



# Washington Township Comprehensive Plan

**Draft for Public Review**



# Contents

## Part I: Introduction

<b>1. About the Plan</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Historic Context</b>	<b>10</b>

## Part II: Township Profile

<b>3. Baseline Trends</b>	<b>11</b>
Population	12
Local Economics	14
Housing Market	16
<b>4. Amenities</b>	<b>19</b>
Municipal Government	20
Public Safety	21
Utilities	22
Education	24
Recreation	25
Historic Places	26
<b>5. Environment</b>	<b>29</b>
Land Form and Composition	30
Agriculture	32
Hydrology	34
Flood Hazard Areas	36
Land Use Implications: Wells and Pipelines	38
Land Use Legacy: Mining	40
<b>6. Transportation</b>	<b>43</b>
Roads	44
Alternative Modes	46
River and Rail	47
<b>7. Land Use</b>	<b>49</b>
Existing Land Use	50
Current Controls	52

## Part III: Vision and Strategy

<b>8. Vision</b>	<b>55</b>
Finding Consensus	55
Vision Statement	56
Community Development Objectives	57
<b>9. Key Issues</b>	<b>59</b>
Future Prosperity	60
Quality of Life	62
Efficient Service Provision	64
<b>10. Recommendations</b>	<b>67</b>
Recommendations by Objective	68
Future Land Use Map	75
<b>Appendix:</b>	
Funding Sources	

## Acknowledgements

The preparation of the Comprehensive Plan was a collaborative effort on the part of Township officials, residents and organizations that generously dedicated their time, effort and expertise. The Township wishes to thank all who contributed to the plan.

### *Township Supervisors*

Dan Moody, Chairman

Jan Amoroso, Secretary/Treasurer

Chuck Yusko

### *Township Planning Commission*

Robert Bergamasco, Chairman

Christy Demuth

Brook Gardner

Larry Rusnak

Jason Walsh

Craig Watson

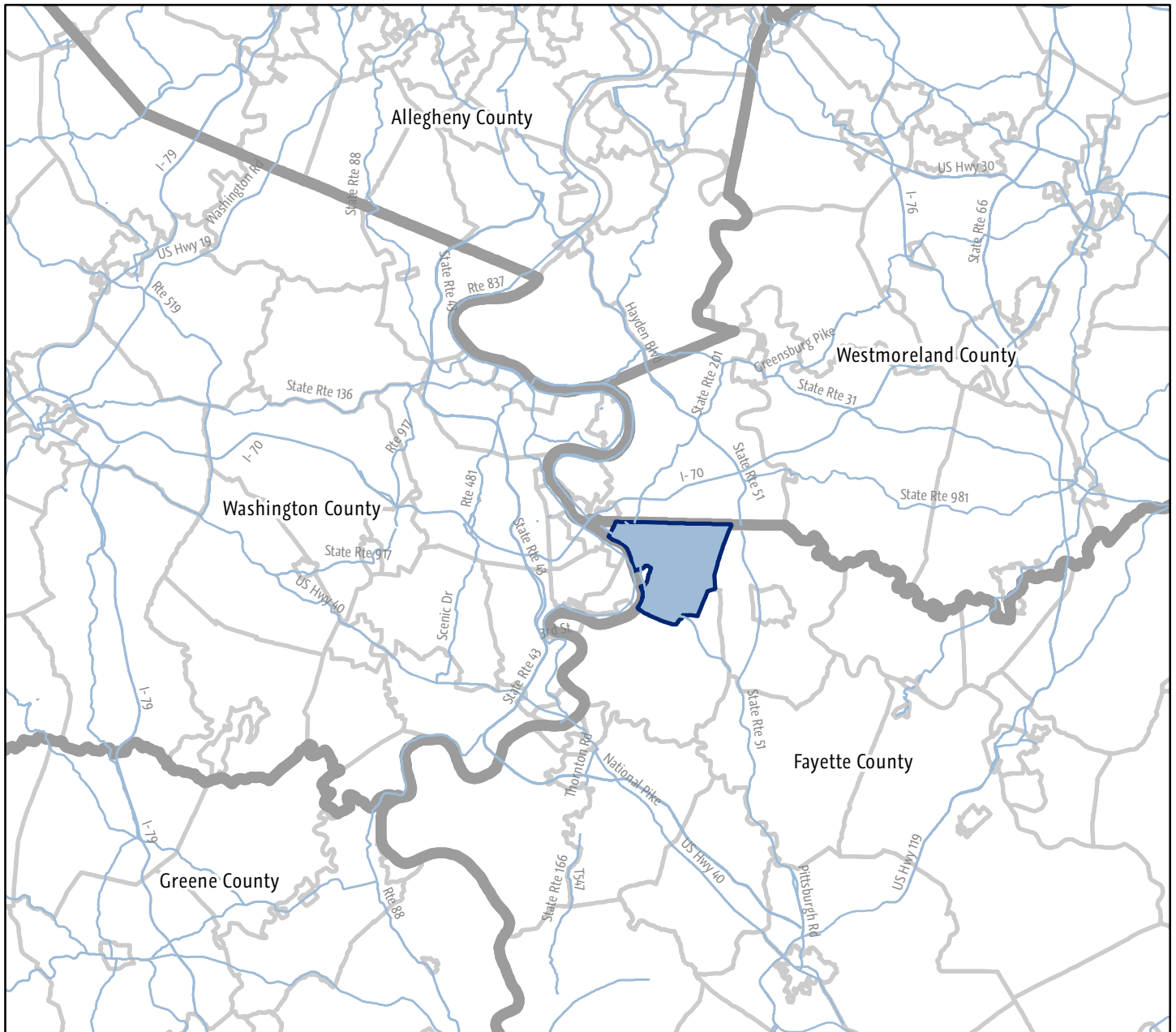
The Comprehensive Plan was prepared with assistance from:



Mackin Engineering Company  
117 Industry Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1015  
[www.mackinengineering.com](http://www.mackinengineering.com)

**[Page reserved for signed  
resolution]**

Figure 1: Township Location



— Primary and Secondary Roads

Washington Township

Municipalities

# 1 About the Plan

## Forging the future

Washington Township is a peaceful, friendly bedroom community where homes and farms spread across a scenic natural countryside. Its residents enjoy the best of both worlds — convenient access to the region’s attraction and employment hubs (via I-70 and PA routes 51 and 43) without the congestion and chaos of more densely settled communities. The community is close-knit, a place where kids play on neighborhood ballfields and adults gather for events at the fire hall, but it is also rural enough to afford ample privacy.

The Township adopted its latest Comprehensive Plan in 1966. Many of the issues that plan identifies remain relevant today: Focusing development in areas well served by infrastructure, preserving natural resources, balancing needs with resources in the provision of public services, and preserving elements of the community that make it a safe, attractive living environment.

However, an update to the Comprehensive Plan is needed to ensure that the Township is well positioned for its best possible future. Development pressure is expected to increase, given growing job markets both south (Morgantown) and north (associated with cracker plants coming online in the next few years). The Township must determine what type of development would be desirable and where and how it should occur. Additionally, the Township needs to determine what public amenities it will need to provide to attract a tax base that will sustain it for the long term.

The Township’s zoning map also dates to 1966 and will need an update to reflect modern case law, emerging land uses and other new developments. An updated vision and plan for implementation will help guide future zoning changes, allowing the Township to retain control of its settlement patterns.

## Comprehensive planning

Authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), a community's Comprehensive Plan lays out strategies for the nature, pace and location of physical development as well as plans for future economic and social conditions.

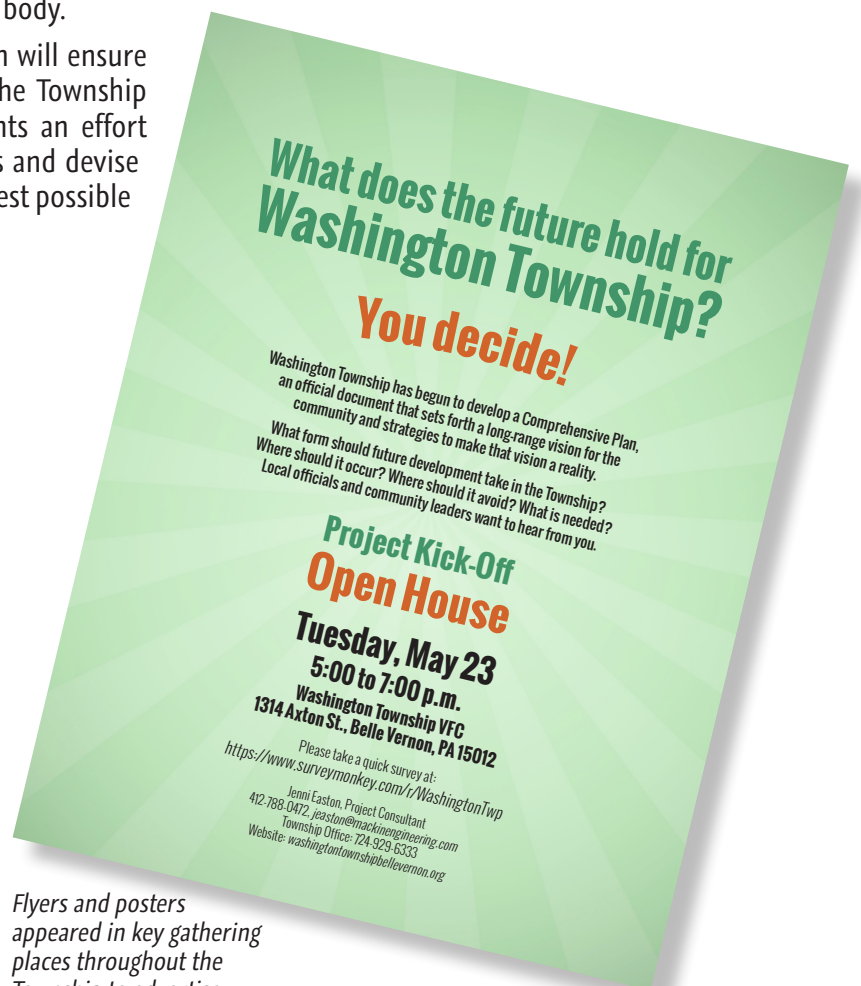
In short, a comprehensive plan is:

- An educational tool for understanding current conditions, issues and opportunities,
- An assessment and prioritization of needs,
- A statement of the optimally desirable vision of future growth and development, and
- A public policy guide to community decision-making adopted by the governing body.

Washington Township's Comprehensive Plan will ensure that local voices drive what happens in the Township in the long term. This document represents an effort to determine local consensus on key issues and devise strategies for the Township to become the best possible future version of itself.

## The planning process

To guide the plan's development, Township Supervisors appointed the Planning Commission to lead the year-long project, which was facilitated by Mackin Engineering Company. The Planning Commission met regularly to offer insight on local conditions, trends and priorities as well as prepare for two public meetings on the plan. The Township widely advertised both public meetings, which informed residents on the planning process and allowed them to submit input that would meaningfully shape the plan's direction, vision, goals and recommendations. Ultimately, the plan belongs to the Township's residents.



*Flyers and posters appeared in key gathering places throughout the Township to advertise open house events for the Comprehensive Plan.*

## Using the plan

This document is designed primarily as a decision-making guide for Washington Township's elected and appointed officials. It represents community will for the policies it contains, as they were formed through the work of the Planning Commission and vetted by the public at various stages of the project.

The Township's Planning Commission spent roughly 12 months gathering input and research to understand current and expected local conditions and determine the best path forward.

The first part of this document sets the stage for the plan by reviewing how the Township has developed and what economic, population and housing trends are expected to impact its future. This section also inventories resources available to the Township, including natural features and infrastructure, and explores the effects of mining and unconventional drilling.

The later sections of this document establish a shared vision for the Township's future, investigate high-priority topics and lay out recommendations to help the Township access and allocate resources to achieve its long-range goals. It is designed to be a reference that can be used in the day-to-day administration of Township business, a living resource that will be useful for years to come.

## Interrelationship

The synthesis of interrelated activities to resolve issues and problems is an important foundation to good community planning. In this regard, there are linkages among the elements, goals and action items of Washington Township's Comprehensive Plan. All are related and should further the overall vision, described in Chapter 8.

## Required consistency

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

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

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

- Allenport Borough
- Belle Vernon Borough
- Dunlevy Borough
- Fayette City Borough
- Jefferson Township
- North Belle Vernon Borough
- Perry Township
- Rostraver Township
- Stockdale Borough



Source: "Atlas of the County of Fayette," Pomeroy Whitman and Co., 1872.

## 2 Historic Context

Washington Township occupies the northwestern corner of Fayette County within the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area and is closely tied to the highly industrialized Monongahela River Valley. The Township was established in 1783 when Fayette County was carved from Westmoreland County, originally including Jefferson and Perry townships. Unincorporated villages within the Township include Arnold City, Brownstown, Fairhope, Lynnwood, Gillespie, and Naomi.

Like many communities across the region, the Township initially grew and prospered along with the rise of the coal industry. In 1880, when Fayette County was the largest coke producer in the country, an estimated three-fourths of the region's workforce labored in coal or coke.<sup>1</sup>

In more recent years, resource extraction has centered on the natural gas industry, which has seen rapid growth regionally and locally. Additionally, the Township is home to many multi-generational agricultural operations, most of which remain active. The Township's natural resources will continue to shape land use and settlement patterns for decades to come.

The Township's most famed historical figure is Colonel Edward Cook, whose home stands today as a listed historic landmark, the first stone building west of the Allegheny Mountains. Cook's home and other historic resources are further discussed in Chapter 4.

<sup>1</sup> Margaret M. Mulrooney, *A Legacy of Coal: The Coal Company Towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania* (Washington, D.C.:

National Park Service/U.S. Department of the Interior), 1989.

# 3 Baseline Trends

## Setting the stage

The composition of population and households drive community character. They also indicate the amount and type of public services and amenities that residents require. For instance, a municipality with an expanding population of elderly citizens may require more services related to health care and community programs focused on home maintenance, while one with a large concentration of children younger than age five calls for an emphasis on recreation and child-care needs.





This section highlights demographic, economic and housing conditions for Washington Township, building the context for later sections of the plan.

# Demographic trends

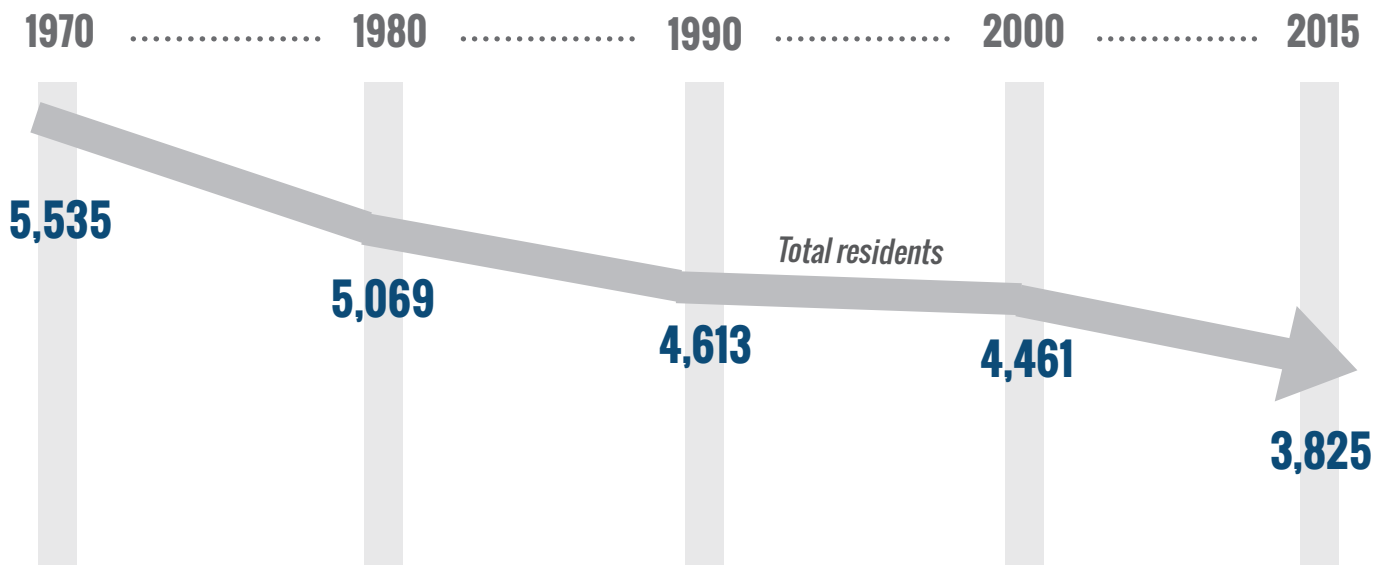
Settlement patterns in Washington Township have followed the trajectory of economic trends within the larger region. The Township historically served as a bedroom community for workers taking part in the area's booming coal mining and production of coke and steel until the local peak of those industries in the 1940s. The collapse of steel in the 1970s caused some workers to move elsewhere in search of prosperity and others to fall from the middle class. The Township's 31% overall population decline since 1970 reflects this reality.

The composition of residents has also changed according to larger trends, such as households becoming smaller (young couples deferring or deciding against having children, more people living alone) and the age distribution shifting as the Baby Boomer generation moves toward retirement.

## 2015 Census estimates:

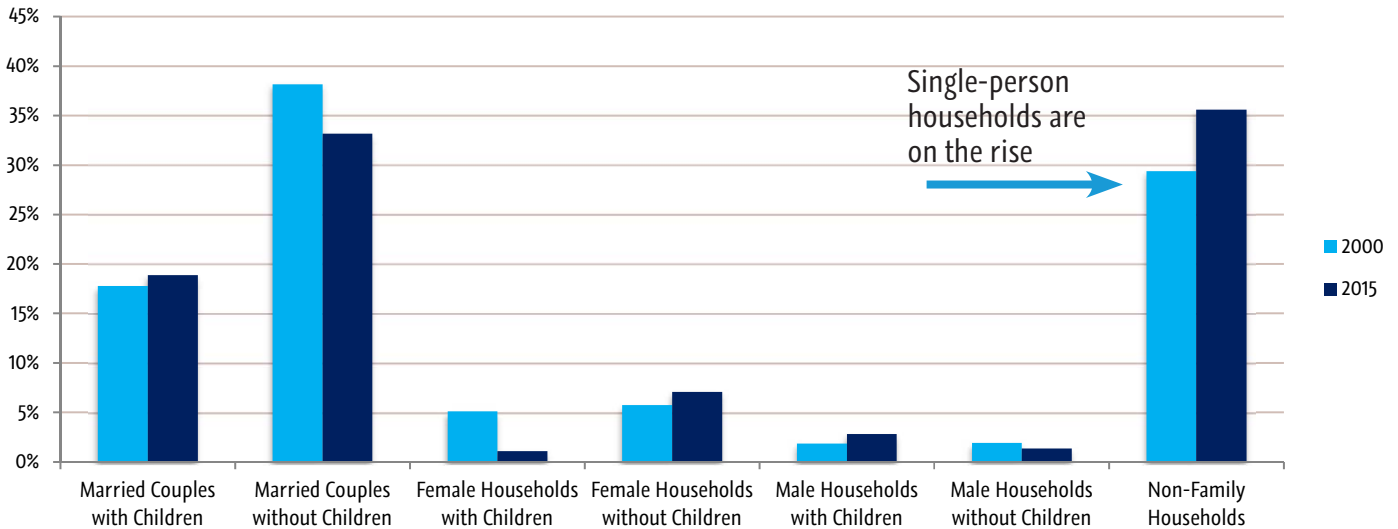
-  **Population: 3,825**
-  **Land area: 9.7 sq. miles**
-  **Households: 1,623**
-  **Median household income: \$52,171**

## Township population



## Household type

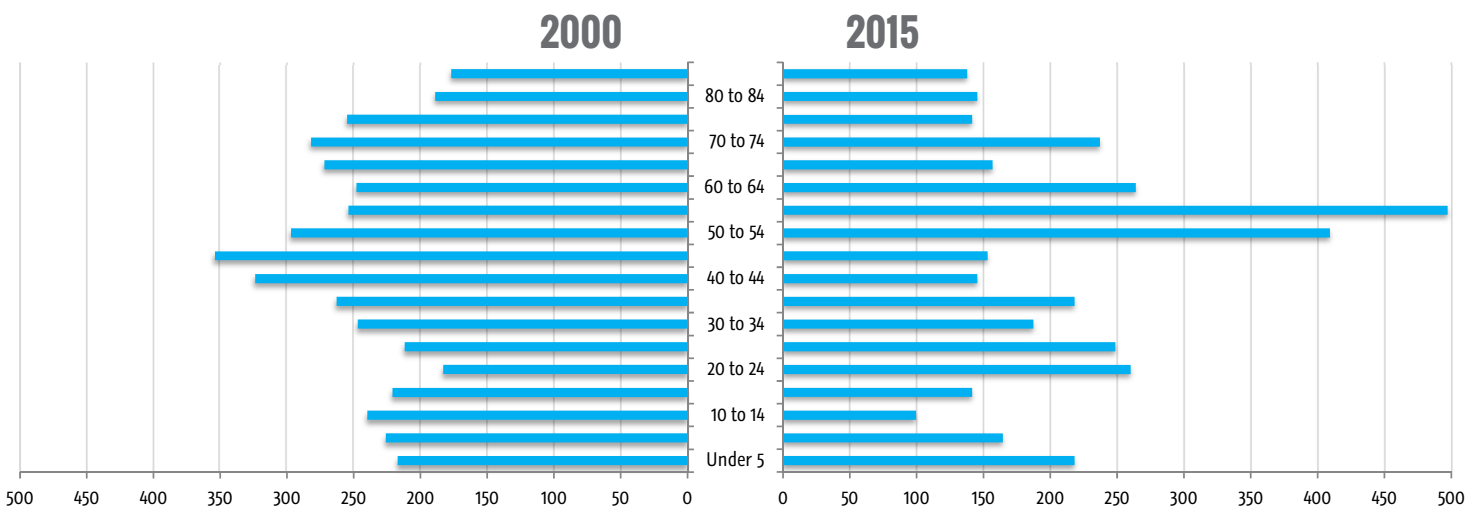
In keeping with a regional and national trend, non-family households represent an increasing share of all households in Washington Township. These include non-related people living together and people living alone. Non-family households now represent 36%, compared to 29% in 2000. At the same time, the total number of households with children fell from 451 in 2000 to 370 in 2015. Fayette County similarly experienced a decline in households with children and growth in non-family households. At the same time, Township residents have observed an apparent increase in enrollment in early childhood and kindergarten programs that may reverse this trend.



## Age

Within the overall context of a 14% population loss between 2000 and 2015, the Township's age distribution has skewed more heavily toward late middle age, adding 356 people in their 50s while remaining stable on the number of young adults (ages 15 to 24) and losing senior citizens — the number of people age 60 and up fell by 341 (24%).

The number of residents age 50 to 59 increased by **65%** since 2000.



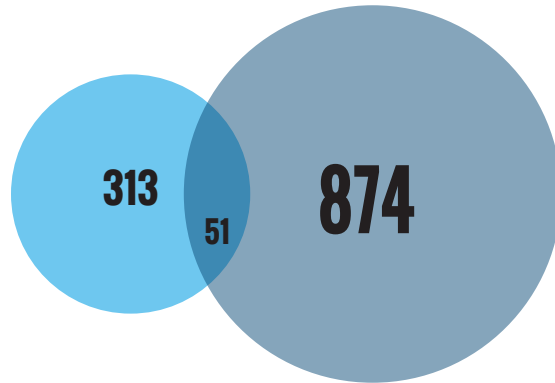
# Local economy

While the bread and butter for many Washington Township residents was traditionally industrial or resource extraction work associated with nearby mills, people who live in the Township today are invested in a much wider assortment of jobs, more focused now in such areas as health care, education and the service sector.

The vast majority of residents still work outside the community, as Washington Township's businesses are generally small and local in nature.

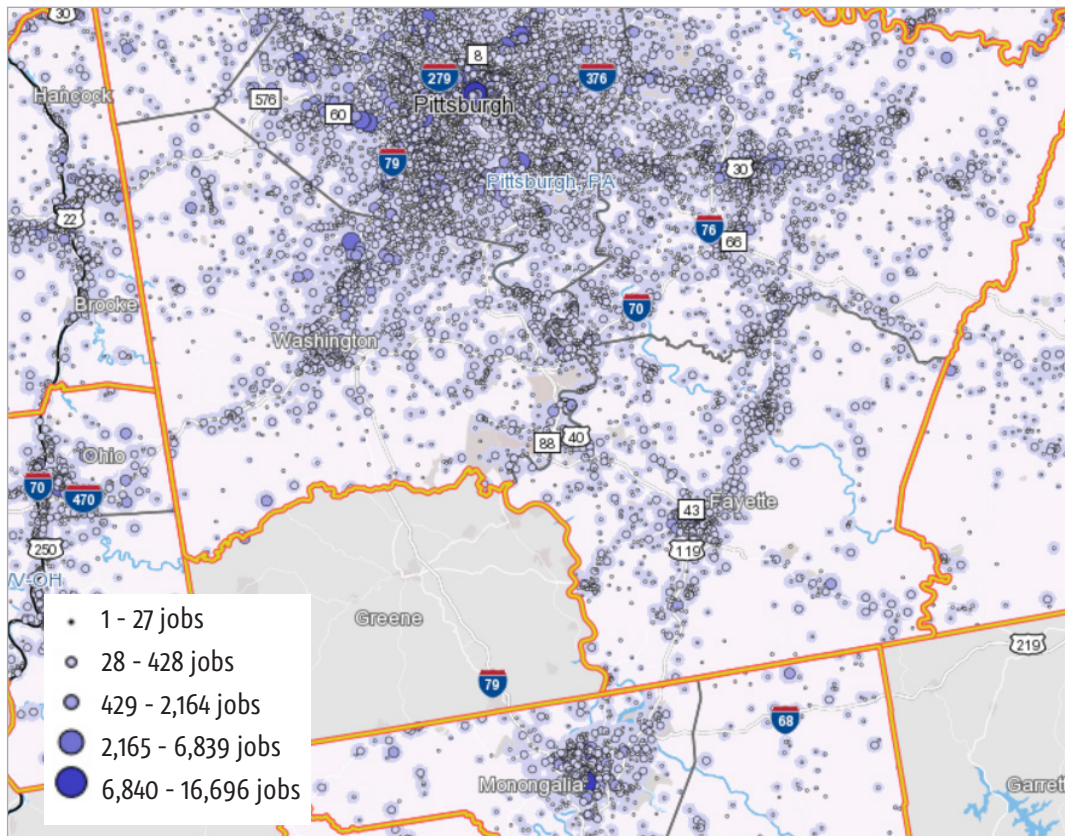
Township residents have higher educational attainment than Fayette County residents on the whole, with 91% of those age 25 and over having attained at least a high school diploma and 26% with an associate or bachelor's degree (compared to 87% and 23%).

**94%** of Township residents with jobs work in communities other than Washington Township.



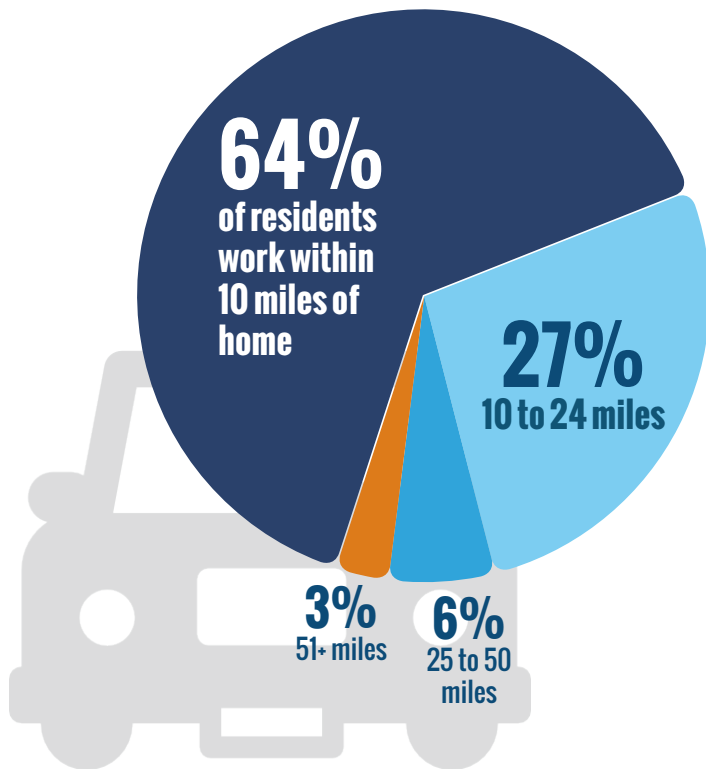
- Work in Washington Township and live elsewhere
- Live and work in Washington Township
- Live in Washington Township and work elsewhere

## Regional job concentrations, 2014



Note: Greene County data not available, but Waynesburg represents an additional job destination for Township residents.

## Commute



The Township's workers scatter to a variety of destinations across the region, including county seats (Greensburg, Uniontown, Washington, Waynesburg) and Mon River communities as well as regional employment hubs such as Morgantown and Pittsburgh. The Township's location and highway connections afford its workers access to a variety of job markets. However, as shown at left, nearly two-thirds of Township residents with jobs have less than 10 miles to commute each day.

### Strongest sectors:

Health care and social assistance, manufacturing, education, construction, retail



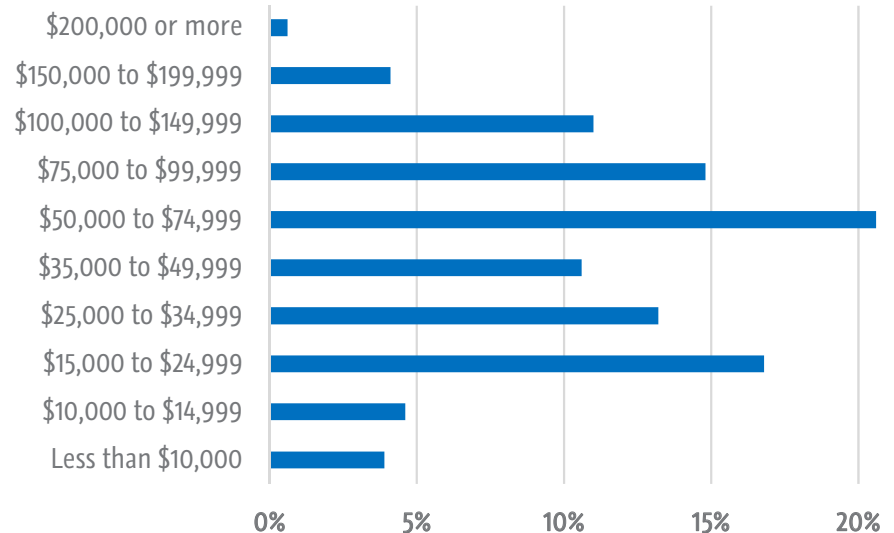
## Income

About 60% of household incomes in the Township fall between \$25,000 and \$100,000 per year, as shown at right. One in every four households has an income below \$25,000, and 16% make more than \$100,000.

The median income across Township households was \$52,171 in 2015, higher than the Fayette County median (\$39,636).

In 2015, 8.2% of Township residents age 18 and over fell under the poverty threshold, compared to 16.3% at the County level. This translated to an income below \$11,770 for a single person or \$24,250 for a family of four.

### Households by income level, 2015



# Housing market

The Township's homes are **26%** renter-occupied.

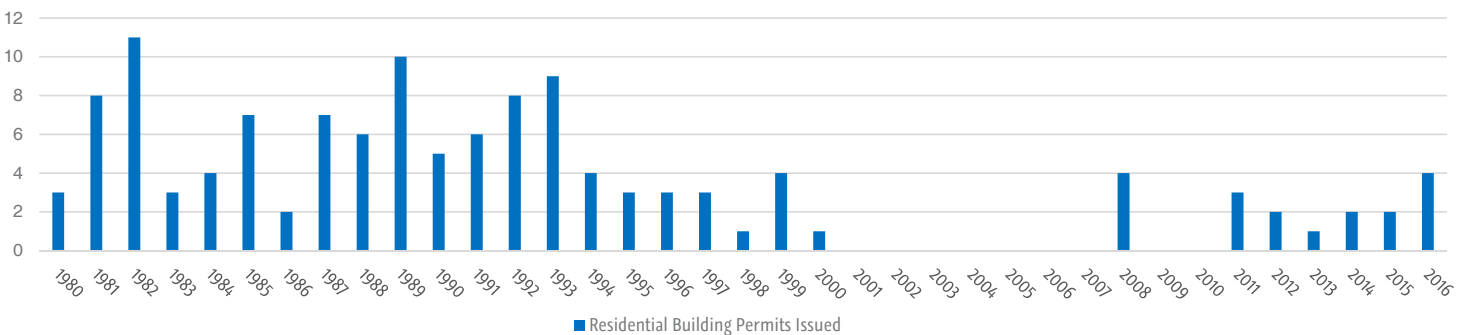


## Total units

The Census Bureau counted 111 fewer total housing units in Washington Township in 2015 compared to 2000, a change that could be due to abandonment/demolition, conversion or other factors.

As the graph below illustrates, permits locally issued for new housing starts ranged by year up through 2000, when they dropped to minimal levels. Most of the Township's homes (68%) were built between 1940 and 1980, and only an estimated 44 homes (2%) were built in 2000 or later.

## Building permits issued for new housing have been sluggish since 2000:



## Market

Current activity in Washington Township's housing market reflects higher foreclosure activity, according to a local Realtor, as it has become more difficult in recent years for single-income households to maintain homes. Township seniors who own large homes often defer maintenance, then ultimately receive low offers from buyers when a need to downsize causes them to sell. Younger buyers generally seem to have specific preferences for layout, finishes and amenities and have little appetite for sweat equity. Thus, the Township would benefit from the construction of new family homes and/or units designed for seniors (small, accessible, low-maintenance), and there is a strong need for home rehabilitation assistance for existing seniors in large homes.

The Township is spread across three ZIP codes: 15012 covers the northern half as well as Rostraver; 15438 covers the southwestern corner and Fayette City; and 15473 spans the southeastern end and Perryopolis. According to Multi-List Service data for Spring 2018:

- There were 70 homes on the market in **15012**, 5% fewer than a year ago, representing a wide variety of home types. The average listing price was \$146,854.
- **15438** was stable, with only a handful of properties on the market outside of Fayette City. The average listing price was \$155,989.
- Nearly all of the homes for sale in **15473** were in Perryopolis. The average listing price was \$172,336.

## Costs

Across the region, household incomes have not kept pace with rising housing costs since 2000, which has caused an increasing affordability problem for many. By contrast, Washington Township has become comparatively more affordable, with household incomes rising by 27% and self-reported housing values falling by an inflation-adjusted 13%. Renting a home or apartment in the Township now costs 31% more than in 2000, after adjusting for inflation.

## Housing costs v. income, 2000 and 2015

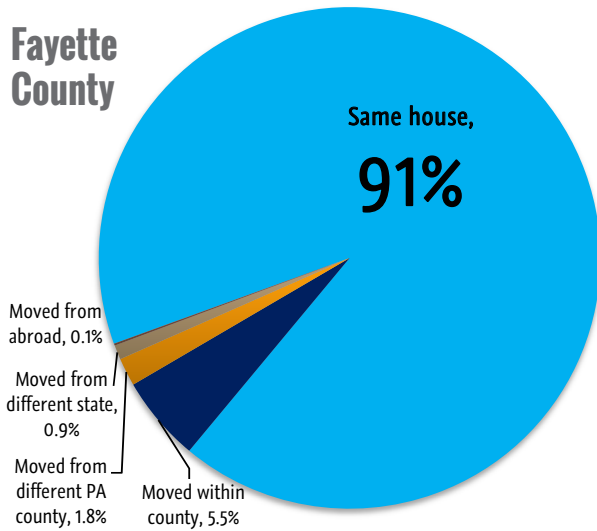
	Median housing value	Median gross rent	Median household income
<b>2000</b>	\$104,486*	\$485*	\$41,153*
<b>2015</b>	\$91,100	\$636	\$52,171
<b>Change</b>	-13%	31%	27%

\* Adjusted for inflation

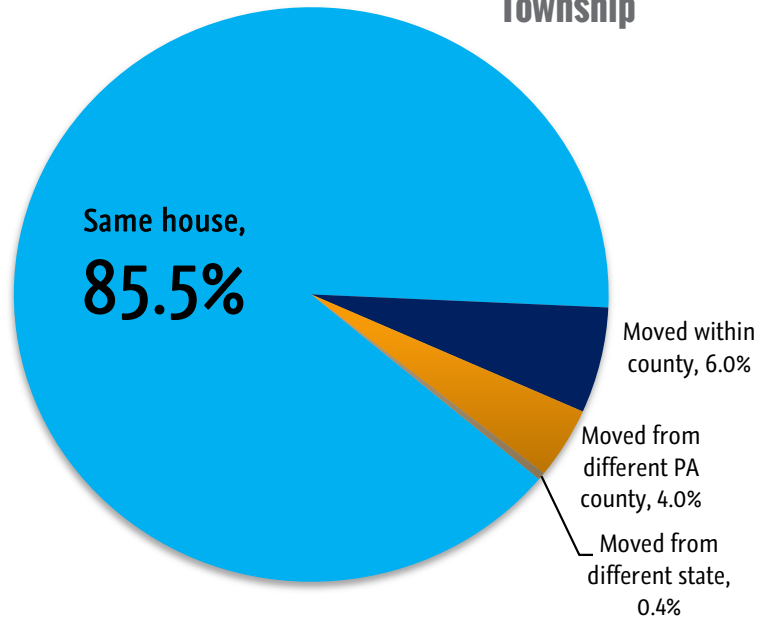
## Mobility

The Census Bureau estimates that 85.5% of Washington Township residents remained in their homes between 2014 and 2015, while 6% moved in from elsewhere within Fayette County and 4% moved in from a different county. The rate of homeowner is higher than across the county, where 91% of residents had been in their homes for at least a year.

### Fayette County



### Washington Township



## Housing type and occupancy

Roughly three in every four Washington Township homes are single-family detached structures. The next most common type is buildings with five to nine apartments, of which there are 163 (9%), followed by buildings with two to four units (152, 8%). The bureau did not report any buildings with more than 10 apartments. (The Fayette County Housing Authority's Marion Villa property has 77 family units, but they are separated into multiple buildings). Overall, the Township's housing is 17% multi-family. Additionally, the Census Bureau reports 97 mobile homes.

As of 2015, there were 127 vacant homes in the Township, comprising 6.5% of all homes. Of these, 55 (43%) were vacant for sale or rent, and six were seasonal use.



# 4 Township Amenities

## Enhancing public value

Residents of a community expect that the dollars they pay in local taxes will support an appropriate level of public amenities, such as sound governance, police and fire protection, education, reliable and well-maintained infrastructure and attractive, functional common areas. The range of services, facilities and opportunities a municipality provides has a substantial impact on the quality of life available in the community. Striking the right balance requires public officials to understand changing needs and to set priorities.

Local governments such as Washington Township provide a selection of services that may include public safety, garbage collection, sewage collection/treatment, water resources, repair and maintenance of local roads, code enforcement and local planning and zoning. Washington Township provides all of the above, in concert with its municipal authority. This section reviews the day-to-day business of Township government and the services and facilities it provides.



*Residents enjoy the walking track next to the Municipal Building. The veterans memorial is visible in the distance.  
Photo source: Mackin*

## Municipal government

Washington Township is led by a three-member Board of Supervisors that direct community policies and operations through passing ordinances and voting on appropriations. The Township does not employ a secretary or manager position, thus elected and appointed officials also handle the responsibility of handling day-to-day operations and assisting residents by informing them of Township rules and laws, explaining procedures and addressing complaints. A phone answering service fields calls on behalf of the municipality, forwarding messages to the Supervisors, road crew or zoning officer as appropriate.

The Township has a five-member planning commission for land use planning and review related to subdivision and land development, as well as a seven-member board that oversees the Municipal Authority of Washington Township, which provides water service to approximately 3,300 customers in Fayette and Washington counties and provides sewage collection for approximately 1,500 residents in the Arnold City, Brownstown, Lynnwood, Naomi and Washington Heights areas.

As required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Township supervisors have appointed a zoning hearing board to ensure that the application and administration of the zoning ordinance is fair and equitable. The board presides over hearings involving appeals of the zoning officer's decisions, the granting of variances for certain hardships imposed by the ordinance and applications for special exceptions.

The Township's appointed Zoning Officer issues permits, conducts inspections and ensures compliance with the adopted ordinance.

The Township employs a road crew responsible for road construction and maintenance, storm drainage work, winter snow and ice removal, traffic and street signs, equipment and vehicle maintenance and building maintenance.

## Public safety

Unlike many of Western Pennsylvania's rural townships, Washington Township maintains a local police presence, which provides the valuable advantages of rapid response and police who know the community well. Currently, the Township has four full-time officers and three part-time officers on staff and operates 24 hours per day.

Township police work out of a station along Fayette Avenue. General calls for service can be routed through the administrative office during normal business hours, while emergency calls are dispatched through 911.

A police force is a tremendously valuable asset, but it represents a cost that is prohibitive for many communities. Therefore, many have begun to study the feasibility of multi-municipal shared police protection. This may be an option to increase cost-efficiency for Township residents, such as forging an agreement to provide services for nearby municipalities.

The Township receives a high level of fire protection from the Washington Township Volunteer Fire Company, a 100% volunteer company with 34 active members. The company provides fire suppression as well as vehicle rescue, water supply and first responder incident response paramedic services. All members are certified in CPR/first aid, and several members maintain state certification as emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

Several issues challenge the ability of volunteers to respond to emergency situations within the Township, including limited public water and fire hydrants, unsafe conditions in dilapidated buildings, poor property maintenance and structures without updated fire alarm systems.



Washington Township Volunteer Fire Company equipment appears on display at the Fire Hall.  
Photo source: [facebook.com/wtvfc](https://www.facebook.com/wtvfc)

# Utilities

## Water/Sewer

Washington Township has proactively invested in the extension of water and sewer infrastructure in areas where such amenities were determined to be economically feasible. This represents a considerable competitive advantage, as the Township seeks to attract business and residential investment, as public water and sewer access is limited in many of the county's townships. As noted previously, the Municipal Authority's water service reaches approximately 3,300 households in Fayette and Washington counties, and its sewage collection system serves about 1,500 residents in the Washington Heights, Arnold City, Lynnwood, Naomi, and Brownstown areas.

In addition to its public health advantages, the availability of water and sewer infrastructure impacts housing costs. Septic system installations can cost anywhere from \$4,000 for a conventional gravity system (for a four-bedroom home) to more than \$40,000 for an aerobic treatment drip disposal system. These systems also have considerable maintenance costs. Potential buyers of homes with untreated, contaminated water will have difficulty qualifying for a mortgage.

However, a certain level of density is required to make water or sewer line extension economically feasible, thus the Township's more sparsely settled areas will continue to use on-lot systems.

## Communication

Across Fayette County, 88% of households have access to wired broadband internet access of 25 mbps or faster.<sup>1</sup> ZIP code 15012 had nine residential data providers as of December 2017. Stakeholders who are Verizon customers reported that its service in particular is unreliable. Lines are old and susceptible to failure and commonly cut out. Both phone and internet outages are normal. This causes problems for the automated calling system that informs residents about water plant problems. Verizon reportedly has no plans to bolster or expand its infrastructure system within the Township.

The issue is not only a frustrating one for residents and businesses, but could also impact future prosperity: Strong access for data connection would allow Washington Township to become an even more attractive living option to those for whom work is not place-based, a work arrangement that is increasingly common.

1 Source: Pennsylvania Profile, Broadbandnow.com. Microbrand Media, LLC.

Figure 2: Broadband Internet Service Coverage, 2016

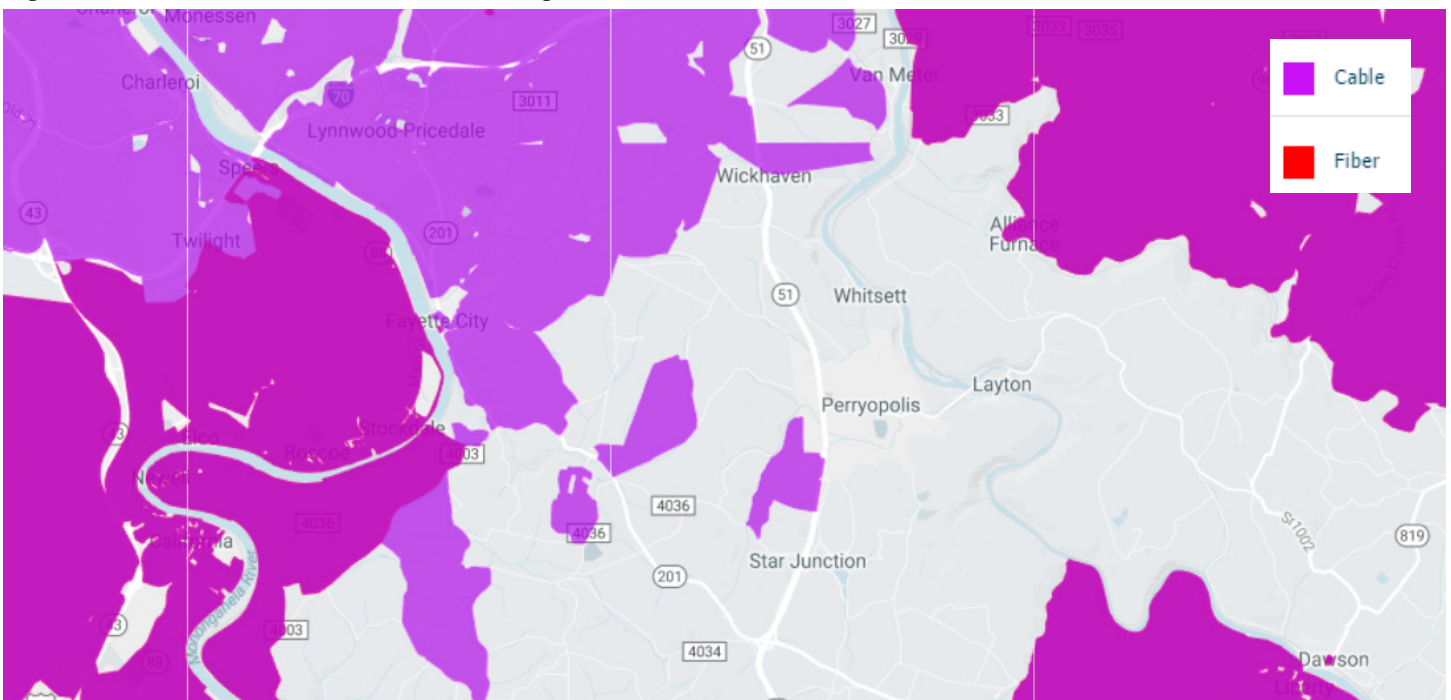
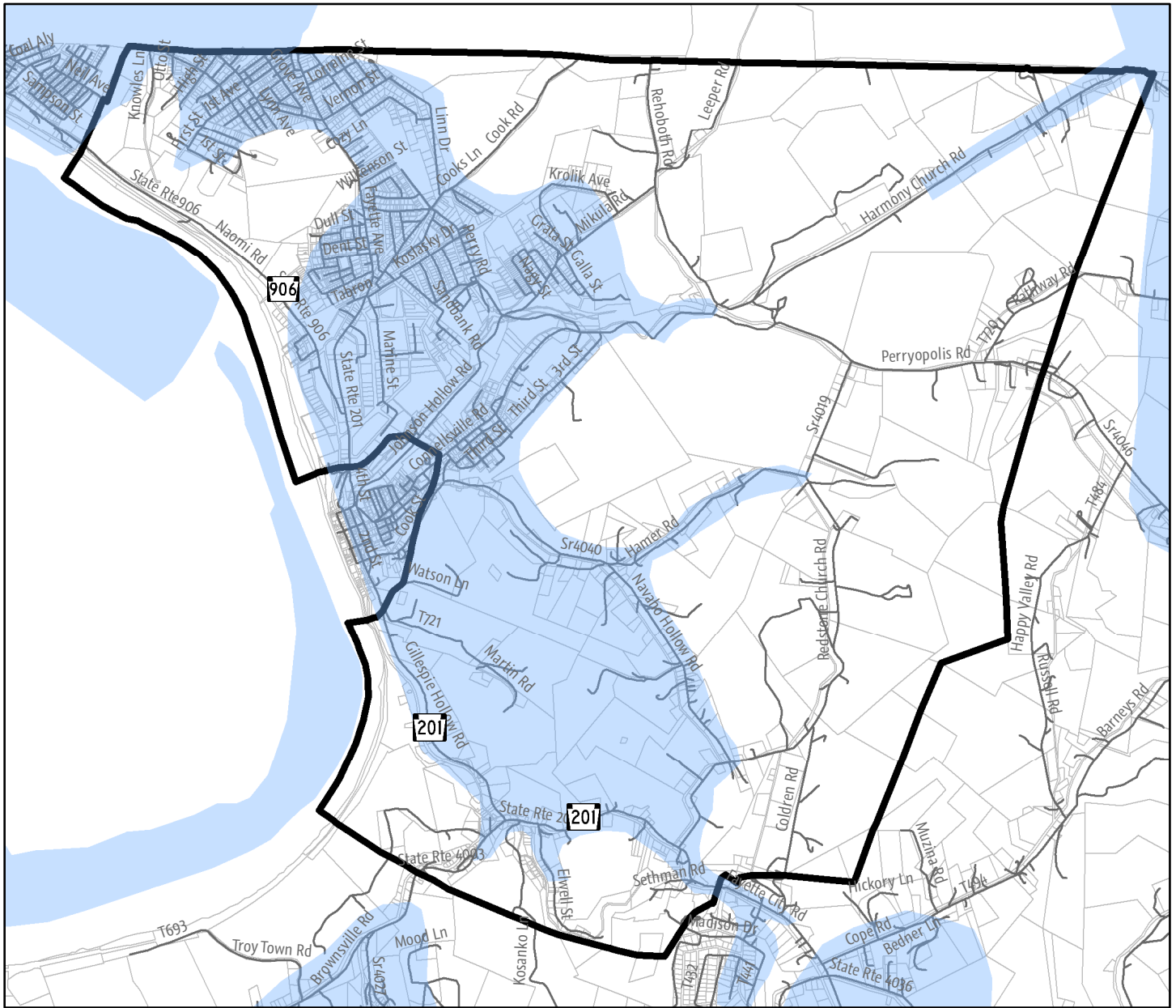





Figure 3: Public Water Service Map



-  Public Water Supply
-  Township Border
-  Parcel Boundaries

## Education

Children who live in the Township attend schools in the Belle Vernon Area School District, the high-quality reputation of which serves as an asset to current residents and a selling point to potential future residents. The district covers more than 20,000 residents across 42 square miles of Westmoreland and Fayette counties, educating students from Belle Vernon, Fayette City, North Belle Vernon and Rostraver Township as well as Washington Township.

In the 2016-2017 school year, the district enrolled 2,428 total students in grades K-12. This included 634 at Marion Elementary, 598 at Rostraver Elementary, 426 at the middle school and 770 at the senior high school.

The district's total K-12 enrollment fell by 16% from 2,886 in the 2006-07 school year to 2,426 in 2016-17, reflecting overall demographic patterns: a decline in families with children. Overall, household size continues to decline as increasing numbers of baby boomers move into retirement age and younger individuals more commonly defer marriage and having children. However, Township residents have noticed an apparent increase in enrollment in early childhood and kindergarten programs that may locally reverse this trend.

In the 2016-17 school year, 37.9% of all district students qualified as low-income by state standards. This was lower than the statewide rate of 43.9%. By school, the share of low-income students ranged from 28.9% at Rostraver Elementary to 50.6% at Marion Elementary.

In 2015-16, the latest year for which this data was available, the district's dropout rate for grades 7-12 was 2%, accounting for 16 students out of 822. By comparison, the statewide rate for the same year was 1.7%.

With regard to performance, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment judged 29.9% of students in the Belle Vernon Area School District to be proficient or advanced in math in 2017, while 66.1% were proficient or advanced in English language arts. These scores place the district slightly below statewide rates in math and above statewide scores in reading.

Anecdotally, stakeholders considered the quality of the district as a selling point for settling in Washington Township, as some parents feel they're getting the quality of a Westmoreland County school district for Fayette County tax rates.

Figure 4: Total Annual Enrollment, Belle Vernon Area School District, 1993-2013

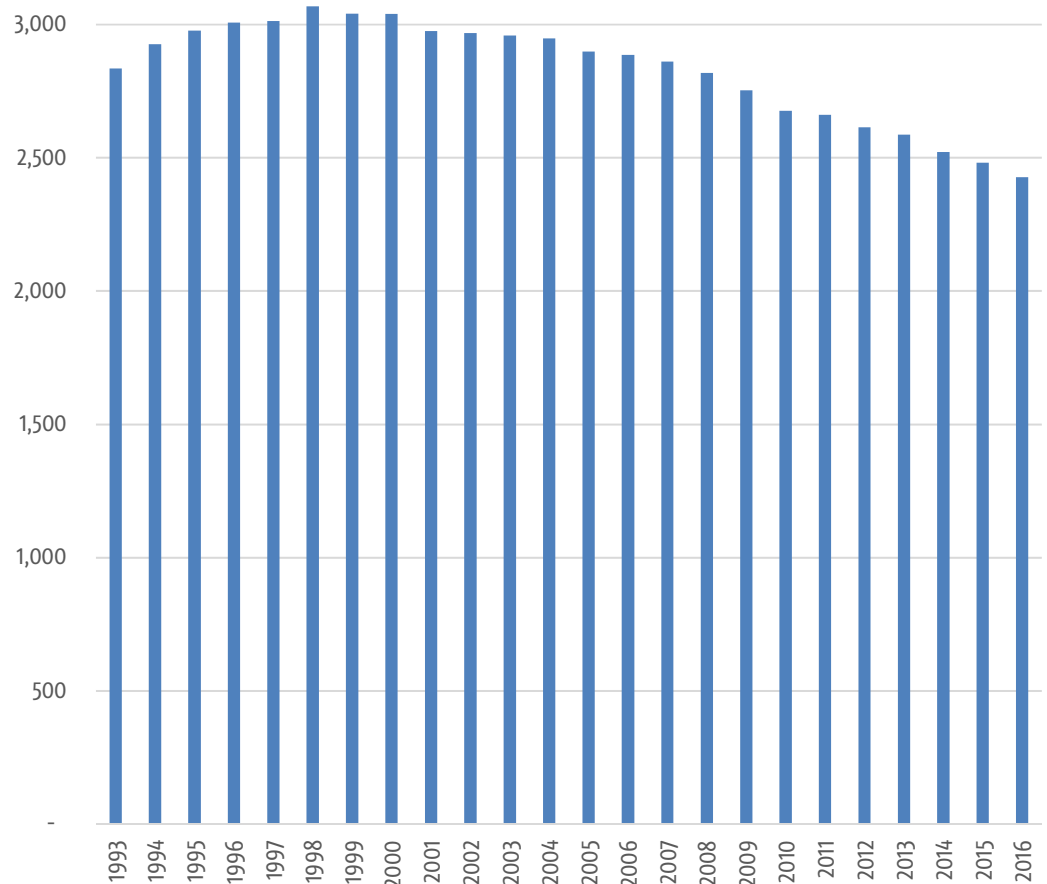


Figure 5: Recreation Facilities within Washington Township



## Recreation

The availability of recreational facilities and services impacts the quality of life within a municipality. Typically, families prefer to reside within a community that affords access to an extensive recreation system.

Currently, public recreation sites within the Township are limited to a walking track and playground near the municipal building, in addition to neighborhood ballfields. Residents have identified a need for more alternatives, as currently there is no nearby park or trail that accommodates dogs, strollers, bicycles or more intense exercise. Regional trails do not pass through the Township.

However, great potential exists for future amenities, given available land and potential funding sources, such as Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Recreation will be a focal area in coming years, involving exploration of possibilities such as:

- Creating public access to the Monongahela River for water recreation
- Capitalizing on programs, advice and resources of existing groups, such as the Marianna Outdoorsmen Association
- Developing a trail or incorporating bicycle infrastructure in future road projects
- Creation of more extensive recreation facilities

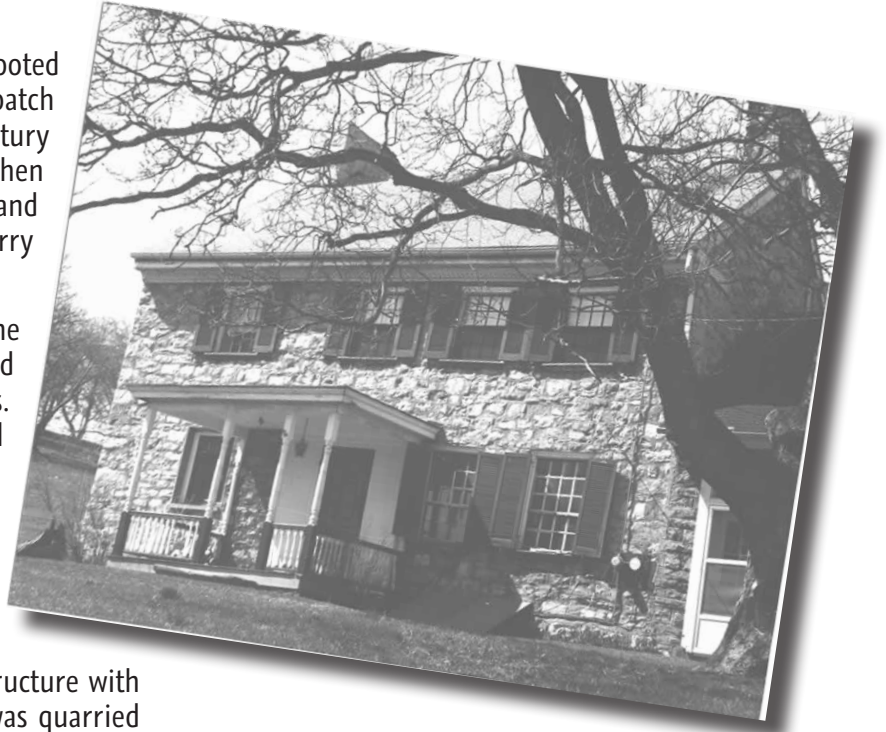
Developing recreational opportunities could help the Township become more environmentally stable, vis a vis the preservation of valuable and sensitive resources, and more economically stable, as these opportunities would become attractions that make the Township a more attractive place to live, particularly for young people and families. Proximity to parks and trails commonly bolsters property values.

## Historic places

Washington Township has a rich history rooted in the experiences of agricultural and coal patch families who settled here more than a century ago. The Township was established in 1783 when Fayette County was carved from Westmoreland County, originally including Jefferson and Perry townships.

The Colonel Edward Cook House, north of the Fairhope Ballfields on Cooks Lane, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Colonel Cook was a member of the Provincial Congress that drafted the first declaration of independence presented to Congress in 1776. He later played a major role in the Whiskey Insurrection of 1791 and was the only Fayette Countian excluded from the general pardon of November 29, 1794. The house is a two story, post-Colonial style structure with exteriors of natural-faced limestone that was quarried on the property.

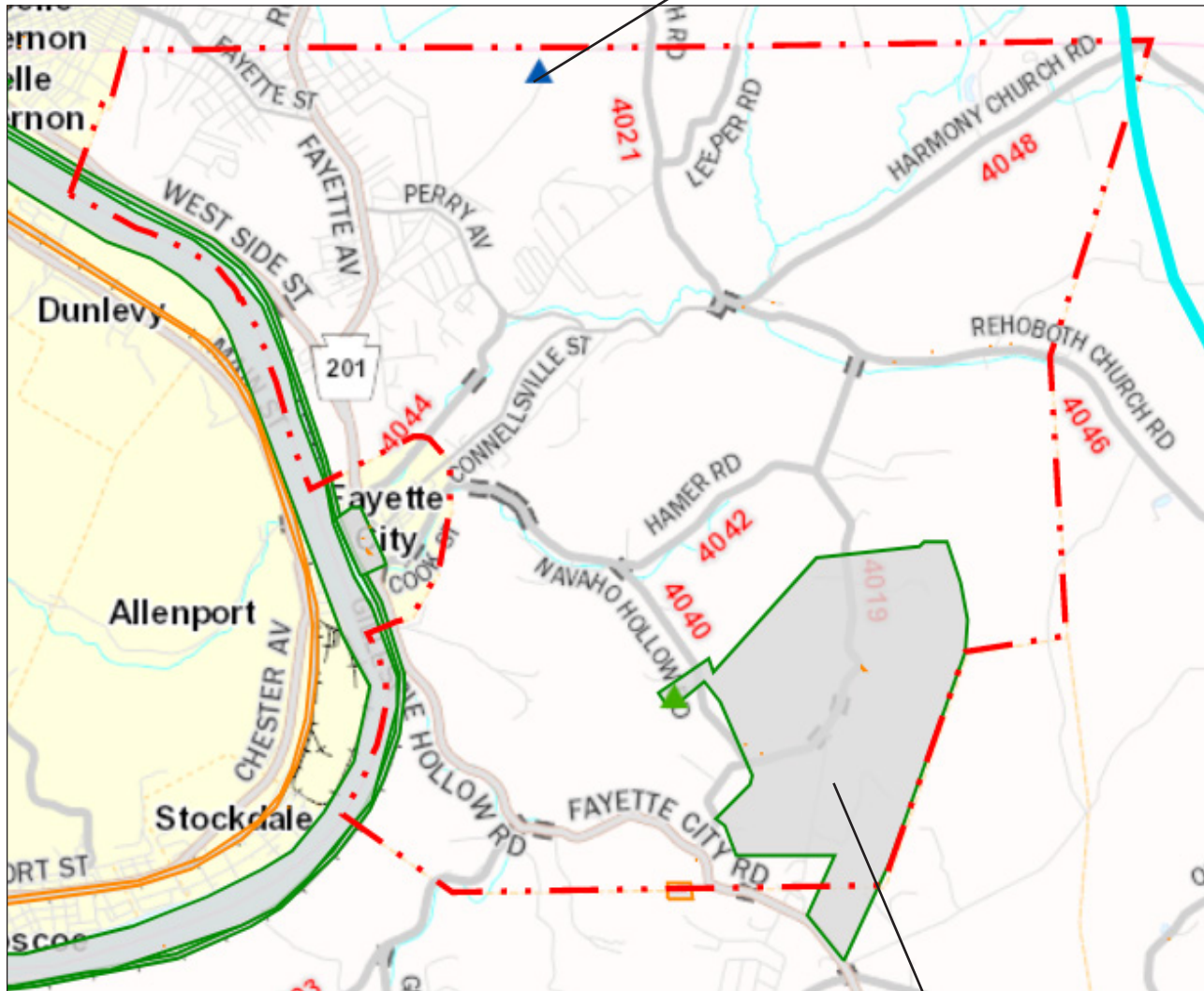
The Little Redstone / Red Lion Valley Historic District, centered on Route 4019, was determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Development in this area dates back to 1790 and includes 30 contributing historical buildings.



*The Colonel Edward Cook House, a post-Colonial private residence, was built in 1772.*

Figure 6: Areas of Historic Interest

**Col. Edward  
Cook House**



Source: Pennsylvania Cultural Resources GIS

**Little Redstone/  
Red Lion Valley  
Historic District  
(Eligible)**



# 5 Natural Environment

## Preserving resources

This section examines the impacts of environmental constraints, such as steep slopes, flood hazards and industrial contamination, on future land development. It also explores ways in which waterways and open spaces can enhance the local quality of life and attract investment for years to come.

The Township's land and water resources shaped where and how people built homes and made a living. They are also a foundation for the future, as natural resources are important assets that merit protection and promotion as the Township formulates its future land use plan and associated priorities.

## Land form and composition

Slopes greater than 25% potentially inhibit development, adding cost, risk and practical infeasibility. As Figure 7 shows, development has not necessarily avoided these areas within Washington Township. Of the nearly 10 square miles of land area in the Township, only 2.5 can be classified as level to rolling. Five and one-half square miles are classified as hilly, having a slope of over 10% but less than 24%. Nearly two square miles (1,075 acres) are steep, with a slope of over 25%.

Pennsylvania is divided into numerous physiographic provinces, defined as regions in which all parts are similar in geologic structure, climate, relief and geomorphic history. The Township is located in the Pittsburgh Low Plateau section of the Appalachian Plateau province, which covers most of southwestern Pennsylvania.

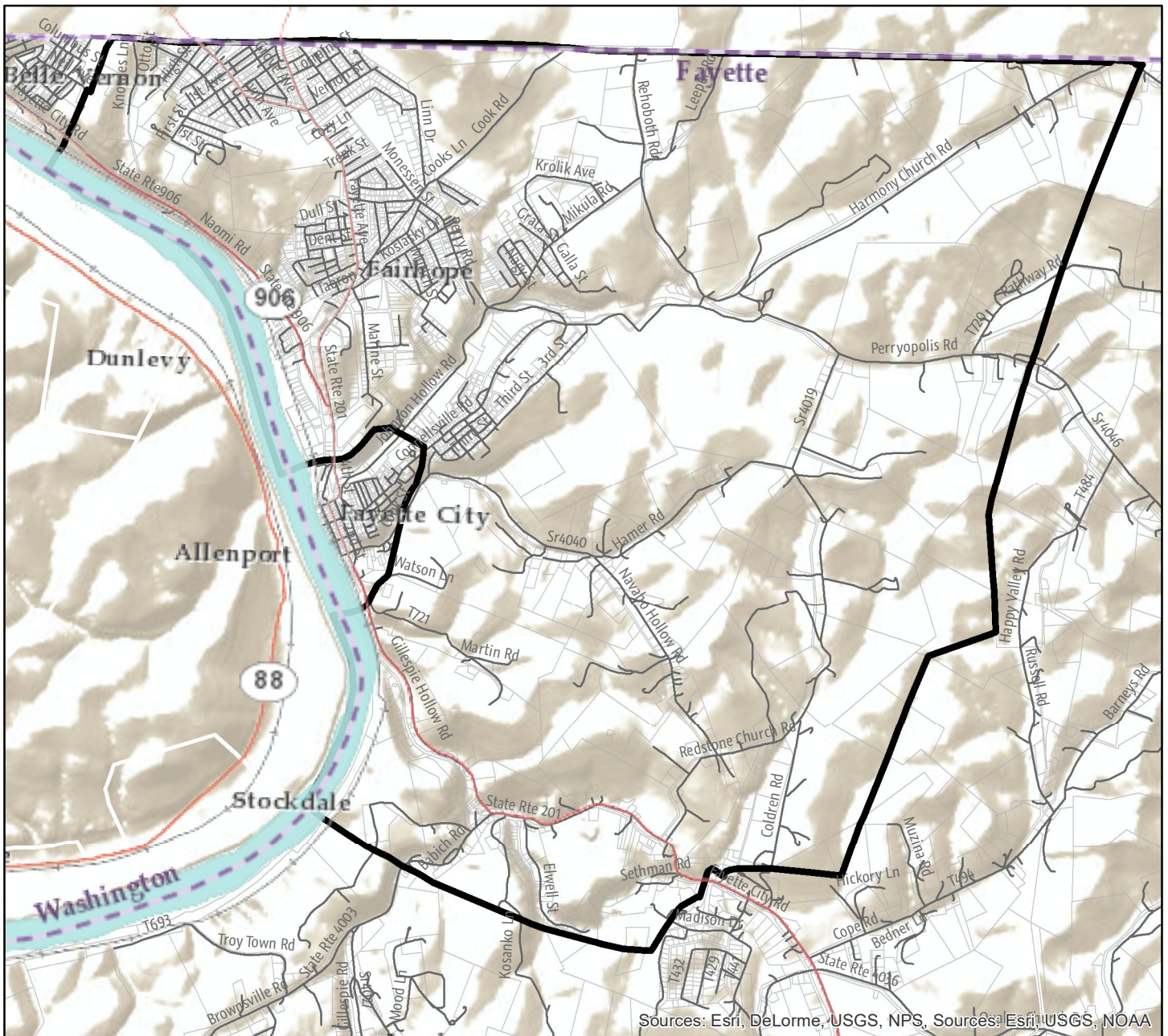
In general, the area is characterized by numerous narrow, relatively shallow valleys. The uplands are developed on rocks containing the bulk of the significant bituminous coal in Pennsylvania. Much of this coal has been historically mined, work which has left its mark on the scarred landscape and streams of the region. The geological formations underlying the area fall into two groups: Permian/Pennsylvanian and Pennsylvanian, each of which represents a different time period in geologic history.

The geological structure of the Township is composed in most areas of alternating layers of sandstone, shales, limestones and coal. The Pittsburgh seam, the world's richest mineral deposit, underlays most of the Township, and the exploration of this coal bed provided an economic stimulant to the area.

Soils in the Township are mostly shallow and well-drained, with moderate to high natural fertility but low moisture capacity. More than half the Township's land area is arable (suitable farmland), with the highest-value arable tracts located within the eastern two-thirds of the Township.

The Camichaels Formation, in the northern end of the Township, was flooded when glaciers dammed the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Rivers. The flood deposited 60 to 70 feet of clay, sand, and gravel that present difficulties to the proper engineering of structural foundations.

Figure 7: Slope



-  Township Border
-  Parcels

## Agriculture

Washington Township, like the region within which it lies, is typically associated with the historical industrial pursuits of mining, steel production and manufacturing. However, agriculture has long been the leading industry for the region and the state.

Active farmland represents a large share of total land cover within Washington Township. The Township has some significant areas of prime agricultural soils, which are deep with good internal drainage and are level or nearly level.

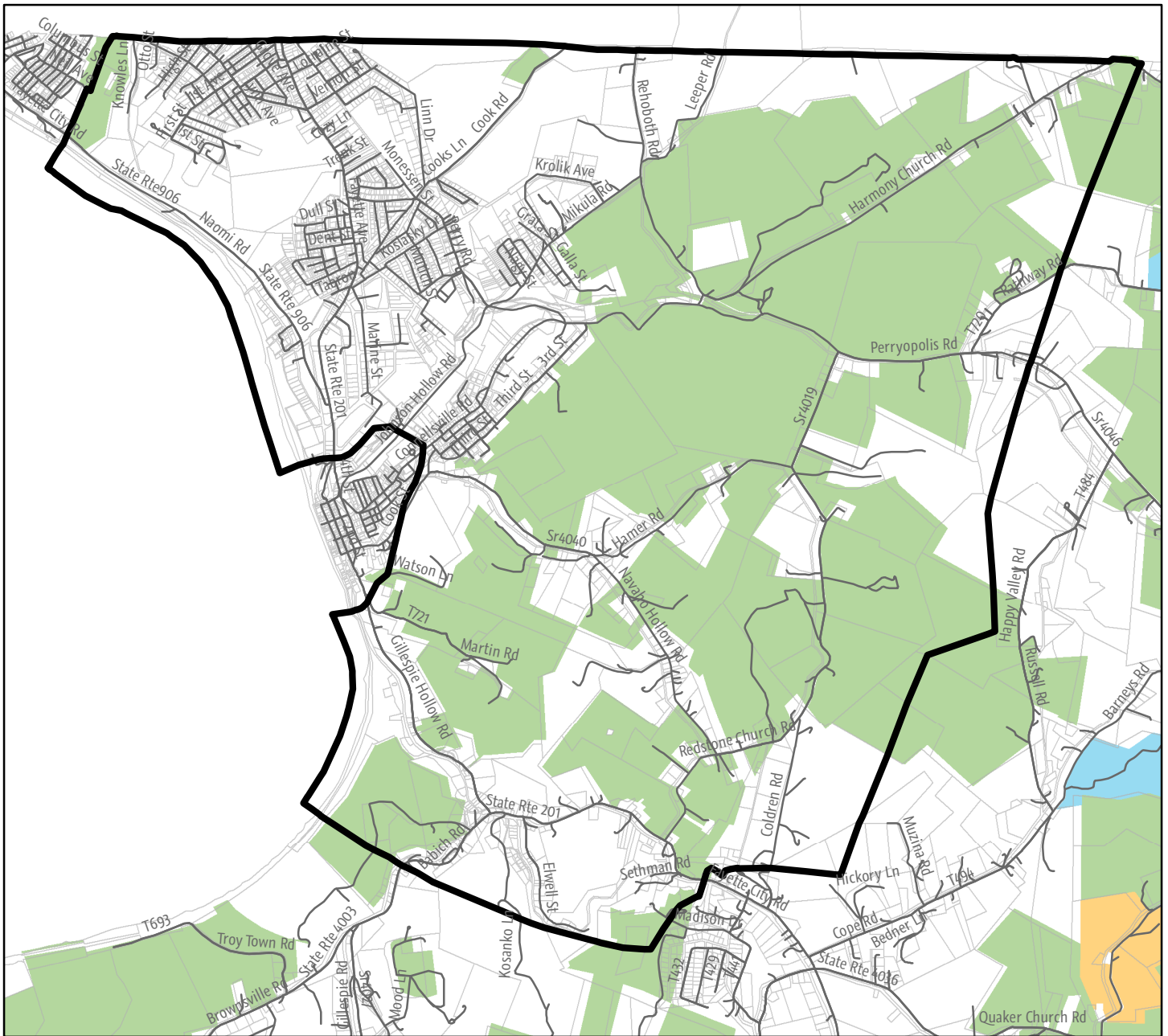
As Figure 8 shows, a substantial number of parcels in the Township are preserved through the Clean and Green tax relief program. This land conservation program lowers the property tax rate for the vast majority of landowners who enroll in the program in exchange for their devoting the land to agricultural use, agricultural reserve use, or forest reserve. Landowners who exit the program may be required to pay up to seven years' worth of back taxes, plus interest.

Although agriculture remains productive and profitable for many residents and remains entrenched in the area's character, many farming enterprises have ceased in more recent decades as family farms were sold, often to accommodate land-intensive forms of development such as sprawling subdivisions or strip malls. Township stakeholders have noticed that older generations of farmers cannot always convince younger relatives to continue the agricultural tradition, which leaves questions as to who will maintain these large-acreage properties.






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

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

Figure 8: Agriculture



Data Source: PASDA

-  Township Border
-  Parcels
-  Agricultural Preservation
-  Agricultural Security
-  Clean and Green Program

## Hydrology

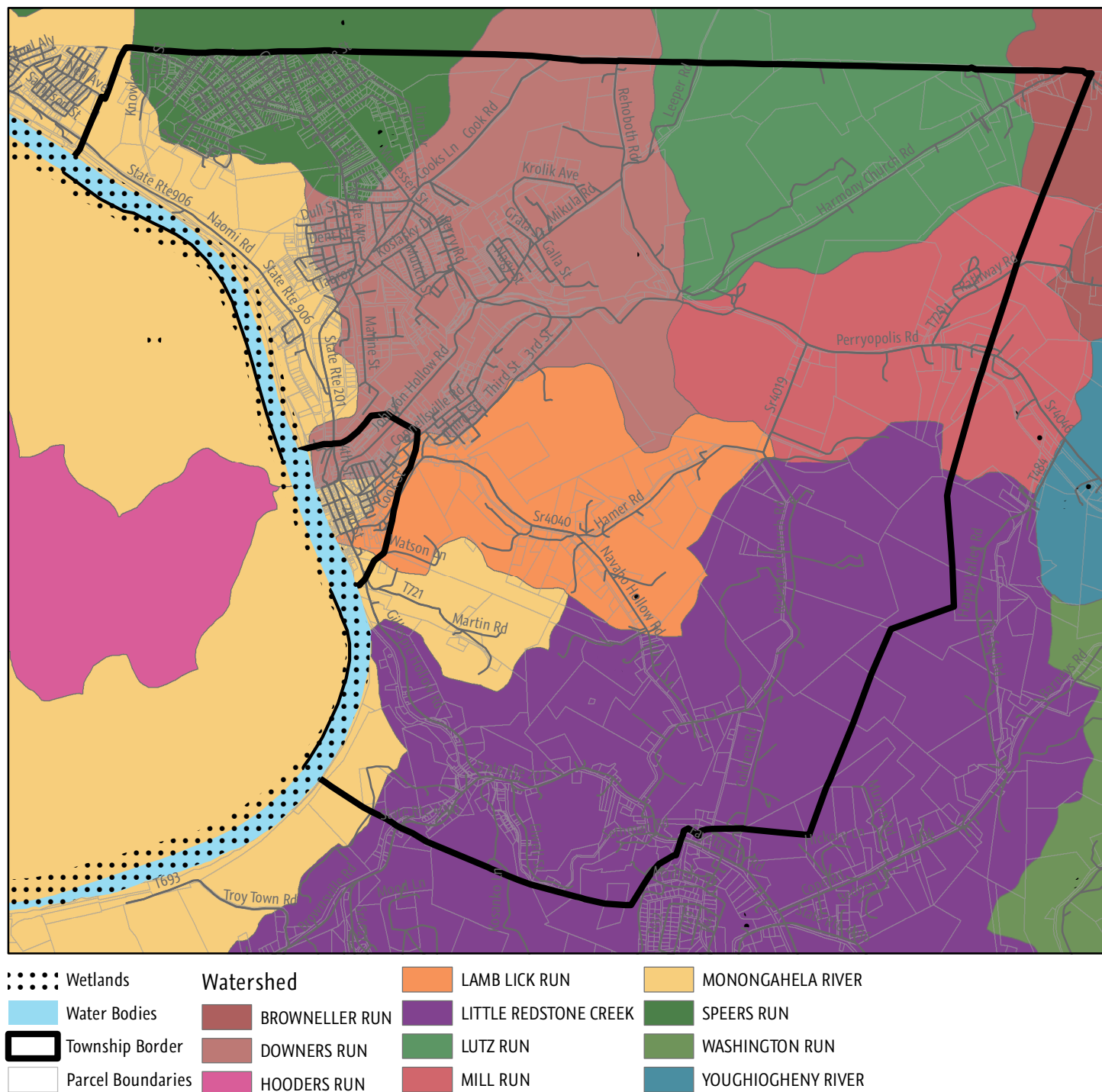
The Environmental Protection Agency defines a watershed as the area of land that catches rain and snow and drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater. Watersheds are delineated based not on municipal boundaries, but by topography and ridgelines. Because watersheds are defined by natural hydrology, they represent the most logical basis for managing water resources.

All of the Washington Township's land area is within the Lower Monongahela River Watershed. Large watersheds such as this can be divided into smaller watersheds, which in turn can be further divided into smaller watersheds as shown in Figure 9. If an unnamed tributary flows directly into the Monongahela River, it is part of that river's watershed.

Figure 9 illustrates the watersheds and stream locations within the Township.

Wetlands are transitional layers between terrestrial and water environments where the water table often exists at or near the surface, or the land is inundated by water. As of December 2017, the National Wetlands Inventory had identified limited wetland areas within the Township, confined primarily to the Monongahela River waterway.

Figure 9: Streams, Wetlands and Watersheds



Data Source: PASDA

## Flood hazard areas

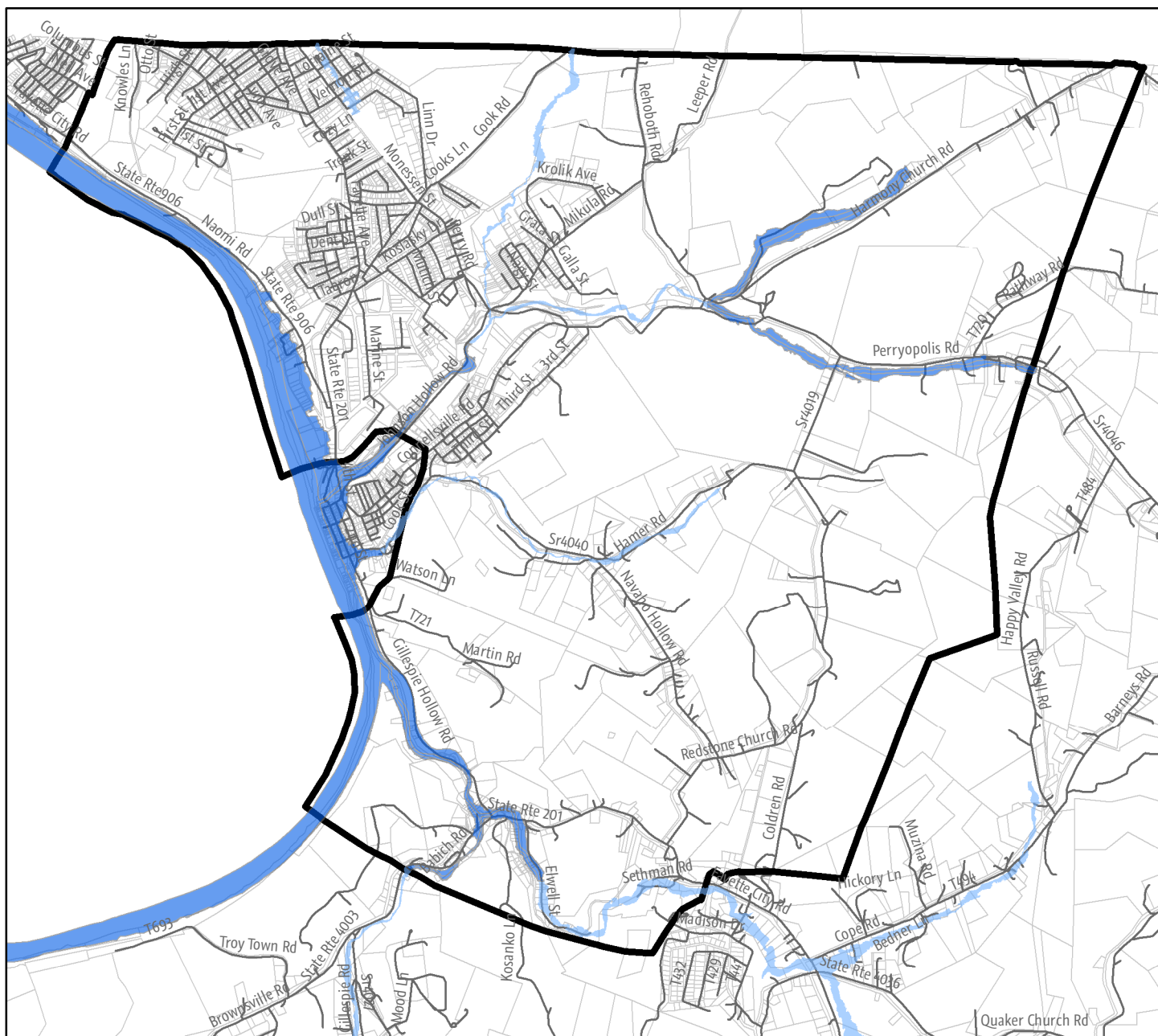
Limited areas of Washington Township are at risk of significant property damage due to their location in the 100-year flood plain, as illustrated in Figure 10 according to the following categories:






- **Zone A** areas (shown in light blue) are subject to inundation by the 1%-annual-chance flood event generally determined using *approximate* methodologies. Detailed hydraulic analyses have not been performed. Mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply.
- **Zone AE** areas (shown in dark blue) are subject to inundation by the 1%-annual-chance flood event determined by *detailed* methods. Base flood elevations, mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply.
- **Zone X** areas are comparatively minimal risk places where flood insurance is not mandatory.

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

FEMA has been systematically updating Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Pennsylvania communities over the past several years. FEMA has released maps for Fayette County that become effective in 2017. Any changes in the flood map do not affect continuing flood insurance policies for structures built in compliance with local regulations and the flood map in effect at the time of construction. However, substantial improvements or damages to a structure (where improvements reach 50% or more of previous market value) would trigger compliance with any new requirements or base flood elevation determinations.

Figure 10: Flood Hazard Areas, 2017



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Flood Zone</b>   |  Township Border        |
|  A (1%, no BFEs determined) |  Fayette County Parcels |
|  AE (1%, BFEs determined)   |  |
|  AO (1%, 1-3 feet)          |  |
| X (Outside the 0.2% floodplain)   |  |

Data Source: FEMA

## Land use legacy: Wells and Pipelines

Figure 12 illustrates the location of oil and gas wells within the Township, the majority of which are conventional —typically vertical, more shallow and substantially smaller in terms of footprint and land use impact than unconventional (Marcellus shale) wells. Since unconventional gas drilling first tapped into the region in the early 2000s, it has rapidly expanded into an intensively active regional industry. According to industry permit tracking (with data slightly more recent than the DEP data reported below), the Township had 25 unconventional wells on 16 sites.

The map indicates that as of 2017, no large gas gathering and/or transmission pipelines ran through the Township. (The map does not show smaller distribution pipelines that deliver gas to homes and businesses.) In order to more efficiently transport natural gas to market, several companies statewide are working on proposals for large-scale pipeline infrastructure build-out that is subject to many sets of federal, state and local laws, regulations and plans. Owners of land where pipelines are set to run will need to consider the impacts of temporary and permanent easements, particularly on property values and future land use. Permanent easements are binding on not only the landowner, but also on all successors and assigns, and typically no buildings or structures can be placed on top of easement areas, which may limit future subdivision and/or development.

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

Figure 11: Total Oil and Gas Wells within Washington Township

	Conventional	Unconventional	Total
Active	96	22	118
DEP Plugged	1	0	1
Operator Reported Not Drilled	10	0	10
Plugged OG Well	4	2	6
Proposed But Never Materialized	16	1	17
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>152</b>

PA Dept. of Environmental Protection



## Land use legacy: Mining

Figure 13 illustrates the nearly complete extent to which Washington Township has been undermined. While no methods exist to accurately predict the potential for sinkhole/trough subsidence or mine water breakout, the state Department of Environmental Protection acknowledges that risk always exists in areas that have been undermined and recommends insurance coverage. Of the more than 1 million homeowners who are sitting on top of abandoned mines in Pennsylvania, only about 6% have subsidence insurance.<sup>1</sup>

Deep mining operations have been active in Township in recent decades. Historically, the Township has suffered significant property damage from surface subsidence, which follows the collapsing of the mine shaft. Some of the more recent deep mining activities have left columns of coal for surface support, and in other areas it is reasonable to assume that subsidence has ceased and that future surface damage is unlikely. Little deep coal remains to be mined.

Two small areas south of Fairhope, an area south of Arnold City, a small section south of Gillespie and a number of long columns of coal in the southeastern section of the Township still remain; however, other coal seams beneath the Township's surface are not economically feasible to mine.

Abandoned mines in the region have been known to contribute to the pollution of area streams, as is evident in a rusty tint to water color and a rotten egg odor. Such contamination poses a serious threat to aquatic life and public health. Data collected and analyzed by California University of PA has determined that acid mine drainage is a non-point source pollutant to the region's groundwater system that could cause negative health impacts to residents using it as a drinking source.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 PA DEP, August 2013.

---

2 Horvath, Lisa Marie. "Well and Spring Water Quality Assessment in the Pike Run Watershed, PA." California University of PA, 2006.





# 6 Transportation Network

## **Maintaining safety and efficiency**

The transportation system within Washington Township consists exclusively of roads designed for and dominated by vehicular travel. The Township is also located with reasonable access to a regional public transit system and modes of air, rail and water travel. Moving pedestrians and bicycles along major routes does not rank as a primary concern at the present time, given topographic and other constraints that would make multi-modal infrastructure expensive and difficult to install, but expanding such options is a priority for the future.

This section reviews the layout and capacity of the local transportation system, with consideration toward ensuring that the Township cost-effectively maintains route options that meet the needs of those who live, work and do business within its borders.

## Roads

The capacity of a road network to safely and efficiently move people or goods to a desired destination has long-ranging implications and is an important factor in land use decisions. The activity hubs where people work and shop must be efficiently accessible. Additionally, the layout and capacity of the road network impacts the ability of local government to provide services.

Many of the state's older rural and secondary roads were not designed to support the weight they now carry. To prevent damage, PennDOT and the Township may post weight restrictions and/or require bonding policies to make haulers financially responsible for excess maintenance on the roads they use. The figures below show roads and bridges within the Township that either bear a weight limit or are covered by an agreement with a hauler. Security funds for bonded roads typically ranges between \$6,000 and \$12,500 per linear mile.

Generally, traffic moves without problem through the Township, and no major connections are missing. Figure 16 labels roads within and surrounding the Township according to their average annual daily traffic, or annualized average 24-hour volume of vehicles passing through a given point or section of road. Route 201 near Fayette City averaged 7,900 vehicles per day, while Route 906 (Naomi Road) saw an average around 2,500 and Route 201 farther north (Fayette Avenue) saw 6,400. Local roads ranged from 100 to 2,700 vehicles per day.

Figure 14: Posted Roads, 2016

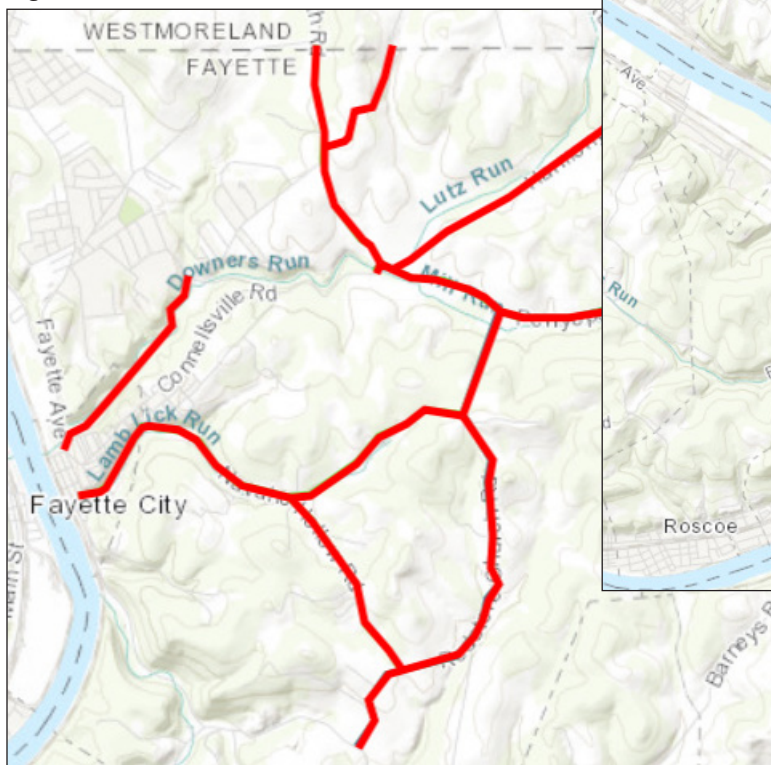


Figure 15: Bonded Roads, 2016

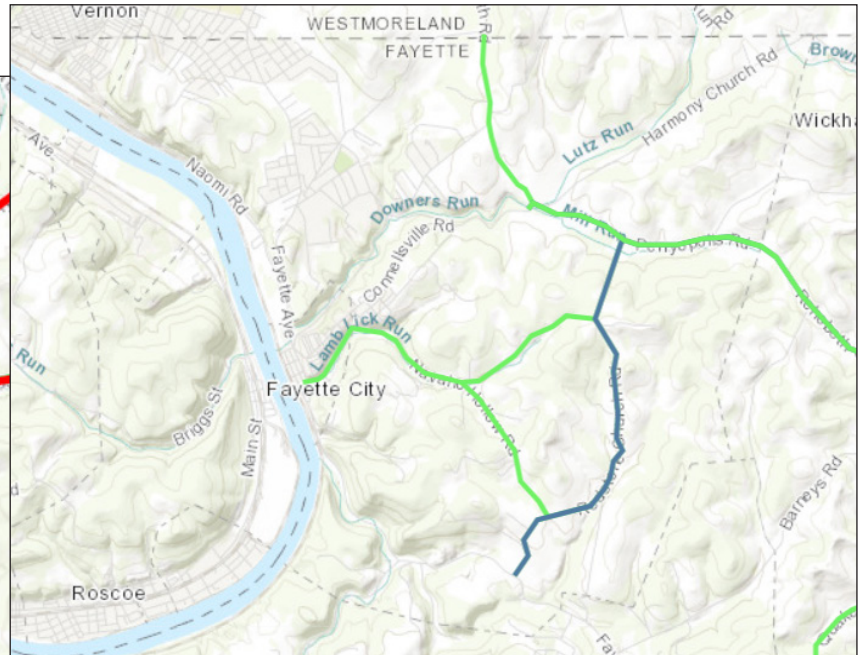
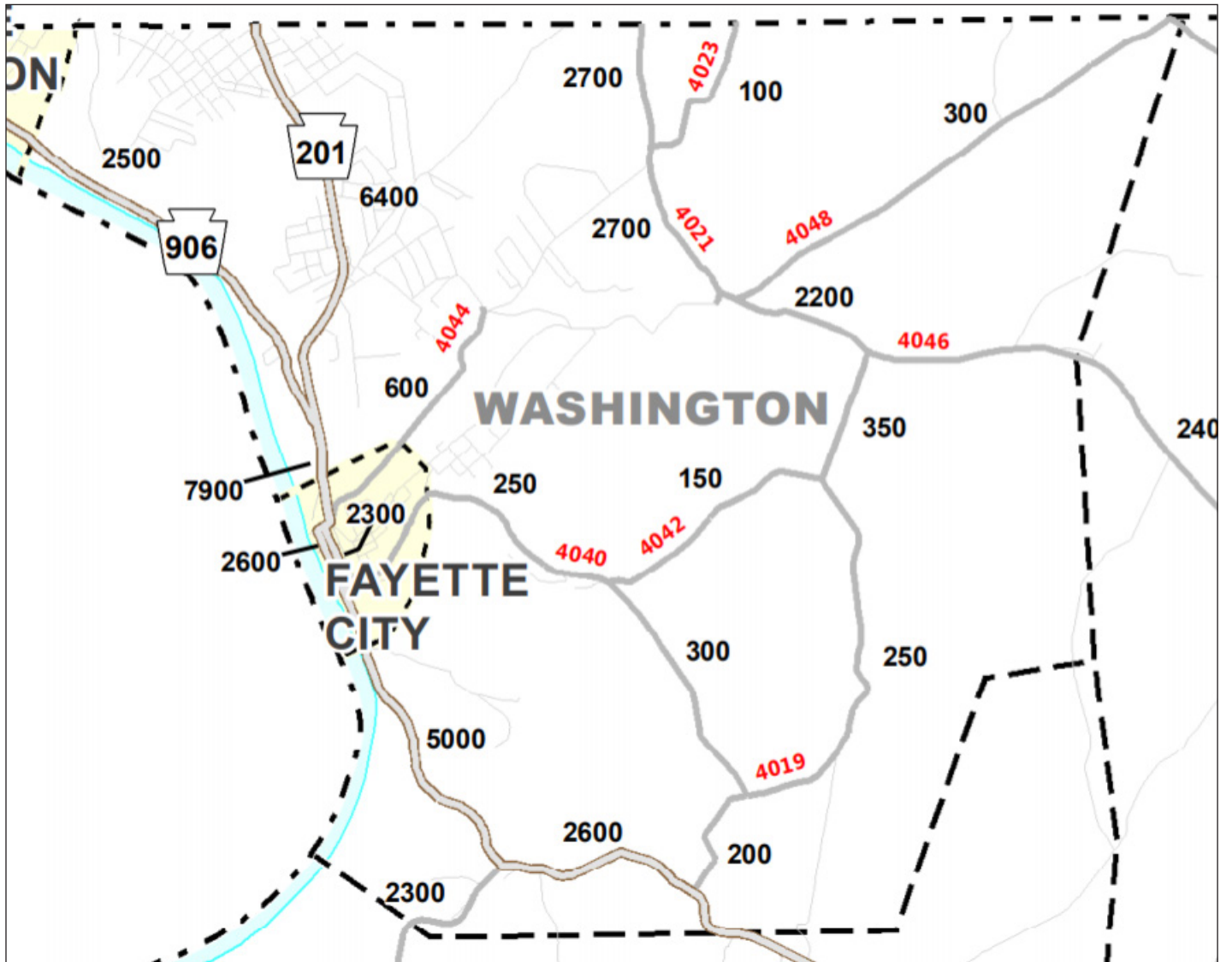















Figure 16: Traffic Volume Map, 2016 (Published November 2017)



Source: PennDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts

-  State Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Borough Boundary
-  City Boundary
-  Fully Controlled Access (Interstate)
-  Fully Controlled Access (Toll)
-  US Route
-  PA Route
-  State Route
-  Local Road
-  County Seats
-  Traffic Volume Number
-  State Maintained Bridge

## Alternative modes

As of the 2016 Census estimates, nearly all workers in Washington Township drove alone to work. Of all workers age 16 and up, 1,588 (85%) drove alone, while 54 carpooled with one other person, and 34 carpooled with at least four others (vanpool). An additional 19 walked to work, and 60 worked at home.

Seventeen workers were reported to use public transit to commute, a low number that is not surprising given that there are no public transit stops within the Township. The nearest routes are run by the Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority (MMVTA), which connects residents of 21 area communities via a regional public transportation system that stretches across portions of Washington, Westmoreland and Fayette counties.

Closest to the Township, MMVTA runs the Valley 1 and Valley 2 routes seven days per week:

- **Valley 1** operates to/from New Eagle (Lignelli Manor), Monongahela, Black Diamond, Donora, Monessen, North and Lower Belle Vernon to/from the shopping plazas along Rt 201 corridor in Rostraver Township (Walmart, Tri-County Plaza, K-Mart and Gabriel Brothers).
- **Valley 2** (University Route) provides service to/from West Brownsville Walmart, California, Cal U's Vulcan Village, Center in the Woods, Liberty Towers, Cal U Campus, Coal Center, Elco, Stockdale, Roscoe, Allenport, Dunlevy, Charleroi (transfer available to Commuter A) to/from the shopping plazas along the Rt. 201 corridor in Rostraver Township (Walmart, Tri-County Plaza, K-Mart and Gabriel Brothers).

Figure 17: Area Transit Map, 2017



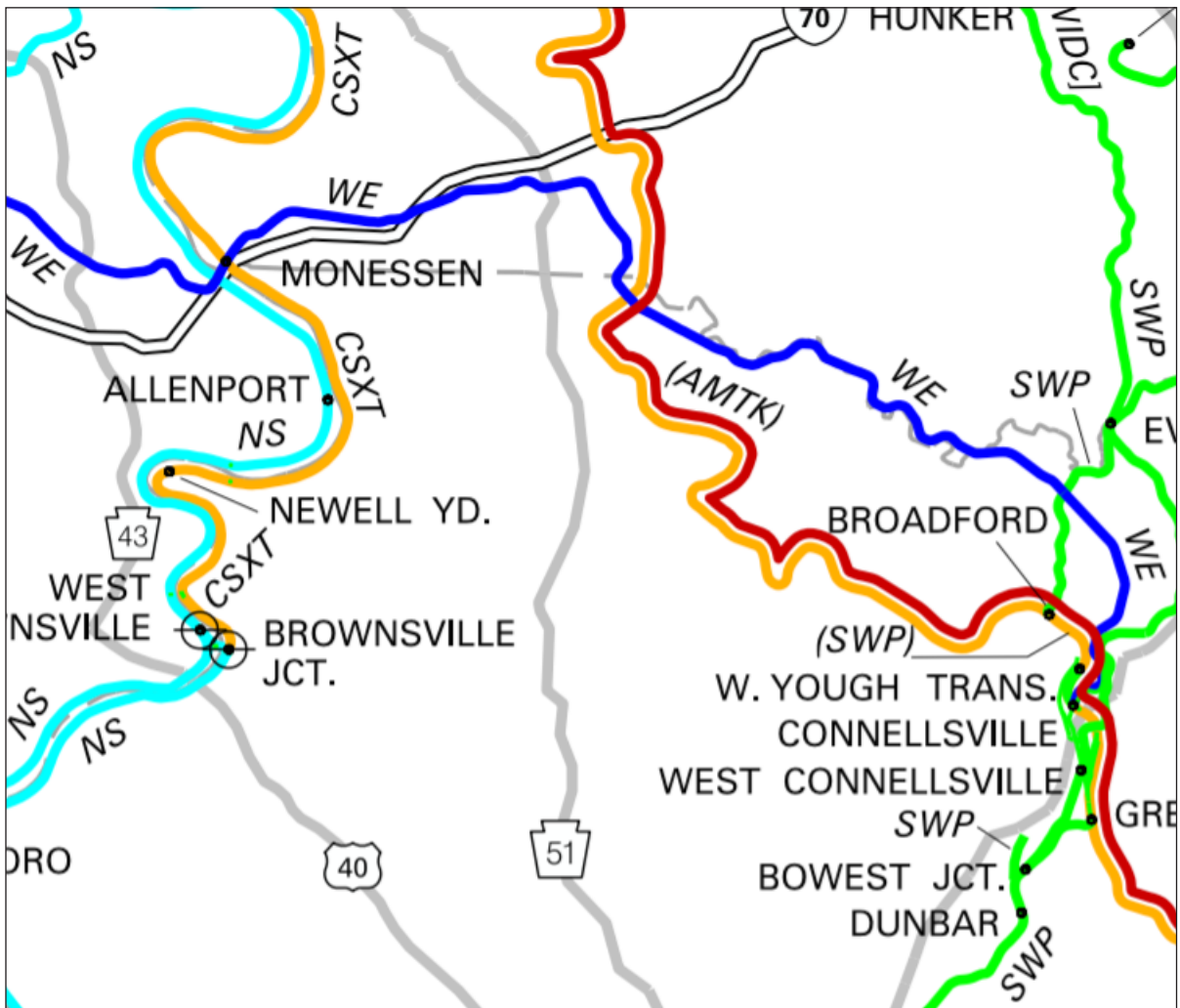
# River and rail

Pennsylvania boasts a well-developed rail freight system with more than 5,000 miles of active lines. Trains operated by CSX run regularly along routes tracing the township's border along the Monongahela River, carrying resources to distribution and manufacturing destinations along the east coast.

The river still functions as a commercial waterway transporting barges loaded with coal, petroleum products, scrap metal and other materials. Washington Township is located along Pool #4 of the lock and dam system installed by the Army Corps of Engineers. The pool stretches about 20 miles from Charleroi to the Maxwell Dam south of Brownsville.

In recent decades, communities along the Monongahela River have worked to reconnect residents to the riverfront via recreational access. This type of development is highly desirable to the Township; however, it is made extremely difficult by the active rail traffic running close to the river's banks. Land on the river side tends to be prohibitively narrow, and experience elsewhere in the region suggests that railroad companies will not grant at-grade crossings for recreational access. An elevated crossing would be more expensive and would require more space. Nonetheless, the Township will continue to explore all available alternatives to provide recreational river access, understanding how valuable such access can be as a community amenity.

Figure 18: Active Rail Map, 2017



Source: PennDOT

- NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY
- WHEELING & LAKE ERIE RAILWAY
- CSXT
- AMTRAK
- LOCAL LINE HAUL / SWITCHING AND TERMINAL RAILROAD



# 7 Land Use

## Shaping the community

This section reviews the current regulations that impact land development within Washington Township as well as patterns of existing land use. It also provides an overview of recommendations from existing planning documents as they relate to land use and, where possible, comments on the extent to which the Township has implemented these recommendations.

## Current land cover

The existing land use inventory for Washington Township consists of land cover data from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), including satellite imagery combined with orthophotographs. This data was verified with local field views.

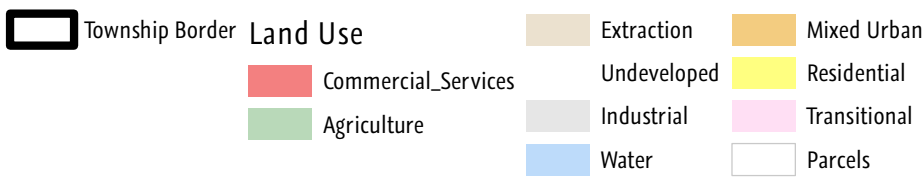
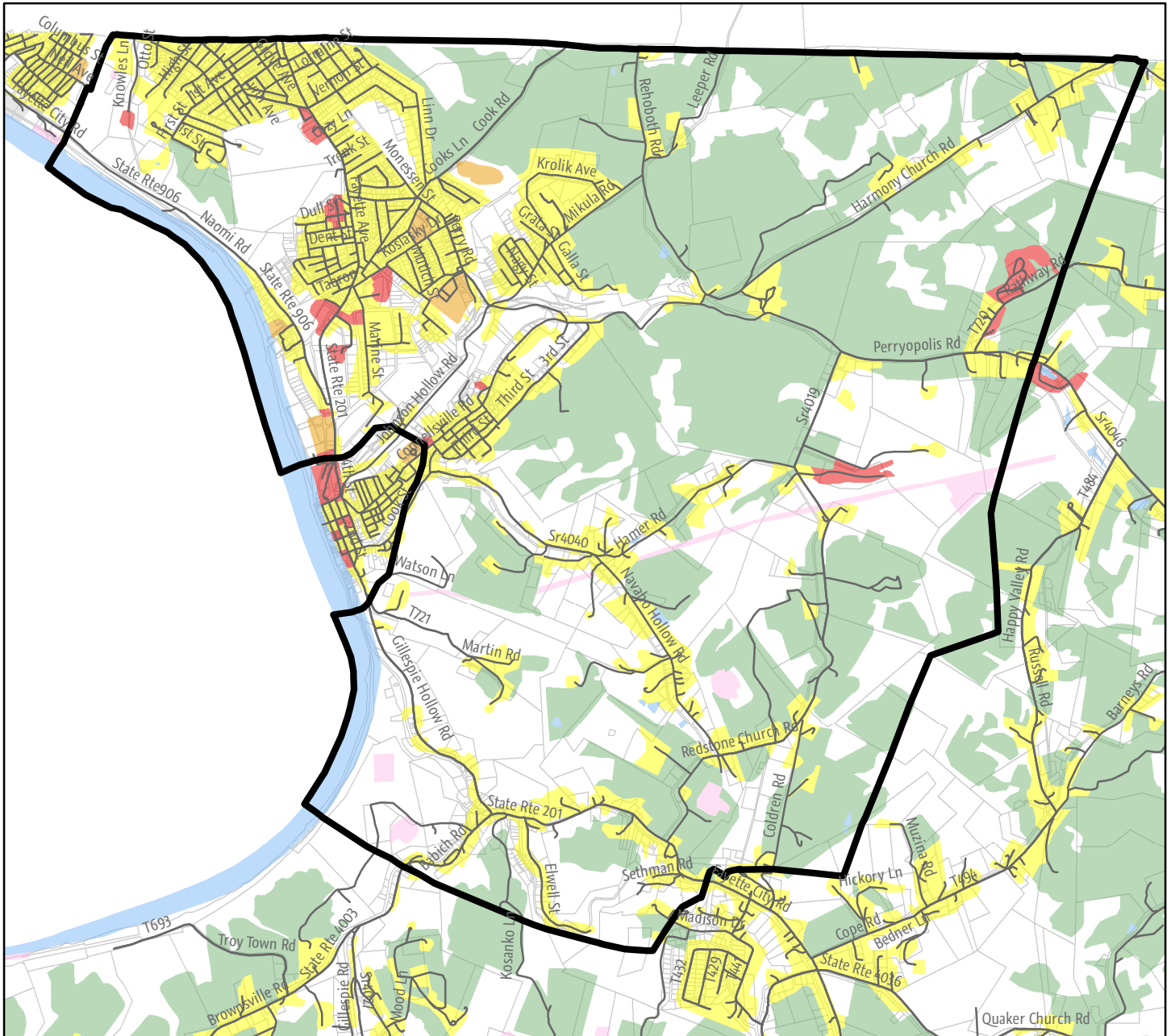
According to SPC data, the Township spans 9.83 square miles, much of which is undeveloped, as illustrated in Figures 19 and 20. The largest category is agriculture, which covers 37.6% of the Township. Residential lots cover nearly two square miles, or 19.4% of the Township, and the properties SPC identified as commercial cover just over 1/10 of a square mile combined.

Figure 19: Land Use Classification

Use	Square Miles	% of Total Area
Agriculture	3.70	37.6%
Mixed Forest	3.35	34.1%
Residential	1.91	19.4%
Mixed Rangeland	0.34	3.5%
Water	0.27	2.7%
Commercial/Services	0.11	1.1%
Infrastructure	0.07	0.7%
Other Developed	0.06	0.6%
Extraction	0.03	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Figure 20: Current Land Cover



Data Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

## Existing controls

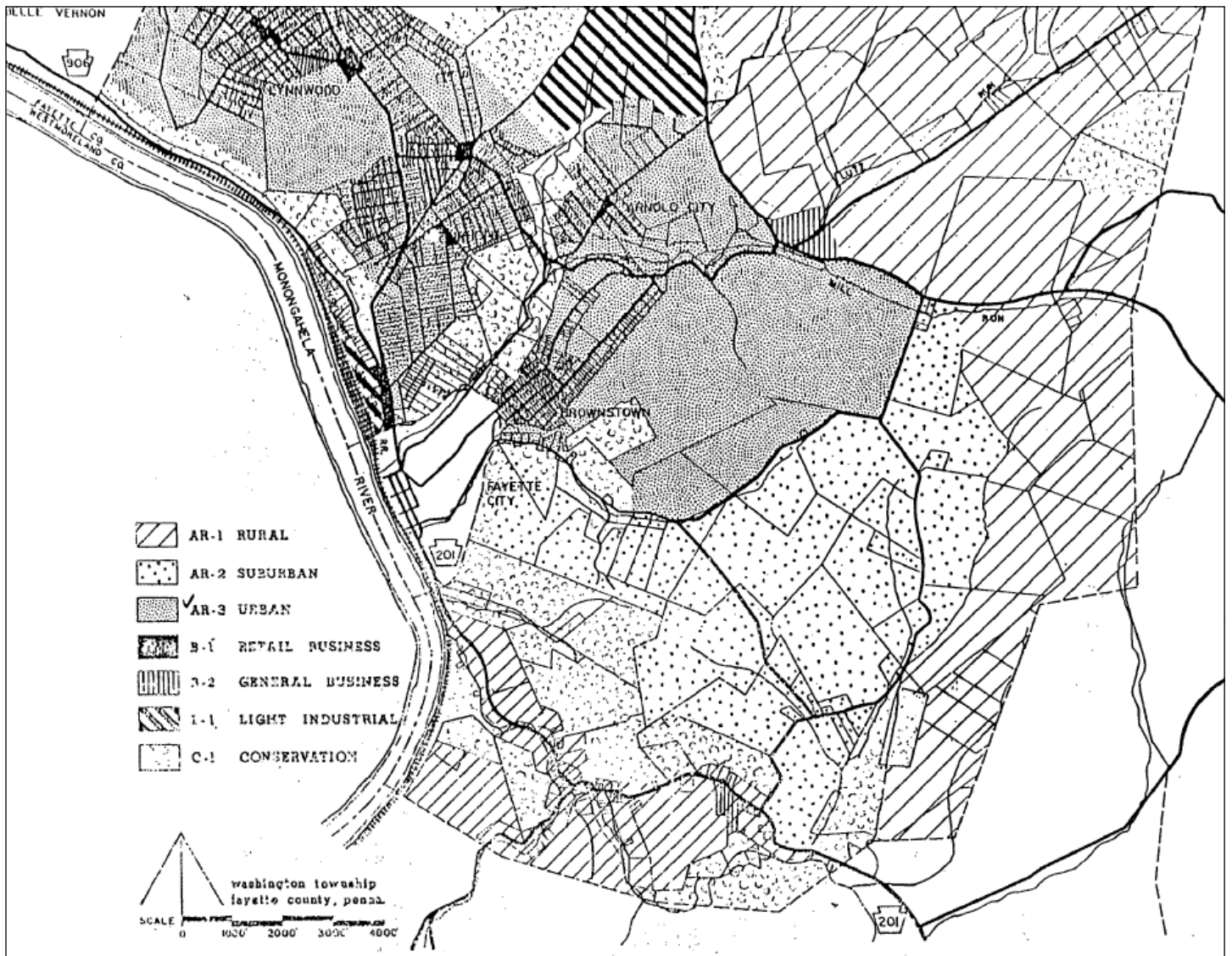
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides authority for powerful land use controls to local governments. Municipal officials apply these tools to achieve their community's development goals and fulfill the vision established in the comprehensive plan, if applicable. Such regulation is essential to maintain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

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

Washington Township is among 11 of Fayette County's 42 municipalities that has adopted a local zoning ordinance to ensure that development and redevelopment conform to local goals. The Township's zoning ordinance established seven districts into which Township land is divided as shown in Figure 21.

- **AR-1 Rural** applies to areas where municipal utility connection would be excessively costly and difficult to maintain. Homes and related uses are permitted only on large lots capable of handling water and sewage needs.
- **AR-2 Suburban** designates land where municipal water and sewer are available or feasible. This district's density and character provides the pattern for most of the Township's residential development.
- **AR-3 Urban** covers densely populated areas that are already developed in urban-type lots.
- **B-1 Retail Business** permits shopping centers.
- **B-2 General Business** includes commercial activities other than retail, such as those that are automobile-oriented.
- **I-1 Light Industrial** is the Township's industrial district, permitting uses that "do not cause conditions that would be objectionable to residential districts."
- **C-1 Conservation** is limited to agriculture and certain other open land uses. These areas are largely unsuitable for development due to slope or flood risk.

Figure 21: Current Zoning Map



Source: Washington Township Zoning Ordinance, 1966



# 8 Vision

## Finding consensus

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

This section establishes a vision statement for Washington Township based primarily on public and stakeholder input. Additionally, it lays out a series of community development objectives that will help the Township to realize its vision. Each objective was evaluated within the context of existing assets, opportunities, challenges and obstacles, a process that facilitated the development of the targeted, practical action steps in the following section.

The Comprehensive Plan belongs not just to the Township Supervisors who commissioned it or the Planning Commission that guided its development, but ultimately to the larger community. The planning process was designed to create an open and transparent public feedback loop, inviting residents to participate early on and throughout the Comprehensive Plan's development. Beyond the residents who provided input at regular Planning Commission meetings, many attended public meetings about the plan and provided a wide range of ideas and comments that helped shape and prioritize the ideas in the plan.

The primary purpose of a vision statement is to provide a focus for the future of the community. A vision statement is the answer to the question: What do residents want to see in the community five, 10 and 20 years from now? The vision statement identifies the community's most important values.

The vision statement that emerged through multiple rounds of discussion and comment with the Steering Committee, public officials and residents serves as the foundation for the entire Comprehensive Plan. It will be realized through:

- The development of citizen-supported goals and objectives,
- The development of targeted strategies and solutions, and
- The development and prioritization of recommendations and strategies.

Future decisions made by the Township’s elected and appointed officials should consider consistency with the vision, as it represents a publicly supported and shared idea of the type of place the Township is and intends to become.

## Vision Statement:

**“Washington Township will build upon its advantages as a well-connected, affordable and close-knit community in a scenic natural setting to grow a healthy and balanced local economy and provide an exceptional quality of life. The Township will manage development to cultivate a stable tax base, a cohesive community character and a housing stock that meets the needs of current and future residents.”**

## Community development objectives

The purpose of community development objectives is to provide a basis for Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. Specifically, the community development objectives are reflective of Article III, Section 301 (a)(1) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC): “A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including, but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development ...”

The community development objectives for Washington Township are designed to provide guidance to elected and appointed officials, to direct growth to appropriate areas, to plan on a broader scope, and to build partnerships in order to promote development in a positive and orderly manner.

The following objectives were developed based on the findings of the Comprehensive Plan research and public outreach process, incorporating comments from stakeholders and residents received at community meetings about the plan. They are designed to support in the plan’s implementation, including updates to the zoning ordinance, as well as provide a framework for future decisions by Supervisors and their appointees.

### *Quality of Life*

Continue to develop the reputation of the Township as an ideal environment in which to live, work and raise a family.

### *Economics*

Build a local economic base in which a variety of commercial and service activities meet resident needs.

### *Infrastructure*

Develop and maintain safe, efficient and cost-effective systems for the conveyance of people and resources throughout the Township with the least possible infringement on other values.

### *Housing*

Provide quality housing opportunities to meet the varied needs of current and future residents while fitting into the Township’s existing character and landscape.

### *Environment*

Be a responsible steward of natural resources and sensitive environmental assets. Ensure that economic activities and land development consider long-term sustainability.

### *Land Use*

Reinforce a development pattern that will preserve natural and rural areas while focusing growth in compatible areas served by existing infrastructure.



# 9 Key Issues

## Areas of focus

Throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, a handful of topics emerged as key focal points for study and development. Public and stakeholder input reinforced the importance of these themes and fleshed out nuances within each that will factor into the formation of related goals, objectives and recommendations:

- Future Prosperity
- Quality of Life
- Efficient Service Provision

Many related topics can be considered under these headings, and many of the headings are related in associated subject matter. However, these three categories serve as an organizing framework for analyzing Washington Township's assets and opportunities.

# Future Prosperity

## **The Township needs to find places and ways to invite controlled growth to bolster the tax base and improve neighborhood vibrancy.**

Washington Township includes large areas of farmlands with high agricultural value and historic integrity, some of which date back more than 200 years. Many people chose to live in the Township for its peaceful, quiet environment and private, safe style of living. Therefore, the preservation of these areas remains very important. One means of doing this is corralling sprawl through land use controls that focus development into appropriate areas.

This is not to suggest that further development is unwanted in the Township — to the contrary, the consensus among those involved in developing the plan is that the Township needs to zone, prepare and market selected lots for commercial and light industrial/manufacturing investment. Expanded uses of this type will deepen and diversify the municipal tax base, which makes the Township more economically sustainable, and attracting compatible retail, services and community facilities will make the Township's villages more complete and appealing places to live. As one participant suggested, "We don't need to create jobs. We need to create a platform to attract the 500 families that come with the 500 jobs created in the communities to which we're connected."

Figure 22: Section of Route 201 Proposed for Mixed-Use Transition



Source: Google Streetview

Ideas for accomplishing this include:

- Allocate and zone areas to create a mixed-use “entrepreneur’s row” along Route 201, establishing a node of low-impact businesses where the predominant use is now housing with some scattered commercial sites. Use buffers and “special exception” designation for certain uses to ensure a neighborhood transition that benefits existing property owners.
- Seek state and local incentives for small business development along Route 201.
- Cultivate a unique expression of place along Route 201, something uniquely Washington Township. This could incorporate public art in the form of a historic monument (statues of Washington, Cook, Lynn) or a symbol representing the Township.
- Improve the streetscape in mixed-use areas of Route 201 and villages (as noted on the Future Land Use Map) to create safe, walkable and inviting public spaces. Improvements might include traffic calming, lighting, landscape features, sidewalks and bike lanes.
- Promote the highest and best use of the Township’s industrially zoned space, keeping in mind the need to respect existing and planned nearby residential and agricultural use. Engage with the Mon Valley Alliance and other regional economic development agencies for assistance marketing the area’s key features, such as proximity to routes 43 and 51 and I-70.
- Take constraints into account when planning for future development priorities. Currently, road frontage and utility availability/ reliability are the highest-priority criteria for development interest. Traffic generated by growth should be intentionally controlled so that it does not threaten the safety or efficiency of existing routes, nor the quiet of existing residential areas.
- Demand locally considerate design. The zoning ordinance update needs to make sure that developers consider how the architecture and site design of their proposed construction will fit into the Township’s vision for its future. Beyond separating land uses into different neighborhoods, zoning is a powerful tool that can drive the intensity and character of land development.

# Quality of Life

## **The Township needs to find ways to broaden the recreational opportunities available nearby.**

A common theme among the plan's stakeholders was the need for the Township to dedicate additional resources to the creation of public recreation assets. The Township's inventory currently includes neighborhood ballfields as well as a walking track and playground near the municipal building, but residents have identified a need for more alternatives, as currently there is no nearby park or trail that accommodates dogs, strollers, bicycles or more intense exercise. Regional trails do not pass through the Township.

This plan recognizes that the Township comprises a diversity of ages and household types, even development patterns, as the Township's villages are more densely populated than its rural eastern side, which may have different recreation needs or preferences. In the future, the Township will need to attract younger households with children in order to sustain and grow its tax base.

With recognition that every community is different, the typical community offers one park for every 2,114 residents served, with 10.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.<sup>1</sup> Using the 2015 Township population estimate of 3,825, this would translate to 1.4 facilities and 38.6 acres of parkland. Currently, the Township offers roughly 1.6 acres near the Township Building (in the form of the walking track, memorial area and playground) and 4.4 acres at the ballfields, a total of six acres (1.6 acres per 1,000 residents).

Recently, the National Recreation and Park Association has begun to rely on comparative benchmarking as a preferable standard. The group has collected and analyzed data from agencies across the country to allow communities to find places similar to themselves. For rural communities such as Washington Township (>500 persons per square mile), the lower quartile of comparison communities provide 4.8 acres/1,000 residents, and the median provides 9.9 acres/1,000 residents. By comparison, the 1.6 acres/1,000 residents available in Washington Township is deficient.

Other reasons communities choose to invest in parks, recreation facilities, programs and community events include the following:

- Strengthening community image and creating a sense of place.
- Attracting and retaining businesses and residents, as well as attracting tourists, and increasing property values.
- Generating income for the community and for local businesses.
- Providing safe environments for recreation by designing facilities, programs and services specifically to reduce criminal activity. (Additionally, providing a place for wholesome activities may help to address the kind of boredom often cited for kids getting into trouble.)
- Promoting physical, psychological and emotional health among residents and cultivating social interaction.
- Protecting and managing valuable resources such as open space, streams greenways, habitats and scenic views.

Ideas to accomplish this include:

- Creation of more extensive recreation facilities, possibly through negotiating a donation of land or funds. Natural gas companies have been receptive to this in other area communities.
- Creating public access to the Monongahela River for water recreation
- Capitalizing on programs, advice and resources of existing groups, such as the Marianna Outdoorsmen Association
- Developing a trail or incorporating bicycle infrastructure in future road projects

If the Township is concerned about financial sustainability now and is unsure whether there is a mandate among residents to invest in recreational features, it would make sense to start with features that have a low financial impact. In the longer term, more intense features could become appropriate.

<sup>1</sup> National Recreation and Park Association metrics, available for review at [nrpa.org/publications-research/ParkMetrics/](http://nrpa.org/publications-research/ParkMetrics/)

## The Township needs to capitalize on its river connection.

Washington Township's western border traces a bank of the Monongahela River. Providing an access point for river recreation would enhance the Township's appeal to visitors and potential residents, as well as affording new value to those who already live here.

Access is made difficult (perhaps prohibitively) by the configuration of an active rail line along the river's edge, particularly because the amount of land between the water and the railway is minimal. The widest stretch of such space is about 70 feet, while in most of the Township, only about 20 feet of space exists between the rails and river. Experience in other area communities has indicated that railroad companies are unlikely to allow an at-grade crossing for this purpose (though negotiation may still be worth the try), and a fly-over crossing would require more space than is available.

However, the Township should continue to pursue efforts to further explore and advance ways to connect residents to the river. Should this prove infeasible, the Township could explore alternatives for water access, such as damming up or diverting a creek. This would likely involve land donation/acquisition, coordination with state agencies and partnership with sportsmen clubs and local businesses.

## The Township needs to promote community connections.

The Township has much to promote: Its rich history, school quality, convenient location to regional attractions and the close-knit connections that make it a pleasant, family-oriented and safe place to live. Stakeholders agreed that the Township could more effectively make these qualities known, both among people who already live and work here and those who might consider investing in a future home or business:

- The Township should facilitate more events that bring together residents and business owners. Sponsors would likely be willing to assist in funding and pulling together organization.
- The Township should publish materials and conduct outreach to ensure that it's on the radar of would-be investors. The Township website and targeted brochures could help accomplish this.

Figure 23: Limited Space Lies between River and Rail



Source: Google Earth

# Efficient Service Provision

## **The Township needs to explore shared services as an option to maintain service levels while controlling cost increases.**

The relatively affordable cost of living in Washington Township is a selling point for its residents, especially for seniors and others on fixed incomes for whom a property tax increase would represent a large burden.

Continuing to provide the current level of basic public services to Township residents —let alone any future increase in services, such as additional police or active recreation facilities —will require balancing the budget by finding ways to control expenses and, likely, increase revenues. The most reliable way to increase revenue without raising tax rates is to expand the tax base, adding taxpaying entities to share the cost burden of local amenities and services. Indeed, the Township will need to consider how to make itself appealing to new residents in order to even sustain its tax base, as future population decline would mean that the burden of paying for public services falls more heavily on the shoulders of those who remain.

Regional problem-solving represents another option for reducing costs. Such solutions can range from informal exercises in intergovernmental cooperation to formal border changes, such as annexation or consolidation to achieve regional goals. These approaches have become increasingly popular in Western Pennsylvania as awareness grows that many issues of planning and community development do not respect local government boundaries — such as environmental concerns, transportation networks, housing markets and public health problems such as the opioid addiction epidemic. In dealing with complex shared problems, communities that understand themselves as partners are better positioned for success than those that regard their neighbors as competitors.

Ideas for regional solutions include:

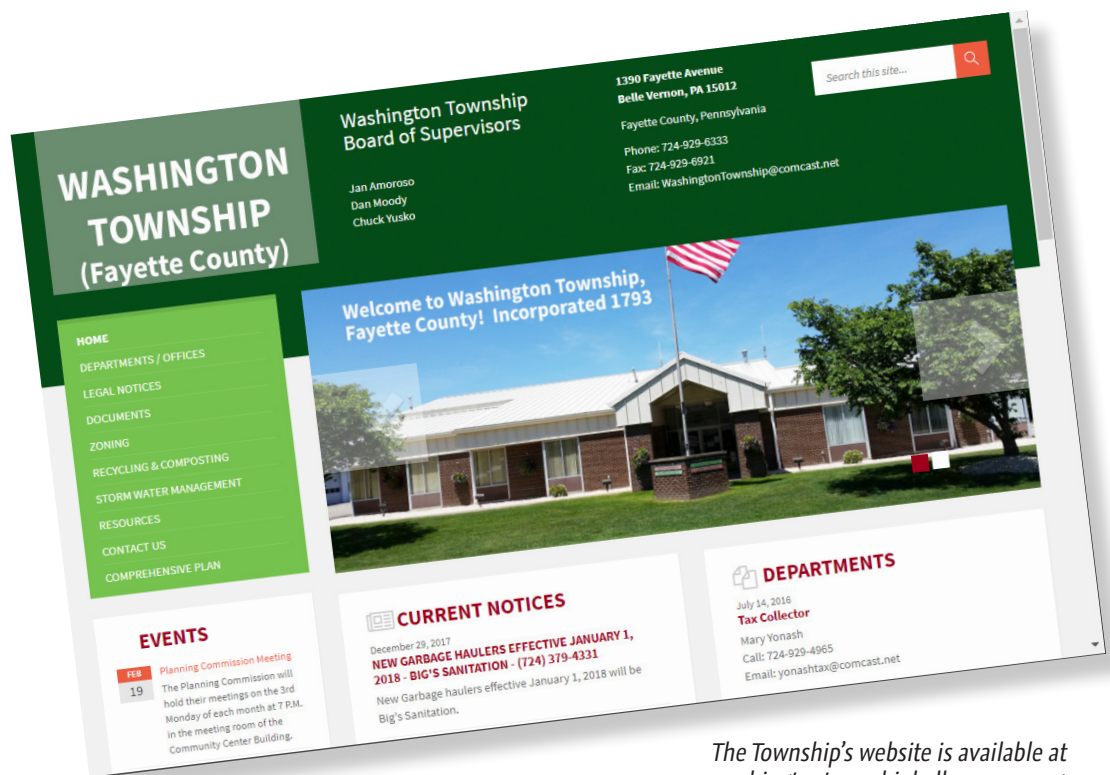
- Negotiating a police service cooperation agreement with surrounding municipalities, which might include providing patrol service to a neighboring area or combining forces with a nearby agency.
- Coordinating with neighboring communities to ensure that their short- and long-range plans and regulations are complementary.
- Shared service delivery, either by operating agreements (i.e. joint equipment purchase), the functional transfer of services among governments or the creation of special districts.
- Jointly funding public facilities and/or services, such as training, community programming or shared recreation facilities.

## The Township needs to find funds.

Myriad grant and low-interest loan programs exist from public, private and non-profit funders that could advance Washington Township's goals. However, the lack of administrative staff makes it difficult to dedicate time to developing expertise, conducting research and preparing grant applications. The Township's investment in a contract or part-time grant writer would likely pay off in opening doors to resources the community does not currently access.

## The Township needs to modernize community engagement.

The Township operates a website as an information clearinghouse. However, stakeholders suggested during the planning process that digital outreach could be improved by adding more updated and interactive information, and by increasing outreach on social media and perhaps via a regular Township newsletter. Successfully engaging residents and business owners on a digital platform would expand opportunities for real-time communication, gathering feedback, promoting events and generally forging further connections among people.



The Township's website is available at [washingtontownshipbellevernon.org](http://washingtontownshipbellevernon.org)



# 10 Recommendations

## From ideas to action

The recommendations in this section are designed to address the needs and issues that emerged during the plan's development. They are a path to successfully implementing the plan's vision. Bringing the Comprehensive Plan into reality will require the support of the entire Township, including elected and appointed officials, the public, local businesses owners and other key stakeholders.

A Future Land Use Map appears at the end of this chapter. This map is general and non-regulatory in nature, unlike the Township's Zoning Map. It exists to convey a community consensus on the way in which the Township should evolve in the long term, with respect to future development and areas that should be protected or preserved.

The recommendations are organized by the Community Development Objectives laid out in Chapter 8 and represent the highest priorities for Washington Township for the next 10 to 20 years. They do not include every possible project or initiative, but outline an action plan that will help the Township achieve its vision. Where possible, information is included on possible partners or funding mechanisms, as the Township itself has only limited resources (in terms of both funding and the time of staff and volunteers) available to apply to these initiatives.

The following actions will need to be taken to ensure the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan:

▶ **Assign a committee to work with Township officials to oversee and implement the Comprehensive Plan.**

Township Supervisors appointed the Planning Commission to lead the Comprehensive Planning process. This group or a separate committee should quarterback the plan's implementation. Regular meetings (perhaps quarterly) should be held with an agenda to discuss the status of the Comprehensive Plan including progress of high-priority action items. This group that oversees the plan will not be responsible for personally carrying out all of its recommended action steps, but can provide leadership to help organize projects and keep momentum strong.

▶ **Brief Supervisors yearly regarding the status of implementation.**

An annual update on the Comprehensive Plan should be completed by the Planning Commission (or other committee) and submitted to Supervisors prior to budget season each year. This report should contain the status of all the high-priority action items in terms of stage of completion and resources needed for implementation. The report should also indicate which action items are planned for the following year, along with any suggested updates or amendments for the plan.

## Quality of life

Continue to develop the reputation of the Township as an ideal environment in which to live, work and raise a family.

▶ **Establish the riverfront as a public amenity** accessible to Township residents (fishing piers, boat launch, boat storage, river-related businesses, etc.)

- Engage the advice and assistance of local groups with a similar vision, such as the Mon River Valley Coalition, the River Town Program and Marianna Outdoorsmen Association.
- Negotiate with property owners (primarily railroads, in this case) for guaranteed public access through recorded easements or land donation.
- Carefully define public access and design high-quality, accessible public spaces.
- Seek opportunities to promote and market amenities that become available, through integration into existing water trails or otherwise. Create signage to heighten visibility and simplify access.

▶ **Expand the variety of available recreational attractions** within the Township.

- Require community recreational assets such as greenways and trails within new developments.
- Pursue acquisition opportunities such as land donation to gain public control of and access to desired open spaces suitable for recreation.
- Develop passive recreation options (i.e. trails, picnic areas) to promote and gauge use before investing more substantially in active recreation facilities.
- Prioritize attractions that would meet local needs/preferences and do not exist in neighboring communities, such as a dog park, splash park, mountain biking trails or interpretive playground.

▶ **Increase resident engagement in community life.**

- Appoint a Recreation Board for facilities and program planning.
- Publish a digital newsletter to advertise events, meetings, volunteer opportunities.
- Continue to refine the Township's website as a hub for news and information. Distribute the link widely. Seek ways to ensure that the official website tops search results.

▶ **Involve residents and local businesses in activities and events that celebrate local character.**

- Coordinate special events that can serve as occasions for residents and business owners to engage in community life. A Recreation Board could lead this effort.

▶ **Ensure that the Township is linked into regional opportunities for recreational and heritage tourism.**

- Seek out and engage in existing efforts to attract visitors to Mon Valley communities and Fayette County. Determine where the Township fits into existing regional offerings
- Consider adding gateway signage — “Welcome to Washington Township” — at key entryways to build the community's identity and communicate its sense of pride.
- Consider adding public art along Route 201 that taps into local history or culture.

▶ **Create materials to highlight the Township's key selling points** to realtors, potential future residents, developers and employers, promoting school quality, availability of sites with infrastructure and excellent transportation access.

- Design a brochure that contains basic Township information as well as selling points for potential residents and business owners.
- Publish selling points on the Township website.

## Economics

Build a local economic base in which a variety of commercial and service activities meet resident needs.

- ▶ **Review and update the Zoning Ordinance** to ensure that it will effectively drive the intensity, character and appearance of land development as desired in the areas specified on the Future Land Use Map. The Ordinance should establish clear standards to preserve community character, controlling the scale, intensity, appearance and performance of new and expanded land uses, while facilitating development in areas and ways it would be appropriate.
- ▶ **Promote reinvestment in and the redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized buildings and properties** to for-profit and not-for-profit developers, entrepreneurs and investors. The County Redevelopment Authority, Mon Valley Alliance and Fay-Penn Economic Development Council can assist. Market the proximity of these sites to Routes 43 and 51 and I-70.
- ▶ **Delineate an area suitable for a walkable, mixed-use settlement pattern.** Envision, brand and market the area for development, particularly to entrepreneurs. Find state and local incentives to encourage small business investment.
- ▶ **Encourage the support and retention of existing local businesses.**
  - Find opportunities to engage business owners in community life, such as through events or participation in municipal projects.
  - Make efforts to meet business owners and learn what impediments, if any, have impeded their prosperity.
- ▶ **Create a regulatory environment that encourages desired investment.** Based on variance requests and experience governing the Township, determine which requirements within the zoning ordinance present obstacles to otherwise compatible development proposals and where flexibility could be added to promote adaptive reuse and infill development. For instance, reconsidering uniform lot sizes and setbacks or the rigid separation of uses in certain districts could help attract investment.
- ▶ **Recruit new desired and complementary commercial enterprises.** Work with economic development agencies and chambers of commerce to ensure that Washington Township's opportunities, assets and intentions are well known to potential investors.

# Infrastructure

Develop and maintain safe, efficient and cost-effective systems for the conveyance of people and resources throughout the Township with the least possible infringement on other values.

▶ **Coordinate future development** to maximize efficient use of existing major roads.

▶ **Maintain and upgrade local roads** and other travel infrastructure to meet capacity and safety standards as needed.

- Continue to operate road maintenance according to a long-term plan based on priority needs. In carrying out the plan, consider future possible roadway functions and adjoining planned land uses.
- Periodically review and, if necessary, adjust road design to best serve efficiency and safety.

▶ **Increase the reliability of electric service.**

- Encourage provider to make the grid more resilient to severe weather through means such as inspecting and strengthening poles and lines and proactively clearing vegetation. Encourage smart gride upgrades with automatic switching.

▶ **Work with utility providers to prioritize the proactive maintenance of existing systems,** including necessary water plant upgrades.

▶ **Identify high-priority projects and lobby Fayette County to get them listed on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** for Southwestern Pennsylvania. The TIP determines and budgets for priority projects to address transportation needs for highways, bridges and public transportation; travel by vehicle, truck, bus, train or plane, bicycle or walking; issues with traffic congestion and safety; and access to work, school shopping, recreation and home.

▶ **Require future developments to provide proper access designs** to minimize traffic congestion and safety concerns.

Increase the safety and feasibility of pedestrian and bike travel.

- In the course of future road upgrades, seek opportunities to implement low-cost infrastructure to support biking and walking, such as bike lanes or navigable, wide road shoulders, sharrows, etc.

- Update ordinances to require sidewalks:
  - » Along **both** sides of all roadways in commercial and industrial areas, along all arterials and collectors in residential areas, and along local streets with at least one unit per acre in residential areas
  - » Along **one** side of the street in residential areas with less than one unit per acre, in rural areas where the road changes from open swales to curb-and-gutter, except where traffic volume is less than 400 average vehicles per day
  - » Allow developers to propose alternative pathways, i.e. crushed stone/permeable material trails, in areas where sidewalks may not be necessary (low-density residential subdivisions, industrial parks, etc.).

## Housing

Provide quality housing opportunities to meet the varied needs of current and future residents while fitting into the Township's existing character and landscape.

▶ **Increase outreach/education on property maintenance standards.**

- Connect older residents who require assistance to “age in place” with services to help meet property maintenance, transportation, health care and other needs.
- Develop a handout or brochure that the Township can provide to property owners that contains information on property maintenance. It should contain a summary of key code standards and other related items, and details on any programs available to help homeowners with maintenance.

▶ **Adopt a rental registration ordinance** that requires local property management.

- Review similar ordinances recently adopted by other area municipalities for best practices.

▶ **Follow legal proceedings:** While many Pennsylvania communities continue to implement these ordinances, they have been challenged in Allentown, Erie and Pittston (also in Pittsburgh, though that case has to do with the city's authority under its home-rule charter), which may set precedent for all other Pennsylvania municipalities.

**Take advantage of resources available to rehabilitate or demolish dilapidated units.**

- Prioritize units that present serious public safety concerns, followed by units that pose the greatest downward pressure on surrounding property values and/or those located along key thoroughfares.

▶ **Promote the creation of housing types according to expected future demand** (particularly smaller, more accessible units).

- Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance provides for the creation of such units where they fit into the context of existing development.
- Consider allowing accessory dwelling units in certain residential areas as a means of affordable housing.

▶ **In considering new housing development, prioritize the build-out of existing residential areas.**

▶ **Consider flexible zoning tools to allow for compatible mixed uses.** Allowing a diverse variety of uses in the Township's designated commercial areas could relieve the sprawl pressure that is inherent to rigidly separating land uses.

▶ **Update the zoning ordinance to provide for conservation design/development,** site configuration that permanently protects open space and/or sensitive features. Conservation design for a residential subdivision, for instance, would allow housing to be built at the density typically allowed in the area, but would require it to be laid out in a way that preserves green space.

## Environment

Be a responsible steward of natural resources and sensitive environmental assets. Ensure that economic activities and land development consider long-term sustainability.

- ▶ **Promote the development and use of solar, geothermal and wind energy** through accommodation in the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO. In addition to defining and setting standards for these uses, the regulations could also prepare the Township for the expansion of these sources in the future – for example, the SALDO could also encourage south-facing roofs for new homes, anticipating that owners in future years may be interested in solar installation.
- ▶ **Require development and redevelopment plans to incorporate stormwater best management practices.**
  - Build provisions into the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO to encourage Low-Impact Development, a stormwater management approach that aims to manage rainfall at the source through small, cost-effective landscape features at the lot level. Key tenets of this approach include:
    - » Conserve natural areas whenever possible (reducing the amount of unnecessary paved surface, for example).
    - » Minimize the impact of development on hydrology.
    - » Prevent increased rainwater runoff from the site by incorporating scattered small-scale features to infiltrate, detain and/or evaporate runoff close to the source.
- ▶ **Consider incentives**, such as expedited review and permitting, for plans that incorporate energy-efficient design (such as LEED, Energy Star, etc.).
- ▶ **Ensure that regulations are in place to protect the public interest** to the extent permitted by state and federal law while providing for industrial land uses such as unconventional drilling.
- ▶ **Require dye tests for septic systems as a condition for the sale or transfer of property.**
- ▶ **Continue to improve the recycling program** to promote its use among residents and the extent to which it is easy, convenient and cost-effective. This might include adding bins in public spaces, promoting participation online or via a newsletter, staging community events for drop-off (paper shredding, hazardous materials, etc.) or cooperating with local businesses and/or neighboring communities to pool materials, increase participation or maximize the efficiency of providing pickup service.
- ▶ **Seek opportunities to reduce the municipal use of water and energy.** This could involve the installation of energy-efficient equipment, such as LED lights, or efforts to conserve energy and resources during the course of everyday operations.

## Land use

Reinforce a development pattern that will preserve natural and rural areas while focusing growth in compatible areas served by existing infrastructure.

▶ **Encourage and facilitate small-scale commercial development along S.R. 201**, using a mixed-use district to facilitate the gradual introduction of low-impact retail and service uses in predominantly residential stretches.

▶ **Preserve** contiguous farmland, known wildlife habitats, potential stream access points and other local environmental assets for their highest and best uses

- Ensure that zoning protects such areas.
- Connect residents with information on County and State farmland preservation incentives. For instance, Pennsylvania's Preserved Farms Resource Center (<https://goo.gl/JA5W3k>) facilitates agricultural business succession and planning for future generations, and the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Land Preservation Board works to safeguard the State's best farmland against development pressure. The State and County can facilitate easement purchase or tax abatement, among other incentives, to preserve agricultural land.

▶ **Focus new development in the Township's northwestern end.**

▶ **Limit development encroachment on flood plains, wetlands, steep slopes, streambanks, woodlands and known wildlife habitats**

▶ **Update the Zoning Ordinance, SALDO and other regulations** to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

▶ **Support property owners in understanding and, where appropriate, challenging designation within the FEMA flood hazard area.**

- Make an updated flood map available on the Township website and at the Municipal Building.
- Connect property owners with available options for appeal:
  - » Owners who wish to document that their home or business is naturally above the Base Flood Elevation even though it may be shown in a flood hazard area may apply to FEMA for a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA). The LOMA request triggers a review of the elevation of the structure or property above the flood level, resulting in a final flood zone determination.
  - » FEMA also offers the option of Letter of Determination Review (LODR), to be requested jointly by a lender and borrower during the loan origination process. The LODR considers the location of the structure relative to the flood area, resulting in a finding that could remove the requirement for flood insurance.

## Governance

Consistently deliver high-quality public services at a minimal taxpayer cost burden.

- ▶ **Seek opportunities for cooperation with neighboring municipalities, ranging** from cross-promotion of community events to supporting cooperative exchanges among public works departments, creating joint purchase agreements to extending police patrols. Fayette City, located entirely within the Township's boundaries, is an obvious candidate for such agreements.
- ▶ **Explore possibilities for structural consolidation or fiscal regionalism** with neighboring municipalities, reorganizing functions and/or boundaries to most effectively reach mutual goals.
- ▶ **Continue to improve overall public safety, evaluate strategies for neighborhood-specific targeted enforcement.**
- ▶ **Update the zoning ordinance** for clarity and accessibility, as well as consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, new case law and modern best practices.
- ▶ **Continue to prioritize fiscal solvency,** plan for economic sustainability.
  - Develop a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan to prioritize and schedule essential capital and infrastructure costs
- ▶ **Invest in a contract or part-time grant writer** who can identify, research and apply for funds to advance Township goals.

## Future land use map

The Land Use Map represents a long-range vision of how Washington Township should continue to develop. It is a guide for future decisions to encourage orderly growth and redevelopment, not to be confused with current legal mechanisms for regulating development (such as the Zoning Ordinance). The realization of the shared local vision articulated in this plan will be gradual, particularly where current development patterns are inconsistent with what is envisioned for the future. However, this map establishes a picture that local leaders can begin to create by directing market forces to meet community goals.

Overall, the future land use map does not envision a dramatic departure from the Township's current land use patterns:

**Agricultural** is shown on the map in green. Residents in this area, generally on the eastern half of the Township, will continue to enjoy the peace and privacy of sparsely developed large lots and continued agricultural activity.

**Industrial**, shown in blue, denotes where the plan recommends concentrating future higher-intensity commercial and/or industrial development south of Rostraver. Rehoboth Road is currently a somewhat narrow two-way passage that may require a capacity upgrade if development pressure materializes. This district must be carefully written to balance economic opportunity with consideration for surrounding agricultural and residential uses.

**Mixed Use**, shown in red, denotes where the plan recommends adding flexibility for mixed commercial and residential uses in villages, particularly Arnold City, Fairhope and stretches of Fayette Avenue where businesses already exist. The introduction of low-impact retail and service uses among housing in this area will strengthen the vitality of the neighborhoods and increase their appeal as walkable community nodes.

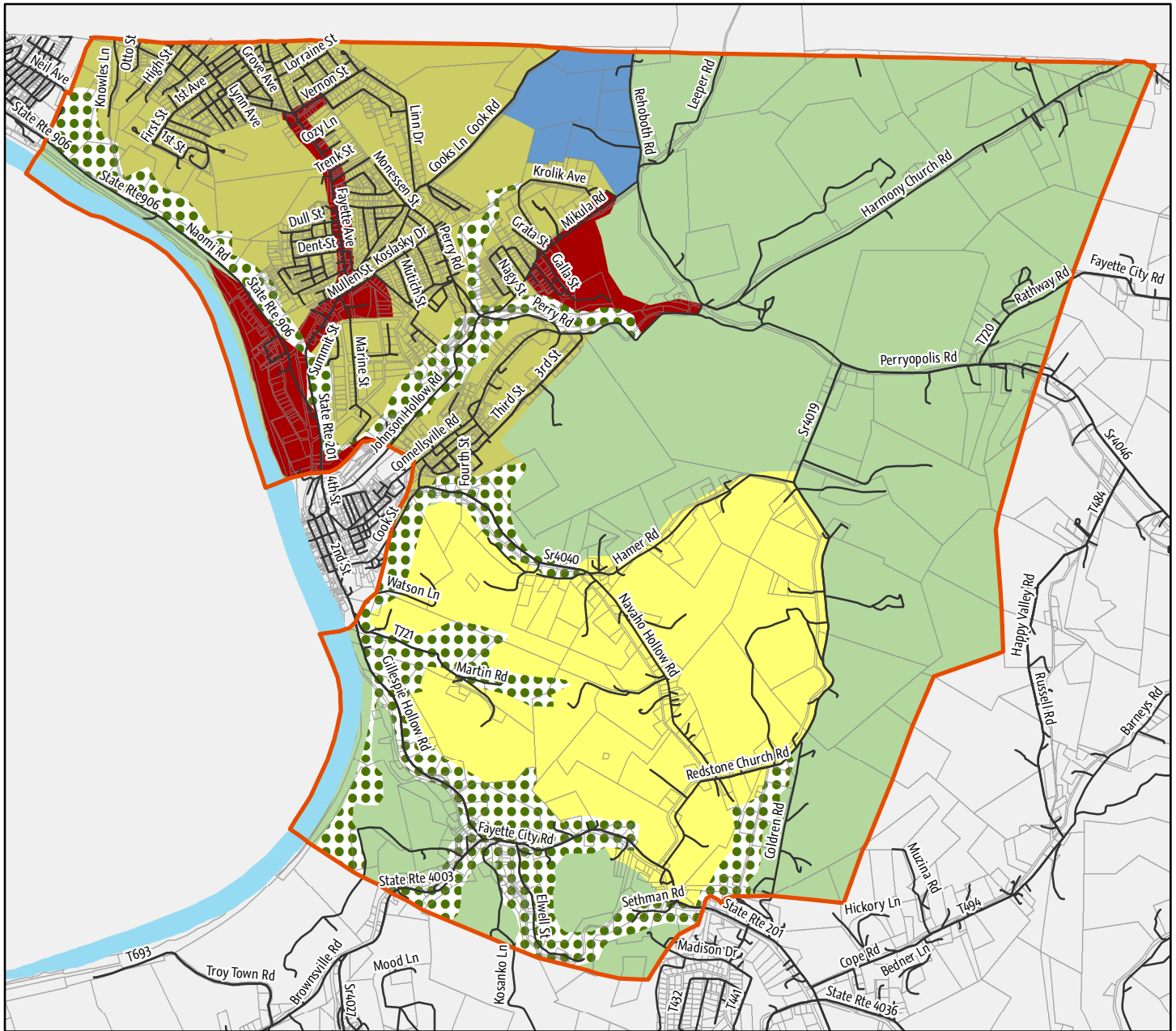
Public water connection is generally available in both the **Village Residential** area (shown in dark gold) and **Rural Residential** area (shown in yellow). The difference between the two is density. Additionally, village residential areas may support more flexible complementary uses. The Township may not ultimately need zoning distinction between these categories; discussion during plan development suggested that the ordinance could be simplified to include the agricultural district and a single residential district.


**Conservation** areas shown on the map denote known steep slopes and/or stream buffers. The area includes some previously developed areas, signaling that environmental considerations should play into future improvements or redevelopment.


The areas shown on here should not be interpreted to dictate the future of any particular parcel. They represent a vision for the general pattern of Washington Township's future development. Implementation will come in the form of updates to the Township's Zoning Ordinance, a process which would require more detailed definition of district boundaries and the rules that apply to each area.



Figure 24: Future Land Use Map



 Township Border


 Monongahela River

 Parcel Boundaries

**Future Land Use**


**Category**

 Conservation

 Light Industrial/Commercial

 Mixed Use

 Village Residential

 Rural Residential

 Agricultural



# Appendix: Funding Sources

## **Funding sources**

### *Economic Development*

#### **Building PA**

Provides mezzanine capital for developers for real estate assets in small to mid-sized Pennsylvania communities.

Uses: Real estate development in small to mid-sized PA communities

Where to Apply: Through issuance of request for qualification (will be advertised in Pennsylvania Bulletin)

More Information: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/building-pa/>

#### **Business in Our Sites Grants and Loans**

Empowers communities to attract growing and expanding businesses by helping them build an inventory of ready sites.

Uses: All site development activities required to make a site "shovel ready"; For speculative projects only.

More information and application: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/business-in-our-sites-grants-and-loans-bos/>

#### **Opportunity Grant Program**

Grant funds to create or preserve jobs within the Commonwealth.

Uses: Machinery and equipment; Working Capital; Job Training; Infrastructure; Land and building improvements; Environmental assessment and remediation; Acquisition of land, buildings and right-of-ways; Site preparation, demolition and clearance.

Where to Apply: Letter of Intent. DCED Center for Business Financing, Grants Division.

More Information: <http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=41>

#### **Pennsylvania Capital Access Program (PennCAP)**

Loan guarantee through participating banks to be used to support a wide variety of business purposes.

Uses: Land, building, equipment, working capital

Where to Apply: Participating Banks

More Information: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/pennsylvania-capital-access-program-penncap/>

#### **Pennsylvania Economic Development Financing Authority (PEDFA)**

Tax-exempt and taxable bonds, both in pooled transactions and stand-alone transactions, to be used to finance land, building, equipment, working capital and refinancings.

Uses: Land and building acquisition; Building renovation and new construction; Machinery and equipment acquisition and installation; Designated infrastructure; Refinancing; Working capital.

Where to Apply: Industrial Development Authorities and Corporations

More Information: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/pennsylvania-economic-development-financing-authority-pedfa-tax-exempt-bond-program/>

#### **Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA)**

Low-interest loan financing through Industrial Development Corporations for land and building acquisition, construction and renovation, resulting in the creation or retention of jobs.

Uses: Land and building acquisition; Building construction and renovation; Industrial park development; Multi-tenant spec building construction, acquisition and renovation.

Where to Apply: Local Industrial Development Corporations

More Information: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/pennsylvania-industrial-development-authority-pida/>

### *Water and Sewer*

#### **PA Department of Community and Economic Development**

H2O PA – Water Supply, Sanitary Sewer and Storm Water Projects

Single- or multi-year grants of \$500,000 to \$20 million to municipalities or municipal authorities to assist with the construction of drinking water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer projects.

More information and application: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/h2o-pa-water-supply-sanitary-sewer-storm-water-projects/>

#### **PA Department of Community and Economic Development**

PA Small Water and Sewer

Grants for small water and sewer infrastructure projects to assist with construction, improvement, expansion, rehabilitation or repair. Eligible projects have a total cost between \$30,000 and \$500,000.

More information and application: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/pa-small-water-sewer/>

#### **PA Department of Community and Economic Development**

Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure Program (PennWorks)

For water and sewer projects not used solely for residential purposes: The project must serve a site being prepared for economic development activities. Eligible activities include land and building acquisition, demolition, water/sewer project construction costs, engineering and other fees associated with project. Grants of up to \$5 million or 75% of the total eligible project costs, whichever is less. Loans of up to \$5 million at a 2% interest rate with a repayment term of up to 20 years.

More information and application: <http://dced.pa.gov/programs/water-supply-wastewater-infrastructure-program-pennworks/>

#### **Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PennVEST) and PA DEP**

##### **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)**

Low-interest loans with flexible terms to assist a variety of borrowers for construction, expansion and maintenance of drinking water facilities (treatment plants, distribution mains, storage facilities), and improvements and upgrades to water quality systems.

How to apply: <https://www.pvportal.state.pa.us/PVLoginP>

More information: <http://www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/FundingPrograms/Pages/Drinking-WaterState-RevolvingFund.aspx#.Vzs38eSgbsl> ,  
<http://www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/FundingPrograms/Pages/Clean-WaterState-RevolvingFund.aspx#.Vzs5qeSgbsl>

Contact: Brion Johnson, [bjohnson@pa.gov](mailto:bjohnson@pa.gov), 717-783-6798 or Steven Anspach, [sanspach@pa.gov](mailto:sanspach@pa.gov), 717-783-6589.

#### **USDA Rural Development**

Water and Waste Disposal Guaranteed Loan Program

Provides a loan guarantee for the construction or improvement of water and waste disposal projects serving the financially needed communities of rural areas. This is achieved through bolstering existing private credit structure through the guarantee of quality loans. Guarantees up to 90% available to eligible lenders.

More information and application: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-guarantees/pa>

**Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce**

National Rural Water Loan Fund (RWLF)

Specifically designed to meet the unique needs of small water and wastewater utilities, the RWLF provides low-cost loans for short-term repair costs, small capital projects, or pre-development costs associated with larger projects.

More information and application: <https://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/>

**Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP)**

Communities Unlimited Water/Wastewater Loans

Communities Unlimited offers loans with terms up to 15 years for small, rural community water/wastewater projects.

More information and application: <https://www.communitiesu.org/index.php/How-We-Help/water-waste-water-loans.html>

*Quality of Life*

**American Greenways Eastman Kodak Awards** (*conservationfund.org*)

The program provides small grants of \$500 to \$2,500 to groups and individuals planning and designing greenways throughout the United States. Grants can be used to cover planning, technical assistance, legal or other costs associated with greenway projects. Grants may not be used for academic research, general institutional support, lobbying, or political activities. The deadline for submitting applications is June 1, and awards will be presented in early fall.

**American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund** (*www.americanhiking.org/NTF/*)

American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund is the only privately funded national grants program dedicated solely to building and protecting hiking trails. Created in response to the growing backlog of trail maintenance projects, the National Trails Fund has helped hundreds of grassroots organizations acquire the resources needed to protect America's cherished hiking trails. To date, American Hiking Society has funded 174 trail projects by awarding over \$500,000 in National Trails Fund grants. Only non-profits with 501(c)(3) designations and AHS Alliance Members are ELIGIBLE to apply.

**Appalachian Regional Commission** (*www.arc.gov*)

Supplemental infrastructure grants for projects funded through other federal programs \$100-\$300K (50% of program; unless access roads than will fund 80%). Applicants may be nonprofit economic development organizations or municipalities.

**Bike Belong Coalition Grants Program** (*bikesbelong.org/*)

The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by the bicycle industry, with the mission of putting more people on bicycles more often. The Bikes Belong Coalition Grants Program provides grants of up to \$10,000 to nonprofit organizations and public agencies at the national, regional, and local level for facility, capacity, and education projects. Priority is given to organizations that are directly involved in building coalitions for bicycling by collaborating the efforts of bicycle industry and advocacy groups. Requests are reviewed quarterly, please see the website each year for application deadlines and guidelines.

**Claneil Foundation, Inc.** (*www.claneilfoundation.org/mission.php*)

Purpose and activities: Giving primarily for the arts, education, health, the environment, and community development in Pennsylvania. Contact: Executive Director Cathy M. Weiss  
630 W. Germantown Pike, Ste. 400 Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462-1059

**Coca-Cola Foundation Public Space Grant** ([bingrant.org/public-space-grant-overview/](http://bingrant.org/public-space-grant-overview/))

The Coca-Cola/KAB Recycling Bin Grant Program supports local community recycling initiatives by providing selected grant recipients with receptacles for the collection of beverage container recyclables in public settings. Grant recipients will receive actual recycling bins instead of funding.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** ([www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/community-development-block-grant-cdbg](http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/community-development-block-grant-cdbg))

Grants and technical assistance for federal designated municipalities for any type of community development, such as housing rehabilitation, public services, community facilities, infrastructure improvement, development and planning. Eligibility is two components: entitlement program, which provides annual funding to designated municipalities, and the competitive program, available to all non-federal entitlement municipalities. Entitlement funding is set by formula. Competitive Program is \$500,000 maximum. Seventy percent of each grant must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program**

([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/))

Jointly administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program provides a flexible funding source for transportation projects and programs that help improve air quality and reduce congestion.

**Conservation Easement Assistance Program** ([conserveland.org/ceap/guidelines](http://conserveland.org/ceap/guidelines))

The Conservation Easement Assistance Program provides small grants to conservation organizations to help cover the costs of completing conservation as well as trail and fishing access easements; amending and restating older easements; establishing or updating baseline documentation; and installing signs on eased properties. The program seeks to increase the quantity of easements completed and special places protected and increase the quality and long-term viability of easements.

**Do Something Seed Grants** ([www.dosomething.org/](http://www.dosomething.org/))

DoSomething.Org provides \$500 Do Something Seed Grants every week to individuals ages 25 or under for community action projects or programs.

**Fiskars Project Orange Thumb** ([www2.fiskars.com/Community/Project-Orange-Thumb](http://www2.fiskars.com/Community/Project-Orange-Thumb))

Fiskars believes in contributing to the growing community garden effort and all it represents — creative expression, beautiful outdoor spaces, civic and community collaboration, healthy hand-grown food and sustainable living. To help support the community garden movement, we've created Project Orange Thumb. Since its inception, Fiskars' Project Orange Thumb has provided over \$1.3 million to 140 community groups and helped to complete fourteen garden makeovers in the U.S. and Canada. Winners receive \$5,000 in cash and tools to help support their goals of neighborhood beautification and horticulture education, and one lucky applicant will receive a complete garden makeover.

**Gannett Foundation Community Action Grant** ([www.gannettfoundation.org/guidelines.htm](http://www.gannettfoundation.org/guidelines.htm))

The Gannett Foundation supports local organizations in communities served by Gannett Co., Inc. Our community action grant priorities include education, neighborhood improvement, economic development, youth development, problem-solving, assistance to disadvantaged people, conservation and cultural enrichment. Our average grant amount is in the \$1,000 to \$5,000 range. We consider grant applications twice a year.

**GardenABC's** ([gardenabcs.com/Grants.html](http://gardenabcs.com/Grants.html))

To help you get funding for your garden project, we're keeping track of every youth and community garden grant we come across. Interested persons can sign up to receive the GardenABC's monthly e-mail or visit the website, which provides links to a variety of grant and resource sites.

**Home Depot Foundation** ([www.homedepotfoundation.org/](http://www.homedepotfoundation.org/))

The Home Depot Foundation was created in 2002 to further the community building goals of The Home Depot Company by providing additional resources to assist nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and Canada. To better support its mission, The Home Depot Foundation will award most of its grants by directly soliciting proposals from high-performing nonprofit organizations with the demonstrated ability to create strong partnerships, impact multiple communities and leverage grant resources. In order to identify potential future nonprofit partners or respond to unique community revitalization opportunities, a limited amount of funding is set aside to be awarded through a competitive process. Preference will be given to grant requests that offer volunteerism opportunities and encourage community engagement.

**Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful** ([keepbeautiful.org/GrantsAwards/FreshPaintDays.aspx](http://keepbeautiful.org/GrantsAwards/FreshPaintDays.aspx))

Fresh Paint Days Pennsylvania is a program designed to provide community groups with paint and painting supplies enabling them to renew a community structure in need into something beautiful through the application of fresh paint and a lot of elbow grease. This annual event is held in partnership with support from BEHR and The Home Depot. During a month-long period, eight grant awardees along with their volunteers will be eligible for up to 20 gallons of exterior paint and \$75 for painting supplies. Any tax-exempt group within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is invited to apply. Private property owners or individual applicants are not eligible.

**Kresge Foundation Arts and Culture Program** ([www.kresge.org/programs/arts-culture](http://www.kresge.org/programs/arts-culture))

Projects designed to revitalize neighborhoods or improve the conditions of low-income people work best when arts and cultural activities are fully integrated and a part of a comprehensive community strategy. Through a collective approach, we will invest and share in our local partners' aspirations for resilient, thriving and equitable places.

**Laurel Foundation** ([www.laurelfdn.org/grants\\_program.html](http://www.laurelfdn.org/grants_program.html))

Since inception in 1951, Laurel Foundation has concentrated its grantmaking in Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania. With an emphasis on outcomes and accountability, grants will focus on programs that offer long-term benefits for participants and the community. The Foundation favors programs that foster individual responsibility and self-sufficiency, exhibit a commitment to sound fiscal and program management, implement collaborative efforts, and demonstrate measurable outcomes. The Foundation awards grants only to organizations that are classified as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Individuals are not eligible for funding, nor are grants made for scholarships or fellowships. Social and cultural organizations whose services fall outside the Greater Pittsburgh area are not encouraged to submit a request. Laurel Foundation does not ordinarily approve

multi-year grants, preferring instead to monitor the status of a program prior to additional funding approval.

**Local Government Academy – Multi-Municipal Planning and Community Sustainability Grant**

*(www.localgovernmentacademy.org/main.asp?ID=40)*

Local Government Academy is pleased to announce the 2013 Multi-Municipal Planning & Community Sustainability Grant Program. To date more than \$500,000 in grants have been awarded to more than 30 groups of municipalities. The purpose of this program is to support the creation and implementation of multi-municipal plans in conformance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

Applicants are eligible for grants up to \$8,500 per municipality for one or more of the following:

- Multi-municipal comprehensive planning;
- Implementing multi-municipal planning priorities;
- Community sustainability assessments by individual or teams of municipalities

**National Endowment for the Arts - Our Town Program**

*(www.arts.gov/grants/apply/OurTown/index.html)*

Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000 available to support creative placemaking projects in rural communities. Town will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to:

- Improve their quality of life;
- Encourage greater creative activity;
- Foster stronger community identity and a sense of place; and
- Revitalize economic development.

**National Gardening Association** *(grants.kidsgardening.org)*

The NGA offers several grant programs for community and youth gardens.

**Neighborhood Assistance, Neighborhood Partnership Program (NAP/NPP)** *(www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/neighborhood-assistance-neighborhood-partnersh)*

Fosters the development of collaborations among business firms, neighborhood organizations, local government entities and residents to encourage high impact long term investments in distressed areas. Projects must fall under one of the following categories: affordable housing, education, health and social services, community economic development, job training, crime prevention and neighborhood assistance. Sponsorship consists of contributing a substantial amount of cash (minimum \$50,000) per year for a minimum period of five years. Tax credit equals 75 percent of approved project. Total tax credit is limited to \$500,000 annually.

**Outdoor Nation—Paddle Nation Project Grants Program** *(www.outdoornation.org/grants)*

Paddle Nation Projects Grants support pioneering projects and initiatives that are youth-developed and that result in increased paddling participation. Projects should reinforce the idea that recreational paddling is one of the most accessible and impactful ways in which young Americans are introduced to the outdoors. Applications are being accepted from individuals between the ages of 18 and 28 and 501c3 non-profits.

**Outdoor Nation—Take Me Fishing** *(www.outdoornation.org/grants)*

The Take Me Fishing Awards support pioneering projects and initiatives that are youth-developed that result in increased fishing participation. Projects should reinforce the idea that recreational fishing is one

of the first and most important ways in which young Americans are introduced to the outdoors. Applications are being accepted from individuals between the ages of 18 and 28 and 501c3 non-profits.

**PA Conservation Corps**

([http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/grants/14632/pennsylvania\\_conservation\\_corps\\_\(pcc\)\\_project\\_grant\\_program/598231](http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/grants/14632/pennsylvania_conservation_corps_(pcc)_project_grant_program/598231))

Local political subdivisions may apply for PCC grants to carry out projects related to conservation, recreation and historical preservation. Non-profit agencies in cities of the first class may also apply, but only for projects related to graffiti removal and the repair of institutional vandalism. Grantees receive the services of a PCC crew for one year, and may also receive up to \$15,000 for the purchase of necessary materials and contracted services. Political subdivisions must supply a 25-percent cash match. Applications are available in October, and must be submitted by the following January. Projects begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

**Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA)** ([www.pacouncilonthearts.org/](http://www.pacouncilonthearts.org/))

At established deadlines throughout the year, the PCA accepts applications for state arts funding from arts organizations, non-arts organizations with arts programs or arts projects, schools, school districts, intermediate units and other educational settings, and other entities through nonprofit conduit organizations.

**Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources—Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2)** ([www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/index.aspx](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/index.aspx))

The DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC) builds connections between the citizens and the outdoors through recreation enhancement, natural resources conservation and community revitalization efforts. BRC partners with communities and organizations across Pennsylvania to provide technical assistance and financial support for these efforts.

**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection—Environmental Education Grants**

([www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental\\_education/13903/grants/588549](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental_education/13903/grants/588549))

Administered through DEP, the funds are used for projects ranging from creative, hands-on lessons for students, teacher training programs, and outdoor learning resources education for adults. The program funds environmental education projects that address: Watersheds; Air Quality; Brownfields; Energy Education; Environmental Literacy; Formal and Non-formal EE Certification; STEM Education; Curriculum Revision or Integration; and Other Environment and Ecology Topics.

**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection—Growing Greener**

([www.depweb.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/growing\\_greener/13958](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/growing_greener/13958))

PADEP offers Watershed Protection and Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation grants to municipalities, watershed organizations, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and municipal authorities.

**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)** (<http://www.fish.state.pa.us/grants.htm>)

The Commission has a number of grant programs that provide funding in support of fishing, boating and aquatic resource conservation; including the Boating Facility Grant Program, the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, and the Coldwater Heritage Partnership.

**Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission—Historic Preservation Program**

([www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/grants\\_and\\_funding/3748](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/grants_and_funding/3748))

The Keystone Historic Preservation Grant program provides funding support for projects that identify, preserve, promote and protect historic and archaeological resources. Maximum grant award from PHMC to an organization is \$25,000. Grants require a 50/50 cash match.

**Pennsylvania Humanities Council** ([www.pahumanities.org/programs/grants.php](http://www.pahumanities.org/programs/grants.php))

Humanities Grants foster collaborative learning through public projects that involve humanities experts and feature a strong discussion component. Examples of humanities projects include discussion groups exploring books or films, workshops, walking tours, panel discussions, exhibitions with interpretive programs, and craft demonstrations integrating conversations about the craft. Humanities Grants are available to all nonprofits, including arts organizations, history groups and public libraries.

**Pennsylvania Safe Routes to School Program** ([www.saferoutespa.org/](http://www.saferoutespa.org/))

Safe Routes to School is a federal initiative that helps to enable and encourage students, including those with disabilities, to walk or bicycle to school. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are built on collaborative partnerships among many stakeholders, including educators, parents, students, elected officials, engineers, community planners, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates. Since 2005, the federal government has provided funding for all 50 states and the District of Columbia to implement a SRTS program. In Pennsylvania, the Department of Transportation is responsible for encouraging, promoting, and supporting SRTS activities across the state.

**Pew Charitable Trusts** ([www.pewtrusts.com/grants/](http://www.pewtrusts.com/grants/))

The Pew Charitable Trusts, based in Philadelphia, are a national philanthropy established 48 years ago. Through their grantmaking, the Trusts seek to encourage individual development and personal achievement, cross-disciplinary problem solving and innovative, practical approaches to meeting the changing needs of a global community. Each year, the Trusts make grants of about \$180 million to between 400 and 500 nonprofit organizations in six areas: culture, education, environment, health and human services, public policy, and religion. In addition, the Venture Fund supports independent projects outside of these six areas that take an interdisciplinary approach to broad issues of significant interest or concern. In particular, the Culture program selectively supports programs for artists and cultural organizations in Philadelphia and has funded history interpretive programs—the Heritage Investment Program has provided technical assistance and challenge grants to historic sites in Philadelphia and the region, and the Philadelphia History Exhibitions Initiative has assisted Philadelphia-area history museums in producing high-quality, innovative exhibitions. Such programs could be used to fund interpretation of trail related historic resources and sites.

**State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grants**

([www.statefarm.com/aboutus/community/grants/company/company.asp](http://www.statefarm.com/aboutus/community/grants/company/company.asp))

The State Farm Companies Foundation provides grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, volunteer fire companies, and chambers of commerce. Safety grants are available for auto and roadway safety and community development grants are available for community revitalization and economic development.

**Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) Local Technical Assistance Program**

([www.spcregion.org/plan\\_ltap.shtml](http://www.spcregion.org/plan_ltap.shtml))

In an effort to transfer transportation technologies and procedures developed at the state and federal level to local municipalities, PennDOT established the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) as part of a national initiative established by the Federal Highway Administration.

SPC, as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and PennDOT planning partner, organizes the LTAP program in the-county region of Southwestern Pennsylvania. This program's mission is to share transportation knowledge, improve road maintenance and safety skills, and put research and new technology into practice at the local level.

**Surdna Foundation** ([www.surdna.org/](http://www.surdna.org/))

The Surdna Foundation seeks to foster sustainable communities in the United States - communities guided by principles of social justice and distinguished by healthy environments, strong local economies and thriving cultures. We seek to dismantle the structural barriers that limit opportunity for many, helping to create communities that are prosperous, culturally enriching, and sustainable. Grants are offered in three areas: sustainable environments, strong local economies, and thriving cultures. The Surdna Foundation accepts letters of inquiry on a rolling basis and invites a limited number of applicants to submit a full proposal.

**Target Store Grants – Arts Grants** ([sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031819](https://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031819))

Funds arts programs that bring the arts to schools or make it affordable for youth and families to participate in cultural experiences, such as school touring programs, field trips to the theater or symphony, or artists residencies and workshops in schools.

**The North Face Explore Fund** ([explorefund.org/](http://explorefund.org/))

The Explore Fund will support organizations that encourage youth outdoor participation, focusing primarily on creating more connections of children to nature, increasing access to both front & backcountry recreation, as well as providing education for both personal & environmental health. Grants will be given up to \$2,500.

**Three Rivers Community Foundation** (<http://trcfwpa.org>)

Three Rivers Community Foundation in southwestern Pennsylvania is the region's only grantmaker dedicated solely to social change and justice. The Foundation's key issue areas include: Disability Rights; Economic Justice; the Environment; Racial Justice; Women, Youth, and Families; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. In addition to making grants of up to \$4,000 in these action areas, TRCF also makes small Special Opportunity Grants of up to \$500 throughout the year for unanticipated opportunities that may arise, for which organizations did not budget.

