

PREFACE

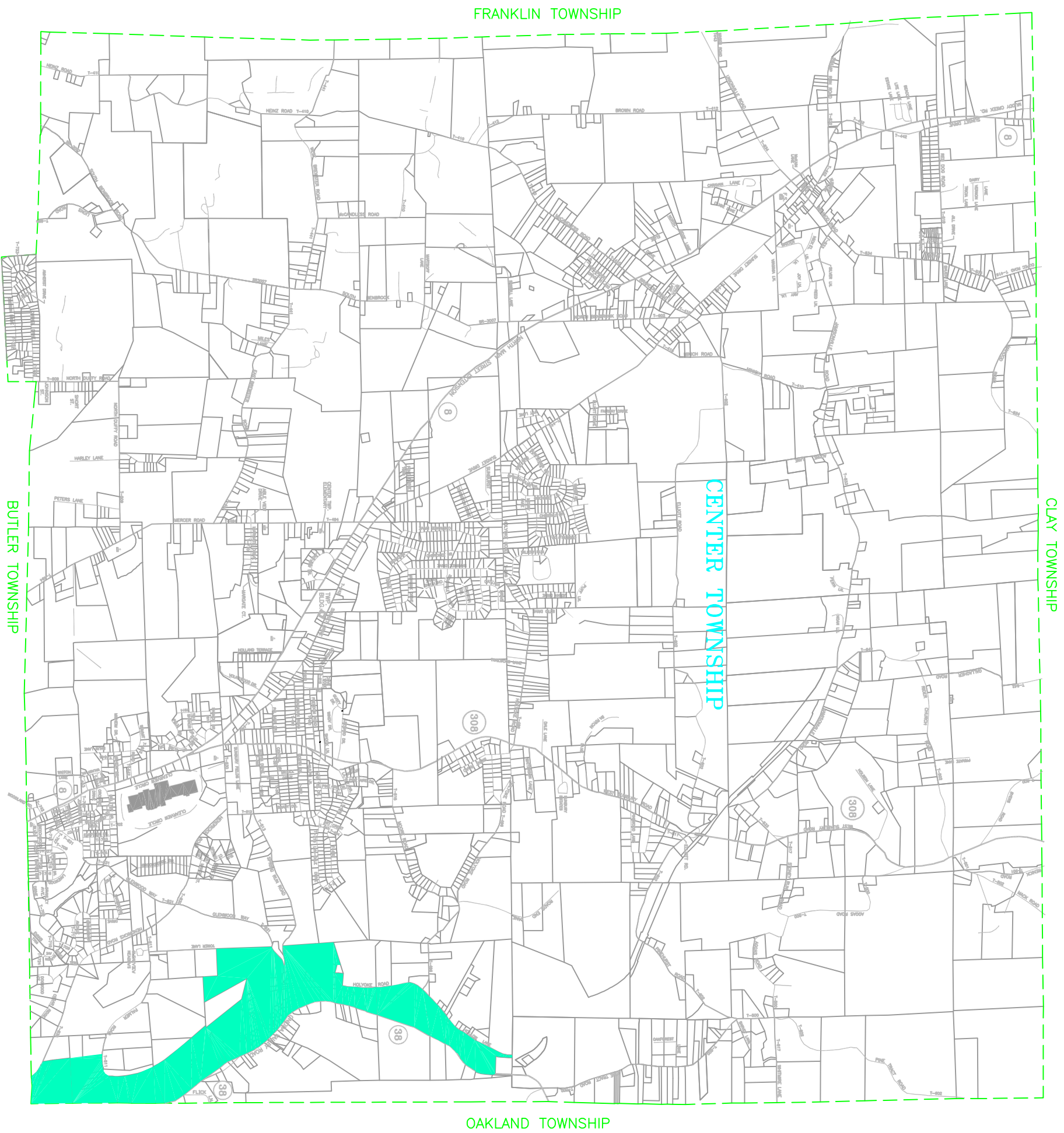
The planning process in Pennsylvania is one that, once begun, must become viable and flexible as the community evolves through time. The initial documents and implementation tools which are developed and enacted are not meant to be the standards for all time. They should be developed with the knowledge that within a specified time period (usually 3-5 years) they will be "re-opened" for review and updating in order to address new growth pressures, any alternative development programs, etc.

Center Township has indicated its willingness to provide an active and viable planning program for its residents, with its initial involvement in the completion of a Comprehensive Development Plan for central Butler County in 1971. The Township Supervisors realized that the community was evolving, growing and changing because of various developmental pressures and completed an "update" of the Comprehensive Development Plan with a "master" plan in 1982. This master plan considered the various growth pressures at the time and provided updated recommendations for land use goals.

In addition to the development of the plan, the Township has also enacted various land use ordinances such as zoning, subdivision and land development, junk car, floodplain and others, to implement the goals identified in those plans.

Center Township as a whole, is a viable, growing community. However, there exist neighborhoods which are facing disparate pressures. Some are growing and feeling the pressure of needed public services, while other neighborhoods are experiencing a loss of residents and remaining vacant due to needed land use changes. Additionally, the region in which the Township belongs is also experiencing the pressures of change, change which affects Center Township. The current elected officials have observed the recent transformations within various sections of the Township and believe that it is necessary to update the existing plan and its' supplemental ordinances. This process will culminate in the creation of a specific set of goals designed with community objectives in mind.

This Comprehensive Development Plan, as presented, provides an update of the previous plan completed for the Township in 1982, as well as building on and analyzing many comments and recommendations from the 1971-73 documents. It represents the continuing planning effort of both the Board of Township Supervisors, the Planning



**CENTER TOWNSHIP
PARCEL MAP**

Commission and residents, and has been developed as a plan which can be used as a guide in creating policies and taking action to mitigate or eliminate problems or deficiencies which have been identified during the process.

BRIEF HISTORY

Center Township, Butler County, was first settled in 1796 by a colony of sixty (60) men (most of which were Revolutionary War veterans) migrating primarily from Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties. Mostly of Scotch-Irish decent and German, the men agreed to place their name into a hat in order to draw for the four hundred (400) acre parcels of land located in the areas that is now Center, Franklin, Clay and Oakland Townships.

In the hopes of promoting business, on October 8, 1805, the Township was officially established. Votes were then taken for governor, congressman, senator and commissioners to represent the citizens of the Township.

The Township's early growth patterns centered around a wealth of natural resources, initially land, water and timber, and then, in the latter 19th century, coal, oil and natural gas. Several "boon towns" grew out of the discovery of oil and gas and the need to provide services to the thriving businesses, among them, Unionville which was established around 1828.

Located in the "center" of Butler County, the Township's principal industry had been farming with coal mining a distant second. Today, however, retail and service industries lead the way with farming still an integral part of many residents' way of life. Beautiful rolling hills, picturesque views and a close proximity to the City of Butler combine to make Center Township an excellent place for people who want to live in the "country" and still have all of the advantages of city life.