

CHAPTER FIVE
Existing Land Use

This chapter provides an analysis of Whitemarsh’s existing land use. While land use is not static and is subject to constant change, such an analysis is useful for it gives a reasonably accurate assessment of the current development pattern in the township.

Figure 5-1 provides an inventory of Whitemarsh’s existing land use.

Figure 5-1
Existing Land Use - January 2003

Land Use	Acreage	% of Total
RESIDENTIAL: Country Residence	747.0	8.00
Single Family Detached	2606.1	27.90
Twin	33.9	0.36
Single-Family Attached	37.5	0.40
Multifamily	92.1	0.90
SUBTOTAL:	3516.6	37.50
COMMERCIAL: Retail	175.2	1.80
Office	325.7	3.40
Mixed Use	63.0	0.60
SUBTOTAL:	563.9	6.00
INDUSTRIAL:	375.7	4.00
INSTITUTIONAL:	719.2	8.00
UTILITIES:	456.1	5.00
OPEN SPACE: Public	923.1	9.80
Private	1092.9	11.70
SUBTOTAL:	2016.0	21.50
VACANT LAND:	962.8	10.30
AGRICULTURE:	655.4	7.00
MISCELLANEOUS:	61.7	0.70
TOTAL:	9327.4	100.00

Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessment and Field Checks

Analysis of Existing Land Use

Residential

Residential use accounts for the largest, single land use in Whitemarsh. Over one-third of the township is devoted to housing. However, to get an accurate picture of this dominant use, it is necessary to individually analyze each residential category.

- **Country Residence.** This category consists of single-family dwellings on 5 to 20 acres. It is analyzed separately from other single-family dwellings not only because it differs in appearance from the typical single-family dwelling in a residential development, but also because it allows further subdivision possibilities. Once common throughout the township, those that remain are generally found in Broad Axe.
- **Single-Family Detached Dwellings.** Of all the residential land uses, this category constitutes the largest group. This is not surprising; even a cursory glance of the township would indicate this. Over 80 percent of the township's housing stock are comprised of this type. Located throughout Whitemarsh, they range from bungalows to bona fide mansions, such as Hope Lodge.
- **Twins or Single-Family Semi-Detached Dwellings.** Comprising less than 1 percent of the township's housing stock, many are located in Cedar Heights or in the old villages. Most were constructed prior to World War II.
- **Single-Family Attached.** Commonly known as townhouses, most of this housing type is relatively new to Whitemarsh. Since the late 1970s, numerous units have been constructed in the vicinity of Ridge Pike and Joshua Road. The first development was Lafayette Estates. It contained 95 units and was built on Birch Drive. Later units were constructed on the nearby site of the former Andorra Nursery. Other developments include those on Mitchell Court and near Sherry Lake.
- **Multifamily (Apartments).** Most of this type of housing is designed as garden apartments and some have been converted to condominiums. Notable examples include Fort Hill Apartments on Bethlehem Pike, Westaway Apartments in Lafayette Hill, Sherry Lake Apartments on Butler Pike and Cedar Grove Road, and Green Valley Manor on Ridge Pike.

Commercial

Accounting for 6 percent of the township's total land use, this category is broken down into three subcategories.

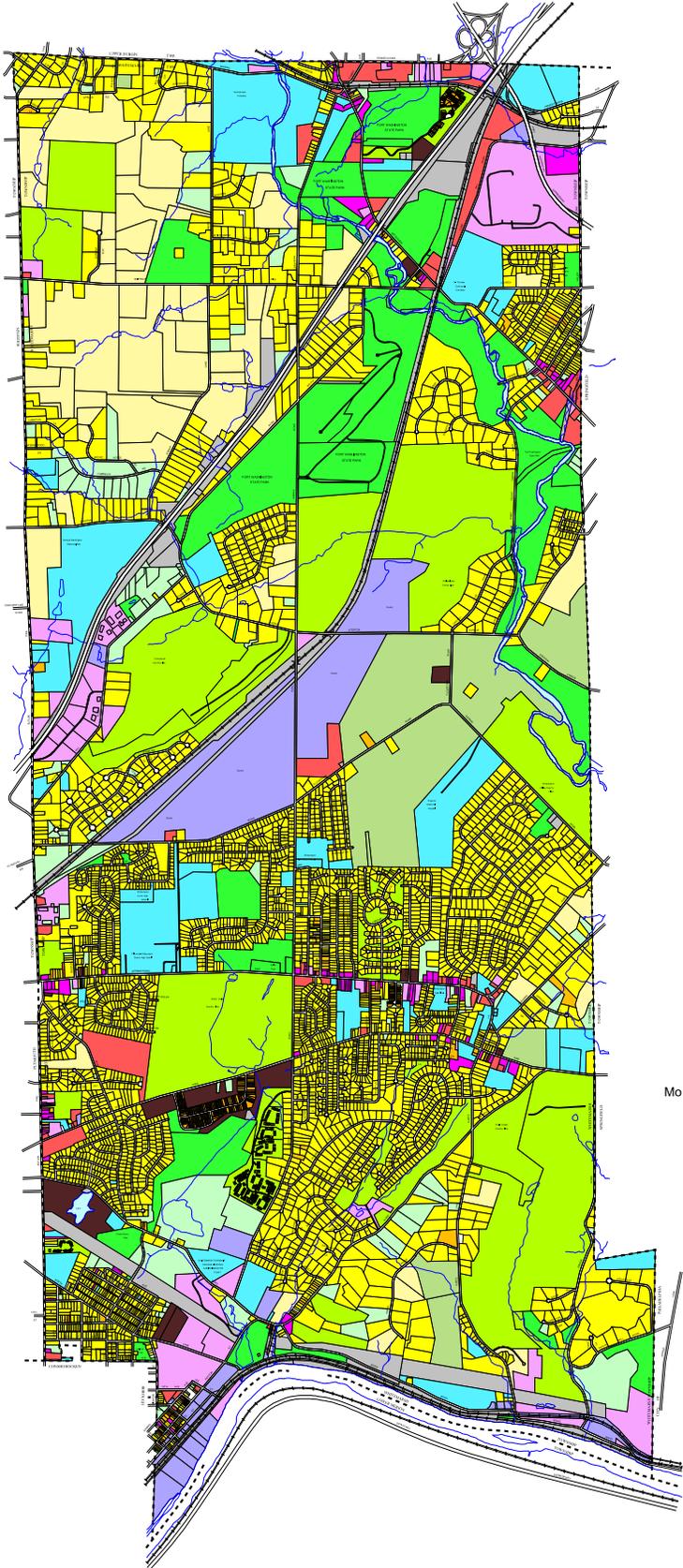
- **Retail.** Only 1 percent of the township's total land area, this small amount is reflective of the local neighborhood orientation of the township's commercial areas. The largest single use is the Whitemarsh Shopping Center and the largest district is along Germantown Pike, between Joshua and Church Roads.
- **Office.** Located throughout the township and found in every building type from converted houses to large modern office buildings, the highest concentration of offices are located in the Whitemarsh Business Campus and in Lee Park.
- **Mixed Use.** Mixed use properties contain both a residential and commercial use. Typically, a residential unit is combined with a ground level commercial use. In Whitemarsh, they are usually in converted older houses in or near the old villages.

Industrial

Once a dominant non-residential use in the township, this use continues to dwindle in Whitemarsh as the entire region moves toward a service economy. Two notable examples remaining in the township are the Highway Materials Quarry, and the township's largest employer, McNeil Consumer Products.

Whitemarsh Township Montgomery County Pennsylvania

Figure 5-2
Existing Land Use



- Multi Family
- Single Family Attached
- Twin/Duplex
- Single Family Detached
- Country Residence
- Mixed Use
- Retail
- Office
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Utilities
- Undeveloped
- Public Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Agriculture
- Water



Base Map Prepared by the
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Institutional

Whitemarsh contains a variety of institutional uses from religious facilities to private hospitals. Those with a regional recognition include, Germantown Academy, the Shriner's LuLu Temple, Progressions Institute, and the Masonic Home.

Public Utilities

Significant land devoted to this use are a wide swath created by PECO's high tension power lines and the Conrail and SEPTA tracks.

Open Space

This land use is divided into two categories-public and private.

- **Public.** This includes all public parkland located in Whitemarsh. It primarily consists of the 483-acre Fort Washington park owned by the state and the county's two parks, Wissahickon Valley (143 acres) and Spring Mill Park (38 acres). It also includes all township-owned parkland.
- **Private.** This land is private open space owned by homeowners associations, the private golf courses, and land owned by the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association.

Vacant Land

Classified vacant by the county is land that is privately owned and presently unused. Most of the township land so designated is developable and zoned residential.

Agriculture

Once the dominant land use in Whitemarsh, agriculturally used land now constitutes only 7 percent of the township's total acreage.

Miscellaneous

This land, totaling 61.7 acres or 0.7 percent of the township's total land, generally consists of vacant parcels for which there is no information. Some of the land extends into adjacent municipalities and may be assessed by them. Other parcels are paper streets or out parcels from older subdivisions.