



FROM THE DIRECTOR |

Market Forces by James Cowhey, AICP

Recently, I wrote about the latest census showing the county population having reached 519,445 in 2010. Despite current economic conditions, the county population in 2011 is most certainly more than 521,000. It is a matter of fact not a matter of policy that the number of people in Lancaster County will increase. A positive growth rate is an indicator that the attributes of Lancaster County are attractive. Said another way, the number of housing units needed in Lancaster County is determined by market demand, not by county or municipal policy. This market demand in Lancaster County has remained robust for many years and shows no signs of dramatically slowing. In a constitutional republic we cannot control how the market determines where people will live and conduct business. Rather, the rate of growth is accepted as a given; county and local governments plan accordingly. Public policy can affect how growth is accommodated.



One myth I've heard is that the county plan is calling for an increased rate of growth and is imposing it on municipalities. More compact development, dare I say higher density, *does not* translate into more people in the county, in a municipality, nor, necessarily, in their cars. Rather, it results in more efficient land use and infrastructure provision; it may actually reduce traffic congestion. The county plan does not call for an increased rate of growth. *Anyway, the county does not impose any policy decision on any entity.*

While a robust growth rate can have its impacts on the community, we can plan to lessen the impacts and maintain the great attributes of Lancaster County. To do this, we need to plan the location of development, provide the infrastructure to support communities, and conserve the features that make Lancaster County special. The county and local plans are in place to balance the demands of growth and the management of it. Growth is not a bad thing; if done properly new land development can improve a community – that is what we strive for in all of our planning efforts.

Later this year we'll continue our dialog about design and how better community design improves our built environment, economy, and lives. This year our dialog will be about how market forces affect real estate

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demand and the design response to it. This is important because if our plans, codes, and ordinances miss the mark, we may end up causing unintended negative effects on our community. For example, the demographics of market demand are beginning to indicate a need for more compact, mixed use communities designed to include single family homes as one of several unit types. However, if our codes only allow single family homes, we miss an opportunity to improve our community by providing for a mix of unit types that attract young families, empty-nesters, etc. At the same time, due to the law of supply and demand, existing single family homes may not increase in value appreciably due

to a glut of the same type of units. I believe opponents of mixed use that are owners of single-family units may be working against their financial interest by advocating that there be an over-supply of that one type of unit. I hope our readers will join this discussion about the market and planning.

This issue features a profile of Mayor Leo Lutz of Columbia Borough who serves as the Secretary of the Lancaster County Planning Commission. Mayor Lutz works diligently to improve and revitalize his hometown. As always, this issue will highlight a range of plans and projects by LCPC and our partners. Finally, please go to our website and read our **2010 Annual Report** for a review of our many accomplishments last year. 🐾

HOLD THESE DATES

Designing for the Market: The Next Generation of Housing and Communities

October 27 @ 7 PM, Kickoff Event – **John Norquist**, CEO, *Congress for the New Urbanism*

November 30 @ 7 PM, Keynote Presentation – **Mitchell Silver**, President, *American Planning Association*

December 1 @ 8 AM, Designing for the Market Workshop – *Panel of National Experts / Mitchell Silver – Moderator*

In the Spotlight: Leo S. Lutz, LCPC Secretary



Leo S. Lutz

Leo Lutz, long-time mayor of Columbia Borough, serves as the Secretary of the Lancaster County Planning Commission. Leo also serves the county as a member of the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Leo is a life-long resident of Columbia Borough. He attended Columbia High School and Penn State University and spent 32 years with Caterpillar, Inc. as an operations supervisor. Leo has been married to his wife Kathleen for 42 years and has three sons, three grandchildren, and one on the way.

“As an elected official,” Leo said, “you are expected to represent your constituents to the best of your ability. I was fortunate to have the chance to retire early. This allows me to devote full time to the position of mayor and be involved in the daily happenings of the borough.”

Leo’s job as mayor allows him to meet with people from the business community, state and county agencies, and civic organizations. He has a good feel for how we are doing as a community, county, and state and what people believe are the problems facing us. Leo says “LCPC is a class organization with one of the best groups of employees I have ever had the pleasure to work with. In my professional life, I get around the state, and I am always impressed at how well we stack-up against other areas. I know we have become the model for the state in many areas of planning.”

During his term on LCPC, Leo would like to see more regional comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances along with a county zoning lexicon to help coordinate zoning within and between municipalities. He would also like to see an evaluation method for transportation problems, a better understanding of how municipalities can get a project on the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, and a better understanding of when a project may be funded. In addition, Leo believes that the Transportation Authority could take on more transportation projects if it became

a committee of the county and established a two-party reimbursement agreement. He says that this would cut up to a year off the time leading to project construction, thus saving millions of dollars due to escalating construction costs and inflation.

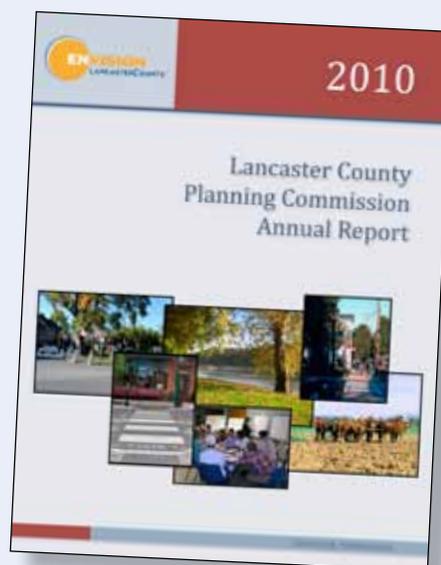
Leo has a strong personal and professional commitment to improving Lancaster County. “At this point in my life, the only professional goal I have is to do the best I can for my community and county,” says Leo. “I was always taught ‘If you want something done, get in there and do it.’” 🐾

LCPC Releases 2010 Annual Report

The Lancaster County Planning Commission released its **2010 Annual Report** during July. A copy can be found [on the LCPC website](#) or by clicking [here](#).

LCPC had several noteworthy achievements during the past year. Highlights included:

- **Pennsylvania Planning Association Conference:** The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association held its annual conference at the Lancaster County Convention Center. Despite difficult economic times, attendance at the event numbered about 575 – one of the highest ever.
- **FYI, e-Newsletter of the Lancaster County Planning Commission:** The electronic format of FYI was launched in 2010. The new format allows for greater content, eliminates printing costs, and enables bimonthly distribution.
- **Envision Series:**
 - **Design Matters Initiative:** LCPC hosted a lecture and design workshop focusing on civic engagement in community design.
 - **Envision Leadership Awards:** Established in 2003, the awards competition recognizes projects and activities that support implementation of Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and Smart Growth principles. The Planning Commission highlighted four noteworthy projects in 2010.
- **Smart Growth Toolbox:** The Envision Smart Growth Toolbox includes a wide variety of strategies, ordinances, programs, and best management practices that can be used by communities to translate smart growth principles into action. With a total of forty tools developed or compiled by staff, the Toolbox is constantly being updated and expanded. In 2010, seven new tools were added, and several others were updated or improved.
- **Amtrak Station Renovations:** Substantial progress was made in 2010 on the three Amtrak Station renovation projects currently underway in Lancaster County. 🐾



Lancaster County Northwest River Trail



Figure 1: The proposed 14-mile Northwest River Trail is located in north-west Lancaster County.

BACKGROUND

The Northwest Lancaster County River Trail is a proposed 14-mile hiking and biking trail located adjacent to the Susquehanna River, from River Park in Columbia Borough to the Fish & Boat Commission access in the village of Falmouth in Conoy Township (Figure 1). The project spans five municipalities in the northwestern edge of Lancaster County. Other entities involved in the project include the Lancaster County Planning Commission and the Parks & Recreation Department, the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority, and the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area.

The trail loosely follows the route of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and uses some of the original towpath along the corridor. Since the corridor follows the old canal route, there are ample opportunities to interpret old industrial archeological remains such as abandoned canal locks; iron furnaces; and abandoned quarries. The trail also connects the historic towns and villages of Columbia, Marietta, and Bainbridge.

In preparation of developing the trail, the five municipalities involved in the project, along with the County Planning Commission and Parks Department, prepared a Master Plan in March 2003 to help guide the development of the trail.

CURRENT STATUS

Approximately 90% of the land along the planned trail corridor is currently in some form of public or quasi-public ownership. Therefore, much of the land required to create the trail has already been acquired. The condition or readiness of the trail for hiking and biking use, however, varies throughout the corridor. The most thoroughly developed section of the trail runs approximately 3.5-miles from the Decatur Street trailhead in Marietta Borough, west to Shocks Mill Railroad Bridge in Conoy Township (Figure 2). This section varies in width from 8-10 ft. as it winds its way through forest and farmland along the Susquehanna River.

East of Decatur Street in Marietta, the trail exists as an unpaved path between the railroad tracks and the river. This 3.5 mile section runs all the way to the Point Rock tunnel in the southern end of Chickies Rock County Park. However, because the continuity of this corridor is not completely secured at this time, through-hikers/bikers should use the current route through Marietta identified in the blow-up in Figure 1. At Chiques Creek, trail users must use a detour until the planned bike/pedestrian bridge is constructed. The final design for this bridge is currently underway and construction is planned for 2012. Until then, trail users must follow Furnace Road to Rt. 441 (Figure 3). At that point, trails users should follow the shoulder of the highway across the Chiques Creek Bridge to the base of the cliff. Trail users can then leave the shoulder of Rt. 441 and head



Figure 2: The recently paved 2.5 mile section of trail from Decatur Street to the pavilion in Riverfront Park was extended an additional mile this summer.



Figure 3: Trail users will have to use the detour around the Chiques Creek Bridge until construction is completed in 2012.

mission access in the village of Falmouth. Parking and trail access is available by turning west on Collins Road off of off Rt. 441.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

North of the Shocks Mill Railroad Bridge, the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority is partnering with Conoy Township to construct a 3.0 mile section of the trail from the railroad bridge to the village of Bainbridge (Figure 4). This section will include a pedestrian/bike bridge over Conoy Creek. Construction of this section of the trail is planned for 2012. North of Bainbridge the trail exists as an undeveloped dirt hiking path, all the way to the PA Fish & Boat Commission parking lot in the village of Falmouth, Conoy Township.

southwest toward the Susquehanna River to reconnect with the trail. Caution should be exercised on this detour due to the fact that Rt. 441 is a heavily traveled highway. From this point on, trails users are on the existing Heritage Trail of Chickies Rock County Park. This section of the trail is topped with crushed stone and is usable for both hikers and bikers. The Northwest River Trail currently ends at the point Rock Tunnel and users should avoid entering the Norfolk Southern rail yard beyond this point.

ACCESS

There are three suggested access points to the trail, at this time.

1. *Decatur Street Trailhead* – This trailhead has parking and direct access to both the developed (west) and undeveloped (east) sections of the trail. Decatur Street intersects Market Street at the western edge of the borough. Trails users can access the parking lot and trail entrance by traveling through the stone arch tunnel at the end of Decatur Street.
2. *Riverfront Park* – Riverfront Park provides access to the developed section of the trail. Access to Riverfront Park is located off of Rt. 441 in East Donegal Township. Trail users can access parking for the trail by turning west on Vinegar Ferry Road and proceeding through the stone arch tunnel.
3. *Falmouth F&B Commission Access* – The northern trailhead is located at the PA Fish & Boat Com-

In addition to the planned projects previously mentioned, there are two major areas of need that will be addressed in the near future. They are as follows:

1. *Rt. 30 Bridge to the Tunnel in Chickies Rock Park* - The construction of the Rt. 441 Relocation Route will provide access for trail users along a separated trail along the shoulder of the road that will enable users to travel from Columbia’s River Park to the Rt. 30 Bridge (Figure 5). From the Rt. 30 Bridge to the tunnel at the southern end of Chickies Rock County Park, the trail will have to cross the Norfolk Southern Rail Yard. Discussions with Norfolk Southern about access through the northeast edge of the rail yard are currently ongoing.

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Figure 4: The trail section between Shocks Mill Bridge and Bainbridge is expected to be constructed in late 2011 or early 2012.

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- 2. *Shocks Mill Railroad Bridge Underpass* – The large railroad bridge that crosses the Susquehanna River south of Bainbridge severs the corridor in two and creates a major challenge to develop a continuous 14-mile trail (Figure 6). Funding for the design of the bridge underpass is being

provided by the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority. Federal Transportation Enhancement funds have been set aside for construction following the completion of the design. Conoy Township has committed to owning and maintaining the underpass after it is constructed. Construction should occur in 2012 or early 2013. 🐾

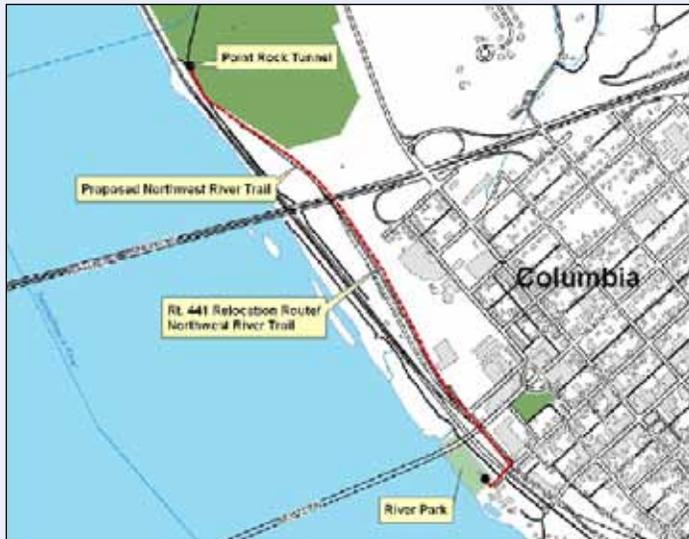


Figure 5: The section of the proposed trail that runs from River Park in Columbia to Rt. 30 is scheduled for construction in 2014.

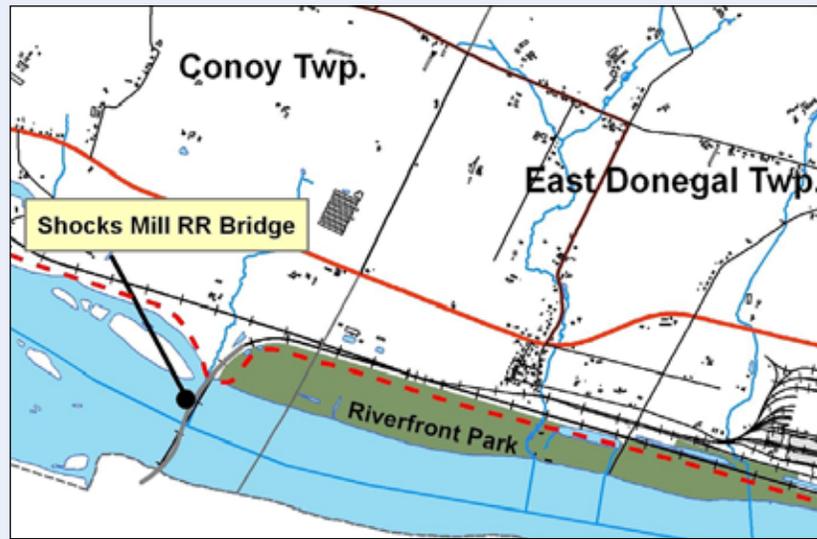
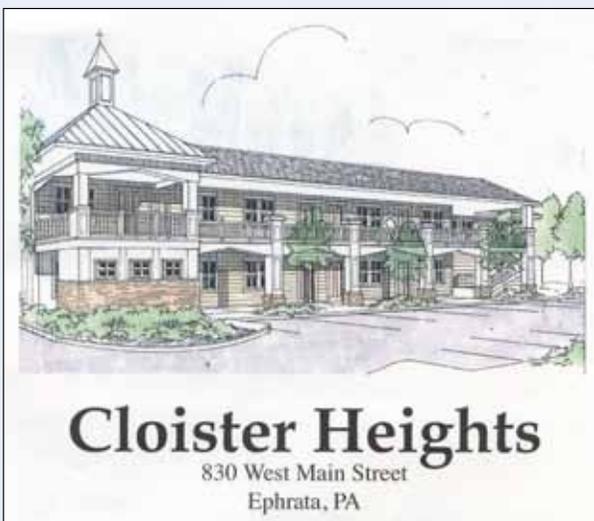


Figure 6: Routing the trail under the Shocks Mill Railroad Bridge is one of the biggest challenges of constructing the Northwest River Trail.

Cloister Heights: An Urban Enhancement Fund Affordable Housing Project



In 2010, Community Basics, a non-profit affordable housing developer based in Lancaster County, received a \$200,000 grant from the Lancaster County Urban Enhancement Fund Program for the Cloister Heights Project in Ephrata Borough. This project is significant for two reasons: it is the first affordable housing project ever funded by the UEF Program, underscoring the importance of safe and decent affordable housing to the health, well being and enhancement of our communities. It is also the first completed affordable housing project in Lancaster County to provide housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Under the Lancaster County Coalition's Ten Year Plan to

End Homelessness, a goal of developing 150 permanent housing units for the homeless was established. Community Basics' Cloister Heights Project is the first project that has been completed that sets our community on the path to achieving this goal.

The Cloister Heights project, completed this year, transformed a vacant and severely blighted 1950's era motel and accompanying single family house into 15 comfortable and convenient one and two bedroom apartments for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The existing motel foundations and portions of the original structure provided the base for the apartment building that includes 12 one bedroom units and a common laundry facility. The existing single family house, built in 1846, was abated of all lead paint, and completely renovated into 3 two bedroom units.

The goal of this project was to follow the principles of "Housing First", recognized as an effective and

efficient response to homelessness, stressing the return of families to independent living as quickly as possible. The Housing First approach provides a link between the emergency shelter and transitional housing systems that serve families experiencing homelessness and the resources and services that can help them rebuild their lives in permanent housing, as members of a neighborhood and a community.

Tom Eisemann, Director of Development for Community Basics said the following about the project and all who were involved in its development: "We all tried to imagine how distraught a soul could be when the options were gone and you found yourself homeless...What if you had young children? The community knew what needed to be done – we needed to build a stable place for individuals and families who found themselves in this situation. The Cloister Heights groundbreaking was attended by 75 community leaders who genuinely cared. The world is now a better place." 🐾

Countywide Traffic Signal Program Study

Lancaster County has almost 500 signalized intersections that are permitted by PennDOT, but owned and maintained by individual municipalities. Signal updates, retimings, and maintenance are uneven throughout the county. Traffic signal coordination on signalized corridors that cross municipal boundaries is often poor. Congestion, wasted time, and negative air quality effects are often the result. A 2004 article in the *ITE Journal* entitled "The Benefits of Retiming Traffic Signals" stated "Signal retiming is one of the most cost effective ways to improve traffic flow along a corridor. Traffic signal retiming can significantly reduce delays and stops experienced by motorists, which can improve safety and reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Typically, the benefit to cost ratio for signal retiming is about 40:1."

To help achieve and implement these benefits, the County of Lancaster, on behalf of the Metropolitan Planning Organization – Lancaster County Transportation Coordinating Committee has hired a consultant to develop a recommended program. The firm of RK&K, with offices in York and Valley

Forge, was selected, but is not yet under contract. The project will consist of an evaluation of the county's traffic signal system/program, including a review of best practices. RK&K will investigate the full gamut of traffic signal issues/problems including maintenance, updates, coordination, ownership, and operation. The analysis will result in a vetting of traffic signal system problems and system improvement alternatives and a decision to move forward with specific recommendations related to maintenance, ownership, coordination, and funding, etc. The study will start this fall and is anticipated to be completed in 6 months. 🐾

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Agricultural Advisory Committees

The newest tool added to the [Smart Growth Toolbox](#) is [Agricultural Advisory Committees \(AACs\)](#). These committees are formed by Townships to provide a forum to discuss issues pertaining to agriculture and to advise Township elected and appointed officials on agricultural issues. AAC's are advisory bodies made up of volunteers from the community and cannot supplant the powers of the elected officials

Townships can appoint farmers, those involved in agri-business, and interested citizens to advise the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on specific issues affecting agriculture. They can advise the Township on topics such as road limitations on agricultural equipment or farm business regulations, or work with groups such as the Lancaster County Conservation District to promote stream bank fencing.

A priority recommendation of [Keep Lancaster County](#)

[Farming: The Phase 1 Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Agriculture in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania](#) (2006) is the formation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee, preferably at the regional level, to advise municipalities on issues dealing with or impacting agriculture before formulating ordinances or policies.

Caernarvon Township provides a good example of how an AAC can function (see below). In addition to advising the Township Board of Supervisors on additions to the Township's Agricultural Security Area, their Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) also provides recommendations on conservation easement purchases in the Township in partnership with the Agricultural Preserve Board or Lancaster Farmland Trust. The AAB also discusses farm-related topics such as animal welfare issues, agricultural tourism, and dog kennel operations, and passes its recommendations on to the Township Board of Supervisors. 🐾

Caernarvon Township Agricultural Advisory Committee

A resolution to establish an Agricultural Advisory Panel for Caernarvon Township, Lancaster County.

The Ag. Panel will have 7 volunteer members to include representation from the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Members shall be appointed by the Board for terms of 3 years.

Purpose:

- (1) Preserve the core of the Township's farmland.
- (2) Identify and prioritize preservation properties.
- (3) Integrate the Township's Preservation Plan with the Lancaster County Ag. Preserve Board, Lancaster County Conservancy, and Lancaster Farmland Trust, and adjoining municipalities.
- (4) Analyze costs/funds and explore long/short term strategies for land preservation.
- (5) Explore and formulate a transferable development rights program locally and regionally.
- (6) Identify and evaluate land not necessarily in active agriculture, but as a value to the Township. in the form of natural resource protection, such as wetlands, flood hazards, steep slopes, or forested areas.
- (7) Advise the Board on financial distribution of its land funds without making financial commitments for the Township.

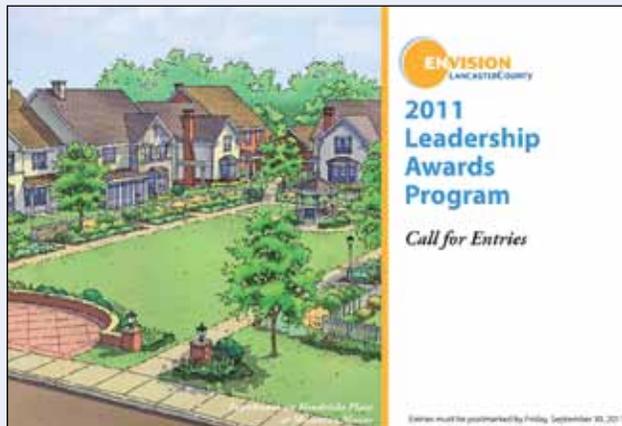
Meetings:

All meetings of the Panel shall be public and will convene at 7 PM on the third Thursday of every even month.

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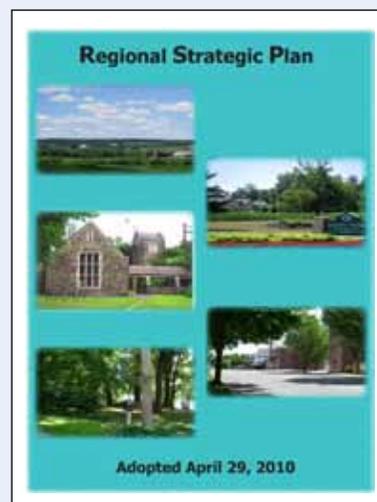
Leadership Awards Submittals Due September 30th

The Envision Lancaster County 2011 Leadership Awards Program [Call for Entries](#) submittal deadline is 30 September, 2011. Please encourage individuals, organizations, municipal boards, public authorities, developers, consultants, and public-private partnerships to submit projects which you believe LCPC should consider for a Leadership Award. 🐾



Northwest Region Begins Strategic Plan Implementation

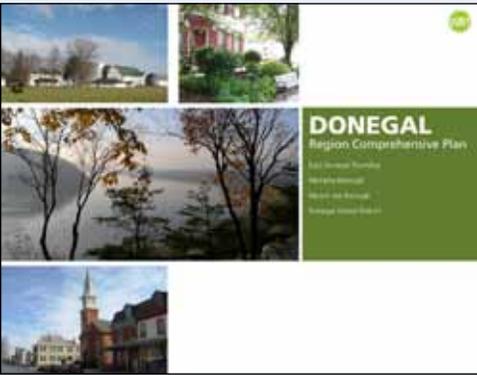
The Northwest Region is working to implement its Regional Strategic Plan that was adopted last year. The municipalities in the region, Conoy Township, West Donegal Township, Mount Joy Township, and Elizabethtown Borough, have created a regional authority to coordinate planning and other government services. They have made significant progress towards creating a joint sewer authority as called for in the plan. West Donegal Township, Mount Joy Township, and Elizabethtown Borough have also begun an effort to coordinate updates to their zoning ordinances in order to implement the [Regional Strategic Comprehensive Plan](#). 🐾



LCPC'S FALL 2011 REGIONAL BREAKFAST SERIES

Municipal Officials: Please be on the lookout in September for your invitation to attend LCPC's Fall 2011 Regional Breakfast Series. The regional meetings will be held between mid-October and mid-November at a place near you.

Donegal Region Comprehensive Plan Update Adopted



After two years of preparation, the [Donegal Region Comprehensive Plan Update](#) was adopted by East Donegal Township, Marietta Borough and Mount Joy Borough in July. The plan update was funded jointly

between the Pennsylvania State Department of Community and Economic Development, Lancaster County, and the three municipalities. The planning process was led by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from each of the municipalities and LCPC staff, as well as the Donegal School District and Main Street Mount Joy to ensure a comprehensive approach to regional issues. The Steering Committee contracted with Wallace, Roberts and Todd, LLC, of Philadelphia, to lead them through a plan development process that included extensive public involvement.

The plan update includes a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that recognize the need to build upon assets of the region as a whole, as well as the distinct qualities and character of each municipality. The document emphasizes that “together, the municipalities leverage their resources to promote a cohesive identity and build connections inside and outside the region.”

In addition to addressing issues such as land use, housing, transportation, agriculture, natural and

cultural resources, recreation and open space, and community services, the plan update includes an extensive economic development component.

The three communities are to be commended for preparation and adoption of the plan. Now the real work begins as they undertake implementation. Key strategies for implementation include:

- Create a Regional Planning and Economic Development Advisory Group.
- Accommodate a minimum of 85% of the region’s population and employment growth in Urban Growth Areas, while improving the character of new development.
- Track and inventory new housing and commercial development, and revisit the Urban Growth Area analysis within 3-5 years to ensure sufficient development capacity in the future.
- Improve parks and greenway connections to better take advantage of the region’s location along the Susquehanna River, improve recreational opportunities, and preserve natural habitats.
- Celebrate the region’s successes in agricultural preservation, and continue to increase the number of permanently preserved farms.
- Continue to regionalize public services (e.g., police, fire, and emergency services) to more efficiently use resources and reduce costs. 🐾

Lancaster County Planning Commission

Suite 320
150 North Queen Street
Lancaster, PA 17603
717-299-8333

www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning
planning@co.lancaster.pa.us

