BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SOUTH CAMPUS
400 E. WYOMISSING AVE., SUITE D, BOX 2
MOHNTON, PA 19540

October 14, 2026

# MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Glenn R. Knoblauch called the monthly meeting of the Berks County Planning Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person in the 1st floor conference room at South Campus.

2. ROLL CALL

**The following members were present:**

Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair
David Mattes, Secretary
Kevin Lerch
Lee C. Olsen, AIA, NCARB
Gavin Milligan
Lyn Rodino
Jodi Gauker
Thomas C. McKeon, AICP, CEcD

**Also Attending:**

Ashley Showers, Executive Director
Leo Scott, Assistant Director
David Peris, Berks County Assistant Solicitor
Matthew McGough, Transportation Planner III
Michelle Franklin, Planner III
Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III
Amanda Timochenko, Transportation Planner II
Rick Royer, Design Planner
Thiago Almeida, Planner II
Shanice Ellison, Planner I
Beth Burkovich, GIS Analyst
Taylor Lawrence, Planner III
Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator
Mark Mohn, Gov't Affairs Director, Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS®
Suzanne Cody, City of Reading Planning Commission
Jeanne Johnston, Center for Excellence in Local Government, Albright College
Kelly Hughes, Account Clerk III

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Mohn, Government Affairs Director for the Reading-Berks Association of REALTORS®, reviewed the Berks County Q3 2026 State of the Market Report. The median home sale price reached $319,900 countywide, while the City of Reading reported a median price of $189,000, briefly reaching $200,000 in August. He reported that a household income of approximately $112,000 is needed to afford the county's median-priced home, compared to the county's median household income of $80,000. Listing activity has declined from 5,447 homes in 2017 to 3,969 in 2026, while median home prices have doubled. Mr. Mohn noted that seniors are now the largest group of both buyers and sellers, highlighting the need for more affordable housing for younger residents. He also stated that limited inventory and strong demand continue to drive higher prices and suggested that additional townhouse and condominium development could help address housing affordability challenges. A board member inquired whether home size may be contributing to rising prices. Mr. Mohn responded that home prices have increased steadily across all housing types over the past two years.

Mr. Mohn announced an upcoming site tour of a new 55+ residential community project, a Berks IDA project in Amity Township, scheduled for October 20 at 4:30 p.m. He noted that the tour is a great opportunity to see how different economic development tools are being used to meet needs and highlighted that this is the first time he has seen a TIF used for a residential permit. Ashley Showers added that Shanice Ellison will be attending the tour.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Ashley Showers opened her report by presenting the Subdivision and Land Development reports for September. There were 22 plans submitted for review, including subdivisions, land development, and annexations, bringing the year-to-date total to 117. Among the submissions were 59 proposed single-homes, 24 apartments as part of a Phase II project, five commercial projects, two industrial projects, and one institutional project, the Tulpehocken STEM school. Some of the industrial projects include Global Metals in Colebrookdale Township and an addition to Eagle Metals in Bern Township. The 24 apartments are part of the Centre Township Phase II development, and the proposed single-family homes are located in Colebrookdale Township. Michelle Franklin, Shanice Ellison, and Executive Director Showers conducted a site visit and developed new comments related to transportation and site access pertaining to the Colebrookdale Township plan. The large commercial plan submitted is for the North Reading Avenue property (formerly Glidden) in the City of Reading. Executive Director Showers noted that the staff are available to discuss any additional questions or provide further information. In terms of zoning, 15 zoning ordinance amendments have been received, the majority relating to data centers. To date, 22 amendments concerning data centers have been submitted – half of Berks municipalities have now submitted data center ordinances. One of the most recent is the City of Reading, which is operating under a curative amendment and has 180 days to complete the ordinance. Robeson Township's amendment was received on October 13.

Executive Director Showers then highlighted several recent outreach activities. She and Assistant Director Leo Scott attended the Wyomissing and West Reading Rotary Club meeting to do a presentation on the Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan as well as the Act 247 review process, with a brief discussion on data centers. Executive Director Showers also attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Schuylkill River Greenways/Schuylkill River Trail – Reeser's Trailhead project in Exeter Township. The improvement project received support through the Imagine Berks Placemaking Fund, with the County Commissioners supporting both the design drawings as well as funds for construction, representing an implementation of the Greenway Plan.

Additionally, Alan Piper and Amanda Timochenko attended a meeting regarding transportation concerns along Route 183 with State Representative Eric Weaknecht.

Executive Director Showers also participated in a Berks Nature volunteer event last week. She noted the ongoing partnership with Berks Nature, which supports four watershed associations: Hay Creek, Angelica, Tulpehocken, and Maidencreek. She expressed appreciation for the conservation work performed by volunteers.

Executive Director Showers also recently represented the County in two data center discussion programs—one for Commissioner Christian Leinbach on BCTV County Connection program and another at the Spotlight PA Ideas Festival. That panel also included Joe D'Ascenzo from Titus Station, Senator Katie Muth, and Wayne Bealer of the City of Reading Planning Commission. Recordings will be linked in the upcoming BCPC e-Flash newsletter and made available on BCTV.

Executive Director Showers shared several upcoming outreach activities. She will attend the Schuylkill Highlands Fall Partnership meeting in Phoenixville Borough, where she will discuss Greenway implementation and the Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan. She will also attend the quarterly MS4 Steering Committee meeting as well as the County Township Supervisors group that is held at Oley Fairgrounds. Beginning on October 18, Assistant Director Leo Scott along with Thiago Almeida, Taylor Lawrence, and Laura Mursch-Hosie will be attending the Pennsylvania Planning Association Annual Conference. Thiago, Taylor and Laura were also part of the planning committee for that conference. Thiago did some of the conference logo design, and the three staff members were also part of the selection committee for the sessions at the conference. Assistant Director Scott will also attend to receive his AICP credits. On October 20, there will be a tour of the new 55+ residential community project tour in Amity Township. In early November, Executive Director Showers will attend the Esri Planning Directors Annual Summit in Chicago. The Berks Nature State of the Environment Breakfast will be held on November 12, with a focus on youth mental health; Rick Perez of the Olivet Boys and Girls Club will present for that program. On November 16, which is a change in date to a previous announcement, the BCPC will deliver a virtual presentation for the Berks Chapter of Certified Engineers.

For next month's meeting, another Blight Review and Resolution will be presented. The board will discuss appointing a member of the board to the Land Use Review Committee for the Comprehensive Plan and will formally adopt the 2027 meeting dates. Group photos and other snapshots will also be taken at the November 2026 board meeting.

Finally, Glenn Knoblauch inquired whether the SALDO fee remains adequate. Executive Director Showers confirmed that an increase has been incorporated into the 2027 budget, raising municipal land development review fees. The County Commissioners are to approve the increase, and the BCPC Board will not need to take any action on those adjustments; however, review fees for Lyons and Lenhartsville may come before the Board next month. Gavin Milligan inquired if municipalities might be resistant to the increase. Executive Director Showers confirmed that this would not be an issue.

5. Authorize the Chairman to sign Albany Township ACT 537 review letter.

Executive Director Showers reported Jaime Passon conducted the review of the 537 Plan update, which is the sewer management plan for Albany Township. Numerous alternatives were evaluated during the process. Although a study was completed in 1970, no formal action

was ever taken. DEP is working on rolling out new ACT 537 regulations. Albany Township is a rural municipality with no public sewage or wastewater management, and they are proposing an on-lot pumping schedule like what has been adopted in other rural areas. The BCPC supports this approach.

MOTION: Dave Mattes made a motion to approve the authorization as presented. The motion was seconded by Jodi Gauker and passed unanimously.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve September 9, 2026 Minutes
B. Approve Land Development and Subdivision Activity Report/Summary August 20, 2026-September 23, 2026
C. Approve Endorsed Land Development and Subdivision Activity September 2026

MOTION: Jodi Gauker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Kevin Lerch and passed unanimously.

7. STAFF, STAKEHOLDER AND BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS

A. Leo Scott - Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan

Assistant Director Leo Scott provided an update on the status of the Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan process, outlining progress made and the timeline ahead. He reported that several key tasks were completed prior to this meeting, including establishing the Land Use Committee and forming the Key Advisory Group, which will serve as the internal staff-level team responsible for guiding the process. The Land Use Committee will eventually include a representative from the board. Chapter leads have been assigned for each major section, such as Who We Are, Where We Are Going, and Implementation. Subchapters will be drafted by individual staff members or small teams before being consolidated by the chapter leads.

Assistant Director Scott reviewed the project schedule which includes an extended writing period and bi-weekly Land Use Committee meetings. The primary writing phase is underway, focusing on the two main chapters, Who We Are and Where We Are Going. Chapter drafting is expected to be completed by end of March to be followed by the Implementation section, including goals and objectives. Public information sessions will be held in early 2027 (schedule pending). A final internal review will occur, leading to the MPC required public comment period. Beginning in January 2027, the Steering Committee will review chapter drafts. This stage is planned to be completed in April 2027. The target schedule calls for BCPC recommendation in August 2027, followed by a Commissioners' hearing for adoption in October 2027.

Assistant Director Scott also discussed upcoming work on stakeholder engagement and future land use planning. Staff will continue working with agricultural stakeholders and incorporate information from the Corridor Analysis and other available data. The next phase may include roundtable discussions to gather feedback, review goals, and consider potential changes to future land use categories and designations.

Assistant Director Scott noted progress on the style guide, which stresses consistent structure and writing throughout the plan. Upcoming tasks include finalizing the style guide, initiating chapter drafting, building the Future Land Use dataset and goal setting, and completing the Corridor Analysis report.

During discussion, Tom McKeon inquired whether BCPC reviews planning work from neighboring counties and state and national organizations. Assistant Director Scott confirmed that Lancaster County has been used as one of the reference sources.

B. Ashley Showers – Joint Planning Update: Eastern Berks | SEAD

Executive Director Showers explained that Laura Mursch Hosie, Intergovernmental Planner, leads the Joint Planning Program. She provided some background on the County's efforts for the past several years to secure Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) grant funding through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to prepare Joint Comprehensive Plans. The County received funding for four plans, two of which were adopted and approved this summer and delivered last week. The Eastern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan covers Topton Borough, District Township, and Rockland Township, while the SEAD Joint Comprehensive Plan covers St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township, Amity Township, and Douglass Township. The two plans differ in format, as the SEAD plan utilized the new model that incorporates GIS capabilities and interactive features and interactive webpage while Eastern Berks plan did not.

Executive Director Showers reported that there are two remaining plans awaiting adoption. The Fleetwood, Maidencreek, and Richmond Joint Comprehensive Plan is nearing completion and requires adoption by one additional municipality before that executive summary can be forwarded to the Board. The Northeastern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan is the final plan, being completed in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Economy League (PEL), includes Albany Township, Greenwich Township, Lenhartsville Borough, Kutztown Borough, and Maxatawny Township. The project is progressing well, with participants recently discussing future land use planning and moving forward with the interactive planning model.

Executive Director Showers noted that the County's focus in 2027 is to complete the Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan; therefore, no new joint planning projects will be initiated during that time. She invited Board members to visit the website for the SEAD plan, noting that the region represents one of the County's main growth areas. Board members commended the work completed on joint planning initiatives. A Board member raised the importance of ongoing communication with participating municipalities, and a brief discussion followed. It was suggested that Board members use future regional meetings with municipal representatives as an opportunity to encourage continued collaboration and joint planning efforts.

C. Matt McGough – Active Transportation Kick-Off

Matt McGough presented an update on the Active Transportation Plan, which is a revision to the current Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan from 2020. He explained that a minor update was completed in 2022 that primarily added mapping and related information; however, the plan itself was not substantially revised. The

current initiative is a revision to what is known as active transportation, which is modes of travel powered by human effort, such as bicycling, walking, rolling, and wheelchair use, rather than motorized transportation.

Mr. McGough reported that work on the plan began in late July. A project timeline was developed, and efforts to form the Steering Committee began in early August. The committee has since been established and consists of approximately 25 members representing a variety of backgrounds from the County. Kevin Lerch of the Planning Commission is serving as a member of the committee, and Mr. McGough thanked him for his participation.

Mr. McGough stated that six Steering Committee meetings are planned during the course of the project. The first was held on September 29 and included a review and refinement of the vision statement, goals and objectives, as well as presentation of survey materials developed for public outreach. He advised that two surveys are also being developed as part of the outreach process, one for the general public and another for municipalities. The public survey will be available in both English and Spanish to encourage participation from the Spanish-speaking community. Once the surveys are distributed and responses are received, the information will be analyzed to help identify key priorities and issues. The surveys are expected to be released by the end of the following week.

The project is anticipated to last approximately one year, with adoption targeted November 2027. Each Steering Committee meeting will focus on specific elements of the plan and opportunities to gather feedback. Two public outreach meetings are scheduled for November 16. A virtual meeting will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., and an in-person meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at County of Berks South Campus.

D. 2027 Board Meeting Dates

Executive Director Showers reported that the County annually compiles public meeting advertisements for the Board. Before submitting the 2027 BCPC Board meeting dates to the Commissioners' office, she invited Board members to discuss any questions or suggestions regarding meeting format, style, or scheduling, including the use of in-person versus virtual meetings. She noted that there are no holiday conflicts affecting the 2027 meeting schedule. This item requires no formal action at this meeting and was presented for discussion only. Board members were asked to consider whether to retain the traditional meeting time or adjust it earlier or later time of day.

Glenn Knoblauch opened the floor for discussion. Board members indicated that attendance has been strong overall and has not been negatively affected by the current meeting time. The availability of virtual participation was discussed; however, requires prior arrangements. Mr. Knoblauch questioned whether evening meetings might increase public participation. Following discussion, general consensus was that moving meetings to the evening would not significantly increase public interest or attendance. Board members present expressed support for maintaining the current meeting time. Meeting format was discussed, specifically in-person versus virtual meetings. In-person meetings were the format preference, citing potential technical difficulties associated with virtual meetings.

Executive Director Showers advised that the 2027 meeting dates will be presented for approval on next month's Consent Agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Jodi Gauker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:07p.m. The motion was seconded by David Mattes.

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Glenn R. Knoblauch, Chair David Mattes, Secretary