

**East Pennsboro Township Comprehensive Plan**

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## Location

Known for many years as a community that grew up around the Enola Rail Yard, East Pennsboro Township today is a bustling and diversified 21<sup>st</sup> Century community. Located on the West Shore of the Susquehanna River in the suburbs of Pennsylvania's State Capitol City, East Pennsboro Township combines older and newer residential neighborhoods with outstanding park and recreation facilities, and a vibrant commercial and economic base.

In 1998, East Pennsboro Township successfully implemented a voter-approved merger with a neighboring municipality. The merger of the former Borough of West Fairview with East Pennsboro Township was initiated by West Fairview citizens interested in the pursuit of greater cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and improvement in the delivery of local governmental services.

East Pennsboro is an evolving community. Since its incorporation as a First Class Township in 1952, East Pennsboro has transformed from a rural, blue collar community to one of Central Pennsylvania's most diversified residential, commercial, and professional office centers. Today, the Township is Cumberland County's second most populated municipality with approximately 20,000 persons, and serves as one of central Pennsylvania's most significant residential and employment centers.

East Pennsboro is also located in the Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which is comprised of four counties—Cumberland, Dauphin, Perry, and Lebanon. East Pennsboro is centrally located within this MSA and is in the immediate core of its economic activity. Moreover, the Township is located along the axis of the MSA's two most important highway corridors—Interstate 81 and U.S. Route 11/ 15.

## Settlement and Development History

Early settlement and development of the township dates to the 17th Century with the duplicate purchases of land from various Indian tribes. The first purchase from the Iroquois in 1696 deeded land on both sides of the Susquehanna River to William Penn for 100£. In the early 1700s, substantially the same land was purchased from the Susquehannock Chiefs, the Shawnee, and Delaware Indian tribes. Just to make sure all sales were final, Penn's sons, in 1736, transacted a fourth purchase accompanied by a complete payment of 500£ (the equivalent of about ½ cent for each 10 acres).

According to the Harris family, the Penns offered the West Shore to John Harris, Sr. for 5,000£. This represented a 4,000 percent mark up in the cost of the land; however, the sale did not take place. Mr. Harris was too shrewd to pay \$1 for two acres of land on the West Shore (within four decades, it was selling for \$12 an acre and by 1957 for \$ 2,000 an acre). The first settlers on the West Shore in 1725 were Scotch-Irish. In 1735, the entire Cumberland Valley was divided into Hopewell and Pennsboro Townships. A year later, Pennsboro was divided into West and East Pennsboro

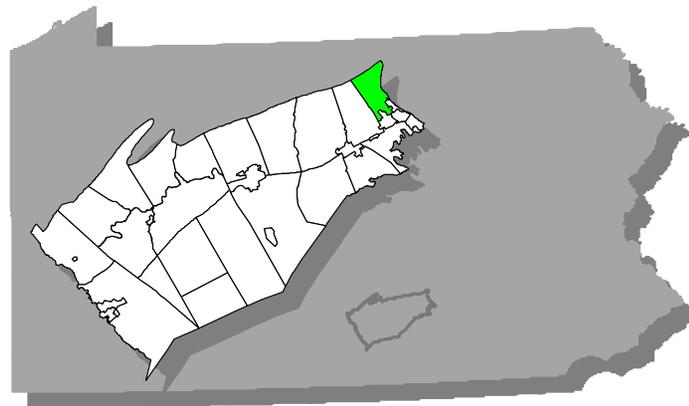
Townships with the dividing line through the crossroads of Indian trails where Carlisle was later established.

Major development came to East Pennsboro Township in the late 1800s and early 1900s with the establishment of the Enola Railroad yards by the Pennsylvania Railroad. The yards covered 300 acres of land and extended five miles in a north-south direction along the Susquehanna. During World War II, the rail yards consisted of 217 sets of track that handled 10,000 rail cars a day. Another early

industry in the Township was the Harrisburg Nail Works, erected in 1810 along the Conodoguinet Creek. At its height, the company produced 6,300 tons of nails annually. West Fairview Park still includes some of the initial foundation of the old mill, dismantled in the early 1900s. In the late 1920s, The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry, established a diagnostic laboratory in the Summerdale area. This site is now planned for Techport West, a business park for technology-oriented industries.

In addition to the thousands of people who have made East Pennsboro

Township their home, thousands of residents of nearby communities know East Pennsboro as their place of employment. Approximately 14,000 people work in the Township's corporate office complex area which is home to many major companies including EDS, Rite Aid Corporation, Highmark, Holy Spirit Hospital, and Gannett Fleming, Incorporated.



East Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania

## The Villages

East Pennsboro Township is comprised of five villages all of which offer unique historical perspectives of the Township. The following historical accounts were developed by the East Pennsboro Township Historical Society.



### Enola

Enola got its name from Francis and Wesley Miller. Wesley sold about two acres of land to the Northern Central Railroad to be used as a flag station. He had a chance to name the station and named it after their four year old daughter, Enola Francis Miller.

*Miss Enola Francis Miller: 1884-1962*

### Summerdale

Summerdale got its name from Harry Horner, who in 1909, purchased 115 acres and laid out the town of Summerdale. By June 1910, he completed a dance hall and during hot summer months, people would travel from Harrisburg to this village. Its location, at the foot of Blue Mountain certainly made it a Summer Dale.

### Overview

The Village of Overview received its name from D.S. Seitz, who laid out the village in 1910. Much of Overview, however, became displaced from the construction of Interstate 81 in 1972.

### Possum Hollow

Possum Hollow was supposedly named after it was discovered that a possum had made its home in a hollow tree. Surprisingly, the village is older than Enola, Summerdale or Overview. Its most famous citizen was Mrs. Catherine Kreitzer, who in June 1955, won \$32,000 on “The \$64,000 Question” television show. Seventy million viewers watched her in the greatest jackpot ever given out on a radio or television program at that time. Among the local residents, Possum Hollow is also home of the Pine Hill Arboretum.

### West Fairview

This former borough is by far the oldest of East Pennsboro’s villages. Abraham Neidig, Sr. laid out the town in 1816. By 1852 it had a post office and fifteen houses and by 1879 it had more than 300 homes, four schools, three churches, one hotel and the Harrisburg Nail Works that employed 350 people. The village has several claims to fame. The first (and most likely the only) female football coach, and for the period, the largest nail factory in the United States.



Township gateway at West Fairview

## East Pennsboro Factoids

**Location:** Cumberland County, Pennsylvania

**Form of Government:** First Class Township (Incorporated 1952)

**World Wide Web:** [www.eastpennsboro.net](http://www.eastpennsboro.net)

**Size:** 11 square miles

**Population (2000):** 18,254

**Median Age:** 37.6

**Housing Units:** 7,804

**Top Five Employers (2000):**

Highmark, Inc.  
Holy Spirit Health System  
Rite Aid Corporation  
Electronic Data Systems (EDS) Corporation  
Gannett Fleming, Inc.

**Climate:**

Average Temperatures:

Summer – low to mid 80s

Winter – low to mid 20s

**Natural Setting:**

Physiographic Province: Ridge and Valley

Watersheds: 1 to the Susquehanna River

Conodoguinet Creek (Native American – “a long way with many bends”)

**Public Parks:**

Adams-Ricci	Midway
Acri Meadow	Oyster Mill
Ridley Park	Susquehanna-Perry
Laurel Hills Tot Lot	West Fairview

## Role and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a general policy guide for the physical development of the East Pennsboro Township community. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Code, Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended (MPC), requires the Comprehensive Plan to consider many factors that influence a community such as location, character and timing of future development.

The Comprehensive Plan evaluates the existing land use, transportation systems, housing, community facilities and services, and natural and cultural resources of East Pennsboro Township; primarily, within the Township boundaries but also in the context of the broader Harrisburg Region, where relevant. The Plan projects future growth trends based on these analyses and proposes the best possible land use and implementation tools to accommodate expected growth while protecting the Township’s vast and precious resources.

## What the Comprehensive Plan Does

- Focuses on current trends and issues in East Pennsboro Township and addresses these with innovative solutions.
- Provides the best possible projection on future conditions based on current patterns and strategies to create a more desirable and sustainable future.
- Directs future change through a vision of community potential.
- Establishes the framework for consistency between future land use policies and land use regulatory measures.
- Assists State, County, and Township officials in their decision making processes.

## What the Comprehensive Plan does not.

- Does not affect individual properties.
- Does not determine land development, neither public nor private.
- Does not preclude future analysis or decision making.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of 1968, P.L. 805, No. 247, as reenacted and amended empowers local municipalities, including First Class Townships...

...to plan for their physical development,

...to develop a “blueprint” for housing, transportation, community facilities and utilities, and for land use.

...to establish community development goals and objectives that guide future growth and development.

Ninety years ago, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., renowned designer/planner of several communities in Pennsylvania including the first planned industrial town designed to be sold to its worker, urged municipalities to “...create or acquire statistical databases on the physical, social, economic and financial environment; compile information on relevant legal and administrative matters and draw up accurate topographical maps.: To this end, a comprehensive plan entails such an inventory and makes recommendations regarding policies designed to guide future development thereby avoiding costly unwise development. Olmsted also noted that “prevention is cheaper than the cure.”

## Relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and Other Plans

The East Pennsboro Township Comprehensive Plan gives policy guidance and direction to Township regulations and codes. The Plan makes policy recommendations to update the following plans and regulations to provide residents of East Pennsboro with the best possible quality of life.

Parks and Recreation Plan

Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan

Zoning Ordinance

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

### *Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan*

The East Pennsboro Township Comprehensive Plan aims to achieve its established goals and objectives in a manner that is consistent with that of the Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan, as required by the Pennsylvania MPC. The Plan acknowledges the broader goals of the County while making specific recommendations for the Township.

## FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

### *Why is the East Pennsboro Township Comprehensive Plan being revised?*

As the pace of change in the Harrisburg Region and West Shore Area continues, public policy must be reviewed. East Pennsboro’s 1989 Comprehensive Plan has become outdated in terms of the guidance it gives to the Township. This plan will review and revise relevant goals and strategies, and introduce new methods to

guide the future character and development of East Pennsboro Township.

*How will the Plan be used?*

The Plan will be used by Township officials, citizen volunteers, land owners, and developers to evaluate proposed changes against the Plan’s vision and goals.

*Who is in charge of making this Plan work?*

While the Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission, and municipal officials will implement this Plan, public support for the vision and recommendations will be most important. This public includes residents, business owners, and organizations that have a direct interest in the future of the Township.



**Official Seal of East Pennsboro Township**

