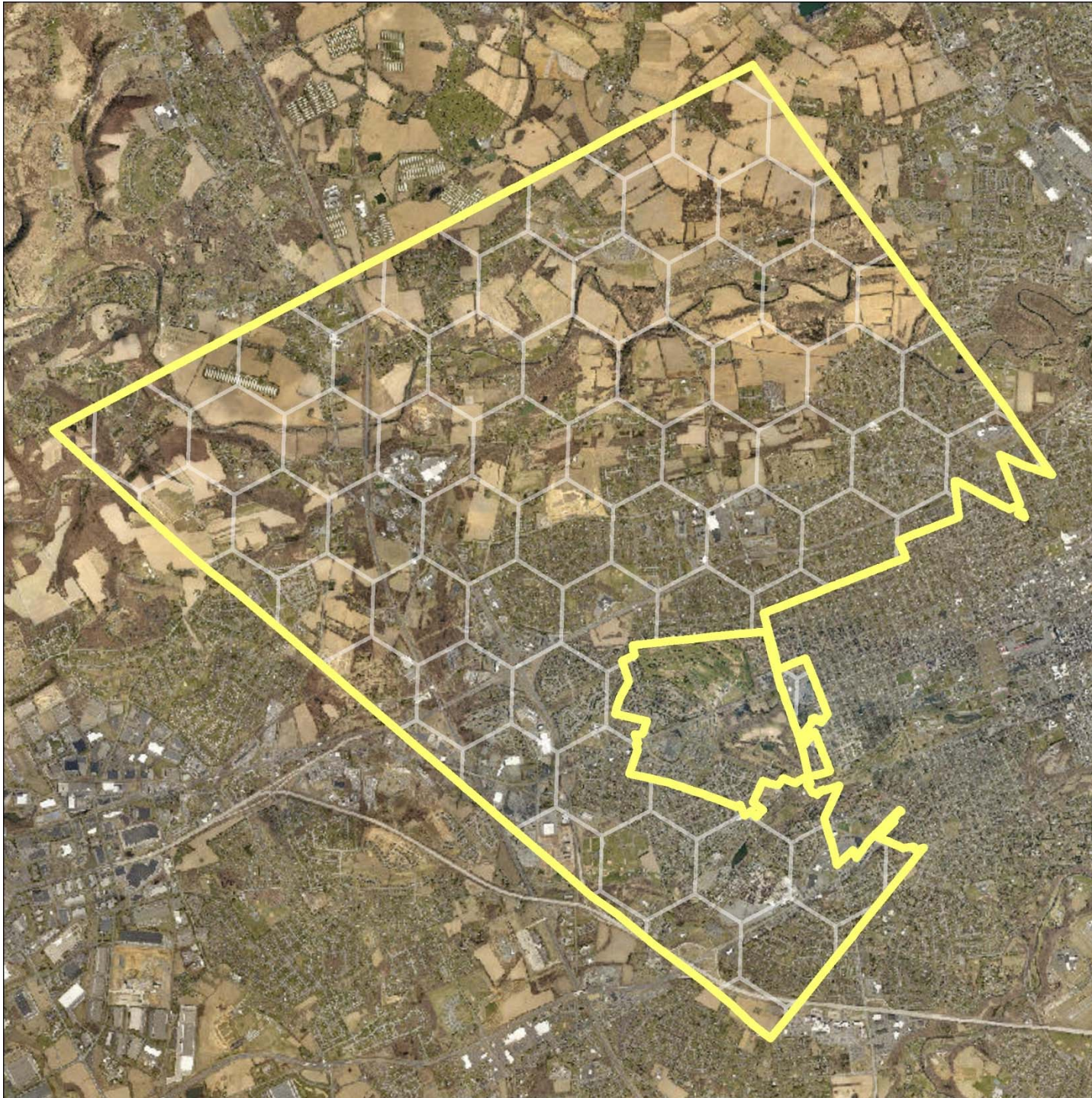


comprehensive plan update

swt

Existing
Conditions
Report

June 18, 2019



Introduction

This report introduces current planning trends and highlights changes that have occurred in South Whitehall Township since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. This will be accomplished using a graphic intensive approach to present data. Data presented in this report is primarily derived from US Census Sources, including the 2010 Decennial Census, 2016 American Community Survey (5 year estimates), and Longitudinal Employment Household Dynamics (LEHD). Other data sources include Pennsylvania, Lehigh County and Lehigh Valley Planning Commission information.

Planning Trends

Cities and suburbs are constantly changing and recent trends are certainly presenting new challenges. Consumer, developer, workforce and municipal expectations continue to evolve and urban development must react accordingly. The listing provided includes both planning trends and potential paradigm shifts that are occurring naturally and where policy focus might be considered. These trends interrelate across all planning disciplines and should be addressed with consideration to proven traditional planning strategies.

SUSTAINABILITY

Improving the quality of people's lives while living within the capacities of supporting natural and human systems

RESILIENCY

Urban resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. Chronic stressed include, but are not limited to, high unemployment, poor or overtaxed infrastructure, water shortages, earthquakes, floods, disease outbreaks, and terrorist attacks.

eCOMMERCE

Ecommerce sales have risen significantly over the past several years with sales projected to increase from 1.3 trillion in 2014 to 4.5 trillion in 2021 (Statista, 2019).



Planning implications include a growing number of brick/mortar store closings, many of which are converting to Efulfillment centers. Policy should recognize the impacts of Ecommerce on freight deliveries, the design of transportation facilities and the inevitable changes Ecommerce will bring.



AUTONOMOUS MOBILITY

The way people and goods travel is changing, driven by a series of converging technological and social trends. This shift includes a move away from personally owned, driver-driven vehicles and toward a future mobility system including driverless vehicles and shared mobility. Planning for AV advancements ensures that this new technology is harnessed in beneficial ways and with the full understanding that AVs will have important ramifications on other key planning areas, including transit, public health, and social equity.

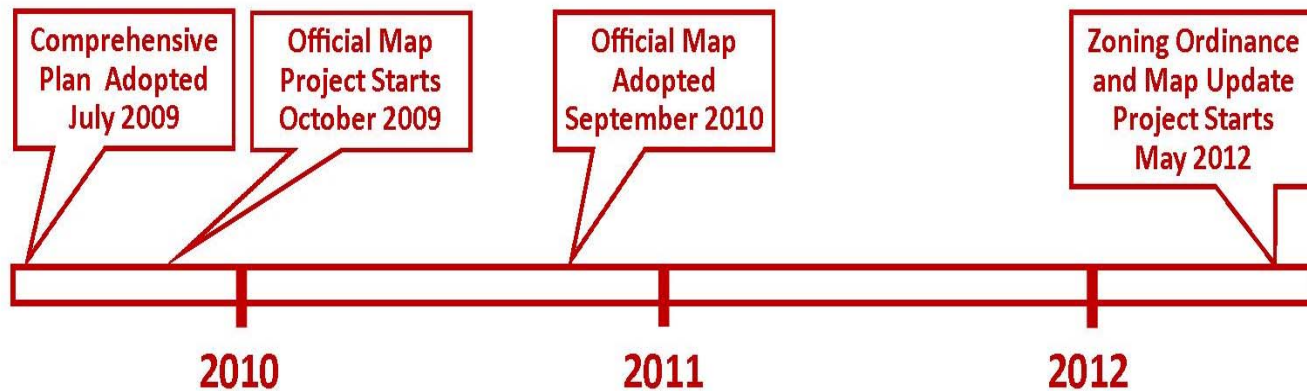
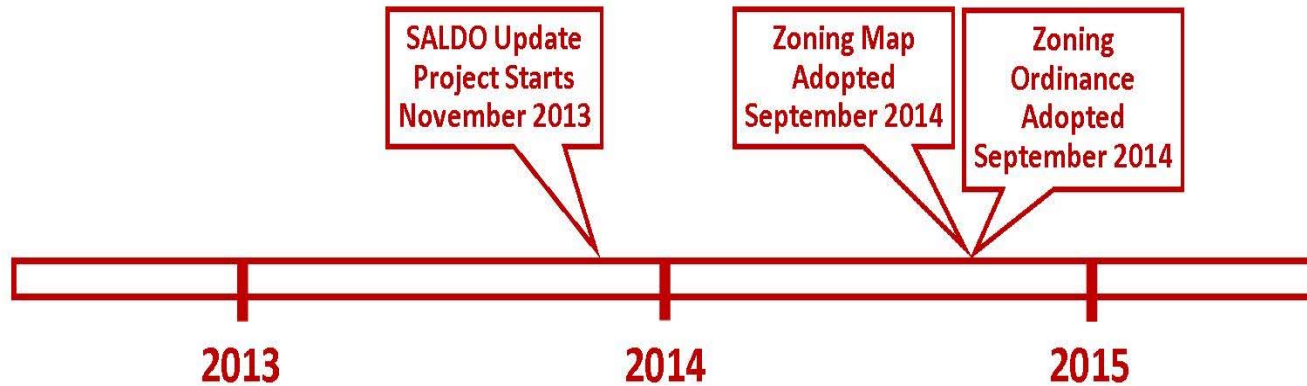
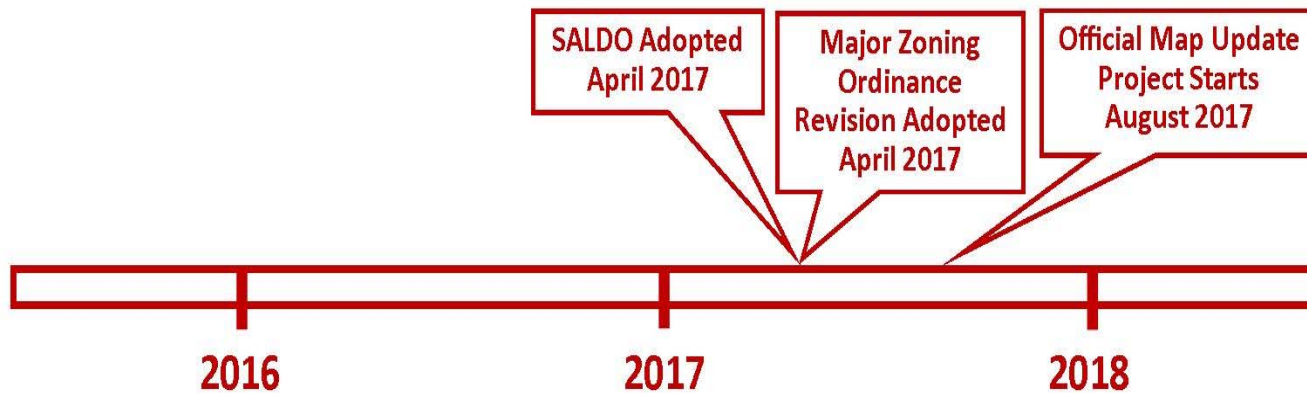
PLACE MAKING



Decades of suburban sprawl has led to the creation of boring, single use developments and empty downtowns. Studies are showing that there is a real dollar value in community policy that promotes the creation of real places that provide an experience and sense of ownership over strip center corridors, franchise architecture and cookie-cutter designs, which are declining nationally.

CLIMATE

Studies show that human-caused change is real and affecting our planet at an alarming rate. Development processes that implement more resilient infrastructure protection and that plans for post-disaster implementation should become a community priority.



Accomplishments/ Implementation


Following the adoption of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, the Township adopted their Official Map. This was followed by an update of the Township Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map including specific rezonings and the addition of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) regulations. The intent of the TND standards was to preserve the existing walkable villages and to offer incentives for the development and redevelopment of selected areas as traditional, walkable, mixed-used neighborhoods. Amendments to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance soon followed along with additional incremental improvements and enhancements to the Township Zoning Ordinance.



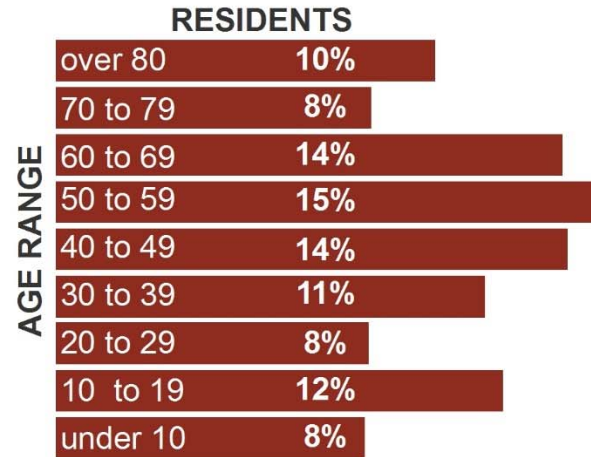
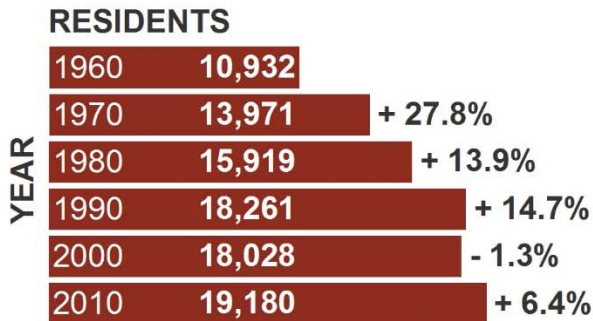
Demographic Profile

This section of the report puts forth data related to the following:

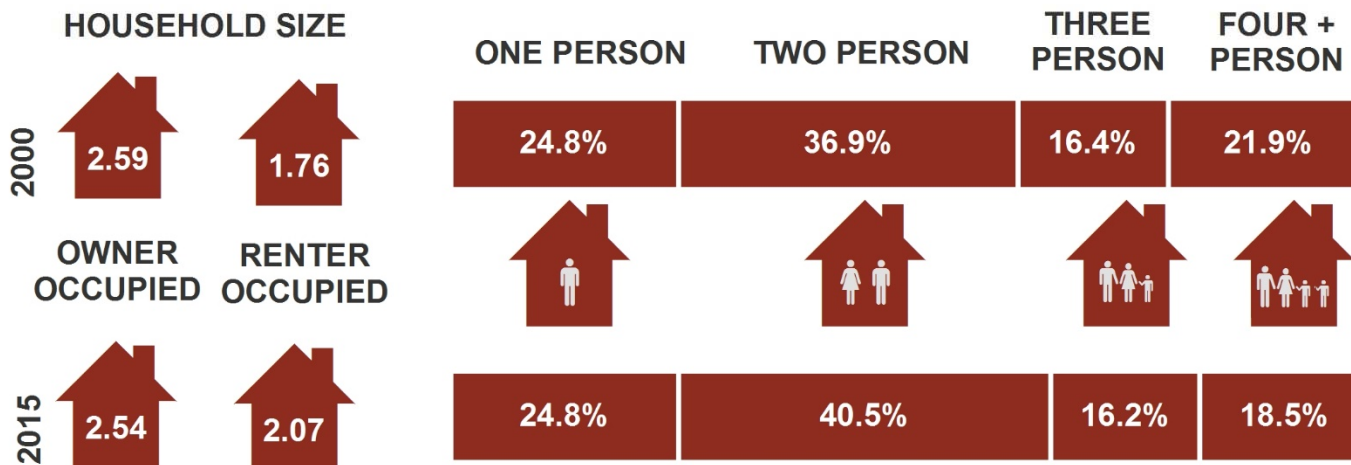
- ❖ Population & Households
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Economy

 **19,541**
SWT POPULATION
* 2011-2015 ACS

2000 MEDIAN AGE **45.9** → **48.2** 2015 MEDIAN AGE
* 2000 US Census * 2011-2015 ACS



2000 OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS **6,943** → **7,707** 2015 OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS



Demographic Profile

Population & Households

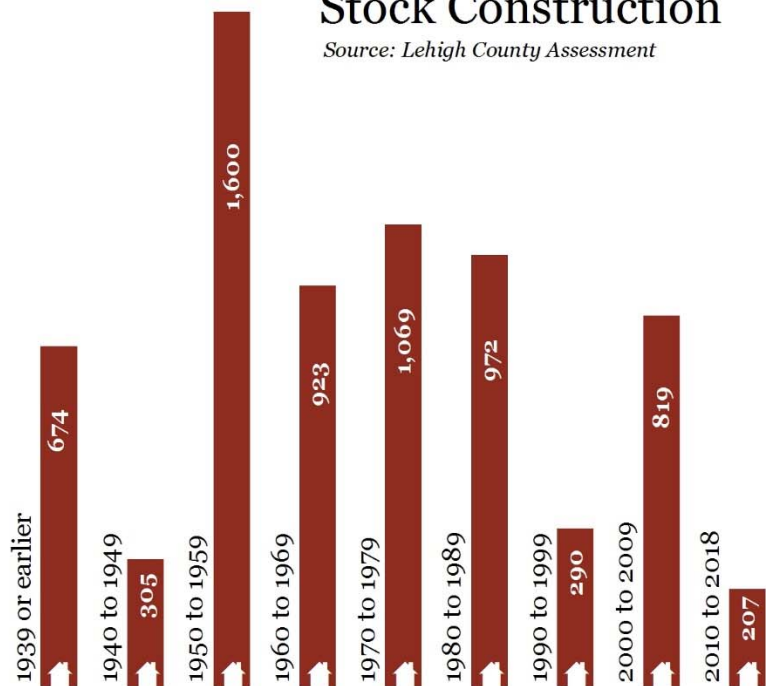
There has been a roughly 2% annual population increase in South Whitehall Township since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. The Township's median age rose slightly from 45.9 to 48.2 years with more than 50% of the population between the ages of 30 and 69.

Occupied housing units increased consistent with increasing population demands. Of interest is the increase in renter occupied housing perhaps suggesting a shift in housing preference and desire for mobility.

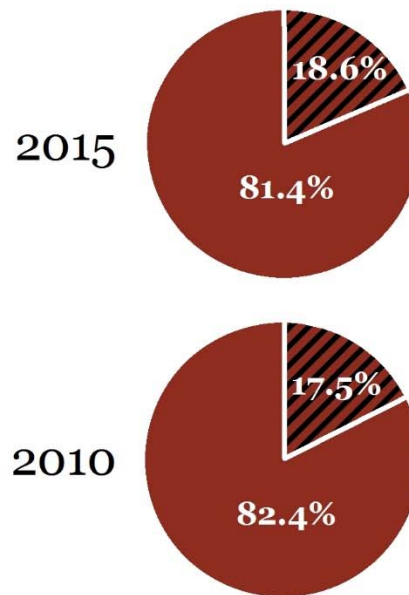
When household size is examined by tenure, there is a decrease in owner occupied household size and an increase in renter occupied household size. Overall two-person households increased and households of four or more decreased.

Year of Housing Stock Construction

Source: Lehigh County Assessment



Housing Unit Tenure

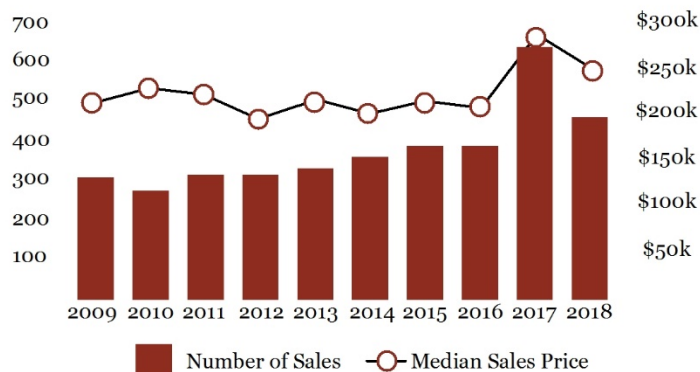


Housing

A review of Lehigh County housing and sales data found that the majority of South Whitehall Township's housing stock was constructed after World War II and prior to 1990. A spike in housing construction occurred in the early 2000's prior to the recession but housing construction today generally remains below historic levels.

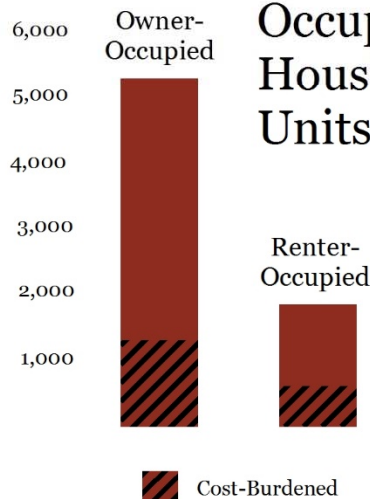
Annual home sales have seen a modest increase since 2009 with the exception of 2017, which saw over 600 home sales within the Township. This may be due to pre-sales related to new Township subdivisions. The median sales price has fluctuated since 2009 again with the exception of 2017 where the median sales price was approximately \$275,000.

House Sales



Source: Lehigh County Assessment

Occupied Housing Units (2015)

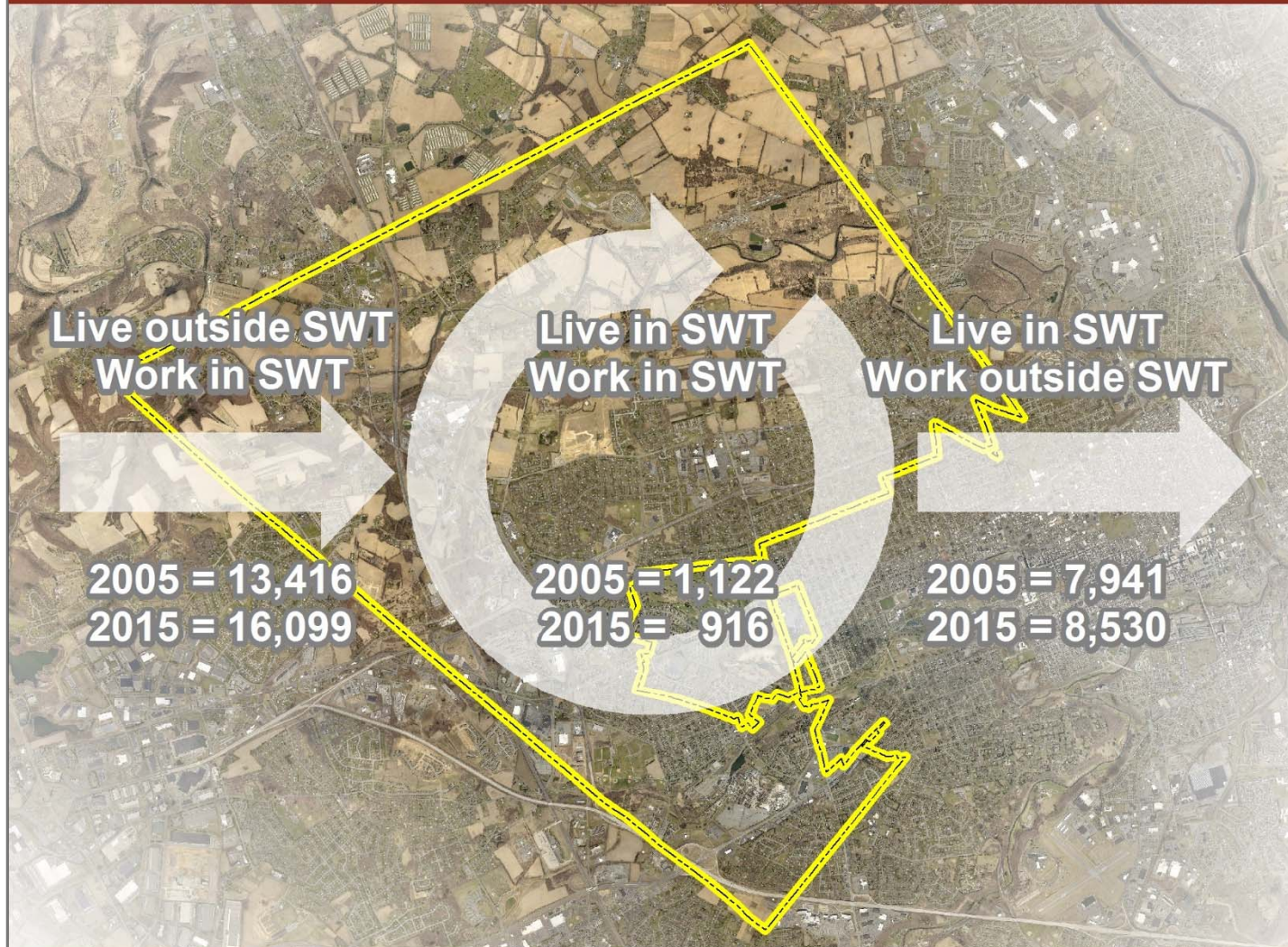


Source: US Census, American Community Survey

Affordability

US Census data shows an increase in median rent of roughly 30% between 2010 and 2015. Meanwhile, median mortgage payments increased by only 9%. HUD describes those who pay more than 30% of their income on housing as "cost burdened", making it difficult to afford other expenses such as transportation, medical, food and clothing. 30% of Township residents with mortgages and 42% of renters fall into this category.

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics



17% Increase in total jobs in South Whitehall Township

Over 4% increase in Workers living in South Whitehall

Roughly 20% decrease in those living and working in South Whitehall

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program is part of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau. The program produces employee/employer data and other economic indicators that local and state agencies can utilize when making decisions about their local economies.



Development Triggers

Utilities

Natural gas, electricity, telephone, cable, water and sewer are just a few of the utilities that require transmission infrastructure from source to end-user.

Planning for utilities can take on many forms. Cellular tower location and stealth design, fiber optic arrays, intelligent transportation infrastructure are just a few of the many challenges offered. While it is important to both retrofit older systems and properly site newer systems...it is equally important to consider policy that offers solutions for long-term maintenance and operation.



South Whitehall Public Water



2019

5,914 customers

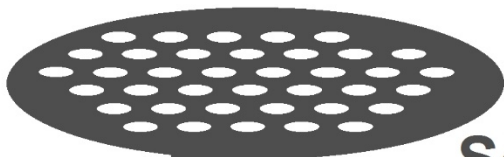
1.8 million gallons per day



2007

5,370 customers

1.52 million gallons per day



South Whitehall Public Sewer

2007

1.9 MGD

2019

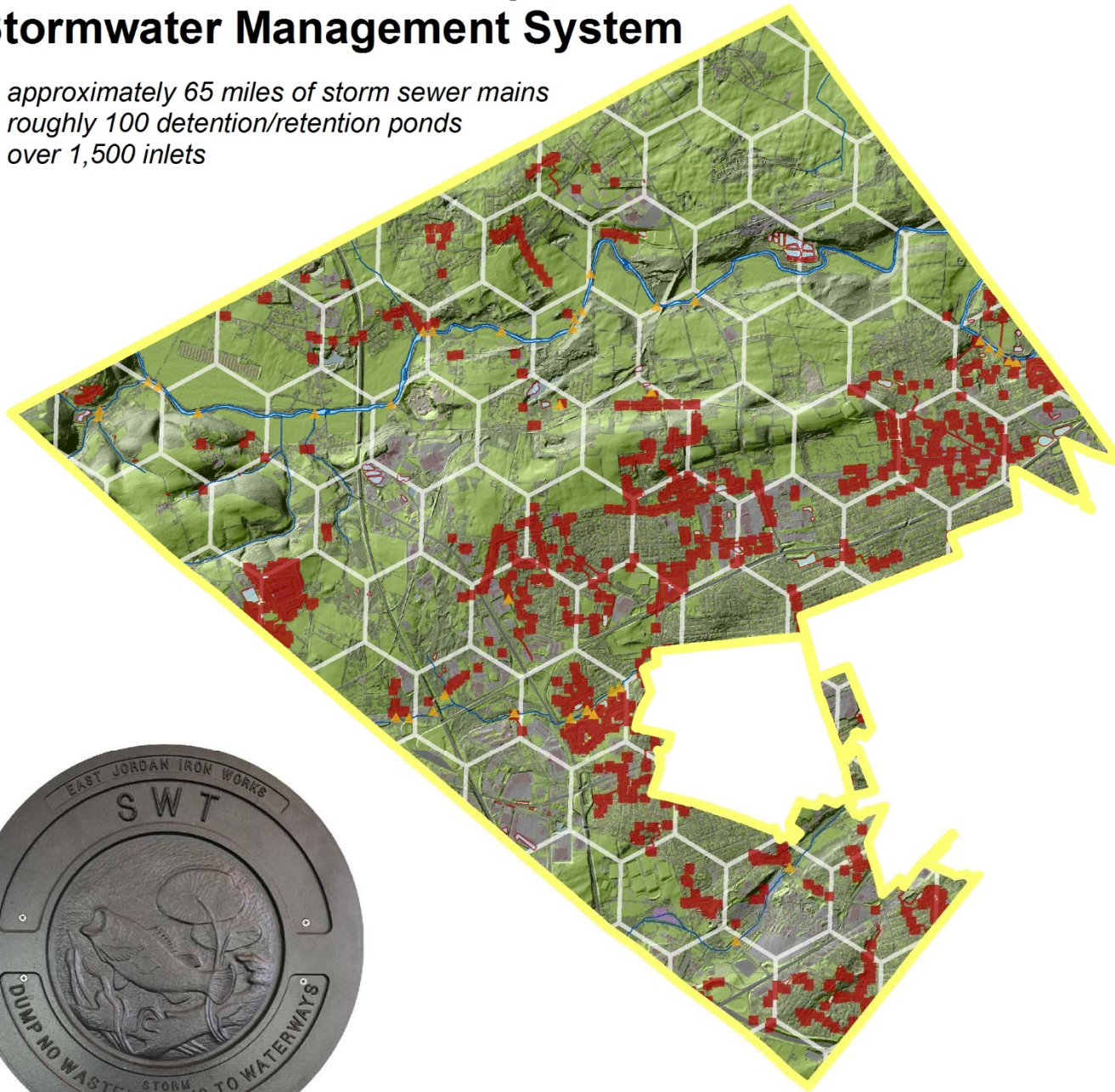
2.26 MGD

Utilities: Water and Sewer

Two of the more important planning structures required of Pennsylvania municipalities are the MS4 Stormwater Program and Act 537 Sewage Facilities Program. PA Act 537 requires municipalities to develop and implement a sewage plan that addresses present and future needs. Policy will need to promote land-use coordination accordingly.

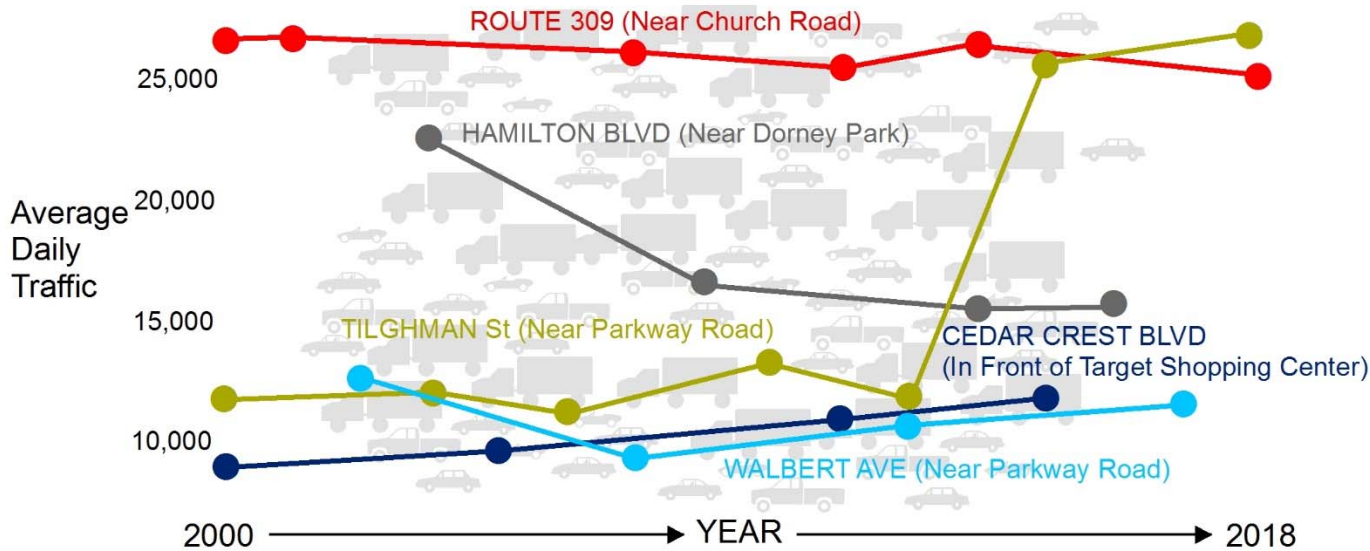
South Whitehall Township Stormwater Management System

- approximately 65 miles of storm sewer mains
- roughly 100 detention/retention ponds
- over 1,500 inlets

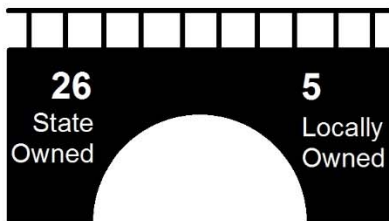


Utilities: Stormwater

Stormwater runoff is commonly transported through municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). These conveyance systems are often owned by a municipality and designed to convey stormwater through storm drains, pipes, and/or ditches. To prevent harmful pollutants from being washed or dumped into MS4s, system operators are required to obtain permits (NPDES) and develop stormwater management programs (SWMPs). Program goals are to minimize the discharge of pollutants by implementing and managing best management practices.



BRIDGES



16 Functionally Obsolete
1 Structurally Deficient

HIGH CRASH CORRIDORS



Route 22
Cedar Crest Boulevard

Transportation
Improvement
Program

CONGESTED CORRIDORS

North Cedar Crest Boulevard
(Orefield Road to Parkway Boulevard)

Route 22*
(Route 100 to Wood Avenue)

State Route 309
(Route 873 to Walbert Avenue)



309 & Tilghman Interchange
Beginning 2021

Route 22 Widening
Beginning 2022

309 Betterment Project
Beginning 2021

Transportation

SWT consists of 108.2 miles of Township roadway and 37.18 miles of State roadway. The highest traveled roads include SR309, Interstate 78, Interstate 476, and US Route 22 at more than 20,000 trips per day.

Transportation Improvement Program

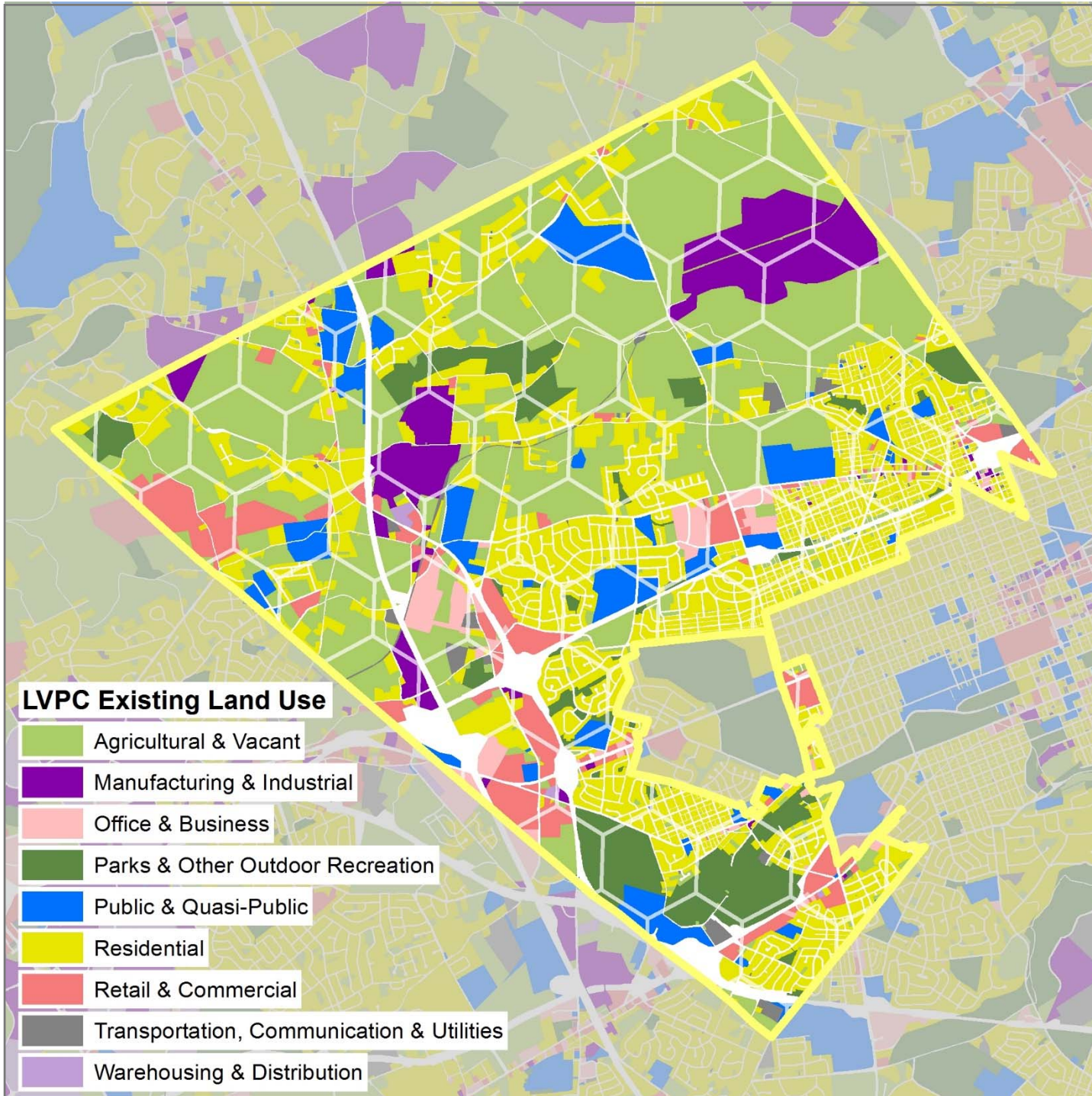
Larger infrastructure improvement projects are funded through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). There are three (3) projects included in the TIP for SWT.

Congestion Corridors

High traffic congestion corridors are identified in the 2016 Congestion Management Process (CMP) report. Several model inputs are used to make these determinations including percentage of truck traffic. Three (3) congestion corridors have been identified in SWT.

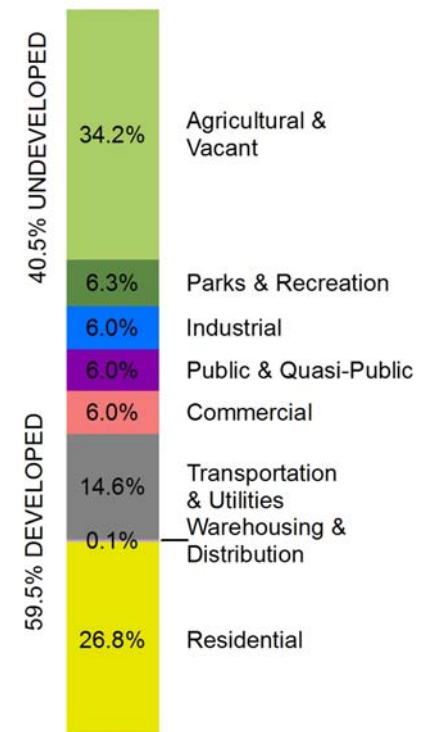
High-Crash Corridors

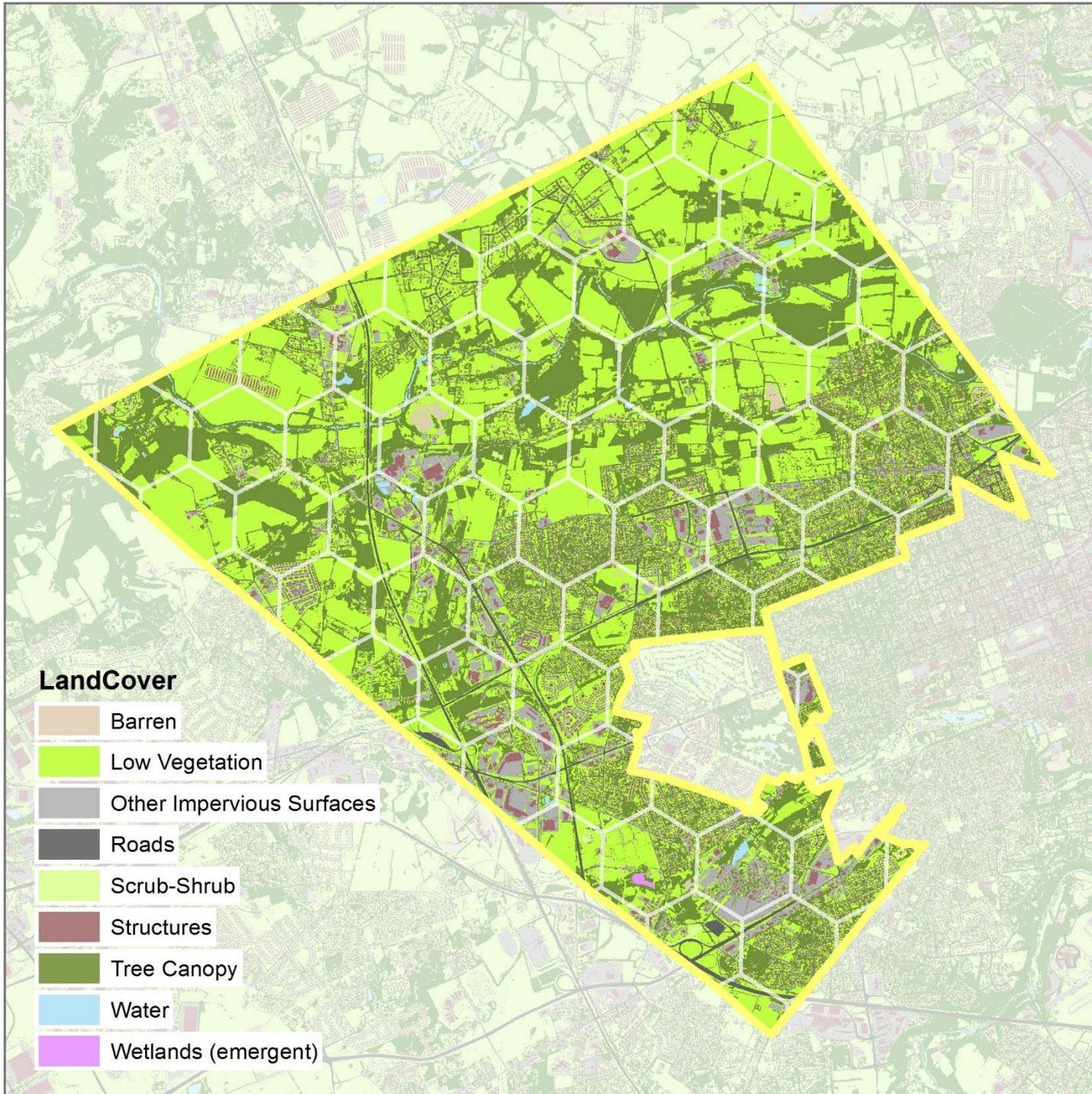
High crash corridors and intersections are identified in the 2016 Traffic Safety Plan. The plan includes injury and fatality data along with a series of mitigation strategies designed to minimize or eliminate future events. Two (2) corridors have been identified in SWT.



Existing Land Use

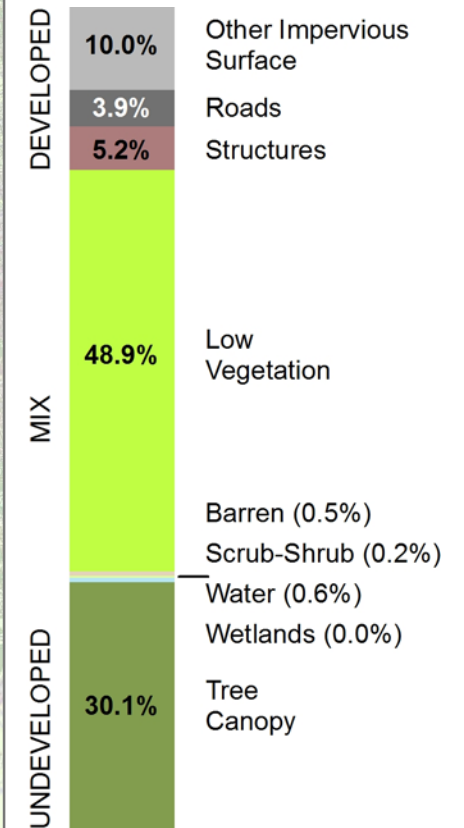
The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission tracks existing land use by parcel. The land use for a parcel is primarily determined by the “highest” use. A parcel with more than one use is classified according to the most intensive use. For residential parcels over 10 acres, the first 10 acres is classified “Residential” and the remainder is classified “Agricultural & Vacant”.





Land Cover

Land cover is another tool that can be used to assess development use and patterns. Parcel are examined based on the physical characteristics of the land surface making it easier to determine developed lands from undeveloped lands. In SWT, there is a clear line of demarcation between lands north of the Huckleberry Ridge and those to the south.



"Low Vegetation" include agriculture, lawn areas, etc...

TOTALS	46	161,385 sf	197,540 sf	964 units
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YEAR PROJECTS **NON-RESIDENTIAL** REDEVELOPMENT RESIDENTIAL

2018	3	9,600 sf	N/A	
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Catering Pavilions, Hamilton Animal Care, New Foods Building and Shaded Seating Area, Permit 4 Application Nestle Purina

2017	10	37,500 sf	18,181 sf	934 units
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Univest/Jamba Juice/Moe's, Duck Donuts Building, Access Improvement Kratzer Elementary School, New Maintenance Building, Dorney Park Project 2018, The Fields at Blue Barn Meadows, the Hills at Winchester/Regency at South Whitehall, KRE Spring View, 30 West Twins, Nestle Purina PetCare

2016	3	18,575 sf	9,020 sf	
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Dorney Park Haunted House, Liquor Control Board Building, Cedar Point West 2015 Re-Development

2015	5	3,200 sf		
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4845 Crackersport Road

2014	6	3,055 sf	5,300 sf	
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Covenant Transport, Overflow Parking Lot, Locker Building, Snake Pit, Broadway Car Wash, Grille 3501

2013	4	24,175 sf	6,839 sf	15 units
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McDonalds at Hamilton and Lincoln, Allentown Family Foot Care, Rothrock Body Work Building, Ressler Acres

2012	5	29,280 sf	113,071 sf	
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Planet Snoopy Improvements, Stinger Roller Coaster, Hamilton Court Lot B, Cetronia Ambulance Corps Joint Operations Facility, Dorney Square

2011	2		9,910 sf	
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PPL Facilities Expansion (Church Road), Zator Law Office Building Expansion

2010	4	36,000 sf	9,128 sf	15 units
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Hamilton Court Land Development, Demon Drop, Giant Food Store, Parkland Place

2009	4		26,091 sf	
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PPL Walbert Training Center, New Theater Building, McDonalds at Cedar Crest and Tilghman, Daniels Mini Dealership

Projects/Subdivisions

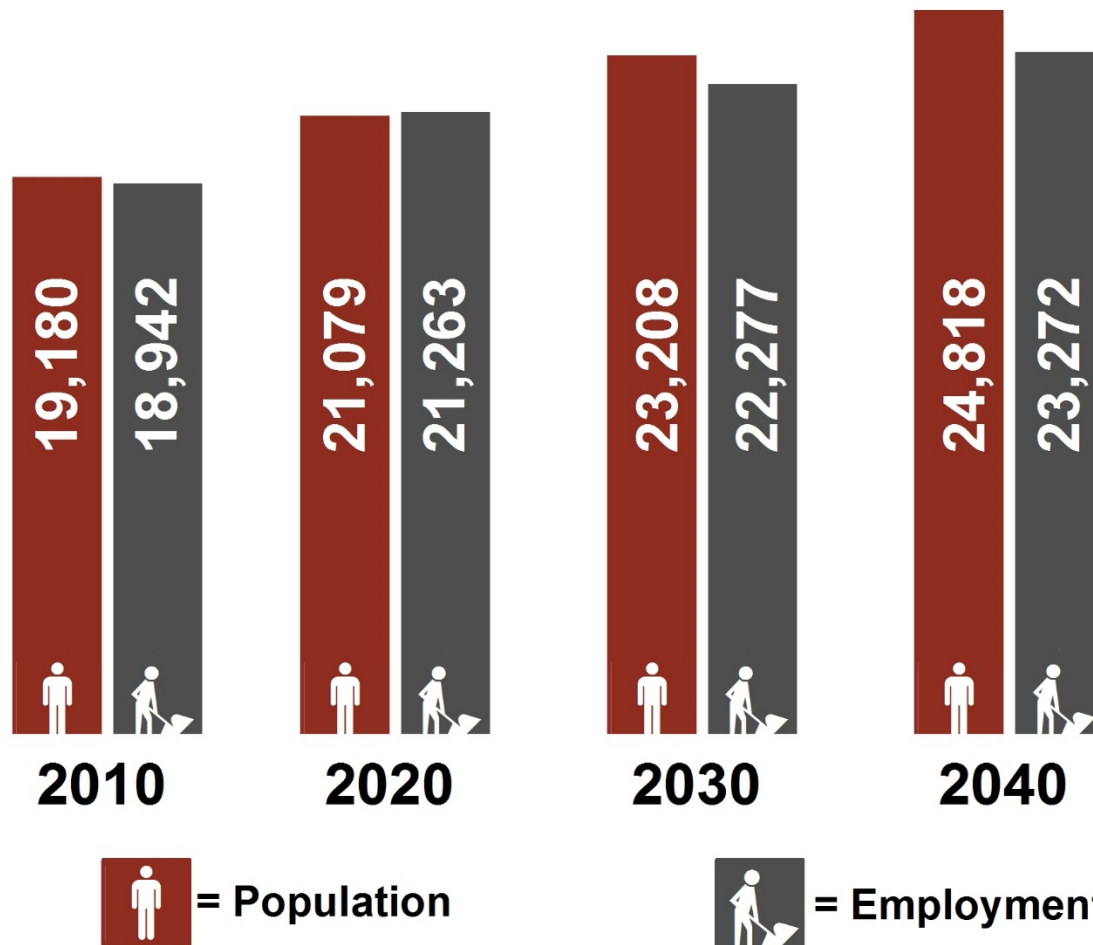
Several land developments have been considered and approved since 2009. Of those, 49 major land development projects have been recorded, an indication that projects are clearly moving forward. These projects total 644,201 square feet of non-residential, 216,909 square feet of redevelopment and 1,036 residential units. The infographic on the left classifies projects based on their year of completion.

There are 12 projects that had their plan recorded since the last comprehensive plan and are not currently completed. It should be noted that these 12 projects were reviewed and approved at various times since 2009.

According to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission:

South Whitehall's population will increase by 29.4%.

South Whitehall's employment will increase by 22.9%.



Projections

In 2017, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) released updated demographic projections through 2040. These projections help inform and guide future planning efforts.

Population

Overall the LVPC projects the Lehigh Valley's population to increase 25.6% by 2040. The population for South Whitehall Township is projected to increase at a higher rate of 29.4% or 5,638 people by 2040.

Employment

Overall the LVPC projects the Lehigh Valley's employment rate to increase by 31% by 2040. The employment for South Whitehall Township is projected to increase by a lesser rate at 22.9% or 4,330 jobs.

