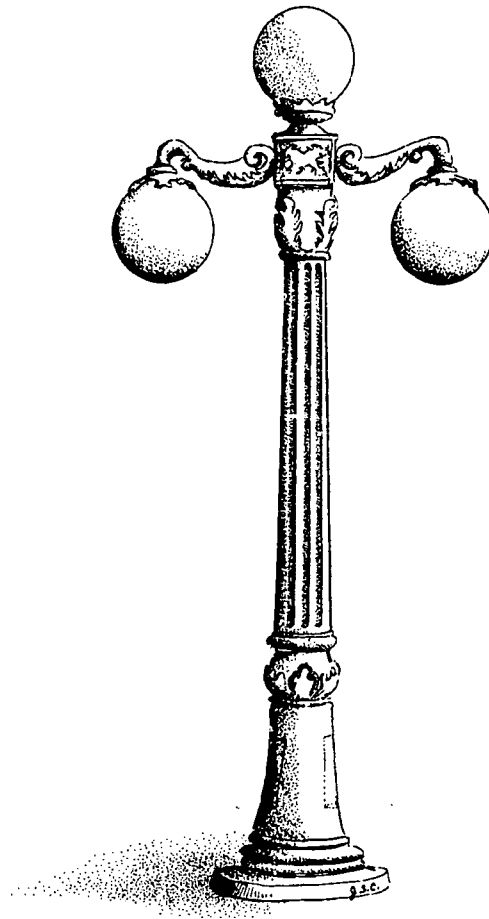


APPENDIX P:

2000 Lewisburg Borough Comprehensive Plan Excerpts

Lewisburg Borough

Comprehensive Plan



Adopted June 20, 2000

The Borough of Lewisburg

Mayor: Lewis Hendricks, Jr.

Borough Manager: Nada Gray

Borough Secretary: Janice Stump

Solicitor: Andrew Lyons

Borough Council

President: Yvonne Morgan

Vice-President: Judith Wagner

Stacy Hinck

Catherine Scheib

Barbara Krohn

Abe Howard

John Baker

Swan Stull

Borough Planning Commission

Chairman: Howard Woodring

Vice-Chairman: Swan Stull

Secretary: Sue Travis

Thomas Kinnaman

Richard Smith

Fred Mummaw

Steven Beattie

Building Permit Administrator: Thomas Sauers

Zoning Permit Administrator: Pamela Mabus

Tax Collector: Beverly Wetzel

Table of Contents

Preface	3
Land Use: Development and Housing	5
Recommendations	10
Transportation and Traffic Issues	12
Recommendations	16
Relation to the Natural Environment	17
Recommendations	19
Community Facilities, Services, and Programs	20
Recommendations	27
Business Environment	29
Recommendations	29
Borough Finances	31
Recommendations	32
Beyond our Boundaries: Goals and Recommendations	33
Implementation Strategy	34
Lewisburg Comprehensive Plan-Implementation Strategy Table	35
Appendix – Maps	
Map 1: Zoning	
Map 2: Historic Area	
Map 3: Transportation	
Map 4: Flood Zones	
Map 5: Community Facilities	

Preface

The last Comprehensive Plan for Lewisburg Borough was adopted in 1979. Much of what was written about in that plan remains relevant today, because the Borough was virtually fully developed in 1979. In other words, its land uses - discussion of which form the foundation of any comprehensive plan - remain much the same.

This does not mean that the Borough doesn't face new challenges or that the old challenges have remained unchanged. In shaping these challenges, two factors in particular stand out: (1) the commercial and residential development of the townships (Kelly, Buffalo, and East Buffalo) that surround the Borough and (2) the increasing traffic throughout the region, most notably on Routes 15 and 45.

The former factor, the commercial and residential development of the townships, is so significant that it makes the writing of this comprehensive plan just for the Borough of Lewisburg very difficult. The prospects for Lewisburg are in many ways tied to the degree of cooperation with the townships. We would like to believe the same is true for them. Many residents of the townships, particularly newer ones, are not aware of the political subdivisions and think that they live in Lewisburg proper. Contributing to this sense of there being just one larger community is the fact that the school district, the Lewisburg Area School District, serves the Borough and the townships without distinction. Furthermore, although they may have chosen to live in the more suburban townships, many of these residents were attracted to the area by Lewisburg's lively, historic, and attractive downtown and identify with it as the center of the larger community. In addition, many of Lewisburg's facilities serve residents not just of the Borough, but also of the entire area. We therefore think that the Lewisburg area, encompassing the Borough, East Buffalo, and at least parts of Kelly, Union, and Buffalo townships, should begin to address problems and the future from an area-wide perspective.

However, because comprehensive regional planning is not yet a reality, this plan focuses primarily on the Borough. It is a document that was four years in the making. At the request of the Borough Council, the planning officer and the planning commission prepared an original draft. This draft was substantially rewritten by then Council President Stacy Hinck, Vice-President Barbara Krohn, Council member William Moore, and Borough Manager Nada Gray. The rewrite was subsequently submitted to the Planning Commission and the Union County Planning Department and their comments were incorporated. Special acknowledgement goes to planning commission members Natasha Cooper, Swan Stull, and Howard Woodring for their help in developing the plan and to former Union County Planning Director Fred Wilder for his thorough appraisal. Before final adoption, the plan was submitted to the various parties specified by the Municipal Planning Code and their comments have been incorporated as well. Two public hearings were also held.

The purpose of this comprehensive plan is twofold: (1) To provide current and future readers with a comprehensive overview of today's Lewisburg, including relevant history,

as well as a description of current problems or issues; and (2) To provide public officials with a working guide to policy decisions that should be made or actions that should be taken in the foreseeable future (i.e. 10 years).

The Plan is divided into two parts. Part I comprises sections that pertain to planning areas relevant to the Borough's situation. Within each of these sections, there is a descriptive narrative followed by one or more action plans, which consist of a statement of goals and a list of recommended actions to achieve those goals. Part II of the Plan sets forth an Implementation Strategy. This Strategy, intended for easy reference by Borough and planning officials, primarily consists of a series of charts listing the recommendations in each action plan along with a time frame and identification of the parties responsible for carrying out each recommendation.

Of course, the writing of a comprehensive plan requires a vision or sense of an ideal. That vision of Lewisburg is presented below. It is a conservative plan, in the original sense of that word, because we, the residents of Lewisburg, are essentially pleased with and proud of our community. We do not seek dramatic changes. Rather, through this comprehensive plan we seek to fine-tune, that is, to address problems and outline improvements that will maximize the community and the quality of life we already have.

Lewisburg is a lively small college town with historic roots and we, its residents, want to maintain and enhance it as such. More specifically this means that we want to see Lewisburg's downtown, comprised of stores, offices, and public spaces, remain as a vibrant community center for the entire area. We want Lewisburg's residential areas to remain quiet, safe, and attractive, a location of choice for people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with varying incomes, and in various stages of life. We want Lewisburg's past proudly represented and preserved in its historic buildings, museums, and traditions. And we want Lewisburg to continue to have a lively community life and for its citizens to have access to a range of educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities. In achieving these goals, we would like to believe that we can maintain, if not improve on, Lewisburg's rating as the sixteenth best small town in the United States accorded it by Norman Crampton in the 1996 edition of his book, The 100 Best Small Towns in America.

II. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC ISSUES

In the Lewisburg area as in most areas of this country in the 21st century, particularly rural ones, the dominant form of transportation is private vehicles. Therefore, this section focuses primarily on the issues related to vehicular traffic (see Map 3).

Public Transportation

Public transportation is offered through USTA (Union Snyder Transportation Alliance), which is administered by Snyder and Union counties through the Office of Human Resources. Because of a lack of funding, service is extremely limited and expensive, except for senior citizens, whose fares are subsidized by proceeds from the Pennsylvania Lottery, and medical assistance recipients traveling to and from medical services, whose trips are also subsidized. A significant need therefore exists not only in Lewisburg but also the entire county for expanded and affordable public transportation, particularly for senior citizens and those with low incomes or disabilities who cannot afford or cannot operate their own vehicles.

U.S. Route 15

Running through the Borough, separating its newer, more suburban neighborhood from the downtown area, is U.S. Route 15, a major north-south highway serving the interior of the eastern seaboard from Canada to Maryland. Because of increased traffic and to further commerce and economic development in the areas through which Route 15 runs, the route is now undergoing major improvements at various points both north and south of Lewisburg, primarily for the purpose of widening it to four lanes where it currently is two.

Although Route 15 has certainly been important to the Lewisburg area's growth and relative prosperity, it now seems increasingly a liability. The growing number of cars and trucks that use Route 15 generates ever greater levels of noise and pollution. Route 15 also effectively cuts off downtown Lewisburg from other parts of the Lewisburg area, creates serious safety concerns at intersections for vehicles as well as pedestrians, and in general negatively impacts the residential quality of the area.

Of particular concern in relation to pedestrian traffic are the intersections of Routes 15 and 45 and Route 15 and St. Mary Street. The Lewisburg Area High School is located at the southeastern corner of the intersection of Routes 15 and 45, thus resulting in many of the students crossing the highway. At even more risk perhaps are the students of younger ages who cross Route 15 by foot, bike, or other means to travel to and from the downtown and the Middle School, which is located west on Route 45 in East Buffalo Township.

Prompting the same concern for all pedestrians, but young residents in particular, is the intersection at St. Mary Street. This is a street that connects the recreation area at Danny

Green Field on the eastern side of Route 15 to the swimming pool, tennis courts, and other recreational facilities on the western side.

It is projected that some relief from traffic volumes, particularly from truck traffic, should be realized when Penn DOT completes a bypass, now in the planning stages. This bypass will cross the river at Winfield, south of Lewisburg, and connect with Route 180, which then connects with Interstate Route 80 north of Lewisburg. However, Penn DOT projects that even with the bypass, traffic on Route 15 will increase by 44.5% by the year 2020. Recent studies by Penn DOT also show that the majority of traffic on Route 15 in the Lewisburg area is local.

To solve some of the safety and congestion problems for travelers on Route 15 in the Borough, Penn DOT has proposed making it five lanes from Route 45 to Route 192 with the fifth lane being a center turning lane. The project is slated for the 2001 construction season. This widening might negatively impact businesses, particularly those on the east side because it will require the acquisition of property in Penn DOT's right-of-way that is currently being used by the businesses. In addition, although the center turning lane may ease the passage of through traffic, it will do nothing to address the other problems caused by heavy traffic on Route 15 (i.e. the noise and air pollution) and it will even increase the divide between downtown and the rest of the Lewisburg area.

The project will result in some safety improvements, however. After its completion vehicles will only be allowed to turn right from Seventh Street. On the initiative of the Borough, Penn DOT will also be installing a traffic signal at St. Mary Street. In addition, in conjunction with the widening project the Borough has decided to have sidewalks installed along its (the eastern) side of the highway.

Another dangerous intersection for vehicles is the intersection of Route 15 and North Fourth Street. It poses particular danger for vehicles turning left (south) onto Route 15 from North Fourth. Improving safety here will require difficult decisions as there are at least two businesses, Dunkin Donuts and Pizza Hut, that depend on easy entrance and exit from Route 15. Compounding the problem is the fact that the street south of the businesses is residential. It is noted that in 1999 Penn DOT completed a highway improvement project along this stretch of Route 15 and did not address the problems of this intersection, despite suggestions from the Borough that something be done.

Route 45

While Route 15 runs north/south through the Borough, State Route 45 runs east/west and like Route 15 has been a major factor in the area's growth and development. It is on this road that Lewisburg's downtown business district has grown, and today commercial development continues along its route in East Buffalo Township. Running from near Danville on the east to State College 50 miles to the west, Route 45 was the major east/west route for this area of central Pennsylvania until the construction of Interstate 80

in the 1970s. Although the advent of Interstate 80 did cut down on long distance, notably truck, traffic through Lewisburg, the traffic on Route 45 has been increasing in recent years. This increase is no doubt due to the increased development in the area and also, perhaps, the construction in 1986 by Penn DOT of a new, wider, and straighter bridge across the Susquehanna River, which is easier for trucks to negotiate than was the previous one.

As with Route 15, the traffic on Route 45 that once promoted Lewisburg's vitality now threatens the Borough's quality of life. It conflicts with the Borough's residential nature, ease of pedestrian movement, and access to local businesses. In this regard truck traffic is particularly bad for a number of reasons, including the fact that the vibrations caused by the weight of the trucks threaten the structural integrity of the many older homes along the route.

Increased traffic on Route 45 also has made increasingly dangerous intersections along its route in town where there are no traffic signals and blocked lines of sight (see Table 1).

Table 1

LEWISBURG TRAFFIC STUDY STATE ROAD 45 At the Lewisburg River Bridge			
	May 30, 1990 *	May 20, 1999	May 31, 2000 **
EASTBOUND			
Volume	7,528	8,537	9,320
Truck Percentage	2.0%	2.8%	
Number of Trucks ***	153	236	1,540
WESTBOUND			
Volume	7,206	7,582	9,116
Truck Percentage	5.2%	3.4%	
Number of Trucks ***	377	256	1,652
TOTAL			
Volume	14,737	16,119	18,436
Truck Percentage	3.6%	3.1%	
Number of Trucks ***	530	492	3,192

* After construction of the new bridge

** Due to extensive road construction and detours in the Lewisburg area, these figures may not reflect normal traffic patterns. A recount will be done upon completion of road construction.

*** Prior traffic studies may not have included two-axle, four-tire trucks.

Note: A 1997 traffic study for Route 45 by Orth-Rodgers and Associates, Inc. estimates an ADT (Average Daily Traffic) of 13,500 vehicles if the Winfield by-pass is constructed. Without the by-pass, the ADT will be 14,500 vehicles.

For example, there is limited visibility for those making right turns onto Market Street (Route 45) from North Eighth Street, North and South Front Streets, and South Water Street, and those making left turns from South Eighth Street, South Fifth Street, North and South Front Streets, and North and South Water Streets. Because of the amount of

southbound traffic on North Water Street and the accelerated speeds of many vehicles coming off the bridge, the intersection at Water and Market Streets is of particular concern (see Table 2).

Table 2

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS		
From January 1, 1995 to the Present *		
	Reportable Accidents **	Non-Reportable Accidents ***
North Seventh Street at US Route 15	14	11
North Fourth Street at US Route 15	15	14

* June 20, 2000

** Reportable: Any accident involving death, injury or a vehicle to be towed from the scene.

*** Non-Reportable: Any accident not meeting any of the above requirements.

Other streets

The increasing amounts, as well as speed, of traffic in the downtown area is threatening the residential nature of a number of local streets including North Fourth Street, North Water Street, St. Anthony Street, South Seventh Street, North and South Third Streets, and the southern portion of Brown Street. It is also making a number of intersections in town more dangerous, most noticeably along North and South Third Streets, where lines of sight are blocked; and the intersection of South Third, University, and St. George Streets at the Monument.

Elsewhere in the Borough, increased traffic, including heavy trucks from a quarry operation west of Lewisburg, is negatively affecting the residences along Buffalo Road (Route 192) as well as destroying the roadway. The increased traffic is also making the intersection of Buffalo Road and Airport Road more dangerous. Residents in the Ikeler Park section of the Borough, north of Buffalo Road, have also seen an increase in traffic in their neighborhood due to drivers using the back way out of businesses on Route 15 or cutting through to avoid the traffic signal at the intersection of Route 15 and Buffalo Road.

Parking

As in almost all urban areas, finding a parking spot--or rather, a parking spot that's considered adequately convenient--in downtown Lewisburg can be a problem. This has been a major concern for store and restaurant owners in the central business district for whom easy access for customers can be a deciding factor in their businesses' continued viability. In addition to the short-term parking needs of customers, there are the long-term parking needs of employees, who like customers in this largely rural area are unused to walking any distances from car to destination.

To address this situation, the Borough has installed a number of municipal parking lots in the last twenty years (see Map 3). These are located behind Market Street between South

Third and Fourth Streets; behind Market Street between North Sixth Street and Linn Alley; behind Market between North Fifth and North Sixth Streets; off Market Street between South Fifth and South Sixth Streets; and, most recently, behind Market Street between North Second and North Third Streets (this latter one not being paved or fully developed as of this writing).

A parking spot shortage more severe than that in the commercial district currently exists at the Union County Court House. The parking lot there is inadequate for the number of employees and visitors and the spillover lines nearby streets, often making it almost impossible for residents to park during courthouse hours. Parking spot shortages aggravate residents and visitors at different times in other parts of town as well. Students who drive to the high school complain that there are not enough nearby parking spots and that parking legally is even more difficult on street cleaning and snow removal days. Parking can also be difficult in areas near Bucknell due to a lack of convenient university parking. This results in students and employees parking on residential streets.

Recommendations

In order to minimize the increase in traffic volume and its detrimental effects on the downtown and residential neighborhoods, the Borough should:

1. Explore alternate traffic routes in conjunction with Penn DOT and neighboring municipalities.
2. Seek ways to effectively limit truck traffic to deliveries within the Borough.
3. Work with institutions bordering residential districts to find solutions for non-residential parking.
4. Work with Penn DOT to slow east/west Market Street traffic.
5. Promote safe and efficient transportation and movement of pedestrians and bicyclists in the Borough.
6. Minimize unnecessary or potentially hazardous traffic conflicts at street and driveway intersections by restricting curb cuts.
7. Ensure the provision of adequate off-street parking facilities in the central business district and other areas of the Borough.
8. Explore public/private initiatives to increase public transportation.
9. Explore traffic calming for streets on which speeding is more of a problem.
10. Explore permit parking.
11. Establish gateways to route traffic into downtown Lewisburg.

RECOMMENDATIONS Transportation and Parking	Implementation Responsibility			Action Priority		
	Public	Private	Pub-Priv	1-2 Yrs.	2-5 Yrs.	5-10 Yrs.
• Explore alternate traffic routes in conjunction with Penn DOT and neighboring municipalities.	X				5	
• Seek ways to effectively limit truck traffic to deliveries within the Borough.			X	Ongoing		
• Work with institutions bordering residential districts to find creative solutions for nonresidential parking.			X		5	
• Work with Penn DOT to slow east/west Market Street traffic.	X				5	
• Promote safe and efficient transportation and movement of pedestrians and bicyclists in the Borough.			X	Ongoing		
• Minimize unnecessary or potentially hazardous traffic conflicts at street and driveway intersections by restricting curb cuts.			X	Ongoing		
• Ensure adequate off-street parking facilities in the central business district and other areas of the Borough.			X		5	
• Explore Public/Private initiatives to increase public transportation.			X		5	
• Explore traffic calming for streets.	X				5	
• Explore permit parking.			X		5	
• Establish gateways to route traffic into downtown Lewisburg.			X		5	