INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Perry County Comprehensive Plan has become a partnership, forged by the Perry County Board of Commissioners with the adoption of the Plan, municipal officials unifying the County’s planning process, the County Planning Commission through their stewardship and endorsement, the planning staff facilitating Plan preparation from inception to adoption and implementation, and citizen stakeholders.

The effectiveness of this plan toward reaching sound planning goals relies on clear communication between the Perry County Board of Commissioners, the Perry County Planning Commission and other agencies and authorities involved in the shaping of the County’s future. The continued support and maintenance of the Plan by county leaders, administrators, and residents is essential for its future success.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan delineates the County’s core governmental components, how they are associated with the planning and development process, and describes the general financial structure of the County. This arrangement will facilitate identification of areas of need, while promoting both Plan design and implementation.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT PERRY COUNTY

With a 2010 population of 45,969, Perry County has been classified as a Sixth (6th) Class County. Section 210, Act 130 of August 9, 1955, P.L. 323, as amended, known as “The County Code” divides counties into nine (9) classes based on decennial population counts. Sixth Class Counties are those having a population of 45,000 or more, but less than 90,000. Perry County has officially transitioned into a new class with this comprehensive planning process revisit.

Diagram 10-1 illustrates the County’s present governmental organization. The diagram is broken down into two headings to cover both, the legislative and judicial sides of government.

The Perry County Board of Commissioners serves as the chief elected officials of the County government. The Board is comprised of three (3) members, each elected to a four-year term. The Board’s responsibilities are numerous and include but are not limited to the annual budget preparation, millage rate establishment, appointment of planning commission members, and hiring county employees. Some other noteworthy responsibilities include supervision of the construction and maintenance of County owned facilities and bridges, and the administration of welfare, elections, and County health services. The Commissioners meets weekly in the Perry County Veteran’s Memorial Building to conduct official county business.
PLANNING IN PERRY COUNTY

Established in 1966, the Perry County Planning Commission (PCPC) is the primary planning body in the County. The Commission consists of nine (9) members appointed by the County Commissioners with each member meeting County residency requirements.

The PCPC’s authorities and responsibilities are set forth in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Act of 1968, No. 247, as reenacted and amended.

In addition to these basic responsibilities, the Board of Commissioners can request that the PCPC provide other services outlined in the M.P.C., such as: preparation and updating of the comprehensive plan, maintenance of certain files and records, preparation of codes and ordinances (zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, building codes, and housing codes), preparation of environmental studies, and preparation of Capital Improvement Programs. The PCPC also administers the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and holds public meetings and public hearings as necessary.

On June 21, 2006, the Perry County Planning Commission finalized its first Mission Statement. The statement is as follows:

“To serve Perry County and its communities with a professional planning program structured to recognize and support regional and local planning efforts and to manage growth in a coordinated orderly fashion while preserving the natural and cultural features and rural character which create the Perry County lifestyle.”

THE TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (TCRPC)

The Perry County Planning Commission’s staff functions through the support provided by the TCRPC under a structured agreement with the Perry County Board of Commissioners. The agreement ensures participation as a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) also known as the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study (HATS) together with the Federal Transportation funding leveraged by the organization. From the county support side of the agreement, an assigned planner from the TCRPC carries the title Perry County Planning Coordinator, and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the office.
In 2012, $62,100.00\textsuperscript{2} was budgeted for county support. Under this budget line, the funds were used to cover work under the Coordinator’s work program and other TCRPC and HATS support staff.

The office at the Perry County Veteran’s Memorial Building is staffed three (3) days a week and includes Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. The other two days (Wednesday and Friday) the Coordinator can be reached at the TCRPC office in Harrisburg. Staff is responsible for preparing a comprehensive plan, meeting with the public, performing initial reviews (S&LD, sewage, ordinance, etc.), coordinate subdivision and land development reviews, reports, work programming, interagency coordination, manage the outreach program, grant writing, website support, among other things.

The TCRPC encompasses Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry Counties. The Commission is composed of 31 voting members representing local planning organizations, municipal officials, county planning commissions and associations representing minority interests. Members are appointed bi-annually by each County’s Board of Commissioners. The TCRPC meets in full four (4) times a year. An Executive Committee, comprised of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, meets monthly outside the Full Commission.

The TCRPC staff includes an Executive Director, Associate Director, ten (10) staff planners, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technician, and a supporting technical and clerical staff. The staff is responsible for the daily activities of the Commission and the professional planning services.

In addition to the various staff functions supplied to the Perry County Planning Commission, the TCRPC’s staff responsibilities to Perry County also extend to cover transportation planning with HATS. In 2012 this participation in HATS yielded access to $5,489,676.00 in federal and state transportation funds covering twenty-five transportation projects in Perry County.

Since its establishment in 1965, HATS, the federally designated MPO for the Harrisburg area, has traditionally been comprised of federal, state, and local agencies. HATS continues with its planning process to establish a transportation system that will adequately serve the growing needs of the Harrisburg urbanized area. In terms of coverage, the HATS support staff, is responsible for road and street improvements within the Tri-County Region’s 1,675 square miles.
coverage area of consisting of 103 municipalities. The HATS planning process emphasizes short and long-term problem solving and involves the public in the development of a Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Short Range Transit Plan, and Congestion Management System. The planning process culminates in the preparation and approval of a biennial Transportation Improvement Program, which constitutes the first four-year period of the Commonwealth's Twelve Year Program. Other important transportation planning activities include traffic counting and inventory work for the federally initiated Highway Performance and Monitoring System; administration of the Regional Ridesharing Program; the provision of transportation system information for interested individuals, organizations and local governments; congestion management planning; transit planning for Capital Area Transit (CAT); and review of projects and recommendations for the Commonwealth's Twelve Year Transportation Program.

In addition to the HATS program, the TCRPC provides regional support services that include: Regional Annual Reports, planning education and training, model ordinances, a quarterly newsletter, functioning as an affiliate for the Pennsylvania State Data Center, and providing area-wide clearinghouse activities and special studies.

The TCRPC also contracts with several Perry County municipalities under the Local Planning Assistance Program (LPA). Through this program, the TCRPC staff provides direct professional planning assistance to the respective municipal planning commissions. The planning mentor service includes consultation on comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivision, and land development and other aspects of local planning programs.

**PLANNING CODES AND ENFORCEMENT**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (PA MPC), Act No. 247, of 1968 as reenacted and amended, gives municipalities and counties, certain powers, and authorities to establish and enforce land use controls. This enabling legislation allows municipalities to prepare comprehensive plans, and to establish zoning, and subdivision and land development ordinances (S&LDO’s).

The PA MPC establishes a reverse hierarchical form of planning protocol in municipalities and counties. In sum, municipalities that enact zoning and S&LDOs have the opportunity to regulate land use, site construction, and lot design in their municipality considering both ordinances enabled by the PA MPC. The PA MPC further empowers county governing bodies to enact, amend, and repeal a county subdivision and land development ordinance, and / or a zoning ordinance which applies to cities, boroughs, incorporated towns and townships where local ordinances have not been adopted.

Since the original enactment of the Perry County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (2011-01) in April of 1968, the Perry County Planning Commission has administered and enforced these regulations. With zoning, the County Commissioners have chosen not to enact a county-wide zoning ordinance to govern land use decisions in areas where the municipal officials have not yet done so. Table 10-1 lists the current
municipal information pertaining to the existence of local planning commissions, zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, sewage facilities planning (Act 537), Uniform Construction Code (UCC Regulation), and comprehensive plans. Under the County S&LDO the PCPC has the jurisdictional authority over eight municipalities for the approval/disapproval of subdivision and land development plats, where no local S&LDO has been adopted. However, the remaining twenty-two (22) municipalities that maintain their own S&LDO ordinances are still required to have the County Planning Commission review and report on each plan application. Under this arrangement, the County has 30 days from the date a subdivision or land development application is received to supply the municipality with its review and report.

The County Planning Commission also fulfills its PA MPC obligations to perform reviews of municipal comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances and collective amendments. The Commission also undertakes a wide variety of intergovernmental reviews and other various county support functions.

Since 2004, the TCRPC staff has been instrumental in securing slightly more than $250,000.00 in state and federal capital for projects. The described funding has been used to update the 2007 County Comprehensive Plan, develop the County’s first Greenways, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and the first Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), and help funded two model ordinances at the regional level for use by municipalities throughout the county. An additional $39,500.00 is presently being sought from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) for the purpose of undertaking a 5-yr update to the HMP.

**SOURCES:**

1 *US Census Bureau:*
2 *TCRPC 2012 Budget*
# County Administration and Financial Analysis

## Chapter 10

### TABLE 10-1

**MUNICIPAL PLANNING INFORMATION**

**PERRY COUNTY**

2012

Source: Perry County Planning Commission 2011 Annual Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Planning Commission</th>
<th>Zoning Ordinance</th>
<th>Subdivision &amp; Land Development (S&amp;LD) Ordinance</th>
<th>S&amp;LD Approving Body</th>
<th>Act 537 Plan</th>
<th>Comprehensive Plan</th>
<th>***UCC Regulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blain Borough</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre Township</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
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<td>Jackson Township</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landisburg Borough</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller Township</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oliver Township</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saville Township</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Township</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (1991)</td>
<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobyne Township</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Perry COG/ BIU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*County acts on all subdivisions but borough zoning regulations apply and override county lot sizes, areas and setbacks

***UCC-Uniform Construction Code

***“Opted Out”*** - “If a municipality opts out, it’s... responsibilities under the UCC are to notify applicants for building permits that they must contract with certified third party agencies for residential permits and inspections or, if commercial construction is involved, secure permits and inspections from the Department of Labor and Industry.”
PERRY COUNTY FINANCES

In order to successfully implement programs and provide services to county residents, adequate financial resources and support are essential. The Board of Commissioners must prepare a fiscal year budget (January 1 through December 31). The budget anticipates all sources of revenue and expenditures for the coming year. The following section will outline the different revenue sources in Perry County in 2012.

Revenue

The most important sources of revenue in Perry County are the Real Estate and Per Capita Taxes. These taxes account for almost half of the total revenue generated each year. Other important revenue sources for the County are intergovernmental revenues and charges for County services. The following will discuss some of these sources.

1. Real Estate Taxes

Real Estate Taxes are taxes levied on real estate within Perry County, with some exemptions such as churches, public buildings, or charitable institutions. The rate is fixed to meet the budgetary needs determined by the County Commissioners. This is the largest revenue generating mechanism at the County’s disposal. The 2012 budget has three variables that affect the revenue total for a given year. These are:

A. Changes in the Total Market Value of Real Estate

   This value usually increases due to the combined effect of real increases in property values due in part to demand, inflation and the price of construction. New additions to the housing or building stock through new construction and redevelopment must also be considered.

B. Changes in the Assessment Ratio

   The assessment value is important because it is the basis on which real estate taxes are levied. Currently, the assessment ratio in Perry County is 100 percent, as set by the County Commissioners. Perry County completed the last full reassessment in 2010.

C. Changes in the Millage Rate

   Determined by the County Commissioners, this rate is levied on the assessed value. The current county rate is 3.3125 mills. As a result, a person who owns a house assessed at $100,000.00 pays $331.25 in county real estate taxes.

2. Per Capita Taxes
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The current Perry County per capita tax is $5.00 per individual.

The Per Capita Tax is a flat rate imposed on all taxable persons that are residents of Perry County. Over the past several years the per capita tax has maintained a stable two or three percent of the total taxes collected in the County.

3. Intergovernmental Revenue

Intergovernmental revenues are obtained from federal, state and local government programs and sources. In general, the federal sources are derived from social security and through the federal lands program. Revenue from the County’s local governments comes from the gypsy moth program and from certain tax notices.

The largest amount of intergovernmental revenue is obtained through the many active state programs and assistance sources. In 2012, there were 28 different sources of state funded revenue for the County. Some of the larger programs include: Grant in Aid, Childcare Title XX, Foster Home/Institutional Care, Domestic Relations, Office of the Aging, and Transportation Coordination.

4. Grants

Perhaps the most known County grant is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administered by the TCRPC for the Perry County Board of Commissioners. Historically this program aided municipalities with their infrastructural improvements.

During the past decade the county has witnessed a slightly gradual reduction in the CDBG funding. Graph 10-1 illustrates this trend as it displays annual appropriations.
5. Department Fees/ Charges for Services

The variety of fees and charges collected by the different services of Perry County’s administration plays an important role in generating revenue. Filing and recording fees, District Justice fees, and Sheriff’s fees services are just a few of the fees collected by the County. This source of revenue accounts for approximately nine (9) percent of the County’s total revenue.

Under the Right-To-Know Law and Right-To-Know Officer can only charge for the fee representing the cost of the printed materials. In many cases service fees such as the handling of these requests are nominal.

**Licenses and Permits**

Perry County administers licenses to individuals, business, and non-profit entities. Such licenses include hunting, fishing, games of chance, and dogs.

Also included in this category are permits. The permits include a concealed weapons permit. Categorized as a revenue source, the licenses and permits issued by Perry County remain the smallest source of revenue.

The 2012 budget relied on this area of revenue for less than nine (9) percent of the County’s revenue income.

6. Investments

The capital received under this category is comprised of dividends yielded from the county financial planning.
7. Other Revenue

The miscellaneous revenue category covers all the revenue outside the above-mentioned sources. This includes sources such as rent, insurance reimbursements, and other reimbursements. This category is relatively stable accounting for seven (7) percent of all revenue in 1985, three (3) percent in 1990, six (6) percent in 2000, and six (6) percent in 2005 and in 2012.

Chart 10-2

**2012 Perry County Revenues**
Percent of Total Budget

Source: Perry County Fiscal Office/ August 13, 2012

**Perry County Expenditures**

Perry County government’s expenses are detailed here. The following is a list of the general categories where money is spent by this government. The County’s 2012 Budget Chart (See Chart 10-3) displays where the County Commissioners planned to allocate monies collected. The categorical lists of offices/departments for the 2012 Budget are as follows:

1. General Government – This category includes the County Commissioners Office, Chief Clerk, Fiscal Office, Voter Registration Office, Auditors, Assessment Office, Tax Claim/Treasurer, and Veterans Affairs.


4. Human Services – This grouping includes Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Drug and Alcohol, Children and Youth Services, and the Office of Aging.

5. Prison – The County budget lists the Prison separately because of the significance of its influence.


7. Debt Service – Return payment on expenditures and other financing.

8. Tax Collection – This classification includes Tax Collectors and the Tax Claim Bureau.

Chart 10-3

Source: Perry County Fiscal Office/ August 13, 2012
The actual dollar amounts budgeted for each 2012 budget area is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Area</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>$2,763,350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>$3,757,645.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>$3,663,250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>$613,375.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>$4,484,050.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation &amp; Development</td>
<td>$311,448.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Collection</td>
<td>$2,763,350.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Perry County Fiscal Office*

All told, employee wages and benefits account for approximately 31% of the budget at a cost of $5,634,150.00.