



Population Change and Service Demands

Land Use and Development

Housing and Neighborhoods

Economic Vitality

Transportation and Traffic Management

Natural Systems and Resource Conservation

Township Heritage and Culture

Community Services

Population Change and Service Demands

The Township will need to monitor changes in the age distribution of its population. Growth in the school age group results in increased needs for primary and secondary school facilities and youth recreation programs. Growth in the senior age group can increase demand for senior leisure and fitness programs, and access to health care (both transportation and proximity to facilities).

If trends in declining household size and in diversifying household types continue, the Township will need to retain promotion of housing diversity in order to meet a variety of housing type, size, and value needs.

Land Use and Development

With approximately 70 percent of the Township classified as developed, East Pennsboro Township is approaching a built-out condition. Portions of the remaining 30 percent are undeveloped and undevelopable due to steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands. Other undeveloped lands are zoned for commercial use (predominantly along East Penn Drive) and residential uses (predominantly in the northwest region of the Township). As a result of limited greenfield development, the Township's population is not expected to continue to grow at rates experienced over the past thirty years. Cumberland County is expected to grow considerably over the next 25

years, however much of this growth is anticipated to occur west of the Township in municipalities that have more undeveloped land.

Indeed, most of the labor force commutes to work, but a growing portion of residents operate home businesses. Private child care, salons, and personal accounting operations are a few examples of the types of businesses traditionally suited to home locations. With this increase documented, the Township may want to review its regulation to evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Analysis of the community survey (2003) indicated wide support for the concept of land preservation and some acknowledgement of the associated costs. The Township should evaluate the public's perceived value of agricultural, mountain and other open space lands to determine what protection tools are most appropriate (e.g. easements, cluster development, transfer of development rights, purchase, etc.).

Large Parcels

The Enola Rail Yard, owned and operated by Norfolk-Southern Railway Company, is the largest, singularly owned property in the Township. The yard is presently used by NS as a switching station and car storage facility. Significant improvements to the site in 2001, namely automation of the switching operations, indicate that NS continues to envision the yard as a key facility in its mid-Atlantic rail network. The rail yard expects to add 80 new jobs by the end of 2004 and another 80 in 2005. Eastbound operations were closed in 1992 and these tracks were removed from the yard in 2001. Eastbound operations are planned to resume after track reinstallation planned for the 2010-2020 period. This could significantly increase rail freight volumes and employment in the Township. The Township should continue to dialogue with NS in order to support the rail yard's vitality where possible.

Housing and Neighborhoods

Due to the fact that much of the Township's housing stock is over 30 years old, the Township will need to maintain strong policy on housing maintenance. In addition, it should establish guidance for redevelopment, so that such redevelopment fits in with the character of older areas of the Township. Redevelopment guidelines should clearly define which features and functions should be retained and which should be replaced with more modern standards. This includes both land use and development/ design standards. Mixed use zoning for the village of Enola is an example of appropriate land use policy (that encourages the on-going redevelopment of the community) that is already in place. Regarding development standards, consider that many older communities were developed before setbacks were required. If redevelopment were to occur, setback requirements should match setbacks found throughout the neighborhood. A setback that is too large would disrupt the character of the streetscape.

Economic Vitality

Economic development was rated as a moderate priority by residents of the Township in the community survey (2003). This rating indicates that residents are satisfied with the job opportunities they find in the Township, as well as their tax rates that are influenced by the strong contribution of property tax revenue the Township receives. The presence of Holy Spirit Hospital, Highmark, the West Shore Office Area Complex, and Central Penn College demonstrate that East Pennsboro Township is a major employment center on the West Shore. These businesses and institutions provide a range of professional employment opportunities and are supported by an even wider range of small businesses.

Commercial vitality can also be aided by maintenance and redevelopment guidance. The recent facelift given to the Summerdale Shopping Plaza is an example of a cosmetic revitalization that enhanced the appearance of this 1970s retail center. Further site and

streetscape enhancements, such as planted medians, reduced or shared parking requirements, and infill development, would be potential topics for the guidance suggested above and application areas would include the US 11/ 15 corridor, among others.

Transportation and Traffic Management

Traffic management may be East Pennsboro Township's biggest challenge over the next 10 to 20 years. Transportation planning and investment will need to balance the needs of drivers, bikers, riders, and pedestrians in regards to everyday needs—not just workday needs—and quality of life.

A large portion of vehicular traffic in East Pennsboro Township is comprised of commuters. Traffic is comprised of residents traveling to jobs in the Township and beyond the Township, as well as residents of other communities traveling inbound to Township employment centers. Journey to work trends in the Township and across the county and state indicate that driving to work is the most common commuter travel mode (95.0 percent for the Township; 91.3 percent for Cumberland County, and 86.9 percent for Pennsylvania). Furthermore, most people drive alone to their jobs. As a result, traffic congestion and travel times have increased.

There is no doubt that state roads are important to mobility within and beyond the Township. Capacity and safety improvements should be made, as needed. The Township plays a significant role in the improvement process. It can identify the need to evaluate a road segment or intersection for potential improvement. Additionally, it can manage access to the roadway through strong policy provisions. Access management would be most appropriate for the US 11/ 15 and PA 944/ Wertzville Road corridors, however it may also be applicable to East Penn Drive, Valley Road, and other roadways or road segments. The concept of access management may seem late for the

Township's initial development patterns, however it could address some traffic concerns through guidance for redevelopment.

The importance of local and secondary roads should not be overlooked. These roads provide alternate travel routes during congestion and temporary road closures and disperse traffic volumes, rather than concentrating them. Therefore, maintenance and management of these roadways are equally important.

There are a number of locations that function as “chokepoints” in the transportation network.

- The intersection of 21st Street and the US 11/ 15 Bypass is noted for long delays and an unconventional layout that confuses some drivers. Improvements to this intersection are designed and construction has been contracted for Spring–Fall 2005.
- The Erford Road bridge over US 11/ 15 is a two-lane facility with traffic signals that aid turning movements just beyond each end.
- Wertzville Road has seen dramatic increases in traffic volumes, as development has infilled the central and western portions of the Township.
- And traffic volumes on US 11/ 15 continue to rise as improvements north of Cumberland County increase access to the rural areas of Perry and Snyder Counties. In order to address these segments of the network, the Township will need to work closely with PennDOT and the adjacent municipalities to evaluate and program future improvements.

Regional support for improved connectivity between the East and West Shores of Harrisburg is generally strong. The collapse of the Walnut Street Bridge between City Island and Wormleysburg in 1996 disconnected the West Shore from the City dramatically. Efforts are underway to re-establish the connection, i.e. re-construct the bridge, however estimated costs are high. Additional connections between the two shores could be made by developing or enhancing boat access

points along the Shores and City Island. The Susquehanna Greenway may provide additional recommendations for inter-Shore connectivity.

The Transit Alternative

As an alternative to the personal automobile, public transit, provided by Capital Area Transit (CAT), is available to residents living in certain areas of the Township. Increased use of public transit could reduce congestion at some locations in the Township. While development densities would not support direct service in many neighborhoods, additional park and ride sites along transit routes could have similar positive impacts. Transit service currently focuses on east-west routes that terminate at the Harrisburg Transfer Station on 2nd Street. The Township should request and cooperate with CAT and adjacent municipalities to evaluate the need for service among West Shore communities and destinations.

Bicycle-Pedestrian Alternatives

The community supports the concept of a bicycle-pedestrian network throughout the Township, as initiated by the community survey (2003). Portions of such a network are already in place at Adams-Ricci Park. Through the Township's forthcoming Parks and Recreation Plan, and future transportation enhancements planning, the Township should be able to design a network that connects key community locations with its neighborhoods. The network would be designed and constructed in segments, once a preliminary network is outlined. Design would need to consider both travel path improvements and intersection safety where paths intersect with vehicular routes. Many types of improvements, such as shoulder improvements for bicyclists and intersection improvements for pedestrians, could be completed as roadway maintenance and upgrade projects are programmed.

Natural Systems and Resource Conservation

The Susquehanna riverfront, the Conodoguinet Creek and Blue Mountain are the Township major natural features with which residents identify. The stream network is an additional feature, but is not nearly as dominant. These features seem to be the focus of residents' priority for protecting natural resources in the Township, as indicated by the community survey (2003). While protecting these resources is a common community goal, and many current regulations already provide some degree of protection, the Township may want to supplement its current policy with guidance for protecting public access to these environments, through greenways and open space designations, as well as through recreational projects. Furthermore, stormwater quality requirements could protect the quality of the creek, though impacts to the river would be minimal.

Flooding is a notable problem, particularly in the village of West Fairview. Unfortunately the village did not have the benefit of FEMA mapping when it developed in the mid to late 1800s. Today, many village properties lie in the 100-year floodplain. Township policy should promote flood mitigation and retrofits for these properties.

While stormwater management is intended to reduce downstream flooding in most cases, upstream development will likely have some impact on flood prone areas. Stormwater management planning is essential to identifying the best standards and practices for minimizing downstream impacts. The Township should press the Cumberland County Conservation District to prepare an Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan for the Conodoguinet Creek watershed.

The Township has already experienced some development on Blue Mountain. As a result of unfavorable comments from Township residents regarding the impacts to the scenic quality of the mountain, the Township has reviewed and revised its ordinances to manage future development more closely. The Township may want to review

additional models for managing steep slope development, such the one developed by Lycoming County, which limits forest clearing to minimize views of structures on ridgetops.

Township Heritage and Culture

Promotion of local heritage and cultural activities was also listed as a moderate priority by the residents participating in the survey. While the survey did not include any follow-up questions to the priority ranking, this response may indicate that residents feel disconnected from other members of the community and the heritage of the Township and its villages. More positively, it may be an acknowledgement of the growing efforts of the East Pennsboro Township Historical Society. The Township may want to consider additional community events, similar to the East Pennsboro Township Pumpkin Festival, which has been increasingly successful over the past three years. Greenways, parks, and trails projects could also incorporate pieces of the Township's culture and heritage into future projects. The Pine Hill Arboretum and the former nail factory site in West Fairview are two sites that could host community events or be interpreted along trails.

Community Services

Residents reported favorable responses to the quality of community services provided by East Pennsboro Township. The Township is fortunate to have volunteers, who assist in these services. Like many communities, community volunteerism has decreased in recent years as the competition for leisure time becomes more fierce. The impact has been felt most directly by the volunteer fire companies. The Township has made some efforts to increase participation through billboard and newsletter advertising. The Township has also requested that the school district establish an elective course in fire service training. Some communities have had success in spurring volunteerism through junior volunteer programs, such as junior fire-fighters. While these younger fire-fighters are limited by state and

federal law as to the extent of their participation on the scene, they are able to assist and receive preliminary fire-fighting training. Upon the age of 18, they are then able to complete their training and join the company as a full member.

Public Safety

While the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 raised national awareness for anti-American sentiments, they also spurred increased awareness for emergency readiness throughout all levels of government. Though not a requirement of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, many communities are assessing their response systems and protocols and planning for better homeland security or homeland protection. Considerations include protecting the integrity of daily infrastructure, such as water supply and treatment, wastewater treatment, and energy supply, communication with government authorities and agencies, and necessary resources for first responders.

One final note from the community survey—residents are generally satisfied with the quality of life they find in East Pennsboro Township. Approximately 24.0 percent of respondents rated their quality of life as “excellent,” with an additional 58.8 percent rating their quality of life as “good.” Members of the Board of Commissioners, both past and present, should feel good about their leadership service to the Township.

INTENTIONALLY BLANK