

# DERRY VISION

## The Mission

The mission of Derry Township is to promote and encourage the development of safe, healthy, and distinctive living environments, amenities, and services for our residents and visitors.

## Why a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a vision of future land use planning in a municipality. Comprehensive Plans address a broad range of topics including, but not limited to, transportation, open space preservation, current and future land uses, housing, public infrastructure including water and sewer supply facilities, critical and sensitive land features such as karst soil conditions and potential natural or man-made hazards.

There are many reasons why municipalities prepare a Comprehensive Plan. The detailed studies, surveys and public meetings offer opportunity for involvement by the general public, community business leaders, County Planners and other stakeholders to discuss the future development of a municipality. Discussions often focus on the latest trends and interests of the community and important areas of concern that affect the safety and welfare of the public. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide a basis for future land use decisions and for future changes to land use policies as they relate to the values and goals for the community over the long-term.

## The Vision

The Board of Supervisors envisions Derry Township as a safe, healthy and active community valuing open space; vibrant cultural, social, and business offerings; and welcoming neighborhoods and gathering places. We envision a variety of housing opportunities with shops and services within walking distance and connected by a network of transportation options accessible to all. We envision a prosperous future driven by our dynamic health care, research, educational, entertainment, business, and manufacturing economies, while respecting our cultural heritage and scenic beauty.

## New Beginnings - How We Got Here

On April 13, 2010 the Board of Supervisors voted to begin the process to update our 1991 Comprehensive Plan. The new plan was to focus on Smart Growth development principles. The Supervisors formed a Comprehensive Plan Working Group to draft the Mission and Vision statements for the new Plan. Over the next two years the working group's efforts included holding over 20 public outreach meetings; creating, distributing and analyzing a community survey and creating an abridged version of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. Based on comments received

at the outreach meetings and from the community survey, the working group developed the present Mission and Vision statements, draft goals and objectives to six focus planning areas, and recommended six planning districts to allow for an in depth study of planning issues at a neighborhood level. The Board of Supervisors adopted the Mission and Vision statements on September 25, 2012.

# Accounting for Changes in Population - 2010 Census Data

Figure 1 - Regional Population Trends (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

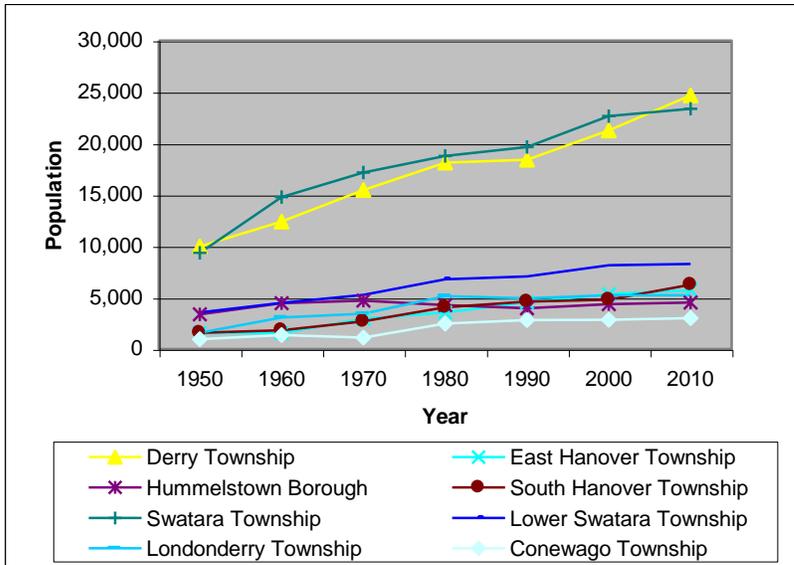


Figure 1 shows that the population of Derry Township has steadily increased since 1950. The Township surpassed Swatara Township in total population and is now the third largest municipality in Dauphin County. However, much of the population growth between the 2000 Census and 2010 Census was due to the fact that the students of the Milton Hershey School were counted in the Township’s population for the first time. This accounts for the larger percentages of population between the ages of 10 and 19 in the Age Pyramid graph in Figure 2. With this in mind, the core population of the Township is those between the ages of 40 and 64. This age group is commonly referred to as the “baby-boomer” generation. Over the next 20 years, which coincides with the anticipated time span of this Plan, the core population will begin to enter into the Senior Age group. Additionally, the total population is projected for further growth over the next 20 years as shown in Figure 3. With these two factors in mind, it is the intent of this plan to incorporate Smart Growth strategies for future planning needs pertaining to such issues as housing, public services and future land uses. Smart Growth strategies and the goals and objectives of the Plan are described in further detail over the next sections.

Figure 2 - Age Pyramid for Derry Township (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

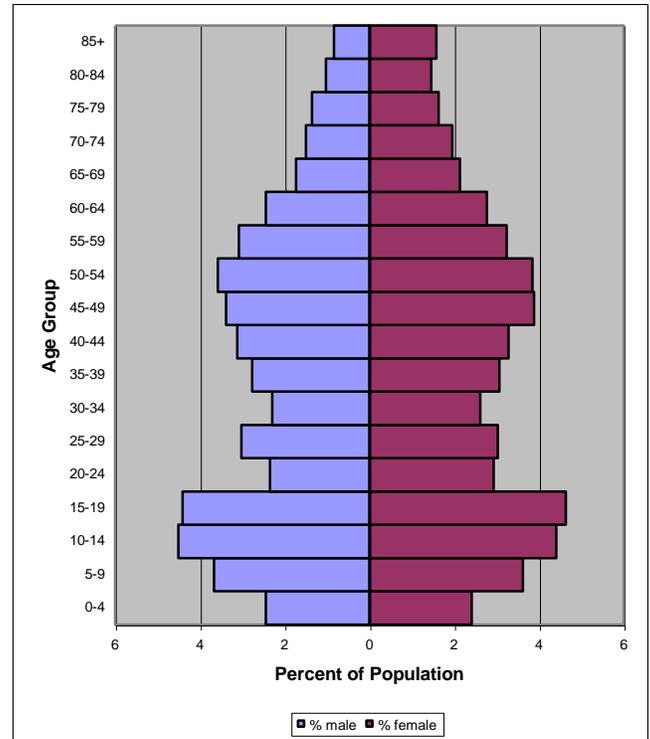


Figure 3 - Population Projections

## Township 2010 Census Summary

- Population - 24,679
- Median Age - 38.3
- Total Housing Units - 10,267
- Average Household Size - 2.33
- Est. Median Household Income - \$64,728 (2011)
- Est. Median Home Value - \$243,700 (2011)

Source - U.S. Census Bureau

## Smart Growth Development Principles

Smart Growth is a planning initiative that encourages careful decision making in order to ensure a balance between the protection of the natural environment and the stimulation of economic growth in a sustainable fashion. Despite the many definitions, theories and ideologies of Smart Growth, there are ten principles that are generally agreed upon as to what constitutes a Smart Growth development approach; these principles are as follows:

- Provide regulations that encourage a mix of land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions



*Redevelopment of the former Press building as a mixed-use/commercial center is a successful use of Smart Growth development initiatives.*

## Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan

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Upon consideration of the changing demographics and Smart Growth design principles, six areas of planning were determined to be a priority for the Comprehensive Plan. These focus areas include Sense of Place, Land Use and Design, Transportation and Circulation, Public Facilities and Services, the Environment and Hazard Mitigation.

In addition to creating goals and objectives for each of the focus areas, six planning districts were created in an effort to create a unique set of planning objectives at a neighborhood scale. Neighborhood level planning allows for prioritizing the planning issues that each district faces, as well as offering greater opportunity to describe implementing strategies to accomplish the goals and objectives assigned to each district.

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## Planning Focus Areas

### Land Use & Design

Goal: To encourage an integrated mix of safe and well planned residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses in order to provide adequate housing, shopping, and employment opportunities for all present and future residents.

Objectives:

- Focus on downtown revitalization as the highest priority for future growth.
- Direct future development towards areas of existing development; promote infill and pedestrian connectivity.
- Encourage restoration, rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures.
- Allow for mixed-use, compact development where appropriate.
- Support technology to stimulate businesses and institutional growth

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### Creating a Sense of Place

Goal: To protect and enhance the visual quality, design excellence and distinctive image of the Township to ensure that development and change are in keeping with the Township's character.

Objectives:

- Preserve the integrity and unique character of Derry Township, including the legacy of Milton S. Hershey in creating a model industrial town.
- Balance the needs of residents with those of visitors (services, infrastructure, etc.) - support Hershey as a place to live and work, and as a regional destination.
- Blend historic and cultural preservation with modern infrastructure and amenities.

## Transportation & Circulation

Goal: To create a safe, multimodal transportation system for all users and to encourage connectivity from all residential neighborhoods to major destination areas of the Township and surrounding region

Objectives:

- Encourage the provision of pedestrian and bicycle networks in developing areas with safe, convenient access to sidewalks, bikeways and trails.
- Maintain the current bike trail system and expand it to enable commuter use.
- Provide public transportation at a scale suitable for Derry Township, taking advantage of regional partnerships and collaboration.
- Develop a highly connected local transportation network that provides a variety of route options.
- Ensure land use and transportation systems are compatible.

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## Public Facilities & Services

Goal: Provide a variety of adequate, high quality and cost efficient public services to all individuals of the Township.

Objectives

- Support information technology that will enhance existing public facilities and infrastructure and improve effective and efficient township operations by interconnecting systems and automating services.
- Synchronize and analyze data to anticipate decision making instead of reacting to problems.
- Coordinate desired land uses with DTMA, American Water, the School District and emergency services to ensure public facilities and infrastructure remain adequate with any increased development densities.
- Take advantage of funding opportunities, regional meetings and other programs that encourage regional planning efforts, of which may lead to improved public services, facilities and infrastructure to the Township and surrounding municipalities.

## Environment

Goal: To create a safe, multimodal transportation system for all users and to encourage connectivity from all residential neighborhoods to major destination areas of the Township and surrounding region

Objectives:

- Require environmentally based stormwater management techniques with all new development.
  - Promote maintenance and retention of existing stormwater management facilities throughout the Township.
  - Preserve open space, including the Swatara Creek Greenway, as visual, community-defining and recreational assets.
  - Support and retain productive farmland in the rural areas of the Township.
  - Provide incentives for green design and construction.
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## Hazard Mitigation

Goal: To create a safe, multimodal transportation system for all users and to encourage connectivity from all residential neighborhoods to major destination areas of the Township and surrounding region

Objectives:

- Coordinate the Township emergency preparedness plan with that of adjacent municipalities, County and State agencies.
- Identify potential hazards associated with developing environmentally sensitive areas of the Township, such as floodplains, wetlands, karst areas and steep slopes and investigate potential regulations that seek to minimize the risks associated with developing these areas.
- In light of the significant flooding in September of 2011, review existing zoning and building policies in flood prone areas to determine whether changes are appropriate in order to minimize property damage.

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## Planning Districts

### **Downtown/Chocolate Ave.**

Goal: Foster the revitalization of the Hershey commercial and civic district including the area along Chocolate Avenue and one block north and south of Chocolate Ave.

Objectives:

- Create a true “center” that can function as both a community-defining symbol and a physical gathering place.
- Convert Chocolate Avenue from a high-traffic thoroughfare to a mixed-use “main-street” with streetscape improvements including street trees, storefronts, landscape amenities, and on-street parking.
- Revise and simplify downtown zoning districts to encourage a variety of mixed uses.
- Ensure ample but efficient parking, including on-street and parking garages, with surface parking that is screened from public streets and spaces.
- Direct downtown visitors to the public parking facilities.
- Attract new retail businesses that meet residents’ needs and activate the entire corridor.
- Encourage the development of a variety of housing types in the downtown.
- Promote pedestrian safety and utility, creating connections to adjacent residential, civic and commercial areas.
- Implement traffic calming measures in the downtown area.
- Ensure the new construction is compatible in scale and form and consistent with “main street” character by implementing design standards.
- Make the district accessible and attractive to residents and visitors for all ages.
- Encourage bicycle use by providing bike paths and bike parking.
- Promote opportunities for mass transit options such as regional or local buses and shuttles.

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## Hersheypark Dr. Corridor

Goal: Create a distinctive place that can provide visitor services and an alternative commercial destination to the downtown.

Objectives:

- Accommodate visitors, as this is the principal destination for many tourists.
- Preserve the bucolic open space buffers along the corridor for their positive visual impact and identity-setting value.
- Create mixed-use commercial areas to promote more integrated activities and efficient infrastructure.
- Encourage retail businesses that are compatible with the downtown revitalization effort; manage the phasing of implementation accordingly.
- Ensure that industrial and office uses blend into the surrounding district.
- Create an access management plan that will reduce congestion by minimizing the number of intersections and driveways.

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## Medical Center/Research Park (HCAR) Area

Goal: Promote a mix of uses in a neighborhood format to meet the needs of employees, students, visitors, patients, and nearby residents.

Objectives:

- Support diverse opportunities and planned efficiencies by creating a mixed use overlay zoning district.
- Determine strategies for minimizing traffic and circulation problems through careful planning, road projects, and alternative transportation options.
- Provide internal connectivity for bikes and pedestrians.
- Create planning incentives to encourage development of a gateway neighborhood to Hershey.

## Waltonville Rd/Middletown Rd. Corridor

Goal: Establish services and opportunities to accommodate the existing residential population that lacks convenient access to neighborhood communities.

Objectives:

- Encourage retail and other commercial development in areas presently zoned for neighborhood commercial use and determine whether other locations along the corridor should be re-zoned to support such development.
- Establish planned mixed-use centers with shared access and parking.
- Promote a healthier community and reduce automobile dependency for residents by providing bike and walking paths that connect to neighborhood amenities.

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## Palmdale Area

Goal: Revitalize the commercial corridor along East Chocolate Avenue to benefit the neighborhood residents and serve through-travelers.

Objectives:

- Encourage concentrated areas of commercial activity (vs. scattered and isolated) to create critical mass, generate interest and enhance the success rate of individual businesses.
- Encourage neighborhood commercial uses on Lingle Avenue.
- Support increased multifamily residential density in areas to support commercial areas.
- Make use of sidewalks and other means of internal connectivity to create walk-able destination(s).
- Consider traffic calming measures for the portion of Chocolate Avenue which bisects Palmdale.

## **Route 743 South Corridor**

Goal: Maintain the rural character of this southern gateway to Hershey, and support uses compatible with neighboring Milton Hershey School (MHS) Campus.

Objectives:

- Allow for expansion of MHS facilities, including MHS graduate services, as necessary and appropriate, including recreational areas to benefit students and community members.
- Promote continued preservation of open spaces.
- Provide visual and safety buffers along Route 743.

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