

# Planning Developments

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## Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Planning Process Presented in Preparation for Mifflin County's Update

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires county and municipal comprehensive plans to be updated at least every ten years. A comprehensive plan provides a “road map” of where a county or community wants to go in the next 10 to 15 years. The Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2000. Therefore, Mifflin County plans to begin the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan in the second half of 2010.

On September 24, in preparation for this update, Shawn McLaughlin, Union County Planning Director, presented to Mifflin County Planning Commission meeting attendees an overview of Union County's comprehensive plan update process. Union County's Comprehensive Plan update was recently completed. The project was a collaboration among the County and a majority of its municipalities. The multi-municipal partnership was initiated by the County, as many of the municipal comprehensive plans were more than ten years old, and some of the municipalities were interested in working together to update the plans.

Like Union County, most municipal comprehensive plans in Mifflin County are more than ten years old. Since the MPC requires consistency between county and municipal plans, all municipalities were invited to attend the meeting for the presentation on Union County's multi-municipal approach.

Union County's Comprehensive Plan update process began in April 2006 with a meeting of County and municipal officials, followed by a survey of municipalities on the multi-municipal process. Intergovernmental cooperation agreements of the participating municipalities resulted. A draft work scope was developed, and a request for proposals was sent to various consulting firms with experience in developing comprehensive plans. Participating municipalities were involved in selecting the project consultant. Cost estimates were then provided, and a budget was developed with a cost sharing formula for the municipalities.

An important aspect of the multi-municipal approach was the municipalities' clear understanding of the cost savings involved with participating in the project. By taking the multi-municipal approach, the project became eligible for funds from DCED and PennDOT. The two agencies contributed approximately \$240,000 to the project. Union County's share was a \$50,000 cash match and a \$50,000 in-kind match. The in-kind portion consisted of the Union County Planning Department's administrative and support efforts, as well as the Union County GIS Department's mapping services. Municipal contributions ranged, based on population, from \$300 to \$8,000. Since the project took two years to complete, the County and municipalities split the costs over two fiscal years.

(continued on Page 2)

### Inside this issue:

<i>Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Planning Process (cont.)</i>	2
<i>PennDOT to Develop Transportation Handbook</i>	2
<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT:</b>	3
<i>CDBG Funds to be Released for Mifflin County Projects</i>	
<i>Derry Township Revises Maitland Project</i>	
<b>PLANNING FOCUS:</b>	4
<i>Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan Nears Completion</i>	
<i>Mifflin County Solid Waste Authority Conducts Wastestream and Revenue Assurance Study</i>	5
<i>Mifflin County Volunteers on Day of Caring</i>	5
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	6

## Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Planning Process (cont.)



Contact the Planning and Development Department for information about Mifflin County's Comprehensive Plan.

For the purpose of updating the comprehensive plan, Union County was divided into three geographic planning regions, based on communalities, for the participating municipalities. This resulted in a consolidated plan with three components. The first two components provided information on the County as a whole and all of its municipalities. The third part focused on an implementation strategy for the County as a whole and by planning region. The County plans to adopt the plan as a whole this fall. The participating municipalities will adopt the first two components, as well as the portions of part three that deal with their specific planning region.

Beyond the cost savings and consistency rationale for collaboratively completing the project, the issue of zoning and spreading uses across

neighboring municipalities is an important consideration in supporting a multi-municipal plan. The MPC states that when such a plan is adopted, "all uses need not be provided in every municipality, but shall be planned and provided for within a reasonable geographic area of the plan." For instance, if a municipality does not have room to accommodate all uses, a use can be provided for in a neighboring municipality.

Mr. McLaughlin's presentation was well received by those in attendance, which included County and municipal officials and representatives, as well as members of the community. More information on the comprehensive planning process can be obtained by contacting the Planning and Development Department.

How do you want your future to look?



Union County presented their multi-municipal comprehensive planning process.

## PennDOT to Develop Transportation Handbook

Transportation is a major element of comprehensive planning. As part of an outreach effort to assist counties and municipalities to best meet requirements in the MPC, PennDOT held a *Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element Guidance* workshop on September 24, 2009. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss a recently completed draft publication on the subject. PennDOT, with the assistance of Parsons Brinckerhoff, Inc., Gannett Fleming, Inc., and Traffic Planning and Design, Inc., developed a handbook entitled *Integrating Transportation and Land Use in Comprehensive Plans*. The handbook will provide guidance in preparing improved transportation/land use elements in comprehensive plans, as well as examples of best management practices. As part of the review process, PennDOT requested input on the draft from various counties, municipalities, and or-

ganizations. Bill Gomes represented Mifflin County at the workshop.

The publication, which will be released in the next few months, not only reviews the comprehensive planning process, but also how to effectively identify and integrate transportation goals and objectives with the future land use component. All transportation modes are to be addressed in the plan with input from applicable interest groups. The handbook highlights various transportation and land use management implementation tools and includes a summary of more than 30 best management practice examples from throughout the Commonwealth.

Once the final document is released, training will be available at no cost to counties and municipalities. To learn more about this publication, contact Bill Gomes at (717) 242-0887 or [wgomes@co.mifflin.pa.us](mailto:wgomes@co.mifflin.pa.us).



PennDOT anticipates releasing their handbook in the next few months.

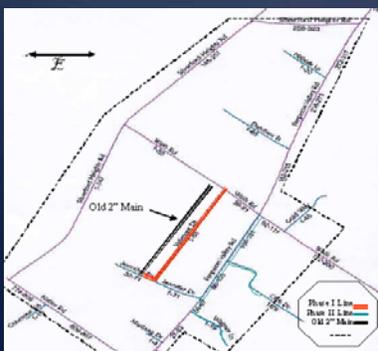
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

## CDBG Funds to be Released for Mifflin County Projects

### FFY 2009 Funding

On September 3, the Mifflin County Commissioners received the executed Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) award of \$252,849 for the FFY 2009 Community Development Block Grant program. The grant application for these funds had been approved by the Mifflin County Board of Commissioners at a public meeting held on June 4.

The FFY 2009 CDBG will fund \$79,336 for a water main replacement project in the Ferguson Valley Road Neighborhood Area, \$20,437 to partially fund a new dental hygienist for the Mifflin Juniata Dental Clinic, \$105,119 for Countywide Housing Rehabilitation projects, \$2,950 for Snyder Union Mifflin Child Development to purchase new playground equipment for the McVeytown Head Start location, and \$45,007 to Mifflin County for program administration.



Upon receipt of the executed contract, the Planning and Development Department began the environmental review process to conform to HUD regulations. Of the projects funded, program administration, the Mifflin Juniata Dental Clinic, Housing Rehabilitation, and SUM Child Development are exempt from NEPA, NHPA, and other environmental laws.

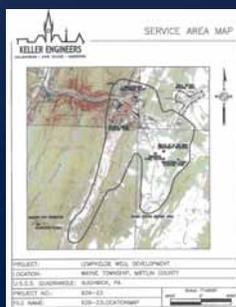
The Ferguson Valley Road Neighborhood Area Water Main Replacement Project was assessed as categorically excluded under HUD regulations. Because the project increases capacity of the existing system by more than 20 percent, both Part 1 and Part 2 of the environmental review format

must be followed. A copy of the environmental assessment is available for review at the office of the Planning and Development Department.

In accordance with procedures, a public notice was published in The Sentinel and posted at the Mifflin County Courthouse, Mifflin County Library, and online at [www.co.mifflin.pa.us](http://www.co.mifflin.pa.us). Public notice was also sent to each Mifflin County municipality for local posting. Residents are invited to comment on this project during the posting period of 15 days. Comments or concerns should be directed to Jan McDonald, Community Development Administrator, by email at [jmcdonald@co.mifflin.pa.us](mailto:jmcdonald@co.mifflin.pa.us).

On October 8, DCED will receive a letter from the Planning and Development Department requesting the release of the project funds. DCED will allow public comment for an additional 15 days before releasing the funds.

### FFY 2008 Funding



The Lemkelde Well project uses an existing well and delivery system to provide a backup source of water capable of supplying 432,000 gallons per day to residents serviced by the Mount Union Municipal Water Authority. This project is to be funded by the FFY 2008 CDBG program.

On September 7, a public notice was published in The Sentinel. Public notice was also sent to each Mifflin County municipality for local posting. The project is assessed as categorically excluded under HUD regulations. Comments were invited during the posting period of 7 days at which time the Request of Release of Funds will be forwarded to DCED. DCED will allow public comment for an additional 15 days before releasing the funds.

## Derry Township Revises Maitland Project

At their September 21 meeting, the Derry Township Board of Supervisors approved a change to the Maitland Competitive Grant project. The grant request was revised to include \$122,000 to be used to pay the balance of the sewer tap fees not paid by the FFY 2009 CDBG funds of \$104,713. The

remainder of the requested \$500,000 Competitive Grant (or \$378,000) will be made available to pay for sewer laterals capped at \$1,665 per EDU, if the project is approved.



# PLANNING FOCUS

## Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan Nears Completion

by Ann Yost, RLA of YSM

The Juniata-Mifflin Counties Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan is nearing completion. Public meetings are being scheduled this fall at which the findings, recommendations, and strategies of the plan will be shared with residents.

Guiding principles of the plan are based upon public input from citizens, community and conservation organizations, business owners, and municipalities, along with an assessment of each County's physical and human assets and opportunities. These principles provided the foundation for the Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan and guided the development of specific goals and recommendations for both Juniata and Mifflin Counties' actions relative to open space and recreation over the next 10 years. The six guiding principles include:

1. Our rural character and high quality natural resources are valuable to our citizens and our community as a whole.
2. Juniata and Mifflin Counties' economic vitality, community wellness, and livable communities depend on the health of our natural environment and the integrity of our rural character.
3. Agriculture is crucial to our economy and our rural agrarian way of life.
4. Active healthy lifestyles made possible through plentiful recreation opportunities are vital to the quality of life for our citizens now and into the future.
5. As rural Counties, collaboration, partnerships, and involvement by state agencies, regional conservation and recreational entities, community organizations, the private sector, municipalities, and citizens are crucial to the successful implementation of greenway, open space, and recreation initiatives.

6. The primary role of the Counties is to serve as the catalyst for open space conservation by harnessing partners in collaborative efforts, providing leadership, encouragement, and professional technical assistance to municipalities, outreach to landowners, and educational support for municipalities and the public. Through these services, Juniata and Mifflin Counties offer a base level of investment in open space, greenways, and recreation.

The Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan balances citizens' diverse needs and interests, recognizes the strengths and opportunities of both Counties, as well as limiting factors, and provides a framework for achieving open space conservation, recreation, and quality of life goals. The Plan recommends actions to expand recreation to foster active healthy lifestyles, strategies for protection of the Counties' natural resources and rural character, and a greenway network to connect the Counties and region with trails, bikeways, and protected green corridors. An orchestrated strategy of partnerships, outreach and education, and support of local organizations and municipalities is defined to promote the recommendations of the plan.

This project is funded in part by a Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The plan is expected to be completed by the end of the year. For more information, contact Bill Gomes at the Planning and Development Department at [wgo-mes@co.mifflin.pa.us](mailto:wgo-mes@co.mifflin.pa.us).

*Mifflin and Juniata Counties are partnering to develop the Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan.*



## Mifflin County Solid Waste Authority Conducts Wastestream and Revenue Assurance Study

By Terry Keene of Barton and Loguidice

In the spring of 2009, the Mifflin County Solid Waste Authority initiated a study to investigate ways to enhance and secure the quantity of waste being delivered to its transfer station and to stabilize revenues to support the Authority's operations. A secure delivery of municipal waste, of a minimum quantity, is needed to support the multiple operations of the Authority, which include, but are not limited to: 1) operation of a waste transfer station at the Authority's property along Route 522 southeast of Lewis-town; 2) post-closure care at the County's closed Barner Landfill; and 3) servicing of a Countywide drop-off recyclables collection program. The waste transfer station opened in 2005, when the Barner Landfill was filled and closed, in order to provide residents and businesses in the region with continued economical waste disposal services. Waste from the transfer station is currently hauled under contract to landfills outside of Mifflin County.

The Authority hired Barton & Loguidice Engineers, of Camp Hill, PA to assist with the study. The first task of this study was to gather a group of "stakeholders" from Mifflin County, to help identify and prioritize possible strategies to increase tonnages to the transfer station and increase revenues. More than 25 strategies were identified, and the top strategies were targeted for immediate further evaluation. The ini-

tial focus of the study has been to accomplish the following:

1. Have voluntary talks with and obtain delivery commitments from major waste haulers;
2. Review ways to reduce and/or control costs and develop competitive tipping fees for its customers;
3. Evaluate additional funding sources for Authority operations;
4. Encourage municipal bidding for waste collection and disposal services, and designating the Authority's transfer station as the delivery point for collected waste;
5. Investigate joint planning and cooperative efforts with Juniata County to identify common waste management and recycling interests, and to support the Authority's transfer station; and
6. Utilize the Mifflin County Municipal Waste Management Plan update process to support waste deliveries to the Authority.

In September, Terry Keene of Barton & Loguidice presented draft findings and recommendations of the study to the Authority for consideration. Several of the recommendations are now being considered and/or implemented by the Authority. The study will be finalized by the end of 2009, at which time a more complete summary of recommendations from the study will be available.

## Mifflin County Volunteers on Day of Caring

On September 16, the United Way held its annual Day of Caring, which is a traditional volunteer event that kicks off the annual campaign every September.

Mifflin County staff members volunteered work at the YMCA. Volunteers were Mark Colussy of the Planning and Development Depart-

ment; Laura Simonetti and Donald Howell of the GIS Department; Dana Parson and Brian Forshey of the Assessment Office; and Laura Espigh, Jessica Wagner, and Sonny Varner of RBA/MIS Department. They scraped, primed, and painted approximately six to eight of the large, steel doors at the YMCA.



*Terry Keene of Barton & Loguidice is assisting the Solid Waste Authority with the revenue study.*



*Mifflin County's Day of Caring Volunteer Team.*



*Mark Colussy prepares a door for painting at the YMCA.*



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Developing a Better Community

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### Upcoming Events

- **Mifflin County Planning Commission meetings for the fourth quarter of 2009 will be held Thursdays, October 22, November 19, and December 17 at 3:30 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the 2nd floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse.**
- **The Peer to Peer Advisory Committee will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, November 4 at 6:30 p.m. at the Derry Township Building.**
- **The FFY 2010 application period for FEMA's hazard mitigation grants will close on Friday, November 6. Grant applications submitted after that date will be held until the FFY 2011 grant application period. For more information, visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).**
- **The Central Section of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association will sponsor a *Traffic Impacts: Finding a Smart Solution* workshop on Friday, November 6, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the PennDOT Riverfront Office Center in Harrisburg. The deadline to register is October 30. For more information, visit [www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org).**
- **The Mifflin County Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee will meet during the November 19 Planning Commission meeting to begin the annual evaluation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.**
- **The submission deadline for proposals for the FFY 2010 Mifflin County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is December 30 by 3:30 p.m. The Mifflin County CDBG public hearing for applicants to present proposals will be held at the Mifflin County Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, January 28, 2010 at 3:30 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the 2nd floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse. Contact Jan McDonald at (717) 242-0887 or [jmcdonald@co.mifflin.pa.us](mailto:jmcdonald@co.mifflin.pa.us) for more information.**

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