

7. I believe development efforts should concentrate "inward" (toward downtown revitalization and by concentrating on utilizing industrial sites that already exist) to eliminate costly water, sewer and highway expansion projects, and to prevent "sprawl".

Strongly Agree      Agree      Indifferent      Disagree      Strongly Disagree      Don't Know

**VII. ATTITUDES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SUPPORT FACILITIES**

- (1) Indicate, for the types of facilities listed, how you feel about availability in the Township/Borough/City:

	Should Have	Should Not Have	Don't Know	No Opinion
branch libraries	_____	_____	_____	_____
youth/teen centers	_____	_____	_____	_____
senior citizen centers	_____	_____	_____	_____
senior citizen programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
adult education programs	_____	_____	_____	_____

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- (2) Services, improvements, etc, cost money. Please review the list below. Pick five (5) items that you feel should receive top priority in Township/Borough/City spending and list them in the order of 1 to 5 (1 being first preference):

public water	_____	public sewers	_____
police force	_____	traffic signals	_____
ambulance force	_____	parks/recreation	_____
public transportation	_____	road improvements	_____
don't know	_____	no opinion	_____

other: \_\_\_\_\_

- (3) It is reasonable to expect road widening/improvements to accommodate growth. Please list the roads that you believe most require improvement/widening.

1: \_\_\_\_\_

2: \_\_\_\_\_

(4) I am satisfied with public transportation systems in the County.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If no, check the areas you feel need improvement in the County.

\_\_\_\_\_ pedestrian systems                      \_\_\_\_\_ air travel  
\_\_\_\_\_ local roads                                      \_\_\_\_\_ rail systems  
\_\_\_\_\_ state roads                                      \_\_\_\_\_ public transportation i.e. bus routes

(5) I would like to see public sewers come to my neighborhood.

Strongly                                      Strongly  
Agree                      Agree                      Indifferent                      Disagree                      Disagree                      Don't Know

(6) If you have an on-lot disposal system, is your system:

(a) conventional inground bed/trench \_\_\_\_\_ (d) sand mound \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) cesspool \_\_\_\_\_ (e) not applicable \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) other \_\_\_\_\_

(7) If you have an on-lot system, how long has it been since you had the system pumped?

(a) less than 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ (c) 5-10 years \_\_\_\_\_ (e) never \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) 2-5 years \_\_\_\_\_ (d) over 10 years \_\_\_\_\_ (f) not applicable \_\_\_\_\_

(8) If you experience seepage from your on-lot sewage disposal system, how often?

(a) frequently \_\_\_\_\_ (c) occasionally \_\_\_\_\_ (e) seldom \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) never \_\_\_\_\_ (d) not applicable \_\_\_\_\_

(9) Have you ever had any major problems with your on-lot sewage disposal system?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable \_\_\_\_\_

(10) If you answered "yes" to question #8, have you been able to resolve the problem?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable \_\_\_\_\_

(11) I believe the benefits of a public sewer system will outweigh the cost and any other disadvantages.

Strongly                                      Strongly  
Agree                      Agree                      Indifferent                      Disagree                      Disagree                      Don't Know

(12) If public sewage is extended further into the Township/Borough/City, it should be financed **primarily** by which of the following:

- (a) state government \_\_\_\_\_ (c) local government \_\_\_\_\_ (e) developers \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) taxes & user fees \_\_\_\_\_ (d) other \_\_\_\_\_

(13) I would like to become further involved in the Comprehensive Plan update process by serving on the steering committee.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

My area of special interest is: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please use the space below for your comments concerning this questionnaire or any topics that may not have been covered and are important to you.

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Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions, your cooperation is appreciated. Well informed residents are the most valuable asset a County can have and it is hoped that this survey will generate additional interest and participation in the activities that impact the County's future. Plan to attend some of the regularly scheduled meetings. Get to know your neighbors and elected representatives. Your interest will be welcomed.

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS OPTIONAL**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE RIDGWAY RECORD

SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 1999

Volume 96, No. 117

Elk County's Newspaper

## First Comprehensive Plan Workshop held

**JAMIE DOLLISH**  
Record Staff Reporter

Representative from the EADS Group Company, Michelle Kephart and John N. Roman, along with the Elk County Commissioners and the Elk County Planning Commission, have prepared an updated version of the County's 1968 Comprehensive Plan.

The last Comprehensive Plan drawn up for Elk County was done in 1968. "The Municipal Planning Code requires us to have a plan," said Matt Quesenberry, county planning assistant. "We felt it was time to revise it."

Basically, the Comprehensive Plan is an outline to use in future decision-making. Typically, it includes a study of demographics, an economic analysis and an overview of land use, transportation, infrastructure and capital improvements.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to achieve a balance in preservation of cultural, recreational, natural resources and development to provide a strong economic base.

The plan is used to help shift the area from sporadic growth spurts to planned growth to avoid incompatible land uses and build strong communities.

In addition, the plan will serve as a base level tool, from which amendments to municipi-

pal comprehensive plans, subdivision and land development ordinances, and zoning ordinances may be developed to assist municipalities in creating quality communities.

The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of many parts. Therefore, the article will speak of the more dominant aspects of the plan.

A list of recommendations was presented to the board by Kephart. The recommendations for planning goals were listed as follows:

- Population Development
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Environmental
- Forest Resource
- Public utilities and infrastructure
- Transportation
- Public service and recreation
- Energy Conservation
- Land use

Kephart explained these topics thoroughly and went over each of their goals and objectives.

The plan for population and growth was provided in the presentation. The success of the economic well-being and availability of jobs is heavily dependent upon an industrial base in carbon and primary metal industries and support industries. This causes a fragile economic climate that runs with the success or failure of specific segments of those industries. The County endorses projects which will diversify the industrial base



Michelle Kephart and John N. Roman, both from the EADS Group, study a map of the county with Dan Freeburg, county planner, dealing with the 1999 updated Comprehensive Plan

and to help the County continue to maintain a relatively low rate of unemployment.

The facet of the population and growth plan is dependent on the integration of all other plan comments. An example of this would be the infrastructure factor. To promote growth and provide jobs for a growing population without sprawl and the negative economic impacts associated with infrastructure extensions, efforts need to direct new prospective employers to already available industrial sites with existing infrastructure.

Another section of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on a Housing Plan. The Housing Plan encourages ideas such

as: downtown housing/ mixed use zoning and the use of manufactured housing for infill lots. This section of the plan determines the housing needs of the various municipalities.

The Economic Plan, another component, endorses development that delivers preservation of open spaces, sense of community, minimized infrastructure costs associated with development, multi-use development, increased density, and performance development. The plan touches on county and regional economic development, subdivision and land development ordinances, and Zoning ordinances.

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# First

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A Public Utilities and Infrastructure and Energy Conservation Plan is incorporated as well. Regarding the waste water facilities, the plan explains how to encourage economic efficiency projects and environmental upgrade projects. Regarding the energy conservation part of the plan, the County wants to increase public awareness of the need to conserve energy and promote projects that increase energy efficiency.

As for the Elk County Transportation Plan, the focus has been put on improving accessibility, reducing congestion, and public transportation.

The Public Services and Recreation and Environmental Conservation Plan will deal with things such as the Rails to Trails and municipal parks. The county encourages land use planning on a municipal scale, consistent with this Comprehensive Plan and plan objectives, in order to achieve predetermined recreational goals.

The plan also has a section that discusses land use in the county. Decisions made on the Land Use Plan should result from social, environmental, economic, and legal factors and should reflect the desires and interests of all citizens and property holders.

Since the last revision of the Elk County Comprehensive Plan, land use has gone up considerably in residential uses, from .85 percent to 6 percent, and has gone down in vacant or agricultural, from 7 percent to 5 percent.

Eight of Elk County's municipalities have some form of land use controls in place. Four have no up to date land use planning tools in place and rely on the 1968 Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Plan has been separated into categories. They are:

- Downtown areas
- Highway Commercial Corridors
- Rural Conservation
- Urban/Suburban
- Urban Residential Neigh-

borhood

- Flexible Housing areas
- Economic Development areas, such as James City and Wilcox
- Industrial areas
- Institutional communities
- Redevelopment areas
- Growth Boundaries
- Community Land Trusts and Conservation Land Trusts

To carry out this revised Comprehensive Plan, an action plan must go into effect. The planning process must shift from planning to organization and initiation of individual studies and projects. "We really need the people to want this, to except it," said Quesenberry.

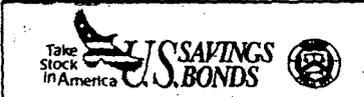
The plan needs to be accompanied by professional assistance, by coordination, between the state and PennDOT, the County, the school district, railroads, etc..., and by capital improvements programming and by funding.

The implementation strategy will begin with the County Planning Commission evaluating the Comprehensive Plan every two years and making recommendations to the commissioners, along with the annual recommendations given.

The County plans to work closely with the agencies identified in the plan to promote success of overall planned economic development.

The public will play a large role in the implementation of the plan. "Their involvement is crucial to the success of the plan," commented Dan Freeburg, county planner. "We don't want this plan to become another dusty book on the shelf."

The public can express their opinion or ask any questions involving the plan by simply calling the Planning Commission office, located in the Courthouse Annex.



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# New version set for 30-year-old plan

By JONI SADLEY  
C-E Correspondent

RIDGWAY — Elk County took the first steps Tuesday to update its comprehensive plan, which the commissioners expect to define and incorporate all future needs of the county.

The commissioners said the first meeting to update the plan was held last week. The last update was 30 years ago. The process is expected to take more than a year.

"What we want to include is what everybody thinks that Elk County needs in the next 10-20 years. We want to make sure we get it all in the plan," Commissioners Chairman Christine Gavazzi encouraged everyone to get involved.

Matt Quesenberry said the county planning office will not try to specifically target any one area or problem and to make the effort successful, everybody's help is needed.

In other items, the commissioners are continuing with the black fly suppression program that began in 1996.

While the commissioners said Tuesday the black fly problem was at its worst two years ago, the county needs to continue the program it began through the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Originally, the cost of the program was \$40,000, with the county responsible for \$10,000 of that amount. Each year as the

## Elk Co.

flies decrease, so do the sprayings and the costs with the county's share for 1997 of \$5,000.

Since the problem was concentrated in Ridgway and Johnsonburg boroughs and Springcreek and Millstone townships areas, the commissioners asked those municipalities to share in part of the spraying costs. They noted that they have received \$500 each from Ridgway and Johnsonburg, but nothing from the other municipalities.

A letter of support will be sent for the St. Marys Public Library to secure a grant from the office of Commonwealth Libraries to help with the installation of computer ware that would start them on the road to connecting all libraries in the county.

The commissioners said that if all libraries in the county were connected through computers, each person would benefit.

The commissioners approved a resolution for the Community Development Block Grant Application in the amount of \$242,440. The program was established to assist municipalities in addressing a variety of community development needs and problems to benefit low- and moderate-income citizens. According to block grant Coordina-

tor Matt Quesenberry, most projects this year include water and sewage needs in various areas of the county.

Also approved was a resolution to support the release of more money to clean up the abandoned mines. The resolution will be forwarded to state and federal legislators.

Gavazzi said \$1.2 billion is currently appropriated for abandoned mines. The Western Pa. Coalition has joined other coalitions around the nation and has been involved in trying to get more of the money released. Only 40 percent of the abandoned mines have been reclaimed in the past 20 years.

"It's ironic. We are fighting to keep new strip mines out of the area and we can't even get enough money to clean up the ones that have caused their mark and take hundreds of years to clean up," Commissioner Joe Koch said.

Commissioner June Sorg said \$8 million is released each year but very little of that amount is used for clean-up.

"Water is one of the number one priorities in the world and here we are with \$1.2 billion just sitting there," Gavazzi said.

Jim Wismar and Russ Braun were reappointed to four-year terms on the Elk County Planning Commission. Their previous terms expired on Dec. 31. Wismar represents Jones and Highland townships and Braun represents Fox Township.

# RIDGWAY RECORD

ELK COUNTY'S LEADING NEWSPAPER  
Ridgway, Pennsylvania, Friday, November 14, 1997

## County awarded grant to update comp plan

By **JOSEPH D. CRESS**  
*Elk County Reporter*

The county will receive the money it was counting on to update its 30-year-old comprehensive plan.

The commissioners learned Monday the Department of Community and Economic Development approved the county's application for a \$25,000 State Planning Assistance Grant.

This funding will pay half of the \$50,000 needed to review the countywide plan which dates from 1968, according to Dan Freeburg, county planner. He noted the grant will be matched dollar-for-dollar through a mix of cash and in-kind service.

A comprehensive plan is an outline for decision-making, Freeburg said. "It's a detailed look at the past, present and projected future in terms of demographics, economics, the environment, land use, housing, transportation, etc."

For example, such a plan would provide officials with direction on whether to pursue an industrial park or approve a subdivision plan or ordinance.

Another benefit is the plan would provide better coordination among all the agencies involved in planning and development, Freeburg said. This way those agencies compliment their efforts, not compete with one another.

For example, the county planning office is heavily involved in the areas of community development, economic development, storm water management, downtown revitalization and the effort to establish a Lumber Heritage Region.

Lastly, Freeburg hopes to use the updated version to draft a countywide subdivision and land development ordinance.

This would benefit the smaller municipalities which

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## County...

(Continued from page one)

do not have such an ordinance in place, said Christine Gavazzi, commissioner chairperson.

She added the current comprehensive plan is outdated in every sense of the word.

Freeburg believes the fact the plan is 30 years old helped the county overcome stiff competition for SPAG funding.

Earlier this year, John N. Roman of Marienville told the county to expect competition because there was only \$175,000 available under the SPAG grant program for all 67 counties within the state.

Roman works as a marketing coordinator with General Engineering, Inc. of Clarion, an affiliate of the EADS Group and had agreed to help the county prepare its application.

Chances are this firm would

serve as consultant during the update process, especially since it was instrumental in helping the county secure funding, Freeburg said. It is his understanding the project classifies as professional service so the county would not have to bid it out.

Freeburg added it's possible work on the plan update could begin in early winter. He noted the county still has to process the necessary follow-up paperwork.

One idea Freeburg has is to form a steering committee of representatives from different fields. This cross section of expertise would help direct the process.

"We're always pleased to get any grant," Gavazzi said. "It's wonderful."

# Elk County Planning Commission

# COPY

Elk County Courthouse Annex  
300 Center Street  
P.O. Box 448  
Ridgway, PA 15853  
Telephone: 814-776-5335  
Fax: 814-776-5379

Daniel R. Freeburg  
Director

Matthew G. Quesenberry  
CDBG Coordinator

James M. Abbey  
Economic Development/Housing Specialist

**TO: MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS**

**FROM: Daniel R. Freeburg, Director** 

**RE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKSHOP, January 28, 1998**

**DATE: JANUARY 22, 1998**

We are pleased to announce that County has been awarded a State Planning Assistance Grant (SPAG) to be used to update Elk County's Comprehensive Plan.

You may recall that the present County plan dates from 1963, with obvious obsolete, inconsistent and otherwise outdated data that is no longer relevant and/or useful to concerted planning efforts.

Thus, we feel that a number of issues and concerns are "ripe" at present and must be comprehensively explored and included in the new County plan update. These include land-use issues in terms of growth, development, preservation and conservation; tourism; highways and bridges; water and sewer infrastructure; economic and industrial trends and the area workforce; the Allegheny National Forest; local education facilities and initiatives; health care and emergency services; community revitalization and housing. It is clear in every planning effort undertaken in the County that these are inter-related and many times co-dependent concerns that must be addressed with concise, factual and update information and data.

*To begin the process, we have scheduled a "kick-off" meeting for Wednesday evening, January 28 1998 at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room of the courthouse annex. Because you or your organization represent one of the above contributing issues, we ask for your participation. Facilitator of the workshop meeting will be the EADS group of Clarion, consultant for the project.*

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me immediately or the project consultant:

Michelle L. Kephart  
The EADS Group  
P O Box 684  
Clarion, PA 16214  
PHONE: (814) 764-5050

Thank you for your interest in this important project

**• NOTE TO ELK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD MEMBERS:**  
**A SHORT RE-ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING FOR PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS WILL BE HELD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKSHOP.**

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8147765379

# County "kick-offs" process to update plan

by JOSEPH D. CRESS  
Elk County Reporter

Last night marked the beginning of a two-year process to update the county's comprehensive plan.

Roughly 30 people attended the first of many meetings to come to bring the plan (dating from 1968) into the 21st century.

Now with the effort underway, the county planning commission is encouraging the public to get involved and voice their concerns.

Survey forms will be distributed to each municipality and are also available in the planning office open weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the courthouse annex in Ridgway.

Through these forms, the public may voice their views on issues that concern them that can be integrated into the plan update, said Dan Freeburg, county planner.

In addition, a steering committee is being formed of representatives from different fields and regular monthly meetings are planned to receive input from the public.

Last night, the county was off to a strong start as General Engineering, Inc. of Clarion, the firm hired to do the update, briefed residents on the process. General Engineering is affiliated with the EADS Group.

Michelle Kephart, lead project planner, began with a definition of a comprehensive plan as a study of past and present land use. The goal being to form a basis for future decision-making on land use management and to outline ways of procuring money for essential projects.

The first five months of the process will involve the collection of background material in such areas of demographics, economics, the physical environment, land use, housing, transportation and community facilities.

From this material, Kephart said, community goals and objectives will be formulated along with general plans concerning housing and redevelopment, economic development, community facilities and capital improvements, transportation and land use.

Also an action plan will be developed outlining specific projects, possible sources of funding and a priority system based on essential, desirable and deferrable improvements, Kephart said.

Aside from the plan being 30-years-old, another reason for the update is that only five of the county's 12 municipalities have comprehensive plans of their own.

Once complete, those without plans could either adopt the county's version or use it to form a basis for developing

## County...

(Continued from page one)

their own, Kephart said. She noted a municipal comprehensive plan tends to be more detailed than a countywide plan.

Other reasons, according to her, include:

- A desire by the county to reverse the trend of out-migration by younger people.

- A desire to obtain a balance between economic development and the preservation of cultural, recreational and natural resources.

- The need for a shift from sporadic spontaneous growth (that could wind up hurting the economy) to planned growth (to promote stronger communities).

To help pay for the update, the county received a \$25,000 State Planning Assistance Grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development. This will pay half of the anticipated \$50,000 in costs with the balance being covered by cash or in-kind service.

In discussing the plan, Don Hunt of Ridgway stated it should address the serious drug and alcohol problem present in Elk County. "It has been that way for a long time," Hunt said.

He added this problem is only getting worse and seems to be an issue the public-at-large hesitates to talk about.

In response, Kephart noted while the drug and alcohol problem may be outside the realm of the plan, it will take into consideration what recreational opportunities are out there to steer youth away from use and abuse.

While he recognizes drug and alcohol abuse as a social ill, Freeburg noted it can't be part of the plan. Rather, the plan can look at ways of better coordinating and supporting existing or future programs offered by schools, social service agencies and hospitals.

## Planning Commission

John Roman and Michelle Kephart presented the commission with a review of housing and environmental results from the survey conducted throughout the county as well as information on economics, utilities and infrastructure.

According to Kephart, 52 residents responded to the survey. Although it may look like a small sample, it is representative of the county and an important part of planning, said Kephart.

According to survey results, the average family size was 2.8 persons per residence with 40 percent of the respondents from Johnsonburg Borough and 24 percent responded as living in an unidentified location. Other percentages include 23 percent from Fox Township and 15 percent each from Ridgway Borough and Jones Township. The remaining municipalities represented smaller percentages.

Environmentally, the majority (90 percent) of the respondents felt the liability for environmental damage for construction related to development should be assumed by developers.

Dealing with landfills, 79 percent felt no additional landfill should be considered in Elk County and 88 percent feel that waste disposal needs are currently met.

Seventy-six percent of the respondents felt that Elk County should have an environmental council to address or monitor environmental concerns affecting the county. However, 59 percent responded as being satisfied with the current environmental quality of their communities.

In replying to housing concerns, according to the EADS Group, Inc.'s survey, 83 percent of respondents favor controlled development to preserve or enhance environmental quality of their com-

munities and 42 percent anticipate the residential growth rate will increase.

However, 43 percent would prefer residential growth to occur at an increased rate, while 38 percent residential growth to maintain as is.

Economic results show the county's unemployment rate is higher than the state average. However, the county's poverty statistics is comparable to the state's with the exception of those 65 and over.

"This is comparable to the 59 percent who feel there is a need to increase the availability of retirement communities," said Kephart.

According to research done by the EADS Group, Inc., the labor market has seen a transition from industrialized markets to service and tourism.

"They are all seeing a monetary growth," said Kephart, "however there is a decrease in employment opportunities in the industries."

Illustrations of these trends in the county were shown using the lumber and wood products industry and the eating and drinking industries as examples.

The group reported many of these statistics were available through the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Labor and Industry.

When looking at utilities and infrastructures, 71 percent of the respondents felt that the market value of their properties is or would be increased by having public sewers and 74 percent felt the market value of their properties is or would be increased by having public water.

In addition, 74 percent of the respondents feel their water source is adequate and 74 percent feel that grants should be sought for a study of drinking water.

The group also reported there are nine public water supplies which serve 80 percent of the population.

"The last comprehensive sewer and water plan done by the county was in 1968," said Kephart. However, all but two municipalities have conducted their own plans since then.

Dale Anderson, President of the Pennsylvania Forest Industry Association, was in attendance and questioned the small number of respondents, asking how it could be representative of the entire county.

"This is just another dimension we are using to make sure things aren't missed," said Elk County Planner Dan Freeburg. He added that the entire comprehensive plan will not be based on the survey results, however it was their way to hear some of the residents' opinions.

Roman and Kephart asked planners to take copies of some of the results thus far and write their comments on them in order to make things as clear as possible. They stated their goal is to get as much feedback, negative or positive, as possible.

Roman is also working on meeting with each county municipality in order to let residents voice concerns.

Briefly during the meeting, three subdivisions were approved in Fox Township. Each dealt with existing residences with with current sewage and water.

A holding tank in Spring Creek was also discussed briefly last night. Freeburg reported that a letter of intent was received from the Burkes regarding the tank.

The next meeting and workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, July 22 at 7 p.m.