

CENTRE REGION

# COG backs bike plan

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FERGUSON TOWNSHIP

The Centre Region Council of Governments General Forum unanimously approved the Centre Region Bike Plan on Tuesday, bringing many months of municipal and residential input to a close.

The Centre Region Planning Agency was directed to prepare a regional bike plan in 2014 on behalf of the municipalities in the region. Since then, the plan has been presented several times to the municipalities, seeking comments from elected officials and cyclists alike.

The plan identifies critical gaps in the regional bike plan, CRPA senior transportation planner Trish Meek said, and seeks to fill the gaps with logical connections. The plan also increases recognition that bikes are a legitimate form of transportation.

“We’re seeing not only in the region, but nationally, that more people are starting to travel by bike,” Meek said.

The plan took what municipalities have already done and identified where additional facilities are needed, she said, and gives options for implementation.

When people from outside the region see the region’s bike paths, they think it’s great, she said.

When the plan is complete, they’ll think it’s fantastic.

In other business, Schlow Centre Region Library Director Cathi Alloway made a request that municipal leaders reach out to their local government representative in hopes of ending the budget stalemate.

More than 150 days into the impasse, she said, the library is feeling the impacts of the lack of a budget. Of all the agencies in COG, Schlow has one of the largest percentages of revenue from the state.

“I am so grateful to be a COG agency,” she said, “because today we learned that one of our district libraries, Mifflin County, will be shutting its doors on Jan. 6 because of this impasse, cutting off all service and furloughing its staff.”

Because the library is a COG agency, she said, it has been able to retain most services thanks to cash reserves. While the library is expecting a \$203,000 check from the state in January, there is no guarantee it will come in time.

Alloway urged the forum, if moved to do so, to contact the state House of Representatives and show support for the Senate-approved bill currently under consideration.

“We just want our money,” she said.

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