

JUNIATA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



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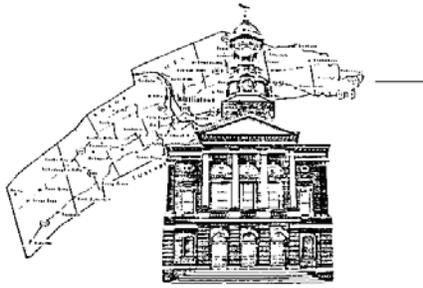
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FEBRUARY 2, 2010



JUNATA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Harry J. Becker, III, Chairman
George L. Hackenberger, Vice Chairman
Harry F. Leach, Secretary

February 2, 2010

Juniata County Board of Commissioners
Juniata County Courthouse – Bridge & Main Streets
P.O. Box 68
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Dear County Commissioners:

We are pleased to submit to you and the citizens of Juniata County the Juniata County Planning Commission's 2009 Annual Report. For more than 30 years the Juniata County Planning Commission has been active in planning and community development activities throughout Juniata County and the surrounding region, and 2009 was a busy year for new and continuing projects.

During the past year, we have partnered with diverse groups to advocate sound land use, sustainable economic development, responsible environmental stewardship, and a better quality of life for the residents of Juniata County.

As always, our accomplishments would not be possible if it were not for the continued support and assistance of the County Board of Commissioners. In consideration of this, and in fulfilling our obligation under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247, as amended, it is with great pleasure that we present to you the 2009 Annual Report.

Thank you again for your invaluable help throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Harry J. Becker, III
Chairman

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the Juniata County Planning Commission is to provide strategic, coordinated, and objective guidance and oversight to the growth, planning, and development activities of Juniata County. In doing so, it is the goal of the Commission to ensure Juniata County's future is characterized by a healthy environment, economy, and society achieved through proactive planning, citizen representation, effective communication, and the provision of professional services from the Juniata County Planning Department.

1.2 Juniata County Board of Commissioners

Jeffery M. Zimmerman, *Chairman*

Dale S. Shelly, *Vice-Chairman*

Teresa J. O'Neal, *Secretary*

Sherlyn Moseby, *Chief Clerk*

1.3 Juniata County Planning Commission

Purpose

Through its activities and those provided by the Mifflin County Planning Department, the Juniata County Planning Commission's purpose is to:

- Provide the orderly growth, development and redevelopment of Juniata County in accordance with the long-term objectives, principles and standards in the best interest and welfare of its citizens and political subdivisions
- Coordinate and integrate plans for orderly growth, development and redevelopment of Juniata County
- Improve the social and economic climate and well-being of the County

- Encourage appropriate land use and the efficient use of fiscal resources through implementation of the County Comprehensive Plan to be completed in 2008
- Encourage the maximum utilization of the existing infrastructure and plan for new infrastructure, including housing
- Promote the conservation and effective use of energy, land, water and air in Juniata County, as well as the preservation of unique historic, cultural and natural features and resources
- Promote and assist in achieving improved traffic and transportation flow
- Collect and distribute relevant County and regional data and information
- Ensure that citizens and municipal officials are well informed of their responsibilities regarding effective planning and development in Juniata County
- Ensure consistency, coordination and communication between and among the County's municipal planning entities
- Encourage the continued support of a fully staffed Planning Department
- Encourage effective coordination and communication between all County entities, agencies and organizations whose activities either influence or are influenced by the effective planning and development of Juniata County

Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Begun Service</u>	<u>Current Term Ends</u>
Harry J. Becker III, <i>Chairman</i>	Jan. 01, 1999	Dec. 31, 2010
George L. Hackenberger, <i>V. Chair.</i>	Jan. 01, 2000	Dec. 31, 2009
Harry F. Leach, <i>Secretary</i>	Jan. 01, 1999	Dec. 31, 2010
John M. Hepner	Jan. 01, 2005	Dec. 31, 2009
William D. Fulton	May 18, 1995	Dec. 31, 2009
Barbara Foster	Jan. 01, 1993	Dec. 31, 2011
Christopher Snyder	Jan. 08, 2008	Dec. 31, 2011
James S.G. Thompson	Jan. 01, 1977	Dec. 31, 2012
John F. Shirk	Jan. 01, 2009	Dec. 31, 2012

1.4 Juniata County Planning Department

Responsibilities

The Planning Department is responsible for:

- carrying out the duties set forth in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (PA Act 247 of 1968, as amended by PA act 170 of 1988)
- providing staff assistance to the Juniata County Planning Commission
- maintaining the Juniata County Comprehensive Plan
- coordinating with other agencies in the areas of transportation, housing, economic development, solid waste and tourism
- providing design guidance and reviewing subdivision and land development plans
- helping guide public policy and land use decisions related to growth and development
- providing assistance to the Counties' Municipalities on a variety of issues and subjects

Staff

Mark A. Colussy, *Associate Planner*

David C. Bardell, *Planning Director*

1.5 Planning Commission Committees

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee was formed to advise the County Planning Commission during the development of the County Comprehensive Plan. The committee is comprised of the following members:

John F. Shirk, *Chairman*

Richard Crawford, *Vice
Chairman*

Christopher Snyder

Glenn C. Supplee

Curt Dreilbelbis
Maureen Jordan
Don Kline
Donald Bashore
Davis Stetler
John B. Anstine Jr.
Ron Taverno

Cynthia A. Iberg
Kelly Stidfole
Robert Kratzer
Harry Becker
Dr. Kenneth Albaugh
Michael W. Kramer

Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan Committee

The Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan Committee, collaboratively by Juniata and Mifflin County, was convened to oversee the development of the Juniata/Mifflin County Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan. The committee is comprised of the following members:

Mifflin County

John Czerniakowski
Brian Frey
Mike Makufka
Marie Mulvihill
Cadie Pruss
Rick Williams

Juniata County

Floyd Ciccolini
Martin Driebelbis
Trish Hoffman
Ken Mummah
Chris Snyder
Jeff Whitesel

SECTION 2: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

2.1 Planning

Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan

Juniata County has teamed up with Mifflin County on a joint Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan. The Department of Conservation and Natural

Resources has a program called the Community Conservation Partnerships Program that provides grant money for such projects. In the spring of 2006, the two counties were awarded with a grant to develop the plan. The project is expected to last about fifteen (15) months until completion, estimated to be completed August of 2008.

The plan will propose green connections to community destinations, target conservation of significant natural resources, explore park and recreation trends and needs, and recommend actions to advance parks, recreation, trails, and greenways in Juniata and Mifflin Counties.

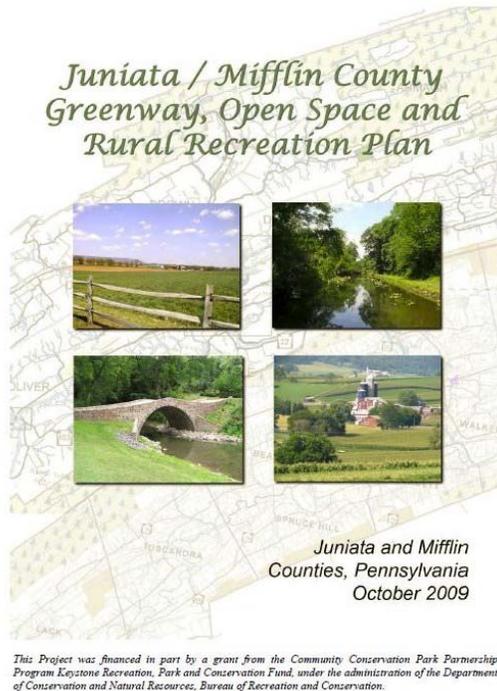


Figure 1 –Juniata and Mifflin County's Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan

The elements of the plan and the planning process include identifying the purpose of the work, establishing an inventory for existing data and related plans including natural resources and manmade resources, analyzing data and developing a proposed greenway network vision, mapping, developing an action plan, and preparation of the final plan. Public participation is also crucial for the project, as multiple meetings were held as well as surveys sent to random households. The plan will compile all the phases of the project to develop opportunities associated with greenways, trails and open spaces.

Guiding principles of the plan are based upon public input from citizens, community and conservation organizations, business owners, and municipalities, along with an assessment of each County's physical and human assets and opportunities. These principles provided the foundation for the Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan and guided the development of specific goals and recommendations for both Juniata and Mifflin Counties' actions relative to open space and recreation over the next 10 years. The six guiding principles include:

1. Our rural character and high quality natural resources are valuable to our citizens and our community as a whole.
2. Juniata and Mifflin Counties' economic vitality, community wellness, and livable communities depend on the health of our natural environment and the integrity of our rural character.
3. Agriculture is crucial to our economy and our rural agrarian way of life.

4. Active healthy lifestyles made possible through plentiful recreation opportunities are vital to the quality of life for our citizens now and into the future.
5. As rural Counties, collaboration, partnerships, and involvement by state agencies, regional conservation and recreational entities, community organizations, the private sector, municipalities, and citizens are crucial to the successful implementation of greenway, open space, and recreation initiatives.
6. The primary role of the Counties is to serve as the catalyst for open space conservation by harnessing partners in collaborative efforts, providing leadership, encouragement, and professional technical assistance to municipalities, outreach to landowners, and educational support for municipalities and the public. Through these services, Juniata and Mifflin Counties offer a base level of investment in open space, greenways, and recreation.

The Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan balances citizens' diverse needs and interests, recognizes the strengths and opportunities of both Counties, as well as limiting factors, and provides a framework for achieving open space conservation, recreation, and quality of life goals. The Plan recommends actions to expand recreation to foster active healthy lifestyles, strategies for protection of the Counties' natural resources and rural character, and a greenway network to connect the Counties and region with trails, bikeways, and protected green corridors.

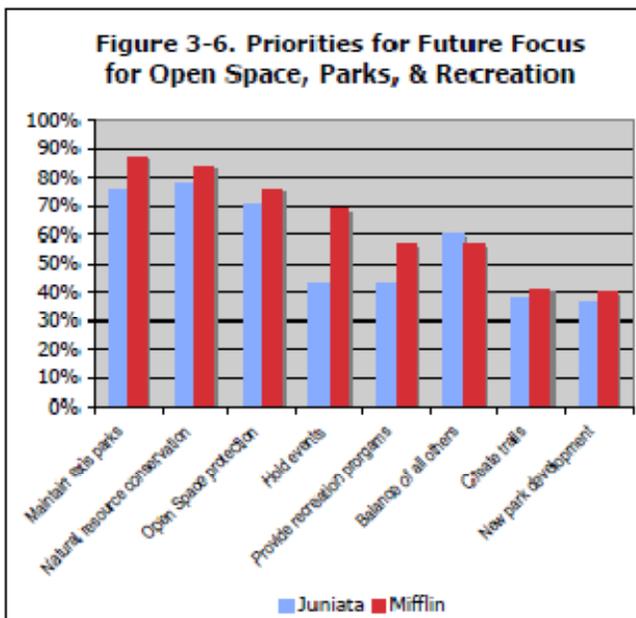


Figure 2 – Example of a Figure from the Greenways, Open Space & Rural Recreation Plan

An orchestrated strategy of partnerships, outreach and education, and support of local organizations and municipalities is defined to promote the recommendations of the plan.

The Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation plan is a joint effort between the consultants hired for the project in Ann Yost, RLA of Yost Strodoski Mears, and Ann Toole of Toole Recreation Planning. This project is funded in part by a Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

The Juniata-Mifflin Counties Greenway, Open Space, and

Rural Recreation Plan is nearing completion. The public hearing for the plan in Juniata County is scheduled for February 16th, 2010.

Shared Municipal Services Program

In October of 2006, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) approved a Shared Municipal Services Program (SMSP) grant between Juniata and Mifflin County. The grant continued through 2008 and into 2009, which the two counties received \$19,500 for FY 2008 and \$10,300 for FY 2009. A portion of the grant funds the Associate Planner's salary. The Associate Planner is a shared position between the Juniata County Planning Department and the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department.



In October of 2007, after interviewing several candidates for the Associate Planner position, Mark Colussy was hired to replace the departed Andrew Hartwell.

In Juniata County, the Associate Planner was tasked with reviewing subdivision and land development plans, assist with the development of the Juniata County Comprehensive Plan, assist with the development of the Tri-County Hazard Mitigation Plan, assist with the development of the Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan, as well as maintain the Planning Department's website. Also, since the Acting Planning Director retired in 2007, the Associate Planner helped fill the vacancy by helping with several other tasks to maintain and operate the Planning Department office until the Planning Director position was filled.

Figure 3 – DCED's Shared Municipal Services Program

Juniata County Comprehensive Plan

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code now requires counties to update their comprehensive plan every 10 years.

This is extremely important given Juniata County's geographic location in central Pennsylvania and the recent and ongoing highway improvements that contribute to the county's accessibility and desirability.

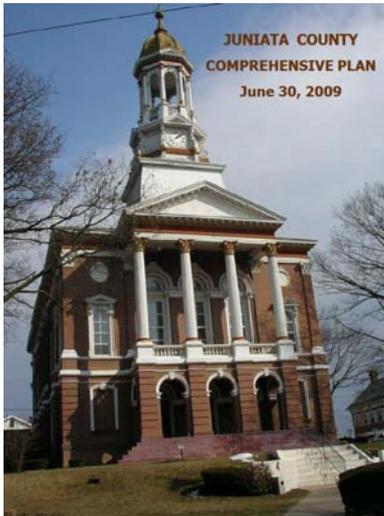


Figure 4 – Juniata County Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is a policy document that will help guide the county over a 10-year period. The plan will also identify community planning strategies that local municipalities can utilize to initiate or strengthen their planning programs.

The Juniata County Board of Commissioners contracted with RETTEW Associates Inc. and Shepstone Management to facilitate the development of the plan. The Planning and Development Department helped oversee the project and administered the DCED Land Use and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP) grant that funded the project.

Key elements of the plan include public participation, community survey, infrastructure analysis, housing analysis, future land use, natural resources availability, agricultural preservation and protection, watershed management, and historic preservation. The plan will also recommend implementation strategies and identify funding sources. The plan will become the framework from which local municipalities can update or prepare their own plans. It is important to develop a common vision and an atmosphere of consistency throughout Juniata County and its 17 municipalities.

In 2005, the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department worked with the Juniata County Commissioners and the Juniata County Planning Department to secure funding and hire a consultant for the project. Funding for the project was secured in 2006 through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program. The Planning and Development Department assisted with developing a request for proposals, reviewing proposals, interviewing prospective consulting firms, and selecting the consulting firm to facilitate development of the plan. The Juniata County Board of Commissioners contracted with the consulting firms of RETTEW Associates Inc. and Shepstone Management.

In 2006, a memorandum of understanding was developed between Juniata and Mifflin Counties authorizing the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department to oversee the development of the Juniata County Comprehensive Plan.

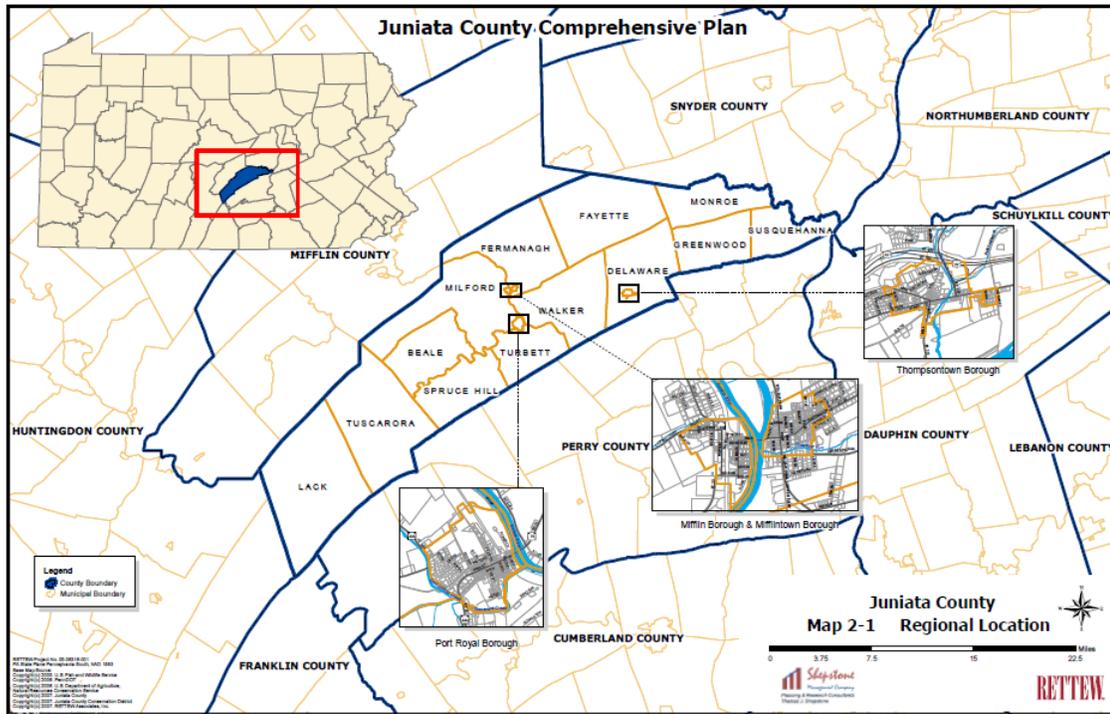


Figure 5 – Map 1 from the draft Juniata County Comprehensive Plan

On June 30, 2009, the Juniata County Board of Commissioners adopted the Juniata County Comprehensive Plan. The completion of this project fulfills an Act 247, Pennsylvania Municipalities Code (MPC) requirement that every county in Pennsylvania must prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan creates a vision for Juniata County with mutually supportive policies that will guide it through the next ten years. This is extremely important given the County's geographic location in central Pennsylvania, as well as recently completed highway improvements that contribute to the County's accessibility and desirability.

Public participation was a key element in developing the Comprehensive Plan. The public's number one comment was to keep the rural character of Juniata County intact. That is accomplished by employing a growth strategy that focuses growth to the boroughs and their immediate surroundings. These areas are generally served by public infrastructure that can immediately accommodate the growth, or upgrades to water and sewer systems can be accomplished to accommodate growth in the future.

The Boroughs of Juniata County are generally located along the Juniata River and act as centralized nodes providing needed services to the residents of the surrounding townships. These Boroughs are connected by state roads, which provide interconnectivity throughout the County.

The natural beauty of Juniata County, along with the small-town, close-knit communities, has contributed to a high quality of life that must be protected for

this generation and future generations to come. It is the preservation of this high quality of life that must follow the adoption of this plan.

The plan also provides municipalities with guidance about future development and how it relates to natural and water resources, population, housing, land use, community facilities, historic resources, and transportation, and it recommends implementation strategies and identifies funding sources. It provides framework from which local municipalities can update or prepare their own plans, and it is important to develop a common vision and an atmosphere of consistency throughout the county and its 17 municipalities.

The Juniata County Commissioners approved the plan on June 30, 2009. The Juniata County Comprehensive Plan is available online at www.co.juniata.pa.us.

2.2 Subdivision and Land Development

Description

An important function of the Juniata County Planning Commission is to review and provide comments for subdivision and land development plans, as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 as amended. In cases where municipalities have a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, plans must be submitted to the Juniata County Planning Commission for review to provide comments to the municipality within 30 days. All municipalities in the county have their own Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance with the exception of Monroe Township, Mifflin Borough, and Mifflintown Borough.

The Planning Commission reviewed 63 plan submissions in 2009. This total is down 54% from the 2008 total of 97 plans reviewed. Of the 2009 plans that were reviewed, 34 plans, or 54% of the plans were minor subdivisions (9 lots or less), 22 were Lot Additions (35%), 5 were Land Developments (8%), and 1 Major Subdivision and 1 other plan. Refer to Chart 2 for total plans reviewed by type. Walker Township had the most plans reviewed 16 (or 25% of the total plans reviewed), followed by Fermanagh Township at 9, and Delaware and Fayette Townships at 7 each. Sixty-Two percent (62%) of all the plans reviewed in the county occurred in the aforementioned four townships. This high percentage of plans reviewed in this area is not surprising, as these four townships are in the core, or center of the county. Refer to Figure 5 on page 10 to see a map of Juniata County. There were zero plans reviewed for all four boroughs, as well as Lack Township. Refer to Chart 3 for plans reviewed by Municipality.

Totals

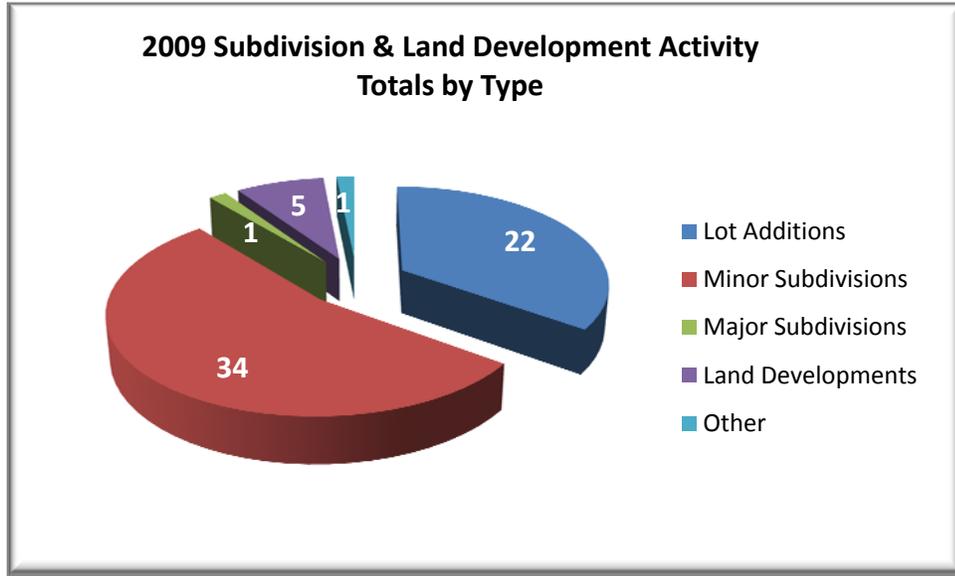


Chart 1 – 2009 Subdivision & Land Development Activity Totals by Type

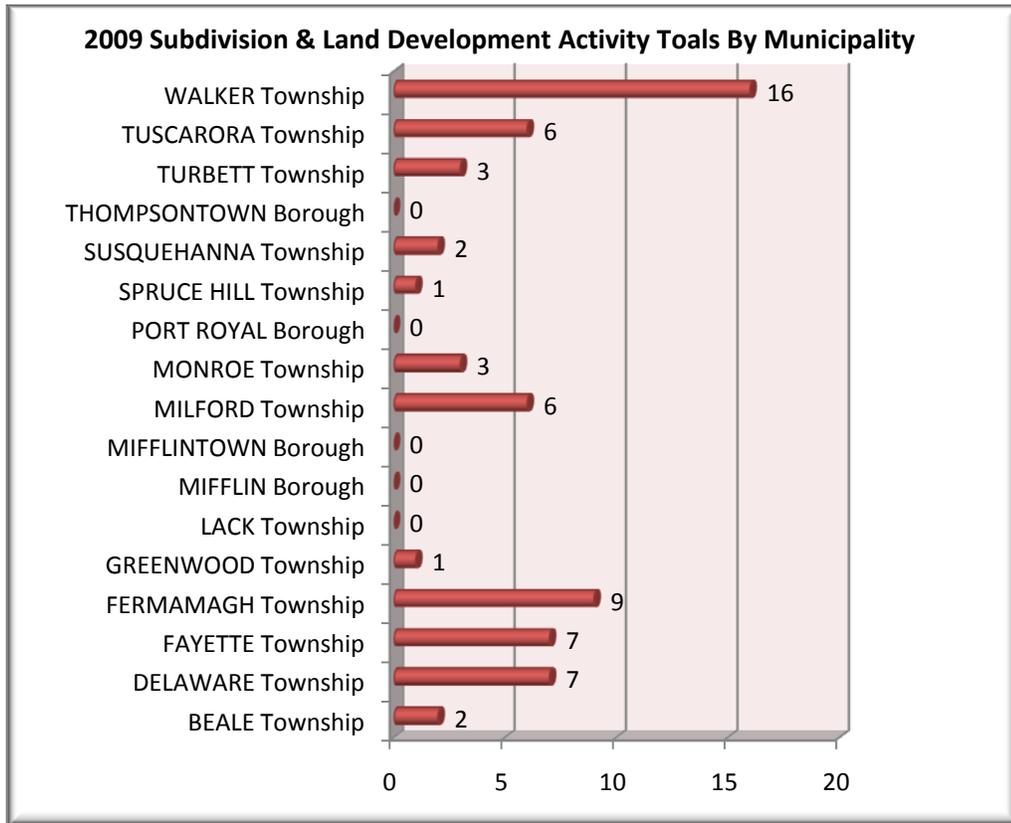


Chart 2 – 2009 Subdivision and Land Development Activity Totals by Municipality

The Planning Commission has reviewed a wide range in plan numbers over the past several years. The average over the past 5 years is 90.2 plans. The total for 2009 is significantly less than the average over the past 5 years. It seems apparent that the assumption can be made that the worldwide recession that occurred throughout the year has affected plan review totals in Juniata County. Refer to Table 1 for plan review totals over the past 5 years.

Year	Lot Addition	Minor Subdivision	Major Subdivision	Land Development	Other	Total
2009	22	34	1	5	1	63
2008	29	49	6	9	4	97
2007*	30	47	4	1	3	85*
2006	19	67	3	9	3	101
2005	30	57	6	11	1	105

*Note that 2007 does not include October totals due to the absence of staff and records

Table 1 – Subdivision and Land Development Activity Totals by Year

2.3 Community Development Block Grant Program

Description of CDBG Program

Juniata County utilizes Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to benefit low and moderate income citizens by alleviating serious and immediate threats to the health and welfare of community residents by improving neighborhood infrastructure. Projects typically funded by this program are improvements to water and sewer systems, housing rehabilitation for qualified families, road resurfacing, ADA modifications to public facilities, and playground improvements. In addition, a portion of the funds may be spent on improving or adding new public services. Juniata County received \$245,400 for FY 2008 from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). These funds are used for County-wide projects or distributed to local municipalities, authorities, and non-profit organizations on a competitive basis.

Fundable Activities

All CDBG projects must benefit a majority (over 51%) of low-to-moderate income persons. If a community-wide activity is funded, then over 51% of low-to-moderate income persons. If a community-wide activity is funded, then over 51% of the residents in the community must meet the low to moderate income limits.

In addition to Census data and County-wide survey data, other methods can be used to document the fundability of a particular project:

1. A survey of the households in the service benefit area be conducted that demonstrates that over 51% of the individuals benefiting from the project have low-to-moderate incomes.
2. The project is designed specifically to serve low-to-moderate income individuals. An example of such a project is housing rehabilitation, where assistance is provided only to those families that meet income guidelines.
3. The project is designed to benefit individuals who are presumed to have low-to-moderate incomes, i.e., senior citizens and handicapped individuals.

Eligible Activities

Many types of projects are eligible including:

1. Construction and reconstruction of public facilities. Public facilities can include, but are not limited to: roads, storms and sanitary sewer systems, water, recreation improvements, firefighting equipment.
2. Acquisition of land, economic development, housing rehabilitation, removal of architectural barriers that restrict the movement of handicapped persons, historic preservation, conservation and other activities
3. Establishment of new, or expansion of existing public services. Examples of this could be child care, health care, job training, education programs, recreation programs, drug abuse counseling and/or treatment, services for homeless persons, etc.

Activities that are NOT generally eligible include the construction or improvement of municipal buildings (except with the removal of architectural barriers), the purchase of municipal equipment (i.e. snow plows), and general operating and maintenance expenses.

Project Total	CDBG	Description
Richfield Area Joint Authority Water System Improvements	\$66,667	Development of a new well and other water system improvements. Project financed with CDBG funds from 2005-2007. Construction finished in 2008.

Table 2 - 2008 projects already underway

Project 2008	CDBG	Total CDBG	Description
Housing Rehab – Milford Township Sewer Laterals	\$158,992	\$158,992	Installation of sewer laterals and decommissioning of septic system for income eligible home owners. Construction completed in June-July 2009.
Public Service – Mifflin Juniata Dental Clinic	\$8,068	\$8,068	Funds for the purchase of dental equipment needed for quantifiable increase in service. Funds expended early 2009.
Village of Walnut Sanitary Sewer	\$34,172	\$859,657	Design and installation of a lagoon based wastewater treatment facility in the Village of Walnut, Beale Township. This project has been underway since 2003 and should be complete in 2010.
Administration \$	44,168	\$44,168	Grantees are entitled to use 18% of the grant for administration
Total \$2	45,400	\$245,400	

Table 3 - New Projects Selected on Juniata County 2008 CDBG Application

SECTION 3: MEMBERS AND STAFF

3.1 Staff Changes

The Planning Commission would like to welcome David C. Bardell, Planning Director, who started May 1 of 2009. Dave is filling the Planning Director position, which has been vacant since August of 2007. Dave is a lifetime resident of Juniata County and brings a diverse work experience to the department. Working for various companies as AT&T, Tellabs, Level 3 Communications and consulting firms, SSI Services and L.R. Kimball, has helped him to fill a position that includes not only planning, but Solid Waste/Recycling Coordinator and SEDA-COG assignments on the Regional Transportation Organization and CDBG interface. The Planning Commission welcomes Dave to the department!