



2019 Annual Report
Mifflin County
Planning Commission

*MIFFLIN COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
2019 ANNUAL REPORT*

Prepared by

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September 9, 2021

PHOTO LOCATIONS:

MONUMENT SQUARE, SOUTH MAIN STREET, AND SOUTH WATER STREET

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September 9, 2021

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Mifflin County Courthouse
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Dear County Commissioners:

The Mifflin County Planning Commission is pleased to submit to you and the citizens of Mifflin County our 2019 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 2019 describes new projects of broad community interest and reports progress on continuing projects.

Since the adoption of *Visions for the 21st Century*, the Planning Commission members and Planning and Development Department staff have focused on implementing recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. We have partnered with diverse groups to promote sound land use, viable economic development, responsible environmental stewardship, and a healthier quality of life for the residents of Mifflin County.

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 you with the 2019 Annual Report.

Thank you again for your instrumental help throughout the year.

Sincerely,



Tom Lake
Chair



Progress through planning

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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
James Spendiff
Kent Spicher
Dan Dunmire
Kay Semler, Alternate

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

William Gomes, Director
James Lettiere, CD Administrator/Assistant Director
Douglas Marks, Housing Rehabilitation Specialist/Construction Manager
Chastity Fultz, CDBG Fiscal Manager
Tiffany Brought, Planning Clerk



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 2019:

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 William Gomes 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

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 William Gomes** 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	*William Gomes	*Chastity Fultz	

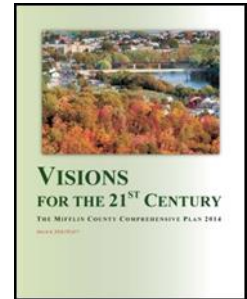
*William Gomes and Chastity Fultz serve as staff representatives from the Planning and Development Department. Phil Lucas represents the Public Safety Office.

SECTION 2: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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.

Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee

In 2019, 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 committee met six times over the year. The focus in 2019 has been how we can move the project forward.

During the year, the Internet Advisory Committee heard from several speakers as to what is taking place around the State and what others have been doing. Among the speakers were Sascha Meinrath of Penn State who has been working on a project sponsored by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania to review broadband across PA looking at FCC measurements in terms of speed and identify discrepancies he found, the limited service around the State and the need for public investment in broadband. The committee also heard from Jason Weaver who is working with volunteers to developing the Rural Broadband Cooperative in the Mill Creek area of Huntingdon County with a potential impact on the SR 655 corridor. Other speakers included Sherri Collins, the Acting Executive Director of the Governors' Office on Broadband Initiatives, Alicia Mathews of Comcast on their public private partners in Massachusetts, Maryland and Virginia and David Screven, Acting Deputy Chief Counsel with PA Public Utility Commission.

Two of the more promising proposals that came forward in the year were the presentations by Scott Kramer of SEDA-COG and their Rural Broadband RLF Pilot Project and the completion of the Mifflin County Rural Broadband Initiative report by Noovis, LLC. Mr. Kramer shared with the Committee the special legislative allocation that SEDA-COG received to develop the Rural Broadband Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) Pilot Project that will impact on Mifflin, Juniata and Perry Counties. SEDA-COG received \$300,000, with each county being allocated just under \$100,000. The program is geared to making each counties' vertical assets (towers) available to Internet Service Providers (ISP) by way of



a lease agreement through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. At the same time, the successful ISP becomes eligible for a low interest (1%) loan through the newly established Revolving Loan Fund. The goal is to incentivize ISP's to provide a minimum of 25 mb down and 3 mb up load speeds to serve selected pilot areas in each county. The final guidelines and the process for an RFP were being finalized in 2019.

In December of 2018, Mifflin County 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. This study was also supported by nine municipalities, the Mifflin County School District, Geisinger Lewistown Hospital, the Municipal Authority of Lewistown Borough and MCIDC. Since the County does not want to become an ISP, the study reviewed barriers to broadband deployment, surveyed 4 potential areas in Decatur, Bratton and Wayne Townships as well as an area considered by one provider in Armagh Township. The areas had population densities varying from 7 homes per mile in the least dense areas to 16 homes per mile in the more dense areas. 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 ISP complain about in accepting public funds as has been evident in many federal initiatives.

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 1 of the trail, within Lewistown Borough, was completed in November of 2018. It provides walking, jogging and cycling opportunities and covers a ¾ mile area. Phase 2 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 ½ 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 2 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 1, where all the trail was owned by the Borough of Lewistown, Phase 2 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 1. Both property owners were positive about the proposed ½ 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 will hopefully be executed in early 2020.

Plans to extend the trail involved the same two grant agencies as Phase 1, 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. DCNR has subsequently requested Mifflin County reapply for funding in 2020 and, due to the shortfall in funding from DCED, may require a small reduction in the overall length of Phase 2 of the trail. The S.H. Rothermel Trail (Juniata River Trail) is a component the Main Line Canal Greenway Trail.

At the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019, the Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Council also started 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 of 2020 and anticipated to be finalized in the early spring of 2020.



Another joint project was the management of the Act 13 Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund program. The Council reviewed six applications from municipalities and non-profits to improve open space and recreational opportunities for residents in Mifflin County. From this review, three projects were recommended to the Mifflin County Commissioners for approval. Two of these projects were completed in 2019 and the others are anticipated to be finished in 2020.

Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

In the summer of 2018, Mifflin County received a grant from the PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist the County in updating the current Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) adopted in 2014.

Every five years the county is required by PEMA/FEMA to update the 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. Unless a municipality participates in the development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and adopts the final plan after it is approved by the grant agencies and the County Commissioners, they will not be eligible for future Hazard Mitigation Grant funds after an emergency or natural disaster occurs. The expected outcome is a fully updated regional plan to be adopted by the sixteen (16) municipalities in the county.

Over the past year, the County's project consultant, Michael Baker International, Inc. has worked with multiple Mifflin County Departments, a County Commissioner-appointed ad-hoc Hazard Mitigation Advisory Committee and the County's 16 municipalities on the MJHMP update process. The Advisory Committee included diverse representation of the County's public and private sector stakeholders including, but not limited to, the Mifflin County School District, American Red Cross, local emergency services, human service agencies, agricultural community, and organizations representing those with disabilities.



The hazard mitigation planning process involved over five (5) meetings with a diversely represented project stakeholder advisory committee and the county's 16 municipalities. The meetings were used to identify hazards and risks and identify specific mitigation projects and measures for each hazard. The planning process was successful in securing feedback and participation by all 16 municipalities, which is better participation than occurred in the last plan update.

A public meeting was held by the Stakeholder Advisory Committee in July 2019 followed by a 30-day public review and comment period. At the conclusion of the public review and comment period, the draft MJHMP plan was submitted to PEMA and FEMA in October and November 2019 for their respective review and comment prior to the plan review coordination meeting with FEMA in December 2019. The plan was approved by FEMA (via a written Approval Pending Adoption notification) in February 2020 and it is currently undergoing the municipal adoption process through the 2020 calendar year. All municipalities are supposed to adopt the plan within one year of its approval by FEMA.

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

SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative – Mifflin County 2019 Activities and 2020 Outlook



The SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative, Inc. was incorporated in June 2016. The vision of the Cooperative is to “provide Pennsylvania’s Natural Gas to Pennsylvanians”, and its mission is to “support and establish new and upgraded natural gas service to central Pennsylvania businesses and residents in an environmentally responsible and cost-effective manner to promote economic growth, cost savings, and the use of cleaner energy.” The Cooperative expects to fulfill its mission through facilitating, supporting, and developing natural gas infrastructure throughout its service area by pursuing grant and loan funding and building and working through partnerships with private and public partners.

Currently, the Cooperative has a 21-member Board of Directors from eight (8) member counties and SEDA-COG. Montour and Union Counties joined the Cooperative in early 2019. Mifflin County Directors include Commissioner Rob Postal, Mr. Bill Gomes, and Mr. Michael Tate.

During 2018, the Cooperative received grant funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Appalachian Regional Commission to begin a virtual pipeline liquefied natural gas (LNG) delivery project, and to conduct a study to identify potential LNG route-based customers in the Cooperative's member counties, including Mifflin County. The study portion was completed in summer of 2019 and identified eight potential priority project areas for LNG delivery, including the Milroy area of Mifflin County. Extensive discussions about using the USDA funds to place a pilot LNG delivery/storage tank with Metzler Forest Products or an industrial/organizational customer in the Milroy area took place in 2019. As of this writing, additional cost concerns related to tank purchase and/or cost of delivered LNG have precluded accomplishing this action. Discussions will continue in 2020 toward placement of a tank, still potentially in Mifflin County.

Outreach to the Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation is also planned in 2020 to coordinate their development efforts with marketing of natural gas availability.

Elsewhere, in Centre County, construction on a pipeline delivery system serving Centre Hall began in September. The Cooperative was instrumental in obtaining state funding and connecting participants to make the project happen. Completion of the initial phase is set for March.

For more information on these initiatives, please contact Don Kiel at SEDA-COG at dkiel@seda-cog.org.

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 204 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 education/training.

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, Lewistown Boroughs, 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 two active loans. Revolving loan funds are available for interested businesses in the greater Lewistown area.

Transportation Planning

Monument Square Streetscape Project - Phase V

The Monument Square Streetscape Project Phase V 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 when entering Downtown Lewistown for both residents and visitors. PennDOT, through the Transportation Assistance Program, awarded \$608,000 to Mifflin County to construct Phase V and these funds will be complemented with \$82,000 from the Borough of Lewistown's CDBG program for final engineering design. This will bring the total project cost to \$690,000, excluding preliminary design work developed as part of the grant application process.

This phase 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. Existing conditions in this area include no sidewalks on the south side of Water Street, unsafe sidewalks, overgrown trees that are heaving up sidewalks and poorly delineated crosswalks.



Construction for Phase V started in the summer of 2019 and most of the work was completed by the end of the year except for the decorative light standards. The work included new sidewalks, 9 trees, foundations for 5 light standards, one shrub, stamped crosswalks on South Main Street, Water Street and Brown Street and a bench near the Mann Edge Terrace II housing complex on Water St. The light standards were installed in early January of 2020. A final project inspection took place near the end of January with only a few minor items to complete. All remaining requirements will be finished between February and March 2020.

During the construction process, Downtown Lewistown, Inc., developed a partnership with the Monument Square Phase V project to improve sidewalks along West Water Street from the end of the Phase V project to Juniata Street. Downtown Lewistown, Inc., was able to secure DCED Keystone Communities Grant funds to construct sidewalk improvements that will hopefully occur in 2020. This link will assist in pedestrian connectivity with Victory Park and the Kish Riverwalk. The Monument Square and Downtown Lewistown, Inc. projects will further enhance ongoing improvements taking place in the downtown area including the construction of a new bridge crossing Kish Creek at the corner of Main and Water Streets.

The EADS Group was the designer/engineer and G&R Charles Excavating was the contractor for this project.

Reedsville Streetscape Project

Since 2016, Brown Township and a local citizens group, the Reedsville Community Association, have been working to improve the appearance and restore the vitality of downtown Reedsville. This effort has resulted in the mini-park, Brown's Mills Square, and ADA improvements along Main Street. However, a complete, unobstructed sidewalk system is missing, and is important in the township's effort to improve pedestrian access. In the summer of 2017, Brown Township requested that Mifflin County assist them with

an application to PennDOT for Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Surface Transportation Block Grant program funds to assist them with improved pedestrian access in the downtown area.

In May of 2018, PennDOT awarded \$834,610 to Mifflin County through the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Transportation Block Grant program to assist in the development of the Reedsville Streetscape Project. This project will encompass three blocks along Main Street in Reedsville from Tony Street to nearby 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 the public right-of-way. This discovery led to the decision by PennDOT that a Right of Way Plan would be required to clearly show the right of way and determine where an additional right of way would need to be obtained. This process took longer than anticipated in confirming the location of the right of way, limits of the new sidewalk design, and determining the number of property owners impacted. Over 30 properties were ultimately determined to require easement agreements. The Right of Way Plan was approved by PennDOT in October of 2019. Following the plan approval, an appraisal of impacted areas was required by PennDOT by a certified appraiser. All affected property owners were notified about the value of the easement areas through a public meeting process in December of 2020. As part of this process, signed easement agreements were required of each of the impacted property owners. This process was completed in February of 2020. At this time, the final construction plans are being developed and anticipate approval by PennDOT in the first half of 2020. The County and Township are hopeful that construction can be completed in 2020, but it could extend into 2021.



Lewistown Train Station Improvement/Feasibility Study

For the past six 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.

Several years ago, passenger service was reduced to one train a day going west to Pittsburgh and one train going east to Harrisburg. This has impacted 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 included 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. PennDOT took the work scope developed by Mifflin County and with some modifications agreed to fund the study. The results of that study should be available in the summer of 2020.

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. The Long Range Plan 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 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Local Access Roads program funds. The types of projects evaluated include bicycle, pedestrian, historic preservation, public transit and roadway access enhancements. Examples of the TAP program impacting Mifflin County are the Monument Square Streetscape Project – Phase V in Lewistown that will be completed in 2019 and the Reedsville Streetscape Project in Brown Township that will be completed in 2020. Other projects have included infrastructure improvements through ARC for the Primary Health Network Facility (former Derry Heights project) and the related Automated Red Light Enforcement Program (ARLE) project involving a traffic signal and intersection improvements at the corner of Ferguson Valley Road (SR 1007) and Freedom Avenue. These projects are proposed to be undertaken in 2020.

Other MPO programs have included a bike pedestrian plan impacting on several of the SEDA-COG counties and a recently completed Strategic Plan. This plan will recommend strategies and identify issues that will provide direction over the next five years as well as support overall community economic development activities for the region.

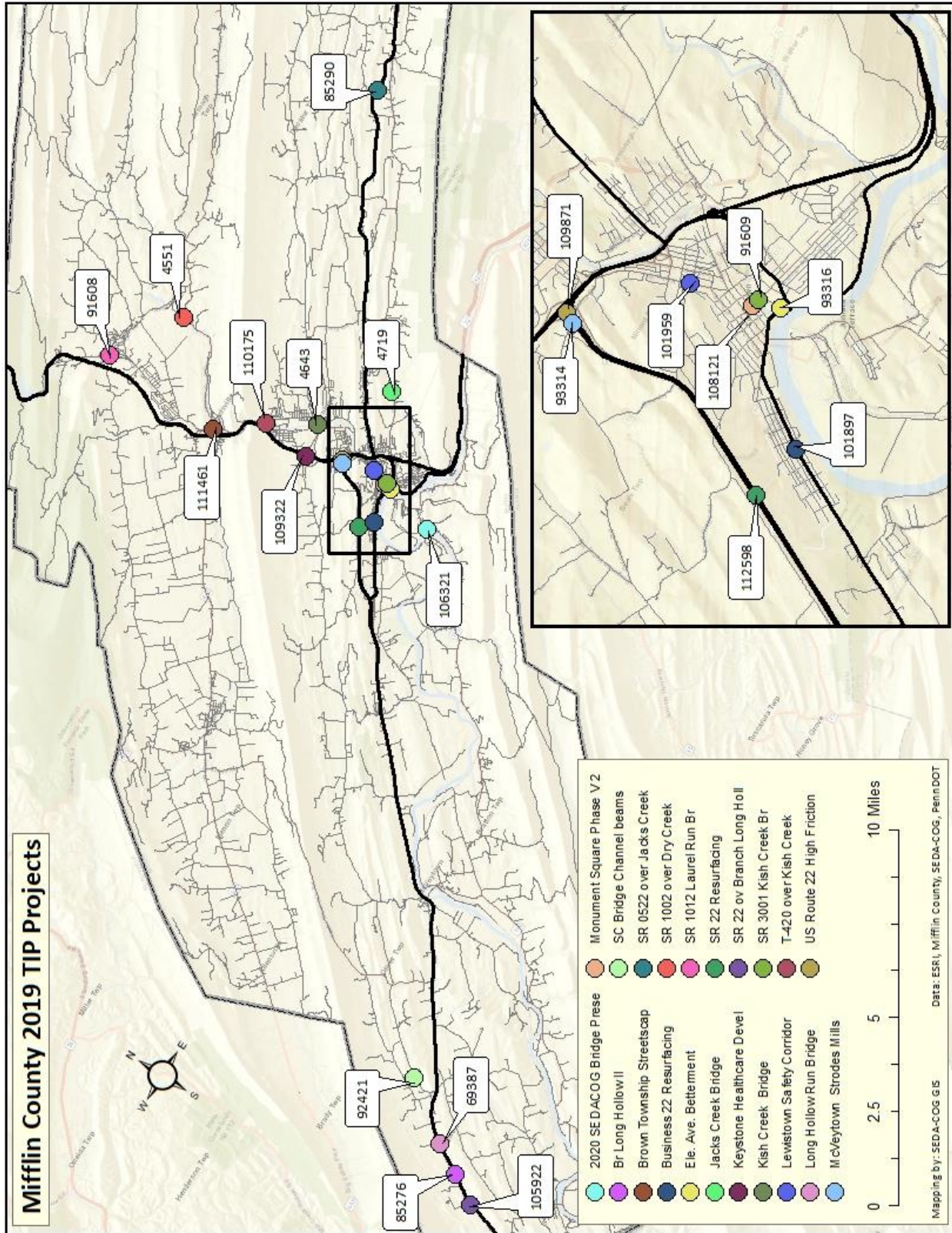
State Transportation Commission

Every two years the State Twelve Year Plan (TYP) is updated. The 2019 TYP was adopted in the summer of 2018 and is part of a systematic way to prioritize state transportation resources/funds. Unfortunately, no new projects submitted by Mifflin County were included in the 2019 Twelve Year Plan of the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is considered the first four years of the TYP. Considering this, 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 2019 TIP map on page 13).

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. They include: the replacement of the Kishacoquillas Creek Bridge on West Railroad Street (T-439) in Brown Township; the Walnut Street Bridge (T-350) over Kishacoquillas Creek in Union Township; and the Kishacoquillas Creek Bridge on Spring Run Road (T-368) in Union Township. Other bridges less than 20 feet in length will be targeted at a later time through this initiative.

The process to update the current Twelve Year Plan (TYP) will begin in March 2019, and a new TYP will be adopted in the summer of 2020. As part of the process, The EADS Group, 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, The EADS Group 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 ground breaking 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.



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 2019 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, review 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 (3) three applications for funding for Mifflin County's 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The second public hearing was held September 26, 2019 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 2019 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 17, 2019 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 six 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 November 7, 2019, 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 21, 2019. This application was made for Mifflin County and on behalf of Brown, Derry, and Granville Townships and the Lewistown Borough.

The County's 2018 CDBG allocation is \$228,235.00. The following tables delineate the recommended funding amounts for each project for the County's 2019 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 \$678,234.00.

Table 2A MIFFLIN COUNTY			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Borough of Juniata Terrace	Stormwater management improvements for Terrace Boulevard (project and delivery)	\$187,153.00
2.	Administration	Planning and administration activities	\$41,082.00
	Total Mifflin County CDBG Funding:		\$228,235.00

Table 2B BROWN TOWNSHIP			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Honey Brook area flood mitigation project	Improvements to existing stormwater piping and inlets, spot repairs of the existing berm and other necessary measures to prevent flooding (project and delivery)	\$74,457.00
2.	Administration	Planning and administration activities salaries and benefits	\$16,344.00
	Total Brown Township CDBG Funding:		\$90,801.00

Table 2C DERRY TOWNSHIP			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Demolition of blighted structure	Demolition of 547 Woodland Avenue (project and delivery)	\$25,396.00
2.	Demolition of blighted structure	Demolition of 518 Pitt Street (project and delivery)	\$25,395.00
3.	Parks and recreation-ADA restrooms	ADA removal of architectural barriers for restrooms at Kishacoquillas Park (project and delivery)	\$50,791.00
4.	Administration	Planning and administration activities salaries and benefits	\$22,298.00
	Total Derry Township CDBG Funding:		\$123,880.00

Table 2D GRANVILLE TOWNSHIP			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Road reconstruction of Granville Run Road	Road reconstruction of Granville Run Road (project and delivery)	\$83,133.00
2.	Administration	Planning and administration activities salaries and benefits	\$18,248.00
	Total Granville Township CDBG Funding:		\$101,381.00

Table 2E LEWISTOWN BOROUGH			
		Project Activity	Funding Amount
1.	Road reconstruction and ADA ramps	Road reconstruction of Wilson Avenue and 3 ADA curb ramps including design and construction and road reconstruction of Susquehanna Avenue and 6 ADA curb ramps including design and construction (project and delivery)	\$113,847.00
2.	Administration	Planning and administration activities salaries and benefits	\$20,090.00
3.	Total Lewistown Borough CDBG Funding:		\$133,937.00

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 2018.

- A. *West Wayne Sewer Authority Project* – On August 21, 2018, bids were received from three contractors for sewer line replacement and pump station upgrades for the project in the Cedar Crest area of Wayne Township. The low bidder was HRI, Inc. of State College in the amount of \$149,425.00. GHD, Inc. of Huntingdon is the project engineer on the project following a request for qualifications process. The construction was started in the latter part of 2018 with the replacement of the sewer line and manhole work. The pump station upgrades will take place in the spring of 2019. Funds came from federal fiscal years (FFY's) 2015 and 2016 funds including engineering and project costs.



- B. *McVeytown Borough Authority Sewer Rehabilitation* – This project consists of open cut trench repairs and cured in place pipe (CIPP), public lateral replacement, as needed, throughout a majority of the areas in McVeytown Borough and a small portion of Oliver Township. The existing line was videoed and areas needing repair/replacement were identified by the engineer Gwin, Dobson & Foreman, Inc. of Altoona. Bids were due in early August, 2017 and a total of four were received. The low bidder was State Pipe Services, Inc. of Cranberry Township, PA with a bid amount was \$846,375.00. A contract was signed in early October and the notice to proceed was issued on October 16, 2017. Work began in late October 2017 and final restoration was completed in the early summer of 2018. The project is now complete. This project, including engineering costs, was funded with FFY's 2014, 2015 and 2015 competitive funds.



- C. *Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program* – Seven houses have currently been inspected and are in the process of the lead based paint risk assessment, asbestos and radon testing and the electrical inspection and one additional house is awaiting an initial inspection. Following all of these processes, the project will go out for bid in early 2019. These projects will be funded with CDBG FFY's 2015, 2016 and 2017 funds, including County, Brown Township and ACT 137 funds.

Derry Township Project Status

The following is a summary of work in progress during calendar year 2018.

- A. *Lewistown Heights/Hamilton Terrace Stormwater and Road Reconstruction Project* – In September 2018, an engineering and design agreement was signed with Buchart-Horn, Inc. of State College. The project will consist of storm water improvements and road reconstruction. It is anticipated that bidding will take place in the spring of 2019 with construction to be completed by fall of 2019. This project is being funded with FFY’s 2015, 2016 and 2017 funds.



Brown Township Project Status

The following is a summary of work in progress during calendar year 2018.

- A. *ADA Fishing Pier project at Bender Park in Reedsville* – This project was completed in late 2018 with minor site restoration to take place in the spring of 2019. A handicapped accessible fishing pier and paved pathway from the existing paved pathways was installed in Bender Park along Honey Creek in Reedsville. The purpose was to eliminate architectural barriers in the area and to improve fishing access for handicapped or elderly individuals. This project was bid in June of 2018 and two bids were submitted. The low bidder and contractor for the project was G & R Charles Excavating, LTD. of Port Trevorton, PA. The engineer for the project was C. S. Davidson, Inc. of York, PA. The construction cost was \$27,785.00. This project was funded with FFY’s 2014 and 2015 funds.



Lewistown Borough Project Status

The following is a summary of work in progress during calendar year 2018.

- A. *South Wayne Street and Spring Street Reconstruction* – In August 2018, two bids were received for the road reconstruction project at South Wayne and Spring Streets. The project consisted of milling notches at cross streets and road reconstruction. Jay Fulkroad & Sons, Inc. of McAlisterville was the low bidder in the amount of \$163,361.64. Work began and was completed in October 2018. This project was funded with FFY’s 2015, 2016 and 2017 funds.



Mifflin County Microenterprise Loan Program

This 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.

The 2015 HOME grant award in the amount of \$500,000 consisted of a local target area of Juniata Terrace, Lewistown and Kistler Boroughs. These three boroughs have the highest concentrations of low/moderate income residents in Mifflin County. Currently, 13 clients are at some point throughout the rehabilitation process of their homes, ranging from initial interview, inspection, lead based paint risk assessment, asbestos and radon testing, electrical inspection, bidding and contracting to completion. We will have 7-10 projects under construction in the coming year. The Department of Labor and Industry has recently required a hybrid version of the PA State Prevailing Wages to be included in rehabilitation projects exceeding \$25,000 in costs. This, along with other factors, has diminished the total number of houses we can assist with funds. Our average rehab costs have increased from \$25,000 to approximately \$37,000 per house. This cost per unit is primarily due to the state prevailing wage rates and is compounded by the requirement to complete lead based paint abatement on most of our homes, as well as completing asbestos removal and radon mitigation on some of the homes. This program will be completed by July of 2019. Our two contractors are working diligently on the houses and all homes will be completed by that date.

For an update on regular housing rehabilitation, refer to Mifflin County Project Status C on page 15 for an update on our other projects that are not funded under the HOME program.

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 County Planning Commission approves, approves with conditions, or denies subdivisions and land developments that occur in the municipalities without Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances. These municipalities are: 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. These include: 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.

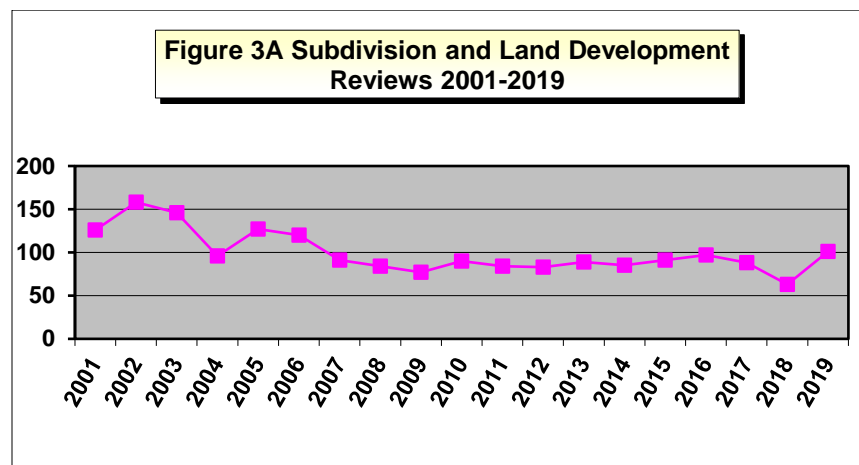


Figure 3A above shows the number of plans reviewed since 2001. The trend since 2005 has been a decreasing number with minor increases in 2010, to a slightly lower consistent number of plans during 2011-2015. However, in 2015 and in 2016, the number of plans rose slightly each year above the 2011 level 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 percent (62%). The Mifflin County Planning Commission reviewed a total of 101 plans in 2019.

Table 3A below shows the number of plans reviewed from 2013 through 2019, with lot additions and lot line adjustments, which are considered minor subdivisions. Of the plans reviewed in 2019, 29 new residential lots were created, covering 62 acres. Among the land development plans proposed, 7 new commercial or industrial lots were created, accounting for 4.724 acres of developed land, or 205,777 square feet of new commercial/industrial land.

Table 3A Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews 2013-2019				
Year	Minor Subdivision	Major Subdivision	Land Developments	Total
2013	70	1	17	88
2014	66	2	17	85
2015	76	1	16	93
2016	82	0	15	97
2017	65	0	23	88
2018	38	0	25	63
2019	77	0	24	101
Totals	474	4	135	615

Figure 3B below shows the percentage of plans submitted by type. Of the 101 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 100 plans reviewed consisted of 5 types as noted within the legend in Figure 3B. The majority of plans, being thirty-seven percent (37%), were minor subdivision while thirty-four percent (34%) were lot additions. Land Development plans decreased to twenty-seven percent (27%) which are plans for constructing buildings and developing property. There were no major subdivisions during 2019. Major subdivisions include more than 6 lots. Lot line adjustments accounted for four percent (4%). 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.

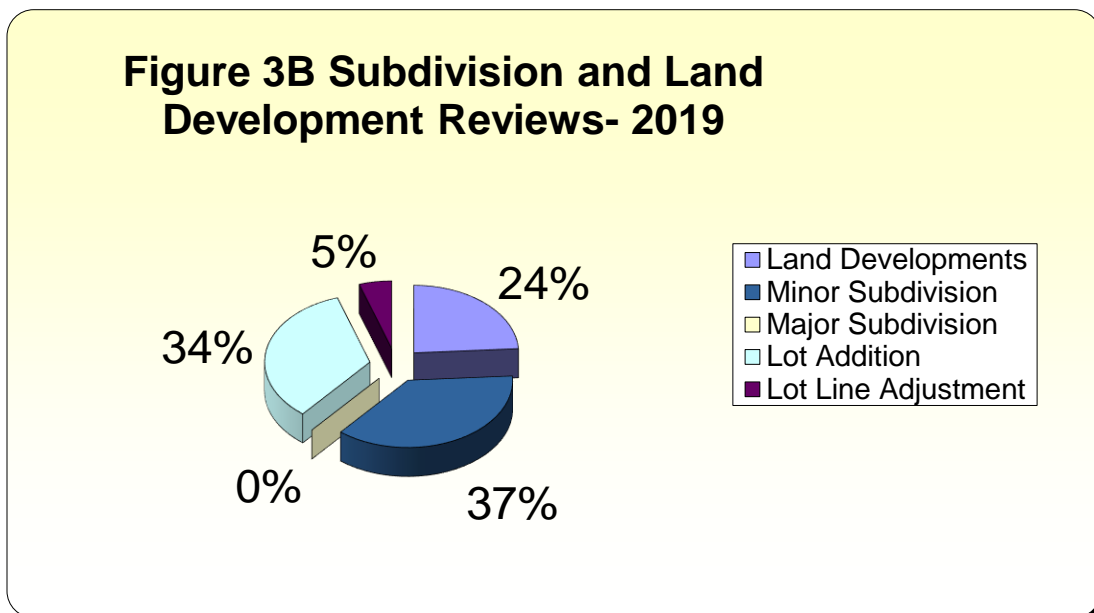
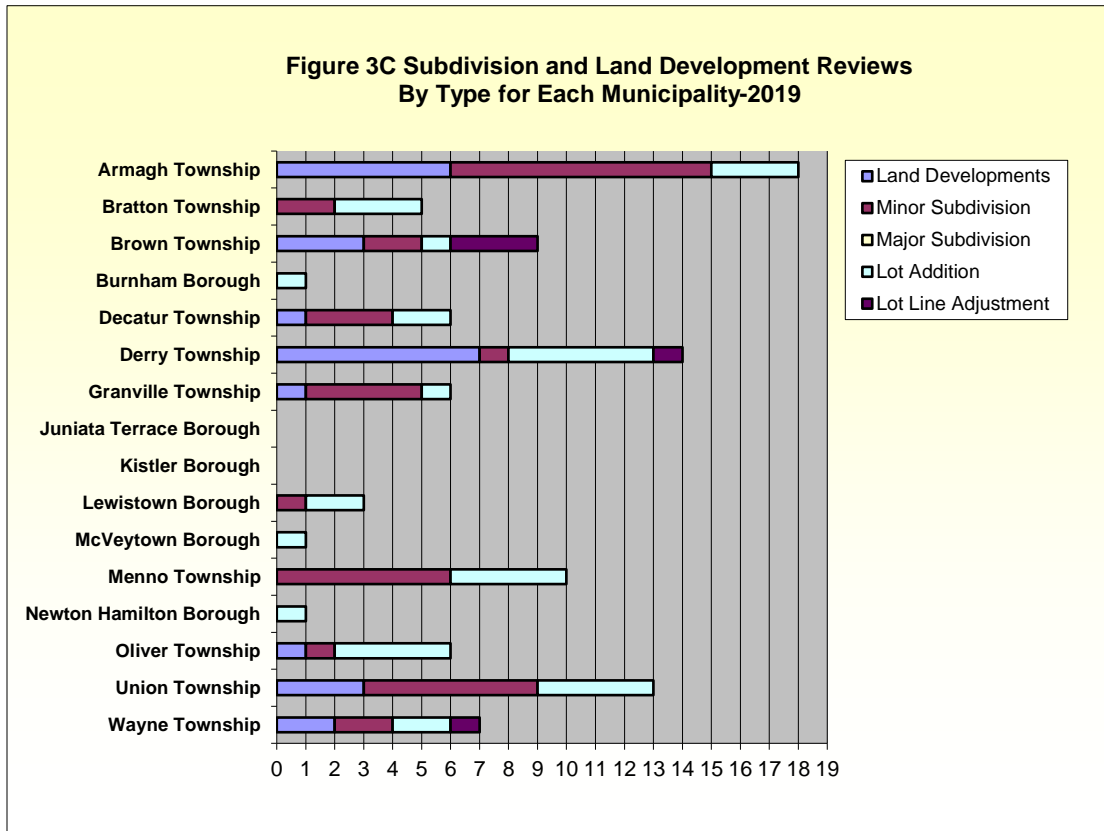


Table 3B below shows the number of plan types reviewed in each municipality during 2019.

Table 3B Subdivision and Land Development Plan Reviews-2019						
Municipality	Land Developments	Minor Subdivision	Major Subdivision	Lot Addition	Lot Line Adjustment	Total
Armagh Township	6	9	0	3	0	18
Bratton Township	0	2	0	3	0	5
Brown Township	3	2	0	1	3	9
Burnham Borough	0	0	0	1	0	1
Decatur Township	1	3	0	2	0	6
Derry Township	7	1	0	5	1	14
Granville Township	1	4	0	1	0	6
Juniata Terrace Borough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kistler Borough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lewistown Borough	0	1	0	2	0	3
McVeytown Borough	0	0	0	1	0	1
Menno Township	0	6	0	4	0	10
Newton Hamilton Borough	0	0	0	1	0	1
Oliver Township	1	1	0	4	0	6
Union Township	3	6	0	4	0	13
Wayne Township	2	2	0	2	1	7
TOTALS	24	38	0	35	4	101

Figure 3C below shows a comparison of the number of plan reviews and types by municipality in 2019. Armagh and Derry Townships had the most plans with a total of 17 and 14 respectively. The next highest number of plans received and reviewed was Union Township with 13 and Menno Township with 10. In terms of the other municipalities, there were 6 plans each reviewed in Bratton, Decatur, Granville, and Oliver Townships, 7 plans each in Brown and Wayne Townships, 3 plans in Lewistown Borough, 1 plan in Burnham, McVeytown and Newton Hamilton Borough. There were no land developments or subdivision plans submitted in the Boroughs of Kistler and Juniata Terrace.



Some areas of Mifflin County are experiencing faster growth than others. One way to pinpoint growth areas is to track the location of subdivisions and land developments 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 2013 to 2019

MIFFLIN COUNTY SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS 2013-2019

Prepared by the Mifflin County GIS Department September, 2020. Data sources from the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department.



Legend
Subdivisions and Land Development -
Parcels of Land

- Roads
- Municipal Boundaries
- Streams and Rivers
- 2019
- 2018
- 2017
- 2016
- 2015
- 2014
- 2013



**Mifflin County Planning Commission -
 2019 Annual Report**

SECTION 4: MEMBERS AND STAFF

4.1 Planning Commission

At the reorganization in January 2019, the officers of the Mifflin County Planning Commission were elected as follows: Kay Semler, Chair; Dan Dunmire, Vice Chair; and Neal Shawver, Secretary.

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.

Mainline Canal Greenway Trail

Jane Sheffield, Executive Director of Allegheny Ridge Corporation, Bob Thomas of Campbell Thomas & Co., and Jim Laird of Laird Recreation and Land Planning gave a presentation at the January 2019 meeting of the Mifflin County Planning Commission on the proposed Mainline Canal Greenway Trail Study.

Jane Sheffield has been working on the Main Line Canal Greenway for a long time. The consultant team has been working on the alignment of the 9/11 National Memorial Trail with the Main Line Canal Greenway Trail between Johnstown and Harrisburg. The Allegheny Ridge Corporation worked on developing the trails that were accessible. Water trail maps and interpretative signage were developed along with access points along the Juniata River. As the communities are connected, it will become a longer trail experience and will be a multiuse trail that will enhance visitation into the communities.

Robert Thomas has worked closely with Jim Laird on many long distance trails. Mr. Thomas shared the results of the feasibility study and the plans for the next steps, including implementation. The study reviewed Huntingdon and Mifflin Counties simultaneously in order to develop the trail. Different corridors were studied, including the old canal and towpath, Kishacoquillas Valley, Ferguson Valley and Route 103. Interviews demonstrated the importance of connecting old canal towns by making them trail towns. Existing and historic railroads were looked at along with maps of historic Indian trails and highways. Major spines and loops were also reviewed along with historic sites and 9/11 sites. They reviewed existing major hiking and bicycle routes along with canoe/kayak guides.

Key outcomes from research and analysis, interviews, stakeholder meetings and public meetings demonstrated that the trail should stay close to the original corridor and the Juniata River. An interim and preferred alignment of the trail was selected and based off of the information that was gathered and presented in the study.

Jim Laird attended the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Juniata River Trail and is excited to see the economic development opportunities related to the trail.

Water for Agriculture Project and State Watershed Improvement Plan Phase 3 (WIP) Initiative

Walt Whitmer, Ag Project Coordinator for Penn State University Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology and Education, shared information on two parallel projects in Pennsylvania to the Mifflin County Planning Commission at their February 2019 meeting.

The first project is Water for Agriculture. This is a four-year collaborative project with partners from University of Nebraska Lincoln, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Arizona State University, Penn State and USDA NIFA. This project brings together social science and biophysical researchers, extension and local partners to support community-led initiatives to address the water and agriculture issues that matter most to them.

Goals of this project are to work in cooperation with and in service to five communities, two of which are located in Pennsylvania (Mifflin County and Potter-Tioga area), two in Nebraska and one in Arizona; assist these communities in addressing the water and agricultural issues that matter most to them; develop an evidence-based approach to stakeholder engagement; assess what difference this approach makes; whether and how it can help these communities and others address critical water and agricultural issues.

The project is currently in its second year. A lot of planning occurred in the first year through interviews, data collection and discussions. Years two and three will have formal activities and efforts with the local leadership team consisting of 18 people made of a diverse group. Year four will contain a lot of post-assessment activities.

The second project running parallel with the Water for Agriculture project is the State Watershed Improvement Plan Phase III (WIP III). This project 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 WIP and creating goals with the fear of regulation.

Four counties were selected for the Pilot Planning Process. They include Lancaster (which 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. If it is rolled out on a tiered approach, Mifflin County is Tier 3 and would kick off in October 2019. If it is rolled out in a watershed-wide approach, it will kick off in July 2019. Nothing is mandated yet, however, the DEP has to submit the PA Statewide WIP Plan to the EPA by April 20, 2019 to establish the targets and benchmarks. It is uncertain if there will be any repercussions 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 largely in part due to weather. Weather events can cause drastic changes to water quality.

Annual Economic Update

Nick Felice, President of MCIDC, provided an annual economic update to the Mifflin County Planning Commission at their May 2019 meeting. The MCIDC office has moved to the CareerLink building, reducing costs by \$5,000 and making a large office space available for rent. He is also more aligned with CareerLink activities as well. There are currently 23 tenants in the Plaza buildings and all are operating in good condition. Over the past year, roof repair occurred at Asher's in the Business Center. Parking lot and stormwater improvements were made in the area the previous year. Growmark relocated operations from Port Royal to the MCIDC Plaza. An overhead door was installed along with site flattening to accommodate this move.

As part of the presentation, MCIDC is reviewing the best use of opportunities for a 30-acre area at the corner of Middle Road and Expansion Drive, of which 12 acres is buildable. Mr. Felice is not sure if

this is a viable industrial site, but is also considering commercial and residential uses. Spectra Wood is now occupying the former GE building. The South Rail Yard project in Burnham has not happened yet. The marketing conditions are not favorable at this time. Krentzman is working with SEDA-COG on this potential project.

MCIDC is working with the Chamber of Commerce holding monthly entrepreneurial meetups that are held at Shy Bear Brewing Company. The meetings are lightly scripted. The MCIDC website has been revamped. Mr. Felice will attend the SelectUSA Foreign Direct Investment Summit where local companies can be connected with foreign interests wanting to establish a presence in the United States. Mr. Felice is also working with Focus Central PA, which is a seven county cooperative marketing consortium that markets and channels existing businesses that are looking to expand. The Governor's Action Team is utilized to bring projects to the counties based on project criteria. The DCED Office of International Business Development looks at neighboring counties because it recognizes workers commute and this is still beneficial to Mifflin County residents.

Mr. Felice closed by sharing concerns with workforce development. It appears the current labor market area is unable to fulfill the needs of area companies. Mr. Felice is also working the Chamber's Business and Education Committee by engaging primary and secondary school students.

Mifflin County School District Update

Jim Estep, Superintendent of Mifflin County School District, John Bilich, Assistant Director of The Academy, and Dan Potutschnig, Administrative Director of the Academy of Science and Technology, gave a presentation to the Mifflin County Planning Commission at their March 2019 meeting. Mr. Estep recently worked with their yearbook company to create brochures focusing on kindergarten through ninth grade and the high school. A professional video was also developed and published on the website, which focuses on the high school and The Academy. Another video will be published in the fall highlighting other parts of the school district.

Mr. Estep further mentioned Mifflin County was one of 370 school districts across the United States and Canada to be named to the college boards AP honor roll. This is an award for increasing the number of AP offerings provided to students. AP courses can be granted college credits. Performance of students on the AP exam has also increased. The STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program is in full swing. Student interest is increasing in robotics and computer programs. They are now co-planning STEM lessons with elementary grades.

The Safe to Say initiative was recently launched as a result of Act 144, which is intended to improve protection of students. A safe school audit was recently completed. A second full-time resource officer has been hired in the school district to cover additional buildings.

The Alpha and MCO (Mifflin County Online) Programs were developed to combat charter schools. There are currently 563 students who take at least one course through one of these programs. There is still approximately \$2 million going to other charter and cyber schools from Mifflin County. Retention of students is currently in the 90th percentile and they are hoping to see incremental growth with offering online classes for those students who have fallen behind.

Mr. Estep announced that the marching band recently won the Eastern Nationals and received major awards and accolades. Approximately 3,000 people attended the school's recent musical, Beauty and the Beast, raising \$25,000, which will help pay for the next musical. Also, the school district has been nationally recognized by the National Association of Music Merchants for being a school district and community that goes out of its way to try to support music and the arts.

Mr. Bilich provided an update of The Academy and noted recent student achievements, including 83% of the senior class receiving advanced or competent on their NOCTI/NIMS testing scores. Student attendance this past year was 92.9% with a goal of 94% for next school year.

A partnership with Penn College allowed for dual enrollment students beginning this year. Students can earn free college credits while attending The Academy, but the student must use these credits at Penn College. The Academy must also take these students to Penn College once a year so the students can see their campus. The current academic year is a pilot year with Medical Science earning up to 6 credits and Mechatronics earning up to 9 credits. Students must pass the entrance exam to Penn College in order to receive the credits. Electrical installation, auto mechanics and agriculture programs will be added next year.

Dan Potutschnig shared the Academy Foundation was formed as a way to raise funds for The Academy. A Rotary seafood dinner is being offered the same day as this meeting with 50% of the proceeds going to the Foundation. Mr. Potutschnig is trying to drill down to the elementary students and parents to gain interest at earlier ages. The Academy participates in the third grade agriculture tours along with Academy Days where their students go to elementary classes and teach lessons. In May, The Academy will host the PSEA Literacy Carnival, which is offered due to growing relationships with teachers and teacher unions. This event has drawn a great turnout.

CDBG Update

Jim Letiere, AICP, Community Development Administrator/Assistant reviewed the budget sheets for CDBG projects to the Mifflin County Planning Commission at their April 2019 meeting. All environmental reviews have been completed for 2017 projects. Jim first reviewed the Mifflin County contract. The Juniata Terrace project is out for bid. The Armagh ADA project is expected to be completed by the end of summer.

The HOME program, which is a \$500,000 grant, is currently at a 72% expenditure rate and all funds must be spent by July 12th. A new mandate states that anything over \$25,000 must use prevailing wages.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters is pulling out of Mifflin County in June and they will forfeit their 2017 money and this will be reallocated to another project. In Derry Township, the Lewistown Heights, Hamilton Terrace project will be underway soon. MABL will be replacing water lines in the area soon. Once the water line replacement has been completed, CDBG will do a stormwater management, paving project in the area.

The total 2018 CDBG funds award was \$666,245, including funds for the County, Brown Township, Derry Township, Granville Township, and Lewistown Borough. We are hopeful to receive the contract by mid-May. Most of the 2018 application was benchmarked for housing rehab since there were no shovel ready projects. Modifications will have to be made to allocate those funds towards other projects. Jim added that there are now only three years to expend the funds and one year to close out the grants.

The U.S. Census Bureau released the latest American Community Survey Data estimates from 2011-2015, which has changed the low-to-moderate income areas in Lewistown Borough as well as some other areas. He can create a spreadsheet to demonstrate the differences.

The department is looking into an emergency rehabilitation program. The problem with using CDBG or HOME money in an emergency situation is that the whole house must be brought up to code within one year. If Act 137 funds are used, this does not have to happen. An emergency will need to be defined.

Annual Transportation Update

Tom Zurat, Assistant District Executive of Design for PennDOT (District 2) provided an update on the area transportation plans at the June 2019 meeting of the Mifflin County Planning Commission. Mifflin County has 271.5 miles of roadway and 184 state owned bridges. There are 11 structurally deficient (SD) bridges in Mifflin County. Six of the eleven structurally deficient bridges are in the process of being programed for work. Tom also stated that the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) was updated two years ago. Over the past five years Mifflin County has had four bridge replacement/rehab projects, six bridge preservations projects, four highway projects, three enhancement projects, three box culverts, three sidewalk enhancements projects and two safety projects.

Mr. Zurat also reviewed carryover contract work currently under construction including the Burnham Interchange and the Kish Creek Bridge in Burnham. The Burnham Interchange project extends the accelerate and decelerate westbound lanes. The Kish Creek Bridge in Burnham had a temporary bridge installed this spring. The work on replacing the bridge is in process. A separate project near the Burnham Interchange at the intersection of Ferguson Valley Road and Freedom Avenue involving a proposed traffic light is out to bid.

The Monument Square Phase V Enhancement Project is now under construction and includes one block of South Main Street and one block east along Water Street connecting with Mann Edge Apartments. Associated with the project is the old building on the corner of Water Street and Main Street needing to be torn down to continue the sidewalk. This project came in under budget and the contractor hopes to do additional work after the building is removed. Another project adjoining this project is the Kish Creek Bridge replacement at the corner of South Main Street and Water Street.

Other miscellaneous projects taking place in 2020 and beyond include The Monument Square Phase V Enhancement Project is now under construction and includes one block of South Main Street and one block east along Water Street connecting with Mann Edge Apartments. Associated with the project is the old building on the corner of Water Street and Main Street needing to be torn down to continue the sidewalk. This project came in under budget and the contractor hopes to do additional work after the building is removed. Another project adjoining this project is the Kish Creek Bridge replacement at the corner of South Main Street and Water Street. Also, in the next 3-4 years, plans call for the full reconstruction of Valley Street from Dorcas to Walnut Streets.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Kelly Tessier, Environment Associate with Michael Baker International, provided an update at the July 2019 meeting of the Mifflin County Planning Commission. Components of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan include an introduction, community profile, planning process, risk assessment, capability assessment, mitigation strategy, plan maintenance and adoption. Ms. Tessier said that risk assessment is the largest part of the plan.

Ms. Tessier gave a recap of the February meeting of the Mifflin County Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee. At the meeting, they reviewed the 2019 Plan format and the process, the mitigation techniques and requirements, discussed the level of participation, and reviewed the schedule.

Ms. Tessier explained that the Mitigation Strategy consists of goals, objectives and actions. Mifflin County will have six goals in the 2019 plan. These goals are the same as those found in the 2014 plan, based on the input from the Steering Committee and Stakeholders.

Goal 1: Strengthen County and local capabilities to reduce the potential impact of flooding on existing and future public/partner assets, including structures, critical facilities and technological hazards.

Goal 2: Protect the citizens of Mifflin County as well as public and private property from the impacts of natural and human-caused hazards.

Goal 3: Enhance planning and emergency response efforts among state, county, and local emergency management personnel to protect public health and safety.

Goal 4: Build Mifflin County's spatial information resources to strengthen public and private hazard mitigation planning and decision support capabilities.

Goal 5: Increase public awareness on both the potential impacts of natural hazards and activities to reduce those hazards.

Goal 6: Increase intergovernmental cooperation and build public-private partnerships to implement activities that will reduce the impact of natural, man-made, and technological disasters.

Every municipality should have a director of emergency management. It was suggested that emergency management contact information for each municipality be added to the directory.

Natural Gas Cooperative Update

Don Kiel of the SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative provided an update at the October 2019 meeting of the Mifflin County Planning Commission.

The USDA has recently sponsored a project through their Rural Business Development Grant at Metzler's Forest Products in Reedsville. Other funding options have come through the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Governor's Last Mile Extension Program also known as "PIPE", U.S. Economic Development Administration and Natural Gas Distribution Company Extension Programs.

Mr. Kiel also discussed the route-based delivery system. This system is especially suitable for smaller and mid-sized agricultural customers (grain dyers, poultry houses, hardwood processors, etc.). In August 2019, they conducted a route-based delivery study that was sponsored by the USDA and ARC. The goal of this study was to identify the most suitable potential types of customers, locations for LNG Delivery and locations for depot supply tanks in nine counties within Pennsylvania. They listed eight top priority LNG delivery areas; Milroy, Duncannon, Mifflintown, McAlisterville, Middleburg, Mifflinburg, Newport and Elysburg. Mr. Kiel discussed the proposed scenario for Milroy. This project would be a virtual pipeline supply with limited pipeline distribution network and would be built in phases. The LNG depot storage/distribution tank would be placed between Philips and Corvette America with the potential to expand service within close proximity to Brown and Armagh Townships. Tom Lake asked the cost of a tank and Mr. Kiel stated it is \$75,000 and higher.

Mr. Kiel closed by stating that he has hopes to get Mifflin County up and going with virtual pipeline.

Lewistown Train Station Improvement Study

Jennie Granger, Deputy Secretary of PA Department of Transportation/Multimodal, gave a presentation of the Lewistown Train Station Improvement study at the December 2019 meeting of the Mifflin County Planning Commission. In the past few years, rail travel has been on the rise as a means of travel for many Americans and there is demand for passenger service across the state. Deputy Secretary Granger wants to help expand train service in Mifflin County.

The study is meant to discover what improvements need to be made in order to improve the functionality of the station. A major concern is meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as evaluate the needs for potential expanded train service. The study will focus on accessibility

improvements. PennDOT will fully fund the study. The station is owned by a non-profit and they are supportive of the study as are Lewistown Borough and Granville Township, where the station is located.

There are two phases of the study. The first step is to identify necessary improvements. Phase two involves the traffic and transportation flow in the area. Granger spoke of an open area near the station which could be used for passenger parking as well as a drop off/pick up for buses or taxis.

One of the other major benefits highlighted at the meeting was the impact rail improvements could have on university students traveling to and from State College. Lewistown is the closest rail hub to Penn State. Another point mentioned was train service being important to the Amish community.

Jennie Granger hopes to have preliminary information on the study to present by April 2020.

4.2 Planning and Development Department

Staff Development

Staff members of the Planning and Development Department have participated in conferences, workshops and other events throughout the year to continue their training and professional development.

County Planning Directors Association

Planning Directors from counties throughout the Commonwealth meet several times a year to discuss issues affecting county planning offices and commissions. 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 William Gomes has been attending these meetings. The association met three times during 2018 and reviewed and discussed the following: State Agency Peer Program through DEP, PennDOT, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED); strategic plan update; rural broadband; the PA Water Implementation Plan; protecting private water supplies; source water protection; 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. James Lettiere has served on this board since 2017.

CDBG: CD and H Practitioners Conference

On March 26-27, 2018, James Lettiere, Douglas Marks and Stacey Herman attended the Pennsylvania CD&H Practitioners Annual Conference in State College, PA. This annual conference reviews compliance requirements for the effective and efficient use of Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds and provides updates on legislative actions that impact these programs. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PA-DCED) focused on the following financial and programmatic items:

- Disaster resilience and housing community development planning
- PEMA pre-disaster recovery plan
- How Community Development Plans and housing assessments feed the PA plan
- Consolidated plan feedback-needs, impediments and opportunities
- Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) and financial management
- Affordable housing
- Using CDBG to address public service needs
- Successful administration of the HOME program
- How to creatively address environmental review requirements
- Community Development and Housing Advisory Committee with practitioners
- National Flood Insurance Program/Community Rating System (CRS)

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association 2018 Annual Conference

From October 16-18, 2018, William Gomes and James Lettiere attended the PA Chapter of the American Planning Association's Annual Conference in Erie, PA. Sessions attended provided diverse information including topics on: Achieving Effective Planning through Leader Recruitment and Development; Real Time Collaboration through Google Drawings; the Affordable Housing Toolkit; Understanding Property Zoning and the Limits of Zoning; Planning for Tackling Blight; Measuring Blight Impact; Selling Stormwater Management; Rethinking Parking Requirements using Drone Imagery; Opioid Epidemic and Planning; and Exploring Erie's Wine Region.

MIFFLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

