

- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices

Providing people with more choices in housing, shopping, communities, and transportation is a key aim of Smart Growth.

- Promote Compact Building Design

Smart Growth provides a means for communities to incorporate more compact building design and more efficient use of land as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive development.

Many of the principles and strategies of Smart Growth have been incorporated into development in Chalfont Borough. The Borough was developed as a small village with rail access. The original buildings had a mix of uses and were located close to each other. New development, such as Chalfont Greene in the Village Office Commercial zoning district, was designed to be a compact, walkable neighborhood that has a mix of residential and commercial land uses, and a real sense of place. The Borough's open space preservation, and park and recreation development efforts help protect critical natural resources and provide additional amenities to both residents and visitors.

## THE LAND USE PLAN

Land use planning and policy development in Chalfont Borough will focus on the revitalization of the central business district, infill development, reuse of existing buildings, protection and restoration of natural areas, and application of Smart Growth principles. The Land Use Plan comprises a map showing generalized land use categories, which are based on the purpose statements of the Borough's zoning districts.

The Future Land Use Plan for Chalfont is a generalized outline for maintaining and enhancing existing land uses and for managing growth in the Borough. Although the growth projected in the next decade is limited, this growth will impact existing land uses. The plan provides a means to preserve existing land use patterns and channel new growth into patterns which preserve the positive aspects of the Borough while still providing the diversity of land uses necessary for a



sufficient tax base. The plan considers the following factors: future population growth, existing land use, natural resources, community facilities, and stated community goals and objectives.

The term Smart Growth is used in planning to describe the existing development pattern of Chalfont. The Borough's center includes mixed use development and residential uses of descending density from the center. Much of the Borough is within a half mile walk from its center. Sidewalks are found throughout much of the Borough, and a centrally located train station provides for travel outside the Central Bucks region.

An important principle of Smart Growth is to create a range of housing opportunities and choices. The Borough has three areas of housing with different housing types and densities. To maintain these levels of choice and opportunity the Borough should ensure that a variety of housing types and densities are permitted by the zoning ordinance. Housing variety promotes a diversity of costs and sizes, provides for the needs of households as they change over time, and encourages stability.

Another feature of Smart Growth is strong neighborhoods that are walkable, attractive, distinctive, and have a sense of place. The quality of life in Chalfont can be maintained and enhanced by protecting the integrity of the housing stock, and preservation and augmentation of its neighborhoods.

### FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Section 301.2 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that comprehensive plans contain a plan for land use. To this end, a future land use plan was developed for the *Chalfont Borough Comprehensive Plan Update*. The land area of the Borough is divided among several land use categories, each of which is characterized, and recommendations are made for retaining positive aspects of the area. The land use areas are Low Density, Medium Density, and High Density Residential, Government/Institutional, Commercial, Parks/Recreation/Open Space, and Industrial/Utility. These land use areas are illustrated on the Future Land Use Map (see Map 6).

## Low Density Residential

Category	Classification
<b>Low-Density Residential</b>	Low Density Residential is the classification for the neighborhoods in the Borough with a density of one to three dwelling units per acre. This category is generally located in peripheral areas of the Borough.
<b>Current Land Use and Zoning</b> <p>The Low-Density Residential classification is predominantly characterized by single-family detached dwellings with an average lot size of approximately 20,000 square feet. This area also contains Unami Middle School, the Chalfont Methodist Church and open space land. The R-1 Suburban Residential District, which permits detached single-family houses, with a maximum density of 2.35 units per acre, is considered to be part of the Low Density Residential classification.</p>	
<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep slopes and wooded areas on vacant parcels southwest of Limekiln Pike provide challenges for development.</li> </ul>	
<b>Opportunities/Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low-density housing is ideally situated toward the edges of the Borough to allow for denser development closer to the Borough center.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the low-density residential boundaries to keep a low-density area outside of the Borough Center, allowing for a variety of housing types.</li> </ul>	

### Medium Density Residential

Category	Classification
<b>Medium-Density Residential</b>	Medium Density Residential is the classification for the neighborhoods with a density of three to five dwelling units per acre. These areas consist of land northeast of the Borough center along North Main Street and north of Park Avenue.
<b>Current Land Use and Zoning</b> Single-family residential is the predominant land use in this area in addition to the Patriot Station apartment complex and the original Chalfont Elementary School. The areas classified as Medium-Density Residential are predominantly found in the R-2 Village Residential Development and R-4 Small Lot Single Family Development zones, which permit densities of 4.8 and 4 units per acre, respectively.	
<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New developments will need to come in the form of infill development and conversions, and adhere to design guidelines established for the historic district.</li> </ul>	
<b>Opportunities/Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adds to the diversity of housing stock in the Borough.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with property owners and Homeowner Associations to ensure properties are maintained.</li> </ul>	

### High Density Residential

Category	Classification
<b>High-Density Residential</b>	High Density Residential is the classification for multifamily neighborhoods with a density of four or more dwelling units per acre.
<b>Existing Land Use and Zoning</b> This area is characterized by mostly multifamily development, including townhomes and multiplexes, in addition to some single-family homes. High-Density Residential areas are predominantly found in the R-3 Planned Residential Development District, which permits a maximum density of four units per acre.	
<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing density and uses in the R-3 to ensure consistency with current residential uses and historic nature of the Borough.</li> </ul>	
<b>Opportunities/Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds to the diversity of housing stock in the Borough.</li> <li>Centrally located near the Borough center.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep high density development in the Borough center.</li> <li>Keep high density development limited to prevent added traffic in the Borough.</li> </ul>	

**Commercial**

Category	Classification
<b>Commercial</b>	Commercial areas are characterized by a mix of small-scale retail and service businesses along Butler Avenue between Oak Avenue and the west branch of the Neshaminy Creek, and between the north branch of the Neshaminy Creek and Bristol Road.
<b>Existing Land Use and Zoning</b> This area is characterized by small-scale retail and service businesses and predominantly located in the CC Corridor Commercial District which permits a variety of commercial uses on lots of 18,500 square feet or more. This category also includes the BC Borough Center District, which permits a variety of commercial uses on lots of 6,000 square feet or more, and the Butler Avenue Commercial Overlay District which promotes a mix of commercial and business uses and requires consistency with design standards.	
<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual, uncoordinated access points along Butler Avenue provide safety risks and reduce efficiency of the roadway.</li> <li>• Limited growth potential in existing buildings.</li> <li>• Traffic congestion and parking availability are major constraints to growth in this area.</li> </ul>	
<b>Opportunities/Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a mix of businesses within the Borough.</li> <li>• Butler Avenue Commercial Overlay District ensures development in this area fits within the character of the Borough and provides for appropriate access management, parking, and design.</li> <li>• Historic nature of this area adds to Chalfont's historic character.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional streetscape improvements such as additional street trees, coordinated signage, and flower beds to enhance the appearance of the corridor.</li> <li>• Consider the creation of corridor design standards that incorporate access, design, parking and other requirements to improve safety, appearance and function of the Butler Avenue corridor.</li> <li>• Establish a partnership with Borough businesses to determine what public improvements are needed to enhance business activity.</li> </ul>	

**Industrial/Utility**

Category	Classification
<b>Industrial/Utility</b>	Industrial/Utility areas are those designated appropriate for industrial and utility development or are already occupied by existing industry or utilities.
<b>Existing Land Use and Zoning</b> This area is characterized by industrial and utility uses. Some of the land in this category is considered open space, but is within the floodplain and wooded, which limits development. The Industrial/Utility areas predominantly fall into the LI Light Industrial zoning district, which permits offices and industrial uses on lots of two acres or more.	
<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing density and uses to ensure consistency with current residential uses and historic nature of the Borough.</li> <li>• Parcels within the floodplain or that are heavily wooded provide challenges to development in the area.</li> </ul>	
<b>Opportunities/Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides employment and tax revenue for the Borough which eliminates the need for further development in an area that currently has high traffic volume.</li> <li>• Bristol Road Extension.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support development of and inform residents about updates regarding the Bristol Road Extension.</li> </ul>	

Areas designated Industrial/Utility are those appropriate for industrial and utility development, or are already occupied by existing industry or utilities. Industrial facilities are located in the areas south of Hamilton Street, east of Oak Avenue and south of Park Avenue. The largest utility in Chalfont, North Wales Water Authority's Forest Park Treatment Plant, supplies drinking water to residents in both Bucks and Montgomery counties and thus provides a necessary service. Parcel 7-6-104 (20.1 acres) located southeast of the Forest Park Water Treatment Plant is vacant but mainly covered with woodlands, floodplains, and wetlands. If the Bristol Road Extension is constructed, pressure may mount to develop the southeastern corner of the parcel adjacent to the proposed roadway.

The proposed Bristol Road Extension would provide direct access to Parcel 7-11-3-2. A portion of this site with no development constraints may be developed, but the rest is encumbered with woodlands, wetlands, and floodplains. There are no plans for any development on this site in the near future.

**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Classification</b>
<b>Parks, Recreation, and Open Space</b>	The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space area contains open space and parkland owned by the Borough, and private land in the floodplain.
<b>Existing Land Use and Zoning</b> This area is characterized by parks for both active and passive recreation and open space, and is predominantly located in the OS/P Open Space/Parkland zoning districts.	
<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating connectivity throughout Borough parks.</li> </ul>	
<b>Opportunities/Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides open space and recreational amenities to residents in a largely developed Borough.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the zoning ordinance regulations for riparian buffers to protect the section of the creek corridor within this area.</li> </ul>	

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space area contains open space land and parkland owned by the Borough, and private land in the floodplain. The stream valley of the Neshaminy Creek and its north and west branches, as well as Pine Run tributary present constraints to development due to flooding, the presence of wetlands, alluvial soils, and woodlands. The land north of the confluence of the north and west branches of the Neshaminy Creek (Parcel 7-8-8-2, 19.69 acres) was purchased by the Borough and is now Twin Streams Park. These resources should be protected from development. Because the watershed of the creek extends beyond Chalfont Borough, watershed development in New Britain Township will impact the creek and the floodplain in the Borough. Therefore, it is particularly important to prevent development in the floodplain areas. It is also important that natural vegetation be protected within the riparian corridor. This vegetation will stabilize the stream bank, filter stormwater, help slow stream velocities, preserve the floodplain, and provide wildlife habitat. Despite the constraints, these areas also present opportunities for recreation and connection of residential neighborhoods to the Borough center, and each other, through open space.



### THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS A DECISION-MAKING GUIDE

The village development pattern established more than 200 years ago serves the Borough well. The natural setting, historic resources, roadways, and rail line that have shaped the Borough will continue to make it an attractive place to live and do business. The Borough has little vacant land left for new development, therefore the major focus of planning for the next ten years will be to enhance what Chalfont already has. This plan reinforces and augments the existing development patterns. The existing land use pattern should be enhanced by efforts to revitalize the Borough's center and improve the Butler Avenue commercial corridor. Other means of improving the quality of life for residents should be pursued, such as ensuring the growth meets the principles of Smart Growth, providing more trails and sidewalks, and improving the existing roadways.

The Comprehensive Plan should be implemented through strong management of Borough government. Borough officials should ensure that the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan should be promoted by making it available at the Borough Hall and on the Borough website.

An effective means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan is promotion among the council, commissions, boards and authorities on an annual basis. Borough Council should have an annual meeting with leaders of all Borough commissions, boards and authorities to review the goals and objectives included in the Comprehensive Plan. Council can discuss accomplishments of the previous year and assign new program tasks to the appropriate commissions/boards. This effort will continually orient new members to the Plan's goals and objectives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

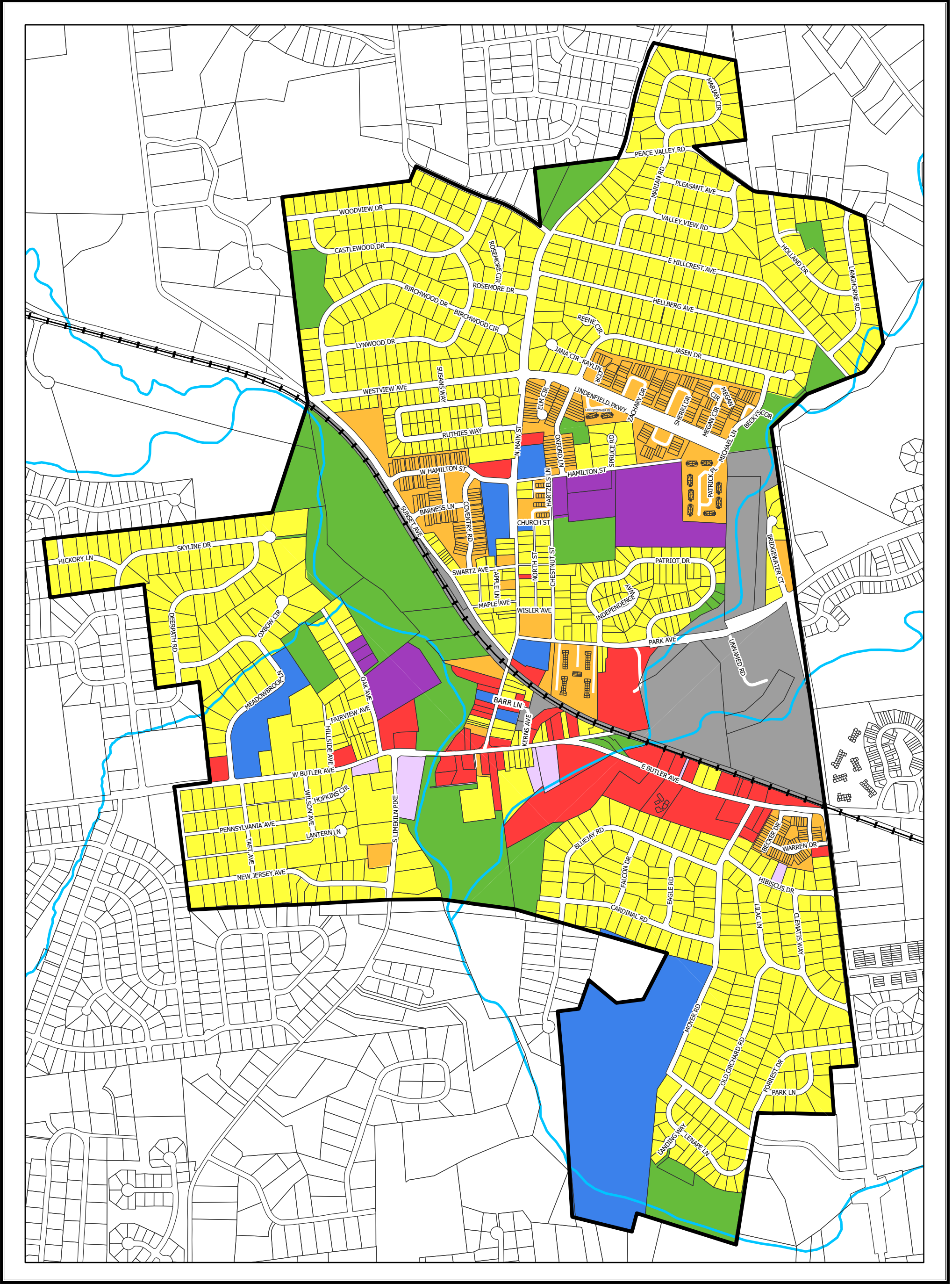
- Provide incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings such as fee reductions.
- Maintain residential amenities, including but not limited to open space, street trees, and sidewalks.
- Encourage village scale retail to provide shopping opportunities within the Borough.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle access from neighborhoods to activity centers in the Borough.
- Encourage innovative site design by adopting flexible building standards.
- Allow for the conversion of large residences into apartments in a manner sensitive to adjoining land uses.
- Cooperate with federal, state, and county agencies in the provision of adequate housing opportunities for ranges of housing types.
- Retain the existing character in the Low-Density Residential areas by maintaining the high quality of service and infrastructure by continued code enforcement and street maintenance.
- Consider preserving Parcels 7-5-37, 7-5-6 and 7-5-8-2 as open space by easement.
- Encourage appropriate infill development that conforms with the character of the Medium Density Residential area.
- Maintain and enhance the character of existing residential areas by continued code enforcement, street maintenance, and construction of the pedestrian bridge across the north branch of Neshaminy Creek.
- Encourage the retention of existing commercial uses and the development of the existing vacant parcels with an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses.
- Establish guidelines for enhancing the character and vitality of the center of the Borough so that it effectively serves the residents of the Borough and community as a whole.
- Appropriate uses should be considered for the former church site at 14 Park Avenue.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

- Encourage the location and retention of *industrial uses* in areas where the nucleus of industry already exists. Ensure that the impacts of industrial and utility land uses upon residential neighborhoods are minimized.
- Ensure that provisions of the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Place Comprehensive Plan on Borough website and at Borough Hall.
- Conduct an annual meeting with leaders of Borough Council, commissions, boards and authorities to review the goals and objectives included in the Comprehensive Plan, discuss accomplishments of the previous year, and assign new program tasks to the appropriate commissions/boards.







**BCPC**  
Bucks County Planning Commission



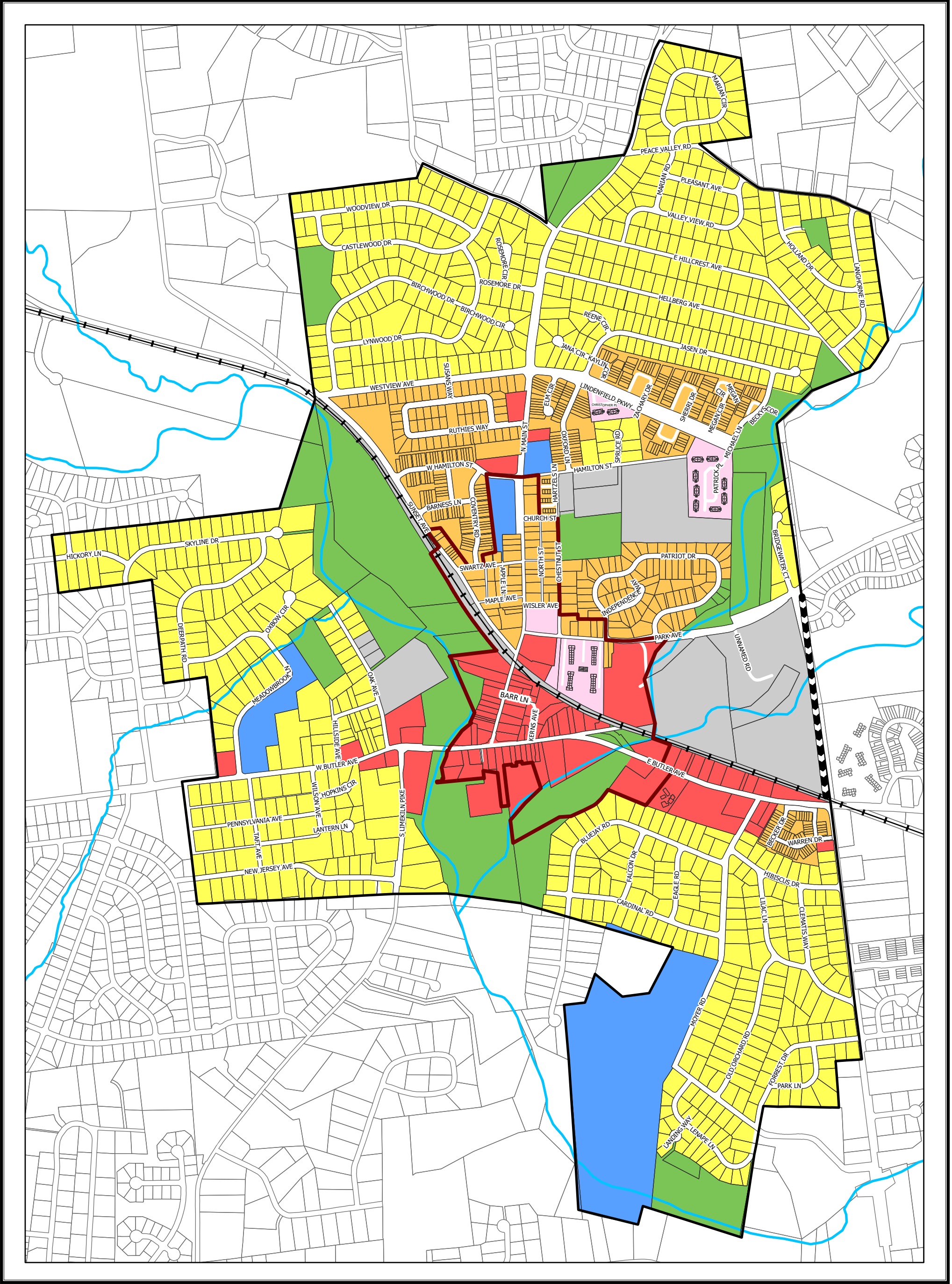
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

- Single Family Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Commercial
- Government and Institutional
- Parks, Recreation and Protected Open Space
- Industrial
- Transportation and Utilities
- Vacant



**Map 5.**  
**Existing Land Use**  
Chalfont Borough  
Comprehensive Plan Update





**BCPC**  
Bucks County Planning Commission



0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Government/Institutional
- Commercial
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- Industrial/Utility
- Bristol Road Extension
- Chalfont Borough Historic District

## Map 6. Future Land Use



Chalfont Borough  
Comprehensive Plan Update

## IMPLEMENTATION: ACTION PLAN

While many things change over time, some things remain the same. The Borough has continued to remain a vital community due in part to its unique character. In general, it has resisted most of the homogenization and strip mall development found in many communities and maintained its historic architecture.

It is important to maintain the Borough of Chalfont's uniqueness, and to do that, residents, businesses, and Borough government must work together and put the common interest of the Borough first. The Borough is comprised of long-time Borough residents, newcomers occupying new housing, business owners who live in the community, and business owners who do not.

Members of the community must work to attain the Principles defined in this Plan based on the context of the natural, physical and historic features, and traditions that make the Borough unique, and that cannot be replaced. In the resident survey and in other public participation activities undertaken in the course of preparing this Comprehensive Plan, residents have affirmed that such a sense of community is an important part of life in Chalfont.

### PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND TOP PRIORITIES

Successful implementation of this Plan requires that specific measures, actions, programs, and/or techniques be employed in a timely and cost-effective manner.

One of the biggest difficulties with implementing most Comprehensive Plans is in deciding where to begin. Once the Plan is completed, the many recommendations presented can be easy to ignore because the Plan is no longer on the minds of local officials and residents until it becomes time to develop a new Plan. New initiatives, which could make a real difference, are essentially wasted.

The following action plan is intended to serve as a tool for Borough officials, committees, and residents to use to ensure that the recommendations discussed in this plan are put into action to carry out the Comprehensive Plan's vision.

During the planning process, the Chalfont Borough Planning Commission, with help and input from Borough Council and Borough staff, agreed on eleven recommendations from the plan that are most critical to the Plan's success.



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Priority Recommendations		
Recommended Action		Record of Action
1.	Support completion of the Bristol Road Extension Project.	
2.	Fill in sidewalk gaps and connections.	
3.	Maintain natural resource protection standards in zoning ordinance and SALDO.	
4.	Encourage shared parking and managed access to parking facilities.	
5.	Maintain streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure.	
6.	Establish a regular maintenance program for stormwater management facilities.	
7.	Amend zoning ordinance to require an impact study for the location of uses which may threaten groundwater.	
8.	Continue to coordinate actions of the Planning Commission with the Historical Architectural Review Board.	
9.	Investigate and implement methods of providing incentives for historic preservation to protect against the abandonment of buildings in need of an alternative use, including allowing additional uses that generate income for historic buildings.	
10.	Interconnect trails within the Borough and the surrounding area to ensure a fully connected trail system for Chalfont including those proposed in the Tri-Municipal Trails Plan.	
11.	Look into potential access easements along the Neshaminy Creek's north branch, west branch, and Pine Run tributaries.	

This Comprehensive Plan provides many other recommendations that should be considered as the Borough engages in the implementation process. The following charts include all recommendations from the Plan, organized by Principle. The 'Record of Action' column is to be used by the Borough to keep track of the recommended actions and their completion. These recommendations will provide the foundation of Chalfont Borough's future success.

Principle 1 Improve Mobility		
	Recommended Action	Record of Action
1.	Support completion of the Bristol Road Extension Project.	
2.	Consider traffic impacts of land use planning decisions.	
3.	Work on parking availability and pedestrian connections to the train station and Borough center by completing all gaps in the pedestrian system.	
4.	Preserve rights-of-way for trails and pedestrian use.	
5.	Encourage walking by requiring sidewalks or bike/hike paths as a part of all new developments.	
6.	Fill in sidewalk gaps and connections.	
7.	Develop policies regarding traffic calming with special consideration given to the development of a complete streets policy.	
8.	Use a context sensitive design approach when roadways and bridges in the Borough are being considered for reconstruction or replacement.	
9.	Implement recommendations from the <i>Butler Avenue Revitalization Strategies Study</i> as redevelopment occurs in the Borough.	

Principle 2 Conserve Natural Resources		
	Recommended Action	Record of Action
1.	Develop policy and regulations for forestation and afforestation.	
2.	Review tree list in subdivision and land development ordinance to ensure species are native and not prone to disease.	
3.	Discuss protection of Forest Park woods with the North Wales and North Penn Water Authorities.	
4.	Coordinate planning for the Neshaminy Creek and Pine Run Corridors with New Britain Township and New Britain Borough.	
5.	Maintain natural resource protection standards in zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.	
6.	Enact riparian buffer requirements to protect stream banks and manage stormwater.	
7.	Consider amending the subdivision and land development ordinance to incorporate provisions encouraging the use of renewable energy systems and energy conserving building design, as authorized by the Municipalities Planning Code.	
8.	Promote the use of native plants as the preferred planting scheme for required landscaping.	
9.	Determine if an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) would be useful in meeting Borough goals.	

Principle 3 Promote Business Vitality		
	Recommended Action	Record of Action
1.	Follow the recommendations of the National Trust Main Street program.	
2.	Encourage shared parking and managed access to parking facilities.	
3.	Help to make local business successful by engaging them and understanding their needs.	
4.	Provide adequate signage for new municipal parking lot and existing parking.	

Principle 4 Promote Livability		
	Recommended Action	Record of Action
1.	Evaluate needs for storage and building renovations.	
2.	Maintain streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure.	
3.	Continue to coordinate capital improvements with utilities serving the Borough (PECO, Aqua PA, Chalfont-New Britain Joint Sewer Authority) to minimize cost and disruption.	
4.	Evaluate and implement energy source and saving alternatives for Borough offices, and Public Works operations.	
5.	Coordinate street closures and trenching with utility providers.	
6.	Examine ways to reduce fuel usage and minimize other costs.	
7.	Maintain communication and coordination with Regional Police department.	
8.	Offer assistance to Borough businesses and institutions to review their recycling and waste management programs.	
9.	Promote infiltration of stormwater to recharge groundwater.	
10.	Continue to enforce the recommendations of the <i>Neshaminy Creek Watershed Stormwater Management Plan</i> , as updated.	
11.	Continue to ensure compliance with the NPDES program and file program reports.	
12.	Explore the development of educational opportunities aimed at engaging the public around the importance of maintaining effective stormwater management practices, including the emerging use of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) practices.	
13.	Continue regular maintenance program for stormwater management facilities.	
14.	Amend zoning ordinance to prohibit high-risk uses which may impact wellheads from within a given a radius of wellheads, or require devices to mitigate spill risk.	
15.	Amend zoning ordinance to require an impact study for the location of uses which may threaten groundwater.	

16.	Promote efficient use of water resources through conservation, infiltration, minimizing additional withdrawals, and reuse.	
17.	Develop an Integrated Water Resource Plan in cooperation with New Britain Borough and New Britain Township in accordance with DRBC guidelines.	
18.	Coordinate efforts with Chalfont New Britain Township Joint Sewage Authority (CNBJSA) in upgrading and maintaining wastewater collection and treatment facilities to reduce costs and provide additional capacity.	
19.	Provide information about water conservation for property owners and promote use of water conservation measures to minimize wastewater treatment costs.	
20.	Coordinate the provision of telecommunications facilities which will provide for a desired level of service in Chalfont.	
21.	Maintain existing telecommunication regulations and revise zoning standards to address emerging technologies as needed.	
22.	Coordinate activities, such as sharing trenches, with utility providers.	

Principle 5 Provide Parks and Recreation		
Recommended Action		Record of Action
1.	Provide trails to link with those proposed in the Tri-Municipal Trails Plan.	
2.	Look into potential access easements along Neshaminy Creek's north branch, west branch, and Pine Run tributaries.	
3.	Interconnect trails within the Borough and the surrounding area to ensure a fully connected trail system for Chalfont.	
4.	Review the <i>Chalfont Borough Open Space Plan</i> (1999) and determine if goals and objectives of the plan are still relevant to the Borough.	

Principle 6 Protect the Historic Core		
Recommended Action		Record of Action
1.	Develop a historic preservation plan for the entire Borough, which provides a background on historic resources and establishes effective methods to preserve historically significant features.	
2.	Continue to coordinate actions of the Planning Commission and Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB).	
3.	Update the historic resource survey and identify areas to be included in the historic district regulated by HARB and identify individual buildings outside the district for protection.	
4.	Investigate and implement methods of providing incentives for historic preservation to protect against the abandonment of large buildings in need of an alternative use.	
5.	Promote community involvement in the Borough, emphasizing preservation and cultural heritage.	
6.	Review the Borough zoning ordinance to determine if the dimensional standards are compatible with the existing built environment and consider allowing additional uses that generate income for historic buildings.	
7.	Amend the Historic District Ordinance to allow the HARB to be involved in the subdivision and land development process.	

Principle 7 Promote Smart Growth		
Recommended Action		Record of Action
1.	Provide incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings, such as a reduction in fees.	
2.	Maintain residential amenities, including but not limited to open space, street trees, and sidewalks.	
3.	Encourage village-scale retail to provide shopping opportunities within the Borough.	
4.	Provide pedestrian and bicycle access from neighborhoods to activity centers in the Borough.	
5.	Encourage innovative site design by adopting flexible building standards.	
6.	Allow for the conversion of large residences into apartments in a manner sensitive to adjoining land uses.	
7.	Cooperate with federal, state, and county agencies in the provision of adequate housing opportunities for ranges of housing types.	
8.	Retain the existing character in the Low-Density Residential areas by maintaining the high quality of service and infrastructure by continued code enforcement and street maintenance.	

9.	Consider preserving parcels 7-5-37, 7-5-6 and 7-5-8-2 as open space by easement.	
10.	Encourage appropriate infill development that conforms with the character of the Medium Density Residential area.	
11.	Maintain and enhance the character of existing residential areas by continued code enforcement, street maintenance, and construction of the pedestrian bridge across the north branch of Neshaminy Creek.	
12.	Encourage the retention of existing commercial uses and the development of the existing vacant parcels with an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses.	
13.	Establish guidelines for enhancing the character and vitality of the center of the Borough so that it effectively serves the residents of the Borough and community as a whole.	
14.	Appropriate uses should be considered for the former church site at 14 Park Avenue.	
15.	Encourage the location and retention of industrial uses in areas where the nucleus of industry already exists. Ensure that the impacts of industrial and utility land uses upon residential neighborhoods are minimized.	
16.	Ensure that provisions of the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.	
17.	Place Comprehensive Plan on Borough website and in Borough Hall.	
18.	Conduct an annual meeting with leaders of Borough Council, commissions, boards, and authorities to review the goals and objectives included in the Comprehensive Plan, discuss accomplishments of the previous year, and assign new program tasks to the appropriate commissions/boards.	



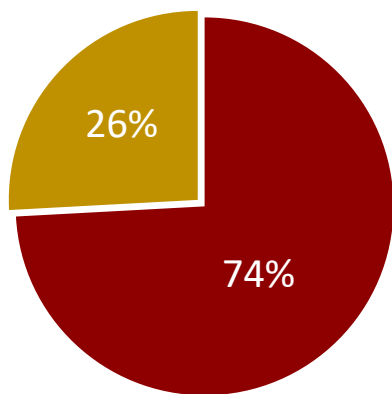


# APPENDIX A

## SURVEY RESULTS

# Chalfont Borough 2024 Comprehensive Plan Resident Survey Results

The resident survey was available to the public for **31** days in October 2022  
and was taken by **263** Participants

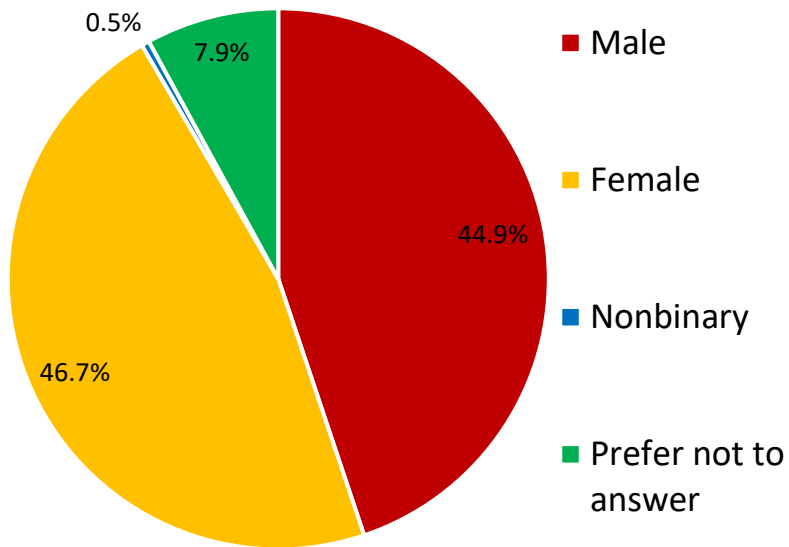


**3/4** Participants used mobile devices to complete the survey

■ Mobile Device ■ Website Browser

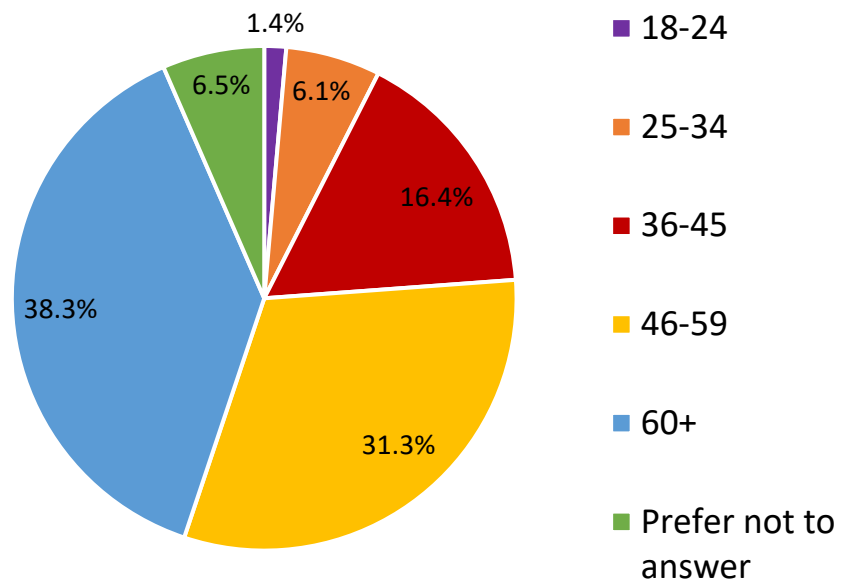
## Who took the survey?

Gender



Approximately **47%** of respondents were female

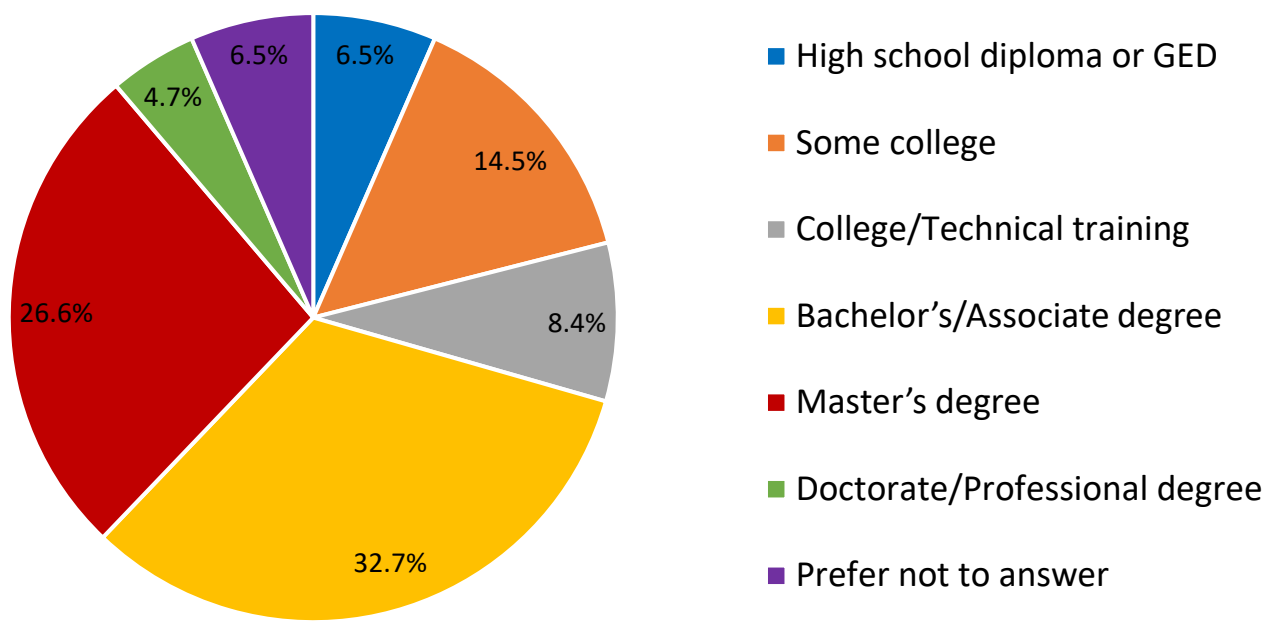
Age



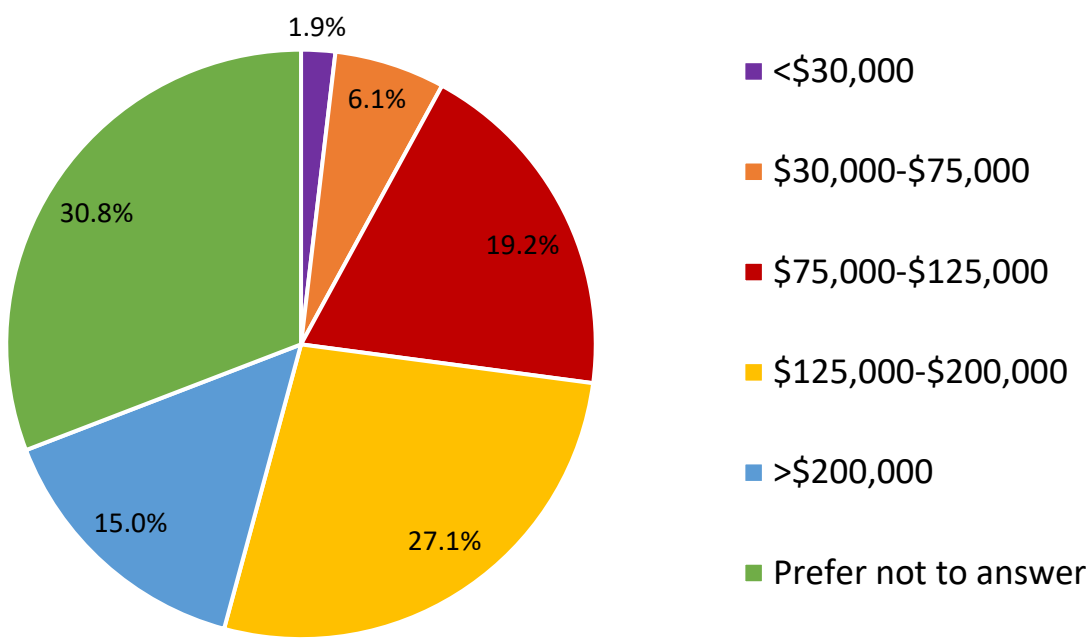
Ages varied among respondents, but **more than half** of the respondents were over **45 years old**

# Who took the survey?

Education Level

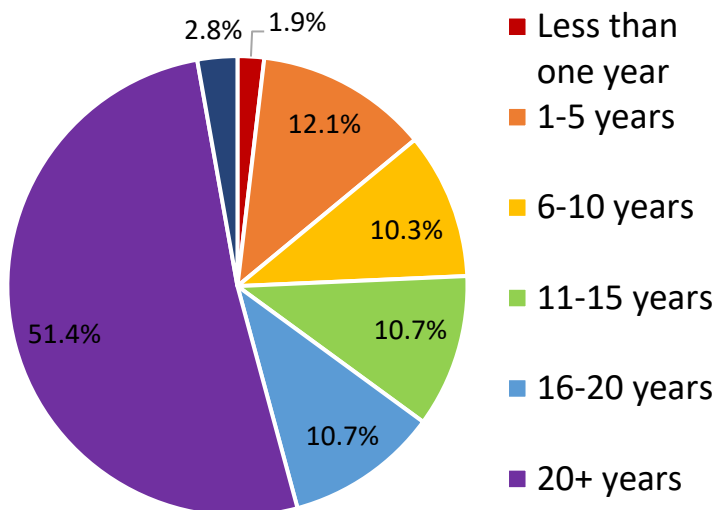


Household Income



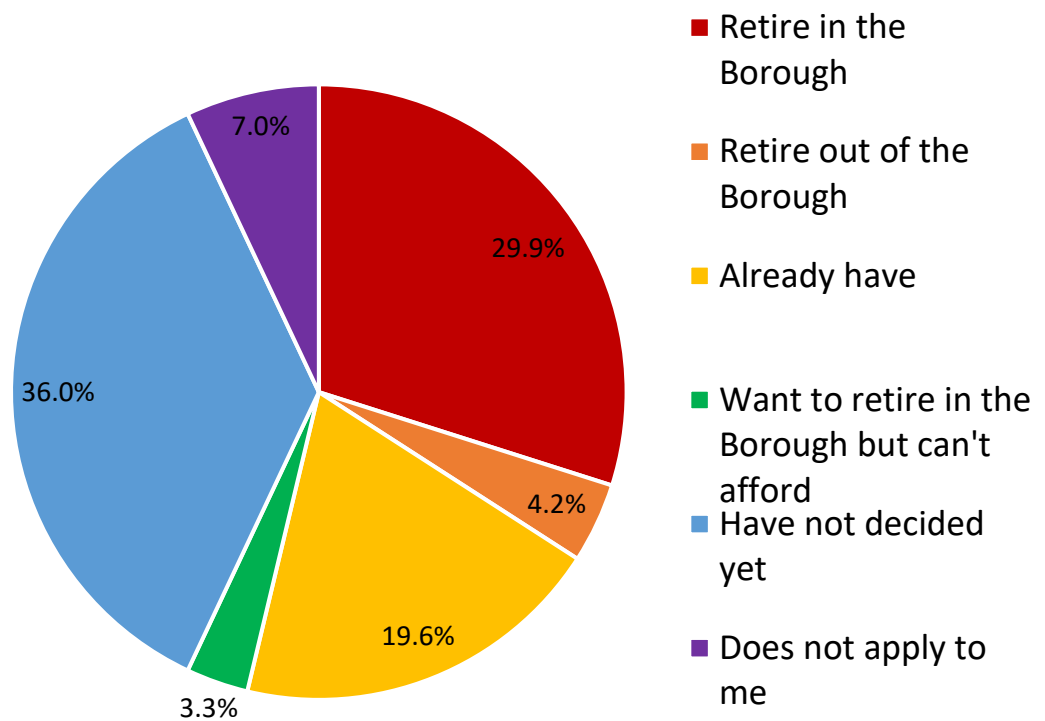
We asked how long respondents have lived in the Borough, and if they plan to retire in Chalfont

### Length of time in Chalfont



More than half of the respondents have lived in Chalfont for over **20 years**

### Plans for Retirement



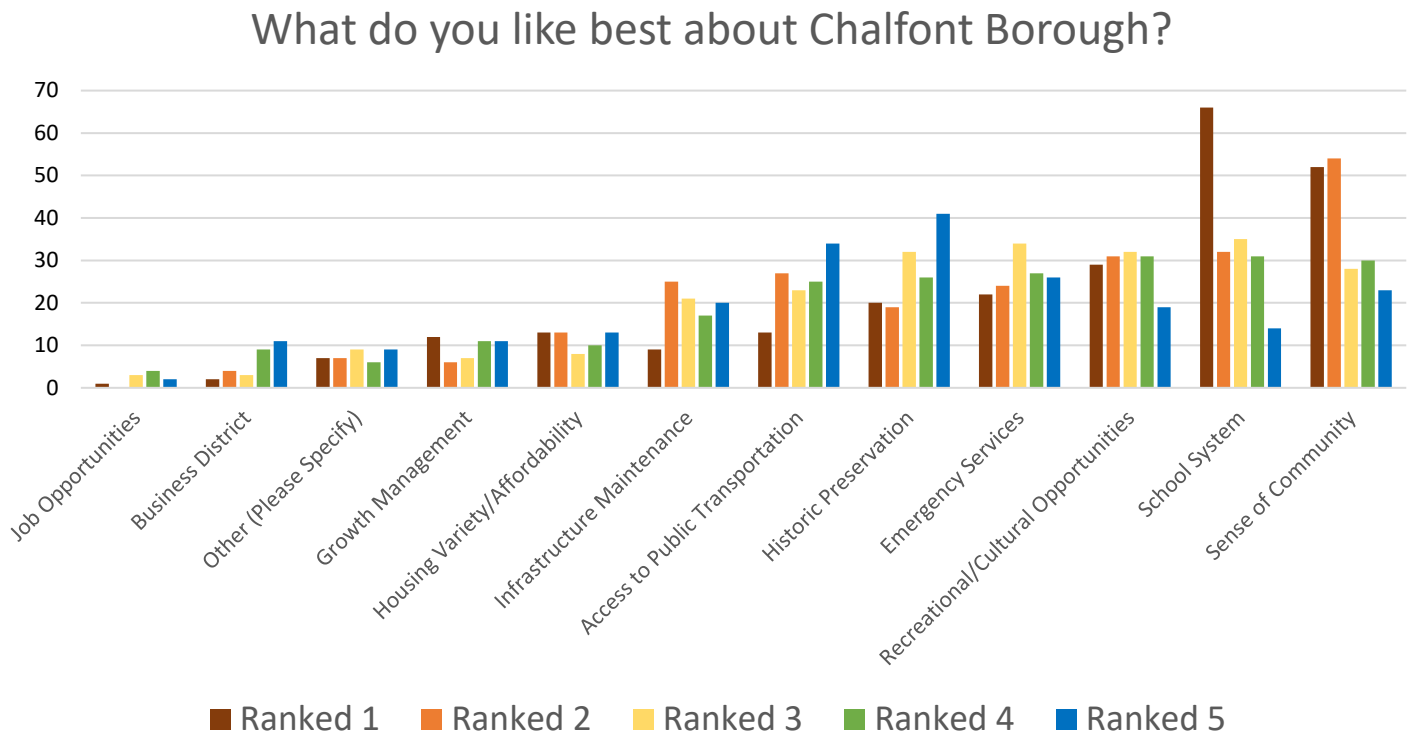
Approximately half of the respondents already have, or plan to, retire in Chalfont



We asked respondents what they like best about Chalfont Borough.

In order to get this information, we provided a list of 12 different categories, and asked them to rank their Top 5 favorite aspects of the Borough.

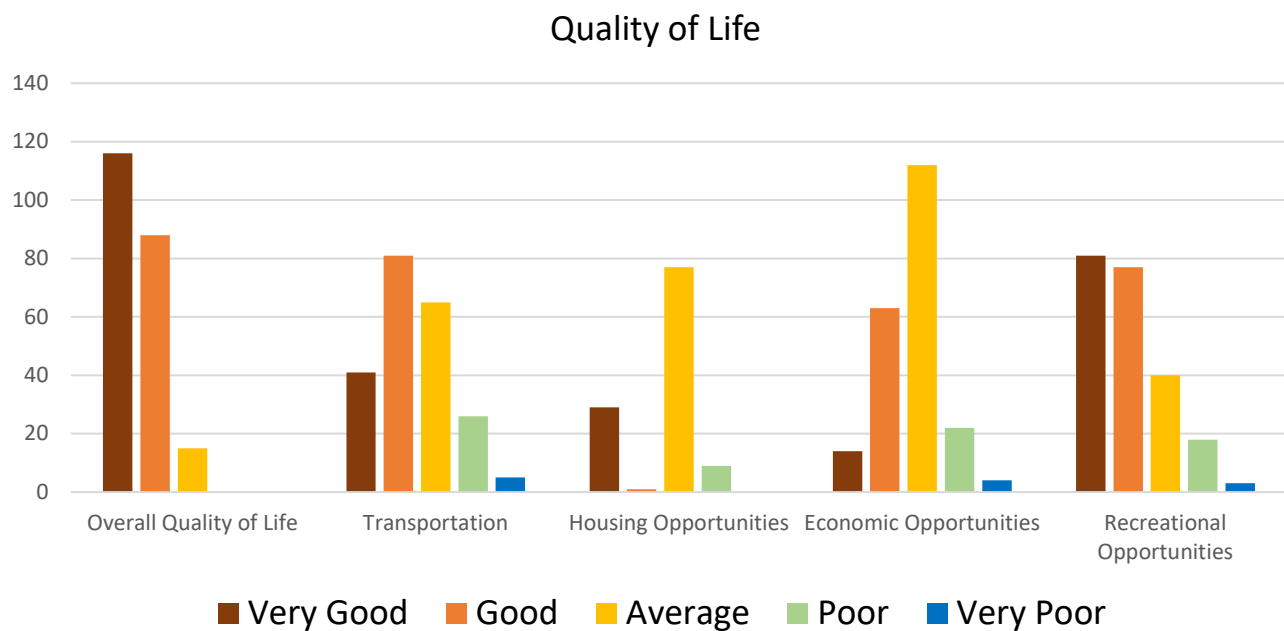
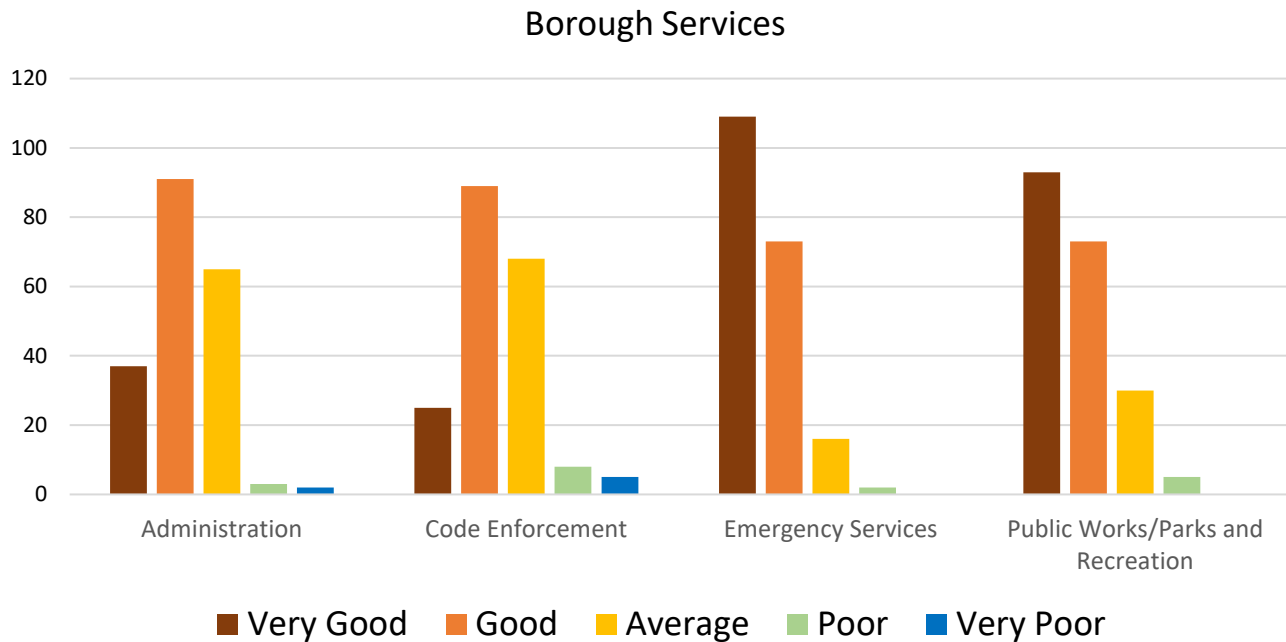
The following chart shows how each category was ranked:



Chalfont's **School System, Sense of Community, and Recreational/Cultural Opportunities** were the categories that most respondents ranked as the best thing about the Borough.

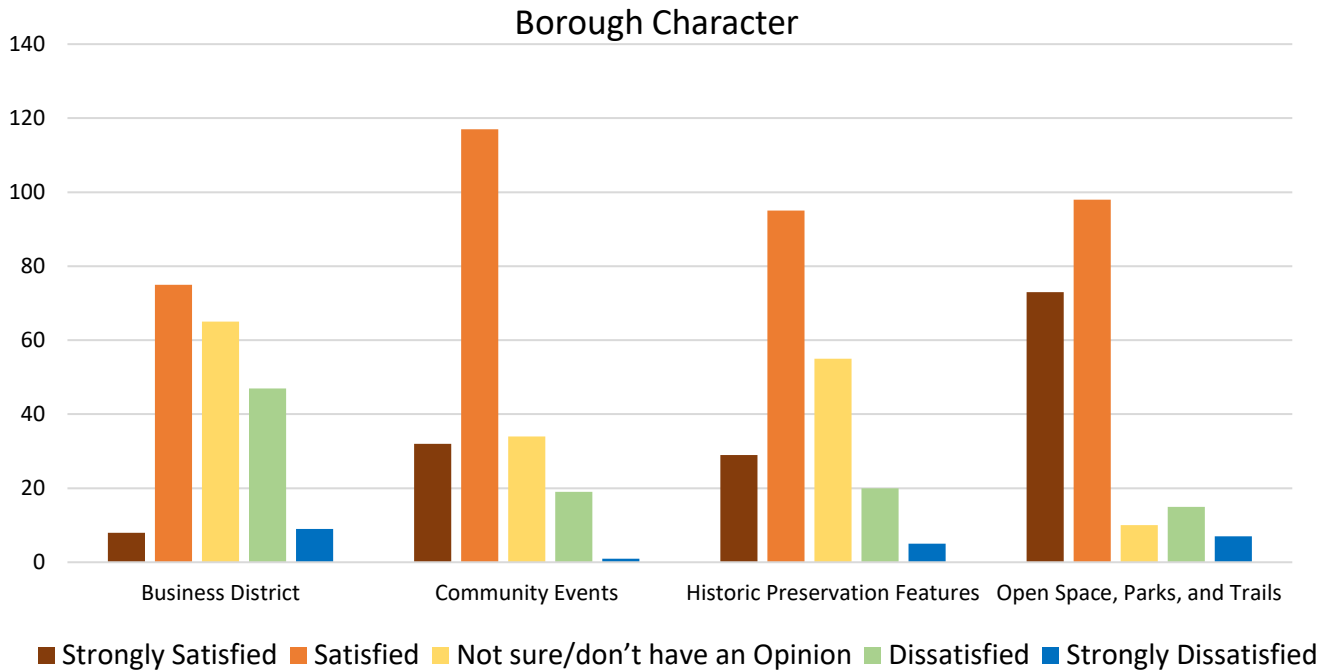
## We asked respondents to determine the quality of Borough Services and the overall Quality of Life in the Borough

The following charts show how respondents answered:



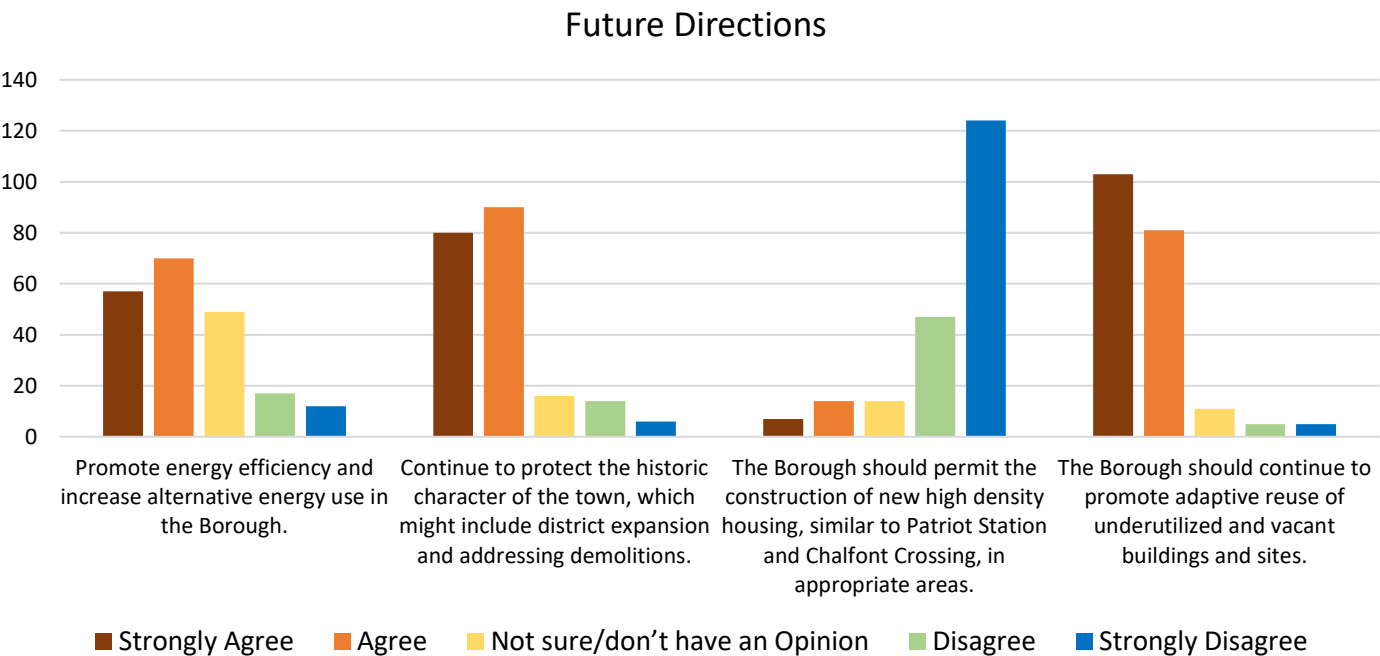
We asked respondents how satisfied they are with various aspects of life in Chalfont that make up the Borough's character.

Respondents were asked to determine if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the following:



We provided respondents with four potential future directions for the Borough and asked them to choose if they agree or disagree with each.

The following shows respondents' responses to future directions in the Borough regarding energy efficiency, historic preservation, construction of high-density housing, and adaptive reuse of sites:



Overall, respondents tended to agree that the Borough should promote energy efficiency, protect the historic character of the town, and promote adaptive reuse of vacant buildings and sites.

Most respondents strongly disagreed with the Borough permitting the construction of new high-density housing in the future.

The following word clouds were created using the comments. Words that appear larger are those that were said most in the respondents comments.

## What do you like best about the Borough?



What is one thing you would like to see changed in the Borough?



## What would you like the Borough to look like in 10 years from now?



We provided an additional comment section at the end of the survey for respondents to provide any additional feedback.

The following word cloud was created from those additional general comments.





# Chalfont Borough 2024 Comprehensive Plan Business Survey Results - Summarized

Chalfont Borough surveyed business owners to find out what issues are most important to them.

Business owners were asked to name the most important **challenges facing their business** and the most popular answers were **attracting new customers, traffic congestion, increasing expenses associated with doing business, and lack of parking.**

Business owners were asked to list issues of importance to them in **improving their ability to operate** successfully in Chalfont and the most popular responses were **improving traffic flow and traffic calming, beautify the Borough with street-plantings, marketing coordination, and parking.**

Business owners were asked how they would **allocate spending on physical improvements** and the most popular responses were **roads and traffic, streetlights borough-wide, and parking.**

**Overall** business owners felt the current climate for doing business in Chalfont was **mostly positive.**

## APPENDIX B

# SUSTAINABILITY TECHNIQUES

## APPENDIX B

### SUSTAINABILITY TECHNIQUES

Sustainability planning is broad in nature and encompasses not only natural resources planning but also focuses on energy production and use, food production, building techniques and landscaping, economic development, transportation, and hazard mitigation.

The Borough envisions a healthy, thriving community powered by affordable, community-based and 100% clean, renewable sources of energy.

The Borough should make certain that it develops policy and adopts ordinances to promote sustainable practices but to also regulate some of the new methods and technologies emerging. Expanding the use of clean, renewable energy sources, such as solar power generated by solar panels, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, reduces air pollution, and promotes community resilience to extreme weather events. Prior planning efforts have effectively promoted the use of energy conservation. As we look toward the future for our community, this plan update moves to the next step: promoting renewable energy.

The Borough may also encourage households and businesses to act more sustainably by providing information and serving as a model. Looking at new or different ways to do things provides a way to conserve resources and save money, thereby lessening our impact on the earth.

Communities in Bucks County have been establishing policies to conserve energy, reduce greenhouse gases and carbon emissions, and manage development to create “greener” communities.

The Borough may consider several actions that work toward establishing a green community. These include: the development area concept; accommodating non-vehicle forms of transportation; protection of tree cover; production of food locally; recycling; promotion of EV charging stations; and smart transportation planning.

With respect to recycling, plastic and Styrofoam take hundreds to thousands of years to decompose and can cause significant damage to the health of wildlife and waterways, near and far. Dedicated measures to mitigate the environmental impacts of these materials are warranted.

Other steps that can be taken are authorized by the Municipalities Planning Code and include subdivision ordinance requirements to encourage energy efficiency and zoning ordinance

standards to protect solar access. The Borough may also encourage households and businesses to act more sustainably by providing information and serving as a model.

The Borough has and continues to take action in regards to sustainability. Since the last Comprehensive Plan, the Borough has done the following:

- Updated the Borough streetlights to more efficient LED bulbs.
- Updated the lighting in the Borough's Administration building and Public Works building from fluorescent to LED bulbs.
- Stormwater upgrades in various locations within the Borough.
- Partners with New Britain Township to provide a shredding and Electronics Recycling event each year for residents.
- Adopted the 2021 Bucks County Hazard Mitigation Plan and was an active member of the countywide Hazard Mitigation Planning process.

There are many local and national resources available for Borough administration and residents to continue enhancing their efforts in becoming a more sustainable community. Below are some local resources available to Borough residents to learn about sustainability and get involved with local sustainability efforts:

[www.buckscounty.gov/sustainability](http://www.buckscounty.gov/sustainability) - The Bucks County website has information and resources for both municipalities and residents regarding sustainability.

<https://greenbuildingunited.org/> - Green Building United is an organization that seeks a sustainable, healthy, and resilient built environment for all by fostering transformative impacts in our communities through green building education and advocacy.

<https://beecityusa.org/> - Bee City USA is an organization that works to galvanize communities to sustain pollinators, in particular the more than 3,600 species of native bees in this country, by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nest sites, and reducing the use of pesticides. Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA are initiatives of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/> - The Arbor Day Foundation created the Tree City USA program to provide communities with a four-step framework to maintain and grow their tree cover. It also gives them an avenue to celebrate their work, showing residents, visitors, and the entire country that they're committed to the mission of environmental change.

<https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/financing-navigator/option/cpace> - CPACE stands for Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy. This is a financial loan tool which grants low-interest loans for energy efficiency and resiliency upgrades to commercial, industrial, agricultural, and residential properties that are five or more units.