

**Public Meeting
June 22, 1999
Stakeholder Groups
Session One Summaries**

The session was advertised in the local newspaper, a press release was published, and information was also communicated via direct mail, flyers, and newsletters. A total of 48 members of the public attended the two-hour session. Nineteen separate zip codes were represented.

Participants were asked to self-select into one of 9 “stakeholders groups”. Each group was facilitated by a member of the Land Use Plan Steering Committee.

Agriculture
Economic Development *
Education and Human Services
Environment
Housing & Real Estate
Public Utilities & Infrastructure
Resource-based Industries
Tourism & Recreation
Transportation

** No participants selected Economic Development at this session.*

Participants were asked to consider the following:

1. List as many ideas as you can think of relating to opportunities, issues, problems that need to be addressed in terms of land use planning.
2. Classify each idea as a PROBLEM (something that must be solved, it is keeping us from progressing), an OPPORTUNITY (a chance to move ahead if we act), or an ISSUE (something that needs to be explored further).
3. ASSIGN A PRIORITY (#1, 2, 3) to the top three priorities on each list.

Participants were given approximately 45 minutes for the group process, at which time they were reconvened and summarized the results of their discussions for the entire group.

AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

PROBLEM:

Property rights are Priority #1
Use of Brownfields before using A-1 land for R-1, R-2, etc. or commercial industrial use (Priority #2)
Identify prime farmland areas (Priority #3)
Fair interpretation and good comprehension of *right to farm laws*
Sewage and water run off from residential areas on to farmlands

OPPORTUNITY:

To have the *GIS* available to help solve the problems identified

ISSUES:

How to *receive more dollars for farmland preservation*
How County development can facilitate agriculture development

EDUCATION and HUMAN SERVICES STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

PROBLEM:

Current *fragmentation of human services*
Ineffective planning of human services
Current *service facilities in poor physical condition*

OPPORTUNITY:

Anticipated *population increase*. Specialized services needed throughout County (i.e. police, elderly, low-income, teens, drug and alcohol, mental health, day care, recreation, transportation).
Additional Service Facilities needed in rural areas of County. Coordinate resources in a countywide effort, based on Land Use Planning.

PROBLEM:

School Districts are too large to effectively manage.
Too much travel time for students due to the large size of School Districts. Neighborhood Schools do not exist in some areas and communities. *Additional Schools are needed* due to increased population in the County.

ISSUES:

Countywide School District
Impact of anticipated population increase.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Anticipated population increase.
More teachers will be necessary.
Additional schools may need to be built in increased population areas.

Land Use Priorities:

Additional service facilities needed in rural areas of the County.
Specialized services needed throughout the County.
Additional schools may need to be built in increased population areas.

ENVIRONMENT STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

PROBLEM: *Watershed management and preservation* is critical.

ISSUE: Need for *comprehensive water study*. Issues are quality, quantity, and support for residential and commercial development, tourism, and recreation development.

OPPORTUNITY: *National resource inventory* to be done.

HOUSING STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

PROBLEM: Inequitable real estate taxes.

OPPORTUNITY: *Reassessment* is #1 priority.

PROBLEM: Too fragmented zoning (land use planning)

OPPORTUNITY: Encourage individual municipalities to *stay with County zoning* – or at least conform their zoning to the County Land Use Plan.

PROBLEM: Too much rent-assisted housing for seniors, not enough other mix of housing.

OPPORTUNITY: Community-based agency with the respect and responsibility and authority to *advise decision-makers on need*.

PROBLEM: Perception that quality, upscale housing is not available.

ISSUE: *School district quality and cultural amenities* are the real problem.

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC UTILITIES
STAKEHOLDERS GROUP**

PROBLEM: Lack of regional focus and process on water and sewage planning (Priority #1).

OPPORTUNITY: Institute a *regional focus* and process for water and sewage planning.

ISSUES: Lack of regional water use plan.
Lack of regional sewage plan.
Take advantage of natural watersheds.
Take ego out of the process.
Take the politics out of the water and sewage planning and funding process.

PROBLEM: The smaller, more rural townships needs are overlooked for those of the larger, more highly populated ones.

OPPORTUNITY: *Develop an infrastructure plan along major corridors, interchanges, and waterways* to maximize controlled growth that will benefit the development of the County.

ISSUES: Economic Development
Residential Development
Character of land and green space

PROBLEM: Need for *alternative sewage solutions and access to funding* to provide sewage services for sparsely populated areas where traditional sewage plants are not economical.

ISSUE: How to both concurrently control and stimulate growth that will result in the most effective land use of economic development, residential development, waterway use, and preserving the character of the County.

PROBLEM: *Address needed upgrades* of older water and sewage lines and *extension of existing lines*.

OPPORTUNITY: Take advantage of the Federal Enterprise Community (FEC) and Keystone Opportunity *Zone designations*.

ISSUES: Priority funding status.
Infrastructure programs.
Compilations and ongoing updating of infrastructure information on water, sewage, roads, etc.

PROBLEM: *Correction of combined sewage outflows* in boroughs and municipalities.

ISSUE: Clean waterways.

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TOURISM AND RECREATION STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

PROBLEM: *Lack of consistency* in application of current zoning and permitting practices.

OPPORTUNITY: Develop and implement *standardized policies and procedures* to identify historical and natural resource sites to assure their protection, conservation, and wise management.

ISSUE: Outdated or nonexistent *ordinances, regulations, and policies*.
Fractionalized zoning and incompatible zoning and planning policies.
Funding to implement current regulations
Standards and criteria to identify historical properties.

PROBLEM: Lack of ability to *correct inappropriate land use*.

OPPORTUNITY: Revise current zoning policies to permit most appropriate use of land as determined by standardized policies.

ISSUE: Develop *criteria* by which property would be designated as historic, recreational, commercial, and residential.
Adopt and apply criteria consistently and universally throughout County.
Equitable relocation of non-compatible uses.
Special planning zones or districts for historic, viewshed, natural, and recreational uses.
Utilities burying lines rather than cutting trees to protect viewshed and appearance.

PROBLEM: *Unsightly structures* and properties.

OPPORTUNITY: *Create and offer incentives* for owners and municipalities to preserve and maintain historic and natural resources and areas.

ISSUES: Rights of private owner in light of public health and welfare.
Funding for incentives.
Organization and support of volunteer efforts.
Current regulations that permit “grandfathering” of unsightly and inappropriate uses of land.

OTHER PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED WERE:

- **Lack of signage standards**
(Opportunity to design standards for commercial and industrial development in main access corridors)
- **Poor road system that makes it difficult to get people into the area and to various existing attractions**
(Opportunity to improve highway and bike trail systems)
- **Lack of supportive services for tourists** (i.e. restaurants, lodging, etc.)
(Opportunity to improve infrastructure so that development can occur)
- **Lack of vision and planning for land use for tourism**
(Opportunity to expand scope of County planners and provide infrastructure, funding, and incentives so developers will consider tourism development)
- **Lack of awareness of resources**
(Opportunity to update and expand natural resource inventory. Make historic resource inventories more accessible to general public)
- **Abuse of natural resources**
(Opportunity to reclaim streams and natural habitat from current polluted status)

TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

ROAD TRANSPORTATION

OPPORTUNITY: The *Mon-Fayette Expressway* is the single most important economic development issue of the region.

ISSUES: Careful scrutiny needs to be placed on *feeder roads and interchanges* along the Brownsville to Uniontown alignment. Planning and zoning concerns are also paramount.

PROBLEM: *Maintenance and upgrading* of major existing routes within the County, including Rts. 119, 51, 711, 40, 21, 166, 381, 281, 652, and 857.

OPPORTUNITY: An examination of *new and needed roads* needs to be done, especially for resource-based industry traffic in the mountain areas and along the Monongahela River.

RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION

PROBLEM: The improvement and *upkeep of existing lines* is critical.

OPPORTUNITY: *New access to lines* for freight and industry need to be opened (side, stations, etc.).

ISSUE: *Passenger traffic* would be a welcome addition.

AIRPORT/AIR TRANSPORTATION

PROBLEM: *A major upgrade of the existing County airport* is absolutely needed. It must be upgraded to accommodate corporate jets. *A new, larger airport facility* at another location should be explored in depth.

OPPORTUNITY: The airport should offer *more recreational flying and skydiving*.

WATER – RIVER/LAKE – TRANSPORTATION

OPPORTUNITY: *A new comprehensive study of river industries* should be undertaken (past, present, and future potential). River taxis also present an opportunity for business and community development.

PROBLEM: *Marinas, ports, docks, and wharves* need to be fostered and upgraded in order to take advantage of river transportation and travel opportunities.

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HIKE-BIKE TRAILS

OPPORTUNITY:

The major trails of the area (Yough, Sheepskin, Redstone, Brown's Run, and "S&M") are cost-effective, connect communities, are use friendly, and bring in much-needed dollars to the small business economy of the area. *New trails* need to be earmarked and explored. *Business development along trails* should be encouraged and fostered.

PROBLEM:

Upkeep of existing trails is mandatory. This should be included in comprehensive planning.

OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSES CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION:

A better use of brownfield areas as well as unused or unusable agricultural land should be critical, especially those parcels nearest to major transportation arteries. Possible uses for these could be transportation hubs for several forms of transport.

Interchanges on major highways should be protected and developed intelligently through sound planning procedures and common sense policies.

The possibility of an all-encompassing Port Authority should be given consideration.

Issues concerning avenues and vehicles for mass transit (bus lines, taxi companies, jitney services, etc.) must be further examined and implemented.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Participants were given the opportunity to submit comments in writing at the end of the session. The following were received:

- *The need for group housing should be discussed in the plan and reasonable provision for such uses needs to be included in zoning proposals.*
- *With the push on for economic development and industrial parks, the County needs to develop design standards and landscaping standards for industrial builds and areas. Example: Metal sheds have been and are being built along Rt. 51, Star Junction, and Franklin Park that are eyesores. We have enough old junkyards in the County without creating new “junk”. A good example of aesthetically pleasing developing is at Rt. 51 and Upper Middletown.*
- *After all of this is in place and we actually have a plan, will the zoning hearing board still be in place as it is, or will it be configured in a different way? Are there other types of zoning boards that might work better?*

**COMMENTS FROM THE JUNE 22nd PUBLIC MEETING
PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING**

These comments are to be included in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

1. TRANSPORTATION: The Fayette County Airport Authority should be changed to the Fayette County Prot. Authority to encompass the other forms of transportation.
2. LAND USE PLANNING: Felt that the subregions that were used in the initial regional public meetings for the plans should be considered in all planning because each area was divided by demographics and other features. This would make for more orderly and complimentary developing the County.
3. HOUSING: Habitat for Humanity plans to build 200 homes per year. Seems to be unrealistic.
4. HOUSING: Raise the taxes of the “cancerous” homes, which would eliminate many; hence, you can build them into a \$30-\$40,000 range of new homes.
5. The comprehensive plan use plan should have a section to be able to update on a regular basis and this should somehow be merged with the Strategic Plan.
6. TOURISM: This effort in the County is a joke because we don’t have real “tourism” directors involved on issues. We need them to broaden the tourism in the County.
7. MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT: Merge of the smaller municipalities with the larger bordering ones to have better productivity and services to the residents. Intergovernmental cooperation is needed to solve political concept and show the benefit of merging.
8. GOVERNMENT: Should Authorities exist unilaterally? The County Housing Authority has a \$22 million budget when the County has only a \$12 million budget.

KEY POINTS FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD IN 1998

These are the comments that were given at the six regional meetings that were held.

Key Ideas Countywide:

1. Need for greater zoning, building, property maintenance and general nuisance code enforcement.
2. Limited or inadequate infrastructure to serve existing or new growth.
3. Few housing choices for young and senior citizens.
4. Improve public school system – consolidate.
5. Expand job opportunities and work force.
6. Capitalize on tourism without negatively imparting historical and natural resources.
7. Enhance cooperation between all levels of government.

Ideas from Regional Meetings:

1. Conservation along the rivers.
2. Riverfront development.
3. Brownfield development needs to preserve green space.
4. Expand rails-to-trails program.
5. Mon-Fayette Expressway controlled in terms of development along the proposed interchanges.
6. Let industry remain in industrial parks.
7. Lack of public parks.
8. Reassessment of property.
9. Need public transportation.
10. Stormwater management – study of.
11. What housing will attract new people?
12. Joint-municipal agreements to share services.
13. Survey existing overnight facility and market the need.
14. Encourage small business growth.

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15. Rewrite zoning ordinance and enforcement of.
16. Need to assist small business and not just larger ones.
17. Need to address problems of aging and to hear the needs of them.
18. Money needed to upgrade or raze older homes.
19. Capitalize on local resources while having minimal impact on community.
20. Need for more green area.
21. Challenge is economic growth and produce diverse professional employment.
22. Don't take development just to have . . . concern on the type of development.
23. Educate on how to use the comprehensive plan when completed.
24. Consider neighboring municipalities – communication is needed.
25. Consideration of regional planning.
26. Eliminate eyesores – junkyards for example.
27. Need of public relations in the County.
28. Cooperation with ten municipalities that handle their own zoning – better communication.
29. Penn State needs to be more affordable – like a community college.
30. Public transportation is needed in the whole County.
31. Improve existing roadways.
32. Need to be careful when planning because of diversity in County.
33. Medical center, grocery store, etc. in mountain region.
34. Region 6 needs to be looked at closely because of the Mon-Fayette – has been neglected in the past.
35. Upgrading of major highways is a need.

RESOURCE BASED INDUSTRIES

Problems

1. In place resource development
- recognizing that natural resources need to be developed where they are located
2. Unrealistic regulations
3. Too many governments with regulations
4. Conflicting, different and multiple regulations
5. Uninformed officials administering regulations
6. Complicated and lengthy permit process

Opportunities

1. More efficient development of natural resources
2. Creation of more usable land
3. Uniform municipal regulations on a countywide basis
4. More efficient post development land use
5. Creation of more wildlife habitat and creation of more wildlife

Issues

1. How do we get multiple, competing governments to:
 - a. work together
 - b. adopt uniform regulations
 - c. streamline and reduce regulations
2. How do we get the public to recognize the need for in place resource development?
- recognize that resources must be developed where they are located
3. How do we get the public to recognize the value of the creation of more usable land?

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

1. Steering Committee – approximately 15 people

Representatives of the major sectors of the County community (business, government, planning and redevelopment, major economic and community development agencies).

The Steering Committee is responsible for overseeing the comprehensive land use planning project. The Committee monitors project performance and outcomes, timeliness, and quality. The Steering Committee will also create and oversee the public participation process for the project.

The Director of the County’s Office of Community and Economic Development chairs the Steering Committee and reports to the County Commissioners.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As of March, 1999

1. Thomas Frankhouser – Supervisor
2. Mike Krajovic – FayPenn Economic Development Council
3. Wayland Smith – redevelopment Authority of Fayette County
4. Jim Hercik – Assessment Office
5. George Tanner – PennDOT District 12-0
6. Denny Barclay – Housing Authority of Fayette County
7. Brent Robinson – Supervisor
8. Stephanie King – Redevelopment Authority City of Uniontown
9. Ralph Wombacker – Redevelopment Authority City of Connellsville
10. Joe Pfohl – Mining Industries
11. Scott Nicholson – Timber Industries
12. Susan Montgomery – Central Fayette Chamber of Business and Industry
13. Dick Oglevee – Private Industries
14. Lloyd Kendall – Planning Commission
15. Scott Pollack – Planning Commission
16. Frank LaCava – Conservation District
17. Edward Rinkhoff, Jr. – Agricultural Land Preservation Board

Please Note the County has not received names for the borough representatives

Christopher Sepesy, Executive Director
Tammy Shell, Chief Planner – Project Manager
Commissioner Vincent Vicities
Commissioner Sean Cavanagh
Commissioner Harry Albert

2. Stakeholders' Groups – These groups provide the majority of focused public input and comment as elements of the plan are created. Participants will be invited from the following stakeholders:
 - Fayette Forward Steering Committee/Action Teams – Economic Development, Infrastructure, Tourism, Environment
 - Chambers of Commerce and Fay Penn members – business and manufacturing, banking and finance, retail-wholesale, telecommunications
 - Township supervisors and municipal officials (Borough Association)
 - Commercial and Residential Real Estate, Builder's Association
 - Natural resources groups
 - History and heritage groups
 - Agriculture
 - Transportation
 - Parks and recreation
 - Housing
 - Public utilities
 - Extractive industries (mining, timber, oil, and gas)
 - Education
 - Human services

3. General Public – any interested citizens

The public at large will be invited to interact with the stakeholders groups via telephone, written input, and attendance at meetings. They will be kept informed of discussions via television, press coverage, and radio.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Steering Committee will develop and implement a process that insures an opportunity for broad community participation in envisioning future land use scenarios and engaging in open dialog regarding preferred development goals and objectives. Information from this community participation process will be provided to planners and decision-makers. Throughout this process, areas of community consensus will be sought.

1. HRG has held introductory “public input” meetings for “focus groups” and the general public. These served to provide generalized, formative information regarding community concerns.
2. The Stakeholders' Groups will be identified by the Steering Committee and invitations to participate in the next input session will be sent.
3. The first public participation session of 1999 will involve education and awareness, including:
 - a. A review of the purpose and goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
 - b. The benefits and impacts to the County, its constituent townships and municipalities, businesses, and individual residents.
 - c. A demonstration of a GIS system and examples of the expected deliverables of the planning process – e.g. maps, overlays, a sample plan document.

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- d. A review of the comments and concerns of the public sessions held by HRG in late 1998.
- e. A review of the County's Strategic Plan and the initiatives related to Land Use Planning.
- f. Open discussion of issues and questions raised by this information.
- g. An invitation to participate in the ongoing project participation process.

This session will be televised to the community at large and the press will be invited. There will be ground rules for discussion.

4. Ongoing Stakeholder Focus Group discussions will be convened **as elements of the plan are researched**, to review and provide input and comment about **specific** land uses. These groups will also be asked to participate in discussions of future land use goals with respect to plan development. The number of groups and focus topics will parallel the major segments of the Plan research. Each will be facilitated by a member of the Steering Committee.

Sessions will be televised to the community at large and feedback invited. The product of these focus groups will be considered in the drafting of the final plan recommendations and strategies.

5. General Public Sessions: "Drafts" of the plan will be shared with the general public and comments will be solicited before the plan is finalized and presented to the Commissioners.

Additional notes:

1. The Stakeholders' Groups will be convened simultaneously in large group sessions, with breakout sessions built in for each focus group area.
2. Methods used by "sustainable communities" projects will be explored for possible use in these sessions. This is in keeping with the Enterprise Community process and with initiatives in the strategic plan which call for sustainable community benchmarking.
3. Three stakeholder focus group sessions will be held (with the possibility of a fourth session) during the project. At least one general public session will be held in addition to the televised information programs.
4. The Steering Committee will take responsibility for providing compiled information to the HRG project team in a format mutually agreed-upon.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Invitations will be sent to the following groups urging their members' participation:

- Economic Development and Business:
 - Fayette Forward Economic Development Action Team
 - Fay Penn Economic Development Council
 - Fayette Industrial Fund
 - Chambers of Commerce – Connellsville, Brownsville, Uniontown Republic
 - Pennsylvania Builders' Association

- Public Infrastructure and Utilities
 - Fayette Forward Infrastructure Action Team
 - Sewage Authorities
 - Water Authorities
 - Utilities
 - Telephone
 - Electricity
 - Water
 - Gas
 - Cable
 - Cellular

- Tourism and Recreation
 - Fayette Forward Tourism Action Team
 - Fay Penn Economic Development Council
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Laurel Highlands Visitors' Bureau
 - National Road Heritage Park
 - Brownsville Area Revitalization Corp. (BARC)
 - Local and State Park offices
 - DCNR
 - Regional Trails Corp.
 - Whitewater Rafting Companies
 - Campground Owners
 - B&B Owners
 - Lodging
 - Restaurants

- History and Heritage Groups
 - Historical Societies
 - Heritage Tourism Attractions
 - BARC

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- Extractive Industries (mining, timber, oil, and gas)

- Education and Human Services
 - School Boards
 - School District Administrators
 - Business-Education Partnership
 - Fayette County Human Services
 - Human Service Agency
 - Fayette County Community Action Agency