





FOSTER TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Project # 31016.20

benesch

MAY
2022

FOSTER TOWNSHIP 2021 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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John Carr, Supervisor
Eugene Maley, Supervisor

Planning Commission, 2019

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Bob Halupa

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Barry Township, Schuylkill County
Butler Township, Schuylkill County
Cass Township, Schuylkill County
Frailey Township, Schuylkill County
Hegins Township, Schuylkill County
Reilly Township, Schuylkill County
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Section 1 // Introduction

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1. Introduction

1.1 Comprehensive Plan Purpose

This Comprehensive Plan is a guideline for the development of Foster Township policy and decision making in both short- and long-term. As referenced in the Municipal Planning Code (MPC) and DCED Governors Center for Local Services Planning series, a Comprehensive Plan is more than just a document disclosing past and present land use trends with a proposed course of action. It imparts organization for the future as well as creates a plan for the overall land use patterns of tomorrow.

Community planning is an organized process of thinking about tomorrow. By thinking how a community has changed in the past will help predict how and what might change and become of the community in the future. When this course of action is taken, it needs to be done in an orderly fashion and made part of the routine administrative process in order to get the best results out of said process.

Foster Township Supervisors and residents realize that their land is one of the most valuable resources of this community. There are many large tracts in the Township previously used for mining operations which have left the land scarred. These lands could be cleaned up, reclaimed and used for either residential or commercial redevelopment of the Township.

The Township also realizes that land is a vital resource that needs to be protected. The Township has purchased and acquired several larger tract properties in the past few years to provide for some residential and commercial growth while also maintaining some open space.

All valuable resources must be responsibly, economically and equitably a benefit for both the property owners' interest as well as the general public. The important power of Local Government is to plan for and guide the way land resources are used.

1.2 Comprehensive Planning in Pennsylvania

Municipal Planning Code (MPC) Section 301 (a), requires each municipal, multi-municipal and county comprehensive plan, consisting of maps, charts, and textual matter, to have nine elements. Collectively these elements should present a composite vision of private and public development for the future based on a statement of community development goals and objectives. Each and every element is linked, interrelated or connected. For example, resident population data equates to housing needs; and demographics such as age can relate to housing types and educational needs, both present and future. There are a multitude of interrelationships among and between the required comprehensive plan elements.

A summary of the required plan elements derived from MPC sections 301 (a) are as follows:

1. A statement of community development goals and objectives that chart the location, character and timing of future development as provided in Section 606 of the MPC.
2. A plan for land use identifying the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use.
3. A plan to meet housing needs of present residents and those families anticipated to live in the municipality as well as accommodating new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.
4. A transportation plan.
5. A community facilities plan.
6. A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components which estimates the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality.
7. A discussion of short- and long-range plans implementation strategies.
8. A statement indicating that existing and proposed development is compatible with plans and development in contiguous municipalities. This statement should indicate that existing and proposed development is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan.

9. A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources to the extent the municipalities are not limited by other federal or state statutes. These resources include wetlands, aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, floodplain, unique natural areas, and historic sites.

1.3 Planning Process

The development of this plan was led by a 13-member Study Committee consisting of representatives of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Township residents and business owners. The following is an outline of major milestones and meetings conducted during the Comprehensive Plan Development Process:

January 7, 2019 // Foster Township Supervisors Meeting – The Township Supervisors directed Benesch to proceed with the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

January 16, 2019 // Foster Township 2021 Comprehensive Plan Kickoff Meeting – The Meeting was the initial kickoff for the Foster Township 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

January 23, 2019 // GIS information was received from the Schuylkill County Planning and Zoning Office.

March 20, 2019 // Mr. Keith Hill, Gateway Consulting provided an overview of the Internet Study, Scope of Work and items to move forward with an internet plan for Foster Township.

May 15, 2019 // The planning meeting included an update on the current issues, completion of a Township Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, & Threat (SWOT) Analysis analysis, and planning for the next several meetings.

June 19, 2019 // The planning meeting included an update on the internet survey and next action items presented by Mr. Keith Hill, Consulting Gateway Corporation. A finalized copy of the community-wide survey has been provided to the Township for distribution to residents.

August 21, 2019 // The planning meeting included a brief update of the internet status by Attorney Brennan.

September 18, 2019 // The planning meeting included an introductory session with Wire Tele-View. With the study committee's assistance, the group also completed the 2045 NEPA MPO transportation study survey. The meeting concluded with a detailed evaluation and presentation on the findings of the Community Survey.

October 16, 2019 // The planning meeting included an in-depth presentation from Mr. Frank Zukas of SEDCO who presented on the current and future status of the Highridge Business Park and future potential for an expansion at the Schuylkill Regional Airport to include a smaller industrial park. He also presented on water and sewer needs from both a supply and treatment end.

January 15, 2020 // This was the Planning Commission reorganization meeting, no formal planning items were discussed.

February 19, 2020 // The planning meeting included a review of the survey items and a workshop to review the currently identified and potential future goals for the township was held.

March – July 2020 // No formal meetings were held due to the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Declarations.

July 15, 2020 // A public regrouping meeting was held at the Mount Pleasant Fire Company Picnic Grove due to COVID-19 restrictions. The meeting was to regroup and identity the outstanding focus points for the final comprehensive plan.

August 19, 2020 // Reading Anthracite and their representatives attended the Planning Meeting to discuss future plans for both residential and commercial land development for their properties locating within the Township.

April 21, 2021 // ECA Solar and their representatives attended the Planning Meeting to discuss future plans solar development in Foster Township and Schuylkill County. Mr. Shawn Langen attended the meeting and also presented on the potential development of parcels of land owned by the CES Landfill.

October 10, 2021 // Draft version of Preliminary Comprehensive Plan and Mapping was provided to the Planning Commission by Benesch.

October 20, 2021 // A copy of the final plan presentation was presented by Alfred Benesch and Company and an opportunity was given to the audience to provide any feedback or comment to the final presentation.

November 3, 2021 // Draft versions of the Comprehensive Plan and Mapping were provided to Barry, Butler, Cass, Frailey, Hegins, Reilly Townships, Minersville Borough, and the Minersville Area School District by Benesch.

January 13, 2022 // Public Notice was provided to the Pottsville Republican for publication.

January 17 and 24, 2022 // Public Notice published in the Pottsville Republican, begin 45-day public display period.

February 2, 2022 // Public Hearing was held was held to receive public comment.

February 2, 2022 // Foster Township 2021 Comprehensive Plan Adopted

1.4 Vision Statement

The Vision of Foster Township is to promote the controlled future growth of the Township to provide for an opportunity to live, play and work within the Township, while still maintaining the close-knit community culture that Foster Township offers. The Township is also looking to maintain stable financial security for future generations of residents living in the community well into the future.

1.5 How to Use This Comprehensive Plan

Vision | Frequently, planning agencies utilize a visioning exercise to kick off a comprehensive planning effort. Visioning is a facilitated process by which citizens develop and articulate their preferences for the future of their community. A community vision should reflect the thoughts and concerns of the residents regarding environmental, social, and economic values, as well as consider future land uses, residents, and the corresponding desires and needs.

Goal | A goal is a long-term result or achievement toward which effort is directed

Objective | An objective is a statement that identifies the course of action the municipality should use to achieve a goal

1.6 Plan Authorization

On January 7, 2019, the Foster Township Supervisors have authorized Alfred Benesch and Company to complete the 2021 Foster Township Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Municipal Planning Code (MPC) Section 301.

Section 2 // Community Profile

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2 Community Profile

2.1 Local and Regional Setting

Foster Township is located in East-Central Pennsylvania, Schuylkill County. Located in the central part of the county, Foster Township encompasses approximately 12.7 square miles with its central point 10 miles northwest of Pottsville, the county seat (Map 1). Foster Township is also located approximately 54 miles northeast of Harrisburg, PA, 55 miles northwest of Allentown PA, and 54 miles southwest of Wilkes-Barre PA. Foster is also located approximately 105 miles Northwest of Philadelphia, PA and 140 miles west of New York City. This makes Foster Township an easy one- or two-hour commute to minor and major metropolitan areas with easy access to Interstate I-81 and SR 61 for work and entertainment.

2.2 A Brief History

The Township was founded in 1855 being formed from Butler, Barry, and Cass Townships. It was named after Solomon Foster of Pottsville, who served as an Associate Judge from 1849 to 1856. At that time, the Township was sparsely settled similar to today. It is bounded by Barry, Butler, Cass, Frailey, Hegins, and Reilly Townships.

A portion of "St. Anthony's Wilderness," little is known about the early pioneers of the Township. Approved in 1770 and completed in 1771, the "King's Highway" traversed the Township and served as the main route between Philadelphia and Sunbury. The road passed through Mt. Pleasant, located in the East-Central portion of the Township. This was the main route until 1809 when the Centre Pike was constructed, bypassing the Township area.

Similar to many towns in the area, Mt. Pleasant was founded in the 1830s during the rise of coal mining. Removing this and other towns in Foster Township from the main travel corridor hampered the prosperity other area towns enjoyed. Mt. Pleasant is particularly noteworthy, however, as it has not changed a great deal since the 19th century. In fact, it has been designated as "one of the last, if not the only, preserved specimen of early 19th century Welsh mining towns in the nation" by the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Coal mining was attempted with limited success prior to 1870. In the early 1870s, the Reading Coal Company purchased most of the coal lands within the Township and made them profitable. The population centers of the Township were established around operating collieries. These centers remain today and include Buck Run, Glen Carbon, Glen Dower and Mt. Pleasant.

The Buck Run Coal Company was established in 1900 by James B. Neale and S. B. Thorne and began operation in 1902. Neale became the leading citizen of Buck Run and gave funds for a chapel, recreational center, school and an athletic field to the Township. He owned a great deal of land in this area as is referenced in many deeds of the current landowners.

The population of the Township peaked at around 1,000 in 1870 and has declined steadily since. This has especially been the case during this century, as the demand for coal has declined with conversion of many plants to oil, gas, nuclear, and newer green technologies. In addition, the steel industry has also declined resulting in a lessening need for coal.

2.3 Planning History and Context

Foster Township currently has an adopted Comprehensive Plan (1999), Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) (2001), Driveway Ordinance (2006), Beneficial Use Monitoring Ordinance (2006), Property Maintenance Ordinance (2007), Property Transfer Ordinance (2010), Real Estate Registry Ordinance (2010), Rental Housing Ordinance (2010), Zoning Ordinance (2014), and Floodplain Ordinance (2021). The following Table lists the preparer and date of adoption for the aforementioned ordinances:

Planning Document	Preparer	Date of Adoption
Comprehensive Plan	Alfred Benesch and Company	February 3, 1999
Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance	Alfred Benesch and Company	October 2001
Driveway Ordinance	The Law Offices of Edward Brennan	October 4, 2006

Planning Document	Preparer	Date of Adoption
Beneficial Use Monitoring Ordinance	The Law Offices of Edward Brennan	November 1, 2006
Property Maintenance Ordinance	The Law Offices of Edward Brennan	May 2, 2007
Property Transfer Ordinance	The Law Offices of Edward Brennan	February 3, 2010
Real Estate Registry Ordinance	The Law Offices of Edward Brennan	February 3, 2010
Rental Housing Ordinance	The Law Offices of Edward Brennan	February 3, 2010
Schuylkill County Hazard Mitigation Plan	Schuylkill County Office of Planning and Zoning	April 17, 2019
Zoning Ordinance	Alfred Benesch and Company	June 2000; Rev Dec. 29, 2021
Floodplain Ordinance	The Law Offices of Edward Brennan	May 5, 2021

2.4 Demographic Characteristics

The purpose of this section is to evaluate the existing growth in said features in order to properly project into the future needs of the Township. This section also accounts for the types of housing including consideration being given to age, type of housing, and population numbers. Current census data will be applied to this section.

Foster Township's population has historically been spread between two villages in the Township, which include Buck Run and Mount Pleasant.

2.4.1 Historical Population

Similar to Schuylkill County and many of its communities, the population of Foster Township has decreased significantly over the past 50 years (Table 2.4.1). The trend has been higher in the Township as the population is approximately less than one-third what it was in 1960, compared to a 14 decrease within the County during the same time period.

As of the 2010 census, there were a total of 251 people living in Foster Township which is a 6% decrease from the year 2000. The 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates the population to be approximately 308 people. The breakdown of the population can be found in Table 2.4.1. below.

Table 2.4.1 – Historical Population Trend

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Foster Township	600	378	289	298	268	251	241
Schuylkill County	173,027	160,089	160,630	152585	150,336	148,289	143,049
Pennsylvania	11,319,366	11,793,909	11,863,895	11,881,643	12,281,054	12,702,873	12,783,254

U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

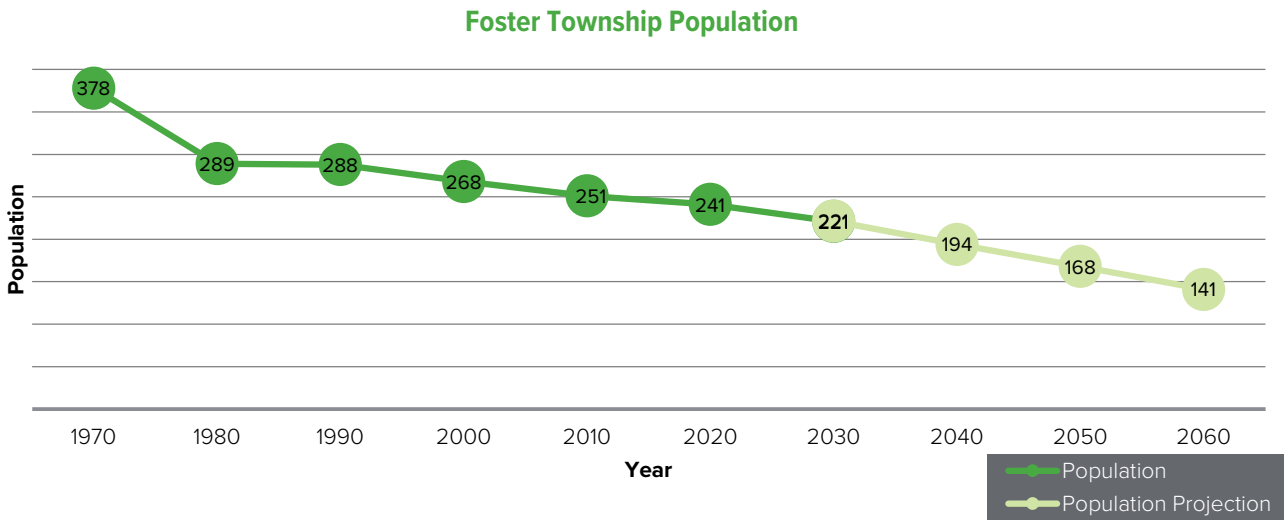
2.4.2 Population Forecast

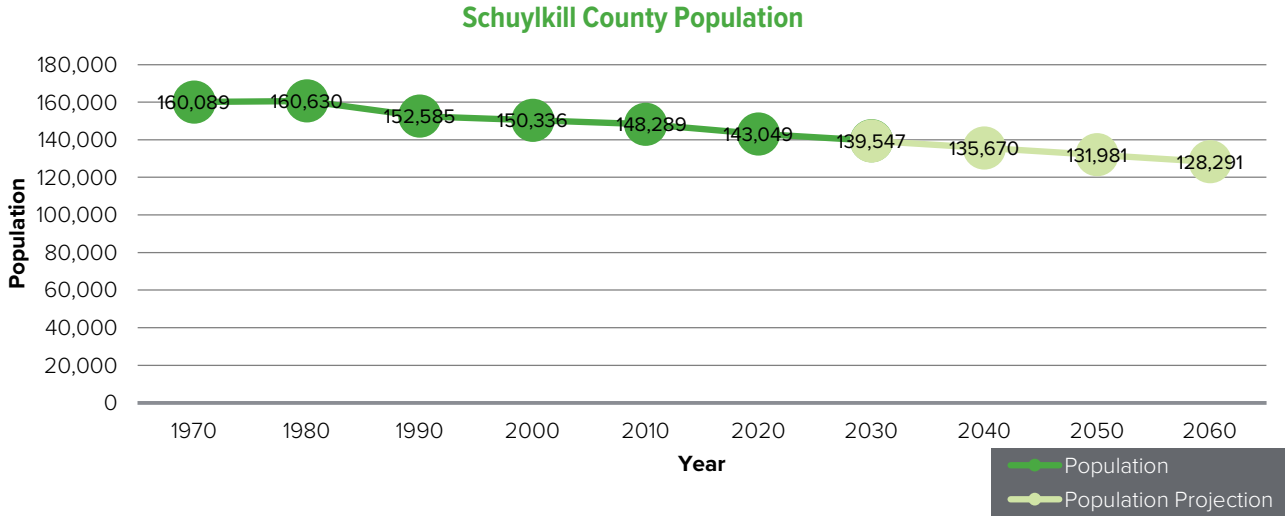
Looking ahead to the next 30 years the township would have a projected population of 141 people, which is a 44% decrease in population. The 2020 Census is currently being conducted by the US Census Bureau however this information is not available at the time of publication of this report. The Township has had an increase in new homes and property constructed since 2010 so is suspected to be slightly higher than the 2020 projection. The data table shows that Foster Township is at a critical point of needing to increase housing stock. The projected population trend without a significant increase in housing stock can be found in Table 2.4.2. below.

Table 2.4.2 – Population Trend Forecast

	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
Foster Township	251	241	221	194	168	141
Schuylkill County	148,289	143,049	139,547	134,202	130,701	125,356
Pennsylvania	12,702,873	12,783,254	12,978,548	13,215,632	13,452,716	13,689,880

MS Excel, Forecast





2.4.3 Current Population by Age and Sex

According the to 2019 American Community's Survey, 5.5% of the population is under 5 years in age, 15.6% is 65 years and older, and 76 % of the population is over 18 yrs old. The median age of the 2019 population was 38.5 years old. The breakdown of the population by sex in varying intervals can be found in Table 2.4.3. below.

Table 2.4.3 – Population by Age and Sex

Age	Male	Female	Total	% of Population
Under 20 years	36	41	77	25.0%
20 to 24 years	10	2	12	3.9%
25 to 34 years	27	19	46	14.9%
35 to 44 years	15	23	38	12.3%
45 to 54 years	19	13	32	10.4%
55 to 64 years	26	29	55	17.9%
65 years and over	21	27	48	15.6%
Total	**154**	**154**	**308**	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2.4.4 Marital Status

According to the 2019 American Community's Survey, approximately 53% of Foster Township residents are married, with about 30 percent never married. The breakdown of the marital status can be found in Table 2.4.4. below.

Table 2.4.4

Marital Status	% of Population
Never Married	30.3%
Married	52.9%
Widowed	4.5%
Divorced	11.1%
Separated	1.2%
Total	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2.4.5 Housing Demographic

Existing housing conditions of a community are often determinants for the quality of life in the area and predictors for the community's potential for future growth. Generally, a wider variety of sizes, styles and prices, among other factors, can make relocation into an area more desirable. A breakdown of total housing units can be found on Table 2.4.5.A below. A breakdown of housing types can be found on Table 2.4.5.B below. A breakdown of housing year constructed can be found on Table 2.4.5.C below. A breakdown of Number of Bedrooms can be found on Table 2.4.5.D below. A breakdown of Heating Fuel Type can be found on Table 2.4.5.E below. A breakdown of Home Value can be found on Table 2.4.5.F below.

Table 2.4.5.A – Total Housing Units

Housing Status	Estimated Count	Percentage
Occupied housing units	115	89.1%
Vacant housing units	14	10.9%
Homeowner vacancy rate	0	--
Rental vacancy rate	0	--
Total	**129**	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The ACS data shows an occupancy rate of approximately 90% and 10% vacant. The Township has been aggressive on abandoned and blighted properties the last several years and has either demolished the blighted and abandoned properties or worked with the property owners to fix up properties and increase the housing stock.

Table 2.4.5.B – Housing Type

Housing Type	Estimated Count	Percentage
1-unit, detached	85	65.9%
1-unit, attached	33	25.6%
2 units	0	0.0%
3 or 4 units	0	0.0%
5 or more units	0	0.0%
Mobile home	11	8.5%
Total	**129**	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The ACS data shows three major types of housing in Foster Township, the majority of homes are single family detached, with the second majority of 1 unit attached followed by mobile homes. There are no multifamily "row homes" or townhouse style houses in the Township.

Table 2.4.5.C – Housing Year Constructed

Year Constructed	Estimated Count	Percentage
Built 2014 or later*	0	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2013*	0	0.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	9	7.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	0	0.0%
Built 1980 to 1989	7	5.4%
Built 1970 to 1979	13	10.1%
Built 1960 to 1969	0	0.0%
Built 1950 to 1959	8	6.2%
Built 1940 to 1949	12	9.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	80	62.0%
Total	**129**	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**We believe the data found in the ACS Survey to be inaccurate for these categories*

The ACS data shows the majority of homes were constructed prior to 1939, with the remainder constructed between 2009 and 1979. The data provided by the ACS did not list any new homes built after 2014, however several new homes have been constructed since that time.

Table 2.4.5.D – Number of Bedrooms

Number of Bedrooms	Estimated Count	Percentage
No bedroom	0	0.0%
1 bedroom	7	5.4%
2 bedrooms	38	29.5%
3 bedrooms	60	46.5%
4 bedrooms	22	17.1%
5 or more bedrooms	2	1.6%
Total	**129**	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The ACS data shows the majority of homes have either two or three bedrooms.

Table 2.4.5.E – Heating Fuel Type

Heating Fuel Type	Estimated Count	Percentage
Utility gas	2	1.7%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	2	1.7%
Electricity	20	17.4%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	61	53.0%

Table 2.4.5.E – Heating Fuel Type (cont'd)

Heating Fuel Type	Estimated Count	Percentage
Coal or coke	28	24.3%
Wood	2	1.7%
Solar energy	0	0.0%
Other fuel	0	0.0%
No fuel used	0	0.0%
Total	**115**	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2.4.5.F – Home Value

Home Value	Estimated Count	Percentage
Less than $50,000	33	32.4%
$50,000 to $99,999	41	40.2%
$100,000 to $149,999	9	8.8%
$150,000 to $199,999	7	6.9%
$200,000 to $299,999	12	11.8%
$300,000 to $499,999	0	0.0%
$500,000 to $999,999	0	0.0%
$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%
Owner-occupied Units Total	**102**	**100.0%**
Median Household Value	**$68,200**	**--**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2.4.6 Income

A thorough understanding of the Township's household incomes can be a powerful planning tool in preparation for economic development. While 23.5% of the households have an average income below $25,000, the majority (61.8%) of the total household incomes fall between $25,000 and $100,000. The remaining 14.7% have incomes of $100,000 or more. A more detailed breakdown of the Township's household incomes can be found in Table 2.4.6.

Table 2.4.6 – Average Household Income

Income	Percentage
Under $10,000	7.0%
$10,000 to $25,000	16.5%
$25,000 to $34,999	14.8%
$35,000 to $49,999	14.8%
$50,000 to $74,999	13.9%
$75,000 to $99,999	18.3%
$100,000 and over	14.7%
Mean Income	**$58,180**
Median Income	**$58,180**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2.4.7 Occupation

The 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) lists a total of 137 people over the age of 16 were listed as employed. 24% in management, business, science, and arts occupations, 16.5% in service occupations, 15.7% in sales and office occupations, 17.4% in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, and 26.4% as production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

The ACS survey indicated that a total of 121 people over the age of 16 commute to work. Of those 84.3% drove in a car, truck, or van alone. A total of 11.6 % carpooled, and the remaining 4.1% worked from home. The survey provided an aver mean travel time to work of 23.9 minutes.

The ACS survey indicated of the total of 121 people over the age of 16, 86% were private wage and salary workers, 12.4% were government workers, and 1.7% were self-employed.

2.4.8 Education Background

The educational background of the Township's population can aid in understanding the potential of the workforce. According to the 2019 American Community Survey 85.4% of the population 25 years and older have a high school diploma, equivalency or a higher level of education. Of the same age range, 11.0% have acquired a bachelor's degree or higher. Table 2.4.8 can give a more comprehensive understanding of the educational background of the Township's residents.

Table 2.4.8 – Education Attainment for Township Population (ages 25+)

Attainment Level	Estimated Count	Percentage
Less than 9th Grade	9	4.1%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	23	10.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	112	51.1%
Some college, no degree	29	13.2%
Associate degree	22	10.0%
Bachelor's degree	18	8.2%
Graduate or Professional degree	6	2.7%

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2.4.9 School Enrollment

Foster Township currently has an estimated 71 residents over the age of 3 years old which are enrolled in school. School based on the 2019 American Community Survey is anyone enrolled in grades preschool through graduate school. There are approximately 57 students enrolled through high school and an additional 14 enrolled in college or higher. Table 2.4.9 can give a more comprehensive understanding of the educational background of the Township's residents.

Table 2.4.9 – Population Enrolled in School (ages 3+)

Attainment Level	Estimated Count	Percentage
Nursery school, preschool	0	2.8%
Kindergarten	2	53.5%
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	38	23.9%
High school (grades 9-12)	17	19.7%
College or graduate school	14	0.0%
Total Enrolled (ages 3+)	**71**	**100.0%**

2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Section 3 // Existing Conditions

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3 Existing Conditions

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report will review the existing conditions in the township and surrounding communities with respect to existing land use, communities facilities, and services including municipal, fire, schools, sewer and water service, etc. This section of the report will also review natural resources which included water resources, watersheds, stream designations, soils, steep slopes, wetlands, and mining. The remaining section of the report includes a review of transportation including roadways classification, public transportation, and airports.

3.2 Existing Land Use

The top 10 existing land uses within the Township are mining (abandoned, reclaimed, or active), forested or open space, industrial, residential, airport, waste disposal, institutional. A detailed map showing the designated existing land uses can be found on Exhibit A.3: Existing Land Use Map.

3.3 Community Facilities and Services

Section 2 gave an overview of the existing community facilities within and surrounding Foster Township. Community facilities are limited in the immediate area around the Township due largely to its small population. Continued demand for services and changing needs of the Township residents furthers a need for a future community services and infrastructure plan.

3.3.1 Municipal Building



The current Foster Township Municipal Building and Complex is located at the corner of SR901 (Sunbury Road) and Upper Beechwood Avenue. The current building includes a general office, police station, file room, conference room for meetings, four-bay garage for storage of Township equipment, handicap accessible bathrooms, and adequate parking.

The Township parking lot was upgraded in 2019 which included an update to the ADA accessibility, repair of poor area of pavement, a full overlay, and installation of new signage, line painting, and traffic control legends. Air Conditioning and heating upgrades were completed on the building in 2018. In 2021 the Township replaced the flooring in the meeting room and repainted a majority of the interior of the building. No expected or recommended upgrades are expected other than routine maintenance over the next 10 years or unless recommendations are provided as part of the energy audit recommended. The Township property also includes two additional garages for the storage of township vehicles including the garbage truck and a salt shed.

The Township also purchased a 10.9-acre property located closer to the Highridge Business Park, known as the “Kachmar Property” which included a 35’ x45’ garage that could also be considered for storage or additional municipal functions. A basic assessment was conducted on the building, which is in generally good condition, including all necessary utilities. The major concern with the existing building is the proximity to SR901 (Sunbury Road) and the lack of adequate sight distance, parking, and other critical support functions. Options to be considered would be installing a new garage entrance on the north side of the building and construction of a new access driveway north of the existing driveway to improve sight distance. The current use of this facility is for the storage of the Township’s less used equipment.

3.3.2 Municipal Staff

The Township currently employs three (3) Supervisors, one (1) full time police, several part-time police officer, one (1) part-time Secretary, one (1) part-time Roadmaster, one (1) part-time road crew workers, and additional part time workers as needed. Residential Building Code, UCC Building Code, Zoning, and Property Maintenance is currently outsourced via contracted services.

3.3.3 Municipal Equipment

The following is a list of Foster Township maintenance equipment:

- 1 – 2002 John Deere Backhoe
- 1 – 2005 Mack Garbage truck
- 1 – 2007 Ford F150 Dump Truck, w/ plow and salt spreader
- 1 – 2013 Ford Explorer Police Interceptor
- 1 – 2016 Ford F150 Dump Truck, w/ plow and salt spreader
- 1 – 2018 Ford F150 Pickup Truck Police Interceptor
- 1 – 2018 New Holland Skid Steer
- 1 – 2019 Ford F150 Dump Truck, w/ plow and salt spreader

The existing equipment owned by the Township is well maintained and should continue to be used as long as fiscally possible. It is recommended that the Township continue to look for funding sources (Chapter 5 Section 1) ahead of time for purchasing new equipment in anticipation of future needs. It is recommended that the Township continue to look for funding sources such as grants or allocate funds in the annual budget ahead of time for purchasing new equipment in anticipation of future needs.

3.3.4 Police Force

Currently, Foster Township has a police department that patrols the municipality and responds to calls 24/7. When the Foster Township Police Department (FTPD) is not on duty, the service area is protected by the Pennsylvania State Police. The FTPD has one police chief and approximately two (2) part-time officers. The size of the Police Force will be adjusted accordingly based on the future needs of the Township.

3.3.5 Airport & Helipad

The closest airport is the Schuylkill Regional Airport – Joe Zerbey Field which is located in the north-central portion of the Township. The airport consists of two runways, including a 4,580' x 75' bituminous and a 2,270' x 125' turf runway. A runway expansion project was recently completed which lengthened the overall runway length to accommodate larger aircraft. The airport includes several hangers for the storage of aircraft. The airport is used primarily for private planes and is attended between 8 AM and 8 PM. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural provided a $99,990 grant to the Schuylkill County Airport Authority for the development of a Master Site Plan. The plan is currently in draft form as of the finalization of the comprehensive plan.

The closest medical helipad is located at the Schuylkill Regional Airport – approximately 3.5 miles away – with a secondary location in Cass Township which serves as the primary designated landing area for emergency service aircraft. If needed, the existing baseball field has been used in certain conditions as well.

3.3.6 Library

The residents of the Township can utilize the Minersville Free Public Library or those offered at the Pottsville Free Public Library. Services offered at both libraries include Public Computer Access, Wi-Fi access, use of copiers and fax machines. Loan services included Large Print Books, VHS/DVD's, Audiobooks, Periodicals, and Interlibrary Loan. Both libraries also off story times for young children and summer programs.

3.3.7 Fire Protection & Emergency Services

In 2021, the Minersville Fire Rescue (Minersville Borough) merged with the Mt. Pleasant Hose Company (Foster Township). The Mount Pleasant Station is the only fire company in the Township and is located along SR901 (Sunbury Road) north of Upper Beechwood Avenue. The Fire Company has six to eight volunteers in the Township that respond, with the remainder responding from the Borough of Minersville.



The Mount Pleasant Station currently houses a 2006 KME engine with 1,250-gallon pump. The truck is in working order and is not in need of any significant maintenance or repairs.

The Township also receives additional fire protection support for emergencies from the South Cass Citizens Fire Company in Primrose, Cass Township, Clover Fire Company in the Village of Heckscherville, Cass Township, Forestville Citizens Fire Company, and in Forestville, Cass Township.

Minersville Fire and Rescue, Minersville is the designated response Company for automotive accidents in the Township and along the I-81 Corridor.

The primary Emergency Medical Service (EMS) provider to the Township is the Goodwill Fire Company (Minersville). Aeromedical service is typically provided by either Geisinger Medical or Lehigh Valley Hospital.

3.3.8 Schools

Children of the Township are part of the public-School System of the Minersville Area School District (MASD), which has three main school buildings. The Minersville Early Childhood Center (Branch Township) provides for education in the 4K and Kindergarten age ranges, the Minersville Elementary Center (Minersville Borough) provides for education in the 1st through 6th grade age ranges, and the Minersville Jr/Sr High School (Cass Township) provides for education in the 7th through 12th grade age ranges. The MASD provides public education to residents of the Foster Township as well as Minersville Borough, Branch Township, Cass Township, and Reilly Township.

Children from the Township can also attend private or parochial schools. Other options in the area include St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School (Minersville) which provides education from Kindergarten to 8th grade, Assumption BVM (Pottsville) provides pre-school through 8th grade, and Nativity BVM (Pottsville) provides 9th through 12th grade. Gillingham Charter School (Pottsville) provides an option to local student from Kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as several cyber–Charter School options available in the State. There are also several locations in the area, which provide day care and also pre-school education for young children.

For children with special needs, services are provided by the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 {IU29} (Marlin). The Saint Joseph Center for Special Learning (Pottsville) and Avenues of Pottsville also provide alternates for students and adults.

For older children and adult learners, the Schuylkill Technology Centers offers numerous career and technical programs.

3.3.9 Recreation Facilities

Currently, the Township owns and maintains two recreational areas in the Township. The first facility is Community Park, which began construction in the mid 1990's. The Park is located on an approximately 2.6-acre site located in the central region of the Township and is within walking distance of the majority of the Township's population. The current amenities include a baseball field, playground, tot playground, basketball court, public restroom, picnic tables, and a ¼ mile bituminous walking path with period lighting. The site shares a parking lot with the Foster Township Municipal Building. This existing site has almost or nearly reached its build-out potential.



The second park, constructed in 2009, is a 0.70-acre pocket park, which consisted of a pavilion, parking lot, raingarden, and flower planter.

Although not owned by the Township, the Mount Pleasant Hose Company owns and operates a picnic grove, which include a 28' x 34' pavilion, kitchen stand, restrooms, ADA Accessible parking and access path, adjacent to the community park.

The Blythe Township Municipal Authority has the Crystal Run drinking water reservoir located in the Township. The area surrounding the reservoir is maintained as open space, and the Authority, through a cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, has allowed the parcel to be open for recreational use, such as hiking and hunting.

Additional recreational facilities outside of the Township included the Minersville Little League Field, the Minersville Area Youth Soccer Club soccer fields, the Minersville Area School District facilities, and the Minersville Community Swimming Pool. Several adjacent municipalities also have recreational facilities and playgrounds.

3.3.10 Sanitary Sewer

Sanitary sewer service is provided by the Foster Township Municipal Authority (FTMA) which collects sanitary sewerage in the area of Buck Run through gravity and low-pressure pipes. Sanitary sewage is conveyed to the High Ridge Industrial Park via two pumping stations owned by the Authority and one owned by the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority (SCMA). Ultimate treatment of the sewage is treated at the SCMA Gordon Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). The Township currently has an allocation of 28,000 gallons per day (gpd) at the treatment plant. Areas outside of the service area shown on Exhibit 10 are served by on-lot sewer systems.

From 2018-2019 Foster Township average daily flow for to the SCMA Gordon WWTP was approximately 11,500 gpd, therefore, it appears that there is approximately 16,500 gpd of capacity for future development. Foster currently has 99 billing customers which equates to 116 gpd per customer (11,500 gpd / 99 customers = 116 gpd per customer).

A typical household, according to PADEP, will generate 250 gpd, so based upon 16,500 gpd / 250 gpd/customer, there are potentially 66 customers that can be added to the Foster collection system. This method of determining the number of future customers is more realistic and conservative and will prevent Foster Township from exceeding their allocation.

SCMA currently is in the process of completing a new Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537) Plan for the several municipalities in which the Gordon WWTP receives flow from. The purpose of the Act 537 plan is help address existing sewage disposal needs, and to help prevent future problems through the proper planning, permitting, and design of all types of sewage facilities. The planning process is expected to take up to two years to complete. Following the planning process, SCMA intends to design and permit a new, larger WWTP at the Gordon plant site. This additional plant increase will accommodate additional growth in the Township and SCMA service area.

3.3.11 Water Service

Currently, there are areas served by public water in the Township. The Buck Run Village area is served by the Blythe Township Municipal Authority, where water is treated at the nearby Crystal Run Water Treatment Plant. The second service area is the High Ridge Industrial Park, which is served by the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority, where water is treated at the Indian Run Water Treatment Plant. Currently, there is no interconnect for redundancy between the two systems. A plan showing the water service area is shown on Exhibit A.11. Areas outside this map are either not served by public water or are on private groundwater wells.

Discussions have been held about a potential interconnection near the BTMA water tank to allow each system to feed the other. This interconnect would include additional pipework, a pressure-reducing valve vault, and a water boosting station. No formal work has been completed on the interconnection.

Foster Township has applied for several grants and completed several new waterlines through the populated portions of the Township. The Township has also completed preliminary fire flow modeling and applied for two additional waterline grants for the completion of a larger fire line from the BTMA tank to Buck Run and also a smaller waterline to serve the area of Turkey Row. Neither of these projects has been selected to be funded by a grant.

3.3.12 Internet

There is currently no hardwired broadband internet service provider (ISP) serving the residential areas of the Township. The Township has received Request for Proposals (RFP's) from several interested ISP in November 2020. The selected ISP is currently in the process of final design and to obtain right of way and usage of utility poles for the construction of the internet system.

3.3.13 Solid Waste

Currently solid waste management is provided by Foster Township to residents at no charge. Solid waste is collected by Township employees and Township owned garbage truck and then transported to the Commonwealth Environmental Systems (CES) Landfill which is located on the western side of Foster Township. The Township also provides large item pick-up days periodically. The CES landfill accepts residential solid waste at no charge to the Township.

Commercial solid waste disposal in the Highridge Industrial Park is provided by each property owner.

3.3.14 Recycling

Foster Township does not currently offer any recycling services. Schuylkill County Recycling Program was dissolved in late 2020 with no current options available to Foster Township Residents. In the foreseeable future, there are no plans to alter the current arrangements however the need for in-house refuse collection will be reassessed based on future development within the Township.

3.3.15 Hospitals

There are no hospitals within Foster Township. Hospitals within commuting distance include the Lehigh Valley Hospital - Schuylkill E. Norwegian Street and the Schuylkill S. Jackson Street. A new Geisinger's/St. Luke Hospital opened in Deer Lake in 2019, as well as the St. Luke's Hospital Miners Campus in Coaldale, Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, and the Hershey Medical Center in Hershey.

3.3.16 Public Outreach

Foster Township currently uses two primary forms of public outreach. The two methods are the publication of ordinances, meetings, and other pertinent information in the Pottsville Republican Newspaper, Pottsville. The second method is paper notices either hand-delivered or attachment to monthly sewer bills. At several public meetings, residents have indicated the Township could do a better job of notifying and updating residents through website postings and newsletters. The Township has begun the development of a newsletter in 2020. The Township has also upgraded their website at https://www.fostertwp.org to include meeting information and code and building permit forms and ordinances.

3.3.17 Finance and Budget

Foster Township has a projected 2021 income of $1,095,250 which includes approximately $260,000 in general government expenses, $180,000 in public safety, and $622,000 in public work projects, and approximately $33,000 in other community development and operating costs. Annual budgets are developed in late fall and adopted before the following year.

3.3.18 Emergency Management

Foster Township currently has a vacancy for a local emergency management coordinator who would handle local emergencies. Should a large-scale emergency develop in Foster Township, the Township would defer the operation to the Schuylkill County Emergency Management Coordinator and the local fire department or other services as needed.

3.3.19 Services for Older Adults

The Schuylkill County Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services handles services for older adults in Foster Township. The Office handles the Meals on Wheels Program, offers adult daycare and personal care, caregiver program for families (respite), elderly protective services, and assist consumers with property tax rebate and heating programs. The program also runs the volunteer transportation program.

3.3.20 Stormwater Management

Foster Township currently manages the stormwater system through the Township with the exception of the Highridge Business Park. The Township has upgraded the existing stormwater system in the Hill Area, Community Square, and Mount Pleasant. Current upgrades being completed in 2021 are on Lower Beechwood Road. Stormwater for new development projects is regulated through the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).

3.4 Natural Resources

3.4.1 Water Resources

The single largest water resource in Foster Township is the BTMA drinking water reservoir which serves approximately 1,020 residents and businesses in Foster, Cass, Reilly, and Branch Townships. The reservoir has a capacity of approximately 60,740,000 gallons or 200 ac-ft and has a filtration plant that is rated at 0.93 mgd, with an average production of 0.50 mgd.

In addition to the reservoir, BTMA has two additional sources that can be used for water during drought conditions, including Dicks Dam and the Airport Quarry.

3.4.2 Watersheds

Foster Township is divided by two major watersheds and three minor watersheds. The watersheds are the Susquehanna River Basin (Swatara and Wiconisco Watersheds) and the Delaware River Basin (upper Schuylkill River).

3.4.3 Stream Designations

Foster Township has five primary streams in the Township. The streams are the Deep Creek, Hans Yost Creek, Swatara Creek, West Creek (Crystal Run), and West Branch Schuylkill. The Pennsylvania Code, Title 25, Chapter 93, Water Quality Standards assigns all of these streams and tributaries within this watershed a water quality designation of Cold-Water Fishery. (CWF, MF). All five of these streams are designated use streams migratory fish.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PAFBC) does not list any of these streams as a Keystone Select Stocked Trout Stream, Special Regulated Trout Stream, Class A trout stream, nor a Wilderness Trout Stream.

There are three streams listed as Stream Supporting Natural Trout Reproductions, and those streams are Swatara Creek, Pine Creek, and Middle Creek.

3.4.4 Floodplains

Foster Township is located on six of the Schuylkill County, Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) #42107C0316F (Hegins Township), #42107C0317F(Frailey), #42107C0310F, #42107C0330F (Foster Township), #42107C0335F (Cass Township), and #42107C0340F (Reilly Township) with an effective date of May 18, 2021.

Upon examination of these maps, it was found that floodplains exist within Foster Township along Crystal Run and the extreme downstream ends of Huns Yost and Swatara Creeks (Map 5). These areas do not pose a concern as they are away from development. The area of the floodplain is designated as Floodzone A.

A new floodplain ordinance was adopted by the Foster Township Supervisors as Ordinance 01-2021, on May 5, 2021.

3.4.5 Soils

The soils found in the Township include:

- ArB, Andover extremely stony loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes
- BuB, Buchanan gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- BxB, Buchanan extremely stony loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- BxD, Buchanan extremely stony loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes
- CaB, Calvin shaly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- CaD, Calvin shaly silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes
- DkB, Dekalb channery sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, rubbly
- DkC, Dekalb channery sandy loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes, rubbly
- DMF, Dekalb and Lehew extremely stony soils, steep
- DR, Dekalb-Rubble land association
- Ds, Dumps, coal waste

- Du, Dumps, mine
- HeB, Hazleton channery fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- HfC, Hazleton extremely stony fine sandy loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes
- HGB, Hazleton-Clymer association, gently sloping
- KvB, Kedron very stony silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- KvC, Kedron very stony silt loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes
- LaB, Laidig gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- LaC, Laidig gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
- LdC, Laidig extremely stony loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes
- LhC, Lehew extremely stony loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes
- MeB, Meckesville loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- MkB, Meckesville very stony loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
- MkC, Meckesville very stony loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes
- SmB, Shelmadine very stony silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes
- UM, Udorthents, strip mine
- UU, Urban land-Udults complex
- W, Water

The Andover complex consists of fine loamy, mixed mesic typic fraquiaulls. These soils are deed and poorly drained and have slow impermeability. The Andover soils are poorly drained soils with a depth to the water table of between 0 to 6 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 0 to 8 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 5 inches of extremely stone loam, 5 to 20 inches of loam, gravelly call loam and cobbly sand. The depth to fragipan 16 to 28 inches and depth to bedrock is 60 inches or more. The soils have a very high runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is D and the soil is rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is mountain slope colluvium derived from sedimentary rock. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Buchanan complex consists of Moderately well drained soils with a depth to the water table between 14 to 30 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 3 to 25 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 21 inches of gravelly loam, 21 to 36 inches cobbly clay loam. The depth to fragipan 20 to 36 inches and depth to lithic bedrock is 60 to 99 inches. The soils have a high runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is D and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is Colluvium derived from sandstone and shale. All areas of this soil are classified as prime farmland.

The Calvin complex consists of Moderately well drained soils with a depth to the water table more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 15 to 25 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 8 inches of channery silt loam, 8 to 26 inches very channery silt loam, 26 to 40 inches extremely channery silt loam, 40 to 44 inches to bedrock. The depth to lithic bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. The soils have a medium runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is B and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is acid reddish-brown residuum weathered from shale and siltstone. This soil is listed as farmland of statewide importance.

The Dekalb complex consists of moderately well drained soils with a depth to the water table more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 8 to 25 percent. The soil has a depth of to 1 inches of slightly decomposed plant material, 1 to 4 inches of channery sandy loam, 4 to 7 inches of channery sandy loam, 7 to 26 inches of very channery sandy loam, 26 to 34 inches of extremely channery sandy loam, 34 to 44 inches of bedrock. The depth to lithic bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. The soils have a medium runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is A and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is residuum weathered from sandstone and shale. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Dekalb and Lehew complex consists of moderately well drained soils with a depth to the water table more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 8 to 25 percent. The soil has a depth of to 0 to 7 inches of very gravelly sandy loam, 7 to 32 inches of very channery sandy loam, 32 to 39 inches of very flaggy loamy sand, 39 to 43 inches of bedrock. The depth to lithic bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. The soils have a low runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is A and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is residuum weathered from sandstone and shale. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Dekalb-Rubble soils are loamy-skeletal, mixed mesic Typic Dystrochrepts. These soils are moderately deed and well drained and have rapid permeability. Dekalb-Rubble are well drained soils with a depth to the water table of more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 15 to 25 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 7 inches of very gravelly sandy loam, 7 to 32 inches of very channery sandy loam, 32 to 39 inches of very flaggy loamy sand, 39 to 43 inches of bedrock. The depth to fragipan 0 to 60 inches and depth to bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. The soils have a low runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is A and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is residuum weathered from sandstone and shale and includes stones and boulder fields of sandstone. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Dumps, mine consist of mine spoil or earthy fill. A soil profile was not provided. The depth to lithic bedrock is not provided. The soil is not rated hydric. These soils are generally well drained. The soil is generally consisted of manmade and altered material from mixed rock types and is evidence of previous mining and mine reclamation in the area. This type of soil is estimated as having approximately 1% of the soils as hydric, and the depth of the groundwater table and bedrock is unknown. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Hazleton complex consists of a loamy-skeletal mixed mesic typic Dystrochreprts. These soils are deep and well drained and have moderately rapid and rapid permeability. Hazleton are well drained soils with a depth to the water table of more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 3 to 8 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 5 inches of channery fine sandy loam, 5 to 35 inches of very channery sandy loam, 35 to 49 inches of very channery loamy sand and 49 to 53 inches of bedrock. The depth to bedrock is 40 to 80 inches. The soils have a low runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is A and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is Residuum weathered from sandstone. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Hazleton-Clymer gravelly sandy loam is found in an area, gently sloping, in shrubs, in Foster Township, approximately 1-1/2 mile north of Mount Pleasant, along Old Airport Road and 100 feet north of the north side. Hazleton-Clymer are well drained soils with a depth to the water table of more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 0 to 8 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 5 inches of very channery sandy loam, 5 to 35 inches of very channery sandy loam, 35 to 49 inches of very channery loamy sand, 49 to 53 inches of bedrock. The depth to bedrock is 40 to 80 inches. The soils have a very low runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is B and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is sesiduum weathered from sandstone. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Kedron complex consists of moderately well drained soils with a depth to the water table of between 6 to 36 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 3 to 8 percent. The soil has a depth of to 0 to 9 inches of silt loam, 9 to 27 inches of very silty clay loam, 27 to 58 inches of channery loam. The depth to fragipan is 20 to 32 inches. The soils have a high runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is C/D and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is colluvium and/or till derived from sandstone, siltstone, and shale. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Laidig complex consists of moderately well drained soils with a depth to the water table of between 6 to 36 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 8 to 15 percent. The soil has a depth of to 0 to 4 inches of gravelly loam, 4 to 33 inches of channery loam, 33 to 65 inches of very channery loam. The depth to fragipan is 30 to 50 inches. The soils have a medium runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is B and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate parent material is Colluvium derived from sandstone and siltstone. All areas of this soil are classified as prime farmland.

The series soils are loamy-skeletal, mixed, mesic Typic Dystrochrepts. consists of fine loamy, mixed mesic typic fraquiaulls. These soils are moderately deed, well drained and have moderate to rapid permeability. Lehew are well drained soils with a depth to the water table of more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 8 to 25 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 8 inches of very channery loam, 8 to 32 inches of very channery sandy loam, 32 to 37 inches of very channery sandy loam, 37 to 41 inches of bedrock. The depth to fragipan 20 to 40 inches and depth to bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. The soils have a very low runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is A and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is reddish loamy residuum weathered from sandstone and siltstone. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The Meckesville complex consists of well-drained soils with a depth to the water table of between 25 to 48 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 3 to 8 percent. The soil has a depth of to 0 to 96 inches of gravelly loam. The depth to fragipan is 25 to 48 inches. The soils have a medium runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is C and the soil is not rated hydric. The predominate parent material is sandstone, siltstone and shale colluvium derived from sedimentary rock. All areas of this soil are classified as prime farmland.

The complex are fine-loamy, mixed mesic typic fraqiaquults. These soils are deed and poorly drained and have slow impermeability. They formed in colluvial soil material and are on toe slopes along drainageways, and in depressional areas. They are poorly drained soils with a depth to the water table between 0 to 6 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 0 to 8 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 7 inches of channery silt loam, 7 to 24 inches of silty clay loam, 24 to 50 inches of channery loam and 50 to 70 inches of channery loam. The depth to fragipan 18 to 30 inches and depth to bedrock is 60 inches or more. The soils have a very high runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is C/D and the soil is rated hydric. The predominate Parent material is loamy till. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The UM, Udorthents, strip minecomplex consists of deep, somewhat poorly drained to well drained soils that have slow to moderately rapid permeability. They formed in residual and colluvial soil materials. Theses soils are on foot slopes and on the top and sides of hills and mountains. Udorthents are well drained soils with a depth to the water table of more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 0 to 65 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 6 inches of very channery sandy loam, 6 to 60 very channery silty clay loam. Some Udorthents soils have a fragipan, the depth to bedrock is 42 to 60 inches. The soils have a medium runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is A and the soil is not rated hydric, however wet spots in depressions are listed as hydric rated. The predominate Parent material is Manmade and altered materials from mixed rock types. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

The UU, Urban land-Udults complex consists of moderately well drained to excessively drained soils that have been disturbed by cutting or filling, and areas that are covered by buildings and pavement. Moderately well drained soils with a depth to the water table of more than 80 inches. Slopes of this soil range from 3 to 25 percent. The soil has a depth of 0 to 5 inches of channery silt loam, 5 to 61 inches of channery silt loam. The depth to bedrock is 42 to 79 inches. The soils did not list a runoff class. The Hydrologic Soil Group is unlisted, and the soil is not rated hydric, however wet spots in depressions are listed as hydric rated. The predominant Parent material is Colluvium and/or residuum. This soil is not classified as prime farmland.

See Exhibit A.9 for the Soils Map.

3.4.6 Topographic and Steep Slopes

The topographic slope of an area defines the amount of change in elevation over a given length of land. Slopes that are too high (>10%), pose limitations to development. Slopes greater than 15% impose extreme restrictions on development requiring special design for it to be feasible. Extremely low slopes (<2%) can also pose development limitations due to drainage problems.

Elevations within Foster Township range from 980 feet in the northwest portion to 1,740 feet in the north portion in the vicinity of the airport. Slope values are high in a great deal of the Township, especially in the northwest and northeast corners. Steep slopes are also found in many of the coal mining areas.

Where slopes exceed 15% within Foster Township, development should be limited. Extensive grading and filling of any type of site would be required in these areas. Development of steep slopes can also lead to erosion and subsequent sedimentation. On-site sewage treatment can also be extremely difficult, if not impossible.

3.4.7 Strip\Abandoned Underground Mines

A review of the PADEP 2019 Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Problem Area Inventory which identifies locations containing public health, safety, and public welfare problems created by past coal mining which includes areas sus as dangerous highwalls, pits, etc. indicated a total of 145 items in Foster Township. The data showed a total of 39 items which have been corrected. In the early to mid-2000's, PADEP completed a number of projects to remove abandoned pits in the Mt. Pleasant Area.

The inventory indicated a total of 106 abandoned features that have not been corrected. One of the goals identified in this planning process is to eliminate additional locations of these features.

3.4.8 Biotic Resources

3.4.8.1 Wetlands

A review of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory website and GIS data which identifies digital map data along with other resource information to produce current information on the status, extent, characteristics and functions of wetlands, riparian, and Deepwater habitats shows a total of 79 wetlands in Foster Township. A total of 77 wetlands were listed as PUBHx, with two other wetlands listed as PFO4A.

A description of for code PUBHx is described below.

P SYSTEM PALUSTRINE: The Palustrine System includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, emergents, mosses or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas where salinity due to ocean derived salts is below 0.5 ppt. Wetlands lacking such vegetation are also included if they exhibit all of the following characteristics: 1. are less than 8 hectares (20 acres); 2. do not have an active wave-formed or bedrock shoreline feature; 3. have at low water a depth less than 2 meters (6.6 feet) in the deepest part of the basin; 4. have a salinity due to ocean-derived salts of less than 0.5 ppt.

SUBSYSTEM: UB Class Unconsolidated Bottom (UB): Includes all wetlands and deepwater habitats with at least 25% cover of particles smaller than stones (less than 6-7 cm), and a vegetative cover less than 30%.

MODIFIER(S):

- A - Water Regime Temporary Flooded (A): Surface water is present for brief periods (from a few days to a few weeks) during the growing season, but the water table usually lies well below the ground surface for most of the season.
- F - Class Forested (FO): Characterized by woody vegetation that is 6 m tall or taller.
- H - Water Regime Permanently Flooded (H): Water covers the substrate throughout the year in all years.
- X - Special Modifier Excavated (x): Lies within a basin or channel that have been dug, gouged, blasted or suctioned through artificial means by man.
- 1 - Split Subclass Broad-Leaved Deciduous (1): Woody angiosperms (trees or shrubs) with relatively wide, flat leaves that are shed during the cold or dry season; e.g., black ash (Fraxinus nigra).
- 4 - Subclass Needle-Leaved Evergreen (4): The dominant species in Needle-leaved Evergreen wetlands are young or stunted trees such as black spruce or pond pine.

3.4.8.2 Species of Special Concern

DCNR list the Bartonia paniculata ssp. paniculata (Bartonia paniculata) {Screw-Stem} as a Special Concern Species. The plant flowers from August – October each year. The plan is often found in Hummocks in wet woods, wooded bogs and sphagnous pond margins.

3.4.8.3 Trout Streams

The DCNR Conservation planning tool does not list any stream in Foster Township as either a wilderness trout stream or a Class A trout stream. There are three streams listed as Stream Supporting Natural Trout Reproductions, and those streams are Swatara Creek, Pine Creek, and Middle Creek.

3.5 Historic Resources

Foster Township does not have any site listing under the National Register of Historical Places. A search of the PA Cultural Resources Geographic Information System indicated that there were several potential historic resources in the Township which included the Schuylkill Airport build Circa 1959, a portion of the existing Philadelphia & Reading Railroad grade. Other local historically significant sites include Trinity Chapel, the gardens, and the Neal Mansion.

3.6 Transportation

Foster Township has approximately 5.7 miles of roads of which approximately 5.2 miles of paved and 0.5 miles of gravel roads are owned and maintained by the Township. Township Road Crews consistently maintain the various roads throughout the Township and complete multiple roadway maintenance projects each year.

Foster Township has one Interstate I-81), one major State Route (SR901 Sunbury Road), and one secondary state route (SR4002 Valley Road) which traverses the Township and serves as the main thoroughfares through the Township to neighboring municipalities. There is one traffic signal in the Township located at the intersection of SR901 (Sunbury Road) & Keystone Boulevard (Highridge Industrial Park).

During the summer of 2018, PennDOT completed numerous drainage and subbase upgrades, complete replacement of all guide rail in the Township, and a full pavement overlay of SR901 (Sunbury Road).

Schuylkill County who owns the Airport Road rehabilitated the entire roadway from SR901 (Sunbury Road) to the Schuylkill Regional Airport in the Fall of 2021. Updates included additional signage.



Highridge Park Boulevard is operated by Schuylkill County who created the Highridge Improvement District, which utilizes, a portion of tax revenue set aside by Foster Township, Cass Township, and the Minersville Area School District to reinvents and improve/repair the roadway. HIDA is responsible for winter and summer maintenance.

3.6.1 Roadway Classifications

Foster Township's infrastructure consists of both a Township Road System, which is owned and operated by the Foster Township, Schuylkill County Roadway (Airport Road), Highridge Improvement District (HIDA*) Roadways, as well as a State Highway System and Federal Interstate Highway System that is the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The breakdown of the roadway type and mile of road can be found in Table 3.6.1. below.

Table 3.6.1 – Summary of Roads

Road Type	Miles
Township Roads	5.68
County Roads or HIDA	3.29
State Roads (Non Interstate)	6.86
State Roads (Interstate)	11.72
Private	0.80
Total Roads	**28.34**

PennDOT Type 5 Map/Schuylkill County GIS

*The Schuylkill County Industrial Development Authority (SCIDA), in conjunction with the Schuylkill County Board of Commissioners, the Board of Education of the Minersville Area School District, and the Boards of Supervisors for Cass and Foster Townships, have created the Highridge Improvement District (HID). The purpose of the HID is to own, operate, and maintain the roadway system in the Highridge Industrial Park. For the purpose of the 2021 Comprehensive plan, this roadway has been classified as a County-owned roadway.

3.6.2 Road Classification

Available mapping and a "windshield survey" were used to classify the roads within the Township. The roads were classified using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) classification system, which takes into account the function, service level, and design standards of a road. The classification system and associated roads are as follows (Exhibit A.6):

Freeway | Roadways having very limited or no access to bordering land uses. Access is generally limited to major streets at interchanges. The typical right-of-way is 300 feet and greater.

The only freeway existing in Foster Township is Interstate 81, which runs the entire length of the Township from west to east. There is one interchange within the Township where the freeway crosses SR901 (Sunbury Road). Access to and from Interstate 81 is provided in both directions. The right-of-way is generally 300 feet or more within the Municipality.

Major Arterial | Roadways serving as major feeders to and from the freeways, and those carrying traffic between major traffic generators. These roadways usually intersect at or near grade and have timed traffic signals and lane markings to facilitate traffic flow. Separation of opposing traffic lanes and full access control and grade separation at intersections may also occur along these roadways. Right-of-way is usually between 80 feet to 120 feet and greater.

SR901 (Sunbury Road) is the only major arterial within Foster Township. This is a two-lane, paved road that runs north - south through the eastern side of the Township. There is some access to adjoining land uses and the road provides access to surrounding Townships and markets, as well as Interstate 81. The right-of-way width averages 60 feet within the Township.

Minor Arterial | Roadways moving traffic from local streets or minor / major collector streets to minor / major arterial roads. These roadways usually have one lane of traffic in each direction and there is direct access to adjoining land uses. Right-of-way can be up to 80 feet wide where possible.

The only minor collector within Foster Township is SR4002 (Valley Road). This two-lane, paved road enters at the eastern side of the Township and ends at a non-signalized intersection with SR901 (Sunbury Road). This roadway mainly serves to provide access to and from SR901 (Sunbury Road) and neighboring Cass Township.

Local Roads | Roadways moving traffic from local residents and business to minor/major arterial roads. These roadways usually have one lane of traffic in each direction and there is direct access to adjoining land uses. Right-of-way generally are either 33 feet or 50 feet where possible.

All roadways not previously mentioned above would fall under the local road category.

3.6.3 State Route Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

The state roadways in Foster Township are broken into Segments by PennDOT. The segment ranges listed below represent the significant breakpoints at which traffic volumes may fluctuate. The breakdown of the ADT by roadway and segment can be found in Table 3.7.3. below.

Table 3.6.3 – Traffic Characteristics in Foster Township

Road	Local Name	Segments	ADT	ADTT	Year	Description
Interstate 81	I-81	1114-1160	14,425	3992	2017	Western Twp. Line to Eastern Twp Line
SR901	Sunbury Road	0082-0132	7,449	1191	2017	Northern Twp Line to I-81
SR901	Sunbury Road	0132-0152	6039	786	2017	I-81 to Valley Road
SR901	Sunbury Road	0152-192	3768	452	2017	Valley Road to Cass Twp. line
SR 4002	Valley Road	0010-0080	357	33	2017	Sunbury Road to Cass Twp. line

ADT: *Average Daily Traffic*
ADTT: *Average Daily Truck Traffic*

Reference: PennDOT, iTMS interactive map

**The most current traffic counts available were used to populate this table and some segment ranges were extend outside of the traffic count areas or township boundary. The ITMS website may offer older volumes for more specific segment ranges.*

3.6.4 Park and Ride

Schuylkill County currently owns and maintains a 50-stall park and ride just off Interstate I-81 Exit 116. This park and ride is considered an unofficial and is not listed on the PennDOT Park and Ride website. Currently R&J tours offers a bus service to the City of Harrisburg from this park and ride.

3.6.5 Public Transportation

The Schuylkill Transportation System (STS) is a public bus service to portions of the County. Foster Township is not serviced by STS, but a door-to-door van service is available for the elderly by appointment.

3.6.6 Airports

The major local airport is the Schuylkill Regional Airport – Joe Zerbey Field in northern Schuylkill County, which is discussed in greater detail under Section 3.5 is located in the northwest quadrant of the Township.



There are other major and secondary airports within driving distance of the Township including the Lehigh Valley International (ABE) in Allentown, the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International (AVP), in Scranton, and the Harrisburg International Airport (MDT), in Middleton which provides direct and commercial flights within an hour drive. The Reading Regional/Carl A. Spaatz Field (RDG) and Hazleton Municipal (HZL) also provide private and small cargo flights within an hour of the Municipal Building. The Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), serves both domestic and international travel, and is approximately a 2-hour drive from the Township.

Section 4 // Neighboring Municipalities

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4 NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

In order to facilitate the concept of regional planning in agreement with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, it is the intent of the Foster Township Comprehensive Plan, to be compatible with the adjacent existing and proposed land uses where possible and feasible, of the contiguous Municipalities. A brief overview of the neighboring municipalities is provided below:

4.1 Barry Township, Schuylkill County

Barry Township has an approximate area of 17 square miles and is located directly to the north of Foster Township. The Township shares two common roadways with Foster Township including SR901 (Sunbury Road) and Buckhorn/Beurys Road. No comprehensive plan could be identified for Barry Township.

4.2 Butler Township, Schuylkill County

Butler Township has an approximate area of 26 square miles and is located directly to the northeast of Foster Township. Butler Township shares only one common roadway with Foster, which is Interstate I-81. Federal Correctional Institute Schuylkill is located in Butler Township, however the access roadway to the facility is located in Foster Township. No comprehensive plan could be identified for Butler Township.

4.3 Cass Township, Schuylkill County

Cass Township has an approximate area of 14.5 square miles and is located directly to the east of Foster Township. The Township shares four common roadways with Foster Township including Interstate I-81, SR901 (Sunbury Road), SR4002 (Valley Road), and Keystone Blvd. The Townships each share a portion of the Highridge Industrial Park. Cass also is the location of the Minersville High School and District Administrative Offices which provides the primary education for students of Foster Township in grades 7 through 12. Cass Township currently has a comprehensive plan developed in October 1995 by Mullin & Lonergan Associates Inc.

4.4 Frailey Township, Schuylkill County

Frailey Township has an approximate area of 9.18 square miles and is located directly to the southwest of Foster Township. Frailey Township shares only one common roadway with Foster, which is Interstate I-81, however SR25 is required to reach the southern portion of the Township. Frailey Township is one of three municipalities that the Commonwealth Environmental Systems (CES) Landfill is located within. No comprehensive plan could be identified for Frailey Township.

4.5 Hegins Township, Schuylkill County

Hegins Township has an approximate area of 32 square miles and is located directly to the west of Foster Township. Hegins Township does not share any common roadways with Foster, however SR25 is required to reach the western portion of the Township. No comprehensive plan could be identified for Hegins Township.

4.6 Reilly Township, Schuylkill County

Reilly Township has an approximate area of 15.6 square miles and is located directly to the southwest of Foster Township. Reilly Township does not share any common roadways with Foster. Reilly Township is one of three municipalities that the Commonwealth Environmental Systems (CES) Landfill is located within. No comprehensive plan could be identified for Reilly Township.

4.7 Minersville Borough, Schuylkill County

Minersville Borough has an approximate area of 0.6 square miles and is located directly to the southeast of Foster Township. Minersville Borough is not a contiguous municipality to Foster Township however is the closest larger population center. Minersville serves as the primary location for shopping, services, and other necessities for Foster Township residents. Minersville also is the location of the Minersville Elementary Center which provides the primary education for students of Foster Township in grades 1 through 6, as well as the closest public library. No comprehensive plan could be identified for Minersville Borough.

Section 5 // Public Participation

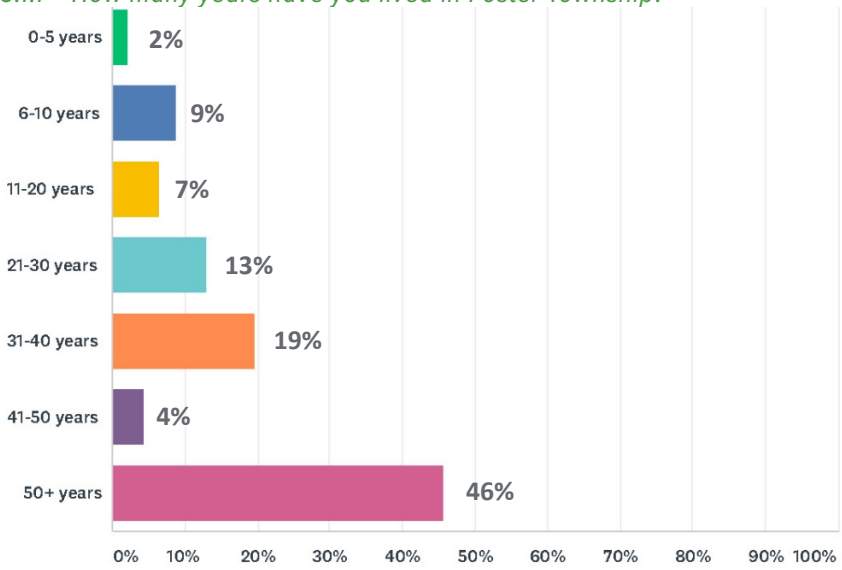
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5 Public Participation

5.1 Public Survey

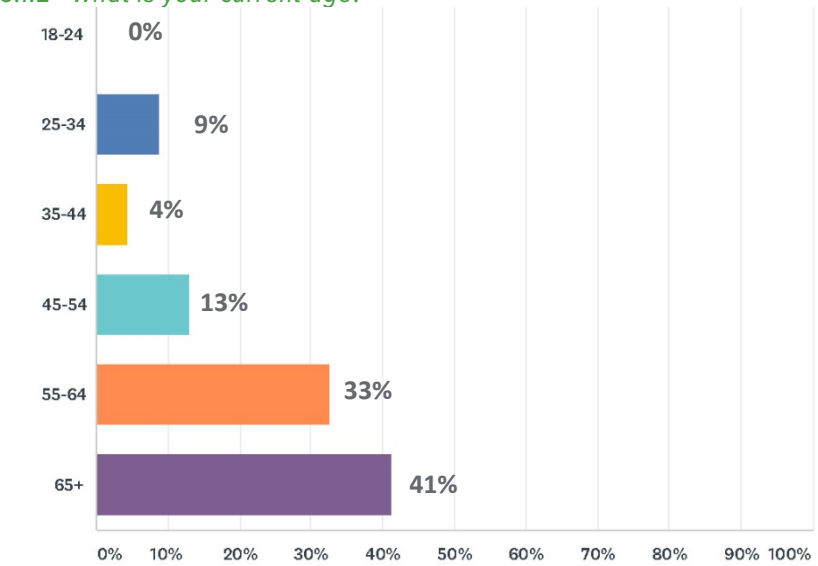
A fifteen (15) question public feasibility option survey was prepared for the comprehensive plan which was sent to all residents in the Township (approximately 100 surveys) in paper format. The Survey was open from June 24, 2019 until July 26, 2019. A total of 46 households responded to the survey. The upfront questions including location and age demographics and is discussed under Section 2 of this report. The second portion of the survey reviewed municipal services and other questions related to the Township function.

5.1.1 How many years have you lived in Foster Township?



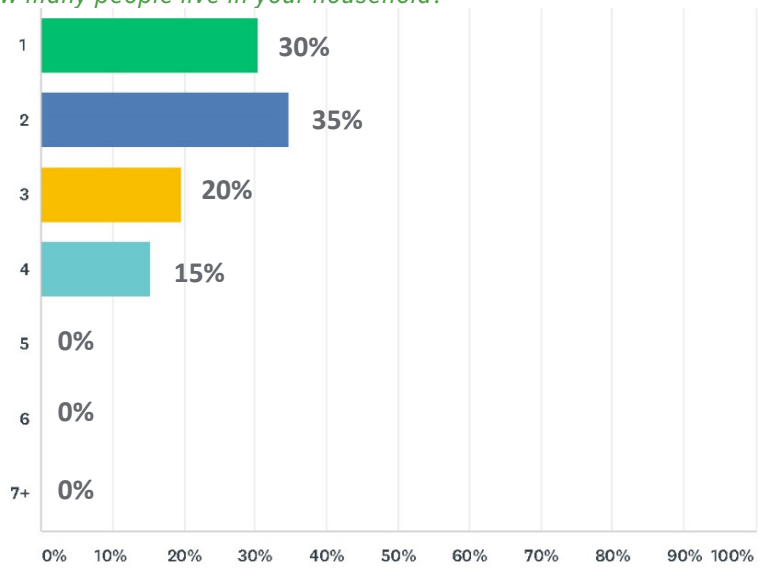
Question 1 included the question of "How many years have you many years have you lived in your Foster Township?" In Figure 5.1.1 above the majority of the Township residents (69%) have lived in the Township for more than 30 years, with a very small portion (11%) living in the Township for less than 10 years.

5.1.2 What is your current age?



Question 2 included the question of "What is your current age?" In Figure 5.1.2 above the majority of the Township residents (74%) are aged 55 and older, with a very small portion (9%) under the age of 34.

5.1.3 How many people live in your household?



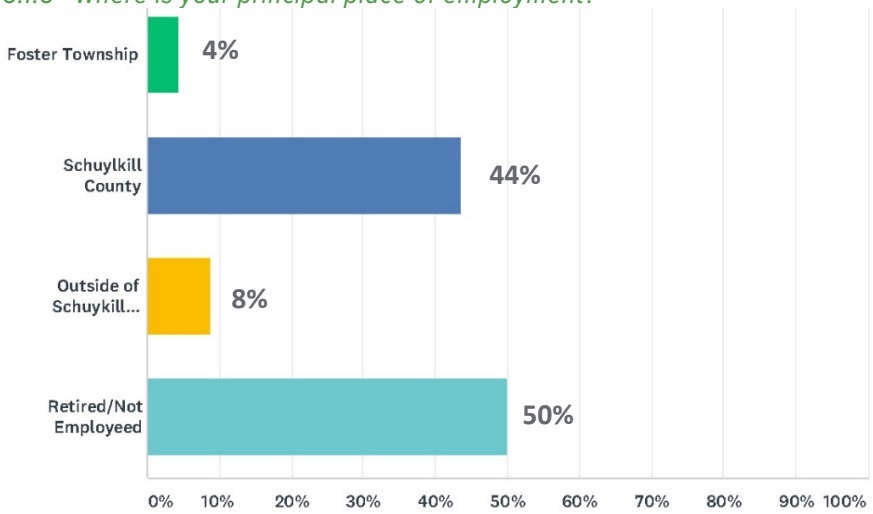
Question 3 included the question of "How many people live in your household?" In Figure 5.1.3 above the majority of the households (65%) in the Township have either one (1) or two (2) residents, with only 15% having at least four (4).

5.1.4 How many people of each age group currently live in your household?

	CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5 YEARS	CHILDREN AGES 6-12 YEARS	CHILDREN AGES 13-18 YEARS	ADULTS AGES 19-64 YEARS	ADULTS AGES 64+ YEARS	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
1	10.71% 3	14.29% 4	10.71% 3	35.71% 10	53.57% 15	28
2				76.47% 13	23.53% 4	17
3				100.00% 5		5
4				100.00% 2		2
5						0
6						0
7						0

Question 4 included the question of "How many people of each age group currently live in your household?" In Figure 5.1.4 above the majority individuals living in the Township were ages 19 or older, with only 10 individuals under the age of 18 living in the Township. Based on the information provided by the 2019 American Communities survey, the estimated population should be closer to approximately 70 children. Based on knowledge of the township, it is expected that the population of children is somewhere between these two numbers.

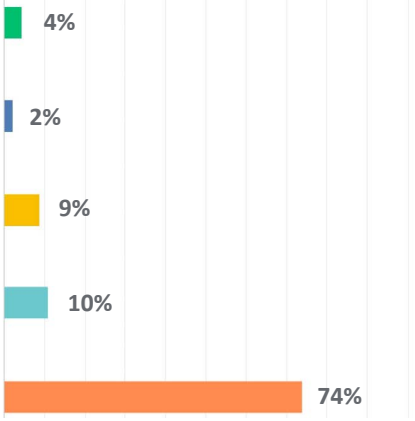
5.1.5 Where is your principal place of employment?



Question 5 included the question of "Where is your principal place of employment?" In Figure 5.1.5 above the majority of employment was split evenly between working either in Foster Township/Schuylkill County (48%) or retired/not employed (50%). A very small percentage (8%) worked outside of the County.

5.1.6 Emergency Services

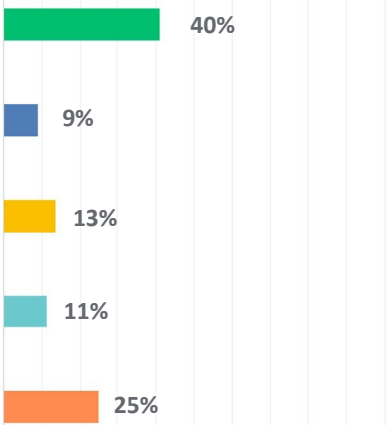
5.1.6.1 Foster Township Police Department



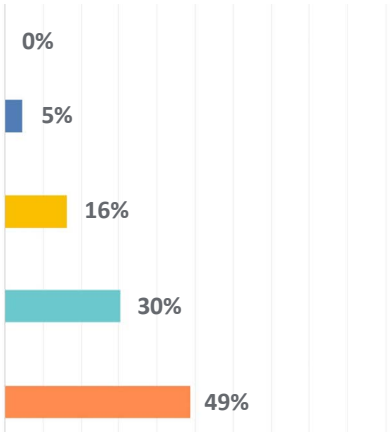


1 = Needs Vast Improvement
5 = Meets or Exceeds All Expectations

5.1.6.2 Mount Pleasant Hose Company



5.1.6.3 Minersville Ambulance



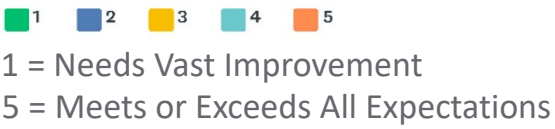
Question 6 included a rating question on the three emergency services provided in the Township including the Foster Township Police Department (Figure 5.1.6.1), Mount Pleasant Hose Company (Figure 5.1.6.2), and Minersville Ambulance (Figure 5.1.6.3).

The majority of respondents (84%) rated the Foster Township Police Department as meets or exceeds expectations. Approximately 49% of respondents rated the Mount Pleasant Hose Company a needs vast improvement or needs improvements*. Approximately 79% of respondents rated the Minersville Ambulance as meets or exceeds expectations.

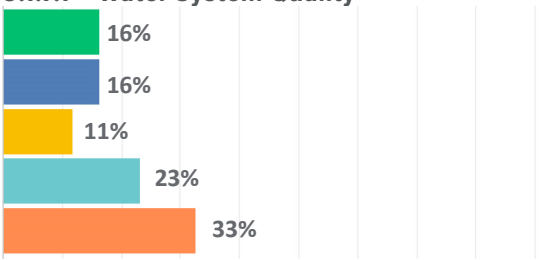
*Note the survey was completed prior to the merger of Mount Pleasant Hose Company and Minersville Fire Rescue. A follow-up survey is recommended in a few years to redetermine satisfaction.

5.1.7 Infrastructure Needs

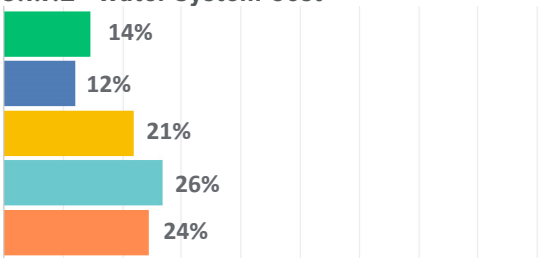
The questions included Water System Quality (Figure 5.1.7.1), Water System Cost (Figure 5.1.7.2), Sewer System Condition (Figure 5.1.7.3), Sewer System Cost (Figure 5.1.7.4), Stormwater/Street Drainage (Figure 5.1.7.5), Streets Summer Maintenance (Figure 5.1.7.6), Streets Winter Maintenance (Figure 5.1.7.7), Streets Marking and Traffic Signage (Figure 5.1.7.8), and High-Speed Internet (Figure 5.1.7.9)



5.1.7.1 Water System Quality

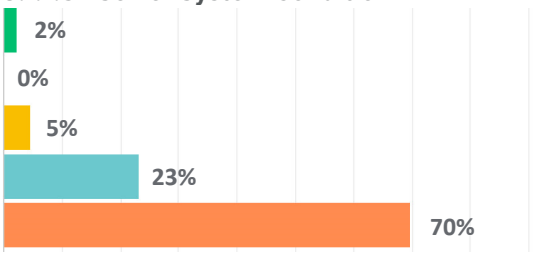


5.1.7.2 Water System Cost

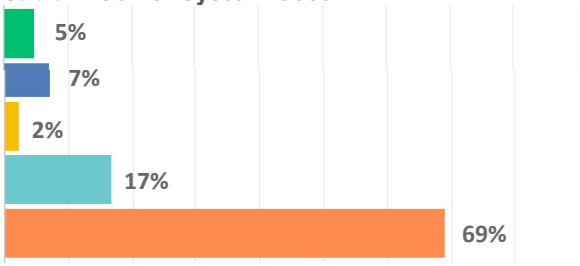


Approximately 56% of respondents rated the Water System Quality as meets or exceeds expectations and 50% indicated the costs as either as meets or exceeds expectations.

5.1.7.3 Sewer System Condition

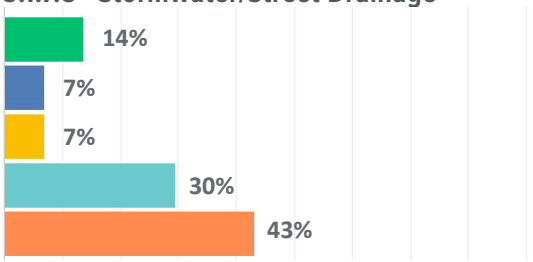


5.1.7.4 Sewer System Cost



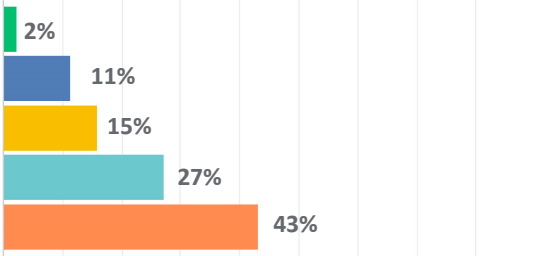
Approximately 93% of respondents rated the Sewer System Condition as meets or exceeds expectations and 86% indicated the costs as either as meets or exceeds expectations.

5.1.7.5 Stormwater/Street Drainage

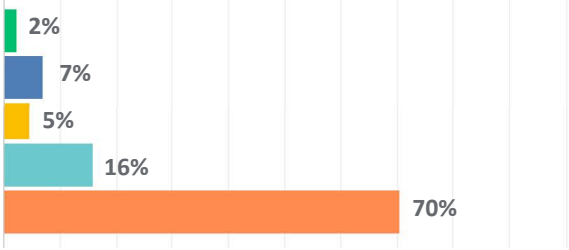


Approximately 73% of respondents rated the Stormwater/Street Drainage as meets or exceeds expectations. Another 21% of respondents rated the Stormwater/Street Drainage as need vast or some improvements. The Township should look to these areas to determine what if any improvements are necessary and look for a means to correct any identified issues.

5.1.7.6 Streets Summer Maintenance

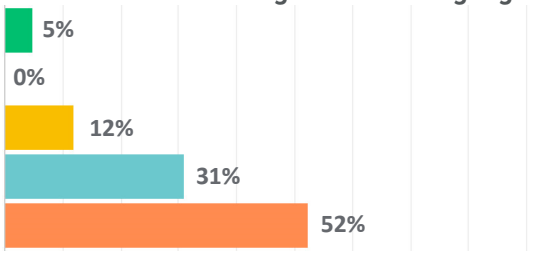


5.1.7.7 Streets Winter Maintenance



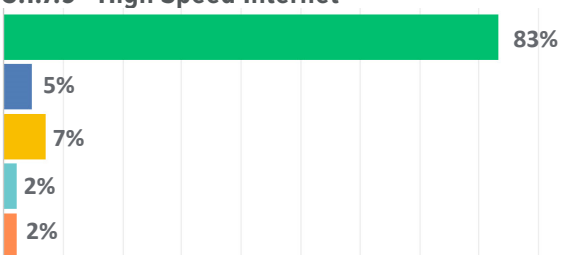
Approximately 70% of respondents rated the Streets Summer Maintenance as either as meets or exceeds expectations, and 86% indicated the Streets Winter Maintenance as either as meets or exceeds expectations. A range of 9% to 13% of respondents indicated the vast need for improvement in Summer and Winter maintenance respectively. The Township should look to these areas to determine what if any improvements are necessary and look for a means to correct any identified issues.

5.1.7.8 Streets Marking and Traffic Signage



Approximately 83% of respondents rated the Streets Marking and Traffic Signage as meets or exceeds expectations. Residents have brought up at recent Township meetings the need for additional stop signs or line painting in select areas. The Township completed a line painting and stop sign addition at the intersection of Upper Beechwood Road and Ball Park Road in 2020 and will add additional signage as part of future road projects. The Township local labor forces can also add additional signage and painting as needed or identified in the Township.

5.1.7.9 High Speed Internet



The vast majority (88%) of respondents rated High-Speed Internet as needs vast improvements. As discussed elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plans this is a high priority item for the Township to focus on.

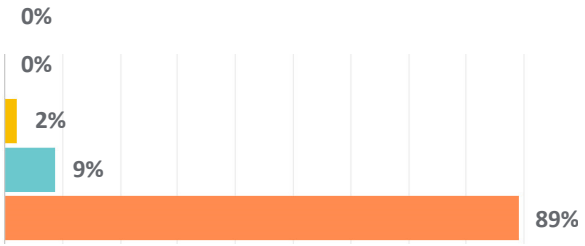
5.1.8 Basic Municipal Services

Question 8 included a rating question on the municipal services provided by Foster Township or others. The question included Trash Removal (Figure 5.1.8.1), Communication to Residents (Figure 5.1.8.2), Snow/Ice Removal (Figure 5.1.8.3), Code Enforcement (Figure 5.1.8.4), Recreation (Figure 5.1.8.5), Recycling Programs (Schuylkill County) (Figure 5.1.8.6), Public Transportation (STS) (Figure 5.1.8.7), Package/Mail Delivery (USPS, UPS, Fedex, private delivery) (Figure 5.1.8.8), Public Library (Minersville Library) (Figure 5.1.8.9), and Public School System (MASD) (Figure 5.1.8.10).



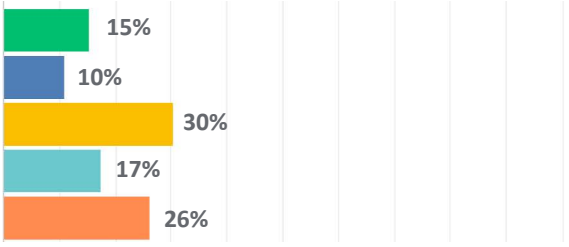
1 = Needs Vast Improvement
5 = Meets or Exceeds All Expectations

5.1.8.1 Trash Removal



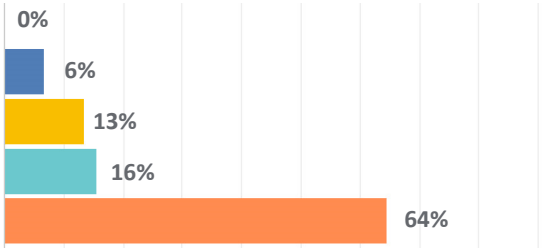
Approximately 98% of respondents rated trash removal as meets or exceeds expectations.

5.1.8.2 Communication To Residents



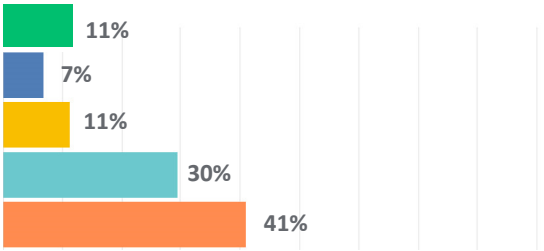
Approximately 43% of respondents rated the communications to residents as meets or exceeds expectations and 25% indicated the communications as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.3 Snow/Ice Removal



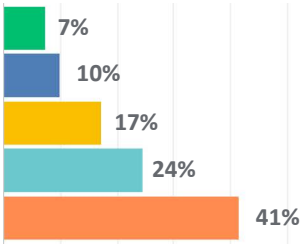
Approximately 80% of respondents rated the Snow/Ice Removal as meets or exceeds expectations and 6% indicated the Snow/Ice Removal as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.4 Code Enforcement



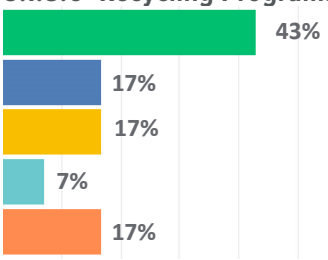
Approximately 71% of respondents rated Code Enforcement as meets or exceeds expectations and 18% indicated the Code Enforcement as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.5 Recreation



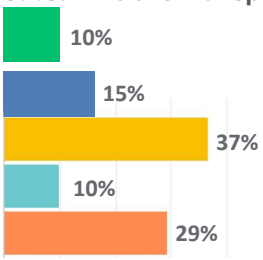
Approximately 65% of respondents rated Recreation as meets or exceeds expectations and 17% indicated Recreation as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.6 Recycling Programs



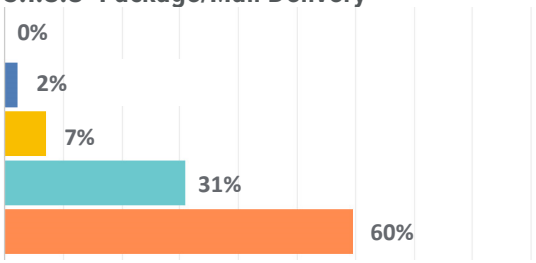
Approximately 24% of respondents rated Recycling Programs as meets or exceeds expectations and 60% indicated Recycling Programs as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.7 Public Transportation



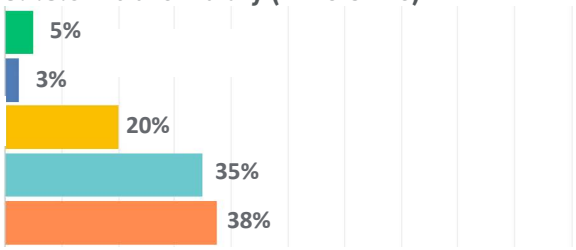
Approximately 39% of respondents rated Public Transportation as meets or exceeds expectations and 25% indicated Public Transportation as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.8 Package/Mail Delivery



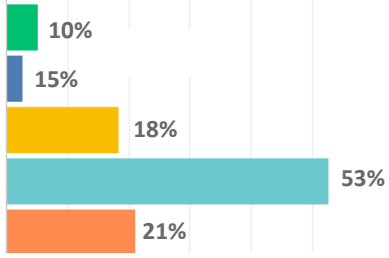
Approximately 91% of respondents rated Package/Mail Delivery as meets or exceeds expectations and 2% indicated Package/Mail Delivery as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.9 Public Library (Minersville)



Approximately 73% of respondents rated the Public Library as meets or exceeds expectations and 8% indicated the Public Library as need improvement or vast improvement.

5.1.8.10 Public School System



Approximately 74% of respondents rated the Public School System as meets or exceeds expectations and 25% indicated the Public School System as need improvement or vast improvement.

The survey seems to indicate that the majority of the residents are satisfied with the majority of municipal functions provided by Foster Township or others. Areas that can be improved upon based on the survey include increased communication with Township Residents, looking into improving or creating a recycling program, and increase or working with STS to increase public transportation options.

5.1.9 Quality of Life

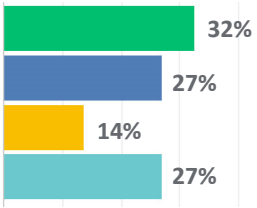
Question 9 included a question about the quality of life, and residents were asked about this that currently existing in the township, neighboring communities, or have been suggested by resident/other to complete in the Township. The responses include we have and value, service should be added, service needs improvement or the service is not needed. The question included Outdoor Recreation (all ages) (Figure 5.1.9.1), Children's Playground (Figure 5.1.9.2), Children's Activities (Figure 5.1.9.3), Teen Activities (Figure 5.1.9.4), Young Adult/Activities (Figure 5.1.9.5), Senior Center/Activities(Figure 5.1.9.6), Dog

Park (Figure 5.1.9.7), Walking Jogging Paths (Figure 5.1.9.8), Seasonal Decorations (Figure 5.1.9.9), Decorative Streetlights (Figure 5.1.9.10), Streetscaping/Curb Appeal (Figure 5.1.9.11), Churches (Figure 5.1.9.12), Pool/Splash Park (Figure 5.1.9.13), Sports Fields (Figure 5.1.9.14), ATV/UTV Park (Figure 5.1.9.15), Convenience Store (Figure 5.1.9.16), Gas Station (Figure 5.1.9.17), and Store/Shops Other (Figure 5.1.9.18).



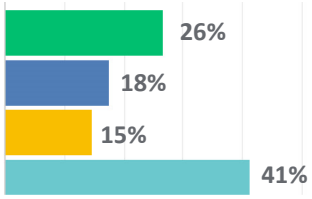
1 = I/We have and value
2 = Service should be added
3 = Service needs improved
4 = Service not needed

Outdoor Recreation



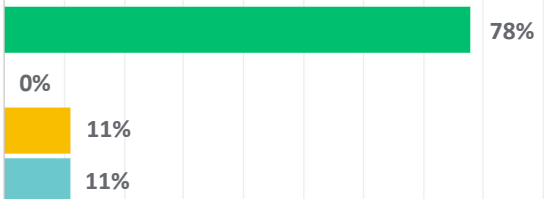
Approximately 32% of respondents valued the Township Outdoor Recreation, while 27% felt the service should be added, 14% felt it should be improved and 27% felt that the service is not needed.

Teen Activities



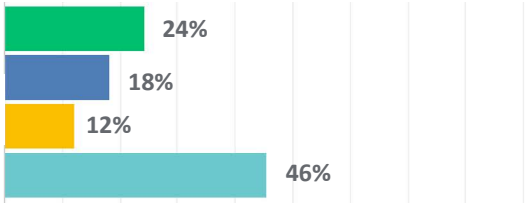
Approximately 26% of respondents valued the Teen Activities in the Township, while 18% felt the service should be added, 18% felt it should be improved and 41% felt that the service is not needed.

Children's Playground



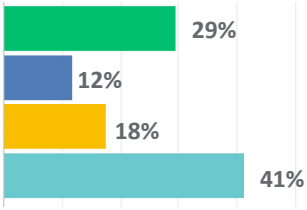
Approximately 78% of respondents valued the Children's Playground, 11% felt it should be improved and 11% felt that the service is not needed.

Young Adult Activities



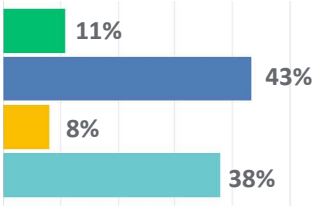
Approximately 24% of respondents valued the Young Adult/ Activities in the Township, while 18% felt the service should be added, 12% felt it should be improved and 46% felt that the service is not needed.

Children's Activities



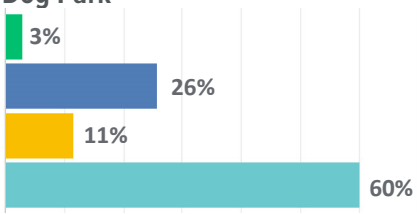
Approximately 29% of respondents valued the Children's Activities in the Township, while 12% felt the service should be added, 15% felt it should be improved and 41% felt that the service is not needed.

Senior Center/Activities



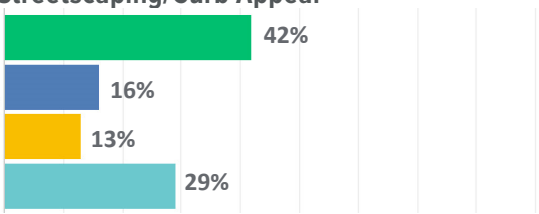
Approximately 11% of respondents valued the Senior Center/ Activities in the Township, while 43% felt the service should be added, 8% felt it should be improved and 38% felt that the service is not needed.

Dog Park



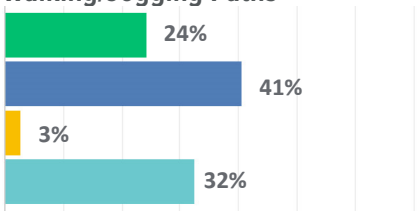
Approximately 3% of respondents valued Dog Parks in assume to be neighboring communities, while 26% felt the service should be added, 11% felt it should be improved and 60% felt that the service is not needed.

Streetscaping/Curb Appeal



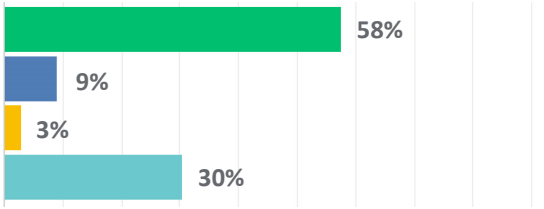
Approximately 42% of respondents valued the Streetscaping/ Curb Appeal in the Township, while 126 felt the service should be added, 13% felt it should be improved and 29% felt that the service is not needed.

Walking/Jogging Paths



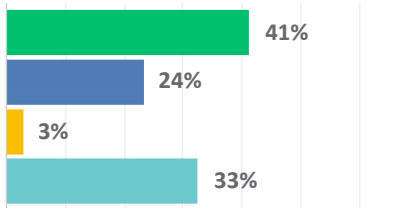
Approximately 24% of respondents valued the Walking Jogging Path in the Township, while 41% felt the service should be added, 3% felt it should be improved and 32% felt that the service is not needed.

Churches



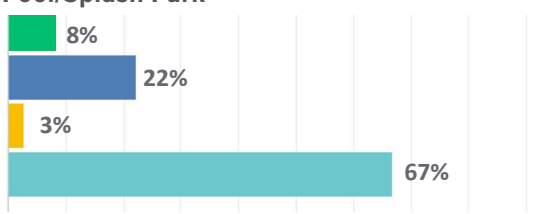
Approximately 58% of respondents valued the Church in the Township, while 9% felt the service should be added, 3% felt it should be improved and 30% felt that the service is not needed.

Seasonal Decorations



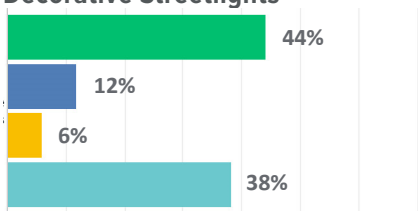
Approximately 41% of respondents valued the Seasonal Decorations in the Township, while 24% felt the service should be added, 3% felt it should be improved and 33% felt that the service is not needed.

Pool/Splash Park



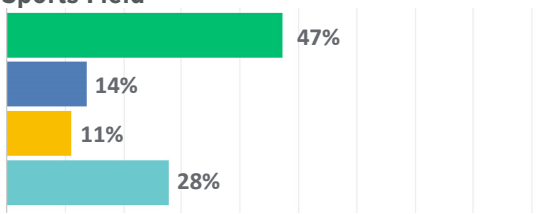
Approximately 8% of respondents valued the Pool/Splash Park assume to be neighboring communities, while 22% felt the service should be added, 3% felt it should be improved and 68% felt that the service is not needed.

Decorative Streetlights



Approximately 44% of respondents valued the Decorative Streetlights in the Township, while 12% felt the service should be added, 6% felt it should be improved and 38% felt that the service is not needed.

Sports Field



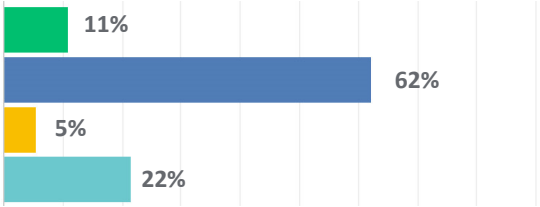
Approximately 47% of respondents valued the Sports Fields in the Township, while 14% felt the service should be added, 11% felt it should be improved and 28% felt that the service is not needed.

ATV/UTV Park



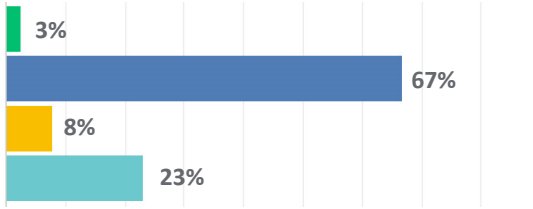
Approximately 3% of respondents valued the ATV/UTV Park Riding areas in the Township, while 14% felt the service should be added, 3% felt it should be improved and 81% felt that the service is not needed.

Gas Station



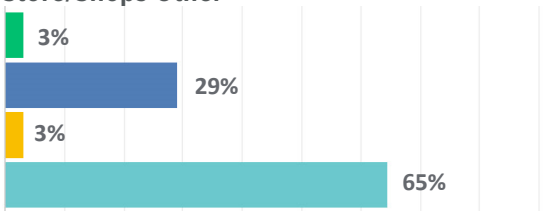
Approximately 11% of respondents valued the Gas Station areas in the Township, while 62% felt the service should be added, 5% felt it should be improved and 22% felt that the service is not needed.

Convenience Store



Approximately 3% of respondents valued the Convenience Store areas in the Township, while 67% felt the service should be added, 8% felt it should be improved and 23% felt that the service is not needed.

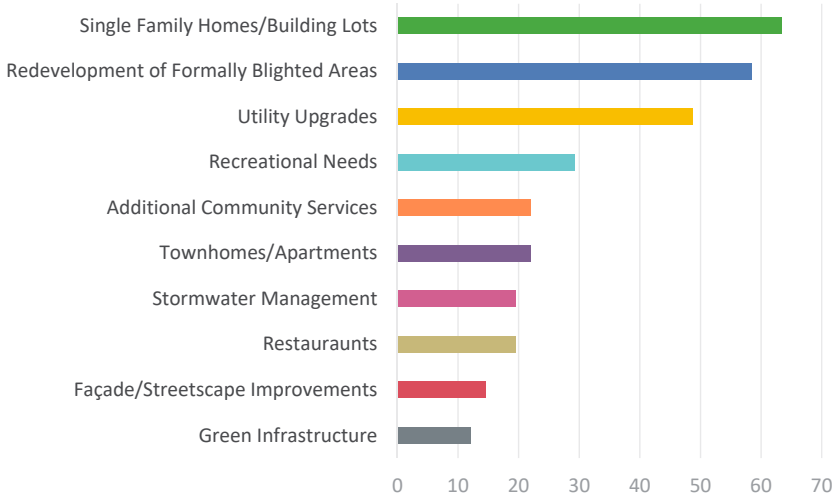
Store/Shops Other



Approximately 3% of respondents valued the Store/Shops in the Township, while 29% felt the service should be added, 3% felt it should be improved and 65% felt that the service is not needed.

The survey seems to indicate that the majority of the residents are satisfied with the community park, season decoration, streetlighting/streetscaping, and church in the Township. The Survey also provides a strong indication that a senior center or activities, should be added as well as additional walking/jogging areas, and a convenience store or gas station. The survey is strongly again adding an ATV park or adding stores and shops to the Township as well as a dog park and children, teen, and young adult activities.

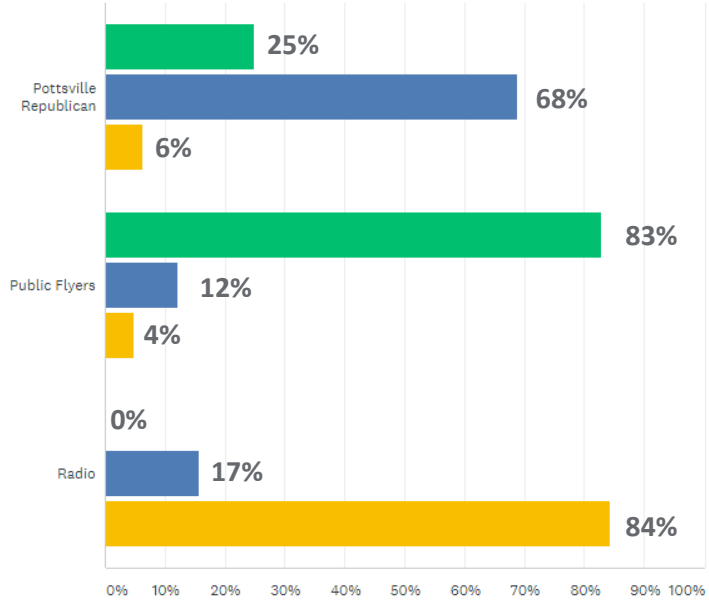
5.1.10 Future Growth



Question 10 asked a question of how Township residents see as needed to attract growth to the area. Figure 5.1.10 provides a graph showing from most to least desired to promote growth in the Township. The top 5 needs include providing for additional single-family building lots, redevelopment of formally blighted areas, proving for utility upgrades, meeting recreational needs, and providing for additional community services.

Several of the ideas listed in the survey included upgrades to the water tank and water system, adding small businesses, beautifications, and many indicated high-speed internet as a primary need for growth.

5.1.11 Communication

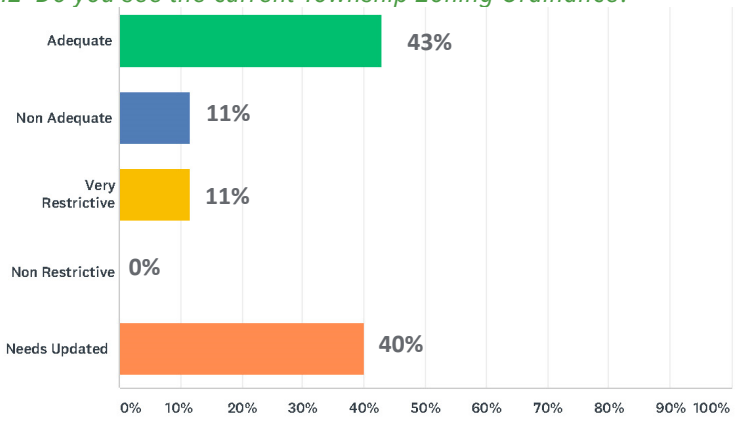


Question 11 asked a question of how Township residents typically get their information. The majority of the Township 83% get their information through Township flyers delivered to their home as the primary source, followed by 68% by the Pottsville Republican as their secondary and, and by public radio as the last method.

Many residents have requested additional Township news through either a newsletter, Facebook or other social media page, or a public bulletin board. Several Township residents indicated the desire to assist with the newsletter, which would be a good opportunity for resident outreach. In 2021 the Township began the "Foster Township Dispatch" which is a newsletter to provide information to the Township residents.

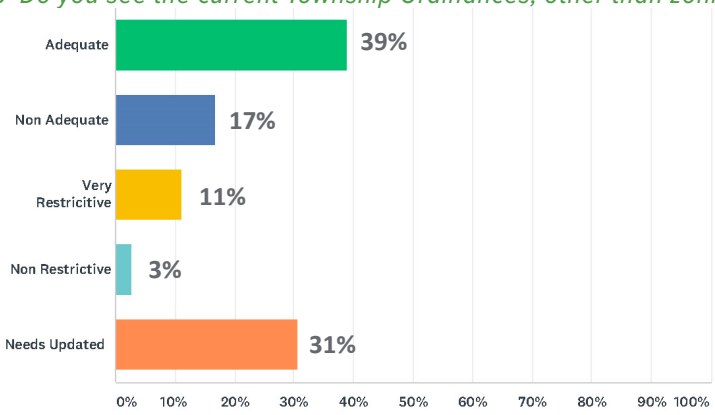
In 2020 the Township also installed an outdoor message board at the Township building for the posting of announcements.

5.1.12 Do you see the current Township Zoning Ordinance?



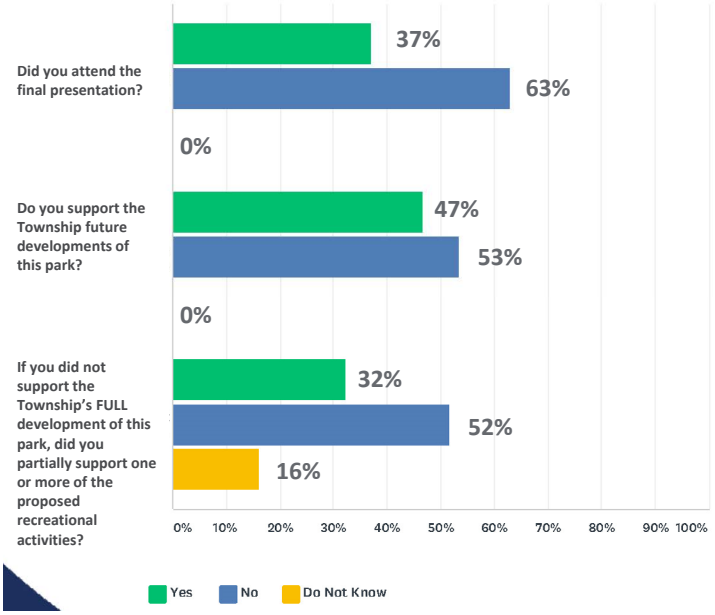
Question 12 asked the question about if the Zoning Ordinance is adequate or overly restrictive, or if it needs to be updated?" In Figure 5.1.12, 43% of respondents felt the ordinance was adequate while 40% felt it needs to be updated. Another 11% felt the ordinance was not restrictive enough and another 11% felt it was very restrictive.

5.1.13 Do you see the current Township Ordinances, other than zoning?



Question 13 asked a similar question to 12 about other Township Ordinance and if they are adequate or overly restrictive, or if it needs to be updated?" In Figure 5.1.13, 39% of respondents felt the ordinance was adequate while 31% felt some need to be updated. Another 17% felt the ordinance was not restrictive enough and another 11% felt it was very restrictive. Some of the responses indicated the need for controlling speed, dog barking (noise), additional ATV ordinance and enforcement, and removal of junk vehicles, junk and tires, pick up in yards. One comment asked for a location of what ordinances exist and what they contain. As of the publication of this plan, the Township is currently working on an updated website with additional ordinances that have been adopted published.

5.1.14 Master Site Plan



Question 14 asked a question of the Master Site Plan that was partially funded by DCNR towards the development of a large parcel of property in the Township into a large-scale park, which was to be phased out over 20-30 years. A public presentation was held in May 2018 with a petition presented to the supervisors to stop the project, the project is currently tabled at this point. The supervisors have been contacted by both residents that were for or against the project or that were for only a portion of the project.

Approximately 37% of respondents attended the final presentation of the overall park plan. Approximately 47% of respondents supported the Townships plan to develop the park in its entirety while 53% were not in favor of the park.

Of those who were not in favor approximately 32% were in favor of some portions of the project, while 52% were against any portion, and 16% did not know where they stood on the subject.

From the survey results asking about support or against, several answered that it should be used as a portion of the project as a park, while others indicated it should be developed into building lots, and others indicated to no do anything with the property.

5.2 Key Person Interviews

As part of the study, in-person or telephone interviews were performed with seven key individuals who were identified throughout the study as major property owners.

Dr. Carl McBreen, Superintendent of the Minersville Area School District

Dr. McBreen has expressed his support for future development in both residential as well as commercial development in the Township. The District has a need for high-quality new housing stock, as well as the need for additional tax revenue created by good, high-paying jobs in projects such as the Highridge Industrial Park.

Jason Kelso, General Counsel, and Mr. Joel Schmoyer, Engineer for Reading Anthracite

Both Mr. Kelso and Schmoyer have indicated the desire to create residential, commercial, and industrial development in the Township. Currently, limitations on development are with the current I-3 mining district boundaries and sanitary sewer and water capacity.

Mr. Bill Willard, Schuylkill Regional Airport – Joe Zerbey Field

Mr. Willard has indicated the airport is currently working on a comprehensive plan for future growth of the Airport and County-owned properties which will include the development of both commercial and industrial development as well as potential solar development projects.

Mr. Michael Burda, Blythe Township Water Authority

Mr. Burda has indicated support for the growth of the Township, but consideration should be given to existing water service capacity and watershed protection as the Township moves forward. Blythe Township Municipal Authority and Schuylkill County Municipal Authority are in the process of developing a system interconnect which will help with future growth and provide a backup water source in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Patrick Caulfield, Schuylkill County Municipal Authority

Mr. Caulfield has indicated concerns with growth potential due to limited sewer capacity at the existing Gordon Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Authority is in the process of a multi-municipal Act 537 plan to expand the capacity of the plant to accommodate future growth in both Foster Township, as well as neighboring municipalities in which they serve.

Mr. Frank Zukas, Schuylkill Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Zukas has indicated pride in working with SEDCO and Foster Township over the years to develop the Highridge Industrial Park into what it is today. He and SEDCO will support the Township with growth potential well into the future.

Mr. Samuel Ryan, Coal Products

The supervisors have spoken to Mr. Ryan who has expressed his desire to create new commercial development projects in the Township near the I-81 interchange.5.3 Meeting Summary

5.3 Meeting Summary

A series of sixteen meetings were held to review and discuss various matters of the comprehensive planning process. A summary of those meeting are outlined in Section 5.3, with meeting minutes found in Appendix C.

5.3.1 Committee Kickoff Meeting #1 – January 16, 2019

The Kickoff meeting included an introduction from Chairman Mr. Rob Sterling, and then a presentation and outlined that it has been almost 20 years since the Township has completed a comprehensive plan. He noted that during the last 20 years a large number of the original items have been completed. The meeting was followed by a presentation by Mr. Daniel Cook, of Alfred Benesch & Company about what a comprehensive plan is and what is required to be completed. Mr. Edward Brennan then spoke on the need for high-speed Internet in the Township.

A copy of the agenda, presentation, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.2 Committee Meeting #2 – March 20, 2019

This meeting included an update from Mr. Edward Brennan who had conversations with SCMA, Schuylkill Regional Airport, and representatives from Reading Anthracite regarding a development they would like to propose in the Township. Following the update, a presentation from Mr. Keith Hill, President of Consulting Gateway Corporation, began announcing who he is and what experience his firm provides to municipalities for internet development. He outlined a presentation on what his firm intends to do on an internet survey and to provide outreach to potential internet service providers (ISP) in the next year.

A copy of the agenda, presentation, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.3 Committee Meeting #3 – May 15, 2019

This workshop meeting included a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis which considered each of the items the group felt were best for each category. The committee was reminded that not everyone would have the same feelings about a threat or an opportunity. A full list of each item is provided in a more detailed description in Section 5.4 of this report.

Following the SWOT Analysis, the team began to work on a list of goals to be implemented after the planning process.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.4 Committee Meeting #4 – June 19, 2019

This workshop meeting included a update on the internet status from Mr. Keith Hill, President of Consulting Gateway Corporation.

The workshop included an updated on the status of the Foster Township Community Survey from Mr. Cook.
A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.5 Committee Meeting #5 – August 21, 2019

The Comprehensive plan meeting included a brief update of the internet status by Attorney Brennan, as well as a discussion on issues with ATV, drugs, and other traffic issues by Police Chief Nettles.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.6 Committee Meeting #6 – September 18, 2019

The September 2019 Comprehensive plan meeting included an introductory session with Wire Tele-View. With the study committee's assistance, the group also completed the 2045 NEPA MPO transportation study survey. The meeting concluded with a detailed evaluation and presentation on the findings of the Community Survey.

A copy of the agenda, presentation, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.7 Committee Meeting #7 – October 16, 2019

The planning meeting included an in-depth presentation from Mr. Frank Zukas of SEDCO who presented on the current and future status of the Highridge Business Park and future potential for an expansion at the Airport to include a smaller industrial park. He also presented on water and sewer needs from both a supply and treatment end.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.8 Committee Meeting #8 – February 19, 2020

The planning meeting included a review of the survey items and a workshop to review the currently identified and potential future goals for the township was held.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.9 Committee Meeting #9 – July 15, 2020

A public regrouping meeting was held at the Mount Pleasant Fire Company Picnic Grove due to COVID-19 restrictions. The meeting was to regroup and identity the outstanding focus points for the final comprehensive plan. Items discussed included an update from Attorney Brennan on the SCMA/BTMA 25-yr water allocation plans and SCMA current status of the Gordon Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion and potential implementation to the Township. A lengthily discussion on the development of the internet was also discussed.

A copy of the agenda, presentation, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.10 Committee Meeting #10 – August 19, 2020

Representatives of the Reading Anthracite Company presented on future Residential, Industrial and Commercial Development of their properties within the Township. Several concerns regarding preservation of the Buck Run Village District, water resources, and truck traffic were discussed.

A copy of the agenda, presentation, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.11 Committee Meeting #11 – October 21, 2020

An informal meeting was held with the committee to discuss the follow-up to the Airport Comprehensive Plan and follow-up to the Reading Anthracite Zoning change request.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.12 Committee Meeting #12 – April 21, 2021

ECA Solar and their representatives attended the Planning Meeting to discuss future plans solar development in Foster Township and Schuylkill County. Mr. Shawn Langen attended the meeting and also presented on the potential development of parcels of land owned by the CES Landfill.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.13 Committee Meeting #13 – May 19, 2021

The meeting included a detail overview of the majority of the maps required for the comprehensive plan, also with a presentation of the proposed Airport Master Site Plan and updated Reading Anthracite Zoning Map Change Request.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.14 Committee Meeting #14 – July 20, 2021

The meeting included a presentation on a proposed 20 lot residential development with a 14,000 SF retail center proposed by Reading Anthracite. The total development as proposed could develop as many as 130 lots.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.15 Committee Meeting #15 – September 15, 2021

The meeting included a presentation on the final maps developed for the project which included the existing and proposed land use changes.

A copy of the agenda, and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.3.16 Committee Meeting #16 – October 20, 2021

The meeting included the final presentation on the 2020 Comprehensive Plan. The Presentation reviewed the planning process, parties involved, and the goals developed as part of the process.

A copy of the agenda, presentation and meeting minutes from this meeting can be found Appendix C.

5.4 SWOT Analysis

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis was conducted by the Foster 2021 Planning Committee, which considered each of the items the group felt were best for each category. The committee was reminded that not everyone would have the same feelings about a threat or an opportunity. For example, ATV's, someone may have an understanding that this could be a strength if promoted property, while others on the committee felt ATV's were a threat to the Township.

5.4.1 Strengths

Strengths were items that the Committee felt were the strong points of Foster Township. Strengths identified included:

- Foster Township is a tightknit community
- Foster Township has potential for both Residential and Business Growth.
- Foster Township has well-maintained recreational facilities
- Foster Township has a stable financial ability
- Foster Township is a quiet community
- Foster Township has a large number of job potential with the Highridge industrial park
- Foster Township currently offers residents free garbage
- Foster Township currently has one of the lowest sewer rates in the county at $30/month and offers residents 6/months free sewer.
- Foster Township currently offers residents free ambulance coverage
- Foster Township currently offers residents local police coverage

5.4.2 Weaknesses

Weaknesses were items that the Committee felt were the weak points of Foster Township. Weaknesses identified included:

- Foster Township does not have access to highspeed broadband networks and has limited cell phone coverage
- A large majority of the land in the Township is held by a few entities including Reading Anthracite, and Girard Estates, and Blythe Township Municipal Authority, which may limit growth potential.
- There is a high volume of large truck traffic on SR901 (Sunbury Road)

- There is a high volume of mining trucks and mining operations in the area
- The area has limited water sources and limited options for sewer disposal
- The Township is located a significant distance from many services and stores
- The Township has limited fire protection
- There are sometimes odors from the landfill and biosolids application

5.4.3 Opportunities

Opportunities were items that the Committee felt were the opportunities for growth and expansion in Foster Township. Items identified as opportunities included:

- The Township has been very successful in grant writing for large projects.
- The Township has been categorized as a Federal Opportunity Zone.
- The Landfill currently provides the Township with a financial source of revenue to use towards large capital projects.
- The Township has a large amount of open space which helps provide a buffer between zoning districts

5.4.4 Threats

Threats were items that the Committee felt were the biggest threats to the Township and its residents. Items identified as threats included:

- The Schuylkill Regional Airport could be expanded into a large regional airport or cargo airport which could bring in more air traffic and noise to the residents.
- There is a large volume of unregulated ATV's, which seem to migrate into the Township from other portions of the County, PA and neighboring states. These visitors tend to have very little regard for the residents and current local and state laws.
- Drug use and distribution in the Township have increased in the past several years.
- The Township has a considerably low amount of blight compared to neighboring municipalities, but there's are still several blighted properties that are impacting the Township.
- The last several years the Township has been receiving a significant amount of stormwater, which has resulted in flooding of existing infrastructure and impacting residents and roadway.
- There are still legacy strip mine pits, mine shafts, and other dangers associated with mining in the area. Over the last several decades, PADEP has worked to reclaim some of these areas.
- The existing landfill has a lifetime, once the landfill closes, there will be a significant loss in revenue to the Township.
- There is a very limited tax base in the Township. The Township currently has a considerably low millage and would like to maintain that for the residents.

Section 6 // Goals

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6 Goals

Over the course of a year, and through numerous meetings and exercises, the committee has come up with a series of 25 goals for the Township to focus on over the next 10 years. Below is a discussion and action plan for each of those goals in order or priority.

6.1 Community Services and Infrastructure Element

6.1.1 Fire Protection

The Minersville Fire Rescue merged with the Mount Pleasant Fire Company in 2021 and currently serves Buck Run through its Mount Pleasant Station. The current Mount Pleasant station is currently low staffed and is supplemented by Fire Personnel from the Minersville Station. This present a major issue for response times in fire, medical, and accident response. The nearest responding station is currently South Cass Fire which has a response time of about 8 minutes, followed by Minersville Fire Company which has about a 10-minute response time.

The Township should look to work with the Minersville Fire Rescue to recruit and train new members in order to reduce response time and increase training levels in the Township.

Since the Minersville Fire Rescue is relatively new to the Buck Run Area, the Township should assist with training opportunities on hydrant locations and pressures through the assistance with the Blythe Township Municipal Authority.

6.1.2 Water Capacity/Operations

A conceptual cost plan and option of probable cost for a high-capacity service line that would serve Buck Run from the BTMA water storage tank near the Highridge Industrial Park was completed in 2019 with an estimated cost of $900,000. The recommendation was to break the project into two phases, which would allow for greater funding options. The Township submitted a grant request for $500,000 to complete Phase I, in 2019 for the proposed project, however, the project was not selected. The Township should consider submitting for future grant funding when they become available. The Township could also consider partnering with BTMA and SCMA on a proposed system interconnect, which would connect the BTMA Crystal Run Water System to the SCMA Highridge Water system and would allow both entities to transfer water between the two systems.

Several areas of the Township have been identified which are not currently served by public water. There has been a request from a resident to obtain public water service in the area of Turkey Road. A detailed option plan and option of probable cost was developed for this water line was completed in 2019 with estimates ranging from $85,000 to $115,000. The Township submitted a grant request in 2019 for the proposed project but was not selected. The Township should consider submitting for future grant funding when they become available.

Another area of the Township which is not currently served is the Airport and potential Airport Industrial Park. Schuylkill County Municipal Authority is currently working with SEDCO and Schuylkill County to identify needs and potential service routes for water service. The Township should provide a letter of support to SCMA and other entities for any grant funding they identify.

6.1.3 Sewer Capacity/Operations

Based on current discussions with Reading Anthracite and the Airport Authority, it would be anticipated that any type of commercial or residential development would most likely exceed the existing Foster Township current sewer allocation at the SCMA Gordon WWTP. SCMA is working with the Township on a revised Act 537 Plan and trying to identify future growth areas, and has included the Township in their effort..

During our discussion with SCMA, they have brought to the Township attention that there are additional sections of the Sewer Agreement that are not in compliance. Specifically, Section 4.02 Measurement of Flow, as defined by the Foster Meter, requires instantaneous flow readings be transmitted via telemetry to the Gordon Wastewater Treatment Plant so that they can view it on a chart recorder and totalize the readings daily. The telemetry system has not worked in many years.

The Township should plan on resolving this telemetry issue and add any projected cost to the Capital Improvements Plan.

6.1.4 Internet Development

The Township has enlisted the Consulting Gateway Corporation, an internet, and community design specialist to complete an assessment, public survey, and creation of recommendation report. The overall summary and results have not been completed at the time of this study; however, the final report and recommendations should be included as an amended summary of this section's goals.

6.1.5 Safety Improvements

The largest safety issue in the Township is currently with ATV and Off-road Vehicles.

The Township Police Chief has requested several special pieces of enforcement equipment including a drone. Drone usage would require the use of a licensed pilot in order to operate the equipment. The Township should consider the training and licensing of one of their officers to utilize the equipment once purchased.

The Police Chief has requested the Township purchase and install a digital license plate reader and computer system in at least one of the township patrol vehicles for the review and enforcement of motor vehicle license and insurance violations.

The Police Chief has requested the Township purchase and install a series of security cameras to be installed at key locations within the township. For security purposes, the list of locations will not be published.

6.1.6 Update Property Maintenance Codes and Building Codes as Necessary

The Township has currently utilized a two-tier approach for property maintenance. The initial approach typically includes the Foster Township Police Department. When additional citations and expertise is required, they enlist the services of a third-party code enforcement officer. The current Property Maintenance Code is the 2006, the Township should look to update their ordinance to modernize the PCM to the 2021 edition or latest published.

The Township should also complete a comprehensive review of their building permits and update ordinances as necessary as well as periodically update fee schedules.

Based on survey feedback, the Township is in the process of updating their website. The Township has updated and uploaded their permit applications more transparent and accessible to Township residents and contractors.

6.1.7 Website Upgrades\Communications

The Township should look to update its website to include a mobile web format and well as update the content of the site. The Website should have a detailed review to remove outdated content and be updated to include more recent ordinances and studies. The Township has hired a web developer to update the website and upload the updated forms and ordinances. Due to recent law changes the Township should appoint an annual webmaster to keep and maintain the website on an annual basis and also train at least two staff members on how to uploaded meeting agendas and meeting minutes to the website.

Based on survey feedback, the Township is utilizing a more electronic communications method to the communicate with Township residents, as well as continue the paper-based system which the residents seem to favor. The Township has currently published two editions of the "Foster Township Dispatch" a quarterly newsletter to Township residents. Copies of the newsletter should be uploaded to the Township website as well.

6.1.8 Energy Audit

The Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code, Section 301.1 Recommends an Energy Conservation Plan Element to promote energy conservation and the effective utilization of renewable energy sources. The Township owns a considerable number of buildings and utility infrastructure that utilizes power and energy. As a recommendation to this study, the Township should consider hiring an energy audit consultant to complete an energy audit for the Township. The audit will identify both small and larger projects to conserves energy and reduces budget increases, ensures the optimum operation of municipal facilities;

identify maintenance issues before they escalate into system failures; and will provide a basis for scheduling and budgeting for periodic maintenance. Items identify should be incorporated into a Capital Improvement Plan.

In addition to the Township Completing an energy audit, the Township should encourage through zoning, subdivision and land development, and building code new energy standards and practices.

6.2 Municipal Function

6.2.1 Asset Management Plan

The Township should look to create an Asset Management Plan (AMP). An asset is property owned by the Township which has a certain value, provides for a critical function, and has a useful lifespan. AMP is a living document that provides an overview of Foster Township's asset conditions and financial preparedness in order to meet the service expectation of the community. It should be reviewed annually and new equipment added, and damage or disposed of equipment removed.

Items that should be inventoried, and condition assessed should include township vehicles, larger township maintenance equipment, police equipment, office equipment, and computers, playground and park equipment, roadways, street signs, sewer utilities, pumping stations, grinder pumps, streetlights, and other township-owned equipment. Much of the inventory and condition assessment can be completed by Township Employees and tracking in software such as excel. Once completed, it will allow the Township to plan for needed improvement projects and to complete a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

6.2.2 Capital Improvements Plan

As recommended by Pennsylvania MPC, Foster Township should look to develop a short- and long-term Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). At a minimum Foster Township should identity a five-year CIP which would include is a collection of projects the Township looks to complete or equipment to be purchased in the next five years with a value of greater than $50,000 or an estimated life of six years or longer such as the acquisition of property, purchase of new equipment, major rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities or new construction, and consulting fees for special, one-time projects.

6.3 Housing Element

6.3.1 Encourage Residential Development

Based on the population growth in the Township the current trend is declining. The Township needs to look to increase its population in order to remain viable. The Township has currently added about a dozen new homes over the last 10 years, which have added approximately 25 new residents.

The Township should encourage planned residential developments (PRD's) that preserve the character of the Township. The Township is currently in the process of creating a redevelopment authority which would allow for the purchase or sale of properties and complete improvement projects, or portions of the Master Site Plan competed in 2018.

6.3.2 Maintain and Improve the Existing Housing

Maintain and improve the existing housing stock through increased diversity and encouragement of modern, adequate households. The objectives to attain this goal is to promote the rehabilitation of deteriorating housing and the elimination of dilapidated housing to steady the existing housing stock.

6.4 Transportation Element

6.4.1 Safety Improvements

Through the planning process, there were several items of transportation and safety concerns from residents. The major items were the off bound ramps from Interstate I-81 and SR901 (Sunbury Road), in which there have been several major accidents including several involving fatalities and vehicles speeding through the Village.

The current speed limit along Route 901 ranges from 55 to 40 MPH. In order to reduce speeds in the Village Area of Buck Run, the Township would need to complete a Formal Speed Restriction Engineering and Traffic Study. The Study would require an engineer hired by the Township to complete speed monitoring, site inspections, and speed calculations to formally determine design curve speeds and what the 85% percentile speed of traffic traveling through the Township is. The Township could in theory move forward with a formal speed study and the study may determine that the 85% percentile is greater than the posted speed limit and submission of said study may result in PennDOT increasing the speed limit. Additional information on Traffic Studies can be found in the PennDOT LTAP technical bulletin #165.The Township should request from PennDOT and PA local representatives that a formal traffic and safety study be conducted at the intersection of I-81 and SR901 (Sunbury Road), as this would be outside the requirements of the Township to complete.

The Township should request from PennDOT and PA local representatives that a formal traffic and safety study be conducted at the intersection of I-81 and SR901 (Sunbury Road), as this would be outside the requirements of the Township to complete.

6.4.2 Increased advisory signage within the Township

The Township has been receiving a request from residents to complete additional signage and line painting in the Township. The most requested area was at the intersection of Ball Park Road and Upper Beechwood. A stop sign study was completed at this intersection in May of 2019, and the recommendation was to provide for traffic control lines and legends, as well as advisory signage at this location as opposed to the creation of a three-way, stopped intersection. Final line painting and signage improvements were complete in the Spring of 2020. Other areas of the Township should be reviewed for no parking, sharp curves and blind intersections. The Township should work with SEDCO for additional signage on Highridge Park Road and Schuylkill County on Airport Road.

In 2012 the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) revised the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to require that signage meet a minimum requirement for retroreflective sheeting. Many of the signs installed in the Township predate this requirement. The Township should consider implementing a signage replacement program to replace all signage in the Township within a reasonable timeframe to meet both the MUTCD as well as the PennDot Publication 236M, Handbook of Approved Signs. The Township should focus on high-priority intersections first.

The Township may also want to consider post delineators and signpost reflectors be added to assisting with winter roadway maintenance.

6.4.3 Elimination of Dirt Roads/Dead Ends

The Township has worked diligently over the last 20 years to eliminate many of the dirt road and dead-end intersections in the Township. One of the last remaining and used regularly, dirt roads to exist is Hill Road. A portion of this roadway will be reconstructed and paved in 2021. The remaining portion of the roadway was not completed due funding constraints. During past discussions, drainage improvements may be necessary prior to paving of the roadway.

Several other dirt roads exist in the Township, but these are mostly access road for the rear properties of homes or right of way access points for utilities.

Two roadways remaining in the Township do not have a cul-de-sac and consist of a dead-end. The two roadways are Hall Road and Mt. Pleasant Roadway. A discussion with the roadcrew is that these areas do not present a significant issue with winter maintenance.

6.4.4 Increase Public Transportation

It would be encouraged that the Township reach out to the Schuylkill Transportation System to identify any potential to create a route to the Township Building, the Schuylkill Highridge Business Park, and the PennDOT park-and-ride lot to encourage more carpooling leading to less congestion of roadways. Township residents could also use the service, which will be available for those employed within the park. Increased carpooling and use of public transportation is a benefit to the residents as well as the environment in terms of air quality.

6.5 Environmental Element

6.5.1 Abandoned Mine Reclamation

One of the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan was to reduce or eliminate a significant portion of the existing mine hazards in the Township. The Township should look to meet with Mr. Bernie Walko, Chief of the Developmental Unit, with the PADEP Bureau of Abandoned Mines to identify any next project actions for the Department to investigate. The Department received federal funding annual for reclamation. The Township could assist PADEP with developing a priority list of projects in Foster Township.

6.5.2 Natural Resources

One of the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan is to protect the Township's natural resources which are vital to the resident's health and character of the community. Objectives are to maintain and protect woodland upstream of the Crystal Run Reservoir and reduce sedimentation and pollution into the drinking water supply. Forested areas are also necessary to protect and maintain the stability of steep and very steep slopes, as well as to protect and mitigate flooding problems in downstream communities.

6.6 Land Use Element

Provide opportunities for development while maintaining the rural character and nature of the Township. The objectives to attain this goal are as follows:

6.6.1 Encourage development and redevelopment

Encourage development and redevelopment of land in a manner consistent with the character of existing development.

6.6.2 Encourage the expansion of new and diverse development

Where appropriate, encourage the expansion of new and diverse development by providing updates in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). This new type of diverse development could include the use of cluster developments, townhomes, and higher-level senior housing.

6.6.3 Encourage development bringing jobs and tax revenue to the Township.

The Township should continue to work with and encourage development bringing jobs and tax revenue to the Township. This item would include working with major partners such as SEDCO and SCMA.

6.6.4 Work with Major Landowners

The Township should work with major landowners (i.e., Reading Anthracite, Blythe Township Municipal Authority, Schuylkill Regional Airport, CES Landfill, SEDCO) in order to achieve desired development.

6.7 Financial Element

6.7.1 Encourage Business Development

The Township is fortunate to have close proximity to the Interstate I-81 Corridor. Over the last several years, there has been consideration of developing both Exit 116 and Exit 112 which are both in or within close proximity to the Township. The township should look to work closely with the utility companies, economic development agencies, and developers to improve and develop large-scale business in the Township in the area of the Interstate Exits. This will allow for additional taxing revenue while protecting the character of Buck Run.

6.7.2 Develop Future Sources of Income

The Township has a considerable amount of financial capability from tax revenue, and tipping fees generated from the landfill. It would be recommended that the Township work with a municipal financial planning firm to develop a method to comprehensively grow the Township's saving and provide for a future long-term stable operating budget.

Appendix A // Maps

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.1
Topographic\Location Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.2
Aerial Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.3
Existing Land Use Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.4
Existing Zoning Map

Appendix A // Exhibit A.5
Green Space Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.6
Road Classification\Transportation Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.7
Steep Slope Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.8
Hydrological Features Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.9
Soils Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.10
Sewer Service Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.11
Water Service Map

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Appendix A // Exhibit A.12
Proposed Land Use Map

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Appendix B // Census Data

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Appendix B // Exhibit B.1
2010 Census Data

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Appendix B // Exhibit B.2
2000 Census Data

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Appendix C // Meeting Minutes

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Appendix D // Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Review

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Appendix E // Public Participation

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