

## **1.0 PREVIOUS WASTEWATER PLANNING**

### **1.1 WASTEWATER PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

#### **1.1.1 Previous Act 537 Planning**

##### **Berks County Master Water and Sewer Plan**

The Berks County Master Water and Sewer Plan (1970) was prepared for the Berks County Board of Commissioners in conjunction with the Berks County Planning Commission. The Plan recommended that the Monocacy Creek Basin, which includes part of Douglass Township, Amity Township and the Gramacy Gardens area of Union Township should connect to the Pottstown Regional Water Pollution Control System. The Plan was adopted by the Amity Township Board of Supervisors in 1970.

The Master Plan was revised in 1975 to recognize Amity Township's desire to construct its own sewage treatment plant. The proposed plant was recognized as a subregional facility and had the potential to treat sewage flows from parts of Douglass, Exeter and Union Townships. The amendments were adopted by the Amity Township Board of Supervisors.

The Berks County Planning Commission updated its 1982 study on *Berks County Sewer and Water Systems*. The September 1995 report did not identify any issues specific to Amity Township. They did, however, identify a short-term sewer need for the southern portion of Douglass Township, and noted that the Douglassville Water Company was at or near capacity. Douglassville Water Company was later purchased by Citizens Utilities, and interconnected with their system. It is now a part of Pennsylvania American Water Company (see Figure 2.9).

##### **Amity Township Act 537 Plan Update (June 1989)**

Amity Township developed an Act 537 Plan in 1989. At that time, the plant was rated at 0.8 MGD, and had reached (and at times exceeded) that capacity. As a result of the study, the plant was upgraded in 1991 to its current rated capacity of 1.6 MGD.

Outside of the heavily developed core of the Township, residents rely on on-lot disposal systems.

#### **1.1.3 Activities Anticipated or Planned by Sewer Authorities**

Amity Township is currently in the design phase of a modification and upgrade project for the sewage treatment plan. The Township has applied for a Part II Permit Modification and anticipates construction to begin in July 2003. The project includes:

- headworks improvements to add rag and grit removal
- oxidation ditch modification, including installation of larger motors to increase oxygen to the ditch

- new final clarifier, doubling existing final clarification area, and greatly improving wet weather performance.

After this project is completed, and after this Act 537 Plan is approved, the Township will apply to the Department for a re-rating of the plant's capacity.

Amity Township will also continue its annual program of replacing old, leaky sewer lines in effort to reduce inflow and infiltration into the sanitary system. For 2003, \$200,000 has been budgeted for sewer improvements.

#### **1.1.4 Planning Through Planning Modules, Land Development and Exemptions**

All subdivisions go through the DEP planning module process.

### **1.2 SUMMARY OF MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

#### **1.2.1 Land Use Plans and Zoning**

##### **Berks County Comprehensive Plan (updated 1991)**

The *Berks County Comprehensive Plan Revision (December 1991)* discusses expansion of sewage treatment plants in its section "Community Facilities and Services Plan." That section references the "Berks County Land Use Plan - 2010" (contained in the Comprehensive Plan), which shows the type of development (if any) deemed appropriate for the County. Amity's plans are generally in conformance with the County plan and map. Most of the area currently sewered is either in "Existing Developed Areas" or "Future Growth Areas" (see Section 4.3.2 for full definitions). The Plan shows areas that are appropriate for limited development, which generally corresponds to the corridor surrounding most of the existing or future growth areas. This is mostly where development has occurred in Amity.

Some limited sewer expansion has occurred in areas designated as "Agricultural Preservation" and "Environmentally Sensitive." This is consistent with the Plan's statement:

This Plan recognizes that certain sewer lines may have to be extended to give relief to areas with malfunctioning on-lot systems.

Those areas developed were contiguous with existing sewered development, and generally had "moderate" to "severe" limitations for on-lot sewage disposal due to steep slopes or depth to bedrock.

The Berks County Planning Commission's (BCPC) new plan, "Berks County's Vision 2020 Plan," was adopted on April 24, 2003. Because much of the work on this plan had already been completed by that date, this plan looked at consistency with both the 1991 plan and the 2003 "Vision 2020 Plan."

The Vision 2020 Plan establishes a number of land uses, some of which are “overlay” districts, and therefore can occur in any district, and cross district boundaries. Key elements of the Plan are:

**Agricultural Preservation** - The area looks for large (minimum 500 acres) contiguous land areas with suitable soils predominately devoted to agricultural activity. They note that “areas should be reserved primarily for agricultural purposes, and are inappropriate for infrastructure extension.” The areas designated as AP by the County are currently in Amity’s “RC - Rural Conservation” district.

**Growth Areas** - Lands are contiguous to existing developed areas where they can maximize existing investment in public sewer and water systems, transportation systems, and other public facilities and services or where public sewer is anticipated in the near future for health and safety reasons. A full range of public infrastructure services including sewer, water, highways and other transportation modes, police and fire protection, public schools, parks, open space and other services should be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate the growth as it occurs. Those areas in Amity are in the MDR district, and are either currently served by sewer, or are adjacent to developments with sewer.

**Rural Conservation** - These areas are appropriate for forestry, small-scale agriculture, and low density “suitably sited” development. This generally represents land zoned as LDR in Amity. The County recommends density of less than 1 unit/acre; Amity requires a minimum of 80,000 sq. ft. lot size (about 1.8 acres).

Areas designated as “Environmental Hazard” are the floodplains and drainage basins. Steep slopes occur in the Monocacy Hill area, which Amity has precluded from development and from extension of sewer.

#### **Amity Township Comprehensive Plan (1990)**

Amity Township first prepared a Comprehensive Plan in 1967. That Plan, however, was never adopted. Amity undertook a 2-year planning effort that resulted in the current Plan, which was adopted in July 1990. That Plan set “Goals,” and established “Objectives and Policies” to implement those goals, in several areas. Those stated goals are:

##### **General Policies**

- Achieve greater awareness, understanding and participation by the Township and its residents in a continuing planning program for the future.

##### **Land Use**

- Identify, protect and preserve the physical limitations within the Township.

- Encourage aesthetical and innovative residential growth within the Township that will meet the needs of existing and future residents.
- That section included the following “objective”:
- **Control higher density development to areas of the Township that have the capabilities and the basic infrastructure to support this type of development.**
- Encourage commercial and industrial development that is adequate to meet the Township’s needs for employment, goods and services.

**Community Facilities**

- **Ensure through planning that public facilities, services and controls are adequate to accommodate future growth.**
- Provide adequate space and facilities to meet the recreation needs of the Township residents and encourage the preservation of the Township’s open space and historic structures and features.
- Promote, encourage and practice energy conservation within the Township.

**Transportation**

- Provide and establish a transportation network that safely and efficiently circulates people and goods throughout and within the Township.

Amity Township is currently involved in developing a Joint Comprehensive Plan with neighboring Exeter Township and the Borough of St. Lawrence. Public meetings and hearings are proceeding, and the three municipal governments are expected to take action on the plan in late2003 or early 2004.

**1.2.2 Amity Township Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)**

Amity Township’s current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1991, and last amended September 16, 2002. Amity Township’s current SALDO codified May 7, 2001 and was last amended March 20, 2002, More details are provided in “*Section 4.4. Land Use Designations Established Under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.*”

Amity Township has the following ordinances, codified under “Sewers and Sewage Disposal”:

**TABLE 1.2.4  
SEWAGE-RELATED ORDINANCES**

| Title  | Ordinance Number | Date          |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Holding Tanks                                    | 48               | March 2, 1973 |
| On-Lot Sewage Disposal<br>Systems                | 148              | May 1, 1995   |
| Public Sewage Disposal                           | 143              | May 2, 1994   |
|  | 147              | Jan. 16, 1995 |
|  | 154              | Aug. 19, 1996 |
| Spray Irrigation and Stream<br>Discharge Systems | 167              | Oct. 11, 1999 |
| Sewage Sludge Disposal                           | 155              | Sept. 2, 1997 |
| Sump Pump Discharge                              | 190              | May 6, 2002   |

See Appendix 1-1 for the full text of the Ordinances.

### **1.2.3 Limitations and Plans Related to Floodplain and Stormwater Management and Special Protection**

#### **1.2.3.1 Floodplain Management**

Amity Township has a Floodplain Ordinance, adopted December 1, 1977, that controls all development within the floodplain areas of the Township. In addition, Section 502 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes a "Floodplain Overlay District" to further protect the floodplain.

#### **1.2.3.2 Stormwater Management**

Section 511 of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) establishes criteria to be met by developers to control sedimentation and erosion, encourage groundwater recharge, convey surface water, protect watercourses, assure proper drainage, and otherwise control stormwater. Subdivision plans require a Storm Water Management Plan.

#### **1.2.3.3 Special Protection**

The Amity Township Sewage Treatment Plant discharges to the Schuylkill River, and operates within the parameters of its NPDES permit. The Schuylkill River is not a special protection waterway. No changes to the NPDES permit are anticipated as a result of the needs assessment done as part of this revision. However, recognizing the plant's current capacity limitations, the Township is designing improvements to the plant concurrently with this study. The Township anticipates filing to have the plant's capacity re-rated after adoption of this plan revision. At that time, the Township will also seek an amendment to its NPDES permit. The plant improvements will by themselves have no adverse impact on the Schuylkill

River, and the effects of the re-rate will be addressed during the NPDES permitting process.

See also Section 6.1.5.