

8. A Plan for Transportation & Circulation

The Municipalities Planning Code Section 301(a)(3) defines the Plan for Transportation & Circulation as “a plan for movement of people and goods, which may include expressways, highways, local street systems, parking facilities, pedestrian and bikeway systems, public transit routes, terminals, airfields, port facilities, railroad facilities and other similar facilities or uses.”

Just as the railroad of the 1800s stimulated the rise of such places as Shoemakers Village, Frutchey, and Coolbaugh, the Township’s convenient location near Interstate highways 380, 80, and 84 has spurred a new era of development, creating a popular bedroom community for the job markets in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. In fact, recent commuting patterns in the Township show that more and more residents work in adjacent states and spend an average of 43 minutes commuting one way, nearly double the national average of 25 minutes.

As Middle Smithfield looks towards new growth and opportunity, it, like many other communities, must also confront the issues associated with increased congestion and traffic safety. These issues exist today and are viewed by residents as a deterrent to economic growth and development. Transportation planning and the coordination between land use and transportation will have a tremendous impact on the Township’s goals of increasing economic development and maintaining a rural character.

Existing Conditions and Functional Classification

Transportation planning, perhaps more than any other area of the comprehensive plan, needs to be a cooperative effort if the most effective and efficient system is to be implemented and maintained. This is due to the many levels and hands involved in the management and ownership of transportation infrastructure, where roads can be either publicly or privately owned. Public roads fall under the jurisdiction(s) of federal, state, or local governments, while many private roads are interior subdivision roads and thus owned and maintained by individual homeowners and community associations.

In addition to being distinguished by ownership, roads may also be categorized by the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHA) functional classification system. This system defines roads based on their design, capacity (volume), and speed. Roads higher on the hierarchy are intended to carry greater volumes of vehicles for farther distances, while smaller, local roads are geared toward shorter, more locally oriented trips. This functional classification system is necessary when seeking federal-aid funding from the federal government. Roads in Middle Smithfield, where classified, fall under the rural functional system, which includes principal arterials, minor arterials, major and minor collectors, and local roads.

The FHA defines these classifications as follows:

- Principal Arteries are designed to link cities, larger towns, and traffic generators such as resort areas and to provide interstate and inter-county service. They are expected to provide for a relatively high travel speeds with minimum interference.

- Rural Major Collector Roads serve intra-county travel and trips of shorter distances than arterial roads. They are designed to link traffic generators of county importance with nearby larger towns or cities or with routes of higher classification. They are designed to accommodate a moderate speed.
- Rural Minor Collector Roads are intended to: (1) Be spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road; (2) provide service to the remaining smaller communities; and (3) link the locally important traffic generators with their rural hinterland.
- Rural Local Roads are designed to provide access between adjacent land uses and to collector roads within a short distance. (Source: www.fwha.dot.gov)

The majority of roads in Middle Smithfield Township are owned by the Township and not currently classified under the FHA system. In addition to Township roads, there are State roads (which are classified), privately owned roads, and some roads whose ownership is different depending on the segment. The roads that comprise this network are depicted on **Map 8-1** and listed below.

State Roads (by classification)

Principal Arterials

Route 209
 Route 402

Rural Minor Collectors

Marshalls Creek Road
 Hollow Road
 Schoolhouse Road

Rural Local Roads

Lower Lakeview Drive
 Sellersville Road
 Tom X Road
 Winona Falls Road
 River Road

Township Roads

Avenue De Guy
 Barren Road
 Besecker Drive
 Big Buck Lane
 Brook Haven Road
 Brook Hollow Road
 Brushy Mtn.
 Buckhorn Drive
 Buroojy Court
 Charley Drive
 Church Hill Road
 Cold Springs Road
 Colonial Drive
 Columbia Blvd.
 Coolbaugh Road

Georganna Drive
 Glenview Court
 Gravel Ridge Road
 Havenwood Drive
 Hiawatha Lane
 Hidden Lake
 High Meadow Dr.
 Hollow Road
 Honeysuckle Drive
 Huffman Hill Road
 Jennifer Lane
 Keystone Road
 Knob Hill Circle
 Laurel Ridge Road
 Ledgewood Court

Pine Tree Drive
 Primrose Lane
 Reservoir Road
 Reservoir Ridge Rd
 River Road
 Rue De John
 Sand Hill Drive
 Sellersville Drive
 Shady Hill Road
 Sellersville Drive
 Shady Hill Road
 Sidorick Lane
 Sky View Lane
 Sterling Court
 Stoney Brook Dr.

Courtright Lane	Lakeside Drive	Stoney Ledge Drive
Creek Run	Manzanedo Road	Sugar Works Drive
Crown Point Court	Maplewood Court	Summit Drive
Crown Point Drive	Maplewood Drive	Sumner Drive
Crown Point Dr.N&S	Marjorie Court	Tego Lake Road
Community Drive	McCole Road	Timber Mtn. Drive
Dancing Ridge Road	Melvin Lane	Timothy Lake Road
Dawn Ave	Michaels Hill Road	Tom X Road
Deer Path Drive	Minsi Road	Travis Drive
Deer Track Drive	Mosiers Knob Road	Turkey Ridge Road
Deer Tack Lane	Mt. Laurel Court	Upper Lakeview Dr.
Denise Lane	Mt. Laurel Drive	Watershed Way
Newton Run Drive	Mt. Nebo Road	Winona Falls Road
Dry Pond Drive	Municipal Drive	Wood Lane
Firestone Lane	Newton Run Drive	Wooddale Road
Fish Court	Oak Grove Drive	Woodland Trails
Flagstone Lane	Overlook Lane	Woods Drive
Forest Run	Pheasant Ridge Dr.	
Foxmoor Drive	Pine Hill Court	
Frutchey Road	Pine Hill Road	

Transportation Organizations

Transportation planning for Middle Smithfield and Monroe County is under the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) District 5. PennDOT has designated the Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) as the designated rural planning organization (RPO) for five counties including Monroe County. As such, NEPA is contracted to engage in various transportation planning and programming activities. NEPA convenes the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NPRTPO) Committee, who assists and advises NEPA with assessing and evaluating the transportation needs and priorities in the region, including the administration of the RPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Other organizations involved in transportation planning include the Monroe County Transportation Authority (MCTA), which operates the bus system, and the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Rail Authority, which manages the rail system. A primary concern of the Rail Authority is to reestablish rail passenger service with New Jersey Transit between Scranton, Pennsylvania and Hoboken, New Jersey.

Route 209 Corridor: Transportation Conditions & Planning

The transportation issue of greatest impact to the Township presently and for the foreseeable future, is the congestion and Level of Service deficiencies along the Route

209 corridor. This corridor is of vital importance to the Township's ability to draw potential employment centers and other commercial development to the area. In 2000, the corridor carried between 15,000 and 23,000 vehicles a day on weekends and less than 13,000 a day during the week (CTLUMS study July 2001). Critical intersections along the route are either operating with deficiencies or at failing levels of service.

The single largest transportation project designed to address this issue is the Marshalls Creek Bypass, otherwise known as the Route 209 Relief Route. Currently under construction, the Marshalls Creek Bypass will be a four-lane limited access bypass intended to relieve congestion in the Village of Marshalls Creek in Smithfield Township. The 3.5-mile bypass connects US Route 209 and State Route 402 in Middle Smithfield Township and includes widening of Rt. 209, upgrades to intersections and drainage and other conditions on some adjacent secondary roads. Construction is scheduled to occur in three phases, the first of which began in summer 2005. The project will also include a new 600-space Park & Ride facility on part of the existing flea market site.

However, even as traffic studies for the Marshalls Creek Bypass were being completed, the Township and transportation experts realized that the Bypass would not solve all of the traffic congestion and service deficiencies in the long term. In response, members at the State, County and Township level established the Comprehensive Transportation and Land Use Management Strategy (CTLUMS) project to ensure acceptable traffic conditions through 2018 after the construction of the bypass. The primary goals are to: manage traffic growth in the area; and manage land use development to protect the quality of life.

The resulting study suggested strategies for each of the jurisdictions within the study area. General recommendations include the adoption of an access management overlay ordinance, preserving open space, revising building and impervious coverage standards directly along the corridor, and revising densities to reduce the impact on both roadways and environmentally constrained areas. Recommendations specific to Middle Smithfield Township include the implementation of a TDR program (discussed in other sections of this Plan), adopting zoning that will support village center type development, and the revision of zoning and density regulations in selected locations. While several of these strategies are included in this section, others are considered in interrelated components of this Plan.

Transportation Concerns & Issues

Residents of Middle Smithfield have a variety of issues and concerns surrounding transportation in their Township.

- As discussed above, there is a high level of concern regarding transportation along the Route 209 corridor and its effect on both economic development and overall quality of life within the Township. While commercial development has traditionally occurred along this corridor, Route 209 cannot dually function as both high-speed thoroughway and small town main street. Alternatively, there is concern that continued development along the linear corridor will result in strip development that degrades the rural and scenic character of the area.

- While the Marshalls Creek Bypass will relieve congestion for a substantial period of time, the growth rate of Middle Smithfield and surrounding areas will inevitably catch up with the planned capacity of the new bypass. Alternative, long-term solutions need to be examined. As experience has shown that a single solution is rarely enough to solve a particular transportation issue, a variety of longer-term alternatives, including opportunities for bicycle, pedestrian, and bus transportation are needed.
- Middle Smithfield Township suffers from a lack of east west roadway connections in the central and northern areas of the Township. Drivers traveling east and west in this part of the Township currently have little choice except to drive south to Route 209, Lower Lakeview Drive, or other in order to reach their destination. This leads to increased traffic on local roadways as well as along the already taxed Route 209 corridor.
- Many residents are concerned with the potential for tractor-trailer traffic on Route 402. As other options are restricted, trailer traffic along this roadway would degrade and interfere with residential neighborhoods, sensitive environmental areas including the Resica Falls Boy Scout Camp.
- Connectivity between existing developments within the Township is low. The ability to drive, walk, or bike from one property to another is often hampered by the lack of an appropriate connection, whether an interior access lane, sidewalk, or pathway. This further enforces the mentality that one needs to get into a vehicle and drive to a destination, even if that destination is a park or school next door.
- Minimum bus service is provided by the Monroe County Transit Authority and several private bus lines that connect within the region is not sufficient to serve the needs of residents who are not able to drive. Bicycle and pedestrian amenities are also at a minimum.

Goal for Transportation and Circulation

As referenced in Chapter 2, the Township's overall goal for Transportation and Circulation is to **facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods; and promote multimodal circulation.**

This goal is supported by the following four objectives:

1. Create an efficient road network.
2. Alleviate traffic congestion through an interconnected road network.
3. Create an interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle paths.
4. Provide travel choices to accommodate all segments of the population.

Recommendations

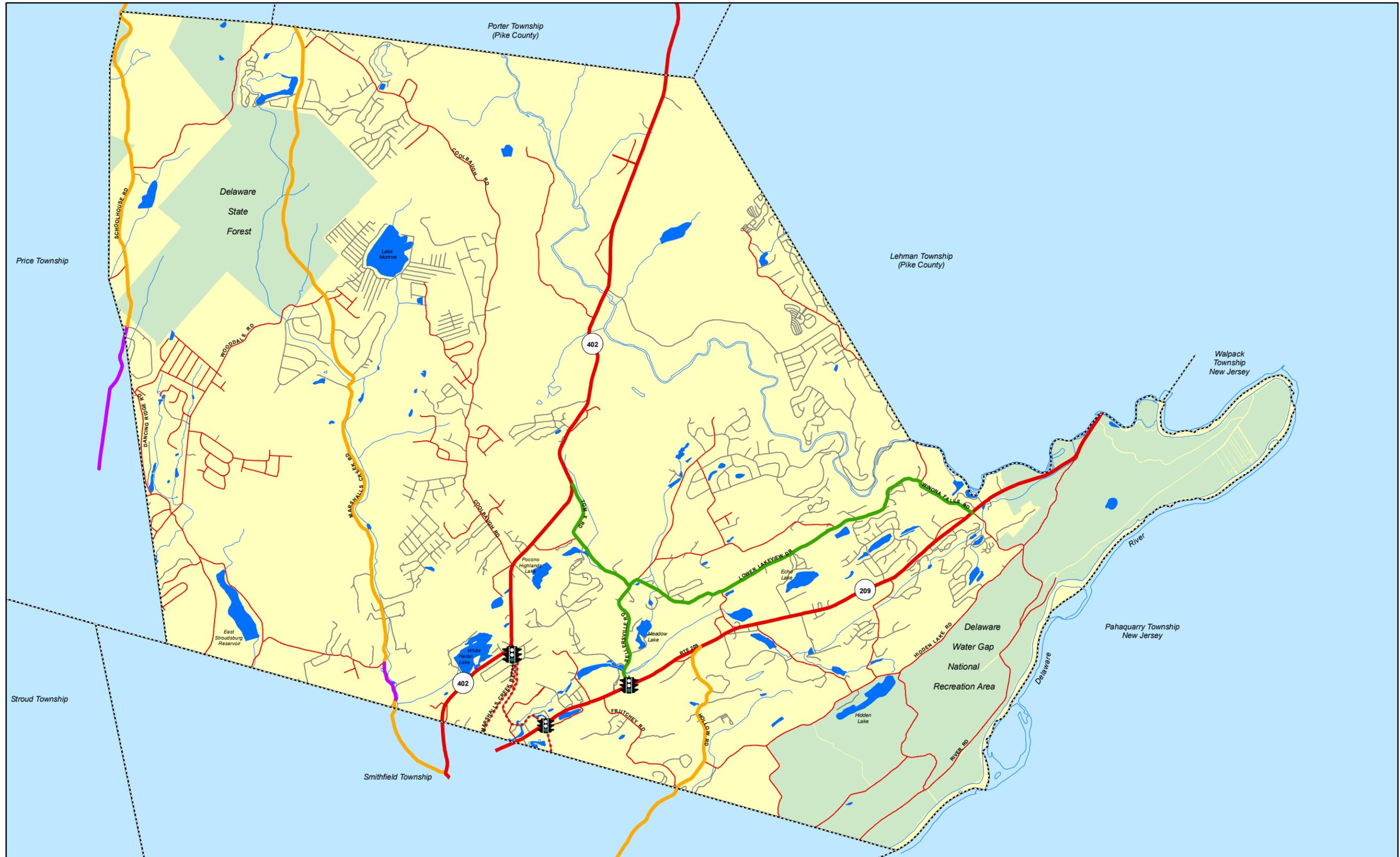
Middle Smithfield anticipates a vibrant future in which an effective and efficient multi-modal system of transportation plays a key role. In order to enhance transportation system and circulation throughout the Township and improve the area's competitiveness

for economic and residential development, the following recommendations are advocated by this plan:

1. Create a road system parallel to Route 209. Congestion along the Route 209 corridor is perceived to be a threat to the healthy development of the Township, even with the improvements associated with the Marshalls Creek Bypass. In order for the corridor to serve its function as both bypass and “main street”, the Township should consider a system of roads forming blocks parallel to the corridor and running in an east west direction. These roads are envisioned as hosting a variety of compact commercial and mixed use developments (as opposed to strip type development) and that retain, but do not interfere with, convenient and safe access along the main thoroughfare.
2. Create an east/west connector to relieve traffic congestion. In addition to the parallel road system adjacent to the Route 209 corridor, additional east west connecting roads in the central and northern areas of the Township will reduce the number of local trips forced onto Route 209 and therefore increase mobility along this important thoroughfare, while decreasing trip length for local trips, and increasing overall community connectivity. One likely place to consider such a connection is between Coolbaugh Road and Marshall’s Creek Road, south of Lake Monroe. As a long term planning objective, feasibility studies are needed and will be useful in providing to direction as the development of individual sites is proposed in the area.
3. Currently even the shortest of trips between individual subdivisions or commercial sites requires extended trips and accessing major roads to reach a destination. In order to decrease this traffic, shorten trip length, and increase vehicular connectivity, the Township Codes should be amended to encourage a minimum of two through-streets between adjoining neighborhoods and to minimize the use of cul-de-sacs in new development. Additionally, cross-access easements between adjacent parcels, whether newly developed or redeveloped, are an important access management tool that reduces the number of vehicles entering onto main arteries. Interconnectivity reduces traffic congestion by providing a greater number of options for travel routes for daily trips. More importantly, greater connectivity improves the mobility of emergency vehicles and contributes to improved response times.
4. Install traffic control devices at selected intersections. Some intersections can be greatly improved through the addition of a variety of traffic control device. The timing of traffic lights for instance can greatly improve the flow of traffic and reinforce the desired speed limit along a corridor.
5. Connectivity between adjacent uses must go beyond vehicular connection if the Township is to promote improved circulation for bicycles and pedestrians. The ability for future residents to walk to adjacent neighborhoods and playgrounds, walk to basic neighborhood services, or even walk their children to school without getting into their cars requires that sidewalks be included in new development now, particularly in Character Areas 3 through 6. These sidewalks should be extended to adjoining neighborhoods, community facilities or amenities.

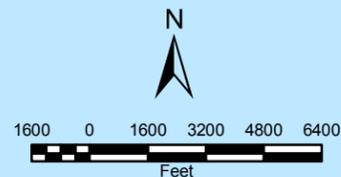
6. The CTLUMS project suggests strategies for growth management that will help maintain traffic at acceptable levels through 2018. These proposed strategies largely focus on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance pertaining to density and impervious surface regulations, the Township's Official Zoning Map, and traffic impact studies. The implementation of these strategies as part of this plan is highly recommended. This study is just one example of the larger need for ongoing coordination and cooperation with the State and County in order to ensure an adequate transportation network.
7. Middle Smithfield Township enjoys an attractive landscape with a variety of parks, scenic areas, historic sites, and other local assets. Trails and pathways that take advantage of these assets can become a great asset to the community, while increasing transportation options and enhancing the enjoyment of natural features. To increase the availability and quality of trails and pathways within the community, the Township should require new on and off-street multi-purpose paths to connect to existing and planned paths on adjacent properties. In the big picture, these paths can connect on a regional basis to planned County-wide greenway systems.
8. Transportation planning requires a high level of coordination between multiple agencies and organizations. Township coordination and participation on the various committees and efforts going on throughout Monroe County is needed to ensure an adequate transportation network and to increase travel choices. These efforts include the Monroe County and PennDOT efforts to formulate a cross-state bikeway system and the Monroe County Transit Authority's mission to provide bus service. The Township should advocate for increased bus service as well as support the use of alternative energy within the transportation system.

Map 8-1: Transportation Plan



Middle Smithfield Township Comprehensive Plan Update

Monroe County, Pennsylvania



Data Sources:
Base Features - Monroe County Planning
Commission, September 2006
Roadway Functional Classification -
PennDOT, 2007

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Adopted: February 14, 2008

Legend

State Roadway Functional Classification

- Rural Minor Arterial
- Rural Minor Collector
- Rural Local
- Urban Collector

- Township Road
- Private Road
- - - Transportation Improvement
- Proposed Traffic Signal
- State Forest/Parkland
- Surface Water