

Comprehensive Plan for

# Whitpain Township

## Township Vision

*Whitpain Township is a community that embraces the future while cherishing our heritage. We will continue to be recognized for our diversity, fiscal responsibility, and leadership in resource conservation. We shall never waver in our collective commitment to ensuring public safety and enhancing the quality of life of all our fellow citizens.*

Town Hall Meeting #1

Lifelong Learning

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015, 7:00 pm

# Joseph T. Steuer

May 21, 1951 – January 31, 2015



**Chairman, Whitpain Township Shade Tree Commission**

# **Agenda**

- 1. Welcome – Fred Conner, Supervisor, Whitpain Township**
- 2. Keynote Speaker – Tom Hylton**
- 3. What is a Comprehensive Plan?**
- 4. Whitpain Township – Existing Conditions Snapshot**
- 5. Broad Axe Village – Existing conditions, Characteristics, Challenges**
- 6. Your Comments, Opinions, Ideas, and Suggestions**



## **Project Consultants**

### **Simone Collins Landscape Architecture**

Planners and Landscape Architects

**Peter Simone**

[psimone@simonecollins.com](mailto:psimone@simonecollins.com)

610-239-7601

**Jared Lowman**

[jlowman@simonecollins.com](mailto:jlowman@simonecollins.com)

610-239-7601

### **McMahon Associates**

Transportation Planning

**Sandy Koza**

[skoza@mcmahonassociates.com](mailto:skoza@mcmahonassociates.com)

215-283-9444

### **Urban Partners**

Economic Market Research and Analysis

**Chris Lankenau**

[clankenau@urbanpartners.us](mailto:clankenau@urbanpartners.us)

## **Township Contact**

**Jim Blanch, Township Engineer**

[jblanch@whitpaintownship.org](mailto:jblanch@whitpaintownship.org)

610-277-2400

## **Project Committee Members**

**Jim Blanch**

**Fred Conner**

**Ken Corti**

**Jaime Garrido**

**Dillon Horwitz**

**Greg Klucharich**

**Joan Knies**

**Ed Lane**

**Bill Lutz, Jr.**

**Cathy McGowan**

**David Mrochko**

**Susan Mudambi**

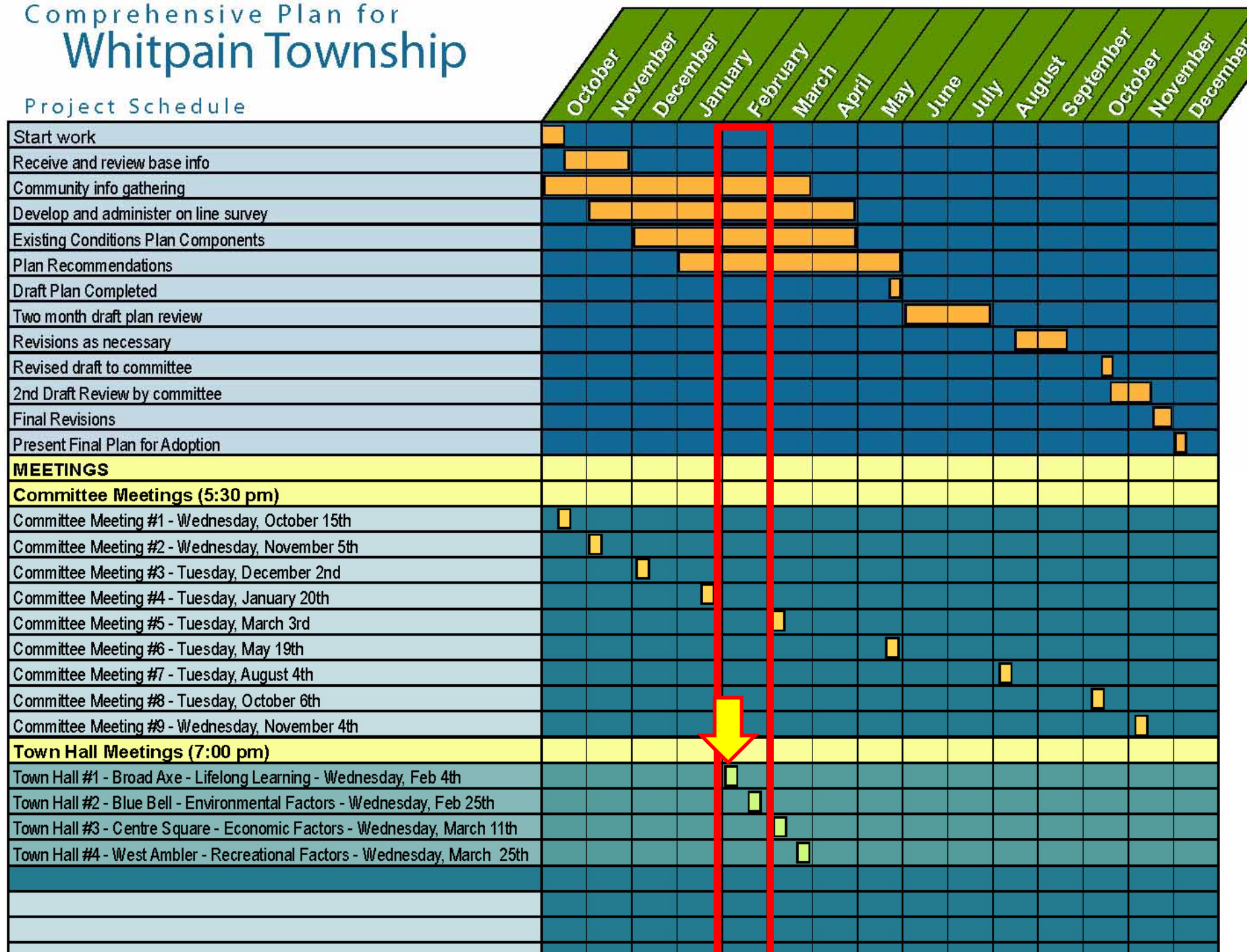
**Melissa Murphy Weber**

**Roman Pronczak**

**Robert Whittock**

# Comprehensive Plan for Whitpain Township

## Project Schedule



# Meeting Schedule

## (9) Committee Meetings (All meetings to be held at 5:30pm)

- Wednesday October 15<sup>th</sup>
- Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, March 3<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>
- Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>

## (5) Town Hall Meetings (All meetings to be held at 7:00pm)



- Wednesday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> - Town Hall #1 – Broad Axe – Lifelong Learning
- Wednesday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> – Town Hall #2 – Blue Bell – Environmental Factors
- Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> – Town Hall #3 – Centre Square – Economic Factors
- Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> – Town Hall #4 – West Ambler – Recreational Factors
- Wednesday, Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> – Town Hall #5 – Draft Plan Presentation



## **Five (5) Town Hall Meetings**

### **Town Hall #1 - February 4<sup>th</sup> - Lifelong Learning**

- Village Focus – Broad Axe Village
- Keynote Speaker – Tom Hylton

### **Town Hall #2 – February 25<sup>th</sup> – Environmental Factors (Cultural & Natural Factors)**

- Village Focus – Blue Bell Village
- Keynote Speaker - Dr. Jeff Featherstone, Professor of Community & Regional Planning, Temple University – Ambler Campus

### **Town Hall #3 – March 11<sup>th</sup> – Economic Factors**

- Village Focus – Centre Square Village
- Keynote Speaker – David Niles, Executive Director, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation

### **Town Hall #4 – March 25<sup>th</sup> – Recreational Factors**

- Village Focus – West Ambler Village
- Keynote Speaker – Drew Gilchrist, Southeast Regional Advisor, DCNR - Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

### **Town Hall #5 – Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> – Present Draft Comprehensive Plan**



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Dublin, is shown with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text 'WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?' is written in bold yellow capital letters and underlined. Faint labels on the map include 'UPPER DUBLIN', 'AUGHRIM', 'EAST NORWICH', and 'UPPER DUBLIN'.

# WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

# Comprehensive Plan Characteristics

- A blueprint for land use patterns of tomorrow
- A guide for the physical development of a municipality
- An effective basis for the development of land use ordinances
- To provide a framework for change: proactive rather than *reactive* process
- An expression of community-wide values


# Common Comprehensive Plan Elements

- A statement of community development goals and objectives that chart the location, character and timing of future development;
- A plan for land use identifying the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use;
- A plan to meet housing needs of present residents and those families anticipated to live in the municipality as well as accommodating new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels;
- A transportation plan for both vehicular and non-vehicular modes of transportation;



# Common Comprehensive Plan Elements

- A community facilities plan: infrastructure, parks, schools, etc.;
- A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components which estimates the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality;
- A discussion of short- and long-range plans implementation strategies;
- Relationship of existing and proposed land use to the proposed land use and plans in contiguous municipalities and county and regional plans; and,
- Energy conservation component

An aerial photograph of Dublin, Ireland, is shown with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text is centered on the image. The words 'A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS' and 'AND' are in black, while 'ADVISORY ONLY' is in yellow and underlined. The final line, 'LACKS COMPLIANCE AUTHORITY.', is in black.

**A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS**  
**ADVISORY ONLY**  
**AND**  
**LACKS COMPLIANCE AUTHORITY.**

# Plan Implementation Tools

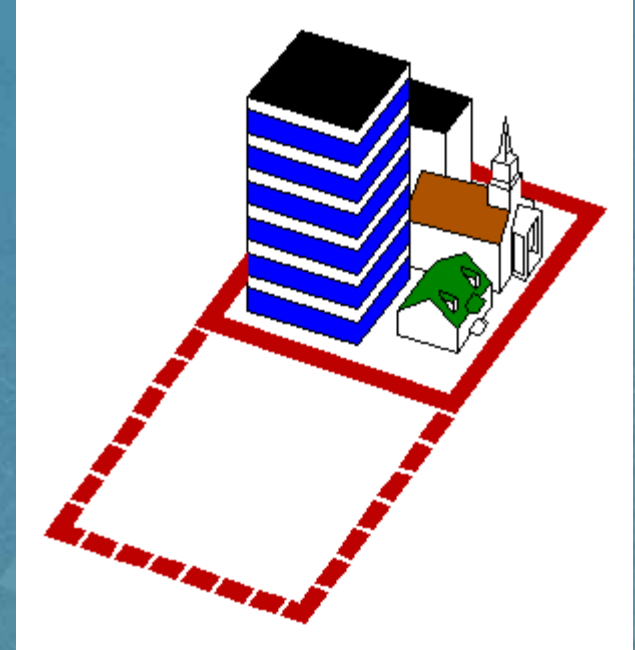
The following Township ordinances are utilized to implement the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Zoning Ordinance
2. Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
3. Official Map



# Zoning ordinance

- Uses of land
- Size, height & bulk of structures
- Intensity of uses
- Protection of natural resources



# Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

- Procedures for development process
- Design standards



# Official Map

- **Public streets & pedestrian access**
- **Public parks & open space**
- **Public transit rights-of-way**
- **Flood control areas**





An aerial photograph of Dublin, Ireland, is shown with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The word "DEMOGRAPHICS" is written in bold, yellow, sans-serif capital letters and is underlined. The text is centered horizontally and positioned in the upper-middle part of the image. Faint labels for "EAST DUBLIN", "WEST DUBLIN", "EAST DUBLIN", "UPPER DUBLIN", "AVONDALE", and "UPPER DUBLIN" are visible on the map background.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## DVRPC Population Forecast

- 1,418 population increase (7.5%) by 2040

### DVRPC Population Forecasts

| Municipality      | 2010 Census | 2040 Estimate | Absolute Change 2010 - 2040 | % Change 2010 - 2040 |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Whitpain Township | 18,875      | 20,293        | 1,418                       | 7.51%                |
| Ambler            | 6,417       | 6,973         | 556                         | 8.70%                |
| East Norriton     | 13,590      | 14,524        | 934                         | 6.90%                |
| Lower Gwynedd     | 11,405      | 12,368        | 963                         | 8.40%                |
| Plymouth          | 16,525      | 17,829        | 1,304                       | 7.90%                |
| Upper Gwynedd     | 15,552      | 16,795        | 1,243                       | 8.00%                |
| Whitemarsh        | 17,349      | 19,286        | 1,931                       | 11.20%               |
| Worcester         | 9,750       | 12,634        | 2,884                       | 29.60%               |

Source: DVRPC Regional, County, and Municipal Population Forecasts, 2010-2040

## Population by Age & Average Person per Household

### Population by Age - Whitpain

| Age Group     | 2000  | 2010  |
|---------------|-------|-------|
| Under 5 Years | 6.1%  | 4.8%  |
| 5 to 14       | 14.8% | 13.5% |
| 15 to 24      | 9.2%  | 10.0% |
| 25 to 34      | 10.0% | 9.3%  |
| 35 to 44      | 17.1% | 12.5% |
| 45 to 54      | 16.7% | 16.9% |
| 55 to 64      | 11.3% | 14.6% |
| 65 to 74      | 7.6%  | 9.1%  |
| Over 75 Years | 7.3%  | 9.4%  |
| Median Age    | 41.1  | 45    |

### Average Person Per Household

|                   | All Units   | Owner-Occ Units | Renter-Occ Units |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Whitpain</b>   | <b>2.53</b> | <b>2.67</b>     | <b>1.93</b>      |
| Upper Gwynedd     | 2.49        | 2.65            | 2.02             |
| Lower Gwynedd     | 2.28        | 2.56            | 1.60             |
| Upper Dublin      | 2.72        | 2.78            | 2.23             |
| Whitemarsh        | 2.59        | 2.70            | 2.09             |
| Plymouth          | 2.46        | 2.69            | 1.88             |
| East Norriton     | 2.38        | 2.51            | 1.94             |
| Worcester         | 2.68        | 2.89            | 1.39             |
| Montgomery County | 2.53        | 2.71            | 2.04             |

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Age of Housing Stock

| Age of Housing Stock |          |               |
|----------------------|----------|---------------|
| Period Built         | Whitpain | Montgomery Co |
| 2010 or later        | 0.5%     | 0.2%          |
| 2000-2009            | 8.6%     | 8.9%          |
| 1990-1999            | 19.0%    | 11.2%         |
| 1980-1989            | 25.4%    | 11.3%         |
| 1970-1979            | 15.2%    | 13.1%         |
| 1960-1969            | 9.0%     | 12.5%         |
| 1950-1959            | 13.8%    | 17.0%         |
| 1940-1949            | 2.9%     | 7.0%          |
| Pre 1940             | 5.5%     | 18.8%         |

*Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

## Housing Ownership (Whitpain & Montgomery County)

**Housing Ownership in Whitpain and Montgomery County (2000-2010)**

|               | Whitpain |         |       |         |
|---------------|----------|---------|-------|---------|
| Housing Units | 2000     | Percent | 2010  | Percent |
| Total         | 7,305    |         | 7,937 |         |
| Occupied      | 6,960    | 95.3%   | 7,462 | 94.0%   |
| Vacant        | 345      | 4.7%    | 475   | 6.0%    |
| Owner Occ     | 5,456    | 78.4%   | 5,768 | 77.3%   |
| Renter Occ    | 1,504    | 21.6%   | 1,694 | 22.7%   |

Source: US Census 2000-2010

|               | Montgomery County |         |         |         |
|---------------|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Housing Units | 2000              | Percent | 2010    | Percent |
| Total         | 297,434           |         | 325,735 |         |
| Occupied      | 286,098           | 96.2%   | 307,750 | 94.5%   |
| Vacant        | 11,336            | 3.8%    | 17,985  | 5.5%    |
| Owner Occ     | 210,233           | 73.5%   | 225,001 | 73.1%   |
| Renter Occ    | 75,865            | 26.5%   | 82,749  | 26.9%   |

Source: US Census 2000-2010

## Median Housing Price

### Median Housing Price (Owner-Occupied Estimates)

|                   | Median Price      |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Whitpain</b>   | <b>\$ 426,500</b> |
| Upper Gwynedd     | \$ 323,900        |
| Lower Gwynedd     | \$ * 455,600      |
| Upper Dublin      | \$ 394,200        |
| Whitemarsh        | \$ 372,100        |
| Plymouth          | \$ 309,700        |
| East Norriton     | \$ 269,400        |
| Worcester         | \$ 424,300        |
| Montgomery County | \$ 296,000        |

*Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

An aerial photograph of a township, likely in the Dublin area, is shown with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text "EXISTING TOWNSHIP LAND USE" is centered in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font and is underlined. Faint labels for "UPPER DUBLIN", "AVONDALE", and "EAST NORWICH" are visible on the map background.

## EXISTING TOWNSHIP LAND USE



# Land Use Mapping

## TYPE



PARK



POST OFFICE



LIBRARY



SCHOOL



CHURCH

Roads

Whitpain Parcels

Municipal Boundaries

## Legend

BUS ROUTES

Agriculture

Commercial

Community Services

Manufacturing: Light Industrial

Parking

Recreation

Residential: Multi-Family

Residential: Row Home

Residential: Single-Family Detached

Transportation

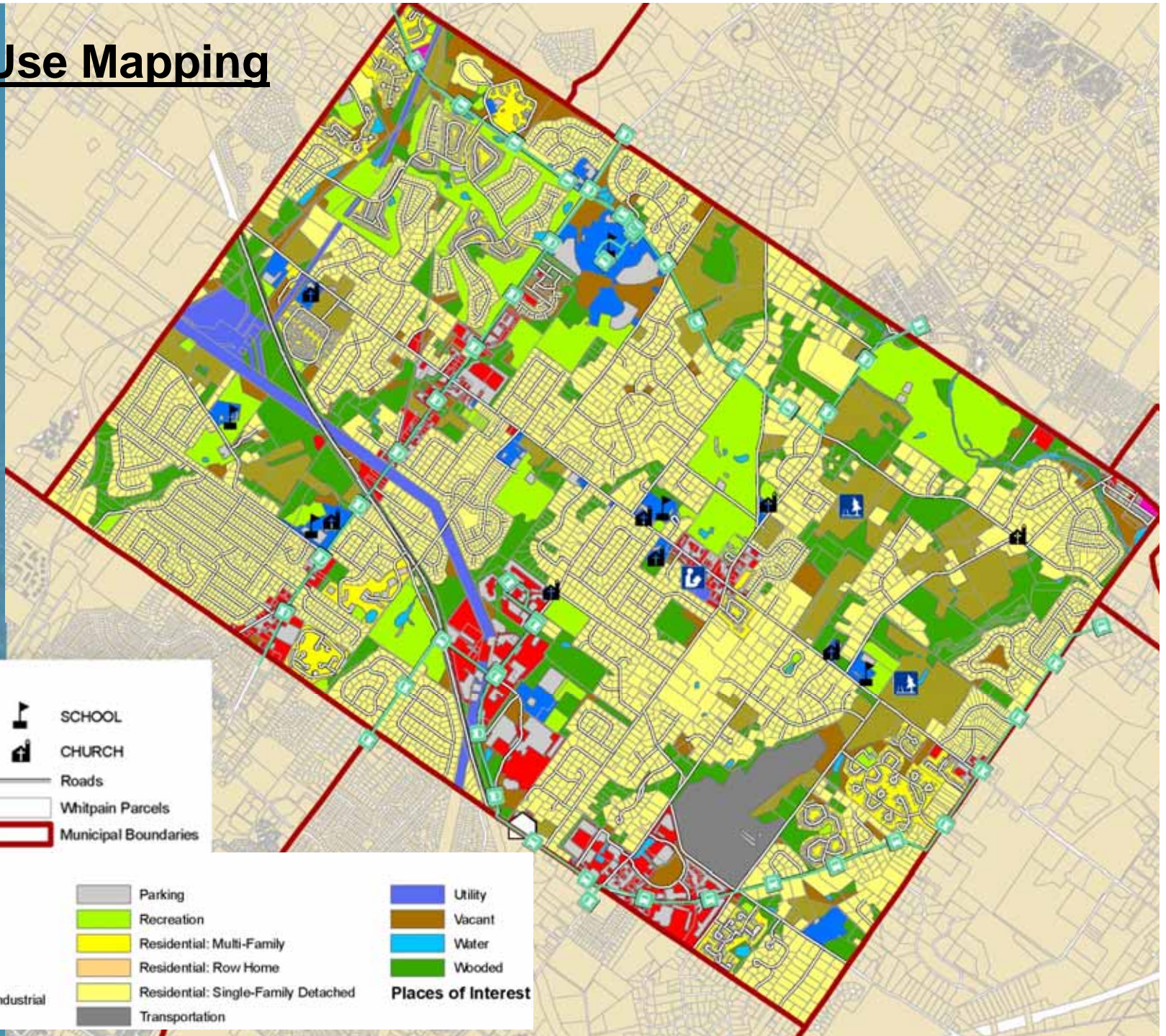
Utility

Vacant

Water

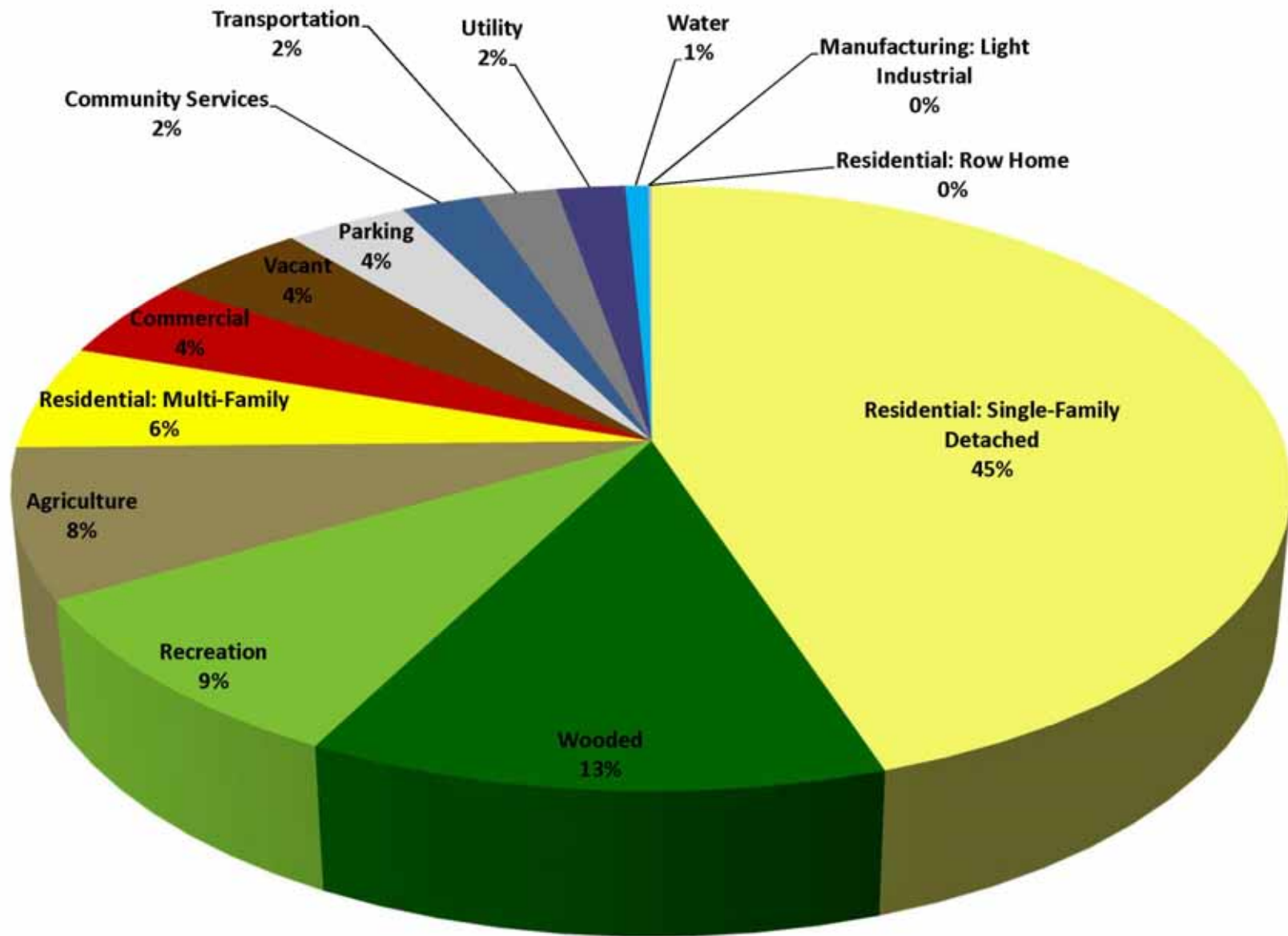
Wooded

Places of Interest

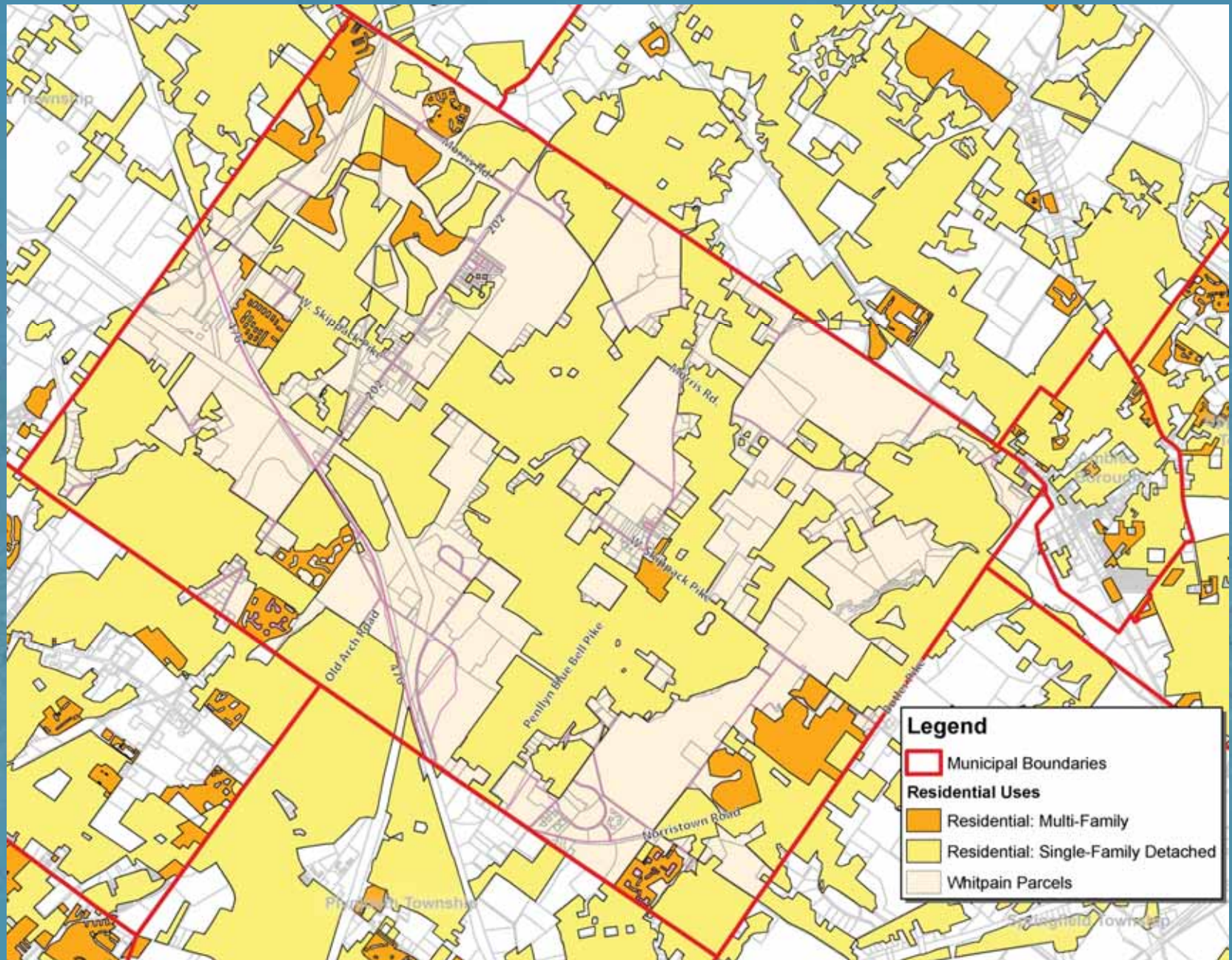




# Land Use

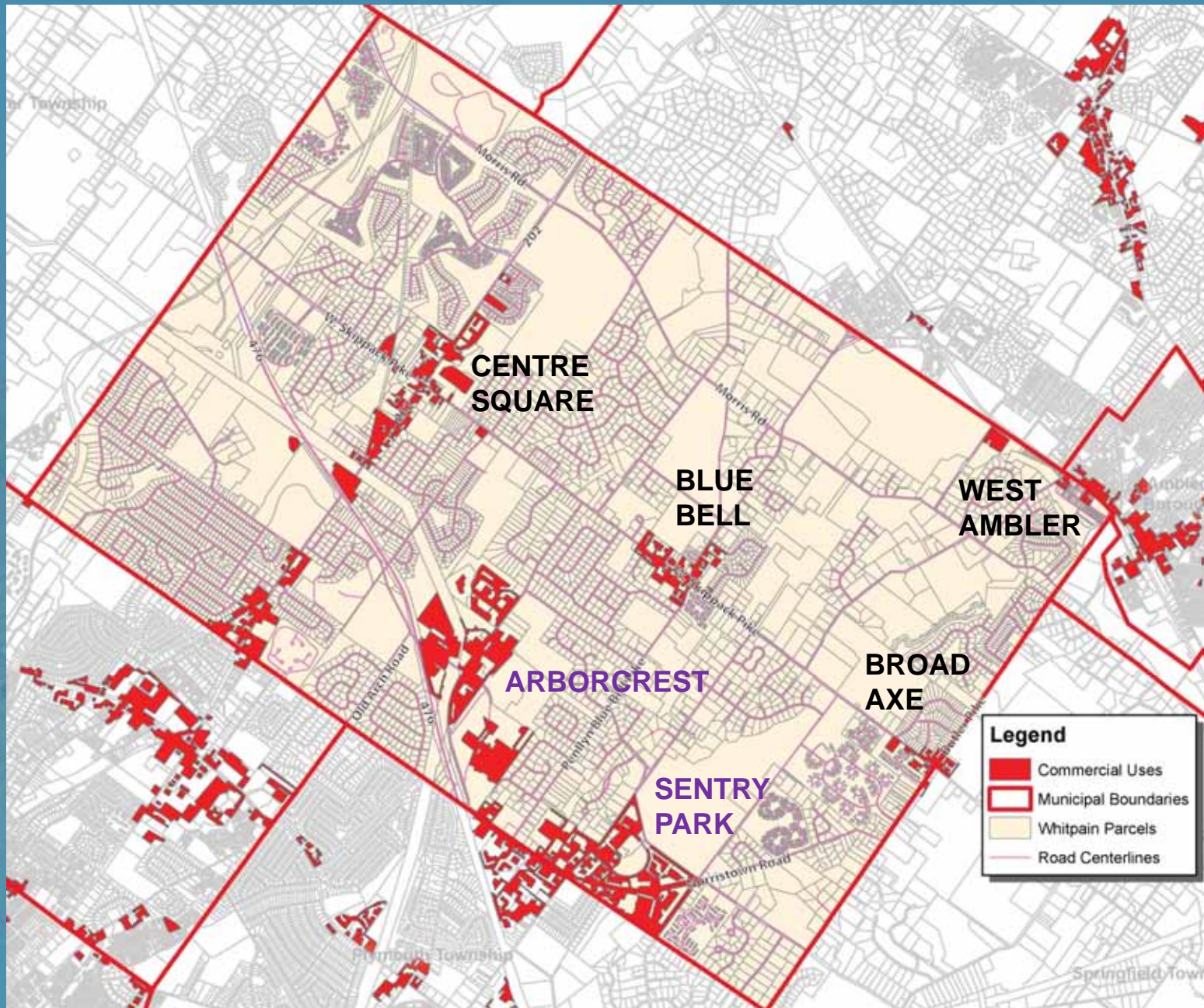


## Residential Land Use (45%)





## Commercial Land Use (4%)

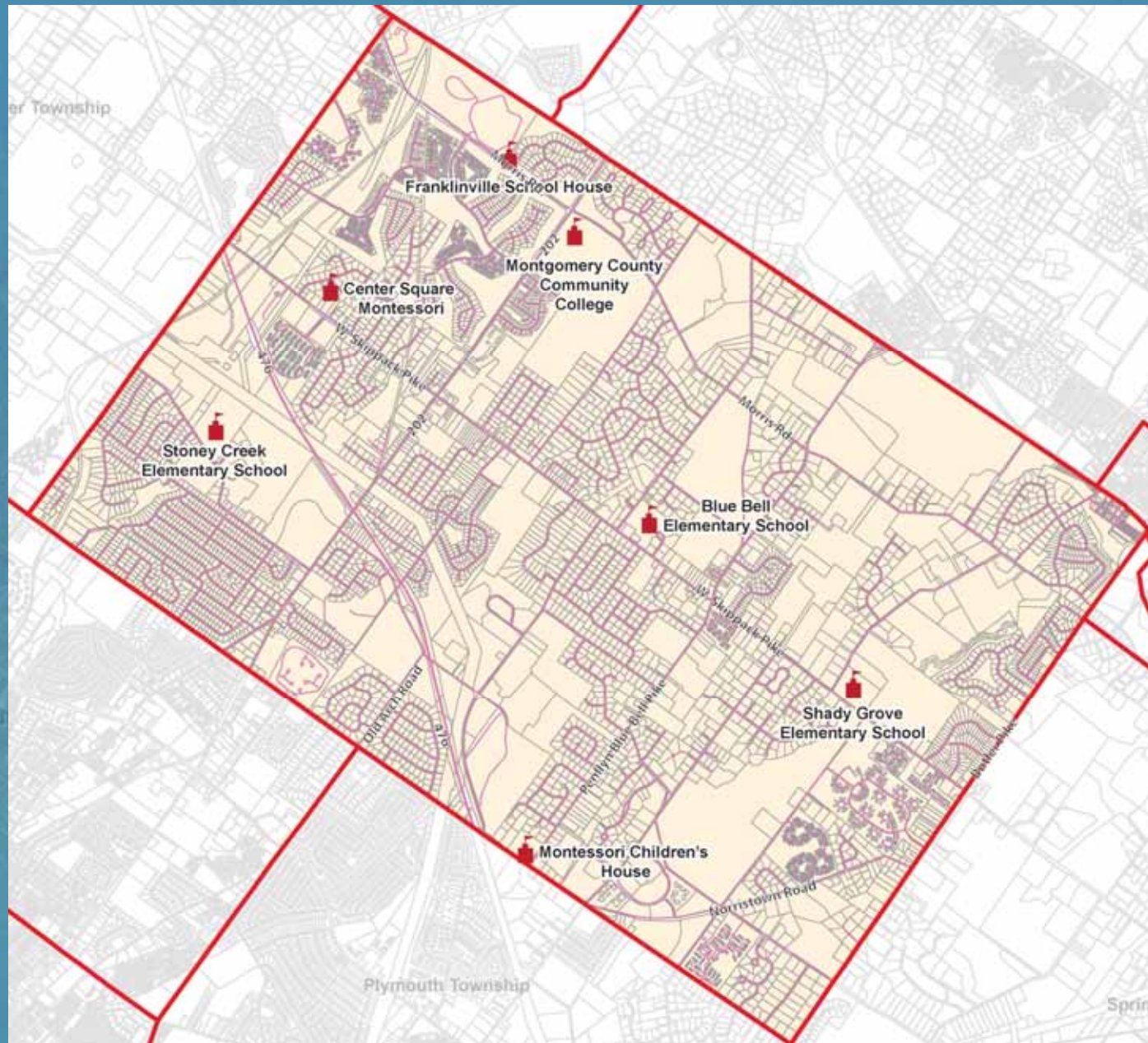




An aerial photograph of a township area, likely in the Dublin region, is shown with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text "EXISTING TOWNSHIP FEATURES" is centered in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font and is underlined. Faint labels for "EAST NORWICH", "UPPER DUBLIN", and "AUGHRIM" are visible on the map background.

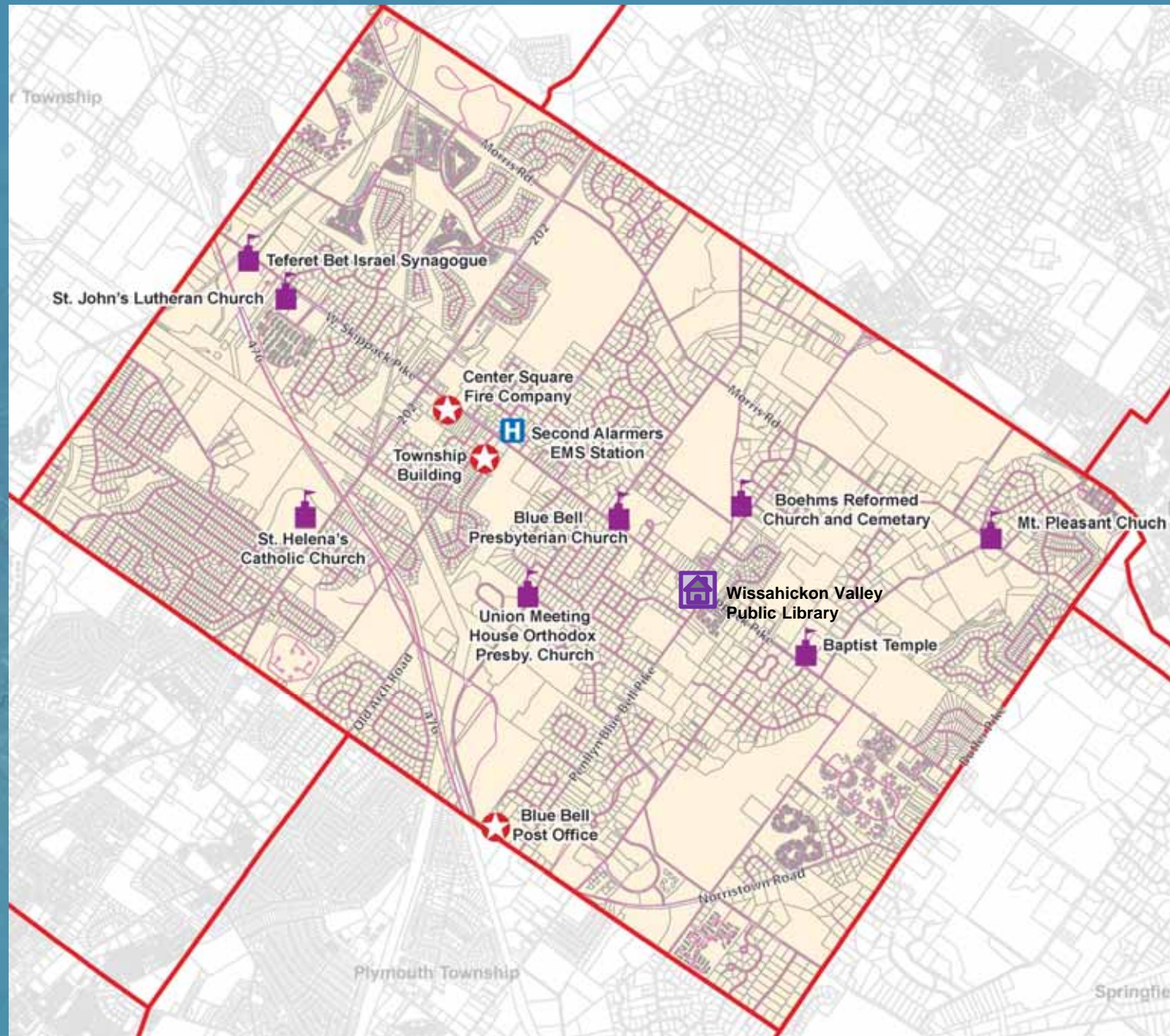
## EXISTING TOWNSHIP FEATURES

# Schools



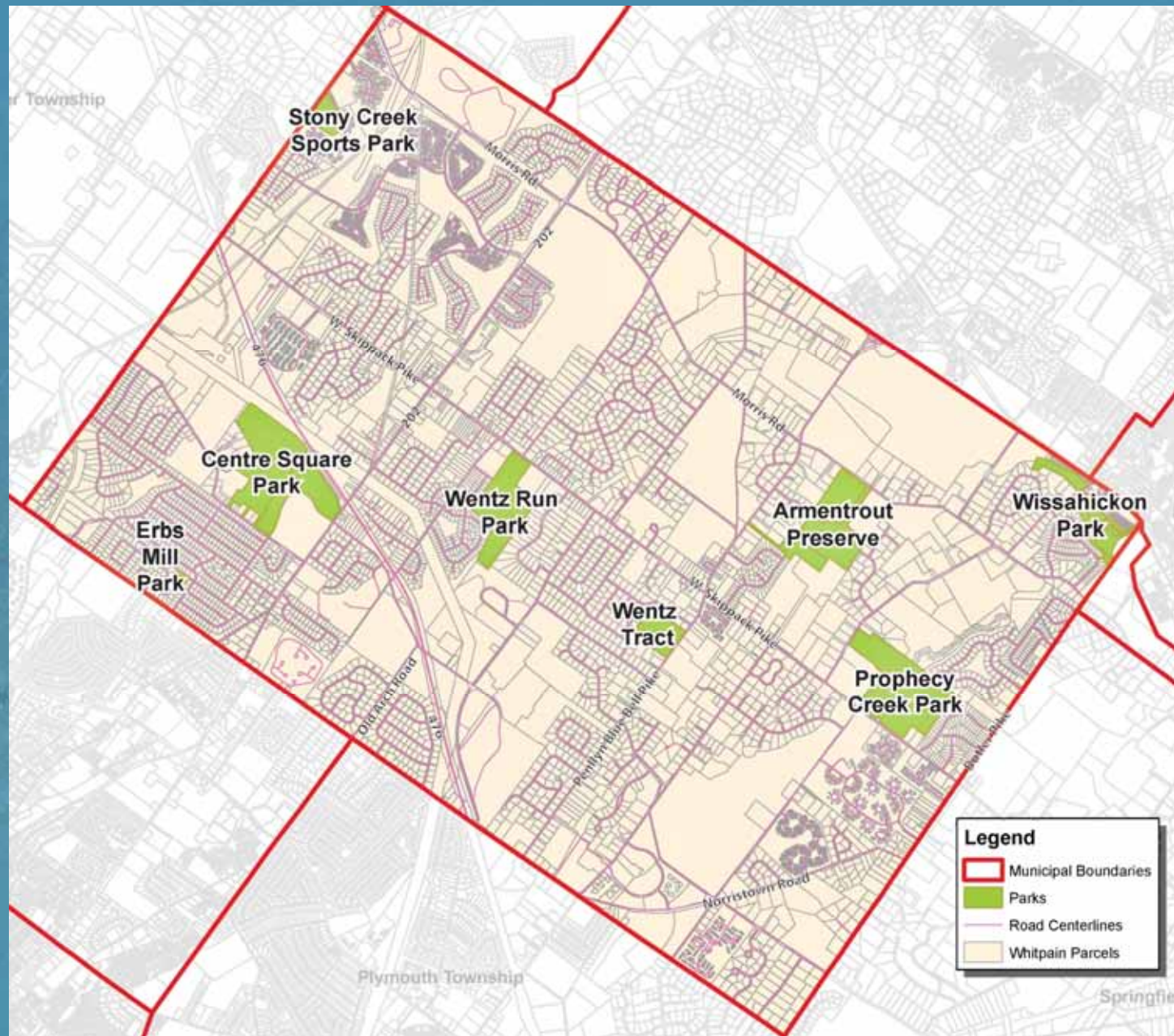


# Community & Emergency Services





# Parks





## Armentrout Preserve



## Prophecy Creek Park

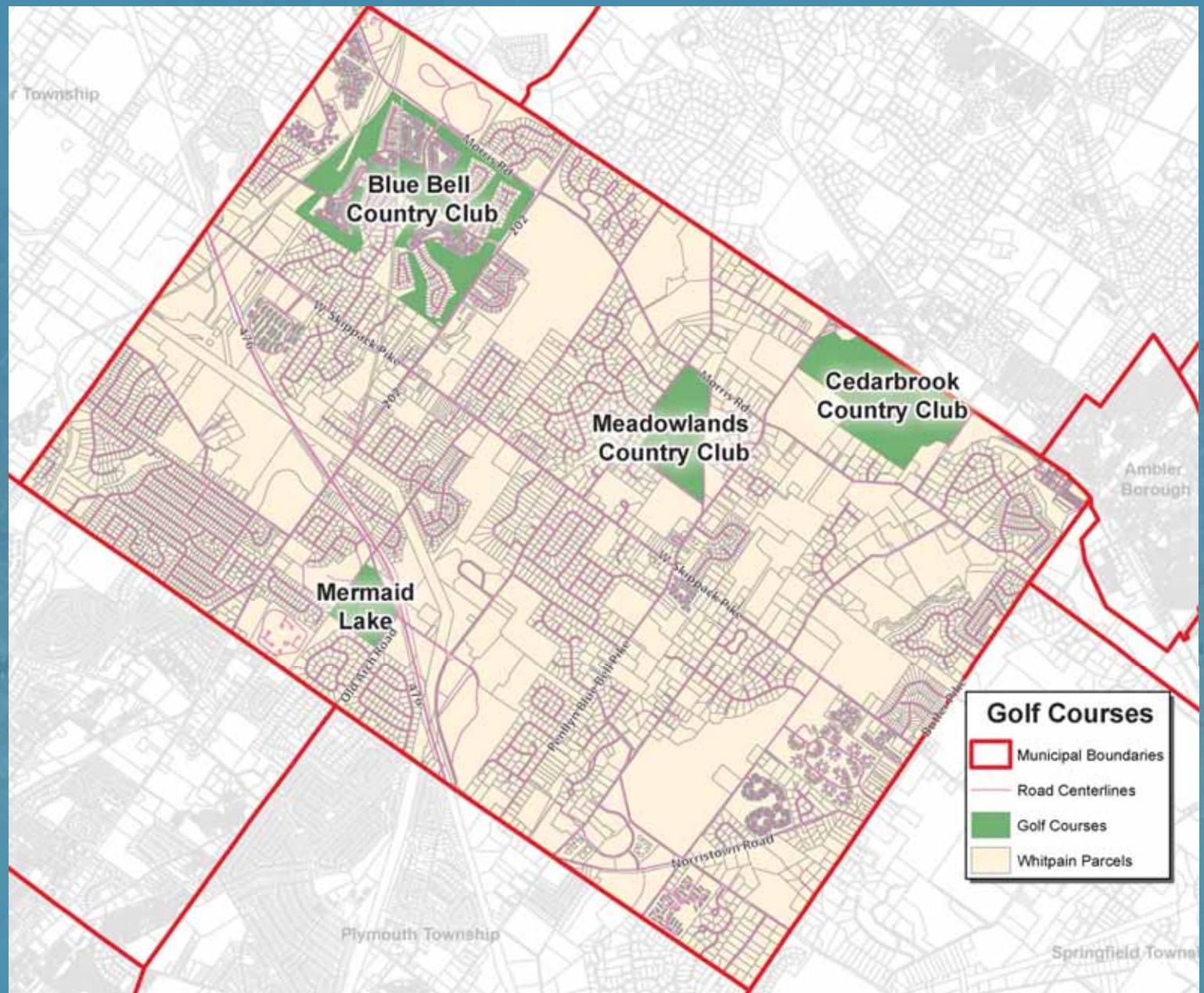


## Wentz Run Park



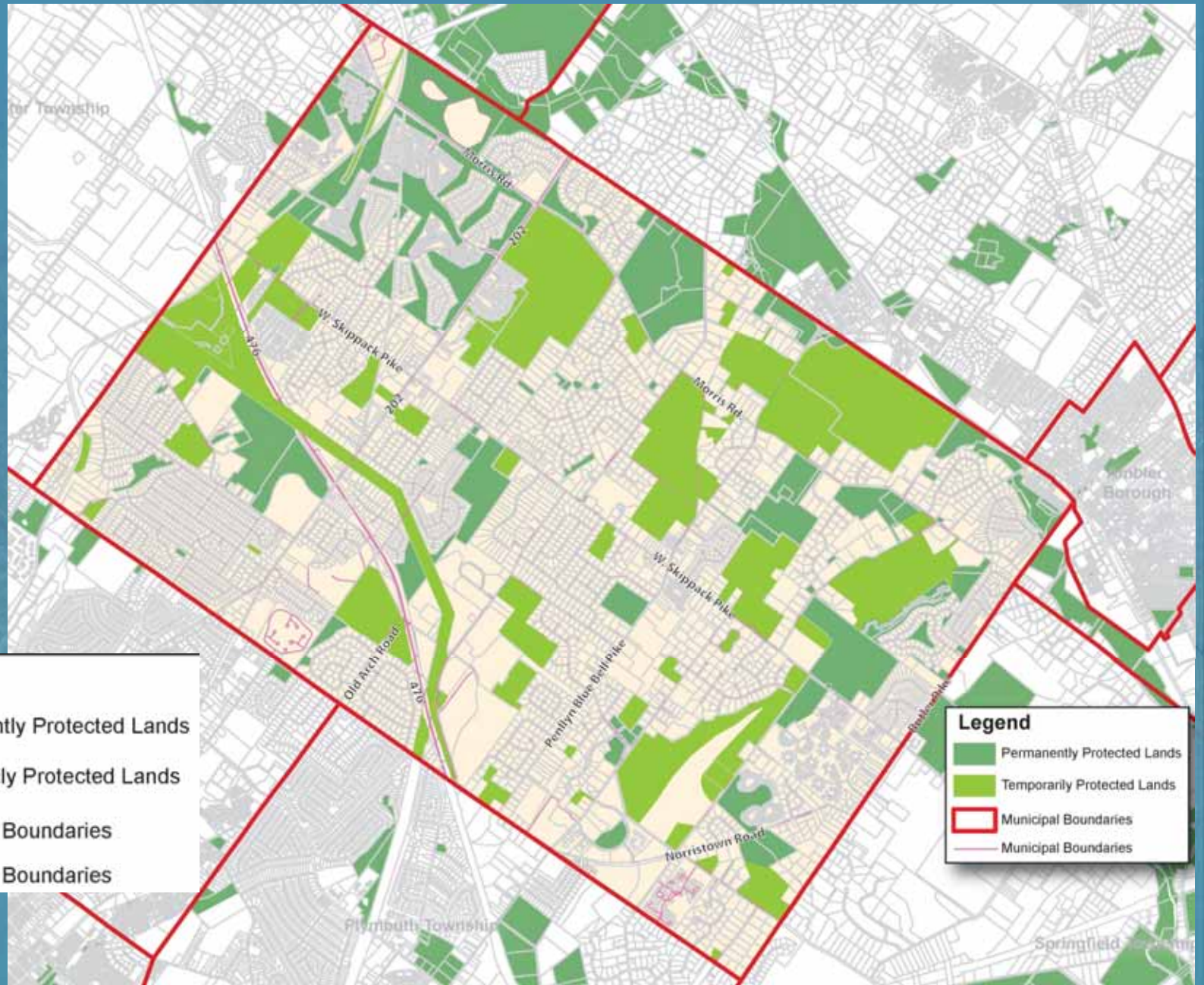


# Golf Courses





# Temporary & Permanently Preserved Lands



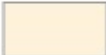



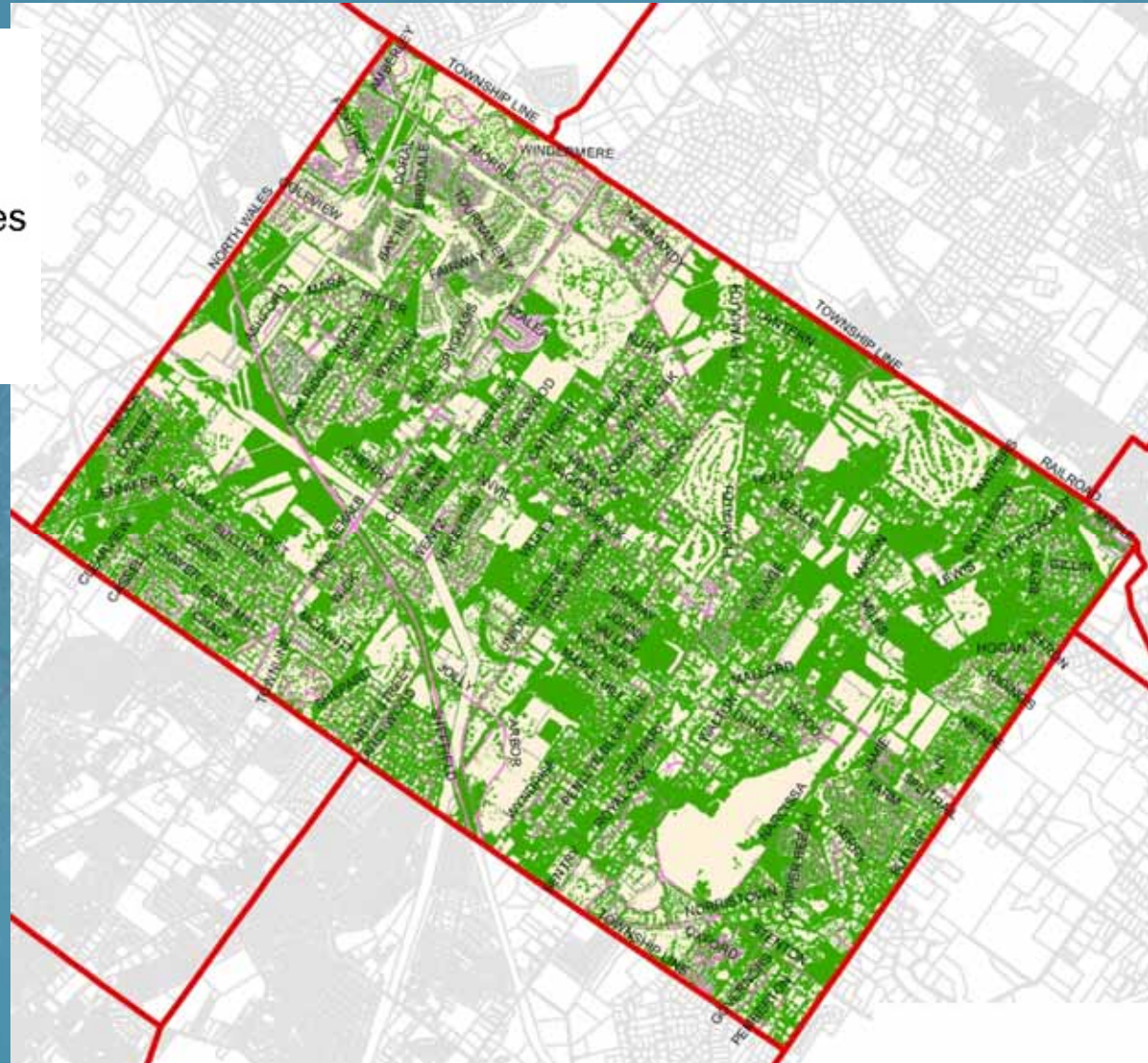


# Tree Cover

- 3,547 Acres (43%)

## Legend


-  Tree Canopy
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Whitpain Parcels
-  Road Centerlines






# Streams & Watersheds in Whitpain Township

## Legend


 Municipal Boundaries

 Road Centerlines

 Streams

## Watersheds

### MAIN\_BASIN

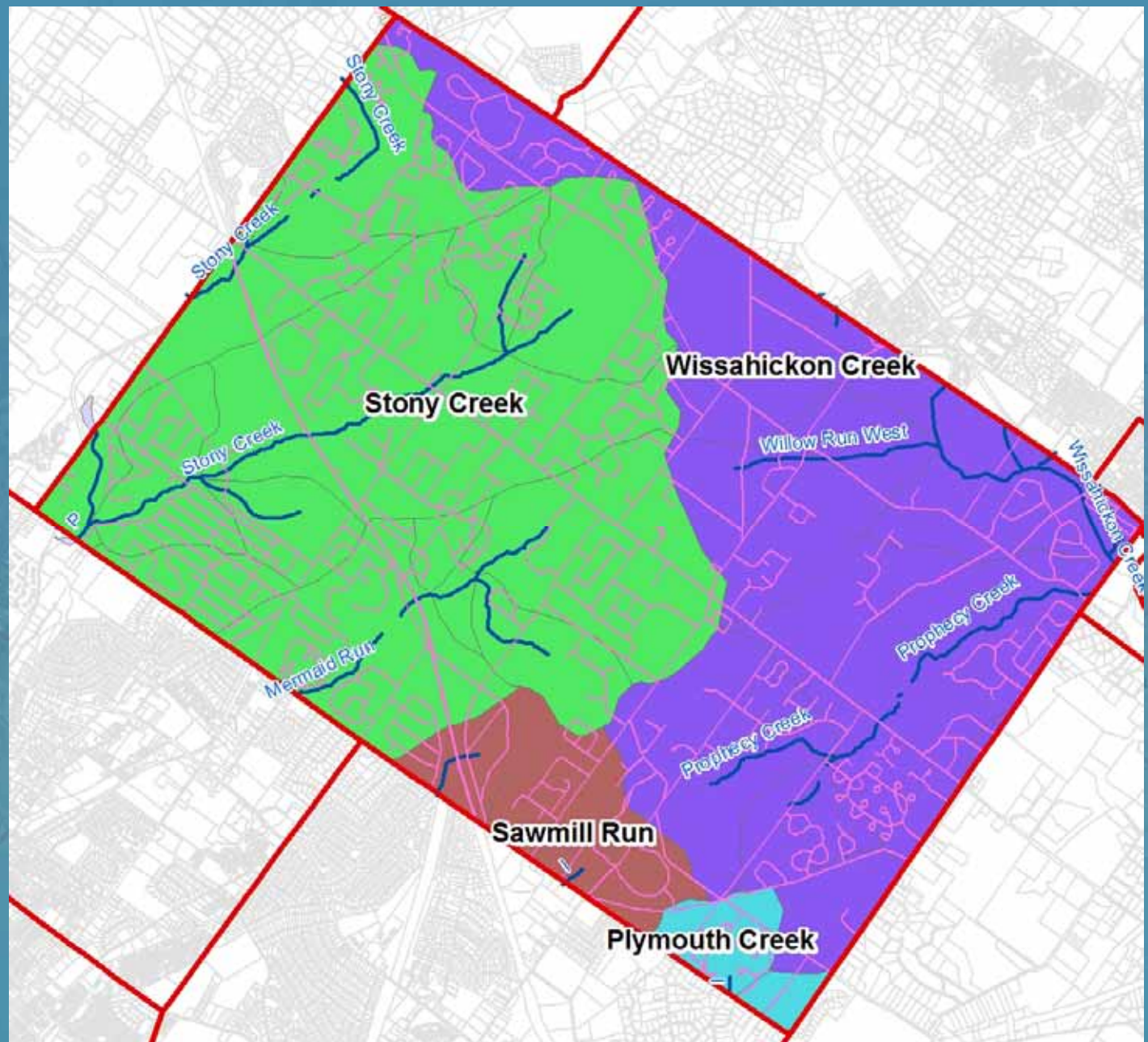
 Plymouth Creek

 Sawmill Run

 Stony Creek

 Wissahickon Creek

 WaterBodies



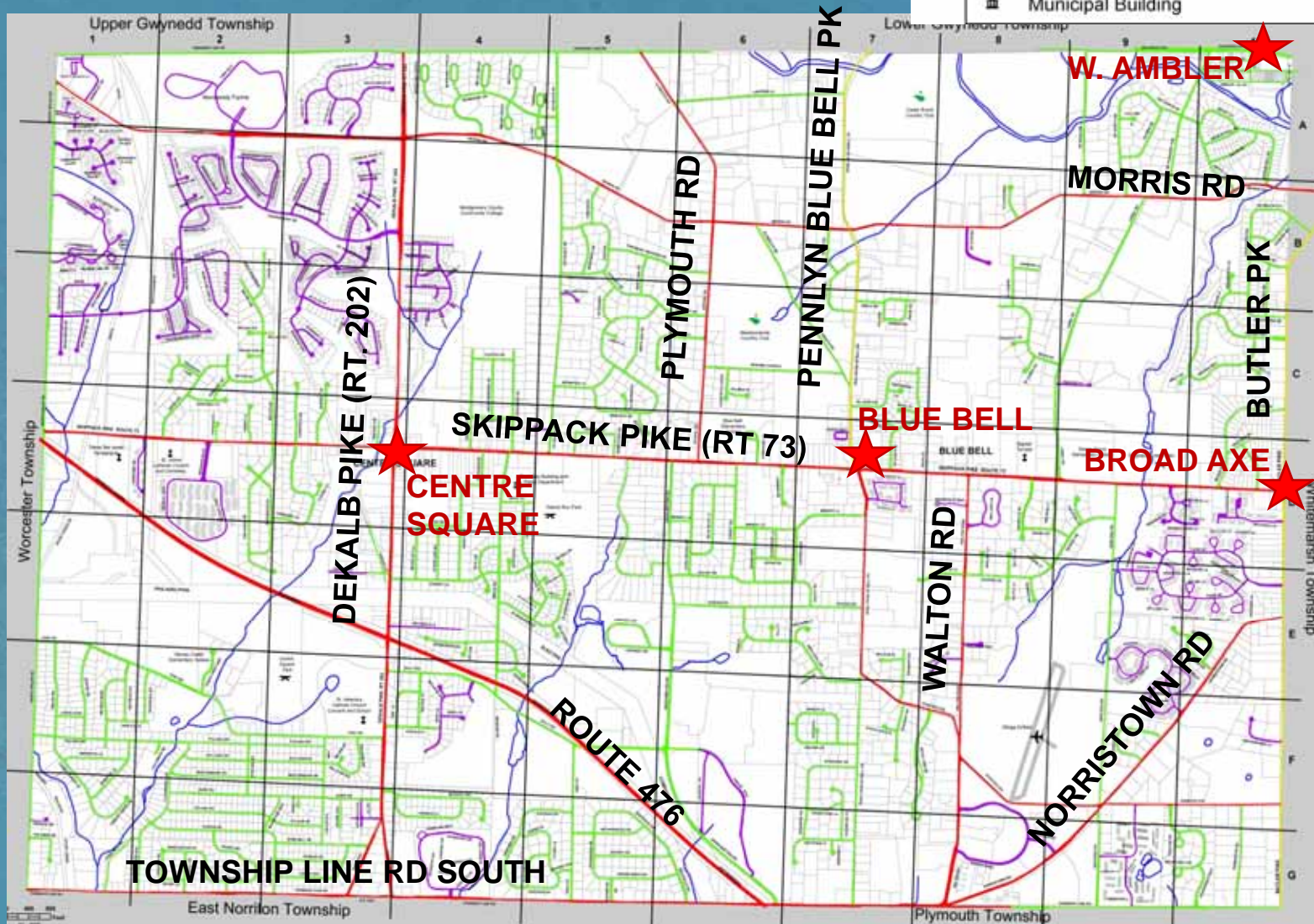
An aerial photograph of Dublin, Ireland, is shown with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The word "TRANSPORTATION" is written in bold, yellow, sans-serif capital letters and is underlined. The text is centered horizontally and positioned in the upper-middle part of the image. Faint labels for "UPPER DUBLIN", "AVONDALE", and "EAST DUBLIN" are visible on the right side of the map. The blue overlay covers most of the image, with some lighter areas where the map's details are more visible.

# TRANSPORTATION



# State, County, Township, & Private Roads

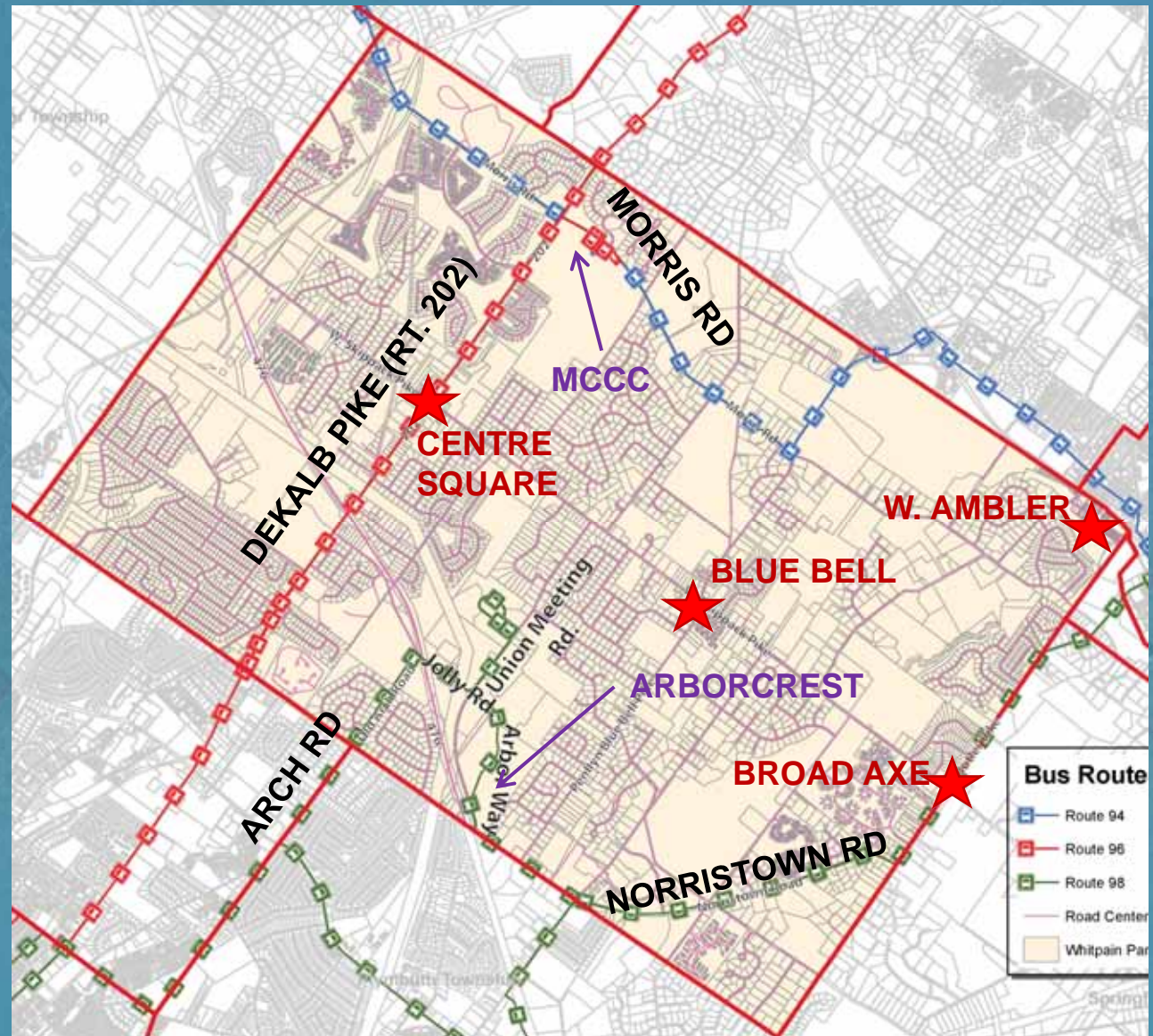
| Legend               |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| ⛪ Churches           | ~ Streams                    |
| 🎓 Schools            | — State Roads (21.09 mi.)    |
| ✈ Airports           | — County Roads (3.75 mi.)    |
| 🏡 Country Clubs      | — Township Roads (68.43 mi.) |
| ⌘ Parks              | — Private Roads (21.38 mi.)  |
| 🏛 Municipal Building |                              |





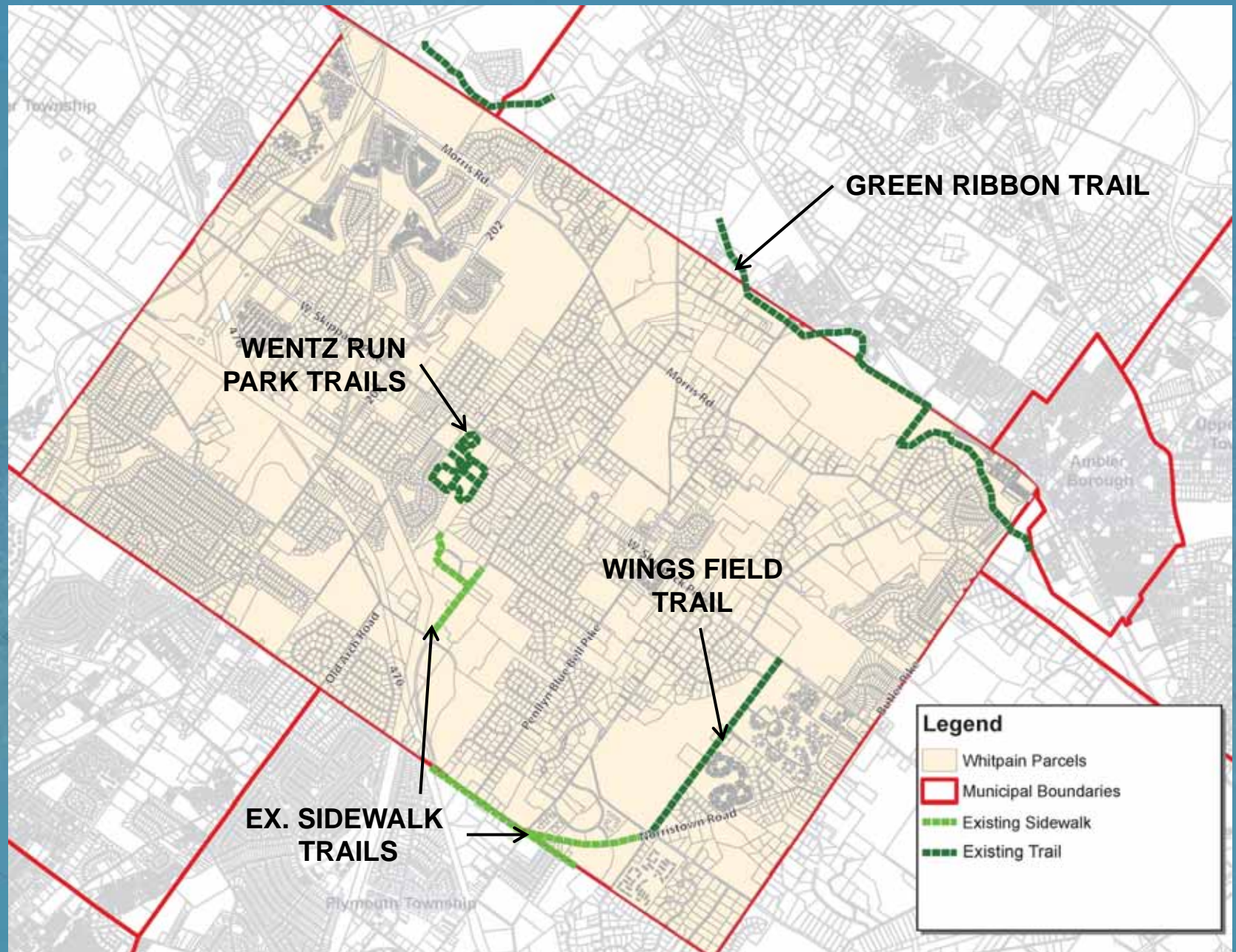
## SEPTA Bus Routes in Whitpain

Is there a need for a Route 73 bus route through Blue Bell?



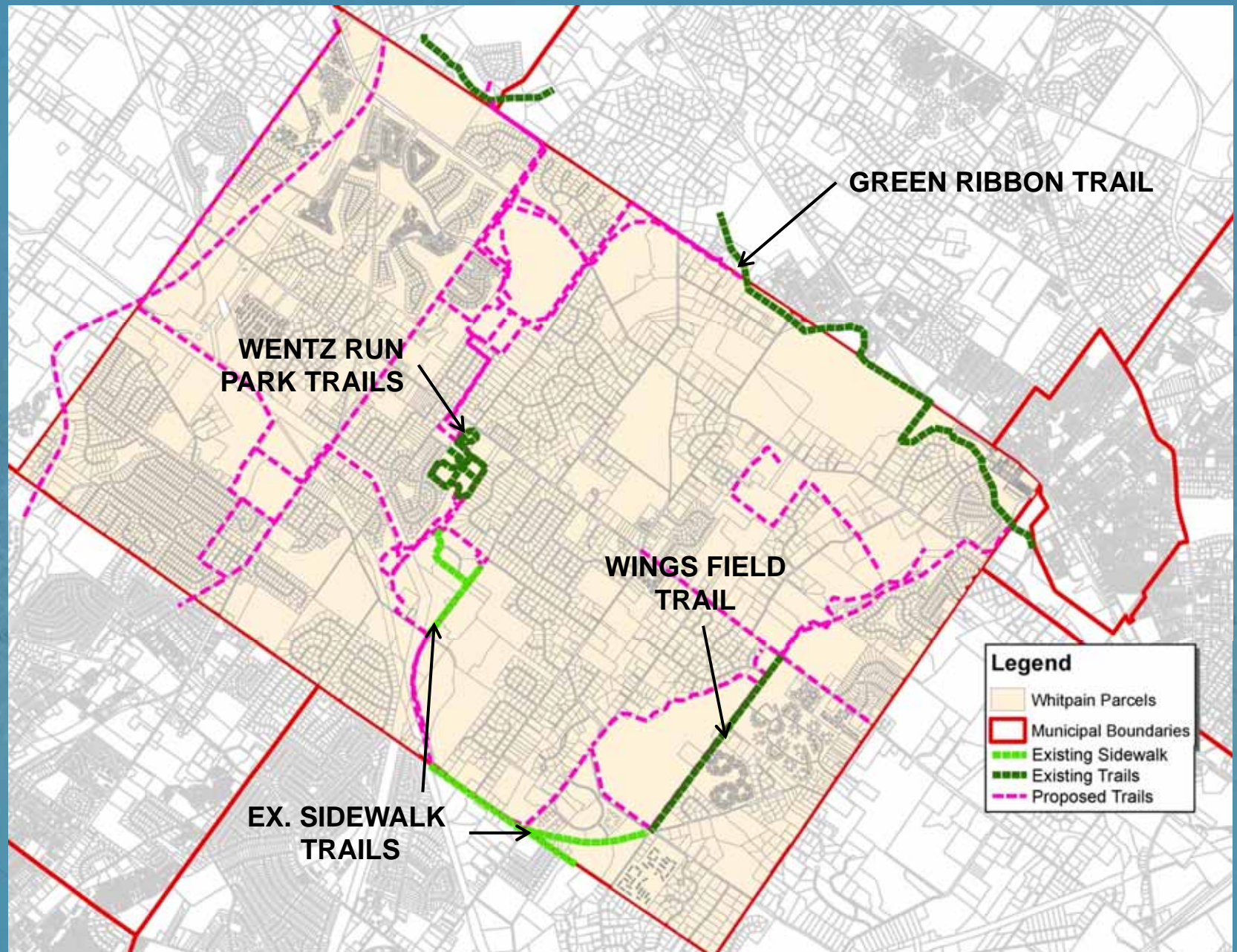


## Existing Trails



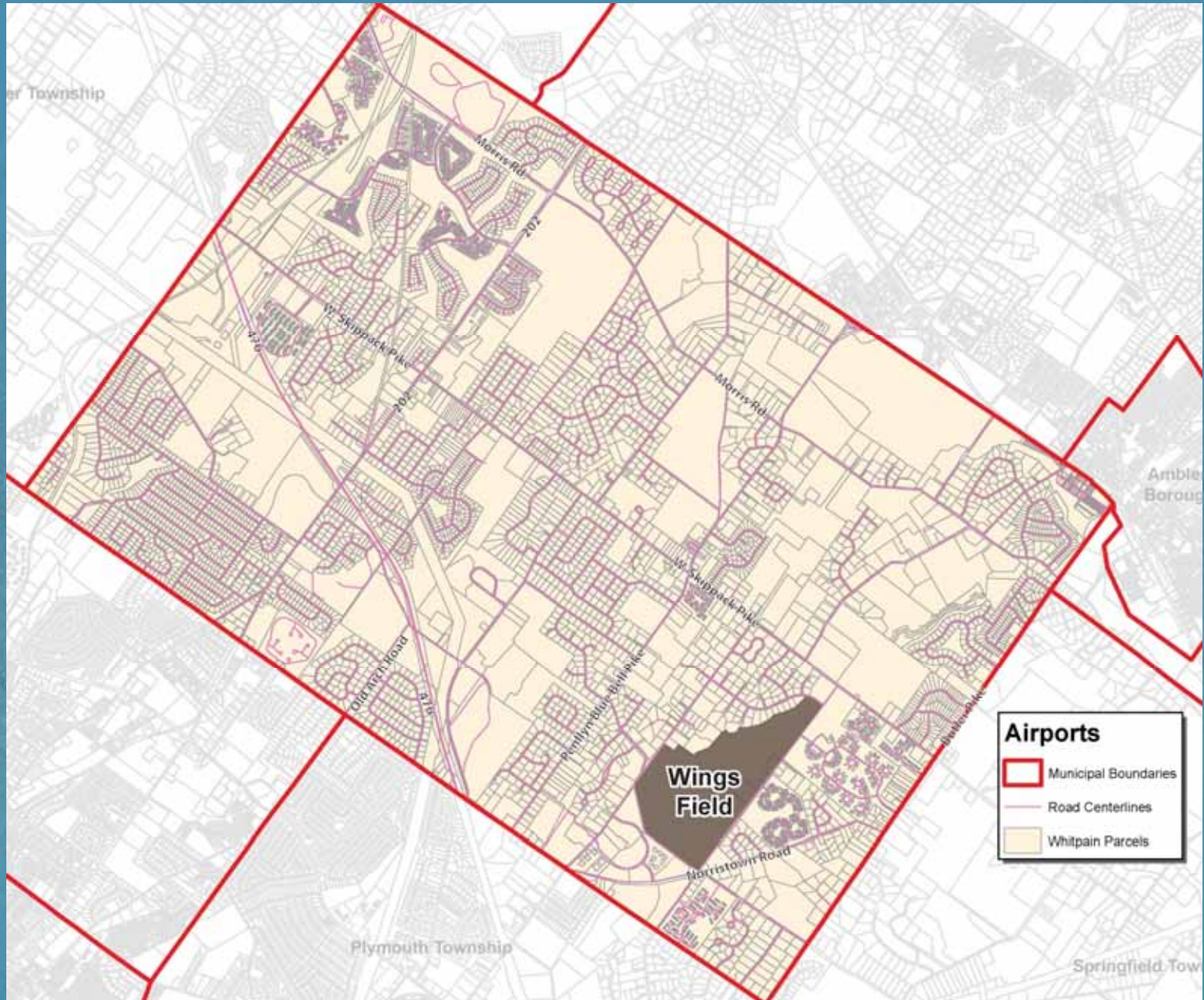


# Proposed Trails





## Wings Field

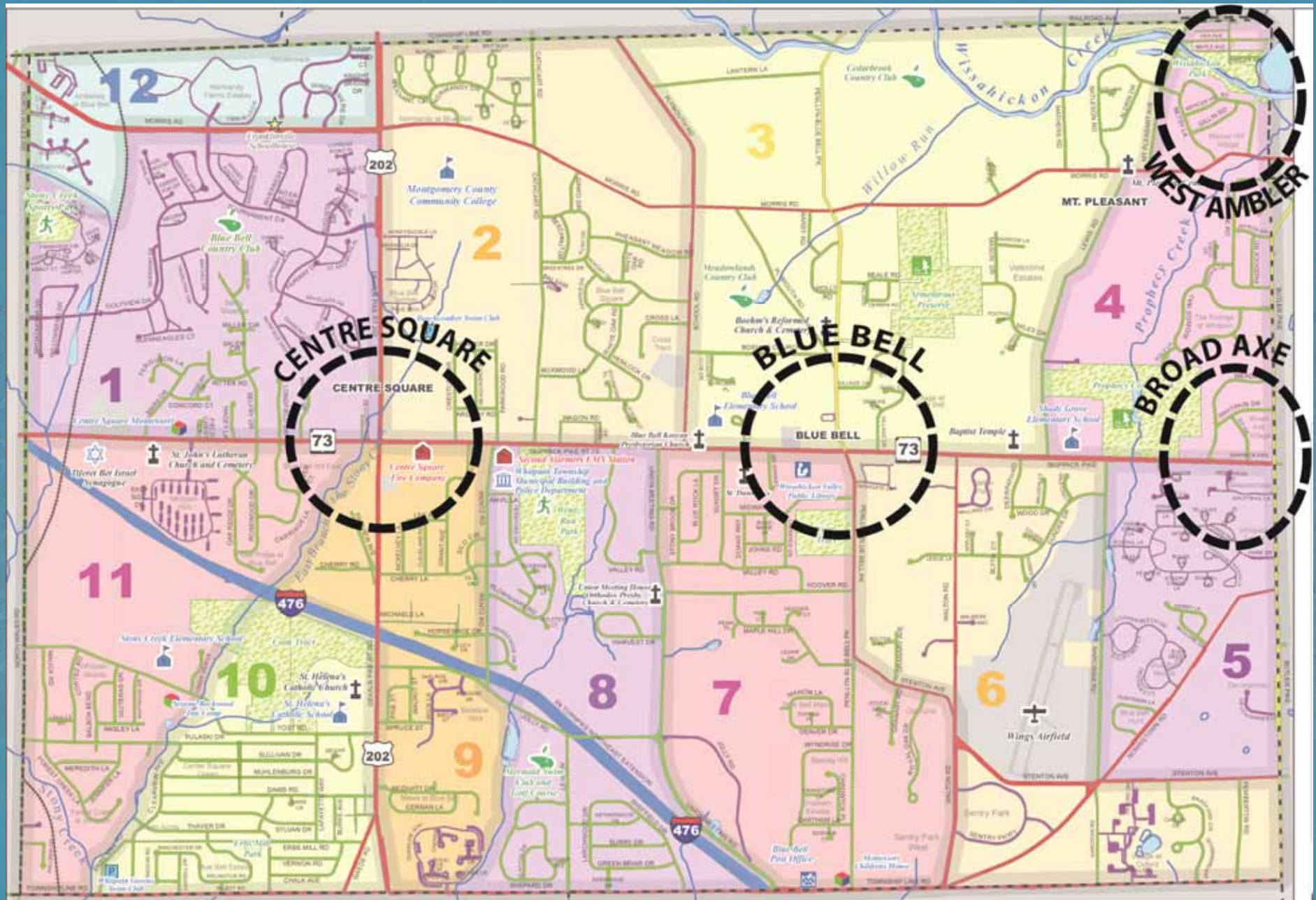




An aerial photograph of a township, likely in Ireland, showing a dense network of roads and fields. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A yellow underlined text 'TOWNSHIP VILLAGE AREAS' is centered on the map. Several place names are visible in white text: 'SPRING BURN' in the top left, 'LAWSON BURN' in the top right, 'EAST NORWICH' in the bottom left, 'UPPER DUBLIN' in the middle right, 'AVON' in the bottom right, and 'UPPER DUBLIN' in the bottom right corner.

# TOWNSHIP VILLAGE AREAS

# Whitpain Township's 4 Villages





# VILLAGE FOCUS: BROAD AXE VILLAGE



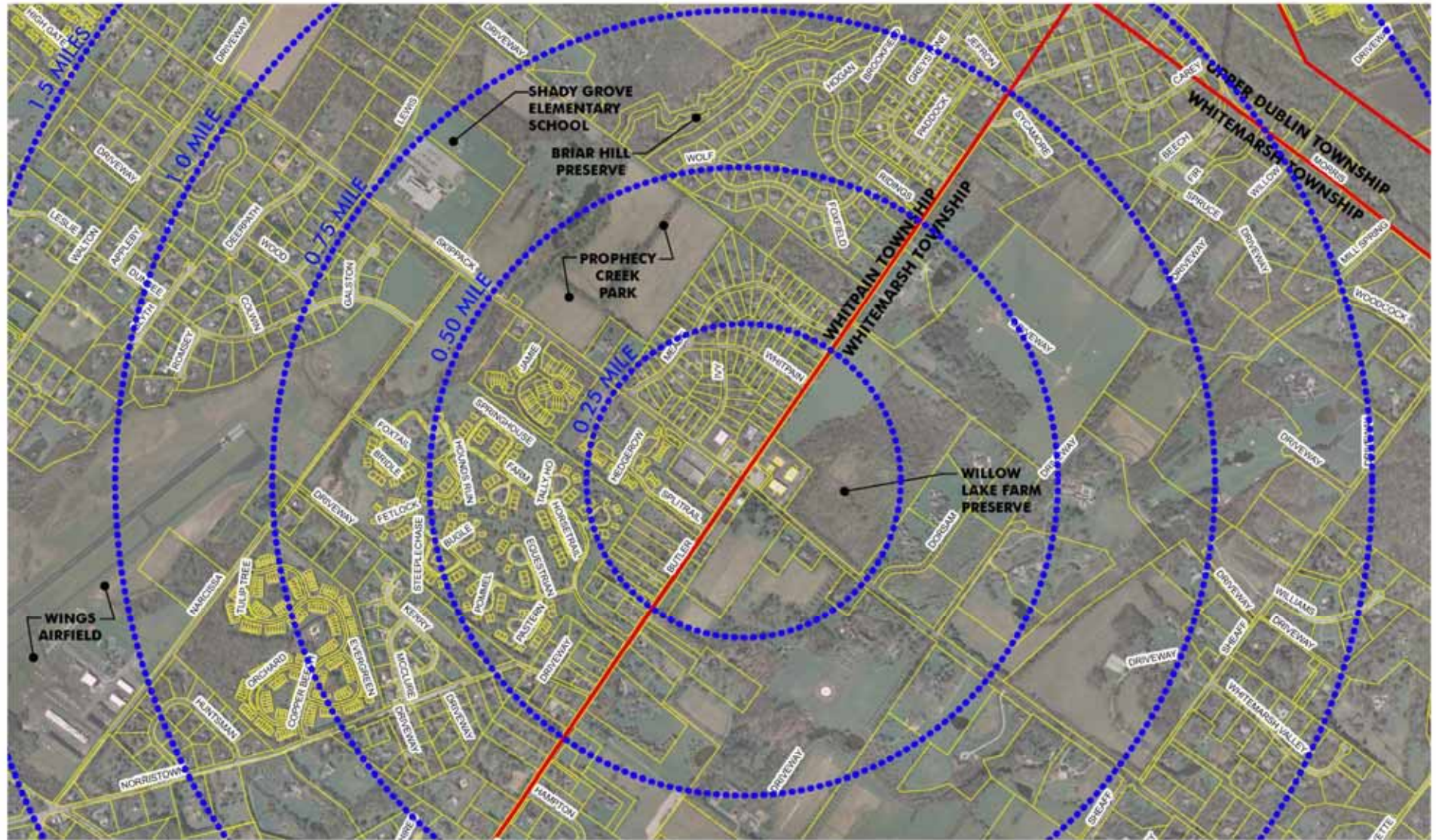


# Broad Axe Village



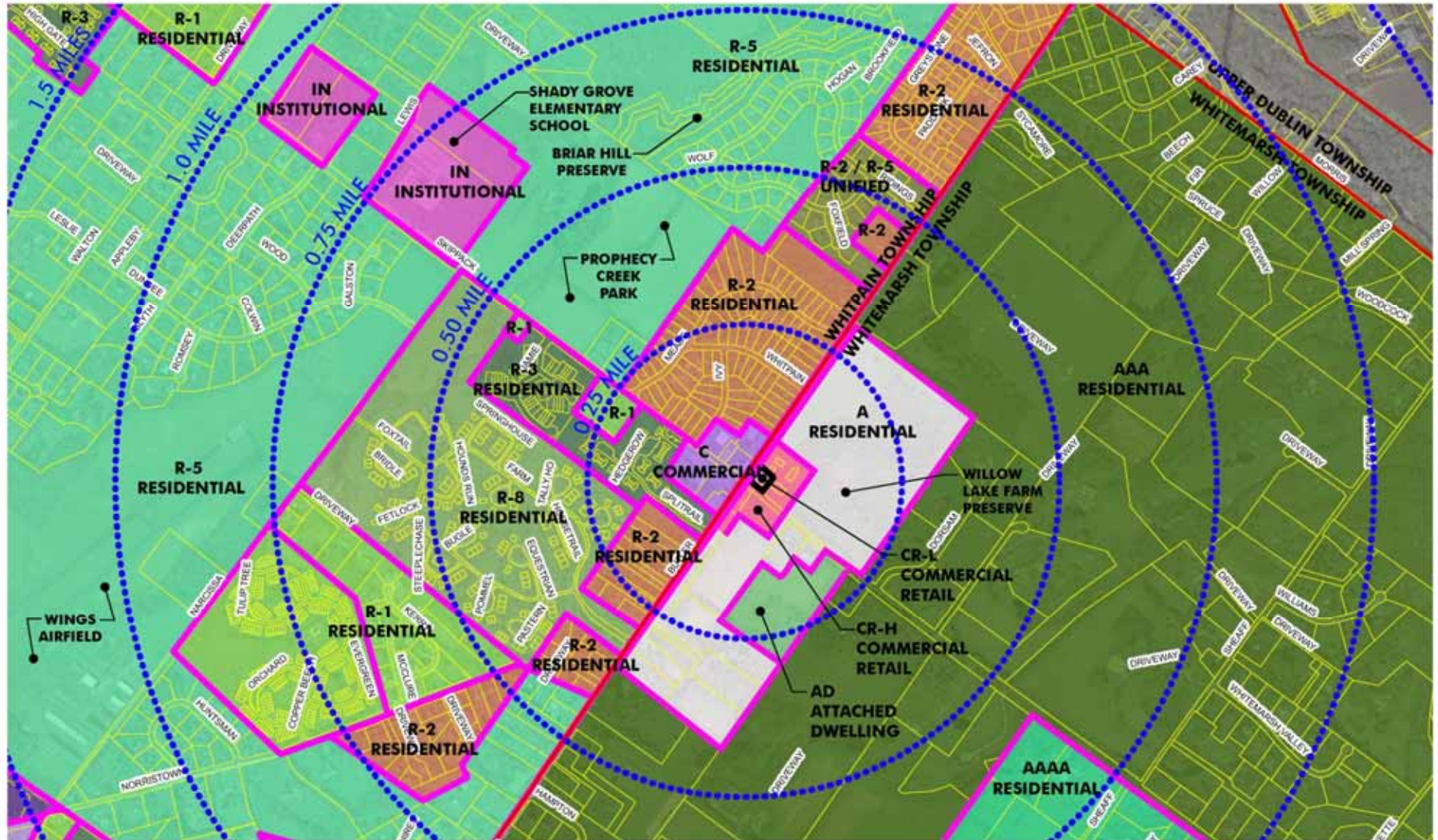


# Broad Axe Village - Distances to Village Center



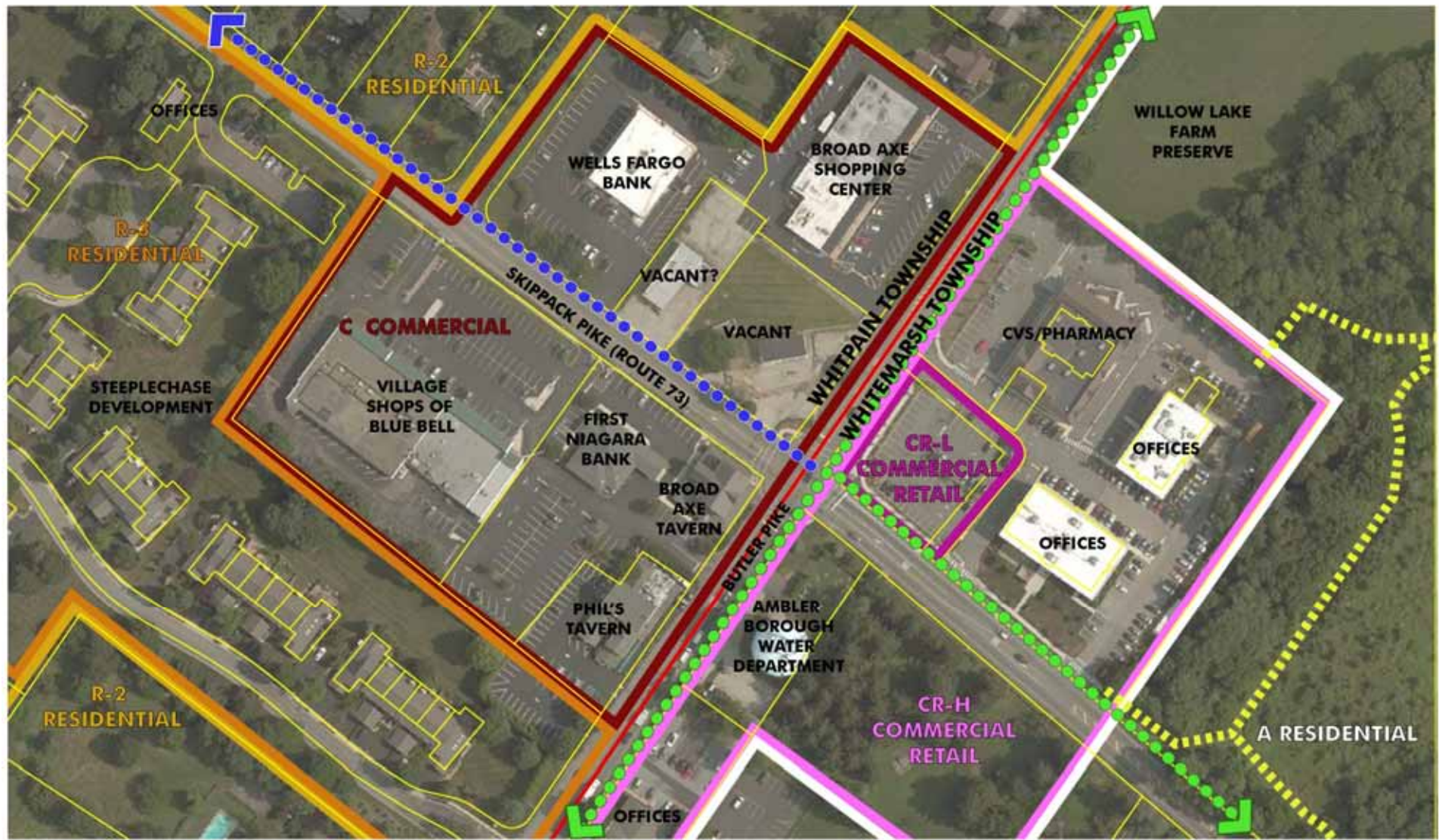


# Broad Axe Village - Zoning





# Broad Axe Village





## Broad Axe Village



Village Stores of Blue Bell



Wells Fargo Bank & adjacent vacant building



First Niagara Bank



Broad Axe Tavern



## Broad Axe Village



**Vacant Gas Station Property**



**Ambler Borough Water Authority Property**



**CVS/Pharmacy and (2) Office Buildings**



**Broad Axe Shopping Center**

## Broad Axe Village





## **Broad Axe Village Opportunities and Challenges**

- **Walkability, safe pedestrian routes, and trail connections**
- **Connections to School and Prophecy Creek Park**
- **Eliminate short vehicular trips to village**
- **Development of two vacant properties**
- **Appearance of future development**
- **Marketing of Broad Axe Village**
- **Coordination with Whitemarsh Township to strengthen village center**
- **Streetscape improvements**
- **Traffic calming measures**

## **Community Survey**

Obtaining feedback from the community is vital to the planning process. We would appreciate you taking the time to complete the following 26 question survey. It should take about 10-15 minutes.

**To take the online survey, please use the link below:**

**<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WhitpainCompPlan>**

or go to **<http://www.whitpaintownship.net/>**



# Now, your ideas, comments, and suggestions.

## Brainstorming – Card Technique

### GOALS

**Goals and priorities for the project** — initially broad, then specific: “Enhance Village Areas” or “Improve Traffic Safety”

Existing **land use, roadway conditions, natural resources, Township destinations, development projects, trails**, all the various interest groups / **Partners** involved in the project

### FACTS

### CONCEPTS

**Ideas for attaining project goals** — “Create Safe Pedestrian Sidewalks”, “Enhance Marketing of Villages”, or “Enhance Stormwater Management”

## **Next Town Hall Meeting: Wed. Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm**

**Topic:** Environmental Factors

**Village Focus:** Blue Bell Village

**Location:** Manor House at Prophecy Creek, 205 W. Skippack Pike, Ambler, PA 19002

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Jeff Featherstone, Professor of Community & Regional Planning Temple University – Ambler Campus



# Comprehensive Plan for Whitpain Township

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