

# WICONISCO TOWNSHIP



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**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**

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THE PLANNERS, TREVOR ZAHNISER AND TINA FACKLER, WISH TO THANK THESE VOLUNTEER MEMBERS FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN ABLY CONTRIBUTING TO COMPILING THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE, WHICH WILL GUIDE THE TOWNSHIP OVER THE NEXT DECADE. THEIR THOUGHTFUL INPUT AND WILLINGNESS TO LOOK AT ALTERNATIVES FOR THE MANY DECISIONS MADE ALONG THE WAY HAS RESULTED IN A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THAT WILL QUITE DIRECTLY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF WICONISCO TOWNSHIP'S RESIDENTS.

WE WOULD ALSO BE REMISS IF CANDICE FAUSNACHT, TOWNSHIP SECRETARY/TREASURER, WERE NOT RECOGNIZED FOR HER PROMPT, ACCURATE AND COMPLETE RESPONSES TO THE MANY REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.

## INTRODUCTION

In commissioning this Comprehensive Plan Update, the Board of Supervisors has confirmed its recognition of the importance of an overall approach to guiding future development within the Township's corporate limits, as well as the effects of their actions on their neighboring municipalities. This planning effort is legitimized and encouraged by the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247, as amended. This state enabling legislation creates the authority for local municipalities to undertake such plans. The MPC outlines general guidelines and specific administrative and procedural requirements that municipalities must follow in developing and implementing comprehensive plans.

Such plans have been upheld by state and federal courts when the provisions of the MPC have been followed in researching, compiling, and bringing the recommendations to fruition. The zoning ordinance and associated map are the primary tools used by municipalities to promote the health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. This code is normally supplemented by subdivision and land development ordinances and building, housing and other codes.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURPOSE

The Comprehensive Plan is an official statement of the Township which sets forth its policies on desirable future development and how it is to occur. It is intended to organize, prioritize and coordinate the ideas, land uses, facilities, infrastructure, services, and environmental elements which comprise the Township as a whole. Thus, the term "Comprehensive" defines the Plan.

Realizing this vision of the future entails four basic activities:

1. Understanding the local and regional issues that concern all stakeholders: residents, businesses, elected officials, and others.
2. Creating a physical landscape and overall character that is the desired objective.
3. Responding to public needs and regional economic demands on the community's resources and planning for dynamic change.
4. Providing a framework for implementation of the planning initiatives.

This Plan has been researched and developed to serve several important purposes. Primarily, it assists local officials in administering the Township's land use planning function. Many maps have been prepared to point up the Township's restrictions on, and opportunities for, its future growth. The extensive research undertaken has been condensed to concise chapters that focus on those aspects of the existing conditions and potential future outcomes most relevant to the implementation process.



## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE**

The 1975 Comprehensive Plan by Direction Associates, Inc. gave a good account of the Township's recent history to that point. The Township received its name from its earliest settlers – the Lykens-Williams Valley Indians. “Whiconescong” refers both to an Indian Chief and a word meaning ‘*wet and muddy camp.*’ The Indians were driven west by Scotch, Irish, and German settlers, who lived by farming and raising sheep.

The 1825 discovery of coal spurred the development of the entire area, but most notably Wiconisco Township, which was created from the Lykens Borough in 1840. The Village of Wiconisco was laid out in 1848 by Thomas Couch and Peter W. Shaeffer. Michael Shaeffer bought the first lot and established a boarding house for miners. The town was controlled by the Susquehanna Coal Company in the early years, since it had no competition.

The opening of other industries and the completion of the Williams Valley Railroad in 1892 and the Lykens-Williams Valley electric railway in 1899 helped bring the Township to a population of 2,670 in 1900. The closing of the Short Mountain Colliery in 1930 signaled the beginning of a long economic decline in the area.

Population decline has slowed and the completion of the Interstate 81 and Rt. 22-322 highways has brought the Township closer to the Pottsville and Harrisburg employment centers.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Some similar version of this type of goals can be found in nearly any comprehensive plan because they represent the basic precepts upon which Pennsylvania local government is based. They are statements so phrased that they require the Township to be proactive in attaining them.

Wiconisco Township residents value their rural and village setting. The absence of the fast pace of urban centers is also seen as a plus. Maintaining the following goals below would insure that this lifestyle would be protected.

1. Maintain the best possible health, environmental and recreational conditions for the benefit of all residents.
2. Insure housing opportunities exist by permitting the development of adequate, safe, and aesthetically pleasing homes.
3. Encourage commercial, industrial, and agricultural continuance and growth that is compatible with its surroundings that established to serve the need for jobs and enable economic growth.
4. Encourage growth and development that is compatible with the setting and protects the Township's social and cultural character.

## **STUDY AND PLAN ORGANIZATION**

The basic studies undertaken for this Comprehensive Plan examined three characteristics of the Township: natural features, built environment and resident socioeconomic and demographic data. Data from numerous sources has been culled and coalesced to form a complete assessment of the status of Wiconisco Township.

The Implementation Strategies, or Action Plan, is based upon the basic studies analysis of all existing conditions, Township and stakeholder preferences, growth potential and limitations, and consultant experience. This section of the Plan will take the form of a matrix of specific actions, who is responsible for completing them, when they are to occur, and if they have any budgetary impact.

A Future Land Use Map will be developed to guide development, which may require revision of the Zoning Map and Ordinances.

## PART I – BACKGROUND PROFILES

### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### CLIMATE

Weather elements, such as precipitation, temperature, wind direction and speed, relative humidity and sunshine, affect the Township. The area averages 46 inches of precipitation each year, which includes a 30 inch average snowfall. The mean annual snow cover period of one inch or more is 50 days. Average wind speed is 10 mph. The mean monthly relative humidity rate for January, April, July and October is 68 percent. Average annual sunshine is around 2,500 hours.

Pennsylvania has a continental climate that is characterized by wide fluctuations in seasonal temperatures, with prevailing winds from the west. The frost-free period lasts the longest in the southeast, the Ohio valley, and the Erie lowlands. Higher areas are free of frost from three to five months a year. *Source: Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-78278>*

#### GEOLOGY

Geology affects several factors that need to be considered prior to any development: on-lot sewage disposal, drainage, groundwater availability and construction cost. Dauphin County contains two physiographic provinces – the Ridge and Valley and the Piedmont. The entire northern half of the County is in the Ridge and Valley province, which is composed mostly of sandstones and shales. It was formed as a result of two continents colliding and causing faulting and folding to occur in the Appalachian basin.

The geology of the Wiconisco Township was formed during the Mississippian Period of the Paleozoic Era, 320 million years ago. Four sedimentary formations make up the entire geologic character of the Township – Pocono, Mauch Chunk, Llewellyn, and Pottsville Formations.

The Pocono Formation is found exclusively on Berry Mountain. It is composed of sandstones, siltstones and shale that is highly resistant to weathering. The materials are used for riprap, road materials and building stone. It exhibits adequate surface drainage and is productive in retaining groundwater. Well yields within this formation range between 20-90 GPM.

A large portion of the Township is underlain by the Mauch Chunk Formation, characterized by shale, claystone, sandstone, and shalestone that are moderately resistant to weathering. The sandstone areas serve as the greatest sources for groundwater, the shale is a good raw material for brick. Well yields within this formation range between 20-90 GPM.

The Llewellyn Formation is found exclusively in the state game lands as the central spine of the Bear, Big Lick and Short Mountains. Interbedded sandstone, siltstone, and conglomerate are common in these medium to coarse grained, light gray to brown rocks also containing coal and dark-gray to black shales. They have good surface drainage, are an adequate source for domestic water, and are a good source of road material and fill. The conglomerate is suitable for building stone, flagstone, embankment facing and riprap. This is located in East Hanover Township, Williams Township and Wiconisco Township, Dauphin County.

The Pottsville Formation is characterized by conglomerate sandstone, gray shale, siltstone, limestone coal and underclay, which have various building uses. It forms crests flanks of ridges and other topographic breaks and is a transitional formation between the Catskill and Mauch Chunk formations in Wiconisco. Well yields within this formation range between 50-100 GPM. *Source: Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan 2005.*

## SOILS

Two of the eight soils associations found in Dauphin County may be found in Wiconisco Township; Dekalb-Lehew and Calvin-Lech Kill-Klinesville. They are 28% and 30% of the soils in the County, respectively, as noted in the Soil Survey of Dauphin County.

The Dekalb-Lehew Association is found primarily on steeply-sloped areas, which includes the majority of Wiconisco Township. The entire southern boundary of Berry Mountain is made up of Dekalb-Lehew, as are the Big Lick, Short, and Bear Mtns. In fact, all but a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile wide strip of land that includes Rt. 209 and Wiconisco Creek is made up of this association. These soils have severe limitations to on-lot septic systems and homes with basements, since they have a depth to bedrock of only 2-3 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet, as well as steeper slope.

It is characterized as moderately, well-drained, and gently sloping to very steep channery sandy loam to channery loam with a very stony surface layer. It is poorly suited for cropland, but well suited to woodlands with a majority of the trees growing on it being oak varieties.

The Calvin-Lech Kill-Klinesville Association makes up the remaining area of the Township and is deep to shallow, predominantly well-drained and gently sloping with a shaly silt loam subsoil. It is normally located in upland areas between mountains and is good for the cultivation of crops. These soils also

have severe limitations to on-lot septic systems and homes with basements, since they have a depth to bedrock of only 2-3 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet.

No agricultural soils of prime or state importance are found in the Township.

## **IMPORTANT FARMLANDS**

The Township has only a few hundred acres of soil suitable for farming and it is where most of the residential and other development has occurred – the more gently sloping land. The State Game Lands are made up of the less desirable soil association, are too steep to build on, and take up 62.5% of the Township's area. The potential exists for one or two moderately-sized farms in the eastern end of the Township.

## **WATERSHEDS**

The entire Township is located in the Wiconisco Creek watershed, with the exception of the extreme northeast corner, which drains into the Mahantango Creek watershed. It is considered part of the Lower Central Susquehanna River Sub-Basin 6. Numerous unnamed tributaries feed the Wiconisco; Bear Creek is the primary stream and drains the area between the mountains in the Game Lands. The PA Dept. of Environmental Protection classifies Bear Creek as a Cold Water Fishery, which establishes strict criteria on water quality. Acid mine drainage is the current focus of a passive mitigation effort within the Game Lands. Wiconisco Creek is classified as a 'Warm Water Fishery'.

## **FLOODPLAINS & WETLANDS**

The only watercourses with these natural features are the Wiconisco, Bear, and a portion of Rattling Creeks. The Wiconisco and Bear have floodplain area throughout their entire length. The Bear Swamp is a wetland at the far east boundary of the Township within the Game Lands. The Wiconisco Creek follows a very linear course from the Township's eastern to western border. Wetlands are found almost continuously along the Creek on the east side of Lykens and in an area just west of the Borough. Rattling Creek flows north through Lykens to join the Wiconisco and drains a large forested north slope of Berry Mountain. In its upper reaches, all within the Borough, it contains wetlands. *Source: Wiconisco Creek Watershed Study 2005, Dauphin Co. Conservation District*

## **TOPOGRAPHY**

Half of the land in Wiconisco Township is set on a 15% slope commonly found on the lower rolling hills of mountains. The steep slopes of Wiconisco Township involve the entire southern boundary on Berry Mountain and rings the boundary of the Game Lands on the Big Lick and Short Mountains. A

narrow east-west strip of Dekalb-Lehew soils exists in the Township with less than the 15% slope that may have development potential in the future.

## **NATURAL FEATURES**

The 1974 Dauphin County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan identified no unique geologic, botanic or ecologic natural features in Wiconisco Township. A Natural Areas Inventory was undertaken in 2000 by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. It, too, found no species of interest of concern or exemplary natural communities in the township.

However, the Township does have a “Natural Feature of Statewide Importance” in the Bear Swamp in the upper reaches of Bear Creek in the State Game Lands.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC SYNOPSIS

Socio-economic and demographic data was obtained from the draft Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan 2005, scheduled for adoption in 2005, the US Census, and PA State Data Center.

### POPULATION CHANGE

Table 1

Population Change by Area

Area	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Pennsylvania	9,900,180	10,498,012	11,305,093	11,798,876	11,864,904	11,881,643	12,281,054
Dauphin County	177,410	197,784	220,255	223,713	232,317	237,813	251,798
Wiconisco Twp.	2,273	1,992	1,801	1,471	1,566	1,372	1,168

From 1980 until 2000, Wiconisco lost 25% of its population, while Dauphin County gained 8%. It should be noted here that Wiconisco Township Officials disputed the Census figures, since they could not account for the loss in population. Their objections went unrecognized by Census Officials. The Dauphin County website cites information obtained from Atlantic Communications Group, Inc. and states Wiconisco Township population is 1,680. The reader is thus advised to consider the following information in reference to the 1990-2000 population change for Wiconisco Township in light of this disputed number of residents.

Table 2

Percentage Population Change 1980-2000

Area	1980 Population	Change 1980-90	% Change 1980-90	Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000
Dauphin County	232,317	5,496	2.37	13,985	5.88
North Section	25,836	844	3.3	(408)	(1.5)
Wiconisco Twp.	1,566	(194)	(12.4)	(204)	(14.87)

Between 1940 and 2000, the nationwide average number of persons living in each household dropped from 3.76 to 2.59, a one-third reduction. Two primary factors are the cause of this decline: declining birth rate and increasing number of non-family households and single parent families.

County population is projected by Dauphin County Planning Commission to increase by 5% by 2010 and another 3.4% between 2010 and 2020. Much of this increase will likely occur in the southern suburban townships: Lower Paxton, Susquehanna and Derry, primarily.

## PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

Table 3

### Persons Per Household 1950-2000

Area	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
United States	3.37	3.33	3.14	2.76	2.63	2.59
Dauphin County	3.15	3.13	2.91	2.58	2.45	2.39
Wiconisco Twp.	n/a	n/a	3.04	2.88	2.66	2.45

The table above shows that the average number of household residents consistently lower for Dauphin County than the entire nation. Wiconisco's number of persons per household falls between Dauphin County and the U.S. During the 1950-60 Censuses, this data was not collected in Wiconisco Twp. or is unavailable.

## 2000 POPULATION DENSITY

Table 4

### 2000 Population Density

Area	2000 Population	Area Sq. Mi.	Persons / Sq. Mi.
Dauphin County	251,798	525.3	479
North Section	26,272	223.5	117.5
Wiconisco Twp.	1,168 / 1,680*	10.1	116

*\*The Dauphin County website lists the higher population figure obtained from the Atlantic Communications Group. When comparing the two numbers, it seems a typo may have occurred. However, it can't be proven.*

Actual density for Wiconisco Township is obviously not evenly distributed. Wiconisco is covered by 4,004 acres of state game lands, or 62.5% of its entire area (*source: PA Game Commission*). The Village of Wiconisco certainly accounts for the majority of the Township's total population. Many Boroughs across the Commonwealth have as much land area as the Township of Wiconisco. Wiconisco Township records a density of 308 persons per square mile (using the disputed total population figure of 1,168). Wiconisco has minimal growth potential without higher density redevelopment of existing residential areas within the Village of Wiconisco, or rezoning other districts within the Township to promote additional residential uses. Population density for all municipalities north of the North Section of Dauphin County (*defined by Dauphin Co. Planning Commission as all municipalities north of Peters Mtn.*) is 117.5 persons per square mile, so the Township is very comparable to its neighbors which includes several Boroughs where density is much higher.



**2000 AGE DISTRIBUTION**

Table 5

**2000 Age Distribution**

Area	Total Pop.	<5	5-19	20-34	35-44	45-64	65-84	85+	Median Age
Dauphin County – #	251,798	15,490	51,052	47,832	41,547	59,960	31,601	4,243	37.9
Dauphin County – %		6.2	20.3	19.0	16.5	23.8	12.6	1.7	n/a
North Section – No.	26,272	1,566	5,308	4,686	4,149	6,317	3,750	496	n/a
North Section - %		6.0	20.2	17.8	15.8	24.0	14.3	1.9	n/a
Wicon. – No.	1,168	64	227	205	165	319	171	17	40.6
Wicon. - %		5.5	19.4	17.6	14.1	27.3	14.6	1.5	n/a

n/a = not available or applicable.

Implications from the decreasing number of person per household are that there are presently more students in the schools than will be enrolling in school in the near future and that Wiconisco has an overall “older” population than Dauphin County. Without any change in residential development, and or reversal of the birth rate, the trend towards smaller families and fewer people per household will ultimately result in a shrinking number of students in the schools. Wiconisco Township is over 98% white with the remaining percentages being divided between black and Asian or a combination of races.

**EDUCATION**

Table 6

**2000 Educational Attainment  
25 years & Over**

Area	Total Pop.	No School	K-6	7-9	10-12	HS Dipl.	<1 yr. Coll.	1+ Yrs., No Degree	A.S. or B.S.	M.S. or Prof. School	PhD
Dauphin County	171,783	1,482	1,289	9,272	75,274	64,174	10,545	17,357	36,059	13,878	1,223
North Section	18,030	100	91	1,908	2,748	8,763	960	1,442	2,111	676	18
Wiconisco Twp.	825	0	11	87	134	432	39	56	57	7	2

Wiconisco has a higher percentage of high school graduates, but is only half of the North Section’s percentage of college graduates.

Table 7

**Educational Threshold Percentages**

Area	Total Pop.	High School Graduates	College Degrees
North Section	18,030	48.6%	15.5%
Washington Twp.	1,367	48	18.5
Wiconisco Twp.	825	52	8

As evidenced in Tables 8 & 9, the entire North Section and Wiconisco lost workers between 1990 and 2000, which is consistent with the disputed census population figures as well as other factors such as an area-wide aging population and worker retirement.

**EMPLOYMENT**

Table 8

**1990 Employment by Occupation  
16 years and Over**

Area	Total	Male	Female	Mgrs, Prof	Tech. Sales & Admin	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision Prod., Craft & Repair	Operators, Laborers
Dauphin County	120,247	63,695	56,552	32,533	42,153	14,829	1,144	11,836	17,752
North Section	12,807	7,151	5,686	1,919	3,426	1,173	385	2,221	3,684
Wiconisco Twp.	624	336	288	79	156	48	4	91	246

Table 9

**2000 Employment by Occupation  
16 years and Over**

Area	Total	Male	Female	Mgrs, Prof	Tech. Sales & Admin	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision Prod., Craft & Repair	Operators, Laborers
Dauphin County	122,805	63,733	59,072	42,833	17,254	35,345	447	9,435	17,491
North Section	12,597	6,919	5,678	3,083	1,627	3,087	92	1,538	3,215
Wiconisco Twp.	523	259	264	60	64	122	4	72	201

Wiconisco lost workers in nearly all categories, save for a noticeable growth in Service. The few farms in the Township remained in operation, while farming experienced a large reduction County-wide, mostly in the North Section.

**Table 10****Employment Change 1990-2000**

Area	1990	2000	% Change
Dauphin County	120,247	122,805	2.1
North Section	12,807	12,597	(1.6)
Wiconisco Twp.	624	523	(1.6)

Wiconisco mirrored the change of the North Section, while Dauphin County had reasonable growth.

**Table 11****Employment – Male & Female Percentage**

Area	1990		2000		1990 %		2000 %	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	M	W	M	W
Dauphin County	63,695	56,552	63,733	59,072	52.9	47.1	51.9	48.1
North Section	7,151	5,686	6,919	5,678	55.7	44.3	54.9	45.1
Wiconisco Twp.	336	288	259	264	53.8	46.2	49.5	50.5

All three areas in Table 11 saw the percentages of males and females in the workplace introduce more women into the workforce. Wiconisco Township experienced over four times the percentage increase as either the County or North Section.

Income data is presented in several types of profiles. The Per Capita method simply adds up all of the income generated for any given municipality and divides that total by the number of residents. It is an average figure. Household summaries contain the provisions that all persons in a household may not be related and family summaries specify that all household members are related by either birth, marriage, or adoption. The Median figure is simply the middle one of any given range. If you have 31 numbers, it is the sixteenth. The income reported in 1990 is actually the income earned in 1989, and so on.

The Median Household Income (MHI) figures do not include one-person households. Between 1980 and 2000, Wiconisco increased its MHI 113 percent. Wiconisco fell behind both the County and North Section in percentage gain in Median Household Income.

**INCOME****Table 12****Median Household Income by Municipality 1980-2000**

Area	Median Household Income				
	1980	1990	2000	1980-2000	
				Number	Percentage
Dauphin County	17,139	30,985	41,507	24,368	142
North Section	16,192	28,183	39,007	22,815	141
Wiconisco Twp.	15,833	27,262	33,654	17,821	113

During the same 20 year period, Wiconisco's Per Capita Income (PCI) increased 170 percent to \$15,258. Jefferson Township, Dauphin County had the greatest percentage increase at 319% and Derry Township, Dauphin County had the greatest dollar increase at \$23,143. Again, Wiconisco PCI is lower than both the County and North Section in percentage gain, however, not as much as the MHI.

**Table 13****Per Capita Income by Municipality 1980-2000**

Area	Per Capita Income				
	1980	1990	2000	1980-2000	
				Number	Percentage
Dauphin County	7,525	14,890	22,134	14,609	194
North Section	6,191	11,889	18,483	12,292	199
Wiconisco Twp.	5,650	10,598	15,268	9,618	170

Wiconisco's Median Family Income figure was the most sluggish during this two-decade period at 106 percent gain, indicating a large difference in the rate of increase from that of the County and North Section gains.

**Table 14****Median Family Income by Municipality 1980-2000**

Area	Median Family Income				
	1980	1990	2000	1980-2000	
				Number	Percentage
Dauphin County	20,596	37,254	50,974	30,378	147
North Section	18,524	32,051	45,467	26,943	145
Wiconisco Twp.	18,504	30,509	38,182	19,678	106

The following three tables (15-17) outline comparisons of persons below the poverty level between Dauphin County, the North Section and Wiconisco Township. The Township generally falls between

the County and North Section for all three comparisons with the exception of persons between 18 and 74 years of age.

Table 15

**Persons Below Poverty Level 1980-2000**

Area	1980		1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dauphin County	22,438	9.9	23,680	9.9	23,706	9.4
North Section	2,075	8.0	1,980	7.4	2,252	8.6
Wiconisco Twp.	142	9.1	116	8.5	112	9.6

Table 16

**Families Below Poverty Level – 1980-2000**

Area	1980		1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dauphin County	4,544	7.4	4,593	7.25	4,989	7.5
North Section	411	5.7	370	4.9	491	6.6
Wiconisco Twp.	26	5.8	28	6.8	24	7.1

In both the Persons and Families Below Poverty Level, the Township was reported less than the County in 1980 and 1990. Wiconisco recorded the highest percentage of persons below poverty in 2000, yet remained between County and North Section rates for the families comparison. This relative increase for persons below the Poverty Level was focused in the 18-74 years of age groups.

Table 17

**Ages of Person Below Poverty Level In 2000**

Area	Total Population	Below Poverty Level		Number & Percent of Persons							
		Number	Percentage	0 to 17		18-64		65-74		74 & Over	
				#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dauphin County	251,798	23,706	9.4	8,471	3.4	12,878	5.1	1,259	0.5	1,098	0.4
North Section	26,272	2,252	8.6	724	2.8	1,135	4.3	164	0.6	220	0.9
Wiconisco Twp.	1,168	112	9.6	33	2.8	62	5.3	10	0.9	7	0.6

**COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION**

Commercial and Industrial building has been absent from the Township for the 18 year period from 1984 through 2001. County-wide, there has been significant activity during this period and even the

North Section benefited from a fair portion of the County's activity: two percent of the total for commercial activity and five percent of the total industrial activity.

**Table 18**  
**Value of Commercial Construction Activity**  
**1984-2001**

Area	Commercial Construction	Industrial Construction
Dauphin County	\$1,281,027,153	\$170,100,391
North Section	\$ 24,924,370	\$ 8,462,045
Wiconisco Twp.	\$ 0	\$ 0

## HOUSING

The 2000 Census listed 536 dwelling units in the Township more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of which were single family detached homes. Twelve percent were listed as multiple unit structures and 25 mobile homes were counted. *A reminder: the Township disputes the findings of the 2000 Census with apparent justification.*

Two-thirds of the dwelling units were constructed prior to 1939. Eight percent of the 2000 housing stock was constructed after 1980, however. Since 2000, the Township has issued only a few new home construction permits per year, primarily in minor subdivisions. Conversely, Township officials cannot support the claim that 46 dwellings were either razed or moved out of the Township between 1980-2000.

363 of the dwelling units are listed as owner-occupied with a median value of \$50,800. No homes were listed as being worth more than \$200,000. The median mortgage payment was computed to be \$724 for the 133 homes with mortgages. The median rental for the 85 renter-occupied units is \$431. The Census identified 56 unoccupied housing units.

Township officials are desirous of developing equitable and enforceable property maintenance and rehabilitation programs that will spur homeowners to improve their properties without unduly penalizing their efforts through increased real estate taxes. More than anecdotal evidence exists to support the contention that exterior renovations are intentionally not done to avoid larger tax bills.

Table 19

Housing Data	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	536	100%
Total Occupied Units	480	89.5%
Vacant Units	56	10.4%
Owner Occupied dwelling units	363	75.6%
Renter Occupied	85	17.7%
<b>Occupied Units Unaccounted for</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
Median Dwelling Unit Value	\$50,800	
Median Mortgage Payment	\$724	
Median Rent Payment	\$431	
Dwelling Unit Age		100%
1990-2000	17	3.2%
1980-1989	25	4.7%
1970-1979	54	10.1%
1960-1969	27	5%
1940-1959	58	10.8%
1939 & earlier	355	66.2%
Average Household Size (persons/household)	2.45	
Dwelling Unit Type		
Single Family Detached Dwellings	416	77.6%
Mobile Home Dwellings	25	4.6%
Multiple Unit Dwellings (1-19 units)	95	17.7%

Source: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

## SUMMARY

- Wiconisco Township has maintained a comparable relationship, with most of its neighbors in the Northern Section and the County in most population categories, despite the disputed 2000 Census population count.
- Income levels for individuals, families, and households have remained within reasonable ranges of the other groupings chosen for comparison.

- The potential of either commercial or industrial development activity is essentially limited to expansion of existing buildings or facilities, and is unlikely to occur due to lack of suitable land, development trends and steep slope characteristics of the land.
- Additional residential development in the Township is desirable within the area where infrastructure exists to support it, which is primarily along the periphery of the Village of Wiconisco and along Pottsville St. Much of the existing housing stock in the Township is in need of renovation. Methods to facilitate housing rehabilitation are currently being explored by Township officials.



## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### THE EARLY YEARS

There are differing points of view as to the time frame when the first Indians settled in this area. Some believe that the Paleo-Indians were here 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. However, some local archeology evidence suggests that these Indians may have been here much longer than that.

The first local people in our area were once nomadic with tribes consisting of hunter-gatherers who started out by moving from one area to another in search of land that could produce enough game and gathered foods to support the tribe.

What are now Armstrong Valley, Powell's Valley and Small Valley became the final destination of this huge migratory movement, but remember that many other dissenting factions broke from the main group earlier, settling in the U.S. Midwestern Plains and Southwest. This made the original migrating group much smaller when it reached the final destination of these valleys in which we now call home.

It is said that the population of Indians inhabiting this area even exceeded the population we have here today. This area turned into a huge, sprawling Indian city that stretched from the eastern shore of the Susquehanna River into the surrounding valleys. Again, these tribes split and resided in separate factions. Many problems occurred among these factions, and war was commonplace and almost ongoing. Even with the wars, most decided to stay here after the migration and fight for the rich land they called home.

Through the years, the weakened Indian tribes moved south and west, as the most powerful tribes remained here. These tribes grew and developed into large Indian nations. We know them now as the Eastern Woodland Indians.

Around the mid-1300s, the North American Native Nations was formed. It was also known as the Five Nations Confederacy. The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca tribes were the original members of this confederacy. They met in a huge council every 5 years to make sure they were all in agreement with the terms of the alliance. This alliance formed into what we now know as the Iroquois nation. Many other Indian nations also fell under the protection of the main confederacy, and peace was beginning to get a foothold in the Indian's life.

The earliest Susquehannocks may have been here as early as 1000 A.D., but they are latecomers compared to how long this area was occupied with other various Indian tribes and nations. The Susquehannock civilization may have reached its peak in the years 1400 to 1500 A. D. The name

Susquehannock comes from the word "*Sasquesahanough*." Interpreted, it means "People of the Muddy River."

The Susquehannocks were considered giants, especially in the eyes of the European explorers. The average height of the male adult Susquehannock Indian was between 6 feet, 2 inches and 7 feet, 2 inches tall. But there have been skeletal specimens of Susquehannocks found that have measured over 8 feet, 2 inches in height. The European explorers must have been overwhelmed at their size, as they averaged in size from only 4 feet to 5 feet, 3 inches in height. In other words, in some cases the Susquehannocks were actually more than twice the size of the early explorers.

As the European settlers moved into the area, the Susquehannocks made alliances to trade with them. They first befriended the French by 1615, and then the English around 1625, and the Dutch by 1630. The Susquehannocks were the only tribe to establish and maintain trading with all three of these competing European peoples. They traded various farmed foods and other items, but their main trading commodity was beaver skins and fur.

Although they were armed with European-made guns, the Susquehannocks soon ran into severe shortages of ammunition. The traders and settlers remained neutral and would not supply them with the needed ammunition. The wars escalated in 1658, and now the entire Iroquoian Confederation was warring with the Susquehannocks.

The Susquehannocks held their ground; however, they soon came up against an enemy for which they had no defense. In 1661, a smallpox epidemic radically reduced their numbers. The Susquehannocks did not have an effective immune system to continue to fight off the diseases brought by the Europeans.

By 1669, the Susquehannock tribe had dwindled down to approximately 300 warriors, as smallpox continued to take its toll. The Susquehannock chiefs realized that they could not fight both the disease and the Iroquois. They sent a high-ranking ambassador to go to the Iroquois to negotiate a peace agreement. The Iroquois, in response to this gesture, tortured and killed the ambassador.

The Susquehannocks finally were defeated in 1675 and the remaining members of the tribe surrendered. Those who were not killed outright were forced to scatter and settle among the Oneida and even the Mohawk tribes. They became members of what was known as the "Covenant Chain."

*The excerpts above were taken from an article compiled from "History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations" by John Heckewelder, Pennsylvania State Library, and "Everyday Life Among the Indians," by Cindy Moulton. It was published in the Upper Dauphin Sentinel during the fall of 2005.*

## THE SETTLERS

Andrew Lycon, a Scotch-Irish immigrant, and his family are recorded as the first of many Scotch-Irish settlers in the valley. They came to the valley following Andrew's jail term for being a squatter on Indian lands in the Juniata valley in 1750. They settled on 200 acres on the northern side of the "Whiconescong" Creek., where they peacefully improved the property until March 7, 1756, when Indians attacked the settlers in the valley. They escaped over the mountains and remained there until the end of hostilities. Andrew died during this period and his family returned to the settlement, probably around 1764. Jane Lycon, Andrew's wife, was given a patent for the land in 1765. Various sources state the Lycon cabin stood until 1863 on land recently owned by Josiah Hoover. The Ferree's, a historic Lancaster County settler family, later purchased the Lycon property. Ferree remains a familiar name to the residents.

## INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE



Coal was discovered in 1825 by Jacob Burd, Sr. and Peter Kimes while scratching a stick in the ground at the foot of Short Mountain.  
Source: *History of the Lykens-Williams Valley*, J. Allen Barrett

The 1,600 acre property where coal was discovered in 1825 had been purchased only shortly before the discovery for \$0.25 per acre by Thomas Cope. The Wiconisco Coal Company was organized in 1831, and the Lykens Valley Railroad and Coal Company was organized in 1831. The railroad began in 1834 and was the first in the county and fourth in the country to transport anthracite. Mules pulled the train the 16 miles to Millersburg until the railroad was rebuilt with T-rail in 1848. Through 1925, 3,234,781 tons of coal was mined

and shipped on the Susquehanna River.

The Short Mountain Colliery operated throughout the mining period in Wiconisco and due to shrinking profits, a series of disruptive strikes and the onset of the Depression finally closed in the early 1930's.



The “Toonerville” trolley was chartered in 1894 under the name of Lykens Valley and Williams Valley Street Railway Company and ran from Reiner City (now Muir) to Lykens, passing through Tower City, Sheridan, Williams Township, and Wiconisco. The 13 mile line cost 25 cents to ride. The second of two

overhead bridges was built over the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks in Wiconisco and the motorman would stop the trolley to allow the faint of heart to debark and walk across the tracks rather than take the daring ride. It operated until 1925 it lost its tracks to paving of Route 209 and competition with the automobile.

The Township’s Sesqui-Centennial Commemorative Book contains a wealth of all aspects of Wiconisco’s history and was used as another source for this chapter.

Wiconisco currently has no sites listed on the National Register of Historic Sites or any PA Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) markers within its boundaries.

The Memorial Park Baseball Field, now called the L & W baseball stadium, constructed as a Work Projects Administration (WPA) project and completed in 1940, is most likely a candidate for recognition as a national site. In the future the Township should consider the preparation of Interpretive Markers that detail Township’s history with regard to the canal, coal, lumber, railroads and Wiconisco trolley.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The number and quality of the facilities, services and utilities outlined hereafter results from the needs and desires of the local residents. These types of community assets vary from area to area and a good measure of the desirability of an area is the quality and quantity of its community facilities. Wiconisco Township has a variety of quality community facilities available to the residents. This section provides descriptions of the area’s community facilities including public sewer and water services, recreation, schools, emergency services and libraries.

### UTILITY SYSTEMS PUBLIC SEWER

The Wiconisco Wastewater Treatment Facility is administered by the Board of Supervisors. It was constructed at the corner of Pottsville St. and Market St. with the effluent entering Bear Creek. The sewer service area of the Township is shown on **Map 9**. Expansion beyond the current service area may be necessitated if additional on-lot septic systems begin failing. However, the cost per user is extremely high to extend sewer mains for relatively few new users.

**Table 1**  
**Wiconisco Wastewater Treatment Facility – 2005 Statistics**

Permitted Capacity (MGD)	0.125
Average Daily Flow (MGD)	0.060
Percentage of Plant Capacity	48
Excess Plant Capacity (MGD)	0.065
EDUs Available	163

*Source: Tri-County 2001 Survey & 2005 Operator Interview.*

*MGD is equal to million gallons per day.*

The plant is designed for 200,000 gallons per day (GPD) capacity, therefore if the need arises, the permitted capacity may be increased by the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) closer to the design capacity.

EDU stands for Equivalent Daily Usage and is standardized by the DEP as 400 gallons per day for a residence. Usage is determined for other types of facilities based upon the number of fixtures or estimated usage of similar facilities elsewhere. Tapping and Hook-up fees are \$200 each, plus the time and materials to complete the work.

Given the limited development potential or demand within the Township, there is no reason to believe that the current plant will need upgrading / expansion in the near future. The Act 537 was last updated in 1994, current and future trends have not dictated the need for a plan update. The current Act 537 Plan defines several areas in the eastern end of the Township and along Pottsville St. west of the plant where there are known incidents of failing on-lot disposal systems (OLDS). In such incidences, holding tanks have been installed and the Township administers OLDS pumping and billing schedules.

## PUBLIC WATER

Wiconisco Township receives public water supply service from the Lykens Water and Sewer Authority. The Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan 2005 indicates that the Authority provides service to 3,100 persons (1,276 connections). It is using only 43.2% of its 1.0 MGD capacity. The Authority has one well and uses the east and west branches of Rattling Creek as its source and has no expansion plans.

## EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Williams Valley School District serves the boroughs of Tower City and Williamstown, along with the townships of Porter, Rush, Wiconisco, and Williams from its Jr. / Sr. High and Elementary Schools in Williams and Porter Townships, respectively. The 2000 Census indicated that 190 students from Wiconisco Township attended Williams Valley schools. Projections by the Census and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission predict one less student will be attending in 2020.

Table 2

**Williams Valley School District Enrollments & Projections**

Grades	2002-2003 Enrollment		2007-2008 Projections		2012-2013 Projections		% Change 2002-03 to 2012-2013	
	K-8	9-12	K-8	9-12	K-8	9-12	K-8	9-12
Williams Valley	855	376	691	370	579	305	(32.3)	(18.9)
Totals:	1,231		1,061		884		(28.2)	

Source: Schuylkill County Comprehensive Plan 2004

School District Officials report the following data for enrollment:

**Table 3**

**Williams Valley School District  
Enrollment Comparison**

	1995/96	2005/06	% Change
Elementary	714	582	(18.5)
Secondary	574	575	0.1
Total	1,288	1,157	(10.2)
<i>Source: School District Business Manager</i>			

These projections present steady declines in future enrollment for the school district and Wiconisco Township in particular. The Schuylkill County Planning Commission has concluded that not only will residential development not occur in the near future, but also that the population, as a whole, is growing older and not having more children. One positive feature of the Williams Valley School District is it offers vocational-technical education to Williams Valley students through the Intermediate Unit in Schuylkill County.

Tax rates for the School District for the current year are

**Table 4**

**Williams Valley School District 2005/2006 Tax Structure**

Real Estate	Dauphin County Rate	10.71 mills
Per Capita	Act 511	\$5.00
Per Capita	Section 679	\$5.00
Occupational Privilege	District-wide	\$10.00
Earned Income	“	0.5%
Occupational Millage	“	\$205.00
Real Estate Transfer	“	0.5%

*Source: School District Business Manager*

**PRIVATE AND NON-PUBLIC PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Ten elementary and five secondary private and non-public schools serve the northern Dauphin County area. There is no available breakdown of the number of students by municipality; however, it is likely that Township residents are among the students at several of the following schools. Enrollments have

remained fairly constant from 1999 through 2002 with the secondary schools showing the most variance.

**Table 5****Private & Non-Public Schools**

School	Location	Enrollment		
		1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
<b>Elementary Schools</b>				
Armstrong Valley Christian School	Halifax	5	4	5
Berrysburg Christian Academy	Elizabethville	12	16	12
Emanuel Wesleyan Academy	Gratz	14	17	14
Garden Spot Amish School	Millersburg	15	24	7
Mahantango School	Lykens	21	24	21
Matterstown School	Elizabethville	25	25	27
North Mountain View Amish	Millersburg	10	12	13
Northern Dauphin Christian School	Millersburg	44	51	47
South Mountain View School	Gratz	21	20	20
Specktown School	Lykens	22	25	24
<b>Secondary Schools</b>				
Armstrong Valley Christian School	Halifax	5	4	2
Berrysburg Christian Academy	Elizabethville	15	22	21
Emanuel Wesleyan Academy	Gratz	10	19	9
Garden Spot Amish School	Millersburg	7	7	3
North Mountain View Amish	Millersburg	4	3	2
<b>Total Enrollments</b>		204	245	201

Source: Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan 2005 Draft

Neighboring Schuylkill County also has numerous private schools, which are primarily parochial elementary and high schools.

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

Six institutions of higher education are available to residents in Dauphin County: Penn State-Hbg., Penn State Hershey Medical Center, Hbg. Area Community College, Temple University, Widener University School of Law, and Dixon University Center, which houses nine colleges and universities. Enrollment during 2002-2003 at these schools totaled 13,482 students. Penn State-Main Campus and Kutztown



Univ. have established small satellite centers in Harrisburg, also. These colleges and universities offer a wide variety of disciplines that lead to associate, bachelor and graduate degrees.

Schuylkill County also has several colleges and schools of business, technology and nursing, as well as campuses of large institutions that are as close as several of those in Dauphin County.

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

### **FIRE, POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Wiconisco Fire Engine Co., No. 1 (now Engine #23) was formed on May 23, 1922. Under the direction of the first Chief, Joseph Noble, the Company quickly became known as one of the most proficient in upper Dauphin County through its diligent training and practice. The Company replaced its first fire truck after 15 years in 1938 and now has a complement which includes a pumper, tanker, rescue squad and brush truck. The 207 membership in 1938 included the first aid squad that had been organized under the leadership of John Loman in 1933. The Squad was well equipped and very efficient and is now known as the Lykens and Wiconisco Ambulance Association, Inc. All fire and emergency services are now housed in a new facility on Arch St. between the Village and Borough. Engine 22 in Lykens Borough and the West End Fire Co. #3 and Volunteer Fire Co. #1, both located in Tower City, are also available to assist in Wiconisco Township.

The Township has its own Police Chief, who is responsible for enforcing all laws and codes in the Township. Additional police services are provided to the Township by the PA State Police located in the Lykens Barracks on State Rd. opposite the Lykens Plaza on Rt. 209.

Advanced Life Support medical services are provided by Medic 6 of Upper Dauphin Co. Emergency Services. Services are dispatched through the Dauphin County 911 operator stationed in Harrisburg. In 2004, personnel responded to four calls of seven total dispatches in Wiconisco Township out of its 230 total responses. Life Lion Helicopter of University Hospital in Hershey also services the area. Tower Porter Community EMS (Tower City Ambulance) of Tower City participates in an inter-municipal assistance agreement with Wiconisco Township for large emergencies, also.

## **HEALTH FACILITIES**

Seven hospitals provide service to Wiconisco Twp. – Hershey Medical Center, Pinnacle Health Hospitals (Harrisburg, Polyclinic, and Community General Osteopathic), Holy Spirit in Camp Hill and Good Samaritan and Pottsville Hospital and Warne Clinic in Pottsville also service the area. Hershey and Pinnacle are the general, non-profit hospitals. The Evelyn G. Frederick Health Center in

Millersburg provides outpatient and primary care. Two licensed nursing homes are located in the valley; Kepler Home, Inc. in Elizabethville and Susquehanna Lutheran Village in Millersburg.

*The sources for much of the Educational Facilities and Emergency Services sections data are the Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan 2005, Township commemorative documents, and the websites of the various organizations.*

## **RECREATIONAL & CULTURAL FACILITIES**

### **LIBRARIES & MUSEUMS**

There are two libraries in the area that provide service to residents; the Elizabethville Area Branch Library adjacent to Upper Dauphin High School and the Northern Dauphin Branch Library, a new facility located in Lykens Borough.

Twelve museums can be found in Dauphin County with themes varying from chocolate to Slavic heritage to Dorthea Dix to the Civil War. The closest museum is the Millersburg /Upper Paxton Twp. Heritage Museum located in Millersburg. Currently, planning is underway to establish a Lykens Railroad Museum.

### **PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES**

National Natural Landmark – The Susquehanna Water Gap, which is so designated, divides Blue, Peters and Buffalo Mountains and provides scenic vistas for area residents throughout the year.

#### ***STATE FACILITIES***

State Game Lands #264 occupy 62% of Wiconisco and #210 lies just over the mountain south of Lykens in Jackson and Jefferson Townships. Dauphin County contains nearly 45,000 acres of State Game Lands. Deer, fowl and small game are harvested from these lands each year. The Haldeman and Greenland tracts of the Weiser State Forest are immediately south of Wiconisco Township in Jackson Township. Over 8,000 acres of State Forest Land, containing two picnic areas, are in Dauphin County. There are, however, no State Parks in Dauphin County.

The PA Fish & Boat Commission has a Susquehanna River Access Area in Millersburg and two miles of Clarks Creek from SR0325 to the Game Commissions' access road at Iron Furnace has been designated as a fly-fishing area.

### ***COUNTY & REGIONAL FACILITIES***

Dauphin County Parks and Recreation has two facilities in the area. The Wiconisco Creek County Park lies to the west in Upper Paxton Township. The park features a 14-target archery skills trail, a large pavilion, soccer and softball fields, tot lot play equipment, one sand volleyball court and walking trails. The ball fields and pavilions are available for rent for privately scheduled events.

Lykens Glen Park is next to Rattling Creek in the south end of Lykens Borough. It contains two pavilions (33 and 10 tables), each with a portable toilet, sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, tot lot and one with electric service and water pump.

A feasibility study has been completed for potential establishment of a 20 mile Rail-Trail generally along the railway bed. Current plans include constructing a portion in the State Game Lands north of Wiconisco Village and two sections east of Millersburg. Such an endeavor normally takes several years and involves numerous negotiations, as well as educational efforts aimed at illustrating the fact that the benefits of a Rail-Trail far outweigh the perceived negative potential.

The Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art is located along Wiconisco Creek in Upper Paxton and strives to continue the artist's love of nature and offers a wide variety of visual and performing arts.

### ***LOCAL FACILITIES***

Wiconisco Township facilities include Mountain Street Park, a two-acre site with playground and picnic area; Walnut Street Park, a half an acre parcel containing one basketball court and picnic area; and L&W Athletic Park, a six acre park that contains the historic Depression-era stadium used for baseball and football.

The Borough of Lykens owns two municipal parks – Lykens Borough Park, a 7.3 acre municipal park containing one basketball court, tennis courts and a public swimming pool and Glen Park, a 50.8 acre park containing one baseball field, one softball field, and picnic area. Glen Park is actually maintained and operated by the Dauphin County Park and Recreation Department.

Tower City contains two parks of 12.3 and 5.4 acres that list only American Legion and Little League size baseball fields among their facilities.

### ***SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES***

Although no schools are located in Wiconisco Township, the facilities of Upper Dauphin School District are close in proximity for residents to make use of them. Williams Valley High School, located in the eastern end of Williams Township and the Elementary in western Porter Township have typical school

outdoor playstations and basketball court facilities are also available for the public's use. School District outdoor athletic facilities available for the public's use when not scheduled for school district activities.

### ***OTHER FACILITY & ACTIVITY PROVIDERS***

The Greater Harrisburg Area YMCA operates a branch in Washington Township. Churches have some congregation-related facilities and activities, as do several local sportsmen / hunting clubs in the area.

### **SUMMARY**

The Township is limited in its development potential, due to stagnant population growth, poor soils for septic systems, slope constraints, available land and market. Therefore, desired residential, commercial and industrial opportunities will likely be focused primarily on re-development and / or expansion of existing buildings or commercial / industrial operations.

Community facilities supporting Wiconisco Township are considered sufficient to meet current day as well as future residential and commercial needs concluding that:

- Existing sewer and water infrastructure can support future expansion.
- Existing schools can absorb additional numbers of students.
- Existing emergency services are considered organized, professional, diversified, and sufficient in coverage and rate of response to meet the needs of the Township.
- Recreational and cultural facilities provide a generally well-rounded menu of facilities and programs for both passive and active pursuits.

## TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

### ROADWAY HIERARCHY

Three or four categories of roadways are normally found in any given municipality. The most commonly known categories are defined as follows:

**Arterial** – This type of roadway has two classifications: Principal and Minor. A Principal Arterial roadway is usually a multi-lane, limited access highway, such as an interstate or turnpike. Its purpose is to move a lot of traffic through an area quickly. Destinations are regionally, not locally separated. A Minor Arterial roadway carries less traffic volume and its destinations are closer. Such a roadway is rarely multi-laned or limited access and has more at-grade intersections and more local destinations (roadside commercial or employment centers). SR209 is classified as a Minor Arterial roadway.

**Collector** – This is a street or road that carries traffic from local streets to the arterial system. As the name implies, vehicles are collected from residential subdivisions and commercial and employment centers and guided to higher level roadways. Pottsville St., SR 1002, qualifies as a Collector Roadway.

**Local Streets** – This roadway is commonly abutted by homes, small businesses, and perhaps industry. The average number of vehicle trips per day on a local street /road is normally under 1,000.

**Lane** – This is a narrow, paved or unpaved, roadway that normally accesses only one usage; farm buildings or residences, private clubs, small non-traffic types of businesses, and the like. Most of these roads are less than 20 feet wide.

PennDOT's Municipal Map of Wiconisco Township lists 5.71 mi. of local roads and 6.85 mi. of state roads for a total of 12.56 mi. *Source: PennDOT Bur. of Planning & Research, Oct., 2001.*

### TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

PennDOT's Bureau of Highway Safety and Traffic Engineering compiles accident data in the form of Engineering Extracts. The latest report available for state routes only includes the period from 1998-2001 and 2003. This data includes only those accidents that involved injury or vehicles being towed. Non-injury and fender-bender type accidents, as well as local road accidents, are occasionally mapped by the local PA State Police barracks, however, the practice is not uniform among local offices and the Lykens Barracks does not undertake this type of analysis.

During the period noted above, 46 accidents occurred in Wiconisco Township. Sixty-two vehicles were involved in these accidents (43 cars, 1 motorcycle, 16 small trucks and 2 large trucks). Of the 31 persons injured in 22 accidents, of which there were no fatalities, three suffered moderate injuries, and 28 had minor injuries.

The most prevalent cause for the accidents was speeding, accounting for 18% of the total. Sixty-one percent occurred during the day and 76% in good weather. Half of all recorded accidents occurred on the weekends. Sixty-one percent occurred on Pottsville St. (SR1002) with the remainder located on Rt. 209 (SR0209). Local roadways involved with crashes included: Pottsville & Dayton Sts., Rt. 209 & Hill St., Pottsville & Center Sts., mid-block on Arch St., Spring St. intersection, Pottsville St. & Machamer Ave. (2), Rt. 209 & Pottsville St. intersection, Pottsville & Hill Sts. intersection, mid-block on Market St., Rt. 209 & Hill St. intersection, and Walnut & Center Sts. intersection. **Map 10** indicates the roadway segments where the accidents were grouped. It shows that the area at Machamer and Pottsville is the most dangerous, having nine accidents during the report period. The map also shows that three of the accidents attributed to Wiconisco Twp. were on roadway segments actually located in either Williams or Washington Townships.

## TRAFFIC COUNTS

PennDOT routinely performs traffic counts on its roadways to determine where significant increases may warrant additional improvement projects and / or increased maintenance activities. The table below and **Map 10** indicate the most current counts taken and their locations.

**Table 1**

### 2002 State Route Traffic Counts

STATE ROUTE	SEGMENT*	COUNT SITE	AADT
0209	0310	12,884	6,577
	0380	12,885	3,882
1002	0030	1,726	1,424
	0100	1,727	1,599

Source: PennDOT Bureau of Planning & Research & iTMS website.

AADT - Annualized Average Daily Traffic

\*See Map 9 for specific segment locations

## TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY BUDGETS

Overall Township budgets have ranged between \$520,000 and \$552,000 over the past five years. A moderate percentage of the budget is devoted to Highway-related expenses: personnel, supplies / materials and equipment for both maintenance and improvement activities.

A Liquid Fuels Allocation is received from the state in direct proportion to the amount of local street mileage the Township maintains. Real estate (millage), Earned Income, and the others shown in the table below are used to offset all Township operating expenses.

General Fund revenues and expenses are commonly limited to those projects that recur on an annual basis or may not be charged to annual allocations by the state. Highway Fund activities involve maintenance / repair / improvement uses on publicly-dedicated Township roadways. Expenses assigned to Liquid Fuels Funds expenditure are not broken out in the budgets.

**Table 2**

### Township Tax Rates – 1999 & 2001-2004

	Unit	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004
Real Estate	Mill*	2.5	3.5	0.9	2.0	3.5
Earned Income – Resident	%	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Earned Income – Non-Resident	%	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Occupational Privilege	\$	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.0	5.00
Stated Rate	\$	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Realty Transfer	%	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Per Capita	\$	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

*\* One Mill is equal to one thousandth (1/1,000) of one dollar (tenth of a cent).*

*The Township also collects special Real Estate Taxes specifically earmarked for Fire Protection and Street Lighting.*

Table 3

## Township Highway Support – 1999 &amp; 2001-2004

	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	% Change over Period
General (Operating) Fund						
Revenues <sup>1</sup>						
Expenses <sup>2</sup>	144,310	142,570	114,948	83,070	88,456	(38.7)
Highway (Capital) Fund						
Revenues <sup>3</sup>	25,557	24,341	22,248	22,680	23,056	(9.8)
Expenses <sup>4</sup>						
<b>Total Annual Support:</b>	144,310	142,570	114,948	83,070	88,456	

Source: Township Budgets

<sup>1</sup> The General Fund budget is composed of revenues generated primarily by local taxes and earnings. Highway operations must compete with the other Township functions, such as Administration and Codes Enforcement, Contributions to agencies, and others for its share of the tax dollar. Assigning revenues to individual Township functions is not usually undertaken by municipalities.

<sup>2</sup> Expenses include salaries and benefits of Township road crew staff, supplies, training, tools, clothing, gasoline, and capital purchases.

<sup>3</sup> Current revenues and earnings figures are taken from the Pennsylvania's Liquid Fuels Tax revenues report. This allocation is based upon actual mileage of roadways the Township is responsible for maintaining.

<sup>4</sup> Expenses from the Highway Fund must be directly related to maintenance and improvements of roads and associated facilities such as bridges and stormwater facilities adjacent to roadways.

## ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

A history of the specific projects that are annually addressed by the Township Highway Department for its 5.71 miles of Township roads would include such types of activities as replacing road signs, storm drainage facilities improvement /repair, guide rails installation /replacement, tree and brush trimming, crack sealing, resurfacing and the like. Annual snow removal expenses limit the Township's ability to financially support large projects or make major equipment purchases.

## SUMMARY

- Accident levels for the Township are not excessive, however, **Map 10** plots the incidences of accidents denotes specific areas on which both the Township and State Police can together institute future improvements (Specifically the intersection area of Machamer and Pottsville Streets).



- Local officials state that little response to problem areas brought to the attention of state officials responsible for them has occurred over the years, even though personal contacts have been made. Problem areas on state roads should be formally submitted to the County Maintenance Office of PennDOT with copies to the District Office.
- A comprehensive Township roadway inventory has not been undertaken. If completed, a listing of potential improvement projects would be prepared including project priorities, probable cost estimates, and schedule for completion.
- Potential new streets desired by the township should be placed on an “Official Map” as roadway projections. This lends legitimacy by having their locations planned and alerts potential developers on their being required to construct them.

## Current Land Use

### LAND USE PATTERNS

State Game Lands dominate land usage in Wiconisco at nearly 62% of the total area and the north slope of Berry Mountain representing another 19%. This leaves a narrow east-west band of 1,211 acres available for all other land uses. These, and the other land uses found in the Township, are detailed in the table below.

### EXISTING LAND USE

The area of Wiconisco Township is 10.1 square miles or 6,464 acres. These areas have been received from the Dauphin County Website and Dauphin County Planning Commission and confirmed by computer measurement. A comparison of the Zoning and Current Land Use maps yielded the following table.

Table 1

Land Use Breakdown

Usage	Approx. Area Zoned	Approx. Area Used	Remaining
	Acreage	Acreage	Acreage
Residential	782	142	640
Agricultural	none	48	-48
Commercial	23	3.5	19.5
Industrial (Manufacturing)	406	292	114
Public <b>minus cemetery</b>	none	51	-51
Semi-Public (Game Lands)	4,022	4,045	-23
Slope (Conservation)	1,231	1,231	0
<b>Totals:</b>	6,464	5,812.5	651.5

The 1975 Comprehensive Plan had the following areas of existing land use that were based upon an 11 sq. mi. 7,040 ac. Township area. Yule, Jordan Associates did not have the availability of computer-based measurement and calculation when compiling the 1975 Plan.

Table 2

## Land Use Change 1975-2005

Usage	1975		2005	
	Acreage	% of Total	Acreage	% of Total
Residential	297	4	164	3
Agricultural	15	<1	19	<1
Commercial	13	<1	3.5	<1
Industrial (Mfg.)	446	6	292	5
Public	25	<1	51	1
Semi-Public	3,978	57	4,045	63
Vacant	2,266	32	662.5	10
Slope			1,227	19
<b>Total</b>	7,040	99	6,464	99

Even using different Township sizes, the percentages of total land for the various uses are fairly comparable. The most that be deduced from the comparison is that the Public use has doubled and the Semi-Public use is perhaps more exact as the acreage for the Game Lands was gotten from the PA Game Commission and confirmed by current calculated estimates.

## RESIDENTIAL

Residential uses in the above table include Single Family, Multi-Family and Mobile Home classification types, amounting to 563, 127 and 90 acres, respectively. This represents approximately 12% of the Township's total land area. Development of the remaining 79% of Residentially-zoned land requires extension of sanitary sewer lines, due to the majority of the Township's soils characterized as unsuitable for on-lot septic systems.

Table 3 compares housing units change from 1980 to 2000 for the North Section of Dauphin County and Wiconisco Township. The North Section experienced a large increase in the 1980's, gaining 11% more residential land uses, while Wiconisco lost nearly 4% of its housing stock during the same period. For the twenty year period, Wiconisco had an overall 8% decrease. It should be noted, the Township officials dispute this declining statistic.

Table 3

**Housing Units Change; 1980-2000**

Area	Total Housing Units			Increase-Decrease	
	1980	1990	2000	1980-1990	1990-2000
North Section	9,917	11,000	11,222	1,083	222
Wiconisco Twp.	576	554	530	(22)	(24)

*Source: Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan 2005*

*Reductions are disputed by Township Officials with specific knowledge, as with Census data indicating population reduction over the same period.*

Contrary to the trends shown on the various tables, building permits for new residences have shown a small increase since 2000 and during nearly the same time period, reported in Table 3, Wiconisco issued fewer than 15 building permits for new homes. Seventy-seven percent of the housing units in the Township were built before 1960. This suggests that a majority of the housing units lost may have been from families upgrading their residences, e.g., from mobile home or apartment to townhome or single family dwelling.

**AGRICULTURAL**

The Township has no Agricultural zoning classification, but one small farm does exist in the eastern end of the Township in a Residential zone.

**COMMERCIAL**

Lands designated as “Commercial” within the Township are limited when referring to the current Zoning Map. The existing commercial base extends from Lykens Borough. There are two commercial zoning districts: Neighborhood and Highway. There is one area each of Neighborhood and Highway Commercial zoning shown on the Zoning Map. The Highway Commercial zoning district is located west of Lykens on the north side of Rt. 209, opposite and adjacent to a General Manufacturing zoning district. The Neighborhood Commercial zoning district is a relatively small area located in the Village of Wiconisco and has essentially reverted to residential or vacant usages.

**MANUFACTURING**

Wiconisco Township uses the term Manufacturing in place of Industrial on its Zoning Map. Three existing, developed sites are located in the Township. The Medco property north of Lykens contains the tailings of the coal industry that thrived throughout the 1800’s and early 1900’s and the complementary processing plant east of the Village. The other site along Rt. 209 is also a remnant of the coal industry

and currently houses a coal breaking operation. Both of these zoning districts could be conducive to redevelopment and / or expansion.

Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals 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.

### **PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC**

As with most municipalities, no zoning district classification exists for Public/Semi-Public uses. However, most zoning ordinances allow such uses within most zoning districts. These uses include Township buildings and facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, water filtration and supply facilities, emergency services, recreation areas, a stadium and a cemetery.

### **GROWTH RATES**

The loss of housing units outlined in the demographic synopsis section is overshadowed by the number of new dwelling units built during a comparable period. Because the housing stock is aging and renovating these homes is not always a viable option, new homes are a healthy vital sign for a municipality. New residential development is the primary land use foreseen in Wiconisco Township. Expansion and redevelopment of existing industrial facilities offers another area of growth potential, lending itself to new residential growth as well.

### **SUMMARY**

- A large majority of the land uses in the Township are destined to remain the same – State Game Lands.
- Minimal redevelopment / expansion opportunity exists for Commercial and Manufacturing uses.
- Residential revitalization and expansion represents the most likely form of future development for Municipal Officials to expect. Wastewater treatment can support a 25% increase in the current number of dwellings and replacing older homes in the Village of Wiconisco would provide tax revenue to support additional Township services, in addition to reviving an older community.

## ORDINANCE REVIEW

The character of any municipality is formed by the regulations it has enacted to guide what uses are permitted in what areas under its jurisdiction and how they are to be constructed and maintained. The Pennsylvania Legislature adopted the PA Municipalities Planning Code Act of 1968 as Act 247 (Public Law 805), which is the law that enables units of local government to enact Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances. The January, 2003 Edition is the seventeenth thus far.

### ZONING ORDINANCE

The purposes of zoning, as enabled by the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), include:

- To promote, protect and facilitate any or all of the following: the public health, safety, morals, and the general welfare ...
- To prevent one or more of the following: overcrowding of land, blight, danger and congestion in travel and transportation, loss of life or property ...
- To preserve prime agriculture and farmland considering topography, soil type, and classification, and present use.
- To provide for the use of land within the municipality for residential housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, ...
- To accommodate reasonable overall community growth, ...

Many rural Townships across Pennsylvania do not have zoning ordinances, although this number is reduced annually. If they have not enacted such codes, it is usually for one of two reasons:

1. The municipality is so rural as not to be subject to growth pressures, or
2. The municipality has made a conscious choice not to impinge on any individual property rights of its residents.

The former reason is understandable in that such a code would likely gather dust, due to its extremely rare usage. The latter reason speaks to a Township's residents, through its elected officials, placing the rights of the individual above those of the general populace. Regardless of the reason, these municipalities are increasingly open to potential abuses through unsafe, substandard and incompatible development and unscrupulous land speculators looking to take advantage of this lack. Municipalities desiring to have an active role in guiding their community's growth and protecting the property rights of their residents choose to enact their own zoning.

Wiconisco Township is noticeably ahead of the curve and enacted its first Zoning Ordinance in December, 1975. The stated purpose is drawn directly from the MPC. This is expanded into a series of Community Development, Social, Economic and Physical Objectives. These laudable aspirations are

legitimized by inclusion in the Ordinance and could easily be interpreted as the Mission Statement of the Township.

A very detailed listing of definitions is included, and while a few terms may have passed into disuse, the majority remain relevant and applicable. The section on General Provisions covers those types of uses that generally do not fall within a given zoning classification, such as types of farming and manufacturing; clubs, lodges and fraternal organizations; garden apartments and conversion apartments; camps and vacation homes; and uses not provided for in the Ordinance. Other sub-sections are height, area, yard, habitable floor area, illumination, waste and sewage disposal, performance standards, drainage, traffic control and protection regulations, and special flood plain restrictions. Nonconforming buildings and uses are given an ordinance section in which all permitted and prohibited activities are delineated.

The zoning classification sections are prefaced with a description of how the districts are established on the Zoning Map, which is incorporated into the Ordinance by reference. The section specifies how the map is constructed with dimensions, boundaries between districts, and common boundary points. The actual zoning classifications included in the Ordinance are:

**Table 1**

**Zoning District Classifications**

O-S	CONSERVATION DISTRICT
S	SLOPE DISTRICT
R-SC	RESIDENTIAL – Single Family - Country
R-MT	RESIDENTIAL – Multi-Family - Town
R-MH	RESIDENTIAL – Mobile Home
C-N	COMMERCIAL - Neighborhood
C-H	COMMERCIAL - Highway
M-G	MANUFACTURING - General
PRD	PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – Mixed Uses

**CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

This zone has only conservation-oriented uses listed under permitted uses. Conditional uses include normal types as well as extraction activities, which, if limited to timber management, would serve the goal of conservation. However, placing mining and quarrying under conditional uses does give the Township control over the type and extent of the activity. Lot sizes, setbacks and coverage percentage are such that the majority of any lot will remain in its natural state. The Conservation District is located

on the entire northern half of the Township on the Zoning Map, the majority of which is State Game Land.

**SLOPE DISTRICT**

Permitted and conditional uses are similar to those of the Conservation District. Lot sizes, setbacks, and coverage percentage are also large enough to maintain a large proportion as open, or undisturbed, space. The Zoning Map indicates two large areas as Slope District - the mountainside on both sides of Lykens that is primarily state forestland.

**RESIDENTIAL – SINGLE FAMILY-COUNTRY**

This classification has a minimum lot size of 20,000 SF and conforms to the typical “Suburban” style housing development zone and is found primarily along Rt. 209 where public sewer is available. Were it to be located in unsewered areas of the Township, a larger minimum lot size would be necessary.

**RESIDENTIAL – MULTI-FAMILY – TOWN**

This zone encompasses the majority of the Village of Wiconisco and represents intensive residential development with a wide variety of permitted housing types and small lot sizes. Many public and institutional uses are also permitted, such as libraries, hospitals, and churches as may be expected in any town.

**RESIDENTIAL – MOBILE HOME**

While a conditional use in the Country zone and not permitted under any circumstances in Town zoning, mobile homes, as well as all Town uses, are a permitted use in the R-MH Zone. The Zoning Map denotes R-MH District located to the northern side of the Village of Wiconisco.

**COMMERCIAL – NEIGHBORHOOD**

All residential uses are permitted in the Neighborhood Zoning District when incidental to its commercial use. Setbacks and buffers are required, except when commercial uses abut each other. The common uses are normally associated with those whose clientele live nearby and fall into the ‘daily needs’ category of commercial operation. One small area in the village of Wiconisco is the only instance on the Zoning Map.

**COMMERCIAL – HIGHWAY**

Commercial uses that require more land area are permitted in the Highway Commercial zoning district along Rt. 209 west of Lykens. These uses characteristically draw customers from a large geographic area requiring enhanced vehicular access and parking.



**MANUFACTURING**

Highway Commercial uses are permitted in a Manufacturing zoning district (M-G), located on either side of Route 209. Another M-G zoning district is located in the coal recovery area north and west of the village of Wiconisco. No residential uses are permitted in the M-G District, either as a conditional or as a special exception use.

**PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

This Zone differs from the previous ones, in that it is not given specific area(s) on the Zoning Map, but functions as an overlay to other classifications. It is enabled by Article VII of the PA Municipalities Planning Code and the majority of the text comes directly from that enabling legislation. Limited to parcels over 15 acres, a PRD provides variety and flexibility in laying out residential and non-residential development. All types of housing units are permitted and most of the commercial uses follow the neighborhood type – meeting the daily or regular needs of the residents of the PRD, primarily.

Sections on Off-Street Parking, Signs, and Motor Vehicle Access are more commonly found in Subdivision Ordinances, but do provide design specifications on design and construction. The closing sections of Amendments and Administration and Enforcement rely heavily on the language contained in, or references to, the MPC and are therefore reasonable, clear and defensible.

Wiconisco Township Zoning Ordinance, as it presently stands, continues to be effective in the coming years. Small revisions, minor additions (revisions, updates) may offer a more accurate and or relevant system of land use permitting for the Township to guide future growth. The following are offered as suggestions for the Township to consider:

- Minimum and maximum regulatory criteria contained in the definition section should be evaluated for their present day relevance.
- The names and composition of several state agencies / departments have changed since adoption and these revisions should update the ordinances, e.g., DEP = DER, less Forests, which now fall under DCNR.
- If valued, an agricultural district should be established to preserve existing farming operations.
- The Drainage Regulations should be repealed and a complete Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance be enacted in accordance with the approved Watershed Study completed by the Conservation District.
- A 30 in. by 30 in. plan size for PRD submissions is very non-standard and should be revised to 24 in. by 36 in.
- Off-street parking requirements for uses should be evaluated.
- Revise General Provisions, specifically, townhouse building criteria. It is recommended the Township permit 3-8 dwelling units per building structure as well as institute design standards including building layout, roofline variation and enhanced architectural design criteria.

## **SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

If zoning ordinances define “what” you may do with a site, then subdivision and land development ordinances define “how” you may do it. The two codes are used in concert to form a system of guiding and controlling land development within the Township that places well-designed and constructed types of land uses constructed in areas of the Township where it is desired.

Pennsylvania County Planning Agencies have normally adopted basic SALDOs to protect those municipalities within their boundaries without their own code. This practice protects the residents of such municipalities, Townships normally, from the construction of substandard and unsafe infrastructure facilities. The design and construction of dwellings and other buildings is covered by building, plumbing electrical and other codes adopted separately from either Zoning or SALDO Ordinances. Fire and Panic provisions of public buildings must be approved by the PA Dept. of Labor and Industry. Wiconisco Township has chosen to go beyond such basic ordinances. The current SALDO was adopted in December, 1975.

Wiconisco Township’s SALDO is rooted in the enabling language of the MPC, Article V., which contains nearly three pages of design provisions to be included in such municipal regulations. The MPC also outlines provisions for ordinance enactment, publication (advertisement), plat approval procedures, improvement guarantees, bonding, plat recording, and enforcement remedies, among others.

The introductory sections of the Ordinance – Purposes, Authority, Regulations and Interpretation, are well-written and outline the framework of the following provisions quite clearly. Sixteen pages of definitions follow that essentially remain relevant even after 30 years.

Much of the plat requirements and processing procedures follow the MPC. The number of copies to be submitted and the specifications to be included on development plans are clear and reasonable, with the exception of the plat size of 17 ½ by 24 in. This size has gone out of use since linen is not used anymore, having been replaced by mylar or engineering bond paper. Common sizes now are either 18 by 24 in. or 24 by 36 in.

The design standards for streets, lots, sidewalks, erosion and sedimentation control, and other construction requirements are again straightforward and not at all unusual for when they were instituted. Probably because these types of developments existed at the time of ordinance adoption, a considerable amount of attention and detail is given to both recreational parks / campgrounds and mobile home parks. The requirements for both are also clear and reasonable.

As might be expected with any 30-year-old document, updates, revisions, and corrections would improve its relevance and utility today. The following are suggestions the Township may wish to undertake if it is considering a major ordinance amendment.

- Update state agency names: DER = DEP, etc.
- Amend stormwater management report / design exemption for development less than 20 dwelling units to a five acre minimum standard. DEP requires an NPDES permit for any site disturbance over five acres when a point source for stormwater does not exist. If a point source exists, a permit is still required if the site has over one acre of disturbance. Projects impacting less than five acres may require only Conservation District review. Twenty dwelling units would also be a rare and large development for Wiconisco to have, given its limited developable area.
- Certified notifications of plan approvals / denials are extra expenses that may not be necessary.
- Change the plat size from 17 ½ by 24 in. to 24 by 36 in. and replace linen with mylar as the primary reproducible material.
- Consider reducing street widths and curbing requirements (outside the Village) to reduce impervious surface and facilitate stormwater infiltration opportunities.
- Change fixed fees (subdivision application and mobile home park permit) language in the ordinance to “that established by annual resolution of the Board of Supervisors.” This will facilitate keeping pace with expenses more readily and inexpensively than formal ordinance amendments.

## **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE**

Dauphin County Conservation District has completed a Watershed Study for the Wiconisco Creek and its tributaries that was recently adopted by the DEP. Implicit within the DEP adoption is that all municipalities within the watershed area are mandated to adopt the model ordinance contained within Act 167. The Township should consider using this study as the basis for enacting a separate municipal Stormwater Management (SWM) Ordinance that follows the provisions of Act 167, administered by the DEP. Essentially, the Act requires that SWM Plans and Reports be submitted as part of the land development process. Stormwater facilities must account for infiltration of a certain level per storm event, in addition to normal detention calculations.

The primary goal of such provisions is to reduce the amount of stormwater that is collected, conveyed and detained through filtration and infiltration structures and processes. In other words, reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater generated by the increased impervious surface created by development. Such ordinances normally require that facilities be included that return a percentage of stormwater to groundwater recharge via such Best Management Practices (BMP) facilities and structures as infiltration beds, bio-retention areas (water gardens) that filter out impurities, dry wells, infiltration swales, retention basins, and the like.

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## **SUMMARY / RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **ZONING ORDINANCE**

- Undertake a thorough ordinance review and update requirements to current levels as well as instituting new design regulatory requirements.
- Create an Agricultural zoning classification.
- Repeal the Drainage Regulations in favor of creating a Stormwater Management Ordinance which follows the recommendations of the 2005 Wiconisco Creek Watershed Study.
- Remove the prohibition of mobile homes in any residential zone, since it has been struck down by the courts in Pennsylvania.

### **ZONING MAP**

- Update the map with the recommendations of the Future Land Use Map contained in the final Wiconisco Township Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Include future roadway projects where potential development areas exist and new connections are desired.

### **SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

- Undertake a thorough review and update to include the recommended items previously stated in this section.
- Reduce street widths and consider removing curbing requirements outside the Village area in an effort to reduce impervious surfaces.
- Delete Certified notification of plan approval / rejection as a cost saving measure.

### **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE**

- Enact an ordinance consistent with the recommendations of the 2005 Wiconisco Creek Watershed Study.

### **OTHER PROVISIONS**

- Update / enact building codes that encourage home rehabilitation and renovation particularly within or abutting the Village area.

## **PART II – PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN**

Wiconisco Township has prioritized the following areas of protection for which goals and initiatives will be developed.

#### ***FARMLAND PRESERVATION***

Two farms presently exist in the Township, totaling approximately 69 acres. They are located at the eastern and western boundaries just south of the Game Lands. Even though not a major land use, the Township recognizes their value. Whether they are considered candidates for the Conservation District operated Farmland Preservation program is determined by the owners' interest, size of the farm, quality of the soils, and the competition of other county applicants.

#### ***FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION***

Wiconisco Creek is considered an important asset that passes through Wiconisco Township. As much knowledge about the creek's water quality, water supply, and creek restoration should be obtained and analyzed for relevance and for potential funding sources for water quality and floodplain protection. A passive acid mine drainage project is currently underway in the reaches of Bear Creek within the State Gamelands. Little more than a demonstration project at this point, it needs aggressive expansion and more research into the potential for such efforts to be commercially-viable by recycling recovered metals and minerals from the sedimentation ponds.

#### ***STEEP SLOPE PROTECTION***

Slopes over 15% exist along the Townships southern border and along the boundary of the Gamelands. Development costs increase significantly when building structures in areas over 15% slope. Costs such as water and sewer line installation, wells and / or on lot disposal systems, access drives and / or roadways, and utilities begin to rise as the slope percent increases. It is recommended, that upon the amendment of the zoning and or subdivision and land development ordinances, the Township institute limitations on development on slopes over 15%.

## HOUSING PLAN

Through stakeholder interviews and reviewing the Township's building trends and demographic data, it has been determined that the Township is likely to experience a low rate of residential population growth over the next ten years. However; there are several growth management recommendations this plan offers:

- A. Establish Primary and Secondary Growth Boundaries (**Map 12**).
  1. Currently, the rate of construction is approximately 2-3 units per year; Wiconisco Township can conservatively expect no more than 30 new or reoccupied units within the next 10 years. Having more land zoned for residences than needed facilitates the direction of potential development away from inappropriate or unsuitable land or zones.
  2. Utilizes the current availability or reasonable extension of infrastructure (public water and sewer service).
- B. The Township wishes to provide a variety of housing types and sizes for existing residents and future citizens of Wiconisco Township. Because the cost of housing has significantly increased over the last 10 years, the Township feels the need to emphasize the importance of affordable housing by enabling smaller homes to be built, i.e. permitting higher density, smaller lot and home sizes including available sewer and water service.
- C. Preserve rural landscape. Allowing higher housing density in or near the Township's developed Village area will assist in the preservation of the area's rural landscape.
- D. The Township should consider requiring the location of new dwelling units a considerable distance from the minor arterial roadway. Locally, it has been determined that "Strip" development is not a desirable viewshed for other residents and travelers in Wiconisco Township. Single lot development is encouraged on Township collector roadways. This plan also recommends limiting the number of single lot subdivisions in the existing and proposed conservation and or semi-public zones. Future residential development proposed outside the Lykens or Wiconisco Growth Area will not require the Township to officially revise its current Act 537 Plan.
- E. Consider residential cluster design. The Township expects a limited number of larger planned residential developments. Clustering future units together while preserving the remainder of the tract free from development is recommended.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PLAN

There are many individual historic structures and buildings within the Wiconisco Township region. Historic and cultural resource protection is essential to this community. Regionally, this valley was known for its industrial and agricultural assets; coal and crop farming in particular. This plan offers several

recommendations acknowledging the importance of cultural and historic resource preservation:

- A Resource Designation – Elected officials, municipal planning commissions and citizen volunteers should begin designating important historic structures, lands, and buildings throughout the Valley of the Wiconisco Creek. Each historic place or location should be documented on a site location map containing informative historic descriptions.
- B Preservation from Land Development – Current land development ordinances do not locate or discuss historic /cultural resource protection. The Township Zoning Ordinance is a good tool to create awareness of the historic structures, lands, and buildings, which should be preserved for future generations to visit and study.
- C Preservation Organization – The more people within a community who acknowledge the importance of the history of the region the easier it will be to protect it from the various factions who wish to disturb it. These people are encouraged to establish the Lykens Valley Heritage Commission as a vehicle to discuss and document and house historic information.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES PLAN**

Community services are undervalued in the eyes and minds of most citizens. Most do not realize the significance and cost of vital services such as public sewer and water service, education, recreation, emergency services and utilities for all businesses and dwelling units. This section has determined the following community services need or will require attention within the next 10 years:

### ***EDUCATION***

The Williams Valley School District provides K-12 grades for the entire Township. Because enrollment rates have shown small declines, it has been determined, if the projected residential development occurs, the existing school buildings, teaching staff, and playground areas will be able to absorb such minimal increases in enrollment. Recommendations for School District consideration:

1. Work in partnership with families of home-schooled children to make sure curriculum is following current standards.
2. Routinely provide educational assistance to the families of home schooled children as well as information about school district sports and recreational activities.
3. Drop outs and others without high school diplomas should have an accessible and complete GED attainment program available to them to widen their employment options.
4. The Wiconisco High School Alumni offer a scholarship to the resident with the highest Grade Point Average as a senior at Williams Valley High School each year.
5. The Township supports the programs and activities of the Upper Dauphin Library at the Township's boundary with Lykens Borough.

**RECREATION**

Additional recreation and park facilities are recommended for future development in Wiconisco Township, even though it is 80% open space in Game Lands and Conservation zone. Although, not considered a priority initiative, the Township plans to review the local recreational needs and desires of its residents. If it is determined additional recreational spaces for new park facilities are greatly needed, the Township plans to conduct a search for available land for a future community park.

Recommendations for recreation are as follows:

1. Begin seeking resources and setting plans to purchase new playground equipment.
2. Work with Lykens Borough to assist in the planning for improvements to the L&W Memorial Athletic Field. Washington and Wiconisco Township residents have mentioned at project workshops as well as by interview that improvements were needed at L&W. The first step is to find out additional information pertaining to the type and range of improvements necessary. The Township may want to consider the preparation of a recreation capital improvements plan in order to earmark specific funds for park additions, restoration efforts or upgrades.
3. Work with the Dauphin County Parks and Recreation Department to preserve the rail-trail initiative and work to open the facility for residents and neighboring municipalities.
4. Provide for additional recreation opportunities as residential development and density warrant the need. A first step for creating new parks and recreation is site location and acquisition. The site should be located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.
5. Active facilities for residents are needed to balance with the wealth of passive opportunities available.

**EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The area has very good coverage by fire and ambulance companies that offer differing levels of service as needed. There is built-in redundancy using a county based communications system. Outpatient and primary care is available less than 20 minutes away in Millersburg. Trauma care patients have the LifeLion helicopter available within a few minutes from Hershey Medical Center.

It would be economically impossible to have a hospital built in the valley, but the services and facilities that have developed to serve the area are meeting the need as well as expected given the population base.

**TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The Township's main goal in planning for its transportation system is to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of through traffic and to provide safe and convenient access to destinations within the Township and nearby village areas. The Township recommends pursuing the following transportation goals:



- A. Improve safety conditions at high accident areas particularly along Routes 209 and 1002. Traffic is expected to increase in Wiconisco Township due to the nearby Wal-Mart commercial center. The Township should begin to understand the expected level increases and work towards partnering with Wal-Mart to ensure appropriate improvements are made to the roadway and intersection. There are also several high accident areas occurring on state roadway (Routes 209 & 1002) and the Township should seek a solution. Establishing a good working relationship with PennDOT is essential to seeking funding and engineering expertise to complete the necessary roadway and circulation improvements.
- B. Prepare a capital improvements plan for existing roadway system. Collector (Township-owned roadways) roadways require a balanced and steady funding stream that ensures priority improvements are completed annually. Increases in road improvement / maintenance funding should be incorporated into the planning process. Many municipalities establish a special fund for transportation capital improvements. Funds could come from a special tax or the use of excess revenues or both.
- C. Become an active contributor / participant in the HATS Committee in order to gain an understanding of the planning process and potentially gain additional transportation funding.

## **ENERGY PLAN**

The Wiconisco Valley has long been known for its coal producing industry. As a direct result many neighborhoods and businesses utilize coal as their sole source of energy. Today coal companies are witnessing and incorporating various ways to improve air quality through the utilization of cleaner coal. The U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Fossil Energy reports:

Clean Coal Technologies—the products of research and development conducted over the past 20 years—have resulted in more than 20 new, lower-cost, more efficient and environmentally compatible technologies for electric utilities, steel mills, cement plants and other industries.

Clean coal technologies helped make it possible for U.S. utilities to meet more stringent Clean Air Act requirements while continuing to utilize America's most plentiful domestic energy resource—coal.

The original Clean Coal Technology Program, which began in 1986, focused on commercializing processes that helped reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions and demonstrating more efficient and environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional pulverized coal boilers.

New programs in clean coal technology—such as the Clean Coal Power Initiative (CCPI)—are essential for building on the progress of the original Clean Coal Technology Program, finding solutions for reducing trace emissions of mercury; reducing or eliminating carbon dioxide emissions; and increasing fuel efficiencies. Over the longer term, research in clean coal technology will be directed toward developing coal-based hydrogen fuels. If coupled with sequestration, this will allow greater use of coal

with zero emissions. The U.S. Department of Energy has announced a Presidential initiative to build "FutureGen," a \$1 billion project that will lead to the world's first emission-free plant to produce electricity and hydrogen from coal while capturing greenhouse gases

### ***CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY IS IMPORTANT, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE***

Electricity demand will increase 53.4 percent over the next 25 years. Meeting this rising growth rate will require the construction of the equivalent of more than 1,200 new power plants of 300 megawatts each—the equivalent of about 65 plants each year.

Coal will remain the largest single source of electricity—accounting for 51 percent of power generation in 2025. Clean coal technologies will help meet these needs, plus continue the decline in SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> emissions already underway.

The recently announced FutureGen project takes clean coal technology even further. FutureGen, a plant to produce hydrogen from coal and sequester emissions, will be the world's first zero emission coal-fired plant.

- Electric utilities lead all U.S. industries by a wide margin in taking voluntary actions to mitigate greenhouse gases. They account for more than 70 percent of all voluntary actions taken to mitigate greenhouse gases, according to the Department of Energy.
- Utility companies are sponsoring reforestation programs in the U.S. and abroad that will remove millions of tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

In the future the Township should keep abreast of energy saving fuel sources and be aware that the continued use of coal is currently a viable option for energy generation. Coal companies remaining in business within the valley should be aware of the current technologies pertaining to air quality mitigation. Information from the DOE is available anytime, regarding sustainable forms of energy production and conservation, such as solar, wind, and water.

### **WATER RESOURCES PLAN**

A healthy, balanced watershed exhibits stable stream channels, significant groundwater recharge capacity and high water quality. Several factors are key to the capabilities of a given watershed to become or remain healthy: 1] the ability of underlying geology to contain and transport water, 2] the percolation rates of the surface soils, and 3] nearly anything man does. The substrata in the Township are generally siltstone and shale on the valley floor and wells drilled there normally have good yields. Seven-eighths of the soils in the watershed are hydrologic group 'C', which indicates an infiltration (percolation) rate of 0.05 to 0.15 in./hr. Group A soils infiltrate three times as much. Man grows crops and livestock, cuts down trees, digs mines, operates factories, builds homes and commercial areas, and

paves roads to get between these different types of development. These activities may all have deleterious effects on water resources.

Wiconisco Township lies almost entirely within the Wiconisco Creek watershed with the exception of the extreme northeast corner of the Game Lands which flows to the Mahantango Creek. The Township has most of the types of development listed above, however it has taken prudent steps to minimizing negative impacts on its water resources.

- 1] It has a detailed floodplain study undertaken by FEMA.
- 2] It has adopted a good floodplain ordinance.

The Acid Mine Drainage entering Bear Creek in the Game Lands is host to a passive mitigation project that directs the water to several sedimentation lagoons, where the various metals and other pollutants settle out of the flow before it returns to its channel. At this point, it is primarily a demonstration project, however, the potential exists for this method of stream cleanup to become profitable by recycling the recovered metals. The Township needs to keep tabs on this project and push for its continuation and expansion.

In 2005, the Dauphin County Conservation District published the Wiconisco Creek Watershed Study that was approved by the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection. The study was produced to comply with Act 167, the PA Stormwater Management Act, and provides a framework and information source to assist municipalities in planning for and managing increased runoff associated with development. This document should be used as a reference for authoring such an ordinance.

The large coal-based manufacturing community in the Township has the primary responsibility for protecting and enhancing the water resources simply because it involves the large majority of the land area. The Conservation District, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service are all agencies that offer numerous technical assistance programs and, in some cases, funding for activities that have positive effects on water resources. For example, a livestock farmer who removes access to the creek for his herds could receive a grant to drill a well and install a solar powered water pump as an alternate source of water for livestock, thereby maintaining the water quality of the stream.

The Township needs to partner with the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association in an advocacy role to promote increased water quality and quantity practices throughout the watershed. Any activities which increase filtration / infiltration to the water table, maintain peak flows from storms, and minimize or remove pollution of all types will be appreciated by your downstream neighbors.

## LAND USE PLAN

One element important to the comprehensive planning process is the charting of appropriately sized and located areas for future growth and development. The delineation of these areas takes into account all of the background information collected as part of this plan, including natural features, the extent of public utilities, allocated in a manner that responds to the Township's desires, as expressed in Part III – Policy and Action Plan.

The preparation of the Future Land Use Map was accomplished with an understanding of several key factors:

- Address future conditions through the year 2026.
- Acknowledge existing land uses
- Utilize a number of plan designations (i.e. agriculture, residential, industrial, public, commercial, conservation.)

The current Zoning Map has succeeded in directing development of all types to those areas of the Township most appropriate for them. The Future Land Use Map proposes zoning revisions consistent with the desired land use pattern and volume of development. The following land uses describe the location, general permitted uses, acreages, and percentages of land remaining:

### **RESIDENTIAL**

Future residential land uses make up 9% of total forecasted land uses. It is the responsibility of every Pennsylvania municipality to provide the opportunity for a variety of housing unit types. Furthermore, it is important that the proper amount and location of these various housing unit types remain compatible with existing development and /or adjoining planned land uses. Within the last 10 years the largest majority of housing units built in Wiconisco Township have been built within or next to the village of Wiconisco. The type and character of housing, unit size, and lot size is substantially different from the outlying housing units. Infill residential growth areas are considered priority development and redevelopment areas because of the public services available. Housing data tells us Wiconisco Township will experience minimal housing growth, as well as having a 10% vacancy rate, which is sufficient to cover the projected increase. The number of new housing units to be built in the next twenty years is forecasted to range from 2-4 dwelling units per year. Depending on size, enough land area has been zoned to cover this increase. When combined with replacing large Single Family Detached units with smaller towns or subdividing them into apartments or condos would serve several goals:

- Accommodate more residents
- Rehabilitation of areas that need it
- Increase density without additional infrastructure costs

***HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT***

Densely developed housing areas have traditionally been located within the Village of Wiconisco as well as just outside the Village on Route 1002. The Township should permit a density of ten or more units per acre in areas containing sewer and water utilities. The Village Mixed-Use zone, proposed on the Future Land Use Map, could provide up to 600 dwelling units, as well as a variety of shops and offices. Zoning changes needed to accomplish this would include smaller lot size and zero lot lines and setbacks, as well as permitting more than one use per structure.

It is recommended that the Township permit smaller housing sizes that promote affordability. The nationwide trend of fewer people per dwelling unit makes the development of smaller, semi-detached or attached housing units more attractive for municipalities where infrastructure exists. Duplexes and townhomes or apartments are viable housing types, even in rural areas. Further, utilization of currently-vacant homes should be made more attractive through incentives such as weatherization grants / assistance, tax rebates, waiving permit fees and similar programs.

Future growth areas in this district where both sewer and water are present should enable the clustering of various types of detached and attached dwellings in compact areas, so that sensitive environmental features can be conserved and protected. Furthermore, the clustering development option can provide density bonuses for project that provide public amenities to existing and future inhabitants. Within these areas, it is recommended that sidewalks be installed in all new developments to encourage safe and convenient pedestrian access. These sidewalks should be designed and incorporated into a system that enables pedestrians to move freely within the internal portion of the development and then provides direct access to the periphery of the development where another type of land use may be located, such as commercial, industrial or institutional.

***LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT***

Rural residential development should be contained as much as possible. The Future Land Use map shows a Primary and Secondary Growth Boundary, which should contain all residential development projected to occur outside the Village area. Lot sizes in the Primary Growth area may remain at the current 20,000 SF, since both public water and sewer are available. The Primary Growth area can accommodate nearly 200 additional homes. The Secondary Growth Boundary may utilize larger lots that can accommodate on lot septic systems, unless the Township extends the sewer and water lines. Without public infrastructure extensions, the Secondary area may be able to accommodate 40-50 new lots. Any residential housing permitted in the Conservation Zone should have a larger minimum lot size with less coverage.

***COMMERCIAL***

Within Wiconisco Township, there is one active commercial corridor along PA Route 209 that contains a variety of commercial uses. For the most part, this corridor contains highway commercial uses that have been developed over time with traditional stripped highway commercial site design. This traditional site design results in each commercial property possessing its own access points, parking

areas, signage, and minimal if any landscaping. This leads to increased traffic congestion, “stop-and-go” traffic, and risky motorist behavior. The Neighborhood Commercial area in the Village of Wiconisco has essentially reverted to primarily residential use. Some additional residential land had, at one time, commercial uses. This land use district originally encompassed approximately 21 acres in the two zoned areas and other non-conforming use sites, but now accounts for the Highway Commercial area of 10 acres.

Infrastructure availability prevents establishing additional commercial areas. There is one, small area (6.5 Ac.) of Neighborhood Commercial in the Village, most of which has reverted to residential use. Besides infrastructure availability, commercial uses need visibility and accessibility to succeed.

### ***MIXED-USE (VILLAGE)***

As an amendment to the Neighborhood Commercial area above, the Township should consider rezoning the majority of the Village of Wiconisco to a Mixed-Use category. This change would enable owners to add shops or offices to residences and could spur rehabilitation / replacement of substandard units to include a variety of uses in one structure. This new zone would encompass existing residential, neighborhood commercial and some vacant land.

### ***MANUFACTURING***

Three established manufacturing areas are found in the Township, as described previously. They all involve the retrieval of coal from existing surface piles and its processing.

New uses for the breaker on Rt. 209 should be fostered, however, are not likely to occur without substantial remediation funding through the Brownfields program or similar economic development assistance. As with commercial uses, manufacturing requires infrastructure and ease of transportation.

### ***AGRICULTURE***

The two farms operating in the Township amount to about 69 acres and are located adjacent to the Game Lands at either end of the Township. The Township should assist with maintaining the continuance of these farms, as they represent added diversity.

### ***CONSERVATION***

Nearly 85% percent of the Township’s area falls under this classification when including the Game Lands, floodplains and wetlands. The common goal of this zone is to limit development, primarily as a result of the unfavorable environmental conditions found there. (poor soils, steep slope, floodplain, wetlands, etc.) The goal of this zone is to severely restrict or prohibit types of development in order to either protect the development from environmental factors or protect fragile resources. Expansion of the Conservation Zone and restrictions on what can be constructed are highly recommended to protect both the environmental limitations found there, as well the proposed development.

**Table 1**

**Future Land Use Table**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Land Use %</b>	<b>Acres Developed</b>	<b>Acres Remaining</b>
Residential	584	9	447	137
Agricultural	69	1.1	69	0
Commercial	10	0.1	21	-11
Mixed Use	57	0.9	57	0
Industrial	276	4.3	292	-16
Conservation / Public *	5,468.4	84.6	5,395.4	73
	6,464.4	100	6,281.4	183

Primary Growth Boundary equals 411 Acres, 105 Acres are Vacant

Secondary Growth Boundary equals 256 Acres, 78 Acres are Vacant

*\* Includes Gamelands, Steep Slopes and Floodplains*

## **PART III – POLICY AND ACTION PLAN**

### **FUTURE PLAN**

#### **THE PLANNING PROCESS...**

Wiconisco Township incorporated an integrated planning process which began by the planning committee answering the following questions:

- Looking at the land use trends in your Township, how different will the landscape look in the next 10 years?
- What lands are you most concerned about losing?
- What amenities or community services are needed most in your Township?
- What are the environmental concerns your Township faces?
- Is the Township currently or in the future subject to growth pressures?

The beginning of the planning activities led to the development of the background profiles (Phase 1) for demographics and socioeconomics, land use and housing, natural resources and environmental features, transportation, wastewater and water utilities and community services and facilities. Synthesizing the information collected in background profiles was the focus of the second part (Phase II) Beginning with the “probable future”, (i.e., the region’s future direction given the continuation of the existing conditions and public policies) a community dialogue led to a preferred future in statements of the Township vision and goals and objectives.

Dramatic results were achieved as each phase built on the activities of the previous phase. The focus of Phase III was to explore the means to attain the Township’s goals and objectives. Strategies were organized into eight priority initiatives: zoning map and ordinance updating, clean air and quality water resources; respected historic and cultural resources; retain our open spaces and environmental resources; enhance the local economy; community beautification (property maintenance); better and safer transportation network; quality community facilities, services and utilities.

These strategies were compiled into the Comprehensive Plan’s Policy and Action Plan. Creating a sound program for implementation of the strategies was the focus of the final phase. The program factored in time commitments, budget constraints, staff requirements, service delivery programs, and Township priorities for Wiconisco Township.



## VISION AND STATEMENTS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **ZONING MAP AND ORDINANCE UPDATING**

**The Vision:** Housing projections point to minimal residential growth over the next 10-15 years and the sewage treatment plant is operating at less than half capacity..

**Goal:** To focus anticipated development to the service areas of public water and sewer systems.

#### **Objectives:**

- Direct the majority of new development to the area generally around the Village of Wiconisco to maximize the investment made in treatment facilities for water and sewer by:
  - Establish a Primary Growth Boundary the encompasses the service areas of public utilities.
  - Minimize the residentially zoned area outside of the growth boundary.
  - Restricting the amount and types of development permitted to occur within other zoning classifications.
  - Establish a Secondary Growth Boundary that represents a reasonable and economical extension area for public utilities.
  - Combine all land with environmental limitations into the Conservation Zone. This includes previously vacant land and accounts for such limitations as steep slope, flood plains, and wetlands.
  - Establish a Mixed-Use zone for most of the Village area that permits multiple uses within a single structure.

### **CLEAN AIR AND QUALITY WATER RESOURCES**

**The Vision:** In the future, water resources will be clean and plentiful, air quality will not be degraded, light pollution will be limited and adequate protection will be provided to sustain resources for future generations.

**Goal:** To conserve water resources, to protect the quality of important water supply and air, and to prevent light pollution.

#### **Objectives:**

- Review land use regulations and update to achieve the following priorities:
  - Reduce the impact of new development on stormwater runoff by reducing the overall percentage of impervious surfaces created by new development.
  - Promote stormwater BMPs for new development.

- o Address the use of efficient light types such as LPS (low pressure sodium) and HPS (high pressure sodium), light trespass standards, and limits on illumination expressed as maximum, average foot-candles per square foot.
- Participate in educational and program activities of area and countywide watershed associations, such as the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association and the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, PA Department of Natural Resources.
- Register the Wiconisco Creek on the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Registry

### ***RESPECT HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES***

**The Vision:** In the future, the Township has identified, promoted and protected important cultural and historical assets to effectively preserve the character of the community and support economic activity associated with heritage tourism.

**Goal:** To preserve local landmarks, buildings, cultures, and traditions that makes the Township unique.

#### **Objectives:**

- Define the public's role in the preservation of special places and celebrate the contribution of businesses, organizations, industry and individuals.
- Identify and preserve appropriate adaptive reuse for historic landmark structures.
  - o Complete a detailed historic building survey for the region that prioritizes property for preservation planning purposes.
  - o Establish and promote a valley-wide heritage commission, the charge for which will be bringing to light those aspects of the area's development that have shaped its current identity.
    - Invite all municipalities partially or totally within the valley to become involved with the research that would highlight its Indian, settler, and industrial heritage

### ***RETAIN OUR OPEN SPACES AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES***

**The Vision:** The Township's future will be replete with recreation, open space, and vast areas of forestlands, where neighborhoods and our business centers have retained close proximity to both building location and community facilities.

**Goal:** To develop both passive and active recreational opportunities for all age groups, to preserve the rural open space, and to promote the greening of the village environment and commercial centers through landscaping and streetscape aesthetics.

**Objectives:**

- Identify high priority open space areas for preservation or conservation, including areas of prime agriculture soils, and promote and educate the community on the economic benefits of open space preservation
- Provide financial support for land acquisition of priority open space lands that provide either recreational opportunities or natural resources protection.
- Promote the use of street trees for new residential development and landscaping standards for new, non-residential development and redevelopment.
- Increase incentives for preserving open space in new residential housing developments.
- Incorporate street tree landscaping standards into land use ordinances.
- Adopt measures to retain and conserve trees in areas subject to development.
- Increase the percentage of tree cover on private residential and business lands.
- Adopt an open space protection plan
  - Develop criteria for identifying and prioritizing the region's open areas based on the presence and relative value of the area's natural and environmental resources.
  - Create a development review process to assure that there is accessible, well maintained open space provided, where possible, in all new residential developments.
  - Explore management options for resource protection, including farmland/ woodland preservation, conservation easements, and acquisition, etc.
- Provide a financial support system for acquisition of priority open space lands that provide natural resource protection.
- Adopt regulations that provide protection for sensitive natural resources, including slopes over 25%, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and floodplains.
  - Protect the floodplain and floodway zones of the Wiconisco and Bear Creeks.
- Promote stormwater best management practices (BMPs)
- Support conservation education.
- Support and actively participate in environmental, nongovernmental organizations such as the Wiconisco Creek Restoration Association.
- Promote the initiatives and resource management alternatives set forth in the Wiconisco Creek Conservation Plan.
- Encourage all current and future Township Planning Commission members and Board of Supervisors to understand and remain consistent with the residential and commercial design and location policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

**ENHANCE THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

**The Vision:** In the future the Township will sustain a healthy local economy where residents will be able to earn a living wage. The region will have full employment and a full range of social services, and a range of housing that will match demand and family incomes.

**Goal:** To sustain livable-wage jobs and to provide opportunities for job training and education and social supports to meet the needs of the labor force.

**Objectives:**

- Develop an adequate tax base to pay for community services and facility needs by balancing residential growth and non-residential growth (commercial, office and industrial).
  - Designate areas for employment centers within the area's targeted areas for growth.
  - Enhance older, established business areas and promote their assets, especially in the Village area.
  - Coordinate the location of new employment enterprises in close proximity to local roadways and infrastructure.
  - Increase local ownership of and support for local businesses.
- Develop a clear definition of the characteristics of businesses allowed within homes and implement uniform regulations for development of home businesses based on the definition and PA Municipalities Planning Code requirements.
- Update the region's statistical database with up-to-date information and reports in order to better understand changes that have occurred in industry and employment sectors, income and education levels, and the correlation between this data and the socioeconomic well-being of the area.
- Provide continuing education opportunities to prepare area residents for new work environments.
- Increase the availability of high-quality childcare options that are affordable and include broad region-wide support.

**COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION**

**The Vision:** In 2026, development in the township will enhance the quality of life and its adjacent neighborhoods.

**Goal:** To provide a set regulatory tools and alternatives that ensure every development includes streetscape enhancements including landscaping plans, trees, pedestrian pathways, lighting, and attractive housing and commercial buildings.

**Objectives:**

- Develop and implement a streetscape plan for areas in the Village of Wiconisco and other areas within the planned growth area.
- Develop and promote design guidelines for new non-residential development that is in keeping with historic character of Wiconisco.
- Promote and provide incentives for infill development within the Township's planned growth area.
- Expand the number of businesses that offer goods and services to the region, including entertainment-recreation businesses.
- Connect older neighborhoods with newer neighborhoods.
- Minimize front setbacks and roadway widths for new development ultimately reducing costly infrastructure.
- Provide recreational opportunities for new and existing neighborhoods.
- Enforce property maintenance codes. Properties containing a variety of housing types are considered in good if not excellent condition and are well-maintained and typically command average to above average values in comparison to those of some of the Township's neighbors. Fostering continuance of good market value entails judicious application and enforcement of Property Maintenance Code provisions.
- Enforce strict building inspection practices. Strict building inspection policies that maintain the current level of safety and condition of housing and other building stock are highly recommended.

***BETTER AND SAFER TRANSPORTATION NETWORK***

**The Vision:** In 2026, every resident of the Township has access to a transportation system to travel easily to jobs, businesses, and recreational and cultural activities.

**Goal:** To provide a transportation system that addresses PA Route 209 and 1002 corridor improvements; traffic control; improved roadways with coordinated landscape, lighting, sidewalks; and pedestrian friendly streets.

**Objectives:**

- Become actively involved with the PENNDOT Highway development process for Routes 209 and 1002 improvements to ensure the design of transportation solutions integrates the community's values and local land use decisions.
  - Work with PENNDOT to produce a transportation alternative that incorporates context sensitive design and environmental enhancements.

- Create a functional classification system for the Northern Section of Dauphin County incorporating roadway design and access management criteria.
- Identify and prioritize network deficiencies within the Upper section which have a regional impact and work together with HATS MPO to plan and implement the resolution of these deficiencies.
- Implement traffic calming measures on Route 209 to resolve safety and operational/circulation issues.
- Develop a roadway improvement and maintenance program, for the entire region and develop a roadway maintenance program that includes those areas within the Township currently without a program.
- Prepare a roadway capital improvements plan
- Highlight program areas where regional cooperation is a preferred option.
- Invest in public transportation, if the need arises.
- Explore a regional rail service that has viable schedules that enable work to home and /or provides transportation solutions to destination places such as shopping centers, hospitals, entertainment and or parks.
- Provide opportunities for safe bicycle and pedestrian traffic, extending from Lykens, schools, existing and future neighborhoods, and recreation areas.

### ***QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES***

**The Vision:** In the future, the Township's youth will continue to be provided with high quality education and social support. Lifelong learning opportunities will be available to all. The region's services and facilities will keep up with the pace of growth.

**Goal:** To provide high quality education at all levels, youth to adult, and community services and facilities, including government, recreation, emergency, and health-care and social services and library resources.

#### **Objectives:**

- Work with the Williams Valley Area School District to coordinate the District's long-range and strategic planning efforts with the planning activities of the Township.
  - Communicate development and planning activities with the school district and work together to resolve common issues and/or problems.
- Review and work closely with senior citizens of the area to provide needed services including: home-based senior care, small care facilities located near neighborhoods or elderly living units, and senior center activities.
- Locate and acquire adequate park space.

- o Designate and acquire appropriately sized lands for a future community park. In order to meet projected need, the Township should look at purchase of land for a community park that amounts to ten acres per thousand population to conform with national standards.
- o Prepare a master recreation and facilities plan. Such a facility should contain both active and passive recreation facilities of type and number as desired by the residents determined by undertaking a master plan study.
- o Create a financing strategy for the implementation of the master park plan. Public funding for recreation is available for purchase, design, and construction of park facilities including grading and installation.

### **STATEMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLANNING ELEMENTS**

Cross-references throughout the policy plan and action plan tie the strategies and initiatives together. These references are too numerous to list; however, the following statements provide a brief listing of the type of relationships that are integrated throughout the policy and action plan.

- In general, the connection between land uses and the development of infrastructure is of primary importance to the Township's efforts to manage future growth.
- The implementation of the roadway standards program, access management standards, and roadway network maintenance /improvement program will ensure that the township's transportation system supports the future land use scenario by focusing the majority of infrastructure dollars within the primary growth area.
- The environmental and natural resources initiative supports the rural resource elements of the growth management plan by emphasizing the management of the region's watersheds through environmental site planning standards, the stormwater best management practices program (directed by PADEP), and environmental education opportunities.
- The economic development initiative focuses on keeping future growth near the Village and areas within the sewer and water service areas. Sustaining a healthy business environment requires a direct interface with future land use and transportation plus the active involvement and promotion of the business community and training of the local workforce.
- An interrelated economic development initiative is the historic preservation initiative that seeks to build a valley-wide heritage commission to preserve historic resources that will begin to promote the region as an interesting place to visit and work.
- The community services and facilities initiatives relates to the quality of life by addressing recreation, senior, governmental, and infrastructure and includes methods for communication, partnership building, and financial resources for foreseen projects.

**STATEMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP TO CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTY**

Wiconisco Township surrounds the Borough of Lykens and is surrounded by the Townships of Jackson, Lykens, Washington and Williams. The Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan 2005 draft lists only two of these six as having comprehensive plans. Notwithstanding this, the land uses of each municipality at the common boundary are similar or complementary.

The surrounding Townships are rural in nature, mirroring Wiconisco's open space predominance with the exception of Jackson, where Berry Mountain forms the boundary and Wiconisco, where the commercial and residential uses continue along Rt. 209 and form the Township's western boundary. Lykens is the central hub for goods and services and Wiconisco Township's growth has primarily emanated from the Borough into the Village of Wiconisco and along Rt. 209.

The Implementation Plan arising out of this planning process respects the congruency of its land uses with that of its neighbors.



## **PART IV – STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

To this point, the Plan has concentrated on the natural environment of the Township, the demographic and economic characteristics of its residents and constraints on, and opportunities for, its future. Summary statements have been included at the end of several chapters to serve as the basis for the creation of the Township’s vision of its future and the methods by which that vision can best be achieved. This chapter will coalesce the major findings of the Basic Studies chapters into primary activities the Township will need to undertake during the next decade in order to realize its vision for how the Township’s landscape will change in the next 10 years.

The following pages are intended to serve as the blueprint for improving the quality of life for all residents through actions that respect the environment, reduce sprawl and increase the livability of the Township.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Township officials and residents are aware of the constraints on the capacity for future growth in their community. Several factors can be attributed to this:

- Very limited land area for expansion of any use or new development
- Potential to increase customer base for current and future businesses is not likely
- Lack of available workforce
- Limited Township financial resources

### **PRIORITY INITIATIVES**

The following initiatives have been prioritized by Township officials and citizen committees who participated in the planning process. They have been collectively grouped in a matrix titled “Action Plan,” which is divided into major focus areas and has four columns that outline what the initiative is, when it should be completed, who should be responsible for it, and what, if any, cost is associated with its attainment.

This format provides the reader with a quick, thumbnail listing of the areas that are felt to have positive effects on improving the quality of life in the Township over the next 10 years.

**ACTION PLAN**

WHAT	WHEN	WHO	COST
<b>HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>			
1. Establish an area-wide Heritage Commission			
1. Establish interest in the concept. Publicize an initial meeting	1-2 years	Township Supervisors	Publication costs, meeting materials and refreshments, meeting space - \$500
2. Form an official group and heritage interest topics. Create a name and regular meeting dates		Commission Members	None
3. Create tasks for group members, member responsibilities and annual goals		Commission Members	None
4. Research funding mechanisms for project financing		Commission Members, Township supporters, PHMC, and DCED – tourism funding programs	None
5. Assign members and due dates to help implement priority initiatives	2-5 years	Commission Members	To Be Determined (TBD)
<b>ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS</b>			
Redraw zoning map boundaries to approximate actual projected amounts of land needed for each use.	1-2 years	PC, BoS and planning professional, in concert with extensive public input.	\$15-20,000 (planning professional), including ordinance revisions and adoption.
1. Establish a Primary Growth Boundary that coincides with the service areas of public water and sewer.	1-2 years	See Above	See Above

WHAT	WHEN	WHO	COST
2. Establish a Secondary Growth Boundary that approximates an economical and logical expansion of public utility systems.	1-2 years	See Above	See Above
Research design controls and protection measures for the PC and BOS review and approval	1-2 years	Dauphin County Planning Commission or an outside planning professional working directly with the Township PC, BOS, and the Township Solicitor	See Map revisions above
1. Residential building design and zone location	1-2 years	See Above	See Above
2. Floodplain/Wetlands protection	1-2 years	See Above	See Above
3. Increase controls for development outside the growth area	1-2 years	See Above	See Above
4. Establish design codes for commercial and industrial development that protect neighbors, use durable materials, provide ample landscaping, and incorporate attractive street lighting, safe routes for customers, consistent signage, and screen parking lots	1-2 years	See Above	See Above
5. Educate current and future members of Township Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to understand the zoning code and its use as a land development tool	2-5 years	See Above	TBD

WHAT	WHEN	WHO	COST
<b>PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE AMENDMENTS</b>			
1. Establish residential property safety code for inspection a. Establish goals and objectives of the safety code program b. Prepare reasonable inspection policies and standards c. Establish a timeframe and fee payment system for the institution of the program and personnel d. Monitor the inspection process, fee payment and results e. Pin point reoccurring issues and initiate resolutions for abatement	1-5 Years	Codes Enforcement Officer (CEO), Township Solicitor, BOS, and area-wide codes enforcement resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upfront costs for initial staffing. Should require one additional staff person at (\$35,000/year)</li> <li>• Clerical assistance</li> <li>• Solicitor fees for program review and adoption</li> </ul>
2. Prepare maintenance code educational materials for deployment each year	2-3 years	BOS	
<b>ECONOMIC BASE</b>			
1. Work with Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC) to stimulate interest with future businesses	Schedule annual meetings	BOS should appoint a qualified resident of the Township to maintain communications with CREDC	Travel expenses
2. Become an active contributor to the efforts of the Northern Dauphin Revitalization Project	Now	BOS appoints 1 of its own to serve on the Township Commission to be established	Undetermined, possibly matching funds for grants
3. Work with local banks to	Schedule annual meetings	BOS should appoint a qualified	None

institute lower fixed rate small business loans		resident of the Township to maintain communications	
<b>WHAT</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>COST</b>
4. Create a tax incentive program for large employer companies wishing to locate within the Township	Only when needed	BOS should be amenable to any future meetings with businesses wishing to locate in the Township	TBD
5. Create a business recruitment package for perspective businesses containing area demographics, tax information, available sites for development, land market value, amenities of the area, and area workforce information	1-3 years	BOS should appoint a qualified resident of the Township to help create ideas and prepare the package; BOS and a professional graphic designer to design the size and appearance of the package	TBD
<b>LAND USE</b>			
1. Work with local housing contractors to initiate and offer housing design plans that are attractive in design and have similar character to the current housing stock	3-10 years	PC members should work with county planners to create design controls for low and high-density housing	TBD
2. Develop a package of grants, loans, rebates and other incentives that make it more attractive to rehab existing vacant housing stock	2-4 years	Supervisors and Staff research County and State programs	None
3. Review current code enforcement practices and document deficiencies (e.g., too many waivers or variances, unsuitable design, obtaining land use or sign permit, housing safety inspection)	1-3 years	PC and CEO	None

WHAT	WHEN	WHO	COST
4. Monitor and document all variance cases	1-3 years	CEO	None
5. Amend zoning and or subdivision and land development ordinance	2-5 years	PC and CEO with assistance from professional planners and Township Solicitor	TBD
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>			
1. Improve safety conditions at high accident areas a. Assess transportation issue and create resolution b. Develop cost estimates c. Investigate a finance strategy	3-10 years	Township Road master, BOS, PennDOT and possibly adjacent municipalities	TBD
2. Initiate annual traffic counts for Route 209 and 1002	Every year	BOS, Road master and PennDOT. DCPC can also perform counts or in coordination with PennDOT	TBD
3. Prepare a roadway improvements plan	Every year	Road master and BOS	TBD
4. Explore expanding / initiating public / commuter systems that will facilitate Park and Ride, carpooling, emergency transportation needs and other energy saving programs.	2-5 years	Supervisors, HATS, Hegins Lines, Share-A-Ride, Commuter Svcs. of Central PA and CAT.	TBD
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES</b>			
1. Establish a new Township park using the L&W Stadium as the basis.	Potentially 10 years	DCNR, PA Rec. & Pks. Society, BOS, PC, for a recreation committee to organize priorities	TBD
a. Review available lands or potentially suitable sites	1-3 years	See Above	

WHAT	WHEN	WHO	COST
b. Investigate acquisition needs and costs	2-5 years	See Above	
c. Prepare financing strategy and available granting agencies	3-5 years	See Above	
d. Prepare a master park plan	3-7 years	See Above	
e. Construct first phase	5-10 years		