

**Countywide Advisory Team
Meeting #6 Summary**

The sixth meeting of the Countywide Planning Advisory Team (PAT) for *Cultivating Community: A Plan for Union County's Future* was held on Thursday, May 8th, 2008 at Carriage Corner in Mifflinburg.

I. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Shawn McLaughlin of the Union County Planning Commission at 7:00 PM. David Rouse and Robert Kerns introduced the PAT to WRT Planner Nancy Oorbeck who has been working on mapping and the land use portion of the plan.

II. Existing Conditions Report Comments

Mr. Kerns asked whether there were any additional comments on the Existing Conditions Report that had been reviewed over the past few PAT meetings. With there not being any further suggestions on the report Mr. Kerns said members could forward further comments to county staff.

III. Transportation Assessment Update

Mr. McLaughlin distributed a handout that showed the final list of intersections that were selected for the manual traffic counts. He noted the list did change from the previous meeting based on recommendations from the PAT and municipal officials. For example the US 15 and Zeigler Road intersection was removed at the advisement of Kelly Township while PA Route 45 and Mabel Street was added as per the discussion at the March PAT meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin said some were not added like PA Route 45 and Reitz Boulevard since discussions with the municipal engineer and McMahan staff felt there is little that can be done to improve the intersection except for possibly signalization. Mr. Fetterman said that the same might be true for PA Route 45 and Fairfield Road. Mr. McLaughlin said that intersection should be thoroughly analyzed by the developer of Paris Meadows. Others may not appear on the list because recent data was available from traffic studies, PENNDOT or Bucknell. The counts were conducted for AM (7 to 9) and PM (4 to 6) peak times during the week of April 14th.

The second page of the handout listed the locations of ten automated traffic recorders that have been placed to collect additional data. They are mainly in the eastern planning area and are intended to supplement other sources of data. Ms. Pearson asked if these were just counts or if speed was being assessed as well. Mr. McLaughlin said McMahan and county staff were only conducting counts but a significant amount of data has been obtained from Bucknell University's Engineering Department that includes speed analysis.

Mr. Fetterman asked if there was any consideration being given to some of the smaller but equally problematic local roads like Stein Lane and Smoketown Road. Mr. McLaughlin said that other problem areas are definitely being considered and that Bucknell had data on a number of these locations in and around the greater Lewisburg area. Mr. Auman noted that Professor Mike Toole at Bucknell has recent data from these areas and that he would assist the county in obtaining it. Mr. Hostetler said Professor Toole also recently did some work on JPM Road in Kelly Township as well. Mr. Fetterman offered data from the East Buffalo Township Police Department. Mr. McLaughlin welcomed all sources of data in order to improve the accuracy of the transportation analysis.

IV. March Forum Results

A summary of the March Forums was distributed to the PAT. Mr. Rouse reported that 250 people attended and he highlighted some of the major findings. He noted there was strong agreement on the draft vision statement that was released to the public. Those that did not agree with it felt that having the three sub-statements for each planning area was divisive and some took offense to the eastern planning area being listed as the center for the retail economy when that is equally important in Mifflinburg. He said the group may want to revisit that wording.

In terms of the growth strategy 85 % agreed with limiting the amount of growth and development in rural areas in order to protect agricultural and natural resources and 86% also agreed with directing growth into designated areas in and near existing towns and villages as was shown in the recommended growth strategy.

Mr. Auman asked how the remainder of the county's population might feel about this growth strategy since the public meetings only reached a portion of the community that was willing to venture out for a meeting on one of those days. Mr. Rouse said he thought the meetings brought out a good cross section and that what was heard at the March Forums was consistent with what has been heard through all the forms of public involvement that have taken place since the project started. He said the random household survey, stakeholder interviews, previous forums, and other opportunities for input have all revealed a strong desire to protect farmland and other rural resources and to maintain the town and country landscape.

Mr. McLaughlin noted that county staff has held follow-up "open houses" in New Berlin, the Union County Library and Winfield and there is one scheduled for New Columbia at the White Deer Fire Hall on May 22. There is another one being planned in the western part of the county as well. Thus far attendees have concurred with the findings from the forums.

V. Draft Growth & Preservation Framework

Mr. Rouse led a discussion about the Growth & Preservation Framework that was mailed out prior to the meeting. This included looking at the Vision Statement again in an attempt to address comments received at the March Public Forums. Mr. Rouse said one issue was the reference to retail economy for the eastern planning area because this was important to Mifflinburg as well. Mr. Woodruff suggested that it be removed. Ms. Pearson and others made several suggestions and the vision statement was adjusted and the retail reference was deleted.

Mr. Rouse noted that while the text that was distributed in advance of the meeting was new, the growth and preservation framework itself has been worked on for several months by the PAT. Mr. Fetterman questioned how the bulleted list on page 1 was obtained since it was a bit different than the results of the second public forum. It was suggested that the words "in order of importance" be removed. Mr. Rouse said WRT staff would revise this section to more fully integrate the themes based on the various public input methods.

Ms. Pearson asked where energy conservation and sustainability are addressed since those were also frequently cited concerns by the public. Mr. Rouse then covered the sustainable growth principles listed on page 3.

Mr. Kerns explained that each growth scenario in the document corresponded to the various ones that were looked at by the PAT and were presented at the March Forums. He said the only difference is the maps are less detailed and more sketchy or conceptual in appearance. Mr. Hoskins commented that the map on page 7 was labeled incorrectly.

Also discussed was the Rural Strategy and Town Strategy and growth capacity. Mr. Rouse noted that the rural strategy is not complete as WRT is awaiting information from the American Farmland Trust, which is waiting for the on-farm survey results from Penn State. Mr. Rouse said one of the big issues deals with on-farm development. He said Mennonite farmers and others repeatedly stated they need to be able to do a limited amount of development whether it is contract farming or other small businesses and home occupations. Ms. Oorbeck explained Table 4-1 on page 10 to illustrate the accommodation of growth for the planning period.

Mr. Rouse suggested that a greenbelt was mentioned in the Lewisburg area as potential buffer between the growth area and the rural resources. Mr. Fetterman asked if the greenbelt would eventually be an obstacle to future growth if the other area was filled. Mr. Rouse said it was possible that eventually that could be the case but it should be well beyond the life of this plan before that happened. Ms. Pearson said that is the intent to put more pressure on the inner lands.

Mr. Hovey asked for clarification on whether the secondary growth areas were part of the 80% or 20% growth figures. Mr. Rouse and Mr. Kerns said the secondary growth areas were included within the 80%.

Ms. Pearson wanted to know when the farm issues will be addressed and Mr. Rouse said it would be discussed at the next PAT meeting since the Penn State data should be available shortly. Mr. McLaughlin said the delay occurred because some of the volunteer visitors for the *Future of Agriculture* program did not get their on-farm interviews conducted in a timely manner. It was reported that over 70 farmers were interviewed through that process.

VI. Future Land Use

The draft Future Land Use chapter and draft Future Land Use map were distributed to the PAT at the meeting. Ms. Oorbeck informed the PAT that the purpose was not to have detailed discussion about it but rather to introduce and explain it so members could then take it with them and review in order to be prepared for an in-depth review at the next PAT meeting. She proceeded to review the town and rural strategies and the different land use categories on the map which were explained in Table 6-1 on page 4.

The town strategy includes the primary growth areas and is intended to be at a higher density to take advantage of the full range of infrastructure and public services. This would be where Traditional Neighborhood Development concepts would be encouraged with densities of 6 dwelling units per acre or greater.

The rural strategy included the secondary growth areas which are focused on villages and would have a target density of 2.5 dwelling units per acre. The rural strategy also included rural resource areas where development would be limited, and rural development areas where residential, rural business centers, and on-farm development would be encouraged.

Ms. Oorbeck asked PAT members to review the land use categories and think about them for the next meeting. Mr. Kerns said WRT staff added Hamlets to the rural land use to address areas of existing development that were not large enough to be considered villages. Discussion ensued regarding the mix of land uses and where employment would be accommodated. Ms. Oorbeck said the purple color on the map denoted major employment centers and the brown was the rural business centers that were also places for job and business growth.

Mr. Fetterman and Mr. Griffith wanted to know where a large manufacturer bringing 500 to 1,000 jobs to the area would be located under this scenario. Ms. Oorbeck and Mr. Kerns said primarily in the purple areas shown on the map and in the Great Stream Commons business park. Mr. Kerns said that the project economist has analyzed business trends and economic patterns in the

county and region and feels that Great Stream Commons will handle nearly all the expected growth in these sectors. Mr. McLaughlin said that the economic development agencies are working on this and it is quite possible that the next large manufacturing facility, should it come, might not be located in Union County at all. Mr. Seibert said the economic development agencies in a five county region, including the Union County IDC, are in the process of working together on a much larger scale to address these issues. He said the next big employment center will be located where it makes the most sense for the region and counties will share the risks and rewards.

Ms. Gray felt that some light manufacturing or industrial should be allowed in the boroughs because Lewisburg has a concrete plant in the center of town. Ms. Pearson indicated that manufacturing and residential can be compatible and referenced several examples from Sweden.

Mr. Auman was concerned about the size of the rural business center in Buffalo Township near the quarry and was interested in why it was so large. Mr. Rouse said there was already a business cluster there and it made sense since the township already had it zoned that way.

Mr. Patton inquired as to whether or not anyone was looking at water and sewer infrastructure as part of the growth strategy due to the fact that several sewage plants were out of capacity. Mr. Kerns said community facilities and infrastructure is one of the plan elements to be addressed in the upcoming months and at future PAT meetings. Mr. McLaughlin said the perception on the street could be worse than what truly exists. He said the county has interviewed all the sewer plants and the majority of them have capacity available. There are other problems that need to be fixed such as nutrient loading, conveyance systems, and the like. He said one purpose of the plan is to identify where growth can and should go and then make recommendations on what improvements are needed to support it. The plan can then be used as a tool to justify grant requests to funding agencies.

Mr. Hostetler requested larger maps in order to see more precisely where the future land uses fall in each township. Mr. McLaughlin said it is the county's intent to provide the municipalities with larger maps of the planning areas. Mr. Hostetler said it might be nice to view the recommendations overlaid on the county aerial map.

Mr. Rouse said the land use will be discussed more fully at the July meeting.

VII. Comprehensive Planning Schedule

Mr. Kerns reminded the PAT that there would not be a meeting in June but there will be a July meeting. He said there will also be upcoming meetings with municipal officials. Mr. McLaughlin reported that county staff will be holding multi-municipal planning meetings in late May and early June to bring municipal partners up to date and to release the land use materials. Then in July the consultant team will meet with municipal officials, hopefully once at the beginning of the month and then at the end of the month, as well. The consultant team and county staff thanked the PAT for their continued participation and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 PM.