

2020 Annual Report  
Mifflin County  
Planning Commission





***MIFFLIN COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
2020 ANNUAL REPORT***

Prepared by

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October 28, 2021

# MIFFLIN COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



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October 14, 2021

Mifflin County Board of Commissioners  
Mifflin County Courthouse  
20 North Wayne Street  
Lewistown, PA 17044

Dear County Commissioners:

The Mifflin County Planning Commission is pleased to submit to you and the citizens of Mifflin County our 2020 Annual Report. For over 50 years, the Planning Commission has been actively involved with planning and community development projects throughout Mifflin County and the surrounding region. Our report for 2020 describes new projects of broad community interest and reports progress on continuing projects. However, it must be stated that 2020 was unlike any prior year.

As we started into 2020, it was the goal to continue to implement our various plans, including *Visions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Next, and without much warning, the worldwide pandemic of Covid-19 began. As much as we like to plan ahead, the world-wide pandemic is something that caught us all off-guard. Accordingly, planning had to change, yet the Planning Commission members and Planning and Development Department staff have focused on implementing recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. We have spent a large part of 2020 adapting to life in a pandemic, through lock-downs, and major impacts to our business and non-profits community. Nonetheless, we were still able to accomplish a lot in 2020, which is why we are furnishing this report to you.

As always, our accomplishments would not have been possible without the continued support and assistance of the County Board of Commissioners. In consideration of this, and in fulfilling our obligation under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 as amended, it is with great pleasure that we present to you the 2020 Annual Report.

Thank you again for your invaluable help throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Tom Lake

Chair



*Progress through Planning*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

<b>1.1 Mifflin County Board of Commissioners</b>	1
<b>1.2 Mifflin County Planning Commission</b>	1
<b>1.3 Mifflin County Planning and Development Department</b>	1
<b>1.4 Planning and Development Committees</b>	2

## SECTION 2: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Planning

Comprehensive Plan	4
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act County Block Grant	4
Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee	4
Open Space and Rural Recreation	5
Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan	7
Planning Services	8
Revolving Loan Fund Program	8
Transportation Planning	8
Monument Square Streetscape Project - Phase VI	8
Reedsville Streetscape Project	9
Lewistown Train Station Improvement/Feasibility Study	9
SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization	10
State Transportation Commission	11
Mifflin County 2020 TIP Projects Map	13

### 2.2 Community Development

Community Development Block Grant Program	14
Mifflin County 2020 Application Status	14
Table 2A Mifflin County CDBG Projects, 2020	15
Table 2B Brown Township CDBG Projects, 2020	15
Table 2C Derry Township CDBG Projects, 2020	15
Table 2D Granville Township CDBG Projects, 2020	15
Table 2E Lewistown Borough CDBG Projects, 2020	16
Mifflin County Community Development Plan – Three-Year Plan	16
Mifflin County Project Status	16
Granville Township Project Status	16
Lewistown Borough Project Status	17
County Project Status	18
Armagh Township Project Status	18
Mifflin County Microenterprise Loan Program	19
Housing Rehabilitation Program	19

**SECTION 3: LAND USE**

**3.1 Subdivision and Land Development**

Figure 3A Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews, 2001-2020 _____	21
Table 3A Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews, 2013-2020 _____	22
Figure 3B Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews by Type, 2020 _____	23
Table 3B Subdivision and Land Development Plan Types by Municipality, 2020 _____	24
Figure 3C Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews/Types by Municipality, 2020 _____	25
Mifflin County Subdivision and Land Development Map, 2014-2020 _____	26

**SECTION 4: MEMBERS AND STAFF**

**4.1 Planning Commission**

Member Development _____	27
PA State Watershed Improvement Plan Phase 3 (WIP) Initiative _____	27
CDBG Update _____	27
Lewistown Amtrak Station Conceptual Design _____	28

**4.2 Planning and Development Department**

Staff Development _____	28
County Planning Directors Association _____	29
Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) _____	29

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Mifflin County Board of Commissioners

Kevin P. Kodish  
Mark Sunderland  
Robert P. Postal, Jr.



The Board of Commissioners is the County's chief governing body. The Commissioners appoint the Planning Commission as an advisory board, which is provided for in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).

### 1.2 Mifflin County Planning Commission

Thomas Lake, Chair  
Cyle Vogt, Vice Chair  
J. Neal Shawver, Secretary  
Michele Bair  
Jason Cunningham  
David Pennebaker

Kent Spicher  
Dan Dunmire  
Kay Semler, Alternate  
James Spendiff (passed away 9/6/20)  
Dan Firth (appointed 11/5/20)

Linus Fenicle, Solicitor  
Reager & Adler, P.C.

The mission of the Mifflin County Planning Commission is to provide strategic, coordinated and objective guidance and oversight to the growth, planning and development activities of Mifflin County. In doing so, it is the goal of the Planning Commission to ensure Mifflin County's future is characterized by a healthy environment, economy and society achieved through proactive planning, citizen representation, effective communication and the provision of professional services from the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department.

### 1.3 Mifflin County Planning and Development Department

Mark Colussy, Director  
Chastity Fultz, Community Development Administrator  
Douglas Marks, Housing Rehabilitation Specialist/Construction Manager  
Tiffany Brought, Grants Fiscal Manager  
Paula Hoffman, Planning Clerk  
*(as of 12/31/20 – see pg. 28 for staff changes)*



The Planning and Development Department is responsible for providing staff assistance to the Mifflin County Planning Commission; administering the Mifflin County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, Home Investment Partnership Program, Act 137 (The Affordable Housing Fund Program) and Housing Rehabilitation program; maintaining the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan; and coordinating with other agencies in the areas of transportation, housing, economic development, municipal waste management, hazard mitigation, recreation and tourism.

In addition to the projects outlined in this report, staff members of the Planning and Development Department were active in several community groups and committees to support efforts to improve the quality of life for residents of Mifflin County. Some additional activities of the staff include involvement with and participation on the SEDA-COG Regional Transportation Advisory Committee, Mifflin County

Parks and Recreation Council, Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee, Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau, Mifflin County Agricultural Preservation Board, Downtown Lewistown, Inc. (DLI), Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association, Juniata Valley Behavior and Developmental Services Citizen Advisory Board, PA County Planning Directors Association, YMCA, PA Municipal Planning Education Institute, Area Agency on Aging/Call-A-Ride Services Local Advisory Committee and the Mifflin County Housing Coalition.

## 1.4 Planning and Development Committees

The following committees were active in 2020:

CDBG/Housing Rehabilitation Advisory Committee: The CDBG/Housing Rehabilitation Advisory Committee provides guidance on policy and programmatic issues to the Planning and Development Department staff. The committee reviews the annual proposals for CDBG funds and makes funding recommendations to the Mifflin County Board of Commissioners, as well as resolves program issues that require policy interpretation or policy revision.

Neal Shawver      Mark Colussy      Chastity Fultz      Doug Marks      Kay Semler

Subdivision and Land Development Review Committee: The Subdivision and Land Development Review Committee reviews subdivision and land development plans and provides recommendations to the Mifflin County Planning Commission regarding approval of these plans. This committee meets monthly.

Daniel Dunmire      David Pennebaker      James Spendiff      Dan Firth

Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Committee: The Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Committee provide recommendations concerning recreational policies, facilities, finances and programs. The Committee works with municipalities throughout the county and provides assistance to Mifflin County in reviewing projects submitted under the Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund program for open space and recreation.

Clint Aurand      Jamie Fultz      Tom Kerstetter      Kevin O'Donnell      Ann Thompson  
David Bolger      Amy Smith      Marie Mulvihill      Venus Shade      Cyle Vogt  
Ron Napikoski      Ann Kanagy

Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee: The Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee seeks to develop options and opportunities to improve broadband internet service in Mifflin County through a collaborative effort that includes residents, businesses, internet providers (Atlantic Broadband, Century Link, Comcast, Nittany Media, and Verizon), Mifflin County School District, and local government. Effectively addressing both the existing and future telecommunication needs of the County is the central goal.

Clint Aurand      Michael Hain      Matthew Moore      Kristen Ritchey      Michael Tate  
Craig Bubb      John Rhone      Kay Semler      Gene Wolfkill  
Doug Cunningham      Mark Colussy\*\*      Tiffany Brought\*\*      Chastity Fultz\*\*

\*advisory representative from SEDA-COG

\*\*advisory representatives from Planning and Development Department



Mifflin County Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee: The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee is responsible for updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan and evaluating the plan annually.

Brenda Aumiller	Sharina Harshbarger	Paul Maidens	Ronald Napikoski	Matt Stringer
Craig Bubb	Bob Henry	Matt Moore	Pat Shoop	Ann Thompson
Rex Fink	*Phil Lucas	*Mark Colussy	*Chastity Fultz	

\*Mark Colussy and Chastity Fultz serve as staff representatives from the Planning and Development Department. Phil Lucas represents the Public Safety Office.

## SECTION 2: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

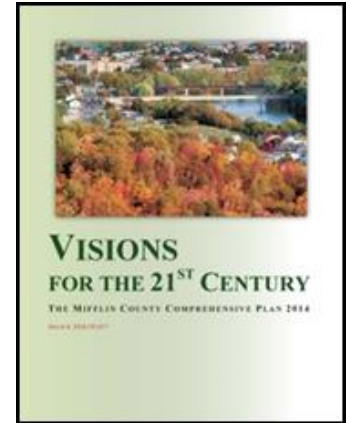
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### 2.1 Planning

#### Comprehensive Plan

The Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Mifflin County Commissioners on April 24, 2014. The Comprehensive Plan examines population trends and long term needs for housing, transportation, community facilities, economic development and natural resource protection and recommends changes or continued efforts in county policy and regulations.

Since the Plan's adoption, the Mifflin County Planning Commission decided to annually work toward implementing some features in the plan. This past year the focus was follow-up on activities started in 2017 related to transportation, connectivity, open space/recreation and natural/manmade resource protection and development.



#### *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act County Block Grant*

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law at the federal level on March 27, 2020, aimed at an economic relief package to protect the American people from the public health and economic impacts related to the Covid-19 pandemic. On May 29, 2020, Governor Wolf signed PA Act 24 of 2020 into law, allowing for the distribution of Covid-19 County Block Grants, as authorized by the Federal Government as part of the CARES Act, to each of the Counties in the Commonwealth. In 2020, the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department was asked to co-administer the \$4.1M Block Grant with support by SEDA-COG. Staff quickly sought ways to make the funding available to the hardest hit sectors of the community, including Small Businesses, Non-Profits, Broadband ISPs, and Municipalities.

Part of the outreach into the community included flyers posted throughout the county, internet posts, mass and direct emails, radio announcements, and even the development of a stand-alone webpage in [www.restoremifflincounty.com](http://www.restoremifflincounty.com). The county collaborated with MCIDC, the chamber, and Downtown Lewistown, Inc. to help review applications that would come in, and then pass them to SEDA-COG for a final eligibility review. The commissioners also formed an ad-hoc review committee of key members of the community with a financial background to help do a final review of the eligible applications before a recommendation was made to the commissioners to fund.



After filtering through all the applications to determine eligibility, it was determined that the County Commissioners were able to fund every eligible request that was made to the county including 27 small businesses, 13 non-profit agencies, 5 municipalities, and 2 broadband ISPs relief grants. By being able to fund all the eligible projects, this allowed enough money to be utilized for county social distancing and sanitary equipment, as well as reimbursement for critical personnel.

#### *Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee*

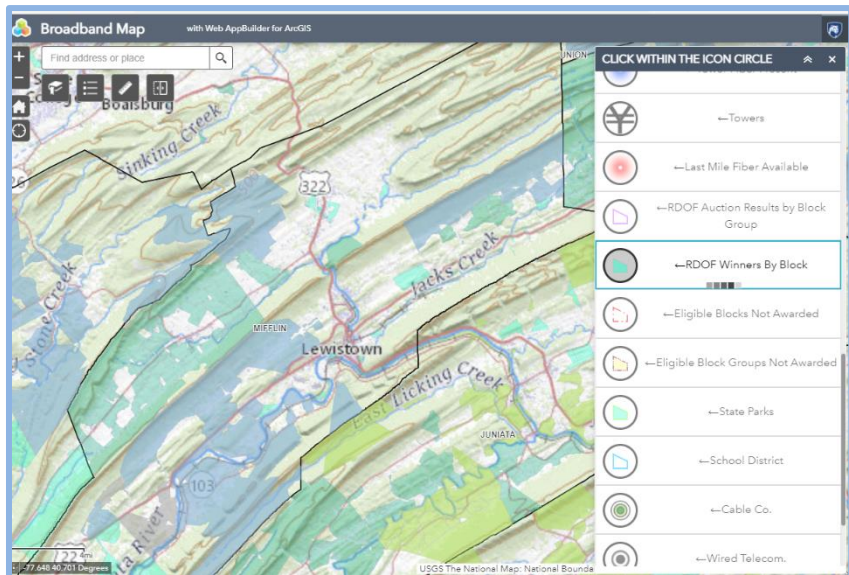
In 2020, the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department continued working with the Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee to find ways to improve broadband service in Mifflin County.

The focus in 2020 has been how to find the funding needed to serve the unserved and underserved areas of the county based on work done in 2018 and 2019 to identify key areas of need.

Mifflin County had previously signed an agreement with Noovis, LLC to take the data that the county has developed in the past couple of years and look at the feasibility of targeting pilot areas in the county where service could potentially be expanded. The study included four potential areas in Decatur, Bratton, and Wayne Townships as well as an area considered by one provider in Armagh Township. While the average cost per mile to build infrastructure varies, the overall average cost was around \$20,000 per mile plus engineering charges of around \$10,000 assuming 25 poles-per-mile. There was also the potential cost of \$400 per pole for the owner to determine if make ready work was necessary. An overall finding was a hybrid approach of fiber optics and fixed wireless solution. The study recommended a cooperative or authority being developed to help move the project forward as well as a public/private collaboration that would minimize what many ISPs complain about in accepting public funds as has been evident in many federal initiatives. The key moving forward would be to finding the funding needed to deploy broadband into these areas of the county.

As part of the CARES Act funding, the county was able to work with two new ISPs in the county: Mifflin County Wireless and CentreWISP. Both firms are considered Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs), as they provide a fixed point to point wireless solution where traditional ISPs do not serve. Both firms also utilized the Noovis study to identify the key areas to target for new service areas. Simultaneously, CentreWISP was able to receive funding from SEDA-COG for a deployment in the River Road area of Bratton Township. SEDA-COG received a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to allow for a \$47,000 grant and \$95,000 low interest loan for the project.

Also in 2020, the FCC opened the 904 Auction, called the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. This auction allowed for broadband providers to receive dedicated funding for census block groups that did not have adequate broadband coverage. Four IACs won awards in Mifflin County: Zito Media, Windstream, CentreWISP, and SpaceX. Meanwhile, Professor Harry Crissy at Penn State had developed a robust online broadband mapping tool and gave a demonstration to Mark Colussy and the County Commissioners. Professor Crissy was able to map existing providers, as well as things such as the 904 Auction winners. This is a great tool to continue to monitor the broadband needs within the county. The county will continue to seek other funding sources to expand and improve broadband service throughout the county.



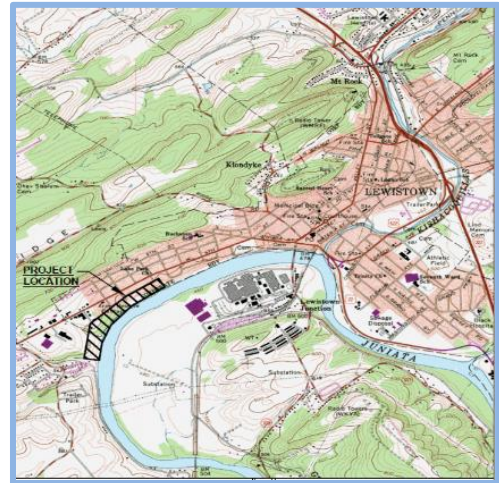
### ***Open Space and Rural Recreation***

The Mifflin County Planning and Development Department continued its collaboration with the United Way of Mifflin-Juniata, by working with the Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Council to promote the goals and objectives of the Juniata-Mifflin County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan. The Plan, which was adopted by the Mifflin County Commissioners in 2010, encourages

the expansion of recreational opportunities and advancing active healthy lifestyles for residents in the community.

The council, with the assistance of the Planning and Development Department and the United Way, focused on completing the Juniata River Trail project, developing a trail feasibility study to connect Victory Park with Rec Park and Kish Park and management of the Act 13 Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund.

In 2019, Mifflin County decided, with the support of the Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Council, the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau and Lewistown Borough, to expand its first multi-purpose recreation trail, the S.H. Rothermel Trail (Juniata River Trail), along the Juniata River. Phase I of the trail, within Lewistown Borough, was completed in November of 2018. It provides walking, jogging and cycling opportunities and covers a three-quarter mile area. Phase II of the trail, which is also within the Borough of Lewistown, will continue work completed with Phase 1 by providing an ADA accessible trail approximately half mile in length extending from Crystal Springs Avenue west along the north shore of the River to the border between the Borough of Lewistown and Granville Township in the area of State Street. The trail will be located on the towpath of the old Juniata Division of the Pennsylvania Canal. Phase II of the trail will also create a western trailhead at the State Fire Academy property. Currently, there is only one entrance and exit for Phase I and this phase will provide a secondary point of access to the trail. This action will also greatly improve ADA accessibility. The Borough of Lewistown has signed a memorandum of understanding with Mifflin County to maintain this new trail segment if it is funded.



Unlike Phase I, where all the trail was owned by the Borough of Lewistown, Phase II will cross private property owned by Juniata Concrete Company and state owned land used by the State Fire Academy. Outreach began to the two property owners following the completion of Phase I. Both property owners were positive about the proposed half mile extension and required property easements. An easement across the Juniata Concrete Company property was signed in the summer of 2019. An easement across the Fire Academy property was more involved with the first step being state legislative approval that also occurred in the summer of 2019. The Fire Academy easement was drafted by the Department of Government Services in October of 2019 and be executed in Spring of 2021.

Plans to extend the trail involved the same two grant agencies as Phase I, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The first application to DCNR was submitted in April for \$290,000 and the second to DCED in May for \$250,000. This was complemented by financial assistance from Mifflin County and the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau. In September, Mifflin County was awarded \$200,000 from DCED, which was less than requested. The DCNR request was denied in November, primarily because the one easement was not in place. Mifflin County did reapply for funding in April of 2020 and, awarded



the one easement was not in place. Mifflin County did reapply for funding in April of 2020 and, awarded

the full request of \$295,000 in November of 2020. The project will go to permitting and final design by the EADS Group in 2021.

Also starting in 2019, the Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Council also began working with the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department in looking at developing a feasibility study that would connect Victory Park, the Kish River Walk, Rec Park in Lewistown Borough and Kish Park in Derry Township. This trail connection was a recommendation in the County's Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan (2010) and the Lewistown River Walk Trail and Feasibility Study (2005). In order to move the project forward, a partnership was required to fund the development of the study, which included Mifflin County, the Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Council, Derry Township, Lewistown Borough and the Victory Park Association. These sources were supplemented in the summer of 2019 by RecTap funds through the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society awarded to the Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Council. The study will explore if and how this trail would work as well as a possible connection with the Stone Arch Bridge. The firm of YSM, Landscape Architects, was hired to undertake the study. A draft of the study was completed in January 2020 and finalized in August 2020.

Another joint project was the management of the Act 13 Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund program. The council suggested that the county commissioners fund the additional amount needed to match the DCNR C2P2 grant application. The commissioners were receptive of this idea, granting an additional \$30,000 in match towards the project. By combining the previously awarded DCED grant with the local monies collected, there was enough money to request the final 50% needed from DCNR via a C2P2 grant. On December 14, 2020, the county received the executed contract so that the project could move forward. The next steps would be to have the county engineer take the project through permitting and final design. Due to delays in permit reviews at DEP, it is expected that this project will be constructed in 2022.

### ***Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan***

Every five years the county is required by PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to update the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP). The plan update addresses and expands upon the previous plan's coverage of multiple natural hazards and manmade hazards. The purpose of the update is to review current data pertaining to hazards affecting the county and its municipalities, determine their risks to populations and critical facilities, assess the county's and municipalities' capacity to deal with the identified hazards, and to identify future actions/projects to mitigate such hazards. A municipality must participate in the development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and adopt the final plan after it is approved by the grant agencies and the county commissioners, if they do not they will not be eligible for future Hazard Mitigation Grant funds after an emergency or natural disaster occurs.

In late 2019, the Hazard Mitigation plan was sent to PEMA and FEMA for review. On January 28, 2020 the Mifflin County Planning Office received a letter from FEMA indicating the approval of the plan, pending adoption (APA). Once the county and at least one municipality adopt the plan via the resolution, the plan is considered approved. On March 2, 2020 Armagh Township signed the resolution. The county approved the resolution on March 5, 2020. Several other municipalities adopted the plan in 2020.

This project was managed by the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department in collaboration with the Mifflin County Public Safety Office.

## **Planning Services**

The Planning and Development Department provides planning services to Derry Township to assist the Derry Township Planning Commission with reviewing their subdivision and land development plans and regulations, as well as zoning ordinance changes. Professional planning staff in the department attend regularly scheduled Derry Township Planning Commission meetings and keep the township informed of important matters. Over the past eighteen years, the Planning and Development Department has assisted the township with reviewing approximately 214 subdivision or land development plans.

This type of contract service agreement is available to municipalities in the county. In addition to the services mentioned above, the Planning and Development Department can also provide assistance with comprehensive planning, Capital Investment Program/Budget reviews and planning commission training and education.

## **Revolving Loan Fund Program**

In 2005, Mifflin County established its Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to encourage business retention and expansion for new and existing businesses in the Greater Lewistown area (Burnham and Lewistown Boroughs and Derry and Granville Townships). The goal was to create or save one job for each \$10,000 loaned with a maximum loan amount of \$50,000. Funding for this program is based on a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program.

The program guidelines were established in collaboration with participating local lending institutions. If the local bank is comfortable with the loan, they partner with Mifflin County in overseeing the loan, which results in reduced loan costs for the local business. Three banks have agreed to participate in the program including Kish Bank, Juniata Valley Bank and MCS Bank. Over the past fourteen years, Mifflin County has provided four loans through the RLF to area businesses.

The Planning and Development Department has one active loan. Revolving loan funds are available for interested businesses in the Greater Lewistown area.

## **Transportation Planning**

### ***Monument Square Streetscape Project - Phase VI***

The Monument Square Streetscape Project is part of a multi-phase project started in 2004 to further the goals of Mifflin County and Lewistown Borough to create a safe, attractive and welcoming environment coming into Downtown Lewistown for both residents and visitors. The most recent phase of the project to go to construction, Phase V, wrapped up with the installation of decorative light standards in January of 2020. Phase V of the project included South Main Street below the Embassy Theatre and then turns east at the intersection of Water Street and goes one block to meet the Mann Edge Terrace II senior housing project.

Monument Square Phase VI is the latest phase of the Monument Square streetscape project to go through preliminary engineering and design. Phase VI is focused on the streetscape along North Wayne Street along the properties owned by the county to tie in the “governmental complex” to the downtown. Quite a number of people are walking to and from the courthouse on any given business day, thus the concept of Phase VI was born. Director Colussy had attended a Borough Planning Commission meeting on September 2, 2020 and a council meeting on September 14, 2020 to get the buy-in and support of the borough, and got it. Timing wise, the county was hopeful to connect the new streetscape work to the renovation project happening at the Annex building. The county ultimately put in a Multi-Modal

Transportation Fund (MTF) application to DCED, and was given a partial award of \$500,000. This project is expected to go to final design in the beginning of 2022.



### ***Reedsville Streetscape Project***

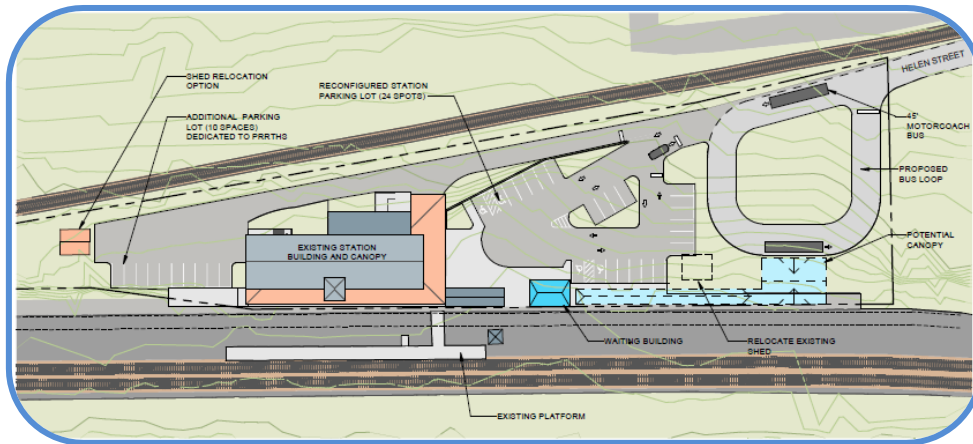
Brown Township continued to work with the county on their streetscape project for Reedsville in 2020. Previously in May of 2018, PennDOT awarded \$834,610 to Mifflin County through the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Transportation Block Grant program to assist in the development of the Reedsville Streetscape Project. This project was designed to encompass three blocks along Main Street in Reedsville from Tony Street to near the old fire house. Aside from sidewalk replacement or installation, the project will include trees, pedestrian level decorative lighting, improved stormwater facilities and better delineated crosswalks where appropriate. The EADS Group was chosen as the project engineer.

Following the kick-off meeting in September of 2018 involving PennDOT staff, township officials and the consulting engineer, it was determined that a significant portion of the existing sidewalks were on private property instead of in the public right-of-way. The township had to work through acquiring rights-of-way for the areas the sidewalks would be improved. This process was completed in February of 2020. The project could then go to final design, and final construction plans were developed by the EADS Group and approved by PennDOT in the first half of 2020 and put out for bid via PennDOT's ECMS system. The contract was awarded to the G&R Charles Excavating, LTD on February 4, 2021. The construction began in the Spring of 2021 and expected to wrap up at the end of 2021.



### ***Lewistown Train Station Improvement/Feasibility Study***

For the past several years, Mifflin County has worked with a group of counties and train advocate organizations including Western Pennsylvanians for Passenger Rail and the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership to improve passenger rail service from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh. One of the goals was to secure the interest of a variety of stakeholders to find a way to financially support improved rail service. Due to the advocacy and increased passenger demand, PennDOT has increased their interest and support of passenger rail service.



A number of years ago, passenger service was reduced to one train a day going west to Pittsburgh and one train going east to Harrisburg. This has affected many people in Mifflin County including the plain sect community and students attending

Penn State University, who rely on this service. One of the impediments to improved service have been the condition of the facilities associated with some of the stations along the corridor. This includes the station in Lewistown where ADA accessibility has been identified as a problem.

In the summer of 2019, the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department approached SEDA-COG about applying for the Supplemental Planning Research funds to develop a train station feasibility study. The overall goal of the Lewistown Train Station Improvement/Feasibility Study was to address expanded use of the facility to make it into a potential transportation center and to address ADA accessibility issues. Lewistown has one of the oldest depots served by Amtrak and is on the National Register for Historic Places. The purpose of the study is to evaluate current and future needs and deficiencies of the station, increase the capacity of the station, work with the current non-profit organization that owns the station to address their concerns on preserving the historic integrity of the facility and improve overall access.

Although the study proposal did not receive SPR funding, it was used to generate interest with PennDOT Deputy Secretary Jennifer Granger, who met with the active stakeholders associated with the station in early December of 2019. Those in attendance include the PA Railroad and Historical Society, owners of the station, Granville Township where the station is located, Lewistown Borough, Mifflin County, and Downtown Lewistown, Inc. This meeting was followed up with a meeting with the Mifflin County Planning Commission at their December 19, 2020 meeting. PennDOT took the work scope developed by Mifflin County and with some modifications agreed to fund the study. The results of that study were finalized in a report on August 14, 2020, which is available in the planning office. Not only did the study analyze both options for the use of a restroom in the train station building itself, as well as site ingress and egress, but it also looked at safe multi-modal connections to Delaware Avenue towards the Memorial Bridge over the Juniata River.

### ***SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization***

The planning and development department continued to represent Mifflin County on the SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which guides the transportation planning and programming process in Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties.

The MPO is responsible for recommending projects for the Commonwealth's Twelve-Year Transportation Plan and assisting in the development of the SEDA-COG Regional Transportation Improvement Program and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP is a multi-modal plan, which describes performance measures, assesses the transportation needs and recommends a list of projects to be developed and delivered over the life of the plan. This plan is linked to the SEDA-COG Unified



Planning Work Program that in the past provided financial assistance toward the development of the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan and the Mill Road/Electric Avenue Interchange Improvement Study.

The MPO also reviews and recommends projects submitted for the state Multimodal Transportation Fund, federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) program, federal Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Local Access Road, and program funds. The types of projects evaluated include bicycle, pedestrian, historic preservation, bridge, public transit, and roadway access enhancements. Examples of recent TA Set-Aside program funds impacting Mifflin County are the Monument Square Streetscape Project – Phase V in Lewistown that was completed in early 2020 and the Reedsville Streetscape Project in Brown Township that will be completed in 2021. Other recent local projects have included infrastructure improvements through ARC for the Keystone Healthcare Development and the related Automated Red Light Enforcement Program (ARLE) project involving a traffic signal and intersection improvements at the corner of Ferguson Valley Road and West Freedom Avenue in Derry Township, which was completed in 2020. Additional projects include the ARC funded Commerce Drive Expansion project in Armagh Township and the Multimodal funded South River Road Rehabilitation project in Oliver Township. The Commerce Drive project is seeking additional funding, and hopes to begin construction in 2022. The South River Road construction was pending by the end of 2020.

Other recent MPO planning activities have included a Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and implementing an Active Transportation Committee. There is also an updated Strategic Plan and an updated Long-Range Transportation Plan. These plans assess regional transportation needs and prioritize strategies for enhancing the region's transportation system, economic development, and quality of life. The plans are all available for download on SEDA-COG's website.

### ***State Transportation Commission***

Every two years the State Twelve Year Program (TYP) is updated. The current 2021 TYP was adopted in the summer of 2020 and is part of a systematic way to prioritize state transportation resources/funds. It is very competitive to get new local projects added to the TYP, particularly the first four years of the program. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is considered the first four years of the TYP. Projects on the previous and upcoming TIP can be found on the map on page 13. Mifflin County decided to take a more proactive position in late 2017 to assist municipalities with bridges by authorizing the collection of a five-dollar fee tied to vehicle registrations. (See current TIP map on page 13, courtesy of PennDOT's online One Map, which can be accessed at <https://gis.penndot.gov/OneMap/>).

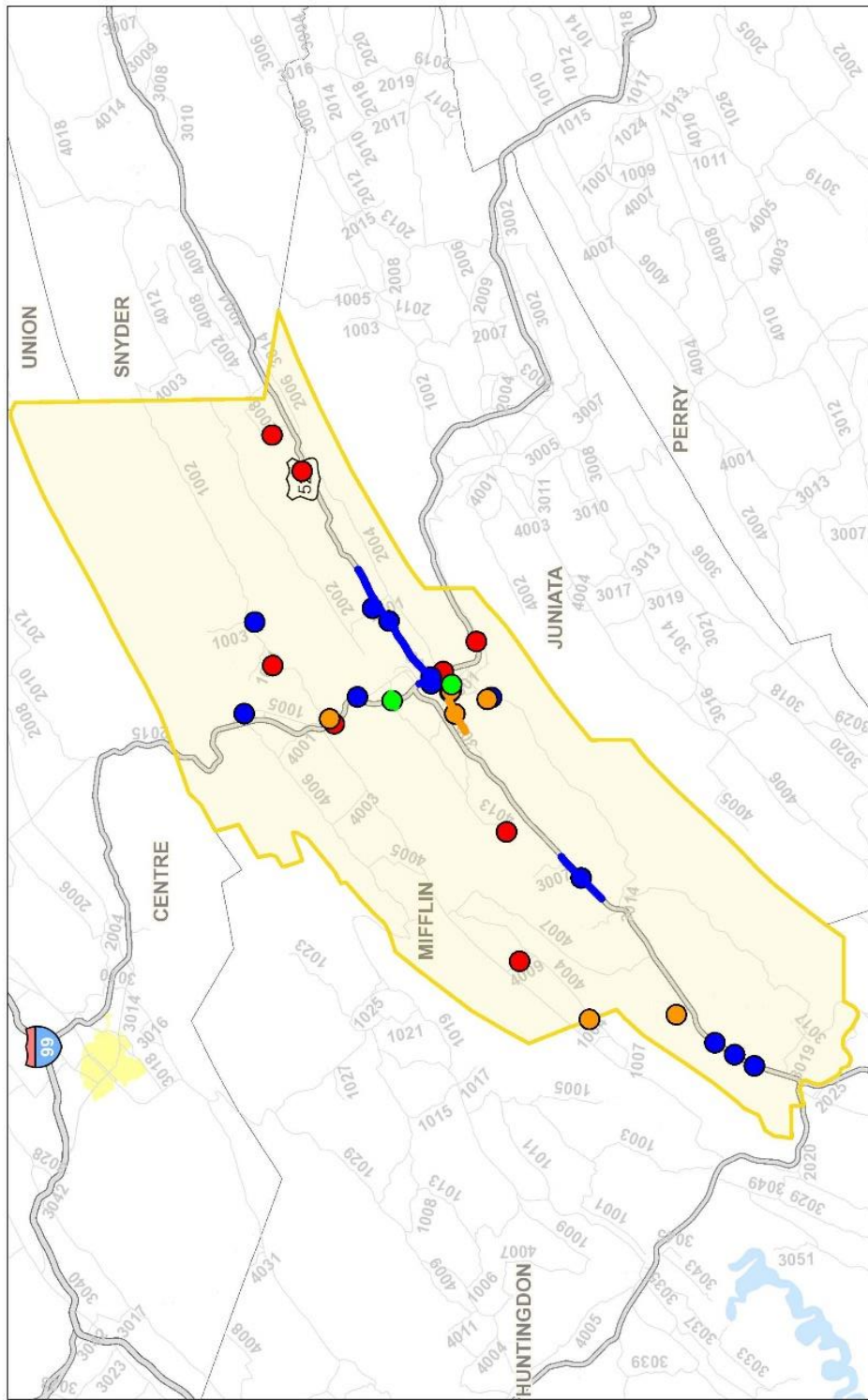
In 2018, Mifflin County developed a program to address both the large and small structurally deficient municipal bridges throughout the county. The Local Use Fee, collected by PennDOT when vehicles are registered, provided the impetus for a larger infrastructure initiative that will total over \$3.5 million. The county will be using approximately \$200,000 per year generated from the Local Use Fee to pay off a Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank loan from PennDOT. The loan, plus the PennDOT grant of up to \$2 million and a 10% contribution from the participating municipalities will finance the municipal bridge program. Four of the nine priority bridges over 20 feet in length recommended by Mifflin County for inclusion in the 2019 TYP will be addressed in the next couple of years through this program. An agreement with Oliver Township was executed for the bridge on T-803 in September of 2020. Agreements have been signed for the Wayne Township bridge on T-310, the Decatur Township bridge on T-708, and the Armagh Township bridge on T-464 in October of 2020. There was a kickoff meeting with Brown Township for their bridge on T-439 in July of 2020. The Hickory Lane bridge in Menno Township was completed on December 30, 2020. Other bridges less than 20 feet in length will be targeted through this initiative at a later date.

The process to update the next TYP began in March 2021, and a new TYP will be adopted in the summer of 2022. As part of the process, Keller Engineers, which is under contract to do bridge inspections, will work with county representatives and SEDA-COG in developing a new list to submit to

PennDOT. During their review of bridges 20 feet or longer, Keller Engineers will develop recommendations based on safety and traffic concerns, the project location, and specific needs of the community.

Also of importance to Mifflin County are the ongoing improvements along State Route 322 into Centre County. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in the fall of 2014 for the Potters Mills Gap Project, which is part of a three-phase construction project. Phase III began in 2018 and should be completed by the end of 2020. As part of this process, a “Needs Analysis” of the Route 322 corridor was completed in 2018. In February of 2019, Governor Wolf announced a \$5 million dollar award in order to begin preliminary engineering design that will ultimately lead to the completion of the rest of the work needed for the Route 322 corridor. As part of the announcement, additional funding over the next 10 years will be provided to complete this “missing link” connecting Mifflin County to Centre County.

Mifflin County TIP Map



October 6, 2021

- TIP - Completed
- TIP - Completed
- TIP - Under Construction
- TIP - Under Construction
- TIP - In Development
- TIP - In Development
- TIP - Future Development
- TIP - Future Development



FennDOT

## **2.2 Community Development**

### **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)**

The CDBG program helps strengthen the community by improving housing and public facilities to provide suitable living environments for citizens, principally those with low-moderate incomes. The program can support a range of activities from housing rehabilitation, public services, community facilities, infrastructure improvements, economic development and planning and administration. Projects must benefit low/moderate-income people, through the elimination of community slum and blight, or meet an urgent need in the community. The planning and development department administers the CDBG programs for Mifflin County, Brown, Derry and Granville Townships and Lewistown Borough.

Derry, Granville and Brown Townships Boards of Supervisors and the Lewistown Borough Council direct the use of the funds in their respective municipalities and have the sole discretion to allocate their CDBG funds to eligible and fundable projects. However, agencies desiring to apply for non-county CDBG funds may petition those municipalities for CDBG funds. The county's role for these municipalities is planning and administrative grant management functions. Ultimately, the county is responsible for all county-wide CDBG funds, which includes those entitlement municipalities.

### **Mifflin County 2020 Application Status**

Each year, local municipalities, authorities and agencies are invited to submit proposals to the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department for funding only for Mifflin County CDBG funds. The Mifflin County CDBG Advisory Committee, comprised of planning commission members and staff of the department, reviews the proposals and ranks them based on a rating system according to established, objective criteria. These include community needs, economic distress, leveraging other funding, project initiation, program priorities and previous CDBG experience. The Mifflin County Commissioners make the final determination of which projects to fund for submission to the PA-DCED.

The planning and development department received four applications for funding through Mifflin County's 2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. A public hearing was held July 23, 2020 for applicants to present their proposals to the Mifflin County Planning Commission. In addition to the presentations, the public hearing also provided an opportunity to receive citizens' views, comments, and suggestions for consideration by the Mifflin County Planning Commission on the 2020 CDBG application and prior years funding. Following this public hearing, the CDBG/Housing Rehabilitation Advisory Committee met to prioritize projects that were submitted to the Mifflin County Commissioners to consider. The final public hearing was held on October 1, 2020 by the Mifflin County Commissioners who approved funding one of the applications submitted. Public hearings were also held in Brown, Derry, and Granville Townships, and the Borough of Lewistown resulting in a total of eight projects, which are shown in Tables 2B, 2C, 2D and 2E on the following pages. The governing body of each municipality decides which projects to fund and do not have a formalized application process.

On October 15, 2020, the county commissioners adopted a resolution recommending approval to DCED for the projects and funding amounts listed in Table 2A-2E inclusive. The county's CDBG application was submitted to the PA-DCED on November 17, 2020. This application was made for Mifflin County and on behalf of Brown, Derry, and Granville Townships and the Lewistown Borough.

The county's 2020 CDBG allocation is \$231,203.00. The following tables delineate the recommended funding amounts for each project for the county's 2020 CDBG application and on behalf of Brown, Derry, and Granville Townships and the Borough of Lewistown. The cumulative total of CDBG funds for the county and on behalf of those entitlement municipalities is \$692,869.00.

Table 2A <b>MIFFLIN COUNTY</b>			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Borough of Juniata Terrace	Stormwater management improvements for Terrace Boulevard (project and delivery)	\$189,587.00
2.	Administration	Planning and administration activities	\$41,616.00
	<b>Total Mifflin County CDBG Funding:</b>		\$231,203.00

Table 2B <b>BROWN TOWNSHIP</b>			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Single-Family Housing Rehabilitation	Housing rehabilitation for an income eligible single-family home owner (project and delivery costs)	\$76,019.00
2.	Planning and Administration	Administrative salaries and benefits	\$16,686.00
	<b>Total CDBG Funding</b>		\$92,705.00

Table 2C <b>DERRY TOWNSHIP</b>			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Single-Family Housing Rehabilitation	Housing rehabilitation for an income eligible single-family home owner (project and delivery costs)	\$104,409.00
2.	Planning and Administration	Administrative salaries and benefits	\$22,919.00
	<b>Total CDBG Funding</b>		\$127,328.00

Table 2D <b>GRANVILLE TOWNSHIP</b>			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Slum/Blight Spot Basis	Demolition of 341 Hawstone Road (project and delivery costs)	\$16,995.00
2.	Slum/Blight Spot Basis	Demolition of 354 Granville Road (project and delivery costs)	\$37,082.00
3.	Slum/Blight Spot Basis	Demolition of 9224 US Hwy 522 South (project and delivery costs)	\$7,450.00
4.	Single-Family Housing Rehabilitation	Housing rehabilitation for an income eligible single-family home owner	\$23,572.00
5.	Planning and Administration	Administrative salaries and benefits	\$18,680.00
	<b>Total CDBG Funding</b>		\$103,779.00

Table 2E  
**LEWISTOWN BOROUGH**

		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	ADA ramp project along West Fifth Street	ADA Ramp project along West Fifth Street beginning at North Grand Street and ending at Grove Avenue and 30 ADA curb ramps (14 on the 200 block of West Fifth Street at North Grand Street to Bratton Avenue, 8 ADA ramps on the 300 block of West Fifth Street at Bratton Avenue to Franklin Avenue, 4 ADA ramps on the 400 block of West Fifth Street at Franklin Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue, 4 ADA ramps on the 500 block of West Fifth Street at Pennsylvania Avenue to Grove Avenue) that includes design, construction and delivery of \$5,000.00.	\$117,176.00
2.	Planning and Administration	Administrative salaries and benefits	\$20,678.00
	<b>Total CDBG Funding</b>		<b>\$137,854.00</b>

**Mifflin County Community Development Plan – Three-Year Plan**

Mifflin County’s three-year Community Development Plan (CDP) is based on the goals and objectives included in the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan: Visions for the 21st Century. The three-year Community Development Plan is evaluated annually and priorities are adjusted to reflect work completed and new community needs. The plan has been updated with 2010 United States Census data and 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) data. Moreover, all CDBG municipalities, including Brown, Derry and Granville Townships and Lewistown Borough, must maintain and update separate three-year community development plans. The county is ultimately responsible for these updates. Additional updates will be made based on more recent American Community Survey (ACS) data as it becomes available.

**Mifflin County Project Status**

The following is a summary of work in progress during calendar year 2020.

**A. *Granville Township- Demolition of 15/17 Henrietta Street, Lewistown -***

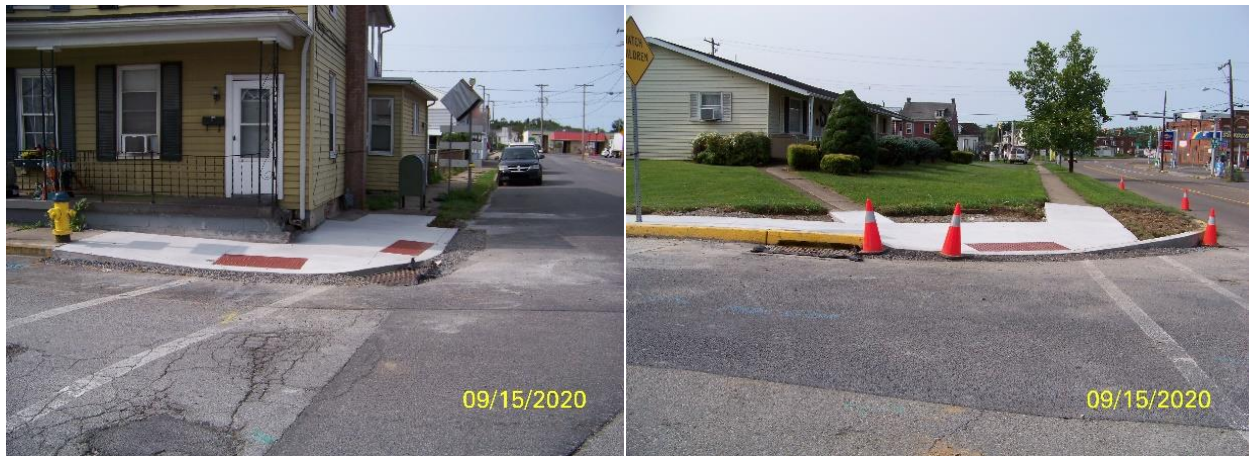
This project consisted of demolition and wall reconstruction of two condemned homes of a total of four row homes on Henrietta Street. Since, only two of the four units are being removed and the other two will still be occupied, an exterior wall needed to be created between the removed and remaining structures. An engineer (The EADS Group) was procured to assist with the structural integrity of the remaining portion of the structure. This project was bid in late 2019. The low

bidder was G & R Excavating & Demolition, of Tyrone, in the amount of \$66,700.00. A contract was signed in late December of 2019. This project was funded by: CDBG - \$36,411.52, ACT 152 - \$10,000.00 and Township funds \$20,288.48. Demolition was started in early 2020 and was well underway, when the COVID shutdown occurred and halted all projects. Due to the complexity of this project with the houses being attached, demolition proceeded by hand until the structures were detached, which is where the project was stopped. When the construction industry was allowed to begin again in early May of 2020, the contractor was able to move to final completion of the project in 2021.



**B. Lewistown Borough- ADA Ramp and truncated dome replacement project –**

This project consisted of removal and replacement of approximately eight ramp locations along South Brown Street in Lewistown. Each replaced ramp had the curb and existing sidewalk removed and replaced to meet current ADA standards. Also included was patch paving around the ramps. Several of the ramps were in the PENNDOT right-of-way and required a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP). This project was completed in mid-late September, which was, prior to a repaving project that the Borough was completing. Engineering for this project was completed by the EADS Group, Lewistown and paid for by CDBG in the amount of \$12,000.00. The low bidder for the project was Solid State Masonry of Lewistown in the amount of \$31,700.00. This project was funded from FFY 2017.



**C. County- ADA Ramp and truncated dome replacement project –**

This project consisted of removal and replacement of approximately five ramp locations along sidewalk of the Armagh Township Municipal Building in Milroy. Each replaced ramp had the curb and existing sidewalk removed and replaced to meet current ADA standards. Also included was patch paving around the ramps. This project was completed in mid-late August. Engineering for this project was completed by the EADS Group, Lewistown and paid for by the Township. The low bidder for the project was Solid State Masonry of Lewistown in the amount of \$17,800.00. This project was funded from FFY’s 2016 & 2017.



**D. Armagh Township- Demolition of 73 North Main Street, Milroy –**

This project consisted of demolition of a condemned single family house located at the above address. Bidding was conducted over the summer of 2020 and a contract was entered into in August with the low bidder, G & R Excavating & Demolition of Tyrone in the amount of \$35,677.00. Work was completed in late October and early November. This project was funded with FFY 2018 funds.





### **Mifflin County Microenterprise Loan Program**

The Microenterprise loan program began in 1997 as a collaboration between Mifflin County, Granville and Derry Townships, and Lewistown Borough using CDBG funds to encourage businesses to hire low to moderate income persons. The funds from this program have been recycled several times over the past several years. The county has not completed any loan transactions since 2016. However, the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department is exploring other options available for the reuse of these funds.

### **Housing Rehabilitation Program**

The planning and development department administers the housing rehabilitation program on behalf of the Mifflin County Commissioners. The county receives funding for the program from the CDBG program, the HOME program, and Act 137 funds, which is the County Housing Trust Fund.

Since 1984, Mifflin County has rehabilitated approximately 512 homes totaling more than \$5,000,000 in grants for qualified homeowners. The housing rehabilitation program provides grants to low and moderate income families for certain types of home repairs. Emphasis is placed on repairs that will correct the most serious building code violations, i.e., health, safety and energy efficiency issues. Minor or cosmetic renovation activities are not normally undertaken. Examples of repairs made under the program are exterior and interior general construction, plumbing, heating and electrical. Repairs are limited to 75% of the home's fair market value.

The program is generally a first come, first served grant program and qualifying applicants are placed on a waiting list. It can possibly take up to four years or more before rehabilitation begins. Currently, 27 low/moderate income applicants are on the waiting list for housing rehabilitation.

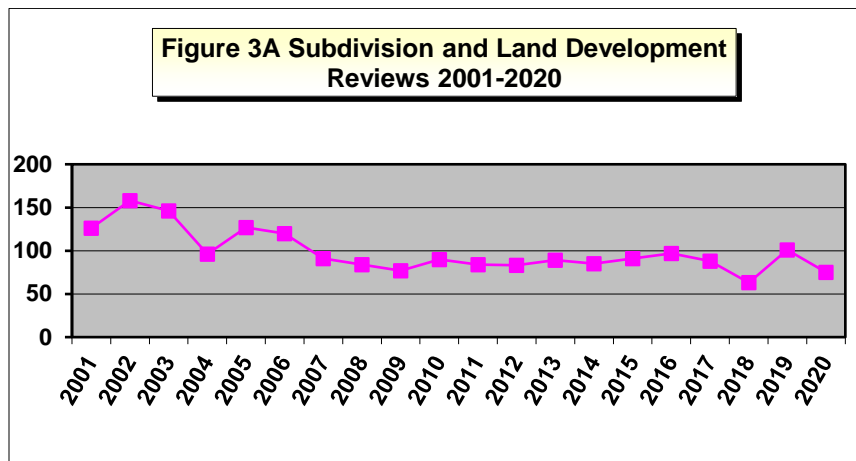
Applicants are required to own their home and the property taxes must be current. A five-year second mortgage is filed when the rehabilitation job is complete. Annual income guidelines are set by The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at \$33,900/year or less for one-person households, plus at least \$4,600/year for each additional person depending on family size. The income limits change yearly. All homes built prior to 1978 must comply with lead-based paint requirements.

## SECTION 3: LAND USE

### 3.1 Subdivision and Land Development

An important function of the Mifflin County Planning Commission is the review and approval of subdivision and land development plans, as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act of 1968, P.L. 805 No. 247 as amended. The Mifflin County Planning Commission approves, approves with conditions, or denies subdivisions and land developments that occur in the municipalities without a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance which includes: Bratton Township, Juniata Terrace Borough, Kistler Borough, McVeytown Borough, Newton Hamilton Borough and Wayne Township. Reviews and decisions for these municipalities, are carried out according to the Mifflin County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, adopted in 1995, updated in 2003 and amended in 2006.

The planning commission reviews and provides comments and recommendations to the municipalities with a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and/or a zoning ordinance which includes: Armagh Township (no zoning ordinance), Brown Township, Burnham Borough, Decatur Township (no zoning ordinance), Derry Township, Granville Township, Lewistown Borough, Menno Township (no zoning ordinance), Oliver Township (no zoning ordinance), and Union Township. The aforementioned municipalities have final approval making powers for plans submitted within their municipalities.

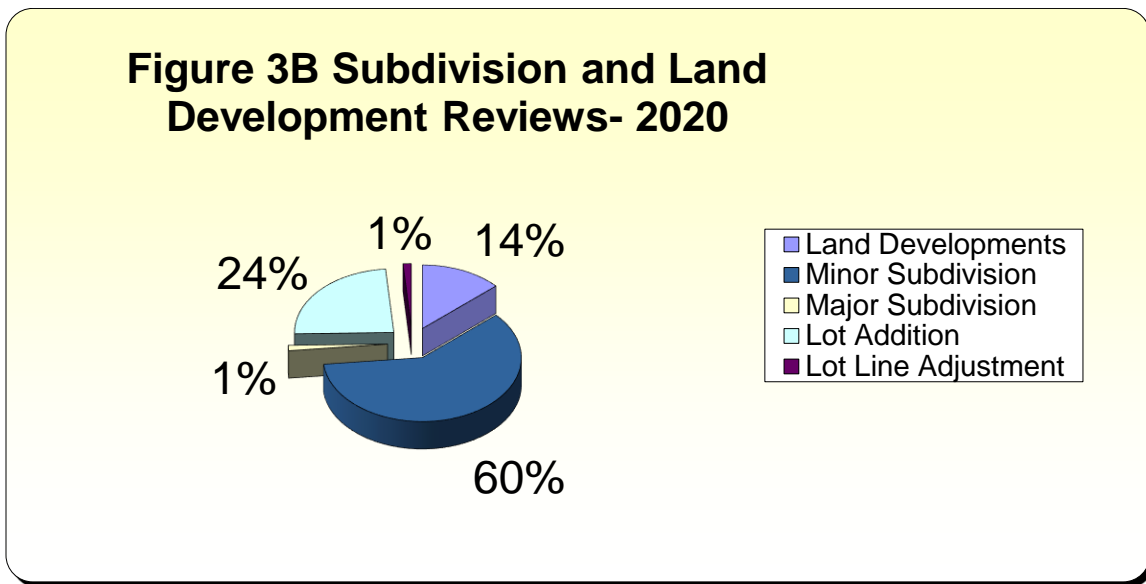


**Figure 3A** above shows the number of plans reviewed since 2001. The trend since 2005 has been a decreasing number with minor increases in 2010, to a slightly lower consistent number of plans during 2011-2015. However, in 2015 and in 2016, the number of plans rose slightly each year above the 2011 level and slightly decreased during 2017 and significantly decreased by twenty-eight percent (28%) during 2018. In 2019, the number of plans reviewed increased by sixty two (62%) to 101, which is the highest single year total in 10 years. In 2020, the total number of plans again dropped below the 10 year average of 82 plans to 75.

**Table 3A** below shows the number of plans reviewed from 2013 through 2020, with lot additions and lot line adjustments, which are considered minor subdivisions. Of the plans reviewed in 2020, 80 new residential lots were created, covering 430 acres. Among the land development plans proposed, 12 new commercial or industrial lots were created, accounting for 31 acres of developed land, and 205,777 square feet of new commercial/industrial building square footage.

<b>Table 3A Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews 2013-2020</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Minor Subdivision</b>	<b>Major Subdivision</b>	<b>Land Developments</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>689</b>

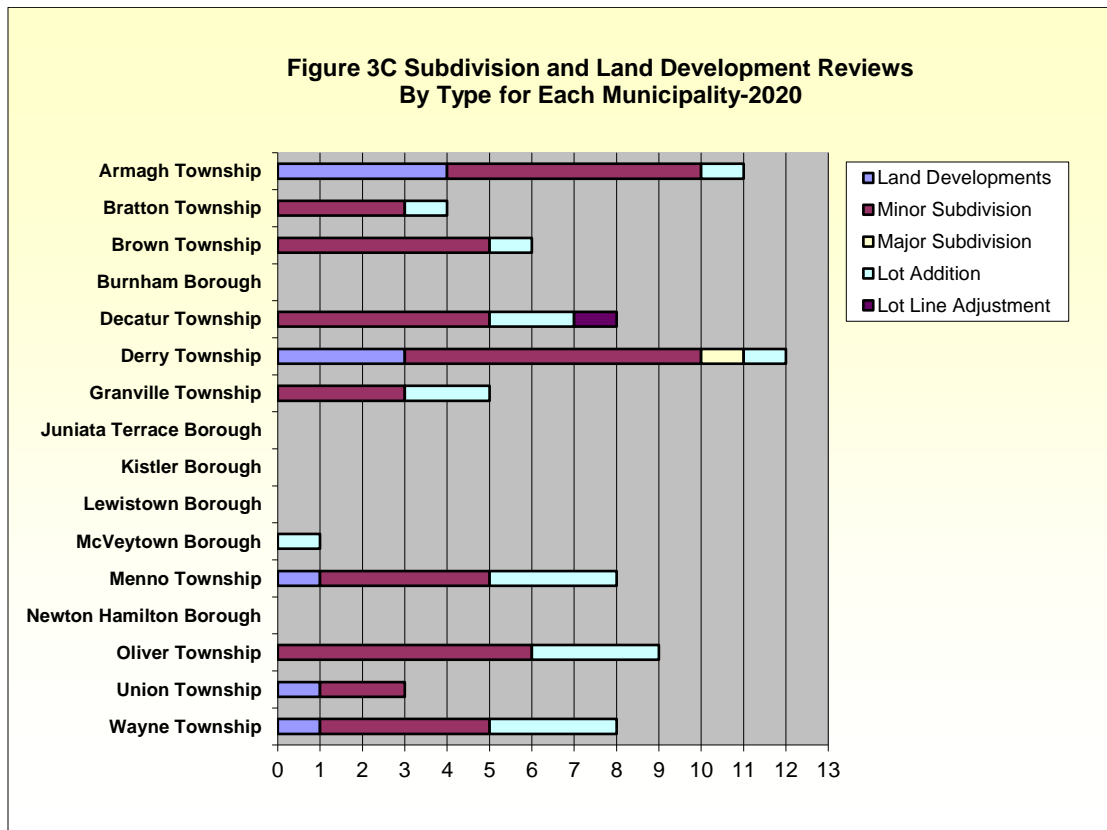
**Figure 3B** below shows the percentage of plans submitted by type. Of the seventy-five plans submitted for review, a number of plans contained multiple types within one plan (e.g., a minor subdivision with a lot addition, or a subdivision with a land development). However, the percentages in Figure 3B do not reflect duplications. Therefore, the seventy-five plans reviewed consisted of five types as noted within the legend in Figure 3B. The majority of plans 60% were minor subdivision plans while 24% were lot additions. Land Development plans decreased to 14% which are plans for constructing buildings and developing property. Major subdivision plans with more than six lots were one percent. Lot line adjustments accounted for one percent. A lot addition involves adding a portion of land from one lot to another lot. A lot line adjustment involves adjusting a lot line between two lots.



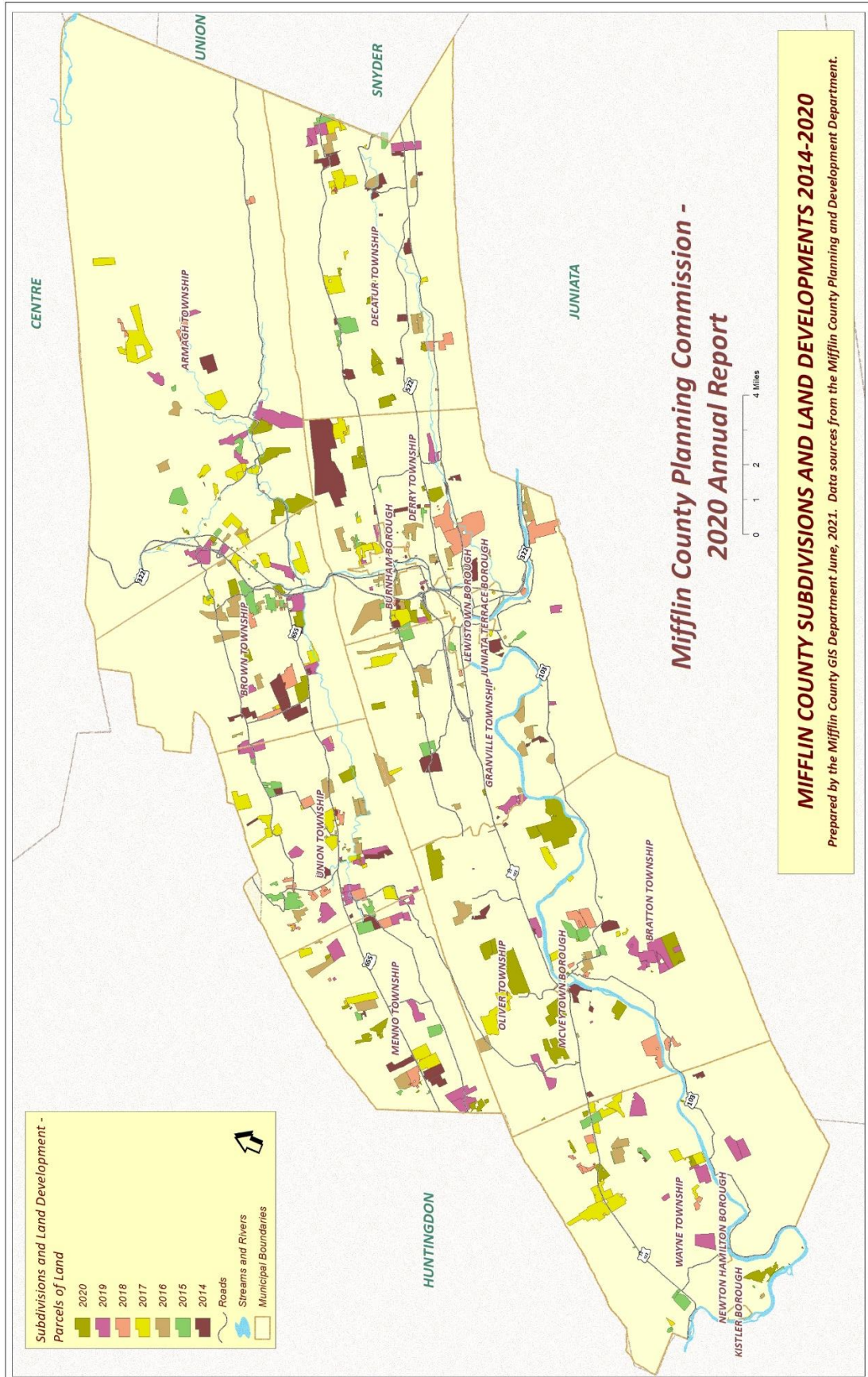
**Table 3B** below shows the number of plan types reviewed in each municipality during 2020.

<b>Table 3B Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews-2020</b>						
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Land Developments</b>	<b>Minor Subdivision</b>	<b>Major Subdivision</b>	<b>Lot Addition</b>	<b>Lot Line Adjustment</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Armagh Township</b>	4	6	0	1	0	<b>11</b>
<b>Bratton Township</b>	0	3	0	1	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Brown Township</b>	0	5	0	1	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Burnham Borough</b>	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Decatur Township</b>	0	5	0	2	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Derry Township</b>	3	7	1	1	0	<b>12</b>
<b>Granville Township</b>	0	3	0	2	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Juniata Terrace Borough</b>	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Kistler Borough</b>	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Lewistown Borough</b>	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>McVeytown Borough</b>	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Menno Township</b>	1	4	0	3	0	<b>8</b>
<b>Newton Hamilton Borough</b>	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Oliver Township</b>	0	6	0	3	0	<b>9</b>
<b>Union Township</b>	1	2	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Wayne Township</b>	1	4	0	3	0	<b>8</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>75</b>

**Figure 3C** below shows a comparison of the number of plan reviews and types by municipality in 2020. Derry and Armagh Townships had the most plans with a total of 12 and 11 respectively. The next highest number of plans received and reviewed was Oliver with nine and Decatur, Menno, and Wayne Townships with eight. In terms of the other municipalities, there were six plans reviewed in Brown Township, five plans each in Granville Township, four plans in Union Township, one plan in McVeytown Borough. There were no land developments or subdivision plans submitted in the boroughs of Burnham, Lewistown, Kistler, Newton- Hamilton and Juniata Terrace.



Some areas of Mifflin County are experiencing faster growth than other areas. One way to pinpoint growth areas is to track the location of subdivisions and land developments looking for clusters of activity. The map on the following page illustrates the locations of parcels that have had subdivision and land development plan activity in Mifflin County from 2014 to 2020.





## **SECTION 4: MEMBERS AND STAFF**

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### **4.1 Planning Commission**

At the reorganization in January 2020, the officers of the Mifflin County Planning Commission were elected as follows: Thomas Lake, Chair; Cyle Vogt, Vice Chair; and Kent Spicher, Secretary. In addition, James Spendiff resigned and then passed away in September 2020 and the commissioners approved Dan Firth to begin serving on the planning commission in November 2020.

#### **Member Development**

Each year the Mifflin County Planning Commission is provided presentations of interest to assist them in better understanding programs that will have or may have a direct impact on the county. Below are a summary of those programs.

#### **Pennsylvania State Watershed Improvement Plan Phase 3 (WIP) Initiative**

The State Watershed Improvement Plan Phase III (WIP III) is based on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requiring Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA-DEP) to meet certain benchmarks to improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay. Phase III focuses on a local area planning effort. Targeted reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus pollutions were set by the EPA. Voluntary efforts include understanding the state's WIP and creating goals ahead of possible future regulation.

Four counties were selected for the Pilot Planning Process. They include Lancaster (who was responsible for 25% of the entire state's nitrogen reduction), York, Adams and Franklin Counties. Lancaster's focus was agriculture while York focused predominantly on stormwater and MS4 requirements. The workgroup must now determine how to complete the planning process in the remaining counties either with a watershed-wide approach or a staged approach. Considering that the WIP was being developed on a tiered approach, Mifflin County is Tier 3 and would kick off in September of 2020. Nothing is mandated yet, however, the DEP had to submit the PA Statewide WIP Plan to the EPA by April 20, 2019 to establish the targets and benchmarks. It is still uncertain what any repercussions will be for those counties who do nothing beyond the planning process.

There has been a constant monitoring upstream and downstream of the bay. Considerable improvements were made until 2018, which was halted largely in part due to weather. Weather events can cause drastic changes to water quality.

#### **CDBG Update**

#### **Mifflin County CDBG-CV**

On March 27, 2020, President Donald Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) to provide immediate and direct response to the emerging crisis impacting our country as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. A portion of these funds were made available under the Community Development fund to prevent, prepare for and respond to coronavirus. The county's CDBG-CV allocation is \$166,152.00. The cumulative total of CDBG funds for the county and on behalf of those entitlement municipalities is \$432,680.00. Public hearings were held in Brown, Derry and Granville Townships, Lewistown Borough and Mifflin County in June and August of 2020. The county and each entitlement community chose to fund the laptop devices for Mifflin County students project. This project was laid out to purchase laptops for students residing in Mifflin County who are of low-to-moderate income to aid in remote learning during times of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the course of the public hearing process, it was determined that the need for laptops for the school students

could greatly exceed the funding allocated. It was decided to pursue a competitive grant application in the amount of \$1,252,792.00 in the hopes of procuring a total of 2,500 laptops. The two individual applications were submitted to the PA-DCED on August 31, 2020 and were made for Mifflin County and on behalf of Brown, Derry, and Granville Townships and the Lewistown Borough.

### **Lewistown Amtrak Station Conceptual Design Presentation**

Deputy Secretary of PennDOT, Jennie Granger, presented an update regarding the Lewistown Train Station evaluation and how to better utilize the space available in and around the train station. After her presentation, Jennie introduced consultant Michael Hartley of Sowinski, Sullivan Co. Michael presented information for possible conceptual designs and discussed what models the township, borough, and surrounding stakeholders, including the owner of the station, may want to develop.

Michael presented three different concepts focusing on outcome, conclusions, and concept designs from the study. All concepts designed considered the stations' historic foundations. Three main areas of focus are modifications of the station facility/site, improving inter-model, and connectivity to the Lewistown Borough.

The first concept would modify the waiting area, entrance and transform the bathroom to meet ADA accessibility requirements.

The second and third concepts would be integrated by connecting the train station and downtown Lewistown. There would be an expansion for Fullington Trailways to have a full-size bus loop and canopy waiting area, new light standards, and incorporate sidewalks and bike lanes to the PA route 103 bridge into Lewistown. The train track crossings would also meet ADA requirements.

Fullington Trailways is interested in the improvements and the potential of additional bus stops. Penn State has very little interest in the project. There may be future interest but this is currently a bad time due to Covid-19. There have not been any specific funding streams identified.

Amtrak pays the local organization to make things accessible (plowing of parking lot, electrical maintenance, etc.). This is an agreement through Amtrak and the owner. An additional result from this evaluation could be the elimination of the bus route in downtown Lewistown. Additional information regarding estimated cost and conceptual plans are available through the planning and development office.

## **4.2 Planning and Development Department**

### **Staff Development**

Staff members of the Planning and Development Department have traditionally participated in conferences, workshops and other events through the year to continue their training and professional development. However, since the Covid-19 pandemic, many trainings were canceled or transitioned to a completely virtual environment. A major theme for 2020 was how many meetings were either canceled or shifted over to online platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Ring Central, etc. For example, the 2020 Pennsylvania CD&H Practitioners Annual Conference was canceled.

William Gomes retired as County Planning Director in January of 2020. Mark Colussy was introduced and began the role of County Planning Director on February 11, 2020. Paula Hoffman resigned as Planning Clerk in November 2020. Jim Lettiere resigned and Chastity Fultz was promoted to Community Development Administrator. Tiffany Brought was promoted to Grants Fiscal Manager.

### **County Planning Directors Association**

Planning directors from counties throughout the Commonwealth traditionally meet quarterly to discuss issues affecting county planning offices and commissions. Over the past two years, the meetings have transitioned to being virtual. The County Planning Directors Association is affiliated with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) and was formalized in 2004 as the County Planning Directors Association. Mifflin County is a member of this organization, and after William Gomes' retirement, Mark Colussy has been attending these meetings. The association had four meetings during 2020 (November 6, August 28, May 8, and February 28), and had two extra webinars to discuss the CARES Act on August 20 and July 23. At the meetings, the following was discussed: solar ordinance considerations and development; public participation outreach and engagement in a COVID environment; West Chester University land use study; a roundtable on planning 101 and topics for future meetings; the 2020 U.S. Census; the new online census data tool; tiny houses and AirBnB; and legislative updates.

### **Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI)**

The Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) is an affiliate of the PA Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA). The purpose of PMPEI is to provide, develop and promote planning education across Pennsylvania for the general public with specific attention to those involved with municipal planning and development. Mark Colussy has served as an instructor for PMPEI since 2016. All in-person instruction has been canceled during the Covid-19 Pandemic until further notice.

