



HALMOON TOWNSHIP SMALL AREA PLAN

Steering Committee Recommended Plan
June 2018





Halfmoon Township Small Area Plan Study Area

LEGEND

- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Regional Growth Boundary
- Parkland
- Open Space Preservation Lease
- Wildlife Corridor
- State Game Lands
- Parcel Boundaries
- Municipal Boundary

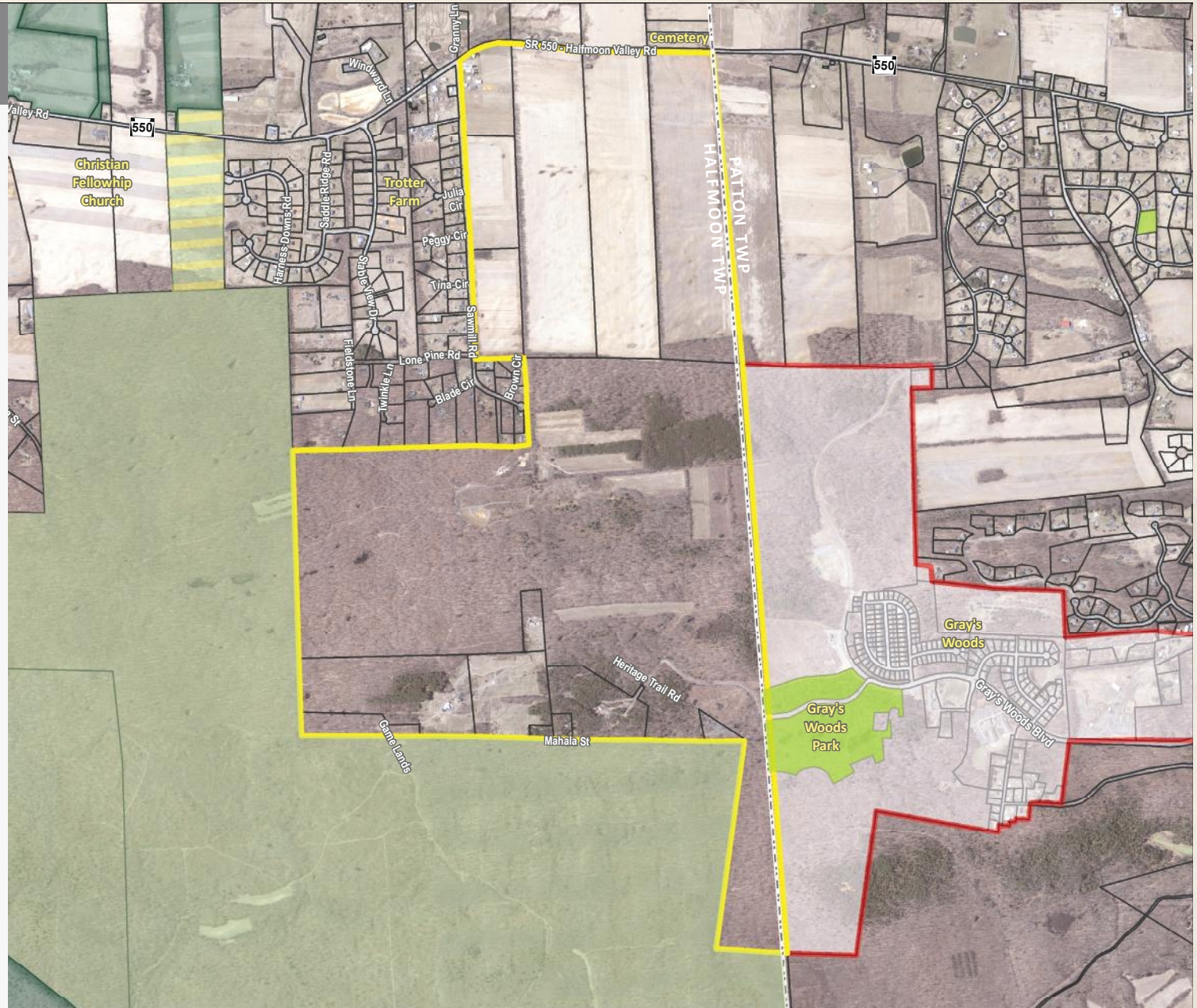


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Introduction

Halfmoon Township is a rural township located in Centre County, Pennsylvania. The namesake is believed to be a consequence of marks made by Native Americans upon trees in the area to delineate an early trail, which appeared to be representations of half-moons. The Township is bounded to the north by Bald Eagle Ridge, and to the south by an area called the Barrens, historically mined for iron ore, and Ferguson Township. The western Township boundary is shared with Huntingdon County and to the east with Patton Township.

The first settler is known to be Abraham Elder, who first arrived in 1784. He first built a log home but he subsequently built a stone home, which still stands in the Township. He later constructed a saw-mill, distillery and a grist-mill, from which flour was transported to Baltimore. When the road transporting iron to Pittsburgh was completed, he ran a tavern called “Elder’s”, which also carried goods to supply his neighbors.

The Township has remained primarily agricultural in nature, although residential subdivisions have recently been developed. According to the 2010 Census, the population was reported to be 2,667 at that time, reflecting an increase of 13.2% from the previous Census in 2000. The CRPA forecast completed in 2011 shows the population at 4,031 by 2,040. The predominant form of development includes single-family residential on large lots, farms that include livestock and cropland operations, and small-scale commercial businesses.

The area is an attractive place to live, in close proximity to the amenities within the Centre Region, but surrounded by low density development and open land. A primary concern from Township residents has been to provide more diversity in housing stock in the future. Because the Township is currently located entirely outside the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area (RGB and SSA), public sewer that would serve increased density is not currently available. Consequently, development must be supported by on-site sewer facilities, which are land consumptive. The Township has been working toward directing new development toward the eastern end of the Township, which abuts the RGB and SSR and a more urbanized Patton Township. The goal has been to preserve the very factors that attract residents to the area, while allowing for growth to occur in a compact way that respects the natural resources and rural character of the Township.

In November of 2016, the Township Board of Supervisors created a Steering Committee to begin to establish a vision and goals for future development in the Small Area Plan. This document conveys that vision to the community, boards, commissions and future developers.

What is a Small Area Plan?

Municipalities can use Small Area Plans (SAP) to implement their comprehensive plan. The SAP can effectively establish a bridge between the broad goals of the regional comprehensive plan and the detailed standards in a subdivision and land development ordinance. Many communities in Pennsylvania prepare Small Area Plans because they are not defined in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), and they are not a component of the comprehensive plan. Municipalities also prepare SAPs because they have the flexibility to establish plans tailored to their needs, without the encumbrances in the MPC regulations. For example, SAPs can range from very general plans that layout broad policies for the municipality, or plans that are as detailed as defining every aspect of future development in the SAP planning area.



The extent to which issues are addressed in a SAP are left totally to the discretion of the municipality. To be most successful however, the SAP should reflect the overall planning goals in the adopted comprehensive plan or other long-range planning documents and have opportunities for the public to provide comments and suggestions.

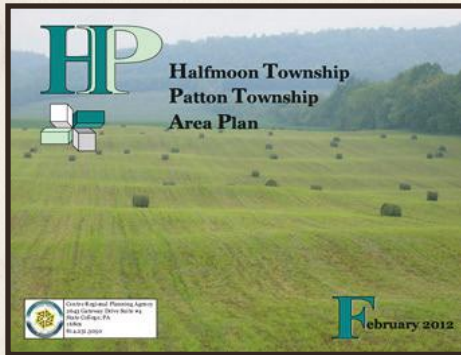
The Study Area is shown on page 2 - Study Area Map.

Existing Conditions

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly summarize the existing characteristics and conditions in the Small Area Plan Study Area.

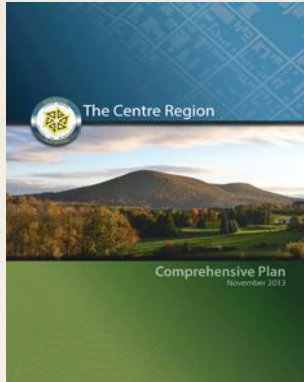
Previous Planning Efforts

Several years ago, Halfmoon Township began work to plan for future development within the Township. These planning efforts have included multiple public meetings and listening sessions to determine Township issues. During this time, the Board of Supervisors received input from the community to help understand how to accommodate future development in the Township. Previously approved planning documents include the *2006 Halfmoon Township - Patton Township Area Plan* and the *2013 Centre Regional Comprehensive Plan Update*.



Halfmoon Township / Patton Township Area Plan – Completed in 2012

From 2006-2012, a Steering Committee, consisting of elected and appointed officials from Halfmoon Township, Patton Township and the Pennsylvania State Game Commission prepared an area plan to include portions of Halfmoon Township and areas of Patton Township. Large vacant tracts of land that had development potential, including, the Gray's Woods Planned Community, the Toftrees Planned Community, the Imbt Tract, and the Halfmoon Acres property were included in the Plan. Both the Gray's Woods Planning Community and the Halfmoon Acres property straddled the Patton/Halfmoon boundary. No development in either of these projects, however was approved in Halfmoon Township. The outcome of this planning effort concluded that some development should occur in these areas to sustain the municipalities. A assessment of the transportation impacts of growth on State Route 550 and Gray's Woods Boulevard, State Route 322 and other streets concluded there were a number of improvements that should be completed as development occurred.



Centre Region Comprehensive Plan - Approved in 2013

The Centre Region Planning Agency completed a Comprehensive Plan in 2013. The Comprehensive Plan included a Future Land Use map for the Township designating the eastern portion of the Township as 'Mixed Use' future land use. A mixed use area envisions a deliberate mix of housing, civic uses, and commercial uses that may include retail, restaurants, offices, and other uses. These uses may be located in close proximity to each other or integrated in the same building.

In planning for the future of the Township, the Board of Supervisors approved the mixed use land use designation in the Comprehensive Plan so that residents of Halfmoon Township had an area of the community that would be planned to offer more choices for housing, would be attractive and fun neighborhood to live in, make good use of public investments sewer, water, and transportation, protect the environment, and make the community a better place.

Land Use and Zoning

Land uses in the Small Area Plan Study Area currently consists of active farmland, forest, several dwelling units, and three water production wells in the State College Borough Water Authority's (SCBWA) Gray's Woods wellfield.

The majority of the Study Area is zoned Agricultural, with a very small portion designated as Industrial. The Agricultural zoning district would allow single family residential development, with the exception of mobile home parks and multi-family housing. Zoning Map is shown in the appendix.

Public Services

Public Water Service

There is no public water service available in the Study Area at this time. The Study Area is however, within the State College Borough Water Authority (SCBWA) service area for potable water. Based upon the SCBWA 2016 Annual Report, and discussions with representatives of the SCBWA there is sufficient capacity to serve anticipated development in the Study Area. On average, the SCBWA produces 4.9 million gallons per day (GPD) and is permitted for 9.1 GPD by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Over the past 30 years, water production in the SCBWA service area, in terms of peak and average daily demand, plateaued in 2002. Since 2002 an additional 2,435 customers have been added to the SCBWA system, and demand has decreased or remained about the same annually over that 15-year period. The nearest existing infrastructure is located in the Grey's Woods Planned Community, bordering the east side of the Study Area.

Public Sewer Service

There is no public sewer service to the Study Area at this time. In order to obtain public sewer service, the Township or future development would need to file a request to expand the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area (RGB and SSA) and prepare a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) with the Township and the Centre Region Council of Governments. The University Area Joint Authority (UAJA) has indicated they have the hydraulic and organic capacity to serve future development in the Study Area. The Centre Region, and the UAJA are preparing a nutrient management policy to help UAJA implement actions to reduce the nitrogen load at the Spring

Creek Pollution Control Facility in Benner Township. The nearest existing infrastructure is located in the Grey's Woods Planned Community, bordering the east side of the Study Area. The UAJA has programmed a project to install a sewerage pump station and force main in Patton Township in the next three to five years. This project will allow several exiting pump stations in the Gray's Woods Planned community to be abandoned and improve the overall systems, including the ability to potentially expand the pump station to provide public service to Halfmoon Township if requested, and if approved.

Transportation

There are no public roads in the Study Area at this time although SR 550 borders the north side of the Study Area. Public vehicular access is anticipated to be provided by a connection to Gray's Woods Boulevard on the southeast portion of the Study Area and to SR 550 on the north side of the Study Area. The internal roadway system has not been developed at this time however, additional connections may be considered depending on specific traffic conditions. Regional access to the north and south is constrained by Bald Eagle Ridge to the north and State Game Lands 176 to the south, leaving only SR 550 and Gray's Woods Boulevard as the primary vehicular access points. Sawmill Road could be connected to the Study Area although it is currently a residential street. The specific location of street connections to SR 550 will be determined upon submittal of traffic impact studies in the future. The connections will also be designed to minimize cut through traffic for regional trips between SR 550 and Gray's Woods Boulevard. The connections should be designed to be "locally convenient, but regionally inconvenient" as stated in the previously completed Halfmoon - Patton Area Plan (HPAP).

CATA provides limited service to the Township. There are also a number of bicycle and hiking trails that access State Game Lands 176, south of the Study Area.

Environment

There are several critical environmental features that need to be considered in, and adjacent to the Study Area when considering future development.

Scotia Barrens/State Game Lands 176

This unique area borders the Study Area to the south and west. The areas included a multitude of uses including, but not limited to hunting, hiking, bicycling, and birding. Both areas also have enormous biological diversity and are very important recreational, cultural, and environmental components of the Centre Region and Halfmoon Township. The Halfmoon and Patton Area Plan (HPAP) provides a detailed summary of this resource.

Planning Process

Initiate Process

- Form Steering Committee
- Select study area
- Collect data

1. Assess Conditions

- Review data
- Land use and zoning
- Water, sewer, and transportation
- Environment

4. Response

- Consider Planning Commission comments
- Consider resident comments
- Amend draft

Adoption Process

- Comments by Board of Supervisors
- Amendments by Steering Committee
- Adoption by Board

2. Develop Draft Plan

- Prepare goals and objectives
- Prepare land use concept

5. Final draft

- Steering Committee provides final draft Small Area Plan to the Board of Supervisors

3. Comments

- Obtain comments from the Planning Commission
- Obtain comments from residents

Vision Statement and Goals for Future Development

Vision Statement

Future development in the Planning Area should reflect the longstanding rural character of Halfmoon Township, while providing for a mix of residential dwellings, small-scale commercial businesses, places for community gatherings, parks and natural areas, and compatible agricultural uses.

Goals

Goal 1.0 Future development in the Planning Area should reflect the rural character of Halfmoon Township.

1.1 Future development should reflect the following characteristics:

- a) provides a peaceful and quiet place to live; in the Study Area and surrounding area; preserves low levels of noise, light and traffic impacts and maintains lot sizes and residential character on the west boundary of the Study Area that resemble existing lot sizes and residential character along Sawmill Road;
- b) small neighborhood-compatible agricultural uses;
- c) close contact with nature;
- d) accessible gathering spaces.

1.2 Future development should include small-scale commercial uses with the following characteristics:

- a) include office and retail space to meet the local resident needs;
- b) located back from State Route 550, maintaining a natural buffer and screening to provide a rural view shed when entering and leaving the Township;
- c) have a height limit of 30 feet or three stories;
- d) generally consist of 5,000 square feet or less for each use;
- e) parking area(s) should not be visible from State Route 550;
- f) include interchangeable retail and office space;
- g) contain residential uses.
- h) connect to green spaces by bicycle and pedestrian pathways;
- i) The Committee has a preference for maintaining the end of Sawmill Road as a dead end local street, not a collector street.

1.3 Future development may include compatible agricultural uses with the following characteristics:

- a) small-scale organic farming, permaculture, and horticulture
- b) subsistence farming, community gardens
- c) without off-site impacts to adjacent properties

GOAL 2.0 Ensure that all uses are connected to each other and also to the surrounding communities by a multimodal network of pedestrian walkways, cycling paths, trails, including those for horse riding, and transit.

- 2.1 Ensure access to open space for all residents, including those with disabilities, by providing appropriate access through several modes of transport, including wider sidewalks and shared use paths.
- 2.2 Provide bicycle racks in appropriate locations throughout residential and commercial areas to support and encourage cycling within the Planning Area, and to encourage visitation from surrounding communities to support commercial businesses.
- 2.3 Establish connections to existing walking and biking trails and pathways on property abutting the Planning Area, including State Game Lands 176.

GOAL 3.0 Provide a variety of residential housing types appropriately located throughout the Planning Area.

3.1 All of the following housing types are encouraged:

- a) Single family detached and attached homes;
- b) Townhomes;
- c) Multi-family duplex to quadraplex;
- d) Multi-family condominiums/apartments;
- e) Mixed-use buildings (upper floors office/residential; lower floors small scale retail/office).

3.2 Plan for higher intensity development to be located on the eastern side of the Planning Area, away from State Route 550 and the State Gamelands 176.

- a) the intensity of future development should be lower moving to the west and south in the Small Area Plan Study;
- b) future development regulations should provide flexible standards related to use so that the influence of the market would dictate types of commercial and residential uses, to include mixed-use structures

3.3 Allow smaller and less expensive housing options by providing flexibility in dimensional standards of lots based upon the following:

- a) consistency with the character of the planning area;
- b) compatibility with existing structures in the area, including height and building materials;
- c) provision of landscaping buffers, if necessary;
- d) provision of appropriate on-street, off-street, or garage parking.

3.4 Dwelling unit types that allow residents to continue to live in the Township at all stages of life are encouraged.

- a) allow a number of unrelated individuals within a dwelling unit to allow for students, young professionals, or empty-nesters;
- b) include assisted living facilities as a residential use;
- c) provide universal design units as part of all development that contains residential uses.

GOAL 4.0 Ensure the adequate provision of open space to maintain the rural character of the Township.

4.1 Open land should be consistent with the following characteristics:

- a) consider allowing reductions in the minimum requirements for open land for projects in the Study Area that meet or exceed other goals in the Small Area Plan while maintaining the rural character of the Township;
- b) can include agricultural uses;
- c) should include informal civic spaces for community gatherings and events;
- d) be accessible to the public
- e) be in a natural state rather than manicured lawns
- f) preserve, maintain, enhance and restore native vegetation, visual corridors, and other quality natural resources
- g) engage with local partners to enhance native plants to the area

4.2 Open land should be connected to areas outside the Planning Area to further the development of linked and continuous open space corridors.

GOAL 5.0 Ensure that all development adheres to environmentally sound practices.

5.1 New development should be clustered to provide open land.

5.2 Clearing and grading activities should be limited to the minimum amount needed for the proposed use(s) to reduce land disturbance and protect sensitive environmental areas

5.3 Trees, shrubs and groundcover should be included in parking lots and along driveways help to alleviate “heat island effect”, to protect air quality and to help manage stormwater.

5.4 Restrict activities and land uses known to adversely affect the water resources, and protect natural groundwater recharge areas.

5.5 Proposed development plans should limit impervious areas.

- a) allow pervious pavers and other pervious elements;
- b) limit paved parking spaces to minimum requirements;
- c) shared parking facilities are encouraged.

5.6 Encourage the use of non-potable sources of irrigation water for agricultural and other uses

5.7 Establish conservation provisions with an emphasis on protection of Biological Diversity Areas, Important Bird Areas, Important Mammal Areas, and endangered or rare species.

5.8 New development proposals should include an environmental impact statement to protect natural habitats and natural resources.

5.9 Direct land uses that are incompatible with the protection and conservation of wetlands and wetland functions away from those areas.

GOAL 6.0 New development should generally follow the concept plan.

Conceptual Land Use Plan

The Conceptual Land Use Plan map provides a visual depiction of where various types of development could be permitted in the Small Area Plan Study Area. This narrative also describes the land uses, and components of the plan (pedestrian connections, trails, mix of uses, etc.) that cannot be shown visually on the Conceptual Land Use Plan map. This narrative was based upon discussions with the Small Area Plan Steering Committee and the goals, objectives and policies in this document. The Conceptual Land Use Map is shown on page 15.

Background

Current agricultural and residential zoning in Halfmoon Township was developed during a time when residents envisioned a community that would remain largely agricultural. The ordinances, for the most part, were written to protect farms and open land and allow families to subdivide lots for their family members to build homes. Over the years, many farms and open lands have also been sold, and converted into single family neighborhoods with one and two acre lots. This type of development has, and continues to make the community attractive to families that can afford to, and want to live in a rural environment on a large lot.

During this process, many residents on the Small Area Plan Steering Committee, in thinking about the future of the Township expressed concern that some things were missing from community. For example, large lot development does not provide for diversity in housing types, consumes a large amount of land, and is difficult for the Township to maintain public roads, and build facilities like parks that serve large geographic areas. There has been very little commercial development in the Township and few opportunity for small offices. Several important concepts emerged in listening to the Steering Committee during the process. These include:

- This Plan is important to the future of Halfmoon Township and should reflect the rural character of the Township. For example, there should be substantial open land conserved in the Study Area. There should be a connection between neighborhoods, parks, and potential commercial or office areas. There should be protection of, and access to natural areas residents value.
- The Plan should benefit the community as a whole. There are residents of Halfmoon Township, that for many reasons cannot or do not want to live on a one or two acre single family lot. The plan should provide opportunities for these residents to have housing that could help them to continue to live in the Township.
- The Plan should improve the community.
- The development of the Plan should be fair. The Steering Committee included a diverse group of residents, business people, Township appointed and elected officials, and developers. There was a sense that the Plan needs to be fair to people that live in the Township now and for future residents.
- The Steering Committee wanted meaningful participation in decisions.

Mixed Use Development in Halfmoon Township

Different communities choose mixed use for different reasons. Some see it as an excellent way to incorporate a mix of housing types on a small scale while enhancing traditional town character. Others see it primarily as a vehicle for revitalizing struggling areas and spurring economic development. The Small Area Plan for Halfmoon Township proposes mixed use development to achieve a number benefits for the community. These include:

- Encourages high quality design by providing both greater flexibility and more control
- Promotes a small village-style mix of retail, restaurants, offices, civic uses, and a mix of housing throughout the Study Area including, single family, two-family, and multifamily housing units
- Provides more housing opportunities and choices

- May increase affordable housing opportunities
- Enhances the Township's unique identity and development potential (e.g., small village center, connected neighborhoods, access to the Game Lands, and "gateway" areas that announce a community's strengths)
- Promotes pedestrian and bicycle travel
- Reduces auto dependency, roadway congestion, and air pollution by co-locating multiple destinations
- Promotes a sense of community
- Encourages economic investment
- Promotes efficient use of land and infrastructure
- Guides development toward designated areas, protecting other rural areas and environmentally sensitive areas
- Improves long term stability of Township finances

Description of, and Design Features in the Conceptual Land Use Designations

This is a brief summary of future land use concepts in the mixed use area of the Township. This section is provided to include a narrative for concepts that cannot be communicated on a map:

Balanced mix of uses: The mixed use area will include a balanced and vibrant mix of compatible uses, with some area that will provide for first floor street-front uses generally reserved for retail, restaurant, and in some cases office uses. The Higher Intensity areas in the Plan would encourage this mix by regulating first-floor street front uses and by incorporating a goals and have criterion that may consider a development's mix and its impact on the existing mix. Thus they allow residential uses on first floors of buildings or parts of buildings only where they are behind those with street frontage or where the Township deems these uses not to have an adverse impact. This also allows uses to be commingled in a single structure or located in separate structures on site.

Connectivity of uses: Traditional neighborhoods tend to emphasize buffering and protecting one use from others. Successful mixed use, by contrast, encourages links among uses. It encourages people to walk from one use to another and to enjoy and socialize in an attractive outdoor setting. Many design features promote this ambience. They should include the layout and orientation of buildings; the network of sidewalks and pathways; the location of parking relative to structures and walkways; and the amount and placement of open land, landscaping, benches, and other amenities. Specifics may include requirements for parking to be behind or next to buildings rather than in front. The community may wish to adopt separate design guidelines to provide more information and positive examples to developers.

Active street frontage: In addition to the first-floor street-front use provisions mentioned earlier in the High Intensity designation, communities influence street frontage through setbacks and other yard dimensions. Thus this should be regulated to consider the depth of front yards in some areas, setting a maximum front yard depth, and perhaps reducing front yard parking.

Compactness: The walkability of a mixed use development depends on the proximity of structures. Thus distance between homes in all land use designations should be considered to all reduced sideyard setbacks allow less separation.

Compatibility with Township character context: This is a difficult concept to implement because there are no existing neighborhoods in the Township like the ones planned for the mixed use area. The Board of Supervisors has a preference for maintaining the 50 percent open space requirement but is open to open space as low as 30 percent if the developer meets the other goals and objectives specified in the Small Area Plan, and the plan maintains the rural character of the Township.

Good bicycle and pedestrian access: One of the key benefits of mixed use is its emphasis on walking and bicycling to reduce auto dependence. Mixed use can promote walking and bicycling by including bicycle parking and storage facilities, creating a network of walkways among uses, minimizing curb cuts, and requiring that automobile parking be in back. The Township has an opportunity to emphasize bicycle and pedestrian access in the mixed use area, and connect to regional facilities in Gray's Woods and the State Game Lands.

Reduced parking: Under certain circumstances, mixed use districts may set aside less parking than in traditional, single use settings. Reductions could occur near public transportation, where uses are clearly at different times and can share the same spaces, or where there is a strong program to manage transportation demand. For the Township to allow such reductions, the public would need to be assured that the resulting parking is adequate to meet the need.

Incorporating Housing: One of the main reasons to allow mixed use is to promote a greater variety of housing choice, including smaller units, more multi-family, and perhaps more rental than is typical in new suburban development. If the Township chooses to require some affordable units, it will need to specify the threshold number of units, the percentage of affordable units, target income eligibility levels.

Determining Appropriate Uses in the High, Moderate, Low Intensity, and Buffer Areas

High Intensity

The High Intensity area should allow housing, including multi-family, as well as retail, restaurants, offices, and civic uses. Other uses may include housing for the elderly, personal services shops, child care facilities, recreation, and municipal uses.

Moderate Intensity

The Moderate Intensity area should allow housing, including single family, two family, and townhome type development.

Low Intensity

The Low Intensity area should consist of single family housing.

Buffers

The Buffer adjacent to State Route 550 is provided to signify the rural character of Halfmoon Township as people enter the community. This area should be open land, but may include community gathering areas. The Buffers between the Study Area and the State Game Lands, for the most part should remain open land, and forested where forest current exists.

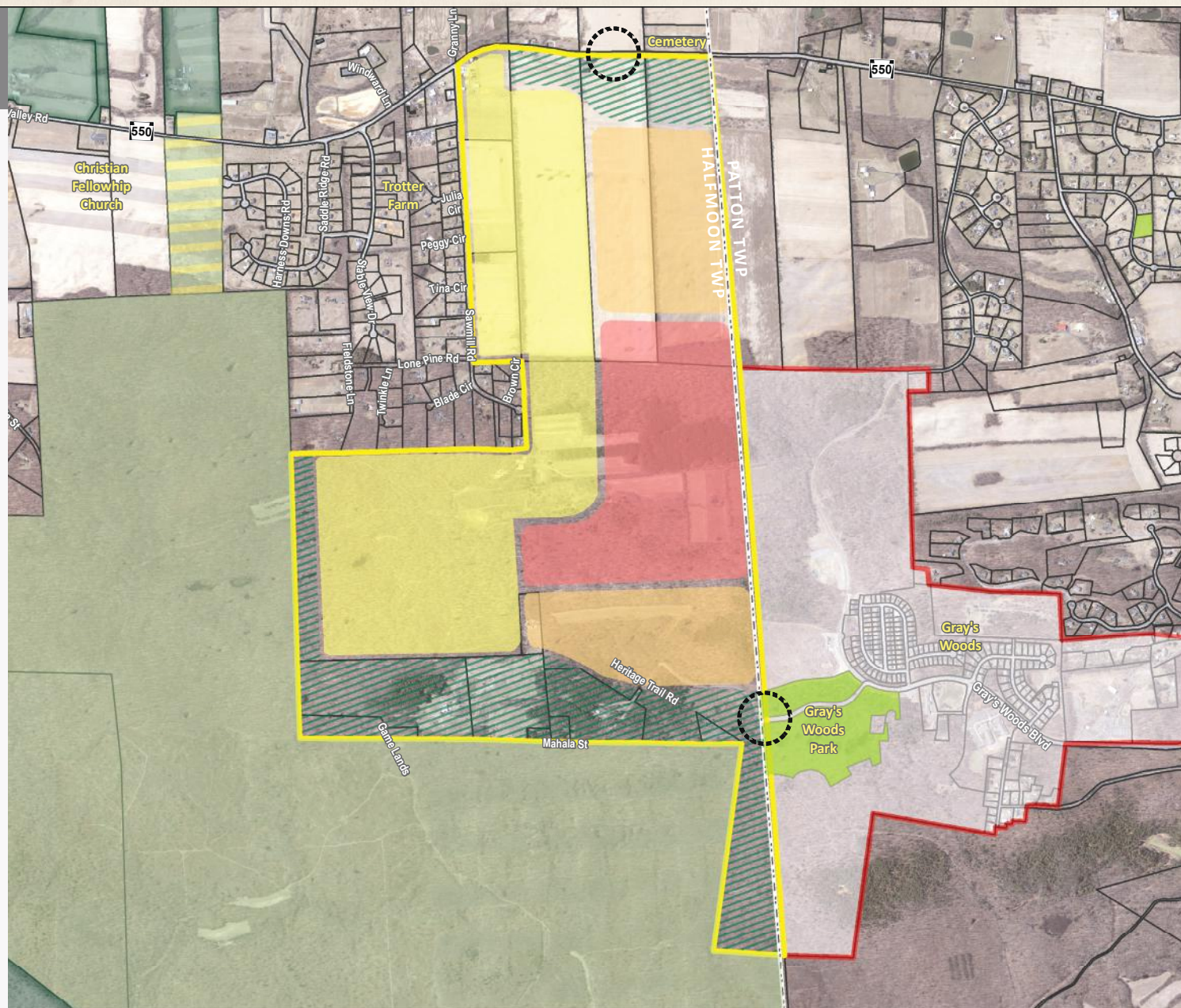


Halfmoon Township Small Area Plan Conceptual Land Use

LEGEND

Conceptual Land Use Areas

- Buffer
- High Intensity
- Moderate Intensity
- Low Intensity
- Primary Street Connection Point between SR 550 and Gray's Woods Blvd
- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Regional Growth Boundary
- Parkland
- Open Space Preservation Lease
- Wildlife Corridor
- State Game Lands
- Parcel Boundaries
- Municipal Boundary



Appendix

- Study Area Zoning Map
- Comments



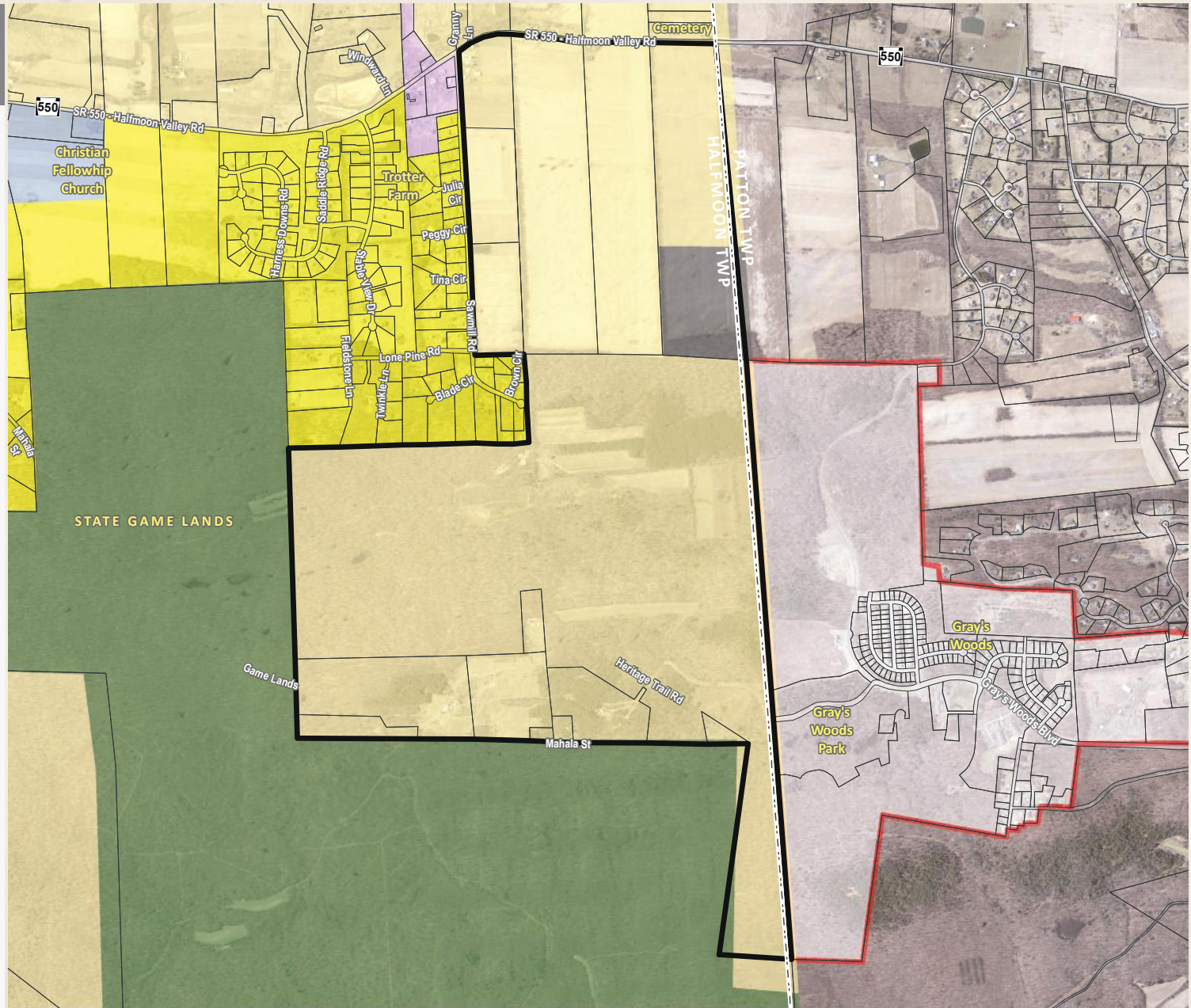
Halfmoon Township Small Area Plan Zoning

LEGEND

Zoning Districts

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Limited Industrial
- Industrial
- Village
- Natural Area

- Small Area Plan Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Boundaries
- Regional Growth Boundary



Prepared by:

