

## CHAPTER 17

# County Administration And Finances

*Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is the responsibility of the administrative body of the county government. The purpose of this section is to describe the composition and function of county government, elected and appointed officials, county authorities, and the planning commission. Existing codes and code enforcement will be discussed relative to the planning process. The financial structure, an important element for the implementation of a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), will also be summarized. The descriptions provided in this section will establish baseline data to facilitate both plan design and implementation.*

### **Form of Government**

Cumberland County is a Fourth Class County. Classification is based on size of population. Fourth Class Counties are counties with a population between 150,000 and 225,000 persons. The County Code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Act of August 9, 1955, as amended) describes the laws pertaining to Third through Eighth Class Counties. Articles IV through XV of the Code describe the rules and regulations governing elected and appointed officials that may be a part of county government. Cumberland County's web site (<http://www.ccpa.net>) provides information concerning the various county departments and their relationships with each other.

There are thirteen elected positions in Cumberland County government. The offices include positions in executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. For the purpose of this discussion the executive and legislative branches are pertinent to the planning process. The judicial branch is involved in enforcement remedies for violation to subdivision, land use, and zoning regulations.

The Board of County Commissioners are the chief elected officials. The Board is composed of three members, elected to a four-year term. The Commissioners are responsible for hiring and appointing all County personnel and act as both the executive and legislative arm of the government. The Board meets regularly each week in the Cumberland County Courthouse to conduct official business.

The highest appointed office in County government is the position of Chief Clerk. The Chief Clerk is responsible for the daily operation of County business. Responsibilities may include keeping accurate records of Board meetings and accounts, acting as a liaison between the Board and County departments and other governments, preparing budgets, supervising County elections, and implementing Board decisions. As such, the Office of County Clerk plays a vitally important coordinative role in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Function of Planning in County Government**

Planning activities for the County are provided by the Cumberland County Planning Commission and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. Their function is to advise the County Commissioners on planning policies and encourage coordinated land use and transportation planning through recommendations to the municipalities. These recommendations are based on the County's goals and objectives established by the Comprehensive Plan.

### *Cumberland County Planning Commission*

The Cumberland County Planning Commission (CCPC) was established in 1964. The authority and responsibilities of the Commission are set forth in Pennsylvania planning enabling legislation, Act 247, Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), as amended.

The CCPC consists of nine members appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. Each member is appointed to a four-year term. All CCPC members must meet County residency requirements. Meetings of the Planning Commission are held monthly at a time and date established by the Commission.

The mission of the Cumberland County Planning Commission is to investigate, coordinate, and administer all matters that have a direct and/or indirect impact upon Cumberland County so as to maintain the highest quality of life for its inhabitants, maintain a balance between urban centers and rural areas, and meet the needs of the County's present population without compromising the needs of future generations.

The Commission's functions shall include:

- Providing advice to the Commissioners of Cumberland County on all matters relevant to the mission of the Cumberland County Planning Commission;
- Developing a County Comprehensive Plan with ongoing updates;
- Interfacing with county agencies and adjacent county planning agencies to enhance regional planning and cooperation;
- Providing advice, review and recommendations to local officials concerning all matters relevant to local and regional planning;
- Fostering cooperative efforts of its citizens and communities so as to promote the overall betterment of the County.

The Commission's goals shall include:

- The protection and preservation of our natural and cultural heritage to include open space, greenways and farmland preservation;
- The revitalization of our urban communities;
- The development of our communities so as to afford a high quality of living standard;
- The maintenance of a sustainable economy;

- The mobilization and investment in the talents of our human resources;
- The promotion of strong planning leadership, awareness, responsibility, and involvement in county and community planning issues;
  - The coordination of planning priorities for transportation, economic development, tourism, and other planning organizations with the County.

The primary responsibilities of the CCPC are to administer and implement the County Comprehensive Plan and act as an advisory agency to municipalities on all planning matters. The County Planning Commission reviews all subdivision and land development plans and provides recommendations to municipalities. All amendments to municipal zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances are required to be submitted to the County for review. The Commission is also charged with the task of holding public meetings and public hearings when deemed necessary.

In addition to these responsibilities the Board of County Commissioners may request the CCPC to provide other services specified in the MPC, including but not limited to:

- Preparation of a comprehensive plan
- Maintenance of files and records
- Preparation of various codes and ordinances (i.e. zoning ordinance, building code, housing code)
- Preparation of environmental studies
- Preparation of a recommended capital improvements program

Between 1981 and 1991, Cumberland County created and maintained its own planning department, which was staffed by a planner and secretary. In 1991 the County entered into an agreement with Tri-County Regional planning Commission to provide planning services. In 2003 Cumberland County hired a planning director.

The CCPC is supported by a staff consisting of a planning director, an open space and greenway coordinator, a farmland preservation coordinator, as well as, the staff of Tri-County Planning Commission. In addition to the activities of administering the planning office, the staff prepares reviews on subdivision and land development plans, as well as, zoning and subdivision amendments for advisory action by the CCPC.

The Commission offers a Local Planning Assistance Program, with staff attending the local planning commission meetings, thereby providing direct planning consultant services. Twenty-six of the 33 municipalities in Cumberland County participated in the program in 2003. The Planning Commission also meets with municipal officials on a quarterly basis through the County's Outreach Program. The intent of the program is to promote coordination between the County and municipalities, as well as, among municipalities.

### *Tri-County Regional Planning Commission*

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) represents the region comprised of

Dauphin, Perry, and Cumberland counties. Its role is to serve as an advisory agency to the three counties, as well as, providing staff for the three county planning commissions. The TCRPC does not assume any powers and functions of the county planning commissions.

One of TCRPC's primary responsibilities is the coordination of County transportation planning. It provides staff for the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study (HATS), which is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region. HATS was established in 1965 and is a continuing planning process of establishing a transportation system to serve the future needs of the Harrisburg area. The HATS Planning Work Program addresses the following major issues:

- Critical bridges
- Highway projects
- Community conservation / economic development
- Mass transit planning assistance
- Energy conservation, congestion reduction, and safety

The TCRPC serves as the HATS lead agency. In addition to the HATS program, Tri-County provides regional support services that include a Regional Annual Report, quarterly newsletters, functioning as the affiliate data center for Pennsylvania State Data Center, area wide clearinghouse activities, and special studies.

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission has a membership of thirty-one voting members representing local planning organizations, municipal officials, and county planning commissions. Members are appointed by each County's Board of Commissioners for a two-year term. The TCRPC meets approximately four times yearly. The Commission Executive Committee, comprised of the Chairman, Vice- Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, meets those months the full Commission does not meet.

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission staff consists of an Executive Director, Associate Executive Director, eleven (11) planners, and five (5) technical and clerical staff. The staff is responsible for the daily activities of the Commission and professional planning services.

## **Authorities**

In addition to elected and appointed officials and the planning commission, six authorities function as entities of County government: the Redevelopment Authority, Housing Authority, Transportation Authority, Solid Waste Authority, Municipal Authority, and Industrial Development Authority.

### *Redevelopment Authority*

The Cumberland County Redevelopment Authority was established in 1956. Although the Redevelopment Authority has responsibilities to the County and its municipalities, it is primarily funded through state and federal grants.

Most of the Authority's initial activities were concentrated on funding projects (e.g. Downtown Improvement Project and Housing Rehabilitation Programs) for the County Seat, Carlisle. The Redevelopment Authority is now actively involved in supporting and administering redevelopment projects for municipalities throughout the County.

The Authority administers a variety of community programs throughout the county. These activities include building rehabilitation for rental and owner occupied housing, commercial façade rehabilitation projects, and public facilities improvements through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The Redevelopment Authority is also involved with the Lease-Purchase Homeownership Program. In the program, properties are purchased, rehabilitated, and leased to moderate income families.

A Blighted Property Reinvestment Board was established by the Board of Commissioners in 1999 and is administered by the County Redevelopment Authority. The authorization for the establishment of the Board is provided for in the Urban Redevelopment Law, 1945, and Act 58 of 1996.

The Reinvestment Board's purpose is to rehabilitate blighted properties for reuse through agreements with the property owner or, if necessary, through condemnation. The Board consists of seven members who serve three-year terms. Requests from municipalities are evaluated by the Board to determine whether a property meets the standard for blight, as defined in the ordinance.

The Redevelopment Authority is comprised of a six member Board appointed by the Board of Commissioners for a five year term. The Redevelopment Authority meets on the second Friday of every month to act on grant applications and administrative decisions. Professional staff to the Authority is composed of an Executive Director, three Division Supervisors, administrative employees, and clerical and maintenance staff.

### *Housing Authority*

The Cumberland County Housing Authority was established in 1970 and received formal funding in 1975. Due to similarities in activities with the Redevelopment Authority, in 1977 a Cooperative Agreement between the two Authorities designated the Redevelopment Authority staff as the staff for both entities. Other similarities exist between the two authorities; including the number of appointed members (six members), length of appointment (five-year term), meeting day, and funding sources (Federal and State grants).

The responsibilities of the Housing Authority may include, but are not limited to, obtaining and administering rental assistance programs and providing residential opportunities for moderate and low-income families and individuals. Programs funded include Rental Assistance Programs, Carlisle Family Housing Project, and senior housing development.

### *Solid Waste Authority*

The Cumberland County Solid Waste Authority was formally established in 1977 as the growing need for a County-wide approach for solid waste management became necessary. The Authority meets monthly in the County Commissioners Board room. Nine members are appointed to the Authority by the Commissioners. The Authority also contracts with a consulting engineer to act as the Solid Waste Authority Staff Engineer.

Since 1980, with the enactment of the Pennsylvania Solid Waste Management Act, the County has taken on the responsibility to guide its thirty-three municipalities in the collection, transportation, processing and disposal of municipal solid wastes. The primary activity of the Authority is the implementation of the County Solid Waste management plan.. The purpose of the Plan is to develop a municipal solid waste management system that will coordinate all public and private solid waste management programs and facilities that serve the County.

### *Cumberland County Transportation Authority*

The Cumberland County Transportation Authority was established by the Board of County Commissioners in 1990. The purpose of the Authority is to address itself to studies, plans, and projects that will meet the present and future transportation needs of citizens and businesses of Cumberland County. The Authority is comprised of seven members appointed by the County Board of Commissioners and receives staff support from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

The Authority's scope of responsibility embraces a broad range of multi-modal transportation issues including air, rail, transit, and motor vehicle, as well as supporting infrastructure elements (e.g. highways and bridges). In fulfilling its responsibilities the Authority communicates and coordinates its efforts with other county, regional, state, and federal organizations, as well as local officials and civic groups involved in transportation matters.

### **Planning Codes and Enforcement**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) empowers municipalities, including counties, with the authority to establish and enforce land use controls. This enabling legislation allows municipalities to prepare comprehensive plans, official maps, and to establish zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances.

The MPC distinguishes the jurisdiction between of county ordinances and local municipal ordinances. The power of the County governing body to approve subdivision and land developments and zoning amendments is limited to land in municipalities that do not have these ordinances in effect. If a municipality adopts an ordinance, it supersedes any County ordinance previously adopted.

Cumberland County has had a County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance since 1965. The County's subdivision and land development jurisdiction applies only to municipalities not

having a local subdivision and land development ordinance. Since 1998, all 33 of the county's municipalities have adopted their own subdivision and land development ordinances. These ordinances supersede the County ordinance and gives approval authority to the local municipality.

Although the County does not have the authority for the administration of the subdivision and land development regulations, the MPC requires a review and report by the County (i.e. Cumberland County Planning Commission). Each application for subdivision and land development in municipalities is required to be submitted to the County for review. County review must be submitted to the municipality within thirty (30) days from the date the application was received by the County.

Cumberland County has not adopted a zoning ordinance. With the completion and adoption of the first Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan in 1990, the supporting documentation to develop a county zoning ordinance is in place. The enactment of a county zoning ordinance can be considered. If a county zoning ordinance were adopted, the ordinance would provide zoning standards for only those municipalities that do not have a zoning ordinance. The six municipalities in the County which currently do not have a zoning ordinance are:

Cooke Township  
North Newton Township  
Penn Township  
Southampton Township  
Upper Frankford Township  
Upper Mifflin Township

It is important to note that following the adoption of a county comprehensive plan, any of the following actions by a municipal governing body shall be submitted to the County for review:

- i. location, opening, vacation, extension, widening, narrowing or enlargement of any street, public ground, pierhead or watercourse;
- ii. location, erection, demolition or sale of any public structures located within the municipality;
- iii. adoption, amendment or repeal of any official map, subdivision and land development ordinance, or zoning ordinance; and
- iv. construction, extension, or abandonment of any water line, sewer line or sewer treatment facility.

Furthermore, following the adoption of a county comprehensive plan, any proposed action of any school district located within the County relating to the location, demolition, removal or sale of any school district structure or land must be submitted to the county planning commission for recommendations prior to the execution of such actions by the governing body of the school

district.

These requirements are expressly stated in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and, therefore, are legally binding on all local government units of the County. The adoption of a county comprehensive plan plays a significant role in placing the county planning commission in a position to formally and effectively influence the development process throughout the County.

## **County Finances**

The success of any county planning program is to a great extent dependent upon the financial resources allocated by the County. The purpose of this section is to identify the current sources/categories of revenues utilized by the County, as well as, the potential revenue sources available to the County.

A more detailed analysis of County revenues and expenditures over a six year period is recommended to be undertaken in preparation of a Capital Improvement Program to facilitate implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

### *County Revenues*

County revenues come from a variety of sources, as indicated below from the Cumberland County 2003 Budget.

<u>Revenue Source</u>	<u>% of Total Revenue</u>
Real Estate Taxes	67.0
Departmental Fees	14.1
Federal and State Grants	4.2
Library Tax	3.4
Per Capita Taxes	1.7
Investment Revenues	1.1
Other Income	8.5

The major revenue sources are those derived from tax revenues, which was approximately 72.0 percent of the total revenues in 2003. The levy of local taxes applied by the County must be accomplished within the limits set by the Pennsylvania Constitution, Pennsylvania legislation, and the Fourth Class County Code. Taxes and the amounts levied at the County-level include:

<u>Type of Tax</u>	<u>Amount Received</u>
Real Estate	2.046 mills
Library	<u>.103 mills</u>
TOTAL	2.149 mills

Per Capita                      \$5.00

In 2003, the County received approximately 28.0 percent of its total revenue from other sources. In the 2003 Budget these sources included:

Licenses and Permits  
Departmental Fees  
Court Cost, Fines, and              Forfeits  
Interest and Rentals  
Grants and Gifts  
Other Income Sources

A variety of state aid programs are available to counties for additional revenue sources. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) periodically publishes a list of these programs in the "Catalog of State Aids to Local Governments". The Catalog describes programs available to local government, such as low-interest loans and direct grants, grants in connection with federal programs, and technical assistance programs provided through the Department's regional and central offices.

Programs are currently available in many different categories. Revenue sources may include funding programs administered by the following State level Departments: Community and Economic Development, Conservation and Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, Public Welfare, and Transportation. Programs are also administered by the following State agencies: Emergency Management Agency, the Historical and Museum Commission, and Housing Finance Agency. Counties may seek assistance from programs relating to site development, downtown revitalization, floodplain management, solid waste management planning, historic preservation, transit, transportation planning, etc.

In addition to state revenue sources, the Federal government also provides funding directly to counties. Information on these federal programs is available through the "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance".

### *County Expenditures*

County expenditures are funded by either the General Fund (money coming from conventional revenue sources) or special funds (money coming from other sources plus a County contribution). The County General Fund expenditures are classified under various categories to simplify the budgeting and accounting process.

For the Cumberland County 2003 Budget, the allocated expenditures of the General Fund are divided into nine (9) categories:

Expenditure Category                      % of Total

General Government	22.1	
Tax Assessment and Collection	3.1	
County Subsidies	12.3	
Judicial	25.0	
Corrections	22.1	
Grants to Community Agencies	4.0	
Other Public Services	3.1	
Debt Retirement		2.4
Library System	5.9	

Money from the General Fund is provided for the three main County funding categories; Administrative, Judicial, and Corrections. Twenty-four other programs and services are funded through the General Fund. Departmental expenditures may include, but are not limited to salaries, communications, general operating supplies, transportation, purchased or contracted services, and capital outlay.

The other twenty four programs and services that receive funding from the County General Fund are:

Emergency Management	Historical Society
Fire Training Program	Agricultural Extension
Vector Control	Community Services
Transportation Authority	Storm Water Management
Veterans Affairs	Insurance
Libraries	Program Subsidies
Consumer Affairs	Highway Safety
Grants and Contributions	Highway Safety Education
Program Innovation and Improvement	Pooled Reserve
Reassessment Project	Debt Retirement
War Museum	Debt Service – Capital Lease
Central Cumberland County Task Force	Economic Development

In addition to expenditures required for the general operation of the County, the County contributes to special funds for the operation of the following programs:

Cumberland County Nursing Home	Hazmat
Domestic Relations	Capital Improvement Fund
Childrens Services	Sinking Fund
Office of Aging	Victim / Witness
Transportation	Solid Waste
Central Booking	Stop Grant
MH / MR	DUI
Emergency Services – 911	Prison Canteen Fund
Conservation District	Hotel Tax

Affordable Housing  
Drug and Alcohol  
Liquid Fuels  
Retirement Fund  
Record Improvement Fund  
Workers Compensation  
Grants  
Grant Administration  
Insurance Fraud/Auto Theft

Army Heritage Museum  
CAD Design & Development Grant  
Exit 44  
Open Space Preservation  
Cumberland Co. Learning Center - Child Care  
Landfill Post Closure Fund  
Human Services Development Fund  
Offender Supervision  
Health Choices Program

In 2003, Cumberland County had outstanding bonds which financed four projects. These bond issues concerned the countywide reassessment, nursing home renovations, 911 emergency radio project, and computer software package. The debt service on these bonds in 2003 was \$1,000,000. The County's debt limit during this time period was \$240,493,110. The remaining principle outstanding for the bond debt in 2003 was \$33,635,000.

As can be seen from the proceeding section regarding revenues, Cumberland County has a variety of sources to draw upon to finance the above County operations, services, and capital outlay projects.