

GWA Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Issues
Record of 2/18/16 GWA Discussion

Chapter/ Main Topic in 2006 Plan	<u>Main Issues Identified in the 2006 Plan</u> Items discussed are in red text; others with majority “yes” votes were not discussed and were kept. Text below each item contains discussion comments captured during GWA Meeting #2, including final decision on whether to keep this as valid for 2016 GWA or not.	Votes from homework assignment <i>Yes=Keep No=Remove</i>
Chapter 2 - Economic Development	<p>Lack of retail diversity – is a concern because it reduces employment opportunities and retail and service opportunities and choices that play a role in maintaining a stable community.</p> <p>Many restaurants downtown. Desire to see more support services such as dry cleaner, clothing, shoe stores. Hard to find a niche for mom-and-pops to compete and survive. Chains don’t often donate to local community and may not cater to local tastes and needs. Mom and pops win on customer service. Everyone’s competing against online sales. Big box stores are moving their customers to online. Consumers will vote with their wallets—“consumer sovereignty.” The market will determine where and when people invest; can’t have a plan for this. No longer have staff funded to work on the downtowns; lost that structure. Creating an ambiance might draw more businesses.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep, but revise to specify “localized” retail diversity (downtowns, etc.—within small community, certain pockets)</p>	Yes – 5 No - 5
	<p>Our small business community struggles to expand due to a lack of programs designed to help small businesses access capital and to deal with increasing tax burdens.</p> <p>If it’s a viable business concept, there are sufficient programs out there now. For example, microloan program partnership between Chamber and City. Other state, federal programs exist. The business viability gets teased out during the vetting process. SBDC tries to help them the best they can, but not all business plans are good. A lot of local community banks that invest in local businesses.</p> <p>Verdict: Drop this item.</p>	Yes – 6 No - 4
	<p>The increasing number of storefront vacancies in our downtown business districts adversely impacts our ability to maintain or improve the vitality of our towns.</p> <p>Storefront vacancies – can create a bad image for business development in boroughs and villages.</p> <p>Seen some improvement in many areas of the GWA. No data collected to show that there are increasing vacancies. The community has worked hard on this over the past ten years. Storefronts can be adaptively reused for different purposes.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep, but revise that we should continue to be watchful of this, but it’s not the concern it was ten years ago.</p>	Yes – 5 No – 4 Yes – 7 No - 3
	<p>Low Wages and Income – can adversely impact the stability of the younger worker population and generation of tax revenues to support community service needs.</p>	Yes – 9 No - 2
	<p>Good Access to Capital – is viewed as a positive aspect of Lycoming County in terms of new business start-ups and existing business expansions.</p>	Yes – 9 No - 2
	<p>Tax Rates – were noted as being a particular burden for business development as well as for low income and elderly families.</p>	Yes – 9 No - 2

Diverse Economy – was viewed as a real need for the future of Lycoming County.	Yes – 8 No - 2
Decrease in the Traditional Family – which is perceived as having an impact on human service needs.	Yes – 8 No - 2
Exodus of Younger Generation with Increasing Elderly Population – This is a concern because as an area ages, the social fabric of the community becomes less stable. Fewer younger workers, who generate a greater proportion of the tax base required to support necessary community services required by older individuals, can create the potential for budget deficits and adversely impact the provision of community services to all individuals.	Yes – 7 No - 2
Good Labor Force – was viewed as important to business development and expansion in Lycoming County. Lycoming County has a good labor force that has served a relatively diverse economy that was anchored by the Manufacturing Sector. However, it may not be well equipped to support our nation’s changing economy, where the number of manufacturing jobs is decreasing and the number of high tech service jobs is increasing.	Yes – 10 No - 1 Yes – 9 No - 1
Housing Stock and Diversity – This is a concern due to the increasing elderly population needing affordable choices to go with a changing lifestyle. It is also important to younger families with limited budgets. Current housing choices , particularly in terms of type and price, do not meet the changing needs of younger workers, the elderly and more non-traditional family households.	Yes – 10 No – 1 Yes – 8 No - 1
Concerning trends in the City of Williamsport include a declining population, increasing number of non-family households, high mobility rate of city residents, low median household income levels, and lack of affordable housing. All can impact the fabric of the community leading to higher crime rates and increasing social service needs.	Yes – 9 No - 1
Since fewer younger individuals and families are making Lycoming County their home, our population is growing older. This may be due in part to declining income levels, relatively lower wage rates, and fewer employment opportunities.	Yes – 8 No - 1
Low Migration Rates – were viewed as an important indicator of close-knit stable communities.	Yes – 8 No - 1
The Influence of KOZs , Little League Baseball, and the Airport – were noted as key contributors to economic conditions in the Williamsport Area.	Yes – 10 No - 0
Increasing Crime and Drug Use – were noted as social service concerns as well as community image concern for business development.	Yes – 11 No - 0
Additional Economic Development Issues/Discussion: City lacks fiberoptics for connections—Make our community more high-tech. Companies don’t come to areas that don’t have a lot of potential. Need to have the best technology available. We don’t have that here yet. Suscom did upgrade and put a lot of fiberoptics around, planning for the future, and Comcast bought that system. Suggestion: Ask Comcast for more information.	

	<p>Boom/bust cycle with gas industry was also seen as important to GWA (see SWOT results for more info).</p>	
<p>Chapter 3 - Land Use Policy and Natural and Cultural Resource Management</p>	<p>Uniform Construction Code - The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC; Act 45 of 1999) will establish consistent construction standards in every municipality in the Commonwealth. The goal of the law is to prevent substandard construction, both for residential and commercial purposes.</p> <p>Every several years UCC changes – Commonwealth is required every so many years to adopt sections of updated UCC. Municipalities need to be aware of what new changes are coming and advocate for appropriate regulations that fit our municipalities and are not overly cost-burdened.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep, and update UCC reference to current information.</p>	<p>Yes –7 No - 5</p>
	<p>Telecommunication towers – The proliferation of the nation’s telecommunications industry has left many Pennsylvania municipalities ill-prepared for the impacts caused by wireless telecommunication towers and associated infrastructure. Due to the urban nature of the Planning Area, the wireless telecommunication facilities are well-established and do not pose a significant impact.</p> <p>Some areas in GWA still lack service.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep, and note that municipalities should continue to evaluate and ordinances as needed.</p>	<p>Yes – 6 No - 5</p>
	<p>Air Quality – Air quality is very important to the overall quality of life and is generally good in the Planning Area. Identified hazards to air quality include auto emissions and open burning. Methods to minimize their impact will need to be developed.</p> <p>Important in relation to auto regulations. If we become a non-attainment area for air quality, it will be very costly to residents and businesses due to federal regs that would kick in.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep, and note that we should continue to monitor air quality and recognize hazards that threaten good air quality.</p>	<p>Yes – 7 No - 4</p>
	<p>Proposed highway improvements for the US 220 / US 15 / I-99 corridor will increase the demand for development along the corridor and will result in significant land use changes that could be unwelcome in some communities.</p> <p>Woodward Township considering zoning change for highway corridor. Municipalities review proposed highway improvement projects and ensure regulations to encourage desired forms of development.</p>	<p>Yes – 7 No - 4</p>
	<p>Susquehanna Campground Flooding – Located along the Susquehanna River, the Susquehanna Campground is a recreational amenity that attracts hundreds of visitors annually and supports the local tourism industry. However, this amenity is regularly subject to flooding.</p> <p>Verdict: Drop this item.</p>	<p>Yes – 4 No - 4</p>
	<p>Standardized land use inventory – The need for developing a standardized land use inventory system has long been recognized. Such a system would greatly benefit regional cooperation and planning initiatives, as well as enhance economic development initiatives. Moreover, a standardized land use system would help local municipalities and the County to achieve consistency in their comprehensive planning policies and land use regulations. To this end, the County, in cooperation with its municipal partners, has drafted the Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan Consistency Manual, which contains a suggested list of zoning definitions based on the American Planning Association’s Land-Based Classification Standards (LBCS) model.</p> <p>Verdict: Review with Kurt Hausammann to see if this needs to be dropped or if there is additional work to be done.</p>	<p>Yes – 8 No - 3</p>
	<p>Reach Road Industrial Park – Situated between Reach Road and U.S. 220, the Reach Road Industrial Park has limited room for expansion, which will ultimately impact the growth and vitality of the local economy.</p> <p>At this time highway access is inhibiting future development.</p> <p>Verdict: Drop this item.</p>	<p>Yes – 6 No - 3</p>

<p>The current trend of uncontrolled steep slope and ridgetop development is creating negative environmental impacts throughout the County.</p> <p>Ridgetop development – Ridgetop development is negatively impacting the County’s invaluable scenic landscapes and there are no local regulations to deal with this trend.</p> <p>Steep slope development – Steep slope development is a concern, since a significant proportion of the County has slope gradients equal to or in excess of 25 percent. The current zoning ordinance does not prohibit development in these locations, but does require erosion and sediment control plans and a soil stability analysis.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep this item, but rephrase that municipalities should review ordinances to check on inclusion of steep slope provisions.</p>	<p>Yes – 6 No – 3</p> <p>Yes – 7 No – 3</p> <p>Yes – 6 No – 2</p>
<p>Land use/interchange impacts from Interstate 99 – The future development of Interstate 99 will provide local municipalities with additional land development opportunities, particularly around both existing and new interchanges. However, such opportunities also pose challenges in terms of mitigating the potential negative impacts, as well as providing sufficient infrastructure to accommodate this growth. Current land use regulations do not specifically deal with highway interchange development activities.</p> <p>Verdict: Drop this item.</p>	<p>Yes – 4 No – 3</p>
<p>Cultural and Historical Resources -- Many of the County's cultural and historical resources are not protected.</p>	<p>Yes – 6 No – 2</p>
<p>Wetlands - Wetlands are unique communities of soils, plants, and animals, and are both functional (temporary water storage and filtering) and scenic. Federal and state regulations exist for their protection and can pose challenges for developers. Accurate identification of these areas will help to facilitate wetland protection and planning for new development.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No – 1</p>
<p>Neo-traditional Neighborhood Development – Neotraditional neighborhood development strives to incorporate into housing designs such long-neglected features as small setbacks and front porches that invite interaction with neighbors and passers-by. Such developments rely on a broad variety of house designs, but all have a central focus, and the houses are turned toward the street in a way to encourage occupants to participate in the community activities. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code now authorizes the use of neo-traditional development concepts through the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) provisions as detailed under Article VII-A. Neo-traditional development is particularly appropriate for infill residential development or redevelopment. Current municipal regulations prescribe suburban-type development and do not allow for neotraditional designs.</p>	<p>Yes – 8 No – 1</p>
<p>Opportunities for growth – The Planning Area is considered the economic core of Lycoming County. Defining opportunities for growth and development/redevelopment is a high priority of both the member municipalities and the County. The City of Williamsport’s Central Business District Revitalization Plan is one part of this process.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No – 0</p>
<p>Cultural Resources – Cultural and historical resources can be found throughout the area, particularly in the City of Williamsport. The Little League Baseball World Series is just one of the more prominent events that are important to the area. Together, they are an integral part of the overall culture and quality of life in the region. A strong sense of community and volunteerism help to promote these resources.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No – 0</p>
<p>Standardization of zoning – In an effort to achieve a high level of consistency, the Lower Lycoming Creek and Greater Williamsport Area Alliance Planning Area municipalities have expressed interest in developing a standardized set of zoning terminology, supported by consistent dimensional and use provisions.</p>	<p>Yes – 10 No – 0</p>

<p>Scenic Resources – The natural beauty of the area is one of its greatest assets, and is very important not only to the people who live there, but also to those who visit. The 1973 study, Scenic Resources of Lycoming County identified many of the scenic vistas in the Planning Area, including the Susquehanna River corridor. New development needs to be sensitive to the intrinsic value of these areas by using design techniques that preserve and enhance the views and scenic beauty of the area.</p>	<p>Yes – 10 No - 0</p>	
<p>Preservation of natural resources, including open spaces, wetlands, and prime agricultural soils is a high priority.</p>	<p>Yes – 10 No - 0</p>	
<p>Flooding continues to cause concern in terms of public safety and property damage.</p> <p>Floodplains - A large portion of the Planning Area is located in the floodplains of Loyalsock and Lycoming Creeks and their tributaries, and to a lesser extent, the Susquehanna River. At present, most of the area is protected by the dike system. Accurate delineation of the floodplains and appropriate regulations will help ensure that new development is sensitive to this natural hazard. Protection of existing development remains a constant challenge.</p>	<p>Yes – 11 No - 0</p> <p>Yes – 12 No - 0</p>	
<p>Groundwater is a source of drinking water for some of the residents of the area. Currently, supplies are endangered due to overuse and failing septic systems. In addition, new development will need to be sensitive to the fact that paving and other surface alterations will impact both the quality and quantity of ground water recharge.</p>	<p>Yes – 12 No - 0</p>	
<p>Chapter 4 – Transportation</p>	<p>Access to the west end of the city, particularly the Industrial Park, needs to be improved.</p> <p>A lot of it falls in Woodward Township—need to have a similar concept and consistency. A lot of the developable land is in their township. PENNDOT is coming through and dictating the crossovers that can happen; that will affect development coming in and out. Township doesn't have much say. Need a connection in that area to the interchange—developable area is 30% in City, 70% in Woodward. If Woodward isn't interested, no sense in the City saying they want to pursue it.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep this item but investigate further.</p>	<p>Yes – 3 No - 5</p>
	<p>The new I-99 /US 15 Interchange in Williamsport can have numerous future impacts, including smoother through traffic flow, and improved access. Providing improved connectivity to arterial streets will be a critical component for enhancing redevelopment opportunities.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep, but remove I-99 reference.</p>	<p>Yes – 8 No - 3</p>
	<p>Limited parking within the residential areas of Williamsport, South Williamsport, Duboistown, and Loyalsock Township.</p> <p>Verdict: Drop this item.</p>	<p>Yes – 6 No - 3</p>
	<p>Limited parking within the city hinders growth of local merchants and, in some cases, keeps new merchants from locating downtown. Potential use of RVT buses for offsite commuter parking, college student transportation, tourist circulation, etc.</p> <p>Verdict: Keep, but note that people circulate and park in off-site locations.</p>	<p>Yes – 8 No - 2</p>
	<p>City Bus provides public, fixed route transit services to the area. There are numerous routes throughout the area, as well as additional services for the disabled and for seniors.</p>	<p>Yes – 4 No - 1</p>

<p>Traffic Safety – Traffic safety is an issue along many roadways in the Greater Williamsport PAT Area. This includes not only motor vehicular conflicts with other motor vehicles, but also conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians. The County has been working closely with PENNDOT and local municipalities to incorporate traffic safety measures at various locations. A major effort in the PAT area has been to utilize traffic calming techniques, such as installation of modern roundabouts along Via Bella at the Mulberry, Court and William Street intersections as part of the overall Market Street Bridge Replacement Project. These roundabouts should be completed in 2007. The LCPC will be investigating additional locations appropriate for use of modern roundabouts as an intersection control and traffic calming technique. Studies show modern roundabouts are safer than signalized intersections since the number of high speed collisions are greatly reduced without inducing intersection traffic flow delays. Other traffic safety measures include better defined cross-walks and street lighting. The Williamsport Streetscape project is an excellent example that is underway. This project encompassing a 25 city block area in the Central Business District and the Historic District includes vintage streetlights, brick sidewalks and crosswalks, trees, landscaping, new curbing and signage. The new PENNDOT Hometown Streets Program and the PA DCED Elm Street Programs provide funding assistance to local municipalities for these types of improvements. The City of Williamsport has already received \$ 1.25 million under these programs for the streetscape project and the County anticipates working with other municipalities to develop similar projects and help secure funding from these two state programs.</p>	<p>Yes – 7 No - 1</p>
<p>Bikeway connections are needed to other transportation systems.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>The SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority has played a key role in preserving freight services in the County by purchasing the Williamsport Branch Line from Conrail. Currently, the Lycoming Valley Railroad operates the line. The Authority’s goal is to “preserve service to rail-dependent industries through shortline operations.” At the present time, the Authority serves 8 Counties and owns 300 miles of track and 5 shortline railroads that haul approximately 30,000 carloads of freight annually. This has allowed some 50 companies to remain cost competitive, which, in turn, has protected over 2,000 jobs in the region. The LVRR alone services 20 companies and handles approximately one third of the total carloads of freight. Currently, there are concerns regarding the preservation of the Norfolk-Southern Harrisburg to Buffalo Main Line.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>This area is well served by road, rail and air transportation facilities. Residents and business owners value the access they have to the various transportation networks.</p> <p>Maintaining a quality rail, road and air transportation system will be important to our future.</p>	<p>Yes – 10 No - 1</p> <p>Yes – 9 No - 0</p>
<p>The Williamsport Regional Airport provides connecting services to Philadelphia: however, affordability is an issue for many residents. Located in the Borough of Montoursville, the Williamsport Regional Airport is classified by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Aviation as a scheduled service facility and provides services to area businesses, residents, and companies visiting the region. The airport provides commercial airline services with direct flights via US Airways Express to major international hubs at Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Multiple daily departures connect Williamsport to over 160 cities in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Central and South America. Due to the Airport Authority’s Fare Watch Program, which is designed to keep the airport’s fees competitive, fares are normally within 5-15 percent of competitor’s prices. Additional details regarding other issues concerning runways and accessibility can be found in the Community Development Profile.</p>	<p>Yes – 8 No - 0</p>

Additional Transportation Issues/Discussion:

Be aware that if something new comes to our community, it may need to be added to public transportation service. For example, new housing development in OLT led to discussion of addition bus service.

Enhance discussion of/focus on pedestrian safety and connectivity. Change verbiage from bikeway connections to bike network.

Areas of the City create barriers for bikes/peds—downtown and residential areas are very ped/bike friendly, but certain zones are problematic (Little League Blvd., High St., for example).

Bike paths—getting from neighborhoods to bike trails can be difficult in some locations.

Encourage children to walk and bike to school by providing bikeways and pedestrian improvements. “Safe Routes to School.”

**Chapter 5 -
Community
Infrastructure
Plan**

Skateboarding - Skateboarding has become a popular activity by our youth. With this activity has come a generational conflict and damage to public and private property. Skateboarding has created conflict in many communities. A skateboard park has been established in the west end of Williamsport.

Verdict: Keep.

**Yes – 7
No - 3**

Integration of Land Use and Facilities – There has been poor integration of land use changes with existing facilities.

**Yes – 6
No - 2**

Water Quantity for Wells - The quantity of water available through drilling of private wells has been problematic in several areas.

**Yes – 6
No - 2**

Campground Sewage Disposal - The Susquehanna River and Pine Creek corridors have public and private campgrounds, as well as numerous river recreation lots. Use of river lots is restricted to a six-month period over the spring and summer. Collection and disposal of sewage from this concentrated recreational use is a significant issue.

**Yes – 7
No - 2**

Water Quality for Wells - The quality of the natural groundwater is not high in many areas. Although well water may be potable, often it is not palatable without treatment. Pollution of groundwater from non-point sources, such as agriculture, has not been identified as problematic.

**Yes – 9
No - 2**

Natural Beauty - This area of central Pennsylvania is rich in natural beauty, with tree covered mountains and rich valleys. There are vistas and scenic overlooks throughout the County. A single trip along any one of a number of scenic corridors, such as the Pine Creek Valley, Route 15, or Loyalsock Creek, will bring visitors back to our area year after year. There is seasonal beauty with snow-covered mountains in the winter, lush greenery and abundant wildlife in the spring and summer, and a fall foliage that rivals any in the world.

**Yes – 8
No - 1**

Sewer Expansion Capacity - The existing capacity of public sewerage systems provides for expansion in many growth areas.

**Yes – 8
No - 1**

<p>Access to the Susquehanna River - Access to the river is both a strong point and a weakness. The river is a tremendous recreational asset flowing through the community. In some respects it is readily accessible, however, there is room for significant improvements in boating access and general public access.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>Arts, Music, Museums - The Greater Williamsport Area is blessed with excellent facilities and programs to address the needs of musicians, artists, and performing artists.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>Outdoor Recreation - There are many opportunities for outdoor recreation with numerous hiking and mountain biking trails in nearby State Forest Land and State Game Lands. The opportunities for outdoor recreation in the vast forestland and open fields of Lycoming County are endless. The region is also rich with quality streams and creeks, plus the Susquehanna River, offering opportunities for swimming, boating and fishing.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>Amateur & Professional Sports - Historic Bowman Field is the home of the Williamsport Crosscutters, which provide local professional baseball at the Single A level. Although there are amateur sports leagues in a variety of sports, this area is known for baseball. The Greater Williamsport Area has been the home of Little League Baseball since its beginning.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>Sports Programs - The region has a wide variety of sports programs, from youth leagues through adult leagues.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>Indoor Recreation (YMCA, YWCA, school facilities) – There are indoor recreation facilities within a reasonable distance, including the YMCA & YWCA in Williamsport and several commercial facilities. Several schools in the Planning Area also provide “open gym” times for public use.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 1</p>
<p>Public Infrastructure – The existing infrastructure, including road network, utilities, and services is in place and can support continued growth.</p>	<p>Yes – 11 No - 1</p>
<p>Storm Water Management Problems - Development has occurred without storm water management controls required. This has led to runoff problem areas adjacent to township roads and complaints amongst residents.</p>	<p>Yes – 8 No - 0</p>
<p>Campground/River Lot Flooding - The public and private campgrounds, as well as river recreation lots, located along the Susquehanna River and Pine Creek are in many cases located within the floodway. There is a concern for safety, and pollution from stored items.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 0</p>
<p>Flood Protection - Flood protection from the Susquehanna River is a primary concern of many citizens. Although there is flood protection in the Greater Williamsport Area, many of the urban areas along the Susquehanna corridor are susceptible to flooding. Flood protection in these areas has been restricted to moving essential services such, as electricity and heat, to an area in residences that is above the flood levels.</p>	<p>Yes – 9 No - 0</p>
<p>Maintaining public infrastructure requires significant maintenance for continued residential, commercial and industrial service and growth.</p>	<p>Yes – 10 No - 0</p>

Bikeway Paths & Connectivity - By the summer of 2005, the Pine Creek Rail Trail will extend from the northwestern border of the County to a trailhead in Jersey Shore. The area has several other bikeways, including the Montoursville/Loyalsock Bikeway, the Lycoming Creek Bikeway, and designated bike paths throughout the City of Williamsport. Construction plans are in process for completing the section of the Susquehanna Trail that will connect to the Montoursville/Loyalsock Bikeway, the Lycoming Creek Bikeway, and Susquehanna State Park. The rerouting of the Lycoming Creek Bikeway from the Memorial Ave. Bridge to the Fourth Street Bridge should be evaluated.

Yes - 10
No - 0