

# DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ADOPTED JUNE 19,1995

prepared for the  
DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WAYNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
by the  
DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

professionally assisted by  
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FORWARD

The work on the Damascus Township Comprehensive Plan was done by Micah Wilcox and the undersigned of Woodland Design Associates Inc., and Thomas J. Shepstone of Shepstone Management Corporation assisted with various aspects of plan development.

We would like to thank the Damascus Township Supervisors and the Planning Commission for their cooperation and for their contributions and assistance towards this project.

The Township would also like to thank the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Department of Community Affairs, for their financial assistance with the Small Communities Planning Assistance Program.

This updated Comprehensive Plan is intended to supplement and update the original plan completed in 1974 by the Damascus Township Planning Commission, as well as to offer a concise description of Damascus Township and its needs in 1995.

Michael C. Wood, R.L.A., President  
Woodland Design Associates, Inc.

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AFFAIRS."

## **BACKGROUND STUDIES**

### **A. REGIONAL LOCATION AND HISTORY**

**REGIONAL SETTING** - Damascus Township is the easternmost municipality in Wayne County, which is the northeastern most county in the State of Pennsylvania. The Township lies 41 degrees 40 minutes north latitude and 75 degrees 05 minutes west of the prime meridian. The Delaware River forms a natural boundary to the east of Damascus Township while Lebanon and Oregon Townships border Damascus Township to the west. The northern boundary of Damascus Township is with Manchester Township while the boundary in the south is with Berlin Township.

**HISTORY**- Even though it is tough at times to find the exact time and date of the first settlers, it is believed that Joseph Skinner came from Connecticut to Damascus in 1755. Soon after, in 1757, the Delaware Company commenced the first settlement in Damascus Township in a place called Cushetunk. This settlement quickly grew and in 1760 it contained thirty dwelling houses, three large log houses, one grist mill, one saw mill and one blockhouse.

Damascus Township came into being as one of the first townships in 1798. It then included all of Lebanon, Oregon, and part of both Dyberry and Berlin Townships. Damascus Township was the first township in the County to be settled.

In 1764, Daniel Skinner (Joseph's son) decided to probe the idea of shipping logs, from the newly settled area, to Philadelphia for the purpose of ship building. His first "log raft" arrived in Philadelphia in 1764, and the area's first industry was born. Daniel Skinner, having constructed and navigated the first raft, was styled "Lord High Admiral" of all raftsmen on the Delaware.

Simeon Calkin was one of the first settlers in Damascus Township. He saw the need for industrial endeavors, and with the help of Timothy Skinner, built a sawmill and grist mill near the mouth of Calkin's Creek.

These early industrial endeavors were really what allowed the first settlers to get a foothold in this new territory. Some of the other important early settlers were Nathan Mitchell, Moses Thomas, Sr., Robert Land, Jesse Drake, Nicholas Conklin, Simeon Bush, Alexander Rutledge, Thomas Shields, and John Boyd. Other important families were the Tylers, Keeslers, Brighams, Sutliffs, Kellams, and Youngs. Many of the residents who reside in

the Township still bear these names and many of our towns and landmarks still retain these historic past fathers' names.

Damascus' population steadily increased until the late 1800's, while farming was the main occupation. Several primary industries also flourished. Due to the great stands of Hemlock, several tanneries were opened. The Rocky Glen Tannery was owned and operated by Captain Eli Beach and his family in Milanville. As already discussed, lumbering and rafting were also very profitable. These activities are not feasible today either because resources are exhausted or the means of production have been outdated. Such was the case with stone quarrying, after modern cement was invented. Today, remnants of stone quarries can still be seen in parts of the Township, but the West Damascus quarry is still in operation.

The 1900's saw a steady decrease in the Township's population. (See population study). Many of the mills and factories became outdated and uneconomical to run. Dairy farming still continued strong in Damascus Township until it peaked in the 1940's. Originally the creameries operated in many locations throughout the Township, until they too were outdated. Now all the local milk is shipped outside the Township.

Looking back, Damascus Township residents can be proud of their Township's heritage and even prouder of the fact that their heritage can still be witnessed today. The villages of Damascus and Milanville have buildings and landmarks that are very symbolic of the early life of the Delaware River settlers.

The fact is, although the land became settled by colonial frontiersmen who brought with them subsequent farming ventures and various mill operations, the industrial revolution of the late 19th and 20th century never dominated the area. As a result, the industrial decline increased the Township's rural attributes and much of the land has reverted to its previous state.

If a sound planning process can control sharp fluctuations in the Township's development. The residents of today have the power and responsibility to make decisions affecting the Township's welfare by providing for protection of the natural assets needed to ensure a prosperous future.

**HISTORIC SITES** -The Township of Damascus has many historic sites which would be of great interest to those individuals who possess a fascination for historic

architecture, engineering, and industrial sites.

Hickory Lane Farmhouse (Skinner Homestead) - Probably the most historical house in the Township. It is an interesting tripartite farmhouse comprised of a two-story federal style structure erected ca. 1790 - 1820, a two-story part whose stylistic details ambiguously date to ca. 1820 (Greek Revival), and a 20th Century one-story end section. The southern and central sections of this architecturally interesting farmhouse probably were occupied by members of the locally important Skinner family after 1795. Originally, the general locale was known as "Arcktake" (or "Ackhake"), but later renamed Tammany Flats. The house of Daniel Skinner, the old "Admiral of the Delaware", burned down in 1788-89 and was replaced by a tavern erected by his son Reuben Skinner at the same site. Reportedly, beginning in 1800, meetings were held in Daniel Skinner's house on the flats. Nearby to the north is the lost grave site of Daniel Skinner, in an early cemetery long ago destroyed by flooding. (Located on Tammany Flats, east of River Road)

Moses Thomas Blockhouse Historic Archaeological Site - The Thomas blockhouse consisted of a rough palisade wall built around Moses Thomas' house and well. This primitive fortification hastily was erected as part of the defense of the Cushetunk settlement in 1763. (Located on River Road between Milanville and Damascus)

John Land House - One and a half story gabled house with dry-laid rough cut stone full-story cellar foundation built into banks. It has stone end chimneys with firebox backs exposed through clapboards, a feature common to other buildings in the Cohecton - Damascus area. The house was built by John Land in 1796. John and his father Robert were from England. They came to America to look after the King's interests, and settled first near Wilmington, Delaware in 1763. The Land family arrived at Cushetunk to serve as Justice of the Peace. John married a sister to Nathan Skinner and soon after built this house. (Located on the River Road in Milanville)

Captain Eli Beach House - Very large two-story "L" plan house of Greek Revival style, with six over six windows and the addition of later porches and bay window. Home of "Captain" Eli Beach (1804 - 1877) who owned the Rock Glen Tannery in Milanville. (Located in Milanville)

Milanville Schoolhouse - Picturesque post 1880 schoolhouse. It was the second schoolhouse on this site. It is currently being restored into a residence.

Milanville Methodist Church - Simple country church. The main block is gabled with a corner tower which has pyramidal roof and flaring eaves. Stained glass windows are arches with matching hoods replete with facsimile keystones. Built in 1910. (Located in Milanville)

Nathan Skinner House -Simplified Greek Revival styled house with parallel side ell. Has the original sash and panes with three-pane eyebrow windows, six over six first and gable story windows, and three-paned transom lights. It was said to have been framed at Tammany Flats in 1815 and rafted in pieces down the Delaware to Skinners Falls. (Located in Milanville)

Philip O'Riley House - Large, ornate and proper, two-story house square in plan with synchronous front and end verandah, all Greek Revival in style. The house was built in the 1840's or 50's and was owned by Philip O'Riley from about 1850 until the 1880's. (Located in Damascus)

Vail and Appley Store and Post Office - Long two-story gable-roofed commercial building with an end entrance toward the road. A fine but unusual Victorian storefront in very good condition. The building was erected ca. 1860 and in 1872 was owned or occupied by "Vail and Appley Store and Post Office".

First Baptist Church - A late example of a Renaissance Revival church, marked by use of classical orders, the elaborately pedimented arch-headed windows and rich moldings. The finest church facade in the Upper Delaware Valley. It was built in 1831. (Located in Damascus)

Appley House - An excellent example of a Tuscan villa styled house and unique within the valley. A two-story, hipped roof house with diagonally placed three-story corner tower and rear wing, all built around 1850. This interesting structure is said to have been built by locally prominent Dr. Luther Appley, who came to Damascus from Canterbury, Connecticut about 1808. (Located on the River Road southeast of Damascus)

\* NOTE: Milanville was recently placed on the National Historic Register of Historic Districts

More information concerning the history of this area is available by contacting the Wayne County Historical Society.

## **B. NATURAL FEATURES**

**GEOLOGY** - The terrain of the Township was formed by glaciers and is, therefore, characterized by both steep slopes and depressions. The glacial deposits of stone and debris contribute the great variety of soils present in the area and account for their often limited suitability for on-site sewage disposal. The primary geologic formation is the Devonian Catskill, which includes sandstones, shales, and conglomerates, the first of these being a good water producer.

**TERRAIN** - The greatest local relief in the Township is found to the east of Abrahamsville where the slope quickly drops from 1200 feet above sea level to 760 feet above sea level. The lowest elevation in the Township is 700 feet above sea level and can be found where the Delaware River crosses at the Berlin Township boundary. The highest elevation of 1823 feet above sea level can be found on a hill north of SR191 and west of T-662.

Topography is always an important element in determining suitability for road construction, recreation and building construction because of the increased potential for soil erosion where land is developed and Damascus' steep slope areas offer some particular problems because of their severity.

**WATER RESOURCES** - Water always has and always will be a critical part of a natural ecosystem and human lifestyles. The presence of water does much to determine the location of human settlements. Greater appreciation of ground and surface water systems are needed if these systems are to be maintained for the future. An aquifer recharge area beneath the surface of land acts as the heart of a water system. As rain water percolates through the soil, it increases the groundwater supply. During low flow periods, groundwater becomes responsible for most of the surface water flow. This is accomplished through various springs and wells.

Man-made structures such as roads, buildings, parking lots, etc. decrease the water holding potential of the land. This decreases the groundwater recharge process and lowers the water table. The accelerated runoff increases the flooding potential that normally would have been much lower. Stormwater management techniques, if employed properly, will slow down the rate of water runoff. If the problem is addressed at the site, then expensive stormwater drainage systems are not required to channel water during times of excessive rainfall or snow melt.



Probably the most important water resource in the Township is the Delaware River. It provides 17 miles of shoreline along the eastern border of the Township and is now classified as a National Scenic and Recreational River. The National Park Service, with its Northeast Regional Office in Damascus Township, monitors the activity along the river and provides a firm foundation for the preservation of the river as the natural wonder that it is.

Ultimately all the water that is within the Delaware River Watershed ends up in the Delaware River. Some of the small watersheds within the Township are the Hollister, Calkins, Beaver Dam, and Equinunk Creeks. Along with these water resources, there are many fine lakes and ponds that contribute to the Township's potential for a desirable recreational and residential area. The largest and best known of these are Duck Harbor Pond (partially in Lebanon Township), Laurel, Silver and Barkley Lakes, Swago and Snyder Ponds.

**SOILS** - Soils influence the development potential of land by determining whether one can farm, build sewage disposal systems, construct buildings or establish recreational facilities. Soils which are too wet (low permeability or high water table), too shallow (low depth to bedrock) or too steep, limit all of the above uses. More information on soils is available by consulting the Township's Act 537 Sewage Plan which details the Township's soil suitability.

**WOODED AREAS** -The vast majority of the Township is wooded. Most of the hillsides are covered with a combination of the Beech, Birch and Maple forest type. The forested ridges along the Delaware River are generally classified as being the Oak-Hickory forest type. Undergrowth is limited in much of the forest due to the density of woodlands, but Mountain Laurel and other undergrowth does flourish where conditions allow. The undergrowth is also limited by the constant browsing of the white-tailed deer. The woodlands support vast numbers of wildlife and a varied lumbering industry.

**C. EXISTING LAND USE**

Damascus Township is the largest municipality in Wayne County with 51,785 acres or 10.6% of the total County area. The 1990 population of Damascus Township is 3,091, an increase of 555 from 1980, and equals 7.7% of the total population in Wayne County. The following table and charts provide a breakdown of land use within the Township from 1970 to 1990, by acreage and percentages in each class.

	1970	1980	1985	1990
Residential	1,966	25,364	25,670	27,863
Industrial	11	1	1	1
Recreation	1,246	2,259	2,162	1,806
Agriculture	45,873	22,258	22,093	20,301
Commercial	27	158	144	261
Public/Semi-public				
Exempt	971	181	185	198
Unused Space	1,691	1,564	1,530	1,355

Residential land use is the largest sector in Damascus Township and, interestingly, there is by far, more land committed to residential use in this municipality than any other in the County. The period of largest growth was from 1970 to 1980 with an addition of 23,398 acres and was to a large extent a result of simple re-classification. Nonetheless, growth continued during the next decade (1980 -1990) with a gain of 2,499 acres or approximately 1.0% per year. An increase of 25,897 acres has occurred from 1970 to 1990.

Agriculture, once by far the dominant land use in the Township is currently the second largest with 20,301 acres. From 1970 to 1980 the agriculture sector experienced the largest loss, totaling 23,615 acres, and this again, was mainly due to re-classification. Since 1980 agriculture land use has declined by only 1,792 acres or approximately 0.8% per year. Damascus Township, in fact, has the second largest amount of agricultural land in the County (after Mount Pleasant Township).

Recreational land use peaked in 1980 at 2,259 acres, an increase of 1,103 acres over 1970. However, it has since declined by 453 acres. Total growth over the twenty year period has been 560 acres.

The commercial sector has risen a total of 234 acres from 1970 to 1990. After experiencing a loss of 14 acres

between 1980 to 1985, it rebounded to its current level of 261 acres.

Industrial land use fell 10 acres from 1970 to 1980, to 1 acre total and has remained at this level to 1990.

Residential land use includes 12,103 acres of single-family homes, 2,409 acres of seasonal dwellings, 143 acres of multi-family units and 1,182 acres of miscellaneous residential land use. Vacant lots occupy 115 acres and vacant acreage accounts for 11,910 acres. Residential activity uses 54.0% of the Township's land. There are 424 single-family homes and 4 multi-family units owned by non-residents, 225 seasonal dwellings and 21 mountain cabins for as many as 674 second-homes, representing 42.5% of the housing stock (1,585 units). Some 56.6% of the Township's residential land is owned by non-residents.

Agriculture land use is largely operating farms with 9,485 acres in this sub-category. Non-operating farms incorporate 4,351 acres and miscellaneous farm land uses total 1,342 acres. Vacant acreage is also a large portion of agriculture land use with 5,123 acres. Altogether, some 39.2% of the Township's area is agriculture.

Recreational land use totals 1,806 acres or 3.5% of Township land, and is exclusively associated with mountain cabins which includes rod and gun clubs.

Commercial land use is broken down into eight sub-categories and represents 0.5% of land use in the Township. Office uses are the largest with 136 acres, auto garages contribute 72 acres and miscellaneous commercial land uses represent 42 acres. Warehouses, motel/hotels, gas stations, stores and vacant lots divide the remaining 10 acres.

Public and semi-public uses include 175 acres of exempt properties, 10 acres of Commonwealth of Pennsylvania land, 11.07 acres of United States Government land and 5 acres of public utilities. They occupy, in total, 0.4% of the Township's lands area.

In the unused category there are an estimated 1,355 acres of lakes, ponds, wasteland and unclassified land. Unused space covers 2.6% of the Township.

An overview of Damascus Township shows that 28,155 acres or 54.4% of the land area is owned by residents. Non-residents own 22,275 acres or 43.0% of the land area and the remainder is unused space.

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**D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS** -The Township municipal building is located just off SR1016, approximately a 1/2 mile from the intersection with Route 371. This building serves as the Township s government center and is also the maintenance shed where its equipment and supplies are stored. Monthly meetings of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and public meetings are held at this facility. The Zoning Hearing Board, Zoning Officer and Township S.E.O. also use the building to service their particular needs. Presently there is an addition being built on the Township building that will serve as a community center.

**POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION AND AMBULANCE SERVICE** - There is currently no paid police protection or force within the Township. Police services are provided by the Pennsylvania State Police. Fire protection and services are provided for the Township by two main fire departments, with four others (Cochecton, Callicoon, Narrowsburg, and Welcome Lake, ) providing additional service. The Damascus Volunteer Ambulance Corps provides the majority of service, with the Tusten Ambulance also .providing some service. All services can now be contacted by a County wide 911 dispatch number.

**POLICE**

	<b>Station</b>	<b>Personnel Full/Part</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>Emergency Number</b>
PA State Police	1	23/0	14	911

**FIRE**

	<b>Stations</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Vehicles/ Tankers</b>	<b>Tanker Capacity</b>	<b>Calls 1990</b>
Beach Lake	1	25	4/1	2,900	97
Equinunk	1	50	4/1	5,000	37

**AMBULANCE**

	<b>Stations</b>	<b>Volunteers/ EMT</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>Special Service</b>	<b>1990 Calls</b>
Damascus	2	35/14	3	-	210

**POST OFFICES** - There are currently four post offices (marked with a \*) located within the boundaries of the Township with three others outside the Township serving as the main post office for some of the Township residents.

*Damascus	18415	Honesdale	18431
*Galilee	18425	*Tyler Hill	18469
Equinunk	18417	*Milanville	18443
Beach Lake	18405		

**SCHOOLS** -The students from Damascus Township attend school in the Wayne Highlands School District. Kindergarten through eighth grades generally go to the Damascus School while ninth through twelfth grades attend the Honesdale High School. Several private schools may provide schooling for some of the Township's students and they are St. Vincent's Catholic School in Honesdale, Damascus Christian Academy and Canaan Christian Academy.

**LIBRARIES** - Currently there are no libraries located in the Township, but libraries in Callicoon, Honesdale and Narrowsburg are readily available for use of Township residents. A library is forming in the Damascus Manor Community Center.

**JUDICIAL SERVICE** - Damascus Township, Wayne County is part of the 22nd Judicial District with the court house located in the Borough of Honesdale. Damascus Township is part of Magisterial District 22-3-04 with a part-time office at the Damascus Municipal Building.

**HEALTH CARE FACILITIES** - Although there is not a hospital located in the Township, the Wayne Memorial Hospital located in Honesdale provides services for most needs. Hospitals in Scranton and Sullivan County are also available for the care of the residents within the Township. Currently there is one doctor's office (Dr. Layton) and one dentist's office (Dr. Haray) located in the Township, and there are also three personal care homes. Assistance from visiting nurses to the private home is a service available throughout the Township.

**UTILITIES** - Electric service is provided by Pennsylvania Power & Light Company while the telephone service within the Township is provided by GTE.

**SEWER SERVICE** - The chief sewage disposal method at this time in the Township is individual on-lot septic systems. A small treatment facility services Pine Grove Estates which is located just off of SR652, below Beach Lake. The

Township has an Act 537 Wastewater Facility Plan which addresses the future concerns for sewer treatment and disposal.

**WATER SERVICE** -The majority of the residents obtain their water supply from individual on-lot wells. Some 7.1% of Damascus Township residents receive their water from public or private water companies.

**ROAD MAINTENANCE** - The Township road maintenance department consists of three roadmasters and a six member road crew. Their responsibilities are snow removal and the routine maintenance of Township roads.

**SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL** - Private contractors are used with good results for solid waste pickup and disposal. A drop-off site for recyclable items is currently in place at the Township building and is open on a scheduled basis.

**PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES** - Currently there is one park, Damascus Forest, located in the Township. This 58.15 acre park is open for low impact activity to the general public, and its main interest point is its six acres of old growth. The forest is owned and operated by the Township with the Wayne County Conservation District acting as an advisory panel.

Recreational facilities present in the Township include the Damascus School which has a playground, two baseball fields, and an outdoor basketball court and the Township also has a Little League field on their property adjacent to SR1016. The Pingle field in Tyler Hill also supports active baseball and softball schedules.

The Delaware River is an important recreation source for not only nearby residents but also people from outside the area. The Pennsylvania Fish Commission operates three river accesses for many fishermen and canoeists to use the Delaware. The National Park Service also monitors activity along the Delaware, to ensure safety and preservation of the river and its users is guaranteed.

While no public campgrounds exist in the Township, there are two private summer camps in operation. They are the Tyler Hill and St. Basil camps.

**E. POPULATION AND ECONOMIC BASE**

The U.S. Census figures show that 3,081 people lived in Damascus Township in 1990, an increase of 21.8% from 1980. The Township's population is expected to grow to some 3,525 persons by 1996 according to National Planning Data Corporation. This represents an annual increase of approximately 2.2%. Extending this rate of growth forward to the year 2000, population can be expected to exceed almost 3,850 people. Damascus was the eighth fastest growing Wayne County township during the 80's, and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues.

**POPULATION TRENDS**

	<b>DAMASCUS</b>	<b>WAYNE COUNTY</b>
1890	2,442	31,010
1910	2,287	29,236
1930	1,876	28,420
1950	1,898	28,478
1960	1,703	28,237
1970	2,006	29,581
1980	2,536	35,237
1990	3,081	39,944
1996 (projected)	3,525	43,789
2000 (projected)	3,850	45,269

**AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS** - Damascus Township's population is relatively middle age with the 1990 median age being 36.2 years old. This is very close to Wayne County's median age of 36.3 years old. The largest age group are those under 10 years of age, and they comprise 15.06% of the Township population.

**TOWNSHIP BY AGE  
PERCENT AND NUMBER (1990)**

	<b>DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP</b>		<b>WAYNE COUNTY</b>	
	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
0- 9 years	15.06	464	13.8	5,512
10- 14	7.34	226	7.1	2,836
15- 17	4.84	149	4.3	1,718
18- 24	7.37	227	8.1	3,235
25- 34	13.44	414	14.8	5,911
35- 44	14.54	448	14.5	5,792
45- 54	10.84	334	10.3	4,114
55- 64	10.12	312	10.2	4,074
65- 74	9.57	295	9.7	3,876
75 +	6.88	212	7.2	2,876
Totals		3,081		39,944

**POPULATION BY SEX** - The gender lines in the Township are slightly weighted to the male side. The male population held a slight edge with 1,560 (50.6%) as compared to the female population with 1,521 (49.4%). Since 1980, this gap has seen little change.

**POPULATION BY SEX**

	NUMBER	1980	1990	
		PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Male	1,275	50.3	1,560	50.6
Female	1,261	49.7	1,521	49.4

**YEARS OF EDUCATION** - The most recent statistics available for Damascus Township in the area of education are from the 1990 U.S. Census. This census only indicates those individuals who are 25 years old or older. It is expected that persons receiving a high school education and post high school education will continue to increase, as has been the trend in recent years.

**EDUCATION 1990**

	DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP	WAYNE COUNTY
TOTAL PERSONS	2,061	26,727
LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	26.9%	25.8%
AT LEAST HIGH SCHOOL	73.1%	74.2%
AT LEAST B.A.	17.3%	13.1%
PROF. OR GRADUATE DEGREE	8.3%	4.8%

**INCOME** - Information supplied by the Wayne County Planning Commission indicates the largest income bracket for Damascus Township households (27.78%) was \$15,000 to \$24,999 per year in 1987, and the smallest category (5.77%) was for those persons earning \$50,000 and over. The median family income was \$28,088 in 1990 and the 1990 census showed that 94 families were living below the poverty level in the Township.

**ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME**

DOLLAR AMOUNT	DAMASCUS	WAYNE
	TOWNSHIP	COUNTY
	1987	1987
< \$7,500	18.38%	15.29%
7,500- 14,999	23.72%	19.17%



15,000- 24,999	27.78%	25.85%
25,000- 34,999	14.32%	17.05%
35,000- 49,999	10.04%	13.54%
> \$50,000	5.77%	9.10%

**MEDIAN INCOME -1989**

**PERCENT OF CHANGE**

<b>HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>1980 - 1990</b>	<b>FAMILY</b>	<b>NON-FAMILY</b>
25,510	33.2%	28,088	11,806

**ECONOMIC BASE** - a 1991 survey indicates that there is a good amount of commercial and industrial enterprises within the Damascus Township municipality. Damascus Township is still very rural in character and therefore, it is appropriate to encourage and support commercial enterprises which serve the daily needs of its residents while also providing job opportunities.

**COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES  
FOR DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP IN 1994**

Industrial Facilities	5
Offices	4
Stores	4
Auto Garages	5
Shopping Centers	0
Gas Stations	2
Fast Foods	1
Motels/Bed and Breakfast	3
Warehouses	2
Other Commercial	12
Total	38

**EMPLOYED POPULATION** - The 1990 census lists that the top occupation for residents of the Township was in technical sales and administration support with 23% of the Township's working population holding this occupation. One drastic occupation change during the past twenty years has been a decrease in those who work in the farming field. In 1970, 26% of the Township's residents worked farms, but in 1990 only 5.8% of the residents found farming as an occupation. This does not necessarily mean that 20% of farms have been lost, but that fewer residents are farming. As more and more people continue to move into the Township, fewer of these people will be farmers, so the percentage of farmers in the Township will be reduced.

**F. HOUSING**

**NUMBER OF PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD** - The number of people living in each house is declining, reflecting the nation's trend towards smaller families. The Township household size is, however, slightly higher than the County's average.

**POPULATION PER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNIT**

	1980	1990
DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP	2.64	2.72
WAYNE COUNTY	2.60	2.65

**HOUSEHOLDS** - From 1960 to 1990, the number of housing units in Damascus Township increased by 421 homes. The largest category of growth was those homes that were owner occupied and this increased by 246. Damascus Township saw the largest increase in owner occupied homes in Wayne County during this time. While other townships saw huge increases in second homes, they did not see much of an increase in owner occupied housing.

**GROWTH IN HOUSING UNITS 1980 - 1990**

	DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP			WAYNE COUNTY		
	1980	1990	GROWTH	1980	1990	GROWTH
OWNER OCCUPIED	753	1,001	246	10,057	11,930	1,673
RENTER OCCUPIED	161	146	-15	2,743	3,237	494
SECOND HOMES OR VACANT	621	609	166	6,796	13,313	6,515
TOTALS	1,535	1,956	421	19,596	26,460	6,662

**HOUSING VALUES** - The value of housing units has grown considerably since 1960. In 1960 the median housing value was \$65,564, but it increased to \$91,600 in 1990.

**HOUSING RENTER OCCUPIED** - 7.2% of the homes in the township are renter occupied. The median rent in 1990 was \$363.00, an increase of \$150.00 from the 1960 figure of \$213.00.

**HOUSING CONDITIONS** - It is difficult to assess the condition of a home without a close examination of the home from the inside out. The U.S. Census does provide some insight as to the age of a home, but it lacks the

capability to indicate which homes have been rehabilitated and upkeep is hard to document.

In 1989 - 90, the Wayne County Redevelopment Authority did a "Needs Assessment Study" to find the ten municipalities most in need of housing rehabilitation. Damascus Township was listed as the township most in need of housing rehabilitation within the County. This indicates that there are many homes in need of attention within the Township.

**SUBDIVISIONS** - Subdivision activity has continued at an steady amount over the last decade or more. In a community like Damascus Township, where there is a need for more residential land, there will continue to be more subdivisions in the Township. A common form of subdivision within the Township is, breaking off a piece of property for a family member or friend. This may not be seen in the following statistics because they often do not surpass the 10 lot limit.

### MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS -10 LOTS OR MORE

#### 1990 UPDATE

NAME	DATE	NO.	LOTS SOLD	DWELLINGS		TOTAL
	FILED			PERM.	SEAS.	
Duck Harbor Estates	1966	62	61	3	37	40
Newman Subdivision	63,65,69	51	51	19	3	22
Woytera Subdivision	1974	19	15	3	0	3
Delaware Park	1966	35	35	5	8	13
Duck Harbor E. Hill Section	1969	25	25	1	7	8
Bavarian Village	65,69,74	83	83	35	19	54
Pine Grove Estates	74,79,81	171	133	97	14	111
Beaver Lake Estates	1971	55	54	8	21	29
Elegant Estates	1985	20	13	5	1	6
Forbes Subdivision	1988	13	7	1	2	3
Hollister Estates	1988	10	1	0	0	0
Cohen Et Al Sub.	1973	38	14	3	4	7
Perretti Subdivision	1977	25	22	6	4	10
Teeple Subdivision	1977	11	11	4	3	7
Indian Rocks Woodlands	1989	22	4	0	0	0
Wildwood Acres	1975	12	12	2	4	6
Wanklin Subdivision	1973	10	9	5	0	5
Zacker Subdivision	1986	23	11	1	4	5
Robert Rutledge Sub.	1974	12	10	4	2	6
Gager Subdivision	1971	12	11	3	3	6
Kwitchoff Subdivision	1987	6	6	3	0	3

NAME	DATE FILED	NO.	LOTS SOLD	DWELLINGS		TOTAL
				PERM.	SEAS.	
Mark Oliver Sub.	1971	14	14	1	6	7
Freer Subdivision	1964	17	14	3	11	14
Dennis Subdivision		11	10	5	0	5
Eldred Subdivision	1988	11	5	3	0	3
Hanes/Manzollillo Sub.	1973	13	13	3	5	8
Frank Mitchell Sub.	1977	12	12	3	3	6
Mark Oliver Sub.	1989	10	1	0	0	0
Pat ten Corp. Sub.	1986	10	10	1	2	3
Spry Subdivision	1963	15	15	3	3	6
Smith Subdivision	1986	12	11	4	0	4
Gries Subdivision	1970	13	12	6	1	7
Delaware River Est.	1989	10	5	0	0	0
Evergreen Acres	1976	27	27	1	7	8
River Hideaway	1977	19	15	0	9	9
Rowedder/Vortue Sub.	1984	13	6	0	3	3
Mills Subdivision	1977	13	10	6	0	6
.Davis Subdivision	1970	13	13	6	2	8
SKS Land						
Specialist, Inc.	1973	18	18	0	8	8
Seven Mountains Corp.	1989	19	18	8	1	9
Beach Glen Inc.	1979	41	34	17	4	21
Lassley Subdivision	1969	11	11	4	2	6
Kaiser Heights	1975	10	9	5	2	7
Woodland Acres	1975	34	34	3	3	6
Gocek Subdivision	1969	13	11	0	6	6
Gillette Subdivision	1969	11	11	2	5	7
Feldhusen Subdivision	1982	11	9	2	7	9
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>1122</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>523</b>

**TRAILER PARKS** -There is one mobile home park located along SR1004 and TR-529 by the name of Orchard Heights, and another one located adjacent to SR1002 west of Milanville called Milanville Heights.

**G. TRANSPORTATION CHARACTERISTICS**

**EXISTING ROADS AND HIGHWAYS** - Damascus Township has an elaborate road and highway system that consists of 22 state roads and 81 township roads. Routes 371, 191, and 652 are the important transportation links in this road system, because they move so many people from day to day.

**FUNCTIONS OF ROADS** - Each of the Township's highways serves a particular purpose in the Township's road network. This network is, indeed, a feeder system. Over time, with alterations in circulation patterns and traffic growth, some road functions will change. There are three basic categories and the following provides a listing and description of each highway as it presently functions.

**ARTERIALS** - Highways that move a high volume of traffic at a fast pace between major parts of townships and counties which includes residential districts, villages and towns, major activity centers and to points outside the County. They also connect collector roads.

State Route 191  
State Route 371  
State Route 652

**COLLECTORS** - Roadways that link commercial enterprises and major avenues of travel with lower traffic volumes and speed limits. They also serve as a connector between local roads and arterial highways.

State Route 1002	State Road 1016
State Route 1004	State Road 1020
State Route 1007	State Road 1025
State Route 1009	State Road 1031
State Route 1033	

**LOCALS** - Smaller widths; shorter segments and occasionally unpaved roads characterize local roads. They include all other street and roadways which form "capillaries" of the road network, picking traffic from individual homes and businesses and moving it towards collector highways.

State Route 1003	State Route 1017
State Route 1006	State Route 1019
State Route 1008	State Route 1021
State Route 1012	State Route 1027
State Route 1014	State Route 1029

**TOWNSHIP ROADS**

<b>ROUTE NUMBER</b>	<b>STREET NAMES</b>	<b>ROUTE NUMBER</b>	<b>STREET NAMES</b>
502	Bavarian Hill Road	638	Brucher Road
504	Steep Hill Road	642	Holgate Road
508	Pintlers Road	644	Coulters Road
513	Rodenburg Road	650	Flat Rock Road
515	Boyds Mill Road	652	Swendsen Road
517	Mohn Road	654	Swago Road
519	Plank Road	654	Marks Road
521	Weiland Road	654	Neer Lane
525	Henderson Road	658	Glen Road
527	Davis Road	660	Deighton Road
529	Spruce Swamp Road	662	Kellam Road
533	Dillmuth Road	662	Arnolds Road
535	Lassley Road	664	Chicopee Road
539	Ellison Road	668	Bush Road
541	Paint Mine Road	670	Stone House Road
543	Sky Lake Road	672	River Road
545	Diehl Road	675	Dexter Road
549	Baldwin Hill Road	675	First Street
551	Whitmore Road	676	Duck Harbor Road
553	Steiner Road	677	High School Road
555	Schuman Road	677	Brook Road
555	Bakers Hill Road	677	Stone Arch Road
555	Annie Mitchell Road	678	Macubbins Road
555	Wood Road	679	Swago Road
557	Burke Road	680	River Road
559	Pflaster Road	683	Rock Run Road
561	Boyce Road	684	Blackwell Road
566	Eighmy Road	685	Methodist Home Road
612	Grist Mill Road	685	DeCourt Road
612	Creek Road	686	Jurgenson Road
616	Schnakenberg Road	687	Kemp Road (Keesler)
618	Trot Lane Road	688	Old Road
620	Nobles Road	689	Buckley Lane
622	John Davis Road	690	Factory Road
622	Boyds Mill Road	691	Elizabeth Road
624	Atco Road	691	Second Street
626	Barkley Lake Road	691	Main Avenue
632	Sheards Road	692	Shady Lane Drive
634	McKnight Road	692	Lake Road
634	Hopkins Road	693	Overlook Drive
636	High Bridge Road		

**AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (ADT) VOLUMES** - Average daily traffic numbers show the volume of traffic, from low to high for each route in Damascus Township. The 1990 average daily traffic counts for the state roads in Damascus Township are as shown:

STATE ROUTE NUMBERS	AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC	STATE ROUTE NUMBERS	AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC
191	1481	1014	219 - 292
371	1461 - 913	1016	438 - 1023
652	3175	1017	292
1002	146 - 584	1019	438
1003	292 - 466	1020	1315
1004	438 - 584	1021	146
1006	219	1025	292 - 438
1007	219 - 292	1027	292
1008	1680 - 72	1029	116
1009	219 - 292	1031	335 - 219
1012	116	1033	219

**DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS AND OTHER CIRCULATION PROBLEMS** - A 1993 study, completed by the Wayne County Department of Planning, mapped and identified dangerous segments of roads within the County. The following was the finding for roads within Damascus Township. The study was based on accident reports for a six year period between 1987 and 1992.

SR1004 -From the beginning of SR1004 in Berlin Township to the intersection with SR1008 in Damascus, Township. This 3 mile section, 1 mile of which is in Damascus Township had 13 accidents. The ratio is .4.3 accidents per mile.

SR371 -From the Damascus bridge to the intersection of SR1009. This 5.2 mile section produced 26 accidents. The ratio is 5.0 accidents per mile.

SR371 -From the intersection of SR1009 to the -intersection of SR191 which is in Lebanon Township. This 4 mile section produced 26 accidents. The ratio is 6.5 accidents per mile.

- SR191 - From the intersection of SR371 in Lebanon Township to the intersection with T-662. This 2.6 mile section produced 26 accidents. The ratio is 10 accidents per mile. A vast number of the accidents occurred outside of the Township at the intersection of SR371 in Lebanon Township.
- SR191 - From the intersection of T-662 to the intersection of SR1018 in Manchester Township. This 3.2 mile section produced 17 accidents. The ratio is 5.3 accidents per mile.
- SR652 - From the intersection of SR1011 in Berlin Township continuing to the intersection of T-502 in Damascus Township. This 3 mile section produced 21 accidents. The ratio is 7.0 accidents per mile.
- SR652 - From the intersection of T-502 east to the end of SR652 at the eastern Wayne County border. This 2.5 mile section produced 17 accidents. The ratio is 6.8 accidents per mile.



## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Community goals are the foundation upon which a comprehensive plan is built. The sources of the goals presented in this Plan were developed from workshop discussions with local officials to assess community needs and interests. The opinions gathered must, of course, be examined in the context of the physical, historical, social, and economic characteristics of the Township as described in the Background section of this Plan. Doing so provides insights into as to what, realistically, can or cannot be achieved in ~ the future and suggests some fairly specific policies and methods (objectives) by which these needs and interests may be satisfied.

### **Goal: Preserve and Enhance the Small Town Rural Atmosphere**

Objectives:

- \* Through the use of land use regulations, direct development in and around existing villages and away from areas having significant physical limitations for growth.
- \* Maintain up-to-date standards requiring new construction and renovation projects to meet minimum health and safety standards and also improve or protect community appearances.
- \* Control common-law nuisances attributable to noise, odors, and unsightly uses exempting farming and other indigenous activities.
- \* Establish use densities and encourage practices such as clustering and planned residential development, which will preserve open space as much as possible.
- \* Enforce regulations to control the proliferation of signs and billboards.
- \* Preserve agricultural land through the support of county purchased conservation easements, agricultural security areas and other devices.
- \* Minimize conflicts between residential and agricultural uses through land use ordinances.

### **Goal: Maintain and Protect the Township's Natural Resources**

Objectives:

- \* Structure land use regulations to limit development in

areas of steep slopes, poor soils, and other limiting factors and link density requirements to land capabilities such as on-lot sewage capability, etc.

- \* Require developers to identify important wetland areas prior to construction to limit the impact on these vulnerable areas.
- \* Encourage the preservation of woodland open spaces to the maximum extent possible (vis-a-vis clustering, etc.)
- \* Require developers to address stormwater and erosion and sedimentation concerns.
- \* Conduct water quality monitoring of the Township's ponds, lakes, streams and rivers.

**Goal: Promote the Availability of Recreational Facilities**

Objectives:

- \* Locate and construct community parks in appropriate areas of the Township, especially in or near villages.
- \* Construct an indoor recreation facility for the senior citizens and teenage population.
- \* Encourage the development of private recreational activities as part of the Township's economic development program.
- \* Ensure the availability of public services and promote the availability of private support services (motels, restaurants, etc.) for new private recreational facilities.
- \* Encourage developers of major subdivisions composed of smaller lots to provide recreation areas and open spaces.

**Goal: Encourage Local Economic Development**

Objectives:

- \* Maintain a cooperative working relationship with the Wayne Industrial Development Corporation, the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and other organizations that can help the Township in the location of businesses within the community.
- \* Identify land best suited to commercial and industrial

development with consideration given to land capability, availability of buildings and utilities, proximity to an adequate transportation network, and compatibility to adjoining uses.

- \* Establish a capital improvements program designed to strengthen local infrastructure components such as sewer and water facilities, libraries, emergency services, recreation, and other community facilities.
- \* Incorporate provisions into Township ordinances encouraging and permitting the establishment and expansion of recreation related businesses.
- \* Aggressively seek the location of other small, clean business or industry.
- \* Provide economic and tax incentives for new industry.
- \* Encourage business development or expansion by local citizens by providing technical assistance and referrals to county, state, federal, and university small business assistance agencies.

**Goal: Provide Necessary and Desirable Community Facilities**

Objectives:

- \* Identify necessary and desirable capital improvements including but not limited to emergency services, recreation facilities, libraries, roads, etc.
- \* Aggressively seek community facilities grant and loan funds.
- \* Encourage citizen and civic organization efforts, especially in regard to senior and youth centers.

**Goal: .Provide and Maintain an Adequate Transportation Network**

Objectives:

- \* Develop a highway improvement and maintenance plan and a highway capital improvements program, to be coordinated with Penn DOT activities.
- \* Maintain an up-to-date road ordinance setting standards for new road construction as well as roads to be dedicated to the Township.
- \* Identify accident-prone areas and pursue measures to

remedy any problems found.

- \* Control street encroachments and access to township highways.
- \* Control the creation of new driving hazards by applying access, parking, setback, and road standards to evaluate new subdivisions, commercial developments or other projects.

**Goal: Maintain and Improve Local Housing**

Objectives:

- \* Encourage housing rehabilitation by seeking and administering state and federal grant and loan funds or by contacting county agencies that do.
- \* Evaluate land use regulations with a view toward identifying techniques for making affordable housing more readily achievable.
- \* Provide for all types of housing, such as multi-family and mobile homes, in appropriate land use ordinances.

**Goal: Preserve Cultural Heritage**

Objectives:

- \* Encourage the use and rehabilitation of older buildings.
- \* Pursue the identification and preservation of archaeological sites, historic buildings, or other areas of cultural value by working with state agencies and funds, utilizing university resources, and encouraging participation by knowledgeable local persons and groups.

**Goal: Cooperate with Adjoining Municipalities in the Implementation of this Plan.**

Objectives:

- \* Make the Plan available to adjoining municipal governments and review theirs. Look for areas of common interests.
- \* Share governmental and civic group resources.
- \* Publicize the Plan -make it available to all residents of the community.

## **LAND USE PLAN**

The Land Use Plan is designed to assist local officials in guiding the development of residential, commercial, agriculture, recreation, and other public and private activities within the Township. Rapid growth continues to be experienced in Damascus Township and the need to channel this growth to best take advantage of and preserve those resources which account for the appeal of the area is ever present. The challenge is determining how these resources can be best utilized.

### **Residential Land Use**

The largest land use in Damascus Township is residential. Therefore, Damascus Township should continue to encourage development within current subdivisions throughout the Township. The most likely area to see projected growth is tough to predict for Damascus Township because the subdivision of lands within the Township is so wide spread. In the past, Pine Grove Estates and the development of Bavarian Village saw tremendous growth periods, but will not in the future because they have reached near peak capacity.

Damascus Township has a large inventory of homes and building lots. However, along with the permanent (year-round) structures there is a substantial portion of these units and lots connected with the second home population. One thing the Township has successfully done thus far, is keep a wide range of affordable housing. Sometimes, developers are able to command high prices because a large number of second home buyers are from New York and New Jersey metropolitan areas and possess higher incomes enabling them to afford these housing prices. Local residents frequently cannot afford them. The large number of new residences occupied by existing residents indicates that Damascus Township has largely avoided this trap.

Therefore, it is necessary for the Township in developing and updating subdivision regulations to address the needs of local residents. This should include allowances for appropriate higher densities in certain developments with proper amenities and/or suitable soils and perhaps some positive incentives for developing lower cost housing. Developers should be encouraged to provide a variety of housing styles and prices to accommodate all income levels with respect to future generations of Township residents. In other words, what is needed in Damascus Township is a balance between higher priced homes priced for the second home and in-migrant market and those priced in the economic range of the local population.

## **Agricultural Land Use**

Farm land preservation is strongly encouraged for the Township. Zoning can be an important tool in this regard and farmers must be protected from residential intrusions which create incompatible land use problems. Likewise, community facilities should not be located where they will increase the pressure to develop farm lands.

## **Commercial and Industrial Land Use**

With the expected future growth and past population increases, opportunities for commercial and industrial enterprises must exist in Damascus Township. Employment and shopping opportunities provide convenience for residents, a positive land use development policy and an enhanced township tax base.

The desire to maintain the rural character of the Township means that commercial land uses should be carefully located and planned. The most ideal settings for commercial and industrial activity are along Routes 652, 191 and 371, mainly for the capacity of these routes to carry a high volume of traffic.

Commercial services such as food marts, drug stores, sit down dining facilities, clothing stores, as well as other retail establishments, are not wide spread in the Township at this time. But, if the Township continues to grow at its current pace, more of these services will be needed. These enterprises should be encouraged and given latitude to locate throughout the Township.

Zoning, as it evolves, should be designed from the perspective of allowing a wide range of home occupations and low-impact uses which might be appropriate throughout large portions of the Township. Convenience, service and jobs should be associated with commercial and industrial land use in Damascus township.

## **Environmental Protection**

### **Conservation Areas**

Areas of the Township that have severe natural feature limitations to development such as steep slopes, floodplain or wet soil conditions, should be utilized mostly as open space uses and limited in most cases to single family large lot development or cluster development which designs around and takes advantage of these features.

## Streams and Floodplain Areas

The preservation of streams, natural channels and flood prone areas in open space is strongly endorsed. Keeping the natural drainage channels open will also reduce the need for expensive storm sewers in the future. Those areas which are adjacent to streams are natural areas for wildlife and can be used for passive recreation. The township has a floodplain map available, that identifies those areas most likely to flood and the frequency of that flooding.

Legitimate wetland areas should be similarly protected. These are important to groundwater recharge, wildlife protection, and stormwater control. Existing Federal and State regulations are more than adequate in this regard.

## Historic Preservation

The Township's historical sites such as those mentioned earlier in the report should continue to be preserved. The houses could be enhanced and utilized as historical museums, community information centers or public libraries. The communities of Milanville and Damascus should be commended for their desire to preserve its historical character by obtaining status on the National Register of Historic Places for historic districts, and other communities should be encouraged to follow their example.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**

Damascus Township's permanent and seasonal populations continue to grow at a steady pace. The need of the community to provide its residents with public services and facilities in order to protect their welfare and promote their social and cultural well-being is ever becoming a greater task. The buildings, parks and other facilities necessary to provide these services are accounted for in this Community Facilities Plan. Township government provides a large portion of these facilities and, therefore, can implement a number of programs and projects addressing these needs.

### **Schools**

The educational needs of the Township are met by the Wayne Highlands School District. No school construction is anticipated in the near future within the Township.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Current recreational and cultural areas in the Township include the Damascus Elementary School, the Township Little League field, Pingle Field, Galilee and Calkins Granges, and a few other isolate<sup>9</sup> places which may provide some recreational opportunities. Other recreational activities in the Township include the following: hiking, horseback riding, swimming, canoeing, rafting and fishing. Overall, with the small amount of recreational opportunities available for township residents, there is room for expanding and allowing for a more diverse recreational pallet.

The Damascus Forest is currently owned and operated by the Township, and the Township may want to explore the possibility of expanding on this park. The current Township policy regarding the park is for no expansion of the existing facilities available at the park, so that it can remain in its existing undeveloped state. Currently, this park is the only one of its kind within the Township, so for the Township to acquire a better park system within its boundaries, it would have to be developed elsewhere.

There are numerous opportunities to expand recreational and cultural services in the Township. It is recommended that the Township work to preserve current amenities and create new parks and recreation areas. The community center that is currently being developed should also be developed in conjunction with these recreational facilities and keyed toward indoor activities for all ages with emphasis on the needs of senior citizens and teenagers.



The Township should also cooperate with private Property Owners Associations in developing and providing recreational opportunities in the community.

### **Township Building**

The Damascus Township Municipal Building should continue to serve as the center for Township government, activities, and public information center. It requires no particular improvements at present.

### **Health Facilities**

The health facilities outside the Township provide an adequate service for the community needs with help from the few health facilities found within the township. However, with the ever increasing population of the Township, health facilities need to be constantly expanding to insure that this adequate service is continually provided. An expanded service outpatient clinic in conjunction with a local or regional hospital would be highly desirable for the area given the older population and large seasonal influxes.

### **Fire, Ambulance & Police Protection**

The existing Beach Lake Fire Station and Equinunk Fire Station, as well as the other fire Stations that provide protection to the community, should continue to expand as necessary to meet community needs. Cooperation between the different fire companies should continue to ensure that adequate service is provided.

Damascus Ambulance service is provided by two stations, one located in the community of Tyler Hill and the other in Equinunk. It is also recommended that the Damascus Ambulance service continue to expand as necessary to meet community needs. The Township is also served by other ambulance services outside the Township borders and cooperation with these corps should be continued.

Currently, the State Police provides police protection in the Township. The Wayne County Sheriff's Department offers service when needed. The establishment of a Township Police Force is very expensive and would result in an increase in local taxes. Local representatives have proposed new State Legislation to authorize greater use of Constables for police protection, with appropriate training to be mandatory. This may offer a compromise solution and should be explored.

Township officials should periodically re-assess Damascus' fire, ambulance and police needs.

## **Sewer & Water**

On-lot septic tanks provide the primary means of sewage disposal in the Township. There is presently one centralized sewage treatment system in the Township and it is located at Pine Grove Estates. The Township's Wastewater Facilities Plan discourages the need for a Township-wide sewer and water system. Instead it recommends that on-lot sewage disposal should continued to be encouraged. The 537 plan should be updated and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with the most up-to-date procedures.

Each of the above recommendations has potential and should be explored more fully as the opportunities arise to do so in reviewing development plans.

**MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS PLAN**

The road system of Damascus Township forms the framework for development. These roads influence the direction of growth as well as commercial, industrial and residential locations. This plan addresses the condition of the highway system, the major transportation network in the Township, and other modes of transportation.

**Highway/Road Planning Principles**

Functional Road Classifications

Every road and highway in Damascus Township plays apart in moving people and goods within and through the Township. Some roads are more important than others and, therefore, it is necessary to assess the future role and function of each road as the Township continues to develop. The following table identifies Township roads by the functions which they must play in the future (as opposed to present use) to achieve an efficient flow of traffic in the Township.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION	FUNCTION	ROADS
Arterial	Carries medium-to-heavy volumes of traffic at moderately high speeds, provides access to major traffic generators.	SR-191 SR-371 SR-652
Collector	Provides connections between Arterials and Local Roads at comparatively slower speeds and carries moderate volumes of traffic.	SR-1002,1004 1007,1009 1016,1020 1025,1031 1033
Local	Provides direct access to abutting properties and channels local traffic to Collector Roads.	All other existing roads

The Traffic Analysis Plate Map in the rear pocket shows each road in the Township as being one of the 3 types - Arterial, Collector, Local. Improvements and upgrading should be made accordingly.

This Plan is designed to develop a system with local and state reconstruction programs as well as continued maintenance programs to bring about a functional system.

\* The township plans to upgrade paved roads as funds become available, and continue to repair all other township roads as needed.

### **Street Maintenance**

With the increase in population and development throughout the Township there are no unimportant roads. The Plan calls for continual road maintenance and paving of unpaved roads each year.

Maintenance should be oriented towards reducing traffic hazards, cutting back the long term cost of highway improvements and increasing the capacity that they can serve. The recommendations outlined in the previous Comprehensive Plan dated 1974 should still be applied.

### **Intersection Improvements**

The following key intersections should be improved (e.g. signalized, widened, redesigned, etc.) These improvements will increase traffic safety and move traffic more efficiently.

\* The Township does not see any intersections that specifically need improvements, but it does plan to improve the sight-distance at all intersections by cutting brush.

Since these intersections involve State roads, the Township [and Penn DOT need to work together to study and determine the best way to improve each.

Accident-prone areas should be continually documented for justification of improvement projects, particularly with Penn DOT.

### **Mass Transportation**

The only public transportation in the Township is that provided by the Area Agency on Aging. There is no bus service to or through the Township. None is needed beyond what the Agency now provides.

## **ACTION PROGRAM**

### **Continuing Planning**

This Comprehensive Plan should be applied consistently in decisions pertaining to land use, circulation and community facilities. If used in this manner it will be a useful document. Each proposal and action should conform with the goals laid out herein.

This Plan should be reviewed annually and updated to reflect new problems and concerns of the time. It would be beneficial to Damascus Township to develop a close working relationship with adjoining municipalities on planning and development matters.

Assistance and consulting from specialists in law, planning, engineering and other areas will help in effectively carrying out this Plan. The use of this assistance will save time, provide positive alternatives and will save long term costs.

### **Implementation Tools**

The Plan is itself an implementation tool. It is a valuable document that provides policies for guiding the future development and preservation of Damascus Township. The Plan has certain legal authority under Pennsylvania Act 247. With the adoption of the Plan, no public building activity can be undertaken without the opinion of the Township Planning Commission as to conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

There are, among other tools, two specific ordinances that can be used to implement the Plan: 1) the subdivision and land development ordinance and 2) the zoning ordinance.

#### **Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance**

The subdivision and land development ordinance guides and controls the layout of lots, streets, utility systems and amount of recreation land that will be provided as well as other standards. Subdivision control helps achieve the following results:

- \* coordinated street patterns \* reduced traffic congestion
- \* adequate utilities that protect streams, wells and land from pollution
- \* installed improvements

The subdivision and land development ordinance is limited in the extent that it only controls lands that are subdivided.

Damascus Township's existing ordinance appears to address each of these needs but it should be specifically reviewed with a view toward addressing some of the specific land use concerns outlined herein and continually be re-evaluated.

## Zoning

A zoning ordinance is a major legal tool for regulating the use of land in the Township. The ordinance may permit, prohibit, regulate, restrict, and determine any of the following:

- \* uses of land and bodies of water
- \* structure size, height, bulk, location, erection, construction, repair, maintenance, alteration, raising, removal and use
- \* density of population and development
- \* actual use of the land (yards, open spaces, unoccupied, dimensions)

Zoning can be used in promoting certain types of advantageous development and also limiting development which is a threat to health, safety and welfare of the public. The zoning ordinance has two parts:

- 1) An official zoning map which delineates land use districts.
- 2) The text which provides general information regarding administration of the ordinance and regulations for each zoning district.

Such an ordinance should be considered in the context of ensuring the ability of the Township to economically develop, accommodate needed services and produce housing affordable to local residents.

## **MAJOR ACTIONS - A SUMMARY**

The following major actions should be taken to implement the Comprehensive Plan:

- \* For every new land use that is proposed in the future ask the question, "Does it help carry out the goals and objectives of the Plan?"
- \* Consider updating the Damascus Township Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the goals, objectives and recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.
- \* Revise the Township's existing Subdivision Ordinance to

help ensure safe and well-designed new development and address the goals outlined herein.

- \* Prepare and implement a three year Capital Improvements Program to schedule public improvements according to priorities established by the Township and the Township's ability to pay for these improvements. Annually update this program to constantly plan expenditures three years in advance. The Planning Commission should prepare and recommend the annual update to the program.
- \* Make maximum use of federal, state and county funds to assist in making needed public improvements. The Planning Commission or a committee of Township Officials should be responsible for keeping informed of funding programs.
- \* Pursue the various measures recommended herein to upgrade the Township highway system, including the adoption and refinement of a traffic control ordinance, which gives the Township the abilities to post road weight limits or speed limits where the need is seen.
- \* Regularly evaluate the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, make modifications to the Plan to ensure that it remains a useful document to help day to day decisions about the future growth and preservation of the Township.
- \* The Planning Commission should submit an annual written report to the Township Supervisors, summarizing its conclusion on the evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan, a summary of the past major activities and crucial issues that will or may be facing the Township.

**DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP**

Resolved and Adopted this 19th day of June, 1995. This

Resolution shall become effective June 24, 1995.

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