Objectives

Lower Merion Township

Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan

Role of Institutions in Comprehensive Plan

Analysis of Institutions as Dynamic Land Use

Conclusions

Case Study of ‘The Palmer’
## Most Populous Municipalities in Pennsylvania (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Philadelphia City</td>
<td>1,547,607</td>
<td>142.7</td>
<td>10,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pittsburgh City</td>
<td>306,211</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>5,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Allentown City</td>
<td>118,974</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>6,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Erie City</td>
<td>101,047</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>5,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reading City</td>
<td>88,102</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Upper Darby Township</td>
<td>82,779</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>10,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Scranton City</td>
<td>75,809</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>2,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bethlehem City</td>
<td>58,143</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>3,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bensalem Township</td>
<td>60,497</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>2,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lancaster City</td>
<td>59,360</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8,072</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lower Merion Township</td>
<td>58,143</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>2,439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Residential land use comprises approximately 74.76% of the township’s land area. In 2010, there were 24,095 housing units in the community. Of these, 57.4% were single-family detached, 11.3% were single-family attached, and 31.3% were multi-family residential.

Between 1990 and 2010 the number of housing units in the Township increased by less than one percent (0.95%).
Housing densities in the Township range from 0.3 housing units per acre in Gladwyne to 9.49 housing units per acre in Ardmore.

In 2010, the median value of a house in Lower Merion Township was $545,000. Approximately 16.7% of homes in the Township were valued at over $1,000,000.
Issues Oriented – Place Based Comprehensive Plan
Township began Comprehensive Plan process at a time of unprecedented land development and zoning activity including:

- Commercial Area Rezoning for mixed use
- Expansion of two hospitals (Bryn Mawr & Lankenau)
- Tear down rebuild of residential neighborhoods
- District wide public school modernization
Institutional Expansion was identified as one of the top issues facing the Township in the Issues Report.

Issues associated with Institutional Expansion included:
- Traffic
- Stormwater Runoff
- Light
- Noise
- Intensity of Use
- Hours of Use
- Loss of Open Space
- Loss of Historic Resources
- Unpredictable and Lengthy Approval Process
Comprehensive Plan – Vision/Goals/Principles

Defining Land Use Characteristics/Future Land Use

Lower Merion is an established, high quality diverse first-ring suburb with strong established residential neighborhoods with educational, institutional, and commercial uses interspersed through it and that future growth strategies should focus on fulfilling the original design intent of neighborhood patterns and commercial districts, which make the Township such a uniquely wonderful place.
COMMUNITY MAP
Township of Lower Merion

January 2008

INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS
PENNSYLVANIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 18, 2016
Comprehensive Plan – Community Development Objective 4.

Maintain the vitality and diversity of private institutions, including colleges, universities, religious institutions, hospitals and private schools, recognizing their value to the quality of life of the residents and their importance as community resources, while balancing their needs with those of the surrounding neighborhoods.
A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
for the Preservation, Infill, and Redevelopment of
LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

January 2016

LAND USE ELEMENT

Use

Residential

Commercial

Institutions

INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

PENNSYLVANIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 18, 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Location/Area</th>
<th>Form*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Low Density</td>
<td>Zoning Districts: RAA, RA, R1</td>
<td>Single-Family, detached homes on large lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium Density</td>
<td>Zoning Districts: R2, R3, R4, R5</td>
<td>Single-Family, detached homes on modest sized lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Density</td>
<td>Zoning Districts: R6, R6A, R7</td>
<td>Multi-Family homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed-Use</td>
<td>BMVD, MUST, ROHO, CAD, C1 &amp; C2</td>
<td>Mix of residential, commercial &amp; office uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>Penn Wynne &amp; Gladwyne</td>
<td>One to two-story buildings with small footprints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighborhood Main Streets</td>
<td>Rock Hill Rd, Penn Valley, Merion Cynwyd, Haverford, Wynnewood, Penn Wynne (City Avenue), City Avenue South</td>
<td>Multi-story, low to mid-rise buildings with ground floor commercial uses*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional Main Streets</td>
<td>Bala, Bryn Mawr, Ardmore</td>
<td>Multi-story, low to mid-rise buildings with a handful of taller buildings, retail on ground floor*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Centers</td>
<td>City Avenue North</td>
<td>Multi-story, mid to high rise buildings, modern architecture &amp; auto oriented, mix of foot prints*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>Under Five Acres</td>
<td>In residential neighborhoods scattered throughout the Township</td>
<td>Neighborhood Scaled locally focused institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over Five Acres</td>
<td>In residential neighborhoods scattered throughout the Township</td>
<td>Regionally focused institutions with larger campus complexes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Lower Merion’s vast array of cultural, religious, educational, recreational, and medical institutions collectively comprise over 13% of the land area of the Township. Many of the Township’s institutions are well established, predating the incorporation of Lower Merion Township as a township of the first class in 1900 and the subsequent development of the community as a commuter suburb. The presence of a large number of renowned institutions is a distinguishing characteristic of Lower Merion Township. The historical, cultural, and architectural character of local institutions contributes to the Township’s unique sense of place. The location of many major institutions along major thoroughfares, and also adjacent to and within residential neighborhoods, helps to define the Township’s land use pattern and impacts the transportation network. A healthy balance between dynamic institutional land uses and the surrounding residential neighborhoods has been identified as a high priority through the comprehensive planning process.

What are institutions?

Institutions can be broadly defined as land uses which serve a community’s educational, religious, social, healthcare, recreational, and cultural needs. Institutions may be privately owned or owned and operated by government agencies. For the purposes of this Plan, institutional uses that function in an arm of the municipal government, such as volunteer fire services, are addressed in the Community Facilities Element. Many institutional land uses are legally established as non-profit at some in non-profit at some point in their existence, while others may be for-profit.

Why Plan for Institutions?

Collectively, institutions exert a unique influence upon the community. While some institutional campuses contain some structures and nature areas that may present an air of permanence, institutional land uses are surprisingly dynamic and undergo frequent changes to their grounds, buildings, and operations. Many institutions are in a continuing state of evolution with some institutions expanding to meet new needs, or declining as a result of demographic or market forces. Because institutional land uses are so ingrained within the fabric of the Township, the physical and operational changes generated by institutional evolution have the potential to significantly impact surrounding land uses.

Institutions that we see today sit on properties that were once the prominent estates of wealthy individuals, which had large land holdings and mansion houses, making them suitable for the adaptive reuse into institutional uses. Notable examples are Friends Central Upper School, Saint Joseph’s University (formerly Episcopal Academy), Rosemont College, parts of Bryn Mawr College, Mary Drexel House, Waverly Heights and Beaumont at Bryn Mawr. Such efforts are not new to Lower Merion. Over time, several notable institutions have either left the Township and sold their property to another institutional use, or have allowed some or all of their properties to be converted into another use. For example, the development of the Indian Creek neighborhood in Wynnewood in the 1980s, involving the subdivision of 60 acres from the campus of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, is an example of part of an institutional property transitioning into a residential use.

Lower Merion also enjoys an eclectic collection of smaller institutions, such as St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Ardmore, which was designed in 1810 by internationally known architect James Renwick, who in 2013, 53 institutional properties under two acres in size occupied approximately 47 acres in Lower Merion Township. Although these institutions are small in size they have typically been thought of as highly stable anchors for community structures and land use. In recent years some of these longstanding institutions have quietly

1 Lower Merion Historical Society (1930) - The First JMW, White Publishing Co.

INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

48 page Institutional Land Use Analysis
Specific Goals and Objectives

THE INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE PLAN

This chapter of the Land Use Element seeks to create a plan for institutional land uses in Lower Merion Township by:

1. Understanding what institutions are and how they function within the Township.
2. Understanding how institutions have evolved in the Township in order to identify institutional trends.
3. Developing specific goals and objectives to guide institutional land use in Lower Merion Township.
4. Developing specific land use regulations that recognize the diversity of institutional land uses within Lower Merion Township.
5. Developing a comprehensive plan that incorporates institutional land use into the overall land use plan for Lower Merion Township.
6. Providing guidelines and regulations for institutional development that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.

INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

(Reviewed by the Land Use Committee July 31, 2012)

Goals

The purpose of the goals is to recognize the importance of institutional land uses, while also recognizing the diversity of institutional land uses and the impacts on the overall economy.

1. Explore creative techniques to allow institutional uses in the vicinity of residential neighborhoods with a high density of institutional uses.
2. Develop a comprehensive plan for institutional land uses that identifies specific goals and objectives for institutional land uses.
3. Recognize the potential for institutional land uses to be developed in a manner that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.
4. Establish guidelines and regulations for institutional land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.
5. Develop a comprehensive plan that incorporates institutional land uses into the overall land use plan for Lower Merion Township.
6. Develop strategies for the preservation and enhancement of institutional land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.
7. Establish guidelines and regulations for institutional land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.

Objectives

1. Develop a comprehensive plan for institutional land uses that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.
2. Develop guidelines and regulations for institutional land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.
3. Establish guidelines and regulations for institutional land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.
4. Develop strategies for the preservation and enhancement of institutional land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.
5. Develop a comprehensive plan that incorporates institutional land uses into the overall land use plan for Lower Merion Township.
6. Develop strategies for the preservation and enhancement of institutional land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Institutional Land Use Plan.

Pennsylvania Planning Association
Annual Conference October 18, 2012
THE INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE PLAN This chapter of the Land Use Element seeks to create a plan for institutional land uses in Lower Merion Township by:

- Understanding what institutions are and how they function within the Township;
- Understanding how institutions relate to the Township’s overall land use pattern and planning initiatives;
- Understanding how institutions have evolved in the Township and to identify institutional trends;
THE INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE PLAN This chapter of the Land Use Element seeks to create a plan for institutional land uses in Lower Merion Township by:

- Establishing goals and objectives to guide institutional land uses and to coordinate institutional land use planning with other Comprehensive Plan elements;
- Identifying potential cooperative opportunities regarding recreation, open space, transportation, historic preservation and economic development between the Township and various institutions; and
- Recommending policies to address institutional trends, to capitalize upon cooperative opportunities and to realize community planning goals.
The report methodology identified three primary factors impacting institutional land uses:

**Issues**—Existing conditions regarding the development, maintenance, and operations of institutional properties and the relationship of these factors to surrounding land uses.

**Trends**—Potential future circumstances and recent observations, which could alter the ownership, use, or activity level of an institutional property or potential future circumstances which could alter the relationship of an institutional use towards surrounding land uses.

**Opportunities**—Existing or future synergies between institutions, the Township, and the community to collectively address matters involving economic development, historic preservation, open space preservation, stormwater management, or transportation.
Inventory and Analysis of Institutional Land Uses

- Institutions are numerous and diverse.
- In 2015, approximately 115 institutional entities were located in the Township, occupying over 140 different properties on approximately 2,050 acres throughout the community.
- No two institutions are the same and each institution has a unique relationship with the surrounding land uses.
Inventory and Analysis of Institutional Land Uses

Institutional uses were categorized into 7 distinct types according to the primary operational function.

- medical and health care institutions;
- cemeteries;
- clubs, lodges and community centers;
- environmental conservation uses;
- elderly housing uses;
- private educational institutions; and
- religious institutions
Examples – Medical & Health Care
Examples - Private Educational – Baldwin School
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Size (Acres)</th>
<th>2012 Enrollment</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Historic Resource(s) (Y/N)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torah Academy Girls High</td>
<td>Bala Cynwyd</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torah Academy</td>
<td>Ardmore</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>Pre-K-8</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>French International School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Campus [2]</td>
<td>Bala Cynwyd</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>Pre-K-4</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Campus</td>
<td>Bala Cynwyd</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grades 5-8</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Katherine’s Day School</td>
<td>Wynnewood</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ages 4 - 21</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kohelet Yeshiva High School</td>
<td>Merion Station</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont School of the Holy Child</td>
<td>Rosemont</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>Pre-K-8</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation for Islamic Education</td>
<td>Villanova</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>Pre-K-12</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin School</td>
<td>Bryn Mawr</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>Pre-K-12</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haverford School</td>
<td>Haverford</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>Pre-K-12</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipley</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>Pre-K-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Campus</td>
<td>Bryn Mawr</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Campus</td>
<td>Bryn Mawr</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fields</td>
<td>Gladwyne</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends Central</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>Pre-K-12</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Lower Campus</td>
<td>Wynnewood</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Campus</td>
<td>Wynnewood</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>229</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,274</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Examples - Private Educational – Haverford School
Examples – Clubs and Lodges – Odd Fellows Hall & Cemetery
### TABLE 5.19 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map No.</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Zoning</th>
<th>HRI</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Idlewild Preserve</td>
<td>955 Amies Ln</td>
<td>Gladwyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>RA/R1</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Saunders’s Woods Preserve</td>
<td>1020 Waverly Rd</td>
<td>Gladwyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>RAA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Riverbend Environmental Education Center</td>
<td>1950 Spring Mill Rd</td>
<td>Gladwyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Haas Estate</td>
<td>330 Spring Mill Rd</td>
<td>Villanova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>RAA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Henry Foundation for Botanical Research</td>
<td>801 Stony Ln</td>
<td>Gladwyne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions – Private Schools

The most significant issue associated with private schools and colleges and universities within the township revolves around the continuing need of these institutions to expand or modernize facilities in order to remain competitive in their market, and the impact of future campus upgrades upon surrounding residential neighborhoods.
Conclusions - Overall

Institutional land uses are dynamic and that future growth and/or decline of institutional land uses has the potential to impact surrounding land uses to their benefit or detriment.

Proper planning should be undertaken and strategies developed, where necessary, to address existing and projected institutional issues of concern to the community.
Private institutional uses have the potential to greatly impact surrounding land uses. Strategies currently in place are inadequate to address the issues associated with the projected growth of larger institutional uses.
Conclusions -Overall

The relocation of an institution and subsequent replacement by another land use, or another institution, may have significant impacts upon surrounding land uses.

Strategies should be developed to ensure that future evolution of these properties is in harmony with its surroundings.
Conclusions - Overall

Township-wide strategies need to be developed to address the use of playfields on private educational institutional properties to ensure that the recreational needs of the broader community are also considered when developing strategies to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses.
In addition to playfields, there are a large number of accessory uses, such as summer camps, occurring on private educational and religious properties.

Strategies currently in place are inadequate to address projected growth issues associated with accessory uses.
Conclusions - Overall

Individual institutions are integral to the character of the Township as they contain important historic, environmental, and recreational resources that should be conserved and enhanced.

Some strategies to address conservation of natural and historic are in place, but should be adapted to address changing circumstances.
Conclusions -Overall

Future growth and the continued use of institutional properties are of great concern to the larger public, particularly residential neighbors in close proximity to institutions.

While strategies to address potential issues concerning future growth and continued use are in place, these strategies should be adapted to address changing circumstances.
Acknowledging the contribution that institutions serve in the character of Lower Merion and the role that institutional land uses play in the Township’s low density suburban land use pattern; Recognizing that institutions are distinct land uses requiring specific types of planning and regulation; and Balancing the need for higher intensity regionally-scaled institutions to physically evolve while maintaining the low intensity character and charm of surrounding residential neighborhoods.
Summary of the outcomes generated by institutional land use review process:

1. Improved understanding of Institutions as a land uses and a better understanding of the land use implications of different types of institutional uses.

2. Recommendations to address major institutional issues including: Relocation/Change of Use, logical modernization of institutional uses/mitigating impacts of institutional evolution upon surrounding residential neighborhoods, Accessory Uses, Approval.
3. Identification of planning tools which could be utilized to address institutional issues.

4. Continued need to refine regulatory policies to address general nuisance issues, such as light and sound trespass, traffic and on street parking associated generated by higher intensity uses in close proximity to lower intensity residential neighborhoods. Many of the ‘nuisance issues’ are broadly applicable to both higher intensity institutional uses and commercial uses and will be addressed through future regulatory efforts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Relocation/Change of Use</th>
<th>Mitigate Impacts of Expansion</th>
<th>Accessory Uses</th>
<th>Approval Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LI1 Establish Institutional Zoning Districts/Overlay Districts for institutional uses five-acres and larger to maintain large institutional properties within the Township and to guide future evolution of institutional campuses.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI2 Establish specific regulations for institutional uses five-acres and larger, particularly private educational uses to ensure that future growth is compatible with its surroundings.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI3 Review and refine the special exception standards governing small scale institutional uses under five-acres to ensure that future growth is compatible with its surroundings.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI4 Protect valued resources, open space and scenic viewsheds under all future circumstances.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI5 Partner with institutions to optimize the public use of playing fields and facilities to serve Township residents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI6 Manage the external impacts of activities occurring on institutional properties, particularly when the frequency and/or intensity of use is proposed to increase. Develop general policies, clear guidelines and specific requirements for controlling the increased use by outside groups such as other public or private institutions or camps.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study Green Hills Farms and Apartments 1919
Palmer – The Palmer 2016 – 20 Apartments
Palmer – The Palmer 2016 – 20 Apartments
Palmer – The Palmer 2016 – 20 Apartments
Institutional Land Use Dynamics
Lower Merion Township
2016 Pennsylvania Planning Association Conference

Christopher Leswing PP, AICP
Assistant Director Building and Planning
Lower Merion Township