

3rd Inning: Land Use and Zoning

General Future Land Uses

One of the major reasons for undertaking a comprehensive plan is for a municipality to identify desired locations for future land uses such as residential, industrial, commercial, green space and preservation areas, parks and recreation, trails, agriculture, and mixed-use developments. Maps and associated narrative generally identify locations and parameters for these desired land uses based on community discussion and consensus.

In a multi-municipal planning process, the task becomes even more interesting in that the municipalities can identify locations for these land uses among the participating municipalities as a whole. Thus, if for example, one or more of the municipalities have no land appropriate for industrial development, and another one has ample land available, an agreement can be reached that any future industrial uses will be located in the municipality with the available industrial land. Through an Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement (ICA), the municipalities can also agree to share the cost of providing services to these industries and the costs of maintenance of infrastructure.

Through this BAMB planning process, the five municipalities have agreed to **general** locations for proposed future land uses. They are general in that specific boundaries are purposely not identified. These land uses are illustrated on **Map 3-1** and include those discussed below. It is understood that future land uses must be consistent with the local zoning code and land use regulations, and that property owners may certainly opt to utilize their land as proposed within this plan or not. This plan does not usurp private property rights. It merely proposes that future land uses be consistent with a plan that has been agreed upon by the residents of the area. When zoning changes are requested by individuals or developers, municipalities should refer to this BAMB Plan to determine if the proposed new uses are consistent with what these communities have determined to be in their collective best interests.

Agricultural Preservation Areas

Preserving prime agricultural land is one of the many goals of the BAMB Plan and of the area. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides opportunities for farmland owners to preserve their properties for farming in perpetuity through two program—Agricultural Security Areas and Agricultural Conservation Easements.

Agricultural Security Areas are intended to promote more permanent and viable farming operations over the long term by strengthening the farming community's sense of security in land use and the right to farm. Agricultural Security Areas are created by local municipalities in cooperation with individual landowners who agree to collectively place at least 250 acres in an ASA. (Source: www.pafarmland.org/agsecareas. Please visit this site for additional information.)

An Agricultural Conservation Easement is an interest in land, less than fee simple, which represents the right to prevent development or improvement of a parcel for any purpose other than agricultural production. (Source: www.pafarmland.org/easements. Please visit this site for additional information.)

According to the PA Farmland Preservation Association web site, a property owner within a 500-acre+ ASA is eligible to sell a perpetual conservation easement or their development rights through their local Ag Land Preservation program. Easements can be sold or donated. Butler County is not listed as having a Farmland Preservation Program.

[As an example, Erie County's site states that Federal, State, and County funds are used to purchase easements. As of January 2008, Erie County has spent \$9 million on preserving 44 farms, comprising over 5,000 acres.]

According to Ron Fodor of Butler County Conservancy District (12/08), there are two Ag Easements in the BMM Area:

- C. Nicklas property, 76.1 acres between (and adjacent to) Meridian Rd. and the Butler/Connoquenessing Township line.
- Edward McCormick property, 50.2 acres in the SW corner of Butler Township.

Specific areas identified during the BMM planning process as having potential for preservation of agricultural activities are identified on **Map 3-1** and include:

- An area in south central Summit Township, generally between Herman, Bonniebrook and Portman Roads;
- An area in southeast Summit Township, north of Herman Road, on both sides of Geibel Road, and south of Beck Road to the eastern Township line;
- The northeastern section of Penn Township;
- The southwestern corner of Penn Township;
- An area around Meridian & Beacon Light Roads from the western Penn Township line eastward to the Hamel Road area; and
- The southwestern corner of Butler Township around McCalmont Road, where there are two existing Ag Preservation Easements along the western Butler Township line.

(A) Farmers with prime farmland who wish to preserve their land for farming long-term should seriously consider placing their properties in Agricultural Security Areas (ASA's) and/or Agricultural Conservation Easements.

Residential Areas

Existing residential areas should, for the most part, be preserved and enhanced, unless otherwise stated herein. At the time this BMM Plan was being prepared, the nation was experiencing one of the worst financial and housing crises in American history. New housing development came to a virtual standstill in all but a few areas of the country, and home sales stalled. Home owners, for the most part, experienced severe declines in home values, and losses in equity and portfolios. Thus, new housing construction was not a topic that the Steering Committee or Working Groups spent much time discussing.

However, the Steering Committee and Land Use Working Group identified two areas for **targeted additional new residential development**; both are located in Summit Township. They are:

- The southwestern corner of the Township along Saxonburg Road, especially after public utilities are provided; and
- The area south of SR 422 along Protzman Road, Valley View Drive, and Portman Road.

It was also recognized that **Penn Township** is positioned for additional growth due to its proximity along a major corridor north of Cranberry, as well as a result of current and proposed investments in infrastructure. Penn Township should continue to plan for this expected residential growth as expansions of existing residential areas, as well as within the areas identified for Mixed-Use Developments.

Additional residential development throughout the BAMM Plan area is being primarily recommended as part of new “Mixed-Use” Developments, which are discussed below.

A key area of concern regarding existing residential development is the unincorporated village of **Renfrew** in NW Penn Township. This area has been subjected to many devastating floods over the past decades. Several plans have been introduced to address the issue, but none have been successfully or fully implemented.

Meridian Road through Renfrew is also an issue, as it passes over a very narrow two-lane bridge over the Connoquenessing Creek in Renfrew, causing a major bottleneck for existing traffic. The potential for Meridian Road to be a major north-south alternative transportation route is contingent upon many things, but the replacement of this bridge would be critical, and would obviously affect the residents of Renfrew.

(A) Penn Township, Butler County, and Renfrew residents should **develop a long-term plan for Renfrew village**, which would most likely include relocating residents out of the floodplain and into safer permanent housing.

- The bridge over the Creek should be considered for widening so that Meridian Road can become a major north-south arterial within the BAMM Area.
- A wetlands mitigation and preservation area could be designated for this area, which would provide a mitigation area for development projects in other parts of Butler County.
- The Oversight Committee should identify a team, and initial steps, to pursue this initiative, including seeking grants from the State and Federal governments, especially the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).

Commercial Areas

It is assumed that existing commercial areas and centers in the BAMM Plan area will continue as such into the future. It is important that the BAMM Plan participants work with business and property owners to assure that these areas remain viable, attractive, and safe, and that they continue to provide the types of services and products desired by residents. If an area or center begins to fail, the Oversight Committee should meet and discuss strategies with the property owners, businesses, and State and local economic development agencies to revitalize the area or to adapt it to other uses.

A few specific commercial areas were addressed in the planning process because of their significance to the overall BAMM Plan area. These include:

- (A) The #1 goal that all participants in the planning process agreed upon is the importance of the revitalization of **Downtown Butler**, as the commercial, government, civic, social, and retail heart of the BAMM Plan area. (The Resident Survey ranked it highest at 4.43 on a scale of 1-5; and the Key Person Interviews ranked it second at 4.03, after BASA issues at 4.51). Extensive efforts are underway through the Main Street group, Butler Downtown **(logo)**, to revitalize the downtown area using the National Main Street approach. **(logo)** **Chapter 6** is devoted solely to the Downtown because of the significant role that the Downtown plays in the future of the entire BAMM Plan area. The Downtown should be viewed as the key commercial/retail/office core of the BAMM Plan area, and appropriate new commercial development should be targeted to vacant or underutilized buildings and lots in the Downtown whenever possible.

- (B) Other commercial development will likely continue along most of the major corridors in the BAMM Plan area. To control this development in the best manner possible, the Steering Committee and Working Groups recommend that **Access Management Areas (AMAs)** be implemented for many of these key corridors. These are discussed in more detail in later in this Chapter.
- (C) The area around the intersection of **Herman Road and Bonniebrook Road** is also projected to become a key commercial core, especially for residents of Summit Township. Both roads are experiencing increased traffic volumes, thus proper planning for this intersection is critical. Summit Township and residents of Herman should identify a team of interested parties to prepare a simple conceptual plan for the continued development of this area.
- (C) The area around the **East Butler Road/Mitchell Hill Road intersection** is also likely to develop with commercial and/or light industrial uses. A conceptual plan should be developed to allow for these types of development in the future, but NO residential development. These recommendations should be presented to Summit Township for review and approval. Township zoning should be amended appropriately. This activity should be initiated by the Oversight Committee.
- Additional commercial development is proposed in **Mixed-Use Developments** at various locations throughout the BAMM Plan area. These are discussed later in this Chapter.

Industrial Areas

Having once been a thriving industrial community, Butler has many large existing industrial areas, many of which are no longer being used to their full capacity. These areas will likely continue as industrial uses in the future, although full utilization of the properties will continue to take an extensive amount of work and coordination among economic development partners, municipalities, property owners, and industries.

Site and Building Inventory--The Community Development Corporation (CDC) of Butler County maintains an inventory of all available industrial sites and buildings within the County and helps market these sites to industrial prospects. All potential **sites and buildings** within the BAMM Plan area are not presently identified and included in this **inventory**. If these sites are to be marketed to prospective companies:

(A) All municipalities should identify and document potential available buildings and sites, and list them in the **inventory**. Federal and State funds may be available to help companies purchase and renovate existing buildings for industrial use, as well as with new construction.

(B) Additionally, municipalities should work with property owners to **enhance the perimeters** of large industrial properties to keep them aesthetically pleasing, possibly tying them in with municipal streetscaping and wayfinding programs.

East Butler Borough--Probably the most critical and promising area from a number of economic development perspectives is **the industrial area within East Butler Borough**. This area should continue to play a crucial role regarding the future of manufacturing and related jobs in the BAMM Plan area. This expansive industrial area is currently comprised of many small companies that have adapted former large

manufacturing facilities to meet their current business needs. It is believed that the area is underutilized, especially from an electrical grid perspective.

This industrial area has **massive electrical capacity**, based on its former manufacturing occupants. High electric usage is currently desired by many companies that provide back-up storage to large corporations in big cities. Being able to maintain operations and retrieve data in times of emergencies, such as 9-11, is imperative to these companies. East Butler Borough, working closely with the CDC and other regional economic development agencies, could recruit these types of businesses to this industrial area, using the existing electric grid as an incentive.

(A) The Bamm Plan Oversight Committee, Butler County, the CDC, and East Butler Borough should **develop a revitalization plan for the Borough**, with emphasis on the tremendous electrical capacity existing within the industrial area, and maximizing the utilization of existing industrial space, while revitalizing and/or protecting the balance of the community, especially its residential and recreational assets. The existing industrial area could present viable and exciting opportunities for the Bamm Area; however, this must be balanced with any other goals of the Borough. Revitalization and/or enhancement of the downtown area, commercial corridors, and the gateways would be beneficial. The Oversight Committee should identify a team and initial steps to pursue this initiative.

New Industrial Sites—Only one site was identified for strictly future industrial development during this planning process - the area within the **US 422/ East Butler Road/ Mitchell Hill Road triangle** in Summit Township. As mentioned above, commercial uses may also be an acceptable venue for this area. Existing and neighboring uses and the topography of the area dictate that continued development as commercial or light industrial makes the most sense. Once again, future residential development should be prohibited in this area. (C)

Other sites in the Bamm Plan area that could accommodate some light industrial or back-office development are the designated Mixed-Use Development areas, as shown on **Map 3-1** and discussed below. These Mixed-Use areas could accommodate appropriate light industry or office uses with other land uses such as housing, retail, public facilities, and parks and recreation.

Proposed Mixed-Use Developments

The American Planning Association (APA) accurately summarizes the concept of “Mixed Uses” as follows:

There was a time when single-use zoning served a vital purpose. Before zoning, industrial and waste-generating land uses were a major nuisance for nearby residential and commercial areas, sometimes even threatening public health. But today, as our economy continues on a path of rapid deindustrialization, we are finding that a system developed early in the last century cannot meet the needs of our changing communities. Strict segregation of land uses continues to stand in the way of developing modern, mixed-use neighborhoods and districts that foster both environmental sustainability and a sense of community. (Source: PAS QuickNotes No. 6, APA)

The Bamm Plan Working Groups discussed the concept of mixed uses at great length and agreed that appropriate areas should be identified for this type of mixed-use development within the five municipalities. Mixed-use areas should be properly zoned to

allow for the blending of residential, commercial, office, cultural, institutional, parks and recreation and/or green space, and some light industrial uses. **Smart growth principles** such as higher densities, compact design, a variety of housing types, transit access, Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND), and mixed-use buildings, should be promoted to provide energy efficiencies and to encourage walking and bicycling.

The potential mixed-use areas identified during the planning process are designated on **Map 3-1** and include areas that are more than likely to develop in some manner in the near future because of their location, availability of infrastructure, topography, adjacent land uses, and/or other factors. This assumes, of course, that property owners are interested in developing these properties.

The key point is that these properties should be developed in a **sustainable** manner, incorporating a variety of desirable land uses and smart growth principles (as mentioned above) that will result in attractive, safe, state-of-the-art, and viable developments for the BAMB Plan area. This will most likely require changes in municipal zoning and development codes.

Two sample Mixed-Use Development Codes are included in **Appendix 3-1**; and a sample TND Code is included in **Appendix 3-2**, for the Oversight Committee to begin development of similar language for a common code for consideration by the BAMB Plan municipalities.

The areas identified during the planning process as potential Mixed-Use Developments include:

- (A) City of Butler. The **West End of Pullman Center**. This area has been under redevelopment for many years and has had many successes in terms of new offices and fast food restaurants. Proposed projects include the Multi-Modal Facility, which is already scheduled for construction. Additional uses could include more office buildings, possibly with housing on upper floors, light industrial or high-tech uses, additional recreational venues to support Pullman Ballpark, and upscale restaurants. The former Pullman Headquarters Building could also develop in a mixed-use manner, providing restaurants, offices, and even upscale housing on the upper floors. (**Plate 3-1**)
- (B) Summit Township. The **eastern part of SR 422**, specifically at its intersection with **Geibel Road**. This area has the potential for mixed-use development with frontage on 422 for visibility, but with access to roads other than 422 for safety and more functional traffic flow. (Refer to **Plate 3-2**) A Mixed-Use Development could provide small retail and service facilities (branch bank, dry cleaners, copy/UPS facility, convenience store) as well as alternative housing options.

The railroad tracks parallel to and north of 422, as well as the topography in some cases, prohibit a lot of development directly off 422. However, businesses that require visibility, but not necessarily direct access, could locate off Geibel and Keck Roads, if the landowners are willing to accommodate this type of development. [Cracker Barrel is a good example of this situation. One can always see their buildings from the road, but once you exit, you find that the restaurant is actually some distance from the road generally on a circuitous path; and yet the restaurants are always busy.]

It may even be possible to accommodate small industries that require rail and highway transportation in the area between the railroad and Keck Road. Geibel Road would

provide direct access from these industries to 422. Once again, this assumes that property owners are willing to convert farmland to other purposes. Buffers should be required between any industrial development and existing or new housing.

Developments at any one of these intersections should be sensitive to the rural context of the area and should be properly screened from any existing residential areas. The topography should be capitalized upon to design unique and innovative developments that complement the hills and woods.

- (B) Penn Township. The area along **Hicks Road, west of SR 8**. This area is well suited for development based on its accessibility to SR 8, and its relative flatness. The area is primarily farmland at this time. **(Plate 3-3)**
- (B) Penn Township. The vacant but developable **land around the airport**, as well as the area at the intersection of Airport Road and SR 8. As discussed in Chapter 4, the airport provides an opportunity for targeted new development and increased activities that could benefit the entire County. Capitalizing on the airport, the Succop Conservancy, and The Mansion, and undertaking joint projects, could provide exciting opportunities for future development once water service is extended to this area. **(Plate 3-4)**
- (B) Butler Township. The **area due south of South Duffy Road**. This area should be designed to serve as a buffer between existing heavy industrial uses to the south and existing residential uses to the north. A mix of uses, with commercial or office to the south and residential alternatives to the north, with walking paths and green areas is proposed by the Land Use Working Group. A dense green area should be created along the southern border of this area to adequately buffer the existing heavy industrial area from this development. **(Plate 3-5)**
- (B) Summit Township. The **area along Herman Road** east of the Village of Herman, once water and sewer are provided to this area. This area could provide services to residents of the southeastern section of the Township, including those residing in Herman. There are several relatively flat farm areas with decent access to roadways that could provide for excellent mixed-use developments, while protecting existing housing and conserving wooded areas. **(Plate 3-6)**
- (C) Summit Township. The **area between Herman, Stutz, and Hinchberger Roads**, once utilities are provided. This area could provide needed services to existing residential areas along Freeport and Saxonburg Roads, as well as a variety of housing alternatives. **(Plate 3-7)**
- (C) Butler Township. The **property owned by Butler County** in southeast Butler Township, which is surrounded by residential uses that could benefit from a mixed-use center (Refer to **Map 3-1**) The County has looked at various options for the development of this area throughout the years. Any development should complement its rural surroundings
- (C) Penn Township. Two areas along Dinnerbell Road are potential areas for mixed-use developments. One area is immediately **east of SR 8 on both sides of Dinnerbell and Old Route 8**. Creative in-fill development throughout this area could better utilize the space through denser and more compact development with good highway access. Including controlled access to SR 8 in the planning for future development here, is crucial for safety and traffic flow reasons. **(Plate 3-8)**
 - The second area is **south of Dinnerbell Road and west of Welsh/Morgan Road**, in an area behind existing homes on the south side of the Road. This area is prime for

development for a variety of housing choices, with a few service/retail enterprises to provide neighborhood services. Sensitivity to existing residences is critical in any future development. **(Plate 3-8)**

Access Management Areas (AMAs)

In order for future land uses to operate in an effective, safe, and sustainable manner, traffic flow and transportation issues must be addressed. Overall transportation issues for the BMM Plan area are discussed in **Chapter 4** in great detail. However, the land use areas discussed and recommendations made regarding land uses in this Chapter will be critically impacted by decisions made concerning specific transportation issues, especially access management.

Both the Land Use and Transportation Working Groups discussed the issue of Access Management Areas or AMAs at length. The BMM Plan highly recommends that AMAs be adopted for identified roadways in the BMM Plan area, and for ease of implementation and general understanding, that they be similar in general requirements while still being specific to each area.

(A) It is recommended that municipalities individually review and approve sample language (as included in **Appendix 3-3**) for an Access Management Area. The Oversight Committee should subsequently encourage the appropriate municipalities to develop, review, and adopt specific AMAs, for the areas identified below. These would become part of their development regulations, with the understanding that this draft language would be refined to be specific for each area prior to local adoption.

Areas identified as potential AMAs during the BMM Planning process include:

- (A) US 422 in Butler Township. Future land uses along most (but not all) of this portion of US 422 are controlled because 422 is a limited access highway. However, there are still numerous issues along 422 at its primary intersections that, if not addressed properly, will degrade the quality of the roadway and create safety concerns.

Specific recommendations for an Access Management Area for the US 422 corridor through Butler Township (as well as Summit Township), should address the areas identified below with limited access from the highway, signage, lighting, land uses, zoning changes, parallel access roads, and desired traffic improvements. These recommendations should be presented to Butler Township for consideration and development. The Township should then prepare the legislation, including the appropriate and specific recommendations, and then adopt and enforce the legislation.

Of special interest regarding access management along 422 are:

- (B) The **northwest quadrant of the main interchange of 422**, north of Moraine Pointe Plaza. The existing north-south interchange road could connect to Lions and Old Eberhart Roads, along a potential access road due north, then heading west, of the interchange. **(Plate 3-9)** It may also be possible to extend this road further west to intersect a northern extension of Meridian/ S. Benbrook Road, which would be especially critical if Meridian Road ever becomes a major north-south connector.
- (C) The **intersection of 422 with Greenwood and Heintz Roads** in the far west corner of Butler Township. These roads intersect 422 but their existing alignment creates poor

traffic patterns and safety issues. Redesigning the intersection and the approaches at 90 degree angles, and the installation of a traffic signal, would improve safety significantly and allow for more accessible existing and future land uses. **(Plate 3-9)**

- (B) The potential for an **interchange at 422 and Duffy Road**, which has been discussed often but not adequately studied to determine its feasibility. The negative side of such an interchange would be the increased traffic impact on existing residential areas on the east side of, and facing North Duffy Road. The positive side would be the ability to mitigate some of the east-west traffic congestion at the New Castle Road/Duffy Road interchange, and at the Moraine Pointe Plaza interchange. If this interchange were to be constructed, future land uses around the interchange and access to them, as well as any changes in land use along Duffy Road, would be critical. **(Plate 3-10)**
- **New Castle Road in Butler Township.** A major thoroughfare entering the City from the west, New Castle Road is experiencing increased traffic flow and congestion. Large new commercial developments have created significant increases in traffic issues (even with required improvements), and older developments with numerous curb cuts create additional traffic hazards. The high school and State Police barracks, with their offset entrances, are also areas of concern along New Castle Road. An AMA for New Castle Road should address:
 - (A) The **intersection of New Castle Road with the north-south interchange road** at Moraine Pointe Plaza, and to the west, the **intersection of New Castle Road with Eberhart Road**. Both are congested intersections. The fact that the north-south interchange road ends at New Castle Road, and cannot proceed south due to Moraine Pointe Plaza, creates traffic congestion and traffic flow problems. There are some vacant parcels of land in this area, and future land uses should be carefully considered so as not to exacerbate the existing problem. Future land uses for the parcel west of Moraine Pointe Plaza, as well as appropriate access to that site, should be investigated. Suggested improvements mentioned above for this intersection would be helpful. **(Plate 3-9)** If Everhart Road could be improved and connected to 422, this route could become a major north-south truck route, removing truck traffic from residential streets, and providing much better direct access for trucks.
 - (A) The section of New Castle Road near the **high school access road (Campus Lane) and the State Police access road (Barracks Road)**, which are off-set, also experiences traffic problems. When the relocation of the State Police barracks occurs, future uses for that property should be reviewed in light of the amount of traffic they will generate. Initially, a right in, right out only restriction on Barracks Road would help the situation, but connecting Campus Lane and Barracks Road at a common 90 degree intersection, should be investigated as the ultimate solution. **(Plate 3-11)**
 - (A) **Future redevelopment and in-fill development** along New Castle Road should be carefully planned. When plans to occupy existing sites or buildings with new uses are proposed, negotiations should be held to reduce the number of curb cuts (in partnership with Penn DOT); improve signage, lighting, landscaping, and parking; investigate shared entrances and parking with neighboring businesses; and otherwise address common access management issues. The ability to do this should be incorporated in Butler Township's AMA legislation.
- **US 422 in Summit Township.** 422 remains a major highway throughout Summit Township, although the volume of traffic is slightly less than in Butler Township. Since 422 is no longer a limited access highway in most of Summit Township, there

are many more intersections with the potential for conflicts. Special areas of concern include:

- (A) **Mixed-use development** should continue in a planned manner from Bonniebrook Road east to the Township line, within AMA guidelines.
- (A) As discussed above for Butler Township, specific recommendations for an AMA for the **US 422 corridor** through both Butler and Summit Townships should address these areas utilizing limited access, signage, lighting, land uses, zoning changes, and/or parallel access roads to improve safety and traffic flow. These recommendations should be consolidated into conceptual plans for each area and specific language for each AMA should be presented to Summit Township Supervisors for consideration and adoption.
- (B) The intersection area of **422 with Bonniebrook Road, the railroad tracks and Grant Avenue**. There are several small roads and numerous drives that enter 422 in this area. The steep hills on some sides of 422 have prevented the number of curb cuts from becoming excessive. However, there are opportunities to reduce the number of existing curb cuts and prohibit additional curb cuts to maintain the integrity of the roadway, and this could be accomplished through an AMA. **(Plate 3-12)**
- (C) The potential for light industrial and commercial businesses in a mixed-use development **between Keck Road and 422** (as discussed above), with all ingress/egress at either Giebel or Keck Roads. This area could be a neighborhood service, retail, employment, and/or convenience center for residents of the Township. Properly addressing access management issues through an AMA will be critical to the safe and aesthetic development of this area. **(Plate 3-13)**
- (B) SR 8 south of Butler City, mostly in Penn Township. SR 8 was identified by the Steering Committee as one of the critical roadways with current and potential traffic issues that could be mitigated through the creation, adoption and enforcement of an AMA. Penn Township should take the initiative with this project. Areas of concern include:
 - (B) The area around the intersections of **SR 8 with Hicks Road/Oak Ridge Road**, which are off-set. Land uses and ingress/egress should be carefully controlled. A study should be conducted to determine the feasibility of improving the intersections, especially if/when the land to the west of SR 8 is developed. **(Plate 3-3)**
 - (B) Land uses in the area near the intersections of **SR 8 with Old Plank Road, Renfrew/McHarg Roads, and the railroad tracks**. Commercial development has been proposed between the railroad tracks and Renfrew Road in the past. This is a very dangerous intersection at the bottom of two hills with no visibility for 422 traffic until drivers start coming downhill. The park and ride lot is in the SE corner of this intersection. Some precautions are needed to make this area safer. A study should be undertaken to identify alternatives for improving the area. **(Plate 3-14)**
 - (B) **SR 8's intersection with Airport Road**, especially with any potential development at The Mansion, continued expansion of programs and activities at the Succop Conservancy, as well as potential expansions at the airport. Additional development has been suggested for around the airport, be it residential, commercial, light industrial, and/or mixed use, once water service is available.
 - The intersection of **SR 8 with Dinnerbell Road**, which is discussed below.

- (A) Bonniebrook Road in Summit Township. As discussed in the Transportation Chapter, although Bonniebrook Road primarily serves residences and farms, it has become a major alternative route for traffic bypassing SR 8 through Downtown Butler. Bonniebrook Road north of 422 is a State Route; south of 422, it is a Township Road. The additional traffic on the Township portion of this road, which is not designed for the amount of traffic it is experiencing, is beginning to make travel unsafe. Special issues of concern include:
 - Intersections with more stringent setbacks, improved site distances, smoothing existing curves, speed limit enforcement mechanisms, increased pavement widths, signage, weight limits, and roadway design are all possible incremental remedies that should be pursued.
 - Due to unforeseen growth and increased traffic, Bonniebrook Road has become a major corridor, and it is beyond Summit Township's capacity to address the needs of this roadway without assistance. The Oversight Committee should appoint a Task Force to initiate conversations with PennDOT to pursue resuming control and **ownership of the roadway** and addressing a **traffic calming study**. Jefferson Township should be involved in this process as well.
 - **Future land uses** along this road should be carefully considered from a traffic generation perspective, before being permitted.
 - If Penn DOT assumes ownership of the road, road improvements should be projected, **placed on the TIP**, and improved.
 - The Township should continue to explore giving this portion of Bonniebrook Road back to the State.
- (B) Dinnerbell Road in Penn Township. Dinnerbell Road is not yet experiencing significant traffic issues, but could when public utilities become available. The Steering Committee and Working Groups felt that potential problems should be addressed prior to them becoming critical. (**Plate 3-8**) Issues include:
 - There is the **potential for a 200+ acre residential or mixed-use development** on the south side of Dinnerbell Road, west of Morgan Road. (This Plan is suggesting the potential for a Mixed-Use Development instead of strictly residential. However, existing housing must be protected from future impacts.) Future land uses, ingress/egress, service roads, signalization and other impacts of this and other potential developments should be pursued further, prior to their construction.
 - The potential for using **Old Route 8** as an access road for future development in this part of Penn Township, with ingress/egress off Old Route 8 as opposed to SR 8, should be seriously considered.
- (A) SR 68 in Butler Township. SR 68 West is a major connector between the BAMM Plan area and I-79 and was a key point in all transportation-related discussions during this BAMM Planning process, in the Key Person Interviews, and in the Resident Survey. As a primary connector to SR 228 and I-79, it is one of the major routes from the Butler area to Pittsburgh and Cranberry. Issues regarding SR 68 include:
 - SR 68 needs to **physically upgraded**.

- The **intersection of 68 (Evans City Road) and Eberhart Road** needs to be improved, so that it can handle additional traffic and left turns. A study should be undertaken, as this project would likely require acquisition of rights-of-way.
- The **intersection of SR 68 and Duffy Road** also needs to be addressed, especially if the current truck route (422 --West to New Castle Road --East to 68 --West on 68) can be shortened to include an improved section of Duffy Road between New Castle Road and SR 68. (**Plate 3-10**) However, Eberhart Road is the preferred alternative to Duffy Road for truck traffic, as it has fewer homes and wider setbacks (as discussed above).
- Although not located in the BAMM Plan area, improvements to SR 68 **through Evans City** are also required to make it an effective connector to I-79.
- The Oversight Committee should appoint a group of interested individuals to pursue this project. Discussing the project seriously and often with the Southwest PA Commission, Butler County, Penn DOT, and other area transportation-related agencies is critical to getting this project under consideration, funded, and constructed.
- **Other areas** mentioned in the planning process as roadways that will be experiencing increased traffic and should be considered for AMAs in the future include:
 - Meridian Road in Butler and Penn Townships, especially if it could become a major north-south connector.
 - Duffy Road in Butler Township if Eberhart Road cannot be improved to provide better north-south connections.
 - Eberhart Road in Butler Township, which could be extended north to the 422 intersection, providing a more direct access to the south.
 - Whitestown Road in Butler Township, which is becoming a heavily traveled east-west connector.
 - SR 356 in Summit Township, which is starting to see an increase in traffic.
 - Old Plank Road in Penn and Butler Townships.
 - Herman Road in Summit Township.

Zoning

Land Use Plans are primarily implemented through zoning and other development regulations within the municipalities. Development regulations are the legal enforcement mechanism. Thus, having them accurate, current, and state-of-the-art is critical to developing the community according to an approved Plan.

The BAMM Plan Steering Committee and Land Use Working Group strongly recommend that all five municipalities **update their zoning, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), and other development regulations** in order to implement the plan successfully. Each municipality is at a different level regarding the status of their regulations, and their ability to enforce them consistently and uniformly.

The PA Municipal Planning Code (MPC) provides incentives for municipalities that coordinate and cooperate on planning and zoning issues (as discussed more thoroughly in **Chapter 8**). This type of coordination with zoning can definitely trigger multi-municipal benefits.

It may be worthwhile to **explore a relationship with Butler County Planning Department** to spearhead an effort to update all regulations, develop commonalities

among the regulations, and properly enforce them. This possibly could require adding additional personnel in that office; however, those costs could be shared among all municipalities. BAMM Plan municipalities should assure that they are able to maintain control over decisions made by the County regarding issues related to the BAMM Plan area, through an advisory committee or some other method.

(A) The Oversight Committee should make it a priority to identify the parties to initiate these processes and then monitor their progress.

Mixed-Use Developments are proposed in the BAMM Plan and Mixed-Use Zoning could be adopted to set standards for the blending of residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and where appropriate, industrial uses. The American Planning Association (APA) states that:

Mixed use zoning is generally closely linked to increased density, which allows for more compact development. Higher densities increase land-use efficiency and housing variety while reducing energy consumption and transportation costs. The mixed-use buildings that result can help strengthen or establish neighborhood character and encourage walking and bicycling. (PAS QuickNotes No.6 APA)

This same source discusses the benefits of mixed-use zoning for smart growth:

Smart growth seeks to encourage compact design, walkable neighborhoods, housing choice, and the creation of more transportation options through access to transit and greater connectivity between neighborhoods. To further the goals of smart growth, a growing number of communities are including provisions for mixed-use developments in their zoning ordinance.

In addition to proposing mixed-use developments and access management areas, the municipalities have some specific issues that need to be addressed within their development regulations. Suggestions arising from the planning process include:

- (A) Encourage all five municipalities to **update their zoning codes** and development regulations. The Butler County Planning Department should be asked to work with the five municipalities to **consider adopting consistent zoning district definitions**, as well as other ways to be more consistent with their neighbors' adjacent land uses and zoning. A summary comparison of the existing zoning districts among the five municipalities is attached as **Appendix 3-4**, and can be used as a starting point to discuss common definitions. Working together, the five municipalities should:
 - Consider Access Management Areas, Mixed-Use Development Districts, Conservation Design Subdivisions, Planned Residential Developments, and Traditional Neighborhood Development standards.
 - Consider adopting **green building standards** for infrastructure improvements and sustainable developments.
 - Explore provisions to **regulate drilling** for gas in the Marcellus Shale, which is becoming a major issue. Issues to pursue include: regulating distances from residential areas, land development and earth disturbance issues, storm water management, erosion and sedimentation control, bonding, weight limits to protect existing roads, tree ordinances for replanting disturbed areas, and improvements to and around associated facilities for all **"energy" businesses**, as permitted by PA law.

- Assure that their ordinances adequately address **Sexually-Oriented Businesses (SOBs)**. According to PA law, exclusionary uses that are not provided for in the zoning code are permitted to locate anywhere. (As mentioned below, if one community within a multi-municipal plan accommodates this type of use, it would meet legal requirements for providing this type of land use for the rest of the municipalities covered in the plan.)
- Encourage a mandatory **dedication of land for parks or payments in lieu of dedicated land** in all new subdivisions. According to the MPC Article V Section 503.11.iv, municipalities that have an adopted recreation plan in place can require these options. The Parks and Recreation Plan is part of this BMM Plan.
- Promote the **preservation of valuable open space areas** that contain features of natural and/or cultural significance, as identified and discussed in **Chapter 7**.
- Promote the preservation of **steep hillsides, streams, waterways**, and other environmentally sensitive areas, as identified and recommended in **Chapter 7**.

In addition, the Working Groups discussed issues regarding specific municipalities. The Oversight Committee should:

- (A) Encourage the **City of Butler** to include updated downtown zoning regulations and special zoning along commercial corridors.
- (A) Suggest that **Penn Township** aggressively address the Renfrew area.
- (A) Suggest that **East Butler Borough** review its regulations in light of the need in the BMM Plan Area for additional industrial and technology-related space, and assure that the Borough's regulations allow for this type of redevelopment.
- (A) Carefully consider and identify opportunities for the **accommodation of land uses across municipal boundaries**, which is permitted in municipalities undertaking multi-municipal plans. For example, if East Butler Borough has the ability to provide industrial uses for high electric users, other municipalities would not have to plan for this type of use. Again, there could be agreements among the municipalities to share the cost for providing services as well as the resulting revenues.