

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## BACKGROUND

### ***Overview***

The pastoral landscape of East Hanover Township has provided its residents with economic benefit and aesthetic value throughout its history. While East Hanover Township has largely maintained its historic, scenic, and rural character, recent land development pressure on the Township threatens the rural qualities and natural resources that sustain the community. In response, the Township has recognized the need to re-evaluate its current land planning policies and strategies for future growth management. Updating the comprehensive plan is the first step in this process.

### ***Regional Setting***

East Hanover Township is located on the Dauphin and Lebanon County borders in southeastern Pennsylvania. It straddles the Blue Mountain and Great Valley physiographic provinces due to its elongated northwest/southeast orientation. East Hanover Township is one of Dauphin County's 40 municipalities. Adjoining municipalities include Middle Paxton, West Hanover, South Hanover, Rush and Derry Townships in Dauphin County, and East Hanover, Cold Spring, and North Londonderry Townships in Lebanon County. Nearby commercial and employment centers are in Hershey (4 miles to the south), Harrisburg (10 miles to the west), and Lebanon (12 miles to the east). Fort Indiantown Gap military reservation is located in the northern portion of the Township, but the military living and business areas of the Reservation are located in East Hanover Township, Lebanon County.

The natural resources of the Township, namely the three ridges and valleys of the Blue Mountain Province, the colluvial soils and abundant surface water emanating from Blue Mountain's southern face have supported human settlement for centuries. With the expansion of automobile transportation beginning in the 1950s suburban and highway land development began to mount. Presently, new development pressures have arisen, a likely result of the expansion of the Pennsylvania Gaming System into the Township, drawing increased commercial and residential value to its lands.

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***Comprehensive Plan***

The comprehensive plan is a policy and planning tool enabled by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through Act 247, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). It inventories the community's existing conditions, outlines planning goals, and provides recommendations and strategies aimed at achieving those goals. As a policy document (rather than a regulatory document), the comprehensive plan guides future land use and municipal management decisions. The policies and recommendations put forth in the comprehensive plan are implemented through regulatory documents such as the zoning and land development ordinances, and through other non-regulatory means. The comprehensive plan is also important from a legal standpoint in that it provides the underlying rationale for ordinance provisions and amendments, and other planning initiatives.

The East Hanover Township Comprehensive Plan update includes the following elements as mandated by the MPC:

- Demographic Profile
- Statement of Community Development Goals and Objectives
- Natural and Historic Resources Protection Plan
- Transportation Plan
- Housing Plan
- Land Use Plan
- Community Facilities and Utilities Plan
- Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan
- Statement of the Interrelationships Among the Plan's Components
- Statement of the Plan's Compatibility with Adjoining Municipalities and the County Comprehensive Plan
- Plan Implementation Strategies

Work on the comprehensive plan update began in May 2009. Bi-monthly meetings of the East Hanover Township Planning Commission and Planning Consultants were conducted and were open to the public. In addition, a Comprehensive Plan Workshop was held on September 16, 2009, a Planning Commission Public Meeting was held on August 30, 2011 and Public Hearings of the

Board of Supervisors were held on November 1, 2011 and December 6, 2011. Each of these meetings was designed to gather community input on the Comprehensive Plan. Thus, the policies and recommendations contained in this Comprehensive Plan are based on input gathered at those meetings and on the various analyses completed by the Consultants.

Understanding that development pressures on the Township are significant, the overall goal of the plan is to manage growth by directing it to the most suitable areas of the Township, and to coordinate it with infrastructure and services. Agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive areas, best suited for conservation, are targeted to receive appropriate protection measures. This results in a sustainable and cohesive land use pattern that accommodates future growth with maximum efficiency while minimizing adverse impacts on the community and the environment.