

Focus Group Overview

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
February – May 2016



Focus Group Overview

As part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan community outreach strategy, Lycoming County conducted a series of focus group meetings with key stakeholders representing a cross-section of the County. Each meeting concentrated on a specific subject area and included participants from organizations with relevant subject matter expertise, including: local governments, County government, emergency service providers, utility providers, municipal authorities, non-profits, for-profit businesses, community leaders and others.

Focus Group meetings were conducted as facilitated open discussions to foster meaningful conversation related to current trends, issues and areas of focus relevant to the development of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The Lycoming County Planning Department opened each meeting with participant introductions followed by an overview of the Comprehensive Plan including its purpose, planning process and intended outcomes. The remainder of each meeting was used for open discussion among participants, guided by a consultant team utilizing targeted questions relevant to each topic area. The findings of these meetings were incorporated into the identification of thematic local and county-wide issues and the development of priority projects and initiatives to be included in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and 2017 Multi-Municipal Plan Updates.

Each Focus Group was conducted over a 2-hour period and was held at either the Lycoming County Executive Plaza Building or the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce offices in Williamsport, PA.

List of Focus Group Meetings and Dates:

Williamsport/Lycoming Young Professionals Focus Group	February 25, 2016
Developer Focus Group	March 14, 2016
Youth Plan the Future Focus Group	April 6, 2016
Community Facilities and Infrastructure Focus Group	April 14, 2016
Community Development Focus Group	April 14, 2016
Economic Development Focus Group	April 15, 2016
Heritage, Arts, and Culture Focus Group	April 15, 2016
Public Safety Focus Group	April 22, 2016
Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Forestry Focus Group	April 22, 2016
Transportation Focus Group	May 2, 2016
Manufacturing Focus Group	May 25, 2016



Williamsport/Lycoming Young Professionals Focus Group

Meeting held on February 25, 2016 from 6:00pm-7:30pm

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

Planning Department staff worked with the Williamsport Lycoming Young Professionals (WLYP) group to conduct a focus group meeting in February of 2016 to determine what was most important to them. WLYP is made up of local youth in the workforce. Members work in a variety of fields across the county including professionals from Lycoming College and Pennsylvania College of Technology, UMPC Susquehanna, as well as local business owners and workers at smaller firms. Almost 20 members of the WLYP participated in this discussion. The primary purpose of this group was to gain the perspective of local young professionals and determine what they like about the area and how to encourage them to stay. Focus Group participants were asked to indicate what they liked about the county and wished to protect and preserve, what would they like to see come to the community, and what would keep them here or persuade them to leave.

The key findings of this group are described below:

- Participants repeatedly expressed their appreciation of the natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities within the County. When asked about “what they loved about Lycoming County,” participants provided answers including: Rider Park, bike paths, the River Walk, Brandon Park, State Parks, Pine Creek Valley, and the scenic resources of the County. Participants indicated that the natural beauty and recreation opportunities were factors in why they lived here and wished to continue living here.
- Participants’ responses reflected the national trend where younger adults prioritize experiences to buying things. In addition to the outdoor recreation opportunities mentioned above, participants also expressed an appreciation of the night life, the arts community, Little League, and the Pajama Factory. When asked what they would like to see added to the community, participants indicated a desire for more restaurant variety, museums, another brewery, and live music venues. Participants also offered support for projects that improve the downtowns.
- Participants emphasized the importance of local business and entrepreneurs. Some of the participants were local business owners who expressed a desire for better access to ultra-high speed internet to support their businesses. They also indicated that more assistance to internet-based businesses operating in the county is desired.

- Participants indicated that low cost of living was a reason why they have chosen to live and remain in the area. Participants also stated that job growth and pay increases were important to keep them living in the area. In addition, they expressed concern that homes may not be affordable for them when they choose to become homeowners.
- Participants indicated that the area needed to overcome its lack of willingness to change. Participants would like to see Lycoming County citizens become more open-minded and indicated that continued stubbornness towards change could encourage them to relocate to a more open-minded area.
- Participants expressed concern for the reputation of the city, specifically in terms of drugs and crime. While participants acknowledged that the lack of crime was important to them, they also felt that some people mistakenly perceive the City as dangerous.

Questions and Answers

What Should We Protect and Preserve?

- Outdoor Recreation
- Scenery
- Arts Community/Pajama Factory
- Assistance to internet based businesses
- Ultra-High Speed Internet
 - Allows for sustainable industry
- Beautiful housing
- Activities for young people
 - Recreation
- Need to coordinate with colleges
- Current projects to improve Downtown
- **More in “College Bubble”**

Need to overcome lack of willingness to change

What do you love about Lycoming County?

- Night life and outdoor activities nearby
- Rider Park
- Bike Path
- Short Commute
- River Walk
- Market Street Bridge
- Little League
- Brandon Park
- Historic Structures
- Local History
- State Parks

- Farmers Market
- Pajama Factory
- Scenic Resources
- Pine Creek Valley

What's not here?

- Chipotle
- Museum
- Vietnamese/Korean/Indian Restaurant
- Public Transit
- **"Eastern Market" (Public Markets)**
 - Lewisburg Farmers Market
- Would like another Brewery
- Live Music Venues
- Better parking
- Open public meeting spaces (free/or in private businesses)

What will keep you here?

- Business Opportunities Downtown
- Arts and Culture
- Financial Reasons/Opportunities
- Expanded night travel options
- Open-mindedness and willingness to change
- Outdoor Recreation
- Lack of crime
- High speed internet/Fiber optics
- Home buyer assistance
- School Districts
- Continued job growth
- Increase connection between college/town
- More things to do for young professionals

What will make you leave?

- Lack of train and air travel
- Perception of the city
- Increasing home prices
- Lack of willingness to change/community values

Why do you live here?

- Outdoors
- Born here
- Short commute
- Things to do
- Pay/Job Opportunities/Employment
- Low cost of living
- Familiarity
- Access to large urban areas
- Mountains/Natural Resources
- Local Business Community

What should we change?

- Transportation
- Parking Options

What to Prioritize:

- Housing Redevelopment
 - Increase Home Ownership
- Central Market
- Poverty/Low Income Alleviation
- Downtown Greenspace
- Brewery



Developer Focus Group

Meeting held on March 14, 2016 from 12:00pm

Focus Group Notes

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Welcome from Vince Matteo, President of the Chamber

Vince welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that the Chamber works regularly with the County on their planning efforts. Recently he and Jason Fink had met with the Lycoming County Planning Department (LCPD) staff to discuss the County and Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan updates that are currently underway. The Chamber has also been attending the Planning Advisory Team meetings across the County. The Chamber offered to schedule a meeting with the developers in the county so that the LCPD staff could receive input and ideas from the developers.

Overview of the Comprehensive Planning Process - by Kurt Hausammann

Kurt provided an overview of the planning process. He stated that comprehensive plan guides development in the county and its municipalities for 10 to 20 years in the future. The last plan update in the County was completed in 2006. Plans are to be reviewed and updated every 10 years. The County and the municipalities are at the 10 year interval and currently are in the beginning stages of the updates.

In an effort to obtain information from the public and stakeholders, the county has established Planning Advisory Teams, conducted public outreach meetings and will conduct meetings with key stakeholders during the process. The County will be conducting focus group meetings in April 2016. There will be additional outreach to the general public over the summer of 2016.

The County is in the process of gathering information on the following:

- What is still valid in the existing plan?
- What worked well?
- What should we do differently?

Purpose of the meeting today: The County would like to hear from the developers in the county and receive any input from them. For example - What things have worked? Areas for improvement? Are there certain areas of county that will be developed and the zoning needs to be changed?

The update to the county plan and the multi-municipal plans will be developed as a focused strategic plan. The county plan will include 5-10 prioritized projects/initiatives in the key areas of the plan. The multi-municipal comprehensive plans will include 5-10 projects of regional significance and include a list of individual municipal projects. The projects of regional significance will have the support of the planning area. The municipal projects will be specific to the individual municipality. The County Plan will include projects of county wide significance (most of the projects of regional significance from the multi-municipal plans). County will focus their resources on these projects. The focus of all of these plans is on implementation.

Kurt provided an example how good planning has worked in the County - There is a fast growing growth area/corridor in Lycoming County between Muncy and Montoursville in the area of the Lycoming Mall, Fairfield Township, Muncy Township and Muncy Creek Township area, along Route 180. This corridor was the fastest growing corridor, however it was determined that the infrastructure was not in place - limited sewer and no public water in corridor. County worked with the Lycoming County Sewer and Water Authority to provide this corridor access to water and sewer. The County also worked with the Chamber and PPL to make sure the electric utilities were in the right place. The two also worked together to make sure the natural gas was in too. The proper zoning was in place. This area is a limited Designated Growth Area which resulted in projects like the development of the Marcellus Energy Park, Turkey Run and MIP II. This resulted in the Marcellus Shale companies locating in this area of the County. The interesting note is that when all of planning was being done, Marcellus Shale was not on the radar screen. The focus was on food processing companies. The comprehensive plan set the stage for the development but did not get down to the specifics about what companies will develop or locate on the specific sites.

LCPD provided a description of the current growth areas in the county and described how the county defines a growth area – any city, borough, and in any area that has sewer or water or both or any area with planned in extended sewer and/or water in the near future.

The 2006 plan provided 2600 acres targeted for growth in commercial and industrial development. The Chamber and County worked together on this during the development of the 2006 plans. As a result, current plans include targeted growth areas across the county to provide the requested acres.

Other miscellaneous information that was provided throughout the meeting:

- **A brief description of the County's role with the City. They work together. The County supports the City with planning services, zoning, and invest state and federal funds into the city.** Examples were provided - Memorial Homes, Brodart Neighborhood Improvement program, Grove Street project, funds available for floodplain enhancement projects. Good revitalization projects going on in the City.
- County can work with developers to discuss and review proposed conceptual/sketch plans and provide comments and technical assistance. The comments will be kept confidential.
- All subdivision and land development plan in county are reviewed by LCPD. There are 26 municipalities governed by the **County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance** and 21 municipalities governed by the County Zoning Ordinance.

Discussion of Critical Issues

Issue for 2016 Plan - Construction of the Susquehanna Valley Thruway and understanding the Impacts and Opportunities. This is in the same US 180 area as mentioned above. As traffic transfers over from US Route 15 at Winfield to Routes 147 and 180 and then comes up into Williamsport, there will be development opportunities. The County will need to consider some interchange zoning for these areas.

A recommendation was made that the area (Lycoming, Northumberland and Union Counties) need to identify how they will leverage the Susquehanna Valley Thruway project. Lycoming should coordinate a 3-County study (Lycoming, Northumberland and Union) on the Susquehanna Valley Thruway to identify and understand the timeframes for the improvements, increased traffic flows, identify intermodal opportunities, and the economic impacts and opportunities from this new infrastructure project. The information should be discussed with all of the developers, municipal officials, general public and other key stakeholders.

Issue for 2016 Plan – John Brady Drive in Muncy Township. The Group asked if any suggestions about zoning changes have occurred in the previous meetings. Answer - Not yet.

Comment - Muncy Township seems to be up in the air about what they want? The Township is concerned about John Brady Drive area because of the heavy traffic. The narrow corridor between Route 180 and south. The Designated Growth Area will protect other parts of the Township from the growth.

Issue for 2016 Plan – PA DOT Low volume driveways. Need to work with PA DOT to address concerns of not counting, cumulatively, the traffic volumes from multiple low-volume driveways on John Brady Drive in Muncy Township. PA DOT defines a low volume driveway as 750 counts and only counts them individually but does not cumulatively add up the counts from 2 or more low volume driveways along a corridor. 10-20 low volume driveways can be installed on one road and the traffic columns will not be cumulatively added up **so the “true” impact of** traffic is not realized. County did corridor study along this Drive and the hope is that PADOT will look at it and make some changes.

Comment - Concern about municipal officials requiring traffic studies on State highway when they do not have jurisdiction over the improvements on the State highway.

There is some development in this area that the county is working on and they are working with PA DOT on the consistent speed limit and no passing zone. LCPD is trying to develop concrete recommendations to PA DOT.

Issues for 2016 Plan – Plans should **not be dictatorial...they need to** be flexible enough to take into consideration the market. With the uncertainty in the area around the Lycoming Mall (because it does not appear to be performing well right now) and with the two vacant Grizzly buildings we need to make sure the updated plans are not too dictatorial but are flexible. The market will drive the development in the county. There will be some situations where developers will propose development in area that is not in the Designated Growth Area but the market shows that this is where the development should occur. Need to be flexible.

Issue for the 2016 Plan - Need to include the planning efforts completed in the East 3rd Street revitalization efforts in the City of Williamsport. There is a plan recently completed for this area and

there currently is a traffic study being conducted. Lycoming College also has on-going revitalization efforts to redevelopment the 3rd street area. Projects from the East Gateway and Old City would be included in the GWA plan and supported by the GWA members. All of the priority projects need to be included in the plan so they can be implemented over the next 10 years.

Issue for the 2016 Plan - Route 15 south from the top of the mountain to the landfill priority for growth. This are will be a focus area of growth once the sewer line is extended. This will become a valuable corridor with the sewer. County sees that as a growth area and it was a DGA in 2006. It will be completed in phases: 1st phase will include coming out from Montgomery to White Deer area and go up to West Company; the next two phases will include the lines up to the light. LCPD stated that they are and will continue to put resources into this growth area.

Issues for the 2016 Plan - Working with utility companies, especially the natural gas utility, to extend their lines into areas that current do not have natural gas. This will assist with new development.

A few developable sites on Alexander Drive. Be helpful if there was natural gas utility available to these sites.

In areas of the county where there will be new sewer and water lines being installed, it would be a good idea to try and coordinate with the natural gas companies to try and get the natural gas lines installed at that time.

Issue for the 2016 Plan – The downturn of the Shale Gas Industry and the potential future opportunities. The developers are in “circle wagon” mode. They are on the backside of the Shale Gas industry and gas bubble. There currently is a surplus of housing, hotel rooms and developed commercial buildings. The numbers continues to grow. The number of sub-lease industrial facilities continues to grow.

However, this could be viewed as a positive opportunity if handled right. There needs to be a focus on addressing these surpluses before so there is not a focus on new green fields. The County needs to “grow our way out this” by:

- Sub-issue - Leveraging the Susquehanna Valley Thruway project. Lycoming should coordinate a 3-County study (Lycoming, Northumberland and Union) on the Susquehanna Valley Thruway to identify and understand the timeframes for the improvements, increased traffic flows, identify intermodal opportunities, and the economic impacts and opportunities from this new infrastructure project. The information should be discussed with all of the developers, municipal officials, general public and other key stakeholders.
- Sub-issue - Take advantage of the next increase in the Marcellus Shale gas industry. What is occurring is a normal part of business. The companies are purging, de-leveraging and selling off assets. At the end of the day, there will be a re-capitalization which will lead to new gas opportunities once the price increases. There will be new gas opportunities because of the developed assets in the county. Secondary businesses will be attract to this.
- Sub-issue - Opportunity to capture the interest from foreign manufactures to develop in the United States. Foreign manufacturers are looking at the US for a couple of reasons – long-term, stable and low cost energy prices and other places around the world that have been the focus of

growth are now consider unstable and not as attractive (China for example) because of a variety of factors.

Several people in attendance at the Focus Group mentioned that they have experienced interest from companies from Brazil, Lithuania and Bulgaria. These companies are looking into making investments in the United States. Pennsylvania is in a perfect location – seaports, inland water ways access, international airports and domestic energy. Lycoming has diverse industry, good inventory of useable commercial and industrial buildings, available real estate, utilities, transportation infrastructure and good countywide services. The county needs to identify all of these assets and attractive features and leverage them to attract these businesses to Lycoming County. If we can get it right- **we will be able to “grow out” of this current economic situation.** If we do not get it right, disinvestment will continue to occur, residential real estate will start to reduce in value and then be commercial properties will reduce in value.

Need to understand the opportunities in the County and define strategies to capitalize on them. The County has low cost and stable energy supply and things like the Penn College Plastics Program. The area could capitalize on plastic manufacturing.

(Some ideas were provided during this discussion are included in the *Made in America* report that was provided to the LCPD staff.)

Issue for the 2016 Plan – Providing Marcellus Shale gas on site of business to reduce energy costs. Need to develop a process for replicating the Proctor and Gamble’s **use of Marcellus Shale gas for** energy source at their facility in Mehoopany, Wayne County. Need to work on developing ways for businesses to access and use on-site shale gas energy. It reduces the expense for businesses and make the businesses more profitable. This would make business location in Lycoming County very attractive.

Issue for the 2016 Plan - Last link for I-99 needed to be placed back on the 12 year plan and built. Also the zoning in Woodward Township is outdated along the corridor. The priority for Woodward Township is to have the I-99 project back on the 12 year plan. Should be included in the study that was previously recommended for the Susquehanna Valley Thruway project.

Highway improvements as proposed now will prevent business in Woodward Township. The highway is going to restrict access and this will prevent business.

Issue for 2016 Plan – There is a general concern about over-regulation by the federal and state government as it related to development and business growth. As it relates to the over regulation by municipal governments it was suggested that the county continues to work with the municipalities to develop reasonable regulations. The county was commended for developing the multi-municipal comprehensive planning efforts.

One example of a specific issue - NPDES permits present a problem for redevelopment projects on properties that are almost 100% covered with building and pavement and there is a proposed change in use. This makes redevelopment harder and sometimes financially infeasible. The issue is that when redeveloping a site that is covered 100% by building and pavement and there is a proposed change in use, the permit regulations require the existing paving to be converted to 20% grass. This is viewed as a

penalty to redevelopment. The LCPD staff mentioned that they are aware of this and that they have dealt with it in areas of the county by having the municipal ordinance name the **County's** Planning Commission as an appeals board to hear appeals for these types of issues. County has granted some appeals. The comment was made that it should not get to that point. It was also mentioned that the former Grizzly property is a good example of how this regulation would require the increase in the stormwater facilities in order to redevelop the site.

Another example was the PA DEP regulations on Brownfield Redevelopment and Act 2 requirements. These require to cap the site as part of the remediation plan but would also require retention ponds and groundwater recharge. These are counterproductive.

Issue for 2016 Plan - Provide funding to businesses to become flood-proofed. This will build on the **county's floodplain program**.

Issue for the 2016 Plan – Built but empty real estate and buildings in City of Williamsport and other parts of the county. These empty buildings could result in disinvestment and the downward spiral of the local economy and other real estate stock.

Issue for the 2016 Plan – Provide low cost energy and have a trained workforce. To improve the economy and attract businesses, need to provide low cost energy and have a trained workforce.

Issue for 2016 Plan – Need to prevent the updated plan redirecting growth from one area in the county to other areas in county. This would result in the disinvestment of the original area. It may also result in sprawl. Sprawl does not equal growth.

Issue for 2016 Plan – In the next 15 years, Warrensville Road could become a problem. Right now, travelers cannot get off going west. As Montoursville and Loyalsock continues to grow, the bridge is going to be a problem.

Issue for 2016 Plan - New stormwater regulations proposed in the City by the City Water Authority. This new regulation would assess a fee for each property that would be used to address infrastructure **projects. This is viewed as a "stormwater tax".** The Chamber has been meeting with the City but they are concerned it is going to be tough to stop. This could be a problem for business in the City.

Issue for the 2016 Plan - Quality of Life is important but the building costs, land costs, utility costs and development costs are driving decisions about where to develop. Quality of life and things like vibrant downtowns are important to businesses. But in this current environment, businesses are looking at the dollars and cents first and then quality of life second. The dollars and cents include - Building costs, land costs, utility costs and development costs.

Issue for 2016 Plan – Limit use of valuable real estate for recreational purposes. Do not use all of our valuable real estate for soccer fields and athletic fields. Maybe we could use floodplains for these types of fields.

Issue for 2016 Plan – Need to renew the Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ) in the County. The KOZs expires in 2018 for several properties in the county and then other KOZs expire in 2022 for different properties. This is viewed as an important economic development tool. Neighboring states have their own version and the threat of expiration will put the state and the county at a disadvantage. It will need an act of the Legislature to be renewed.

Issue for 2016 Plan – Capitalize on the still existing 500-800 acres in the designated growth near the NuWeld facility. There is infrastructure. *A Question was asked by LCPD staff – Are there areas in the County that are not DGAs now and should be?* The LCPD staff mentioned that there could be opportunities to work with the appropriate partners to try and extend the sewer and water into that new areas for growth. (Please note - No one provided an answer to this specific question, however, the SVT study and the opportunity of placing the I-99 project back on the 12 Year Plan could result in some changes.)

Issue for 2016 Plan - Fairfield Township by interchange will be ripe for residential growth in the future.

Issue for 2016 Plan – Increasing the opportunities for development on the west side of the county.
Discussion on this item included:

- Observation is that there has been some retail development that has failed in the recent past. The area and market seems to be pointing towards more industrial development.
- Most development is moving east.
- Western part of Jersey Shore with rail siding for industrial ground
- Not adequate infrastructure except for rail. Lack of sewer and water infrastructure. Road infrastructure is lacking.
- Williamsport to Jersey Shore – need to separate the local and the thru traffic there will be traffic problems.

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Youth Plan the Future Focus Group

Meeting held on April 6, 2016

Focus Group Notes

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In April 2016, the Lycoming County Planning Department held a Youth Focus Group meeting that included about 25 junior and senior students from eight school districts within Lycoming and Sullivan Counties listed to the right. Students were first given a tour of important projects completed to give them an idea of the work which planning gets involved in. Once the tour was completed the students were brought back to county offices to discuss issues they identified as important to themselves and their communities. The primary purpose of this group was to

- *Williamsport Area School District*
- *South Williamsport Area School District*
- *Loyalsock Township School District*
- *East Lycoming School District*
- *Muncy School District*
- *Jersey Shore Area School District*
- *Canton Area School District*
- *Sullivan County School District*

identify issues impacting youth, their families, and their communities. Planners noted a particular level of interest from the students representing the more rural areas of the County and that urban students may not have spoken up as much. This may have skewed the results of the discussion.

Discussion Questions & Responses

1. Your future...

- a. Would you live here as an adult? Why or why not?
- b. What would keep you here once you are an adult?
- c. What would make you want to leave?
- d. What do you see as the main benefit for moving out of the area?
- e. What are your biggest concerns about your future?

Answers:

- Yes, open space
- Family, jobs, cost of living, environment
- Distance from jobs, commercial center
- Jobs → Availability

- Safe and recreation environment
- Open space and community
- Protected way of life
- More involvement
- No limitations based on area

Students indicated that they would like to live and settle down in the region in the future because of the amount of open space and in order to enjoy the rural character and the outdoor recreation that the area affords. They also added that the area is family-friendly, is characterized by close-knit communities that they can become involved in, and offers a variety of job opportunities, an affordable cost-of-living, and beautiful natural surroundings. They repeatedly expressed an interest in preserving the rural way of life and the need to conserve natural resources and spaces.

They expressed concern that they will likely have to make lengthy commutes to and from work in order to live and remain in the area, but were not unwilling to do so as long as it would be economically viable for them. Although they acknowledged that they might have to commute longer distances to find work, they did not feel that living in and growing up in the region has limited their work and financial potentials.

Chief among their worries was the rising cost of a college education, and that student loan debt payments may make living in this region difficult. Despite a low cost-of-living, the students were not confident that salaries and wages in this area would support their debt service.

2. **Your thoughts on where you live...**

- a. What do you love about this region?
- b. What should we protect and preserve?
- c. What should we change?
- d. What is not here that you love about other places you have been?
- e. If you had the money, what would be your top priority for this region?

Answers:

- Be able to know what is happening around you. Ability to be involved
- Safe, rural, close-knit communities
- Potential and drive to finish what they started
- Sacrifice commute for space
- Communication

Students indicated that, because the region is generally rural and small

town in nature, they can easily stay informed as to what is happening in the area and become involved. They described the area as generally safe, rural, and consisting of closely-knit communities.

Students valued the rural character of the area, so much so that they would be willing to commute longer distances from work in order to live in rural, lesser-developed, natural environments. They expressed strong desire for the natural resources and beauty of the area to be preserved.

3. **Work/Career...**

- a. What to you is a “good” job?
- b. What would you need to earn in order to consider yourself to be making a “good living”?
- c. How confident are you that you could find a good job here in the future when you are out of school?

Answers:

- Stability, consistent job, enjoyable, commute, effective leadership
- All around cost of living
- Supportive community/benefits
- Career diversity

Job stability, paycheck stability, and a benefits package were most important to the students. These issues were more important to them than the amount of pay or even the kinds of jobs available. In general, the students felt that the cost-of-living here was favorable to them, and felt confident that there was a diverse job market in the region from which they could gain employment in a variety of fields.

They indicated that they are seeking strong leadership from their superiors on the job, and that they valued this leadership in order to help them succeed. They also desired to build strong relationships with co-workers, to feel supported on the job. With regard to employment, job stability and work enjoyment were the most important needs that they identified.

4. **Community...**

- a. What makes (or would make) your community home to you?
- b. What is your idea of being involved in a community? What does this involvement look like?
- c. What volunteering interests do you have?
- d. Which of the following would you be interest in being personally involved in now or in the future: local government; charities; organizations; institutions; etc.
- e. What would you like to change about your community?
- f. What do you want to see in your community?
- g. What does it mean to be a part of a community?

Answers:

- Community gatherings
- Involved to make community better as a whole
- Community clean up, soup kitchen
- Bring everyone together
- Change safety and bad reputation
- Community = Unity
- Support local businesses
- **We don't want diversity, we want unity**

To the students, a “community” is marked by opportunities for public, social gatherings, and they expressed a desire for more such organized events. They said that the outcome of community involvement is to make the community better as a whole. They felt that the best way to be involved in their communities was to participate physically in and volunteer time with established institutions, clubs, and community organizations. They gave examples of these as religious groups, soup kitchens, community clean-up crews, and others.

The theme of this part of the discussion was “togetherness.” The group felt that efforts to bring diversity in recent years have caused division. They felt that the way forward was in “unity, not diversity.” This generation has grown up with diversity, unlike previous generations, and consider themselves relatively free of the “baggage” of the past. They prefer to focus on commonalities than differences. They expressed the desire to work together in order to change the bad reputation that some areas have gained due to recent crime and drug activity. Drugs, crime, and safety issues were significant concerns.

They also said that they thought it was important to patronize and support small business throughout the region, and that this was another way to improve community betterment and unity.

5. Personally...

- a. How would you personally like to make a difference in this region?
- b. Would you raise a family here? Why or why not?
- c. What do you think older people do not understand about you and/or your generation?

Answers:

- Make a difference by voting
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Clubs taking an interest in their community

The students felt that the single greatest way to make a difference in their community was through active participation in local government and by exercising their rights to vote.

They specifically wanted the older generations of the area to know that they are ready to step up into leadership positions in government and in the community, and are willing to take up where they have

left off. They expressed great confidence in their ability and interest in doing so, but did not feel that the older generation realizes how they feel.

(over for SWOT)

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Education, many opportunities within high school (dual enrollment and A.P. courses, Technical) – 10 votes
- Recreation amenities and diversity of amenities county wide – 8 votes
- Easy access to amenities – 7 votes
- Highway systems – 2 votes
- Diversity of opportunities for public service – 1 vote
- Strong sense of community—1 vote
- Strength in open space in diversity of areas—1 vote

Weaknesses

- Affordable CC education – 9 votes
- Salaries cannot support cost of living—7 votes
- Lack of career availability – 5 votes
- Costs money to volunteer (such as firefighting) – 5 votes
- Same group of people that get involved in everything – 4 votes
- Safety of area – 0 votes
- Flooding – 0 votes

Opportunities

- Opportunity for entrepreneurship with low cost of living—11 votes
- Focus resources on the arts to gain recognition and tourism opportunities—9 votes
- Susquehanna River and Riverwalk needs an amphitheater (like Lock Haven)—4 votes
- State and federal grants for fire companies—4 votes
- Gas industry may offer high paying jobs—1 vote
- Online opportunities – work from home – 1 vote
- Forests- recreation and industry—0 votes

Threats

- Overall cost of higher education and impact of debt on ability to find sufficient salary here, housing cost, market forces—13 votes
- Minimum wage is really low—6 votes
- Lack of funding for EMA—5 votes

- Crime and drugs—3 votes
- Pollution, fracking, emissions, illegal dumping, etc.—2 votes
- Gas industry jobs may not be sustained for long-term career—1 vote
- Flood insurance – 0 votes / Stock Market – 0 votes

(over for additional notes)

Additional SWOT Analysis Notes

Strengths

- Safe; rural, close-knit communities; good schools; convenience/proximity of amenities
- This generation has the drive and intelligence to pick up where previous generations left off and to improve communities
- Community events—parades, charity events, public gatherings make communities a home. South Side lacks that community center location.
- Country living/open space
- What do you love? – Open space, close-knit community

Weaknesses

- Canton Area—farther away; proximity/distance is a problem, but if you want to live in a more open-space area, it is a sacrifice.
- What to change about our community? – Safer environment for children and elderly; change the reputation of the community (reputation for crime, drugs)

Opportunities

- Youth want opportunity to have a say and make a difference—through government and educational institutions—being informed, present and involved. People should vote.
- Innovation and entrepreneurship is another way to make a difference. Clubs and community organizations – Example: Lions Club. Collaboration.
- What does it mean to be involved in the community?—everyone cooperate and take part; no one can do it all—volunteer interests; cleanups, soup kitchens
- Personally involved? – charities, service organizations
- Support local businesses and small businesses—**“We don’t want diversity, we want unity.”**
- What to protect?—environment, wildlife, hunting, game lands
- What to change?—more jobs and services in area, fire companies, EMS, more volunteers

Threats

- Guidance counselor—research shows that rural students sometimes feel limited with job opportunities

Other General Notes

- Strive for unity and make community better
- Reasons to stay: family, jobs, environment—neighbors and hunting, cost of living
- Reasons to leave: Distance from jobs, travel from place to place to get services, lack of jobs, no jobs in northern part of county, crime, shootings, access to wildlife
- Rural setting is more willing to take on any job, urban may be choosier.
- What is a good job?
 - Stable salary and job that lasts
 - Enjoyable—not something you hate
 - Not a major long commute
 - Not hazardous
 - Respected and effective leadership on job
 - Cost of living
- Supportive community with safety net/public services
- 90% confident that they could find a good job here.
- Diversity of industries and job opportunities



Community Facilities and Infrastructure Focus Group

Meeting held on April 14, 2016 from 12:30pm-2:30pm

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

General

- Old or ineffective infrastructure needs upgraded and lack funding to accomplish it.
- There are challenges stemming from fragmented utility and service providers. Explore opportunities for greater coordination and communication.

Sewer/Water

- Water/Sewer expansion challenges and impediments
 - Lack of funding for improvements. Utilities cannot afford to build speculatively without confidence that there will be customers
 - There is a need for better coordination between utilities to ensure all services are available in a new growth area
 - Currently there is no mandatory connection/hookup requirement for public water service. As a result, people can elect not to connect and use their wells instead. Not knowing how many customers there will be makes it cost-prohibitive to do expansion projects.
 - Regulatory approvals are very slow and deter growth/development. A major project looking to locate in Lycoming County may go elsewhere if permitting is too slow.
 - PA DEP water allocation policy can be a challenge for planning for future growth
 - Susquehanna River Basin Commission water allocation - decision of how much water capacity the providers have prevents water utilities from marketing the **“true” capacity of water that is available to new large economic development** projects that may be large water consumers. The **timing for SRBC's approval also** is a deterrent. Too slow.

- Declining water consumption, partially due to conservation practices, is resulting in rate increases for customers because less water usage equals less rates collected. This results in growth planning challenges because lack of available funding and unpredictable usage
- Vulnerability of fringe developments in the municipalities (e.g., trailer parks) is a pending water/sewer issue. These communities may be required to connect to water and sewer systems because of environmental, health or regulatory requirements but are economically challenged to hook-up to these systems.
- Wellhead protection concerns
- Extension of sewer infrastructure along Route 15 is needed

Natural Gas

- Opportunities for synergies between raw materials and plastics technology to support economic development
- Need for compressed natural gas stations and infrastructure

Storm Water Management

- Current storm water infrastructure needs to be improved. There are various deficiencies in storm water systems throughout the County.
- Need to plan for future resiliency rather than planning just to meet current conditions.
- Compliance with more stringent regulations (MS4) can be a cost burden for some areas without providing a means to pay for necessary upgrades and compliance measures
- Currently not maximizing opportunities for green storm water management (retention areas, bioswales, constructed wetlands etc.)
- Need for parking regulations to reduce impervious surfaces. Opportunity to highlight the benefits of reduced parking as it relates to stormwater management. Opportunities to use green infrastructure.

Cell and High Speed Internet

- Cell and internet coverage is inadequate in some areas (especially in the northern part of the county – Hepburn Twp.) There are other areas in the county that have limited coverage.
 - Impedes utility service and improvements- Utilities use technology for reporting, inspections, maintenance and day-to-day work. Limited coverage prevents use of new technologies to provide services.

- Decreases economic competitiveness – prevents use by businesses. Can be a deterrent to relocation of businesses to County.
- Causes or exacerbates social or educational issues (online courses, homework, healthcare access)
- Maybe have implications for public safety services
- Possibly place antennas on other pieces of infrastructure to address coverage issues

Recreation Facilities

- Some important recreation assets are underutilized due to (access restrictions, need to for expansion etc.)
- Need for stronger marketing and information related to recreation assets/opportunities
 - Leverage the walking trails and bike trails in the county
- Need for additional recreation facilities (pools, indoor basketball gyms etc.)
- Need to build connections with the bike trails to build safe and contiguous bike routes throughout the county
 - Leverage bike trail being built from Rochester NY to the Chesapeake Bay. It will go through Lycoming County.
 - Montoursville – Muncy area needs improvement of bike and pedestrian trails
- Address safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists along roadways
- Difficult to access Riverwalk and need for more connectivity between the Riverwalk and downtown Williamsport.
- Opportunities to better capitalize on opportunities and synergies between green infrastructure/stormwater management and recreation
 - Recreation areas for storm water management. These facilities could be also used for green infrastructure.
 - Could use water and sewer easements for recreational areas.
- Increase marketing of assets through the Tourism Promotional Agency
- Leverage the new arena in Williamsport for increased recreational activities.
 - Build upon activities for the college students (flag football, dodge ball, etc.)

Institutional Facilities

- Need for better integration between Colleges and the community. Opportunities to strengthen **Williamsport's identity as a "college town"**.
 - Need to overcome some of the physical barriers to connect Penn College with downtown. (industrial properties between the College and downtown)
 - Leverage the current investments in redevelopment/development around the colleges
 - Attract the students to downtown for activities (restaurants, art galleries, performing arts etc.)
- Need for more fine arts education
- Need more recreation opportunities for students
- Investigate opportunities for a business incubator to create entrepreneurs from the colleges

Healthcare

- Lack of access to primary care providers and urgent care facilities
- Need to build upon collaborations to bring more resources to the area
- Explore opportunities for tele-health services

Additional Comments

The comments below were received after the Focus Group meeting by participants via comment sheet or email

- Transportation to Williamsport is difficult if you do not have a car
 - Investigate opportunities for express bus service on Rt 80 and Rt. 15
 - **People from urban areas that want to visit but don't have cars cannot come**
- Need a regional park system (like State College)
- There is a need for a covered Farmers Market – possibly could be combined with offices and lavatories in a parking garage structure
- Events to attend
 - Williamsport Welcomes the World – August 26
 - Summer Concerts in Brendan Park – Sundays between June and August



Community Development Focus Group

Meeting held on April 14, 2016 from 3:00pm-5:00pm

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

Housing

- There is a need for high quality market rate housing stock and more housing choices (locations, types, amenities)
 - Housing stock is very old with outdated systems and features
 - Housing stock lacks amenities that some people desire
 - Lead based paint concerns with older housing
 - Need for more senior housing choices (not just low income seniors)
 - Need for large single family housing for large families
 - Missing transitional homes (Baby-boomers are looking to downsize and little alternatives are available)
 - Need for condo and townhouse
- There is a need for more housing choices for vulnerable populations (locations, types, amenities)
 - Affordable housing
 - Senior housing
 - People with criminal backgrounds
- Williamsport housing market is not attractive to buyers and new county residents
 - New residents are often given a negative impression of living in Williamsport before they arrive
 - High taxes
- Insufficient funding to address all housing issues community wide. Difficult to secure funding assistance for rental properties in particular.

- Opportunities for better transit connections between housing areas and employment centers. Currently people without private vehicles may feel forced to live where they work.
- There is a need for better coordination and collaboration between landlords and local government.
 - There is a tense relationship between the City and the landlords due to recent policies and ordinances enacted
 - Explore opportunities to involve landlords in housing programs/initiatives.
- Large amounts of developable land is owned by relatively few individuals
- Need to rehabilitate housing in the City on both east end and west end
- Need housing rehabilitation in Muncy, Montoursville and Montgomery

Social Services

- Family instability in the region causes problems for children, adults and the workforce.
- Need for more investment in educational and social programs for children and families
 - Need to provide assistance to children at a young age to provide a solid developmental foundation (i.e., early prevention programs).
 - More prevention at the front end. Focus on the kids
 - Many children are being raised by someone other than their biological parents
 - Need more adult volunteers to support social programs
 - Need for case workers to have better access to caretakers and the household of those assisted through social services. This would allow the programs and case workers to understand the problems and assist individuals more comprehensively.
 - Explore opportunities to provide programs that teach life skills (e.g., how to cook a healthy meal) instead of only providing them with a commodity (e.g., pre-cooked meal).
 - Need for more comprehensive support for the homeless. Not just providing rent payments but additional services to transition back to a home.
 - Need for better education to the community regarding what to donate/provide.
- Opportunities to support more seniors remaining in their homes
- Social services are fragmented without a coordinated strategy. Services are provided separately by numerous organizations and would benefit from a coordinated effort.
- Need to address heroin and other drug and substance abuse problems
 - Leverage Project Bald Eagle
- Homelessness among children is an issue – 137 homeless children in county

General

- Parking restrictions in Williamsport deter economic development

Additional Comments

The comments below were received after the Focus Group meeting by participants via comment sheet or email

- Transitional age youth (ages 18 to 25) are struggling to achieve a viable path to self-sufficiency
 - This group struggles to find and keep employment, lack confidence and motivation and seem unwilling to put forth the effort and hard work to do what it takes to become successful.
 - Particular issues include high school drop outs, college drop outs, youth involved in the child welfare or criminal justice system, youth struggling with mental health and substance issues and other barriers to self-sufficiency
- Youth: need resources to provide more employment and skills building opportunities
- Workforce Development: holistic program needed to provide a bridge between unemployed / underemployed and employers who provide living wage jobs
- Case management/Service Navigation: need to invest extensively in this area—enables us to determine the barriers that keep people in cycle of poverty—build goal plans to achieve financial self-sufficiency—leveraged opportunity when integrated into early childhood education as well as housing rehab
- Housing: the number and extent of the weatherization and rehab project requests from LMI families far outpaces available funding resources
- Need to continue to encourage family engagement as the true driver of self-sufficiency increase success
- Explore the possibility of a community-wide effort; bringing additional opportunities to make even greater self-sufficiency impacts through workshops and trainings, like: Bridges out of Poverty training, Circles USA, etc.
- Creation of a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) consisting of law enforcement agencies and mental health and disability professionals etc to interact with residents in need and provide treatment/assistance to help keep them from prison and the criminal justice system
- Create a mental health resource guide
- Pro Se Litigants – Assistance to help people navigate legal system
- Conduct an assessment of current programs/services to determine if there are services for older youth (age 16-21) or if there are gaps.



Economic Development Focus Group

Meeting held on April 15, 2016 from 9:00am-11:00am

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

Industry and Economic Drivers

- Need to capitalize on the following primary drivers in the county:
 - food processing/manufacturing industry;
 - Penn College and Lycoming College;
 - Do not compete with each other
 - Approximately 90% of the graduates are employed with their 1st job in the central part of Pennsylvania
 - 8,000 college students in the Williamsport area
 - Culinary arts program at Penn College
 - Susquehanna Health
 - Regional medical center
 - Teaching hospital
 - Hospitality Industry (hotels and restaurants)
 - Tourism
 - Recreational and eco-tourism
 - PA WILDS, rails and trails, Lumber Heritage, Iron Cross bike race, Pine Creek, Riverwalk
 - Family accessible
 - Sports industry
 - Little League World Series
 - Leverage the Liberty Arena
 - Electronics industry
 - Arts and Galleries
- Need more activities to attract young professionals to county to work (i.e. Colleges and Hospitals)

- Some groups/individuals may feel there is not enough to do (food/entertainment etc.)
 - Students
 - Young professionals
- Barriers can separate people from available amenities (physical barriers, psychological barriers, timing barriers)
 - Physical barrier between Penn College and downtown amenities
 - Industrial properties located between campus and downtown
 - Days/Hours of operation for businesses vary (especially retail in the City)
 - People have preconceived feelings about certain areas and **just won't go there**
- Need to explore opportunities for better partnerships among the culture, arts and entertainment industries
- Challenging to support economic assets that are not regularly accessible to the public (e.g., certain historic sites among others)
- Misconceptions about the City keep people away
 - High crime rate
 - Lack of parking
 - Inaccurate generalizations about race and behavior
 - Distance – **feel like it's a long way away**
- Economic challenges as a result of changing spending preferences and business models
 - Internet shopping
 - Malls are less appealing and increasingly vacant
- Opportunities to explore ways to reuse vacant/underutilized sites
- CSVT – implications for new traffic patterns and new economic development opportunities
- Airport could be improved as an economic driver
 - Has a high number of enplanements (people getting on a plane here and going somewhere else). Most enplanements at small airports are going down but Lycoming is going up
 - Service at the airport is one of the worst in PA
 - Airport used for freight delivery and transfer
 - Airport used to park/store aircraft
 - New legislation restricts number of hours crews/pilots are allowed to work – heavily impacting small airports

Workforce

- What constitutes a “Good paying job” varies from person to person and industry to industry. Difficult to determine what the workforce expects and there is a disconnection between expectations and reality.

- Challenge with providing employment opportunities at similar pay levels for workers that have lost jobs in the gas industry
- Challenging for employers to find quality workforce
 - Drug use and drug testing
 - Work ethic (not willing to work long and consistent hours)
 - Work expectations (e.g., flexibility, work from home etc.)
 - People are not committed to a job for the long term
- Lack of employment opportunities for under educated or under trained workforce
- Lack of racial diversity across industry categories
 - Difficulty in recruiting/retaining minorities for professional job opportunities
- Difficulties in adjustment to life in Lycoming County for people coming from an urban environment
 - Amenities/lifestyle changes
 - Lack of racial diversity
 - Difficult to build ties for people who are not from here
 - Not particularly welcoming to outsiders

Housing

- Not enough diversity in housing types/prices (e.g., mid-priced new homes) to meet needs of all people (e.g., young professionals, first time home buyers, gas industry workers)
- Not enough people moving in to the county to justify new home construction
 - Populations has been slightly reducing
- Developers or banks not willing to build large developments speculatively



Heritage, Arts and Culture Focus Group

Meeting held on April 15, 2016 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of critical issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

General

- Protect and continue to grow a strong arts community in the county (arts, visual, theatre, music)
 - Strong presence in City of Williamsport
- There is a need for a clear goal for the arts/heritage/culture initiative in the County. (e.g., **We want to be one of the top arts town's in the Country. What will it take to achieve this and what would the impacts be?**)
- Need for a more comprehensive inventory of cultural and heritage assets
- Need to ensure that Arts/Culture/Heritage are a primary component of economic development and community development planning and governance
- There is a lack of readily accessible financial resources to support historic preservation/restoration.
- Historic district regulations can deter private rehabilitation or improvement of historic properties in some cases
 - Need to have better local criteria to support properties and priorities
 - Adherence to federal standards can be cost-prohibitive. Investigate opportunities to provide financial incentives to assist with this.

Organizational Capacity and Coordination

- Opportunity for greater coordination between the various organizations to improve activities and events and maximize the benefits of arts, heritage and cultural assets (e.g., performing arts, art galleries, historic sites, restaurants among others).
 - Need for a renewed Arts Council
 - Previously there was an Arts Council funded by the State but funding is no longer available.

- Organizations are primarily staffed by volunteers and they need more capacity
 - Staff spend considerable amount of time creating events which leaves little time for management, coordination, growth etc.
- The local arts and culture organizations need continuity planning to ensure that when a key member of the organizations step down a replacement can take over and continue a higher level of operation/service

Improved Marketing and Connectivity

- Opportunity for expanded and coordinated marketing efforts
 - A coordinated overall marketing effort is needed to link the organizations and events together
 - Expanded efforts are needed to market for one another. For example advertising during a music event for an art gallery **event the following weekend.”**
 - Opportunities for arts or performances from one community to have a special event in another community For example a musical group from Williamsport, held an event in Muncy in 2015. These efforts could be expanded.
 - Montgomery – they could benefit from enhanced coordination with the events and organizations in the other parts of the county.
 - Need to better communicate and coordinate with other local businesses/restaurants about the art programs/events and discuss how they can benefit each other
 - Explore how local government can assist with quantifying and communicating the potential economic impacts and value of the arts/heritage to the community (i.e. tax revenue impacts). Need to educate the local elected officials of these benefits
 - Identify additional opportunities to capitalize on arts/heritage visitors and direct them towards local businesses and vice versa
 - Opportunities for using technology for marketing programs and events - (Facebook, smart phone apps, digital mapping etc.)
 - Opportunities to tie-in with regional tours (e.g., lumber tour etc.)
- Opportunities to better capitalize on Little League visitors/events
 - Event is only 10 days a year but opportunity to communicate the of visitors extending their stay or returning later to attend events.
 - Visitors tend to stay near the complex and may not travel to other events or extend their stays while they are in town for the Little League World Series. Increase marketing to encourage baseball visitors to extend and broaden their stay in Williamsport
 - Investigate opportunities to bring in more arts/culture exhibits and activities to the Little League World Series. (i.e. music in between games)

- Create new opportunities to leverage the interest in Little League baseball generated by the Little League World Series to attract more year-round baseball and softball tournaments.
- Create gateway into Williamsport related to the Little League World Series. i.e. country flags on the Market Street Bridge.
- Leverage baseball statues in the area to create a walking tour. Need more of them.

Expanded Heritage/Arts/Cultural Programs and Improved Accessibility

- Need to be more inclusive in what is offered to align with the preferences of a wider audience (ages, ethnicities, socio-economic level, cultures, preferences etc.)
 - Current programs and events are not culturally/ethnically/interest diverse
 - Need to combat assumptions that groups (races, ethnicities, cultures etc.) all have the same preferences and interests
 - Capitalize on opportunities to ask groups what they want to see. Do not assume that we already know what they want to see.
 - Need to find ways to encourage minority populations to attend and participate in programs and events
- Getting better at connecting college students with the arts but there is room for improvement
 - Need to better connect students with programs/events outside of the college
 - Need to better connect the wider community with events on the college campuses.
- Greater cellular and internet coverage is needed to capitalize on opportunities for expanded technology integration with the arts/heritage especially in the northern parts of the County (i.e. Pine Creek area). There are pockets in other parts of the county where coverage is a problem. The organizations could use improved coverage to enhance the use of smart phone applications for tours, events and advertisements
- Need to bring the arts and cultural activities outside of the buildings and into the community.



Public Safety Focus Group

Meeting held on April 22, 2016 from 9:00am-11:00am

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

Staffing, Recruitment and Retention

- Personnel shortages negatively impacting emergency service capability
 - Lack of volunteers
 - Training requirements are extensive (600+ hours) and costs are increasing
 - EMT course (150+ hours), Vehicle Rescue Certification (48+ hours), Firefighter 1 Certification (100+ hours), Hazmat Operations (16 hours) and other related training.
 - Family dynamics are changing (both parents work, kids busy with activities year round)
 - People may be involved in an activity and unable to drop what they are doing and respond to a call for service
 - People are transient and do not always put down roots in one place
 - Mental health challenge can deter volunteers. Volunteers exposed to a service call for someone with a mental health issue may not want to continue volunteering.
 - Reimbursement does not cover costs of some calls for service
 - Career based recruitment/retention challenges
 - Lack of volunteers placing additional strain on full time service providers
 - Large area relying on same pool of staff
 - Multi-tiered intake process (written test, physical fitness, background checks test etc.) results in few qualified candidates
 - More difficult to retain EMS – Fire and Police have better retention
 - EMS wages and benefits are typically lower than other services. Pensions and other benefits are helping to keeping people in police/fire careers.

- People take advantage of EMT training opportunities/funding here and then move elsewhere
 - Changing work ethics and expectations of younger workforce
 - Expectations for quality of life/flexibility do not meet job requirements (e.g., working nights/weekends etc.)
- Increasing cross-over of services and need to have additional skills/training
 - Can be a good thing but compounds funding and logistical training challenges

Calls for Service

- Call volume has increased dramatically and staffing has not kept pace
 - Increased nuisance calls
 - Increased lift assistance
 - **People are not putting down roots so they don't have a support network**
 - EMS has seen largest increase in call volume
 - More people relying on public safety service due to cost, procedures or access of medical facilities
 - Seniors staying at home
 - Insurance policies that encourage early discharge
 - Increasing specialization of medical facilities requiring increases in transports of patients to other areas
 - Lack of mental health providers and needs fall to public safety providers
 - Area has been identified by health and human services as an area without sufficient providers
 - Increased reliance on public services for things that used to be handled by family, friends and support networks
 - Household maintenance
 - Mobility assistance for elderly
 - Increasingly looked to for the provision of social services

Resources and Coordination

- Increased need for service places additional strain on equipment
- Traditional funding (taxes etc.) is limited and impedes optimal service
 - Some areas have fire taxes and others do not
 - Requires additional fund raising and other financing which exacerbates capacity issues
 - Costs deter regional consolidation and shared services

- New service needs (e.g, new Hazmats) are introduced with emerging industries but there is not additional financing to support the additional need for service
- Not increasing local taxes is seen as a point of pride however it is leading to decreased service capacity/capability
- Emergency service provides services that are actually the responsibility of different government departments (e.g., snow clearing, setting up generators etc.) but additional funding is not provided to support this.
- Insufficient funding to support modern technology upgrades – tech moves very fast and requires regular investments to capitalize on opportunities for improved service and new requirements of some fields (e.g., tele-medicine)
- Paramedic services are provided to larger region but is not supported financially by municipalities
 - Rely on reimbursement from insurance and hospital funding
 - County tax could offset these costs
- Emergency services should be considered essential infrastructure and supported as such
 - Bake sales/Bingo/Carnivals etc are not enough to fund essential equipment/services
 - Funding is available/used for equipment more readily than for people/staff
 - Need to have cost sharing across the population
 - Home health care impacts on hospitals and emergency services
 - How many calls are associated with home health needs?
- Inefficiencies in the provision of services and need for improved coordination/regionalization
 - Funding to support consolidation is a challenge
 - Politics and personality challenges (e.g., territorialism)
 - Lack of communication regarding the process, realities and benefits of regionalization
 - PA regulatory environment makes regionalization difficult – home rule etc.
 - Areas with few calls have service providers that are not fully utilized. These resources could benefit other areas with more calls through regionalization.
 - Could become more competitive in securing grant funding if we have a regional approach
 - Some municipalities not paying their fair share and relying on state police
 - Areas with high population and large number of calls are relying on state police
 - Can cause shortages in other areas

Other Challenges

- National or industry-wide reports and publications (studies, guidelines, manuals etc.) do not reflect the realities of Lycoming County
 - One model does not fit all places
 - Need to have service models that make sense for the conditions of Lycoming County

- Portions of the County are difficult to serve
 - Northern portion of the County is greater than a 15 minute response across all service providers according to a study of Advanced Life Support EMS units responding to those areas
 - Lycoming emergency service providers are regularly going into other counties to assist
 - Lack of capacity
 - Areas with aging population and small population do not have a sufficient pool of people to staff volunteer departments

- Internet and cell service challenges
 - Areas with insufficient service
 - Route 15 (Clinton and Armstrong township) lacks service
 - Route 44 to County line - Watson/Porter Township line northbound to Potter County and the Elimspport area in Washington Township
 - Route 414
 - PA 87 - Barbours area/Plunketts Creek Township area
 - 118 east of Lairdsville
 - Mifflin, Lycoming and Anthony twps.
 - Disinvestment in land lines and traditional communications
 - Tower locations impact where 911 calls are routed and can result in calls from Lycoming going to another county
 - Explore opportunities to share private towers for public services
 - Funds for these upgrades and other tech upgrades are not readily available

- Unintended consequences of regionalization
 - Would volunteers who need to travel further to a station continue to volunteer?
 - Would volunteers be able to get to the station as quickly if it is further from their home?

- Need to better educate public officials on the needs of emergency services

Additional Comments

The comments below were received after the Focus Group meeting by participants via comment sheet or email

- Autopsies are currently performed in Allentown which causes increased costs for coroners and law enforcement
 - Review findings of 2012 regional forensic center feasibility study
- Need for improved mass fatality preparedness
- Would like to see City Police Department participate in this process
- Need for improved problem identification and problem solving



Natural Resources, Agriculture and Forestry Focus Group

Meeting held on April 22, 2016 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Focus Group Notes

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General Notes

- Economic development and the environment need to be viewed and planned for as mutually supportive not in opposition to one another
- Ecological services provided by natural resources should be acknowledged and better preserved. Need to protect the numerous benefits that are expensive to replace with man-made interventions
 - Oxygen supply
 - Clean water – removes pollutants
 - Flood control
 - Top soil
 - Carbon sequestration
- Need to make sure that current population centers and developed areas remain attractive/accommodating. Keeping the development areas attractive will allow for the undeveloped and natural areas to remain undeveloped and continue to provide services and quality of life
- Need to better integrate water resource management with land use planning and development practices
 - Need to have appropriate land use management to support water reclamation and storm water management
 - Need to keep adequate quantities of permeable land in key areas
 - Need to pursue greater use of green infrastructure for storm water, community beautification and for active recreation
- Farms need to have the freedom and flexibility to ensure that they can adapt and remain viable through changing circumstances.
 - Need to have a regulatory framework that supports current farmers and future generations of farmers
- Storm water ordinances do not differentiate between land uses and types of construction. **Forcing farmland and other rural areas to utilize green infrastructure that isn't appropriate for these areas.** Rain gardens etc. may be appropriate for urban areas but they should not be

forced on farmers and rural areas to compensate for poor management in more dense areas. Good farming practice accomplishes storm water management without the need for manufactured solutions.

- Farmland preservation efforts are limited by funding. Additional funding would allow for continued preservation of important farmlands.

Agriculture

Sustainability of Agriculture as a Business Sector

- Opportunity to expand farming in the County by providing food for areas with growing populations and shrinking farms such as south/eastern part of Pennsylvania. **Western/northern parts of PA that aren't experiencing the same population growth as the south/eastern parts of the state** may capitalize on the need to feed those populations, as the farms in that area slowly disappear. Same trend if you look regionally at the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast. Agriculture in Lycoming County may be well positioned in the long-term to serve the regional market.
- Without opportunities to expand agricultural industries/operations you are not going to have a sustainable agriculture industry.
- Shrinking income and lack of long-term business planning is a challenge for extending farming into future generations. Income is at a nine-year low for the agriculture industry and Long-term business planning and income generating potential of a farm operation determines whether additional generations can come back and get involved in the farm. Profit margins are very small, so expansion is usually the only way to add a job or two to the farm to support additional family members.
- **Need to support the agricultural industry's ability to diversify to adjust with cyclical prices of agricultural products.** Agriculture industry is very cyclical. Prices rise and fall every year, sometimes because of disease issues or other completely external factors. This is also driving consolidation of farms and larger, modern operations, which can weather the ups and downs better and handle the regulation compliance as well. Also driving diversification.
- There is a need for more businesses that support the agriculture industry. Example: there is a need for more Mills, feed suppliers, milk processors/marketers, egg packaging facilities, bean plant (extruder).
- Particular concern about the loss of the dairy industry, even among the Amish now. Milk prices are a federal issue.

Impact of Regulation on Agriculture

- Agriculture industries need consistent and legal enforcement of regulation by municipalities
 - Municipalities need to abide by state laws (Ex: Right to farm, ACRE legislation) in enforcing ordinances (ex: no liquid manure storage).
 - A number of townships have what are considered illegal ordinances (example from Limestone).

- The townships do not apply ordinances evenly to all properties, but only use it when they choose to apply it (selective enforcement).
- **Some other counties don't have zoning and land development regulations, so farmers who** come here from other areas may not expect or know how to navigate the requirements.
- The cost and time of permitting and development approval is a challenge for farmers
 - NPDES permit requirements for disturbance over one acre have added significant cost to many agricultural projects.
 - Storm water management plans cost money, both when the farmer hires their engineer and then again when they pay the fees to have the township and their engineer review it.
 - Permitting takes too long and can be a burden to successful agriculture operations. **Overall concern is that permitting is “death by a thousand cuts” and can take a year or more for a major project.** Regulations can kill a project before it starts. To get through the process, you have to take time off work, and if you make one mistake you reset the clock. Need to simplify permitting so that projects can develop with shorter timelines but not with less care or more environmental impact.
- Need to ensure that each **municipality's** enforcement of land development regulations is in accordance with State Law and does not unnecessarily add additional burden. Explore ability to offer standardized options that are pre-approved.
- Setbacks in the countryside district is very limiting under County zoning. Makes it hard to locate barns.
- Municipalities have weight restrictions on roads that limit the ability to get large vehicles in to service modern farms. Milk trucks are exempt but other types of agriculture trucks are not.

Education

- Public misconceptions about agriculture are an issue. There is a need to educate people who are not involved with agriculture about the industry, its importance, and how it benefits everyone in the community. Explore opportunity for the County to play that role and coordinate with other organizations that are working on education and outreach materials.
- Schools have stopped offering vocational-ag and home economics programs. Only two FFA **programs remaining in the county. “We still need to train people who can turn a wrench.”**
- There is an impression that farmers are not good environmental stewards. Most operators do not want to be irresponsible, bad operators. No one is more interested in preserving natural resources than farmers are.

Land Use

- Other industries seem to be prioritized over agriculture
 - KOZ program does not typically fund agricultural projects. A lot of the projects that are funded are built on prime agricultural soils, and many end up vacant/empty.

- Many of the farms and agricultural industry businesses have been here for generations and will continue to be.
- Concern expressed that the County government values other industries that come and go over the agriculture industry.
- Agricultural preservation programs are limited by funding. There is more demand than funds available.
- Large amounts of land are owned by relatively few individuals. Need to get buy-in or support from large land owners to be able to effectively plan or implement projects.
- Not enough agriculture expansion areas designated in the northern area of the County. Concern that agriculture areas are being designated as natural resource areas and could result in limitations for agricultural uses.

Other Agriculture Comments

- There are concerns over of invasive/non-native animals
- Greater tracking and record keeping is required to document paths from farms to grocery stores. Desire of the consumers and consumer protection agencies are driving these additional efforts.
- Large areas held in public protected land (game lands, state forests/parks) are a limitation on tax base to support smaller municipalities where a lot of the agriculture is located.
- Concerns regarding Clean and Green Program and implication for cell towers and well pads. In some instances there are concerns that a cell tower or well pad will trigger payment of back taxes.

Natural Resources

Natural Resource Extraction

- Gas industry represents a threat to our natural resources and requires proactive efforts to mitigate impacts (some impacts cannot be mitigated reactively)
 - Forest fragmentation and loss of environmental services from forests.
 - More runoff and more flooding
 - Loss of contiguous habitats
 - Need for greater regulation
 - Pending DEP regulations may fill some gaps
 - Federal government is studying the negative air quality impacts of the gas industry
 - Need to protect existing public lands (state parks, county parks etc.) from new gas development
- Need for improved studies and public education regarding costs and benefits of current practices

- Need for a study to compare the actual economic benefits of the gas industry with the actual impacts/costs (economic, quality of life, habitat, loss of environmental services etc.)
- Need to explore consequences of resource extraction for future generations
- Need for studies to explore and quantify the potential benefits of expanded greenways and other investments - Cost benefit analysis of this
- We are privatizing the profits of resource extraction and socializing the costs. Private companies and individuals are making profit but publicly funded programs/initiatives are responsible for cleanup and addressing impacts.
- Substantial amounts of natural gas royalties are paid to property owners who actually live full-time in other counties.

Resource Preservation and Protection

- Need to prioritize the wise and prudent management of our commonly-owned natural resources at all levels of government. Need to broaden efforts and fiduciary trustee responsibilities of all levels of government to ensure the protection of the common good and public assets. Under Article 1 Section 27 of the PA Constitution.
 - Pursue a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory methods
 - Opportunities to use the comprehensive plan to support appropriate zoning and other tools to protect areas of importance
 - Comprehensive plan should reflect and coordinate with the State Forest Resource Management Plan, PA Wilds, Captain John Smith National Historic Trail, National **Recreation Trail Designations on the Susquehanna River, PA office of tourism “Pursue Your Happiness” and other relevant efforts**
 - Need to include better outreach with other land management partners (lumber industry etc.)
 - Riparian areas or stream buffers should be better utilized to preserve water quality and recreation opportunities. Funding is available to support this.
- Need to preserve land owner rights to the greatest extent possible. Allow them to maximize the utility of their property.
- Need for more tools and resources to support preservation
 - Need to explore and capitalize on opportunities for incentives to reward private investments in conservation practices
 - **Do not tax natural or wooded areas that aren't being used for commercial purposes**
 - Storm water utility fees can be used to encourage best practices (e.g., cost proportionate to amount of impervious surfaces) and fund green infrastructure
 - Opportunities to integrate preservation efforts with local businesses and events
 - Private voluntary donations. For example ask for a donation as part of the bill from a restaurant at the end of a meal
 - Encourage private business sponsorships
 - Explore opportunities for user fees to access important resources
 - Investigate willingness of users to help pay for local match for grants

- County comprehensive plan should recognize the validity of the PA Wilds program and incorporate philosophies and design concepts into the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Need for assistance to get projects to “shovel ready” status to support grant funding**

Outdoor Recreation

- Opportunity for the comprehensive plan to lay the philosophical foundation and research for a Greenway and Open Space Referendum
- Outdoor recreational and eco-tourism opportunities should be a focal point of economic and community development efforts. Maximizing these resources for economic development and quality of life should be a priority.
 - Need for scenic areas to be identified and recognized for their importance
 - Need for continued trail expansions and connections
 - Explore opportunity for a County or multi-county trail authority/organization to support improved recreation (grant funding, easements, project management etc.). Other counties are considering a regional collaborative.
 - Access to Riverwalk could be improved.
 - Need for better coordination with PennDOT to be sure transportation projects are consistent with recreation uses/needs and safety considerations.
 - Need to plan for complete transportation networks in the comprehensive plan
- Land ownership can impede or challenge new trail connections. The Comprehensive Plan should recognize the public interest which needs to be weighed in conjunction with the private interest.
- Additional access to natural and recreation areas can have unintended consequences (vandalism, garbage etc.)
- Additional resources to be protected:
 - Rt. 287 and 87
 - Jersey shore as a potential trail hub
 - Corridor from Allenwood to Jersey Shore

Additional Comments

The comments below were received after the Focus Group meeting by participants via comment sheet or email

- County growth area is along the river so it will be important to preserve and/or create riparian areas during future development



Transportation Focus Group

Meeting held on May 2, 2016 from 11:00am-1pm

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

General

- Need for a sustainable/reliable source of funding to provide local match for grants that support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

- Need to better identify the most used/desired bicycle routes and improve access and safety
 - Need to consider bicycle safety and connectivity when conducting road maintenance and planning for road conditions (i.e., paved vs. gravel etc.)
 - Conduct outreach with bicycle community to get feedback on what routes they use etc.
 - Additional bike lanes, signage and safety procedures where feasible
 - Public and motorist education on bicycle safety
- Where sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of property owners it can be difficult to regulate and ensure proper safety/mobility

Roads

- Funding for ideal level of maintenance and addition of new features/amenities is limited. Need to focus on realistic improvements in most appropriate areas.
 - Liquid fuels is only a small source of funding
 - Often not enough funding for both maintenance and operational performance improvements. Costs to maintain/improve the condition of assets requires the bulk of available funding and leaves few resources to improve the operational performance and functionality of these assets

- Not enough resources to maintain and improve locally owned roads to ideal conditions and provide for all modes of transit
- Opportunity to identify specific areas for priority investments and additional features (bike/ped improvements etc.). Not realistic to think we will have enough resources to make the entire network functional for all modes of transit but can identify specific areas that are most appropriate and pursue resources for implementation.
- Need to focus on a balance between different transportation modes. Promote **“complete streets” designs and best practices where appropriate**
 - Need to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian access is adequately represented when planning and implementing access to areas and/or assets
 - Improve coordination between municipalities to encourage complete street planning

Public Transit

- Sunday service is requested frequently
- **Cannot provide service to meet every person’s individual needs.**
 - **Not realistic to think that bus stops will be adjacent to everyone’s home in rural areas.**
 - STEP could provide service to meet additional needs in some areas but may not be cost-effective for some individuals
 - **Opportunity to adjust people’s expectations for what is reasonable service (e.g., public transit cannot always meet an individual’s work schedule etc).**
- **Opportunities to better connect with the larger region and “outside world”.** Investigate how to connect current buses with Rt. 80 and Express Bus service.
- Opportunities to capitalize on great rail infrastructure/system in the County to drive economic development
 - Need to encourage additional industrial development with sidings along rail network
 - Lots of available capacity now that Marcellus related freight is reduced (95% decline)
 - Capitalize on Newberry rail yard capacity and hazmat capability
 - Capitalize on ability to handle large loads that roads cannot
 - Muncy Industrial park phases 2 and 3 will tap into this
 - Opportunity for new rail yard in Clinton Twp between Saeger Station Rd and Brick Church Rd
 - Need to respect rail corridors and prevent incompatible development adjacent to railways. Current issues with incompatible land uses and associated problems such as trespassing, liabilities and other potential concerns.
 - Support necessary SEDA COG JRA crossing upgrades that have been identified

Airport

- Need to secure additional funding for an improved access road to the airport
- Establishing an additional destination with excellent connections is desirable
 - Airport is challenged by Philadelphia capacity/staff limitations
 - Pittsburgh no longer has many connections to other locations



Manufacturing Focus Group

Meeting held on May 25, 2016 from 12-1:30pm

Focus Group Notes

The following is draft summary of the issues, ideas and comments provided during the focus group meeting. These statements do not represent the opinions of the County. This list is to be used as one of several informational tools to inform the planning process. The draft list of issues may or may not be specifically included in the 2016 update to the **County's** Comprehensive Plan or the six multi-municipal Comprehensive Plans.

Industry Growth and Expansion

- It can be difficult for some industries to expand
 - Flexible regulations are key
 - In some areas the lack of available infrastructure is a deterrent
 - Need to have available land appropriately zoned to allow for growth and expansion
 - Need to ensure that as processes evolve through new innovations that old **methods are “grandfathered” into regulations to allow businesses to continue in traditional ways if necessary**
- Some areas have water and sewer infrastructure needs to support industry
 - Water pressure issues
 - For example in Montoursville, the Savoy Company struggles with adequate water pressure
 - There are issues with territorialism between water/sewer authorities
- Intergovernmental coordination should be improved to support industry success
 - Complexity and dysfunction of working with multiple authorities etc. can prevent expansion or attraction of new industry – prefer there to be one single entity across county
 - Some areas lack water infrastructure that are located between two municipalities and neither wants to be the one to extend the service
 - Need for greater cooperation between authorities
 - A relatively small number of officials in individual municipalities can deter important projects
 - First Quality business did not locate in Lycoming County due to local regulatory challenges and approvals
- Need to balance vibrant neighborhoods with vibrant industry

- Industrial uses may not be appealing but the jobs and services are essential to a healthy community
- Need to explore incentives to encourage desirable practices and economic development
- Level Corners (Woodward and Piatt Townships) has potential for future growth. Also has possible rail extension.

Transportation

- Highway expansion is unpredictable and makes it difficult for industries to build facilities with confidence
- Bridges and utility lines are not always appropriately designed for truck traffic
 - 287 Railroad bridge is too small and forced trucks to re-route 50-60 miles out of the way
 - Utility lines in places are too low and prevent safe truck traffic
- Tolls increasing may be a problem for businesses that rely on trucks
- Williamsport
 - Maynard St businesses that rely on truck traffic are concerned about future ability for truck circulation. Road is very busy and the Health center expansion project may exacerbate this.
 - **Truck mobility/access near Wegman's shopping center** (Hepburn)
 - Traffic circles and high amounts of traffic off of the highway present challenges for truck deliveries
- The road network is much improved since Marcellus development however it is possible that as the industry slows down and money is not as available that the roads may not have funding to be maintained in the future
- There is a need for a western access into reach road industrial park

Workforce

- Williamsport not always attractive for drawing top talent
 - Small town image is not always appealing to people from other areas particularly more urban environments
- The County struggles to attract quality IT people which is a critical and growing need for industries
- Youth challenges
 - Hard to motivate the youth
 - Youth are difficult to get to show up and work diligently
 - Very high turnover rate with entry level employees
 - Not prepared for difficult work and quit immediately
 - Not seeing many youth interested in manufacturing industry

- More middle aged people coming back to these jobs
 - In the past industries would attract farm kids into manufacturing but this does not happen much anymore
- Finding qualified candidates who are not using drugs is difficult
 - Only 30-40% pass drug tests in some industries
 - Industries are afraid to drug test or they will lose large numbers of their workforce
- Mechanically inclined workers are declining
- Local schools have not been training or encouraging students to/for industrial sector jobs. Recently, there is a little more acknowledgement, but overall this has been lacking as education programs are turning more toward higher tech job markets.
- Need to do on the job training as traditional skillsets (e.g., mill wrights) are not prevalent anymore. This presents additional burdens and challenges for companies.

Other

- Some areas in Williamsport are not attractive for visitors or residents
 - Between Hepburn and Maynard in Williamsport is unattractive
 - Too expensive to move the existing uses
 - On the other hand these industries represent significant jobs and are consistent **with the County's blue collar heritage and values**
- Airport has minor impact on the manufacturing industries. The airport functions well but limited funding would be better spent on sewer/water infrastructure, bridges etc and not on the airport

Additional Comments

The comments below were received after the Focus Group meeting by participants via comment sheet or email

Rural PAT Participant List

Lycoming County 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update



Three Planning Area Teams (**PAT's**) were created to assist with the development of the 2018 County Comprehensive Plan Update. The vast rural areas of the County were geographically divided for purposes of ease of gathering and receiving input (see map in Appendix D). These groups helped identify issues, concerns, and opportunities for the future that may not have been heard otherwise. Below is a list of the individuals who participated in the meetings.

Rural – West PAT

Brett Taylor, Lycoming County Planning Commission
Jim Crawford, Lycoming County Planning Commission
Ronald Moore, Brown Township
Dennis Paucke, Brown Township
Thomas Thompson, Cummings Township
Dale Winter, Limestone Township
Steven Dawson, McHenry Township
Robert Groff, McHenry Township
Robert Paucke, Mifflin Township
Ty Sheddy, Mifflin Township
Mike Steinbacher, Susquehanna Township
Allen Wolesslagle, Susquehanna Township
Gene Zinck, Watson Township

Rural – East PAT

Chris Keiser, Lycoming County Planning Commission
Brett Taylor, Lycoming County Planning Commission
Christine Weigle, LCWSA
Michael Welickovitch, Eldred Township
Victor Marquardt, Franklin Township
Wayne Arthur, Franklin Township
Robert Puderbach, Jordan Township
Eric Hopkins, Jordan Township
Warren Whitmoyer, Jordan Township
Dan Dorman, Penn Township
Luther Lunt, Upper Fairfield Township

Rural – Central PAT

Jonathan Ertel, Anthony Township
Kevin Spega, Anthony Township
Joe Reighard, Gamble Township
Art Plaxton, Jackson Township
Dan Clark, McIntyre Township
Al Boyer, McIntyre Township
Donna McKnight, McNett Township

MEETING SUMMARY

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural-West South PAT
November 16, 2015—Meeting #1
6:30 – 9pm, Wheeland Community Center



Attendees:

Kim Wheeler, AICP, PCD
Mark Murawski, PCD
Brett Taylor, LCPC
Jim Crawford, LCPC
Jim Dunn, LCPC
Ronald Moore, Brown Township
Dennis Paucke, Brown Township
Thomas Thompson, Cummings Township
Dale Winter, Limestone Township
Steven Dawson, McHenry Township

Robert Groff, McHenry Township
Robert Paucke, Mifflin Township
Ty Sheddy, Mifflin Township
Mike Steinbacher, Susquehanna Township
Allen Woelagle, Susquehanna Township
Gene Zinck, Watson Township

Missing Townships: Pine, Bastress

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Kim Wheeler facilitated the meeting and began the discussion. She thanked the members of the PAT for their interest and attendance, and asked that everyone sign-in. She introduced Mark Murawski, the County Transportation Planner who is also working on this team. All members present introduced themselves, including their organization and role.

One binder was provided for each municipality with the meeting materials. This binder should be **retained as an archive of the PAT work and to house the municipality's final adopted copy of the completed plan.** Other members were provided with meeting materials in a folder.

Agenda Item #2 – What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Kim reviewed the PowerPoint slides regarding the intent and scope of a county comprehensive plan. She explained that the Comprehensive Plan is a general policy guide for the physical, social and economic development of the Lycoming County community. It is a vision for the County and a long-range policy to make that vision a reality. Kim also explained the differences between planning and regulation and cited examples of both. Furthermore, Kim explained that a Comprehensive Plan evaluates existing land use, transportation systems, housing, community facilities and services, natural and cultural resources, water supply needs, and opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation. It was also explained that there are growth planning areas and rural planning areas, each with a PAT associated with it that will guide the development of the plan.

Agenda Item #3 – Roles, Responsibilities, & Operating Procedures of the PAT

Kim reviewed the PowerPoint slides regarding the roles, responsibilities, and operating procedures of the PAT as provided in the packet. Kim also emphasized that the role of the PAT members is to convey the concerns of the local residents and other constituents as they are aware. It was requested that

municipal leaders add the County Comprehensive Plan to their monthly agendas to keep the remainder of the Board and the public apprised of the progress of the plan and allow for comments.

Agenda Item #4 – Draft Comprehensive Plan Timeline

Kim explained the expected timeline for the comprehensive plan update process as provided in the packet. The next opportunity for full public engagement is June of 2016 when there will be an opportunity for County residents to weigh in on some of the project ideas coming out of the PAT process. The process is expected to conclude in Summer 2017.

Agenda Item #5 – Overview of 2006 Plan

Kim provided a short summary of the major themes and conclusions from the 2006 Countywide Plan. In 2006, the countywide plan represented all rural areas – it was not broken down into sub-areas (east, west, central). The following items were noted as part of the overview:

- What people liked
 - Overall Quality of Life
 - Sense of Community
 - Rural Life-Style
 - Scenic Beauty
 - Prime Agricultural Lands
 - Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation: hiking, biking, fishing, hunting
- Concerns
 - Protection of rural character from inappropriate development
 - Loss of higher paying and manufacturing jobs
 - Exodus of younger and highly trained workers
 - Agricultural + Natural Resource protection
 - Coordinated land use and infrastructure planning
 - Higher speed and heavy truck traffic (PA 44 + 414)
 - Lack of Bicycle routes
 - Conversion of second or seasonal dwellings to year-round
 - Rural rescue services – costly
 - Intergovernmental cooperation for planning and services
 - On-lot septic system failures

Agenda Item #6 – Highlight of Accomplishments Since 2006

Kim and Mark provided a short list of accomplishments that have taken place in this PAT area since the 2006 Plan was adopted. The following were noted as part of the presentation.

- Sewer & Water Infrastructure Installed
- County Zoning and SD/LD Ordinances Updated for Oil and Gas Development and Exploration
- Steep slope ordinances
- Pine Creek Rail Trail Connection to JS
- Jersey Shore Boat Launch
- Washington Township Bridge repairs and replacement

Comments were made from at least one PAT member that the County has not always done a good job of listening to the rural municipality concerns and preferences. At least one particular incident was noted from 10+ years ago, however, the group agreed that it is not a systemic issue.

Agenda Item #7 – SWOT Analysis and Prioritization

The PCD staff team (Kim and Mark) conducted a SWOT analysis exercise in which members were asked **to identify the PAT area's particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. After all** responses were documented, members were given the opportunity to prioritize the answers by using colored dot stickers (two per category). The results were later tabulated and documented by PCD staff in a separate document.

Agenda Item #8 – Homework Assignment and Next Meeting

Members were asked to add a standing agenda item for Comprehensive Plan Update to their **municipality's or organization's monthly meeting agendas, and to provide updates when available and** solicit feedback to bring back to the PAT.

Members were also asked to check back to the project website regularly for updated information and resources for future PAT meetings. All material will be housed at www.lyco.org/CompPlan, with sub-pages to be created for PAT meeting resources.

Kim explained specific homework assignments to be completed prior to the next meeting, which is planned for February 2016. Homework assignments will be focused around review of specific sections of the 2006 plan. She will follow up with reminders to all members.

PAT members agreed that the same day of the month in January would work for the next meeting. The next meeting of the Rural – West PAT is Wednesday, February 17th at 6:30pm at the Wheeland Community Center.

Kim adjourned the meeting at 9pm.

SWOT Analysis Notes

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update

Rural West PAT, Staff Lead: Kim Wheeler

Monday, November 16, 2015 6:30 – 9:00 PM

The Robert H. Wheeland Community Center 1201 Locust Street, Jersey Shore



Strengths: 26 votes total

- 7 – Recreational opportunities and access to them
 - Ex) Bike trail
- 5 – Scenic and natural resources
- 3 – Rural lands
 - Pristine
 - Not developed
- 2 – High air quality
- 2 – Water quality and quantity
- 2 – Pine Creek Rail Trail
- 2 – Low Taxes
- 1 – Close proximity to town/city
- 1 – Susquehanna – unique, bedroom community
- 1 – Unique landscape
- 0 – Low noise – peaceful and quiet
- 0 – Low traffic
- 0 – Public access to water
- 0 – Little Pine State Park and TD forest
- 0 – Gas industry assistance with community facilities and infrastructure
- 0 – Road system on West End
 - Access
- 0 – Pine Creek COG
- 0 – Regional cooperation -- EMS

Weaknesses: 29 votes total

- 9 – EMS/Fire capacity
 - Low volunteerism
- 7 – Lack of communication
 - Cell towers
 - Broadband
- 3 – Lack of public water/sewer at village centers
- 3 – Large portions of townships untaxable
- 2 – Farming not providing a sustainable HH living

- 2 – Police coverage is lacking
- 1 – Lack of political clout – forgotten area
- 1 – Rural municipalities feel undervalued
 - County, state
- 1 – Aging population
 - Less replacement options for municipal rates/positions
- 0 – County inattentive to township desires
 - Ex) Mifflin
- 0 – Loss of working farms
- 0 – Loss of economic diversity
- 0 – Speeding on local streets
- 0 – Availability and affordable housing in Pine Creek Valley

Opportunities: 25 votes total

- 7 – Recreation tourism
- 6 – Leverage Act 13 funds to implement projects of regional significance
- 3 – Increase parking and restroom facilities for rail-trail
- 3 – Use zoning to identify what's special and unique and needs to be preserved
- 3 – Open state forest trails for snow mobiles
- 2 – Potential for state and other grants due to significant assets
- 1 – NG-related economic development
- 0 – Mixed-use pockets of development at village centers and crossroads
- 0 – Small-scale water/sewer systems to offer diversified economy and housing options
 - Cluster development

Threats: 28 votes total

- 8 – State not respecting local visions and desires (state park and forest land)
- 7 – Road maintenance and repair in the future

- 3 – Aging infrastructure
- 2 – Loss of local control of property
 - Out-of-towners buying up land
 - Amish
- 2 – Environmental risk of old infrastructure
- 1 – Chesapeake Bay mandates
- 1 – Sprawl development
- 1 – Forest fragmentation
- 1 – Loss of scenic viewsheds due to pipeline development and lumbering
- 1 – Increased gas activity returning and worsening
- 1 – Creek flooding – ice melt, storms
- 0 – Future of farming and agriculture
 - Government policies
 - Unsustainable living
 - What's next?
- 0 – Gas infrastructure investments built by others including foreigners/Global visibility due to MS
- 0 – Large floodplain – Susquehanna Township

MEETING SUMMARY

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural - West PAT
February 17, 2015—Meeting #2
6:30 – 8:30pm, Wheeland Community Center



Attendees:

Kim Wheeler, AICP, PCD
Mark Murawski, PCD
Brett Taylor, LCPC
Jim Dunn, LCPC
John Gasperine, Cummings Township
Dale Winter, Limestone Township
Steven Dawson, McHenry Township

Robert Paucke, Mifflin Township
Paul Hoffmaster, Pine Creek Watershed Assoc.
John Bickhart, LCWSA

Missing Townships: Bastress, Brown, Pine,
Susquehanna, Washington, Watson

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Kim Wheeler and Mark Murawski facilitated the meeting and began the discussion. They thanked the members of the PAT for their interest and attendance, and asked that everyone sign-in. All members present introduced themselves, including their organization and role.

Meeting materials were **distributed for the night's discussion which is to be added to the folders given out at the first meeting. These folders are to serve as the PAT member's record of our progress and discussions.**

Agenda Item #2 – Reviewing Data and Issues

Kim reviewed the PowerPoint slides and handout reviewing the results of the SWOT analysis and received input regarding various notable outcomes of the SWOT summary.

Kim reviewed the demographic information that has been gathered thus far from census data. A summary document was distributed to the group that showed **projections** based upon population and demographic trends. A demographic **forecast** which combines observations & assumptions with the **projections** presented in this meeting will be arrived at as a result of this planning process. Many concerns arose as to the accuracy and therefore usefulness of the profile data for the rural areas of the county. Several townships found the population data from the census to be very exaggerated and cautioned that we should not use it to derive projections. The attendees advised the Planning staff to use the data carefully otherwise abandon it.

Agenda Item #3 – Facilitated Discussion on 2006 Plan Review

Kim and Mark then lead a discussion regarding the review of issues covered in the 2006 plan to see what is still relevant and what topics needed to be expanded. (Please refer to attached spread sheet for details)

In addition, the following comments and discussions were of note:

- The group thought it was important to market "Living Here" to younger generations.

- Cummings Township noted that there is very little influx of new residents coming into the Township. A recent trend that is emerging is that when people die, their properties are more often turning to recreational uses as opposed to staying residential.
- It was noted that the local schools are not offering a proportional amount of trades/ mechanical / technician course work as technology and other essential trainings. Several from the group thought believe that the trades are just as or more essential in this area.
- There was a lengthy discussion about on-lot septic system management and the failing capacities in the west end of the county. It was noted that new mechanisms are necessary to manage the systems in some areas because of the exceptional value streams. It was also noted that nearly every business from Blackwell to Waterville is in jeopardy of failing septic systems. This is going to be a growing issue in the Pine Creek Valley over the next 10yrs. There needs to be a discussion on innovative septic options in order to accommodate more density in the future in some areas.

Agenda Item #4 – Comprehensive Plan Update Process

Kim then summed up the remainder of the presentation by touching on the updated meeting schedule, the organization and contents of the updated planning document, prioritization of projects, PAT members role/responsibilities, data needs and focus group information. Information for each PAT can be found on the County webpage and instructions on navigating to the correct location were given to the group. Kim also encouraged each municipality to keep the Comprehensive plan update as a standing item on their agendas to encourage conversation and spread an understanding about what the plan is and how it impacts the community.

Agenda Item #5 – Next Steps

PAT members in attendance noted that the same day of the month in June would work for the next meeting. Tentatively, the next meeting of the Rural – West PAT is Wednesday, June 15th at 6:30pm at the Wheeland Community Center.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

MEETING SUMMARY

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural - West PAT

June 22, 2016 — Meeting #3

6:00 – 8:00pm, Wheeland Community Center



Attendees:

Kim Wheeler, AICP, PCD

Mark Murawski, PCD

Brett Taylor, LCPC

Jim Dunn, LCPC

Ronald Moore, Brown Township

John Gasperine, Cummings Township

Robert Groff, McHenry Township

Steven Dawson, McHenry Township

Robert Paucke, Mifflin Township

Ty Shedly, Mifflin Township

James Seltzer, Watson Township

Gene Zinck, Watson Township

George Durrwachter, Pine Creek Watershed Ass

John Bickhart, LCWSA

Jeff Prowant, DCNR BOF

Tom Casilo, DCNR BOF

Missing Townships: Bastress, Pine,

Susquehanna, Washington

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Kim Wheeler and Mark Murawski facilitated the meeting and began the discussion. They thanked the members of the PAT for their interest and attendance, and asked that everyone sign-in. All members present introduced themselves, including their organization and role.

Meeting materials were distributed for the night's discussion which is to be added to the folders given out at the first meeting. These folders are to serve as the PAT member's record of our progress and discussions.

Agenda Item #2 – Heritage Plan Update / Discussion of Survey

Kim **presented information on the County's Heritage Plan update which will be integrated into the County Comprehensive Plan.** The presentation covered:

- The historic inventory update process;
- what a historic resource is;
- the newly created Lycomap gallery which is currently being populated with historic sites and **will provide useful information via the County's online GIS tool;**
- and, requested that all group members provide additional sites for consideration through a survey handout.

Detailed information on the heritage plan update can be found in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Agenda Item #3 – Focus Group Update

Kim then summarized the information that was gathered through the following focus groups: Public Safety, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Forestry, Heritage/Culture & Arts, Economic Development, Community Facilities & Infrastructure, Community Development, Transportation, and Private

Developers. Detailed information on the focus group meeting notes can be found in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Agenda Item #4 – Prioritization of Issues and Development of Actions

The group then performed a “dot exercise” to prioritize which issues were most important in the Rural-West planning area and also brainstormed actions or strategies that could help address the stated issues. The results were the following:

1. Lack of Family Sustaining Jobs and Affordable Housing
 - a. Workforce training
 - b. Diversify the Economy and job opportunities – look beyond gas
 - c. Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

2. Threat to Outdoor and Scenic Assets
 - a. Conserve sensitive natural features
 - b. Coordinate with gateway planning initiatives
 - c. Partner with state agencies
 - d. Review ordinances for consistency with the comprehensive plan
 - e. Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

3. Lack of Communication Infrastructure
 - a. Partner with state agencies
 - b. Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

4. Protection of Water Quality and Supply
 - a. Conserve sensitive features
 - b. Partner with state agencies
 - c. Preserve prime agricultural lands
 - d. Support careful monitoring and regulation of fracking operations
 - e. Sensible sourcewater protection measures
 - f. Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

5. Lack of Volunteerism
 - a. Re-evaluate mandatory training hours
 - b. Provide incentives (ie. tax reductions)
 - c. Teach civic engagement
 - d. Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

6. Taxes
 - a. Explore alternative tax structure
 - b. Preserve prime agricultural lands
 - c. Partner with Lycoming County to provide better local government services
 - d. Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

The following additional comments from the group were recorded:

Pine Township has the English Center Bridge. This is a significant bridge structure and is nationally significant. Should be recognized.

Scenic viewsheds: many viewsheds have been disturbed by the gas industry. Suggestion to review and become familiar with the scenic resources document in the 2006 County Comprehensive Plan.

Cell / communications Infrastructure: the group seemed to be more in favor of limited service in few locations for public safety reasons. They did not want to see coverage throughout the Pine Creek Valley **as part of the area's advantage is that it is remote and less connected to more urbanized amenities.**

One of the biggest issues discussed was the lack of volunteer capacity and lack of younger generations, in particular, taking part in civic duties.

Agenda Item #6 –Summer Public Outreach Overview

Members were asked to send the PAT leads any suggestions they had for public outreach events.

Agenda Item #7 – Next Steps

Tentatively, the next meeting of the Rural – West PAT will be in the Fall of 2016.

Meeting adjourned around 8:35 pm.

MEETING SUMMARY

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural - West PAT

April 12, 6pm — Meeting #4

6:00 – 8:00pm, Wheeland Community Center



Attendees:

Kim Wheeler, AICP, PCD

Mark Murawski, PCD

John Gasperine, Cummings Township

Thomas Thompson, Cummings Township

Dale Winter, Limestone Township

Steven Dawson, McHenry Township

Robert Paucke, Mifflin Township

Gene Zinck, Watson Township

Paul Hoffmaster, Pine Creek Watershed Assoc.

John Bickhart, LCWSA

Missing Townships: Bastress, Pine,
Susquehanna, Washington and Salladasburg
Borough

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Kim Wheeler and Mark Murawski facilitated the meeting and began the discussion. They thanked the members of the PAT for their interest and attendance, and asked that everyone sign-in. All members present introduced themselves, including their organization and role.

Meeting materials were distributed for the night's discussion which is to be added to the folders given out at the first meeting. These folders are to serve as the PAT member's record of our progress and discussions.

Agenda Item #2 – Review of Countywide Plan Contents

Kim reviewed the Outline of expected contents for the Countywide Comprehensive Plan. They are as follows:

Introduction

1. Executive Summary
2. Plan Overview
3. General countywide data profile (not related to topical areas; summary up front, more detailed in Appendices)
4. Plan Organization

Chapter Two

Topical Area Updates: Heritage / Culture / Arts; Agriculture and Natural Resources; Community Development; Economic Development; Community Facilities and Infrastructure; Transportation Mobility; Land Use

Chapter Three

1. County Government Priorities – LCC’s
2. **Countywide “Top 10” Priority Issues (includes growth and rural areas)**

Growth Area and Future Land Use Maps

References and Plan Consistency

Appendix

All other Issues identified

Agenda Item #3 – Review of Prioritized Issues and *draft* Strategies and Consideration of Recommended Projects for each Issue

Kim and Mark reviewed the Issues that were identified by those in attendance at the previous Rural-West meeting in Summer of 2016 (mtg #3). Some potential solutions or strategic actions were also identified in PAT mtg #3 and those were reviewed as well. After that, Mark and Kim facilitated a discussion with the group to ensure there was a full understanding of the issue and how it manifests itself in the Rural-West portion of the county. The overview (below) captures the Issues identified and how they were converted to *Countywide Issue Statements* as well as the full list of Actions that the group discussed.

Priority Issue 1: Lack of Family Sustaining Jobs and Affordable Housing (The economy is changing, and our communities and workforce are not optimally positioned to realize our untapped economic potential and become resilient to economic trends)

Strategic Actions:

- Workforce training
- Diversify the Economy and job opportunities – look beyond gas
- Potential assessment of companies to better understand risk of survival
- Expand infrastructure availability
- Address Opioid and work ethic issue
- Explore alternative tax structure
- Preserve prime agricultural lands
- Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

**Special Note: those in attendance recommended that representatives from the education and industrial sectors need to be at the table together to articulate where the gaps and deficiencies in skills are and figure out how to match them up. Also, the group wanted to know if there could be a county strategy developed to figure out which big businesses and industries might be at risk of going under and can there be some way to collectively assist?*

Priority Issue 2: Threat to Outdoor and Scenic Assets (Outdoor recreation resources are not fully developed, protected and promoted)

Strategic Actions:

- Conserve sensitive natural features
- Coordinate with gateway planning initiatives
- Explore joint or better coordinated ordinances
- Partner with state agencies
- Review ordinances for consistency with the comprehensive plan
- Review 2006 scenic viewshed maps for disturbed areas
- Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating – *this was believed to be one of the most productive things the valley can do in coming years*
- Develop better predictive models for flooding

Priority Issue 3: Lack of Communication Infrastructure (Communications infrastructure (especially cell phone and broadband internet) do not meet the needs of all areas of the County. *The discussion revolved around the need for having reliable internet service for school requirements, work from home options, and public safety.*

Strategic Actions:

- Partner with state agencies and SEDA-COG
- Review any state laws/regulations on statewide coverage promises
- Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

Priority Issue 4: Protection of Water Quality and Supply (Water quality is vital, but is vulnerable to a multitude of threats)

Strategic Actions:

- Conserve sensitive features
- Partner with state agencies
- Preserve prime agricultural lands
- Innovative and affordable way to address septic failures
- Support careful monitoring and regulation of fracking operations
- Sensible sourcewater protection measures
- Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating
- Biggest concern:* impact to streams from fracking and hazardous truck spills

**Special Note: The group discussed the desire of putting together a comprehensive truck routing plan that would take into account sensitive areas and high quality stream protections.*

Priority Issue 5: Lack of Volunteerism (Volunteerism and civic engagement, particularly among young people, are insufficient to sustain community institutions and services)

Strategic Actions:

- Re-evaluate mandatory training hours – EMS/Fire
- Provide incentives (ie. tax reductions)
- Teach civic engagement

Expand the PC COG to adjacent communities not currently participating

**Special Note: The problem of lack of volunteerism is experienced across the board but EMS and Fire service is hit the hardest. There was recognition that the valley is mostly made up of older individuals and no-one is picking up the responsibility from the younger generations. Merging of fire companies is already happening.*

Agenda Item #4 – Next Steps

Kim announced that there will be an LCPC Public Meeting on April 20th at 6pm. There will be presentations on all PAT Prioritized Issues and projects. It is open to the public and anyone can attend to listen and/or provide comment. After that, the LCPC will hold a special meeting for themselves the first week in May to determine the **“Top 10” countywide issues**. It is expected that by June/July – countywide Issues and projects will be submitted to the County Commissioners and it is expected that there will be a *draft* Countywide Plan by end of September.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

MEETING SUMMARY

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural East PAT

November 10th, 2015—Meeting #1
6:30 PM – 7:45 PM, Hughesville Library



Attendees:

Fran McJunkin, Lycoming County PCD
Tom Krajewski, Lycoming County PCD
Michael Welickovitch, Edred Township
Planning Commission Member
Victor Marquardt, Franklin Township
Wayne Arthur, Franklin Township Planning
Commission
Robert Puderbach, Jordan Township Planning
Commission
Eric Hopkins, Jordan Township Planning
Commission
Warren Whitmoyer, Jordan Township Planning
Commission

Dan Dorman, Penn Township
Luther Lunt, Upper Fairfield Township
Chris Keiser, Lycoming County Planning
Commission
Brett Taylor, Lycoming County Planning
Commission

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Fran facilitated the meeting and began the discussion. She thanked the members of the PAT for their interest and attendance, and asked that everyone sign-in. All members present introduced themselves, including their organization and role.

One binder was provided for each municipality with today's meeting materials. This binder should be retained as an archive of the PAT work and to house the municipality's final adopted copy of the completed plan. Other members were provided with meeting materials in a folder.

Agenda Item #2 – What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Fran reviewed the PowerPoint slides regarding the intent and scope of a county comprehensive plan.

Agenda Item #3 – Roles, Responsibilities, & Operating Procedures of the PAT

Fran reviewed the PowerPoint slides regarding the roles, responsibilities, and operating procedures of the PAT as provided in the packet.

Agenda Item #4 – Draft Comprehensive Plan Timeline

Fran explained the expected timeline for the comprehensive plan update process as provided in the packet. The process is expected to conclude in Summer 2017.

Agenda Item #5 – Overview of 2006 Plan

Fran provided a short summary of the major themes and conclusions from the 2006 Plan for this PAT.

Agenda Item #6 – Highlight of Accomplishments Since 2006

Fran provided a short list of accomplishments that have taken place in this PAT area since the 2006 Plan was adopted. Members were asked to suggest other noteworthy accomplishments to include for future documentation.

Agenda Item #7 – SWOT Analysis and Prioritization

The PCD staff team conducted a SWOT analysis exercise in which members were asked to identify the **PAT area's particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. After all responses were** documented, members were given the opportunity to prioritize the answers by using dot stickers (two per category). The results were later tabulated and documented by PCD staff in a separate document.

PAT members were allowed to leave after placing their dot stickers. PCD Staff did not set up a time for the next meeting before adjourning. The next meeting date will be coordinated with PAT members via email and homework will be assigned via email as well.

Fran adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM.

SWOT Analysis Notes

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural East PAT, Staff Lead: Kurt Hausammann
Tuesday, November 10th 2015 6:00 – 8:30 PM
Hughesville Public Library 146 S 5th St, Hughesville, PA



Strengths: 20 votes total

- 8 – Rural character
- 5 – Beautiful landscape
- 3 – Availability of hunting
- 1 – Industrial park -- jobs
- 1 – Best agriculture
- 1 – Rural and quiet
- 1 – Water quality
- 0 – Hospital in East End
- 0 – Accessibility to interstate
- 0 – Library – public facilities
- 0 – East Lycoming school is strong
- 0 – Pride in the Eastern end
- 0 – People (volunteer)
- 0 – Fairgrounds – more use
- 0 – Community activities in the commercial centers (Main Streets)
- 0 – Gas impact fees
- 0 – Roads

Weaknesses: 20 votes total

- 7 – EMS losing volunteers
- 5 – Poor cell coverage
- 4 – Bridges -- funding
- 4 – Hard to keep youth
- 0 – Long commute times

Opportunities: 20 votes total

- 6 – Natural gas to rural areas
- 5 – Natural gas
- 5 – Multi-municipal bridge programs
- 3 – Consolidation of EMS
- 1 – Expansion of regional water and sewer

Threats: 20 votes total

- 8 – Regulation – all forms
- 5 – Gas industry – explosion
- 3 – Lot of acres – not a lot of tax base
- 2 – Aging infrastructure
- 2 – Water quality

MEETING AGENDA
Rural-Central
Planning Area Team (PAT)
Executive Plaza
330 Pine St, Williamsport, PA

2016 Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan Update

- I.** Welcome and Introductions
 - A. In attendance were:
 - 1. Jonathan Ertel, Anthony Twp
 - 2. Kevin Spega, Anthony Twp
 - 3. Art Plaxton, Jackson
 - 4. Dan Clark, McIntyre Twp
 - 5. Donna McKinght, McNett Twp
 - 6. Fran McJunkin LCPC
 - 7. Jenny Picciano, LCPC

- II.** What is a Comprehensive Plan?
 - A. Description Reviewed

- III.** Roles, Responsibilities & Operating Procedures of the PAT
 - A. Reviewed
 - B. Draft Comprehensive Plan Timeline
 - C. Overview of 2006 Plan

- IV.** Highlight of Accomplishments since 2006
 - A. See power Point

- V.** SWOT Analysis and Prioritization
 - A. See attached results

- VI.** Homework Assignment and Next Meeting
 - Review 2006 Plan and provide comment. See Attached. Meeting will be scheduled for February, 2016.

SWOT Analysis Notes

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural Central PAT, Staff Lead: Frances McJunkin
Wednesday, November 18th 2015 6:00 – 7:30 PM
Executive Plaza, 330 Pine Street, Williamsport, PA



Strengths: 10 votes total

- 3 – Wonderful place to be/beautiful place to live
- 2 – Farmers/strong community that sticks together
- 2 – Operate economically/lack of overhead costs
- 2 – Lack of development/natural beauty and lack of “big box” store type development
- 1 – Recreation from natural resources
- 0 – New cell tower

Weaknesses: 10 votes total

- 3 – Lack of volunteers for fire, ambulance, etc. due to increased state training requirements
- 2 – Need for additional funding for roads, etc.
- 2 – Lack of volunteers for township i.e. auditors, tax preparers
- 2 – Inconsistent cell service
- 1 – Operating with part time staff/Lack of full time employees
- 0 – Increased labor costs versus cost of services needed i.e. snow plowing
- 0 – Floodplain
- 0 – Non-certified levee/flood protection

Opportunities: 10 votes total

- 4 – Availability of funding Act 13 etc.
- 2 – Active township participation
- 2 – Increased funds for roads/road improvements
- 2 – Potential for new township/community parks
- 0 – Purchase new equipment
- 0 – Oil and gas companies to furnish oil/gas lines to community/potential to access gas

Threats: 10 votes total

- 5 – Potential loss of impact fee
- 2 – Lycoming Creek flooding
- 2 – Legal notice issues/not aware of notices for zoning
- 1 – State mandates EPA/DEP
- 0 – Oil and Gas impacts on roads
- 0 – Traffic (highway spillover)
- 0 – Uncontrolled development

MEETING SUMMARY

Lycoming County 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural East PAT

February 29th, 2016 — Meeting #2
6 – 8:00 pm, Hughesville Public Library



Attendees:

Kurt Hausammann, Jr., AICP, PCD Director
Christine Weigle, LCWSA
Victor Marquat, Franklin Twp
Robert Puderbaugh, Jordan Twp

Chris Keiser, LCPC
Brett Taylor, LCPC
Luther Lunt, Upper Fairfield Twp

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Kurt Hausammann facilitated the meeting and began the discussion. He thanked the members of the PAT for their interest and attendance, and asked that everyone sign-in. All members present introduced themselves, including their organization and role.

Meeting materials were distributed for the night's discussion which is to be added to the folders given out at the first meeting. These folders are to serve as the PAT member's record of our progress and discussions.

Agenda Item #2 – Reviewing Data and Issues

Kurt reviewed the PowerPoint slides reviewing the results of the SWOT analysis and received input regarding various notable outcomes of the SWOT summary.

Kurt reviewed the demographic information that has been gathered thus far from census data. A summary document was distributed to the group that showed **projections** based upon population and demographic trends. A demographic **forecast** which combines observations & assumptions with the **projections** presented in this meeting will be arrived at as a result of this planning process.

Agenda Item #3 – Facilitated Discussion on 2006 Plan Review

Kurt lead a discussion regarding the review of issues covered in the 2006 plan to see what is still relevant and what topics needed to be expanded.

Agenda Item #4 – Comprehensive Plan Update Process

Kurt then summed up the remainder of the presentation by touching on our updated meeting schedule, the organization and contents of the updated planning document, prioritization of projects, PAT members role/responsibilities, data needs and focus group information. The group identified several major issues: septic failures, structurally deficient bridges, lack of cell coverage, natural gas to rural residents, and lack of UTV/ATV trails. One major project was identified, Sewer system for Lairdsville. Kurt asked the group to think about other projects or programs that could address the issues that have been identified for the next PAT meeting.

Agenda Item #5 – Next Steps

PAT members agreed that the same day of the month in April would work for the next meeting. Next meeting is June 14 at 6pm at the Hughesville Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

RURAL EAST PAT - PRIORITIZED ISSUES (Keep)

Agriculture

Loss of farms

CAFO's

Community Development

Floodplains

Good schools

Inter municipal cooperation

Community Facilities

Stormwater Management

National gas distribution

Public water

Failing septic

Aging infrastructure

Economic Development

Exodus of younger generation

Low wages

Employment

Tax rates

Small business struggle

Heritage, Culture

Fewer younger families

Cultural resources

Natural Resources

Groundwater

Surface water quality

Pristine nature Susquehanna River

Scenic resources

Preservation of natural resources

Steep slope development

Air quality

Public Safety

Drugs

EMS

Fire

Police

Transportation

Joint Rail Authority-strength

Quality transportation

RURAL EAST PAT – NON-**ISSUES (Don't Keep)**

Agriculture

Ag preservation

Industrial farms

Community Development

Strip housing development

Uniform construction code

Standardized land use inventory

Community Facilities

Sewer expansion

Broadband

Water system

Economic Development

Heritage, Culture

Natural Resources

Ridgetop development

Karst geology

River access

Public Safety

Interchange development

Transportation

High air transit costs

I-99

Public transit

Airport

MEETING AGENDA
Rural-Central
Planning Area Team (PAT)
Meeting #2

Gamble Township Building
Wednesday, February 17, 2016
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

2016 Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan Update

Welcome and Introductions

I. In attendance were:

- Al Boyer, McIntyre Twp.
- Joe Reighard, Gamble Twp.
- Dan Clark, McIntyre Twp.
- Fran McJunkin LCPC
- Jenny Picciano, LCPC

II. Reviewing Data and Issues

- A. SWOT Analysis Results were reviewed
- B. Demographic Data
- C. 2006 Plan Review Results

III. Facilitated Discussion on 2006 Plan Review –the 2006 plan was review with those in attendance and included the submission by Art Plaxton, Jackson Township. Attached are the major topics as developed in the review.

IV. Comprehensive Plan Update Process

- A. Comp Plan Website
- B. New Approach: Focus on Implementation
- C. Multi-Municipal Plan Format
- D. Review of Roles
- E. Data and Info Collection
- F. Updated Schedule (Jan – June 2016)

v. Next Steps

- A. PAT Assignments
Scheduling Next Meeting, June 29, 2016

MEETING SUMMARY

Lycoming County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update
Rural East & Rural Central PAT
July 7, 2016—Meeting #3
6:00-7:50 PM, Executive Plaza, Williamsport



Attendees:

Jenny Picciano, Lycoming County PCD
Fran McJunkin, Lycoming County PCD
Christine Weigle, Lycoming County Water & Sewer Authority
Chris Keiser, Lycoming County Planning Commission

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Jenny Picciano and Fran McJunkin facilitated the meeting and began the discussion. All members present introduced themselves, including their organization and role.

Meeting materials were distributed for the night’s discussion which is to be added to the folders given out at the first meeting. These folders are to serve as the PAT member’s record of our progress and discussions.

Agenda Item #2 – Heritage Plan Update/ Discussion of Survey

Staff gave a **brief overview of the county’s** update to its list of historic resources and heritage plan. Members were asked to help identify additional historic resources in their community for consideration on the updated inventory list.

Agenda Item #3 – Focus Group Review

Planning Staff summarized the focus group discussions.

Agenda Item #4 - Determining and Prioritization of Issues

The priority issues issued at the last meeting were reviewed and discussed. Members we asked to vote on their top priorities:

- Priority Issue # 1: Septic Failures need to be prevented (5votes)
- Priority Issue # 2: Lack of Volunteerism and civic engagement, particularly among the young people (5 votes)
- Priority Issue # 3: Current zoning and land use needs to be reviewed and amended as necessary to meet municipal visions and respond to changing conditions (3 votes)
- Priority Issue # 4: Transportation system needs to be maintained and improved (Bridge & Road Maintenance (3 votes)
- Priority Issue # 5: Focus on employment opportunities (3 votes))
- Priority Issue # 6: Communication Infrastructure (cell phone and broadband) needs improvement (3 votes)

- Priority Issue # 7: Interagency cooperation, partnerships, regionalization of services need to be explored) (2 votes)
- Priority Issue # 8: Floodplain management (2 votes)
- Priority Issue # 9: Original wording: Better strategies and funding mechanisms are needed to meet state and federal regulations (2 votes)

Agenda Item #5 –Tag Strategic Actions to Identified Priority Issues Exercise

Members were given key strategic actions from the 2006 plan (Chapter 9, Recommendations) and asked to identify those that are still effective at addressing the priority issues. Members were also asked to identify other actions that would **address the priority issues**. See the “Summary of Priority Issues with Strategic Actions” document. **These priorities will** be used to help identify projects for the PAT in the 2016 update.

Agenda Item #6 –Summer Public Outreach Overview

Members were asked to send the PAT leads any suggestions they had for public outreach events.

Agenda Item #7 –Next Steps

The next meeting will be scheduled for the fall. Meeting details will be sent out prior to the meeting date.

Members were reminded to check the project website regularly for updated information and resources for future PAT meetings: www.lyco.org/CompPlan.