



ROSTRAVER TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



NOVEMBER 2020

ROSTRAVER TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

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RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RESOLUTION NO.: 1196
INTRODUCED BY: DEVIN M. DERIENZO
ADOPTED: DECEMBER 30, 2020

**RESOLUTION
OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ROSTRAVER**

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code provides for the development and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for a municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Rostraver Township Planning Agency prepared a Comprehensive Plan Update and recommended it to the Board of Commissioners for adoption; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Rostraver Township held a public hearing pursuant to public notice wherein it took public comments on the Comprehensive Plan Update recommended by the Planning Agency;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Rostraver Township that the "Rostraver Township Comprehensive Plan Update November 2020", a copy of which is attached hereto, the content of which, including all maps, charts, textual matter and other material forming the plan as attached, are incorporate herein by reference, is hereby adopted as the Comprehensive Plan of Rostraver Township.

RESOLVED this 30th day of December, 2020 by the Board of Commissioners in lawful session duly assembled.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWNSHIP OF ROSTRAVER

BY:


John LORENZO, President

ATTEST:


Pamela S. BEARD, Township Secretary

INTRODUCTION



This document is an update to Rostraver Township’s Comprehensive Plan. It reviews conditions and changes occurring in the township. It looks to the future and how to improve the quality of life of residents and secure the success of businesses and institutions that call Rostraver home.

The plan is “comprehensive.” It deals with a variety of matters – population, housing, neighborhoods, the local economy, public facilities and services, and recreation. It sets goals and defines strategies the township is intent on pursuing in the coming years. It identifies objectives and policies the township will use to guide decisions about regulations, public investments, and community improvements.

The township started examining data and issues for the Comprehensive Plan Update as early as 2017. The effort intensified in 2019. Planning consultants were hired to assist the township with the plan. There were work sessions with the Rostraver Township Planning Agency and the Rostraver Township Board of Commissioners. An open public meeting was held for citizen input. It took a year, with an interruption of work due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, to complete the plan update.

*A **comprehensive plan** is a collection of data, charts, maps, ideas, and recommendations. Though not mandatory, every Pennsylvania municipality may prepare one. It may be officially adopted, but itself is not an ordinance or law. It can provide legal support for municipal actions, and be relied upon by funding agencies as an expression of local needs and priorities.*

Rostraver Township first undertook and adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2000. The 2000 Plan provided an in-depth picture of the township arranged around planning topics like land use, transportation, and housing. The Plan was updated in 2008. The 2008 Update focused on planning strategies in different areas of the township. The current 2020 Update focuses on aspects of the township and priorities that have changed since 2008. It does not provide a full, detailed reiteration of data, maps, and issues from the 2008 Plan.

**Rostraver
Township
Comprehensive
Plan Update**

**A COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
POLICY GUIDE**

TOWNSHIP OF ROSTRAVER
17 **R** 73

Rostraver Township Commissioners
Nick Lorenzo, Chairman
Thomas G. Patterson, Vice Chairman
Patrick G. Egros
Ralph Iacoboni
Brian L. Sokol

APRIL 2008

**Township of Rostraver,
Westmoreland County**

TOWNSHIP OF ROSTRAVER
R

**Comprehensive Plan
2000**

prepared by:
**Rostraver Township Comprehensive Plan
Steering Committee**

with assistance by:
**Pashek Associates, Ltd.
&
Herbert, Rowland and
Grubic (HRG), Inc.**

DATA AND ISSUES

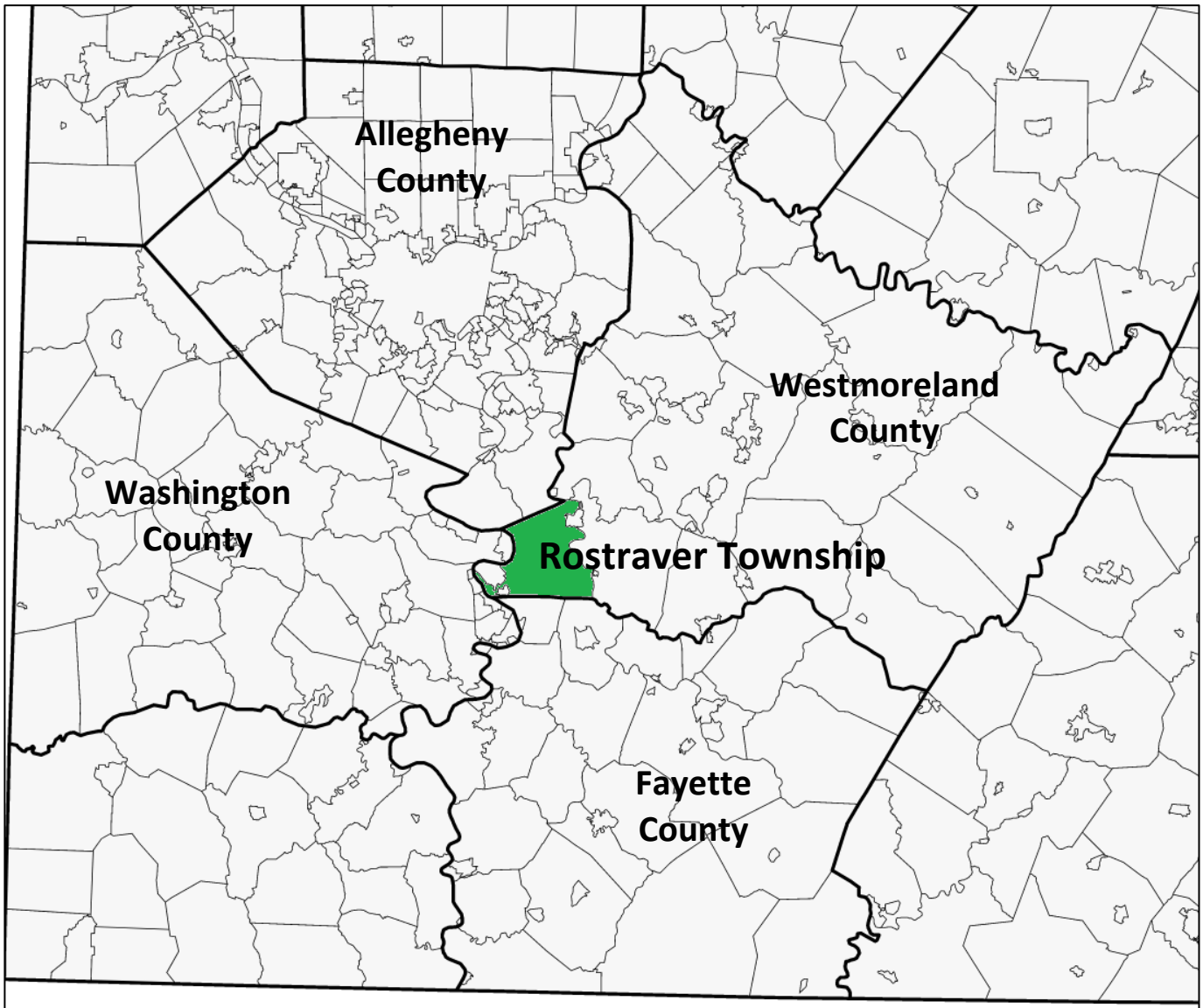


Rostraver Township is changing. It grew from its early days as a rural community to become a full-service community with the largest population in the Mid Mon Valley. In the years ahead, Rostraver, like the world around, will see changes in demographics, technology, and health that in turn will change society and the economy.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan Update presents data depicting current conditions and how the township is trending. There is data on population, income, employment, and housing. There is information on the natural gas industry which emerged as a major issue in Southwest Pennsylvania municipalities since Rostraver Township's 2008 Comprehensive Plan. And there is a summary of the most significant issues revealed by data and trends.

ROSTRAVER TOWNSHIP HAS A UNIQUE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Rostraver Township is located in the southwest corner of Westmoreland County. The township is bordered on three sides by three other counties – Allegheny, Fayette, and Washington. This presents planning and political challenges. Inflow and outflow for employment, shopping, and services occurs between Rostraver and places in four counties. Four counties exert influence on Rostraver in demand for housing and traffic on highways and roads. Yet Rostraver Township is away from the political center of Westmoreland County and lacks a political voice in the three other counties.

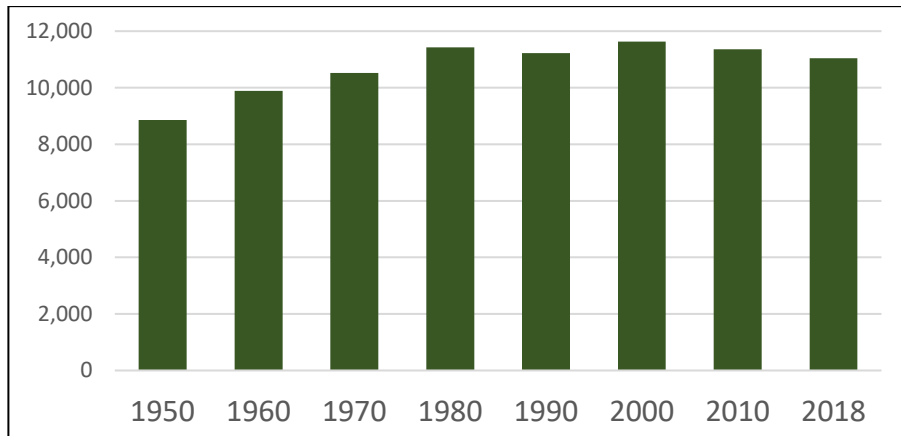


TOWNSHIP POPULATION IS STABLE AND APPEARS TO HAVE PEAKED

Rostraver Township population, after several decades of growth, has been stable at 11,000+ for the past 40 years.

Figure 1 Rostraver Township Population

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



The last Census population count (2010) for the township was 11,363.

The most recent Census population estimate (2019) for the township was 11,007.

Rostraver Township maintained stable population while significant population decline occurred in surrounding municipalities and Westmoreland County. Some population likely shifted from surrounding municipalities into Rostraver Township, but continued decreases in the region pose a challenge to Rostraver for sustaining its population.

Table 1 Population of Rostraver Township and surrounding area

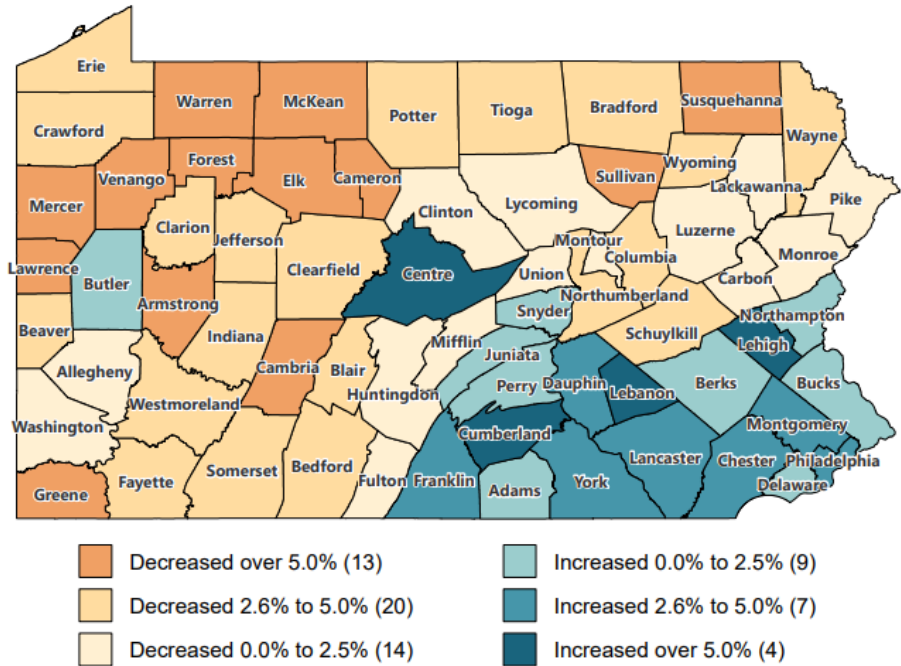
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

	1990	2000	2010	Estimate 2018	% change 1990-2010	% change 2010-2018
Rostraver Township	11,224	11,634	11,363	11,042	1.2%	-2.8%
Monessen City	9,901	8,669	7,720	7,277	-22.0%	-5.7%
North Belle Vernon Borough	2,112	2,107	1,971	1,871	-6.7%	-5.1%
Sewickley Township	6,642	6,230	5,996	5,755	-9.7%	-4.0%
South Huntingdon Township	6,352	6,175	5,796	5,505	-8.8%	-5.0%
West Newton Borough	3,152	3,083	2,633	2,496	-16.5%	-5.2%
Planning District #3	39,383	37,898	35,479	33,946	-9.9%	-4.3%
Westmoreland County	370,321	369,993	365,169	350,611	-1.4%	-4.0%
Southwest Pennsylvania	2,694,079	2,656,007	2,574,959	2,531,934	-4.4%	-1.7%
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	12,702,379	12,807,060	6.9%	0.8%

The Township sits in a region and state with weak prospects for population growth. Decreases are prevalent in all but one Western Pennsylvania county. Pittsburgh is showing economic resurgence, but it has yet to translate to population growth. Pennsylvania’s state population is growing, but at a slow rate. Pennsylvania ranks 44th out of 50 states in rate of population growth.

Figure 2 Population Change 2010 to 2018

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and PA State Data Center



The township exports (more move out than move in) post-high school and post-college young adults.



The township imports (more move in than move out) adults aging into their 30s, 40s, and older.

Township population appears to have peaked. The 2018 population estimate suggests a second consecutive decade in which the population decreases. A projection of township population for 2020 and 2030 suggests further decreases.

Table 2 Rostraver Township Population Projection

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Denny Puko, Planning Consultant LLC

	Population	Population	Population	Population	Population
Age group	1990	2000	2010	Projection 2020	Projection 2030
0-4	661	680	576	568	547
5-14	1,406	1,608	1,337	1,220	1,190
15-24	1,399	1,158	1,191	1,046	954
25-34	1,643	1,381	996	1,100	966
35-44	1,672	1,911	1,526	1,130	1,247
45-54	1,339	1,710	1,920	1,547	1,145
55-64	1,319	1,274	1,714	1,876	1,511
65+	1,785	1,922	2,103	2,438	2,754
TOTAL	11,224	11,644	11,363	10,923	10,315

The main reason for a projected population loss is aging of the township’s population. Persons age 65+ are the largest age group and growing. As they die in increasing numbers, the lower current birth rate will not be sufficient to replace them.

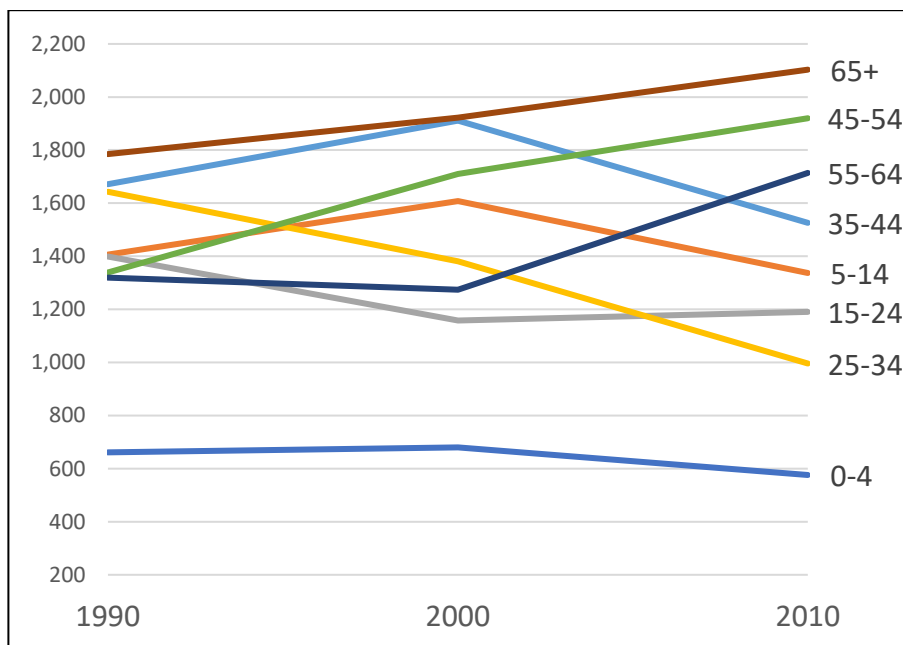
Rostraver Township’s population is 96% white. Nationally, white population is expected to peak before 2030 and begin to decrease.

TOWNSHIP POPULATION IS COMPARATIVELY OLD AND AGING

As of the last census, the median age of the township’s population – 45.3 years – was 5 years older than the state and 8 years older than the national population. About one in five township residents is age 65 or older. The largest age groups in the township are 65+, 45-54, and 55-64. All are growing. A subset of the 65+ group – people age 75+, sometimes called the “old old” – are growing even faster, from 643 persons in 1990 to 998 persons in 2010, an increase of 55%.

Figure 3 Rostraver Township Population by Age Group

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



If trends continue, by 2030 over one in four township residents will be age 65+. This is consistent with the aging of the large Baby Boom generation and the rise of life expectancy in the United States to 78 years, combined with the trend that the township has been an exporter of young adults and importer of middle and older adults.

Median Age (2010)

- 45.3 Rostraver Township
- 45.1 Westmoreland County
- 40.1 Pennsylvania
- 37.2 United States

Persons 65+ (2010)

- 19% Rostraver Township
- 19% Westmoreland County
- 15% Pennsylvania
- 13% United States

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

ROSTRAVER TOWNSHIP IS IN A POSITIVE ECONOMIC POSITION

Incomes of Rostraver Township households are higher and rising faster than in most surrounding municipalities and the county, state, and nation.

Percent Persons in Poverty (2017)
 4.6 Rostraver Township
 10.3 Westmoreland County
 13.1 Pennsylvania
 12.3 United States

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3 Median Household Income

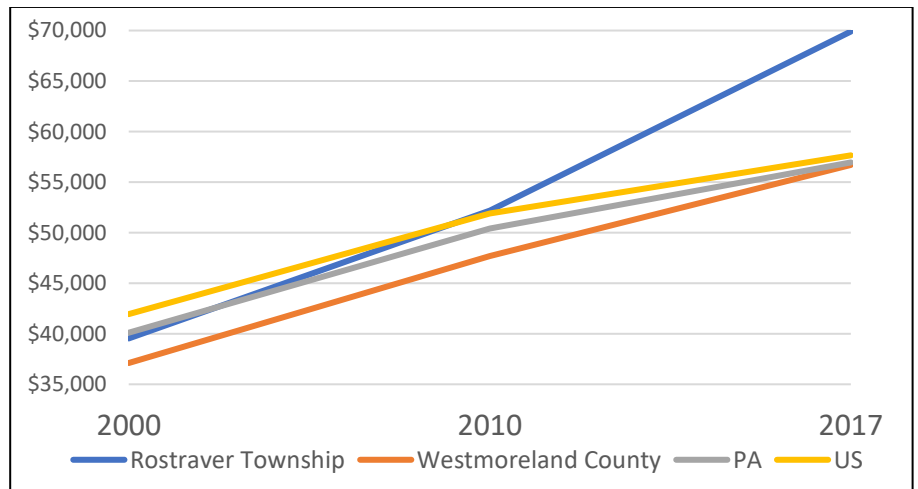
Source: U.S. Census Bureau


	Census 2000	ACS* 2010	ACS* 2017	% change 2000-2010	% change 2010-2017
Rostraver Township	\$39,538	\$52,195	\$69,904	32.0%	33.9%
Monessen City	\$26,686	\$28,270	\$38,777	5.9%	37.2%
North Belle Vernon Borough	\$30,721	\$37,778	\$50,556	23.0%	33.8%
Sewickley Township	\$32,677	\$45,847	\$59,264	40.3%	29.3%
South Huntingdon Township	\$35,431	\$46,429	\$56,954	31.0%	22.7%
West Newton Borough	\$25,912	\$31,711	\$42,337	22.4%	33.5%
Westmoreland County	\$37,106	\$47,689	\$56,702	28.5%	18.9%
Pennsylvania	\$40,106	\$50,398	\$56,951	25.7%	13.0%


*ACS - American Community Survey

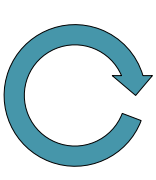
Figure 4 Median Household Income

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



4,555 people work in the township but live elsewhere. 

 4,452 people live in the township but work elsewhere.

500 people live and work in the township. 

Rostraver Township has a balance of employment opportunities in the township and in surrounding areas. The township has significant commercial employment areas at the I-70/PA 201 interchange in PA 51 corridor. Most jobs available in the township are in retail trade and accommodation and food services. Most township residents work in other municipalities. Jobs held by township residents are mostly in health care and social assistance, retail trade, and manufacturing. Unemployment in the township (2013-2017 American Community Survey data) was 5.7%, above the county's 4.9% and below the state's 6.5% and nation's 6.6%.

A more complete profile of employment is on the next page.

Table 4 Employment Profile

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

	People who live in Rostraver Township		People who work in Rostraver Township	
Total All Jobs 2017	4,952		5,055	
Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector				
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4	0.1%	0	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	35	0.7%	15	0.3%
Utilities	65	1.3%	7	0.1%
Construction	259	5.2%	170	3.4%
Manufacturing	509	10.3%	85	1.7%
Wholesale Trade	224	4.5%	177	3.5%
Retail Trade	614	12.4%	1,873	37.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	244	4.9%	422	8.3%
Information	55	1.1%	3	0.1%
Finance and Insurance	173	3.5%	97	1.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	55	1.1%	65	1.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	263	5.3%	86	1.7%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	104	2.1%	16	0.3%
Administrative & Support & Waste Management	153	3.1%	83	1.6%
Educational Services	462	9.3%	331	6.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	929	18.8%	325	6.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	69	1.4%	107	2.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	420	8.5%	975	19.3%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	174	3.5%	176	3.5%
Public Administration	141	2.8%	42	0.8%
Jobs by Earnings				
\$1,250 per month or less	1,117	22.6%	1,816	35.9%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	1,405	28.4%	1,849	36.6%
More than \$3,333 per month	2,430	49.1%	1,390	27.5%
Jobs by Travel Distance				
Less than 10 miles	1,594	32.2%	1,880	37.2%
10 to 24 miles	2,387	48.2%	1,790	35.4%
25 to 50 miles	473	9.6%	651	12.9%
Greater than 50 miles	498	10.1%	734	14.5%

Top Places Where Township Residents Go to Work (2017)

- 542 Pittsburgh City
- 499 Rostraver Township
- 161 Charleroi Borough
- 156 Hempfield Township
- 137 West Mifflin Borough
- 132 Carroll Township
- 117 Jefferson Hills Borough
- 116 Greensburg City
- 100 Monessen City

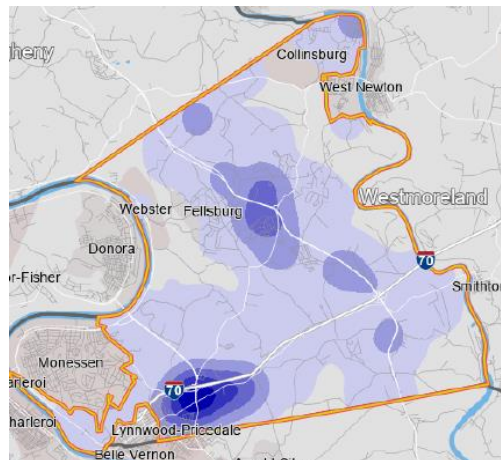
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 5 Location of Jobs in the Township

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Jobs per Square Mile

- 5 - 163
- 164 - 640
- 641 - 1,435
- 1,436 - 2,547
- 2,548 - 3,978



THE TOWNSHIP HAS AN AFFORDABLE AND SOUND SUPPLY OF MOSTLY SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING

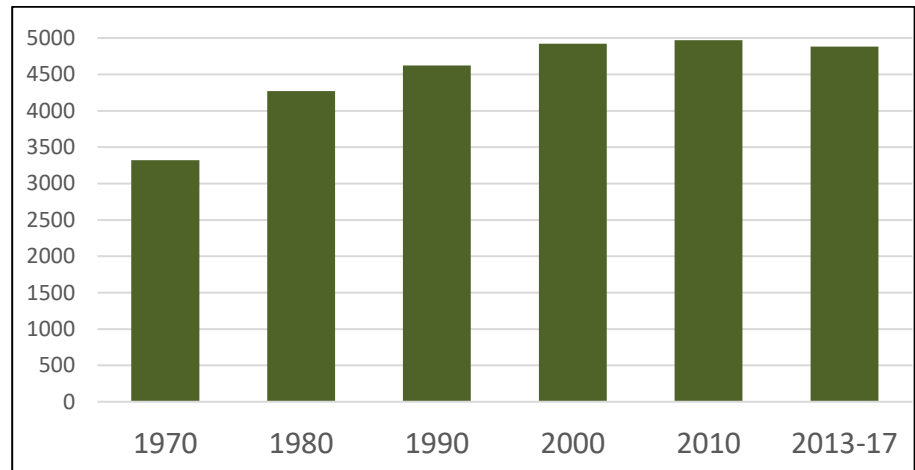
Rostraver Township has just under 5,000 housing units. The number of housing units has been growing despite the fact that population has leveled (reflecting the national decrease in average household size), but the rate of increase has slowed.

The last Census housing unit count (2010) for the township was 4,968.

The most recent Census housing unit estimate (2013-17 5-year estimate) for the township was 4,881.

Figure 6 Number of Housing Units Rostraver Township

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Rostraver Township has a higher than average percentage of single-family and owner-occupied housing.

Table 5 Occupancy and Type of Housing

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

	2013-2017 American Community Survey		
	Township	County	PA
Occupancy of housing units			
Owner-occupied	86.5%	77.6%	69.0%
Renter-occupied	13.5%	22.4%	31.0%
Type of housing units			
Single-family detached	84.8%	75.8%	57.1%
Attached and multi-family	7.4%	18.4%	38.9%
Mobile homes	7.8%	5.8%	4.0%

Also according to 2013-2017 American Community Survey estimates:

- The township has a slightly higher percent of housing units that are vacant but not for sale, for rent, or seasonal. Rostraver 6.8%, Westmoreland County 5.5%, Pennsylvania 4.6%.
- The township has a slightly newer supply of housing. Median year housing structures were built: Rostraver 1968, Westmoreland County 1962, Pennsylvania 1962.

By most measures, housing in Rostraver Township is affordable. The median value of owned housing and median rent for rented housing are below state medians. The township has a low percentage of households in owner-occupied housing that are cost-burdened (that is, they pay more than 30% of their income for housing). There is a comparatively high percentage of renter households that are cost-burdened.

Table 6 Housing Costs and Affordability

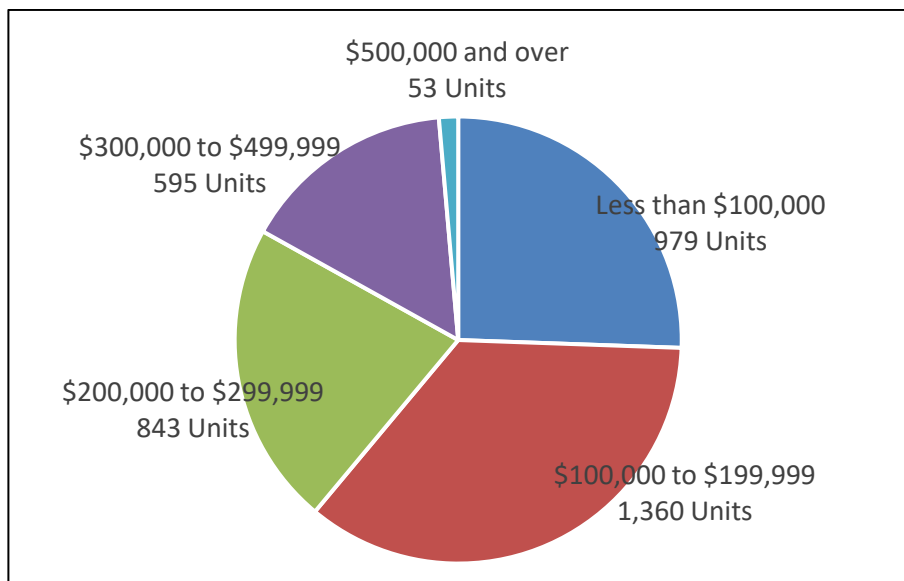
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

	2013-2017 American Community Survey		
	Township	County	PA
Median value owner-occupied units	\$165,000	\$144,900	\$170,500
Median rent renter-occupied units	\$771	\$674	\$885
Cost-burdened owner households	16.9%	17.6%	22.5%
Cost-burdened renter households	47.2%	42.7%	49.0%

Further, the township has a well-balanced distribution of housing values available to owners at a variety of income levels.

Figure 7 Owned Housing by Value (2013-2017 ACS)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



The comprehensive plan consultant conducted a general field view of housing conditions in Rostraver Township. Conditions appear mostly sound and the township lacks problematic concentrations of blight.

As noted in the 2008 comprehensive plan, there are several villages – Collinsburg, Lynnwood, Pricedale, Van Meter, and Webster – where age of housing, a standard of development from a previous era, and lack of reinvestment are a concern. The consultant’s observations are that the concern remains legitimate. Webster exhibits the most significant concentration of blight. Pricedale is the source of the greatest number of blight complaints to the township code officer. Other villages appear

Rostraver Township scores 178 in Hometown Locator’s housing affordability index. (The base index value is 100. Values over 100 indicate greater affordability. Values under 100 indicate less affordability.) For comparison, Westmoreland County’s affordability index is 163; the state’s is 131.

www.hometownlocator.com

stable (for now). Conditions appear mostly fair to good and there are few encroachments of incompatible uses that spawn blight. Surprisingly few “for sale” signs were observed, indicating that homes meet a market need and are in demand.

There are two other areas of the township – Fellsburg and the Sweeney Plan – where housing is at or approaching 50 years of age. Many streets in these areas were built to a minimal spec – narrow and without curbs or sidewalks. These areas appear sound and stable, without encroachments of incompatible uses, and still offer sound value in a middle-income residential market.

The pace of new housing and other development in the township has slowed in the last decade.

Figure 8 30-Year Trend in Township Building Permits

Source: Rostraver Township

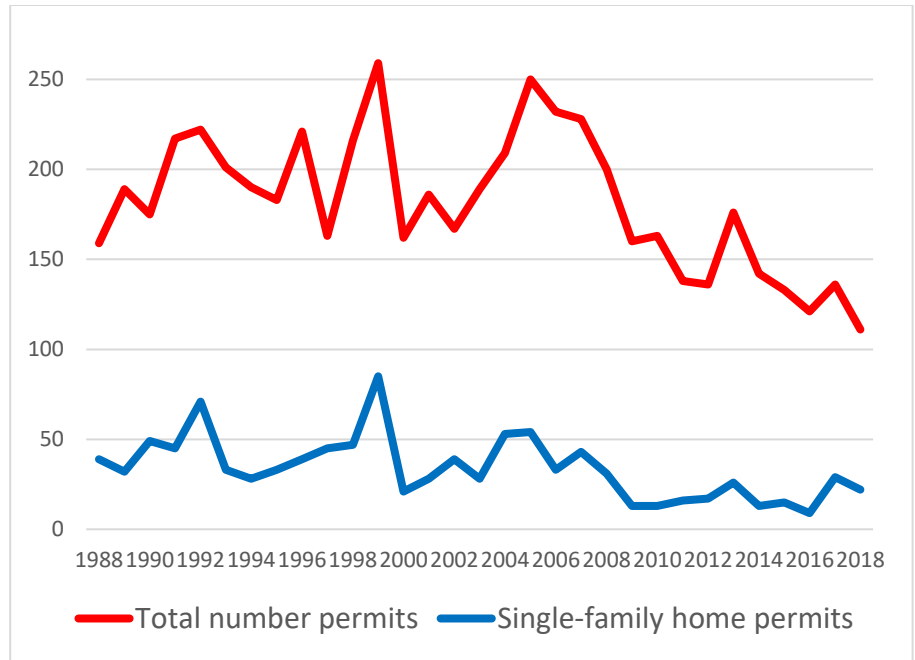


Table 7 Numbers of Township Building Permits

Source: Rostraver Township

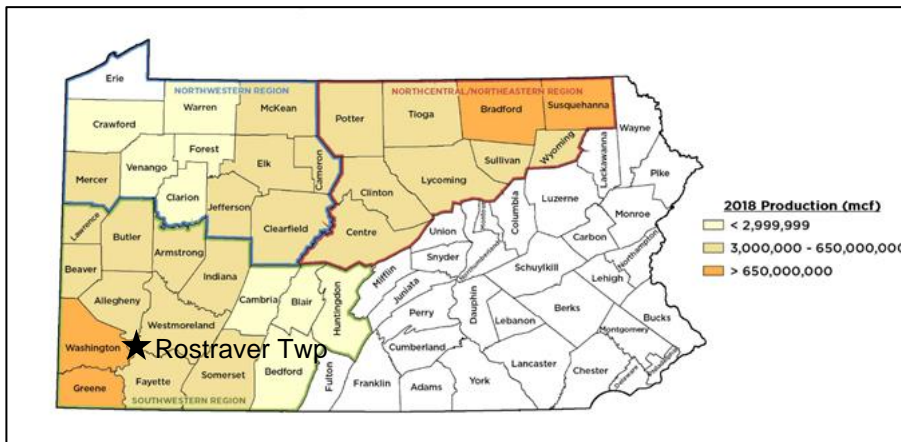
Decade	Total number permits	Single-family home permits	% Single-family homes	Condo permits # bldgs	Condo permits # units
1990s	2,047	475	23.2%	17	68
2000s	1,983	343	17.3%	31	100
2010s	1,256	160	12.7%	5	16

ROSTRAVER TOWNSHIP IS IN A REGION OF ACTIVE NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION

Natural gas production in Pennsylvania continues to rise and Rostraver Township is in a region of active production.

Figure 9 Pennsylvania Shale Gas Production 2018

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection



PA Natural Gas Production
(trillion cubic feet Tcf)

- 2018 – 6.12 Tcf
- 2017 – 5.36 Tcf
- 2016 – 5.10 Tcf
- 2015 – 4.60 Tcf
- 2014 – 4.02 Tcf
- 2013 – 3.10 Tcf
- 2012 – 2.04 Tcf
- 2011 – 1.06 Tcf

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection

As of 2018 Pennsylvania is the 2nd largest natural gas producer in the United States. Production was 6.12 trillion cu.ft., up from 1.06 Tcf in 2011. Pennsylvania has a staggering 125Tcf of proven natural gas reserves.

Rising production has caused lower gas prices, but, according to EQT CEO Toby Rice, “The cure for low gas prices is low gas prices.” Low prices drive push for new markets via new pipeline development and downstream industries. As an example, natural gas has replaced coal as PA’s main source of electric power. Low prices are also causing changes in extraction. Producers are “wringing” gas from existing unconventional wells by “refracking”, co-locating, longer laterals, and better technology.

Bottom line: Production keeps rising. Though there is less current interest in new well development, new wells keep coming online in the region.

The following map and table show active unconventional shale gas wells in Rostraver Township and surrounding areas. There are three wells in Rostraver Township, a low number compared to nearby townships. There are two current inquiries for new wells in the township.

Rostraver Township has an ordinance regulating natural gas activity, enacted as an amendment to the zoning ordinance in 2011. It was prepared by township staff in consultation with natural gas industry representatives. The ordinance is extensive and thorough in regulating natural gas activity.

“It is clear that a great deal of thought was put into the ordinance and it does provide a lot of protections for the municipality and its residents.”

Review of Rostraver Township’s natural gas ordinance by Corey Young, Director, Center for Energy Policy and Management at Washington & Jefferson College

Figure 10 Location of Unconventional Shale Gas Wells 2019

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection

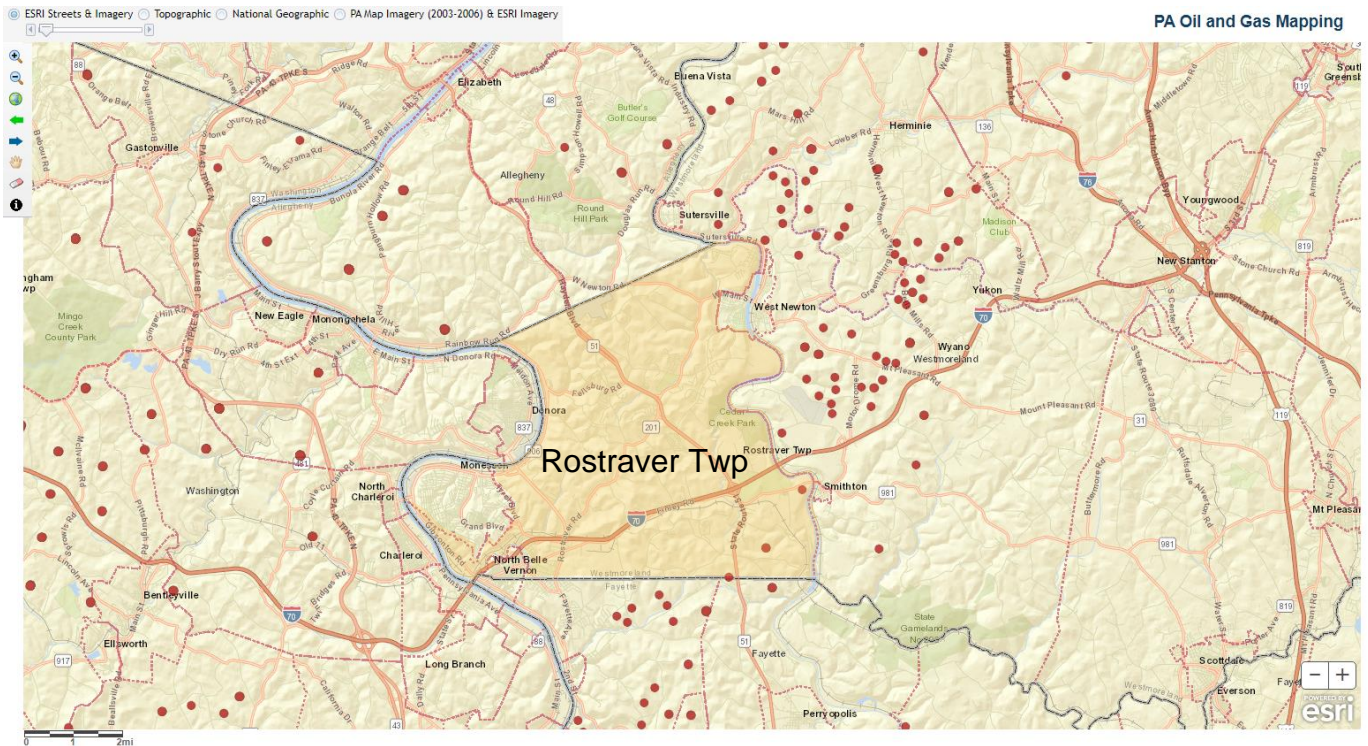


Table 8 Number of Unconventional Shale Gas Wells

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection

Municipality	County	Spud wells 2017
Rostraver	Township Westmoreland	3
North Belle Vernon	Borough Westmoreland	0
South Huntingdon	Township Westmoreland	24
Smithton	Borough Westmoreland	0
Monessen	City Westmoreland	0
Sewickley	Township Westmoreland	28
West Newton	Borough Westmoreland	0
Perry	Township Fayette	5
Washington	Township Fayette	11
Belle Vernon	Borough Fayette	0
Forward	Township Allegheny	49
Elizabeth	Township Allegheny	0
Carroll	Township Washington	46
Donora	Borough Washington	0
Fallowfield	Township Washington	17
North Charleroi	Borough Washington	0
Charleroi	Borough Washington	0
Speers	Borough Washington	0

SUMMARY OF ISSUES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Aging population

Township population is comparatively old and aging. An aging population will have particular needs for housing and services to accommodate both independent living and long-term care. An aging population also has unique recreation interests the township can consider for park facilities and recreation programming.

Projected population decrease

With an aging population and continuation of current trends, township population is projected to decrease. The decrease will be small, but it indicates a reversal of trends the township may wish to address. With reduced birth rates, population growth will be dependent on net in-migration (more people moving into the township than out).

Attraction factors

Factors that make Rostraver Township attractive to existing and potential residents are affordability and quality of housing and neighborhoods, public safety, parks and recreation, economic development opportunities, and high public service to low tax ratio.

Changing commercial development

Since the last comprehensive plan update, following the axiom that “retail follows rooftops,” further commercial development occurred and contributed to tax base diversity. However, the retail industry is changing dramatically, including e-shopping, e-marketing, and experiential retail. Traditional retail stores are decreasing and/or changing. The viability of shopping areas in the township could see significant change.

Positive economic position

There is a suitable balance of number of jobs available in the township and number of jobs available elsewhere in the region that has contributed to the township having higher than average incomes. If there is a slight imbalance, it is that jobs in the township are more in retail and food and accommodation services, and jobs held by township residents in other places are more in health care and manufacturing.

Housing affordability

By most measures, housing in Rostraver Township is affordable. The township has a well-balanced distribution of housing values available to owners at a variety of income levels.

Aging housing areas

Concerns raised by the 2008 comprehensive plan for villages with older housing – Collinsburg, Lynnwood, Pricedale, Van Meter, and Webster –

Issues important to Rostraver Township residents that responded to the 2017 survey for the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan included:

- *Affordability and quality of housing*
- *Quality of neighborhoods*
- *Quality of life overall*
- *Public safety*
- *Parks and rec*
- *Economic development and growth*

remain legitimate. Revitalization measures are warranted where there is blight. Preservation measures are warranted where conditions are stable. Two other housing areas – Fellsburg and the Sweeney Plan – are approaching an age where preservation measures could be considered.

Continued attention to planning and implementation

Regular attention by the township and its agencies and staff to planning and implementation has contributed to growth, development, and positive conditions in the township. Activities have included keeping ordinances up to date, providing professional reviews and assistance for development, and attending to capital improvements in parks, roads, and sewers.

Natural gas activity continues to grow

Low gas prices have lessened interest in new wells and driven gas companies to “re-frack” existing wells, but regional gas production keeps increasing and new wells keep coming online. Rostraver Township is well-positioned with natural gas regulations in its zoning ordinance to accommodate new wells and protect township residents.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2008 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Rostraver Township is serious about planning. The township invests money and effort into planning in order to springboard improvements to the community, not to produce a book to sit on the shelf.

After completing the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, Rostraver Township set out to implement it. The table below shows which recommendations of the 2008 Plan have been implemented, which are still being reviewed and pending action, and which have not been implemented. With the 2020 Plan Update, the township considered if the recommendations pending or not implemented still have merit, or if conditions have changed and the township should move in different directions.

Growth Plan Action Items

<u>Implemented</u>	<u>Pending</u>	<u>Not Implemented</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise recreation land and fees-in-lieu standards – SALDO (subdivision and land development ordinance) amendment enacted 2008 • Require traffic impact studies – SALDO amendment enacted 2008 • Enhance buffer and screening standards – zoning amendment enacted 2010 • Create new MU Mixed Use District – zoning amendment enacted 2009 • Consider public investments to support growth areas – Township has ongoing efforts to expand and improve sewer and water facilities • Examine land available and zoning options for multi-family housing – area rezoned to R-3 Multi-Family on W. McClain Road 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise PRD (Planned Residential Development) standards – zoning amendment prepared, not enacted • Establish access management standards – SALDO amendment prepared, not enacted • Create new Town Center Overlay District – zoning amendment prepared and ready for future use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider additional zoned land and zoning options for multi-family housing, particularly in view of an aging population

Revitalization Plan Action Items

Implemented

- Create new V-1 Village District – zoning amendment enacted 2019
- Pursue funding for public improvements in older villages – Township is addressing flooding in Elks Place – Township partnered with county land bank to acquire and demolish dilapidated structures

Pending

- Revise standards for non-conforming dwellings and lots – some standards included in V-1 Village District zoning amendment – additional zoning amendment prepared, not enacted

Not Implemented

- Pursue funding for further public improvements and housing rehab in older villages

Conservation Plan Action Items

Implemented

- Ensure zoning in agricultural areas includes small business activities – agri-tourism zoning amendment enacted 2017

Pending

- Create conservation development standards for A-1 Agricultural District – zoning amendment prepared, not enacted

Not Implemented

- Establish an environmental advisory council
- Find funding mechanisms for voluntary conservation easements

Miscellaneous Action Items

Implemented

- Revised definitions, parking standards, lighting standards, and business sign regulations – zoning amendments enacted 2010 and 2018
- Created new zoning map with property lines 2019
- Obtained \$202,000 grant from PA DCNR for renovation and development of DiVirgilio Sports Complex 2019
- Obtained \$327,000 grant from PA DEP to implement MS4 stormwater improvements in Cedar Creek watershed 2019

Pending

Not Implemented

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



The first step in dealing with trends and changes since the 2008 Comprehensive Plan is setting updated goals and objectives. Goals and objectives, simply put, define what is important to Rostraver Township.

Municipal governments have limited resources and must make choices. Their choices should address the matters which are most important to the community and provide the greatest positive impact and results for the community. Goals and objectives articulate those choices and define the most important matters for which use of the township's limited resources would have the most beneficial impact.

Goals and objectives have two parts. First, there are updated goals from the 2008 Plan and discussion of the objectives that remain relevant or should be modified. Second, there are new 2020 goals and objectives suggested by the community trends and changes since 2008. Two maps are included. The first shows the land use plan for the whole of the township. The second shows priority areas and land use objectives associated with each.

UPDATED 2008 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update had three major goals – GROWTH, REVITALIZATION, AND CONSERVATION. These goals are still relevant for Rostraver Township.

GROWTH – It is important for the township to sustain its well-being to attract people and businesses to call Rostraver home.

REVITALIZATION – Older neighborhoods are integral to the variety and affordability of residential opportunities in the township and should be targets for upkeep.

CONSERVATION – In pursuit of growth, the township should be mindful to conserve the unique character of the landscape and development which is at the heart of why people and businesses choose to call Rostraver home.

Below are updated 2008 objectives for each of the three goals.

Growth objectives

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT is still a viable objective for the area around the township building. TND means:

- A more closely knit neighborhood
- Walkability
- Connection to the township park and Cedar Creek Park
- Suitable for accommodating multi-family and senior housing

TND at this target location will provide a living option desired by senior population which is growing in the township and young adults, a next generation of residents, which the township wants to attract.

A town center with commercial development, proposed in the 2008 Plan, is no longer envisioned as part of the TND.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREAS remain important to the township. They provide a residential option in demand by middle-age adults with families, a long-time core segment of Rostraver's population, at locations best suited to accommodate the development. Suburban residential growth areas will promote:

- Quality single-family homes
- Targeted where public water/sewer is available
- Near commercial and other services
- Protected from conflicting development

Goals from the 2008 Plan

GROWTH
Planning for growth is about managing change.

REVITALIZATION
Planning for growth includes revitalizing older neighborhoods.

CONSERVATION
Natural and historic resources are essential to the township's unique character.

SMART GROWTH BUSINESS AREA is still the best objective for Route 51. The corridor has developed ideally for the township, and “smart growth” promotes management of development on PA 51 so that it continues to:

- Provide incremental growth of business opportunities
- Without urbanization and traffic congestion that alters “township character”

It is tempting to promote full build-out of businesses along Route 51. The township must be mindful of the potential for too much development to change the more rural character and lack of congestion that is a primary reason why people choose to locate in Rostraver Township.

Revitalization objectives

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION AREAS should still include the older housing areas of Van Meter, Webster, Collinsburg, Lynnwood, and Pricedale. The township should give priority attention to these areas:

- Periodic community outreach meetings to learn needs
- Upkeep of parks and streets
- Applications for funding for neighborhood and housing improvements.

Further, it is time to add Fellsburg and the Sweeney Plan, where housing is at or approaching 50 years of age, as similar targets for revitalization.

Prospects for the **SPECIAL PURPOSE DEVELOPMENT AREA** by the DeiCas Highway and Monessen fringe haven’t changed since 2008. The township should continue to monitor for special development opportunities while protecting existing homes from undue conflicts.

Conservation objectives

An **AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AREA** is still a viable objective. Farms provide economic opportunity. Open and green space is a township asset. Yet current zoning leaves preservation to chance and permits the same opportunity for subdividing as in suburban growth areas. The township should strongly consider:

- Conservation development zoning
- Other policy options to secure agriculture as preferred development

The land use plan map identifies a target area where agriculture is most active in the township and preservation is most needed, but the township should support agriculture as a productive part of the community and the economy throughout the township.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION is still a viable objective in areas between the farmland preservation core and suburban growth to keep the healthy mix of residential, farm, and forest sought in the 2008 Plan.



Figure 11 Future Land Use Map

Source: Rostraver Township and Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development

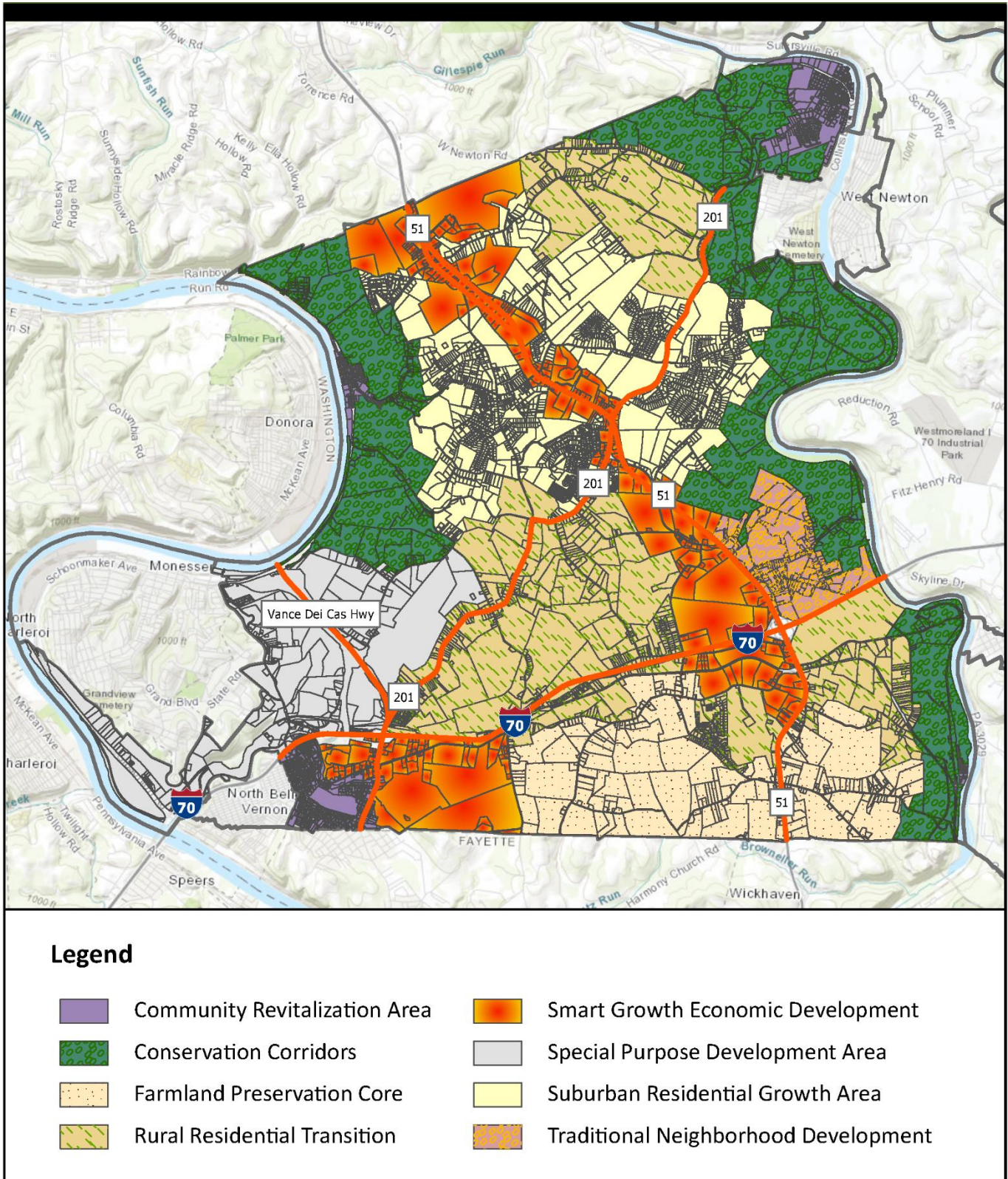
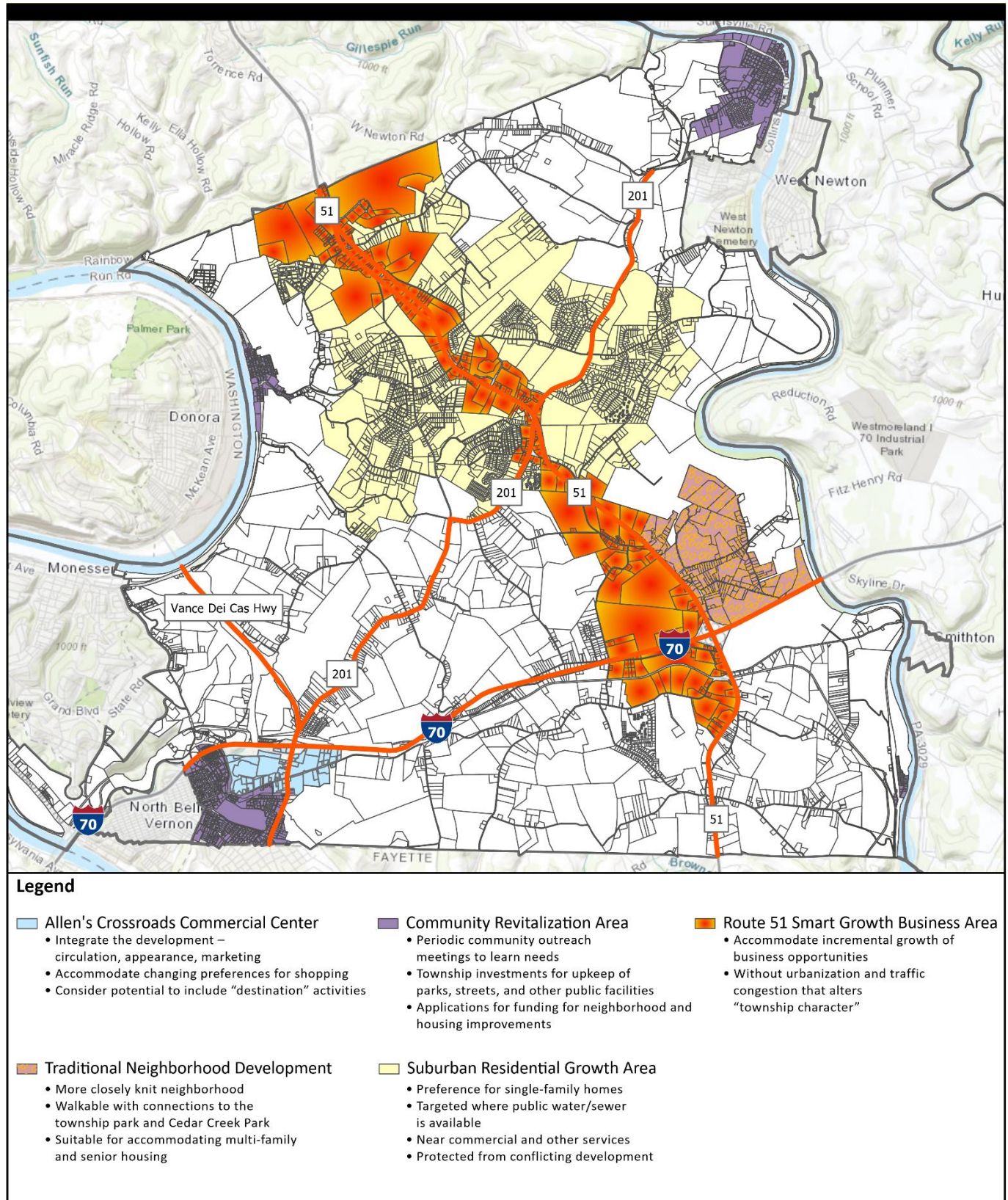


Figure 12 Priority Land Use Objectives Map

Source: Rostraver Township and Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development



NEW 2020 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update includes three new goals that are top priorities of the township to address community trends and changes since the 2008 Plan.

Counteract potential for a decline in population

Keeping and attracting population (residents) is an important goal. Residents provide customer base for township businesses. They provide employees for local businesses and industries. A stable population ensures homes remain occupied and neighborhoods remain socially and economically healthy.

Data and surveys say people choose to live in Rostraver Township because of the following core assets:

- Affordability and quality of homes
- “Township character” and lifestyle
- Safety
- Parks and recreation
- Economic opportunities within reach

THE TOWNSHIP SHOULD ACT WITHIN ITS CAPACITY TO PROVIDE AND ENHANCE THESE ASSETS. Conventional wisdom says jobs are the key to attracting population. Yet in Rostraver nine of ten employed residents work outside the township. People live in Rostraver for additional reasons, and these should get the township’s priority attention.

Focus should be directed to three segments of the population:

- **KEEP THE TOWNSHIP’S AGING RESIDENTS.** Help residents age in place. Provide quality of life assets, like recreation, geared to seniors. Provide more options for “your next home in Rostraver Township” – downsized patio homes and townhouses, independent living retirement communities, and assisted living and care facilities.
- **INVEST IN ASSETS IMPORTANT TO A CORE SEGMENT OF CURRENT RESIDENTS, MIDDLE-AGE ADULTS WITH FAMILIES.** The core assets described above are a priority for this population segment.
- **ADDRESS MARKET FACTORS IMPORTANT TO A NEW GENERATION OF RESIDENTS.** Young adults – Millennials and Generation Z – have different needs and interests than their parents. They have greater need for affordable housing via multi-family and rentals. When they look to buy, they will want homes turned over from aging residents to be in sound condition. They will want to work more from home and seek entrepreneurial opportunities via the “gig economy” and “share economy.”

Goals for the 2020 Plan Update

POPULATION
Counteract potential for a decline in population.

INFRASTRUCTURE
Provide public services and facilities integral to keep and attract residents and businesses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Strategically promote economic opportunities.

Provide public services and infrastructure integral to keep and attract residents and businesses

INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BEEN AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE A TOWNSHIP PRIORITY. Rostraver Township provides visible and core facilities and services that are important to the success of neighborhoods and businesses:

- Well-kept streets
- Parks and recreation
- Prevention of stormwater and flooding damage
- Police protection

Neglect by the township will breed neglect by property owners. Attention and care by the township will breed attention and care by property owners.

Strategically promote economic opportunities

ALLEN’S CROSSROADS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR ATTENTION FROM THE TOWNSHIP. Located at the interchange of I-70 and PA 201, It is the commercial center for the Mid Mon Valley. It is facing imminent weaknesses and threats. Some properties are aging to the point of concern. Internal circulation – going from business to business – is poor. Businesses are threatened by the changing nature of shopping.

The township should convene the county and business and property owners to discuss:

- Integrating the development – improving internal circulation, creating a more uniform physical appearance, and doing coordinated marketing – so that it functions more like a singular destination
- Accommodating changing preferences for shopping
- Potential to include “destination” activities

This is a large and complex objective. It is hard to foretell what will be the most successful strategies. Nonetheless, a first couple steps should be taken to convene the parties and start discussion about coordinated actions.



THE TOWNSHIP SHOULD WORK WITH THE COUNTY TO CREATE A TARGETED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN. Objectives should be:

- Development that yields higher-pay jobs (to counteract the current imbalance in which the largest proportion of jobs in the township are in lower-pay retail and food/accommodation service sectors)
- Target locations most marketable for desired development and most compatible with “township character”
- Using the township’s underutilized planned business park zoning designation

Westmoreland County Development Council and Planning and Development Department are the foremost economic development agencies in the county. Rostraver Township should promote its objectives for job creation and development to the county and seek the county’s assistance in a targeted economic development strategy.

THE TOWNSHIP SHOULD CONTINUE ITS STREAMLINED AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS. Rostraver Township has a professional planning agency (department), consisting of the township planner, zoning officer, and engineer. They should continue their work as a team effectively reviewing development proposals, helping property owners and developers successfully comply with township regulations, and ensuring timely action on permits.



Rostraver Township Planning Agency: (from left) Frank Monack, zoning officer; Carl DeiCas, engineer; and Tamira Spedaliere, planner

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS



This section of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update discusses strategies Rostraver Township can use and actions it can take to address goals and objectives in the previous section. The township has powers granted to it as a Pennsylvania municipal government. Those include administering regulations to promote the public health, safety, and welfare and to manage land use and development. Powers also include raising and spending public funds, again to promote public health, safety, and welfare, for public facilities and services like roads, water, sewer, recreation, and police. Township powers and resources are limited. There are matters like highways and economic development in which higher levels of government or the private sector, not the township, have power and resources. In such matters the township can still be active. It can agitate and be vocal about its interests. It can seek funding and other outside assistance. And it can be a convener, bringing together various parties to discuss solutions.

This section discusses how the township can best use its powers and limited financial resources to address matters important to the township and its citizens.

ZONING STRATEGIES

Zoning ordinances are a principal means by which municipalities regulate land use and development. Zoning is too commonly perceived as a barrier to development and private rights. When done right, zoning is a positive force. It permits development desired by the community, articulates standards for development to contribute to community character, and aids property owners' rights to derive value and enjoyment from their properties.

Barriers to desired development

Rostraver Township should ensure its zoning ordinance does not unnecessarily present barriers for development goals and objectives, such as housing to accommodate needs of seniors and young adults, or economic development opportunities.

Public input in review of development

Public input in zoning occurs principally in the preparation of the ordinance and its regulations. For most development permitted by right, an application that complies with zoning regs is considered to meet the public interest as expressed in the regs without further public input. Some types of development may have greater impacts not clearly consistent with public interest. These may be designated in the zoning ordinance as conditional uses or special exception uses, and be subject to additional public input at hearings and by additional reviews of township boards.

Surveys indicate most developers want to provide a quality development. Most do not consider local development standards and criteria to be obstacles. According to developers, the two most significant obstacles are:

- Time it takes to gain approval.
- Unpredictability of regulations, review and approval processes (particularly where hearings and public input are involved), and multiple parties involved in review and approval.

Rostraver's zoning ordinance permits most forms of multifamily housing and some economic development uses only as a conditional use or special exception use. Both add time and unpredictability to the development process. Both require review and approval by more than the zoning officer – the planning agency and board of commissioners for a conditional use, the zoning hearing board for a special exception. Both require a hearing open to the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Change certain conditional uses and special exception uses, which would accomplish goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, to uses by right not needing additional review and hearings. Use the land development review process to involve the township planning agency and commissioners in negotiating quality of development enhancements and setting any needed conditions.
2. If the township desires to retain the additional level of zoning approval, change certain special exception uses, which would accomplish Plan goals and objectives, to conditional uses. That way, the board of commissioners, which is closely aligned with development policies, not the zoning hearing board, has decision-making and condition-setting authority.

The housing and economic development sections that follow will have recommendations for specific conditional uses or special exception uses to change.

Surveys indicate barriers to development also include vague, unclear, and pointless regulations and complex development review processes. Rostraver’s zoning ordinance for the most part provides sound, value-adding regulations. Also, the township provides a streamlined and helpful development review process via its “planning agency”.

Zoning for multifamily, rental, and senior housing

The Comprehensive Plan Update has a goal to sustain population in the township and objectives to provide more retirement home options for seniors and more affordable multifamily and rental housing to attract young adults. By the latest data, only 7% of the township’s housing is multifamily and 14% rentals.

All zoning districts in the township ordinance permit multifamily housing of some kind:

- VR – duplex; conversion apartment by conditional use
- R-1 – PRD (planned residential development), which can include townhouses and apartment buildings, by conditional use
- R-2 – duplex; PRD by conditional use; multifamily condominium by special exception
- R-3 – same as R-2; plus multifamily rental by special exception
- MU – condominium and multifamily by conditional use

However, any multifamily housing greater than a duplex must have conditional use or special exception approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Remove the conditional use requirement for a PRD. The zoning ordinance and state law (Municipalities Planning Code) subject a PRD to a separate review process requiring a hearing and approval by the governing body. Conditional uses also require a hearing and approval by the governing body which would be redundant and could be interpreted as sequential adding time to the process. Also, the township should consider other changes to its PRD regulations, like increasing density (more information on next page), permitting nonresidential uses, and making PRD more effective at clustering development and providing open spaces which are important to the character of the township.
2. In R-2, change multifamily condominium from a special exception to a conditional use. It will promote more consistency and predictability of review if the zoning approval and subdivision and land development ordinance approval are both done by the board of commissioners.
3. In R-3, make all multifamily uses by right not needing additional conditional use or special exception approval. The intent of the

Planned residential development (PRD)

PRDs may be permitted in zoning to allow master-planned development of larger tracts of land for housing and a mix of nonresidential uses. PRDs may be permitted by different regulations allowing more design flexibility and creativity than conventional zoning and subdivision regulations.

district is to promote multifamily housing. Multifamily housing fitting the definition of a land development would still be subject to land development application and review under the township's subdivision and land development ordinance.

In addition to permitting or not permitting multifamily housing, the zoning ordinance also regulates density. Maximum densities for multifamily housing are low:

- Maximum 6 units/gross acre for multifamily housing by special exception
- Maximum 4 units/gross acre for PRD

Below are visualizations that show what higher densities of 10 and 15 units/gross acre would look like.

Figure 13 Visualization of multifamily housing 10 units/gross acre

Source: Google Map



Figure 14 Visualization of multifamily housing 15 units/gross acre

Source: The Urbanist



RECOMMENDATION: The township should consider increasing the density for multifamily housing particularly for the R-3 zoning district. An increase to 10 units/gross acre would be a reasonable option to allow more multifamily housing in carefully-selected locations without negatively impacting “township character.”

The zoning ordinance is not overly restrictive of types of housing, and is open to housing types sought by seniors capable of independent living and looking for patio homes, townhouses, and other types with less space and yard care. The ordinance also accommodates acute care facilities (nursing homes) under the use category “group residential facility”.

However, the ordinance could better accommodate other alternative senior living options that integrate housing with support services and facilities:

- Independent living, retirement communities, active living communities – Developments with separate housing units and integrated dining (restaurants in addition to a traditional dining hall), socializing, and recreation. Some are age-restricted. Some promote particular interests like golf or art.
- Assisted living – Developments with independent housing plus facilities and 24/7 staff providing personal and health care.
- Continuing care retirement community (CCRC) – A term being used for developments that offer a combination of independent living, assisted living, and acute care facilities.

Another housing alternative the zoning ordinance should be updated to accommodate is ECHO housing – Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity. ECHO cottages are small, manufactured residences that are temporarily placed in the side or rear yard of a host home. Units are typically equipped for care of an elderly relative. When living requirements of the resident change, the cottage can be moved to the property of another host family.

In addition to updating zoning for above options, it will be worthwhile to review against best practices and update the special exception criteria for group residential facilities.



Examples of continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), aerial and street views. Source: Google Maps

Traditional neighborhood development

Municipalities may use zoning to promote traditional neighborhood development (TND). A zoning ordinance may create a separate zoning district exclusively for TND. Or the ordinance may designate TND as a use permitted, along with other uses, in any zoning district. TND zoning may be more creative than conventional zoning, specifying a mix of uses, design of buildings, streets, and trails, and incorporation of parks and natural areas. TND provisions may even include a manual of written and graphic design guidelines.

Traditional neighborhood development

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan and this 2020 Update both include an objective for traditional neighborhood development (TND) in the vicinity of the township building, township park, and Cedar Creek Park. TND uses small-town planning principles to promote close-knit, front-porch, walkable neighborhoods. TND is a style of development in demand by aging Baby Boomers and young adults, two population segments the township should attract to keep and grow population. TND could accommodate needed senior housing options, multifamily housing, and rentals in a style consistent with Rostraver's rural/suburban character.

RECOMMENDATION: The township should evaluate use of TND zoning options in the TND area targeted on the future land use map. It should be noted that several, though a minority, of attendees at the public meeting held for the Comprehensive Plan disagreed with establishment of TND. In evaluating TND, the township should seek further public input and incorporate elements to address public concerns.

Zoning for economic development

For the most part Rostraver Township's zoning ordinance adequately accommodates economic development opportunities. Some form of business or industrial development is permitted in several districts – A-1, B-1, B-2, I-1, I-2, I-3, MU, and VR. The types of business or industrial uses permitted are, for the most part, suitable for the districts and compatible with other permitted uses in the districts. If the zoning ordinance is short in any way accommodating economic development, it is that some economic development uses are permitted only as conditional uses or special exceptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consider changing certain uses in the B-2 Retail Business District from conditional uses or special exception uses to uses by right. The B-2 district is the township's main, general business zoning district, covering much of the Route 51 corridor and Allen's Crossroads. It makes sense that uses, unless significant in potential impact, should be permitted by right without need for additional hearing and approval. Examples include day care, pet grooming, commercial parking, micro-breweries, and micro-distilleries. The latter two, particularly, deserve consideration for change to uses by right. They are popular with a younger demographic the township should seek to attract, and they are similar in impacts of hours, crowds, and noise to general eating and drinking establishments that are permitted by right. The township took a favorable step in 2020 amending the ordinance to change shopping center from a special exception use to a use by right. More uses can be similarly changed.

2. Consider changing certain uses in the I-1 Light Industry District to uses by right. I-1 is a district in which industrial uses are preferred, but several industrial uses are permitted only as special exception uses – light manufacturing, warehouse, transportation terminal, and contractor yard. Several non-industrial commercial uses are permitted as uses by right – eating/drinking, retail, bank, and office. It is easier for these non-industrial uses to locate and take up space in the district than desired industrial uses.

Rostraver’s zoning ordinance includes a zoning district called MU Mixed Use. It was amended into the zoning ordinance in 2009 to implement a recommendation in the 2008 Plan to promote more mixed-use development opportunities. Since 2009, the MU district has been applied only to one small property. The MU district, and a planned business park designation that is a principal feature of the district, can be a strategic tool for implementing this Plan’s objective for targeted economic development.

RECOMMENDATION: As the township works with Westmoreland County to develop a targeted economic development action plan, it should consider how the MU district can be effectively used to implement the action plan. The planned business park designation could be integral to permit business and industrial development most beneficial for creating higher-pay jobs in an upbeat business environment that is compatible with “township character.”

The MU district regulations should be revisited. One change in particular is likely needed. Several industrial uses – assembly, light manufacturing, warehouse/wholesale – are permitted as uses by right anywhere in the district without having to be located in a planned business park. Uses of such scale and impact should be steered to a planned business park.

Another matter deserving Rostraver’s attention is the changing economy. With growing availability of broadband, the new axiom is, “People can and do work anywhere.”

RECOMMENDATION: To make the township more attractive to young adults and capture a growing economy, the township should update its zoning ordinance for at-home workers, free-agent workers, the share economy, and other entrepreneurial opportunities. The zoning ordinance currently permits no impact home-based businesses – those run from home by the occupant only with no visible indications of the business – as a use by right in every residential zoning district. The ordinance permits home occupations – which allow one non-family employee, use of an accessory building, customer and client traffic, and additional parking spaces – as a special exception use in A-1, VR, R-1, and R-2. Home occupation requirements are worth revisiting: 1) to consider if they can be permitted as a use by right in any district; and 2) to consider if regulation changes would aid accommodating the growing number of home entrepreneurs and free-agent workers. Also, the township should consider accommodating uses like co-working spaces and live-work housing units.

Entrepreneur assistance

The changing economy has new terms like gig or free-agent economy, share economy, and live-work, co-work, and maker spaces. These are new forms of entrepreneurship – creating and running new, typically small, businesses – being sought by young adults. Rostraver Township can play a part attracting entrepreneurs. It can seek to partner with institutions that assist entrepreneurs to connect township residents with available help.

California University of Pennsylvania Center for Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship.

St. Vincent College Small Business Development Center

Westmoreland County Development Council

Westmoreland County SCORE Chapter

Route 51 Smart Growth Business Area

What is smart growth?

Smart growth encourages development that is compatible with and enhances, rather than undermines, the distinctive and attractive character of a community, and that occurs without undue cost to a community.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan and again the 2020 Plan Update set an objective for “smart growth” in the Route 51 corridor. Route 51 has provided ample opportunities for development of businesses and it has remained largely open, nonurbanized, and uncongested. As the primary gateway to Rostraver Township, Route 51 sets the tone for character of the community overall. Too much development could overwhelm and unfavorably change the corridor. As noted in the 2008 Plan, a smart growth objective is to avoid traffic congestion and the worst features of sprawl, and buffer Route 51 development from other areas.

RECOMMEDATIONS:

1. The 2008 Plan recommended two smart growth zoning strategies. One, improved buffer and landscaping requirements, particularly for larger developments, was implemented by amendment of the zoning ordinance. The other, access management regulations, was not implemented. A draft ordinance was prepared for consideration. *It is time to again consider enacting access management* before additional development brings proliferation of business driveways and related congestions and hazards that are irreversible.
2. *The township should be judicious about additional rezonings for business development in the corridor.* Current B-2 zoning is ample to meet demand for the foreseeable future. Additional rezonings could permit development at scales too large for the character of the corridor or in amounts too much for the long-term.
3. *The township should use the land development review process to encourage new development to incorporate design enhancements consistent with the open, nonurbanized, and uncongested character of the corridor.*

RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

It has already been emphasized that parks and recreation are a key asset for keeping current residents and attracting new ones. The township provides high-quality and well-maintained facilities at its community park, the John DiVirgilio Sports Complex. The township also provides smaller parks or playgrounds at various neighborhood locations. Rostraver is also home to two regional recreation facilities. Westmoreland County’s Cedar Creek Park has 479 acres of picnic, trail, playground, and river access facilities. The Great Allegheny Passage destination trail passes through Rostraver on its way from Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD.



It is important for the township to be aware of current public interests in recreation. The National Recreation and Park Association conducted surveys in 2019. Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in 2020 completed a five-year outdoor recreation plan. Findings of both are summarized below.

Figure 15 Americans' top outdoor recreation activities

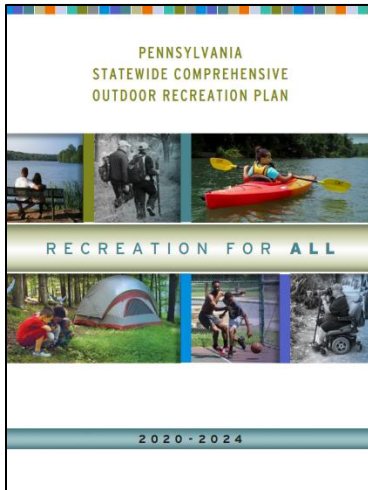
Source: 2019 survey, National Recreation and Park Association

Gathering with family & friends at the park	58%
Going to the pool	48%
Walking or hiking on a local trail	45%
Attending community social events	38%
Attending performing arts events	32%
Camping	30%
Playing in team sports/ league	12%
Playing racquet sports	11%
Running/ cycling races	10%

Top 2019 trends according to the National Park and Recreation Association:

- Recycling, a popular program in public parks, is declining.
- Opioid abuse in parks is forcing changes in programs, maintenance, and public safety.
- Parks are using more technology: beacon counters, geo-fencing, and drones.
- Funding investment in park infrastructure is predicted to rise.
- Dog parks are one of the fastest growing types of parks in the country.

- Libraries, health services, social services, afterschool care, and other community services are being offered in partnership with public parks.
- Public park facilities are facing competition with new and growing indoor facilities like trampoline centers, climbing facilities, and multi-sports bubbles.



Select findings and priorities from the 2020-2024 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan:

- Walking, running, and hiking are the most popular activities of surveyed citizens. More than three-quarters identified community or regional trail systems as their highest priority for facility investment.
- Maintenance of and funding for existing park and recreation facilities continues to be a challenge and a priority.
- Pennsylvanians place a high value on conserving natural, cultural, and historic resources that are integral to outdoor recreation.
- Outdoor recreation is a key to improve people’s health, particularly walking and biking.
- A goal is to ensure park and recreation opportunities are available to all people.
- Technology and mobile connectivity are important to help people find, enjoy, and benefit from recreation.

Studies say outdoor recreation is important in the current health crisis, important to maintain a healthy weight, prevent and manage heart disease, high blood pressure, and type II diabetes, and improve emotional and mental well-being. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest the following activities for a healthy lifestyle, depending on age:

- Walking, biking, field and court sports (baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, tennis, flag football), water sports (swimming, kayaking), jogging, martial arts, dancing, and muscle-building activities (climbing on playground equipment, weight training)

Programs are important to encourage people to become active in outdoor recreation and experience the health benefits. Local parks can partner with nonprofit groups and health care providers to offer health-related rec programs. An example is “Centred Outdoors” and “Precription PARx” in Centre County, PA. A local nonprofit leads a program of walks and hikes at nearby natural and historic sites. Participating doctors from a local health care provider “prescribe” Centred Outdoors walks and hikes to their patients as part of a treatment plan.

Recreation for an aging population

In addition to the above findings, recreation experts from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and National Recreation and Park Association identified unique recreation needs for the growing senior population:

- Senior centers. Today’s senior centers should be more than a place to get meals in church basement. They should provide a community focal point for senior activities and socializing. New and updated centers are providing a café setting for socializing.
- Recreation programs designed for seniors. It is important to provide programs in addition to facilities. Top program areas are:
 - Lifelong learning, with favored topics being hobbies, 2nd careers, technology, travel, and volunteering.
 - Fitness/wellness, including offerings like hospital-corporate wellness programs, physical therapy clinics, Tai Chi (effective at reducing seniors’ risk of falls), and walking groups.
- Loop trails and paths up to 3 miles in community parks. (Note: Seniors bird-watch and wildlife-watch more than any other age group.)

Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging has senior centers near Rostraver Township in Monessen and West Newton. The agency wants to expand senior health and wellness programs. The agency receives federal funds for such programs.

The aging agency starting in 2020 is undertaking a 4-year plan for senior services in Westmoreland County. Contact person: Carrie Nelson, 724-830-4515, cnelson@co.westmoreland.pa.us

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Rostraver Township should pursue, in partnership with or assistance from the Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging, creation of a senior center at or near the township building and park.
2. The township should put more attention to recreation programs. Programs will provide needed recreation opportunities for two goals: serving the township’s aging population and getting more people active in healthy outdoor recreation. Programs will also encourage more use of township recreation facilities.
3. The township should consider creating a parks and rec director position. A director can design and run programs recommended above, and can provide professional support for the township’s recreation commission and for managing park facilities. An outline for such a position is shown below.
4. The township, in planning for recreation facilities improvements and programs in the coming years should consider the current and changing interests of citizens as summarized from studies and surveys in this section of the plan.

Outline of duties and qualifications for a parks and rec director position

Job description

Oversee maintenance and operation of recreation facilities and provision of recreation programs for residents and visitors under supervision of the township manager and board of commissioners.

- Develop and run recreation programs.
- Oversee planning and development of and seek funding for park and rec facilities.
- Oversee operations and maintenance of park and rec facilities and develop an annual budget.

Qualifications

- Bachelor’s degree in parks & rec or related degree.
- Some experience in parks and rec with a preference for local government experience.

Salary

- P&R directors in nearby townships range from \$40,000 to \$60,000+.
- A local director said salary could start at \$30,000.
- A national survey suggests a range of \$41,000-\$55,000 for municipalities like Rostraver.

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan and 2020 Plan Update set a goal to revitalize the older villages and neighborhoods in the township. Target areas include Van Meter, Webster, Collinsburg, Lynnwood, and Pricedale. The 2020 Plan Update further suggests starting to give similar attention to Fellsburg and the Sweeney Plan where housing is at or approaching 50 years in age.

Housing and public infrastructure in these areas are old. Both require greater attention for maintenance and reinvestment. And, due to aging of the township population (60.7% of the township's owned housing is owned by persons age 55 and older) it is likely a large number of homes will go on the market for sale in the next 10-20 years. The National Association of Realtors reports shifting preferences of Millennials aging, having families, and looking to buy homes. Affordability is important. With urban area home prices rising, Millennials are looking to other places to buy. Rostraver has a competitive advantage in the affordability of its housing. But, housing being turned over from aging Baby Boomers will need to be in sound condition to attract buyers. Buyers will look for "value" in neighborhood infrastructure in addition to the homes.

RECOMMENDATION: The township should have a priority to invest in and give attention to details in township facilities and infrastructure in older villages and neighborhoods to contribute to the value of those areas.

- Parks and playgrounds
- Streets
- Stormwater management and flooding
- Crime prevention and police presence



The township should hold periodic community outreach meetings in each of the older neighborhoods to learn of needs for infrastructure maintenance and neighborhood improvements. In 2020 Rostraver Township started an initiative to each year plan and budget for a package of park, street, and other public improvements in different older neighborhoods in the township. These investments will ensure the neighborhoods retain value and will encourage homeowners to keep up their homes. Neglect breeds neglect. Conversely, reinvestment by the township will breed reinvestment by property owners.

RECOMMENDATION: Rostraver Township should actively pursue funding opportunities for improvements in older villages and neighborhoods. There are three primary funding sources to pursue – two available from Westmoreland County and one available from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Funding opportunities

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Westmoreland County annually receives CDBG funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Recent annual allocation has been \$3 million. CDBG projects must benefit principally low-moderate income persons or prevent slums or blight. The township is familiar with the Westmoreland County CDBG program and could seek to utilize CDBG more often in the future. The Pricedale/Lynnwood neighborhood (BG 2, CT 8058) has over 51% LMI persons (56.14% as per latest 2011-2015 ACS HUD LMI data). Projects that benefit the area would be eligible for CDBG funding. For other neighborhoods, the township would have to conduct an income survey to determine if there are at least 51% LMI persons making the area eligible for CDBG. Projects that exclusively serve elderly persons are presumed to benefit principally LMI persons and eligible for CDBG funds. Also, projects addressing blight, like spot demolition, can qualify for CDBG funds.

Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) – Westmoreland County annually receives HOME funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Recent annual allocation has been \$1 million. HOME funding is used to acquire, rehabilitate, or construct housing that is then made available to rent or sell to qualified low income families. The county works with community housing development organizations (CHODOs) to undertake HOME-funded projects. While the county has set a priority to fund urban areas, a case can be made for the need for improved affordable housing and the positive impact that can be achieved in rural villages such as those in Rostraver Township.

Rostraver Township will do well to open a door for discussion with Westmoreland County. The Community Development Division of the Department of Planning and Development administers CDBG and HOME. Further, staff are generally knowledgeable about community development projects and strategies and, likely, other funding sources.

Blight mapping

Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development created an online blight map for the City of Monessen comprehensive plan. It shows blighted properties and allows analysis with patterns of police and fire incidents and tax delinquency. The county makes this and other planning and mapping services available to municipalities, including Rostraver, for cost.

CDBG and HOME

*Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division
Jennifer Woodling, Local Government Coordinator
724-830-3615*

NAP

*Westmoreland Community Action
Mandy Zalich, CEO
724-834-1260*

*PA Department of Community and Economic Development, Southwest Regional Office
Ali Doyle, Deputy Director
412-565-5004*

Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) – NAP, administered by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), provides a state tax credit to businesses that contribute to eligible community improvement projects. One or more local businesses can earn tax credits for donations to nonprofit organizations for one-year or multi-year projects that improve low-income neighborhoods. Projects can include housing improvements, economic development, services, crime prevention, education, and physical improvements including beautification. NAP has become DCED’s principal source of community development funding. In Westmoreland County, the Community Action agency (WCA) has sponsored successful NAP projects in Jeannette and New Kensington. WCA is considering submission of additional NAP applications in the future. The township should open a door for discussion with WCA about potential NAP projects in the older villages and neighborhoods. It would also be worthwhile to connect the township with other WCA programs.

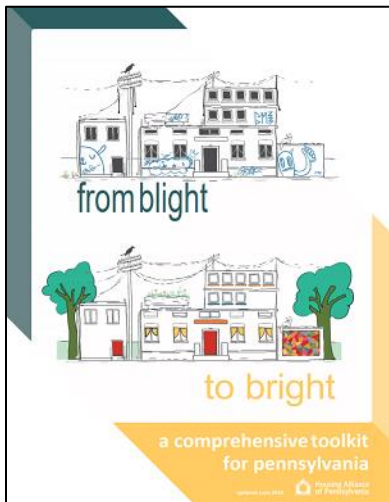
Blight measures

To conserve housing and maintain sound and decent conditions in older neighborhoods, municipalities in Pennsylvania have a variety of options to prevent and eliminate blight. The Pennsylvania legislature has made blight a priority and has added to those options in the past 10 years.

Rostraver Township currently has several ordinances it successfully uses to address blight – brush, grass, and weeds; unsafe buildings; junk and junk dealers; nuisances; and rental occupancy. Three other options are worth considering:

- Property maintenance code – A comprehensive code would allow the township to address additional safety and sanitation measures – light, ventilation, maximum occupancy, plumbing, fixtures, and mechanical and electrical systems.
- Negligent property owner ordinances – These laws would enable the township to disqualify buyers at tax sales who have delinquent taxes and outstanding code violations; and enable the township to attach assets and deny permits to property owners with significant code violations.
- Conservatorship – Pennsylvania law allows a municipality, school district, or other entities to petition the court to appoint a third-party conservator to take control of a vacant, blighted property, repair it, and turn it back for reuse.

RECOMMENDATION: The township should consider enacting negligent property owner ordinances. These would give the township additional effective means to motivate action by negligent property owners on problem properties. The township should also consider using conservatorship for properties where code enforcement has failed to motivate an owner to take action or there is no owner present.



From Blight to Bright, published by the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, is the best source of information on blight strategies available to Pennsylvania municipalities.

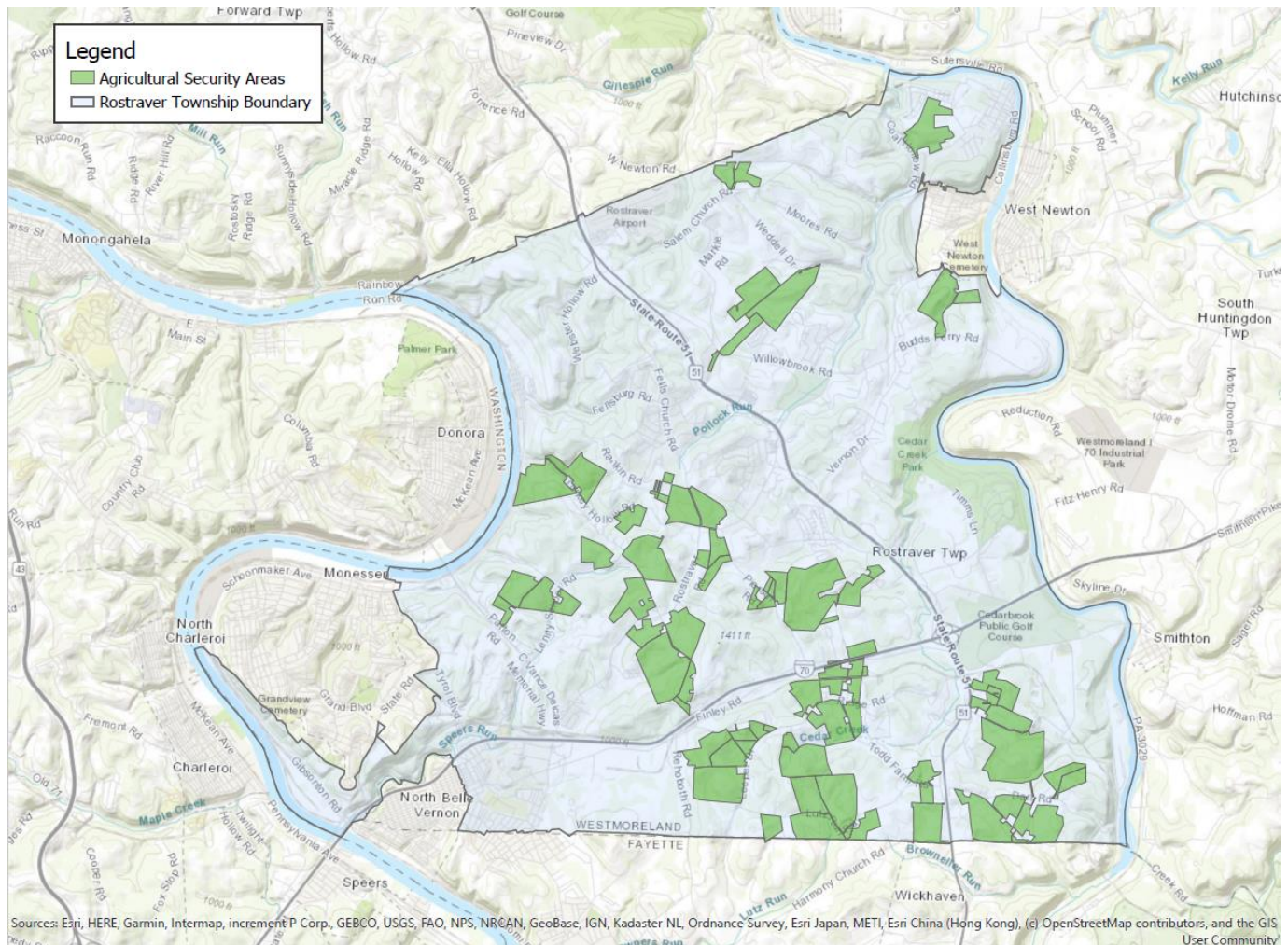
AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan and the 2020 Plan Update state an objective to preserve agriculture. A core area for farmland preservation, covering a large part of the township south of I-70, is designated on the Future Land Use Map. At the public meeting for the 2020 Plan Update, participants voiced strong support for agriculture in all parts of the township.

Two programs, both available in Rostraver Township, provide principal support for agricultural preservation:

- Agricultural Security Area – Rostraver Township created an Agricultural Security Area designating farm properties that petitioned the township for inclusion. Properties get protection from township actions that might inhibit farming, and are eligible

Figure 16 Agricultural Security Areas Map
 Source: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development



Information about Agricultural Security Areas and applications for Conservation Easements can be obtained from:

*Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation
Betty Reefer, Director
724-837-8971*

for public purchase of a conservation easement to keep the land in farming.

- **Agricultural Conservation Easements** – Properties in Agricultural Security Areas are eligible for public purchase of a conservation easement. The PA Farmland Preservation Program, in cooperation with Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation, purchases the easement. In return, the property owner keeps the land in agricultural production in perpetuity. Applying for a conservation easement is voluntary. Funds are limited. Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation ranks applications based on quality of the farmland and beneficial impact of an easement.

RECOMMENDATION: Rostraver Township should promote the availability of the Agricultural Security Area and Agricultural Conservation Easements Programs to farmers in the township. Upon petition from farm owners, land may be added to the Agricultural Security Area any time. The township should be receptive to additions. Applications for conservation easements may be submitted by property owners at any time to Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan recommended creating and amending into the zoning ordinance conservation zoning options including agricultural preservation provisions. An amendment was prepared but not enacted. The amendment would strengthen agriculture as a preferred use in the A-1 Agricultural zoning district and limit the opportunities to break up farm tracts by subdivision for residential development.

RECOMMEDATION: The township should again consider enacting the conservation zoning amendment for the A-1 district.



ALLEN'S CROSSROADS IMPROVEMENTS

The 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update identifies the Allen’s Crossroads commercial area at the I-70/PA 201 interchange as a priority for attention from the township. With the decline in Mid Mon Valley towns in recent decades, this development has evolved to become the region's commercial hub. The continued vitality of the hub is important to Rostraver Township AND a surrounding region reaching into four counties.

There are a number of factors influencing long-term viability:

- Positive factors – The area has many and a variety of businesses that provide essential goods and services for people and households in the region. Businesses include strong, recognized national chains. Development has spanned different generations and has continued into the current decade.
- Negative factors – Different plazas and big boxes developed over time without an integrated plan. Internal circulation – moving from business to business – is poor. Different developments have different design qualities, some more, some less attractive in appearance. Older developments are beginning to appear tired. The I-70/PA 201 interchange is functionally obsolete and a problem with traffic congestion and hazards. Changes in consumer attitudes, growing preferences for e-shopping, and other market trends are threatening demand for traditional retail space.

Figure 17 Allen’s Crossroads commercial area

Source: Google Maps



The Allen's Crossroads area would sustain itself through aging and changing times if it were a more integrated development and presented itself as a single destination with integrated internal circulation, uniform physical design and appearance, and coordinated branding and marketing.

RECOMMENDATION: Rostraver Township should initiate action at Allen's Crossroads, and seek help and partnership of Westmoreland County. Initially, the township and county should facilitate a roundtable of property owners and businesses. Start a dialogue. Put ideas before the group. Suggest working together. These steps sound small, but are the necessary first steps to tackle a large and complex issue.

As interest grows, there are strategy and funding options for planning and undertaking improvements.

Planning funding via SPC

SPC, the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission, is the agency responsible for transportation planning in 10 counties including Westmoreland. Three sources of funding to help planning at Allen's Crossroads can be accessed via SPC:

- *Supplemental Land Use Planning Funds*
 - *SPC's SMART Program*
 - *PennDOT Connects*
- Rostraver Township should begin by involving and getting support of Westmoreland County Department of Planning & Development and Board of Commissioners, then with their help advance an inquiry through appropriate channels at SPC.*

Pennsylvania transportation funding – The Commonwealth has funding options via the Department of Transportation and Department of Community and Economic Development/Commonwealth Finance Authority for planning and implementation of transportation improvements. Example: The City of Hermitage, Mercer County, was awarded a \$730,000 grant from DCED's/CFA's Multimodal Transportation Fund for road circulation improvements to create a town center mixed-use development at the site of an underperforming existing mall.

Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) – The PA Department of Community and Economic Development offers 50% planning grants through MAP that can be used to prepare a plan for integrated improvements and development at Allen's Crossroads.

Business Improvement District – Rostraver Township, with property owner consent, can create a Business Improvement District (BID) at Allen's Crossroads. Property owners in the BID would pay an annual assessment that would pay for improvements and programs benefiting the businesses – for example, streets and streetscapes, building facades, and marketing/promotions.

LERTA and TIF – The township can consider using tax tools like LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance) tax abatements and TIF (tax increment financing) to encourage reinvestment and improvements by property owners.

Further, Rostraver Township should continue to press for upgrade of the I-70/PA 201 interchange. The township has agitated the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission and PennDOT, the two groups with decision-making authority for federally-funded projects, for upgrade since 2005. The township should elevate its voice by asking support of Westmoreland County, and asking the county to help assemble support of Allegheny, Fayette, and Washington Counties whose residents are served by the Allen's Crossroads commercial hub.

NATURAL GAS REGULATIONS

As explained in the Data and Issues section of this document, Pennsylvania continues to be a national leader in natural gas production and Rostraver Township sits in a region of active production.

Oil and gas extraction is not new to Western Pennsylvania. However, with the innovation of extraction techniques making deeper formations like Marcellus Shale more accessible, natural gas exploration and extraction activities have increased exponentially. The natural gas industry's presence within a community can fluctuate significantly in short periods of time. The industry is driven by market forces and, as such, the resultant development activities have been quite volatile. Recently the pace of development has slowed as profitability decreased and demand was limited by the lack of existing supply infrastructure and end users. These trends may change dramatically as companies are able to capitalize on the expanded pipeline distribution network which will dramatically broaden the market of potential customers.

Rostraver Township has an objective to achieve a win-win with natural gas. The township will provide opportunities for natural gas exploration and production while also providing for the health and safety of township residents and property owners and protecting community character and the environment. The township will allow the burgeoning industry to succeed and provide valued jobs and other economic benefits while also applying effective and fair regulations in the public interest.

Zoning is the best method for regulating natural gas development and uses. The PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) provides authority for zoning regulations to protect public health, safety, and welfare, and to protect natural resources and the environment. At the same time, the MPC requires zoning to provide for the reasonable development of minerals which include natural gas. The PA Oil and Gas Act preempts some areas of municipal zoning control, but allows municipalities to determine in what areas oil and gas activities are and are not appropriate, and to regulate aspects of oil and gas activities not regulated by the act.

Rostraver Township natural gas regulations

As noted in the Data and Issues section, Rostraver Township has natural gas regulations that were amended into the zoning ordinance in 2011. The regulations permit oil and gas drill sites as a special exception use in the A-1 Agriculture district. The A-1 district covers a majority of land in the township. As current hydraulic fracturing methods can reach several hundred feet from a well bore to extract natural gas, the township zoning ordinance provides ample and reasonable opportunity for natural gas

“Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals may 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.”

– *The PA Municipalities Planning Code requires the above statement to be in the comprehensive plan.*

development. The regulations permit oil and gas drill sites and other gas development like compressor stations and processing facilities as special exception uses appropriately in I-1, I-2, and I-3 Industrial zoning districts. The regulations also provide safeguards for the township and its residents. Safeguarding regulations are designed to achieve the following community development objectives:

- Ensure public safety.
- Prevent excessive noise, lights, vibrations, dust, and odors.
- Provide for emergency preparedness.
- Ensure there is adequate vehicular access to oil and gas facilities.
- Minimize harmful impacts to public roads and highways.
- Adequately manage stormwater and minimize runoff and flooding from oil and gas development.
- Protect the quality of surface water and groundwater.
- Minimize loss of woodlands and open space.
- Buffer oil and gas development from homes, businesses, and other occupied buildings and development.
- Ensure restoration of land disturbed during exploration and production.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Rostraver Township has a priority to provide high quality and reliable infrastructure. This section provides a summary of township facilities and any needed upgrades for roads, water, sanitary sewers, and stormwater management.

Township roads

Rostraver Township owns and maintains 90 miles of roads. The township has an adequately staffed and equipped road department that maintains roads and rights-of-way, including mowing, patching and repairs, winter maintenance, and maintenance of catch basins, ditches, and signs. With help from the township engineer, roads are systematically reviewed and paved where needed on an annual basis.

Water service

The Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County provides public water service to most of Rostraver Township. Small parts of the township are served by municipal authorities in Belle Vernon and Charleroi. The authorities provide regular systems maintenance and improvements. Public water service is adequate and reaches all but 20 homes in the township.

Sanitary sewers

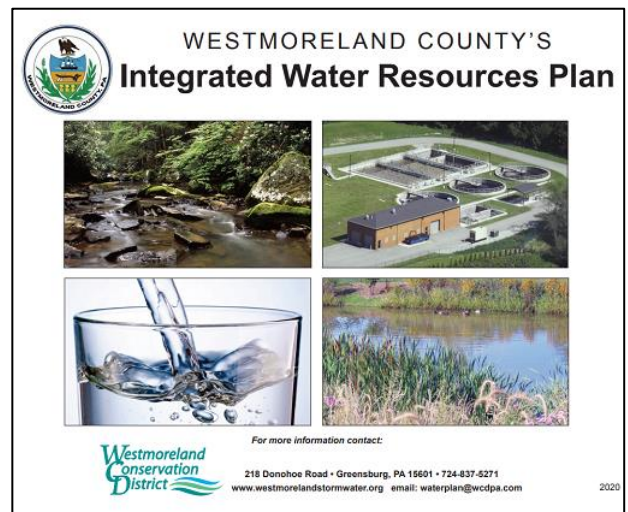
The Rostraver Township Sewage Authority provides public sanitary sewers and wastewater treatment for most of Rostraver Township. Small parts of the township are served by four other authorities from neighboring communities. In total, 75% of the township is served by public sanitary sewers. Of areas not currently served, the village of Webster has the highest priority for consideration of service as the financing capacity of Rostraver Township Sewage Authority improves in coming years.

Stormwater management

Rostraver Township has a stormwater management ordinance to ensure new development manages and minimizes pollution from additional stormwater runoff it causes. The ordinance has been in effect since 2003. The ordinance has been effective enough that the township has few current stormwater management problems. The ordinance is being reviewed and will likely be revised. In

In its planning for public water service, Rostraver Township recognizes that commercial agriculture production impacts water supply sources.

– *The PA Municipalities Planning Code requires the above statement to be in the comprehensive plan, though the plan does not specifically address commercial agriculture in the township.*



Public transportation

Rostraver Township is served by two public transportation providers:

- Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority provides bus transit on several local fixed routes that connect Mid Mon Valley towns and the Allen's Crossroads commercial area at I-70 and PA 201 in Rostraver Township. MMVTA also provides commuter bus transit to Pittsburgh starting from several Mid Mon Valley towns but not from Rostraver Township.
- Westmoreland County Transit Authority provides bus transit on inter-community fixed bus routes in the county and commuter bus routes to Pittsburgh. However, none of the routes enter into Rostraver Township. Westmoreland Transit also operates Go Westmoreland, an on-demand, shared-ride bus service that travels anywhere in the county. Go Westmoreland is designed to serve and offers reduced fares for seniors, disabled persons, and persons qualifying for medical assistance.

Fixed route service is limited. The MMVTA local bus routes only serve the Allen's Crossroads commercial area. The rest of the township is unserved by bus routes. Township residents desiring to commute to Pittsburgh must drive to park and ride lots for MMVTA in Donora or Charleroi; for Westmoreland Transit in New Stanton, Greensburg, or North Huntingdon; or for Port Authority of Allegheny County in Elizabeth.

RECOMMENDATION: There are challenges to providing public transit service to a large and mostly rural township like Rostraver. However, as the township has an objective to provide services needed to attract and keep population, especially the growing senior population, it is in the township's interest to open a door for discussion with MMVTA and Westmoreland Transit to enhance options for public transit serving the township.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

Westmoreland County

Westmoreland County in 2018 adopted a new comprehensive plan: *Reimagining Our Westmoreland*. Rostraver Township consulted the county plan in preparing the township plan update. In fact, Rostraver used data from Rostraver responders to a county comprehensive plan survey to learn more about needs and issues important for Rostraver Township.

Rostraver Township’s 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update is consistent with the county comprehensive plan. The below table identifies many objectives and recommendations in each plan that support each other.

Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan	Rostraver Township 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update
Assist small businesses. Advance entrepreneurialism.	Update zoning regulations to better accommodate working from home, and opportunities for free-agent economy, share economy, and entrepreneurs.
Provide development ready sites.	Work with the county to develop a targeted economic development action plan.
Grow local.	Promote Agricultural Security Areas and conservation easements. Consider conservation zoning.
Provide housing options.	Update zoning to better accommodate multi-family and rental housing.
Direct density. Increase walkability.	Promote traditional neighborhood development in the area by the township building and park.
Connect with parks and nature.	Make it a priority to maintain township rec facilities. Give more attention to rec programs.
Eliminate blight.	Make it a priority to invest in township parks, roads, police, and other services in older villages and neighborhoods to encourage property owner reinvestment.
Bolster age-friendly community services.	Make it a priority to provide recreation and other support services for aging residents.

City of Monessen

The City of Monessen is preparing a comprehensive plan. As of October 2020, a completed draft plan was submitted to surrounding municipalities, including Rostraver Township, for review.

Rostraver Township submitted a review letter supporting the city’s plan and expressing two particular areas of mutual interest:

- Enhancing options for public transit serving the municipalities.
- Promoting and utilizing more the Herman Mihalich boat launch on the Monongahela River near the city/township border.

Other areas of common interest between the Rostraver and Monessen plans include:

- Revitalization older neighborhoods and reducing blight
- Promoting business development, particularly entrepreneurs
- Updating the zoning ordinance
- Having a streamlined development review process

Given the mutual areas of interest and similar timing of the two comprehensive plans, Rostraver Township’s review letter invited the city to reach out to the township to discuss future collaboration.

Consistency with surrounding municipalities

The land use and development goals and objectives in Rostraver Township’s 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update are generally consistent with surrounding municipalities. Rostraver’s Plan promotes protection and revitalization of residential areas adjacent to Monessen, North Belle Vernon, and West Newton. It promotes compatibility of the Route 51 business corridor as currently exists north of Rostraver in Elizabeth and Forward Townships. And, it promotes rural character compatible with surrounding areas in other municipalities.

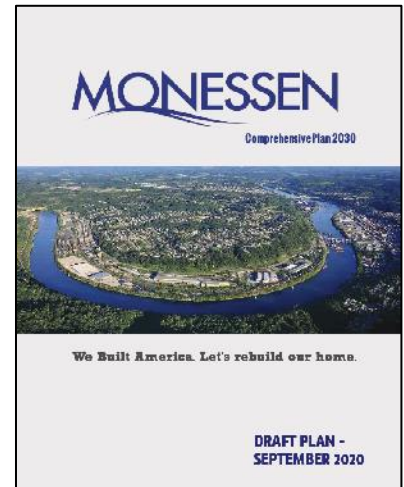
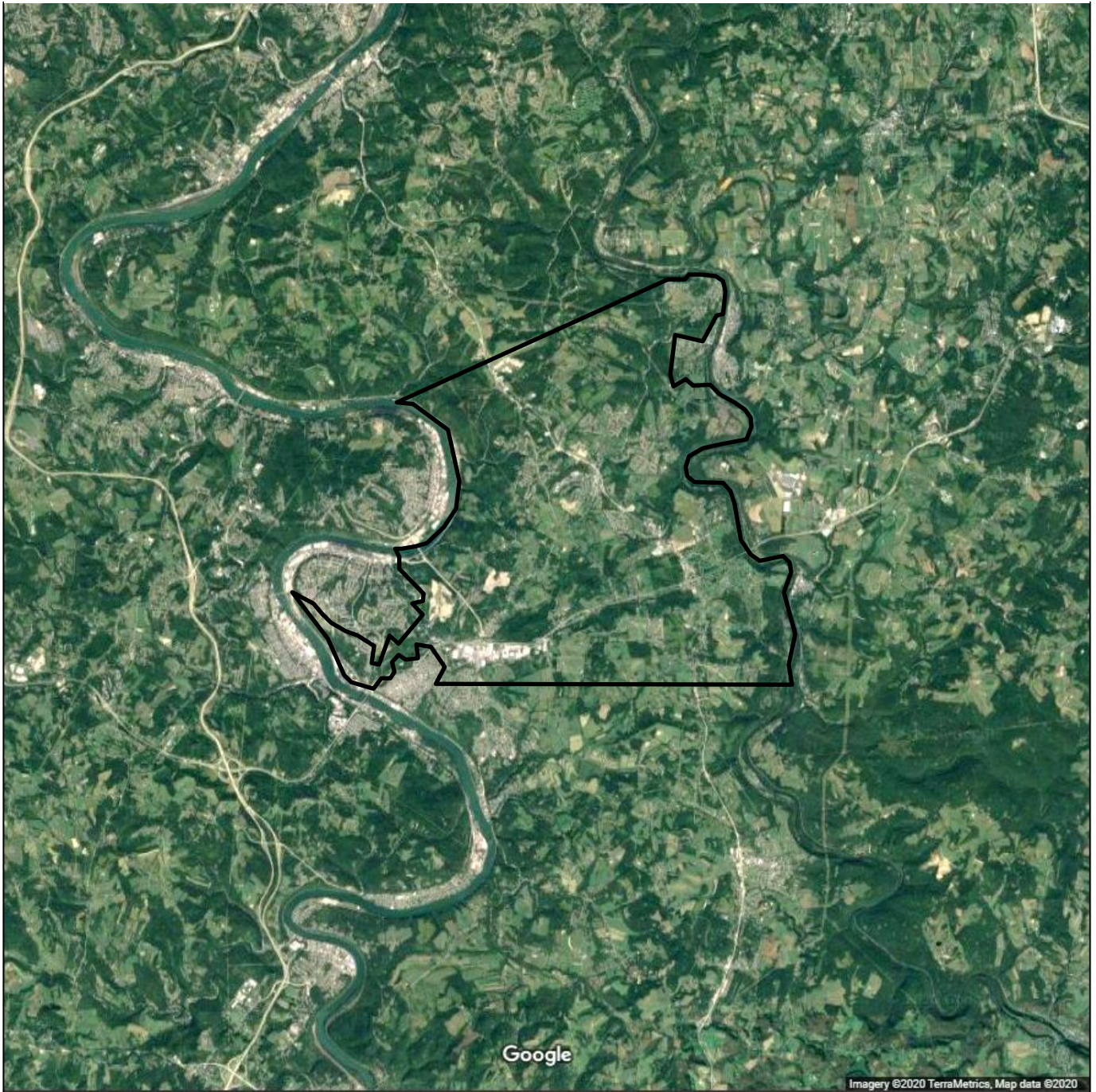


Figure 19 Aerial image – Rostraver Township and surrounding area

Source: Google Maps



APPENDIX



CONTENTS

Tabulation of input from the Comprehensive Plan open public meeting and follow-up comments.

Tabulation of responses from Rostraver Township responders to the public survey for the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Pla

PUBLIC INPUT – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

AN OPEN PUBLIC MEETING WAS HELD SEPTEMBER 9, 2020, CEDAR CREEK PARK PAVILION #1. Information from the public meeting was made available at the township building and posted online until September 25, 2020. Meeting participants and other reviewers were invited to submit an exit survey and provide written comments.

EXIT SURVEY – TABULATION OF RESPONSES

Participants were given information on 11 priority objectives for the Comprehensive Plan Update and asked via exit survey if they agreed, disagreed, or neither.

①	Promote TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT for new development near the township building.	AGREE 14	DISAGREE 10	NEITHER 1
②	Continue to promote SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREAS.	AGREE 14	DISAGREE 8	NEITHER 3
③	Promote SMART GROWTH for development along Route 51.	AGREE 20	DISAGREE 4	NEITHER 1
④	Promote COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION for older housing areas.	AGREE 21	DISAGREE 0	NEITHER 3
⑤	Consider conservation zoning and other options to PRESERVE AGRICULTURE.	AGREE 22	DISAGREE 2	NEITHER 1
⑥	KEEP THE TOWNSHIP'S AGING RESIDENTS by providing recreation and "next home" options geared to them.	AGREE 22	DISAGREE 2	NEITHER 2
⑦	Invest in assets important to a core segment of current residents, MIDDLE-AGE ADULTS WITH FAMILIES.	AGREE 21	DISAGREE 4	NEITHER 1
⑧	Address market factors important to attracting a NEW GENERATION of younger township residents.	AGREE 21	DISAGREE 1	NEITHER 4
⑨	Continue a priority to provide PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE to attract residents and businesses.	AGREE 26	DISAGREE 0	NEITHER 0
⑩	Make long-term economic success of the ALLEN'S CROSSROADS development a township priority.	AGREE 18	DISAGREE 5	NEITHER 2
⑪	Target ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT that yields higher-pay jobs and is compatible with "township character."	AGREE 20	DISAGREE 3	NEITHER 3

PUBLIC INPUT – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

EXIT SURVEY – TABULATION OF RESPONSES

After a presentation of information at the open public meeting, open comments were taken from participants. Comments were recorded and are shown below. Via the exit survey, participants were asked to list three comment they most agreed with. The number of participants who indicated agreement is shown after each comment.

- A. CONSIDER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS 5
- B. PROMOTE AG PRESERVATION IN OTHER PARTS OF THE TOWNSHIP 11
- C. HIGHER PRIORITY ON REVITALIZATION AREAS THAN GROWTH 6
- D. AG PRESERVATION TARGET SHOULD APPLY TO ALL EXISTING AG PROPERTIES 3
- E. PROVIDE WATER/SEWER ON PA 51 SOUTH OF I-70 6
- F. CREATE AN ATTRACTION TO BRING PEOPLE TO THE TOWNSHIP (a pigeon auction, for example) 2
- G. APPLAUD PRIORITY #8 3
- H. MORE AMENABLE REGULATIONS (Ouch! 6 months to get a sewer permit) 1
- I. NEED TO ATTRACT MORE AND BETTER RESTAURANTS 6
- J. REACH OUT TO ELIZABETH TOWNSHIP AND EXPRESS CONCERN RE: POWER PLANT 0
- K. ROSTRAVER IS ATTRACTIVE BECAUSE OF LOW TAXES 5
- L. RENTAL PROPERTIES IN THE AREA ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE 6
- M. CHILD-CARE OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED 2
- N. NEED LOWER-PRICED CONDOS 2
- O. “SELL” THE SCHOOL DISTRICT 5
- P. ATTRACT LONGER-LASTING JOBS 2
- Q. HAVE SAFETY ZONES AROUND SCHOOLS 1
- R. PROVIDE ECONOMIC START-UP AREA FOR ENTREPRENEURS 1
- S. USE FORMER JUNIOR HIGH FOR R. 0

PUBLIC INPUT – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

EXIT SURVEY – WRITTEN COMMENTS

Participants were invited to submit written comments with exit surveys, shown below.

All agricultural areas should be equally protected. Need to attract more sit down restaurants as well as expanded shopping development.

1) The housing plans are low quality and ugly. Low-quality and ugliness does not attract a tax-base. 2) I appreciate farmland focus in the north-central part of the township, not just the south. 3) I do not want a diamond diversion at the I-71/SR 51 exchange. There is not enough traffic to warrant it and I do not want that much traffic. 4) High-quality child care.

Don't know if the older residents would use a rec center – what about transportation? Need more restaurants.

Younger working professionals will need activities to keep them.

Sidewalks and walkability is important. Improvement of internet services. There are areas that do not have reliable service. I know that there have been improvements in the storm water system but I think needs to continue to have twp involvement because it needs to not just be up to homeowners. I do agree rentals are needed. My son just moved from school and does not have local options if he chooses to move out. Plus would be good for seniors. Maybe have connecting roads between businesses at Allen's Crossroads. After school programs. Indoor soccer fields (attraction).

Thank you for this opportunity. I would encourage you to seek out Gen Z feedback – like it or not they are our future. Keep up the good work.

Who determines changes to agricultural priorities? All farmland is important! 373 Gallitin Rd. Safe zones around schools.

Streamline regulations. Promote child care opportunities.

Community pigeon loft. Perhaps maintained by scout troops or volunteers. Weekend activity involving races, auction of birds for each race, prizes.

Turning arrow at Pricedale Road + Rostraver Road.

A – Make sure access is “street level” (i.e. “no step” entry for those not in wheelchair but don't climb stairs. B – Open up easements to areas not currently in production. N – Affordable yet “nice” apartments & less costly condos.

We have enough housing development at the moment. We should focus on getting more restaurants along route 51 and updating and modernizing Allen's Crossroads.

Stop sprawl. Control growth. Focus on elderly.

I don't feel Lynnwood & Collinsburg – older housing.

Encourage a growth in diversity.

Encourage growth in diversity.

Secure new light industrial for new I-70/Rte 51 interchange ASAP.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2017 PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES OF PERSONS WHO INDICATED LIVING IN ROSTRAVER TOWNSHIP

Below are select questions and number and percent of top (not all) responses.

What are the top three (3) advantages of living in Westmoreland County?	Family	21	16.5%
	Location	17	13.4%
	Quality of residential neighborhoods	16	12.6%
	Housing costs	14	11.0%
	Safety and security	13	10.2%
	Parks/recreation programs and facilities	10	7.9%
What are the top three (3) disadvantages of living in Westmoreland County?	Job opportunities	17	13.6%
	Restaurants	15	12.0%
	Available shopping	11	8.8%
	Quality of roads	11	8.8%
	Mass transit options	10	8.0%
What is the overall quality of housing stock (appearance, cost, property maintenance) in Westmoreland County?	Excellent	1	2.3%
	Good	34	77.3%
	Fair	7	15.9%
	Poor	2	4.5%
How is the quality of housing changing in Westmoreland County?	Getting much better	1	2.3%
	Getting somewhat better	15	34.1%
	Staying about the same	20	45.5%
	Getting somewhat worse	5	11.4%
	Getting much worse	3	6.8%
What are the top three (3) types of new residential development would you like to see in Westmoreland County in the future?	Single-family homes	27	25.5%
	Senior citizen housing	25	23.6%
	Townhomes	21	19.8%
	Condominiums	17	16.0%
	None	8	7.5%
What are the top three (3) types of non-residential development would you like to see in Westmoreland County in the future?	Restaurants	25	21.6%
	Entertainment	18	15.5%
	Retail stores	16	13.8%
	Industry	14	12.1%
	Medical facilities	12	10.3%
What are the top three (3) priorities the Comprehensive Plan should focus on? (choose three)	Development and growth potential	18	14.4%
	Taxes	18	14.4%
	Schools	15	12.0%
	Natural environment	13	10.4%
	Transportation and access	11	8.8%
	Parks and open space	11	8.8%

Are you satisfied with the overall quality of life in Westmoreland County?	Very satisfied	4	9.1%
	Satisfied	35	79.5%
	Dissatisfied	4	9.1%
	Very dissatisfied	1	2.3%
In five years Westmoreland County will...	Be a better place	9	20.5%
	Stay about the same	27	61.4%
	Get worse	8	18.2%
What are the top three (3) planning issues for you?	Quality of development	15	12.0%
	Infrastructure maintenance	15	12.0%
	Neighborhood quality	12	9.6%
	Location of development	11	8.8%
	Public safety	11	8.8%
	Economic development	10	8.0%
	Parks/Trails	9	7.2%
	Environmental issues	8	6.4%
	Housing choices	7	5.6%
Public transportation	6	4.8%	

Note: Even though survey questions had a county perspective, the answers of Rostraver responders provided value for the township comprehensive plan. Responders' answers were influenced by perspectives looking out their own windows and familiarity with their own surrounds.

RICHARD "RICK" GROSSMAN
1963-2020



Rick Grossman was planning consultant for Rostraver Township from 2007 through his untimely passing while working on this plan. He considered it a privilege to work for Rostraver and many other municipal clients over three decades. Rick's greater love was the woods and fields of the family farm in Butler County where he and his wife Katherine kept a large vegetable garden and orchard, and raised chickens, pigs, goats, sheep, and cattle.