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# **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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Wheatfield Township, Perry County, Pennsylvania

JANUARY 30, 2013 FINAL DRAFT

Adopted by

Wheatfield Township Board of Supervisors on (date)

Prepared by

Wheatfield Township Planning Commission

With assistance from



Preparation of this plan was funded by the Wheatfield Township Board of Supervisors.

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# Adopting Resolution

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Placeholder for adopting resolution

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# Acknowledgements

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## **Board of Supervisors**

James L. Fuller, Chairman  
Annette L. Mullen, Vice-Chairman  
Barry L. Schrope, Supervisor

## **Planning Commission**

Paul Finkenbinder, Chairman  
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## **The Purpose of the Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan is a 10-year policy guide for development and conservation in Wheatfield Township. The Plan establishes policies for community and economic growth and improvement; renews a foundation for land use and development regulations; and provides a framework for decisions regarding transportation, housing, municipal services, utilities, natural resource protection and historic resource conservation. Its purpose in considering these topics simultaneously is to ensure that municipal decisions are coordinated and complementary.

## **Authority for Municipal and Intergovernmental Planning**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended, authorizes municipalities to plan for their future using a variety of planning tools. These tools include the municipal planning commission, the comprehensive plan, the official map for planned municipal facilities and infrastructure, the subdivision and land development ordinance, the capital improvement program, the zoning ordinance, and the zoning hearing board. The MPC also authorizes municipalities to use these tools in cooperation with one another through intergovernmental agreements.

Article III of the MPC requires that a comprehensive plan consider the many factors that influence a community's development: land use, transportation system, housing, the economy, community facilities and services, and natural and cultural resources. Comprehensive plans are to evaluate the existing conditions of these factors, primarily within the study area but also in the context of surrounding areas. From these studies, the Comprehensive Plan projects community and economic trends, evaluates alternative approaches, and recommends a future land use plan and revisions to land use and development regulations, capital improvement to transportation and infrastructure systems, and revisions to municipal services to manage expected change (growth or decline) while protecting the community's resources and character

or transforming to a more desired character. The Comprehensive Plan should organize and prioritize these recommendations as short and long range strategies to implement the plan and achieve its community development goals and objectives.

As a policy document, the Comprehensive Plan does not add, change or remove municipal regulations, procedures or standards. It may recommend that such items be revised to guide the development of a more cohesive and sustainable community. But it is only through subsequent actions—not the plan itself—that these are put into effect.

## **The Comprehensive Plan and its preparation can...**

- Engage local officials and community residents in a planning process to identify quality of life issues in the township and form consensus on goals for the next 10 years.
- Address growth and development trends and issues with best practices and innovative solutions.
- Provide a realistic projection of future land use scenarios based on current patterns and propose strategies for a more desirable and sustainable future.
- Establish consistency between future land use policies, land use regulations (zoning), infrastructure investments, and conservation policies.
- Assist state, county, and municipal officials in their decision-making process by defining needs and priorities.
- Outline feasible areas for cooperation with Perry County and other municipalities.

## **The Comprehensive Plan cannot...**

- Change land use regulation. Land use is regulated by zoning ordinances and maps.
- Require new standards for development and construction. Subdivision and land development ordinances regulate these topics.
- Determine what land will be developed. This is a property owner's decision.
- Determine what land will be owned by the public sector or by private owners. Such determination requires action by a public or private entity.

## History of Planning in Wheatfield Township

Wheatfield Township has employed five of the seven municipal planning tools to manage development and its impact on the community since 1970, when its planning commission was established. The planning commission's first responsibility was the preparation of a comprehensive plan, adopted in 1974. In 1988, the township adopted municipal land development regulations and in 1993, a municipal land use (zoning) ordinance, which included provisions for a municipal zoning hearing board. The township does not use an official map or a capital improvement program to plan future public land acquisitions or improvements for township facilities, road network expansions, or other public purposes. In accordance with other state statutes, the township follows a prepared sewage facilities plan and an adopted recreation plan.

### Municipal Planning Tools

1. Planning Agencies
2. Comprehensive Plan
3. Official Map
4. Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
5. Capital Improvement Program
6. Zoning Ordinance
7. Zoning Hearing Board

**Table 1-1 Planning Activities in Wheatfield Township**

Planning Tool	Adopted/Established	Last Amended
Comprehensive Plan	11/1974	
Zoning Ordinance	12/1993	4/2008
Zoning Map	12/1993	5/2008
Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance	2/1988	3/2007
Official Map	None	
Planning Commission	5/1970	7/1994
Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan	Prepared and followed; not adopted	
Recreation Plan	2008	

Source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission website, [www.tcrpc-pa.org](http://www.tcrpc-pa.org)

## Relationship to Local Plans and Regulations and County Plans

The Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan can give direction to its municipal ordinances and other municipal plans. As a result, ordinances may need to be amended to become consistent with the comprehensive plan.

The comprehensive plan should be generally consistent with the Perry County Comprehensive Plan and other Perry County plans and guidance documents. These include the following, which are reviewed in Chapter 6:

- Perry County Greenways, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, 2011
- Tri-County Regional Growth Management Plan, 2011

- HATS Regional Transportation Plan
- Tri-County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Perry County Plan, 2008
- Perry County Sewerage Plan, 1994
- Perry County Natural Areas Inventory, 2005

## **An Overview of the Plan Preparation**

The preparation of Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan blended professional planning expertise with the local knowledge and values of citizens and local officials. In advance of the plan's preparation, municipal representatives identified several planning priorities. The township desired to:

1. Analyze, examine, and establish Rural Areas, Rural Centers, Agricultural Areas, and Natural Areas consistent with the Perry County Comprehensive Plan.
2. Assess the applicability of the Comprehensive Plan's goals.
3. Assess the impacts of the most recent Tri County Growth Study and HATS Study.
4. Assess the impacts of business development, particularly the Neighborhood Commercial District and its impact on Route 274.
5. Address the sustainability of current agricultural practices.
6. Address the recreation, park, and open space needs of the region.
7. Assess housing needs. If needed, identify possible locations for large scale housing development and assess impact on township roads and intersections.
8. Determine the effects and impacts of land use on the school district.
9. Evaluate an appropriate business to residential ratio for the fiscal health of the township and school districts while taking into account the rural setting of the area.
10. Assess the value of historic places and structures, such as mill at Dellville and the park at Montebello.
11. Identify strategies for preservation of the historic and cultural character.
12. Assess the impact of surrounding township plans for future development.
13. Identify funding sources in order to implement the strategies of the plan.

## ***Technical Preparation***

The technical preparation of the plan was conducted in three phases. The planning commission reviewed data available from U.S. Census Bureau, municipal and county records, and other plans and studies to analyze trends and issues in the township and its surroundings. These findings are reported in a series of township profiles in the Appendix and summarized in Chapters 2 and 3. Maps from recent plans and studies were cross-referenced and new maps of

population density, land use, and community facilities were prepared using geographic information systems (GIS) technology.

The second phase projected development trends for the next 10 years and estimated its impacts, evaluated three alternatives for managing that limited development, reviewed current land use and land development regulations, and revised the community development goals and objectives from the 1974 comprehensive plan for current conditions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Throughout the process, the interrelationship among land use, transportation, and other aspects of community development and consistency with Perry County planning were kept in mind. The results of this phase are found in Chapters 4 and 5.

The third phase developed a rural strategy to achieve those goals and objectives. The rural strategy is presented in Chapter 5. Given its relative isolation and the slow pace of the economy as the plan was being prepared, the recommendations are not substantial in number or effect. However, several topics are recommended for further consideration and could become more relevant if the pace of development increases.

## *Public Involvement*

The public participation process included a variety of techniques to obtain specific input, foster local ownership, and build support for plan approval and implementation throughout the region. The following techniques were used:

1. The Wheatfield Township Planning Commission and the planning consultant, Gannett Fleming, Inc., met throughout the planning process to develop the plan and discuss local input on issue analysis, alternative approaches, and recommendations.
2. Key person interviews were conducted with:
  - Township Supervisors
  - Township Recreation Board
  - Township Zoning Officer
  - Duncannon Fire Company
  - Duncannon EMS
  - Duncannon Sportsmen's Association
  - Four large land owners
  - Four business owners
  - A local historian
  - Perry County Planning Commission
  - Perry County Economic Development Corporation
  - Perry County Farmland Preservation Board
  - Perry County Transportation Authority
  - PennDOT's County Maintenance Office

3. A Public Meeting was conducted on November 15, 2011 at the Duncannon EMS Building to present the findings of the 2011 Citizen Survey and discuss the issues and concerns raised by the survey and township profiles. Twenty-six people attended the meeting, viewed the presentation, and discussed the following questions. A complete meeting summary for Public Meeting #1 is provided as Appendix B1.

- Should additional lands be designated for business and industry development?
- What flexibility do farmers need or anticipate?
- What township, county, or state investments could incentivize business development or indirect economic benefit to Wheatfield Township?
- Where are appropriate locations for smaller lots and housing units?
- How and where should open space be protected?
- Would you support mandatory trash collection? a burning ban to protect clean air?
- Would you support higher standards for property maintenance?
- Are there other roads or bridges that need to be maintained differently or improved?
- Should the township support the water trail and rail-trail concepts? Are there other trail corridor suggestions?
- What historic landmarks should be incorporated?
- Are there services that Wheatfield Township doesn't provide that it should?
- Are there services that Wheatfield Township doesn't provide but should provide through shared arrangements?

## Review and Adoption

A public meeting was conducted by the Wheatfield Township Planning Commission on October 11, 2012 at the Wheatfield Township Municipal Building. Three residents attended the meeting and voiced no concerns about the draft plan. A meeting summary is provided as Appendix B4.

The Wheatfield Township Board of Supervisors held a public hearing to hear public comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan on \_\_\_, 2013. A record of the public hearing is provided as Appendix B5.

The Wheatfield Township Board of Supervisors passed Resolution \_\_\_, adopting the Comprehensive Plan, on \_\_\_, 2013.



## 2

## THE TOWNSHIP AND ITS CHARACTER



### **Its Character**

Wheatfield Township lies northwest of the Borough of Duncannon in Perry County, Pennsylvania. The Township comprises 13,500 acres (21 square miles) of rolling ridges and valleys, drained by the Juniata River, Little Juniata Creek and Shermans Creek, which empty into the Susquehanna River at Duncannon. Pastures, crop fields, and woodlands dominate the landscape. Country roads carry motorists over hilltops and along the waterways, conserving wide swaths of open space. Historic farmsteads, churches, and bridges speckle the countryside among more recent homes and a handful of home-based, farm-based and small businesses.

### **Its Residents**

By 2010, the township population reached 3,334 residents in 1,308 households. The vast majority of residents were European descendants with a minority Hispanic/Latino population of 1.8 percent. The average township resident was 39.6 years old, held a high school diploma, and lived in a 2-3 person household. Residents who worked outside the home tended to hold management/professional occupations or sales/office occupations and were most commonly employed by public service and logistics industries – many in the Capital Region but also statewide. The median household income in 2009 was estimated at \$62,333.

The Population Density Map in Appendix C shows that residents are highly concentrated in a few small areas, such as the Paradise Mobile Home Park and compact single family home developments, and otherwise dispersed across the Township.

Trends in demographics since 1990 showed that residents ages 45-64 made up a larger percentage of the overall population. Residents were also more highly educated as demonstrated by increased percentages of residents with high school diplomas and advanced degrees. In addition, household sizes were smaller with fewer children under the age of 18.

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Median household income rose from \$44,010 in 1989 to \$62,333 in 2009, an increase of more than 42 percent.

*The 2011 citizen survey conducted as a public involvement activity for the comprehensive plan found that most of the 83 respondents to the survey:*

- *Have lived in Wheatfield Township more than 24 years (49%)*
- *Choose to live in Wheatfield Township for its rural community (69%) and because it's a good place to raise a family (54%)*
- *Have no children (under 18 years) living at home (65%)*
- *Own their home (95%)*
- *Are employed full-time (52%)*

*While only 83 survey responses were submitted, several of these demographic and socio-economic statistics were very similar to those reported by the 2010 census.*

## Natural and Historical Resources

Topography has protected Wheatfield Township's natural environment more than man-made efforts. First, Blue Mountain visually separates Perry County from Cumberland County, the Great Valley, and the Capital Region. The limited number and capacity of transportation corridors around and over the mountain limits access to Perry County, especially its central and western municipalities. Pine Ridge creates a smaller-scaled separation from Duncannon. Second, steep slopes on the mountain and hill areas have made conventional development techniques impractical.

Soil conditions are typical of communities in the mountain sections of the Ridge and Valley yet still support an active agricultural community. Naturally productive farmland soils are present but not abundant in the township. Prime farmland soils are located only in the flattest valleys, while soils of statewide importance, those that are productive under accepted agricultural management practices, are somewhat more common, especially found along the waterways. The remaining soils tend to be shallow and less fertile.

Significant waterways and water frontage are found along the township's eastern and southern borders. Approximately two miles of the Juniata River flow along Wheatfield Township's eastern border. More than three miles of the Little Juniata Creek and more than four miles of Shermans Creek, plus their tributaries, flow through the township before emptying into the Susquehanna River. These waterways support both warm water and cold water fisheries, offering local recreational opportunities.



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While there are over 6,000 acres of woodlands in the township, only those along the southern border are considered large, unfragmented forest blocks. Similarly, there are only a few areas that support nearly pristine natural communities of plant and animal wildlife: Aqueduct Bluffs/Juniata River Scour, Sherman's Creek at Pine Ridge, Losh Run Valley, and Pine Ridge Swamp, on the border with Penn Township. The balance of open space in the township provides wildlife habitat, and offers scenic beauty and nature-based recreational opportunities – mostly on private lands.

Commercially viable stone, mineral, oil and gas resources are not found near the surface in Wheatfield Township but the Marcellus Formation of the Hamilton Group underlies the northwestern portion of the township. This deep, shale-based formation is under exploration throughout parts of Pennsylvania for the feasible extraction of natural gas. No Marcellus gas wells have been permitted in Perry County to date.

The township's agricultural heritage is reflected in its historic features: farmsteads of homes, barns, and outbuildings; mills, bridges, and railroads associated with the processing, production, and shipment of agricultural and forest products; and civic buildings, such as churches. Historic features that are still in use are generally in good condition. Those that have been abandoned from use have generally not been maintained. Many other historic structures, such as grist mills, iron forges, and the Pennsylvania Railroad, have been removed, but their locations are still known to a few residents and County historians. Regardless of their presence or condition, all of these historic resources are part of Wheatfield Township's history and potentially significant to the township, Perry County, and the Commonwealth.

## Current Development Patterns and Community Infrastructure

As a result of its rolling topography and relative seclusion, development in Wheatfield Township is only vaguely concentrated along public roadways and gentle hilltops. Roseglen is perhaps the most concentrated area of residential development, followed by the Paradise Mobile Home Park (also known as the Pfautz trailer park) and the largest residential subdivisions, Wheatfield Estates and Dellville Manor on Grandview Drive. Commercial businesses are few and isolated: the Duncannon Farmer's Market (formerly Bruce's Furniture), Noaker's Auto Body, John Wright's Used Cars, Burgett's Land Surveying, Ameriprise Financial Services and the Electrician Union Training Center plus scattered home- and farm-based businesses.

The Existing Land Use Map in Appendix C shows that most of the land in the Township is used for agriculture or as forestland and residential uses are concentrated along state highways.

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*The 2011 citizen survey conducted as a public involvement activity for the comprehensive plan found:*

- *Residents are divided over whether or not adequate commercial services, such as shopping and restaurants, are available within or near Wheatfield Township; 45% agree, 54% disagree.*
- *Respondents would like more commercial services to locate in or near the township for variety of reasons: to increase local employment opportunities, to balance the municipal and school district tax base, and to increase convenience.*

The township's housing stock, 1,370 units, comprises homesteads on the farm and single family detached homes, supplemented by the trailer park and two small group homes. A majority of single family homes were built in the 1970s and 1980s. The average home was valued at \$142,000 in 2009. Nearly all homes are owner-occupied. Residents of the trailer park own their trailer and rent the lot. A few homes are made available as rentals by private individuals.

Water supply and sewerage disposal are provided by on-lot wells and on-lot disposal systems. The trailer park operates a small package plant for sewerage disposal. Stormwater is managed through surface grading and detention basins.

The roadway network serves as the backbone of the township's transportation system. The majority of workers rely exclusively on the roadway network for their journey to work to regional and statewide employment centers. The roadway network consists of 15.9 miles of state roadway and 34.75 miles of township-owned roadway. Traffic volumes vary widely given the differing roles of the township's roadway network. PA 274 and PA 34, rural minor arterials, each carry over 6,000 vehicles daily. Other state routes carry lighter traffic volumes: PA 849, 1,400 vehicles per day; Dellville Road, 350 vehicles per day; and Paradise Road and Aqueduct Road, each 400 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes for township-owned roadways are assumed to be light carrying only local traffic; data is not available. Residents also walk and bike on the roads and road shoulders, as the few sidewalks in Wheatfield Township do not function as a system and there are no marked bicycle lanes on the roads. Demand-responsive transit service is available to seniors, persons with disabilities, and other qualifying individuals through the Perry County Transit Authority.

## **Municipal Facilities and Community Services**

The township owns two properties: the office and maintenance facility on New Bloomfield Road and Wagner Park on Paradise Road. From the office/maintenance facility, the township provides the following services to its residents and business citizens:

# The Township and Its Character

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- Road maintenance of township-owned roads, including surface repair and replacement, clearing and snow plowing
- Planning, zoning and engineering (subdivision and land development standards and review)
- Park maintenance
- Monthly collection of specified household recyclables from the drop-off facility
- Administrative services, including public meeting space.

An annual collection of large household items for disposal, e.g. furniture, doors/windows, wood, appliances, small motorized equipment, bicycles, and tires, occurs each spring at the park. Household trash collection is individually contracted by property owners with local haulers.

Wagner park was established in 1991 with a land donation from Mildred B. Wagner. The site has been expanded and facilities developed in the ensuing years under leadership of the volunteer Recreation Board. Additional recreation opportunities are available on nearby municipal and county parklands, on state game and park lands, and through arrangement with private landowners. Recreation programs, such as youth sports and faith-based adult softball, are organized by volunteers.

The Community Facilities Map in Appendix C shows that most community services are based in Duncannon and/or New Bloomfield.

4As a relatively small community, the township has no local police, fire, or emergency medical service department. Citizens rely on the Pennsylvania State Police for law enforcement services, the Duncannon Fire Company and the New Bloomfield Volunteer Fire Company for fire protection, and the Duncannon EMS for emergency medical services. The township makes annual contributions to the fire companies and Duncannon EMS to help sustain these volunteer-based public safety services.

The Susquenita School District serves residents of eight municipalities, including Wheatfield Township with elementary and secondary school facilities located in Duncannon. Two private schools near Wheatfield Township, as well as others in Perry County and the Capital Region, offer alternative education programs for grades K-12.

The Bloomfield and Newport Public Libraries are the two closest libraries to Wheatfield Township. Both are members of the Perry County Library System.

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The Perry County Office of Aging, based in New Bloomfield, offers a variety of services and assistance for seniors. The nearest senior centers are located in Duncannon and New Bloomfield.

Commuter Services of PA helps commuters find travel alternatives to driving alone and helps employers support the use of travel alternatives.

*The 2011 citizen survey conducted as a public involvement activity for the comprehensive plan found:*

- *At least 65% of respondents agreed that 8 of the 11 community services available within or near Wheatfield Township are adequate: state police, fire and ambulance, road maintenance, trash collection, recycling, public parks and recreation, and public walking, biking, riding trails.*
- *A slight majority (57%) agreed that on-demand transportation service from the Perry County Transportation Authority is adequate but nearly 35 % were not sure.*
- *Only 40% agreed that public library services and services for seniors are adequate accompanied by significant response rates for “not sure.”*
- *Some respondents were uncertain of the availability of area library, senior and on-demand transportation services.*

### 3

## TRENDS AND CONCERNS



### A Steady Growth Trend

Growth in Wheatfield Township was slow during the first decade of the 21st century—a mere 5 more residents—following a 60-year trend of steady growth. The economic downturn in the late 2000s depressed the housing and employment markets, and thus slowed population growth in many outlying communities.

Yet, this small population increase was accompanied by 49 more households and 87 more homes. Since housing and household growth were not stagnant, other factors influenced the very small population increase. Household sizes declined by one tenth from 2.75 to 2.65 persons per household alongside lower percentages of children and youth. These figures reflect maturing families, where children have grown and left home, and a lack of young families with children and youth.

The low density population of Wheatfield Township and the surrounding communities supports few local businesses, and only one new business opened in the township since 2000.

**Table 3-1 10-Year Trend, 2000-2010**

Growth Indicator	Quantifiable Change	
Population change	5	More residents
Household change	49	More households
Housing unit change	87	More single family detached homes
Commercial/industrial change	1	More business

Source: Gannett Fleming, Inc.

### A 10-Year Projection of Limited Growth

County and regional growth projections prepared before the recession suggested continued growth. These figures have not been revised, indicating that the steady growth is expected to

# Trends and Concerns

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return to the Capital Region, though the timeline and intensity of economy recovery are unclear.

In the absence of more recent projections, the past decade, which included steady development in the early years and very little development in the late 2000s, is a reasonable basis for projecting growth for the next decade, assuming the economy continues its slow recovery. Using the housing and business increase from 2000-2010, the amount of projected development is relatively small— only 175 acres, less than 2 percent of the township’s total area, as shown in Table 3-2. The type, intensity (building size), and character of projected development will likely be similar to what is currently found in the township—single family detached homes and one business—and the impacts from projected development on the community and natural environment would also be relatively small.

**Table 3-2 10-Year Projection, 2012-2022**

Growth Indicator	Projected Change	
Population change	5	more residents
Household change	50	more households
Housing unit change	85	more single family detached homes
Commercial/industrial change	1	more business
<b>Projected Land Use Change</b>		
85 housing units (residential use) each on 2 acres	170	acres of residential converted from agriculture, woodland, or vacant use; a 12% increase in residential
1 commercial use on an average lot size of 5 acre	5	acres of commercial converted from agriculture, woodland, or vacant use; a 20% increase in residential
Total Land Use Change	175	a 1.3 % change across the entire township
<b>Projected Impacts</b>		
Transportation	340-765	more trips affecting road use and maintenance <sup>1</sup>
	36	trips per day per commercial use, affecting road use and maintenance <sup>2</sup>
Water Supply/ Sewerage Disposal	86	on-lot systems (groundwater removal, groundwater replacement/recharge)
Public Safety		more calls for police, fire protection, and EMS; not township-provided services, but fire and EMS are township-supported services
Public Education	1	student
Natural Resources	175	acres of open space removed (vegetation, habitat, groundwater recharge)
	36.5	acres additional impervious surface (stormwater generation, water quality reduction)
Historic (Manmade) Resources	-	Not applicable; too scattered to project



<sup>1</sup> 4-9 trips per day per single family detached home; Trip Generation, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, An ITE Informational Report, Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> 15 trips per AM peak hour and 21 trips per PM peak hour per auto care facility, <5000 sf; Trip Generation, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, An ITE Informational Report, Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2008.

Source: Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Though future development in Wheatfield Township is projected to be relatively small, its location and concentration will affect the community. If projected development were dispersed throughout the township, the impacts of 85 homes and one business would be relatively unnoticeable to the community at large. If it were concentrated in one or just a few locations, such as through subdivision and development of a farm, its impacts would be noticeable only locally, not throughout the township. If it were significantly larger or different from existing development in type, intensity or character of existing development, it could have a more noticeable impact locally and throughout the township.

Realistically, most future development will likely be dispersed and occur on valley farmland where the vegetation has been cleared, the topography is relatively flat, the soils are well-drained and suitable for on-lot septic systems, and where there is no next generation farmer.

## **Rural Community Values and Concerns for Growth and Development**

Over the past 60 years, the landscape of Wheatfield Township has changed as homes, individual or in subdivisions, and a few businesses have gradually taken the place of fields, pastures, and woodlots. In Pennsylvania, where property rights include the right to use and develop one's land, municipalities cannot prohibit development, only manage the amount, timing, intensity and character of private development in the interest of protecting public health, safety, and welfare. As a result, development will continue to change the Township landscape in the future.

Through the citizen survey, interviews, and the planning commission, residents expressed their values for community and the landscape and their concerns for the change that development brings. They value the scenic landscape, the spaciousness and privacy of large lots, low taxes, and property rights. Their concerns reflect the varied perspectives of long-time township residents and relative newcomers, who returned to or relocated from urban and suburban communities. Economic, environmental and social problems are few.

Collective opinions from the above sources offered the following directives.

*The 2011 citizen survey conducted as a public involvement activity for the comprehensive plan found:*

- *Respondents were very satisfied with the quality of life in Wheatfield Township. Over 92% agreed that the quality of life is very good.*
- *Property maintenance was a major issue for 48% of respondents, however 49% disagreed that it was a major problem in the Township. Junk cars, equipment, trash, depositing leaves, grass clippings and snow onto the roadside, and lack of enforcement were reported as sources of the property maintenance issue.*
- *Only three other issues were considered major problems by more than 30% of respondents: stormwater runoff, unemployment, and loss of rural character. Fair enforcement of township ordinances, lot sizes (too large for seniors to maintain), increasing school taxes (without commercial development to balance the tax burden), trash burning (and its effect on air quality), speeding, and roadside litter were mentioned by only a few survey respondents.*
- *When asked about development concerns, respondents expressed concerns for over-development and loss of character (“too much development”), the impact of certain development types on property values and the tax base, and suitable locations for development types.*
- *A majority of respondents agreed that Wheatfield Township should:*
  - *concentrate development in limited areas (78%)*
  - *require land conservation by subdivisions of 10 lots or more (68%)*
  - *require public parkland provision by subdivisions of 10 lots or more (70%), and*
  - *purchase of historic sites and landmarks as public parks (79%).*
- *Respondents supported the continued presence and expansion of a variety of uses typical of rural communities: farms, secondary businesses on the farm, single family homes and large lot estates, home-based businesses, service shops/garages, and even senior housing. There was very little support for multi-family housing with the exception of housing for seniors.*
- *Significant losses among the farming community, woodlands and open space were cited by a majority of respondents as reasons they would consider leaving the Township. Increasing taxes was noted among “other” reasons.*
- *When asked what one thing was most important for the comprehensive plan to accomplish or advance, respondents listed the conservation of rural character and a limited amount of development to balance tax base and meet job and service needs locally most frequently.*



## 1. Keep Our Rural Character

Some residents define the Township's rural character as the natural beauty of woodlands that roll across the hills and valleys and change with the seasons, while others appreciate the farm fields and pastures. Still others suggest that large residential lots and country churches are defining characteristics of the rural landscape. The State Game Lands and Wagner Park are the only lands protected from future development by the nature of their public ownership. The Hall Farm, which spans Centre and Wheatfield Townships, is the only preserved farm. All of these elements are defining features for Wheatfield Township today and reflect the evolution of the landscape, community, and culture.

### *What Planning Can Do*

Land use and development policies influence what uses can be developed, where they can be developed, how large lots and buildings can be, and how buildings are set back from property lines. These factors can disperse development and its impacts across the Township, or concentrate development and its impacts in one or more areas.

*The 2011 citizen survey conducted as a public involvement activity for the comprehensive plan found:*

- *Most respondents supported regulations that limit further development to defined areas and that require land dedication for public use from larger subdivisions.*

The Township had an initial discussion of open space planning techniques a few years ago. A public meeting revealed misconceptions about the intent among residents and the Township tabled the topic. Further study by the planning commission of open space planning techniques and their application in Pennsylvania could improve a future presentation and proposal of one or more techniques as an ordinance amendment.

## 2. Foster Family Farms

Family farms are characterized as a way of life, a primary occupation of working the land and raising livestock while raising the next generation of farmers, connected to the local community by cultural roots. They are often contrasted with corporate farms and factory farms, which are perceived as managed by outside decision-makers with sole regard for profitability. In fact, all farms are businesses that require land, workers, and markets for their business to succeed. And like all businesses, farming may need to evolve and change their product types, equipment, technology, and/or workforce to remain economically viable.

## *What Planning Can Do*

Township planning cannot influence farm ownership, the number of farmers and the markets they choose to supply, but it can influence the presence of farming through land use policies, the township's support of agricultural security areas, and Perry County's farmland preservation program. Zoning can minimize conflicting uses in agricultural districts and permit farm-based businesses to supplement the farm income when it is not sufficient to sustain a modern family. Agricultural security areas can protect farmers from nuisance claims. And Perry County's farmland preservation program can purchase development rights from willing farmers. Some residents have expressed little or no support for the farmland preservation program, citing doubt for the continued productivity of the farm when purchased as an estate, not a business, and thus a poor return on investment. Elsewhere in Pennsylvania, land preservation is used as a tool to protect farmland and to limit development that attracts students and results in school district tax increases.

## **3. Support Nature-Based Recreation**

Outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking, hunting, and fishing, are available on State Game Lands, at Wagner Park, at the sportsman's club, and on private lands in the Township. Outdoor recreation for fitness, leisure, and sport is part of the Township's rural lifestyle and therefore part of its culture.

## *What Planning Can Do*

Ensuring public access to parklands and waters enables all residents and those who visit the Township to enjoy the outdoors. Planning can encourage conservation of woodlands and stream corridors to sustain vegetation and wildlife, and encourage land owners to set aside areas for public recreation and develop recreational facilities, such as trails and fishing piers. Introducing nature-based recreation activities to children and youth through programs and special events helps cultivate an appreciation for nature among future generations, and having public parks and private clubs for programs and events makes them even more accessible.

## **4. Protect Our Local Landmarks**

There are several structures in the Township that residents identify as local landmarks. Only the Dellville Bridge is protected through public ownership for all to see and celebrate the history of rural transportation and bridge construction at this site. Other landmarks, such as the Pennsylvania Railroad corridor, the McKinzie Farm, the old mill and store/house at Dellville, and the park at Montebello, have played a role in the culture and character of the community.

## *What Planning Can Do*

Where these site and structures have value to Township and County citizens, efforts could be organized to purchase them as public property. Consideration would need to be given to maintenance and restorations costs. The Township's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026 may provide an impetus for historic resource investigation and preservation planning, particularly historic sites and landmarks that could be preserved as parks as part of the township's heritage.

## **5. Retain Our Sense of Community**

Residents of Wheatfield Township have a close connection to one another – many by way of multi-generational families rooted in the Township's agricultural heritage. Whether members of an extended family, church or other community organization, residents come together in times of celebration and times of need and appreciate the stability their community offers.

## *What Planning Can Do*

Planning has only an indirect relationship to the composition and social character of the Township. The availability and suitability of housing for the differing needs of young, mature and senior households influences which households will choose to live here. Local and nearby opportunities for employment are essential for residents to provide income for their household, fulfill their career goals, and contribute to the community's well-being. The availability of services, volunteerism opportunities, and amenities, including places where residents can connect with one another, is important, too.

## **6. Expand Opportunities for Income and Employment**

More businesses are desired by some residents to increase employment, strengthen the tax base, and reduce travel. Additional employment and increased income opportunities could come through home- and farm-based businesses—butter shops, farm stands, and vehicle and equipment repair shops were suggested—as well as expansion and/or relocation of commercial and industrial zoning districts. Other residents favored economic development nearby, such as in Duncannon, but not in the Township.

While unemployment in Wheatfield Township has been low even through the recession, a small portion of the township's residents (an estimated 4.0 percent of families and 5.5 percent of all residents) live below the poverty line. The largest percentage of individuals living below the poverty line is a group age 65 or over. Increased employment opportunities could have a positive impact on the estimated 136 residents of working age and their families, living below the poverty line.

*The 2011 citizen survey conducted as a public involvement activity for the comprehensive plan found:*

- Nearly 40% agreed, and 45% disagreed, that adequate employment opportunities were available within or near Wheatfield Township. Another 15.9%, some but not all of whom were retired, were not sure of the availability of local jobs.*
- A majority of respondents supported offices and retail stores/restaurants, which are not as common in rural communities, but could provide additional local employment.*

## ***What Planning Can Do***

Additional home- and farm-based businesses could be permitted through the zoning ordinance without any change to the zoning map. The Township currently has three business zoning districts in five locations:

- an industrial district along Paradise Road
- a general commercial district along Paradise Road
- two single-property general commercial districts along Route 894, and
- a neighborhood commercial district along Route 274 from Paradise Road to Route 34.

Route 274 from Paradise Road to Route 34 was zoned neighborhood commercial in the 1970s to accommodate then-existing businesses. Today, there is only one business (a surveyor) in this corridor. If further developed for commercial uses, the district's location along this rural state highway and its shallow depth could result in strip design with numerous driveways. Its winding road alignment, topography, and vegetation already create sight distance hazards at speeds currently traveled on this route. Fortunately, the number of cars entering the roadway from existing residences, the township building, and other properties is low. Reducing, relocating, or eliminating the neighborhood commercial district from this corridor could prevent strip development and safety hazards but could impact property values for land owners in this district.

## **7. Explore Housing Options for Seniors and Young Households**

Housing options in Wheatfield Township are limited. The township's housing stock was estimated as 1,156 single family detached dwellings and 196 mobile homes in 2009. The township had no single family attached units or multi-unit structures. All units were owner-occupied, though the Township is aware of a few private rentals. The average home value in Wheatfield Township was estimated at \$142,000.

Some seniors are not interested in or capable of the effort and expense required to maintain a 2-acre lot and home. Similarly, many young households are not able to afford a 2-acre lot and home in Wheatfield Township, requiring them to live elsewhere, potentially away from family.

## *What Planning Can Do*

Smaller lots and smaller units may be part of the solution. Both are permitted in the Township's R2 Residential zoning district along Dellville Road but require public water and/or public sewer, which is not currently available. Elsewhere, soil and topographic conditions make it difficult to site a primary and secondary septic system on a lot smaller than two acres. Cluster developments with shared open space for primary and/or secondary septic systems may be a viable approach.

## **8. Keep Regulations Reasonable**

Some residents indicated that the Township has begun to over-regulate development, making it more costly to develop without reasonable benefit to the community and citing provisions that were borrowed from other municipalities without refinement to the rural context of Wheatfield Township. Some even suggested that the Township consider repeal of certain regulations. When asked about potential new regulations, such as mandatory trash collection and prohibition of trash burning, few gave favorable responses.

## *What Planning Can Do*

Indeed, municipalities do borrow ordinance provisions from one another and review and local modification should take place prior to adoption. Notices of ordinance amendments (and repeals) are required to be advertised and public comments heard by both the planning commission and the Board of Supervisors prior to adoption.

## **9. Manage the Cost of Township Services: Prioritize Maintenance over Expansion, Share Services, where feasible**

Municipal service costs for maintenance, supplies, insurance, and staff and benefits increase with inflation. Population growth within the Township and the surrounding region also influences service costs, especially roadway maintenance and repair. Additional services may also be mandated as the resident population reaches certain thresholds. Residents expressed a desire to prioritize maintenance and efficiency over service and facility expansion and support for shared services, where expansion is necessary and feasible.

*The 2011 citizen survey conducted as a public involvement activity for the comprehensive plan found:*

- *Respondents largely supported listed public service improvements as 10-year priorities, including:*
  - *roadway improvements, especially to address drainage problems;*
  - *higher development standards;*
  - *additional development of Wagner Park;*
  - *development of other public trails (a walking/biking trail from Duncannon to New Bloomfield suggested),*
  - *enforcement of township regulations (property maintenance, trash burning, and noise ordinances suggested), and*
  - *maintenance (not replacement) of township buildings, vehicles, and equipment.*
- *When asked specifically about the future study and evaluation of regional public services, e.g. a regional police force, as Wheatfield Township's population grows, a majority of respondents agreed, and one in five reported "not sure."*

## ***What Planning Can Do***

Maintaining existing municipal infrastructure, services, and facilities should be the focus of annual planning and budgeting. Where service or facility expansion needs are identified, options for sharing services and facilities with other municipalities or community organizations should be explored through formal studies or informal discussions *and* public dialogue. For services that the Township does not provide, it could consider directing residents to regionally available services, for example the Bloomfield and Newport Public Libraries, to improve residents' awareness and increase use, and even private support, of these services.

## **10. Keep an Eye on the Shale Gas Industry**

The Marcellus Shale formation and the deeper, thicker Utica Shale formation lie under the far northwestern of Wheatfield Township. There have been no Marcellus Shale gas wells permitted in Perry County. Areas where Marcellus Shale gas wells have been drilled will have an infrastructure advantage when it becomes feasible to extract natural gas from the Utica Shale.

## ***What Planning Can Do***

Though Wheatfield Township lies at the edge of both shale regions and is not a likely focus for gas drillers, it should maintain some level of awareness for community impacts occurring in the Marcellus Shale play in the event that drillers take interest in the township or nearby areas of Perry County in the future.



## 4 ALTERNATIVES



### **Three Alternatives for Managing Future Growth**

Residents desire to keep the Township's rural character – its agricultural and woodland landscape, and its dispersed development pattern – as much as possible. Many also consider an expansion of lands designated for business or an expansion of permitted home- and farm-based businesses to be worthwhile consideration. The following three scenarios or alternative approaches to managing future growth were considered by the Township.

#### ***Approach 1: Maintain Current Zoning Ordinance and Map – No change***

If projected growth occurs per the current zoning ordinance and map, development will likely be scattered. Some residential development may occur to construct approved residential land development plans. Other residential development may occur in the Residential (R1) district, where there is limited capacity, and in the Agricultural Residential (AR) district, which is widely dispersed and has no short-term capacity constraints.

Based on recent trends, one projected commercial development could occur in the Commercial (C) or Neighborhood Commercial (NC) district, or could come forth as a rezoning request in another district.

#### ***Future Land Use Plan***

- Future Land Use Map: display as the Zoning Map

#### ***Advantages***

- No change to zoning map, property rights, or property value.

#### ***Disadvantages***

- Productive farmland and/or woodlands would likely be impacted.
  - Farmland could be replaced by housing units and residential yard, impacting scenic views and value.

- Woodlands could be reduced in size, impacting scenic views and value.
  - Farmland and/or woodlands could be fragmented from similar lands, creating the potential for land use conflicts.
- Large lots would likely be subdivided into multiple parcels, each with their own landowner and land management goals.

## **Approach 2: Apply County and Regional Land Use and Development Policies**

Land use policies recommended by Perry County and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission call for:

- a. Concentration of development in water- and sewer-served areas and conservation of rural areas, namely continued agricultural and forest use with limited, low density development.
- b. Discouragement of strip development along state highways, which can impact traffic flow and safety, and can create obstacles to more compact development patterns that may be appropriate in the future. Where development potential exists, county and regional policies recommend that the impact on traffic flow and safety be managed through driveway separation standards and other access management techniques.
- c. Provision of a variety of housing types, including subdivision/land development techniques that allow development and result in protected or preserved open space.
- d. Agricultural zoning that effectively supports agricultural use and discourages farmland conversion.
- e. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas (wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, and natural areas).
- f. Use of incentives (ex. unit or density bonuses) for providing recreational/open space areas.

Wheatfield Township is a rural area, as it does not contain or even adjoin any areas served by community infrastructure. Conservation of agricultural and forest uses are recommended with limited opportunity for non-agricultural or non-forest related activities. The village of Roseglen is largest concentration of residences and the only concentration not resulting from a subdivision/land development plan. If the township were to anticipate water- or sewer-service for Roseglen in the next 10 years, the growth management guidance could be interpreted to focus growth in this area through infill incentives and zoning district expansion. This approach could foster a stronger community identity for Roseglen and direct any development pressure away from nearby agricultural areas.



Development has already taken place along state highways in the township. More development is permitted along state highways:

- along Route 274 (the Neighborhood Commercial district).
- along Route 849 (the Residential R1 district).
- along Dellville Road/SR 2002 (the Residential R2 district).
- along Paradise Road/SR 2005 (the Commercial and Industrial districts).

With strip zoning already in place, the township could consider changing the location of these districts and/or revising driveway separation standards.

Wheatfield Township has provisions for varied housing options in its Residential R2 district, which is a strip zoning district opposed by county and regional policies as noted above. The township has no provision to accommodate, encourage or guide land protection in tandem with land development. Provision for cluster or conservation by design subdivision/land development techniques could enable the township to accommodate development and protect open space.

### ***Future Land Use Plan***

- Future Land Use Map: revise the Zoning Map with
  1. expansion of residential and possible inclusion of commercial uses in the vicinity of Roseglens
  2. require or permit cluster or conservation by design subdivision/land development techniques in open space zoning districts
  3. remove or reduce the Neighborhood Commercial district along Route 274, or strengthen driveway separation standards
  4. reduce/align the Residential R1 district along Route 849 to parcels, or expand to Wheatfield Estates and strengthen driveway separation standards
  5. reduce length/increase depth, or relocate the Residential R2 district along Dellville Road/SR 2002
  6. evaluate driveway separation standards in the relatively short Commercial and Industrial districts along Paradise Road/SR 2005
  7. evaluate effective agricultural district provisions
    - Provide minimum and maximum lot areas for uses other than farming – homes not associated with a farm, independent farm support businesses, and other non-farm uses
    - Limit the number of development rights on a parcel (fixed-area ratio or sliding scale technique)

- Locate dwelling or non-farm uses on areas of the farm property which are the least suitable for agriculture use
- The area remaining after all development rights have been used may not be further subdivided.

## ***Advantages***

- Could guide growth to the Roseglen area and away from agricultural areas
- Could foster a stronger community identity for Roseglen
- Could increase feasibility of development but would not affect market feasibility
- Could prevent safety hazards from multiple, closely spaced driveways

## ***Disadvantages***

- Could affect property rights where development potential is reduced.

## **Approach 3: Approach 2 with Emphasis on Community Needs and Concerns**

Manage growth and change to protect:

1. Our rural character
2. Presence of family farms
3. Nature-based recreation opportunities
4. Our historic landmarks
5. Housing for all ages that enables families of multiple-generations to live in the township
6. Sense of community

Manage growth and change to:

1. Increase opportunity for business development and local employment – appropriate locations for visibility/viability, access
2. Minimize impacts on agriculture – minimize potential residential/ag conflicts
3. Enable tools for open space protection (to protect rural character) – enable, not require
4. Provide options for smaller lots and homes – select areas based on soil suitability for on-lot systems or consider public or private/community sewerage disposal systems (which could be located in associated open space)
5. Achieve reasonable standards and regulations for the township's character
6. Leverage land uses of regional impact (state gamelands, township park, sportsmen's club) for township benefit - trail access in addition to highway access (via official map and trail easement eligible recreational/open space land dedication)

## ***Future Land Use Plan***

- Future Land Use Map: revise the Zoning Map with
  1. expansion of residential and possible inclusion of commercial uses in the vicinity of Roseglen
  2. require or permit cluster or conservation by design subdivision/land development techniques in open space zoning districts
  3. remove or reduce the Neighborhood Commercial district along Route 274, or strengthen driveway separation standards
  4. reduce/align the Residential R1 district along Route 849 to parcels, or expand to Wheatfield Estates and strengthen driveway separation standards
  5. reduce length/increase depth, or relocate the Residential R2 district along Dellville Road/SR 2002
  6. evaluate driveway separation standards in the relatively short Commercial and Industrial districts along Paradise Road/SR 2005
  7. evaluate effective agricultural district provisions
    - Provide minimum and maximum lot areas for uses other than farming – homes not associated with a farm, independent farm support businesses, and other non-farm uses
    - Limit the number of development rights on a parcel (fixed-area ratio or sliding scale technique)
    - Locate dwelling or non-farm uses on areas of the farm property which are the least suitable for agriculture use
    - The area remaining after all development rights have been used may not be further subdivided.
  8. add/cluster commercial or neighborhood commercial district at Meck's corner
  9. review/revision of home- and farm-occupation use standards

## ***Advantages***

- Could guide growth to the Roseglen area and away from agricultural areas
- Could foster a stronger community identity for Roseglen
- Could increase feasibility of development but would not affect market feasibility
- Could prevent safety hazards from multiple, closely spaced driveways
- Could increase home- and farm-based business activity and local employment

## ***Disadvantages***

- Could affect property rights where development potential is reduced.

## Selection

Approach 1 does not address the concerns that prompted the comprehensive plan update and thus is not adequate. Approach 2 addresses concerns and strengthens consistency with county and regional planning. Approach 3 does the same with additional recommendations that the Township officials and its residents may or may not be prepared to adopt. Therefore, Approach 2 was selected as the basis for the future land use plan.

# 5

## OUR RURAL STRATEGY



### Vision for Community Development and Conservation

Wheatfield Township will offer a complementary coexistence between the natural and man-made environments.

### Goals

Through its planning and daily decision-making, the Township aims to:

1. Conserve the presence and quality of local topography, soils, waters, wildlife, and native and naturalized vegetation.
2. Encourage the provision of a range of safe and sanitary housing to meet the needs of existing and future residents.
3. Provide community facilities and services necessary to meet the existing and future needs of the community.
4. Provide a safe and efficient transportation system for the movement of people and goods.
5. Encourage economic development compatible with the rural community.
6. Provide and manage sufficient recreational parks, facilities, and programs.
7. Sustain an active planning program that maintains current data, plans, and operational tools necessary for implementation.
8. Strive for coordination of policies, plans, and programs through cooperation among local and county government officials.

The Future Land Use Map is located in Appendix C.

## 10-Year Community Development and Conservation Objectives

To address the values and concerns expressed by residents and consistency with county and regional planning, the Township will focus on the following objectives:

### *Land Use, Housing and Economic Development*

1. Expand land use opportunities for business and industry development.
2. Explore cluster and conservation development techniques that protect open space and environmental qualities; consider incentives to encourage the use of these techniques.
3. Explore options for enabling smaller lots and homes to serve smaller households.
4. Review the appropriateness and cost-benefit value of development regulations and standards.

### *Transportation*

1. Maintain Township roads and bridges; address safety and security concerns in all transportation projects.
2. Promote the availability alternate modes of travel, including carpooling, vanpooling, and shared ride services.
3. Coordinate highway occupancy permits with PennDOT to reduce unnecessary access points.
4. Plan to connect existing and future developments; ensure these rights-of-ways are preserved for this use.

### *Community Facilities and Services*

1. Require notification to school districts where twenty (20) or more dwelling units are proposed in a subdivision or land development.
2. Explore the regionalization of local police, fire and emergency services, as community needs increase.
3. Prepare (or update) a comprehensive park, open space and recreation plan; ensure that park and recreation plans are coordinated with efforts to protect natural resources.
4. Reduce littering and illegal dumping.

### *Natural and Historic Resources*

1. Promote the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, water quality and quantity, and air quality.
2. Consider developing an inventory and assessment of historical resources and properties.
3. Promote the designation of historic buildings, districts and transportation corridors.
5. Monitor shale gas extraction activities and impacts in Pennsylvania.

## Recommendations to Achieve the 10-Year Objectives

### *Land Use*

1. Update Zoning Ordinance and Map, using the Future Land Use Map in Appendix C as a guide, to :
  - expand residential opportunities and add commercial uses in the vicinity of Roseglen
  - permit cluster or conservation by design subdivision/land development techniques
  - remove or reduce the Neighborhood Commercial district along Route 274
  - reduce/align the Residential R1 district along Route 849 to parcels, or expand to Wheatfield Estates
  - reduce length/increase depth, or relocate the Residential R2 district along Dellville Road/SR 2002
  - add total impervious coverage maximums to all zoning districts
2. Update the citation of FEMA's Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) as the source of floodplain delineation.
3. Improve relevance and consistency of definitions in the zoning and subdivision/land development ordinances.

### *Transportation*

1. Repair 2012 flooding damage to the intersection of Sulphur Springs Road and Montebello Road.
2. Explore options to reduce flooding along Sulphur Springs Road at Simoncelli's, 100 yards upstream from Sulphur Springs Bridge.
3. Consider a traffic study of travel speeds along Linton Hill Road (between Dark Hollow Road and Dellville Road to determine if reduced speed limits are warranted.
4. Promote awareness of Perry County Transit Authority services, e.g. through township newsletter and website.
5. Promote awareness of Commuters Services of Central PA, e.g. through township newsletter and website.
6. If the Neighborhood Commercial district remains along Route 274, review minimum driveway separation distances for driveways accessing local and state roads with PennDOT Access Management Handbook and Model Ordinances.



The Wheatfield Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance has provisions for lot access, sight distance and streets not in alignment—all with implications for access (driveway) spacing. In the rural context, sight distance plays a more significant role increasing safety (reducing crashes).

## *Community Facilities and Services*

1. Require notification to school districts where twenty (20) or more dwelling units are proposed in a subdivision or land development.
2. Engage residents interested in volunteering for community services. Forty-five respondents would consider serving Wheatfield Township as a township or community service volunteer; sixteen provided contact information, which was forwarded to the Township office.
3. Utilize remnants of the former Sherman's Valley Railroad rights-of-way to develop a trail that would connect Duncannon Borough to New Bloomfield Borough and to other destinations in the County. Portions of the rights-of-way have been claimed by adjoining property owners therefore the initial recommendation is to prepare a feasibility study to determine a general path and cost of the project.
4. Plan and develop the Shermans Creek Water Trail, including increased access points for floating, fishing, and other water-related recreation opportunities.

## *Natural and Historic Resources*

1. Cite natural resources identified in the Tri-County Natural Areas Inventory as resources to be identified in the Environmental Assessment as prescribed in the zoning ordinance and the preliminary plat requirements as prescribed in the subdivision/land development ordinance.
2. Cite natural resources and greenways, or planned corridors of open space (see definition on page 33), identified in the Perry County Greenways and Open Space Plan as resources to be identified in the Environmental Assessment as prescribed in the zoning ordinance and the preliminary plat requirements as prescribed in the subdivision/land development ordinance.
3. Define and designate steep slopes as resources to be protected in the zoning ordinance. Perry County recommends that municipalities define and designate areas of slope as low, precautionary (15 to 24.9 percent) and severe (25 percent and greater) for development purposes and that development on severe slopes should be restricted and development on precautionary slopes should be regulated.



4. Define wetlands, require their delineation on subdivision and/or land development plans, and establish wetland buffer zones.
5. Develop an inventory and assessment of historical resources and properties.
6. Develop greenways to protect linear features and promote recreation.
  - Plan for conservation of the Little Juniata Creek Greenway, 13.5 miles through Centre, Miller, Penn, and Wheatfield Townships, and Bloomfield and Duncannon Boroughs
  - Plan for conservation of the Shermans Creek Greenway from the headwaters of Shermans Creek and terminating at its confluence with the Susquehanna River

## **A greenway is...**

a corridor of open space designated to protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, and enhance natural beauty and quality of life in neighborhoods and communities. Greenways typically follow linear landscape features, such as a stream, abandoned railway or canal, or ridgetop, and might follow more than one feature. "Development" or establishment of a greenway may include the conservation of the corridor as open space by easements or other conservation tools; these are known as conservation or ecological greenways. It can also involve the design and construction of trails for hikers, bicyclists, and other non-motorized recreation; these are known as recreational greenways.

Summarized from *Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections*

7. Adopt or incorporate into existing subdivision and land development ordinances provisions that address slope stability.

## **Further Considerations**

1. Modify zoning provisions of the agricultural/residential district to conserve agricultural land.
  - Two effective agriculture zoning models are popular in Pennsylvania: sliding scale zoning and fixed-area ratio zoning. The two models have the following common features:
    - Provide minimum and maximum lot areas for uses other than farming – homes, and farm support businesses *and other non-farm uses*

- Limit the number of development rights on a parcel, i.e. lots permitted to be subdivided for dwellings or other nonfarm activities
- Locate dwelling or non-farm uses on areas of the farm property which are the least suitable for agriculture use
- The area remaining after all development rights have been used may not be further subdivided.

The difference between the two techniques is the method of placing limits on the number of development rights on a parcel.

- Sliding scale zoning: Using a sliding scale the number of development rights varies with the size of the farm parcel.

**Sliding Scale as applied in Shrewsbury Township, York County**

Size of Parcel	# of Development Rights
0-5 acres	1
5-15 acres	2
15-30 acres	3
30-60 acres	4
60-90 acres	5
90-120 acres	6
120-150 acres	7
Over 150 acres	8 plus 1 dwelling for each 30 acres over 150 acres

- **Fixed-Area Ratio:** The number of development rights is based on a set ratio of rights to the total acreage. Examples include one development right for every 10 acres or one development right for every 25 acres. The size is often based on the county's definition of a productive farm.



### Consistency in Land Use Planning

Section 301(a)(5) of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that municipal comprehensive plans strive to minimize land use conflicts along their borders and with their home county. Specifically,

“A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan” is required.

In an effort to prepare a comprehensive plan that is consistent with county and regional planning policies, six documents were reviewed for their relevant policies and guidance for Wheatfield Township.

- The Perry County Comprehensive Plan
- Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Growth Management Plan
- HATS 2035 Regional Transportation Plan
- Perry County Sewerage Plan, 1994
- Tri-County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Perry County Plan, 2008
- Perry County Greenways, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, 2011

Language from these plans provided the basis for two of the growth management alternatives outlined in Chapter 4 - specifically Approach 2, which the Township elected to use as the foundation for its land use plan. Several policy statements and recommendations in other topical areas were also recognized as applicable to Wheatfield Township and thus incorporated.

# Planning Guidance & Consistency

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Draft January 30, 2013

The integration of county and regional plan review with planning alternatives enabled the Township's plan to have strong consistency with county and regional planning.

## **Consistency with Perry County Planning**

The Perry County Comprehensive Plan is the County's guide "to orderly development in promoting health, safety, welfare and convenience of the people within Perry County." The plan's Part I, Basic Studies, documents the physical, demographic, socio-economic, and socio-cultural conditions of the County as well as its development, infrastructure and service patterns at or near the time of adoption. This portion of the plan is a rich resource of historic information and has been used to characterize conditions in the Wheatfield Township profiles.

## ***Policies and Guidance applicable to Wheatfield Township***

- Focus growth where community facilities and services exist to support the added service needs.
- Preserve and protect the agricultural and forested character of Perry County.
- Integrate land use and transportation (planning) in Perry County.
- Provide safe, efficient travel systems for all modes.
- Increase Perry County's employment opportunities.
- Provide coordinated and effective community facilities and utilities in Perry County.
- Make preparations for increased housing demands as anticipated by population projections.
- Sustain historic, cultural and natural resources.
- Manage development of regional impact by type and size.

## ***Recommendations Applicable to Wheatfield Township***

### ***Land Use***

1. Discourage the residential strip development along State Routes; provide for separation distance limits on access to local and state roads.
2. Municipal ordinances to provide for a variety of housing types, especially increased opportunities for cluster developments which groups housing closely together, leaving more open space and preserving the county's agricultural and environmental attributes.
3. Encourage landowners to participate in Woodland/Forest Easement Programs
4. Municipal adoption of effective agricultural land use regulations (e.g. Sliding scale zoning).
5. Encourage sound judgment and consistent regulation of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO) procedures and guidelines.

# Planning Guidance & Consistency

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Draft January 30, 2013

## ***Transportation***

1. Encourage the sharing of common access for commercial establishments in densely developed areas. Promote better coordination of highway occupancy permits between PennDOT and municipalities to reduce unnecessary access points.
2. Ensure potential roadway rights-of-ways connecting existing or future developments to one another are preserved.
3. See that all paved roads have painted centerlines.
4. Ensure that utility poles are moved back from the edges of roads where they pose a safety hazard.
5. Encourage additional posting and policing of speed limits on roads.
6. Consider the use of PennDOT liquid fuels funds to assist with pedestrian improvements.

## ***Community Facilities and Utilities***

1. Require notification to school districts where twenty (20) or more dwelling units are proposed in a subdivision or land development.
2. Explore/consider the consolidation of local police, fire and emergency services on a multi-municipal and regionalized level.
3. Prepare a comprehensive park, open space and recreation plan.
4. Provide incentives (ex. Density bonuses) for providing recreational/open space areas.
5. Make certain [that] park and recreation plans are coordinated with other efforts to protect natural resources.
6. Implement the general strategies of the Perry County Water Supply Plan.
7. Develop public water supply protection plans supported by local ordinance.
8. Revise ordinances to require /developers of proposed subdivisions in excess of a specified minimum number of lots to determine water needs generated by the development.
9. Encourage regular testing of drinking water from private wells.
10. Update and/or adopt sewage facilities plans in accordance with the Pa Sewage Facilities Act 537.
11. Pursue storm water management planning and adopt storm water management ordinances.
12. Strive to maintain and protect open spaces and drainage areas and incorporate them into storm water management decisions.
13. Implement to the best of their abilities, and in coordination with county agencies, the recommendations of the new 2005 solid waste management plan.
14. Explore options to reduce littering and illegal dumping.

## ***Housing***

1. Review and amend ordinances for their impact on affordable housing and handicapped accessible housing.

See also land use recommendations for residential uses.

## ***Historical and Cultural Resources***

1. Consider developing an inventory and assessment of historical resources and properties.
2. Create zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance amendments which aid in protecting the County's historic and cultural resources, e.g. required documentation of any plans or actions that may impact National Historic Property and/or eligible properties.

## ***Natural Resources***

1. Define wetlands, require their delineation on subdivision and/or land development plans, and establish wetland buffer zones.
2. Adopt or incorporate into existing subdivision and land development ordinances provisions that address slope stability.
3. Adopt or amend ordinances to preserve natural floodplains and restrict new development in the 100-year floodplain; periodically review their floodplain ordinances for consistency with state and federal guidelines.
4. Consider programs for the relocation or improvement of frequently flooded properties.
5. Encourage the preservation of woodlands in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains.
6. Adopt agricultural preservation zoning districts that allow appropriate and diverse agricultural uses, and significantly restrict residential development.
7. Amend their subdivision and land development ordinances to protect natural areas.
8. Work to protect the areas identified in the Tri-County Natural Areas Inventory.

## **Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Growth Management Plan**

The Regional Growth Management Plan was most recently updated in 2011 with a planning horizon of 2035. It serves as a guide for coordinating comprehensive planning among the 103 municipalities, 3 counties and regional planning agency within the Tri-County area. It also coordinates with the Regional (Long Range) Transportation Plan.

The Regional Growth Management Plan shares many smart growth policies with the Perry County Comprehensive Plan. (It also includes many urban policies not applicable to municipalities in Perry County.) This consistency among plans is intentional and demonstrates



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agreement between county and regional planners and officials on growth potential and need for growth management.

## *Policies and Guidance Applicable to Wheatfield Township*

- Manage growth toward areas with existing or planned public facilities and services
- Protect, preserve and conserve agricultural land and open space/greenways
- Protect, preserve, and conserve the region's natural resources
  - Promote the protection of environmentally sensitive areas
  - Promote the protection of water quality and quantity
  - Promote the protection of air quality
- Protect, preserve and conserve the region's historic, cultural and scenic resources
  - Promote the designation of historic buildings, districts and transportation corridors
  - Promote the protection of the region's scenic resources
- Promote a sufficient supply of safe, affordable and energy-efficient housing for all residents
- Promote the creation of livable, sustainable communities
  - Develop housing in proximity to existing or planned infrastructure, wherever possible
- Maintain the condition of our transportation system
- Improve the performance of our transportation system for all users
- Increase the availability and use of our alternate modes
- Provide a transportation system that is committed to the environment and quality of life
- Integrate land use and transportation
  - Consider the effects on land use when evaluating and implementing transportation improvements
  - Consider the current and future transportation system when making land use decisions
- Encourage provision of an adequate amount and mix of safe and sustainable facilities and services
  - Facilitate development of facilities and services to accommodate existing and projected population through the year 2035
- Promote the use of planning best management practices (bmps)
  - Promote municipal coordination of land use planning at multiple levels
  - Facilitate participation from the public and private sectors



## **HATS 2035 Regional Transportation Plan**

The Regional (long range) Transportation Plan is coordinated with the Regional Growth Management Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan documents the current status of transportation projects and programs, identifies long-term needs and recommends transportation programs and projects to meet those needs. It also outlines priorities for the distribution of federal transportation funds. The federal surface transportation legislation establishes procedures and requirements for long range transportation planning. The current plan recognizes four significant factors that influence the need for surface transportation maintenance and improvement:

1. Land use, sustainability - How we develop our communities directly affects how we travel.
2. Maintenance, safety - Maintaining existing infrastructure in good operating condition is a perpetual challenge and increasingly expensive.
3. Livability, competitiveness - The operation and improvement of our transportation system needs to maintain a commitment to the environment and quality of life.
4. Affordability - Scarce funding requires efficient and targeted use of available resources.

The goals of the Regional Transportation Plan mirror the transportation policies of the Regional Growth Management Plan:

1. Maintain the condition of our transportation system.
2. Improve the performance of our transportation system for all users.
3. Increase the availability and use of alternate modes.
4. Ensure safe and convenient access between communities and among different transportation modes.
5. Provide a transportation system that is committed to the environment and quality of life.
6. Generate integrated, mutually supportive land use/transportation planning and investment.
7. Provide adequate and timely funding opportunities for transportation system improvements.

## ***Policies and Guidance Applicable to Wheatfield Township***

Additional policies in the Regional Transportation Plan relate to PennDOT's funding priorities and benchmarks. Select policies and benchmarks include:

- Prioritize system preservation and maintenance activities over expansion activities.
- Address safety and security concerns in all transportation projects and programs.

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- Reduce the number of crashes and fatalities (motorized and non-motorized) to no more than one fatality per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.
- Improve railway/highway crossings and eliminate at-grade crossings where possible.
- Coordinate facility improvements with local emergency management agency priorities.
- Target projects and programs to support the state's designated safety focus areas.
  
- Promote efficient management and operation efforts to lessen traffic congestion.
  - Manage targeted areas through the congestion management process (CMP), safety and mobility initiative (SAMI) projects and application of advanced technologies such as ITS and PA 511.
  - Facilitate multi-municipal efforts to coordinate traffic signals and traffic flow along priority corridors.
  - Support access management efforts and promote better coordination of Highway Occupancy Permits between PennDOT and municipalities to reduce unnecessary access and potential conflict points.
  - Reduce single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) by providing incentives to use different modes.
  - Discourage parking policies that contradict SOV reduction strategies and programs.
  
- Facilitate increased travel by bicycle and pedestrian modes.
  - Eliminate gaps and enhance existing linkages for non-motorized transportation between communities and neighborhoods, and between residences and employment/retail centers including, but not limited to, the Capital Area Greenbelt.
  - Improve existing substandard bicycle and pedestrian facility conditions.
  - Encourage installation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improvements with all improvement projects.
  
- Eliminate conflict between motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation.
  - Develop and promote bicycle safety education and training for all ages and levels of experience.

Replacement of the Sulphur Springs Road bridge over the Little Juniata Creek is the only project in Wheatfield Township included in the Regional Transportation Plan. There are several other

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transportation needs along major routes to the region's employment centers, e.g. PA 274 near Duncannon and near New Bloomfield (geometry), in Duncannon and New Bloomfield (safety), along US 22/322 (congestion, safety, and land use). Various projects are programmed to address these and other locations, which may affect Wheatfield Township residents as they travel, as shown in Table 6-1.

This RTP continues to prioritize funding for the regional transportation network and intermodal connections which support and connect with the interstate system, and not the interstate system itself.

Finally the Regional Transportation Plan highlights planning tools that municipalities are authorized to use to manage development and the travel demand it places on transportation systems. It characterizes comprehensive plans as a tool for analyzing needs and designating principles and concepts, e.g. Complete Streets and context sensitive design. It highlights official maps as a tool for designating trail corridors and park locations, rights-of-way, and other improvements. It calls out the subdivision and land development regulations as a tool for establishing street design and context sensitive design standards, as well as access management standards. It acknowledges the complexity of traffic impact fee requirements as barrier to broader use by municipalities.

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Table 6-1 Select Projects from HATS Regional Transportation Plan

Municipality / Sponsor	Project Name (Location)	Description	Year of Expenditure
<b>Highway and Bridge Projects</b>			
Carroll Township	PA 34 & PA 850 Intersection	Safety improvements at the intersection of PA 34 and PA 850	2011-2014
Carroll Township	PA Route 34 / Sunnyside Drive	Intersection improvement at Sterrett's Gap	2011-2014
Duncannon Borough	Market St Bridge, Duncannon	Rehabilitate bridge over Little Juniata Creek	2011-2014; 2015-2022
Marysville Borough	US 11/15 Rock Slope	Remove rock slope adjacent to roadway; install rock fence.	2011-2014
Marysville Borough	Valley Street Bridge	Replace bridge on US 11/15	2011-2014; 2015-2022
Penn Township PA 274	Business Campus	Improve the intersection of PA 274 with Friendly Drive	2011-2014
Rye Township	Pine Hill Road Bridge	Replace existing 24' feet single span steel bridge	2011-2014; 2015-2022
Wheatfield Township	Sulphur Springs Road Bridge	Replace steel bridge over Little Juniata Creek on Sulphur Spring Road	2011-2014
<b>Regional Projects</b>			
Cumberland Perry Counties Task Force	PA 34 Corridor	Improvements Package 34-A improvements from CPTF study	2015-2022
Cumberland Perry Counties Task Force	US Routes 11/15 (11A)	Turn lanes, signage	2015-2022
Cumberland Perry Counties Task Force	US 11/15 Rock Slope	Rock fall protection on US 11/15 at Kinkora Heights	2015-2022
Cumberland Perry Counties Task Force PA	Route 274 (274A)	Overhead clearance	2015-2022
Cumberland Perry Counties Task Force PA	Route 849 (849B)	Island modification	2023-2030
Cumberland Perry Counties Task Force	PA Route 34 (34C)	Restriping, vertical curve	2023-2030
Cumberland Perry Counties Task Force	PA Route 34 (34D)	Sight distance improvements	2023-2030
Centre Township	T-422 Dix Hill Road	Bridge Replace	2023-2030
Penn Township	Linton Hill Rd Bridge	Replace	2023-2030
Marysville Borough	South Main St Bridge	Rehabilitate	2023-2030
Duncannon Borough	SR 274 and Locust Road	Sight distance improvements	2023-2030
<b>Safety Projects</b>			
HATS Region	US 11	Priority safety projects from "Top 25" - Perdix	2015-2022
<b>Maintenance</b>			
Carroll and Rye Township	Valley Road	Resurface State Route 850 from State Route 34 to the Marysville	2015-2022
PennDOT	US 11 - Beginning of (in 3 segments)	Pavement Patching and Grinding from divided section to Juniata County Line	2023-2030

Source: HATS Regional Transportation Plan

## **Perry County Sewerage Plan, 1994**

The 1994 Perry County Sewerage Plan was prepared to promote orderly and efficient community growth by preventing overlapping and duplicative sewerage facilities. It evaluated existing systems and unsewered areas for present and foreseeable needs for sewer service to protect water quality.

The plan documented that there are no public sewerage treatment facilities in the Township. It identified five areas suspected of on-lot sewage disposal problems and one private facility problem area in Wheatfield Township. The plan made no recommendations to address these areas.

The plan references on-lot disposal system design criteria as regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (now the Department of Environmental Protection, DEP) as well as on-lot management and maintenance ordinance provisions as a best practice to protect water quality and maximize the life of the system.

The plan lists no adopted Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan for Wheatfield Township and stated that “areas not having an individual Act 537 Plan are believed to use the county Act 537 Plan.”

Note: Wheatfield Township prepared an Act 537 Plan in (date). During the public review process, residents expressed opposition to the recommended on-lot management ordinance and the plan’s review process was suspended. The Township has implemented and enforces the balance of the plan.

## **Tri-County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Perry County Plan, 2008**

The Perry County Planning Commission and the Perry County Emergency Management Agency prepared a countywide, multi-jurisdictional, Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) to bring the County into compliance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The MHMP aims to reduce or eliminate long-term risks to life and property that result from natural and manmade hazardous events, such as floods, severe winter weather, drought, and transportation accidents through various policies and actions.

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The plan evaluates the vulnerability, probability, localized maximum threat, and secondary effects of 15 types of hazards. These include:

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Civil Disorder               | 9. Nuclear Failure          |
| 2. Dam Failure                  | 10. Public Health Emergency |
| 3. Drought                      | 11. Severe Weather          |
| 4. Fire (Urban and Rural)       | 12. Terrorism               |
| 5. Flooding                     | 13. Tornado                 |
| 6. Forest (Insects and Disease) | 14. Transportation          |
| 7. Geologic Hazards             | 15. Utilities Failure       |
| 8. Hazardous Materials Spill    |                             |

Flooding resulting from slow moving and heavy rainstorms is an annual hazard in Perry County. As a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program, Wheatfield Township has adopted a floodplain management ordinance that meets the program eligibility requirements.

The plan identified flooding along Dark Hollow as a problem. It recommends a new bridge and stream stabilization project along the road at an estimated cost of \$395,000. The project ranks 7<sup>th</sup> of the 11 projects in the plan with no specified completion date.

The County and each municipality that adopted the plan are now eligible to apply for federal funds to implement those hazard mitigation measures identified within the plan.

## **Perry County Greenways, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, 2011**

The County's Greenways, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan directs action toward the conservation of land and development of recreational facilities to foster community and environmental health and protect local character.

### ***Policies, Guidance and Recommendations applicable to Wheatfield Township***

- PS1 - Conserve Land and Water Resources, and Promote Activities that Contribute to the Ecological Health of the County.
- PS2 - Protect the County's Scenic Character and Rural Lifestyle.
- PS3 - Provide Assistance and Outreach to Municipalities and Private Sector Partners.
- PS4 - Establish Partnerships to Promote and Implement Greenways, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.
- PS5 - Expand Existing Recreation Programs.

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- Recommendation #6 – Increase access points to the Shermans Creek for floating, fishing, and other water related recreation opportunities.
- PS6 - Link the County through the Development of Greenways and Trails.
  - Recommendation #1 – Develop Greenways to Protect Linear Features and Promote Recreation.
    - b) Support Locally Identified Greenways

## Recreational Greenways

6. The Little Juniata Creek Greenway follows the Little Juniata Creek for approximately 13.5 miles. The greenway is located in Centre, Miller, Penn, and Wheatfield Townships, and Bloomfield and Duncannon Boroughs.

- Recommendation #2 – Commission a Committee to determine the Feasibility of developing the Shermans Creek Greenway starting at the headwaters of Shermans Creek and terminating at its confluence with the Susquehanna River.

### Action:

- The vision of this greenway is more than resource protection. Shermans Creek runs the full length of Perry County from west to east and is enjoyed by numerous interests – including trout and bass fishermen, swimmers cooling off during a hot summer day, canoeing and rafting during high water levels during the spring thaw to name a few. Landscapes along the way include forested lands, farms, narrow valleys, parks, and campgrounds.

- Recommendation #3 – Support Shorter Greenways that Connect the Mega-Greenways to the Shermans Creek Greenway to Public and Private Park and Recreation Areas to Trails.

### Opportunities:

2. Shermans Creek as a Water Trail - Shermans Creek was identified as a significant waterway and one of the most underutilized water features in the county. Throughout this plan Shermans Creek has been identified for a greenway and water related recreation, and now a water trail. However, full fledge boating/canoeing opportunities only present themselves during spring and early summer when water levels of the



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creek run high. During summer months tubing and related floating adventures can occur; however, it will require significant portage,

8. Rail Trail – Utilize remnants of the former Sherman’s Valley Railroad rights-of-way to develop a trail layout out plan that would connect Duncannon Borough to New Bloomfield Borough and to other destinations in the County. Portions of the rights-of-way have been claimed by adjoining property owners therefore the initial recommendation is to prepare a feasibility study to determine a general path and cost of the project.

Action:

- a. Interconnecting proposed greenways to other greenways and trails is essential in developing a coordinated approach to preserve linear features and the recreational use of the greenways and trails. These smaller but equally important greenways include: Big Buffalo Creek, Bixler Run, Berry Mountain, Bowers Mountain, Buffalo Mountain, Conococheague Mountain, Cove Mountain, Hickory Ridge, Laurel Run, Little Buffalo Creek, Little Juniata Creek, Little Second Mountain, Mahanoy Ridge, Montour Creek, Perry Furnace Run, and Tuscarora Mountain.
- o Recommendation #5 - Link the County through Greenways and Trail

Actions:

- b. Plan for the development of the Shermans Creek Water Trail.
  - h. Plan for a rail trail from Duncannon/Newport boroughs to New Bloomfield to the Tuscarora State Forest. This trail could also be used by the Amish as a transportation corridor in the western part of the County.
- PS7 - Provide New and Enhance Existing Recreation Facilities.
    - o Recommendation #6 - Expand access to rivers and streams.
  - PS8 - Promote Tourism and Compatible Economic Development.

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## Current, Adjacent Municipal Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Maps

Of the five adjacent municipalities, only three have comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, as shown in Table 6-2. These planning documents from Carroll, Penn and Rye Townships are reviewed below for consistency with Wheatfield Township's plan.

This Comprehensive Plan recommends relatively few changes in land use policy (zoning), namely at Roseglen and along the PA Route 274 corridor from Paradise Road to PA Route 34. (The Future Land Use Map is located in Appendix C.) Still, a review of land use policy (zoning) and land use planning along the municipal border, where such has been completed, is provided below.

**Table 6-2 Status of Municipal Land Use Policy**

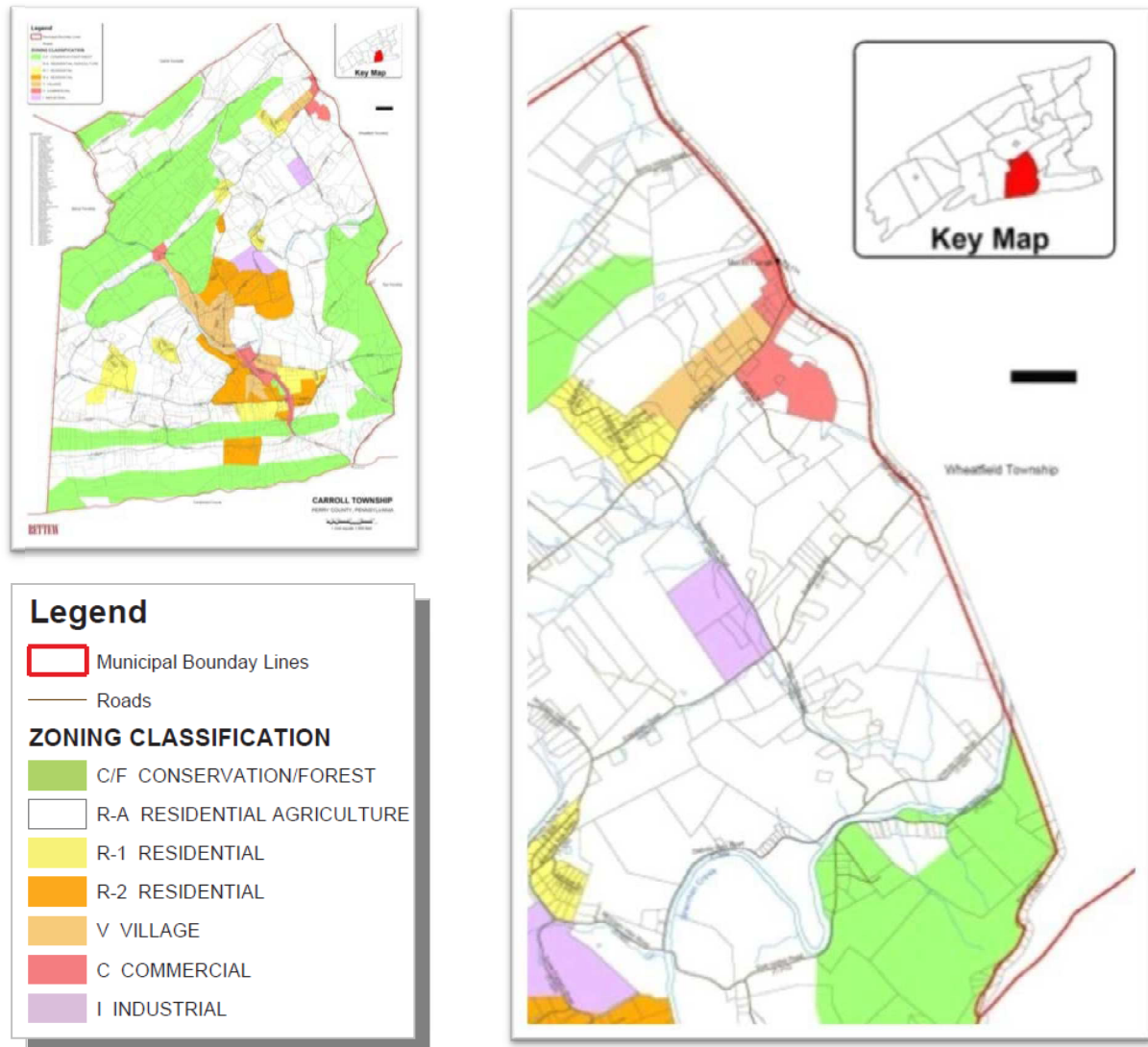
MUNICIPALITY	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	ZONING ORDINANCE	RELEVANT FOR REVIEW
Bloomfield Borough	1975	1975, Amended In 1993	No, not ccontiguous
Carroll Township	1987	1990; Amended In 2003	Yes
Centre Township	None	None	-
Duncannon Borough	1983	1988; Amended In 1996	No, not ccontiguous
Miller Township	None	None	-
Penn Township	1994	2003	Yes
Rye Township	1999	2011	Yes

## Carroll Township

Carroll Township's comprehensive plan was adopted in 1987. The plan designated lands along the municipal border with Wheatfield Township as residential, north of PA Route 274; agricultural from PA Route 274 to Shermans Creek; and conservation from Shermans Creek to the ridge top.

Carroll Township's zoning ordinance was subsequently adopted in 1990 and amended most recently in 2003. In the ordinance, the township designated lands fronting PA Route 34 near its intersection with PA Route 274, known as Mecks Corner, as one of three commercial district locations. This area is, in fact, occupied by a pizza shop and a storage unit business. Wheatfield Township's commercial/industrial designation along PA Route 274, abuts this district and neither creates nor enables land use conflicts.

Figure 6-1 Carroll Township Zoning Map



The ordinance designated lands along the Carroll-Wheatfield municipal border south of Shermans Creek as conservation forest. This district limits development to low density residential, conservation, municipal and utility uses in the interest of cultivating and sustaining natural resources. This designation is consistent with the countryside designation on the Wheatfield Township side of the border.

Carroll Township designated all other lands along the municipal border as its residential agricultural district. This district permits low density development similar to the conservation forest district, although where public service systems exist, densities may be slightly higher. This district is also consistent with Wheatfield Township's countryside designation.

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**Table 6-3 Carroll Township Zoning Provisions for Lands along the Carroll-Wheatfield Municipal Border**

Adjacent Carroll Township Zoning Districts	Summary District Provisions
<b>C - Commercial</b>	Designed to provide adequate and accessible commercial services to the Township.
Uses Permitted	Various commercial and public services, single family detached dwellings, private recreation services, places of worship, multi-family dwellings (additional provisions), and animal husbandry.
Lot Requirements	Minimum Size: 1.5 acres Minimum Width: 125 feet Maximum building coverage: 50% Minimum Setbacks: Front – 35'; side – 20'; rear – 35'
<b>C/F – Conservation Forest</b>	Designed to protect areas in the Township for the preservation and conservation of the natural environment and permit and encourage the retention of forested and open land; floodplain areas of streams, creeks and drainageways; and nonintensive land uses
Uses Permitted	Single family dwellings, conservation areas and structures, recreation areas (public and private), limited forms of agriculture, horticulture, and silviculture, municipal and utility facilities.
Lot Requirements	Minimum Size: 5 acres Minimum Width: 275 feet Maximum building coverage: 20% Minimum Setbacks: Front – 50'; side – 20'; rear – 50'
<b>R-A – Residential Agricultural</b>	Composed of agricultural areas and low-density residential areas in the Township with limited or no public service systems. The regulations for these districts are designed to protect and stabilize these essential characteristics and promote and encourage a safe and healthful environment for family life.
Uses Permitted	Single family dwellings, conservation areas and structures, recreation areas (public and private), limited forms of agriculture, horticulture, and silviculture, municipal and utility facilities.
Lot Requirements	Minimum Size: 1.5 acres Minimum Width: 150 feet Maximum building coverage: 20% Minimum Setbacks: Front – 30'; side – 20'; rear – 35'

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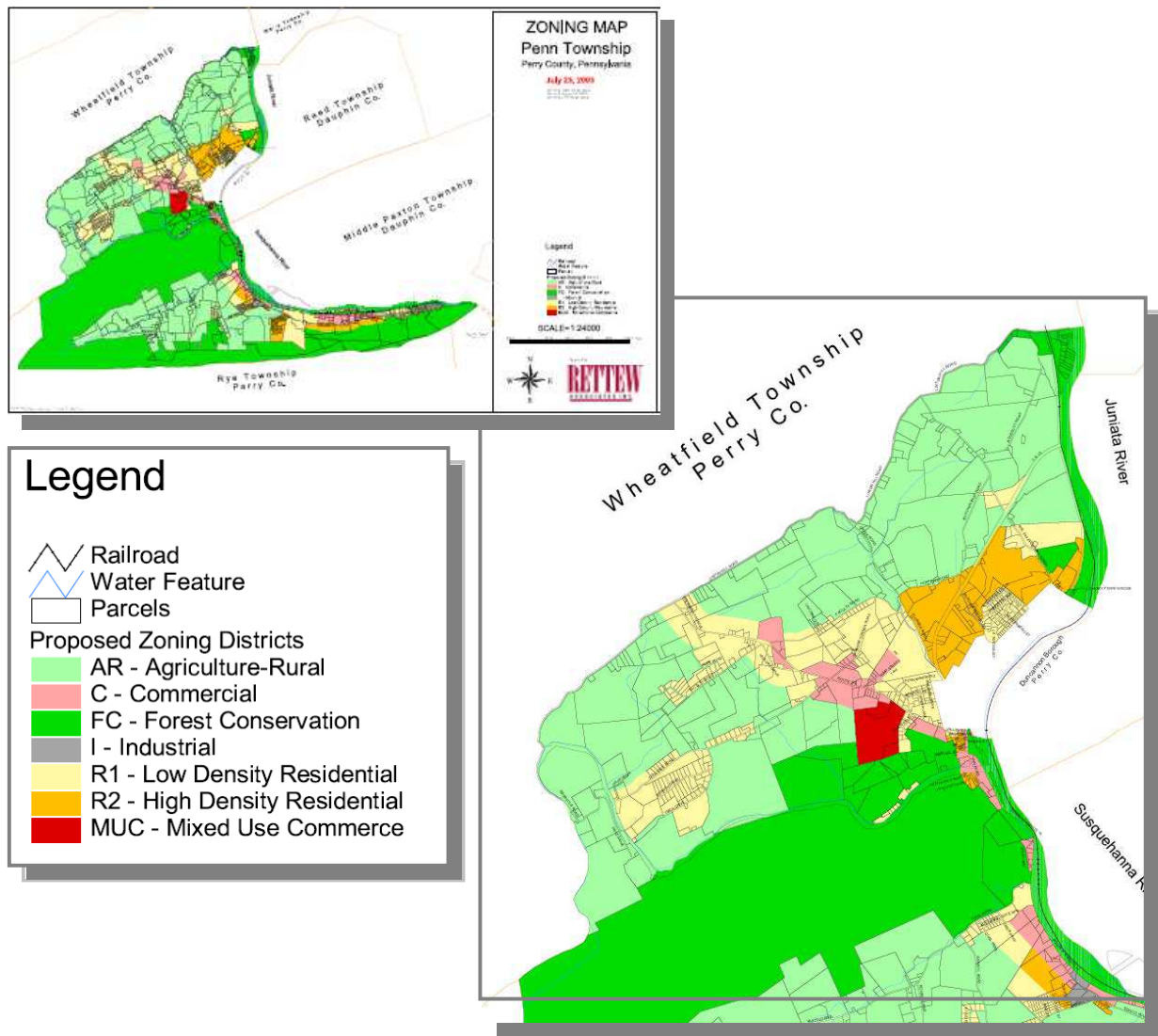
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## Penn Township

Penn Township's comprehensive plan was adopted in 1994. The future land use map designates residential, agricultural and conservation uses along the municipal border with Wheatfield Township. The township is currently preparing an update, which it expects to complete by the end of 2012. The draft update reflects no change to land use policy along the municipal border.

Penn Township adopted its zoning ordinance in 2003, with most recent amendments adopted in 2008. The zoning map designates the majority of lands along the municipal border with Wheatfield Township as agricultural-rural. The district is intended to support agricultural uses, low density residential and rural community and small-scale commercial uses. This district is consistent with Wheatfield Township's countryside designation.

Figure 6-2 Penn Township Zoning Map



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Lands fronting on PA Route 274 in Penn Township are designated low density residential, which generally permits the same uses as the agricultural-rural district but also allows for smaller lots where public sewer is available. Along waterways near the shared municipal border, Penn Township designates lands as forest conservation. Permitted uses in this district are again similar to other districts but the minimum lot size in this district is much larger, 4 acres, and setbacks are deeper. These districts are also consistent and/or compatible with Wheatfield Township's countryside designation.

**Table 6-4 Penn Township Zoning Provisions for Lands along the Penn-Wheatfield Municipal Border**

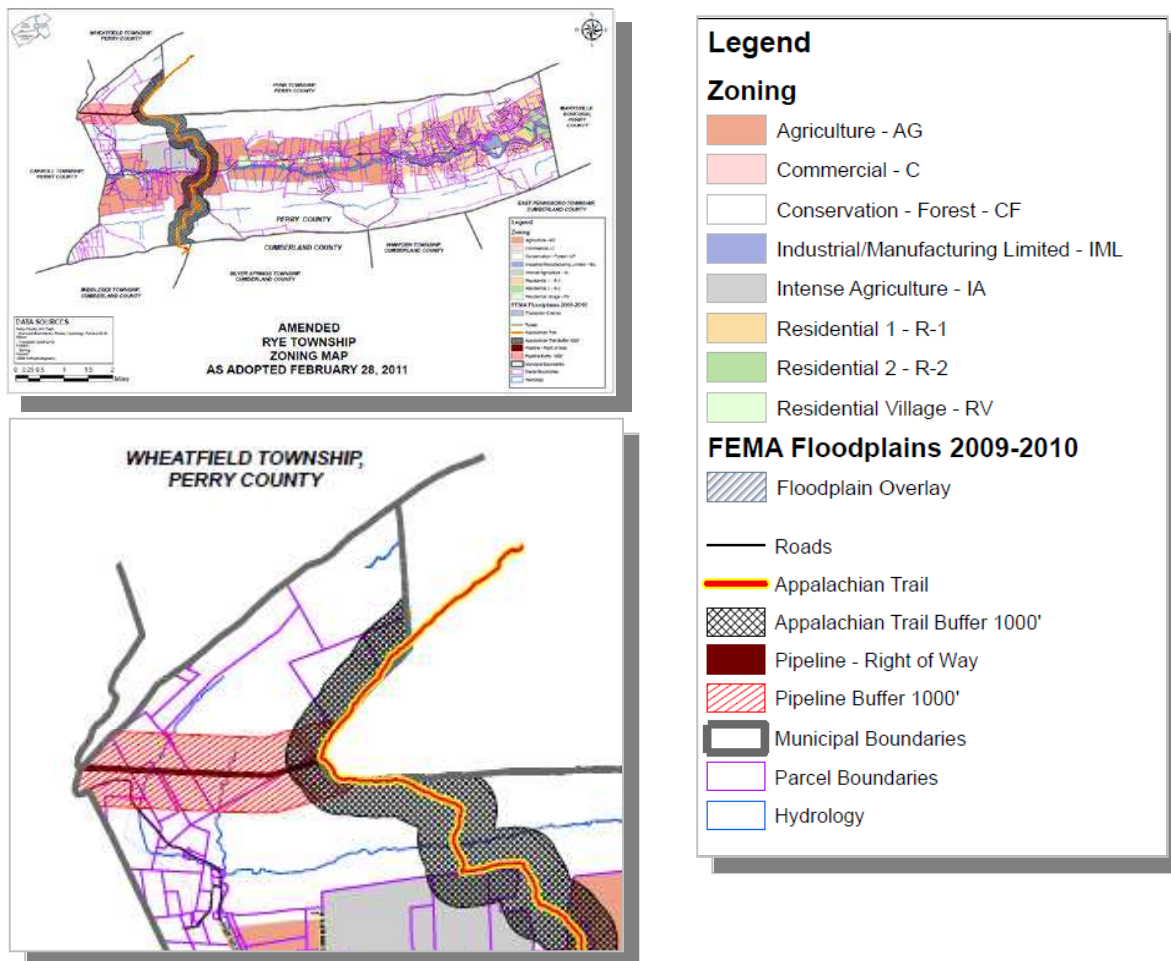
Adjacent Penn Township Zoning Districts	Summary District Provisions
<b>AR – Agricultural-Rural</b>	Designed to protect and stabilize the area's essential agricultural characteristics, and limit development that requires highways and other public services and facilities in excess of those required by agricultural and low density residential uses.
Uses Permitted	Single family dwellings, conservation areas and structures, recreation areas (public and private), various forms of agriculture, horticulture, and silviculture, home occupations, day care homes, cemeteries, and non-commercial sawmills; additional rural and open space uses by conditional use approval.
Lot Requirements	Minimum Size: 1.5 acres with on-lot well/septic (1 acre with public sewer) Minimum Width: 150 feet Maximum impervious coverage: 20% Minimum Setbacks: Front – 25'; one side – 15'; total sides – 30'; rear – 25'
<b>FC – Forest Conservation</b>	Designed to protect areas in the Township for the preservation and conservation ("wise use") of the natural environment and to permit and encourage the retention of open space, floodplain areas of streams, creeks and drainageways, and open land uses
Permitted Uses	Single family dwellings, conservation areas and structures, recreation areas (public and private), various forms of agriculture, horticulture, and silviculture, home occupations, day care homes, and non-commercial sawmills; additional rural and open space uses by conditional use approval.
Lot Requirements	Minimum Size: 4 acres Minimum Width: 300 feet Maximum impervious coverage: 20% Minimum Setbacks: Front – 40'; one side – 15'; total sides – 50'; rear – 25'
<b>R1 – Low Density Residential</b>	Designed to accommodate low density development and is composed of areas in the Township where such development already exists or is desired to be located.
Permitted Uses	Single family dwellings, conservation areas and structures, recreation areas (public and private), limited forms of agriculture, and silviculture, home occupations, and day care homes; additional rural and open space uses by conditional use approval.
Lot Requirements	Minimum Size: 1.5 acres (20,000 sf with public sewer; 15,000 sf w public water and public sewer) Minimum Width: 150 feet (100 feet with public sewer) Maximum impervious coverage: 20% Minimum Setbacks: Front – 25'; one side – 15'; total sides – 30'; rear – 25' (smaller sides with public water and public sewer)



## Rye Township

Rye Township adopted its comprehensive plan in 1999. The plan recognizes regional growth affecting rural communities, like Rye Township, made possible by major highway corridors. Per the plan, the township expects residential development to continue to occur along with some small-scale commercial increase. No large-scale commercial or industrial activity is expected. The plan states that natural features pose moderate to severe limitations to the amount, location, and intensity of development in the township. Steep slopes, soils with limited capacity to support on-lot septic systems, wetlands, and stream and floodplains are specifically noted in the land use plan chapter. A limited area near Marysville Borough is designated for moderate to high density development, supported by extension of the Marysville Borough sewer system.

**Figure 6-3 Rye Township Zoning Map**





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Along the border with Wheatfield Township, where steep slopes and forest cover are found, the Rye Township Comprehensive plan recommends a land use policy of conservation. The plan also recognizes the agricultural/forest land use classification in Wheatfield Township's (1974) comprehensive plan as consistent with this recommendation.

Rye Township adopted a new zoning ordinance in February 2011, replacing its 1990 ordinance and interim amendments. The new ordinance maintains the Conservation Forest (CF) district for lands along the border with Wheatfield Township. The district requires large lot sizes consistent with its purpose to conserve sensitive natural resources while permitting non-intensive development. Wheatfield Township's countryside designation for lands on its side of the municipal border is consistent with Rye Township's zoning.

**Table 6-5 Rye Township Zoning Provisions for Lands along the Rye-Wheatfield Municipal Border**

Adjacent Rye Township Zoning District	Provisions
<b>Conservation Forest</b>	Designed to protect areas in the Township for the preservation and conservation of the natural environment and permit and encourage the retention of forested and open land; flood plain area of streams, creeks, and drainageways; and non-intensive land uses located to constitute a harmonious and appropriate part of the physical development of the Township.
Uses Permitted	Public conservation areas and structures; places of worship; public, semi-public, and private parks and recreation areas, camps, and clubs; single family detached dwellings; no impact home occupations; communication towers and antennas; public utility transmission and distribution facilities; municipal buildings and facilities; agriculture, horticulture, and forestry; forest products industries; bed and breakfasts; horse stables; winter sports and lodges; golf courses; public and parochial schools; historical preservation areas; mining and quarrying; and wind energy facilities (by special exception).
Lot Requirements	Minimum Size: 10 acres for lots where slopes on at least 50% of the lot are 0-14%; 20 acres for lots where slopes on at least 50% of the lot are 15% or more. Lands with 25% slope area excluded from the calculation. Minimum Width: 500' at the building face Maximum impervious coverage: 10% Setbacks: Front – 30'; side – 20'; rear – 50'



### Moving Ideas to Action

The comprehensive plan recommends several investments and activities. These include physical infrastructure projects but also local land use and resource planning, regulatory revisions, and educational and outreach initiatives on regional community services, among others.

The responsibility for implementing the comprehensive plan lies with the Board of Supervisors as the governing body. Elected officials direct implementation of the comprehensive plan as they make daily decisions, approve plans, delegate tasks and initiatives to municipal staff and volunteers, and approve municipal budgets. Zoning updates are generally the first recommendations to be implemented, followed by other ordinance updates, capital improvement planning, and public education efforts.

The implementation schedule shown in Table 7-1 is used to prioritize recommendations and program them sequentially, where needed. The three implementation periods – 2013-2015, 2016-2019, and 2020+ – are intended to distribute the need for staff, funding and other resources over several years. However, recommendations may be acted upon whenever leadership, funding and other resources are available, or where there is an immediate need in the interest of public health, safety and welfare.

Table 7-1 should be used as a guide to the annual review of completed implementation activities and to the annual programming of upcoming implementation activities by Board of Supervisors, assisted by the planning commission. Check boxes are shown to denote the time period for implementation and can be marked when the action is complete. A status and notes column is provided, enabling this two-page layout to serve as a progress report on the ongoing implementation of the comprehensive plan.

# Plan Implementation & Review

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**Table 7-1 Implementation Schedule**

Recommendations	YEAR(S) FOR IMPLEMENTATION			STATUS AND NOTES
	2013-2015	2016-2019	2020 +	
Land Use				
1. Update Zoning Ordinance and Map.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
2. Update the citation of FEMA’s Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) as the source of floodplain delineation.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
3. Improve relevance and consistency of definitions in the zoning and subdivision/land development ordinances.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Transportation				
1. Repair 2012 flooding damage to the intersection of Sulphur Springs Road and Montebello Road.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
2. Explore options to reduce flooding along Sulphur Springs Road at Simoncelli’s, 100 yards upstream from Sulphur Springs Bridge.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. Consider a traffic study of travel speeds along Linton Hill Road (between Dark Hollow Road and Dellville Road) to determine if reduced speed limits are warranted.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
4. Promote awareness of Perry County Transit Authority services, e.g. through township newsletter and website.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
5. Promote awareness of Commuters Services of Central PA, e.g. through township newsletter and website.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
6. If the Neighborhood Commercial district remains along Route 274, review minimum driveway separation distances for driveways accessing local and state roads with PennDOT Access Management Handbook and Model Ordinances.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Community Facilities and Services				
1. Require notification to school districts where twenty (20) or more dwelling units are proposed in a subdivision or land development.	<input type="checkbox"/>			

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Recommendations	YEAR(S) FOR IMPLEMENTATION			STATUS AND NOTES
	2013- 2015	2016- 2019	2020 +	
2. Engage residents interested in volunteering for community services.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
3. Utilize remnants of the former Sherman's Valley Railroad rights-of-way to develop a trail that would connect Duncannon Borough to New Bloomfield Borough. Begin with a feasibility study.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
4. Plan and develop the Shermans Creek Water Trail, including increased access points for floating, fishing, and other water-related recreation opportunities.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>				
1. Cite natural resources identified in the Tri-County Natural Areas Inventory as resources to be identified in the Environmental Assessment as prescribed in the zoning ordinance, and the preliminary plat requirements as prescribed in the subdivision/land development ordinance.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
2. Cite natural resources and planned conservation corridors identified in the Perry County Greenways and Open Space Plan as resources to be identified in the Environmental Assessment as prescribed in the zoning ordinance, and the preliminary plat requirements as prescribed in the subdivision/land development ordinance.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
3. Define and designate steep slopes as resources to be protected in the zoning ordinance.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
4. Define wetlands, require their delineation on subdivision and/or land development plans, and establish wetland buffer zones.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
5. Develop an inventory and assessment of historical resources and properties.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
6. Develop greenways to protect linear features and promote recreation.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
7. Adopt or incorporate into existing subdivision and land development ordinances provisions that address slope stability.	<input type="checkbox"/>			

# Plan Implementation & Review

Draft January 30, 2013

Recommendations	YEAR(S) FOR IMPLEMENTATION			STATUS AND NOTES
	2013-2015	2016-2019	2020 +	
FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS				
1. Modify zoning provisions of the agricultural/residential district to conserve agricultural land.			<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Annual Plan Review and Plan Updates

Amendments to the MPC (Section 302(d)) require municipal comprehensive plans to be reviewed every 10 years [Section 301(c)]. In rapidly growing planning areas, more frequent updates may be needed to maintain timely policies and priorities. In slow growing areas, a 10-year update of population, demographic, and socio-economic information that shows little or no change could provide the basis for sustaining the current plan and policies with re-adoption of the existing plan.

Indeed, the Comprehensive Plan will only be useful if its recommendations are implemented, evaluated and updated. For this to occur, it is recommended that the Township Planning Commission annually perform the following actions:

- Evaluate the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, make modifications to the plan to ensure it remains useful regarding the future development and conservation decisions in the Township.
- As recommendations are completed, review, refine, and reprioritize the remaining recommendations.
- Prepare an annual written report summarizing plan evaluation, the past year's implementation activities, upcoming implementation activities, and crucial issues that will, or may, impact the region.
- Submitted the annual report to the Board of Supervisors and the Perry County Planning Commission for public awareness.