

## Section 1. Regional Context <sup>1</sup>

Upper Dublin Township encompasses 13-square miles located in the southeast section of Montgomery County. It is known for its good schools, quality housing, parks and recreational opportunities and the Fort Washington Business Park. Residents enjoy a quality of life that makes Upper Dublin Township a desired location to live, learn, work and play. As a commuter suburb, the Township occupies the suburban inner ring of Philadelphia – an area settled beginning in the 1800s. Scattered nodes of settlement known as Fort Washington, Jarrettown, Maple Glen and Dresher grew tremendously following World War II, through the 1960s to the present. Today, the Township is more than 95 percent built-out with a population of 25,878 (2000 U.S. Census Bureau). **Figure 1.1** shows Upper Dublin Township in its regional setting.

Upper Dublin owes much of its growth to its location at the intersection of State Route 309 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Route 309 is a limited access expressway from Philadelphia, through Upper Dublin, and into the Spring House area of Lower Gwynedd Township. The Pennsylvania Turnpike has its interchange with Route 309 in Upper Dublin Township at Pennsylvania Avenue near the Fort Washington Office Park. A limited access slip ramp for westbound travel on the Turnpike provides a second interchange for the Turnpike in Upper Dublin. The interchange occurs at Virginia Drive, a local road within the Fort Washington Office Park.

The SEPTA R-5 Regional Rail Line also provides regional access to Upper Dublin. SEPTA's R-5 trains travel through Upper Dublin between Philadelphia, Lansdale and Doylestown, with many intermediate stops including four stations located along the western boundary of the Township – Fort Washington, Oreland, North Hills and Ambler. Bus service operated by SEPTA serves portions of the Township with key connections at the regional rail stations and employment nodes such as the Fort Washington Office Park, Prudential and Dresher. In addition to the regional access noted above, Upper Dublin is well served by a local road network.

Retail and commercial nodes of development include Maple Glen, the Dresher Triangle Area, Jarrettown, Fort Washington and Welsh Road near the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Much of the commercial development is relatively small scale, and residents regularly patronize businesses in adjacent municipalities particularly Horsham and Upper Moreland Townships, both of which house a number of large-scale retail centers and big box stores along Welsh Road on Upper Dublin's northwestern border. The Fort Washington Office Park, Ambler Borough and Temple University Ambler are three recognized places that help give identity to Upper Dublin Township. The Prudential Office Park, located at Welsh and Dresher Roads is also a major employment center.

The Fort Washington Office Park, developed in the mid-1950s, is one of the first office parks in suburban Philadelphia. It has evolved into a combined light industrial and office center with a variety of uses that have become part of a mixed-use pattern, including the GMAC Financial Services, satellite facilities for Temple University and Gwynedd Mercy College, DeVry University and LA Fitness. Employment in the Office Park is estimated at 14,000 (2004), with the vast majority of workers coming from outside of the Township. These people add to the richness of community, support commercial uses and make use of Township facilities and services, including parks and

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<sup>1</sup> The Upper Dublin 2005 Open Space Plan "Regional Setting" description pp. 1-1 to 1-2 was used to prepare this section.

open spaces. The success of the Office Park is challenged by its age, flooding and road conditions in certain sections, particularly along Virginia Drive and near the Fort Washington Turnpike Interchange. There are numerous vacancies due to lack of reinvestment in properties damaged by flooding.

Temple University Ambler has been part of the community since its establishment here as the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women in 1911. The 187 acres campus is a significant area of land that includes institutional facilities and a high proportion of open space. Temple Ambler is one of many educational and religious institutions in the community that adds diversity and land stewardship of relatively large pieces of land.

The Township is made up of a number of distinct neighborhoods, each of which has unique characteristics related mostly housing type, development patterns and history. While each of neighborhoods enjoys a distinct sense of place, Upper Dublin Township as a whole lacks a cohesive element that draws the Township together. A number of neighborhoods, including Jarrettown, Maple Glen and Fort Washington have developed vision plans to guide future development and protect key resources.

Upper Dublin shares its border with eight municipalities, all of which offer Township residents with additional amenities or services that augment the Upper Dublin experience and what the Township has to offer. A number of these municipal boundaries cut across traditional neighborhood lines, transportation facilities and other infrastructure and natural resources, making it important for the municipalities to work together on issues of shared importance.

- **Abington Township** sits along the eastern border of Upper Dublin Township. Abington is among the oldest communities in Montgomery County.
- **Upper Moreland Township** shares a small portion of Upper Dublin's northeastern border along Welsh Road where several big box retailers are located.
- **Horsham Township** shares the rest of the northern border along Welsh Road. In addition to the big box developments described above, there is an office park and the Maple Glen neighborhood resides partly in Horsham.
- **Lower Gwynedd Township** lies to the west along Tennis Avenue. Lower Gwynedd prides itself on its natural balance between historic preservation and modern living.
- **Ambler Borough**, sometimes cited as Upper Dublin's "downtown," is a former industrial and suburban railroad town. In the last decade, Ambler has had a notable economic upswing and major reinvestment in the commercial center. This includes creation of a "Main Street" program and manager and the introduction of new restaurants, small specialty shops, retail stores, refurbished visual and performing arts theaters and additional housing.
- **Whitemarsh Township** shares the Upper Dublin's southern border along Morris Road and Pennsylvania Avenue. The Townships share access to the Fort Washington SEPTA

Regional Rail train station, which is actually located in Whitemarsh. Regionally, Whitemarsh is well known as the home of Fort Washington State Park.

- **Springfield Township** shares the rest of the Upper Dublin's southwestern border along the East Oreland and North Hills neighborhoods. The townships share access to the Oreland and North Hills SEPTA Regional Rail train stations, which are located in Springfield.
- **Whitpain Township** shares the smallest border with Upper Dublin south of Ambler Borough where the Wissahickon Creek runs through the townships. Both townships share a desire to preserve this natural resource.

### **Issues and Conclusions**

Several issues are emerging that focus on Upper Dublin's role in the region and its relationships with the adjacent municipalities. Many of these issues are being coordinated at the staff level but not at the decision making level. Current common issues include the following:

- Watershed, environmental and conservation issues are currently being coordinated between the municipalities but need to remain a focus to ensure sustainability and responsible development occurs within the township and region.
- As a focus of establishing a regional trail network with multimodal connections, trail connections across major roadways will need coordination with PennDOT and adjacent municipalities.
- Stormwater and drainage issues affect the regions ability to provide suitable developable land to attract businesses.

## Section 2. Community Profile

This chapter outlines data on demographic and economic trends in Upper Dublin, including information on the residential and commercial real estate markets impacting the Township. Demographic estimates and projections were collected from several sources, including the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and ESRI, a proprietary demographic data vendor.

### Population Trends

According to the 2000 Census counts, Upper Dublin Township is the sixth most populous municipality in Montgomery County. Upper Dublin experienced significant growth in the 1960s and 1970s as suburban development spread to communities beyond the inner ring municipalities abutting Philadelphia. Population increases continued steadily through the next two decades, although at a slower rate. **Table 2.1** shows these trends.

**Table 2.1 Upper Dublin Township Population Trends**

Year	Population	Change	
		#	%
2000	25,878	1,850	7.7%
1990	24,028	1,680	7.5%
1980	22,348	2,786	14.2%
1970	19,562	9,378	92.1%
1960	10,184	--	--

*Source: US Census*

Between 1990 and 2000, the population in Upper Dublin increased by 7.7 percent, a rate more than double the state average, but slower than that of Montgomery County as whole (**Table 2.2**). The Township's 2000 population totaled 25,878, a density of just over 1,960 persons per square mile, or approximately three persons per acre.

**Table 2.2 Population Change: 1990 - 2000**

Jurisdiction	1990	2000	Percent Change
<b>Upper Dublin</b>	<b>24,028</b>	<b>25,878</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
Montgomery County	678,111	750,097	10.6%
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	3.4%

*Source: US Census*

Because Upper Dublin is largely built out, population growth after 2000 is projected to slow significantly through 2030. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission projects population growth of 2,083, or approximately 8 percent between 2000 and 2030 (**Table 2.3**). Montgomery County's population is projected to grow by 17.2 percent over this same period.

**Table 2.3 Upper Dublin Township Population Projections 2000-2030**

Year	Population	Change	
		#	%
2000	25,878	--	--
2010	26,516	638	2.5%
2020	27,280	764	2.9%
2030	27,961	681	2.5%

*Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, July 2007*

**Age Profile**

With a 2008 estimated median age of nearly 44 years, the population of Upper Dublin is relatively older than that of Montgomery County or Pennsylvania as a whole (**Table 2.4**). **Table 2.5** below shows the impact of the aging of the Township’s Baby Boom generation.

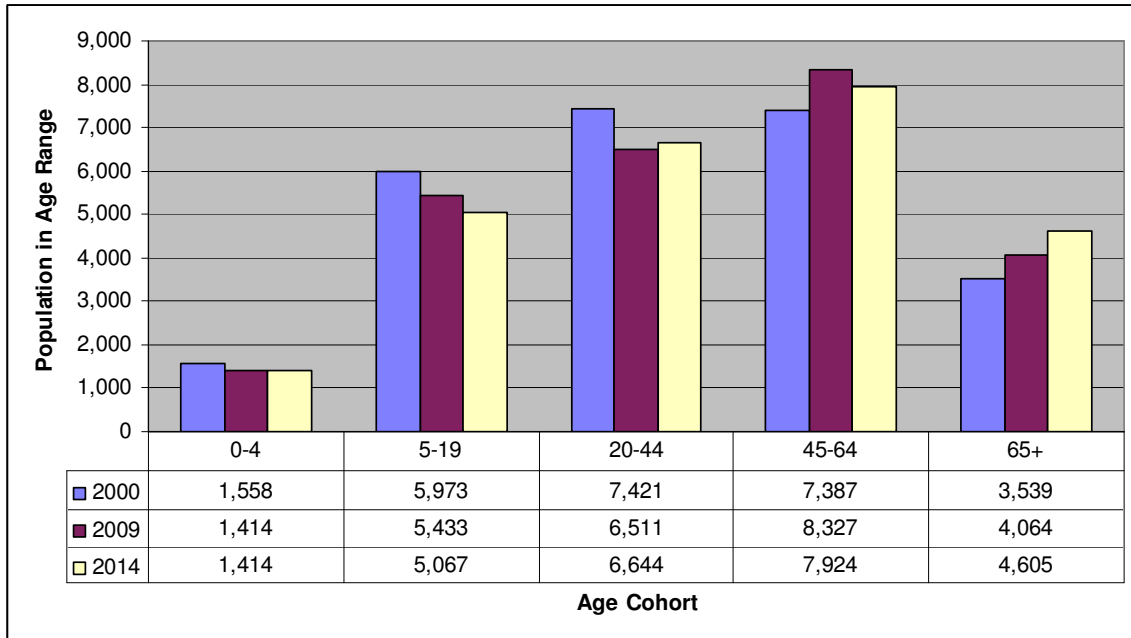
**Table 2.4 Median Age: 2008 Estimate**

Jurisdiction	Median Age (years)
<b>Upper Dublin</b>	<b>43.9</b>
Montgomery County	40.5
Pennsylvania	40.3
USA	36.8

*Source; ESRI*

Over the next five years, the oldest Baby Boomers will turn 65 and the number of Township residents in the age 65+ cohort will continue trending upward. The growth in this age group should continue during the time frame of this Comprehensive Plan. As the Baby Boomers age, the number of persons in the age 45-64 cohort will moderate. The impact of the Baby Boom Echo can be seen in the slight upward growth in the number of Township residents age 20 to 44 over the next five years. Again, this trend should continue as this demographic segment moves through the prime years for household formation, child rearing and home purchase.

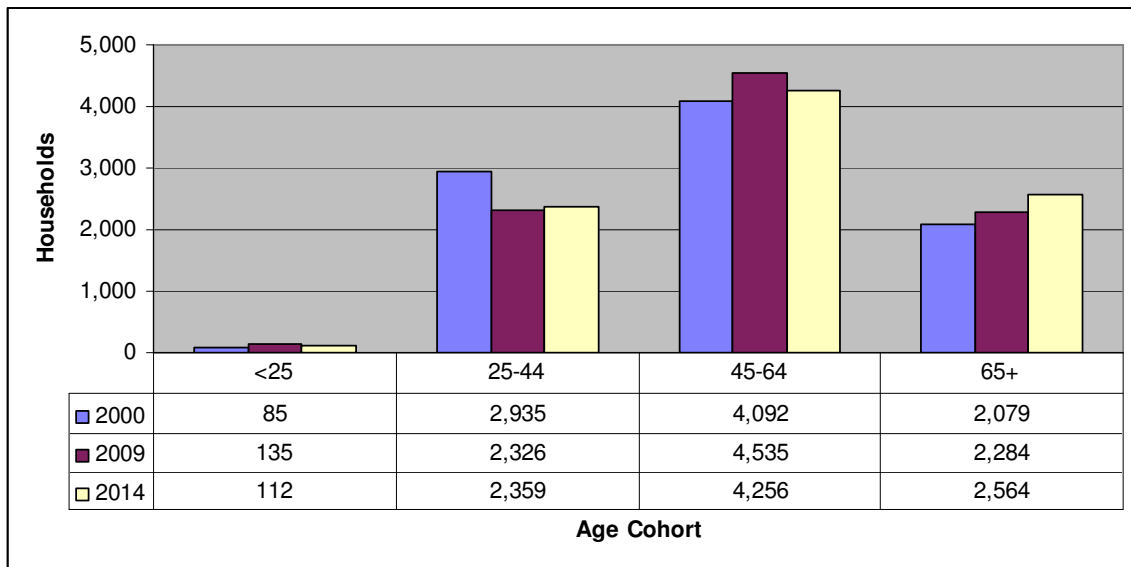
**Table 2.5 Upper Dublin Township Population by Age: 2000, 2009 and 2014**



Source: ESRI; RES

The projected distribution of Upper Dublin **households** by age is similar, but more directly relevant to current and future housing demand. **Table 2.6** presents data on household trends by age cohort.

**Table 2.6 Upper Dublin Households by Age of Householder: 2000, 2009 and 2014**



Source: ESRI; RES

**Household Size**

The 2009 average household size in Upper Dublin is estimated to be 2.73 persons, down slightly from the 2.78 person figure reported in the 2000 Census. An aging population can result in decreases in average household size over time. The 2009 average household size for Montgomery County as a whole is estimated to be 2.52 persons.

**Racial Profile**

The 2009 population of Upper Dublin Township, like that of Montgomery County as a whole, is estimated to be more than 82 percent white. Asians represent the Township’s largest minority population at 9.8 percent, a significantly higher proportion than seen in the County or the Commonwealth as a whole. The Asian population is growing as a percentage of Upper Dublin residents. In 2000, Asians represented only 6.2 percent of the Township population. The African-American community also has seen modest growth from 2000, when this segment totaled 5.4 percent of Upper Dublin residents; in 2009 blacks are estimated to make up 6.5 percent of the municipal population.

Persons of Hispanic/Latino origin – 1.2 percent of Upper Dublin residents – represent a smaller proportion of the Township’s population compared with either the County or Pennsylvania overall. **Table 2.7** presents the 2009 population distribution by major race classifications as well as Hispanic/Latino origin (of any race) for the Township, Montgomery County and the Commonwealth.

**Table 2.7 Population Distribution by Selected Race Classification and Hispanic/Latino Origin: 2009 Estimate**

Jurisdiction	White Alone	Black Alone	Asian Alone	Hispanic or Latino Origin
Upper Dublin	82.7%	6.5%	9.8%	1.2%
Montgomery County	82.6%	8.8%	6.1%	2.7%
Pennsylvania	83.2%	10.7%	2.6%	4.2%

Source: ESRI; RES

NOTE: Persons of Hispanic/Latino origin can be of any race.

**Housing Trends**

Housing construction peaked in Upper Dublin Township in the 1960s, when nearly 2,100 housing units were built in the municipality. Significant residential construction activity continued through the 1990s. At this time, the Township is largely built out; thus, relatively few housing units have been added to Upper Dublin’s inventory subsequent to the figures reported in the 2000 Census (**Table 2.8**). The median year built for housing units in Upper Dublin is 1969.

**Table 2.8 Upper Dublin Housing Units by Year Structure Built**

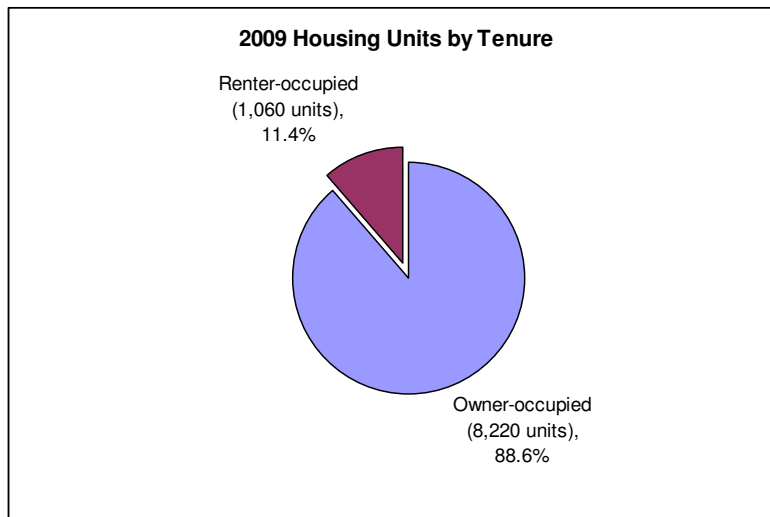
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,502</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
1999 to 2008 (est.)	255	2.7%
1990 to 1998	1,076	11.3%
1980 to 1989	1,604	16.9%
1970 to 1979	1,658	17.4%
1960 to 1969	2,098	22.1%
1940 to 1959	1,765	18.6%
1939 or earlier	1,046	11.0%

Source: 2000 US Census; ESRI; RES

Housing condition in the Township is generally good to excellent, with less than one percent of the inventory registering indications of substandard conditions in the 2000 Census. As a result of the well-maintained housing stock and the overall desirability of the community, housing vacancy is very low. The 2000 Census reported a residential vacancy rate of 1.8 percent for Upper Dublin; ESRI estimated a 2.3 percent rate in 2009.

A small proportion of Upper Dublin's housing stock predates the suburbanization boom. Eleven percent of the inventory was built prior to 1939; and a number of these structures are of historic interest and/or significance.

**Table 2.9 Upper Dublin Housing Units by Tenure: 2009 Estimate**



Source: ESRI; RES

Upper Dublin has a very high homeownership rate. In 2009, an estimated 88.6 percent of occupied units are owner-occupied while the remaining 11.4 percent are renter-occupied (**Figure 2.9**). In contrast, 26.5 percent of Montgomery County occupied housing units overall are renter-occupied.

### Housing Stock

The housing stock in Upper Dublin Township is comprised primarily of single-family detached dwelling units. According to 2000 Census data, single-family detached homes made up approximately three-quarters of the total inventory. Another 15 percent of residential units in the Township are townhouse units. Multifamily buildings make up only 11 percent of Upper Dublin's existing housing stock. **Table 2.10** presents the distribution of housing types in Upper Dublin reported in the 2000 Census.

**Table 2.10 Upper Dublin Housing Units by Type: 2000**

Type of Housing	Number	Percent
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>9,344</b>	<b>100.0</b>
1-unit, detached	6,937	74.2
1-unit, attached	1,378	14.7
2 units	140	1.5
3 or 4 units	131	1.4
5 to 9 units	232	2.5
10 to 19 units	217	2.3
20 or more units	302	3.2
Mobile home	7	0.1
Boat, RV, van, etc.	-	0

Source: 2000 US Census

The average sales price of a home in Upper Dublin was \$401,130 in 2008, up from an average of \$241,865 in 2000.

**Household Income**

Upper Dublin is an affluent community. At \$102,420, the Township’s 2009 estimated median household income is 28 percent higher than Montgomery County’s median and 92 percent higher than the Pennsylvania state household median income. (Table 2.11) The difference between 2009 average household income levels (a measure analyzed by retailers and other businesses evaluating a community’s purchasing power) is even more significant. The figure for Upper Dublin is 39 percent higher than the County average and 114 percent higher than the statewide figure.

**Table 2.11 Household Income Characteristics: 2000 Census & 2009 Estimates**

	2000 Census	2009 Estimate	Percent Change 2000 - 2009
<b>Upper Dublin Township</b>			
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$78,791</b>	<b>\$102,420</b>	<b>30.0%</b>
<b>Average Household Income</b>	<b>\$105,902</b>	<b>\$143,801</b>	<b>35.8%</b>
Montgomery County			
Median Household Income	\$60,868	\$80,212	31.8%
Average Household Income	\$79,813	\$103,260	29.4%
Pennsylvania			
Median Household Income	\$40,108	\$53,225	32.7%
Average Household Income	\$52,682	\$67,138	27.4%

Source: 2000 US Census; ESRI; RES

Income growth in all three jurisdictions profiled in Table 2.11 exceeded the 23.8 percent growth in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) between 2000 and 2009 signaling real, rather than nominal, increases in wealth and purchasing power.

Between 2000 and 2009, the average household income in the Township has grown at a more rapid rate than the median income suggesting that income growth in the Township is not evenly distributed; rather it is occurring more rapidly for households at the higher end of the income distribution. Table 2.12 presents data on household income distribution in Upper Dublin Township.

**Table 2.12 Upper Dublin Households by Income: 2000 Census & 2009 Estimates**

Household Income	2000		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
< \$15,000	453	4.9%	262	2.8%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	579	6.3%	314	3.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	571	6.2%	442	4.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1,105	12.0%	635	6.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,636	17.8%	1,442	15.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1,295	14.1%	1,418	15.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1,592	17.3%	2,083	22.4%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	897	9.8%	1,008	10.9%
\$200,000+	1,063	11.6%	1,676	18.1%

Source: 2000 US Census; ESRI

### Educational Attainment

The adult population in Upper Dublin Township is highly educated. Over 62 percent of Upper Dublin adults ages 25 and over have earned a bachelor's degree. Only 42.4 percent of Montgomery County adults and 25.3 percent of Pennsylvania adults statewide have attained this level of education. (Table 2.13) Only five percent of Upper Dublin adults do not hold a high school diploma.

**Table 2.13 Population Age 25+, Distribution by Educational Attainment: 2009 Estimates**

	Upper Dublin Township	Montgomery County	Pennsylvania
Less than 9th Grade	1.8%	2.2%	4.1%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	3.2%	6.2%	9.7%
High School Graduate	16.0%	26.7%	38.8%
Some College, No Degree	10.8%	15.5%	15.1%
Associate Degree	6.2%	6.9%	7.0%
Bachelor's Degree	33.9%	25.1%	15.7%
Graduate/Professional Degree	28.2%	17.3%	9.6%

Source: ESRI

The educational profile of a community's residents is a key factor for many businesses in evaluating potential location opportunities. For businesses employing highly skilled technical and knowledge workers, Upper Dublin's profile is ideal. However, businesses that rely on a large pool of semi-skilled labor would face challenges attracting workers to a location in the Township.

### Labor Force and Employment

The overall labor force in Upper Dublin has shrunk from a peak of just over 15,000 in 1997 to a 2008 level of 13,864, primarily as a result of aging and retirement as well as the tendency during strong economic periods for married couple families with younger children to have one parent opt out of the workforce to serve as homemaker and caregiver. Employment levels also peaked in 1997 but have remained in the 13,150 to 13,450 range from 2000 through 2008.

**Table 2.14 Upper Dublin Labor Force and Employment: 1991 - 2008**

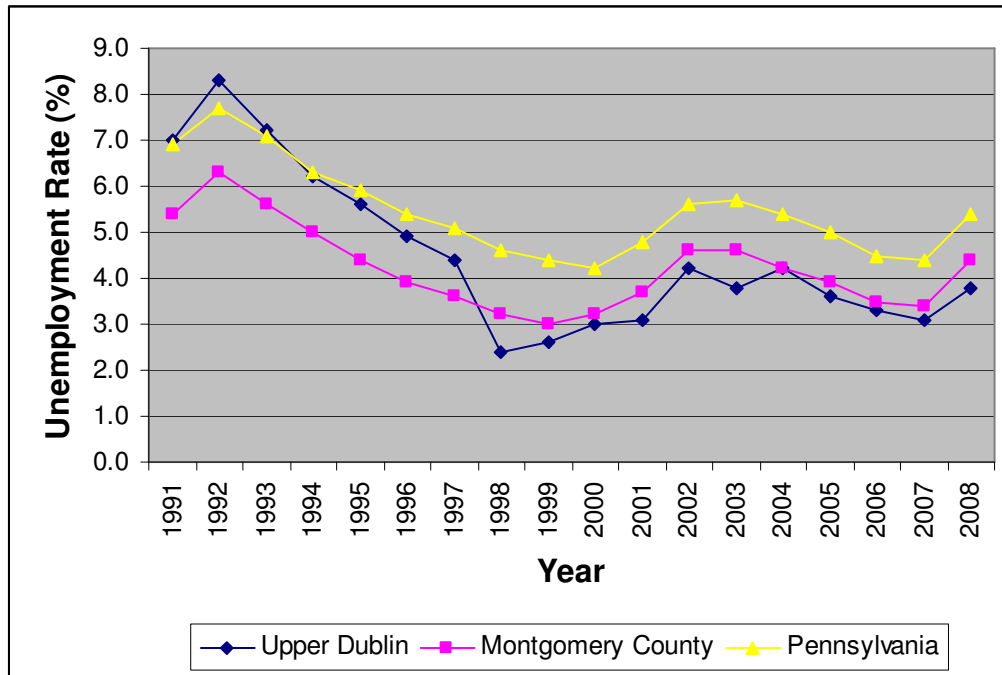
Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	
			Unemployment	Rate (%)
1991	14,512	13,495	1,017	7.0
1992	14,747	13,516	1,231	8.3
1993	14,082	13,071	1,011	7.2
1994	14,153	13,270	883	6.2
1995	14,202	13,406	796	5.6
1996	14,594	13,881	713	4.9
1997	15,017	14,349	668	4.4
1998	14,369	14,020	349	2.4
1999	14,576	14,196	380	2.6
2000	13,564	13,163	401	3.0
2001	13,888	13,451	437	3.1
2002	14,023	13,437	586	4.2
2003	13,774	13,255	519	3.8
2004	13,763	13,188	575	4.2
2005	13,764	13,271	493	3.6
2006	13,747	13,299	448	3.3
2007	13,689	13,261	428	3.1
2008	13,864	13,342	522	3.8

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

NOTE: Data are not seasonally adjusted. Beginning in 2004, Pennsylvania revised its labor force estimation and modeling methodology.

Since 1998, the unemployment rate in Upper Dublin has consistently trended below Montgomery County and Pennsylvania statewide levels (**Table 2.15**). It is likely that the unemployment rate for all three jurisdictions will trend higher in 2009 and subsequent years, both as a result of job losses due to the current recession and the reentry into the workforce of both stay-at-home parents and seniors concerned about shrinking retirement accounts.

**Table 2.15 Unemployment Rate Trends: 1991 - 2008**



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

NOTE: Data are not seasonally adjusted. Beginning in 2004, Pennsylvania revised its labor force estimation and modeling methodology.

The Upper Dublin labor force is comprised primarily of white collar employees. This occupational category represents over 86 percent of employed Township residents. (Table 2.16) Nearly 40 percent of Upper Dublin employed residents hold professional positions, and another 22 percent are employed in business management or finance occupations. Service workers – such as hotel and restaurant workers and building maintenance and security personnel – represent 7.2 percent of the Upper Dublin labor force, while the remaining 6.5 percent is comprised of workers in blue collar occupations.

**Table 2.16 Upper Dublin Employed Residents by Occupation Type: 2009 Estimates**

<b>White Collar</b>	<b>86.3%</b>
Management/Business/Financial	22.0%
Professional	39.7%
Sales	13.9%
Administrative Support	10.5%
<b>Services</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
<b>Blue Collar</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	0.1%
Construction/Extraction	2.3%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	1.1%
Production	1.5%
Transportation/Material Moving	1.6%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI

### Industry Mix

The business establishments that are located in Upper Dublin are heavily concentrated in services and financial industry classifications, although manufacturing is more strongly represented than is typical in the many of the area's suburban communities. **Table 2.17** presents the distribution of businesses and employment in the Township by NAICS sector, ranked by number of employees. Professional, scientific and technical services is the dominant economic sector, both in terms of the number of businesses (202) and the number of persons employed at those establishments (2,242). This sector represents nearly 17 percent of workers employed in Upper Dublin. The educational services, health care, and finance and insurance sectors, each accounted for more than 10 percent of employment in the Township in 2008. The manufacturing sector is the second largest employer in Upper Dublin, accounting for more than 1,400 workers employed in the Township.

**Table 2.17 Businesses by NAICS Sector: 2008**

Upper Dublin Township				
	Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	202	15.3%	2,242	16.7%
Manufacturing	38	2.9%	1,444	10.8%
Educational Services	32	2.4%	1,452	10.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	168	12.7%	1,438	10.7%
Finance and Insurance	111	8.4%	1,426	10.6%
Retail Trade	141	10.7%	1,052	7.9%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	110	8.3%	821	6.1%
Information	36	2.7%	749	5.6%
Wholesale Trade	61	4.6%	659	4.9%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	77	5.8%	490	3.7%
Construction	119	9.0%	430	3.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	47	3.6%	426	3.2%
Public Administration	16	1.2%	280	2.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	21	1.6%	258	1.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	43	3.3%	177	1.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	16	1.2%	37	0.3%
Unclassified Establishments	76	5.8%	14	0.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3	0.2%	1	0.0%
Mining	1	0.1%	3	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Totals	1318	100.0%	13,399	100.0%

Source: InfoUSA; ESRI; RES

### Real Estate Market Conditions

The following sections provide basic information regarding the existing and projected real estate market conditions within which various uses in Upper Dublin compete. Data are drawn from

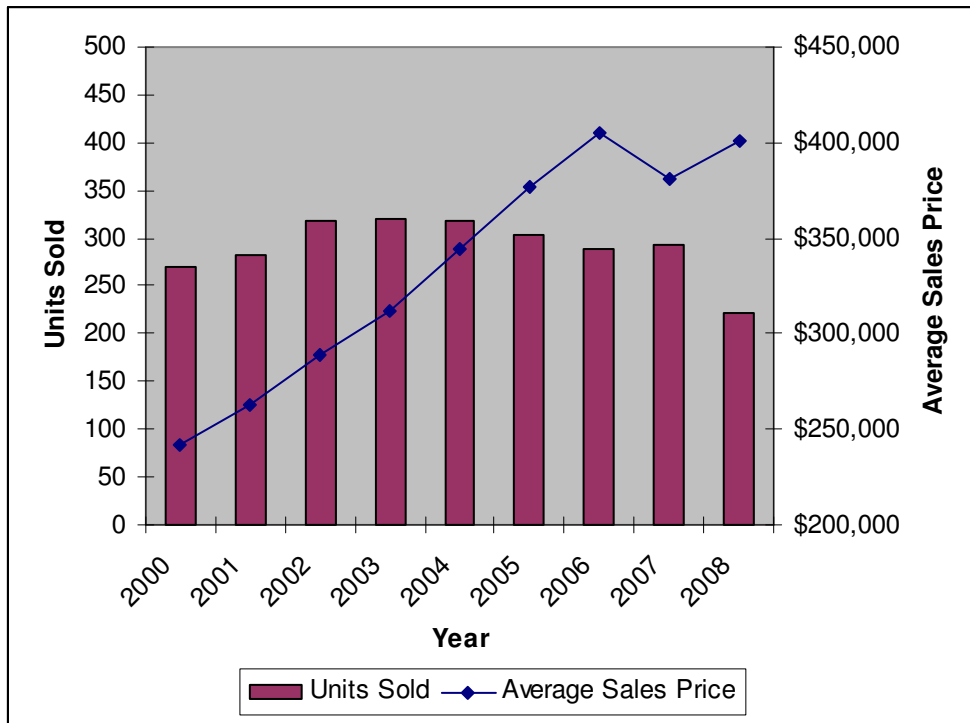
several proprietary services including the TREND residential multiple listing service (MLS) as well as REIS, a commercial real estate data vendor.

**Residential Market**

According to data from the Federal Housing Finance Agency House Price Index (HPI), the average annual home price appreciation in the Philadelphia metropolitan statistical area (MSA) between 2000 and 2008 was 8.6 percent. A review of TREND MLS data indicates that the average home sales price in Upper Dublin increased at an average annual rate of 6.5 percent between 2000 and 2008. These two sources are based on different methodologies and are not directly comparable, but together indicate that Upper Dublin homeowners have enjoyed significant price appreciation over most of the last decade.

**Figure 2.18** presents TREND MLS data on sales volume and average home sales price trends in the Township since 2000. Between 2000 and 2008, the number of Upper Dublin home sales reported on TREND (which captures the majority of arms length transactions) averaged 290 annually. The average sales price for 2008 was \$401, 130.

**Table 2.18 Upper Dublin Residential Sales and Average Sales Price: 2000 - 2008**



Source: TREND MLS: RES

There are few multi-family rental buildings in Upper Dublin, although at least one property, The Woods, is located proximate to the Temple Ambler campus in the northern part of the Township. REIS includes the Township in the “Moreland/Abington/Upper Dublin” submarket and tracks 8,993 apartment units in this area. This level of inventory has remained flat since 2005; no additions to supply are anticipated through 2013.

REIS data and projections indicate that the average annual apartment vacancy rate in this submarket between 1995 and 2008 was 4.9 percent indicating balanced supply and demand. The current recession has led to some softening in the local apartment market. Vacancies are projected to peak at 10 percent in 2010 before trending downward to a projected 6.3 percent by 2013. The 2008 weighted average asking rent for apartments in the Moreland/Abington/Upper Dublin submarket was \$1,230.

Developers are beginning to target Upper Dublin for senior housing projects. The ACTS Fort Washington Estates complex on Susquehanna Road is a continuing care retirement community. BET is developing Dublin Terrace, a 192- unit active adult rental community at S. Limekiln Pike and Dreshertown Road.

**Retail Market**

Retail supply in Upper Dublin Township is concentrated in four older neighborhood shopping centers with a collective total gross leasable area of approximately 286,000 square feet. Each center is anchored by a grocery store; three of the four also have a separate pharmacy tenant. The shopping centers range in age from nearly 35 to nearly 50 years old. While the Upper Dublin Shopping Center has been improved with an updated façade, the other three shopping centers appear worn and need significant capital improvements in order to retain existing stores and upgrade their tenant mix. **Table 2.19** summarizes information on the four shopping centers.

**Table 2.19 Existing Shopping Centers in Upper Dublin Township**

<b>Shopping Center</b>	<b>Gross Leasable Square Feet</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Anchors</b>
Dreshertown Plaza 1650 Limekiln Pike Dresher 19025	97,000	1975	Shop & Bag, Rite Aid
Fairway Shopping Center 1825 Limekiln Pike Dresher 19025	41,220	1960	Acme
Upper Dublin Shopping Center 3622 Welsh Road Willow Grove 19090	90,554	1964	SuperFresh, Rite Aid
Maple Glen Shopping Center 1925 Norristown Road Ambler 19002	57,200	1969	Genuardis
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>285,974</b>		

Source: REIS

According to REIS, rental rates for anchor tenants at these properties range from \$15 to \$20 per square foot while non-anchor rents range from \$19 to \$30. Dreshertown Plaza and Fairway

Shopping Center have space available while Maple Glen and Upper Dublin Shopping Centers are fully leased.

Willow Grove Pointe is a new power center located across the township line in Lower Moreland at 3900 Welsh Road. This shopping center is anchored by a Lowes and Sam's Club and includes 65,000 square feet of in-line and pad retail. A Walmart is located behind this center. The proximity of these types of big box tenants on the periphery of the Township as well as the accessibility of major malls in Willow Grove and King of Prussia draw shoppers out of Upper Dublin.

ESRI estimates indicate that the average Upper Dublin household expenditure on retail goods will total almost \$49,200 in 2009. Upper Dublin residents spend 91 percent more than the average US household on retail goods including:

- 40 percent more than the US average on apparel and personal services
- 107 percent more on entertainment and recreation
- 92 percent more on food away from home
- 89 percent more on household furnishings

Given the basic nature of most of the retail establishments located in Upper Dublin, a significant portion of these expenditures are leaking out of the Township to establishments in surrounding communities. Better quality stores and restaurants located in upgraded, accessible shopping environments should be able to capture some of the spending potential that is currently flowing to establishments outside of Upper Dublin. Furthermore, the more than 13,000 workers employed in the Township have few options for dining. This type of amenity is becoming more important to prospective office tenants and will be critical to the future competitive position of the Fort Washington Office Center and Prudential Business Campus.

Given the amount of existing retail space in surrounding communities, it is unlikely that major retail development could be supported in Upper Dublin. Policies that encourage upgrading the existing supply of space and accommodating limited additions to supply in selected locations would be appropriate given overall retail market dynamics in the area. Entertainment and recreational offerings are underrepresented in the Township and could be another development option for areas of the Township zoned for commercial and business activities.

### **Office Market**

Office space in Upper Dublin is generally classified as part of the submarket that also includes Horsham and Upper Moreland Townships. Some brokerage firms break out Fort Washington as a distinct submarket from Horsham/Willow Grove.

Commercial brokerage firm Grubb & Ellis reports that Class A asking rents in Fort Washington averaged \$24.63 in the first quarter of 2009; Fort Washington Class B asking rents averaged \$22.18. According to REIS, deep concessions in the office market are resulting in effective rental rates that are only 75 to 80 percent of the asking rents. This situation is projected to persist over the next five years.

The overall vacancy rate in the first quarter of 2009 in the Fort Washington submarket was 21.6 percent compared with 16.8 percent for the Pennsylvania portion of the Philadelphia suburbs. Other northern suburban submarkets also have increasing space availability: The current Horsham/Willow Grove submarket vacancy rate is 22.1 percent, and the Jenkintown submarket vacancy rate is 22.2 percent. Blue Bell/Plymouth Meeting office space is 20.2 percent vacant. The credit crisis and related recession has affected companies in the financial sector disproportionately and this has caused retrenchment in the northern suburban office submarkets.

There is no new office space under construction in the Fort Washington submarket. The premium between Class A and Class B rents has been compressed, however, giving tenants the opportunity to upgrade space within the existing inventory. According to REIS, substantial net positive absorption is not projected to occur in the submarket until 2011, although vacancy rates will not moderate immediately.

The document entitled *Assessment of Market and Development Potential of Fort Washington Office Center* prepared by Coleshill Associates for inclusion in the Revitalization Plan for the Fort Washington Office Park presents an excellent overview of overarching trends in the office market that will affect both the redevelopment potential of the Fort Washington Office Center as well as potential development at the Prudential Business Campus. This report also provides an extensive review of competitive submarkets in both the Philadelphia suburbs and the Central Business District. This report was finalized prior to the fall 2008 credit crisis, but many of its findings continue to be relevant in the longer term. As Coleshill Associates notes: Mixed use, accessible (including by transit), "green," amenity rich campuses will be important tools for competitive advantage in the suburban office market moving forward. Mixed industrial and office environments will be at a disadvantage.

It is unlikely that the office market will fully absorb existing vacancies within the next five years. The current soft office market conditions and multi-year recover timeframe present the time and opportunity to Upper Dublin to plan and act strategically to capture office demand when the market recovers.

### ***Industrial Market***

Light industrial/flex space in Fort Washington competes within the broader Montgomery County industrial submarket. The County has an existing inventory of nearly 70 million square feet of warehouse, manufacturing, flex and research & development (R&D) space. Grubb & Ellis reports that the 2009 Q1 industrial vacancy rate in Montgomery County has risen to 9.8 percent. Rental rates average \$3.73 triple net for warehouse space and \$8.87 triple net for flex/R&D space.

The Fort Washington Office Park enjoys good access to both east-west and north-south highways, however with the presence of substantial numbers of office workers commuting to and from the area, the park is not ideal for truck access to major distribution operations. Distribution and manufacturing buildings also have a more rapid cycle of obsolescence when compared to office space. The labor pool in and around Upper Dublin also suggests that the most appropriate use of commercial and industrially zoned land in the Township would be office and potentially R&D space.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Upper Dublin is an affluent, stable suburban community with a solid employment base and a very well-educated workforce. The most significant demographic trend is the aging of the Township's population and, ultimately, of a major portion of its housing stock over the timeframe of this Comprehensive Plan.

Upper Dublin's housing inventory offers few options for households desiring low-maintenance living options or seniors looking for one-story living. At the same time, the community has an excellent education system that will continue to attract families with children to Upper Dublin, and this household type is well-matched to the existing housing stock. Seniors wishing to sell their homes and move either within or outside of the municipality should be able to find willing buyers. The Township needs to address at a policy level whether Upper Dublin is a community where seniors can age in place or whether it will primarily serve households during the child-rearing and active adult life stages.

The significant proportion of Upper Dublin's housing stock that was built in the 1960s and 1970s will continue to age over the next two decades. Although Upper Dublin households generally have the financial resources to adequately maintain their homes, the Township should consider strategies to maintain neighborhood quality over time, including policies related to tear-downs of older, functionally obsolete units and subsequent infill construction.

The Upper Dublin economic base is generally well-diversified and offers significant employment opportunities for workers with the college degrees. As a result, Township residents are able to find employment opportunities in their local community, and this fact will continue to attract households to Upper Dublin. In order for Upper Dublin to retain existing professional businesses and service establishments in the decades to come., the Township must address the changing needs and preferences of businesses and attract restaurants, goods and services that employees need.

### Section 3. Land Use

Upper Dublin Township is largely built out. According to Montgomery County Tax Assessor’s data, developed land accounts for 95 percent of total acreage. A breakdown of existing land use is shown on the **Table 3.1** below.

**Table 3.1 Existing Land Use**

Existing Land Use	Parcels	Percent of Parcels	Acres	Percent of Acreage
Single Family Residential	8,651	89.0%	4,282	56.4%
Multi-Family Residential	162	1.7%	95	1.3%
Institutional	207	2.1%	1,302	17.1%
Commercial	219	2.3%	700	9.2%
Open Space/Recreation	97	1.9%	585	7.7%
Vacant	279	2.9%	346	4.6%
Industrial	39	0.4%	183	2.4%
Utility	33	0.3%	94	1.2%
Not Classified*	34	0.3%	7	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,721</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,593</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* The land use for these parcels is not identified in the Montgomery County Tax Assessor’s database and will need to be field verified.

As evident from **Table 3.1** and in **Figure 3.1**, the primary land use in the Township is residential constituting approximately 58 percent of the total land area of the Township. Within this use category, the majority is single-family detached units. Multi-family development represents a very small proportion of the total residential use in Upper Dublin. The next largest category is institutional uses with 17 percent. This includes uses like school facilities, public buildings, churches and the Temple Ambler campus. About 9 percent of the total land area is in commercial use (retail or office), and public and private open spaces combined represent about 8 percent of the total land area. With only about 5 percent of land in Upper Dublin vacant, the Township is essentially built out.

Looking to the future, a common theme during the stakeholder interviews conducted for the Comprehensive Plan was the need to balance the tax base, with many stating that the current mix of land uses relies too heavily on single-family residential. While nearly all stakeholders identified reinvestment in the Fort Washington Office Park as critical, there was less agreement on other strategies to balance the tax base. With so little vacant land remaining, tax balancing strategies will rely largely on reinvestment in commercial districts and the Fort Washington Office Park, along with a strategic approach to development of remaining vacant land.

A review of the Township’s Zoning Ordinance and Map reveals a strict approach to managing specific uses and locations for commercial/retail development. It would not be difficult to make the case of “spot zoning” for a number of commercial sites if someone were to challenge the zoning. Such an approach is often perceived of as protecting a community from negative change, but the inherent inflexibility – or need to obtain major variances or zoning changes – can discourage new development and ultimately result in disinvestment. The Comprehensive Plan needs to consider changes to the Zoning Ordinance that will make it consistent with modern development patterns in a manner that protects community vision and values.

Other zoning issues that could be considered in the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Managing traffic impacts on residentially zoned properties located along major traffic corridors – for existing homes, options could include more liberal home occupation standards or permitting limited office uses. Another option could include classifying local roadways by what types of uses can be located on them.
- Adaptive reuse standards for historic homes – Many larger historic homes are expensive to maintain. Limited office or institutional uses for such homes could make it more economically feasible to reinvest in them. Any proposal for non-residential adaptive reuse would need to include use and performance standards to limit impacts to surrounding residential development.
- Infill development – As a largely built-out community, an increasing proportion of new development will come from infill. The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances need to be able to effectively manage development on parcels that may be “challenged” by factors related to issues such as size, location, access or adjacent uses.
- Redevelopment – Many of the Township’s commercial areas require reinvestment and/or redevelopment. The Comprehensive Plan will need to be able to provide policy direction on standards for redevelopment.
- Zoning for remaining vacant land – Recent development applications including residential development proposals at the Prudential Office Campus and Celebration at Upper Dublin indicate an uncertainty to the best use of key parcels of remaining vacant land.
- Overlay Districts – The Township has several overlay districts in its Zoning Ordinance, some those intended to implement local community plans including:
  - Dreshertown Triangle Plan
  - Jarrettown Action Plan
  - Maple Glen Master Plan
  - Fort Washington Village Master Plan

While the scope, scale and specific uses for desired future development in each of the plans vary, a key theme is the need to create pedestrian-friendly centers within the Township. Some, particularly the Dresher Overlay and the Maple Glen Overlay, have not been successful in facilitating the development patterns desired in their respective plans. Understanding the “disconnect” between the community’s vision as expressed in a master plan and its potential for implementation through the zoning and development process will be an important issue for the Comprehensive Plan.

Another critical land use issue for the Township, is that the Temple Ambler campus is likely to make changes to its existing campus in the short to medium term. State budget cuts make it likely that most current campus programs will move to Center City Philadelphia. Adult learning programs currently renting space in the Fort Washington Office Park will likely move to the

Ambler Campus, which is not currently well-designed for this use. The University is likely to seek to redevelop portions of the campus to make it work better. Options could include structuring parking to provide spaces closer to classrooms, which would free up the current parking lot for redevelopment. Development of a bio-tech campus would be possible in partnership with a private firm. Such an approach could create revenues to the University and ratables for the township.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

As Upper Dublin nears 100 percent build out, infill and redevelopment will become the drivers of future investment and tax ratables. As such, the Township will need to develop the zoning and other policy tools to encourage reinvestment in and redevelopment of underutilized and/or underperforming properties. As noted in the economic analysis, the Township's commercial districts, particularly the Dresher Triangle area, the Maple Glen Shopping Center and the Fairway Shopping Center on Limekiln Pike need significant capital investments. To facilitate investment, the Township needs to seek clarity on community desires for future development to remove roadblocks to reinvestment and to assist community groups in implementing identified vision plans.

Planning for the use of remaining large parcels of vacant land is another important land use issue for the Township. This includes the Prudential Office Campus described above, but should also consider the community's desired future for the two privately-owned golf courses located in Upper Dublin. There are 16 golf courses in the area immediately surrounding the Township, including the three located here, and changes to the economics of the sport make it unlikely that the area can continue to support all 16 courses. A proactive strategy for preserving the courses in some kind of recreational use or a development strategy compatible with community goals and objectives would protect community interests into the future.

Implementation of the Fort Washington Office Park Plan is now and should remain a top priority for the Township moving forward. The Township is making good progress with outreach to Office Park property owners and public sector funders and has begun design of critical stormwater and transportation improvements to become eligible for federal stimulus funding.

Other important issues from a land use perspective include engaging Temple Ambler early in its planning for potential new uses on the campus and a comprehensive review and revision of the Township Zoning Ordinance.

## **Section 4. Physical Features and Natural Resources<sup>2</sup>**

Upper Dublin Township has made major investments in protecting its open space and natural resources. Its 2005 Open Space and Environmental Protection Plan has inventoried resources located in the Township and laid out an aggressive strategy for protection of vulnerable resources. The following summarizes the physical and natural features as described in Upper Dublin's Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan. Understanding where these vulnerable resources are, and their relationship and context in the surrounding community, is a key factor in determining how they may be protected and preserved in the future.

### **Geology**

The foundation of physical conditions in the environment is the bedrock geology. The rock characteristics and weathering directly affect soil conditions, landforms, surface water and groundwater movement and chemistry, and plant and animal life that can inhabit a region. The geology that under lays Upper Dublin Township is relatively simple and is typical of the Piedmont Uplands and the Triassic Lowlands. The upland rocks are older, harder metamorphic and igneous rocks such as granite and schist with incorporated bands of carbonate rock such as limestone as evidenced by the quarries and kilns in the region.

In Upper Dublin, the hard, weather-resistant formations found in the southeast corner of the Township, define the ridge that roughly follows Camp Hill Road, Dreshertown Road and Twining Road east of the PA Turnpike. These rocks are found in two assemblages or formations: Chickies Quartzite and Quartz Schist, and Wissahickon Schist, Granite Gneiss and Hornblende Gneiss. The former are very hard rocks formed from sandstone that weathers slowly, have very little available groundwater, and commonly form steep hillsides. The schist of the latter formation is less hard and more weathered at the surface. Like the quartz and quartzite, the granite and hornblende gneisses are hard and weather-resistant resulting in steep hillsides.

Adjacent to these two formations and located at the extreme south corner of the Township are an assemblage of rocks called Ledger Dolomite, Elbrook, and Conestoga Limestone. The topography in this geology is flatter and found within broader valleys with characteristic limestone soils that are fertile and have good groundwater storage and yields. Many of these areas have been quarried for building materials.

The balance of the Township from the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the municipal borders of Lower Gwynedd and Horsham Townships is a geologic formation called Stockton Sandstone, Conglomerate and Shale that is typical of the Triassic Lowlands. The composition is largely sandstone with good groundwater supplies, and the landform is commonly rolling with gentle slopes.

### **Soils**

All soils are formed from the natural weathering of rock, and the associated characteristics are directly related to this parent or geologic material. The soils of the most concern from an

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<sup>2</sup> The Upper Dublin 2005 Open Space Plan "Physical and Natural" description pp. 4-1 to 4-2 was used to prepare this section.

environmental point of view are those referred to as hydric and alluvial. The hydric soils are routinely wet with poor drainage and are indicators of shallow water tables (groundwater near the surface) and the presence of wetlands. They are commonly found in low-lying areas. Wetlands have wildlife and water protection values. To minimize potential development impacts such as loss due to filling, the state and federal governments regulate some of them. In Upper Dublin Township, these soils are found throughout the municipality, in both large and small isolated pockets and within linear corridors.

Alluvial soils also are commonly wet soils as they are deposited by floodwaters as a result of storms. These soils are most often found in and are indicative of the limits of the floodplains. Alluvial soils are distributed throughout the Township in isolated areas and in corridors that coincide with streams and their floodplains.

### **Hydrology**

Upper Dublin Township lies primarily within the Wissahickon Creek watershed with numerous smaller streams or tributaries that join this waterway on route to the Schuylkill River. The exception is the northern corner of the Township in the Maple Glen area, which is at the edge of the Little Neshaminy Creek and Pennypack Creek watersheds. Water flows to these creeks in neighboring townships en route to the Delaware River. A small stretch of the Wissahickon Creek flows through Upper Dublin in the far west corner, west of Ambler. Upper Dublin constitutes approximately 20 percent of the total Wissahickon watershed. Most of Upper Dublin drains by tributaries to the Wissahickon Creek. These tributaries generally flow east to west and include the following: Sandy Run, Small Run, Pine Run, Rapp Run (the latter three join the Sandy Run), Honey Run, Tannery Run and Rose Valley Run (which join the Wissahickon Creek).

Each of these creeks and streams has associated with it a floodway and floodplain. The floodplains extend beyond the banks of the watercourse and to variable distances depending on flow and the adjacent topography. Protection of floodplains reduces damage and flooding, and it helps maintain water quality and preserve wildlife habitat.

The floodplain areas of greatest concern for protection and for limited development are those portions identified as the 100-year floodplain – the area that commonly floods with the 100-year storm event. These are shown on **Figure 4.1** and are mapped by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) for the Federal Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Program. The current mapping was revised in 1996 and subsequently in areas around the Pennsylvania Turnpike Interchange at Fort Washington in 2003. Extensive floodplain map updates resulting from the Fort Washington Office Park Revitalization Plan are under final review at FEMA. **Figure 4.1** also identifies watershed boundaries and wetlands.

### **Woodlands & Wetlands**

Woodlands and wetlands exist throughout Upper Dublin. Each can enhance the quality of the environment as they protect against erosion, sustain high water quality and quantity, provide wildlife habitat, improve air quality, moderate temperatures, provide visual and physical buffers, and offer a varied aesthetic and visual relief from developed land.

The remaining woodlands in the Township occupy both wet lowland sites and steep hillsides. The upland woods are dominated by deciduous hardwood species such as oak, hickory, ash and tulip poplars. Wooded slopes provide the best protection from erosion and rapid runoff. Lowland woodlands often have species such as maples, sycamore, elm, cherry, box elder and birch that inhabit wet conditions. Wetlands are commonly found in isolated pockets, along stream corridors and in floodplains; and range in type from wooded swamps to reed and cattail marshes. State and federal laws protect larger wetlands, and the Township has enacted ordinances that protect all woodland by limiting the clearing of trees and requiring replacement and landscape supplements. Maintaining these natural assemblages in contiguous units with minimal fragmentation enhances their value.

### **Physiography**

Landform or physiography is determined by the topography of the area. It is commonly shown on maps as contour lines and can be used to depict areas that are flat, rolling or steep. Those areas that are steep are among the most environmentally sensitive and when disturbed, result in impacts such as erosion of soils and rapid runoff of precipitation and consequential flooding down slope. Upper Dublin is sensitive to accelerated runoff due to low-lying areas that regularly flood.

The majority of the Township north and west of the Pennsylvania Turnpike has flat to rolling topography. Steep slopes are characteristic of the primary ridge that runs east-west and parallel to the Turnpike through much of the southern part of the Township. Slopes that are 15 percent and more are those of greatest concern and are shown on **Figure 4.2**. The Township has enacted steep slope and tree protection/replacement ordinances to help preserve these sensitive areas. Undeveloped areas that are steeply sloping and covered with woodland are prime candidates for future protection.

### **Stormwater Management**

Pennsylvania's NPDES storm water program establishes permitting requirements for construction sites disturbing more than one acre, industrial sites, and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). Upper Dublin Township has an MS4 permit and is required to implement a stormwater management program consisting of six minimum control measures.

In September 2004, the Upper Dublin Township Board of Commissioners adopted revisions to the its Stormwater Management Regulations to bring the regulations into conformance with current MS4 program requirements. The revised ordinances amended the Stormwater Management Regulations contained in the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances as well as the Watercourses Chapter and the Stormwater Management Chapter.

In addition to regulation, stormwater management is an important consideration for open space acquisition, and the Township has capitalized on opportunities to increase stormwater runoff storage capacity on open space parcels it owns. Floodplain restoration and improved stormwater management are major elements of the Fort Washington Office Park Revitalization Plan.

### **Fort Washington Office Park<sup>3</sup>**

The Fort Washington Office Park is a critical economic resource for Upper Dublin Township, yet it faces significant environmental challenges that threaten its viability if not addressed in relatively near future. Originally built on marshland, the Office Park is crossed by the Sandy Run, Pine Run, Rapp Run and Bodenstein Creek en route to the Wissahickon Creek. A significant portion of the Office Park and its buildings lie in the floodway or 100-year flood plan. Compounding this issue is the absence of stormwater management and the substandard condition of existing roads. The Office Park's flooding is made worse by runoff from surrounding residential communities.

The constant threat of flooding and recent series of significant storm events have resulted in loss of life and damage to buildings and infrastructure, which has resulted in high vacancy rates. A plan for the future of the Office Park was completed by the Temple University Department of Community and Regional Planning. Entitled *Out of the Water | A Revitalization Plan for the Fort Washington Office Park*, the Plan lays out a set of stormwater management, transportation and other improvements needed to transform the Office Park into a vibrant, mixed-use, environmentally sustainable employment center for the Township. In early 2009, Upper Dublin began to actively pursue the partnerships and funding needed to implement the Plan's vision.

### **Upper Dublin Township Environmental Initiatives**

Upper Dublin Township prides itself as an environmental leader and has demonstrated commitment to environmental preservation through a variety of initiatives. In terms of energy resources, the Township purchases 100 percent of its electricity from clean energy sources and has completed a greenhouse gas emissions audit to understand ways the Township, residents and business can reduce their carbon footprint. Upper Dublin is the first municipality in the area to have a RecycleBank, which offers RecycleBank Rewards that can be redeemed for goods and services at area merchants and restaurants.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Upper Dublin Township has made good progress in protecting environmental resources. Logical next steps could include:

- Considering how to integrate environmental stewardship into future planning and development decisions
- Development of a Greenhouse Gas Action Plan
- Continued evaluation of best management practices for stormwater management, including continued protection of open space, but also considering how to provide incentives for (or to require) development practices such as bio-swales, rain gardens and other "natural" stormwater management tools

As the importance of effective stormwater management grows for the township, it will need to consider funding alternatives for improvements and maintenance of facilities. Many communities throughout the country are turning to stormwater authorities as a mechanism to fund the cost of services directly related to the control and treatment of stormwater. An authority is administered and funded separately from the revenues of the general fund, ensuring a dedicated revenue

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<sup>3</sup> *Out of the Water | A Revitalization Plan for the Fort Washington Office Park*

source. Revenues can be generated through sources including service fees, system development charges (connection fees) and special assessment districts. Such authorities are not yet permitted in the Pennsylvania Commonwealth, but legislation is currently pending.

## Section 5. Parks Recreation and Open Space<sup>4</sup>

The mission of the Upper Dublin Township Department of Parks and Recreation is to enrich the lives of residents through recreation, creating natural beauty and maintaining a safe, clean environment. The department has an extensive list of activities that stretches throughout the year. In conjunction with youth sports leagues and the School District, it offers team sports, facility rentals, classes and camps for residents of all ages.

The Township’s 2005 Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan describes Township goals and objectives for recreation and open space and lays out an aggressive implementation strategy for achieving stated goals, which are summarized below:

- Create an open space system that will be a model for responsible land management policies, demonstrating best management practices to preserve and protect the most sensitive and desirable natural and recreation resources;
- Identify and permanently protect land and resources that support the community’s identity, improve quality of life and support activities that foster a healthier public;
- Use trail and greenways to link parks, schools, neighborhoods and natural areas into a continuous network of open space resources; and
- Provide safe access to at least one public neighborhood or community park to satisfy both active and passive recreation needs, as well as a neighborhood or school playground within a half-mile of every Township residence.

The Open Space Plan is indeed a model for effective open space and recreation planning in the region. The Parks and Recreation Department continues to make impressive progress in implementing the plan’s recommendations. In November 2008, Township voters approved a \$30 million bond measure for open space and historical property acquisition to protect vulnerable resources identified in the Plan. With the purchase of the Braccia site and Dillon Road parcel located in the northwest quadrant of the Township, nearly all Upper Dublin homes north of the Turnpike will be within one-half mile of an active recreation facility.

**Table 5.1** list the location of existing recreation facilities in Upper Dublin Township. **Figure 5.1** illustrates the location of parks, open space and existing and planned trails and bike routes.

### 5.1 Recreational Facilities Located in Upper Dublin Township

Aidenn Lair Park	Mondauk Waters / Wentz Pond
Burn Brae Park	North Hills Park & Community Center
Camphill and Highland Athletic Complex (CHAC)	Old Fort Washington Elementary School
EPI-Center/SAUDC	Pine Run Park
Fields of Dreams	Robbins Park
Fort Washington Elementary School	Sandy Run Middle School
Franklin Park	Sheeleigh Park
H.L. Willet Park / Tennis Courts	SPARK-Upper Dublin Sports Park

<sup>4</sup> Upper Dublin Township 2005 Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan

## Upper Dublin Township Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Analysis

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Jarrettown Elementary School	Thomas Fitzwater Elementary School
Loch Alsh Fields	Three Tuns Park / Tennis Courts
Loch Alsh Reservoir	Twining Valley Golf Club
Luther Klosterman Park	Upper Dublin Community Pool / Evelyn B. Wright Park
Maple Glen Elementary School	Upper Dublin High School
Mondauk Common	Upper Dublin Municipal Complex
Mondauk Manor Park / Mon "daug" Bark Park	Veterans Memorial Park

Looking forward, facilities are an important issue for the Parks and Recreation Department. It offers programs at multiple sites in the Township – the EPI-Center, Fort Washington School, and Township Building. There has been some discussion of consolidating facilities to increase operational efficiencies.

Trail connections are a top priority for the Parks and Recreation Department. The Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program has committed \$1.4 million to trail improvements in Upper Dublin, and \$700,000 has already been authorized for expenditure. The current County commitment is expected to fund four out of 17 identified trail segments in the 2005 Open Space Plan.

Another priority for the Parks and Recreation Department is maximizing the impact of open space bond fund acquisitions. The Open Space Plan identified 51 open space parcels as vulnerable to development and prioritized protections for each, placing them in one of four categories (in declining order of importance) “conservation/protection easements,” “action,” “interest” and “watch” depending on their significance to meeting the open space needs and objectives. While this is a somewhat fluid list, care should be taken to focus on primary conservation and recreation needs when purchasing properties or easements.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan has provided a comprehensive set of strategies for protection of sensitive natural and cultural resources and development of a strong recreation network. The Plan is an important guide for open space acquisition decisions. Expansion of the trail network is a high priority and will require funding beyond that currently available through Montgomery County.

The Parks and Recreation Department works closely with the School District, local sports leagues, the library and others to meet recreation programming and facility needs. Continued interdepartmental and inter-agency coordination is needed and will be particularly important to ensure adequate facilities for recreation programs, which may be able to be co-located with the library or other community service locations. Future facilities planning needs to balance cost savings of a single, consolidated location with service benefits of multiple locations, particularly if satellite locations are in areas with limited income and/or access to transportation.

## **Section 6. Transportation**

Mobility and access are important transportation issues for Upper Dublin Township. Transportation infrastructure encompasses all elements that provide for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services and includes roadways, railroads, transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The network of roads within Upper Dublin Township functions well for the most part and the roads are well maintained.

### **Functional Classification**

Functional Classification is the grouping of roads, streets, and highways in a hierarchy based on the type of highway service they provide. Streets and highways do not operate independently. They are part of an interconnected network, and each classification performs a service in moving traffic throughout the system. Generally, streets and highways perform two types of service. They provide either traffic mobility or land access and can be ranked in terms of the proportion of service they perform.

- Arterials provide for high mobility and limited access. Arterials often connect an urban center with outlying communities and employment. Arterials are designed for high volumes of traffic at moderate speeds. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) further classifies arterials as “principal” and “minor.”
- Collectors provide access between local roads and streets with arterials. Collector roads are intended to provide for moderate volumes of traffic at reduced speeds.
- Local access roads provide immediate access to adjoining land uses. Local roads are intended to only provide for transportation within a particular neighborhood, or to one of the other two road types.

As shown in **Figure 6.1**, the functional classification of roads within Upper Dublin Township include: interstate highways, principal arterials, other arterials, collectors and local roads.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike, while it is a roadway that has a large volume of traffic, affects only a portion of the Township due to the interchange located at Route 309 in the Fort Washington area. This interstate highway deposits vehicles onto the local roadway system. The recent addition of a westbound slip ramp off of the Turnpike has helped ease the amount of traffic on Upper Dublin’s local network that primarily is destined for the Fort Washington Office Park. Significant corridors and their functional class as defined by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are shown on **Figure 6.1** and include the following:

#### ***Principal Arterials***

- Route 309
- Butler Pike
- Norristown Road
- Welsh Road

### **Minor Arterials**

- Susquehanna Road
- Limekiln Pike
- Fort Washington Avenue
- Dreshertown Road
- Pennsylvania Avenue
- Bethlehem Pike

### **Major Collectors**

- Tennis Avenue
- Meetinghouse Road
- Highland Road
- Jarrettown Road
- Commerce Drive
- Virginia Drive
- Camphill Road
- North Hills Avenue
- Twining Avenue
- Several segments of various arterials

The remaining roads in the transportation network are local roads which provide limited mobility but high access to individual properties.

### **Road Ownership**

As shown in **Figure 6.2**, the majority of roads within Upper Dublin Township are owned and maintained either by the State of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, Montgomery County, or Upper Dublin Township. Very few are privately owned and maintained. The Commonwealth owns and maintains the following roads within Upper Dublin Township:

- Welsh Road (SR 0063)
- Limekiln Pike (SR 0152)
- Norristown Avenue (SR 2007)
- Susquehanna Road (SR 2017)
- Bethlehem Pike (SR 2018)
- Tennis Avenue (SR 2020)
- Fort Washington Avenue (SR 2022)
- Dreshertown Road (SR 2024 & 2028)
- Pennsylvania Avenue (SR 2027)
- Route 309 (SR 0309)
- Fitzwatertown Road (SR 2038)

These are many of the highly traveled corridors within the Township making coordination between the Township and PennDOT critical. The only road that Montgomery County owns and maintains is Butler Pike. The remaining roads within Upper Dublin are owned and maintained by the Township or by private entities.

**Transit Routes and Service Frequency**

Upper Dublin Township is serviced by both SEPTA Regional Rail and bus service. While the Township has no regional rail stations located within its boundary, there are four stations within close proximity that can be easily accessed by residents of Upper Dublin Township. The R5 Lansdale/Doylestown line has stops in the following locations:

- North Hills – Station and Mt Carmel Avenue in Springfield Township
- Oreland – Bridge Street and PA Avenue in Springfield Township
- Fort Washington – Bethlehem Pike and Station Avenue in Whitemarsh Township
- Ambler – Butler Pike and Main Street in Ambler Borough

The R5 line runs on a frequent basis during the peak morning and evening hours with 10 trains between 5:00 and 9:00am and nine trains between 4:00 and 6:30pm, Monday through Friday and hourly during non-peak weekday times and weekends. The trip to and from Center City Philadelphia varies from 30 to 45 minutes depending on the number of stops. At the four stations, there are over 1,100 parking spaces, of which the majority of spaces are filled by lease holders. The stations also are equipped with several bicycle parking spaces.

SEPTA also serves the community with limited bus service on five different routes as shown in **Table 6.1** below. The most heavily used bus service to the Township is Route 201 with service from the Fort Washington Train Station to the Fort Washington Business Park. Many of the other routes connect residents to the area shopping with the service in the Township concentrated in the Bethlehem Pike corridor. The only other route is the Horsham Breeze Route 310, which provides service from the Willow Grove SEPTA station, along Welsh Road to several office complexes in Horsham. A large portion of the Township is not accessible via public transportation which is a major issue facing residents of the Township. Many households own multiple vehicles due to the lack of transportation options.

As shown in **Table 6.2**, only 7.4 % of those in the workforce commute via public transportation, which is still higher than either the State or County usage. To further drive home the fact that residents in Upper Dublin drive almost everywhere, the 2000 U.S. Census shows in **Table 6.3** that almost 55 percent of the households have two vehicles, and more than 18 percent have three or more vehicles. This results in a large number of trips generated per household.

**Table 6.1 SEPTA Bus Service in Upper Dublin**

Route	Endpoints	RR Transfer Points	# of trips per direction (M-F)	Travel on
94	Chestnut Hill to Montgomery Mall	Fort Washington Ambler	8 (AM) / 5(AM) 9 (PM) / 12(PM)	Bethlehem Pike
98	Norristown Trans Center to Plymouth Meeting and Willow Grove Park Malls	Ambler, Fort Washington, North Hills	9 (AM) / 12 (AM) 15 (PM) /14 (PM)	Bethlehem Pike Pennsylvania Avenue
134	Chestnut Hill to Montgomery Mall	Fort Washington	2 (AM) / 1 (AM) 3 (PM) / 3 (PM)	Bethlehem Pike
201	Fort Washington Station to Fort Washington Business Park	Fort Washington	15 (AM) / 15 (AM) 25(PM) / 27 (PM)	PA Avenue Commerce Dr Virginia Dr
310	Horsham Breeze	Willow Grove	18 (AM)	Welsh Road

Source: SEPTA

**Table 6.2 Travel Statistics**

Geographic Area	Total % of population working over age 16	% in carpools	% using public transportation	Mean travel time to work	% worked outside of county of residence
Upper Dublin	66.7	5.7	7.4	28.3	38.4
Montgomery County	68.5	8.3	4.4	26.5	35.3
Philadelphia County	55.9	12.8	25.4	32	24.6
Pennsylvania	61.9	10.4	5.2	25.2	27.6

Source: US Census

**Table 6.3 Percent of Car Ownership per Household**

Geographic Area	Total Households	None	1	2	3 or more
Upper Dublin	9174	2.8	24	54.9	18.3
Montgomery County	286,098	6.3	32.8	45.3	15.6
Philadelphia County	590,071	35.7	42	18	4.2
Pennsylvania	4777003	12.8	34.9	37.5	14.8

Source: US Census

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

While the Township is making progress on an interconnected trail network, the community as a whole is not very walkable. Sidewalks are not continuous and unsafe pedestrian crossings are common in commercial areas. The Township’s trail plan is addressing some sidewalk deficiencies; however, a holistic look at pedestrian access needs is needed to identify critical neighborhood and commercial locations where connections and safe crossings are missing. The Township may also need to coordinate with its neighbors on unsafe locations that cross into neighboring municipalities.

There has been some consideration of bicycles in recent development plans. The inclusion of bicycle storage in development plans has shown an interest in accommodating those who would prefer not to drive everywhere and fosters the bicycle and pedestrian accessible developments. Many of the roadways have wide paved shoulders that provide a relatively protected zone for bicyclists to travel. In addition, the Parks and Open Space plan’s trail network on **Figure 5.1** can provide a safer, more recreational type of an environment for bicycles.

### Traffic Volumes and Capacity Issues

**Figure 6.3** shows the traffic volumes for Upper Dublin’s street network. The highest volumes are on the interstate and arterial corridors and the lowest volumes on the local roads.

Roadway capacity is a function of the number and configurations of lanes, signal intersections and spacing as well as curb cuts. According to stakeholder interviews, there doesn’t seem to be capacity issues on many of the roadways. There are however choke points related to existing infrastructure such as railroad overpass on Susquehanna and turning lane lengths in some locations.

Traffic control devices such as traffic signals can also contribute to congestion, travel delay and high fuel consumption if the signals are not timed correctly for the volumes that are currently on the roadways. Retiming and interconnecting signals are types of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects that PennDOT is currently undertaking. As noted on the Township's 10-year Capital Improvement Plan, there are plans to update signals over the next several years which will help reduce congestion. This will require the coordination with PennDOT since the majority of the signals are on State-owned roadways.

There have been numerous traffic impact studies on developments and there are a range of recommendations included in the studies. Some of these include installing traffic control devices or installing turning lanes to change the way vehicles move through a particular area.

### **Railroads**

Active freight rail lines include the Norfolk Southern Line that runs along eastern side of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. SEPTA's R5 Regional Rail corridor runs through a small portion of Upper Dublin, north of Morris Road. Railroad traffic has picked up recently due to the high cost of transporting freight via tractor trailer. Some rail companies are less willing to work with municipalities on improvements that involve rail facilities due to the increased rail volume. This has been a barrier for resolving the traffic pinch point created by the Norfolk Southern viaduct over Susquehanna Road.

### **Streetscape and Gateways**

Efforts to provide a consistent streetscape throughout the Township have been unsuccessful. There have been several neighborhood improvement plans which have addressed streetscape issues within the each neighborhood plan, but there has not been a comprehensive approach on the part of the Township. A comprehensive approach may help with an identity for Upper Dublin Township. This is not to say that every neighborhood would look alike but there may be common elements so that the streetscapes follow similar themes to create a unified Township "feel." Also missing from the community are gateways that let visitor know that they are entering Upper Dublin Township. There may be some key locations that a gateway would help distinguish Upper Dublin from its neighbors. There have been some improvements and enhancements to the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor that can be built upon.

### **Issues and Observations of Key Problems Areas**

Some areas of concern throughout the Township include but are not limited to the following:

- Dresher Triangle area - Three major roads of Limekiln, Dreshertown, Susquehanna form the Dresher triangle. As the home of one of Upper Dublin's shopping centers and an area slated for redevelopment, transportation concerns related to access to parcels and congestion are the main issues. In addition to vehicular movements, another concern is to provide for the safe movement of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the area.
- The rail bridge over Susquehanna Road – This is a point where there is no room to widen Susquehanna Road to accommodate more lanes without a major reconstruction requiring coordination with Norfolk Southern.

- Traffic congestion in the Maple Glen area – Three heavily traveled arterial roads, Limekiln Pike, Welsh Road, and Norristown Road, define the commercial center of Maple Glen. A number of factors result in poor vehicular circulation through Maple Glen include:
  - Intersections are closely spaced
  - Access drives to parking lots are too numerous and too close to intersections
  - Signals are not interconnected
  - Turning lanes are absent or inadequate
  - Continuous curbcuts are present at some properties
  - Intersections with angles that vary significantly from 90 degrees
- Street conditions and unsafe traffic situations in the Fort Washington Office Park – The office park is not a safe environment for pedestrians. Sidewalks are limited and the crosswalks are not clearly marked leaving the pedestrian to dodge traffic. Suggested improvements include completing the sidewalk network, raised crosswalks and increased signage.
- High speeds and cut through traffic in residential areas – Several neighborhoods such as Fort Washington and Parkview Gardens among others have studied the traffic traveling through its neighborhoods. Traffic calming measures, consisting of narrowing street widths, increased enforcement, and turning movement restrictions were suggested improvements to increase the safety in these areas.
- Lack of a community character as it relates to streetscapes and gateways – There have been some efforts made in this area but the township could benefit from an overall plan for its gateways.
- Limited bus service throughout community – SEPTA bus service is primarily located along Germantown Pike with a small amount along Welsh Road in Horsham. Residents cannot effectively travel to shop and run errands within the Township without using a private vehicle.
- Limekiln and Broad Street intersection (Jarrettown Inn) - Vehicular queues occasionally develop on Jarrettown Road and on Broad Street during the morning and/or afternoon peak hours because of higher volumes of traffic. Circulation between parcels is inadequate and require vehicles to use Limekiln Pike for access.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The emerging emphasis of sustainability and reduction of green house gas emissions could play a role in the transportation element as a set of strategies to reduce emissions. Some of these strategies could include:

- Travel demand measures
- Parking for electric vehicles and carpools
- Telecommuting pods
- Carpool incentives

As redevelopment occurs, incorporating incentives for to improve multimodal connections may become a focus and strategy.

As funds for transportation improvements are limited, developing partnerships with private companies may bear fruit in terms of creative financing packages

## Section 7. Cultural and Historic Resources

Upper Dublin Township is in an historic area of the State and a region of national significance with ready access to major and important sites within a short drive. Within the Township's border there are many architecturally and culturally significant structures that are considered historic, including structures that were built by famous architects, were lived in by well known or influential individuals and/or which exemplify a particular era or style of construction.

The Upper Dublin Township Board of Commissioners adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance in November 2006. The ordinance protects the most important historic resources from demolition while providing a process for discussion with owners of additional resources to consider alternatives to demolition. The ordinance also established a Historic Commission which is responsible for evaluating, compiling, maintaining and publishing the Historic Resource Inventory. Since its formation the Historic Commission has undertaken a significant update to the Historic Resource Inventory which was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in March 2008 and reevaluated and adopted in April 2009. The inventory includes eight Class I resources as shown in **Table 7.1** and more than 800 Class II resources.

**Table 7.1 List of Class I Historic Resources**

Name of Property	Address	Location	Status/Comment
Browslea	1404 E. Butler Pike	Ambler	Class I
Fairwold Estate	190-200 Camp Hill Road	Fort Washington	Class I
Hedgerows	528 Fort Washington Avenue	Ambler	Class I
Camp Hill Hall and outbuildings	709 E. Pennsylvania Avenue	Fort Washington/Whitemarsh	Class I
Paxson Farm/Spring Farm/Friendly Acres	1704 Dreshertown Road	Fort Washington	Class I
Quaker Manor House	1165 Pinetown Road	Fort Washington	Listed on the National Register of Historic Places Class I
Brown-Tyson House/Old Maple Farm	875 Welsh Road	Maple Glen	Eligible for National Register Class I
Lukens-Moses House	1425 Welsh Road	Maple Glen	Eligible for National Register Class I
Hawkswell	2001 E. Pennsylvania Avenue		built ca 1904 - designed by Wilson Eyre for Sarah Drexel Fell Van Rensselaer
Fort Washington Heights	bordered by Fort Washington Avenue, Madison Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue and Rt. #309	Fort Washington	early suburb built 1876-1926 ; late Victorian-early twentieth century architecture built by local builders of local materials
Quellehoff	223 Madison Avenue	Ft. Washington	Home of George Bodenstein; designed by Keith and Company and built by Edmund Ford
Hopeston Company Store			ca 1901- the most recognizable remaining structure of the Hoopes and Townsend Rolling Mill located in the current

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			office park from 1901-1925
Lindenwold Terrace		Ambler	home to Mattison family members and notable persons; built ca 1898
Little Linden Farm		Ambler	served Dr. Mattison's estate, Lindenwold
Keasbey and Mattison company housing			
Thomas Pollack Anshutz House	212 Bethlehem Pike	Ft. Washington	artist, instructor Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Darby School of Art
Breckenridge House	206 Bethlehem Pike	Ft. Washington	artist, instructor, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Darby School of Art
Northview	Butler Pike	Ambler	home of Wilmer Atkinson founder of the Farm Journ home of Wilmer Atkinson founder of the Farm Journal
Oreland			Oreland-homes built individually starting in 1890's through 1940's
Fitzwater-Potter House	Limekiln Pike	Fitzwatertown	
Ridgewood Farm			built in 1909 for Alfred C Harrison/Wm Frazier Harrison- Camp Hill Rd.
Jarrettown Methodist Episcopal Church	Limekiln Pike		built 1866 rebuilt 1896 following the tornado
Three Tuns Schoolhouse			
Waldheim Farm	Penns Lane	Three Tuns	redesigned by Horace Trumbauer
Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women	Meetinghouse Rd	Ambler	established 1911
Gilkeys Corner Store/Costa Deli	Butler Ave. and Bethlehem Pike		stone store build in 1803; served for a time as post office and meeting place
WVWA barn	Morris Rd	Ambler	designed by Horace Trumbauer
Elliger Park and Ambler Highlands	bordered by Ft. Washington Ave, Bethlehem Pike, Montgomery Avenue, Rt# 309	Ambler Highlands	predated Ekiger Park but both communities represent early suburban development. Eliger was built by the Potts Brothers 1925-about 1950
Schlater House	215 Bethlehem Pike	Fort Washington	built 1795; county treasurer, tollhouse
Trinity Lutheran Church	Summit Avenue		built 1897- designed by T. Frank Miller
Sloan house	210 Madison Ave	Ft. Washington	home to artists John and

## Upper Dublin Township Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Analysis

Oakley/Calder House	117 Ft. Washington Avenue		Marianna Sloan built ca 1752 served as summer home to artists Violet Oakley and A. Stirling Calder
Sheeleigh house- Friedenheim	116 Summit Ave	Ft. Washington	designed by Milton Bean for Rev Matthias Sheeleigh who was involved with three area churches.
Firehouse 1916			
Upper Dublin Lutheran Church graveyard	corner of Susquehanna and Butler Pike (Puff's corner)		dates from 1750's

*Source: Upper Dublin Township Historic Resource Inventory*

Class 1 historic resources represent sites, buildings, structures and objects that are listed on the National Register or that have received a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission indicating that the site meets the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, but is not actually listed on the National Register. Class 2 historic resources are buildings that have local historical, architectural and/or archaeological significance. They may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, but no determination has yet been made.

In addition to historic resources, a major cultural resource for the Township is its network of scenic roads. Scenic road segments were designated in the 1994 Open Space Plan as those that have significant tree cover and visual qualities that distinguish them and add a desirable quality of life and image to the areas they serve. Upper Dublin has a Shade Tree Commission that monitors changes to the trees lining all of the roads that cross through the Township. Monitoring includes review of land development applications to preserve and replace trees as well as input on routine trimming and pruning of roadside trees as related to maintaining travel lanes and above ground utilities.

### Summary and Conclusions

As a relatively new Commission, the Upper Dublin Historic Commission has identified education as a top priority for moving forward. Education initiatives will include outreach to the public and other Township boards and commissions about the existence and location of historic resources, their cultural and economic importance to the community and options for preservation. Funds from the open space bond measure passed in 2008 can be used to purchase historic properties or easements to protect them.

## **Section 8. Community Facilities, Services and Infrastructure**

Upper Dublin Township is committed to ongoing investment in community services and amenities. Maintaining and expanding high-quality services and facilities is important in continuing the overall attractiveness of living and working in Upper Dublin Township. In addition to schools and recreational facilities that are spread throughout the Township, Upper Dublin is working to create a “civic campus” that concentrates many community uses. The campus is anchored by the Township Building and Upper Dublin High School on Loch Alsh Avenue. The Township Building includes the library, Police Department and an extensive set of well-utilized community rooms. The new fire station (discussed below) is planned to be located along Fort Washington Avenue across from the high school complex.. **Figure 8.1** shows the location of community facilities and services throughout the Township.

### **Schools**

Upper Dublin Township is known for its School District. The schools have won numerous awards for their test scores, achievement records and creative programs. The District is a separate governmental body guided by the statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It has a Board of School Directors elected by the residents with the power to levy taxes within state guidelines, and a superintendent is in charge of day to day operations as well as strategic planning.

The District enjoys stable enrollment with about 4,300 students in the District. Only about 16 percent attend private and parochial schools, fewer than in comparable suburban locations, again attesting to the quality of education. One unique characteristic of the District – at least in the Pennsylvania Commonwealth – is that it has the same boundary as the Township. This is helpful for a number of reasons such as budgeting purposes and coordination issues. It also creates an identity for the community to rally behind.

The District’s base budget is among lowest among Montgomery County’s 21 districts. Residents have demonstrated support for investment in the District’s facilities through the passage of two recent bond measures to fund specific capital improvements – one for the new Upper Dublin High School and a 2006 maintenance bond, which is funding capital improvements in the District’s other schools.

There are four elementary schools (grades K-5), one middle school (grades 6-8) and one high school (grades 9-12). The professional staff has an average of 16 years teaching experience and approximately 85 percent hold advanced degrees.

- **Fort Washington Elementary** is located in on Fort Washington Avenue and is adjacent to the municipal and high school civic campus. Serving 510 students, Fort Washington Elementary operates on a "School within a School" model with several "neighborhoods" staffed by teams of teachers. The goal of this concept is to create a smaller, nurturing learning culture for students and staff.
- **Maple Glen Elementary** is the newest school in the Upper Dublin School District and it is located on the corner of Fort Washington Avenue and Limekiln Pike in Maple Glen, directly across the street from the District’s administrative complex, the single story school opened

in September 1999. The school, which has been the home to roughly 450 students each year since its inception, was designed to be easily expanded to accommodate an ultimate enrollment of 600 students. The school is aesthetically pleasing inside and out; with a shingled roof and landscaping that is compatible and sympathetic to its surrounding neighbors.

- **Jarrettown Elementary** is located on Limekiln Pike and reflects the construction of its 1950s construction era – brick, windowed, ambling, and with constraints which are common with 60 year old buildings. However, in spite of its age, and being the oldest of the District's elementary schools, the principal, faculty, support staff, students and their families, feel nurtured by this neighborhood school, which is part of the landscape in this section of town. Nearly 500 students attend Jarrettown Elementary School, which serves one of the older sections of town.
- **Thomas Fitzwater Elementary** is located on School Lane off of North Hills Avenue. The school serves approximately 445 students. Thomas Fitzwater Elementary School is proud of its recognition as a 1999 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and a 2007 recipient of a Pennsylvania Achievement Grant.
- **Sandy Run Middle School** is a 6th, 7th and 8th grade school and is located on Twining Road in the Fitzwatertown neighborhood. It serves approximately 1,050 students and has 88 full-time teachers and staff.
- **Upper Dublin High School** is a four-year public school recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, by the U.S. Department of Education. The high school is also accredited by the Middlestates Association of Colleges and Schools and certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. A new high school is currently under construction on the campus of the existing high school. The first phase is expected be complete in December 2010 and the second phase in August 2012. It serves nearly 1,500 students.

### Library

The main library is located on the lower level of the west side of the Upper Dublin Township Building, across the street from the Upper Dublin High School. The North Hills Branch of the library is located at 212 Girard Avenue.

The Upper Dublin Public Library serves the community with a collection of over 90,000 books, more than 100 magazine and newspaper subscriptions and over 7,000 videos, recordings and audio-books. The library provides telephone and walk-up reference service, Internet and Microsoft Office access, electronic resources, services to students and business, bestsellers, biographies, general nonfiction, mysteries, science fiction, children's picture books, large print books, exhibits, videos, audio-books, and CDs. The library also provides story times for preschool children, book clubs, summer reading clubs and cultural and educational programming for all ages.

The Library recently conducted a comprehensive facilities plan to identify its space needs over the next 30 years. The study considered reprogramming existing space, expanding the existing facility

or building a new stand alone facility. No decision has been made yet as to the direction that the library board and the Township is going to take.

### **Police**

The Upper Dublin Township Police Department is charged with the protection of life and property within the 13 plus square mile political boundary the Township. The Police Department is a Pennsylvania first class, civil service, accredited, law enforcement agency. The department is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and employs 41 full-time officers, five full-time dispatchers, two part-time dispatchers, one full-time civilian clerk and one part-time civilian clerk. Upper Dublin's Police Department is one of only 63 accredited forces in the Pennsylvania Commonwealth (out of about 1,200). Accreditation is a rigorous process and must be renewed every three years.

The Department consists of patrol and staff officers as well as personnel who support in the areas of communications, adult investigations and juvenile investigations. There are a number of specialized units addressing tactical response, major incident response, medical response, bike patrol, highway patrol and DARE education. The department is committed to the community-oriented policing philosophy and often hosts outreach programs each year such as college intern programs, driver safety seminars and a junior police academy.

### **Fire**

Fire protection is provided by the Fort Washington Fire Company Number 1, a volunteer company providing services to Upper Dublin Township surrounding communities. The Fort Washington Fire Company is committed to the education of the residents of Upper Dublin Township, and offers a number of programs in the areas of fire safety and fire prevention. In 2006 the Township hired a professional Fire Services Administrator who manages community fire protection planning, public safety and fire protection issues. The Fire Services Administrator is the liaison between Township fire and EMS service providers, Township administration and departments, businesses, civic groups, and local, state and federal agencies. The Fort Washington Fire Company operates out of two fire stations within Upper Dublin and also maintains a fully equipped training facility.

- Station 88-A is located on Summit Avenue in the Fort Washington section of Upper Dublin. It houses Engine 88, Squad 88, Tower 88, Rescue 88, Traffic 88 and a boat. This station has a recreation room, a large meeting room, offices for the chief and president, a conference room and a fully equipped kitchen.
- Station 88-B is located at the corner of Twining Road and Susquehanna Road in the Dresher section of Upper Dublin. It houses Engine 88-1, Squad 88-1, Special Service 88 and a boat. The station has a recreation room and a compressor for filling air bottles.
- The training facility is located on Susquehanna Road, adjacent to the Twining Valley Golf Club. It allows the Fort Washington Fire Company to continue to be one of the most proficient, well-trained fire companies in the area.

The major issue related to fire services is planning for a new fire station. The current main firehouse on Summit Avenue no longer meets the needs of fire and rescue service in the upper-

end of the Township. A site concept and facilities study identified a parcel at 1245 Fort Washington Avenue for the new station location. Commonly referred to as the “Bonsell Site,” its is located adjacent to the Upper Dublin High School and the municipal complex. The Township has engaged an architectural and engineering firm to evaluate the property and develop conceptual plans for the new station and any other civic uses that could potentially be located on the site.

### **Municipal Services**

Public sewer and water serve nearly all of Upper Dublin Township. The Township sold its sewage collection system to the Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority who continues to operate and maintain it. Aqua Pennsylvania, Ambler Water Authority and North Wales Water Authority supply water to Township residents and businesses. Trash and recyclable materials are collected and disposed of by Upper Dublin Township. The Township hosts and contributes to a new regional recycling center/transfer station that was established in 2003. The Township operates a leaf composting facility.

During stakeholder interviews, enhanced technology infrastructure was identified as a tool for supporting environmental, transportation and land use goals for the Township. Specific initiatives discussed included community broadband, electric car parking and demand-responsive bus dispatch. From late 2005 to 2008, the Township investigated and pursued establishing a municipally-owned broadband network. Though it was unable to reach an agreement with a vendor, the research can lay groundwork for future initiatives.

As a part of the ongoing development of the Upper Dublin civic campus, the Public Works Department transportation facility may be moved to another location. The Fort Washington Office Park has been considered as at least a temporary location. The School District recently obtained a five-year lease to store its buses at a site there. There have been preliminary discussions between the Township and the School District about developing a shared facility.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Upper Dublin Township and School District provide excellent community services, which act a major attraction for new and existing residents. Both are proactive in planning for future facility and program needs. Opportunities to share community facilities between Township departments, such as the library and Parks and Recreation, and the School District should continue to be pursued as each moves forward with its planning.

## Section 9. Form and function of government

### Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels

Upper Dublin Township was incorporated as a First Class Township in 1946. In accordance with the Pennsylvania First Class Township Code, a Board of Commissioners is elected to represent Township residents. The government is a strong Council/Manager type. There are seven Commissioners, one for each ward who act as the legislative branch of the government with responsibility for all policy decisions as well as annual budget approval. The Commissioners serve on a part-time basis for four-year terms. Municipal elections for Commissioners are held bi-annually with an alternating four seats and three seats subject to election or re-election. The Commissioners appoint the following major officials:

- Township Manager
- Solicitor
- Engineer
- Police Chief
- Fire Administrator
- Township Secretary

These positions are supported by directors and staff of about 50 people in the following departments and as shown on the Upper Dublin organizational chart.

- **Administration** – The Administration Department is responsible for day-to-day operations and the coordination of the other Township departments. The 2009 Administrative Department's budget was \$1,448,703 or 5.9% of the total.
- **Finance** – The Finance Department is responsible for Township finances and for keeping accurate accounts of all sums received from taxes and other sources. The Finance Department's budget was \$650,268 or 2.7% of the total.
- **Parks and Recreation** – The Upper Dublin Township Department of Parks and Recreation is a professionally operated, multi-faceted leisure services organization. The Parks and Recreation budget was \$1,870,459 or 7.7% of the total.
- **Police** – The Upper Dublin Township Police Department is charged with the protection of life and property within a 13 plus square mile political boundary. The 2009 Police Department's budget was \$6,044,591 or 24.8% of the total.
- **Public Works Services** – The Public Works Department of Upper Dublin Township ensures that all of the infrastructure within the Township are maintained and secured. The 2009 Public Works Department's budget was \$3,483,221 or 14.3% of the total.
- **Code Enforcement** – The Code Enforcement Department is responsible for issuing permits, inspecting projects and generally ensuring adherence to Township regulations. The Code Enforcement department's budget was \$574,665 or 2.4% of the total.

- **Library** – The Upper Dublin Public Library provides telephone and walk up reference service, story hours and children's programming, services to students and business, best sellers, biographies, general non-fiction, large print, children's fiction and non-fiction, picture books, videos, books on tape, electronic databases, a collection of reference works, and drive up drop-off service. The Library Department's budget was \$987,712 or 4% of the total.

### **Commissions and Boards**

In addition to staff, Upper Dublin Township relies heavily on the volunteers who serve on a multitude of boards and commissions. These Commissioner-appointed bodies assist the Township in carrying out its responsibilities to its residents.

- **Building Code Board of Appeals (BCBA)** – Four members are (re)appointed for a period of three years. This Board reviews appeals of the Uniform Construction Code of Pennsylvania. The BCBA meetings and hearings are held as needed.
- **Civil Service Commission** – Five members of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) are (re)appointed for a period of six years. There is also one attorney on the CSC which meets as needed on the call of the chairman.
- **Environmental Protection Advisory Board** – Seven members of the Environmental Protection Advisory Board (EPAB) are (re)appointed for a period of three years. The EPAB either initiates or upon request advises the Board of Commissioners on issues relating to protecting the quality of water, land and air resources.
- **Historical Commission** – Seven members of the Historical Commission are (re)appointed for a period of three years. The Historical Commission seeks to foster awareness and appreciation of our community's history, encourage the preservation of local resources, and offer information and assistance to residents and owners of commercial and residential properties.
- **Library Board** – Seven members of the Upper Dublin Public Library Board (UDPLB) are (re)appointed for a period of three years. The UDPLB creates service standards and policy, and recommends funding for the Library.
- **Planning Commission** – Seven members of the Upper Dublin Planning Commission are (re)appointed for a period of three years. The Planning Commission actively reviews current planning issues, such as active development applications. It is also responsible for helping complete the longer range planning necessary to retain and enhance the quality and character of Upper Dublin Township.
- **Shade Tree Commission** – Five members of the Upper Dublin Shade Tree Commission (STC) are (re)appointed for a period of five years. The STC was established by Ordinance, #870, that vests the Commission with "exclusive custody and control" of all Shade Trees which are defined as trees within the public Rights-of-Way.

- **Vacancy Board** – One member is (re)appointed for a period of two years.
- **Zoning Hearing Board** – Six members of the Upper Dublin Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) are (re)appointed for a period of three years. There must be at least one attorney appointed to the ZHB due to the nature of the decisions made by the ZHB.

### Municipal Finances

The Township 2009 budget projects revenues and expenditures of \$24,421,573. The source of funds and breakdown of expenditures are shown in the **Table 9.1 and 9.2** below. The General Fund finances basic services including Police, Sanitation, Highway, Code Enforcement, Parks and Recreation, Township Library and the General Administration of the Township.

**Table 9.1 Upper Dublin Township Revenues**

Real Estate Taxes	\$10,071,494
Local Enabling Taxes	7,300,000
Licenses & Permits	853,500
Fines & Forfeits	108,000
Interest & Rent	953,000
Grants & Gifts	1,639,551
Department Earnings	2,754,685
Assessments	105,000
Miscellaneous	38,800
Use of Prior Year Reserves	597,543
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,421,573</b>

*Source: Upper Dublin Township 2009 Budget*

**Table 9.2 Upper Dublin Township Expenditures**

General	\$15,654,042
Parks and Recreation	1,870,459
Sewer	5,000
Debt Service	1,631,147
Fire Protection	390,657
Open Space Projects	115,255
Capital Projects/Equipment	1,710,994
Library	987,712
Fire Capital	237,800
Non-Expendable Trust	5,900
Storm Sewer Projects	1,702,607
Economic Development	110,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,421,573</b>

*Source Upper Dublin Township 2009 Budget*

### Township Taxes

The collections of local enabling taxes make up about 30 percent of the revenue generated by the Township every year. Property taxes add an additional 40 percent of revenue to the Township's operating budget.

- **Earned Income Tax** – The EIT in Upper Dublin Township is one percent (1.0%) of the Earned Income/Net Profits for all Township residents. Also included are any non-residents engaged in business, working or headquartered out of an office within the Township.
- **Local Services Tax** – The LST is assessed on each employed individual by the political subdivision of the individual's place of employment. The rate for Upper Dublin Township is \$52 annually.
- **Real Estate Transfer Tax** – The RET is based on a percent of each sale of property within the Township.
- **Property Tax** – Upper Dublin Real Estate Tax is determined by multiplying the assessed value of your home by the millage rate. The tax millage rate is determined annually by the Township, the County Board of Commissioners and the School Board. Table 9.3 shows the millage rates for 2009.

**Table 9.3 2009 Residential Property Tax Rates in Upper Dublin Township**

Description	Millage Rate
<b>Montgomery County</b>	<b>2.695</b>
<b>Upper Dublin Township</b>	<b>4.523</b>
General Government	2.554
Debt Service	0.735
Parks & Recreation	0.610
Fire Protection	0.437
Community Reinvestment	0.187
<b>Upper Dublin School District</b>	<b>22.777</b>

*Source Upper Dublin Township 2009 Budget*