



CHESTER COUNTY  
**Planning**  
COMMISSION

**COMMUNITY  
PLANNING  
ASSISTANCE**

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**CHESTER COUNTY, PA**

**2026**

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## 1.0 Program Overview

Community Planning Assistance (CPA) is available to Chester County municipalities to improve their planning programs while achieving consistency with and implementation of the goals, objectives, recommendations, and map of *Landscapes3*.

CPA allows Chester County Planning Commission staff to act as the consultant for municipal projects, with cost-sharing between the County and municipality. Municipalities may apply for a CPA Contract at any time. Awarding CPA is dependent upon Chester County Planning Commission staff availability, *Landscapes3* implementation, and staff expertise.

## 2.0 Program Purpose

CPA supports implementation of *Landscapes3* at the municipal and multi-municipal level through various planning projects.

The purpose of CPA is to advance consistency with and implementation of the county comprehensive plan while supporting municipalities through innovative municipal planning; multi-municipal planning; and new and revised municipal plans, ordinances, and planning studies that address opportunities and issues of community concern.

## 3.0 Eligibility

### 3.1 Eligible Applicants

- A. CPA contracts are open to all Chester County municipalities. Eligible applicants include a single municipality or a multi-municipal group, which may consist of two (2) or more contiguous municipalities or two (2) or more municipalities when located in the same school district. The application or request must be submitted by a lead municipality in the case of a multi-municipal group application.
- B. Only one (1) CPA Contract shall be underway at a time by an individual municipality, and the municipality cannot be in a current VPP contract to ensure and promote successful completion of the project. If approved by the County Planning Commission, a municipality may be permitted to have an individual project underway while participating in a multi-municipal project.
- C. Municipalities involved in a multi-municipal comprehensive plan update will not be eligible to undertake a full an individual comprehensive plan update at the same time as the contract term of the multi-municipal plan. Partial updates to a specific comprehensive plan section, such as the historic resources plan, may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### 3.2 General Project Eligibility

- A. The project must advance one or more of the *Landscapes3* goals and objectives and implement one or more of the *Landscapes3* recommendations at the municipal or multi-municipal level.
- B. General project types that may be eligible include plans, ordinances, ordinance amendments, and planning studies.

- C. Projects enabled by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247, as amended, such as comprehensive plans (or elements thereof) or ordinances, must demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the MPC. Projects not adopted under the provisions of the MPC are defined as “Planning Studies” for the purposes of CPA.
- D. Projects must be supported by a municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan that was adopted within the prior ten (10) years, unless the municipality has undergone the formal plan review process as outlined in Section 301(c) of the MPC or the applicant provides documentation identifying why the urgency of the proposed project supersedes the need for an update of their comprehensive plan.

### 3.3 Eligible Projects

Table 3.4 identifies examples of specific projects that are eligible for CPA Contracts. Projects not specifically listed will be considered by the CPA Administrator on a case-by-case basis and under the general project eligibility of Section 3.2.

<b>Table 3.4 Eligible Projects</b> Community Planning Assistance Contracts
Comprehensive Plan
Open Space, Park, and Recreation Plan (to include a greenway plan)
Zoning Ordinance and Amendments (to include amendments specific to topic areas such as agriculture, historic resources, natural resources, housing, traditional neighborhood development, form-based code, and transfer of development rights)
Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and Amendments (to include amendments specific to topic areas such as bicyclist/pedestrian circulation, natural and cultural resource protection)
Official Map and Ordinance or updates
Urban Center Revitalization Plan
Resource Protection/Stewardship Plan (addressing topics such as open space, natural resources, parks, scenic resources, historic and cultural resources)
Environmental and Community Sustainability Study
Community Design Guide (addressing topics such as housing, historic resources, and villages)
Village Master Plan
Heritage Interpretation Plan (in accordance with <i>Preserving Our Places</i> , CCPC, 1998)
Housing Plan/Study
Economic Development Plan/Study
Multimodal Plan/Study
Trail Feasibility Plan/Study
Parking Studies
GIS Mapping and Analysis
Graphic Design Layouts, Renderings, and Illustrations
Ordinance Analysis or Ordinance Amendments
Limited Special Studies

### 3.5 Ineligible Projects

The following are examples of projects that are **not** eligible:

- A. Plans, ordinances and studies that are inconsistent with the goals, objectives, recommendations, or map of *Landscapes3*;
- B. Act 537 Sewage Facilities plans and updates;
- C. Capital improvement plans;
- D. Road maintenance plans;
- E. Building codes and similar products;
- F. Building feasibility studies/designs;
- G. Geographic Information System hardware or software;
- I. Land acquisition; and
- H. Those portions of otherwise eligible projects commenced prior to a CPA Contract.

## 4.0 Project Level and Selection Process

### 4.1 Project Level

The total cost of the project determines the project completion timeframe. CPA contracts that are \$5,000 or less must be completed within 12 months.

### 4.2 Selection Process

- A. Municipalities interested in a CPA Contract must submit an *online application*.
- B. Applications will be reviewed by the Chester County Planning Commission for implementation of *Landscapes3*, County staffing availability, and County staff expertise necessary to complete the requested project.
- C. Municipalities not selected for a CPA project may contact the CPA Administrator for feedback as to how their future requests could be facilitated, or suggestions for alternative options to advance the project.

## 5.0 Costs

### 5.1 Project Costs

- A. Cost sharing between the County and the municipality will adhere to a formula of the County covering fifty (50) percent of the project cost and the municipality paying fifty (50) percent of the project cost.

- B. Municipal Contribution

Municipal staff time contributions cannot be counted toward the required municipal payment.

- C. Financing

For a CPA Contract, the municipality will be responsible for payment of project invoices on a quarterly basis across the duration of the contract.

## 5.2 Included Fees and Expenses

The following fees and expenses will be included in the project cost generated by the Chester County Planning Commission:

- A. Chester County Planning Commission fees for staff hours on the project,
- B. Costs related to materials for task force meetings (such as hard copies for distribution to task force members),
- C. Costs of materials for public meetings (such as display boards), and
- D. Up to three copies of the final document. Additional copies may be requested at a separate cost, to be priced at the time of the request.

## 5.3 Separate Fees and Expenses

Certain fees and expenses are outside of any contract or agreement between the County and a municipality. If incurred across the duration of a contract, such fees and expenses are to be borne directly by the municipality. Such fees and expenses may include but are not limited to:

- A. Rental of meeting facilities,
- B. Advertising costs,
- C. Food or refreshments,
- D. Equipment and other capital costs,
- E. Review of materials by non-planning professionals, such as attorneys or engineers, and
- F. Other costs deemed ineligible by the Chester County Planning Commission.

## 6.0 Lead Planner Qualifications

Chester County Planning Commission will provide a qualified staff member to act as the lead planner. The lead planner will ensure that the final product is comprehensive; accurate; consistent with the MPC where applicable; consistent with the goals, objectives, recommendations, and map of *Landscapes3*; and tailored to the municipality's needs and character.

- 6.1 The lead planner appointment will be based on staff availability and subject area expertise of staff.
- 6.2 If necessary, during the duration of the contract or agreement, the CPA Administrator will communicate any changes in the lead planner to the municipality. All changes to the lead planner must be approved by the municipality. If a change to the lead planner is necessary, the new lead planner will be a similarly qualified professional.
- 6.3 Supporting staff will be provided as necessary to complete the project's scope of work.

## 7.0 Application – Community Planning Assistance Contract

### 7.1 Application Requirements

Municipalities must comply with the following requirements when preparing an application:

- A. Municipalities are required to schedule a meeting with the CPA Administrator to discuss their proposed project, including questions regarding project eligibility or the application process.
- B. The municipality must complete and submit an online application form. Access the application at : <https://www.chesco.org/FormCenter/Planning-44/Community-Planning-Assistance-CPA-Applic-221>.
- C. Only one (1) project per municipality may be submitted per application.

## 7.2 Multi-Municipal Applications

In addition to the requirements noted in Section 7.1, a multi-municipal group applicant must designate a single municipality as the lead municipality and file only one (1) application. The lead municipality will be responsible for administration of the contract, and all communications and transactions must be directed through the lead municipality.

## 7.3 Application Contents

The CPA Contract application process requires the following:

- Completed Online Application
  - Contact Information
  - Project Type and Description
  - Designated Official
  - Letters of Commitment (See Section 7.3 A)
  - Acknowledgement of the rules and procedures as written in the Community Planning Assistance (CPA) County Consulting Manual, as revised, and agreement to be bound thereby.
- A. Letters of Commitment.
- Letters of commitment must be uploaded as part of the application process for any CPA project.
1. Municipal letters of commitment must include:
    - a. A commitment to forming a project task force to guide the project for the municipality or multi-municipal group that includes at least one (1) member of the governing body and at least one (1) member of the planning commission, with information on who other potential members of the task force may be (such as municipal staff, representatives from other municipal commissions or committees, business owners, residents, etc.);
    - b. A commitment to the funding details of the project, to include identification of the fifty (50) percent municipal share of the cost and notation of the understanding that the municipality is required to pay their portion into the County across the course of the project's contract; and
    - c. Identification of the individual officially designated to submit the application
    - d. Each municipality must submit a letter signed by a member of the governing body. Such letter must include those items identified in Section 7.3.A.1.a – c, as well as

acknowledgement of which municipality is acting as the lead for the application and the individual municipality share of the overall cost.

2. Multi-municipal: For multi-municipal projects, each municipality must submit a letter signed by a member of the governing body. Such letter must include those items identified in Section 7.3.B.1.a – c, as well as acknowledgement of which municipality is acting as the lead for the application and the individual municipality share of the overall cost.

#### **7.4 Project Selection**

Following application from the municipality (or multi-municipal group), and meeting with the municipality (or multi-municipal group) to discuss the project in detail, the Planning Commission will determine whether there is staff expertise and capacity to conduct the requested project and if the project is consistent with and advances *Landscapes*<sup>3</sup>. If a project is not selected to advance through the CPA process, the Planning Commission will coordinate with the municipality regarding the reasons why and potential avenues to advance the project. (See Section 4.2 C)

#### **7.5 Proposal Development**

If selected the Planning Commission will coordinate with the municipality regarding when staff will be available. If the proposed project start is acceptable to the municipality, the Planning Commission will proceed with development of a proposal including a detailed scope of work and associated cost. Finalization of the scope of work and associated cost may require multiple rounds of discussion and edits between the municipality and the Planning Commission. Following agreement on the scope of work and cost, the Planning Commission will prepare a contract for municipal and County signature through DocuSign.

### **8.0 Selected Projects – Community Planning Assistance Contracts**

#### **8.1 Contract Development**

- A. Municipalities with selected projects will coordinate with the CPA Administrator, who will develop a full scope of work for attachment to the contract.
- B. The scope of work developed during the proposal process may be revised during contract development. The final scope of work will include the following:
  1. Project Tasks.  
To include a detailed description of the specific services to be performed and the various sections, articles, or chapters of the document. Deliverables by task will be noted.
  2. Public Participation, Meetings, and Hearings.  
To include the number, purpose, and expected outcomes of:
    - Task Force work sessions;
    - MPC mandated public meetings and hearings; and
    - Plan for involvement of municipal officials, the public, and partners/stakeholders.

Involvement of municipal officials (including elected, appointed, and staff), the task force, the public, partners, and other stakeholders should be accomplished through a combination of methods that facilitates input and feedback throughout the project,

including opportunities early in the process and diverse options that are accessible to the various audiences.

3. Products.  
To include a summary of task deliverables and final products.
4. Schedule.  
To include a description or depiction of the completion of each major task, deliverables, adoption or acceptance, and other key project components. The proposed schedule will be accommodated within the minimum contract timeframes, as follows.

Plans

Municipal Comprehensive Plan Update	Twenty-four (24) months
Partial Comprehensive Plan Update	Twelve (12) to Eighteen (18) months
Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan	Twenty-four (24) to Thirty-six (36) months

Ordinances

Full Ordinance Update	Twenty-four (24) months
Ordinance Amendments	Twelve (12) to Twenty-four (24) months
Official Map	Twelve (12) months

Planning Studies/Guides	Twelve (12) to Eighteen (18) months
Multi-municipal Planning Studies	Eighteen (18) to Twenty-four (24) months

<u>Other Projects not Listed</u>	To be determined on a case-by-case basis
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5. Cost Summary  
To include a description of the overall cost summary, noting the cost-sharing for the project with respect to percentages and dollar amounts, and breakdown of municipal cost and County contribution by quarter for the duration of the contract. The summary will also note that invoice submittal to the municipality will be quarterly.
- C. After a full scope of work is provided by the CPA Administrator and approved by the municipality, an agreement or contract will be developed for signature by the municipality and signed via DocuSign.
- D. For contracts requiring the Commissioners' signatures, following signature by the municipality, contracts will be placed on the next available Board of County Commissioners' agenda for final approval.
- E. The CPA Administrator reserves the right to change the Contract Term (start and end dates of the project) if necessary, before the contract is executed by the Chester County Board of Commissioners. Changing the Contract Term will be done in coordination with the municipality but may be done administratively and does not require a second contract signature from the municipality.
- G. Upon final execution of the contract, an executed contract will be sent in digital format to the municipality.
- H. The County Planning Commission reserves the right to use and share the products prepared under CPA with other municipalities, planning agencies, and the public.

## 9.0 Amendments to an Executed Contract

- A. Amendments to executed contracts may be permitted to accommodate time extensions or revisions to the scope of work. Amendments will only be considered when the municipality has demonstrated good faith in completing the approved scope of work and the work to date has demonstrated consistency with *Landscapes3*.
1. Time Extension. The municipality may request an extension of time to contracts with no change to the scope of work as follows:
    - a. The municipality must submit an email or letter to the CPA Administrator requesting the contract extension, detailing the reasons why the contract extension is needed, and noting the revised schedule;
    - b. Requests for extensions must be filed with the Planning Commission no less than thirty (30) days prior to the contract end date; and
    - c. Each extension shall be for a period of six (6) months. Total contract extensions must not exceed one (1) years beyond the end date of the original contract for a total of two (2) contract extensions permitted.
    - d. If the project cannot be completed within the time frame described in Section 9.A.1.c, the contract will be terminated. Written notice will be provided should the County determine that the project is unable to be completed. Invoicing will end as of the date of termination, which must not exceed thirty (30) days past the date of written notice.
  2. Revision to Scope of Work. The municipality may request a revision to the scope of work as follows.
    - a. The municipality must submit a letter to the CPA Administrator requesting the contract revision. Requests must be filed with the Planning Commission no less than sixty (60) days prior to the contract end date.
    - b. The request must include a scope of work with any revisions from the original scope of work identified and an explanation of how the revisions relate to *Landscapes3*.
    - c. The Planning Commission will review the request, and if in agreement with the need for additional work, will develop a detailed scope of work with associated costs for a contract addendum. Once agreed to by both the municipality and the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission will develop the amendment, to include the additional scope of work items and associated costs.
  3. All parties must sign the contract amendment in accordance with the following.
    - a. Time extensions must be signed by the municipal governing body chair or president or municipal signature designee, and the Executive Director of the Chester County Planning Commission.
    - b. Scope of work amendments require the signature of the governing body for a single municipality contract, and the governing bodies of each participating municipality for a multi-municipal group, as well as the County Board of Commissioners.

**9.1 Termination of Contract**

Upon written thirty (30) day notice, any party will have the right to terminate the contract. Invoicing will end as of the date of termination, which must not exceed thirty (30) days past the date of written notice. The municipality will be responsible for payment of invoices from the contract start date through the date of termination.

**9.2 Review of Completed Project**

Upon completion of the project but prior to potential adoption, all projects enabled by the MPC, such as comprehensive plans (or elements thereof) or ordinances, must be submitted by the municipality for an Act 247 Review consistent with the requirements of the Municipalities Planning Code.