

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**for the**  
**BOROUGH OF COCHRANTON**

November, 1990

by

**ADAMS, GRANEY AND ASSOCIATES**

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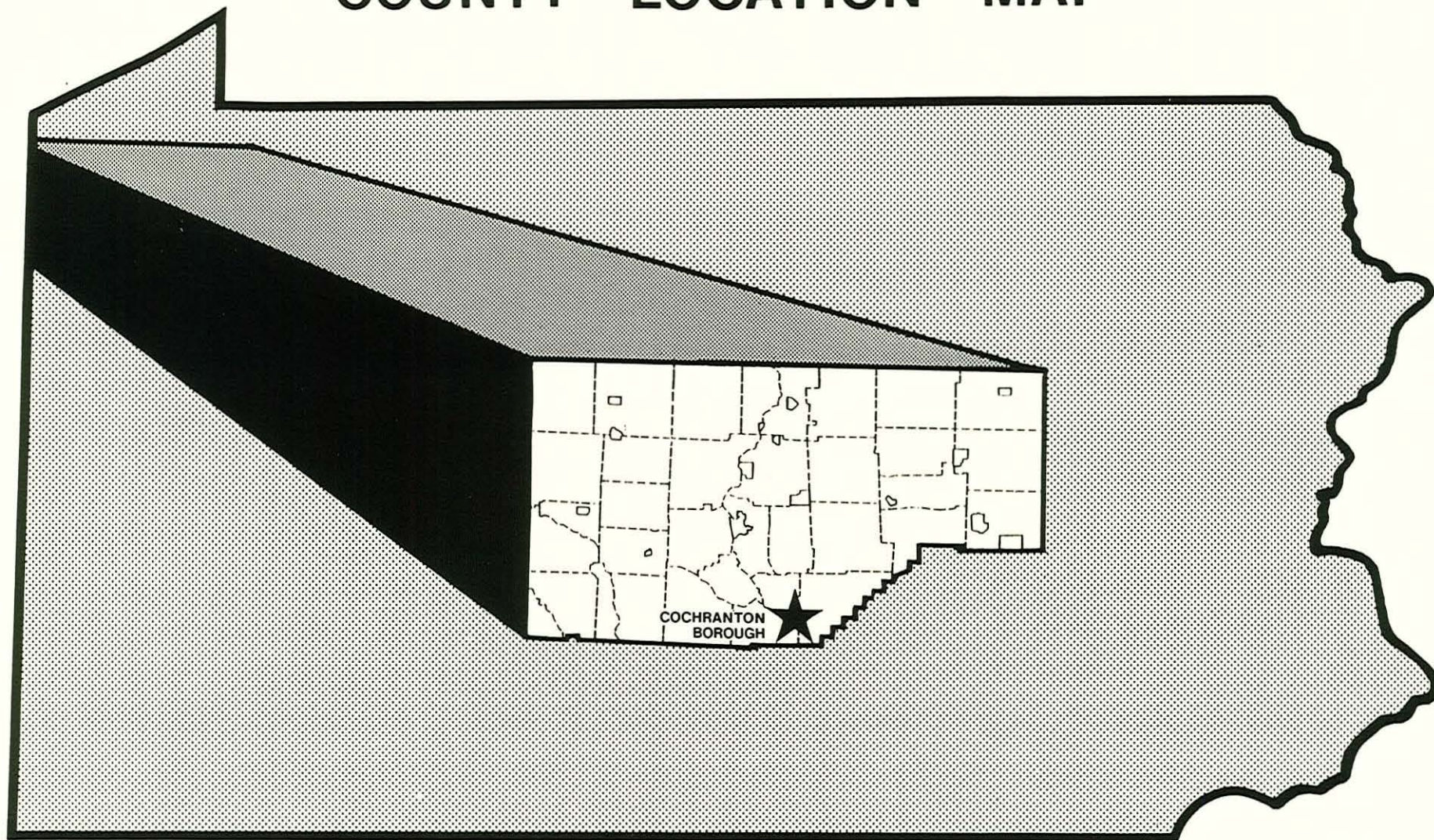
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# COCHRANTON BOROUGH COUNTY LOCATION MAP



CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



ADAMS, GRANEY & ASSOCIATES



# COCHRANTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## BACKGROUND

## PHYSIOLOGY

Land form has a direct impact upon development. Western Pennsylvania has been covered by glaciers at various times. As the glaciers retreated, they left a mixture of soils. Although these ice forms did grind down much of the pre-existing landscape - a favor to modern development - they also often left poorly drained clayey soils - a real development problem. As soils and slopes do not change appreciably with time, there is little need to go into great depth covering information described twenty years ago. Therefore, only a brief section on soils and slopes is included. For additional data, the 1972 Regional Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Area Plans for Water and Sanitary Sewers should be consulted.

**Soils:** According to the Soil Survey for Crawford County, numerous soil types can be found in Cochranon. Primary varieties include Braceville, Pope, Chenango, Haven, and Red Hook. Of these, Braceville, Pope, and Chenango predominate. These soils are described as deep and moderately to excessively well-drained soils. The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) comments that many of these soil types are associated with floodplains or are found near major streams.

Obviously, such a description is apt for Cochranon. Although the Borough has a water system for over ninety years, it is not sewered. This community is rather densely populated, but is not under state mandate to construct a waste water treatment facility. Undoubtedly, the deep, well-drained and often gravelly soils found here allow the existing on-site sanitary sewer facilities to handle their effluent quickly.

In fact, the Department of Environmental Resources recently completed a survey of the Borough specifically to find evidence of malfunctioning on-lot septic systems. They did not find such evidence. Consequently, the Borough can still rely, at least in the short term, on its installed individual sewage systems.

**Slope:** Although a great deal of Cochranon is composed of nearly flat sectors, there are some locations where considerable slope is present. A quick glance at the soils map for the Area shows scattered "C" (8-15%) and "D" (15-25%) slopes. According to the 1972 Comprehensive Plan, approximately 20% of the Borough has slopes of 9% or more. Normally, slopes over 8% present development difficulties, while those with slopes in excess of 15% are rarely developed. Most of the more severe slopes are encountered in lightly or non-developed areas along Route 322, North Street, Route

173 (Cemetery Hill), and in the extreme southeast section of Cochrannton. These slope considerations have encouraged development parallel to Franklin Street and French Creek. This historic pattern is apt to continue. The steep slope lands are unlikely to develop except where acute economic pressure is felt.

**Floodplains:** On June 4, 1990, the Federal Emergency Management Agency published a Flood Insurance Study for Cochrannton. This Study covered French Creek and Little Sugar Creek within the Borough's borders. According to the Study, the upstream drainage area for French Creek is 990 square miles, of which 53 is contributed by Little Sugar Creek. There are two flood control structures upstream from the Borough which help control flooding; one in Erie County, the Union City Reservoir; the other in Crawford County, Woodcock Creek Lake. Previous floods of record included January of 1959, March 1913, April 1947, March 1960, and March 1964.

From a planning standpoint, the Study results are of importance. Traditionally, the top of the railroad tracks was the flood limit. In Cochrannton, the tracks follow French Creek; but in most cases, do not set the flood hazard area. The flood hazard area spills over into areas near Franklin in the south of the Borough. It includes much of the land the 1972 Plan proposed to use to construct the "missing links" of South Smith and South Atlantic Streets. Near the confluence with Little Sugar Creek, it includes the Fair Grounds, as well as a significant portion of the school/ ballfield complex to the north of the Little Sugar Creek.

On Little Sugar Creek itself, the flood areas are shown on both sides of the stream and include a large portion of relatively flat undeveloped land off North Street.

Perhaps the greatest impact of the Flood Study results are to limit the development options of the Borough in future years.





## EXISTING LAND USE

The primary purpose of the land use section of a comprehensive plan is to describe the existing land use patterns which exist in a community and to recommend policies for future development. For Pennsylvania communities, these land use recommendations normally are translated into specific land use controls typically centering around zoning.

For Cochranton, it is possible to view the land use patterns with some sense of the history of development. In the 1972 Cochranton Regional Comprehensive Plan, a land use survey was completed. This survey contained two tables.

The initial analysis was along general land use categories, while the second looked at developed land only. The results were as follows:

TABLE 1  
COCHRANTON BOROUGH  
GENERAL LAND USE - 1972

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Developed	309.7	38.8
Agriculture	113.5	14.2
Open	143.7	18.0
Wooded	201.1	25.0
Marshlands	-0-	-0-
Water Bodies	<u>29.3</u>	<u>3.8</u>
Total	797.3	100.0

Source: 1972 Cochranton Regional Comprehensive Plan, Michael Baker, Jr., Inc.



TABLE 2  
COCHRANTON BOROUGH  
DEVELOPED LAND USE - 1972

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Residential	188.9	61.0
Commercial	16.7	5.4
CBD	3.5	1.1
Neighborhood	13.2	4.3
Industrial	7.7	2.5
Public Service Use	22.1	7.1
General	15.4	5.0
Recreational	6.6	2.1
Roads and Railroads	<u>74.3</u>	<u>24.0</u>
Total	309.7	100.0

Source: 1972 Cochranon Regional Comprehensive Plan, Michael Baker, Jr., Inc.

The 1972 Plan discusses existing land use in some detail, comparing use patterns in Cochranon with certain national averages. These comparisons were not too revealing, as each individual community tends to have unique circumstances which shape its particular development. The 1972 Plan characterizes Cochranon's land use patterns as haphazard. It further notes a mixture of incompatible land uses, especially commercial and residential. However, even with these apparent problems, the 1972 Plan did not point to such matters with alarm. It was more concerned with uncontrolled future development and the lack of development controls.

In 1989, a new land use survey was compiled. The current survey was prepared from the County Assessment Maps.

Before any comparisons can be made with prior efforts, certain facts should be made clear to the reader. The first relates to the "base" maps used for each of these efforts. As noted above, in 1989, County Assessments Maps were used. Prior efforts used aerial photos and/or U.S.G.S. maps. Although these maps depict the same information, there is bound to be spatial differences between them. In the 1972 work, the Borough size was estimated at 797.3 acres, while in 1989, the total was 756.11. Obviously, 41.19 acres of Cochranon (about 5% of its land mass) did not disappear. Rather, the difference was one of base mapping and measurement approaches.

Assessment maps tend to divide uses via property lines. Using aerial photos, such divisions are more apt to be less distinct. For example, many property owners whose homes abut vacant lots often maintain adjacent fields for the sake of appearance. Using a visual approach to land use surveys, a portion of these fields

would be credited to residential uses. Such practice will slightly overstate residential land use categories. Conversely, the assessment map system is more restrictive and may even slightly understate residential uses.

One final difference should be noted; and it, at times, is a major one. In 1972, land use designations were made upon the developed portion of the land. For example, if a school sat on a 5-acre lot and only half the lot was actually developed, then 2-1/2 acres would be classified as public service and 2-1/2 acres as open. In 1989, while that approach was used with privately owned land, it was not used for the public/semi-public category. Historically, it is quite rare to see portions of vacant school or public land converted to private use. With these caveats in mind, we can now look at the 1989 figures.

TABLE 3  
LAND USE SURVEY  
COCHRANTON BOROUGH - 1989

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>(1972)</u>
Residential	158.04	20.9	188.9
Single Family	155.27	20.3	
Multi-Family	2.6	0.6	
Commercial	15.274	2.02	16.7
Industrial	13.27	1.73	7.7
Public/Semi-Public	96.27	12.73	22.1
Streets	45.40	6.00	74.3**
Railroads	19.63	2.60	
Undeveloped*	<u>408.40</u>	<u>54.02</u>	
Total	756.11	100.00	

\*Vacant, Water, Agriculture

\*\*Combined with railroads - 1989 combined is 65.03

Source: Field Survey, 1989

When comparing the 1972 to 1989 land use figures, it would appear that there was a shrinkage of residential land (188.9 - 158.04 = 30.86 or 16%). True, there appears to be a few conversions to commercial along Franklin, yet in Oakland Estates alone, perhaps 15-20 new housing units were added. Furthermore, this land use survey revealed no massive demolition sites. Consequently, any real changes have been modest and incremental - the difference of measuring techniques only.

Regardless of the type of measurement and the difference between old and new, the predominant land use for developed land within Cochrannton Borough is residential. In the most part, this



development remains single-family residential, with only a small portion of the acreage counted listed as multi-family in nature. Obviously, if the new FmHA housing project of twenty-four units is constructed, this will change.

A great deal of the housing within the Borough is contained within the older sections of the community. These are typified by paved, curbed streets, single lots, and single-family dwellings. Newer developments within Cochranon Borough can be typified by the Oakland Estates. It is a more modern development, with ranch style homes in a setting of larger lots fronting on a typical uncurbed street.

It is obvious from the Oakland Estates, the Borough of Cochranon lacks modern subdivision regulations. Not all streets which were shown on the Plan were installed, and there is a lack of adequate drainage facilities.

A more dramatic shift is seen in the public/semi-public land use category. This was a deliberate shift caused by the previously mentioned policy - that of counting the size of the entire parcel, not merely the developed area. An examination of the 1972 Land Use Plan shows quite limited areas designated as public for schools. This has been extended. Furthermore, there has been some development of recreational land since 1972.

Beyond the increase of actively used recreational land, surprisingly few dramatic changes have occurred in land use over the past 18 years. The modest development of Oakland Estates was projected and has been realized. Probably the most striking land use change is not one of type but of intensity. Cochranon's commercial section shows signs of a steady downgrade. Thus, though uses are still commercial, the intensity of that classification is certainly much diminished.

Industrial land use in Cochranon is contrary to normal patterns. Typically, such functions are grouped together and along some major transportation facility, road, or rail. In Cochranon, current industrial development is scattered and often surrounded by other, apparently non-compatible, land uses. However, the relationship of industry to community does seem amicable; and none of the current firms appear to exert a blighting influence. Perhaps of more concern is the fact that no obvious, large, undeveloped industrial land exists.

What overall conclusions can be made? Between the land use study and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, especially social-economic concerns, there are certain items which become apparent.

1. Nearly one half of all Borough land is developed.

2. Much of the undeveloped land is steep slope or flood-plain.
3. Developed land represents the very great majority of property with road access, public water, and physical characteristics which lends itself to easy development.
4. Barring dramatic economic shifts, future new development will probably center on single-family residences.
5. The typical American household is shrinking in size. Consequently, housing demand per population unit is rising. At the same time, the local population is aging. The events will likely lead to increased demand towards the conversion of larger one-family dwellings to two- or three-family units. Such activity will likely be felt in the central part of Cochrannton.
6. Unless some dramatic shifts occur, the Cochrannton commercial area will likely remain rooted in convenience goods stores with few, if any, comparison goods outlets.
7. Industrial uses are scattered with little, or limited, clear land available for expansion.
8. There is an obvious lack of development standards for the Borough.



## INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is the backbone of a community. The streets, drains, water, electric, and other utility lines all make up an essential framework that the more visible portion of Cochranton relies upon. In this section of the Comprehensive Plan Update, a brief examination of the various systems is presented, along with comments relative to their adequacy.

**Water:** According to prior information, the Cochranton water system was originally constructed in 1893, some 97 years ago. Up until a few months ago, this was a municipal service, although limited customers outside the Borough limits were served. Then, in 1990, a Water Authority was created to allow representation on a regional basis. With an official start in April of 1990, the Authority - composed of five members from Cochranton and Wayne Township - has the task of addressing the system's problems.

**Description:** The water system has two wells in Fairfield Township. These wells have a rated capacity of 400,000 gallons per day each. In addition to the wells, there are three springs which are available with a safe yield of 15,00 gallons daily.

After the water is withdrawn from the wells, it is chlorinated and either fed to the distribution system or to one of the system's two storage tanks. These tanks, on Cemetery Hill and Steen Hill, have a capacity of 240,000 and 200,000 respectively. Tanks are steel in construction. Both tanks are uncovered. The distribution system is composed of various sized lines. According to available information, over eight miles of line is present in the distribution system. Lines vary from three-fourths to eight inches in size. Although much of the system uses cast iron or PVC pipe, nearly three miles of steel pipe is present.

The system serves approximately 571 customers in Cochranton and Fairfield Township. Some 97% of the connections are metered. According to 1989 figures, usage ranges from 65,000 to 400,000 gallons per day, with an average consumption of 275,000 gallons.

**Comments:** Over recent years, water line replacement has been a high priority in the Borough. The most recent effort was a line replacement on High, Franklin, and Oak using 8" PVC. Some thirty-five fire hydrants were also installed. Prior to that, lines on Wood, North Franklin, and River had been replaced. In spite of these efforts, there are still significant problems with leakage and corroded lines throughout the system.

In October of 1989, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources wrote a letter to the Borough identifying some nine water system problems which require attention. Some of these issues are



quite serious and are mandated actions under the federal and state legislation. Principal concerns are the two uncovered storage tanks and the level of residual chlorine.

These two problems appear to be related. With uncovered tanks, sunlight and other environmental forces dissipate the chlorine in the finished water. Furthermore, the use of open tanks is contrary to the Pure Drinking Water Act; and that condition must be corrected. In addition to being open, these tanks are old; and they operate inefficiently.

Another water concern is the well field on Steen Hill. This field has a capacity of 50,000 to 60,000 gallons per day in dry weather; an excellent backup to existing wells. However, water quality remains in question.

Although the replacement of water distribution lines has been a past priority, the problem is a pervasive one. The line condition is exacerbated by a number of deadends which encourage sedimentation and corrosion. Certainly, steel pipe, especially subject to corrosion, is one of its many weak links in the system. Due to line age and corrosion, there is some concern that upgrades to this system, of improved volume and pressure of water, may rupture weaker lines. That concern has been translated into an ambitious improvement program recently funded by PENNVEST. Ironically, even the recent increase in water chlorination, per DER orders, has had a bad effect. The excess chlorine in the system is causing the loosening of mineral deposits in pipes. Consequently, delivered finished water may have a poor taste along with an unpalatable odor.

A final problem of the water system is the hydrants. A recent report relates to many of the Borough's hydrants work improperly. Due to their age, replacement parts for these hydrants are not available.

In general, Cochranon Borough has a very serious situation relative to water.

All sewerage for the Borough is through individual, on-lot septic tanks. In 1989-1990, PADER sanitarians made an inspection of these systems. Their findings were overwhelmingly favorable. Yet, for the purpose of long-range planning, the need of a central sanitary sewer system must be addressed.

Gas and electric within the Borough seem to be satisfactory, and we learn of no criticism of these utilities. Likewise, the telephone company appears to have adequate service for the needs of the Borough user currently and for the immediate future. Consequently, no comments relative to the level of service of the private utilities need be made.



## TRANSPORTATION

According to available information, there are approximately seven-and three-quarter miles of roads in the Borough. Of these, about 3.3 miles are state owned, with the balance controlled by the Borough.

Principal traffic carriers are Routes U.S. 322 and PA 173. Route 322 functions as an arterial highway and connects the Oil City-Franklin area with Meadville. It passes through the northern end of Cochranton. Recent traffic data indicates usage on that road at approximately 6,500 vehicles a day. Most traffic on this highway is through and does not have a local origin or destination. According to the Trucker's Guide to Pennsylvania, Route 322 will accommodate 102" twins and 102" x 48" trailers, making it an important truck route. It is interesting to note that in the 1972 Comprehensive Plan, volumes on Route 322 were only 1,530 to 1,721 ADT (Average Daily Traffic). Volumes in 1990 were forecast at 3,781 ADT. Current volumes in the Cochranton Area far exceed any of the 1972 projections.

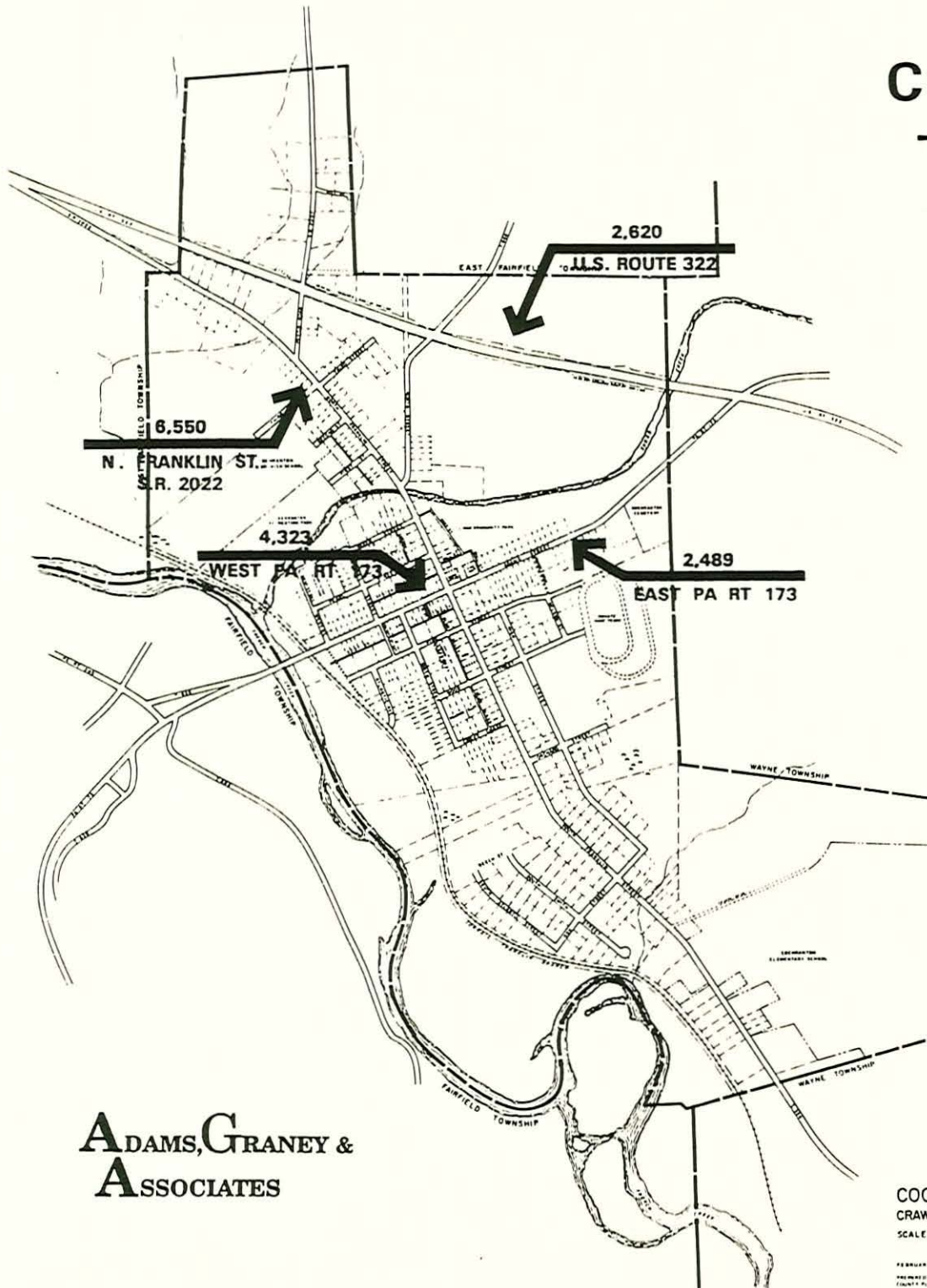
Route 173 begins in the Slippery Rock area and ends north of Cochranton. Locally, it serves to connect the Stoneboro-Sandy Lake area to Route 322 at Cochranton. Recent traffic information for Route 173 put volumes at 4,200 to 4,300 ADT in the Borough.

There is one full traffic light in the Borough at the intersection of Franklin and Adams. Reportedly, the signal is a maintenance problem, especially due to the fact that parts for this device are no longer manufactured. In addition, the signal no longer meets current PennDOT standards that require a signal head for each lane, as well as a pedestrian indicator. There is also a "blinker" light on Route 322 and Pettis Road.

There are two important bridges serving the community. The bridge on Adams Street was constructed in 1930 and is a two-lane truss affair. It appears in sound shape. PennDOT records reveal the bridge had a new deck installed in 1983 and has been painted within the past 6-7 years. Also, some minor work to repair truck damage was completed in 1989. The second bridge is along North Franklin as it crosses Little Sugar Creek. Although the bridge appears sound, the angle of approach is poor. The intersection of North and Franklin at the north end of the bridge presents a problem. Motorists entering Franklin from the north have almost no field vision to the south.

Previous Plan recommendations proposed several new streets. These involved principally Smith and Atlantic Streets. This proposal involved street extensions to provide "missing links" between Chevy Chase and Oakland Estates. Other proposed streets included Third

# COCHRANTON BOROUGH TRAFFIC VOLUME MAP



TRAFFIC COUNT  
ROUTE #

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC  
COUNTS IN VEHICLES PER DAY

(PENNDOT DATA)

ADAMS, GRANEY &  
ASSOCIATES

COCHRANTON BOROUGH  
CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
SCALE 1" = 300'

FEBRUARY 1989  
PREPARED BY THE (COUNTY) PLANNING COMMISSION

THIS MAP WAS FINANCED, IN PART, FROM THE SMALL COMMUNITIES PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS.



Street (a southerly extension) and West Street, an extension from the Fairgrounds across Little Sugar Creek to the new Third Street extension. Also, a brand new road off Third (north of Franklin) was recommended to access the large vacant area between Sugar Creek and North Street.

Another source of possible future road programs is the PennDOT 12 Year Plan. This is a listing of proposed road projects throughout the Commonwealth based upon three (3), four-year increments. Normally, projects in the first four-year segment are on some type of firm construction schedule, while proposals in the second four-year term are "planned," with the third four-year proposal considered tenuous.

There are no major projects currently on the State's "12 Year Plan" for Cochranon Borough. In the past, projects on Route 322 and Route 173 were listed, as well as a Franklin Street Bridge and the North Street sight alignment correction. They have since been dropped.

Another PennDOT programming device is the maintenance program. Although short term in scope, it can often involve significant reconstruction and rehabilitation work. One important element of that element is the "3R" Program. On the PennDOT "3R" Program, Route 322, from Cochranon north, is being restored. This work involves drainage, shoulders, and repaving. The Cochranon south segment is planned for future years.

Cochranon is somewhat unique, as rail service is still available. A Conrail branch line connects the Oil City-Franklin-Titusville area to its main line in Meadville. The branch line runs through the Borough, generally along French Creek. Given the activity at the Pennzoil Refinery in Oil City, the rails should remain in use for the foreseeable future. No local active use outside of scrap storage is noted for the railroad.

## POPULATION

Population characteristics and projections are essential in developing an effective comprehensive plan. Therefore, a prime section of the Borough's Plan will be based on statistical information derived from various population studies.

According to the last population count taken, the 1980 U.S. Census, the Borough of Cochranton numbered 1,240 persons. This figure is projected to remain relatively constant for approximately the next ten years unless job opportunities in the area increase (see Table 4). This low rate of growth (1%) is consistent with projections for the State of Pennsylvania and Crawford County.

TABLE 4  
U.S. CENSUS POPULATION PROJECTIONS  
1980-2000

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990*</u>	<u>1995*</u>	<u>2000*</u>
Pennsylvania	11,863,895	12,018,816	12,100,149	12,101,253
Crawford County	88,869	90,427	91,025	91,196
<b>Cochranton</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>1,262</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>1,272</b>

\*Projected

Source: Pennsylvania Data Center

A July 1988 population estimate from CENDATA, the U.S. Bureau's on-line computer service (Table 5), shows Pennsylvania's population increasing 1.2% from 1980. On the county and local level, however, the data is somewhat less optimistic. CENDATA estimates a 3.3% decrease in population for Crawford County and an alarming 8.5% decrease for the Borough of Cochranton. However, this data is often less accurate at the local level than at the County level. This is due to the fact that the prime estimates are based upon county, not local, population.



TABLE 5  
POPULATION CHANGE ESTIMATES  
1980-1988

	<u>7/1/88</u> <u>Estimate</u>	<u>4/1/80</u> <u>U.S. Census</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Pennsylvania	12,002,000	11,864,720	+1.2
Crawford County	86,000	88,869	-3.3
Meadville	13,570	15,544	-12.7
<b>Cochranton</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>-8.8</b>
Fairfield	1,130	1,099	+2.5
East Fairfield	850	932	-9.2
Wayne	1,360	1,335	+2.2
Union	820	884	-7.0

Source: CENDATA, U.S. Bureau of the Census

Although the difference between Tables 4 and 5 seem significant in terms of percentages, the difference in real numbers is not. Table 4 can be interpreted to mean an annual increase of 2.2 persons; whereas, Table 5 would show a decrease of 13.75 persons annually. The average of the two Tables is an annual decrease of eight persons, the equivalent of three average households in Cochranton. There are various factors that can contribute to a population decrease in a small community. They include the out-migration of people of working age and their families in search of employment, low birth rates and mortality rates, as well as the out-migration of college students.

During the completion of this Plan, the U.S. Bureau of the Census released its **preliminary population data** for 1990. The 1990 count for the Borough was 1,174, confirming the 1988 Cendata estimate, and all projections for a modest loss or static population.

In order to gain a sufficient understanding of a community's population characteristics and to anticipate future change, an analysis of the age structure of the community is essential. Table 6 gives a population break down according to age, percentage of total population within each age group, and the percentage of females in each age group.

TABLE 6  
COHORT ANALYSIS

	<u>PA</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Crawford County</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Coch- ranton</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% Females</u>
0-4	747,458	6.3	6,310	7.1	76	6.1	54
5-9	805,151	6.8	6,996	7.8	95	7.7	52
10-14	931,891	7.9	7,628	8.6	104	8.4	49
15-19	1,080,610	9.1	8,376	9.4	108	8.7	48
20-24	1,059,815	8.9	7,405	8.3	76	6.1	47
25-29	945,051	8.0	6,611	7.4	97	7.8	52
30-34	847,847	7.1	6,437	7.2	69	5.6	52
35-44	1,274,072	10.1	9,610	10.8	146	11.8	51
45-54	1,296,012	10.9	8,816	9.9	121	9.8	54
55-59	712,074	6.0	4,735	5.3	76	6.1	65
60-64	632,981	5.3	4,464	5.1	48	3.9	48
65-74	944,065	8.0	6,871	7.7	134	10.8	59
75-84	456,908	3.9	3,419	3.8	66	5.3	65
85+	129,960	1.1	1,191	1.3	24	1.9	67
TOTAL	11,863,895	100.0	88,869	100.0	1,240	100.0	53

Source: Pennsylvania Data Center (1980 U.S. Census Bureau)

With the exception of the 45-54 and 60-64 cohorts, Table 6 indicates a higher percentage of people in each age cohort over the age of 35 in Cochrannton than in both Crawford County and Pennsylvania. This is reflected in the mean age of Cochrannton (34.6), (Table 8) which is 2.5 and 3.7 years higher than both the State of Pennsylvania and Crawford County respectfully. Within Cochrannton, the mean age of females is 37.2 as compared to 31.8 for males. This significant difference in mean age by sex can be related indirectly to the number of people widowed. There were 49 widowed females and only 13 widowed men in the Borough of Cochrannton per the 1980 Census.

TABLE 7  
AGE COHORT DIVISIONS

<u>Percentage Over</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>	<u>Crawford</u>	<u>Cochrannton</u>
35	45.9%	44.0%	49.6%
45	35.2%	33.25	37.8%
55	24.2%	23.2	28.0%
65	13.0%	12.8%	18.1%

Source: Pennsylvania Data Center (1980 U.S. Census Bureau)



As Table 7 illustrates, nearly one-fifth of the Borough's population is over 65. This is 1.5 times the County average. Persons over the age of 65 have a set of unique needs compared to the general population. Most will be retired; and thus, can be discounted from estimations of workforce size. The housing needs of the 65+ population are often radically different from the population as a whole. Limits in income and sometimes physical disability sometimes prevent elderly homeowners from maintaining their single-family homes. Often, elderly persons live alone and comprise many of the single-family households of a community. In 1980, just under one-quarter (23.75%) of all housing units in the Borough were one-person domiciles. That number is projected to increase. Varying degrees of physical disability also create a need for specialized multi-family housing units providing varying degrees of personal care. Even the spectrum of transportation can change with the presence of a large number of elderly persons.

TABLE 8  
MEAN AGE (YEARS)

Pennsylvania	32.1
Crawford	30.9
Cochranton	34.6

Source: Pennsylvania Data Center (1980 U.S. Census Bureau)

In conclusion, the population of Cochranton is estimated to remain relatively stable in the upcoming years, with a possible minimal decrease expected. While Cochranton's overall population size is holding steady, it is, at the same time, gradually climbing in age. Statistics from the 1970 U.S. Census shows 16.3% of the Borough's population to be over 65, with the mean age being 34.1. In comparison, 1980 U.S. Census statistics show 18% of the population over 65, and the mean age 34.6. When developing an effective comprehensive plan for the future, Cochranton must take into consideration their maturing community and plan accordingly.

TABLE 9  
 PROFILE OF 1980 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS  
 COCHRANTON

Population: 1,240  
 Sex of Persons: 582 males, 658 females  
 Mean Age: 34.6 - 31.8 males, 37.2 females  
 Number of Households: 469  
 Number of Families: 349  
 Average Household Size: 2.64  
 Households with Children:

Total - 350  
 Married Couples - 308  
 Male Households, No Wife - 11  
 Female Households, No Husband - 30  
 Non-Family Households - 1

One-Person Households:

Total - 119  
 Male - 24  
 Female - 95

Persons by Race: 1,238 white, 1 American Indian, 1 Asian Indian  
 Marital Status of Persons 15+:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Single	107	88
Married (Except Separated)	313	313
Separated	3	4
Widowed	13	94
Divorced	<u>12</u>	<u>18</u>
Total	448	517

Source: Pennsylvania Data Center (1980 Census)

## ECONOMY

Economics is, simply put, a study of inter-relationships. Manufacturing, buying, selling, payrolls, and all related activities are simply inter-relationships. This section will examine the Borough of Cochranton as it relates to the surrounding townships and Crawford County.

According to the Census of 1980, the Cochranton zip code area had a total population of 5,417 persons. About 2,881 of these persons fall between the ages of 20 and 64, making them at least potential members of the workforce. However, full participation in the workforce is rarely, if ever, achieved. A series of both voluntary and involuntary factors prevent all individuals from participating. Unemployment, parenting, health, student status, and even incarceration limit participation. In the Cochranton Zip Code region, only 2,146 persons were part of the active workforce in 1980. This represents about three-fourths of the persons of age to work.

Table 10 illustrates the breakdown of these workers by employment category, showing both real numbers and proportion to the total workforce.

TABLE 10  
EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC SECTOR: COCHRANTON  
ZIP CODE AREA - 1980

AFFM*	141	6.6%
Construction	141	6.6%
Nondurable Goods Manufacturing	128	6.0%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	667	31.0%
Transportation	122	5.7%
Communications	35	1.6%
Wholesale Trade	57	2.7%
Retail Trade	289	13.5%
FIRE**	41	1.9%
Business Repair/Service	59	2.7%
Personal Services	56	2.6%
Health Services	186	8.7%
Educational Services	119	5.5%
Miscellaneous	37	1.7%
Public Service	68	3.2%
Total	2,146	100.0%

\*Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining

\*\*Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

Source: Donnelley Demographics, 1989



As the table notes, about one in three area workers were involved in durable goods manufacturing in 1980. This is much higher than the national average, showing the Region's traditional link to industry.

As all area residents know, manufacturing experienced some severe setbacks in the early 1980's. Unemployment rose to the highest levels seen since the Great Depression. Crawford County suffered, as did all of Western Pennsylvania. However, by 1988, recovery was evident. Table 11 illustrates unemployment for Crawford County (Meadville Labor Market Area) from 1988-1990.

TABLE 11  
UNEMPLOYMENT FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY  
1988-1990

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>Feb. 1990</u>
Rate	8.0	6.8	5.8	6.8

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor, Bureau of Research and Statistics

One of the most notable, and from current information, most durable changes to Crawford County in the 1980's was a restructuring of regional economics. In general, total manufacturing employment declined. Total service sector employment (Retail Trade, Personal Services) rose. However, manufacturing remains proportionally higher in the region than in the nation as a whole.

# COCHRANTON BOROUGH EXISTING LAND USE MAP

## LEGEND

### RESIDENTIAL

SINGLE-FAMILY



MULTI-FAMILY



PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC



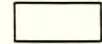
COMMERCIAL



INDUSTRIAL



AGRICULTURE/OPEN



THIS MAP WAS FINANCED, IN PART, FROM THE SMALL COMMUNITIES PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS.

ADAMS, GRANEY &  
ASSOCIATES

COCHRANTON BOROUGH  
CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
SCALE 1" = 300'

FEBRUARY 1985  
PREPARED BY THE CRAWFORD  
COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

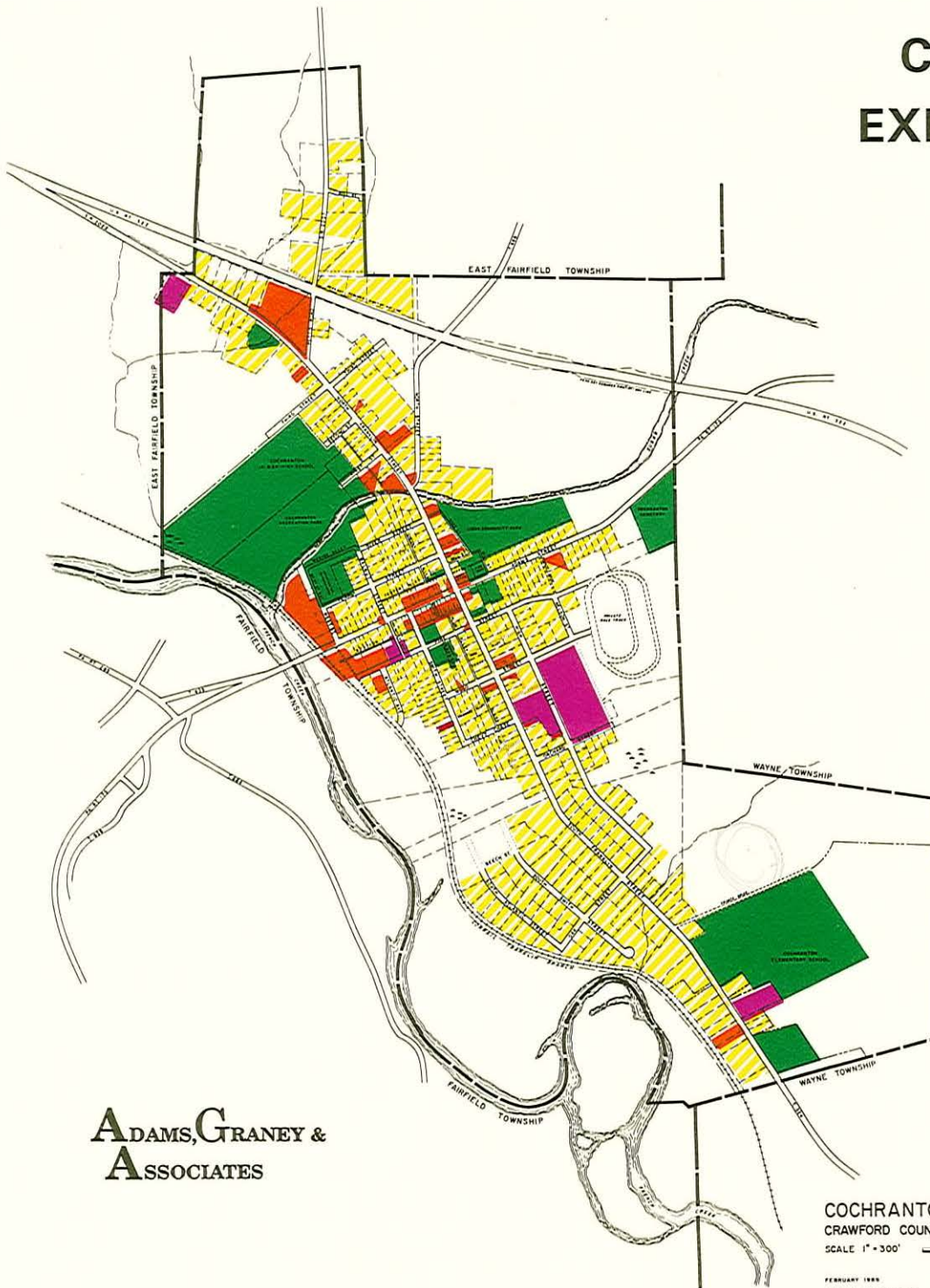




TABLE 12  
LARGEST EMPLOYERS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES  
CRAWFORD COUNTY - 1986

	<u>SIC Code</u>	<u>Name</u>
University	8221	Allegheny College
Hospital	8062	Meadville Medical Center
Steel Mill	3312	Cytemps Specialty Steel
Glass Products	3211	PPG Industries
Amusement Park	7996	Conneaut Lake Park
Hand Tool Manufacturer	3423	Channellock
Fastener Manufacturer	3964	Talon, Inc.
Hospital	8062	Titusville Hospital
Nursing Home	8651	Wesbury United Methodist Community
Nursing Home	8651	Beverly Enterprises

Source: Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1986

As the table notes, six of the ten top employers are non-manufacturing entities, showing a growing importance of services in the regional economy, but the retention of manufacturing as a viable enterprise in the County.

The ten most common occupations in Crawford County that year also reveal something about changing economic patterns.

TABLE 13  
MOST COMMON (POPULOUS) OCCUPATIONS  
CRAWFORD COUNTY - 1980

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Numbers</u>
1. Teachers (Secondary and Post)	1,740
2. Secretaries/Receptionists	1,411
3. Janitors and Cleaners	960
4. Production Supervisors	834
5. Farmers (except Horticulture/Nursery)	778
6. Truck Drivers, Heavy	741
7. Laborers, Exc. Construction	736
8. Nurses Aides/Orderlies	704
9. Grinding, Abrading, Buffing Machinists	628
10. Registered Nurses	598
Total	9,130

Source: Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1986

In total, these ten occupations represent nearly 24% of the County's workforce (estimated at 38,225). The top three and five of the ten represent service sector jobs. In general, Crawford County falls somewhere in the middle of State totals for wholesale trade, retail trade, and manufactures. Manufacturing has yielded some preeminence to service occupations. Though less important than a generation ago, it is still a vital part of the area economy and proportionally more important in Crawford County than the Commonwealth as a whole.

TABLE 14  
ECONOMIC SECTORS IN PENNSYLVANIA AND  
CRAWFORD COUNTY BY NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS  
AND EMPLOYMENT (BY PROPORTION)

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>		<u>Crawford County</u>	
	<u>Number of Establish- ments</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>	<u>Number of Establish- ments</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>
Retail Trade	26.3%	20.48%	28.2%	22.1%
Services	34.3%	30.0%	31.5%	28.4%
Manufacturing	6.7%	24.45%	12.3%	33.7%

Source: County Business Patterns, 1987

In conclusion, the regional economy is rather typical of Western Pennsylvania. Historically, the center of activities shifted from agriculture to industry. In more recent years, retail trade and service activities have made tremendous gains. The next section will attempt to examine how Cochranton fits into this regional picture.

Cochranton was originally founded as a primary service center for the surrounding agricultural region. In many ways, it retains its primary purpose. While the nature of many businesses has changed, they are still present to serve the agricultural community. One hundred and fifty years ago, communities like Cochranton would have had a grist mill, tavern, and blacksmith. Today, those agribusiness needs are met by the feed mill, implement dealership, and diner.

Because agriculture is still important to the local economy, it is important to devote some attention to the nature of agriculture in the Cochranton Area. Unfortunately, like the other economic censuses, the Census of Agriculture only releases data at the county level. Thus, the following information is rather generalized.



Crawford County lies at the southeastern border of what is commonly referred to as the Great Lakes Dairy Belt. In 1987, there were 554 farmers with dairy herds. Total inventory of milk cows was 19,968, or an average of 36 per farm. This placed the County fourth in the State's 67 counties for farms with dairy herds. The County also had a high number of farms with inventories of beef cattle and moderate inventories of hogs. Four hundred and ninety-two dairy farms were engaged in sale of milk products in 1987. Total sales were estimated at nearly thirty million dollars. Few crops were grown for direct human consumption, feed grains and silage crops leading County crops. Average size of farm was 185 acres (including both owned, rented and leased land). The largest single number of farms, had 100-134 acres. This is typical for dairy operations and eastern livestock operators. In total, about 36% of the County land area is occupied by farms, about ten percentage points above the State average.

During the 1980's, the number of farms declined sharply in Crawford County (nearly 20%). This should have had some negative effect on the local retail and service economy but may have been offset in the long term by residential growth in rural areas.

**Work Place:** Most of the people from the Cochranon region do not work within the Borough itself. Although not a complete "bedroom community," certainly, it is somewhat the case with Cochranon. Homes are in the Borough, but jobs are not. One-third of the workforce drives 20-29 minutes to reach their work place.

TABLE 15  
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK  
COCHRANTON, PA - 1980

<u>Time</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
-5 Minutes	47	10%
5-9 Minutes	115	25%
10-14 Minutes	52	11%
15-19 Minutes	50	11%
20-29 Minutes	153	33%
30-44 Minutes	33	7%
45-59 Minutes	0	0%
60+ Minutes	<u>11</u>	<u>3%</u>
Total	461	100%

Source: Census of 1980

In conclusion, the Cochranon Area serves as a residential base for the Meadville labor force, and as one of the centers of agriculture in Crawford County. Most borough businesses exist as a primary

service center for one of these two bases. Much of its economic future will remain dependent on traditional economic activities.



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**Cochranton Area Public Library:** Located at 107 Pine Street, the Cochranton Area Public Library is situated in an old converted army structure of WWII vintage. Regardless of its age, the building is kept in good repair and has undergone recent remodeling.

The function of this facility is a community library, serving the entire Cochranton Area with a collection of over 10,000 volumes. The Library has a six-day-a-week schedule. In total, this facility is open thirty-two hours weekly, balancing morning and afternoon times to provide everyone with an opportunity to visit the establishment. Staff is provided by two paid persons and ten volunteers. A variety of activities are offered which affords Cochranton residents with services not often found in smaller communities.

In addition to its traditional role, the Library also provides a meeting place for various community organizations. The Saddle Club, Heritage Society, and similar groups meet here. However, due to the limited size of its meeting rooms, larger organizations cannot be accommodated.

**Cochranton Volunteer Fire Company:** Similar to the Library, the Fire Company is intended to serve the area, not just the Borough proper. Fire officials estimate their service area at some 3,100 families, about 8,500 persons.

The Fire Hall is located next to the Borough Building on Adams Street. This is a modern masonry structure, with a recent addition to house a kitchen. Equipment at the Department consists of an engine, pumper, one tanker, a "brush" truck, squad truck, two ambulances, and a SCUBA boat.

**Police Services:** Unlike the Fire Department, police services are normally limited to the Borough. Police staff is currently made up of one chief, one full-time officer, and two part-time patrolmen. There is also an auxiliary police staff of three officers, who do not normally work, but are available during a specific emergency. Recently, as part of a Drug Task Force Agreement, arrangement was made for Borough officials to make drug arrests beyond the Borough limits. Major equipment includes a patrol car and radio equipment. The Department is headquartered in the Borough Office.

**Recreation:** The Borough of Cochranton is fortunate to have within its borders a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

Located to the rear of the Borough Building and Fire Hall is the Lion's Community Park, dedicated to Marshal "Doc" Runkel. This is a multi-purpose family-oriented park, with a sliding board, various swing sets (2), see saw, picnic pavilions (2), tennis courts (2),



and a half-size hard surface basketball court. This park is maintained by the Cochranon Lion's Club. The regional Recreation Authority provides liability insurance for this site.

A second recreation complex is maintained by the Cochranon Area Recreation Authority, between the High School complex and Little Sugar Creek. Principally, this is devoted to ballfields, with two little league and four regular fields. The most recent improvements have been the construction of a snack bar and rest rooms. This facility appears to be well maintained.

Yet another community resource is the Cochranon Fairgrounds. These are located south and east of Little Sugar Creek, along West Street Extension, and Marine Alley. These grounds are used annually for the Cochranon Fair; and the grounds are under the control of the Fair Board. There has been some discussion to provide limited recreational vehicle parking in this area, but no project to date.

Facilities are primarily composed of various stands and booths. It is reported that both electrical and water services to the Fairgrounds are in need of repair or replacement.

Located within the Fairgrounds complex is the Cochranon Railroad Depot. Constructed in 1862, the building was moved to its current location as a permanent home. The Depot is showing its age as well as years of disuse. Current activities include squaring up the building, putting it on a foundation, and closing it in. However, it is still a long way from becoming a usable community resource. Local groups foresee use of this building, both as a local museum and as a community meeting facility, replacing the overcrowded accommodations at the Library.

One final recreation resource is the local Fish Access area located on French Creek, just upstream of the Adams Street (Route 173) bridge. Due to severe stream bank erosion, this area has been closed to vehicles and has limited utility for its intended use.

**Borough Building:** Rounding out local facilities is the Borough Building. Here the Borough has its office, police headquarters, and Borough garage. At best, this complex can be categorized as crowded. Furthermore, the Borough's meeting room is not easily accessible to the handicapped. A small 28' x 40' salt storage building is now planned for the parking area behind the Borough Building.

**Schools:** In addition to Borough and recreational facilities, the Junior, Senior High complex and Elementary Schools are also located in Cochranon, along North and South Franklin respectively.

For a community of its size, Cochranon has a surprisingly large number of community resources.



## HOUSING

No other aspect of a community is as important to its residents as the housing stock. Even the busiest person spends nearly half his or her time at home. Equally as important, is the impression a community makes upon visitors. Typically, the type and quality of its homes are the primary points which set the physical attractiveness of a community.

According to the 1980 Census, there were 501 housing units in Cochranon Borough. A housing unit, as conceived by the Census Bureau, can be anything from an entire house to a single room, as long as it is intended as separate living quarters.

The major housing characteristic from the 1980 Census of Housing is summarized in the following paragraphs.

**General:** Of the 501 housing units, 498 (99%) were considered year-round; and of these, only 29 (5.81%) were vacant. The average number of rooms was 5.8. In Cochranon, the vast majority of units, 368 (74%), were single-family detached dwellings. Seventy-seven units were duplexes, 50 units in multi-family dwellings. At the time of the 1980 Census, only three mobile homes were counted.

**Age:** One of the key elements of devising a housing strategy is the age of the housing stock. Older homes need more maintenance, modernization, and are more subject to conversion into multi-family dwellings. According to Census data, 297 (60%) of all Borough housing stock was constructed prior to 1939. Between 1970 and 1980, only 42 (8%) units were added. Consequently, the majority of homes in Cochranon are more than 50 years old.

**Tenure:** Traditionally, small urban places in Western Pennsylvania have high ratios of home ownership. Cochranon is no exception. Once more, using the 1980 Census, we see 343 of the occupied units, or 73% of all single-family homes, are owner-occupied, while only 27% were renters. This is a home-ownership rate of about 7% higher than that of Crawford County.

**Value:** The estimated home values and rental costs of Census reports are given by the housing unit occupant and are not professional estimates. Nonetheless, as they are done universally, the same comparative information can be derived. The Census of Housing 1980 reports a median home value (owner-occupied) at \$33,200 in the Borough, with median rents at \$127. Respective values in the County were \$34,300 and \$140.

**Miscellaneous:** Just a few more items will complete our analysis of 1980 Census data. At that time, the County report showed 16.65% of all housing units were one-person households, with nearly 24% of all Cochranon units in that category. Finally, the Census Bureau



uses two yardsticks to measure housing quality. When there is more than 1.01 persons per room, the unit is regarded as overcrowded. For Cochrannton, that number was only 2 (.4%), while the County was at 1.9%. A second measure is lack of certain plumbing facilities. County-wide, the percentage was .27%, while in Cochrannton, there were no such units reported.

In 1989, AGA undertook a housing survey of Cochrannton. This was done by structure not unit. Consequently, the housing count will be less than the Census data. It is interesting to compare this data to a similar survey completed by the Urban Planning Division of Michael Baker, Jr. for the 1972 Plan.

TABLE 16  
STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS - COCHRANTON

<u>Residential Structures</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1970</u>
Sound	416 (97%)	363 (94%)
Deteriorated	8 (2%)	20 (5%)
Dilapidated	4 (1%)	4 (1%)
Total	428	387

Source: Field Survey, November 2, 1989, AGA  
Michael Baker 1972 Plan

The only other comment of interest relative to the existing housing stock relates to mobile homes. In 1980, there were only three such units counted; in 1989, there were nine; still, they only account for 1.8% of housing units. 1990 preliminary census housing data was released during the course of this work. The Census Bureau counted 495 units in the Borough which would indicate practically no change since 1989.

In the 1972 Plan, two major areas were proposed for new housing. In one area, Oakland Estates, there has been new homes added; the other area selected was north of the Junior/Senior High School complex to the west of North Franklin. Unfortunately, most of that area is now designated as floodplain.

There is one new major housing initiative planned for the Borough. The Patterson-Erie Corporation has received permission from FmHA to construct a 24-unit elderly project off Adams Street, east of the Borough Hall. That project is not slated for construction until 1991. The developer does have some long-term concerns relative to sanitary sewage.

Finally, the consultant talked to a local realtor relative to housing values in the Borough. The results were somewhat mixed. Although a good "average" used homes could be purchased in



Cochranton for a reasonable price, \$35,000 to \$45,000, traditionally, the residential market has been tight, with few homes really available. This is especially true with rental units.

**Conclusions:** The preceding paragraphs have been filled with many dry statistics and numeric observations. What do they mean; what do they tell us about Cochranton? Probably, there are some major characteristics that must be appreciated when devising a housing strategy for the Borough. The most evident characteristic is that of an older and aging housing stock. With over 60% of the home in excess of fifty years of age, a host of maintenance, and even safety problems, can be expected. These older homes often are larger also. That fact, coupled with an aging population, and a large number of one-person households, can predictably bring a number of housing conversing about. Conversions of one-family dwellings into duplexes or multi-unit apartments.

Finally, when combined with housing information with the data from the population section, it is easy to understand why Patterson-Erie decided to select Cochranton for an elderly housing project. At this time, the units are not yet built. It will be interesting to see how quickly they fill up; and if, in fact, that project alone will be sufficient to meet the immediate needs of this Area.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

What will the future hold for Cochrannton? If this question could be answered with any exacting confidence, this document would be a prophetic one rather than a planning one. Unfortunately, such is not the case. Anyone reading the original Plan will realize that projections and forecasts, no matter how well substantiated, are often simply wrong. This problem evolves into the need for periodic comprehensive plan updates. Thus, the purpose of the following narrative is to analyze the 1972 Comprehensive Plan in the light of all that has happened since. Upon this analysis, the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan will be altered, re-oriented, or carried over, as necessary.

In 1972, the citizens of the Region had several major concerns for the future. They were:

1. The effect of newly constructed I-79 upon the local area.
2. The decentralization of Crawford County's population.
3. The potential for outdoor recreation in the Area.

In retrospect, the effect of any of these agents was considerably less than anticipated at the time. While there has been some commercial development near the Cochrannton interchange, it has had little effect on the Borough.

Concerning Element 2, Cochrannton has benefitted from some of the decentralization of Meadville's population. In fact, as illustrated by the section on population, the last decade has brought the Borough proper, a population loss. Over time then, even small central places like Cochrannton have seen the effect of population decentralization. Cochrannton may also simply be a part of a trend which has beset the northwest quadrant of Pennsylvania. Simply put, Crawford County and many neighboring counties are losing population.

Element 3 may still have potential, but it has to this point not been realized. Outdoor recreation opportunities abound to the east, north, and south of the Cochrannton Region; but with the exception of some seasonal housing, and a Pennsylvania Fish Commission access point, tourism has been negligible.

Pages 7 to 10 of the 1972 Plan have more objectives for Cochrannton. Also, specific recommendations can be found in the functional categories of that Plan. Many of these are set forth within the background report of the edition of the Comprehensive Plan. In the balance of this report, we will not continuously re-visit the 1972 Plan but emphasize currently perceived needs.



**COCHRANTON BOROUGH  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, a Comprehensive Plan must consider the elements set forth in Section 301 of that legislation. The balance of this document will deal with these elements and make specific recommendations for the Borough of Cochranton to follow now, and in the future.

A Comprehensive Plan should have a "mission statement," a premise which provides a communal philosophy underlying its specific recommendations. Cochranton's Statement of Community Development Objectives is set forth below:

- a. To lessen congestion in the streets.
- b. To secure safety from fire and other dangers.
- c. To provide adequate light and air.
- d. To prevent the overcrowding of the land and to avoid undue concentration of population.
- e. To facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements, as well as the conservation of the value of land and buildings.
- f. To protect the existing residential development within the Borough, as well as to provide for new residential opportunities of different types and densities.
- g. To provide adequate space for existing and new commercial enterprises in Cochranton.

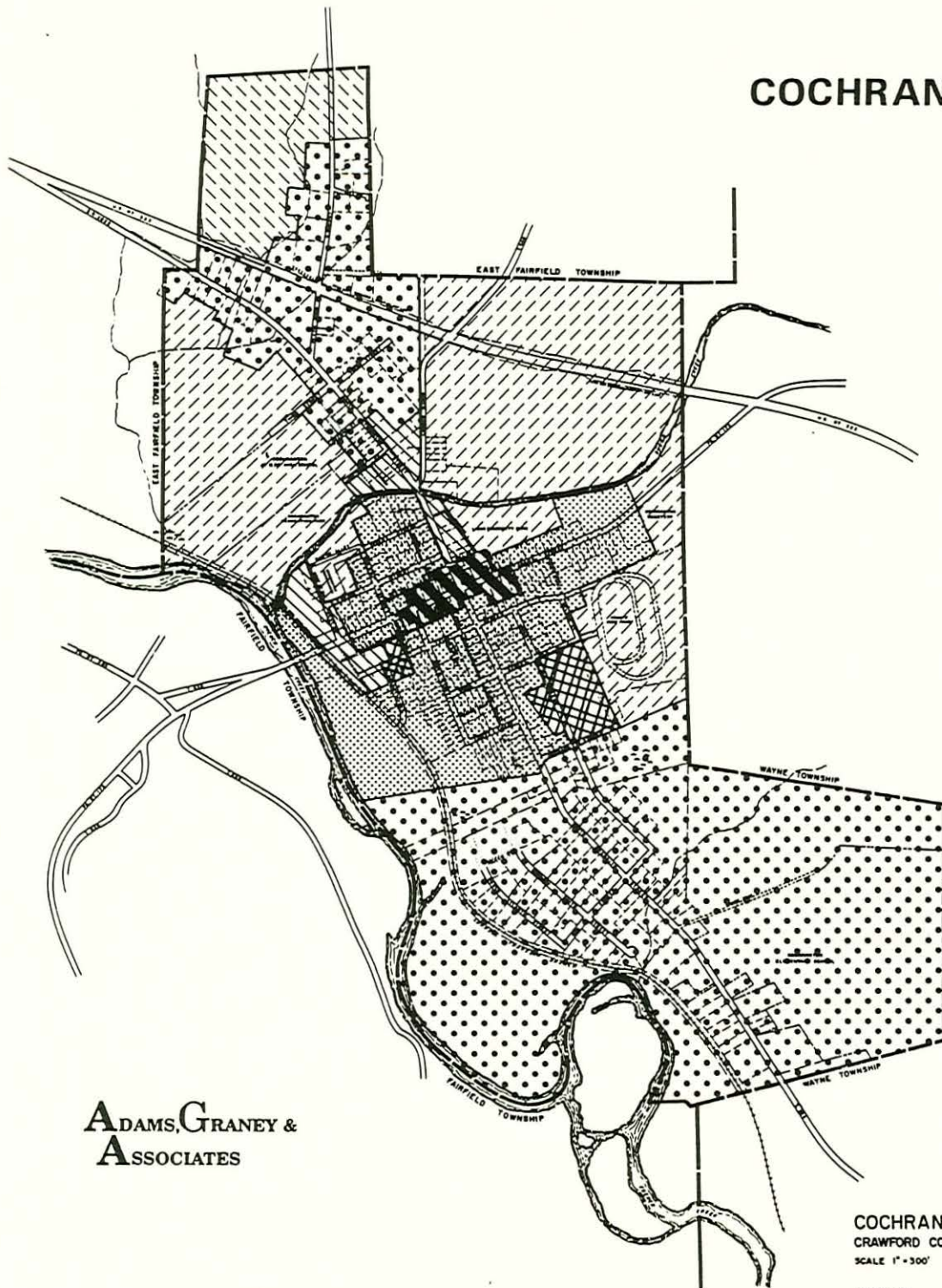
These are made with reasonable consideration of other concerns, the existing character of the various areas within the Borough and their respective suitability for particular uses.

To provide for more specific guidance relative to the relationship of the community and the Comprehensive Plan, certain elements are set forth in the following paragraphs.








**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN:**

In the past decade, there has been virtually no population growth within the Borough. In fact, both preliminary census counts and demographic forecasting has indicated a marginal decline. These facts undoubtedly will affect future land use considerations, especially in the residential and commercial categories. These two

# COCHRANTON BOROUGH ZONING MAP



## LEGEND

	R-1	SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	R-2	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	C-1	DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL
	C-2	GENERAL COMMERCIAL
	I-1	INDUSTRIAL
	A-C-1	AGRICULTURAL/CONSERVATION
	A-C-2	AGRICULTURAL/CONSERVATION

THIS MAP WAS FINANCED, IN PART, FROM THE SMALL COMMUNITIES PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS.

ADAMS, GRANEY &  
ASSOCIATES

COCHRANTON BOROUGH  
CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
SCALE 1" = 300'

FEBRUARY 1989  
PREPARED BY THE CRAWFORD  
COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT





categories are quite sensitive to, and are very much driven by, population levels.

The population section of this report sets forth the detail of Cochran's demographics. From those facts, the following can be deduced:

1. Overall population count should remain relatively static.
2. The composition of the population will continue to change with:
  - an aging population
  - more one-person households (especially among the elderly)

The above conclusions should point to a modest demand for additional housing, especially units aimed towards the elderly and the small family. As a result, the need for residential land will continue; some classified as higher than normal densities.

Conversely, demand for traditional commercial will likely decrease. Some transition of existing commercial uses to more secondary ones or other use types (likely residential) can be projected.

Even though population forecasts do not indicate a great demand for new traditional single-family dwellings, some activity in this arena can be expected. This expectation is based upon subjective considerations. Such considerations include the fact that Cochran is a pleasant place to live and a good place to raise a family, removed from some of the more noxious urban problems.

To accommodate this future growth, the Future Land Use Plan and proposed Zoning Ordinance have been developed. The Future Land Use Plan is reflected in the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations of this report. The proposed Zoning Map is contained in the draft Zoning Ordinance prepared as a companion piece to this document. Frankly, these Plans suggest little change to existing established land use patterns.

The two challenges to the Borough are to preserve the excellent quality of life which currently exists and to accommodate new growth in a sensible and responsible manner. The proposed Zoning Ordinance has been structured to accomplish much of both aims. It sets forth land use districts, density, bulk, and yard regulations that are appropriate for the Cochran community. Furthermore, it addresses some of the basic questions relative to housing conversions which need to be considered (see also Housing Plan).

The shortcoming of the zoning approach however, is that it cannot address the infrastructure requirements any new development may bring. It is the recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan that, while the Zoning Ordinance be considered immediately, consideration

of subdivision requirements and related standards should not be postponed too long. The same planning process that has been applied to zoning in 1989 and 1990 should continue for subdivision regulations in 1991 and 1992.

The preliminary aims of these regulations are to:

1. Require developers to provide for reasonable roads and storm water drainage facilities.
2. To provide for such other infrastructure necessities as the Borough may reasonably require.

A good example of the need of these types of regulations can be found in Oakland Estates. Though an attractive development, there are many shortcomings. The two principal problems are the lack of facilities to dispose of storm water and the incomplete street system. Although Beech Street is shown on the Subdivision Plans, it was never constructed, complicating the provision of municipal services to residents along South Smith and Atlantic.

The Crawford County Planning Commission has developed an excellent local subdivision ordinance and a willingness to work with communities desiring to adopt such regulations. Consequently, the Borough should avail itself of these services and develop a subdivision ordinance. The target date for formal consideration should be 1992. In the interim, the Borough must protect itself against these problems mentioned above.

Section 1731 of the Borough Code, et. seq. allows Cochran to set reasonable standards for new roads. Between the preparation of this Plan and the consideration of formal subdivision regulations, it is suggested that Borough Council formally adopt reasonable street standards.

Based upon previous Crawford County recommendations, the minimal standards should be as follows:

Street right-of-way - 50 Feet

Cartway - 20 feet, with a 6 foot shoulder on each side of the road

Cartways for streets with curbs - 30 feet (8 foot parking lane and two 11 foot traffic lanes)

Maximum street grade - 10%

Minimum street grade - 1%

Radius at intersections - 25 feet



Construction specifications per the Borough Engineer's written recommendations and PennDOT's "Form 408."

In addition, the Borough should require that any development involving new streets provide for adequate storm drainage. Such storm drainage facilities should meet all applicable local, county, and state regulations.

The above recommendations, zoning and subdivision controls, are essential for Cochrannton if it is to provide for future land development within its confines.

#### **HOUSING PLAN:**

The housing stock within Cochrannton Borough is primarily composed of single-family dwellings, most of which were constructed more than fifty years ago. There are no codes or other standards which the Borough has adopted to insure new building or the conversion of existing homes into multi-unit structures are constructed in a structurally sound and safe manner. To preserve and protect the Borough's housing stock, the following steps are suggested:

1. **Codes and Standards:** The Rehabilitation Program listed below requires the use of minimum HUD standards. The Borough should explore overall standards to be applied uniformly throughout its jurisdiction. There are several options that might be explored. For example, the Council of American Building Officials (CABO) has published a One and Two Family Dwelling Code. This may be an excellent place to start.

In addition to the guidelines for one and two-family dwellings, there are several other construction codes produced by a variety of organizations which may be considered. These standards provide for residential construction, commercial construction, and cover plumbing, electrical, in addition to structural and mechanical aspects. If the Borough proceeds to consider these options, it must be recognized that adequate administration is required. Therefore, it may be wise to consult with larger municipalities within Crawford County to see if these types of services are available on a contract basis.

It must be noted that such a program need not cost the taxpayers of Cochrannton, for code programs should be self-sustaining through a reasonable fee structure.

2. **Rehabilitation Program:** The Borough currently has a "rehab" program operated with services provided by the Meadville Redevelopment Authority. Under the current effort, approximately ten homes will be completed. Though the demand for this program has been less than anticipated, it is recommended that it be continued.



According to the exterior housing survey, twelve housing structures in Cochranon were listed as deteriorated. This is a very low percentage of the total housing stock. As such, some may question the need for rehabilitation activities. Yet, with 60% of the units constructed before 1939 (50 years ago), many interior deficiencies were missed in the exterior survey program. Consequently, the rehabilitation program is a vital one to upgrade Borough housing.

3. **Special Housing Needs:** The Zoning Ordinance allows for the development of a variety of housing types within the Borough's limits. There are no unusual or excessive requirements which would preclude the construction of moderately priced homes. Furthermore, provisions for mobile home parks, a popular housing option for those with limited incomes, have been provided. However, special housing needs may still not be completely met.

As shown in the demographic section on population, there is a number of older citizens within the Borough. Furthermore, there is a significant number of one-person households. Older citizens often do not want the burden of caring for traditional homes with the demands of yard and structural maintenance. Consequently, many are attracted to housing alternatives that smaller apartment units can afford.

At this time, a twenty-four unit housing development is being proposed within the Borough for construction in 1991. These units are specifically designed for at older citizens of the Cochranon area. Borough officials should pay very close attention to this development. If it fills rapidly, it will be an excellent indicator that additional housing of this type is necessary.

4. **Demolition:** Regardless of the efforts of local officials, there will always be homes that deteriorate to the point that they are not salvageable. To remedy that situation, public intervention may be required.

The Borough's Nuisance Ordinance should be reviewed to assure:

- a. It is adequate relative to due process.
- b. It provides for repair, as well as demolition options.

#### **RECREATION PLAN:**

For a community of approximately 1,600 residents, the Fairgrounds, the Lion's Community Park, as well as the ball field complex by the schools allow for a wide diversity of formal recreation opportunities, with only a modest financial demand for support by the Borough. Nearby creeks and gamelands also provide for



recreational outlets. The only problem spot in the existing recreation inventory is the Fish Access Area off the Adams Street Bridge at French Creek.

In fact, the Borough is quite fortunate as many of its recreational resources are maintained or operated by other organizations. Often smaller municipalities have developed larger resources than they are capable of sustaining as budgets shrink. The following recommendations are made relative to the Borough's recreational needs:

1. The current level of support (financial and legal) be continued.
2. The Borough develop a working committee of local recreational organizations who may desire to engage in capital projects over the next five years. If the Borough will be requested to contribute either directly or through grant sponsorship (RIRA, etc.), the following guidelines are suggested:
  - Require project budgets be defined, then a five-year priority list established.
  - Post developmental maintenance and operational cost must be defined for all proposals, and only projects which can be accommodated with affordable maintenance program efforts should be supported.
3. To date, recreational efforts have focused towards younger persons. Yet in 1980, nearly 50% of all residents were 35 years or older; and in 1990, this figure is likely to be much higher. Efforts to define and quantify the recreational needs of these citizens should be addressed. Again, the Borough's recreation committee should be used to consider the unmet needs in this sector. For example, a walking path along Little Sugar Creek. Needless to say, the same budgetary caveats mentioned in item 2 will also apply to any recommendations.

#### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN:**

The Borough Building, the police station, and garage are all housed in a structure on Adams Street. It is an older building and not well suited for its usage. One of its primary drawbacks is a lack of access for the handicapped. On the positive side, the building is centrally located near the Borough's main traffic intersection. The Borough intends to construct a 28' x 40' salt storage building in the near future. That structure will be located to the rear of the Borough Building in lightly used parking area.

In the upcoming few years, the Borough may find a need for more office space, as demands for water, and possibly sewer,

administrative services area increases. The ideal answer would be the construction of a new municipal building and police station. Garage and maintenance functions could be included in this new facility or a separate building.

The first step in determining spatial needs is to analyze current operations and work with an engineer or architect to develop a schematic plan for such needs. Then the Borough can begin to examine its options of new construction, existing buildings, or a combination of answers.

**Cochranton Area Public Library:** This facility is well operated. Boasting over 10,000 volumes, it is much larger than similar operations in like sized towns. Beyond ongoing support for this service, no initiatives are suggested.

**Cochranton Volunteer Fire Company:** The structure, located next to the Borough Building, has just had an addition completed. No new activities are suggested.

**Schools:** Due to the limited scope of this Plan, no analysis of these facilities is suggested.

**Cochranton Railroad Depot:** This structure was originally built in 1862 and is typical of such construction. It was recently moved to its current location. As previously noted, certain fundamental work is being undertaken to secure and close in the Depot. Additional work is needed. The following steps are suggested:

- Phase 1      Professional appraisal of the Depot's structural integrity. If the finding is positive, continue to Phase 2.
- Phase 2      Reuse analysis (historic and community needs).
- Phase 3      Physical rehabilitation and site plan - develop an accurate **BUDGET**.
- Phase 4      Funding and implementation.

It is obvious that due to its age, this project needs architectural assistance that is sensitive to its historic import. Often the preliminary studies can be accomplished through a combination of private fund raising and foundation grants.

#### **TRANSPORTATION PLAN:**

The transportation needs of the Borough of Cochranton are relatively straightforward. Projects which are proposed by the Comprehensive Plan are shown on the Comprehensive Plan plate. Briefly, they can be described as follows:



Priority 1: Replacement of the traffic light at Franklin and Adams - This intersection is the only one in the Borough with a full-time four-way light. Unfortunately, though the signal is adequate for its needs, it is quite dated; and replacement parts are often impossible to find. Therefore, it will be necessary to replace this signal with a modern one.

It is suggested the Borough examine two possibilities relative to this problem. The most obvious approach is to have a safety analysis done of the intersection. If the volume of traffic and the number of accidents warrant it, it is possible the signal could be added to the PennDOT 12-Year Program as a safety project. This would insure that the great percentage of project funding would be provided by the federal and state governments. However, the Borough must be aware that it will have a rather complicated signal system and would be responsible for its maintenance.

An alternative would be to find an older used traffic signal from any number of local communities that have been converting their traditional single signal head to the multi-lane variety required under current standards. In the last analysis, the latter approach may, in fact, be wiser and more frugal if PennDOT would approve.

Priority 2: The configuration of the North Franklin Street Bridge creates a very difficult site situation for motorists entering Franklin from North Street. There is no easy solution to this problem; yet, it remains a hazard to the residents and motorists using Franklin Street in the Borough.

There are various options that could be taken; however, they are beyond the scope of this study. It is, therefore, suggested that at a first step, the Borough request that PennDOT send a traffic engineer to the Borough to offer one or more suggestion on how this problem could be overcome. If PennDOT's assistance is not forthcoming, then a private engineer should be retained to develop specific suggestions on how the problem can be resolved and the approximate cost of same.

Ideally, there should be at least two suggestions. The first for a short-term solution; merely to provide minimal safety to the residents of Cochran. The second, a permanent solution. With these solutions and preliminary budget estimates, the Borough is in a strong position to request assistance from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Because of the probable size of such an undertaking, there is no doubt that the formal 12-Year Plan approach must be used.



Priority 3: The portion of Adams, between Franklin and the bridge over French Creek, has many narrow sections; and often times presents a problem for fire vehicles to travel. A modest widening of the street by a few feet may alleviate much of this problem. Once more, engineering services are needed to ascertain whether or not this widening is indeed feasible, especially in relationship to the infrastructure that currently rests underneath the street.

The cost of such an undertaking, at least in preliminary figures, should be developed before any other action is taken. Once the cost is known, again, the approach need be to PennDOT to see if this suggestion could be accommodated, either through the formal 12-Year Project process, or perhaps through a more short-term maintenance activity in the "3R" Program.

#### **WATER AND SEWER:**

Under infrastructure in the Background Report, a full description of the Borough's water system is set forth. The Borough has recently created a regional water authority in conjunction with neighboring communities. Therefore, it no longer is directly responsible for the water system. Obviously, the system has extensive problems, but most of these have been identified; and some of them have been recently addressed, while others will be addressed in the near term.

Consequently, the Comprehensive Plan merely must suggest that projects already clearly identified, and prioritized by the Borough and its engineering consultant, be followed to consummation.

The Borough does not have a sewer system. There is somewhat of a question as to whether, in fact, one is needed. The last time the area was checked, the Department of Environmental Resources indicated that it found no evidence of groundwater pollution due to malfunctioning septic systems. If that is the case, the construction of a sewer system would be an unneeded and unwarranted burden for the community.








Yet, the construction of a sewer system must be considered as a potential project. Hopefully, this need can be delayed until the needed improvements to the water system can be completed so that local residents need not face both burdens at the same time.

As this study does not include funds for engineering analysis, no specific recommendations are made relative to the feasibility costs or advisability of the construction of a Borough sewer system. No doubt a new Act 537 Plan is in order.



# COCHRANTON BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE MAP

## LEGEND

	RESIDENTIAL
	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
	PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC
	COMMERCIAL
	INDUSTRIAL
	AGRICULTURE/OPEN
	APPROX. FLOODPLAIN BOUNDARY

## RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

- ① NEW TRAFFIC LIGHT
- ② IMPROVE VISIBILITY
- ③ RAILROAD DEPOT
- ④ BOROUGH BUILDING
- ROAD WIDENING

**ADAMS, GRANEY &  
ASSOCIATES**

COCHRANTON BOROUGH  
CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
SCALE 1" = 300'

FEBRUARY 1988  
PREPARED BY THE CRAWFORD  
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