

Berks County Planning Commission Annual Report for 2015

Highlights

The Berks County Planning Commission (BCPC) and staff are actively involved in many projects throughout Berks County and beyond. Many of these programs and projects are dependent upon funding and regulations beyond our control. One of these key programs relates to Transportation which not only has an impact on our roads but projects involving economic development, recreation and almost every other project the BCPC is involved with. On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or "FAST Act". It marked the first time in over ten years that a law was enacted that provided long-term funding certainty for surface transportation improvements (highways, bridges, transit). This five year bill is fully funded and allows States and local governments to move forward with vital transportation projects without having to worry if the funding will be in place. Here in Berks County, the FAST Act provided an additional \$17million in formula funds over the next four years. Additional funding may also become available to the region as the State and Federal governments identify the process to be used to allocate new funds dedicated to the improvement of our



transportation system that focus on the movement of freight – a vital factor in our economic future.

Introduction

The BCPC serves as the area-wide planning organization for Berks County. The Commission provides a regional blueprint for land use, transportation and community facilities. It assists local units of government with development and preservation activities and provides

assistance to the Berks County Board of Commissioners and other departments of county government. The BCPC and its professional staff also serve as community advisors for modern planning practices and advocates for sound regional growth management. Finally, since the Commission is involved with a range of activities with a number of partners, it plays a very important coordinating role in community development issues and projects.

Commonwealth Authorizing Legislation Updates

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968 is the legislation that grants authority for land planning in Pennsylvania to municipalities and counties. The MPC sets the ground rules that all municipalities must follow for comprehensive planning, zoning, and subdivision and land development.

Article II of the MPC spells out the options that a governing body has to create a planning agency. A planning commission is just one option. The governing body can also create a planning department or planning committee to directly advise the governing body. Typically, at the local government level, the planning commission makes recommendations to the governing body, which still acts as the approval body. The governing body can appoint a planning commission and delegate subdivision and land development authority to the commission. The Berks County Commissioners opted to form the BCPC in 1968 and delegated subdivision and land development duties directly to the Commission.

Periodically, the MPC is updated or amended. The MPC's most recent amendment occurred in October 2015. Act 42 of 2015 allows municipalities to appoint alternate members to their planning commissions.

The BCPC is subject to the Right to Know Law and Sunshine Act. Accordingly, the Commission must maintain accurate files and records, and easy access to these files.

Membership and Organization

The BCPC consists of nine members appointed to four-year terms by the Board of County Commissioners. Initially, the terms were staggered so that each year two or three members come up for reappointment or replacement. The members may serve until they are replaced or reappointed. All members of the Commission must reside in Berks County and at least six must not be employees or officers of the County. In making appointments, the Commissioners try to maintain geographic representation from all areas of the County and

ensure that all facets of the community play a role in planning decisions.

Each year the BCPC elects a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. The Commission's bylaws limit the Chair to only two consecutive terms. The BCPC also has a number of standing committees that meet separately and report back to the full Commission.

During 2015, the officers and members were:

James C. McCarthy, Chairman
Lee C. Olsen, Vice-Chairman
Barry L. Schlouch, Secretary
James L. Mason
Thomas C. McKeon
Douglas Paul Rauch
Mark C. Scott
Peter F. Giorgi
Vacant

Planning Commission Staff

In order to accomplish its duties, the BCPC retains a staff of eleven professional planners, three office support and technicians, and the planning director. The staff is divided into four primary work groups: subdivision and land development, transportation, community planning, and administration. The planner positions require a four-year college degree with specialized skills in geography, environmental science, landscape architecture and transportation. The vacant Transportation Planner II position was filled in February 2015 by David Berryman. The vacant Subdivision and Land

Development Planner II position was re-configured into the Transportation/Subdivision & Land Development Planner I and filled by Devon Hain. Laura Mursch was then hired to fill the Planning Technician position that Devon previously held.

The following individuals were staff to the Commission during 2015:

- Shannon L. Rossman, AICP, Executive Director
- Cheryl A. Auchenbach, Planner III – Community Planning
- Elizabeth A. Burkovich, GISP, GIS Analyst
- Michelle D. Franklin, Planner III – Subdivision & Land Development
- Michael D. Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler
- Laura Mursch, Planning Technician
- Pauline R. Klopp, Office Support V
- Devon B. Hain, Transportation Planner/Subdivision & Land Development Planner I
- David Berryman, Transportation Planner II
- Jamie L. Passon, Planner II
- Alan D. Piper, Planner III – Transportation
- Matthew F. McGough – Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Ashley J. Showers, Planner II
- Amanda M. Timochenko, Planner II
- Regina F. Zdradzinski, Office Support III
- Vacant, Planning Aide

The County of Berks Assistant County Solicitor Heidi B. Masano serves as the Commission’s Solicitor.

Planning Commission Budget – Revenue & Expenditures

The Berks County Board of Commissioners allocates funding for staff and related expenses. The BCPC also

receives revenues from a variety of government agencies and fees. A summary of the BCPC’s budgeted expenditures and revenues for 2015 is as follows:

<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Wages - Staff	\$785,242
Wages - Part time no benefits	\$6,553
FICA	\$57,920
Fringe	\$206,298
Sub Total - Personnel	\$1,056,013
Operating Expense*	\$113,508
Sub Total – Operating	\$113,508
Building Indirect Costs	\$74,900
Other Indirect Costs	\$218,327
Sub Total – Indirect	\$293,227
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,462,748
*estimate	
<u>REVENUE</u>	
CDBG	\$120,000
FTA Revenue	\$143,673
RATS State Revenue	\$48,110
RATS Federal Revenue	\$356,494
BCMS4 Cooperative Ed Program	\$6,301
UCC Fees	\$4,851
Eastern Berks Region JCP Update	\$1,552
SALDO Fees	\$66,545
Maps Other	\$232
SALDO Recording Fee	\$1,280
TOTAL REVENUE	\$749,038

Duties, Responsibilities and Work Program

The BCPC's 2015 work program consisted of duties proscribed by the MPC and directives from the Board of Commissioners and are summarized as follows:

Comprehensive Planning

As required by the MPC, the BCPC prepares the Berks County Comprehensive Plan, which is adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. This regional plan uses demographic, economic and geographic information, and citizen input to formulate recommendations for future land use, transportation and community facilities. The plan is a statement of our community goals and serves as a template for local governments to use in designing local plans and ordinances. The transportation element of the plan is also consistent with the federally required Long Range Transportation Plan. The Plan was last updated in 2013. During 2015 the BCPC Staff began the process of working with the economic development community, through the Ride to Prosperity's Sites & Infrastructure Committee to determine where new industrial and commercial sites are appropriate within the County.

This effort is ongoing and relies heavily on the availability of updated data; including transportation, water, wastewater, environmental restrictions, electric, natural gas and other infrastructure necessary to economic development projects. Staff will continue to work with the Sites & Infrastructure Committee to determine where new economic development is feasible. This information will then be presented to the BCPC and County to determine if any updates are needed to the Comprehensive Plan.

Subdivision and Land Development

The MPC mandates that if a local municipality has not adopted its own development regulations, then the County's adopted ordinances have authority and the County becomes the approval agencies for development decisions in those municipalities. Currently, only the Boroughs of Lyons and Lenhartsville do not have their own development regulations. During 2015 the BCPC did not review any approval plans.

The MPC further mandates that if a local municipality has adopted its own development regulations, the County must be afforded an opportunity to review all development plans and offer recommendations to the local governing body. During 2015 the BCPC staff reviewed a total of 134 subdivision or land development plans, 14 sewer modules and two municipal subdivision and land development ordinances.

Prior to officially recording a plan with the County Recorder of Deeds, the BCPC staff must endorse the plan as having been reviewed and approved in compliance with the MPC and recording requirements. During 2015 the staff endorsed 122 plans prior to recording. All plans submitted for Recording are now digitally scanned in our office as part of the endorsement process. Once they are scanned in, which include all documentation in the file and the reviewed version of the plan, the documents are available to be viewed on the Recorder of Deeds website.

This process allows the BCPC to request permission from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) to destroy the paper copies of all previous plans. Currently, the BCPC has permission from PHMC to destroy the 2012 files. The staff is working with municipalities to determine if any are interested in obtaining the files before they are destroyed. PHMC is in the process of reviewing the request to destroy

files previous to 2012. Certain files, such as the Boroughs of Lenhartsville and Lyons will be kept due to the Commission still being the approval agency for development decisions.

The Recorder of Deeds keeps backup digital copies of all of the submitted records in two off-site places in addition to the on-site back-up. It is anticipated that this will free up a large area of off-site storage space for the BCPC to reorganize other documents that are still necessary to store.

Transportation Planning and Reading Area Transportation Study Duties

The BCPC's staff also serves as staff for the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), which is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for Berks County. RATS formulates and adopts the Long Range Transportation Plan and the four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to qualify for federal transportation funding for highways and transit. Spring 2015 marked the beginning of a two year process to update major transportation planning documents. In April, the Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission hosted an Online Public Meeting marking the kick-off of the development of the State's FY 2017-2020 Twelve Year Program. At this same time, they launched an online survey that allowed citizens across the Commonwealth to express opinions on transportation needs and make recommendations for specific transportation projects. This material was then shared with the Reading MPO for its use in the development of the FY 2017 – FY 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and the FFY2017 – FFY2020 Transportation Improvement Program. The Reading Area Transportation Study also initiated its own solicitation of

project recommendations in fall, 2015. The results of both of these surveys will be combined and projects will be evaluated for placement in either the Long Range Transportation Plan or the Transportation Improvement Program when they are formally adopted in summer, 2016.

Projects

Substantial progress was made on improvements to the PA 61/US 222 Interchange and the widening of PA 61 between US 222 and Water Street in Muhlenberg Township to eliminate traffic bottleneck and allow improved traffic flow at the intersection of PA 61 and Tuckerton Road.



Other major projects that are in process are: replacement of remaining bridges over I-78 west of Hamburg, reconstruction of the Krumsville Interchange on I-78, SR 222 Corridor between Reading and the Lehigh Valley, West Shore SR 422, and widening of the PA Turnpike from the Morgantown Interchange east towards Philadelphia.

The staff also participates in the planning, capital programming, and funding of county bridges under the Liquid Fuels Program.



The staff attends regular progress meetings with the County's Facilities Department. The major bridge projects underway are: The Buttonwood Street Bridge, which carries 16,000 vehicles per day and

numerous pedestrians from and to the City of Reading and the Borough of West Reading, restoration and rehabilitation project, began in July of 2015. The project is estimated to be completed in two years. Due to structural conditions the Bridge is closed during the project. Once the Buttonwood Street Bridge is completed work will begin on the Penn Street Bridge. Traffic will continue to flow over the Penn Street Bridge during construction. Berne Station Bridge that crosses the Schuylkill River, north of Shoemakersville Borough between Perry Township and Tilden Township was completed. The staff also coordinates the county capital program with the RATS Transportation Improvement Program.

The staff provided assistance as requested to a number of other local municipalities. This included providing a funding pass through agreement with the Reading Public Works for ADA curb ramp upgrades analysis of the 18th Ward.

Zoning and Local Comprehensive Planning

The MPC requires that the BCPC be given the opportunity to review all proposed zoning ordinances, amendments and comprehensive plans that apply in Berks County. The BCPC staff reviews the ordinances and plans for conformity to the County Comprehensive Plan, modern zoning techniques, new development trends and changes that will affect land use. The Commission staff reviewed and offered comments on 55 proposed zoning amendments and comprehensive plans.

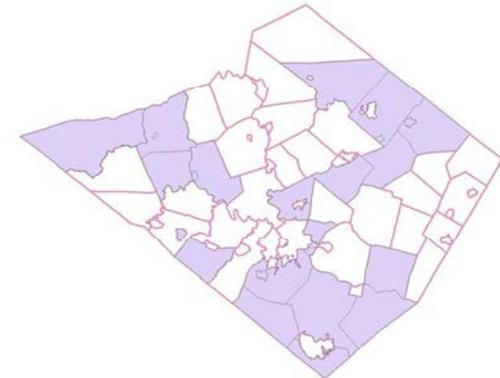
During 2015 the staff kept track of any changes FEMA made to the floodplain maps for Berks County. As changes are made by FEMA staff will update the flood plain maps located on the BCPC's website for the public to view

Historic Resources Update

Planning staff has been working diligently on completing the mapping portion of the historic resources database. Currently, 67 of the 73 municipalities in Berks County are mapped. The remaining municipalities to be mapped are Upper Bern, Upper Tulpehocken, Windsor, Reading, Robesonia, and Wyomissing. The historic locations are based on PHMC Data, Meiser Data, Conservancy Data, and field checks.

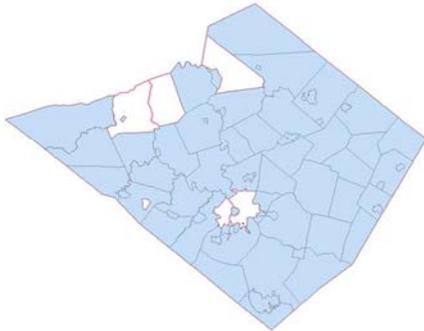
BCPC has survey forms for 25 municipalities. Staff has been continuing to work with members from the

Surveys Received



Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County to increase the number of municipalities that have Berks County survey forms associated with the structures that are mapped.

Mapped Historic Resources



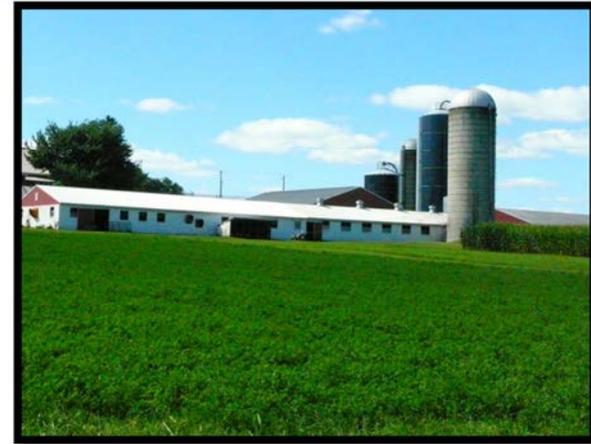
Upon completing the mapping portion of the the database, staff continues to conduct field checks of the mapped structures as well as obtaining pictures.

Basic survey forms are completed and uploaded to the Historic Resources Map as a link to the mapped locations on the BCPC website, which is found in the left navigation pane. Picture forms are also created and uploaded. Once all of the municipalities are mapped, staff will develop a plan to ensure that the data is as up to date as possible. Also, staff will continue to work with PHMC staff to share data. The historic resources mapped locations and survey information can be found at www.countyofberks.com/planning .

Other Reviews

The BCPC reviews a variety of programs, plans and grant applications for consistency with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan. Quite often state and federal grant requirements stipulate that proposed projects must be consistent with regional plans. During 2015 the Commission reviewed Act 97 solid waste applications and grant applications. The BCPC also provided comments on 30 PUC/PennVEST/106 applications, other local ordinance/codes

reviews for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Federal Executive Order reviews, River Basin Commission reviews, watershed protection grant requests, and 4 agricultural security area reviews.



The BCPC staff also reviewed 120 Act 67/68 DEP permit applications for consistency with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

The BCPC assists local communities with the preparation and adoption of joint local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances that are consistent with the overall county comprehensive plan. During 2015 staff continued to assist municipalities with the implementation of existing joint comprehensive plans. Eastern Berks Region Joint Comprehensive Plan Update was initiated during 2014 and had a preliminary draft completed by December 2014 for initial review by the participating municipalities; Topton Borough, District Township and Rockland Township. This Plan Update was the result of Longswamp Township pulling out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Also, discussions with Hereford Township and Washington Township, Governor Mifflin

Planning Area, and Northern Berks Planning Area began and outreach to other Joint Comprehensive Plans that are past or nearing their 10 year review timeframe. The Governor Mifflin Planning Area consists of Brecknock and Cumru Townships, Kenhorst, Mohnton and Shillington Boroughs and the Governor Mifflin School District were awarded a grant to cover the majority of the costs for the update to their Joint Comprehensive Plan. BCPC staff will start this project in early 2016.

The BCPC also continued to implement the recommendations contained in *The Sewer and Water Regionalization Study Update 2011* through Berks County Water & Sewer Association. The association's mission is to promote efficient water and sewer service, encourage better administration, expand local training opportunities, and provide the infrastructure needed for economic development through better regional cooperation. The BCW&SA holds an annual conference each year on the last Wednesday of July. The Conference on July 30th was attended more than 100 persons and its main focus was on disaster management.

The following slate of Association Officers was in place for 2015:

Chip Bilger, Chairman
Keith Brobst, Vice
Chairman
Shannon Rossman,
Secretary
Dean Miller, At-Large
Charlie Jones, At-Large*
(Replaced by Lyn O'Hare)
Brian Hassinger, At-Large



In addition the Center for Excellence in Local Government at Albright College was appointed the Fiscal Agent for the

Association and Paul Janssen, the Director, was re-appointed Treasurer through 2015.

The BCPC continues to provide administrative support to the County Uniform Construction Code (UCC) Board of Appeals. The County Board provides UCC appeals support for 57 municipalities in Berks. The County provides this service to relieve municipalities of the cost and difficulty of appointing a qualified board. During 2015 the County Board did not hear any appeals.

The BCPC also continued its coordinating role in assisting 36 municipalities with meeting the federal MS4 stormwater regulations. During 2015 the BCPC staff, Berks County Conservation District and Berks Nature continued to provide the BCMS4 Steering Committee municipal members with required training to meet their federal MS4 NPDES permit requirements. Providing these services on a countywide basis is a cost effective approach for our local governments. The Berks County MS4 Steering Committee also continued its collaboration with the Center for Watershed Protection, whom with the input of the member municipalities, created and constructed a best management plan project at the Penwyn Playground in the Wyomissing Creek Watershed to help improve the Creeks TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads) and educate the municipalities about the process.

The MS4 Education Committee prepared and delivered more than 15 presentations to various target audiences on the importance of complying with the regulations and protecting water quality.

Other Departments of County Government

The BCPC continues to assist other departments of County government. We provide administrative assistance with grant applications and project management to the County

Department of Parks and Recreation for the continued development of Antietam Lake Park. The staff helps manage the administration and reporting for existing grants. The grants are related to the restoration and improvements for Antietam Lake and the Angora Fruit Farm.

The BCPC staff contacted each of the departments that are directly impacted by the County's MS4 NPDES Permit and met with their department staff to prepare an improved Operation and Maintenance document. This includes helping educate employees regarding proper management of stormwater and what to do in case of a pollution event. Part of this project includes marking all of the storm drains at the North Campus to remind employees and visitors that the storm drains drain directly to a creek not a waste water treatment plant.



The BCPC also continued to provide assistance as necessary to the Community Development Office and Redevelopment Authority. The staff has cooperated with the Joint Express Approval Program (JEAP) which attempts to 'fast track' economic development projects by coordinating a timeline for all municipal and agency approvals.

The staff collaborates regularly with the Berks County Industrial Development Authority on industrial site selection and industrial park development.

Collaboration with Non-Profit Organizations & Community Groups

The BCPC promotes policies and activities that encourage balanced growth and preservation. We play a lead role in cooperative efforts such as the Smart Growth Alliance of Berks County. The Alliance acts as a catalyst and supports innovative strategies that protect the environment and strengthen communities.

BCPC staff served on committees and work groups for conservation efforts such as the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative, Schuylkill River Heritage Area, and the Hopewell Big Woods program. The staff also participated in storm water education and outreach program through the Schuylkill Action Network (SAN). The staff worked closely with the Berks County Conservancy, now known as Berks Nature, regarding land management issues and the annual preparation of the State of the Environment report. The



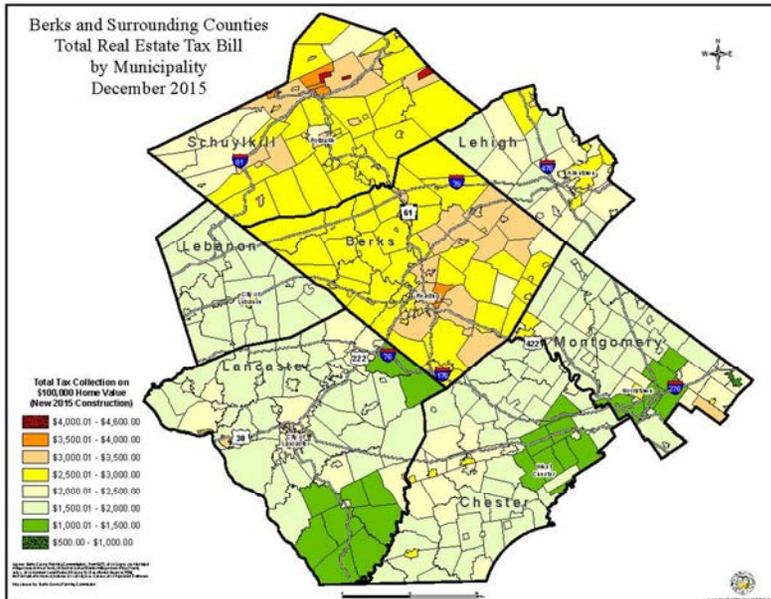
Greater Reading Trails, which includes many groups such as the Berks Area Mountain Biking Association (BAMBA), Berks Nature, Reading Health System and many more, was successful in its application to the

International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) in receiving Bronze status for our extensive trail systems.

The transportation staff regularly advises and works with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry's transportation committee on economic development, county priorities and funding. The Chamber provides input back to RATS regarding economic development needs. The Chamber took an active role in 2014 with creating and hosting the www.Readingbridges.net website to keep area travelers up to date on the bridge replacement project.

Information Assistance

The BCPC serves as a repository of information about Berks County and is the local affiliate of the Pennsylvania State Data Center and the Bureau of the Census. As such, we provide assistance and information to other departments of county government, the private sector and the public. We maintain a website (www.countyofberks.com/planning) in order to distribute the information and maps.



The staff, at the request of the Commissioners and various others, compiled data on migration, population trends, labor and industry, property taxes (including local, school, county and surrounding counties), and poverty. This data was analyzed and presented to the BCPC, Commissioners and is available for download on the website under handouts.

2015 Construction Update

Working with the Berks County Assessment Office, the Planning Commission continued to track new housing and non-residential construction throughout the County.

Berks	2001	2013	LQ Growth 2001-2013	Employment Growth 2001-2013
Competitive (LQ>1.0, employment growth)				
Management of companies and enterprises	1.94	1.15	-4.2%	2.0%
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	2.02	1.02	87%	1.5%
Wholesale trade	0.99	0.98	2.5%	1.0%
Retail trade and motor vehicles and motor vehicles and motor vehicles	0.98	1.00	2.0%	2.0%
Other services except public administration	2.01	0.99	87%	0.0%
Emerging/High employment growth				
Health care and social assistance	0.37	0.83	-1.0%	3.4%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.00	0.97	-1.4%	1.3%
Accommodation and food services	0.80	0.90	0.3%	1.3%
Professional, scientific and technical services	0.95	0.91	-1.5%	0.5%
Educational services	0.33	0.40	0.0%	2.0%
Other	0.34	0.21	-0.2%	2.0%
At Risk/High employment decline				
Manufacturing	1.80	1.00	0.0%	-0.2%
Printing, publishing and related industries	1.00	0.47	-2.1%	-0.0%
Construction	0.99	0.84	2.0%	-0.0%
Information	2.10	0.60	0.0%	-0.0%
Health care and social assistance	1.00	0.60	0.0%	-0.0%
Declining/High employment decline				
Construction and reconstruction	0.90	0.90	-4.7%	-4.0%
Finance and insurance	0.90	0.90	-1.7%	-1.0%
Information	0.90	0.90	0.0%	-2.0%

New housing construction remained sluggish, as 417 units were constructed in 2015. However, the pace of construction finished strong as 182 units were built in the fourth quarter.

In 2015, 64% of all new housing units were single-family detached houses. Apartment construction accounted for 14% of the new units added to the inventory last year. Twelve percent of the new units were mobile homes, while single-family attached units, which includes semi-detached and townhouses accounted for 10% of the new units.

Examining the location of new housing units, new homes were constructed in 45 of the county's 73 municipalities. Alsace Township had the most new housing, 46 units, including 40 apartments. Rounding out the top five municipalities were Lower Heidelberg Township (33units), Muhlenberg Township (29 units), Ontelaunee Township (27 units) and Oley (23 units).

Non-residential development, broken down into the following categories: commercial, warehouse/storage, industrial, public and quasi-public (institutional land use) was also tracked in 2015. This data includes new buildings, as well as additions to existing structures. Non-residential construction totaled 934,699 square feet of new space. Commercial development which includes retail, services and office uses, dominated the categories with 556,348 square feet of space. This included two hotels totaling 319 new rooms, nearly 95,000 square feet of office space, three new "dollar" stores, and a grocery store. Warehousing/storage accounted for 161,351 square feet of new space while industrial uses contributed 68,722 square feet. Two new public school projects accounted for the majority of the 148,278 square feet of new public/quasi-public space.

2015 Top Ten Largest Non-Residential Construction Projects

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Square Feet</u>
DoubleTree by Hilton	Reading	Commercial	219,351
Hamburg Elementary School	Shoemakersville	Public/Quasi-Public	101,610
Zimmerman Farm Service garage	Bethel	Commercial	70,000
Energys office/lab additions	Bern	Commercial	60,901
Fairfield Inn	Spring	Commercial	59,295
All Star Distributing warehouse addition	Muhlenberg	Warehouse/Storage	56,000
G.W. Packaging warehouse	Douglass	Warehouse/Storage	39,281
Boyer's Grocery Store and retail	Birdsboro	Commercial	35,011
GLP Capital LP office	Wyomissing	Commercial	30,141
Can Corp of America addition	Maidencreek	Industrial	23,358

Not included in the non-residential construction projects are the agriculture related development. In 2015 the staff reviewed and endorsed development plans for 13 poultry, 1 duck and 1 dairy operations.

In addition to our normal data distribution, we continued to distribute results of the 2010 Census and other data collection survey information. Working with the Assessment Office, we continued to track new housing and non-residential construction throughout the County.

Municipal Training and Technical Assistance

The BCPC assists with the training of municipal governments and local planning commissions by conducting workshops on topical planning issues via the Center for Excellence in Local Government at Albright College and the Berks Municipal Partnership. The Commission continues to sponsor the *Berks County Master Planner Program* for local officials in collaboration with the Center. The Center for Excellence and Local Government at Albright College holds its Open House at Roessner Hall, each year in October.

New in 2015 are the cooperative efforts of the Smart Growth Alliance of Berks County with the Center for Excellence in Local Government. While the Reading-Berks Realtors Association still handles the financial and secretarial duties for the Smart Growth Alliance, the groups have combined resources to become a more effective promoter and educator of Smart Growth in Berks County. The 2015 Open House, hosted by Albright College, included the nationally known speaker, Ed McMahon of the Urban Land Use Institute. Mr. McMahon spoke about the necessity of smart growth and how to accomplish smart growth on any scale.

Each year the Smart Growth Alliance of Berks County presents an award to a person, project or program that provides a community service and/or showcases great places, new development, existing building renovation, municipal planning, energy efficiency and conservation that promote smart growth practices within Berks County. The 2015 Smart Growth Award was present to ReDesign Reading for the creation and success of the Reading Bike Hub. www.readingbikehub.org

For more information about the Smart Growth Alliance of Berks County go to www.smartgrowthalliance.org .

The BCPC staff continues to provide municipalities with timely news and information via our municipal e-mail alert program, E-Flash. During the year the staff has also continued to attend a variety of advanced training workshops and conferences in order to keep current with new planning strategies, legislation and topical issues.

