

# FINAL PLAN- JANUARY 2021



## Comprehensive Plan Update Penn Township, Westmoreland County



**TOWNSHIP OF PENN RESOLUTION NO. 2 - 2021**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PENN ADOPTING THE UPDATED**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code authorizes and sets content standards for a municipal comprehensive plan and amendment to the comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Penn Township Planning Commission has prepared an updated comprehensive plan which contains all necessary elements to meet the requirements of a comprehensive plan under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code; and

**WHEREAS**, this plan offers a prioritization of projects, guidance policies, and explanatory text for such important issues as land use, housing, community facilities, conservation, transportation, economic development and natural and historic resource protection; and

**WHEREAS**, a copy of the updated Comprehensive Plan, which includes the text, maps, charts and any other items which form the whole of the comprehensive plan and was made available for public review is attached hereto and made apart hereof; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan was sent to all contiguous municipalities, the Penn Trafford School District and Westmoreland County Planning Division for review and comment on November 12, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the Penn Township Commissioners considered all comments received within forty-five (45) days of submission; and

**WHEREAS**, notice of a public hearing was forwarded to the Penn Trafford News to be advertised and published pursuant to the Municipalities Planning Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commissioners held a public hearing on January, 20, 2021 to hear and consider public comments, and that the comments received at the public hearing were duly noted; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commissioners, after consideration of comments received, have determined that the plan should not be substantially revised in whole or in part; and

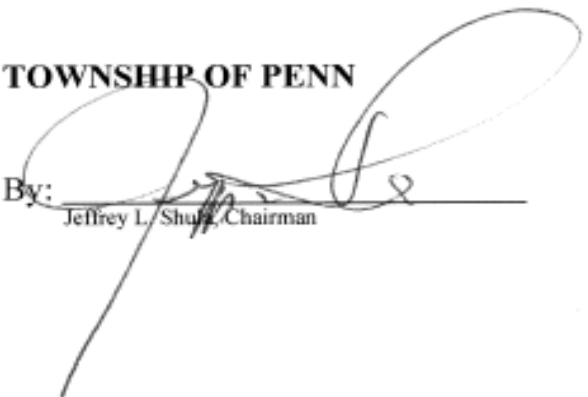
**WHEREAS**, the Commissioners have found that the updated Comprehensive Plan is beneficial to the health, safety and welfare of Penn Township's citizens.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** and it is hereby resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Penn that the Penn Township updated Comprehensive Plan attached hereto, as pursuant to Article III and Article XI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, is hereby adopted. Any and all previous comprehensive planning documents are hereby repealed.

**RESOLVED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021.

**ATTEST: (SEAL)**

  
Mary Perez, Secretary

**TOWNSHIP OF PENN**  
By:   
Jeffrey L. Shupe, Chairman





# Acknowledgements

## ***Township Commissioners***

- Ward 1 — Jeff Shula, Chair
- Ward 2 — Lisa Rose Zaucha, Vice Chair
- Ward 3 — Chuck Konkus
- Ward 4 — Timothy Gwynn
- Ward 5 — Larry Harrison



Many additional agencies, groups and individuals contributed information, expertise and perspective to this report.

## ***Planning Commission***

- Phillip E. Miller, Chair
- Donna Muller, Vice Chair
- Mark Cypher
- Paul A. Knapp
- Robert P. Marietti
- Jason McCabe
- Hank Tkacik

## ***Township Staff***

- Mary Perez, Manager
- Bill Roberts, Director of Community Development
- John Otto, Chief of Police
- Tom Lamacz, Public Works Foreman
- Jeanann Greer, Administrative Assistant/Planning Commission Secretary
- Alexander J. Graziani, AICP, (Former Manager)

## ***Township Engineer***

- Mark Szewcow, P.E., Gibson-Thomas
- Dan Schmitt, P.E., Gibson-Thomas

## ***Township Solicitor***

- Michael T. Korns, Maiello Brungo & Maiello

## ***Project Consultants***

### ***Mackin Engineering***

- Brandi Rosselli, AICP
- Jenni Easton, AICP (Former Planner)

### ***4ward Planning***

- Todd Poole

### ***Regola Consulting***

- Bob Regola



# Contents

Introduction .....

Infrastructure .....

Road System

Stormwater Management

Utilities

Open Space and Recreation

Land Assets

Economic Development .....

Market Conditions

Key Opportunities

Parcel Suitability

6

10

33

Land Use and Zoning .....

Landscape and Constraints

Existing Controls

Regulatory Tools

Implementation .....

Landscape and Constraints

Existing Controls

Regulatory Tools

Appendix .....

Additional Provisions

Public and Stakeholder Outreach

Demographic Snapshot

Funding Sources

Implementation Status of 2006 Plan

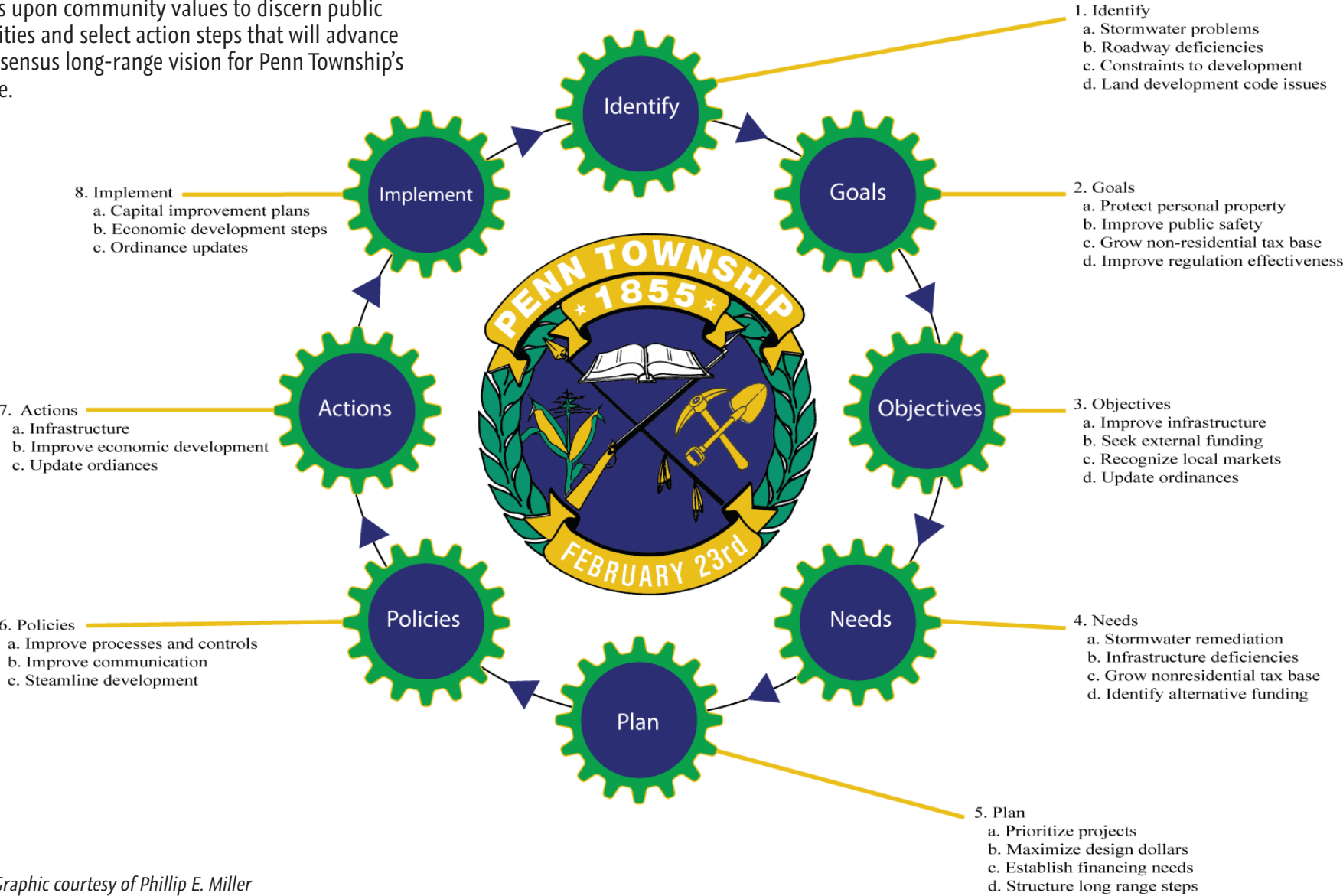
45

69

74

## Comprehensive Plan Update: Guided Decision-Making

This graphic illustrates how the planning process draws upon community values to discern public priorities and select action steps that will advance a consensus long-range vision for Penn Township's future.



Graphic courtesy of Phillip E. Miller



# Introduction

Penn Township adopted its latest Comprehensive Plan in 2006, an official statement of policies concerning physical development and social and economic goals, the end product of exhaustive research and committed community engagement (a spreadsheet of the status of plan recommendations can be found in the appendices).

This Comprehensive Plan builds upon the 2006 plan, updating its assessments of existing conditions and changing markets to provide a fact base and new tools for ongoing planning efforts. If planning can be understood as a way of thinking about the future, this plan represents a first step toward figuring out what Penn Township's best possible future looks like and how we might get there from here.

A key directive for the Comprehensive Plan was to focus exclusively on three topics directly related to community prosperity:

infrastructure, economic development and land use regulation. Local leaders recognize the Township's cherished identity as a bedroom community as well as their responsibility to keep the Township economically sustainable in the long term. This has led to a need to diversify the real estate tax base —which is currently 87% residential — in ways that are consistent with local values and the character of the built environment.

Cultivating further commercial and light industrial development will require an understanding of market forces at play, an adequate supply of available land zoned accordingly in advantageous locations and maintenance of a transportation system with according capacity. The plan examines each topic and suggests an array of action steps that can open up opportunity in the Township as other aspects of long-range planning continue to develop.

One item that has arisen toward the end of the planning process is the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is still too early to determine exactly how the pandemic will change or affect the township in the future, economic development, primarily in terms of retail and restaurant activity, and more work from home options will most likely come in to play. In light of this, the Township should monitor changes related to this or any future pandemic and adjust policy and land use regulations accordingly.

Action items are highlighted within each topic area and further detail is included in the Implementation Matrix on pages 72-73.

Supporting demographic and market data can be found in the appendices and the supplemental documents: "Penn Township Market Study" and "Penn Township Build Out and Fiscal Impact Analysis" completed by 4ward Planning.

*Route 130 is shown here undergoing a multi-million-dollar intersection improvement project at Pleasant Valley and Sandy Hill Roads. The project added turning lanes and a traffic signal to ease congestion.*

# Mission and Vision

The Comprehensive Plan process represents an opportunity for a community to envision and evaluate future scenarios on a grand scale, identifying the type of place it wishes to become and what would be required to achieve the best possible future version of itself.

The mission statement developed for the Comprehensive Plan represents the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. It answers the question: What do residents want to see happen in the community in the long run? The mission statement identifies the community's most important values. The vision statement details how the Township intends to fulfill the mission statement.

The Comprehensive Plan supports the mission and vision through:

- The development of citizen-supported goals and objectives,
- Prioritization of goals and objectives, and
- Implementation of specific, targeted strategies.

Future decisions made by Commissioners and appointed officials should consider consistency with the mission and vision, as they represent a shared idea of the type of place the community is and intends to become.

“

## Mission Statement

In recognition of resident's values, expressed through word and example, it is the mission of Penn Township government to support, guide and protect a safe and clean community of rural character and high quality recreational spaces with sufficient growth to support our residents. Penn Township recognizes the importance of development of residential, commercial and industrial growth in a controlled, responsible manner and seeks to encourage such development as it is consistent with citizen preferences. Through provision of efficient and responsive local government services, Penn Township will continue its emphasis on public safety, and responsible planning and zoning within the Township, to foster the kind of community our residents' desire.

”

“

## Vision Statement

Penn Township will accomplish its stated mission through development of a strengthened land use policy as codified by the Zoning Ordinance and updates and supported by identified infrastructure improvements. Additionally, to support existing and future single family, multi-family and townhome residential housing needs, the Township will foster new economic development by encouraging new retail and commercial development – consistent with a primarily residential/rural setting. These developments will be required to adhere to defined performance standards for a clean, safe, family-oriented community.

”

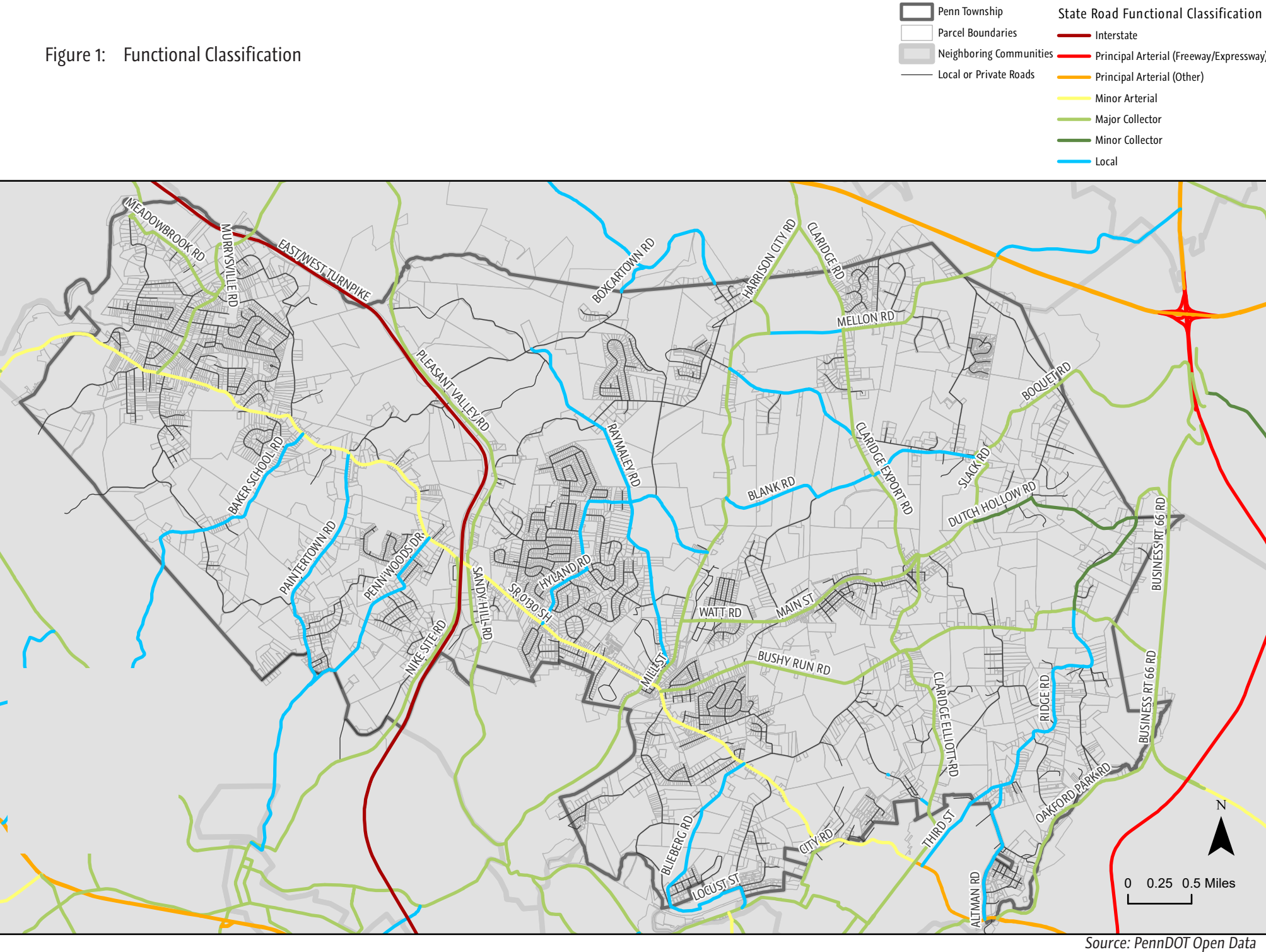


# Infrastructure

This section examines the way that people, goods and resources move through Penn Township. The Township's planning efforts focus primarily on elements within the control of local government. While other public agencies and market forces at regional and national levels influence what is built here, Penn Township's leaders control the maintenance, improvement and expansion of the public infrastructure systems over which they preside. This in turn determines the capacity of those systems, their safety and the mobility they enable.

Accordingly, this section focuses heavily on two issues that were often discussed as Phase I developed: How the Township can most efficiently and cost-effectively ensure that its road network is safe for all users, adequately maintained and modernized to meet the demands of growth; and how the Township should ensure that its aging, undersized stormwater system is updated to address ongoing issues, to comply with regulatory mandates and to sustainably support the economic development the Township has envisioned.

Figure 1: Functional Classification





## Road System

Penn Township's road network represents its largest capital investment. The Township owns and maintains 112 miles of roadway within its borders, consisting mostly of local and minor collector roads. Additionally, the state owns and maintains the roughly 52 miles of road shown by classification in Figure 1, which (with the exception of the Turnpike) range from local roads to principal arterials:

- **Local roads** constitute all rural roads not classified in a higher system. These roads provide access to land adjacent to the collector network and serve travel over relatively short distances.
- **Minor collectors** are spaced at intervals to collect traffic from local roads, linking local traffic generators with the rural hinterland.
- **Major collectors** provide service to larger towns and other traffic generators, connecting routes of higher classification and serving intracounty corridors.

- **Minor arterials** link cities, larger towns and other traffic generators, providing integrated interstate and intercounty service. Corridor movements are consistent with greater trip lengths and travel densities than those served by rural collector or local systems.
- **Principal arterials** serve at the statewide or interstate level, serving all urbanized areas and providing integrated movements without stub connections.
- **Interstates** provide limited-access facilities.

Westmoreland County owns and maintains 3.7 miles of Harrison City / Export Road, a major link to U.S. Route 22 and a corridor likely to experience further development.

The highest-traffic routes within the Township are the Pennsylvania Turnpike, State Route 130 and State Route 993. In general, the internal road system is fairly low-capacity, having been originally laid out to serve a predominantly rural agricultural area. Traffic volume grew dramatically in recent decades as thousands of homes were built. As one stakeholder observed, "These roads used to see three hay carts per day; now it's hundreds of minivans."

## Action Steps

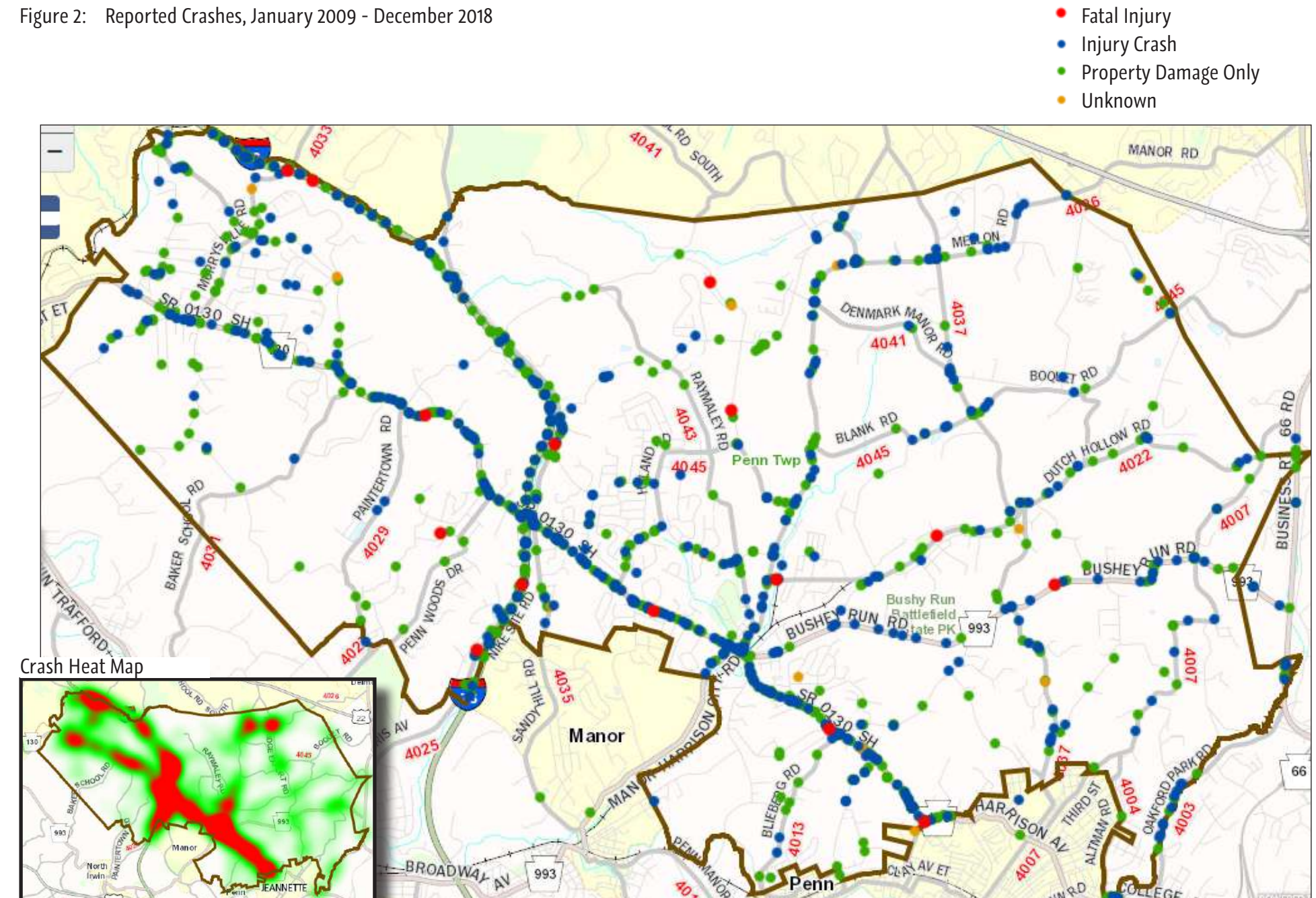
The analysis in this report is accompanied by recommended action steps, each of which have ballpark estimates of:

- The financial effort level that local government should expect to be involved in carrying out action steps, whether through the General Fund budget or other sources.
- The general outlook for how long an action step would take to achieve, given known constraints (personnel, funding, political realities, etc.).

These estimates appear next to each action step according to the symbols below. More information on the action steps can be found in the Implementation Matrix beginning on page 72.

\$	Staff time, funding < \$5,000
\$\$	\$5,000 to \$20,000
\$\$\$	\$20,001 to \$100,000
\$\$\$\$	More than \$100,000
\$V	Varies based on project scope
◆	Short term: 1-2 years
◆◆	Mid term: 2-5 years
◆◆◆	Long term: More than 5 years

Figure 2: Reported Crashes, January 2009 - December 2018



Source: PennDOT Crash Information Tool



# Support a Route 130 Corridor Study.

A study to analyze the safety conditions and traffic operations on Route 130 is currently listed on the Southwestern Pennsylvania Transportation Improvement Program for 2019-2022. The Township and its elected representatives should continue to support this study through PennDOT and ensure it includes safety evaluation for Hillview, 14th Street, Burrell Hill, Chestnut and Sunbirch. More broadly it should also examine existing and future traffic operations (considering the potential impact of a Turnpike interchange), corridor deficiencies, road and bridge conditions and capacity to support the local economy.

According to Google traffic data, congestion is at its worst in Penn Township during Friday afternoon rush hour, when backups are typical heading into Harrison City from all directions. Local public safety officials note that the recently completed PennDOT project to widen the busy intersection of Route 130 with Pleasant Valley and Sandy Hill roads has improved conditions in the immediate vicinity, but it has also “moved the bottleneck” east toward Harrison City. Route 130 is in clear need of further improvements that are made challenging by a lack of space: Any widening of the right-of-way would require the acquisition of land and likely buildings.

## Reported road safety issues

Figure 2 illustrates the latest 10 years of traffic collisions for which data were available in Penn Township. A total of 1,143 incidents were distributed fairly evenly over the decade, with a low of 131 events in 2017 and a high of 170 in 2011.

Of the 1,143 incidents, 803 (70%) involved a state road, 661 (58%) involved local roads, and 262 (23%) occurred on the portion of the Turnpike running through the Township. (The overlap is due to the prevalence of incidents happening at intersections of state and local roads.) Incidents were heavily concentrated along Route 130, particularly east of Nike Site Road.

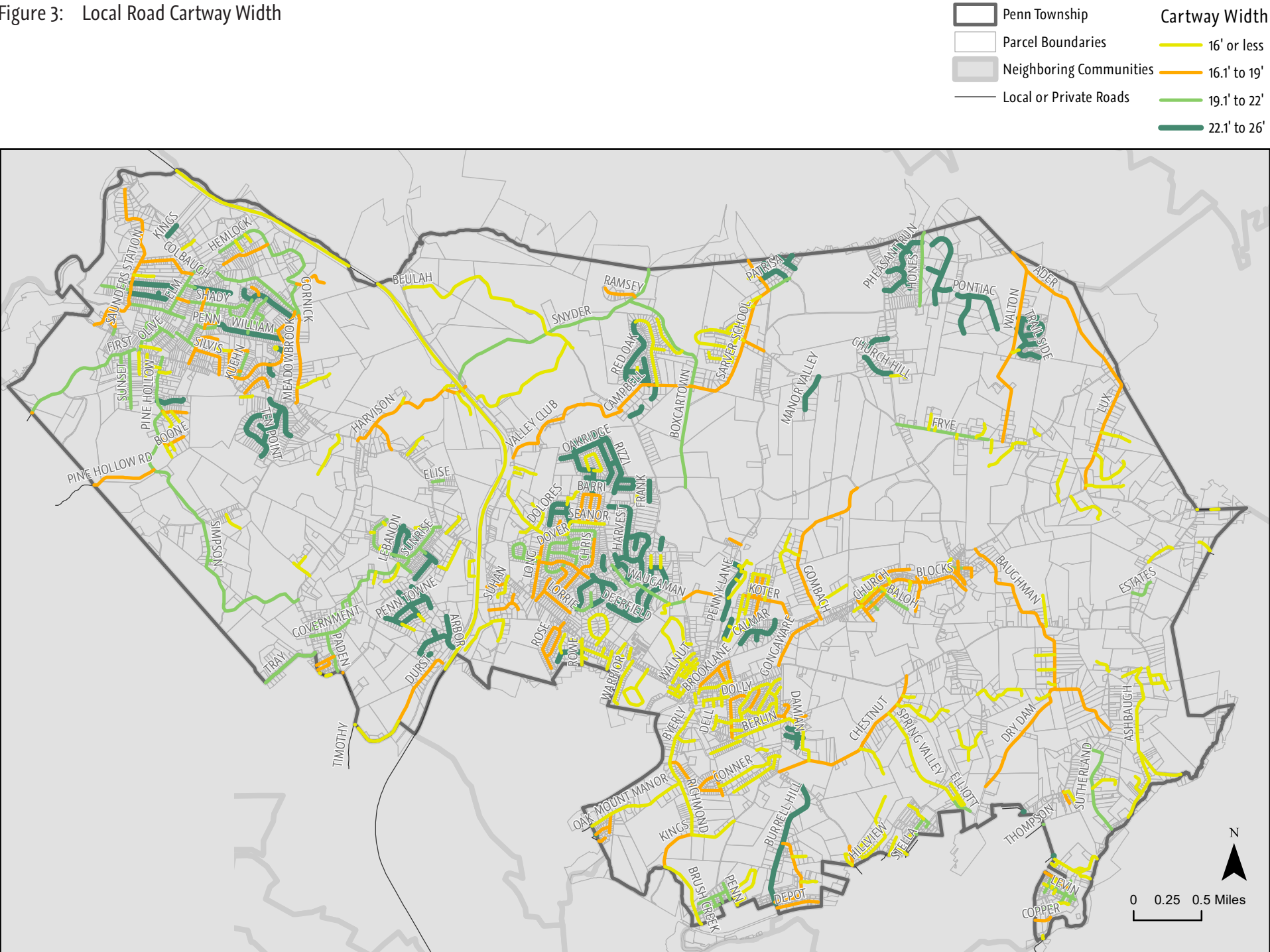
The majority of incidents (59%) resulted in property damage only, though 15 incidents resulted in fatality and 29 in suspected serious injury.

By description, the largest share of incidents (48%) involved collision with a fixed object, followed by rear-end collision (17%) and collision at an angle (16%). Eighteen incidents involved collision with a pedestrian.

Other problems identified by local public safety personnel included:

- Accidents related to poor drainage icing on Route 130 in the vicinity of Harvison and Paintertown Roads
- Vegetation on private property limiting sight distance
- Safety problems at the blinker intersection of Mellon and Claridge roads
- Stormwater from new developments causing problems
- Road slides, including Paintertown Road
- Hazardous conditions for cyclists
- Need for a long-term infrastructure safety/hazard mitigation plan

Figure 3: Local Road Cartway Width



## Action 1b

### Continue to evaluate “turnback” opportunities.

As discussed, subsidence and flooding issues on certain state-owned roads call for examination of whether the Township should take over their design and maintenance through PennDOT’s turnback program. The Township should compile a list of possible turnback projects and estimate the long-term cost and benefit for each.

Cost

\$

Time



## Action 1c

### Monitor Turnpike Slip Ramp Interchange Plans

As noted, the transportation system within the Township could change drastically depending on the Turnpike plans. The Township should stay in touch with Turnpike officials as well as state representatives to monitor the development of an interchange within their boundaries.

Cost

\$

Time



### Capacity and development

The Comprehensive Planning process represents an opportunity to entertain transformational change for the Township’s transportation system: Decades from now, will Township leaders and residents be satisfied with the road system as it exists now? If not, what should be done to further develop it?

Transformational change may come within the next 10 years, based on Turnpike Commission plans:

- Starting in 2023, a \$300 million Turnpike Commission project will widen the toll road to three lanes in each direction between the Irwin and Monroeville interchanges.
- Plans to add a cashless tolling interchange near Route 130 have gained traction, as the Commission added this project to its 10-year plan, and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) lists the project in its draft 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program. SPC’s 2016 feasibility study estimated that the project would bring average daily traffic on that section of Route 130 from 12,000 vehicles per day to 20,000, requiring capacity improvements that would cost \$38 million.

SPC’s study estimated that a new ramp in Penn Township would have “good potential to

attract new [Turnpike] customers, considering the fairly dense population and potential congestion experienced traveling to nearby existing interchange access points (Irwin to the east, Monroeville to the west).” The economic and land use impacts of such change are considered later in this report. The traffic impact would be substantial.

Projects identified for the short to mid term include:

- Route 130 – Route 993 Walnut Street intersection (Westside / Southbound)
- Route 130 – Route 993 (Bushy Run Road) (Eastside / Northbound)
- Commercial Court - cul-de sac

## Related best practices

### Pavement Management Systems

An increasing number of local governments are adopting new technology to ensure that road maintenance projects are selected in a consistent and rational manner that optimizes limited resources.

The concept of such systems is not new. In 1983, the American Public Works Association defined pavement management as “a systematic method for routinely collecting, storing and retrieving the kind of decision-making information needed to make maximum use of limited maintenance (and construction) dollars.” However, advances in digital imaging and data storage and analysis make these systems ever more efficient and powerful.

Implementing a pavement management system generally involves the following:

- Defining and inventorying the network
- Collecting pavement condition data
- Predicting the future condition of segments
- Selecting appropriate treatments
- Reporting results to assist decision makers
- Storing, analyzing and managing data
- Keeping the process dynamic and current

Municipalities using these systems report improvements in the scheduling of pavement works that reduce costs, as well as better tools for decision-making. The associated investment includes software, personnel training, data collection, system maintenance and updates.

### Capital Improvement Plans

A municipality’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a prioritized list of anticipated large expenses, identifying the highest-priority capital needs and a preliminary schedule of expenditures over a longer future term. The CIP coordinates strategic planning, financial management and physical development, examining competing demands for resources based on a community’s long-term vision and goals.

Capital expenses are relatively expensive permanent ones, such as new or replacement streets, public buildings, sewer systems, etc., and a “large” expense can be at whatever threshold makes local sense.

Benefits of planning for capital expenses in the 20-year range include:

- Providing transparency to taxpayers
- Creating a framework for funding projects
- Supporting high bond ratings
- Creating a degree of certainty for the long term
- Anticipating large expenses helps avoid tax increases
- Allowing time to plan for larger undertakings

Drafting a 20-year Capital Improvement Plan for Penn Township might include appointing a committee representing major departments with capital facilities (public works, police, etc.); developing a process, calendar, forms, criteria and schedule; seeking citizen and stakeholder input; identifying projects and funding options; and preparing and recommending a plan for adoption. The CIP’s first five years become the first capital budget.



Action  
1d

Adopt a pavement management system.

The Township should factor the cost of inspection, planning and programming into its road maintenance program, taking advantage of advances in technology to efficiently and objectively analyze information that can inform how road maintenance and improvement projects are scheduled.

Cost

\$

Time

◆◆

Action  
1e

Develop a Capital Improvement Plan.

In order to anticipate and schedule major expenses and stabilize a budget over the long term, Penn Township should annually adopt a five-year capital budget that implements a 20-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Cost

\$

Time

◆

Management and funding strategies

The Township's local roads vary in width, as shown on "Figure 3: Local Road Cartway Width" on page 17, including paved areas ranging from less than 16 feet wide up to 26 feet wide. In some cases, a narrow cartway can help mitigate speeding, as drivers (regardless of posted speed limits) tend to drive at the maximum speed at which they feel safe. However, the Township's narrow cartways have presented some site-specific safety problems (sight distance, geometry, etc.) and tend to preclude walking or biking.

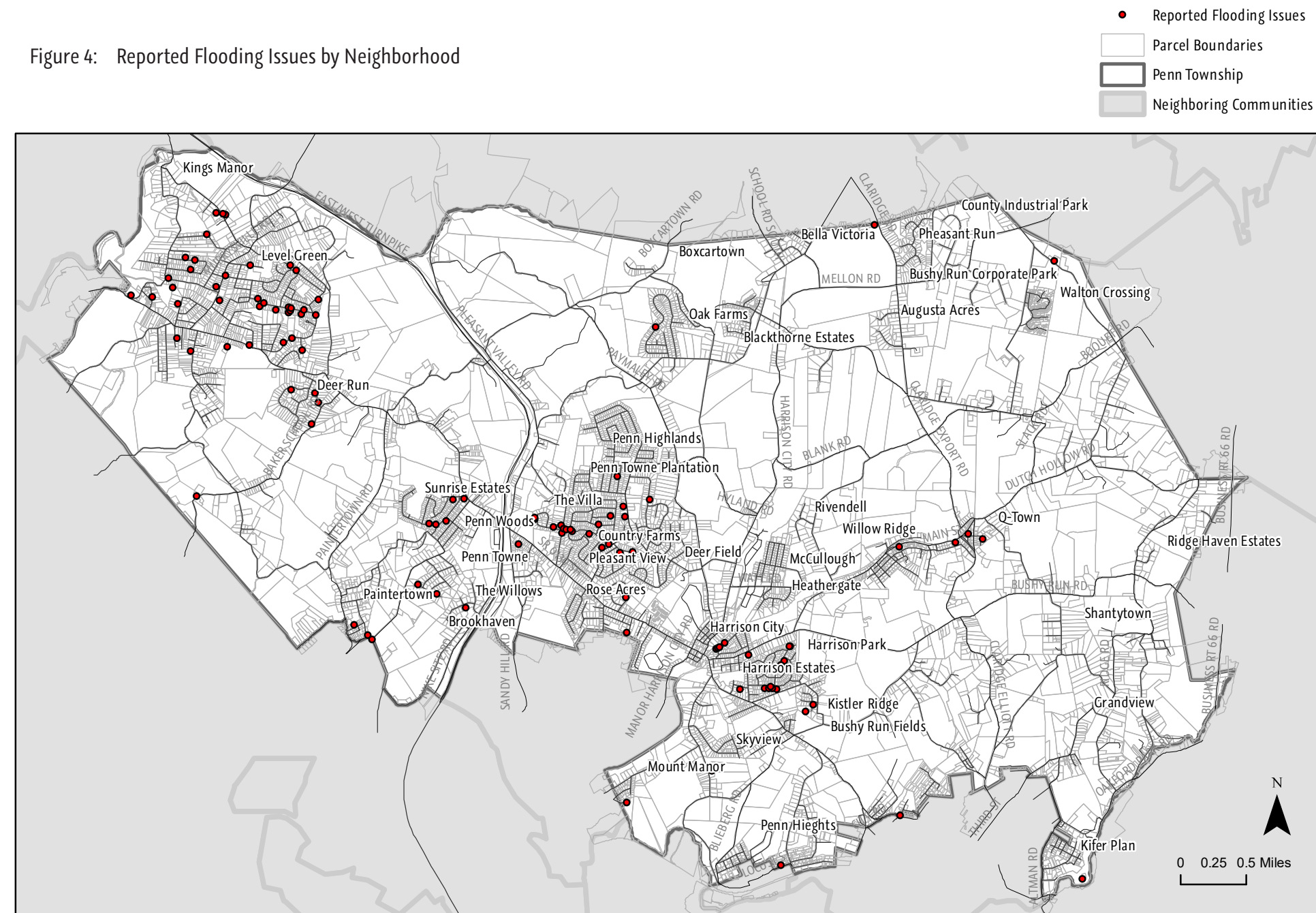
Conditions of local roads vary, despite an active annual paving program. As one official noted, roads sometimes fail before their life expectancy is reached, a situation that calls for explanation and a correction plan to achieve a better outcome. While the Township maintains a professionally managed paving schedule, planning for future maintenance and improvements could be made more efficient and data-driven by incorporating new technology.

In a similar theme on a larger scale, the Township can empower its comprehensive planning efforts by tying them into long-range financial planning. A 20-year Capital Improvement Plan, described on page 16, is a means of anticipating and planning for the Township's larger capital expenses over time and scheduling projects that are consistent with local priorities. It is also a means of formalizing the process for selecting projects and increasing transparency.

The Township previously funded specific road improvements through traffic impact fees collected from developers per Pennsylvania Act 209 of 1990. This ended in 2015, in part because the funds were seldom used and additionally because continuing to collect fees would have required the Township to conduct a comprehensive Roadway Sufficiency Analysis.

The Township continues to evaluate the costs and benefits of accepting state-owned roads through PennDOT's Highway Transfer "Turnback" Program, which allows the transfer of functionally local, low-traffic state roads from state to local government ownership. Gaining local control over state roads would bring the long-term liability of maintenance costs, but doing so would allow Penn Township the advantage of designing road improvements to protect private property and address resident priorities. An example is Hyland Road, which needs widening, repaving and drainage improvements for which the state has no plans. Turnback has also been discussed as an option to improve the safety of Raymaley Road and Paintertown Road. In each individual case, the Township should determine the cost of both immediate improvements and long-term maintenance to determine what a state offer would need to include to make this a tool the Township could use to address identified problems.

Figure 4: Reported Flooding Issues by Neighborhood



While continuing to respond to reported run-off and flood problems, the Township should build a complete system dataset that allows for the identification and prioritization of major issues.

## Stormwater Management

Figure 4 on page 18 illustrates the distribution of reported flooding issues across the Township. Staff estimated in July 2019 that resident calls related to localized flooding problems were up 75% over the prior year, as an increasingly severe season of storms caused private property damage and hazardous roadway conditions.

Stormwater management was a major focus for Phase I of the Township's comprehensive planning efforts due to pressures both external and internal:

- Heavy rain events are increasingly common. Between 1958 and 2012, Pennsylvania saw more than a 70% increase in the amount of precipitation falling in "very heavy" events, and the period of 2010 to 2014 saw the highest annual precipitation levels on record.<sup>1</sup> The state Department of Environmental Protection expects precipitation to increase an additional 8% by 2050.

1

Data: CICS-NC and NOAA

- The costs of complying with related federal and state requirements are expected to continue increasing.
- Many localized flooding issues are related to developments that were built in years when infrastructure standards were lower. The Township's engineer is currently working to inventory and assess the condition of systems in order to understand where needs are the greatest and where and when failures can be expected. This will allow the Township to generate specific project priorities and estimate the costs of needed improvements.
- The Township's vision for structured, sustainable future growth requires that its stormwater management system be adequate to support desired investment in targeted areas.

Penn Township's growth and development in recent decades have exacerbated its stormwater problems. The construction of impervious surfaces — roofs and paved areas, for instance — prevents stormwater from soaking into the ground. The Westmoreland

County Conservation District estimates that each residential rooftop generates more than 600 gallons of stormwater runoff for every one-inch rain. Multiplied by the roughly 7,100 single-family detached homes in the Township (let alone multi-family, commercial, industrial and institutional buildings and paved roads and parking lots) this amounts to more than 4.2 million gallons per inch of rain.

Penn Township is classified by the state as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community. As such, the Township must obtain a permit to discharge stormwater into local streams and rivers. The requirements of the permit program are becoming more aggressive in Phase II of the MS4 program and will demand a greater compliance effort from the Township.

In order to fulfill its mission to protect people and property, Penn Township must find ways to better reduce and capture runoff to mitigate erosion, property damage, sanitary sewer infiltration and natural clean water stream contamination.

Township leaders have been proactive in addressing the issue, having taken actions including the following:

- Adoption of a strong stormwater management ordinance for water quality and land disturbance activities, requiring that new developments permit at most half as much stormwater runoff as the undeveloped land on which they are built,
- Retired \$2.8 million in flood control

projects in Harrison Park through multiple PennVEST loans, which were paid off as of 2019,

- Evaluation and engineering along Hyland Road for stormwater remediation, which will be funded through a PennVEST loan,
- Raised real estate taxes by two mills in 2018. This provides approximately \$500,000 of additional revenue for the Capital Reserve Fund and is used exclusive for infrastructure projects, and
- Put to good use new general fund resources made available to design and undertake targeted projects to improve the system.

However, much remains unknown about this component of the Township's infrastructure, including the condition of pipes — what are they made of, how are they holding up, and when should we expect them to need repair or maintenance? — and the extent and condition of legacy infrastructure, the thousands of linear feet of pipe installed by developers and homeowners without proper design or dedication to the Township.

Recognition of stormwater management as an increasingly demanding area of focus for Penn Township in the long term calls for the following actions:

- Understanding the current extent and condition of existing assets, where they are failing and/or inadequate and why,



# Action 1g

Cost

\$\$\$

Time

◆◆

## Build upon next MS4 plan to create Township Stormwater Management Plan

This undertaking should inventory and describe the condition of the system and its assets, prescribe a comprehensive set of projects according to priority and establish a to-do list with estimated costs.

- Calculating what projects would be required to make the system complete and adequate and what these projects would cost, and
- Devising a management approach to improvement and maintenance that represents the best possible use of taxpayer resources.

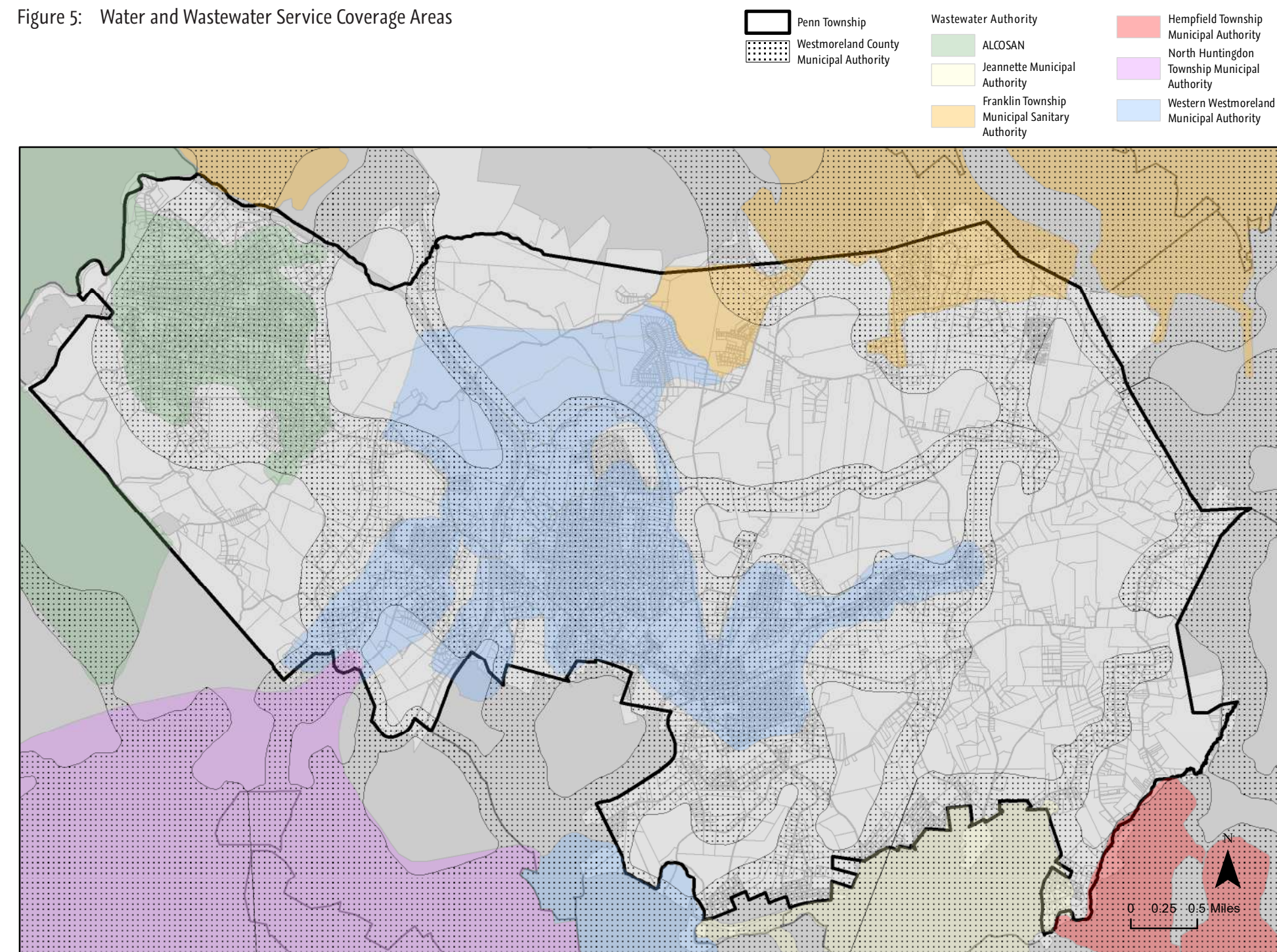
The Township should develop a system for stormwater management that bases project planning and prioritization on a full, accurate data set, incorporating preventative maintenance that tracks and manages assets and schedules their improvement to ensure that assets meet or exceed their expected service life. Doing so will make unexpected failures less likely, protecting against extra costs, damage and disruption.

Another resource is available in the form of Westmoreland County's Integrated Water Resources Plan, which the Township is in the process of integrating into their Stormwater Ordinance. This plan inventories water resources, impacts, issues and challenges and provides an action plan and implementation strategies. The report suggests stormwater projects such as stream restoration, stormwater management retrofits, mechanical pollutant capture, land acquisition in flood hazard areas, acid mine drainage treatment and green infrastructure.

The Westmoreland County Conservation District encourages partnership and/or cooperative agreements among communities, recognizing that flooding does not respect municipal borders, and that municipalities

may realize savings and economies of scale by jointly planning and addressing problems.

Figure 5: Water and Wastewater Service Coverage Areas



Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission



## Track current and future Sewage Authority projects in the Township

Future water and sewer line extension projects should achieve consistency with the future land use map the Township will develop during Phase II of its Comprehensive Plan. This will ensure that the local utility system works in concert with Township efforts to target economic development and cost-effectively manage infrastructure maintenance.

## Utilities

As shown in “Figure 5: Water and Wastewater Service Coverage Areas” on page 25, the systems for providing public water and wastewater service are not uniform across Penn Township. Westmoreland County has 10 water-providing authorities and 41 sewage treatment authorities, in addition to rural areas where residents rely on private water suppliers, wells, privately-operated sewage treatment plants and on-lot septic systems.

Identified high-priority projects include the following:

- Extension of sanitary sewer lines up Harrison City / Export Road toward Route 22. Penn Township Sewage Authority’s Phase I proposal for this project includes significant improvements to the Harrison City Sanitary Interceptor, which represent a continuation of a much-needed regional upgrade to the entire Brush Creek Interceptor, and
- Continued work on a multi-phased master plan to extend the Brush Creek Sanitary Trunk Line to the Village of Boquet, where on-lot systems are now failing.

Additional areas where officials have identified a potential need for sanitary sewer system extension include sections of the Township’s key thoroughfares, including Route 130 approaching Level Green, Route 993, Claridge / Export Road and Claridge / Elliott Road.

It is well understood in the Township that sanitary sewer system extensions will increase the appeal of newly connected parcels for future development. It is not a simple case of “if you build it, they will come,” as potential developers of such sites consider many other factors (traffic volume, road connection and capacity, site constraints, local economic conditions, to name a few), but providing public sewer facility access removes a significant barrier to potential development. Thus, infrastructure construction policy can be a very effective growth management tool.

Ultimately, the Township should work closely with Penn Township Sewage Authority and other utility providers to ensure that any future infrastructure extensions are consistent with the ultimate adopted policy findings and future land use map created as Phase II of the Township’s Comprehensive Plan.

There is a definite public health interest in expanding the provision of public water and sewer service to residents. However, without defining and respecting specifically targeted geographic areas suitable for growth, the Township risks sprawling infrastructure to an extent that is not financially sustainable.

Sewer expansions are a self-sustaining investment if the revenues estimated to result from associated development along the extended line will be greater than the long-term costs of operating and maintaining the line, which is more difficult to accomplish in sparsely developed areas. By contrast, focusing growth in areas already served by infrastructure can strengthen the municipal bottom line. As the Township moves forward, an expected level of long-term growth they should evaluated and allocated to areas where it is most likely to strengthen the tax base, where it will require the lowest level of public subsidy in the form of long-term maintenance liability for new roads or pipes.



## Implement the recommendations of the updated Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan

Annually budgeting for and carrying out improvements to the Township's recreation facilities and programming remain important to attracting, retaining and providing public value to resident households, especially those with children.

## Open Space and Recreation

Quality recreation assets are critical to Penn Township's competitive appeal as a place to live and raise a family. Recognizing this, the Township has recently developed an update to its Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan, as well as master plans for Penn Township Municipal Park and Brush Creek Park.

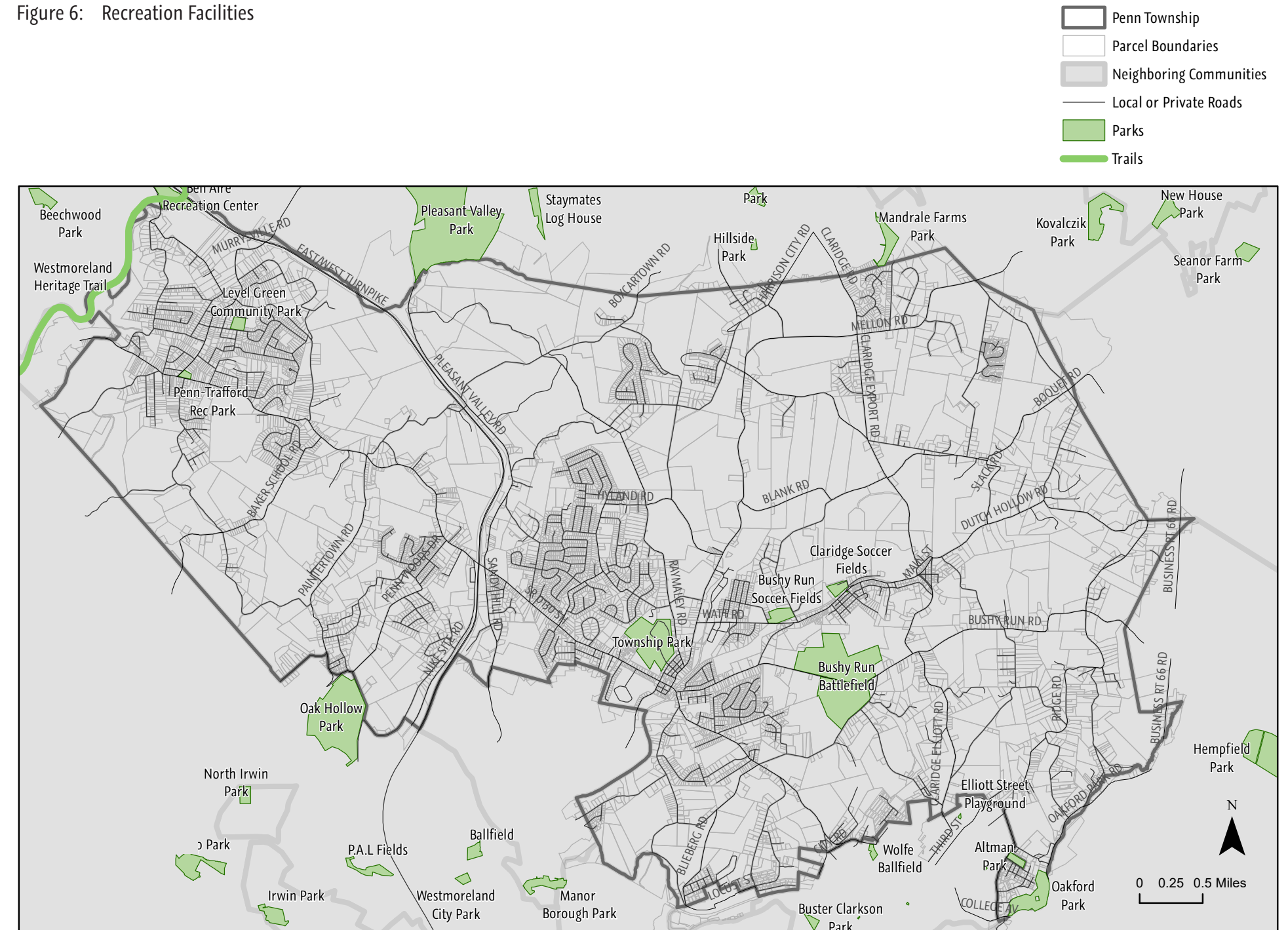
The map in Figure 6 illustrates recreation facilities in and beyond Penn Township. The Township owns the Municipal Park and Brush Creek Park, and it provides maintenance to Level Green Park and the Bushy Run/American Legion Park. The recently updated Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan recommends that the Township do the following:

- Provide walking trails, the No. 1 amenity identified by the plan's public engagement,
- Provide trails using both park properties and Township-owned properties to provide linkages between parks, open space, neighborhoods and commercial development,
- Encourage private developers to provide walking trails that connect to the Township trail system,

- Provide permanent accessible restrooms,
- Seek funding partnerships with corporate and private donors, as well as state grantors for matching funds to increase the overall budget,
- Utilize Brush Creek Park as a passive park with looped hiking, walking and biking trails,
- Enhance passive areas of the Municipal Park with native vegetation, a riparian stream buffer and no-mow meadow areas,
- Provide an on-site maintenance facility at the Municipal Park and share it with PTARC, and
- Continue to provide excellent playground facilities at the Municipal Park, along with additional amenities such as a spray park and outdoor fitness area.

The heat map in Figure 7 shows "heat" in lighter colors made by aggregated public activities during the past two years. These activities are logged using GPS by walkers, runners and cyclists, showing areas of the Township that see the most recreational activity. In addition to popular areas one might expect, Bushy Run Battlefield is a highly-trafficked outdoor destination.

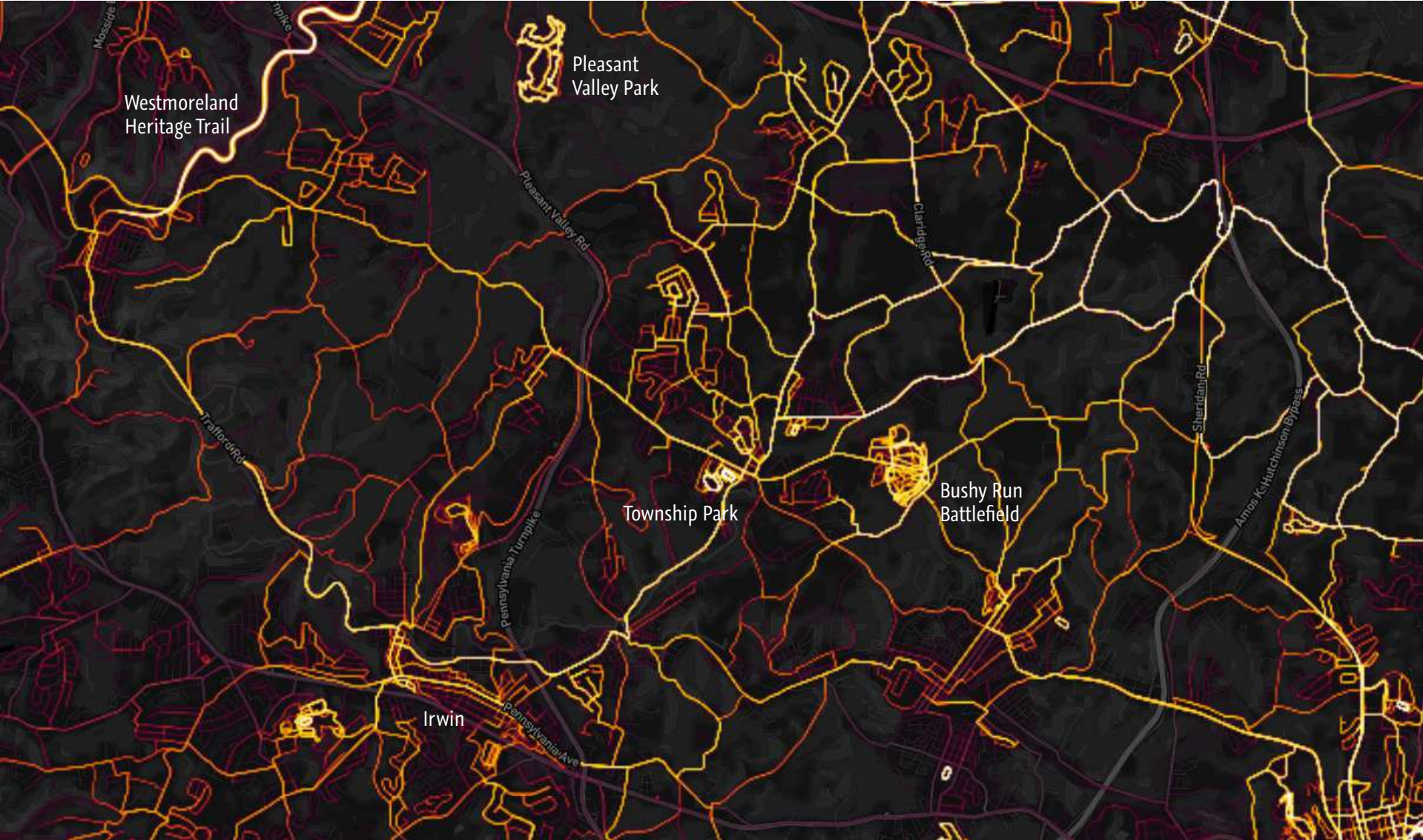
Figure 6: Recreation Facilities



Source: PennDOT Open Data

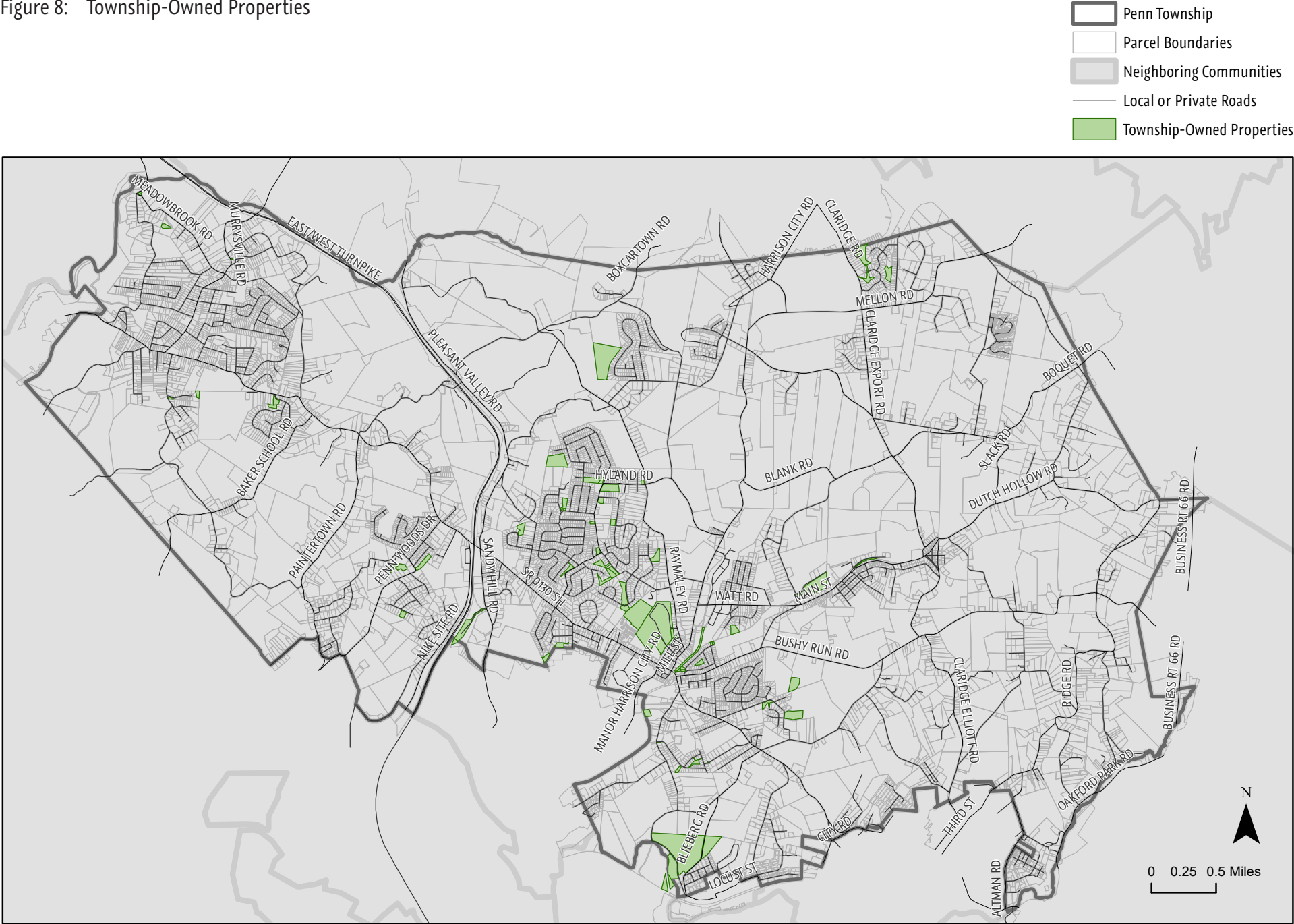


Figure 7: Heat Map of Walk/Run and Bike Activity



Source: Strava Global

Figure 8: Township-Owned Properties



Source: Local records



## Land Assets

Among its more obvious holdings, Penn Township owns land scattered throughout its borders for various reasons and to varying levels of utility. The current inventory includes 66 parcels spanning roughly 275 acres, as shown in Figure 8.

The largest Township-owned parcels are recreational in use classification, with Brush Creek Park and Penn Township Municipal Park accounting for about 118 acres combined. The Municipal Building is on a 4.8-acre parcel.

An additional 27 parcels are currently in use as stormwater retention areas, ranging from 0.09 acres to 22.3 acres.

Thirty-four parcels in the Township's inventory are either classified as vacant or do not have a listed use classification. They range in size from tiny slivers of less than 200 feet to 12.5 acres and vary in shape, access (some are land-locked) and location.

The Township, with assistance of the Township's Economic Development Committee, the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Committee or other appropriate agency, could consider the strategic acquisition of parcels either to hold and preserve for what is envisioned as the highest and best use, especially in the case of the Turnpike ramp vicinity, or to position prime viable sites for economic development. State funds may be available to assist.







# Economic Development

An important component of the Comprehensive Plan included an objective, data-driven evaluation of Penn Township's position within the regional economic landscape, identifying prospective assets and strengths while affording measures to reverse or mitigate the area's liabilities and weaknesses.

This section summarizes the work of 4ward Planning, a firm nationally recognized for expertise in land use economics, which conducted an analysis of local and regional real estate trends, an in-depth labor and industry analysis, a build-out analysis and fiscal impact analysis to identify likely development opportunities and produce recommendations regarding how Penn

Township can most effectively position its best-bet sites for optimal investment. Two full reports from 4ward Planning (the Market Study and Build-Out and Fiscal Impact Analysis) are included as companion documents to this report and are briefly summarized here.

This work ultimately sought to provide the Township with market-supported strategies to enhance existing business and foster sustainable, strategic commercial and light manufacturing development. It also envisions what form future development could take along Township gateways such as Harrison City / Export Road and a potential Turnpike interchange.

Finally, this section includes an analysis combining GIS data with a recently completed Commercial and Light Industrial Property Analysis to identify undeveloped parcels that appear suitable for commercial or industrial development.

Taken together, this information can help shape the Township's future land use map and updates to the zoning ordinance that will help diversify the real estate tax base in ways that are consistent with local values and a shared vision for Penn Township's best possible future.



## Market Conditions

The market study for Penn Township included the following findings, among others:

- Population totals for Penn Township and Westmoreland County will likely remain flat through 2024, though **the share of senior citizens (age 65 and up) will increase**. This translates to less consumer spending, demand for smaller, accessible and lower-maintenance housing, lingering workforce participation and needs for transportation services.
- Penn Township is **relatively affluent**, with a median household income of nearly \$84,000, and **well educated**, with about 40% of adult residents having earned a bachelor’s degree or greater. This indicates the potential for a high level of local entrepreneurial activity.
- The Township’s jobs are clustered along I-76, Route 130 and in its industrial node near Route 22. In 2015, there were **4,400 primary jobs in Penn Township**.
- More than 53,000 people work in the County but live elsewhere, which suggests **pent-up housing demand** for commuters who would likely live closer to their places of employment if housing meeting their needs were available. Conservatively, Penn Township could capture between 110 and 220 units by 2029.
- The Township’s housing stock is 88% single-family detached and 92% owner-occupied. Vacancy rates for both for-sale and for-rent housing in the Township reinforce the **need for additional housing options, particularly multi-family**. A wider variety of housing types would help meet the needs of the growing senior population, as well as young workers.
- There is sufficient **unmet demand** within Penn Township to support a new grocery store and up to seven restaurants.
- **Demand for new office space is softening** within the region. While the County’s comprehensive plan calls for “pad-ready” sites to be developed near Route 22 within the Township, current vacancies and price trends call for caution.
- **Industrial Park III and Bushy Run Corporate Park are virtually built out**, reflecting the Township’s status as a desirable place to do business for investors within the region. The County has nearly 2.3 million square feet of vacant industrial space (8.1% of all industrial space), which suggests that the Township should coordinate with the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation the on selection of additional industrial park space.

## Key Opportunities

The market study conducted a detailed analysis of possible alternatives for key areas of the Township. These concepts represent development possibilities that are supported by the market findings and consultation with local and regional economic and industrial development professionals. They also represent development possibilities that would bring a net positive fiscal impact for the Township, in comparing projected net new revenues (real estate tax, earned income tax, local service tax) with project service costs. Details appear in the Build-Out and Fiscal Impact Analysis report. It is important to note that the Township is not in the business of economic development. The only way any of the following scenarios will work is if the private sector leads the development/redevelopment outlined in each and is supported by the Township through its land use regulations and land development process. Potential local partners could include the Economic Development Committee, the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation or the Economic Growth Connection.

The concepts provide development scenarios as summarized on the following pages for:

- **Harrison City / Export Road Corridor**, where available and affordable real estate could be used to add housing, retail and services to meet projected needs while increasing the appeal and viability of an existing strip shopping center,
- **Route 130 / Turnpike Area**, where the addition of an interchange would accelerate demand for convenience retail, a community shopping center of up to 150,000 square feet and/or up to 100,000 square feet in light industrial activity.

4ward Planning’s analysis was designed to identify Penn Township’s best bets, realistic future development concepts that represent the greatest return on investment for public coffers.

### Action 2a “Invest in Penn Township Day”

Detailed more specifically in the Build-Out and Fiscal Analysis Report, this half-day event would engage outside developers, existing business owners and prospective entrepreneurs in a presentation and tour to engage them in the Township’s most promising economic development opportunities.

Cost

\$

Time

◆

### Action 2b Conduct a quarterly check-in

The Economic Development Committee should develop a business registry and conduct a quarterly survey of those it includes. This will help keep the Township aware of and responsive to prospective business expansion or relocation plans. More details appear in the Build-Out and Fiscal Analysis Report.

Cost

\$

Time

◆



**Harrison City / Export Road Corridor**

The development scenario for this area envisions an opportunity for senior housing. A continuum-of-care housing complex could work in this location (between Penny Lane and Harrison City/Export Road, assuming no topography or environmental constraints exist on the strip of land between these roads).

This would include independent housing (small carriage homes and one-story bungalows), assisted living and skilled nursing, both of which uses would be contained within two- to three-story buildings)

There would be a landscaped buffer between this complex and the surface parking in front of Penn Crossing, yet offer relatively easy access for those seeking to patronize the stores.

Over time, some of the current uses in the shopping center would change to cater to this senior population. The supermarket would remain, but there would likely be more health care service providers and small eateries. The addition of the senior complex would also create more of a village

feel, particularly if improved landscaping and pedestrian infrastructure were provided (e.g sidewalks, walking paths and scenic sitting areas). Additionally, creating an outdoor space for live music could also be a big draw for area residents and further stimulate patronage of the stores in the shopping center.

Specifically:

**Senior housing and/or continuum-of-care facility:**

- 20 small-scale carriage homes
- 40 bungalow clusters
- 100-unit assisted living/continuum-of-care facility

**Change will occur at the Penn Crossing Shopping Center:**

- Two to three new dining establishments
- 10,000 square feet of healthcare related service businesses
- 3,000 square feet of small co-working space
- A possible upgrade or expansion of the existing supermarket

The hypothetical build-out within the Harrison City/Export Road corridor, inclusive of 100 residential units and 13,300 s.f. of commercial space is projected to have a positive net fiscal impact to Penn Township and the Penn-Trafford School District.

Based on assumptions and methodologies described in the Build-Out and Fiscal Impact Analysis report, the Township is projected to realize a net fiscal impact of nearly **\$72,000** in the first stabilized year of the project. The school district is projected to realize a net fiscal impact of approximately **\$313,000** in the first stabilized year of the project.

It should be understood (for all build-out scenarios) that the net fiscal impacts derived assume no new personnel will be required, based on existing service delivery capacities. However, if new personnel were required for either entity, the annual personnel wages, salaries and associated fringe benefits would need to be deducted from each respective entity’s projected fiscal surplus.

**Summary of Annual Net Fiscal Impact Findings**

<b>Net Annual Fiscal Impacts (Township)</b>	<b>\$71,780</b>
<b>Net Annual Fiscal Impacts (School District)</b>	<b>\$313,342</b>
<b>Projected Service Costs</b>	<b>\$15,017</b>
Public Schools	\$0
Township Services	\$15,017
Roads, Sewers & Parks	\$0
<b>Projected Net New Revenues</b>	<b>\$400,139</b>
<b>Total Tax Revenues (Township)</b>	<b>\$86,797</b>
Real Property Tax Revenues	\$54,753
EIT Revenues	\$24,318
LST Revenues	\$7,727
<b>Total Tax Revenues (School District)</b>	<b>\$313,342</b>
Real Property Tax Revenues	\$266,803
EIT Revenues	\$46,209
LST Revenues	\$329

Source: 4ward Planning Inc., 2019



Route 130 / Turnpike Area

Penn Township has advocated for more than a decade in support of a new Turnpike interchange at Route 130. The addition of the project to the Turnpike Commission 10-year Capital Plan — as well as the latest draft of Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission’s 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program — brings the project closer to a near-term reality.

Considerable development exists near the area where a ramp would likely be constructed. However, remaining space would be suitable for convenience retail or a community shopping center of 50,000 to 150,000 square feet).



The close proximity of existing residences near this location would make certain light industrial uses difficult to fit compatibly. However, the land area to the north/northeast of the Rite Aid site could facilitate upwards of 100,000 square feet of light industrial activity. Assuming it was well buffered from the existing residential in the area via landscaping, this would have minimal impact on residential units in the immediate area.

Specifically:

- A future community shopping center (150,000 square feet of total space and approximately 10 to 12 acres of land), should the interchange construction occur
- The possibility for up to 100,000 square feet of light industrial use (either as one large building or several smaller buildings) to be developed to the north/northeast of the Rite Aid pharmacy site

Finally, the hypothetical build out within the Route 130/Turnpike Area corridor, inclusive of 150,000 s.f. of commercial space and 100,000 s.f. of light industrial space, is projected to have a positive net fiscal impact to Penn Township and the Penn-Trafford School District.

Based on assumptions and methodologies described in the full report, the Township is projected to realize a net fiscal impact of just over **\$131,151** in the first stabilized year of the project. The school district is projected to realize a net fiscal impact of approximately **\$505,000** in the first stabilized year of the project.

Summary of Annual Net Fiscal Impact Findings

Net Annual Fiscal Impacts (Township)	\$131,151
Net Annual Fiscal Impacts (School District)	\$504,910
Projected Service Costs	\$6,153
Public Schools	\$0
Township Services	\$6,153
Roads, Sewers & Parks	\$0
Projected Net New Revenues	\$642,214
Total Tax Revenues (Township)	\$137,304
Real Property Tax Revenues	\$92,575
EIT Revenues	\$27,339
LST Revenues	\$17,389
Total Tax Revenues (School District)	\$504,910
Real Property Tax Revenues	\$451,109
EIT Revenues	\$51,951
LST Revenues	\$1,851

Source: 4ward Planning Inc., 2019

## Parcel Suitability

A Commercial and Light Industrial Property Analysis completed for the Township in September 2019 parsed Westmoreland County real estate assessment data to inventory which areas zoned for commercial or light industrial uses remain undeveloped. Further, the analysis applied the following criteria to classify parcels as suitable or unsuitable. An undeveloped parcel that failed to meet any of these three requirements was deemed unsuitable for economic development:

- Empty lot or has no occupied structures
- No improvement, meaning that County records report the improved value as \$0
- Parcel is at least 0.5 acres in size.

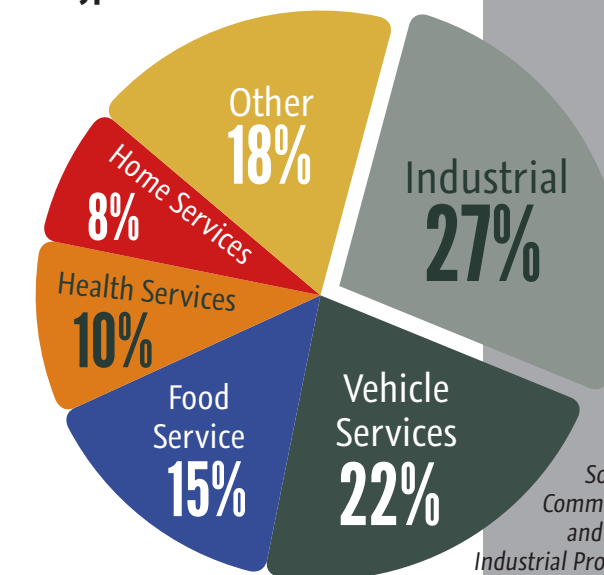
With a policy goal of locating opportunities for further commercial and industrial development in locations that would be maximally viable and would not encroach on residential neighborhoods, the analysis found that the following corridors held the greatest potential for future commercial and/or light industrial development:

- **Harrison City / Export Road**, which provides a direct route from S.R. 130 to S.R. 22 in Delmont. The road is heavily traveled by residents and non-residents alike. This corridor is zoned for commercial use and had nine undeveloped parcels suitable for economic development comprising about 35 acres.
- **Mellon Road** passes through relatively open, flat terrain that represents Penn Township's manufacturing hub, serving Industrial Park III and Bushy Run Corporate Park. Fourteen undeveloped parcels in this corridor totaling about 100 acres were deemed suitable for industrial development.

- **Pennsylvania Turnpike** corridor parcels gain increasing importance with the growing likelihood that an interchange will transform access to the area. The analysis classified nine parcels covering a total of 103 acres along the Turnpike as suitable for economic development.
- **Route 130** is the Township's busiest road, lined with a mixture of residences, businesses and civic uses. The analysis deemed suitable 11 parcels along this corridor totaling 133 acres.

The analysis included classification of existing business operating within Penn Township by type. A total of 110 enterprises were allocated across the categories below, led by industrial business, which included 30 businesses and accounted for 27% of the total.

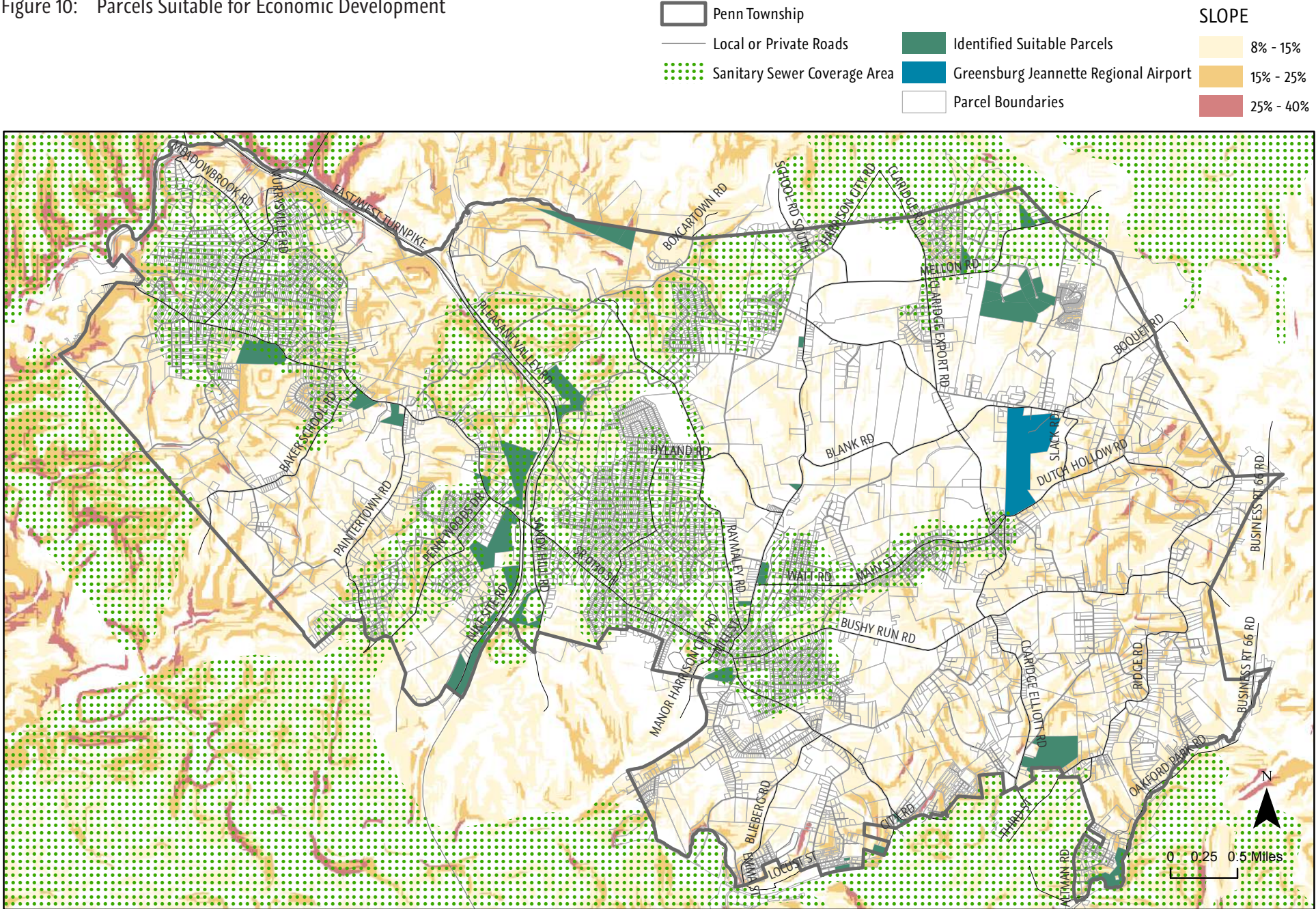
**Figure 9: Existing Township Businesses by Type**



Source:  
Commercial  
and Light  
Industrial Property  
Analysis, 2019



Figure 10: Parcels Suitable for Economic Development



Source: Local analysis

Figure 10 on page 42 indicates parcels classified as suitable for economic development in the Commercial and Light Industrial Property Analysis. These represent undeveloped plots of at least 1/2 acre in some of the Township's key corridor areas. By virtue of their selection within existing commercial or industrial areas, most fall within areas where the Township's Zoning Ordinance currently permits these uses. Further, the map illustrates that some (not all) are currently within connection distance of the sanitary sewer system, and some —particularly those along Route 130 heading toward Level Green —may be impacted by slopes of up to 25%.

Overall, this analysis identified 55 undeveloped parcels of at least 0.5 acres zoned for commercial and/or light industrial uses.

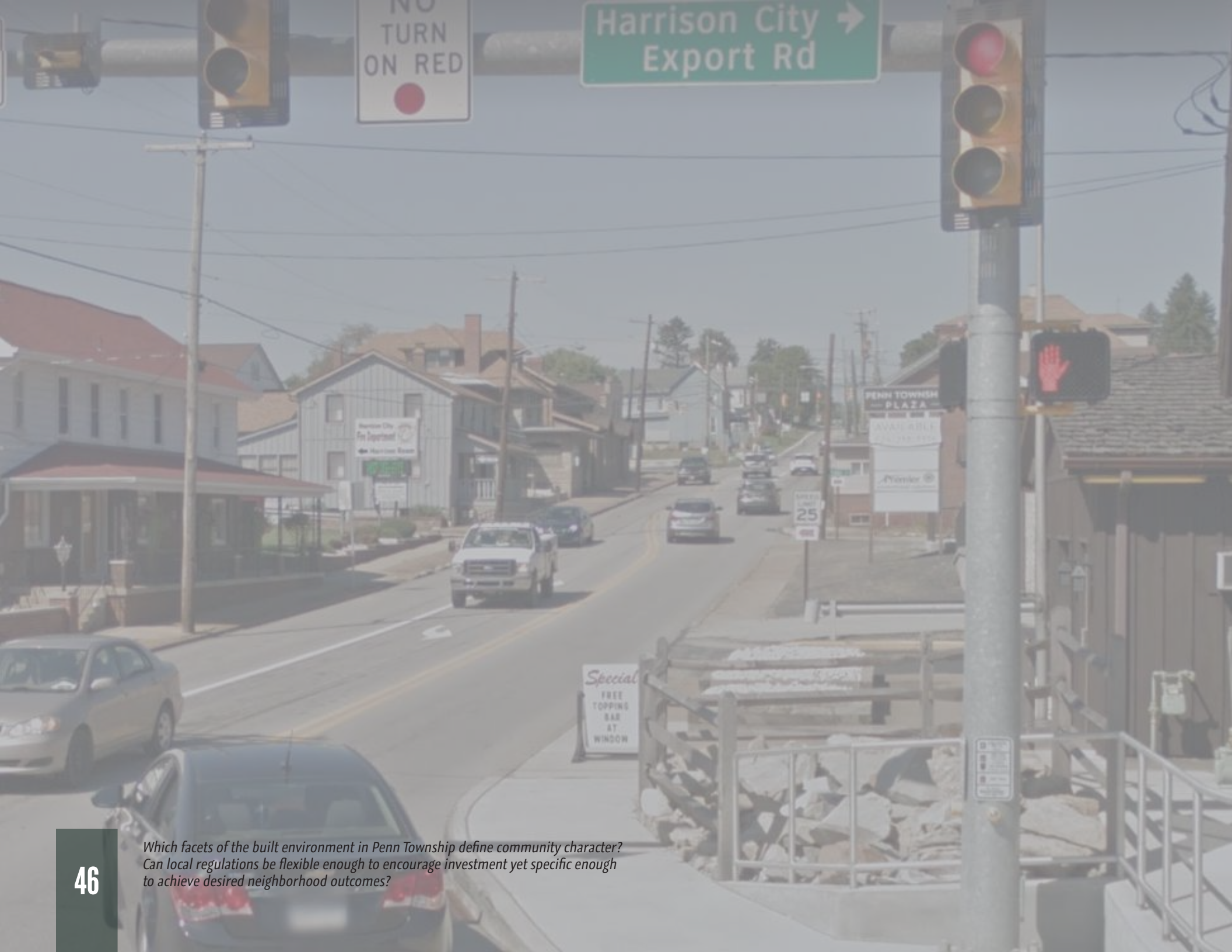
The sites selected here reflect a preference toward the infill of areas already zoned and developed as commercial or industrial, and they do not include sites that are ripe for redevelopment. Thus, the list may change according to the way the Township wishes to preserve or change its development pattern. Finally, the introduction of a Turnpike interchange and associated improvements to Route 130 could drastically change opportunities for properties in the vicinity.

## Action 2c Continue to market the Township using the website

Using the Township's website as a marketing tool is a cost efficient and effective way to showcase economic development opportunities within the Township. In addition, the website should promote local resources available to residents, zoning regulations and Township requirements regarding development projects, etc.

**Cost**  
\$  
**Time**  
◆





*Which facets of the built environment in Penn Township define community character? Can local regulations be flexible enough to encourage investment yet specific enough to achieve desired neighborhood outcomes?*

# Land Use and Zoning

Penn Township's most powerful tool in implementing its future vision will be its Zoning Ordinance. As reviewed during Phase I of the comprehensive planning process, the ordinance is generally modern and flexible, but could be calibrated further to enable, invite and strengthen the type of development the Township wishes to see.

This section examines existing conditions as they relate to land use, including the way land is being used now and a variety of considerations for future use: physical constraints such as flood hazard areas and steep slopes, the placement and

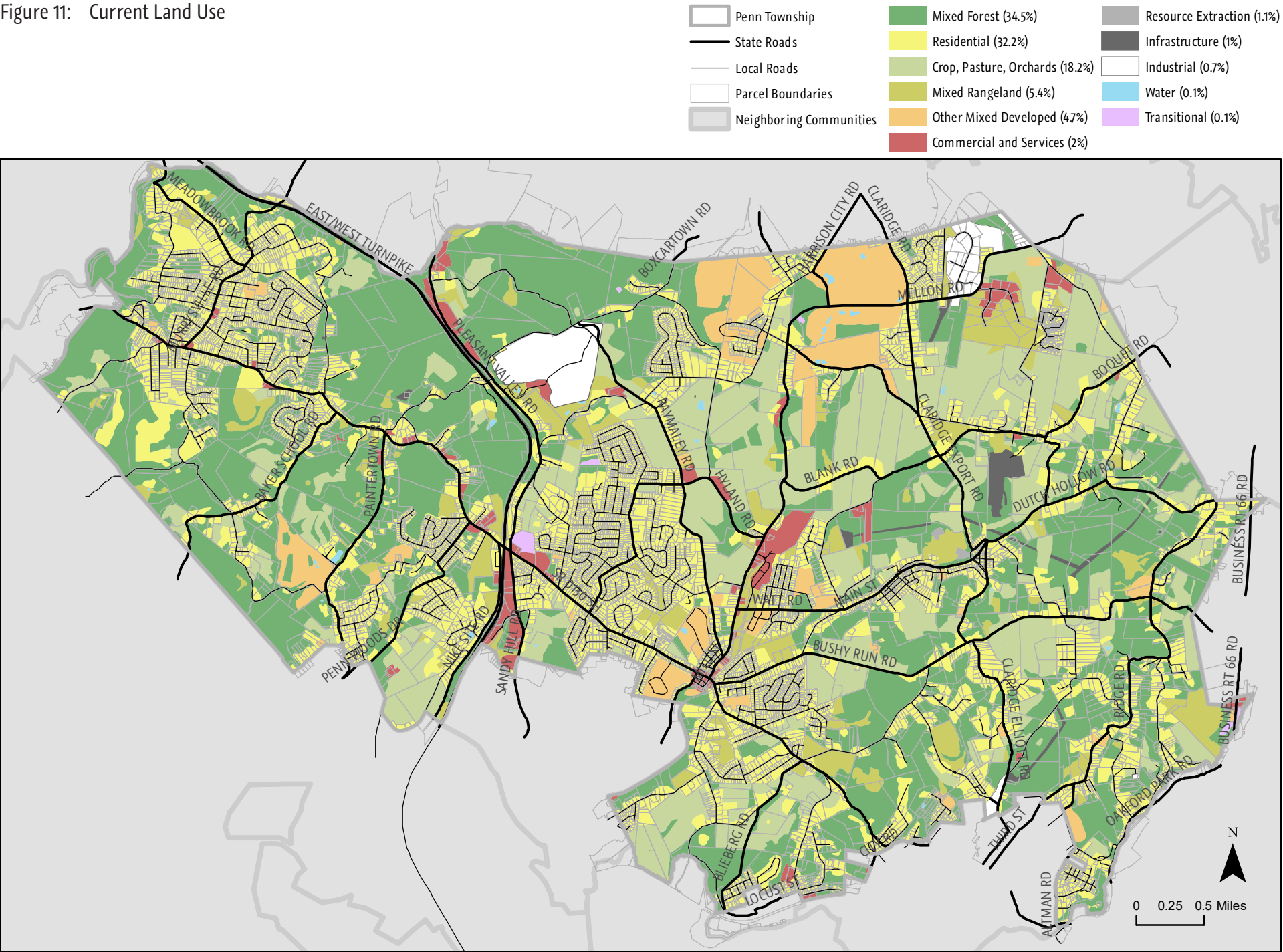
implications of gas wells and pipelines, land currently protected under agriculture programs, land identified as having high preservation value and how disaster mitigation planning should play into long-range land-use planning.

The section is built upon the findings of the prior two sections, given that bringing a desired land use to fruition requires the presence of both adequate supporting infrastructure and market demand —as Township leaders know, adding further commercial and industrial uses to the real estate tax base is not as simple as “if you zone it, they will come.”

Realizing the development Penn Township leaders wish to see will not require a drastic redrawing of zoning district lines, but it will involve creativity in rewriting the rules within those districts, enhancing the flexibility that is a hallmark of the ordinance while building in stronger incentives for developers to provide market-supported land uses that will meet current and future community needs.



Figure 11: Current Land Use



Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Local updates

# Landscape and Constraints

In order to determine which areas and parcels represent Penn Township’s most advantageous opportunities for further development, it is necessary to provide the full context of what already exists. The next few pages review how land is currently being used, as well as an assortment of physical or policy constraints and considerations in certain locations.

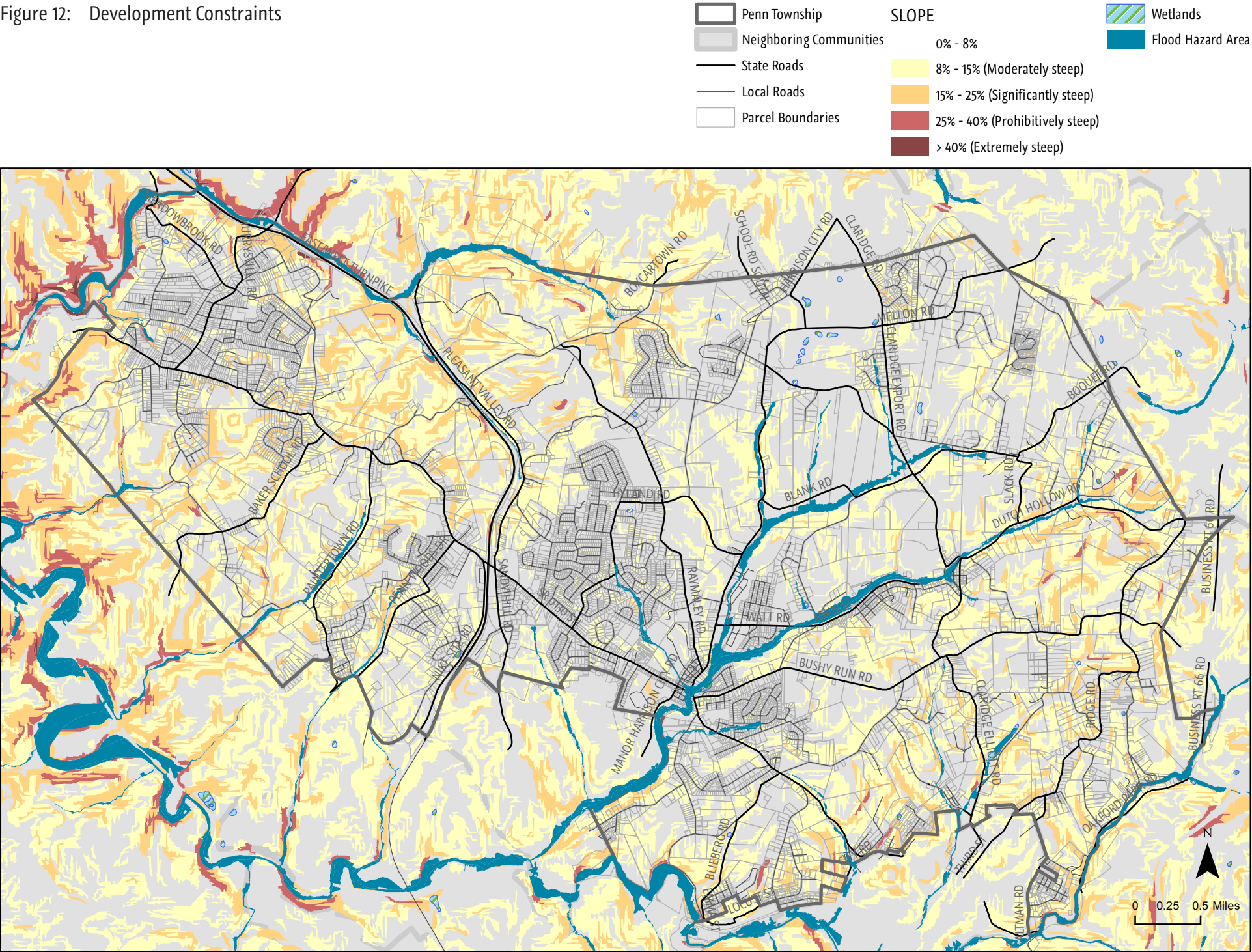
## Current Land Use

The existing land use inventory shown in Figure 11 for Penn Township consists of land cover data from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), including satellite imagery combined with orthophotographs. This data was comprehensively updated with local research and field work in 2019.

According to SPC data, the Township spans 30.8 square miles, the largest share of which is undeveloped. The largest category is “mixed forest,” which covers 34.5% of the Township. Residential lots cover nearly 10 square miles, or 32.2% of the Township, and an additional 18.2% is agricultural. The properties classified as commercial, including both “commercial and services” and “other mixed developed,” cover just 6.7% of land area.



Figure 12: Development Constraints



Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

**Development Constraints**

The 100-year floodplain is shown in dark blue in Figure 12. This area is subject to inundation by the 1%-annual-chance flood event. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply.

Flood management and insurance rates are coordinated through the National Flood Insurance Program. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) conducts routine flood insurance studies that investigate the existence and severity of hazards. The results of these studies are then used to develop risk data useful to land use planning and flood plain development.

Wetlands are transitional layers between terrestrial and water environments where the water table often exists at or near the surface, or the land is inundated by water. The National Wetlands Inventory has identified limited wetland areas within the Township, as shown in Figure 12 on page 48.

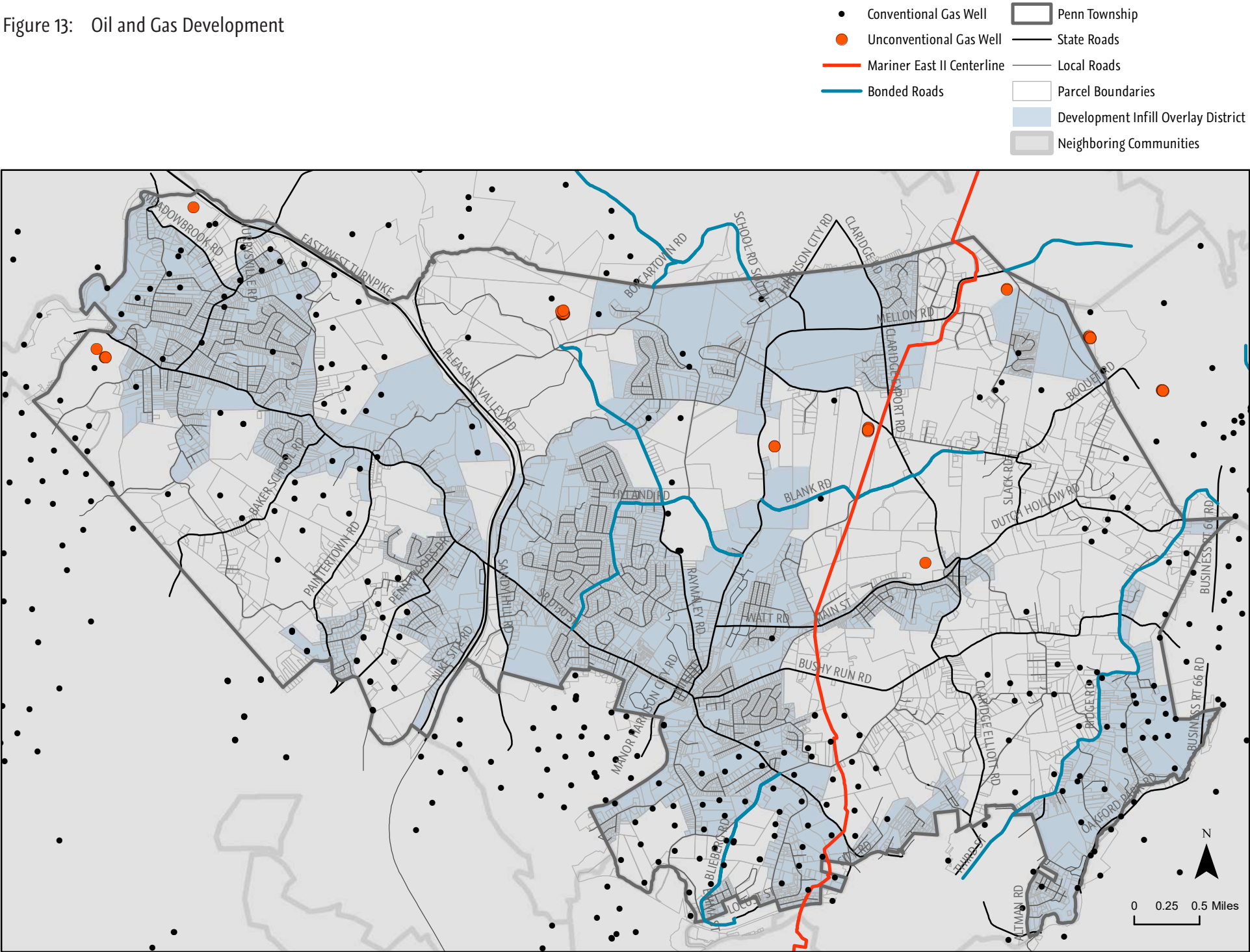
Slopes greater than 25% potentially inhibit development, adding cost, risk and practical infeasibility. Development in Penn Township has largely avoided its most imposing slopes, selecting its flattest non-agricultural expanses. As Figure 12 shows, further development in the Township’s western end will be more likely to encounter slopes up to 25%.

Very little of the Township’s total land area (126 acres, or 0.6%) is prohibitively steep at more than 25%:

- The largest share (11,128 acres, or 56.5%) is level up to 8%.
- One-third of land area (6,507 acres) is rolling, sloped between 8% and 15%.
- The remaining 9.8% (1,932 acres) is hilly, sloped at 15% to 25%.



Figure 13: Oil and Gas Development



Source: Pennsylvania DEP, FracTracker

Oil and Gas Development

Figure 13 on page 50 illustrates the location of oil and gas wells in the Township. The majority (218 of 251) are conventional — typically vertical, more shallow and much smaller in footprint and land use impact than unconventional (Marcellus shale) wells. Since unconventional gas drilling first tapped into the region in the early 2000s, it has expanded into an intensely active regional industry. Industry data cited below, show 35 wells permitted on seven sites within Penn Township.

Olympus Energy Exploration (formerly Huntley & Huntley), one of two oil & gas operators holding permits in the Township, is currently the most operationally active. As of October 2019, Olympus had completed development of two pad sites with two wells currently in production on one of the two pads. Permits are also on file for the development of a freshwater storage facility, which would be utilized during drilling operations to lessen truck traffic. Olympus has indicated they may have one additional well

site location that they wish to develop, but with no projected timeline.

Apex Energy has approved well sites at eight locations throughout the township with only one site, the Quest Realty Central Pad, being completed and operational with two wells in production. Citing low market pricing and excessive inventory Apex has not released any planned timeline for the development of any of their other sites.

The long-term land use implications in addition to the regulatory environment of unconventional drilling remain unclear, as the industry is relatively young. In the current regulatory environment state regulations override most local control of gas and oil operational parameters with municipalities only able to utilize zoning as a regulatory tool.

Pipelines, drilling pads and wastewater storage facilities alter the built and natural landscape and potentially impact property value and future use. All additionally carry safety and environmental considerations that must be weighed against economic opportunities.

Figure 14: Total Oil and Gas Wells within Penn Township

	Conventional	Unconventional	Total
Active	131	21	152
DEP Plugged	3	0	3
Operator Reported Not Drilled	44	6	50
Plugged OG Well	22	0	22
Proposed But Never Materialized	13	6	19
Abandoned	5	0	5
Grand Total	218	33	251

PA Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Action 3a Continue to evaluate the local impacts of unconventional drilling

**Cost**  
\$  
**Time**  
◆◆  
Answers are not yet clear on what unconventional gas drilling and pipeline activity will mean for the Township's future. The Township should continue to collect and discuss information on the industry's impact on:

- Property values
- Emergency management planning and response
- Environmental resources
- Road infrastructure
- Changing the use and/or character of rural and agricultural areas



Figure 15: Agricultural Security Areas



Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

**Farmland Protections**

Agriculture is an important component of Penn Township’s heritage. Although agriculture remains productive and profitable for some households, many farming enterprises have ceased in more recent decades as family farms have been sold, at times to accommodate other land uses such as residential plans. Across the region, older generations of farmers cannot always convince younger relatives to continue the agricultural tradition, which leaves questions as to the future of these large-acreage properties.

As shown in Figure 15 on page 52, a significant number of Penn Township parcels are currently recognized as Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs), per Act 43 of 1981. Township governments create ASAs at the request of those who own farms at least 10 acres in size, agreeing to support agriculture by not passing nuisance laws that would restrict normal farming operations. Government’s ability to condemn farmland in these areas is also limited.

ASAs are reviewed and re-established every seven years. In 2013, when the ASAs were last reviewed, the ASA shrank by 64 acres to cover 3,710 acres across 133 parcels in the Township. Penn Township’s ASA is expected to shrink further in 2020.

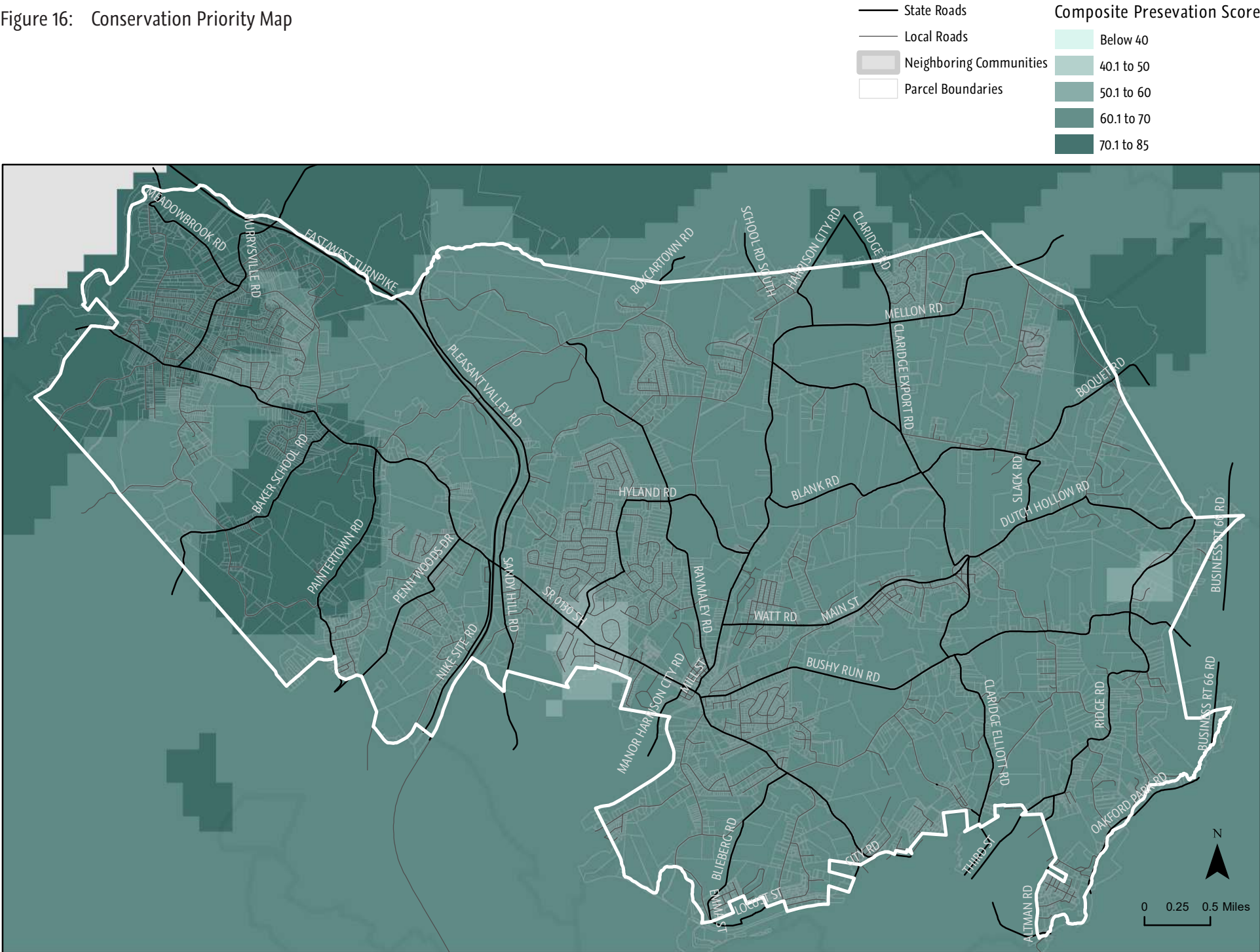
Farms may also qualify for the Clean and Green tax relief program. This land conservation program lowers the property tax rate for the vast majority of landowners who enroll in the program in exchange for their devoting the land to agricultural use, agricultural reserve use, or forest reserve. Landowners who exit the program may be required to pay up to seven years’ worth of back taxes, plus interest.

The Township does not include any property covered under the the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, which was established under the Agricultural Area Security Law in 1981. The agricultural easement provides the option for a landowner to sell the development rights to agricultural land — in this case, the land remains under the person’s ownership but may not be developed for any nonagricultural use.

Other programs and pieces of legislation designed to protect agricultural heritage and use include the 1982 Right to Farm Act, the Sewer and Water Line Assessment Exemptions Act (1976) and the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act.



Figure 16: Conservation Priority Map



Source: Westmoreland Land Trust

**Conservation Value**

To support its efforts to strategically conserve land and preserve the county’s green and rural character, the Westmoreland Land Trust conducted a spatial analysis of all land across the county, assigning a combined score for conservation priority to each 1,000-foot square area of land based on the following ecological qualities, historic or scenic value and recreational value:

- Areas important for plant or animal species
- Areas without fragmentation
- Old growth and healthy forest
- Streams of special value
- Wetlands
- Farms of special value
- Scenic roadways and land
- Historic places
- Trails and recreational waters
- Trout waters
- Local area need for conserved land

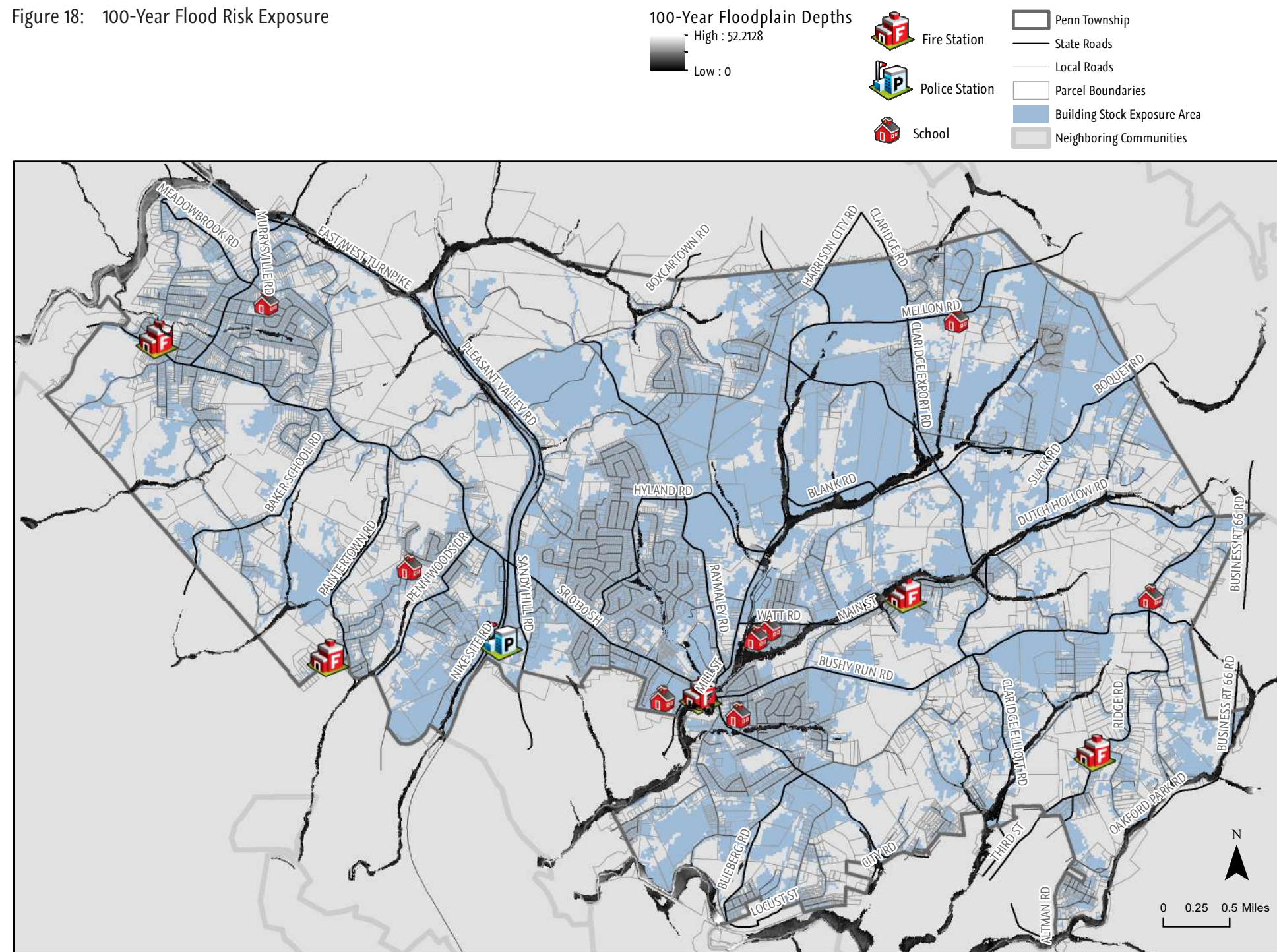
As shown on Figure 16 on page 54, within Penn Township, this analysis assigned the highest conservation value to a forested area west of Level Green, followed by land between Baker School Road and Paintertown Road north of Irwin Country Club.

Figure 17: Area with Highest Conservation Value





Figure 18: 100-Year Flood Risk Exposure



Source: FEMA HAZUS

## Hazard Mitigation

As the Township's mission is to protect life and property, hazard mitigation is key to accomplishing its function as a local government.

Flooding and landslides are generally regarded as the types of disasters most likely to impact the Township. A review of past landslide locations and environmental data did not identify any areas especially vulnerable to imminent landslide hazard, though subsidence has caused damage to public and private property in recent years.

Flood risk was analyzed using FEMA's Hazus system, a nationally applicable standardized methodology that models losses for certain types of hazards. Hazus uses GIS technology to estimate physical, economic and social impacts of disasters, illustrating the limits of identified high-risk locations to help determine the most beneficial mitigation approaches.

The Hazus system reported that there are approximately 8,300 buildings in Penn Township with an aggregate total replacement value of \$2.43 billion, 81% of which value is associated with homes. The data included eight schools, five fire stations and one police station within the Township.

In the event of a 100-year flood, Hazus estimated that 23 buildings in Penn Township would be at least moderately damaged and 708 tons of debris would be generated. The total economic loss would be \$31.6 million, including \$14.7 million in direct building losses (the cost to repair or replace what was damaged) and \$16.8 million in business interruption (inability to operate a business due to damage).

Westmoreland County is currently preparing an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan that involves multiple county, local and other agencies. The plan, updated every five years, provides a strategy to reduce or eliminate risk from the area's most threatening hazards. In order to fully leverage county and state resources for hazard mitigation, the Township should participate in the plan's development and adopt its update.

In the long term, the Township could work with county agencies to seek buy-out funds for repeatedly flooded properties near waterways, restoring the flood plain. The land bank has resources and could assist in securing permanent easement for this purpose.

Additionally, Protect PT has encouraged the Township to create a plan for evacuation in the event of an emergency related to unconventional drilling or the pipeline transfer of gas through the Township, such as the pipeline explosion that scorched 40 acres of Salem Township in 2016.

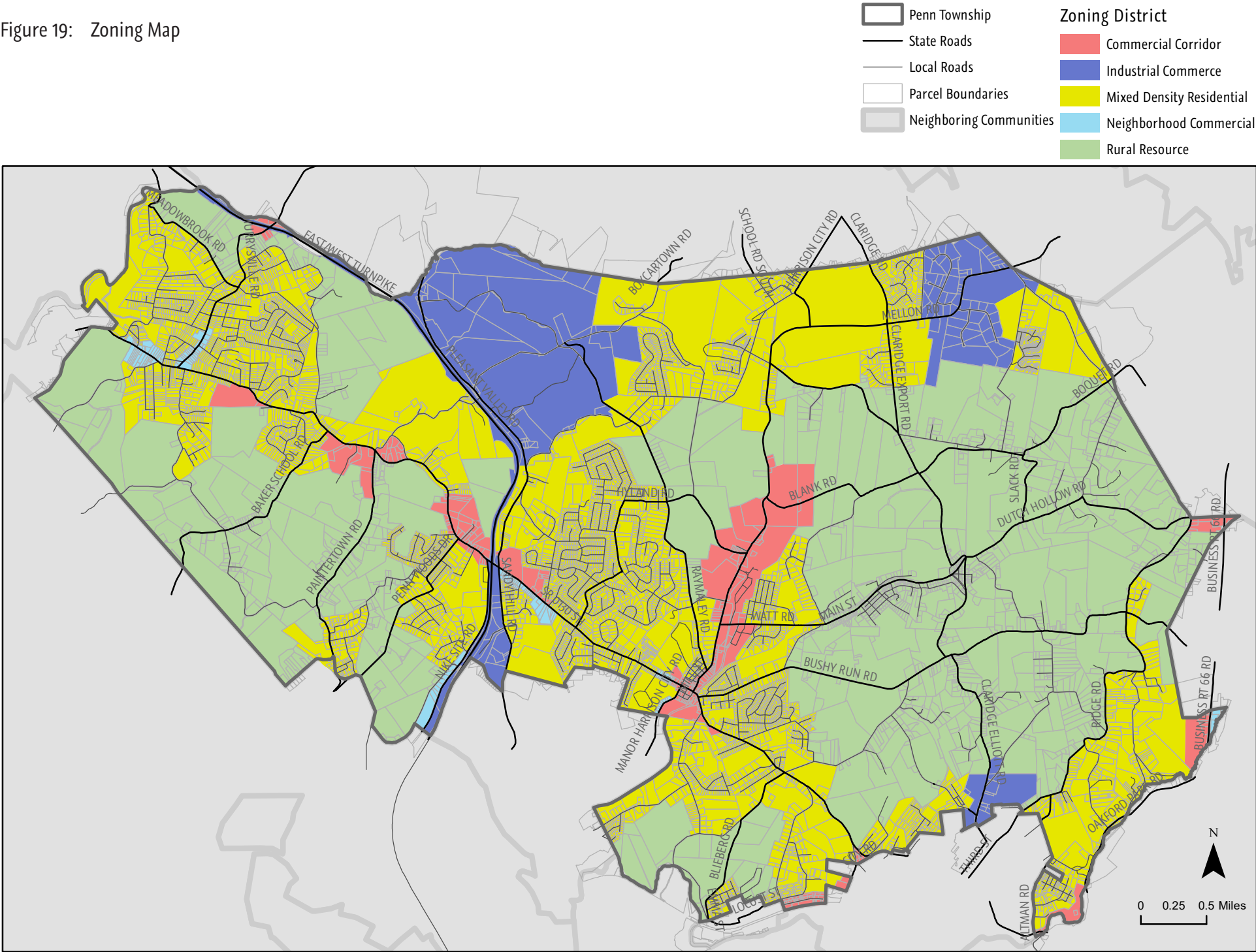
## Action 3b

### Continue to participate in preparation of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan

<b>Cost</b>	In addition to ensuring that the Township may access County hazard mitigation grant funds, sharing information with the County will help both governments become mutually better prepared for hazard planning and response.
<b>\$</b>	
<b>Time</b>	
<b>◆</b>	



Figure 19: Zoning Map



# Existing Controls

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides authority for powerful land use controls to local governments. Municipal officials apply these tools to achieve their community’s development goals and fulfill the vision established in the comprehensive plan, if applicable. Such regulation is essential to maintain the orderly growth of a municipality. Land use controls include zoning ordinances as well as subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDO).

A zoning ordinance establishes regulations regarding the use of land and the intensity of development that may occur on a particular parcel or parcels. A SALDO contains requirements for the creation of new lots or changes in property lines and ensures that the new roads, water and sewer lines and drainage systems are constructed to municipal standards. Following the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the Township should update the zoning ordinance accordingly. An update will help to ensure that the Township is using its powers of regulation as effectively as possible to achieve community goals.

Penn Township’s zoning ordinance established five districts into which Township land is divided, as shown in Figure 19.

**RR Rural Resource** provides land for continuing agricultural operations, resource management, timber harvesting, outdoor recreation, public and private conservation areas, low-density single-family residential and compatible support uses. This is the largest district in the Township, covering 9,238 acres, or 47% of all land area.

**MDR Mixed Density Residential** provides land for a wide variety of housing options in a number of configurations at moderate to high densities, as well as to provide for personal and professional services, small-scale mixed-use sites and compatible support uses. MDR is substantial in share, covering 7,666 acres, or 39% of all land area.

## Action 3C Update the Zoning Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan

**Cost** \$\$\$  
**Time** ♦

Zoning is the most important tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Township should review and update its Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with the vision and future land use plan. Specific areas for consideration when undertaking the update are included on pages 60-67.

**NC Neighborhood Commercial**

provides land for small-scale commercial uses, personal and professional services, planned mixed-use developments, multi-family residential, mixed-use structures with commercial uses on the first floor and residential on floors above, restaurants, arts and entertainment, and compatible support uses. The NC district is limited in area, covering 117 acres, or 0.6% of all land area.

**CC Commercial Corridor** provides land for transit-oriented uses at a variety of scales, whether planned as a unified development or as a stand-alone facility, including compatible support uses. CC covers 827 total acres, or 4.2% of all land area.

**IC Industrial Commerce** provides land for heavy and light industrial uses, processing, planned light industrial and commerce areas, warehousing and distribution, supply yards and compatible support uses.

Also in effect are two overlay districts: the MEO Mineral Extraction Overlay, providing low-density areas for mining, quarrying and oil and gas drilling, and the DIO Development Infill Overlay, consisting of all areas not covered by the MEO.

**Ordinance review**

A review of the Zoning Ordinance revealed opportunities to build in both controls and flexibility that will help the Township advance its land use and economic development goals. Relevant findings include:

- The ordinance is generally consistent with modern terminology and legal standards. It is broadly flexible with regard to use, though dimensional standards may inhibit desired development patterns in some locations.
- In Harrison City, many lots are well below 10,000 square feet in area, whereas the minimum is 21,780 sq ft. This makes small-scale development illegal without a variance, encouraging developers to consolidate lots and create a larger footprint that may be undesired in this location.
- The 35' minimum setback from the ROW in the same area would prohibit buildings fronting a sidewalk, which is important for a traditional downtown node. The setback currently encourages parking lots in front of buildings.
- The CC district dimensions are better suited to existing lots in the Penn Crossing vicinity. A different

base district or overlay specific to Harrison City could involve a reduced minimum lot size requirement and a reduced setback, zero setback or build-to line.

- The maximum density in MDR, CC and NC is fairly low by general standards, likely reflecting community preferences and historic character. Multi-family in CC may not exceed 4 DU/ac, a density that tends to lend itself to single-family detached, though the CC district is intended to be transit-oriented. Density can help developers reduce housing costs, so recalibrating these maximums could help make the Township more competitive for multi-family or mixed-use investment, if that is a community goal.
- The parking requirement options at 190-626 offer great flexibility (shared and remote parking). However, they are available only in NC, less than 1% of total land in the Township. They should also apply at least in Harrison City.
- Minimum off-street parking requirements by use should be reviewed. Parking is dead weight with regard to the tax productivity of land and can reduce the feasibility of development/redevelopment in certain areas by driving up costs or requiring space where none exists.
- The ordinance could offer more incentives (such as density or height bonuses, greater lot coverage, reduced lot minimum) in exchange for desired features, design or amenities.
- The ordinance enables mixed-use structures in NC, CC and IC, which supports reinforcing a traditional downtown development pattern particularly in Harrison City.
- The ordinance allows single-family detached housing by right in all zoning districts, which is fairly unusual. In allowing this flexibility, the Township must otherwise ensure A) control of negative externalities of industrial uses on residences and B) a means to preserve the most marketable commercial or industrial property in these more intense districts for highest and best use.
- Parcel classifications appear to avoid "spot zoning," in which lots or small areas are singled out for different treatment from that accorded to similar surrounding land from which it is indistinguishable in character for the economic benefit (or detriment) of the property owners. This protects the Township from validity challenges.



## In general:

### Ways to make sure your zoning doesn't get in the way of your economic development

Keeping the following points in mind during an ordinance update will help keep things streamlined and simple, which developers, investors and others using the ordinance will appreciate.

- **Keep the committee small.** Writing a Zoning Ordinance with a large group is like over-decorating a Christmas tree: Everyone wants to keep loading it up with regulations to address their favorite issues. Eventually, the whole thing comes crashing down under its own weight.
- **If there are certain types of development you want, make them easier to do.** Consult local developers to identify which regulations are difficult to meet.
- **Review variance requests.** If a certain type of variance is always granted, then it shouldn't have been prohibited.

- **Avoid offering too many opportunities for nuisance challenges** of a zoning or subdivision approval that are simply designed to delay a project and run up the developer's expenses. It helps to write ordinances so that desirable project types are unlikely to need special exception, conditional approval or variances.
- **Don't over-use conditional and special exception approval processes.** It is not only time-consuming and expensive for applicants; local officials could often be making better use of that time. Work these types of conditions into regular standards for the uses. Save the process for the complex, controversial uses.
- **Don't be afraid of another building story.** Arbitrarily restricting height can waste land in prime areas and interfere with high-quality architectural designs. Industrial developers often now seek heights up to 50 foot, even for one floor. Maximum height will be subject to the reach of local fire equipment.
- **Consider relatively small setbacks** between adjacent business uses, which make it easier to expand and redevelop.
- **Don't write zoning to limit a site to what is felt to be the optimum use.** Instead, provide a range of uses so that the private market can work.
- **Review the location of existing nonconforming businesses** and consider whether any should be included in a business district or have their use allowed in their current district.
- **Make sure your ordinances do not make your community less pedestrian-friendly.** This includes excessive setbacks from the street and excessive curb radii.
- **Consider increasing densities along major bus corridors.** Require pedestrian pathways that connect buildings to transit stops.
- **Don't require excessive amounts of parking.**
- **Have a simplified process** to address minor land developments, and consider where burden can be removed from preliminary plan requirements.

-- Adapted from a presentation by Charlie Schmehl, Urban Research and Development Corp., Bethlehem, Pa.

### Identified issues

Phase I research and outreach identified a few issues with the Township's Zoning Ordinance, in its current edition and in past iterations, that should factor into future updates:

- Larger and more experienced developers have little trouble navigating the Township's regulations, though the process and requirements are less clear to entry-level applicants.
- The Township is working hard to shake an anti-business climate it was previously known for having, in part due to impact fees. It will be important to ensure that regulations are not overly burdensome and keep the Township competitive.
- Real estate and economic development professionals suggested that Penn Township could make itself even more business-friendly by expediting the land development approvals process.

- A former floating traditional neighborhood development (TND) overlay sought to create density-neutral mixed-use nodes, but was repealed after its implementation did not meet community goals.
- Area realtors have found minimum lot sizes to be restrictive.
- As mentioned previously, the impacts of unconventional drilling and associated development remain largely unknown at this point, other than easements having "turned surface rights into Swiss cheese."

## Action 3d

Cost

\$\$

Time



### Make local approvals processes more clear and accessible

The Township should create flow charts or other guides to explain what is required for various types of applications and, to the extent possible, move the application processes online.

In addition, this action should involve a review of the current processes to determine what the Township requires beyond what the MPC requires and look for ways to expedite the process, especially for desired development types.



# Departing from Euclidean Zoning

Nearly all zoning regulations in effect across Pennsylvania are conventional in nature, reflecting the original purposes of zoning established in *Euclid v. Ambler*, the landmark 1926 Supreme Court case that upheld the validity of zoning. Among other things, early zoning sought to prevent the overcrowding of land and population and the intrusion of heavy industry into neighborhoods. The effect in practice has had unintended consequences:

- Segregation of daily destinations in scattered locations (home, work, day care, health care, shopping, etc.), increasing vehicle miles traveled and land consumption
- Streets designed for cars instead of people
- Lower density relative to what the market would provide
- Limited choice in housing supply
- Prohibition of walkable development styles, types of places where people love spending time and money (through large minimum cartways, minimum lot sizes, minimum setbacks, minimum block lengths and excessive off-street parking requirements)

Municipalities have increasingly explored and adopted different approaches to land-use regulation, drawing upon form-based and performance zoning styles to build ordinances that give the market flexibility to provide development solutions that strengthen community form and function.

Instead of building an ordinance around *use* as primary organizing principle, deciding where certain activities may and may not happen, form-based code focuses on the structure of the built environment and how it interacts with the public realm, and performance zoning usually involves staking out specific community goals for development and allowing developers flexibility to determine how to best meet those goals. Some combination of these tools could benefit Penn Township.

Figure 20: Comparison of Regulation Types

Conventional Zoning	Form-Based Code	Performance Zoning
Auto-oriented, segregated land-use planning principles	Mixed-use, walkable, compact-development-oriented principles	Mixed-use principles that prioritize specific community goals
Organized around single-use zones	Based on spatial organizing principles that identify and reinforce a density hierarchy	Based on performance criteria
Use is primary	Physical form and character are primary, with secondary attention to use	The performance of specific uses is primary, with secondary attention to use
Proscriptive regulations, regulating what is not permitted, as well as unpredictable numeric parameters such as density and floor-area ratio	Prescriptive regulations, describing what is required, such as build-to lines and combined min/max building heights	Prescriptive regulations describing what requirements must be met, leaving flexibility for how they can be met
Regulates to create buildings	Regulates to create places	Regulates to achieve specific goals

Source: Adapted from *Form-Based Codes: A Guide for Planners, Urban Designers, Municipalities and Developers*, by Daniel G. Parolek, Karen Parolek, Paul C. Crawford, 2008.

## Regulatory Tools

The results of Phase I analysis indicate that the Township has zoned an amount of commercial and industrial space that will likely accommodate demand during the next 10 years. Additionally, while exceptional opportunities are always worth consideration, the Township will generally enjoy a higher net fiscal impact from development that taps into infrastructure it already pays to maintain. Therefore, the Township does not need to drastically change its Zoning Map to facilitate more commercial and light industrial investment: It needs instead to change the rules.

Penn Township’s Zoning Ordinance already reflects more modern form- and performance-based approaches in one respect: Its districts are relatively permissive with regard to permitted uses, particularly in allowing various housing types and commercial categories to coexist by right. The Township has recognized the value of mixed-use neighborhoods, where residents and business owners mutually benefit from locating homes near low-impact, compatible

uses, and has incorporated ordinance provisions to encourage this flexibility. It remains a priority, as staff have explored whether this flexibility could be further leveraged to open up new options for developers, via broadening the mix of permitted uses in targeted areas and crafting controls to ensure that new investment fits in harmoniously and enhances the Township’s built environment.

The answer is yes. There is not one model ordinance that would be perfect for Penn Township, but the Township can build a careful combination of controls and incentives —sticks and carrots — to support its specific development goals for designated neighborhoods and commercial nodes, as well as regulations that will support the Township’s overall vision and future land use map.

As noted starting on page 64, dimensional requirements currently represent the most outstanding regulatory barrier to desired development types. Therefore, one obvious intervention should involve determining the desired scale, bulk and massing of

Figure 21: Current Zoning at Turnpike and Route 130



All five zoning districts cover areas near the Turnpike / Route 130 vicinity. The Township should evaluate whether adjusting any of these boundaries could help capitalize on the economic impact of a new interchange.



# Performance and form regulation in action

Below is a collection of case studies describing unconventional approaches to zoning that have been adopted and enforced (with the exception of Lower Merion, where the new ordinance was pending adoption as of December 2019). Western Pennsylvania municipalities have incorporated components of form- or performance-based zoning into their codes, though few have completely left behind a conventional framework. The variety of cases below will demonstrate how important it is for each community’s approach to conform very specifically to its priority needs and vision. The key to effective flexible zoning is to select the items that *really* matter in implementing a consensus vision, regulate those items prescriptively, and ease pressure on the items that matter less.

Figure 22: Zoning Case Studies

Jurisdiction	Approach	Remarks
Lower Merion Township, PA	User-friendly form-based code to remedy the “significant disconnect between many of the current zoning provisions and the built environment”	One of the first full-fledged community-wide form-based codes in PA, demonstrates how design regulations can fit within what the Municipalities Planning Code permits.
Westmoreland County, PA	<i>Reimagining Our Westmoreland</i> recommends that municipalities use SmartCode, an open-source form-based code template	SmartCode has “modules” on specific topics that communities can plug in as needed. Penn Township should review to determine what might be useful.
Havana, FL	Performance-based zoning designed to nurture new development, eliminated the need for rezonings and public hearings during development	Overall reduced the time required to approve, start and complete development projects
Newlin Township, PA	One of multiple Chester County communities that have adopted performance zoning criteria to establish the development carrying capacity of sites	Environmentally focused — development is limited to only land uses that will not unduly impact natural features
Nashville, TN	The city replaced its conventional ordinance with a “community character” approach based on the look and feel of neighborhoods, centers, corridors and open spaces	The update resulted in a 75% increase in taxable value in the impacted districts, compared to a 28% increase overall
St. Lucie County, FL	Governs “towns, villages and countryside” — a floating TND overlay for 18,000 acres	Combines agricultural preservation and limited development

buildings in certain commercial-heavy areas and adjusting regulations to match. For instance, much of Harrison City is subject to the same minimum lot size setbacks as the Penn Crossing area, though the existing built environment in these areas is quite different. Further enhancing Harrison City as a walkable downtown node must involve allowing the use of existing (small) lots to build structures that line the sidewalk.

In considering performance standards, Penn Township must determine which public goals are most important to achieve. Such public goals might include:

- Private construction of stormwater best management practices that exceed requirements
- The provision of open space and trails that connect to the Township’s systems and are available for public use
- Efficiency of land consumption
- Preservation of key environmental resources
- Housing type variety
- Specific architectural considerations
- Transit-supporting features
- Other public benefits

Once these goals are determined, the Township can work with the local development and real estate community to discern how to design the most effective possible incentives. Municipalities commonly offer density bonuses, flexible regulations

(lot dimension, coverage, etc.), reductions in required parking, waivers of fees and shortcuts through the permitting process.

Penn Township could employ any combination of the following approaches to adding flexibility:

- Replace the former TND overlay with an incentive overlay that offers specific incentive types and levels in exchange for fulfillment of selected public goals,
- Retain base districts generally, but carve out a few mixed-use areas (Harrison City in particular) for new form- or performance-based districts with much higher flexibility (example: no minimum lot size, wide range of uses permitted by right, but buildings here must conform to specific requirements for size, site placement and interaction with the public realm),
- Review the dimensional requirements of existing base districts to ensure consistency with envisioned neighborhood conditions, build design and performance standards into the conventional framework, or
- Take the plunge into a full Zoning Ordinance rewrite using a form- or performance-based approach, perhaps starting with SmartCode.

## Action 3e Form a Zoning Work Group to further evaluate approaches

The Township should encourage further discussion about the balance of flexibility and prescriptive requirements in the ordinance, particularly what tools would most effectively help the Township achieve its goals for future land use.

Cost

\$\$

Time

◆◆◆





# Implementation

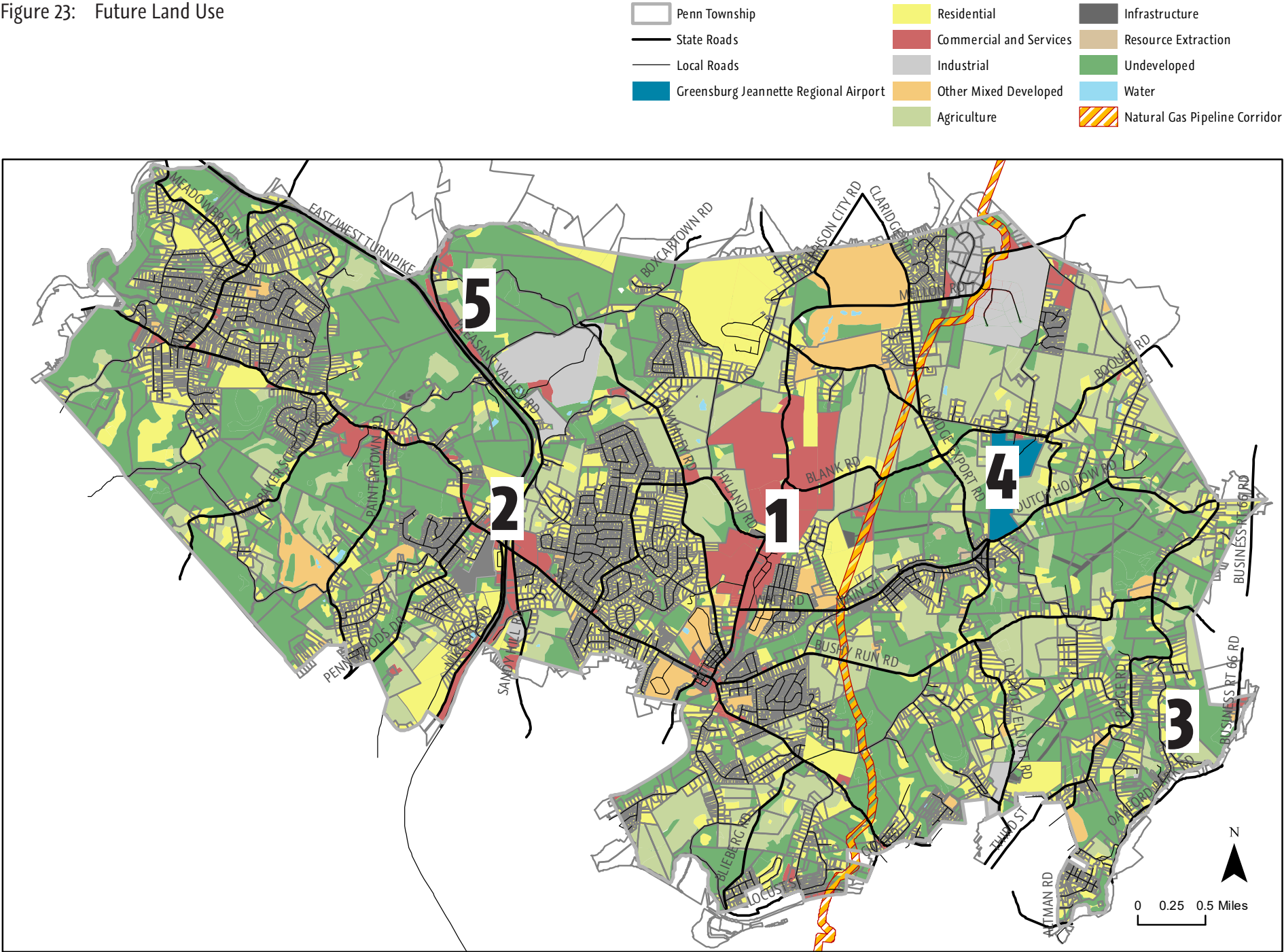
## General Action Steps

Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require continued commitment from the Township, specifically the following:

- Assign the Planning Commission to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission would not be responsible for directly carrying out actions, but would initiate tasks and coordinate with agencies, volunteers, Township staff, local organizations and/or other groups.
- Submit implementation projects as part of Township budget discussions. If projects require municipal approval and/or funding, ensure that they are presented to Commissioners with plenty of time for deliberation.
- Annually evaluate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, documenting actions taken during the past year to help achieve the mission and vision, address community development objectives and make recommendations to Township Commissioners of modifications to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Update the Township's zoning ordinance to achieve consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Specific updates to implement the vision are included throughout the plan.



Figure 23: Future Land Use



# Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map, shown in Figure 23 on page 70, represents a long-range vision of how Penn Township should develop. This map has a horizon of five to 10 years in mind. It is a guide for future decisions to encourage orderly growth and redevelopment, not to be confused with current legal mechanisms for regulating development (such as the zoning ordinance). While this map reflects consideration of the development potential for certain individual parcels, it should not be interpreted as a specific plan or regulatory future for any in particular.

The map establishes a picture of the Township that elected and appointed officials can use to channel market forces in directions that the residents have determined would be desirable, as would result from the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

This map carries forward the detailed parcel-level data analysis of the revised and updated Land Use Assumptions completed in April 2008, which projected land use for 15-20 years, updating analysis according to new analysis and the policy directives of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This data was combined with a survey of current (2019) land use, an analysis of suitable undeveloped parcels within areas currently zoned for commercial and/or industrial use and consideration of

environmental constraints to establish the Future Land Use Map.

This map does not represent a drastic departure from current land use patterns, as the Township intends to preserve its largely rural character while cultivating pockets of commercial industrial activity at varying scales along key arterials where the capacity to support it is expected to grow. In addition to future land use categories, the Mariner East II pipeline is depicted on the Future Land Use Map because it is one of several large gas gathering or transmission lines in the Township. Owners of land where pipelines run must consider impacts of temporary and permanent easements. Permanent easements are binding on not only the landowner, but also on all successors, and typically no structures can be placed on top of easement areas, which can affect future development and redevelopment.

Five key areas have also been identified on the map for future development/redevelopment options. Potential action items for each area are described in the call out box to the right.

## Area 1: Harrison City/Export Road Corridor

- Define a vision for this area from Watt Road to Schramm Farm area.
- Create performance standards to compliment and achieve the vision.
- Consider enticements for developers in an effort to build the Township's vision.

## Area 2: Potential Turnpike Interchange

- Discuss trigger points for specific action items related to this possible development area.
- Consider a joint grant funded sewage feasibility study for the Pleasant Valley Road Corridor.

## Area 3: Route 66 Development Corridor

- Public sewage is being constructed in this area so the Township should consider desired future land uses (mixed use, commercial, industrial).
- Develop performance standards in the zoning ordinance that would permit flexibility of use.

## Area 4: Airport Corridor

- Explore options for an overlay district that would be conducive to permitted ancillary tourism and commercial development.
- Determine infrastructure needs related to any future development options.

## Area 5: Pleasant Valley Corridor

- Possible development options should follow trigger points developed for Area 2.
- Additional roadway connections from this area to other existing township corridors.



# Implementation Matrix

The implementation matrix is intended as a living document, a worksheet that can be revisited, updated and adjusted as projects and budgets play out. The highlighted items have been identified as high priority by the Township. A list of potential funding sources can be found in the appendices.

Recommendation	Cost Estimate	Resources	Primary Responsibility	Short term (1-3 years)	Medium term (3-5 years)	Long term (5-10 years)
Infrastructure Goal: Provide a complete infrastructure system by planning appropriately for improvements.						
Support a Route 30 Corridor Study (details page 15)	N/A	Staff	SPC and PennDOT	X		
Continue to evaluate “turnback” opportunities (details pg. 17)	N/A	Staff and PennDOT	Township			X
Monitor Turnpike slip ramp interchange plans (details pg. 17)	N/A	Staff and Turnpike Commission	Township	X		
Adopt a pavement management system (details pg. 19)	\$5,000	Staff	Township		X	
Develop a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) (details pg. 19)	\$5,000	Staff	Township	X		
Continue building a full inventory of inlets, outfalls and other system aspects for stormwater management (details pg. 23)	\$40,000-\$60,000	Staff	Township		X	
Build upon the next Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) plan to create Township Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) (details pg. 23)	\$20,000-\$40,000	Staff	Township		X	
Track current and future Sewage Authority Projects in the Township (details pg. 25)	N/A	Staff	Sewage Authority	X		
Implement the recommendations of the updated Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (details pg. 27)	Dependent on project	Penn Trafford Area Recreation Committee	Township		X	

# Implementation Matrix

Recommendation	Cost Estimate	Resources	Primary Responsibility	Short term (1-3 years)	Medium term (3-5 years)	Long term (5-10 years)
Economic Development Goal: Ensure sustainability by diversifying the tax base.						
Invest in Penn Township Day (details page 35)	\$5,000	Staff	Economic Development Committee	X		
Conduct a quarterly check-in with businesses (details pg. 35)	\$5,000	Staff	Economic Development Committee	X		
Continue to market Township using website (details pg. 43)	\$5,000	Staff	Township	X		
Land Use and Zoning Goal: Ensure land use policies regulations are consistent with the mission and vision of the Township.						
Continue to evaluate the local impacts of unconventional drilling (details pg. 51)	N/A	Planning Commission	Township		X	
Participate in the preparation of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan (details pg. 57)	N/A	Westmoreland County	Township	X		
Update the zoning ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan (pgs. 59-67)	\$40,000-\$60,000	Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board	Township	X		
Make local approvals processes more clear and accessible (details pg. 63)	\$5,000-\$10,000	Planning Commission	Township	X		
Form a Zoning Work Group to further evaluate approaches (details pg. 67)	N/A	Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board	Township			X

# Appendices

## Additional Provisions

This section includes themes and language incorporated into Penn Township’s plan to comply with Pennsylvania’s Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The Code was the primary framework for the plan’s formulation, and its process was designed to satisfy and exceed MPC requirements.

### Adjacent communities

As per Article III, Section 301 (5) of the MPC, the relationship of the existing and proposed development in Penn Township should be analyzed in relation to the existing and proposed development in adjacent communities and the region. The planning process for Penn Township involved review and consideration of the following documents:

- Retooling Jeannette (2017)
- Within Site: Murrysville Comprehensive Plan (2015)
- Monroeville Comprehensive Plan (2005)
- Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan (2018)

### Interrelationship

The synthesis of interrelated activities to resolve issues and problems is an important foundation to good community planning. In this regard, there are linkages among the elements, goals and action items of the Penn Township Comprehensive Plan. All are related and should further the overall mission and vision, described on pages 8-9.

## State Water Plan

In recognition of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, Section 301 (b), the Penn Township Comprehensive Plan supports efforts to provide a reliable supply of water and provisions aimed at adequately protecting water supply sources. These should be developed in consideration of current and future water resources availability and its uses and limitations. The Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the Pennsylvania State Water and recognizes that:

- Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
- Commercial agriculture production impact water supply sources.



## Public and Stakeholder Outreach

In addition to regular meetings with Township staff and Planning Commission, the planning process also included a public survey conducted at the beginning of the process and outreach to stakeholders with specific expertise in the three key planning topics identified for the plan. These stakeholders included agencies and organizations (such as Westmoreland County Planning Division, PennDOT, Western Westmoreland Municipal Authority, Franklin Township Municipal Sanitary Authority, Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County, PA Turnpike, Protect Penn Township, Penn Township Sewage Authority, and the Westmoreland Conservation District) while others were business owners or individuals with a stake in the Township's future success.

The Township Commissioners also met jointly with the Planning Commission at a public meeting to review the draft plan.

Once the draft plan was finalized, it was sent to adjacent municipalities, the Penn-Trafford

School District, and Westmoreland County for review per the Municipalities Planning Code. **The plan was also made available for public review on the Township's website.**

**After the review period, the Township held a public hearing prior to plan adoption.**

## Demographic Snapshot



**Population: 19,984**



**Households: 7,621**



**Land area: 30.76 sq. miles**



**Median household income: \$83,778**



**Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 40%**



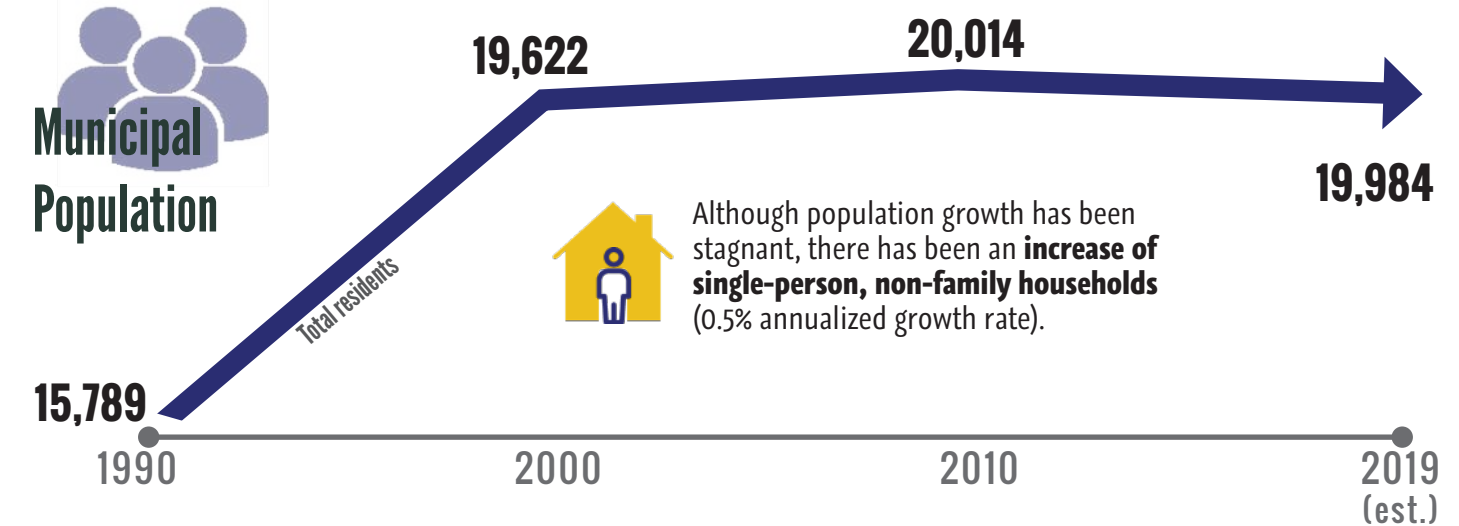
**Median Housing Value: \$192,400**

Penn Township can be generally characterized as a relatively affluent and well educated community. With a median household income 1.39 times that of Westmoreland County and the Pittsburgh region. In addition, approximately 40% of adult residents have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS estimates



**Municipal Population**



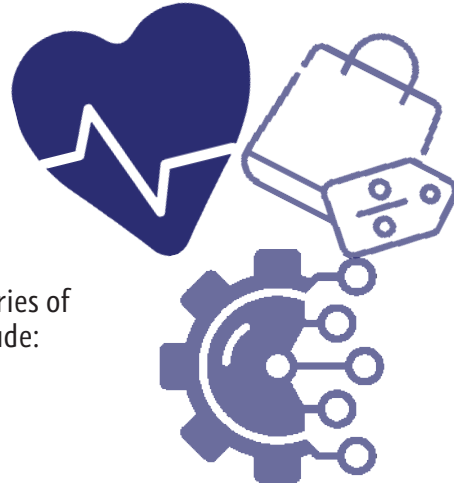
## Economy



### Strongest sectors:

The highest employing industries of Penn Township residents include:

- Healthcare (15%)
- Retail (14.7%)
- Manufacturing (12.5%)



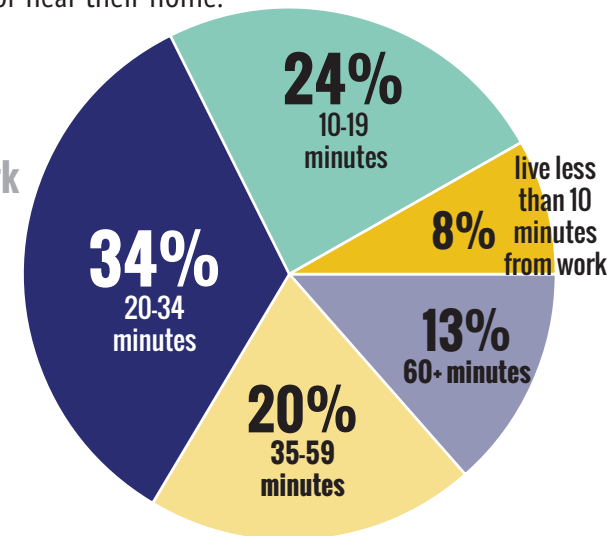
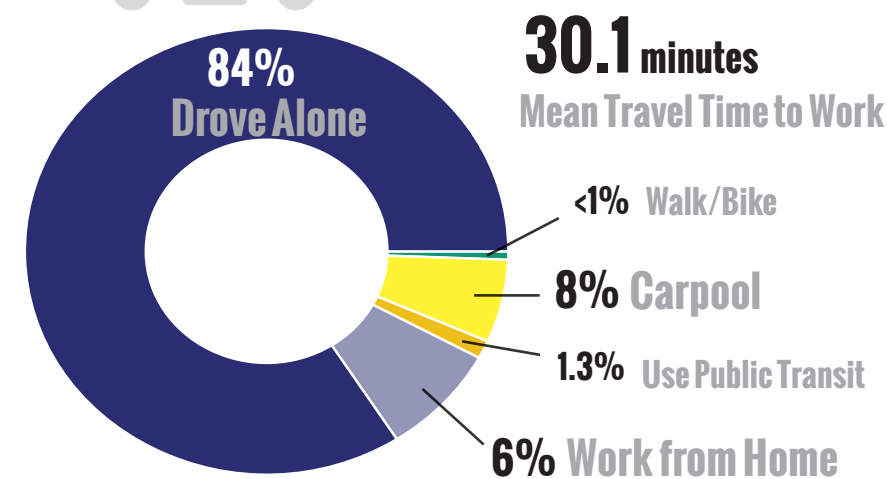
The top three sectors by share of total employment within Penn Township provide a wide range of annual earning opportunities, with health care and social assistance jobs offering average earnings of \$46,600 per year; retail trade jobs offering average earnings of \$32,000 per year; and manufacturing sector jobs offering average earnings of approximately \$64,500.

When compared to the County, Penn Township has more people employed in finance and insurance; information; utilities; professional (i.e. professional, scientific and technical services); and entertainment (i.e. entertainment, arts and recreation).

## Commute



There is an opportunity to nurture an entrepreneurial atmosphere in Penn Township. 60% of people who start small businesses are between 40 and 60 years of age. The Township offers a great combination of highly educated, older residents who may be looking to avoid long commutes and start their own business in or near their home.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS estimates



**88%** Traditional Single-Family Detached Homes

**92%** Owner-Occupied Housing Units

Median Age in Penn Township

**48 years**

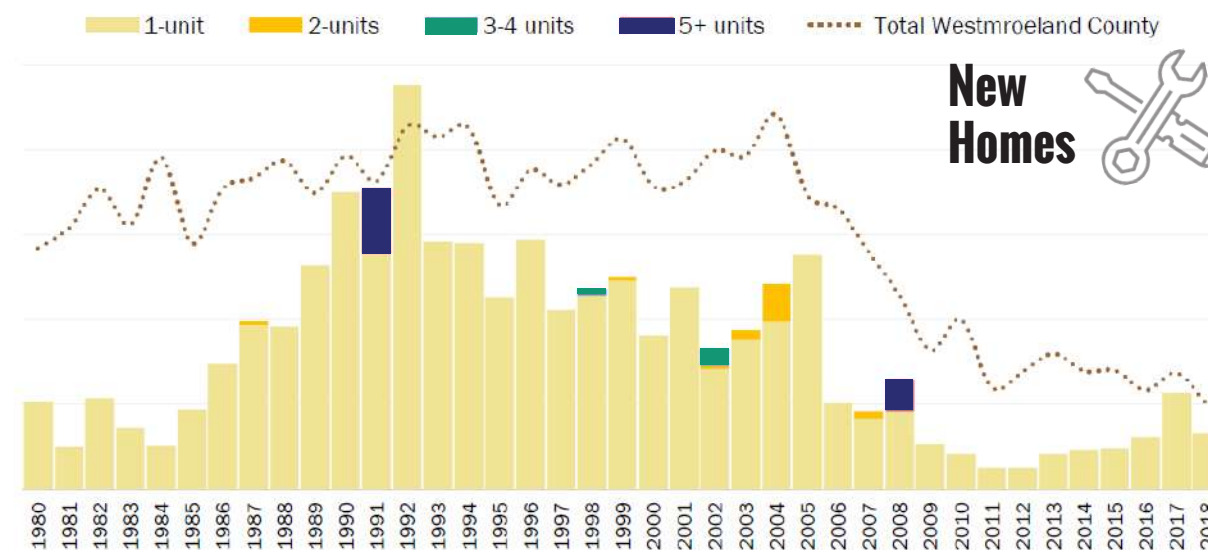


= ?

The population is **aging** and the overwhelming majority of housing units are owner-occupied, single-family detached dwellings. What does this mean for the future?

Most likely, a demand for more multi-family and rental housing. An increase in demands for service. And possibly a decrease in discretionary spending.

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS estimates



New Homes



Penn Township experienced a large housing construction boom between 1990 and 2005; then fell off in keeping with the national housing crisis.

No multi-family units have been constructed since 2008.



# Funding Sources

## DCED Municipal Assistance Program (MAP)

- [www.dced.pa.gov/programs/municipal-assistance-program-map/](http://www.dced.pa.gov/programs/municipal-assistance-program-map/)
- Grants for planning projects such as comprehensive plans and ordinance updates

## Act 13 Programs (Marcellus Legacy Fund)

- [www.dced.pa.gov/programs-funding/commonwealth-financing-authority-cfa/act-13-programs/](http://www.dced.pa.gov/programs-funding/commonwealth-financing-authority-cfa/act-13-programs/)
- Various grants related to water quality; flood mitigation; greenways, trails and recreation; acid mine drainage; sewage facilities; watershed restoration; and orphaned or abandoned well plugging

## PennDOT Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank (PIB)

- [www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/PA-Infrastructure-Bank.aspx](http://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/PA-Infrastructure-Bank.aspx)
- Low interest loans to accelerate priority transportation projects

## PennDOT Automated Red Light Enforcement Program (ARLE)

- [www.dot.state.pa.us/Portal%20Information/Traffic%20Signal%20Portal/FUNDARLE.html](http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Portal%20Information/Traffic%20Signal%20Portal/FUNDARLE.html)
- Grants to projects that reduce violations and crashes and provide additional safety benefits to highway users and pedestrians

## DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)

- [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/)
- Grants for recreation projects

## Appalachian Regional Commission

- [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)
- Supplemental infrastructure grants for projects funded though other federal programs (50%; unless access roads, then 80%)

## Congestion Mitigation and Air quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program

- [www.fhwa.dot.gov/envronment/air\\_quality/cmaq/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/envronment/air_quality/cmaq/)
- Flexible funding for transportation projects that improve air quality and reduce congestion

## PENNVEST

- [www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/Funding-Programs/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/Funding-Programs/Pages/default.aspx)
- Financing for projects related to clean water, solid waste disposal, sewage treatment and pollution control projects

## State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grants

- [www.statefarm.com/about-us/corporate-responsibility/community-grants/good-neighbor-citizenship-grants](http://www.statefarm.com/about-us/corporate-responsibility/community-grants/good-neighbor-citizenship-grants)
- Safety grants for auto and roadway safety and community development grants for community revitalization and economic development

# Implementation Status of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan

Highlights indicate items that continue to be especially relevant.

## Goal A: Preserve open space and limit the impact of development on the natural environment

Completed: Yes or No	Objective	Action
Y	Preserve the natural environment, including steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands through local land development regulations.	
N		Consider the creation of a “conservation overlay” district to limit development in sensitive areas.
Y		Expand current grading and stormwater management regulations in the current Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
?		Conduct a natural resources audit and map identified areas.
N	Limit the development of wooded areas by regulating forestry operations and timber management.	
N		Define the term “forest” broadly in Zoning Ordinance.
N		Establish standards for harvesting based on percentages and numbers of certain sizes of trees
N		Amend supplemental regulations to include limits on harvesting of mature stands of trees.
N		Reference “forest” management standards in Section 190-21(B)41.
N	Acquire open space through a mandatory dedication program or pursue the conservation of natural open space and wooded areas through land development standards.	
N		Administer the recently adopted Comprehensive Recreation Plan with the focus on preserving “passive recreation” areas which will remain undisturbed.
N		Consider the creation of environmental overlay districts to limit the impact of development on identified sensitive areas.
Y	Consider identifying a “Rural Resource Area” that is restricted for all but extractive industries (mining, oil and gas extraction, sand and gravel excavation), recreation, forestry and tourism related development.	
N		Monitor impacts of development in natural resource areas.
N		Monitor loss of land in agricultural production.

## Goal B: Implement a land use plan based on growth management standards which respect individual property rights

Completed: Yes or No	Objective	Action
Y	Guide development into areas appropriate for growth.	
Y		Identify select corridors for growth based on access and utility availability.
Y		Identify preferred land uses within those corridors.
N		Amend zoning map and/or text where appropriate, to accommodate selected land uses.
N		Complete a land resource survey to determine the amount and developability of land in specified growth areas.
N	Provide for an ongoing planning program which will be reviewed and revised as necessary, based on identified trends, and concerns of property owners.	
Y		Continue to provide monthly and quarterly community development reports.
N		Utilize the Township’s GIS software to generate trend maps which indicate lots for which building permits have been issued (quarterly).
N		Complete a review of Zoning Hearing Board activities on an annual basis.
Y		Identify patterns of variance requests as they relate to specific ordinance provisions.
Y		Introduce amendatory language to Zoning Ordinance when warranted, to reduce number of appeals.
Y		Provide funds for training and continuing education of Planning and Zoning Board members, Zoning Hearing Board members, and Commissioners.
N	Limit the construction of intense development in and adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas.	
N		Identify specific areas for preservation based on natural features.
N		Research the need for the creation of a conservation district where an aggregate of environmentally sensitive sites are in close proximity to each other.



Completed: Yes or No	Objective	Action
Y	Promote the use of mitigating site design features including use of natural topography, landscaping, existing vegetation and bufferyards between disparate land uses through the adoption of a “Development Guidelines Manual.”	
N		Consider adoption of a Township-wide special purpose landscaping ordinance or assign a portion of the Design Manual to landscaping requirements.
N		Encourage compact building forms in planned, multi-use developments, leaving open space on site.
Y		Encourage “low-impact” site preparation activities which limit the disturbance of sloped areas.
N		Expand options in certain residential districts through development models, and provide for several types of mixed residential neighborhoods, i.e. single family and mixed residential/neighborhood commercial.
N	Adjust and revise current site plan review procedures and controls based on preferred development patterns.	
N		Select features of development site design which are effective and limit impacts on abutting properties.
N		Prepare standards for inclusion in the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances based on observation of preferred design concept.
N		Include “limit of construction” and “structure orientation” standards to development submittal requirements.
Y	Monitor the extension of public utilities and services into areas targeted for growth.	
Y		Quantify available EDU’s in system expansions and track permits as they are issued.
N		Estimate “buildout” based on current trends and proposals.

Goal C: Provide for housing types which reflect the demographic needs of the Township

Completed: Yes or No	Objective	Action
Y	Provide for a variety of housing types (single-family detached, townhouse, apartment, mobile home) for all income ranges.	
N		Review current residential district uses to assure compliance with the Fair Housing Act.
N		Add multi-family housing to “transition zones” between low density residential and nonresidential classifications as a “discretionary use.”
Y		Provide for low maintenance “quad” housing marketed toward empty nesters and retirees in certain residential zoning districts.
N	Initiate a local program for the removal or adaptive reuse of deteriorated or vacant housing.	
N		Segregate the Township into “residential planning units” and conduct a windshield survey to confirm the presence of deteriorated housing.
N		In transition areas with access to collector roadways, encourage the conversion of small residential dwellings to commercial or office uses where permitted.
Y	Promote the maintenance of residential dwelling units and properties through the adoption of a property maintenance code and enforcement program.	
Y		Assess the number of neighborhoods or areas with a proliferation of poorly maintained housing units using results of windshield survey.
Y		Adopt a proactive approach to property maintenance through administration of the Uniform Building Code.
Y		Add a Codes Enforcement Officer position to current staff.
N	Limit conflicts with incompatible uses through consistent application of the long range land use plan and provisions of the zoning ordinance.	
N		Review current zoning district boundaries at perimeter of Township and evaluate compatibility with districts in neighboring municipalities.
N		Link the goals for land use with recommended amendments to current land use ordinances and evaluate “best fit” options.
N		Consolidate similar uses in each district into broader use categories and define those uses and categories in the Zoning Ordinance.

Goal D: Support increased employment opportunities and expansion of the economic tax base

Completed: Yes or No	Objective	Action
Y	Encourage balanced economic growth to avoid an overburden of future tax revenues from residential development only.	
Y		Prepare a parcel-level commercial land use inventory:
Y		Create one layer with all lots currently undeveloped and zoned for commercial uses.
Y		Create another layer with all developed lots in areas zoned for commercial land use.
N		Prepare a nonintervention scenario report relative to future tax revenues from residentially zoned land based on projected trends.
Y		Quantify currently undeveloped commercial or business acreage and project tax revenues based on “developed” status.
Y		Quantify currently undeveloped industrial acreage and project tax revenues based on “developed” status.
N		Complete revenue-projection based on current zoning classification, development trends and current rate of taxation.
N		Prepare a parcel-level developed lots maps, animate by year for new housing starts.
N		Prepare an intervention scenario report with options for revised zoning boundaries, and expanded use provisions.
Y		Provide additional developable land in nonresidential zoning classifications. (Depending on Phase II further visioning/land use planning)
N		Include land in close proximity to the Pittsburgh-Bouquet Airport in a specific plan to permit light industrial, planned commerce and office park uses. (Depending on Phase II further visioning/land use planning)
Y		Consider select areas within the SR 130 corridor for mixed-use or business transition uses and amend the Zoning Ordinance and map to include traffic mitigation standards.
N	Promote employment opportunities through reasonable development requirements.	
N		Amend the current Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to establish a fast track review and approval process for land development applications which will result in permanent well-paying jobs.
N		Amend the current Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to establish a two-tiered land development submittal procedure, one for “neighborhood scaled” developments and one for Township or regional scaled development.
N		Add new definitions and define terms.
Y		Eliminate “discretionary” language in both Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to avoid interpretive issues during application review.

.... Goal D is continued on the next page

Completed: Yes or No	Objective	Action
Y	Guide commercial and industrial growth to those areas with adequate services and facilities, and avoid conflict with low density residential land use.	
Y		Identify growth corridors where utility extensions are provided or planned.
N		Conduct a transition zone survey at points where potentially incompatible land uses are permitted on abutting lots.
N		Establish “limit of construction” standards on large tracts proposed for development.
Y		Adopt a Township-wide landscape ordinance.
Y		Create “buffer” zones or overlay zones where potentially disparate uses are permitted.
N		Prepare a “prime development sites” inventory based on preferred use, utility availability and the capacity of access roadways.
N		Utilize two (2) maps generated during planning process.
N		Revisit impact fee service district boundaries and include identified parcels.
N		Utilize “corridor design standards” in selected growth corridors for consistency and quality of development.
N		Promote “Smart Development” guidelines to limit sprawl.
N		Add transportation improvement projects to the list of projects funded through impact fees where new commercial and industrial growth will necessitate such upgrades.
?	Assess the consistency of the Township’s Comprehensive Plan goals with the recommendations of the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan	
?		Verify that Penn Township’s plan is “generally consistent” with the County plan.
?		Review selected local growth areas for consistency with County’s selected sites.
?		Acknowledge County’s plan for preservation of natural and historic resources where these areas are located within Penn Township.
?		Evaluate the County plan’s strategic initiatives in terms of economic goals and job creation on sites in Penn Township.
N		Assess regional transportation goals and proposed transportation improvements.
N		Update the Township’s Act 209 impact fee program.
N		Include potential jointly funded projects with Westmoreland County.
Y		Pursue CDBG funding for infrastructure improvements in selected growth corridors in concert with the County.
N		Identify perceived differences between the plans at the time of adoption, and document choices made at the local level.



Goal E: Continue conservative fiscal policies regarding the provision of publicly owned and maintained infrastructure

Completed: Yes or No	Objective	Action
N		Continue to commit pro-rated revenues for capacity and safety improvements to Township owned and maintained roadways through the Impact Fee Program.
N		Monitor development trends and adjust the Transportation Impact Fee Program list accordingly.
N		Reevaluate the listed transportation improvement projects every two (2) years.
N		Promote traffic planning activities in the development and review of subdivision and land development plans.
N		Establish a policy of requiring traffic impact analyses for smaller land developments in growth corridors.
?		Continue to budget thirty percent (30%) or more of the annual budget for road and street maintenance and safety and capacity improvements.
?		Explore public/private funding mechanisms for the expansion of public utilities and facilities to those areas identified for growth.
?		Establish a policy of co-mingling of funds where resulting expansion will improve public service delivery.
?		Consider an “infrastructure overlay” district to identify areas with inadequate facilities to support continued development.
Y/N		Continue to distribute the Township newsletter. (Website now serves this purpose)
Y		Use to inform residents of new policies and planning initiatives. (Website)
N		Include a “viewpoint” section to get taxpayer’s opinions on local government operations.
N		Prepare a developer’s packet with Township review and approval procedures, planning philosophy, and community goals and objectives.
N		Include copies of all required application forms.
N		Include info about mandatory dedication of open space and transportation impact fees.
N		Provide crime statistics and incident report summaries.
N		Include digital color photos of Township landmarks and rural characteristics.
Y		Continue to fund administrative operations at the current staffing level and provide for ongoing training to Township officials.