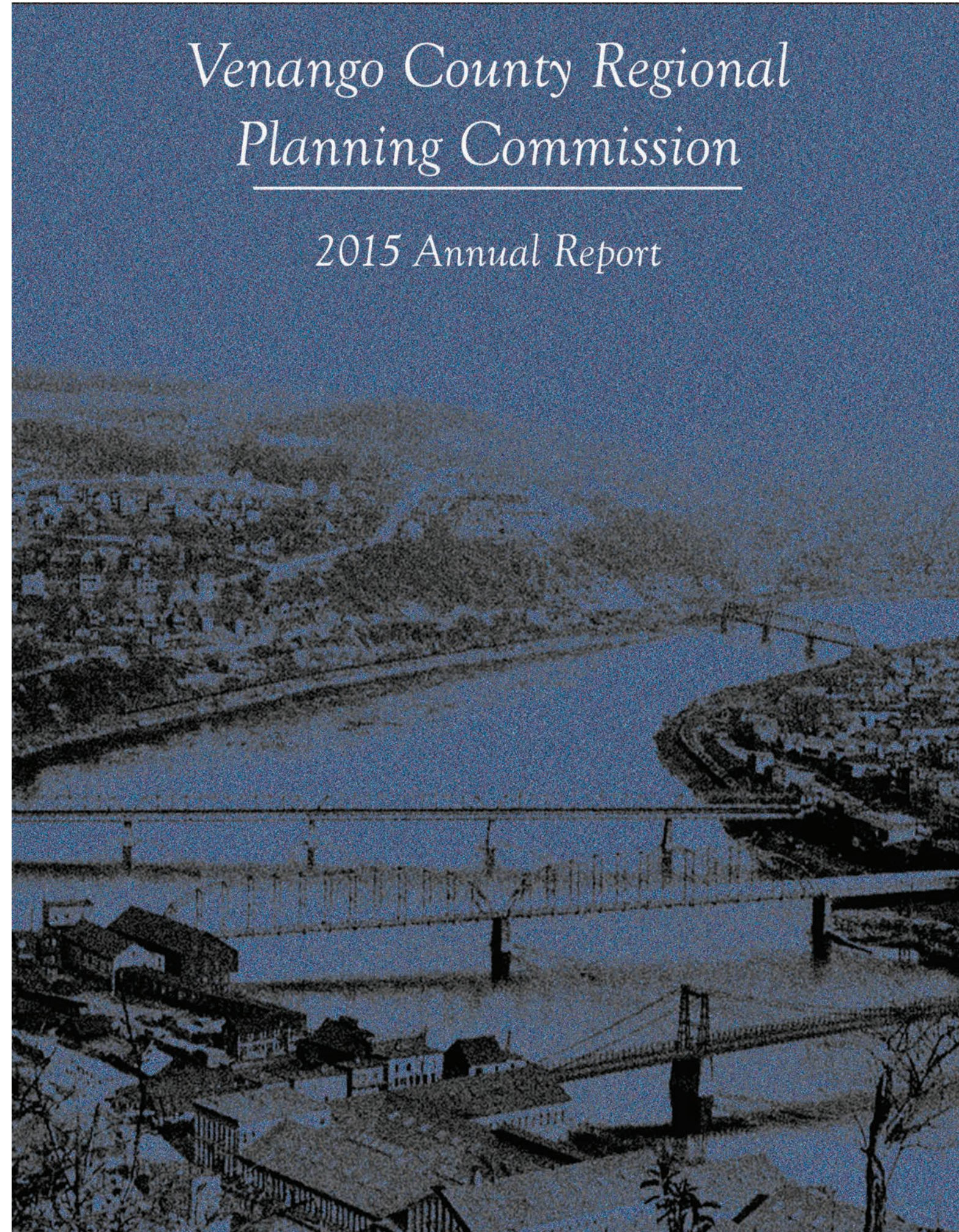


Venango County
Regional Planning Commission
PO Box 831
1168 Liberty Street
Franklin, PA 16323



Venango County Regional Planning Commission

2015 Annual Report



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Venango County Regional Planning Commission (VCRPC) is to support and advise all municipalities, other partners and organizations to aid in growth, development and land use in accordance with the comprehensive plan.

The Venango County Planning Commission was created in 1961 and consisted of a nine-member board. In 2005, the Venango County Planning Commission became the Venango County Regional Planning Commission consisting of a fifteen-member board comprised of county residents, elected officials, and members of the area COGs. All members are appointed by the County Commissioners. The Commission employs a staff of five full time employees to carry out the administrative and technical responsibilities. The responsibilities include county-wide comprehensive and functional planning in the areas of community development, stormwater management and recycling. The Commission also compiles and analyzes information about county characteristics and trends for use in evaluating proposed activities and projects and in preparing studies and plans.



Technical assistance is provided to county and local agencies on numerous matters including planning, zoning, subdivision and development. The commission administers the county Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, which requires that plans for subdividing land or engaging in major land development be reviewed and approved by the commission. The Planning Commission maintains a library of publications and data used by the commission in carrying out its responsibilities and it is made available for use by other agencies and individuals.

The Venango County Regional Planning Commission coordinates its efforts with local and regional planning organizations. The County Commissioners serve on the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, which includes representation from Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties. The commission is a member of both the Pennsylvania and American Planning Associations. The Planning Commission’s functions and responsibilities are governed by state law, primarily the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, which provides for the creation, funding and operation of planning commissions at the discretion of each municipal or county government.

VENANGO COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
PROPOSED 2016 MEETING SCHEDULE
3rd Tuesday of each month
Start time for meetings will be **6:30 PM**
FICDA Meeting Room
VCRPC Office
1168 Liberty Street
Franklin, PA 16323

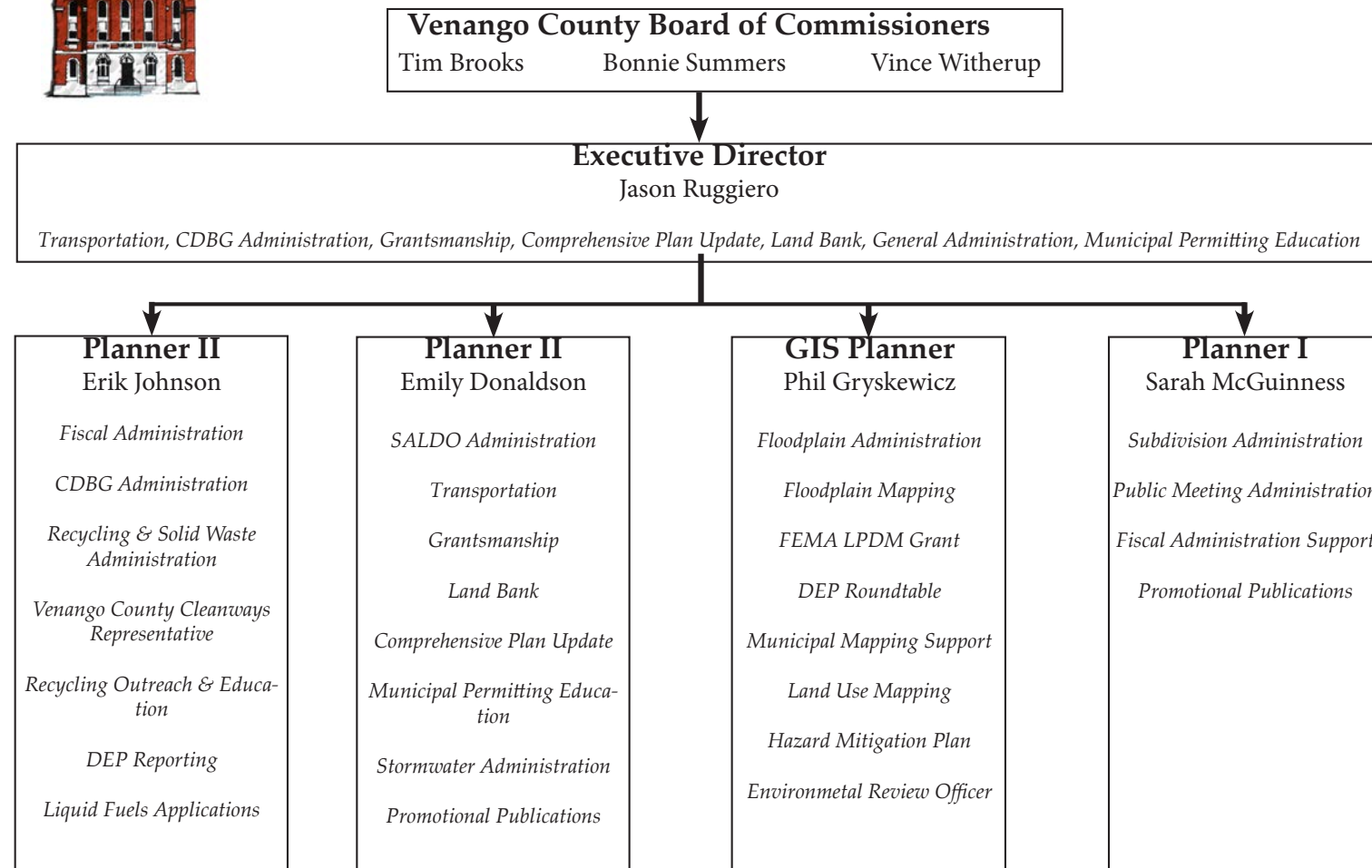
December 15, 2015	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
January 19, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
February 16, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
March 15, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
April 19, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
May 17, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
June 21, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
July 19, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
August 16, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
September 20, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
October 18, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
November 15, 2016?	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.
December 20, 2016	FICDA Meeting Room at 6:30 p.m.

2016 VCRPC Goals & Objectives

- o Continue efforts to construct a multimodal transportation hub in Oil City
- o Continue to explore funding options for a County Recycling Center
- o Continue to offer special collections through the recycling program
- o Continue to provide floodplain management support and mapping
- o Finish an update to the Venango County Comprehensive Plan
- o Begin updating the Venango County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
- o Continue to work toward a multi-agency cloud based data system
- o Continue to educate municipal officials through Municipal Permitting Workshops



Venango County Regional Planning Commission Organizational Chart



Venango County Regional Planning Commission

2015 Member Municipalities

Allegheny Township
Barkeyville Borough
Canal Township
Cherrytree Township
Clinton Township
Clintonville Borough
Cooperstown Borough
Cornplanter Township
Cranberry Township
Emlenton Borough
Frenchcreek Township
Irwin Township
Jackson Township
Mineral Township
Oakland Township
City of Oil City
Oil Creek Township
Pinegrove Township
Pleasantville Borough
Plum Township
Polk Borough
President Township
Richland Township
Rockland Township
Rouseville Borough
Sandycreek Township
Scrubgrass Township
Sugarcreek Borough
Utica Borough
Victory Township



2015
Venango County
Board of Commissioners

Timothy S. Brooks
Vincent L. Witherup
Bonnie S. Summers

Retirement of Executive Director Judith Downs Barrett

Summer 2015 marked the end of an era for the Venango County Regional Planning Commission as Executive Director Judith Barret retired after more than ten years.

An alumna of Slippery Rock University, Judy put her Geography and Human Ecology studies to use across the country, working in community planning and grant management in Colorado, California, and Texas.

Locally, Judy has filled a variety of planning related positions, including Oil City Community Development Director, Planner I, and Recycling Coordinator before being appointed director in 2005.

Looking back, Judy is proud that the Planning Commission has been able to make a visible differ-



After more than ten years of service Judith Barrett retired from her position as Executive Director of the County Planning Commission.

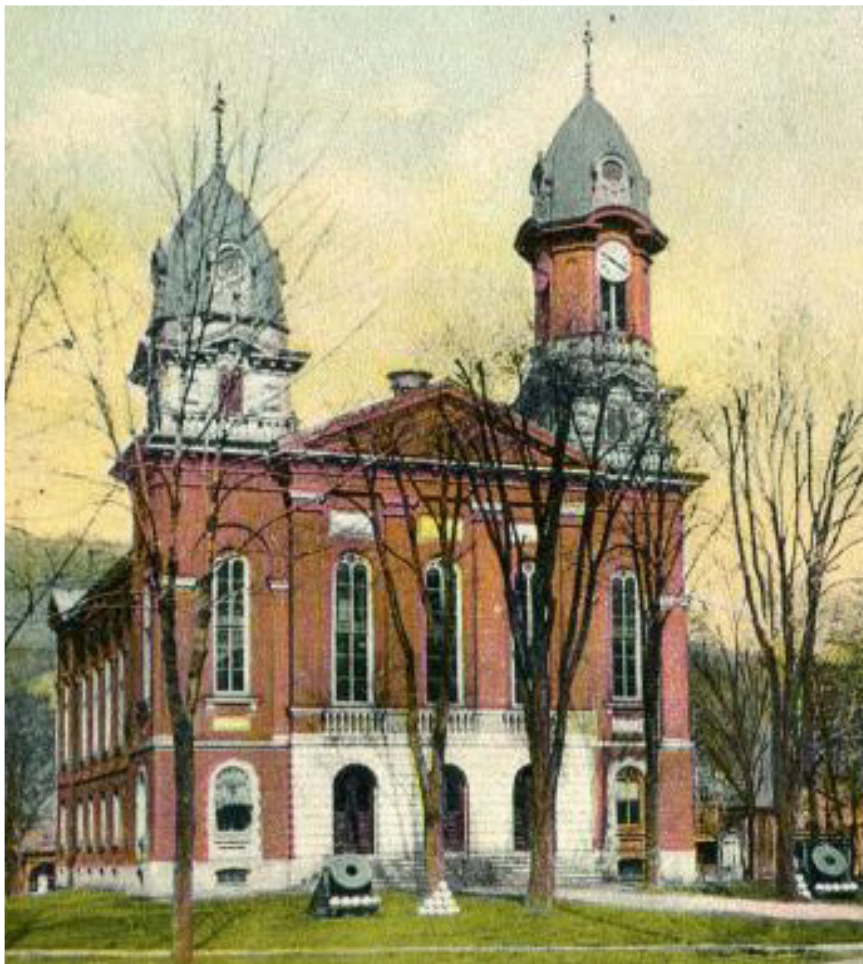
ence in the community through solid infrastructure improvement projects such as the Debence Drive Industrial Park roadway. Her focus on obtaining funding and accomplishing manageable goals is something the Planning Commission will seek to continue in the future.

In retirement, Judy has turned to a more relaxing way of life. Regular bike rides, visits with grandchildren, and travel are priorities. At home there is always a project underway, and she will soon welcome an addition, a Samoyed puppy arriving from Ohio. Still excited about the accomplishments and goals of the Planning Commission heading into 2016, Judy is eager to focus on enjoying her retirement.

VCRPC celebrates ten years as a regional planning commission

For ten years the Venango County Regional Planning Commission has been working to provide residents and municipalities with cohesive and cooperative progress. This commission has worked to improve the quality of planning throughout Venango County in order to increase economic opportunity, protect local resources, and aid in obtaining federal and state grants.

Over the past ten years, the regionalization of the Planning Commission has provided and enhanced services for both municipalities and residents. The VCRPC has agreements with eighteen member municipalities to administer stormwater ordinances and with twenty-nine member municipalities to administer the county's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The Planning Commission also administers the Community Development Block Grant allotments for Cranberry Township and Sugarcreek Borough. Increased communications between and throughout Venango County's municipalities has improved public outreach and participation through events such as annual collections and permitting workshops.



Staff

- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** - JASON RUGGIERO
- RECYCLING COORDINATOR** - ERIK JOHNSON
- GIS PLANNER** - PHIL GRYSEKOWICZ
- PLANNER II** - EMILY DONALDSON
- PLANNER I** - SARAH MCGUINNESS

STAFF TRAINING

- CDBG WEBINARS
- URA CDBG TRAINING
- HAZARD MITIGATION TRAINING
- HAZUS GIS WEBINAR
- FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT WEBINAR
- PROP CERTIFICATION COURSE: PLASTICS 437
- CDBG URA TRAINING

CONFERENCES

- PROP CONFERENCE
- TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- PA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- BLUEPRINT COMMUNITIES
- PAHRA CDBG ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- NORTHWEST PA GIS CONFERENCE
- REGIONAL RECYCLING COORDINATOR'S MEETING

WORKSHOPS

- FAIR HOUSING WORKSHOP
- DCNR'S C2P2 GRANT WORKSHOP
- MUNICIPAL PERMITTING WORKSHOP
- LSSE PERMITTING AND REGULATION UPDATE WORKSHOP

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, COMMITTEES & OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

- OIL CREEK WATER TRAIL COMMITTEE
- VENANGO COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
- ORA HERITAGE COUNCIL
- ORA ECONOMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL
- VENANGO COUNTY LAND BANK
- NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNERS COMMITTEE
- AGRICULTURAL FIELD DAY
- POLK CENTER'S EARTH DAY
- TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- SUGARCREEK BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
- OC REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
- WELLNESS COMMITTEE
- DEP ROUNDTABLE

VCRPC Project Snapshots



of Highways, spent a year in Algeria with Teledyne Geotronics, and has been working as a private surveyor ever since. He and his wife have raised four children and now have ten grandchildren. John is also an active member of the Franklin General Authority and an ace golfer.

TRACKING DEVELOPMENT

Work has continued on a cloud-based database for subdivision and land development administration this year. This database currently contains documents and maps related to approved projects and facilitates data sharing and communication within the Planning Commission.

Utilizing newly obtained computer equipment staff will be connecting this data with an interactive map through Google Earth. The ultimate goal of this project is a user-friendly data system which

will promote communications between public leaders, developers, and staff, as well as aiding in comprehensive planning throughout the region.

DESIGN SOFTWARE

Venango County has also invested in software and training to improve the quality and efficiency of administrative tasks such as grant applications and report compilation.

This software update includes the latest Adobe program, Creative Cloud. Creative Cloud facilitates teamwork on projects and design both in the office and in the field. This upgrade, along with the office's two new Surface Pro tablets, has proven essential to the fast and successful completion of projects including workshop preparation, CDBG applications, the Oil City Revitalization Plan, and the Comprehensive Plan update.



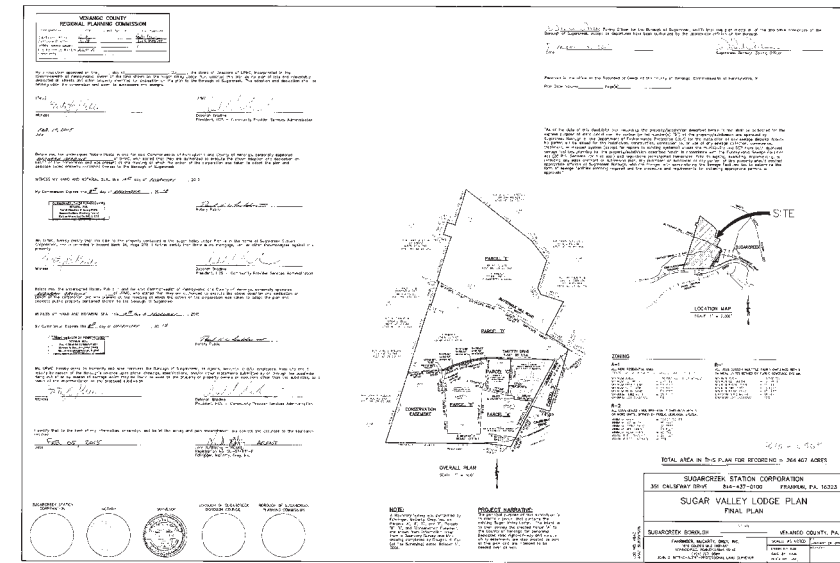
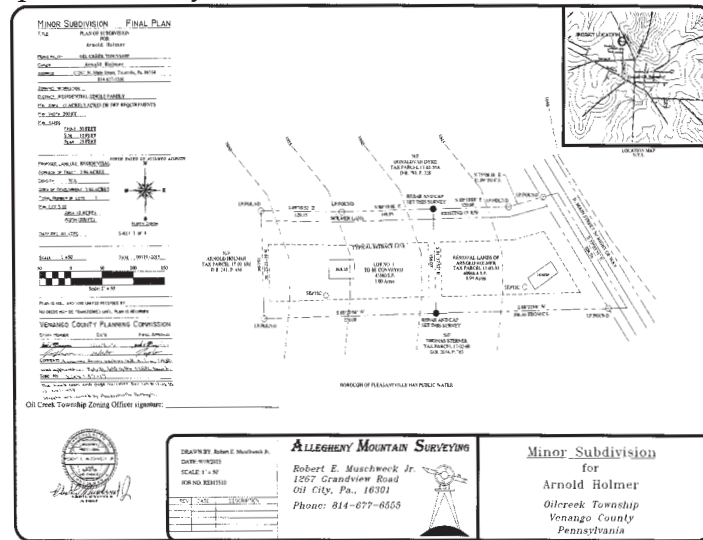
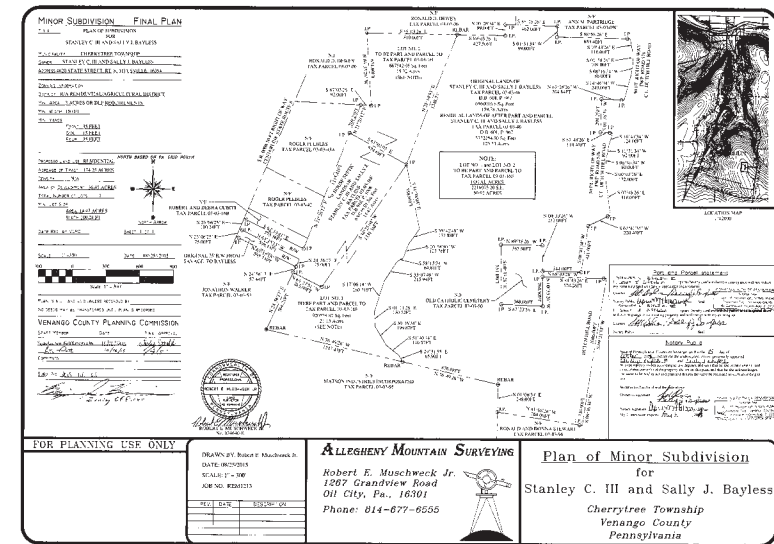
Drake Well Museum, located in Cherrytree Township, Venango County, honors Sir Edwin Drake for his monumental contribution to the history of oil by completing the first commercially successful oil well.

Subdivisions

In 2015 there were a total of 69 subdivisions approved by the Planning Commission. This is a 4% decrease from the number of approvals granted in 2014.

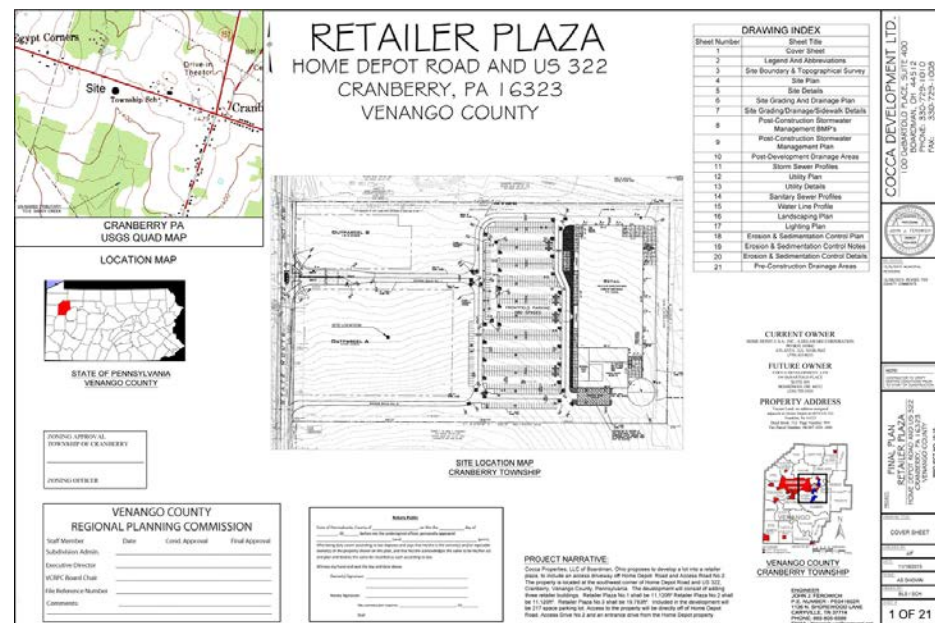
With 12 subdivisions making up 17% of this years total, Cranberry Township has seen the most activity in 2015, a trend that has continued for the last five years.

Cherrytree Township didn't trail far behind with 8 subdivisions and Rockland Township and Sugarcreek Borough each saw 6 subdivision approvals this year.



2015 Subdivision Report (Minor, Major and Land Developments)														
Municipality	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total Land Developments	Total Per Municipality
Allegheny				1									1	1
Barkeyville												1	1	2
Canal	1										1		2	2
Cherrytree			2	1	1			1		1	2		8	8
Clinton				1						1	1		3	3
Clintonville													0	0
Cooperstown													0	0
Complanter													0	0
Cranberry			1	2	3	1			1	2	2		12	12
Emlenton													0	0
Franklin													0	0
Frenchcreek	1											1	1	1
Irvin							1			1			2	2
Jackson		1			1					1			3	3
Mineral													0	0
Oakland								1					1	1
Oil City			1		1						1		4	4
Oil Creek									2	1	1		4	4
Pinegrove				1		1			1				1	3
Pleasantville										1			1	1
Plum	1												1	1
Polk													0	0
President		1											1	1
Richland						2							3	3
Rockland	2						2			1	1		6	6
Rouseville													0	0
Sandycreek									1	2		1	4	4
Scrubgrass			1			2		1					1	5
Sugarcreek		1	2		1					1	1		1	7
Utica													0	0
Victory												1	1	1
2015 Totals	5	3	7	6	7	6	3	3	3	12	10	4	6	6
2015 Year to Date	5	8	15	21	28	34	37	40	43	55	65	69	75	75
2014 Totals	9	5	8	11	3	4	7	9	7	2	7	6		
2014 Year to Date	9	14	22	33	36	40	47	56	63	65	72	78		
2013 Totals	4	2	3	3	4	11	7	3	6	4	7	2		
2013 Year to Date	4	6	9	12	16	27	34	37	43	47	54	56		
2012 Totals	7	7	2	5	6	7	2	6	5	2	6	7		
2012 Year to Date	7	14	16	21	27	34	36	42	47	49	55	62		
2011 Totals	6	3	6	6	6	5	6	6	7	5	7	4		
2011 Year to Date	6	9	15	21	27	32	38	44	51	56	63	67		

Land Developments



Throughout the course of 2015 six land developments received final approval, three of which were started in the 2014 calendar year.

The Oil Region Astronomical Society received final approval for plans to develop a site in Pinegrove Township. Speedway Gas Station gained final approval for their development located in Barkeyville Borough and UPMC gained final approval for their plans to construct three personal care facilities in Sugarcreek Borough.

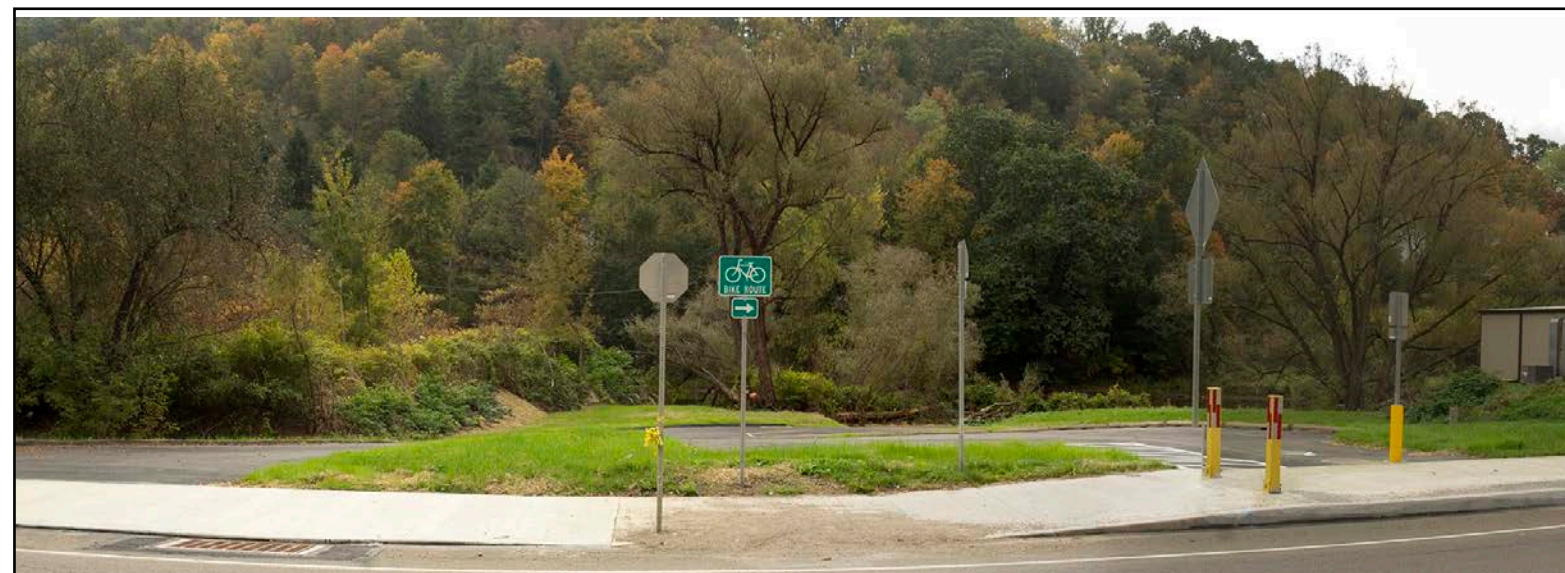
Sweetwater Developers and Allegheny Mountain Hardwood Flooring both received final approval to expand their facilities in Scrubgrass Township and Richland Township, respectively.

Plans have been submitted for the development of a retailer plaza in Cranberry Township. The project, which will be constructed on an out-parcel in front of Home Depot right off US 322 will include three retailer buildings. This project is currently under review and approval is anticipated to be granted in early 2016.

One of the most exciting developments of 2015 was the Oil Creek Memorial Landing project in the City of Oil City. The Oil Region Alliance submitted plans in early 2015 to construct a public trailhead and waterway access area along North Seneca Street. The area will serve as a location where users of the McClintock Trail can park their vehicles and hop on the trail as well as a location where kayaks and canoes can enter Oil Creek.



The Oil Creek Memorial Landing (shown below) will allow small, non-motorized watercraft and trail users easier access to Oil Creek through the work of the Oil Region Alliance.



Transportation

Long-Range Transportation Plan update completed

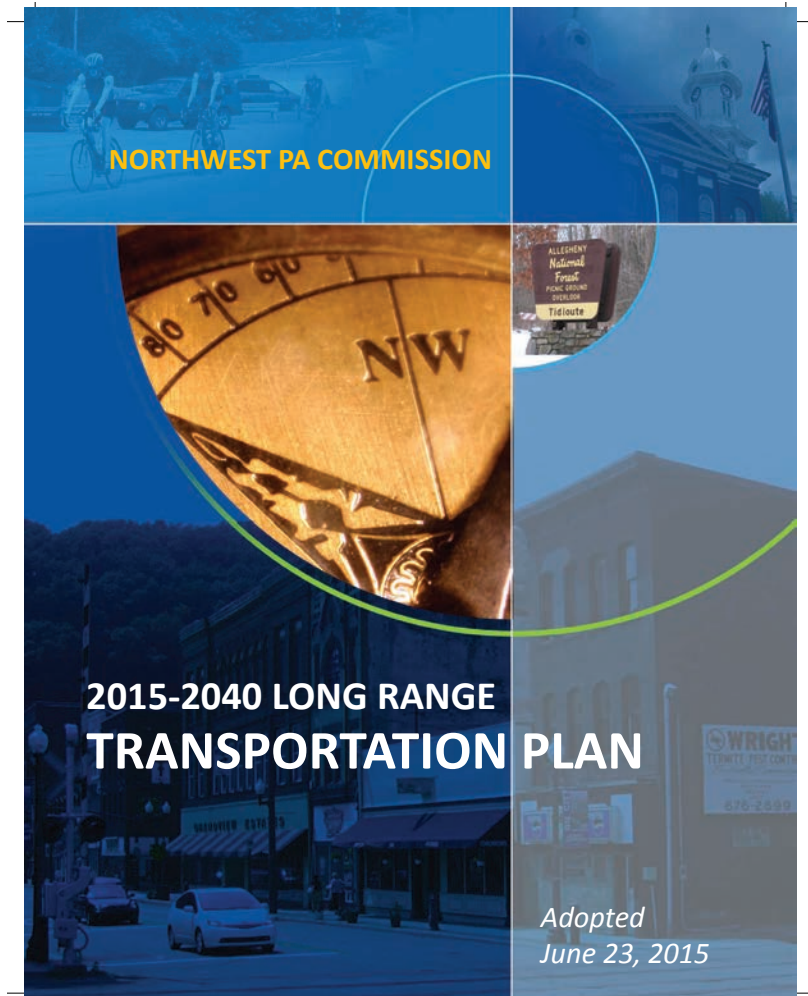
The Northwest Pennsylvania Commission adopted an updated Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in June of 2015. This plan spans from 2015 to 2040 and covers five counties of northwestern Pennsylvania; Venango, Clarion, Crawford, Forest, and Warren.

This plan “recognizes that transportation planning for the region must address both longstanding and emerging challenges.” These challenges include the increasing demand for vehicular travel, changes in federal transportation funding programs, the regions overall isolation from the national highway system, and upgrading and increasing transportation infrastructure throughout the region.

This plan also includes updated regional statistics on population, communication patterns, roadway networks, highway safety, and other transportation related issues. In addition, the Northwest Commission has introduced a new method of evaluation, by providing a “report card” for successful implementation which will be updated annually.

Another new aspect to this plan is the proposal to regionalize transportation. Phase 1 of the Northwest PA Transit Regionalization Study indicated a savings upwards of \$200,000 annually if regionalization were to be implemented.

Throughout the coming years Planning Commission staff will reference the specific transportation priorities and projects outlined as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan when prioritizing transportation projects throughout the county. The LRTP’s project rankings will also be used by PennDOT and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) when assembling the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in conjunction with the five-county Regional Planning Organization (RPO).



Transportation

Revitalization of Oil City's Northside Business District

The Planning Commission hopes that the Northside Business District Revitalization Plan serves as a valuable resource to both local government officials and non-governmental agencies looking to leverage their investments into downtown Oil City by capitalizing on work that is already underway in the community.

The redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Oil City would serve as an economic boost to not just Oil City but to Venango County as a whole. As such, the Planning Commission hopes that this study can be used to bolster efforts in economic development, job creation, increased foot traffic and business for downtown shops, increased property values, expansion of affordable safe transportation, and finally, to focus on the positive developments that are already underway in Oil City and provide a positive future outlook.



The Oil City parking garage currently sits empty and condemned on 1-acre of space within the Northside Business District.



The National Transit Building is the home of Arts Oil City and the Oil City artist relocation program which has resulted in over 40 artists relocating to Oil City.



A historical snapshot of the way downtown Oil City once looked.

Venango County Recycling

Annual electronics collection a continued success

Venango County's sixth annual electronics collection event was held on Saturday, November 7th at the Cranberry Mall. Over five-hundred residents took advantage of this opportunity to safely and responsibly dispose of their old or obsolete electronics.

This county-sponsored event was done in partnership with JVS Environmental of Somerset County. Fourteen volunteers including VCRPC staff, board members, and Venango County residents assisted with this event. The event has been growing yearly as awareness and interest in recycling continually increases throughout the county.

The Planning Commission has been pursuing multiple options for increasing the availability of recycling services for residents. The creation of a county-wide recycling convenience center is currently being evaluated. This convenience center would provide residents with an additional avenue for recycling and special collections. Multiple grant options are being considered in order to provide funding for start-up and building expenses.



Cars lined up waiting to take advantage of the annual electronics collection event that was held in November at the Cranberry Mall. More than 500 cars participated in the one-day collection.



Just a small sample of the electronics that were collected at the annual electronics collection.

New County Solid Waste Management Plan adopted

After several years of work the Venango County Municipal Solid Waste Management Plan was adopted by the Venango County Commissioners on January 13, 2015.

This ten-year plan makes provisions for adequate waste disposal capacity throughout Venango County. The plan now mandates

that all haulers operating within Venango County must offer recycling as a service. Area waste haulers have already begun adjusting their practices to accomplish this.

Curbside recycling is currently available in the mandated communities of Franklin and Oil City, with haulers taking the initiative

to offering recycling services to the outlying municipalities.

In addition, select municipalities provide recycling services to their residents at drop off locations within their communities. All county residents are welcome to utilize the drop off recycling site located at the Two Mile Run County Park.

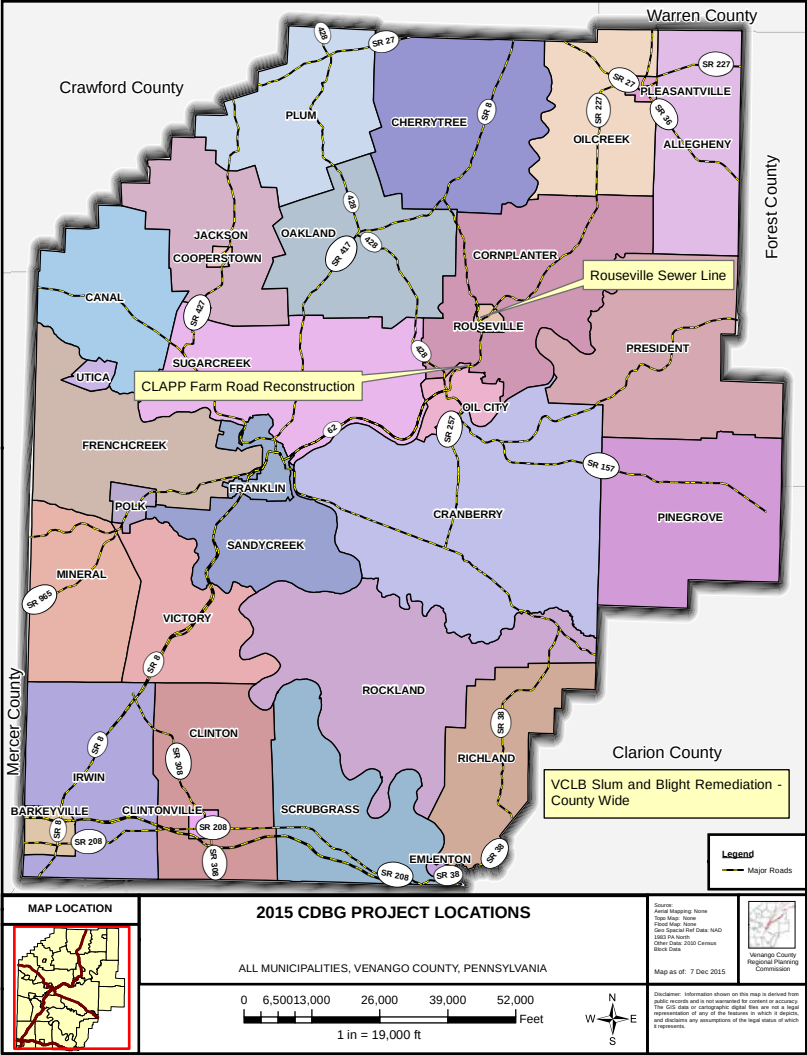
Community Development Block Grants

2015 CDBG Application

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides funding for projects which meet one of three criteria: 1) Provide a benefit to low to moderate income persons, 2) Prevent or eliminate blight, 3) Meet an urgent community need that poses an urgent threat to health or welfare.

In total, 70% of the expenditures from this grant must provide a benefit to low to moderate income persons. For Venango County's 2015 CDBG application, the Venango County Regional Planning Commission submitted proposals for three projects.

The first project, located in Cornplanter Township is the Clapp Farm Street Improvements project. This project would be a continuation of FFY 2014's street reconstruction project in this area. The second project is the Rouseville Borough Sewer Extension. This project would be the first step in a three-year plan to improve sewer connectivity in the Borough. The third project, VCLB Slums and Blight Remediation, would be the start of a county-wide initiative to demolish and rehabilitate the county's aging housing infrastructure in coordination with the Venango County Land Bank (VCLB).



Venango County begins administration of “on-behalf-of” municipal CDBG programs



Building Better Neighborhoods

2015 marks the first year of newly instituted regulations for the CDBG program. The Department of Community and Economic Development has stated that municipalities with a population less than 10,000 can no longer administer their own CDBG program.

This development has led Venango County to enter into agreements with Sugarcreek Borough and Cranberry Township to administer their CDBG allotments. Under these new agreements, the county will be responsible for the program application as well as the day-to-day administration of the program. The municipality will assist the county in the preparation of certain reports and municipal residents and

officials will retain the right to select the individual projects funded through the program. For fiscal year 2015 Sugarcreek Borough's application consisted of three projects. First, a borough-wide clearance and demolition project to address blight on a spot basis. Second, the repair and reconstruction of a 900 foot stretch of Venango Road. The third project will address architectural barriers at the Miller-Sibley pool in an effort to bring this facility up to ADA standards. For fiscal year 2015 Cranberry Township's application consisted of three projects as well. The first, is to remove architectural barriers at Morrison Park in order to improve ADA accessibility. The second, is to fund code enforcement in the Upper Sage Run area and the final project is the continuation of road improvements to Upper Sage Run Road.

Transportation

Revitalization of Oil City's Northside Business District

This year the Venango County Regional Planning Commission has taken steps to become more involved in efforts to revitalize Oil City's Northside Business District. Various individuals and organizations have been working for years to recapture the city's historic charm and increase its economic development. In order to encourage and facilitate communication and cooperation between these groups, VCRPC staff has produced a dedicated Northside Business District Revitalization Plan. This plan provides a summary of both ongoing and proposed projects in addition to projecting the outcome of these combined efforts.

This plan stresses the importance of Oil City's heritage as well as the need to provide for future economic growth in the region.

Important aspects of this revitalization effort focus on expanding trail-related businesses to take advantage of Oil City's unique status as a Certified Trail Town, recapturing and rehabilitating the area's historic architecture, replacing excess blighted housing with green space and increasing the availability of amenities such as high-speed Internet to encourage new business growth.

Current projects on the Northside include efforts by Oil City Main Street to improve both the aesthetics and economics of downtown storefront properties, Arts Oil City's Artist Relocation Program located in the National



This is an artist's rendering of the Lyric Theater in downtown Oil City after the proposed renovations have been completed.



The former site of the Brody Block has been revitalized and turned into Town Square through the efforts of the Oil City Redevelopment Authority. The creation of this downtown greenspace has been a welcome addition to the Northside of Oil City.

Transit Building, the renovations of the Downs Building by the Oil Region Alliance, and a multi-agency effort to develop an Oil Creek Water Trail. Not least among these projects is the county's proposal to relocate its Transportation Department to a new multimodal transportation facility located on the site of the currently condemned Oil City Parking Garage.

Grantsmanship

OC Multimodal Hub leads 2015 grant submissions

The Planning Commission, with support from the Oil Region Alliance wrote several grant applications in the hopes of securing funds for the demolition of the condemned parking garage and subsequent construction of a multi-modal hub in the heart of Oil City’s Northside Business District.

TIGER GRANT

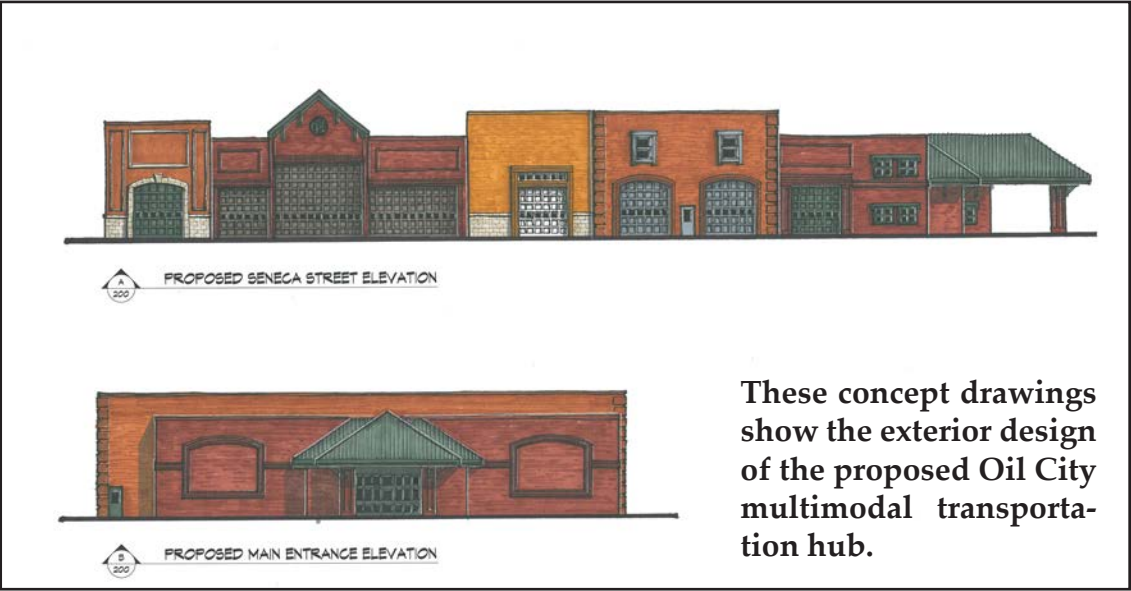
One of the funding sources explored was the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery or TIGER Discretionary grant. TIGER is a competitive grant program through the U.S. Department of Transportation, grants are awarded to fund capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure that will have a significant impact on a region.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PROGRAM

Funding was also applied for through the Commonwealth Financing Authority’s Multimodal Transportation Funding Program (MTF). The MTF provides financial assistance to municipalities and other organizations for the purpose of improving transportation assets that enhance communities and ensures that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to residents.

REDEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE CAPITAL PROGRAM

Grant funding was applied for through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP), a commonwealth grant program administered by the Office of the Budget. This grant program is for the acquisition and construction of



regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historical improvement projects. The Planning Commission is no stranger to this type of funding source. In 2013 VCRPC partnered with ORA to extend the DeBence Drive Roadway in Sandycreek Township, a project made possible through the use of RACP funds.

The Planning Commission played a part in several other grant submissions throughout 2015 as well.

PA DEP ACT 101 GRANTS

Act 101, Pennsylvania’s Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act provides counties and municipalities with numerous grant opportunities to offset expenses associated with mandated recycling programs. The county has completed the annual 903 and 904 DEP grants that are available as a result of Act 101. The 903 grant submission is for reimbursement of the county’s recycling coordinator position, up to 50% of this position’s allocated time is reimbursed through this grant. The 904 grant submission is a performance driven grant based on the amount of allowable recycling tonnage generated. This grant,

submitted both county wide and on behalf of Cranberry, Cherrytree, and Frenchcreek Townships, was completed in 2015 for tonnage generated throughout 2014.

DCNR C2P2 GRANT

In 2015 Utica Borough, with assistance from the Planning Commission, applied for a Community Conservation Partnership Program, Small Community Development Grant through DCNR for the rehabilitation of the Marty Clark Playground.

Utica Borough has requested this grant funding to bring the park into compliance with the 2010 Venango County Playground Safety Audit and ADA standards.

The rehabilitation will include, among other things, the replacement of swing sets, the addition of an adaptive swing package, refreshed pavilion and picnic tables, replacement of benches, and the installation of a charcoal grill. The borough has requested \$34,568.73 in grant funds, with a combined contribution from the borough and the county of both cash and non-cash matching funds in the amount of \$14,568.74 for a total project cost of \$49,137.47.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

GIS RESOURCES

The Venango County Regional Planning Commission has continued its initiative to implement various Geographic Information Systems in order to increase services and efficiency. In 2015, staff obtained updated software and equipment enabling the implementation of new and upgraded services to county municipalities and residents.

MAPPING SERVICES

In a continued effort to provide municipalities and residents with excellence in service, Venango County has recently obtained high-resolution aerial imagery from Seneca Resources.

In the near future this imagery will be used to update the Venango County Parcel Viewer, which is managed by the county assessment office. However, the Planning Commission’s GIS Planner already has access to this imagery and can utilize it on a variety of projects for both local government and for members of the public. It has already been put to use in creating maps for competitive grant applications, local government organizations, and property owners.

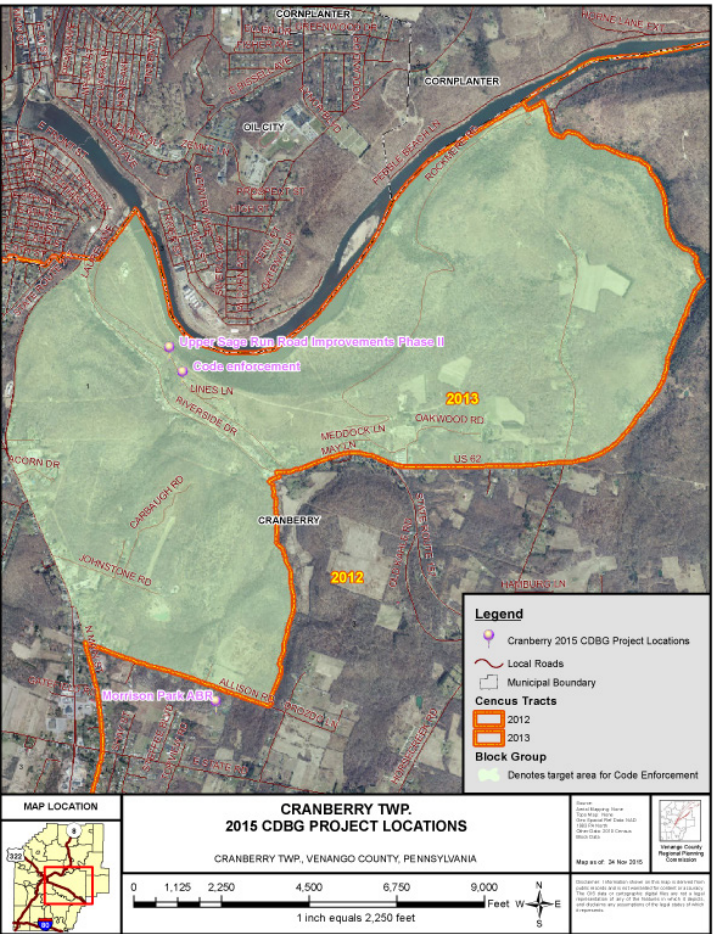
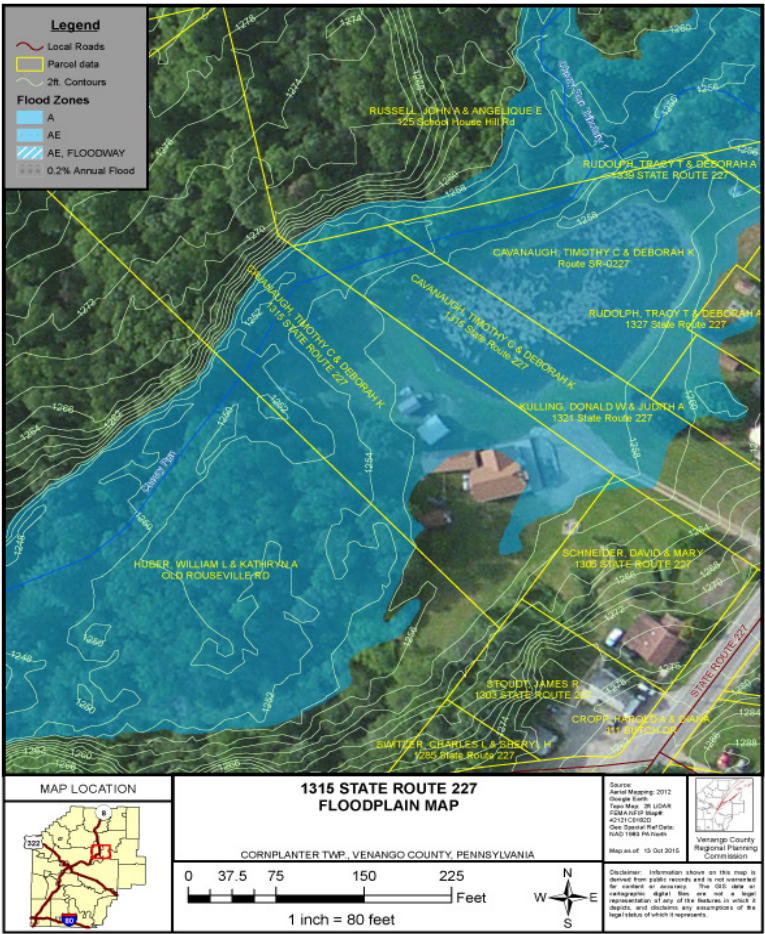
Various data layers are available and curated by the Planning Commission’s GIS Planner which allows for the creation of countless maps. The ability to combine common information like floodplains, elevations, property owner information and various other data sets allow for the synthesis of various information sources.

Custom mapping is also available. This service is free to member municipalities and available for a fee to county residents. County-owned equipment allows our GIS Planner to inventory and map the location of items such as fire hydrants, stormwater BMP’s, stormwater catch basins, wetland boundaries and countless other features.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

The Planning Commission’s GIS Planner is also a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM). As such, he can assist municipalities with the administration of their floodplain ordinance or the management of development in the floodplain.

He has also been successful numerous times in submitting a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) to FEMA in order to remove a home-owner’s property from the floodplain when the floodplain is incorrectly mapped.



County Comprehensive Plan Update

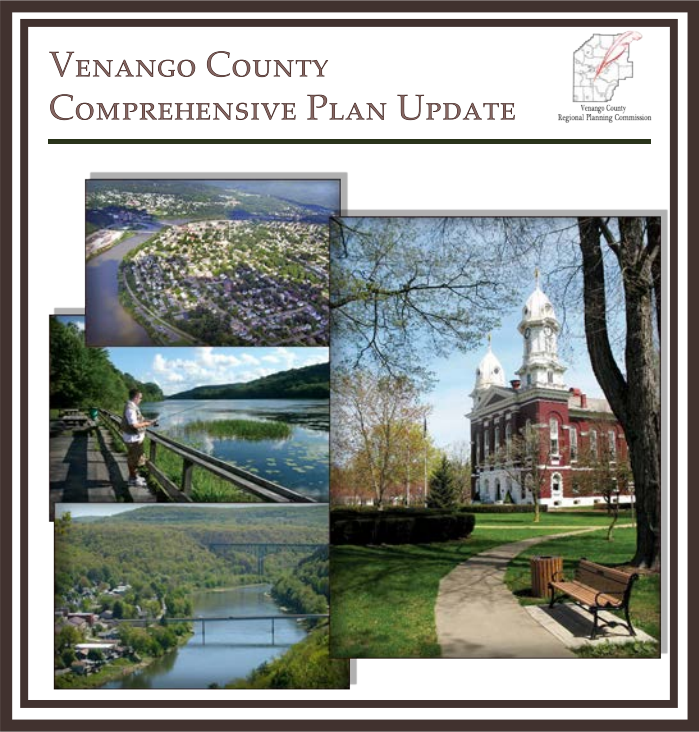
The Venango County Regional Planning Commission has been working with community leaders to update the county's comprehensive plan, originally completed in 2005.

This plan recommends policies on issues including community development, resource management, growth, transportation, housing, and facilities county-wide to agencies in both the public and private sectors.

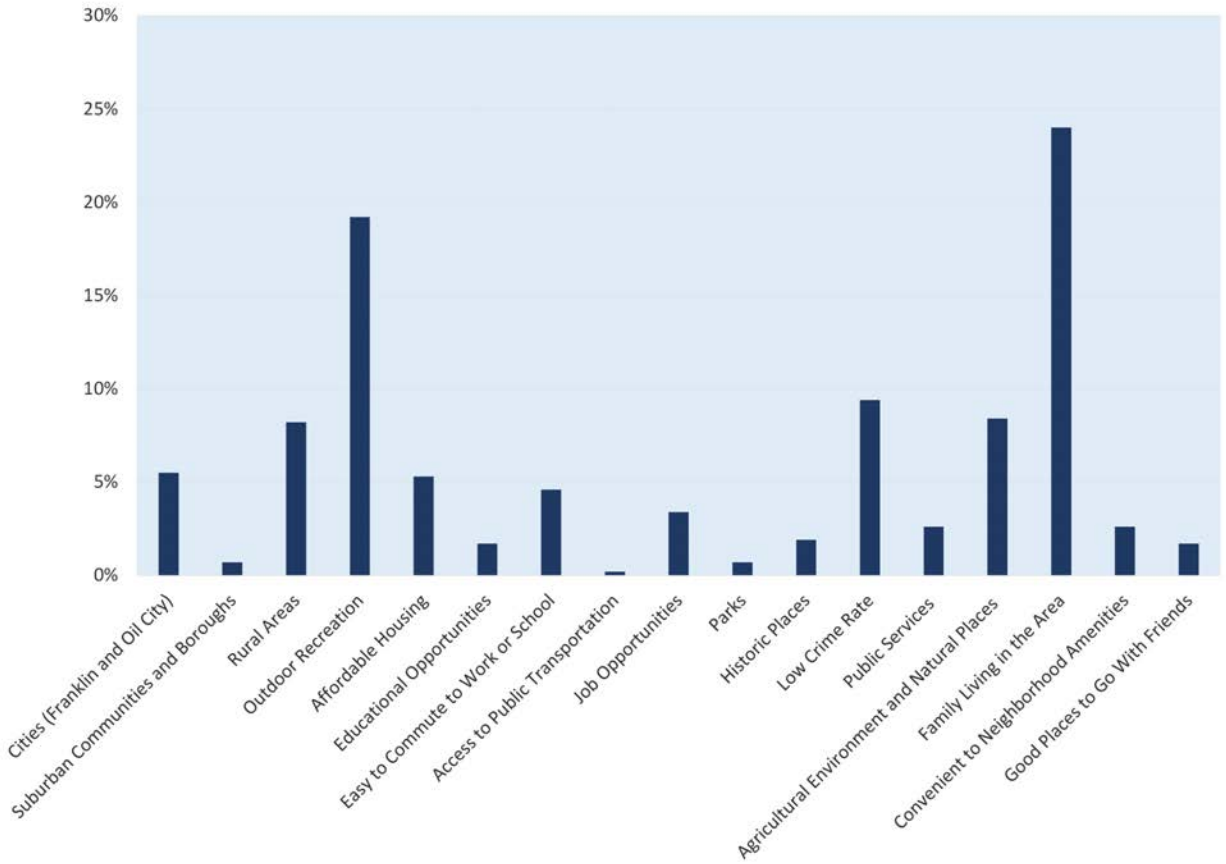
The previous comprehensive plan prioritized immediate, short range, and long range goals in addition to providing information regarding county assets and projects. The goal of this update is to create a usable, streamlined document which will effectively guide development, increase opportunities throughout the county and address county-wide concerns.

Over the course of the year, board members, staff, and community leaders worked to assess the accuracy and usefulness of the previous document and prioritize goals and projects for the new comprehensive plan which will be drafted in the coming year. Venango County residents were encouraged to provide input through a public survey designed to help determine the areas of greatest need throughout the county.

This survey identified the areas in which residents feel the Planning Commission should focus its efforts. For the most part, the results of this survey reinforced the priorities the commission has been working toward this year and in years past. Many residents emphasized specific challenges, such as blight remediation and economic development, which have been the subject of focused and concerted efforts by both the Planning Commission and other community organizations.



What do you like most about Venango County?



Grantsmanship

Pursuit of Chub & Morrison Run funding continues

The Planning Commission continues to pursue the construction of stormwater retention basins in the City of Franklin and Sandycreek Township in order to control runoff from nearby development.

The construction of these basins is funded through a congressional earmark obtained by former U.S. Congressman John Peterson. However, we must meet FEMA's regulations before the money will be released.

The jurisdictional determination from the Army Corp of Engineers was completed in 2015 and currently we are beginning to acquire the designated properties from private landowners.



The current design for the project calls for the construction of four retention basins. Three will be located in Sandycreek Township with the other located in the City of Franklin

Construction of rain gardens in Wilson Park begins

Rockland Township and the Venango Conservation District have teamed up with the Planning Commission and other volunteer groups to install three rain gardens in Wilson Park.

Insufficient stormwater controls in this area result in excessive erosion and runoff which carries sediment onto State Route 3008 and into the village of Kennerdell. The rain gardens will reduce runoff and lower the sediment load in this area.

The Northwest Regional Planning and Development Commission, which administers the Northwest Greenways Block Grant, awarded Rockland Township \$20,000 to construct these gardens. The Greenways Block Grant Program was made possible through the collaboration of DCNR and DEP. Use of the property was donated by the Kennerdell Community Center and the project design was completed by the county's contracted engineering firm, Lennon, Smith & Souleret Engineering, Inc.

Rockland Township has provided equipment and labor for this project while Planning Commission staff has administered the grant through in-kind donations. The Venango Conservation District has provided a cash match of \$3,000 and technical assistance.

Two gardens were constructed in the fall of 2015 and the third will be constructed in early 2016. At this point all the gardens will be planted with bio-retention plantings purchased with the Conservation District's cash match.



Wilson Park is located just above the village of Kennerdell and the Allegheny River.