into green sanctuaries —

Consider the magnificent cathedral. Symbolic tree trunks form pillars flanking the sanctuary, their spreading branches forming the latticework of the ceilings.

With a tree canopy spreading overhead, Hershey’s outdoor living spaces can become cathedrals of green. Maple Avenue, above, is one of the few Hershey streets that has retained its towering street trees.
Twenty years ago, urban designer Allan Jacobs wrote a widely acclaimed book, “Great Streets.” In it, Jacobs described some of the world’s most attractive streets and explained what makes them uniquely appealing.

He listed streets on four continents, from the Champs-Elysee in Paris to the Botanical Gardens in Rio de Janeiro to Main Street in Disneyland.

Great streets create appealing outdoor spaces, where people can shop, eat, and meet other people. Cars are secondary to pedestrians, and as such, must be “calmed” to move slowly. And virtually every great street is lined with towering shade trees to provide beauty and unity to the street.

In Milton Hershey’s day, Chocolate Avenue ranked as one of America’s great streets, with its enormous chocolate factory, majestic civic buildings, shade trees, trolleys, and bustling pedestrian life.

Today, the lively crowds on Chocolate Avenue have been replaced by a steady stream of cars and trucks, most of them just passing through. While the Hershey Story Museum has been a welcome addition, drawing visitors and adding stature to the street, too many parking lots and vacant spaces remain.

Restoring life and vitality to Chocolate Avenue should be a primary goal of Derry Township’s comprehensive plan.
as one of America’s great streets —

Two common elements of great streets are vibrant pedestrian life, framed by closely spaced shade trees, unfurling canopies high overhead to provide beauty and unity to the street.

Ringstrasse, Vienna

Ramblas, Barcelona

Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich
A master plan for Hershey’s downtown has been discussed and debated for decades by townspeople and representatives of the Hershey entities. Everyone agrees the land north of Chocolate Avenue between Cocoa Avenue and Park Road is an integral part of downtown Hershey and is critical to its future.

In 2001, the Keating Development Co. introduced a $60- to $80-million plan to restore the Hershey Press building, possibly as a new location for the Hershey Museum, and to build a hotel, multiplex theater, shops, and restaurants. A parking garage would serve the complex.

The plan was vehemently opposed by Hershey residents who didn’t want the area turned into an entertainment and shopping mecca that would attract tourists into the downtown. The plan was withdrawn the following year.

Next, contractor Dave Bowser, a graduate of the Milton Hershey School, submitted a plan in 2003 that would use the land primarily for housing, with some retail on Chocolate Avenue. Three existing buildings—the Hershey Press building, the laundry (since demolished), and the post office—would be adaptively reused, and four new residential buildings would be constructed. Two levels of parking, screened by buildings along Chocolate Avenue, would be provided.

Although the plan was popular with many residents, it was deemed financially impractical, and a less ambitious project was eventually adopted. The Hershey Press building was beautifully restored for offices, with two restaurants on the first floor. A handsome new museum called The Hershey Story was built, fronting on Chocolate Avenue across from Chocolatetown Square. A parking garage to the rear, along the railroad tracks, serves both buildings. A pedestrian bridge from the garage crosses the railroad tracks to a bus depot on Park Avenue, with connections to Harrisburg and Lebanon. (Eventually, light rail to Harrisburg, Lebanon and beyond may become feasible using the tracks, and the bus depot will become an Intermodal Center.)

A building south of Chocolate Avenue was acquired and demolished, and a piece of Chocolatetown Square was removed, to allow the intersection of Chocolate and Cocoa Avenues to be reconfigured for smoother traffic flow.

But the land west of the museum is still vacant, and the downtown remains incomplete.
could dramatically improve downtown Hershey —

Early this year, Mechanicsburg native Sean Douty submitted a redevelopment plan for downtown Hershey as his master's degree thesis in architecture at the University of Maryland.

The son of a Hershey executive, Douty worked several years at Hersheypark and as a reservations agent for the Hershey resorts. His experiences, he says, not only helped him realize the value of the town to tourists, but also the value of tourists to the town.

Douty cites three reasons to develop downtown Hershey:

• Generate revenue.
• Maintain the downtown's relevance following next year's closing of the original chocolate factory.
• Restore Milton Hershey’s vision of a green town with a vibrant public realm.

Hersheypark draws tens of thousands of tourists daily, and Douty believes they can help sustain an invigorated downtown, enriching their experience in Hershey and improving the quality of life for residents at the same time.

One challenge is physical: Although the park and the downtown are in close proximity, the railroad tracks are a barrier for pedestrians. Douty suggests a cable-car system to carry as many as 3,000 people per hour across the tracks in each direction. Such systems are increasingly common worldwide.

Among the uses Douty proposes for the Chocolate Avenue tract are retail shops, a farmer's market, a multiplex cinema, grocery store, and even a game room for young adults. Buildings would front both Chocolate Avenue and a pedestrian mall behind them. Parking would be underground. The architecture of all buildings would be compatible with the historic character of Hershey.

All the plans proposed thus far would bring far more density to the downtown than it has supported in the past. Inevitably, downtown Hershey will change dramatically and likely within the next few years. At 2 million square feet, the soon-to-be-redeveloped chocolate factory is larger than all but a handful of shopping malls in America.

More people will enliven the downtown. The challenge will be dealing with their cars.
To create handsome, inviting streets...

With more than 3 million visitors annually, Freeport, Maine, needs to provide plenty of parking spaces. And it does, though you don’t see them from Main Street, where most of the town’s outlets are located.

Parking is parsed out among numerous modest parking lots, tucked behind buildings and accessed by narrow lanes. This encourages motorists to slow down, and it allows pedestrians to enjoy the charming ambience of a New England main street, which is narrow and easy to cross.

Many older Pennsylvania towns, from Chestnut Hill to Franklin, have retrofitted their historic downtowns with parking lots behind the buildings facing their main streets. Boyertown in Berks County, for example, has done an excellent job of screening its parking in one centralized parking lot.

Likewise, as downtown Hershey redevelops, parking lots need to be scaled for a small town and hidden behind buildings. Just as we put all manner of household goods out of sight in closets and storage rooms, cars ought to be stored out of sight when we’re not using them.

Above right, the main intersection of Boyertown as seen from the street.

Below right, the same intersection from the parking lot to the rear of the buildings.

The borough of Boyertown, in Berks County, has maintained the 19th century character of its downtown by placing its public parking in the interior of its main commercial block, shown in yellow. Four unobtrusive entrances and exits allow easy access for motorists from three different streets.
Next year, the original Hershey chocolate factory, anchor of the downtown for more than a century, will close. Chocolate-making will be transferred to the West Hershey plant.

Whether the 2 million-square-foot factory is redeveloped for office, retail, or residential uses—most likely a combination of the three—the impact will be dramatic. Structured parking will likely be needed.

But parking garages can be even less attractive than parking lots. In recent years, in more and more communities, downtown parking garages are screened from view by handsome, functional buildings in front of them. That’s why a line of buildings, compatible with existing historic architecture, should front any downtown garage that faces the street.

This lovely building on Princeton’s Palmer Square, above right, is one of several “liner” buildings attached to two large parking garages, shown from the air, below right. Parking garages with liner buildings can store hundreds of cars efficiently and make an aesthetic contribution to the street at the same time.
A green canopy over pavement and buildings...

Recent flooding in Derry Township, the worst on record, makes stormwater management more urgent than ever.

The township is working on bricks and mortar projects to carry stormwater away. A less expensive and more sustainable approach is to reduce runoff: Replace excess asphalt with vegetation and create a green canopy over developed areas. One mature canopy tree can reduce stormwater runoff by more than 1,000 gallons per year and provide the cooling power of several large air conditioners.

Derry Township has a particular abundance of parking lots with the Hershey entertainment venues and the Penn State Hershey Medical Center. Looking down on Derry using the satellite imagery of Google Earth, we find hundreds of asphalted acres dedicated to cars. And parking stalls typically are empty most of the time.

Parking lots are unattractive and bad for the environment. Their black expanses absorb the sun's rays in the summer, raising ambient temperatures and making hot weather even hotter.

But Derry’s numerous parking lots can be transformed into green spaces for cars through the creative use of trees. Simple geometry makes this possible: The footprint of even a huge tree seldom exceeds five square feet, but its trunk can rise up five stories and unfurl a canopy the breadth of a house. Trees can be distributed throughout parking lots to provide plenty of room for cars at ground level and plenty of shade overhead.

Although the township now requires one tree for every eight spaces in large parking lots, a better proportion would be one tree for every two spaces in every parking lot, large and small.

Meanwhile, Hershey Entertainment and Resorts might consider retrofitting their existing parking lots with trees, setting a good example for others.

Above, a park for people in Chicago is not much different from an adjacent park for cars.

Top left, the parking lots for the Hershey amusements off Hershey Park Drive cover about 100 acres.

Below left, the parking lot at the Keeneland Racetrack in Lexington, Ky., is one of the few lots in America with a complete tree canopy.
Parks aren’t the only candidates for green roofs. A growing number of public and private organizations are placing vegetated roofs on their buildings.

Although green roofs cost more, they last longer than conventional roofs and have numerous environmental benefits. They reduce heat loss by a third and stormwater runoff by 70 to 90 percent. They cut down on the “heat island” effect caused when the sun heats up conventional roof surfaces, warming the air around them.

The city of Lancaster recently adopted a green infrastructure plan that includes reducing impervious surfaces, using porous sidewalks, planting more trees, and building more green roofs. The city already has more than an acre of green roofs and hopes to add two more acres in the next five years.

The U.S. Forest Service promotes trees as an effective stormwater management device.

Two officials look over the green roof on Lancaster’s Lafayette Elementary School.

The asphalt was removed and 35 red maple trees were planted in two feet of topsoil with a crushed stone surface.

A vacant lot was donated to a non-profit group in Pottstown for use as a low-maintenance park.

Ten years later, the trees enhance the neighborhood and the park acts as a water retention area.
The Penn State Hershey Medical Center was made possible in 1963 by a $50 million grant and donation of land in Derry Township to the Pennsylvania State University by the Milton Hershey School Trust Fund via the MS Hershey Foundation. The university opened its medical college in 1967 and the hospital accepted its first patients in 1970.

Since then, the College of Medicine and hospital have become Derry's largest employer, with nearly 9,000 employees, and have vastly increased the quality of life in central Pennsylvania.

Although Penn State Hershey likes to think of itself as part of a small town, the sprawling campus is suburban in character. Buildings are set far apart from each other, and each has its own substantial parking lot.

In fact, the 550-acre campus is nearly twice the size of the University of Pennsylvania campus in Philadelphia and more than four times the size of the University of Pittsburgh's main campus in Pittsburgh.

As the medical center continues to grow, it might consider placing buildings closer together to form a pedestrian friendly campus, to conserve land and make it possible to walk from place to place.
Can a conventional suburban office park be recast for the 21st century, and transformed into a pedestrian-scale community? With imagination and determination, it can.

Look at the office park at top right. Compare it to the revamped version below. Five parking garages with attached “liner buildings” replace the existing surface parking lots and lawns. Each of the garages and many of the office buildings are given a green roof of vegetation. Streets and sidewalks are constructed in between the buildings, lined with shade trees.

The buildings house a mixture of uses: residential, retail, and office space. The plan vastly expands the amount of usable space without substantially increasing the amount of impervious surface. The plan is far more attractive and practical for pedestrians.

Penn State Hershey's Centerview parking garage (below) can be integrated into a pedestrian campus as the college and medical center evolve in the coming decades. A liner building might eventually be constructed on the outside of the garage to improve its appearance and provide more useful space.
With every new link, a good trail system...

Derry Township boasts one of the finest pedestrian and bicycle trail systems of any municipality its size in Pennsylvania.

The 13-mile Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail extends from the Stone Creek development in the southwestern corner of the township to Palmdale on the eastern border with Lebanon County.

Conceived in the 1980s, the trail was greatly expanded in the 1990s with grants from the federal and state governments. Easements have been donated by the Milton Hershey School Trust, the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, and private property owners. Additional links with donated easements are expected as new subdivisions are approved.

The trail is named for Jonathan Eshenour, a township resident who was killed in a bicycle accident in 1997 when he was 12 years old. For more than a decade, a foundation set up by his family has held regular fundraisers, raising more than $1.8 million for the trail.

Considered a recreational amenity, the trail is heavily used by people of all ages for walking, bicycling, jogging and in-line skating. It extends through developed areas, woodlands, and farm fields. It connects to several township parks.

At present, many residents load their bicycles onto their cars and drive to the nearest park connection to the trail, because it is not safe to bike to the trail directly from their homes.

The 13-mile Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail is shown in red.
becomes a better transportation corridor —

What is now a fine recreational trail has the potential to become an alternative transportation system for Derry residents who want to walk or bicycle to some destinations.

It’s just seven miles in a straight line from Gelder Park at the western end of the township to Palmdale at the eastern end. That’s less than a 50-minute ride for most bicyclists.

People who want to bicycle to destinations within the township, such as the medical center or the Hershey public school complex, might find themselves within a 10- to 15-minute ride of home.

Just two links, delineated in yellow on the map, are needed are needed to create a true transportation “spine” through the township. One is along Middletown Road in the west. The other extends from the eastern edge of the medical center to the Hershey Recreation Center along Cocoa Avenue. These links should not be difficult to design and implement.

The Jonathan Eshenhour Memorial Trail already has connections to some of Derry Township’s numerous cul-de-sac housing subdivisions.

Top left, the trail connects to Courtland Circle in the Indian Run subdivision.

Left, an Indian Run jogger heads for home after running on the trail.

Bottom left, Elm Avenue offers a perfect opportunity to connect the existing trail from Fishburn Road to Cocoa Avenue.

The street is lightly used by cars and has plenty of room for a bicycle trail like the one along Brooklyn’s Prospect Park, bottom right.
During the last 60 years, Derry Township has been segmented into many isolated housing subdivisions, each connected only to the nearest road.

Let’s suppose the township’s existing recreational trail, the Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail, was expanded into a transportation corridor running down the center of the township, for use by walkers and bicyclists. It would then be possible to connect each of Derry’s 40 or so housing subdivisions with walking and bicycling paths to the main trail.

Everyone could then walk or ride a bicycle from his or her home to anywhere in the township. For example, the maps at right illustrate the distances from a few different housing subdivisions to the Derry school complex. Things may be closer than they seem from behind the wheel of a car.

This is particularly important for seniors, Derry Township’s fastest growing population, who need safe places to walk and ride their bicycles or electric scooters; to cross the street; and to rest on benches along the way.
through a township-wide walking and biking system —

Case Study: The Netherlands

The Netherlands enjoys the world’s finest pedestrian and bicycle network.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths accompany every street and road, and many paths take you places where cars cannot. Nearly half of all trips are made by walking or riding a bicycle, the highest percentage in the world.

Although the Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries on earth, 83 percent of its land mass is farmland and open space. The Dutch live in cities and towns surrounded by greenbelts, which means the countryside is only a few minutes bicycle ride away. Abundant paths in the countryside allow everyone to enjoy the great outdoors.

COLD? TRY OULU

Oulu, Finland, is a city of 140,000 people just south of the Arctic Circle. During the winter months, the daily mean temperature is about 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

Yet 40 percent of all trips in Oulu are made by walking or riding a bicycle — the highest percentage in Finland. Oulu has more than 300 miles of bike paths in the city, which are plowed and sanded on weekdays before 7 a.m.
Case Study: Blue Zones

In 2004, National Geographic joined with journalist Dan Buettner and demographers to identify the areas in the world where people live the longest. They pinpointed small communities in five areas -- from Japan to Sardinia to Costa Rica -- which they called Blue Zones (inspired by a Belgian demographer working on the project who circled the healthiest municipalities with blue ink on a map).

Buettner visited each community to search out its secrets for longevity. Among them were eating healthy foods in small portions, exercising as part of daily life, living with a purpose, and enjoying a loving relationship with others.


The health care industry is fascinated by Buettner's research and its potential to dramatically cut health care costs. In 2009, Albert Lea, Minn. -- population 18,000 -- became the first community to implement the Blue Zones program, sponsored by the AARP and a $750,000 grant from the United Health Foundation.

Town meetings were held. Experts in nutrition, motivation, and pedestrian-friendly communities were brought in as advisors. More than 3,000 people signed up, and the municipality did its part by building a new walking trail around Fountain Lake, in the heart of the city. “Walking school buses” were set up to encourage students to walk to school. The formal program lasted ten months, ending in October 2009. Participants reported losing an average of three pounds each, and they boosted their life expectancy by three years, based on measurements formulated by health care experts. City and school district health care claims -- and absenteeism -- dropped dramatically.

Building on its success, the Blue Zones group formed a partnership with Healthways, a nationwide company that promotes healthy living on behalf of corporations and health care institutions. The partnership recently launched a multi-million dollar effort to improve the well-being of residents in the adjacent California cities of Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach and Manhattan Beach, funded by a local health services agency.

Iowa vows to be ‘healthiest’ state...

Last summer, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad announced an initiative to make Iowa the nation’s healthiest state within five years. The state currently ranks 19th, as measured by the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, an assessment of people’s health and well-being based on daily polling. (Pennsylvania ranks 30th.)

As former president of a medical college, Des Moines University, Branstad is well aware of the enormous financial and emotional toll caused by obesity. He estimated that over the next five years, healthier lifestyles could save Iowa residents more than $15 billion that is currently lost to health care spending and diminished productivity.

Last month, the state kicked off the initiative with a “Start Somewhere Walk.” At noon on Oct. 7, more than 290,000 Iowans took a break from their daily routines to walk one kilometer.

Cities and towns are now competing to be named one of Iowa’s 10 “Blue Zone Communities” where people “Live Longer, Better.” Funded by Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Iowa’s largest health care provider, the winning communities will receive help from national experts to help their citizens adopt healthier habits, from daily exercise to eating better.
**health, quality, community —**

As Derry Township residents contemplate updating their comprehensive plan, we hope they find useful ideas in this report -- a starting point for discussion and goal-setting.

Derry is unique. No other Pennsylvania community has been so defined by one person. Milton Hershey’s overwhelming significance is not just because his steward, the Hershey Trust Co., owns more than half the acreage in the township and controls many of its jobs, but because of the high ideals that Milton Hershey established and carried out.

**Think big, think globally, think decisively —**

Milton Hershey was not afraid to think big. When he first talked about his plan for an ideal town, his friends and business associates – even his wife – thought he was crazy. Yet he confidently plowed his immense fortune into his new enterprise.

Hershey was a global learner. His chocolate-making ideas originated in Europe. He visited a display of German chocolate machinery at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago and ordered it for shipment to Pennsylvania. Inspired by a company town the Cadbury family founded in England, he started one of his own.

**Blue Zones —**

As we reported on the previous page, Iowa recently launched an initiative to become the nation’s healthiest in five years, based on National Geographic studies identifying small communities around the world which have the longest-lived people – Blue Zones.

Like Milton Hershey, Iowa is thinking big. Also, like Milton Hershey, Iowa is avoiding the common but flawed reasoning that nobody but Americans has worthwhile ideas.

A primary mission of the Penn State Hershey Medical Center is promoting healthy lifestyles. To do that, we must change our physical environment and our culture. Derry Township is an ideal place to start.

**Creating a model 21st century community —**

Cars are marvelous inventions that have expanded our horizons and vastly increased our quality of life. Even the Dutch, who do more walking and bicycling than any other people in the western world, still use cars for almost half their trips.

Like all good things, though, cars need to be used in moderation. In this publication, we have talked about Davis, California; the Netherlands; and Oulu, Finland. These communities have made it easy to walk and bicycle everywhere.

Likewise, Derry needs to ensure the car is not the only transportation option by making it possible for Derry residents to go anywhere safely on foot or bicycle. That’s the first step.

**Compact and beautiful —**

Milton Hershey built a town that was beautiful as well as compact. He personally oversaw the design of its buildings – even workers’ houses, a few of which he tore down during construction because he thought them mediocre. His civic buildings – the Community Building, the Hotel Hershey, Senior Hall – are all architectural masterpieces. He planted shade trees on every street.

Encouraging people to walk and bicycle requires special attention to appearances – lovely buildings, beautiful landscapes, and abundant shade trees. So design reviews and landscaping requirements should be a focal point of zoning and subdivision laws.

**Google Earth - the world on our computer —**

Thanks to the amazing satellite imagery of Google Earth, it is now possible to look down on every corner of the globe on our computer screens. Its Street View feature allows us to digitally meander down streets and roads at ground level, as if we were there in person. Today, everyone can be an informed planner, seeing how communities worldwide have arranged their landscapes.

**Derry’s extraordinary resources —**

Derry Township boasts extraordinary resources. The Milton Hershey School Trust Fund is valued at $7.5 billion. The Hershey Trust Co., as trustee for the school trust fund, has controlling interest in the chocolate company, complete ownership of Hershey Entertainment and Resorts, and total control of the M. S. Hershey Foundation.

Although the Trust’s fundamental obligation is supporting the Milton Hershey School, the Foundation is empowered to establish and maintain educational institutions in Derry; to support and improve Derry public schools; and to advance the “vocational, cultural, or professional education” of Derry residents.

It was through the Foundation, using funds from the School Trust Fund, that the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center was created in 1963, as an educational institution in Derry Township. Today, the medical school and hospital is the third largest such institution in the state, and rapidly growing.

Beyond these institutions, there is Derry Township government and the people it serves. Derry citizenry enjoy a high level of education and professionalism, which is reflected in their governance.

**The Hershey Legacy —**

But perhaps Derry’s most important resource is the Hershey legacy. Milton Hershey was a brilliant businessman whose cardinal goal in life was uplifting his fellow man. For more than a century, profits from Hershey enterprises have given disadvantaged children an education; they have also been used for the betterment of Derry residents.

**Carrying out Hershey’s high ideals —**

The Derry supervisors have assembled a stellar group to guide the process of updating the township’s comprehensive plan. It includes leaders from Penn State Hershey, each of the Hershey entities, the school district, planning commission, and citizen volunteers.

We hope this group will seek the adoption and implementation of worldwide best practices for health, beauty, quality, and community. The resources are there. It is a matter of creativity and purpose.

As it says in the Scriptures, “To whom much is given, much is required.” Derry can use the planning process to cultivate the high ideals established by Milton Hershey. It can set an example for all Pennsylvania and the world beyond.
HEALTH
QUALITY
COMMUNITY