

CENTRE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

2007 Annual Report

COMPILED BY THE CENTRE COUNTY PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, SPRING 2008

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

To the Citizens of Centre County,

On behalf of the County Commissioners and Planning Commission, we are pleased to present to you the *Centre County Planning Commission 2007 Annual Report*.

Although Centre County's economy remains stable, the recent nationwide downturn has had a noticeable effect on development activities within the County, particularly housing. However, this has not been the case for other activities such as wind to energy and natural gas exploration. High fuel prices have made the development of wind to energy facilities and natural gas drilling in the Marcellus shale formation feasible. The Planning Office will be monitoring these activities to ensure that these homegrown energy sources are developed safely and protect the interests of the residents.

This past year, the Planning Office also began providing another new service for the residents – the *Centre County Gypsy Moth Suppression Program*. With the addition of a coordinator, this office cooperated with the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and developed residential spray blocks in areas that had significant tree defoliation. This successful program will continue in 2008 as well.

Even with the shift in economy and the addition of the gypsy moth suppression program, the Planning Office will continue to provide the variety of services that you've come to rely on in previous years. These include municipal services, subdivision/ land development, agricultural preservation/ farmland trust programs, transportation planning, affordable housing/ first time homebuyer programs, small community water service program, census and data management, community and economic development, grant writing, recreational/environmental planning, GIS mapping, and the West Nile virus program.

As you'll see in this report, the Planning Office strives to provide the most responsive and cost effective services to you, the citizens of Centre County.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Jacobs

Robert B. Jacobs, AICP

Planning Director

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MISSION STATEMENT:

It is the mission of the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office to provide the citizens of Centre County with professional planning services by promoting a coordinated and cost effective approach to the orderly growth and development of their communities.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

One of the most important tasks of the Planning & Community Development Office is to administer and enforce the Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. This is done to ensure that the benefits to be realized by development activity outweigh negative impacts that might result from an increase in demand on local facilities and services.

In order to achieve this goal, the Planning & Community Development Office monitors all subdivision and land development plans to verify if they have been properly approved by the appropriate municipal officials. The administration of the County's Subdivision and Land Development

Ordinance is the direct responsibility of staff members Anson Burwell and Christopher Schnure.

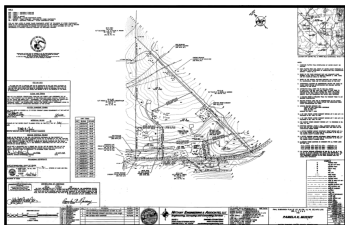
In the Ten Year Comparison of compiled subdivision and land development activity for 2007, the total number of Subdivision Lots created (421) represents a marked decrease in lots created and depicts a significant drop from the previous year's total of 727 lots.

In contrast to the above, a ten year comparison of Land Development Units created show a county-wide total of 483 units in 2007. This number represents an increase in land development activity

from last year's total of 327 units.

Upon comparing the data compiled for 2007 with previous years' data, it seems evident that the national, state and now local economic conditions have had an effect on the subdivision and land development growth patterns and trends.

Per the above, we anticipate a general 'wait and see' attitude among the County's developers and this office is projecting a continued easing of activity until lot and unit inventories have been significantly reduced in volume coupled with the signs of a perceived economic rebound.



2007 SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

RECORDED SUBDIVISION / LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR 2007

(Including Miscellaneous Plans)

Planning Regions	New Files Created	Total Recorded Plans	Sub. Plans	Acres Subdivided	Lots Created	Land Dev. Plans	Acres Developed	Units Created	Misc.Plans
Centre	98	106	19	619.86	176	39	131.49	343	15
Lower Bald Eagle Valley	18	12	9	347.09	22	0	0	0	3
Nittany Valley	67	49	23	934.11	115	10	19.59	122	16
Moshannon Valley	10	10	2	12.49	3	2	9.36	1	6
Mountaintop	9	9	5	465.99	30	1	0.9	1	3
Penns Valley	67	39	18	1,307.46	61	5	2.76	8	16
Upper Bald Eagle	22	19	7	212.04	14	2	4.86	8	10
County Totals	291	244	83	3,899.04	421	59	168.96	483	69

This chart provides a summary of the subdivision and land development activity that occurred in 2007. More detailed information can be found in the *Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Activity Report*. The report can be found online on the Centre County Government website, www.co.centre.pa.us. Copies are available at the Planning Office.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

Of the 291 New Files generated in 2007, 166 files (57 percent) were for those municipalities that fall under the jurisdiction of the Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and the remaining 125 New Files (43 percent) were for subdivision or land development activity located within the ten municipalities that administer their own local SALDO.

Of the 244 Recorded Plot Plans for 2007, 118 record plans (48 percent) were for those municipalities that fall within the administration of the County’s SALDO and the remaining 126 record plans (52 percent) were for activity occurring in the ten municipalities having their own SALDO; however, approximately half of those plans fell within the Miscellaneous Plans category.

In the Ten Year Comparison of compiled subdivision and land development activity for 2007, the total number of Subdivision Lots created (421) represents a marked decrease in lots created and depicts a significant drop from the previous years total of 727 lots.

In contrast to the above, a ten year comparison of Land Development Units created show a county-wide total of 483 units in 2007. This number represents an increase in land development activity from last year’s total of 327 units.

Rush Township acted to adopt a local Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (dated May 24, 2007) and by doing so, their local ordinance automatically superseded the County’s SALDO and the Rush Township Supervisors became the governing body for all subdivision and land development activity within Rush Township from that date forward.

Upon comparing the data compiled for 2007 with previous years’ data, it seems evident that the national, state and now local economic conditions have had an effect on the subdivision and land development growth patterns and trends.

Per the above, we anticipate a general ‘wait and see’ attitude among the County’s developers and this office is projecting a continued easing of activity until lot and unit inventories have been significantly reduced in volume coupled with the signs of a perceived economic rebound.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

For the past 24 years, the Centre County Community Development Block Grant program has been a source of versatile and comprehensive funding to help local municipalities meet their community development needs. This program has made it possible for communities to address local problems, take advantage of development opportunities and provide an impressive range of benefits to low and

moderate income citizens.

The County’s CDBG program has invested \$7,142,100.23 in facilities and services in Centre County since its inception in 1984. More than \$4 million alone has been invested in local water system upgrades in 15 different communities since 1995. Over \$800,000 has been invested into Housing Rehabilitation projects with some of these project funds

used to help low income homeowners pay connection cost to new public sewer systems. Over \$500,000 has been spent to provide public services, such as cancer screenings or specialized training for the low income. There have been many other worthwhile projects funded as indicated in the chart on the next page.

CDBG FUNDING TO DATE BY MUNICIPALITY			
\$ 255,528.00	Bellefonte Borough	\$ 268,421.00	Milesburg Borough
\$ 15,000.00	Benner Twp.	\$ 60,225.00	Millheim Borough
\$ 116,566.00	Burnside Twp.	\$ 89,520.00	Patton Twp.
\$ 1,242,566.00	Centre County	\$ 485,053.00	Penn Twp. (Coburn)
\$ 76,176.00	Centre Hall Borough	\$ 598,244.00	Philipsburg Borough
\$ 76,663.00	Curtin Twp. (Orviston)	\$ 576,922.00	Port Matilda Borough
\$ 119,550.00	Ferguson Twp (Marengo Rd)	\$ 229,372.00	Rush Twp.
\$ 115,000.00	Gregg Twp. (Spring Mills)	\$ 15,068.00	Snow Shoe Borough
\$ 220,000.00	Howard Twp. (Mt. Eagle)	\$ 894,078.00	Snow Shoe Twp
\$ 56,485.00	Huston Twp. (Julian)	\$ 255,330.00	Spring Twp.
\$ 286,545.00	Liberty Twp.	\$ 530,354.00	Unionville Borough
\$ 5,970.00	Marion Twp. (Jacksonville)	\$ 93,000.00	Walker Twp. (Nittany)
\$ 460,463.00	Miles Twp.		

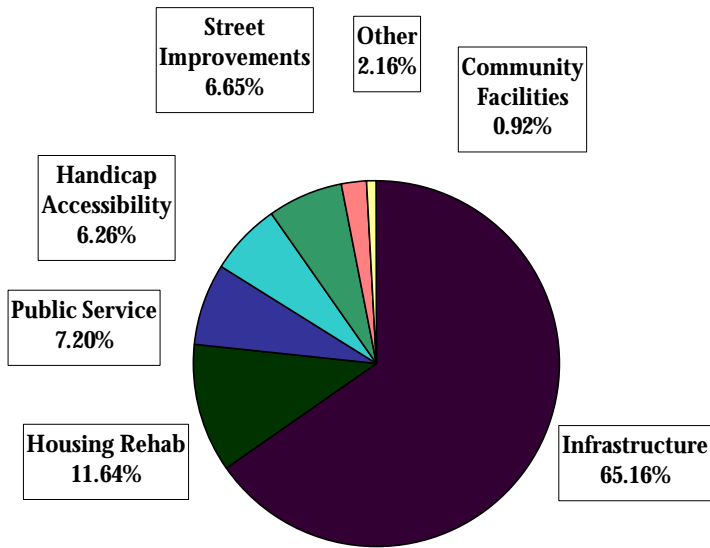
BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Local infrastructure upgrades or construction is a critical need that is being met by County Officials. Viable infrastructure is the foundation which must be in place before local economic development can occur. Critical projects completed to date include new safe and reliable water supplies in Orviston, Monument, Mt. Eagle, Coburn, Madisonburg, Port Matilda, Rebersburg and Spring Mills. New water storage tanks have been constructed in Sandy Ridge, Clarence, Orviston, Mt. Eagle, Monument, Madisonburg, Rebersburg and Spring Mills (const. in 2008). Old, leaking and undersized water mains were replaced in Milesburg, Port Matilda, Unionville, Clarence and Moshannon, Orviston, Monument, Mt. Eagle, Coburn, Casanova, Blanchard and Millheim. These water main projects also included new fire hydrants to improve fire protection.

The County Planning and Community Development Office (PCDO) also recognizes deficiencies in on-lot sewage disposal systems in the County and has worked with local officials to see that CDBG funds have been used for public sewer system projects in Nittany, Coburn, Sunnyside, Julian, Sandy Ridge, North Philipsburg, Loch Lomond Road and Centre Hall Mountain.

As part of the County’s long range facilities planning efforts, the PCDO also identifies and prioritizes future water and sewer infrastructure needs to municipalities and has initiated income surveys in these communities as a vital first step in determining eligibility for grants for future upgrades. Income surveys to determine grant eligibility are scheduled for: Moose Run Road and Lucas Hill Road in Boggs Township; Pine Glen in Burnside Township; Pancake Road in Snow Shoe Township; Mt. Eagle in Howard Township; and Aaronsburg in Haines Township.

CDBG Dollars Spent by Project Type (to date)



CDBG PROJECT FUNDING 2007

Municipality	Project Description	Amount Funded
Gregg Twp.	New water storage and treatment in Spring Mills	\$ 100,000
Miles Twp.	Water storage and Treatment in Rebersburg	\$ 40,000
Philipsburg	Front Street Streetscape improvement	\$ 105,681
Rush Twp.	Sewer Laterals in Sandy Ridge, Ernestville	\$ 40,000
Snow Shoe Twp.	Water main replacement on Clarence Road	\$ 40,000
Total:		\$ 325,681

SMALL COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS

The County’s CDBG Program works closely with the County’s Small Community Water System Assistance Program in continuing the successful efforts to bring adequate quantities of safe drinking water to the small, rural communities in the County. The program, which was initiated in 1994, provided various types of assistance to almost half of the 41 water systems in Centre County in 2007. The County program coordinates closely with the Centre County Water Authority, which was formed in 1999, and implements many of the programs that the Water Authority initiates.

The most active program in 2006 was the Circuit Rider Certified Water Operator program. The program currently provides state certified water operating services to the water systems in Orviston, Monument, Mt. Eagle, Eagle Creek Community. The Circuit Rider performs such duties as water testing, chemical feed rate adjustments, water quality complaint investigation, water main flushing, leak detection, and creation of various reports including the Annual Water Report to PA DEP and the Consumer Confidence Report.

-Matt Milliron, *Senior Planner*

WEST NILE VIRUS PROGRAM

West Nile Virus is a disease that resides in bird populations and can be transmitted to humans through the bite of a mosquito that has previously bitten an infected bird. While most cases of West Nile Virus in humans are mild or even undetected, in some instances the virus can result in inflammation of the brain or spinal cord, and can result in death.

Since mid year 2000, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) has made funds available in the form of annual grants to each County for the purpose of monitoring the local mosquito population

for the presence of West Nile Virus, for the purchase of equipment and pesticide products for controlling mosquito numbers, and for public outreach to teach citizens how to protect themselves from becoming infected by West Nile Virus.

In Centre County the West Nile Virus Program is administered by the County Planning and Community Development Office. In 2007 the staffing consisted of a County Coordinator and two Project Assistants, all of whom are part time County employees. This staff logged 2,688 hours

and accumulated 22,938 miles of travel while carrying out the program.

-Bert Lavan, County Coordinator



Surveillance and Control

During the surveillance season from late April until the end of October, larval and adult mosquitoes from over 500 test sites throughout the County are captured and sent to PADEP in Harrisburg for identification. The adult mosquitoes are further tested for West Nile Virus if they are found to be a species that can infect humans with the virus. In 2007 there were 1,575 sampling events in Centre County that resulted in 19,099 mosquitoes being sent for identification and testing. There were 739 West Nile Virus tests performed on adult mosquitoes, with no positive results. In 2006 the County WNV programs also assumed responsibility for collecting and shipping dead birds

for virus testing, a function previously performed by the PA Department of Health. Ten birds from Centre County were tested in 2007, with none being positive for West Nile Virus.

The presence of a positive mosquito or the presence of large numbers of a mosquito species that can transmit the virus to humans can result in the application of pesticides to reduce the population of these "target vectors". In 2007, Centre County West Nile Virus staff conducted 159 pesticide applications to control mosquito numbers.

Funding

The PADEP grant funding for the Centre County West Nile Virus Program that was expended in 2007 totaled \$67,736; Centre County's funding for the 2008 WNV Program has been increased to \$93,820 by PADEP.



Public Education

Public education is also an important part of the West Nile Virus program. In 2007, County staff made presentations to five Senior Citizen Centers. In addition, the West Nile Virus program maintained an educational booth at the Grange Fair in Centre Hall.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Despite a decline in reported human cases in Pennsylvania from as many as 237 in 2003 to 9 in 2007, the virus is clearly still with us, as positive West Nile Virus birds and mosquitoes were found throughout the state in 2007. Residents should take reasonable precautions to avoid mosquito bites, such as wearing long sleeved clothing where mosquitoes are active, and using insect repellents outdoors, especially those containing DEET. Elimination of standing water in both natural areas and artificial containers is the single most important thing residents can do to reduce breeding populations. Rain gutters, swimming pool covers, bird baths, wheelbarrows, ornamental ponds, and especially tires are all capable of breeding large amounts of mosquitoes.

GYPSEY MOTH SUPPRESSION PROGRAM

The western and central areas of the County were subjected to a major gypsy moth infestation in 2007. The severity and the scope of the outbreak were unanticipated, as in the previous year only the westernmost municipalities had experienced any gypsy moth damage. The dry springs of 2006 and 2007 were major contributing factors to the outbreak. The situation in the County was mirrored in the central part of the state, which also experienced a major gypsy moth outbreak. Because of the suddenness of the population increase, and the initial non-availability of state and federal funds, only a very limited suppression program was performed by DCNR in 2007.

2007 Gypsy Moth Outbreak



In the summer of 2007, as wide areas of the County were defoliated by the gypsy moth, the Planning Office became overwhelmed with residents' requests to suppress the gypsy moth population. The Commissioners responded by hiring a gypsy moth coordinator, who started work at the end of July. The last time that such a position existed in the County was in 1994. The coordinator's main task was to organize all the requests for spraying in 2008 which had mostly been phoned in to the County's planning office during the spring and summer.

Participation with Pennsylvania DCNR

The County does not run its own suppression program; rather it manages the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) program at the county level. Because of the large size of the outbreak (Centre County had the largest defoliated area of any county in the country and the second largest forested residential spray program) and delay in getting started, the state allowed the County to submit the final list of spray blocks several weeks past its required deadline. Some 207 spray blocks totaling just over 16,000 acres were initially submitted.

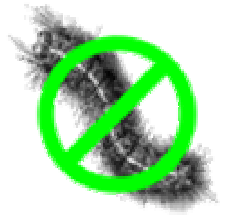
Because the state requires a cost sharing program (in 2008 homeowners had to con-

tribute \$17/acre to participate in the program), there was the matter of collecting assessments from homeowners. This was largely done by municipalities, although some refused to do the collections and it was up to the coordinator to do it personally. In the end, 158 spray blocks remained, totally some 13,400 acres; around forty spray blocks had to be withdrawn from the program due to non-payment.

The Spray Program

The DCNR uses the GIS files depicting individual spray blocks generated in the program to directly guide the helicopters and airplanes used in the spray program.

The 2008 program was successful in reducing defoliation and coincided with a very wet spring and early summer which had a marked reduction on larval survivorship due to a specific fungus (*Entomophaga maimagi*). In areas where the fungus had not been active, the protective effect of the Bt spray on foliage was clearly visible as a dark green area contrasting with the brown defoliated background.



Public Information Initiative

When County residents' most valued resources, their properties, are getting defoliated, they naturally want to know as much as possible about what is being done at the County level to help them. With this in mind, the coordinator made available a web-based GIS map which gave users the same level of information about the areas of the County that were getting sprayed as was available at the planning level of the County. Additionally, users were encouraged to sign up for an electronic newsletter which is the major means that the County uses to communicate with its residents about the gypsy moth program. The newsletter was used during the spray season to announce the evening before spraying, which spray blocks would be treated the following day. This was welcomed by residents who wanted advance notice on, for example, when they should keep their pets indoors to avoid them being sprayed.

Building a Structure for Future Gypsy Moth Programs

The initiatives in GIS and web technologies have been built upon for the 2009 spray season. Residents requesting spraying are now required to sign-up online (if they don't have a computer, they can call the Planning Office and one of the secretarial staff will input the details using the online site). Additionally, users can monitor their requests on the online GIS and use the map depiction that they see to encourage their neighbors to sign up in order to get the maximum community participation that is usually required for an effective gypsy moth spray block.

These resources will continue to be available after the present gypsy moth outbreak has died down, ready to be reactivated at short notice when the inevitable future outbreaks occur again.

INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION

During the past year, the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office staff has continued to work with several municipalities and regions to develop and implement regional Comprehensive Plans and to promote inter-municipal cooperation. Regional Comprehensive Plans offer recommendations to guide and manage the communities' growth, protect sensitive natural areas, promote economic development, and provide for adequate infrastructure. By planning together, municipalities can achieve many goals including the efficient use of land and infrastructure and the provision of various housing types. Other inter-municipal partnerships provide opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of municipal services while controlling costs.

The Nittany Valley Joint Planning Commission, consisting of the Borough of Bellefonte and the Townships of Benner, Marion, Spring, and Walker, adopted a regional Comprehensive Plan in September of 2004 and has, with assistance from the Planning and Community Development Office, been preparing a model regional zoning ordinance. The model ordinance should be ready for municipal adoption in early 2007.

The Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission, made up of representatives from Centre Hall and Millheim Boroughs and the Townships of Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, and Potter, adopted a regional comprehensive plan in March 2006. The municipalities have continued their cooperative relationship to implement elements of that Plan

including the development of conservation design techniques and village zoning district regulations.

In addition, several of the municipalities in the County's Upper Bald Eagle Valley Region (Huston, Taylor, and Worth Townships) have joined with neighboring Halfmoon Township to form the Upper Bald Eagle / Halfmoon Council of Governments. This new organization, formed with the assistance of Planning and Community Development Office staff, will serve as a continuing mutual forum to deal with regional challenges and opportunities and will serve to facilitate cooperative ventures including joint purchasing, the delivery of services, contracting arrangements, etc. for the mutual benefit of the municipalities and their citizens.

MUNICIPAL OUTREACH

As part of our municipal outreach program, the Planning and Community Development Office offers ordinance preparation and review assistance to the County's municipalities. Several municipalities have taken advantage of this service in 2006 with projects including zoning ordinances, sign regulations, village district criteria, conditional use ordinances, conservation design and cluster development standards, and historic conservation ordinances.

ANNUAL POPULATION ESTIMATES

The Population Estimates Program publishes county total population estimates each year. The publication of net population estimates also includes demographic components of change (births, deaths, and migration). Later in the year, we publish the estimates by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. The reference date for county estimates is July 1.

Centre County Population Estimates								
2000 Census	July 1, 2000	July 1, 2001	July 1, 2002	July 1, 2003	July 1, 2004	July 1, 2005	July 1, 2006	July 1, 2007
135,758	135,925	136,919	139,440	140,740	141,313	141,807	144,205	144,658

CENTRE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

The mission of the Agricultural Land Preservation Board is to preserve the County's prime agricultural land. The nine member board was established in 1989 and has purchased Agricultural Conservation Easements on 31 farms in seven townships totaling over 5,305 acres.

Farms meeting the minimum criteria are evaluated and scored based on the Land Evaluation-Site Assessment process developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The 100 point scoring process takes four factors into consideration: soil quality, (50% of the score); farmland potential which involves acreage, stewardship and conservation efforts, (20% of the score); clustering which takes into account both preserved farms and those enrolled in Ag-

ricultural Security Areas, (20% of the score) and development pressure (10% of the score). Farms are then ranked in order from the highest to lowest scores. The board makes offers to purchase development rights from the owners of the highest ranking farms. The easement value, which is the difference between the market value and the agricultural value, is determined by a Certified General Appraiser. If the



farm owner accepts the Board's offer, documentation is prepared for review by the Bureau of Farmland Preservation and final approval by the State Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

Funding for easement purchases comes from the Bureau of Farmland Preservation, Centre County Government, and the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. Townships also have the option to participate in the easement purchase program. The total amount of funds used to purchase Agricultural Conservation Easements now exceeds nine million dollars. This is an average of 1.7 farms per year at \$1,831 per acre or \$313,355 per farm.

-Norman Lathbury, *Ag Land Preservation Program Coordinator*

Centre County Farmland Trust

The Centre County Farmland Trust is a publicly supported, tax exempt, nonprofit organization [501(c)(3)]. The trust is authorized by the Internal Revenue Service and the Pennsylvania Department of State to accept, hold and administer conservation easements. Governed by a 15 member Board of Trustees established in 1996, the Trust preserved its first farm, consisting of 147 acres, in May of 2004, a second farm consisting of 122 acres in the spring of 2005 and the third farm consisting of 100 acres in 2006. Three more farms totaling over 500 acres are in the process of being preserved in 2007. Ten more farms, totaling over 1,900 acres are on the waiting list.

Land owners wishing to donate a conservation easement as a charitable gift must meet the minimum criteria established by the Internal Revenue Service and the Trust. Once approved

by the trustees, an easement deed is prepared along with extensive documentation that establishes the condition of the land at the time the easement deed is recorded. Land owners who qualify may be able to claim their donation as a charitable gift and take advantage of federal tax reductions. Eased properties are inspected annually by the Board to ensure that the easement deed is being observed.



GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) & MAPPING

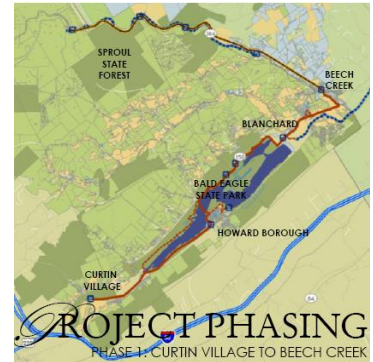
The Centre County Planning and Community Development Office provides several types of maps for municipalities, organizations, and the public. Maps are sold to the public for a nominal fee. In 2006, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania completed a state-wide aerial flight under the program "PA Map". Aerial photography for all of Centre County is now available. Other types of maps that our office can produce include zoning districts, agricultural easements, and future developments to name a few. All of our spatial data is stored inside Centre County's GIS (geographic information system). GIS software allows our office to provide both simple and complicated analysis based on planning scenarios such as residential build-outs, infrastructure upgrades, and land use changes.

CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND RECREATIONAL

Brick Town Trail

The Brick Town Trail is the signature project of the Beech Creek Greenway Plan, an effort to leverage the recreational, historical, cultural, and environmental assets of the Beech Creek area in such a way that distinguishes this greenway plan from every other greenway plan in America. The resources the plan proposes to leverage are Bald Eagle State Park and its 1,700 acre Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir, the two million acre Sproul State Forest, historic Curtin Village and reconstructed Eagle Ironworks, and the unique and

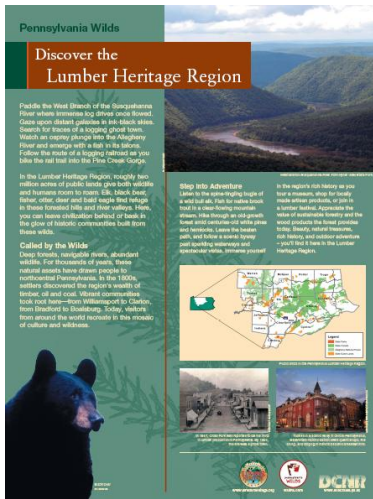
fascinating stories in every brickyard town between them, all linked together by a network of trails and bike paths that not only serve the health and fitness needs of the local community, but entice and invite the weary urban dweller of the bored suburbanite to this wondrous place of refuge and renewal on the southern edge of the region known as the Pennsylvania Wilds.



Lumber Heritage Region of Pennsylvania

The year 2007 was truly a year of accomplishment for the Lumber Heritage Region. Many of our projects came to fruition or moved significantly toward completion. The biggest accomplishment was the finalization of the design of 30 interpretive signs. Half have been fabricated and are scheduled for installation at 6 sites throughout the Lumber Heritage Region (LHR). The balance will be fabricated and installed later this year. Samples of the signs can be found on the website www.lumberheritage.org under

“What’s New.” Several other projects were completed in 2007—The Pennsylvania Forests DVD; the Ridgway Interpretive Sign Project; the purchase of the Model T for the Lumber Museum; the Feasibility Study for Kinzua Byway and the Visitor’s Center in Renovo. Other projects underway include a Smethport Mansion Walking Tour Brochure, the CCC Video, and museum exhibits for the Lumber Museum. LHR’s West Branch Map and Guide Book continues to sell with 252 sold during the year with most of the sales coming from our network of outfitters. Outreach was successful this year with the LHR being represented at 34 events and some 85 stakeholder meetings throughout the region. The LHR became members and partners with the Tourism Promotion Agencies that cover all 15 counties, enhancing our relationship with this important core group of people who are working to promote the region. With the completion of the interpretive sign designs the LHR was able to develop a traveling display in July that was exhibited at 7 events.



Lumber Heritage Region Introductory Sign

Bellefonte Central Rail Trail

The PCDO contracted with Pashek Associates to complete this study. The feasibility study was to determine the viability of a shared use path, connecting State College to Bellefonte, following the former Bellefonte Central Rail corridor. The corridor is approximately fourteen miles long. The study was completed by the County on behalf of the participating municipalities: Benner Township, College Township, Ferguson Township, Patton Township, Spring Township, Bellefonte Borough, and State College Borough. The executive summary and the maps which depict the corridor in thorough detail can be viewed on the County’s website.

Recreation & Greenway Plan

The County officially kicked off its greenway planning efforts in late July. A steering committee was formed to help guide the project and offer technical assistance. Two public meetings and three steering committee meetings were conducted over the last nine months. The outcome of the meetings proved beneficial in comments received. Draft maps were reviewed by the steering committee and then displayed at the last public meeting. Public participation, key person interviews, and surveys are an integral part of this process. A draft document should be available fall 2008, and this will serve as a toolkit for municipalities, non-profits, and other stakeholders to implement recreation and greenway initiatives throughout the county.

-Beth Rider, *Senior Environmental Planner*

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO) staff continues to take a proactive approach to the coordination of land use and transportation infrastructure development. In conjunction with the Centre Regional Planning Agency, the CCPCDO helps staff the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO). The CCMPO is governed by federal law and regulations requiring that local and state officials work cooperatively to ensure a continuous and comprehensive long-range transportation planning program within urbanized areas with a population over 50,000 persons, which includes Centre County.

Structurally Deficient Bridges

A structurally deficient bridge is one that is deemed currently safe, but in need of costly repairs or replacement to bring it to current standards. Despite a record level of investment since 2003, Pennsylvania has the largest number of structurally deficient bridges in the nation — nearly 6,000 statewide.

With 25,000 state-owned bridges, Pennsylvania has the third largest number of bridges in the nation, but leads the nation in the number of bridges classified as “structurally deficient.” The average age

of bridges on the state system is 50 years old.

Centre County currently has 61 structurally deficient state owned bridges and 17 structurally deficient local bridges. Identified as a key objective of both PennDOT and the CCMPO, the replacement or repair of these bridges began in earnest through the CCMPO’s 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and will be addressed in more detail in the 2008 LRTP Update and as well as the 2009-2012 TIP.

To learn more about structurally deficient

bridges, please visit www.dot.state.pa.us.



SR 45 bridge, Spring Mills

Long Range Transportation Plan

Originally passed in 2006, the Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan 2030 (LRTP) serves as the official, adopted plan for a metropolitan area, and directs transportation decision making for a twenty-year period.

In June 2007, the LRTP was updated to ensure its full compliance with the federal transportation legislation known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users or SAFETEA-LU.

This update addressed a number of issues including:

- Addition of Transportation Enhancements (pedestrian/bicycle) projects
- Addition of Bridge projects
- Environmental mitigation
- Consultations with federal and state environmental resource review agencies
- Consistency of Plan with planned growth and development plans
- Operational and management strategies

- Visualization techniques in plans and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development

To learn more about the LRTP, please visit the CCMPO’s website at www.ccmpto.net.



Act 44

In July 2007, Pennsylvania Act 44 was approved by the legislature and signed by Governor Ed Rendell. Act 44 provides increased state funding for highways, bridges and mass transit, and also makes fundamental changes to the way the mass transit funding is distributed in the Commonwealth.

A portion of the new transportation funding authorized by Act 44 comes from revenue generated by the conversion of I-80 to a toll road, which would be operated by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) through a 50-year lease agreement with PennDOT.

To learn more about Act 44 and the proposed tolling of Interstate 80 please visit www.paturnpike.com/I80/

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Centre County’s First Time Home Buyer Program, an initiative of the Centre County Board of Commissioners and administered by the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office, continued to assist first time home buyers throughout Centre County.

In 2007, \$125,950 in down payment assistance was provided to 13 home buyers. The assistance was in the form of a zero percent loan, a second mortgage with a limit of \$10,000 or 10% of the purchase price, whichever is less. The loan is to be paid back when the home is no longer used as a principal residence, refinanced for more than 100% of the purchase price, resold, or the mortgage is paid off.

Since the beginning of the program in 1996 and through 2007, 276 home buyers have been assisted.

Centre County First Time Homebuyer Program		
1996 –2007		
	# of Housing Units	Assistance
CENTRE COUNTY	276	\$2,154,527.43
CENTRE REGION	86	\$704,762.25
LOWER BALD EAGLE VALLEY REGION	35	\$278,312.05
NITTANY VALLEY REGION	71	\$559,500.19
MOSHANNON VALLEY REGION	11	\$76,646.00
MOUNTAINTOP REGION	18	\$115,589.00
PENNS VALLEY REGION	41	\$327,550.94
UPPER BALD EAGLE REGION	14	\$92,167.00

Affordable Housing



Affordable housing continues to be a priority concern. The Office participates as an active member of the Centre County Affordable Housing Coalition, addressing the affordable housing needs in our communities. The Office appreciates the support of the Centre County Board of Commissioners and the dedication of resources to continue our work. More information on the program is available on the County’s website.

*-Linda Marshall,
Housing Coordinator*

2008 Centre County Affordable Housing Cabinet	
Doug Bierly	Penns Valley Region
Derek Canova	Centre County Association of REALTORS
Robert Crum	Centre Regional Planning Agency
Emily Gette-Doyle	Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership
Glenn Fisher	Clearfield Bank and Trust
Sue Hannegan	Nittany Valley Region
Carl Hess	State College Borough Planning & Community Development Office
Robert Jacobs	Centre County Planning & Community Development Office
George Khoury	Centre County Housing Authority
Bill MacMath	Spring Township-Nittany Valley Region
Tom Mesko	Habitat for Humanity of Greater Centre County
Ron Quinn	Centre County Affordable Housing Coalition
Tommy Songer	Central Pennsylvania Builders Association

CENTRE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Jon W. Eich, Chairman

Rich Rogers

Stephen G. Dershem

Timothy T. Boyde, County Administrator

CENTRE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Centre County Planning Commission is comprised of elected officials and interested citizens to represent the regions of the County. The Commission meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the Willowbank Office Building. The Commission provides valuable input on the activities of the Centre County Planning & Community Development Office.

Many thanks to these individuals for the commitment of their time and energy to the work of the Centre County Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission Members in 2007 were:

Robert L. Corman, <i>Chairman</i>	<i>Penns Valley Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/10</i>
Freddie Persic, <i>Vice Chairman</i>	<i>Centre Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/08</i>
Kevin Abbey, <i>Secretary</i>	<i>Centre Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/08</i>
Thomas E. Hoover	<i>Mountaintop Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/11</i>
Cecil J. Irvin	<i>Centre Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/11</i>
Thomas Poorman	<i>Lower Bald Eagle Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/09</i>
Jack Shannon	<i>Moshannon Valley Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/10</i>
Vacant	<i>Upper Bald Eagle Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/10</i>
Vacant	<i>Nittany Valley Region</i>	<i>Term Expires: 12/31/09</i>

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

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Check us out on the Web too!

<http://www.co.centre.pa.us>