

2000 EDITION

CITY OF ERIE LAND USE PLAN

PREPARED BY THE CITY OF ERIE; ASSISTED BY GRANEY, GROSSMAN, RAY AND ASSOCIATES



626 State Street - Room 407
Erie Pennsylvania 16501-1128
(814) 870-1265 - Fax 870-1443

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
City of Erie - Land Use	1
Erie: Community Description	1
Background	1
History	1
Current Characteristics	5
Development Constraints	7
Floodplains	7
Wetlands	8
Steep Slopes	9
Soils	10
Historic Districts	10
Summary	10
Socio-Economic Features	11
Population	11
Age Characteristics	13
Household Characteristics	15
Employment	17
Summary	18
Other Plans	20
The Nolen Report	20
The 1937 Zoning Ordinance	21
The Waterfront Comprehensive Plan	22
Enterprise Area Development Plan - 1986	23
Impact Assessment of the Erie Transitway Mall	24
Erie East Side Enterprise Zone Study	25
An Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in the City of Erie	25
The New Horizons of the Bay City	25
Summary	26
Existing Land Use	27
Current Land Use	28
Land Use Plan	32
Industrial	32
Commercial	32
Residential	32
Social-Education	32
Summary Findings	33
The Zoning Ordinance	39

Tables

Table 1 - City of Erie Population - 1950-1990 12
Table 2 - Net Migration By Cohorts, City of Erie - 1980-1990, Based on Natural
Increase 13
Table 3 - 1990 Age Characteristics - City of Erie 14
Table 4 - Future Population Characteristics By Age - Erie City 14
Table 5 - Estimated Households - Erie City - 1990-2010 16
Table 6 - Selected Unemployment Rates By Percent - 1990-1997 18
Table 7 - Land Use - City of Erie - 1963 28

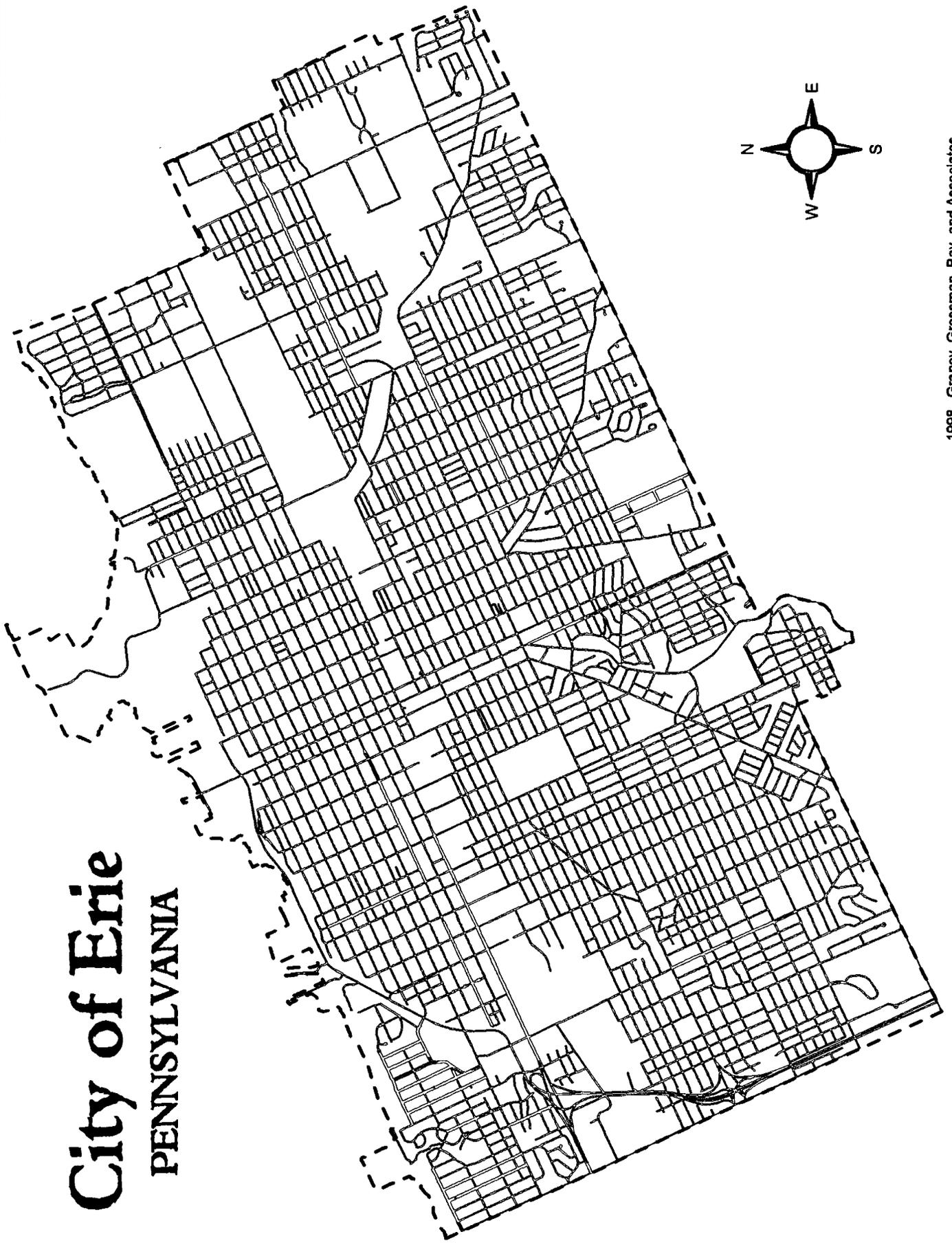
Plates

City of Erie Frontispiece
Annexation Follows Page 4
Development Constraints Follows Page 9
Historic Districts Follows Page 10
Existing Land Use Follows Page 29
Land Use Issues Follows Page 34
Proposed Land Use Follows Page 35

Addendum
Administration

City of Erie

PENNSYLVANIA



CITY OF ERIE - LAND USE

"Erie is facing a promising future. The task of today is to solve present problems and to plan wisely and unselfishly for future growth."

GREATER ERIE, 1913
Page 15

ERIE: COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Land use is a mixture of the private market, governmental efforts of control, citizen desires, and cultural forces.

The land use found in a community is not the result of any one force. Rather, it is a mixture of the private market, governmental efforts of control, citizen desires, and cultural forces. The quote listed above is from GREATER ERIE, Erie's first Comprehensive Plan, an example of a private-public effort to shape Erie's growth.

Because many elements affect land use, this section was written. It provides a brief overview of some of the events which have resulted in the Erie of today.

Background

Erie ranks as Pennsylvania's third largest city.

The City of Erie, Pennsylvania's only lake port, is situated on the southern shore of Lake Erie. Erie is the most populous municipality in Erie County and it also serves as the County seat. With 108,718 residents, Erie ranks as Pennsylvania's third largest city.

History: Erie's early development was a witness to conflict. The original settlers were the Eries (or Erietz) Indians. Reportedly, they were a contrary tribe often embroiled in conflict with other Indian groups. Popular history relates that this negative attitude, during

a lacrosse match led to their undoing. It resulted in a battle where the tribe was literally wiped out. After the Eries Indians were defeated in the battle with the Six Nations in 1653, there was little settlement activity locally for 100 years. Then, in 1753, the French established a fort and settlement at Presque Isle. This action was followed by a series of British and then American forts or blockhouses. Obviously, Erie was viewed as a location of military significance.

According to history, Erie was originally laid out in 1795 by William Irvine and Andrew Ellicott. By Act of the Pennsylvania legislature on April 18, 1795, some 1,600 acres in the "Triangle" were to be surveyed and laid out in lots. The criteria of the original plot of Erie is still seen in the older portions of the City. Blocks (out lots) are 330 feet by 660 feet, or some 5 acres in size. The typical building lot is 165 feet by 82½ feet, about one third of an acre. Originally, eight lots faced the primary east-west street and each block was two lots deep. This historic pattern has left an interesting palette upon which to work.

Erie's development phases were strongly influenced by transportation. The industrial corridor (12th Street to 16th Street) developed along railroad trackage and not only determined where factories were located, but also where various groups, the workers and managers, would live. For example, the West 6th Street corridor saw many of Erie's most prestigious homes, the 8th to 10th Street sector saw more modest structures, while the West 11th to West 19th neighborhoods were predominantly worker dwellings. Shop workers walked to work and lived very close to their place of employment. Managers and owners could afford to ride carriages. They also could afford to build homes, removed from the soot, noise, and congestion of the industrial corridor. These residential decisions also influenced the location of retail/commercial sectors which serviced the nearby homes.

Erie City's development phases were strongly influenced by transportation.

As personal transportation improved, these relationships changed. The explosion of the family auto after World War II was the primary transportation force in contemporary times. It resulted in the extensive residential growth of the southern portion of the City and the weakening of traditional retail corridors in the Downtown as well as secondary concentrations along Parade Street and West 18th Street. In the 1950s and 1960s, massive urban renewal projects were undertaken to reverse those trends in the Downtown. However, when these efforts ignored market trends, they resulted in only temporary delays or may have actually accelerated the demise of Erie's Downtown. The Downtown of today is a clear example of this fact. Conversely, many of the industrial projects along West 11th and 12th Streets, also assisted by urban renewal, still prosper.

Another factor of growth was residential density. Historically, Erie has been a city of single-family and duplex homes, or flats, as they are known in local jargon. Dwelling units intended for shop workers typically had small parcels. The original lot of 82½ feet by 165 feet was reduced. In some instances, the widths were halved to 41¼ feet; other times, they were reduced so a home would just fit on them. Lot frontages of 30 to 32 feet are not unusual in the older residential neighborhoods. Some bygone developers even used Erie's generous lot depth to put one home behind another. This pattern is obvious in the lower west and east sides. Conversely, in neighborhoods where the prestigious homes were constructed, lots from 80 feet to 120 feet wide can be found.

The newer areas of Erie were also not immune from crowding. Subdivisions built after World War II, to accommodate the Baby Boom, typically have parcels 7,200 square feet in size (60 feet by 120 feet). New residential development in Erie was dominated by small lots and modest starter homes in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, many home buyers wanted large yards and sprawling ranch houses. Where one car was once a luxury, two vehicles became the norm, and these buyers could afford to move "to the country." Thus, an exodus of homeowners was seen to suburban locations, a movement especially obvious over the past few decades.

Certain activities were more immune to the changes than those which impacted residential and retail uses. Hamot Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital, Gannon University, Erie Insurance Exchange, and Mercyhurst College are long-term institutions whose influence continues to this day. Though their degree of influence may change over time, they will likely remain anchors of their respective neighborhoods.

Topography, so often critical in community development, has played little part in Erie's development history. Certainly, some of the topography along Glenwood, Park Avenue, along Cascade Creek, and a few other locations have limited or even prevented development. But, such instances are rare. With the exception of the Millcreek Flood in 1915, there have been few natural disasters in Erie City. Though, in the past, there were some significant swamps within its current borders, they have long been drained or filled. Perhaps the most prevalent physical constraint is subsoil conditions. Subsoil problems may constrain heavy construction in various sectors. Erie has traditionally adapted to this characteristic by a relatively low physical profile.

Today's land use planners are presented with a relatively flat, but developed, landscape upon which they must work. Physical issues of contemporary developers will more likely be concerned with such prosaic problems as stormwater drainage and parking, rather than any geographic challenges of the site (see also Development Constraints).

Some important dates in Erie's developmental and land use history include:

- 1795 - Erie given its name by the Commonwealth and was laid out by Ellicott and Irvine
- 1805 - The Borough of Erie chartered
- 1851 - Erie becomes a city
- 1852 - The first railroad comes to Erie
- 1870 - The Borough of South Erie is annexed
- 1913 - The Nolen GREATER ERIE PLAN completed
- 1913 - First City Planning Commission appointed
- 1919 - Largest annexation of land occurs
- 1923 - Last land addition, Erie's current boundary is set
- 1937 - First Zoning Ordinance adopted for Erie City
- 1968 - Current Zoning Ordinance adopted

Map 2 gives a pictorial history of Erie and its annexations to the current day.

Any view of contemporary land use issues in Erie must realize the importance of its history. Some specific facts to keep in mind:

The gridiron pattern of Erie was first established by the 1795 Plan of the City, completed by Ellicott and Irvine. Common lot sizes and block layouts were also influenced by that first plan.

This early layout, its parks, and street widths influenced the creation of State Street as the City's main street, and the Perry Square area as the governmental center.

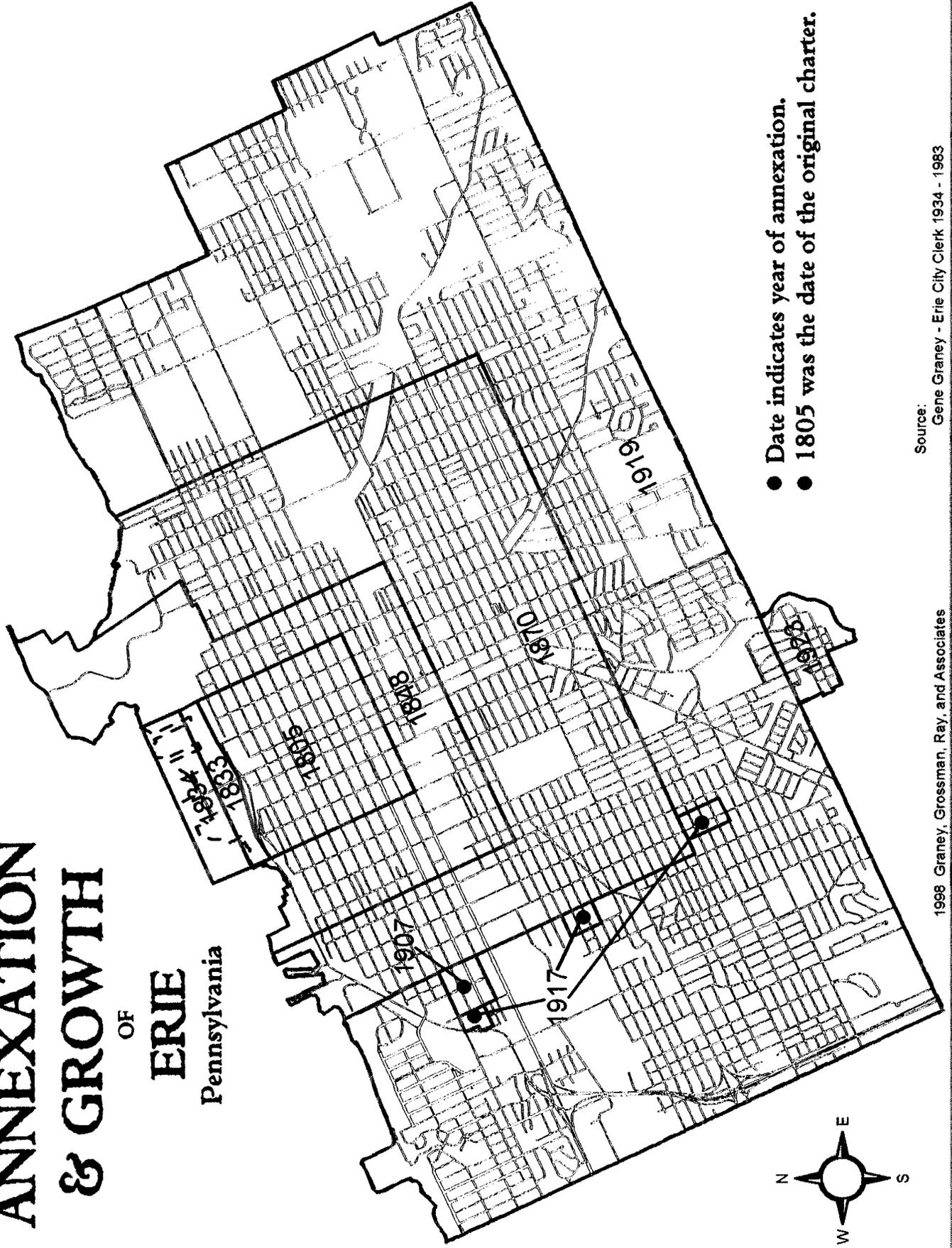
Transportation, originally by lake boat and later by rail, and now dominated by highway transportation, established much of the existing pattern of Erie's industrial development.

In 1913, General Electric selected Lawrence Park for its Erie Works. This resulted in two related events. The generation of employment sparked an immigration of new workers. General Electric also followed a program subcontracting some of their work, thus, creating even more local industries and jobs. These actions generated both residential and industrial land development in Erie, especially on its east side.

Current zoning patterns, in terms of district use schedules and the zoning map, were heavily influenced by the 1937 Zoning Ordinance.

ANNEXATION & GROWTH

OF
ERIE
Pennsylvania



Source:
Gene Graney - Erie City Clerk 1934 - 1983

1998 Graney, Grossman, Ray, and Associates

Urban renewal activities in the late 1950s and 1960s also had a profound influence upon current zoning. Some of the zoning patterns, on West 11th Street especially, were created in reaction to, or anticipation of, redevelopment projects.

Another major land use influence was the Land Use Report of August 1965 and the ERIE CITY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE of 1967. These were reflected directly by the Zoning Map of the 1968 Ordinance.

Thus, various forces, both long term and transient, have shaped contemporary Erie. And, they will continue to do so. The past dynamics of Erie's growth and land use problems are continuing today. This Plan must recognize such facts if it is to be effective.

Current Characteristics: If contemporary Erie is to be characterized, that task is difficult. At one time, it was a bustling lake port and rail hub. Ships and trains were in abundance. Its role as a transportation center encouraged industry. Iron works, foundries, various manufacturing enterprises, and the nearby location of the Erie General Electric Works influenced development patterns, land use, and the growth of the City. These influences continue to this day.

Yet, it was not industry alone which shaped the City. The major institutions previously mentioned dominate their respective neighborhoods. Also, office uses are critical. As a County seat, numerous law firms find the City a good location. Erie Insurance has had a dramatic, thankfully beneficial, impact on the Downtown. In addition, views of the Lake and Bay are becoming a greater factor in development decisions. It is no accident that the Frontier area on the west, and the Lakeside sector on the east are attractive residential areas. Also, the burgeoning Bayfront "condos" are also witnesses to that desire to live near the water. Finally, Presque Isle is a tourist attraction. That fact is a continuous influence on both retail and cultural development patterns.

Perhaps the most dramatic, recent changes are in Erie's neighborhoods. Older sections of Erie, typically north of 26th Street, west of East Avenue, and east of Liberty Street, have seen problems. These have been caused by a variety of forces, public, private market, and time. Such forces have resulted in pockets of deterioration which benefit neither the City nor the residents of those areas.

From a land use standpoint, the Erie of 1999 is a product of historic and economic trends tempered by the City's physical environment.

From a land use standpoint, the Erie of 1999 is certainly a product of historic and economic trends tempered by the City's physical environment. Though Erie is in continuous change, the lessons from past development, both good and bad, now

need to be recognized. Redevelopment could not keep the Downtown retail in place. But, the industrial corridor has shown both staying power and new vigor and benefitted by renewal activities. Likewise, good residential areas have been able to keep their solid attractiveness. Conversely, some older neighborhoods have been negatively impacted by incompatible mixed uses and unplanned density. Finally, the many cultural, health, and educational facilities found here allows Erie to be truly a city - not just an oversized small town.

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Development constraints play an important role - both historically and in the future.

In most communities, their historical development patterns are influenced by physical characteristics. Rivers, hills, and steep slopes are not only geographic features but also help to define sections or even neighborhoods. Pittsburgh is an excellent example of such an interplay of topography and development. The purpose of this element of the Erie City Land Use Plan is to examine these types of constraints in Erie City -- the role they have played historically and, more importantly, their future implications. A plate, Development Constraints, is included as a visual reference for the physical characteristics discussed in this section.

Floodplains: The presence of floodplains is important for many areas. Certainly, one cannot think of the Midwest without bringing to mind the near perennial floods along the Mississippi River. Closer to home, both Meadville and Oil City have periodic problems.

Though Erie City experiences episodic storm problems, these are generally limited to poorly functioning storm drains -- not stream-fed floods. The last major flood in Erie, probably the City's worst natural disaster, occurred on August 3, 1915. The Millcreek flood is credited with taking thirty-seven lives and causing some \$3 million in damage. Subsequently, Millcreek was "tubed" and has not since caused flooding problems.

The National Flood Insurance Program does identify flood hazard areas in the City. For the most part, these are quite limited in physical size and only core areas are categorized as Zone A (100-year frequency floods), while the larger portion is classified as Zone B (100- to 500-year frequency).

On the lower west side, Cascade Creek and the west branch of Cascade Creek are the primary floodways. Generally, the main branch of Cascade is considered an "A" Zone, from the Conrail tracks to the Bay. A great deal of the area is industrial and parkland (Frontier Park). The west branch extends to the Millcreek Township border, following a well-defined ravine near Woodland Drive and Grove Drive as well as the Manor Subdivision.

Portions of Mill Creek, south of its entry into the Mill Creek tube at Moorehead, are also listed in the “A” flood Zone. Much of this is found in Glenwood Park. The balance is in a rather well-defined stream channel that generally follows Glenwood Park Avenue.

The remaining three floodways are on Erie’s east side, and predominately “B” flood zones. One is found east of Parade Street Boulevard in the Mercyhurst area. It eventually runs into a tube near 34th and Ash. A second, Cemetery Run, starts at 41st near Davison and travels north to a point just beyond Buffalo road and Camphausen Street, when it, too, is placed in a storm drain. The final system begins near East 33rd Street (between McClelland and Bird Drive). It then ends at East 26th, to reappear at East 10th, near Tacoma. It then travels in a nearly straight channel to outfall in Lake Erie. All the upper reaches as “B,” as is a good portion of the northern segment of this stream.

From a community development standpoint, none of these streams and their associated floodplains have an extensive influence. In fact, most residential flooding in the City appears to be the result of limited storm drain capacity and an excess of hard surfaces such as buildings and parking lots. At most, a limited neighborhood impact may be apparent. New development in the City, when the impervious surface is over 5,000 square feet, is required to have a storm water management plan and provide on-site storm water retention. This policy should prevent the aggravation of current storm drainage problems. A second positive factor is the upgrading of the City’s sewer system. Many of Erie’s older sewers are combined (i.e., storm and sanitary flow in the same pipe). As this older system is upgraded and separated further, relief of temporary flooding is expected.

Overall flooding does not have a significant impact on the City’s land use.

Wetlands: General wetland delineation was prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Specific delineations are made on a case-by-case basis using specially trained technicians. The Department of Interior’s findings are displayed on maps which use U.S.G.S. quadrangles as a base. There are three such maps which cover Erie City: Erie North, Erie South, and Swanville.

Overall, there is little physical area within the City identified by the Department of Interior’s maps as wetlands, and these are found on Erie’s East Side. The greatest concentration falls between the Allegheny and Eastern Railroad and Bird Drive, south of East 26th. One concentration is found along the northern boundary of the Erie Industrial Park; the other between McClelland and Bird Drive, from approximately 27th Street to 36th Street. The only other wetlands were along the east Bayfront area, especially just north of the Channel. It must be stressed these are very generalized demarcations and subject to on-site evaluation.

Erie City has a gentle slope toward the Waterfront and generally affords little impediment to development.

Steep Slopes: If Erie can be envisioned from the standpoint of its geography, the best characterization would be an uneven plane. The high point of this plane is Erie's southeast border (elevation approximately 980 to 1,000 feet above sea level). Elevations start downward from that corner, very slightly, as they travel west (elevations in southwest Erie are 800 to 820 feet above sea level). As this plane proceeds toward the Bay and Lake, the elevation changes more dramatically, to about 570-580 feet elevation at the water line. However, that slope is only about 2.5 percent on average. Overall, Erie City has a gentle slope toward the waterfront and generally affords little impediment to development.

There are, however, exceptions to this generalization. Along Erie's border with Millcreek, especially in the southeast boundary, some areas of increased slope can be found. However, these generally fall between 5 percent and 7 percent -- usually developable. The only areas of truly steep slopes are associated with the Millcreek Valley, the Bay, the Lake Bluff, and Cascade Creek.

In the Glenwood area, slopes associated with Mill Creek can occasionally exceed 25 percent. A similar condition is found along limited reaches of the west branch of Cascade Creek, though the grade appears somewhat gentler (20% ±). Also, there are occasional hills found within the City limits. Other natural steep slopes impacting the City are the Lake bluffs along the Bayfront and Lake Shore. These range from 40 to 60 feet high and can sometimes reach grades of 40 percent.

All of these steep slope areas, combined, make up only a few percent of Erie's total land mass. Their impact is generally minimal. Only in the evolving marketplace of the Waterfront might some conflict between land development and steep slope areas be experienced.

There are twenty-three historic structures and three historic districts within Erie City.

Soils: According to the 1965 LAND USE report, there are six general soil areas within Erie City (see MASTER PLAN REPORTS, LAND USE, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS, pps. 39-41). The most significant characteristic noted was a seasonal high water table and slow permeability. Traditionally, sub-soil conditions are reported to hamper the construction of tall buildings in Erie and help to account for its low profile.

Historic Districts: There are twenty-three historic structures within Erie City. Most, though not all, are in the Downtown area (see plate). In addition, there are three historic districts. These are:

West Park Place: Generally, the area from State to Peach, North Park Row, to West 5th Street.

West 6th Street Historic District: This area generally extends from Poplar to Peach, fronting on West 6th. In addition, there are two entire blocks included in the district. One is West 6th to West 7th, between Sassafras and Myrtle. The second is West 6th to West 7th, from Cherry to Poplar Streets.

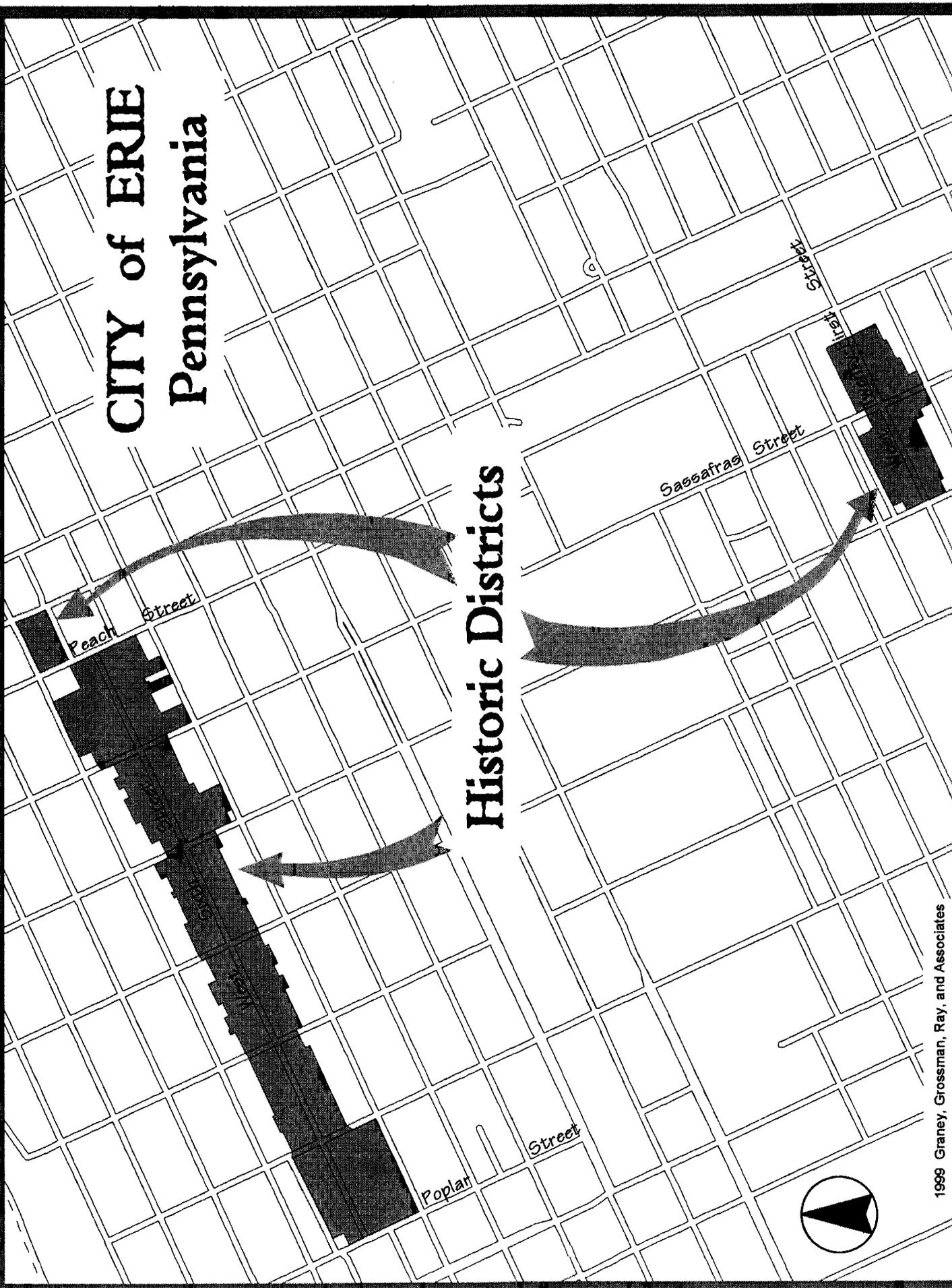
West 21st Street: This is an irregular-shaped district, focused around 21st and Sassafras. Portions extend north to Crandall Alley, and south to West 22nd Street. One property touches Myrtle.

These three areas were listed in 1980, 1983, and 1989, respectively, on the National Register of Historic Preservation. However, there is no local historic district under Pennsylvania law nor through the City's zoning. Consequently, these historic districts have few development limitations, and those limitations are associated with Federal programs.

Summary: Floodplains, steep slopes, soils, wetlands, and historic areas all have influences on Erie City, but very limited ones. Of these four elements, this historic area could be incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan. Conversely, the other elements are of minimal consequence, except the possible Lake-Bay bluff area.

CITY of ERIE Pennsylvania

Historic Districts



SOCIO-ECONOMIC FEATURES

Land use is a partial reflection of the socio-economic forces at work in a community.

Why a section on socio-economic features for a Land Use Plan? Land use is, in fact, a partial reflection of the socio-economic forces at work in a community. Population and population characteristics influence the need for housing. Young, growing families prefer single dwellings, while retired householders may opt for an apartment. The ebb and flow of manufacturing, the service sector, and retail trades all have an impact on the demand for land and how it is to be used.

Erie's current zoning ordinance was written thirty years ago. Much has changed since that time. The purpose of this section of the Plan is to look at changes in Erie demographics and economic features, since that time. It is obvious these changes should be reflected in the current Land Use Plan.

Population: Historically, Erie City experienced continuous growth from 1900 to 1960. With the exception of the decade of the Great Depression, such growth was typically significant. Percentage increases were often double digit. And, numerical gains, from Census to Census, could exceed over 10,000 persons. Between 1950 and 1960, that pattern began to slow down. Then, from 1960 to 1970, a downward trend started which continued for the next two decades. That decline in population, which started in the decade of the 1960s, was the same time during which the current zoning ordinance was written. Yet, the real evidence of population loss was not actually seen until the 1970 Census figures were announced.

The most recent Census was nearly eight years ago. The City of Erie's 1990 population was listed as 108,718 by the Census Bureau. This figure represented a drop from 1980 of -10,405 persons (-8.7 percent). Table 1 shows the changes in Erie City's population over the past forty years.

TABLE 1**CITY OF ERIE POPULATION
1950-1990**

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
1950	130,803	+13,848	+11.8%
1960	138,440	+7,637	+5.8%
1970	129,231	-9,209	-6.7%
1980	119,123	-10,108	-7.8%
1990	108,718	-10,405	-8.7%

Source: Various Census reports

Erie demographic patterns are rather typical in a western Pennsylvania city. For Erie City, the population losses in the 1980s were, no doubt, linked to economic problems. In 1983, annual unemployment averaged 14.2 percent in Erie County and 15.4 percent for the City. This was the height of a restructuring of the American economy. Due to its manufacturing base, that restructuring affected Erie City more severely than either the United States or Pennsylvania. The cutback of jobs in Erie led to a widespread out-migration. Families left the City for the Sunbelt to look for employment. In addition to this economically driven exodus, there has been a long-term process of suburbanization in Erie County. Together, these forces have caused Erie City's urban population to decline.

According to the *Erie County Demographic Analysis and Population Projections*, such trends are likely to continue into the next century. However, losses are expected at less than half the recent rates. A population of 103,562 is projected for 2000 and 98,548 for 2010.

To better understand population losses, Table 2 was constructed. Its purpose is to examine migration patterns. The actual 1990 Census Report population for each age group was compared to a natural increase projection of the 1980 population. The natural increase process accounts only for resident births and deaths, and does not factor any migration. Table 2 presents the difference between a natural increase scenario and the actual Census count.

TABLE 2

**NET MIGRATION BY COHORTS
CITY OF ERIE - 1980-1990
BASED ON NATURAL INCREASE**

<u>Age of Cohort(s)</u>	<u>Net Migration</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Preschoolers 0-4	-1,048	-12.2%
School Age 5-19	-4,058	-17.9%
Young Adults 20-34	-4,339	-15.8%
Adults 35-64	-5,575	-17.2%
Older 65+	-1,083	-6.2%
Total	-16,103	-14.8%

Source: 1990 Census, 1980 Census, consultant's computation

Table 2 must be viewed with caution. It is, after all, a theoretical, demographic exercise. Nonetheless, it illustrates a rather high level of out-migration of all age categories. Of these, age segments with a negative double-digit percentage is a special cause for concern.

Please note that if there were no migration, Erie's population in 1990 would have been 124,820, not 108,718. That figure would have represented a 4 percent increase over 1980. The figure is instructive. It illustrates that, if the City's economy improves, it is quite possible growth could again be experienced.

Age Characteristics: Erie City's population is typical for an urban place. The overall age pattern in 1990 for Erie City is shown by Table 3.

TABLE 3**1990 AGE CHARACTERISTICS - CITY OF ERIE**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Preschoolers (0-4)	8,589	7.9%
School Age (5-19)	22,667	20.8%
Young Adults (20-34)	27,546	25.3%
Adults (35-64)	32,428	29.8%
Older (65+)	17,488	16.1%
Totals	108,718	100.0%

Source: 1990 Census

In proportion, the City's 65+ population is marginally larger than either Erie County (13.8 percent) or Pennsylvania (15.4 percent). Conversely, the percentage of preschoolers is actually higher than for both the County and the State. Also, the percentage of persons under age 35 (54 percent), though not as high as the County (58.3 percent), is higher than the State's (50 percent). It is interesting to compare Tables 2 and 3. Such a comparison gives a sense of the effect of out-migration experienced by the City, per age group.

What about Erie's future? Will it be larger or smaller, younger or older? Again, turning to the County's demographic report, a picture of Erie in the next century can be developed.

TABLE 4**FUTURE POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS
BY AGE - ERIE CITY**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1990*</u>		<u>2000**</u>		<u>2010**</u>	
Preschoolers (0-4)	8,589	(7.9%)	8,098	(7.8%)	7,236	(7.3%)
School-Age (5-19)	22,667	(20.8%)	22,020	(21.3%)	21,096	(21.4%)
Young Adults (20-34)	27,546	(25.3%)	22,527	(21.8%)	20,447	(20.7%)
Adults (35-64)	32,428	(29.8%)	36,650	(34.4%)	37,467	(38.0%)
Older (65+)	17,488	(16.1%)	15,264	(14.7%)	12,302	(12.5%)
Total	108,718		103,562		98,548	

*1990 Census

**County population projections

As previously noted, the overall trend is downward, but this varies by age groups.

Preschoolers: This group is expected to slowly drop in number and by proportion by 2010.

School-Age: These three age cohorts show surprising strength, with a modest drop in numbers but an increase in its proportion of the total population.

Young Adults: This group is projected to drop significantly in real and proportionate terms over the term of the projections.

Adults: This group includes the “Baby Boomers.” They are expected to increase dramatically by 2010.

Older: Once more, a drop in numbers and proportion is expected. However, after 2010, the Baby Boomers will cross the age 65 threshold, and this category will increase rapidly.

It is difficult to accurately assess these projections until the next Census. Certainly, recent increases in school enrollment may call for a reassessment. However, the Census does issue periodic estimates, and it is possible to compare the most recent estimate with an interpolated figure from the County’s projections. The Bureau’s 1996 estimate of Erie City’s population is 105,270 persons. The County’s projection would be 105,624 -- a difference of 0.3 percent. Consequently, these projections do appear to hold up, at least based on current information.

The household is the market unit which creates the need for individual dwellings.

Household Characteristics: Though total population may be the raw engine that drives the demand for residential land use, it is the household unit that gives it definition. The household is the market unit which creates the need for individual dwellings. Demographically, households include all persons not in group quarters.

Historically, the size of the household in the United States has been shrinking over the past few decades. This has been due to changes in age patterns and the increase in single-parent families. Erie City has followed this national trend. In 1980, there were 2.66 persons, on average, per household in the City; by 1990, this figure had dropped to 2.47.

What did that change mean? In 1980, for every 1,000 residents of Erie, 376 housing units were needed. In 1990, 405 dwellings were required. This was an increase of 29 homes per thousand. Thus, in a decade, which experienced an 8.7 percent drop in total population. The demand for housing only fell 3.5 percent!

What will the future be? Past history has demonstrated that a decrease in average household size may partially counterbalance population decreases in the housing market. Thus, a shrinking population could still result in a constant demand for residential land based upon the household unit.

The Census Bureau has stated the shrinking of average household size is slowing or even stopping. (See their narrative which accompanies the “Projections of Household by Type: 1995 to 2010 . . . ” released May 1996.) This is due to various reasons. These include age at first marriage, a more stable divorce rate, and the general age of population. For Erie City, many of these assumptions appear valid. So, an estimate can be made that the trend in decreasing household size so evident in the decade 1980-1990 (-7.7%) will moderate, and perhaps stop.

To determine the number of future households, the population for 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010 was determined from the County projections. From that figure, the estimated population in group quarters was deducted and the remaining number divided by the estimated household size.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Gross Population</u>	<u>Persons in Group Quarters</u>	<u>Household Population</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>	<u>Households</u>
1990	108,718	4,449	104,269	2.47	42,131
1995	106,140	4,600	101,540	2.38	42,662
2000	103,562	4,600	98,962	2.33	42,473
2005	101,055	4,600	96,455	2.30	41,937
2010	98,548	4,600	93,948	2.30	40,847

Note: 1990 per Census data; balance of table is consultant's estimates, based upon Erie County Population Projections.

Table 5 demonstrates that even if current out-migration trends continue, the net loss of housing units will be just over 1,000.

Employment: Relying upon 1990 information, the Erie economic picture is shown as quite diverse. Management, professional specialties, sales, precision crafts, and machine operators are the leading occupations. Industrial employment reflects the occupational profile. Of the "big three," manufacturing had 24.0 percent of all jobs, retail trade 19.8 percent, and services 37.6 percent.

More recent data can be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, on a county, not municipal, basis. Yet, as the City is the chief place of employment in Erie County, the trends are instructive.

From 1990 to 1995, the total employed workforce grew by 7,800 persons, to 128,300; some 6.5 percent. Broken down into two prime categories, the "Goods-Producing Industries" actually show a small 2 percent drop (about 800 jobs) to 30,500 in 1995, but the "Service-Producing" sector enjoyed a 10.7 percent growth (plus 8,600 jobs), reaching 88,800. In spite of these shifts, the goods-producing section remains at 30 percent of the job force and manufacturing at 27.5 percent of all jobs.

Unemployment problems, so devastating to Erie in the decade of the 1980s, have improved.

Unemployment problems, so devastating to Erie in the decade of the 1980s, have improved. Though the City's rate is typically higher than that of the County, State, or Nation, it has remained in single digits. Furthermore, its fluctuations have paralleled the larger units closely.

TABLE 6

**SELECTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
BY PERCENT
1990-1997**

	<u>Erie City</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>	<u>United States</u>
1990	7.0	5.8	5.4	5.5
1991	8.7	7.2	6.9	6.7
1992	9.6	7.7	7.5	7.4
1993	8.7	7.1	7.0	6.8
1994	8.2	6.6	6.2	5.6
1995	8.7	6.4	5.9	5.6
1996	7.7	5.8	5.3	5.6
1997	7.9	5.9	5.2	4.9

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

Summary: The purpose of the preceding pages was to put the current land use patterns of Erie City into perspective. A perspective colored by physical, historic, and economic forces. Erie's current land use, indeed, has been influenced by these various factors, from which some generalizations can be made:

- Bayfront, Lakefront property is generally desirable, and has been identified as worthy of special protection by the City.
- Large institutions influence land use in their immediate area.
- The industrial core, especially in the 12th to 15th Street area, seems to be stabilized and, in some areas, rejuvenated.
- Based upon current population projections, the number of households in the City will see an increase to the year 2000 and then slip about 4 percent by the year 2010.
- Recent patterns of population decline are slowing, and a booming economy may further slow or even stop this trend.
- Future land use needs to be sensitive to age/household trends.

- Market forces and market trends may be delayed, but not reversed by public action.
- Changing economic and age characteristics directly affect neighborhoods.
- Older neighborhoods in center Erie are especially vulnerable to overcrowding and deterioration.
- Erie still possesses many attractive residential areas.
- New transportation patterns will have an influence on land use.
- The City does possess historic resources worthy of protection.

OTHER PLANS

Though it has been thirty years since the publication of ERIE CITY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE (1967), to this date, that Plan has been the single most important influence on the City's Zoning Ordinance. That Plan will be discussed in the next chapter. However, there have been other recent studies which do merit attention. Among the Plans considered pertinent to this effort are the following:

- Waterfront Comprehensive Plan, 1986
- Enterprise Area Development Plan, 1986
- Impact Assessment of the Transitway Mall, 1988
- Erie East Side Enterprise Zone Study, 1991
- An Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in the City of Erie, 1991
- New Horizons of the Bay City, 1993

The purpose of this element of the City's Land Use Plan is to discuss these studies and how they might impact upon the current study. Two other documents have been added to that list as being important to Erie's land use, the Nolen Report, and the 1937 Zoning Ordinance.

The Nolen Report: Erie's first comprehensive plan, titled *Greater Erie, Plan For the Extensions and Improvement of the City*, was prepared in 1913 by John Nolen. That same year, 86 years ago, the first City Planning Commission was formed. This report contained six sections and contained extensive analysis, many examples of what other communities had done, and specific action recommendations. Though many of these were project-oriented, there were some land use considerations. Some of the more interesting recommendations included:

- Public ownership - or control - of the entire Waterfront. This was a reaction to the Pennsylvania Railroad's control of the Bayfront.
- Building height harmony.
- Limit building height to 125 feet or not to exceed the width of the street.
- Encourage model residential settlements, essentially worker housing.
- Land subdivision approval.

Little of the Nolen Report was immediately implemented. However, over the years, the innate wisdom of many of his key ideas has been embraced. Certainly, the entire Waterfront section of the current Zoning Ordinance would have seen Nolen's approval. Also, the concept of limited building height and subdivision approval are now practiced in the City which were certainly ideas espoused by Nolen.

Frankly, there may be few specifics which can be adopted from Nolen's work to the Erie of today. Technology, life styles, perhaps even certain societal aspirations have changed over the four score and five years since his plan. Yet, there is one idea which is as viable in 1998 as it was in 1913. That is to aim for a city its citizens can be proud of - not to settle for second best.

The 1937 Zoning Ordinance: Erie's first zoning ordinance was of a classical pyramid variety so popular in the early days of zoning. In the pyramid scheme, the single-family "A" Residence District sits "atop" the schedule of uses. In the next district, usually medium density residential "B-Residence," all "A" uses are allowed along with "B" uses. And, so it continues to the industrial district which, in a classical pyramid ordinance, literally allows all uses. In that first ordinance, there were three residential zones, one business district, and two industrial districts. In lieu of incorporating yards, lots, building height, and similar regulations into the various use districts, Article XV of the Ordinance contained "Height and Area Districts." These were then laid over the use districts on the zoning map.

Much of the 1937 Ordinance was retained in the current zoning regulations. A few key examples are:

- Lot Area - 6,000 square feet for one-family dwellings
3,000 per family for duplexes
- Front Yard - 30-foot setback (R-1)
- Height - 35 feet (R-1, R-2, T-1)
- Lot Area per family (multi-family units) - 1,500 square feet (T-1, C-1)

In general, there is also a great similarity between 1937 and 1968 relative to the Zoning District Map. Though the "A" Residence District was not as inclusive as the current R-1, other use districts were very much alike.

The important lesson that this source supplies is to realize much of Erie City's current zoning philosophy is literally sixty years old. And, in zoning, age does not necessarily make a document better!

The Waterfront Comprehensive Plan: This document was prepared in 1986 when interest in Erie's Bayfront was emerging. Morton Hoffman and Company completed this report. Its primary aim was to look at the market real estate for Bayfront land and complementary services to the year 2000. Their examination included residential, marina, commercial, and industrial land.

The report offers specific ranges of demand for various markets using two horizons, 1985-1990 and 1990 to 2001. A few comments upon the projected needs are appropriate.

Table 11 of the Hoffman report sets forth estimated market demand numbers of the Bayfront. For example, from 1985 to the year 2000, it projected a market for 770 to 1,070 new residential units (about 15% to 20% as second homes). Certainly, there has been much development in the Bayfront with up-market condominiums much in evidence. Homes developed by Patterson-Erie on the old Strong Estate as well as development on the old Cascade docks are obvious examples. However, the demand for unit has been much slower than anticipated.

Similarly, new offices and restaurants have been developed. Perhaps in the office market, the expectations of the Hoffman report were realized. However, much of this development represented the transfer of tenants from traditional "Downtown" offices to lower State Street and the Bayfront. Consequently, though the Bayfront prospered, there were losses elsewhere in the City.

Conversely, the extraordinary developments of the new Blasco Library the Observation Tower at the dock, and the Maritime Museum, in combination with the Niagara berth, were only partially forecast. Furthermore, the new hotel and retail space may be realized with the construction of the Bayfront Center complex.

As projected, industrial land has also increased, but at a modest pace. The Litton facility, expected to be converted to institutional use, has shown surprising strength and remains as an industrial-maritime use.

Overall, the trends the Hoffman plan projected in the Bayfront area are generally correct. However, the intensity has been much less than expected, and development has occurred at a slower pace than projected. New public investments in the area, led by the continuing

development of the Bayfront Road/Eastside Connector, the Library, the Observation Tower, and the plans of the Port Authority may yet induce additional private investment along Erie's Waterfront, to the level that Hoffman visualized.

The key contribution to Erie land use was the introduction of the Waterfront zoning concept.

Perhaps the key contribution to Erie land use, by the Waterfront Plan, was the introduction of the Waterfront zoning concept (adopted in 1987). Along with the idea of special zoning districts for the Waterfront was the concept of site plan and design review, ideas infrequently used in Pennsylvania zoning.

Much of this report can be read profitably even now - over 10 years later. Its mixture of optimism and reality are refreshing. Some general concepts to keep in mind are:

- Encourage a 24-hour cycle of use
- Consolidate industrial uses toward the Marine terminal (East Bay)
- Frame the retail-hotel development in a real-world environment
- Consider lower State Street as prime commercial development
- Retain and focus on the Brig Niagara
- Encourage urban (2 to 4 story) development along the Bayfront
- Be sensitive to the bluff

Enterprise Area Development Plan - 1986:

Completed by Adams, Graney and Associates, this Plan resulted in a portion of Erie being named as an Enterprise Zone (EZ) under the Commonwealth's program. Although much of the document was focused upon economic concerns, one section, pages 20 to 34, was devoted to a land use analysis of the Study Area. This area had its east border on Peach Street and the west limit on Pittsburgh Avenue. The north and south borders were somewhat irregular. Generally, West 11th and West 12th were the north edges of the zone, while West 19th, West 20th, and West 21st Streets served as the southern border.

A portion of Erie was named as an Enterprise Zone under the Commonwealth's program.

As a result of the analysis completed at that time, seven areas within the proposed EZ were recommended for rezoning. These are as follows:

1. The south side of West 11th (Liberty - west to Cranberry) was zoned M-1 (per 1967 recommendations). Its use remains primarily residential. Rezone to T-1.
2. Change north side of West 12th from M-2 to M-1 from Sassafras to Poplar.
3. Rezone selected areas of West 18th (Sassafras to Poplar) from C-1 to R-3 (essentially those which were, and remain, residential).
4. Rezone selected areas along West 16th and Plum from R-3 to M-1 (and M-2). Also rezone some frontage on Liberty Street (West 17th to West 14th) to C-2 from R-3.
5. Rezone selected vacant parcels and some M-2 to M-1 (Liberty to Cascade, including the former Continental Rubber Works areas, north of 20th and south of 18th).
6. Rezone a portion of the Delaware project off West 16th from R-3 to M-1.
7. Rezone some of the M-1 area (west of Irwin, east of Pittsburgh) to M-2.

Many of the zoning anomalies which were observed by the 1986 Plan still exist today.

Impact Assessment of the Erie Transitway Mall: This document was completed in 1980 as the City reassessed the role of its Transitway Mall. Conceptually, the mall was a product of the Downtown urban renewal efforts of the late 1960s. Its purpose was to re-energize the traditional downtown creating and exciting atmosphere for both office workers and shoppers.

There was a strong feeling that this mall and complementary renewal activities would stem or even reverse the drain of retail from the City center. It did not work.

**The marketplace remains the
prime factor in land
development.**

The Transitway study was completed by a triad of firms, led by Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen & Payne, Inc. It is an important document that has some general land use implications. Perhaps the most important lesson is that just wanting, or wishing for, development is not sufficient. For good or for bad, the marketplace remains the prime factor in land development.

The report did recommend certain development activities in its study area (essentially Front to 12th Streets, Sassafras to Holland Streets). However, these focused on individual activities, such as a retail “gallaria,” market-priced housing, and an expanded convention center. It did not suggest changes to the zoning or land use in this sector.

Erie East Side Enterprise Zone Study: This document was prepared in 1991 by Adams, Graney and Associates. Its purpose was to create a second enterprise zone in Erie, on its east side. Similar to the original effort in 1986, it focused on the industrial corridor which abuts the railroads south of 12th Street. However, it did extend northward in some areas as far as East Lake Road and as far south as the Erie Industrial Park (38th Street and McClelland Avenue).

Where the 1986 report had several, specific land use-zoning recommendations, the 1991 report had few recommendations on this topic. One reason was due to a shift in State policy in the EZ program. Land use concerns were definitely now quite secondary. The second reason was that most of the industrial land use was already suitably zoned. As noted on page 63 of the report “. . . for the most part, the existing land use pattern and the zoning map . . . present a reasonable relationship.” The only zoning comment was the observation that there was an excessive amount of strip commercial zoning along Buffalo Road and Parade Street. Its most important result was an expansion of Erie’s EZ district and a strengthening of some industries.

An Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in the City of Erie: This document was prepared by Community Research Associates in 1991. It was completed to fulfill certain requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development relative to the Community Department Block Grant Program. Though there were 20 separate recommendations which came from this study, none requested any changes to Erie’s Zoning Ordinance. Rather, its efforts focused on issues more directly related to housing. The only possible issue relating to land use and zoning was a perceived limitation of residential care for persons aged 18 to 61 years.

The New Horizons of the Bay City: Completed in 1993, this is a comprehensive study of Erie’s 79 parks which are located both inside and outside City limits. Most of this study

focused on the use and improvement of existing parks within the City's system. That portion of the study consequently represented no change to land use for Erie City. There were some park recreation proposals:

- Waterfront recreation area (west of Dobbin's Landing)
- Bayfront Walking and Promenade facility
- Develop the 26th and McClelland areas as a major park - cost \$3,337,620.

Generally, new projects were on City-owned land and would reflect a change of use from essentially a vacant to a park designation. Yet, they are primarily in residential areas and are not a departure from traditional residential land use patterns. Moreover, the real priority of the Plan is to stabilize, promote, and preserve the park system before it undertakes major expansions.

Summary: Of the documents reviewed, those most important to this Plan are:

- The 1937 Zoning Ordinance
- The Waterfront Comprehensive Plan
- The 1986 Enterprise Area Plan

EXISTING LAND USE

One of the basic requirements for a Land Use Plan is to determine the current use of the land. This is especially true for this Plan, as detailed changes to the Zoning Ordinance and Map will ensue. Generally, the patterns of existing land uses will have a significant influence on future land use recommendations. This is especially true in Erie City, which is nearly fully developed. Any significant deviation from current land use by the City Zoning Map Ordinance would be difficult to achieve. In fact, based upon past experience, such divergence would promote land use conflicts with neighborhood damaging results.

The 1967 PLAN FOR THE FUTURE was based upon the report LAND USE, RESEARCH ANALYSIS, prepared in August of 1965. For that report, in 1963, a detailed survey of land use and structures was completed within Erie City. It must have been a monumental task. There were nine primary land use categories, and various subcategories, resulting in a total of 40 separate uses. These were then listed by Planning District (20) and subdistricts. The land use code was also transcribed onto into the City's 15 plat books. Even now, a user of a plat book in 1999 can ascertain that in 1963, the block at 6th and East Avenue (tax map 1030) contained the following uses:

- CE - Cultural Education (Wayne School)
- CR - Cultural Religion (Wayne Baptist Temple)
- RS - Nine single-family dwellings
- RT - Six two-family residential units
- BC - One business convenience store

The acreage for each use in the planning subdistricts was calculated to the hundredth of an acre and totaled for each of the 20 statistical planning districts. The total land use for the City is shown by Table 7.

TABLE 7**LAND USE - CITY OF ERIE
1963**

<u>Use</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Residential	4,253.32	34.0%
Business	250.13	2.0%
Services	216.06	1.7%
Storage	181.35	1.5%
Transportation	725.54	5.8%
Streets and Alleys	2,458.00	19.7%
Production	1,028.25	8.2%
Social/Cultural	935.48	7.5%
Vacant Land	2,450.51	19.7%
Total	12,498.64	100.0%

Source: LAND USE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS, 1963, Appendix B

The results were graphically presented on an Existing Land Use plate containing these 20 land use categories, along with three classes of structures.

Though this approach represents an excellent “snapshot” in time, it is exactly that. Some updates to the plat books were made as uses changed. However, there was no practical method of continually updating this information. And, after a time, changes were not made. Consequently, this detailed effort did not have the long-term value its originators may have foreseen.

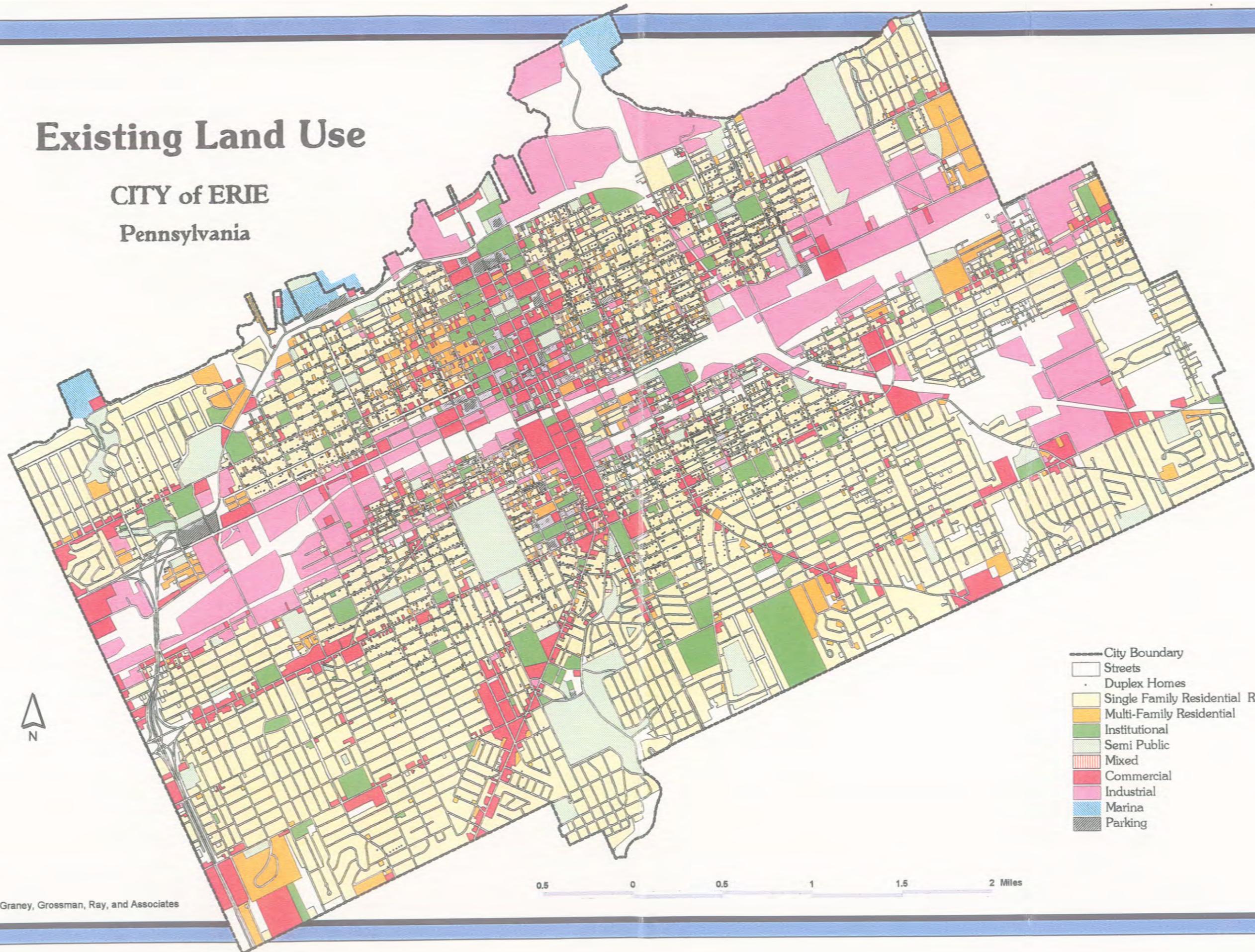
Current Land Use: To determine current land use, a full field survey was undertaken. Two-person teams traveled every public street in the City coding land use. In all, three separate teams, using six individuals, were used. For this survey, a more simplistic land use classification was followed:

- Single-Family Residential - one- and two-family dwellings*
- Multi-Family Residential - multi-family use
- Commercial - office and retail use
- Mixed - smaller residential and commercial uses in a single structure
- Industrial - warehousing, manufacturing and certain utility uses
- Institutional - public and semi-public uses involving structures
- Public/Semi-Public - open uses such as playgrounds, parks, and cemeteries
- Parking - parking garages and large open lots
- Marina - Bay or lakefront - marina areas

*Note: On larger scaled maps, a black dot denotes a duplex.

Existing Land Use

CITY of ERIE
Pennsylvania



- City Boundary
- Streets
- Duplex Homes
- Single Family Residential R-1
- Multi-Family Residential
- Institutional
- Semi Public
- Mixed
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Marina
- Parking



0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

The survey of land use in Erie was indeed a more daunting effort than anyone first assumed. In fact, it took the better part of a year just to complete this task. The land uses were coded directly on plat books supplied by the City. They were then digitized onto an electronic map of Erie, using “GIS” software. This electronic map was supplied by Erie County, who were engaged in a land use study at the same time. It is based upon a series of orthophotographs completed in 1991 for the purpose of 911 addressing. Given the capability of GIS software, the City can use this electronic map as a the first piece toward a true GIS effort for Erie. At the very least, it affords them the opportunity to update land use and zoning information in a convenient manner (see Existing Land Use plate).

Modern GIS software allows such a map to be “geographically” sensitive. As polygons depicting blocks and parcels within blocks were drawn, the software calculates line length, polygon parameter, and area. Where previous area calculations were derived from physical map measurements or estimated by a mechanical planimeter, this effort was calculated electronically. That does not infer one method is better than another — it merely is taking advantage of modern technology. In fact, even the City map has not been tied to ground-control points for the accuracy desired in a full GIS application. Nonetheless, it is more than adequate for land planning purposes. Because of the different techniques used and land use classifications followed, a one-on-one comparison between 1968 and 1998 is difficult. In fact, a modest difference in total acreage is apparent.

However, there are certain trends which are very apparent when Tables 7 and 8 are compared:

- ▶ The area and proportion of residential land use increased dramatically. Much of this can be ascribed to development along the southern boundary of the City (both east and west), the Bird Drive/Roselle Park area, and along the West Bayfront.
- ▶ Commercial areas have also grown, but not nearly as extensively. These changes have been primarily seen along major highways.
- ▶ Industrial use has also increased. In 1968, the Erie Industrial park at 38th and McClelland had quite limited development. In 1998, most of the buildable area of this site has been covered by structures.

TABLE 8**LAND USE - 1998 - CITY OF ERIE**

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Low-Density Residential	4,935	40.0%
Multi-Family Residential	467	3.8%
Institutional	589	4.8%
Public/Semi-Public Open Space	596	4.8%
Mixed Use	35	0.3%
Commercial	883	7.2%
Industrial	1,381	11.2%
Parking	107	0.9%
Streets and R-O-Ws	2,950	23.9%
Marina Areas	99	0.8%
Open	288	2.3%
Total	12,330	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

A frequently asked question is whether the proportion in various land use categories is adequate.

Contrary to past theories, there is no ideal distribution of uses in a municipality. Not every city needs 30 percent commercial use or 50 percent residential. Furthermore, development patterns are area-wide, following economic patterns, not municipal boundaries. Finally, modern land use planning examines trends and patterns rather than being fixed on acres and percentages.

Even with the changes that have occurred over the past 30 years when the land use patterns of 1968 and 1998 are compared, the similarity is indeed striking. Yes, there has been infill. Skyline, Emery, and Perkins are now developed. But, overall, the City appears quite similar.

Perhaps, the major changes are perhaps in intensity. In 1968, Erie's Downtown still bustled with shoppers, though the transfer of retail stores to the "malls" was already well underway. In 1998, much of Erie's Downtown was occupied by offices. Banks, insurance offices, and lawyers have replaced department stores and clothiers. Even in the low-density residential arena, changes have occurred that are not readily apparent. For

example, in 1970, the average Erie household had 3.03 persons; but, by 1990, that figure had dropped nearly 20 percent, to 2.47. Furthermore, many new single-family units, constructed primarily in south Erie, were on larger lots. Combined, these factors decreased residential density (i.e., intensity) by 25 percent.

Thus, Erie City's land use follows a national urban phenomena of the past two decades. A growth in land use areas, but a definite decrease in intensity.

Beyond that, the second principal observation is that Erie is slowly approaching a built-out status. A brief glance at the open areas show that many are associated with railroad right-of-ways, and some, unfortunately, with development constraints. The largest areas of land with developmental potential are in Erie southeast quadrant. One large tract is owned by the City, a second is privately owned (recently rezoned C-3), while a third sector is associated with the Erie Industrial Park. It becomes obvious that except for these well-defined places, future land use shifts will primarily be a result of reusing existing development, not through new development on vacant land.

Some additional generalizations can be made from the Existing Land Use plate.

- The older center City has the greater concentration of commercial land — much of it service-oriented.
- The older City is witness to much more diverse land use patterns.
- Railroads have influenced industrial placements.
- Residential areas with few land use intrusions appear to be in better physical condition than mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Primary highways and roads are often stripped with commercial, retail, and office uses.

LAND USE PLAN

The current Land Use Plan of Erie City is contained in the report ERIE CITY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, dated 1967 and produced by the Erie County Planning Commission. Pages 8 through 12 of that document and its Future Land Use Plan set forth its “Current Land Use” goals of the City. They can be summarized as follows:

Industrial: Expand industrial areas along the West 12th Street corridor, in the east Bayfront, south of 18th to 21st (State to East Avenue), and at the Erie Industrial Park (38th and McClelland).

Commercial: Proposed commercial development embraced the then Downtown (Perry Square to 12th, Sassafras to Holland), the upper area 12th to 26th, Sassafras to French (only Peach to French above 19th). It also envisioned the retention of the Parade (8th to 12th Street) corridor. Retail nodes at Broad Street, 26th; and East Avenue, 38th and Pine, 26th, Parade; West 38th (Washington to Greengarden), 38th and Zimmerman, Upper Peach/Cherry; and 12th Street and Pittsburgh Avenue. Restricted Business-Office sectors were projected along Buffalo Road (east of Downing), West 26th (west of Cherry), Grandview at Pittsburgh Avenue, and Grandview - east of Pine Avenue to Davison, then to Stanton and north to 38th Street; and West 8th.

Residential: There were three residential themes. The frame area of the Downtown, the Bayfront-Center City area, was to be the location of extensive apartment development, some conceived as quite upscale. Older neighborhoods, north of 26th and Raspberry to East Avenue, were slated to provide compact homes and medium-density options such as townhouses. The outer areas were seen as low-density, single-family homes. The primary thrust was to preserve existing low density, single-family areas. To deter blight, strict code enforcement in older areas was suggested.

Social-Education: Much of this category was driven by the development plans of Gannon College (7th Street to 2nd Street, Myrtle to Peach Street).

Realizing many of these land use goals required extensive urban renewal projects involving property acquisition, clearance, and the resale of land. This was especially true for most of the commercial, industrial, and high-density residential goals that were contained in the PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. The 1967 Plan also saw a continuing population growth.

The PLAN FOR THE FUTURE projected Erie's population at 150,000 persons by 1985 (actual 1985 estimate was 114,000).

The Planning document was prepared in good economic times. Extensive suburban migration of population and retail business started but was not yet endemic. The industrial "hard times" of the 1980s were a decade and one-half away, and the emergence of the service sector had not yet occurred.

The challenges and aspirations which have driven this Land Use Plan are quite different. Some concerns are pragmatic — others to enhance Erie's future development. This Plan has a distinct advantage over the 1969 effort. It can look back and see what succeeded and what did not. One lesson is clear — the future land use plan and its implementing land use ordinances must be sensitive to current land use patterns. Consequently, the following observations are appropriate.

Summary Findings: Current land use for Erie City can be summarized as follows:

1. The older area of Erie (north of 26th, Liberty to East Avenue) is its most vulnerable. Mixed-use neighborhoods are common. In some areas, this mix works well. In other areas, there are many incompatible intrusions in the residential areas, also many of the commercial properties are marginal.
2. Special problems in this older area are:
 - Conversion of existing dwellings to higher density - multi-family units
 - Sororities and fraternities
 - Retail locations that just don't work
3. Much of the pressure for rezoning is from residential to commercial, usually along primary traffic arterials.
 - Nearly all major streets are at capacity or over capacity (1995 Erie County Transportation Plan)
 - Typically single lots along all major roads are small

Buffalo Road - 5,200 to 6,000 square feet
West 6th Street - 6,800 to 13,600 square feet
East 26th Street - 4,800 to 6,000 square feet

West 26th Street - 5,400 to 8,000 square feet
Parade - varies - usually under 6,000 square feet
East 38th Street - 4,400 to 6,250 square feet
West 38th Street - 5,800 to 11,000 square feet

Though parcel size varies in Erie, the “newer” residential lot is 40 feet to 60 feet wide, 100 to 150 feet deep. In old Erie, lots are deeper - usually 165 feet, but can be very narrow - 42.5 feet or less.

4. There is pressure for higher density residential use - but overall, demographic trends are for a smaller or stable population.
5. The most attractive, new development areas appear to be lower State Street (commercial) - the West Bayfront and some areas of south Erie (residential).
6. There are several excellent residential areas which need to be protected (Frontier, Lakeside, most of South Erie).
7. The primary industrial areas are vigorous.
8. The “Downtown” area is dominated by service uses, institutions, and high-density residential development. Retail is limited and often aimed at neighboring residents or daytime workers. The introduction of more activities in the core area does appear to be reinvigorating the Downtown.

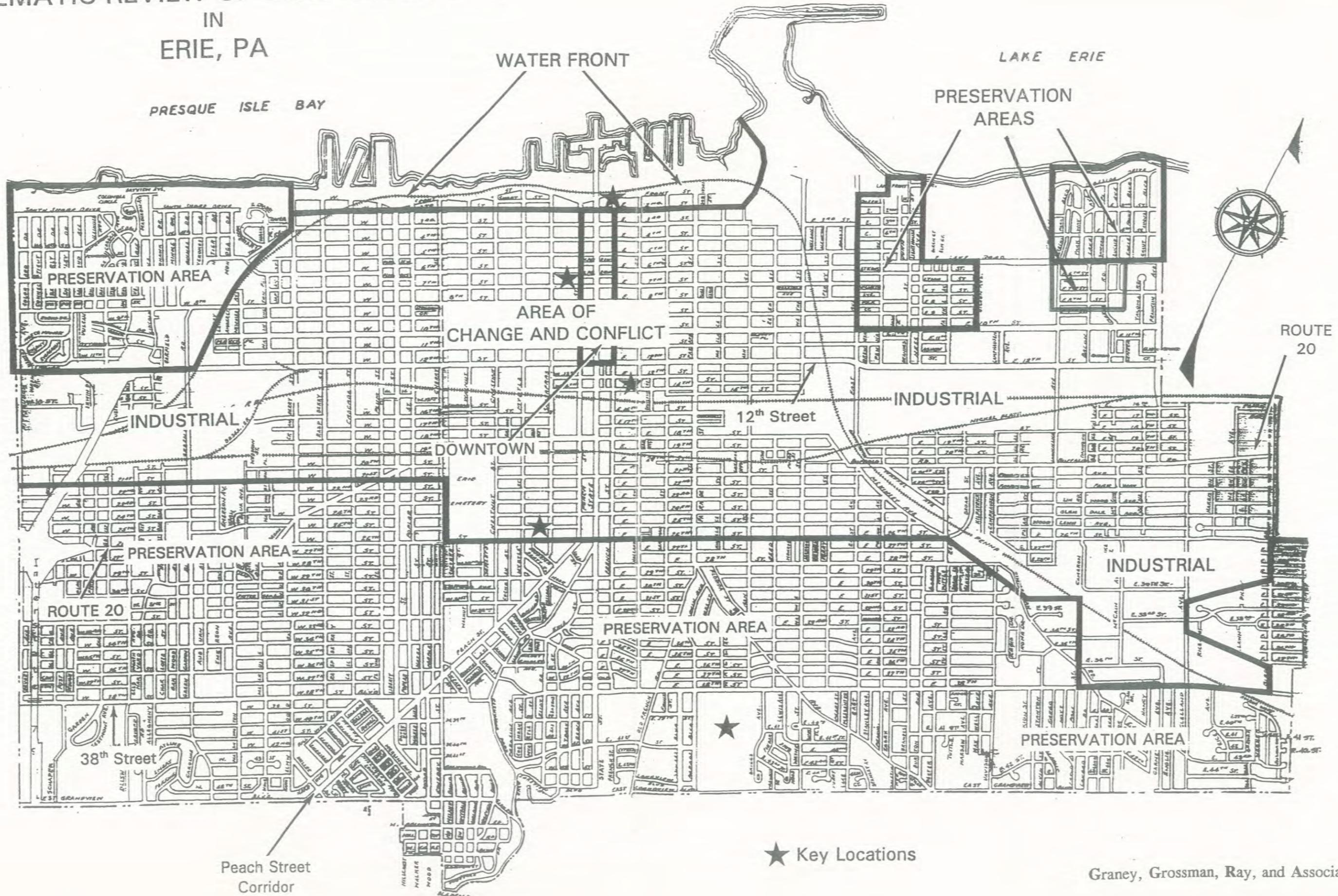
The overall philosophy of this Land Use Plan is drawn from two sources. On April 16, 1996, the Erie City Planning Commission set down some concerns. Six of these became priorities. They were, in order:

- Keeping neighborhoods intact (tied for first)
- Impact of the Eastside Connector (tied for first)
- The Plan should be the prime document for land use decisions
- Provide a vision for the future
- Encourage future development
- Maintain the current development plan

To these broad goals were added:

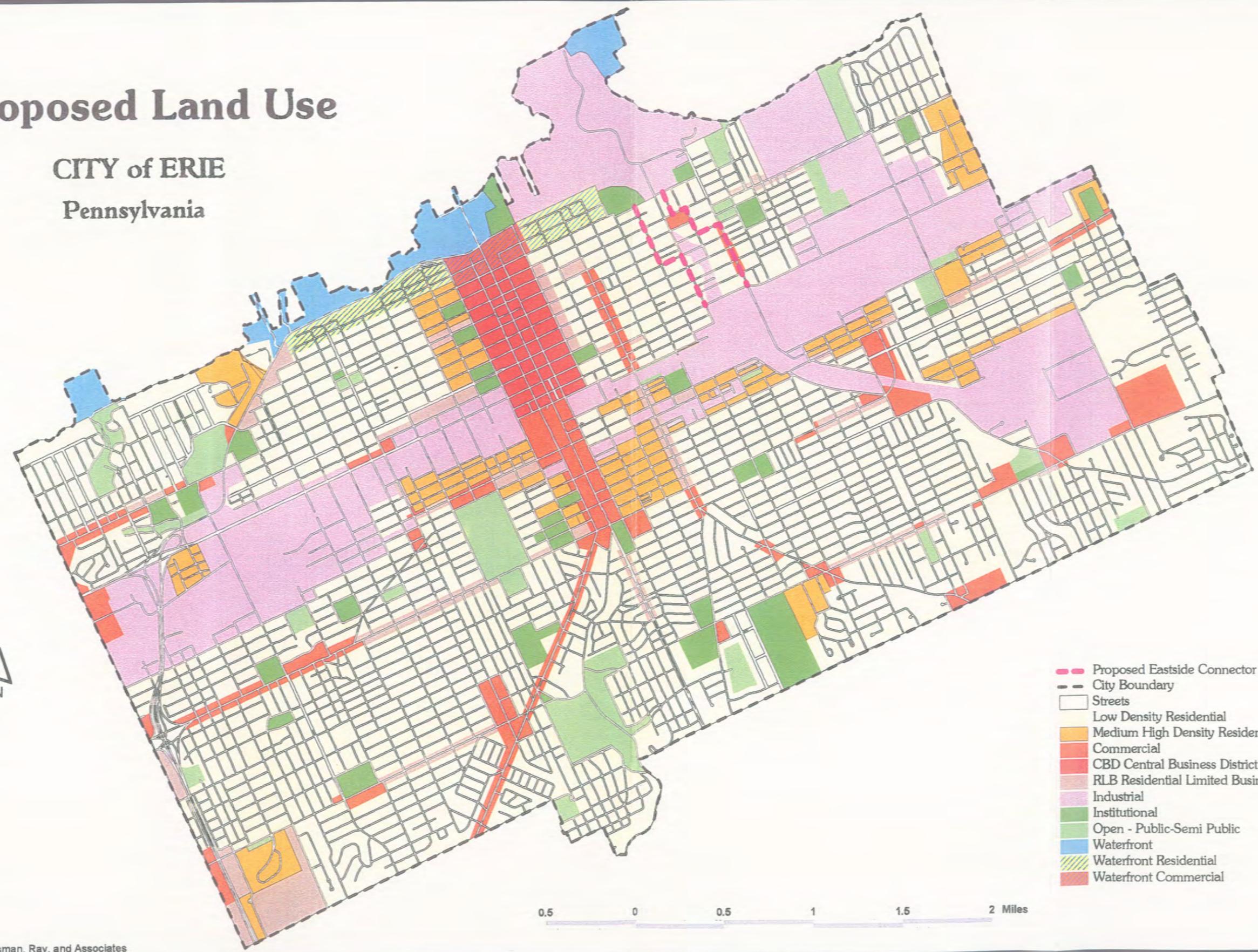
- Preserve the integrity of existing single-family areas

A THEMATIC REVIEW OF LAND USE ISSUES IN ERIE, PA



Proposed Land Use

CITY of ERIE
Pennsylvania



-  Proposed Eastside Connector
-  City Boundary
-  Streets
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium High Density Residential
-  Commercial
-  CBD Central Business District
-  RLB Residential Limited Business
-  Industrial
-  Institutional
-  Open - Public-Semi Public
-  Waterfront
-  Waterfront Residential
-  Waterfront Commercial



- Encourage successful commercial areas
- Strategically place non-retail commercial areas along major traffic routes
- Provide and protect key industrial sectors

A plate, Land Use Issues, shows some of these factors geographically.

The proposed Land Use Plan is shown by the plate on the following page. Geographically and thematically, its major elements are as follows:

1. The Bayfront - The Bayfront has become one of the most desirable locations within the City of Erie. Both the immediate Bayfront and the area surrounding it, receive special consideration under both the Land Use Plan and its primary implementing document, the Erie Zoning Ordinance. This special attention to the Bayfront area encourages good design, wise use, and the preservation of bay/lake vistas. The Bayfront Parkway and Eastside Connector are Erie's gateway to the Bayfront. As such, they too should adhere to high design standards and present a minimum of visual clutter and signage to visitors.
2. Residential Areas - The primary difference between this Land Use Plan and the prior edition, from 1967, is the treatment of residential densities. This Plan recognizes that the Frontier Park area, the Manor subdivision, most of southwest and southeast Erie, as well as the Lakeside area and other neighborhoods on Erie's Eastside are sound residential areas which deserve protection. The underlying philosophy of this Plan is that these areas should remain essentially for single-family dwellings, with an occasional duplex permitted. In the older sections of the City, generally north of 26th Street, east of Greengarden, and west of East Avenue, the Plan recognizes that there are many neighborhoods of mixed use. Moderate densities are appropriate in these areas, but determinations must be done on a block-by-block basis. Therefore, where possible, low-density residential, an R-1 zoning designation, is desirable.

However, where appropriate, in the scale of the neighborhood, R-2 zoning may be the best answer the City's development needs.

This is especially true in the older sections of Erie, where land use changes are inevitable and that there is a high degree of varied land use. The ability to assemble a few parcels and develop new town-house type residential areas may be a beneficial change to existing developmental patterns.

The medium, high-density residential is shown on this map by a brownish, orange. In some respects, it reflects the existing land use patterns of the City. Many of the Erie City Housing Authority projects are shown in that designation, as well as some

of the major apartment developments. Some of the theme of the 1967 Plan is retained by the use of this designation in the area immediately to the west of the Central Business District. However, to a large extent, this use category has been cut back and is now concentrated on the region from 21st, 26th, Parade to French, along the Buffalo Road corridor, and north of West 18th Street. One section that has been added serves as a buffer between the Erie Industrial Park and the low-density residential neighborhoods to its north along Fairmont Parkway.

A final element is flexibility. The current land use controls in Erie lack the capacity to develop small or large parcels in a varied, holistic manner. To allow developmental innovation, a Planned Residential Development option in the Zoning Ordinance is needed.

3. The business and commercial areas are shown in red. There is little change to the Downtown CBD area, and much of the other designated sections are, in fact, existing commercial, often located along busy transportation corridors. There has been an effort to rationalize this land use. For example, West 26th Street, west of Brown Avenue, is a wide, very busy, road. Consequently, much of its frontage has been designated as commercial.
4. Conversely, east of Brown Avenue, much of 26th Street, both east and west, is a relatively narrow two-lane street, with parking on one side. Furthermore, it is nearly fully developed, with limited opportunity to acquire property and create the kind of parcel size which is necessary for today's auto-oriented retail. Therefore, much of this has been designated as a limited business and residential area by the proposed Land Use Plan. This will allow flexibility in the utilization of this property by owners. But, at the same time, not encourage the type of incompatible land use that would have negative effects upon the low-density residential areas, which abut these strips, both to the north and south.

The Limited Business designation has also been used on 38th Street, both east and west. Once again, the City is faced with the problem of having a high volume, often high speed, transportation corridor which penetrates good residential areas. Typically, offices and related service-oriented enterprises are day-time operations and blend in nicely with the abutting residential neighbors. It is Plan policy that this is the best approach to accommodate the growing demand for business-type uses on these corridors, while at the same time preserving the integrity of abutting neighborhoods. This use also allows for a more logical transition between commercial nodes that are found on these busy streets and nearby residential areas.

It must be finally remembered that though the West 38th Street corridor developed much later than the 26th Street commercial corridor, it has many of the same problems. These problems focus around the size of lots, multiple parcel ownership, and the limitations on available parking.

5. The Industrial land use follows the historic development patterns of the City of Erie. The use of the Bayfront property for both bulk aggregate and storage, the City sewer plant, and the shipping facilities near the channel are apparent. The influence of early railroads in an east-west corridor is shown, along with the influence of the Hammermill Paper Company and the eastside industrial development activities of the Greater Erie Industrial Development Corporation. These are important uses to the City, both as generators of tax base and as job creators. As such, it is important to both recognize them and protect them.
6. The Institutional and Open Land categories essentially reflect the existing parks, institutions, and schools found within the City. Based upon the City's recently completed comprehensive recreation plan, no great new development of parks or open space is proposed.
7. The Eastside Connector presents a special challenge to the City. Much of it travels through an already intensely developed sector of Erie. The City has learned from its experience with the 1968 Plan that wholesale land use changes, without the ability to affect same through urban renewal or similar devices, merely encourage incompatible land uses.

Along the Eastside, especially to the north of 12th Street, industrial and residential uses have lived side by side for years. A critical portion of the Eastside Connector travels through this area. This Plan recognizes that this portion of the Eastside Connector may present economic opportunities for the City for the future. However, it is the policy of this Plan that such changes must be comprehensive and area-wide and not limited to benefitting one or two parcels at the cost of introducing islands incompatible land use into residential areas. Therefore, this Plan identifies the Eastside Connector as a generator of possible future land use change, but for the current time, prefers to stay with the existing land use patterns of this section.

Finally, there must be a recognition, of this Plan, that there are historic neighborhoods in the City. Some have already received national recognition. At a minimum, this Plan must provide a means for the residents of such areas to preserve and protect them. Using the

City Zoning Ordinance is one option. The Planning Code allows such an option, and it would not create a new regulatory body.

This Plan attempts to reflect the very priorities that the City Planning Commission set forth: preserve the best of Erie, protect the residential neighborhoods, but at the same time allow for the wise development and redevelopment of the City to make it a healthy, prosperous municipality. We believe this Plan achieves this goal.

As a final admonition, this Plan has learned that unrealistic assumptions can have unfortunate results. For example, in 1967, much of the land around Erie's CBD was designated R-3, in the belief that private-market, expensive apartments would cluster here. It did not really happen. True, there was one high-end apartment development. However, most of the resulting land use changes were the conversion of single and duplex homes into multi-family units. These were not always positive conversions. A second example was West 11th Street, from Liberty to Wechsler. It was assumed that urban renewal would provide the tool for changing a hodge-podge of industrial/commercial/residential uses into an orderly industrial corridor and would provide buffers to mitigate use changes. However, the detailed urban renewal plan of the 1960s became the generic Block Grant Program of the 1990s. With that change, the grand schemes were forgotten and, today, that area of West 11th is virtually unchanged over 30+ years.

As Erie City faces the new millennium, it does so with vigor. A new highway initiative is driving a circumferential loop to I-90. State, Federal, City, and private investment is transforming the Bayfront, Erie's economy is likewise rebounding. Once written off as part of the Midwest "Rustbelt," new economic growth is apparent. Industrial land is at a premium and resident industries are prospering. Between 1989 and 1996, the City's return on earned income increased a healthy 22 percent.

So, this Plan is being written at a very opportune time. A period of Erie's history which allows a mixture of experience, pragmatism, and hope to be blended as the City plans for its future!

THE ZONING ORDINANCE

In Pennsylvania, the primary instrument of land use policy is the zoning ordinance. That certainly is the situation in Erie. Because of this, much of the effort of this Land Use Plan has been focused on zoning. Certainly, there were lessons to be remembered from the past. In 1967, the PLAN FOR THE FUTURE envisioned dramatic changes to Erie. Population growth would continue indefinitely and major urban renewal projects would reshape many blocks of the City. Neither of these events occurred. Essentially, many of the ambitious land use goals set forth by the Plan were simply not realized. This experience can be capsulized as follows:

- ▶ Widespread changes in land use — funded primarily by public action — are unlikely to occur.
- ▶ Changes to the Zoning Map predicated upon future actions are not effective until those actions are actually programmed.
- ▶ Land use assumptions must be based on a realistic assessment of trends.
- ▶ Land use policy must recognize private market forces.
- ▶ Policy cannot be set in a top-down fashion.

The current City of Erie Zoning Ordinance and Map were adopted on July 10, 1968. That was the same year the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code was enacted by the General Assembly. The philosophy and land use policy of this ordinance was founded in two primary documents, the 1937 Zoning Ordinance and the ERIE CITY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE (1967).

These facts lead to some of the problems contained in the current ordinance. They can be summarized as follows:

1. The ordinance is not completely in “sync” with the current Planning Code, nor with its 1988 re-enactment.
2. Many of the land use concepts and lot criteria taken from the 1937 Ordinance are not appropriate in 1998.

3. The Zoning Map of 1968 assumed all needed actions to realize the 1967 PLAN FOR THE FUTURE and its Future Land Use Plan would be implemented. They were not, and consequently, some of the zoning district patterns are inappropriate.

Added to these broader issues are some other elements which create additional problems with the current zoning ordinance. The problems are manifested in many ways, but can be summarized under three categories.

The first is the Zoning Map. A series of 29 zoning map changes was examined. These took place from January of 1994 to July of 1996. The sheer volume of approved changes is, in itself, a concern. Typically, Zoning Map changes are infrequent. The Erie City frequency of change denotes two separate problems. The most obvious is the fact that there must be a better rationalization between the Zoning Map and the real estate market of Erie. The second fact is not as obvious. But, even more important, City Council has no confidence in the current Zoning Map!!

A second system of the ordinance's malaise is the frequency of hearings before the Zoning Hearing Board. The Board has a near chronic overload, with about a dozen cases per month. Some 80 percent of these relate to dimensional variance requests.

Another concern with the ordinance can be summarized as administrative problems. These present a wide variety of issues the City Zoning Officers must deal with on a near daily basis. Many are not critical, but most are chronic and ongoing. They work to the detriment of the City and those requesting permits under the zoning ordinance. When asked to delineate these administrative problems, the City zoning staff came up with a "punch list" which ran onto several pages. Most of these issues were quite mundane in nature, clearer standards, better definitions, and similar needs. Individually, they were minor annoyances, but together, they did cause unneeded administrative bottlenecks. It must be stressed that these primarily represented frustrations for citizens following under the Ordinance's preview — not just for administrators.

In summary, the City needs to make dramatic changes to its Zoning Ordinance and Map. Some of these changes are technical in nature — update to statute law; some are purely administrative — make the document easier to use; but, some changes are fundamental. Changing from the philosophy of wholesale renewal by bulldozer, to preservation, conservation, and beneficial change. Change within the context of the Erie City of today and the Erie City that can be tomorrow. Such changes are both to text and map. Though some of the format, language, and standards of the 1968 Ordinance can be retained, the

shift in overall philosophy argues that this should be treated as a new, readopted ordinance, not merely an amended one.

This ordinance must become the basic tool for this City to allow its citizens to revitalize Erie — truly, one of America's great places to live!

ADDENDUM

Administration

Erie is classified as a third-class city under Pennsylvania law. The City is a home-rule municipality, classified as a strong mayor organization, with a seven-member City Council. In addition to the Mayor and City Council, a City Treasurer and City Controller are elected directly by its citizens.

Administratively, the City has four departments. These are:

- Public Safety
- Economic and Community Development
- Administration and Finance
- Public Works, Parks and Property

Each of these departments is subdivided into bureaus or offices. For example, the Department of Public Safety contains two Bureaus, Police and Fire. Other departments are similarly divided along functional lines. The Department of Economic and Community Development functions include the administration of planning, zoning, and building regulations.