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CENTERPIECE FEATURED

West Hills municipalities working on comprehensive plan, 'consolidation of services'

By Dave Sutor
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Upper Yoder Township Supervisor Sue Konvolinka, Lower Yoder Township Supervisors Vice Chairman Al Grandinetti and Brownstown Borough Council member Jessica Jung look at maps inside The Ridge before the start of the West Hills field tour on Monday, Sept. 22, 2025.

By Dave Sutor
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JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – Brownstown, Southmont and Westmont boroughs, and Upper Yoder and Lower Yoder townships are divided by borders, but share many common challenges that cross those imaginary lines.

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West Hills R

her to develop a

The outline will address areas such as shared services, recreation, the economy, co-op purchasing programs and stormwater management.

On Monday, Upper Yoder Township Supervisor Sue Konvolinka, Southmont Borough Councilman Richard Burkert, Brownstown Borough councilwoman Jessica Jung and Lower Yoder Township Supervisor Al Grandinetti, along with representatives from the Cambria County Planning Commission and the Stuart Group consulting firm, discussed the plan while touring sites in the West Hills.

"I think this is a good thing because we can address local issues as well as more-regional local hilltop issues as well," Burkert said.

Jung said that getting together is "very important because there are things that I think some of the different municipalities are struggling with that maybe another one is also struggling with and they can share resources to maybe get to a common goal."

Grandinetti pointed out there is a "cooperative spirit that seems to be happening," but emphasized that "it's consolidation of services, not consolidation of municipalities. Everybody keeps their own identity."

Cambria County Planning Commission Executive Director Mark Lazzari described the project, which is being funded with a \$75,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's Municipal Assistance Program, as being "bottom-up planning."

"You really need input from borough officials, residents, stakeholders, shareholders, students to find out what really impacts them and affects them and what is their vision for the future," he said.

The plan is expected to be finalized toward the end of 2026 and serve as an outline through 2035.

"The one really great thing about this plan is it's going to be used for funding," Shanna Murphy Sosko, the county planning commission's community development planner, said. "They can use it whenever the municipalities want to go for some grants because it's going to make for a stronger application if it says this was identified in the West Hills Regional Comprehensive Plan as a goal and objective of something that's needed."

Dave Sutor is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. He can be reached at (814) 532-5056. Follow him on Twitter [@Dave_Sutor](#).
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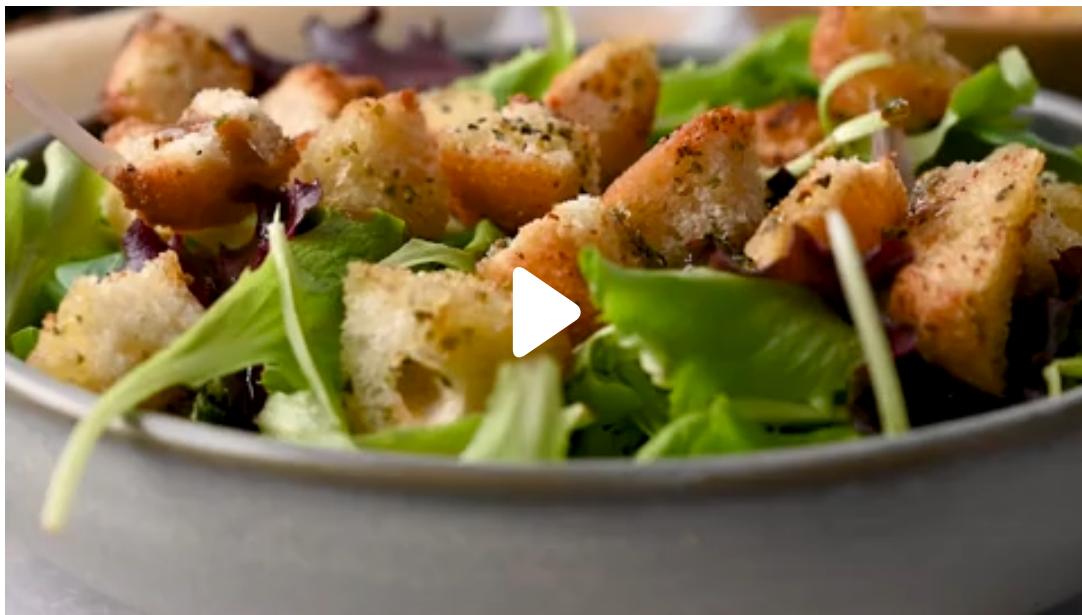
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