

# MUNICIPAL SPOTLIGHT

## CONEWAGO TOWNSHIP



Nestled between bucolic meandering branches of the Conewago Creek and the Little Conewago Creek, which serve as well over two-thirds of the municipality's boundary, it's no surprise where Conewago Township gets its name. Coming from a Lenape word for "at the rapids", we are one of three Townships in the state of Pennsylvania to carry the name. Formed in 1818, Conewago is a Township of the Second-Class that encompasses 24.7 square miles, and is home to nearly 9000 residents.

Conewago was, and still is, a bedroom community. Rural country living for those who commute to work in York, Harrisburg, Lancaster, or Maryland. Working in the urban but living in the rural is a point of pride for the residents who don't consider themselves "city folk". The bustling energy of York City's revitalization and redevelopment has seen metropolitan sprawl creeping northward for decades. It is now feeling like the community is perched upon the front steps of York City. Development encroaches north into our southern edge and balloons around the Exit 28 interchange with I83. While the bulk of development has been contained to a well defined "growth corridor" it has nevertheless left many residents feeling worried that the character of their home Township is changing too fast.

Planned Residential Developments have been a huge part of the growth as York County continues to struggle with a housing shortage. Many older residents want more options to age-in-place or move into a 55 and over community within the Township. Newer residents are expecting more urban amenities not previously prioritized within the Township. The booming residential sector is perhaps best illustrated by Freedom Square, a one square mile planned development with mixed residential and commercial uses now entering Phase One. The development promises to bring the much anticipated 55 and over housing as well as a significant boost to commerce and local jobs.

Susquehanna Trail's vital role as the emergency detour for I83 and the subsequent Exit 28 on/off ramp within the Township guarantees the municipality's location is highly desirable to Warehouses and Distribution Centers looking to capitalize on maximizing their reach along the eastern seaboard coupled with shorter shipping times. However, when the first warehouse came to the Township, the word "warehouse" was not even in the zoning ordinance. Ordinance updates have been necessary to keep pace with the changing needs of development types still evolving to meet consumer demand.

Surrounding municipalities have seen similar development, and the resulting traffic coming through the Township has created concerns over the timeline of the Exit 26 construction. Local roads have been carefully cultivated to meet the growing needs of citizens. Recent paving has now upgraded the last gravel road in the township and now all are fully paved. In addition, many updates are scheduled and underway to improve State roads in the Township. Canal Road and the intersections with Bull Road and Susquehanna Trail as well as the Bridge on Canal Road leading into East Manchester Township are expected to soon commence improvement projects.







The preservation of farmlands and open space is another topic often heard at Board meetings. Preserving land through easements, Ag Preservation Zoning, or other means has long been a priority. Currently working on a Comprehensive Plan update, we hope to find solutions that suit our community and reach the goals our residents want. We are looking into avenues not previously implemented in our community and using innovation and determination to preserve the rural character of our Township. Pennsylvania leads the country in the effort to preserve agricultural lands and Conewago is dedicated to doing its part. Efforts are currently underway to identify tracts of land suitable for preserving as public open space either for trails, water access to the Conewago Creek, or as sites for future parks.

Favorite local parks, Mill Creek Park and Zion View Park are both seeing exciting improvements. Mill Creek Park, the location of our popular Food Truck Friday events has recently seen an expanded parking area and the addition of a new pavilion. Our local elementary school students participated in a Food Truck Friday Poster Coloring Contest to help design the flyers for this year's event. Entries are currently on display at our website [www.ConewagoTwp.com](http://www.ConewagoTwp.com). Zion View Park, which has three ball fields and hosts Little League World Series Games, is used extensively by North Eastern Little League. The park is scheduled for updates to the parking area as well as future upgrades planned for the next few years. Plans include upgrading the largest ball diamond, adding batting cages and new ball courts, and expanding the playground.

Conewago Township is committed to greeting the future without forgetting the past. Efforts to embrace new technologies are coupled in tandem with missions to document the past and preserve the historic. The Zion View area and Strinestown area are slated to be recognized as Historic Villages. Efforts are also mobilizing to identify local historic stone farmhouses and single room schoolhouses. We recently finished construction on a brand-new Administrative Office building without the need for a loan or raising taxes. A feat accomplished through careful budgeting and ARPA funds. As we continue to work on our Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance updates we make special efforts to preserve our history and keep all of our residents "Conewago Proud!"

