

# PLANNING INSIGHT

A Newsletter of the Bucks County Planning Commission



## GRANTS INSIGHT

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) offers **Keystone Historic Preservation Planning and Construction Grants**. The deadline to apply is **March 1, 2021**. More information: [www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Planning-Projects.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Planning-Projects.aspx)

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) offers various grants which build connections to the outdoors through recreation enhancement and community revitalization efforts. The deadline to apply is **April 14, 2021**. More information: [www.brcgrants.dcnr.pa.gov/](http://www.brcgrants.dcnr.pa.gov/)

Staff continues to maintain and update the County's COVID-19 Portal. From case counts, to grant and funding information, be sure to stay up to date as the portal evolves regularly. [covid19-bucksgis.hub.arcgis.com/](http://covid19-bucksgis.hub.arcgis.com/)

## BUCKS TRIVIA

What was the first segment of commuter rail completed in Bucks County?

- A.) Yardley to Newtown
- B.) Ivyland to Philadelphia
- C.) Morrisville to Bristol
- D.) Quakertown to Perkasie

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Greetings and Happy New Year! I hope this finds you all healthy. As we collectively look to regroup and start off with New Year's resolutions and a fresh start, staff and I are gearing up for both an update to the 2011 County Comprehensive Plan, as well as an update to the 2016 County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Both projects will require your assistance and participation as we look to assess where we are, where we are going, and how we get there.

In terms of departmental operations, we have launched a new 2021 Subdivision and Land Development Application and a new fee schedule. We are also now using ShareBase to permit applicants to upload full plan sets, versus the truncated emailed submissions we accepted as a result of the pandemic. The Act 247 Subdivision and Land Development

Application process will be replaced later this year by an entirely new e-commerce platform, which will enable all electronic submissions and payments.

As always, my door is open, and I may be reached via email or phone at [estone@buckscounty.org](mailto:estone@buckscounty.org) 215.345.3401. I look forward to hearing from you and welcome your feedback. Enjoy *Planning InSight!*

The Bucks County Housing & Community Development Department is accepting applications for HUD's 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through March 8, 2021. Application documents can be accessed at [www.buckscounty.org/housing](http://www.buckscounty.org/housing). **Please note a change for this year: engineering, architectural, and project management costs will be considered a match and are not eligible for CDBG reimbursement.**

## MODEL ALTERNATIVE ENERGY ORDINANCE

As is often our practice, we develop and distribute model ordinances to address topical planning issues. Renewable, alternative energy is certainly one of those topics. Solar energy is making a renewed push into the marketplace; however, Pennsylvania still does not have a solar access law. The regulation of solar and other forms of energy production, like many other uses, falls to each municipality to regulate and govern through local zoning ordinances.

The good news is that nearly 55 percent of our Bucks municipalities have some form of alternative energy ordinance in place. These ordinances allow for wind, solar, geothermal, or biofuel production. What we find however is that these energy sources are not all necessarily

included under one alternative energy umbrella. Typically, we see solar-only or solar-and wind-only ordinances, but seldom do we see all sources combined in a singular ordinance chapter. More importantly, existing ordinances do not incentivize the use of alternative energy during the initial planning and subsequent construction phases. There are also only a few examples where alternative-energy-friendly site design principles are incorporated to encourage optimum solar orientation.

Working closely with Commissioner Harvie, we have developed an inclusive Model Alternative Energy Ordinance which brings alternative and renewable energy production methods into one guidance document. *Continued...*

## MODEL ALTERNATIVE ENERGY ORDINANCE (CONTINUED)

The model ordinance provides examples of various incentives which could be included to encourage the use and incorporation of alternative energy systems at the beginning stages of a residential or nonresidential development proposal. The model ordinance builds on numerous successful ordinances from such municipalities as Northampton, Buckingham, Haycock, and Doylestown Townships. It was further developed using model ordinance language and guidance from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The ordinance specifically does not address utility-scale energy systems and

installations, as the goal was to include only the residential and commercial development that we typically see.

As with any model ordinance, it is a guidance document based on what we believe to be sound and researched evidence-based practice. Should you feel its content, or variation thereof, is applicable and useful in providing for the uses outlined in your municipality, we encourage you to consider its adoption and incorporation. As always, we welcome your input. A copy of the sample ordinance can be found here: <https://communityplanning-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/model-ordinances>

## BUCKS COUNTY'S HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION

If you lived in Bucks County 100 years ago, how you traveled around your community would be entirely different from what you experience today. You might have ridden a train from New Hope to Ivyland, hopped a trolley from Doylestown to Riegelsville, or possibly even sailed a boat from Bristol to Morrisville via the Delaware Canal.

As much as residents in Bucks County rely on their cars today, modes of transportation have continuously changed over the course of the county's history. The story of how our transportation system has evolved over the years is finally being told.

The Bucks County Planning Commission debuted Bucks County's History of Transportation web feature. Beginning 350 years ago with the county's founding and traveling through to the present, this feature uses maps and information slides to showcase the county's transportation system at various points in development. The maps are then gradually enhanced with photographs and data of past and present conditions.

What was once dirt paths and rivers, this feature touches on the canal, train, trolley, and road networks that came to be. Bucks County's transportation system is depicted as ever-evolving to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

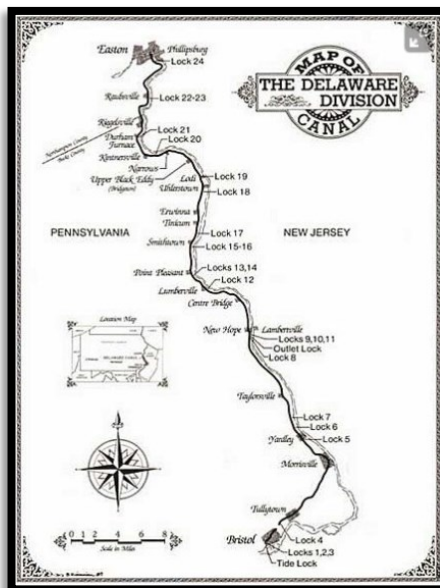
Furthermore, it showcases the impact that the transportation system has had on our everyday life. From the formation of new municipalities, changes in populations, and the continuous

redevelopment of our natural landscapes, all were impacted by the transportation network.

The Story Map will be continuously updated with new information about our transportation history.

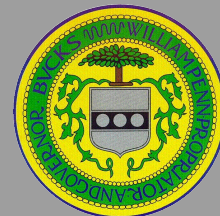
After viewing the Story Map, feel free to contact us at: [planningcommission@buckscounty.org](mailto:planningcommission@buckscounty.org) with new topics or ideas to explore.

The web feature can be accessed by visiting the county's web portal, or can be accessed directly at: [bucksgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5feefa07fc8e4723a2b95ebfb79de26f](https://bucksgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5feefa07fc8e4723a2b95ebfb79de26f)



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[www.buckscounty.org](http://www.buckscounty.org)

[www.buckscounty.org/PC](http://www.buckscounty.org/PC)

[www.dataportal-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com](http://www.dataportal-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com)

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Trivia Answer:

C.) Morrisville to Bristol

