

Planning Beyond Boundaries

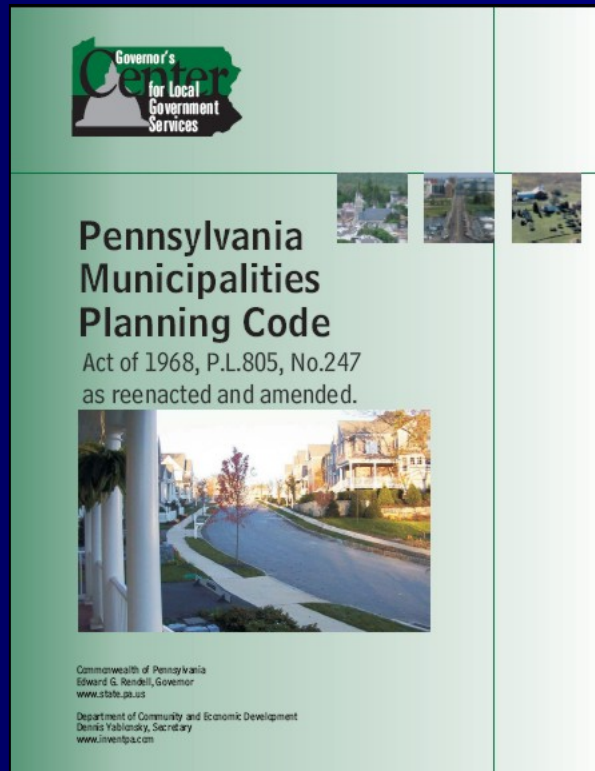
Multi-municipal planning strategies Part 1



Background

- 21st Century Environment Commission – land use most urgent issue
- Pennsylvania “Growing Smarter”
- June 2000 amendments to PA Municipalities Planning Code

Multi-municipal planning



- Key feature of 2000 MPC amendments
- Authority for multiple municipalities to plan using cooperative agreements
- New incentives & tools

What is planning?

Comprehensive plan:

- The official statement of a municipality setting forth its desired future land use and development, plus strategies for housing, utilities, roads, parks/rec, and valuable resources.

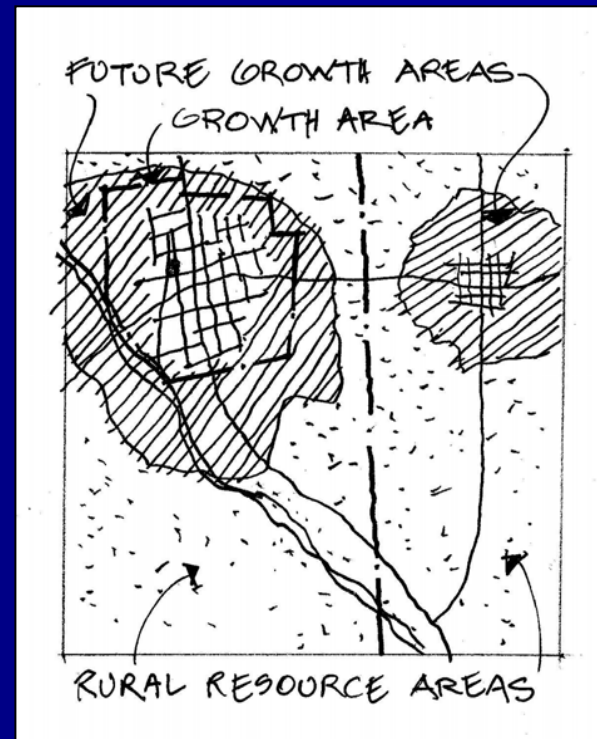


Illustration by Robert F. Brown, FAIA,
Brown & Keener Urban Design

What is the difference between a standard comprehensive plan and a multi-municipal cooperative comprehensive plan?

- Multi-municipal plans cover a larger area and more than one municipality.
- Multi-municipal plans can involve by agreement counties, authorities, and special districts.
- Multi-municipal plans can do things not authorized for single municipal plans

Special planning tools & benefits

- Priority consideration in state funding or permit decisions
- Designation of growth, future growth, and rural resource areas
- Zoning protections for accommodation of uses area-wide
- Shared review of developments of regional impact
- TDR & tax sharing across municipal boundaries
- Specific plans

Why plan cooperatively?

Doesn't it make sense to plan for the entire area in which daily human and economic activity is taking place (without restriction of municipal boundaries), and in which all the roads, utilities, schools, etc. have to be managed?



Multi-municipal planning opportunities

*Where there is
no vision, the
people perish.*

— Proverbs 29:18

- Shared vision, goals, aspirations & excitement
- Involve the greater public; harness citizens' positive energy.

Multi-municipal planning opportunities



*Photos ©2002
by Blair Seitz*



- Strive for a quality built & natural environment; capitalize on unique assets; create a place that attracts investments for homes & businesses.
- Market for investment – “You’re only as strong as your weakest link!”

Multi-municipal planning opportunities

- Strategic targeting of growth & rural areas
- Strategic targeting & priority setting for capital projects (infrastructure, community & economic development)



Multi-municipal planning opportunities

- Save money by cooperating in public infrastructure and services
- Get more clout and results by working together and pooling resources – Your voices at the county seat, in Harrisburg, and in Washington, DC, are louder and more clear
- Attract partnerships with groups that have knowledge and resources – economic development, housing, recreation, etc.



Myth? Multi-municipal planning is consolidation in disguise.



Fact! It is an opportunity to explore voluntary relationships to address mutual problems & goals.

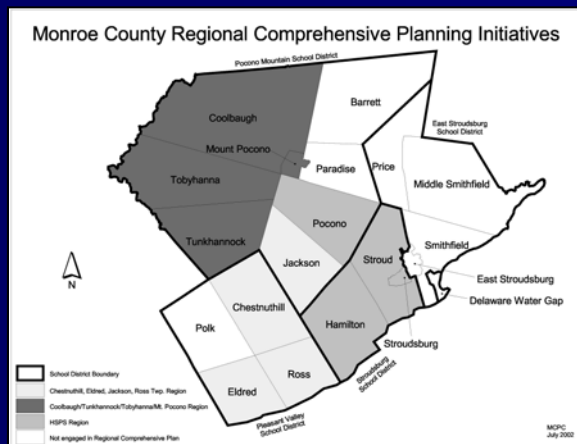


Threat? Multi-municipal planning will allow one municipality to dictate to another.



Opportunity! It gets you to the table to share important decisions.

Deciding a planning area

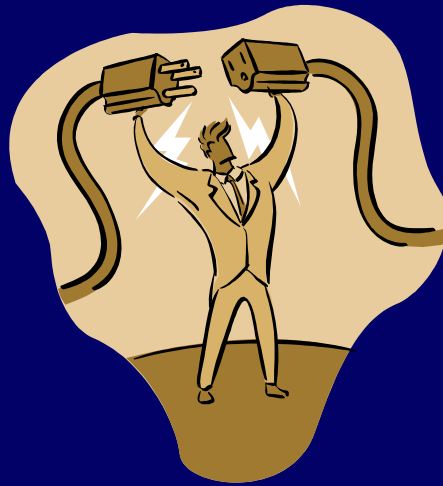


- Any size and number of municipalities, either contiguous or all in same school district
- An entire county, however...
- Logical arrangements:
 - A greater community, sub-county region, school district, utility service area, COG, watershed, transportation corridor

Forming the partnership

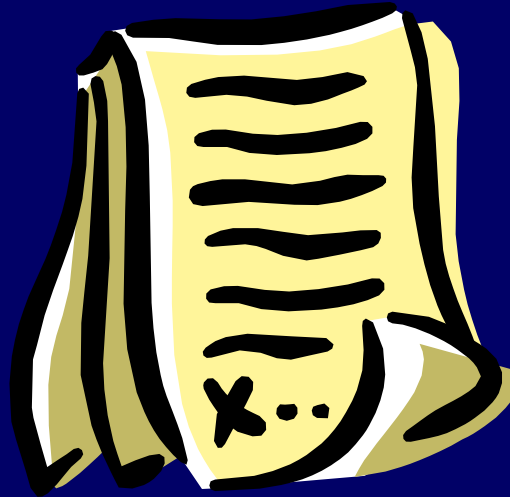
- Resolution
- Intergovernmental cooperative agreement in accord with PA ICL
- In addition, a planning agreement should:
 - Assign who will prepare the plan
 - Outline a schedule
 - Establish how municipalities participate or withdraw

The content of a multi-municipal comprehensive plan is important!



There is a direct connection between the content of the plan and its intended implementation results. Plan content sets the stage for certain plan implementation tools.

*Also, the plan should prepare the way
for an implementation agreement!*



A cooperative implementation agreement is necessary
to provide the full legal authority and effect of a multi-
municipal comprehensive plan.

Designation of growth & rural areas

Growth areas

- Density 1+ unit/acre
- Services provided or planned for
- Town & surrounds

Future growth areas

- Orderly extension

Rural resource areas

- "Rural" uses & densities
- No municipally-financed infrastructure except in villages or for health & safety



Area-wide zoning



- All uses need not be zoned in every municipality.
- ZHBs and courts must consider this in ruling on exclusionary zoning.
- Multi-municipal plans should include a “plan for the accommodation of all categories of uses within the area of the plan.”

Reasonable geographic area

- All uses shall be provided for in a reasonable geographic area
- Use discretion re: community needs & character
- Some standards are advised:
 - Some measure of housing & commercial in every municipality
 - Uses like airport or landfill – one per county may be reasonable – or one per planning area if not countywide
 - Consider demographics, market, and physical character of the planning area.

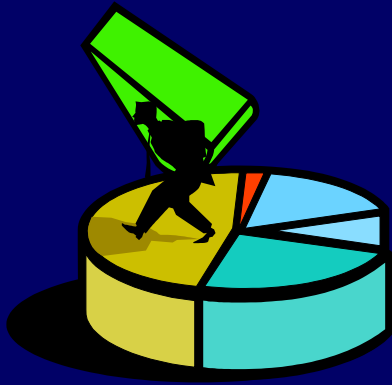
Developments of regional impact & significance (DRI)



- Large-scale developments that affect neighbor municipalities as well as host
 - Major residential, shopping center, industrial park, airport, sewage plant, landfill
- Set thresholds – number of housing units, acres of development, levels of use
- Specify where DRIs are OK, siting criteria, mitigation of impacts

Adopting a multi-municipal plan

- Same process as for a single municipality, except adoptions steps are taken by each participating municipality (see MPC Section 302)
- *Participating municipalities should follow a well-coordinated schedule*
- Some steps can be done jointly



What happens if one municipality does not adopt the plan or does not adopt all parts of the plan same as other municipalities?

- It may be necessary to revisit, revise, and re-adopt the plan.
- Important – The plan and its contents need to be uniformly adopted by all participating municipalities
- Important – The plan should be prepared with a strong consensus and with approval of a plan steering committee

Help and information

Governor's Center for Local Government Services

- Land Use Planning & Technical Assistance Grants
- Education programs
- One-on-one assistance



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