

South Strabane Township Comprehensive Plan

**The 10-year Comprehensive Plan for advancing
neighborhoods, business vitality, recreation,
and quality of life in
South Strabane Township, Pennsylvania**

November 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Some of the many landscapes of South Strabane



WELCOME

What is a Comprehensive Plan, and why is South Strabane doing one?

A comprehensive plan is a plan for action to shape the direction of a community's vitality and quality of life. The Plan defines and documents vision and aspirations and outlines a roadmap to assist the community in making decisions about its future. While a comprehensive plan carries no weight of law and contains no rules or regulations, the plan's vision can prompt examination of regulatory guidelines to ensure compliance with stated goals and actions within the plan.

A comprehensive plan is broad in scope, examining the existing physical, social, and economic characteristics, but it seeks to apply this knowledge to the future. It speaks to various issues in general terms, but it also makes specific recommendations. The comprehensive plan is used to chart the path into the future.

A comprehensive plan:

- is both a document and a process;
- is a public policy guide for big-picture thinking about what makes a place to live, work and play actually a community;

- helps the community prepare for and manage population and business development patterns;
- helps the community plan for and coordinate major public investments.

In preparing the plan, studies must be conducted on various subjects, including the existing conditions within the community and the prospects for future growth.

Factors such as population, changing demographics, and the ever-increasing influence of global economics all complicate planning for the future while making it necessary. Regardless of where a community is or how successful it has been in the past, change is inevitable in any municipality. In short, the foundation is constantly shifting.

South Strabane Township has developed two Comprehensive Plans in the past, its first completed in the 1960's and the last completed in 1994. Since its last Comprehensive Plan, the Township has continued to develop and grow both its commercial/business nucleus and its residential neighborhoods. As the community continues to grow and reach build-out, the Township will have to consider how to develop its remaining land and seek opportunities for redevelopment and improvement where applicable. This document is intended to help shed light on these issues and point out opportunities for smart growth and strategic planning.

Goals-Objectives-Actions Overview

Goals

- describe an idea or sought-after end
- are non-specific/general statements
- are the foundation to which policies could refer

Objectives

- advance a goal's specific purpose, aim, ambition or element
- suggest a course of action

Actions

- Describe how an objective will be carried out
- Describe method or provide guidelines
- Are usually measurable and/or time sensitive
- May have an associated cost
- Identify lead or potential partners for implementation

Adopted by resolution, a Comprehensive Plan is not legally binding like in a zoning ordinance (adopted by ordinance). The community's ordinances are amended as appropriate to legally implement the Comprehensive Plan. Building on a series of technical analyses, observations from fact-finding and field work along with feedback from the public, the Comprehensive Plan presents a range of concepts and recommended actions for the Township and its lead or potential partners to pursue over the coming decade. Focusing on the community's future, the document presents realistic aspirations.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The Plan's first part presents the big aspirations of the community: its goals and its objectives. These statements lay out the overarching ideas to answer the question "What are we, as a community, trying to achieve?"

The Plan's vision statement, goals and objectives build upon the framework of South Strabane Township's existing Comprehensive Plan. All ideas aim to stay true to the community's historic planning philosophies while responding to new and/or emerging challenges. A summary of key planning influences – evolving patterns over the past decade - follows these aspirations. As with many decisions in life, one often reaches a destination efficiently, effectively and most enjoyably when he or she knows what influences and obstacles exist along the way. From housing availability to downsizing to tax impacts to attractiveness of different types of development and real estate choices, as a community's population ages, other patterns are worth considering in a municipality's longer-term planning efforts.

Goals

Goals identify what the community wants to achieve in the coming decade.

1. Land Use & Housing

Encourage coordinated development of a diversified housing stock that serves residents of all ages.

2. Economic Vitality

Support, through land development policies, opportunities for retail, office, and limited industrial development, redevelopment and infill so offerings in the Township remain responsive to evolving markets, innovation, as well as regional and local needs while protecting the health and welfare of residents.

3. Connectivity

Improve the safety and overall mobility of pedestrian and vehicular connectivity within the Township.

4. Community Services

Enhance services within the Township that the community values and public spaces provide opportunity for partnerships and improve the residents' quality of life.

5. Natural Resources

Integrate policies of development, conservation and resource amenities that lead to proactive decision making and physical changes in the Township's rural, suburban and urban landscapes.

6. Fiscal Responsibility

Maintain fiscal responsibility as related to the delivery and cost effectiveness of the community's high-quality services.

Key Trends

Population

According to the 2015 US Census data, South Strabane's total population is 9,501 residents, making it the third most populated township among its surrounding communities. This is nearly a 20% increase from those numbers reported as part of the 2000 US Census. The City of Washington, even with decline, continues to rank the most populated with a population of 13,663 residents. North Bethlehem Township is the smallest of the surrounding townships with a population of 1,631 people.

The residents of South Strabane are an aging population. In 2015, the median age was 50.9 years (an increase from 44.8 years in 2000). A majority (55%) of the Township's population are ages 20-64. The second highest age range (26.9%) is residents 65 years of age or more. Conversely, the lowest age range is residents under 5 years of age at 3.6%. The age range decreasing from the 2000 Census data was residents between ages five and 19. These numbers decreased from 17.8% to 14.3%. The presence of an aging population will influence relationships and decisions regarding future land use and supporting services/amenities.

2010 Population

	Total population	Median Age (years)	% under 5 years	% 5 to 19 years	% 20 to 64 years	% 65 years and over
South Strabane Township	9,346	48.6	4.7%	15.2%	55.6%	24.6%
Amwell Township	3,751	44.9	5.7%	17.4%	62.3%	14.6%
Canton Township	8,375	44.8	5.3%	17.0%	59.2%	18.5%
Chartiers Township	7,818	47.5	4.5%	15.3%	58.0%	22.2%
East Washington Borough	2,234	32.3	3.0%	24.1%	60.1%	12.8%
North Bethlehem Township	1,631	44.5	5.2%	18.2%	62.1%	14.5%
North Franklin Township	4,583	48.1	4.7%	15.9%	55.0%	24.4%
North Strabane Township	13,408	42.8	6.2%	17.5%	59.1%	17.2%
Somerset Township	2,684	47.2	4.4%	16.7%	60.7%	18.3%
Washington City	13,663	38.2	5.6%	16.3%	64.1%	14.0%

**2010 US Census Demographic Profile Data*

2015 Population

	Total population	Median Age (years)	% under 5 years	% 5 to 19 years	% 20 to 64 years	% 65 years and over
South Strabane Township	9,501	50.9	3.6%	14.3%	55.1%	26.9%

**2015 American Community Survey*

Millage

A quick view of millage rates for Washington County communities during the period of this Comprehensive Plan’s effort include the following. One of the important considerations in comparing and/or evaluating these types of rates is the relationship of tax rates to the types of services that each municipality provides its residents and businesses.

Washington County Millage	0.00243		
MUNICIPALITY	MUNICIPAL MILLAGE	SCHOOL DISTRICT	2017 SCHOOL MILLAGE
AMWELL	0.0007	TRINITY	0.0136
CANTON	0.00053	TRINITY	0.0136
CHARTIERS	0.0008632	CHARTIERS-HOUSTON	0.0119855
EAST WASHINGTON	0.002749507	WASHINGTON	0.0151578
NORTH BETHLEHEM	0.00141	BENTWORTH	0.011562
NORTH FRANKLIN	0.00145	TRINITY	0.0136
NORTH STRABANE	0.00103	CANON-MCMILLAN	0.01109
SOMERSET	0.0011	BENTWORTH	0.011562
SOUTH STRABANE	0.001	TRINITY	0.0136
WASHINGTON (LAND)	0.03421	WASHINGTON	0.0151578
WASHINGTON (BLDG)	0.00358	WASHINGTON	0.0151578

Education

While the Township continues to grow older, it experiences fluctuations in school aged residents. As of 2015, there are 1,775 residents in school: 5.9% are in nursery or preschool, 7.1% are in kindergarten, 34.3% are in grades first through eighth, 26.6% are in grades ninth through twelfth, and 26.2% are at the college or graduate level. South Strabane also saw an increase in college and graduate level students. In total, 7,401 residents attained a high school education or higher. 92.5% of these people graduated from high school or higher, while 28.3% received a bachelor's degree or higher. From these patterns, the residents of South Strabane value learning and the opportunities it provides.

2010	Education Enrollment						Education Attained (Age 25+)		
	School Aged Population 3 yrs +	Nursery or preschool	Kindergarten	Grades 1-8	Grades 9-12	College or graduate school	Residents 25 yrs+	High school or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher
South Strabane Township	1,778	1.9%	3.5%	43.8%	25.6%	25.3%	7,147	89.9%	28.4%
Am well Township	692	11.0%	6.2%	38.7%	21.0%	23.1%	2,753	90.4%	21.2%
Canton Township	1,468	11.7%	7.2%	40.9%	22.0%	18.1%	6,365	84.0%	14.4%
Charters Township	1,560	7.5%	5.3%	54.9%	19.7%	12.6%	5,813	89.0%	22.2%
East Washington	849	2.5%	1.6%	16.8%	8.5%	70.6%	1,240	96.8%	53.4%
North Bethlehem Township	305	3.9%	5.2%	41.0%	29.5%	20.3%	1,104	91.1%	24.7%
North Franklin Township	1,046	7.5%	7.7%	44.3%	20.1%	20.5%	3,347	89.5%	28.0%
North Strabane Township	3,152	8.4%	5.7%	42.0%	24.3%	19.6%	9,587	92.8%	38.4%
Somerset Township	516	0.8%	3.5%	52.7%	18.6%	24.4%	1,983	89.8%	21.1%
Washington City	3,385	8.7%	5.8%	31.4%	16.4%	37.6%	9,017	83.7%	14.5%

*2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

2015

2015	School Aged Population 3 yrs +	Nursery or preschool	Kindergarten	Grades 1-8	Grades 9-12	College or graduate school	Residents 25 yrs+	High school or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher
	South Strabane Township	1,755	5.9%	7.1%	34.3%	26.6%	26.2%	7,401	92.5%

*2015 American Community Survey

Employment

There is a steady labor force in the area at 56.9%. This is categorized as residents 16 years of age or older who actively work or are seeking employment. This number totals 7,992 people. While the employed population consists of 4,325 residents, the unemployment rate increased from 2.0% to 2.6% since the last US Census report in 2000. There are numerous industries in which these Township residents work. The majority of employed residents work in the education, health care, or social assistance sectors. Other high areas of employment include: retail trade, arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, food service, professional, scientific, management, and administration. The lowest areas of employment increase are wholesale trade, agriculture, and information. Further, the sectors that decreased since the 2000 Census are: retail trade, manufacturing, transportation, warehouse, utilities, and other. The amount of time it takes people to travel to work is longer than in previous years. The average commute time for employed residents is approximately 22.9 minutes which indicates a 13% increase since 2000.

Industry of Employment

	2015		2010								
	South Strabane Township	Amwell Township	Canton Township	Chartiers Township	East Washington Borough	North Bethlehem Township	North Franklin Township	North Strabane Township	Somerset Township	Washington City	
Employed population 16 yrs+	4,429	4,325	1,883	4,243	3,902	1,233	673	2,055	6,804	1,241	6,034
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	3.7%	2.2%	1.6%	1.8%	2.9%	2.4%	3.9%	1.9%	2.0%	5.8%	1.9%
Construction	4.1%	5.9%	9.0%	6.1%	9.0%	3.7%	14.0%	5.6%	5.5%	14.2%	4.0%
Manufacturing	10.2%	9.8%	15.0%	15.9%	10.3%	1.6%	11.3%	11.3%	9.6%	11.4%	10.3%
Wholesale Trade	1.2%	0.8%	6.1%	2.9%	4.0%	1.7%	1.6%	4.9%	2.5%	0.2%	2.2%
Retail Trade	18.3%	12.4%	12.9%	12.3%	10.3%	14.5%	17.7%	10.7%	13.4%	11.4%	12.4%
Transportation, warehouse, utilities	3.6%	4.0%	7.6%	4.2%	4.9%	1.1%	5.9%	3.1%	4.4%	6.0%	4.8%
Information	2.2%	2.2%	3.9%	1.4%	1.1%	0.5%	2.5%	2.5%	3.0%	2.3%	1.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	8.3%	5.6%	2.5%	6.5%	8.0%	5.4%	2.7%	4.5%	7.9%	5.2%	2.9%
Professional, scientific, management, administration	9.3%	11.1%	7.6%	8.4%	7.6%	6.2%	5.2%	11.2%	11.9%	8.1%	6.5%
Education services, health care, social assistance	23.9%	26.2%	20.3%	23.9%	22.8%	45.5%	24.8%	25.6%	22.2%	25.3%	29.6%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	7.1%	11.4%	7.8%	5.8%	9.8%	12.1%	4.5%	10.3%	11.8%	8.0%	17.0%
Other	4.0%	3.1%	5.0%	5.2%	6.0%	3.6%	4.8%	3.3%	4.1%	0.9%	3.4%
Public administration	4.1%	5.4%	0.7%	5.6%	3.0%	1.9%	1.2%	5.0%	1.7%	1.3%	3.5%

Households

As of 2015, 4,721 housing units were constructed in the Township. This is a 37% increase from 3,444 housing units in 2000. However, occupied housing units decreased from 96.4% to 93.2% and, as a result, vacancy rates increased from 3.6% to 6.8%. This is a similar trend in neighboring townships such as Amwell, Canton, Chartiers, East Washington, North Bethlehem, and Somerset. Home ownership also decreased since the last US Census. The US Census reports that the rate of home ownership (2011-2015) is 67.8% - a rate consistent with nation-wide trends. Reports also indicated a decrease in home ownership without a mortgage. These numbers trended from 42.3% (2000) to 40.6% (2010). As of data reported in 2015, the median household income is \$60,069, while the per capita income is \$35,625. The average persons in a household decreased from 2.56 in 2000, to 2.19 in 2010 and to 2.16 in 2015.

Majority of residents moved into their homes between the years 2000-2009 and live in homes that were primarily built before the year 2000. The amount of 1-unit detached (single family homes) housing structures decreased from 75.1% to 67.9% in 2010. Other housing types to experience a decrease in this timeframe are 2-units (carriage homes), 10-19 units (apartments), and mobile homes.

2010 Individual and Household Income

	Median household income	Mean household income	Per capita income
South Strabane Township	\$56,911	\$69,645	\$28,561
Amwell Township	\$67,825	\$71,378	\$28,207
Canton Township	\$55,393	\$62,425	\$23,351
Chartiers Township	\$59,067	\$68,358	\$28,213
East Washington	\$61,736	\$95,164	\$30,766
North Bethlehem Township	\$53,611	\$73,713	\$34,542
North Franklin Township	\$54,481	\$67,085	\$25,242
North Strabane Township	\$68,232	\$80,973	\$31,251
Somerset Township	\$57,361	\$72,584	\$26,631
Washington City	\$33,616	\$43,869	\$14,818

**2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates*

2015 Individual and Household Income

	Median household income	Mean household income	Per capita income
South Strabane Township	\$60,069	\$75,577	\$35,625

**2015 American Community Survey*

Community Character

An examination of the community's physical form provides important context for the relationships of future decision making. While not all types of resource information, such as potable water lines or oil/gas pipelines, is currently available in mapping form, it is important to consider the overall character of and past mining patterns within the community as it is influential to broad land use planning. As part of the planning process, a blending of what exists physically and in terms of policy comes together in what is commonly identified as a "build-out analysis." An analogy of this is taking a "whole pie" (land that remains available for development or what is commonly referenced and mapped as 'gross developable area') and slicing out "pieces" (features an/or dimensional criteria based on local, state or federal policies). The resulting relationship identifies the extent of "remaining pie" (potential developable areas or what is commonly referenced and mapped on the following pages as 'net developable area'). The purpose of this buildable area assessment is to understand the big picture view of the relationships between the land's capacity for development and community policies for density. From this type of analysis, general projections of population and development change can be generated.

Perspectives

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, residents and those in the real estate market expressed a variety of perspectives about the assets of life in South Strabane.

- South Strabane is the heart of Washington County and is a preferred area to live in the Washington zip code. The Township is conveniently located to all shopping and highways.
- While other townships offer "more value", there are more buyers than homes in South Strabane which is a good sign for the community.
- Trinity is a great school district and Trinity East Elementary is a huge draw for younger buyers.
- Residents would like to see a recreation center, updated amenities at the park, a more modern public pool, and more of a neighborhood feel without the closeness of living on top of each other.
- Although people enjoy the shopping and restaurants, some people feel the area is too congested and prefer to live in a more rural setting.
- Overall, residents are very happy in South Strabane. The police do a good job, roads are maintained, and it is a clean community.

Source: The Existing Generalized Land Use is based on Washington County Tax Roll data, 2010. Base GIS data provided by the Washington County GIS Department, 2017.

Gross Developable Acreage is made up of the following Generalized Land Uses:

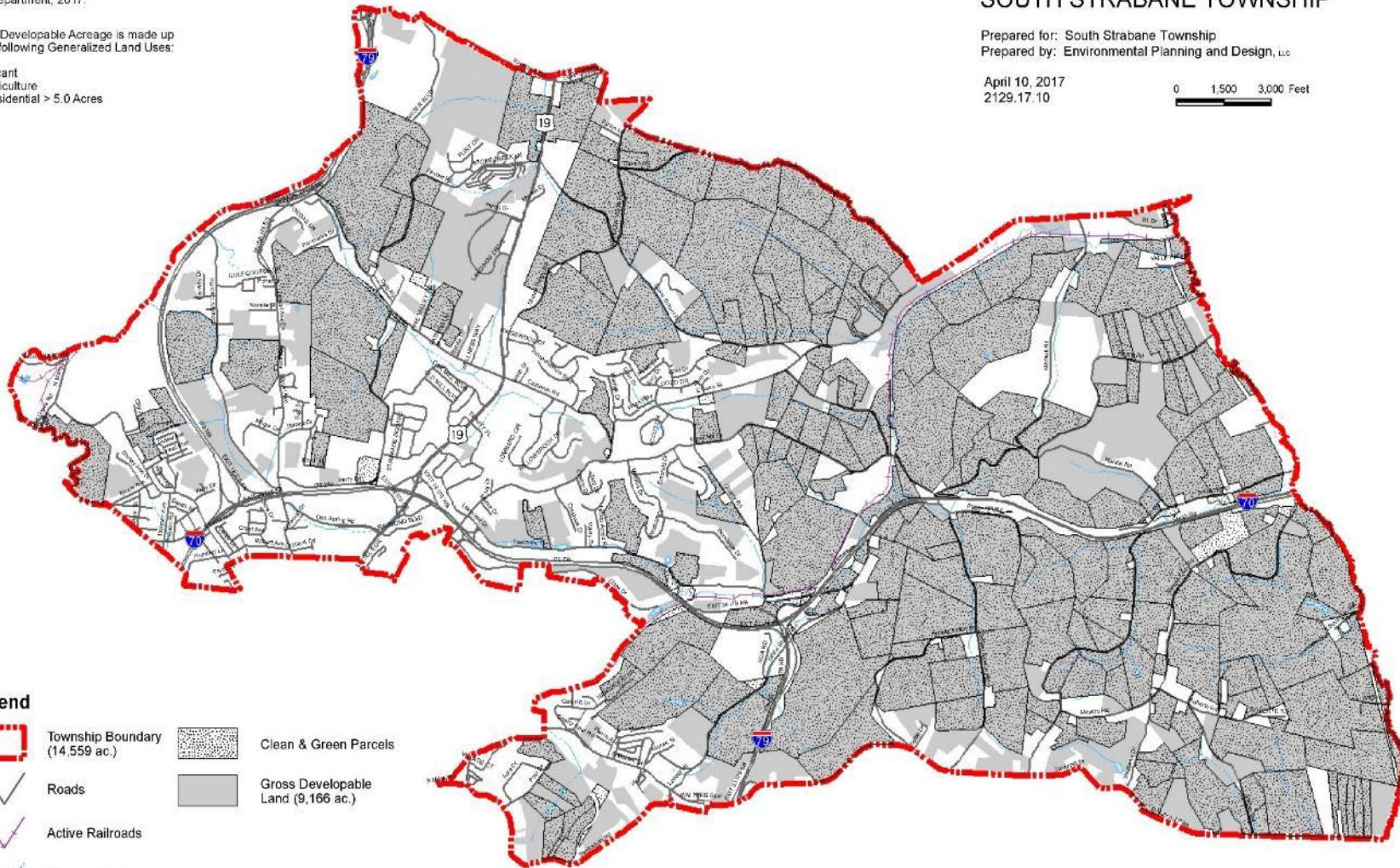
1. Vacant
2. Agriculture
3. Residential > 5.0 Acres

GROSS DEVELOPABLE LAND MAP
SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP







Prepared for: South Strabane Township
 Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

April 10, 2017
 2129.17.10

0 1,500 3,000 Feet



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Township Boundary
(14,559 ac.) |  | Clean & Green Parcels |
|  | Roads |  | Gross Developable
Land (9,166 ac.) |
|  | Active Railroads | | |
|  | Streams/Ponds | | |

Part 1: Introduction

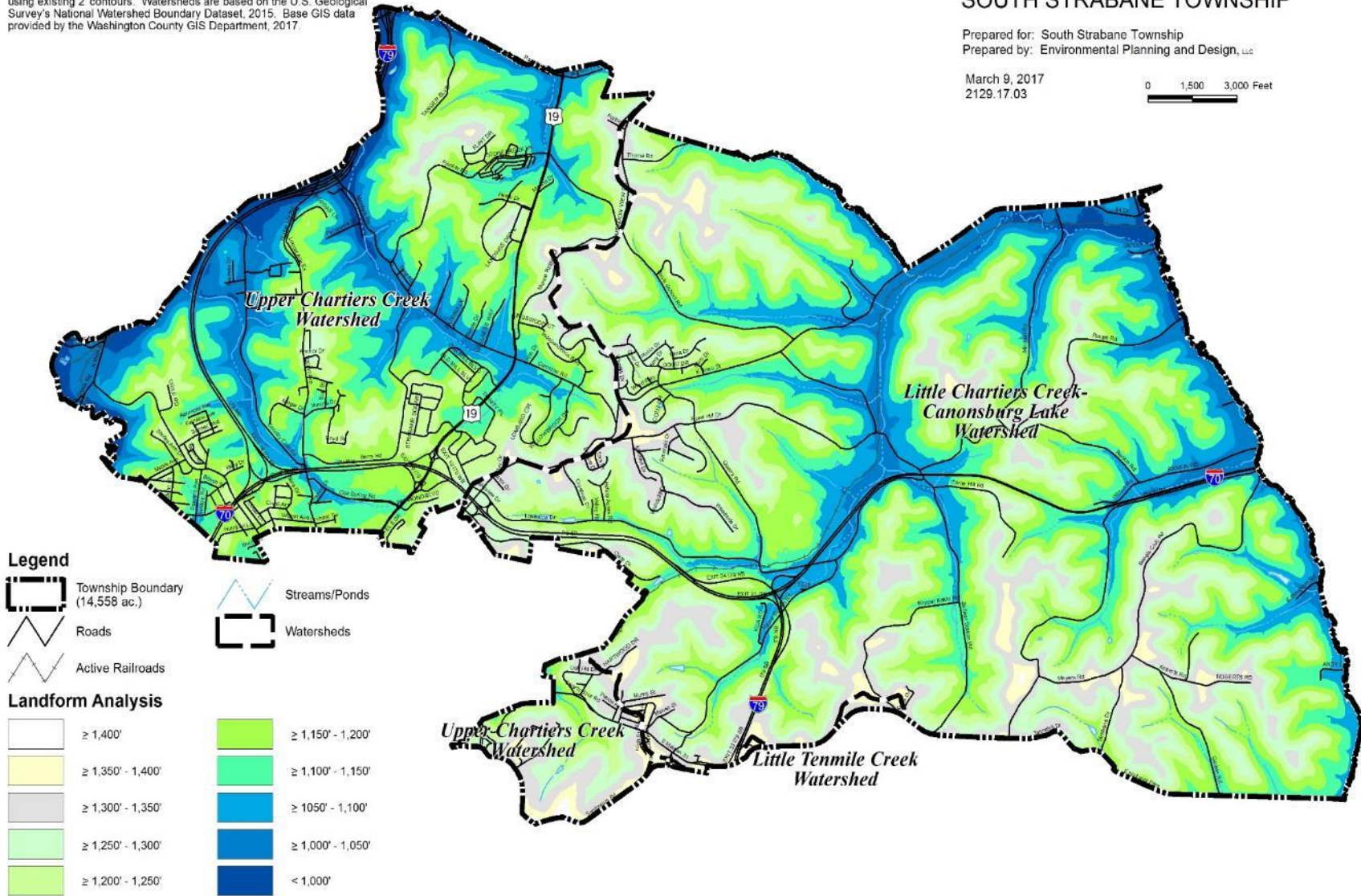
Source: The Landform Analysis Map is based on LIDAR topographic data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' PAMAP Program, 2008. The Landform Analysis was generated using existing 2' contours. Watersheds are based on the U.S. Geological Survey's National Watershed Boundary Dataset, 2015. Base GIS data provided by the Washington County GIS Department, 2017.

LANDFORM & WATERSHED MAP SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP

Prepared for: South Strabane Township
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

March 9, 2017
2129.17.03

0 1,500 3,000 Feet



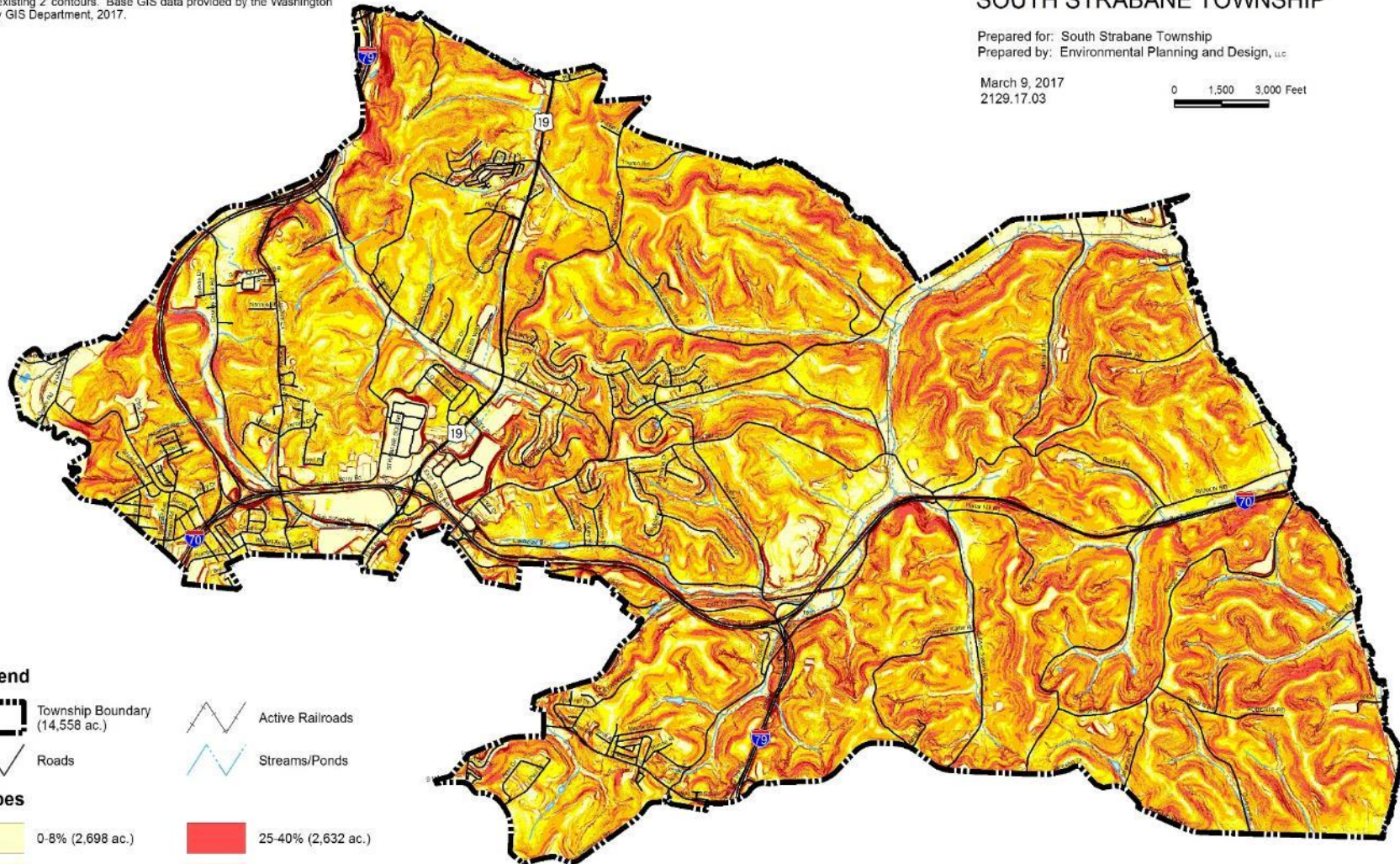
Source: The Slope Analysis Map is based on LiDAR topographic data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' PAMAP Program, 2006. The Slope Analysis was generated using existing 2' contours. Base GIS data provided by the Washington County GIS Department, 2017.

SLOPE ANALYSIS MAP
SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP










Prepared for: South Strabane Township
 Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

March 9, 2017
 2129.17.03

0 1,500 3,000 Feet



Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Township Boundary (14,558 ac.) |  Active Railroads |
|  Roads |  Streams/Ponds |
| Slopes | |
|  0-8% (2,698 ac.) |  25-40% (2,632 ac.) |
|  8-15% (3,212 ac.) |  >40% (853 ac.) |
|  15-25% (5,163 ac.) | |

Source: The Existing Generalized Land Use is based on Washington County Tax Roll data, 2010. Base GIS data provided by the Washington County GIS Department, 2017.

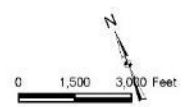
Sensitive Resources includes:

1. Surface Water (25' buffer).
2. High Quality Streams (150' buffer).
3. Wetlands (50' buffer).
4. 100 Year Floodplain.
5. Steep Slopes (slopes > 25%).
6. Active Oil & Gas Wells (1,500' buffer).





SENSITIVE RESOURCES MAP
SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP

Prepared for: South Strabane Township
 Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

April 10, 2017
 2129.17.12



Legend

-  Township Boundary (14,559 ac.)
-  Sensitive Resources
-  Parcels
-  Roads
-  Active Railroads

Source: The Existing Generalized Land Use is based on Washington County Tax Roll data, 2010. Base GIS data provided by the Washington County GIS Department, 2017.

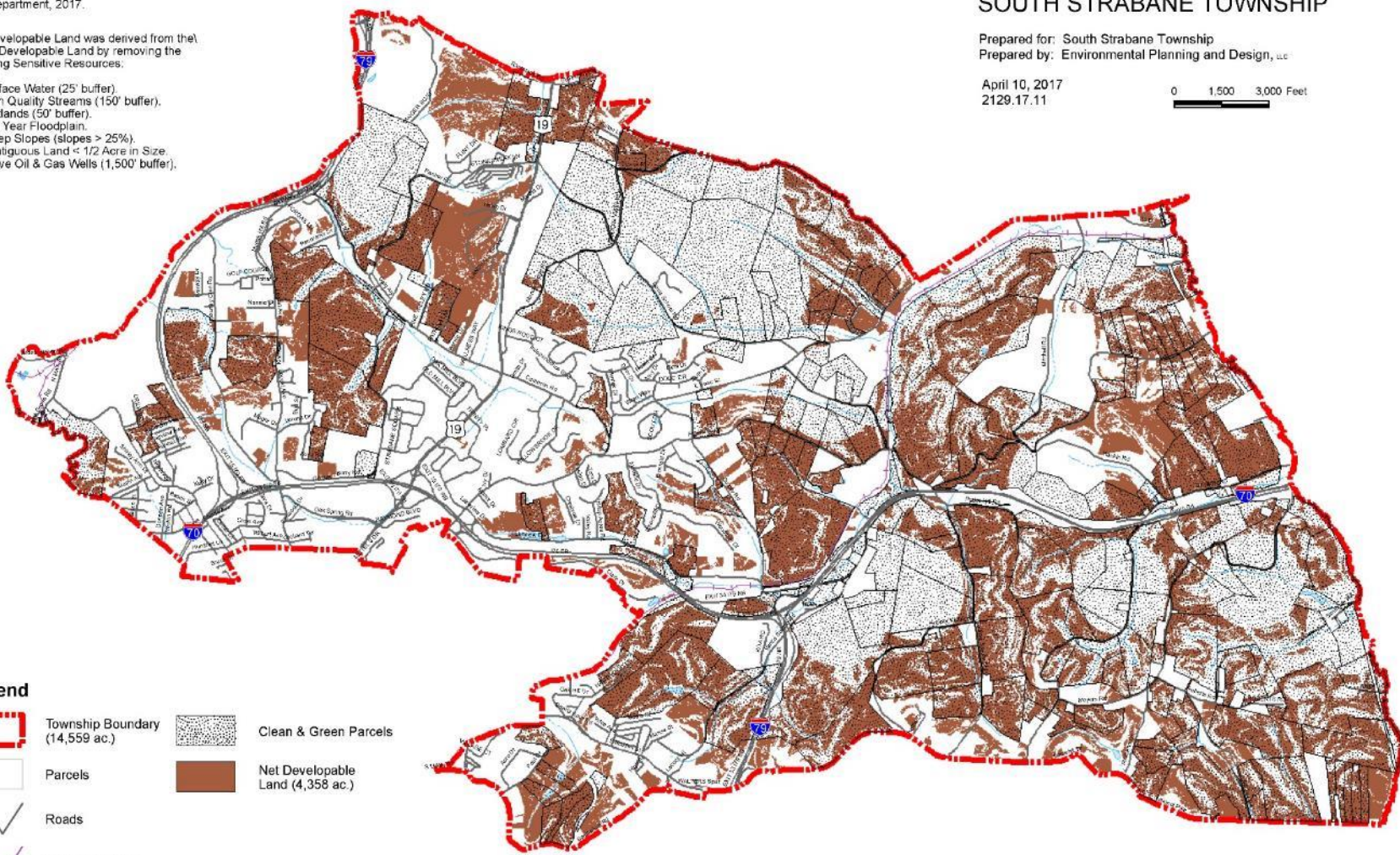
Net Developable Land was derived from the Gross Developable Land by removing the following Sensitive Resources:

1. Surface Water (25' buffer).
2. High Quality Streams (150' buffer).
3. Wetlands (50' buffer).
4. 100 Year Floodplain.
5. Steep Slopes (Slopes > 25%).
6. Contiguous Land < 1/2 Acre in Size.
7. Active Oil & Gas Wells (1,500' buffer).

NET DEVELOPABLE LAND MAP
SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP

Prepared for: South Strabane Township
 Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

April 10, 2017
 2129.17.11



Legend

- Township Boundary (14,559 ac.)
- Parcels
- Roads
- Active Railroads
- Streams/Ponds
- Clean & Green Parcels
- Net Developable Land (4,358 ac.)

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When potential growth is also considered with the reality of limited public service delivery in the eastern portion of the municipality, then a significant percentage of calculated units in the A-1 district will likely not be realized. Further, based on discussions throughout the comprehensive planning process, there was a desire expressed to ensure, that as part of the big picture view, the eastern portion of the Township remains rural.

Baseline Data

1. Average persons per household ¹	2.20		
2. Employees per developable non-residential acre ²	7.63		
3. Municipal operating costs per resident ³		4. Municipal operating costs per non-residential unit ³	
Police	\$123	Police	\$30
Fire/Ambul.	\$65	Fire/Ambul.	\$16
Public Works	\$87	Public Works	\$21
Other	\$177	Other	\$43
Total	\$452	Total	\$110
5. Local school district costs per student ⁴			
Schools	\$8,125		

Notes:

- 1: Based on 2010 US Census Data (= total population/total households).
- 2: Employment population based on 2015 Tax Revenue
- 3: Relative operating costs based on the 2015 Municipal Budget.
Cost ratio between residents (9346) and employees (9609) is 80% to 20%.
- 4: Based on Expenditures per Pupil on Pennsylvania School Performance Profile, 2012-13 (Local revenue = \$26,315,317.03; total revenue = \$46,309,756.57)

Buildout/Yield Analysis - includes Oil/Gas setback dimensions

Zoning District	Development Statistics									
	Developable Area (ac)	Density	Students per D.U.*	Persons per D.U.*	Total D.U.'s	Dev'ment Sq. Ft.	Total ADTs	Residents	Students	Employees
C-1	31	0.35				472,626	3,294			237
C-2	230	0.25				2,504,700	17,458			1,755
C-3	122	0.25				1,328,580	9,260			931
I-1	32	0.20				278,784	1,943			244
I-2	546	0.18				4,281,077	29,839			4,166
A-1	1,994	1.00	1.31	2.20	1,994		14,815	4,377	2,620	
R-1	177	1.00	1.31	2.20	177		1,694	389	233	
R-2	1,077	2.00	1.31	2.20	2,154		20,614	4,728	2,830	
R-3	145	3.00	0.20	2.20	435		2,893	955	87	
R-4	0	0.00			0		0	0	0	
Total	4,354				4,760	8,865,767	101,810	10,448	5,770	7,333

Notes:

ADTs- Average Daily Trips

D.U.- Dwelling Unit

*Based on 2010 US Census Data

PART 2: VISION

Overview

From the goals, the Comprehensive Plan's ideas for the future come together. Recommendations within this Comprehensive Plan aim to produce positive results for the overall community while being realistic and cost-effective.

This Plan revolves around a series of central themes:

- **Creating compatible residential, non-residential and mixed-use land use patterns**
- **Conserving agricultural land uses and rural character**
- **Balancing infrastructure and transportation demands with attainable resources**
- **Enhancing connectivity and safety within both vehicular and pedestrian networks**
- **Pursuing mutually beneficial partnership opportunities when they arise**
- **Enhancing and protecting the health of residents**

For each series of objectives, where it is applicable, key recommendations are highlighted. These key recommendations complement or frame the context for the full range of the Comprehensive Plan's concepts that the Township aims to pursue over the coming decade. More specific information about each key recommendation is also included in the Action Plan table found at the end of the document.

Land Use and Housing

In realizing continued success in comprehensive planning into the coming decade, land use, housing and development remain an important aspect of community discussion and action. With years of continuing growth, preserving the existing identity of the Township's rural areas remains a priority. Along with changes in the residential landscape, changes to nonresidential development and employment opportunities have occurred. More commercial development exists in the community today, and there is still opportunity for growth, as well as emerging potential for redevelopment.

The way in which future residents can experience a genuine sense of community in South Strabane Township will shape residents' quality of life and their desire to further invest their time and talents within the community.



South Strabane has areas of suburban growth and of rural settings

Residential and non-residential development have blossomed in the western portion of the Township in proximity to convenient regional and local access. The eastern portion of the Township has been significantly undermined in the past 100 years. With limitations of infrastructure expansion in the east, the underserved land is anticipated to preserve the community's rural distinction.

Reflecting on the 2015 American Community Survey conducted through the US Census Bureau, the Township is home to approximately 9,500 residents and 4,720 housing units. Most of these housing units were built before 2000, and there is a perception that most of these homes are of an older housing stock. That being said, in comparison to most other municipalities in Washington County, South Strabane has constructed significantly more residential units since 2000. Existing neighborhoods are significant contributors to the community's character. As the Township looks to the future, the balance of land, community character and capacity are the drivers in determining potential for new development, achieving successful redevelopment and limiting impacts on sensitive resource areas.

The support of residential growth for those of all ages is also balanced with a healthy non-residential development base. Clustered primarily along or near Route 19 and the I-79 interchange, businesses are an important component of quality of life in the Township.

The Township's commercial nucleus currently comprises restaurants, as well as big-box retail stores, making shopping convenient for both residents, nearby neighbors and those throughout Washington County.

Throughout the process of creating this plan, the Township has expressed the desire to ensure non-residential development stability within South Strabane. Benefiting greatly from its non-residential sector, South Strabane envisions that redevelopment of regional businesses and attractions will likely happen sooner than later. A mix of large-scale and smaller-scale commercial development will complement each other and augment the variety of retail centers in the Township. Additionally, future redevelopment of the existing commercial core can be considered if vacancy occurs (see Economic Vitality).

South Strabane has opportunity to identify its community core or possibly community "cores." With the mixture of larger-scale and smaller-scale business corridors, private-sector construction has had limited design supportive of walkability and pedestrian-scale massing. Concepts of elevating the sense of community, through both infill and strengthened vehicular and pedestrian connections throughout the community, as well as within a potential 'Town Center', are important to South Strabane. Through its policies, the Township can shape the character and interconnections of future development as it sees most advantageous.

When planning for future land use, the Township will also be exploring the balance of land use in context of needed commitments for public services, as well as short- and long-term costs. Ensuring the community is proactive in minimizing any potential domino effect of blight in Pancake, Patton, Manifold/Panorama, as well as Township-wide, is important to the municipality's residents. Considering the balance of residential versus non-residential land use is a planning aspect the

Township needs to continuously assess as development and redevelopment are proposed.

Along with oil, gas and mining activities, economic and development influences exist in its agricultural landscape. Where desirable, opportunities exist for landowners to work with Washington County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in conserving and securing this landscape with long-term rural protections and benefit.

Objective 1: Encourage development that best utilizes existing building stock, complements neighboring land uses and established community character, encourage “close-to-home” access to goods and professional services, and is sustainable.

- Develop an evaluation tool associated with fiscal, physical, social and environmental trade-offs of decisions within and outside of Infrastructure Service Areas.
 - Highlight proximity and potential interconnections of public spaces/areas.
 - Evaluate proposed development in the context of how it interfaces with resources and infrastructure availability.
 - Continue to uphold key cultural/historic working landscapes with land use and development controls. Encourage the continuation of lands and locations for locally cultivated agriculture and its economy.
 - Encourage commercial development/ reinvestment and strategically located light industrial-oriented development/reinvestment along major corridors in non-residential areas.



Predominate housing types and choices are single-family homes

- Maintain community character throughout existing neighborhoods and developments.
- Continue Township support for policies and programs that make resources more available
- Continue to be proactive in minimizing the domino effect of blight. Areas sensitive to its potential impacts are Pancake, Patton, and Manifold/Panorama

Objective 2: Continue to provide a full range of housing types throughout the community to encourage retention of long-term residents and to attract a new generation of residents.

- Maintain and update (as needed) a New Resident Welcome series through the Township website; and in cooperation with local realtors, promote the area's housing options and to assist new and potential residents in understanding Township opportunities and requirements, available resources and regulations.
- Prepare a housing strategy that reflects existing residential development characteristics. Goals of this strategy are to support housing that is:
 - diverse and provides for a mix of socio-economic interests
 - sustainable and well-designed
 - in character with the surrounding neighborhood
 - strategically located to ensure effectiveness of public safety, public works, infrastructure and transportation system capacities

✓ **Key Recommendation**

Maintain and update (as needed) a New Resident Welcome series to promote the area's housing options and to assist new and potential residents to understand Township requirements, available resources and regulations. The packets should feature Township quality-of-life initiatives.

- Develop public-private partnerships where possible and practical to realize construction of residential housing product/price point that can attract and retain those to invest in a home within the Township:
 - seniors who desire to maintain residency in the Township
 - young adults and young families new to the community but in need of a different housing product/price point/investment (owner versus renter) than what is currently available
- Stay abreast of available loan/mortgage program information relevant to young adults through discussions with banks, real estate agents, large local employers and other regional entities to understand current market influences
- Reach out to existing and prospective residents with a promotional campaign and a new resident "welcome package" to:
 - outline advantages for long-term residents to remain within the community
 - encourage home ownership throughout the community especially within traditional, single-family neighborhoods



Rolling hills of the Township

Objective 3: Strategically address land use and development issues and reinforce the community's high-quality development standards.

- Complete strategic ordinance updates to public improvements (e.g. aligning sidewalks, bikeway, lighting, signage and landscape construction) with priority areas for development, redevelopment and connectivity.
- Formalize ways in which quality open space and opportunities for non-vehicular connectivity can be realized within residential and non-residential developments.

Objective 4: Utilize existing zoning and subdivision ordinances to encourage greater development synergies, understanding and compliance.

- Continue to support zoning provisions as applicable to concentrate commercial and residential development in the areas where they already exist and in those areas where the land meets these specific uses.
- Focus on compatibility and open spaces in residential areas, and emphasize the importance of transitions between existing and developing areas.
- Maintain consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and community ordinances for a well-balanced and cohesive environment in the Township.



Neighborhoods are important points of identity in the Township



Pasture land

Economic Vitality

Economic vitality in the Township is a crucial aspect of growth and resilience. While a commercial sector is beneficial to any community in terms of a reliable tax base, a community consisting primarily of regional retail has its challenges in years ahead as market trends shift. Business trends are shaped by many influences, including:

- Changing customer needs, such as increasing or decreasing product or service usage
- Changing demographics, such as the trend for children to stay at home longer
- Pricing, such as a market trend to discounting
- Technology, such as the increasing use of online purchasing
- Economy, such as interest rate changes and job growth
- Global factors, which are changes in the world economy
- Social factors which are changes in social behavior such as online networking and shopping

- Communication/Media such as the increased use of social media by certain customers
- Small, resident-owned businesses

In general, long-term underutilized or vacant commercial spaces can result in a snowball effect. The Township recognizes that these challenges for the commercial sector can impact quality of life in the community.

The stability of locally oriented businesses is equally important to the predominance of large-scale businesses and services. Following consumer trends is an important aspect that the Township can focus on when considering redevelopment of their commercial sector. The Township has the opportunity to call upon the expertise of local resources such as the Chamber of Commerce to identify what trends are happening and when. Preparing for change with a proactive outlook and development policies that promote compatibilities of redevelopment and infill is fundamental to economic vitality in South Strabane.

Objective 5: Promote South Strabane Township as a business-friendly community.

Through many decades, the municipality has aimed to proactively address the intricate relationship and balancing of residential and non-residential land uses. In doing so, land use policies can align with balanced fiscal management strategies. South Strabane seeks to further success of its non-residential development areas by:

- Creating a New Business Information series on the Township's website to assist new and potential business owners in understanding Township requirements, available resources and regulations.
- Exploring partnerships with entities at the local and county levels, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to ensure healthy discussions regarding possibilities and realization of continued business location and/or expansions within the Township.
- Strengthening community identity based upon a concept such as South Strabane as a destination. Develop a method and messaging associated with regional attractions and components of quality of life (e.g. Tanger Outlet, Trolley Museum, employment opportunities [professional, service and production-oriented jobs], farmers' markets and agriculture products)



Connectivity

South Strabane is comprised of numerous roadways varying in capacity and traffic intensity. Two of the busiest roads that experience intense traffic patterns at higher speeds are Route 79 and Route 70. In some portions of these routes, there are 20,000 AADT (annual average daily traffic) while other portions have 40,000 AADT. Some roadways that are not as highly-trafficked but still used quite frequently are: N. Main Street, Locust Avenue, E. Beau Street and E. National Pike (or E. Maiden Street), Cameron Road, Oak Spring Road and Berry Road. Although these are frequently used, they are not well-suited for handling current and ever-increasing traffic patterns. Other public roadways throughout the Township include: Manifold Road, Country Club Road and Davis School Road. Route 19 is another highly-trafficked roadway that runs through the Township and is a main regional arterial roadway that connects to the City of Pittsburgh. This route experiences 20,000 to 40,000 AADT north of Cameron Road and 10,000 to 20,000 AADT south of Cameron

Road. This route also provides direct access to the major commercial and retail developments located within the Township. Because of this, there are many intersections of concern along Route 19.

Recommendation: Implement Access Management throughout portions of Route 19.

According to PennDOT's Access Management Model Ordinance for Pennsylvania Municipalities Handbook, 'access management hinges on balancing two concepts—mobility and accessibility. Mobility refers to the movement of traffic while accessibility refers to the ability of traffic to enter and exit a roadway from adjacent properties. Roadway systems are developed in a hierarchical structure aimed at best serving both of these functions. Higher order facilities (e.g., Interstates, arterials) are intended to play a greater role in providing mobility, while lower order roadways (e.g., collectors, local roads) are intended to serve a greater role in providing access to property. Research shows that corridors that implement access management techniques share the following features:

- Increased roadway capacity (statistics range from 23% to 45%)
- Decrease in the number of vehicular crashes (studies have shown upwards of 50% reduction in the number of crashes)
- Improved safety conditions for bicycles and pedestrians
- Encourage orderly and cohesive commercial development
- Reduced need to widen roadways for additional capacity

The federally oriented Transportation Research Board's Access Management Manual identified 10 principals for access management:

1. **Provide a specialized roadway system** – It is important to design and manage roadways according to the primary function they are expected to serve
2. **Limit direct access to major roadways** – roadways that serve higher volumes of regional through traffic need more access control to preserve traffic flow
3. **Promote intersection hierarchy** – an efficient transportation network provides appropriate transitions between different roadway classifications
4. **Locate signals to favor through movements** – longer, uniform spacing of signals on major roadways enhance the ability to coordinate adjacent signals and maintain the desired speed

5. **Preserve the functional area of intersections** – remove/restrict driveways within the functional area of the intersection where vehicles stop, decelerate, and queue
6. **Limit the number of conflict points** – reducing the number of conflicting movements and the complexity of the driving task can reduce collisions
7. **Separate conflict areas** – drivers need sufficient time to address one potential set of conflicts before facing another
8. **Remove turning vehicles from through traffic lanes** – turn lanes allow drivers to decelerate gradually out of the through lane and wait in a protected area to complete the turn
9. **Use non-traversable medians to manage turn movements** – medians can minimize left turns and reduce conflicts, which in turn improve safety
10. **Provide a supporting street and circulation system** – a supporting network of local and collector streets to accommodate development puts less stress on the arterial roadway network

Based upon the potential benefits outlined above, in order to mitigate persistent traffic challenges the Township experiences, an Access Management Overlay is recommended to cover portions of Route 19. PennDOT recommends a multi-tier approach to access management. Each successive tier is relatively more complex and more involved from a planning and implementation process. As part of its detailed transportation planning and development application approval process, South Strabane is able to evaluate and incorporate access management solutions that best fit its overall transportation network. The following summarizes the basics of each tier.

- **Tier 1** – these design practices relate to the number and location of site driveways and basic design elements that should be evaluated for every access. These practices would be evaluated during the land development process; therefore, coordination with County and PennDOT officials is essential for implementation of these practices. The access management practices associated with this tier include:
 - Number of driveways per site
 - Driveway corner clearance
 - Driveway sight distance
 - Joint and cross access to adjacent parcels
 - Access to outparcels
 - Driveway apron length

- Driveway apron width
- Driveway radius
- Driveway profile

- **Tier 2** – these design practices involve more complex design elements for individual driveways. These practices are also evaluated during the land development process but require an even higher level of coordination with County and PennDOT officials. The access management practices associated with this tier include:
 - Auxiliary turn lanes
 - Left turn lanes
 - Acceleration lanes
 - Driveway spacing
 - Signalized intersection spacing
 - Driveway clearance from interchanges

- **Tier 3** – these design practices involve the highest level design elements and planning practices implemented over a much larger area such as a corridor. These practices require the highest level of coordination with County and PennDOT officials. In addition, these practices can also require cooperation with adjacent land owners. The access management practices associated with this tier include:
 - Implementation of an access management overlay zoning district
 - Implementation of an Official Map
 - Two-way left turn lanes
 - Frontage/service roads
 - Non-traversable medians
 - Development setbacks
 - Development bonuses and incentives (e.g. permissible height increases)
 - Pre-existing access

Implementation of Access Management is anticipated to best be achieved through the use of a Zoning Overlay. An overlay district establishes additional requirements over an existing zoning district while the underlying regulations are retained. In addition, an access management overlay district would not affect existing driveways unless the owner

requests to modify the driveway, change the use, or expand the existing use. The benefits of extending the overlay district along portions of Route 19 would be that over time, these existing developed areas would gradually change from the unlimited access today to a more controlled, efficient access in the future.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity Plan

Another element of the smart transportation approach to transportation planning and programming for South Strabane Township is a pedestrian and bicycle connectivity plan. The focus of the connectivity plan is to connect high population areas to destination areas. This would include connecting neighborhoods to Township parks and schools, as well as to commercial areas.

The goal of the pedestrian/bicycle connectivity plan could not only be to increase availability and opportunities for recreational use, but could also look to increase the extent at which traveling by foot and/or bike is viewed and used as a true transportation mode. The pedestrian/bicycle connectivity plan could serve as an opportunity to connect neighborhoods to each other and to the commercial district better promoting a sense of community.

Implementation of the overall plan should also look to incorporate pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities as a part of all transportation projects. The Township may want to evaluate the ways in which the components of pedestrian and bicycle planning could come to fruition as part of the Complete Streets Study including developing preliminary streetscape designs for infrastructure funding considerations; conducting final design work inclusive of right-of-way acquisition and utility work once funding is secured and, ultimately, implementing streetscape improvements.

Objective 6: Enhance the transportation infrastructure to promote ease and safety for vehicular traffic.

- Develop vehicular street connections between existing corridors and collector roads in conjunction with future land development activities.

- Continue to prioritize roadway and key intersection improvements based on PennDOT's Twelve-Year Program.
- Create a Township Transportation Plan based on the PennDOT Smart Transportation Initiative.

The State of Pennsylvania and PennDOT have developed the current Smart Transportation Initiative to support multi-modal transportation facilities that are safe and affordable, responsive to the needs of all users, and supportive of community planning goals. Smart Transportation promotes the implementation of transportation strategies and improvements based upon an understanding of financial constraints, community needs and aspirations, land use, and environmental constraints.

Other planned improvements should be focused on addressing the specific corridors and intersections of concern. The Township should also continue to evaluate the potential and need for new roadway alignments and roadway extensions. One of these that would assist with creating a more complete transportation network within the Township and is consistent with future land uses.

A clear and concise transportation plan can assist a local municipality as it partners with and provides input to PennDOT during the planning and development of a transportation project. An effective plan will also assist the municipality and Washington County in implementing improvements along local roadways. A key component of the transportation plan could include language pertaining to the importance of promoting multi-modal transportation facilities to provide the local community with an efficient and effective transportation network.



Navigating intersections varies in complexity throughout the Township

Part 2: Vision

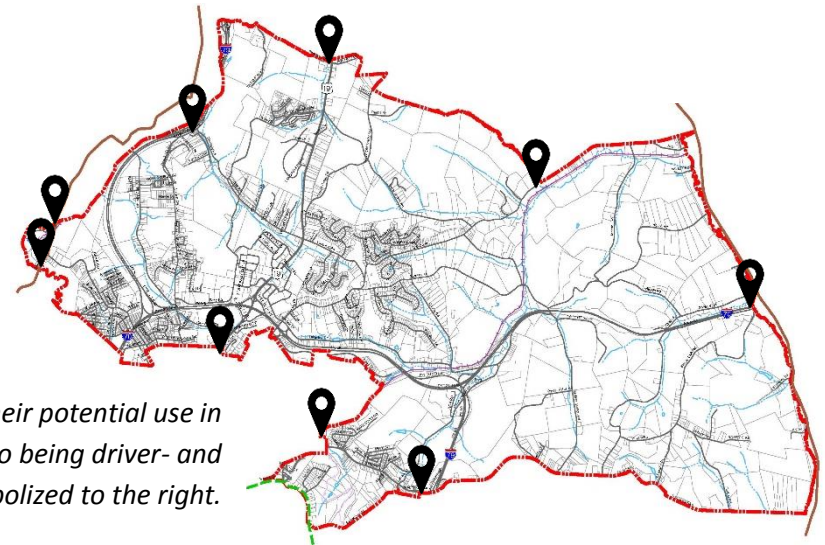
Objective 7: Enhance the transportation infrastructure to promote ease and safety for non-vehicular traffic and pedestrians.

Pedestrians and bicyclists are legitimate users of a transportation system. All transportation projects should start with an evaluation that includes gaining an understanding of land uses and zoning along and adjacent to a project corridor. Based upon the continued development growth in South Strabane, it is recommended that the feasibility of non-vehicular traffic connections be evaluated along the entire Route 19 corridor. In doing so, safe and realistic connections between adjacent residential neighborhood areas and the commercial corridor populated with services and shops can be identified.

This type of assessment would assist in developing a thorough understanding of the existing and future needs of motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists alike.

It is recommended that the community:

- Form a Township-led wellness program that is based on the existing transportation network and is continuously implemented as new development occurs.
- Create and publish a Recommended Pedestrian Routes Map.
- Analyze areas of concern such as intersections along Route 19 for safety coordination/improvements.
- Work with the South Strabane Police and the Trinity Area School District to host pedestrian/bicycle safety/education days.



Consider identifying gateways and their potential use in emphasizing/informing drivers of the Township aims to being driver- and pedestrian-friendly. Potential major gateways are symbolized to the right.

Objective 8: Develop a focused Complete Streets network through transportation projects in an affordable, balanced, responsible and equitable manner that accommodates and encourages travel by motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and ability.

The promotion of a multi-modal transportation network coincides with the Complete Street approach to smart transportation planning. *SmartGrowthAmerica.org* defines a complete street as “safe, comfortable, and convenient for travel for everyone, regardless of age or ability – motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation riders.” A local municipality can implement a Complete Streets Policy through a variety of avenues, including: ordinances/resolutions; comprehensive plan; and design guidelines and standards. No matter the implementation avenue, the right type of policy for South Strabane Township must be based upon an understanding of existing conditions and the future vision with respect to land use and zoning. The implementation of Complete Streets could focus on providing the safe and effective pedestrian and bicycle facilities at a few key areas within South Strabane Township—focused along and adjacent to key corridors and community destinations.

- Create and implement a system that includes the evaluation of every transportation project to understand the impact and effectiveness of multi-modal transportation solutions with a goal of providing an integrated network of facilities that

are safe and convenient for people of all ages and ability.

- Create and implement a **Pedestrian/Bicycle Connectivity Plan** which improves pedestrian and bicycle access to schools, neighborhoods, parks, shopping, restaurants and other destinations.
- Coordinate with community and regional organizations as applicable regarding the extent and pursuit of potential funding avenues for identified multi-modal projects.



Multi-Modal Transportation Opportunities

South Strabane Township's overriding goal related to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity is focused on creating a network of connectivity that is affordable, balanced, and equitable and that accommodates and encourages travel by motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and ability.

Gateways

Gateway treatments provide a sense of arrival, as well as a means of welcoming visitors into a local community. When positioned properly, a gateway can also function as a means of traffic calming. Effective gateway treatments are positioned along key routes and visible from the appropriate direction. Visibility of a gateway can be enhanced through the use of public art, landscape plantings, lighting and other aesthetic treatments.

In the case of South Strabane, gateways could be used to mark the arrival to the exterior limits of commercial areas. Unless done in cooperation with private property owners, development of gateway features may require additional right-of-way.

Community Resources

From parks and recreation amenities to communication methods, the Township's community resources focus on delivering the intangibles – the elements of quality of life that make home feel like home.

Objective 9: Develop and pursue a Comprehensive Amenities Action Plan

- Work with community groups, the County and other applicable private entities to construct recreation and open space facilities and linkages.
- Partner with other institutions locally and throughout the region that promote current offerings in Lifelong Learning programs to enrich the lives of retirees who live in or are relocating to South Strabane Township.
- Identify and formalize policies associated with ways in which existing and future civic space becomes integral with development and accessible to the community's overall pedestrian network.
- Ensure efficiency and effectiveness of Township services through coordination between the community-wide Amenities Plan and its transportation planning efforts (Objective 6)

Objective 10: Plan future growth and development to conserve and preserve natural resources, cultural amenities and environmentally sensitive areas.

- Establish a Public Infrastructure Service Area to ensure all natural resources are well-maintained and managed.
- Designate areas that encourage mixed-use development.
- Consider using conservation easements, transfer of development rights and other strategies to preserve and conserve specific open spaces that are important to community character and quality of life.
- Work with land owners interested in County/State-wide farmland programs to further conservation of rural resources in the less developable areas of the Township.
- Continue to promote preservation of riparian areas to protect water quality.
- Continue to implement and update stormwater management and floodplain management initiatives to protect public safety, public health, as well as the quality of local streams.
- Continue to identify and understand how the community's amenities and activities contribute to its cultural and historic landscape.



Serenity in the Landscape

Parks and Open Space

South Strabane has the opportunity to build upon past planning successes and investments by enhancing its system of parks, recreation and open space. In updating the Township's overall planning strategies for park and recreation, the municipality can identify detailed recommendations associated with the management, facilities, maintenance, programs and financing associated with its parks, recreation and open space. Properly balancing each of these recommendations allows for an enhancement in the parks and recreation opportunities throughout the Township.

Currently, there are four public parks throughout South Strabane:

- Billy Bell Park
- Driscoll Park
- Streator Park
- Community Park

Billy Bell is the second largest park at 6.3 acres. Within the park, there are two baseball fields, one soccer field, one basketball court, playground equipment, ½ mile of trails, eight exercise stations, a pavilion with a kitchen and grill, water fountains, restrooms, and limited parking.

Driscoll Park is 2 acres and has parking for 20 cars. There is also a baseball field, a pavilion with tables and a grill, and playground equipment.

Streator Park is the smallest of the parks with .5 acres. Inside the park is a pavilion with picnic tables, one baseball field, one basketball court, playground equipment, and limited parking.

Community Park, the largest of the parks, is 73 acres in total. There is a pavilion with picnic tables, portable restrooms, playground equipment, one baseball field, ¾ mile walking trail, one basketball court, one sand volleyball court, one multi-purpose field, and parking for 40 cars.

Currently, the four parks are maintained by the Township with support from the Park-Recreation Council. As demand for services grow and as new residents consider what amenities are important to their overall quality of life, the delivery of parks, recreation and routine maintenance services becomes even more significant. Thus, as South Strabane continues

to grow in all aspects as a community, the municipality can evaluate what needs, if any, exist to incorporate professional expertise and time to manage recreation facilities and programs most efficiently and effectively. A successful system of parks and recreation incorporates a wide range of opportunities for those of all ages, abilities and interests.

One example of measuring service delivery is rooted in the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Gold Standard for parks and recreation. The Gold Standard is 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. The current estimated population of South Strabane is 9,500± residents while the build-out population could, as permissible by today's zoning densities, reach an additional 10,488 residents. Park acreage and open space in the Township is currently 81.8 acres, putting it at 8.2 acres below the NRPA Gold Standard for today's population level. When considering the build-out population, the Township park acreage and open space is 18.2 acres less than the NRPA Gold Standard calculation. Opportunities for enhancing facilities as well as partnering with public and private sector institutions and businesses could broaden recreation-related enjoyment in a cost-effective manner while meeting its aims to enhance quality of life for community residents.

Public Services

South Strabane Township's leaders and staff are interested in and committed to advancing the effectiveness of service delivery. As identified through the comprehensive planning process, the Township is dedicated to further enhancing efforts of communications and cooperation in order to see the Plan's recommendations through to implementation. As part of delivering South Strabane Township's Plan for further improving local government and services, the Township has identified several objectives to address continued community distinction, which are covered in detail on the following pages.



The Township Police Department

South Strabane Township is a community which greatly values its public services. The community's public services include fire, police, and emergency management, public works and infrastructure maintenance and planning, code enforcement, financial management of public resources, as well as land use planning and zoning. Like most

communities, South Strabane is deeply passionate about the safety and service of its citizens. The community's total proposed 2017 expenditures are \$5,494,575, and \$2,448,050 of that budget is dedicated for public safety services, a portion that equates to 44%.

In May of 2017, the Township held two public open houses where citizens were invited to view exhibits of the Comprehensive Plan and share their ideas and opinions about public services. Participants expressed satisfaction with the level of public safety its able to provide its community. Based on the 2015 Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System, South Strabane contributes 9.2% to Washington County's overall crime rate. This is a result of a higher rate of property crime (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, white collar theft and vandalism) and a very low rate of violent crimes (sex offenses, assaults, and homicide). From the Reporting System, the rate (measured as per 100,000 population) identifies that the rate of property crime in South Strabane is three times that of the County; violent crimes are approximately ½ of the rate experienced throughout the overall County. Other rates of offenses include robbery that is twice that of the County and drug violations being about ¾ of the County's rate.

During the public open houses, residents that attended shared ideas as to how the Township could improve its safety tactics. It was suggested that providing enhanced communication systems in more remote public areas such as parks, trails and other public spaces, to make alerting authorities easy. As the community assesses all aspects of Township operations, safety improvements can always be considered. Safety is an important consideration in a community's quality of life.

With the knowledge that there is a relationship between environment and land use, as well as a relationship of infrastructure and development intensities, considerations for making wise infrastructure investments (approximately \$600,000+ per 1 mile in 2017) are significant. Infrastructure and code enforcement also directly affect public safety. Considering the theory of "crime prevention through environmental design," a planning foundation ubiquitously acknowledged as a key guideline to community development, there is a direct correlation between blight and safety. For example, if a building becomes vacant, dilapidated, and unmaintained. When the atmosphere of a community projects that there is little care or gaps in maintenance, it can subconsciously encourage citizens to embody this mentality, perpetuating the problem. Further, homes and buildings which do not meet code standards can negatively affect surrounding homes beyond safety – by lowering the real estate value of surrounding homes and buildings.

A report conducted by the Tri-Cog Collaborative, titled *The Financial Impacts of Blight* (see Appendix), explains that blighted property affects the real estate value of a community greatly. While this study was conducted in communities within the Mon Valley, the message remains universal – unmaintained or blighted properties negatively affect a community. The report explains that in general, being within 150 feet of a blighted property reduces the real estate value of a home by 24%. Additionally, if a home or building is not only blighted but also vacant, this puts pressure on the Township to maintain the property, requiring the use of Township resources.

Also, enhanced and/or more frequent communication strategies between the Township, residents and businesses allow for a greater understanding of the areas where public service resources should be applied. Pursuing effective strategies engage residents, and that is a crucial part of any planning process.

No matter the size, where opportunities for shared services between the Township, Trinity School District and other municipalities exist, the Township should evaluate the mutual benefits such partnerships can bring. As the Township moves forward in its growth the balance of how the budget is allocated towards the various elements of public service should be continuously evaluated.

Objective 11: Work to establish a stronger identity for the Township to build a stronger sense of place and to promote meaningful citizen participation in all aspects of local government to inform, engage in and stay abreast of trends.

- Pursue detailed parks and recreation planning and evaluate considerations for related professional staff to aid in delivering quality services.
- Redesign/enhance the Township website. Use the site as a communication tool with residents and update or change content as necessary.
- Outline and implement a coordinated communications strategy that convenes and publishes up-to-date opportunities for involvement in public and quasi-public groups' activities; use a variety of electronic and print media to raise awareness of opportunities in which people can volunteer/stay involved. Determine the media type based on organizational capacity and

Part 2: Vision

realistic goals for ongoing maintenance and production.

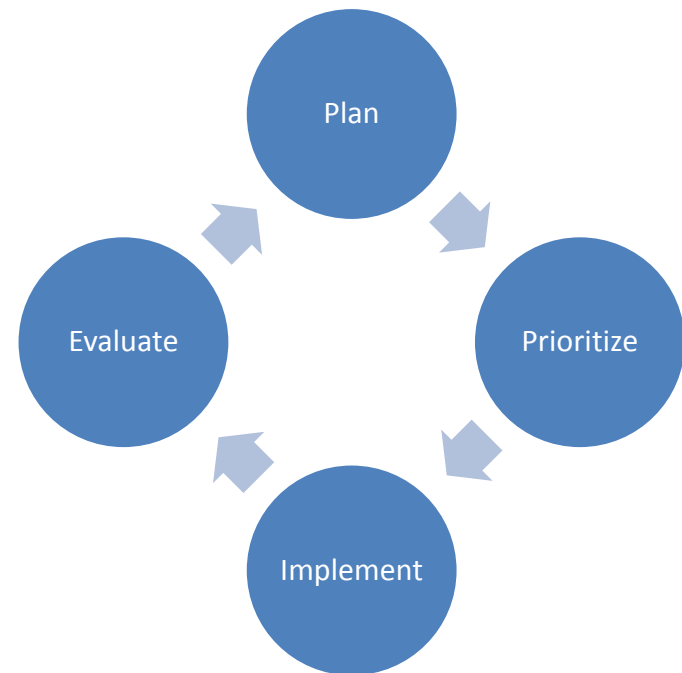
- Organize and expand opportunities for collaboration with Trinity Area School District to energize the community's youth in becoming and staying involved in municipal sponsored/offered activities.
- Create and realize a community current events/promotion campaign focused on South Strabane Township community assets, development opportunities and resident quality of life that highlight the opportunities and benefits of residing/conducting business in the Township. Customize messages to the wide range of age groups, households and levels of businesses that may consider the Township for a future home and/or that may remain within the community as part of transitioning from one stage of life to another. Evaluate opportunities for utilizing

effective, economical community-scale publications as a starting point for the current events/promotion campaign.

- Prioritize Gateways. Integrate gateways into key development areas and points of community access. As development occurs or funds become available, complete Gateway enhancements. (See also Objective 7)
- Conduct biannual information get-togethers (e.g. Informational Breakfasts) with representatives in real estate, Trinity Area School District, developers and business owners, preservation groups and other interested stakeholders to share insights and observations of current and emerging trends within development, education, employment and other relevant community/regional patterns. Consider and respond to relevant planning policy impacts as appropriate.

Objective 12: Track progress related to the on-going implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Form a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to oversee and evaluate the Plan's implementation. Extend the 2017 Plan Steering Committee members to potentially include representation from Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, Township Staff, Township residents, business representatives, Trinity District School board, health care institutions. Provide training for the group as related to weighing potential steps for action and mechanisms for implementation objectively. (See also page 53)
- Create a Report Card and self-evaluate implementation progress on a regular basis; develop an annual report of findings.
- Amend the Comprehensive Plan's socio-economic data following the release of the 2020 US Census data and as market trends shift over time.
- Outline recommended upcoming actions and focus within the annual review report.

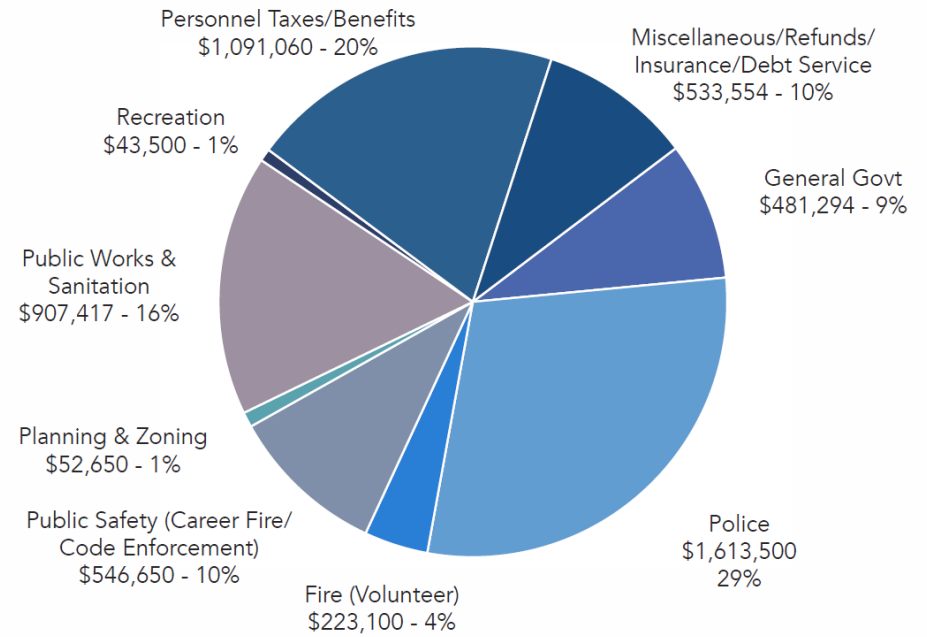


Objective 13: Support public services and facilities necessary to enhance public health, safety and welfare within the framework of responsible spending and debt service so that the needs of a growing and aging community can be met.

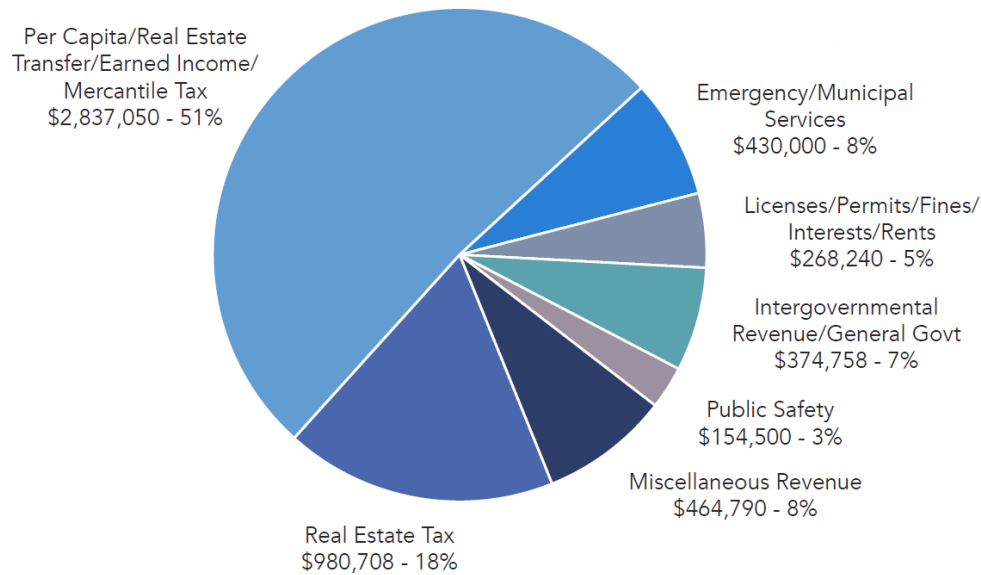
- Continue working to time and align service system extensions with existing areas of population growth. Support sewer/water infrastructure improvements that are aligned with the Public Infrastructure Service Area and seek grants to fund this development.
- Initiate a Coordination Task Force to undertake proactive strategic planning at a regional level in a forum/venue to share information, discuss issues, and evaluate development opportunities/applications in conjunction with Trinity Area School District, Western Area Vocational/Technical School, Penn Commercial Business/Technical School, Washington & Jefferson College and neighboring municipalities as issues or opportunities arise.
- Promote Township-led health and wellness through the use of parks and recreation facilities, seminars/town halls with local/national medical organizations, local health care providers, local fitness facilities, and emergency services.
- Maintain support and continue to improve current recycling efforts setting annual goals for increased participation/volume. Consider working with the Trinity Area School District to undertake a recycling awareness/promotion campaign.
- Coordinate public safety needs in order to optimize delivery of personal and traffic safety services.

A snapshot of Township 2017 budget planning

TOWNSHIP EXPENDITURES



TOWNSHIP REVENUES



Regional Relationships

Seven municipalities either border or are encompassed by South Strabane Township and include the following: Amwell Township, Canton Township, Chartiers Township, Borough of East Washington, North Bethlehem Township, North Franklin Township, North Strabane Township, Somerset Township and City of Washington City. In conformance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the patterns of land use, zoning and future land use plans of these adjacent municipalities were considered during the planning process for development of this plan element.

In general, existing and future land use patterns, transportation patterns, and land use regulations appear to be consistent or compatible with surrounding municipalities. As development continues in the Township and pressures on environmentally sensitive areas increase, coordinated review and consideration should continue with all municipalities. Communication of any regional-scale development should be shared with any potentially impacted communities.



Interrelationships

The Comprehensive Plan considers land use, housing, the environment and transportation. The plan identifies land use, environmental and transportation needs, goals and objectives, preferred goals for the future and strategies that address those elements in an integrated fashion. This plan focuses on planning and developing land uses in concert with transportation infrastructure and public services so the Township minimizes both fiscal and environmental impacts.

Implementation

The following Action Plan summarizes the ideas for implementation. This Action Plan is the result of public input, collaboration with Township staff and input from elected and appointed officials. In understanding the recommendations in context of their objectives (and goals), the community's action plan table reinforces each action. The timeframe for implementation, the lead or potential partners of specific recommendations, generalized costs and possible funding are all factors unique to each recommendation. Priorities can emerge in consideration of human and financial resources available and level of external/internal agency participation (other communities, advisory boards, regional orgs, state agencies, consultants, etc.) which incorporates "complex" and "routine" tasks into the overall array of actions.

To implement complex projects, the cooperation and collaboration of many will most likely be needed. Each project, policy and action will require the commitment

and cooperation of civic leaders, authorities, residents, institutions and businesses. Complex projects also will typically have a high level of direct involvement with elected leaders and Township staff. Smaller-scale projects could be initiated by community leaders but may be supported by volunteers. The manner in which the community's volunteers become engaged in and remain aware of opportunities will be critical to the success of implementing the Comprehensive Plan's actions.

Public-private partnerships are also anticipated to be an important component of Comprehensive Plan implementation. A public-private partnership is commonly formed as a contractual agreement between a public agency (federal, state or local) and a private sector entity. Through this agreement, the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared in delivering a service or facility for the use of the general public.

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Building on past planning successes and the momentum of this Comprehensive Plan's preparation, South Strabane Township should consider establishing a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee early on to enhance communication and coordination in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The Committee will coordinate Plan implementation between Township staff, authorities, boards and commissions, schools, civic organizations, legislators, businesses and faith communities. As the Comprehensive Planning process comes to a close, soon choose a small group to form the initial Planning Committee. This group could prepare a letter of invitation to identified Comprehensive Planning Committee members outlining Committee roles and responsibilities. Once the Comprehensive Planning Committee has come together, their first steps can include the following:

- Define a clear set of rationales or reasons for the Committee's formation and create communication outlets to build public awareness of the Committee and its role/mission/purpose
- Identify the criteria and full range of projects/policies appropriate for Committee action
- Determine the frequency of Committee meetings
- Establish a Comprehensive Plan Progress Card to be used annually to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and status of the Comprehensive Plan's implementation
- Work with identified partners on priority projects and lay the groundwork for upcoming projects
- Utilize the Comprehensive Plan Progress Card as part of pursuits/applications for funding to demonstrate areas that need improvement and areas where improvements have been made

Volunteers and Volunteerism

Volunteers and partnerships will be key to the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Recruiting volunteers—from those who will be asked to sit on the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to residents who will help with community events—can take effort. However, a robust volunteer program encourages community investment and can go a long way towards implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Again, building on South Strabane's past successes the network of volunteers could possibly be expanded.

Cast a wide net. Recruit volunteers through online volunteer websites and social media.

Make it worthwhile. Help volunteers discover that their skills and interests might match open volunteer positions or projects.

Look close to home. Create an atmosphere where people who are already involved in the Township or civic organizations feel personally invited to become part of the Comprehensive Plan implementation.

Reach out to lapsed or one-time volunteers. Ask every departing volunteer and the individuals volunteering with a group if they are willing to be on your e-mail list for periodic updates and notices.

Keep in touch. Three to four times a year, send everyone on this list a "Volunteering Update," sharing what has

been going on in the period. Always include a list of *current openings* for volunteers, particularly short-term projects that someone with the right skills can accomplish relatively quickly. Say that you would love to hear from anyone on the list who might be qualified and interested in any of these roles, and ask them to *tell others* they know about these opportunities.

Be Specific. It is vital to be specific and make outreach efforts timely, inviting applications for assignments currently available. It is not enough to vaguely mention the organization's volunteer opportunities with a universal (and impersonal) "ask us about volunteering" notice. Describe all vacancies and include desired qualifications, time commitment, and other pertinent details. Give a URL where someone can learn even more.

Date any fact sheet, bulletin board notice, article, and whatever informational materials you distribute. Make sure what someone picks up is never older than one month. (Hint: Even if your volunteer opportunities remain somewhat the same, still change the date every month to make sure they feel fresh.)

Enlist paid staff and current volunteers in this recruitment effort. They will benefit from its success.

Key Action Plan

The following Key Actions are those identified in the comprehensive planning process as the most significant foundation stones upon which other Township planning activities can build.

TIMEFRAME (TIME)		ESTIMATED COST LEGEND	
Immediate	1 to 2 years	\$	\$0 - \$10,000
Short-term	2-5 years	\$\$	\$10,001 - \$40,000
Long-term	5-10 years	\$\$\$	\$40,001 - \$100,000
On-going	multiple instances of action anticipated over the course of the Plan	\$\$\$\$	\$100,001 - \$1,000,000
		\$\$\$\$\$	\$1,000,000+
PRIORITY LEVEL			
P Primary			
S Secondary			
POTENTIAL PARTNERS			
PC	Planning Commission		
BoS	Board of Supervisors		
TS	Township Staff		
DCED	PA Department of Community and Economic Development		
WC	Washington County		
CoC	Chamber of Commerce		
PD	Police Department		
FD	Fire Department		
PennDOT	PA Department of Transportation		
MA	Municipal Authority		
SD	School District		
DCNR	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources		

		Time	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Priority Level	
LAND USE & HOUSING						
Goal: Encourage the development of a diversified housing stock that accommodates the existing and anticipated needs of the community's current and future residents.						
Recommendation: Ensure that the Township has the capacity to accommodate population trends with an appropriate variety and supply of housing types while striving to keep the existing housing stock full.						
ACTION	1	Perform an audit of existing housing types and current zoning and SALDO regulations to determine if there are adequate housing options in the Township that can support current populations and future.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS	\$\$	P
	2	Encourage a diverse housing stock that supports the different populations within the Township, such as senior housing. Update the Zoning Ordinance to promote the development of this housing stock in appropriate areas of the Township.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, DCED	\$\$	P
	3	Review and update the existing Zoning Ordinance and SALDO to adequately manage growth, promote quality development, and reflect the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan through the implementation of updated infill and redevelopment standards, necessary impact study requirements, reconfigured parking requirements, etc.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, DCED	\$\$	P
Recommendation: Nurture opportunities for redevelopment and infill in the portions of the Township where roadway and utility infrastructure has been established.						
ACTION	4	Identify viable, practical locations for expanding desired types of development. Concurrently, identify locations within the Township where possible opportunities for redevelopment are appropriate, as well as in context of known sub-surface/mid-stream infrastructure systems.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS	\$	P
	5	Update Zoning Ordinance and SALDO to support these future developments.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, DCED	\$\$	P

		Time	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Priority Level
Recommendation: Preserve parts of the Township which support and celebrate the agriculturally-oriented character of the community.					
ACTION	6 In cooperation with property owners, encourage land owners pursuit of designating agricultural security areas and/or farmland preservation. Using zoning tools, reserve these parcels for limited land use activities based on the farmland preservation program.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, WC	\$	P
ECONOMIC VITALITY					
Goal: Support the non-residential sector of the community – retail, office and industrial development – through land use policies and fiscal management.					
Recommendation: Sustain economic development successes in a healthy South Strabane environment					
ACTION	7 Balance services with attractive millage that draw both residents and businesses to the Township.	On-going	PC, BoS, DCED	\$\$	P
ACTION	8 Identify sensitive resources within the Township and limit through policy to ensure compatible land uses occur there.	On-going	PC, BoS, TS	\$	S
Recommendation: Continue strategic and conscientious planning efforts and assessments to sustain the Township's prosperity and direct future development.					
ACTION	9 Work with local experts to support a long-term redevelopment plan for the large-scale commercial sector of the Township. This plan will focus on ensuring retail facilities support and reflect consumer trends.	Long-term	PC, BoS, TS, CoC, Others	\$	P`
ACTION	10 Update Zoning Ordinance and SALDO to reflect planning initiatives recommended in this Comprehensive Plan.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS	\$\$	P

		Time	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Priority Level	
CONNECTIVITY						
Recommendation: Mitigate traffic issues present within the Township.						
ACTION	11	Ensure economic development enhances the health of residents and is compatible with Article 1, Section 27 of the PA Constitution. Identify intersections within the Township which cause traffic congestion, incidents or overall traffic confusion. Work with PennDOT and other related organizations to find solutions to these traffic issues.	Medium-term	PC, BoS, TS, PD, FD, PennDOT,	\$\$	P
	12	Incent future developments to expand sidewalk	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS	\$	S
	13	Expand public transportation network to encourage	Medium-	PC, BoS, TS,	\$\$\$	S
PUBLIC SERVICES						
Recommendation: Continue to provide a high-quality level of safety service to the community.						
ACTION	14	Continue to allocate an appropriate amount of financial and human resources to public works and public safety functions	On-going	PC, BoS, TS, FD, PD	\$\$\$	P
	15	Consider and pursue beneficial measures as needed to ensure public space safety	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, PD, FD	\$	P
	16	Continue to allocate an appropriate amount of financial and human resources to planning and zoning to ensure proper code enforcement is maintained.	On-going	PC, BoS, TS	\$\$	P
	17	Designate a public infrastructure service boundary to align development intensities with available and planned public services while also minimizing unwanted impacts on the Township's natural resource system.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, MA	\$	P

		Time	Potential Partners	Estimated Costs	Priority Level	
	18	Explore possibilities for enhancing communication strategies between the Township and residents.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, PD, FD, SD	\$\$	P
	19	Consider opportunities for sharing services and greater economies of scale between the school district surrounding municipalities and the Township.	On-going	PC, BoS, TS, SD	\$	P
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE						
Goal: Continue to provide recreational opportunities to the Township that serve all community residents.						
Recommendation: Consider improvements to enhance the Township's existing parks and recreational facilities.						
ACTION	20	Update the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan to expand and focus on initiatives to improve public safety and universal accessibility.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, SD, DCNR	\$	P
	21	Identify additional amenities that are needed or desired for various parks within the Township such as updated equipment, bathrooms, pavilions, etc. Prioritize these improvements or additions based on safety and universal accessibility needs.	Medium-term	PC, BoS, TS, SD	\$\$\$	P
	22	Evaluate and update the structure of service delivery as related to park and recreation facilities, administration, programming, maintenance and financing. Align the structure in context of enhancing year-round recreation within a system that benefits residents of all ages and abilities.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, SD	\$	S
	23	Expand recreational programming for residents of all ages in the Township.	Medium-term	PC, BoS, TS, SD	\$	S
	24	Explore possibilities for sharing recreational facilities and spaces with the school district and/or neighboring municipalities.	Short-term	PC, BoS, TS, SD	\$	S

Glossary of Terms

Blight- An area that is detrimental to the safety, health, and well-being of a community due to factors such as deterioration, faulty planning, inadequate or improper facilities, deleterious land use, or the existence of unsafe structures.

Buildout- Development of land to its theoretical capacity as permitted under zoning designations.

Commercial- Land primarily used for the sale, rental and distribution of products, or performance of services.

Community services- Public services provided to the residents of a community such as fire, police, emergency management, public works, infrastructure maintenance, planning, code enforcement, financial management of public resources, and land use planning and zoning.

Connectivity- The degree to which roadway systems in a certain area are interconnected.

Density- The ratio of dwelling units or employees per unit of area. Density generally refers to residential areas.

Destination- Retail stores and services that attract visitors from beyond the normal retail trade area, often because of the entertainment value or special amenities provided.

Economic development- Programs and activities designed to increase vitality such as new jobs, establishment of new businesses and improvement of existing businesses.

Floodplain management- The measures taken to minimize the negative impacts of flooding such as zoning, subdivision, building requirements or special-purpose floodplain ordinances.

Gateway- A sense of arrival for pedestrians or motorists along a roadway.

Infill- The rededication of land in an urban or suburban setting typically for use as commercial buildings or housing.

Infrastructure- The provision of utilities to support development.

Land use- The management and modification of the natural environment into the built environment.

Mixed-use- Regulations that permit the use of both commercial and residential development.

Multi-modal- A street which accommodates multiple modes of transportation, such as rail, bus and streetcar.

Open spaces- An undeveloped parcel of land that is accessible to the public.

Public infrastructure service area- Infrastructure that is owned by the public or intended for public use.

Public-private partnerships- A relationship between a private-sector company and a government agency for the purpose of providing the public with an asset or service.

Recreation- Active and passive activities in an indoor or outdoor setting.

Riparian areas- The areas bordering land and rivers or other bodies of surface water.

Residential- Land used for dwelling units and its supported amenities.

Sensitive resources- A geographic area defined by natural resources where there is a significant risk of groundwater degradation from activities conducted at or near the land surface.

Stormwater management- The measures taken to minimize the negative impacts of runoff from rainfall or snowmelt on impermeable surfaces such as roadways and parking areas.

The Proposed Future Land Use Plan illustrates the broad classification of general land use patterns for the Township. As this Plan is not a Zoning Map, the Township has the opportunity to consider how specific patterns and intensities of development can be balanced with surrounding uses and conservation of open space as well as how to ensure public infrastructure service areas available in the Township's western half are compatible with land use demands. Public infrastructure is not planned for the Township's eastern half.

Part 2: Vision

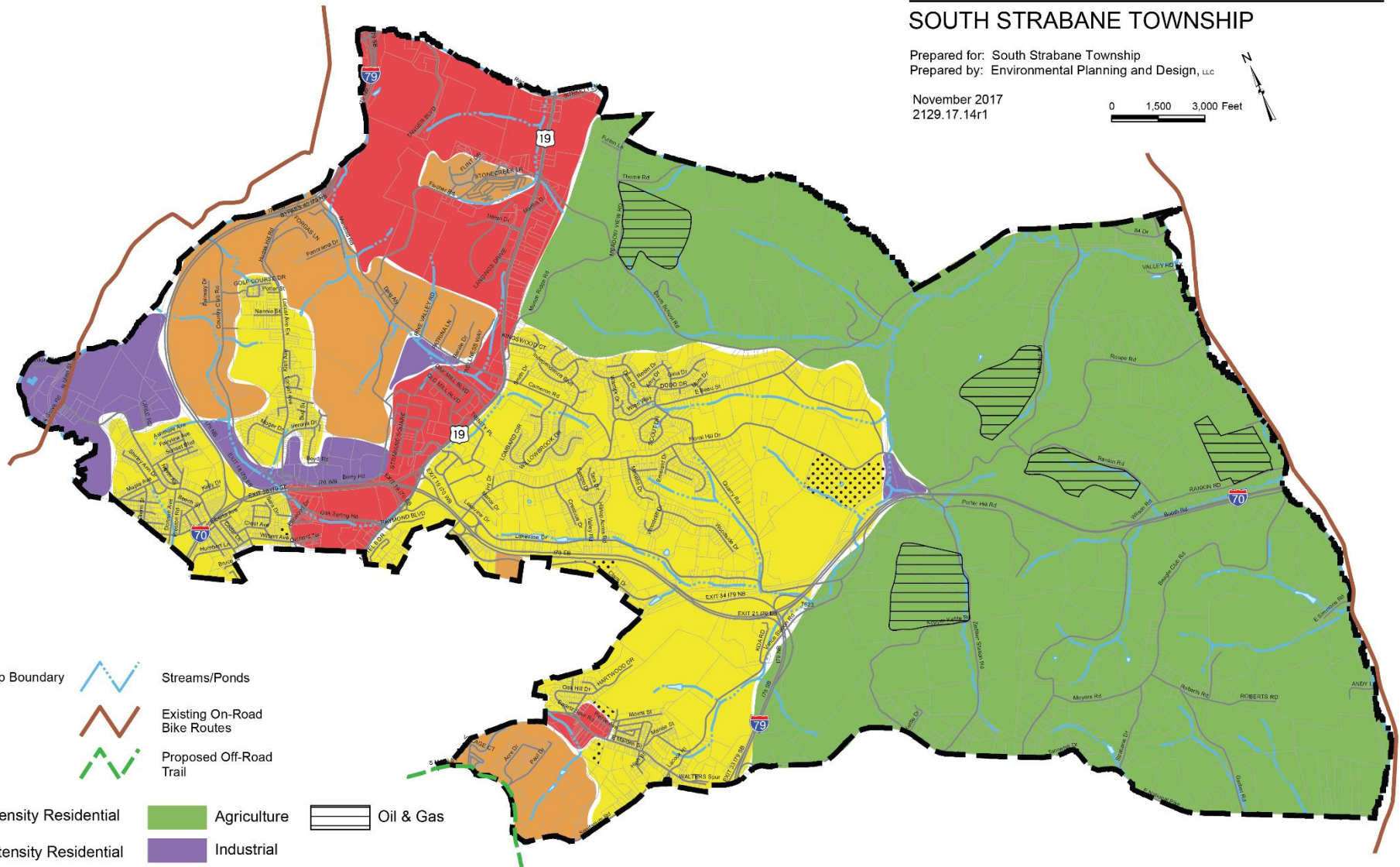
Future Land Use Plan

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP

Prepared for: South Strabane Township
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

November 2017
2129.17.14r1

0 1,500 3,000 Feet



Legend

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| | Township Boundary | | Streams/Ponds |
| | Parcels | | Existing On-Road Bike Routes |
| | Roads | | Proposed Off-Road Trail |
| | Lower Intensity Residential | | Agriculture |
| | Higher Intensity Residential | | Industrial |
| | Commercial/Mixed Use | | Oil & Gas |
| | | | PARK |