

2026
Comprehensive Plan

Planning for a Safe, Healthy, and Connected Future

Draft for Adoption – September 2026

Salisbury Township, Lehigh County

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*No applications were received from Ward 3. John Barbaz was appointed to represent the ward.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 4

Focus Areas 6

Introduction 7

A Comprehensive Plan for Salisbury Township 9

Other Planning Efforts 10

Process Phases and Schedule 11

Planning Framework 12

How to Use the Plan 13

Community Engagement 14

Stakeholder Interviews 15

Community Survey Results 18

Engagement Summary: The Insights 22

Existing Conditions 23

Population & Demographics 25

Housing 32

Economy 37

Environment, Parks, & Recreation 41

Infrastructure 45

The Built Environment 54

Strategies for Action 59

Vision 60

Strategies & Recommendations 61

Focus Area #1 62

Focus Area #2 68

Focus Area #3 73

Focus Area #4 77

Future Land Use 79

Future Land Use Map 80

Community Development Objectives 85

Implementation Plan 86

First 5 Strategies 104

Executive Summary

Salisbury Township 2026 Comprehensive Plan

From 2025 to 2026, Salisbury Township facilitated a process to update its 2012 comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development in ways that ensure the community remains vibrant, sustainable, and adaptable to the needs of residents and businesses. Over 15 months, the township worked with Strategic Solutions, a Pittsburgh-based public sector planning firm, to assess existing policies and collaboratively develop a vision for the township. Local officials and community members guided the project to ensure it accurately reflected the values and priorities of Salisbury Township.

The resulting plan includes prioritized projects and action strategies for implementation. It was formally adopted in the fall of 2026.

While some parts of the plan include technical details needed to guide future projects, you don't need to be an expert to find meaning in it.

At its heart, the plan tells Salisbury Township's story—where the community has been, where it is today, and where it hopes to go next. Every member of the community can find something that connects to their interests, whether it's housing, transportation, parks, the local economy, or overall quality of life.

The new comprehensive plan was shaped by the voices of Salisbury Township. Through public engagement, we heard about what matters most to community members. Their ideas and feedback helped shape the goals and strategies found throughout the new comprehensive plan.

The following pages provide an overview of how the plan came together and outline Salisbury Township's top priorities for building a vibrant, connected, and sustainable future.













The Planning Process

The process for updating Salisbury Township's comprehensive plan took place over 17 months, from May 2025 to September 2026, and was pursued in four phases.

Phase I – Groundwork

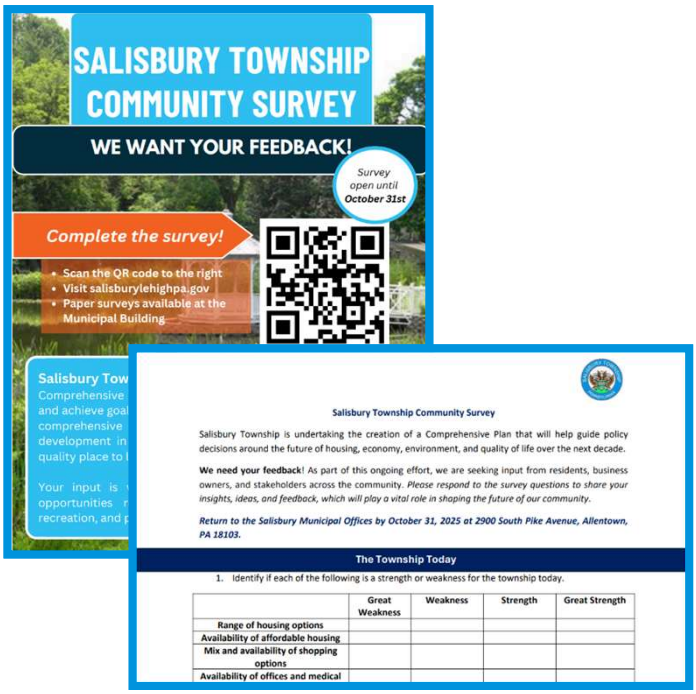
Phase I of the planning process aimed to document demographic trends, identify economic development priorities, evaluate the township's strengths and weaknesses, and capture the community's shared values and vision for the future. Input was collected through Steering Committee meetings, individual key stakeholder interviews, and a community survey.

The Community Engagement section of this plan presents a comprehensive understanding of Salisbury Township through perspectives of township officials, community leaders, and residents.

Phase II – Planning Sessions

Phase II of the planning process overlapped with Phase I and focused on interactive planning sessions with the township's Steering Committee, which included the township manager, community development director, public works director, police chief, assistant township manager, and members from the board of commissioners and planning commission. These planning sessions explored key topics including community input, township assets, land use, infrastructure, housing, implementation strategies, and project prioritization.

During this phase, practical strategies were created to help Salisbury Township turn the comprehensive plan's vision into action. Each focus area reflects the community's top priorities and the opportunities that will shape the township's future.



Phase III – Strategies for Action

The focus areas highlighted in the 2026 comprehensive plan, along with their associated strategies, provide a framework to guide decision-making and the allocation of resources, helping to shape policies, programs, and investments to benefit the township in the years ahead.

By addressing critical topics, the strategies in the comprehensive plan support a balanced and forward-looking approach to growth and development. The strategies are intended to be flexible, allowing priorities to shift as new opportunities or funding sources arise.

Each of the 4 focus areas and their vision statements are included on the following pages. While the full plan contains a comprehensive set of recommendations for each area, the pages that follow highlight only the highest-priority action items.

Phase IV: Adoption

In 2026, the new comprehensive plan was reviewed by Salisbury's Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners and shared with Lehigh County and adjacent municipalities. *The Salisbury Township 2026 Comprehensive Plan* was formally adopted on DATE.

Focus Areas

These four focus areas and associated priorities emerged through the planning process. Although priority action items have been identified below for each focus area, the plan contains many more recommendations as part of the Strategies for Action chapter.

Focus Area #1: Growing Strategically for Financial Benefit

Reduce long-term pressure on tax increases by encouraging strategic, higher-density development and redevelopment in appropriate commercial corridors and on underutilized sites, balancing the financial sustainability of Salisbury Township with protection of existing community character.

Impact Action Items:

- Allow for mixed-use development along commercial corridors
- Target residential densification along Lehigh St.
- Coordinate a joint corridor study along Lehigh St.
- Allow modest density increases to support senior housing near medical facilities

Focus Area #2: Preventing Property Disinvestment

Prevent property disinvestment by addressing blight and deterioration, supporting well-maintained housing, and protecting the quality and stability of neighborhoods throughout the township.

Impact Action Items:

- Enhance code enforcement data collection
- Registration of rental properties
- Registration of vacant properties
- Registration of foreclosed properties
- Explore conservatorship

Focus Area #3: Building a Connected Community

Build a common community identity by strengthening ties between the east and west areas of Salisbury Township, encouraging community interaction, and ensuring residents across both areas have easy access to township resources and services.

Impact Action Items:

- Evaluate Feasibility of Recreation Amenities Across from Municipal Facilities
- Create digital newsletter, increase social media presence, and township website enhancements
- Host community events

Focus Area #4: Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

Sustain and improve Salisbury Township's parks and open spaces through continued investment, regular maintenance, and partnerships that expand accessible recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Impact Action Item:

- Prioritize additional parks and trail master planning
- Explore and potentially expand partnerships to enhance stewardship of parks and natural areas

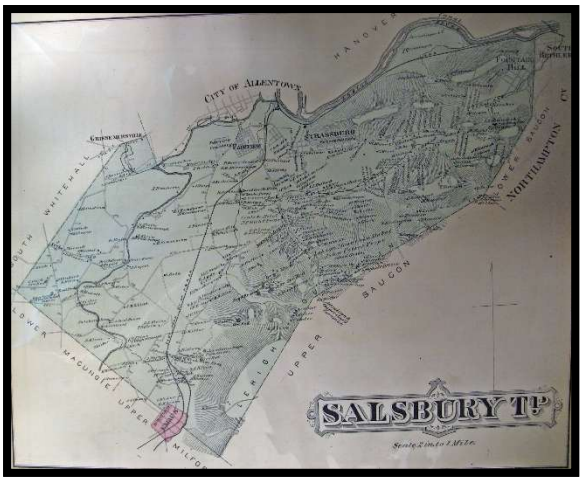


Introduction

History

Salisbury Township was formally established in 1753, the year the Liberty Bell was completed and 16 years after the area's first official settlement. Over time, the township experimented with several names, including Saltzberg, Salsberg, Salzburg, and Salisburg, before ultimately settling on Salisbury, the name that has endured for more than two centuries.

The first settlement in the township was established by Solomon Jennings along the Lehigh River in 1736. Since that time, Salisbury's boundaries have changed significantly. The township once encompassed what are now the Borough of Fountain Hill and portions of the Borough of Emmaus and the City of Allentown. With Emmaus incorporated as a borough in 1759, Fountain Hill in 1893, and South Allentown annexed to the City of Allentown in 1920, Salisbury's borders gradually shifted to their present configuration.



1876 map of Salisbury Township, prior to many of the annexations that define its current form.

Background

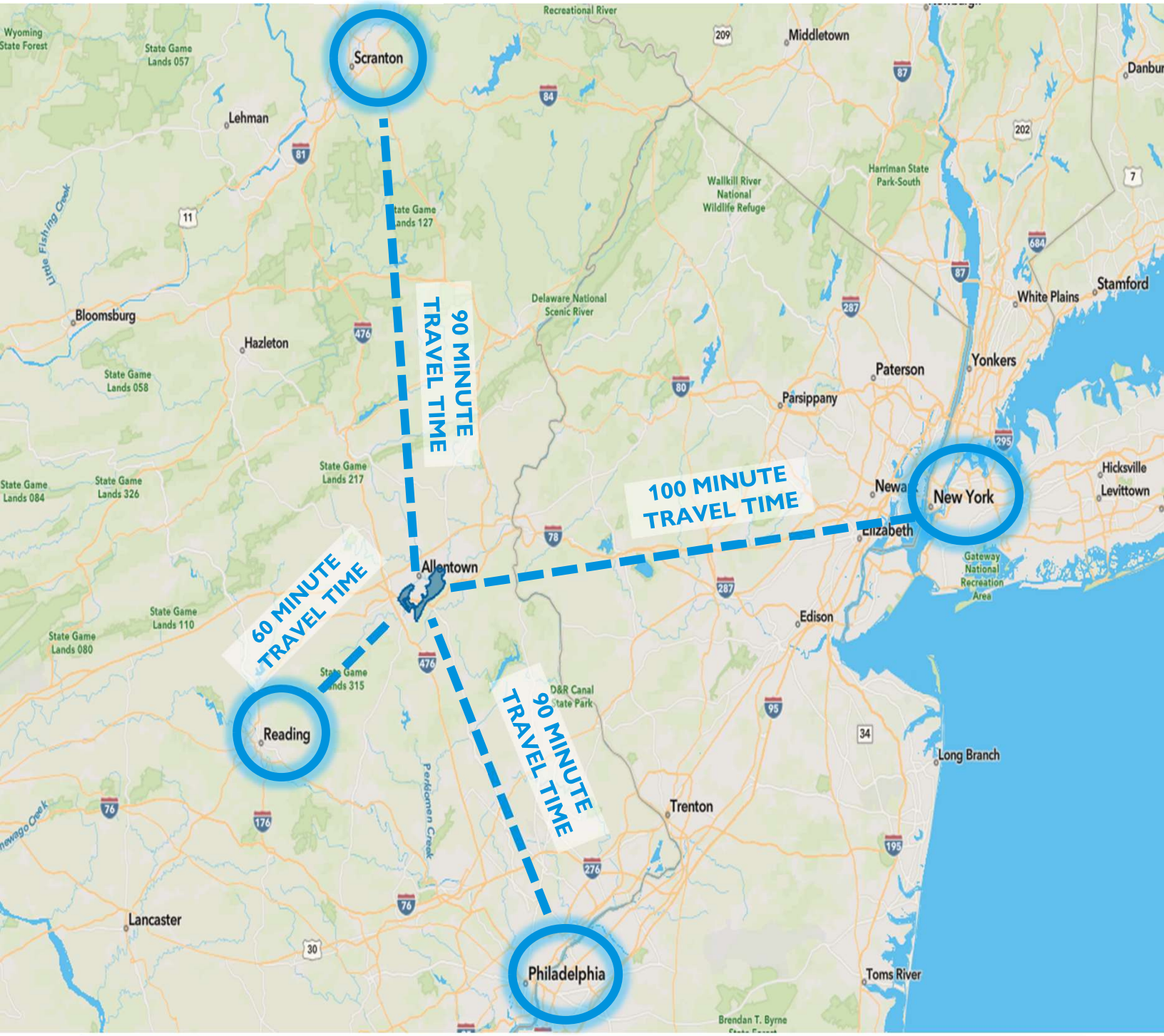
As a result of the annexations described above, present-day Salisbury Township holds a unique designation as the only non-contiguous municipality in Pennsylvania. The township consists of two separate sections, one to the west and one to the east, divided by the City of Allentown and Emmaus Borough. While physically separated, these two areas function as one community, served by a single school district.

Salisbury was one of the first suburbs of Allentown to develop, growing substantially during the mid-twentieth century. As a largely built-out community, its population has remained steady since 1990 even as the region has grown. Limited opportunities for expansion and established neighborhoods have shaped the township's development pattern. Salisbury continues to be valued for its location within the Lehigh Valley, proximity to major employment centers, and natural features such as Lehigh Mountain and South Mountain.

Regional Context

The township is strategically situated between major metropolitan areas, including Scranton, Philadelphia, and New York City, each approximately a 90-minute drive, and Reading, approximately one hour away. The township is also positioned close to the state border with about a 30-minute drive to the Delaware River which separates Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

As the Lehigh Valley grows, the township must define how it will manage change, protect what residents value, and position itself for long-term stability.



A Comprehensive Plan for Salisbury Township

In 2026, Salisbury Township formally adopted a new comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development in ways that ensure the community remains vibrant, sustainable, and adaptable to the needs of residents and businesses.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range document that captures a community's vision for its future. These plans typically cover a ten-year period and address important topics such as land use, housing, transportation, economic development, environmental stewardship, public services, and other key community priorities.

A comprehensive plan serves as a guide for local leadership when reviewing zoning decisions, development proposals, and public investments. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires municipalities to maintain a comprehensive plan.

In 2012, Salisbury Township adopted its previous comprehensive plan. That plan looked ahead 10 to 15 years and addressed key issues including future land use and housing, environmental conservation, community facilities and services, transportation, and community development and revitalization.

That plan established a framework that empowered policymakers to advance community goals and address the most pressing issues facing the township. Prior to its adoption, the township's comprehensive plan had not been updated since 1992.

Why Update the Plan?

Updating the comprehensive plan ensures that Salisbury Township's vision, policies, and strategies remain relevant, effective, and responsive to current and future conditions. As the community changes, it is important to maintain a plan that can address emerging priorities and new challenges.

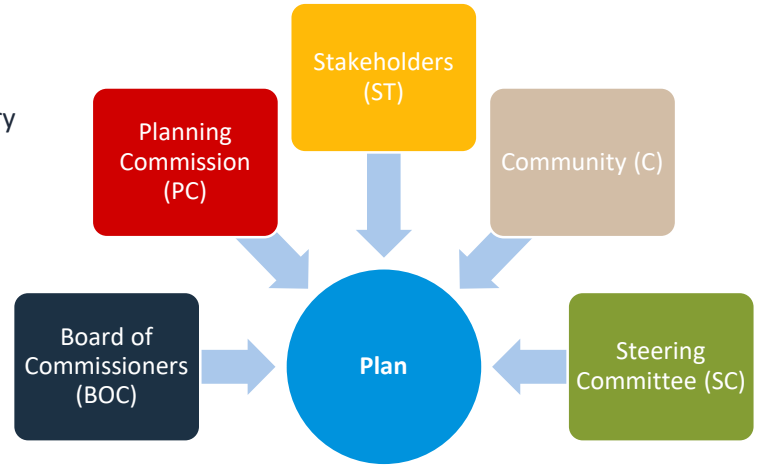
Regular updates are also consistent with the guidance of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Maintaining a current plan strengthens the township's ability to access funding for infrastructure upgrades, transportation improvements, and other short- and long-term community projects. It also ensures that the community's preferences for future land use are clearly defined and kept up to date, providing direction for the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO), which should reflect the objectives of the comprehensive plan.

Above all, updating the plan provides an opportunity for township officials and residents to collaborate, share their perspectives, and build a shared vision that will guide Salisbury Township's future.

Who Was Involved?

The decision to undertake this planning effort began with local leadership and staff, who recognized both the extent of change since the last comprehensive plan and the importance of keeping the document current.

However, this update represents more than a statutory requirement. Guided by a Steering Committee—including representation from the township's Planning Commission, Board of Commissioners, and local stakeholders—the recommendations in this plan reflect the community's priorities and shared vision for Salisbury Township's future.



Other Planning Efforts

Planning occurs at multiple levels, from municipalities to counties and across the broader region. To inform this plan and ensure alignment with ongoing efforts, relevant regional planning initiatives were reviewed, several of which are summarized below.

FutureLV: The Regional Plan (2023)

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission completed a regional plan to provide a long-term vision for managing future growth, building resiliency, and leveraging assets.

The plan identified five goals:

- Efficient and coordinated development pattern
- Connected mixed-transportation region
- Protected and vibrant environment
- Competitive, creative, and sustainable region
- Safe, healthy, inclusive, and livable communities

Lehigh Valley Transportation Study: Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (2024)

Adopted in 2024, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission completed the Coordinated Transportation Plan to:

- Promote transportation equity
- Manage resources efficiently
- Foster cooperation
- Create economic opportunities

The plan identified the following needs:

- Funding sources
- Services for seniors and people with disabilities
- Accessible transportation
- Safety education

William H. Laubach Memorial Park & Franko Farm Recreation Area

The township adopted the Master Site Development Plan in 2017 to address growing development needs for Laubach Memorial park and the Franko Farm recreational area.

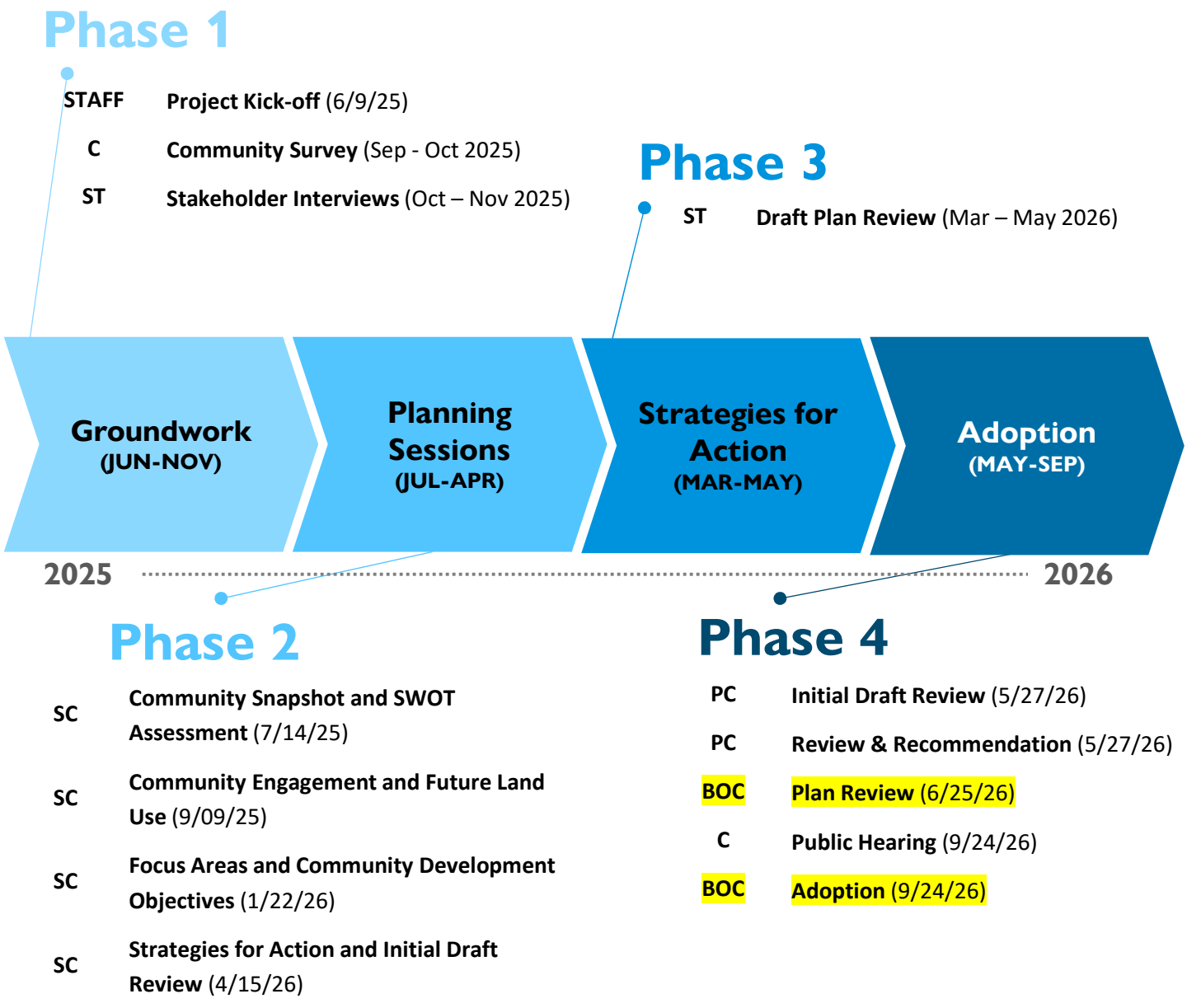
The plan identified nine goals:

- Solve two predominant concerns at Laubach Park: stormwater runoff and vandalism.
- Provide recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities in eastern Salisbury Township
- Improve the health of the pond and rehabilitate Trout Creek in Laubach Park
- Create an integrated passive and active recreation experience at both parks
- Develop a vegetation management plan for Franko Farm
- Provide ADA connections at both parks
- Upgrade facilities to meet current standards
- Plan innovative improvements to provide activities for all age groups
- Phase the work to fit with the township's budget



Process Phases and Schedule

A 15-month long planning process beginning in spring of 2025 was organized around four phases. Targeted and widespread community engagement informed the outcomes of the comprehensive plan, and the timeline below summarizes the breadth and depth of touchpoints between the planning team and the community. The process allowed the planning team to conduct detailed research and analysis, which was shared with stakeholders and used to inform the development of targeted strategies that support a shared vision.

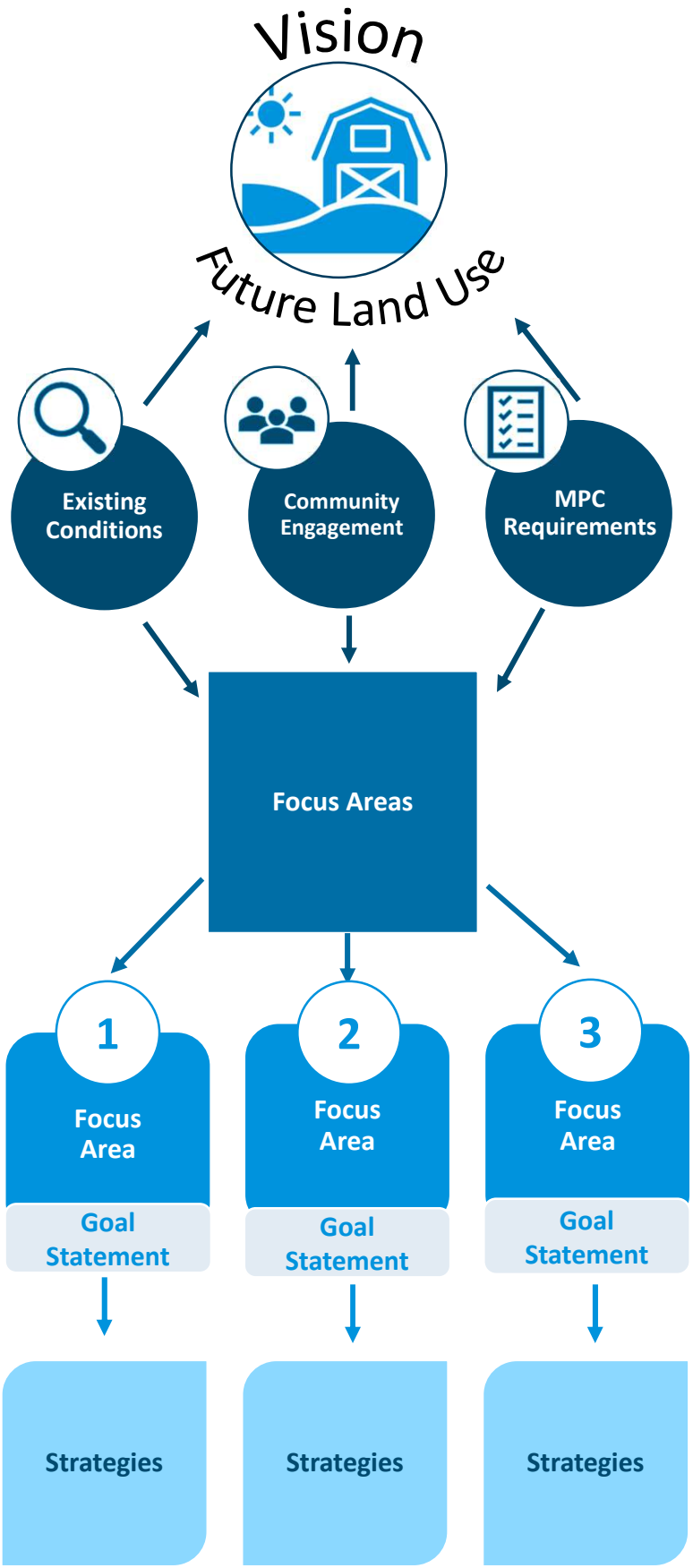


Planning Framework

The comprehensive planning process for Salisbury Township was designed to establish a shared, forward-looking vision that reflects local conditions, community priorities, and statutory planning requirements. The vision was informed by an evaluation of existing conditions, including land use patterns, demographic trends, housing needs, economic conditions, transportation, and natural resources.

Technical analysis was combined with community engagement to guide the plan's direction. Public input was gathered through a community survey and stakeholder discussions, with oversight from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to help ensure the plan reflected the perspectives of residents, businesses, and community leaders while aligning with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

Together, the analysis of existing conditions, community input, and MPC requirements informed the Focus Areas that organize the plan's recommendations, as summarized in the "Strategies for Action" chapter, beginning on page 59. Each Focus Area includes a goal and targeted strategies to guide decision-making and implementation. Additional recommendations addressing topics such as land use, housing, transportation, community facilities, and utilities are also included in the Implementation Plan chapter, beginning on page 86, to meet MPC requirements.



How to Use the Plan

This plan is organized into six chapters that summarize information learned throughout the planning process and introduce Salisbury Township's shared vision for land use and quality of life in the next decade.

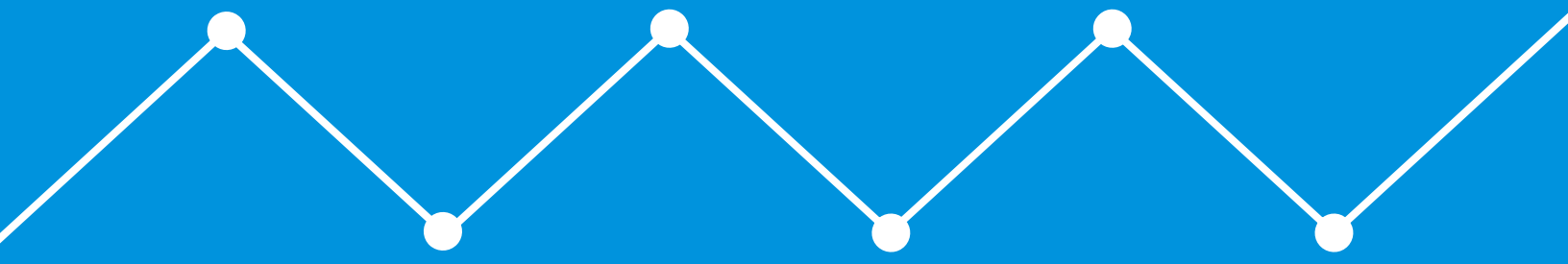
1. **Introduction:** Describes the purpose and process of comprehensive planning and introduces Salisbury Township and its prior planning efforts
2. **Community Engagement:** Summarizes input shared from the community stakeholders and identifies key insights
3. **Existing Conditions:** Discusses population, housing, and economic data; reviews existing land uses, community assets, and regulations to inform vision and future land use
4. **Strategies for Action:** Outlines focus areas for the plan identified through community engagement and existing conditions analysis, and contains a detailed discussion of priority strategies related to focus areas
5. **Future Land Use:** Identifies Salisbury Township's desired land use and community development objectives over the next ten years
6. **Implementation Plan:** Contains a comprehensive list of recommendations for Salisbury Township spanning all topics required for a comprehensive plan under the MPC

Over the next decade, this plan should serve as a central policy document to guide land use decisions, capital investments, and coordination among township officials, community partners, and residents.

Guide Land Use Regulation: Ensure development aligns with community goals

Evaluate New Proposals and Projects: Check if projects fit within the plan's vision and recommendations

Engage the Public and Stakeholders: Use the plan to communicate goals and gather community input



Support Infrastructure and Capital Planning: Prioritize investments in utilities and public facilities

Coordinate Across Departments and Jurisdictions: Promote unified decision-making among planners, officials, and agencies

Monitor Progress: Review and update consistently to reflect changing conditions



Community Engagement

Overview

Community participation plays a vital role in shaping this comprehensive plan. By engaging residents throughout the process, Salisbury Township reinforces a shared sense of investment and ensures the plan responds to the community's distinct opportunities and challenges. The insights gathered through this collaboration help guide a vision for a future that reflects the values and priorities of Salisbury Township's residents.

Specifically, this section captures the collective voice of the community—its hopes, concerns, and aspirations. Through open dialogue and comprehensive data collection, the township is committed to a planning process that is both inclusive and reflective of the people it serves.

Community outreach was a key element in the development of this plan. Engagement efforts included a steering committee, stakeholder interviews, and a community survey.

Steering Committee

Steering Committee meetings offered valuable insight into the current state of Salisbury Township and helped identify key needs, opportunities, and challenges related to land use, housing, infrastructure, and public services.

Summary of Engagement Opportunities

Steering Committee meetings offered guidance on land use, housing, infrastructure, and services.

Stakeholder interviews provided critical insight into the challenges and opportunities for the Township.

The **Community Survey** received a tremendous response and captured residents' priorities, concerns, and vision for Salisbury Township's future.

Steering Committee Meeting Schedule

- Project Kickoff (6/9/25)
- Demographics (7/14/25)
- Land Use (9/9/25)
- Strategies for Action (4/15/26)

Stakeholder Interviews

Involving key stakeholders in the planning process fosters inclusion and ownership of the plan, helping to build broader support and improve the likelihood of successful implementation. Stakeholder interviews, in particular, provide an opportunity to gain insight from individuals with unique personal or professional relationships and/or specific areas of expertise.

Eight individuals who live or work in Salisbury Township, including longtime residents, civic leaders, and community advocates, were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. These stakeholders were selected for their deep knowledge of the community, unique perspectives, and personal and professional relationships. Their input offered valuable insight into Salisbury's strengths, challenges, and opportunities, while also helping to build trust and buy-in for the planning process.

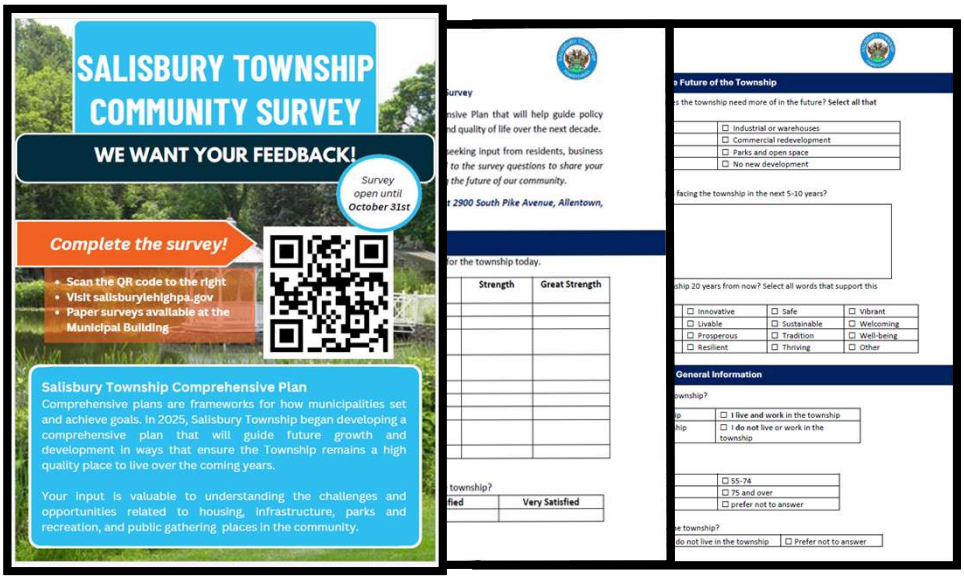
Key Stakeholder Interviews

- Lynn Fuini-Hetten
  (Superintendent, Salisbury Township School District)
- Joe Gnall
  (President, Salisbury Township School Board)
- Commissioner Debra Brinton
  (Board of Commissioners President, Ward 3)
- Commissioner Heather Lipkin
  (Board of Commissioners Ward 1)
- Bryon Cramsey
  (Salisbury Youth Association, President)
- Lauren Wellbank
  (Salisbury Youth Association, Vice President)
- Annie Greaves
  (Salisbury Youth Association, Secretary)
- Julius Ewungkem
  (Property Owner, Local Developer)

Community Survey

The community survey provides both quantitative and qualitative feedback from residents, key stakeholders, and other community members, capturing their opinions, preferences, and concerns regarding community life.

An online and paper version of the survey was offered to community members to collect input on the township's strengths, areas for improvement, and development needs. Participants were also invited to share their views on a long-term vision for the community.



A survey was made available to residents to provide their feedback.

Stakeholder Interview Results

Community Strengths

Key stakeholders value Salisbury Township's small, close-knit feel, where residents can form strong personal connections. This tight sense of community is further supported by a unified school district that serves the entire township.

Stakeholders consistently highlighted the township's location as a key strength. Its proximity to the neighboring communities of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton as well as metropolitan areas of New York City and Philadelphia allows residents to enjoy the amenities of larger cities while living in a more relaxed, suburban setting. The presence of major roadways, including I-78, provides convenient access to the broader region.

What makes Salisbury Township a good place to live, work, or do business?

Being a small, close-knit community that is close to major metropolitan areas are strengths for Salisbury Township.

Community Challenges

The City of Allentown and Borough of Emmaus run between the east and west sides of Salisbury Township, physically separating the two areas and creating unique challenges. Stakeholders noted that perceptions of unequal maintenance and investment in community park amenities, along with economic disparities, contribute to an east–west divide that limits community cohesion.

While stakeholders recognized that the township could benefit from additional tax revenue generated by new development, they also agreed that opportunities for development are very limited. They further noted that residential growth could introduce additional challenges, including increased traffic, added strain on the school district, and the potential for higher crime rates as the population grows.

In addition, stakeholders identified the ongoing upkeep and renovation of existing community parks and schools as a third significant challenge, citing the need to upgrade facilities, equipment, playing fields, and lighting over time.

What are the biggest challenges or concerns you hear from community members?

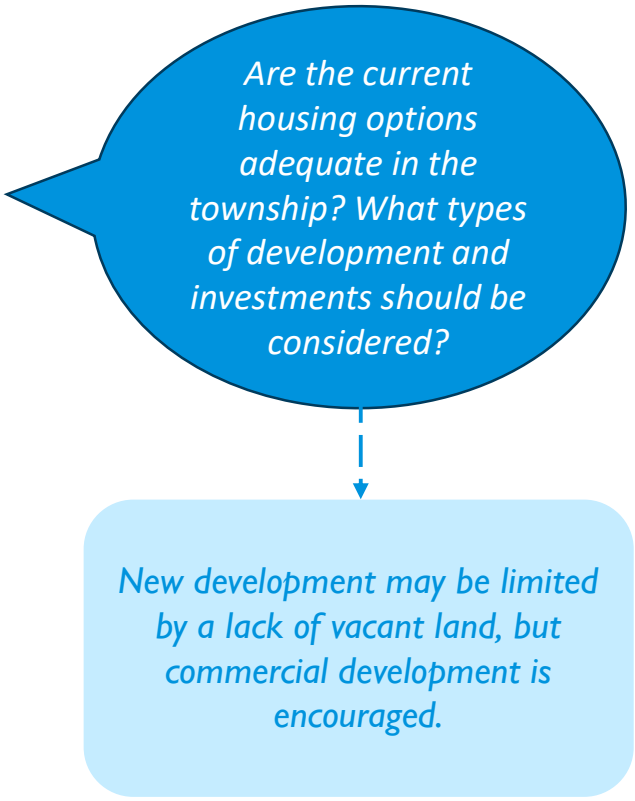
Community cohesion between the east and west side of the township, limited development opportunities, and the need for upkeep of community assets were identified as challenges.

Land Use and Development

Development challenges were largely attributed to a lack of developable land. Additionally, stakeholders mentioned restrictive zoning rules around development as a challenge.

A lack of developable land and restrictive zoning regulations impact Salisbury Township's opportunities for increasing their existing housing supply, some of which is aging and declining in quality. One stakeholder with real estate experience said, although the township currently has housing available for all income levels, Salisbury Township should consider opportunities to encourage more multi-unit housing.

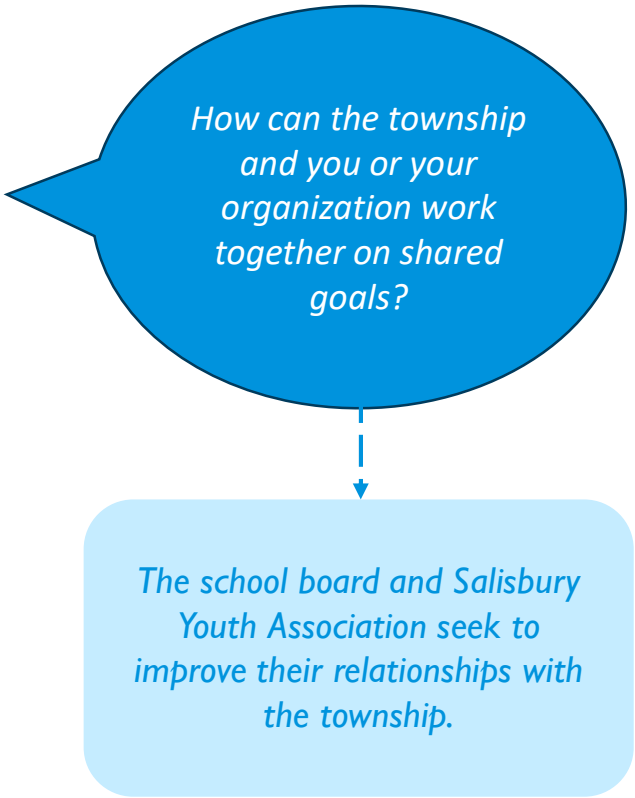
Further, stakeholders said limited opportunities for new commercial development impede the community's desire for better and more plentiful commercial amenities. Stakeholders emphasized that vacant retail space at the South Mall could provide an opportunity to expand retail and restaurant options.



Working Toward Common Goals

When asked which community organizations could work together toward shared goals, stakeholders highlighted the relationship between the township and the school board. For example, the township could have a school board member attend relevant meetings to share information, and vice versa. Stakeholders also said the relationship between the Salisbury Youth Association (SYA) and the Salisbury Township Recreation Advisory Committee could be strengthened, building on the partnership that already exists.

Additionally, stakeholders said the township should partner with local organizations to help raise awareness about community resources available for families. Because many households experience financial instability, improving access to information about a variety of local and regional resources and services could benefit many residents.



Community Survey Results

The township circulated an eight-question survey among community members in both online and paper formats. Survey questions asked about the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and the long-term vision for Salisbury Township. The survey received 384 responses.

Survey Participant Demographics

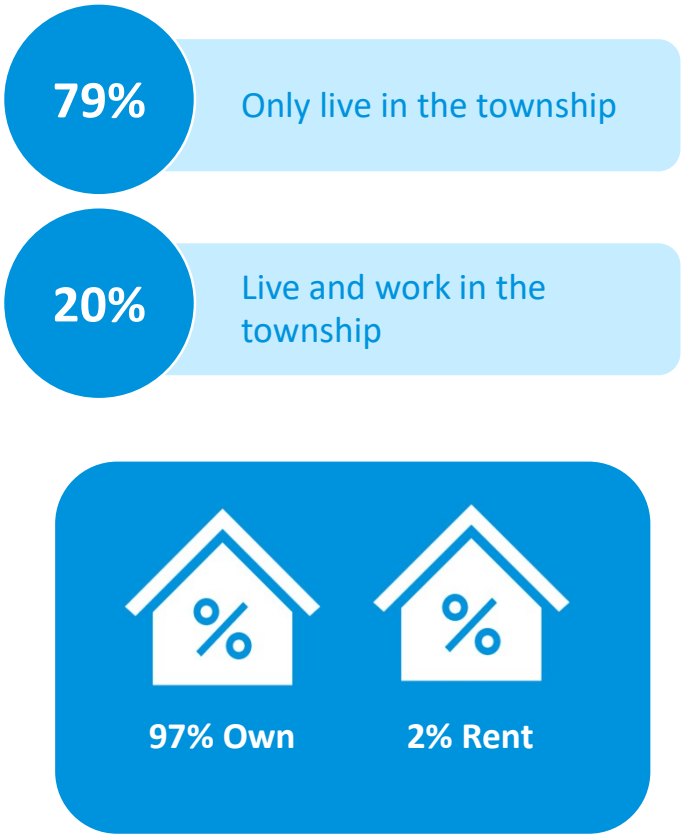
The survey included demographic questions to gain a data-informed understanding of how well different groups of the community were represented.

The majority of individuals who completed the survey selected that they *only live in the township,* with many also noting that they *live and work in the township*. Less than one percent responded that they *only work in the township* or *do not live or work in the township*.

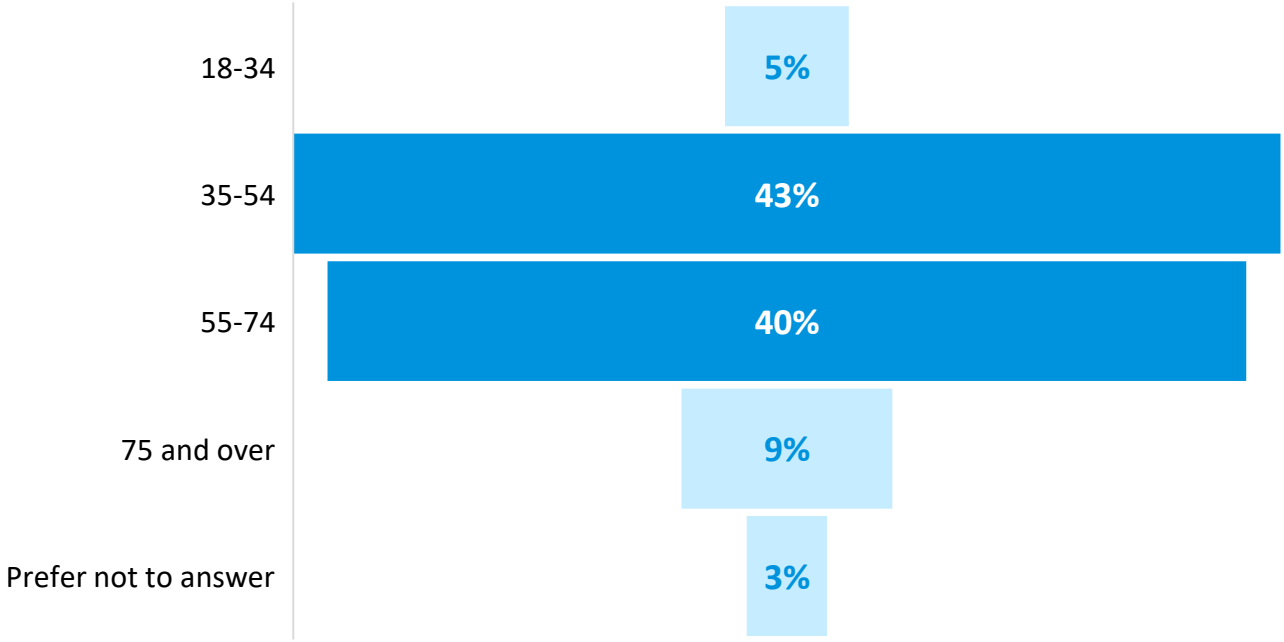
Eighty-three percent of survey takers identified themselves as being between the ages of 35 and 74 years old. Only five percent were 34 or younger.

Almost all of the participants responded that they own their home, with only two percent identifying as renters.

Characteristics of Survey Participants



Age of Survey Respondents



Quality of Life

Most survey participants responded that they are either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the overall quality of life in the township.

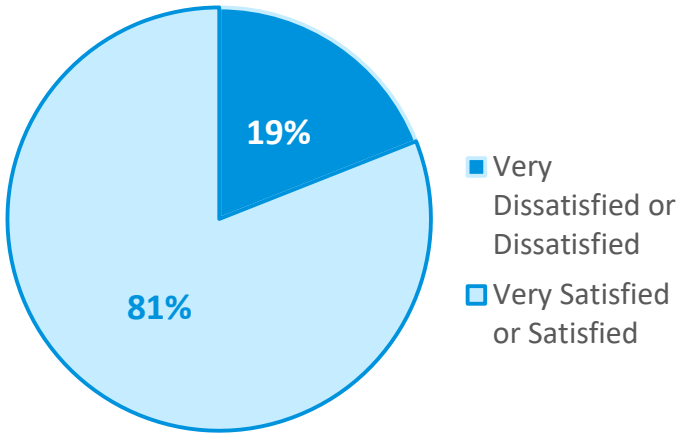
Strengths and Weaknesses

The survey asked participants to rate nine categories as either a *great strength, strength, weakness,* or *great weakness.* Survey respondents identified several community strengths. They said the township has a range of housing options and office space as well as adequate availability of medical services, parks and recreation amenities, and emergency services (police, fire, and EMS). Roadway conditions were recognized as a major weakness in the township.

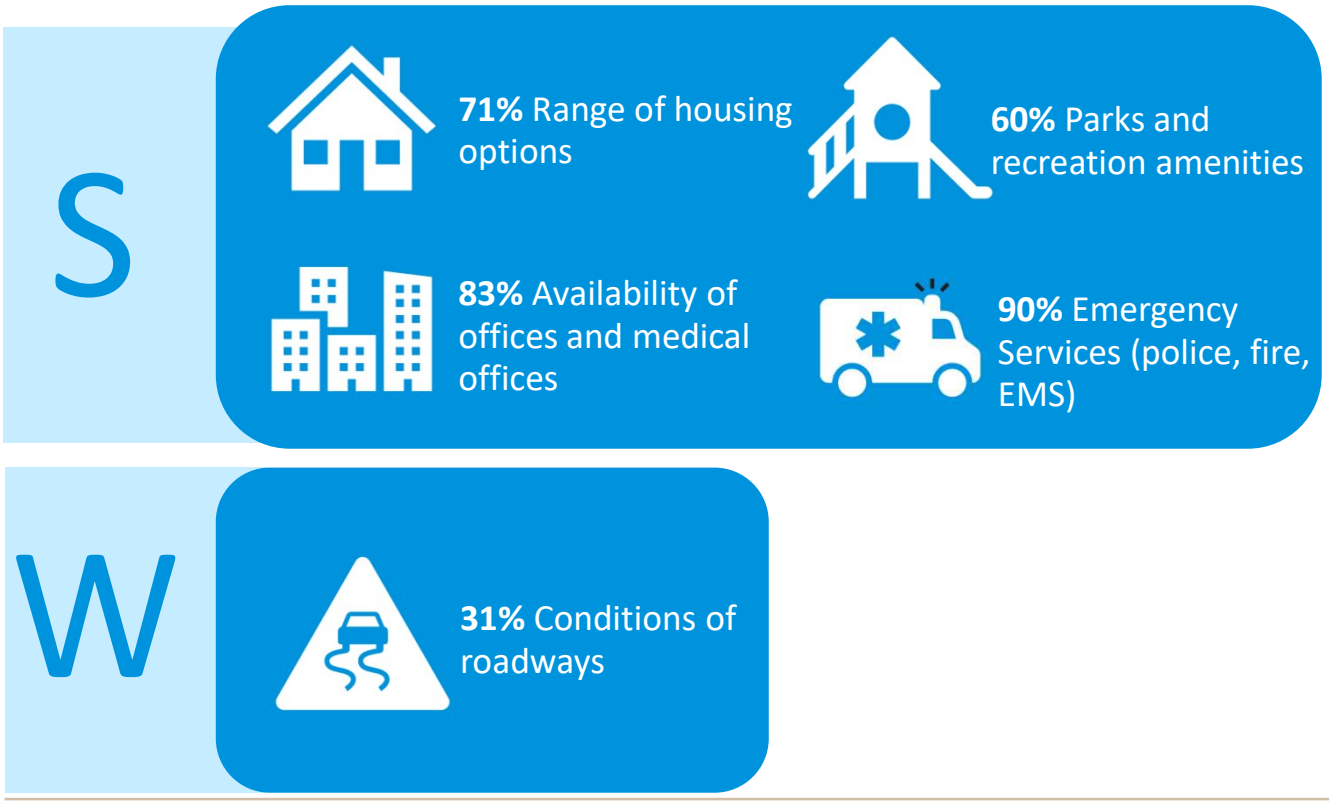
Mixed responses were received for a few categories where participants did not strongly indicate that a topic was either a strength or weakness, including:

- Mix and availability of shopping options
- Community gathering spaces
- Employment opportunities

Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Life in the Township



Satisfaction with Salisbury Township Amenities, Services, and Infrastructure



Community Challenges

Survey participants identified several key challenges that the township may face in the next 5-10 years. These challenges may need to be addressed by the township to meet long-term community goals.

There were multiple facets to the challenges related to development. Some respondents noted concerns about both current and future *overdevelopment,* and the potential for overcrowding and reduced open space. There was particular concern that more residential development would create strain on the school district. However, some feel that more development is needed to increase the tax base and meet local needs.

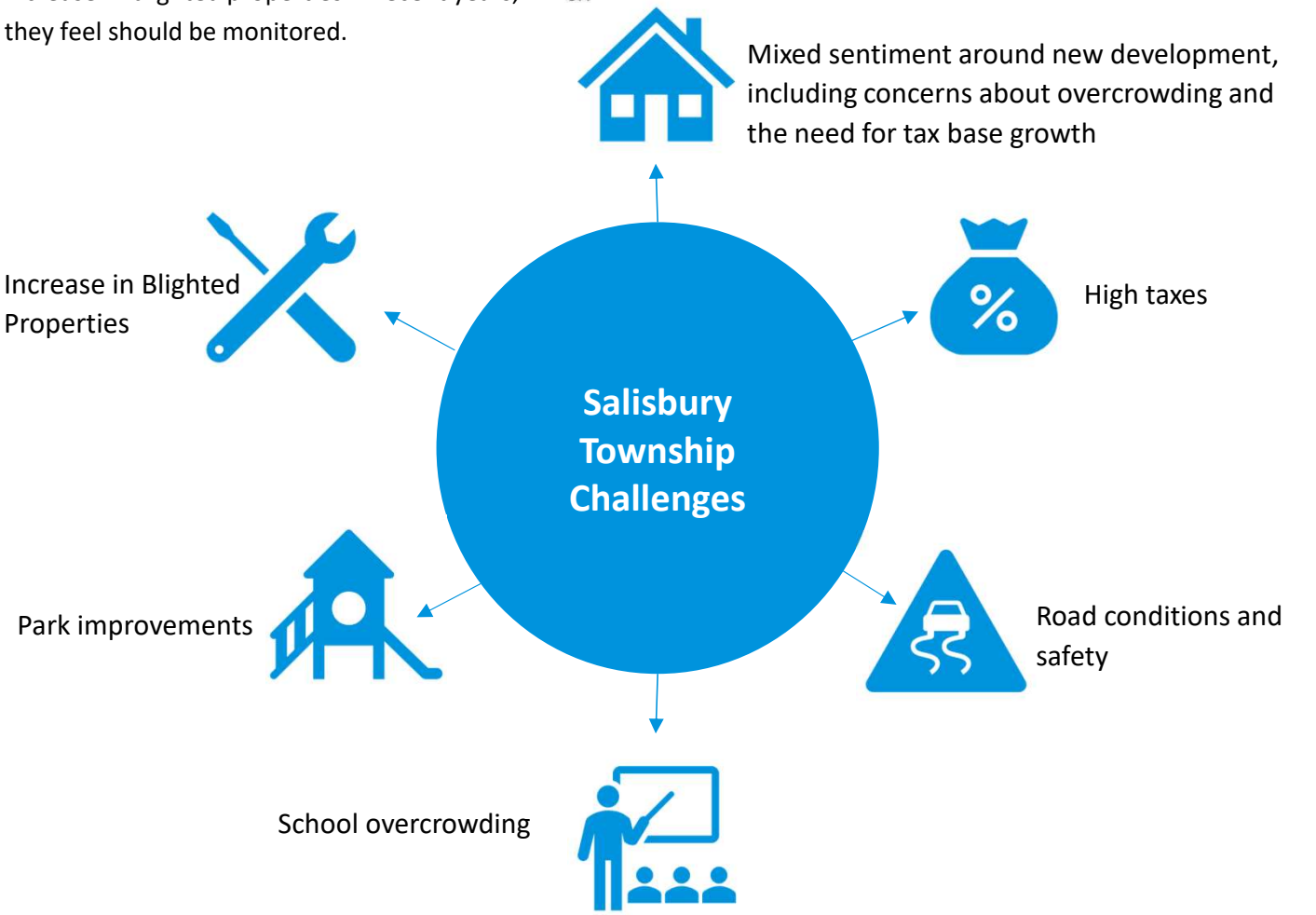
High taxes were noted as another challenge. Participants communicated concern that any additional increases in taxes would make the community unaffordable to many current residents.

Some survey respondents said there has been an increase in blighted properties in recent years, which they feel should be monitored.

The condition and safety of roadways emerged as a key concern, with survey participants noting a decline in roadway maintenance and increased risks to drivers and pedestrians due to higher traffic volumes, speeding, and a lack of sidewalks.

Survey respondents identified the school district as a major challenge, citing concerns about overcrowding and its potential impact on the quality of education provided to students in the community.

The need for park improvements was another recurring theme in public feedback, particularly regarding Laubach Park. While many residents expressed appreciation for the township's park system overall, numerous responses pointed to declining conditions and amenities at Laubach Park. Specifically, respondents cited concerns with cleanliness, outdated facilities, and a perceived lack of investment compared to other parks.



Future Development

When asked what types of development the township needs more of in the future, about half of survey participants responded that parks, open space, shopping, and retail are priorities.

While a third of respondents identified single-family homes as a development need, an almost equal number indicated they did not want any new development.

20-year Vision

Survey participants were asked to choose from a list of 20 words to describe their vision for Salisbury Township 20 years into the future. The most frequently selected word was "safe," chosen by 80 percent of respondents. "Livable," "welcoming," and "healthy" were also selected by at least 50 percent of participants.

Development to Encourage in Salisbury Township

Type of Development	Percent Response
Parks and open space	49%
Shops and retail	43%
Single-family homes	34%
No new development	31%
Apartments or townhomes	14%
Commercial redevelopment	10%
Offices and medical offices	5%
Industrial or warehouses	3%

20-year Vision Characteristics for Salisbury Township

Accessible	Balanced	Collaborative	Connected	Diverse
27%	37%	25%	33%	27%
Forward-Thinking	**Healthy**	**Inclusive**	**Innovative**	**Livable**
39%	50%	28%	23%	58%
Other	**Prosperous**	**Resilient**	**Safe**	**Sustainable**
5%	36%	19%	80%	39%
Thriving	**Tradition**	**Vibrant**	**Welcoming**	**Well-being**
40%	23%	22%	50%	25%

Engagement Summary: The Insights

Engagement throughout the planning process was intentional and far-reaching to ensure that the community's collective voice shaped the vision of this plan. Through this outreach, six key focus areas emerged to guide the township in developing strategies that will advance this shared vision. The following summarizes primary directives within each focus area:

Strengthening Connections between East and West Salisbury Township: Community members expressed a desire to foster stronger connections between the township's two distinct areas. This may be supported by:

- Investigating the potential to develop centrally located community spaces that are accessible and welcoming to all residents.

Enhancing Community Spaces: Building on that theme, the community values parks and open spaces as places to gather, connect, and recreate. There are opportunities to:

- Continue investing in park facilities through improved maintenance and cleanliness.
- Identify strategic upgrades that enhance usability and visual appeal.

School District: The small size of the Salisbury Township School District contributes to a close-knit community. However, facilities may have limited space to accommodate future population growth.

- Cultivate open lines of communication with the School District regarding projected growth and potential impacts.

Open Communication: In addition to coordination with the School District, residents emphasized the importance of opportunities for open dialogue that foster a sense of collaboration with the township. One potential strategy is to:

- Identify opportunities for collaboration between the Recreation Advisory Committee and the Salisbury Youth Association

Development Wants and Limitations: The community encourages the pursuit of more economic vitality in the area. There are opportunities to:

- Identify areas to encourage commercial development
- Evaluate opportunities to boost retail and restaurant options at the South Mall
- Promote strategic residential and commercial development that maximizes limited vacant land availability with community needs

Taxes: Although taxes are a necessity to support vital public services and infrastructure, some community members said increased taxes may cause a financial strain on residents.

- Evaluate the benefit of new development on local taxes, including the benefits to the school district





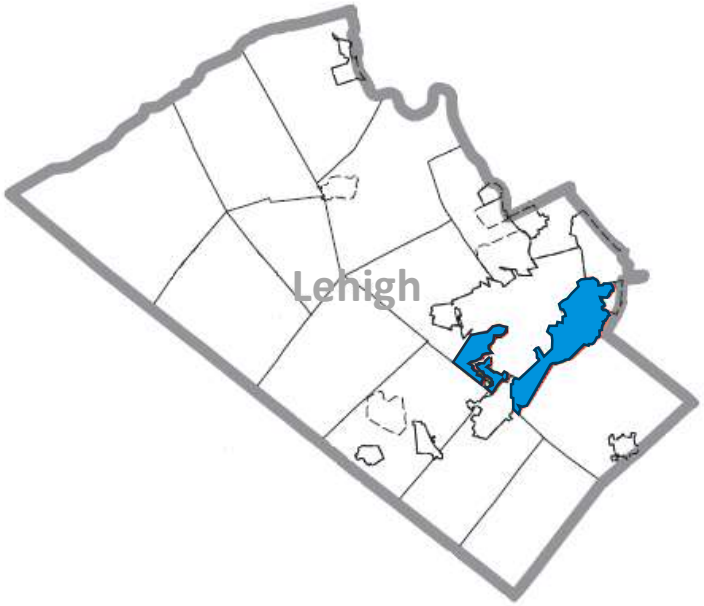
Existing Conditions

Overview

Salisbury Township's population has remained relatively constant since 2000, and projections suggest continued stability in the decades ahead. While the Lehigh Valley region is projected to continue recent strong growth, Salisbury's steadiness allows it to plan intentionally for evolving housing, infrastructure, and service needs without the pressure of rapid change.

Salisbury is unique in its geography—divided into western and eastern portions by the City of Allentown and Borough of Emmaus. Despite this separation, residents across both halves share a common identity in the township's public institutions and an appreciation for the community's location, character, and quality of life. The township features a mature suburban development pattern dominated by single-family, owner-occupied homes constructed during the mid- to late-20th century. Its proximity to major employment centers in Allentown and Bethlehem (and convenient access to regional destinations like Philadelphia and New York City) continues to make Salisbury a desirable place to live.

Many Salisbury residents' long-term residency reflects deep ties to the township. A detailed analysis of demographic, economic, and housing trends provides valuable insight into the community's character and how it may evolve. These insights will help Salisbury build on its strengths and proactively address emerging needs.



13,605
Current Population

5,535
Housing Units

ACS, 2023

Comparison Communities

To provide context for the data presented throughout this plan, Salisbury Township is compared with several nearby communities that share key characteristics. These comparison communities were selected based on factors such as population density, income levels, demographics, housing stock, and educational attainment. In addition to similar suburban townships, the City of Allentown was included due to its size, proximity, and influence on development patterns within Salisbury.

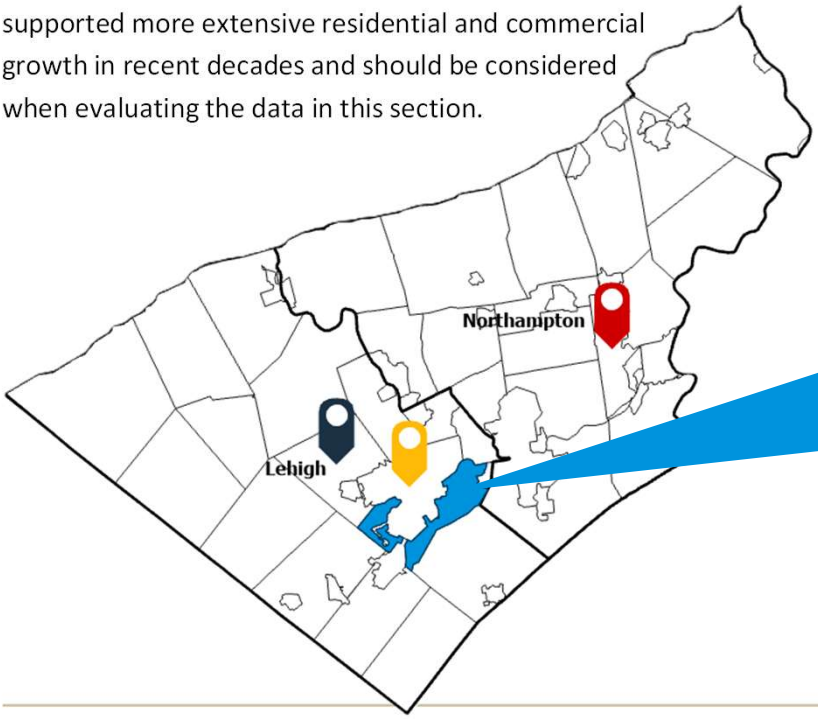
By analyzing how Salisbury aligns with or diverges from these communities, the plan is better able to distinguish between trends that are local, regional, or statewide. This comparative lens supports a clearer understanding of where Salisbury is unique and where it shares challenges or opportunities with its neighbors—ultimately informing more targeted and strategic decision-making.

The selected comparison communities include Palmer Township (Northampton County), South Whitehall Township (Lehigh County), the City of Allentown, Lehigh County overall, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Unlike Salisbury Township, both Palmer Township and South Whitehall Township have had greater availability of developable land, which has supported more extensive residential and commercial growth in recent decades and should be considered when evaluating the data in this section.

South Whitehall Township		
Population	**Location**	**Description**
21,173	Lehigh County	South Whitehall Township is a suburban community that also borders Allentown, and has similar income, housing, and demographic characteristics.

Palmer Township		
Population	**Location**	**Description**
22,325	Northampton County	Palmer Township is a suburban community northeast of Bethlehem, with similar age and racial characteristics to Salisbury.

Allentown City		
Population	**Location**	**Description**
124,871	Lehigh County	Allentown is the largest urban center in the Lehigh Valley region, and borders Salisbury Township.



Comparison communities were selected based on similar population attributes, demographics, and geographic proximity to Salisbury Township.

Population & Demographics

It is worth stating that people are at the heart of this plan. Who Salisbury Township is at present, and who it will be in the future, gives meaning to all the data in this section.

Salisbury Township's identity is rooted in a quiet, suburban residential setting with convenient access to major employment centers throughout the Lehigh Valley. Much of the community was built out during the mid-20th century, contributing to its established character today.

An in-depth look at the township's demographic makeup offers insight into its past and present, while anticipating trends that may shape its future. Understanding these patterns allows Salisbury to plan thoughtfully for change and build on the qualities that set it apart in the region. This section focuses on the people who call Salisbury home. Additional data related to housing and the local economy is explored in later chapters of the plan.

Population Growth

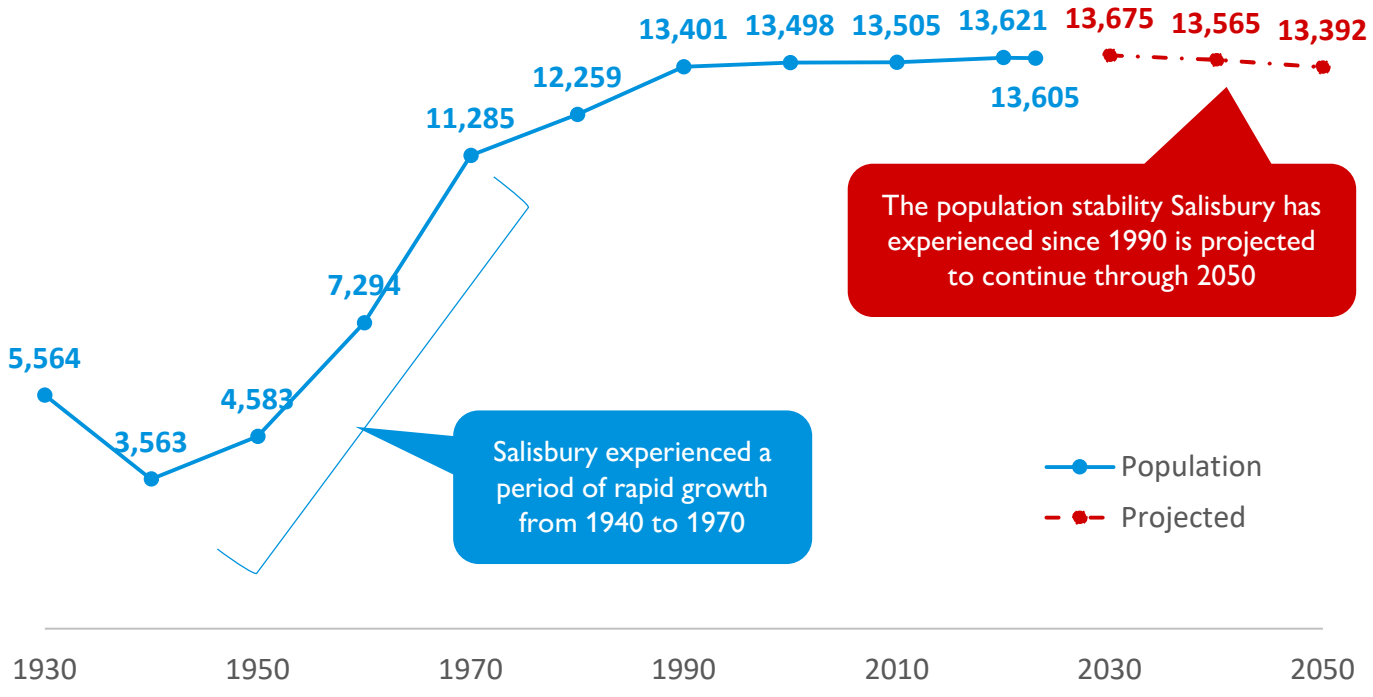
Salisbury Township experienced significant population growth from 1940 through 1970. Growth continued over the next two decades, though at a slower pace, before leveling off at 13,401 residents in 1990. Since then, the population has remained steady, with 13,621 residents recorded in the most recent American Community Survey (2023).

Projections from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) suggest that this period of population stability will continue. By 2050, Salisbury's population is projected to be 13,392—a slight decrease from current levels.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The projected population stability provides an opportunity for the township to evaluate the tax implications for current residents due to lack of growth. This evaluation may include reviewing the benefits of attracting new businesses to the area to help support funding needs.

HISTORIC POPULATION & PROJECTED GROWTH

American Community Survey, 2023
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2023



Regional Growth

While Salisbury Township's population has remained stable since 1990, the surrounding Lehigh Valley region has experienced, and is expected to continue experiencing, substantial growth. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission projects population will grow by an additional 12.8 percent between now and 2050, potentially driven by the area's proximity to two major metros – New York City and Philadelphia – along with strong employment centers like Allentown and Bethlehem.

Accordingly, surrounding communities have seen notable increases in population in recent decades. The neighboring City of Allentown, for example, has grown by nearly 18 percent since 2000. Suburban peers such as South Whitehall Township and Palmer Township have each experienced more than 15 percent growth in that same period.

Future planning efforts must respond not only to internal trends but also to the pressures and potential benefits of growth in the region overall.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** A stable population allows the township to plan proactively—ensuring that infrastructure, housing, and services align with evolving needs while preserving the characteristics that make Salisbury unique within the Lehigh Valley.

Salisbury Township has experienced minimal population growth in the last two decades, while Lehigh County has grown by nearly 20%.

HISTORIC POPULATION & PROJECTED GROWTH

CENSUS, ACS, LVPC

Salisbury Township

2000 – 2023	2023 – 2050 (proj.)
0.8%	-1.6%

South Whitehall Township

2000 – 2023	2023 – 2050 (proj.)
17.4%	9.6%

Palmer Township

2000 – 2023	2023 – 2050 (proj.)
32.8%	23.3%

Allentown City

2000 – 2023	2023 – 2050 (proj.)
17.5%	6.3%

Lehigh County

2000 – 2023	2023 – 2050 (proj.)
20.3%	12.8%

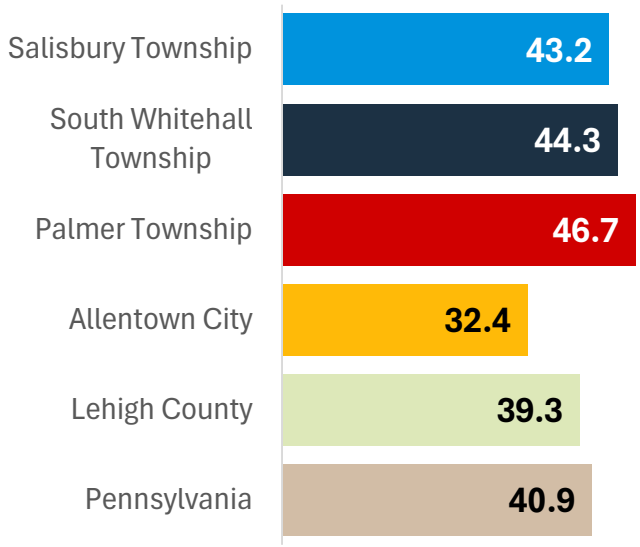
Demographics – Age & Sex

Salisbury Township's population is relatively balanced across age groups, with a slightly higher concentration of residents between the ages of 40 and 60 years old. Males and females are evenly represented.

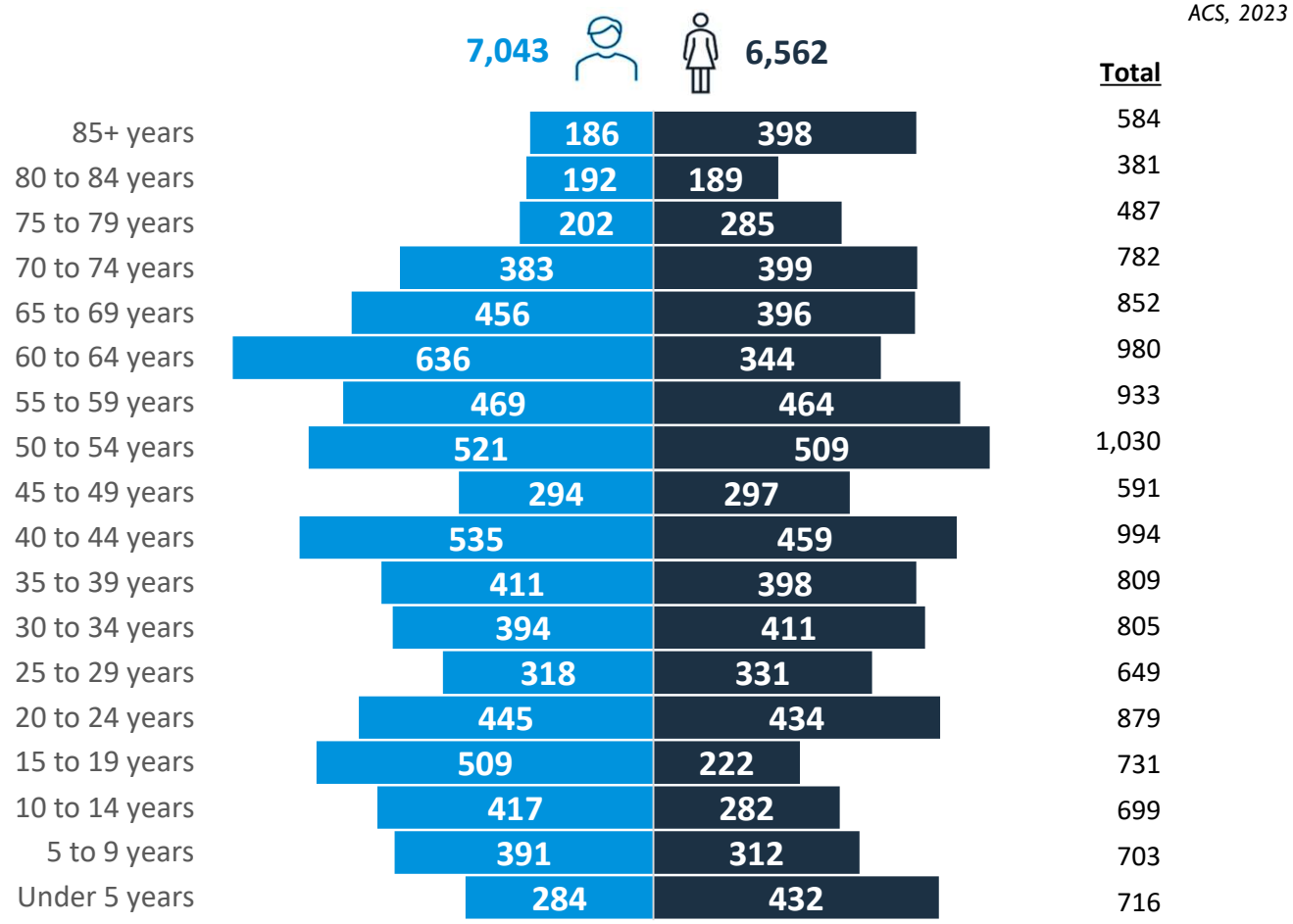
The township's median age of 43.2 is lower than nearby suburban townships, but still higher than the City of Allentown, Lehigh County, and Pennsylvania as a whole. The data reinforces Salisbury's reputation as a strong community for families, while also highlighting the need to plan for services and amenities that support residents at all stages of life.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The township's age distribution demonstrates an opportunity to accommodate the needs of residents that span a range of ages, including expanding job opportunities and supporting housing options that both appeal to younger households and accommodate older residents aging in place.

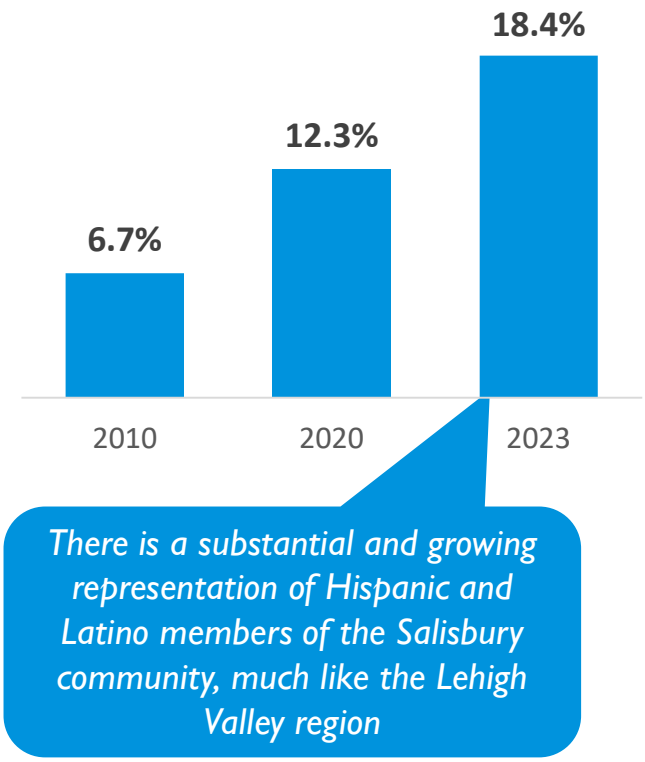
MEDIAN AGE (IN YEARS)
ACS, 2023



POPULATION COHORT (AGE & SEX)
ACS, 2023



Ethnicity – Hispanic or Latino Share of Population
Census 2000, 2010; ACS, 2023



Demographics – Race & Ethnicity

Like much of the surrounding region, Salisbury Township remains predominantly white. However, it is becoming increasingly diverse. Nearly 75 percent of residents identify as white, a share higher than Lehigh County as a whole but roughly in line with the statewide average.

The township's growing diversity is largely driven by increasing Hispanic or Latino populations, which now make up 18.4 percent of residents. This share exceeds that of comparable suburban communities and reflects the influence of nearby Allentown, as well as broader regional and national demographic shifts. As Salisbury looks to the future, understanding and embracing its evolving population will be essential to fostering a welcoming and responsive community.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The upward trend in a more diverse community underlines the importance of community outreach and ensuring services are welcoming and accessible to all current and future residents.

Race & Ethnicity
ACS, 2023

Race	Salisbury Township	South Whitehall Township	Palmer Township	Allentown	Lehigh County	Pennsylvania
White	75.1%	78.0%	76.2%	42.3%	66.8%	75.8%
Black or African American	3.8%	1.7%	3.9%	13.0%	6.9%	10.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Asian	2.1%	7.1%	5.9%	2.5%	3.5%	3.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	5.4%	4.0%	5.3%	21.2%	9.6%	3.4%
Two or more races	12.1%	8.7%	8.7%	20.5%	12.8%	6.1%

Ethnicity	Salisbury Township	South Whitehall Township	Palmer Township	Allentown	Lehigh County	Pennsylvania
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	18.4%	11.6%	15.0%	53.8%	27.0%	8.4%

Household Income and Poverty Rate

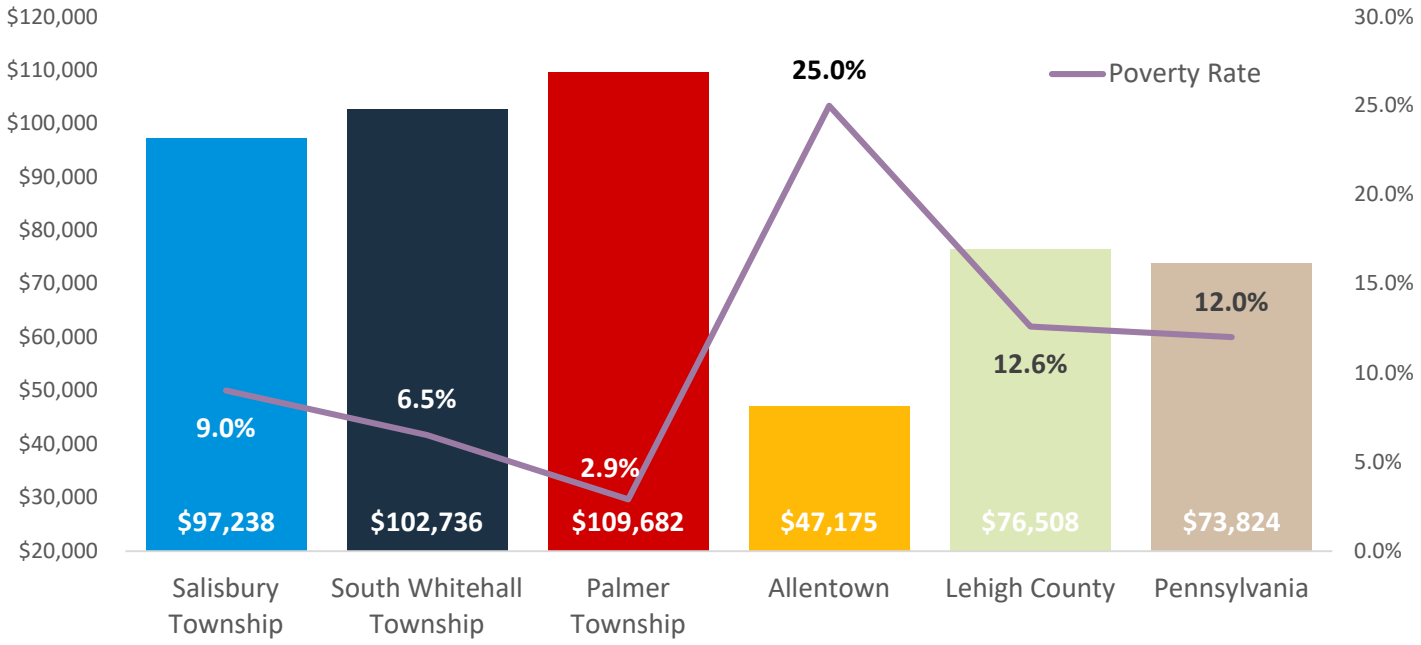
Salisbury Township's relatively high median household income of $97,238 exceeds both the Lehigh County and Pennsylvania medians. This level of income aligns with the township's largely owner-occupied, single-family housing stock and reflects a generally stable, middle-income population. While Salisbury's median income trails slightly behind nearby suburban peers like South Whitehall and Palmer Townships, it still suggests broad economic strength.

Poverty data, however, reveals areas where additional attention may be needed.

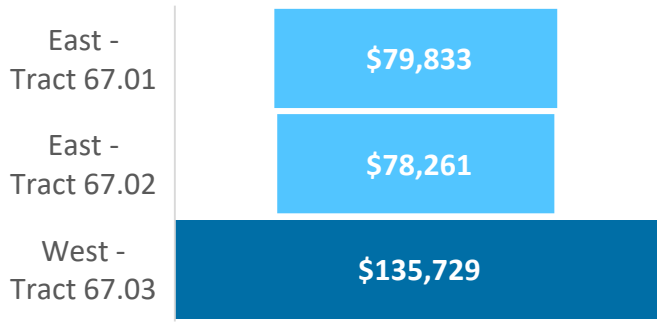
The overall poverty rate of nine percent in Salisbury is lower than county and state averages, but higher than those seen in comparison suburban communities. This meaningful share of residents suggests an ongoing need to ensure access to services, support, and opportunities for all households. These challenges are unevenly distributed across the township: According to census data, poverty is more concentrated in the eastern portion of Salisbury, particularly in Census Tract 67.02, where the poverty rate exceeds 17 percent.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** This data emphasizes the need for the township to consider strategies that support residents who may be financially vulnerable and promote equitable access to opportunities, services, and resources across the township.

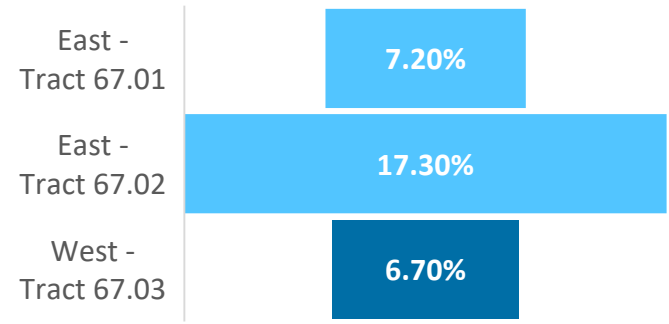
Median Household Income and Poverty Rate
ACS, 2023



Median Household Income – East and West
ACS, 2023



Poverty Rate – East and West
ACS, 2023

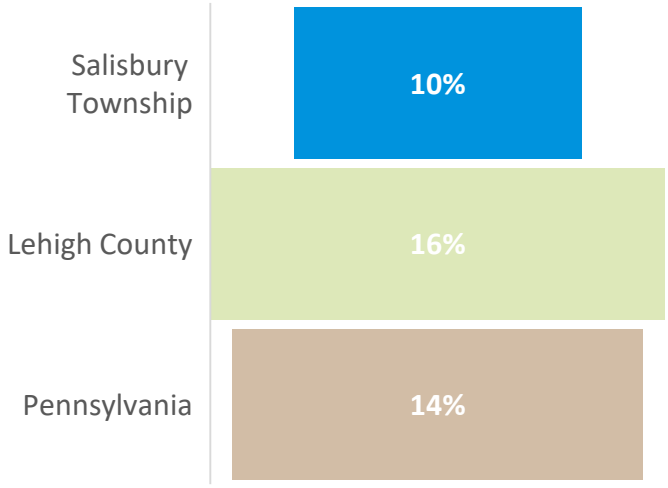


Benefits and Assistance

Approximately 10 percent of Salisbury Township residents reported receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in the past 12 months. This rate mirrors the township's poverty rate and is lower than the share of recipients in both Lehigh County and Pennsylvania overall. While this points to relative economic stability for many households in Salisbury, a significant portion of the population may require support, underscoring the importance of continued access to assistance programs.

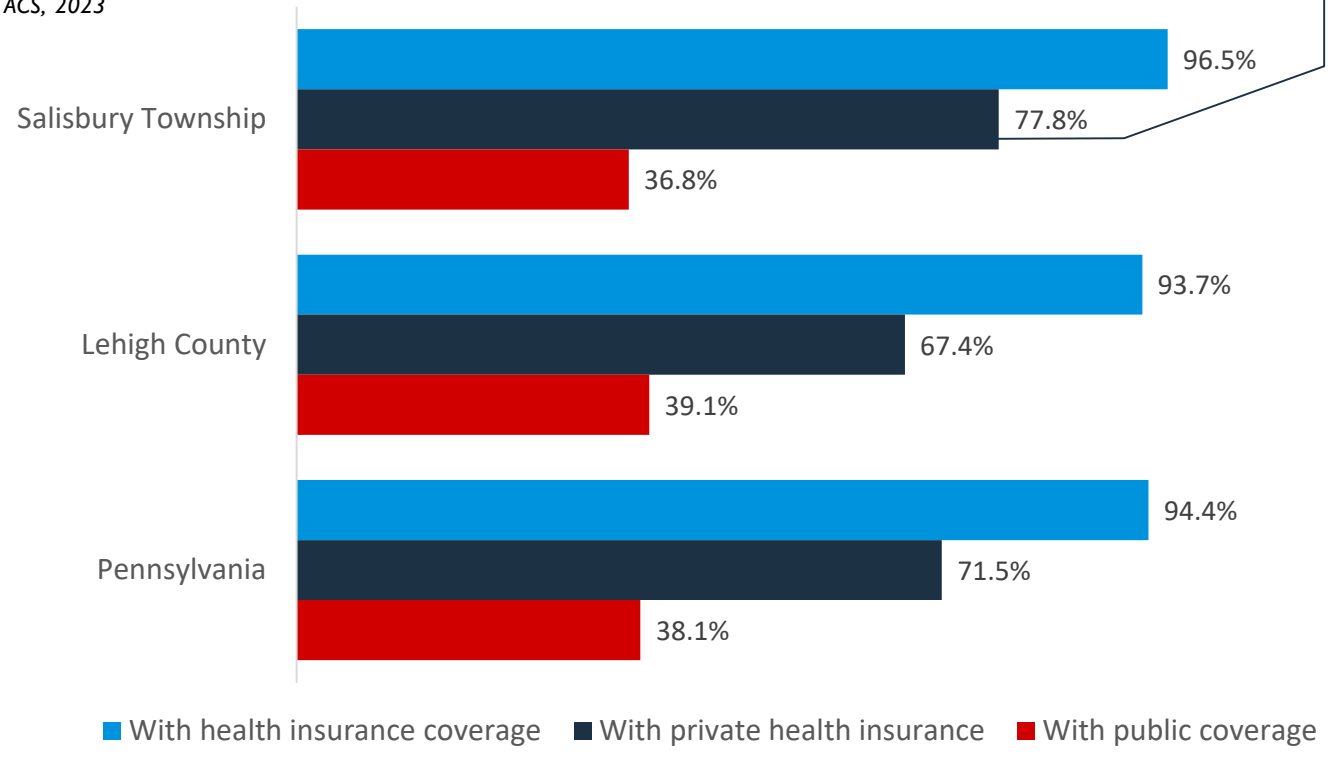
Health insurance coverage in Salisbury is also strong, with a higher proportion of residents covered by private insurance compared to the county and state. This is likely tied to the township's high rate of employment and stable household incomes. The American Community Survey measures all health coverage from the prior 12 months, allowing individuals to be counted in both public and private coverage totals. The availability and affordability of both public and private insurance options will remain an important consideration as Salisbury's population continues to age and its healthcare needs evolve.

SNAP BENEFITS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS
ACS, 2023



Nearly 78% of Salisbury Residents have received private health coverage in the last 12 months, higher than the county and state and likely attributable to the stable economic position of most residents

HEALTH COVERAGE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS
ACS, 2023



Educational Attainment

Over one-third of Salisbury Township residents have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, with an additional 25 percent having completed some college or an associate degree. Exceeding both the county and state averages, this suggests that many residents are well-positioned to access a range of job opportunities, particularly in knowledge-based or professional sectors.

Salisbury also benefits from its proximity to several higher education institutions, including Lehigh University, Lafayette College, Muhlenberg College, Cedar Crest College, DeSales University, and both Northampton and Lehigh Carbon Community Colleges. This access strengthens the township's appeal to educated workers and offers ongoing opportunities for workforce development.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** These trends suggest that continuing to retain and attract college-educated residents may help to reinforce the township's economic resilience and support long-term prosperity.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
ACS, 2023



7% No High School Diploma



32% High School Graduate



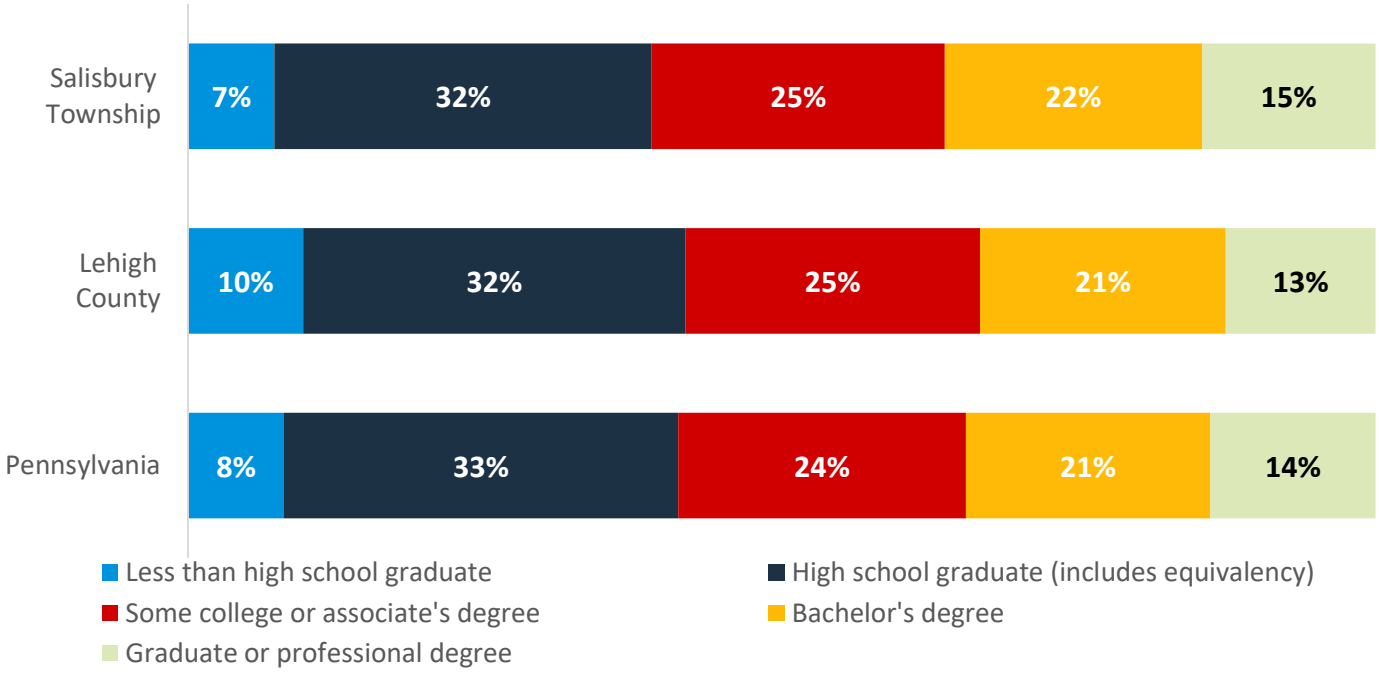
25% Some College / Associate's Degree



37% Bachelor's / Graduate/ Professional Degree

More than 1/3 of Salisbury residents have completed a college education, slightly exceeding the county and state.

EDUCATIONAL BREAKDOWN COMPARISON
ACS, 2023



Housing

Housing is one of the most critical elements shaping a community's quality of life. A well-maintained, appropriately priced housing stock supports individual and family stability, strengthens neighborhoods, and reflects both the history and trajectory of a community. This section explores the characteristics of housing in Salisbury Township, including age, type, value, affordability, and occupancy to better understand how the built environment has evolved and where future opportunities or challenges may exist. These insights are essential for making informed decisions about land use, reinvestment, and how best to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Home Ownership

Eighty-three percent of housing in Salisbury Township is owner-occupied housing, representing the highest rate of owner-occupancy among all comparison communities. This reflects the township's strong residential character and can be a sign of neighborhood stability and long-term investment in homes. However, lower rates of rental housing may present challenges for new or more transient residents looking to access the community and its many benefits, particularly younger households, those not yet ready to buy, empty nesters, and retirees.



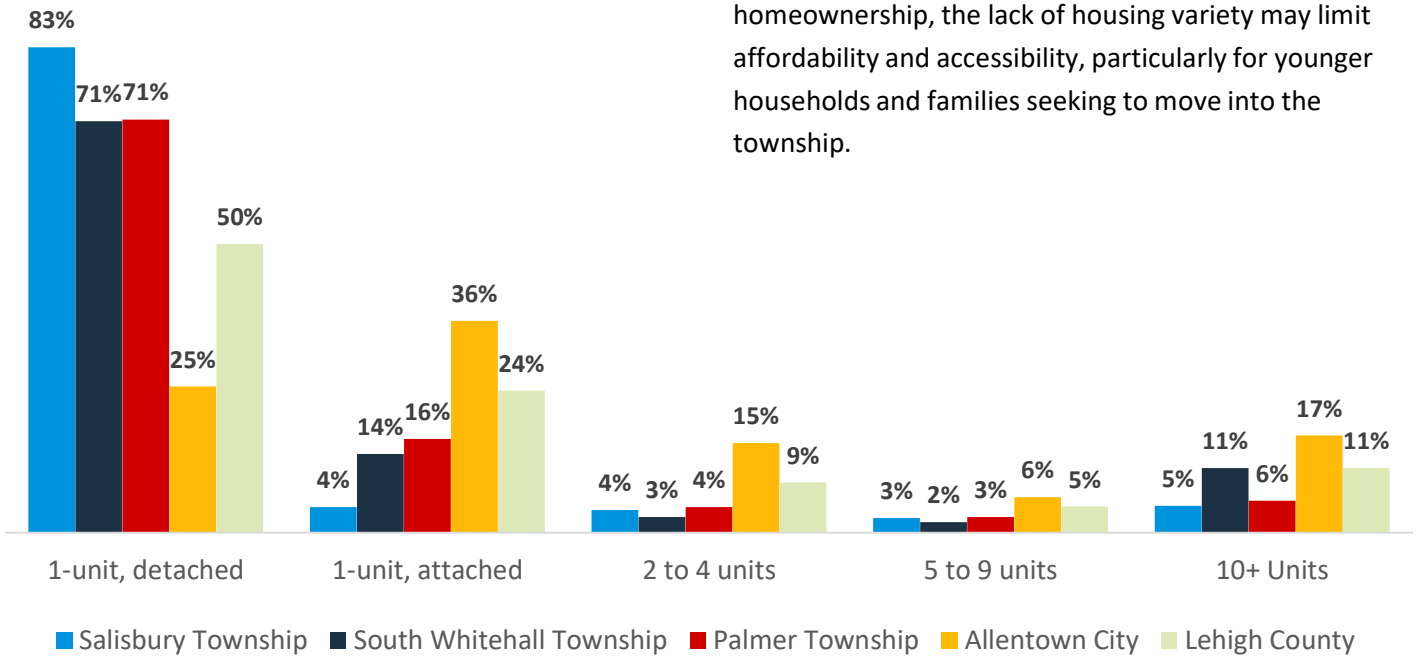
83% Owner-Occupied Housing

South Whitehall	Palmer	Allentown	Lehigh County
78%	81%	42%	65%

Housing Type

Salisbury Township's housing stock is overwhelmingly composed of single-family detached homes, which make up 83 percent of all units. This share is significantly higher than in comparison communities, including other suburban municipalities like South Whitehall and Palmer Townships, where 1-unit detached homes represent 71% of housing. Alternatively, only four percent of housing in Salisbury Township is of the 1-unit attached variety, as opposed to 14 percent and 16 percent in South Whitehall and Palmer townships, respectively. This pattern reinforces the quiet, residential character that many in the community value. However, when paired with high rates of homeownership, the lack of housing variety may limit affordability and accessibility, particularly for younger households and families seeking to move into the township.

Housing Types
ACS, 2023



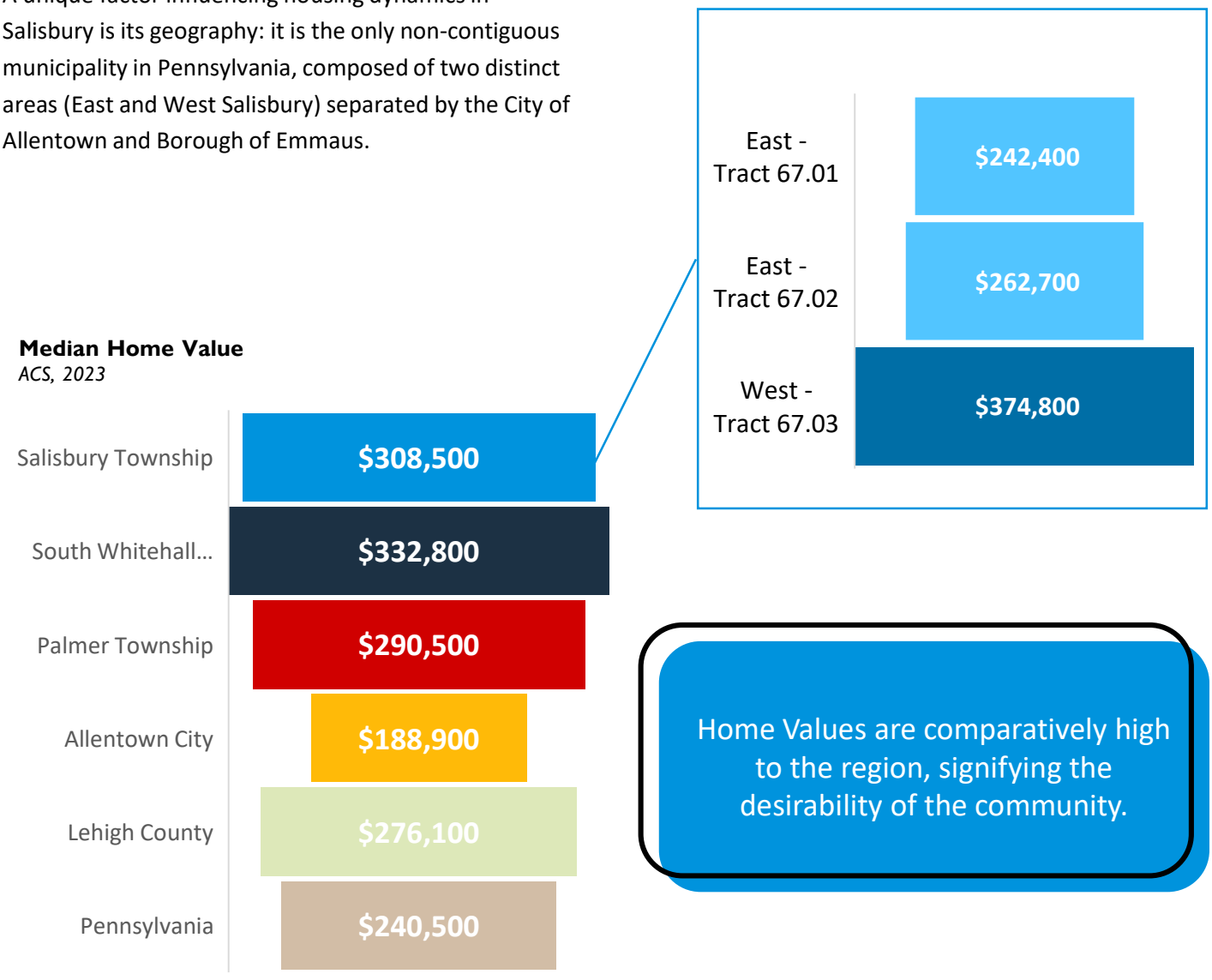
Home Value

Salisbury Township's median home value stands at $308,500, surpassing nearby municipalities as well as the county and state overall. This figure reflects the strength and desirability of the community, reinforcing trends seen in the township's high rate of homeownership and predominance of single-family detached housing. These characteristics contribute to neighborhood stability and a high quality of life but may also lead to limited availability of more affordable housing options. While Salisbury's home values are not the highest in the region, the township may need to monitor affordability over time to ensure continued access for a range of household types.

Home Value – East Salisbury vs West Salisbury

A unique factor influencing housing dynamics in Salisbury is its geography: it is the only non-contiguous municipality in Pennsylvania, composed of two distinct areas (East and West Salisbury) separated by the City of Allentown and Borough of Emmaus. Together, they form a unified community, but analyzing each area independently can offer deeper insight into how Salisbury has developed and changed over time. The western portion, represented by Census Tract 67.03, generally has higher home values than the eastern portion, which is made up of Census Tracts 67.01 and 67.02. While home values in East Salisbury—particularly in Tract 67.01 adjacent to Allentown—are lower than in the west, they still exceed values found in the City of Allentown, underscoring the strength of the housing market across the township.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** These differences indicate that the township should consider planning strategies that promote balanced investment and housing opportunities across the township.



Home Values are comparatively high to the region, signifying the desirability of the community.

Housing Affordability

The cost of homeownership in Salisbury Township is in line with nearby suburban communities, but renters face significantly higher cost burdens. The median monthly owner cost for households with a mortgage, including mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, and utilities, is $1,993. This figure is comparable to neighboring suburban communities like South Whitehall and Palmer, and slightly above the county and state median. Median gross rent, which includes rent and basic utilities, is $1,514 - lower than suburban peers but still higher than in Allentown, Lehigh County, and Pennsylvania overall. This may reflect an older or more limited rental housing stock in a predominantly owner-occupied community.

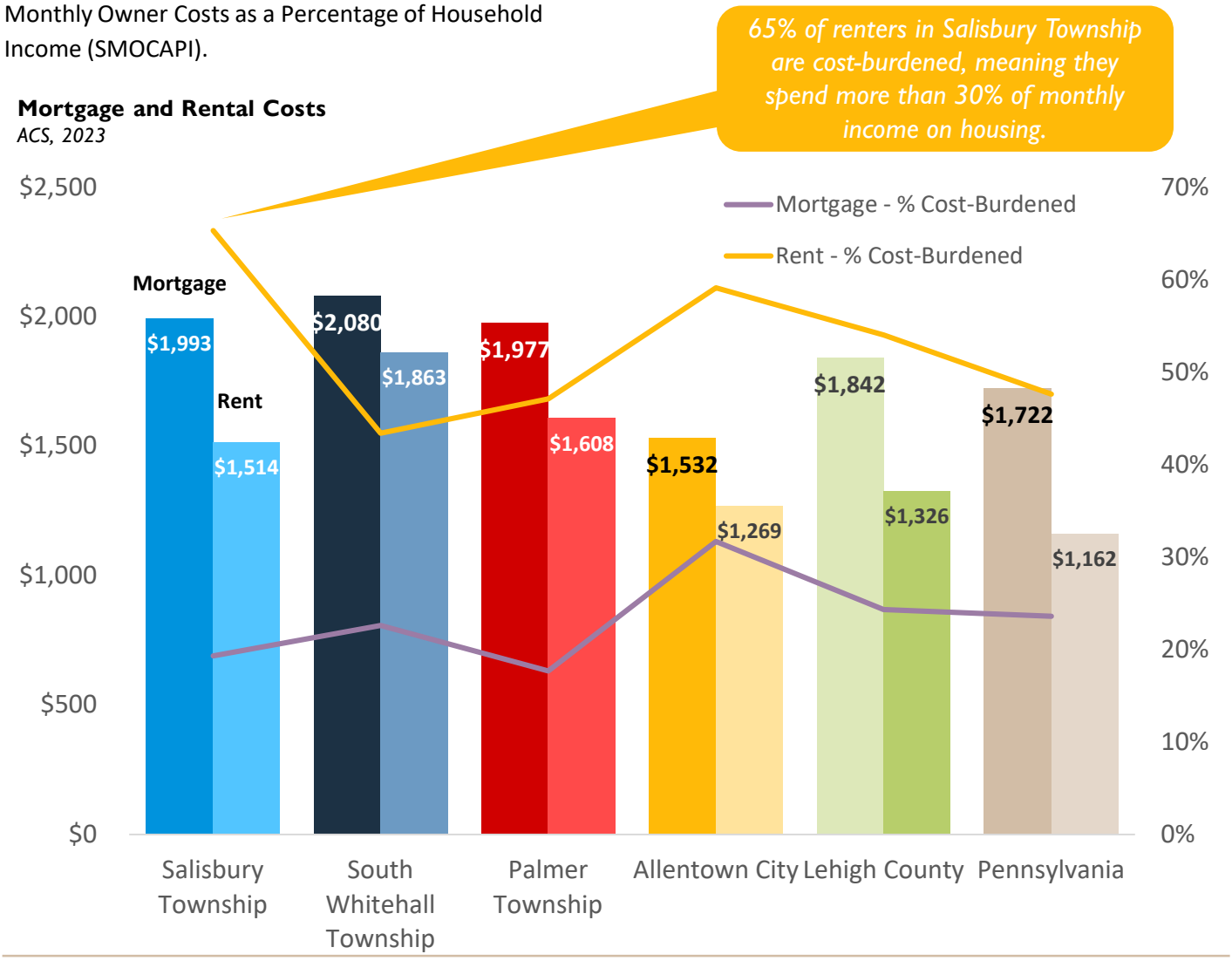
To better understand affordability, it's useful to examine housing costs as a percentage of household income. For homeowners, this is measured through Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (SMOCAPI).

For renters, the equivalent measure is Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (GRAPI). In both cases, households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing are considered cost-burdened under U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines.

In Salisbury, only 19 percent of homeowners with a mortgage are cost-burdened—well below national concern thresholds. However, 65 percent of renters exceed this affordability threshold, signaling a significant challenge in the local rental market. Addressing this disparity will be essential to ensuring that the township remains accessible to a broad range of household types and income levels.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** These figures emphasize the importance of providing a variety of housing options to ensure residents can access housing that meets their financial needs.

Mortgage and Rental Costs
ACS, 2023



Age of Housing Stock

Salisbury Township's residential market is mature and largely built out, with relatively little new construction in recent decades. With only three percent of the township's housing having been built since 2000, the bulk of the housing stock was developed in the mid-20th century—38 percent between 1960 and 1979; 23 percent between 1940 and 1959; and another 23 percent between 1980 and 1999. Compared to nearby suburban communities, Salisbury's homes are generally older, contributing to its established character but also pointing to the potential need for reinvestment over time.

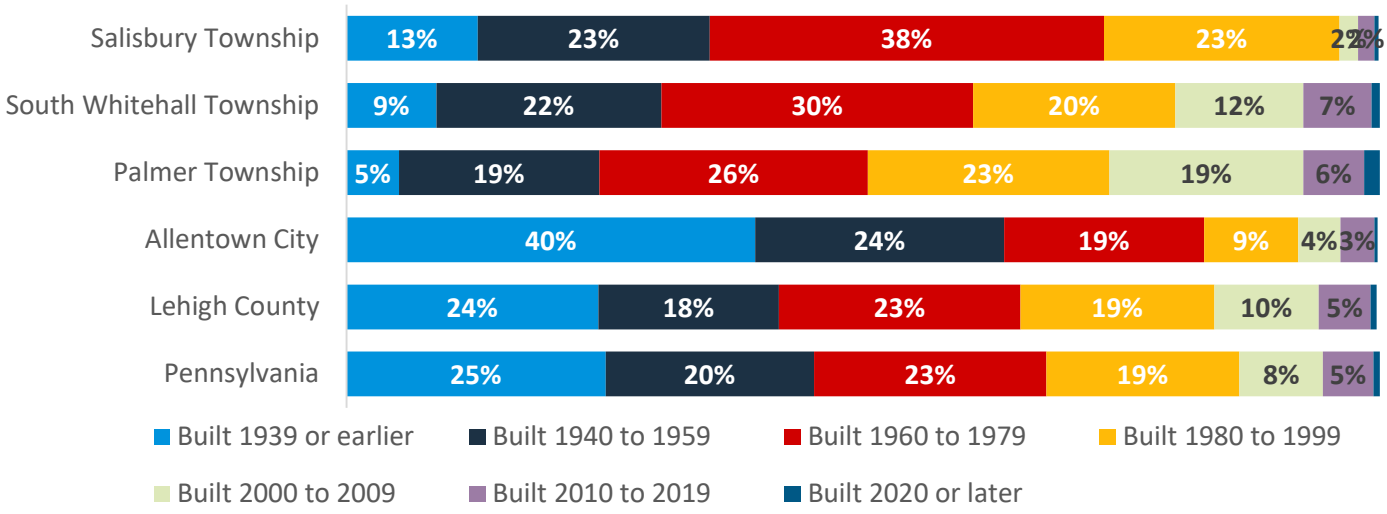
Differences in housing age across Salisbury's non-contiguous geography also reflect distinct development patterns. East Salisbury was built out earlier, with a greater share of homes constructed before 1939.

In contrast, West Salisbury has a larger proportion of homes built after 1980. This variation helps offer a broader mix of housing styles and price points across the township but also suggests that maintenance and reinvestment needs may vary by area as the housing stock continues to age.

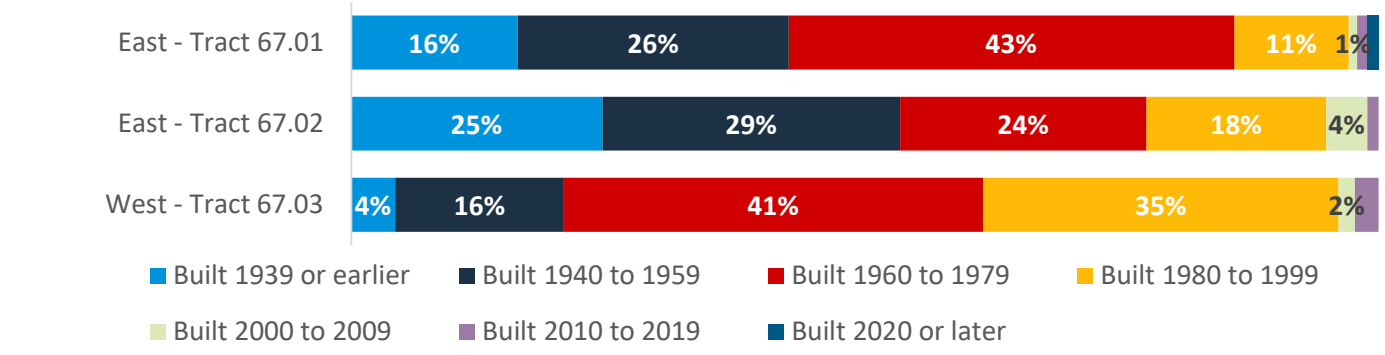
***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** To support an aging housing stock, the township should promote and provide opportunities for residents to undertake necessary maintenance and upgrades to protect long-term housing quality.

The majority of Salisbury's housing (61%) was built between 1940 and 1979.

HOUSING YEAR BUILT
ACS 2023



Housing Year Built – East Salisbury vs West Salisbury
ACS 2023



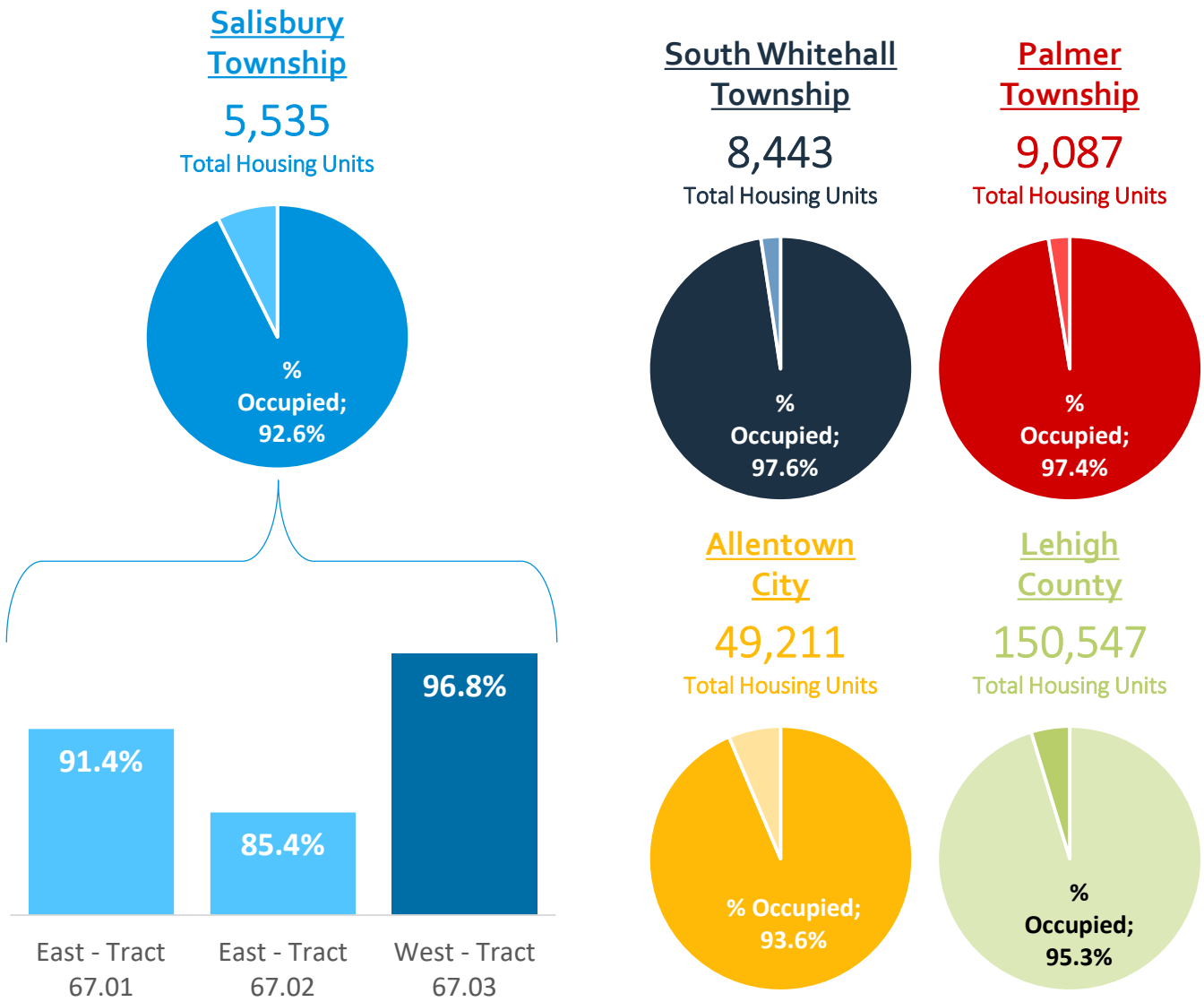
Housing Occupancy

Salisbury Township's housing occupancy rate stands at 92.6 percent, slightly lower than nearby suburban communities, as well as Lehigh County and the Commonwealth overall. While not an unusually high vacancy rate, it is notable and may warrant further monitoring over time. Housing units may be classified as vacant for a variety of reasons in census data—ranging from homes listed for sale or rent, to seasonal or recreational use, to "other vacant" situations such as properties undergoing renovation, used for storage, or held by individuals living elsewhere, such as in a care facility.

Salisbury's comparatively lower occupancy rate could be partially attributed to its aging housing stock, which may include homes in need of reinvestment or repair. This trend is especially evident in East Salisbury, where vacancy rates appear higher and housing tends to be older than in the western portion of the township. While the current rate does not indicate a widespread issue, it highlights the importance of monitoring housing conditions and ensuring that existing homes remain viable, safe, and attractive for current and future residents.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** To improve occupancy, the township can explore ways to rehabilitate existing homes and encourage appropriate reuse of underutilized properties.

Housing Occupancy Rates
ACS 2023



Economy

A strong local economy is essential for fostering economic growth, providing job opportunities, and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

To assess the strength of the economy, this plan examines key factors such as industry diversity and labor force participation. Understanding where Salisbury residents are employed and how that affects commuting times is especially important in the wake of a pandemic that altered “work life” for many individuals.

Continued prosperity is a top priority for the township, and the following data will help to identify strengths and weaknesses and guide strategic decisions that will promote economic stability and long-term growth.

Industry Trends

Salisbury Township’s economy is not driven by one industry, but rather by its advantageous location between two major employment centers (Allentown and Bethlehem), leading to a diversity of job types within the township. Industry trends help reveal areas where the township is currently doing well and where the community can continue efforts and promote new industries, fostering continued growth and prosperity.

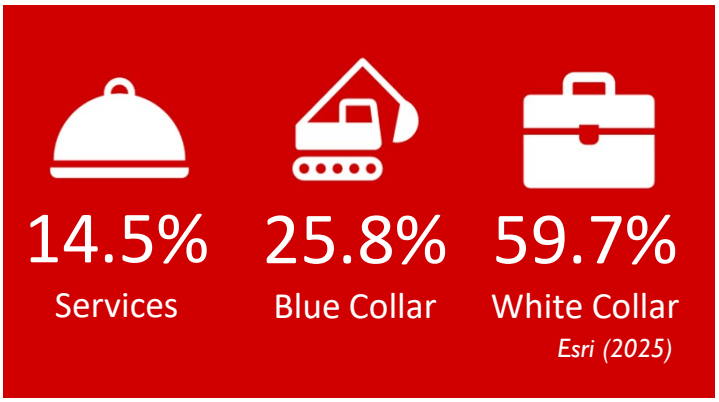
Industry Sectors

Although white-collar jobs are most predominant in the community, there is a mix of service, blue-collar, and white-collar industry jobs, which creates a symbiotic relationship among sectors. It is important to encourage some diversity among sectors, for the health and long-term sustainability of the job market.

The **service sector (14.5 percent of population)** encompasses fields such as building maintenance, personal care, food preparation, and health support, which plays a crucial role in meeting the everyday needs of the community and enhancing quality of life.

Blue-collar workers (25.8 percent of population) employed in transportation and distribution, maintenance and repair, construction and extraction, and farming form the backbone of the township's infrastructure, and ensure its physical development and maintenance.

White-collar professionals (59.7 percent of population) in finance, healthcare, education, and technology bring expertise and innovation, and contribute to intellectual and innovative growth.





Schools are major employers in Salisbury Township.

Top Employers

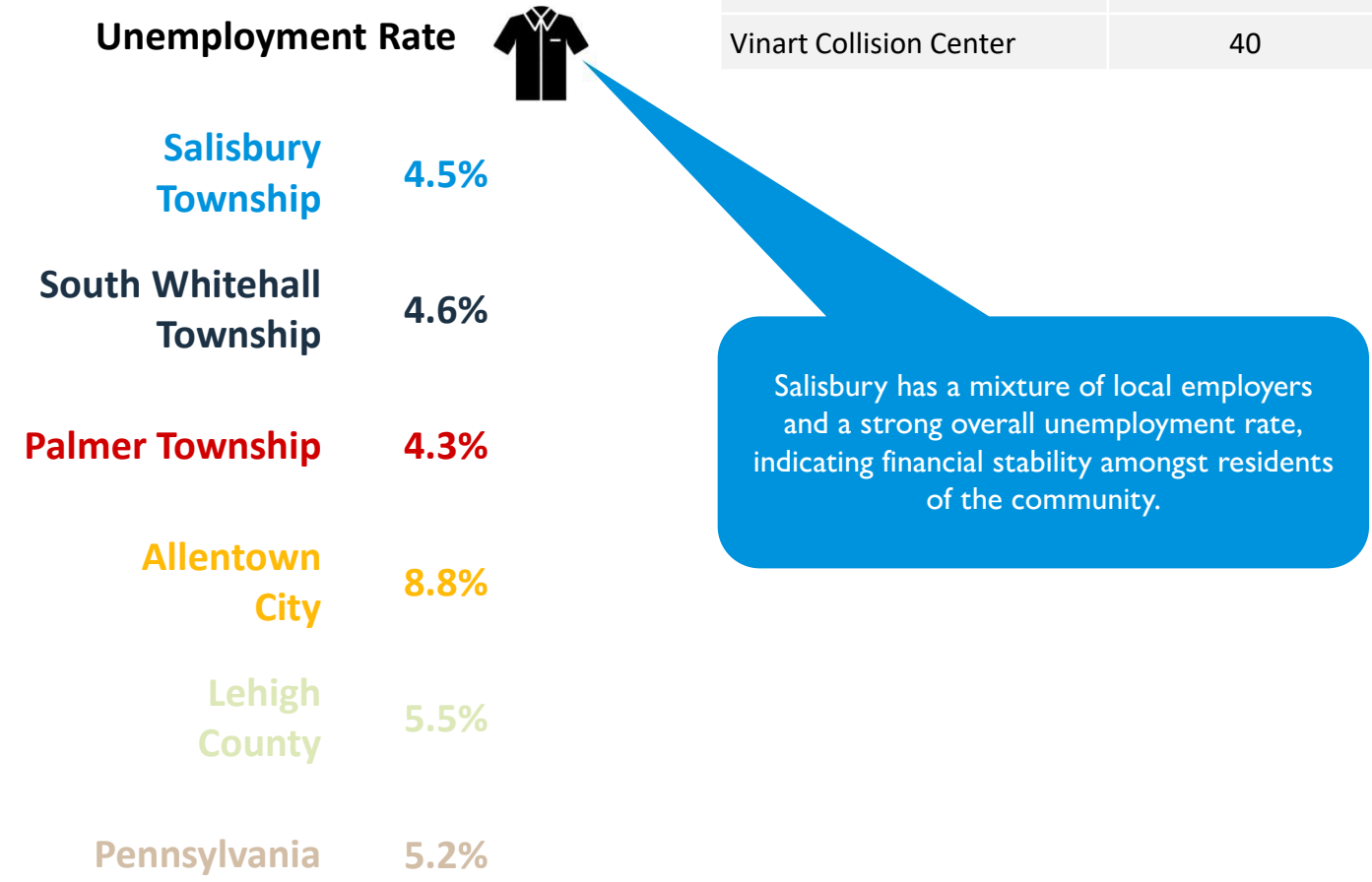
The top employers in Salisbury include auto dealerships along the township's main commercial corridor (Lehigh Street), as well as the local elementary and high schools and a range of small businesses within the community. Together, these employers play an important role in sustaining the local economy by providing jobs that support residents' livelihoods and contribute to overall community stability.

Looking ahead, Salisbury has an opportunity to strengthen its economic base by attracting additional businesses, which could expand employment options and enhance financial security for residents. Even so, the township already benefits from a relatively low unemployment rate—outperforming both the county and the state, which underscores the strong financial footing of many Salisbury households.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Supporting and retaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses to the area will help ensure that the township continues to provide plentiful employment options.

TOWNSHIP TOP EMPLOYERS
ESRI, 2024

Top Employers	# of Employees
Scott Family of Dealerships	160
Scott Mazda	150
Scott Chevrolet	120
Porsche Lehigh Valley	90
Harry S Truman Elementary School	80
Harris Rebar	70
G C Electric Co	50
Perkins	50
Salisbury High School	44
Hawser LLC	42
Arts Academy Charter Middle School	40
Allentown AutoParts Warehouse	40
Vinart Collision Center	40



Workforce Trends

Examining workforce trends is crucial for understanding the dynamics of a community's labor market and its overall economic health. Using workforce data, communities can identify key sectors that drive growth, areas where skill development may be needed, and gauge infrastructure needs and commuting patterns. This can influence local development and infrastructure policies and provide valuable insight for fostering a resilient workforce and sustainable economic growth.

Top Occupations

Salisbury Township residents work across a diverse range of industries, with the top three being Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade. The prominence of health care occupations is likely influenced by the presence of the Lehigh Valley Health Network's flagship hospital, located in the western portion of the township. While employees of the hospital are officially counted within a different jurisdiction and thus were not identified earlier in the report as a top local employer, many Salisbury residents are likely employed there, contributing substantially to both the regional and local economy.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** These industries suggested a need to continue to support a variety of occupations in the township.

Modes of Travel

Commuting in Salisbury is primarily car-dependent. Eighty-two percent of residents drive alone to work, and an additional 6% carpool, reflecting the township's proximity to major roadways and employment centers in Allentown and Bethlehem. Public transportation is not widely used, despite the availability of bus service to destinations like the Lehigh Valley Health Network hospital. Notably, 10% of Salisbury residents now work from home—a trend that has grown significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic and may continue to influence transportation and infrastructure planning in the years ahead.

TOP OCCUPATIONS
ESRI, 2025

Top Occupations	% of Employees
Health Care / Social Assistance	15.9%
Manufacturing	15.9%
Retail Trade	15.7%
Educational Services	7.8%
Transportation/ Warehousing	6.1%
Construction	5.9%
Other Services (Ex. Public)	5.8%

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:**
Transportation costs affect household budgets and quality of life. Township residents benefit from relatively short commutes due to the community's location near Allentown and Bethlehem. Public Transit can be promoted as an option in strategic locations (Lehigh St., E. Emmaus Ave). Roadway maintenance will be a top priority for the township.

MODES OF TRAVEL TO WORK
ACS, 2023



10%
Work from Home



6%
Carpooled



1%
Public Transportation



82%
Drove Alone

Commute Times

Salisbury Township benefits from its strategic location between the major employment centers of Allentown and Bethlehem. This proximity helps keep average commute times relatively low compared to county and state averages.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, which links where people live and work, shows that Allentown and Bethlehem are the two largest destinations for Salisbury residents. At the same time, the township's position within the growing Lehigh Valley economy provides access to jobs in nearby boroughs and townships, with some residents also commuting to larger metropolitan areas such as New York and Philadelphia.

Overall, Salisbury's location offers residents convenient access to a range of employment options, and an average commuting time of about 24 minutes.

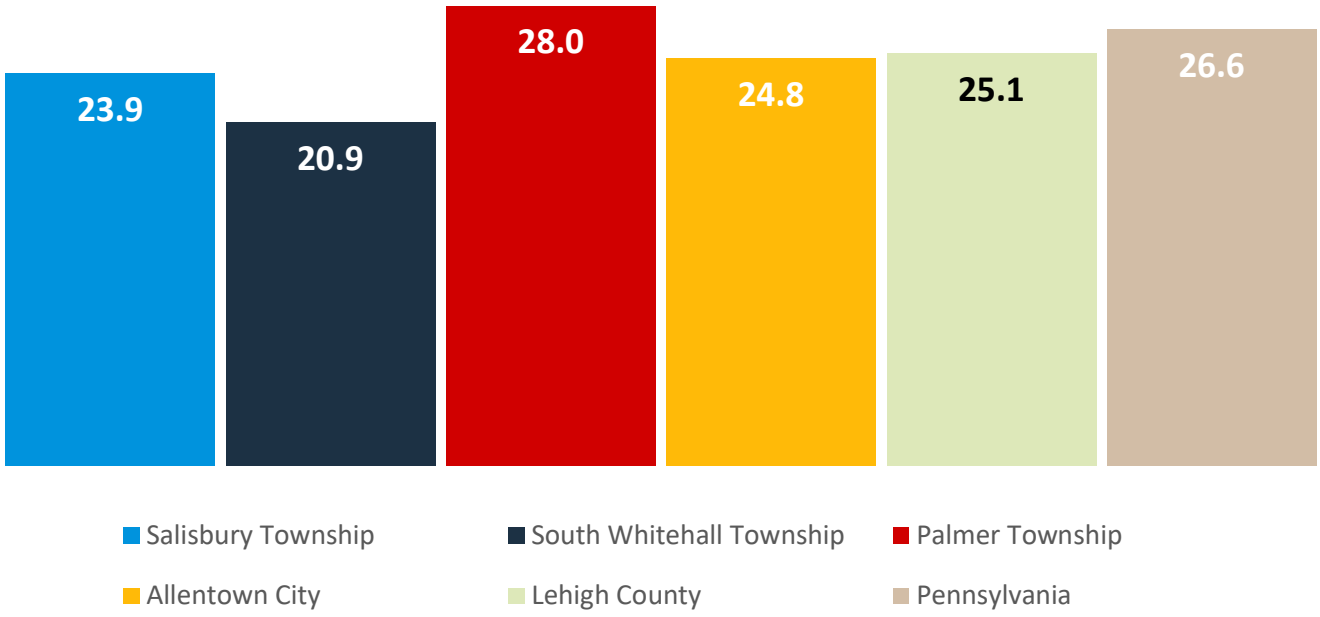
***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:**
Supporting local and nearby employment opportunities will help maintain favorable commute times for residents and support an overall quality of life.

JOB LOCATIONS FOR SALISBURY RESIDENTS
U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2023

Place	Count	Share
All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)	**6,825**	**100.00%**
Allentown city, PA	1,039	15.20%
Bethlehem city, PA	598	8.80%
Fountain Hill borough, PA	184	2.70%
Philadelphia city, PA	157	2.30%
Emmaus borough, PA	133	1.90%
New York city, NY	82	1.20%
Trexlertown CDP, PA	71	1.00%
Fullerton CDP, PA	64	0.90%
Wescosville CDP, PA	54	0.80%
Dorneyville CDP, PA	52	0.80%
All Other Locations	4,391	64.30%

Many Salisbury residents work in the neighboring communities of Allentown and Bethlehem, lowering commute times and providing access to economic opportunity.

Mean Commute Time to Work (Minutes)
ACS 2023



Environment, Parks, & Recreation

Parks & Recreation

Planning for parks, recreation, and the environment is vital to a community's overall health, as it influences residents' physical and mental well-being and protects natural resources. The recreation options in Salisbury Township are ample, and the community benefits from several parks and outdoor areas for residents to enjoy within the township and in surrounding areas.

Community Parks

Salisbury Township's abundance of community parks promotes socialization, connection, and wellness. William H. Laubach Memorial Park, a small 14-acre neighborhood park situated between Lehigh and South Mountains, offers basketball and tennis courts, baseball and football fields, a playground, and a pavilion. In January 2026, the township received a $3,000,000 grant through the Community Conservation Partnership Program funded by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The grant will help fund the $6,800,000 park project which will provide major improvements including new courts, ball fields, pavilion, concession stand, splash pad, pedestrian walkways, and ADA access.



Residents benefit from the Franko Farm Recreation Area as a recreational amenity.

Situated in a residential neighborhood west of Little Lehigh Creek, Lindberg Park features a pavilion, basketball, tennis, volleyball, and pickleball courts, as well as playground equipment. And north of here visitors can find similar amenities and recreation at Frank McCullough Sr. Park.

Devonshire Park Recreation Area, an approximately 30-acre park near the Little Lehigh Creek also provides a variety of passive and active recreational activities and gathering places.

Another prominent amenity is the Franko Farm Recreation Area, a 94-acre park located along the South Mountain ridgeline that provides scenic views of nearby Allentown. The park offers active recreation opportunities through baseball and soccer fields and also includes a community garden and pond with a walkway and gazebo for public use.

Other Recreation Areas

Black River Sanctuary is a 187-acre nature preserve that provides seven hiking trails of varying difficulty and an overlook of Allentown.

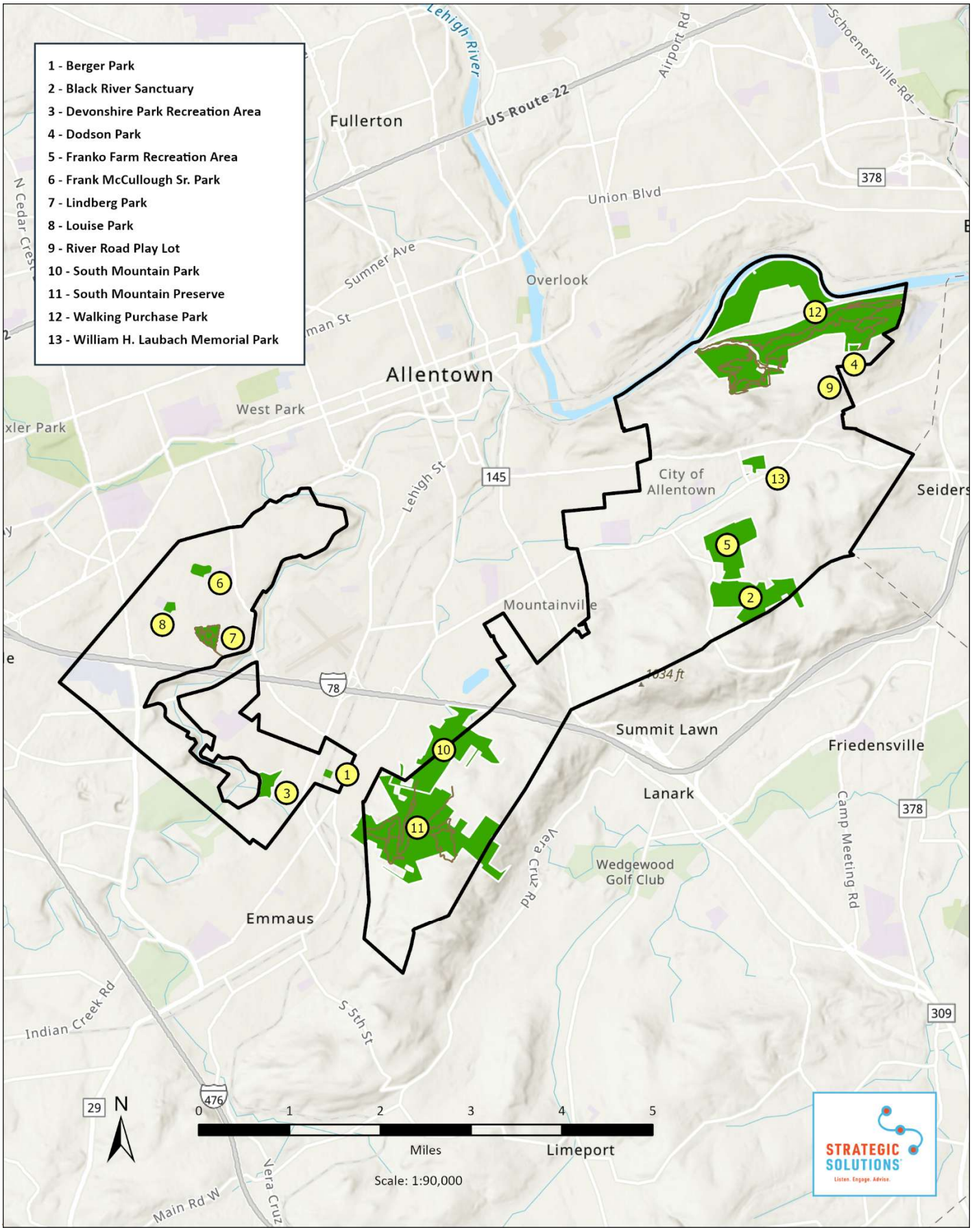
Bordering Allentown and the Lehigh River to the north, Lehigh Mountain Park, also called Walking Purchase Park, is more than 500 pastoral acres with numerous recreation options, including hiking and biking trails, fishing, and dog-friendly spaces.

The Little Lehigh Parkway Path is an approximately six-mile loop trail that extends from Fish Hatchery Road along the Little Lehigh Creek to Kline's Bridge, providing opportunities for walking and biking. The trail is also within walking distance of Lindberg Park.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Salisbury Township has a plethora of valued recreational assets. Careful planning should be made for their maintenance and preservation as well as potential enhancement.

MAP 1: Parks and Trails

Source: Salisbury Township, GFT, ESRI



Constraints on Development

Natural features and environmental constraints play a significant role in shaping where and how development can occur within a community. Soil conditions, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and conservation easements influence site design, construction feasibility, infrastructure costs, and long-term sustainability.

Floodplains

A floodplain is an area next to a stream or river that is prone to flooding during heavy rainfall or snowmelt.

Floodplain areas are subject to periodic inundation and are regulated to minimize property damage and protect life and safety. Development within these areas is heavily regulated and sometimes restricted. A floodplain permit is required for all development in these areas.

Wetlands

Wetland areas consist of saturated soils, such as swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar environments.

Wetlands provide important ecological functions, including water filtration, flood storage, and wildlife habitat. Impacts to wetlands often require avoidance, mitigation, or permitting, which can affect project timelines and design. Development in and around these natural features is regulated and approved at both the state and national levels.

Slopes

Slope refers to the rise and fall of land, expressed as a percentage, with lower percentages being flatter and higher percentages being steeper.

Steeper slopes can increase construction costs, create erosion risks, and pose long-term maintenance challenges. Development on or near steeper slopes often requires additional grading controls and stormwater management measures to prevent sedimentation and downstream impacts.

Land with slopes of eight percent or less is relatively flat and presents few restrictions for construction. Slopes between eight and fifteen percent can generally be developed with standard site design considerations, though additional grading and stormwater management may be needed. Slopes between fifteen and twenty-five percent present greater development challenges and typically require more careful site planning and engineering. Slopes over twenty-five percent are generally unsuitable for development, though single-family housing may be possible on large parcels where slopes remain under forty percent.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement permanently limits certain types of development or land use on a property in order to protect its natural, agricultural, scenic, or historic resources.

Conservation easements shape development patterns by permanently preserving land for environmental, agricultural, or open space purposes. Properties subject to conservation easements typically limit or prohibit development, guiding growth toward areas more suitable for construction.

Collectively, these environmental and legal constraints inform land use planning decisions, encourage responsible site design, and help direct development to areas where infrastructure can be supported safely and sustainably.

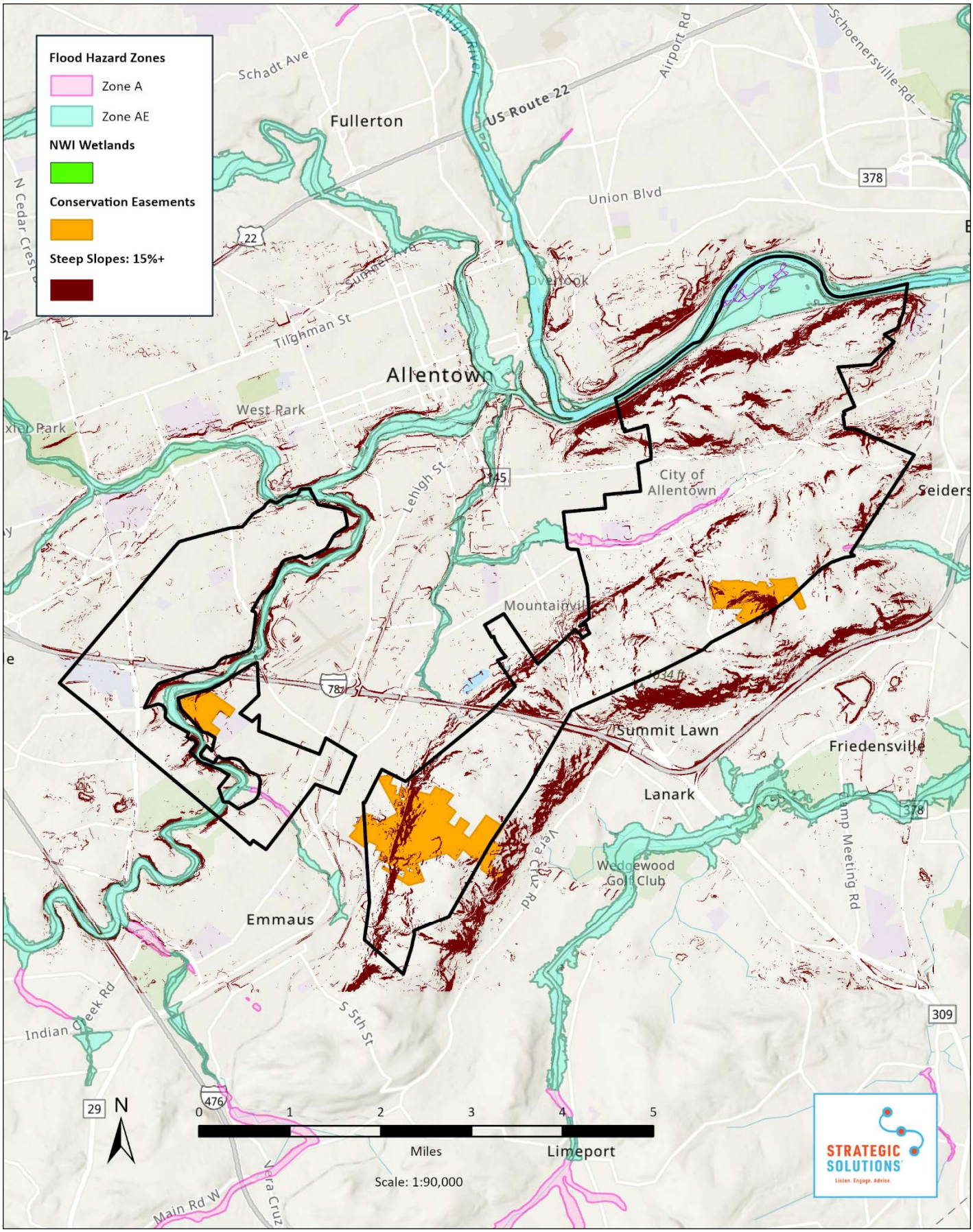
***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Areas with these constraints should be identified on the Future Land Use Map in this plan for low-intensity uses, such as open space or low-density residential.

Conservation Easements…

Boots & Saddle Riding Club sits on a parcel located at 2850 Fish Hatchery Rd. that has been permanently preserved from development since 1991, when Wildlands Conservancy helped negotiate a deal for Salisbury Township, Allentown City, and Lehigh County to purchase the property and sign a conservation easement.

MAP 2: Constraints on Development

Source: Salisbury Township, GFT, ESRI



Infrastructure

Infrastructure systems are essential to the community's ability to function safely, efficiently, and sustainably. Transportation networks, utilities, and community facilities support daily activities, economic development, and overall quality of life. Maintaining and improving these systems ensures reliable access to services while promoting public health, safety, and welfare.

Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure includes an examination of roadway networks, travel by air, and travel by cyclists and pedestrians. While Salisbury Township is an auto-centric community, it may be valuable for the township to consider increasing accessibility to other forms of travel including safe walking and biking paths.

Regional Roadway Network

Salisbury Township is a suburban community with some rural areas and strategic access to surrounding communities, connecting residents to vital businesses, amenities, and services. Interstate 78, running north-south, cuts through the township, offering direct routes to Harrisburg to the west and New Jersey to the east. Interstate 78 also has interchanges with Route 309 and Route 29 providing access to surrounding areas north and south of the township. Route 145, running north-south, also cuts through the eastern portion of the township, connecting it to Allentown.

Local Roadway Network

The western section of Salisbury Township has several major roadways including Fish Hatchery Rd running west-east and S. 24th Street, Oxford Drive, Lehigh Street, and Cedar Crest Blvd. running north-south. In the eastern section of the township, the major residential area is encompassed by E. Susquehanna Street to the north and E. Emmaus Avenue to the south.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, there are approximately 78 miles of roadways in Salisbury Township. Sixty-five miles are township roads and 13 miles are state highways.

Roadway Congestion

Roadway congestion is an important consideration when planning for the township's future transportation needs, particularly given Salisbury's auto-oriented development pattern. PennDOT provides publicly available traffic data using Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), which measures the average number of vehicles traveling on a roadway segment each day over the course of a year. Based on this data, the most heavily traveled segment in western Salisbury is Cedar Crest Boulevard south of the Lehigh Valley Health Network hospital entrance—a state-owned roadway that serves as a critical corridor for patients, employees, and emergency services. In eastern Salisbury, Broadway carries the highest traffic volumes, particularly near the complex intersection formed by East Emmaus Avenue, East Susquehanna Street, and Seidersville Road, reflecting strong commuter connections to Fountain Hill and Bethlehem.

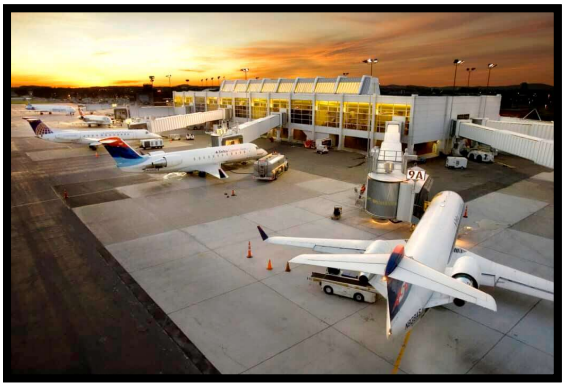
***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:**
Maintaining roadway safety and conditions should be a top priority, particularly given residents' reliance on personal vehicles. The township can increase coordination with PennDOT, prioritize maintenance of township roads, and consider roadway improvements.

Salisbury Township includes 78 miles of roadways. The state highway system encompasses 13 of those miles.

Air Travel

Salisbury Township benefits from having Lehigh Valley International Airport within a 30-minute drive time of the township. The Philadelphia International Airport and Harrisburg International Airport are both within a 90-minute drive of Salisbury Township, offering additional air travel options.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Access to regional airports supports both economic development and overall mobility by connecting Salisbury Township to broader regional and national markets. This level of connectivity supports business growth, workforce accessibility, and travel convenience, making the township an attractive location.



Lehigh Valley International Airport

Transit

The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) provides local transit services to Salisbury Township and surrounding areas. Residents benefit from the LANTA bus Route 101 which connects Bethlehem and Allentown. This route traverses Salisbury Township east-west from Fountain Hill and across Susquehanna Street.

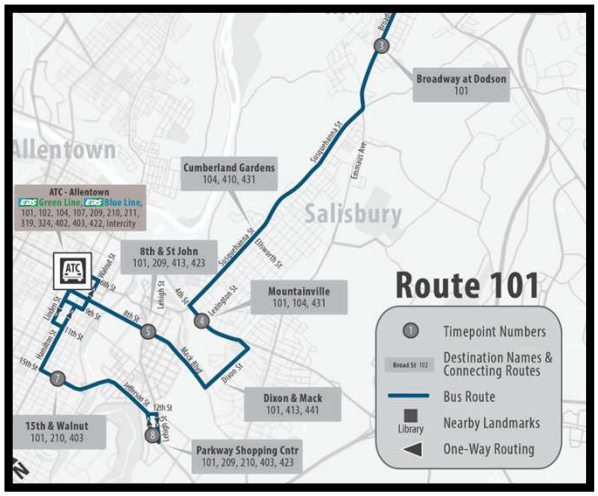
The LANTA Route 104 bus provides transit service connecting Emmaus, Salisbury Township, and Allentown, with multiple stops throughout the corridor. The route runs from the Weis Markets in Emmaus to the Allentown Transportation Center, offering residents access to employment centers, shopping destinations, and services.

The LANTA bus Route 210 offers connections from Salisbury Township to Whitehall, with the route beginning at the South Mall along Lehigh Street, providing multiple stops through Allentown, and concluding at Whitehall Central.

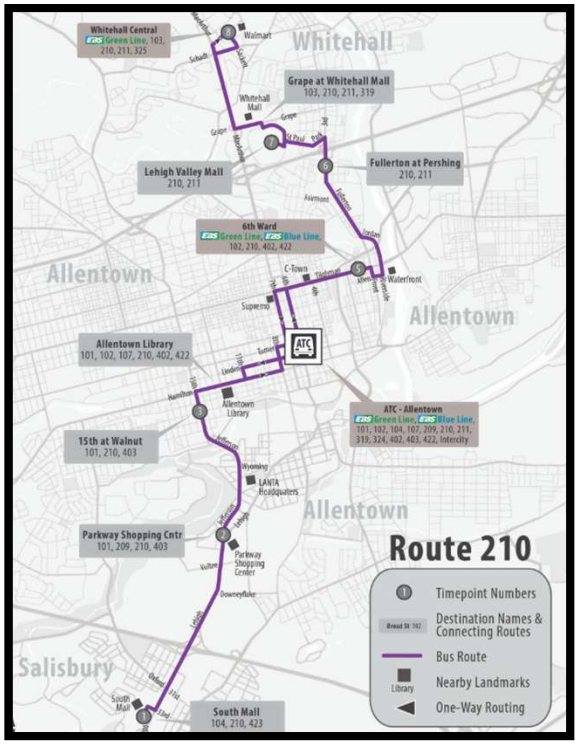
The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority Van (LANtaVan) also provides door-to-door shared ride service to physically disabled individuals in Lehigh County.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** As a car-dependent community, the township should promote the availability of public transit services, particularly for elderly and disabled residents who may have limited or unreliable transportation support.

LANTA Bus Route 101



LANTA Bus Route 210



Pedestrian and Bicycling Network

Providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access to key destinations gives residents convenient options for both travel and recreation, promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing environmental impacts. Factors such as land use, development density, and the availability of safe, well-designed infrastructure determine how feasible these options are within the community. Access to sidewalks is limited in Salisbury Township, particularly in older residential neighborhoods.

Salisbury Township is closely connected to a larger regional and state effort to identify and implement bicycling routes that connect communities. The BicyclePA route L, a 229-mile trail, runs north-south from Susquehanna County to Chester County, passing through major metropolitan areas including Scranton, Allentown, and Philadelphia. Residents can connect with this bike trail off Route 100 in Alburtis. The U.S. Bicycle Route System also has built over 900 miles of trails across Pennsylvania and is continuing to add more trails. Future trail additions may benefit Lehigh County and subsequently Salisbury Township.

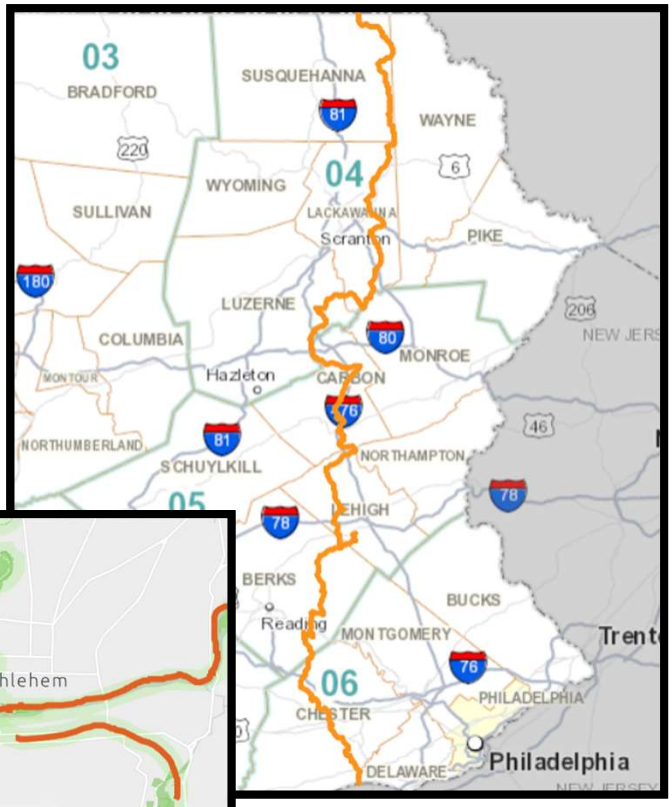
Additionally, the Lehigh Parkway Path and Eastern Pennsylvania's D&L Trail are part of The LINK, a network of multi-use trails that connects residents and visitors in the Lehigh Valley region.

The Lehigh Parkway Path is a seven-mile trail located in Allentown that passes between the eastern and western sections of Salisbury Township. This path includes stops at several points of interest, including the Museum of Indian Culture and Bogert's Covered Bridge.

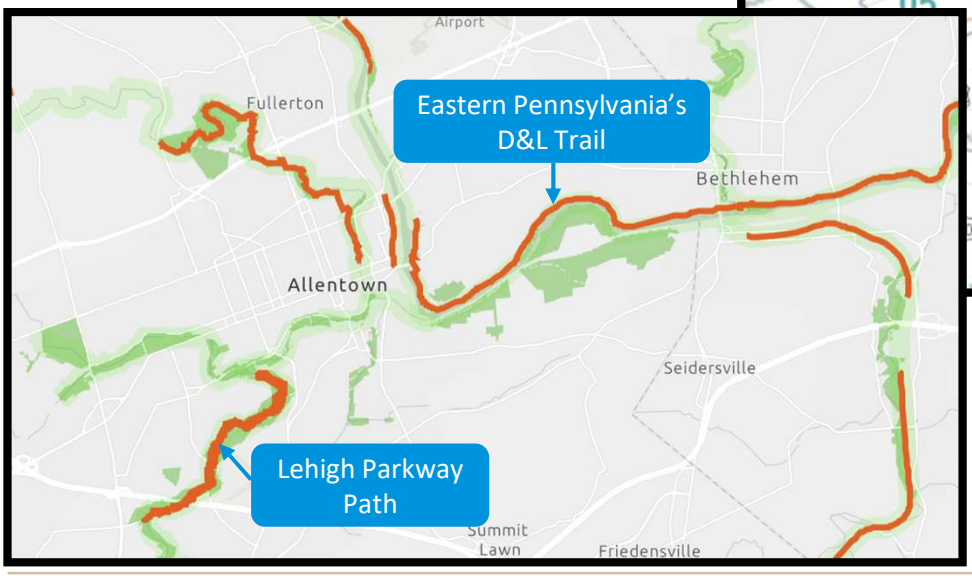
The Eastern Pennsylvania's D&L Trail offers 140 miles of trails, spanning from the Greater Philadelphia region to Mountain Top in the Appalachian Mountains. This extensive trail runs along the Lehigh River in Allentown, offering Salisbury Township residents close access to recreation opportunities, connecting them to the region and beyond.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The township should continue to explore opportunities as part of park and recreation planning efforts to connect the township to larger regional networks.

BicyclePA – Route L



The LINK Trails



Utilities

Access to dependable water and sewer services is essential for meeting residential, commercial, and industrial needs. A sufficient water supply provides resources for daily use, fire protection, and industrial operations, while a well-functioning sewer system effectively manages waste and safeguards public health.

Water

Water service is provided in Salisbury Township by the Lehigh County Authority (LCA), which serves more than 3,000 customers within the community. Public water service is limited in eastern Salisbury Township to highly populated areas between E. Susquehanna St. and E. Emmaus Ave., while western Salisbury Township has more coverage, excluding more rural areas.

Salisbury Township's water distribution system includes 60 miles of water main, a pump station, a 300,000-gallon storage tank, and a 500,000-gallon Hydropillar. Several properties along the Emmaus Borough border are served by LCA through the Emmaus Borough water system. Small portions along the Township's eastern border are also served by the City of Bethlehem, although service area data was not available for those areas.

To ensure the continued delivery of safe and reliable drinking water, the Lehigh County Authority conducts regular monitoring and testing of the water system. The results of this monitoring are made available to the public through the Authority's annual Consumer Confidence Report.

Although residents primarily receive water sourced from the Lehigh County Authority, the Pennsylvania Geological Survey documents that there are over 400 active and inactive water wells in the township. A water well is a structure or excavation created in the ground to access groundwater from an underground aquifer. Private water wells are commonly used to supply drinking water in areas without public water service. Poorly maintained or aging water wells can pose serious health risks if they become contaminated or are unable to provide a consistent supply of safe drinking water. These wells may also pose development constraints due to groundwater protection, infrastructure planning related to density, and environmental considerations.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** To ensure a safe and reliable water supply, the township should continue to support regular monitoring and testing of the water system and provide well maintenance education to well-dependent residents. Areas planned for higher intensity uses on the Future Land Use Map should be in areas with existing public water availability.

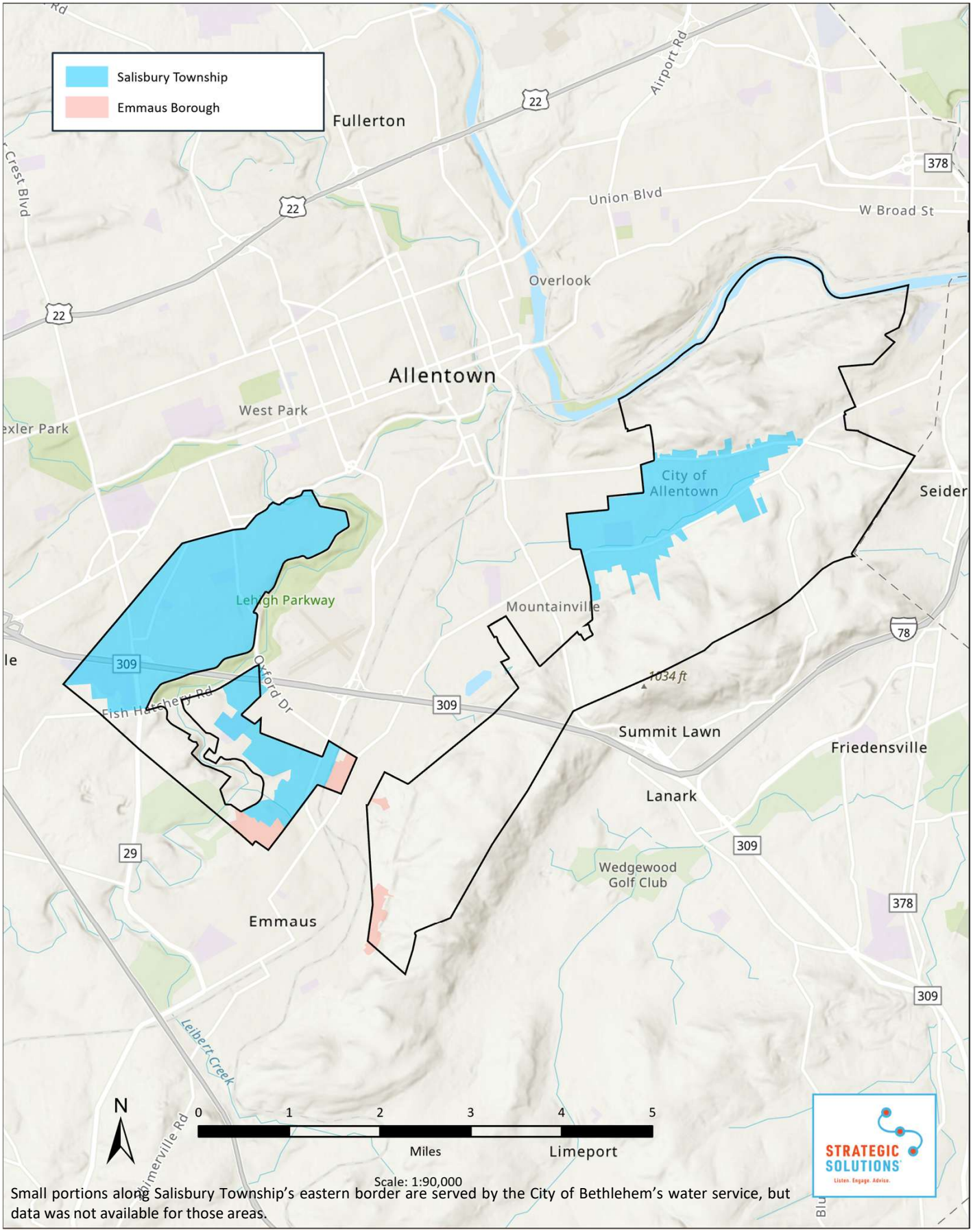
Sewer

Salisbury Township owns and maintains the sanitary sewer collection and conveyance system serving most developed areas of the township. Wastewater collected within the system is conveyed to the Kline's Island Wastewater Treatment Plant in the City of Allentown, where it is treated in accordance with regulatory standards. The township pays for treatment services at this regional facility based on daily flows. While most of the township is served by this system, limited areas along the township's boundaries are served by collection systems owned by the Lehigh County Authority or neighboring municipalities.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The township should consider the long-term capacity, cost, and coordination of sewer services when planning for future growth. Higher intensity uses identified on the Future Land Use Map should be directed to areas with existing public sewer service. The township should also evaluate how future development may affect system capacity, maintenance needs, and costs. As part of this effort, Salisbury Township should coordinate with regional partners and consider updates to its Act 537 Plan to ensure consistency with the Kline's Island Regional Act 537 Plan.

MAP 3: Public Water Service

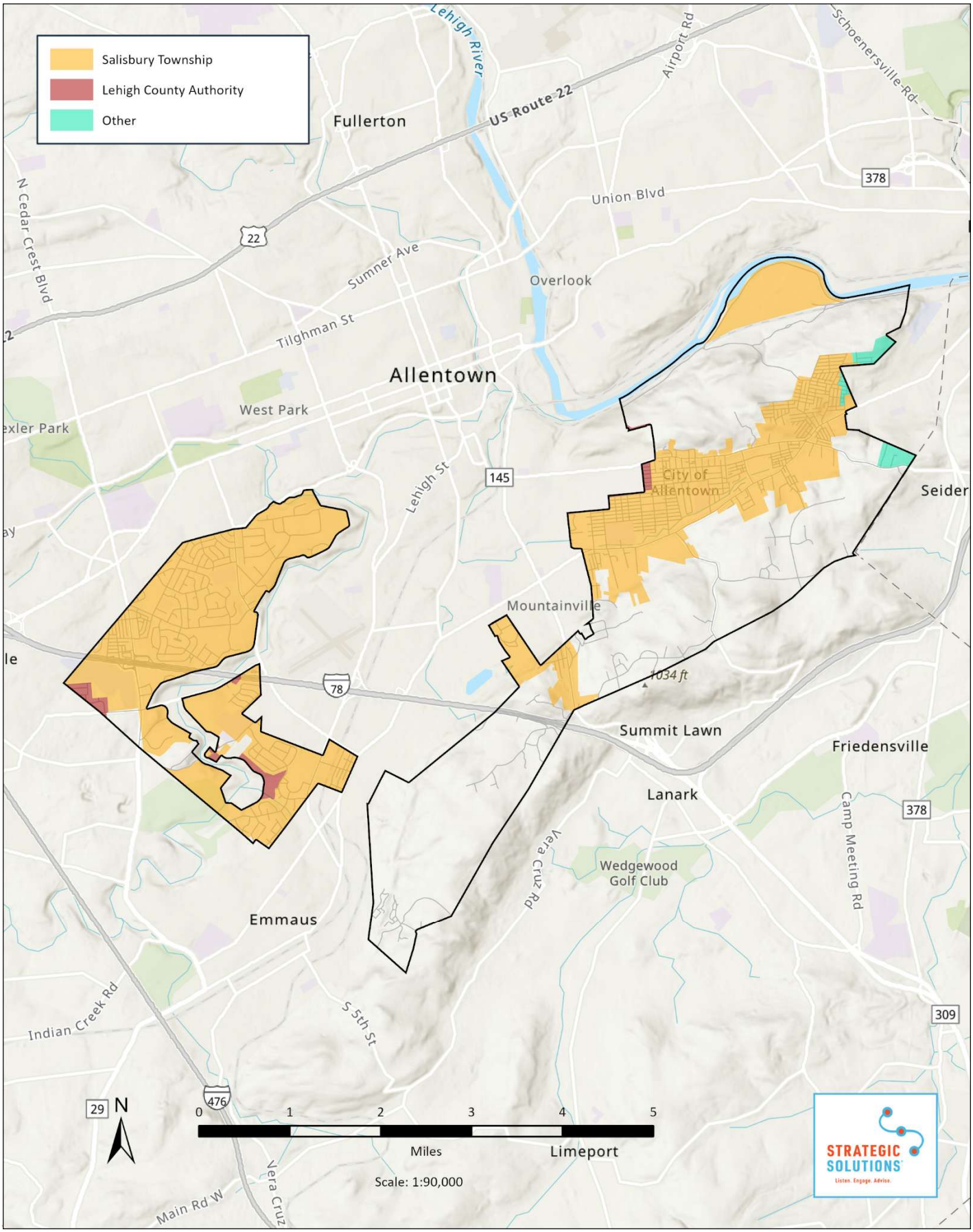
Source: Salisbury Township, GFT, ESRI



Small portions along Salisbury Township's eastern border are served by the City of Bethlehem's water service, but data was not available for those areas.

MAP 4: Public Sewer Service Areas

Source: Salisbury Township, GFT, ESRI



Community Facilities

Community facilities play a vital role in supporting the health, safety, and overall quality of life of residents. These facilities include municipal buildings, public safety services, educational institutions, and essential infrastructure that serve the daily needs of the community. Funded through taxes, fees, and other public resources, community facilities support not only core municipal services but also the transportation and utility systems that allow the community to function efficiently.

Well-maintained and strategically located community facilities help ensure access to public services, promote civic engagement, and support orderly growth and development. As the community evolves, thoughtful planning for these facilities is essential to meet current needs while anticipating future demands.

Municipal Campus

The Salisbury Township Municipal Building is located on South Pike Avenue in the eastern portion of Salisbury Township. Renovated in 1995, the building contains the township's administrative offices and provides a variety of government and administrative services to help support the community.

The township's Public Works Department is conveniently located adjacent to the municipal building in the Public Safety Building. This large facility, built in 2000, consists of the Utility Division and Highway Division. The Utility Division manages water and sewer infrastructure, while the Highway Division oversees street maintenance and upkeep of parks and public grounds.

Salisbury Township Municipal Building



Police Department

The Salisbury Township Police Department is located at the township's Public Safety Building along with the public works department. The department, which began operations in 1958, consists of three divisions: Patrol Division, Criminal and Fire Investigation, and Training/Administration Division. The department is supported by 24 officers total, including the Police Chief, one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, two Corporals, two Detectives, three School Resource Officers, and two K-9 teams who provide twenty-four-hour emergency response to Salisbury Township. Three administrative staff professionals support both the Police and Fire Safety departments.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The township should ensure that police facility, staffing, and equipment needs are coordinated with long-term capital planning efforts. As the community evolves, the township should evaluate whether existing facilities and resources remain adequate to support efficient response times and service delivery.

Fire Safety

Fire protection in Salisbury Township is provided by a coordinated volunteer fire service that ensures timely and effective emergency response throughout the community.

These volunteer personnel respond to a wide range of incidents, including fire suppression, vehicle collisions, rescue operations, hazardous conditions, and assistance with medical emergencies, as well as other public safety calls.

Salisbury Township's Fire Prevention and Life Safety Program currently employs four inspectors/investigators who complement the volunteer fire companies by providing code enforcement, inspection services, and emergency response support.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** To ensure fire safety can be sufficiently managed across the community, the township should continue to support the needs of both Fire Departments, including assisting with providing any financial or staffing support. Also, to ensure the public is aware of services provided by the Eastern Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department, the township website should be updated to include additional information about this department.



The Salisbury Township Fire Prevention and Life Safety Program coordinates with both volunteer fire companies to provide coverage for fire emergencies across the township.

School District

Students in Salisbury Township benefit from a small K-12 school district that supports the entire community. The school district includes an elementary school, a middle school, a high school, and a virtual academy that offers students a fully online educational experience.

The elementary and high school are closely located in the eastern portion of the township while the middle school is located in the western portion. Transportation is provided to students across the school district with the exception of students who live within one and a half miles of the elementary school or within two miles of the middle and high schools. Students residing within these distances are expected to walk to school and are not provided transportation from the school district.

The school district consists of a diverse student body of varying ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Per the National Center for Education Statistics, students are supported by smaller classroom sizes with student/teacher ratios of about 15:1.

According to Niche, the Salisbury Township School District ranks 194 out of 494 for best school districts in Pennsylvania and 13 out of 21 for best school districts in the Lehigh Valley area.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** The township should partner with the school district to monitor development and demographic trends that could impact enrollment.

Salisbury Elementary School

- Approximately 500 students
- Kindergarten – 4th grade

Salisbury Middle School

- Approximately 100-120 students
- Grades 5-8

Salisbury High School

- 500+ students
- Grades 9-12

Virtual Academy of Salisbury Township

- Grades K-12

The Salisbury Township School District offers small classroom sizes and a unified district for all students.



The Built Environment

Existing Land Use

Existing land use patterns in Salisbury Township provide the foundation for understanding how the community functions today and how it may evolve in the future. The township's mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, institutional uses, open space, and infrastructure reflects past development decisions and regulatory frameworks. Understanding how land is currently used helps inform future land use planning, infrastructure investment, and policy decisions, ensuring that growth and change are guided in a way that aligns with the township's long-term goals.

Land Use Categories

To better understand existing development patterns, parcels in Salisbury Township were grouped into ten land use categories. Residential uses include mobile homes, multi-family, single-family attached, and single-family detached housing. Non-residential uses include agricultural, commercial, industrial, public, and recreation. A mixed-use category is also used to identify areas where residential and non-residential uses occur in close proximity.

Land Use District	Percent of Total Acres
Agricultural	14.2%
Commercial	2.4%
Industrial	1.2%
Mixed-Use	0.2%
Mobile Home Residential	0.2%
Multi-Family Residential	1.0%
Public	11.2%
Recreational	23.0%
Single-Family Residential (Attached)	0.5%
Single-Family Residential (Detached)	46.4%

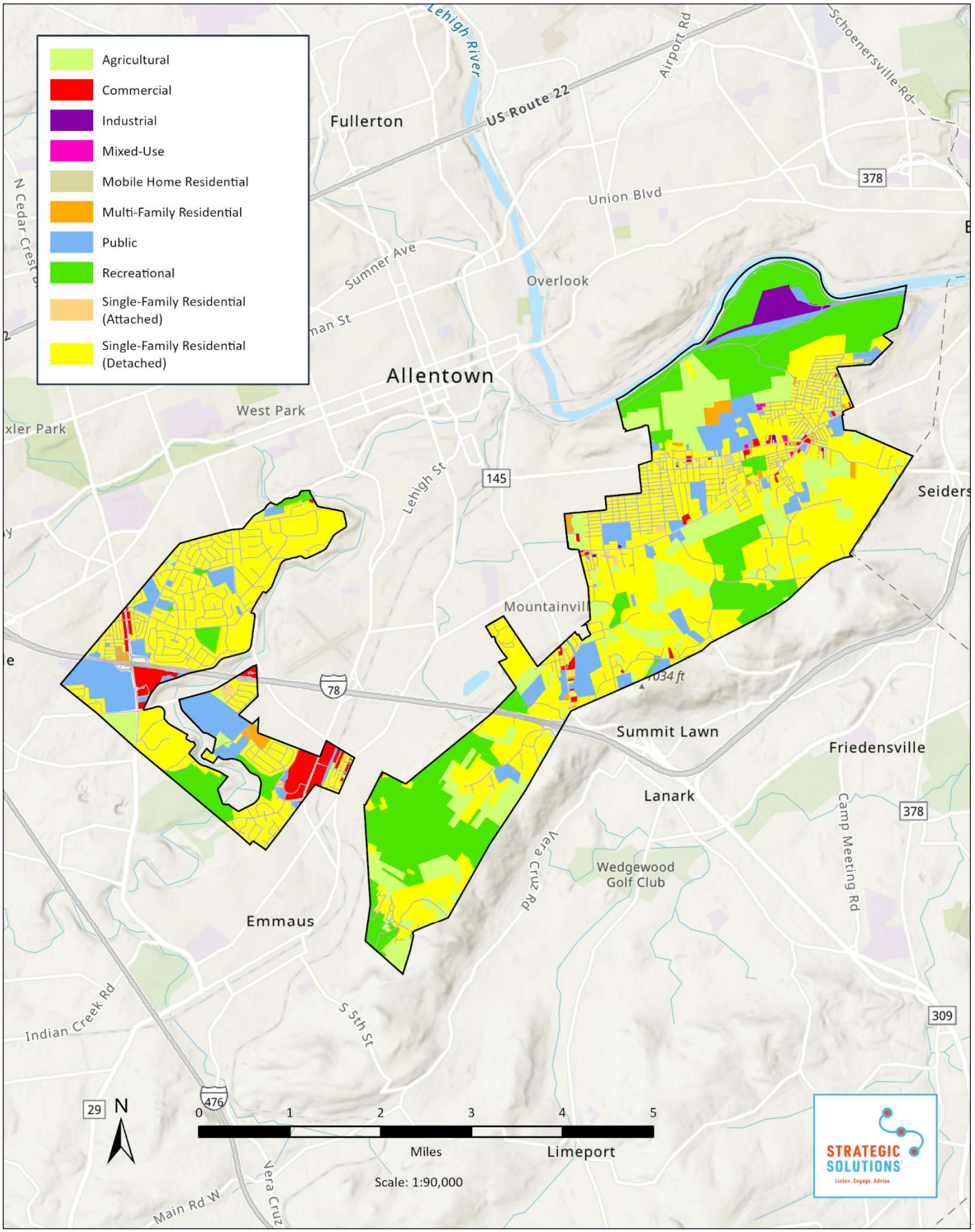
An analysis of existing land use patterns highlights several key trends. Housing in Salisbury Township is predominantly single-family detached, accounting for 46.4 percent of land area, which reinforces the township's suburban development pattern identified in prior sections. At the same time, a significant portion of land is devoted to open space-related uses. Recreation land accounts for 23 percent of the township, while agricultural land comprises 14.2 percent. Much of this agricultural land includes undeveloped or forested areas rather than active farmland. Together, these uses contribute to the township's balance of suburban convenience and a more rural, open character.

Commercial (2.4 percent) and industrial (1.2 percent) uses occupy a relatively small share of land area. This limited supply of employment and commercial land underscores the importance of strategically managing these areas to support the township's economic needs. Public uses account for 11.2 percent of land, while other residential types, including multi-family, attached housing, and mobile homes, make up a comparatively small portion of the overall housing mix.

***Considerations for the comprehensive plan:** Existing land use patterns should be evaluated alongside the Future Land Use Map to identify opportunities for strategic growth and preservation. The township should consider how to support a broader mix of housing types in appropriate locations, particularly where they can reinforce existing commercial areas and corridors. At the same time, areas of recreation, open space, and undeveloped land should be preserved outside of designated growth areas to maintain the township's character and support the Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space focus area.

MAP 5: Existing Land Use

Source: Salisbury Township, GFT, ESRI



Zoning

Zoning Ordinances are used to guide land use and development in a manner that protects public health, safety, and welfare. The township's current zoning ordinance was adopted by the Salisbury Township Board of Commissioners on March 26, 2015. This ordinance establishes permitted uses, development standards, and dimensional requirements that shape the character of neighborhoods, commercial areas, and open spaces.

Reviewing existing zoning in relation to current land use patterns and future community goals helps identify areas where zoning supports the township's vision, as well as areas where updates may be needed to better accommodate growth, promote compatibility, and encourage sustainable development.

Residential Districts

Residential zoning districts are intended to provide areas for safe, stable, and compatible housing while protecting the character of established neighborhoods. These districts regulate the type, density, and scale of residential development to ensure orderly growth, minimize land use conflicts, and promote public health, safety, and welfare. By establishing development standards such as lot size, building height, and setbacks, residential zoning helps maintain neighborhood quality, preserve community character, and support a range of housing options appropriate to the community's needs.

Residential land in Salisbury Township is divided into six zoning districts: conservation-residential (CR), rural residential (R1), low density residential (R2), medium low density residential (R3), medium density residential (R4), and medium-high density residential (R5).

East Salisbury Township is mostly zoned as CR, followed by R4. Alternatively, the west section of the township offers a blend of R1, R2, and R3.

Residential Zoning Districts

- **Conservation-Residential (CR) District:** To provide for mostly single-family detached housing at a very low density and conservation-oriented land uses, in recognition of the extensive important natural features in this district
- **Rural Residential (R1) District:** To provide for mostly single-family detached housing at a relatively rural density
- **Low Density Residential (R2) District:** To provide for mostly single-family detached housing at a low density
- **Medium Low Density Residential (R3) District:** To provide for mostly single-family detached, twin and townhouse development at a medium low density
- **Medium Density Residential (R4) District:** To provide for a wide range of housing types at a medium density
- **Medium High Density Residential (R5) District:** To provide for a wide range of housing types at a medium high density

Gilly's Mobile Home Park



Non-Residential Districts

Non-residential zoning districts are intended to accommodate commercial, industrial, institutional, and other employment- and service-oriented uses that support the community's economic vitality and daily needs. These districts provide appropriate locations for businesses, offices, manufacturing, and public or institutional facilities while establishing development standards that manage building scale, traffic, noise, and other potential impacts. By directing non-residential development to suitable areas and ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses, non-residential zoning districts help promote economic growth, efficient use of infrastructure, and the overall health and functionality of the community.

Non-residential land in Salisbury Township is divided into six zoning categories: office-laboratory (C1), neighborhood commercial (C2), general commercial (C3), light industrial (I), health care overlay (HCO), and transitional overlay (TO).

Overlay districts differ from traditional zoning districts in that they are applied in addition to underlying zoning regulations. These supplemental regulations may be used to address specific conditions such as environmental protection, historic preservation, or design while the base zoning district continues to regulate primary uses and development.

Non-residential districts are strategically located throughout the community. C1, C3, HCO, and TO are restricted to west Salisbury Township. Alternatively, most Light Industrial is limited to the northern section of east Salisbury Township.

Non-Residential Zoning Districts

- **Office-Laboratory (C1) District**: To provide for offices and related types of development
- **Neighborhood Commercial (C2) District:** To provide for limited types of commercial uses, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods
- **General Commercial (C3) District:** To provide for a wide range of commercial uses, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods
- **Light Industrial (I) District:** To provide for a range of manufacturing and other industrial uses, while recognizing that there are limited suitable sites for such activity within Salisbury Township

Overlay Districts

- **Health Care Overlay (HCO) District:** To provide for a range of health care uses, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods
- **Transitional Overlay (TO) District:** To provide for limited types and intensities of health care uses, while protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods



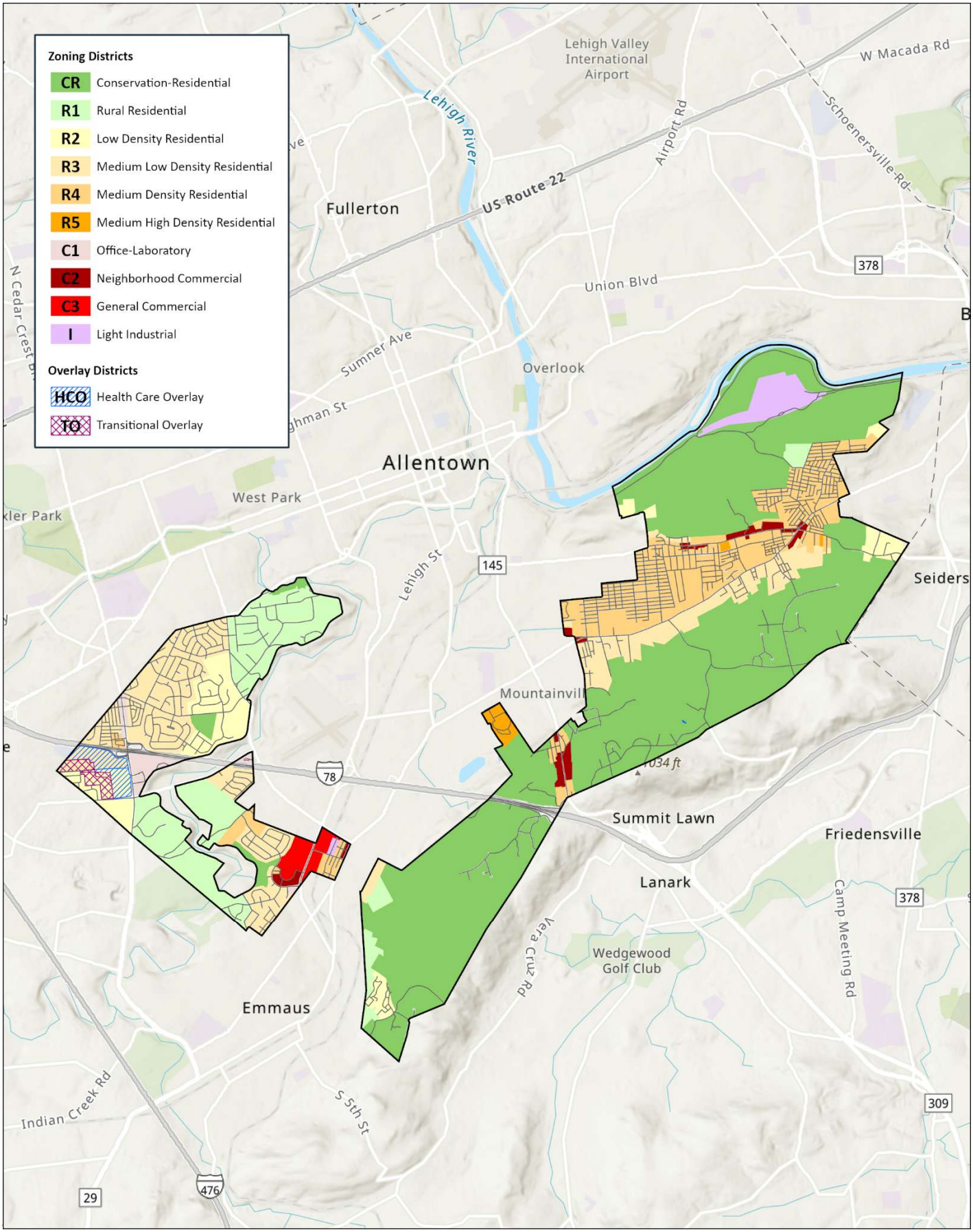
South Mall



Jerusalem Western Salisbury Church

MAP 6: Zoning Districts

Source: Salisbury Township, GFT, ESRI





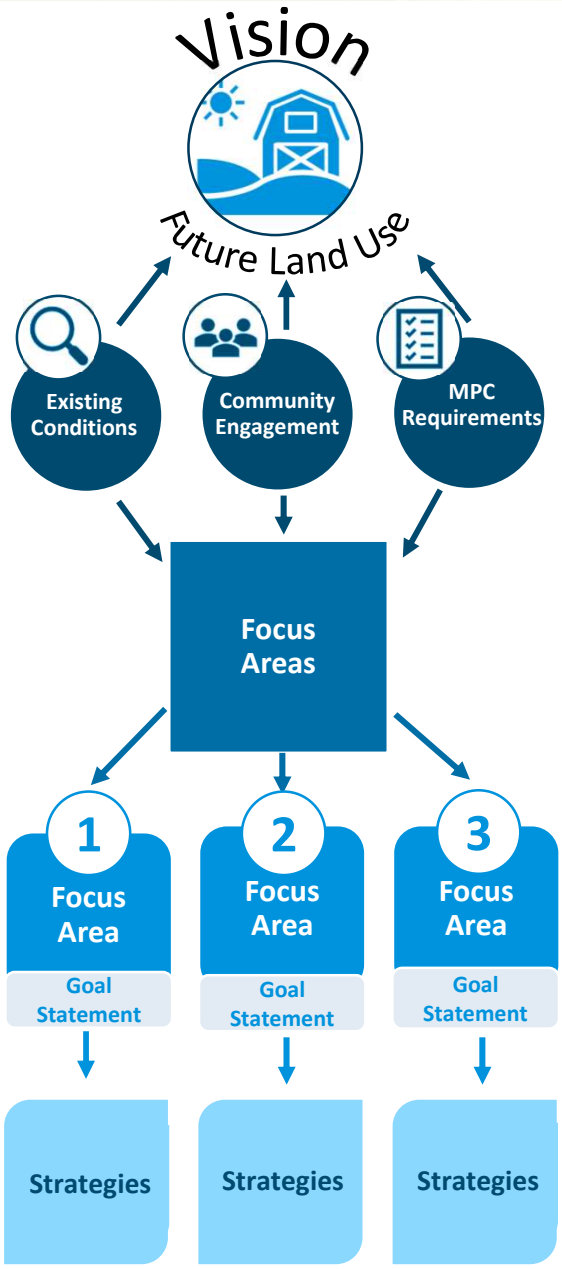
Strategies for Action

Overview

This section is where the comprehensive plan comes to life. Earlier chapters established an understanding of Salisbury Township through community input, analysis of existing conditions, and review of data and mapping. That work formed the foundation of the plan, and this chapter builds on it by outlining the strategies that will help the township achieve its vision and guide decision-making over the next decade.

After introducing Salisbury Township's vision for the next decade, the remainder of this chapter is organized into four focus areas that reflect where attention and action are most needed. Each focus area includes a goal, a set of desired outcomes, and priority strategies that outline specific, actionable steps to move the township toward that goal. Each priority strategy is supported by a detailed explanation of how it was identified and what it is intended to accomplish.

The vision, focus areas, and priority strategies introduced here establish the foundation for the remainder of the plan. The subsequent Future Land Use chapter builds on this framework by illustrating how land use patterns can support these priorities, followed by the Implementation Plan, which outlines a broader set of actions to guide long-term execution.



In Ten Years...

Salisbury Township is a safe, livable, healthy, and welcoming community defined by its high quality of life and strong sense of connection. Its small-town character and unified school district foster close relationships and civic pride, while its strategic location near major metropolitan areas, regional medical centers, and interstate access provides opportunity and convenience. With well-maintained neighborhoods, vibrant parks and open spaces, and thoughtfully directed growth, Salisbury continues to thrive as a community that is both forward-thinking and rooted in stability.





Strategies & Recommendations

The remainder of this chapter outlines focus areas and priority strategies Salisbury Township may pursue to achieve the community's vision and guide decision-making over the next decade.

To help support implementation, each strategy includes three additional pieces of information: an estimated cost to the township, a recommended priority level, and a suggested responsible party. These indicators are intended to provide general guidance as the township considers which initiatives to pursue and how they may be implemented. A key to explaining these indicators is provided below.

Priority: The order we suggest implementing these recommendations, based on impact on achieving the community's vision and available resources

🕒 **- Short-Term**

🕒🕒 **- Medium-Term**

🕒🕒🕒 **- Long-Term**

Cost: Estimated financial requirement to carry out the strategy. If the strategy is expected to generate revenue, the cost estimate is adjusted to reflect net cost (Expenses – Revenue)

$$$ - $500k+

$$ - $50-500k

$ - < $50k

Responsible Party: Primary organization and staff members responsible to achieve the strategy. In many instances, needed partners will be noted in the strategy.

Focus Area #1

Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

Goal: Reduce long-term pressure on tax increases by encouraging strategic, higher-density development and redevelopment in appropriate commercial corridors and on underutilized sites, balancing the financial sustainability of Salisbury Township with protection of existing community character.

Overview

Communities naturally move through cycles of growth and maturity. In the early years of development, infrastructure and public amenities are built as new residents move in and investment is readily available. Over time, however, growth slows while roads, utilities, and other infrastructure age and become more expensive to maintain. Without new growth or reinvestment, communities are often faced with difficult choices, such as raising taxes to maintain services or reducing investments in infrastructure and public amenities.

Salisbury Township is not immune to these dynamics. As one of the earliest suburbs of Allentown to develop in the twentieth century, much of the township is already built out. While the broader Lehigh Valley has grown by nearly 20 percent since 2000, Salisbury's population has remained largely stable and is projected by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission to remain so in the coming years.

Community input reflects this tension. Residents frequently express concerns about road maintenance and infrastructure needs while also raising questions about taxes. At the same time, many residents value Salisbury's established neighborhoods and recognize that there is limited land available for development.

In response, Salisbury Township must look for opportunities to support strategic redevelopment and target higher-density development in locations where infrastructure already exists, particularly along commercial corridors and on underutilized sites, allowing the township to strengthen its tax base while maintaining the community's character.

Key Outcomes

1. Community Sensitive Growth
2. Diversified Tax Base
3. Efficient Use of Infrastructure



"My housing and local school taxes keep going up, Township needs to come up ways with more commercial and industrial corporations to help offset taxes. Lehigh Valley Hospital alone does not cut it."



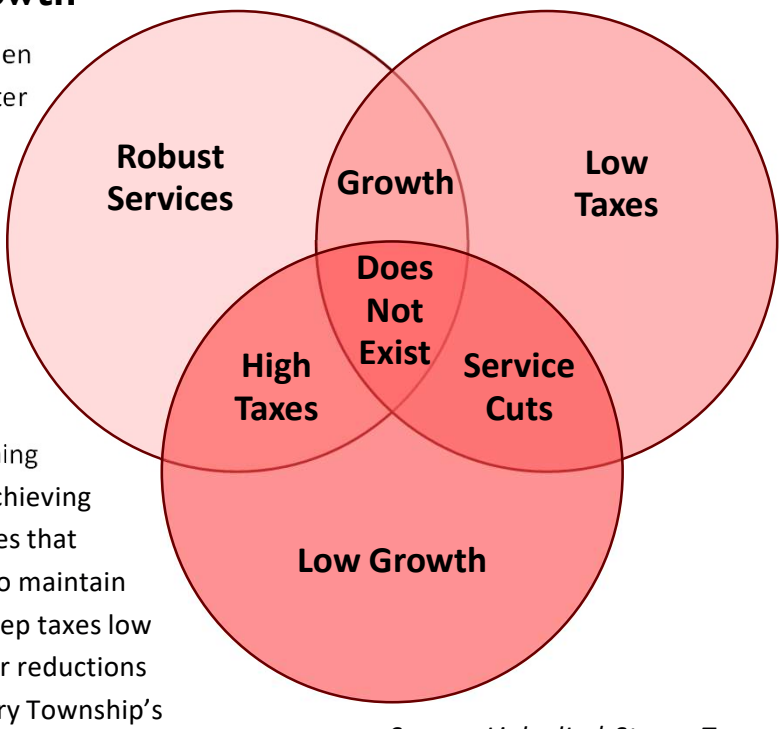
"New housing and how it will affect our schools and taxes ... our school taxes are very high ..."



"I'm a bit worried about the township budget and how property taxes continue to rise even though one of the elementary schools had to shut down to save money."

Balancing Taxes, Services, and Growth

The tension expressed by Salisbury residents between taxes, infrastructure needs, and community character reflects a common challenge facing many municipalities. Local services such as road maintenance, public safety, parks, and administration are largely funded through property taxes.



Source: LinkedIn | Strong Towns

Communities generally balance three competing priorities: maintaining robust services, keeping property taxes low, and limiting growth or maintaining lower-density development patterns. In practice, achieving all three simultaneously is not possible. Communities that prioritize lower growth often require higher taxes to maintain services. Alternatively, communities that seek to keep taxes low may rely on growth, higher-density development, or reductions in service levels. This dynamic helps explain Salisbury Township's property tax structure compared with nearby municipalities shown in the table below.

- Salisbury Township's taxes are lower than neighboring cities and boroughs - Allentown, Fountain Hill, and Emmaus.
- Across all municipalities, school district taxes represent the largest share of the overall property tax bill.
- Some nearby townships maintain lower municipal tax rates due to structural differences. For example:
    - Lower Macungie and Upper Milford Townships do not operate local police departments.
    - South Whitehall Township benefits from a significantly larger commercial tax base.
    - Upper Saucon has experienced substantial population growth since 2000, expanding its tax base.

Understanding these dynamics reinforces the importance of strategic reinvestment and targeted growth in locations where infrastructure already exists, as it can have financial benefits to Salisbury Township.

Property Tax Millage Rates, Salisbury Township and Adjacent Municipalities, 2026

Municipality	Millage Rate				Taxes @ $300k
	Municipal	School	County	Total	
Salisbury Township	**4.77**	**24.84**	**3.78**	**33.39**	**$10,017**
BOROUGH					
Emmaus	10.64	21.84	3.78	36.26	**$10,878**
Fountain Hill	11.61	19.42	3.78	34.81	**$10,443**
CITY					
Allentown	29.10	22.64	3.78	55.52	**$16,653**
Bethlehem	6.21	19.42	3.78	29.41	**$8,823**
TOWNSHIP					
Lower Macungie	0.75	21.84	3.78	26.37	**$7,911**
South Whitehall	3.59	17.90	3.78	25.27	**$7,581**
Upper Milford	0.75	21.84	3.78	26.37	**$7,911**
Upper Saucon	1.64	17.71	3.78	23.13	**$6,939**

Priority Strategy #1:
Support Mixed-Use Development Along Key Corridors

The township should support the development of mixed-use areas along key corridors such as E. Emmaus Avenue, E. Susquehanna Avenue, and Lehigh Street, consistent with the Future Land Use Map. These corridors are well-positioned for this pattern due to their access to public infrastructure, proximity to higher-density residential areas, and presence of institutional and limited commercial uses. Encouraging a mix of residential and neighborhood-serving commercial development can help create a local customer base to support small-scale businesses while improving corridor vitality. Over time, this approach may also create opportunities to enhance selective pedestrian connections.

Priority	
Cost	$
Responsible Party	Community Development Director

Context

This strategy builds on the Future Land Use Map, which identifies key corridors such as E. Emmaus Avenue, E. Susquehanna Avenue, and Lehigh Street as appropriate locations for mixed-use development. In Salisbury Township, this approach is particularly relevant given the limited amount of commercial land and the need to strengthen existing corridors without expanding development into established neighborhoods.

These corridors are well-positioned to support a mix of uses due to their access to public water and sewer, proximity to higher-density residential areas, and existing presence of institutional and small-scale commercial uses. However, the form and intensity of mixed-use development should be context-sensitive. Along E. Emmaus Avenue and E. Susquehanna Avenue, development may remain lower in scale and more neighborhood-oriented, while Lehigh Street may accommodate more intense development patterns consistent with its role as a regional corridor.

Implementation of this strategy will require updates to the township's zoning ordinance to allow for a broader mix of uses and housing types in these areas. Consideration may also be given to tools such as Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, to provide flexibility in site design and encourage more integrated development patterns. Over time, these areas may also present opportunities to improve pedestrian connections between residential areas, commercial uses, and community institutions, supporting a more connected and functional community pattern.

Mixed-Use Development along key commercial corridors in the township could sustain new small businesses while providing residents nearby access to services.

Priority Strategy #2:
Target Residential Densification along Lehigh Street

Encourage higher-density residential development along Lehigh Street by allowing mid-rise apartment buildings on underutilized parcels, such as the South Mall ring road and rear parking areas. This approach leverages existing infrastructure and access to services to expand the tax base while directing growth away from established neighborhoods.

Priority	
Cost	$
Responsible Party	Community Development Director

Context

Lehigh Street serves as one of Salisbury Township's primary commercial corridors. While the roadway runs north–south through Allentown and continues south into Emmaus Borough as State Avenue, a short but important segment passes through Salisbury Township. Within the township, Lehigh Street functions as a major commercial destination, providing access to retail, services, and employment opportunities for residents throughout the community. The corridor also includes fixed-route public transit service via bus routes 104 and 210, providing an additional transportation option for residents and workers.

A significant portion of the corridor in Salisbury is anchored by the South Mall, which has recently experienced renewed investment. Once considered a declining regional shopping center, the mall has begun to see reinvestment, including the opening of a new Giant supermarket and a new Burlington store. This momentum presents an opportunity for Salisbury Township to build on recent improvements.





Across the country, many shopping centers are evolving by introducing residential development on underutilized portions of mall properties, particularly along ring roads and within excess parking areas. Salisbury Township can take advantage of this trend by encouraging mid-rise residential development along the corridor, including in and around the South Mall. Allowing higher-density housing in these areas would leverage existing infrastructure and services, expand the township's tax base, and help direct growth toward commercial corridors rather than established neighborhoods.

Priority Strategy #3:
Coordinate a Joint Corridor Study along Lehigh St.

Partner with the City of Allentown and Borough of Emmaus to study the shared commercial corridor, documenting land uses, property conditions, vacant buildings, signage, pedestrian activity, traffic safety, and access management. The study should identify redevelopment opportunities, including underutilized or vacant commercial properties that could support reinvestment or mixed-use development. It should also explore ways to better align zoning, design standards, and permitting processes. This collaborative effort can support corridor reinvestment, improve the visual character of the area, and strengthen the long-term tax base.

Priority 

Cost $$

Responsible Party Township Manager, Community Development Director, Adjacent Municipalities

Context

During stakeholder engagement, residents frequently described the Lehigh Street corridor as a place primarily associated with fast food restaurants, car dealerships, and other auto-oriented businesses. While Salisbury Township has limited land available for new commercial development, the corridor remains an important destination for residents seeking everyday services and a key contributor to the township's tax base, despite its relatively short extent within the municipality.

Lehigh Street also functions as a shared commercial corridor with the City of Allentown and the Borough of Emmaus. From the perspective of residents and visitors, the corridor operates as a continuous commercial area regardless of municipal boundaries. Because of this, meaningful improvements to the corridor will likely require coordination across municipalities. Establishing a shared understanding of corridor conditions and priorities can help lay the groundwork for future collaboration on infrastructure improvements, redevelopment opportunities, and long-term corridor planning.



Priority Strategy #4:
Allow Modest Density Increases to Support Senior Housing Near Medical Facilities

Allow modest increases in residential density to accommodate potential senior housing near major medical facilities, particularly along the Cedar Crest Boulevard corridor. Housing types such as townhomes, quadplexes, and other small-scale multi-unit buildings can provide options for residents who wish to downsize while remaining in the community. Similar housing types may also be appropriate in areas near Lehigh Country Club. Locating these housing options near healthcare services and everyday amenities can support aging residents while improving the viability of redevelopment along the corridor. Housing targeted toward older residents also tends to generate fewer public school students, which limits additional public education costs.

Priority	
Cost	$
Responsible Party	Community Development Director

Context

Salisbury Township is often described as an excellent place to raise a family, and many residents choose to remain in their homes for long periods of time. While this stability is a strength, it can also limit the availability of housing for younger households seeking to move into the community. At the same time, Pennsylvania's population is aging, and many residents prefer housing options that allow them to remain in the communities where they have long-standing ties.

Providing housing options that are attractive to older residents, such as townhomes, quadplexes, and small apartment buildings, can create opportunities for residents to downsize while remaining in Salisbury Township. These housing types are commonly used in age-restricted or senior-oriented communities and can be particularly appropriate near major medical facilities and services. Allowing modest increases in density to accommodate these housing forms in strategic locations can support aging residents who wish to remain in the community, open up existing homes for younger families, and expand the township's tax base without significantly increasing demand on the school district.

Spotlight On… The Cottages at Old Saucon



Source: oldsaucon.com

Nearby in Upper Saucon Township, The Cottages at Old Saucon were developed as a 55+ community across from Saucon Valley Country Club, featuring homes designed for lower-maintenance living. As demand grows for senior housing near recreational amenities such as golf courses, similar opportunities near Lehigh Country Club could allow Salisbury Township residents to downsize while remaining in the community.

Focus Area #2

Preventing Property Disinvestment

Goal: Prevent property disinvestment by addressing blight and deterioration, supporting well-maintained housing, and protecting the quality and stability of neighborhoods throughout the township.

Overview

Property disinvestment can occur gradually as homes and neighborhoods age, maintenance is deferred, and reinvestment slows. Over time, these conditions can lead to declining property values, visible deterioration, and the spread of blight, all of which can affect neighborhood stability and community perception. Housing data suggests early signs of concern, particularly for census tracts in the eastern portion of Salisbury Township, where home values and occupancy rates are considerably lower than west Salisbury.

Salisbury Township has many established neighborhoods that contribute to the community's character and quality of life. As housing stock ages, however, maintaining these neighborhoods becomes increasingly important. While much of the township remains well maintained and desirable, differences in housing conditions and investment patterns across the community highlight the need for continued attention to property upkeep and neighborhood stability.

Community feedback reinforces these concerns. Some residents noted visible property maintenance issues, identifying it as one of the primary challenges facing the township over the next decade. These perceptions highlight the importance of maintaining neighborhood quality and addressing potential issues before they contribute to broader patterns of disinvestment.

Key Outcomes

1. High Quality Housing
2. Stable Neighborhoods
3. Preserved Property Values



"…there are so many properties that look like junk yards. Tractor trailers parked and abandoned on streets. Cars racing on streets where kids live."



"…It's a shame how many properties are not clean and have cars, trucks, trash, as permanent fixtures."



"Please build up our community with better housing options for the EAST Side of Salisbury. I have lived here my whole life. Laubach Park needs so much attention."

In response, Salisbury Township can take steps to support reinvestment and prevent the spread of blight through targeted strategies that identify problem properties, support active code enforcement, and promote reinvestment and redevelopment in more extreme cases.

Priority Strategies

Preventing property disinvestment requires a proactive and flexible approach. Early signs such as declining maintenance, vacancy, or nuisance conditions can emerge gradually and may lead to broader neighborhood decline. While Salisbury Township does not currently face widespread disinvestment, community engagement identified deteriorating property conditions as a potential challenge over the coming decade. By acting early, the Township has an opportunity to maintain neighborhood stability and prevent small issues from becoming larger problems. To guide this effort, priority strategies are organized into three categories that reflect a graduated response. Together, these strategies allow the township to respond appropriately based on scale and severity.



Assess and Monitor: focuses on tracking housing conditions and identifying emerging concerns.



Prevent Bad Actors: includes proactive measures that encourage responsible property ownership and enforce existing regulations.



Escalation Tools: provide stronger actions when early interventions are not sufficient.

Assess and Monitor



Priority Strategy #1:
Enhance Code Enforcement Data Collection

Ensure code enforcement database captures date and time of each violation and inspection, corresponding photos, name and contact info for tenant or agent, and fines or penalties owed. A best-in-class system would integrate with building permits, police and fire reports, and property ownership records.

Priority 

Cost $$

Responsible Party Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT

Context

The first step in an effective program to manage property conditions is effective code enforcement. Salisbury Township already maintains a mature code enforcement program and is upgrading its system to GovWell. As part of this transition, the township should ensure violation data, inspection records, photos, and contact information are consistently captured and integrated with police, fire, permit, and property records to support more coordinated and proactive enforcement.



Priority Strategy #2a:
Update Rental Registration Ordinance

Update the Township's existing rental registration ordinance to ensure it is effectively supporting property maintenance and code compliance. The Township should evaluate opportunities to strengthen enforcement, including increasing penalties for non-compliance to reduce evasion of registration requirements. Consideration should also be given to incorporating periodic inspections by the code enforcement department, rather than relying solely on tenant turnover, to support a more proactive approach to property maintenance. An annual registration fee can continue to be used to offset administrative and inspection-related costs.

Priority 

Cost $

Responsible Party Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT

Priority Strategy #2b:
Registration of Vacant Properties

Adopt a vacant property registration ordinance requiring owners of vacant buildings to register with the township after a defined period of vacancy and provide current contact information and a local agent responsible for the property. Registration fees should be structured to cover administrative and inspection costs and may escalate the longer a property remains vacant to encourage reuse, sale, or rehabilitation. Failure to register may result in fines or municipal liens. When paired with rental registration and a modern code enforcement database, this tool improves tracking of vacant properties and supports proactive code enforcement.

Priority 

Cost $

Responsible Party Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT

Priority Strategy #2c:
Registration of Foreclosed Properties

Adopt a foreclosure property registration ordinance requiring lenders to register properties once they enter foreclosure or mortgage default, provide responsible contact information, and pay an annual fee to offset administrative costs. Registration allows the Township to monitor properties early in the foreclosure process and hold lenders accountable for maintaining properties to prevent deterioration or abandonment. Many municipalities partner with private registry companies that manage lender registrations, maintain the database, and collect fees, reducing administrative burden on township staff while improving compliance and property tracking.

Priority	
Cost	$
Responsible Party	Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT

Context

Beyond code enforcement, Salisbury's next strategy would be to enact programs to register rental, vacant, and foreclosed properties. One challenge associated with these properties is that municipalities often lack accurate contact information for owners or responsible agents. In some cases, property owners may also be unaware of local maintenance standards and their responsibilities under township codes. Registration programs help close these gaps by requiring owners or lenders to provide up-to-date contact information and designate a responsible local agent. These programs allow the township to communicate expectations clearly, monitor property conditions more effectively, and intervene early when issues arise. Registration fees can be structured to cover inspections, complaint response, and administrative oversight, creating a self-funding system that supports proactive code enforcement. When combined with a modern code enforcement database, registration programs improve tracking of at-risk properties, strengthen accountability for owners and lenders, and help prevent deterioration before it spreads to surrounding neighborhoods.

Did you know?

Allentown already has registration programs for rental, vacant, and foreclosed properties. Allentown's programs would operate on a much larger scale than Salisbury Township's, so the city could be a valuable resource in enacting and administering these programs.



A newly constructed duplex on a recently subdivided lot that could be replicated in higher-density areas of the township

Priority Strategy #3:
Explore Conservatorship

Offers municipalities a method to obtain the right to enter into a property (under specific conditions) and complete the improvements needed to make it safe. A court appoints the conservator after a formal process and hearing, at which point the conservator can begin making the necessary improvements to bring the property up to code. If the owner doesn't take the necessary steps to regain possession (and reimburse the conservator), the court can be approached to approve sale of the property.

Priority	
Cost	$$
Responsible Party	Township Manager, Community Development Director

Context

As a final strategy, if it is determined that specific properties require more direct intervention, Salisbury Township could consider the use of conservatorship. This legal tool allows a court to appoint a conservator to take control of a blighted property and bring it into compliance with applicable codes. Conservatorship is most effective in otherwise strong housing markets where a rehabilitated property can be resold, allowing the costs of improvements to be recovered at the time of sale. The process can be complex and time-intensive, requiring legal coordination, project oversight, and careful consideration of staff capacity. However, conservatorship provides a highly targeted approach for addressing individual problem properties when traditional tools such as code enforcement, property registration, or owner outreach have not produced results. Used selectively, it allows the township to intervene in difficult cases and support the rehabilitation and productive reuse of properties that may otherwise continue to deteriorate.

Spotlight On… Conservatorship in PA



Source: Pittsburgh Magazine

Dormont, a borough that borders the city of Pittsburgh, has used Pennsylvania's conservatorship law to address abandoned and deteriorating homes with persistent code violations. Through the process, the borough was able to intervene when traditional enforcement tools were unsuccessful. In two cases, blighted homes were rehabilitated and returned to the market for new ownership. In another instance, a structure that was too deteriorated for rehabilitation was demolished and replaced with a newly constructed duplex (pictured above), demonstrating how conservatorship can support both rehabilitation and redevelopment of problem properties.

Focus Area #3

Building a Connected Community

Goal: Build a common community identity by strengthening ties between the east and west areas of Salisbury Township, encouraging community interaction, and ensuring residents across both areas have easy access to township resources and services.

Overview

Although Salisbury Township functions as a single community, its eastern and western areas have developed with distinct characteristics over time. The physical separation in the township has contributed to the development of unique identities and has led to comparisons between the two.

Differences in development patterns, housing conditions, and access to certain amenities have contributed to perceptions of separation between the two areas. While residents across the township share many common priorities, community input indicates a desire to strengthen the connections that unite these areas and reinforce a shared sense of identity.

Building a more connected community involves more than physical infrastructure. It also includes fostering social and civic relationships that encourage residents from different parts of the township to interact, collaborate, and participate in community life. Opportunities such as shared events, improved communication, accessible community spaces, and coordinated planning efforts can help bring residents together while ensuring that resources and services are available throughout the township.

By promoting stronger physical, social, and civic connections between the eastern and western areas of Salisbury Township, the community can build greater trust, strengthen unity, and reinforce a shared sense of place. Supporting these connections will help ensure that all residents feel represented and included while contributing to a cohesive township identity and a stronger foundation for future growth and investment.

Key Outcomes

1. Strengthen Community Identity
2. Build Trust and Unity
3. Foster Connectivity and Equity



"Cohesion of eastern and western townships."



"The built environment and landscape between Eastern and Western Salisbury is quite different…"



"There is no pride in the township and no place to gather."

Priority Strategy #1:
Evaluate Feasibility of Recreation Amenities Across from Municipal Facilities

Evaluate the suitability of the township-owned parcels across from the municipal facilities for future recreational amenities, such as a community center or park space. While portions of the site are being utilized for important public works investments, remaining areas may present opportunities for complementary community uses. The parcels' relatively central location between the eastern and western portions of the township could support broad community access and help establish a shared gathering space over time.

Priority 

Cost $$$

Responsible Party Board of Commissioners, Township Manager

Context

The township owns approximately 48 acres of contiguous parcels across from the municipal building that are currently used by the Public Works Department and are the focus of several important municipal investments. Recent improvements include the construction of a salt storage facility with capacity to support winter maintenance operations, relocation of fuel tanks from the Public Safety complex to improve traffic flow and parking, and the planned relocation of additional Public Works and municipal service functions. Together, these investments represent a significant commitment to improving the township's ability to efficiently deliver core services while addressing operational constraints at existing facilities.

As Salisbury considers ways to strengthen connections between its eastern and western areas, it will also be important to identify opportunities to create shared community spaces. The parcels' central location presents a unique opportunity to serve residents from both sides of the township while reinforcing a shared sense of place. While portions of the site are actively used for municipal operations, there remains a substantial amount of undeveloped and wooded land that could be evaluated for passive and active recreational amenities over time.

Initial improvements could include walking trails, open space, and court-based recreation such as tennis or pickleball, depending on community interest and available resources. These types of investments could be phased in over time and designed to complement existing municipal uses. As demand is better understood, the long-term feasibility of a community center could also be evaluated as one of several potential options for the site.

Any future improvements should be carefully coordinated with ongoing Public Works operations and may require evaluation of site access, including the potential for a new entrance from Mountain Park Road to ensure safe and efficient circulation.



The nearly 48-acre township-owned property across from the municipal complex is heavily wooded and may support future recreational amenities.

Priority Strategy #2a:
Create a Digital Newsletter

Publish a quarterly community newsletter to share updates on township initiatives, upcoming events, public meetings, and other important information for residents. The newsletter could be distributed digitally through the township website, email lists, and social media platforms.

Priority	
Cost	$
Responsible Party	Communication and Events Administrator

Priority Strategy #2b:
Increase Social Media Presence

Building on the township's ongoing efforts to expand its social media presence, regularly publish timely and consistent content highlighting community events, township initiatives, and public information. The success of the Salisbury Township Police Department's page demonstrates the value of these platforms for improving resident awareness, engagement, and township-wide connectivity.

Priority	
Cost	$
Responsible Party	Communication and Events Administrator

Priority Strategy #2c:
Township Website Enhancements

Update the township website to serve as a centralized, user-friendly information hub by adding and maintaining descriptions of the Eastern and Western Salisbury Volunteer Fire Departments, the Recreation Advisory Committee, park, local, and regional maps, school district information, a business directory, and resources for new residents. Link all township social media accounts and routinely review the website to ensure committee member information and contact details remain accurate and up to date.

Priority	
Cost	$
Responsible Party	Communication and Events Administrator, IT Manager

Context:

Building a shared identity across Salisbury Township is strengthened by maintaining a consistent voice across the township's communication channels. Clear and regular communication helps ensure residents are aware of township initiatives, public meetings, community events, and the amenities available throughout the community. By expanding the use of tools such as a digital newsletter, social media platforms, and an improved township website, Salisbury can more effectively share information and tell the story of the community. Strengthening these communication channels can help residents better understand the work being undertaken by the township while fostering greater awareness, engagement, and connection across both sides of the community.

Priority Strategy #3:
Host Community Events

Building on the success of Salisbury Township's first annual Light Up Night, consider additional opportunities to host community events. These events can bring residents together through shared activities, such as seasonal activities, food trucks, ice-cream socials, and cultural or art-based events, and could either be centrally located or alternate between parks on each side of the township.

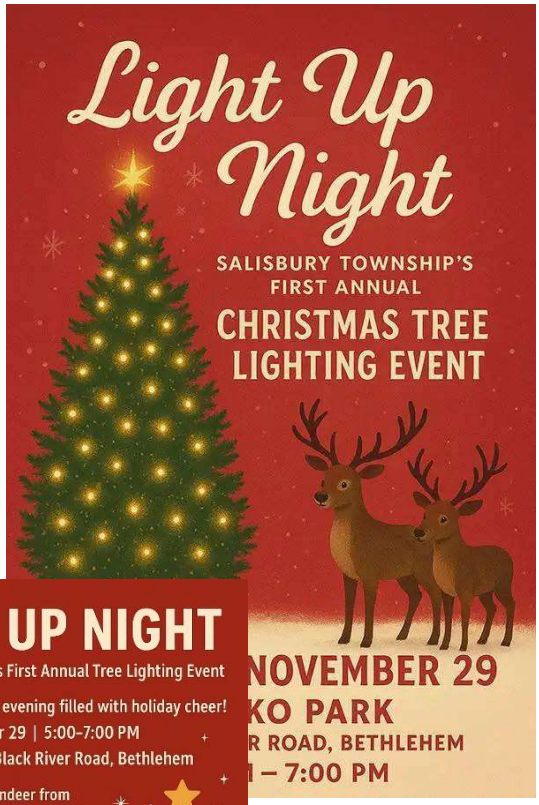
Priority	
Cost	$$
Responsible Party	Communication and Events Administrator, Township Manager, Parks & Recreation

Context

Community engagement made it clear that residents value opportunities to connect and are looking for ways to strengthen a sense of community across the township. One of the most effective ways to do this is by creating opportunities for residents to gather in shared spaces, enjoy local amenities, and interact with their neighbors.

Salisbury Township's first annual Light Up Night demonstrated the impact of these efforts. The event brought together families, local organizations, and first responders for an evening of music, activities, and seasonal celebration. Beyond entertainment, it created meaningful opportunities for residents to engage with one another and with local institutions such as the Police and Fire Departments.

The success of the event demonstrates the value residents place on these shared experiences and provides both a model and a strong foundation for expanding community programming in the future.





Focus Area #4

Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

Goal: Sustain and improve Salisbury Township's parks and open spaces through continued investment, regular maintenance, and partnerships that expand accessible recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Overview

Well-maintained parks and accessible recreational facilities contribute to residents' quality of life while also serving as gathering spaces that bring people together. As Salisbury continues to grow and evolve, maintaining and enhancing these spaces will be essential to ensuring that residents of all ages and backgrounds have access to safe, welcoming, and modern recreational amenities.

Feedback from the community survey highlighted park maintenance as a priority, with particular attention given to improvements at Laubach Park. Residents expressed interest in ensuring that parks remain clean, well maintained, and equipped with facilities that meet the needs of the community. At the same time, stakeholders noted that the relationship between the Salisbury Youth Association (SYA) and the Salisbury Township Recreation Advisory Committee could be further strengthened, building on the partnership that already exists. Greater coordination between these organizations can support more effective programming, facility planning, and communication about recreational opportunities.

The township was recently awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund to support proposed improvements to Laubach Park, including a perimeter walking path, a boardwalk and fishing platform at the pond, pickleball courts, a basketball court, a soccer-football field, two baseball fields, and restroom facilities. These investments will help modernize park amenities while expanding recreational opportunities and fostering stronger community connections across the township.

Key Outcomes

1. Well-Maintained and Modern Facilities
2. Strong Community Partnerships
3. Accessible Recreation

"Some neighborhoods have great parks and walking paths and others not so much."

"We live in a smaller area of our township, and we seem to be overlooked quite a bit with our parks and roadways. Laubach park has become rundown. We usually have our son's birthday parties there every year. This year we changed for better amenities."

"There are no parks like Devonshire or Lindberg on the east side."

Priority Strategy #1:
Prioritize Additional Parks and Trail Master Planning

Pursue additional parks and trails master planning efforts to identify priority connections between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and the regional trail network. Focus should be placed on opportunities to connect Salisbury Township to nearby assets such as the Lehigh Parkway Path and the Delaware & Lehigh (D&L) Trail. Prior master planning efforts for Lindberg Park and Laubach Park have been highly successful and demonstrate the value of planning ahead for park improvements and trail connections. Funding for planning and implementation may be available through DCNR, Lehigh County, and other grant programs.

Priority	
Cost	$$
Responsible Party	Township Manager, Parks & Recreation Director

Context

Salisbury Township has built a strong track record of turning park and trail master planning into tangible improvements for residents. In 2013, the township adopted a master plan for Lindberg Park, a neighborhood park originally developed in the 1970s. The plan identified simple but impactful priorities, including a perimeter walking trail and a direct connection to the Little Lehigh Parkway. With support from DCNR, these improvements were implemented soon after, creating a widely used recreational asset and demonstrating the value of planning ahead.

Building on that momentum, the township completed a master plan for Franko Farm and Laubach Park. While implementation has taken more time, the plan positioned Salisbury to successfully compete for funding, including a $3 million grant through the U.S. Department of the Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund. Planned improvements include new trails, a boardwalk and fishing platform, and expanded recreational facilities.

Together, these efforts show how thoughtful planning can lead to real investment. Continuing this approach can help Salisbury identify future connections and improvements that strengthen access to parks and the regional trail network.

Spotlight On… Black River Sanctuary



The Black River Sanctuary, a 187-acre nature preserve in Salisbury Township, is protected and maintained through a partnership with the Wildlands Conservancy. The site offers trails, scenic views, and headwaters that support regional water quality, providing a valuable natural amenity for residents. This partnership has allowed the Township to leverage volunteer support and organizational expertise to maintain and enhance the property, demonstrating how collaboration can expand capacity while preserving important open spaces.



Future Land Use

Future Land Use is, in many ways, the most critical component of a comprehensive plan. It serves as the fulcrum around which many other elements of the plan pivot, providing the policy direction that informs land use decisions and helps achieve the community goals identified by the planning process. By illustrating how land in the township should be used in the future, the Future Land Use Map establishes a framework for guiding growth, reinvestment, and preservation.

In Pennsylvania, the Municipalities Planning Code establishes that zoning ordinances are intended to implement a municipality's comprehensive plan. As a result, the Future Land Use Map plays an important role in shaping future updates to zoning regulations and other land use policies. The land use recommendations outlined in this chapter provide direction for how Salisbury Township can move toward its long-term vision while balancing strategic growth, community character, and neighborhood stability.

The Future Land Use Map presented in this plan was developed through a combination of technical analysis and community input. The Steering Committee reviewed existing land use patterns, current zoning regulations, known community assets, and infrastructure considerations. Public input from the community survey and feedback from the Steering Committee also helped identify how residents would like to see future development occur.

The process began with a hand-drawn concept map that explored how Salisbury Township could evolve over the next decade. This exercise helped identify potential areas for reinvestment, preservation, and strategic growth. The concept was then translated into a digital map, refined to reflect existing parks and open space, infrastructure constraints, and key community assets. The resulting Future Land Use Map reflects both the township's existing conditions and the community's vision for how Salisbury should grow and change in the years ahead.



Early concept sketch developed during the planning process to explore potential future land use patterns.

Future Land Use Map

What is a Future Land Use Map?

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) illustrates how Salisbury Township envisions land being used over the planning horizon of this comprehensive plan. It serves as a policy guide that helps direct future land use decisions and supports the township's broader goals for growth, reinvestment, and preservation.

The FLUM is not the same as the zoning map. Zoning maps are parcel-based and establish specific regulations such as permitted uses, setbacks, building heights, and minimum lot sizes. The Future Land Use Map is more generalized and focuses on long-term patterns of development rather than individual properties. Its designations help guide future zoning amendments, infrastructure investments, and development decisions.

Areas identified for more intensive uses, such as higher-density residential or commercial development, may correspond with locations where infrastructure already exists or could be expanded. In other cases, large vacant or underutilized parcels may be identified as opportunities for new development over time.

The map identifies eight Future Land Use categories, described in the following section that can be used to help with interpretation of the Future Land Use Map:

Future Land Use Key

Commercial:

These areas contain development that…

serves a broad regional market area, often drawing customers from multiple municipalities. Uses include shopping centers, big-box retail, auto dealerships, restaurants, entertainment venues, hotels, as well as office, medical and research and development (R&D) or laboratory uses. R&D and labs are generally integrated into office spaces. These areas often require access to major roadways, accommodate higher traffic volumes and parking, and development may be predominantly auto-oriented.

Industrial

These areas contain development that…

is intended for industrial and employment-related uses, including manufacturing, processing, warehousing, distribution, research and development, and similar industrial activities. Supporting uses may include offices, service functions, and limited commercial amenities accessory to primary industrial operations. These areas typically require access to major transportation corridors and appropriate infrastructure to support freight movement and industrial activity. Accordingly, these areas may accommodate heavy truck traffic and noise, which should be considered in relation to surrounding land uses. As riverfront development expands in the Lehigh Valley, waterfront industrial properties may also be considered for future dense residential or mixed-use development where appropriate.

Spotlight On… Riverfront Development



Source: Instagram |thewaterfrontlv

Just east of Salisbury, former industrial riverfront areas in Bethlehem have transformed into major destinations such as Wind Creek and SteelStacks. Similar redevelopment is occurring along the Lehigh River in Allentown. As riverfront investment continues across the region, Salisbury should remain aware of opportunities for future mixed-use redevelopment on underutilized industrial waterfront properties.

Future Land Use Key (cont.)

Mixed-Use:
These areas contain development that…
is primarily located along key traffic corridors such as Cedar Crest Blvd., Lehigh St., E. Emmaus Ave., and E. Susquehanna Ave., where a combination of regional and local commercial uses—such as offices, retail, restaurants, and personal services—are supported. These areas may also accommodate residential development supported by existing infrastructure, including public water and sewer and access to major transportation routes. Development is typically two stories along E. Emmaus Ave. and E. Susquehanna Ave., while development along Lehigh St. and Cedar Crest Blvd. may reach up to four stories. Over time, these areas may evolve into a more integrated mix of uses that reflects traditional neighborhood development patterns and supports selective walkability while maintaining the corridors' roles as important regional transportation routes.

High-Density Residential:
These areas contain development that…
consists of higher-density residential uses at approximately 2 to 10 dwelling units per acre in areas fully served by public utilities. Neighborhoods within this category exhibit a suburban to urban residential character and accommodate a mix of single-family detached and attached housing types, including townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and garden apartment buildings.

Medium-Density Residential:
These areas contain development that…
consists of medium-density residential uses in areas predominantly served by public water and sewer, generally allowing densities of approximately 1 to 6 dwelling units per acre. Development is characterized by a suburban residential character and consists primarily of single-family detached dwellings, with select single-family attached housing types such as twin dwellings, duplexes, and triplexes.

Low-Density Residential:
These areas contain development that…
consists primarily of single-family detached dwellings on large lots, generally at a minimum density of one dwelling unit per acre. Areas designated Low-Density Residential are identified as having lower building coverage, greater open space, and a suburban to semi-rural residential character. Select portions of this category are served by public water and sewer, though the majority utilize on-lot wells and septic systems that limit development intensity.

Institutional:
These areas contain development that…
consists of governmental, institutional, and community-serving facilities that meet local or regional needs. Uses include municipal buildings, police and fire stations, government offices, public schools, and community centers. Development within this category typically consists of larger-scale facilities that function as important civic and community anchors.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space:
These areas contain development that…
consists of publicly owned or privately conserved land made available for public use and dedicated to active or passive recreation and open space preservation. Uses include community parks, playgrounds, sports fields, trails, greenways, nature areas, and similar recreational amenities. These areas support community recreation, environmental conservation, and quality of life, and may include associated structures such as pavilions, restrooms, and maintenance facilities.

Future Land Use Key (cont.)

In addition to the Future Land Use categories outlined on prior pages, the Future Land Use Map identifies certain landmarks that support priority strategies and improve overall map interpretation.

Public Infrastructure:

Approximate locations of key public infrastructure are noted on the map, as these areas are not developable and appropriate buffers and transitions should be used.

Water Tank: These dots indicate the approximate location for water tanks owned by Salisbury Township as part of the public water distribution system

Pump Station: These dots indicate the approximate location for pump stations owned by Salisbury Township as part of the public water distribution system

Community Gateways:

Key entrances to Salisbury Township along major corridors are identified and should be considered for gateway signage to enhance Salisbury Township's identity and ensure visitors recognize when they have entered the community, as discussed in Recommendation UCF-6 in the Implementation Plan chapter.



Conceptual rendering of signage at one of the Community Gateways identified on the Future Land Use Map



Steering Committee members reviewing a land use map.

Key Destinations:

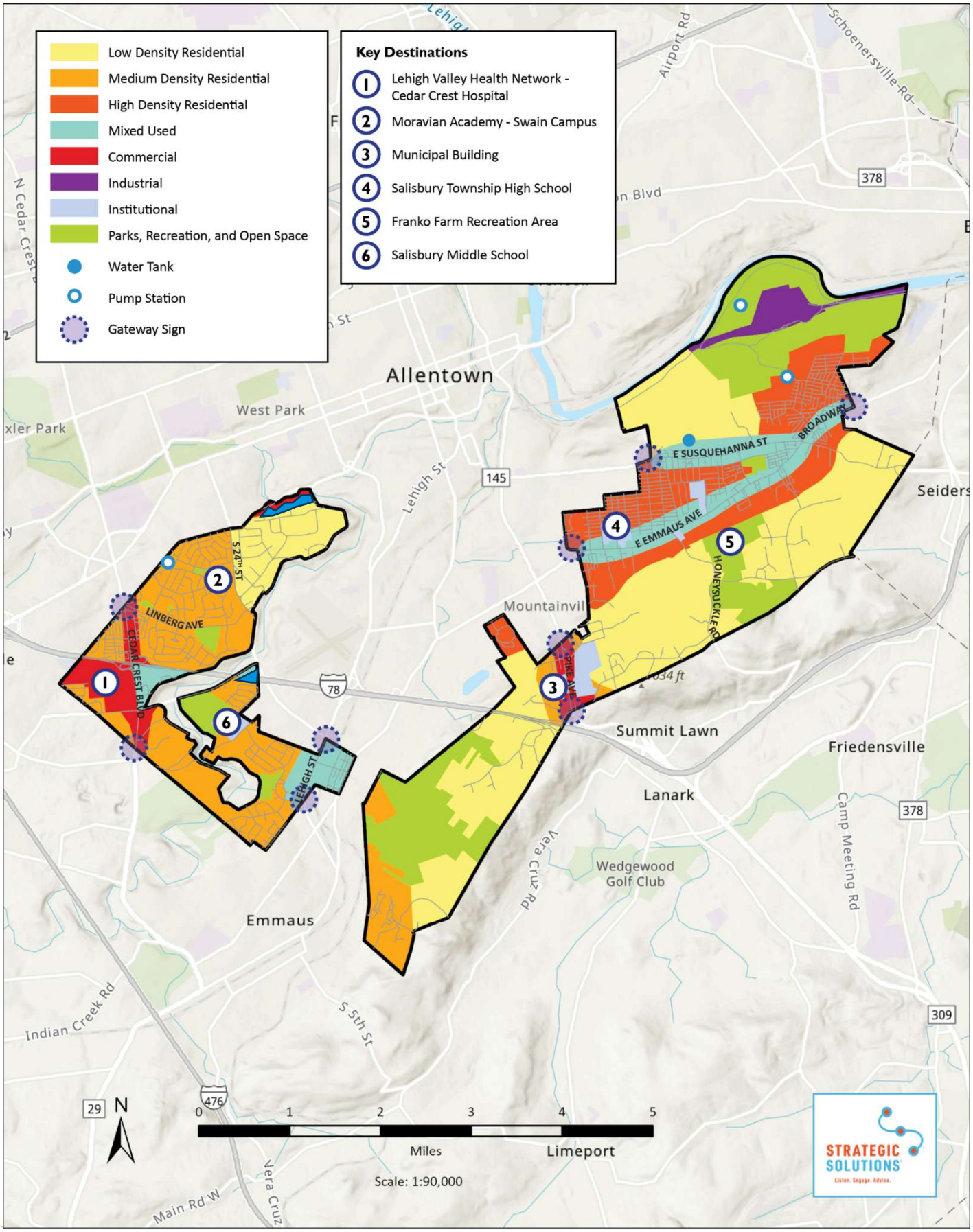
To support interpretation of the Future Land Use Map, key destinations across different areas of the township are identified. These locations represent important community assets, activity centers, and points of reference that help illustrate how future land use patterns are envisioned over the next decade and how different parts of the township function together.

Growth Areas:

In addition to the Future Land Use Map, a companion map highlights key growth areas identified through priority strategies in the Strategies for Action chapter. These areas reflect locations where change, reinvestment, or new development may be most appropriate, helping to illustrate how the township's strategies translate into a coordinated vision for future land use.

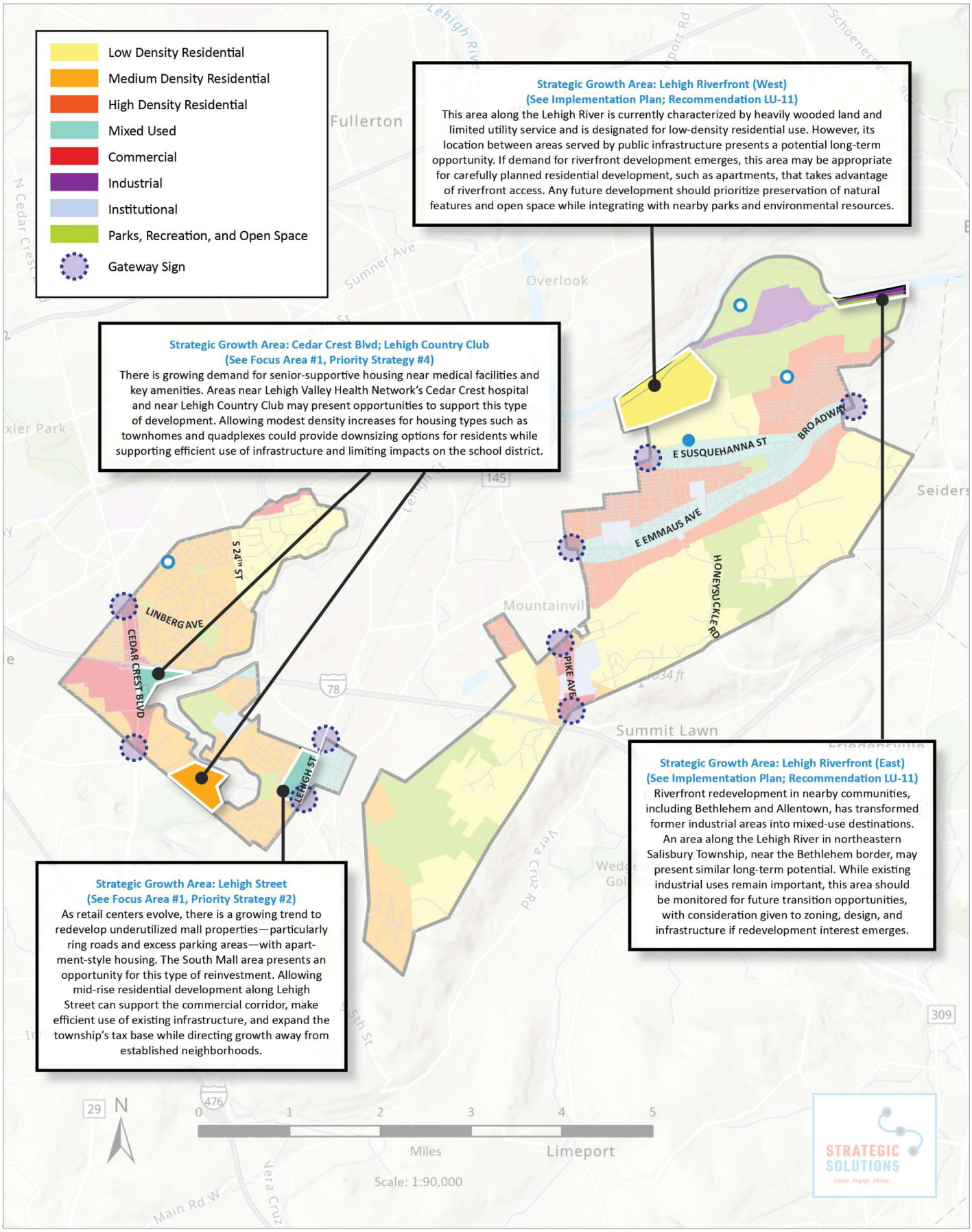
MAP 7: Future Land Use

Source: Salisbury Township, ESRI



MAP 8: Future Land Use: Potential Strategic Growth Areas

Source: Salisbury Township, ESRI



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following community development objectives will help shape how Salisbury Township grows and develops over the next 10 years. These objectives establish the policy foundation for future land use decisions and are intended to guide updates to zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances. They reflect the Township's vision for the location, character, and timing of future development, and are closely aligned with the Future Land Use Map presented in this chapter.

- **1. Compatible Land Use Transitions:** ensure compatibility between land uses through appropriate transitions, particularly between higher-density development and surrounding lower-density residential areas, while considering conditions across municipal boundaries.
- **2. Mixed-Use Development:** encourage smaller-scale commercial uses within mixed-use areas that promote walkability while remaining compatible with nearby neighborhood character.
- **3. Strategic Corridor Development:** along major roadways, promote a mix of commercial uses that serve a broad regional market area while allowing selective residential density where it enhances corridor viability, improves visual character, and can be integrated with surrounding development.
- **4. Diverse Housing Opportunities:** provide a range of housing types and densities that respond to the needs of different household types.
- **5. Infill and Redevelopment:** Encourage reinvestment, infill, and redevelopment in existing developed areas where appropriate.
- **6. Transportation and Land Use Coordination:** Support transportation improvements that advance the township's land use goals and improve safety and connectivity.
- **7. Strategic Growth:** direct growth to areas with adequate infrastructure, utilities, and public services to support development.
- **8. Preservation of Low-Density Neighborhoods:** maintain community character by preserving existing low-density residential areas served by on-lot water and septic systems.



Implementation Plan

This chapter builds on the vision, focus areas, and priority strategies presented in prior sections by outlining a broader set of actions to support Salisbury Township's long-term goals. While the priority strategies highlight key initiatives, this chapter presents a more comprehensive set of recommendations that address the full range of elements required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and reflect opportunities identified through the planning process.

The strategies that follow are organized by planning topic and represent actions the township may consider over the next decade. They are organized within each planning topic first by priority-level, with short-term priorities listed first, and then by cost, with more expensive strategies listed first. The result is a practical framework for implementation that extends beyond the plan's core focus areas while remaining aligned with the township's overall vision.

To support implementation, each strategy includes an estimated cost, recommended priority level, and suggested responsible party. These indicators are intended to provide general guidance as the township evaluates and advances specific initiatives. A key explaining these indicators is provided on this page.

Icons are also used throughout this chapter to identify which MPC requirements each strategy addresses, as well as alignment with the plan's focus areas. A key for these icons is provided on subsequent pages.

Priority: The order we suggest implementing these recommendations, based on impact on achieving the community's vision and available resources

🕒 **- Short-Term**
🕒🕒 **- Medium-Term**
🕒🕒🕒 **- Long-Term**

Cost: Estimated financial requirement to carry out the strategy. If the strategy is expected to generate revenue, the cost estimate is adjusted to reflect net cost (Expenses – Revenue)

$$$ - $500k+
$$ - $50-500k
$ - < $50k

Responsible Party: Primary organization and staff members responsible to achieve the strategy. In many instances, needed partners will be noted in the strategy

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
Primary MPC Topic: Housing				
[H-1] Enhance Code Enforcement Data Collection: Ensure codes database captures date and time of each violation and inspection, corresponding photos, name and contact info for tenant/agent, and fines or penalties owed. A best-in-class system would integrate with building permits, police/fire reports, and property ownership records. **(Focus Area #2, Priority Strategy #1)**			 $$	Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT
[H-2] Connect Residents with County Housing Repair Programs: Salisbury Township should help connect eligible residents with housing repair assistance programs offered through Lehigh County and community organizations. Programs such as the Community Action Lehigh Valley Urgent Need Roof and HVAC Replacement Program provide financial assistance for critical repairs for homeowners with incomes at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income. The township can support participation by sharing information through its website, digital newsletter, and social media channels, and by coordinating with community partners such as the Salisbury Township School District to help distribute program information to residents.			 $	Communications and Events Administrator, Community Development Director
[H-3] Update Rental Registration Ordinance: Update the township's existing rental registration ordinance to effectively support property maintenance and code compliance. The township should evaluate opportunities to strengthen enforcement, including increasing penalties for non-compliance to reduce evasion of registration requirements. Consideration should also be given to incorporating periodic inspections by the code enforcement department, rather than relying solely on tenant turnover, to support a more proactive approach to property maintenance. An annual registration fee can continue to be used to offset administrative and inspection-related costs. **(Focus Area #2, Priority Strategy #2a)**			 $	Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[H-4] Registration of Vacant Properties: Adopt a vacant property registration ordinance requiring owners of vacant buildings to register with the township after a defined period of vacancy and provide current contact information and a local agent responsible for the property. Registration fees should be structured to cover administrative costs and may escalate the longer a property remains vacant. Failure to register may result in fines or municipal liens. This tool supports proactive code enforcement. **(Focus Area #2, Priority Strategy #2b)**			 $	Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT
[H-5] Develop a Proactive Code Enforcement Strategy: The township should consider establishing a proactive approach to code enforcement that includes regularly scheduled inspections across defined geographic areas. This may involve organizing inspections by existing wards or other consistent zones and rotating coverage.			 $	Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer
[H-6] Coordinate with the County Redevelopment Authority for Property Reinvestment: The township should coordinate with the Redevelopment Authority of Lehigh County to support property rehabilitation and reinvestment efforts. The Authority may provide access to financial resources, technical assistance, and programs that can help address property maintenance issues and facilitate redevelopment. Strengthening this partnership can expand the township's capacity to respond to underutilized or distressed properties. If the Authority is designated as a land bank in the future, it may also assist with clearing title and returning tax-delinquent properties to productive use.			 $	Community Development Director, Township Manager
[H-7] Explore Conservatorship: Offers municipalities a method to obtain the right to enter into a property (under specific conditions) and complete the improvements needed to make it safe. A court appoints the conservator after a formal process and hearing, at which point the conservator can begin the process of making the necessary improvements to bring the property up to code. The owner can petition the court to regain possession and reimburse the conservator, otherwise the property can be sold. **(Focus Area #2, Priority Strategy #3)**			 $$	Township Manager, Community Development Director

Focus Areas

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MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[H-8] Registration of Foreclosed Properties: Adopt a foreclosure property registration ordinance requiring lenders to register properties once they enter foreclosure or mortgage default, provide responsible contact information, and pay an annual fee to offset administrative costs. Registration allows the township to monitor properties early in the foreclosure process and hold lenders accountable for maintaining properties. Many municipalities partner with private registry companies to administer the program, reducing administrative burden on township staff while improving compliance and property tracking. **(Focus Area #2, Priority Strategy #2c)**			 $	Community Development Director, Code Enforcement Officer, IT
[H-9] Require Presale Property Inspections: Adopt an ordinance requiring properties to undergo a codes inspection before being transferred to a new owner. Sellers would request and pay for the inspection, and the township would issue a report identifying any code violations. Violations must either be corrected before settlement or disclosed to the buyer, who must commit to correcting them within a specified period after purchase. This approach helps ensure compliance with local codes, prevents unsafe conditions from being passed to new owners, and provides the township an opportunity to verify legal use and property conditions before transfer.			 $	Township Manager, Community Development Director
[H-10] Conduct a Township Housing Condition Survey: Conduct a parcel-level housing condition survey to document housing quality, vacancy, and maintenance issues across Salisbury Township. The survey can be completed using GIS tools and field observations by staff, interns, or consultant support. The resulting database will help target code enforcement, identify redevelopment opportunities, and inform housing policy decisions. *Grant Funding Opportunity: Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, Municipal Assistance Program (MAP)*			 $	Township Manager, Community Development, IT (GIS), Interns or External Support

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
Primary MPC Topic: Land Use				
[LU-1] Undertake a Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and SALDO Update: To implement the goals of this comprehensive plan, the township should prioritize a comprehensive update to its zoning ordinance and SALDO. This effort should align zoning regulations with the Future Land Use Map and support key priorities, including mixed-use development along major corridors, housing options for seniors near medical facilities, preservation of established neighborhoods, and a coordinated approach to potential riverfront redevelopment. The update should also incorporate best practices and address emerging land use trends to ensure the ordinance remains clear, flexible, and reflective of current conditions.			 $$	Community Development Director, Township Manager
[LU-2] Evaluate Zoning and SALDO Amendments to Support Redevelopment: Either separately or as part of a comprehensive re-write, evaluate targeted updates to the township's zoning ordinance and SALDO to make rehabilitation and redevelopment of blighted or underutilized properties more feasible. SALDO amendments may include simplified review procedures for minor subdivisions, lot-line adjustments, and small infill projects. The township should also consider clear modification guidelines where strict compliance with current standards may be impractical due to existing site constraints. Companion zoning updates should evaluate dimensional standards such as setbacks, frontage, and lot coverage, particularly in older or higher-density areas where redevelopment may be more viable.			 $$	Community Development Director, Township Manager

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[LU-3] Prioritize a Review of Zoning and SALDO Standards to Improve Corridor and Site Design: Either separately or as part of a comprehensive re-write, Salisbury Township should prioritize a review of its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to ensure they reflect current best practices for site and corridor design. Updates could address elements such as building placement, landscaping, signage, parking layout, and architectural considerations to improve the visual quality of development along major corridors. This effort could be coordinated with other planning initiatives, such as the proposed Lehigh Street corridor study and strategies supporting targeted redevelopment, to ensure development standards align with the township's long-term vision for these areas.		 	 $$	Community Development Director
[LU-4] Target Residential Densification Along Lehigh Street: Encourage higher-density residential development along Lehigh Street by allowing mid-rise apartment buildings on underutilized parcels, such as the South Mall ring road and rear parking areas. This approach leverages existing infrastructure and access to services to expand the tax base while directing growth away from established neighborhoods. **(Focus Area #1, Priority Strategy #2)**	 	 	 $	Community Development Director
[LU-5] Allow Modest Density Increases to Support Senior Housing Near Medical Facilities: Allow modest increases in residential density to accommodate potential senior housing near major medical facilities, particularly along the Cedar Crest Boulevard corridor. Housing types such as townhomes, quadplexes, and other small-scale multi-unit buildings can provide options for residents who wish to downsize while remaining in the community. Similar housing types may also be appropriate in areas near Lehigh Country Club. Locating these housing options near healthcare services and everyday amenities can support aging residents while improving the viability of redevelopment along the corridor. Housing targeted toward older residents also tends to generate fewer public school students, helping limit additional public education costs. **(Focus Area #1, Priority Strategy #4)**		  	 $	Community Development Director

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[LU-6] Support Mixed-Use Development Along Key Corridors: The township should support the development of mixed-use areas along key corridors such as E. Emmaus Avenue, E. Susquehanna Avenue, and Lehigh Street, consistent with the Future Land Use Map. These corridors are well-positioned for this pattern due to their access to public infrastructure, proximity to higher-density residential areas, and presence of institutional and limited commercial uses. Encouraging a mix of residential and neighborhood-serving commercial development can help create a local customer base to support small-scale businesses while improving corridor vitality. Over time, this approach may also create opportunities to enhance selective pedestrian connections. **(Focus Area #1, Priority Strategy #1)**			 $	Community Development Director
[LU-7] Explore TND zoning to support walkable, mixed-use development: Consider evaluating whether a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) provision, as authorized by Article VII-A of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, could support mixed-use development or redevelopment within designated Mixed-Use areas. TND regulations allow flexibility in site design, housing types, and the integration of residential, commercial, and civic uses in a walkable pattern. This approach can incorporate features that residents have identified as important, including small-town character, neighborhood-scale development, and accessible parks, greens, and gathering spaces, while encouraging compact development that supports pedestrian activity and reduces the need for expanded infrastructure.			 $$	Community Development Director

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[LU-8] Evaluate Policy Options to Support Momentum at South Mall: Work with the South Mall property owner to identify opportunities to sustain recent leasing momentum and improve the long-term viability of the property. Coordination may include evaluating zoning flexibility, parking requirements, and approval processes, as well as identifying potential streetscape or access improvements that could support reinvestment. The township may also consider whether economic development tools, such as LERTA or other incentives, could help support future redevelopment if appropriate.			 $	Community Development Director
[LU-9] Coordinate with the School District on Future Use of the Former Western Salisbury Elementary Site: The recent closure of Western Salisbury Elementary School creates a potential redevelopment opportunity at a prominent community site shared with the Salisbury Middle School campus. Salisbury Township should coordinate with the Salisbury Township School District to understand its long-term plans for the property and explore whether future reuse could support broader community goals. Potential opportunities could include redevelopment that supports housing, community facilities, recreation space, or other compatible uses. The township should remain supportive of policy, zoning, and planning approaches that help facilitate a reuse consistent with surrounding neighborhoods and community needs.	 	 	 $	Township Manager, Board of Commissioners

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[LU-10] Evaluate Opportunities to Advance Previously Approved Subdivisions: The township should evaluate opportunities to support the buildout of previously approved but undeveloped subdivisions where public rights-of-way have already been established. In some areas, road alignments exist on paper but were never constructed, limiting access and development potential. Exploring options for facilitating road construction or access improvements, where appropriate, may help make these properties more viable for residential development. Any such efforts should be carefully considered in the context of surrounding neighborhoods.		 	$$$ 	Community Development Director, Township Manager
[LU-11] Monitor Potential for Riverfront Development: Monitor regional momentum for riverfront redevelopment, including projects in Allentown and Bethlehem, and evaluate whether similar opportunities could emerge along the Lehigh River in eastern Salisbury Township. If demand arises, the township should assess whether zoning updates, design standards, or infrastructure improvements could support development that balances residential or mixed uses with existing industrial activity nearby.		  	$ 	Community Development Director

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
Primary MPC Topic: Transportation				
[T-1] Prepare a Neighborhood Circulation and Access Plan for the E Emmaus Ave Corridor: In response to community concerns regarding traffic and safety associated with the approved Vistas at South Mountain development, Salisbury Township should consider preparing a Neighborhood Circulation and Access Plan for the surrounding area near the proposed development. This effort would evaluate existing access points, turning movements, pedestrian safety, and internal circulation patterns, and identify opportunities to improve driveway placement, shared access, and intersection operations. *Grant Funding Opportunity: Green Light-Go*			$$	Township Manager, Public Works Director, Community Development Director
[T-2] Improve Pedestrian Safety Through Targeted Connection Improvements: The Township should identify targeted opportunities to improve pedestrian safety at key crossings, particularly near schools and community destinations. In some locations, sidewalks exist but do not fully connect to intersections, limiting safe access. Addressing these gaps through short sidewalk extensions, new crosswalks, and pedestrian-activated warning devices such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) can significantly improve safety. A priority example is E. Emmaus Avenue and S. Dauphin Street near the high school, where improved connections and coordination with PennDOT could enhance pedestrian access.			$$$	Township Manager, Public Works Director

Focus Areas

Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

Preventing Property Disinvestment

Building a Connected Community

Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

Land Use

Housing

Transportation

Community Facilities / Utilities

Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[T-3] Coordinate a Joint Corridor Study with the City of Allentown and Borough of Emmaus along Lehigh Street: Partner with the City of Allentown and Borough of Emmaus to study the shared commercial corridor, documenting land uses, property conditions, vacant buildings, signage, pedestrian activity, traffic safety, and access management. The study should identify redevelopment opportunities, including underutilized or vacant commercial properties that could support reinvestment or mixed-use development. It should also explore ways to better align zoning, design standards, and permitting processes. This collaborative effort can support corridor reinvestment, improve the visual character of the area, and strengthen the long-term tax base. **(Focus Area #1, Priority Strategy #3)** *Grant Funding Opportunity: Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program*		 	 $$	Township Manager, Community Development, Adjacent Municipalities
[T-4] Coordinate with LANTA to Improve Bus Stop Accessibility: As the township considers opportunities for redevelopment and modest increases in density along primary corridors in the township, it should coordinate with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) to improve the accessibility and comfort of bus stops. Guidance in LANTA's most recent Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan highlights opportunities to enhance transit stops through improved sidewalks, ADA accessibility, signage, shelters, and lighting. *Grant Funding Opportunity: Multimodal Transportation Fund*			 $$	Community Development Director, LANTA

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
Primary MPC Topic: Utilities / Community Facilities				
[UCF-1] Upgrade Police Department Technology: The Township should prioritize upgrades to police department technology to support effective and efficient service delivery. Existing systems and equipment require modernization to meet current operational needs. Improvements may include body-worn cameras, in-car camera systems, mobile data terminals, communication systems, and records management technology. These needs should be incorporated into the Township's capital planning process, and opportunities for grant funding should be pursued to help offset costs and support timely implementation.			 $$	Police Chief
[UCF-2] Expand Public Communication of Capital Improvements: Continue publishing the Township's road paving schedule several years in advance to promote transparency and help residents understand how infrastructure investments are prioritized. Building on the success of this approach, Salisbury Township should explore similar ways to communicate other planned capital improvements, such as park upgrades, infrastructure projects, and facility investments. Sharing this information can improve residents' understanding of long-term planning and reinforce a township-wide perspective on public resources investment.			 $	Township Manager, Finance Director, Public Works Director
[UCF-3] Evaluate Feasibility of Recreation Amenities Across from Municipal Facilities: Evaluate the suitability of the township-owned parcel across from the municipal facilities for future recreational amenities, such as a community center or park space. While portions of the site are being utilized for important public works investments, remaining areas may present opportunities for complementary community uses. The parcel's relatively central location between the eastern and western portions of the township could support broad community access and help establish a shared gathering space over time. **(Focus Area #3, Priority Strategy #1)** *Grant Funding Opportunity: T-Mobile Hometown Grant; Capacity and Community Development Purpose Grant*	 	 	 $$$	Board of Commissioners, Township Manager

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[UCF-4] Update the Township's Act 537 Plan: Building on the recently adopted Kline's Island Sanitary Sewer System Act 537 Plan, Salisbury Township should prepare a comprehensive update to its municipal Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. The update should ensure consistency with the implementation requirements of the regional plan adopted by the township under Resolution No. 08-2025-1867 and align sewer service planning with the Future Land Use Map in this Comprehensive Plan. *Grant Funding Opportunity: Act 13- Baseline Water Quality Data Program*		 	 $$	Township Manager, Community Development Director, Public Works Director, Board of Commissioners
[UCF-5] Pursue additional parks and trails master planning efforts: Identify priority connections between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and the regional trail network. Particular focus should be placed on opportunities to connect Salisbury Township to nearby assets such as the Lehigh Parkway Path and the Delaware & Lehigh (D&L) Trail. Prior master planning efforts for Lindberg Park and Laubach Park have been highly successful and demonstrate the value of planning ahead for park improvements. Funding for planning and implementation may be available through DCNR, Lehigh County, and other grant programs. **(Focus Area #4, Priority Strategy #1)** *Grant Funding Opportunity: Act 13- Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program; C2P2: Recreation and Conservation Planning*		 	 $$	Township Manager, Parks & Recreation Director
[UCF-6] Install Welcome Signage at Key Entry Points: Identify prominent entry points along township boundaries for the installation of welcome signage that reinforces Salisbury Township's identity and creates a welcoming environment for residents and visitors. Potential locations are identified on the Future Land Use Map. Signage design and placement should be coordinated with streetscape improvements, landscaping, or other gateway features.			 $$	Township Manager, Community Development Director, Public Works Director, Board of Commissioners

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[UCF-7] Prioritize Maintenance of Existing Sewer Infrastructure: Focus municipal investment on maintaining and improving the township's existing sanitary sewer collection and conveyance infrastructure before pursuing system expansion. Given the limited need for new service areas, maintaining system reliability and capacity will help support redevelopment and higher-density development in appropriate locations while avoiding unnecessary infrastructure expansion and long-term maintenance costs.		 	 $$$	Public Works Director, Community Development Director, Township Manager
[UCF-8] Evaluate Long-Term Fire Service Sustainability: Salisbury Township should work with its two volunteer fire companies to evaluate long-term service sustainability, including volunteer recruitment trends, facility and apparatus needs, and future capital planning. The township may consider partnering with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to conduct a fire service study or organizational assessment. These studies help municipalities and fire companies evaluate service demand, operational structure, funding needs, and opportunities for shared services or collaboration.			 $$	Fire Commissioner
Grant Funding Opportunity: FEMA; Assistance to Firefighters Grants; Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant				

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
Primary MPC Topic: Natural/Historic Resources				
[N-1] Strengthen Partnerships to Enhance Stewardship of Natural Areas: Continue working with regional partners to explore opportunities for enhanced stewardship and management of natural areas within Salisbury Township. This may include evaluating partnership models with organizations such as the Wildlands Conservancy, which manages nearby natural areas including Black River Sanctuary. Similar partnerships can help reduce administrative and maintenance burdens on the township.	 	 	 $	Parks & Recreation Director, Township Manager
[N-2] Assess Community Interest in Historic Preservation Efforts: Salisbury Township should assess whether there is community interest in expanding local historic preservation efforts, including the potential creation of a Historical Review Board to advise on historic resources and preservation initiatives. One approach would be to identify members of existing township boards and commissions who have an interest in historic preservation and may be willing to help lead the effort. The township could also engage with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which serves as the State Historic Preservation Office, to explore tools such as a dedicated preservation plan, the applicability of a Historic District ordinance, and participation in the Certified Local Government program, which can provide access to additional funding.			 $	Township Manager, Board of Commissioners
[N-3] Expand Historic Markers and Interpretive Signage: Salisbury Township could work with local historians or an established Historical Review Board to expand historic markers and interpretive signage that highlight important local stories. The township's website already identifies a number of historic locations, which could serve as a starting point for identifying sites where signage may be appropriate (A current example exists at the Commix Hotel). Additional interpretive signage could be considered at parks, historic sites, and community gateways to help reinforce community identity while educating residents and visitors about Salisbury Township's history. *Grant Funding Opportunity: Keystone Historic Preservation Planning*			 $	Township Manager, Board of Commissioners, Community Development Director

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
Additional Plan Topic: Communication/Transparency				
[C-1] Host Community Events: Building on the success of Salisbury Township's first annual Light Up Night, consider additional opportunities to host community events. These events can bring residents together through shared activities, such as seasonal events, food trucks, ice-cream socials, and cultural or art-based events, and could either be centrally located or alternate between parks on each side of the township. **(Focus Area #3, Priority Strategy #3)**	 		 $$	Communication and Events Administrator
[C-2] Develop an Annual Taxpayer Guide: Develop an annual taxpayer guide that clearly explains how a typical property tax bill is divided among the school district, county, and township, and how the township's portion is allocated across services and programs. Presented in a clear, visual format, the guide would improve transparency, build public understanding of fiscal realities, and provide helpful context for conversations about taxes and strategic development decisions.			 $	Township Manager, Finance Director
[C-3] Create Digital Newsletter: Publish a quarterly community newsletter to share updates on township initiatives, upcoming events, public meetings, and other important information for residents. The newsletter could be distributed digitally through the township website, email lists, and social media platforms. To expand reach while managing costs, printed copies could also be distributed through existing mailings (such as utility bills) or made available at municipal buildings, parks, and other public locations. **(Focus Area #3, Priority Strategy #2a)**			 $	Communication and Events Administrator
[C-4] Increase Social Media Presence: Building on the township's ongoing efforts to expand its social media presence, regularly publish timely and consistent content highlighting community events, township initiatives, and public information. The success of the Salisbury Township Police Department's page demonstrates the value of these platforms for improving resident awareness, engagement, and township-wide connectivity. **(Focus Area #3, Priority Strategy #2b)**			 $	Communication and Events Administrator

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[C-5] Website Enhancements: Update the township website to serve as a centralized, user-friendly information hub by adding and maintaining descriptions of the Western and Eastern Salisbury Volunteer Fire Departments, the Recreation Advisory Committee, park maps, local and regional maps, school district information, a business directory, and resources for new residents. Link all township social media accounts and routinely review the website to ensure committee member information and contact details remain accurate and up to date. (Focus Area #3, Priority Strategy #2c)			 $	Communication and Events Administrator
[C-6] Track and Report Planning Initiatives Across East and West Salisbury: Establish an internal framework to track and report capital investments, infrastructure improvements, and major initiatives across both the eastern and western portions of the Township. This approach would support transparent, data-informed decision-making, allow the township to address questions about perceived imbalances, and help build trust by reinforcing township-wide perspective on planning and investment priorities.			 $	Township Manager, Finance Director
[C-7] Coordinate Planning with the Salisbury Township School District: Salisbury Township should establish a regular coordination framework with the Salisbury Township School District to share information on land development activity, residential growth trends, and demographic changes that could affect enrollment. Periodic coordination meetings or cross-attendance at Township and School Board meetings, perhaps on an annual basis, can help both entities stay informed about shared priorities and impacts. The township can provide updates on approved and proposed residential development that may influence long-term enrollment patterns, while the School District can share information on enrollment trends, facility planning, and capital projects.			 $	Township Manager, Board of Commissioners

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

Strategy	Focus Areas	MPC Topics	Cost & Priority	Responsible Party
[C-8] Include SYA Activities on the Township Website Calendar: The township should work with the Salisbury Youth Association to include SYA events and activities on the township's website calendar. Providing information about scheduled games, tournaments, and field use can help residents understand when parks and athletic facilities will be active while improving awareness of recreational opportunities in the community. This effort can also be integrated with broader improvements to the township's website and digital communications.			 $	Communication and Events Administrator, Parks & Rec Director
[C-9] Establish Regular Coordination Between the Township, SYA, and the School District: Salisbury Township should encourage consistent coordination between the township Recreation Advisory Board, the Salisbury Youth Association (SYA), and the Salisbury Township School District. Establishing regular attendance or representation at Recreation Advisory Board meetings can help improve communication regarding field scheduling, facility maintenance, capital improvement needs, and recreational programming. Strong coordination among these organizations can help maximize the use of community athletic fields and recreational facilities while supporting long-term planning for maintenance, scheduling, and future improvements.	 		 $	Recreation Advisory Board
[C-10] Partner with SYA to Support Community Recreation Events: Salisbury Township should explore opportunities to partner with the Salisbury Youth Association to host community recreation events that bring residents together and highlight local parks and athletic facilities. Events such as youth sports festivals, family recreation days, or seasonal activities can strengthen relationships between the township and SYA while encouraging greater community use of parks and recreation amenities.	 		 $$	Communication and Events Administrator, Parks & Rec Director

Focus Areas

 Growing Strategically for Financial Benefits

 Preventing Property Disinvestment

 Building a Connected Community

 Sustaining & Enhancing Parks & Open Space

MPC Required Elements of a Comp Plan

 Land Use

 Housing

 Transportation

 Community Facilities / Utilities

 Natural & Historic Features

First 5 Strategies

To build early momentum, the following five strategies are recommended as priority actions to pursue soon after plan adoption.

1. Continue to enhance and leverage new communication channels, including a digital newsletter, updated township website, and social media channels
(See Implementation Plan Items C-3, C-4, and C-5)

2. Continue enhancement of code enforcement data collection and, in tandem, implement strategies for proactive code enforcement.
(See Implementation Plan Items H-1 and H-5)

3. Undertake a comprehensive update of the township Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to achieve the goals of this plan.
(See Implementation Plan Item LU-1)

4. Install Salisbury Township signage at key gateways into the community, helping to reinforce the township's identity for visitors and residents.
(See Implementation Plan Item UCF-6)

5. Build on the momentum of the recent grant award to upgrade Laubach Park, and identify additional parks and trail master planning efforts that could lead to future enhancements to recreational amenities.
(See Implementation Plan Item UCF-5)



2026
Comprehensive Plan

Salisbury Township, Lehigh County