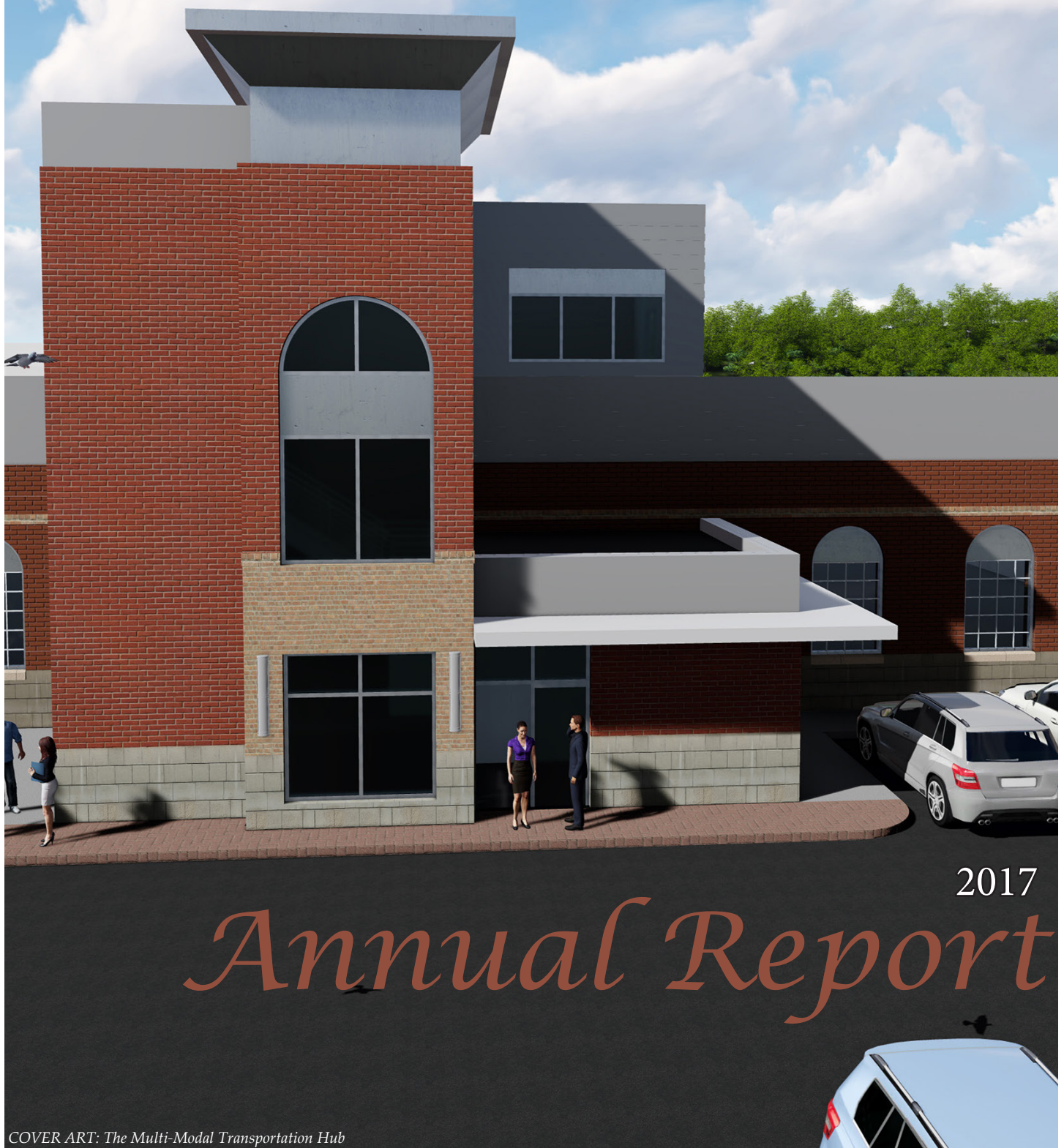


# Venango County Regional Planning Commission



2017

# *Annual Report*

COVER ART: *The Multi-Modal Transportation Hub*

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# MISSION STATEMENT

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*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.*

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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 15-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 6 full-time employees to carry out administrative and technical responsibilities. The responsibilities include countywide 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 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 creations, funding, and operation of planning commissions at the discretion of each municipal or county government.

Photo courtesy of Rob Sampsell

# VENANGO COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## 2017 Member Municipalities

Allegheny Township  
Barkeyville Borough  
Canal Township  
Cherrytree Township  
Clinton Township  
Clintonville Borough  
Cooperstown Borough  
Cornplanter Township  
Cranberry Township  
Emlenton Borough  
City of Franklin  
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  
Sandy creek Township  
Scrubgrass Township  
Utica Borough  
Victory Township



2017  
Venango County  
Board of Commissioners  
Timothy S. Brooks  
Vincent L. Witherup  
Albert "Chip" Abramovic

# —OIL CITY NORTHSIDE REVITALIZATION—

## Breathing new life into former bank building

*Planning Commission sets  
sights high with acquisition  
of Cornplanter Square*

In May 2017, Venango County purchased the five story historical Oil City National Bank building, also known as Cornplanter Square, with the purpose of rehabilitating the building and encouraging economic development in Oil City's Northside. A public/ private partnership was entered into with local business owners to restore the first and second floors to accommodate a brew pub and associated banquet space. The top three floors will serve as an incubator for technology oriented start-ups. The aptly named Business Innovation Center is in an ideal location, with a county owned high speed fiber optic line already running through the area.

In August 2017, Design Lab Architects of Boston, MA was contracted to perform a Technical Feasibility Study which includes the following: a General Site Review to assess



Photo courtesy of Rob Sampsell

the overall condition of the structure, including its roof, windows and masonry; a LEED Review to address the option of LEED Certification; an Environmental Review to address any potential contaminants; a Systems Review covering HVAC, electrical, and plumbing; and a Code Review to insure all local, state, and federal requirements are met. In addition, a Concept Design Study will be provided to show the overall building organization by floor and typical layout by program. The PNC Charitable Trust provided \$35,700 to cover half of the cost of this study, which is expected to be completed in early 2018.

In addition, a \$500,000 Keystone Community Grant was awarded as a revolving loan fund to Venango County by the PA Department of

Community and Economic Development. The fund, managed by the Venango County Economic Development Authority, will initially be used to purchase kitchen and brewing equipment for the brew pub. Once the brew pub is up and running, these revolving funds will be utilized to provide loans to businesses throughout the county.

The County was awarded a \$1 million dollar RACP grant from the state Office of Budget for improvements to the bank building. The RACP funds will be used to make upgrades to the HVAC system and cover costs associated with environmental abatement. Additional funds continue to be sought for any additional rehabilitation needs.

# *OIL CITY NORTHSIDE REVITALIZATION*



## Parking garage down, effort turns to construction

The Oil City Northside Project saw the demolition of the former Quaker State parking garage as the Venango County Planning Commission turned a pivotal corner toward the completion of the initiative.

The goal, to establish a multi-modal transportation hub at the former parking ramp's location, is now well-positioned to come to fruition.

The county also awarded bids and have issued a notice to proceed with Phase 1 of the con-

struction project.

Phase 1 includes the construction of a ground-level parking lot in the footprint of the former parking garage, which will be used by PennDOT District 1 employees, the construction of a connector street from Elm to Seneca streets, realigning a one-block section of Seneca Street to accommodate two-way travel, and running stormwater infrastructure from the lot to Oil Creek. The new parking lot will have about a dozen spaces dedicated to



the general public, 24 hours per day, along with public parking permitted, for free, on nights and weekends.

The new parking lot will also include a bicycle fix-it station as a site along the under-construction Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail, which runs through Oil City.

Phase 2 of the project will include the

permanent closure of the eastern-most block of Elm Street to allow for the construction of the new multi-modal transportation hub, which will be used for administrative offices and public transit maintenance and storage, with multiple garage stalls and a capacity to house 25 buses.

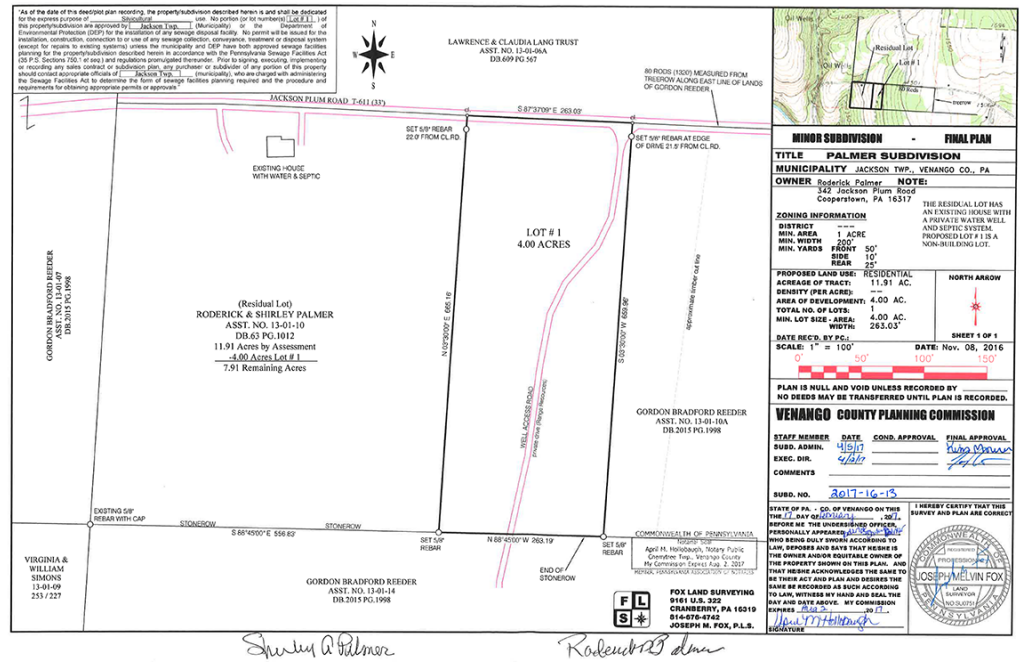
# SUBDIVISIONS

In 2017, there were a total of 77 subdivisions approved by the Planning Commission.

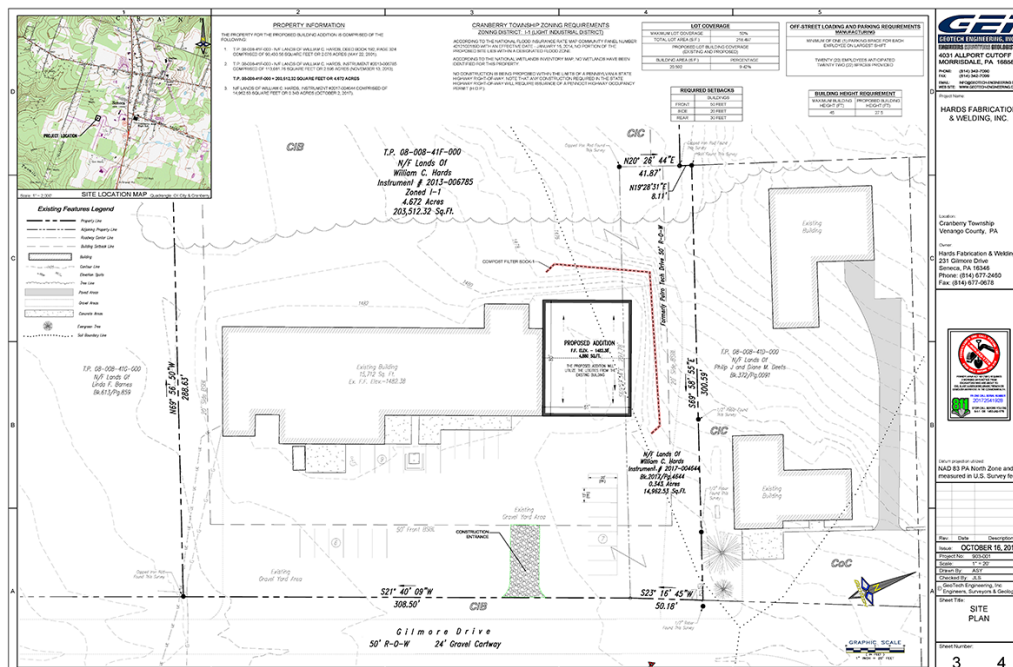
For the seventh year running, Cranberry Township has seen the most activity, with 16 subdivisions.

Sandycreek Township came in second, with seven subdivision approvals, while Sugarcreek Borough, with six, came in third.

## Palmer Subdivision, Jackson Township



| 2017 Subdivision Report (Minor, Major and Land Developments) |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   |                        |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|------------------------|--|
| Municipality                                                 | January   | February  | March     | April     | May       | June      | July      | August    | September | October   | November  | December  | Land Developments | Total Per Municipality |  |
| Allegheny                                                    |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1                 | 1                      |  |
| Barkeyville                                                  |           |           | 0         |           |           |           |           |           |           | 2         |           |           | 1                 | 3                      |  |
| Canal                                                        |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 3                      |  |
| Cherrytree                                                   |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 1                      |  |
| Clinton                                                      | 1         |           | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |                   | 4                      |  |
| Clintonville                                                 |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         |                   | 2                      |  |
| Cooperstown                                                  |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 0                      |  |
| Cornplanter                                                  |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 1                      |  |
| Cranberry                                                    | 2         |           |           | 1         | 1         | 3         | 1         | 3         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 5                 | 21                     |  |
| Emlenton                                                     |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 0                      |  |
| Franklin                                                     |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 0                      |  |
| Frenchcreek                                                  |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           | 1         |           | 1         |           |           |           |                   | 4                      |  |
| Irwin                                                        |           |           | 1         |           |           | 2         |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 3                      |  |
| Jackson                                                      |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |                   | 2                      |  |
| Mineral                                                      |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 1                      |  |
| Oakland                                                      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           | 1         |                   | 2                      |  |
| Oil City                                                     |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 0                      |  |
| Oil Creek                                                    | 1         |           | 2         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |                   | 5                      |  |
| Pinegrove                                                    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           | 1         |           |           | 1                 | 3                      |  |
| Pleasantville                                                |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 0                      |  |
| Plum                                                         | 1         |           |           | 1         | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1                 | 5                      |  |
| Polk                                                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 0                      |  |
| President                                                    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |                   | 1                      |  |
| Richland                                                     |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 2                      |  |
| Rockland                                                     |           |           |           |           | 2         | 1         |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |                   | 4                      |  |
| Rouseville                                                   |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 1                      |  |
| Sandycreek                                                   |           |           | 1         |           | 1         | 2         |           | 1         |           | 2         |           |           | 1                 | 8                      |  |
| Scrubgrass                                                   |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         |                   | 1                      |  |
| Sugarcreek                                                   | 1         |           | 1         |           | 1         | 2         | 1         |           |           |           |           |           | 1                 | 7                      |  |
| Utica                                                        |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                   | 0                      |  |
| Victory                                                      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | 1         | 1         |           |                   | 2                      |  |
| <b>2017 Totals</b>                                           | <b>6</b>  | <b>0</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>5</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>10</b>         |                        |  |
| <b>2017 Year to Date</b>                                     | <b>6</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>14</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>77</b>         |                        |  |
| <b>2016 Totals</b>                                           | <b>10</b> | <b>1</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>3</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>0</b>          |                        |  |
| <b>2016 Year to Date</b>                                     | <b>10</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>77</b>         |                        |  |
| <b>2015 Totals</b>                                           | <b>6</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>1</b>          |                        |  |
| <b>2015 Year to Date</b>                                     | <b>6</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>16</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>35</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>44</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>67</b>         |                        |  |
| <b>2014 Totals</b>                                           | <b>9</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>11</b> | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>6</b>  |                   |                        |  |
| <b>2014 Year to Date</b>                                     | <b>9</b>  | <b>14</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>47</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>63</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>78</b> |                   |                        |  |
| <b>2013 Totals</b>                                           | <b>4</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>11</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>2</b>  |                   |                        |  |
| <b>2013 Year to Date</b>                                     | <b>4</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>43</b> | <b>47</b> | <b>54</b> | <b>56</b> |                   |                        |  |
| <b>2012 Totals</b>                                           | <b>7</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>  |                   |                        |  |
| <b>2012 Year to Date</b>                                     | <b>7</b>  | <b>14</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>47</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>62</b> |                   |                        |  |
| <b>2011 Totals</b>                                           | <b>6</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>4</b>  |                   |                        |  |
| <b>2011 Year to Date</b>                                     | <b>6</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>44</b> | <b>51</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>63</b> | <b>67</b> |                   |                        |  |



# VENANGO COUNTY RECYCLING

## Finding popularity, recycling program continues success

Due to the program's popularity, in 2017, with assistance from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Venango County increased the number of Household Hazardous Waste recycling events, held at the Cranberry Mall, as well as returning the annual tire recycling event.

The Planning Commission revisited the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and electronics recycling, and applied for funding from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to help offset the cost of these collections to county residents, of which approximately 120, on average, per event, took advantage of the opportunities to recycle.

These events encourage the proper disposal of such hazardous waste as household cleaning products, paint stripper/remover/thinner, fluorescent light bulbs, aerosols, antifreeze, and weed killer, just to name a few; in addition to everything in electronics waste, from computers, printers, fax machines, and televisions to microwaves, stereo devices, cell phones, and air conditioners.

Upon approval by the DEP, Venango County partnered with ECS&R to offer seven collection events for HHW and electronics at the mall – that number up from four such events in 2016.

The Jan. 28 event garnered the largest turnout, with 164 households taking advantage of the opportunity to recycle, disposing of 6,753 pounds of HHW and 14,693 pounds of electronics waste.

Across the year's seven events, 20,376 pounds of HHW and 64,872 pounds of electronics waste was accepted.



## Tire collection event grows in '17

Venango County continued what it revived in 2016, with the second annual tire collection event, at the Cranberry Mall parking lot on Oct. 21. The 2016 event was the first since 2007.

The Planning Commission partners with Mahantango Enterprises to provide this service to county residents.

This event in 2017, which is limited to Venango County residents, saw an increase in the number of tires allowed per household or business over the previous year. Residents were limited to 20 tires per household – that number was 12 in 2016.

The 2017 event brought in 46,840 pounds of tires. In 2016, 31,281 pounds were disposed of.

Looking ahead, the county will continue to provide residents the annual opportunity to recycle tires at similar events.



# =COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS=

## **Building Better Neighborhoods**

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides funding for projects that 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 the future, Venango County will continue to administer CDBG funds on behalf of Sugarcreek Borough and Cranberry Township, as a result of a regulation handed down from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

While these projects are administered by the county, the local municipalities still have the responsibility to select their own projects that comply with the CDBG program requirements.

## **2017 CDBG Application**

For Venango County's 2017 CDBG application, the Planning Commission submitted proposals for \$90,006 for architectural barrier removal renovations for Cornplanter Square, in Oil City; \$73,861 for an Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible trail for the Venango Conservation District; and \$16,750 for an architectural barrier removal for the Barkeyville Borough Municipal Building.

For Sugarcreek Borough, the Commission submitted proposals for \$58,346 for a Shuf-stall Street reconstruction; and \$24,900 for demolition.

For Cranberry Township, the Commission submitted a proposal for \$93,294 for housing rehabilitation.

In total, the 2017 application submissions requested \$416,372 for municipal and county projects.

## *Clapp Farm Streets Project*



## *Rouseville Third Avenue Waterline Project*



# GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

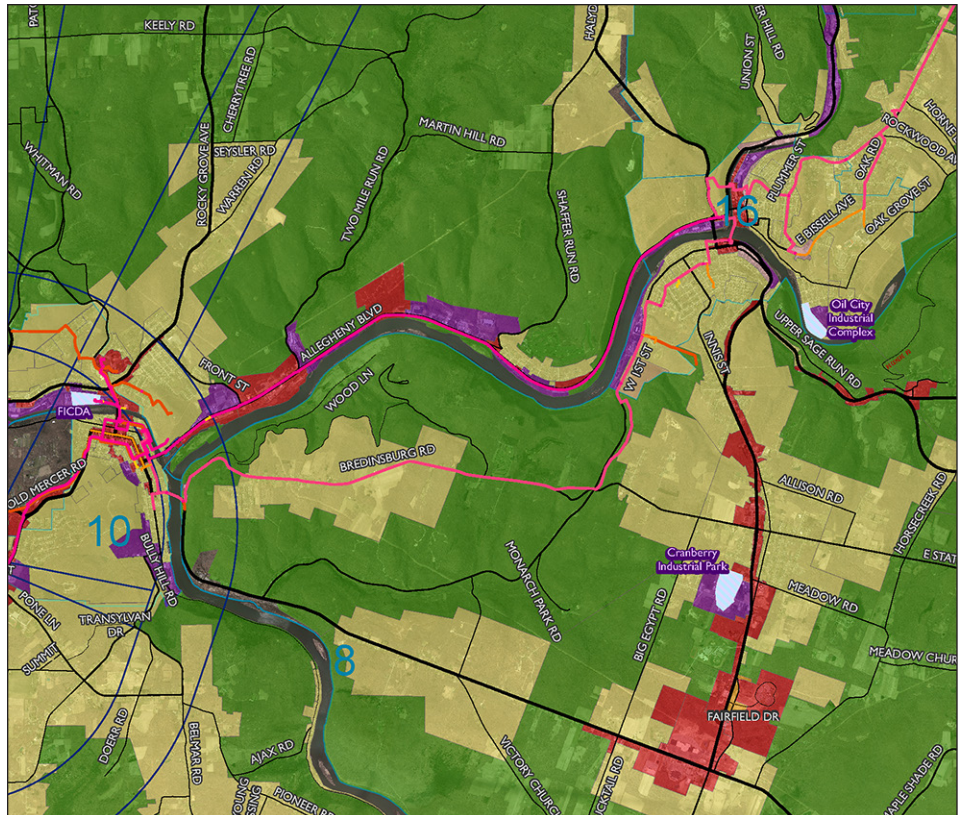
## GIS Resources and Mapping Support

The GIS and mapping services provided by the Planning Commission continue to be important tools for residents, community organizations, and our member municipalities. Custom mapping projects in 2017 included a Business and Trail Map for Emlenton as well as maps for the Venango County Chamber of Commerce, Oil Creek Water Trail, and Wild and Scenic Allegheny River brochures. Maps were also created to support grant applications, locate blight areas, and show abandoned well locations.

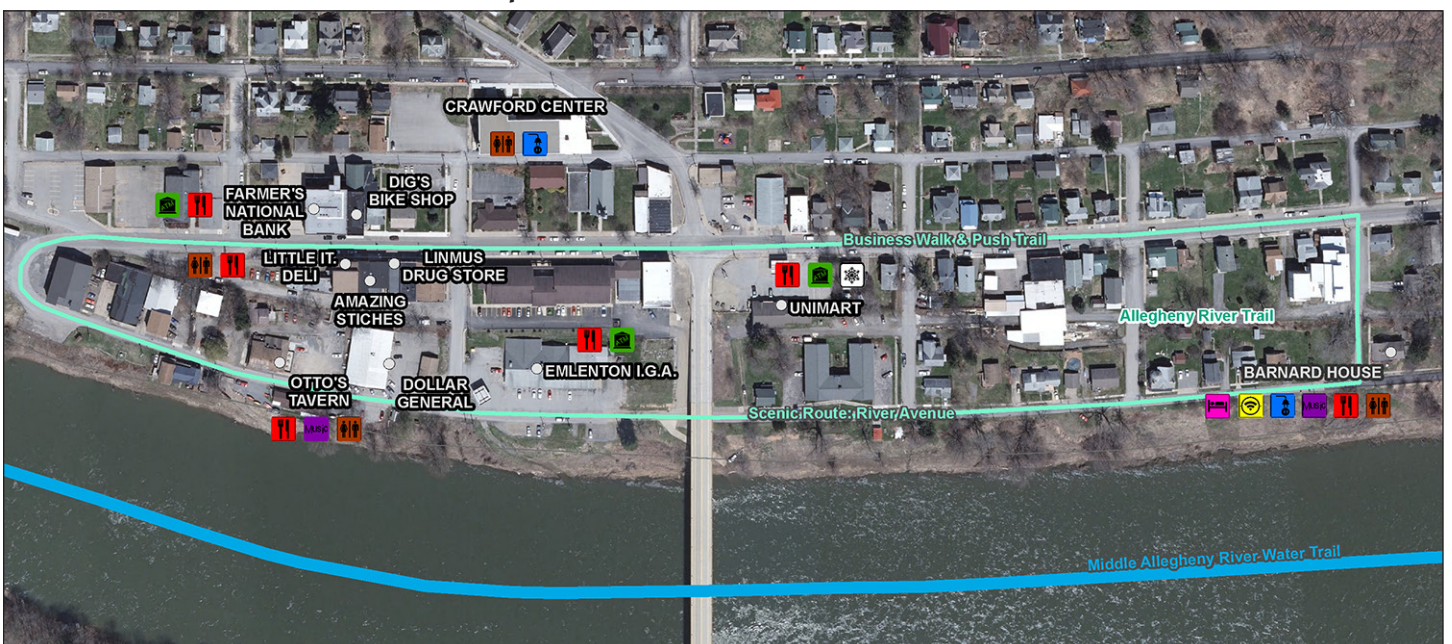
### Floodplain Management Support

Our GIS Planner is also a Certified Floodplain Manager, which allows the Planning Commission to offer assistance for floodplain related issues. In 2017, nine National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Elevation Certificates were issued, providing information for insurance companies to determine proper insurance premiums. These certificates also ensure compliance with floodplain regulations and can be used to support Letters of Map Amendment (LOMAs) to FEMA.

### Venango County Fiber Optic Network



### Emlenton Business and Trail Map



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# PHARE GRANT

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## Grant to help correct dysfunctional housing market

In 2017, the Venango County Regional Planning Commission applied for grant monies through the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) Fund and the Realty Transfer Tax (PHARE/RTT) Fund, and was awarded by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency with \$60,000, which will be used toward housing rehabilitation and blight removal.

PHARE was established by Act 105 of 2010 (the “PHARE”) Act) to provide the mechanism by which certain allocated state or federal funds, as well as funds from other outside sources, would be used to assist with the creation, rehabilitation, and support of affordable housing throughout Pennsylvania. The PHARE Act did not allocate any funding but did outline specific requirements that include preferences, considerations, match funding options, and obligations to utilize a percentage of the funds to assist households below 50 percent of the median area income.

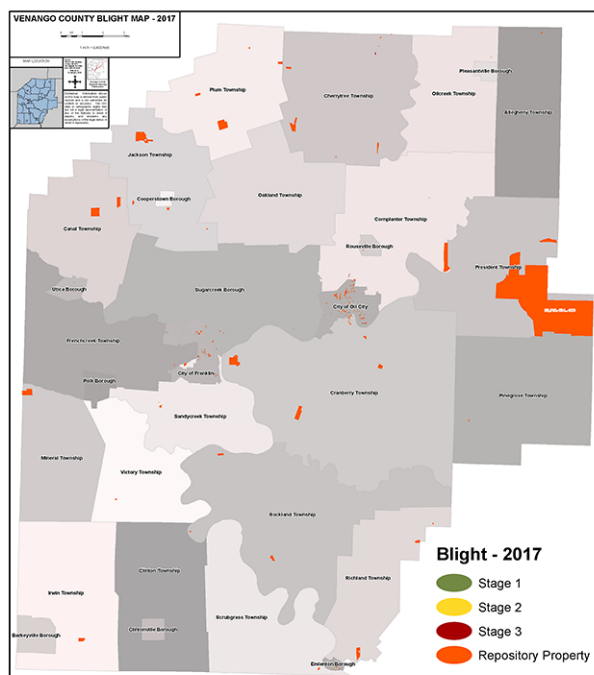
This funding stream requires that 30 percent of awarded grant monies assist persons or families below 50 percent of the median area income. This splits the grant awarded to the county between \$18,000 for a proposed housing rehab project, and \$42,000 for the removal of blight – structures that are vacant and/or underutilized.

One of the central factors and top priorities to address from a 2009 study of Venango County’s housing market, conducted by czbLLC, was the negative impact of an overabundance of housing stock throughout the county. This overstock is credited with contributing to a large amount of functionally obsolete, older properties in advanced stages of disrepair; and a ripple effect driving down home values across all submarkets.

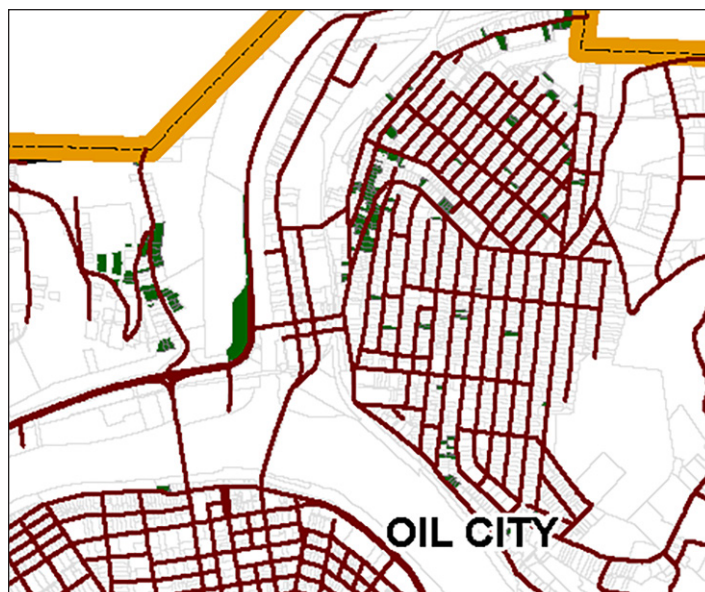
“If no intervention by the public sector were to occur in any form from this point forward, what would be the result?” Charles

Buki, of czbLLC, asked in the study.

This is where Venango County’s blight removal initiative enters the picture. Along with a commitment to rehabilitate those properties that are able to be rehabilitated, the removal of excess housing stock is an effort to provide a better level of housing for the county’s most financially stressed households and higher resale values for current property owners.



### *Oil City Properties on Repository*



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# GRANTSMANSHIP

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## **Educational and pollinator garden progresses**

Work on the educational and pollinator gardens at Two Mile Run County Park commenced in the spring of 2017.

Both the rain garden enhancement area and educational pollinator garden were cleared, then planted or seeded with pollinator friendly plant species.

To complete the project in 2018, educational signs and brochures highlighting the benefits of pollinators, as well as how to attract them to backyard gardens, will be featured at the gardens.

Funded by the Northwest Commission's Greenways Block Grant, other partners include the Venango Conservation District, Two Mile Run County Park, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and PA Department of Environmental Protection.



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## **Hazard mitigation funds continue to be pursued**

After a benefit cost analysis, FEMA determined that the benefits of the stormwater retention basins planned to mitigate flooding hazards from Chubb and Morrison Runs would not equal the \$1 million that had been earmarked, and would not release the funds. In order to prevent losing this money, the scope of work was revised and is currently being considered by FEMA.

The Planning Commission is now seeking funds for a joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Franklin Professional Building

that would service the entire county. Along with upgrades to the Franklin Professional Building, funds have been requested to run fiber optic lines from their current end point at the Venango Regional Airport, through Sandycreek and the City of Franklin.

Additional funds are being sought to purchase new generators for the Sandycreek Fire Department Social Hall and Sandycreek Township Municipal Building.

Funds are also being requested for Variable Message Signs and barriers to be used by emergency personnel to prevent local or transient entrance into hazardous areas.

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## **Wilson Park rain gardens constructed**

The Venango County Regional Planning Commission, in partnership with Rockland Township, paid for the construction of three rain gardens at Wilson Park.

The funding came through the Greenways Block Grant, which is through the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which is administered by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

The Kennerdell Community Center donated the use of the lands for the rain garden.

# GRANTSMANSHIP

## A sidewalk from Franklin to shopping in Sugarcreek

County takes up lifetime maintenance; seeks local match monies

The Venango County Regional Planning Commission in 2017 continued its work toward the establishment of a sidewalk from Franklin to the shopping centers in Sugarcreek, with an application to PennDOT's Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) "set-aside program."

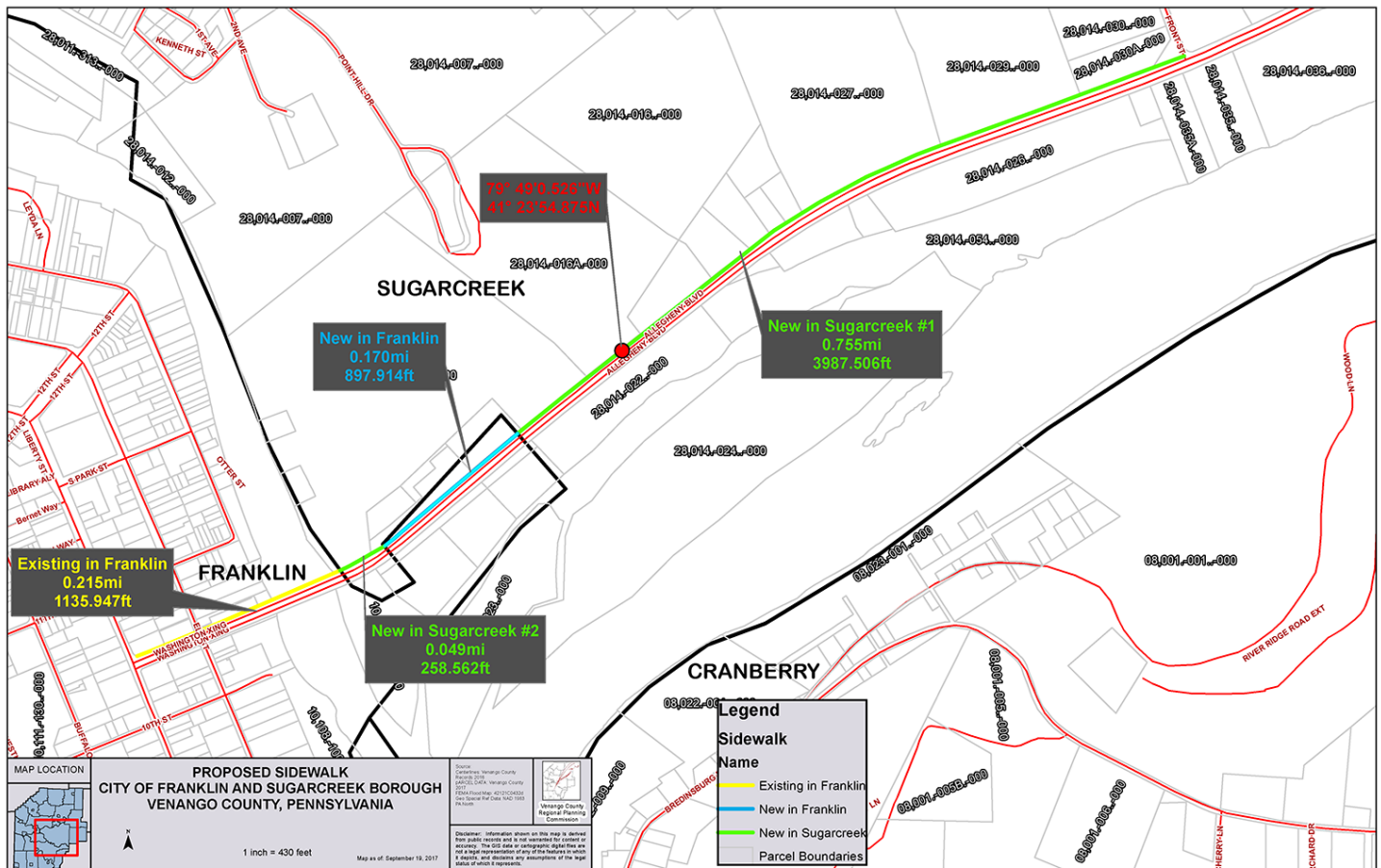
In 2012, a Complete Street Study was done, which, among other things, called for the creation of a sidewalk from Liberty Street, in Franklin, to Front Street, in Sugarcreek, along Allegheny Boulevard.

The sidewalk is intended to replace what is widely regarded as an unsafe dirt path that pedestrians travel along the four-lane highway.

The sidewalk was determined to be the top priority project from the Complete Street Study.

With \$2 to \$2.5 million in funding from PennDOT's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the municipality was required to provide 20 percent of the project costs in a construction and maintenance agreement. The county ultimately agreed to take on the maintenance costs for the lifetime of the sidewalk, and is now awaiting approval of the 2017 TAP set-aside program funding, as well as exploring local match opportunities for the TIP monies.

### The Sidewalk Plan



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# TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

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## *Dotter Bridge, Rockland Township*



Photo courtesy PennDOT Cultural Resources Program

In 2017, the Planning Commission partnered with PennDOT, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, and other local organizations to ensure the transportation needs of Venango County will continue to be met.

The Venango County Liquid Fuels program continued to be administered by the Deputy Director of the Planning Commission (Emily Lewis) throughout 2017. In early 2018, Ms. Lewis was promoted to the Executive Director position of the newly formed Venango County Economic Development Authority. The Deputy Director position was filled by Hilary Buchanan, who will continue to administer the Liquid Fuels program, as well as other transportation related projects.

The County Liquid Fuels program continues to be made up of three separate allocations. The largest is the County Liquid Fuels MS-991, or Liquid Fuels General Fund, which is used to fund municipal aid grant requests via the County Aid Program, bridge inspections for local bridges, and the Summer Bridge Crew. Act 44 and Act 89 are the other two allocations, and may only be utilized for

expenses related to county owned bridges.

### **County Aid Program**

In 2017, the County was able to allocate \$250,000 of County Liquid Fuels funds to be used in 2018 for county aid projects by our municipalities.

There were 19 applications received by the Planning Commission for a total of \$610,651.48. Eight of these applications were awarded a total of \$249,800. Project scopes ranged from paving and seal coating to day-lighting excessively shaded roads to updating drainage systems.

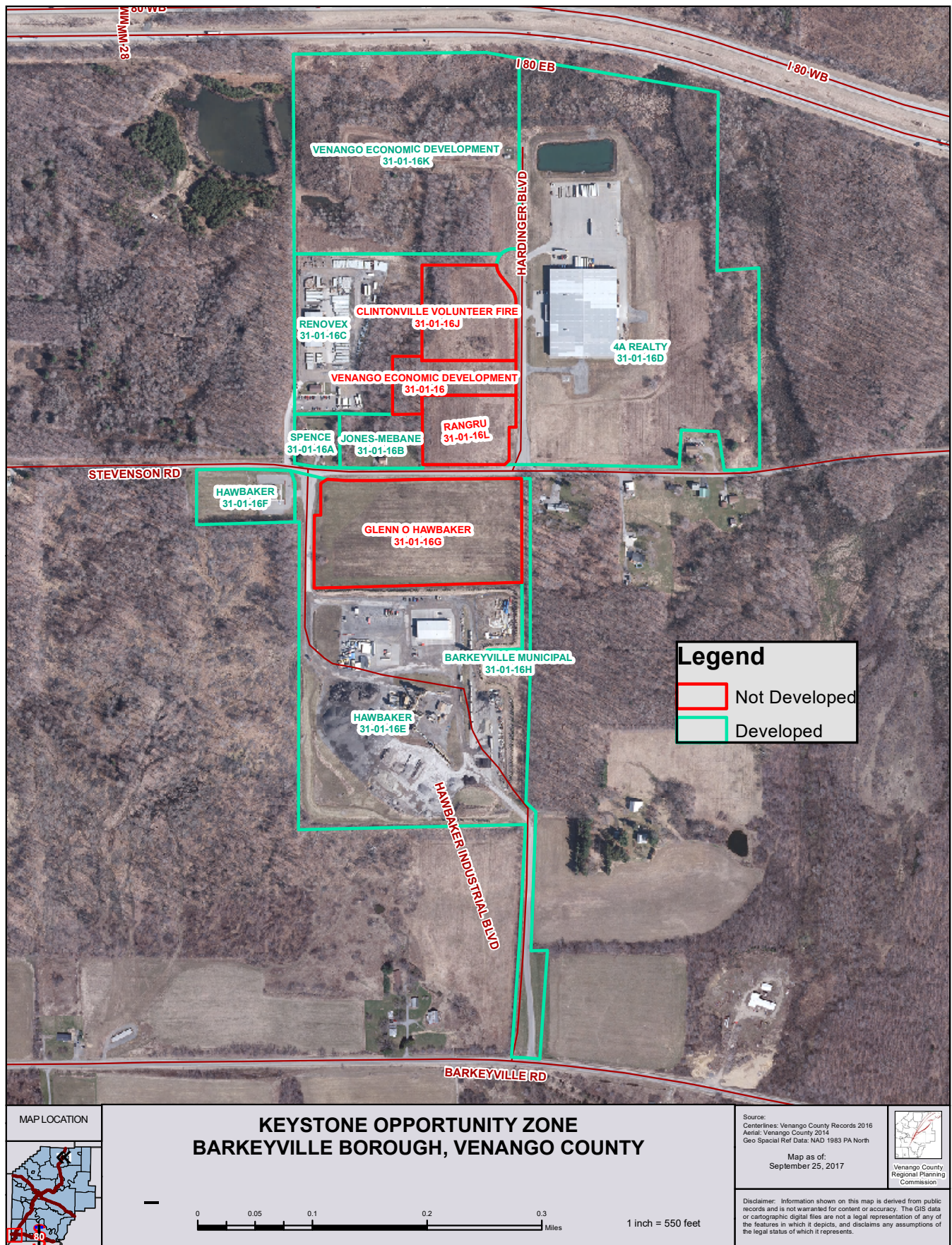
### **National Bridge Inspection Program**

The National Bridge Inspections Standards (NBIS) requires bridges over 20 feet in length on public roads to be inspected. The County has agreements with each municipality to administer the inspection process on these bridges to ensure they are in compliance with federal inspection requirements.

The municipalities of Venango County own a total of 51 bridges, and the county itself owns 19 bridges over 20 feet in length.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Barkeyville Keystone Opportunity Zone



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# VCRPC CHANGES

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## Planning Commission increases capacity by making staff changes and additions

At the end of 2017, Emily (Donaldson) Lewis was offered the position of executive director of the newly-created county Economic Development Authority.

While Emily is no longer an employee of the Venango County Regional Planning Commission, where she had served as deputy director, her office still resides within the Planning office, as the two agencies continue to work closely together to shape the county's economic future.

Replacing Emily in the Planning Commission's deputy director role is Hilary Buchanan, who came on board in February.

Joshua Sterling was hired on as the county's community development plan-

ner to take over administration of the Community Development Block Grant program, and to work with the Venango County Land Bank.

This newly-created position will allow Erik Johnson to focus more intensely on the expansion of the county's recycling program – including the establishment of a dedicated recycling center.

Ashley Smith took on the combined responsibilities of SALDO and land use administrator.

Previously, SALDO and land use development was divided amongst multiple positions.

This change was made to create continuity of operations and increase efficiency of administration.

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### *VCRPC Staff*



The Venango County Regional Planning Commission staff of 2017-18 — Joshua Sterling (back, from left), Emily Lewis, Jason Ruggiero, Sarah McGuinness, Hilary Buchanan (front, from left), Erik Johnson, and Ashley Smith.

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### **2018 goals and objectives**

- Continue revitalization efforts in downtown Oil City
- Continue to explore funding options for a county Recycling Center
- Continue to offer special collections for recycling on a quarterly basis
- Continue to provide floodplain management support and mapping
- Adopt the Venango County Comprehensive Plan
- Update the Venango County Subdivision and Land Development ordinance
- Continue to work toward a multi-agency cloud-based data system
- Seek best path toward correcting dysfunctional housing market



# Venango County Planning and Economic Development

## Organizational Chart

**Venango County Board of Commissioners**  
 Tim Brooks      Vince Witherup      Chip Abramovic

**Venango County  
Economic Development Authority**

**Executive Director**  
*Venango County Regional Planning Commission*  
 Jason Ruggiero

**Executive Director**  
*Venango County Economic Development Authority*  
 Emily Lewis

| <b>Deputy Director</b>                   | <b>Senior Planner</b>                             | <b>Senior Planner</b>                          | <b>GIS Planner</b>                                       | <b>Land Use Planner</b>                        |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Hilary Buchanan                          | Erik Johnson                                      | Joshua Sterling                                | Sarah McGuinness                                         | Ashley Smith                                   |
| <i>Transportation Planning</i>           | <i>Fiscal Administration</i>                      | <i>CDBG Program Administration</i>             | <i>Floodplain Mapping &amp; Administration</i>           | <i>Land Development Review</i>                 |
| <i>Liquid Fuels Program</i>              | <i>Recycling &amp; Solid Waste Administration</i> | <i>Venango County Land Bank</i>                | <i>Municipal Mapping Support</i>                         | <i>Subdivision Administration</i>              |
| <i>Act 13 Bridge Program</i>             | <i>Special Collection Event Coordination</i>      | <i>PHARE Grant Administration</i>              | <i>Land Use Mapping</i>                                  | <i>Small Project Stormwater Administration</i> |
| <i>Grantsmanship</i>                     | <i>Recycling Outreach &amp; Education</i>         | <i>Housing Market Stabilization Activities</i> | <i>Economic Development &amp; Infrastructure Mapping</i> | <i>SALDO Administrator</i>                     |
| <i>Comprehensive Plan Update</i>         |                                                   |                                                | <i>Environmental Review Officer</i>                      |                                                |
| <i>Oil City Northside Revitalization</i> |                                                   |                                                |                                                          |                                                |
| <i>Municipal Outreach</i>                |                                                   |                                                |                                                          |                                                |

# **2017 Planning Commission Staff**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** - JASON RUGGIERO

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR** - EMILY (DONALDSON) LEWIS

**SENIOR PLANNER** - ERIK JOHNSON

**GIS PLANNER** - SARAH MCGUINNESS

**PLANNER I** - KIM MOURER (JANUARY-JUNE)

**LAND USE PLANNER** - ASHLEY SMITH (AUGUST-PRESENT)

## **STAFF TRAINING**

CDBG WEBINARS

PROP CERTIFICATION TRAINING

ASFPM FLOODPLAIN MANAGER WEBINAR

FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

## **CONFERENCES**

PROP CONFERENCE

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

PAHRA CDBG ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NORTHWEST PA GIS CONFERENCE

REGIONAL RECYCLING COORDINATOR'S MEETING

NORTHWEST REGIONAL WASTE AND RECYCLING ENFORCEMENT FORUM

## **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

POLK CENTER'S EARTH DAY

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TITUSVILLE CHAMBER TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

DEP ROUNDTABLE

# **2017 Planning Commission Board Members**

**Chair** - ROBERT CROSS

**Vice-Chair** - DAVE OWENS

**Secretary/Treasurer** - MIKE SWATZLER

RODNEY GLADD

GREG MILLER

JOHN NEIDICH

BILL MOON

NICK MELNICK

JOHN MCCLELLAND

NANCY MARANO

RICK BURCHFIELD

KEITH KLINGLER

FRANK PANKRATZ

TRACY JAMIESON

KEN KING

**VENANGO COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
2018 MEETING SCHEDULE**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month (except May)**

**Start time for meetings will be 6:30 PM**

**FICDA Training Room**

**191 Howard Street**

**Franklin, PA 16323**

|                    |                                  |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| December 19, 2017  | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| January 16, 2018   | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| February 20, 2018  | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| March 20, 2018     | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| April 17, 2018     | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| May 14, 2018       | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 PM   |
| June 19, 2018      | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| July 17, 2018      | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| August 21, 2018    | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| September 18, 2018 | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| October 16, 2018   | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| November 20, 2018  | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |
| December 18, 2018  | FICDA Training Room at 6:30 p.m. |

**VCRPC Office  
1168 Liberty Street  
Franklin, PA 16323**

