

B. Utilization of Schools

Public school enrollments often reflect the changing age composition and general social trends of a school district. The Pennsylvania Economy League, in Report No. M-83, examined the change in enrollments in Lower Merion Township.

Their review of the data showed a gradual increase in enrollments from 1960 through 1967. From 1967 to 1977 enrollments declined, and they are expected to continue to decline for the next ten years. Elementary school enrollments, grades 1-6 and special, have declined 19% since the peak year of 1967, while secondary school enrollments, grades 7-12 and special have decreased 12% from the 1966 peak. Total enrollment fell from 9,491 in 1960 to 8,370 in 1976. Present projections indicate lower enrollments in 1981 than in 1976 and lower enrollments in 1986 than in 1981.

Much of the school construction in the 1960s was based on the assumption that enrollments would increase due to a continuing high birth rate and in-migration of children born outside the area. But in-migration was minimal, and annual births declined.

Consistent with the trend of declining enrollment is the underutilization of the elementary, junior high and senior high schools in the district. The current enrollments, utilization rates and capacities for 1975-1976 shows a system with 8,752 students occupying facilities capable of holding 11,651 students. This yields a utilization rate of only 75.2%. The high schools had the lowest utilization rate, 70.9%, followed by the elementary schools with 75.8%, and the junior high schools with 80.6%. The result of underutilization is higher per capita costs per student. Because of these school enrollment figures the school board has decided to close several of the school buildings. These closings will impact on the neighborhoods to varying degrees. A change in the uses of the structures could certainly modify the character of the neighborhoods, even if the new uses were residential. Security situations may also arise, especially if the facilities are not put to any alternative uses. This may also affect property values, as well as the attractiveness of the area as a place to reside.

C. Private Educational Facilities

The township of Lower Merion has an abundance of private educational institutions. In total there are 29 facilities of private education, and eight of these are institutions of higher learning. These institutions, particularly the colleges, can have a significant effect on township policies.

4. Fire Services

The township's fire delivery system includes seven volunteer fire companies. Six are located within the municipality and the seventh is in the Borough of Narberth.

The funding for the companies comes from fund raising campaigns sponsored by the individual companies and from annual allocations from the municipal budget. Coordination and regulatory activities are accomplished through the Township Fire Department's staff, consisting of the Superintendent of Fire and three professional assistants. New equipment is also funded through the township's capital improvement program.

The companies have an ISO rating of 4 (the best a volunteer company can receive) and can protect 98% of the township in under four minutes response time. If the Gladwyne area continues to develop, a sub-station may be needed to maintain the best response time. Other stations which border adjacent municipalities also participate in mutual aid agreements, which means that neighboring companies come to each other's aid where called upon.

This evaluation indicates that fire service needs fluctuate and in the future a rearrangement of facilities may be needed, which may include a decrease or increase in services. Further detailed studies should be done to provide an on-going evaluation of these operations.

5. Libraries

Lower Merion has a well developed system of neighborhood libraries consisting of six separate facilities available to all residents of the township.

The total collection contains 240,641 volumes and 51,824 pieces of reference material. Additionally, the public school libraries make available to township residents another 159,359 volumes. Besides the usual collection of library books and reference materials, the system has developed the following special collections:

Specialty

American Field Service Collection

Art Books

Black History Collection

Business Reference Collections

Library

Harrilton High School
Library

Ludington

Ardmore

Ludington and Bala Cynwyd

Specialty

Career Education Books
Cookbooks and Needlepoint Books
Drama and Playreading Collection
Films
Folklore and Fairy Tale Collection
Foreign Language Books
Historical Children's Collection
Jewish Literature and Religion
Music
Pennsylvania and Local History
Picture Collection
Professional Collections
Toy Collection

Library

All secondary schools
Gladwyne
Penn Wynne
Ludington
Ludington
Ludington
Ludington
Bala Cynwyd
Bala Cynwyd
Gladwyne
Bala Cynwyd and Ludington
Ludington, Bala Cynwyd, all
schools
Belmont Hills

In addition to the special collections and usual books and reference materials, the libraries also have available maps, charts, sheet music, films, records, puzzles and other educational materials.

The entire library system was the subject of an analytical report prepared by the township in 1976. The study looked into the organizational structure and operations of the library system to find out where alterations that would improve the system might be made. The report also compared the township's library system with other townships, and presented statistics on circulation and townships' cost of operation. The study concluded that the township is fortunate to have a well run and efficiently managed system providing excellent service to Lower Merion's residents. Suggestions were made for improving the library system by making all accounting procedures uniform, and by obtaining the latest library technologies to reduce costs.

6. Public Buildings and Facilities

The township has twenty-four institutional facilities performing various service functions, such as issuing building permits, refuse removal, street maintenance and providing for public safety. There are also twenty-one quasi-public facilities in the township, consisting of senior citizen centers, clubs, hospitals, and community centers. The township has a Community Services Director who coordinates and supervises the various events carried out in the community centers.

A. U.S. Postal Service Offices

There are six post offices in Lower Merion Township. Each office is located in a major residential center. The determination of post office location, zip code delineations and other postal business is handled by the regional postal service headquarters in Philadelphia. Plans have been completed to build a new post office in Bala Cynwyd near the site of the present facility.

B. Historical and Cultural Resources

The township is rich in American history. Much of this early heritage is preserved in the form of architectural tributes to a previous era. Structures such as private residences, old mills, schools and inns still dot the roads of twentieth century Lower Merion. In the background study report a complete list of the 75 historical and cultural site locations can be found, along with the name of each facility. A more detailed description of these sites can be found in the Inventory of Historic and Cultural Resources by the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

7. Religious Facilities

Lower Merion Township has forty-seven religious institutions of various faiths actively serving the community. Measurement standards established by C.A. Perry produce an estimate of forty-one facilities needed for a community of Lower Merion's size. Since the township has forty-seven institutions, a surplus does exist. This does not preclude the establishment of new facilities but it does indicate the maturity of the township.

Religious institutions, besides providing programs for members, often participate in community affairs. Sometimes the physical location of a facility is such that it serves as a neighborhood focal point for such secular programs as day care centers or elderly food programs. The importance of these community services often goes unmentioned, but they do supplement the existing public activity centers and should be included when surveying available sites for public programs.

8. Water and Sewer Systems

A. Water System

The entire township is presently being serviced by the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company. The Company provides water from the following sources:

- . Springton Reservoir
- . Green Lane Reservoir
- . Gladwyne well at Adrienne Lane and Gypsy Lane

From these reservoirs, water is pumped into the township by five pumping stations located at:

- . Matson's Ford and Montgomery Avenue
- . Old Lancaster and Lancaster Avenues
- . Black Rock Road
- . Manayunk and Montgomery Avenue
- . Belmont Avenue at Cornell

In addition to these reservoirs and pumping stations, there are three storage tanks in the township located at:

- . Old Lancaster and Lancaster Avenues
- . Black Rock Road
- . Manayunk and Montgomery Avenues

Land use activities play an important role in water resource planning. In order for new water sources and distribution pipe lines to be installed, the water company must be alerted to developments while they still are in the planning stages so that disturbances to the environment can be minimized.

B. Sanitary Sewer System

Most of Gladwyne is not served by the community sewerage system, which necessitates large lot zoning in order to make the use of septic tanks safe. Eventually, developmental and health pressures might necessitate sewer extensions into this area. The township does not operate any sewerage treatment plants, and none is located in the municipality. Instead, all sewerage is sent to plants located in Philadelphia through a series of pumping stations and/or gravity flow lines. The township now operates ten pumping stations with half of them located along the Schuylkill River. Studies by regional agencies recommend that if the Gladwyne area is given sewerage service, the flows should be directed to Conshohocken for treatment in a facility located there.

C. Storm Water Sewer System

The township has initiated studies on storm water as well as the sanitary sewer system, and is looking for solutions to eliminate infiltration and inflow into the sanitary sewerage system. The township requires retention basins and control measures in new developments to prevent future problems.