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William A. Hendrickson, Regional Supervisor, Bureau of Planning, Dept. of Community Affairs

# comprehensive plan

EOROUGH OF BLOOMING VALLEY, CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

# ABSTRACT

(1) TITLE: Blooming Valley Comprehensive Plan

(2) AUTHOR: Beckman, Swenson & Associates

Wexford, Pennsylvania 15090

(3) SUBJECT: A survey and analysis of existing conditions and a Plan to guide the future development of Blooming

Valley.

(4) DATE: October 12, 1970

(5) PLANNING Blooming Valley Planning Commission AGENCY: Saegertown Area Planning Commission Department of Community Affairs

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

(6) SOURCE OF Blooming Valley Planning Commission COPIES: Saegertown Area Planning Commission

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Regional Office

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Department of Housing & Urban Development Region II, Federal Bldg., Pgh., Pa.

HUD - Division of Planning Assistance Washington, D. C.

(7) HUD PROJECT

NO: P-27701

(8) NUMBER OF PAGES: 33

(9) THE ABSTRACT:

This report consists of maps and written material, which analyze the existing conditions within the community. It includes a statement of objectives for the future, A Plan for the use of land, a Plan for the Movement of People and goods, and a Plan for the development of community facilities and utilities.

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# RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF BLOOMING VALLEY, CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

WHEREAS, the Blooming Valley Borough Planning Commission has been created and appointed to consider among other things long-range plans for the growth of the Borough; and

MIEREAS, the Planning Commission has obtained and utilized the services of Beckman, Swenson & Associates, professional city planners, and studies, surveys, and analyses of probable growth trends, objectives, and needs have been completed; and

WHEREAS, plans and policies affecting the future of Blooming Valley Borough have been formulated, adopted and recommended by the Planning Commission: and

WHEREAS, the Blooming Valley Borough Council has held hearings with the Planning Commission on the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the community and its people, both individually and collectively, to establish a municipal policy for future growth; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Borough Council to utilize foresight to assist and guide themselves and others in the affairs of the Borough:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF BLOOMING VALLEY, COUNTY OF CRAWFORD, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA:

THAT this document with all plans, maps, sketches, and text constitutes the Comprehensive Plan for the future development of Blooming Valley Borough.

ADOPTED THIS 2/ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 1970

Homer of Mickerson President of Council

ATTEST:

Secretary Laylo

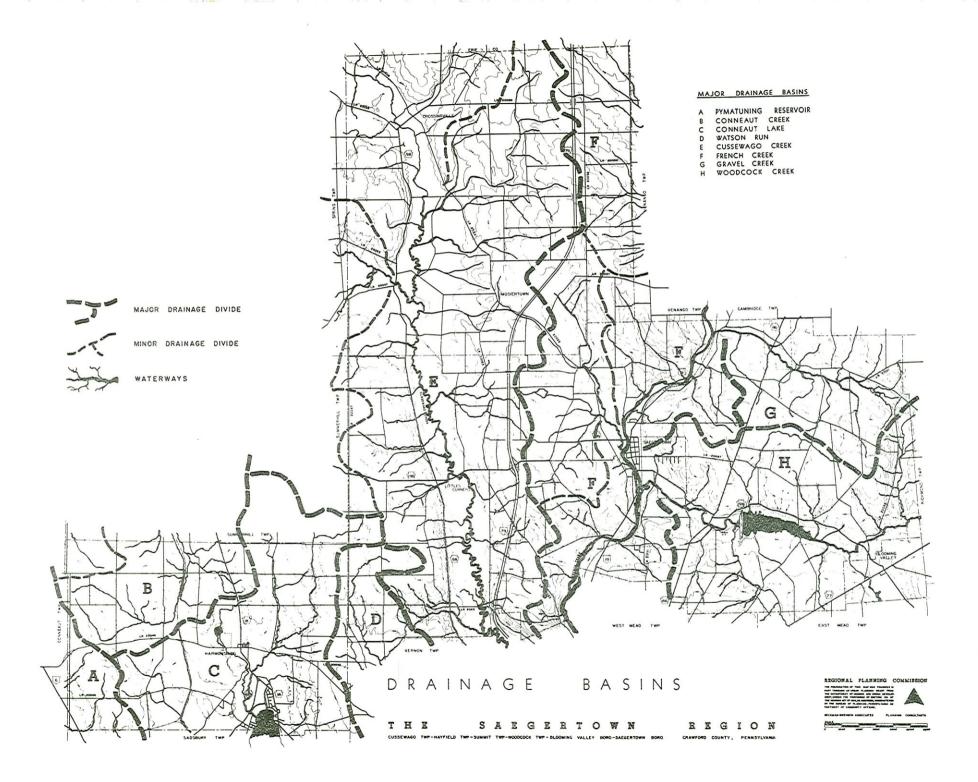
#### THE ENVIRONMENT

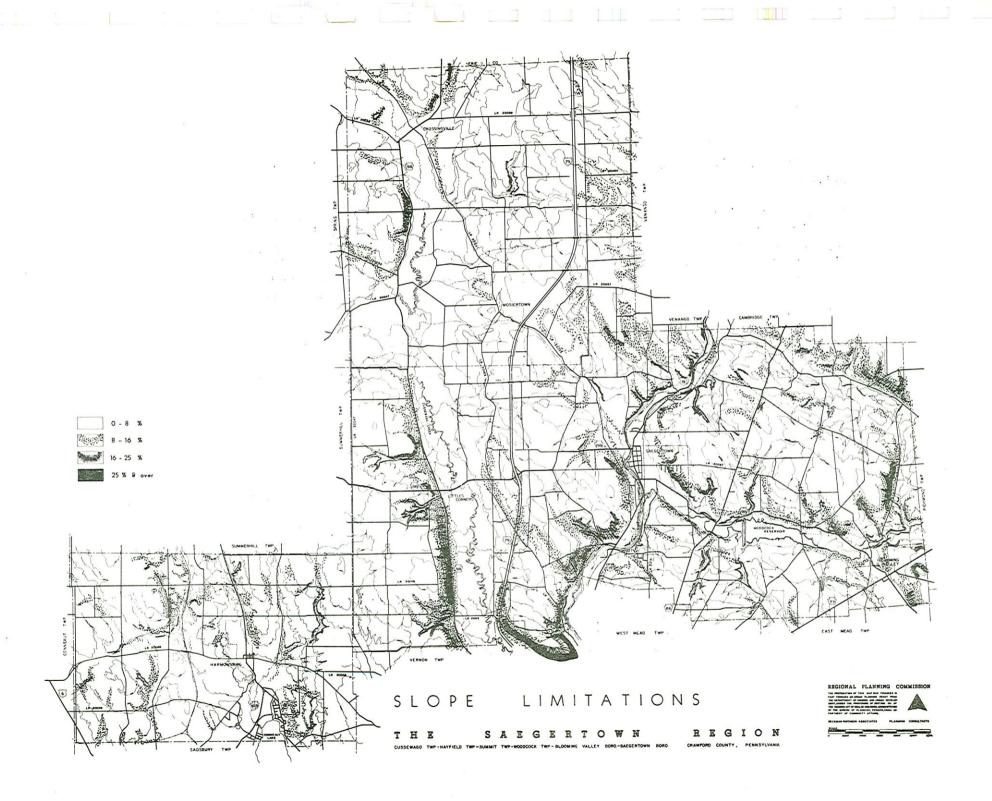
Blooming Valley Borough occupies an area of 1180 acres in central Crawford County. Its center is about six and one-half miles east northeast of the center of Meadville. The Borough is rectilinear in form with its maximum north-south dimension being 6700 feet and its largest east-west dimension being 9500 feet. It is not a simple rectangle since the northwest corner is not included in the Borough.

As its name suggests, the topography of the Borough is characterized by a valley running north and south through the center of the Borough. The valley lies in the upper extremities of the Woodcock Creek Valley running west northwesterly from the upper area of the Borough, and Little Sugar Creek Valley which enters the Borough from the south. An unusual aspect of the topography is that there is no clear ridge line separating these two drainage systems. Instead, a swampy area along the southern boundary of the Borough forms an indefinite dividing line between these two creeks.

The lowest point in the Borough is on the northwestern corner where the Blooming Valley Run descends to Woodcock Creek. Where this run leaves the Borough, it has an altitude of about 1219 feet above sea level.

The marshy iand on the southern central boundary at the upper extremities of Sugar Creek is about 1270 feet above sea level. Five ponds are located in this valley with four of them to the south of Route 77 and one to the north. Al! of these ponds have been filling in through a natural process of growth and siltation so that the division between pond and marsh land





along the southern boundary is indefinite. Hills rise on either side of the valley.

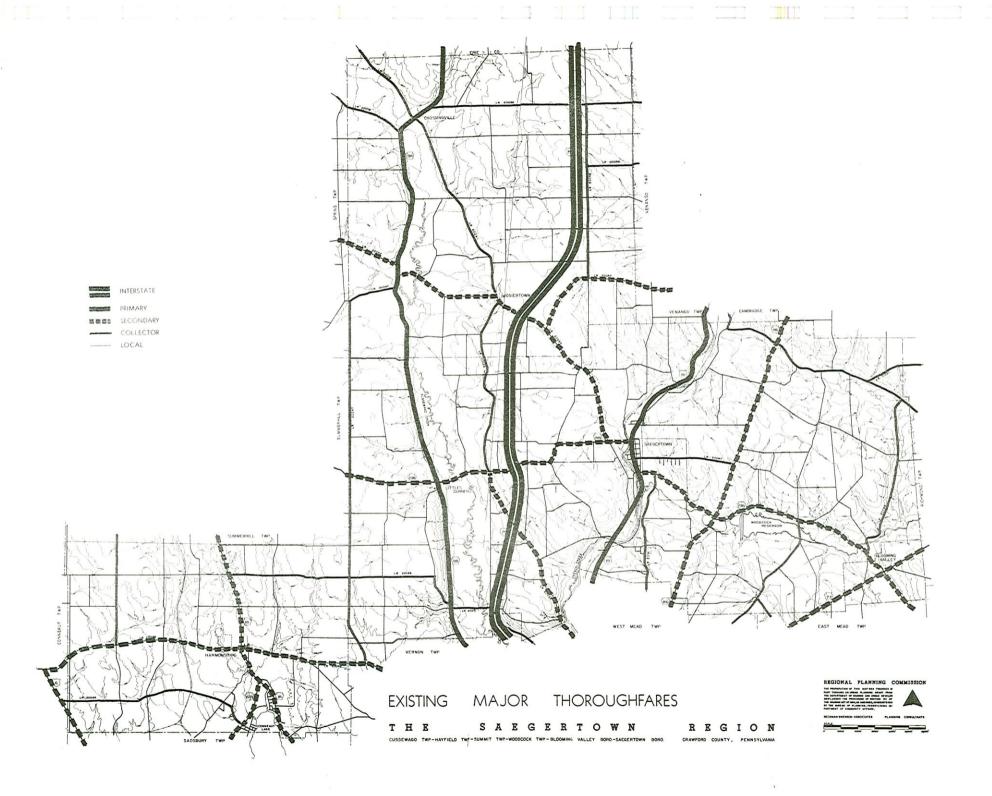
The highest point in the Borough is 1530 feet located near the eastern boundary midway between Route 77 and Hickory Corner Road. From that point the topography falls away fairly evenly on contours that approximately parallel Dickson Street to about 1270 feet. Thus, the maximum local relief in the Borough amounts to about 260 feet. A hill rises along the western boundary also reaching a maximum height of 1385 feet at the southwest corner of the Borough.

The slopes are reasonably gentle on these hills. The steepest category of slope is about 20 per cent and this is limited to only a few areas, as around the high knob along the eastern boundary of the Borough. The hill-sides rising above the central valley have a slope of between 8 to 16 per cent and this offers no unusual problems to residential development.

# Highways

The highways in the Borough are a simple intersection of two State highways. Route 77 crosses the Borough from the southwest to the northeast, and Route 198 crosses from the southeast to the northwest. A few secondary routes branch off of these two State highways, and a local residential loop street is located in the center of the Borough.

Route 77 has a straight alignment across the Borough descending into the valley and rising again. This straight line across the valley emphasizes the topography of the community. It enters the Borough from the Meadville side at a height of approximately 1360 feet, descends to about 1250 feet where it crosses the Blooming Valley Run about one-third of the way through



the Borough and then rises to a height of about 1430 feet at the northeast corner of the Borough. The emphasis of the topography results in a strong sense of identification with the valley, and this has obviously had its influence on the naming of the community.

Route 198 follows the eastern edge of the valley through the Borough. To the northwest it follows Woodcock Creek and is presently in the process of being realigned along the hillside to the north of the Creek in order to accommodate the construction of the Woodcock Reservoir.

#### THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

Blooming Valley dates back over 100 years as a place of residence, but its population has changed very little during that time. In 1870 its population stood at 209. It had been established principally as a central trade and service area for the surrounding agricultural community. Without a railroad to sponsor any industrialization, and with competition of larger urban centers, such as Meadville, the area has remained predominately a low density residential community. Its early peak in population was reached in 1880 when it stood at 232. From that time, it had declined in population to a low of 141 in 1920.

Following the 1920's the community has grown slowly. The growth has been a reflection of the ability of the residents to commute by private automobile elsewhere for employment. During the 20's the community gained more than 50 people and another 20 during the 30's. By 1950 it stood at 256; in 1960 296; and in 1970 remained almost unchanged at 297.

# Condition of Housing

The 1960 Census of housing counted 97 residential structures in the Borough. Twelve of these were less than 10 years old; another 12 were between 10 and 20 years old; and 73--three out of every four structures--were more than 20 years old.

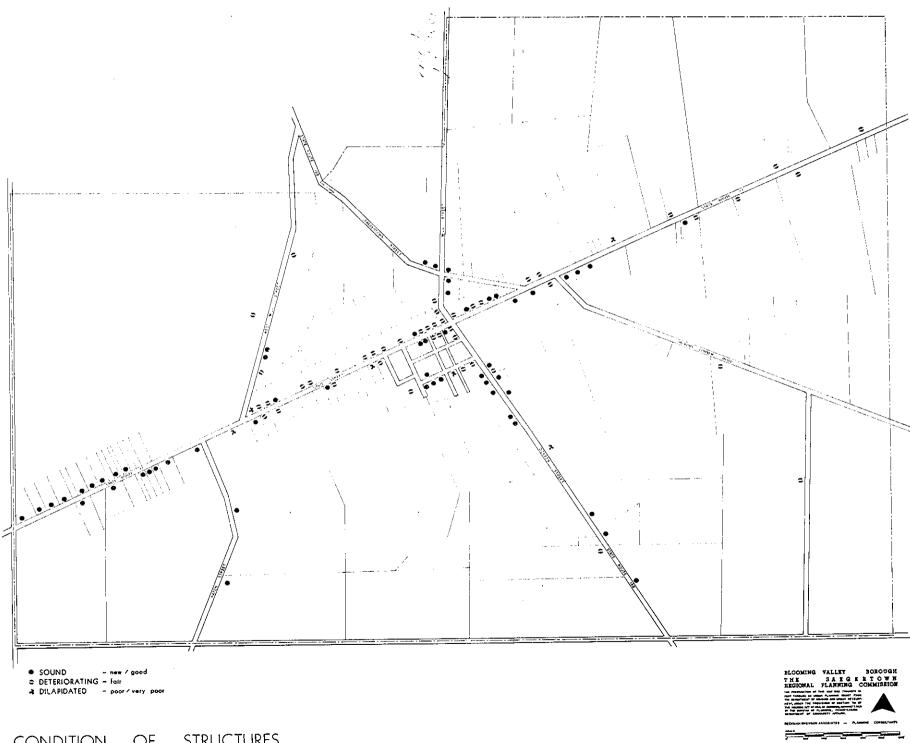
According to the 1960 Census, the condition of structures was reasonably

good. Seventy-six were classified as in sound condition; 18 were counted as deteriorating; and 6 as dilapidated. At that time there were no vacant houses available for rent in the Borough, although eight units were classified as seasonal or unavailable and vacant.

A more recent evaluation of the condition of structures in Blooming Valley was obtained by a field survey conducted by Beckman, Swenson & Associates in the summer of 1969. This survey included only an exterior evaluation of the structures and did not include any detailed measurement nor any interior inspection. The two categories poor and very poor have been grouped together into the similar category "Dilapidated" which is generally comparable to the 1960 categories "Deteriorating" and "Dilapidated".

The results of the 1969 field survey are shown on the adjacent map "Condition of Structures". A tabulation of the structural conditions in 1969 shows 56 units were in sound condition, 36 were in fair condition, and 6 were in poor or very poor condition. As a general observation, the total number of units judged in poor or very poor condition has decreased during the 60's.

The large number of older homes judged only in fair condition still amounts to a substantial portion of the housing supply in Blooming Valley. Those housing units judged in fair condition only, show evidences of minor deficiencies, as observed from the exterior. In many cases the minor problems result from the advanced age and the accumulation of maintenance problems. At a time when the standards of construction for new buildings has been steadily rising, these aging structures represent a cause for concern with respect to the continued acceptability of housing in the Borough.



#### Existing Land Use

The pattern of existing land use and the extent of residential is shown on the map "Existing Land Use". This map was prepared from data obtained from a field survey in the summer of 1969. It classifies land use according to categories of Residential, Commercial, Public-Semi-Public and Agricultural. Stands of Woodlands are also shown on this map. There are no industrial uses located in the Borough.

While the Borough is rectangular, the pattern of residential development is linear. Almost all the development is located along Route 77 and is strung from one end of the Borough to the other along this one single artery. In addition, scattered housing development has occurred along the roads and streets branching off Route 77. A number of homes are located along Route 198 to the south of the center of town, and along West Mill Street, Hatch Street and Hickory Corner Road. In addition, a cluster of housing occurs around the school in the center part of town.

Agricultural land or rural land occupies the bulk of the land area in the Borough. In addition, large areas of woodlands prevail in the Borough, particularly in the hilly areas of the community.

Public uses include an elementary school, located on the southside of State Street, and the Municipal Building and fire station located on Mill Street just north of the main intersection.

Commercial uses are located in a random pattern along State Street and are primarily small convenience retail outlets for gasoline, drugs, groceries, barber shops, taverns, and the like.



#### THE WORKING COMMUNITY

Although agriculture is the largest land use in the Borough, it is a relatively minor source of income. In 1960, only 24 of the 296 people living in Blooming Valley were classified as farm population. Since 1960, the number of full-time farmers has further decreased. Except for some minor agricultural activities, and the limited commercial uses in the Borough, Blooming Valley is predominately a bedroom community with its residents obtaining employment in other areas.

In 1960, the majority of the employed labor force worked in manufacturing industries. Manufacturing accounted for 35 per cent of the employees, or 30 out of 89. Trade accounted for 32 per cent; professional services 9 per cent and mining and construction for 9 per cent.

Family income for Blooming Valley was not specifically computed for the residents of Blooming Valley, but the distribution of population would indicate that the median income stood at about \$5,500. This is higher than the median family income for Crawford County (\$5,110) but lower than Pennsylvania's (\$5,719).

#### OBJECTIVES

# Environmental Objectives

All subsequent development and use of land shall be conducted so as to prevent excessive erosion of land through control of grading and the removal of trees from wooded areas, and the removal of topsoil.

Woodlands and brush areas should remain in a natural state to provide sanctuary for birds and small animals and to maintain a sound ecological balance.

All development should be carefully evaluated for any detrimental effect on the purity of water or air. Pollutants should not be permitted in connection with any development and sewage treatment facilities should be adequate to assure clean water to all downstream users.

Land adjacent to creeks should not be encroached upon by residential or other development, and a natural area at least 75 feet in width should be maintained in order to filter the nutrients from the creek.

# Housing Objectives

Efforts to encourage the development of a housing industry to provide additional housing units for moderate and low-income families in the region will be supported. A variety of housing types should be encouraged within the Region.

Efforts to rehabilitate and improve the maintenance on existing housing will be encouraged.

Building codes and safety codes should be adopted and enforced by the Borough or the County in order to assure a sound quality of housing during the coming years.

#### Transportation Objectives

The dispersed pattern of development in the region is oriented to vehicular traffic, and future development should be planned to accommodate the use of the automobile.

Through traffic, high-speed traffic and industrial traffic should be limited to assigned major thoroughfares through the Region.

All future development should provide adequate off-street parking facilities and off-street loading facilities so that Borough residents need not carry the burden of paving additional on-street spaces.

#### Community Facilities and Utilities Objectives

Park and Recreation facilities should be expanded in advance of the needs of the growing population.

Sanitary sewers should be provided in appropriate areas of the Borough.

#### Economic Objectives

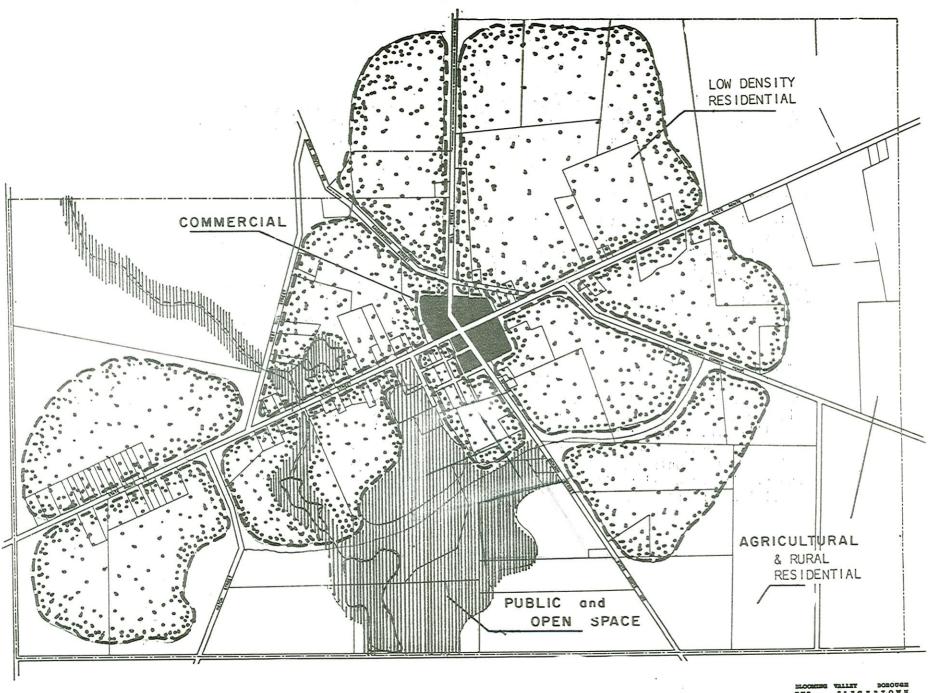
Sound commercial development within the limits of the economic feasibility of the population should be permitted where they can create a stable business environment.

#### THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Regional Development Plan has been prepared by the Regional Planning Commission to serve as an overall guide for the Saegertown Area and to provide the basis for the development of individual municipal plans for each of the four Townships in two Boroughs. The Regional Development Plan is necessarily general in nature and identifies the kinds of highways and other facilities which will be required to serve the Region in the future, and it indicates the general policies on land development from a regional standpoint. The recommendations are incorporated in the adjacent map "The Regional Development Plan".

The goals of the regional planning program are broadly stated and they are all generally aimed at the protection of the health, and safety of the now and future residents of the region and in improving their general welfare in the broadest sense.

The goals include the expansion of economic activity in the area so that the low and moderate income families can increase their earnings; the expansion of the housing supply and the improvement of existing housing conditions; the provision of adequate facilities to accommodate the population including public utilities; parks and recreation and highway facilities and the protection of the environment through the control of pollutants, the adoption of specific conservation policies and the avoidance of developing unsafe or hazardous ground; and, the phasing of improvements so that future development can be carried on within the limited financial resources of local government.



LAND USE PLAN



shopping center environment, which is an advantage to commercial owners as well as to the surrounding residents. There is a clearer line of demarcation between the districts and less conflict from divergent uses.

#### Residential Land

Residential land uses recommended an expansion into the fields behind the lots fronting on Route 77. A strong linear pattern which is evidenced today in the Borough has many undesirable aspects. Specifically, the cost of extending services rather they be electrical lines, sewers, garbage collection, mail delivery, police patrol, and whatever, is more expensive when residences are strung out along a single street. Grouping these together so that a shorter distance between buildings results, provides a major advantage for the economy of the community services.

Moreover, the full development of the area, rather than frontage can result in a better environment for each individual family. Homes can be grouped so as to maximize privacy while still minimizing the cost of development. The eastern, southern, and northwestern edges of the Borough are still expected to remain as agricultural, low-density residential areas. The areas around the ponds and the marsh lands, centering in the valley and the central portion of the community are expected to remain as conservation areas with either public or open space being the predominant classification of use.

#### MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Major Thoroughfare Plan for the Borough assumes that primary traffic routes will bypass the Borough. As shown on the Regional Development Plan, U. S. 27 bypassed the Borough to the south to provide direct access to Interstate 79. Thus east-west, north-south major traffic movements and truck movements need not traverse the Borough. Major thoroughfares within the Borough would be limited to secondary highways including Pennsylvania Routes 77 and 198.

New collector streets are shown on the Major Thoroughfare Plan extending into the northern boundary and paralleling Route 77 to the south of 77. These routes are intended primarily to open up access to areas where residential growth is anticipated. The opening of the collector streets paralleling Route 77 in the south will provide for an alternate route around 77 within the Borough. Thus, if a traffic accident should close off Route 77, emergency equipment could still move over the new collector road so that emergency access to most parts of the community would be insured.

and other residential communities. The concentration of industrial growth near the Interstate with further expansion in present growth corridors along French Creek are also anticipated.

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#### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

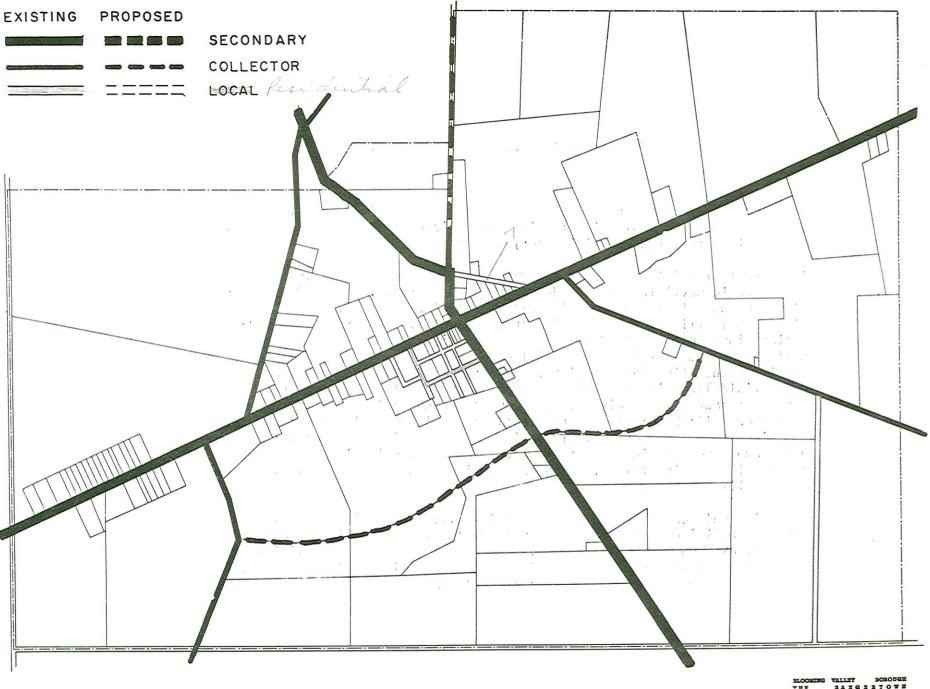
The Plan for future land use anticipates a concentration of commercial uses around the main cross roads, the expansion of residential areas, and the delineation of specific conservation areas in the Borough. No industrial uses are anticipated.

#### Commercial Uses

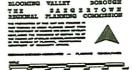
The expansion of commercial uses is anticipated in conjunction with the growth of population in Woodcock Township and in the Borough of Blooming Valley. The commercial uses are expected to cluster around the principal intersection in the center of town. The clustering has many advantages. First, it is a more convenient pattern so far as customers are concerned instead of driving from one store to another, the customer can park in a single spot and walk in one store to the next. This principal which is the primary organizational idea of a shopping center, can easily be applied to Blooming Valley.

Secondly, joint facilities can be used by the stores, such as shopping centers. Specifically, parking facilities can be grouped together so as to benefit the entire shopping district. Common entrance and exit lanes to the shopping facilities simplify traffic movements. Landscaping, lighting, and the like can also be jointly arranged.

In addition, the clustering of commercial uses, establishes a separate



MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN

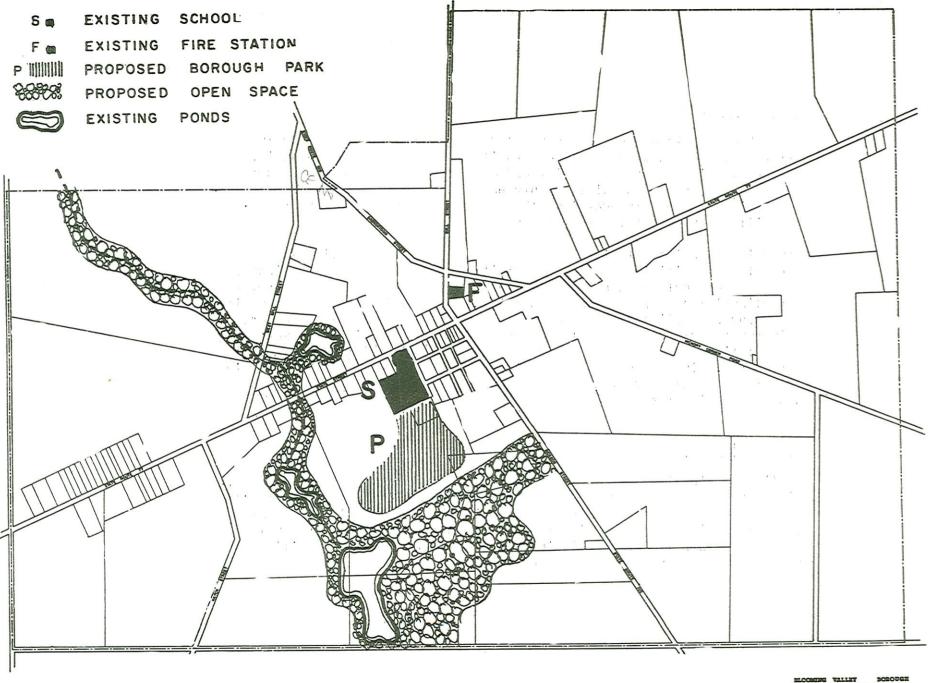


#### COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES PLAN

Blooming Valley is a part of the Saegertown Area School District. The elementary school located in Blooming Valley is presently being used only for special education facilities for elementary school children.

The School District is presently completing a new high school on a 100 acre site in Hayfield Township just west of Saegertown. Upon its completion, the use of present school facilities will be shifted. The new high school will house grades nine through twelve. The present Junior-Senior High School located in Woodcock Township and adjacent to the northern boundary of Saegertown will be converted to a Middle School housing grades five through eight. The Brookhouser Elementary School in Hayfield Township adjacent to the new high school will house grades three and four. The Euclid Avenue Elementary School in the center of Saegertown will become a primary school and will house Kindergarten, and first and second grades. In addition, the Euclid Avenue School will accommodate the special elementary education class which is presently located in Blooming Valley. Upon these shifts, the Blooming Valley School will be closed.

No additional school facilities are anticipated in Blooming Valley. It has been anticipated that a new elementary level school will be needed in Woodcock Township in the future. Other expanded school facilities needed to meet the growing population around Saegertown will be meet by the expansion of the present school facilities.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN



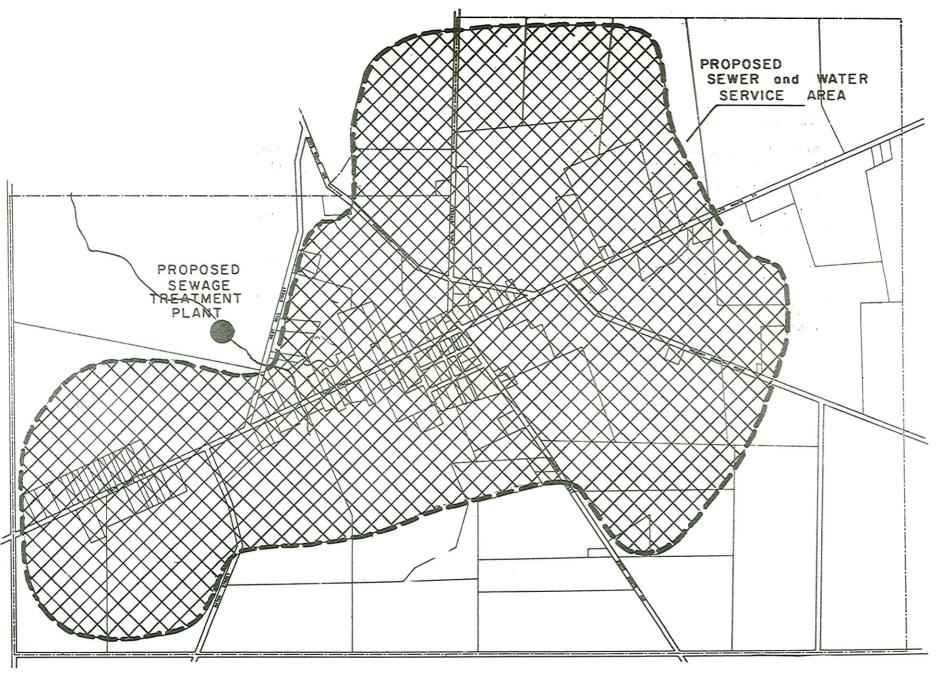
#### Parks and Recreation

Woodcock Reservoir now being constructed just downstream from Blooming Valley will be a major recreational facility for Western Pennsylvania. Major recreational facilities will be located around the southern boundary of the reservoir and will be only about three miles from the center of Blooming Valley. In addition, the open space surrounding the reservoir will reach almost to the Borough.

With this major installation, however, the Borough must provide expanded recreational facilities in close proximity with its residential neighborhoods. A national standard requires that at least ten acres of improved recreational land per thousand population be provided by each municipality. This standard applied to Blooming Valley would indicate that three acres of improved recreational facilities are now required. With the expansion of population, possible by the end of the century, a full ten acres would be required. The school site extending back to the ponds and conservation areas in the southcentral portion of the Borough should be reserved as a future park site for the Borough.

# Other Facilities

The fire station is on Route 198 just off the intersection with Route 77. This is a very good location for the fire station being centrally located to the residents of the community, being located at the principal cross-roads with quick access to all parts of the community. The fire station also serves as a municipal building for the Borough. No new facilities are anticipated for Blooming Valley.



MUNICIPAL UTILITIES PLAN



# Utilities

While the areas are presently served by individual wells and septic tanks, it is anticipated that a sewerage system and treatment plant and public water supply will be required in the future by the Borough. The growth areas outlined on the Future Land Use Plan are defined by the areas where municipal utilities appear most feasible. Altogether, about half of the Borough is expected to be served by sewer and water by the end of the Century. A small package plant to serve residents can be located in the northwestern portion of the community. This plant would be located along the Blooming Valley Run leading down to Woodcock Creek and Woodcock Reservoir. Since the plant is located above Woodcock Reservoir, tertiary treatment to remove excess nutrients would be required at the treatment plant.

#### THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is shown on a summary map form and includes the recommendations made previously in this report. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan includes plans for the future use of land within the Borough; a Plan for the movement of people and goods within the Borough; a Plan for Community Facilities and Utilities; a Statement of Objectives located barlier in this report with respect to the future development of the Borough; and a Statement of regional relationships incorporated in the Saegertown Area

This Plan has been set forth to serve as an overall evaluation of the community together with a policy statement reflecting the community-wide interest in the future development of the Borough. It is intended to serve as a guide not only to the Borough Council, but also to other governmental agencies and to private individuals and developers seeking to develop land or to expand their developments within the Borough. The Plan is set forward so that every individual will be aware of the overall Borough goals and can best coordinate his particular development to meet the overall plan.

To assist in the implementation of the program, a Zoning Ordinance has been prepared reflecting these plans and objectives. The Zoning Ordinance sets forth the districts of the Borough and establishes the uses permissible in each district. In addition, conditional uses are permitted under specific circumstances, upon the review and approval of the proposed use by the Planning Commission and the Borough Council. The size of yards, height of buildings, density of population, off-street parking requirements, setback

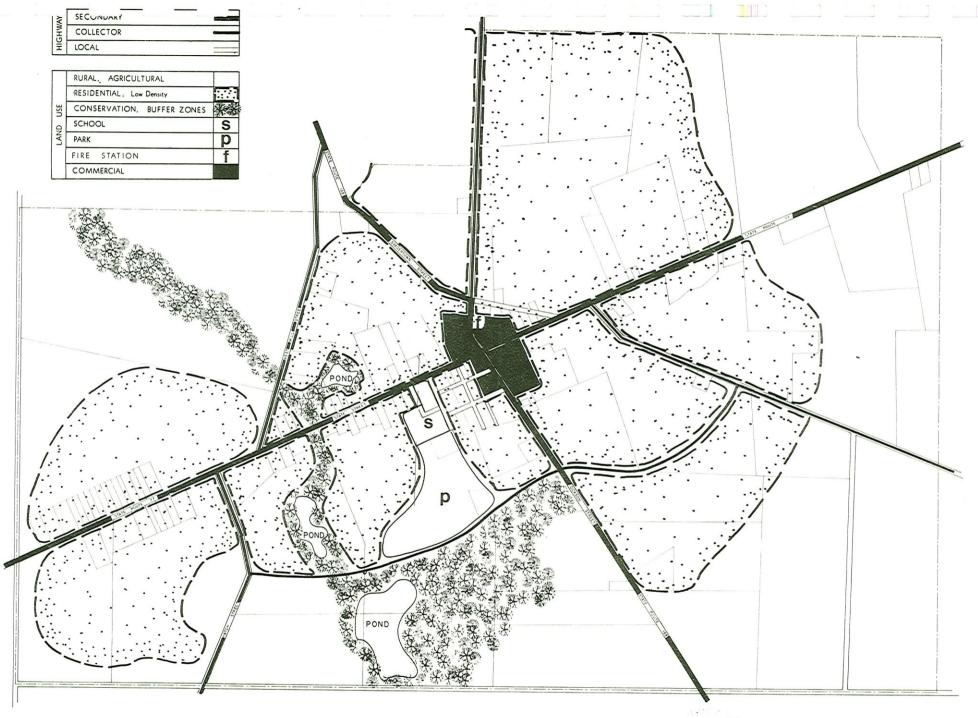
and side yard requirements are all set forth in the Zoning Ordinances.

The Ordinance will be enforced by a Zoning Officer, and every individual proposing to build a new building or to establish a new use within the Borough will be required to obtain a Zoning Certificate prior to occupying the building or establishing the use.

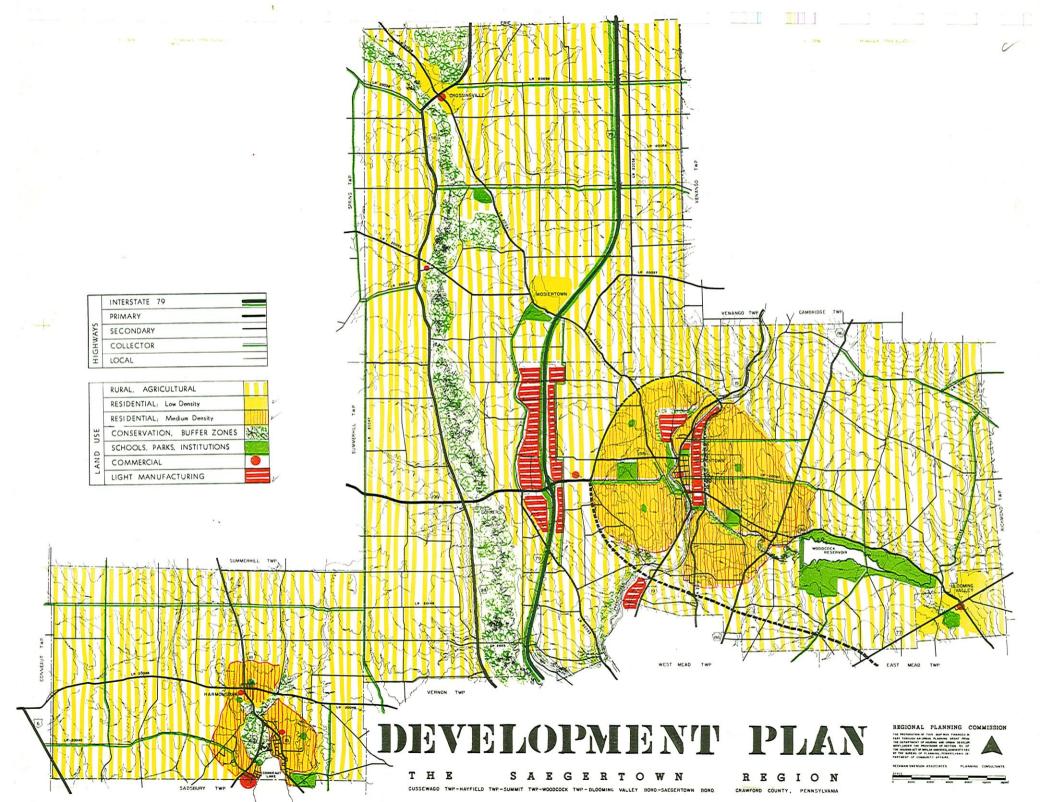
A Land Development and Subdivision Ordinance has been prepared for adoption by the Borough Council as a part of this Planning Program. The Subdivision Ordinance sets forth the standards and procedures for subdividing any parcel of ground in the lots for building purposes. The Subdivision Ordinance sets forth the type of improvements which are required, and the method of construction and minimum standards for construction for streets and other improvements in connection with any subdivision. These provisions are intended to provide an orderly development of land and for the sound installation of public streets and other improvements as necessary to insure adequate service to those families who will subsequently make their homes in the subdivisions.

Additional recommendations with respect to capital improvements programming and capital needs for the Borough have been made in separate reports to the Planning Commission and these will be revised by the Planning Commission from time to time as dictated by changing needs in the Borough.

Changes in the Plan itself may occur from time to time as dictated by changing forces and requirements in the Borough. Where such changes appear to be necessary, a proposed amendment to the Plan can be made by the Borough Council if they have first held a public hearing as required by law with respect to the change.



C O M P R E H E N S I V E P L A N



These above goals should not be taken as promises of things to come, but instead as commonly agreed upon end products of the accumulated building activities of all levels of government and of the private developers and individual families who will change the present development of the Region. All these isolated activities will combine to build the communities which will exist within the Region by the end of the Century. These individual activities are too often un-related, and it is the avowed purpose of the Regional Planning Commission to pool these individual activities in the patterns which work together to constitute an entire community. The Planning Commission aims for the "synergistic affect" whereby the end product, the whole, is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

The Regional Planning Commission hopes to progress toward these goals by establishing rational land development policies. For example, a policy which would concentrate development pressures at logical points would result in aggregation of housing markets and would lead to economics in providing supporting facilities as well as in the construction of homes themselves. The pressures in the Saegertown Area can fortunately be focused in one area since the major concentration of population, the main location of new industry, the two main investments by the Federal Government in local improvements and the programmed State improvements in the Region all lie along an access from the Hayfield Interchange of Interstate 79 through Saegertown to the Woodcock Reservoir. This access is supplemented by major new schools, sewage facilities, major new recreation facilities which are programmed near Woodcock, and the construction of Pennsylvania Route 27, more or less along this access. With this concentration, most of the developmental problems of the area can be concentrated so that solutions to one problem will solve other solutions as well. In addition, major growth around older established areas as at Conneaut Lake and Harmonsburg can be expected to grow. Further rural residential growth is expected with expansion of Blooming Valley