



**July 24, 2023**

**To:** Mary Perez, Penn Township Manager

**From:** Jon Cherry  
Dawood Engineering  
Community and Economic Development Planner

**Address** Penn Township  
2001 Municipal Ct,  
Harrison City, PA 15636

**Re:** Economic Development and Impact Strategy

Dawood Engineering's Community and Economic Development team is pleased to present to Penn Township's Board of Commissioners and Economic Development Impact Strategy Steering committee a memo with recommendations to promote targeted growth and economic development.

Dawood understands that Penn Township is seeking planning level guidance and consulting related to the Turnpike Interchange, industrial zoning, and the promotion of balanced commercial/residential development. Dawood also understands that the Township removed residential uses from all non-residential zoning within the Township to limit residential use pressures on areas desired for commercial use. Additionally, we recognize that the Township has engaged their solicitor in a review of their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to ensure that it enables the Township to better guide growth.

**Executive Summary:**

Dawood has completed a comprehensive evaluation of regional economic and demographic performance. In summary, the County and Township have seen reductions in several key contributing industries, workforce aged populations, and has experienced increasing demand for residential development. Much of the working aged population within the Township work outside of the Township. The service industry and medical industry have been substantially impacted by recent economic fluctuations within the region. These industries have been slow to recover, which presents both a risk and an opportunity for the Township. Additionally, the majority of the Township's designated land for industrial development is built out. This too is an opportunity.

The Township will likely continue to see demand for new housing. Nationally, and within Pennsylvania there is a well-documented housing shortage. This shortage is for a variety of mixed housing types from rental/apartments to single family units and everything in between. The Township has taken steps to reduce the land area available to housing development by eliminating it as a by-right use within industrial and/or commercial zones. However, given modern housing demand and its demand for commercial venues that are close to dwelling units, this presents an opportunity.

By limiting housing within commercial and industrial zoning, which includes several high-quality parcels, the Township has enhanced demand for housing and is in a good position to foster positive change.

The memo recommends the following actions:

- Recommendation 1 - Traditional Neighborhood Overlay
- Recommendation 2 - Recurring Meetings with The Turnpike
- Recommendation 3 - Route 130 Corridor Study
- Recommendation 4 - Interchange Overlay District
- Recommendation 5 - Rezoning of Parcels to Industrial Use
- Recommendation 6 - Regional Developers Forum
- Recommendation 7 - Updates to the Comprehensive Plan

These recommendations are explored in detail within the **Recommendations** section of this memo.

Ultimately, these recommendations should accommodate residential demand and mixed housing types; Balance economic development and residential unit needs; Foster industrial economic development; Provide clear indications for all stakeholders as to the Township economic development mission; Attract skilled working and creative class populations; Provide well rounded capitalization on the Township's unique geographic location, proposed infrastructure improvements/developments, and foster interest in economic development.

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## Purpose of Impact Fees:

Infrastructure Impact fees, particularly for transportation, are encouraged to be included in the implementation of Recommendation 1 and 4. These fees refer to the payments that local governments can impose to finance the necessary infrastructure that supports or mitigates the effects of new development equitably. Impact fees serve as an effective tool to ensure that new development pays for its fair share of the costs associated with providing essential services and maintaining the surrounding infrastructure. By incorporating these fees into the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 4, the Township can ensure that the necessary funds are available to support and improve local infrastructure, which will ultimately benefit the community as a whole.

There must be a rational nexus between the fee and its use. These fees need to be based on sound methodology and calculations that are proportional to the impact, is standardized, and fair. However, they are necessary given some of the recommendations herein. According to the American Planning Association, "Local governments throughout the country are increasingly using impact fees to shift more of the costs of financing public facilities from the general taxpayer to the beneficiaries of those new facilities." (APA Policy Guide on Impact Fees). When properly calculated, communicated, and consistent with the Township's overall mission to foster economic development, an impact fee can be an effective tool to improve infrastructure and promote smart growth.

Impact fees are not intended to fund all infrastructure and they are not intended to stop growth, they are intended to limit the burden of induced infrastructure upgrades/needs on the taxpayer. Impact fees are paid by the developer prior to development. As the development and its beneficiaries are likely to benefit the most from the new or improved infrastructure, the cost of the impact fee may be passed down to the end user, but it is justifiable to say that those who stand to benefit the most bear the greatest financial responsibility.

Given the volume of development potential for the Township, it is highly recommended that a well-defined and calculated impact fee system be developed to support the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and Interchange Overlay District (IOD) recommendations. Impact fees should be determined in accordance with state law and in close collaboration with the Township Solicitor.

## Data Evaluations and Findings:

Given the scope of work and our preliminary understanding of project goals, and after discussion with Township Staff, our team engaged in a holistic data collection and evaluation. Our evaluations included land use and zoning ordinance review, a review of the Township's past and current comprehensive plans, demographic profile reviews, commuter pattern review, as well as economic performance indicator evaluations. The basis of these reviews and an overview of findings are summarized in greater detail below.

Evaluations were completed prior to the engagement of committee members to ensure that our staff had a complete objective and data driven understanding of existing conditions to aid in targeted committee engagement and to ensure that resulting ideas/recommendations were data driven and implementable.

Dawood reviewed Township Assessment Data, state, and federal economic performance data, PennDOT traffic count data, Township building permit data, US Census data, Township zoning and land use data, as well as performing spatial analysis of various GIS data layers. These evaluations were intended to identify regional trends in population, economy, land use, and human movement to both educate/inform the steering committee, as well as guide our recommendations in a data driven manner.

## Demographic Review:

Dawood's review of US census data focused on the American Community Survey (ACS) data rather than the U.S. decennial census. This is because the primary purpose of the U.S. decennial census is to provide counts of people for the purpose of congressional apportionment. The ACS is intended to measure changes in demographic profiles. The use of the ACS provides a more granular view of the Township's census blocks and allows for a more detailed analysis. The general findings are as follows:

**While the ACS from 2010 to 2020 of both the township and county demonstrate positive population growth overall, working aged adults declined while retirement age populations increased.** This has the effect of increasing the need for senior housing, elder care services, and industries that caters to those demographics and focuses less on emerging technologies or emerging technology support services.

**The Township's educational attainment among 18–24-year-olds was on track with the county and United States, which is an encouraging statistic.** It represents that of those working age adults remaining within the Township, 38% have a high school diploma, 38% have some college education or an associate's degree, and 18% have a college degree. **This represents a highly employable group of working aged adults. However, it is likely that the need to develop or engage industries in a workforce development/recruitment exists.**

Label (Grouping)	USA	Westmoreland County	Penn township
AGE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
<b>Population 18 to 24 years</b>	(X)	(X)	(X)
Less than high school graduate	11.70%	11.10%	4.20%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	34.80%	38.60%	38.80%
Some college or associate's degree	40.70%	38.80%	38.90%
Bachelor's degree or higher	12.80%	11.50%	18.00%
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	(X)	(X)	(X)
Less than 9th grade	4.80%	1.40%	0.70%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5.90%	3.90%	1.90%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	26.30%	35.90%	29.90%
Some college, no degree	19.30%	16.00%	15.00%
Associate's degree	8.80%	11.80%	14.20%
Bachelor's degree	21.20%	19.20%	24.80%
Graduate or professional degree	13.80%	11.70%	13.50%
High school graduate or higher	89.40%	94.70%	97.40%
Bachelor's degree or higher	35.00%	30.90%	38.30%

Figure 1: ACS Educational Attainment 5-Year Estimate

Of those employed directly within the Township 29% work within manufacturing, 16% work within healthcare or social assistance, 11% work within construction, 9% work within administration and support, with the remainder distributed at low percentages across varied industries.

Our evaluation of Census data indicates that 91% of the Township's population works outside of the Township and travel between 10 and 24 miles to a job location. This suggests that the job distribution is relatively close to the Township boundary. **The Township is exporting its working class.**

#### Township Building Permits Review:

**Of the Township building permits issued between 2019 and 2022 most were for upgrades or additions to existing units.** There was a spike in new construction from 32% of permits issued in 2019 to 43% in 2022. This spike has declined to a rate of 30% of total permits issued in 2022, suggesting that demand for new construction has reduced to pre-COVID levels. **Residential demand within the Township has consistently outpaced commercial permitting demand.** Percentage of commercial permits by year. In fact, the percent of permits issued for commercial development has declined:

- 2019 = 13.5%
- 2020 = 7%
- 2021 = 4.3%
- 2022 = 8.9%

#### Economic Trends:

Within the region there are industries that are in demand, and there are industries that are not. There are also industries that are growing, and those that are in decline. **A natural inclination might be to assume that those industries that are in decline are also those industries that are experiencing declining demand.**

**This, however, is not always the case.** For example, within Southwestern PA, Westmoreland County, and by correlation Penn Township, the **top expenditure of household income within the County**, (excluding expenses on owner occupied dwellings) was on expenditures at **hospital and offices of physicians.** **However, within the county local health service employment declined.** In fact, while local health services within the Southwestern PA region grew by an estimated 5674 jobs from 2017 – 2019, regional declines far outpaced estimated growth with estimated declines reaching 14,904 from 2019 – 2022.

Below Dawood has summarized some key data points for consideration. The focus of this data is to assist the reader in understanding the dynamics within the region and to better identify industries that might best produce growth within the Township.

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2019  
All Workers

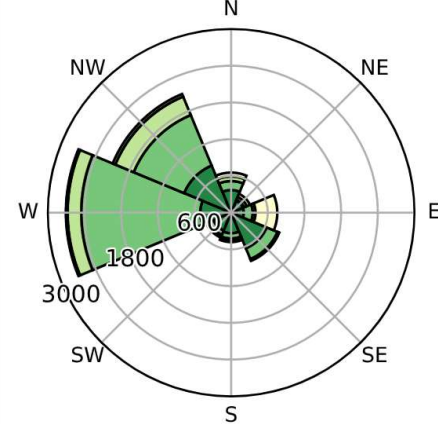


Figure 2: Job Location & Volume from Township, ACS 5-Year Estimate

How to attract business will be covered within the **Recommendations** section.

Upon evaluation of the Southwestern region surrounding Penn Township, and the likely employment areas, it was found that the top 12 Industries that gained employment 2017 – 2022 included:

- Construction Products and Services
- STEM Research and Development
- Local Logistical Services
- Information Technology
- Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development
- Insurances Services
- Environmental Services
- Local Community and Civic Organizations
- Local Personal Services (Non-Medical)
- Paper and Packaging
- Upstream Chemical Products
- Plastics

Upon evaluation of the same region, it was found that the top 12 2022 – 2027 anticipated employment growth industries include:

- Local community and civic organizations
- Local personal services (non-medical)
- Oil and gas production
- Construction products and services
- Business Services
- Information technology and Analytical instruments
- Stem research and development
- Lighting and electrical equipment
- Insurance services
- Video production and distribution
- Production technology and heavy machinery

Our evaluation suggests that emerging industry trends may require a highly technical skill sets found in limited quantities within the region when compared to other regions. During COVID, employment dropped significantly, however, job growth has begun increasing at pre-COVID rates but not at pre-COVID volume. There were significant job losses in employment within Local Hospitality and Local health services that have limited recovery, while similar losses in other segments like business services have experienced a near full recovery. There is anticipated regional growth within personal services as well as emerging tech markets while local commercial and hospitality segments are expected to see a continuous decline.

In comparison, to the county-wide data, typically the smallest unit of economic performance evaluation, indicates that many of these industries will see limited growth within the County and by association the Township. In 2019, the top 12, 2019 employment growth segments included:

- Employment and payroll of local government and education

- Full-service restaurants
- Limited-service restaurants
- Other real estate
- Employment services
- Retail - General merchandise stores
- Architectural, engineering, and related services
- Individual and family services
- Hospitals
- Nursing and community care facilities
- Offices of physicians
- Religious organizations

Those items in red above, when compared to the list below, are related employment segments that will see reductions. In other words, these are the areas that were strong pre-covid, but which are now in decline and/or projected to continue decline. The top 12 2022 – 2027 industries anticipated to experience employment reductions within Westmoreland County include:

- Local food and beverage processing and distribution
- Local real estate, construction, and development
- Local retailing of clothing and general merchandise
- Education and knowledge creation
- Local education training
- Location entertainment and media
- Upstream metal manufacturing
- Business services
- Local industrial products and services
- Local health services
- Production and services
- Federal government services

Local health service jobs were growing prior to COVID but have dropped during COVID and continues to drop post-COVID. Similarly, local hospitality jobs grew slightly and then steeply declined by nearly 25k jobs within 2019-2020, these jobs rebounded by less than half of their losses within 2020-2022.

Of the services that are produced within the Southwest Region and consumed within the region, a common trend exists. Services that are produced within the Southwest Region, and “exported” or consumed outside of the region, the trend remains similar, with two distinct outliers. Business Services rebounded to near pre-COVID levels, as did construction products and services.

**Westmoreland County is anticipated to see its largest “growth” within service and hospitality-oriented business or blue-collar industry, and very limited growth within technical industry such as STEM research and development or information technology. This trend contrasts with that of the wider region. This growth in service industry is mostly a COVID recovery and does not likely represent new organic growth.**



This trend suggests that of the regional emerging market sectors and employment of qualified individuals remains tight and could potentially inhibit economic growth for a period of time. It also means that sighting of business near qualified individuals and attracting them with improved or high quality of life will be important.

*NOTE: The short- and long-term impact of COVID also needs to be accounted for. Reductions of jobs during COVID are rebounding at a similar rate, but at total volumes significantly lower than pre-COVID. See Figure 3.*



Figure 3: PA On Target, DCED 2023, Total Job Growth for Southwestern Region

### Capture of Markets:

As indicated in the table above, the percentage of employment captured regionally within growth industries is relatively limited, except for “production technology and heavy machinery”.

Growth Market coincidental between Southwest PA and Westmoreland County	County	Southwest Region	Percentage Employment Capture
Local Logistical Services	174	1130	15.40%
Local Personal Services (Non-Medical)	284	1993	14.25%
Oil and gas production	107	1422	7.52%
Information technology and Analytical instruments	171	599	28.55%
Production technology and heavy machinery	148	273	54.21%

One way to understand what services to attempt to capture within an area that might be in demand is to look at household demand. In other words, where are people spending their money. The table below indicates the market segment and total spending volume within Westmoreland County.

Description	Household Demand
Owner-occupied dwellings	\$1,753,680,118.12
Hospitals	\$524,308,757.75
Offices of physicians	\$458,862,253.93
Limited-service restaurants	\$351,219,070.83
Retail – Non-store retailers	\$332,422,676.45
Nursing and community care facilities	\$243,735,056.32
Retail - General merchandise stores	\$227,798,444.82
Religious organizations	\$224,231,578.49
Tenant-occupied housing	\$218,753,526.08
Retail - Food and beverage stores	\$206,397,394.71
Full-service restaurants	\$199,516,082.57
Other local government enterprises	\$176,426,910.25
Monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation	\$158,139,637.45
State/Local Govt Hospital and Health	\$144,639,144.39
Automotive repair and maintenance, except car washes	\$143,728,308.65
Individual and family services	\$140,318,659.94
Other financial investment activities	\$134,986,195.85
Retail - Motor vehicle and parts dealers	\$118,884,283.07
Funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles	\$116,754,509.98
Offices of other health practitioners	\$114,772,311.06

Job growth by location (as explored below in **Job Locations & Impacts**), when compared to spending volume, suggests that the services most likely heavily consumed are located outside of the county, and by relationship, the Township. Segments such as full-service restaurants, limited-service restaurants, other real estate, employment services, retail - general merchandise stores, architectural, engineering, and related services, individual and family services, hospitals, nursing, and community care facilities, which are listed above are not anticipated to grow significantly within the county. This indicates that these services are likely to be consumed outside of the region. This data is based on trend, increased availability and resources to promoted economic growth has the potential to influence these trends.

### Job Locations & Impacts:

2019 American Community Survey data suggested that the majority of the population within the Township (91%) work outside of the Township. According to the data, the majority of these workers are commuting west towards Monroeville and Pittsburgh. The data also suggests that many people employed within the Township (84%) actually reside outside of the Township.

When reviewed against job segments and demographic/educational data above, this suggests that the Township is exporting white collar and/or skilled labor and importing labor that requires a more limited skill set.

### Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (Private Primary Jobs)

	2019	
	Count	Share
<a href="#">Employed in the Selection Area</a>	4,267	100.0%
<a href="#">Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside</a>	3,593	84.2%
<a href="#">Employed and Living in the Selection Area</a>	674	15.8%
<a href="#">Living in the Selection Area</a>	8,314	100.0%
<a href="#">Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside</a>	7,640	91.9%
<a href="#">Living and Employed in the Selection Area</a>	674	8.1%

Figure 4: Census On the Map Job Location Metrics

### Traffic Pattern Evaluations:

Dawood had to rely upon PennDOT traffic volume data for current traffic volumes. We did not have access to the Pennsylvania Turnpikes' traffic projections resulting from studies and/or evaluation completed as part of their interchange planning processes.

Currently, Route 130 and Harrison City Export Road are the two primary corridors within the Township, with the apparent majority of traffic moving from the Harrison City Route 130 intersection east and west.

While Harrison City Export Road is a major corridor, data suggests that volume decreases as the roadway moves north. This suggests that the corridor collects traffic with volumes increasing as it approaches the Harrison City Route 130 intersection which is further distributed to both east and west of route 130.

Mount Pleasant Road is also indicated as a primary route for both passenger vehicle and truck traffic moving north from Route 130.

Truck traffic volume appears to move east and west between New Alexandria and Pittsburgh. There is a relatively low volume of north/south truck traffic volume and a low volume of traffic indicated on I-76 when compared to other corridors within the region.

Dawood recommends requesting regional traffic projections that have been completed by the Pennsylvania Turnpike to better understand anticipated induced demand or projected traffic patterns modeled as part of the turnpikes planning process.

Based on current traffic patterns and Township industrial zone proximities to existing major corridors, it would be anticipated that the primary increase in volumes along the Route 130 corridor would be due to passenger vehicle traffic, however this needs to be validated against more comprehensive datasets, preferably resulting from a comprehensive corridor study in combination with PA Turnpike projection data.

### Penn Township Land Composition Evaluations:

**Zoning:** Currently within the Township approximately 81% of the land area is zoned as either Mixed District Residential (36%) or Rural Residential (45%). Only 8% of Township land area are dedicated to Industrial uses and only 4.5% of the land area is dedicated to some level of commercial use.

**Current Land Use:** 38% of the Township's land area is currently used for agriculture and 34% is utilized for residential use. This represents 72% of the Townships land area. 2.2% of the land area is currently utilized as industrial, and 10.8% of the land area is used for commercial uses.

**Potential Industrial Land Area Utilizations:** Dawood completed a comprehensive land area evaluation using multiple authoritative data points to identify current land use, current zoning, parcels that are ripe for redevelopment, vacant parcels, and the evaluation of parcels within key distances to major corridors, intersections, or the proposed interchange. Our evaluation yielded the potential for an additional 2,957 acres of industrial or commercial development.

Our land evaluations first identified vacant, largely/partially undeveloped, and large area parcels that could accommodate new or redevelopment. This evaluation identified 2,957 acres land area that could absorb new development. This level of development would be vastly impactful and change the character of the community. Recognizing this, Dawood sought to narrow the scope of evaluation by considering the desirability of parcels within the following drive time ranges in miles:

Drive Distances from Major Intersections Evaluated			
0 -0.25	5 - 0.75	1 – 2	3 – 4
0.25 - .05	0.75 – 1	2 – 3	4 – 5
5 - 6			

Based on the evaluations, a primary consideration was given to those areas that didn't extend beyond 3 miles. Based on this evaluation we were able to greatly narrow our focus from 2957 to 1368 acres.

Of these, approximately 356 acres would be designated for some level of commercial development and approximately 993 acres would be designated for industrial development.

**In addition to our evaluation, we noted that the comprehensive plan notes that**

### Opportunity Increases with Underlying Zoning Displayed

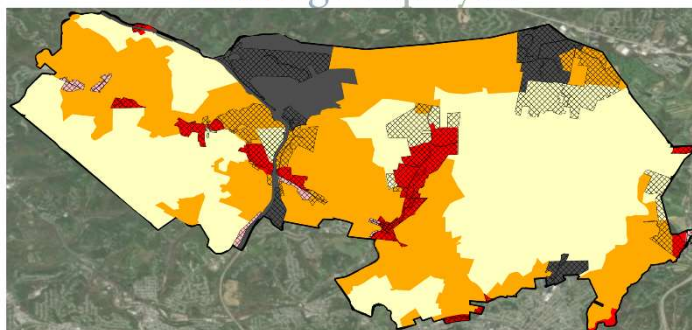


Figure 5: Development Increases (Black Hashing) Displayed Over Current Underlying Zoning (Red = Commercial; Orange/Beige = Residential; Grey = Industrial).

**the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) district is limited in area, covering 117 acres, or 0.6% of all land area. NC as it is established within the Township is discontinuous and limited in scope, but the district provides significant potential for redevelopment along the Route 130 corridor. However, we are not making a recommendation for changes in those areas at this time, rather we are recommending a Route 130 corridor evaluation, the results of which should make recommendations for land use and zoning alterations.**

### Comprehensive Plan Evaluations:

Within the Commonwealth the MPC states that municipal officials should make policy decisions that are generally consistent with their comprehensive plan. Because of this, Dawood thoroughly reviewed the 2020 Comprehensive Plan to ensure that our recommendations, resulting from stakeholder engagement and data analysis, would be generally consistent with the comprehensive plan. Based on this evaluation, we identified areas of the comprehensive plan that we believe may need to be slightly modified to better accommodate our recommendations. These modifications are included within the Recommendations Section.

- Our observations found that the comprehensive plan only evaluated vacant parcels for development. Our evaluations found this to be limiting and did not leverage opportunity for the expansion of industrial development in a contiguous manner. Therefore, our land use evaluations were developed to consider drive times, redevelopment opportunities, acquisition opportunities, as well as continuity to existing developments.
- The current comprehensive plan recommends a wholesale migration of their ordinance to form based zoning. While the statement within the comprehensive plan may apply well within Neighborhood Commercial and potential commercial districts that are urbanized, it has been found that this approach is difficult to enforce and increases litigation in rural areas.

Form based zoning, if applied universally, may create market conditions that are not consistent with the overall vision of the Township, especially given recent trends. According to the comprehensive plan, 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. Because of this, it is our observation that a more targeted and cost-effective Traditional Neighborhood overlay approach might offer similar benefits at a lower cost and complexity.

- The comprehensive plan notes that there are few areas available for continued industrial development. Current areas for economic development that are zoned Industrial are largely built out. To foster development that targets regional emerging markets, startups, etc. there is a need to expand industrial zoning.
- The comprehensive plan notes that the NC district is limited in area, covering 117 acres, or 0.6% of all land area. NC district as it is established within the Township is discontinuous and limited in scope, but the district provides significant potential for redevelopment along the Route 130 corridor.

### Steering Committee Kick-off Meeting Summary:

Dawood facilitated the Steering committee meeting with a comprehensive overview of the facts and data explored in the preceding sections. During this meeting the committee members were presented with data and facts that demonstrated an aging population, residential growth outpacing commercial growth, economic statistics, job growth and decline metrics. Included in this presentation was discussion of the Southwest region and Westmoreland County emerging technology markets. Data reviews included:

1. Demographic Reviews
2. Building Permit Trends
3. State & Southwest Regional Economic Trends
4. Westmoreland County Economic Trends
5. Penn Township US Census Employment Composition
6. Job Locations & Impacts
7. Traffic Pattern Evaluations
8. Penn Township Land Composition
9. Slip Ramp Stakeholder Feedback

Dawood reviewed with the members how Dawood had progressed through the data evaluation process, what data had been reviewed, and engagement completed to date. This included discussion of our work to review the comprehensive plan, aggregate and evaluated economic performance data from multiple data sources, conduct a spatial analysis of land uses and available land within the Township, as well as a summary of our Township Manager and Economic Development Planner Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting 1 outcomes.

Steering committee members agreed that the statistics and figures they were presented with were not surprising. And that they could see the correlation of the numbers with their observations. As a result of discussions with the steering committee, several areas were identified as focus areas for evaluation including areas adjacent to the Harrison City Export Road, the airport corridor, the potential turnpike interchange near the I-76 and Rout 130 overpass, as well as the Route 130 Corridor from Harrison City to Level Green.

- **Harrison City Export Road:** Discussion regarding this area included how to determine the appropriate level, mix, and intensity of uses. A focus of the discussion was how to allow mixed use development with commercial compositions. The concern being that the developer may simply not build the commercial development component.
- **Industrial development and the Airport Corridor:** There were discussions about how to expand opportunities for industrial development within the northeastern portion of the Township. This included discussion on how to potentially incorporate the Greensburg Jeannette Regional Airport into this potential. Per the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, 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. However, to capture this demand, the appropriate locations need to be made available to developers.
- **I-76 at the Route 130 overpass:** A major catalyst for this development within the region could be the prospect of a future interchange at the crossing of I-76 and Route 130. The discussion of this



revolved around the lack of information and knowledge as to when the development will occur and to what scale (i.e., full interchange, slip ramp, etc.). Results of how to manage this area and the collateral impacts of the project are discussed in the recommendations.

Dawood provided members with a description of the methods under consideration for discussion. These included:

- Text amendments to existing zoning and maintain existing zoning districts such as the removal and/or limiting of residential uses within commercial and industrial zones.
- Modification of types and regulations for housing in the Neighborhood Commercial
- Expansion of existing zoning districts such as:
  - Rezoning to allow for a higher/better use in targeted areas and drive development away from other areas using CC and IC
  - Expansion of NC areas around CC or along corridors to encourage re-development.
    - Up to an additional 783 acres Commercial; 2154 acres Industrial; 19 acres Neighborhood Commercial.
- Utilization of overlay zones as a mechanism to foster the right type, density, and mix of development within commercial zones, as well as overlay districts to signal the Township's intentions in the area of the proposed/potential Turnpike interchange project.

All evaluations were preliminary, flexible, and subject to change based on Committee Involvement.

#### One-On-One Steering Committee Meetings:

During the week of January 2, 2023, one-on-one meetings were set up with each steering committee member. The purpose of these meetings was to recap the first steering committee meeting and confirm each member's buy-in for the recommendations proposed within the **Recommendations** section below. Fortunately, there was near universal interest in the recommendations posed by Dawood. A short recap of the discussions is listed below.

The Dawood team presented a compilation of meeting notes, key comprehensive plan observations pointing out the specific language and text followed by a short presentation discussed traditional neighborhood overlays, village mixed use zoning and some case studies of mixed use phased neighborhood development based on which the township can consider applying and modifying the zoning and SALDO. Based on these conversations, Dawood was able to develop a series of consensus observations.

**Traditional Neighborhood Overlay:** The use of a Traditional Neighborhood Overlay that allows for mixed-use development was discussed. Ultimately there was consensus on the idea that this type of development would be desirable and would likely aid the Township in its mission. There was some resistance to the idea of apartments or rental units, however after discussion about the benefits of balanced housing options and their proven positive impacts on economic development, as well as the ability to use an overlay to control location, density, and height of these facilities, this concern was mitigated.

A primary concern about the traditional neighborhood development concept was how to ensure that the commercial development required as part of the planning/land development process would get built. Multiple committee members were seeking standards or functional policy mechanisms to foster commercial development within the TND areas and expressed concerns about a past mixed use

development which to this day has not seen the promised commercial development. After discussion, the concept of including phased percentages was agreed upon pending review by the solicitor to ensure legality.

Generally, there was agreement that the need for comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian connectivity was overstated within the comprehensive plan, and that a more targeted approach would be preferred. One committee member desired sidewalks along the Harrison City Export Road corridor to improve connectivity.

After discussion it was determined that sidewalks, given the needed right-of-way and other restrictive attributes of the existing roadway, might be too costly and time consuming to implement.

An alternative was offered to the committee member, in which the use of paved/asphalt walking trails as an internal component of the traditional neighborhood overlay would replace the use of corridor sidewalks. There was discussion about how these paved systems could be creatively constructed to tie into other mature neighborhoods, commercial areas (Winery, Brewery, Outlets, Parks etc.), and be included as a criteria within the overlay district. This alternative was welcomed and encouraged.

**Industrial Rezoning:** During discussion about industrial development, it was noted that current development opportunities are limited and that the industrial parks are largely built out. It was also noted that the current LERTA in the area did not offer any space for new development. Discussions of strategies revolved around the best method to protect industrial areas and promote economic development.

**Interchange Overlay District:** There is great discussion surrounding the probability and potential design of a Pennsylvania I-76 interchange at or near the overpass of Route 130.

After meeting with Township staff, a discussion was facilitated between the Township manager and the Pennsylvania Turnpike (Turnpike). It was indicated, by the Turnpike, that the project has not yet entered the design phase and that there were still some elements to be determined before that would occur. The Turnpike did indicate that they had run some preliminary demand and traffic forecasting models for the region based on a connection.

Because of the uncertainty there was discussion regarding an interchange overlay district, model ordinance, and amendments to the comprehensive plan.

**Route 130 Corridor Study:** The corridor of Route 130 was discussed in association with the Interchange Overlay District due to the wide variety of impacts that could occur, the undetermined nature of those impacts, and the desire to preempt them without undue cost and/or negative impacts. Given that the corridor has had some studies completed in the past and that the Turnpike indicated that they have completed impact assessments, the data may be in place to perform a comprehensive evaluation at a relatively low cost.

#### [Solicitors Meeting:](#)

As part of the One-on-One meeting process, a meeting was arranged with the Township solicitor to discuss their current initiatives in the evaluation of the Township SALDO. The discussion was to determine the nexus between the solicitor's efforts and our own, as well as any points where there could be the potential for duplicative efforts or contradictory findings. During the discussion it was determined that the efforts

of both the solicitor and Dawood are complimentary, not duplicative, and would be mutually beneficial to the overall mission of the Township.

Next steps for coordination with the solicitor included a presentation of recommendations for review, comment, and implementation coordination efforts.

### Township Interviews regarding Pennsylvania Turnpike Ramp Projects:

Dawood made a concerted effort to reach out to several Townships that have experienced PA Turnpike ramp projects. Very few were willing to discuss projects, mainly because the individuals who had knowledge of the project had since left the Township. We were able to get three perspectives (Towamencin Township, Montgomery County, PA, Bensalem Township, Bucks County, PA, and East Whiteland Township, Chester County). These interviews are summarized below.

#### Towamencin Township, Montgomery County, PA:

- **Timeline:** The Pennsylvania Turnpike completed the construction of a new slip ramp in Towamencin Township as part of a larger widening of the Northeast Extension in Fall of 2017.
- **What was the process like for the township?** The Pennsylvania Turnpike presented the Township with plans and provided little opportunity for engagement. The Turnpike did not include the road widening as a part of their slip ramp/interchange project. A narrower local road is intersecting with the slip ramp causing traffic backup to the neighboring township. The Township is still working with state authorities to resolve issues that have arisen from the plan.
- **Are there anything you would have done differently while working with the turnpike?** The Township and the Pennsylvania Turnpike should have had more detailed meetings on the design and the impacts of it on traffic. The Township feels that the Turnpike needed to analyze the traffic impact on the local road and their widening options. The Township understands that the Turnpike is doing the design in advance to save time, but the Township feels that they failed to consider the impacts of their design on local roads and the resulting improvements that needed to be facilitated. The Township felt that the Turnpike did not listen to their input because they already had a design. The Township indicated that even though the Township had everything ready and was fully prepared to discuss the project, the Turnpike did what they wanted to without any room for input.
- **How did you prepare for the project?** The Township did a survey of signalized intersections to prepare for the proposed traffic impacts. The results were close to the PennDOT projections.
- **What positive impacts did you experience?** The Township indicated that they have not experienced any net positive impacts from this project at the time of interview.
- **What negative impacts did you experience?** The resulting reoccurring traffic jam(s) on a narrower local road intersecting with the slip ramp are a negative result. Additionally, the Township has observed that the slip ramp appears to not have been designed to manage large trucks. While the Trucks should use the larger interchange, they are utilizing the slip ramp. The Township feels that this is causing more traffic congestion and accidents.
- **What would you have done differently?** The Township feels that if you are facing a Turnpike project, that communities should anticipate the Turnpike's approach to community engagement.



They feel that there should have been more community and stakeholder participation in the process and that the Turnpike should spend more time interacting with impacted community on every detail of the proposed project.

#### Bensalem Township, Bucks County, PA:

- The Pennsylvania Turnpike completed the construction of a new, direct ramp and interchange in Bensalem Township to ease congestion at the Township's other toll plaza. This project was completed in Fall of 2010.
- **What was the process like for you?** Similar to any major road construction project, there were traffic issues during the several year period it took to complete. The exit ramp from the PA Turnpike to Street Road has (both east and west bound for Street Road destination) lessened the impact of overall traffic, especially during peak travel times. Please know the PA Turnpike entrance from Street Road is East bound only.
- **Are there anything you would have done differently while working with the turnpike?** No
- **How did you prepare for the project?** It was all planned and designed by the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The Township followed their instructions and timeline.
- **What positive impacts did you experience?** The number of motorists traveling through Bensalem on any day is calculated at 250,000. The Township is pleased post-construction as the slip ramp has decreased the traffic overall.
- **What negative impacts did you experience?** Nothing to date
- **What would you have done differently?** No. The Township needed this slip ramp for smooth flow of the traffic.

#### East Whiteland Township, Chester County, PA:

- The Pennsylvania Turnpike completed the construction of a new interchange in East Whiteland Township to shorten commute times of nearby commercial and residential communities. This project was complete in Fall of 2012.
- **What was the process like for you?** Slip ramp was installed in industrial commercial zone. Had a very positive impact on the township. Majority of the infrastructure improvements for the slip ramp took place in the neighboring township.
- **Are there anything you would have done differently while working with the turnpike?** No, everything worked out smoothly.
- **How did you prepare for the project?** The Township did not have to prepare for anything. Neighboring Township had some traffic re-route.

- **What positive impacts did you experience?** East Whiteland Township benefited with traffic problems. More access to commercials in the township.
- **What negative impacts did you experience?** None.
- **What would you have done differently?** Everything that went as planned by the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

#### Dawood Summary of Pennsylvania Turnpike Ramp Project Interviews:

The three interviews above outline one negative and two positive outcomes. The evaluations are subjected and experiential in nature, but they offer insight into what to expect.

**Be Prepared** – In all cases it was indicated that the Turnpike came to the table with a set of plans and an anticipation of what they were going to execute within the Township(s). Because of this, it would be wise to have a regular coordinated meeting with the Pennsylvania Turnpike to know the expected outcome and timeline and phases of construction to manage the traffic flow change during the construction process.

Additionally, the Township should conduct a corridor study of Route 130 to better understand its current configuration and pain points. This could be done in coordination with SPC and the Pennsylvania Turnpike utilizing projections and models that have been completed by the Turnpike. This will foster discussion and collaboration.

In the scenario that the Township feels that they need additional support, they should be prepared to rely on existing resources, and/or hire a third-party consultant/facilitator with experience in Turnpike projects. The Township has several resources at various levels that they can approach for aid when it comes to large scale infrastructure projects. This includes the Southwestern Planning Commission (SPC), Westmoreland Development Council, County legislators, and State legislators. Each resources have their own compelling avenues. Engagement of these resources should be strategic and incremental.

#### Recommendations:

The removal of housing from commercial and industrially zoned areas was a recommendation to be made herein. This has, however, already been completed by the Township, and should remain in place, and/or only allowed as a conditional use. This helps the Township to avoid spot zoning concerns, maintain a greater level of control over the development of lands for residential use, while still providing flexibility for the Township's constituents.

All recommendations herein should be generally consistent with the Township's comprehensive plan. This means that in those cases where it is not, the comprehensive plan should be amended to include the recommendations and/or reference to the implantation timeline.

Within the table below you will find a recommendation table that provides a brief overview of the recommendation name, priority, type, and actions.

The prioritization is based on urgency from both the steering committee and the data, as well as our understanding of plans that are currently pending for residential development within the Township.

The need for implementation of a TND is the top priority along with a regional developer forum to better inform other economic development recommendations mentioned later within the table.

Updates to the comprehensive plan are listed as a high priority simply because it should be generally consistent with the ordinance, and it is one of the first things developers look at when proposing.

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Recommendation Matrix						
Prioritized Recommendations	Priority	Type	Purpose/Benefits	Implementation Steps	Key Stakeholders	Potential Public Funding
<b>Implement a Traditional Neighborhood Overlay</b>	1	Overlay District	Provide needed and in-demand housing options that incorporate required components of economic development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted protections</li> <li>Promotes recreational assets</li> <li>Housing diversity</li> <li>Infrastructural efficiency</li> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Clear developer expectations</li> <li>Indicates open for business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted Stakeholder Engagement</li> <li>Draft Ordinance</li> <li>Complete PA MPC rules for zoning change implementation</li> <li>Outreach to developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be discussed as part of Regional Developer Forum</li> <li>Current property owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Developers Forum</b>	1	Engagement	This forum will link the theory of the recommendation with the boots on the ground perspective and buy-in needed to make recommendations a reality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes communication and trust</li> <li>Gathers critical experience and observational data</li> <li>Provides insight into the best steps forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an agenda</li> <li>Identify and invite stakeholders</li> <li>Conduct meeting</li> <li>Establish next steps</li> <li>Adjust recommendations accordingly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Regional Developer Forum in recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PA DCED</li> </ul>
<b>Update to Comprehensive Plan</b>	1	Plan Update	Ensures that all recommendations are reflected within the comprehensive plan to avoid confusion, provide a clear pathway to the future, and avoid legal contentions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces confusion and legal issues</li> <li>Signals the Township's intentions to all stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review recommendations with solicitor and adjust as directed to provide consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Recurring Meetings with The Turnpike</b>	2	Engagement	Maintain working relationship with PA Turnpike <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data and intelligence gathering</li> <li>Rudder checks</li> <li>Better anticipation and mitigation of negative impacts</li> <li>More opportunity to capture positive impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Design Coordination</li> <li>Preliminary-Design Coordination</li> <li>Final design Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PA Turnpike</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>

Recommendation Matrix (Continued)						
Prioritized Recommendations	Priority	Type	Purpose/Benefits	Implementation Steps	Key Stakeholders	Potential Public Funding
<b>Route 130 Corridor Study</b>	<b>2</b>	Study	<p>Evaluate current and potential future conditions to ensure that the corridor can support recommendations made herein.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure corridor compatibility with proposed economic development is feasible.</li> <li>• Traffic controls</li> <li>• Improved safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage SPC and public funding entities/apply for funding.</li> <li>• Data gathering</li> <li>• Report publishing</li> <li>• Implementation of findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PA Turnpike</li> <li>• SPC</li> <li>• PennDOT</li> <li>• General Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PennDOT</li> <li>• PA DCED</li> <li>• PA Turnpike</li> <li>• SPC</li> </ul>
<b>Interchange Overlay District</b>	<b>3</b>	Overlay District	<p>Foster right sized/right fit economic development that manages transient traffic impacts, captures market share and minimizes Township's impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Traffic controls</li> <li>• Concentric density</li> <li>• Redevelopment</li> <li>• Clear developer expectations.</li> <li>• Indicates open for business</li> <li>• Provides perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Draft Ordinance</li> <li>• Complete PA MPC rules for zoning change implementation</li> <li>• Outreach to developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be discussed as part of Regional Developer Forum</li> <li>• PA Turnpike</li> <li>• SPC</li> <li>• PennDOT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PA Turnpike</li> <li>• PennDOT</li> <li>• PA DCED</li> </ul>
<b>Rezoning of Parcels to Industrial Use</b>	<b>3</b>	Rezoning	<p>Up-zone a select subset of 17 parcels to industrial use. Consider implementation of additional LERTA for Airport Property and immediately adjacent parcels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased opportunity for economic development</li> <li>• Protects land ripe for industrial development.</li> <li>• Protects community character</li> <li>• LERTA strategy can increase demand for non-LERTA parcels due to infrastructure improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage impacted property owners</li> <li>• Ensure consistency with comprehensive plan</li> <li>• Standard MPC zoning procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be discussed as part of Regional Developer Forum</li> <li>• Current property owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

**Recommendation 1 – Traditional Neighborhood Overlay:** It is our recommendation that the Township incorporate either a new Traditional Neighborhood Zoning District, or an overlay district. Our preference is to incorporate an overlay district. The Benefits of an overlay district include:

- **Targeted Protections** including the ability to require commercial uses on the first floor of structures in traditional “town center”.
- **Recreational Assets** including the ability to require that the areas designated to public use are high quality and not “junk” land that was simply not able to be developed.
- **Housing Diversity** including the ability of the Township to provide their fair share of all housing types in a manner that delineated the most appropriate locations to accommodate this need, as well as the ability to incentivize cluster development in exchange for density bonuses.
- **Infrastructural Efficiency** includes the reduction of linear feet of dedicated assets that then need to be maintained by the Township. In Penn Township’s case this would largely include roads and stormwater assets.
- **Economic Development** is enhanced as the development in these areas can require commercial development percentages.

The incorporation of a **Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) overlay** district that contains form-based development standards, cluster subdivision incentives, and a required ratio for the phasing of commercial development when compared to residential development will benefit the Township in terms of economic development, social development, quality of life, and in maintaining the current character of the community.

The TND Overlay should:

- Be generally consistent with the Township’s comprehensive plan.
- Comply with Article VII-A, Traditional Neighborhood Development, of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247[1], as amended, in particular, the purposes and objectives listed in Section 701-A of Article VII-A[2] such as: encouraging innovation for mixed-use pedestrian-oriented development; extending opportunities for housing; encouraging a more efficient use of land; allowing for integrated, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods; establishing public greens; minimizing traffic congestion; and fostering a sense of place and community.
- Incorporate impact fees that aid in the funding of needed infrastructural improvements.
- Provide effective opportunities for infill development, mixed-use development, and redevelopment. The TND could be extended south to include areas on Penny Lane Drive and/or near Waugaman Road.
- Have an emphasis on visual appeal and amenities such as street scaping criteria.
- Provide Multi-use paths that connect into existing commercial centers, as well as mature neighborhoods.
- Increase housing opportunities to attract skilled labor, white collar, and creative class residents.

To implement a TND overlay, both Township Ordinances and the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances, as well as the comprehensive plan should be amended. The TND should utilize form-based code. This targeted application of form-based code will aid the Township in implementing specific regulations that promote predictable results within the built environment, as well as unique public space

by focusing on physical form rather than separation of uses as is typical in Euclidian zoning. The application of the TND as an overlay district is targeted and strategic and allows for the Township to better capture economic opportunities and workforce.

TNDs typically include a variety of residential and commercial development where homes, shops, and offices are within a short walk of each other. Often, a hallmark of the TND is abundant tree-lined streets, multi-use pathways, roads designed in a manner that calms traffic, as well as abundant public space that can be utilized and is not land that just couldn't be developed otherwise.

It is critical that the zoning provisions offer clear guidance to both property owners and the governing body charged with approving proposals. Zoning requirements must be applied equally over all properties within the district. The ordinance not only must comply with any state and federal regulations, but must also be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the municipality's comprehensive plan.

The overlay should include, if feasible and in alignment with the PA MPC, provisions for total required percentage of commercial, as well as phasing of commercial development as a ratio of residential development. For example, for every 20% of residential units under construction, 10% of commercial development must be concurrently constructed. This is to allay fears that developers will not construct the proposed commercial development indicated within TND Plans.

It is important that the local governing body involve the public to clarify issues and explain the reasons behind mapping district boundaries. An educational program targeting developers and affected property owners will help increase awareness and compliance with the new requirements. It is also important to reference regional developers to better understand performance metrics that would best promote demand and feasibility for these types of development within the Township.

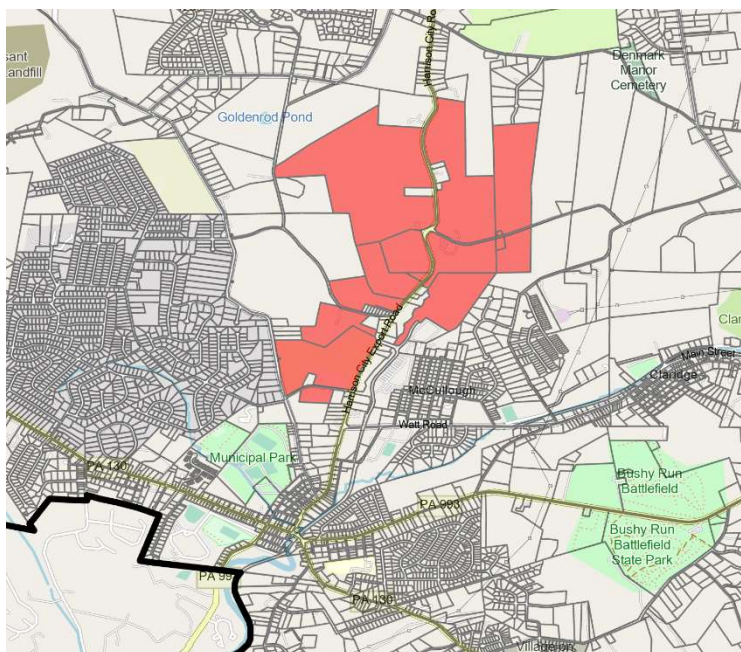


Figure 6: Parcels Recommended as Subject to TND Overlay

Recommended TND Overlay Parcel Numbers	
005500090000000016500000	005500090000000014200000
00550009000000001600000	00550009000000001200000
00550014000000001100000	00550009000000001200000
00550009000000001500000	005500090000000005200000
00550009000000001700000	005500090000000011400000
005500090000000011600000	005500090000000005200000
005500090000000012000000	005500090000000021500000



### Steps for Implementation:

The recommendations below were developed, in part, by utilizing the Chester County Planning Commission's comprehensive guidance for the development and implementation of Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinances. These guidelines can be found here (<https://www.chescoplanning.org/MuniCorner/eTools/16-tnd.cfm>)

This resource is extremely useful as it will enable the Township to enact a TND quickly, without "reinventing the wheel".

1. Engage the community early to determine the level of support for the TND. The Township should work to reach a generalized consensus on what the community would like to see implemented within the TND. This will likely involve significant outreach and education on the subject on TNDs to foster support.
2. The use of a TND and its principles should be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The Township will want to ensure that input from step one, which should include general design elements, incorporated into the comprehensive plan and presented in a public forum.
  - a. The TND will need to accommodate various mixed land uses and allow for town-like amenities, such as on-street parking. It will also need to incorporate various types of street widths to create desired traffic flow and control. In exchange for sidewalks, the TND within Penn Township should include mixed-use pathways that connect the TND internally, as well as with adjacent existing commercial areas and mature neighborhoods.
  - b. The Township will also need to develop a manual of design guidelines that provide visual references for design elements that are consistent with the TND concept. The Chester County Planning Commission in PA offers one of the most comprehensive guides for the implementation of a TND.

We would recommend reviewing the ordinance examples provided by the Chester County Planning Commission, which include:

- i. The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association Model Ordinance
- ii. Eagleview: Uwchlan Township
- iii. Weatherstone: West Vincent Township
- iv. West Bradford Township's Village of Marshallton: Manual of Design Guidelines

These examples, and more can be found at this link - <https://www.chescoplanning.org/MuniCorner/eTools/16-tnd.cfm>

They offer solid draft documents that Penn Township could easily modify to fit their community character.

3. Once support is achieved and consistency with the comprehensive plan is established, the Township should identify a model ordinance or similar TND utilized in another Pennsylvania Township to use as a starting point. They should work to evaluate the model and identify policies that may be necessary meet community expectations and remove those that are not in alignment with expected outcomes. The definition of open space, mixed-use, and village-type development should be clearly defined, as well as the percentage requirements for a given development type.



Often third-party developers have very well-developed models that Township solicitors can re-craft to meet the needs of specific Townships.

4. The location of the TND, specifically its geographic extents need to be confirmed.
5. The way a TND must be established is outlined within the PA MPC, specifically within ARTICLE VII-A, “Traditional Neighborhood Development.” The Township will need to review its existing ordinances in collaboration with their solicitor to determine compatibility. In some cases, the TND and its various components may introduce conflicts with underlying zoning that need to be addressed.
6. The Township will need to determine the method in which the TND will be allowed (by-right, special exception, or conditional use. While we recommend the use of an overlay, a TND can also be established as base zoning if desired.
7. The Township should, once the TND is drafted and satisfactory, engage their solicitor to guide them through the zoning amendment process in accordance with the PA MPC.

**Recommendation 2 – Regional Developers Forum:** All recommendations listed above should consider the willingness of developers to engage the Township’s new zoning positions.

While the seven recommendations provided should, in theory, improve the Township’s ability to capture economic development in a manner that balances the need for new residential units, it relies upon the assumption that regional developers are interested in and see demand for this type of development.

It is our recommendation that the Township heavily publicize its intents and actions to increase visibility among regional developers. As part of this, Dawood would recommend that the Township host a regional developers forum. This could include key stakeholders that play a role in development, regulatory approvals for development, or those agencies that have pending development actions within the region. It should also include agencies or authorities that would be impacted by new development and/or could play a role in advertising the Township’s efforts.

**Regional Stakeholders:**

- Regional Health Systems (UPMC)
- Universities, Colleges, and Trade Schools
- School District
- Infrastructure Authorities
- PennDOT
- Pennsylvania Turnpike

**Local Stakeholders:**

- Business Owners
- Local developers and/or developers with pending or active plans

**Influencers:**

- Southwestern Planning Commission
- Westmoreland County Economic Development
- Regional Tourism and Travel
- Chamber of Commerce
- Regional Housing Authority

The proposed draft agenda, which would need to be further fleshed out depending on RSVP results and the review/desire to implement the recommendations above could include:

- **Introduction:**
  - Key staff and roles
  - Key consultants and roles
  - Listing of attendees present
- **Overview of the purpose for the forum:**
  - Brief review of study results
  - Overview of the proposed recommendations
    - Recommendation definitions
    - Implementation process
    - Desired/expected results
- **Facilitated discussion in large group format or breakout groups depending on attendee numbers. Discussions will include mapping out:**
  - Observed economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Economic development projects, needs and opportunities
  - Review of economic clusters/industries to focus on based on data evaluations
  - Workforce needs
  - Policy and procedural needs to improve the development process, timelines, and positive impacts
- **Report out:**
  - Breakout group findings
  - Potential actions
- **Next steps:**
  - Timeline for review
  - Timeline for implementation
  - Where to find additional information

In preparation for the forum the following tasks should be completed.

- Prepare and issue the invitations to stakeholders
- Follow-up RSVP
- Confirm meeting location and room set-up
- Finalize agenda and facilitation process
- Prepare meeting materials

**Post-forum follow ups actions should include:**

- A summary of forum results
  - Attendee summary
  - Reaction/feedback on summary of study data and recommendations
  - Preferred action items and next steps
- Development of content for consideration by Township decision makers
  - Modifications to Recommendations
  - Additional recommendations to be evaluated

Dawood would recommend that the Township consider hosting the developer forums in May of 2023 with finalization of recommendations to be completed by mid-June of 2023.

**Recommendation 3 – Updates to the Comprehensive Plan:** As with most policy at the Township level, the actions of the Township should be generally consistent with the comprehensive plan. Where there is disagreement between a recommendation, one of two actions should be taken. Either the recommendation should be updated/modified, or the comprehensive plan should be amended.

This has two critical impacts. First, it insulates the Township from legal challenges. Second, it signals to all stakeholders the intent of the Township. Consistency allows developers to clearly understand the desires and expectations of the Township, engage in prospecting, and foster dialog with the Township. This is true of both residential, commercial, and industrial development.

**Recommendation 4 –Recurring Meetings with The Turnpike:** The Township should work to establish recurring status and coordination meetings with the Turnpike. It is incumbent upon the Township to be professionally persistent when it comes to engaging the Turnpike on the interchange process. In this way, they will be able to gather more actionable intelligence.

**Pre-Design Coordination:** The Township should establish and facilitate meetings on a 60-day recurring basis with a PA Turnpike representative to:

- Establish Township position and current actions in preparation for the potential interchange.
- Exchange data on traffic projections to support recommendations 2 -3.
- Discuss existing conditions and concerns.
- Monitor timelines, status, and maintain open lines of communication.

**Preliminary Design Coordination:** Once the Turnpike indicates that they have initiated the design processes, the Township should facilitate a meeting with enhanced focus on establishing preliminary impacts on infrastructure, scope, and scale. This includes:

- Get a first blush at the limits of disturbance for the project.
- Establish design timeline and major muscle movements.
- Evaluation on data needed from and/or by the Township to make data driven decisions about when to implement the Interchange Overlay District (IOD).
- Establish a new recurring meeting with a timeline that reflects the major muscle movements.

**Final Design Coordination:** Typically, the Turnpike will establish this meeting and, if desired, conduct a field view with the Township to discuss final design, impacts, and timelines. At this point, it will be too late

for the Township to have meaningful impact on the design process. These are typically informational sessions. The Township should seek to:

- Determine construction bid release timelines.
- Determine contract dates.
- Determine anticipated completion date.
- Determine temporary easement locations and equipment staging locations.
- Determine impacts, if any, on economic development.
- Establish a reoccurring construction period meeting at every 90 days.

Status meetings, regardless of phase, should last no more than 30 minutes, and are critical in establishing a relationship. It is important that the meeting process be initiated at the **Pre-Design Coordination** phase, as this is the period that the Township will have the most influence.

**Recommendation 5 - Route 130 Corridor Study:** In tandem with **Recommendation 2** it would be advantageous for the Township to conduct a corridor study of Route 130 to include:

- Examination of current conditions for passenger and commercial traffic volumes, bike/pedestrian utilization, intersection performance, delays, peak volumes, turning movements, corridor land used and associated economic performance, and corridor zoning.
- Evaluation of potential future conditions and Turnpike interchange scenarios. Work with the Turnpike and the SPC to determine likely scenarios for traffic volume along the corridor once an interchange is implemented.
- Evaluation of policy changes. The Township should evaluate the findings of the current condition and potential future scenarios to determine needed policy changes along the corridor, especially to determine if a need for the expansion of the Neighborhood Commercial Zone is warranted along the corridor to foster redevelopment of corridor parcels.
- Evaluation of the intersection improvement needs. While we understand that an evaluation of intersections has been completed, it is likely that these evaluations were not completed in tandem with the Turnpike traffic volume projections. Intersections should be reevaluated with new volumes and land uses in consideration.

**Steps to Implementation:** Corridor studies are an effective tool to help evaluate an existing corridor, understand potential impacts of new development, and position a Township's decision-making processes in a proactive manner.

Unfortunately, the steps to implement this project depend heavily on the willingness of regional and state entities to participate. The first step is to engage the Southwestern Planning Commission, PennDOT, and the PA Turnpike to gauge:

1. Willingness to share data.
2. Timelines of each entity for major projects.
3. Gauge agency local understanding of Penn Township, present data, and discuss goals, mission, desired outcomes.
4. Evaluation potential funding opportunities.

5. Gather feedback on next steps, needed information, and expectations of agencies to move a corridor study forward.

Once this meeting is concluded, the Township will have a better understanding of the resources available to them and will be able to determine the next steps needed. Regardless, the corridor study should:

1. Seek to better understand mobility within the corridor, access needs, and primary users.
2. Determine current transportation demand within the region.
3. Seek to define corridor capacity and potential future demand induced by new land development patterns and the PA Turnpike interchange.
4. Determine the need improve or manage intersections.
5. Determine the need for corridor land use modifications/zoning changes.
6. Identify deficiencies within the system and work to improve system efficiency.
7. Determine intensity and feasibility of redevelopment along the corridor, especially for economic development purposes stemming from PA Turnpike interchange implementation.
8. Develop a project implementation and public funding guide.

**Recommendation 6 – Interchange Overlay District (IOD):** Based on our evaluations of the data, the assets within the Township, and the potential economic impacts of access to the Turnpike, it is our recommendation that the Township incorporate an Interchange Overlay District into their Zoning Ordinances, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), and the Comprehensive Plan. The overlay district can be used to preclude new types of residential development while opening up the areas of the Township for redevelopment which should be consistent with the Township vision and promoting economic development that would occur at a major interchange.

Due to recent PA Turnpike comments on the status of the project and a lack of design, the district should be completed as an overlay to provide flexibility within the region both in terms of scope and scale, as well as position.

The Interchange Overlay District should:

- Encourage economic development near and around the interchange at densities and intensity that blends into the current community character.
- The interchange should limit new residential development within the overlay district and promote redevelopment of existing lots and/or units.
- The overlay district should be developed in a manner that provides a tax base that will have minimum impact on municipal services.
- The overlay district should work to anticipate traffic demand induced by the proposed interchange and reduce traffic conflicts and congestion by minimizing transient travel outside the interchange areas and provide convenient locations for services needed by the traveling public.
- The overlay district should promote varying workforce skill sets, focusing not only on service industry but promoting potential white collar business development opportunities.
- The overlay district should incorporate impact fees as a mechanism to fund needed infrastructure improvements within the district that have a logical nexus and proportionality to the developments proposed.
- Allow for commercial use, non-industrial, and service industry such as conference centers, hotels, and other uses commonly associated with highway interchanges but in a manner that

incorporates design standards that promote the character of the community vs. developments commonly associated with interchanges, i.e., Breezewood.

#### **Steps for Implementation:**

1. Engage the community early to determine the level of support for the IOD. The Township should work to reach a generalized consensus on what the community would like to see implemented within the IOD, as well as those uses that they are opposed to. This will likely involve significant outreach and education on the subject on IOD and could be paired with discussion of the TND. Fostering support for the IOD should also include discussion of findings within Recommendation 2.
2. The use of an IOD and its principles should be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The Township will want to ensure that input from step one, which should include general design elements, is incorporated into the comprehensive plan and presented in a public forum.
3. Once support is achieved and consistency with the comprehensive plan is established, the Township should identify a model ordinance or similar IOD utilized in another Pennsylvania Township to use as a starting point. They should work to evaluate the model and identify policies that may be necessary meet community expectations and remove those that are not in alignment with expected outcomes. The Township will want to include in their ordinance:
  - a. Permitted uses that are clearly and narrowly defined to ensure development is consistent with the desires of the community. We would recommend the exclusion of warehousing, especially high cube warehousing. Mixed uses should be accommodated, and specifically addressed.
  - b. Dimensional standards that include:
    - i. Maximum impervious coverage
    - ii. Maximum building coverage
    - iii. Maximum floor area ratio
    - iv. Setbacks for buildings
    - v. Entrance and egress criteria
    - vi. Building height restrictions
  - c. Design Standards including architectural, lighting, landscaping, utility placement, transit-oriented designs, etc.
  - d. Impact fees and assessments.
4. The location of the IOD would be TBD. While the concept of the IOD and its language can be drafted and incorporated into the comprehensive plan, official adoption and geographic extents should wait until the PA Turnpike indicated that they have a Limit of Disturbance for the project.
5. The IOD and its various components may introduce conflicts with underlying zoning that need to be evaluated and addressed. The Township will also need to make a final determination of the method in which the IOD will be allowed (by-right, special exception, or conditional use). While we recommend the use of an overlay, an IOD can also be established as base zoning if desired.

6. Once these elements are in place, and when the PA Turnpike indicates preliminary design, the Township should engage their solicitor to guide them through the zoning amendment process in accordance with the PA MPC within Recommendation 4.

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**Recommendation 7 - Rezoning of Parcels to Industrial Use:** The Township should work to rezone the identified parcels to the Industrial Land Use Zone. This rezoning will:

- Protect those lands most concurrent with and likely for organic growth adjacent to the existing industrial park.
- Encourage developer's interest in additional economic development within the Township by providing a clear expectation for industrial development.
- Capitalize on proximity to an existing intersection and infrastructure.
- Offer a location for economic development of a higher intensity use that allows for the remainder of the Township to maintain its character, property values, and provide increased tax base while not creating demand for increased tax rates.

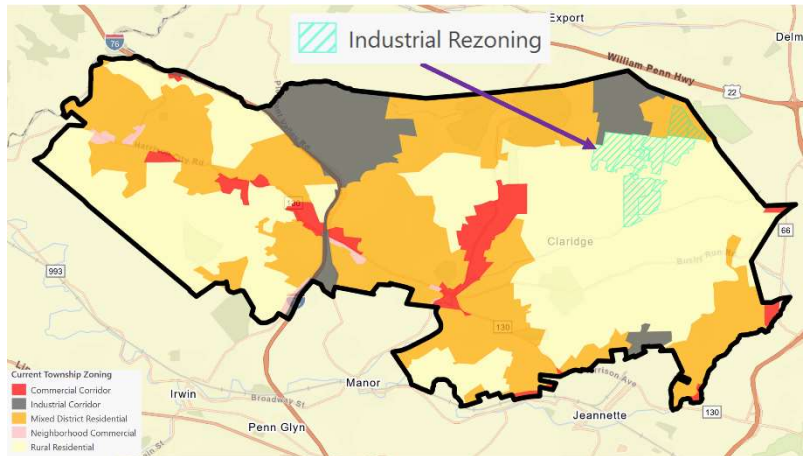


Figure 7: Map of Industrial Rezoning Parcels with Underlying Current Zoning

Recommended Industrial Rezoning Parcel Identification Number	
00550005000000001700000	00550010000000001400000
00550010000000002550000	00550010000000000650000
00550010000000002620000	00550010000000001330000
00550010000000002630000	00550010000000000710000
00550010000000001450000	00550010000000001460000
00550010000000001500000	00550005000000001900000
00550010000000002450000	00550010000000002150000
00550010000000003500000	00550010000000003600000
005500100000000027100000	

**Modifications to industrial zoning:** Given the proximity of this rezoning to existing residential uses, it would be wise to increase buffers in any scenarios where proposed industrial development abuts an existing residential unit. Buffer distances have not been considered as part of this evaluation.

#### Steps for Implementation:

1. Engage impacted property owners early and often. This will create an open dialog and aid decision makers in the understanding of parcels that may present increased resistance. The Township should approach this engagement as an active negotiation. Discussion of setbacks, buffers, landscaping, and impact mitigation should be on the table as tools to facilitate buy-in.
2. The Township should make all decisions in a manner that is generally consistent with the comprehensive plan. Therefore, we recommend some minor text edits to be made in the current comprehensive plan to incorporate the above-mentioned recommendations, so the Township's actions are consistent with the comprehensive plan.
  - a. All elements within the comprehensive plan aim at making it easier for developers to understand the goals and development elements that the township is looking for in future growth phases, which is why it is very important to have a comprehensive plan which reflects on the future growth and vision of the Township.



3. Once it is confirmed that the Township is ready to engage in the rezoning of parcels for industrial use, they should engage their solicitor to guide them through the rezoning process. Groundwork laid in step 1 above will be invaluable in this process as any points of contention should have already been mitigated.

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*All recommendations made herein should be reviewed with the Township solicitor and modified, as needed, to be consistent with the Pennsylvania Municipal Code. All recommendations assume that the Township and its solicitor are familiar with the processes for amendment and/or adoption of zoning code, timelines, and required public outreach.*

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### Closing Statement:

In closing, this memo provides a summary of actions taken, data evaluated, stakeholders engaged, and a roadmap to implement seven (7) recommendations. Our evaluations are based on best available data but should be vetted against both regional developers, as well as the Township solicitor for their recommendations or inputs.

Our review did not include specific recommendations on impact fees for traffic/infrastructural improvements. These should be included, especially given the condition/placement of intersections on Harrison City Export Road. On this topic we will defer to the evaluations of the solicitor and support them in their implementation.

Many of the Township's other interests, such as high-quality recreational areas, are subject to TND standards built within the ordinance language.

Our recommendations outline general implementation steps and needs. We have not associated a cost estimate for these tasks because we believe they should be completed in close collaboration with the Township's solicitor, and we are not privy to their rates.

Upon receipt and approval of this memo, Dawood would recommend a short presentation of our recommendations and their purpose within an executive session followed by a public meeting.

Upon request, Dawood will work with the Township's solicitor to develop estimates for recommendation implementation.