



Centre Region Council of Governments
CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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Serving the Townships of College, Ferguson, Halfmoon, Harris, Patton, and the Borough of State College

TO: Mark Kunkle, Township Manager
Cassandra Schmick, AICP
Ferguson Township Director of Planning and Zoning

FROM: Sebastian DeGregorio,
Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)

DATE: October 9, 2001

SUBJECT: Amended Review, Proposed Ordinance Amendment – Chapter 27, Ferguson Township Code of Ordinances, Appendix D, Official Map.

This current review serves to replace my previous review of record dated September 10, 2001 regarding the current Ferguson Township Official Map amendment. My prior review overlooked a major map change that could have very serious regional implications, and warrants staff comments from that perspective. I apologize for any misunderstandings and/or confusion that my oversight may have caused. That being said, in accordance with the stated review and comment time provisions noted in Article IV, Section 402 of the Municipalities Planning Code regarding adoption and amendments to an official map, the following comments are provided for your consideration:

Land Use and Environmental Concerns:

1. The proposed Blue Course Drive extension illustrated on this revised official map is intended to connect Whitehall Road and Pa. Route 45. This proposal raises issues of consistency with the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan due to its location outside of the Regional Growth Boundary and established sewer service area, which should be considered in evaluating the Official Map for adoption.

The proposed road connection runs counter to the environmental protection goals and policies of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The road would traverse the identified recharge area of the Harter Thomas Wellfield, which is an important water source of the State College Borough Water Authority. Slab Cabin Run is a sensitive headwater area that is a tributary to both the Spring Creek and its related resources, including the fragile ecosystem of the Millbrook Marsh. As noted in the Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory completed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in 1991, "The water quality of Spring Creek is partially dependant on that of the Slab Cabin Run." Due to the shallow water table in this area and the presence of sinkholes throughout the Slab Cabin Run basin, the construction of a roadway in this area could present significant environmental issues.

This idea appears to warrant much more detailed future land use analysis relative to potential negative impacts on several municipalities including State College Borough,

College and Harris Townships.

2. The proposed road would traverse active agricultural farmlands zoned Rural Agriculture (RA) that currently participate in the Ferguson Township Agricultural Security Area Program. According to the Agricultural Security Area Law of 1981, the state's Agricultural Land Condemnation Advisory Board (ALCAB) would be required to review and approve any petition for condemnation of property.

Transportation Comments:

1. Though the Blue Course Drive extension would promote the further expansion and development of a "grid" transportation system and provide more links and alternative traffic flow options, the provision of this proposed link might exacerbate existing and future "cut through" traffic in residential areas of State College Borough and Ferguson Township which is currently problematic along Blue Course and Waupelani Drives and also West Whitehall Road in College Township.
2. The Township should consider preparing a detailed traffic study to gauge the traffic benefits and impacts of this proposed new roadway. CRPA will also attempt to evaluate the traffic benefits and impacts of the proposed roadway when developing the new Centre County/CRMPO Long Range Transportation Plan in 2002.
3. The creation of a new road in this location could almost certainly promote rezoning requests and subsequent development. The new trips that could ultimately be generated and subsequent regional traffic distribution should also be thoroughly evaluated.

In light of the potential problems and issues associated with this recommended official map amendment, the CRPA recommends more thorough discussion and evaluation regarding this proposed new road segment. If we can be of assistance in facilitating a forum for discussion, please do not hesitate to contact us at 231-3050.

/sjd

cc: State College Borough Planning Department
College Township
Harris Township
State College Borough Water Authority
Millbrook Marsh Nature Center
Centre County Planning Office
Daily Correspondence

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