
PROJECT MEMORANDUM



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Huntingdon County Comprehensive Plan Update DM/A Project No. 05-183

TO: Comprehensive Plan Committee

FROM: DM/A Planning Group

DATE: March 30, 2006

RE: Water Supply Plan

As a result of amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), comprehensive plans are now required to include a plan component that identifies reliable sources of water for both current and future needs. This component must be consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan that may have been adopted in the region. Section 301.(b) of the MPC reads as follows:

The comprehensive plan shall include a plan for the reliable supply of water, considering current and future water resource availability, uses and limitations, including provisions adequate to protect water supply sources. Any such plan shall be generally consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan adopted by a river basin commission. It shall also contain a statement recognizing that:

- (1) Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals may impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.*
- (2) Commercial agriculture production may impact water supply sources.*

The Water Supply Plan is not intended to be an exhaustive water resources plan for Huntingdon County. The goal of the Plan is to provide a guidance document for the Huntingdon County Commissioners, County and local planners, water suppliers, and other interested groups to follow and implement as they address water supply needs throughout Huntingdon County. The Water Supply Plan provides basic information and the direction needed to make planning decisions to provide residents with safe, adequate, and reliable drinking water at reasonable cost. To achieve this goal and meet the requirements of the MPC, the Plan will be comprised of the following components:

- Introduction
- Overview of County Conditions and Previous Planning
- Water System Inventory
- Water Demands
- Water System Evaluations
- Water Supply Planning Policies
- Plan Implementation

The scope of work for the preparation of the component was derived from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) guidelines for County Water Supply Studies. Although somewhat scaled down from the complete DEP guidelines, the scope of work includes: collect and review available data and information; contact with water system authorities; compile available data; prepare water system overviews for each water system; estimate water demands; identify potential deficiencies; develop water supply planning policy statements; and develop recommendations for implementing the plan.

Data is being collected from numerous sources. Each water system authority will be contacted to complete an initial "Water Facilities Report". Each authority will be requested to provide information about their system and its operation. The information to be requested includes such items as: water allocation and supply permits, system map and facility drawings, customer and demand data, engineering reports, supply data and source protection plans, financial reports, water rate schedule, operation and maintenance manual, etc.

Although the data collection and analysis is on-going, draft policy statements have been prepared for review by the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Although the County does not have the authority to require the water systems in Huntingdon County to implement the recommended water supply plan, the County can facilitate the implementation of the Plan through active involvement in the identification, evaluation and discussion of water service needs with existing water systems and DEP. The policy statements are intended to guide the County's involvement in addressing water supply issues. As the preparation of the Water Plan continues, these statements may be revised, supplemented or removed based on input for the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Draft Water Supply Plan Policy Statements to be discussed with the Comprehensive Plan Committee include:

1. Direct new development to areas that currently have public water and some level of excess capacity, or to areas that can expand for additional capacity.
2. Connect areas with contaminated water supplies to existing public water, where economically and physically possible.
3. Protect water quality by creating wellhead or similar source protection areas and prohibiting incompatible uses near surface water. The County will encourage the Huntingdon County Conservation District to work with farms in the vicinity of water sources to develop nutrient management and other plans that minimize nitrates and other contaminants.
4. Water systems should encourage water conservation by using an incremental fee schedule that rewards those who use less water.
5. Protect water quantity by maintaining water lines and promoting water conservation.
6. Areas that are being connected to public sewer should also connect to a public water system. Municipalities should complete a water study of areas that have been identified for future sewers due to on-lot septic malfunctions. This study should address where the contamination is coming from and ways to fix, treat, or eliminate it.

7. Zoning practices which take into consideration the availability of water, septic, and other environmental issues and then determines the appropriate lot size necessary should be encouraged.
9. The County will encourage small water systems to interconnect with larger systems where possible, and help them to secure funding. The County will also encourage them to increase their reliability by adding wells or storage tanks and to complete testing on all of their water sources.
10. New privately-owned small water companies, serving only a new development or small geographic area, are not recommended.
11. The permitting of facilities used for the extraction of water, where the water is to be bottled for sale off-site, should only be allowed after the following criteria are met:
 - The extraction will not negatively affect the reliable supply of water for that community;
 - The extraction does not lower the nearby surface water levels especially in the case of exceptional quality streams;
 - Develop an approved drought protection plan, which will include the supply of emergency water to local municipalities during drought events.