

**PROPOSED PENN STATE REZONING  
REZONING EVALUATION**

**1. PARCEL IDENTIFICATION:**

**Address: Blue Course Drive and Whitehall Rd**  
**Tax Map No.(s): 024-004-076A**  
**Name and Address of Owner(s): The Pennsylvania State University**  
**Size of Parcel(s): 23.6 acres**  
**Existing Zoning: Rural Agricultural**  
**Proposed Zoning: R-4 Residential**

**2. RELATIONSHIP TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

**In Primary Growth Area: \_\_\_\_\_(yes) X\_\_\_\_(no)**

**Regional and Municipal Need for Rezoning: At this point in time, there does not appear to be a pressing need to approve the proposed rezoning.**

**Analysis: This proposal comes at a propitious time from the perspective of having solid information on which to analyze the request. The Centre Regional Planning Agency has recently completed a detailed land use analysis, an inventory of vacant land, and a 30-year growth forecast.**

**The land use analysis shows that the amount of land in the Centre Region devoted to residential uses grew by 5544 acres (from 4,383 acres in 1980 to 9,927 acres in 2001). This equals a 126% increase over this 20 year span. If you simply annualize this change, the represents an additional 278 acres per year developed as housing of all types and densities.**

**The vacant land inventory provides information on the amount of land zoned for different uses in the Centre Region and the amount of vacant land remaining in each zoning district with the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB). According to page 3 of the inventory, 30% of the land within the RGB is vacant. This represents 5, 517 acres that is, theoretically at least, available for development. The term "theoretically" is used because as the inventory points out, not all of this land is suitable for development. Of these 5,517 vacant acres, 4507 acres are zoned low and medium density residential and mixed use community which allow some form of at varying densities.**

**Turning from the regional to the local level, the inventory tells us there are 1,298 acres of undeveloped land in the RGB. Of these acres, we find the following that allow residential uses:**

Zoning District	# of vacant acres	Units per acre	Potential Population
Planned Residential PRD	260	Determined during PRD approval process	
Single Family	291	4	2677
Suburban Family Residential	77	2	354
Two Family Residential	27	10	621
Townhouse Residential	38	10	874
Multifamily Residential	0	12	
<b>Total</b>	<b>693</b>		<b>4526</b>

The 2000 US Census reported average household size of 2.7 for owner occupied dwellings and 2.3 for rental occupied units in Ferguson Township. Using the lower per unit occupancy, we can estimate a potential population increase of up to 4500 individuals could be supported by the existing vacant land without considering the existing vacant PRD acreage. It is important to point out that in actuality it is not possible to reach the theoretical density because a portion of the vacant land is used for roads, parks, storm water or other utilities, etc. thus is not available to be developed as housing. Thus the actual population that can be supported by developing the vacant acres will in all likelihood be less than the theoretical potential. The recently completed Centre Region Growth Forecasts for 2003 – 2030 suggest that Ferguson Township will grow by 7,040 over that time frame. It is quite possible that currently vacant residentially zoned land could support all or a substantial portion of this anticipated population growth even with the above noted caveat.

The 30-year growth forecast for the Centre Region does not identify this area as one of the growth areas in Ferguson Township. In fact, the growth forecasts envision the RGB remaining in place for the duration of the 30 horizon.

### **3. PUBLIC SERVICE**

The letter from Sweetland Engineering, Penn State's representative of this proposal, indicated that informal meetings have been held with the State College Borough Water Authority and the University Area Joint Authority and both utilities indicated capacity existed to serve the site.

With respect to sewer service, extending sewer service to this site would require an amendment to the Act 537 sewer service area. A state-mandated requirement, the Act 537 Plan must be updated every 5 years. The next scheduled update will occur in 2005. This will provide the opportunity to consider the entire sewer service area and, since this area is contiguous with the RGB, an opportunity to review the RGB as well. It should be noted that given the slope of the property it is unlikely that gravity sewers would be possible. Thus, it would be necessary to pump waste water from the site to sewer lines located in Whitehall Road.

In addition to the issue of water service to the site, we must consider the issue of potential impact this and other rezoning requests in this section of the Centre Region could have on the recharge area of the State College Borough Water Authority's (SCBWA) Harter and Thomas well fields. In a study completed for the SCBWA by Nittany GeoSciences the one-year zone of contribution for the Harter and Thomas fields extended north almost to the edge of this site. That same study suggested that a wellhead protection zone for Harter Thomas would actually be larger and incorporate this site. An examination of the topography of the area suggests that storm water runoff and other runoff from the site would be channeled by the topography to toward the well fields.

At this point in time, no formal wellhead protection ordinance is in effect. It could be argued that the current RA zoning is de facto wellhead protection zoning since it has a 50 acre lot minimum and an effective sewage management program. However, rezoning to higher density designation absent wellhead protection might lead to increased risks to the recharge area

Police Services would be provided by the Ferguson Township Police Department. Their station is located in the Ferguson Township municipal building on W. Whitehall Rd, approximately 1 mile west of the site.

Fire Fighting Services would be provided by the Alpha Fire Company. The closest station maintained by Alpha is the Public Safety Building at the corner of Beaver and Atherton.

Ambulance services would be provided by the Alpha Community Ambulance Service. The new ambulance service building proposed for University Drive near Marylyn Avenue would be the closest facility. Until the facility is operational, the closest facility is in the 700 block of S. Atherton St.

The two closest elementary schools are Corl Street and Pine Grove Mills. Should the proposal advance, we would meet with SCASD staff to discuss issues related to which elementary school students from a new development would attend.

#### **4. TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS:**

##### **Direct Access Roads:**

The proposal calls for servicing the site through an extension of Blue Course Drive. Ferguson Township's official map shows Blue Course extending from its current terminus at Whitehall Road to Rte 45 (see attached map).

Blue Course Drive is a municipal street. Whitehall Road is a state facility. Both are considered part of the Inner Loop. Both are considered arterials. The proposal calls for reserving a 90 foot right-of-way, which is a continuation of the right-of-way width of Blue Course Drive in State College Borough. It would not be necessary to construct an arterial street to serve a 26 acre development. In fact, from the perspective of minimizing storm water run off and other environmental impacts, it may be desirable to construct a narrower cartway within a dedicated 90 foot right-of-way.

As noted in the material from PSU's agent, a traffic signal is scheduled to be installed in 2004 at the intersection of Blue Course Drive and W. Whitehall Road. However, additional traffic improvements in this section of Whitehall Road have been identified but not funded due to constraints on the MPO funding process. These improvements included turn lanes and shoulder improvements in several locations. Introducing additional traffic generators prior to funds being available for these corridor improvements may not be prudent.

A second major traffic issue raised by this proposal is opening up the Slab Cabin Run Valley to development by starting the extension of Blue Course. The RGB parallels the southern edge of Whitehall Road in this area. Opening an arterial street into this area outside of the RGB would represent an important revision to the concept of containing higher density development north of Whitehall Road.

If consideration of the proposed rezoning advances, a detail Traffic Impact Study by a qualified professional should be prepared. This study should include an assessment of the traffic impacts of traffic from this site on Borough neighborhoods to the north.

The nearest CATA route is the R route, with a stop at the corner of Blue Course and Stratford Drive. This stop is one block north of Whitehall Road.

#### **5. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

##### **Existing Land Use and Vegetative Cover:**

A detailed analysis of these factors was not completed for this report. The site is primarily open in either cultivation or meadow. There are a number of wood lots in the general area. As noted in the discussion of issues related to wellhead protection, the site generally slopes from north to south. That is

from Whitehall Road toward Slab Cabin Run. Staff's assessment is that the slope would not prevent development.

The 100 year floodplain map identifies an intermittent stream in the area of the site. Should the rezoning advance beyond this level of consideration, a detail detailed determination of the existence of any floodplain would be necessary.

Soil types on the site are primarily Hagerstown Series and Opequon Series. Both of these series of soils are very conducive to crop or hay propagation or pasture land. In fact, according the Centre County Soil Survey, the Hagerstown complex is among the most productive soils in the Centre Region. Agricultural uses are the predominant use of this section of the Center Region.

Overall, there are not immediately obvious physical constraints that would preclude redevelopment from agricultural to some other more intensive use. However, the soils in the area are productive agricultural soils. A more in depth analysis would be needed before a recommendation to rezone the property could be made.

**6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

Water quality, storm water runoff and visual (aesthetic) appear to be the 3 area with the greatest potential for environmental impacts. The first two are primarily related to the fact that the site is located on the northern rim of the recharge area for the Harter and Thomas wellfields of the SCBWA. Regardless of when and what type of development occurs in this area, care will be needed to ensure these critical water supply resources are not adversely effected.

Visual impacts may be more subjective but an important consideration nonetheless. The vistas on Whitehall Road from Blue Course Drive to Research Drive (adjacent to the Ferguson Township municipal building) are very appealing. The fall of the land from Whitehall down to Slab Cabin Run and then back up again culminating in Shingletown Gap and the Tussey ridge are among the most attractive in the Centre Region. Depending on the type, siting and density of any future development, these vistas could be lost.

**7. SPECIAL FEATURES:**

An analysis of any historical, archeological, recreational, or other unique features was not completed for this review. Staff notes that a proposal has been discussed to create a 75 acre township park to the adjacent to the site. This park would use the extension of Blue Course Drive for access. However, it would possible to develop a more modest driveway within at 90 foot reserved right-of-way for park access.

**8. LEGAL ISSUES:** None that have come to staff's attention.

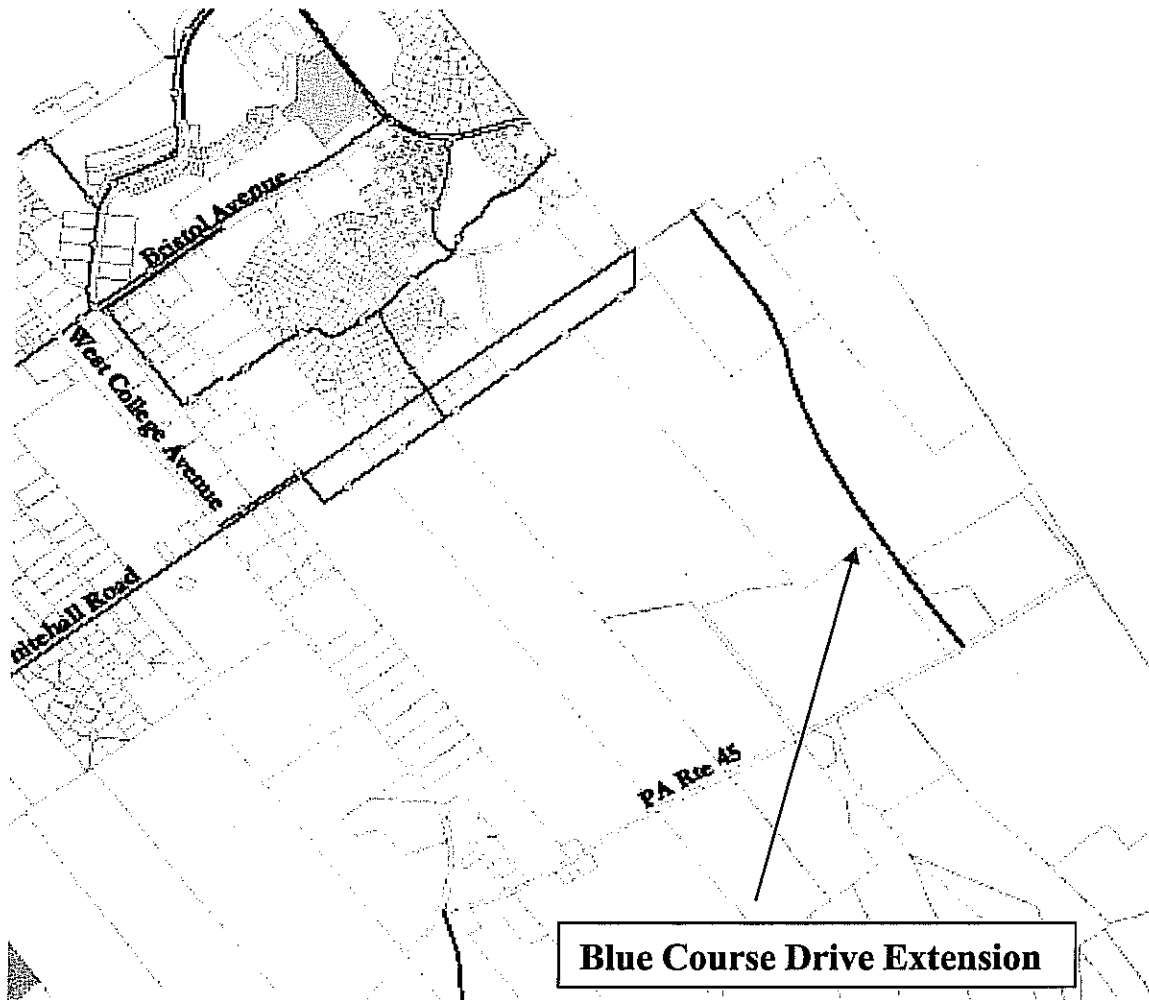
**9. OTHER:** N/A

**10. OVERALL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:**

Staff does not believe there is a pressing need for this rezoning even though there is no vacant R-4 land in Ferguson Township. This assessment is based on the following:

- The ability of other vacant land zoned for residential development to absorb anticipated population growth.

- The potential environmental impacts, especially on public water sources and on Slab Cabin Run, of moving the RGB south of its current location.
- The fact that the recently completed 30-year growth forecast does not identify a need to move the RGB.





# CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

## STAFF REVIEW

### FERGUSON TOWNSHIP



*Tax Parcel #24-074-76A, Whitehall Road near intersection with Blue Course Drive*



Request to rezone property from RA (Rural Agriculture) to R-4 Multi-family and expand the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area

*March, 2004*



## CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

2643 Gateway Drive, Suite #4  
State College, PA 16801  
814-231-3050  
814-231-3083 FAX  
www.crcog.net

**TO:** Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors  
Ferguson Township Planning Commission  
Mark Kunkle, Township Manager

**FROM:** Sebastian J. DeGregorio, AICP *sdj*  
Centre Regional Planning Agency

**DATE:** March 29, 2004

**SUBJECT:** **Proposed Penn State University Rezoning and Growth Boundary Expansion Request**  
**South of the Intersection of Whitehall Road and Blue Course Drive, Ferguson Township, PA**

The Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA) received the above noted application for rezoning and Growth Boundary Expansion request informally on January 22, 2004 from the Ferguson Township Director of Planning.

The following analysis and recommendations have been provided in accordance with the requirements of the Municipalities Planning Code, Section 609 (e) and 304 (a)(3), the tenets of the 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan and other applicable regional plans and policies.

**Applicant/Owner:** The Pennsylvania State University  
c/o Mr. Gary Schultz, Senior Vice President, Finance and Business.

**Size/ Tax Parcel:** A 26.3 acre portion of tax parcel # 24-04-76A which is 39.5 +/- acres total in size.

**Application request:** Request to consider the rezoning of a 26.3 acre portion of a 39.5 +/- acre parcel from RA – Rural Agriculture to R-4 - Multifamily Residential. This proposal would also result in the expansion of the current Regional Growth Boundary (RGB), which is

coterminous with the public Sewer Service Area boundary. Such a request would necessitate an amendment to the Centre Region Act 537 Plan in order to provide the site with centralized sewer service via the University Area Joint Authority (UAJA).

**Location:**

Directly opposite (south) of the intersection of Blue Course Drive and Whitehall Road. (See attached Map.)

**Access:**

The property would be accessed by the proposed extension of Blue Course Drive, a 90' right-of-way as depicted on the Ferguson Township Official Map. The proposed road would bisect this parcel and continue south from Whitehall Road and terminate at an intersection with State Route 45.

**Surrounding Land Uses:**

North - Zoned R-3B, townhouse units, State College Borough.

South - Zoned RA, rural agriculture, active agricultural production. During the past two years Ferguson Township, Penn State University and a COG regional ad hoc park committee have been working to secure grant funds to purchase 75 acres of the adjacent University held land for use as a regional park facility.

East - Zoned R-4, multifamily residential, vacant.

West - Zoned RA, rural agriculture, active agricultural production.

(see attached land use maps)

**Relevant Background**

The subject property is a portion of a larger 39.5 +/- acre tract of which a half interest is that of Penn State University. To CRPA's knowledge the use of the land has always been that of active agricultural crop production.

The present RA zoning of the property has been in place since approximately the early 1980's. From a residential standpoint the RA District *only* allows one (1) single family dwelling unit for every 50 acres of land. A change to R-4 - multifamily residential, could allow many varying types of both attached and detached arrangements of residential



dwelling types. The densest arrangements, two-family attached and multi-family attached dwellings (apartments) both would allow a base *gross* density of 17 units to the acre based on the spatial requirements of 2,500 square feet of area for each proposed dwelling unit. Additionally the ordinance also allows a more comprehensive Planned Residential Development (PRD) option for R-4 properties under which up to 20 dwellings to the acre could be permissible with appropriate approvals.

The University acknowledges in their application that should the requested 26.3 acres be rezoned to R-4, Penn State would combine this parcel with an adjacent 15.3 acre R-4 tract to allow a larger R-4 development.

## **Site Characteristics**

### **Topography**

The 26.3 acre site is undeveloped, rolling and gently sloping farm fields that have an average slope of between 0-3% in the front portion of the site, directly adjacent to Whitehall Road. The site drops much more sharply to approximately 7% as one moves away from the road, about 500 – 600 feet and closer to the fairly large drainage swale, which moves across the site from northwest to southeast. This swale acts as an active natural storm water drainage control facility in even the most modest storm events. This natural drainage swale moves across all adjacent farm fields and at a distance of less than 1 mile, eventually reaches the area of the State College Borough Water Authority's (SCBWA) Harter-Thomas Well fields where a series of active water production wells are located. These wells pump approximately 4 million gallons of drinking water a day to 35,000 – 40,000 people. (see attached landscape view photos)

A visit to this site reveals water erosion carving or terracing that has naturally occurred over time in the large swale, and the sediment, various rocks and particles that have been both deposited and exposed by the swift movement of storm water. It is also obvious that the current entity responsible for farming has wisely chosen over the years to *not* plant this area for crop production/rotation, given that it is a natural drainage way subject to flash flooding. The only existing vegetation is that of the remaining corn stalks that have been harvested.

### **Soils**

Soils consist of two major types. The Hagerstown complexes (HaB, HaC and HuA), two types of Opequon complexes (OhB and OhC) and some Nolin (No) soils. The Hagerstown soils have fair to good crop production potential, consist of deep dark, well-drained silt loam near the surface and yellow and reddish clays below 8 inches and deeper in the subsoil layers. Hagerstown soils in the Centre Region are predominantly used for cropland production and pasture. The Opequon complex soils also have fair to good crop and pasture production potential, are also well drained and are dark, close to the surface. Approximately 8-10 inches below the surface Opequon soils become a more red/yellow clay composition in the subsoil like Hagerstown, and often transition to

dark gray limestone stratas at about 18 inches subsurface, and can contain rock outcroppings. Like Hagerstown complexes, most Opequon acreage in the Centre Region is also used for active crop and pastureland.

Though not shown on the digital GIS soil layer and the accompanying soils map, there are a small portion of Nolin soils on the subject site. The Nolin soils are somewhat similar, but also have some differences. Nolin soils are usually found at slopes of between 0-5% and are nearly level to gently sloping and found in the flat areas of limestone valleys. The Nolin areas are usually no larger than 15 acres, usually less, runoff is slow and erosion hazards can be slight to moderate based on their location. They form in alluvium (sand and clay deposited by moving water), are limited only by the occasional incidence of flooding and are associated with both Hublersburg and Opequon soils used primarily in agriculture.

### **Environmental Considerations**

As previously mentioned the subject property is located within the recharge area for the State College Borough Water Authority's Harter Thomas Well field. This well field is one of the SCBWA's primary drinking water sources. The current zoning of this property provides protection for this important well field due to the restrictive nature of the RA zoning district.

Studies have documented a direct correlation between surface and ground water within the Slab Cabin Run valley. The swale that traverses this site leads directly to the Harter Thomas Well field area. If this site is rezoned for multi-family purposes, storm water runoff leaving this site will move through this swale into the well field area.

A significant concern is the precedent that this rezoning and RGB/SSA expansion could create. If this request is granted, it will be extremely difficult to deny similar requests for other properties east and west along Whitehall Road. If the Growth Boundary is moved and suburbanization is permitted to move across Whitehall Road into the Slab Cabin Run valley, the Harter Thomas Well fields could be threatened.

Drainage on the site is a significant concern should the property be developed. The very prominent swale that exists on the site will need to be protected with an acceptable buffer to protect this drainage area.

Sinkhole occurrences are prevalent on properties south of Whitehall Road. These environmentally sensitive features must be recognized when evaluating the expansion of the RGB in this area.

### **Utilities**

There is an existing 50-foot wide Allegheny Power easement that runs down the eastern side of the subject property. Overhead electric service is present and available.

According to CRPA's digital GIS mapping, both central water and sewage disposal mains run along Whitehall Road.

## **Sewer**

The subject property is located outside of the sewer service area established within the **Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan**. This Plan was adopted by the six Centre Region municipalities and was approved by the PA Department of Environmental Protection as the Official Sewage Facilities Plan for the Centre Region.

Regional coordination and consensus is necessary to develop this plan since the Region's municipalities share the wastewater treatment and disposal capacity of the University Area Joint Authority's (UAJA) Spring Creek Pollution Control Facility. Any changes to the Plan's sewer service area require approval by all six Centre Region municipalities and the PA Department of Environmental Protection.

When evaluating sewer service to this site, and requests to expand the sewer service area identified in Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan, it is also important to evaluate these issues from a regional perspective. The UAJA wastewater treatment facility is currently permitted to treat and dispose of 6 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater. Current flows to the plant are approximately 5.4 MGD.

The UAJA facility's location on Spring Creek presents sewer planning challenges to the Centre Region community. Spring Creek is a high quality coldwater stream and contains a significant wild brown trout population. Due to concerns regarding the impact that wastewater discharges beyond 6 MGD would have on Spring Creek, and the high quality designation of the stream, the Centre Region was required to complete a Wastewater Alternatives Study. This study evaluated 14 wastewater treatment and disposal alternatives that are available to meet the community's capacity needs beyond 6 MGD.

The study concluded by recommending the Beneficial Reuse Alternative for implementation by the Centre Region municipalities. This alternative involves the addition of advanced water treatment systems at the UAJA plant in the form of micro-filtration and reverse osmosis to produce water, which approaches drinking water standards. This water will be circulated and reused in the community for beneficial purposes.

The project is divided into three Phases that are planned for construction under the following schedule:

### **Phase I (Under Construction)**

- Construction of micro-filtration and reverse osmosis treatment systems at the UAJA facility
- Construction of a reuse water line to Dale Summit Industrial Park where water will be offered to industrial users

- Anticipated Completion Date: 2005 for line construction
- Capacity following completion of Phase I
  - 6 MGD discharge to Spring Creek
  - .75 MGD to Dale Summit Area for industrial reuse purposes
- No formal agreements have been signed with customers for the reuse water. These agreements will be needed for capacity to expand beyond 6 MGD.

## Phase II

- Extend beneficial reuse water line from Dale Summit to South Atherton Street area.
- Make water available for golf course irrigation and to supplement flow in Slab Cabin Run
- Anticipated Schedule
  - Centre Region Act 537 Plan Update: 2006
  - Design: 2007
  - Operable: 2008
- Capacity Following Completion of Phase II
  - 6 MGD discharge to Spring Creek
  - 1.5 MGD for industrial reuse/spray irrigation/discharge to Slab Cabin Run

## Phase III

- Extension of reuse water line to Slab Cabin Run basin (upstream of Harter Thomas Well field). A wetland will be constructed to receive the reuse water before it is used to replenish Slab Cabin Run and the groundwater basin.
- Anticipated Schedule
  - Act 537 Plan Revision: 2013
  - Design: 2014
  - Construction: 2015/2016
- Capacity Following Completion of Phase III
  - 6 MGD to Spring Creek
  - 3 MGD for industrial reuse (Dale Summit Ind. Park), spray irrigation, discharge to Slab Cabin Run surface and groundwater

The beneficial reuse project will provide infrastructure with the potential to increase the Region's wastewater disposal capacity to 7.5 MGD in the year 2008. However, it is important to recognize that this infrastructure cannot be fully utilized, and wastewater capacity cannot increase beyond 6 MGD, until customers are found for the reuse water. Currently, no agreements have been signed with customers for the reuse water.

When considering requests to expand the current sewer service area and growth boundary, it is important to compare the Region's wastewater forecasts to the time schedule for the Beneficial Reuse Project. The Centre Region's Growth Forecasts have been used to prepare the following wastewater flow forecasts for the UAJA facility.

Year	Flow (MGD)
2004	5.51
2005	5.60
2006	5.68
2007	5.75
2008	5.84
2009	5.92
2010	6.00

These flow forecasts *do not include* 0.33 MGD of flow from State College Borough which is planned to be diverted from the Penn State Plant to UAJA. These forecasts are also based on maintaining the current sewer service area without any changes to existing zoning.

If contracts are not signed with customers for the beneficial reuse water, the Region will reach its wastewater disposal capacity in the year 2010. This threshold will be achieved earlier if the flow diversion from the Borough occurs in the next six years.

A review of the beneficial reuse project and flow projections for the UAJA facility stresses the need for the Region's municipalities to be cautious when considering expansions to the current RGB and SSA. The current sewer service area contains 5,500 acres of vacant land zoned for growth. If developed under current zoning, these vacant acres can generate more than 9 MGD of wastewater that will require treatment at UAJA.

The UAJA has recently published a policy statement regarding the UAJA Board's position on sewer service area expansions and rezoning within the SSA. This policy is included as an attachment. The UAJA policy summarizes concerns about municipal action to expand the sewer service area and/or rezone properties within the SSA at this time.

### **Evaluation of Current Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area**

When evaluating requests to expand the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) and Sewer Service Area (SSA), it is important to evaluate the amount of vacant land within the current SSA and RGB, and how that land is zoned.

The CRPA staff completed a Vacant Land Inventory & Analysis in 2002. This report analyzed the Regional Growth Boundary to determine the amount of vacant land remaining within the RGB, and how this vacant land is zoned. In 2002, over 5,500 acres of vacant land remained within the RGB. The location and zoning of this remaining vacant land is illustrated in the attached maps.

Ferguson Township contains 1,235 acres of vacant land within its portion of the Regional Growth Boundary. This vacant land is well positioned for future growth due to its proximity to transportation access, sewer, water and public transportation services.

The Centre Region Growth Forecasting Project supports this conclusion. From a population standpoint, Ferguson Township is expected to be the fastest growing municipality in the Centre Region in the next 26 years. The Township is expected to gain over 7,000 new residents and more than 2,700 new dwelling units during this time frame. Over 90 % of Ferguson Township's forecasted population growth is expected to occur within the current Regional Growth Boundary under existing zoning. It is important to note that these forecasts do not reflect a full build out of the vacant land within Ferguson Township's portion of the RGB.

Questions have been raised regarding the availability of vacant land within the current RGB and SSA available for multi-family development. Ferguson Township's zoning regulations allow R-4 multi-family development in 10 separate and distinct zoning districts by using the Planned Residential Development (PRD) option. A total of 953 acres of vacant land within Ferguson Township's portion of the RGB are available for multi-family development under the PRD option.

Recent history indicates a high likelihood that many of these 953 acres of vacant land will be developed as PRDs. Greenleaf Manor, Stonebridge, Haymarket, The Landings, Foxpointe and Teaberry Ridge are all examples of PRD plans that have been approved in the Township with multi-family housing components. In addition, the Township has seen sketches for a mixed-use community on the Imbt Tract, which includes a significant amount of multi-family development.

Moving outside of Ferguson Township, region-wide there are over 2,300 acres of vacant land within the RGB and Sewer Service Area that can be developed for multi-family purposes. This is a low estimate that does not include all vacant lands where a PRD option can be developed throughout the Region.

**Based on this analysis, there does not appear to be a need for additional zoning at the local or regional level for multi-family zoning.**

In addition, the current Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area have more than adequate land to support growth in Ferguson Township and the Centre Region beyond the year 2030. **As a result, there is not a regional or local need to expand the current RGB and Sewer Service Area to include this property.**

### **Transportation**

The Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) provides public transportation service to this area of Ferguson Township. Centre Line Service to the proposed location would most likely come from an extension of the current R Route that travels between campus and Waupelani Drive. Currently, the closest transit stop to the proposed location along the R Route is near the intersection of Stratford Drive and Blue Course Drive. However, high-density residential development on this site will most likely necessitate the need to provide closer service than is currently provided to ensure safe movements

between the residential development and transit service. Any service extensions would result in increased costs to the municipality.

Main access to the core of the proposed 26.3 acre site would be from a 90 foot right-of-way for a future extension of Blue Course Drive that was added to the Ferguson Township Official Map in October of 2001 (see attached CRPA review dated October 9, 2001). At that time the CRPA review of this Official Map amendment first questioned the issue of regional and local consistency with the goals and objectives of the 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan due to the road extension being shown outside the Regional Growth Boundary. Second, CRPA questioned the need to show this new road through undeveloped, Rural Agricultural zoned, active farmland properties some of which are in the Township's own Agricultural Security Area (ASA) closer to its eventual intersection with PA Rt. 45. Staff also mentioned the difficulty often encountered at the State level when proposing the future condemnation or taking of farmland for road construction in an established ASA area.

CRPA also previously raised concerns regarding the implication, such as the present request for rezoning and RGB expansion, of increased growth, development and "the domino effect " of other potential requested rezonings, which would all be spurred by the extension of Blue Course Drive on the Official Map.

Though any Blue Course Drive extension could promote the further expansion and development of a "grid" road system south of Whitehall and into the Slab Cabin valley, and provide more links and alternative traffic flow options, the provision of this proposed link and connections to it will exacerbate future "cut through" traffic in residential areas of State College Borough and Ferguson Township. This is currently problematic along Blue Course Drive, magnified with the connection and opening of the Western Inner Loop road and also Waupelani Drive and Whitehall Road in College Township.

To CRPA's knowledge, Ferguson Township has not yet conducted a detailed traffic study in order to gauge the traffic benefits and impacts of this proposed new roadway on this area. Certainly if this rezoning request is approved it would be incumbent upon the applicant to share in any cost of conducting such a study since they will be the initial and only beneficiaries of any required road improvements and enhancements.

Potential new trips that could be expected by such a requested rezoning of this property were evaluated by both CRPA and estimated trip generation data provided by Trans Associates, Ferguson Township's traffic planning consultant. (see attached)

In short, the numbers range from a low of 198 units generating 1,340 average weekly daily trips to 458 units (the existing R-4 and the proposed), generating 2,903 average weekday daily trips. These estimates are significant numbers generated by the proposed development whether you take a conservative (1,340) or a slightly higher development approach (2,903) as indicated.

Significant traffic analysis and associated impacts should be studied in much more detail with regard to mitigation, safety, signalization, pedestrian and bicycle needs/improvements, widening and turning lane requirements just to name a few. Decisions would also have to be made with regard to who would pay for all or portions of the costs of constructing and installing any/all necessary improvements.

### **Relationship to the 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan:**

The 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan very specifically speaks to focused and concentrated growth in areas where growth is planned and most appropriate. The introductory portions of both the 1990 and 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plans appear to be very clear with regard to the issues of focused and properly planned growth and concern about altering the RGB. Of the 9 goals agreed to by the Centre Region citizens and adopted by their respective elected officials region-wide *only* four years ago (see attached), it appears that ***this proposal would directly and indirectly conflict with 7 of the 9 Comprehensive Plan Goals as follows:***

- The proposal *would not* balance community growth and could pose potential detriment to environmental resources (drainage way and storm water impacts as well as threats to the Slab Cabin valley and Harter-Thomas Well fields)
- This proposal is *inconsistent with directing growth to areas within the RGB so that new development can be efficiently served by public utilities, services and transit.*
- This proposal *is counter to preserving and enhancing the low-density community character in the rural areas located outside the RGB.* Ferguson Township has the third highest number of multifamily dwellings in the Region, 953 acres that allow for more multifamily dwellings in the future and policies of strict Agricultural zoning and ASA standards to protect existing farmland.
- This proposal *will not preserve prime farmland for agricultural use.*
- This proposal *could* threaten the coordination of land development activity with necessary public facilities and services in a cost effective manner. Impacts to sewer capacity and expensive capital costs associated with increasing unplanned density, potential impacts to well water quality, in essence a continuation of unplanned growth leap frogging existing boundaries and established policies. What are the socioeconomic cost and benefits? Do these types of units "pay their way" with regard to the direct cost impacts and benefits to the local and county government and the State College Area School District?
- Though the development would provide housing opportunity, *it is a category, multifamily, that the Township has plenty of presently and has very adequately provided for in the future.*



- Finally the ninth goal, "*Maintain a cooperative relationship between the Centre Region municipalities and Penn State University to ensure that future growth at the University benefits the community.*" What has the University provided as part of its application to demonstrate and substantiate that this rezoning proposal benefits the larger Centre Region community?

The proposal is also *inconsistent* with the Future Land Use Plan adopted in the 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use Plan identifies this parcel as an agricultural area. The current RA zoning of the tract is consistent with this recommendation.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Centre Regional Planning Agency **recommends denial of the request to rezone the subject property from RA to R-4.** This recommendation is based on the following points that are reviewed throughout this report.

1. The request is inconsistent with the goals and policies of the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan.
2. The property is located outside of the Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) identified in the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan. The request is also inconsistent with the future land use plan established in the Comprehensive Plan.
3. The property is located outside of the sewer service area established in the Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. Any action to expand the sewer service area would require approval by all six Centre Region municipalities and the PA Department of Environmental Protection.
4. The existing sewer service area contains over 5,500 acres of vacant land. If developed under current zoning regulations, this vacant acreage could generate more than 9 million gallons of wastewater per day, the current planned capacity of the UAJA.
5. While efforts are underway to expand the UAJA plant capacity through the Beneficial Reuse Project, customers must be found for the beneficial reuse water for wastewater disposal capacity to expand beyond 6 MGD. No formal agreements have been signed with reuse customers to date. Flow forecasts indicate that the Region's current wastewater capacity of 6 MGD will be exceeded in 2010, and that this threshold will be achieved sooner if State College Borough flow is diverted from the Penn State plant to UAJA. Decisions to expand the sewer service area before agreements are finalized with reuse customers could create a sewer capacity problem that can be avoided through sound planning and growth management practices.

6. It is not necessary to expand the existing RGB and SSA to accommodate future growth in Ferguson Township. There are over 1,235 acres of vacant land within Ferguson Township's portion of the RGB and SSA. This vacant land is well positioned for future growth due to its proximity to public utilities and services. Ferguson Township is expected to be the fastest growing municipality in the Region over the next three decades, with over 90 percent of this growth expected to occur in the Township's portion of the RGB.
7. There is not a need for additional multi-family zoning in Ferguson Township. Ferguson Township's zoning regulations allow R-4 multi-family development to occur in 10 different zoning districts by using the PRD option. A total of 953 vacant acres of land exist in the Township's portion of the RGB and SSA, which are available for multi-family development. This inventory is more than adequate to meet the Township's future needs.
8. Approximately 50% of the dwelling units expected to occur in Ferguson Township through the year 2030 are expected to be multi-family units. This point illustrates the adequacy of Ferguson Township's existing multi-family zoning.
9. There are more than 2,300 vacant acres of land with the Centre Region available for multi-family development within the RGB and SSA. There is not a regional need to expand the RGB/SSA and rezone this property to the R-4 designation.
10. The proposed rezoning has the potential to have significant impacts on the rural and environmentally sensitive Slab Cabin Run Valley. The Comprehensive Plan clearly expresses a desire to preserve the Slab Cabin drainage area. If the RGB and SSA are moved, and suburbanization is permitted to move across Whitehall Road into the Slab Cabin Valley, the natural resources of this area could be threatened. The location of 200 – 400 multi-family units on this property is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goals for this area.
11. The concerns expressed in point #10 will be extremely difficult to prevent if the RGB and SSA are expanded to include this parcel. This action could create a significant precedent making it difficult to deny similar requests for other large adjacent properties in this area.
12. The subject property is located within the recharge area of the SCBWA's Harter Thomas Well field. Intense development in this area could negatively impact this important regional drinking water supply.
13. Adjacent residential areas currently enjoy attractive vistas and views of Tussey Mountain in this area. These vistas are apparent along the entire length of Whitehall Road. This rezoning proposal has the potential to

permanently remove these vistas and view sheds, and set a precedent for other similar impacts along Whitehall Road.

14. Phase III of the UAJA Beneficial Reuse Project involves the creation of wetland areas in the Slab Cabin Basin to replenish surface and groundwater resources with beneficial reuse water. Suburbanization of the Slab Cabin basin will increase the difficulty of locating acceptable areas to discharge the reuse water.
15. The proposed zoning change is not consistent with adjacent agricultural land uses to the west and south. In addition, the requested R-4 zoning for this site would not provide an acceptable zoning transition from the R-3 zoning area located north of Whitehall Road into the RA area south of Whitehall Road.
16. The environmentally sensitive characteristics of properties located south of Whitehall Road (i.e. sinkholes, wellhead protection area, prime farmland soils, sensitive headwater area) influenced the community's decision to not include these areas within the RGB and SSA in 2000. The location of properties with these characteristics within the RGB is not consistent with sound land use planning principles.

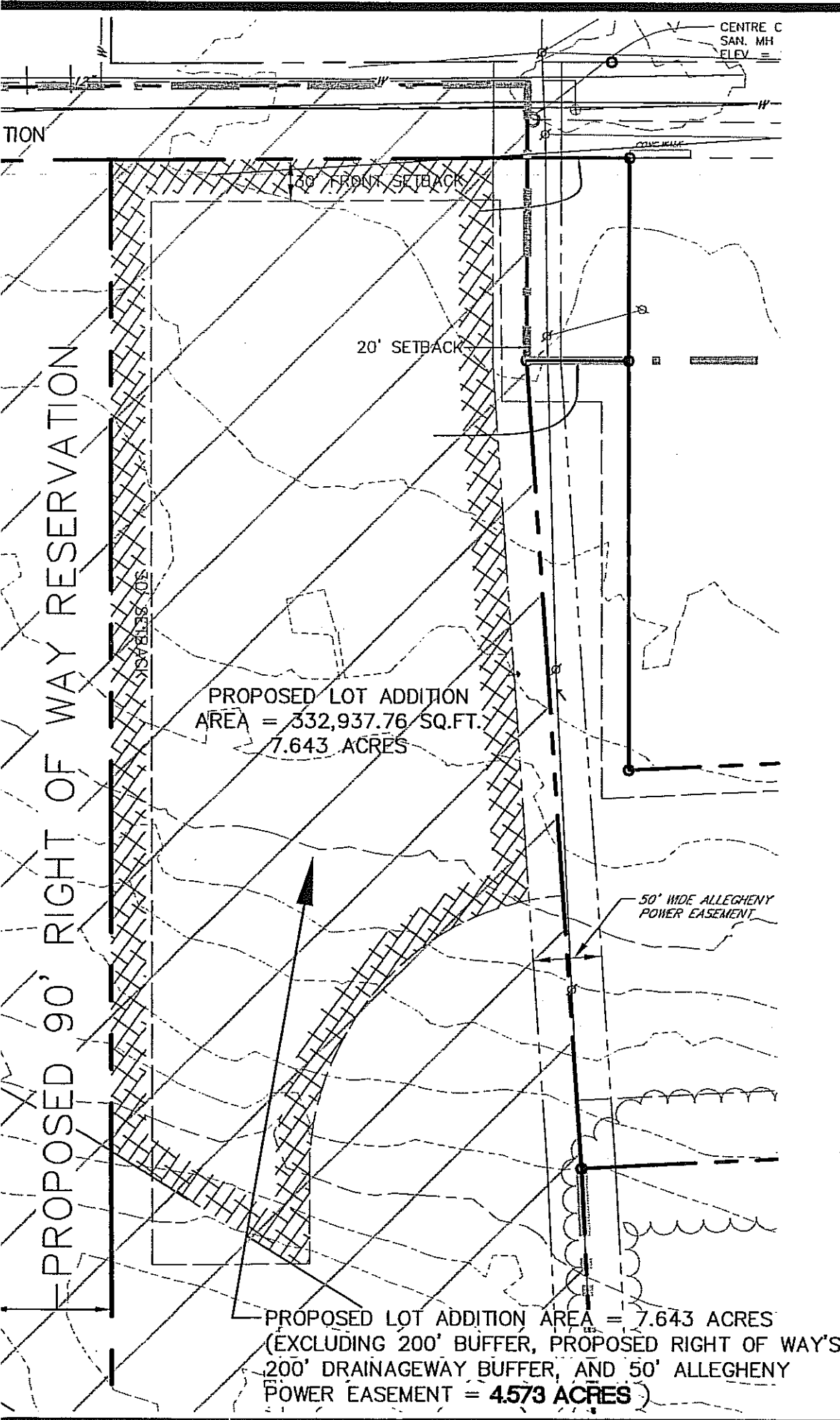
**TRIP GENERATION FORECAST**  
**PSU Whitehall Road Rezoning Request**  
**Ferguson Township, Centre County, Pennsylvania**

Scenario	LAND USE	SIZE <sup>(1)</sup>	ITE Land Use Code (Apartment)	Average Weekday Daily Traffic	NUMBER OF VEHICLE TRIPS <sup>(2)</sup>					
					A.M. PEAK HOUR		P.M. PEAK HOUR		TOTAL	
					ENTER	EXIT	ENTER	EXIT	ENTER	EXIT
1	Rezoning of 26 acres from RA to R-4 (net 11.7 acres)	198 units	220	1,340	20	81	101	82	44	126
2	Existing R-4 land and proposed rezoning (net 27 acres)	458 units	220	2,903	46	183	229	175	94	269

Source: Analysis by Trans Associates.

(1) Size based upon permitted density provided by Ferguson Township (17 units/acre for R-4).

(2) Calculated using 'Trip Generation', 7th Edition', ITE.



PROPOSED LOT ADDITION  
 AREA = 332,937.76 SQ.FT.  
 7.643 ACRES

PROPOSED LOT ADDITION AREA = 7.643 ACRES  
 (EXCLUDING 200' BUFFER, PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY'S,  
 200' DRAINAGEWAY BUFFER, AND 50' ALLEGHENY  
 POWER EASEMENT = 4.573 ACRES)

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**SWEETLAND ENGINEERING & ASSOCIATES, INC.**

**Corporate Office:**  
 600 Science Park Road  
 State College, PA 16803  
 (814)-237-6518 Phone  
 (814)-237-1488 FAX  
 www.sweetland-eng.com

**Branch Office:**  
 105 Cole Street  
 Sayre, PA 16840  
 (570) 882-8777 Phone  
 (570) 882-8298 Fax

CLIENT:	P.S.U.
PROJECT TITLE:	REZONING REQUEST
SHEET TITLE:	USABLE AREA SKETCH
SITE LOCATION:	FERGUSON TOWNSHIP CENTRE COUNTY, PA.
DRAWN BY:	NJS
CHECKED BY:	JAS
DESIGNED BY:	
SCALE:	1"=100'
DATE:	12/11/03
PROJECT NO.:	4926A
DRAWING NO.:	A-1014
SHEET NO.:	1 OF 1