

**BUENA VISTA
TOWNSHIP PLAN
ATLANTIC COUNTY, N.J.**

SEPTEMBER, 1969

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LAND USE SURVEY

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP
ATLANTIC COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared for

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

NOVEMBER 1, 1967

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

1967

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LAND USE SURVEY
BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Before we undertake to plan for Buena Vista Township's future we must first fix clearly in our minds the stage of development at which the Township finds itself today. Just as the doctor needs to examine carefully the condition of his patient before making a diagnosis, so also must the planner survey existing conditions before making schemes for the future.

The heart of any comprehensive plan for future growth should be its general plan for land uses and their distribution throughout the planning area. Since this future land use plan helps to determine the pattern of activities of the human beings who reside and work in the region and since it will set standards for the amount and location of recreation areas, provide for the location and ease of access of industrial and commercial areas and set forth a guide for many other features of our future environment, it becomes abundantly clear that such a plan for future land uses must be developed with the utmost care.

The foundation for this future land use plan is the existing land use inventory or survey. Our planning for the future must recognize the private and public development that has taken place in the past and use this as a starting point. Consequently, the survey of existing land use and the resulting

existing land use map constitute one of the most important of the basic plan studies.

In this report we will attempt to present a complete picture of present day land use in Buena Vista Township together with some of the important factors which have worked to determine its existing pattern. While some of the facts contained in this report might appear to some to paint a dreary picture - one which restricts and limits imaginative development in the future - we see something quite different. If we are willing, we can benefit from our past mistakes in the use of the land to more intelligently cooperate with the many natural and human forces which have operated in the past and will continue to operate in the future in the important business of community building. By protecting and enhancing the best of our past growth and more accurately predicting future needs of the township, we can devise workable standards and regulations which, if we are willing to live by them, will lead to sound and worthwhile future growth in Buena Vista Township.

Physical Characteristics

Many of the physical characteristics of the environment of which Buena Vista Township is a part have had a strong influence over the nature and extent of land use development. Since these physical environmental factors will continue to affect the nature and pace of development in the future we will review some of them here.

The Township

Buena Vista Township occupies a little more than 40 square miles of New Jersey's outer coastal plain in the heart of southern New Jersey. It is located in the extreme western corner of Atlantic County about 25 miles due west of Atlantic City and some 35 miles southeast of Camden. The township is bounded by Franklin and Monroe Townships in Gloucester County to the Northwest, the borough of Folsom to the north, the township of Hamilton to the east, Weymouth Township to the south, the City of

Vineland in Cumberland County to the southwest and the borough of Buena to the west.

The Township is approximately $12\frac{1}{4}$ miles in its longest dimension, from north to south, with its northern and southern sections being set apart -- partly by manmade and partly by natural barriers. An east-west line of demarcation is formed in part by the borough of Buena and in part by the open space barrier formed by the wide, flat wetlands adjacent to the headwaters of Deep Run which crosses the narrow waist of the Township from west to east.

The borough of Buena, which contains what were formerly the Township's community centers of Landisville and Minotola, still serves as a community center for many Township residents and may be expected to interact importantly with future growth and development of the Township. The lower section of the Township is also oriented strongly to the city of Vineland and its future must be mapped out with this in mind.

The Township is in the distant hinterland of the major urban complexes of both Atlantic City and the Philadelphia-Camden area, lying almost equidistant from each.

Climate

Buena Vista Township, being a part of the Southern New Jersey peninsula, has a relatively mild climate due to the modifying influences of surrounding water bodies. It experiences longer summers and milder winters than inland areas of the same latitude. The average annual temperature is approximately 55 degrees. The climate provides a relatively long growing season of approximately 200 days which enables Buena Vista Township farmers to make early plantings and to rely on crops maturing rather late in the fall. On an average, killing frosts do not occur between mid-April and the latter part of October.

Precipitation maps for the State indicate that the

Township is in a belt which averages between 42 and 44 inches of rainfall annually. Weather bureau records also indicate that this rainfall is spread fairly evenly throughout the year with between 22 and 24 inches normally coming in the warm season between April and October.

Despite the fact that the Township experiences a fairly generous amount of annual rainfall, extended dry periods often occur during July, August, and September. Rapid percolation in the sandy soil, drying summer winds, and increased evaporation in the periods of high temperature all contribute to the rapid drying of soils and the need for agricultural irrigation. The prevailing winds are from the northwest in the fall, winter, and spring and from the southwest to the southeast during the summer. Buena Vista Township is in a comparatively clear-sky area with the sun shining for more than 60% of the possible total. This adds to the moderate nature of the Township's climatic environment.

Vegetation

As in other Southern New Jersey coastal plain situations, scrub pine and oak are important tree species on the upland areas.. In many areas these woodlands follow early logging operations which removed valuable timber species that originally existed over most of the Township's area. Common tree species are the short-leaf or yellow pine, pitch pine and oaks, including black jack, scrub, post, chestnut, black and white. Also included in these areas are persimmon, hickory, wild cherry, and sassafras. Much of the timber was cut down for building material while the land was being cleared for agriculture. In lowland situations white cedar and holly are more plentiful native species, with dogwood, white and black oak, sweet gum, sour gum, magnolia, maple, ash and tulip poplar more or less in evidence. American Holly is of course, also an important native evergreen growing profusely in low lying areas, though few large trees of this species can still be found.

As will be discussed later, the growing environment of Buena Vista Township is suitable with proper land management, for a wide variety of cultivated fruit and vegetable plants. In passing, it also should be noted that sound woodland management should be an important planning consideration for the Township, since approximately two-thirds of the township's areas still remains in the woodland classification. This and other considerations with respect to land management and plant growth will be considered in more detail in other report sections.

Geology and Soils

The lands of Buena Vista Township lie entirely within the geological province called the outer coastal plain which is the flat to gently rolling coastal terrace having predominantly sandy surface soils underlain with various levels of different types of sand deposits interspersed with clay lenses. At its outer reaches the coastal plain soils are distinguished by the almost white sand surface horizon which is 4 to 12 inches or more in depth. However, in Buena Vista Township which lies along the inner boundary of the coastal plain the surface soils vary from sandy loam to loamy sand and are light brown in color. A wide range of drainage conditions can be found, even in the upland agricultural areas. Some areas of auro soil exist in the western part of the Township. This soil type includes a Clay hardpan subsoil which adversely affects the growth of deep rooted crops.

Buena Vista's soils are easy to manage and with proper treatment will produce high value crops, particularly in the vegetable and fruit lines. At the present time sweet potatoes predominate, with many of the Township's farmers having particular know how with respect to various types of exotic greens. While the soils are easy to till they are subject to excessive leeching and wind erosion, both of which present particular management problems. Special procedures involving the use of cover crops as well as repetitive fertilization and

water application are required for successful crop production.

According to John Krohn, the U.S. Soil Conservation Specialist, about 25 to 30% of the Township's soils have been mapped by his agency. At one time this soil mapping could have been completed for Buena Vista Township alone if sufficient local support had been forthcoming. At the present time, due to the agency's mapping programs in other areas, it will be necessary for the project to be undertaken on a county-wide basis. According to present work schedules, this work could be undertaken for Atlantic County by 1970.

Probably the most striking feature of Buena Vista Township's physiography is the fact that it is extremely flat. The township is strategically positioned at the crest of the Southern New Jersey peninsula forming the flatland in which streams from both bay and ocean have their headwaters. Lake Branch, Tree Pond Branch, and South River, all emptying into the Great Egg Harbor River, rise in the woods and fields of Buena Vista Township; while Deep Run, emptying into the same river, has many of its headwater branches in either Buena Vista Township or neighboring Buena. In the southern part of the Township the Tuckahoe River, also wending its way to the Atlantic Ocean, rises within the Township's borders. Heading to the west, Panther Branch and the headwaters of the Manumuskin have their origin in the Township, both of which finally enter the Delaware Bay through Maurice River.

The Township's unusual location in a headwater area together with the fact it lies in the outer coastal plain and is thus extremely flat, work to create an extremely important community development problem. A look of the U.S.G.S. maps of the Township shows that the highest elevation in the Township is 120 feet, near the Buena line, and the lowest, 70 feet, along the Hamilton Township line near Penny Pot. However a great majority of the Township's area lies between elevation 90 and 110. This meager 20 foot elevation differential means an extremely

low surface drainage gradient, making natural surface drainage difficult in many areas. The flat topography results in many perched water areas where the relative slow percolation into subsurface aquifers is the only escape route for trapped surface waters.

On the one hand, these are the highly valuable recharge areas for South Jersey's short, meandering rivers and underground water reserves. They work to store the water in swamps and surface sands and gradually release this water to the rivers and underground aquifers through the months of little rainfall. On the other hand such areas, when developed, present extremely difficult water removal problems if not anticipated in advance. Development of the land creates a situation in which much less water is able to enter directly into the soil and thus must be removed overland through pipes or natural drainage ways or transferred to the ground waters through leaching basins. The importance of securing adequate drainage easements and protecting adequate widths for natural surface drainage can't be overemphasized. This problem will have special significance for Buena Vista Township as the pace of development picks up, simply because of its uniquely flat topography and equally unique headwater location with respect to all of the streams which form its drainage network.

HOW THE LAND IS USED

Land Use Survey

This survey of all existing land uses in Buena Vista Township was made during the months of May and June 1967. The survey was conducted by actually viewing each parcel of land in the township and recording the principal use of the parcel on field maps. The field maps used for this purpose were quadrangle sheets of the U.S. Geological Survey, which include much cultural reference material. Common land uses were recorded on the sheets by the use of a system of color symbols while actual notations were used to describe unusual or special cases.

Once the data had been collected and recorded on the field maps, they were checked against aerial photos for field and woods boundaries, the location of improvements well removed from any road, etc.

Next, the actual land use acreages were measured by the use of a planimeter, an instrument calibrated in a manner to permit the measurement of land areas from scaled maps. Once the acreage of the various land use categories had been ascertained the uses were transferred to the planning base map using various line and dot patterns to represent the particular uses. This map was then reproduced and appears in this report as page 10.

For the purposes of our survey, land uses were divided into two groups or major categories - developed and undeveloped uses. Seven subcategories of developed land use were recorded. These include residential, business and commercial, public buildings and grounds, public recreation areas, quasi-public uses, industry, and streets and roads. Four

sub-categories of undeveloped land types were recorded. These include agriculture, vacant, wetland, and woodland. The first of these undeveloped categories possesses both developed and undeveloped characteristics. While man must add his improvements to make agricultural land use a going enterprise, the extremely low density of these improvements permit agricultural land to retain its open, undeveloped nature. Since we feel that the undeveloped characteristic of farmlands is more dominant we have included it as one of the undeveloped uses.

The Land Use Pattern

Shown on page 10 is the existing land use map for Buena Vista Township. As soon as one becomes familiar with the land use key for this map he is struck by the predominance of open land uses of one kind or another. Foremost in evidence, is the Township's 16,400 acres of wooded area. Occupying two thirds of the area of the Township, woodland still heavily dominates the land use picture in Buena Vista. This together with the other open land uses, including agricultural and wet lands, result in the fact that only one tenth of Buena Vista's land has actually been developed to date. This would seem to indicate an unusual opportunity for planning, since so much of the Township's land remains in the undeveloped reserve.

However, to temper our enthusiasm several things have happened which will work to definitely limit the range of choices we will have as planners; chief among which is the fact that a great many miles of speculative development roads either exist or are at least recorded, many of which do not show up among the woodland trees. The location and caliber of these roads will be difficult if not impossible to change. This, and other limiting factors will be discussed later.

Generally, the pattern of developed land uses in the Township is one of wide dispersion with indications of beginning concentrations in the north and south central portions of the Township.

The map also depicts clearly the natural and man-made barriers separating the northern and southern halves of the Township. It dramatizes the planning void (so far as the Township is concerned) created by the separation of the borough of Buena from the Township. The economic and social ties between the new borough and the central portion of the Township will grow in importance as time goes on and a close liason between the planning efforts of the two municipalities should certainly be maintained. In addition, to the Buena void, the flat wetland barrier extending through the remainder of the waist of the Township to the Hamilton Township line is also clearly evident on the land use map.

The map depicts clearly how land uses tend to concentrate along major access routes. Major examples in Buena Vista Township are the main roads radiating from the borough of Buena area as well as those extending outward from the city of Vineland. Other interesting aspects of the overall land use pattern which can be noted from the map include the historical locations of land use groupings at railheads which have continued to affect the pattern of developed uses long after the automobile replaced the train as the important vehicle of transportation; pronounced concentration of agricultural uses along the Gloucester and Cumberland County lines together with the absence of such uses along the eastern corridor; and the spotty, almost random, location of industrial uses throughout the township.

Developed Land

Table #1, page 19, provides a breakdown of land use categories both by acres and percentage. The table shows two different percentages, one relating to major land use category and the other to total township area. In the case of residential land use, as an example, the 549 acres amounts to 21% of all the area that has so far been developed, but only a little over 2% of the total area of the Township.

As can be seen from the table, the largest user of developed land in the Township is the quasi-classification, with 873 acres. This acreage is largely composed of the two major golf courses and alone accounts for more than one third of the total acreage of developed land in the Township. The second largest user of land is residential. Occupying 550 acres of land, residential uses in the Township are presently predominantly single family. The scattered pattern of residential development is primarily a result of the rural nature of the Township, but is also due partly to the lack of land use guides and controls. In this connection it is interesting to note that all of the residences now existing in the Township could be placed within the confines of the two golf courses with more than a third of the golf course acreage left over.

Street and roads occupy third place with respect to the acreage of developed land occupied. This amounts to almost 20% of the developed acreage in the Township. Part of the reason that it takes almost an acre of road for each residence at this point in the Township's development is that land uses are so widely scattered. Many miles of existing roadway frontage are unoccupied. The rest of the explanation relates to premature subdivision. Many miles of development roads have been laid out in the township far in advance of any bona fide market for homesites. While much of this mileage still lies hidden under the trees and was not counted as part of this acreage some of it has been partially improved-- at least to the point where it is open to traffic and can be considered an existing street or road.

The table shows that less than 10% of the Township's total land area has been so far turned to developed uses. This amounts to only 2,600 acres out of a total 26,000. These statistics emphasize the amount of land yet to be developed and the opportunity to create plans and controls aimed at concentrating future growth in logical patterns; organizing the various uses in logical relationships to each other, and seeking to secure a balance between residential

and commercial development.

Working to limit this approach, of course, are the hidden speculative developments, already on record, which were mentioned earlier, and the scattered, mixed pattern of land use that already exists throughout many parts of the Township.

Table #1 also shows the acreage and percentages of the various open land uses in the Township. By far the most common type of open land is that devoted to trees and shrubs. The Township's 16,400 woodland acres amounts to a little more than two thirds of all the open space and a little less than two thirds of the Township's total land area. Whichever percentage we use, it's large and dominates all other types of land use in the Township. The fact that so much woodland remains as a development reserve not only underlines the opportunity for good land use planning in the Township but also points up specific possibilities in the area of sound forest management practices and the comparative ease with which suitable and adequate recreation areas of all types might be set aside as development of the Township progresses.

The 1,850 acres of wetland are composed of low lying upland swamp areas usually associated with a portion of the Township drainage network. Careful concern should be given these areas not only from the standpoint of discouraging development in difficult drainage situations but also from the standpoint of maintaining an adequate, overall, natural surface drainage network for the Township.

Agricultural Land Use

While agriculture has been classified as an undeveloped land use in Table #1 because of its basic open land character, it is nonetheless, by far the Township's most important economic activity and an activity which occupies about nine times as much acreage at the present time, as does residential land use. Table 2, page 19, shows a breakdown of

the farmland taken from the 1959 census of agriculture by the Department of Agricultural Economics at Rutgers. According to this breakdown there are a large number (150) of unusually small size (29 acres average) farms. According to an estimate of Charles A. Dupras, Atlantic County Agriculture Agent changing trends in agriculture have probably eliminated some of the individual farms and tended to increase individual farm size. He suggests that perhaps 125 farms of the 35 to 40 acre average size would be a fair estimate of the present situation. Whichever figures we use, the size of the farm indicates the predominance of intensive vegetable culture on an individual family basis. The almost complete lack of pasture acreage points to the comparatively small number of livestock operations.

Land Use Comparisons

Table 3, page 15A, represents comparisons in both acres and percent of total land area between Buena Vista and several other area municipalities. The Table shows figures for both developed and undeveloped land. In general, the amounts of land used for various purposes in Buena Vista Township compare quite closely to those of both Fairfield Township in Cumberland County and Upper Township in Cape May County. Some prominent discrepancies occur, as in the case of Public and quasi-public land in Upper Township where a large State holding of fish and game land has been included in the public category. The sizeable acreage in this category in Buena Vista Township is primarily made up of quasi-public land in the form of the two golf courses. Another discrepancy occurs in the wetland category. Both of the Townships used for comparison with Buena Vista possess large sections of tidal marsh land, Fairfield Township along the Delaware Bay and Cohansey River and Upper Township along the Atlantic Ocean. Consequently, Buena Vista's 1,850 acres of wetland constitutes much more of a development problem for the future than a quick comparison of these figures would indicate. Figures for the city of Vineland have been included in the

LAND USE COMPARISONS-1967

TABLE III

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

CATEGORY	BUENA VISTA TWP.		FAIRFIELD TWP. (Cumberland)		UPPER TWP. (Cape May)		VINELAND	
	ACRES	PERCENT	ACRES	PERCENT	ACRES	PERCENT	ACRES	PERCENT
DEVELOPED LAND	<u>2,614</u>	<u>9.9</u>	<u>1,584</u>	<u>6.1</u>	<u>7,085</u>	<u>16.9</u>	<u>10,893</u>	<u>24.4</u>
Residential	549	2.1	706	2.9	871	2.1	5,703	12.8
Business & Commercial	32	.1	128	.5	73	.2	1,007	2.3
Industrial	494	1.8	114	.5	1,132	2.7	14,72	3.3
Public & Quasi-Public	1,032	4.0	161	.5	4,282	10.2		
Streets & Roads	507	1.9	473	1.7	724	1.7	2,716	6.1
UNDEVELOPED LAND								
Agriculture & Vacant	5,588	23.4	6,506	23.5	2,710	6.4	14,598	32.8
Wetland	1,852	7.8	9,473	34.3	15,266	36.3		
Woodland	16,396	68.8	9,656	36.1	16,986	40.4	18,948	42.7
TOTAL	26,451	100.0	27,520	100.0	42,048	100.0	44,480	100.0

Source: Municipal Land Use Studies

table primarily to show the changing acreage and percentage relationships as development of an area becomes more intensive.

Land Use Development Problems

Several important land use problems are becoming apparent in Buena Vista Township. The sooner these problems can be confronted the less expensive and more satisfactory will be their solution. Some of these have been mentioned in passing as various land use categories were discussed. The more urgent ones that have been disclosed by this land use survey are summarized below.

Scattered Development

To date, residential growth in Buena Vista Township has occurred haphazardly in a widely scattered pattern. Most of this scatteration has occurred since the coming of the automobile which has permitted greater and greater flexibility in the choice of a particular homesite. Increasing use of the automobile together with more readily available financing for rural construction will undoubtedly increase the pressure for this type of scattered housing pattern in the future.

An effort should be made to achieve a more concentrated pattern of residential growth. Studies have demonstrated that providing scattered developments with adequate municipal services including fire and police protection, water, sewerage, and other community services is extremely costly -- often costing as much as one third more in areas of scattered development than in closely knit communities.

Premature Subdivision

Buena Vista Township has been the target of a considerable amount of premature subdivision to date. This highly speculative land dealing which involves platting at little or no cost and reselling unimproved lots to unsuspecting buyers in remote cities has brought the Township to the point that large

areas of its land are now platted at urban lot sizes with practically no urban services in place -- and in fact, no prospect of achieving them. There can be little doubt as to the treatment needed here: future subdivision activity should be limited stringently to currently needed building sites and no subdivision should be approved for urban sized lots unless provisions are made by the developer to provide them with a full complement of urban services. After past development practices, this will seem strong medicine indeed but it is medicine that must be taken if the Township ever hopes to get its development house in order.

Strip Development

Already many sections of main roads in the Township are becoming lined with mixed commercial uses of one sort or another. Eventually this sort of growth not only interferes with the efficient use of the roadway but also creates sort of a blighted area which adversely affects the development potential of adjoining open lands. An effort should be made to discourage the spotting of isolated commercial uses along most of the highway frontage through adequate zoning restrictions, and to minimize the number of minor subdivisions in favor of major subdivisions which utilize the rear portions of deep lots.

Mixed Uses

A quick look at the land use map clearly indicates the extent to which the various types of uses have tended to locate in a random manner in the past. This is a natural tendency, especially in a rural area in which development has little reason to organize itself into functional groupings. As development proceeds, however, and land users necessarily come into closer proximity one to another, land use conflicts will begin to arise. Home owners will begin to find it more difficult to sell their property if it is located across the

street from a junkyard or gravel pit. Business uses will become unattractive if they happen to be located downwind from a smoke or odor producing factory. To avoid these and many other unnecessary land use conflicts in the future, a conscious effort should be made to organize and separate incompatible uses through a carefully worked out zoning plan. And once the plan has been worked out its rules and requirements should be enforced fairly and consistently so that future growth will occur in accordance with it. Already the Township has within its borders some 25 junk yards. For the purpose of the survey an area qualified as a junkyard if it contained three or more unlicensed vehicles or an equivalent area devoted to junk storage. Such uses are bound to have a depressing effect on neighboring properties. A special effort should be made to contain both the number and extent of such uses and to seek their discontinuance where possible.

TABLE # 1.

EXISTING LAND USE - 1967

Buena Vista Township
Atlantic County, New Jersey

Category	Adjusted Acres	Percent of Major Category	Percent of Total
DEVELOPED LAND	<u>2,614</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>9.9</u>
Residential	549	21.0	2.1
Business & Commercial	32	1.2	.1
Public Buildings & grounds	106	4.1	.5
Public Recreation	53	2.0	.3
Quasi-Public	873	33.4	3.2
Industry	494	18.9	1.8
Streets & Roads	507	19.4	1.9
UNDEVELOPED LAND	<u>23,036</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>90.1</u>
Agriculture	4,380	18.4	16.6
Vacant	938	3.9	3.4
Wetland	1,852	7.8	7.1
Woodland	16,666	69.9	63.0
TOTAL	26,451		100.0

TABLE II

FARMSTEAD
LAND USE, 1959

Buena Vista Township
Atlantic County, New Jersey

Number of Farms	150
Acres in Farms	4400 ac
Avg. size of Farm	29 ac
Cropland Harvested	1700 ac
Cropland Pastured	66
Idle Cropland	280
Woodland not Pastured	1350
Other	1000

Source: From 1959 Census of Agriculture by
Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Rutgers.

STUDY OF POPULATION

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP
ATLANTIC COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared by

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

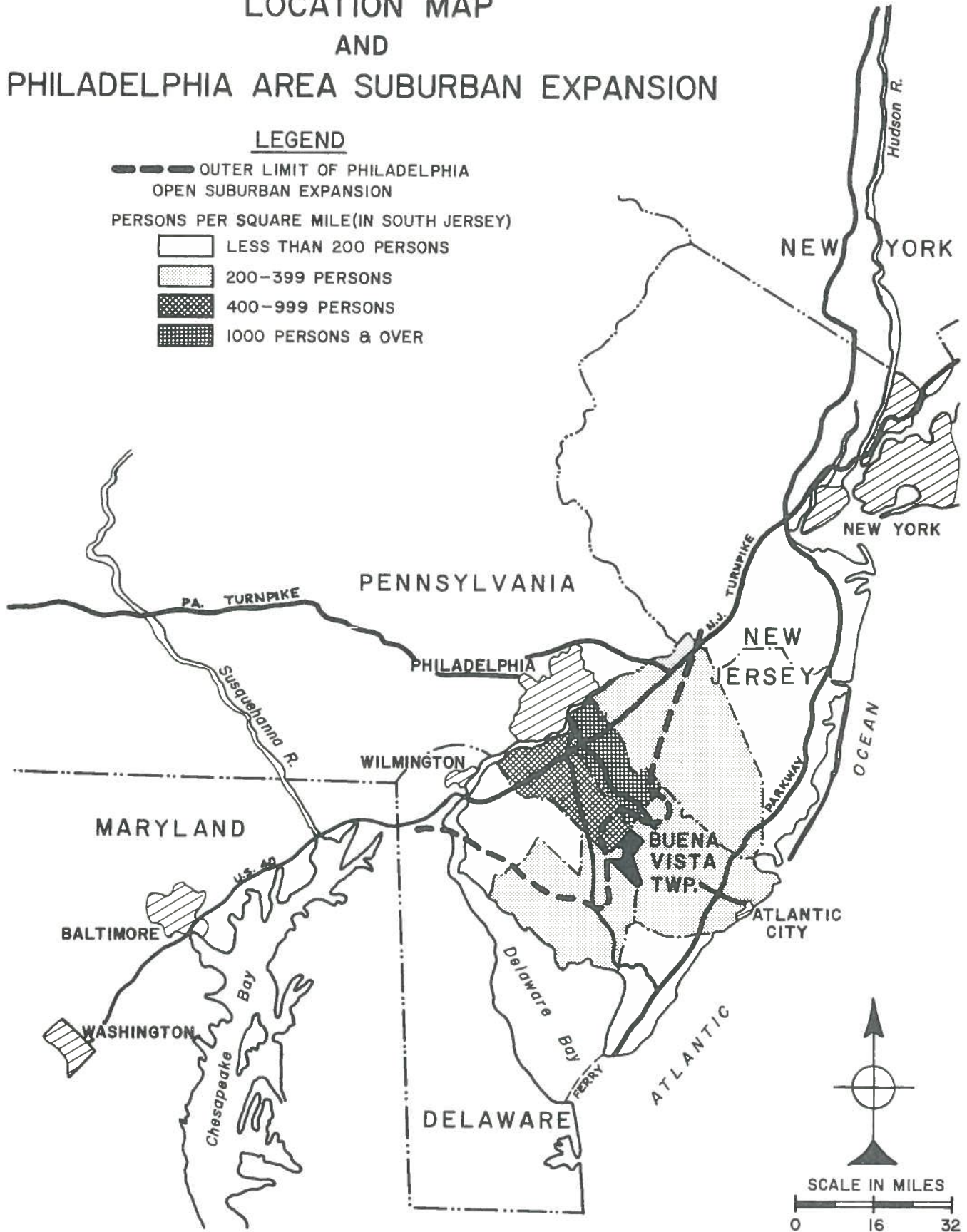
DECEMBER 1, 1967

LOCATION MAP AND PHILADELPHIA AREA SUBURBAN EXPANSION

LEGEND

- OUTER LIMIT OF PHILADELPHIA
 OPEN SUBURBAN EXPANSION

- PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE (IN SOUTH JERSEY)
 - LESS THAN 200 PERSONS
 - 200-399 PERSONS
 - 400-999 PERSONS
 - 1000 PERSONS & OVER



STUDY OF POPULATION

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

Atlantic County, New Jersey

INTRODUCTION - This Study of Population is the second in a series of fact-gathering, background information studies in the preparation of a sketch plan for future growth and development in Buena Vista Township. The initial report was a Land Use Survey. Other studies will cover economy, circulation and transportation, public buildings and services, and schools and recreation.

A primary objective of Buena Vista Township planning should be to create among its citizens a concern for the environment in which they must live and the environment legacy which they will leave to their children. No planning goal, however, is apt ever to be realized unless the people's wishes are expressed as goals which are desirable and attainable . . . goals with solutions which literally offer something for everyone. Therefore a major function or purpose of planning -- comprehensive and "master" planning as it is sometimes referred to -- is to help citizens discover their true wishes and objectives, and then to best serve the estimated needs of the people. But some people are here today and gone tomorrow, while others are yet to be born. Planning must serve the needs of the future population as well as those now living, and to do this effectively it is necessary to determine how many people and what kind of people may live in Buena Vista Township in the future. Therefore it is appropriate to gather facts about population (the whole number of people) early in the preparation of the plan for the community. This is, in short, a necessary prerequisite to plan formulation.

In order to project population increases into the future with acceptable accuracy, planners find it necessary to research past trends of growth and changes in the characteristics of people. They also find it necessary to study the general characteristics, composition, and distribution of the existing population. An evaluation of past trends coupled with revealed needs and wishes of the people living in the township today helps both planner and community leadership to determine the inherent needs and desires of the community of the future. To a large extent -- but not exclusively -- this applies to the land requirements for the everyday living, working, building and recreational needs of future township citizens.

LOCATION -- First let us orient Buena Vista with respect to the nearest, well known, large population centers. As indicated in the Land Use Survey, the township is situated in the western corner of Atlantic County essentially half-way between Philadelphia and Camden to the north west, and Atlantic City to the east. This "boot shaped" municipality is 41.3 square miles in area and its borders touch eight other municipalities in three counties, and its northern most tip almost touches Winslow Township in Camden County. See map on page 21.

Buena Vista Township, geographically speaking, is part of the Delaware Valley Region -- or, more specifically, the Trenton, Philadelphia, Camden, Wilmington region -- which has an historical background as old as that of the United States. Atlantic and its neighboring adjacent counties comprise most of what is known as Southern New Jersey and shares the isolation that often comes to a peninsula. Yet one of the very bodies of water which has given the area its isolation in the past -- the Delaware Bay and River, -- seemingly holding back development, soon bids well to vitally effect future development in a very positive and unmistakably visible manner. This will come about with the continued growth of the Delaware River seaport and expansion of fresh, deepwater facilities down stream into the Delaware estuary. These developments will have long-term influence on southern New Jersey's

development through the constant radial suburban expansion of this vital and industrially vigorous metropolitan area. Related to this major influence are two additional factors. Buena Vista Township lies just off the main corridor of transportation of the populous Eastern Seaboard. The not-too-distant creation of an alternate north-south transportation corridor with a new bridge across the upper part of the Bay will undoubtedly spark increased development activity in the area. Coupled with the major tri-state metropolitan influence and the influence which the urbanized eastern seaboard could have upon the isolation of southern New Jersey is the long prong of urbanization extending outward from the Philadelphia-Camden seaport toward the attraction of the Jersey Seashore resorts. The rapid completion of the Atlantic City Expressway shows us how rapidly highway improvements can change the sphere of influence of large concentrations of population and thus affect an outlying area such as Buena Vista. In this manner Atlantic City will have a vital effect upon Buena Vista, perhaps more so than as a labor center, etc.

While we have strayed somewhat from a strictly narrative description of location, the intent was to relate Buena Vista to its region, which has had a steady growth over the past hundred years at a rate which has equalled the rate of national population increase. This rate of growth is somewhat lower than the national average of increase for metropolitan areas in recent decades, reflecting the general shift of population within the U. S. away from the East. But even a moderate growth position for the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington Metropolitan area compared to that of the United States, brings vast changes into play. And these changes, for such reasons as those given above, can vitally affect a relatively isolated area such as Buena Vista.

FACTORS AFFECTING POPULATION CHANGE

Change of population in an area is the result of (1) natural change: the excess of births over deaths (or vice versa) of (2) net migration: the excess of in-migration

over out-migration (or vice versa); or a combination of these two processes. There has been an excess of births over deaths for so many years in practically all areas that this natural change has come to be known as natural increase. But this could be a negative number if there were an excess of deaths over births. (This occurred in some areas at the depth of the depression.) In actual fact, the record shows that Buena Vista lost 63 in population in the 1880s and 109 numerical population in the 1930s. Buena Vista has grown rather leisurely during most of its history. And while in-migration has been a factor in this slow growth, growth has been largely attributable to the first factor -- natural increase. Only infrequently has migration figured as a significant proportion of the population change and the most significant of these periods may be the current one, as will be shown in the next several paragraphs.

CHRONOLOGICAL GROWTH OF THE TOTAL POPULATION

Not too much is known about the population of Buena Vista in the very early days, and except for general historical interest may not be too significant from a planning viewpoint. Detailed study of the recent past and of the present population, including its general characteristics, composition and distribution is necessary, however, if we are to make an intelligent forecast as to what the population will be like in future years. Only then (and also assuming that the resident population cares sufficiently about its future environment) can we determine the future economic, social, and land use requirements to meet the needs and desires of the community.

After leisurely growth for many years, and with an occasional slight decline, plus a geographical and political separation (of Buena Borough in 1949) resulting in a severe reduction of population, a sharp percentage rise in numerical population took place between 1950 and 1960. An increase of more than 1,800 persons in that decade was the largest numerical increase for any single decade in Buena Vista's history and was attributable largely to

in-migration rather than natural increase.

This growth activity has continued into the 1960s but at a lower rate of increase. It is interesting to note that early in the current decade the township had regained the actual population of 4067 recorded in the U. S. census of 1940 and by 1968 or 1969 may have also attained the total of 5,500 estimated population of the township at the time Buena Borough was separated in 1949.

Table 4

CHRONOLOGICAL POPULATION TRENDS

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

1867 - March 5; Erected from Hamilton Township

<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>	
1870	948	
80	885	- 63
90	1299	+ 414
1900	1646	+ 347
10	2723	+ 1077
20	3647	+ 924
30	4176	+ 529
40	4067	- 109
1949	- Buena Borough created out of Buena Vista Township	
1950	2106	- 1961
60	3915	+ 1809
65	4800 est.	+ 885
66	4960 est.	
67	5030 est.	

1950 - 1960
(10 year increase)
85.9%

1960 - 1965
(5 year increase)
22.6%

VITAL STATISTICS

Table 5 gives vital statistics from records of the New Jersey Department of Health. It can be seen how the annual number of births has gradually but steadily advanced during the past 10 years (since 1957), as one

might quite naturally expect from an ever enlarging population base, but the increase has been at a rate greater than one would expect in view of the slackening birth rates in widespread areas of the United States. Buena Vista, therefore, has experienced in this decade a much larger annual gain by natural increase than during the previous decade.

Table 5

V I T A L S T A T I S T I C S

Buena Vista Township

<u>Year</u>	<u>Births</u>	<u>Marriages</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Natural Increase</u>
1950	38	9	22	16
1951	32	15	27	5
1952	43	13	23	20
1953	47	15	25	22
1954	45	10	20	25
1955	48	14	25	23
1956	54	23	32	22
1957	55	18	23	32
1958	71	15	30	41
1959	88	12	23	65
10 Year Total	521	144	250	+271
1960	95	15	25	70
1961	107	19	27	80
1962	89	15	22	67
1963	101	14	25	76
1964	88	16	41	47
5 Year Total	480	79	140	+340
1965	105	12	38	67
1966	81	19	44	37

The number of marriages recorded has remained stable. But the baby out-put has jumped. Recent year's additions to the list of birth preventatives -- the "pill" is one example -- no doubt have had their effect in many areas. Buena Vista, however, does not appear to be one of them.

It is also probable that a high proportion of the in-migrating families are young families in the child rearing ages, counteracting a leveling off of the baby boom.

After many years of rather stable numbers of deaths annually in the township, this vital statistic also has begun to show an increase in very recent years. This is quite to be expected with an ever increasing total population.

NATURAL INCREASE VS NET MIGRATION

If we combine elements from tables 4 and 5 an approximation can be made of the proportion of total known population growth attributable to natural increase and that to in-migration. (Some people have inevitably moved out of the township.)

Table 6

B U E N A V I S T A G R O W T H

Total Added Population	<u>Portion Attributable to</u>			
	<u>Natural Increase</u>		<u>Net-Migration</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
	<u>Added</u>	<u>of Total</u>	<u>Added</u>	<u>of Total</u>
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1950/60 (10 years) 1809	271	27	1538	73
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1960/65 (5 years) 885	340	38	545	62
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

These calculations would indicate a slackening rate of net-migration into the municipality; and, as discussed before, a considerably larger portion of the total addi-

tional population attributable to natural increase -- the excess of births over deaths.

POPULATION OF SURROUNDING AREAS

While discussing total population for the township and the apparent historic trends, it may be useful for a variety of purposes to tabulate three or four decades of population and related information concerning neighboring municipalities such as the eight "touching" or adjacent neighbors located in the three counties of Atlantic, Cumberland and Gloucester. In addition, Winslow Township in Camden County is but a few hundred yards separated. Several other municipalities, though not adjacent to Buena Vista, are listed because of their proximity. Table 7 shows this useful information. It can best be used in conjunction with the area map on page 21.

Perhaps the two most significant single statistical revelations on the entire tabulation actually have to do with Buena Vista Township. The actual population increase between the 1950 and 1960 censuses expressed as a percentage change was +85.9%. For the 5 year period 1960-1965 (one-half decade) the change is estimated by the New Jersey Department of Economic Development to have been 22.6%. Both percentage increases exceed those for any adjacent or near-by municipality. The fastest growing municipality in the entire area, not excluding Vineland, is Buena Vista Township. While the actual numbers of people involved are as yet relatively low this is statistical witness to the forces which must be creating change in the region.

POPULATION GROWTH ---- SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

Let us take a brief but close look at population growth in southern New Jersey where Buena Vista has its most intimate physical, social and economic relationships. Between 1910 and 1960 the southern New Jersey area has

Table 7

POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP AND VICINITY - 1930 - 1965

Co.	Municipality	1930	1940	1950	% CHANGE		% CHANC	
					1950	1960	1960	1965
Atl.	<u>BUENA VISTA TWP</u>	4176	4067	2106	3915	85.9	4800	22.6
	Adjacent To:							
	Buena Boro.	--	--	2640	3243	22.8	3450	6.4
	Folsom Boro.	219	229	292	483	651.	580	20.3
	Weymouth Twp.	685	675	750	778	3.7	790	1.5
	Hamilton Twp.	3193	3363	3774	6017	59.4	6300	4.7
Cumb	Vineland City	21603	24493	29573	37685	27.4	43750	16.1
	Maurice Rvr Twp.	2319	2261	2834	3105	9.6	3320	6.9
Gl.	Franklin Twp.	--	3464	5056	7451	47.4	8510	14.2
	Monroe Twp.	--	--	5531	9396	69.9	10460	11.3
Cam.	Winslow Twp.	--	4866	5102	9142	79.2	10760	17.7
	Near-by:							
Atl.	Mullica Twp.	1425	1500	1804	2944	63.2	3510	19.2
	Estell Manor City	423	406	381	496	30.2	540	8.9
	Hammonton Twp.	7656	7668	8411	9854	17.2	11420	15.9
Gl.	Newfield Boro.	880	889	1010	1299	28.6	1320	1.6
Cam.	Waterford Twp.	2421	2750	2997	3809	27.1	4420	16.0
<u>Atlantic County</u>		<u>124,823</u>	<u>124,066</u>	<u>132,399</u>	<u>160,880</u>	<u>21.5</u>	<u>176,440</u>	<u>9.7</u>

shown a steady increase in population, faltering only in the thirties, as did the state, and by 1960 it contained over 1,234,000 people. Since 1920 the area has shown a steady but modest increase in its share of the state's population, rising from a low of 17.2% in 1920 to 20.3% in 1960. This means that the entire area has been growing at a more rapid rate than the state. Between 1950 and 1960 southern New Jersey has grown 38.3% in population while the state experienced only a 25.5% growth.

Growth rates within the southern area have varied considerably. The suburban areas bordering the largest concentrations of population in the Philadelphia-Camden area, Atlantic City itself, and Wilmington, Delaware, experienced their highest rates of population increase early in the century. Salem was the only county not to show a downturn in growth during the thirties. Cape May County has experienced erratic growth, largely determined by the national economy and desire and ability to pay for recreation. Ocean County has had a similar history with very high growth of 91% in the last decade due primarily to the construction of the Garden State Parkway. Burlington and Gloucester Counties also had their highest growth rates in the last decade. Cumberland, likewise, showed its two highest decennial growth rates in the last two decades.

Another meaningful comparison of population statistics is the degree to which one area is increasing or decreasing in its share of the total populations of a larger area. Mention is made above of southern New Jersey's increasing share of the State's population. While there have been many shifts in the relative positions held by the 21 counties of New Jersey over the years more of the southern counties have lost ranking than have gained, indicating greater growth rates in the northern half of the state, and clearly pointing out the near absence to date of metropolitan growth influence in wide areas of southern New Jersey. Atlantic, Gloucester and Ocean Counties, quite low in ranking in years past, have gained slightly in recent decades. But, notwithstanding the losses recorded, four counties of the southern area are ranked among the top ten counties of the state in terms of popu-

lation percentage increase from 1950 to 1960. Ocean County was ranked 1st, Burlington 2nd, Gloucester 6th, and Cape May 10th. This strongly indicates a southern shift in the state's overall growth pattern. (Atlantic ranks 14th of the 21 counties.)

Discussion of state and areawide growth as well as the shifts in county growth patterns should help the reader to recognize the relationship of Buena Vista to neighboring areas as well as to the state. Although Buena Vista has a very small portion of the State's population and therefore accounts for a minor portion of the area's total increase each year, considered by itself, the township's growth story is becoming erratic. Highly irregular figures for municipalities are not uncommon. They indicate the responsiveness that a small area may show to all external and internal influences. Population change in this one small area is being influenced by world, national, regional and local events which need to be studied and watched with great care and attention if township officials are to grapple successfully with ever-mounting community problems.

POPULATION DENSITY

Of the 568 municipalities in New Jersey, Buena Vista with a population density of 95 persons per square mile, based on the U. S. census of 1960, ranks a low 477. It ranks 314th in population. New Jersey had an average overall density of more than 800 in 1960, and now it is reputed to be over 900. Since experience has shown that any change in population density will present new community problems, and that exceedingly high densities can bring chaotic living conditions, it behooves township leadership to know present densities and to estimate the densities that may exist in the future so that shortcomings of poor population distribution can be avoided. The density of population in Buena Vista, though still quite low, has increased sharply since 1950 from 51 to 95 in 1960, and an estimated 120 persons per square mile currently.

The community, faced with such rapidly changing density patterns, should attempt to insure reasonable population densities by deciding how land will be used for manufacturing, trading, farming, residences, etc. -- through adoption and uniform enforcement of zoning regulations. One logical step toward this desirable objective was taken in October this year with the passing of an interim zoning ordinance. Armed with this control and statistical knowledge of population facts, the community can begin to develop sound plans for guiding future growth. Other planning tools including stringent subdivision improvement requirements are available for accomplishing the desirable ends, but it is apparent their effect has not yet been felt. Unless bold action is taken immediately the entire township could eventually become one sprawling, congested, formless urbanized area.

The highest density patterns are concentrated in the vicinity of Buena Borough, the southwestern area bordering the city of Vineland, and several small clusters of higher density such as Richland and Collings Lake. Future population growth is likely to be more rapid in these areas and therefore concern should be shown for the population densities they may experience. But before this happens the practice of permitting sporadic, isolated subdivisions to locate over wide areas will create a demand for many urban services in widely scattered locations and add unnecessary costs and long delays in the provision of these needed services. There are already too many examples of this situation developing.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

Now that we know how many people live in Buena Vista township, where they live, and some of the reasons why they live there, a closer look at the people themselves will be more meaningful. Some basic information concerning the characteristics of the residents will help to make the plan for the future more realistic.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

The word "household" as used in census reports is not at all synonymous with "family". Rather, it includes all homes and apartments maintained as separate living units and thus makes no distinction between households maintained by individuals living alone and those maintained by family groups. Recognizing this limitation, however, it is useful to know the number and average size of households, even though there is a fairly wide range and variation in household size in the municipality.

Table 8

PRIVATE DWELLING UNITS BUILT (PERMITS ISSUED)

Buena Vista Township - 1950 - 1965

<u>Year</u>	<u>#</u>		
1950	25		651 Existing Occupied
1951	19		
1952	26	Decade	550 D. U. Permits Issued
1953	41		
1954	90	Less	7 D. U. Demolished
1955	101		-----
1956	30		543 Net Added
1957	52		
1958	101		or + 83.4%
1959	65		
1960	28		1194 Estimated Total D. U.
1961	43	5 years	285 D. U. permits Issued
1962	92	Less	29 Demolished
1963	66		256 Net Added
1964	56		or + 18.9%
<hr/>			
1965			1450 Estimated Total D. U.

Atlantic County's average number of persons per household in 1960 was 3.02. This compares with 3.40 in rural New Jersey and 3.27 for the state as a whole. In Buena

Vista Township according to the U. S. 1960 census there was a population of 3894 in 1,134 households for an average 3.43 persons per household. This corresponds reasonably well with figures representing private dwellings as reported by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry in table 8. Some discrepancy can be attributed to the difference between the designation "existing housing units" and "occupied" units. The difference between the population listed in households and the total population is 21, or, presumably, the institutional population.

RACIAL COMPOSITION

Table 9 shows Buena Vista's population by race based on the 1960 U. S. census. Its non-white population totaled 748 or 19.1%. Only Atlantic City (36.4%) and Hamilton township (19.3%) in Atlantic County have higher proportions; the average for the county is 17.7%. The township's proportion is more than double the statewide pattern (8.7%). Non-white consists of such races as Negro, Indian, Japanese, Philippino, etc. Persons of Mexican parentage as well as Puerto Ricans, are classified as white. By and large there are very few of other non-white races apart from Negro. In almost every area there has been an increase in the percentage of non-whites over the past ten years; Buena Vista is no exception.

Table 9

POPULATION BY RACE
BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP - - - 1960

	<u>1960 Census Population</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>% Non-white</u>
Buena Vista	3,915	3,167	748	19.1
Atlantic County	160,880	132,393	28,487	17.7
New Jersey	6,066,782	5,539,003	527,779	8.7

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age composition is shown in table 10. From a planning standpoint the most notable features are the proportion of children and aged in the population and the proportion of those falling in the middle age brackets. Buena Vista reflects statewide trends toward a greater proportion of younger people in its total population. These conditions have been brought about by many factors such as the low birth rates of the 1930's, the sharp rise in births after World War II, a decline in infant mortality over the past 30 years, and an increased life expectancy. The higher proportion of younger residents has led to larger households and increasing school budgets. The greatest share of the area's labor force consists of persons in the 20 - 44 age group. This is basically the working population or the income and tax producers for the community. Even though the elderly citizens do not represent a significantly large proportion of the total population, their numbers have been growing gradually while changing social and economic conditions have tended to make their group the object of greater concern.

Table 10

<u>AGE GROUPS - 1960</u>			
BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP			
		<u>% twp.</u>	<u>% state</u>
Under 5	533	13.6	10.6
5 - 14	784	20.0	18.2
15- 24	487	12.4	11.9
25- 44	1,004	25.7	28.3
45- 64	785	20.1	21.9
65 and over	<u>322</u>	<u>8.2</u>	<u>9.1</u>
Total	3,915	100%	100%

THE FUTURE POPULATION

We have tried to show in the previous paragraphs of this report that population includes much more than mere numbers of people. Nevertheless, the study is essentially an inventory of how many people reside in the township and where. Research has revealed how little more we really know about the township's people. But planning is looking ahead and preparing in advance for future needs, and the needs that planning must attempt to foresee depend to a very large extent upon future changes in population and particularly upon the size of the population to be served by the plan. Rational planning is not possible without rational population forecasts. Thus the community's concern must be for information about future growth if it is to manage its future well.

The components of population growth are much too dynamic, too responsive to unpredictable changes in the economic, political, and sociological aspects of the national, regional and local situation ever to be predicted with a high degree of assurance. Some of the nation's foremost demographers have in recent years grossly under and over estimated future population. Projection of future growth, on the other hand, implies the plotting of a trend, brought from the past and continued into the future.

It should be noted clearly here that in this report we are attempting to project rather than predict the population growth of Buena Vista Township. We wish to avoid giving the impression that the future can be seen very clearly. Projection of births and migration is not foolproof. This task is a difficult one, particularly for a comparatively small municipality where a small unforeseen change can cause a drastic fluctuation in population growth. And yet, forecasting the future population is one of the planner's most important jobs. Consequently, we are taking into account as many factors that will affect future growth as possible, and in addition are assuming that many of the general conditions affecting the community will remain or continue as discussed earlier. We also are weighing -- though not enumerating -- many observed assets and liabilities.

A detailed account of the multitude of factors which could possibly influence the future growth of the township is beyond the scope of this study. But our general awareness of these factors, tempered by common sense, leads to the conclusion that Buena Vista's population will continue to grow, and it is reasonable to suppose that the rate of growth will be considerably less than the 1950 - 1960 rate of 86%. A rate of between 30 and 60% over the balance of this decade would mean a numerical population increase to between a low estimated total of 5500 and a high of 6200. The latter is improbable in view of the estimated increases to date in the current decade. But a high estimate of 8100 persons in the township by 1975 is quite realistic, whereas the low forecast of 6300 is less likely to be borne out in view of the quickening pace of activities in much of southern New Jersey.

Although projections through the 1970's are needed to serve as the basis for planning proposals, the dangers increase as the length of the projection period increases, particularly for such a small geographic area and relatively low number of people. If we assume similar trends during the next decade, Buena Vista should have a numerical population by 1980 of between 7,300 and 10,500 persons. An adequate examination into the question of the municipality's population in 1980 should be related to an analysis of its economic base, circulation and transportation and other variables, reports of which will follow in series. Table 11 indicates that both the high and low projections show a continuing rapid "rise" in the future population of Buena Vista Township largely, we believe, in response to external influences.

The only facts about population to be taken as a basis for planned action are "What happens next?" Are the directions in which population is changing and its rate of change desirable? Are the trends such that an increase, a decrease, or a constant population is preferred? What effects will these changes have on the economy of the community? These are the useful points to consider - to judge what is happening and what can be changed. Closing our eyes and refusing to adjust to change only

stores up a painful and ultimate reckoning. Awareness of it, and acceptance of the need to plan for it, permits us to accomodate it and even guide it in desirable directions.

Table 11

<u>PROJECTION OF FUTURE POPULATION</u>						
Buena Vista Township						
	<u>ACTUAL</u>		<u>EST.</u>	<u>PROJECTED</u>		
	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>
				6200	8100	10,500 HIGH
				+30%	+30%	
Change	2106	3915	4800			
	+86%	+23%				
				5500	6300	7300 LOW
				+15%	+15%	

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

And, therefore, it follows that another matter should be noted. A continued increase in population and development does not necessarily mean economic prosperity or even proportionally increasing tax ratables. This depends on whether the new development is of sufficient value to pay its own way or will require subsidizing by other existing uses. Buena Vista can gradually up-grade average tax ratables through subdivision regulations and the judicious use of higher minimum lot sizes and floor area requirements in the zoning ordinance. By using all available techniques the township could be sure that any new development would be of sufficient character and value to be able to pay for the services the municipality provides or should provide.

In this connection it is important to bear in mind that the Township's subdivision regulations were adopted in 1959 and its interim zoning ordinance in mid 1967. New

residential construction -- and population increases from in-migrations -- can now to some extent be more effectively controlled by the township. But these land use regulation devices have only just entered upon the scene. Their controlling effect on past population trends has been negligible.

Since there are events lying ahead of us which cannot presently be forecast, the projections into the future must be tempered to accommodate them. This is not as serious a shortcoming as it first might appear. The major objective is to know approximately how many people there will be 5 or 10 years hence. If, after developing estimates of this future population, some now unexpected event occurs to hasten or depress the growth rate so that the projected figure is reached a couple of years before or after the target date, it will make little real difference if township leadership constantly keeps abreast of the situation and adjusts planned improvements and services to fit the altered situation.

What we're really saying is that, to be successful, a planning program must be a continuing one which makes constant appraisals of the future and adjustments in its plan. Ideally, the planning period of approximately 15 to 25 years should be moved ahead periodically, and when this is done a logical opportunity is provided to take into account forces which, though unforeseeable now, will then be apparent.

Notwithstanding the number of people who may come to live in Buena Vista Township, or who may be born here, it doesn't matter when in the future these increases may take place -- the vital point to realize, now, is that land is precious; there is just so much of it in the municipality, and no more. We must make certain that this important and limited natural asset is properly used through sound and realistic planning.

STUDY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP
ATLANTIC COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared for

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

APRIL 1, 1968

STUDY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

Atlantic County, New Jersey

INTRODUCTION--Of primary importance to the development of any community plan is the review and analysis of existing public facilities and services, and consideration of service and facility expansion that must be expected to occur during the planning period. On the following pages we have attempted to catalogue Buena Vista's present governmental functions and to analyze their adequacy in the face of expected growth. A map showing existing and proposed public facilities and lands is included as page 46.

Education

Currently there are three schools located within Buena Vista Township, and fourth is under construction and expected to be opened for the 1968-1969 school year. The largest of the existing school facilities within the Township is the Buena Vista Elementary school on Harding Highway. It has a total of 9 classrooms and an enrollment of 278 pupils in grades Kindergarden through sixth. This is an average of 31 pupils per room, which is above the maximum figure of 25 students per room recommended by the New Jersey State Board of Education. The State Board of Education maintains that the quality of education suffers increasingly as class size builds up. The teacher has much less time to devote to each student, and the student gains much less from the time he spends in school. The State Board also feels that for these same reasons Kindergarden classes should be kept to a maximum of 20, and never should exceed 25 students.

The Richland School within Buena Vista Township is much more overcrowded than is the elementary school on Harding Highway. The Richland school has 4 rooms, one for each grade-Kindergarden through third-yet it has a total enrollment of 187, for an average of 47 pupils per room! In this situation, if state standards are anywhere near right, the quality of each child's educational experience must be sharply affected. From the Richland school most of the students go to the Milmay school, which concentrates on the fourth and fifth grades. The Milmay school has one class of each and a total enrollment of 48 students. Presently this average of 24 per room makes this situation the only one that falls within recommended state standards.

After completion of fifth grade at Milmay the students attend sixth grade at either the school in Minotola or the Borough of Buena. All students in Buena Vista Township attend Junior High school at Cleary Junior High in Minotola, which like the other schools is part of the Buena Regional School District. All township students attend Vineland High School, and this is currently costing the board of education \$694 per student in tuition charges.

The Cains Mill Road School is currently under construction. When it opens, scheduled for the fall of 1968, it will provide 14 classrooms, a library, cafeteria, teachers lounge, and a sick room. These are all features which are missing from the other schools within the township, but should be in them. The Richland school is in the old portion of the Richland Fire House. Even though this has been remodeled to provide the school, it is impossible for it to provide such items as a library or gymnasium, which are important to the educational process. None the less, the Richland and Milmay schools are expected to be kept open after the Cains Mill Road School opens. This will give the township a total of 29 classrooms, compared to the 15 it now has.

Although the enrollment has been increasing at an average rate of 50 students per year, this past year showed an increase of 100 new students. Using the high estimated population from the population study it is possible to see that there may be a total of 1240 children between the ages of 5 and 14 in 1970 and that this figure may reach 2100 children in 1980.

Table 12

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP
PROJECTED POPULATION AGED 5 THROUGH 14
By Five Year Periods

Year	High	Medium	Low
1970	1240	1170	1100
1975	1620	1440	1260
1980	2100	1750	1460

This would require increasing the number of school rooms by almost 100% in 12 years! There are also a number of large undeveloped subdivisions which have been approved within the township, but have not been developed at this time. These may easily become a reality within the next ten years, and increase the school enrollment even more. These subdivisions would attract newly married people, just starting a family and those people who have a young family, but are looking for more room for the children, so it would be unwise to expect them to do anything but increase the school enrollment.

The Milmay-Richland area of the Township is the area without a good school at the present time. This would seem to make it the next logical target area for building a new school-both to replace the inadequate facilities that are being used there now, and to handle future population growth in that area. This should be undertaken as soon as possible.

The school taxes are now approximately \$4.18 per \$100 of assessed valuation. Any building program which is undertaken should be done in a manner to spread the tax burden out as evenly as possible, in order to avoid a sudden inordinate tax increase, which would meet with the voter disapproval and perhaps cause the schools to become more overcrowded.

To aid in keeping the overall taxes down, there is no reason why a school cannot combine some facilities that can be used by the entire community throughout the year. This includes a multi-purpose room which can be used for meetings or a more specialized auditorium which can be used for little theater groups as well as the school. It is also a good practice to landscape the site in such a way to make it a community park which can be used throughout the year, and to keep the playground open all year for the use of the children who live near the school.. Other more drastic measures may be required-as for example the complete reorganization of the school program to provide for full double sessions, complete with a double teaching staff-as a means of coping with the growing tax squeeze.

The actual size of the site cannot be projected without having plans available for the school, however, some factors can be considered. If the school is one story rather than multi-story it will require more land area. Also, if the school is a cluster of units around a central office and cafeteria, multi-purpose room, it will require more land than just a single unit, single story structure. In 1964 the National Council on Schoolhouse Construction recommended:

"For elementary schools it is suggested that there be provided a minimum site of 10 acres plus an additional acre for each 100 pupils of projected ultimate maximum enrollment. Thus, the site of minimum size for an elementary school of 200 pupils would be 12 acres."¹

¹ National Council of Schoolhouse Construction, NCSC Guide for Planning School Plants, p. 27.

It is important to note that this is the minimum size recommended for the maximum ultimate enrollment, not for the initial enrollment. This means that all plans for future additions should be considered when purchasing the land for the initial construction. Therefore, the Board of Education should decide before building continues whether they plan to continue their building program by having smaller elementary neighborhood schools located through out the community, or if they plan to have one large centralized elementary school. The small localized schools are more desirable from the standpoints of transportation savings, community spirit, and proximity to homebase-especially for younger children, however, it often requires the duplication of some facilities, such as libraries and multipurpose rooms, that can be more comprehensive and more efficiently utilized with a larger centralized school population.

The decision whether to build a high school or to continue to send high school students to Vineland will depend on the relative costs involved as well as Vineland School Board policy. Should high school construction be decided upon or become necessary it will create a sizable shock wave to the Township's financial structure. Consequently the merits and ramifications of such a step should be studied carefully and as far in advance as possible so that every possible financial advantage can be brought to bear. From a locational viewpoint such a facility should be provided a generous well drained site, with a reasonable amount of natural tree cover, easily accessible to major arterial and collector roads and centrally located with respect to its expected future service area.

Fire Protection

There are currently five volunteer fire companies within Buena Vista Township. One of these is located on Main Avenue in Richland, one at Milmay, the third is on East landis Avenue in East Vineland, the fourth on Route 54 in the Newtonville area, and the fifth is on Cains Mill Road near Collings Lakes. For a rural area such as Buena Vista Township the National Board of Fire Underwriters recommends that all residential areas be within a three mile radius of a fire company. It is possible to see from the map on page 46 that the five companies

within the township fulfill this requirement quite adequately.. It also appears that no matter where in the Township new development takes place it will be within the service area of one or more of the existing fire companies. This means that rather than building new facilities the companies and the township in concert should aim to improve existing structures, purchase new equipment as needed and to maintain the equipment that they have in the best possible working order.

Township Hall

The Township meetings are currently held in the fire station on East Landis Avenue in East Vineland. In addition to this public meeting facility all of the other fire stations also have rooms which can be used for meetings. In an effort to provide better facilities for Township meetings and to establish centralized office space for the primary township administrative functions, and Township court; there are currently plans to build a new Township hall on US 40 next to the existing elementary school. The Township plans to acquire 5 acres of land for the building which should allow room for ample parking space and room for future expansion when necessary. The proposed plans of the building show that it will have a general all purpose room to be used for Township meetings and for the Court. There will also be offices for the Township Clerk, Tax Collector, and Assessor. In addition there will be a fourth office that will be vacant when the building is first opened, but will be available for use as the functions and duties of Township administration call for it. The plans also show that the Clerks Office will be of sufficient size to be used for a caucus room at Township meetings when the need arises. The projected site would be well located with respect to expected future population growth and accessibility, but if possible its size should be increased not only to guarantee adequate space for a future township administrative, service and cultural center but also to provide greater potential for eventual beautification of township headquarters. Additional office space for township police, code enforcement officers and welfare should be considered by way of providing for future needs.

Water and Sewer

At the present time there are no public water and sewer facilities within the township, which means that everyone has their own well and septic tank or other disposal methods for sewage. As the population becomes denser and houses are built more closely together the chances of wells becoming contaminated by septic tanks increases. The State Health Department recommends that wells be located no closer than 50 feet to a septic tank, and 100 feet from a leach bed. Even this can be too close if the soil is sandy and quite porous, which is true for large portions of Buena Vista Township. Also, due to topographic conditions many sections have a high water table and poor drainage, as is evidenced by the large marsh areas. This also makes it easy for ground water sources to become contaminated in that there is not enough ground leaching distance for waste water to be purified before it reaches the water table, where it may find its way to a nearby well.

In an effort to prevent this from happening there is a new State Law which requires that all subdivisions be reviewed for adequate sewage disposal systems before the subdivision are approved for development. This does not appear to mean that septic tanks cannot be used, but where on-site disposal is to be used lot sizes must be large enough to insure that wells on adjacent lots will not become contaminated. If the Township were to initiate action now which would require that developers of new subdivisions install water and sewer mains as they are constructing the roads, it would make it much more feasible to later connect them to a central sewage plant and water plant. (This is presently being done in some areas not serviced by public systems.) Subdivisions should also be required to have storm sewers and to provide necessary on-site and off-site easements to handle the increased storm runoff which results from the development.

Police

At the present time what police patrolling is done in the Township is handled by the State Police. However, due to the wide ranging nature of State Police responsibility, and size of its force, it is impossible for it to provide adequate police service for the Township. There is one Township Constable, but again, it is unreasonable to think that one person can adequately

cover the Township, especially at times when the State Police are busy elsewhere. As the population of the Township continues to grow, so will the need for police patrolling and protection. When the establishment of local police force becomes mandatory, it may be possible for it to operate initially from one or more of the Fire Stations. More desirable, of course, would be properly designed space in the new Township Hall when it is constructed. Eventually when policing problems intensify, due to the shape and expected development pattern of the Township, it becomes desirable to develop police sub-stations-one in the Milmay-Richland area and another in the Northern portion of the Township near Collings Lakes estates or the Pine Lakes Estates area. This would allow easy access to the entire community in a minimum of time, as is true for the Fire Stations now.

Health Services

Although the hospital in Vineland is a relatively short distance from most residents of Buena Vista Township there are no hospitals or clinics within the Township. Even with the expected increase in population it does not appear that it will be necessary, or feasible to consider the construction of a hospital in the community. For health inspections of wells, sewage disposals methods and other health requirements the Township depends on the County Health Department. To date this has proved to be adequate, and unless the County program fails to expand as needed there is no reason why this method cannot continue in the future. However, one short coming of the present system must be remedied and that is that it depends largely on citizen reported violations rather than on systematic community inspection. Enforcement of any law, ordinances or regulation should not have to depend on neighbors reporting on each other.

Library

The Township has no library, other than the one which will be in the new Cain Mill Road School, at the present time. It is served by the county bookmobile, which makes stops at various locations throughout the Township on a bi-weekly basis. The Library in the elementary school will be for those children in the school, and cannot be

expected to supply books for the general public while the Bookmobile arrangement from the county is a highly desirable and economical solution, it should not be thought of as a complete library service or as a permanent solution to the problem. Eventually, planning for a Township library, perhaps in conjunction with a community center, should be undertaken as a central feature of a cultural center. If available, land for such a center should be acquired in the near future either adjacent to or preferably, directly across the road from the township administrative headquarters.

Summary and Conclusions

This report has examined the existing facilities and services provided by the Township and has given recommendations of how these facilities and services should be increased as the population increases. Although at the present time there are no serious deficiencies within the Township, except for the crowded condition of the schools, which will be alleviated, at least temporarily, with the opening of the Cains Mill Road School, unless other services keep pace with the growth of the township serious problems will result.

1. By 1980 the number of children will probably double, which will call for a total of 48 classrooms instead of the 29 which will be available this fall, this will require the construction of a 15 room school every 6 years to meet this increase and this does not take into account the possible construction of a regional high school.

2. The land for these classrooms should be acquired as soon as possible since it is unlikely that there will be a lowering of land prices, and the land can be used for open space needs until construction begins.

3. The fire companies appear adequate for the township, and any investment in them should be for new equipment rather than for new buildings and locations.

4. Concentration of development should be encouraged and as this growth progresses, feasibility studies should be considered for a public sewer and water system to serve the areas of higher population density within the Township.

5. As the population increase the need for more and better police protection will grow. Steps should be taken now toward the gradual establishment of an adequate police force in the township.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing nationwide awareness of the need for open space and recreation. Not since the days of Teddy Roosevelt has the conservation of unspoiled natural areas and strategically located recreational resources seemed as imperative to Americans as it does today. And this is not hard to understand: each year in this country more than one million acres of our most desirable lands are put to the bulldozer. As the wholesale transformation from rural to urban takes place, our people grow closer and closer together until they are literally cheek-by-jowl in villages and center of commerce, along transportation corridors, lining lakes and ocean fronts and crowding centers of education and governmental power. The more this transformation takes place, the more man needs open space--whether he realizes it or not. The most thoughtful people presently wrestling with the life and death problems of big-city ghettos turn regularly to the healing powers of the open space as the most promising solution. The pity is that for the ghettos, real open space is now so far away that for all practical purposes, it is out of reach.

Open space--and we're speaking of much more than just active recreation area--is coming to be recognized as a regenerating force as vital to man as food and water! Wherever open space exists today--along ponds and streams, in farm fields and wood lots or most importantly, penetrating busy urban areas--attempts must be made to preserve portions of it. Only in this way can we keep our urban concentrations from becoming so densely developed and impersonal that they no longer offer a rational environment for man as he is presently constituted.

In Buena Vista Township practically all of our development future is still before us. We still have a wide range of choices about our future environment--choices that have long since disappeared for those living in metropolitan areas. And the interesting thing is--especially as relates to the the saving of important open space areas--that the scarcity of money need not be a critical stumbling block. If we are willing to set up sound development rules and to live by them, a sizable

portion of an outstanding future open space network can be gradually assembled as development takes place. But before we discuss future possibilities we need to consider what has been accomplished to date.

Existing Public Open Space

The Land Use Survey for Buena Vista Township shows that there are currently 53 acres of publicly owned land available for recreational use. This land is located in two tracts. The larger of the two is the Cedar Avenue Recreation Center, which has 35 acres. This area has two little league fields, one large baseball field, a football field, and a picnic area with rest-rooms. The second public area is a tract of approximately 17 acres in conjunction with the fire department located on Highway 54. While this land can be planned for future use it is currently undeveloped and has no recreational facilities on it. There are also small playgrounds in conjunction with the schools within the townships. These recreation areas are shown on the map found on page 46.

Standards and Future Needs

The National Recreation Association has developed guidelines for the development of recreation areas based on the population. In addition to those facilities which should be provided by higher levels of government and locally desirable flood plain, conservation and natural areas, the Association recommends that there be one acre of developed active recreation land for every 100 residents of the municipality. Using this as a guideline, it is possible to see that Buena Vista Township would currently come quite close to meeting the standards for active recreation needs if all existing publically owned open space were intended for this purpose and the sites were properly located to serve existing residential areas. However, a look ahead to the year 1980 shows that the high projected population is 10,500, or almost twice the current population. This means that in that not too far off year the Township could require twice the amount of land it now has just to meet active recreation needs alone.

Indensely built urban situations (several of which already exist as paper developments in Buena Vista Township) the N.R.A. recommends what is often referred to as a "Tot Lot". These are small areas within high density population concentrations intended for use by children up to six years of age. Facilities in them include swings, sand boxes, and quiet places for mothers and children to sit. Although at the moment such facilities appear to be unnecessary in Buena Vista Township-since there are few areas of high population density-future developments similar to Collings Lakes and the several other approved subdivisions in which little open space has been set aside, could benefit from such facilities. Ideally, tot lots soould be close enough to the home to provide easy access for a mother with one or two small children.

The next type of recreation facility for which the National Recreation Association provides standards is the Neighborhood Playground. These are the most important building block in an effective recreation program because they give children between the ages of 6 to 16 an area to play basketball, touch football, soft ball, and hopefully tennis and other net games, in addition to providing equipment such as swings, slides, teator-toters and climbing apparatus. If the elementary schools continue to be built on a neighborhood basis in various sections of the township, instead of at one location as a campus type school, these neighborhood playgrounds can best be established in connection with the school. In this way playgrounds would be available as the population expanded in particular sections. However, it should be stressed that it is imperative to keep school connected playgrounds open year round or they lose most of their usefulness.

While it is true that most of the children in Buena Vista Township now have an abundance of privately owned open space to use for pickup games, hiking, and other recreational activities that do not require special equipment or facilities, there are areas that even now are lacking in recreation opportunity. An example of this can be seen by a drive through the Collings Lakes area. Each house has its own yard, which can be used for limited recreation, yet there are few areas large enough for a game of baseball to be safely conducted

without endangering a great number of windows or other residential appurtenances.

A third type of active recreation facility suggested by the NRA is the Play Field. This is a larger facility, area-wise, ranging upward from 15 to 20 acres and, when completely developed, providing an opportunity for a wide range of team games and other activities--such as track events--which require more spacious accommodations. Since playfields are designed to serve older youths and young adults, play fields need not be neighborhood type facilities, but rather can be located farther from the people who will use them and thus able to service sizable geographical sections of the community.

The Cedar Avenue Recreation Area, an outstanding example of community spirit and cooperation on the part of the Recreation Commission, the fire companies and other organizations, presently provides many attributes of a play field. In view of the fact that one such facility is more than ample to service the present population, this facility is relatively well located to serve the entire township, at this stage of the Township's development. However, as the Township population expands, and the needs for more sports fields grows, the Cedar Avenue Field will need to be more intensively developed and two other playfields will eventually need to be established.

One of these could be located in conjunction with a high school, (if this course is decided upon) probably in the north central part of the Township, and another, as the need evolves, in the southern extremity of the Township to serve the Milmay and East Vineland area.

In addition to Tot Lots, Playgrounds, and Play Fields, a fourth important objective is the steady accretion of municipally owned Parks as development takes place. These are the publicly managed natural areas aimed primarily at providing passive recreational opportunities for all ages. Walking paths and benches away from the clamor of civilization are important characteristics. Small neighborhood parks should be designed into subdivision patterns and acquired as development takes place, either within the boundaries of large subdivisions or

so located that they will serve several small subdivisions. Where possible they should involve a stream having hard ground adjacent to it.

One large centrally located Community Park, designed for use by all township residents, would also be desirable. In addition to serving the passive recreational needs of nature observers and picnickers, this park could also provide various active recreational opportunities, particularly those orientated to water i.e., swimming, fishing, canoeing, etc. It could become a central feature in the Buena Vista Plan. A seemingly ideal location would be in the Pancoast Lake, Deep Run area (see map pg. 46.) While much of the land is presently low and wet (and thus less expensive to acquire), it has great potential for future park development as the population and tax base grow. An example of what can be done in the way of park development in low lying situations with which we are all familiar is presently taking place in Vineland at Cooper's Mill Park south of Landis and west of Lincoln Avenues.

A fifth open space category is the natural area or greenbelt. Although there are presently no large areas of high density population within Buena Vista Township, several large paper subdivisions may come to life at any time. When this happens to existing platted areas there will be a continuous pattern of houses in an apparent endless parade across the landscape. When additional sections of the township are subdivided, the resulting neighborhoods will be infinitely more desirable and satisfying if they have areas of natural woodland breaking up the housing pattern. These areas, normally called Greenbelts, can be used to form buffer zones between industrial and commercial areas or major arterial highways on the one hand, and residential areas on the other. They are useful in muffling noise, making the area more scenic, and often provide ideal settings for the neighborhood parks referred to earlier. In some cases it is possible to secure Greenbelts by establishing zoning requirements which prohibit construction along stream courses. or by requiring dedication of such areas as part of the subdivision process. Where this is done it results in a side benefit to the community in that it tends to drastically reduce the number of costly stream crossings in the future street and road pattern. An im-

portant degree of openness can also be achieved by requiring new industrial or commercial buildings to be set well back from highways and district boundaries.

In addition to utilizing State Green Acres matching funds, which are now at least temporarily depleted, some southern New Jersey communities have obtained funds for the purchase of recreation areas with funds from the estate of the late Frank H. Stewart. The estate makes it possible for the trustees to purchase and convey to public ownership certain kinds of land. To be considered the tract must contain flowing water course, it must bound a stream of water, or the municipality must be willing to accept the land with a deed restriction limiting its use to public parks, recreation ground, game refuges, bird sanctuaries, fishing grounds or breeding areas for fish.

Many communities have also regularly acquired space for neighborhood recreation by requiring that subdivisions over a designated size, say ten acres, deed a percentage of their land to the Township for recreational purposes to be available primarily for the use of subdivision residents. This is often a percentage, normally ten percent, of the total land being developed. There can be no question of the legality of this approach when it is applied in connection with cluster subdivisions and in Planned Unit Developments in which a given number of dwelling units are concentrated at higher densities on a portion of a large tract in return for guaranteeing the remainder of the tract will be devoted to open land and recreation uses.

At the present time the Pine Lakes subdivision has 14 acres which it plans to deed to the Township for recreation purposes. Collings Lakes Estates, while not deeding any land to the Township, has recreation facilities for its own residents, but these cannot be used by other residents of the Township unless they are a guest of a resident of Collings Lakes Estates.

Existing recreation areas as well as future recreation and open space proposals are shown on the map following page 45. These proposals are set forth not as exact locations but rather as generalized locations in the vicinity of which the indicated facility could best serve the needs of the people living or that will live

in that particular portion of the Township. It should also be kept in mind that while the urgent need for most of these facilities may be far in the future, it is incumbent upon us as planners to do what we can to see that they are available when the need does arrive. To this end we recommend that primary emphasis and available public resources be used in the next few years to acquire planned locations, especially those in danger of being forever preempted by development.

ECONOMIC SURVEY

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP
ATLANTIC COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared for

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

JUNE 1, 1968

ECONOMIC SURVEY

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

Atlantic County, New Jersey

INTRODUCTION

This survey of the economy of Buena Vista is the fourth of a series of fact-gathering, background information studies in the preparation of a sketch plan for future growth and development in the township. The initial report was a Land Use Survey, followed by a Study of Population, then a Study of Community Facilities and one dealing with Open Space and Recreation. Other studies will cover Circulation and Transportation, and the Fiscal Structure of the Municipal Government prior to the Development Plan itself.

Before dealing with the economy of the Township, it is important to note the relationships among the various studies or sections of the plan report. For instance, even though the Study of Population precedes the study of the community's economy, it was necessary to have some insight into the township's economy before future population could be projected. Similarly, a knowledge of population characteristics (i.e. age, sex, race, income levels, etc.) helps us to gain some insight into the township's economy.

PURPOSE OF THE ECONOMIC SURVEY

The purpose of the economic survey is to provide facts which illustrate and explain the present status and basis of Buena Vista community life. Governing officials and other key persons of the area realize that the total well-being of its inhabitants is based upon the nature of the economic opportunity and prosperity, or lack of it, offered in the community and the region. If there was ignorance of this economic fact of life or an atmosphere of civic indifference, there would have been no attempt to develop a plan for the community to meet the challenges of growth and change.

The accumulation of data is seldom more than a means to an end. Analysis, interpretation and suggested long-range solutions to development problems is our intended end. We shall try to uncover any well defined economic trends within a geographic radius of influence on Buena Vista, disclose their effects, and assess their impact on the local area.

The Economy - What Is It?

The future development and growth of Buena Vista very much depends upon the nature of its economy which is, in short, the way the community makes its living. The economic well-being of the community is measured by its wealth, or lack of wealth as the case may be, which is the sum total of public and private investment which, in turn, is a reflection of the potential return on such investments; the profits on sales and services and tax revenues.

Planning well for the physical development of the community requires difficult decisions—many on the part of the governing body and planning board—concerning the type and amount of economic activity which the community can and should support. The decisions should be made on the basis of economic factors, some of which are assembled in this survey, as well as the physical elements of the township: land use, population density, circulation and transportation, and public facilities and services.

The economic analysis should help to answer questions such as these:

- Is the area growing and expanding?
- What is expanding—business, housing, farming, industry?
- What are the economic activity trends in the region?
- What are the principal sources of income and how stable are these income sources?
- What is the make-up and skill of the labor force?
- What may be expected in the way of new employment opportunities?

In seeking answers to these questions, more had to be done than trace the history of the area's productive pursuits, or examine and evaluate present day economic activity, and review the characteristics of the area's work force. Consideration had to be given to the possibilities for future change in relation to the larger, well established Philadelphia-Camden metropolitan area and to the budding Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton urban complex, and, of course, to the Atlantic City urbanized area.

General Description of the Southern New Jersey Economy

The six-county southern New Jersey area covers 2,253 square miles and had a total population of 901,871 in the 1960 U. S. Census. The 1967 estimate for the same geographic area by

the New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development was 949,250 persons. The northwestern sector of the area (including Camden and Gloucester Counties) is located within the urban region that has evolved along the Boston-Washington axis. Its southern sector comprised of Salem, Cumberland, Cape May and Atlantic Counties forms a peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and the Delaware Bay. This area is sometimes dubbed "dead-end" territory. Nevertheless, its economy has historically developed by capitalizing upon the very barriers that constrain it—fishing in the bay and ocean, recreation on the ocean shore, and agriculture in the rural open space. The communities along the Atlantic Coast rely excessively upon resort activities; while inland from the ocean and facing Delaware Bay, the economic activity is largely based in agriculture or manufacturing activity, an important segment of which is devoted to processing of locally produced farm products. The leading manufacturing industries of the region are stone, clay and glass production, apparel and related products, and food processing.

Because of its coastal location, the economy of Atlantic County is strongly influenced by the resort "industry." A large proportion of employment is in trade and services and of a seasonal character. Manufacturing represents only a minor sector of the economy of the county in comparison with the state or, for that matter, with Cumberland and Salem Counties. Industries classified under apparel and related products ranked first in employment, while food and kindred products ranked second, and thirdly, establishments manufacturing stone, clay and glass products. Employment growth registered by these three categories of employment was only about 10% during the last decade. Agricultural employment in the county has been relatively low, representing less than 3% of the total employment in 1960.

Seasonal unemployment as high as 18% during the winter months resulting from excessive dependence on resort trade is the most serious social and economic problem in Atlantic County. Buena Vista Township, located as it is in the far western corner, miles from the shore based, major urban center of the county, Atlantic City, is (as we shall endeavor to illustrate in greater detail) economically much more closely related to Cumberland County. Unfortunately, and for different reasons, seasonal fluctuation is also one of the more perplexing problems which has plagued the Cumberland County labor market for many years. However, seasonal fluctuations in Atlantic and Cape May counties are more severe.

The Economy of the Township

So much for southern New Jersey and for Atlantic County. But what have been the "wealth" producing activities within the Township? Buena Vista's past economy clearly has had its base in farming and services to agriculture. But recently the agricultural "industry" has been showing signs of change. In one sense the change has been a sign of weakening due to several causes such as a national and industry-wide trend to fewer farms and farmers, a resulting exodus from rural areas to the cities; and locally, the urbanizing influence of the rapidly forming metropolitan complex in Cumberland County. Considerable evidence is also seen locally of non-agriculturally oriented home-sites which reflect an element of flight from the city—particularly from the big city complexes of Philadelphia and New York.

The 1959 U. S. Census of New Jersey agriculture indicated that in Atlantic County there were 1,060 farms. About 46,000 acres of land were used for farming, or about 12.4% of all land, for an average size of 43 acres per farm. The 1964 Census—an interim period of only 5 years—reports 659 farms, about 39,000 acres used for farming, or 10.6% of all land, and an average size of 60 acres. The county's average size farm had increased 17 acres per farm. The countywide proportion of total land area in farms had dropped 7,000 acres from 17.4% to 10.6%. The survey of existing land use in Buena Vista as reported on page 19, indicates 4,380 acres of land in agricultural use or 16.6% of total township land area, a considerably higher proportion than reported for the county as a whole. According to estimates of the county agricultural agent, the number of farms in Buena Vista has dropped from 150 of unusually small sized farms (29 acre average) to perhaps 125 farms of from 35 to 40 acres each. This estimate roughly corresponds with the trend between 1959 and 1964 as reported for the county as a whole. Agricultural change has exhibited very similar trends in Cumberland County but the proportion of total land area in agriculture is higher—25%. Much of the Township's agricultural land is located in the southerly sector which is strongly oriented to the city of Vineland in Cumberland and it is quite evident that the agricultural economy of Buena Vista exhibits greater similarity to Cumberland and particularly the Vineland area, than it does to its own Atlantic County. And so we can say that there is considerable statistical support for the statement that the Township now has fewer farms of large average size producing as much or more crops and can be considered the township's largest :

producer of income. However, with the tendency to use non-domestic seasonal help and with the known trends in mechanization, agriculture must be looked upon skeptically as a means of remedying unemployment problems.

Fringe Area

Buena Vista is one of several "fringe" communities around the Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton urban complex. This tri-city area is developing as a central core for a southeastern New Jersey metropolitan area. Much of the future economic growth of southern New Jersey can be expected to take place in this region. Vineland, being the largest city of the three and the most rapidly growing area, will display considerable growth adjacent to its core not alone in Cumberland but also in Salem, Gloucester and Atlantic counties. Buena Vista is participating in this growth. Unfortunately, this fringe area is devoted largely to agricultural activity. Much of the best agricultural land of the Township is located in the fringe area nearest to Vineland. Being level and free of major developmental obstacles, the land in this area has also become in demand for urban development. In fact, an important characteristic of any farmland is its ready convertibility to other more intensive land uses. The potential for conversion to a broad range of development patterns is very strong on the fringe of the expanding Vineland area. Residential developments could severely change the present patterns of the farm community. Whether this growth is likely to be slow or rapid—in large or in smaller units—is difficult to say. But the responsibility to tie the developments together into an efficient physical pattern rests with the community—with the Township governing body—with the Planning Board. Certainly at very minimum, there is a need for protection of the agricultural lands against unnecessary and premature, scattered development and for the major source of income which they are. Also, efforts should be made to help agriculture to change, adapt and to grow and, through it all, to make a uniform transition when the urbanizing pressures mount.

The competition between agriculture and urban land uses will exert the major influence on the future of agriculture in Buena Vista even though multiple changes are occurring within agriculture. While it is difficult to formulate an exact relationship between population growth and the weakening of agriculture, a municipal or small area population density of from 500 to 700 persons per square mile has been recognized elsewhere as a generalized, or rule of thumb, signal that the

predominance of agriculture as a land use is threatened. Population projections by the New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development for the southern region of the state estimate the density of Atlantic County in 1970 at 345 persons per square mile; in 1980 - 394. For Cumberland the estimate is: 1970 - 257; 1980 - 297. For Gloucester: 1970 - 510; 1980 - 595; it is the only southern county expected to reach a population density within the range of 500 to 700 by 1980. But these projections are for rather large areas. A small area (such as Vineland city) with a high density, can influence another small area such as Buena Vista quite severely. The current (1967) density in Vineland is 660. Projections estimate Vineland's density in 1970 will be 711. in 1980 - 954. And portions of Buena Vista Township lie as closely to the downtown area as do many outlying portions of Vineland itself.

Of course, concentrations of population are not the only hazard to agricultural land use. Widely dispersed population is often fostered by large lot zoning regulations (in the interest of lowered school populations), the attractions of a rural atmosphere, "official" emphasis on single family homes, new highway building—each of which may encourage rather than counteract urban expansion into agricultural areas.

Farmland Assessment Act

The Farmland Assessment Act of 1964 is of major importance on a statewide basis for its affect on agricultural land use, retaining open agricultural land that previously—and perhaps prematurely—might have succumbed in competition with high market value land uses on the urban fringe. It provides that land which is actively engaged in agriculture or horticultural use, upon application of the owner, may be assessed on these values alone. While the act will protect a bona fide farmer as long as he wishes to farm, there is little in the act that will work over a long period of time to keep prime lands in agriculture. And it appears that this bill has not been as successful as it could be. Further state legislation should be sought to strengthen the preferential farmland assessment bill by extending the back tax payments on farmland which is sold for development from the present two years to a longer and more effective period which is more likely to deter developers from buying farmland in outlying sections and then leasing it for cultivation during the period it is ripening for intensive development, a practice that will tend to abnormally inflate the value of all agricultural land.

With a reasonable amount of care and use of the tools available, agriculture could remain a vital part of Buena Vista's economy for some time to come. But it will take affirmative action which treats agriculture as an important element of the county's economy.

Commuting Patterns of the Work Force

Commuting Patterns of Workers Employed in New Jersey (in 1958), a research study conducted by the State Department of Labor and Industry and published in 1961, revealed many of the intricate patterns linking place-of-work and place-of-residence. While the basic figures were obtained nearly ten years ago, they are believed still to reflect the broad directions of commuting traffic even though each new industry or each new housing development alters details of the pattern. The study was for the area prior to its separation into Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township.

Atlantic County, the third largest in New Jersey, is 25 miles from east to west. Our study area is located in the far western corner of the county. It is far removed from the extreme eastern shore where more than two-thirds of those with year-round employment in the county live within a five-mile radius of Atlantic City. Such distances do not encourage commuting. In fact, neither geography nor patterns of industry encourage in or out of county commuting or commuting within the county. A very high percentage—over 95%—of Atlantic County year-round jobs are filled by Atlantic County residents.

Only about 4.2% of all workers employed in Atlantic County come from outside the area. Cumberland residents fill only 1.2% of Atlantic County jobs, mostly from the City of Vineland to the inland communities on its western boundary—Minotola, Landisville, Richland, Hammonton, etc. Camden, Cumberland and Cape May Counties receive more workers from Atlantic County than they contribute. Camden County attracts 2.8% of Atlantic County's resident work force. While less than 2% of all Atlantic County workers commute to Cumberland, 21% of the workers residing in Buena Borough/Buena Vista Township work in Cumberland. It is apparent that residents in the western corner of the county find the Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton job area particularly attractive.

It may be interesting to note that 19% of Cumberland's out-of-county labor supply comes from Atlantic County, and, we may fairly assume, largely from the Buena Boro-Buena Vista

Township area. When considering inter-county commuting statistics in the southernmost four counties, the volume is comparatively small. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the volume relationship between the Vineland-Millville and Buena/Buena Vista is comparatively large.

Table 13

COMMUTING PATTERNS

<u>Place of Residence</u>	<u>% of Total Work Force</u>		<u>% of Resident Work Force</u>	
	<u>Resident in County</u>	<u>Who In-Commute</u>	<u>Who Work in County</u>	<u>Who Commute Out To Another N.J. Co.</u>
Atlantic	95.8	4.2	93.0	7.0
Camden	72.1	27.9	90.8	9.2
Cape May	90.3	9.7	84.9	15.1
Cumberland	88.0	12.0	94.1	5.9
Gloucester	79.1	20.9	61.3	38.7
Salem	76.6	23.4	84.1	5.9

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry, Division of Employment Security, from data collected in 1958.

We quote directly from the report section dealing with Atlantic County. "The limited volume of commuting to adjacent counties requires some explanation in view of the considerable volume of unemployment that persists for approximately eight months of each year. In the first place, areas of labor demand are for the most part, located at extensive distances, while the reservoir of labor supply is found in the extreme eastern portion of the county. At the same time the pool of labor is limited by service and trade skills that are not readily adapted to manufacturing requirements. Individuals who do out-commute, in most instances, live in the municipalities contiguous to the adjacent counties. Camden County draws most of its commuters from Hammonton..... Atlantic County commuting facilities, except for the vicinity of Atlantic City, generally follow major highways..... Atlantic County transportation facilities, highways, and railway are geared to resort traffic, but offer good potential for commuters as southern New Jersey develops industrially."

Table 14

INTER-COUNTY COMMUTING

November 1968 - Atlantic County

Working in the County	40,014
Commuting from County	2,897
Commuting to County	1,699

Commuting emphasis is almost entirely upon the private automobile. Public transportation has been made virtually extinct by the adaptability and flexibility of the auto.

One of the strongest indications of metropolitan ties is frequently the extent to which people go back and forth across county and municipal boundaries. The lack of strong commuting patterns across Atlantic County's boundaries may indicate the relatively weak ties with the Philadelphia-Camden metropolitan area. Nevertheless, the same study revealed that of the 1,540 resident workers in Buena/Buena Vista, 1,131 of whom indicated Atlantic County as their place of work, 324 commuted out to work in Cumberland, 79 in Camden and 3 each in Burlington and Gloucester. While this is a small volume of commuting, the figures indicate a strong tie with Cumberland County.

Table 15

BUENA/BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP
RESIDENTS WHO WORK IN ATLANTIC COUNTY

In Non-Manufacturing		
trade		552
service		42
transportation)	
communications)	127
public utilities)		
all other		37
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>758</u>
In Manufacturing		
Non-durable		
apparel		223
food		98
Durable		
misc. mfg.		14
stone, glass		38
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>373</u>
In all Industries		
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>1,131</u>

Education and Economic Status

Some of the economic problems faced by the Township (and quite obviously by many of its residents) can be explained in part by an examination of its vocational and educational patterns. Such information for the relatively small area was not obtainable from published census reports. In view of the demonstrated lack of ties between the Township and its parent county, census reports for Atlantic County as a whole can not be considered relevant. Nor, of course, can Cumberland statistics be held applicable merely because of the close relationship revealed between the extreme western corner of Atlantic County and the Vineland-Millville area. A blend of statistics for the two counties, however, might be significant. When we examine the average educational attainment of adults in the two counties and compare with figures for the state, it becomes evident that the adults of the area are very poorly educated—in fact, among the poorest in the state—with a median of 9.7 and 9.1 school years completed. The two counties also have higher percentages of adults who completed high school. A closer look at the breakdown of the education level attained (see Table 16) reveals other interesting and alarming statistical facts.

Table 16

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED (1960 U. S. CENSUS)			
Rural Population			
	N. J.	Atlantic	Cumberland
	%	%	%
25 years old and over	100.0	100.0	100.0
No school completed	2.5	2.7	3.1
Elementary:			
1-4	4.5	6.6	9.5
5-6	7.1	10.3	12.2
7	6.5	9.7	10.0
8	18.3	22.7	17.5
High School:			
1-3	20.4	22.9	18.2
4 years	24.6	19.0	22.9
College:			
1-3	7.7	3.9	4.2
4 years	8.4	2.2	2.6
Median school years completed		Rural 8.9	8.5
TOTAL	10.6	9.7	9.1

Vocations and Economic Status

The low educational attainment levels in the area are also borne out by the vocational distribution as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

COMPARATIVE OCCUPATIONS:
1960 EMPLOYED AND EXPERIENCED UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

Major Occupation Groups	New Jersey Percent	Atlantic No.	%	Cumberland No.	%
Professional, Technical and Kindred Workers	12.1	4,529	7.0	3,053	6.9
Farmers and Farm Managers	0.6	945	1.5	1,585	3.6
Managers, Officials and Proprietors (ex. farm)	8.5	5,509	8.5	3,166	7.1
Clerical and Kindred Workers	16.2	7,728	12.0	4,649	10.5
Sales Workers	7.2	5,259	8.1	2,502	5.6
Craftsmen, Foremen and Kindred Workers	14.8	8,936	13.9	6,181	13.9
Operatives and Kindred Workers	21.8	10,937	17.0	14,227	32.0
Private Household Workers	1.7	1,466	2.3	679	1.5
Service Workers Except Private Household	7.4	10,970	17.0	2,623	5.9
Farm Laborers and Foremen	0.5	620	1.0	1,403	3.2
Laborers Except Farm and Mine	4.2	2,896	4.5	2,686	6.1
Occupation Not Reported	5.4	4,642	7.2	1,659	3.7

TOTALS	100.0	64,437	100.0	44,413	100.0

Subject data from U. S. Census of Population: 1960

Incomes

The educational level and vocational distribution may explain the low median income for Atlantic County. Data from the 1960 U. S. Census shows that Atlantic County has more than the state's proportion of families with incomes under \$4,000, though not as high a percentage in this category as Cape May or Ocean Counties. Conversely, Atlantic has a low record of families with incomes of \$10,000 and over.

More recent figures from Sales Management Magazine reveal the range of estimated incomes for households, a term which roughly coincides with the census term, families and related individuals. Again, Atlantic appears quite low in the southern group of counties with respect to net effective buying income per household. There seems to be a decreasing level of incomes proportionate to the distance out from the Wilmington and Philadelphia areas. On a per capita income basis all southern counties are lower than the state level, reflecting the effect of the rural farm and even the rural non-farm mode of living which is dependent upon several economic activities that experience drastic cyclical swings during each year.

Table 18

NET EFFECTIVE BUYING INCOMES 1957-1962-1966

	<u>Family Income</u>		
	<u>1957</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1966</u>
Atlantic	\$5,729	\$5,896	\$7,026
Cape May	4,986	5,158	6,844
Cumberland	5,472	5,730	7,438
Salem	6,022	6,272	9,042
<u>New Jersey</u>	<u>7,225</u>	<u>8,219</u>	<u>9,816</u>

Source - Sales Management Magazine

Summation

Although the accumulation of data is a neutral process, information is required if we are to analyze the local economy, define the nature and extent of its problems and facilitate solutions. Unfortunately, we are handicapped by the lack of local information for assessing the economy of such a small area which, quite frankly, is also a rather illogically shaped area, with no definite business center or one concentration within its political boundaries around which community life revolves. In truth, the Township has a very small economic base. But the exercise of looking and planning ahead has been considered sufficiently important by the Township Planning Board to warrant this probing and interpreting of the local economy and its people, using the pertinent, accessible and relatively recent secondary data and generating some primary data within the means of the Board and the scope of the report. Obviously, the Board recognizes that the economic future of Buena Vista Township depends to some degree—be it large or small—on the soundness of many decisions it must make and that it must do so not only with the "local" picture in mind but with full recognition given to major economic forces in surrounding areas.

The year 1968 finds Buena Vista Township an essentially rural area dependent largely upon agriculture and supporting services as the mainstay of its existing economic base. The rapid growth of industrial activity in neighboring Cumberland County and the tremendous industrial and population growth and development just "over the horizon" to the north makes the observer suspect that the area is in the process of transition to an increasingly urbanized community keyed to more manufacturing activity. The areas of Buena Vista considered "fringe" to the Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton core can anticipate residential construction and related commercial and service development, all unfortunately in competition with existing agricultural activities.

Industrial construction on the fringe of Cumberland's tri-city core, in Atlantic County, does not seem likely in the foreseeable future but the flurry of speculative talk of industrial activity for the Winslow area of Camden County makes one wonder how great are the pressures originating from the vast Philadelphia-Camden agglomeration.

Interim Actions

It may be too early to forecast with any certainty the time schedule for approaching urbanization (the last decade showed an 86% increase in population) and industrialization nor, in fact, to say that Buena Vista has reached a turning point. During the "waiting" period, however, a number of interim actions are suggested as well as hints of the consequences of inaction.

If Buena Vista—and to a certain extent the labor market area of which it is a part—is to improve in economic health, it must face certain facts: employment has an unfortunate seasonal pattern, unemployment is high, educational attainment is low, as are worker skills and family income.

Trends emphasize the need for residents to obtain the education and training that will prepare them to cope with the skill level which automation demands. Well paid jobs held by local residents will help to improve the area's living standard. The critical problem is equipping local workers for the more complicated techniques that will be required as new manufacturing and service enterprises come into being. The need for improving manpower resources of the area is clear. Every opportunity to encourage improvement through training and retraining should be taken, however involved and difficult. Every step taken will reduce the educational lag. More educational opportunities will foster economic betterment.

Competition for new industry is very intense today, so much so that communities not only must provide adequate facilities such as water, power, transportation and physical facilities, but are required to assure a selection of housing types, good schools, churches and other facilities found in the modern community.

Many an expanding business, bursting at the seams in cramped metropolitan quarters looks to the suburbs and rural areas as an escape from the city's high costs and congestion. But the grass isn't always greener in the outlying areas. Many businesses look carefully before they leap. They consider all the facts, uncover all the hidden costs. They often find it more profitable to forget those cheaper rural land costs and taxes. The rural disadvantages often revealed are:

- Lack of adequate police and effective fire-fighting

- protection with resulting higher insurance premiums.
- Inadequate educational and cultural facilities.
 - Lack of adequate water supply and sewage disposal systems.
 - Inconvenience to railroad stations, both passenger and freight, and to airports.
 - Shipping and receiving problems.
 - Inconvenience to banking facilities, restaurants, etc.
 - Inadequate arterial and access roads. And last, but not least,
 - Insufficient source of skilled, experienced labor.

Of course, a rural location has proved healthful and beneficial to many growing firms. Community leaders should be alert to such possibilities for relocation, particularly for those firms with employment needs in the winter and early spring that will complement the existing seasonal fluctuations. In the all-out search for industrial rattables, however, community leaders are warned to avoid the fly-by-night, parasitic industry or business and to insist on securing and developing industry that will give stability to the local economy. Bigness is not an only requisite; many of the best industries will be small, employing 25 or less, but geared to community needs or designed to utilize local resources. The community must not forget or overlook its existing enterprises. It is more important to save and expand existing businesses with local labor already trained to their needs than to replace them with new industry requiring new skills and new facilities. Extend all possible assistance to resident concerns.

One-time studies such as this report are insufficient for meeting the broad needs and ever changing complex problems of even a small, rural area such as Buena Vista Township. A formal structure for gathering economic "intelligence" and for thinking about the community's economy and guiding appropriate and effective action is advisable. The factors of demand are always changing and the community must constantly reappraise these factors.

Future Economy of Buena Vista

What, then, is the economic future of the Township? First, we must admit that it is virtually impossible accurately to project economic growth for the small municipality. The entire area is hampered by the "dead end" physical characteristics of the southern New Jersey peninsula which are not so far conducive to the attraction of industry. In time

manufacturing activity will come to the area and meanwhile there are specific planning actions which might be taken to enhance Buena Vista's opportunity when the area does ripen for such development. If rampant and uncontrolled housing development takes place by itself it will almost certainly lead to an uninviting tax picture for future industrial prospects. A moderate, controlled rate of residential growth would seem to be indicated.

Another important planning technique which bears careful scrutiny is the Planned Unit Development in which industry would be planned as an integral part of each individual development. A specific proportion of the land area could be required to be devoted to industry and the whole development timing could be pegged to the establishment of industry.

A great danger is that overoptimism may result in the belief that prospects for industrial development are much greater than they really are, especially in the early days. The motives may be sound--increased net income to the community. But the community can not afford to waste valuable time just idly waiting or, as seems to be a common tendency in many areas, to put too much emphasis on elaborate industrial projects, again, especially in the early days. It may be more valuable toward the goal of industrial development to put more emphasis into fields such as carefully controlled growth, education, circulation, closer examination of community assets and improvement of public administration.