

An aerial photograph of a large institutional complex, likely a university or government campus. The complex features several large, multi-story buildings with light-colored facades and dark roofs. A prominent church with a tall, ornate steeple is located in the lower-left quadrant. The campus is surrounded by green fields and trees, with a residential area visible in the lower-right corner. The text is overlaid in white, sans-serif font.

Institutional Land Use Dynamics Lower Merion Township 2016 Pennsylvania Planning Association Conference

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

An aerial photograph of a large institutional complex, likely a university or government building, surrounded by trees and open land. The complex features several large, multi-story buildings with flat roofs and a prominent central tower. The surrounding area includes a mix of open fields, wooded areas, and residential housing in the lower right corner.

Objectives

Lower Merion Township

Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan

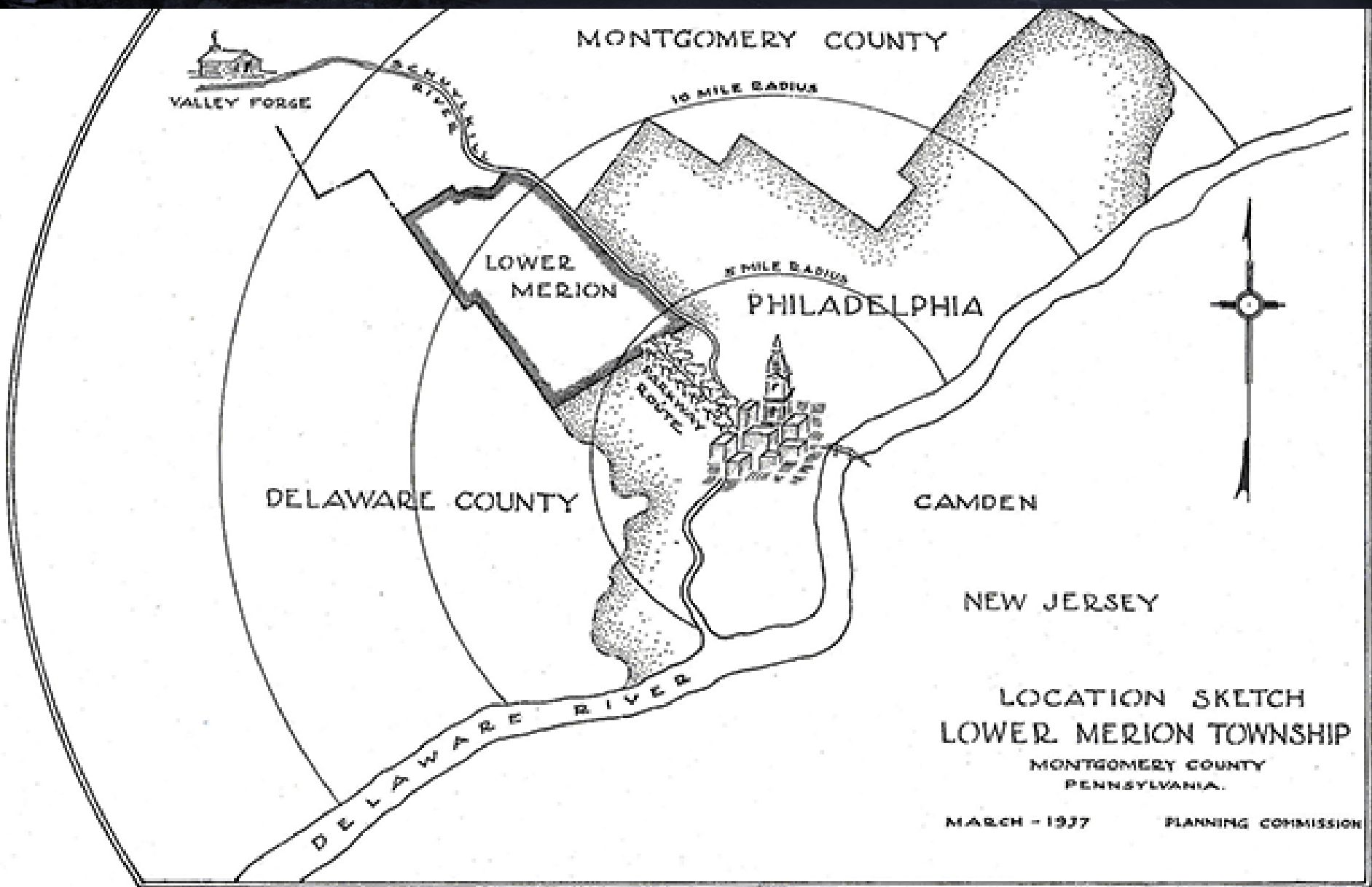
Role of Institutions in Comprehensive Plan

Analysis of Institutions as Dynamic Land Use

Conclusions

Case Study of 'The Palmer'

REGIONAL LOCATION



DEMOGRAPHICS AND BACKGROUND

Most Populous Municipalities in Pennsylvania (2012)				
*Rank	Municipality	Population	Area	Population Density
1	Philadelphia City	1,547,607	142.7	10,845
2	Pittsburgh City	306,211	58.3	5,249
3	Allentown City	118,974	18.0	6,601
4	Erie City	101,047	19.3	5,241
5	Reading City	88,102	10.1	8,689
6	Upper Darby Township	82,779	7.8	10,579
7	Scranton City	75,809	25.5	2,969
8	Bethlehem City	58,143	19.5	3,861
9	Bensalem Township	60,497	20.9	2,890
10	Lancaster City	59,360	7.4	8,072
11	Lower Merion Township	58,143	23.8	2,439



DEMOGRAPHICS AND BACKGROUND – Housing Characteristics

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%).



DEMOGRAPHICS AND BACKGROUND – Housing Characteristics

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.

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN for the Preservation, Infill, and Redevelopment of LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

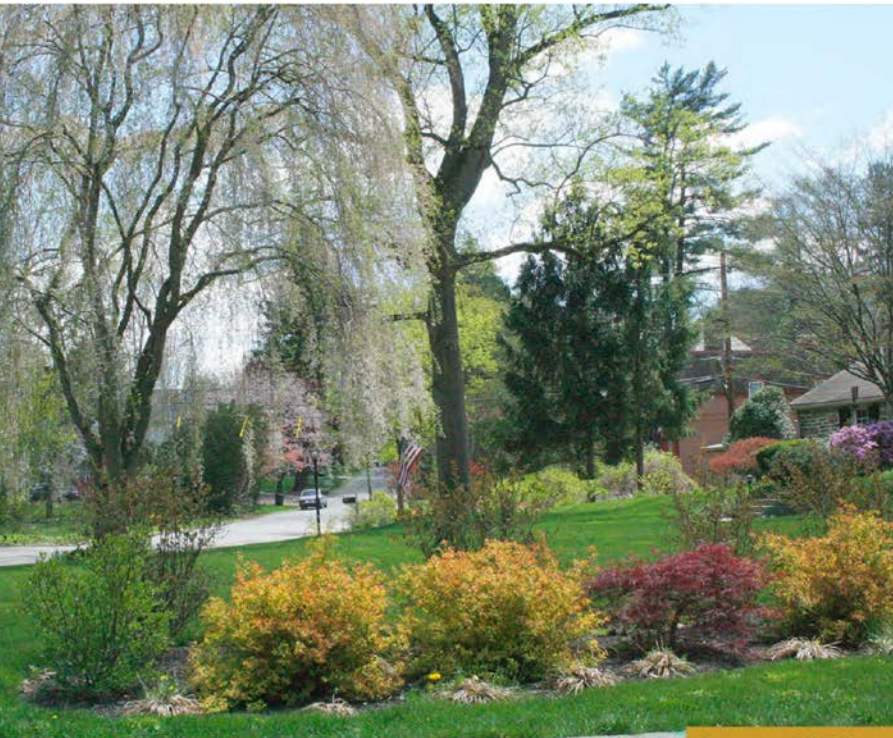
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January 2016



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INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

PENNSYLVANIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION
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THE ISSUE

THE ISSUES REPORT



Issues Oriented – Place Based Comprehensive Plan

INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

PENNSYLVANIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION
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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**

Issues Report - Institutional Issue Summary

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



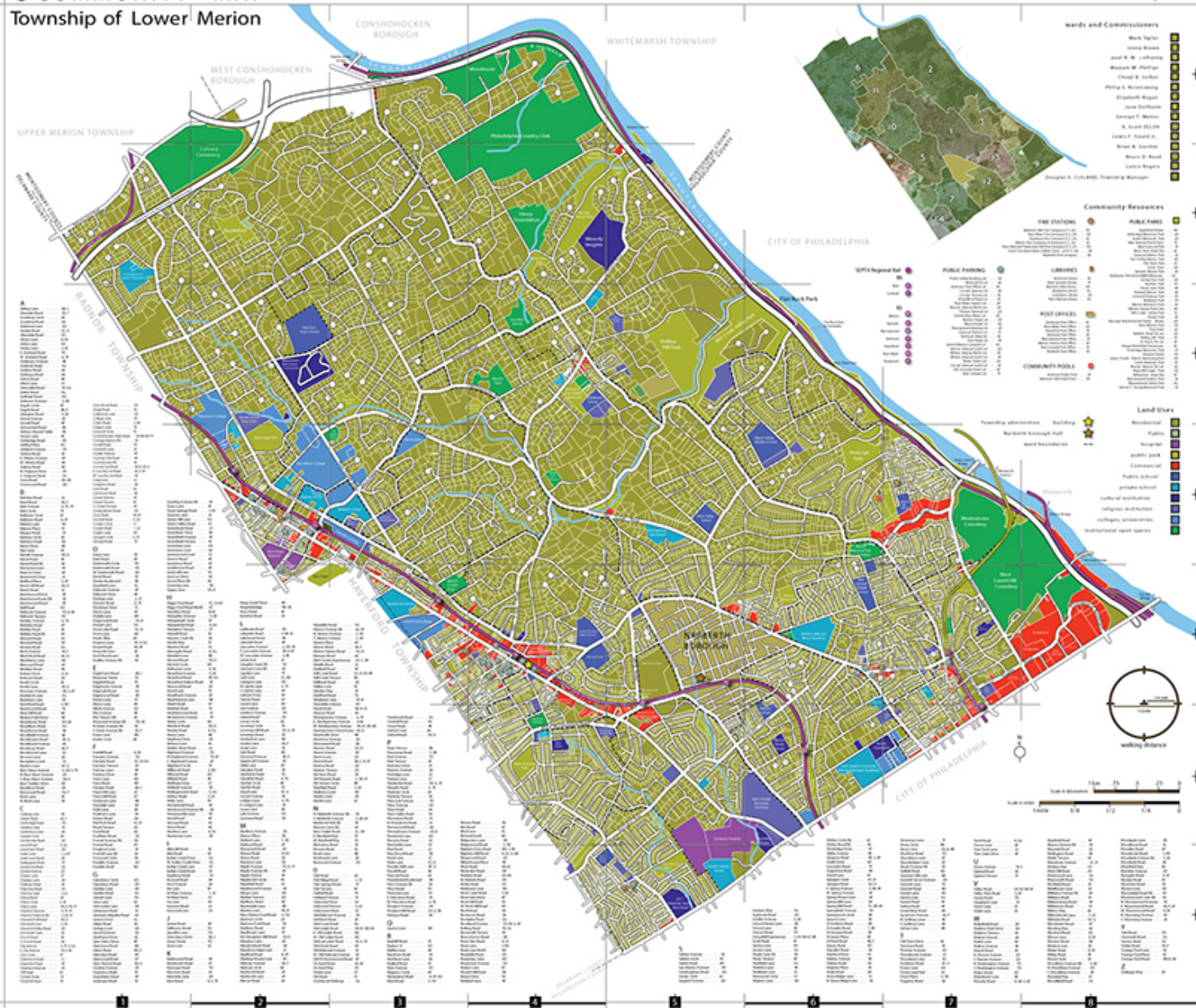
Comprehensive Plan – Vision/Goals/Principles

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

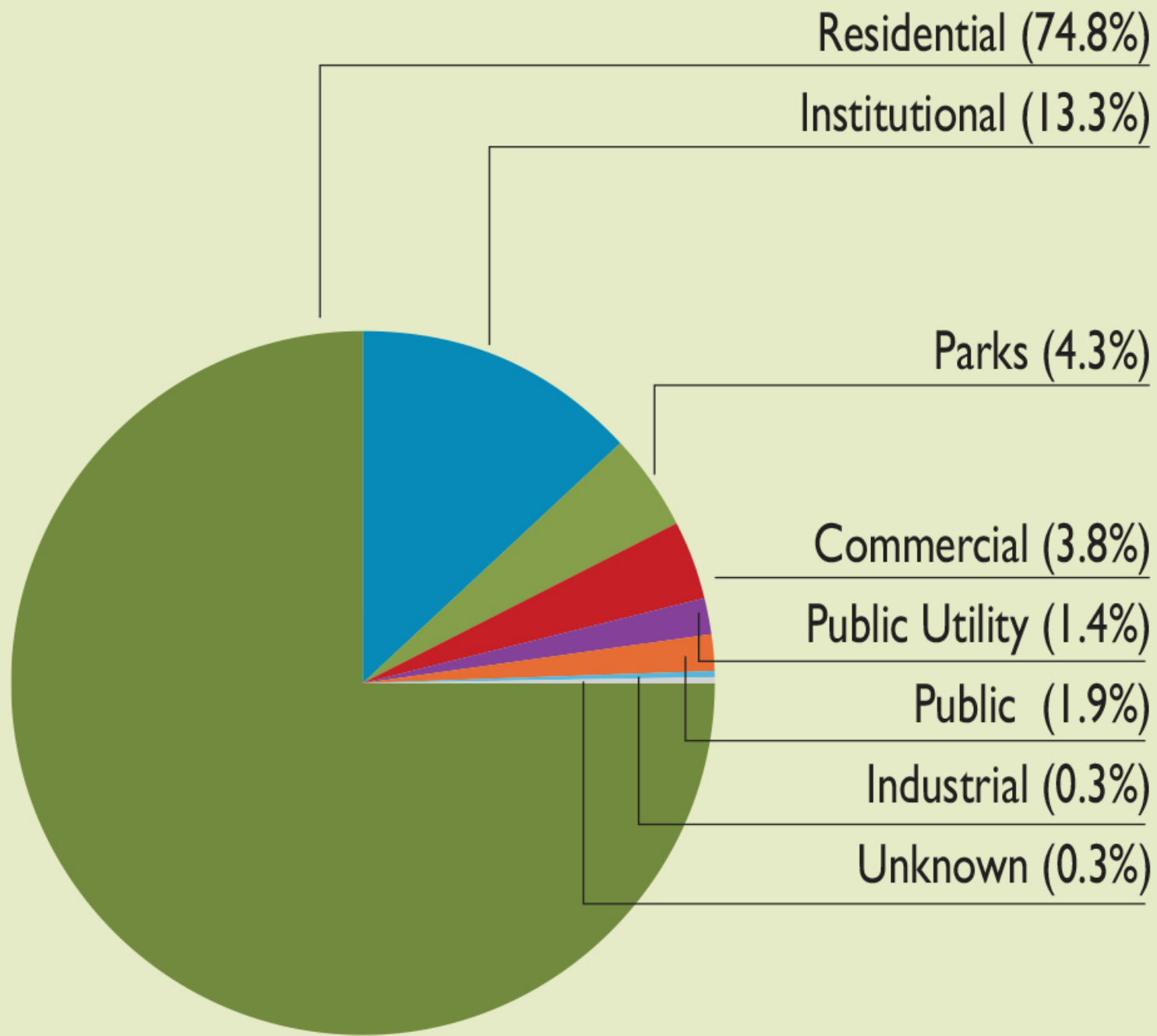
January 2008





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

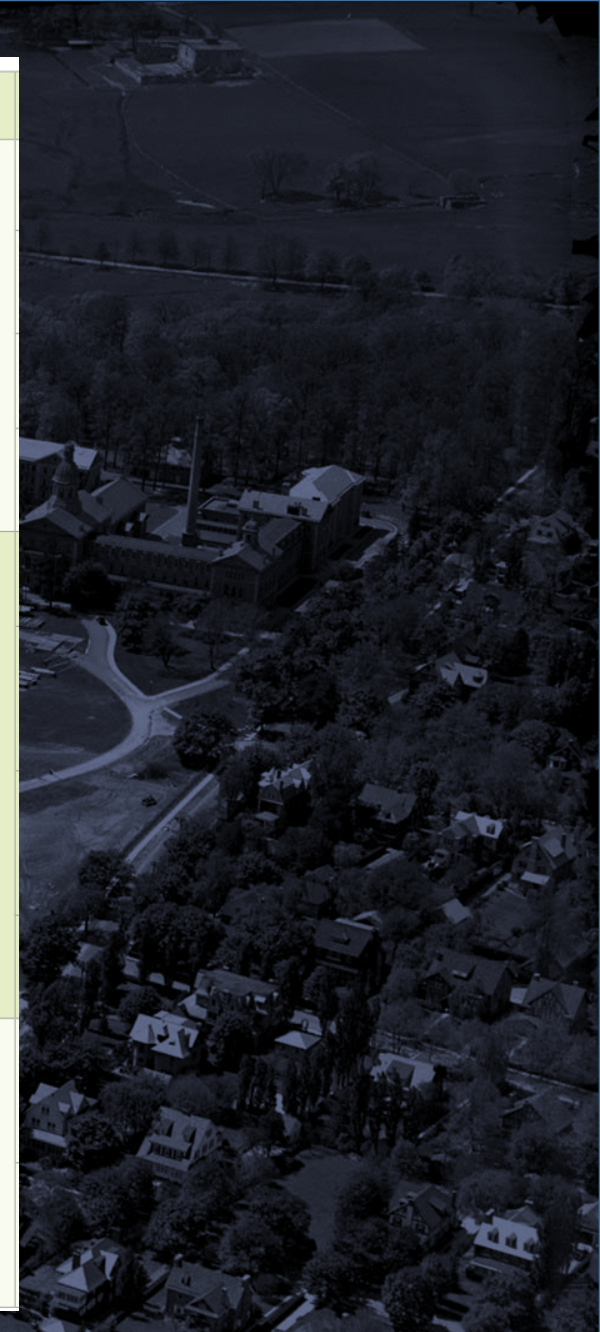
LAND USE ELEMENT

Use

Residential

Commercial

Institutions



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

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 public thoroughfares, and also adjacent to and within residential neighborhoods, helps to define the Township's land use pattern and impacts the transportation network. Promoting 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/or operated by government agencies. For the purposes of this Plan, institutional uses that function as 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 not-for-profit; but in some cases, as with larger scale institutions such as hospitals, institutions may also include a for-profit component.



Rosemont College

Why Plan for Institutions?

Collectively, institutions exert a unique influence upon the community. While stately institutional campuses containing stone structures and mature trees 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.

Many 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 Home, Waverly Heights

and Beaumont at Bryn Mawr.¹ Such evolution of uses is 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 Wynemwood 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 1886 by internationally known architects Furness & Evans. 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 long standing institutions have qui-

¹ Lower Merion Historical Society. (2000). *The First 300*. Diane Publishing Co.

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 relate to the Township's overall land use pattern and planning initiatives;
3. Understanding how institutions have evolved in the Township and to identify institutional trends;
4. Establishing goals and objectives to guide institutional land uses and to coordinate institutional land use planning with other Comprehensive Plan elements;
5. Identifying potential cooperative opportunities regarding recreation, open space, transportation, historic preservation and economic development between the Township and various institutions; and
6. Recommending policies to address institutional trends, to capitalize upon cooperative opportunities and to realize community planning goals.

Institutional Land Use Goals & Objectives

(Approved by the Land Use Committee July 23, 2012)

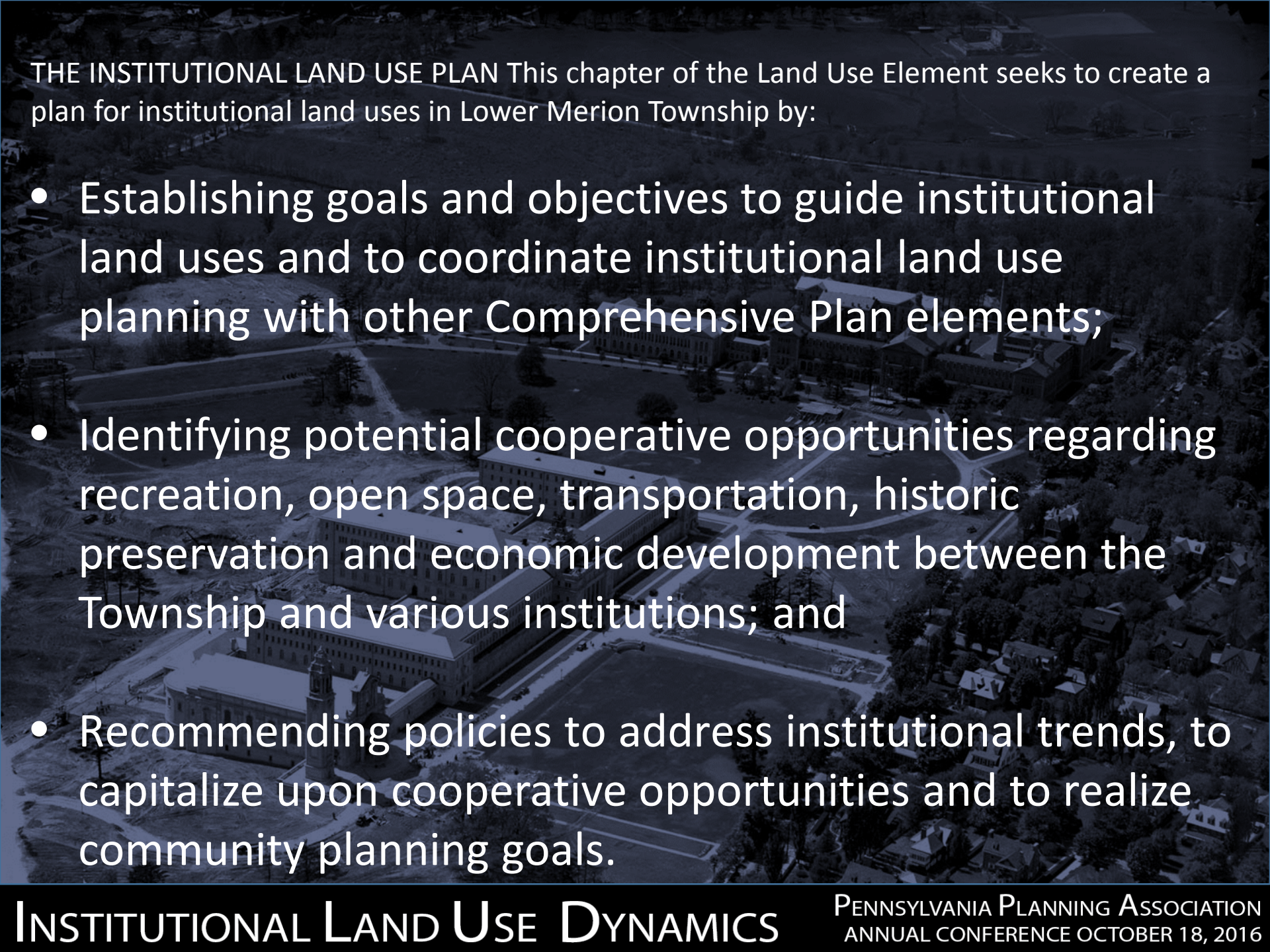
Goals:

The purpose of the goals is to recognize the importance of institutional land uses, while also recognizing the diversity of institutional land uses and their impacts on the adjacent residential community.

1. Explore creative techniques to allow institutions to evolve while maintaining protections of the surrounding residences. Striking a balance between the land use and operational needs of the institutions and their residential neighbors is of utmost importance.
2. Preserve the residential quality of the neighborhoods, when balancing the land use and operational needs of the institutions.
3. Recognize institutional land uses as a distinct and defining land use within Lower Merion Township and develop specific land use strategies to address issues relating to the growth and preservation of institutional land uses.
4. Develop policies and land use regulations that recognize the diversity of institutional land uses within Lower Merion. Future policies and regulations should address the impact of institutions upon the Township's economic, social, transportation, housing, open space, and recreational needs.
5. Develop strategies for the preservation and enhancement of historic, cultural, and educational resources which are defining elements of Lower Merion Township. While institutions have an air of permanence, the vast majority of institutional properties are temporarily protected and potentially vulnerable to future development.

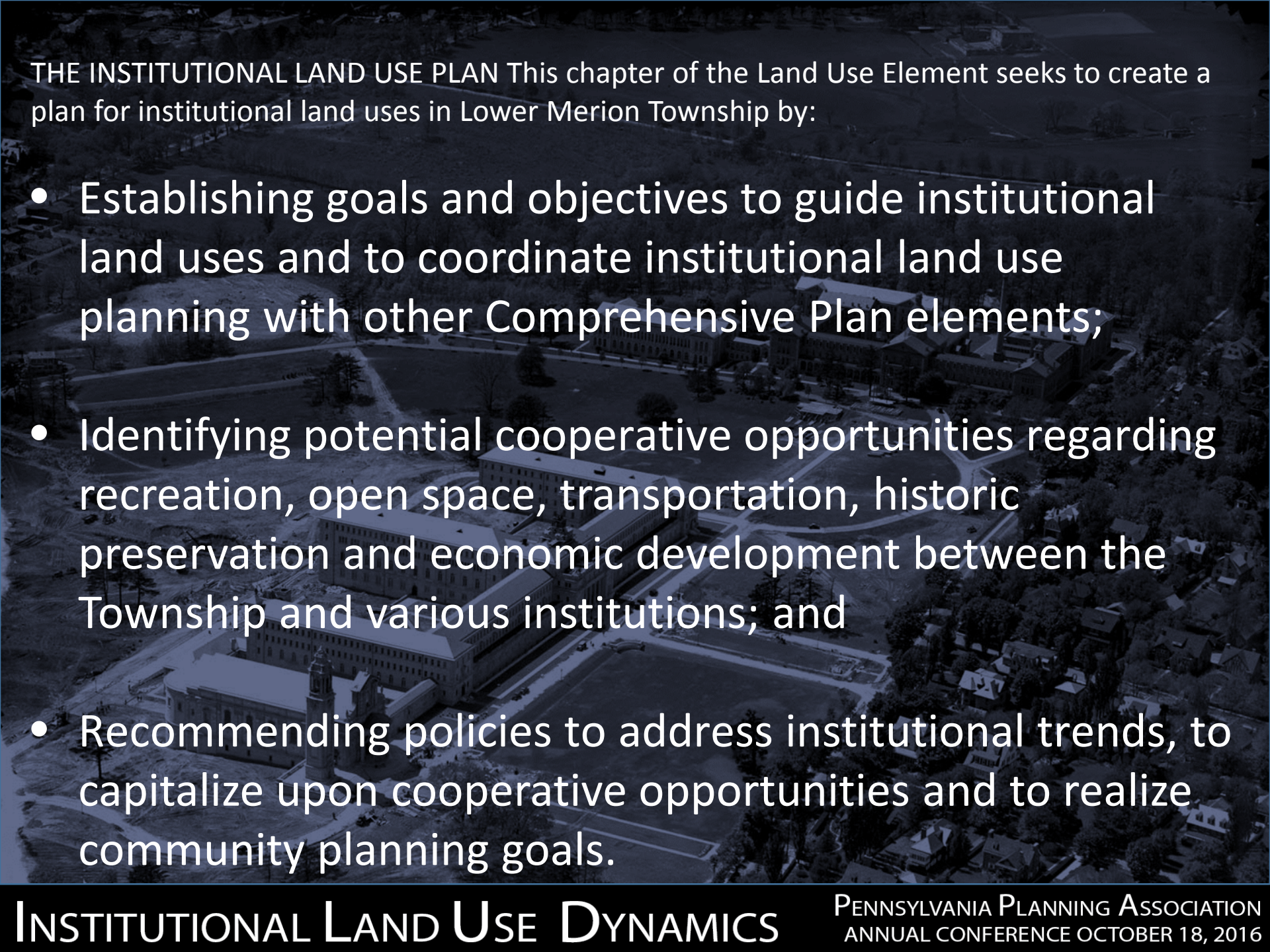
Objectives:

- a. Develop quantifiable methods to determine the appropriate capacity for institutional land uses in the Township and develop strategies for addressing the impact of institutional change upon residential neighborhoods and the Township as a whole. (Goal 1 & 2)
- b. Develop tools to permit reasonable evolution of institutions while mitigating negative externalities upon residential neighborhoods in which institutions are located. (Goal 1)
 - (1) Determine if the most effective tool for managing the reasonable expansion of existing institutional uses is the special exception approval process or the creation of an institutional overlay district or some combination of both.
 - (2) Explore the merits of various tools to help the community visualize development projects. Request institutions to submit a Concept Development Plan (CDP), where appropriate, as part of the special exception or land development approval process. (Goal 3)
 - (3) Explore the possibility of permitting institutional uses by-right.
- c. Establish partnerships and procedures to ensure that future institutional evolution is consistent with Township economic, circulation, housing, historic preservation, and open space goals. (Goal 4)
 - (1) Explore the potential of transfer of development rights (TDR) and the use of the Official Map as authorized by the MPC to permit institutional expansion in exchange for making land available to satisfy other Township goals, such as acquiring playfields, developing trails, and preserving historic properties.
 - (2) Identify ways that institutions can catalyze economic development.
 - (3) Identify ways institutions can provide added social benefits to the local community, such as through the public use of playing fields.



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- Understanding how institutions have evolved in the Township and to identify institutional trends;

An aerial photograph of a large institutional campus, likely a university or government complex. The image shows several large, multi-story buildings with light-colored roofs, interspersed with green lawns and trees. The campus is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial buildings, with a road visible in the foreground. The overall scene is captured in a dark, monochromatic style with a blue tint.

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:

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- 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.

Legend

- Cemetery
- Club, Lodges and Community Centers
- Club, Lodges and Community Centers greater than 5 acres
- Elderly Housing
- Elderly Housing greater than 5 acres
- Environmental Conservation
- Medical & Health Care Institutions
- Private Institutions
- Private Institutions greater than 5 acres
- College & Universities
- Religious Institution
- Religious Institution greater than 5 acres
- Parks



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 – Medical & Health Care - Bryn Mawr Hospital



Examples – Medical & Health Care Lankenau Hospital



INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

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Examples – Medical & Health Care Lankenau Hospital



Aerial Perspective

Examples – Religious- St, Charles Seminary



Examples - Private Educational – Baldwin School



INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

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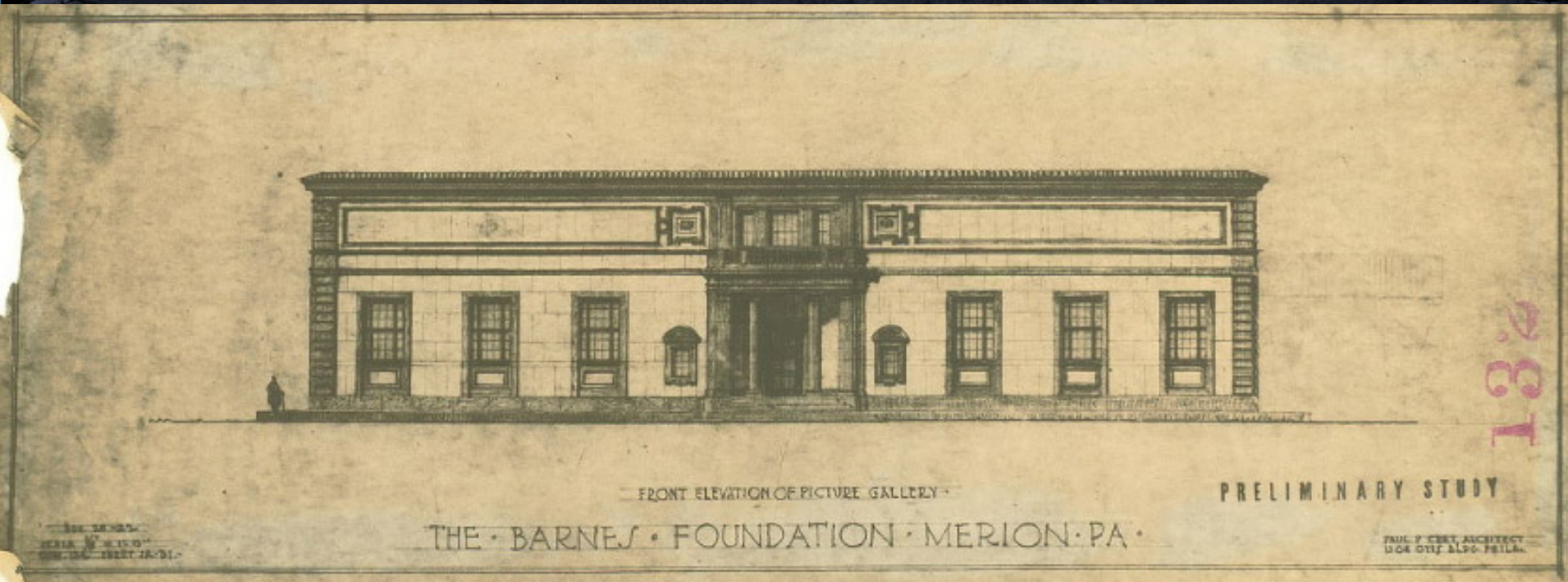
Examples - Private Educational – Baldwin School

Name	Village	Size (Acres)	2012 Enrollment	Curriculum	Historic Resource(s) (Y/N)
Torah Academy Girls High	Bala Cynwyd	1.6	NA	Grades 9-12	N
Torah Academy	Ardmore	3.8	318	Pre-K-8	Y
French International School		2.4	225	Pre-K-8	
Lower Campus [2]	Bala Cynwyd	1.6		Pre-K-4	N
Upper Campus	Bala Cynwyd	0.8		Grades 5-8	N
St. Katherine's Day School	Wynnewood	2.96		Ages 4 - 21	N
Kohelet Yeshiva High School	Merion Station	6.1	108	Grades 9-12	Y
Rosemont School of the Holy Child	Rosemont	16	316	Pre-K-8	Y
Perelman Day School - Stern Center [3]	Wynnewood	20.4	226	Grades K-5 [4]	Y
Foundation for Islamic Education	Villanova	22.9	108	Pre-K-12	Y
Baldwin School	Bryn Mawr	24.2	556	Pre-K-12	Y
Haverford School	Haverford	25.5	1,013	Pre-K-12	Y
Shipley		31.7	838	Pre-K-12	
Lower Campus	Bryn Mawr	8.9			
Upper Campus	Bryn Mawr	15.7			Y
Fields	Gladwyne	7.16			N
Waldron Mercy-Merion Mercy [5]	Merion Station	34.1	554	Pre-K-8	Y
Friends Central		40.3	978	Pre-K-12	
Lower Campus	Wynnewood	18.3			Y
Upper Campus	Wynnewood	22			Y
TOTAL		229	5,274	-	-

Examples - Private Educational – Rosemont College



Examples - Private Educational - Barnes Foundation



Examples - Private Educational – Haverford School



INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

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Examples – Clubs and Lodges – Odd Fellows Hall & Cemetery



INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

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Examples – Environmental



TABLE 5.19 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

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

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.

Conclusions -Overall

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

Conclusions -Overall

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

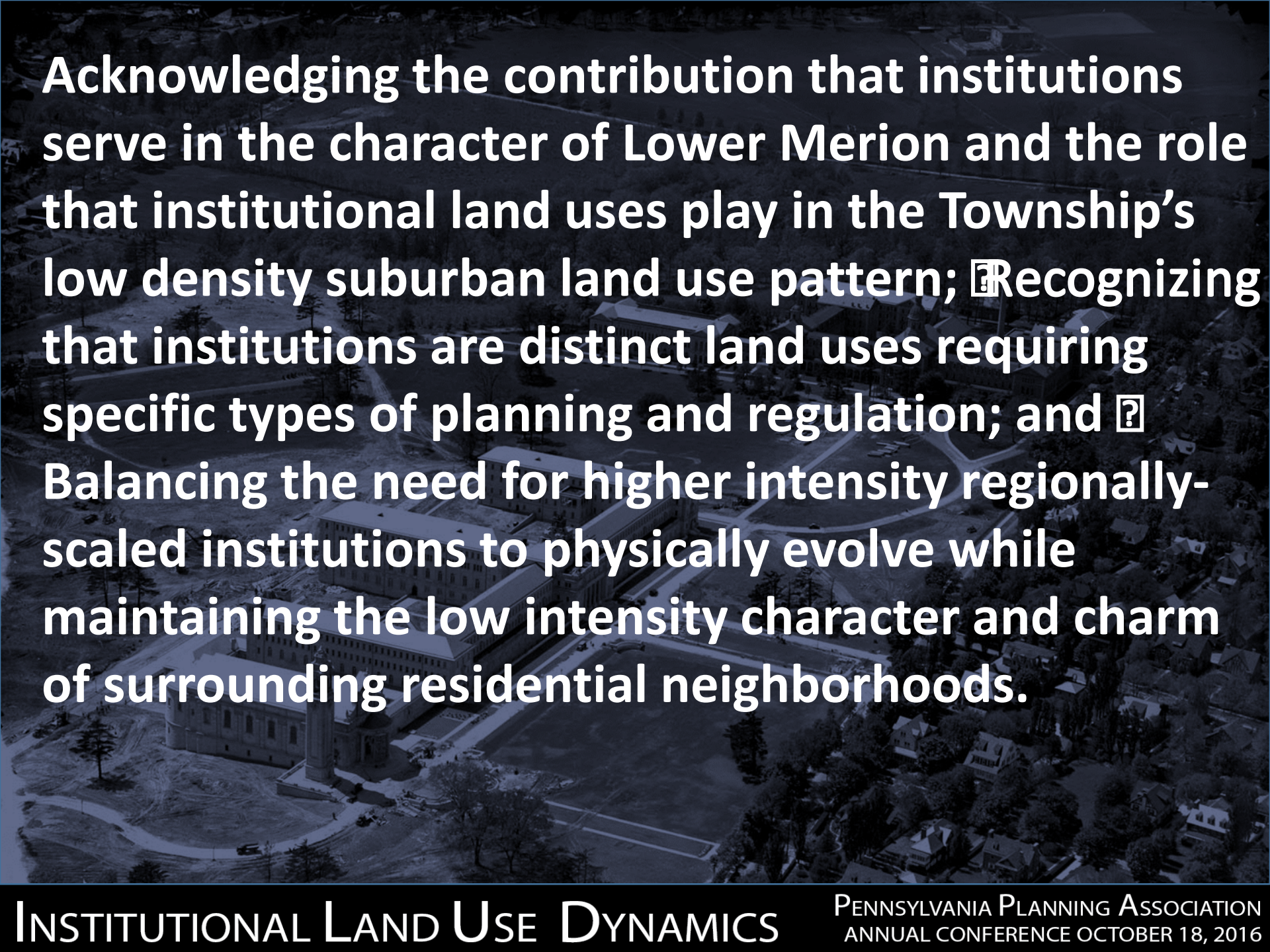
Individual institutions are integral to the character of the Township as they contain important historic, environmental, and recreational resources that should be conserved and enhanced.

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; [R] Recognizing that institutions are distinct land uses requiring specific types of planning and regulation; and [B] 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

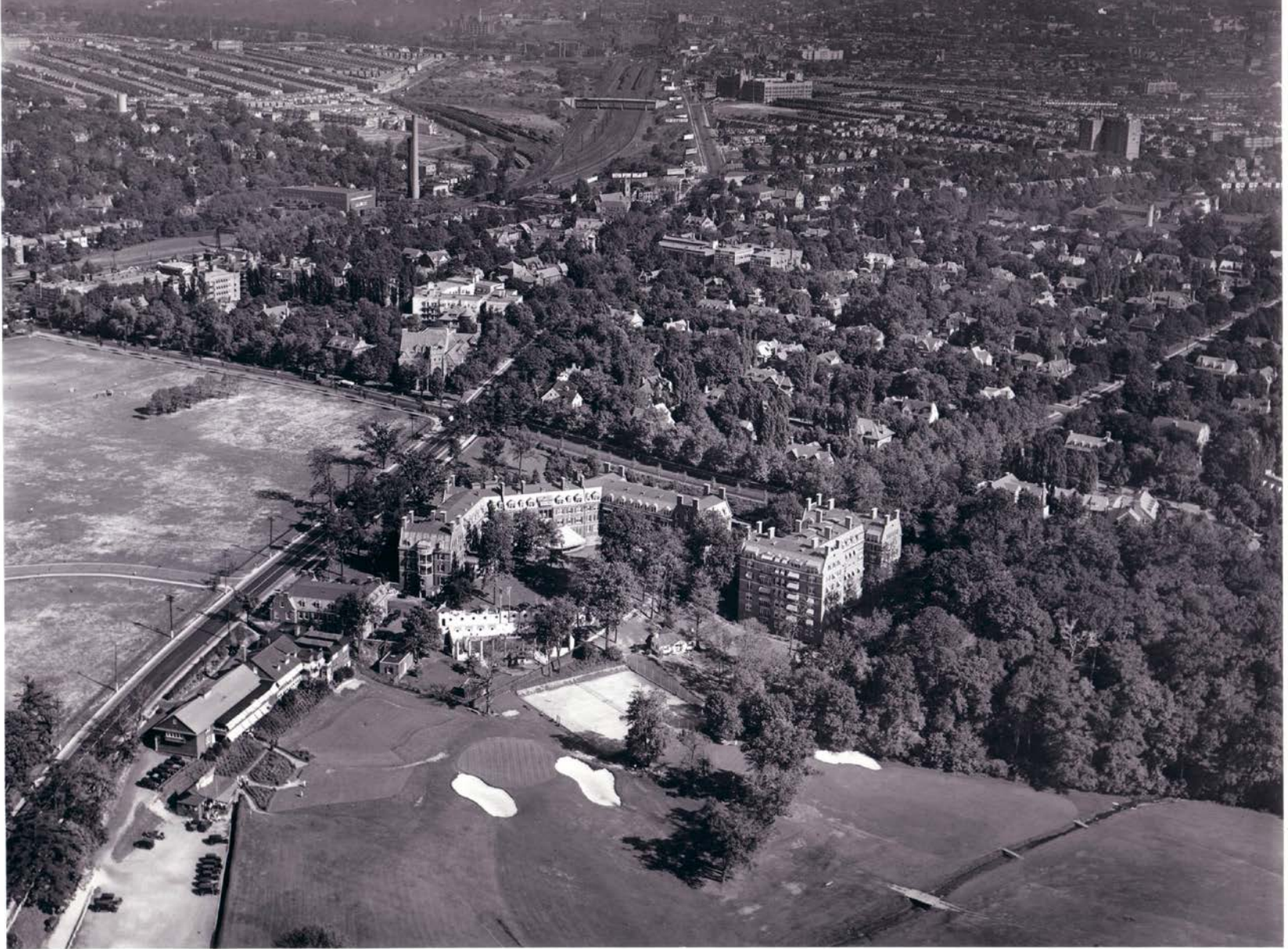


3. Identification of planning tools which could be utilized to address institutional issues.

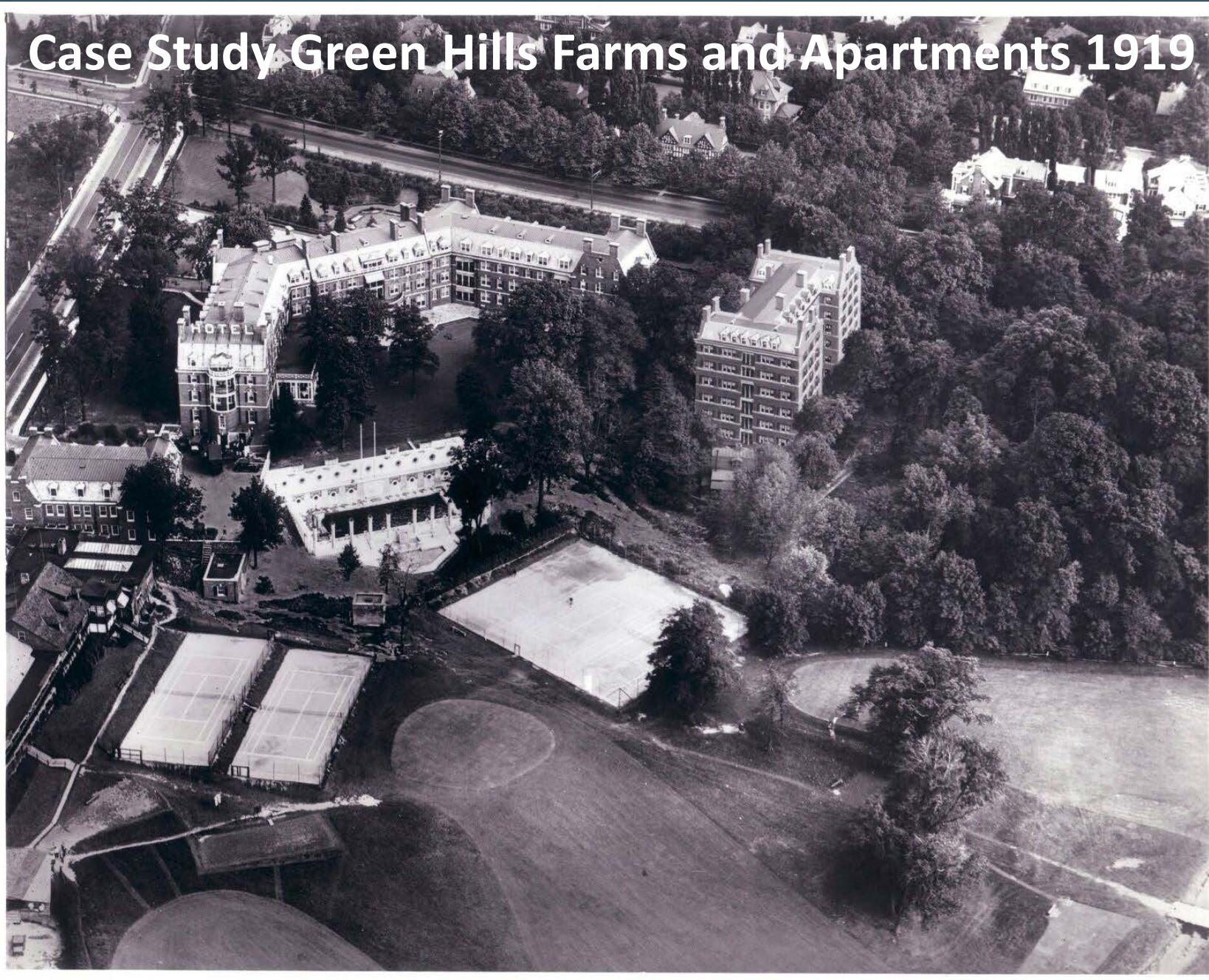
4. Continued need to refine regulatory policies to address general nuisance issues, such as light and sound trespass, traffic and on street parking associated generated by higher intensity uses in close proximity to lower intensity residential neighborhoods. Many of the 'nuisance issues' are broadly applicable to both higher intensity institutional uses and commercial uses and will be addressed through future regulatory efforts.

	Recommendation	Relocation/ Change of Use	Mitigate Impacts of Expansion	Accessory Uses	Approval Process
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.	X	X	X	X
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.	X	X	X	X
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.	X	X	X	X
LI4	Protect valued resources, open space and scenic viewsheds under all future circumstances.	X	X		
LI5	Partner with institutions to optimize the public use of playing fields and facilities to serve Township residents.			X	
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.		X	X	

Case Study Green Hills Farms and Apartments 1919



Case Study Green Hills Farms and Apartments 1919



Palmer Seminary 1939-2010



INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE DYNAMICS

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Palmer – The Palmer 2010 – 112 Apartments



Palmer – The Palmer 2016 – 20 Apartments



Palmer – The Palmer 2016 – 20 Apartments



Palmer – The Palmer 2016 – 20 Apartments







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