



Comprehensive Development Plan

Shenango Township, Lawrence County, PA

Chapter 9 – Current and Future Land Use

Overview

Shenango Township has a predominantly low-density residential development pattern in place which evolved from past agrarian settlement patterns. With an area of approximately 22.8 square miles or 14,623 acres, 88.4% (12,920 acres) is zoned for low and moderate density residential and agricultural land uses predominantly in three (3) zoning districts categories, A-1 Agricultural, R-1 Rural Residential and R-2 Suburban Residential. Two (2) smaller lot residential districts, R-3 and R-4, represent about 3.5% of the total land area. The remaining land, about 8.1% or 1,188 acres, is divided into two (2) commercial designations, the C-1 Community Commercial and C-2 Highway Commercial Districts, and the I-P Industrial Park and M-1 General Industrial Districts.

The Township is accessed via three distinct commercial corridors: the U.S. Route 422 corridor, the US 422 Bypass and the Pennsylvania Route 65 Corridor. The Route 65 Corridor is home to much of the township's shopping district. This area is served by the Lawrence Village Plaza, which includes general and specialty retail. This area is also served by both national chain fast food restaurants and local sit-down restaurants. The US 422 corridor is more of a light industrial area which is anchored by the McKesson Corporation. Distribution/warehousing, and light manufacturing facilities including the new Portersville Valve Company relocation, a 60,000 square foot manufacturing facility which is expected to employ an additional 25 local workers at full production, dominate segments of the corridor. Two (2) mixed-use commerce parks also offer industrial development opportunities:

NAME OF COMMERCE PARK	Size	Available lots	Description
Shenango Commerce Park	202	Yes	Manufacturing/Industrial/Light Industrial/Business/Warehouse
Eastgate Commerce Center	26	Yes	Manufacturing/Industrial/Light Industrial/Business/Warehouse

Source: 2004 Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan

Zoning and Taxes

Discussions concerning recent analyses of the relationship of rural community's zoning patterns to tax revenues to support the delivery of public services were initiated during the plan preparation process. The conclusions drawn from the Penn State Agricultural Extension Service reports were as follows: The Township's preference for low density agricultural/residential land use options will continue to increase the tax burden on residential property owners; a wider variety of service and commercial uses should be considered to provide additional development opportunities where the infrastructure can accommodate more intense development; additional agricultural related support uses and agritourism options should be incorporated into future zoning ordinance revisions. These observations are discussed in a variety of contexts in this document.

District Use Provisions (Zoning Ordinance Audit)

At present, there are 104 land uses provided for in nine (9) zoning district designations in the Township. One characteristic of the Township's land use regulations identified during preparation of this work element is the proliferation of discretionary uses requiring additional review and costing both time and money to property owners to get approval. Uses by Special Exception and Conditional Uses options attach supplemental criteria to specific uses in specific zoning districts in order to mitigate certain use characteristics deemed to be less than desirable. These criteria or conditions can, if not drafted carefully, stifle development in the worst case, or present property owners with impediments to investing in small scale business expansions, residential additions, or even making home improvements.

Nine (9) Zoning Districts:

A-1	Agricultural District	C-1	Community Commercial District
R-1	Rural Residential District	C-2	Highway Commercial District
R-2	Suburban Residential District	I-P	Industrial Park District
R-3	Urban Residential District	M-1	General Industrial District
R-4	Multi-Use Residential District		

Use	A-1	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	C-1	C-2	I-P	M-1
P = Principal permitted use; A = Accessory use; C = Conditional use; C/A = Conditional accessory use; SE = Use by Special Exception									
Accessory uses, customarily incidental	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Adult businesses									C

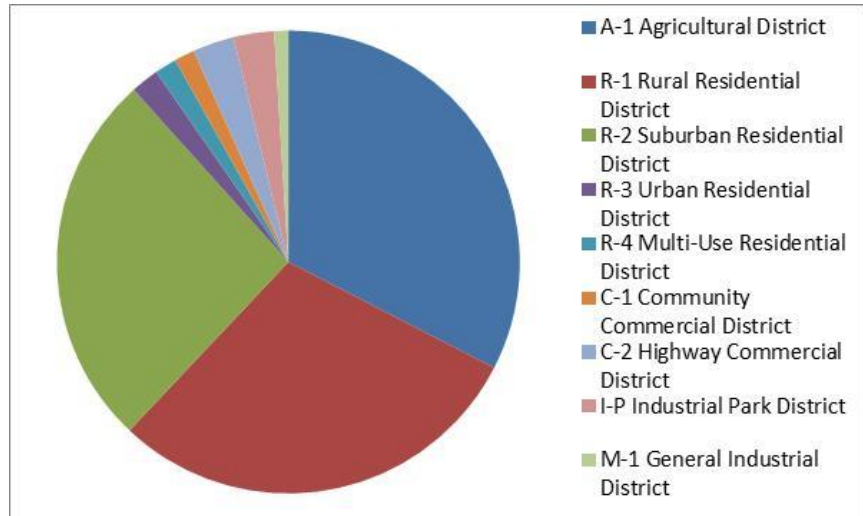
Use	A-1	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	C-1	C-2	I-P	M-1
Agricultural operations	P	P							
Airport	C								
Animal hospital	C					SE	SE		
Automobile service station						SE	SE	P	P
Bakery						P	P		
Billboards							C		C
Boarding, stable	P								
Business services						P	P	P	P
Business or professional offices						P	P	P	P
Campground or RV park	C								
Candy or ice cream store						P	P		
Car wash						SE	SE		
Cemetery	C	C							
Church	C	C	C						
Cluster subdivision	C	C	C						
Commercial communications tower	C						C	C	C
Commercial recreation						C	C		
Commercial school						P	P	P	P
Comparable uses not specifically listed						SE	SE	SE	SE
Contracting business						P		P	P
Convenience store						P	P		
Day care center					SE	P	P		
Day care center or pre-school in church or school	SE	SE	SE	SE					
Delicatessen						P	P		
Density bonus for multi-family development					C				
Drive through facilities						A	A		
Essential Services	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Fences	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Financial institutions						P	P		
Firehouse	C	C	C						
Forestry/Fish production	P								
Funeral home						SE			
Garden apartments					P				
Garden nursery						P	P		
Garden nursery or greenhouse	P								
Golf course, country club		C							
Group care facility					C				
Health club						P			
Home gardening	A	A	A	A	A				
Home occupation	C/A	C/A	C/A	C/A	C/A				

Use	A-1	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	C-1	C-2	I-P	M-1
Home office	A	A	A	A	A				
Home office or home occupation in a dwelling which is a nonconforming use						A	A	A	A
Hospital, clinic or nursing home						C			
Indoor amusement						P	P		
Junk yard									SE
Keeping of domestic pets	A	A	A	A	A				
Kennel	P								
Landfill	C								
Laundry or dry cleaning establishment						P	P		
Lumberyard							P		
Manufacturing									P
Manufacturing, limited							SE	P	
Mineral removal	C								
Mini-warehouses or self-storage buildings							C		P
Model home or sales office						SE			
Mobile home park	C								
Motel/hotel						P	P		
Noncommercial recreation				C	C				C
Nursing home					C				
Off-street parking and loading	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
On-site accessory to a farm	A								
Personal care boarding home	C				C				
Personal services						P	P		
Pet grooming						P	P		
Pharmacy						P	P		
Planned residential development					C				
Printing								P	P
Private club						C	C		
Private garages and storage buildings	A	A	A	A	A				
Private res. swimming pools or tennis courts	A	A	A	A	A				
Private stables	A	A							
Public buildings	C	C	C	C	C			C	C
Public parking garage						SE			
Public recreation	C	C	C	C	C			C	C
Public utility building or structure	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Repair shop						P	P	P	P
Research and development								P	P
Restaurant						P	P		
Retail sales						P	P		
Retail sales of products produced on-site								A	A

Use	A-1	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	C-1	C-2	I-P	M-1
Retirement community					C	C			
School	C	C	C						
Secondary dwelling for resident farm workers	A								
Shopping center						SE			
Signs	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Single family dwelling	P	P	P	P	P				
Supply yard									P
Tavern						P	P		
Temporary construction trailer	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Temporary use or structure	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE
Townhouses					P				
Truck and heavy equipment rental, sales and service							SE		
Truck and heavy equipment repair									P
Truck terminal									P
Two family dwelling, triplex, fourplex			C		P				
Vehicle accessory sales and installation						P	P		P
Vehicle rental								P	
Vehicle rental, sales and service						SE	SE		P
Vehicle repair garage							SE	P	P
Warehousing and distribution							P	P	P
Wholesale business							P	P	P
Zero lot line single family dwelling					P				

SHENANGO TOWNSHIP				
ZONING DISTRICTS ACREAGE				
A-1	Agricultural District	4,760.92	32.6%	
R-1	Rural Residential District	4,310.60	29.5%	
R-2	Suburban Residential District	3,848.41	26.3%	91.9%
R-3	Urban Residential District	288.25	2.0%	
R-4	Multi-Use Residential District	226.40	1.5%	
C-1	Community Commercial District	206.83	1.4%	
C-2	Highway Commercial District	423.62	2.9%	8.1%
I-P	Industrial Park District	415.31	2.8%	
M-1	General Industrial District	142.73	1.0%	
Total		14,623.07	100.0%	

Of the 104 uses listed in the current Township Zoning Ordinance, 45 uses are listed as conditional or as uses by special exception requiring a public hearing and another 16 uses are listed as accessory uses to principal permitted uses. This equates to only 43 principal uses permitted by right Township-wide. Recognition that a



comprehensive amendment to the current land use regulations was needed was included in the scope of work for this comprehensive plan preparation project and that effort will be on-going. Traditional zoning approaches have undergone significant improvements in the Commonwealth in the last two (2) decades including more flexible use options such as mixed-use and overlay zoning. Following the adoption of a long range community development plan, the time to consider these flexible options to land use regulations in order to implement the development objectives of the Comprehensive Plan is the next logical sequence in the community planning process.

The use of performance criteria, mixed-use site planning, reasonable dimensional and buffer yard requirements, architectural and design standards and broad land use categories can protect existing development from new development and redevelopment while providing property owners with a wider palette of use options in discrete zoning districts. These tools will be incorporated into future regulatory language at the discretion of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Agritourism and Agribusiness

A trend in rural Townships in Pennsylvania that offers agricultural operation owners additional opportunities to supplement revenue is Agritourism. In the Township's southwestern quadrant, and to some extent the southeastern quadrant, extractive industries such as strip mining, timber harvesting and conventional oil and gas well drilling have coexisted with farming since the first half of the century. In 2000 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania amended the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code with Acts 67 and 68 to support the use of natural resources while defining agriculture as one of those resources.

The approach suggested by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania is to utilize the characteristics of a working farm to encourage a variety of activities for which use of the agricultural property can be leased or utilized for a fee. The following chart breaks these activities down into three (3) categories, Natural, Physical and Heritage, and provides examples of support activities that can be programmed on site:

Asset Type	Assets Classification	Examples	Agritourism Activity Examples
Natural	Scenery and atmosphere	Views, quiet areas	Hiking, meditation
	Wildlife and insects	Big game, small game, waterfowl, butterflies	Fee-based hunting, bird watching
	Livestock	Horses, sheep, goats, cows	Trail rides, sheep shearing, petting zoo, milking demonstration
	Hydrology	Lake, stream, creek, pond, waterfall	Kayaking, fishing, or related activities
	Topography	Elevated area, cave, rock formation, lookouts	Rock climbing, rappelling, photography
	Vegetation	Forest, grassland, crops	Corn mazes, crop identification, u-pick
	Climate and Seasons	Precipitation, weather patterns, growing season, planting season, harvest season	Star gazing, pumpkin walk
Physical	Residential	Main house, bunk house, cabin	Guest rooms, bed and breakfast
	Non-residential	Pen, paddock, barn, out building, machine shop	Rodeo, cider mill, gift shop
	Other function	Pavilion, play area, shooting range, trails	Corporate cook outs, family reunion, geo-caching course
	Transportation	Wagon, tractor	Haunted hayride, tractor pull, farm tour
	Space	Parking area, camping area, seating area	Corn maze, u-pick, concert location
	Decorative	Silo, bridge, windmill, gazebo, greenhouse, garden, water tower	Practically any activity involving scenery.
Heritage	Built heritage	Historic barn, civil war site, mine shaft, dam	Architectural tour, photography safari, reenactment, sightseeing
	Cultural heritage	Food, crafts, music, cemetery, petroglyph	Bakery, candle making, quilting, art gallery, music festival, ghost walk or escorted walking tour
	Natural heritage	Scenic gorges, rolling hills, lakeside views	Interpretive trail, nature photography, hosting art classes

It is incumbent on the municipality to support these activities through an amendment to the local zoning ordinance. This objective was discussed by the Steering Committee and has been formalized as part of the Implementation Plan in Chapter 12.

When these options to land use in support of agricultural operations in the more rural zoning districts of the Township are enacted by the Board of Supervisors it will be important to let landowners engaged in agricultural operations know about the expanded menu of options they have. This can be accomplished through inclusion in a newsletter being discussed as a community objective, an open letter to the editor of the locally distributed newspaper, or through direct contact with farm owners through the Beaver-Lawrence Farm Bureau in New Galilee, PA.

Permit Records and Subdivision Activity

A review and analysis of Township records on building permit issuance and subdivision activity for recent periods is provided as a method of estimating local economic strength. The creation of new building lots or the approval of land developments indicates potential investment in the community. In Shenango Township's case, subdivisions are predominantly for the transfer of property for the construction of single family homes, although between 2004 and 2011 the number of lots developed for townhouses, duplexes, and condominiums represented a greater proportion of approved subdivisions than in previous periods and which were not classified as lot consolidations.

Between 2010 and 2013, according to Township permit records, new construction value of \$14,881,964 was reported, for all construction permitted. Residential development, including single family homes, mobile/manufactured homes, and multi-family dwellings (duplex and triplex) drew a total of 46 building permits or about two-thirds of all permits issues (64.7%). Residential additions and accessory structures were not included in this analysis.

Commercial and industrial construction drew 25 permits during the period reviewed which, for the most part, included additions and expansions to existing facilities and renovations. This continued investment in the Township's local economy bodes well for future business promotion initiatives as more than seven (7) million dollars in nonresidential development was invested in existing businesses (\$7,002,771) in the four (4) year period analyzed. This does not include the 4.7 million dollar Portersville Valve development on US 422. While this number may not be significant when compared with permit records for the region's competitive municipalities examined in Chapter 5, it is nonetheless an indication that investment in Shenango Township's future is still viable.

Permit Records 2010 to 2013

	Description	SFR	Mobile/Manufactured	Duplex	Triplex	Commercial/Industrial	Value (\$)
2010		1					145,000
	Business space for retail					1	352,000
	Addition of a cooler room		1			1	800,000
	Business space accommodation					1	21,000
			1				145,000
		1					201,000
			1				120,000
		1					100,000
		1					150,000
			1				98,000
		1					150,000
			1				98,000
				1			310,000
			1				14,000
		1					380,000
	Relocated		1				14,000
		1					235,000
		1					167,388
					1		330,000
		1					99,000
		1					250,000
		1					171,800
		1					165,300
	TOTAL	12	7	1	1	3	4,516,488
2011				1			310,000
	Interior store removal					1	3,042,657
	4,225 sf commercial addition					1	100,000
	Interior remodeling & ADA barrier					1	80,171
	23 x 38 rear bkd add. for aquatic therapy					1	223,000
		1					290,000
		1					60,000
				1			310,000
	Int/Ext remodel w/minor add.					1	200,000
		1					221,000
				1			330,000
	1,920 sf office addition					1	170,134

		1					182,000
	2,001 sf shop/warehouse add.					1	35,000
	TOTAL	4	0	3	0	7	5,553,962
2012		1					198,000
	Installation		1				3,000
	Park-n-ride facility					1	250,000
		1					236,498
			1				63,000
		1					147,000
		1					278,000
	2,596 sf warehouse add.					1	68,800
	Add new Dea conveyor line system					1	396,181
		1					200,000
	Business space accommodation					1	n/a
	Remodel employee break room					1	n/a
	Offices & restroom alterations					1	50,000
	Foundation to support new equip.					1	60,000
				2			330,000
				2			310,000
				2			310,000
				2			330,000
	TOTAL	5	2	8	0	7	3,230,479
2013	Toilet/Locker Room					1	100,000
		1					70,000
	Alterations to Dairy Queen					1	100,000
	100 x 200 building warehouse add.					1	664,828
		1					189,000
	Business office chiropractic int. alt.					1	60,000
	Level 3 alterations					1	185,000
	Office/warehouse					1	n/a
		1					168,207
	Level 3 alterations					1	25,000
	Level 2 alterations					1	19,000
	TOTAL	3	0	0	0	8	1,581,035

2010	TOTAL	12	7	1	1	3	4,516,488
2011	TOTAL	4	0	3	0	7	5,553,962
2012	TOTAL	5	2	8	0	7	3,230,479
2013	TOTAL	3	0	0	0	8	1,581,035
		24	9	12	1	25	14,881,964

The balance of new construction value, \$7,879,193, represented the addition of sixty (60) new dwelling units in the four (4) years between 2010 and 2013 or about 15 units annually, in a variety of configurations.

Subdivision/Land Development Activity 2004 to 2011						
	SUBDIVISIONS	MINOR SUBDIVISIONS	NONRESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS	LAND DEVELOPMENTS	LOT CONSOLIDATIONS	LAND SWAP
2004	48	3	4	0	2	0
2005	25	0	0	0	0	0
2006	11	0	0	26 units	1	0
2007	34	0	0	15 units	0	0
2008	2	0	0	0	0	0
2009	40	0	2	32 units	0	0
2010	8	0	0	0	2	0
2011	18	0	0	6	12	1
Total	186	3	6	6	17	1

For the eight (8) year period 2004 through 2011, Shenango Township approved 186 subdivisions which included six (6) land developments, (defined as the improvement of a single parcel for a single, nonresidential use or multiple residential uses), and 17 lot consolidations, some of which may also have resulted in new residential development. This equates to subdivision activity or the creation of new building lots at about 21 new lots annually. The rate of residential development, as reflected in permit records for the period 2010 to 2014 indicates that approximately 55% of the approved lots were developed on average annually for the most recent period reviewed (11.5 residential permits issued annually on 21 new lots on average).

This calculation does not include lot consolidations resulting in new residential development which could raise the take-down rate higher. However, the analysis may indicate a weakness in the housing market Township-wide with respect to available building lots and the time-on-market component. The dominant single family residential trend established in the Township's land use pattern continues, but the growth rate will depend on undefined variables, some of which are beyond control of Township officials. What is encouraging is that 25 permits for commercial and industrial construction were issued between 2010 and 2013 and in local growth cycles nonresidential development tends to precede residential growth. There is an

abundance of developable land in the Township's commercial and industrial corridors to support increased infill development, which in turn could provide employment opportunities and an increased demand for housing.

Summary

A summary of observations, threats and opportunities regarding in current and future land use in Shenango Township is as follows:

- Only 8.1% of the Townships 14,623 acres is zoned for nonresidential development.
- Subdivision activity between 2004 and 2014 indicates probably increases of between 238 and 254 persons at five (5) year intervals through 2020 and between 320 and 348 persons through 2030 or about 51 persons annually to 2020 and then about 69 persons. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's later horizon estimates after 2030 appear to be high.
- Designated growth areas abutting the US 422 corridor and SR 65 corridor are recommended to encourage infill development.
- Lack of available leasable units 3,000 square feet of gross floor area and up are limiting nonresidential development options according to current and prospective business owners.
- About 55% of new lots created through the subdivision approval process have been developed annually on average from 2010 to 2013.
- 88.4% of the Township is zoned for low and moderate density residential land use.
- There are four (4) Natural Heritage Areas located in Shenango Township where land use should be restricted or limited.
- Between 2010 and 2013, new construction value of 14.8 million dollars was reported or about 3.7 million dollars annually on average.
- The acquisition of the Township's sanitary sewerage system by the New Castle Municipal Authority has the potential to address sewerage service demands in an area of the Township with development potential.
- Of the 104 land uses provided for in the current zoning text, only 43 principal land uses are permitted by right.
- Agritourism and agribusiness support uses in rural areas can support the continuation of active farming in the Township.
- Opportunities for the extraction of oil and gas must be balanced with standards designed to protect the health and safety of residents in existing neighborhoods.