



LANCASTER COUNTY
PLANNING

**Pequea Valley Regional Comp Plan
Committee Meeting – Creating Great Places**

Salisbury Township Municipal Building
Thursday, July 25, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

Attendees

Lancaster County Planning Department

Kip Van Blarcom, Sharon Cino, Matt Hoyer

Partners

David Thompson (Paradise Township), Kirsten Peachey (Salisbury Township), Damian Clawser (Salisbury Township), Rich Eby (Pequea Valley School District), Christopher Slaymaker, Frank Howe (Leacock Township), Merv King (MK Builders), Gordon Hoover (Salisbury Township), Wally Hockensmith (Paradise Township), Mike Hartmann (Paradise Township), Mike Sensenig (Leacock Township), Dale Hershey (Paradise Township), Dylan Coleman (Paradise Township), Shira Zimmerman (The Factory), shira@thefactoryministries.com

Welcome/Introduction (Sharon Cino)

Housing (Matt Hoyer)

- One of the challenges facing Lancaster County is housing affordability with about a third of renters and mortgaged homeowners feeling the impact of increased costs.
- Countywide we are seeing a high demand for more housing types.
- Looking at the county as a whole, the Pequea Valley Region has some of the larger concentrations of younger families with children.
- A low vacancy rate countywide is contributing to the issue of housing affordability.
- The overall vacancy rate in the Pequea Valley Region is similar to the county. This region also has a number of short-term rentals as well as blighted or condemned properties.
- The fastest growing household demographics countywide are households without children: older empty nester/retired couples, young individuals, and couples without children, and one-person households.
- In the East Planning Area, about a third of mortgaged homeowners and renters are cost burdened.
- Housing cost burdenship occurs when a household spends more than 30% of its gross income on housing.
- Median home values in the Pequea Valley Region are \$100k higher than the county median, while wages are only slightly higher than in the rest of the county.

- About 60% of all students enrolled in the Pequea Valley School District qualify for free/reduced lunch, versus 52% in public schools countywide.
- 4+ bedroom units are the second-fastest growing type of housing units in the region. The percentage of 5+ bedroom houses in the region is over three times the number we are seeing countywide.
- There are often zoning challenges to conversions of existing buildings into new housing units. Two-unit or apartment conversions are typically permitted only by conditional use. This is sometimes a barrier for builders.
- There is a greater need for single-family homes (detached, twins, townhomes) on smaller lots.
- The Pequea Valley Region is seeing a higher percentage of detached homes, which leads to higher housing costs.
- A local builder mentioned the need for zoning setback relief to allow construction of more single-family attached duplexes and townhomes.
- Reusing existing buildings is somewhat limited in Salisbury Township as they only allow conversions of buildings built July 1973 and earlier. Aging housing stock is a challenge for many homeowners.
- EDC of Lancaster County recently met with Paradise Township municipal leaders to discuss potential areas for industrial use.
- Developers are asking for variances to construct single-family homes as opposed to smaller homes such as duplexes, expressing concern over their marketability.
- Some of the challenges we are seeing with higher rents are related to the low availability of smaller units.
- Investors often buy properties in this area, which means fewer units are available.
- Residents have little appetite for more compact development.
- In some cases, the lack of water and sewer infrastructure makes new home construction difficult. Paradise Township is in the process of hiring a consultant to develop a water feasibility study.
- Several people expressed interest in joint zoning in the region, promoting cooperation amongst the three townships.

Growth Management (Kip Van Blarcom)

- In November, we will hold another round of regional meetings on the recalibration process and staff will provide recommendations for potential changes in growth areas. In the Pequea Valley, all growth areas are Village Growth Areas (VGAs).
- LCPD staff have also identified “focus areas” where buildable land is within walking/biking distance of transit routes.

Draft Survey (Sharon Cino)

- LCPD will be sending out a draft survey to the committee for their review by August 1. The survey is expected to go live on the project website by August 9.

Next Steps (Sharon Cino)

- The next meeting is scheduled in September. The topic of discussion will be transportation. We will focus on the next big idea: Connecting People Place and Opportunity.