

Venango County Regional Planning Commission



Annual Report | 2019 – 2020

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 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 creation, funding, and operation of planning commissions at the discretion of each municipal or county government.



A Statement from Our Director

How exactly do you write a summary of year like 2020? What if you had to include 2019 in the mix? Well that was the challenge that we faced this year as we sat down to put together our Annual Report. We realized that, amidst all the COVID-related disruptions of the past year, we completely forgot to put out a 2019 Annual Report. So, we decided to just mix two reports into one and thus was born the 2019-2020 Annual Report.

In all honesty, sometimes it's been a bit of a struggle to remember 2019 after a year like 2020, but we've done our best to capture all the work we've put in over the last two years. Inside, you'll find updates on Community Development Block Grant projects, subdivisions and land developments, and county bridge projects. You'll also find exciting updates on longstanding projects like the development of a County Recycling Center, the Multimodal Hub in Oil City and the rehabilitation of the Oil City National Bank Building. A lot of these projects are going to reach their conclusion in 2021, so make sure to circle back around a year from now and find a copy of our next report. Otherwise, you'll risk missing the exciting conclusion!

2020 certainly had its share of challenges as the world was thrown into a bit of chaos on every level. It's not very often that world events have such a direct impact on people's lives; but that is exactly where we found ourselves in 2020, with global events shaping day-to-day life within our state, our community and even our households in a truly profound way.

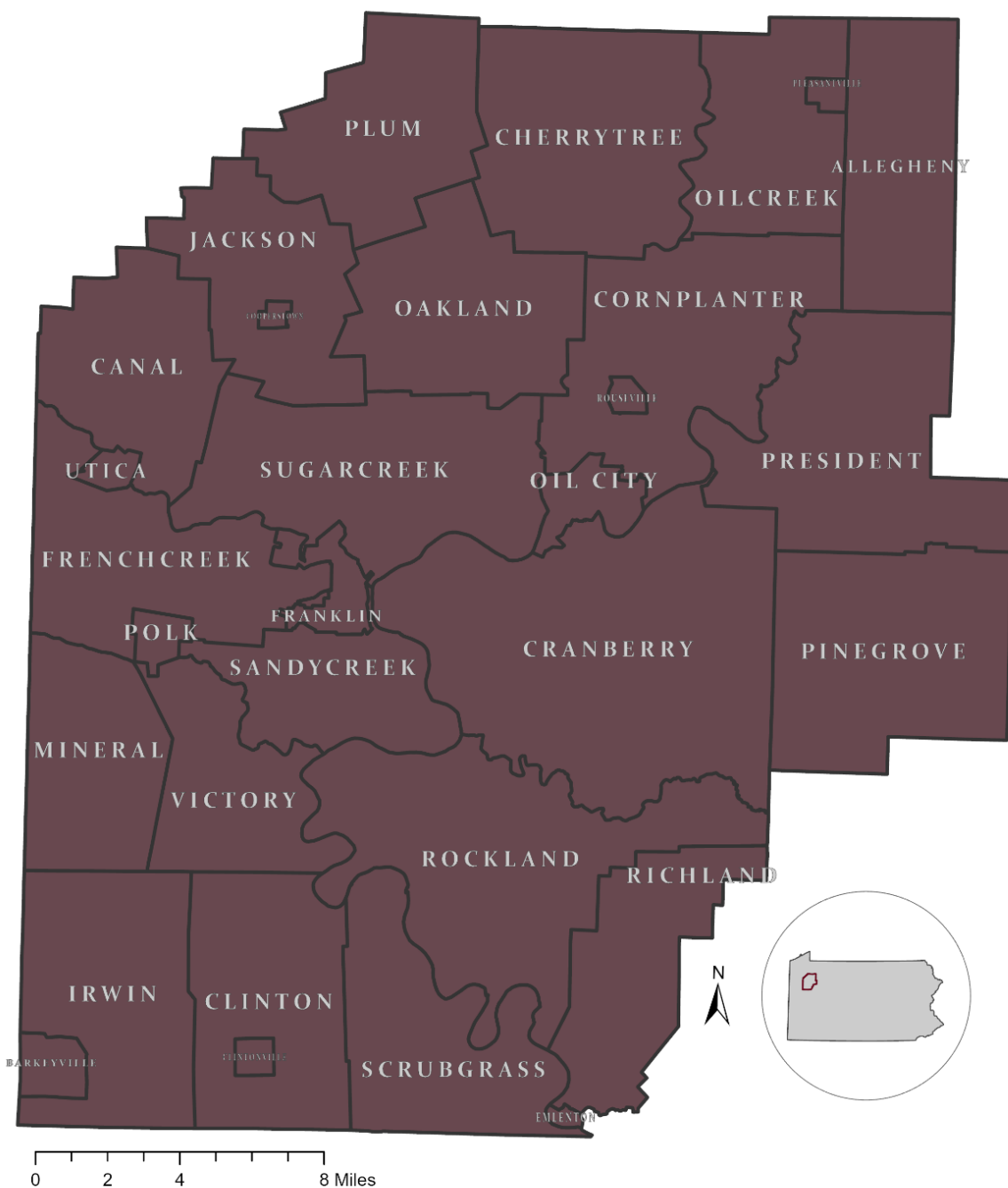
It certainly had an impact on the way we conducted business in the last year. As many of you know, we share office space with the county Economic Development Authority. As a result, that means, most of the time, we have eight desks crammed into three offices. By definition, that means we are a pretty tight-knit group of co-workers. Unfortunately, tight working quarters are just about the opposite of what you want during a public health emergency; so we spent much of the year adapting to our surroundings. We went through a lot of different working arrangements throughout the year, including telework, rotating teams, split shifts and basically every other arrangement possible. We made ourselves get comfortable with masks, zoom meetings and plexiglass separating us from our friends, co-workers and neighbors.

But, despite all the challenges, we still managed to get the work done. Whether it was staff meetings with kids bouncing on our laps or tele-town halls, we still managed to keep things moving forward and making improvements in Venango County. The way we worked might have changed, but the quality of work certainly did not and because of that I'm exceptionally proud of this staff and all they have done over the last two years. Take a look for yourself over the next several pages. I think you'll be impressed; and if you see one of us out and about, don't hesitate to stop and say hello. We want to know what you think about your local park, your neighborhood, or whatever you have on your mind. Tell us what works and what doesn't in your community, and we will do our best to help. See you around!

— Jason Ruggiero, VCRPC Executive Director

Member Municipalities 2019-2020

Allegheny Township
 Barkeyville Borough
 Canal Township
 Cherrytree Township
 Clinton Township
 Clintonville Township
 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
 Oilcreek 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



Bank Building

Spring of 2019 marked the beginning of the first phase of rehabilitation at the Oil City National Bank building in Oil City. Years of neglect had resulted in failing finishes throughout the building, as well as damaged and out-of-date infrastructure systems. However, a concept study authored by Design Lab Architects of Boston, Massachusetts, found that -- behind those failing finishes and systems -- the building remained structurally sound and a prime candidate for rehabilitation within Oil City's historic downtown.

As a result, the Venango County Economic Development Authority moved the project forward by authorizing a contract with Canfield Development in order to selectively demolish, clean and abate the interior of the bank. That process took about six months and resulted in a building free of any mold, asbestos, lead paint or any compromised material and primed for redevelopment.

At the same time, the Authority contracted with KLA Roofing in order to remove and replace the failing roof system that was installed by a previous owner, and with Gurtner & Sons glazing to remove and replace all the exterior doors and windows. These two contracts were completed in 2020 and resulted in a watertight exterior.

In late 2019, the Authority received \$1.5 million in funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission and \$1.5 million in funding from the Economic Development Administration for the continued redevelopment of the Oil City National Bank Building. In 2020 Design Lab Architects was contracted once again to guide the design process for bringing one of the buildings floors back to life with a combination of traditional office space, co-working space, a makerspace and a public meeting room. The 10,000 square foot redevelopment project is expected to get underway in the spring of 2021.



Oil City Bank Building, Spring 2021

Multimodal Hub

In June of 2019, construction began on Phase II of the Venango County Multimodal Hub. The second and final phase of the project will result in the completion of a project that began in 2017 with the demolition of the former Oil City Parking Garage. This phase of construction is estimated to cost \$10 million, with Venango County contributing only \$60,000 of that total amount. The balance of the project cost will be covered by PennDOT funding through the Bureau of Public Transit.

The project, which was undertaken in partnership with both PennDOT and the Crawford Area Transit Authority (CATA), is estimated to be complete in April of 2021. At that point, CATA will move its Venango County operations from their current location, adjacent to Venango Regional Airport, to the new multimodal facility. The facility includes new administrative offices, four maintenance bays, a dedicated bus wash facility and indoor storage for up to 25 transit vehicles.

In total, the Venango County Multimodal project has invested more than \$12 million into Oil City's Northside neighborhood and will result in a more user friendly and cost-effective public transit system in Venango County.



Multimodal Hub, Spring 2021

Venango County Recycling

Special Collections, Cranberry Mall

In 2019-20, the County hosted a total of eight quarterly Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) / Electronics collection events in the rear parking lot of the Cranberry Mall. These events served a total of 1106 households and diverted 138,749 lbs. of HHW and Electronics to be recycled or disposed of properly. Additionally, the County held an annual Tire Collection Event at the mall in 2019. This event collected a total of 792 tires (25,520 lbs.) to be recycled into rubber related products such as turf, parking/dock bumpers, flooring, rubberized asphalt, etc. Due to Covid-19 related liabilities, the County did not host a tire collection event in 2020.

Convenience Center Finds a New Home

In 2019, the County embarked on finding a new site to host a new Recycling Convenience Center. The original site chosen for this project in Cranberry Township was determined not viable for a variety of issues relating to future development of the facility. With this being the case, the County assessed additional locales in Cranberry Township, Franklin and Oil City to host the project. In early 2020, the Commissioners approved the use of the County-owned Garage at the Airport for the Recycling Center. This site is currently being utilized by Crawford Area Transit Authority (CATA) as their local bus depot; but, they are slated to move to the new Multimodal Hub being built in Oil City by April of 2021. The County will move recycling operations onsite shortly following CATA's departure.

2020 - 902 DEP Grant Submission

The County submitted for a new round of DEP 902 grant funding in May of 2020. This grant would allow the County to make significant upgrades to the Recycling Convenience Center via significant building/land development of the site and purchases of additional equipment to process material. In late 2020, the County was notified it was awarded \$349,998 by the Department of Environmental Protection to build capacity at the site. This funding is in addition to the original 2018 DEP 902 grant of \$345,504 awarded to the County to create the Recycling Center.

Venango County Household Hazardous Waste(HHW)/Electronics Collection Event
Schedule 2019-2020



2019
JUNE 8th
SEPTEMBER 28th

2020
JANUARY 25th
MARCH 28th

Household Hazardous Waste:

- Household Cleaning Products
- Pool Chemicals
- Wood/Metal Cleaners & Polish
- Indoor Pesticides
- Flea Repellants/Shampoo & Collars
- Mouse/Rat Poisons & Baits
- Motor Oil & Fuel Additives
- Transmission/Brake/Starter Fluid
- Car Wax & Polishes
- Gasoline/Kerosene/Diesel Fuel
- Home Heating Oil
- Herbicides & Insecticides
- Fungicides/Wood Preservatives
- Oil/Enamel/Latex & Spray PAINTS
- Fixatives & Solvents
- Paint Stripper/Remover/Thinner
- Photographic Chemicals
- Mercury Thermostats/Thermometers
- Propane Tanks/Compressed Gas Cylinders
- Fluorescent Light Bulbs
- Compact Fluorescent Lights

Electronics:

- Computers and Peripherals
- Televisions
- Printers
- Microwaves
- Stereos/CD & Tape Players
- Copiers
- Fax Machines
- Cell Phones/Telephones
- Laptop Computers
- VCR's/DVD Players
- Phone Systems
- Dehumidifiers
- Air Conditions

UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS INCLUDE:

- No Explosives
- No Tires
- No Medical Waste
- No Radioactive Materials (Smoke Detectors)

- No Ammunition
- No Large Appliances
- No Syringes

CRANBERRY MALL

EVENT TIMES:
9AM - 1PM

COST: See Below*

ECS&R From household waste to electronics, ECS&R handles it all. Just follow this simple Collections Guide.

We kindly ask that all Individuals and Businesses PLEASE **PRE-REGISTER** FOR THESE EVENTS.

Call: 1-866-815-0016 or

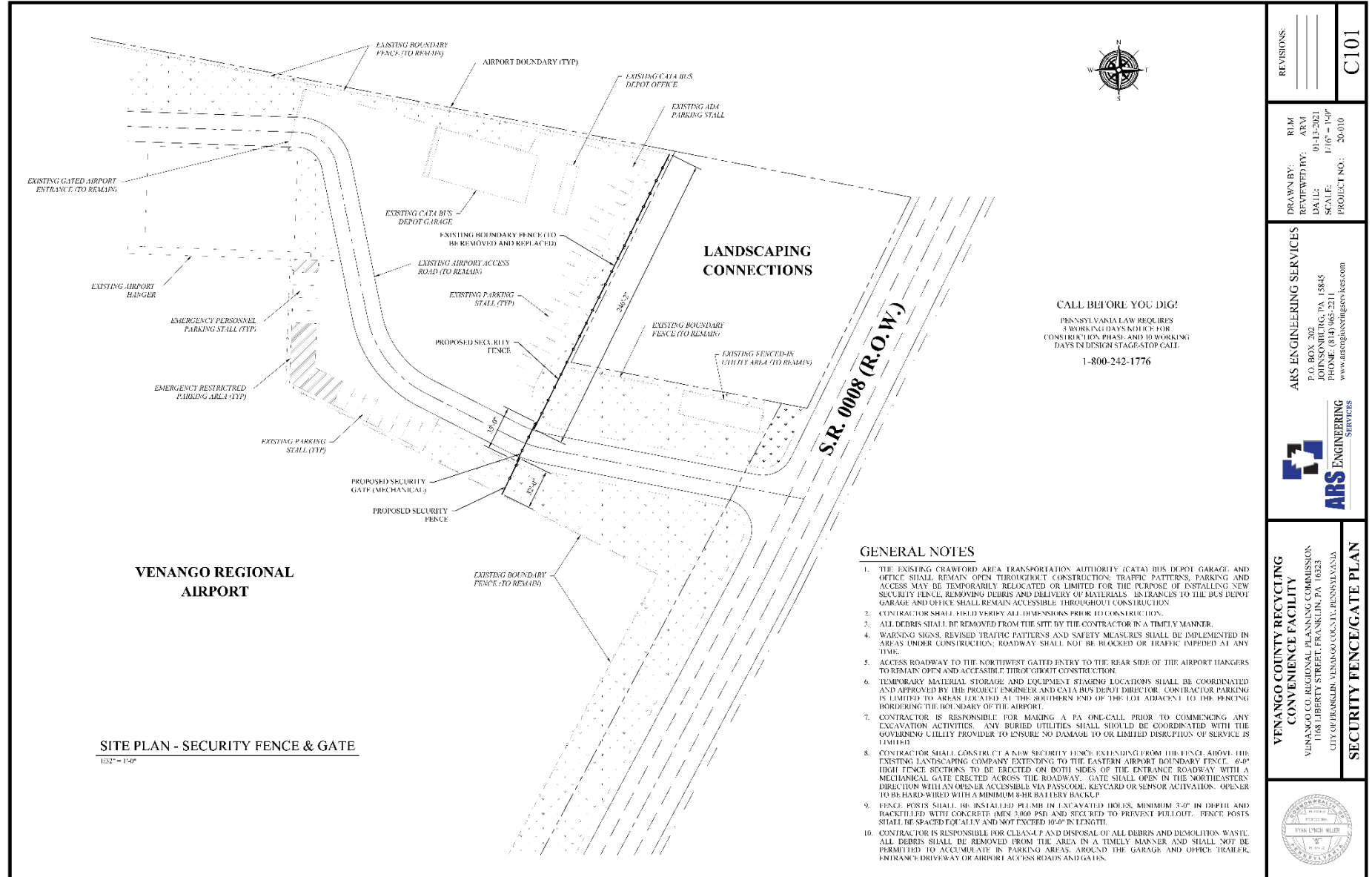
Log-on to: **ECSR.NET** to Register



*Household Hazardous Waste/HHW: \$0.87/LB *Universal Waste(Bulbs & Batteries): \$0.87/LB
 *TV's & Monitors: \$0.45/LB *All Other Electronics: \$0.25/LB *Small Freon Containing Devices: \$0.52/LB



Erik Johnson, Recycling Coordinator



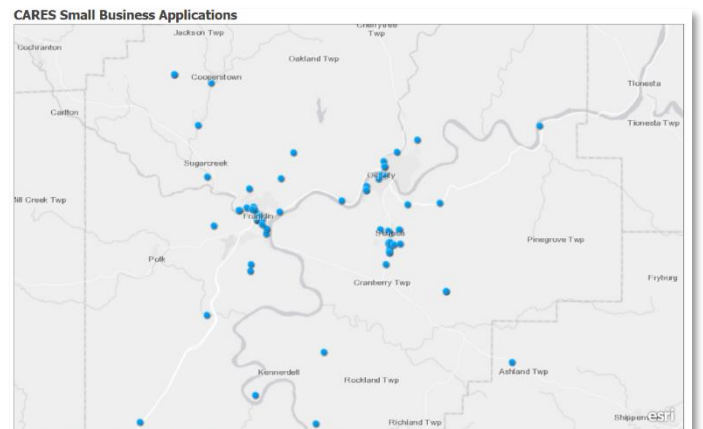
Geographic Information Systems

Venango County benefits from mapping services provided by Alexandria Shreffler, the new Geospatial Analyst in the Regional Planning Commission. She began providing services in June of 2020, with ongoing experience in web mapping, analysis automation, programming, and database management. Daily support provided by the Geospatial Analyst includes topics such as floodplain management, environmental review, member requests, grant assistance, geocoding, and data delivery. Ongoing goals in the planning commission include the adoption of an enterprise system, establishment of a strong support network for GIS and related activities, and preparation for long-term documentation of procedures. The culminating product of all these activities will be a panel of GIS products accessible via the internet, potentially evolving into a centralized reference and planning tool for all members of the planning commission, other county departments, municipal officials, local businesses, homeowners, and all citizens interested in community participation.

Visualizing CARES Act Applications, Home Rehab Program

During the summer of 2020, the economic development authority requested a map plotting the locations of business that applied for CARES Act funds. Although the map was created using the typical software, the data was also uploaded to the ArcGIS Online platform for interactive visualization.

After realizing some of the limitations presented by ArcGIS Online, other platforms were tested, including CARTO, which provides similar capabilities in an intuitive user interface. The ongoing testing and development of several mapping platforms will inform enterprise GIS adoption in the long-term future of the planning department.



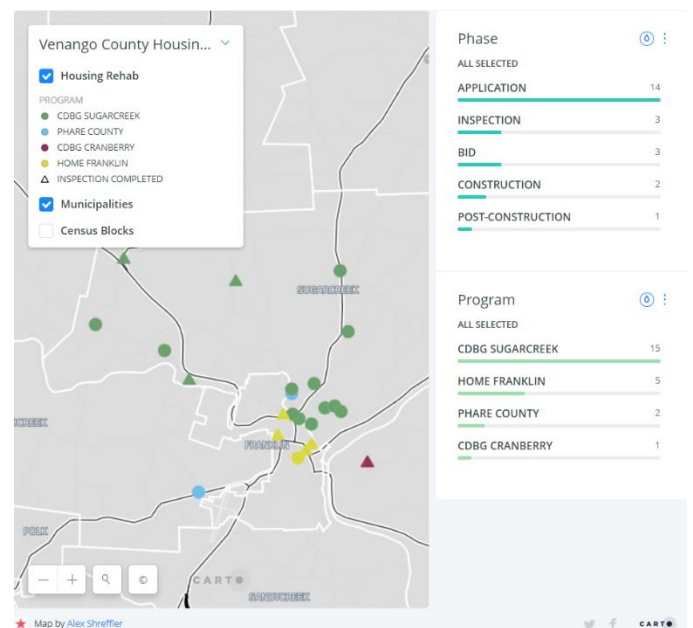
CARES Small Business Applications Web Map

Developing Enterprise GIS

Enterprise GIS is a system where any one of the three traditional GIS components (storage, processing, rendering) are completed over the internet. A connected GIS between multiple departments becomes an "enterprise" GIS and resolves needs collectively instead of individually. Some benefits of enterprise GIS would include the more efficient use of resources, seamless sharing of data, and self-service mapping abilities. The implementation of an enterprise GIS structure would require the following conditions to be met:

- 1) Organized data in a navigable structure
- 2) Established procedures for backups and refresh cycles
- 3) Platform(s) which facilitate the storage, rendering, and maintenance of geospatial data

These three activities were investigated at length in 2020 and will continue to be researched and implemented in the coming year.



Screen capture of the online platform demo which may potentially become an ongoing reference tool for the Home Rehabilitation Program

Grantsmanship

DEP Driving PA Forward Grant

As part of the Volkswagen settlement, all states received money to implement measures to improve air quality in their state. Pennsylvania allocated this money to put toward grant and rebate programs that would “improve air quality in Pennsylvania and drive transformation from older, polluting diesel engines to clean technologies.”

In collaboration with the Venango County Economic Development Authority, the Planning Commission applied for and received a \$10,000 grant to install a two-plug electric charging station, which was installed at the Oil City Bank Building. This was completed in 2020.



Electric car charging station, 2020

County Courthouse Tower Restoration

The towers atop Venango County’s historic 1868 Courthouse were suffering the effects of weather. Pinholes had opened up through brown-orange spots of corrosion in the tower roofs’ tin surface, allowing moisture into the building’s inner structure.

The County Commissioners in 2019 opted to put \$100,000 of local money into preserving the towers. The Venango County Regional Planning Commission, under the direction of the Commissioners, applied for a \$100,000 Historic Preservation Construction Grant, through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), utilizing the local funds as a match for that grant to cover the estimated \$200,000 project.

In June 2019, PHMC awarded the grant to Venango County. The Contract went to Strongland Roofing Systems.

Today, the Courthouse towers are clean, bright, and safe from weathering, after the tin sheeting was repaired and both tower roofs were coated with RMer-Coat Restoration System, which matches the previous appearance and the historic nature of the building.



Tower Restoration - Before



Tower Restoration - After

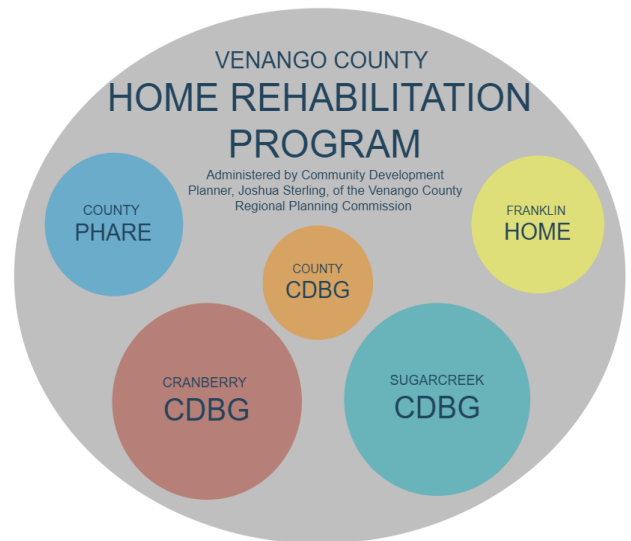
Housing Market

The County of Venango is taking a two-pronged approach to correct an out-of-balance housing market that has needed corrective actions for decades, as detailed in a 2009 housing market analysis by CZBLLC. Through the County's – and its OBOs' – Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs, demolitions of blighted structures have been ongoing. A substantial overstock of housing has led to an ever-growing list of vacant properties and households across the county suffering the effects of deferred maintenance, whether regarding maintenance on their own homes or those around them. The natural course for blight, according to the housing analysis, is to spread – unless there is a sustained public sector effort to mitigate the problem.

Once the City of Franklin partnered with the County on the administration of the new \$300,000 HOME Investment Partnerships Program grant, planning staff then set to work reestablishing the home rehabilitation program that had not existed for a number of years in the County. After learning one of its CDBG projects was disqualified, the Borough of Sugarcreek modified its FFY2016 CDBG Contract to include approximately \$60,000 for LMI, owner-occupied home rehabilitation. During the pre-application phase for its FFY2017 CDBG program, Cranberry Township decided to allocate its entire entitlement – less program admin – of \$93,294 into the housing rehabilitation program. From 2018 to present, both Sugarcreek and Cranberry have allocated nearly all of their CDBG funding into housing rehabilitation and demolitions.

The County was also awarded a \$125,000 Pennsylvania Housing And Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) fund grant, which was written solely for owner-occupied home rehabilitation on a Countywide basis.

Altogether known as “The Venango County Home Rehabilitation Program,” administered by Community Development Planner Joshua Sterling, the program awards funding to low- to moderate-income (LMI) homeowners in order to help maintain the housing stock that may otherwise become in danger of falling into blight conditions. Through the program, the County collects pertinent income and household composition data required to determine eligibility. Once a homeowner is qualified, the County sends its third-party home inspector to the residence to draft a work write-up, in consultation with the homeowner. The homeowner then gets to choose three vetted General Contractors from a County-maintained list to receive bid packets for the project, which includes the work write-up. The lowest bidder gets the Contract, unless the homeowner opts for one of the other bidders and agrees to pay the cost difference. The homeowner also agrees to a 5-year depreciating lien, that is attached to their home's deed for a period of five years (except in the case of PHARE), in the amount of the grant-funded home rehab.



The complement to the home rehabilitation side of this initiative is blight demolitions. According to the housing market analysis, there are approximately 5,000 more housing units affordable to households earning less than 50 percent of the area median income than there are households at that income level. Therefore, outside of an economic boom to the scale that established the local cities and economies with the birth of the US oil industry, part of the solution must be to remove the housing market's overstock through demolitions of buildings currently contributing to community blight. One way the County is accomplishing this project is by partnering with all its municipalities to purchase homes off tax sales through the Venango County Land Bank. The Land Bank has the power to purchase homes from those sales without competitive bids. This makes the larger goal of removing properties with extreme deferred maintenance and clearing the lots for future development more affordable.

Continued

As the County's PHARE grant shifted to solely funding home rehabilitation – formerly it was split between rehab and demolition – the County's CDBG program pushed its demolition funding to the maximum allowable – 30% of the total grant Contract. In the FFY2020 CDBG application, the County has allocated \$83,965 for countywide demolition projects.

In July 2020, the Planning Commission applied for a Pennsylvania Blight Remediation Program grant, which will be used to hire a specialist to study and compile a detailed analysis of the blight issue facing the City of Oil City. The \$25,000 grant application included a 10% (2,500) local cash match, which the Commissioners approved. Once the Blight Study is completed, the County will be eligible to apply through the program for up to \$300,000 in grant funding for demolition projects for the studied area.

Community Development Block Grant Projects

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 (LMI) 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. The Venango County Regional Planning Commission initiated and completed numerous Community Development Block Grant-funded projects during 2019 and the later part of 2020.

CDBG Application 2019

For Venango County's FFY2019 CDBG application, the Planning Commission submitted proposals of \$53,583 for the Clintonville Borough Sewer and Water Authority to replace outdated water meters; \$70,000 to construct public restrooms and parking that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act at the Clinton Township Building; \$19,264 to support hardware and food purchases at the Clintonville Community Food Pantry; and \$48,603 for Countywide demolition and clearance activities.

For Sugarcreek Borough, the Commission submitted a proposal of \$84,700 for LMI, owner-occupied home rehabilitation activities.

For Cranberry Township, the Commission submitted a proposal for \$76,183 for LMI, owner-occupied housing rehabilitation; and \$20,000 for demolition and clearance activities.

In total, including administrative expenses, the 2019 application submission requested \$454,064 for municipal and county projects.

CDBG Application 2020

For Venango County's FFY2020 CDBG application, the Planning Commission submitted proposals of \$70,000 to reconstruct a section of stormwater infrastructure, in Emlenton; \$10,000 to construct an entrance to the Reno VFD in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; \$30,371 for countywide LMI, owner-occupied home rehabilitations; and \$83,965 for countywide demolition and clearance activities.

For Sugarcreek Borough, the Commission submitted a proposal of \$86,741 for LMI, owner-occupied home rehabilitation.

For Cranberry Township, the Commission submitted a proposal of \$78,795 for LMI, owner-occupied home rehabilitation; and \$20,000 for demolition and clearance activities.

In total, including administrative expenses, the 2020 application submission requested \$463,248 for municipal and county projects

Transportation Planning

In 2019 and 2020, 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, Hilary Buchanan. 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 both 2019 and 2020, the County was able to allocate \$250,000 of County Liquid Fuels funds to be used in 2020 and 2021 for county aid projects by our municipalities.

In 2019, there were 18 applications received by the Planning Commission for a total of \$487,995.32. Eleven of these applications were awarded a total of \$237,997.50. Awarded project scopes included addressing township building repairs, drainage issues, paving or sealing roads, restoration work due to flooding, and bridge repair and replacement.

In 2020, there were 22 applications received by the Planning Commission for a total of \$643,419.32. Eleven of these applications were awarded a total of \$248,566.00. Awarded projects include paving, ditch line revisions, and replacing worn and damaged street signs.

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 following 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.

The four-year inspection contract for the NBIS program expired in 2019. The Planning Commission worked with PennDOT throughout the year to select an inspection firm for the next four years. STV, Inc., the incumbent inspector, received the contract for 2020-2024, and will continue to service our county and municipalities as they have done for the previous four years.

Dotter Road Bridge

Dotter Road Bridge in Rockland Township, constructed in 1885 by the Smith Bridge Company, is a single span, single lane, pin-connected four-panel Pratt pony truss with a nail laminated timber deck. It has been listed as structurally deficient for many years and needs replacement.

Because it is considered a historic bridge, it is required to be preserved as such. Therefore, the bridge could not just be torn down and replaced. The bridge has been purchased by an individual in Texas, and will be relocated to their property.

The Environmental Clearance and Right-of-Way easements necessary for construction were acquired during 2019. The project was let in late 2020, with the removal of the existing bridge and construction of the new bridge expected to occur in 2021.

Miller Farm Bridge

Miller Farm Bridge, constructed in 1888, connects Cherrytree and Oil Creek Townships in Oil Creek State Park. It is a single span steel truss with steel stringers and a laminated timber wood deck. Originally, the bridge was slated for removal, but upon further consideration, the decision was made to try to rehabilitate the bridge instead. Right-of-Way easements were acquired during 2019. The project is expected to let in September of 2021.

Act 13 At-Risk Bridge Program

Pinegrove Township completed its Act 13 project to address a culvert issue on Township Line Road over Tarklin Run. Issues with the two existing culverts have led to undermining of the pipes and bank erosion, which if allowed to progress, could have led to sinkholes in the roadway and additional encroachment on the roadway shoulders. The solution to replace this culvert with a single, larger aluminized culvert with concrete headwalls and riprap scour protection was supported by PennDOT. The \$104,750.00 project was completed in 2019.

Heavy rain events contributed to the need for three other Act 13 projects to occur in 2020.

Aires Hill Bridge in Cranberry Township was closed after an inspection revealed a large void in the stream channel under the bridge along with extensive scour below one of the abutment walls. They used \$13,000 in Act 13 funding, along with their own funds to repair the stream channel and install a concrete toe wall where the abutment was undermined in order to reopen the bridge as quickly as possible, while maintaining structural integrity.



Aires Hill Bridge, Cranberry Township

Cranberry Township also received \$42,326.64 in Act 13 funds to perform repairs and scouring that compromised Van Road Bridge, leading to its closing. Along with their own funds, the township installed new concrete toe walls at the base of both abutments and installed rip rap along the wing walls.



Old Beech Road Bridge, Irwin Township

Irwin Township was able to make necessary repairs to Old Beech Road Bridge while also providing for streambank protection and foundation stability in the future. Old Beech Road dead ends where Interstate 80 cuts it off, and the bridge provides the only route for multiple residents and a business. The township utilized \$48,312 in Act 13 funds along with their own funding to make all the repairs and keep this road open to its residents.

Richland Township utilized \$4,110.35 in Act 13 funding to perform underpinning work on Starr Road Bridge that arose due to bridge scour. In addition to repairs to the bridge foundation, they also added rip rap under the bridge to attempt to prevent further scour from occurring. They were able to save a significant amount of money by performing the work themselves.

Planning Efforts Continue for Multi-Use Trail from Franklin to Sugarcreek

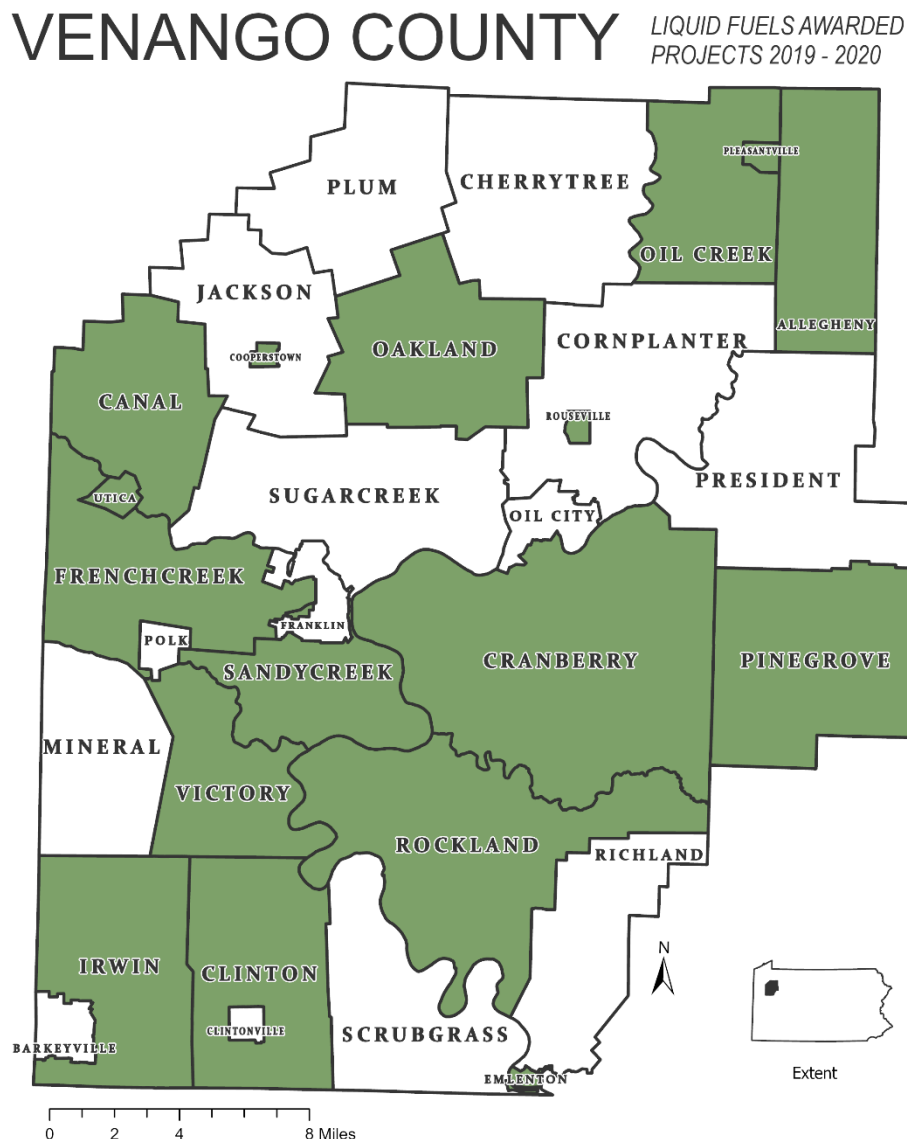
Design and planning efforts continued throughout 2019 and 2020 for the multi-use trail that will extend from Liberty Street in Franklin, to Front Street in Sugarcreek, along Allegheny Boulevard (Route 8/62).

The trail is intended to replace what is widely regarded as an unsafe dirt path that pedestrians travel along the four-lane highway. The asphalt multi-use trail will be at least 8 feet wide beginning at the end of the bridge where the sidewalk currently ends. This will allow for two-way pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Considerations include, but are not limited to: ADA compliance, safety at intersections with local businesses, a variable right-of-way, utility locations, and environmental concerns. The project is expected to be let in August of 2021.



Multi-Use Trail, Franklin to Sugarcreek



Projects completed throughout the county, numerous projects completed in Frenchcreek Township and Oil City

Hazard Mitigation & Planning

Hazard Mitigation Projects Began

Work neared completion on the three subgrants for which funding was awarded in 2018. The projects contained within these subgrants were created to address emergency events regarding flooding issues surrounding the Chubb and Morrison Run watersheds.

The Joint Emergency Operations Center, located at the Franklin Professional Building, received a complete renovation in order to serve the entire county in the event of an emergency. The space was previously used as a physician's office; and was completely gutted, before receiving new electric, plumbing, flooring and wall overhauls as needed. Since completion, it has also been able to be used as a training facility for emergency workers.

Generators were installed at the Franklin Professional Building, Sandycreek Township Municipal Building and Sandycreek Fire Hall in 2020. These generators will provide emergency backup in the case of a power outage, supporting emergency personnel and providing a location for a warming station if needed during winter months.

The variable messaging signs and emergency barriers were purchased and delivered to the City of Franklin, where they are being stored in order to be used in the event of an emergency.

The fiber optic line extension project began in 2020, routing the line from the Franklin Professional Building to the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Franklin, then to the Sandycreek Municipal Building and Sandycreek Fire Hall. This configuration provides a redundant loop to protect from a service outage in the event of an emergency.



Stocked safety trailer, Franklin

All grants are expected to be closed out in 2021.

Floodplain Management

The end of 2020 brought news of one engineering firm requesting floodplain permitting information for a proposed stream bank stabilization along South Sandy Creek in Mineral Township. Venango County holds an agreement with Mineral Township to provide floodplain management services; therefore, this project will be undergoing approval in 2021. Ongoing floodplain management activities at the county level will include the establishment of a network of municipal floodplain managers, improving floodplain management procedure with documentation and standardized record-keeping, and prioritizing education and mitigation of flood related damages.



Kennerdell Lookout Fall 2020, Rockland Township

Community Development Planning - Key Events

In February 2019, award of \$300,000 HOME Investment Partnerships Program grant was announced to be utilized within the City of Franklin as a County partner.

In March 2019 – as part of a larger County project to rehabilitate and repopulate the vacant Oil City National Bank Building – the County's CDBG program (FFY2017) began a project to remove and replace the building's leaking roof.

2019

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr



In February 2019, the County awarded a contract to Bert Klapec Inc., on behalf of Cranberry Township's FFY2015 CDBG program, for demolition and clearance services to remove an unsafe structure, at 1294 Riverside Drive

GIS Planner, Joyce Jiang, conducts a blight analysis to inform project selection on a county wide basis with particular attention to properties in the Oil City area.

Cranberry Township announces decision to allocate its entire entitlement – less program admin – of \$93,294 into the housing rehabilitation program.

Sept

Oct

Nov

Dec



In November 2019, the County awarded a contract for demolition and clearance services to Bert Klapec Inc. to remove two abandoned residential structures, in Rouseville – at 23 Hiland Ave. and 64 Mechanic St. This was funded through the County's FFY2015 CDBG Contract.

Community Development Planning - Key Events

In July, the Borough of Sugarcreek modified its FFY2016 CDBG Contract to include approximately \$60,000 for LMI, owner-occupied home rehabilitation.

In August 2020, the County was awarded a \$125,000 Pennsylvania Housing And Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) fund grant, which was written solely for owner-occupied home rehabilitation on a Countywide basis.

May

Jun

Jul

Aug



In July 2019, the County awarded a contract to Shields Asphalt Paving to reconstruct the entirety of Upper Sage Run Road, in Cranberry Township, as part of the Township's FFY2015 CDBG program. The Township's workforce laid the groundwork for the project by shoring up the infrastructure beneath the roadway. In all, this project was funded across three years of the Township's CDBG program.

In December 2020, as part of the County's FFY2017 CDBG program, a contract was awarded to Blair Construction to rebuild the Barkeyville Borough Building's restroom, to bring it into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

2020

Oct

Nov

Dec

In October 2020, a contract was executed for Right Electric of Butler to purchase and install a gas-powered electric generator at the base of Cornplanter Hill Road in Cornplanter Township. The generator was mandated by DEP to secure safe drinking water for the several LMI households that live up the hillside in times of power outages and other such emergencies. This project was funded through the County's FFY2016 CDBG Contract.



This home, along Otter Street in Franklin, received a new roof along with several other improvements throughout the home. The railings on the front porch were also added. This project was funded through the HOME Investment Partnerships Program grant.

Subdivisions

2019

In 2019 there were a total of 65 subdivisions approved by the Planning Commission. This is a 3% decrease from the number of approvals granted in 2018.

Cranberry Township has seen the most activity in 2019 with 11 subdivisions, continuing the trend for the 9th year in a row.

Rockland Township came in second with 7 subdivisions approved in 2019. Sugarcreek Borough had 5 subdivisions approved this year.

2020

In 2020 there were a total of 44 subdivisions approved by the Planning Commission. This is a 32% decrease from the number of approvals granted in 2019.

Cranberry Township, Frenchcreek Township, and Rockland Township had seen the most activity in 2020 with 5 subdivisions each. Sugarcreek Borough and Oakland Township were next, with 4 subdivisions approved this year.

Land Developments

2019

The Planning Commission received nine land development applications in 2019. Eight of those applications were approved and the other one applicant is working towards approval in early 2020. Two development applications from 2018 were approved in 2019 as well for a total of ten approved development plans in 2019.

Notable land developments approved in 2019 include Chris's Tire Shop in Cranberry Township, J&A Tool building addition in Sugarcreek Borough, Bear's Furniture building addition in Sugarcreek Borough, Country Fair building addition in the City of Oil City, and Dollar General in Polk Borough.

In 2019, the county continued their contract with Lennon, Smith and Souleret Engineering, Inc., which serves as the reviewing engineering firm.

2020

The Planning Commission received five land development applications in 2020. Two of those applications were approved and the other three applicants are working towards approval in early 2021. Three development applications from 2019 were approved in 2020 as well for a total of five approved development plans in 2020.

Notable land developments approved in 2020 include Farmer's Bank parking lot in Emlenton Borough, Team Hardinger expansion in Barkeyville Brough, and Paul Gierlach's service garage in Sugarcreek Borough.

In 2020, the county continued their contract with Lennon, Smith and Souleret Engineering, Inc., which serves as the reviewing engineering firm.

2019 Subdivision Report - Minor, Major, and Land Developments

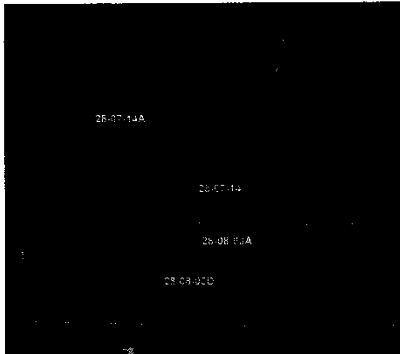
Municipality	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total Land Developments	Total Per Municipality
Allegheny						1						1		2
Barkeyville			1										1	2
Canal								2				1		3
Cherrytree	1							3						4
Clinton			1					1						2
Clintonville			1											1
Cooperstown														-
Cornplanter			1	1					1					3
Cranberry	1		1	2	1	1		2	1		2		2	13
Emlenton													1	1
Franklin			3											3
Frenchcreek	1			1					1					3
Irwin						1								1
Jackson														-
Mineral														-
Oakland	1							1						2
Oil City			1		2								1	4
Oil Creek														-
Pinegrove			1					1			2			4
Pleasantville														-
Plum														-
Polk			1										1	2
President									1					1
Richland														-
Rockland	1	1	1	1				1			1	1		7
Rouseville											1	1		2
Sandycreek							1	1	1					3
Scrubgrass				1			1	1						3
Sugarcreek				2			1				2		3	8
Utica													1	1
Victory														-
2019	5	1	9	11	3	3	3	13	5	0	2	10	10	Grand Total:
Monthly Accumulation	6	15	26	29	32	35	48	53	53	55	65*			75

*Value represents the total Minor and Major Subdivisions

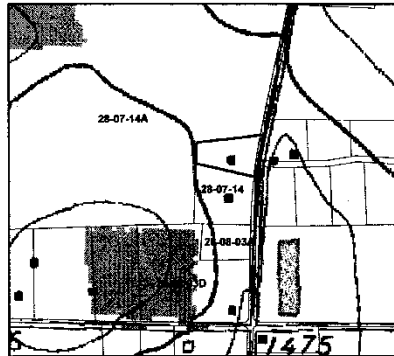
2020 Subdivision Report - Minor, Major, and Land Developments

Municipality	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total Land Developments	Total Per Municipality
Allegheny														-
Barkeyville													2	2
Canal									1					1
Cherrytree						1								1
Clinton						1								1
Clintonville						1								1
Cooperstown														-
Cornplanter														-
Cranberry		2	1					1			1			5
Emlenton													1	1
Franklin														-
Frenchcreek			1			1		2				1		5
Irwin						1						1		2
Jackson		1									1	1		3
Mineral														-
Oakland			2				1				1			4
Oil City								1						1
Oil Creek									1					1
Pinegrove											2			2
Pleasantville														-
Plum								3						3
Polk														-
President														-
Richland										1	1	1		3
Rockland								2	1	1		1		5
Rouseville														-
Sandycreek							1				1			2
Scrubgrass								1			1			2
Sugarcreek			1							1			2	4
Utica														-
Victory														-
2020	0	3	5	0	0	5	2	10	3	3	7	6	5	Grand Total:
Monthly Accumulation	3	8	8	8	13	15	25	28	31	38	44*			49

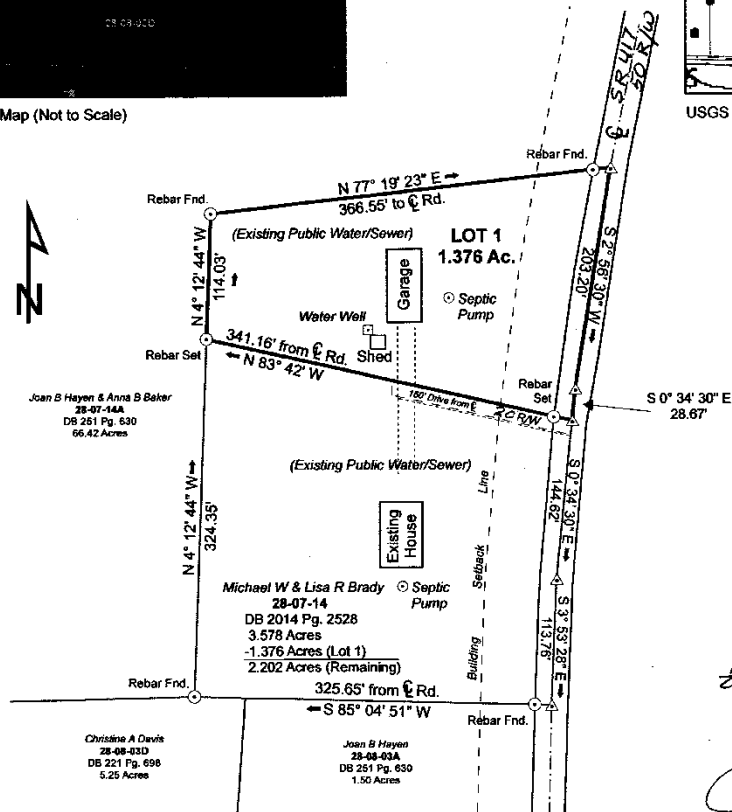
*Value represents the total Minor and Major Subdivisions



Vicinity Map (Not to Scale)



USGS Quad (Franklin, PA)



Frank Pankratz Surveying
188 Lynmarann Lane
Franklin, PA 16323
(814) 671-7831

Layman 2-13-2020
Zoning Office

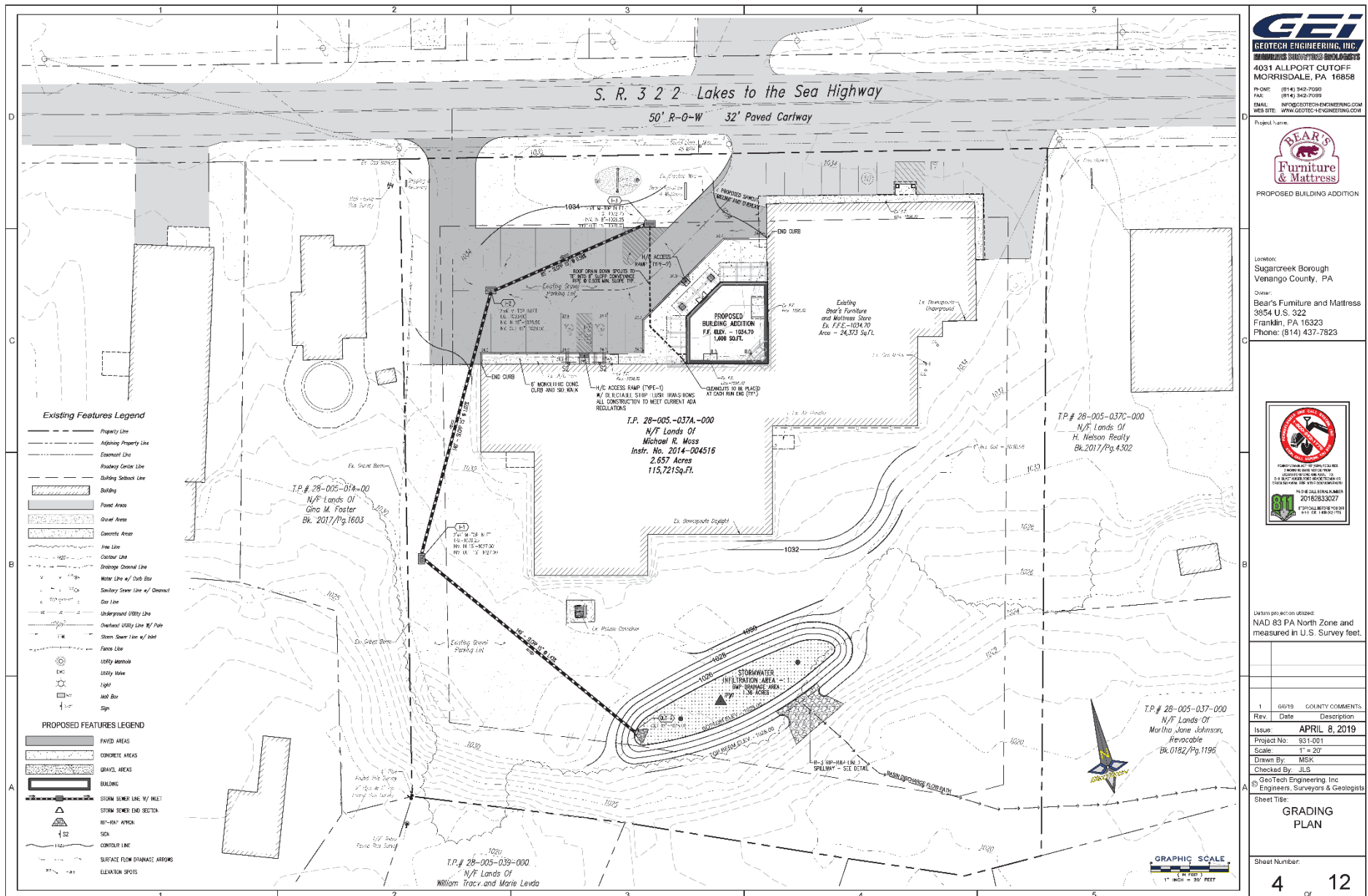
On this Date 02-12-20
The Sugarcreek Borough Planning
Commission Approved This Plan

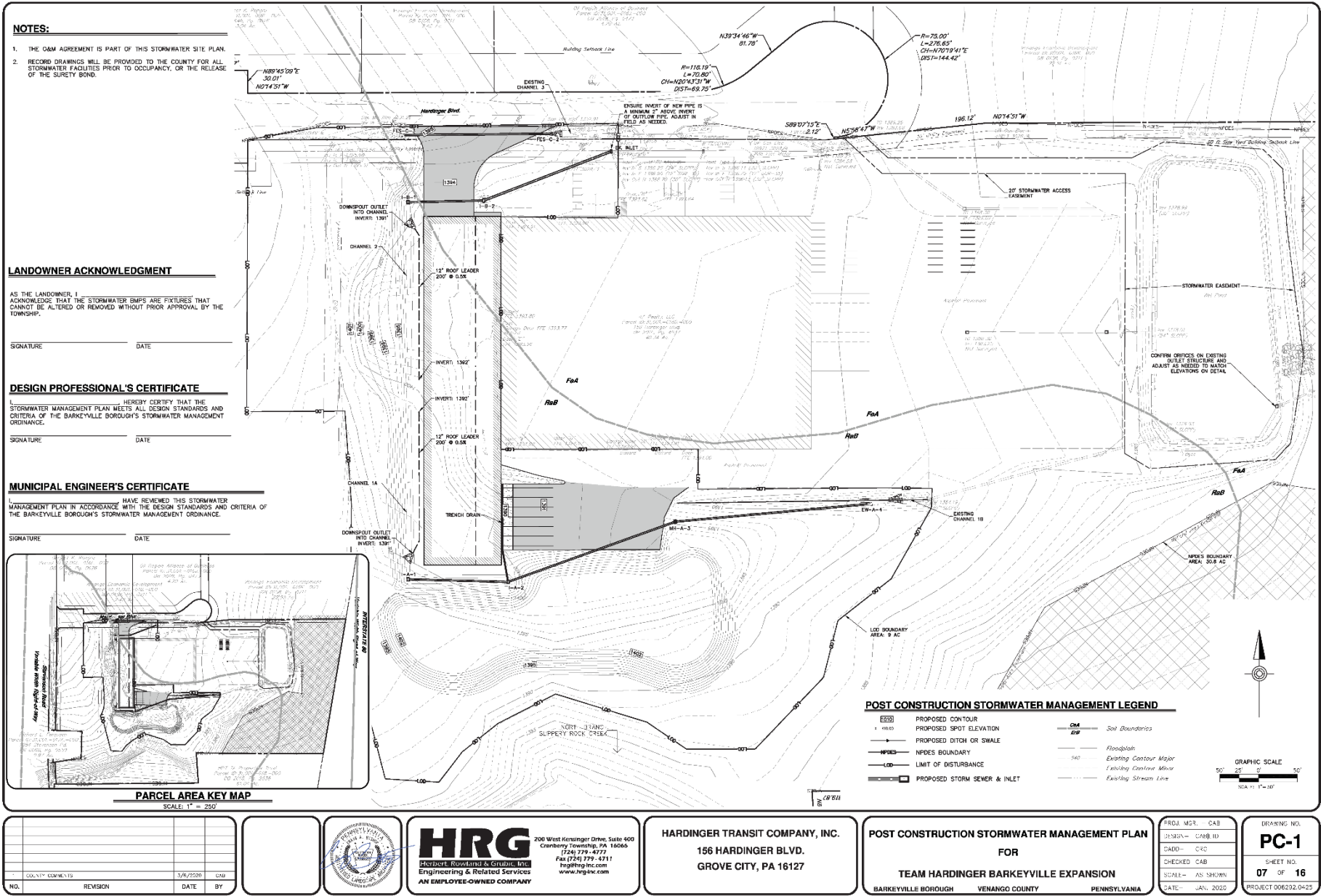
John Pankratz *R. D. Layman*

2020 - 839

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Sidney Seal:
County of Venango, Venango County
Delaware County, Venango County
My commission expires August 10, 2023
Commission number 1235880
Member, Pennsylvania Association of Notaries

MINOR SUBDIVISION		FINAL PLAN	
TITLE: BRADY SUBDIVISION			
MUNICIPALITY: SUGARCREEK BOROUGH, VENANGO CO., PA.			
OWNER: MICHAEL W. & LISA R BRADY			
ADDRESS: 2341 ROCKY GROVE AVENUE FRANKLIN, PA 16323			
ZONING INFORMATION		NOTES	
DISTRICT:	MIN. AREA: 1 ACRE	PINS SET 1/2" REBAR +/- 30" LONG	
MIN. WIDTH: 200'	Public water/sewer		
SETBACKS:	FRONT: 50' SIDE: 10' REAR: 25'		
PROPOSED LAND USE: RESIDENTIAL	NORTH ARROW		
ACREAGE OF TRACT: 3.58 AC.	N		
AREA OF DEVELOPMENT: 1.376 AC.			
TOTAL NO. OF LOTS: 1			
MINIMUM LOT SIZE: 1.376 AC.			
MINIMUM LOT WIDTH: 28.67'			
DATE: JANUARY 10, 2020	SCALE: 1" = 100'		
VENANGO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION			
SUBD. ADMIN. <i>2/12/20</i>	COND. APPROVAL <i>2/12/20</i>		
EXEC. DIR. <i>2/12/20</i>	COMMENTS <i>2020-05-28</i>		
I, the County of Venango, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as filed in the office of the County Recorder, and that the same is the property of the owner and/or equitable owner of the property shown on this plat, and that he/she acknowledges the same to be his/her act and deed and desires the same be recorded as such according to law. Witness my hand and seal the day and date above. Signature <i>Debra Wackel</i> Date <i>02-11-2020</i>			





Year-to-Year Subdivision Overview (Minor, Major, and Land Developments)

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total Land Developments
2020	-	3	5	-	-	5	2	10	3	3	7	6	5
Monthly Accumulation		3	8	8	8	13	15	25	28	31	38	44*	
2019	5	1	9	11	3	3	3	13	5	-	2	10	10
Monthly Accumulation		6	15	26	29	32	35	48	53	53	55	65*	
2018	4	3	7	4	3	5	13	6	6	5	2	9	8
Monthly Accumulation		7	14	18	21	26	39	45	51	56	58	67*	
2017	6	3	8	6	10	13	5	8	4	8	5	6	7
Monthly Accumulation		9	17	23	33	46	51	59	63	71	76	82*	
2016	10	1	6	6	7	8	7	4	6	10	3	9	-
Monthly Accumulation		11	17	23	30	38	45	49	55	65	68	77*	
2015	6	3	7	6	7	6	3	3	3	6	10	6	1
Monthly Accumulation		9	16	22	29	35	38	41	44	50	60	66*	
2014	9	5	8	11	3	4	7	9	7	2	7	6	Not available
Monthly Accumulation		14	22	33	36	40	47	56	63	65	72	78*	
2013	4	2	3	3	4	11	7	3	6	4	7	2	Not available
Monthly Accumulation		6	9	12	16	27	34	37	43	47	54	56*	
2012	7	7	2	5	6	7	2	6	5	2	6	7	Not available
Monthly Accumulation		14	16	21	27	34	36	42	47	49	55	62*	
2011	6	3	6	6	6	5	6	6	7	5	7	4	Not available
Monthly Accumulation		9	15	21	27	32	38	44	51	56	63	67*	

*Value represents the year's total of Minor and Major Subdivisions

Venango County Board of Commissioners

2019

Timothy S. Brooks
Vincent L. Witherup
Albert “Chip” Abramovic



2020

Sam Breene
Mike Dulaney
Albert “Chip” Abramovic

Planning Commission Staff

Executive Director – Jason Ruggiero

Deputy Director – Hilary Buchanan

Senior Planner – Erik Johnson

GIS Planner – Joyce Jiang (2019)

Geospatial Analyst – Alexandria Shreffler (2020)

Land Use Planner – Ashley Smith

Community Development Planner – Joshua Sterling

Staff Training

DCED Environmental Review Training, September 19th 2019
DCNR’s Grant Training Workshop, November 20th 2019
PEMA’s Floodplain Management Training, January 23rd 2020
Bridges Out of Poverty Training, January 31st 2020
DCED Virtual Income Verification Virtual Trainings, June – July 2020
PA Floodplain Managers Webinar Series, September 2020
DCED SHPO Historic Resource Survey Forms, September 29th 2020
PAFPM Implementation of GIS and H&H, October 22nd 2020
DCED SHPO Consulting Party Coordination Webinar, December 10th 2020
HUD Environmental Review Webinar, December 10th 2020
Venango Chamber of Commerce’s - Leadership Venango 2019

Conferences

PAHRA DCED Conference, October 6-8, 2019
PA Brownfields Conference, March 10-11, 2020
Esri User Conference, July 2020
URISA GIS Pro, September – October 2020

Workshops

Neighborhood Assistance Program Workshop, February 11, 2020
Amazon Web Services Migration Webinar, August 27th 2020
URISA Workshop: Experiential Learning, September 24th 2020
Venango Conservation District – Dirt and Gravel Workshop

Professional Associations, Committees & Outreach Opportunities

American Planning Association (APA)
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)
Pennsylvania Association of State Floodplain Managers (PAFPM)
Pennsylvania Mapping and Geographic Information Consortium (PAMAGIC)

Planning Commission Board Members

Chair – Nancy Marano

Vice-Chair – Frank Pankratz

Secretary/Treasurer – Greg Miller

Annie Fuchs*

John McClelland

Ben Porter*

Tracy Jamieson

Nick Melnick

Sue Smith*

Keith Klingler

Bill Moon

Glenn Speer**

John Neidich

Departing Members

The Planning Commission extends gratitude to Rodney Gladd and Dave Owens for completing 10 years of service between 2009 and 2019.

Tribute to Rick Burchfield, 2016 – 2020

One tragedy brought by 2020 was the loss of Rick Burchfield, a dedicated Planning Board Member. Rick had volunteered his service since April of 2016, providing valuable feedback and insight to staff, board members, and the general community regarding the development and expansion of businesses in Venango County. His quick-wit and kindness will be deeply missed.



Rick Burchfield

*New 2019 Members, ** New 2020 Members

Meeting Schedule 2021

3rd Tuesday of each month (except May)

Start time for meetings will be 6:30 PM

In-Person Meeting Location:

737 Elk Street
Franklin PA, 16323

January 19, 2021

February 16, 2021

March 16, 2021

April 20, 2021

May 17, 2021

June 15, 2021

July 20, 2021

August 17, 2021

September 21, 2021

October 19, 2021

November 16, 2021

December 21, 2021

VCRPC Office
1168 Liberty Street
Franklin, PA 16323

