Putting “Implementable” Comprehensive Plans into Practice

Examples from:

Lycoming County, PA
Dauphin County, PA

October 24, 2017

PA Chapter APA Conference
State College, PA
The Concept of an Implementable Comprehensive Plan

It all started one day at DCED…

July 2008
The Concept of an Implementable Comprehensive Plan

And now, the lone champion…

Creating an Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Workbook and Reference
Version 1.1
August 27, 2012

Denny Puko
The Concept of an Implementable Comprehensive Plan

- It’s time for Planners to think differently about a Comprehensive Plan!
- Planning should help communities take action – teach them how to move in new directions and achieve their vision
- Implementation, not preparation is the target
- Staying committed to using the process to initiate action!
- Importance of stakeholder advocacy and broad participation
The Concept of an Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Ten Questions:

- Is the plan realistic?
- Is the plan comprehensive?
- Is the plan specific?
- Is the plan linked with related functions?
- Does the plan link public and private interests?
- Is the plan citizen-focused?
- Is the plan understandable?
- Is the plan problem- and solution-specific?
- Is the plan change-specific?
- Is the plan current?
5 Keys for an Implementable Plan

1: Focus the plan on real relevant issues

2: Organize plan the way local officials and citizens think

3: Devise practical and workable recommendations

4: Recruit partners and create capacity to implement the plan

5: Get local ownership of the plan and commitment to implement
The Concept of an Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Two Examples:

- Lycoming County Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan Updates
- Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan
The Lycoming County Example
The Lycoming County Example

We started by having an internal contest

- What is our timeframe?
- What message do we want to convey?
- What do we want the public to understand?
The Lycoming County Example

We collected data and information based on these topical areas.
The Lycoming County Example

Message from the beginning: focus on implementation

- Focus on developing specific projects/programs/initiatives of regional significance
- Plan to be used as a roadmap for future investments
- A tool to attract investment in the planning area
The Lycoming County Example

What was our process?
- Validated previous plan info
- Highlighted Accomplishments since 2005
- Looked at trends since 2005
- Completed new SWOT analysis and prioritization
- Identification of (today’s) Most Significant Issues
- Priorities of Regional Significance
- Implementation Strategy
Outreach Efforts:

LC Commissioners
School Districts (8)
Youth leadership
Young professionals
Senior Expo
Lycoming Arts
Historical Societies

Public meetings around the county
Municipal Summit
Meetings-in-a-Box
Public Events
Interviews
Intercept Surveys
On-line Survey

Focus Groups
Community Development
Community Facilities and Infrastructure
Developers
Heritage / Arts / Culture
Manufacturing
Naturals Resources
Agriculture
Public Safety
Transportation and Mobility
Youth
Outreach Efforts
Outreach Efforts

On-line survey:

- What **do you like** about Lycoming County and want to make sure lasts well into the future?
- What **don’t you like** about Lycoming County and wish were different?
- “Lyco Bucks” exercise: If you were in charge of making decisions, where would you invest resources first? Select 5.

Business card distributed throughout summer
The Lycoming County Example

14 Thematic Issues

- Elected Officials
- Focus Groups
- Public Meetings & Events
- Surveys
- Interviews
- PAT Input
The Lycoming County Example

14 Thematic Issues prioritized across all PATs
These 14 Issue Statements were determined to be of importance to the six multi-municipal planning areas in Lycoming County during the 2015-2017 update process. All of these were selected by at least one PAT as a priority issue in their Comprehensive Plan.

1. The economy is changing, and our communities and workforce are not optimally positioned to realize our untapped economic potential and become resilient to economic trends.

2. Flooding is a threat to life, property, and communities throughout the county.

3. Communications infrastructure (especially cell phone and broadband internet) do not meet the needs of all areas of the County.

4. Significant cultural and historical resources are not adequately documented, protected, and promoted.

5. Current land use regulations and enforcement do not consistently and adequately meet community visions and respond to changing conditions.

6. Downtown and village center areas across the County are not thriving or achieving their maximum potential.
The Lycoming County Example

7. Fragmentation of local government in Pennsylvania is a barrier to efficient delivery of some public services. (all 6 PAT’s)

8. Natural gas infrastructure is not adequate in all areas of the County.

9. Outdoor recreation resources are not fully developed, protected and promoted.

10. Drugs, particularly heroin, are creating significant social, economic, public health, and safety problems across the County.

11. Our multi-modal transportation system, particularly the airport, has deficiencies in safety, physical condition, and availability of facilities in some areas of the County.

12. Volunteerism and civic engagement, particularly among young people, are insufficient to sustain community institutions and services.

13. Water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure systems are not sufficient across the County to meet all needs.

14. Water quality is vital, but is vulnerable to a multitude of threats.
### The Lycoming County Example

The 14 major problems identified in Lycoming County relate to these topical areas elements of comprehensive planning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Agricultural Facilities and Infrastructure</th>
<th>Community Development</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Natural Resources</th>
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Priority Issue #3

Outdoor recreation resources are not fully developed, protected, and promoted.

Back Story
Lycoming County is known for its beautiful mountains, wide valleys, miles of hiking trails, scenic bikeways and pristine streams and creeks. The recreational resources of the GWA Planning Area contain many of these same amenities and are a key reason why many residents choose to live, work, and play in these six municipalities. In short, these natural and recreational resources are among the greatest assets of this Planning Area. Residents of the GWA communities desire to develop or expand these existing recreation assets, as well as improve access to them, so that residents and visitors alike can more fully capitalize on the benefits they provide:
- opportunities for positive community impacts
- enhanced quality of life
- improved health benefits
- expanded transportation options (e.g., trails)
- new educational opportunities
- economic growth

GWA PAT members identified the natural beauty and scenery of Greater Williamsport as the top strength of this Planning Area. Likewise, the potential to capitalize on outdoor recreation resources located very close to the urbanized area was selected as the top opportunity for this Planning Area.

Priority Issue Overview
During the GWA Comp Plan public outreach, the desire for more outdoor recreation opportunities was among the top four priorities listed by respondents (see Appendix C for survey results). The consensus among PAT members and the general public is threefold:
- Expand existing recreation assets
- Add to the area’s recreational resources
- Improve access to these recreational venues

This issue was well documented in the 2003 adopted GWA multi-municipal comprehensive plan. That document identified the development of new recreational opportunities as a key strategy to enhancing the community’s infrastructure. Specifically, the adopted 2003 GWA Comprehensive Plan had two major recommendations:

Lycoming 2030: Plan the Possible
**Top Viable Project of Regional Significance for this issue (First of Three)**

**Susquehanna River Walk Extension and Access Improvements**

The Susquehanna River Walk Extension Project will connect the existing River Walk with Susquehanna State Park, as well as improve connections to the existing River Walk. The main part of the project consists of a 2.4-mile extension of the existing Susquehanna River Walk. In addition, improvements to the River Walk access will be pursued.

![Susquehanna River Walk](image)

As a destination, the Susquehanna River Walk is utilized by residents and visitors alike for jogging, fishing, and paddling.

**How Project Addresses this Issue**

The Susquehanna River Walk is a walkable and bikeable recreation and transportation route providing a scenic connection to multiple parts of the City of Williamsport, including the CIE, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Lycoming College, and Susquehanna State Park.

**Project Leadership**

- **Lead Agency:** Lycoming County PCD and Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
- **Other Partners:** City of Williamsport, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Lycoming College, Susquehanna Economic Development Association (SEEDA), COG Joint Rail Authority, Williamsport Sanitary Authority, USACE, PennDOT, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), DOED

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**Steps for Success**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step Number</th>
<th>Description of Step</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Select Project Delivery Team</td>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>GWA PAF</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Planning and Design to Determine Final Route of River Walk Extension from Williamsport State Park, Including Necessary Connection</td>
<td>Year One-Year Two</td>
<td>LPCD, City of Williamsport, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Lycoming College, DOED</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Planning and Design of Bicycle, Pedestrian Underpass and New River Walk Connection at Main Street</td>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>LPCD, Penn College of Technology, Lycoming College, DOED, City of Williamsport</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Begin Construction of River Walk Extension</td>
<td>Year Two-Year Four</td>
<td>LPCD, City of Williamsport, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Lycoming College, DOED</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Construct Bike &amp; Pedestrian Underpass &amp; New River Walk Connection at Main Street</td>
<td>Year Three-Year Four</td>
<td>Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, PennDOT</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Planning and Design of River Walk Connection to South Beach Road</td>
<td>Year Five-Year Seven</td>
<td>City of Williamsport, LPCD, Lycoming College, DOED, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Construction of River Walk Connection to South Beach Road</td>
<td>Year Eight</td>
<td>City of Williamsport, LPCD, Lycoming College, DOED, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership</td>
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**Funding Resources**

Potential funding sources for this project include PA DOER, PennDOT Multimodal Funds, Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Funds, PA DOED Multimodal Funds, and Act 133 Legacy Funds.
Top Viable Project of Regional Significance for this Issue (First of Two)

Support the Airport Authority's Construction of a New Terminal and New Access Road at Williamsport Regional Airport

To address existing facility deficiencies and position the airport for long-term viability, this project would create a new 50,000-square-foot terminal facility that is modern and energy efficient, and has space to house two additional airlines. This project would include state-of-the-art passenger processing and security systems with a secured holding room that would comfortably accommodate up to 200 passengers—more than five times the capacity of the current hold area.

This project is consistent with the Williamsport Area Transportation Study Long Range Transportation Plan adopted by the Williamsport Metropolitan Planning Organization in December 2013. Need for this project is also supported in an Airport Terminal Replacement Feasibility Study approved by the Federal Aviation Administration in 2014.

How Project Addresses the Issue

The Williamsport Regional Airport Terminal Building Replacement addresses the above-cited deficiencies in physical facilities and airline operations and services. By addressing these current limitations, the airport's value as a transportation facility, quality of life asset, and economic driver would expand expanded.

This project could positively impact the regional economy by providing opportunity to add more flights to more destinations at competitive fares via stimulation of more airline competition. Current annual economic impact of the airport is approximately $66 million (based on a PennDOT Bureau of Aviation commissioned study) supporting 250 jobs directly related to airport operations and tenants. This project is anticipated to create opportunities to expand positive economic impacts of the airport. A modern full-service airport could also help recruit additional industries to the area, as well as better support current employer air service needs, especially with the resurgence of Marcellus Shale activity. This project will include a building design that would allow future expansion to ensure the facility is able to continually respond to changing demand and operational needs.

This project would also improve ingress and egress at the terminal through a separate but related project that would extend Montour Street to connect with Airport Road and provide a second access to the airport.

Lycoming 2030: Plan the Possible 56
The Dauphin County Example
Introduction

The Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan -- "Growing Together" -- establishes an overall vision for the future of Dauphin County. The Comprehensive Plan sets the direction and identifies the goals for the County’s community, environmental, and economic initiatives. But, beyond stating the goals, this Comprehensive Plan seeks to be an "Implementable Plan" by outlining and establishing the methods, actions and accounting for progress of meeting the goals.

The Comprehensive Plan was developed after conducting an assessment of community issues. This was completed through a survey of Dauphin County residents and conducting in depth interviews with community implementation partners. This work received oversight and input from a Comprehensive Plan advisory committee. This work identified the problems to be solved, the needs to be addressed, and opportunities to be pursued. Further refinement of the broad goals results in an identification of practical and workable recommendations in sufficient depth and detail which includes specific action steps, responsible parties, estimated cost and means of financing. The information identified so as to provide a guide toward the implementation of the tasks.

There have been changes in interpersonal connectivity and the way we share data — through internet and mobile means particularly. With this understanding, The Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan is available primarily on a web page format. Utilizing this medium, the plan will be able to utilize the presentation of information and interpersonal connectivity to make Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan easy to use and understand. Also, it will allow for the
Issues Oriented Model

1: Focus the plan on real relevant issues

2: Organize plan the way local officials and citizens think

3: Devise practical and workable recommendations

4: Recruit partners and create capacity to implement the plan

5: Get local ownership of the plan and commitment to implement
Dauphin County Model

1: Focus the plan on real relevant issues

2: Organize plan the way local officials and citizens think

3: Recruit partners and create capacity to implement the plan

4: Devise practical and workable recommendations

5: Get local ownership of the plan and commitment to implement
Survey Design

- **Introduction**
  - Basic info about relationship to DC

- **Housing**
  - Role of DC in Housing Development

- **Economic Development**
  - Focus locations for Economic Development

- **Transportation**
  - How do people move around the County

- **Utilities & Community Facilities**
  - Integrations of Library Survey

- **Ag, Natural & Cultural Resources**
  - Character of County and Resources preservation

- **Land Use**
  - What Land Uses are important to Focus on in the Future

- **Public Participation/Demographics**
  - Staying involved
Survey Responses:

- Open from April 4th to May 27th, 2016
- 49 total questions on SurveyMonkey
- 613 total responses
Plan Relevant Issues

- Community Development
- Environmental Enhancement
- Economic Growth
- Municipal/Implementation Partner Resource Guide
Outreach Efforts:

DC Commissioners
DC Housing Authority
DC Library System
DC Parks & Rec
DC Conservation District
DC Human Services
DC Economic Development
DC Public Safety

Derry Township
Upper Dauphin COG
Susquehanna Township Schools
East Hanover Township
Harrisburg City

PA Historical & Museum Commission
Capital Region Water
SARAA
Hershey/Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau
Greater Hbg Assoc of Realtors
Capital Area Transit
Tri-County Community Action
PSU Harrisburg
Pinnacle Health
Home Builders Assoc
PSU Hershey Med
Hbg Young Professionals
Manada Conservancy

PA DCNR
PA DEP
PA DCNR
PA Historical & Museum Commission
PennDOT District 8-0
PA DEP
Input Sought:

- Key Challenges, Issues & Goals
- Current Initiatives or Activities
- Future Initiatives or Activities
Implementation Phase

Steering Committee/Interviewees

July 2017

Implementation Partners
1: Focus the plan on real relevant issues

2: Organize plan the way local officials and citizens think

3: Recruit partners and create capacity to implement the plan

4: Devise practical and workable recommendations

5: Get local ownership of the plan and commitment to implement
Lessons Learned

- Requires flexibility – No standardized approach
- Implementation support beyond in-house staffing is critical
- Create a process, not a document
- Consultant roles can vary
- Matching schedules for elected officials, funding, and partners can be challenging
- Budget needs can vary significantly and can increase as implementation areas are refined
- No rules on the level of detail needed
- May drive the need for an MPC update
Questions & Answers
Contact Information

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  - (570) 320-2134

- Jerry Duke – gduke@tcrpc-pa.org
  - (717) 234-2639

- Steve Deck – sdeck@tcrpc-pa.org
  - (717) 234-2639