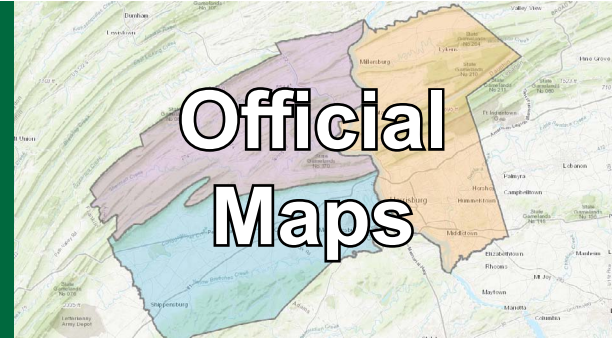


TCRPC

Planning Toolkit Fact Sheet



INTRODUCTION

An official map is a joint map-ordinance effort that can be adopted by municipalities as a means to implement their comprehensive plans. Both the visual map and written ordinance expand on the municipality's goals for public facility improvements by designating areas to be reserved for public use. This is an important tool for forward thinking planning, and gives municipalities the power to direct growth, preserve resources, establish parks and recreation areas, and facilitate trails and other public improvements within their own borders. Municipalities are granted the power to enact the map and ordinance by Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

As more municipalities realize the value of comprehensive plans to maintain efficient control over their respective futures, anything that helps with implementation measures is a valuable tool to have at their disposal. As with any public planning document, official maps and ordinances should be shaped with plenty of public input, knowledge of current conditions and issues, and with an eye towards the future. A wide variety of stakeholders should be consulted to gain as many perspectives as possible. Once adopted, municipalities should strive to maintain the integrity of official maps and ordinances.

BENEFITS

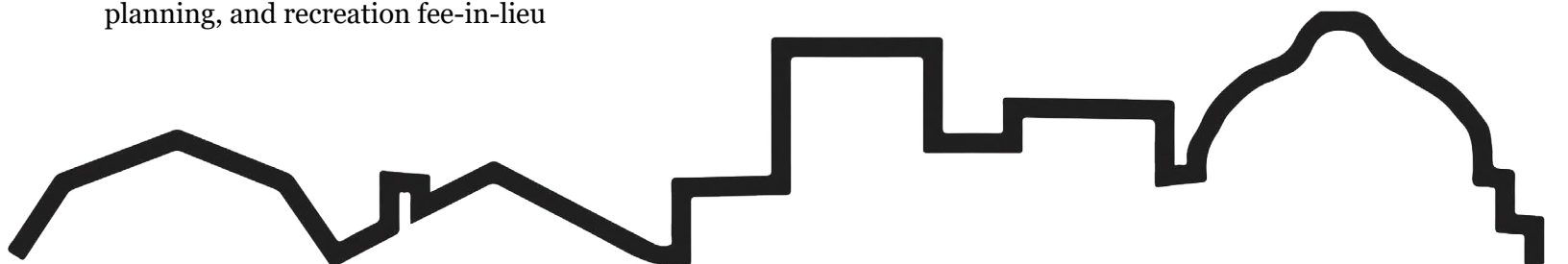
- Provides a regulatory tool to implement of the goals of their comprehensive plan that can be used with or without zoning and subdivision ordinances
- Provides an easy resource to developers, conservation/recreation groups, and citizens to understand the goals of the municipality
- Can provide an advantage to grant applications
- Can be integrated with other planning practices such as transfer of development rights, conservation planning, and recreation fee-in-lieu



CLICK ON MAPS TO VIEW

DRAWBACKS

- Municipalities may need a certain amount of financial backing to fully implement an official map
- A municipality should have a comprehensive plan before adopting an official map—which will be an additional cost
- There can be disagreement within municipal government regarding the features to be included on an official map, especially when done without a recent comprehensive plan



PRACTICAL TIPS

- Involve the public in the official map process through outreach and educational events
- Reference the official map in the subdivision and land development ordinance to make sure it is effectively integrated into the land development process
- Review existing land use plans and the comprehensive plan, as effective justification for the official map
- Consider including supporting studies such as traffic or parks and recreation studies
- Consult developers, conservation groups, relevant municipal subcommittees, and other stakeholders for multiple perspectives

RESOURCES

Examples

- **Derry Township – Dauphin County – Official Map and Ordinance**
- **Susquehanna Township – Dauphin County – Official Map and Ordinance**
- **South Middleton Township – Cumberland County - Official Map and Ordinance**
- **Elk Township – Chester County – Official Map and Ordinance**

NOTE: The guidebook “Official Map: A Handbook for Preserving and Providing Public Lands and Facilities has a full list of municipalities in Pennsylvania with an adopted official map.

Guides and Assistance

- **The Official Map: A Handbook for Preserving and Providing Public Lands and Facilities**
- **MPC Quick Guide – Official Maps**

RELATED TOOLKIT FACT SHEETS

- **Cluster Subdivisions**
- **Agricultural and Natural Resource Protection**
- **Complete Streets**
- **Connectivity**
- **Walkability**
- **Transit Oriented Development**

