

LIGONIER VALLEY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Focus Group Summary – Police and Public Safety
January 17, 2017 – 7:45 PM

A total of twelve (12) persons attended the session facilitated by Mark Lazzari (EADS). The Ligonier Township Emergency Response Coordinator and the Police Chief were among the attendees. Suggested topics as per input received from field work, the prior workshop and the community survey included the following, but these were noted for guidance only:

- Truck traffic and other safety issues
- Expanded cooperation of local law enforcement
- Drug issue
- Emergency planning/information

After a brief introduction on the process and the purpose of this session, input on issues and recommendations were welcomed.

Emergency Planning

A majority of the meeting was spent discussing this topic. The main points/areas of concern focused on the following:

- Perceived lack of communication of emergency response procedures, including what different sirens mean, roles the residents could/should do to prepare for an emergency and methods for dissemination of information with residents;
- Perceived lack of communication of information with residents during an active emergency response; and
- Need for a single point of access (along Bell St.) into the Elementary/Middle School campus.

The following suggestions were made by attendees to address Communication:

- The Plan should identify a strategy for educating residents on emergency situations, response and planning. Suggested that no one method will cover all residents, multiple methods will be needed:
 - Use the Township's local station provided through Comcast cable;
 - Develop a reverse 9-1-1 or a One Call Alert System – suggested to coordinate with the School District's and Ligonier Township Municipal Authority's notification system;
 - Include emergency response information on the Borough and Township web-sites;
 - Include emergency response information in the Township's newsletter;
 - Add residents to the Borough and Township's Threat Response Committees to provide a residents input/perspective on emergency threats and responses;
 - Conduct direct interaction with residents in flood prone areas to help them be better prepared for future flooding events; and

- Use the 1670 AM radio station to provide information on current emergencies.

Truck traffic and Other Safety Issues

A brief discussion was conducted on truck related emergencies and the potential for accidental spills/leaks in both the Township and Borough. The following summarizes the key points made:

- Emphasis was placed on the detrimental environmental impacts and health impacts that would result from a spill/leak from trucks.
- The Borough and Township's Hazard Mitigation Plans already both address information on spills/leaks from trucks.
- The Township's emergency response coordinator described the high level of preparedness that local responders have to address a spill/leak from a truck.

Drugs

The Ligonier Township Police Chief educated attendees on the status of the Drug problem in the area:

- Heroin (and opioids) has reached the Ligonier Valley;
- There is no one single demographic or location that has been more impacted over another;
- There has not been a great amount of heroin related issues at the High School or secondary schools. Primary issues experienced here is pill (prescription drug) use; and
- Local police forces coordinate and work well with other, with the Westmoreland County drug task force and with State agencies.

One attendee discussed their belief that rental properties (and their increasing numbers) are a primary source of drug related activity and that they should be the focus on local law enforcement.

- It was suggested that information be provided to residents on how they can provide Township and Borough police departments with tips on suspected drug use from rental properties and elsewhere in the area.

Overall, it was suggested that the best way for the Township and Borough to address the Drug issue is to focus on preventative measures:

- Continue to host drug prevention type public meetings/forums; and
- Provide information on resources that parents can use to help protect their children from drug use and related activities.