
Community Facilities and Public Utilities Plan

This Section of the Clinton-Buffalo Townships Comprehensive Plan will examine the basic facilities and public services that can affect local growth and development policies. Probably one of the greatest changes in the two townships in the past forty (40) years since the last Comprehensive Plan was prepared, has been the addition of numerous additional community facilities and services. At that time of the last plan, Buffalo Township had no public sewer system or police services. As the two (2) communities have grown and municipal functions become more comprehensive, community facilities have grown. This Section will examine:

- Public water and sewer systems, with regards to capacity and extent
- Educational facilities
- A brief discussion of municipal finances

Recreation facilities are discussed in detail within Chapter 8.

Public Water and Sewer Systems:

These are the engines which drive most growth and development in the rural and suburban areas of Western Pennsylvania. Due to soil type, intensive growth and development is frequently impossible without these systems. Information about public systems was provided the system management.

Sewer service is provided in Buffalo Township by the Municipal Authority of Buffalo Township (MABT). Its service area includes a small collection-only system serving about 450 customers in the southeastern corner of the Township (with effluent treated by the Upper Allegheny Joint Sanitary Authority) and a larger service

are for both collection and treatment. This larger service area centers on the PA Route 356 corridor and serves about 1,500 customers. About 63 percent of the Townships households are served by the MABT system. The Township authority Chapter 94 report (an annual report of wastewater treatment plan loadings) indicates the system is operating well within its permitted capacity. Sewage treatment capacity is measured as both hydraulic and organic loading. The plant's permitted capacity is 410,000 gallons per day (GPD) or .410 million gallons per day (MGD). The average hydraulic loading for the system was .244 MGD in the year 2000. By 2004, average loading was up to .337 MGD. In only one month during the past 4 years was there ever an incident of hydraulic overloading (September of 2004 due to storms caused by Hurricane Ivan). This is an excellent record, especially when compared to many city and borough systems.

Based upon averages for 2004, the system retains adequate hydraulic capacity for the near term. Sewage flow is based on a unit of measurement known as the Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU). An EDU is the amount of water usage or sewage flow that would equal that of a single family dwelling. For planning purposes, an EDU can be considered 400 gallons per day. From this type of rough measurement, the overall capacity of a system can be estimated. The Buffalo Township system has 73,000 gallons in hydraulic capacity, or the ability to handle another 180 EDU's before reaching overload. In reality, DEP will not permit such a close level of loading and will typically place restriction on new tap-ins to the system. By the time this has happened, the local community is no longer in control of the important community facility.

The Authority is using a projection ratio of 50 EDU's per year. In this scenario, maximum hydraulic flow would reach .369 by 2009. This projection should be compared to land use and demographic information to ensure that the Township and its constituent authority are coordinating their planning.

Water service in Buffalo Township is provided by the Municipal Authority of Buffalo Township and the Fawn-Frazer Water Authority. Fawn-Frazer serves a small,

primarily residential area in the southeastern corner of the Township. The Municipal Authority of Buffalo Township serves an additional 1,500 or so customers throughout the rest of the Township. The water is produced from the 1.25 MGD Freeport Filter Plant on the Allegheny River in Freeport Borough, Armstrong County. The Authority purchased this plant in 1987 from a private owner. The plant's current daily output is about .7 MGD. This water supplies Buffalo Township and the two neighboring communities of Freeport Borough and South Buffalo Township. The Authority also has an emergency interconnect with the Harrison Township Municipal Authority.

Clinton Township is primarily served by the Saxonburg Area Authority. This authority was formed in 1959 after the Saxonburg Borough Municipal System was extended into both Clinton and Jefferson Townships. The authority operates both public water distribution and wastewater treatment. Two of three water towers are located in Clinton Township, though the raw water source is actually in Allegheny County. The wastewater treatment plant is also located in Clinton Township. More recently two other townships, Penn and Middlesex chose to join this authority. The creation of an authority in this manner, both increases borrowing power, and allows for a fair approach to inter-municipal infrastructure extensions. With this expansion of members, the Authority has initiated a massive project to extend sewage treatment service into a much larger area. A joint Act 537 Plan was prepared for all the municipalities that are authority members as well as Richland Township, Allegheny County. The Plans include a 2.05 MGD sewage treatment plant, 6 new pump stations, over 10 miles of new force main, and nearly 70 miles of new gravity line. Total project costs are estimated at over forty million dollars. This large project has the potential to actually alter some regional patterns of growth and development (See demographic section).

The Public Utilities Map depicts the actual extent of current water and sewer service areas in both townships. Only a small area of Clinton Township has current service, basically centered on the Victory Road Business Park Site. A more recent extension from Saxonburg has been made to a residential subdivision. Perhaps one

fourth of Buffalo Township's land area has public sewage service, with the main service area extending along Pa. Route 356 through the length of the Township.

Future extensions should be made to assist in implementation of the Land Use Plan. In Buffalo Township, this would involve service to areas in the southeastern portion of the Township, especially south and east of Pa. Route 28, and extending laterally from the Cole Road area. More modest extensions would meet the need of Clinton Township's identified growth areas. Within Clinton Township, service should not extend south of Pa. Route 228, to remain consistent with both the land use plan and Act 537 Plan.

Educational Facilities

Pennsylvania school districts are the third basic form of local government with taxing authority (after the County and the Township/City/Borough). In most situations, the physical plant and employment exceeds that of the municipality. Consequently, real estate taxes paid to the school district often exceed those assessed by the County or primary municipality. School districts also face a host of Federal and State requirements to provide a mandated level of educational services to any child resident within the district.

Clinton Township is a part of the South Butler County School District. This district includes the Borough of Saxonburg and the Townships of Clinton, Penn, Jefferson and Winfield. Until the late 1990's, this district operated five (5) elementary schools and a consolidated Junior/Senior high school facility. The four (4) municipal level elementary schools, located in each municipality, were closed and new primary elementary (kindergarten to 3rd grade) and intermediate elementary school (Grade 4-5) were constructed on the same campus as the middle and high school facilities. According to the District website, there are presently 274 employees

(15 administrative/management personnel, 182 teachers, and 77 support staff) and about 2,900 students K-12.¹

Student performance at various grade levels is presented in the Table below, as it compares to statewide percentages. These are based on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, a series of standardized statewide tests which began in 1999, and allow public access to performance at all levels of geography. The following results are from the 2004-2005 assessments. They are summarized for brevity. Students are rated at Advanced (Superior), Proficient (Satisfactory), Basic (Marginal), and Below Basic (Unsatisfactory).

TABLE 5-1
2004-2005 PSSA Assessment Percentages
South Butler County School District and Pennsylvania

GRADE		% ADVANCED/ PROFICIENT MATH	% ADVANCED/ PROFICIENT READING	% BASIC/BELOW BASIC MATH	% BASIC/BELOW BASIC READING
3	PA	81.0	68.0	20.0	32.0
	SB	82.0	76.0	18.0	24.0
5	PA	69.0	64.2	31.0	35.8
	SB	85.0	81.3	15.0	18.7
8	PA	62.9	64.1	27.1	36.0
	SB	76.0	67.2	23.9	32.8
11	PA	50.9	65.0	49.2	34.9
	SB	55.7	70.9	44.3	29.0

Source: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=115272

In addition to assessments of academic performance, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) monitors enrollment trends and creates projections of future enrollments. These are created as a planning tool to assist district in sizing facilities, and also establish State formulaic reimbursement.

¹ <http://www.southbutler.k12.pa.us/>

**TABLE 5-2
 TOTAL ACTUAL AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT
 SOUTH BUTLER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL OR PROJECTED	PREVIOUS YEAR CHANGE
2000-2001	2,980	actual	-n/a
2001-2002	2,953	actual	-27
2002-2003	2,954	actual	+1
2003-2004	2,917	actual	-37
2004-2005	2,884	actual	-33
2005-2006	2,833	projected	-51
2006-2007	2,812	projected	-21
2007-2008	2,765	projected	-47
2008-2009	2,689	projected	-76
2009-2010	2,631	projected	-58
2010-2011	2,546	projected	-85
2011-2013	2,494	projected	-52
2012-2013	2,446	projected	-48
2013-2014	2,365	projected	-81
2014-2015	2,303	projected	-62

Source: <http://enrlproj.ed.state.pa.us/EnrIRpts/e0410780.htm>

It is critical that Township officials coordinate with school district officials with regards to planning for school facilities capacity.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the district will lose a significant number of students over the next ten (10) years. From a policy standpoint, this projection is overly pessimistic, particularly giving consideration that overall population will increase. It must be noted that the Pennsylvania Department of Education projections do not account for changes in in-migration. However, the PDE model is not consistent with overall district enrollment trends. Enrollment grew consistently in the 1990's, with an average gain of twenty-nine (29) students per school year. PDE projections based on 2000 enrollment were significantly higher.

If a building project were necessary, the size of the facility could be computed based upon current enrollment plus ten percent (10%), the PDE projection, or an independent projection approved by PDE. The 2003-2004 enrollment figure would be 3,208. A Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) projection extrapolation could result in projection twice as high. It is imperative that the Township cooperate in district facilities planning for this reason. Growth over the life of a facility may very well exceed ten percent (10%) of current enrollment.

The Freeport Area School District was formed in 1969, and includes Buffalo Township, Freeport Borough, and South Buffalo Township (both of the latter two are in Armstrong County). This makes it one of only two school districts in Butler County that cross the County line. (The other is Allegheny Township, which is part of the Allegheny-Clarion Valley School District.)

Multi-County school districts present a particularly complex situation because of the method of countywide assessment of real estate as taxable property. The Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 requires a multi-county index be prepared to rebalance tax rates in this situation. The law is intended to prevent a school district from gaining a windfall because millage rates are uniform, but the basis of assessment is not consistent within each County. At this point there are three (3) options:

1. The school district must adjust the rate of taxation consistent with valuation established by the State Tax Equalization Board.
2. A formulaic approach may be employed to balance the variation at the option of the school district.
3. The rate may be uniform if both Counties assess at one hundred percent (100%) of market value and use the base year of amount and validation.

Option 2 is employed by the Freeport Area School District. The calculations here were provided by the district office.

**FREEPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
 REAL ESTATE TAX COMPUTATION
 2005-2006**

	MARKET VALUE CERTIFIED 6/30/04	% MV	DISTRICT SHARE REAL ESTATE TAX	ASSESSED VALUES	MILLAGE
Armstrong	\$138,053,600	31.442%	\$3,112,758	\$ 63,735,818	49
Butler	<u>301,020,000</u>	<u>68.558%</u>	<u>6,787,242</u>	<u>44,778,476</u>	152
	<u>\$439,073,600</u>	<u>100.00%</u>	<u>\$9,900,000</u>	<u>\$108,514,294</u>	

The District has five (5) school facilities. A Kindergarten Center is located in Freeport Borough, which was formerly the Freeport Elementary School. Elementary schools are located in South Buffalo Township and Buffalo Township. The Junior High School is located in Freeport Borough, and the District Administration and Senior High School are located in Buffalo Township.

Like the South Butler County School District, the Freeport Area School District has very positive assessment test scores.

**TABLE 5-3
 2004-2005 PSSA Assessment Percentages
 Freeport Area School District and Pennsylvania**

GRADE		% ADVANCED/ PROFICIENT MATH	% ADVANCED/PROFICIENT READING	% BASIC/BELOW BASIC MATH	% BASIC/BELOW BASIC READING
3	PA	81.0	68.0	20.0	32.0
	FR	95.0	82.0	5.0	18.0
5	PA	69.0	64.2	31.0	35.8
	FR	88.3	85.1	11.7	15.0
8	PA	62.9	64.1	27.1	36.0
	FR	82.0	84.5	18.0	15.6
11	PA	50.9	65.0	49.2	34.9

TABLE 5-3
2004-2005 PSSA Assessment Percentages
Freeport Area School District and Pennsylvania

GRADE		% ADVANCED/ PROFICIENT MATH	% ADVANCED/PROFICIENT READING	% BASIC/BELOW BASIC MATH	% BASIC/BELOW BASIC READING
	FR	64.5	83.5	35.6	16.4

Source: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=115272

Enrollment projections for the Freeport Area School District are illustrated in the next table. The district has gained significantly over the past few years. Again, however, this projection may be overly modest in light of increasing subdivision and building permit activity in the Township.

TABLE 5-2
TOTAL ACTUAL AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT
FREEPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL OR PROJECTED	PREVIOUS YEAR CHANGE
2000-2001	1,876	actual	-n/a
2001-2002	1,899	actual	+23
2002-2003	1,952	actual	+53
2003-2004	1,950	actual	-2
2004-2005	2,002	actual	+52
2005-2006	2,029	projected	+27
2006-2007	2,036	projected	+10
2007-2008	2,036	projected	-3
2008-2009	2,064	projected	+28
2009-2010	2,076	projected	+12
2010-2011	2,100	projected	+24
2011-2013	2,100	projected	0
2012-2013	2,089	projected	-11
2013-2014	2,078	projected	-11
2014-2015	2,060	projected	-18

Source: <http://enrlproj.ed.state.pa.us/EnrlRpts/e0410780.htm>

Municipal Financial Statistics

Municipalities are creations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Therefore, their power to tax charge fees or otherwise collect revenue is limited by the state.

Each community attempts to balance its need for revenue, against potential sources of income in different ways. An example of this is that until recently, Buffalo Township had no real estate tax. By contrast, real estate taxes account for nearly 15 percent of Clinton Township's total revenue. The next two tables illustrate both revenue and expenditures for each Township in 2002. The first table examines revenue, and the second table examines expenditures. These tables are based on Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development reports.

Sources of Revenue, Clinton and Buffalo Township, 2002		
Revenue Source	Buffalo Township	Clinton Township
Total Revenue	\$1,803,644	\$633,346
Tax Revenue	\$714,424	\$383,347
Real Estate Tax	0	\$92,058
Earned Income Tax	\$591,018	\$257,485
Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$72,826	\$28,731
Occupational Privilege Tax	\$10,995	\$5073
Per Capita Tax	\$39,625	0
Business Gross Receipts Tax	0	0
Amusement Tax	0	0
Amusement Devices Tax	0	0

Sources of Revenue, Clinton and Buffalo Township, 2002

Sources of Revenue, Clinton and Buffalo Township, 2002		
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$235,633	\$144,175
Water Fees	0	0
Sewer Fees	0	0
Solid Waste Fees	\$115	0
Parking	0	0
Recreation Fees	0	\$125
Municipal Charges	\$103,184	\$26,478
Permits	\$1,054	\$13,443
Fines	\$31,086	\$1,258
Interest income	\$10,251	\$6,562
Other	\$707,922	\$57,958

Local Government Expenditures, Clinton and Buffalo Township, 2002

Item of Expenditure	Buffalo Township	Clinton Township
Total Expenditures	\$1,655,931	\$601,061
Excess of Deficit	+\$147,738	+\$32,285
General Government Operations	\$152,803	\$73,908
Police	\$281,318	0
Fire	\$118,033	\$24,543
Other Public Safety	\$1,362	\$5,910
Public Health	\$3,643	0

Roads	\$810,246	\$359,084
Sewer	0	\$150
Water	0	0
Solid Waste	0	0
Other Public Works	\$120	0
Parks and Recreation	\$11,286	0
Libraries	\$1500	\$6,500
Planning	\$16,692	\$12,836
Debt Service	\$23,963	\$12,000
Other	\$234,965	\$106,280

The notable differences in Revenue are that in that year Clinton Township charged no per capita tax, and Buffalo Township charged no real estate tax. Of course, direct comparison is a bit more difficult because of each community's uniqueness. One crude measure is revenue compared to population. By this standard, Buffalo Township took in \$264 dollars per person (based on its 2000 population) of which \$104 was from taxes; taxes being the most reliable source of annual revenue. Clinton Township took in \$227 per person, of which \$137 was from taxes. The major year-to year difference in expenditures the maintenance of township level police protection in Buffalo Township.

In general, these summaries illustrate the typical Pennsylvania situation of financially prudent and responsible township governments. The challenge of the future will be to maintain this favorable situation as growth and development changes public service needs and expectations.

A major difference in community finances is in the way each Township handles emergency services. Clinton Township relies upon the Butler Barracks of the State

Police and Buffalo Township has township funded local police protection. All of Clinton Township is served by the Saxonburg Volunteer Fire Company, which maintains two stations. The Saxonburg Fire Company handles fire protection, fire police and ambulance/EMT services. Buffalo Township is served by three different fire companies; The Buffalo Township Volunteer Fire Company, The Freeport Volunteer Fire Company, and the Sarver Volunteer Fire Company. As of 2002 for Buffalo Township, these services were only costing the Township about \$58.00 per annum on a per capita basis.