

## **INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

In conducting the inventory of the community, rail corridor, and immediate surroundings, the following attributes have been considered.

### **Community Characteristics**

The following characteristics are gleaned from the Comprehensive Plans and/or Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plans of the four municipalities. (Refer to Resource List for documentation.)

- Akron Borough's population in 2000 was 4,064, which represented an increase of 5.5% since 1990. The age cohort of 35-44 represents the largest age demographic. While little support existed for expansion of the park system, some support did exist for passive recreation uses such as walking, biking, and hiking, especially west of Route 272. <sup>(1)(6)</sup>
- Ephrata Borough's projected population for 2000 was 13,153, estimated to increase to 14,147 by 2010. Since the 1970's, the Borough witnessed a considerable increase in the age cohort of 20-34. Park and recreation facilities were expected to increase so as to meet demands of its population. <sup>(2)</sup>
- Ephrata Township has seen its population double since the 1960's. An age distribution analysis shows that the Township contained a high percentage of youth. The median age is 29.9, lower than that of Lancaster County. Based on these demographics, there is a proportionately greater need for recreation within this municipality than the County as a whole. Population projections put Ephrata Township's population at 13,845 residents by 2010. <sup>(10)</sup>
- Warwick Township's population in 2000 was projected at 14,500; further, it was projected to increase to approximately 15,124 by 2010. The largest age cohort is in the 18-44 range. However, according to the 2006 update of the Lititz/Warwick Joint Strategic Comprehensive Plan, the 2010 population projection has increased to 20,095 residents. The Township's residents are highly supportive of recreational trails and the expansion of park and recreation uses. <sup>(4)(5)(18)</sup>

### **Crossings of roadways, waterways, and drainageways**

Over its approximately 4-mile length, the rail corridor crosses eleven (11) roads or streets, as listed below and as shown on the **Picture Location Map (Map 3)**. The majority of these crossings are at-grade; three crossings are grade-separated as noted below.

- Clay Road
- East Newport Road
- Rothsville Station Road

- Picnic Woods Road
- Meadow Valley Road
- Rothsville Road
- Millway Road (grade-separated)
- Main Street in Akron (grade-separated)
- Fulton Street in Akron
- North Reading Road or Route 272 (grade-separated)
- Park View Heights Road

The railroad corridor also crosses the Cocalico Creek (see attached report) via a bridge and four unnamed tributaries via pipe- or culvert-crossings. The corridor also crosses numerous minor drainageways.

### **Environmental Site Assessment**

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was completed for the proposed trail. The purpose of the ESA was to identify and evaluate any recognized environmental conditions (REC's) along the rail corridor including surrounding properties.

The assessment resulted in the identification of two REC's, one of which is just beyond the easternmost tip of the project study area in Ephrata Borough and the other is near Rothsville Station Road in Warwick Township. Site observation also identified random illegal dumpsites that would need remediation.

It is recommended that the impacted areas be remediated through the excavation of contaminated soil and for the materials found at the dumpsites to be removed and disposed/recycled according to accepted practices along with confirmation of contaminant removal through analytical methods.

### **Existing and proposed cultural features, parks/recreation areas, greenbelts/trails, open space, destinations/attractors, and activity nodes**

Existing cultural features, destinations/attractors, government centers, greenbelts/trails, hospitals/retirement facilities, parks/recreation/open space, and schools immediately adjacent to or within approximately one mile of the rail corridor (including features in Lititz Borough and West Earl Township) include the following as located on the **Community Services Map (Map 4)**:

- Cultural Features:
  - Eicher Arts Center
  - Ephrata ACT-Community Theater
  - Ephrata Borough Visitors Center
  - Ephrata Cloister
  - Ephrata Playhouse in the Park
  - Historic Downtown Ephrata
  - Historical Society of the Cocalico Valley
  - Lititz Borough Historic District

Lititz Borough Visitors Center  
Lititz Historic Foundation Museum

- Destinations/Attractors: Akron, Ephrata, and Lititz Borough Business Areas  
Doneckers Complex  
Ephrata Public Library  
Ephrata Main Theaters  
Erbs Covered Bridge  
Hampton Inn/Applebee's Complex (Ephrata)  
Kellers Mill/Rettew Mill Covered Bridge  
Lititz Public Library
- Government Centers: Akron Borough Hall  
Ephrata Borough Hall and Police Station (located directly adjacent to the rail corridor.)  
Ephrata Township Building  
Warwick Township Municipal Campus and Police Station (located directly adjacent to the rail corridor.)
- Greenbelts/Trails: Lititz/Warwick Trailway  
Newport Square Trail System
- Hospitals/Retirement Facilities: Ephrata Community Hospital  
Ephrata Manor  
Groves Assisted Living  
Luthercare  
Maple Farms  
United Church of Christ Home
- Parks/Recreation/Open Space: Broad Street Park  
Bethany Estates Park  
Brickyard Park  
Edgewater Meadow Park  
Colonial Drive Park  
Ephrata Recreation Center  
Ephrata Mountain Park  
Lincoln Heights Outdoor Recreation Area  
Lincoln Heights Park  
Lititz Lions Club Park  
Lititz Springs Park and Borough Pool  
Lloyd Roland Memorial Park  
Moyers Meadow Park  
New Street Park  
Nissley Park  
Redcay Playground

Riparian Park  
Tom Grater Community Park & Pool  
Volunteer Fire Company of Rothsville  
Warwick Township Forney Polo Field Park  
Warwick Township Lions Club Park  
Warwick Township Municipal Campus Park  
Westview Golf Course  
80's Lanes & Games

- Schools:

Akron Elementary School  
Ephrata Area Rehab Services  
Ephrata High School  
Ephrata Middle School  
Fulton Elementary School  
Highland Avenue Elementary School  
John Bonfield Elementary School  
Kissel Hill Elementary School  
Lincoln Elementary School  
Linden Hall  
Lititz Area Mennonite  
Lititz Elementary School  
Middle Creek School  
Our Mother of Perpetual Help  
Owl Hill Learning Center  
St. Clement's Mission House  
Warwick Middle School  
Warwick High School

- Community/Developments:

Fulton Manor  
Heritage Village

In addition to the above, approximately 40 churches lie immediately adjacent to or within one mile of the rail corridor.

Proposed cultural features, destinations/attractors, government centers, greenbelts/trails, hospitals/retirement facilities, parks/recreation/open space, and schools immediately adjacent to or within approximately one mile of the rail corridor (including features in Lititz Borough and West Earl Township) include the following:

- Greenbelts/Trails/Parks:

Ephrata Rail Trail (under construction)  
Ephrata Township Park (50 ac. on E. Fulton St.)  
Lititz Borough Greenway and Trail System  
Little Creek Park  
Lloyd Roland Park Trail System (expansion)

**Existing and proposed employment and commercial areas**

As shown on the **Land Use Map (Map 5)**, existing employment areas (primarily industrial and commercial) and retail/service areas are immediately adjacent to or within easy walking distance of the rail corridor. These areas occur either in dense concentrations or in a dispersed fashion; the greatest concentrations occur in urbanized portions of the municipalities.

As of the date of this Inventory, no new employment and commercial areas are proposed within the Study Area.

**Existing and proposed residential developments**

As shown on the **Land Use Map (Map 5)**, existing residential developments are located immediately adjacent to or within easy walking distance of the rail corridor. In addition to these concentrations of resident populations, these development areas are interspersed with lower-density residential areas as well as rural/agricultural residences. The greatest concentrations of residences occur in urbanized portions of the municipalities.

As of the date of this Inventory, no new residential developments area proposed within the Study Area.

**Existing and proposed roadway improvements and access points**

As noted above, the rail corridor crosses eleven (11) existing roads/streets only one of which (Clay Road) is improved for pedestrian or rail/trail-type usage. As is to be expected, none of the remaining crossings are improved for pedestrian or rail/trail-type usage.

As of the date of this Inventory, no new roadway improvements are proposed within the Study Area.

Streets, sidewalks, and trails that “stub” at the rail corridor along with compatible public land uses (such as parks, government centers, and schools) provide existing opportunities for accessing the rail corridor should it be developed into a rail-trail.

**Property Ownership and Agricultural Preservation Easements**

Some 131 deeds have been identified for properties located adjacent to the rail corridor as follows:

- 53 in Akron Borough
- 11 in Ephrata Borough
- 13 in Ephrata Township
- 54 in Warwick Township

ELA has read the available current deeds of adjacent landowners and highlighted properties that may pose problems or are unclear in their exact boundaries, which may need some further investigation through other means. A **Property Disposition Map (Map 6)** shows the properties in which deeds were read. Colors reflect information recorded in the Property Disposition List located in the appendices of this report.

As referred to in the Analysis portion of this report, one outstanding issue that must be resolved is that of the discrepancy between the deed information and tax map records. According to the tax records, an entity named Pagnotti Enterprises (trading as Reading Company) processed a quit claim/quiet title action on the right-of-way and currently pays taxes on an extensive portion of the corridor. This can be seen on **Pagnotti Enterprises Property Map (Map 7)**.

Adding to the ownership issues are the agriculture preserve rights, which are governed by two entities, the Lancaster County Agricultural Preservation Board (which consists of both state and county preserve agreements) and the Lancaster Farmland Trust. The lands that are under preservation easements are highlighted on the **Agriculture Security Map (Map 8)**.

**Significant Features (slope/aspect, soils, vegetation, wildlife habitat, floodplains, wetlands, and cultural resources)**

As shown on the **Steep Slopes (Map 9)** and **Flood Hazard Map (Map 10)**, the longitudinal profile of the rail corridor is relatively flat, owing to its former use as a transportation corridor. In isolated areas, the cross-slope of the rail right-of-way is subject to steep slopes, either in cut-, fill-, or combined cut-/fill-sections.

Along the rail corridor, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies two primary areas that are susceptible to flooding: the Cocalico Creek and the unnamed tributary adjacent to Park View Road. It is noted that, at each of these locations, the rail corridor crosses the watercourse via an existing bridge (Cocalico Creek) and culvert (unnamed tributary).

As shown on the **Soils Map (Map 11)**, 11 soil types occur within the 60' right-of-way. As relates to the development of Paths and Trails, the US Department of Agriculture identifies that the following 3 soil types, located within the right-of-way, may pose some difficulty to development:

- Clarksburg silt loam [ CkA ] (severe due to erosion)
- Linden silt loam [ Lg ] (severe due to erosion)
- Roland silt loam [ Rd ] (severe due to erosion)

In terms of vegetation, the corridor is primarily characterized by grasses, understory plants, and volunteer tree growth that have occurred since the rail usage was discontinued. Due to the agricultural use and development activity along the edges of the

rail corridor, few natural stands of trees/woodlands occur adjacent to the rail right-of-way.

A presence/absence analysis of wetlands and wildlife habitats has been conducted. According to the generated report, while there are wetland areas present in the corridor, they are separated from the trail surface and will not be affected unless culvert replacement/work is needed.

An analysis of cultural/historic features has been conducted through the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission Bureau for Historic Preservation. They will provide no determination until the full scope of the project is known, which, unfortunately is not possible to determine until the development of construction documents. They did state that based on the scope of the project, it would be unlikely that there would be any impact on historical resources.

### **Utilities**

Availability and security issues concerning utilities crossing or running adjacent to the railroad right-of-way have deterred us from including them within this report. Upon commencement of producing construction documents for this project, a survey would have to be completed to determine exact utility locations. However, due to the nature of the project, it is unlikely that any existing utilities will pose conflicts with development. As for potential amenities for the trail that may require connection to utilities, the aforementioned detailed survey would provide the necessary information to provide the connections.