



# PENN TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

September 10, 2024



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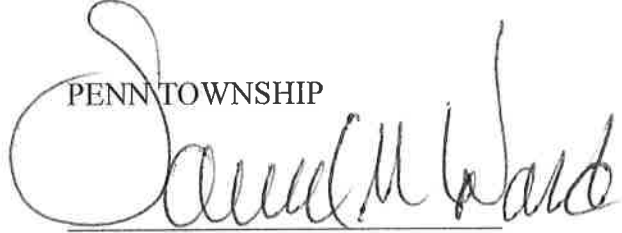
PENN TOWNSHIP, BUTLER COUNTY  
RESOLUTION NO. 2024-573

**A RESOLUTION OF PENN TOWNSHIP GRANTING THE FINAL APPROVAL AND  
ADOPTION OF THE TOWNSHIP'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Supervisors of Penn Township, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, hereby approve and adopt the final Comprehensive Plan for Penn Township.

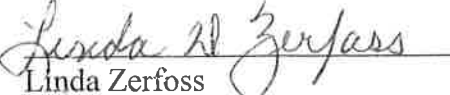
**RESOLVED** this 10<sup>th</sup> day of SEPTEMBER 2024.

By:

PENNTOWNSHIP  


Samuel M. Ward  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST: (SEAL)

  
Linda Zerfoss  
Township Manager

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan was put together with the assistance of the project Steering Committee, Township staff, and the Township’s elected and appointed officials. This plan reflects a significant contribution of time, expertise, advice, and feedback from the following individuals along with input and feedback from a variety of stakeholders that live, work, or otherwise have a vested interest in the community. This plan would not have been possible without their valuable participation.

## Township Board of Supervisors

Samuel M. Ward, Chairman  
Douglas A. Roth, Vice Chairman  
Wilbert J. Mowry, Jr., Supervisor

## Steering Committee Members

Wilbert J. Mowry, Supervisor  
Brandon Rau  
Charles McCall  
Cheryl Hughes  
Clinton Bonetti  
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Douglas A. Roth, Supervisor  
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## Township Staff

Linda Zerfoss, Township Manager  
Clinton A. Bonetti, Land Use Administrator  
Nicole Tempalski, Administrative Assistant



This plan was prepared with assistance from HRG.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The 2024 Comprehensive Plan for Penn Township establishes a glimpse of where the Township is currently and also creates a framework for decision-making over the next decade. Through input from the Steering Committee, Township staff, and the public, key theme areas and corresponding goals and objectives were established. These key theme areas, goals, and objectives are the heart of the Plan. The theme areas will help to guide the future of parks and recreation; trails and connectivity; transportation; development and preservation; infrastructure; and the Township’s commercial corridor, Route 8. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision for Penn Township to continue to be a desirable place for people to live, raise a family, own and operate businesses, work, play, and explore.

During the 13-month planning process, public input was solicited through a number of methods. These methods included an online survey, one neighborhood pop up event at Succop Nature Park, key stakeholder focus group meetings, and one public input meeting. The Township website was also updated throughout the planning process and the Butler Eagle featured several articles on the Plan as it was being developed.

Based on the public input received, Steering Committee feedback, and input from the Township staff members and Board of Supervisors, the following theme areas were established for Penn Township:

## 1. Balancing Preservation and Growth

The Balancing Preservation and Growth theme area discusses the importance of preserving the Township’s natural and agricultural character, explores existing land use and future land use, presents various tools for

promoting preservation, and discusses enabling some moderate development and redevelopment to occur, where appropriate, to continue to move the Township forward into the next decade.

## 2. Infrastructure Needs and Improvements

The Infrastructure Needs and Improvements theme area focuses on the existing infrastructure present in Penn Township, from stormwater management to water and sewer services to traffic and roadway maintenance and management. This theme area discusses improving and enhancing water and sanitary sewer services in the Township and explores various intersections and roadways in need of traffic related improvements.

## 3. Parks and Recreation for Everyone

The Parks and Recreation for Everyone theme area provides an overview of the Township’s existing parks and recreation facilities and provides a summary of the improvements slated for Harcrest Park as part of the recently updated Harcrest Park Master Plan. This chapter also explores a proposed future trail network that connects many of the Township’s parks and recreation facilities and potential enhancements to the additional land available at the municipal building property on Airport Road.

## 4. Promoting Economic Development

The Promoting Economic Development theme area discusses existing land use and economic development in the Township, with a focus placed on both the Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport and expanding the existing housing stock in the Township. This chapter explores ways that the Township can continue to grow



Sidewalk Chalk Art at Renfrew Park

its tax base, particularly in and around the airport with some smaller-scale development and the creation of an Airport Overlay Zoning District. This chapter also discusses the importance of providing various housing types, not just single-family detached residential, for all different ages and stages of life.

## 5. The Route 8 Commercial Corridor

The Route 8 Commercial Corridor theme area discusses opportunities for economic development and infill redevelopment along the State Route 8 corridor that runs North to South in the Township, with a focus on the importance of providing additional housing types, placemaking, and installing gateway signage. This chapter explores the possibility of creating an Overlay Zoning District in a targeted area in and around the Corridor to promote housing growth and additional housing types.

Each theme area corresponds to its own Chapter within the Plan and has its own set of goals, objectives, and strategies. Additionally, the Implementation Chapter

of the Plan focuses on providing potential partners, timeframes for completion, and funding sources for the various goals. The Implementation Matrix is organized by theme area.

Winston Churchill once said, "He who fails to plan is planning to fail." The 2024 Comprehensive Plan for Penn Township plans for the bright and successful future of the Township. The Plan builds upon the present, working to identify solutions and strategies to address the most pressing and important needs and issues within the community, and creates a guide for future decision making and policies in Penn Township.

Disclaimer: Any conceptual renderings, sketches, or drawings that depict proposed improvements are meant to be conceptual, high-level designs. These are not drawn or sketched to scale and are not engineered. These conceptual ideas are meant to provide a picture of what some proposed improvements could look like and are subject to change upon implementation. No official planning or funding has been allocated to date to any of the sketches included in this comprehensive plan.

# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

This 2024 Comprehensive Plan for Penn Township was developed over the course of a 13-month period to provide an understanding of how the Township has changed since their previous multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan, the Butler Area Multi Municipal (BAMM) Plan was completed in 2008, jointly with the City of Butler, Butler Township, Summit Township, and East Butler Borough.

The new Comprehensive Plan provides a snapshot of where the Township currently is and develops a roadmap for future policy and decision-making in the years to come for several important topics including economic development, preservation of farmlands and greenspace, parks and recreation, environmental and natural resources, trails and connectivity, infrastructure, and various community facilities and services.

What additional improvements are needed for the Township’s parks and community amenities? What do residents want the future of Penn Township to look like? Where should development be focused and what areas should be slated for conservation, preservation, and agriculture? Where can additional connections be made? These are all questions that the Comprehensive Plan intends to address.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan outlines goals and strategies with an emphasis on the key themes that were identified during the planning process. The key theme areas were developed based on feedback received from the online community survey and through discussions with key stakeholders, the project Steering Committee members, and Township staff and officials. These key theme areas are as follows:



2019 Penn Township Community Day at Harcrest Park, image courtesy of Penn Township

1. **Balancing Preservation and Growth**
2. **Infrastructure Needs and Improvements**
3. **Parks and Recreation for Everyone**
4. **Promoting Economic Development**
5. **The Route 8 Commercial Corridor**

The chapters that follow in this Plan provide background and context for each of the five key theme areas that emerged from the public and stakeholder engagement process.

## Planning in Pennsylvania

A comprehensive plan is a community’s opportunity to aspire to be a better version of itself for its residents and stakeholders. Municipalities in Pennsylvania are required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) to adopt a comprehensive plan and to review and update their plan every 10 years. A comprehensive plan provides a vision for what a community wants to look like in the future and the actionable steps it must take to make its vision a reality.



This Comprehensive Plan serves as a policy guide for Penn Township, where the policy goals and recommendations that are included in the Plan are to be implemented over a certain period of time, through a variety of action items, and by teaming up with various partner organizations and stakeholders. Penn Township chose to create this Plan in the Implementable Comprehensive Plan model, which focuses on building consensus on key issues through public input and engagement and to identify realistic and achievable goals, projects, and initiatives to address the key issues identified in the Plan. The key issues and themes were confirmed through the public engagement and outreach process and through regular meetings with the Steering Committee.

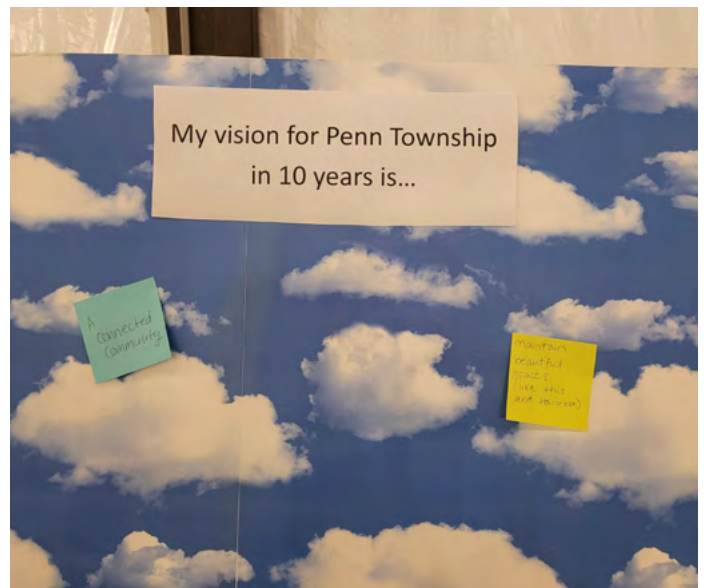
As a policy guide and an overall vision for the Township as they march into the next decade, the 2024 Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance to municipal staff and elected and appointed officials in the decision-making process. The plan serves as a tool and guide for what matters most to the residents and stakeholders of the Township, and what they would like the future of their community to look like, while providing steps to help preserve and enhance greenspace and open space, better connect neighborhoods to amenities, improve and enhance commercial corridors and roadways, provide ample parks and recreation opportunities, manage the impacts of development on the area’s natural and environmental resources, create a stronger sense of place and identity, and improve the overall quality of life for residents.

## The Process

The planning process for this Comprehensive Plan update started in July of 2023, when Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. (HRG), the planning consultant, held a kick-off meeting to discuss the project and its goals with the Board of Supervisors, Township Staff, and the



Picnic at the Park community engagement event at Succop Nature Preserve

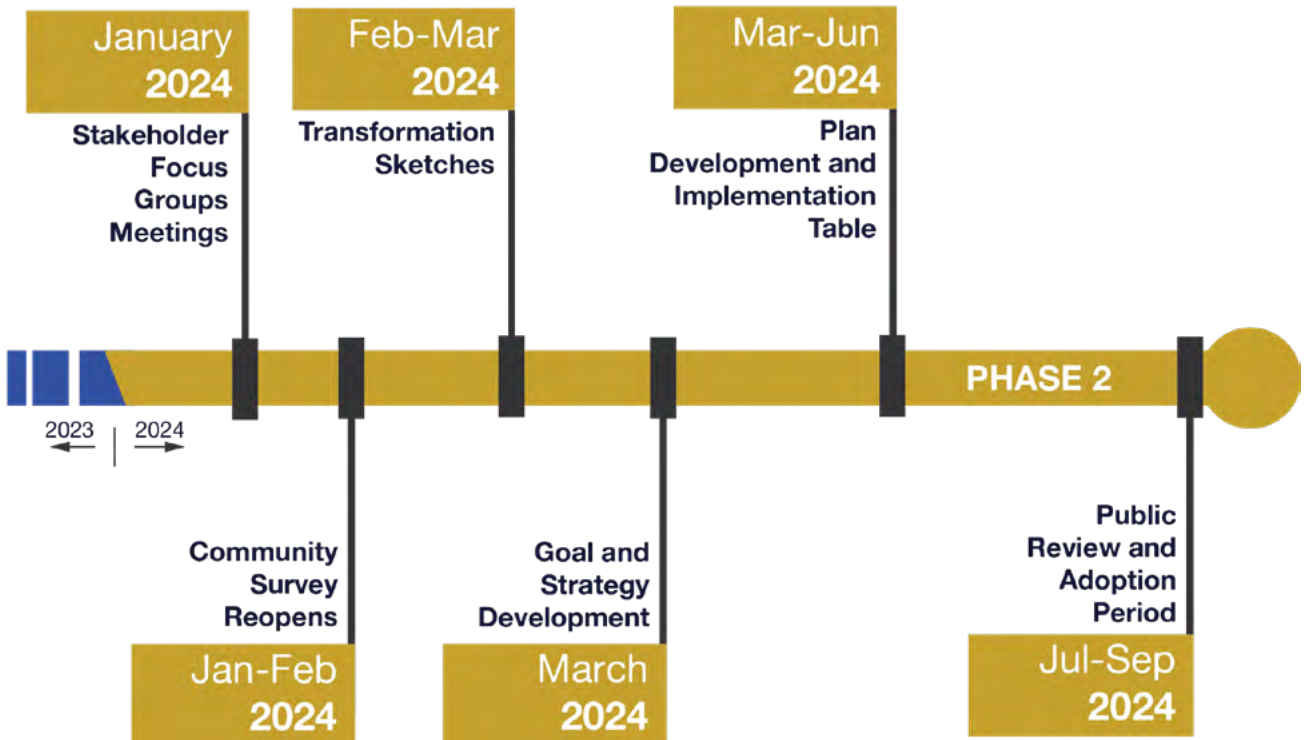
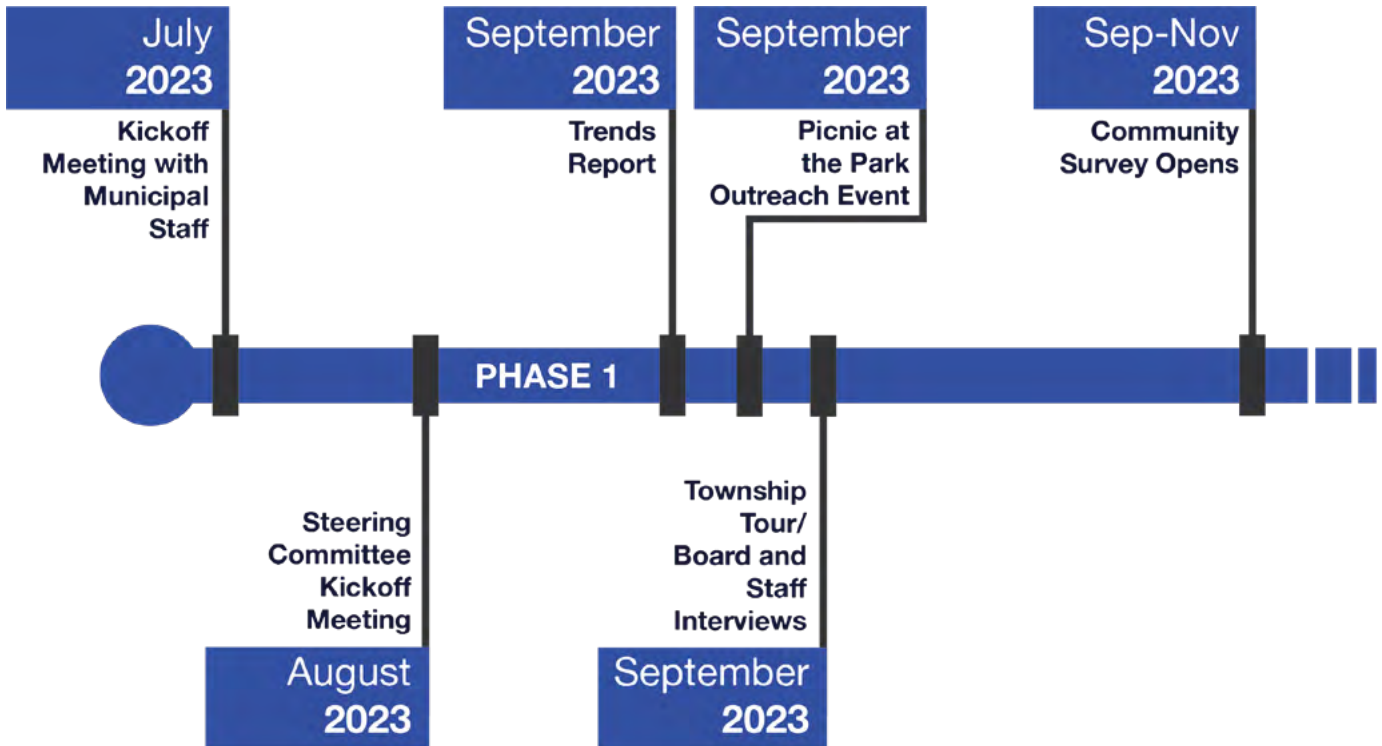


Some of the early results from the Picnic at the Park event

appointed project Steering Committee. From there, the Township and HRG worked through the proposed schedule and tasks that took approximately 12 months to ultimately develop the Plan and its key themes, goals, priorities, and objectives. The schedule on the following page provides an overview of the planning process.



# THE PLANNING PROCESS



## Penn Township residents wish to preserve township's rural character

William Pitts Eagle Staff Writer

December 11, 2023 Last Updated: December 10, 2023 09:09 PM Government



Comprehensive Plan updates from the Butler Eagle

As part of the planning process, the Township relied heavily on input from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was made up of several stakeholders within the community and Committee members were appointed by the Township Board of Supervisors. Regular meetings were held with the Steering Committee throughout the planning process and specific topics and issues were discussed at each meeting.

Members of the Steering Committee played an integral part in the development of the Plan and helped to create initial recommendations and provided feedback and input along the way. In addition to the Steering Committee, HRG also conducted Key Stakeholder Focus Group meetings with Township officials and staff as well as identified stakeholders in the area, participated in a driving tour of the community, hosted an online community survey, and attended community engagement events, which are discussed in more detail throughout this Plan and results can be found in Appendix A.

## Public Input and Engagement

The first phase of the implementable comprehensive planning process focused on visioning, community outreach, and public engagement to determine the most important needs and issues to be addressed in the Plan. As part of phase one, extensive outreach was conducted with the public and key stakeholders.

Residents and stakeholders were engaged in the process in many ways, including attendance at community pop up events, an online survey, and regular updates via the Township website and email distribution list. The following list provides a summary of the public outreach efforts that were included in the planning process. Please note additional details on the results of the various public input and engagement methods is provided in the plan's appendices, specifically in Appendix A.

### **Neighborhood Pop Up Event**

Plan consultants from HRG participated in a neighborhood pop up event at the Picnic at the Park event held at Succop Nature Park on September 14, 2023, to gather input on the Plan's direction and to hear from residents and stakeholders on what they thought were the most pressing needs and issues for the Plan to address. General conversations with the public took place at the event and feedback was gathered through the following activities:

1. The Dream Box, where residents were asked to write their visions for Penn Township on an index card and place them in the box. It was emphasized that their responses could cover anything from Parks & Recreation, to Utilities, Housing, Businesses, and more.
2. Blue Sky Boards, where residents were challenged to consider what their vision for the Township in 10 years was and write those visions on a post-it note and place it on the board.

## **Online Community Survey**

An online community survey was made available via Survey Monkey for residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to complete. The survey was available from September 4, 2023 through November 20, 2023. A total of 183 responses were received. The results of the online survey helped to identify and confirm some of the key issues and needs in the Township. For example, the results of the survey confirmed preservation of rural land and the control of future growth were important issues moving forward.

In January of 2024, the Steering Committee, Township Staff, and the planning consultants agreed to reopen the survey to collect more public input. The decision was made as a result of the stakeholder roundtable meetings conducted earlier that month, where groups determined that more public feedback would strengthen the argument for the theme areas determined for the Plan. The survey was reopened from January 26 to February 24, 2024 and received an additional 115 responses during the second input period. The results from the first and second input periods remained relatively similar.

Full results of the community survey can be found in Appendix A.

## **Key Stakeholder Focus Groups**

On January 11, 2024, several key stakeholders were invited to participate in focus group discussions to gauge their opinions, thoughts, and comments on key issues, including strengths, opportunities, challenges, and general topics to address in the community. The list of stakeholders to be interviewed was determined by Township staff and elected officials and was representative of the Township as a whole, including business owners, property owners, residents, farmers, and volunteers that serve on area boards, commissions,



Key Stakeholder focus group meeting

or other local organizations, including several Butler County agencies and departments.

Findings from this event included sentiments about expansion of water and sewer services, housing availability, and a push to republish the Community Survey, as mentioned in the Online Community Survey section of this Chapter.

## **Public Input Meetings**

Public input was solicited at the Township's annual Community Day held on Saturday, August 17, 2024 at Harcrest Park. The plan consultants from HRG had a table and tent at the event and discussed the plan's goals, ideas for increased connectivity and other improvements, planned improvements to Harcrest Park that are part of the Master Plan, and collected comments and feedback on the draft plan. Public feedback received was overall very positive and residents showed support for the ongoing improvements at the Park and for increased connectivity and trails in the Township.





The 2019 Penn Township Community Day, image courtesy of the Butler Eagle

### ***Steering Committee Meetings***

While Steering Committee meetings were held primarily to discuss thoughts and give feedback from an appointed group of Township residents and staff, all Steering Committee meetings were publicly advertised, and any Township resident could attend and participate in the process.

Over the course of the planning process, the Steering Committee met five times to review HRG deliverables, discuss the various plan elements and components, and provide feedback and perspectives that would help guide the direction of the Plan.

The meeting minutes from each meeting were also published on the Township’s website for public review and comment.

### ***Township Website Updates***

The Township’s website has been updated regularly with new information and updates concerning the

Comprehensive Plan and the various results and activities conducted throughout the planning process. In addition, Township staff also utilized email distribution lists to provide updates and announcements.

### ***Public Display, Review, and Adoption Process***

The draft of the Penn Township Comprehensive Plan officially went on public display for the required PA MPC 45-day review period on July 26, 2024. The Township Planning Commission will review the draft plan at its upcoming meeting to be held on August 27, 2024. The Board of Supervisors will hold the official required public hearing on September 10, 2024.

The Butler County Department of Economic Development and Planning as well as all neighboring municipalities and the Knoch School District received a copy of the Plan for their review and comment.

In addition, a comment form was available online for residents and stakeholders to provide general comments and feedback on the plan.



# BALANCING PRESERVATION AND GROWTH

## Overview

The character of an area can, in no small part, be attributed to how the land is used, developed, or conserved. These uses and developments, or lack thereof, are the product of a municipality's history, as well as local regulations, programs and efforts that control or direct how land is used. Therefore, a community's vision for the future must consider the existing character and limitations of the land, as well as how future policies and initiatives may work to bring about the desired mix of development and preservation.

Historically, Penn Township has been a rural, agricultural community. Throughout this comprehensive planning process, participants generally voiced a desire to prioritize the maintenance of the existing rural character. This includes the preservation of agricultural land, as well as open spaces containing valuable natural resources and recreational access. However, in the larger region, development pressure makes these goals more difficult. As growth has expanded from Cranberry Township to the southwest and the City of Butler to the north, neighboring municipalities have experienced increased development, especially more dense housing, and losses of agricultural land and open space. Some new development in Penn Township would help to meet residents' interest in additional retail and commercial opportunities, as well as creating new jobs and more housing choices. New development would be an important part of retaining and growing the population and maintaining the tax base for longer-term success of the Township. The key will be to direct and control growth in a way that will not threaten the existing rural character.



Agricultural land next to residential property

This chapter provides recommendations on Township wide land patterns, regulations, and initiatives that will help to establish a balance between the preservation of open space and agricultural land, while directing controlled development and growth.

## Natural and Agricultural Character

To balance development with the natural character of the Township, there must be an understanding of the natural and historically agricultural character of the area.

### **Water**

Within the Township there are three watersheds and many small streams, which can be seen in the Hydrography map on the following page. Watersheds play a critical role in natural water management. A watershed is an area of land that drains all of the streams and precipitation to a common outlet. In a watershed without development, most precipitation will infiltrate the ground or be used by vegetation. The majority of the water that soaks into the ground will successfully make its way into bodies of





Some of the varied topography in the Township

water and through the watershed, being naturally filtered and cleaned as it moves through the layers of soil and sediment. Conversely, in a watershed with significant development, increased impervious surfaces will prevent the water from infiltrating the ground, causing the water to run directly off and into nearby bodies of water, without treatment, creating significant issues for fresh water and the ecosystems they house. Balancing preservation and development will mitigate potential runoff and flooding issues caused by increased development and associated impervious surfaces.

The Township has many small wetlands, waterbodies, and streams scattered throughout the area. The most significant water body that runs through the Township is Thorn Creek. The land surrounding Thorn Creek and some of its tributaries is currently zoned as part of the S-Conservancy district. Additional land surrounding the Township's wetlands, waterbodies, and streams should be considered for future conservation due to the critical ecosystem services provided and the inherent contribution made to the Township's rural character.

### **Slope**

Slope plays a critical role in an area's suitability for development. Steep grade changes may render a parcel undevelopable due to instability and/or the

prohibitive expense associated with making a parcel safe for development. Land with steeper slopes will also have lower water infiltration rates and greater potential for runoff. The addition of impervious surfaces on these areas can create significant stormwater management issues. Slopes may be further compromised by the clearing of trees and other vegetation which help to stabilize the land. Following the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), areas with an unaltered slope of thirty-three (33) percent or greater are considered to have steep slopes and development in these areas must follow additional standards. Standard development standards usually allow unrestricted development on slopes of fifteen (15) percent or less. Based on a slope analysis of Penn Township, which can be seen in the Slopes map on the following page, slopes in the area are generally within the developable range.

### **Soils**

Soils in the region are predominately well or moderately-well drained which can be seen in the Soil Drainage Classifications map on page 19. Areas with poorly drained soils should be prioritized for future preservation as they are not compatible with development and developing on these soils may lead to flooding.

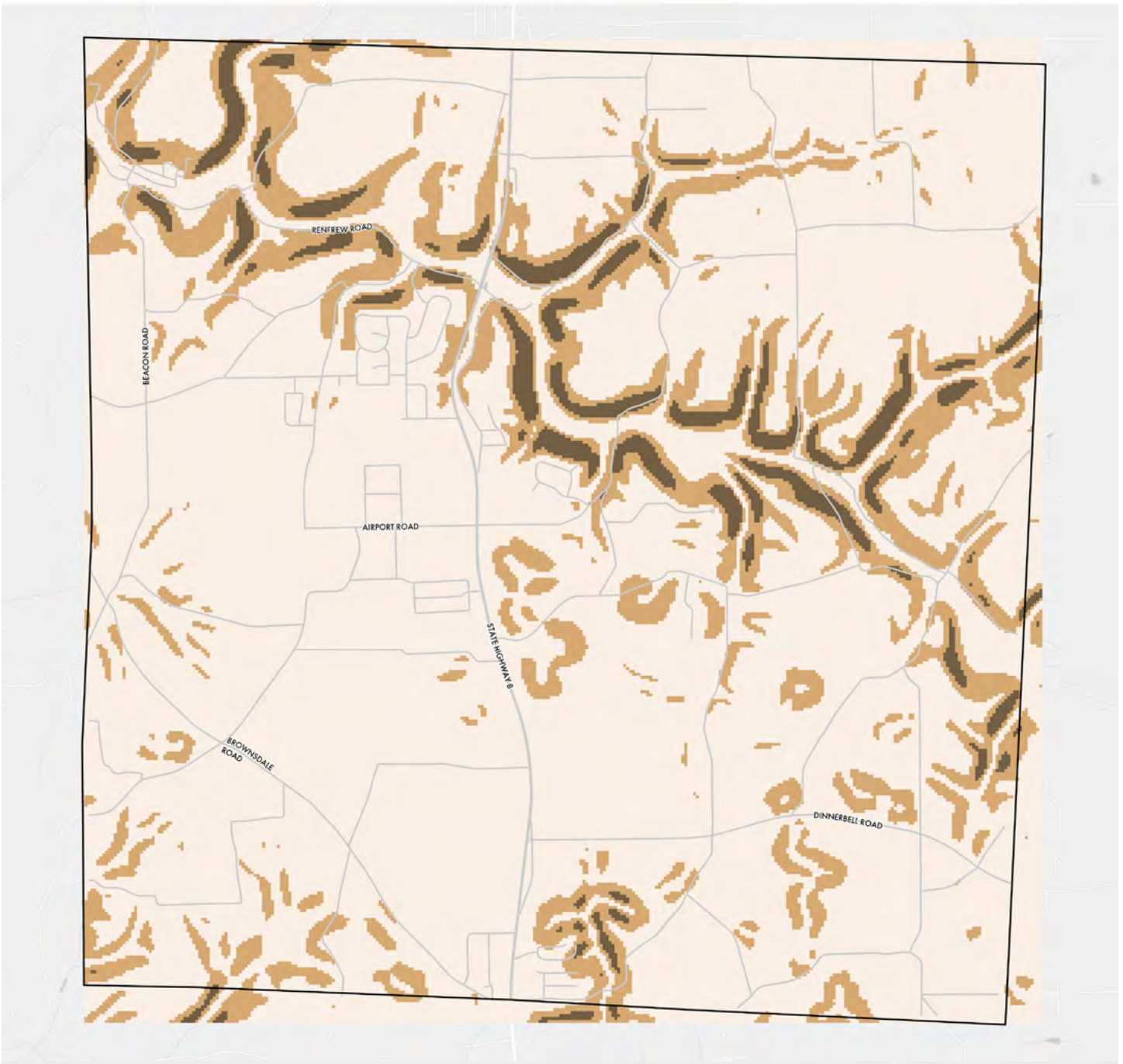
### **Agricultural Character**

Despite development pressure, Penn Township has maintained thousands of acres of active farmland. Some of this land, like Rath, Kennedy, or Wible Farms, has been farmed by the same families for generations. Of the Township's 15,500 total acres, 4,033 contain agricultural uses, like crops, pasture, orchards, and groves. This does not include acreage dedicated to agricultural support businesses or related businesses, like farm markets. These properties make up a critical part of the Township's rural character and are an important part of the vision for the future.



# PENN TOWNSHIP

## Slope



### Legend

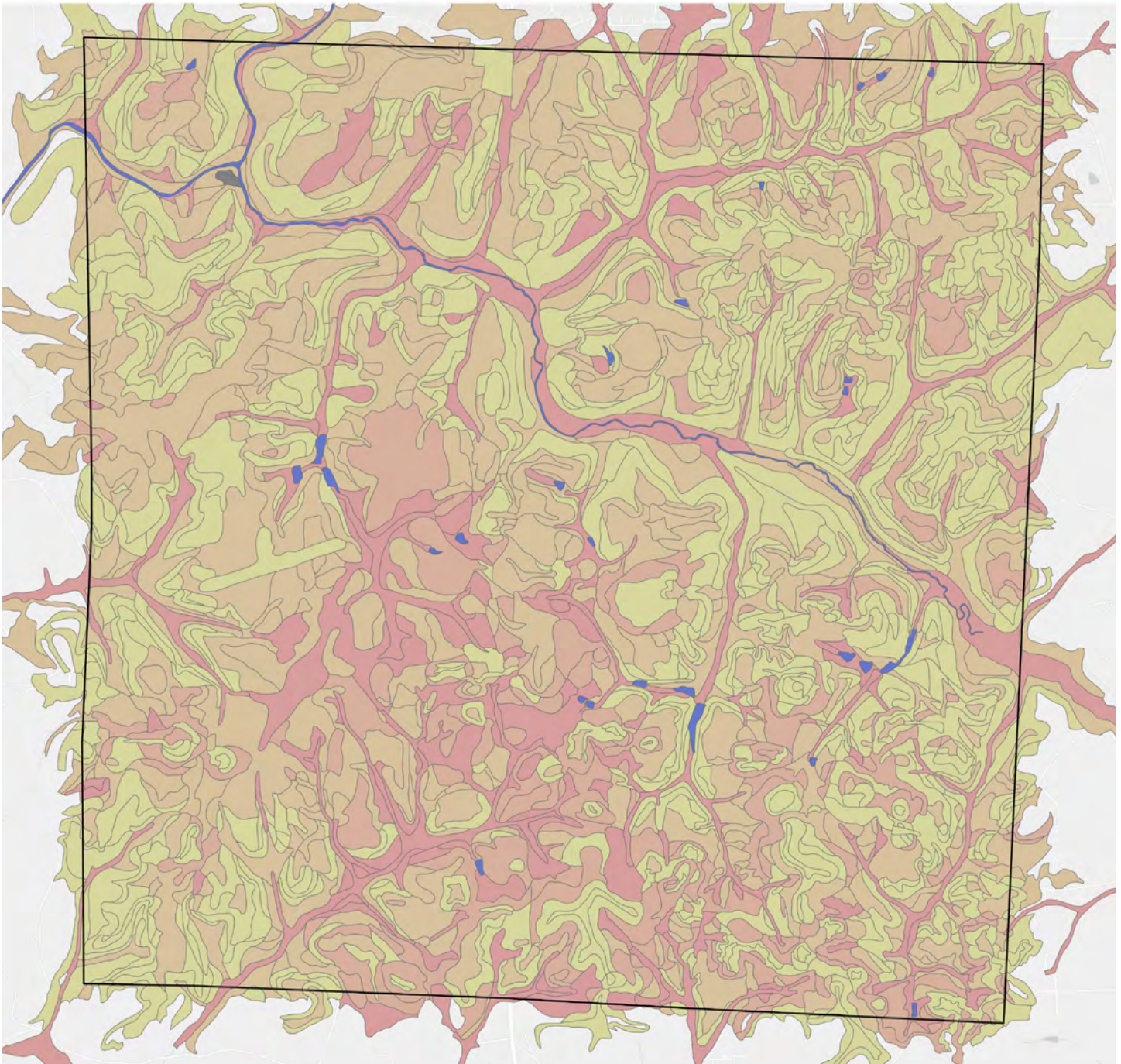
- Penn Township
- Slope Category**
  - Under 15% Slope
  - 15% to 25% Slope
  - Over 25% Slope

0 0.25 0.5 Miles  
Mapping derived from data.esri.com, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/ NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS  
7/24/2024  
**HRG**



# PENN TOWNSHIP

## Soil Drainage Classifications



### Legend

- Penn Township
- Soils
  - Well drained
  - Moderately well drained
  - Somewhat poorly drained
  - Poorly drained
- Drainage
  - Water
  - N/A

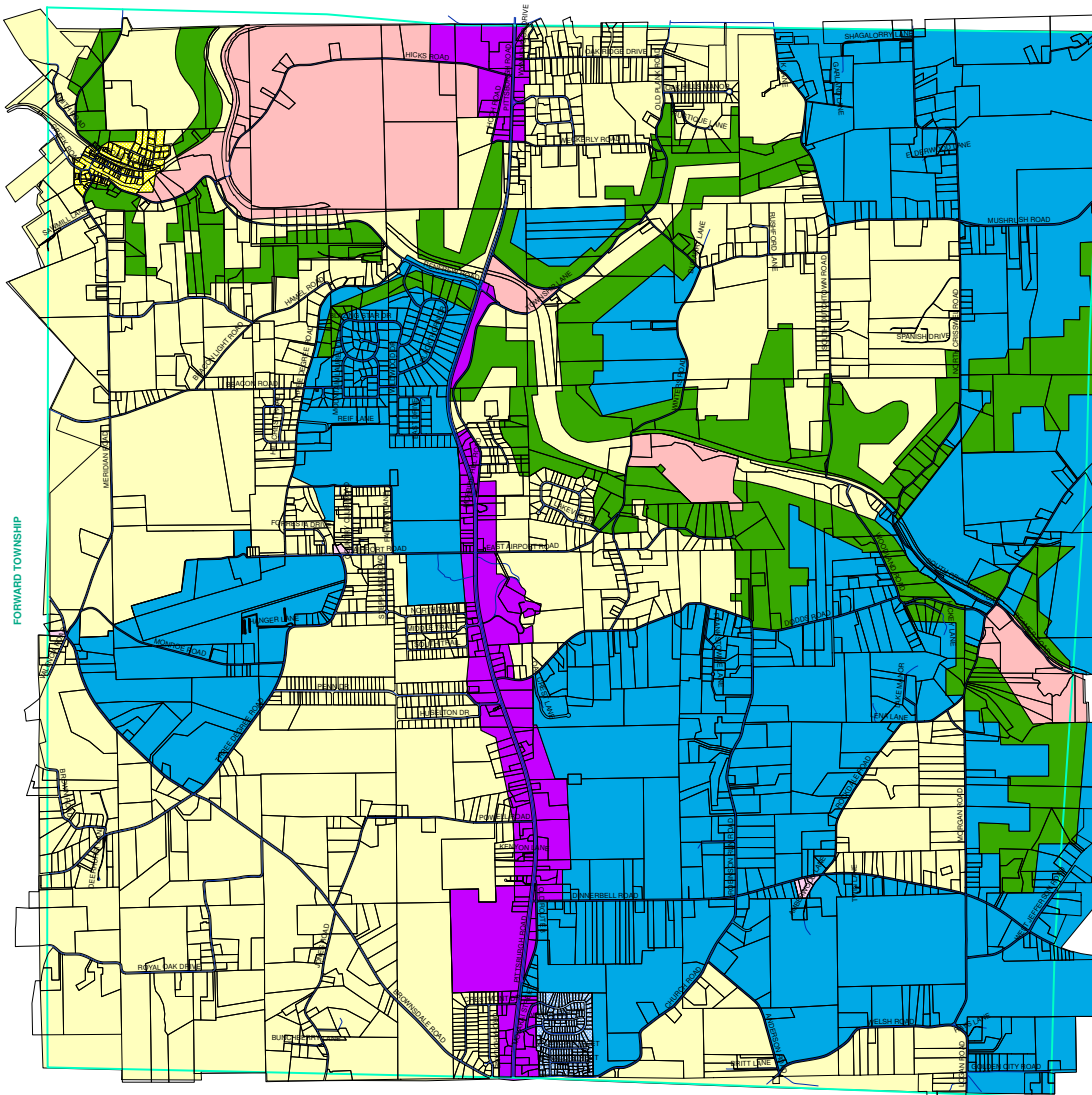
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# PENN TOWNSHIP BUTLER COUNTY

## ZONING MAP



- ZONING DISTRICTS**
- C1 - Neighborhood Commercial
  - C2 - Highway Commercial
  - I-L Limited Industrial
  - OZ1 - Overlay Zone Renfrew
  - OZ2 - Overlay Zone Port O' Call
  - R1 - One Family Residential
  - RE - Residential Estate
  - S - Conservancy

This is to certify that this map is the official Zoning District Map, a part of the Zoning Ordinance of Penn Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania.

Adopted: August 13, 1962 as amended



## Land Use and Zoning

Land use and zoning represent an interconnected system of actions and regulations that establish the built environment characteristics of a community. At its core, zoning describes what is allowed on a parcel of land. Use-based zoning, the type of zoning currently used in Penn Township, is based on the premise of separating different land uses, like residential, commercial, industrial, agriculture, etc., in order to avoid potential negative interactions, commonly called nuisances. Zoning ordinances like this provide regulations for the type of uses allowable on a parcel, dimensional standards for what may be constructed, and special standards for development. Existing land use describes the use or uses

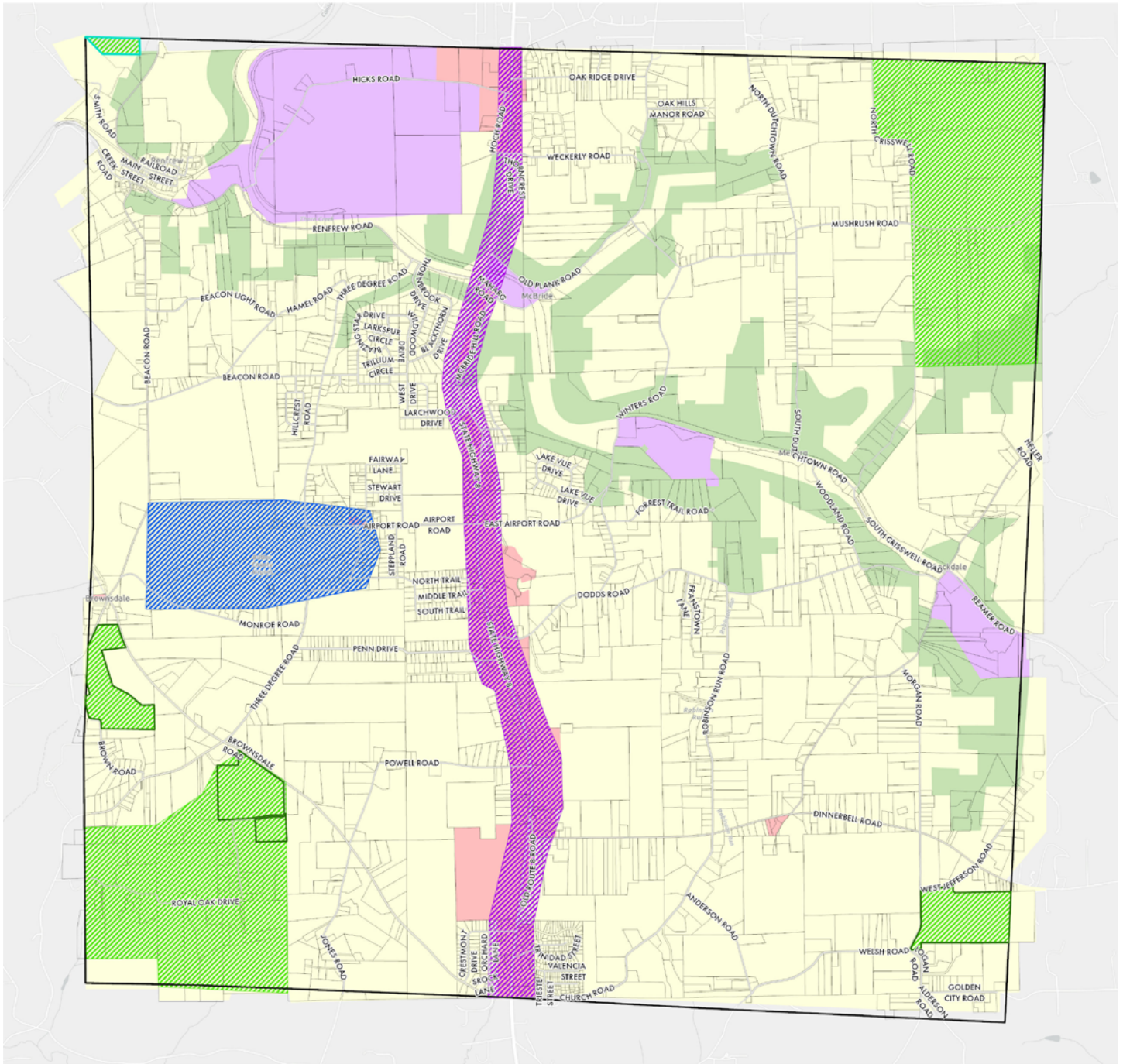
that currently exist on a parcel, whether permitted by the current zoning or not. Finally, future land use represents the proposed, planned, or anticipated future uses for parcels in the community. Future land use may or may not be consistent with the existing zoning ordinance and can represent precedent for future regulatory decisions. Penn Township's existing land use and zoning are summarized in the Trends Report, which can be found in Appendix B.

Through this planning process, a future land use map (as seen on the following page) was developed, which establishes the Township's future land use plan, as required by the PA MPC. The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map or an official map but establishes the Township's vision for future planning. The Future Land Use Map is largely consistent with existing land use



# PENN TOWNSHIP

## Future Land Uses



### Legend

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Existing Farmland Easements    | <b>Current Land Use Category</b> |
| <b>Type of Future Land Use</b> | Commercial                       |
| Airport Overlay                | Conservancy                      |
| Farmland Preservation          | Industrial                       |
| Route 8 Overlay                | Residential                      |

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Mapping derived from data pa.gov, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/ NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

4/16/2024

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patterns and the current zoning ordinance, but also reflects desired use of land in order to accomplish the goals outlined by this plan.

The Future Land Use Map highlights areas in the northeast and southwest corners of the Township for “farmland preservation.” These areas currently consist primarily of agricultural uses or large lot single-family homes. The existing uses are consistent with the rural character of the Township and contribute to maintaining that character in the future. The southwest corner is zoned primarily R-1-One Family Residential, while the northeast corner is zoned primarily RE- Residential Estate, with some parcels zoned R-1 and some zoned S-Conservancy. The R-1 and RE districts allow for similar uses, mainly agricultural and single-family housing. Planned residential developments, or PRDs, are allowed in both districts, and are intended to allow for developments that incorporate a single type or variety of residential and related uses, and allow for development patterns and densities that vary from those allowed by the underlying zoning district. In theory, the use of PRDs can promote efficient use of land and can require additional dedication of green space as part of the overall design, which can help to preserve some open space. However, because of the inherent flexibility from the zoning requirements of the underlying districts, the allowance of PRDs in these areas may promote development where the preservation of natural landscapes is preferred. Zoning changes should be evaluated and reviewed to determine the pros and cons associated with discouraging large-scale development and enforcing development patterns consistent with the Township’s rural character. Large lot single-family homes and agricultural uses in agricultural areas and the southwest and northeast corners of the township are both areas where zoning changes should be evaluated, given the overall goal to promote the preservation of open space and agricultural land. This could include modification of PRD requirements, rezoning these areas



Some of the residential development in the Township

to be part of the S-Conservancy district, or many other possible solutions that could be assessed as part of the comprehensive ordinance review.

While the Future Land Use Map emphasizes preservation in some areas, it also highlights areas that are suitable for more intense development, consistent with the goals of the plan. Given the current downward trend in the Township’s population, additional development and job creation will be a necessary part of attracting and retaining new residents, necessary for the Township’s long-term success. The areas highlighted by the Airport Overlay and Route 8 Overlay shown on the future land use map have been identified as appropriate for greater development and redevelopment. Additional details about the purpose and proposed standards for these overlays are provided in the “Promoting Economic Development,” and “Enhancing the Route 8 Commercial Corridor” chapters of this plan. The creation of overlays for these areas will establish special standards that will allow development to vary from the underlying zoning district within the designated area. By establishing zoning overlays, the Township can take an active role



in the development of these areas, establishing tools that will motivate the desired types of development, while guiding the process with design standards that ensure consistency with the existing character. Just because an overlay zone is suggested does not mean that development has to happen or that development will happen right away. Overlays are just a tool to help guide a vision for a particular area.

Following the adoption of the comprehensive plan, the Township should perform a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance, and all other ordinances and initiatives for consistency with the goals of this plan. At that time, amendments or updates may be made to the ordinances that will aid in the implementation of this Plan's overall vision. Some potential tools that may be implemented through the update process are discussed throughout the rest of this chapter.

## Promoting Preservation

The comprehensive planning process established goals to promote the Township's open space and promote the Township's agricultural heritage and farmlands. Preservation of open space and farmland takes place through two major forces. The first is the use of regulatory tools, which are generally seen in the form of municipal ordinances that regulate development, like zoning ordinances and SALDOs. The second method is the use of conservation tools or land acquisition tools, which generally aim to acquire property rights.

### Regulatory Tools

The Township's existing Zoning Ordinance protects natural areas through the S-Conservancy zoning district. The purposed of this district is to, "protect the rural integrity of the municipality (including natural, scenic, cultural, aesthetic, and historic areas) by restricting uses to agriculture and recreation, as well as single-

family dwellings, schools, and churches. Preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas is a goal of this district." Parcels zoned S-Conservancy generally follow Thorn Creek's steep bank and floodway, which helps to prevent dense development in areas where it would not be conducive. By minimizing development, this zoning also helps to maintain the natural function of the floodplain, helping to naturally address flooding and drainage for the Township. Given the defined purpose of the S-Conservancy zoning district, consideration should be given to rezoning additional parcels under this district. This would help to promote the preservation of open space and agricultural land through overarching regulatory means.

In addition to the existing Conservancy District, the Township's existing Zoning Ordinance promotes the preservation of rural character by requiring large lot sizes for most single-family residential development. There is a two-acre single-family lot minimum in the Conservancy District, and a one acre minimum in the RE-



Single-family dwelling on large estate lot with large setback



Some of the historic agricultural land in the Township

Residential Estate and R-1 Low Density Single-Family Residential Districts. These larger lots are generally in keeping with the area's rural character, however, if desired in the future, additional preservation could be promoted by further increasing lot size requirements in the most environmentally-sensitive areas. Establishing a conservation zoning district that requires lot sizes of at least twenty-five (25) acres would promote the preservation of open space and/or agricultural land, and enhance natural biological function in those areas. This would also limit potential development on those parcels, which may be desirable if the preservation of land is being prioritized, but may cause concerns for those interested in subdividing and developing those parcels.

### ***Conservation and Acquisition Tools***

With significant public interest in maintaining open space and agricultural areas, additional land conservation tools should be considered. In addition to the regulatory tools already discussed, non-regulatory and land acquisition tools may be used to protect undeveloped land.

#### **1. Conservation Easements**

Non-regulatory tools, like agricultural easements, have already been implemented in the Township, in association with the Butler County Agricultural Land Preservation Program. The existing agricultural easements can be seen on the Future Land Use Map. These parcels will continue to be protected as farmland into the future.

Agricultural or farmland easements are a subcategory of conservation easements, which may be used to conserve additional types of land. Conservation easements are a tool for conserving land in the public interest that does not rely on government regulations and allows private landowners to maintain ownership and control of the land. A conservation easement is established by voluntary, mutual agreement between a landowner and a private land trust or government. Local governments can promote and support this process and may even help to pursue funding if needed. The easement limits certain use of the land in order to achieve particular conservation objectives while



keeping the land in the owner’s control. The owner also benefits from reduced property and estate tax, if relevant . The owner may continue to use the land, within the constraints agreed to when establishing the easement. A conservation easement does not create a right for the public to access a property, unless the owner explicitly establishes that right. A conservation easement is considered to “run with the land,” meaning that it will continue in force no matter who owns the land in the future. In order to create a conservation easement, first a land trust or government that is willing to hold it must be identified. It is important to note that conservation easements may only be used to conserve land when the land is in the public interest and will actively advance conservation objectives. Potential objectives include:

- Maintain and improve water quality;
- Protect natural habitat;
- Prevent loss and depletion of soil;
- Protect scenic views;
- Prevent erosion and flooding downstream; or
- Ensure that the land is managed so that it can always support sustainable forestry or agriculture.

In Penn Township’s case, Butler County has already established a conservation easement program and the Township may work with the Butler County Planning Commission to help promote the coinciding County and Township goals to preserve farmland and open space. The County suggests funding the preservation of private forests and natural lands through transfer of development rights (TDR). Through a TDR, a developer can be allowed to develop at a higher density in a pre-defined growth area, commonly known as a receiving area, by paying for a conservation easement in a rural area, known as a sending area. The County can help to coordinate this process and these agreements across municipal boundaries, once sending and receiving areas have been established. The Township should work



Some of the historic agricultural land in the Township

with the County to pursue funding opportunities, like TDR, that will enable the establishment of conservation easements.

## 2. Butler County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

Currently, there are three preserved farms in Penn Township. These properties are preserved through the Butler County Agricultural Land Preservation Program and include the Kennedy Farm, the Hixon Farm, and the Dwinnell Farm.

To be considered for the County’s Agricultural Land Preservation Program, there are state and federal criteria requiring the farm to be at least 50 acres or be contiguous to a property with a conservation easement held by a qualified conservation organization, be located within an agricultural security area of at least 500 acres, have at least 50% of the soils available for production to be in capability classes one through four as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and contain the greater of 50% or ten acres of harvested cropland, pasture, or grazing lands.

The County's Farmland Preservation Board operates within the State law on Agricultural Easements enabling state and county governments to purchase conservation easements from farmers wishing to protect their farms into perpetuity. The focus of the program is to preserve the County's most prime farmland soils. The soils are tested and scored by Butler County based upon calculations provided by the State, factoring in other State requirements that influence the overall total score. Farms are ranked from the highest to lowest overall score. The ranking changes annually based upon new farm applicants to the program. Currently in 2024, Butler County has 37 farms ranked on its list based upon properties' overall soils scores. According to County officials, there are farms that have been on this list for decades waiting to move up the list into the top three farms, which is usually the only farms the County is able to preserve in one year's time.

Once a farm is preserved under this program, it cannot be undone or bought back. It is preserved into perpetuity. In October of 2023, Butler County preserved its 75th farm. Thus, now the County has over 7,546 acres of rich farmland preserved in 24 municipalities across the County. In the past nine years, there has not been a farm in Penn Township preserved through this program.

### 3. Agricultural Security Areas

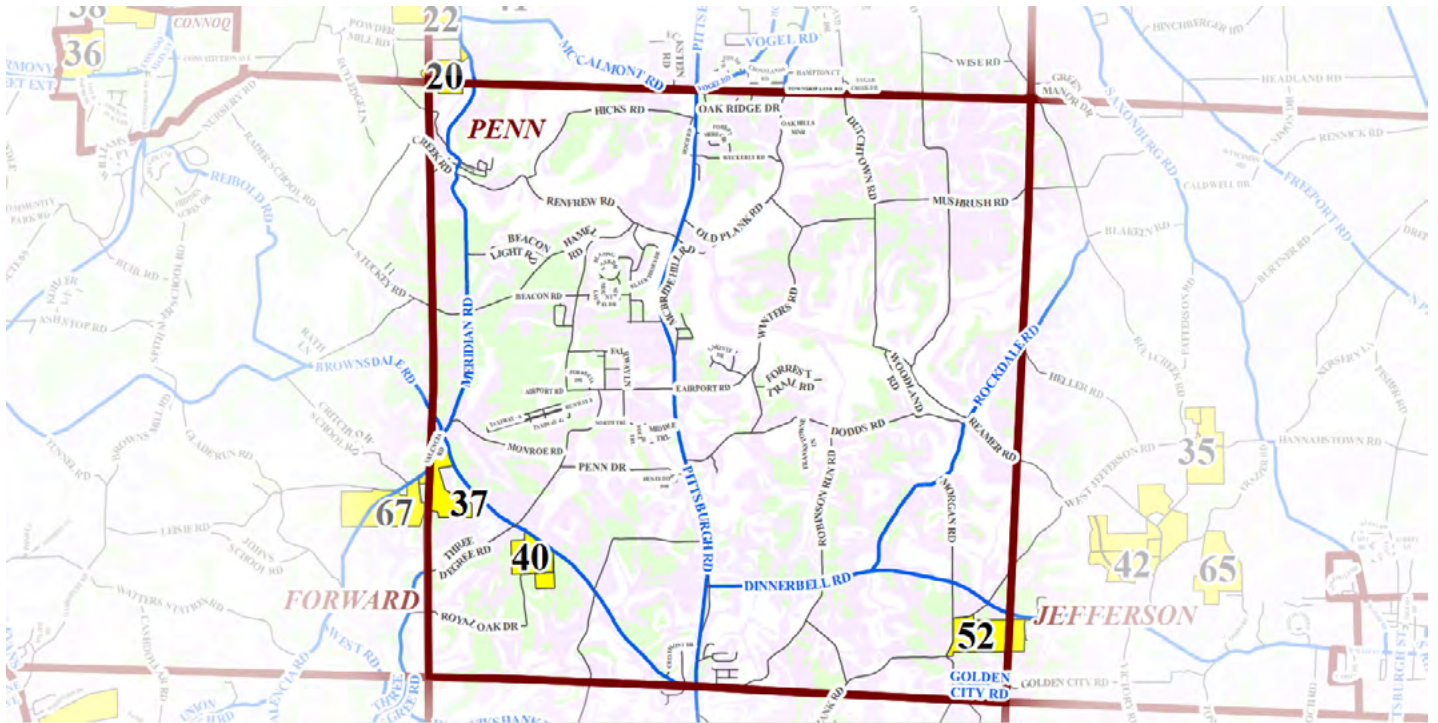
Another tool that may be used to preserve farmland that it is not currently being used in Penn Township is agricultural security areas. Commonly referred to as ASAs, agricultural security areas and agricultural easements go hand in hand, as an ASA must be established before an agricultural easement can be created. ASAs do not require the acquisition of land, but are the first step in preserving farmland. To create an ASA, a landowner or group of landowners whose parcels together comprise at least 250 acres

may apply to their local government for designation. Participants in the ASA program receive protection from local ordinances and nuisance lawsuits affecting normal farming activity, and review of farmland condemnation by state and local government agencies. According to Pennsylvania law, ASAs must be reviewed every seven years and property owners can opt out of the ASA at any time, provided they go through the proper procedures. The formation of an ASA does not prevent a landowner from choosing to subdivide and/or develop a parcel, but it does create a path to establishing a conservation easement and more permanent conservation. A parcel does not need to be actively farmed to qualify as an ASA, but it must be at least ten acres in size and be viable agricultural land.

Participating in an ASA or agricultural easement also helps to protect agricultural areas from eminent domain, which is the right of government to take private property, with payment of just compensation.



Active farmland in Township



Preserved farms in Penn Township

In Pennsylvania, if conserved land is considered for an eminent domain taking, an additional set of considerations applies, requiring that the taking of the land for the proposed purpose would not negatively impact agricultural or municipal resources in the area, and that there is no “reasonable or prudent alternative.”

ASA applications must be reviewed and approved before by the Board of Supervisors. The Township can help to promote the use of these tools by educating residents and local farmers about this choice and its benefits. By promoting ASA enrollment, a pathway is created to establishing an agricultural easement, enabling long-term preservation of that land.

## Enabling Development and Redevelopment

While the preservation of farmland and open space has been prioritized by this planning process, enabling controlled and appropriate development is also a goal and should be promoted to ensure the ongoing economic success of the Township. The creation of new retail and

commercial opportunities will improve the quality of life for existing residents and attract new people to the Township. Additionally, diversifying housing types will allow the existing aging population to age in place, retaining the existing population and opening up the housing market to new buyers. By establishing a plan for future growth, this can all be accomplished without sacrificing preservation.

Currently, housing options in the Township consist primarily of single-family homes on large-lots. While this may help to promote the rural character and preservation at the periphery, at the Township’s core, especially along the Route 8 Corridor, the allowance of additional housing types by right would open up new dwelling unit options. Currently, older residents looking to downsize or young buyers looking for less-expensive or lower maintenance options must look outside Penn Township to find a home. The majority of the Route 8 Corridor is zoned C-2- Highway Commercial. In this district, multi-family dwelling units are allowed conditionally, and mixed-use buildings with residential upper levels are allowed by right. No other private housing types are permitted. Allowing higher-density





A construction business office located along State Route 8

residential uses, like multi-family dwellings and two-family dwellings, by right would create smaller dwelling units in an area of the Township that would not interfere with or sacrifice agricultural land or open space.

Enabling greater residential density in the Township's core would also create the critical mass needed for more retail and commercial uses to locate to the Township. Residents expressed specific interest in a grocery store or market; restaurants; and additional opportunities for local businesses to develop. For businesses to be viable, a sufficient population must first be present. Once that has been accomplished, the desired retail and commercial developments will be more likely to locate in the Township and will be more likely to locate adjacent to the established population density at the core, continuing to help maintain the balance between growth and preservation. The Township should work with area real estate brokers, property management companies, the Butler County Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations to recruit and retain businesses in the Township.

To enable this development, zoning changes would be required to allow for the additional residential uses to be permitted by right in the C-2 district and/or the future Route 8 Corridor Overlay District. In addition to allowing additional uses, design standards should be created to help regulate the denser development to ensure its consistency with the Township's existing character. Multi-family dwelling units should be defined and limited to a dwelling units per acre density consistent with the rural character of the Township. This may range from about seven units per acre, common for patio homes or quadplexes, to fifteen units per acre, common for townhomes. Residents should be engaged during the ordinance update process to gain public input about what might be most appropriate and desirable.

To help ensure specific design outcomes, an update of the Zoning Ordinance and creation of the Route 8 Corridor Overlay could also consider the incorporation of elements of form-based code. Form-based code is a type of zoning that focuses on the regulation of development's physical form, instead of the separation of uses. While it is not suggested that an entirely form-



based code be adopted by the Township, adopting elements may allow greater design regulation, helping not only to preserve the existing rural character, but also helping to create a consistent appearance and sense of place along the Township’s central corridor. Adopting form-based code elements as part of the Route 8 Overlay would allow the Township to establish requirements like a specific mix of building types, the number of floors allowed, specific frontage requirements, etc.

Long term, Penn Township must work with residents to determine a balance between development and preservation. The tools discussed in this chapter may be used as a guide for the implementation of the Future Land Use Map, which will serve as a first step in determining this balance.

## Action Items

The future land use vision is that Penn Township is a desirable and enjoyable place to live, work, play, and raise a family. Penn Township maintains its rural and agricultural heritage that residents value and appreciate, while being open to growth and development in locations that make sense within the community. Residents enjoy the convenience of being located near amenities along Route 8 and in neighboring communities but enjoy the rural landscape and ample greenspace and farmlands within the Township. Growth will be balanced with preservation in Penn Township to maintain the existing character while also continuing to provide ample available goods and services to its residents.

<b>Goal No.</b>	<b>Goal Description</b>	<b>Obj No.</b>	<b>Objective Description</b>
<b>1</b>	Promote the Township’s open spaces and greenspaces and engage in preservation efforts as appropriate.	<b>1.1</b>	Review the Township’s land use ordinances to ensure that preservation, open space, and other related development requirements promote a balance between development and greenspace and open space.
<b>2</b>	Promote the Township’s agricultural heritage and farmlands and engage in preservation efforts as appropriate.	<b>2.1</b>	Work with area farmers, landowners, and potential developers to preserve farmlands throughout the Township.
<b>3</b>	Promote desired land uses and potential growth in areas throughout the Township where it makes the most sense and does not negatively impact the surrounding residential and farming communities.	<b>3.1</b>	Promote the vision of the Township’s Future Land Use Map.
		<b>3.2</b>	Attract new businesses to meet the needs of Township residents in targeted areas that support such development.
<b>4</b>	Consider additional housing growth and development, including a variety in housing types, to support residents of all ages, where appropriate.	<b>4.1</b>	Identify target areas for housing growth and development in the Township.

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# INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND IMPROVEMENTS

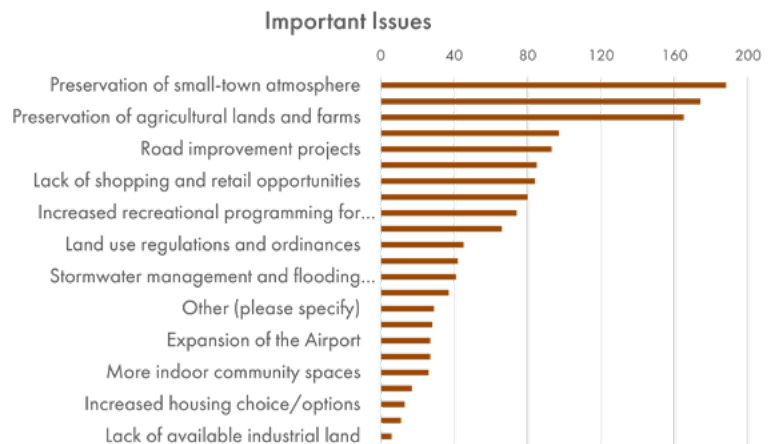
## Overview

With a population of nearly 5,000 residents, Penn Township has an extensive responsibility to provide their community with high-quality infrastructure and ongoing maintenance. With that said, the Southwestern Pennsylvania region as a whole has historically struggled with aging infrastructure and Township is no exception to this trend.

Aging infrastructure places strain on future growth opportunities. As the community continues to change and modernize, this growth will require updated infrastructure to support the Township’s changing needs. In addition to the demands caused by future development pressures, community residents also expressed the need for infrastructure improvements through the feedback received during the public engagement process. For example, roadway improvements and public utility improvements were rated as top concerns for the community alongside preservation of land and natural resources.

Having modern infrastructure, including water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electric, and gas utilities as well as safe road networks are increasingly important for communities that have aging infrastructure. There are necessary steps that the Township can take to ensure their infrastructure will support the needs of all residents in the community.

This Chapter intends to lay out the areas for improvement in terms of the extent and quality of infrastructure. As a result of infrastructure enhancements, existing residents and business owners can benefit from improved utilities and services.



## Existing Infrastructure

### Public Works

The Penn Township Public Works Department has 4 full-time employees who are responsible for the maintenance of the 57 miles of municipally-owned roadways, two parks, and stormwater infrastructure. Additionally, the Public Works Department, is responsive 24/7 to address weather-related incidences such as fallen trees, vandalism of road signs, roadway flooding, and unpredictable snowstorms. As well as the standard Public Works responsibilities, Penn Township also hosts its own composting facility where residents can dispose of lawn trimmings and other organic materials.

### Stormwater Management

In 2003, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s began requiring certain municipalities to have a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) through the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit program for storm water discharges from storm sewer systems. Even though Penn Township is not an MS4 community, the Township

has implemented several actions to ensure the proper handling of stormwater discharge. In 2011, the Township passed a stormwater ordinance prohibiting illicit discharges or connections of non-stormwater discharge, as well as regulating stormwater management of land disturbance activities and the handling of post-construction stormwater runoff.

Penn Township joined the Southwest Stormwater Committee (SSC) several years ago and through the SSC, the Township was asked to identify three local areas with flooding concerns. The three areas identified for purposes of the SSC's focus included Dodds Road at Rockdale Road, South Dutchtown Road between Woodland Road and Crisswell Road, and Main Street in the Renfrew area, near the Park. Funding was made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds distributed through the Butler County Commissioners. Through the use of the ARPA funds, the Township was able to address the Dodds Road flooding problem. Construction is currently underway in this area of Dodds Road and entails improving fish habitat, bank erosion prevention, wetland mitigation, and raising and moving a short portion of Dodds Road away from Thorn Creek. In addition, Penn Township, along with other members of the SSC, voted to reduce release rates by 10% for new development and is looking into other ways to lessen flooding in the region as whole. It is important to note that while three areas to address flooding were selected for purposes of the Township's involvement with the SSC, the three locations are not the only areas where flooding is a concern in the Township.

### **Sanitary Authorities**

Sewage and water are provided by the Saxonburg Sewer Authority (SSA), the Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township (MWAAT), and PA Water, depending on where in the Township the property is located.



Salt storage for road management

As of now, water and sewer service is primarily servicing the Route 8 corridor area, where the highest density of development exists. The large majority of the Township that is not serviced by public sewage uses septic tanks or other on-lot sewage systems for wastewater management.

### **Traffic and Roadway System**

Many of the intersections along Route 8 have been identified and are slated for improvements in the near future. For example, the intersection of Route 8 and Airport Road is currently in the process of getting a new traffic signal, a long-awaited project to improve safety at this key intersection in the Township. The improvements include new left turn lanes, pedestrian crossings, new traffic lights, and improved street lighting.

The Township has traffic concerns that may hinder future growth in the region. These concerns vary from areas of congestion to confusing intersections to poor visibility. Managing traffic patterns in a community is essential for several reasons. For one, it helps to ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists by reducing the likelihood of accidents and collisions. Additionally, it helps to improve the flow of traffic and minimize congestion, which can lead to reduced travel times and less air pollution. Effective traffic management can help





The Saxonburg Area Authority (SAA) at work in the community, image courtesy of Justin Guido/Butler Eagle

to create a more livable and pleasant community by reducing noise and improving the overall quality of life for all residents.

As seen in the map on the following page, the Township owns the majority of roads within the municipality. Penn Township benefits from and struggles with the central location of the Route 8 Corridor. While this road allows for ease of travel for residents traveling to and from the City of Butler area as well as provides the community with necessary commercial business, the road is the main contributor for speeding concerns, pedestrian safety, and visibility. Other roads of concern in the Township include Airport Road, Brownsdale Road, and Dinnerbell Road.

The Township is currently working with consultant on updating its Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance. Any projects identified in the updated Traffic Impact Fee Study should be given high priority in terms of key projects to improve the Township's traffic and roadway systems.

### ***Improving Existing Water and Sanitary Services***

In Penn Township, public sanitary sewer services are provided by the Saxonburg Area Authority (SAA)

and public water is provided by the Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township (MWAAT).

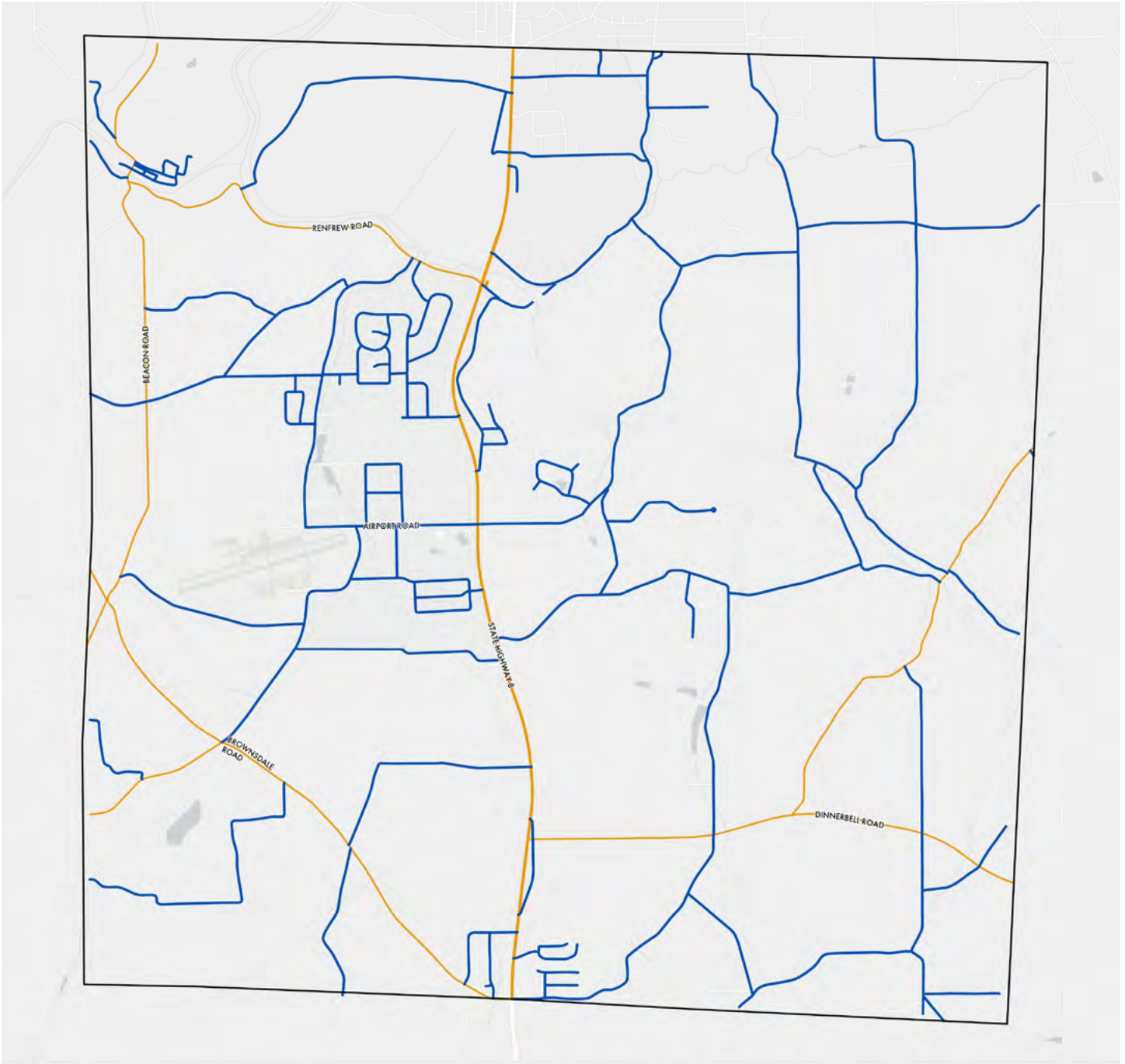
Pennsylvania, Penn Township, and MWAAT do not require mandatory freshwater tap-ins, unlike the wastewater and sanitary sewer tap-ins which were mandatory by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) several years ago.

All of the existing residences within 150 feet of the original SAA sanitary sewer lines were addressed under the PA DEP-mandated treatment system constructed in 2016. Future sanitary sewer expansion in Penn Township will be developer-driven. Thus, as new businesses or housing developments are proposed and constructed, it will be the responsibility of the developer to install any new sanitary sewer lines and to connect to the existing systems.

Concerning water services, the Township will not look to mandate freshwater tap-ins but will instead seek affordable solutions to promote water tap-ins in existing developments. There are funds readily available for this purpose and MWAAT has access to various Infrastructure Funds at the County and State level to help undertake such projects.

# PENN TOWNSHIP

## Road Management



### Legend

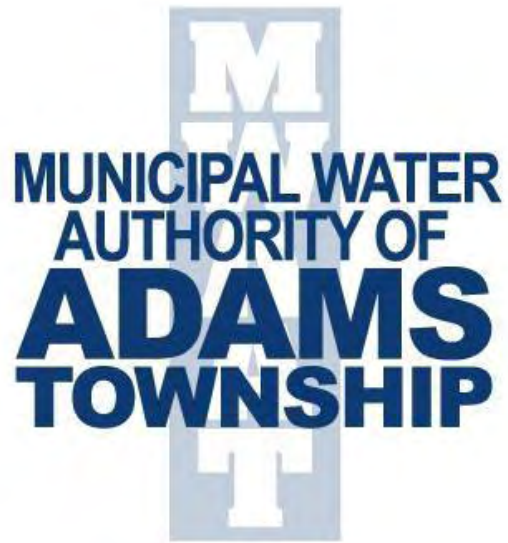
- Penn Township
- Local Roads
- State Roads

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Mapping derived from data provided by Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc., METI/ NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

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MWAAT Logo, image courtesy of MWAAT

Penn Township is currently conducting a water survey to analyze residents' interest in having MWAAT water services. The survey was mailed out to about 650 residents in existing residential neighborhoods to better understand their freshwater needs and to determine their willingness to tap in if an affordable MWAAT freshwater solution is eventually developed. The Township will share the results of the survey with MWAAT to help them prepare accurate costs for the water service construction debt surcharge. The surcharge has been the main concern of residents as they want any monthly charges to be affordable. It is important to note that the greater the participation in an existing development, the less the overall unit cost will be. In addition, MWAAT can use any available low-interest, long-term financing for new freshwater service construction costs.

Recent discussions have initiated a study to develop costs to maintain existing water wells, pumps, storage tanks, and water treatment systems. Meetings should be scheduled in the future to review the results of the survey, evaluate MWAAT's response, determine additional public outreach and education needed, and to review the overall costs to maintain existing wells and compare those to the costs for freshwater public services provided by MWAAT.

In order to continue providing Township residents and property owners with high-quality water and sanitary sewer services, it will be necessary to first identify target areas for improvements or upgrades. The planning process helped to identify some desired water expansions, as can be seen on the map on the following page.

The Township should also track areas in need of water and sanitary sewer repairs and can do so by meeting with representatives from the various service providers, developers, and residents. In addition, to continue to control the development of Penn Township, the

expansion of sanitary sewers along the Route 8 corridor should continue to be developer-driven and reflect the goals of the Township for this key corridor.

### ***Improving Traffic Flows***

Through the planning process, the municipal staff and residents have helped to identify areas in the community that need roadway improvements or better management of traffic flows. These roads and intersections serve as pinch points for effective traffic flow as well as pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The following are potential implementable traffic improvements that the Township may consider:

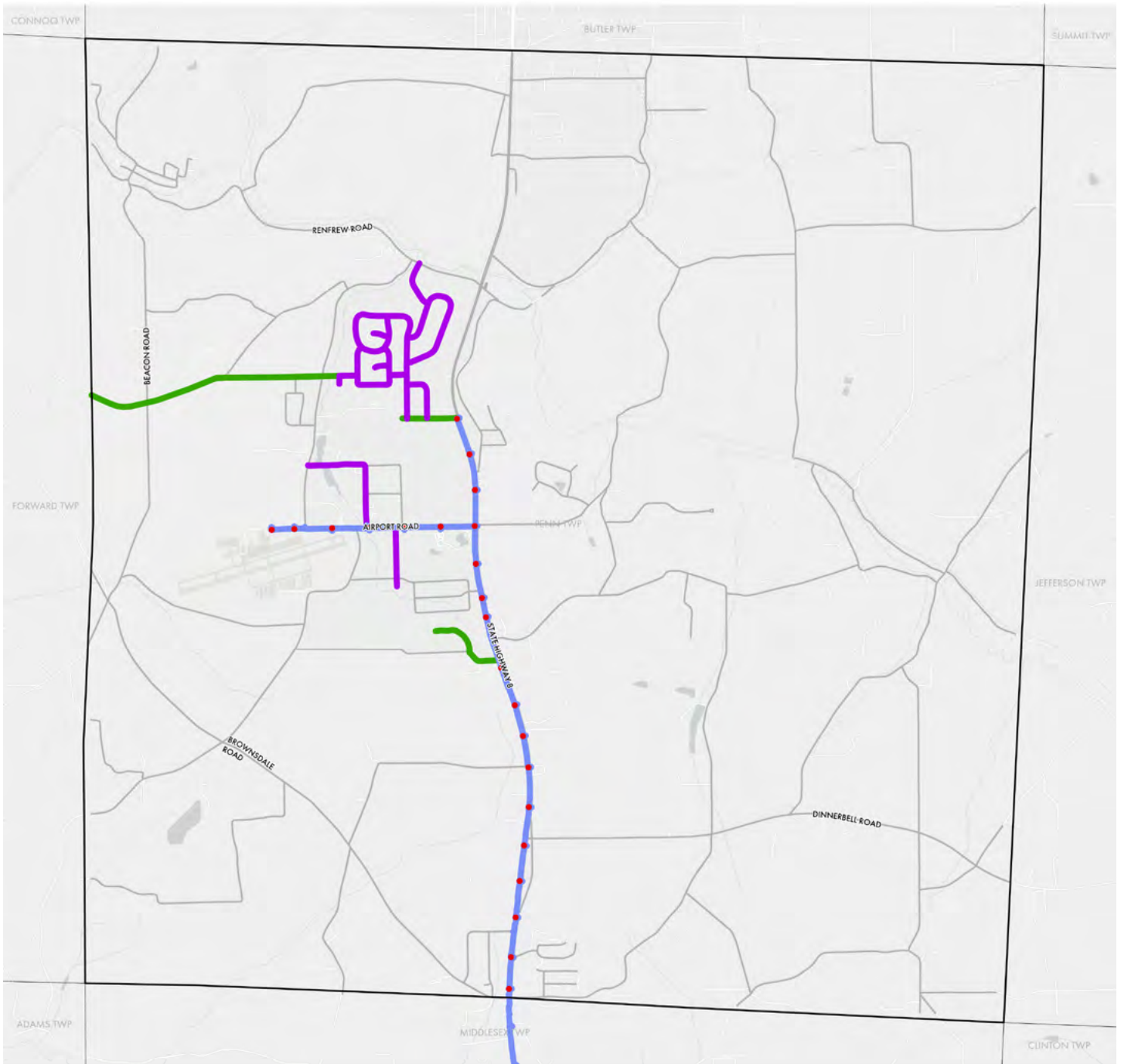
- Connections of Route 8 to surrounding neighborhoods
- Intersection improvements (including traffic light modifications at key Route 8 intersections at Brownsdale Road, Airport Road, and Church Road)
- Traffic flow improvements along Route 8
- Traffic calming along Route 8

All of these roadway efforts will require external funding assistance in order to be accomplished. The Township may want to consider resources such as



# PENN TOWNSHIP

## Waterlines



### Legend

- Penn Township
- Existing Waterlines
- MWAAT Planned Future Expansions
- Township Desired Future Expansions
- Hydrants

N

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Mapping derived from data.pa.gov, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/ NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

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4/5/2024

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the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA), and Butler County, among others. These organizations have dedicated funds for these types of initiatives, like the Transportation Set Aside Program Funds or the Multi-Modal Transportation Funds.

## Action Items

While the extent and quality of infrastructure in the Township are generally sufficient, it will be vital to strive to ensure that ample water and sanitary sewer services

are provided in the region. In addition, roadways owned by the municipality need to be maintained, repaired, and safe for all users and modes of transportation. It is the ultimate goal of the Township to provide a suitable and reliable transportation network and roadway system that meets the needs of its residents and businesses and that also addresses the traffic-related impacts from developments in adjacent neighboring communities.

Included in the following action items are initiatives that can be implemented to facilitate the development of the Township’s infrastructure needs over the next decade and beyond.

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description
1	Improve and enhance existing water and sanitary sewer service lines and infrastructure as needed and where appropriate.	1.1	Identify and track areas in need of water and sewer repairs and improvements.
		1.2	Work with Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township and Township residents to identify areas for water expansion.
2	Improve traffic flows and conditions along key roadways and at key intersections throughout the Township.	2.1	Improve conditions and traffic flows along the Route 8 Corridor.
		2.2	Complete a Traffic Impact Fee Study to determine focuses for improvement projects.
		2.3	Continue to improve intersections of Township-owned roads and Route 8 as needed.
		2.4	Improve traffic and safety concerns along key roadways and intersections as needed.

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# PARKS AND RECREATION FOR EVERYONE

## Overview

Recreational facilities are an important part of any healthy and vibrant community. Penn Township currently provides high quality parks and recreation facilities for residents of all ages. These facilities are well-utilized by Township residents. The Township is actively investing in the quality of its parks through recent land acquisition and facility upgrades. With two Township-owned Parks and several publicly or privately-held recreation facilities, Penn Township is poised to be a regional model and destination for recreation amenities across Butler County.

Results of community engagement outreach efforts indicated that residents would like to see a continued investment in the development of recreational facilities in Penn Township. In response to the online community survey, respondents rated the ruralness and small-town atmosphere amongst the most valued Township assets and noted that the character of recreational spaces should match that vision. Additionally, the community survey responses indicated that more than one-third of residents want Township leaders to increase recreational opportunities in the next 5-10 years, especially in terms of continuing the phased design plans for Harcrest Park.

## Existing Parks & Recreational Facilities

Penn Township owns and manages roughly 67 acres of parkland between its two municipal parks – Harcrest Park and Renfrew Park. In addition to the two Township owned parks, Penn Township is home to Succop Nature Park, which is owned by the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, and four privately-owned golf courses,



Harcrest Park signage

including the Conley Resort, the Butler Country Club, Suncrest Golf Course, and LakeVue North Golf Course.

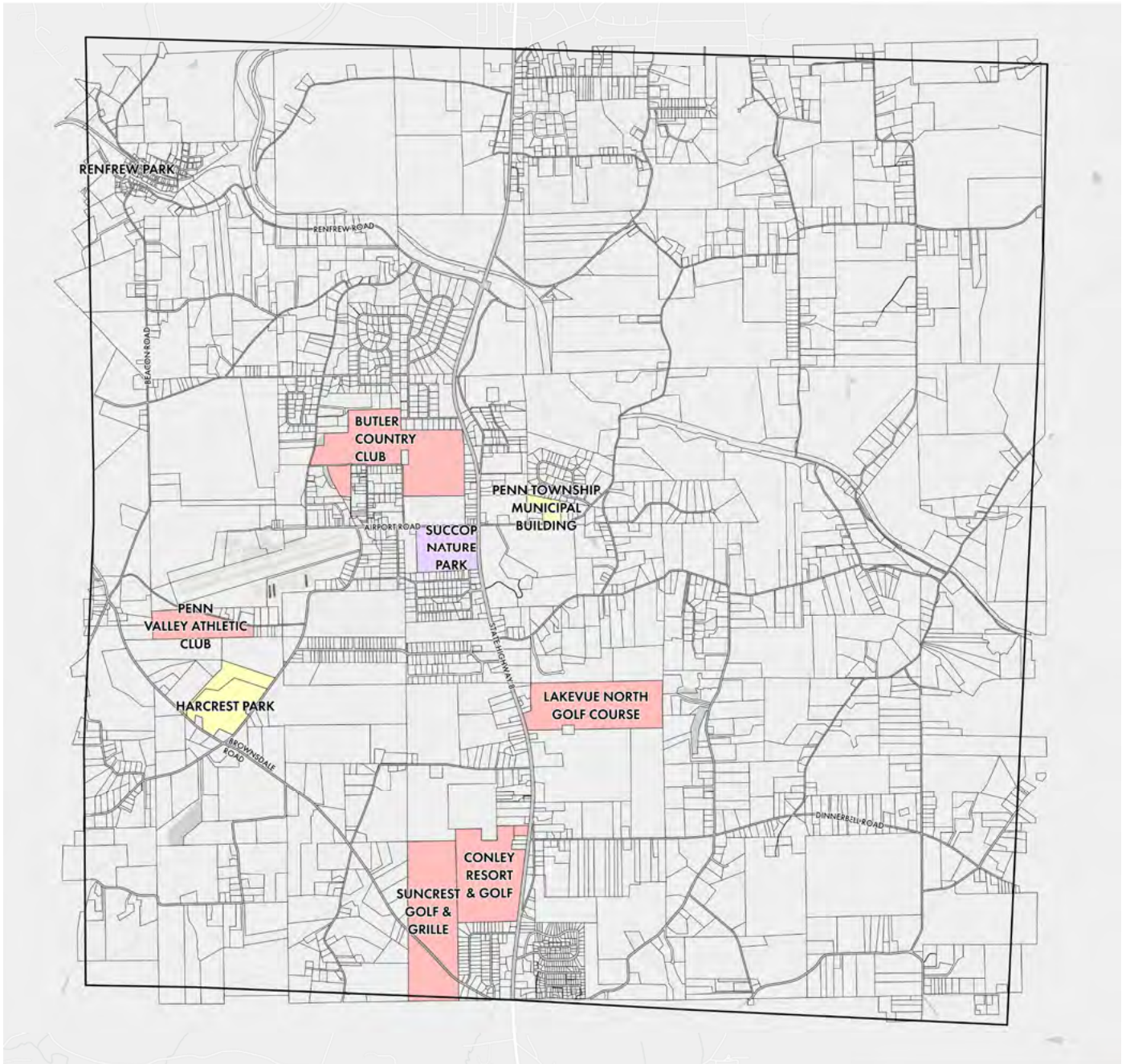
The map on the following page highlights the Township owned parks and other recreational amenities in Penn Township.

### ***Harcrest Park***

As the largest park in Penn Township, Harcrest Park offers several facilities for various purposes and several enhancements are planned for the Park in the coming years. The 64 acres of parkland in Harcrest Park currently include amenities such as walking paths, a playground, a pavilion, a sand volleyball court, a disc golf course, a horseshoe court, parking, and public restrooms. To align with the vision of an agricultural and natural community, a large portion of the land is devoted to passive recreation and meadowlands.

# PENN TOWNSHIP

## Recreational Assets



### Legend

#### Recreation Category

- Municipally-Owned Recreation Asset
- Owned by ASWP

- Privately-Owned Recreation Asset
- Penn Township

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Mapping derived from data.pia.gov, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, HERE/ NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

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7/18/2024





ADA-accessible swings at Harcrest Park

The map on the following page highlights the proposed phased improvements and enhancements at Harcrest Park over the next several years.

The Township purchased the property that Harcrest Park is now located on in 2007 and the Township began working on the Harcrest Park Master Plan later that year. The Harcrest Master Plan was published in 2009 and outlined various goals and strategies involved in developing the land into a space for all community members to enjoy. In 2018, the Township updated the Plan to better align with the priorities of the community. In 2021, the Township purchased the parcel directly north of Harcrest Park to support efforts to expand and enhance the park per the updated master plan. More information about the Master Plan, its current status, and future plans can be found in the “Harcrest Park Master Plan” section of this Chapter.

### **Renfrew Park**

Located in the far northwestern corner of the Township in the Renfrew neighborhood, Renfrew Park consists of 2 acres of parkland abutting the Connoquenessing Creek. The Park’s amenities include a boat launch, two pavilions, a newly-constructed pickleball court, a basketball court, and a playground.

There are no current plans to significantly upgrade the amenities at Renfrew Park. However, the Township will continue to perform adequate and regular maintenance on the existing facilities. In addition, the Township will continue to receive community support from local residents who help to keep an eye on the conditions of the park and dispose of any trash and debris.

### **Succop Nature Preserve**

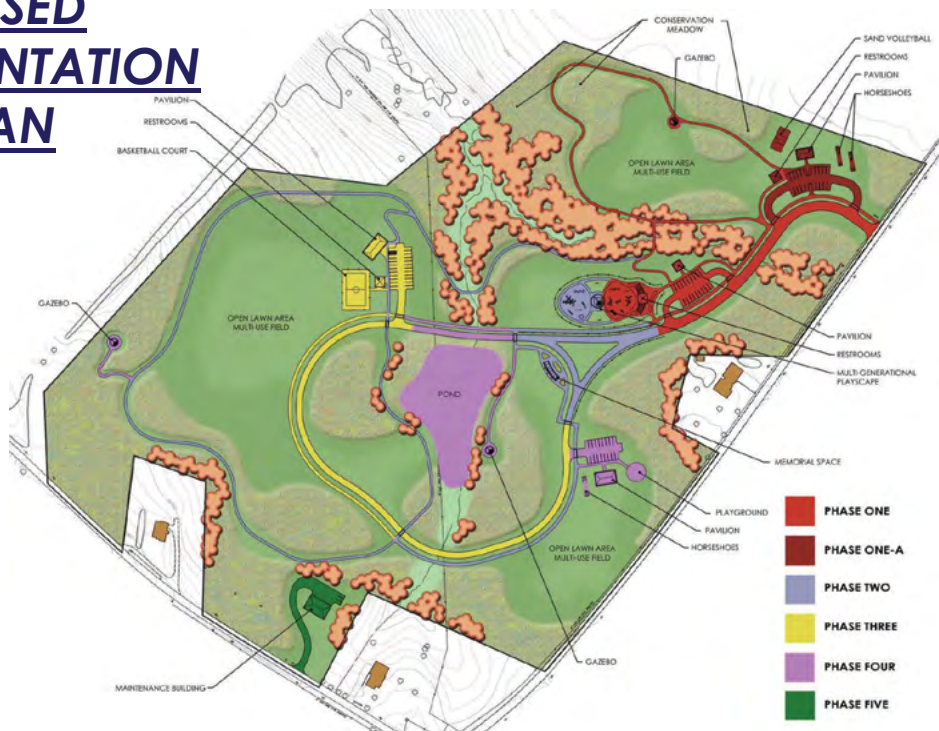
Succop Nature Park is owned and managed by the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania and offers 50 acres of woodlands, fields, two ponds, pavilions, and walking trails, all of which are available for public use. This historic property was once the estate of T. W. Phillips Jr., the founder of T. W. Phillips Gas and Oil Company, and was operated by the Butler County Community College Education Foundation from 2001 to 2011, at which time it was given to the Audubon Society. Succop Nature Park is open to the public during the daytime and is available to rent for private events throughout the year. The Park is a great asset for area birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts.



Renfrew Park boat launch



## PHASED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Original 2009 Harcrest Park Master Plan

### Golf Courses

While not owned or maintained by the Township, Penn Township is home to four significant golf courses or country clubs:

- Butler Country Club
- Conley Resort & Golf
- LakeVue North Golf Course
- Suncrest Golf & Grille

Private golf courses and country clubs provide an additional recreational environment where community members can engage in leisure activities, fostering social connections and camaraderie among participants. Additionally, such facilities often enhance property values, contributing to the economic prosperity of the community.

### Harcrest Park Master Plan

The 2009 Harcrest Park Master Plan’s vision was informed from an extensive public input and outreach process. As a part of the master planning process, the Township sought public feedback via a community survey, stakeholder interviews, and a focus group to discuss the facilities and amenities that the Park should provide. The results from the public engagement process indicated that the three most-requested amenities to be added at the Park were walking trails, biking trails, and picnic shelters. With this input in mind, the final Master Plan that was released in 2009 included five phases to address residents’ recreation needs. The original master plan design (shown above) highlights the various phases of the master plan for the Park.

The first phase of park development, which includes most of the existing amenities available at the park as of 2024, was completed in 2017 according to the 2009 Master Plan. The remaining phases of the plan were



Updated 2021 Harcrest Park Master Plan

updated in 2018, including the important change of excluding a vehicle circulation route from the core of the Park. Residents had grown to love the natural character and unrestricted walking trails in the Park, and public input supported the change to encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

In 2021, Penn Township purchased the parcel directly north of Harcrest Park to be added to the park development plan. The design for the additional parcel, as seen above, includes some of the following amenities:

- Four-Season pavilion
- Public restrooms
- Basketball court
- Pickleball courts
- Tennis court
- Stormwater runoff area
- Walking paths
- Outdoor classroom
- Parking

A grant from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund was awarded to the Township in 2022 for the construction of the Master Plan’s Phase 2 improvements. Construction costs had greatly increased since the original grant application. The Township determined that the grant award would not cover the full extent of the proposed improvements. Due to rising construction costs, the challenges of funding, and the opportunity for land acquisition, the Township updated the master plan to include development of facilities on the newly-acquired land including additional parking spaces, several sport courts, a paved and shaded walking loop with a great lawn, additional restrooms, and a shelter.

While the Township has made great progress towards developing the Park’s land to meet the community’s overall vision for the Park, continuing the momentum will be vital in the coming years to ensure that Harcrest Park meets the recreational needs of Township’s residents. In order to continue making improvements to the Park, Penn Township will need to access public funding from organizations such as WeConserve PA, DCNR, DCED, and other local, regional, state, and federal agencies.

## Land Dedication & Fee-in-Lieu

The process whereby developers dedicate land to the Township for recreation, or pay a fee in lieu of land dedication, has not been adopted by Penn Township as of 2024. Collecting such fees-in-lieu would provide the Township with a dedicated funding stream for park and recreation related improvements. As a result of the Township staff's proactive efforts to raise the standard of excellence for community facilities, this is an issue of utmost importance as well as general fiscal responsibility and accountability.

Land dedication, and the Township's ability to charge a fee in its place, is an important way that municipalities can accommodate the impacts of increased development on recreation needs. Land dedication is authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) (Act 247 of 1968). These funds are provided for by law because they are an important part of how municipalities sustain essential services. The MPC also governs how these funds are to be managed and utilized according to the municipality's formally adopted Comprehensive Recreation Plan. In light of the strain placed on parks and outdoor community spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic, securing proper funding is now more important than ever.

## Future Access to Parks and Recreational Assets

While the park and recreation facilities currently available are well maintained and well utilized by many residents of the Township and nearby communities, there is always potential for enhancement of facilities. It is a priority of the Pennsylvania 2020-2024 Outdoor Recreation Plan to make outdoor recreation readily available to all Pennsylvanians. In order to be consistent with statewide goals and to provide residents with a high level of services and amenities, the Township

must continue to maintain and enhance its existing recreational amenities. In addition to the presence and quality of facilities, access to outdoor recreation facilities must also be considered.

As the Township considers expanding its recreational assets to meet residents' needs, development of some of the surrounding undeveloped land at the municipal campus on Airport Road may be an opportunity. The land would likely be developed as a passive recreation space which may include trails and other natural features, instead of active recreation like sports, to align closely with the community vision of maintaining the natural scenery of the area. In order to determine whether the idea is realistic, the Township should prepare a site feasibility study of the property to determine next steps for moving forward with potential public recreation amenities on the municipal building property.

Accessibility must consider not only geographic access, but the capacity for users of all ages and abilities to use any new or existing park and trail facilities. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should be considered at existing facilities as well as for any new construction. ADA compliance should consider, but not be limited to the following: accessible restrooms, accessible swings in play areas, and sufficient ADA parking spaces. In addition to ADA compliance, access to all groups, including families, senior residents, and young children should be taken into consideration. This may include the addition of facilities to ensure sufficient clean restrooms, water fountains, seating along trails, and shaded picnic areas.

## Bird Town Pennsylvania

Bird Town is a state-wide, grassroots program that works in partnership with local municipalities and organizations to promote community-based conservation actions that create a healthier and more



# BIRD TOWN PENNSYLVANIA



Bird Town Pennsylvania branding and signage

sustainable environment for birds, wildlife, and people. Bird Town is a municipal level conservation program that aims to work directly with municipal leaders to develop bird friendly communities and raise awareness of the important role people play in supporting bird populations. By encouraging cooperation within and among communities, the program seeks to ensure the long-term well-being of birds by restoring and enhancing their habitats, reducing threats to their survival and other positive impactful environmental initiatives.

Bird Town Pennsylvania engages and encourages residents directly by offering educational materials at table events, creating pop-up gardens, supporting and running community science programs, providing native plant sales, educating about invasive plants, offering birding walks, and more. These activities model best practices, encourage and support residents to embrace bird friendly practices such as planting native species, reducing window strikes, restoring habitats, and reducing pesticide use.

For over 12 years, Bird Town has modeled best practices for supporting the natural world. Bird Town's work is inclusive and nurturing not just for wildlife but

also for those who participate in its community science, planting, birding, and sustainability initiatives.

The first Bird Town was established in Upper Moreland Township in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Today, there are 50 Bird Towns in nine Pennsylvania counties that have encouraged participation through speaker events, pop-up native plant gardens, plant sales and swaps, and installation of pollinator gardens.

The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania (ASWP) recently agreed to manage the program in Southwestern Pennsylvania. In addition, ASWP has been successful in receiving grant money that will enable them to have staff to support municipalities in applying for mini grants to help initiate projects.

Becoming a Bird Town in Pennsylvania is a fairly simple process. A municipality must pass a resolution, signed and enacted by its governing body. All newly designated bird towns start at the Green level designation.

## Trails and Connectivity

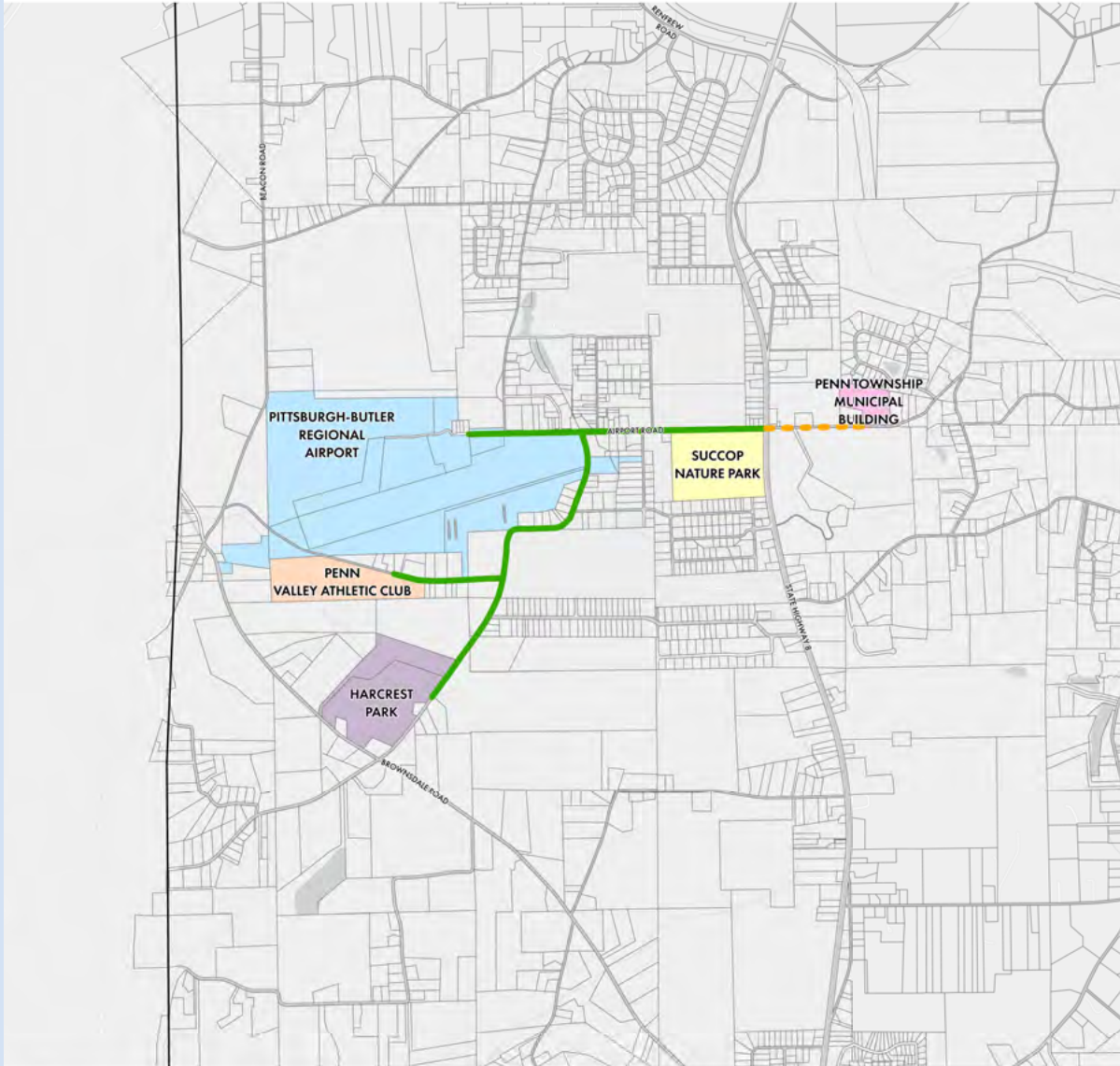
Harcrest Park, Succop Nature Park, Renfrew Park, and all other recreational assets in Penn Township are primarily visited using a vehicle. Through this Comprehensive Plan's visioning process, community members and the Steering Committee conceptualized a trail network to connect the significant recreational and economical assets to each other to encourage alternate transportation including walking and biking.

The planning process highlighted a need for connectivity and placemaking within the Township, with Airport Road being an ideal location to create additional walkability, new community gathering spaces, and a link to other important assets in the community like the Airport and the municipal building. The sketch on page 45 shows some of the improvements --and their related costs-- that could be made to the Airport Road corridor to create a safer walking and biking experience for all residents.

# PROPOSED FUTURE TRAIL NETWORK

## PENN TOWNSHIP

Proposed Trail Network



**Legend**  
Trail Phase  
— Phase I  
— Phase II

0 0.15 0.3 Miles  
Mapping derived from Esri Community Maps Contributor, data via gov. Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGrissh, GeoTechnologies, Inc., METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS  
7/18/2024  
**HRG**

Community connectivity through trails promotes physical activity, fosters mental well-being, and strengthens social bonds. Trails provide accessible spaces for walking, running, and biking, enhancing public health and reducing carbon emissions from transportation by creating alternative transportation options. Moreover, they create opportunities for people to connect with nature, appreciate their surroundings, and build a sense of belonging within their communities.

The proposed trail shown on the previous page would comprise of two phases, the first of which would connect Succop Nature Park, Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport, Penn Valley Athletic Club, and Harcrest Park. The second phase would be a final connection to the Municipal Building on Airport Road. All in all, the first phase of the trail would involve about 8.4 miles of trails and the second phase would involve an additional 1.1 miles of trails.



Airport Area existing infrastructure

Project Name	Proposed Trail Network
<b>Scope</b>	Create trail network to link and connect the Township’s main amenities – Harcrest Park, Succop Nature Park, the Airport, the Penn Valley Athletic Club, and the Municipal Building.
<b>Owner / Partners</b>	Township, area property owners, the Airport, Penn Valley Athletic Club, the Audubon Society, Butler County, DCED, DCNR
<b>Timeline</b>	5 years
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1,000,000 - \$1,900,000
<b>Funding Opportunities</b>	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund, Private Foundations
<b>Key Dependencies/ Potential Roadblocks</b>	Right-of-way acquisition and any required easements from property owners



# AIRPORT ROAD IMPROVEMENTS



Penn Township does not currently have a downtown, central business district. The main commercial district in the Township is located along the Route 8 Corridor. Throughout the planning process, connectivity and placemaking were identified as some key needs within the Township, with Airport Road being an ideal location to create additional walkability and community gathering spaces, and to link assets like the Airport and Harcrest Park to Succop Nature Park and the municipal building. Adding sidewalks, benches, and trees will help to create more of a community feel and improve connectivity in this key area of the Township.

Airport Road has a speed limit of 40 mph and an average annual daily traffic (AADT) of 2,414 trips. Therefore, sidewalks are recommended to create a safe, dedicated space for non-motorized users. In general, sidewalks should be separated from the roadway by a curb or unpaved buffer space. There are no curbs present along Airport Road, and the paved shoulders along the roadway are minimal. Therefore, a grass buffer should be provided between the travel lanes and the sidewalk to create safe separation between vehicles and non-motorized users. Given the 40mph

speed limit, this unpaved buffer should be maximized within the available right-of-way (ROW) to help ensure the safety and enjoyment of the sidewalk users.

Minimizing potential conflict between users along the roadway also requires safe crossings. The start and end of any non-motorized crossing requires a safe transition to the adjacent connection. Because there are no curbs along the roadway, there is no change in elevation between the roadway surface and the sidewalk, so a curb ramp is not required. However, each sidewalk and sidewalk landing must still comply with all other Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), which in addition to specific geometric and dimensional standards, require the use of detectable warnings. Detectable warnings are used along paths to indicate hazards, including the transition from sidewalks to the roadway at intersections. These surfaces are raised and can be detected by non-motorized users with low or no vision.

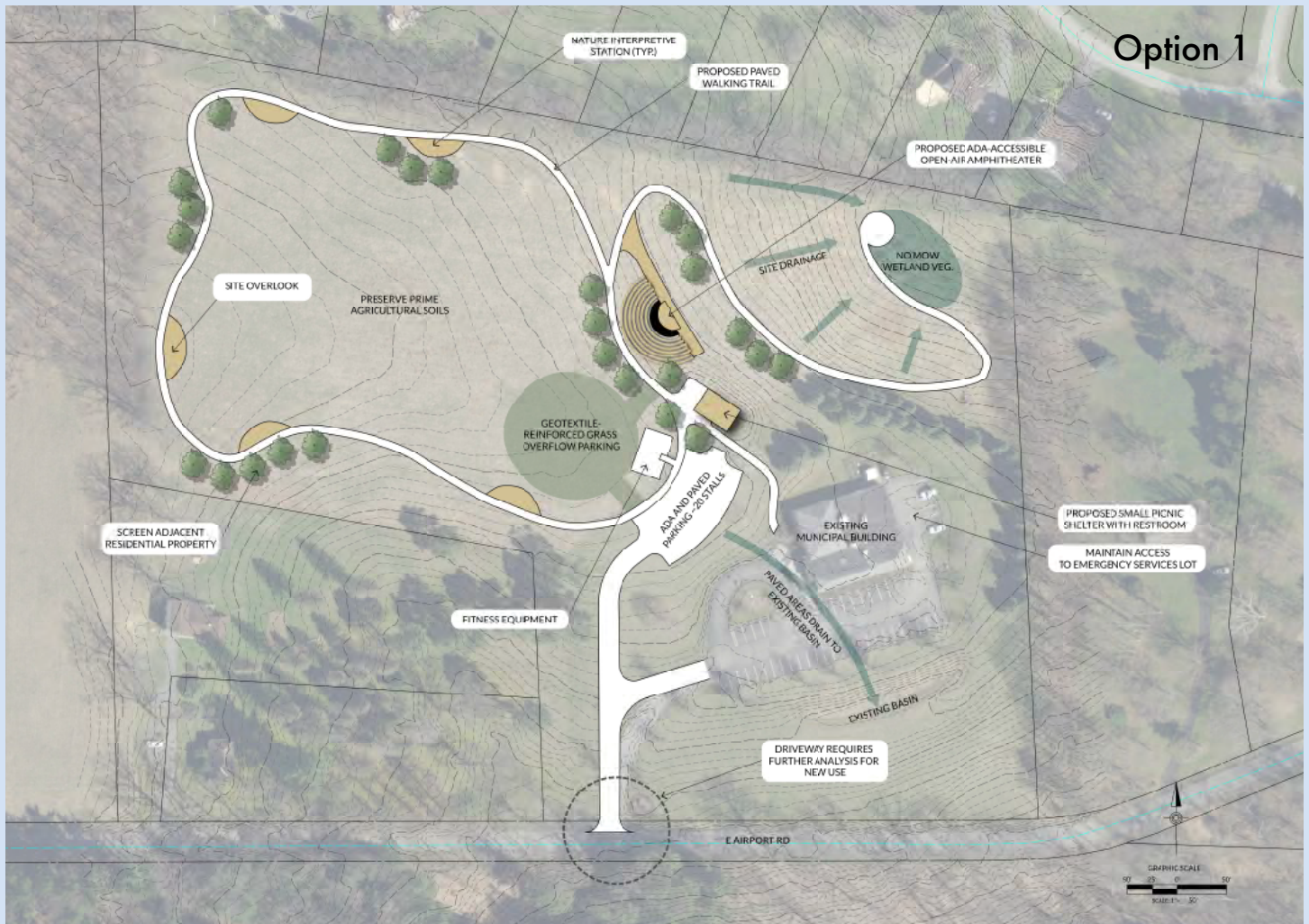
Given the relatively high speed of the roadway, high visibility crosswalks should be installed at appropriate intersections, as determined by an engineering assessment. For this planning level design, crosswalks have been assumed at Airport Road’s intersections with Three Degree Road and with Fairway Lane. In this case, piano-key style striped crosswalks are proposed. Using higher visibility crosswalk striping helps signal to drivers that non-motorized users may be present. This is even more effective if the same striping is used throughout a corridor or better yet, an entire municipality.

There are utilities present within the (ROW). However, the poles are setback far enough to allow for a five foot (5’) wide sidewalk and unpaved buffer, without having to move or bury utility poles. If additional buffer is deemed necessary or desirable, the sidewalk could be curved around the poles. Creating this meandering sidewalk would have the added benefit of slowing down any bicyclists that may choose to use the sidewalk, and reducing potential conflicts with pedestrians. However, if phase 1 engineering determines that utilities need to be moved, the cost estimate may increase significantly.

Element	Count/Length	Unit Price	Cost Estimate
5' concrete sidewalk on the north and south sides of Airport Road from Route 8 to Three Degree Road	.6 miles/ about 3100 feet (x2 for both sides)	\$190/ linear foot	\$1.2 million
High visibility crosswalks	2	\$13,500	\$27,000
ADA Compliant Sidewalk Landings	-	-	\$10,000
Street Trees	-	\$1,000/tree	\$100,000
Benches	-	\$1,000/bench	\$10,000
Engineering and Permitting Estimate	-	-	\$45,000
<b>Total Cost</b>			<b>\$1.4 million</b>



# MUNICIPAL BUILDING LAND DEVELOPMENT

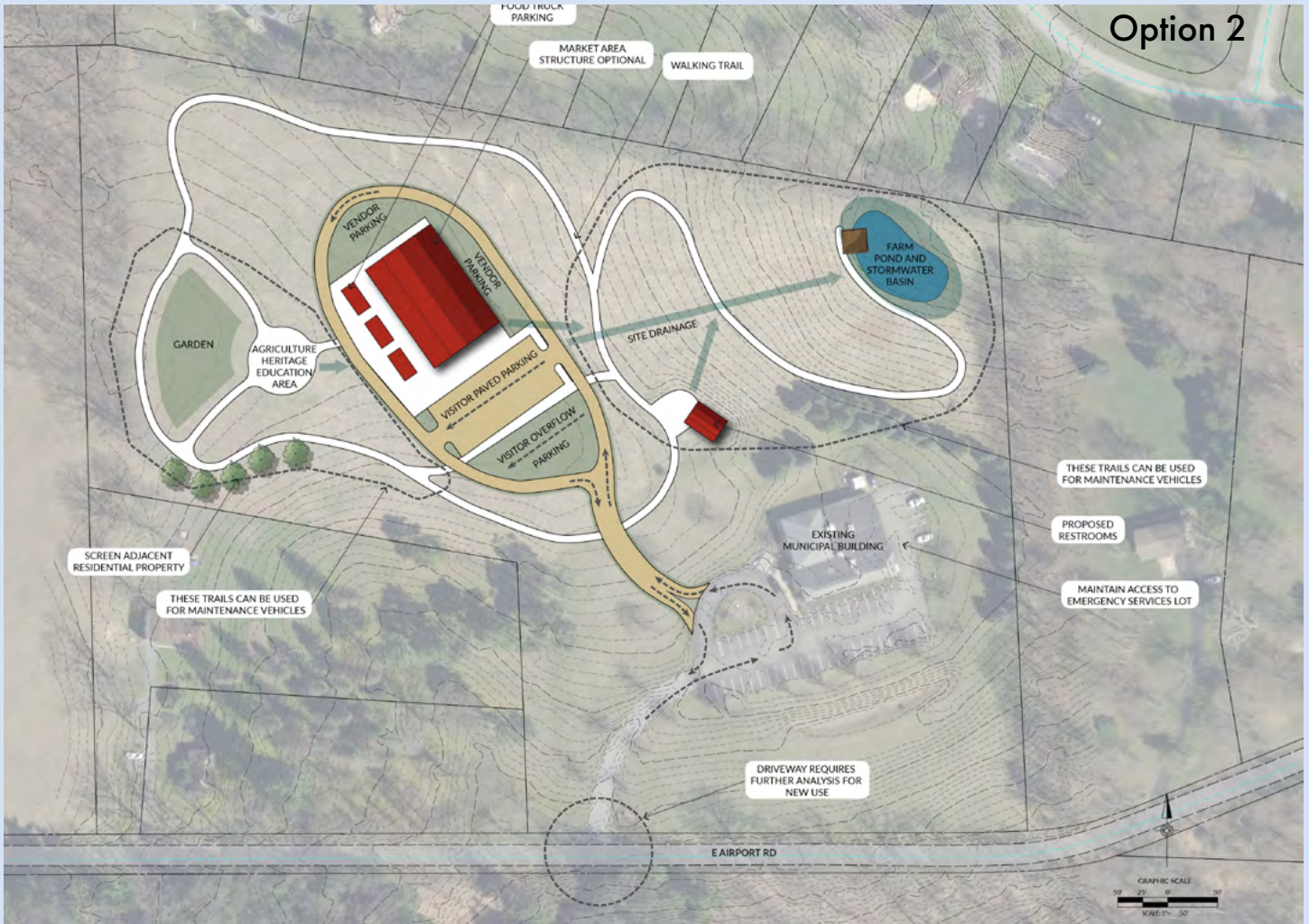


As the Township pursues responsible growth, there will be greater need for recreation and community gathering space. The land adjacent to the Municipal Building is an opportunity to provide these services without the need for acquisition, on a parcel that is already served by utilities and maintained by the Township. In keeping with Penn Township’s residents’ values, the key to a successful facility will be balancing preservation with development, and celebrating the natural and agricultural heritage of the Township. With this in mind, two development options were explored.

Option 1, above, focuses on maximizing preservation while providing recreation access for all. The proposed amenities are located in a way that preserves the maximum amount of farmland on the most level parts of the property. Option 1 proposes a 1/3 mile paved ADA accessible loop trail, and a shorter but more challenging trail extension. The trail serves two purposes. First, the easy loop trail along with the small outdoor fitness area near the parking lot provides fitness opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. The opportunity to walk outdoors is very important, especially for people living in areas without sidewalks. This trail is a complement to the existing trails in Harcrest Park. Second,



the loop trail is enhanced with interpretive stations with some interactive elements, providing interest and education for families with a combination of signage and gardens, rocks, stumps, and wildlife habitats. The trail extension accesses a proposed wetland that uses the property's natural drainage to support a variety of beneficial and educational native plants. Community gathering space is provided in a small ADA accessible open air amphitheater that can be used for community events, family entertainment such as summer concerts or movies, and can be rented by other organizations. It is located tucked into the hill slope for minimal visual impact. Option 1 was the preferred option of the project steering committee.



Option 2, above, honors Penn Township's agricultural heritage and the importance of its working farms today. Community gathering space is provided in the form of a farmer's market, with space reserved for a covered three-season market building. Sufficient additional parking must be provided both for vendors and visitors, meaning that this development option will have a greater impact on the land. A trail similar to that in Option 1 is included for day-to-day use, with centralized interpretive amenities focused on agricultural heritage and practice, and a farm pond-style stormwater basin to capture runoff from the pavement needed for a three-season market. Consider forming a study committee of local working farmers early in the design process to ensure that there is sufficient vendor interest to sustain a truly local market, to set operations policies and vendor fees (if any), and to avoid impacting the multiple existing successful private farm market-type businesses in the Township. Consider rental income from the large pavilion on non-market days; include groups that may be interested in collaborating to build an agricultural demonstration or community garden.

Some considerations apply to either development option. Preliminary analysis of the existing driveway to the municipal building shows that it may not be appropriate for more intensive use, or use by larger vehicles or trailers, due to sight distance limitations (see Appendix C). A contingency to redesign the Municipal Building driveway should be included in the development budget, particularly for the Option 2 Farmer’s Market. In addition to the Municipal Building, there are other locations being considered for a potential Farmer’s Market in Penn Township. The Township will work with stakeholders and partners to select the location.

With regards to accommodating additional traffic flow, emergency services housed in the Municipal Building should be consulted early in the design process to ensure any new uses do not impact their operations or ability to respond to calls. Finally, consider maintaining open communication with neighboring residents throughout to process to plan for minimal impact to their enjoyment of their property, to include landscape screening, appropriate operating hours, safety and security, and whether these properties could benefit from new trail connections into the proposed Municipal park. Finally, consider that any additional public use of the land will likely require a restroom and shaded resting areas that are part of the recreation area, not the existing Municipal Building.

<b>Project Name</b>	
<b>Municipal Building Land Development</b>	
<b>Scope</b>	Recreation and community gathering amenity development for approximately 8 acres of Township land on the Municipal Building parcel.
<b>Owner / Partners</b>	Township / Audubon Society and/or Penn State Extension
<b>Timeline</b>	3+ years
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1.27 million Option 1, all amenities as shown \$2 million Option 2, all amenities as shown
<b>Funding Opportunities</b>	DCNR C2P2, CFA LSA; Option 1: AARP; Option 2: USDA (FMPP and others), SBA; consider sponsorship and naming rights for new community gathering facilities
<b>Key Dependencies/ Potential Roadblocks</b>	Community facilities require delegation of management and programming responsibility. Garden areas require maintenance. Resident opposition to development.

## Action Items

Penn Township already offers high quality recreational facilities. Continuing to maintain and upgrade the park assets will help to ensure that all Township residents have access to high-quality facilities for years to come. Through the addition of new parks amenities and trails, the Township must maintain the momentum and community interest over the course of the next several years. Efforts should continue to ensure that all existing facilities are accessible as well.

Recommended actions have been discussed throughout this chapter. The following goals, objectives, and strategies have been developed to guide the ongoing investment in Penn Township’s parks and recreation amenities and facilities.

<b>Goal No.</b>	<b>Goal Description</b>	<b>Obj No.</b>	<b>Objective Description</b>
1	Continue to implement the Harcrest Park Master Plan’s Phased Implementation Plan and Strategy per the 2018 Plan Update.	1.1	Solicit funding from DCED, DCNR, and other regional, state, or federal agencies to support the various improvements and projects identified in the Harcrest Park Master Plan.
		1.2	Administer and monitor current and future grant funding received for Harcrest Park construction and improvement projects.
2	Maintain and improve Renfrew Park’s facilities and amenities as needed.	2.1	Conduct regular routine maintenance and cleanup of the Park as needed.
		2.2	As improvements and enhancements are needed, solicit funding from available sources to help support the improvements.
3	Explore the feasibility of adding parks and recreation amenities at the Township Municipal Building Property on Airport Road on the surrounding undeveloped acreage.	3.1	Prepare a site feasibility study of the property to determine next steps for moving forward with potential public recreation amenities on the property.
4	Create trails to connect the Township’s recreational areas and open spaces.	4.1	Develop a plan to connect Penn Valley Athletic Club, the Airport, Harcrest Park, Succop Nature Park, and the Municipal Building.
		4.2	Develop a plan to connect the Township’s recreational areas and open spaces to other neighboring municipal recreation amenities as appropriate.
5	Work towards getting Penn Township to become a designated Bird Town community.	5.1	Work with the Audubon Society of Western PA to get Penn Township designated as a Bird Town in Pennsylvania.



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# PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Overview

Penn Township is a desirable place to live, to raise a family, to work, and to explore and play. The Township is home to a vast array of recreational amenities, including many parks and golf courses. In addition, Penn Township is home to numerous businesses and industrial uses as well as agricultural uses and farms. The Township has a rich agricultural heritage and history that residents value and want to preserve. While preservation is important, Penn Township continues to feel the pressures of development from the growth occurring in neighboring communities. Some additional growth in the Township is healthy and necessary in order to remain a desirable place to live and to do business. Existing economic development opportunities should be promoted in the Township to help boost the local and regional economy as well as the local tax base.

One of the findings in the Trends Report is that Penn Township has an aging population. The Township's ability to attract younger professionals and families to move into the Township will be an important factor over the next several years. With a median age of 53.5 years old, some potential population growth and overall economic development may be necessary to support the overall vision for the Township moving forward.

Economic development can occur in a variety of ways, including residential development, commercial development, and mixed use development, to name a few. Land uses in Penn Township are predominantly single-family residential and agriculture. However, there are several areas scattered throughout the Township where commercial and industrial uses exist, and new similar



Route 8 commercial corridor

uses could be added in the future. The Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport has potential to help expand the local economy through the establishment of new businesses and employment opportunities. Additionally, the Route 8 Corridor is a largely commercial and mixed use corridor that is home to many existing businesses as well as vacant parcels of land and vacant and/or underutilized buildings. Infill redevelopment opportunities exist along Route 8 and other main roadways in the Township.

This Chapter explores potential options and solutions for promoting economic development in areas that make sense for Penn Township as a whole and that can accommodate growth. It is the Township's overall goal to preserve its rural and agricultural heritage while at the same time promoting economic development opportunities in areas that make sense and where development is appropriate and fits into the context of the neighborhood. Any future development and growth that occurs in Penn Township can help support the local economy and improve the local tax base.

## Land Use and Economic Development

Penn Township has historically been a predominantly rural, suburban community. The majority of the land in Penn Township is zoned and used for residential purposes. The Township is predominantly zoned either R1, One-Family Residential, or RE, Residential Estate. Per the Township's Zoning Ordinance, the R1 District reflects a traditional resident lot. Lot sizes required in the R1 zones are smaller than in the Conservancy and RE Districts but larger than lots found in older municipal subdivisions. By comparison, the RE District is intended to provide a rural environment for large-lot single-family homes, allowing a greater variety of permitted and conditional uses than just residential but keeping with the rural character of the Penn Township community.

There are two commercial zoning districts in Penn Township. The C1 District is the Neighborhood Commercial District and there are three small C1 areas in Penn Township. The first is located in the center of the Township on the north side of Airport Road near the intersection of Country Club Road. In addition, the second C1 area is located in the southeastern part of the Township along Dinnerbell Road, between Robinson Run Road and Rockdale Road.

The C2 District, also known as Highway Commercial, is the other commercial zoning district within Penn Township. This District runs the majority of the length of the State Route 8 Corridor from north to south through the Township, from the border to the south with Middlesex Township to the northern part of the Township bordering Butler Township.

While only a small amount of land is dedicated to industrial uses, Penn Township is still home to several industrial areas and businesses. Penn Township's industrial uses can be found throughout properties in the I-L Limited Industrial Zoning District. The I-L zoned areas are predominantly located in the northern part of the Township. Specifically, there are I-L areas along



The Raducz Stone Quarry in the I-L zoning district

Hicks Road, off of Renfrew Road, and at Renfrew Road near Township Lane. In addition, there is a small I-L area along East Airport Road between Lakevue Drive and Winters Road.

Development of any kind, whether residential, commercial, industrial, etc., can affect neighboring properties and surrounding communities within the general vicinity of the development. Specifically, development can often lead to increased noise, more traffic, loss of trees and greenspace, displacement of wildlife, and increased flooding and stormwater runoff.

There are several goals and strategies that the Township can use to manage the potential impacts that development has on the community at large. These tactics include reviewing, auditing, and potentially amending the land use related municipal ordinances as well as the zoning map. Another strategy is to create a future land use map that reflects the community's vision and then revise the official zoning map accordingly to be consistent with the future land use map that can be seen in the Balancing Preservation and Growth chapter of this Plan.

In terms of next steps, the Township should review its





An airplane at the Pittsburgh- Butler Regional Airport

Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and other land use related ordinances. As part of this review, Township staff and Board members can determine and evaluate current land uses permitted, whether by right, as a conditional use, or a use by special exception. As part of the review, the Township can prepare some suggested recommendations on changes and amendments that could be made in the future, like whether to add certain uses allowed, alter area and bulk requirements, change the design standards, etc.

## The Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport

The Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport is located in Penn Township and is a big part of the local and regional economy. Established by Pittsburgh Aviation Industries Corporation, the Airport opened in Penn Township on September 27 and 28, 1929. The Airport, located just about five miles south of the City of Butler’s central business district, was constructed at the site of the former Nixon and Dodds farms.

In 2023, the Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport was designated as one of three Airport Land Development Zones (ALDZs) in the State of Pennsylvania. The ALDZ program is offered through the Pennsylvania Department

of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and was established to encourage and promote the creation of new jobs on land and buildings owned by airports, while accelerating economic activity at and around airports on undeveloped land or vacant buildings owned by airports that can provide new revenue sources for airports. The ALDZ program is an incentive-based tax credit program to foster development on this vacant land. Funding provided by the State is a \$2,100 per-job tax credit to approved businesses operating within an Airport Land Development Zone.

The Airport also owns a neighboring property which totals about 92 acres and has about 40 or so acres that can be easily developed. The Airport is exploring potential options to develop the land.

The Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport is currently zoned a mix of R1 and RE. The current zoning does not allow for much potential growth, expansion, or additional land uses at the Airport-owned property. The creation of an overlay zone for the Airport is a possible solution and compromise to allow the Airport to partake in some development of its land while at the same time providing limitations and parameters associated with said development and permitted land uses in order to

maintain the community character and to avoid having a negative impact on neighboring and adjacent properties. Through the development and implementation of an Airport Overlay Zone, Township officials and the Airport could work together to identify the ideal potential types of uses, primarily either light industrial or small-scale commercial, that could be added to the Airport-owned properties.

The potential development opportunities at the Airport are critical to take full advantage of its designation as an ALDZ. The Township and Airport need to work together to determine what land uses and development types would be desirable in and around the Airport. An amendment to the zoning ordinance could be explored to create this overlay.

The Airport is currently working on a Master Plan and this Plan should be shared with Penn Township officials when a draft for review is ready.

## Housing and Economic Development

In order to remain an attractive and desirable place to live for residents of all ages, housing access is an important topic. Currently, the most common housing type provided in Penn Township is detached single-family residential housing units. For existing seniors in the community that want to remain in the Township and age in place, there are not a lot of options for them if they want to downsize or live among other aging residents. In addition, there are not many condominiums, townhomes, or apartments that often attract young professionals or young families with a smaller income.

Allowing higher densities such as townhomes, patio homes, duplexes, and garden apartments, to name a few, could provide for new developments to accommodate the needs of senior citizens as well as young professionals and families and entice them to

move into the Township. Determining what other housing types are acceptable to the Township and that blend in with the existing character of the area is important. Other housing types and where they can fit in to the existing fabric of the Township should be considered moving forward.

Having a variety of housing types is crucial for many reasons. Penn Township will ultimately need to weigh the pros and cons and determine where higher density housing types make the most sense in the community. Having a variety of housing types promotes inclusivity, affordability and attainability, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, cultural diversity, and community resilience, making it essential for the overall well-being and vibrancy of a community.



Mandell Trails Mobile Home Park

## Action Items

The vision for the future is that Penn Township is a thriving community that has retained its existing population and remains a desirable place to live for all ages, including young professionals and families as well as older generations that have successfully aged in place in the Township. The Township has experienced adequate commercial and retail growth and development to maintain and improve its tax base while continuing to embrace and value the rural character of the community as a whole.



Some single-family homes in the Township

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description
1	Promote desired land uses to fill vacant store fronts, buildings, and empty lots throughout the Township.	1.1	Identify and track areas in need of water and sewer repairs and improvements.
		1.2	Work with Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township and Township residents to identify areas for water expansion.
		1.3	Promote limited development at the Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport.
2	Promote additional housing growth and development, including a variety in housing types, to support residents of all ages, where appropriate.	2.1	Identify target areas for housing growth and development in the Township.
		2.2	Consider the development of additional housing types to diversify the housing stock so that housing in the Township is accessible to varying income levels.
3	Promote limited development at the Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport.	3.1	Form a task force or committee to explore the feasibility of creating an Airport Overlay Zoning District.



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# ROUTE 8 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

## Overview

Commercial corridors are an integral and important part of any community. They contribute to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of communities and provide many benefits, including economic growth, support of small businesses, public gathering spaces, cultural diversity, increased property values, increased tax revenues, livability, and job creation. In addition, commercial corridors can also serve as a gateway into a community.

The Pennsylvania State Route 8 Corridor is a major 148.6-mile long corridor in western Pennsylvania that runs from the City of Pittsburgh to the City of Erie. Also known as the William Flynn Highway, a large portion of State Route 8 runs through Butler County and specifically Penn Township. The corridor is a major thoroughfare and connector in the Southwestern Pennsylvania region and is home to a mix of businesses and land uses. The specific section of Route 8 in Penn Township starts at the Church Road/Brownsdale Road intersection, at the municipal boundary with bordering Middlesex Township, and stretches northbound to just past Vogel Road/McCalmont Road near the municipal border with neighboring Butler Township. The map on the following page provides an aerial view of the Route 8 Corridor in Penn Township.

This chapter provides recommendations for various improvements along the Route 8 Corridor in Penn Township focusing on economic development and infill redevelopment opportunities, placemaking activities, and new gateway signage.

## Economic Development and Infill Redevelopment

The State Route 8 Corridor is home to a diverse mix of land uses, including many types of commercial uses, light industrial uses, and residential uses. The corridor is mostly zoned C2, Highway Commercial. The businesses along the corridor include restaurants, retail stores, car dealerships, auto repair garages, animal day care and veterinary services, recreational destinations related mostly to golfing, landscape supply centers, and business and professional offices.

There are many existing infill development/redevelopment opportunities along Route 8 within Penn Township. It will be critical for the Township to promote land uses that complement the existing uses within the Corridor as certain areas are redeveloped or developed. For example, there is a small residential community that was recently approved that will bring approximately 24 single family dwellings to the Township, located off of Penn Drive right off of Route 8.



The Hardwood Cafe located along Route 8

# PENN TOWNSHIP

## Route 8 Corridor



### Legend

- Penn Township
- Road Name**
- State Highway 8
- Other Roads

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Mapping derived from Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, data.pa.gov, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

4/2/2024

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“Now available” signage advertising land available to develop along Route 8

Providing for a variety of housing types at varying densities was discussed with the Steering Committee throughout the planning process. While much of the Township consists of rural and agricultural lands and residential homes on larger lots, the Route 8 Corridor is already a densely developed and active area and could support higher density housing types in and around the Corridor, including duplexes, townhomes, patio homes, quadruplexes, multi-family housing, and garden apartments. These higher-density units would be best suited in the commercial areas of the Township and would provide additional housing options for senior residents that want to age-in-place, young professionals, and young working families that may want to move to the Township but are looking for a more attainable housing type with less land and house to maintain. The Township should explore ways to promote some higher density housing types along Route 8 in the Highway Commercial District by creating an overlay zone.

An overlay district, also known as an overlay zone, is a zoning district layered on top of another existing zoning district that implements additional regulations. They

can be used to prevent certain types of development, promote certain types of land uses, preserve historic buildings, or to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Overlay zones can help to control building codes and urban design, permitted land uses, density, and other factors. The use of an overlay zone in this instance for the Route 8 Corridor would allow for some flexibility along the corridor to promote the construction of higher density housing types like townhomes, duplexes, or garden apartments, and would provide for some potential design flexibility for these additional housing types along the commercial and mixed use Route 8 Corridor. The Corridor is the ideal area to promote these higher density housing types.

## Placemaking

Placemaking is a strategy used to boost engagement among residents within a community. Furthermore, it is a creative process that helps to bring people together to develop a neighborhood’s social, economic, and cultural identity. Projects that involve placemaking provide communities with an opportunity to highlight

what makes them so unique and different. More importantly, placemaking initiatives help people to feel more connected to the places that they live, which in turn can lead to greater civic participation and pride.

There are many benefits to creating places for people to gather within a community. Placemaking provides great opportunities for utilizing the resources and assets that already exist in a community as well as taking an economic and sustainable approach to revitalizing neighborhoods or areas in need of a quick boost. Here are just a few of the benefits of placemaking:

- It encourages economic development.
- It creates a forum for idea exchange and discussion.
- It converts underperforming areas into more interesting places.
- It can make a community a better place to live and play.
- It provides cultural opportunities.
- It can help to improve public safety, public health, and the environment.

(Source: <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/benefits-placemaking-go-beyond-urban-beautification/240971/> and <https://www.pps.org/article/10benefits>)

Creating places for people to gather can come in many shapes and sizes. From community parklets to open air markets to larger destination parks to smaller gathering spaces with a simple picnic table or bench, there are many ways to create usable public spaces for residents to enjoy in the Township.

The placemaking activities that should be the focal point of the Township's efforts in future years along the Route 8 Corridor include streetscape enhancements, façade improvements, and other beautification efforts to make the corridor feel more inviting and welcoming and to distinguish the section within Penn Township from the corridor in neighboring communities.



Penn Township branded street signs

## Gateway Signage

There are all different types of signage that can be used to help recognize and identify a community, place, landmark, or amenity. These various types of signs include welcome signs, monument signs, wayfinding signs, gateway signs, and directional signs.

Improved signage can help to reinforce an area's defining history, landmarks, and assets and can also help the public and visitors find and access places of enjoyment and gathering spaces.

Successful signage campaigns use design elements that are consistent throughout the community, including color coding of signs so they all use the same colors and also consistent branding in terms of using the same logo or fonts in all signage. Signage should also reflect the unique character of the locality and spotlight something that makes it unique or different from other area destinations.

Currently, there are no welcome or gateway signs located within the Township on its major roadways when you enter Penn Township from neighboring communities. A goal of the Township moving forward should be to install gateway and "Welcome to Penn Township" signage at key locations and entrances to the Township along main arterial roadways

# TOWNSHIP WELCOME SIGNAGE



As a part of the ongoing process of the Township to develop a unique identity in the Butler County region, the Township will have the opportunity to establish gateway signage at ideal locations along main arterials roadways.

Gateway signage serves as a welcoming beacon for communities, offering a multitude of benefits. These prominent structures not only mark the entrance to a community but also instill a sense of identity and pride among residents. Well-designed gateway signage can showcase the unique cultural heritage and character of a community, fostering a strong sense of belonging among its residents and visitors.

While the location for a sign has not yet been determined, the ideal location would be close to the border with Middlesex Township in a space with wide sight distances. In addition, Steering Committee members and Township staff



have helped to create a vision for the style of the signage. As shown on the previous page, the sign will use the same locally-quarried stone from the Raducz Stone Quarry used in the construction of the Municipal Building.

Potential location options for the Township welcome signage were discussed with the project steering committee but no definitive locations were selected or finalized. Ultimately, the consensus amongst the committee was that signs should be placed at ideal locations, where property owner permission could be easily established and at key entrances to the Township along main, arterial roads.



Existing Municipal Building roadway infrastructure

Project Name	Township Welcome Signage
Scope	Signage, landscaping
Owner / Partners	Township, area businesses, and/or area property owners
Timeline	1-2 years
Estimated Cost	\$20,000
Funding Opportunities	DCED Keystone Communities Program, Private sponsorships
Key Dependencies/ Potential Roadblocks	Cooperation with property owners

## Action Items

Penn Township’s vision for Route 8 for the future of the corridor is for it to continue to be a major thoroughfare and connector in the Southwestern Pennsylvania region and to be a home to several businesses, including retail stores, markets, restaurants, office parks, shopping plazas, recreation amenities, and more that will serve the needs of Penn Township residents as well as residents of neighboring communities. The following goals, objectives, and strategies have been developed to promote improvements and enhancements along Route 8 in Penn Township.

It is important to note that certain improvements that are planned for Route 8 by the Township will need to be approved by PennDOT, since Route 8 is owned by the State. However, working with property owners to beautify the corridor and installing welcome signage can likely be done without the need for approvals from the State. Any traffic calming measures would ultimately be coordinated by PennDOT with the Township being a partner as plans are developed.



The Schramm Farm Market

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description
1	Promote economic development and infill redevelopment opportunities along the Route 8 Corridor.	1.1	Explore the feasibility of an overlay zone along part or all of the Route 8 corridor to help promote desired and compatible land uses consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
2	Install gateway and “Welcome to Penn Township” signage at key entrances to the Township along main arterial roads..	2.1	Work with a signage company or other consultant to develop schematic drawings of the potential new gateway signage.
3	Promote and conduct various placemaking activities along the Route 8 Corridor, including streetscape enhancements, façade improvements, and other beautification efforts.	3.1	Offer incentives to property owners along the corridor to improve their facades and landscaping.

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# IMPLEMENTATION

## Overview

Throughout this Comprehensive Plan, many goals and objectives related to preservation, infrastructure, connectivity, parks, recreation, enjoyable public spaces, economic development, and commercial corridor improvements have been established for Penn Township to strive to achieve over the next ten plus years. It is important to focus on the prioritization and implementation of these goals and objectives so that the Township and its many partner organizations can work together to make them a reality.

Implementation of the various goals and strategies included in this Plan cannot happen overnight and will require time and patience of not only staff and officials from Penn Township but also of area stakeholders and partner organizations. Furthermore, implementation of the Plan will require coordination of resources, the development of funding and financing strategies for specific projects, and the organization of multiple stakeholders, including representatives from both County and State agencies as well as private property owners and developers.

The goals and strategies for Penn Township that are included in this Plan will take many years to implement. Furthermore, some goals and strategies will be easier and quicker to achieve than others. Successful projects and initiatives that result from this Plan will involve public private partnerships between the Township and its many partner stakeholder organizations in the area. Some of the most impactful partnerships that end up producing results are public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships have become increasingly important and more common over the last two decades throughout



Renfrew Park Pavilion

Pennsylvania. Many times, the reason that projects like the ones included in this Plan get implemented is due to the mix of funding sources and the partners involved that work together to make it happen.

## Prioritization

Project Steering Committee members ranked the various draft priorities and goals. The Steering Committee members were asked to complete rankings in an excel spreadsheet and indicate their preferences in terms of project urgency and importance. The results of the Steering Committee prioritization exercise have factored into the various goals and objectives included within the Implementation Table included in this Chapter.

Overall, the goals and objectives that were rated as most important were usually also rated as most urgent, with some exceptions. Some of the top-rated priorities and goals included items such as promoting desired land uses, improving traffic safety, and promoting open space.

Prioritization of goals and the actual reality of implementing each goal, no matter how important or

urgent it may be, along with the specific role that the Township and its partners can contribute in terms of implementation, have been factored into the process of development of the Implementation Table.

## Funding

There are many ways that the identified projects and improvements mentioned throughout this Plan can be funded. For example, there are many public funding sources like grants and low-interest loans available through State agencies like the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), The Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and the Commonwealth Finance Authority (CFA). In addition, there are regional financing solutions and funds available through Westmoreland County and SPC. Federal grants are also a possible funding source for certain projects, including funding programs available through ARPA and US DOT. Locally, western Pennsylvania also has a strong grouping of private foundations and nonprofit organizations that offer various grant programs. Donations from private individuals and companies, as well as potential sponsorships from area businesses, are also possible solutions to fund some of the projects and improvements in this Plan.

## Implementation

Implementation of the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan will require the cooperation and collaboration of Township staff and the Board of Supervisors with many public and private sector entities, including the Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township, the Saxonburg Area Authority, the Butler County Chamber of Commerce, the Butler County Department of Economic Development and Planning, County Commissioners, developers, property owners, the business community, and other utility and service

providers, to name a few. In terms of implementing the recommendations that are outlined throughout this Plan, the Township will utilize a phasing plan with phases categorized as follows:

- Immediate (1-2 years)
- Short-term (2-5 years)
- Long-term (6-10 years)

The table on the following page provides a list of acronyms used in the Implementation Table. Where Penn Township is listed in the Table, that includes Township staff, the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission members, and other members of the Township's various committees or boards.

Also, the funding levels corresponding to the opinion of probable cost provided in the table are included below.

- \$ = \$0-\$250,000
- \$\$ = \$250,001-\$1,000,000
- \$\$\$ = \$1,000,001-\$2,000,000
- \$\$\$\$ = More than \$2,000,000

The following Implementable Matrix highlights the various goals and objectives detailed throughout this Plan and identifies potential partners, costs, funding sources, and time frames for each goal or strategy.

## Next Steps

Moving forward, the Implementation Matrix provides a framework for Penn Township staff and officials to work on projects to improve the community as a whole as well as more specific target areas for growth and preservation. Township staff and officials, along with partner organizations and other area stakeholders, will need to champion key projects identified in the Plan to see them through to fruition.

Organization, Entity, or Funding Source	Acronym
Penn Township Act 13 and Impact Fees Infrastructure	Act 13
American Rescue Plan Act	ARPA
Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania	ASWP
Butler County Chamber of Commerce	BCCC
Butler County Conservation District	BCCD
Butler County Department of Economic Development and Planning	BCDEDP
Commonwealth Finance Authority	CFA
Community Development Block Grant	CDBG
Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township	MWAAT
PA Department of Community and Economic Development	DCED
PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	DCNR
PA Department of Environmental Protection	DEP
PA Department of Transportation	PennDOT
Saxonburg Area Authority	SAA
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission	SPC
US Department of Transportation	USDOT

For all of the identified projects, more detailed funding plans will need to be prepared. In addition, grant applications will need to be completed and submitted. In some cases, depending on the project, an engineer or a third-party consultant may be needed to provide support, including more detailed construction drawings for roadway improvements, more detailed park improvement plans, assistance with rewriting ordinances, etc. As the Township moves forward into implementation, staff and officials will need to further prioritize the most important needs and projects and look for additional resources, both in regard to money and time, to achieve the many goals outlined in this Plan. The Township can place advertisements for requests for qualifications and proposals to assist with the various projects as needed.



The Mansion property



# BALANCING PRESERVATION AND GROWTH

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Promote the Township's open spaces and greenspaces and engage in preservation efforts as appropriate.	1.1	Review the Township's land use ordinances to ensure that preservation, open space, and other related development requirements promote a balance between development and greenspace and open space.	Penn Township, Third Party Consultant	Minimal Cost for review; \$ for ordinance updates	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time; PA DCED MAP Grant for zoning ordinance updates (if needed)
2	Promote the Township's agricultural heritage and farmlands and engage in preservation efforts as appropriate.	2.1	Work with area farmers, landowners, and potential developers to preserve farmlands throughout the Township.	Penn Township, PA Department of Agriculture, BCCD	Minimal Cost	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
3	Promote desired land uses and potential growth in areas throughout the Township where it makes the most sense and does not negatively impact the surrounding residential and farming communities.	3.1	Promote the vision of the Township's Future Land Use Map.	Penn Township	Minimal Cost	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
		3.2	Attract new businesses to meet the needs of Township residents in targeted areas that support such development.	BCCC, BCDEDP, Real Estate Brokers, Property Management Companies	\$	Ongoing	Staff time, Meeting time
4	Consider additional housing growth and development, including a variety in housing types, to support residents of all ages, where appropriate.	4.1	Identify target areas for housing growth and development in the Township.	Penn Township, Area Property Owners, Area Developers	Minimal Cost	Ongoing	Staff time, Meeting time

# INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Improve and enhance existing water and sanitary sewer service lines and infrastructure as needed and where appropriate.	1.1	Identify and track areas in need of water and sewer repairs and improvements.	Penn Township, DEP, Developers, MWAAT, Property Owners, SAA, SPC	\$-\$\$	Ongoing	SPC, ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA - PA Small Water and Sewer Program, CFA - Sewage Facilities Program, PennVEST
		1.2	Work with Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township and Township residents to identify areas for water expansion.	Municipal Governance, Township residents, MWAAT	\$	Ongoing	SPC, ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA - PA Small Water and Sewer Program, CFA - Sewage Facilities Program, PennVEST
2	Improve traffic flows and conditions along key roadways and at key intersections throughout the Township.	2.1	Improve conditions and traffic flows along the Route 8 Corridor.	Penn Township, PennDOT	\$-\$\$\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
		2.2	Complete a Traffic Impact Fee Study to determine focuses for improvement projects.	Penn Township, PennDOT	\$-\$\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
		2.3	Continue to improve intersections of Township-owned roads and Route 8 as needed.	Penn Township, PennDOT	\$-\$\$\$	Ongoing	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT
		2.4	Improve traffic and safety concerns along key roadways and intersections as needed.	Penn Township, PennDOT	\$-\$\$\$	Ongoing	ARPA Infrastructure Funds, CFA Multimodal, DCED, PennDOT

# PARKS AND RECREATION FOR EVERYONE

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Continue to implement the Harcrest Park Master Plan's Phased Implementation Plan and Strategy per the 2018 Plan Update.	1.1	Solicit funding from DCED, DCNR, and other regional, state, or federal agencies to support the various improvements and projects identified in the Harcrest Park Master Plan.	Penn Township, DCNR, DCED	\$\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund, Private Foundations
		1.2	Administer and monitor current and future grant funding received for Harcrest Park construction and improvement projects.	Penn Township, DCNR, DCED	\$\$-\$	Ongoing	Staff time, Meeting time
2	Maintain and improve Renfrew Park's facilities and amenities as needed.	2.1	Conduct regular routine maintenance and cleanup of the Park as needed.	Penn Township	\$\$-\$	Ongoing	Staff time, Meeting time
		2.2	As improvements and enhancements are needed, solicit funding from available sources to help support the improvements.	Penn Township, DCNR, DCED	Minimal Cost	Ongoing	DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), County CDBG, DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund, Private Foundations
3	Explore the feasibility of adding parks and recreation amenities at the Township Municipal Building Property on Airport Road on the surrounding undeveloped acreage.	3.1	Prepare a site feasibility study of the property to determine next steps for moving forward with potential public recreation amenities on the property.	Penn Township, Third Party Consultant, DCNR, DCED, BCCD	\$\$-\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
4	Create trails to connect the Township's recreational areas and open spaces.	4.1	Develop a plan to connect Penn Valley Athletic Club, the Airport, Harcrest Park, Succop Nature Park, and the Municipal Building.	Penn Township, Third Party Consultant, DCED, DCNR	\$\$\$\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
		4.2	Develop a plan to connect the Township's recreational areas and open spaces to other neighboring municipal recreation amenities as appropriate.	Penn Township, Third Party Consultant, DCED, DCNR	\$\$-\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
5	Work towards getting Penn Township to become a designated Bird Town community.	5.1	Work with the Audubon Society of Western PA to get Penn Township designated as a Bird Town in Pennsylvania.	Penn Township, ASWP	\$	Ongoing	Staff time, Meeting time



# PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Promote desired land uses to fill vacant store fronts, buildings, and empty lots throughout the Township.	1.1	Amend the Township's Zoning Ordinance to ensure that desired land uses are permitted along the corridor.	Penn Township,	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
		1.2	Work with area real estate brokers, property management companies, and the Chamber of Commerce to promote available retail, commercial, and other spaces throughout the Township.	Penn Township	\$	Immediate 1-2 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
2	Promote additional housing growth and development, including a variety in housing types, to support residents of all ages, where appropriate.	2.1	Identify target areas for housing growth and development in the Township.	Penn Township	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
		2.2	Consider the development of additional housing types to diversify the housing stock so that housing in the Township is accessible to varying income levels.	Penn Township	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time
3	Promote limited development at the Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport.	3.1	Form a task force or committee to explore the feasibility of creating an Airport Overlay Zoning District.	Penn Township, Township residents, Area Business Owners, Pittsburgh-Butler Regional Airport staff	\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff time, Meeting time

# ROUTE 8 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Goal No.	Goal Description	Obj No.	Objective Description	Potential Partners	Opinion of Probable Cost	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Strategy
1	Promote economic development and infill redevelopment opportunities along the Route 8 Corridor.	1.1	Explore the feasibility of an overlay zone along part or all of the Route 8 corridor to help promote desired and compatible land uses consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.	Penn Township, BCCC, BCDEDP, Third-Party Consultant	\$\$-\$	Ongoing	Real Estate Brokers, Property Management Companies
2	Install gateway and "Welcome to Penn Township" signage at key entrances to the Township along main arterial roads.	2.1	Work with a signage company or other consultant to develop schematic drawings of the potential new gateway signage.	Penn Township, Third-Party Consultant	\$\$-\$	Short-term 2-5 yrs	Staff Time, Meeting Time
3	Promote and conduct various placemaking activities along the Route 8 Corridor, including streetscape enhancements, façade improvements, and other beautification efforts.	3.1	Offer incentives to property owners along the corridor to improve their facades and landscaping.	Area Business Owners, Area Property Owners, Potential Area Sponsors	\$\$-\$	Long-term 6-10 yrs	Staff Time, Meeting Time