TRI-COUNTY TCRPC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

NEWSLETTER

The Voice of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission since 1970

Wrapping Up 2026 & Getting Ready for 2027



By Executive Director Andrew Bomberger, AICP

As we roll into autumn, TCRPC is looking forward to a strong end to a successful 2026 and preparing for an exciting 2027.

Our HATS planning staff is wrapping up an update to the Coordinated Public Service-Human Service Transportation Plan and the functional classification of the region's roads and highways.

Outreach, research, and analysis continues for the update of the Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan, alongside workgroup coordination and implementation of our Picture Perry Comprehensive Plan.

Regional planning staff are also working on our first update to the Regional Growth Management Plan in nearly 10 years.

Through it all, we're providing our municipalities and stakeholders with tools and resources to address the land-use and transportation issues facing our communities both today and in the future.

For 2027, TCRPC staff is looking forward to a renewed focus on outreach and training, including spring and fall events, our Annual Luncheon, and a return of the Premier Project Awards.

As always, we'll work hand in hand with our partners in our mission to foster the long-term livability and vitality of our communities, counties and region.

Like our motto says: *Stronger when we work together.*

New & Improved Premier Project Awards for 2027!

We're launching a revamped **Premier Project Awards** in 2027 to recognize planning excellence in the Tri-County Region.

Nominations will open January 1st for completed community planning and land development projects, including transportation projects in Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry counties, and land use projects in Dauphin and Perry counties.

Example projects include housing, roads and streets, parks and recreation, active transportation, public improvements, growth studies and much more. **Watch for more news** about this quarterly award program, the nomination guidelines and process, and what winners will receive.

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TRI-COUNTY TCRPC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

BECOME A SPONSOR IN 2027

LUNCHEON & OUTREACH SPONSORSHIP

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission is offering sponsorships for its **2027 Outreach Program**, including the **Annual Luncheon**.

As always, our Annual Luncheon will give local officials, planners, developers, engineers and others the chance to dine together and discuss the region's future.

In addition, we will hold **regional training/outreach events** in the spring and fall, providing an opportunity to learn more about our ongoing efforts and hear from experts on current land use and transportation topics.

For $2,000, you'll get the following:

- **A table for 8** at the 2027 Annual Luncheon;
- **Recognition** on our website and at all outreach events;
- **A full-page ad** in all 4 issues of our quarterly newsletter.

The dates, locations, guest speakers and other details for each event will be announced as they become available.







NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIP

We're also offering sponsorships for our quarterly newsletter, which reaches approximately 3,000 local officials, planners, developers, engineers and others in the region.

Each issue features news and updates about our diverse projects, education and training programs, upcoming events and much more.

A sponsorship gives you an ad in ***all 4 of our quarterly issues*** for 2027 at the following rates:

- **1/2-page ad:** $1,000
- **1/4-page ad:** $500
- **1/8-page ad:** $250



SPONSOR TCRPC TODAY!

For more information and to sign up, visit:
www.tcrpc-pa.org/sponsorships

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Welcome Our New Associate Director!



James C. Hess, Jr., AICP, is a Tri-County Region native, graduating from East Pennsboro High School in 1979.

He earned a master's degree in Geoenvironmental Studies from Shippensburg University and a master's in City Planning from Rutgers University. He then accepted a job at a small transportation planning firm in Trenton, NJ, embarking on a career in the consulting industry.

He eventually settled at AECOM Technical Services, serving as a project manager and lead planner for a wide range of projects.

Jim is interested especially in integrating transportation planning with land use and development, and he looks forward to applying his experience in his home region.

He'll replace Diane Myers-Krug upon her retirement at the end of the year.

PICTURE PERRY: Closer to Community Planning Unification

By Jason Finnerty, *Perry County Planning Coordinator*

Perry County recently achieved another milestone with the announcement that Toboyne Township has adopted the PICTURE PERRY Comprehensive Plan. The decision shows strong leadership and a commitment to cooperative planning across the county.

Of Perry County's 30 municipalities, only six have not yet adopted the plan. Staff will continue its outreach to them with the goal of achieving full participation.

Implementation Progress

The third round of Implementation Workgroup Sessions for 2026 recently have concluded. These sessions continue to bring together municipal leaders, partners and stakeholders to advance coordinated planning efforts across the county. Key themes emphasize collaboration, long-term sustainability, infrastructure investment, and strategic economic development.

Summary reports detailing the discussions and outcomes of each session will be posted **online**.

Following are some of the topics covered by each workgroup.

- **COMMUNITY FACILITIES & UTILITIES:** Wastewater infrastructure, electric transmission, municipal facilities, parks and trails, housing development, communications infrastructure, and emerging data-center activity.
- **HOUSING:** Increasing rental costs, limited housing choices, barriers to development, gaps in emergency support, infill development, accessory dwelling units, senior housing, adaptive reuse, and housing-oriented nonprofit partnerships.
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Tourism, outdoor recreation, housing, land use planning, business and industrial development, and potential infrastructure investments.
- **NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION:** Connected recreation activities, community destinations, public and conservation lands, economic development, public safety, environmental and infrastructure constraints.
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Funding challenges for smaller municipalities, creative approaches to bridge replacement, state and regional grant programs, technical assistance, and the connection with economic and residential development.



BUILDING CONNECTIONS ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Michael Baker partners with communities to turn local vision into real, funded projects, delivering plans that

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- Geospatial Technologies
- Grants and Funding
- Planning and Urban Design
- Public Engagement

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

- Multimodal Planning and Engineering
- Traffic Engineering and Design
- Transit and Rail
- Safety and Congestion Management

RESILIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Air Quality
- Disaster Planning
- Emergency Management
- Environmental Resiliency

INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

- Broadband
- Civil and Municipal Engineering
- Construction Management and Inspection
- Telecommunications and Utilities

LEARN MORE

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Cold Weather is Coming – Stay Active with SusqueCycle!

Cold weather may be on its way, but that doesn't mean your bicycle has to go into hibernation. Like many bikeshare systems in colder climates, SusqueCycle adjusts its fleet to match seasonal demand and allow for proactive maintenance.

This December, about half of the SusqueCycle fleet will be placed into seasonal hibernation, while every rack location will remain active and ready for riders.

And while the season brings colder temperatures and shorter days, it also brings an opportunity to rethink how we get around. Cold weather doesn't have to mean putting active transportation on hold. With the right preparation and a little extra awareness, bicycling can remain a safe, healthy and enjoyable way to travel right through winter.

A little preparation goes a long way:

- **Layer up:** Dress in layers and choose insulated, wind-resistant outerwear to stay comfortable.
- **Keep hands and feet warm:** Gloves and footwear with good insulation and traction can make cold weather riding much more enjoyable.
- **Be seen:** Shorter daylight hours make front and rear lights and reflective clothing or accessories very important.
- **Slow it down:** Give yourself extra time and ride at a reduced speed when conditions are wet, snowy or icy.
- **Brake early:** Allow additional stopping distance and be cautious on slippery surfaces.
- **Watch for hazards:** Slush, snow buildup, ice, potholes and faded pavement markings can create unexpected challenges.

The SusqueCycle bikes that are placed into hibernation will return in early spring, just as the days grow longer and temperatures begin to rise. Until then, whether you're a year-round rider or simply looking forward to your first spring ride, keep moving and stay safe.

For more information, visit www.susquecycle.org.





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Modeling Land Suitability Using GIS for Growth Management Planning

By Lindsey Grier, *Regional Planner*

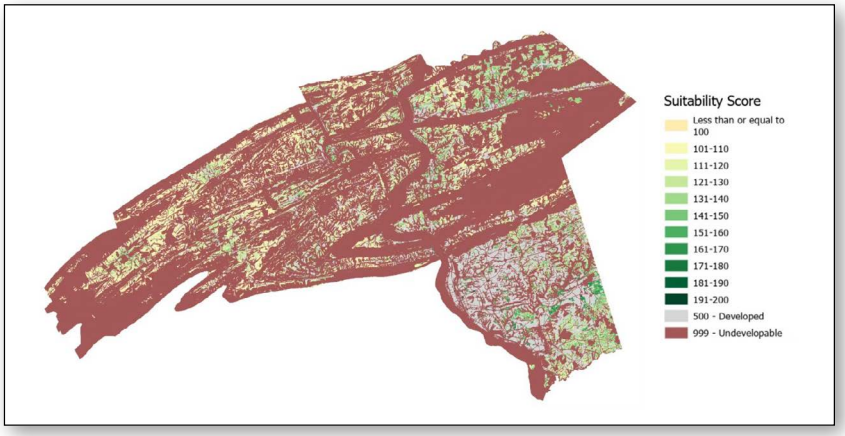
TCRPC continues to update the Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP 2050), which serves as the foundation of our regional planning program.

Following a months-long stakeholder outreach effort, during which staff gathered valuable insight into the most pressing issues our region faces today and in the coming decades, we spent the summer taking a close look at our region's land.

Evaluating land suitability for future development is an essential step in developing potential future growth scenarios that will guide regional planning decisions for years to come.

TCRPC performed a robust analysis, employing geographic information system technology, to analyze the entirety of Dauphin and Perry Counties.

Applying research, best practices, and input from the public and expert stakeholders, we created a weighted rating system that applied a wide set of land use criteria to over 1.4 million small segments of land across the entire region.



Land suitability analysis depicting potential developable areas across the region.

The criteria that went into this analysis included: existing land use; proximity to development; access to services such as public water, sewer, EMS, recreation, and community facilities; flood risk; conservation areas and farmland; and connections to transportation.

The result of this analysis is a map of our region that depicts the suitability of land for potential future development.

The land suitability analysis will inform the next phase of the regional plan development, where we will model potential future growth scenarios.

You can follow the Regional Growth Management Plan's progress **on our website**.

Zoning & the Risks of Stand-alone Ordinances

By Lindsey Grier, *Regional Planner*

As new technologies and land uses emerge, municipalities face the challenge of implementing regulations to address our ever-changing landscape.

Also, as industry demands and local needs change at an increasingly rapid pace, local leadership must often work quickly to incorporate new uses and standards in local ordinances.

In Pennsylvania, adopting a robust and up-to-date zoning ordinance that is consistent with a municipal comprehensive plan is the key tool by which townships and boroughs can effectively regulate land uses and locations.

While municipalities may regulate certain quality of life issues outside of a zoning ordinance pursuant to the PA Municipalities Planning Code, it is important that local officials consult experienced land use attorneys to ensure compliance with the MPC if considering a non-zoning ordinance to address land use concerns.

In the case of stand-alone zoning ordinances where no comprehensive zoning ordinance exists, there remains a risk of legal challenges and invalidation of the ordinance under the state's land use code. Municipalities should act with care when considering such ordinances.

Additionally, neighboring municipalities that currently lack zoning may choose to consider joint zoning to address land use issues across multiple municipalities, as this can be a useful strategy to both implement comprehensive regional planning and alleviate the administrative burden on any single local government.

TCRPC provides many resources online through our **Planning Toolkit**, including model zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.

KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES



Preserving Our Night Skies: A Brighter Future Starts with Less Light

By Karen Dixon, *Planner*

When we think about conservation, we picture forests, clean streams, farmland, and wildlife habitat.

But did you know that protecting the darkness of our night skies is also an important part of conservation?

The **Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape** brings together partners committed to protecting Pennsylvania's natural resources, working lands, and military readiness.

Preserving dark skies supports these goals while helping maintain the region's rural character and natural beauty.

Excessive artificial lighting can disrupt wildlife, interfere with migrating birds, waste energy, and diminish our view of the stars.

Responsible outdoor lighting is especially important along the Kittatinny Ridge, where wildlife habitat and natural corridors provide valuable ecological connections.

Dark skies also support the military training mission at Fort Indiantown Gap.

Excessive lighting from nearby development can affect nighttime training conditions, making thoughtful lighting practices an important consideration for both conservation and national defense.



Image outlining the Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape and Nighttime Lights as displayed by ArcGis Online

How can municipalities help? Adopting a Dark Skies Ordinance is a practical way to reduce light pollution while maintaining safe, well-lit communities.

These ordinances encourage shielded fixtures, appropriate brightness, downward-directed lighting, and controls that turn off or dim lights when they are not required.

The goal isn't to eliminate outdoor lighting, but to make sure it serves a purpose without unnecessarily illuminating neighboring properties, natural areas, or the night sky.

TCRPC is currently collaborating with partner agencies to develop a Dark Skies Fact Sheet and additional resources to help municipalities explore responsible outdoor lighting and ordinance development.

Look for more information coming in early spring 2027.

Together, we can protect our night skies, support wildlife, preserve our rural heritage, assist with military readiness, and help safeguard the unique resources that make the Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape so special.

EXPLORE TCRPC'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL!

Click here for all the latest & archived meeting videos for TCRPC, HATS, the Dauphin and Perry County Planning Commissions and more!

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DERRY TOWNSHIP
COMMUNITY CENTER

A New, Reliable & Accurate Way to Count Vehicles

By Tanner Stroup, *GIS Coordinator*

Each year TCRPC staff assists PennDOT in collecting traffic count data across Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry counties.

We are assigned 90 Traffic Monitoring Station (TMS) locations scattered throughout our region in which we must collect volume and/or vehicle classifications data.

Typically, about half to two-thirds of the counts we are assigned are volume counts.

As the name implies, volume counts are solely looking at the number, or volume, of vehicles that pass by the counter at that location.

The remainder of the assigned locations are classification counts.

At TMS locations where classification information is requested, we not only have to collect volume information, we also must classify each vehicle into one of 13 different groups, or classes, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

For many years, TCRPC, like many other agencies, utilized tube counters to collect this data.

These types of counters used hollow black rubber hoses that stretched across the roadway to detect the volume (1 tube) or classification and volume (2 tubes) of vehicles at each TMS location.

In 2025, TCRPC started using AI camera technology to collect our assigned count data.



Volume Counter
(StreetLogic Pro - countCAM4)

Now, as we look to close out our 2026 count season, it's safe to say that these new units have proven to be both reliable and accurate assets.

And while there may be uncertainty on AI camera technology elsewhere, rest assured that TCRPC only retains the volume and classification data collected from these devices.

That data is submitted to PennDOT and archived for use in our transportation planning programs and initiatives.

For more information on TCRPC's Traffic Counting Program, please email **Tanner Stroup**.

To view PennDOT traffic count data, visit their Traffic Information Repository (TIRe) **website**.

Say Hello to Our Fall Intern

Daniel McCleary is a senior at Shippensburg University majoring in Geoenvironmental Science & Sustainability.

This fall he'll assist with finishing up our 2026 traffic count program and work on various other GIS and planning projects.

He plans to graduate in May 2027 and pursue a career in urban planning processes in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Welcome, Daniel!



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REQUEST A PLANNING CONSISTENCY LETTER

Many grant/funding programs require applicants to submit a letter from their local, county or regional planning agency to confirm that a project is consistent with local plans.



Click here to request a planning consistency letter, or call the TCRPC office at 717-234-2639 for more info. You may also email us at planning@tcrpc-pa.org.

THE TCPRC PLANNING TOOLKIT:

A Valuable Resource for Municipalities Around the Region & State

TCRPC's online Planning Toolkit provides local governments and the public about a wide variety of techniques and policies that promote up-to-date Smart Growth principles.

The site features fact sheets and model ordinances on numerous topics that you can download to help your community address planning-level issues in consistent and effective ways.

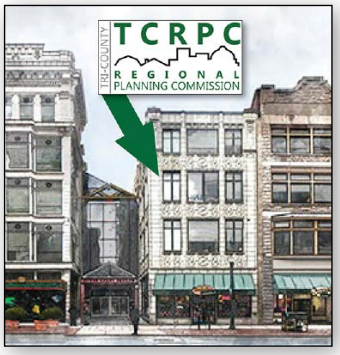


VISIT THE TOOLKIT SOON!

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PUBLIC INFORMATION & PARTICIPATION

This newsletter is a primary means, other than such items as may be published on the TCRPC website or broadcast by the general media, by which information concerning the Regional and Transportation Planning programs is made available to the citizens and public of the Tri-County Region. It is distributed four times a year and has a circulation of over 2,000. The meetings of the Regional Planning Commission and the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study are open to the public. Persons who wish to receive issues of this newsletter, obtain other information or comment about the planning programs should email planning@tcrpc-pa.org.



Strawberry Square, Home of TCRPC

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