

APPENDIX

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Capital Improvements Planning

Capital improvements planning includes financial analysis of past trends in the community, present conditions, and a projection of the community's revenues and expenditures, debt limit and tax rates, to determine what the financial capabilities of the municipality are. It also includes a capital improvements program which establishes a system of priorities. The final element is the capital budget which lists the schedule of improvements over a 5-year period based on the community's financial capacity and availability of grant money.

In the capital improvements program, capital expenditures are separated from operational expenditures. Operational expenditures are those for administration, salaries, maintenance and similar functions, and are short term. Capital expenditures are for assets which have a substantial value compared to the total municipal budget and are expected to provide service for a number of years. The purchase of land or the construction of a building is an example of a capital expenditure.

The capital improvements program schedules the purchase of capital items in a systematic manner rather than allocating a large amount of money for all expenditures in one year. Based on the assessment of future needs, future expenditures are planned so that the municipality can anticipate these major expenditures prior to the budget year. The program is based on identified capital needs, goals for capital acquisitions, and a priority list of all proposed capital expenditures.

A time frame is established for the capital improvements program. Five-year programs are typical. Every year the schedule for capital improvements must be revised and updated as necessary, based on the current municipal priorities. For each project included in the program, estimated costs must be established and a budget prepared.

Benefits of capital improvements programs include:

- It helps assure that projects will be based upon the ability to pay and upon a schedule of priorities determined in advance.
- It helps assure that capital improvements are viewed comprehensively and in the best public interest of the municipality as a whole.
- It promotes financial stability by scheduling projects at the proper intervals.
- It avoids sharp changes in the tax structure by the proper scheduling of projects.
- It facilitates the best allocation of community resources.
- It helps to better plan municipal budgeting through economic downturns.

Official Map (excerpts from the MPC)

The governing body of each municipality has the power to make an official map of all or a portion of the municipality which may show elements of the Comprehensive Plan with regard to public lands and facilities, and which may include, but need not be limited to:

1. Existing and proposed public streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widenings, narrowings, extensions, diminutions, openings or closings.
2. Existing and proposed public parks, playgrounds, and open space reservations.
3. Pedestrian ways and easements.
4. Railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements.
5. Flood control basins, floodways and floodplains, stormwater management areas and drainage easements.
6. Support facilities, easements and other properties held by public bodies undertaking the elements described in the Comprehensive Plan.

The governing body may make surveys and maps to identify the location of property, trafficway alignment or utility easement by use of property records, aerial photography, photogrammetric mapping or other method sufficient for identification, description and publication of the map components. For acquisition of lands and easements, boundary descriptions by metes and bounds must be made and sealed by a licensed surveyor. (The surveying is required prior to acquisition of land or easements not at the time of placement upon the Official Map.)

The adoption of any street lines or other public lands as part of the official map does not constitute the opening or establishment of any street nor the taking or acceptance of any land, nor does it obligate the municipality to improve or maintain any such street or land. The adoption of proposed watercourses or public grounds as part of the official map does not constitute a taking or acceptance of any land by the municipality.

For the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the official map of the municipality, no permit shall be issued for any building within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground shown or laid out on the official map. No person shall recover any damages for the taking for public use of any building or improvements constructed within the lines of any street, watercourse, or public ground after the same shall have been included in the official map, and any such building or improvements shall be removed at the expense of the owner. However, when the property of which the reserved location forms a part, cannot yield a reasonable return to the owner unless a permit shall be granted, the owner may apply to the governing body for the grant of a special encroachment permit to build.

The governing body may fix the time for which streets, watercourses and public grounds on the official map shall be deemed reserved for future taking or acquisition for public use. However,

the reservation for public grounds shall lapse and become void one year after an owner of such property has submitted a written notice to the governing body announcing his intentions to build, subdivide or otherwise develop the land covered by the reservation, or has made formal application for an official permit to build a structure for private use, unless the governing body shall have acquired the property or begun condemnation proceedings to acquire such property before the end of the year.

GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS

The following is a list of some of the County, state and federal programs for community and economic development. Programs can be modified or eliminated over time, so it is necessary to contact the responsible agency for availability and eligibility information.

- **Berks County**

 - **Joint Comprehensive Planning Program**

 - **Joint Zoning Ordinance Program**

- **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**

 - **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)** – This program provides financial and technical assistance to aid communities in their community and economic development efforts. Activities include housing rehabilitation, community facilities, infrastructure, public services, economic development and planning. The activities are to benefit areas containing a majority of low to moderate income persons and administered by Berks County.

 - **Communities of Opportunity** – This program is for state-funded grants for community and economic development and the development or rehabilitation of housing.

 - **Infrastructure Development Program** – This program provides grants and low interest financing for the construction of public and private infrastructure needed for business to locate or expand to a specific site. It also provides financing for infrastructure costs to redevelop former industrial sites, including site clearance costs.

 - **Inter-municipal Project Grants Program** – This program provides grants for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services.

 - **Industrial Sites Reuse Program (Brownfields)** – This program provides grant and low interest loan financing for environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites.

 - **Community Economic Revitalization Program** – This program is intended to fund infrastructure improvements, community revitalization, building rehabilitation, and demolition of blighted structures, in order to increase community tax base and promote community stability.

Main Street Program – This program is intended to promote business retention and development and preserve the historic character of a community’s downtown. A downtown business organization is created and a Main Street manager is hired. Grants can be received for façade restoration, signage programs and design assistance. The program can then be followed by the development of an Elm Street Program.

Elm Street Program – This program is intended to improve residential areas that are directly adjacent/connected to the Main Street area.

Downtown Pennsylvania Program – This program provides management to organize and implement a Business District Authority. The Authority provides financing for services in Commercial areas.

Home Investment Partnership Program – This program provides financial assistance to municipalities for expanding the housing supply for low income persons.

Small Business First Program – This program provides low interest loans for projects such as site acquisition, building construction, machinery, and working capital for businesses of less than 100 employees.

Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program – This program provides low interest loans for equipment and municipal facilities.

State Planning Assistance Grant Program – This program provides matching funds for comprehensive plans and special studies and plans.

Small Business Incubator Program – This program provides loans and grants for facilities in which a number of new businesses operate under one roof and share services and equipment.

Shared Municipal Services Program – This program provides matching grants for cooperative municipal efforts to increase the efficiency of public services.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**

Urban Forestry Grants – This program provides grants for tree planting projects.

Community Grant Program – This program provides grants for comprehensive recreation and park planning, greenways and master site development planning. Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for the rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities and acquisition of land for park and conservation purposes.

The Conservation Corps Program – This program provides funding for labor for community projects such as trail improvements.

Rivers Conservation Grant Program – This program provides grants for river conservation plans and non-acquisition, non-development implementation projects.

Acquisition and Development Grants can be used for land acquisition and the development of river conservation projects.

Heritage Parks Grant Program – This program promotes public/private partnerships to preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism. Grants are awarded for purposes such as feasibility studies, development of management action plans, specialized studies, and implementation projects and management grants.

SYMMS Recreational Trail Program – This program provides matching funding for the acquisition, development and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails.

Rails to Trails, PA Program – This program provides matching grants for feasibility studies, plans, acquisition and improvement of former railroad lines for recreational trails.

- **C2P2** – This program provides a matching grant for completing Open Space and Recreation Plans. Where municipalities apply to complete a joint plan there is a higher opportunity for funding. There is also funding for specific projects through this grant program. Under this program smaller grants with lower or no matches are available to municipalities that are less than 5,000 residents for playground projects.

- **Peer Study** – This program helps municipalities to look at joint opportunities for open space and recreation.

- **PA Department of Environmental Protection**

Stream Improvement Program – This program provides design and construction projects to eliminate imminent threats due to flooding and streambank erosion.

- **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**

Local History Grants – These grants support public programs, research and writing, educational and commemorative.

Keystone Historic Preservation Grants – This program provides matching grants to groups that are rehabilitating or restoring historic properties that will be open and accessible to the public.

Historic Preservation Grants – This program supports non-construction activities and cultural resources surveys, National Register nominations, technical and planning assistance, and educational programs.

Certified Local Government Grants – This program provides matching grants and technical assistance to protect and regulate historic districts.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation**

Transportation Enhancements Program

The program provides funding for programs such as provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles; acquisition of scenic easements or historic sites; landscaping or other scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities.

Hometown Streets / Safe Routes to School

The program provides funding for non-motorized improvements for pedestrians and bicycles that promote walking/cycling within the community and between houses and schools.