

# IMAGINE REGIONAL PLANS THAT ACTUALLY WORK

October 5, 2009

APA-PA Chapter Annual  
Conference

Lessons Learned from the  
Imagine West Shore Joint Comprehensive Planning Effort

# Introduction - Presenters

## Kirk Stoner, AICP Director of Planning

- Employer
  - ▣ Cumberland County, PA
- Education
  - ▣ BS/MS: Geoenvironmental Studies, Shippensburg University of PA
    - Land use specialization
- Employment History
  - ▣ 13 years experience in planning and economic development background
- Volunteer
  - ▣ South Middleton Township
    - Zoning Hearing Board
  - ▣ County Planning Directors Association of PA
    - Vice President

## Christopher Knarr, AICP Community Planner

- Employer
  - ▣ RETTEW Associates, Inc.
- Education
  - ▣ BA: Geography/Environmental Planning Bloomsburg University of PA
    - Minor: Anthropology
  - ▣ MRCP: University of Oklahoma
- Employment History
  - ▣ 13 years experience public sector (local, county, regional) & private sector
- Volunteer
  - ▣ Mechanicsburg Borough
    - Planning Commission
    - HARB
    - Main Street Mechanicsburg
  - ▣ Cumberland County
    - Planning Commission

# Introduction - Presentation Overview

- Overview
- Process
- Product
- Implementation
- Discussion - Questions, Comments, etc.
- Contact Info

*Focus on transferable examples not overt detail on communities you have never visited . . .*

- *Green\* – Worked well\**
- *Red – Didn't work well*

# Imagine West Shore (IWS) – Regional Overview

- Setting
- Assets
- Issues
- History of Working Together (& **NOT**)

# IWS Mission

- Imagine West Shore represents a **collaborative planning effort among Camp Hill, Lemoyne, and Wormleysburg** to build upon our location, promote our diversity, and encourage opportunities for revitalization to realize our vision of serving as the gateway to the West Shore.



## *Imagine West Shore Joint Comprehensive Plan*

The Boroughs of Camp Hill, Lemoyne & Wormleysburg, Cumberland County, PA



# IWS Regional Setting

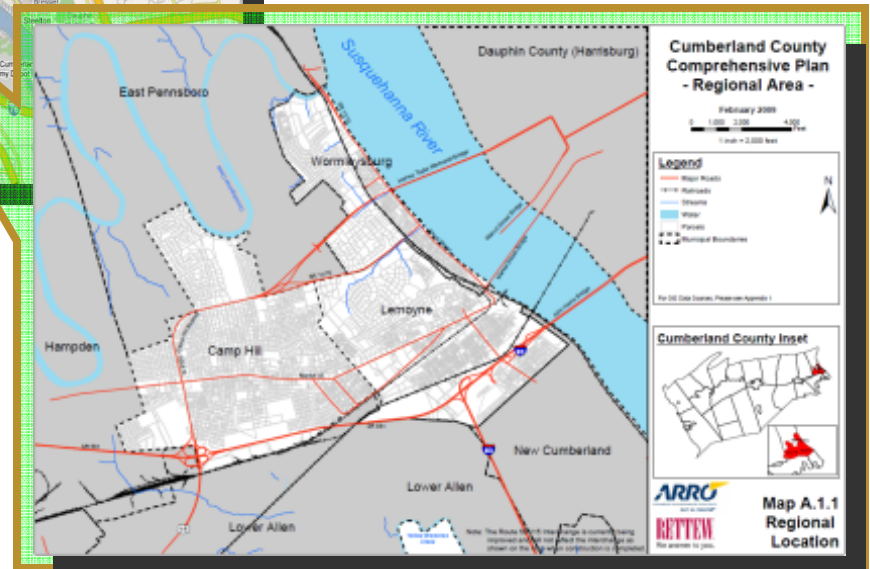
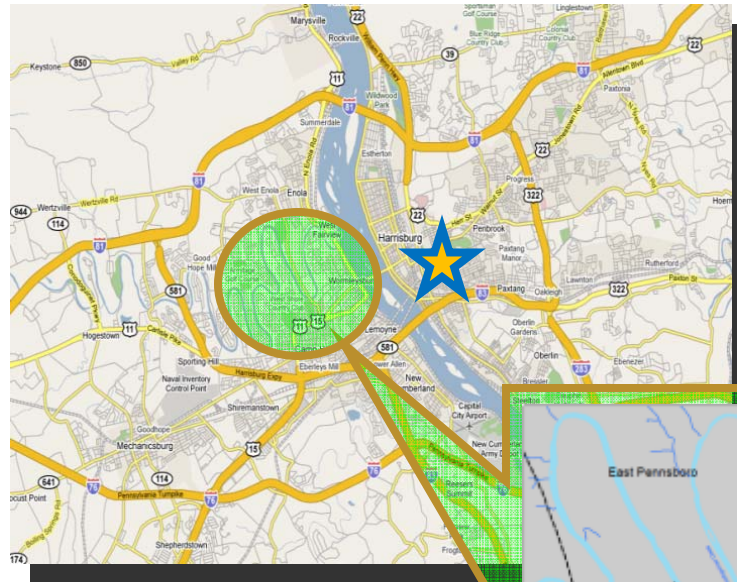
3 contiguous  
Cumberland  
County  
boroughs:

Camp Hill  
Lemoyne  
Wormleysburg

Gateway to the  
“West Shore” of  
Susquehanna  
River

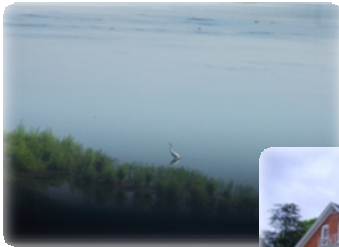
Harrisburg /  
State Capitol  
Other notables:

“High Water  
Mark of  
the Civil  
War”





# IWS Regional Assets



# IWS Regional Issues





# IWS History of Working Together

## □ Although...

### ▣ Lemoyne & Wormleysburg

- School District
- Police Department
- Fire Bureau
- Recreation

### ▣ All 3 boroughs share / common

- Sewage Treatment
- Waste Disposal/Recycling
- Water System

# IWS History of NOT Working Together

- ...there is a...
  - ▣ History of “Perception [and reality] of Deception”
  - ▣ Varying levels of Capacity
    - Interest/Sophistication
      - Staff & Administration/Enforcement
      - Leadership & Volunteers
    - Financial
  - ▣ Lack of, or poor . . .
    - Communication/Cooperation
    - Planning/Implementation
    - Capital Improvements Investment & Maintenance
  - ▣ Duplication of Services/Programs/Efforts

# IWS Regional Planning Process



**“It’s all about the process,  
not the product . . .”**

*Nameless, faceless bureaucrat, 2009*

# IWS Regional Planning Process

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- Lessons Learned
  - ▣ Getting Started
  - ▣ Gearing Up
  - ▣ Developing the Plan

# IWS Regional Planning Process – Getting Started

- County as neutral facilitator/deal maker/coordinator/work horse for entire project\*
- Establish written rules of engagement\*
  - ▣ ICA or similar; common sense language
  - ▣ What, when, why, and how much?
- Achieve strategic buy-in from elected officials\*
  - ▣ Find individual champions
  - ▣ Meet with individuals
  - ▣ Don't ask the question if you don't know answer



# IWS Regional Planning Process – Gearing Up

- Project funding

- Match state and local sources\*
- MUST include local cash and in-kind services\*
- P3 to save costs\*

- Consultant selection process

- Competitive process
- RFQ process to help identify needs\*
- Publish the project's funding level\*

# IWS Regional Planning Process – Developing the Plan

## □ Commitment

- ▣ Establish shared expectations for involvement\*
- ▣ Instill ownership

## □ Committees

- ▣ Get the right people\*
- ▣ Include elected officials, PC members, and staff\*
- ▣ Limit the number and keep coordinated

# IWS Regional Planning Process – Developing the Plan

## □ Communication

- ▣ Establish protocols early
- ▣ Report to elected officials at milestones\*
- ▣ Speak with the whole AND the part\*
- ▣ Peer pressure is productive\*
- ▣ Branding & Media\*

## □ Community Involvement

- ▣ Stakeholder interviews\*
- ▣ Joint elected/appointed officials meetings\*
- ▣ Joint elected officials meetings\*

# IWS Regional Plan Product



**“We don’t want another plan  
that’s going to sit on the shelf  
for another 30 years”**

*Nameless, faceless bureaucrat, 2008*

# IWS Regional Plan Product

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- Lessons Learned
  - ▣ Contents
  - ▣ Format & Layout



# IWS Regional Plan Product – Contents

1. Introduction

2. **Planning  
Elements/Strategies**

- A. Future Land Use & Development
- B. Downtown
- C. Natural, Cultural, & Historic Resources
- D. Transportation
- E. Housing & Neighborhoods
- F. Community Facilities
- G. Economic Development
- H. Additional Strategies

3. **Implementation**

- A. West Shore Collaborative
- B. Communication Plan
- 4. Parks/Recreation & Open Space
- 5. Status of Region

# IWS Regional Plan Product – Format & Layout

- Layout of Individual Planning Element/Topic Chapters
  - ▣ 2 parts
    - Overview
      - Introduction
      - Regional Themes
      - Core Community Planning Principles & Relationship to MPC
    - Individual Strategy Sheets
      - Action oriented
      - “Tear out sheets”

# IW/S Regional Plan Product – Format & Layout

## Imagine West Shore

### B.1 Future Land Use and Development

#### Introduction

The Future Land Use and Development Plan element includes a set of themes, principles, key strategies, and standards relating to guiding future land use and development within the Imagine West Shore region. In addition to the text, the Future Land Use and Development plan is presented in the form of a map spatially showing the location and extent of land use and development categories within each community and the region. The Future Land Use and Development Plan is intended to form the basis of not only future land use, development, and zoning decisions, but also community and economic development policies and decisions within the Imagine West Shore region.

Generally, land use and development is heavily dependent on a community's:

- vision, general policies and principles, and specific strategies set forth in the various planning elements;
- current patterns of manmade features including existing land use, zoning, and development including lots, blocks, sidewalks, and roadways, as well as

- important natural features and development constraints including topography and steep slopes, waterways and floodplains, wetlands, geologic formations and soil characteristics, wooded areas, etc.

For the IW/S region, it is not the intention to create substantial changes in existing land use, zoning, and development patterns but rather to build upon and protect appropriate existing development and land use forms and patterns, as well as to protect and enhancing important and unique manmade and natural features. The Future Land Use and Development Plan recommends protecting and

enhancing the established pattern of building, development, and natural features by indicating the types of activities that should be located within various areas of the community, as well as the general intensity and spatial distribution of land uses, building types, and development patterns. The IW/S Future Land Use and Development Plan has been structured around the Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan future land use classifications as well as the following influential factors:

- the existing pattern of land use, development, and buildings;
- the existing municipal zoning classifications;
- community and transportation facilities;
- natural features;
- population and housing / neighborhood trends;
- downtown revitalization and economic development; and
- the capability of the community to support and accommodate growth generally in the form of infill, replacement, and redevelopment.

It must be remembered that the Future Land Use and Development Plan is generalized and conceptual in nature, and that the boundaries of the various land use categories are not meant to be exact. The Future Land Use and Development Plan is meant to provide a common land use and development framework for the region, but still allow flexibility at the individual municipal level.

For more coordinated or regional approaches to planning and implementation presented in this plan, region-wide land use and development key strategies range from basic opportunities, such as

Imagine West Shore represents a collaborative planning effort among Cragg Hill, Lenoire, and Watauga/Cherokee to build upon our location, promote our direction, and encourage opportunities for revitalization to reduce our issues of zoning in the future in the West Shore.

B.1-1  
February 2009

## Imagine West Shore

Updating individual municipal ordinances to reflect common zoning and development terms and definitions, to more advanced opportunities, including the creation of a joint or regional planning commission or joint zoning and land development ordinances. It should be noted that this plan does not suggest one approach over another, but merely lists the various opportunities, beginning with the most basic form of regional implementation to the most advanced. It will be up to the municipalities to evaluate the approaches and determine which are most appropriate not only for each individual municipality, but just as important, for the region as a whole.

### Imagine West Shore Regional Land Use and Development Themes

Regional land use and development themes for the IW/S region include:

- Lack of underdeveloped land - need to rehabilitate, reuse, and redevelop. Build better and "up".
- Better connections between neighborhoods, areas, and communities.
- Better property maintenance and building codes (either enforcement or regulations).
- Increasing trend of conversions of single-family homes into multi-unit residential units.
- Higher rental occupancy rates versus owner-occupied housing rates.
- Higher vacancy rates.
- Small town atmosphere.
- High quality of life.
- Sense of community pride and stewardship.
- Community and neighborhood aesthetics and attractiveness.
- Clean and safe neighborhoods.
- Established, walkable neighborhoods.
- Zoning, SALDO codes should allow infill and redevelopment in a consistent and compatible manner with existing development.
- Housing affordability.
- Diversity of housing.
- Seen as "bedroom communities" - easy commutes.
- Need to get folks more involved, build capacity, and grow volunteers.
- Traffic congestion increasing.
- History and heritage preservation of specific resources, areas, and neighborhoods is important.
- Creating green neighborhoods and softening of urban edge:
  - Street trees
  - Landscaping
  - Pocket parks
- Preserving clusters of important architecture styles/characteristics.
  - Buildings should be maintained.
  - Buildings should be rehabilitated and reused.
  - Prohibit demolition of specific resources, areas, or neighborhoods.

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B.1-2  
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## Imagine West Shore

- Taxes versus level of services and infrastructure
- Above-ground utilities detract from community aesthetics.
- Parks are important to attract families and maintain quality of life.
- Better connections between neighborhoods, parks, areas, and communities using natural features.
- Community and neighborhood aesthetics and attractiveness.
- Duplication of services, programs.
- Park and recreation land dedication/loss in lieu of are not provided by developers.

development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or measures must be taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses.

2. Support and promote compact development patterns: To minimize economic, social, and environmental costs and efficiently use resources and infrastructure, the maintenance, rehabilitation, reuse and reasonable expansion of existing buildings and land should be encouraged and supported before demolition, as well as new development should take place in the form of appropriately designed and scaled infill, redevelopment, and replacement in areas previously developed before expanding onto lands previously undeveloped or possessing important natural features.

- in-fill (in-fill noun - development of vacant or remnant lands passed over by previous development in urban areas.

- replacement (replacement noun - the act of remodeling or reusing a previously developed or improved lot, building or structure.

3. Support and enhance healthy communities: To protect the natural environment and increase quality of life, neighborhoods, communities, and regions should have compact, multi-dimensional land use and development

### Overall Planning Principles and MPC provisions relating to Land Use/Development for the Imagine West Shore Region

1. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)

Communities shall plan for and guide the location, amount, intensity, character, and timing of all types and patterns of land use and development (including buildings) including a variety of residential, industry, business, agriculture, major health and transit facilities, utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation, preservation of prime agricultural lands, flood plains and other areas of special hazards and other similar uses.

Communities' existing and future land use and development patterns must be generally consistent and compatible with the existing and proposed

Principles 2 - 3 are modified versions of the *Alternative Principles for Smart Growth Development* by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

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# IWS Regional Plan Product – Format & Layout

- Individual Strategy Sheets Include:
  - ▣ Numbering/Lettering identification
  - ▣ Images of current setting in each community/region
  - ▣ Abstract - Definition & purpose
  - ▣ Description of Significance
  - ▣ General Considerations &/or Design Guidelines/Standards
  - ▣ Timing
  - ▣ Key Locations of Focus (if applicable)
  - ▣ Stakeholders & Partners
  - ▣ Example images graphically supporting the text (if applicable)

# IWS Regional Plan Product – Format & Layout

## *Imagine West Shore*

### B.2 Downtown - Design

**B.2.e Key Strategy:** Pursue a coordinated streetscape improvement effort for Market Street, Front Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and other important corridors that either connect the three downtowns or exist within one or more of the areas adjacent to these core commercial areas.



#### Summary:

Streetscape projects typically involve a variety of aesthetic improvements designed to increase the appeal of the downtown or central business district. Such improvements may include decorative street lighting, brick or specially paved sidewalks or accents, specialized crosswalks, on-street parking, street trees, landscaping, utility line relocation, and the placement of street furniture, such as benches and trash receptacles. Many of the physical improvements are designed at the scale of the pedestrian, as opposed to the scale of the automobile. This helps to create a pedestrian friendly environment and encourages additional pedestrian movement in the downtown. Traffic calming measures may also be included as part of a streetscape project, helping to decrease vehicle speeds and increase awareness of pedestrians in the downtown. Altogether, streetscape improvements can lead to increases in the real and perceived safety of the street for pedestrians and motorists, in addition to aesthetic improvements and an improved retail business environment.

#### General Considerations:

- o **Short-term**
  - o Determine which key corridors should be the focus of a streetscape improvement project.
  - o Develop a master plan for the streetscape, with heavy involvement from key stakeholders, business owners, property owners, and members of the public.

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## *Imagine West Shore*

#### Mid-term

- o Establish a phasing and funding plan for the implementation of streetscape improvements.
- o Implement streetscape improvements according to the phasing plan and funds available.
- o Weigh the importance of a specific "big ticket" improvement with items that are easily accomplished and can show short term success.
- o Consider the sequence of events to be implemented so that one project does not have adverse effects on another. For example, if utility lines are to be buried, which would require that the street be dug up, this should occur before decorative crosswalks are installed.

#### Long-term

- o Develop a plan for the long-term maintenance of the streetscape.
- o Annually evaluate necessary or regular maintenance improvements to adequately plan for funding such improvements.
- o Coordinate volunteer efforts with work performed by borough staff.

#### General and/or Specific Location(s):

- o **Camp Hill**
  - o Market Street
- o **Lemoyne**
  - o Market Street
  - o Third Street<sup>1</sup>
- o **Wormleysburg**
  - o Front Street



#### Stakeholders & Partners:

- o Borough Council
- o Planning Commissions
- o Revitalization Organizations
- o Business Owners and Property Owners
- o Civic, Service and Faith-Based Clubs and Organizations
- o West Shore Council of Governments
- o Pennsylvania Downtown Center
- o Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
- o Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

<sup>1</sup> Images by Kairos Design Group

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# IWS Regional Plan Product – Lessons Learned

## □ Content

- ▣ Be careful about asking for what you want...you may just get it
  - Information & mapping
- ▣ Don't apply your plan to the MPC, apply the MPC to your plan\*
  - Still be comprehensive & MPC compliant ....and not necessarily laid out in "traditional MPC" checklist fashion
- ▣ Develop specific action oriented strategies with relevant info\*
- ▣ Include strategies that can be undertaken at the regional level as well as individual municipal level\*
- ▣ Prominence of Plan/Strategies & Implementation\*
- ▣ Consider amount/number of strategies and presentation of info\*

# IWS Regional Plan Product – Lessons Learned

## □ Format/Layout

### ▣ Develop branding\*

- Mission statement on every sheet & meeting handouts

### ▣ Develop a plan that is sexily practical\*

- Balance form & function
- Infuse tired text, tables and charts with attractive photos, drawings, and maps

### ▣ Limiting budget for printing\*

- Number of hard copies
- Focus resources on relevant planning process/information
- CDs, Internet (various sites), and B&W copies

# IWS Regional Implementation



“Why can’t we just get to projects?”

*Nameless, faceless bureaucrat, 2008*

# IWS Regional Implementation

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- Lessons Learned

- Funding

- Process

# IWS Regional Implementation

- Gap between plan adoption and implementation is critical
- West Shore Collaborative
  - ▣ Implementation organization
  - ▣ Elected officials, staff, citizens
  - ▣ Institutionalized with MOU
  - ▣ County “staff”



# IWS Regional Implementation

- WSC Purpose
  - ▣ Prioritize and pursue comp plan projects
  - ▣ Coordinate review/approval with elected officials and boards/commissions
  - ▣ Oversee other regional projects
- WSC Status Report
  - ▣ Identified top 2 projects
  - ▣ All councils approved priorities
  - ▣ Councils allocating funds
  - ▣ Grant applications being prepared

# IWS Regional Implementation – Lessons Learned

## □ Funding

- ▣ Budget for “gap” – getting to implementation\*
- ▣ Budget for implementation projects\*
- ▣ Budget for long term staffing

# IWS Regional Implementation – Lessons Learned

## □ Process

- Avoid concurrent planning/implementation
- Bridge of planning and implementation is critical\*
  - Re-establish rules of engagement\*
  - Establish implementation organization\*
- KISS principle
- Visit other communities\*
- FOOD\*
- Schmooze funding partners / get the word out\*
- Establish a future “check point” for monitoring and evaluation of success\*

# IWS Measures of Success

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Planning Effort in Cumberland County
  - ▣ Re: implementation - most successful
- 1<sup>st</sup> meeting ever of 3 Borough Councils
- Media Coverage/Exposure
- APA-PA Innovation in Regional Planning (nominee)
- WSC Formed & Functioning
- Budgeting for local funding match
- On various funding agencies radar
- 3 early regional implementation projects:
  - ▣ Streetscape
  - ▣ Consistent zoning & subdivision/land development ordinances
  - ▣ (Small) business retention, development, and expansion program



# Wrap up . . . IWS – Lessons Learned

- Need a leader for project, go to person\*
  - ▣ Communicator
  - ▣ Deal broker
  - ▣ Politics
  - ▣ Doer
- Develop Public/Private Partnerships (Financial, Technical, Professional)\*
- Secure local commitment\*
- Focus on what's important to you . . . ask for it. . . and do it\*
  - ▣ “Pure planning” vs. “Keeping it real and getting to projects”
- Plan for implementation\*
- Be Present, Be Relevant\*

# Discussion . . .

Questions? Comments? etc. ?



# Contact Information

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