



FROM THE DIRECTOR by James Cowhey, AICP

With the Memorial Day holiday behind us, the summer season is here. It's appropriate that this issue of *FYI* focuses attention on the impact of the Conewago/Lebanon Valley Rail Trail on the local economy. The economic impact study recently released by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources documents the importance of this recreational facility in fostering positive economic activity in the community. The report comes at a time when there is increasing support for trail development in Lancaster County, including the Northwest River Trail and the Atglen-Susquehanna Trail. The larger lesson to be learned is that quality of life amenities have more than aesthetic value and can really generate new business opportunities. The DCNR report provides encouraging support for communities planning recreational trail development by underscoring the positive impacts that these facilities have on local economies. This issue also reports on our continued work on our Designing for the Market program as we increase our understanding of the changes occurring in the real estate market. We will be scheduling more events around this theme later in the year. In the meantime, enjoy the season! 🐾



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OUR NEW FEATURE

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LCPC Staff picks a local project to highlight. Featured in this issue—

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Local Experts Discuss the Housing Market



A panel of local experts met at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center on March 29, 2012 to discuss trends and preferences in housing and community development in Lancaster County. The panel consisted of Brandon Clark, Lancaster County Association of Realtors; Scott Provanzo, Building Industry of Lancaster County;

Jeff Scheuren, Fulton Mortgage Company; Ray D’Agostino, Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership; Ed Drogaris, The Drogaris Companies; and Mary Clinton, Appraisal Associates, Inc.

Consumer preferences, affordability, credit, and development regulations were some of the issues discussed. According to Brandon Clark, “First-time homebuyers are looking for somewhat smaller houses than in the recent past, especially for new construction.” He said “They also want quick access to retail.” Scott Provanzo indicated that “the \$260 – 275,000 price range is where homes are moving in the market.” He said that “lower priced homes are being built in some municipalities that were generally expensive.” He also indicated that migration to Lancaster City is increasing.

Ray D’Agostino told the audience that “Housing prices have come down, but, unfortunately, so have incomes.” He said “It is still a really good time to buy, and Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership is seeing an uptick in the number of people attending their seminars and looking for help.” He pointed out that there is “not a great amount of diversity in affordable housing; it is still concentrated in certain areas.” He said “Good housing is the foundation of great communities.” He indicated that “the housing

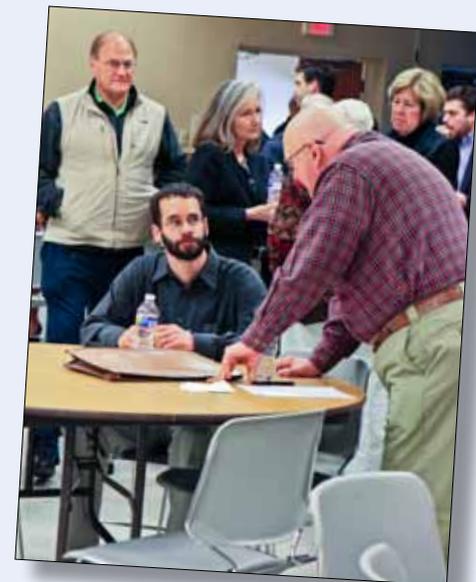
market is out of sync – builders can’t build at the affordable price points.”

Jeff Schueren told the audience that “credit is very tight. Only 40% of the population can qualify for a mortgage under today’s regulations, and Dodd-Frank regulations further threaten the availability of credit.”

Mary Clinton said “Appraisal requirements and constraints have doubled.” She indicated some amenities that would not be included in many new homes would be “open space to the second floor, spa tubs, elaborate patios, and higher end kitchen appliances.” She said that “construction cost is exceeding market value in some cases.”

Major issue areas identified by the panelists included zoning, building codes, mixed use affordable financing, parking, and infrastructure.

- *Zoning* – Municipal zoning ordinances need to provide for mixed use, multi-family, and more efficient development.
- *Mixed Use Affordable Financing* – Developers and homebuyers need access to credit and affordable financing for mixed use development projects as well as single family dwellings within mixed use zones.
- *Building Codes* – Flexibility is needed in building codes in order to increase housing affordability and allow for the reuse of vacant upper stories in existing buildings as well as preservation and reuse of historic properties.





- *Parking* – Parking requirements should reflect demand while at the same time taking into

consideration the ability of the land use to provide for on-site parking.

- *Infrastructure* – How can we provide the infrastructure for the development required to accommodate the population increase of 100,000 people which are projected to be added to Lancaster County over the next 25 years?

These issues were further addressed at the Planning Commission’s May 1 Agenda for Action Event. (See related article.) 🐾

Designing for the Market: Moving Towards an Agenda for Action

Building on the work of a local panel of experts, a group of planners, designers, developers, municipal officials, and finance experts met to work on “An Agenda for Action” on May 1 at the Farm and Home Center. This workshop focused on the issue area defined by the panel discussion held on March 29. These issues were zoning, building codes, mixed use affordable financing, parking, and infrastructure.

need to allow for an mix of uses and a variety of affordable housing options,

2. Allowing developers flexibility in their mixed use developments both during the development phase and through the life of the project.
3. Recognizing the importance of revising parking requirements for mixed use infill projects, especially within urban areas.



The session on zoning looked at the need for municipal ordinances to provide zones for mixed use, multi-family,

and more efficient development. Three priorities resulted from the session:

1. Educating the public and elected officials on the



The session on building codes looked at the need for flexibility in building codes in order to increase housing affordability and allow for the reuse of vacant upper stories in existing buildings as well as preservation and reuse of historic properties. The results of that session were the need for

1. Separate construction codes for new and exist-

ing construction.

2. Safe, sound, and secure codes for existing construction.
3. Quantifying “safety” in the codes.



The mixed use affordable financing session covered the need for developers and homebuyers to access credit and affordable financing for mixed use development projects as well as single family dwellings within mixed use zones. Priorities from this session included

1. Local planning commissions and builders associations along with the American Planning Association and the Urban Land Institute should come together to have a say in formation of finance regulations as well as writing letters to Congress.
2. The understanding among municipal officials of how zoning may impact financing in the existing market should be improved.
3. Municipalities should ensure that residential use is an allowable use in commercial districts where the municipality wishes to have both, i.e. - Main Streets.

The discussion on parking focused on the need for parking requirements to reflect demand while at the same time taking into consideration the ability of the land use to provide for on-site parking. The results of this session were

1. Parking should be underground, structured, and/or integrated into buildings and development.



2. Parking should be shared and located behind businesses and in the interior of blocks,
3. The Urban Land Institute should be used as a resource for innovative analysis of parking needs.
4. Local examples of innovative parking techniques should be identified.

The question addressed by the infrastructure session was “How can we provide the infrastructure for the development required to accommodate the population increase of 100,000 people which are projected to be added to Lancaster County over the next 25 years?” Results of the discussion included the need for

1. Regulatory reform and streamlining of the regulatory process and building codes for cost and time saving.
2. Density and building height increases which



are critical to the efforts to cover the costs of maintaining and replacing infrastructure in the future. Flexible zoning ordinances and incentives to encourage infill development to maximize the use of existing infrastructure is a component of this action. Building code reform was mentioned as an important incentive for

redevelopment/infill projects.

LCPC's next step will be to evaluate the recommendations from the workshop. An agenda of priorities will be established. Additional educational programs and forums focusing on the priorities will be held through the remainder of 2012. 🌸

Connections 2040 to be Adopted

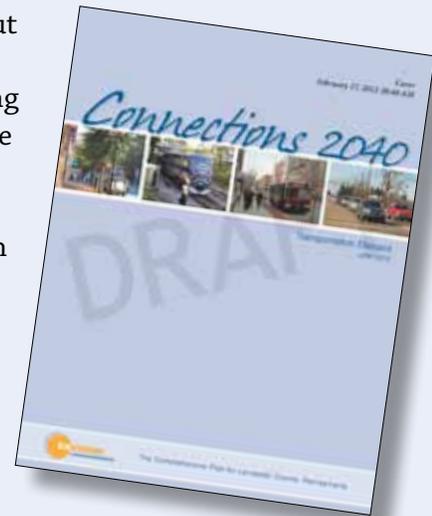
Lancaster County has just completed a draft of its new Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), **Connections 2040**, and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The LRTP provides a framework for transportation planning over the next 28 years (2013–2040) and is an element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. The TIP presents all the projects that will be funded with federal funds in the county over the 2013–2016 period.

A 30-day public review period began on May 1, 2012 and continues through May 31, 2012. Anyone interested in reviewing the draft plan and TIP can view them on the LCPC website (www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning), or at any municipal office or library in the county. In addition, a public meeting was held at the county offices at 150 North Queen Street from 4:00–7:00 p.m. on May 21, at which copies of the plan and TIP, along with maps showing the location and types of projects to be funded and other materials, were available for review. LCPC staff will respond to comments that are received during this period and all questions and responses will be made part of the final plan. The plan will be presented to the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) at its meeting on June 11 and to the MPO for approval on June 25, 2012. As a final step, the LRTP will be presented to the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners for its approval.

The update process began in January 2011 and was guided by a 38-member LRTP Update Task Force that represented a broad range of stakeholders. Members of the TTAC and MPO also provided guid-

ance and input throughout the process. The general public, in addition to being represented by the Update Task Force, participated through an online survey on the LCPC website from January–April 2011. A total of 389 people took the online survey. Outreach was made to the county's Amish community. The county's large Hispanic community participated through a Spanish language survey that was made available to them through churches and social service organizations. LCPC expresses its appreciation to everyone who took the time to participate in the process.

Connections 2040 involved a new partnership between Lancaster County and the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission (PHMC) to provide a more proactive approach to the potential impacts of transportation projects on historic and cultural resources and measures to mitigate any impacts. This partnership resulted in a new section in the "Environmental Overview" chapter of the plan, improved language concerning heritage resources in the plan's strategies and actions section and a new "Treasured Places" map. LCPC expresses its appreciation to the PHMC staff who lent their time and expertise to work with LCPC staff on this section. 🌸



TreeVitalize Metros Grants Available

In the quest to improve the quality of our streams and rivers and better manage storm water runoff, the simple act of planting a tree is one of the easiest, most effective, and least costly means of achieving this goal. In fact, tree planting is so effective that developing local tree canopy targets (or goals) to increase the County's percentage of tree canopy is one of the primary strategies recommended in the ***Draft Lancaster County Integrated Water Resources Plan***.

Why does the ***Plan*** lean so heavily on planting trees as a strategy to improve water quality and stormwater management? Because trees perform vital ecological services that benefit both the natural and built environment. They help capture or intercept rainfall and reduce storm water runoff, improve water quality, enhance air quality, and create wildlife habitat. Trees can shade asphalt and concrete and reduce the heat absorbed and reflected off these surfaces; thereby reducing the "heat island effect" of densely built urban environments. This reduces cooling costs for home and business owners and improves human health.

According to Mary Gattis, Senior Countywide Planner, targeting rural watersheds that have low percentages of tree canopy is a priority in the ***Integrated Water Resources Plan***. She says that "increasing the tree canopy, particularly along waterways in agricultural communities, is an effective means of reducing sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus levels in our streams and rivers; which eventually make their way to the Chesapeake Bay." This is a fine approach for rural areas, but what about urban areas where buildings, streets, and parking lots dominate the landscape?

Can trees really have an impact in these areas?

The simple answer to this question is an emphatic "Yes!" Depending on size and species, the National Arbor Day Foundation estimates that

a single tree may store 100 gallons of water or more before it reaches its saturation point after about one to two inches of rainfall. The Foundation also says that studies have shown that as much as 65 percent of storm water runoff can be reduced when trees are combined with other natural scaping. In communities such as Lancaster City where storm and sanitary sewer lines are combined and treatment facilities can be overwhelmed with the smallest of rain events, this can mean the difference between treating wastewater or discharging raw sewage directly into a waterway (know as Combined Sewer Overflow). Shade trees that line public streets, trees in parks and other public spaces, and parking lot islands are all examples of how trees can be incorporated into the urban environment.

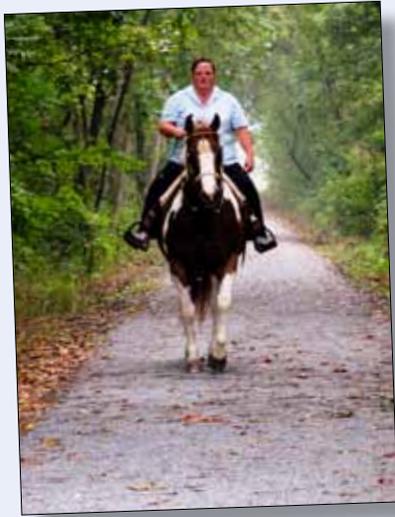
The State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) considers increasing the tree canopy in Pennsylvania to be such an important tool in the effort to improve water quality that it formed a special funding program to help defray the cost of planting trees for both municipalities and municipal agencies. The program, ***TreeVitalize Metros***, is a partnership between DCNR, the PA Community Forests organization, and the Penn State Extension Urban Forestry Program. The program is administered locally through a partnership between the Lancaster County Conservation District and LIVE Green, a program of the Lancaster County Conservancy. ***TreeVitalize Metros*** provides up to \$15,000 in funding for trees to be planted within a public right-of-way or within parks and greenways open to the public. **The application deadline is September 1st, 2012** for plantings to be completed during the spring of 2013. An information session will be held on **Wednesday, June 27th, 8:00 a.m. at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center** for any municipality that is interested in learning more about ***TreeVitalize Metros***. Christine Ticehurst from ***TreeVitalize***-DCNR will be on hand to review the grant process step-by-step.

Don't miss this chance to get your questions answered. For program guidelines, applications or questions, or to confirm your attendance at the information session, please contact Fritz Schroeder, Director of LIVE Green fritz@livegreenlancaster.org, 717-392-7891 ext. 207. 🐾

TreeVitalize Metropolitan Areas



Economic Impact of the Conewago Trail



Trails are often cited as economic income generators for adjacent communities. But until now, most of the studies conducted to support this statement have focused on large, long distance trails outside of the Lancaster County area. This is no longer the case.

The Northeast Regional Office of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has just released the results of a year-long study of the

combined economic impacts of the Conewago Trail and Lebanon Valley Rail Trail. The report, titled *“Lebanon Valley Rail Trail and Conewago Recreation Trail 2011 User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis,”* surveyed users of the trail to determine a number of factors, including the purchase of both durable (shoes, bikes, supplies, etc.) and consumable (snacks, drinks, etc.) goods.

The Conewago Trail, located in northwest Lancaster County near Elizabethtown, and the Lebanon Valley Trail, which starts at the Lebanon/Lancaster County border and runs to the City of Lebanon, provides over 20-miles of trail for pedestrians, bikers, and equestrians. Data from both infrared counters located along the trail and user surveys received indicate that an estimated 125,244 users visited

the trail in 2011. These user visits resulted in a total economic impact of \$1,326,117 (including \$875,320 directly into the local economy).

What do these results mean for Lancaster County communities? It means that those communities with struggling business districts that have the potential to connect to a regional trail network, should consider the trail an important part of their economic development strategy. Through promotion and partnership with the business community, the trail may increase the retail activity needed to keep the business district healthy and could potentially expand the portfolio of businesses in the community.



To view the full economic impact study on-line, go to http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/ucmprd2/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_009851.pdf

Those interested in information and assistance with trail development in their community can contact Michael A. Domin, AICP, Principal Planner, Lancaster County Planning Commission, at (717) 299-8333 or domin@co.lancaster.pa.us 🐾

Pequea Valley Strategic Plan

Leacock, Paradise, and Salisbury Townships have begun the planning process of preparing a regional strategic comprehensive plan. The three (3) municipalities currently each have their own individual comprehensive plans that date from 2001, 1997, and 1990 respectively. A steering committee has been formed with representatives from each municipality, a LCPC staff representative, and a member of the Pequea Valley School Board. URS Corporation lead by Marian Hull, Planning Group Leader, is the planning consultant assisting the municipalities in this planning effort. LCPC staff is providing in-kind services to the planning process and has and will be working very closely with the steering committee and planning consultant to the conclusion of the plan. The planning process will continue throughout the summer and fall with an anticipated completion date by the end of the 2012. 🐾

Staff Pics

Progress on the Enola Low Grade Trail in Providence Township

While dwindling funding resources has slowed the development of trails in many areas, some communities simply refuse to sit idly by waiting for the economy to recover and funding to reappear. Take, for example, the case of Providence Township and its section of the Enola Low Grade Trail in southern Lancaster County.

The 8.27-mile section of the Enola Low Grade Trail owned by Providence Township is fraught with challenges such as bridge replacement, drainage problems, and slope erosion. Some of these items are costly and will require outside funding sources to be completed. This, however, hasn't stopped the township from making great progress on the trail.

Through a partnership between the Supervisors, their Parks and Recreation Committee, and a dedicated group of volunteers, the trail has been substantially improved. The Parks Committee serves as an advisory committee to the supervisors. They also operate as a volunteer work force, assisting the township staff in maintaining the trail by providing supplemental labor. The committee's main goal is to help support the township in providing a safe and enjoyable trail experience for all.

As you visit the trail, take note of the improvements that occurred over the winter and also some current projects. Safety fencing installed at road overpasses, trash removal, access point improvements, a Kiosk and landscaping at the Fairview Trailhead, stone benches along the trail, and bluebird nesting boxes are just some of the projects completed over the past several months. In the upcoming months, visitors will also see improved parking at Sigman Road and some trail surface improvements near the Fairview Road Trailhead.

The committee meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the township office and are open to the public. If you are interested in volunteering for up-coming trail projects, please send an e-mail to parks@providencetownship.com or visit their website at <http://www.enolalowgradetrail.com> for more information. 🌲



The Parks Committee and its volunteer workforce have made significant improvements along the trail.

Visit the trail website at www.enolalowgradetrail.com



Upcoming Transportation Meetings and Locations

- June 6, 2012 (TCAC) Transportation Citizen’s Advisory Committee, 7:00 p.m. Upper Leacock Township Municipal Building, 36 Hillcrest Ave. Leola PA 17540. Royerd@co.lancaster.pa.us
- June 11, 2012 (TTAC) Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, 12:00 p.m. 150 North Queen Street, Room 102-104. lwestbrook@co.lancaster.pa.us
- June 25, 2012 (LCTCC) Lancaster County Transportation Coordinating Committee , 12:00 p.m. 150 North Queen Street, Room 102-104. lwestbrook@co.lancaster.pa.us
- July 9, 2012 (TTAC) Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, 12:00 p.m. 150 North Queen Street, Room 102-104. lwestbrook@co.lancaster.pa.us

For more information on Transportation meetings, check the Meeting Agendas page of the website. <http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=639313&planningNav=|>

Impact 2017 Joint Comprehensive Plan



IMPACT 2017 is kicking off in 2012! Elizabeth Township, Warwick Township, and Lititz Borough, all members of the Warwick School District, are joining together to create a regional update to their Comprehensive Plans. This will

be the third update for the Lititz/Warwick Regional Comprehensive Plan and Elizabeth Township is joining the regional plan for the first time and will update their 2003 Comprehensive Plan.

The goal of *IMPACT 2017* is to plan for the future development and community character over the

next 5 years (until 2017). *IMPACT 2017* will include 2010 demographics and update objectives relating to residential growth within the region, sustainability and economic development issues, infrastructure and transportation coordination.

A large steering committee has been created including municipal officials, business persons, and volunteers as well as representatives of the Warwick School District, WESA, the Recreation Commission, Lititz Public Library, and Venture Lititz. The Steering Committee plan to meet over the next 6 months on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 a.m. in various locations throughout the region. All are welcome to attend and provide input. Residents will be kept informed and can provide input through Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Impact-2017/381868708532050> , municipal websites, newsletters, and local newspaper articles. 🐾

Lancaster County Planning Commission

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