

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The comprehensive plan has been the cornerstone of American planning theory and practice since the early 1900s. Pennsylvania law requires counties to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan. It contains the basic policies that will guide the future growth and development of the community. The plan is of a general nature, long-range in outlook, and includes all factors affecting growth and development. The comprehensive plan serves three principal functions: it is a statement of goals, a listing of objectives, and a vision of what could be; it is an educational tool, helping everyone who uses it understand the conditions, problems, and opportunities of the community through the provision of factual information; and it serves as a guide to public and private decision-making, thus, shaping the future of the community.

A comprehensive plan by itself is not a solution to all the problems and concerns of a community. The value of a well-prepared plan is derived from the process of preparing the plan and the implementation of the plan after it is prepared. The plan should focus attention on the major issues and concerns of a community and establish a basis for debate, discussion, and conflict resolution. The plan should never be regarded as a finished project, to be completed every ten years or so, but as a community-based planning process.

*Continuity Through Conservation II, The Plan* is Huntingdon County's blueprint for the future, detailing the vision, goals, objectives, policies and plans for the next twenty years. It is our goal that Huntingdon County achieve economic prosperity while retaining the qualities of rural and small-town living. The Plan was developed between 1996 and 2000 by a team of consultants and the staff of the Huntingdon County Planning and Development Department. The Huntingdon County Comprehensive Plan is made up of the following documents:

- *Huntingdon County Heritage Plan, 1996*
- *Continuity Through Conservation II, Part I, Background Studies, 1997*
- *Continuity Through Conservation II, Background Studies Supplement, 1999*
- *Continuity Through Conservation II, Part II, The Plan, 2000*
- *Huntingdon County Intergovernmental Action Plan, 2001*
- *A Comprehensive Economic Analysis for Huntingdon County, 2003*
- *Huntingdon County Natural Heritage Inventory, 2004*
- *Continuity Through Conservation II, 2007 Supplement*
- *Infrastructure Investment Strategy and Water Supply Plan, 2007*
- *Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Plan, 2007*

The *2007 Supplement* updated the land use plan, developed an infrastructure investment strategy, developed a model zoning ordinance and developed an updated zoning ordinance for Huntingdon Borough.



## HERITAGE PLAN UPDATE

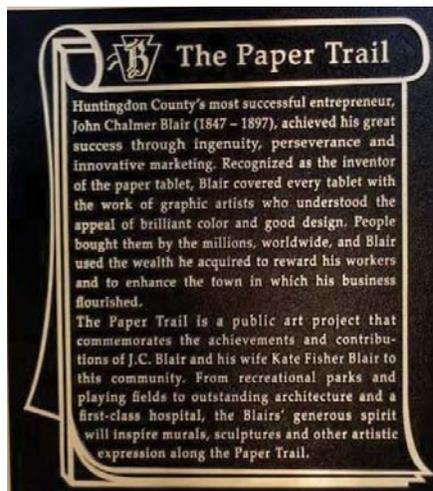
The *Huntingdon County Heritage Plan* was last updated in 1996. After securing a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in 2013, the Planning Commission was tasked with updating this Plan. The Commissioners kept the PHMC Grant funds in the County by hiring local consulting services. The services of the Huntingdon County Historical Society (HCHS) and the Huntingdon County Arts Council (HCAC) were utilized for this project. Ilona Ballreich of the HCAC was contracted to be the primary consultant on the project. The majority of the research and Plan writing took place in 2014, while the final draft of the Plan was completed on March 23, 2015.

The update process engaged the recently reconvened Heritage Committee to evaluate the priorities of the existing Plan and add new priorities that have emerged since 1996. As can be expected, a



significant amount of change had happened to the structures identified in the 1996 Plan over the past 20 years. The thrust to update the Plan was not focused just on updating the 1996 Plan, but to building upon it. The Plan update includes a few significant new sections, including a cultural resource inventory - a collection of ‘intangible’ cultural heritage elements found throughout the County. Since the 1996 Plan had such a focus on the bricks and mortar structures that represented the County’s heritage, the new Plan would provide some context to those places by understanding other major cultural heritage elements that made the robust community. Finally, the Plan update process also understood the need of the owners and admirers of heritage sites throughout the County to be equipped with more resources to help preserve their heritage sites well into the future. The owners and admirers of heritage sites include many community Historical Societies and similar organizations. This was furthered by developing a network of collaboration among stakeholders to foster preservation and investment in the County. Understanding the heritage and history of the County and region allows us to foresee where we are headed. Part of the update process involved capturing this inventory of organizations, historical societies, and museums.

Once this inventory was compiled, each group was sent a Historic and Heritage Asset Survey. The goal was to find better ways for organizations to better work with technology, promotion, events, and education. After this data was compiled, it would be possible to better collaborate, work together, and learn



from each other. For example, it was determined that each organization might benefit from bringing in a speaker that could help them create a better web presence. A realization was made that a workshop could be held to help multiple people. The completion of the *2015 Huntingdon County Heritage Plan* provided a resource that can be used as a tool well into the future.

## LAND USE PLAN UPDATE

The Planning and Development Department and the Mapping Department teamed up to produce existing land use maps for a few of the County’s municipalities. Considering that one of the projects in the Juniata River Blueprint Communities was to do a property inventory, the Core Team discussed using land use maps to use as a base map to help determine areas of need and possible project locations. The Planning Commission saw the value in these local workshops and tasked the Planning Department to continue to have the land use maps reviewed by the local communities in the County’s eleven planning regions. Workshops are anticipated throughout 2016.

## MULTI-COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Huntingdon County Comprehensive Plan, Continuity through Conservation II*, was adopted in 2000 and last given a through update in 2007. The Municipalities Planning Code, *Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247* as reenacted and amended, is the enabling legislation for land use law in Pennsylvania. Under Article II - Comprehensive Plan, Section 302(d) states that “County comprehensive plans shall be updates at least every ten years.” Given this timeline, a new Comprehensive Plan is needed in Huntingdon County. Since Planning Director Mark Colussy was the Chairman of the SAP&DC Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) in 2014, he brought up this need at a Committee meeting in an effort for possible coordination with neighboring counties. As it turns out, the majority of the counties in this six county region are in the same situation. After months of negotiation and discussion, SAP&DC staff was authorized by the board to investigate possible funding sources. The members and staff of the PAC first reached out to Denny Puko of DCED to see if he thought this would be a feasible project. He delightedly suggested applying for a MAP grant. In order to find an accurate budget number, staff of SAP&DC produced a Request for Information (ROI) for consultants to determine if the project could be done and for what estimated amount of money. After the results were in, all six boards of Commissioners in the Region approved supplying match funds for a grant to complete the project. This grant was submitted in 2016.