Planners distribute survey to aid comprehensive plan

By SEAN SURO
Staff Writer

County planning coordinator Jason Finnerty attended the May 12 county commissioners’ meeting to solicit the public’s help in producing a comprehensive plan. He announced that an online survey is to be used to seek input from residents to keep the plan up to date.

“It is an approach that is more strategic,” he said. “It looks at targeting achievable goals and objectives.”

Surveys are a new approach used by the state Department of Community and Economic Development and have made comprehensive plans more implementable, Finnerty said. “It will identify issues in the county that we will be targeting.”

Such plans typically look ahead at least 10 years. The survey will help identify the county’s top five or 10 issues. On the survey is a list of many issues and people are asked to check boxes beside what they believe are the three most important. The survey also allows other issues to be named in an optional box.

“We don’t know exactly what we’re going to end up with,” Finnerty said. “It’s just going to be an interesting process.”

Survey takers also can suggest solutions to perceived problems.

“It’s basically taking a snapshot of where the county stands at the present time,” Finnerty said.

People are encouraged to provide their home municipalities because the comprehensive plan divides Perry County into three development regions — northeast, southeast and west.

“We’re looking to try to pull representatives in who have interest in those specific areas,” Finnerty said.

“We’re also taking information from outside of the county from people who work here or continually drive through. Responders also are encouraged to indicate their willingness to serve on a comprehensive plan committee. Information is not to be shared with the public and is to be used only for committee contact purposes.”

“This will be the first time,” Finnerty said of background information used.

Similar surveys used to alleviate traffic in Cumberland and counties, Tri-County Planning Commissioner Craig Layne said, don’t know about it and do anything about it. The survey may

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BRIDGE TO THE PAST — This old photo of 125-year-old Waggoner’s Mill Covered Bridge shows the original white color. The bridge was painted red at one point. It now is in danger of falling down.

Bridge is sloping to one side and chained to a tree on another side to help support it. The whole thing is kind of sinking in,” Hocker said. “I’m kind of scared to walk on that guy. It’s that bad.”

Waggoner’s at one time was considered among the most picturesque bridges in the state, Hocker said. “It has graced magazine covers, and it appeared in various magazines in the 1940s and 50s.

“The bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places. So this bridge is considered a national treasure, as well as a county treasure.”

Now, Hocker would like a preservation scheme developed. “Hopefully, we’ll get something worked out with the county. We just need the initial somebody to stand up and say, ‘I’m going to fix it.’”

County Commissioner Steve Naylor said the issue had been looked at before but to no avail.

“There was an attempt to make some progress with it. I personally got nowhere.”

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Survey

Continued from Page 1

Intermediate Unit for special education services. A contract with River Rock Academy for up to 14 alternative education slots at a cost of $284,760 also passed, but on a 3-5 vote with Suzanne Dell, Dan Rice, Lucinda Egolf, and Paul Boone dissenting.

Hard-copy surveys are key to receiving feedback from the county’s Amish communities and from those without Internet access. Finnerty also sent surveys, in an e-mail form, to county municipalities and said he hopes they will make them available at their offices.

“We’d like to wrap the survey portion of this up fairly quickly,” Finnerty said. “I’m thinking two months.”

The comprehensive plan was last updated in 2007, and Finnerty said the 2015 plan is to be more thorough.

“It may have been a little weak in how we move the county forward,” he said of previous plans. “We’ve been trying to work the planning back to the time of the census to make it more current.”
Planners distribute survey to aid comprehensive plan

By SEAN SAURO
Staff Writer
County planning coordinators recently attended the May 12 county commissioners' meeting to solicit the public's help in producing a comprehensive plan. They announced that an online survey is to be used to seek input from residents to keep the plan up to date.

"It is an approach that is more strategic," he said. "It looks at targeting achievable goals and objectives." Surveys are a new approach, used by the state Department of Community and Economic Development and have made comprehensive plans more feasible, he added. It will identify issues in the county that will be targeting.

Such plans typically take at least 10 years. The survey will help identify the county's top five to 10 issues. On the survey is a list of many issues and people are asked to check boxes beside what they believe are the three most important. The survey also allows other issues to be named in an optional box.

"We don't know exactly what we're going to end up with," Finney said. "It's just going to be an interesting process." Survey takers can suggest solutions to perceived problems.

"It's basically a snapshot of where the county stands at the present time," Finney said.

People are encouraged to provide their own feedback, because the comprehensive plan divides Perry County into three development regions - northeast, southeast, and west. We're looking to try pull representatives in who have interest in those specific areas," Finney said.

"We want to take information from outside of the county from people who work here or continually drive through." Responders are also encouraged to indicate their willingness to serve on a comprehensive plan committee. Information is to be shared with the public and is not to be used only for committee contact purposes.

"This will be the actual plan itself," Finney said. "It's a lot of background information." Similar surveys have been used to alleviate traffic issues in Cumberland and Dauphin counties, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission spokesperson Craig Layne said. "If we don't know anything, we can't do anything about it.

The survey may be taken.

Planners distribute survey to aid comprehensive plan.

Early deadline
Due to the Memorial Day holiday, there will be an early deadline of 4 p.m., Thursday, May 22, for advertising and editorial copy for the May 29 issue of the Perry County Times.

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Input sought as commission maps Perry County’s future

By SARA LANDIS
Staff Writer

The Perry County Planning Commission took a new approach in creating 2015's updated Comprehensive Plan: Get as much community feedback as possible.

The commission hopes to take the same approach in adopting it. "Obviously it's good to hear from the public on these things," said Jason Finnerty, Perry County planning coordinator. "Otherwise the planner would think that everything is OK" while the public might feel important issues are not being addressed.

A comprehensive plan, which the county is required to revisit every 10 years, covers everything from planned land use to taxes to transportation. Work on the new plan began with an online survey posted on the county's website.

The question was simple: What did people believe were the most important issues that Perry County needed to address? The results of the survey then were used to build the new plan, which can be viewed as a PDF at www.tcrp-pa.org/Perry-County.

The proposed plan is divided into sections based on each issue being addressed. Each section details the effect of that issue on the community, problems that issue is causing the community, remedies for fixing the problems, objectives that the Planning Commission hopes to achieve in relation to the issue and action items for achieving those objectives.

The commission hopes that addressing the issues will advance the county in a positive direction.

Before the plan is brought before the county commissioners, the Planning Commission once again is asking for input from county residents.

Article 3 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code requires scheduling a public hearing for residents to voice concerns and to ask questions about any proposed plan.

"We're going to go ... well beyond that," said Finnerty. "We're going to give the public ample time to kind of digest (the plan) and read through it and offer up comments."

The Planning Commission plans to hold three public forums, in addition to the required hearing. "It's a new approach," said Finnerty, noting that the old approach involved the public much less.

"It's kind of a feeling-out process to see if this is the route the county should be looking at. According to Finnerty, the purpose of the extra meetings is to lay the plan out "a little bit more in layman's terms" as the written document itself likely will not answer all questions that residents may have.

The new approach seems to be going over well with county residents. The task force meetings, held last fall, were well-attended, and Finnerty said he has received positive feedback from newsletter and newspaper articles, noting the experiment has so far been a "nice, engaging process with the public."