CHAPTER 4

INTERRELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

Issues and their perceived level of impacts are inordinately tied to other influencing factors. In this chapter you read about a number of interrelationships among the county’s top 10 issues.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 as reenacted and amended) requires a certain level of attention to be devoted to recognizing the interconnected nature of the various plan components. The second portion of this chapter will discuss these connections.

We will begin with issues and end with key plan components.

THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ISSUES

When faced with an issue, we can see how it might become magnified; perpetuated by another issue. Often times these perpetuating circumstances are overlooked. This portion of the Chapter 4 devotes time and attention on issue pairings, in an effort to identify issue strength and analyze potential consequences to the environment, energy, finances, economic development, and the social well-being.

TABLE 4.1
STRENGTH OF ISSUE CONNECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower Taxes</th>
<th>Protection of Open Space/Agricultural Preservation</th>
<th>Economic Growth</th>
<th>Natural Resource Protection</th>
<th>Transportation Infrastructure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Taxes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mid-level</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
<td>Mid-level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation Infrastructure</td>
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</table>
VERY STRONG CONNECTIONS

Lower Taxes and Economic Growth

Under this pairing there are a host of areas to focus attention. Some of which have strong positive and negative associations.

- Environmental Consequences - Lowering taxes could help to stimulate economic growth. Tax abatement programs operate under these pretenses.

- Energy Conservation Consequences - Lowering taxes could take on the form of tax credits. Tax credits for energy conservation could stimulate the local contractor business when the labor market is down. In 2000, Perry County was number 1 in Pennsylvania (per capita) for contractor employment.

- Fiscal Consequences - From the County’s perspective the lowering of taxes should be met with a positive return on allowance (i.e. revenue neutral) Suffice to say if an abatement were applied, there should be met with an increase in the number of laborers, longevity of the company staying with the municipality.

- Economic Development Consequences - Lower taxes may help to attract new business and/or industry. It may also help to create a more residential construction-friendly atmosphere for strengthening the civilian labor force. The underlying position is lowering taxes should stimulate growth. This is a gamble, if it does not stimulate economic growth, taxes would need to be raised to make up any deficit created by implementing such an approach.

- Social Consequences - On the brighter side, lower taxes and positive economic growth could help to improve an individual, family, and household’s economic standing. Higher taxes and economic stagnation reduced economic can lead to increased social unrest and outward migration. On the opposite side, lower taxes will have implications to core social programs. Comparatively speaking, having low taxes to begin leaves very little room for lowering taxes further.

Transportation Infrastructure and Economic Growth

- Environmental Consequences - Increased traffic congestion will likely result from added ingress and egress from new business and industry. Improvements to the highway system may compliment and spur additional growth. With increased vehicle trips there may be an increase in the number of accidents. With tractor trailers this may include those of a hazardous spill variety.

- Energy Conservation Consequences – Increased economic growth will increase energy consumption as it will create a new destination for vehicle trips. However, with competitive prices goods and services, individuals may choose to shop closer to home. This in turn would consume less gasoline reducing energy consumption.
• Fiscal Consequences - More often than not, there is a generally a positive tie in to investment in transportation infrastructure and economic growth. One notable contradiction to this majority might be transportation safety improvements designed to limit access.

• Economic Development Consequences - Generally good, upward trajectory with the improved accommodation of greater volumes of traffic. On the opposite side the same can be said for limitations on access as it was expressed with fiscal consequences.

• Social Consequences - The influx of new residents will bring about the need for school improvements and community services. The addition of out-of-county laborers and consumers will also increase community service demands.

Natural Resource Protection and Protection of Open Space/ Agricultural Preservation

• Environmental Consequences - The protection of natural resources connected to the physical landscape of the county would work in the direction of protecting open space. Prime agricultural soils are a natural resource. In sum, the two are essentially unified, categorically speaking. The Agricultural Preservation Program looks to soil types for consideration and ranking.

• Energy Conservation Consequences - This depends upon the energy source. With electric there will be less of a transmission expense. Considering fuel and oil concentrated development conserves fuel. There may be increasing interest placed upon such lands for fossil fuel extraction.

• Fiscal Consequences - On the positive side, protecting open space inhibits the need to increase municipal services. On the negative side, this may continue to drive up the costs of developable land.

Considering the opposite view, every additional acre of ground removed from the tax rolls forces other properties to pick up the additional tax burden. The results of this can be seen within the Tri-County Region. A continued balanced approach to protecting land at a rate that does not inhibit economic prosperity is a must.

• Economic Development Consequences - The additional tax burden experienced by county businesses from more properties being removed from the tax rolls will negatively affect a businesses’ bottom line. If economic growth stagnates, there will be less of an opportunity to maintain investment in protecting additional natural resources, open space or agricultural lands without raising taxes.

On the brighter side, the preservation of large contiguous expanses of agricultural lands with prime agricultural soils protects the long-term economic viability of such lands.
• Social Consequences - The preservation of land maintains existing viewshed, water quality, and traffic volumes.

On the flip side, monies used for preservation could be going to help support social and community services.

THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF KEY PLANNING COMPONENTS

Now that we have discussed the issues we will focus our attention to key planning components. There are many connections that we need not belabor but need to still identify to help us all understand for every action there is a reaction. Sometimes actions can be undertaken with the fortune of multiple positive outcomes. Reversing this, actions can also be undertaken, much to the detriment of others. According to Sir Isaac Newton, and his third law, “For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.”

The following diagram (Diagram 4.1) displays the observable connection strength between plans. Through the Plan Fusion process they are all included and contain as ancillary plans within this Comprehensive Plan.
Chapter 4

Interrelationships

Diagram 4.1
Strength of Issue Connections

Future Land Use Plan

Transportation Plan

Greenways, Parks, Recreation Open Space Plan

Housing Plan

Capital Improvement Plan

Emergency Operations and Hazard Mitigation Plan

Energy Conservation Plan

Community Facilities and Utilities Plan

Sewage Plan

Solid Waste Plan

Water Plan
PLAN IMPACTS

While we are utilizing the comprehensive plan process to undertake this effort, there are clearly other plans which will be impacted. These plans presently include: *Capital Improvements; Future Land Use; Greenways, Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Housing; Emergency Operations; Hazard Mitigation; Sewerage; Solid Waste; Water Supply*

These parts of the chapter serves to not only identify these plans, but to recognize where there is identified overlap and direct connections to the issues in this plan. Moreover, this plan will serve to integrate action for all other plans in an effort to eliminate systematic redundancy. The envisioned benefit will be in allowing more time to address issues and resolve recognized problems. Also, it will help to focus improved direction on where the best use of funds should take place.

*Capital Improvements Plan*

- Lower Taxes - Simplifies the process of developing a Capital Improvements Plan as it limits the inclusion of new elements without elimination of existing content. Limits the expansion of department purchases and actions/pursuits. Increases the need to seek outside funding sources. This may affect other government taxes. (Fed./State)

- Economic Issues - A well designed capital improvements plan can act as a springboard for economic development, indicating to potential investors that a municipality has its finances in order and a good sense of infrastructural priorities.

- Natural Resource Issues - Capital improvements plans should ultimately contain projects that enhance the protection of natural resources within a given municipality. An example of this might be monies set aside as a local match for open space protection, including parks or trails for habitat protection or environmental education.

- Transportation Issues - The quality and extent of the transportation infrastructure within a given municipality is directly tied to the thoroughness and structure of the capital improvements plan. A well designed plan allows for the most important links in the transportation system to be secured.

- Community Services (Solid Waste) - Capital improvements plans are necessary for the funding and timing of projects directly related to the processing of solid waste. Without such a plan in place, haphazard funding or timing could jeopardize the functionality of the entire system.

*Future Land Use Plan*
• Lower Taxes - Lower taxes might negatively affect the chances of open space and agricultural preservation programs by not adequately funding them. On the other hand, it is also possible that lower taxes will attract direct investment in a given area and thereby grow the economic “pie” and in so doing, contribute to increased tax revenue. This is a chicken or egg scenario and depends on what the community feels is the right approach for the given municipality.

• Economic Issues - Future land use plans directly affect the economic future of a place by directing development and investment into one area or another to the exclusion of another. In so doing the map “decides” where development and investment will take place. Understood in this light, a future land use plan can play a major role in the future of the local economy. In that sense, it behooves municipalities to think it through carefully, considering amenities such as road networks, rail, and labor pool.

• Natural Resource Issues - The protection of natural resources is affected by the future land use plan in that the use of the land – be it commercial, residential, or otherwise has bearing upon the natural habitat and resources found in that particular natural environment.

• Transportation Issues - The extent and scope of a municipality’s transportation infrastructure depends largely on how accurately the future land use map defines its’ parameters. If, for example, a particular area is delineated for agricultural preservation, one would expect little to no major road work in that area. In this sense, the ability to get from one place to some other, and the distance between destinations can be decided by the future land use map and how accurately development follows its prescriptions.

• Community Services (Solid Waste) - Where the future land use map directs growth and development should be the primary focus of handling solid waste, including recycling efforts.

Greenways, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan:

• Lower Taxes - Will have a detrimental impact on pursuing actions and locating matching monies for grants to undertake actions listed.

• Economic Issues - A well-established system of greenways, parks, and open space attracts young families to an area looking for a decent quality of life. In so doing, greenways may pull in both primary and secondary economic development in the form of tourism, residential development, and the commercial activities needed to support both.

• Natural Resource Issues - A well thought out system of greenways can help to protect existing natural resources such as water basins, by expanding the scope of protected areas and creating green linkages which further protect the natural
environment while offering wildlife the chance to roam freely where they might have otherwise been blocked by development.

- Transportation Issues - An adequate transportation system can facilitate usage of greenways and parks within a municipality furthering economic development. On the other hand, Highway and rail intersections with greenways can also impact wildlife and humans in a negative light with such breaks in the greenway fabric. (Increased vehicle and animal collisions.)

- Community Services (Solid Waste) - A carefully planned solid waste management system will naturally protect natural areas by removing the propensity of some to illegally dump refuse.

**Housing Plan:**

- Lower Taxes - Lower taxes might present families with opportunities for the first time homeownership. It may increase the chance for current homeowners to look at purchasing a larger home, or even move into areas that they consider “advantageous” from a tax standpoint.

- Economic Issues - Housing demand is often affected by national trends outside the control of local and regional economies. However, matching supply with demand has always been a key to success.

- Natural Resource Issues – Natural resources are at greatest risk where the development patterns are the most intense or are simply not well mitigated. By establishing areas for development (not just housing) a municipality can help protect the natural resources in abundance in a given area.

- Transportation Issues - The location and density of housing in a municipality directly correlates to the transportation needs of its inhabitants. If residents are spaced apart from each other and far from commercial development, the road needs of residents would be different than if development was more concentrated, or if trips could be made without the car.

- Community Services (Solid Waste) - The location of housing affects the location efficiencies of community service. Housing location and density should be cost effective for the municipality and public services going into the future.

**Emergency Operations Plan and Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan**

- Lower Taxes - Will have a detrimental impact on pursuing actions and matching monies for grants to undertake actions listed.

- Economic Issues - An area without a hazard mitigation plan will not only be at a disadvantage when natural disaster strikes, but will not be as appealing to
potential developers and businesses who want to make sure their investments will be protected if natural disaster strikes.

- **Natural Resource Issues** - A proper hazard mitigation plan will minimize the damage done to natural resources in a given area as protecting our natural resources in many cases works to mitigate natural hazards.

- **Transportation Issues** - Mass traffic jams can make natural disasters worse. A well conceived emergency operations plan will contain evacuation contingencies and as well as plans for outreach and delivery of emergency services using the existing transportation infrastructure.

- **Community Services (Solid Waste)** - Multi-hazard mitigation plans will contain the steps necessary to keep basic infrastructure up and running or to repair it as soon as possible. This includes, but is not limited to, sewer and water infrastructure.

### Sewerage Plan:

- **Lower Taxes** - Initially such a change may have a detrimental impact on a municipality; paying back loans typically used to cover infrastructural pursuits like the establishment or expansion of sewerage facilities at the municipal level.

- **Economic Issues** - Public sewer infrastructure attracts development. It is important to carefully plan where to extend it and where to preclude its extension. Areas once though untouchable can be development overnight, much to the chagrin of longtime residents.

- **Natural Resource Issues** - A proper and up to date sewerage plan will protect natural resources. Dated facilities can cause environmental and human health risk.

- **Transportation Issues** - Public sewer system, like public water infrastructure, can have a determining effect upon the location and scope of development. By nature streets are inherently in need of maintenance. Such improvements need to be coordinated so new streets and sidewalks are not torn apart within a few years following constructed or resurfacing. A geographically restricted system of public sewer lines will generally limit where more intense development takes place.

- **Community Services (Solid Waste)** - A well designed sewerage plan will take into account bio-solids. The Perry County Solid Waste Plan does this determine the extent of developed areas and that will determine other public service provider areas.

### Solid Waste Plan:
Chapter 4  Interrelationships

- Lower Taxes - May negatively affect efforts to improve solid waste management in the County and municipalities.

- Economic Issues - A proper solid waste plan in evidence will appeal to potential investors and developers looking to expand into a given area.

- Natural Resource Issues - Implementation of a solid waste plan will protect natural resources by guiding refuse to be disposed of in an orderly planned manner, utilizing designated landfill space to minimize negative effects on the environment and natural resources.

- Transportation Issues - Perry County’s geography has historically made it difficult to address solid waste. Selecting from a limited pool of haulers willing to handle large hauling routes has been difficult for municipal officials in certain reaches of the county. In low density areas, the long distance collection routes adversely affects costs associated with this service.

- Community Services (Solid Waste) - A well designed solid waste plan can aid in the continuation of public health, while improving competitive edge for enticing prospective business to areas with such service arrangements. With such arrangements there is a reduction in logistical worry for county and municipal residents about how to dispose of their refuse.

**Water Supply Plan:**

- Lower Taxes - As with the sewerage plan above, lowering taxes would likely have a detrimental impact on paying back loans typically used to cover such water system pursuits at the municipal level.

- Economic Issues - There will always need to be capacity with the water supply system necessary enough to supply existing business and labor and to attract new investment.

- Natural Resource Issues - A well thought out water supply plan with help protect natural resources by cultivating the protection of important water basins necessary for drinking water.

- Transportation Issues - Water supply, like public sewer infrastructure, can have a determining effect upon the location and scope of development. Improvements need to be coordinated so new streets are not torn apart within a few years following constructed or resurfacing. A geographically restricted system of public waterlines will generally limit where more intense development takes place.

- Community Services (Solid Waste) - A proper water supply plan will ensure adequate roll out of public services both in the day to day and in emergency situations.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

While it has been documented in prior plans, identifying interrelationships pronounces an awareness of connections. Knowing the connections can lead to realistic expectations moving forward.