



LANCASTER COUNTY  
**PLANNING**

**Pequea Valley Regional Comp Plan  
Project Team Meeting – Organization & Scope**

Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

**Attendees**

**Lancaster County Planning Department**

Kip Van Blarcom, Sharon Cino, Mark Huber, Amanda Peters

**Partners**

David Thompson (Paradise Township), Kirsten Peachey (Salisbury Township), Damian Clawser (Salisbury Township), Rich Eby (Pequea Valley School District), Frank Howe (Leacock Township), Erik Orndorff (Pequea Valley School District)

**Discussion**

**Housing**

- Like most of Lancaster County, the region needs more housing units. The tight housing market doesn't give residents much flexibility to find housing that accommodates their needs.
- The housing available in the region is not affordable to many residents. The county has a very low vacancy rate compared to many communities in the U.S., and that contributes to the cost of housing. Some buyers are paying all cash, which puts others at a disadvantage.
- Many people commute from outside the county to work at the region's major employers including Urban Outfitters. Some commute because they can't find or afford housing closer to their employer.
- Single-family detached units are the most common by far, but this type of housing doesn't work for all residents.
- Although increasing density is a goal, it can also be a challenge, because it increases the cost of infrastructure and other public services.
- Regulations on short-term rentals are inconsistent between municipalities.
- The Amish prefer their businesses to be close to where they live. They want it "across the driveway." This makes it challenging when businesses get too big for the farm.
- Young families want to move into the Pequea Valley School District, but can't find housing.
  - Parents are staying in their homes long after their children have graduated. Their homes are often paid off, and a tight housing market pressures them to stay where they are. Retirement communities are unaffordable.

**Economic Development**

- There may be more opportunities to develop tourism than industrial/manufacturing in this region. There are already examples of large, successful agritourism businesses like Cherry Crest Adventure Farm – but zoning for these uses can be tricky.
- Route 30 is mostly built out, so it may not have much potential for development or redevelopment.

## **Water Quality / Stormwater**

- Water quality is an important issue in rural areas like the Pequea Valley. Because there are so many farms, there is a lot of agricultural runoff resulting in many impaired streams that need to be addressed.
- Following the meeting, Mark Huber noted that the East region has two recent Watershed Restoration Plans: 1) The Pequea Creek Watershed Restoration Plan that was completed last year, and 2) the Upper Conestoga Watershed Restoration Plan that's underway right now. Both plans are led by Brian Gish of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

## **Pequea Valley School District**

- Lack of transportation makes it difficult for students to get around, especially to extracurricular activities.
- Only 35% of school-aged students are enrolled in the school district (because so many are Amish and home schooled), and 60% of those enrolled qualify for free or reduced lunch. The Welsh Mountain area is particularly impoverished.

## **Outreach**

- The population of the region presents unique challenges: in each municipality, ~65-70% of the population is Amish. Additionally, ~70-80% of land is zoned agricultural in each municipality.
  - To include the Amish in our outreach efforts, we could offer surveys on election day(s).
- The Together Initiative Network (TIN) – a network of 30 or so local organizations – meets quarterly to address challenges and opportunities the region faces. This network includes organizations such as The Factory Ministries, the PV School District, etc. David recommended that LCPD staff follow up with them to attend a future board meeting, conduct a survey, and/or make a presentation.

## **Schedule**

- We anticipate that the planning process will take about one year, followed by the review and adoption process.

## **Meetings**

- LCPD staff discussed project logistics with the team:
  - Public Meetings – These will occur over the course of the planning process. Toward the end, municipalities will hold public meetings for the draft.
  - Committee Meetings – Each municipality will identify 3-4 individuals to participate, such as local officials and staff, school district staff, business owners, community leaders, and residents. Additional LCPD staff and Partners for Place will be invited depending on the topic of discussion. We'll also occasionally tap into local business owners and organizations such as Stoltzfus Trucking, B&D Builders, The Factory, Upward Broadband, etc.
  - Project Team Meetings – This team consisting of township and LCPD staff will meet and hold progress meetings to discuss and address the plan's development.

**LCPD Contacts****Project Manager**

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