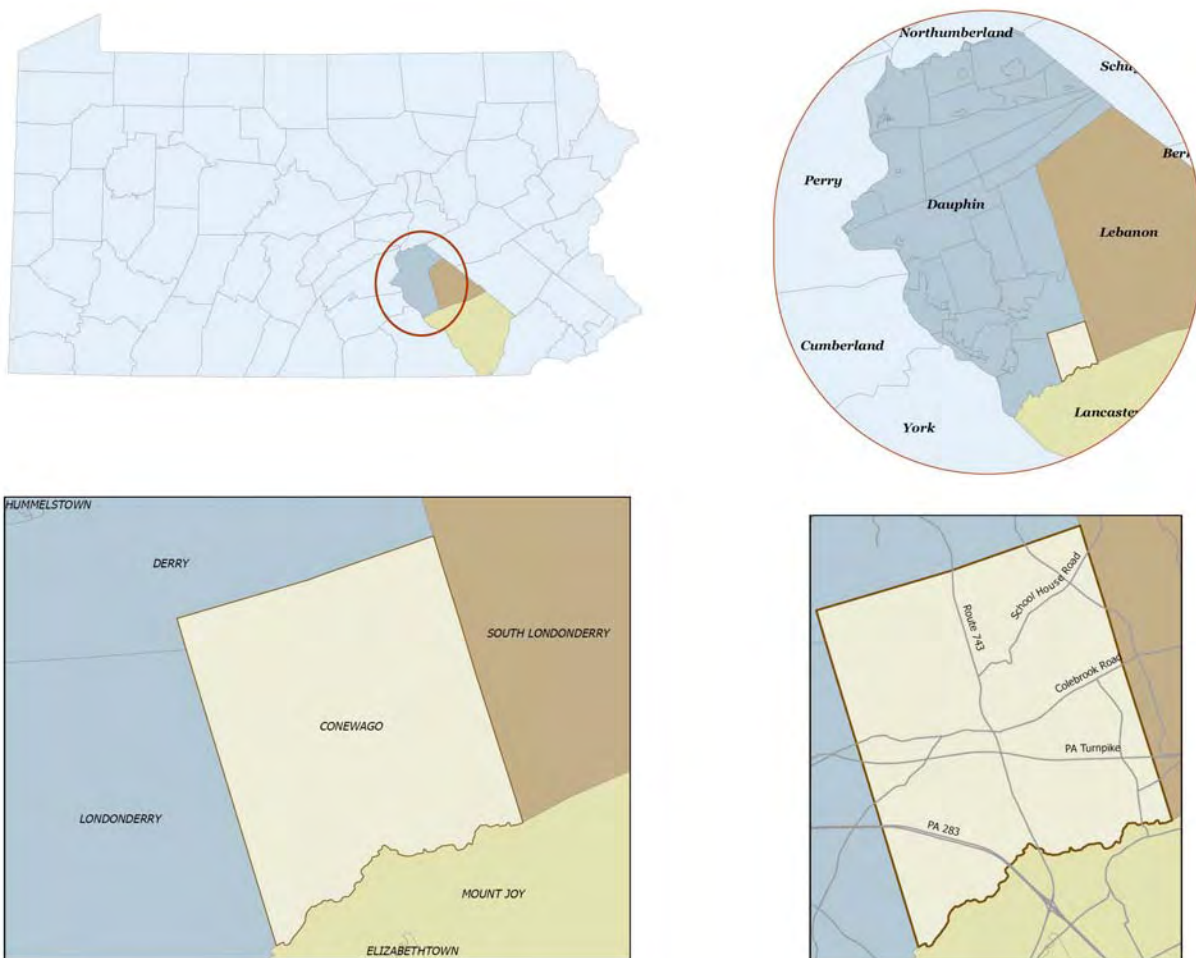


Conewago Township is located in southeastern Dauphin County on the boundary of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties. The township was formed by an Act of State Assembly on April 2, 1850, from Londonderry and Derry Townships in Dauphin County, and was named for the creek that forms its southern boundary. Today the township covers approximately 17 square miles and it contained an estimated 2,926 people in 2005.<sup>1</sup> State Routes (SR) 743 and 341 serve as the major transportation thoroughfares for the township. The Pennsylvania Turnpike and SR 283 travel through the township, although neither is accessed within the township. The closest turnpike interchange is the Harrisburg East Interchange, located in Dauphin County. SR 283 is accessed in Londonderry Township, and in Mount Joy Township in Lancaster County via SR 743.

**Figure 1-1: Regional Location of Conewago Township**



Sources: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; RETTEW Associates, Inc.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2005 population estimates

Conewago Township recognizes the necessity of developing a plan that is comprehensive in nature to guide the township through the next ten to fifteen years. Planning is not a new concept to Conewago Township. This plan will serve as an update to the 1981 Comprehensive Plan, and the township has also adopted a zoning ordinance, subdivision and land development ordinance, and an Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. However, the comprehensive plan, which serves as the township's primary policy document, does not adequately address the current growth pressures that the township is facing.

Conewago Township is part of the Lower Dauphin School District, and recognizes the effectiveness of planning on a regional level. The township was initially part of the Lower Dauphin Area Regional Planning Group (LDARPG), a steering committee for the Lower Dauphin Area Regional Comprehensive Plan. However, as the plan was developed, the goals set forth in the plan did not accurately reflect the desires of Conewago Township in the future, and as such, the Township did not adopt the Lower Dauphin Area Regional Comprehensive Plan.

The Conewago Township Comprehensive Plan will take into consideration the influences of the Lower Dauphin Area as a region, but will work to form a plan that focuses on the protection and preservation of the township's rural heritage, while encouraging and implementing smart growth policies recommended and supported by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The comprehensive plan is a policy guide for decisions and for the orderly development and redevelopment of the township. The plan's primary objective is to promote and improve the quality of life, health, safety, and conveniences for residents of Conewago Township, as reflected in the following mission statement for the plan:

***The Conewago Township Comprehensive Plan will encourage and maintain the preservation and continuance of the agricultural and rural character that has defined the township, while maintaining the quality of life for all Conewago residents through improvements to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.***

The plan is intended to organize and coordinate the interrelated collection of people, ideas, land, facilities, services, infrastructure, agricultural preservation efforts, land uses, and environmental elements that comprise the township as a whole. Thus, the term "comprehensive" is used to express the scope of the plan's content.

## ***PLANNING AS A CONCEPT***

The comprehensive plan is a tool to be used by township officials as a roadmap to guide them through future decisions. It should be noted that when changes and conditions evolve within the area, the comprehensive plan should be modified to address these changes and recognize demands.

The plan charts the course for municipal growth and change by:

- Expressing the aims and ambitions of area residents and businesses;
- Being responsive to change;
- Providing a framework necessary for continual review and revision;
- Delineating the municipal forms and character they seek to achieve.

In part, the comprehensive plan is a factual report that examines how the past has led to the present; it is a report that can be used to chart the municipality's future, as well as a report of the plans and actions necessary to achieve its objectives for the future. Often, much of the value in a community's comprehensive plan is found in the decisions that are made in the process of preparing the plan and the actions that are taken to implement the plan.

## ***LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY***

Pennsylvania local governments receive legislative authority from the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247, as amended, to manage and plan for development within their respective municipal boundaries. This legislation sets forth general guidelines, as well as specific administrative and procedural requirements, that municipalities must adhere to in developing and implementing municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plans. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code states that the municipal comprehensive plan shall include the following:

- A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development;
- A plan for land use;
- A plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality;
- A plan for the movement of people and goods;
- A plan for community facilities and utilities;
- A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components;
- A discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies;
- Either a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipalities is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plans;
- A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources to the extent not preempted by federal or state law; and
- A plan for the reliable supply of water.

## ***LEGAL BASE FOR THE PLAN***

The right of a municipality to exercise its authority in legislating regulations governing the use of the land has been upheld by the state and federal courts. The courts grant that a municipality has the right to manage development and growth activities within certain legal constraints. The primary method, upheld by the United States, to protect and provide for the best interest of citizens of a municipality is through the adoption of a zoning ordinance. However, this method of safeguarding the public welfare is not sufficient by itself. It must be supplemented by the adoption of certain other mutually supportive codes and ordinances; in particular, a subdivision and land development ordinance, building and housing codes, etc.

In order to provide for the management of land uses as prescribed in the zoning ordinance, the courts acknowledge the need for a municipality to properly evaluate the use of all land within its political jurisdiction and give consideration to land uses in areas adjacent to its borders. To ensure that zoning districts are not arbitrarily determined, the courts require evidence that the various land use districts established in the community are related to an overall land use plan for the entire municipality.

Through the adoption of the Municipalities Planning Code, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has granted local governments the authority to enact a zoning ordinance to implement the comprehensive plan. Therefore, a properly adopted “comprehensive plan” for land use and development is clearly needed to provide the proper foundation for its implementation through zoning and other related land management ordinances.

## ***PLAN ORGANIZATION***

The Conewago Township Comprehensive Plan has been organized into three main sections. Part I includes chapters 1-7 and analyzes current and recent trends to provide a profile of the community. For this reason, Part I is referred to as the Community Profile. Part II includes chapters 8-12 which comprise the plan for the township moving forward. Part II, the Plan, develops a plan for the township, and provides a series of tools that the township may consider as it implements the plan. Part III, Implementation, lays out a schedule for implementation of the plan. It itemizes specific actions for the township to focus on over the next 10 years. The Implementation section is condensed into one chapter, chapter 13, and details specific actions by indicating the lead party responsible, projected time frame for implementation, and potential were identified as priorities at the time of the plan’s adoption, the township should be reviewing and updating the list of actions on an annual basis to ensure that the list remains current and is modified as conditions in the township change.

## ***PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT***

The purpose of this plan is to develop a set of broad policies and supporting strategies that will guide Conewago Township over the next ten years, and allow the township to achieve its goals. Successful planning initiatives begin with a solid plan to engage the public and local municipal officials. Failure to engage the public and keep them engaged will result in a plan that does not represent a common vision, and therefore, has a greater potential to fail. A community public meeting was conducted as part of this plan, and the plan also references a community survey and previous planning initiatives that involved Conewago Township.

Conewago Township held a community public meeting on June 12, 2007 at Conewago Elementary School. Approximately 100 residents attended the meeting. The meeting was designed to gain public input on several topics in the community including housing, land use, transportation, natural resources, community facilities, and economic development. Meeting attendees were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses or issues related to each of these topics. Participants were then asked to vote on the issues they felt to be the most important. The identified strengths were not ranked. In addition to the strengths and weaknesses exercises, residents had an opportunity to comment on the preliminary overriding goals of the township.

Information collected at the meeting was utilized in developing the plan components. The plan will focus on capitalizing upon, sustaining, or enhancing the identified strengths, while working to address or guard against any identified current or potential issues that are affecting the township.

### **Common Themes**

After analyzing the results of the meeting, several common themes emerged from the items that were commented on. These themes are further described below. Raw data collected at the meeting, in the form of comments made by members of the public, is presented in Appendix I.

■ **Agriculture and the Rural Character of the Region**

- In general, meeting attendees seem to appreciate agriculture and the rural character that defines the township. People considered agriculture to be a strength in the community and expressed a need to maintain rural development patterns. Concerns were expressed regarding the potential for additional residential and commercial development to encroach upon the farmland.

■ **Route 743**

- The Route 743 corridor received much attention under a variety of topic areas. Many people indicated that they were fearful of Route 743 turning into another Route 39, which has seen a great deal of commercial and residential development in the past decade. People discussed the need for turning lanes or traffic lights in certain locations, and indicated that they did not want to see additional commercial or residential development in this area.

■ **Development Needs**

- Many comments that were received at the meeting leaned against encouraging development. People indicated that they do not want more housing and they feel they have enough commercial developments. They do not want to see development encouraged and feel that there is a need to limit high density housing. They are also aware of the associated impacts that development brings with it, including impacts to the schools and transportation infrastructure.

■ **Enhanced Community Facilities**

- Many attendees indicated that they would like to see the community facilities, utilities, and services in the township improved. Specific concerns related to frequent power outages, improved coordination between emergency service providers, and an addressing project to ensure that emergency services personnel are able to find all residences in the township. Technological improvements regarding high speed internet access and the prefix of phone numbers were also expressed as items that needed to be addressed. Residents also expressed a need to know who emergency service providers were for different locations in the township, and a need for additional assistance for seniors.

## ***VISION STATEMENT***

An important benefit of the community public meeting and steering committee discussions is the development of a vision statement. The vision statement must be based on an accurate understanding of current conditions and must reflect the varied perspectives of the township. The vision statement should be built through careful dialogue and thought, and should be supported by implementable plans that when executed, result in the fortification and maintenance of all aspects of the vision for the region. In this sense, a vision statement is the framework around which goals and objectives are developed. Without a strong vision guiding the township, there will be no follow-through. The vision statement for Conewago Township was developed around the results of the public participation process and through input from steering committee members. The vision statement is the mental image generated by residents and leaders of the region that describes the way it should appear and function in the future.

*Imagine, 10 to 15 years from now...*

*Conewago Township is a rural and agricultural community that has retained its character and the charm of yesteryear. While many of the surrounding municipalities have seen a large influx of commercial and residential growth, development in Conewago Township has been minimal, and has occurred in a coordinated fashion, based on the future land use plan and designated water and sewer service areas. New residents in the township recognize that much of Conewago is a farming community, and they value and support the agricultural traditions that drew them to the township. Transportation improvements and the reclassification of township roads in the subdivision and land development ordinance have helped to increase safety for motorists, pedestrians, farm equipment, equestrians, and bicyclists in the township. Conewago remains a close knit community; people know their neighbors and greet them as they pass by. Conewago Elementary School and the new township community park further unite the community. These places offer opportunities for community interaction, education, and recreation. Communication in the township has been improved by enhancements to the community newsletter and township website. In addition to improvements in communication with residents, the township has also been successful in communicating its needs with the utility company providers. Although power outages are still known to occur during heavy storms, their frequency and duration have decreased. Natural resources in the township are valued and respected and the township continues to work with various non-profit groups and the county and state governments to ensure their long term sustainability. Overall, the composition and character of the community has not changed much in the past ten years. Conewago Township remains a peaceful and well connected rural and agricultural community.*

## ***OVERRIDING GOALS***

A goal identifies what the township tends to accomplish in a broad sense, without identifying specific objectives or actions. In each plan element, the goal for that element has been expanded upon to include a series of objectives to meet the goal. Specific actions in the implementation section further support the objectives and the overriding goals. The goals are oriented to achieving the vision for the township. One goal cannot be implemented and the others discarded; they must all complement each other in order to achieve the vision for Conewago Township.

### **■ Community Character**

- Encourage and maintain the preservation and continuance of the agricultural and rural character that has defined the township, while enhancing the quality of life for all Conewago residents through improvements to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

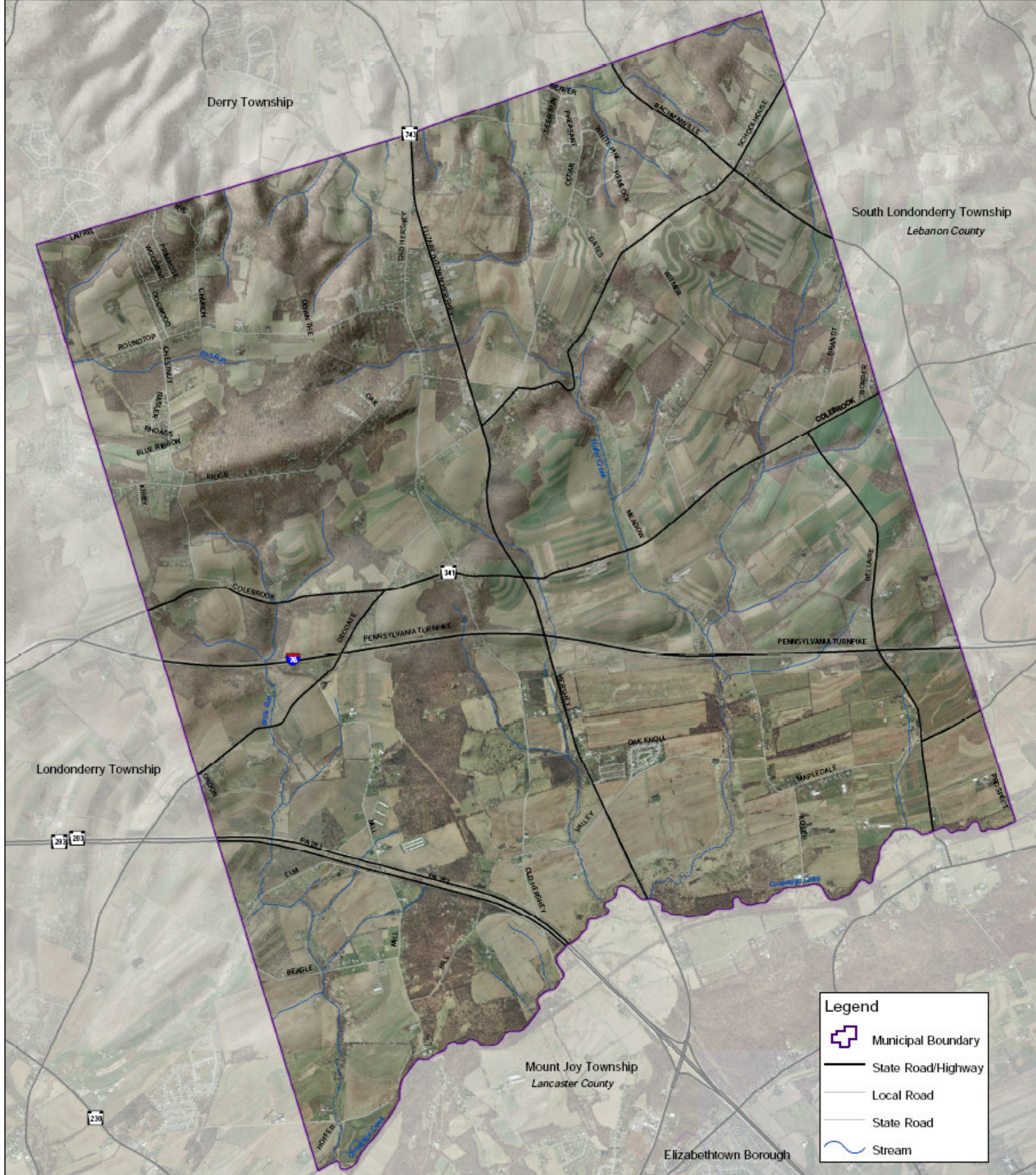
### **■ Land Use**

- Preserve the agricultural heritage of the township that allows for coordinated community growth

- **Transportation**
  - Encourage a safe, coordinated network of roadways that provide increased mobility for residents, agricultural and farm equipment, and goods movement in the township.
- **Housing**
  - Provide a desirable mix of safe and well maintained housing that meets the needs of current and future township residents of all incomes and family sizes.
- **Community Facilities**
  - Support appropriate community facilities and utilities that adequately serve residents and businesses in the township, in a systematic manner that supports current and future development.
- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**
  - Utilize the adopted Conewago Township Parks and Recreation Plan to increase passive and active parks and recreation opportunities for township residents.
- **Natural and Historic Resources**
  - Preserve and enhance the Conewago Creek, and other historic, cultural, and natural resources that exist in the township, and support initiatives that promote education and increased awareness of the value of these resources.
- **Economic Development**
  - Support the variety of businesses that operate in the township and those that operate in the region and provide employment to township residents, while sustaining the prevalence of agriculture in the local economy.

## ***EXPECTED OUTCOMES***

The ultimate outcome of this planning effort is a policy document to guide future growth to areas of the township that can support it; protect historic and cultural features; protect prime farmland and groundwater resources; and retain the rural heritage that makes the township a quality place to live. The plan will consist of a set of implementation actions to be undertaken to carry out the policies and achieve the objectives of this plan.

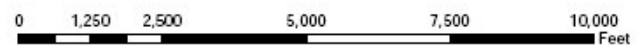


**Legend**

-  Municipal Boundary
-  State Road/Highway
-  Local Road
-  State Road
-  Stream



**Map 1-1**  
**Conewago Township**



**CONEWAGO TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**2008**

PA State Plane South, NAD 1983  
 Base Map Source:  
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