



The 2016 Update to the Comprehensive Plan

Lower Swatara Township,
Dauphin County, Pennsylvania

Adopted _____, 2016

Draft for Public Review

September 30, 2016

Prepared with assistance from



Lower Swatara Township Comprehensive Plan

The 2016 Update to the 2004 Township Comprehensive Plan

Draft September 30, 2016

Preparation of this comprehensive plan was funded by the Lower Swatara Township Board of Commissioners and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's Regional Connections Grant Program.

Our Vision

In 2025, Lower Swatara Township will be a community that...

Offers housing choices in type, size, lot size, and neighborhood character.

Values businesses and institutions as employers, resident recruiters, and community partners.

Has new retail and industry that provides employment opportunities, serves residents and attracts visitors and new residents, and improves the Township and school district tax base.

Has proactive and responsive public safety services.

Has new parks and expanded recreational facilities and activities.

Manages water use, including stormwater, to minimize water pollution.

Restores floodprone areas to open space, where feasible.

Manages, maintains, and improves its transportation network and infrastructure for modern use.

Works actively and cooperatively with the Middletown Area School District with regard to community development, recreation opportunities, and commitment to meeting the educational, social and health needs of students and families.

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Tom Eddinger, Dauphin County
Planning Commission and
Tri-County Regional Planning
Commission
Leah Eppinger, former Dauphin
County Planning Commission and
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Plan Purpose and Preparation

The Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is a policy guide for the ongoing development of a municipality in Pennsylvania. The comprehensive plan establishes a foundation for land use and development regulations and a framework for municipal decisions regarding infrastructure and community services. Its purpose is to ensure that municipal decisions regarding community and economic growth are coordinated with the land use plan and with one another.

As a policy document, an adopted comprehensive plan is a guide and reference for officials as they make decisions and approvals. The plan itself does not add, change, or remove municipal regulations, standards, or procedures. Its approval recommends that such action be taken in the future. A comprehensive plan is implemented through ordinance adoption or amendment, budget, and other approvals.

The comprehensive plan establishes a foundation for land use and development regulations and a framework for municipal decisions regarding infrastructure and community services.

Authority and Tools for Municipal Planning

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended, authorizes municipalities to plan for the future using a variety of planning tools. These tools include the municipal planning commission, the comprehensive plan, the official map, the subdivision and land development ordinance, the capital improvement program, the zoning ordinance, and the zoning hearing board. Comprehensive plans are required for counties and are voluntary for boroughs and townships.

The MPC requires that a comprehensive plan consider the many factors that influence a community's development: existing development and infrastructure; anticipated changes in population, housing, and economic development; and associated changes in demand for services. Comprehensive plans are to examine community and economic growth trends, project future change, and recommend a future land use pattern, new or revised development regulations, transportation and infrastructure investments, and community service improvements that accommodate those projections. In addition, the comprehensive plan should include strategies to implement or carry out the plan through the use of applicable planning tools.

The MPC acknowledges that comprehensive planning is an ongoing process—one that needs periodic review and update to address continuing issues in the most effective ways and to address new issues that arise over time. The municipal planning agency—in this case, the Lower Swatara Township Planning Commission—is required to review and, as

appropriate, renew or update its comprehensive plan at least every 10 years (Article III, Section 301(c)). The 2016 Comprehensive Plan is an update of the Township's 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Preparation

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan was prepared through discussions with an appointed Steering Committee, interviews with Township officials and staff, and citizen input. The Steering Committee was charged

- to convey the perspectives of local residents and constituent groups in planning discussions, and
- to maximize public participation by extending the planning effort to others, e.g., sharing discussion points, promoting the webpage for citizen input, and inviting people to public events.

A social media webpage, <https://LowerSwatara.mysidewalk.com/>, was available for citizens to suggest issues and opportunities that the Township's 2016 Comprehensive Plan should address. Paper copies of the webpage's prompting questions were also available.

As required by the MPC, the Planning Commission advertised and held a public meeting to receive comments on the draft comprehensive plan on August 25, 2016. Additional comments were heard at the September 22, 2016 Planning Commission meeting prior to the Planning Commission's acceptance of the draft plan with the following specified revisions:

1. Recommend rezoning of the Williams Farm along the north side of Fulling Mill Road and the adjacent residentially zoned parcels along the west side of Longview Drive to neighborhood commercial at a depth consistent with the existing neighborhood commercial district on the east side of Nissley Drive and Hollywood Drive; add to Future Land Use map.
2. Recommend rezoning of the Williams parcel along the south side of Fulling Mill Road between Lumber Street and the existing Light Industrial Park district; add to Future Land Use map.
3. Specify the extension of Spring Garden Drive eastward from PA 441 to North Union Street as a recommendation.
- 1.4. Specify improvement of the township-owned portion of North Union Street as a recommendation.

Upon acceptance of the draft plan by the Planning Commission, the draft plan was distributed to Dauphin County, the Middletown Area School District, and adjacent municipalities, and made available in the Township office for the required 45-day review period. On (date), 2016, the Board of Commissioners held a public hearing to receive final comments on the draft plan. On (date), 2016, the Board adopted the plan by approval of Resolution [redacted].

Population and Household Trends

Lower Swatara Township had a resident population of 8,268 in 2010, reflecting a steady rise since 1980. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission projects a continued population increase for the Township through 2040, to approximately 9,450 residents.

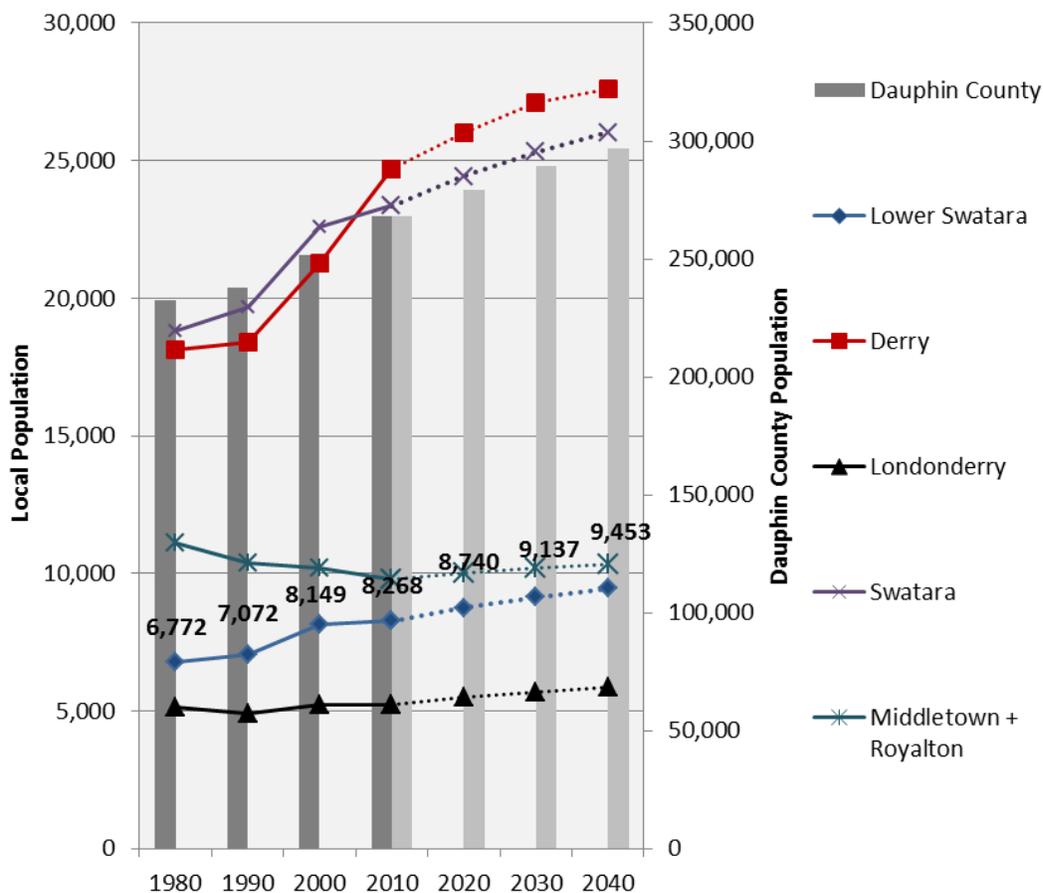
Derry Township, Londonderry Township, and Swatara Township also grew from 1980 to 2010. All three are projected to grow through 2040 with Derry and Swatara Townships growing slightly faster than Lower Swatara and Londonderry Townships.

Middletown and Royalton Boroughs have lost population since 1980. Tri-County projects that this trend will turn by 2020 and the Boroughs will begin to recover.

Overall, Dauphin County experienced a population increase from 1980 to 2010, which is projected to continue.

Lower Swatara Township is projected to continue its steady growth to a population of approximately 9,450 by 2040.

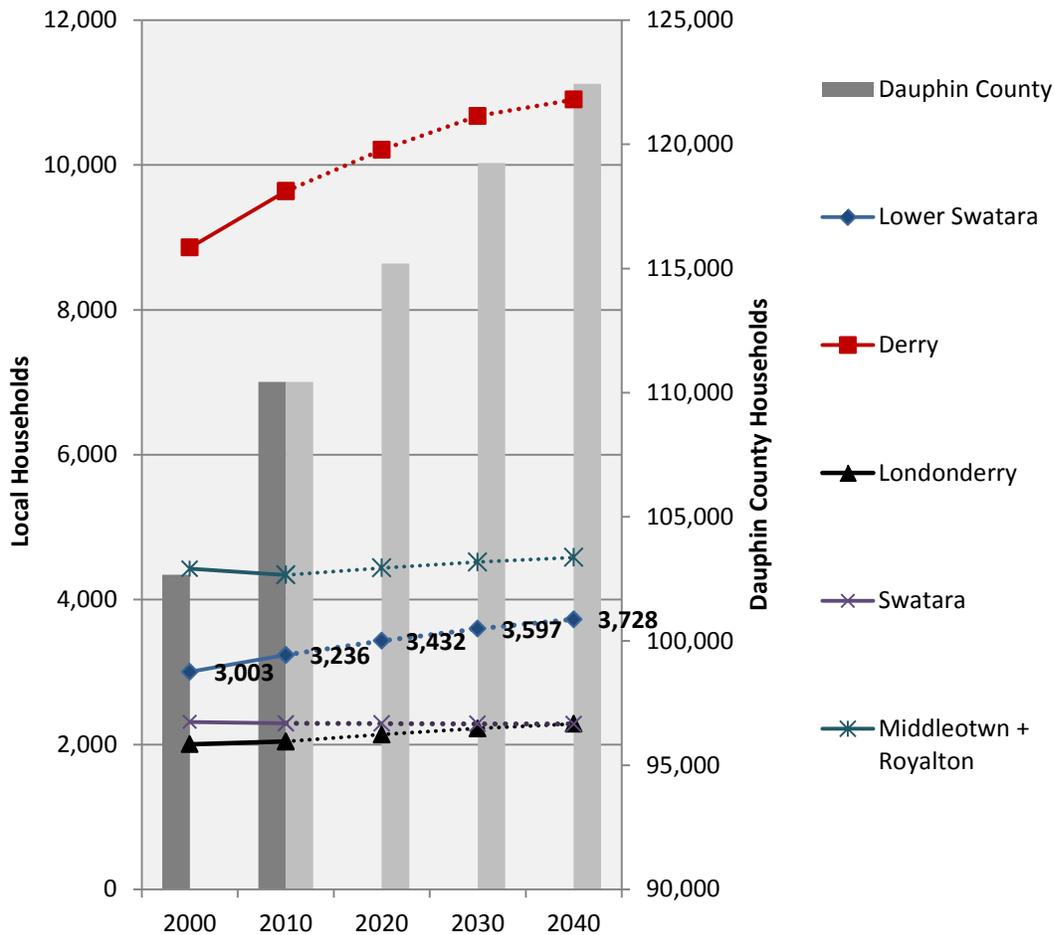
Figure 2-1 Population Change, 1980-2010, and Projections, 2020-2040



Source: 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, HATS/Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

There were 3,236 households in Lower Swatara in 2010. As a result of population growth and household trends, the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission projects an increase to approximately 3,278 households through 2040.

Figure 2-2 Household Change, 1980-2010, and Projections, 2020-2040



Source: 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, HATS/Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Race and Ethnicity

In 2010, 90 percent of Lower Swatara’s residents were white, although the population of two minority race groups, namely African-Americans and residents of two or more races, each increased by 150 or more people since 2000. Over the same time period, the Hispanic population more than doubled to 300 residents (4 percent of the total population) from 2000 to 2010.

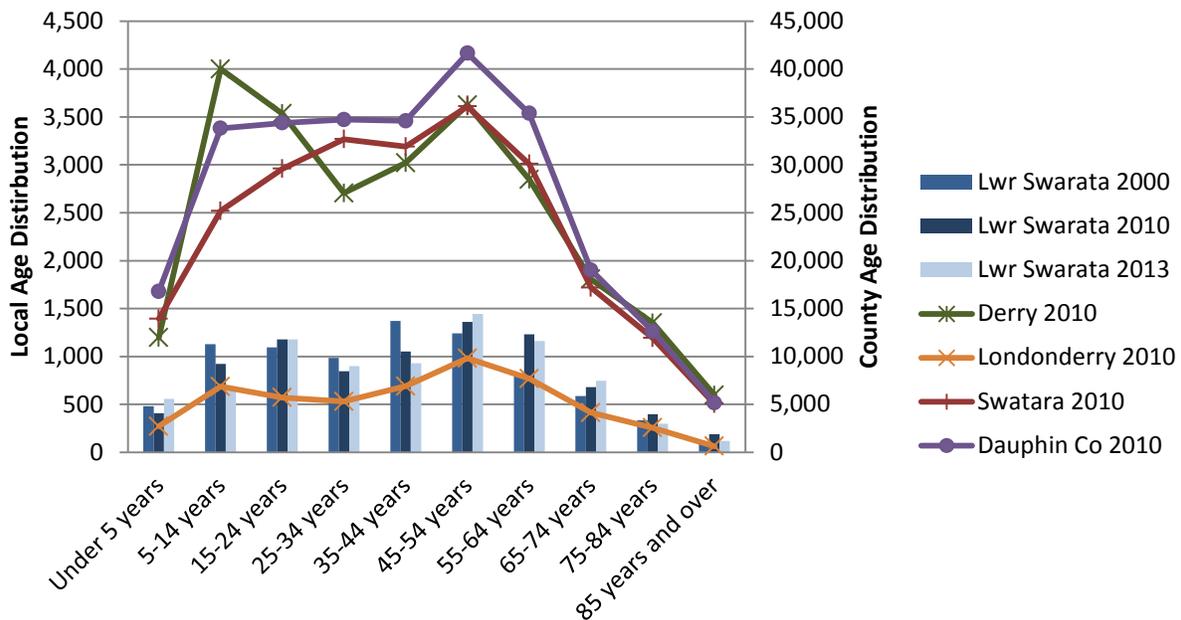
Age Distribution

In 2010, Lower Swatara’s largest age groups were the 45-54 year group, the 55-64 year group, and the 15-24 year group. The youngest and oldest age groups--under 5 years old and 85 years and older--are represented by the fewest residents.

All older adult and senior age groups increased in number from 2000 to 2010, contributing to a rising median age from 38.2 years to 42.7 years. All younger age groups declined, except the 15-24 year age groups, which is likely due to growth in student enrollment at Penn State–Harrisburg.

With a fewer young people in the community, the Lower Swatara’s median age increased to 42.7 years in 2010 and exceeded the County’s median age, 39.1 years.

Figure 2-3 Age Distribution, 2010 and 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Educational Attainment

Educational levels of residents 25 years and older in Lower Swatara are similar to county-wide levels, with 28 percent holding a bachelor’s degree and 9.2 percent holding a master’s, doctorate, or other professional degree.

Households, Household Size, and Composition

In 2010 there were 3,236 households, of which 59.9% were married couples, 9.5% were single female householders, 3.5% were single male householders—all with children—and 27.2% were nonfamily households (unrelated individuals living together). Nearly 1 in 4 nonfamily households were single householders living alone, and 1 in 12 were single

seniors (65 years of age or older). The average household size was 2.41 people and the average family size was 2.85 people.

Household Income

In 2010, Lower Swatara's median household income was \$67,321, and the median income for a family was \$77,776. Both figures were lower for Dauphin County as a whole—\$52,371 and \$66,023, respectively. After accounting for inflation, Lower Swatara's median household income gained nearly three percent in real value since 2000 but median family income showed no real gain.

Lower Swatara's households gained nearly three percent in income value from 2000 to 2010 but family income had no real gain.

About 4.1% of families and 4.2% of the total population were living below the poverty line in 2010, including 4.4% of those under age 18 and 2.6% of those age 65 or older. In Dauphin County, 11.9% of the population was below the poverty line. Likewise, other county poverty rates were higher.

Housing and Neighborhoods

As of the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 3,250 housing units in Lower Swatara at an average density of 220 units per square mile, or three units per acre. Of the occupied units, 87.4% of the housing units were owner-occupied; 12.6% were renter-occupied. Only 4.5% of all units were vacant. Figures were vastly different from Dauphin County, where the renter market was stronger at 35.3 percent, and vacant units (including seasonal) were at 8.3 percent.

According to the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, 82.8% of housing units in the Township were single units (detached or duplexed), 2.8% were in two- to four-unit structures, 1.3% were in five-unit or larger structures, and 13.0% were mobile homes. Regarding the age of housing units, 46.1% were built since 1980, 48.1% were built between 1940 and 1979, and 5.8% were built in 1939 or earlier.

Figure 2-4 Homes along James Street



The median price of a house in Lower Swatara in 2010 was \$144,400; Dauphin County's median home value was \$153,100.

Neighborhoods

The earliest homes in Lower Swatara were farmsteads scattered across the rolling countryside. In the early to mid-1900s as the population grew and personal automobiles became common, individual lots were subdivided from farms and homes were built along streets extending from outside of Middletown and Highspire and along the rural state

highways; North Union Street, Lumber Street, Rosedale Avenue, Oberlin Road and Longview Drive are examples. In the 1950s, residential development patterns changed to create multiple lots for new homes, typically less than 10. Mobile homes were a relatively quick housing solution after Hurricane Agnes displaced area residents in June 1972 and became a permanent as the mobile home parks at Lisa Lake and Little Hollywood. Since then, large scale subdivision and land development has been the predominant means of residential construction, building multiple homes in a planned fashion as a neighborhood. Today, many of these neighborhoods are known simply by their development project names, such as Old Reliance, Twelve Oaks, Georgetown, and Woodridge.

Economy

Major employers in Lower Swatara include FedEx and its affiliates, Tyco Electronics, Phoenix Contact, numerous commercial and industrial entities concentrated along Fulling Mill Road, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, the Harrisburg International Airport, the Penn State Harrisburg and the Middletown Area School District.

According to the 2012 Economic Census, Lower Swatara had 205 business establishments within its borders.¹ These businesses employed approximately 5,500 workers. The three industries with the most businesses were transportation and warehousing (34), wholesale trade (20), and retail trade (19). Together they employed 2,348 workers, or about 43 percent of all workers. Government employer data was not fully reported.

From the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program at the Center for Economic Studies, also at

Figure 2-5 Market Street Extension



Figure 2-6 1400 AIP Drive in the Industrial Park



¹ The Economic Census does not generally include government-owned establishments, even when their primary activity would be classified in industries covered by the Economic Census. Because of these exclusions, economic census data for industries in many sectors might appear to be incomplete.

the U.S. Census Bureau, jobs in 2012 were counted as 8,518; public administration (includes the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission), transportation and warehousing, and manufacturing ranked as the top three industries of employment.

The 3,605 Lower Swatara residents who were employed in 2012, regardless of job location, were most commonly employed in health care and social assistance (465), public administration (371), retail trade (358), and manufacturing (310), followed by accommodation and food services (263) and finance and insurance (257). The majority commuted to outside locations for work; only 10.3% worked within the Township.

With 8,518 jobs in the Township in 2012, more than twice as many workers commuted into the Township (8,145) as commuted out of (3,232) to reach their employment destination. This puts significant pressure on the transportation system.

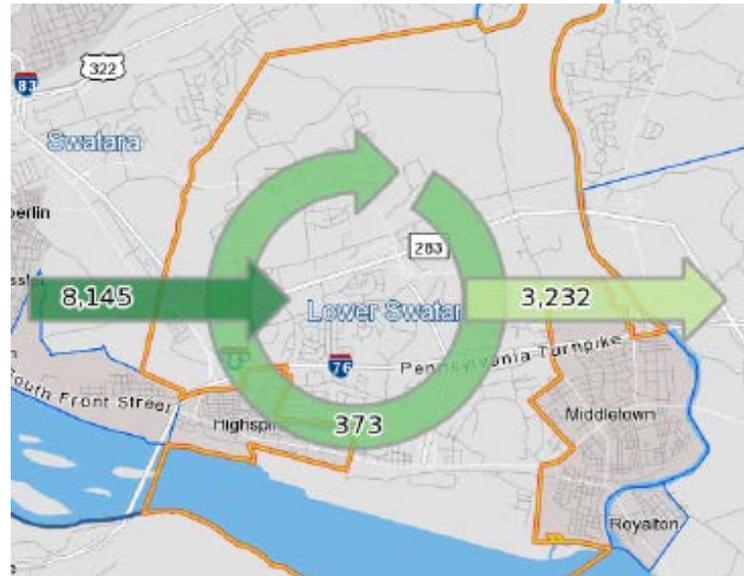
That same year, less than three percent of working residents worked at home, requiring no travel commute to work. Among those traveling, 86.0% drove alone, 5.5% carpooled, 4.9% walked, 0.4% took public transit, and 0.3% took a cab, motorcycle, or other means.

Unemployment rates fell from 2.7 percent in 2010 to 1.8 percent in 2014.

Land Use

In 2014, 40 percent of lands in Lower Swatara Township had been developed for intensive uses, namely residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses, or were actively under construction. Quarrying was active in two percent of the Township, and agricultural activities were evident on 20 percent. Open space, such as parks, lawns, and landscapes, as well as natural areas, including river islands,

Figure 2-7 Worker Flows into and out of Lower Swatara



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Economic Census.

Figure 2-8 Workers Harvesting Strawberries at Strites



Source: Strites Orchard and Farm Market

occupied the remaining 38 percent. Land use/[land cover](#) classifications made by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission in 2008 and 2014 reflected real changes in uses, such as development of new homes, changes in use, and changes in ownership and use, as well as a refined delineation of open space within developed sites.

Southern portions of the Township along the PA Route 230 corridor have experienced redevelopment. Lands where the Harrisburg International Airport and Penn State Harrisburg are located were first developed by the military in the late 1800s and renamed the Olmsted Air Force Base after World War II. Decommissioning of the air force base made administrative buildings and residence facilities available to the state for re-use as a branch campus of Penn State University in the Harrisburg area, established in 1966. The air field was developed into a commercial airport to offer passenger aviation and air freight services, commencing in 1969. Both the university and the airport have redeveloped various sites within their campuses in efforts to modernize facilities and meet market needs. Other properties, such as the Capitol Logistics Center and the school district, have been redeveloped with modern facilities for continued use. Central and northern portions of the Township have typically experienced only a single wave of development for residential, commercial, or industrial uses.

Education

The Middletown Area School District serves Lower Swatara Township, Middletown Borough, and Royalton Borough. Enrollment in Fall 2015 was 2,427 students. The racial and ethnic composition of students is much more diverse than that of the Township. Districtwide, families are economically challenged, with 51.3 percent qualifying for free or reduced lunch in Fall 2015.

The school district operates three elementary schools (grades K-5), one middle school (grades 6-8), and one high school (grades 9-12). The Lyall J. Fink Elementary School is located in Middletown and was renovated in 2007-08. The John C. Kunkel Elementary School is located on Fulling Mill Road. The Robert G. Reid Elementary School, the Middle School, and the High School South are located on a connected campus. Reid Elementary was completed in 2002. The Middle School was completed in 2007. The District is currently constructing a new high school, which will open for the 2016-2017 school year.

All students living in Lower Swatara are bussed to school.

Figure 2-9 Middletown Area High School



Private Catholic education for prekindergarten through grade 8 is available at the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary School on East Water Street, Middletown.

The nearest public library is the Middletown Public Library on North Catherine Street in Middletown. The William H. & Marion C. Alexander Family Library in Hummelstown is the nearest branch of the Dauphin County Library System.

Penn State Harrisburg is an undergraduate college and school of the Penn State University. It offers more than 65 associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs. The student body of more than 4,400 students is increasingly diverse in race, ethnicity, and origin. Campus alumni now total more than 35,000—a significant network of professionals with connections to the Middletown area.

The Penn State Harrisburg campus spans the Lower Swatara-Middletown border on lands once part of the Olmsted Air Force Base. The campus hosts facilities for academic instruction, residence halls, student affairs and student life services, and athletics. Off-campus student housing is available adjacent to the campus and within a 20-minute walk.

The campus is patrolled by the Department of Safety and Police Services to enforce state laws and University rules and regulations.

Penn State Harrisburg is one of the hubs of the Harrisburg Market Keystone Innovation Zone, making certain business ventures eligible for tax incentives.

Figure 2-10 Penn State Harrisburg



Health Care

Residents of the Township have close access to two health systems. The Penn State Hershey Health System is based in Derry Township. PinnacleHealth is based in Harrisburg. Both offer hospitals and other medical facilities within minutes of Lower Swatara. However, there is no medical or urgent care clinic in the Middletown area.

Indicators of public health and access to health care are found in the Community Health Needs Assessment jointly conducted by PinnacleHealth, Penn State Hershey Health, and Holy Spirit Health systems. Findings included:

- Rates of childhood obesity in Dauphin County are higher than the rest of the state.
- Rates of heart disease in Dauphin County are higher than statewide rates, but cancer rates are lower.

Childhood obesity and heart disease are prevalent in Dauphin County. Also, regular access to a primary care doctor and medical services for seniors are limited.

- More than one out of every five individuals in the region does not have a doctor.
- The top two services that individuals report having the most difficulty finding were services for individuals with HIV/AIDS and services for individuals over the age of 60.

Public Safety

Crime statistics compiled and reported by Neighborhoodscout.com indicate that the Middletown area experienced 16 violent crimes (rape, aggravated assault) and 117 property crimes (motor vehicle theft, arson, larceny, and burglary) in 2014 for a total of 133 federally reported crimes or 15 crimes per 1,000 residents. Crime rates for 2015 will be released in Fall 2016.

When compared to other suburban areas in the region—some with educational institutions, the Middletown area had more violent crimes per 1,000 residents and fewer property crimes per 1,000 residents.

Table 2-1 Community Crime

Urban Area or Town	Violent Crimes per 1,000 residents	Property Crimes per 1,000 residents	Crime Index (100 is safest)
Middletown	1.80	13.19	53
Harrisburg	11.23	38.43	7
Hershey	1.04	20.52	35
Hummelstown	2.42	11.64	n/a
Enola	0.47	9.69	72
Camp Hill	0.25	7.98	81
Mechanicsburg	0.78	18.06	41
New Cumberland	1.10	14.17	53
Etters	1.41	17.67	41
Elizabethtown	1.12	14.47	51
Pennsylvania	3.14	19.52	n/a

Source: Neighborhoodscout.com

The most common natural hazard causing the greatest risk in Lower Swatara is flooding from heavy rain events. Additional common hazards are steep slopes with poor cut slope stability, areas subject to sinkhole development, and woodland subject to wildfires. Lower Swatara has a low risk of earthquakes, a moderate risk of hurricanes, and high risk of hail and tornadoes.

Three Mile Island, a nuclear power generation facility, is located a few miles downriver.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Lower Swatara owns and maintains eight municipal parks with facilities. Memorial Park and Greenfield Parks are its largest, developed for baseball and soccer, respectively.

Shopes Gardens and Woodridge have additional baseball fields. Greenwood Commons has a nature area. Other parks are neighborhood parks with play equipment, pavilions and picnic tables, and grass fields.

In 2015, the Township acquired land at the east end of Fulling Mill Road. A public water access may be developed there, but there are no formal plans to date.

Figure 2-11 Memorial Park



Table 2-2 Township Parks

Township Park	Facilities	Size (acres)
Georgetown Park	Playground, and picnic facilities	2.0
Greenfield Park	Soccer, playground, picnic and walking path facilities	20
Greenwood Commons Park and Nature Area	Playground and picnic facilities; nature area	2.4
Memorial Park	Baseball, softball, basketball, tennis, playground, and picnic facilities	16.1
Old Reliance Park	Basketball, playground, and picnic facilities	8.4
Rosedale Park	Basketball, playground, and picnic facilities	0.6
Shope Gardens Park	Baseball, basketball, playground, and picnic facilities	3.5
Woodridge Park	Baseball, playground, and picnic facilities	5.1
Fulling Mill Road site	Undeveloped; located in the floodplain	(#)

Source: Lower Swatara Township

Transportation

The transportation system in Lower Swatara is comprised of 17 miles of state and Interstate highways, 42 miles of local streets, a rail shortline for freight, bus service along the PA 230 corridor, the airport, and neighborhood sidewalks. Passenger rail services is available in Middletown.

The state and interstate highways give property owners in Lower Swatara immediate access to the national highway network, while local streets provide for circulation and connectivity. PennDOT has programmed several significant maintenance (preservation)

Figure 2-12 I-283 Interchanges with PA Turnpike and Highspire



projects for the state system, as listed in the table below. The Township has begun to outline local transportation needs for road and drainage maintenance and associated costs [in an informal capital improvement program](#).

Table 2-3 Recent and Future PennDOT Projects

	Improvement Type	Let Date (Estimated)	Completion Date (Estimated)
I-83 Early Action (I-283)	Resurface	Completed	
PA 441 Bridge over PA 8020 ramp	Bridge Preservation	Completed	
Harrisburg Pike Resurface from PA 341 (Colebrook Road) to Tioga Avenue	Resurface	06/26/2014	07/22/2016
PA 283 Reconstruction 3 from Eisenhower Boulevard (PA 3001) to Colebrook Road (PA 341)	Reconstruct	02/23/2017	09/06/2019
PA-283/I-76 Interchange	Interchange Improvement	02/23/2017	09/06/2019
Airport Connector North Bound from PA 230 to PA 283	Resurface	None; Twelve Year Plan	
Oberlin Rd over PA 283 Ramp	Bridge Preservation	None; Twelve Year Plan	
Harrisburg Pike Bridge 2	Bridge Replacement	None; Twelve Year Plan	
Rosedale Ave over Airport	Bridge Preservation	None; Twelve Year Plan	
Spring Garden Rd over Airport Connector	Bridge Preservation	None; Twelve Year Plan	
Airport Conn South Bound	Resurface	Candidate; Decade of Investment	

Source: PennDOT MPMS IQ, accessed March 1, 2016.

The Middletown and Hummelstown Railroad is a shortline rail company providing rail freight service between industrial sites between these two communities and the Norfolk Southern main line.

The Capital Area Transit Authority’s Route 7 connects Downtown Harrisburg, Capitol Complex, Riverfront Office Complex, and Steelton with Highspire, Middletown, Penn State (Middletown Campus), and Harrisburg International Airport.

[Lower Swatara Township contains central Pennsylvania's largest airport facility, Harrisburg International Airport \(HIA\). The Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority \(SARAA\) oversees operations of the facility. Lower Swatara Township holds one of fifteen member seats on SARAA’s board of directors.](#)

[HIA comprises approximately 800 acres along the Susquehanna River, where the river helps minimize noise impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. The](#)

Figure 2-13 Harrisburg International Airport



Terminal Complex includes the passenger terminal, aircraft parking apron, circulation roadways, rental car facilities, and short-term parking. The long-term (economy) parking area is located to the east of the Terminal Complex. Additional parking is available from private vendors off-site. The Airport has its own full-time police and fire departments as well as its own water and sewer systems.

In accordance with their Master Plan, SARAA is upgrading and expanding many facilities at HIA. These activities indicate that HIA will continue to grow in upcoming years and may present economic development opportunities for the Township.

Water Infrastructure

Suez, formerly United Water Pennsylvania, provides public water to more than 5,000 people in Lower Swatara Township. United Water acquires water from surface and groundwater sources and processes it at water treatments in Harrisburg and Hummelstown. The Harrisburg water treatment plant can generate up to 12 million gallons of water per day, while the Hummelstown water treatment plant can generate up to 2.8 million gallons of water per day. Approximately 90% of its treated water distributed to Lower Swatara customers comes from the Hummelstown plant and 10% from the Harrisburg plant. The well owned by the Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority (SARAA) provides water for the airport and is connected to the Suez water system. Treated water storage facilities within Lower Swatara Township include a 1 million gallon tank near the airport and a 300,000-gallon tank along Spring Garden Drive. Suez tests its water regularly to ensure that it meets all health and safety standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP).

Residents outside of the public water service area acquire fresh water from private wells. In some cases, service areas are limited by the high costs of service area expansion versus the number of start-up users. Some residents have expressed a desire to connect to the public water system if and when it becomes available. A few residents have concerns about groundwater quality.

Wastewater

The Municipal Authority of Lower Swatara Township provides public sewer service to Township properties. There are more than 40 miles of sewer lines providing service for 2,200 residential and commercial customers in the service area. Wastewater is sent to three wastewater treatment plants in neighboring Highspire, Middletown, and Derry Townships. All three plants have capacity to process waste from future community and economic development in Lower Swatara.

There is a very small percentage of the Township that is not incorporated into the public sewer system service area. These lands are relatively undeveloped and are treated by individual on-lot septic systems owned and maintained by the property owner.

The Township Authority's Act 537 Plan, its plan for managing sewage disposal systems, was last revised in 1983. An update is scheduled to begin later in 2016.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater management has become increasingly regulated through the implementation of the federal Clean Water Act. Municipalities with separate municipal storm sewer systems (MS4) are required to adopt development and other regulations consistent with its permit issued under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and the county integrated water resources plan, and to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater.

Lower Swatara Township has municipal stormwater regulations (Chapter 26, Water, of the Township Code of Ordinances) in addition to traditional subdivision and land development requirements. The ordinance intends not only to provide design, construction, and maintenance criteria for permanent onsite stormwater management facilities, but also to regulate the modification of the natural terrain and existing drainage patterns that characterize the Township. The Township has put programs and practices in place in support of stormwater management and is beginning to evaluate their impact.

Quality of Life Services

The Lower Swatara Police Department employs nine Patrol Officers, three Sergeants, two Detectives, one School Resource Officer, and the Chief of Police.

The Lower Swatara Fire Department is a volunteer organization providing fire protection and ambulance services. The Department owns and maintains all fire-fighting apparatus and the Fire Hall at 1350 Fulling Mill Road. Calls for service from 2012 through 2014 averaged 535 per year.

Figure 2-14 Lower Swatara Fire Department



Lower Swatara provides mandatory residential trash and recyclables collection and disposal services through its designated contractor. Commercial, industrial, and institutional establishments are ineligible for service through the Township contract.

Lower Swatara contracts with a single hauler for curbside collection of trash and recyclables.

Natural and Historic Resources

Natural resources create the physical environment where the community of Lower Swatara has grown. The environment in southern Dauphin County presents few significant constraints to community and economic development; floodplains and wetlands are the most notable.

A few natural communities of high quality are present along the Susquehanna River and the Swatara Creek, as documented by the Dauphin County Natural Heritage [Areas](#) Inventory (2005). The core habitats and their conservation recommendations include the following:

- A one-mile section of Swatara Creek at Fiddler's Elbow, including quickwater riffles with gravelly to stony stream bottom that supports three freshwater mussel species of concern in PA; Elktoe (*Alasmidonta marginata*), Triangle Floater (*Alasmidonta undulata*) and Yellow Lampmussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*). Maintaining water quality will enable these species to exist for future generations.
- Fiddler's Elbow Bluffs, the limestone cliffs and ledges along the creek, where native and sometimes rare plant and animal species are present.
- Swatara Creek Woods, where two PA-Threatened plant species have been found; *Elissia nyctelea* and limestone petunia (*Ruellia strepens*). No conservation recommendations.
- Susquehanna River at Middletown, where the river and its banks support five species of concern including nesting Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) and Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*); a plant species of concern waterpod (*Elissia nyctelea*) and two additional species of concern. The riverbank is intensively developed in this area. Conservation and repair of a 100 meter-wide forested buffer along the riverbank will help protect the river from sources of pollution and habitat fragmentation. Development in floodprone areas should be restricted.

A 100-meter supporting landscape buffer is mapped and recommended as a forested corridor along the creek and river banks to help minimize erosion and sedimentation, absorb floodwaters, protect the waterways from other non-point sources of pollution during storm events, and help maintain cool water temperatures for improved water quality and wildlife habitat.

The Swatara Creek Watershed Association (SCWA), based in Lebanon, PA, is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to protecting and improving water resources and the environment in the watershed from Schuylkill County to Middletown. The Manada

Conservancy, a land trust based in Hummelstown, engages in land preservation throughout the watershed.

The Township is home to a variety of old and locally valued structures, as well as a few that meet the standards for historic designation. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's Cultural Resource database includes 66 records for 24 surveyed resources in Lower Swatara.

- Two buildings are officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Star Barn, which is to be relocated to West Donegal Township, and the Conrad Alleman House on Farmhouse Lane in Old Reliance.
- Nine buildings and structures and one aggregate railroad district were eligible for the National Register at the time of their evaluation by State Historic Preservation Office. These include: the structure associated with the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the Pennsylvania Railroad: Mainline district, the Odd Fellows Home (now Middletown Home), five private homes, and two farms.
- Another nine buildings, structures, sites, and districts, dating from 1820 (Highspire (Swartz Nissley Cemetery) to 1960, were determined not eligible. These included resources submitted as the Middletown Air Depot District, the Middletown and Hummelstown Railroad, the Middletown Air Depot Base Chapel, and the Olmstead Army Airfield and Middletown Air Depot (with 18 associated buildings).
- Sixteen records for buildings and structures were associated with the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and thus listed among Lower Swatara resources. Twelve were evaluated as significant to the Turnpike; four were not.
- Three resources dating from 1826 to 1955 did not have enough information to evaluate their historic significance and determine edibility for the National Register: the Rosedale Farm House, the Nissley Drive post-World War II subdivision, and the Union Canal: Middletown to Reading.
- Finally, two were noted as demolished or destroyed: Whitehouse Lane Bridge and the Immaculate Conception Home for Children.

Local Government

The Township is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners.

In 2015, the Township employed 43 full-time equivalent workers, or an estimated 5.1 municipal employees per 1,000 residents.

State and Federal Government Representation

Residents of Lower Swatara are represented by PA House Districts 106, PA Senate District 47, and Pennsylvania's 11th and 15th congressional districts to the U.S. Congress.

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This community assessment outlines a variety of features and qualities that contribute or constrain Lower Swatara Township's quality of life and community and economic development potential. The assessment characterizes each aspect or topic and identifies implications and preliminary recommendations, which form the basis for the actions listed in Chapter 5.

Assets and Opportunities

Central Location and Good Highway Access

Lower Swatara Township is located central to several south central Pennsylvania employment and entertainment centers, as well as smaller urban hubs. The state and interstate highway systems, including the Pennsylvania Turnpike, make travel throughout south central Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic region convenient for Lower Swatara residents. Hershey, Greater Harrisburg, the West Shore, Carlisle, Lancaster, and York each lie within a 45-minute drive of the Township. Hummelstown, Elizabethtown, and other small towns are accessible via state and local highways, expanding "nearby" job, education, retail, and service opportunities.

From a business perspective, Lower Swatara and other communities in the south central PA region with available land along the interstate highway system are attractive locations for their access to markets from the East Coast to the Midwest. South central PA locations offer one-day access to these markets in an era when overall production-to-delivery efficiency is increasingly measured in days, not weeks or months, and online retail customers expect nearly the same-day service they used to receive in the store. As long as land is available within a few miles of PA 283, property owners and developers are likely to request rezonings for industrial development.

Implications

1. Located at the hub of state, interstate, and Pennsylvania Turnpike access, Lower Swatara is a good location for those who want or need to travel regionally by highway.

Relatively Low Crime and Crash Rates

While Middletown area crime rates are higher than those of many other regional communities, Lower Swatara experiences very little violent or property crime. The Police Chief confirmed that serious crime is low and property crime has diminished in recent years. Calls for service regarding fraud, identity theft, money scams, and credit card misuse have increased but in excess of national trends.

While motor vehicle crashes still occur, the severity of crashes has decreased with the increase in safety

Figure 3-1 Township Police



technology in motor vehicles. Most local crashes today are caused by human error, not street or highway design, again per the Police Chief. Regarding the problem locations that remain, many local drivers know where and when conditions are hazardous and take precautions to slow down or avoid such locations, and the Township continues to seek cost-effective improvement solutions.

The Harrisburg Area Transportation Study reports that approximately 455 traffic crashes have occurred each of the past five years. These statistics include incidents that occurred on interstate, state and local highways. Fatalities and major injuries have averaged 8 over the same time period. Aggressive driving was used to characterize 65-75 percent of incidents each year.

Table 3-1 Traffic Crash Statistics, 2010-2014

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent of County Incidents</u>
<u>Crashes</u>	<u>464</u>	<u>467</u>	<u>425</u>	<u>452</u>	<u>468</u>	<u>2,276</u>	<u>15.40%</u>
<u>Fatalities & Major Injuries</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>8.30%</u>

Source: Traffic Safety in the Tri-County Region 2010-2014, February 2016

Implications

1. The Township is a comparatively safe place to live. Criminal activity and transportation safety are not constraints to community growth.

Choices in Housing Types and Neighborhoods

As described in Chapter 2, Lower Swatara offers housing choices in type, size, lot size, and location. Single-family home choices include early 20th Century two-story structures, mid-century ranch homes, and late-century styles with integrated garages. Townhomes are available in the Georgetown neighborhood south of Rosedale Avenue and in the Woodridge neighborhood. Apartments and mobile home options are also available.

Residentially-zoned land is available in the Residential-Urban, Residential-Suburban, and Residential-Agricultural districts and water and sewer infrastructure has capacity to support additional development.

Future development could further expand housing and neighborhood choice. Traditional neighborhood development integrates residential and retail uses, often with a mix of housing types. Several of these mixed-use developments have been constructed in Lancaster County—Brighton near Manheim, Richmond Square near East Petersburg, and Florin Hill in Mount Joy to name a few. With several large parcels zoned for residential use, and community interest in more local retail and restaurant options, a mixed-use

Figure 3-2 Edinburgh Road



approach could be successful. (Alternatively, coordinated development of adjoining residential and commercial districts with integrated transportation planning could achieve the same result.) Developers will examine the market to determine the viability of a mixed-use approach in Lower Swatara. The Township should explore “lessons learned” and “best practices” in zoning and development from these local mixed-use development projects.

Implications and Preliminary Recommendations

1. There is ample room for growth in the Township’s residential zoning districts. Such growth could be widely varied in housing unit type and density.
2. The Township, particularly the Planning and Zoning Coordinator and the Planning Commission, should become familiar with development approaches to housing in combination with development of commercial, institutional, and open space uses—specifically traditional neighborhood development and conservation by design.

Penn State Harrisburg and Harrisburg International Airport

Both Penn State Harrisburg and HIA evolved from re-use of the Olmsted Air Force Base and both have become significant hubs in Dauphin County. These institutions are portals for visitors from the regions and beyond to enter, experience, and develop impressions of Lower Swatara Township.

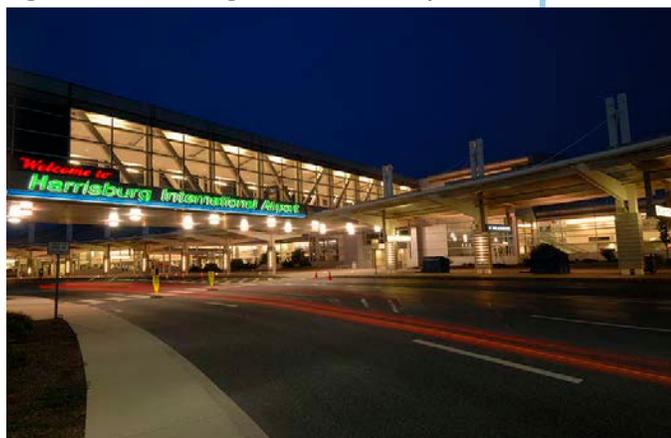
Penn State Harrisburg has become the fastest-growing campus in the Penn State system by drawing students from across the region and the state to begin their post-secondary education and career development, expanding undergraduate and graduate programs, redeveloping the former military campus into an educational campus to support those programs, and establishing partnerships with local industry to advance research and its application. Continued growth of the institution will attract undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and administrators, and even corporate partners, who will seek desirable residences in quality communities for themselves and their families.

HIA has expanded and modernized its commercial aviation and air freight support services in line with federal

Figure 3-3 Penn State Harrisburg



Figure 3-4 Harrisburg International Airport



requirements and [as a result of](#) increasing demand from markets, including travelers to Penn State Harrisburg and Capital Region corporations. Today, HIA is looking forward to continued growth in both sectors through its 2014/15 master plan to revise site programming and facilities, as evidenced by its recently submitted land development plans for an onsite hotel. In addition, HIA has participated in the Meade Avenue improvements in advance of leasing the North 29 site, the former long-term parking lot, for commercial development.

Implications

1. Continued growth of Penn State-Harrisburg will attract undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and administrators, and even corporate partners to the Middletown area. If Lower Swatara wants a portion of this associated residential and business growth, it will need to ensure that its borders and connections with the institution are seamless and welcoming.
2. HIA is developing additional facilities on its lands to serve air travelers on-site. This may reduce demand for traveler-oriented services along the edge and approach corridors to the airport.

Figure 3-5 Penn Ridge Farm



Open Space

Natural, landscaped, and farmed open spaces retain rural character in this suburban community. These spaces include highly visible, wooded tracts along the Turnpike, PA 283, and Airport Connector corridors, riparian (waterside) areas along the Susquehanna River, Swatara Creek, and smaller drainageways, maturing landscapes in established neighborhoods and on industrial sites, actively cultivated farm fields, and Township parks of various sizes. These unbuilt areas remind long-time residents of the countryside that was Lower Swatara years ago; for newcomers, the open spaces represent lower-density suburban living. They may even increase property values, as studies in the Delaware and Lehigh valleys have shown, by providing close to home opportunities to observe and experience the natural environment and to increase physical activity, and improve mental health.

[Both the Delaware Valley and Lehigh Valley have quantified the impact of open space protection in their regions with studies entitled Return on Environment. They assessed economically measurable impacts on natural systems, air quality, health, outdoor recreation, economic activity, and property values. The studies can be found here:](#)

- [Return on Environment: The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 2011](#)
- [Lehigh Valley Return on Environment, 2014](#)

Implications and Preliminary Recommendations

1. Natural landscapes visible from state and local highways are an important part of the Township's identity.
2. Conservation of highly visible woodlands, riparian areas, mature landscapes, etc. should be encouraged. Establishment of new landscapes and naturalized areas in new development should also be encouraged.

A Growing Park and Recreation System

Lower Swatara has eight parks and one site for future parkland. Many of its parks were acquired through the land development process, namely a dedication of parkland provision in the ordinance. This approach allows the Township to increase its parkland in relative proportion to its population growth and growth locations. With additional land zoned for residential uses, this approach will continue to be effective for acquiring parkland in proximity to future neighborhoods.

From time to time, a property owner offers to sell or donate a parcel to the Township for parkland. The land may seem valuable, particularly when offered at or below market value, but the Township has no policy for evaluating these offers. Neither the recreational needs of present or future residents nor the potential for lands to function as stormwater management facilities is well known at this point. Criteria by which the Township could evaluate a parcel for its value as public land should be developed.

Recreation programming for Lower Swatara residents is limited. The Olmsted Regional Recreation Commission and community leagues offer seasonal sports programs for children, youth, and adults. Municipal recreation departments in the Capital Region offer access to far more diverse programming: arts and crafts, fitness classes, non-traditional sports such as bowling, technology training, preschool activities, seasonal family events, discount theme park and resort tickets, bus trips, etc.

Periodically, the Township or the Recreation Commission should assess residents' recreational interests. Commission-program participants should be surveyed for their interest in additional programs. Other residents should have a reasonable opportunity to give their input, too.

In addition to a few park improvement ideas, Lower Swatara residents suggested that the Township develop off-road trails, as nearby Derry Township has done. A Swatara Creek trail has been a vision of creek and recreation advocates for many years. Middletown's 2007 comprehensive plan update includes a concept for linking its river and creekside parks and public places with a walking trail. This trail would logically extend north into Lower Swatara Township, and may at some point cross the creek into Hummelstown or

Lands available to the Township for donation or purchase should be evaluated based on long-term recreational and environmental needs.

Derry Township. A creekside trail, perhaps in conjunction with the Middletown and Hummelstown Railroad corridor, might be a place to start.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Enhance existing parks with facilities and features that promote safe access and activity for all ages:
 - walking paths for health and wellness.
 - naturalized meadows that require only seasonal mowing in place of lawn.
 - additional trees or tree clusters for shade relief from the sun.
 - additional parking at Memorial Park, which will likely require land acquisition.
2. Develop the Fulling Mill Road site; consider a water access to Swatara Creek and a trailhead (see preliminary recommendation 4 below). Retain and enhance the riparian buffer on the site.
3. Develop a written policy with criteria for evaluating the costs and benefits of accepting parkland donations and purchase offers.
4. Survey residents on their interest in expanded recreation program opportunities. Consider a school district-wide survey that would provide service-area results to Olmsted Recreation and municipal-level results to Lower Swatara, Middletown, and Royalton.
5. Consider renewal of the Olmsted Recreation Commission to serve the recreational needs of all ages. The school district and municipalities could request funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for a peer-to-peer study to begin to re-define the Commission and its director position.
6. Work with Middletown on the planning and development of a trail along Swatara Creek. Become familiar with the trail development process from others in the Capital Region: how to explore potential trail locations, how to talk about trail benefits, how and when to approach property owners to request an easement for trail use, etc.

Improved Planning for Local Road Maintenance

Many of the Township's roads were built in conjunction with mid- to late-century residential developments. Built to carry low traffic volumes and weights associated with residential deliveries, these roads have performed for several decades with minimal maintenance. As these roads and the utility infrastructure beneath them age, they add to the miles of local roads and streets that need more than resurfacing. They need repair after utility line replacements, drainage assessments and improvements, and other emergency and preventive maintenance.

The Township's Public Works Department is responsible for local road maintenance, including the drainage features associated with the road network. The Department and Township Engineer have outlined several road projects that are needed within the next

decade. They have phased preparation and construction activities for each project over three years to accommodate realistic schedules and costs for permitting (year 1), drainage improvements (year 2), and paving (year 3). Projects in the first five years are cost-estimated; projects in the latter five years are not. Estimated costs for the first five years total \$11.9 million. Township staff has begun researching funding sources to supplement the Township's Liquid Fuels allocation to fund these projects.

This is the Township's first attempt at long-range capital improvements planning. This approach anticipates improvement needs and schedules them proactively rather than waiting for conditions to deteriorate to a point of necessary replacement. This approach extends the life of road and drainage facilities and offers flexibility to address emergency needs and their costs as they arise without losing sight of upcoming needs. It also provides a ready list of project needs and their estimated costs for Township budget and finance planning. For example, there may be times when it is more cost-effective to fund multiple projects as a batch project. A ready project list is also helpful when a new funding source becomes available, such as Dauphin County's new transportation funding, resulting from authorization in Pennsylvania's Act 89 of 2013.

The Township has begun multi-year planning for maintenance and improvement of its transportation network.

A Revenue Tool for Local Road Improvement: The Traffic Impact Fee

The Township could employ another planning tool to generate revenue for transportation improvements and incentivize development in certain locations. Article V of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (enacted as Act 209 of 1990) authorizes municipalities to use impact fees to cover the cost of off-site improvements necessitated by new land development within a designated service area; the tool is known as a traffic impact fee or Act 209 ordinance. The ordinance allows the municipality to charge a per-trip traffic impact fee based on the location and number of trips projected from new development in each designated service area. The fee can be waived in service areas where development is highly desired (i.e., infill or redevelopment) as an incentive and to relieve development pressure on other lands.

The fee revenue can be used for construction, land and right-of-way acquisition, engineering and some planning, and legal and debt services costs—only for activities identified in the Capital Improvements Plan. The fee revenue cannot be used to fund improvements that are needed to serve existing development. The Capital Improvement Plan tool ensures that the municipality has anticipated and documented transportation improvements associated with future development in a designated service area.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Maintain the 5-year and 10-year road maintenance needs assessment as a programming and budgeting tool. Consider road conditions as well as safety among the needs transportation projects should address.

2. Contact municipalities that use an Act 209 ordinance to learn about their experience—their approaches, successes, and lessons learned. Evaluate and determine whether an Act 209 ordinance would be beneficial to the Township. If beneficial, develop and adopt a traffic impact fee ordinance.

Issues and Challenges

Truck Traffic between Middletown and PA 283

PA Route 441/Oberlin Road is a state highway connecting riverside communities from the City of Harrisburg south to Columbia. Locally, connections can be made to PA 283 and I-283. These limited-access highways carry high volumes of through traffic, and PA 441 is an important connection from points of origin to these freeways and from the freeways to final destinations.

PA 441 through Lower Swatara is a minor arterial that follows the local topography. The southern segment (outside the urbanized area) between the Turnpike overpass at

Middletown and Spring Garden Drive has several sharp curves over hilly terrain with narrow shoulder widths, making it a hazardous road segment. The northern segment (within the urbanized area) from Spring Garden Drive to Highland Street also has tight curves, though it is somewhat less severe in both horizontal and vertical alignments. PennDOT has maintenance projects programmed for PA 441 in the distant future (2027-2034), but these are not scoped to address the overall alignment of the corridor.

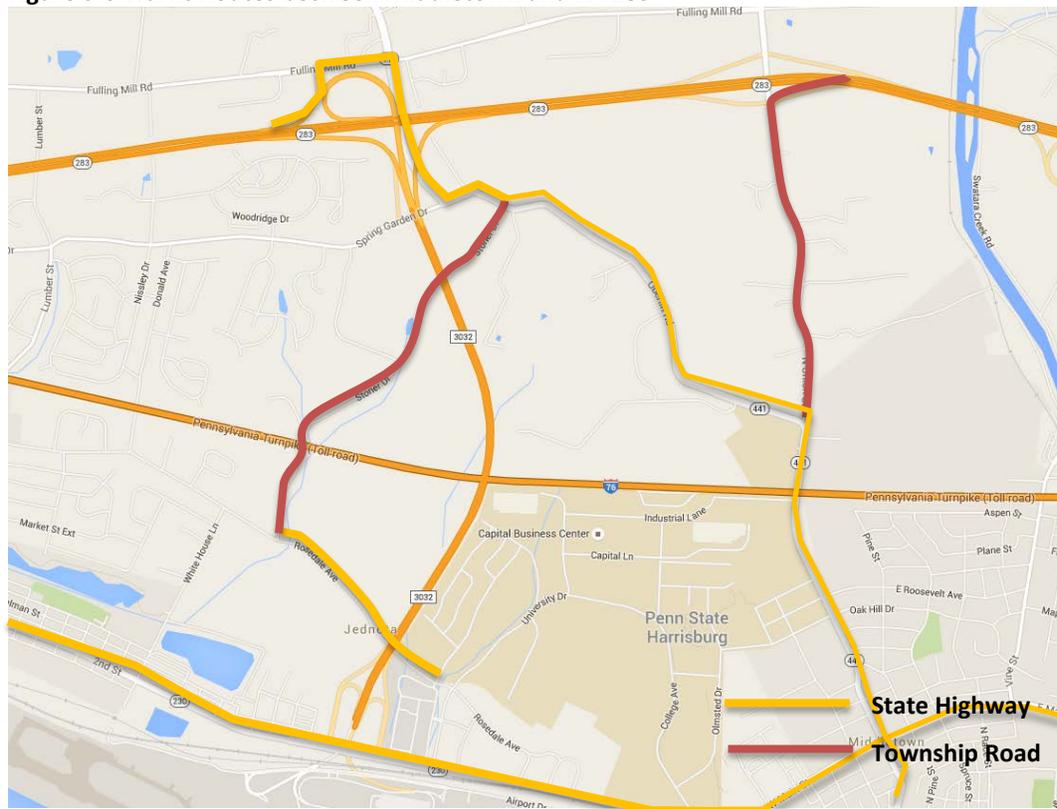
Other minor arterials in Dauphin County have straighter alignments and wider shoulders. Eisenhower Boulevard, Vine Street, Derry Street, portions of Union Deposit Road, and Locust Lane are examples. Nyes Road still has a winding alignment and narrow shoulders, but has been improved where possible.

Trucks Using Township Roads

As an alternative to PA 441/Oberlin Road from Middletown to PA 283, trucks were using North Union Street to the Frank Linn Interchange and Rosedale Avenue to Stoner Drive to PA 441. Both routes used Township roads, which were not built for 40-ton tractor-trailers—they do not have a structural base of stone to distribute the load or shoulders to protect the cartway (the travel lane) pavement from deterioration.

The Township has taken recent action to weight-restrict traffic (namely trucks) from these routes. Formal posting of weight limits will follow shortly. Thereafter, Township police will enforce the weight limit, directing potential violators to a nearby truck scale to be weighed and, if overweight, fined based on the amount of excess weight. This action is expected to significantly reduce truck traffic on these Township roads. As a result, truck traffic will likely increase on PA 441/Oberlin Road, giving further support for improvement of, at minimum, the southern segment as described above.

PA 441 is an important connection between Middletown and the region's freeways. It is also one of the most hazardous roads in the Township.

Figure 3-6 Traffic Routes between Middletown and PA 283

Redevelopment of Linden Centre, future commercial development of the airport's North 29 site, and redevelopment on the west side of Middletown seeking to take advantage of the new Amtrak station location will generate additional truck traffic for commercial deliveries in the coming years.

The Township recognizes that additional access from Rosedale Avenue to the Airport Connector would alleviate travel demand on PA 441. At one time, Jednota Estates applied to PennDOT for a permit to construct a half-interchange. Interest in developing the Jednota lands waned and Jednota did not proceed with interchange design and construction. Jednota lands north of Rosedale Avenue are zoned for residential development. Lands south of Rosedale, however, are zoned for commercial and industrial uses and are likely to generate truck trips when developed.

With the Turnpike to the north, the Airport Connector to the east, and commercial/industrial lands to the south, the Jednota lands between Rosedale Avenue and the Turnpike are well buffered from residential uses and may be suitable for commercial/industrial uses. Rezoning of this area was examined (see page 36) and not recommended at this time. If Jedntoa or a future property owner were to submit a compelling development concept or if PennDOT agrees to permit access to Rosedale Avenue, rezoning of this site should be revisited. [PennDOT/Harrisburg Area Transportation Study has identified an Airport Connector access project in its long-range](#)

transportation plan (long-term period, Years 2027-2034), but exact access point and alignments have yet to be determined. The estimated project cost is \$36 million.

Figure 3-7 Concept Diagram for Access at Rosedale Avenue



Preliminary Recommendations

1. Advocate that PennDOT improve the alignment of the PA 441 corridor, through site-specific improvements or corridor-wide improvement.
2. If zoning along North Union Street is intensified, require improvement when development proposals are submitted for adjacent properties.
3. Alternatively, consider improvement of PA 441, namely straightening of curves and widening of the alignment, as well alternative approaches, such as swapping the segment of PA 441 from North Union Street to Spring Garden Drive for North Union Street from PA 441 to PA 283. This approach offers a more direct connection for trucks between Middletown and PA 283 and the Fulling Mill Road corridor and perhaps fewer improvements needed to the current PA 441 alignment to serve residential traffic. The feasibility and cost comparison of this approach would need to be studied.
4. Support the addition of a Rosedale Avenue interchange.

Limited Connectivity at Community and Neighborhood Scales

Residents in the planning process noted that Lower Swatara has no center—no place that residents identify as the center of community activity. This view is typical of townships that have no central crossroads village, and no civic building, major park, or space where citizens regularly gather socially, as a community.

In Lower Swatara, the condition is further complicated by the fact that two limited access highways traverse the Township and create barriers for the natural expansion of neighborhoods and business districts, where social activity can also occur. The Township is essentially divided into three areas:

- The PA 230 corridor and lands north to the Turnpike, where 230 and Rosedale Avenue are the only corridors linking residential areas west of the Airport connector with household retail east of the connector.
- Lands between the Turnpike and PA 283, where routes north and south pass over or under the highways and serve vehicular traffic but not bicyclists and pedestrians, and where Spring Garden Drive to PA 441 is the only east-west connector.

- Lands north of PA 283 that perhaps have the best connectivity in the Township, though some alignments are still challenging.

With so many barriers and incomplete connections for people, Lower Swatara is physically more divided than connected.

Established highway infrastructure and topography are real challenges to connectivity, but the Township has land available for development that could create the private and public space that functions as a community center as well as existing travel connections for a wider range of travel options.

To Create Centers of Community Life

The Township has an opportunity to guide the development of one or more centers for the Township community. Lands known as the Shope farm have been zoned for commercial uses due to their proximity to the PA 283 corridor and their potential to support construction of a thoroughfare to connect PA 441 and North Union Street. Together, a corridor of commercial uses, the public space of the street, and some green space (as a mini park or stormwater facility) could create a retail destination for citizens. Adjacent lands zoned for residential uses provide an opportunity to live “next door” to this potential community hub.

Lands owned by the Williams family on the west end of Fulling Mill Road were considered for rezoning in this planning process (see page 37). Here too a proximate mix of commercial and residential uses with associated parks and green space for stormwater management could emerge as a community center. The Kunkle Elementary School already draws residents to this end of Fulling Mill Road. Access (driveways) and improvements to Fulling Mill Road would need to consider the bus and parent traffic associated with this location.

The Shope area has better visibility and accessibility to high traffic volumes on PA 283 to support commercial activity but also has greater topographic challenges. The Williams area is closer to the residential areas of the Township and has more gradual topographic changes but is not as accessible to high traffic volumes.

Lands along Rosedale Avenue west of the Airport Connector are a third opportunity site for development that creates a community center—one in the southern portion of the Township. This area was also examined for rezoning (see page 36). One residential neighborhood and Highspire’s

Figure 3-8 Opportunity Sites for a Community “Center”



Reservoir Park with connections into Highspire are located to the west, while Linden Center and Penn State Harrisburg lie to the east. Stoner Drive and Nissley Drive offer local road connections into neighborhoods on the north side of the Turnpike.

Any or all three of these areas could be developed with a “Main Street”-style retail complex and other commercial services that draw resident and visitor patronage, provide a plaza or square for community events, and result in opportunities for planned and chance meetings among residents that strengthen the sense of community. Alternatively, Township parks could become the social centers of the community if programs, activities and events were to draw residents to them regularly.

Figure 3-10 South Nissley Drive Bridge



To Improve Neighbor Connections for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

The road network is currently the primary means of connectivity and as outlined above, has numerous use-versus-design, safety, and connectivity challenges. Whether improved by a private developer as a result of proposed development needs and impacts, or by the Township or PennDOT, the project development process can include examination of other travel and transportation needs. Residents suggested several locations and improvements:

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the roads and bridges over and under the Turnpike and PA 283 (Lumber Street, Nissley Drive, Stoner Drive, and Spring Garden Drive) to support neighborhood connections to other neighborhoods, parks, and retail, service, and employment destinations.
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities on Rosedale Avenue between the residential neighborhoods on the west end and Linden Center and other commercial areas on the east end.
- Bicycle and pedestrian travel between Penn State Harrisburg and the redeveloping commercial area.
- Pedestrian routes along Fulling Mill Road serving the business parks.
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities along North Union Street—a corridor used by Middletown residents to reach employment along Fulling Mill Road.

Figure 3-9 South Nissley Drive Bridge



Replacement of the bridge from the east end of Fulling Mill Road to Schoolhouse Road in Derry Township was discussed as a potential reconnection. The Clifton Covered Bridge that once spanned the creek was washed out during Hurricane Agnes in 1972 and not replaced. Reconstruction today could provide a crossing for one or more mode of transportation:

1. As a bicycle-pedestrian trail crossing connecting the Township's future park site and a future creekside trail to Derry Township on Swatara Creek's eastern bank.
2. As a light vehicular and bicycle-pedestrian crossing, making the same connection for passenger vehicles and as an alternative to PA 283, Fiddlers Elbow, or PA 23.
3. As an all-traffic crossing able to serve as an alternative route during PA 283 incident closures.

The Steering Committee noted that each of these options has benefits but also impacts that would need to be examined and mitigated, and that ultimately Derry Township, Harrisburg Area Transportation Study, and PennDOT should be involved in evaluating this reconnection. At this time, the Township has little interest in pursuing this reconnection.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Advocate for pedestrian facilities from Penn State Harrisburg to Linden Center.
2. Examine bridge rehabilitation and replacement projects for bicycle and pedestrian improvement needs.
3. Review development proposals for opportunities to interconnect neighborhood streets with trails for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. For example, in nearby Elizabethtown, North Lime Street and Hickory Lane are not bridged over Conoy Creek, however two small paved paths allows bicyclists and pedestrians to move across this green space between the neighborhoods on either side.

Balancing Livability with Commercial and Industrial Development

The Great Recession and housing crisis dampened the pace of development nationally in the late 2000s. The residential market was hit hardest, but even commercial and industrial development slowed under more stringent access to financing. As the economy recovered, development activity began to pick up.

In 2013, Hillwood Investment Properties took interest in several properties along North Union Street north of Fulling Mill Road for industrial development. Hillwood's community meeting to explore residents' reactions to additional industrial development yielded significant opposition, and Hillwood has not pursued rezoning of properties in the mineral extraction and residential-agricultural districts for industrial development to date. In 2015, the Williams family met with the Township to express interest in rezoning and development of the farm in recognition of it location along the west end of Fulling Mill Road and its proximity to the Swatara interchange with I-283. In early 2016, the First Catholic Slovak Union (locally known as Jednota) and its marketing agent, NAICIR,

contacted the Township with a request for zoning alternatives. All were interested in zoning alternatives for industrial development.

Regarding commercial development, the PA 230 corridor has historically been the Township's focus for retail uses and services. Portions of Fulling Mill Road and Spring Garden Drive have also been developed for commercial offices over the past 25 years. A three-phase retirement community is approved to absorb the remaining acreage in the commercial neighborhood district along Fulling Mill Road at Nissley Drive.

Two areas zoned for commercial use remain available: lands between the east end of Spring Garden Drive at the old firehouse and North Union Street, which were zoned to commercial neighborhood in the mid-2000s to create the potential for retail and restaurant development, as residents desired then, and support the extension of Spring Garden Drive to North Union Street, and a parcel at the intersection of PA 441 and North Union Street uphill from the school district campus. Additionally, a cluster of parcels southeast of the North Union Street interchange was considered for rezoning to commercial in 2015 then retracted. This area south of PA 283 has perhaps the best potential to attract the retail stores and restaurants that residents still request. It offers easy access to PA 283, visibility to tens of thousands of daily travelers, and proximity to Middletown, Hummelstown, and suburban Harrisburg markets. Its development challenges include topography, lack of water and sewer service at present, and potential need for North Union Street improvement from the access to the interchange. In addition, compatibility between the commercial use and existing residential uses would need to be carefully addressed, since commercial uses could have greater impacts than residential uses as permitted today.

Finally, amid the discussion of land use and zoning, the Steering Committee recognized that economic development could help reduce the burden of school district property taxes on residents. Commercial and industrial properties pay property taxes but do not generate students and the needs for educational facilities and services the way residential properties do. In light of recent increases in school district tax rates, the Committee aimed to consider the costs and benefits of additional commercial and industrial development in its land use recommendations.

The Steering Committee examined several alternative land use options for four sites and nearby available properties and reached consensus on the following recommendations. Figures and charts on the following pages illustrate points of discussion.

Figure 3-11 Advanced Conversion Technology, Inc.



Preliminary Recommendations

See illustrations in on the following pages

Area 1 North Union Street north of Fulling Mill Road

1. Retain the current zoning designation, Mineral Recovery.

Area 2 North Union Street south of PA 283

1. Rezone the southeast quadrant of the Frank Linn Interchange (North Union Street) to Commercial.
2. Retain the current zoning designations for the remaining portions of the North Union Street corridor from PA 283 to PA 441 at this time.
OR Consider rezoning the Residential-Agricultural district in this location to Residential-Suburban for consistency with adjacent lands and in support of economically feasible extension of water and sewer utilities to serve this area.

Area 3 Rosedale Avenue west of the Airport Connector

1. Retain the current zoning designations for the Rosedale Avenue corridor west of the Airport Connector at this time.

Area 4 West Fulling Mill Road

1. Rezone the Williams Farm along the north side of Fulling Mill Road and the adjacent residentially zoned parcels along the west side of Longview Drive to neighborhood commercial at a depth consistent with the existing neighborhood commercial district on the east side of Nissely Drive and Hollywood Drive.
2. Rezone the Williams parcel along the south side of Fulling Mill Road between Lumber Street and the existing Light Industrial Park district to neighborhood commercial.
- ~~1-3.~~ If the school closes or relocates, revisit the zoning designation for remaining parcels on the south side of Fulling Mill Road.

Zoning Ordinance Review

In discussing the land use options for these locations, the Steering Committee reviewed the residential, commercial and industrial zoning districts for awareness of their differences. An overview of each district's purpose and permitted uses is shown in Figures 3-9, 3-10, and 3-11, beginning on page 35.

Preliminary Recommendation

1. Conduct a detailed review of existing use locations and patterns and the zoning regulations to determine if the four industrial zoning districts can be streamlined.

Area 1: North Union Street, north of Fulling Mill Road



Area Features:

- Nearby access to PA 283
- Contained by North Union Street and Swatara Creek
- Karst geology (prone to sinkholes)
- Adjacent: Indian Echo Caverns, residential uses

Alternative Uses Discussed:

- Industrial
- Office Park
- Recreation

Source: Dauphin County GIS Parcel Viewer

Area 1	Alternative Uses/Rezoning	Comments
Current Zoning	Industrial (Mineral Recovery)	N Union Street and Swatara Creek are reasonable district boundaries.
Alternative 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industrial ▪ Industrial Park ▪ Office Park 	Current condition of Fiddlers Elbow Rd and bridge is a constraint to more intensive use, i.e., heavy traffic. Portion north of bridge is posted, i.e., weight-restricted; Lower Swatara portion is not posted. With truck restriction or road improvement, alternatives could be feasible.
Alternative 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation – commercial or public 	Recreation/open space use is of interest for the abundant creek access, proximity to Indian Echo Caverns, and the natural communities that, if still viable, could be protected.

Area 2: North Union Street south of PA 283



Area Features:

- Access to PA 283, PA 441
- Contained by major highways and creek
- Desired street connection from Spring Garden Drive to North Union Street

Alternative Uses Discussed:

- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Office
- Mixed Residential and Commercial

Source: Dauphin County GIS Parcel Viewer

Area 2	Alternative Uses/Zoning	Comments
Current Zoning	Airport Connector east to North Union Street: Residential-Agricultural North Union Street east to Swatara Creek: Residential-Suburban	Area is contained by the Airport Connector, PA 283, Swatara Creek, and MASD campus and Greenfield Park. Topography constrains but does not prohibit intensive use. Commercial Neighborhood zoning was intended to support extension of Spring Garden Drive to North Union Street.
Alternative 1	Residential-Agricultural to ▪ Residential-Suburban	Water and sewer services required for suburban development density.
Alternative 2	Residential-Suburban to ▪ Commercial	Consistent with Planning Commission’s Fall 2015 recommendation for lands adjacent to PA 283 interchange.
Alternative 3	All to ▪ Mixed Residential-Commercial	Ratio of residential to commercial to be determined by developer or by Township ordinance. Commercial would likely be highway-visible.
Alternative 4	All to ▪ Commercial Neighborhood ▪ Office Park	Would require major access improvements and significant stormwater management.

Area 3: Rosedale Avenue west of the Airport Connector



Area Features:

- Nearby access to PA 230, airport and Airport Connector
- Proximity to Highspire’s Reservoir Park
- Access to water and sewer

Alternative Uses Discussed:

- Commercial Office
- Light Industrial
- Commercial Retail
- Mixed Residential and Commercial

Source: Dauphin County GIS Parcel Viewer

Area 3	Alternative Uses/Zoning	Comments
Current Zoning	Northside of Rosedale Avenue: Residential-Urban Corner of Rosedale Avenue and Whitehouse Lane: Office Park Southside of Rosedale Avenue: Industrial Park-Limited	Residential use to the west and south. Turnpike and Airport Connector highways are barriers to the north and east. Current condition of Rosedale Avenue may be constraint to more intensive use, i.e., truck traffic. Development would require road improvements (intersections, turning lanes) and significant stormwater management. Development could benefit from/contribute to access improvement to Airport Connector.
Alternative 1	Residential-Urban to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Office Park ▪ Industrial Park-Limited 	Same as above.
Alternative 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mixed: Residential-Commercial 	Same as above. Also, ratio of residential to commercial could be determined by developer or Township ordinance. Residential could include a mix of single- and multi-family.

Area 4: West Fulling Mill Road



Source: Dauphin County GIS Parcel Viewer

Area Features:

- Access to Fulling Mill Road
- Access to PA 441
- Access to water and sewer
- Inefficient north-south connections

Alternative Uses Discussed:

- Residential
- Commercial Office
- Commercial Retail
- Light Industrial
- Mixed Residential and Commercial

Area 4	Alternative Uses/Zoning	Comments
Current Zoning	Residential-Suburban Residential-Agricultural	Existing residents to the north, west, and east may expect residential uses. Development presents potential extension of Lumber and other streets. Kunkle Elementary School is located at Fulling Mill Road and Lumber Street. Residential retirement and commercial uses are approved in the commercial district east of Nissley Drive.
Alternative 1	Residential-Agricultural to ▪ Residential-Suburban	Uses permitted in Residential-Suburban are compatible with existing residences but not with the corridor's existing uses.
Alternative 2	Residential-Agricultural to Commercial/Industrial: ▪ Commercial Neighborhood or Office Park ▪ Industrial Park or Industrial Park Limited	These uses are generally compatible with development along the Fulling Mill Road corridor. However industrial uses are not necessarily compatible with residential uses unless carefully integrated with the existing development scale and buffered from visual and operational impacts.
Alternative 3	Residential-Agricultural to: ▪ Commercial Neighborhood or Office Park, and ▪ Residential-Agricultural to Commercial	Largest parcel could be zoned into multiple districts, e.g., one non-residential district fronting Fulling Mill Road and one residential district in the northern section.
Alternative 4	Residential - Agricultural to ▪ Mixed: Residential - Commercial	The mix of residential and commercial could be determined by developer or Township ordinance. Residential could be a mix of housing types.

Figure 3-12 Comparison of Residential Zoning Districts

	Residential -Agricultural	Residential -Suburban	Residential -Urban	Residential-Multi-Family
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote agricultural activities • prevent adverse effects resulting from encroachment by incompatible development types and intensities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide for single-family residential living at low development densities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residential living opportunities of a more urban nature at greater densities with a limited diversification of residential unit designs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a variety of residential living opportunities at greater densities
Permitted by Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family detached • Places of worship • Public Education, Public Recreation • Municipal, Public utility • 10 agricultural uses and related • Accessory 	<p>Same +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parochial Education, library, museum • Ag activities • Accessory 	<p>Same +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family, semi-detached • Home gardening • Accessory <p>No agricultural uses</p>	<p>Same +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family attached • Multi-family • Boarding, lodging, rooming houses • Private Recreation • Med, dental clinic • Hospital • Nursing, convalescent homes <p>No agriculture</p>
Permitted by Special Exception	5 uses including hospitals, nursing homes, convalescent homes	4 uses including medical and dental clinics and TND	3 uses including medical and dental clinics	2 uses including var. apt types and accessory uses to them
Minimum Lot Size	1 acre	1 acre 20k sf w/ public sewer	1 acre 20k sf w/ public sewer and well 10k sf w/ water and sewer or 5k sf for semidetached	10k sf w/ water and sewer

Figure 3-13 Comparison of Commercial Zoning Districts

	Commercial Neighborhood	Commercial Highway	Office-Park
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> serve the needs of the surrounding residential neighborhood, with convenience goods and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accommodate a wide range of shopping and service functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> permit combined business and office activities
Permitted by Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stores Eating and drinking places <4,000 sf service offices Municipal Accessory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stores Eating and drinking places Service offices Auto dealers and service stations Auto rental, repair Lodging places Sports/Rec Clubs Commuter bus/train services RV parks Municipal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Offices Medical clinics Hotel/conference Scientific R & D Personal services – health/fitness, day-care Restaurants Convenience store Municipal Public utility
Permitted by Special Exception	2 uses including residential retirement student housing		n/a
Minimum Lot Size			

Figure 3-14 Comparison of Industrial Zoning Districts

	Industrial	Industrial Park	Industrial Park Limited	Manufacturing Limited
Purpose	provide employment opportunities and establish land for intensive industrial uses	maximize the light industrial and commercial/ office development in a planned park-like environment	provide for light industrial development of a less intensive nature, along with commercial/ office, in a planned park-like environment	provide for certain types of manufacturing and industrial uses minimize their incompatibility with other districts
Permitted by Right	Auto-related Manufacturing Lumber-related Construction trades Freight, trucking Wholesale, warehouse Power stations Municipal Various agricultural uses and related Accessory	Manufacturing Business Offices R & D Warehouse/ distribution Municipal Public Utility Various agricultural uses and related Accessory	Same	Auto-related Manufacturing Lumber-related Construction trades Wholesale, warehouse Power stations Municipal Various agricultural uses and related Accessory No freight, warehouse
Permitted by Special Exception	2 uses - windmills, heliports	3 uses – same + outdoor storage	Same	n/a

Repetitive Flood Damage and Recovery Costs

Portions of the Township are prone to flooding. In certain locations, flooding is largely a natural condition, but in some areas, grading for development created or exacerbated drainage patterns that contribute to flooding. The Jednota Flats between the airport, which was heavily graded in the development of the air base and later the airport, and the Turnpike, also disruptive to natural drainage patterns, is one such area. Swatara Park Road and Lumber Street are others.

Flood damage is costly for property owners and the government agencies that assist in flood recovery. Where repetitive flood damage can be eliminated, property owners and governments can save time, effort, and dollars in damage prevention and restoration.

The Township has worked in conjunction with the Pennsylvania and Federal Emergency Management Agencies (PEMA and FEMA) with willing property owners to remove uses and structures that encounter repeated damage from floodprone areas, restoring the land to an open space condition where flooding has minimal impacts.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Continue to seek out willing property owners in flood-prone areas for voluntary buyouts.
2. Continue to identify county, state, and federal sources to fund voluntary buyouts.

Unfunded State Requirement for Elimination of Pollution in Stormwater from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's program to eliminate pollution in stormwater from entering waterways was established in 1990 under the Clean Water Act. It relies on expansion of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. Phase 1 implementation in the early 1990s was targeted to the largest systems and pollutant sources. In 1999, Phase II extended coverage of the NPDES permit program to include "small" MS4s in urbanized areas, as classified by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The NPDES permit program requires operators of MS4s to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater. Each MS4 must outline its program, including the "six minimum controls," identify its goals and best management practices, and report annually to the NPDES permitting authority on its progress. Neither the EPA nor the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the NPDES permitting authority in Pennsylvania, provides

Six Minimum MS4 Controls

1. Public education and outreach (often fulfilled by information in municipal newsletters).
2. Public participation and involvement.
3. Illicit discharges detection and elimination.
4. Construction site runoff control.
5. Post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment.
6. Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations and maintenance.

financial assistance to help system operators take action to comply. Thus, many municipalities view the change in the permit as an unfunded mandate for action and associated costs.

PA DEP notified the Township in 2014 that MS4 program compliance would soon be required for its general NPDES permit, held since 2003, because the Township lies in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and local streams are impaired. Penn State Harrisburg and the Harrisburg International Airport have separate NPDES permits. These storm sewer system operators must also comply with the program.

The Board of Commissioners has authorized the Township municipal authority to oversee stormwater infrastructure, including maintenance, inspection, and improvement of public stormwater facilities. The authority could charge fees to all property owners to generate revenue to cover the cost of these services. To date, no fees have been proposed or approved.

The Board has also directed Township staff to begin revising or establishing new programs and practices required for compliance. Revised ordinances for subdivision and land development and stormwater, to remove development requirements and standards that negatively impact water quality and add those that positively impact water quality, have not yet been prepared but are expected to impact the development process and increase the cost of planning/design, approval, and permitting.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Update ordinances to remove development requirements and standards that negatively impact water quality and add those that positively impact water quality.
2. Determine the need, and if needed, the value, for a municipal authority fee to property owners to fund management and maintenance of community stormwater facilities.
3. Conduct administrative and enforcement practices to maintain compliance with current and future MS4 requirements.

Regionalization of Police Services

In 2015, Dauphin County completed a study of the potential costs and benefits of regionalizing local police forces. Though the issue of police service costs was not raised by Township officials or residents, the potential cost savings and other benefits deserve acknowledgement and potentially future community discussion.

The Dauphin County Policing Services Study took account of police services, 2013 crime rates, and 2014 staffing and costs for all 16 of the existing police departments. It reported 17 sworn officers and one civilian employee for Lower Swatara at a 2014 cost of \$1,950,490.

The study discussed the advantages and disadvantages of regionalization in terms of quality of service and costs. The study noted that cost savings were assumed to take place

gradually over several years due to personnel attrition, not layoffs. The study then analyzed seven scenarios or options for regionalization as shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Summary Cost Impacts of Seven Regionalization Options

Options	Current Costs	Projected Year-One Costs	Cost Savings (or Increase)
1. Dauphin County Metropolitan	\$38,838,711	\$23,507,490	Savings: \$15,33,221
2. Harrisburg Metropolitan	\$55,333,058	\$37,124,420	Savings: \$18,208,638
3. Southern Dauphin Merger	\$15,643,813	\$11,615,720	Savings: \$4,028,093
4. Southern Dauphin Regional	\$7,396,017	\$6,720,560	Savings: \$675,457
5. Derry Regional	\$6,971,439	\$4,729,680	Savings: \$2,241,759
6. Northern Regional	\$447,851	\$2,071,660	Increase: \$1,623,809
7. Countywide	\$55,780,909	\$39,609,670	Savings: \$16,171,239

Source: Dauphin County Policing Services Study, 2015

Lower Swatara was included in five of the scenarios. Cost savings of 12 to 37 percent were projected. Option 4, which analyzed the consolidation of five departments in southern Dauphin County, resulted in a projected eight percent increase over 2014 policing costs.

Table 3-2 Per Resident Cost Impacts of the Regional Policing Options involving Lower Swatara

	Lower Swatara		
	Per Resident Cost	Per Resident Cost Savings	Percent Savings
Current Police (2014)	\$235.81		
Future Police Options			
Option 1: 12 Urban/Suburban Borough and Township Departments	\$151.65	\$84.16	36%
Option 2: 12 above + City of Harrisburg	\$191.5	\$44.31	19%
Option 3: 7 southwest departments, not City	\$207.70	\$28.11	12%
Option 4: 5 southern departments, not City	\$253.94	-\$18.13	-8%
Option 7: All 17 departments	\$147.74	\$88.07	37%

Options 5 and 6 did not include Lower Swatara Township in the regional service area.

Source: Dauphin County Policing Services Study, 2015

The study should be viewed as a reference for municipalities interested in regionalized policing services. Local and countywide discussion of the study is likely to continue in 2016. Township Commissioners should engage residents, corporate citizens, and the police department as they decide whether or not the Township is interested in a next phase of study and what questions and concerns should be addressed in making decisions about Township policing.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Invite Township citizens to discuss support, concern, and questions about policing services. This could be done through a special meeting or workshop, or a dedicated agenda item spanning several regular Board meetings. A summary of

comments could be posted on the Township website or otherwise made available as a record of this discussion and reference for Board decision-making.

Declining Fire Department Volunteerism

Like many civic organizations, the Lower Swatara Fire Department has experienced declining trends in volunteer participation. According to fire department officials, today's volunteers spend less time fighting fires and more time training and fundraising, which discourages many from participating. When the department doesn't have the manpower to respond to call, another company or department must travel farther and longer to the scene, putting life and property at greater risk.

This issue is common across Pennsylvania where volunteer fire departments are the norm in small communities. Culturally, people are less interested in civic service organizations and their employers are less flexible in allowing their participation. In the mid-2000s, the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee examined the feasibility of regionalizing departments, and the Center for Rural Pennsylvania explored Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention in Rural Pennsylvania. The first concluded that regionalization was an option best evaluated locally and the second made policy recommendations for the state, which would aid all rural fire departments. Neither identified local actions for firefighter retention and recruitment.

This issue will need to be addressed at some point in the future. The Township and the fire department may want to exchange retention and recruitment ideas with other municipalities and departments sooner, rather than later, to extend the life of the volunteer system. If the regional policing study is embraced as valid and implementable, perhaps Dauphin County would lead a similar study for fire departments.

Implications and Preliminary Recommendations

1. Based on current trends, the department may not be able to staff service calls, particularly during weekday business hours, by 2025. If local 24/7 fire protection service is desired, the Township may need to hire firefighters to ensure daytime service coverage.
2. Exchange volunteer firefighter retention and recruitment ideas with other municipalities and departments.
3. If fire protection services are studied similar to police service regionalization, support Dauphin County in its leadership of a regional fire protection service study.

The Future of Farming in the Township

Land in agricultural use in the Township declined from 2,166 acres in 2002 to 1,804 acres in 2014, as classified by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. More than half of this 362-acre change in use occurred between 2002 and 2008. Since 2008, changes from agricultural use to another have included:

- 55 acres to transitional use (under construction).
- 26 acres to industrial use.
- 16 acres to recreational use.
- 48 acres to passive use (meadow, brush, mixed vegetation, and woodland).

In counties where fertile soils are abundant, farmland preservation programs pay for the development rights of farmland at rates that protect the value of land for future farming. In Dauphin County, soils on average are not very fertile and the rates the county can afford to pay for development rights are not competitive with values the development sector offers. Therefore farmers have not been interested in the program and lands remained zoned for future non-agricultural uses.

At this point, the Township expects that by 2025 some additional acreage will change from agricultural use to residential or other intensive use, particularly in infill areas. The amount of change will depend on market demand. More than half of the remaining 2014 farmland is contiguous along Longview Drive and largely zoned in Residential-Agricultural (R-A) District. The Residential-Agricultural (R-A) District allows agricultural uses as well as the following non-agricultural and non-agricultural business uses, permitted by right:

- | | |
|--|--|
| A. Single-family detached dwelling units; not manufactured/mobile homes. | D. Public recreation areas. |
| B. Churches or similar places of worship; their social facilities. | E. Municipal buildings and facilities. |
| C. Public and private educational facilities. | O. Public utility service structures and facilities. |

It also allows these uses by special exception:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Cemeteries. | 4. Country clubs and golf courses. |
| 2. Accessory (secondary or "in-law") apartment dwelling. | 5. Hospitals, nursing homes, convalescent homes. |
| 3. Wind energy conversion systems. | |

Figure 3-15 Penn Ridge Farm



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Vision

With an understanding of the assets and opportunities Lower Swatara can build upon and the issues and challenges it must also face, the Township can frame a vision for the years ahead to focus its policies and practices. This vision outlines goals that address the various elements of comprehensive planning.

In 2025, Lower Swatara Township will be a community that...

Offers housing choices in type, size, lot size, and neighborhood character.

Values businesses and institutions as employers, resident recruiters, and community partners.

Has new retail and industry that provides employment opportunities, serves residents and attracts visitors and new residents, and improves the Township and school district tax base.

Has proactive and responsive public safety services.

Has new parks and expanded recreational facilities and activities.

Manages water use, including stormwater, to minimize water pollution.

Restores flood-prone areas to open space, where feasible.

Manages, maintains, and improves its transportation network and infrastructure for modern use.

Works cooperatively with the Middletown Area School District with regard to community development, recreation opportunities, and commitment to meeting the educational, social and health needs of students and families.

Community and Economic Development Objectives

In support of this vision for community and economic development, Lower Swatara Township will conduct local government activities and administer public services following these objectives.

Housing

1. Provide opportunity for a range of housing types, sizes, lot sizes, and neighborhood choices, including development approaches to housing in combination with development for commercial, institutional, and open space uses.

2. Maintain effective code enforcement that promotes safe housing conditions in existing and proposed units. Safe housing efforts can also include public service (educational) announcements on housing maintenance to prevent loss of life and property in the event of a fire, hazard, or other emergency.

Economic Development

3. Designate suitable locations for business and industry and coordinate infrastructure planning and improvement, as needed.
4. Exchange information on community planning and development projects among major employers and institutions, including the school district.
5. Identify opportunities for coordinated planning, design, construction, and impact mitigation.

Community Services and Facilities

6. Maintain support for public safety services that are effective. Evaluate the effectiveness of facilities, vehicles, equipment, and staff with metrics related to:
 - a. Preventing, investigating, and helping to prosecute criminal activity.
 - b. Responding to, investigating, and preventing fire incidents.
 - c. Responding to medical emergencies and assisting in medical transports.
 - d. Communicating messages about public safety to residents and corporate citizens.
7. Manage public parkland acquisition, development, and maintenance in line with use and need.

Related programs and practices should:

- a. Manage the overall public parkland acreage owned by the Township, including acquisitions.
 - b. Improve parks to accommodate people of all ages and abilities.
 - c. Develop parkland with recreation facilities that serve the needs of current and future residents; consider demographic trends and expressed recreational activity interests.
 - d. Reserve lands in a natural, low-maintenance condition as nature lands or for future facility development.
 - e. Involve user groups, i.e., sports clubs, in discussions of park and facility maintenance.
 - f. Provide adequate parking for the use of facilities.
 - g. Assess residents' use of parklands and facilities.
8. Provide access to expanded recreational programs, i.e. expanded programs provided by the Olmsted Recreation Commission, the Township or other recreation service provider.

Related programs and practices should:

- a. Assess residents' participation in recreation programs and activities and their interest in additional ones.
 - b. Partner to provide residents with access to existing activities or local programming, when feasible.
 - c. Ensure ADA-access to all programs.
9. Integrate cultural and historic resources with parks, trails, and other public facilities.

Water Infrastructure

10. Manage and maintain water, sewer, and stormwater utilities for modern use and potential community growth.

Related programs and practices should:

- a. Maintain updated infrastructure assessment and improvement planning.
 - b. Modernize treatment techniques for cost-effectiveness and minimal pollutants.
 - c. Maintain utility facilities to maximize efficiency of conveyance and treatment costs.
11. Protect and improve water quality from the impacts of existing and new development.

Related programs and practices should:

- a. Encourage developers to propose innovative ways to meet stormwater requirements.
 - b. Encourage property owners to use low-maintenance landscaping—meadows or woodlands—in place of large expanses of lawn. A lawn edge at the perimeter can demonstrate that the natural area is intentionally maintained.
 - c. Retain and restore riparian buffers on Township-owned lands.
12. Protect floodplains and flood-prone areas from development; restore developed flood-prone areas to open space, where feasible.

Transportation

13. Manage, maintain, and improve the transportation network for local users and planned future expansion.

Related programs and practices should:

- a. Assess road conditions regularly and program needs into the capital improvement plan.

- b. Expand facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians as free and active transportation choices. Examine bridge rehabilitation and replacement projects for bicycle and pedestrian improvement needs.
- c. Consider transit-related standards for corridors that may benefit from bus service in the future. Examples are sidewalks from the road to the building entrance and driveway turning radii for larger employment complexes that accommodate buses.
- d. Look for opportunities for improvement in conjunction with new development, e.g., opportunities to negotiate additional right-of-way to improve alignment and widen shoulders.
- e. Enforce weight-restricted facilities to extend the service life of roads and bridges.

Land Use

14. Manage the location, intensity, character, and timing of land uses in ways that protect and complement existing neighborhoods, business districts, and agricultural activities, in conjunction with transportation and infrastructure investment.

Related programs and practices should:

- a. Interconnect neighborhoods with compatible adjacent uses, e.g., using bicycle and pedestrian paths.
- b. Protect established neighborhoods from the development of incompatible adjacent uses.
- c. Protect sensitive natural areas from harmful development impacts.
- d. Review zoning map and rezoning requests (approved and disapproved) in advance of the next comprehensive plan update.

This action plan presents recommendations to implement or fulfill the goals and objectives. The recommendations are based on the analysis in Chapter 3 and organized as follows:

Housing Actions 49

Land Use Actions..... 50

Transportation Actions 51

Water Utilities Actions..... 55

Community Services and Facilities Actions..... 57

Implementation

Section 301(a)(4.2) of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that municipal comprehensive plans include a discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies, which may include implications for capital improvements programming, new or updated development regulations, and identification of public funds potentially available. Resources for implementation are identified in the action plan tables below.

Housing Actions

- Become familiar with development approaches to housing in combination with development of commercial, institutional, and open space uses—specifically traditional neighborhood development and conservation by design.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome

Visit nearby communities that have used these innovative approaches to residential use in south central Pennsylvania. Invite their developers and municipal staff to share the success and shortcomings of these projects. Seek to understand where they might be applicable or even permitted by right in lieu of conventional development in Lower Swatara Township.

Partners

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission for knowledge of innovative developments throughout the region and developer and municipal staff contacts.

Funding Sources

None for this informational activity.

Priority and Timing

High in advance of zoning ordinance and map revisions.

Land Use Actions

1. Update the Township zoning map to reflect the desired future land use pattern.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome

- a. Rezone the southeast quadrant of the Frank Linn Interchange (North Union Street) for commercial uses.
- b. Rezone the Williams Farm along the north side of Fulling Mill Road and the adjacent residentially zoned parcels along the west side of Longview Drive to neighborhood commercial at a depth consistent with the existing neighborhood commercial district on the east side of Nissley Drive and Hollywood Drive.
- b-c. Rezone the Williams parcel along the south side of Fulling Mill Road between Lumber Street and the existing Light Industrial Park district to neighborhood commercial.
- d. If economic or infrastructure conditions have change, reconsider land use/zoning alternatives for Areas 1, 2 and 4.

Partners

None.

Funding Sources

None, for so few changes.

Priority and Timing

High, to be completed within three years of plan adoption.

2. Provide educational opportunities for Township officials and staff to strengthen their knowledge and administration of effective zoning, development, stormwater management, and other regulations.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome

Township officials who approve development plans and Township staff who review them should be exposed to a variety of regulations, their administration and interpretation to further their understanding and ability to make informed decisions and suggestions for improvement.

Partners

None.

Funding Sources

None, for so few changes.

Priority and Timing

High, to be completed within three years of plan adoption.

3. **Continue to seek out willing property owners in flood-prone areas for voluntary buyouts.** Flood-prone areas include but are not limited to Jednota Flats, Lisa Lake, Swatara Road, and Lumber Street.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Continue to identify county, state, and federal sources to fund voluntary buyouts.

Purchase land and property from willing landowners to reduce the risk of lost life and property and reduce costs of rescue and recovery. Demolish structures and restore land to an open condition. Look for opportunities to interconnect open spaces, e.g., Highspire's Reservoir Park.

Partners

Dauphin County, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Manada Conservancy.

Funding Sources

Same as above.

Priority and Timing

Medium and with outreach to flood-prone property owners ongoing.

Transportation Actions

1. **Advocate that PennDOT improve the overall alignment of the PA 441 corridor.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

As a state facility, improvement of the highway should be led by PennDOT. Future development of nearby parcels, ~~particularly at the west end of Fulling Mill Road,~~ may contribute to specific design needs regarding traffic volumes and distribution as well as opportunities to acquire additional right-of-way to re-align hazardous segments.

Partners

Middletown, Penn State Harrisburg, and local businesses.

Funding Sources

Township only for advocacy.

Priority and Timing

Medium.

2. **Maintain the 5-year and 10-year road maintenance needs assessment as a programming and budgeting tool. Consider road conditions as well as safety among the needs transportation projects should address.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Maintain a ready list of transportation improvement needs and associated service costs (permitting, design, construction).

Partners

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and Harrisburg Area Transportation Study for examples of other regional municipalities using capital improvement programs.

Funding Sources

Township; recommendation is for a traditional municipal planning activity.

Priority and Timing

High and ongoing.

3. **Budget the majority of annual transportation maintenance funds for road maintenance and repairs and budget a portion to 1) proactive road maintenance and 2) road safety improvements.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

While assessing road conditions, look for safety improvements and small maintenance projects that will help to extend the lifecycle of the facility. Budget a minority of the annual maintenance funds for these proactive activities. Flex the funds if maintenance emergency repair costs are higher and reprogram the activities for the following year.

Partners

None.

Funding Sources

Township.

Priority and Timing

Medium and ongoing.

4. **Review development proposals for opportunities to improve traffic flow, safety and emergency response and to interconnect neighborhoods streets and business centers with trails-facilities for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Regarding traffic flow and emergency response, consider opportunities such as these:

- a. Improve North Union Street; alignment, width, durability, lack of shoulder, and lack of bicycle-pedestrian facility are concerns.
- a-b. Extend Spring Garden Drive east to North Union Street potentially through the commercial highway district;
- b-c. Extend Lumber Street north to PA 441; also consider the alignment and stormwater management design so as not to exacerbate stormwater flow.
- e-d. Extend Hollywood Drive east to Nissley Drive through future development of the Williams Farm.
- d-e. Extend O-Hara Drive west to Longview Drive.

Regarding bicycle-pedestrian connections, in nearby Elizabethtown, North Lime Street and Hickory Lane are not bridged over Conoy Creek, however two small paved paths allow bicyclists and pedestrians to move across this green space between the neighborhoods on either side.

Partners

Developers.

Funding Sources

Developers and Township.

Priority and Timing

Medium and ongoing.

5. Support the addition of a Rosedale Avenue interchange.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Expand access to the Airport Connector with a new full or half interchange, if/when feasible.

Partners

PennDOT, HIA.

Funding Sources

PennDOT, HIA, developers, and Township.

Priority and Timing

High and ongoing with interest from one or more developers and approval from PennDOT.

6. **Recommend or review improvement of North Union Street and Stoner Drive, when development proposals are submitted for adjacent properties.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Improvement of North Union Street and replacement of Stoner Drive.

Partners

Developers.

Funding Sources

Developers and Township, including possible use of transportation impact fee revenue.

Priority and Timing

Medium, weight-restrictions and enforcement will curtail truck use. Safety remains a concern for bicyclists and pedestrians along North Union Street.

7. **Become familiar enough with the Act 209 Traffic Impact Fee provisions to determine whether this is a planning tool Lower Swatara Township should enact.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Contact municipalities that use an Act 209 ordinance to learn about their experience with the system—their approaches, successes, and lessons learned. Evaluate and determine whether an Act 209 ordinance would be beneficial to the Township. If beneficial, develop and adopt a traffic impact fee ordinance.

Partners

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission for knowledge of innovative developments throughout the region and developer and municipal staff contacts.

Funding Sources

None for this informational activity.

Priority and Timing

High in advance of zoning ordinance update.

8. Advocate and coordinate pedestrian connectivity from Penn State Harrisburg to Linden Center.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Participate in planning discussions to determine where and how to provide pedestrian connectivity.

Partners

Penn State Harrisburg, the Middletown Home, HIA and developers of the North 29 site, developers of Linden Center.

Funding Sources

Township for planning discussions; developers and possibly Township for improvements.

Priority and Timing

Medium and ongoing in conjunction with redevelopment of the PA 230 corridor and realignment of facilities on the Penn State Harrisburg campus.

9. Review transportation improvement plans for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to support active and low-cost travel connections to parks and retail, service, and employment destinations.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Participate in planning discussions to determine where and how to provide bicycle-pedestrian connectivity, particularly along the roads and bridges over and under the Turnpike, PA 283, and Airport Connector (Lumber Street, Nissley Drive, Stoner Drive, and Spring Garden Drive).

Partners

PennDOT, Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

Funding Sources

Partners.

Priority and Timing

Medium and ongoing.

Water Utilities Actions

1. Update the Township's Act 537 Plan.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Assess the condition of public sewer facilities. Assess the demand for public sewer service in terms of volume and location of future development. Assess private systems for functionality and groundwater protection. Plan for service area expansion in conjunction with land use planning and groundwater protection.

Partners

PA Department of Environmental Protection, Derry Township, Highspire Borough, Middletown Borough.

Funding Sources

PA Department of Environmental Protection.

Priority and Timing

High and beginning in 2016.

2. Update ordinances to remove development requirements and standards that negatively impact water quality and add those that positively impact water quality.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Conduct administrative and enforcement practices to maintain compliance with current and future MS4 requirements.

Partners

None for regulatory updates.

Funding Sources

None.

Priority and Timing

High within three years (unless required sooner by PA DEP).

3. **Determine the need, and if needed, the value, for a municipal authority fee to property owners to fund management and maintenance of community stormwater facilities.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

The Township has authorized the municipal authority with maintenance inspections and repair/improvement of public stormwater facilities in the Township. The costs of inspection and repair/improvement have not been estimated. Revenue will likely be needed to cover these service costs.

Partners

None.

Funding Sources

None for the decision on fee need or value.

Priority and Timing

High/Medium within 1-2 years.

Community Services and Facilities Actions

1. **Determine the Township's preference and basis for police services.**

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

The Township should review this planning study and determine how police services are best provided for Township residents. Invite Township citizens to discuss support, concern, and questions about policing services. This could be done through a special meeting or workshop, or a dedicated agenda item spanning several regular Board meetings. A summary of comments could be posted on the Township website or otherwise made available as a record of this discussion and reference for Board decision-making. Additional study could be needed, if the Township is interested in a regional police service area that differs from those presented in the 2015 study.

Partners

Only if there is interest in a next phase of study for regional police services.

Funding Sources

Township for this policy decision; PA Department of Community and Economic Development for further study and consolidation assistance.

Priority and Timing

High; interest should be explored while the study is relatively current, followed by appropriate action.

2. Work with the Fire Department to explore volunteer retention and recruitment ideas.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Exchange volunteer firefighter retention and recruitment ideas with other municipalities and departments.

If fire protection services are studied similar to police service regionalization, support Dauphin County in its leadership of a regional fire protection service study.

Partners

Dauphin County.

Funding Sources

Township and Fire Department; possibly grants for volunteer pilot retention and recruitment programs.

Priority and Timing

Medium and ongoing.

3. Memorial Park: Expand parking and add walking trail.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Memorial Park is very busy during baseball season. Games on all three fields generate more park visitors and vehicles than the current parking lots accommodate. As a result, visitors park vehicles in the grass and along the street, the latter posing safety hazards.

Parking should be expanded. By how much? The Township and baseball league should work together to estimate the parking demand by reviewing the game schedule to determine how frequently multiple fields are in use and how many vehicles each game generates.

Parking expansion could occur through 1) replacement of existing facilities with an additional lot, 2) acquisition of additional land and construction of an additional lot, and/or 3) shared use of future parking that may be developed on adjacent property.

ADA-accessibility throughout the park should be evaluated.

Benefit: Public Safety

Costs: Land or easement acquisition; parking lot design and construction.

Memorial Park is large enough to accommodate a loop path that connects the various facilities and offers a good surface for walking for health and wellness. If the park is expanded, the walking path should also extend to the parking lot located there.

Benefit: Public Health

A walking path along the perimeter of Old Reliance park is another park enhancement to consider. Streets within Old Reliance carry only low traffic volumes, but a walking path within the park would be truly separate from vehicular traffic hazards.

Partners

Baseball League.

Funding Sources

Township, PA Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Priority and Timing

High for safety of park visitors when parking.

4. Greenfield Park: Convert lawn areas not used for soccer fields to meadow.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Soccer fields aside, Greenfield Park consumes a significant amount of public works labor in maintaining the park lawn. Portions of park lawn are appropriate in areas around the concession stand, where game spectators are expected to sit, and around benches sited along the walking path. However, other areas could be planted or over-seeded with meadow species and left uncut for several weeks at a time. Seasonal mowing would be sufficient to keep saplings and brush from establishing. If one or more areas are desired as woodlands, mowing could be abandoned and the area would in time return to a woodland cover condition. Restrooms should also be considered.

Benefits: Reduces lawn maintenance costs; improves soil quality (composition, absorption); diversifies and enhances park as a natural area.

Partners

Soccer League, Dauphin County Conservation District, Dauphin County Parks and Recreation and/or Natural Lands Trust for suggestions on naturalized landscapes.

Funding Sources

Township, PA Department of Conservation and Recreation, Chesapeake Bay

Foundation.

Priority and Timing

High to reduce maintenance costs and within 1-2 years.

5. Design and develop the Township land at 140 Fulling Mill Road as park with a water access to Swatara Creek.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Now that the Township owns property along the Swatara Creek at the east end of Fulling Mill Road (river mile 37), this land is the most feasible location for a public water access (boat launch). Its use for other recreational facilities is limited due to its location in the 100-year floodplain. The Swatara Creek Water Trail guide labels the site as the “Clifton Covered Bridge Project” access point, and describes it as “a washed-out covered bridge planned for reproduction.” The nearest upstream access is at the Hanover St. Bridge & Hummel Nature Trail (river mile 28-29) and downstream, Middletown (river mile 42).

As a water access, the site should include a boat ramp, parking, and park signage with safety information and emergency contacts. To the greatest extent possible, the woodlands along the creek should be retained as a riparian (river) buffer to absorb floodwaters from the creek and stormwater from the site, including sediment and pollutants. The remaining portion of the site could be enhanced as a nature park with a walking path meandering through lawn, meadow and/or meadow-to-woodland areas. A pavilion with picnic benches, if able to be sited and secured from flood waters, would indicate the site as one of the Township’s parks.

Benefit: Public Recreation (access to public waters, nature park)

Partners

Swatara Creek Watershed Association, PA Fish and Boat Commission

Funding Sources

Township, PA Department of Conservation and Recreation, Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Priority and Timing

Medium, within 5-7 years.

6. Develop a written policy for evaluating the costs and benefits of accepting parkland donations and purchase offers.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Consider the following potential criteria:

- The need for additional or alternative facilities to meet residents’

active and passive recreational needs. This would include the availability of desired facilities within the Middletown area and projections of facility needs, e.g., fields for community (team) sports, into the future. Sports clubs should be able to demonstrate trends in participation and project those trends in line with age-specific population trends.

- Land area and topographic parameters associated with recreational needs. Nature parks are most easily “developed” on sites with existing woodland and meadow landscapes; they are often more interesting with topography that creates varied microclimates and diverse vegetation. On the other hand, active parks developed with sports fields, courts, and the like require relatively flat land or terraced hills large enough to accommodate the facilities and the parking associated with sports and spectators.
- Unique site features. These include natural and cultural/historic resources that are connected to the Township’s natural and cultural heritage and that distinguish property from any other in Pennsylvania.
- The long-term cost of additional parkland, including design, construction, and maintenance.

Partners

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission may know of other municipalities that have such criteria. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, Manada Conservancy (for holding easements).

Funding Sources

Township.

Priority and Timing

Medium, within 5-7 years.

7. Survey residents for their interest in expanded recreation program opportunities.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Consider a school district-wide survey that would provide service-area results to Olmsted Recreation and municipal-level results to Lower Swatara, Middletown, and Royalton. Municipal-level results will help the Township and Boroughs understand what facilities may need to be updated or replaced in support of desired programming. Where the results show common interests between Township and Borough residents, develop additional programs or partner with other (municipal) recreation

departments to provide access to programs. For activities where there is only Township interest, consider whether a part-time recreation director/manager position is warranted.

Partners

Olmstead Regional Recreation Commission, Middletown Area School District, Middletown, Royalton.

Funding Sources

Partners, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (RecTAP program grants).

Priority and Timing

Medium, within three years.

8. Work with Middletown on the planning and development of a trail along Swatara Creek.

Specific Actions, Value, or Outcome:

Become familiar with the trail development process from others in the Capital Region: how to explore potential trail locations, how to talk about trail benefits, how and when to approach property owners to request an easement for trail use, etc.

Partners

Middletown, Hummelstown, Middletown & Hummelstown Railroad, Swatara Creek Watershed Association, Manada Conservancy.

Funding Sources

Partners, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Priority and Timing

Medium, beginning in 3-5 years.

Interrelationships

The Municipalities Planning Code (Section 301(a)(4.1)) requires that a comprehensive plan include a statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components.

This comprehensive plan makes few significant recommendations for change to community and economic development policy. The three land use recommendations are perhaps most notable. Future development of West Fulling Mill Road, for which two areas are recommended for rezoning, has ready access to water and sewer infrastructure. Transportation connections and improvements should consider providing and interconnecting multiple modes of travel. Access design should prioritize safety for the adjacent school and for the long-term character of a neighborhood commercial district. Internal street layout and design should balance needs for traffic calming and accommodation of delivery trucks and emergency response vehicles to and through the site. The Township may want to discuss pedestrian connectivity with TE Connectivity and its privately owned on-site trails. Stormwater management will also require careful design so that drainage and flooding is not compounded along Lumber Street.

Future development of the southeast quadrant of the PA 283 and North Union Street interchange will require a much larger investment in infrastructure – road, water, sewer, etc. – from the Township, the Township Authority, and private entities. Improvements to North Union Street should address the condition of the road for access as well as corridor use and development access for bicyclists and pedestrians. If the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan update determines there is a need for sewer extension to this area of the Township, development may help reduce the cost to Township taxpayers.)

Other recommendations made in the plan are based on the intent to maintain or enhance the quality of life offered in the Township.

Compatibility

The Municipalities Planning Code (Section 301(a)(5)) requires that a comprehensive plan indicate that “the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses...”

This comprehensive plan considered several changes to Township land use policy and zoning. The few recommended changes are internal to the Township, not located adjacent to nor expected to have any notable effect on other municipalities.

Other land use changes considered during the plan’s development, should they be acted upon in the coming years, are also located internal to the Township.

Consistency

The Municipalities Planning Code (Section 301(a)(5)) also requires that a comprehensive plan indicate that “the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan.”

The Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2008. The plan places a high value on the existing quality of life that residents enjoy and incorporates smart growth philosophies that view land as a limited resource, community as a mix of uses integrated by transportation choices, and infrastructure as a public investment for maximum use.

The plan’s land use objectives promote local planning, managed or smart growth within infrastructure served areas, protection of farmland and preservation of the ability to farm, and close coordination of land use and transportation planning. This plan is consistent with these objectives.

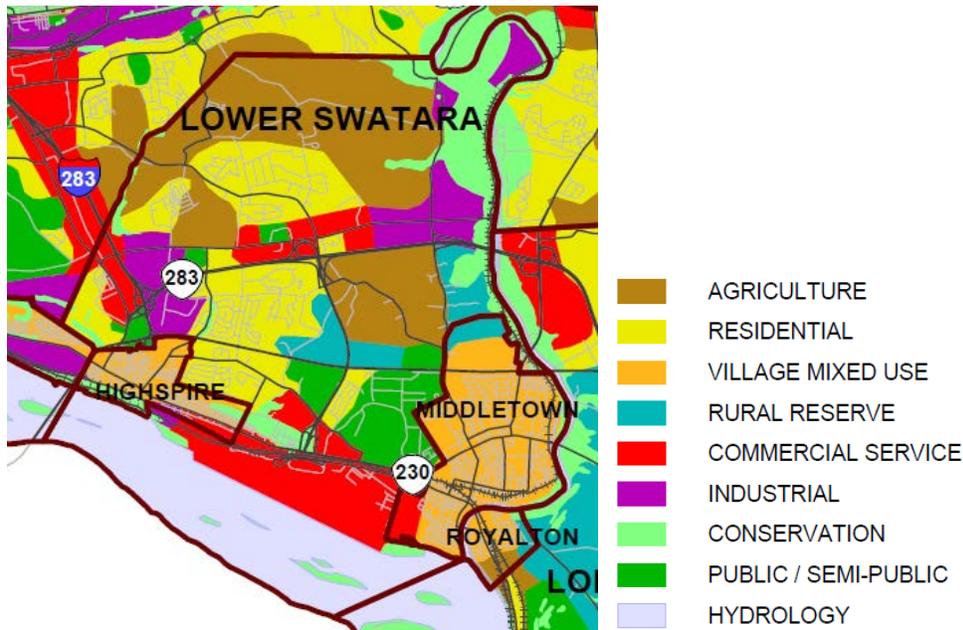
The Generalized Future Land Use Map coarsely reflects land use patterns present in 2008, with a few exceptions, and does not anticipate significant land use change, given the fact that the nation was in the midst of an economic recession in 2008.

Indeed, development pressure was minimal until the recession was over and recovery began. In recent years, industrial development interest has returned though the Township community has vocally opposed it. With capacity in residential, commercial and industrial zoning districts to absorb projected development demand, the only recommended change to Township land use policy (zoning) is a strategic change to increase economic opportunity at the highly visible PA 283 and North Union Street interchange. This recommended change is not consistent with the Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan, however, it was not considered at the time the county plan was prepared.

Exceptions to the 2008 map include the following, which should be reviewed when the county plan is updated:

- Agriculture has been replaced by commercial and industrial uses north of Fulling Mill Road and east of the Old Reliance neighborhood. Agriculture is also less active between PA 283 and the Turnpike, where rural residential uses are present and commercial zoning was approved between PA 441 and North Union Street in the mid to late 2000s.
- Residential uses are not expected in the southeast quadrant of Rosedale Avenue and White House Lane; this area is zoned for commercial office and lands to the east are zoned for light industrial uses. Residential structures in Meade Heights have been demolished and are not expected to be redeveloped. [A few residences exist along Richardson Road, but most of the land to the south and west is zoned for industrial use.](#)

Generalized Future Land Use, Map P6-2, Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan, 2008



- Rural Reserve includes the Middletown Area School District Campus which has been under construction and expansion since the early to mid 2000s. The portion west of the Airport Connector is zoned for suburban residential development and has ready access to water and sewer utilities. The portion east of North Union Street is rural and not served by utilities at the present time, however development is expected, specifically by way of Woodland Hills in Middletown and potentially by the recommended rezoning of the southeast quadrant of the PA 283 and North Union Street interchange to commercial use.
- A small pocket of commercially zoned land fronts PA 230 southeast of Penn State Harrisburg.
- Industrial uses were recommended for the Fiddler's Elbow area in the 2004 plan, though not implemented. Future land uses for this area were considered during this planning process, but no recommendation for change is made.
- Public / Semi-public is shown for lands owned by the First Catholic Slovak Union west of the Airport Connector. These lands are privately owned and currently zoned for residential use. Lands between Penn State Harrisburg and the Turnpike are also privately owned and have been used and zoned for industrial warehousing for many years.

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The Comprehensive Plan will be most meaningful if its recommendations are implemented, conditions are re-evaluated and the plan is updated to reflect additional policy/regulatory, infrastructure or other efforts to address community development concerns. For this to occur, it is recommended that the Township Planning Commission perform the following actions:

- Prepare an annual written report summarizing the past year's implementation activities and outcomes achieved, upcoming implementation activities, and crucial issues that will, or may, impact the Township. Submit the annual report to the Board of Commissioners and share with local media for public awareness.
- Evaluate the Comprehensive Plan every three to five years and, if necessary, propose modifications to the Board of Commissioners to ensure the plan remains useful regarding the future growth and preservation decisions in the Township. As recommendations are completed, the remaining recommendations may be reviewed, refined, and reprioritized.
- Upon 10 years, the Comprehensive plan must be reviewed per the Municipalities Planning Code (Section 301(c)). In rapidly growing planning areas, more frequent updates may be needed to maintain timely polices and priorities. In slow growing areas, a 10-year update of population, demographic, and socio-economic information that shows little or no change could provide the basis for re-adoption of the existing plan for another 10 years.