

# Clearfield County Planning Commission 2020 Annual Report

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### *Mission Statement:*

*To provide appropriate planning services and to develop leadership so that all Clearfield County municipalities can begin to plan for their future.*

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING / BROADBAND INITIATIVES

### TRANSPORTATION

#### Regional Freight and Mobility Plan

The North Central PA Regional Planning and Development Commission, developed a Regional Freight and Mobility Strategic Plan for the six-county region that established a set of strategic implementation recommendations that outlines the decision-making processes and targeted regional actions and policies for priority transportation investments. The entire document is web based and can be



located at:

<https://tmp-map.s3.amazonaws.com/nc/v005/html/index.htm#home>

#### Regional Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission updated its Regional Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan for the six-county planning region that includes Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter Counties.

This Plan is a critical tool for regional multi-modal transportation planning that aims to enhance mobility for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals.

The federally required plan brings together public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers and sets the direction for the region to improve transportation options and promote mobility of those dependent on public transit. Visit the Transportation Hub to learn more about the planning process, survey results, and additional opportunities to provide feedback on your experiences with transportation in the region.

<https://human-services-transportation-northcentral.hub.arcgis.com/>



#### Access to Transportation Pilot

Transportation is a major barrier for the residents living in this region. Trips to a medical provider, travel to a supermarket for basic staples, and even transportation to maintain meaningful employment can be challenging and sometimes impossible.

North Central Regional Planning secured a federal grant and has been working with Penn Highlands Healthcare to develop a RFP process to secure an innovative partnership with a transportation provider/coordinator.

A vendor was selected to develop a six-month pilot study to look at finding ways or helping to identify what the true access to transportation gaps are, if any. This project is still ongoing as progress was delayed due to impact of COVID 19.

#### 2019 Act 13 County At Risk Bridge Dollars

Act 13 of 2012 establishes a Marcellus Legacy Fund that allocates a portion of the Marcellus Shale Impact Fee to the Highway Bridge Improvement Restricted Account in the Motor License Fund. These funds are distributed to counties (proportionately based on population) and are to be used to fund the replacement or repair of locally owned (county; municipal), at-risk, deteriorated bridges.



In 2020, Clearfield County funded the following local municipal projects.

- Gulich Township - TR 919 Walnut Street over Muddy Run – award of \$50,000.00
- Cooper Township - TR 774 Coalward Street over Sulphur Run – award of \$50,000.00
- Morris Township - TR 704 Colorado Road over Unnamed Trib. To Moshannon Creek – award of \$32,000.00

All three bridges were closed and funding will allow them to be re-opened.

Since 2016, Clearfield County has awarded a total of \$934,481 in County At Risk Bridge dollars that supported 14 local municipal bridge projects.

#### Broadband Initiatives

North Central has been working over the last year on an EDA Grant that has allowed them to identify vertical assets in our region and also do speed testing and put it on to a data base. This data was then interpreted to identify spots that are unserved or underserved and create a priority list so when dollars become available, we can start addressing each of those areas

#### ARC POWER Grant

A \$600,000 Appalachian Regional Commission POWER broadband grant supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) was awarded to the North Central PA Regional Planning and Development Commission to undertake broadband expansion throughout the state.

#### Keystone Communities Grant

The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission which serves the counties of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter received Keystone Communities funding for broadband initiatives in the amount of \$133,125.

North Central will use the grant money to expand the existing internet service area. There will be at least one project in all six counties. The project area for Clearfield County is Smoke Run. They plan to serve a total of 550 homes and 100 businesses in the six county area.





## FARMLAND PRESERVATION, RECREATION, and CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

### COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION:

The County received its first application for a farm land easement purchase in 2020.



As such, our office as administrative agent for the county farmland preservation board sought proposals for title abstracting services, title insurance services, as well as, another for special farmland appraiser services.

Upon securing such services the farmland board and applicant were informed of the estimated associated upfront costs. Upfront costs were an issue for the applicant who declined to proceed.

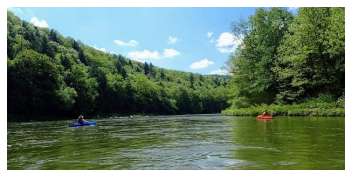
In response, the Farm Land Preservation Board is looking to change the county program guidelines to address this issue while seeking other sources of seed money to cover those upfront costs.

### RECREATION:

Susquehanna River Water Trail Access Plan - Our office assisted the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership at the request of the county's tourism bureau on an application to DCNR for funds to prepare a 2021 Susquehanna River Water Trail Access Plan for Clearfield County.

The 2021 Susquehanna River Water Trail Access Plan - Clearfield County (Access Plan) will prepare a report on the opportunities, needs, challenges, and recommendations related to the formal and informal network of accesses along the Susquehanna River Water Trail – West Branch in Clearfield County.

The goal is to provide recommendations for improvements to existing formal launches, and proposals for new launches to increase public access to the West Branch Water Trail.



### CHESAPEAKE BAY COUNTYWIDE ACTION PLAN:

Chesapeake Bay Countywide Action Plan - After several meetings to discuss this initiative among county commissioners, planners and conservation districts DEP has placed Clearfield, Clinton and Cameron counties in a group which will be eligible for funding to prepare county Chesapeake Bay Countywide Action Plans.



Clinton County has agreed to be the applicant obo the 3 counties. Our Conservation District will be taking the lead obo Clearfield County.

Plan kick off is planned for early next year. Our office will be assisting with the urban/developed lands portion of plan development.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, ENERGY, AND UNCONVENTIONAL GAS DEVELOPMENT

### SOLAR DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, we saw a lot of activity in terms of solar development interest. Many counties including Clearfield saw their first commercial scale solar power land development plan and learned about the growing development of this energy sector across the state.



Decreasing costs of solar installations, technical advances that allow for economical electric generation, availability of open land, policy & regulatory, along with access to transmission infrastructure are all driving this surge in development.

Another related topic that occurred across the state was the regulation of solar development. Not many municipalities currently regulate such activity and those regulations were deemed by some as being outdated. Penn State offered a webinar entitled Grid Scale Solar Energy – Ordinance Considerations directed at municipal officials.

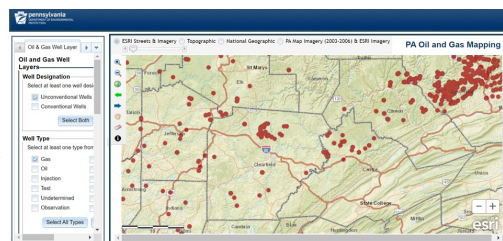
Upon consultation with county solicitor it was determined that such development did not fall under the definition of land development as per the PA Municipalities Planning Code and therefore not regulated under the County Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance.

**MARCELLUS SHALE OIL AND GAS ACTIVITY** - For 2020, there was just 1 unconventional gas permit issued. DEP provided online mapping that allows you to view the active unconventional gas wells in the state. Furthermore you can click on any well site and view additional information specific to that well such as operator, longitude &

latitude, inspection reports, production reports, waste reports, as well as well pad information.

**WATER WITHDRAWALS** - Throughout 2020, our office received eighteen (18) water withdrawal permits in the following municipalities; Chest, Cooper, Goshen, Girard and Lawrence Townships. While there was just one new unconventional oil and gas well drilled, companies are still securing water withdrawal permits for natural gas development and drilling activities in the amount of 71,052,000 million gallons per day.

### Location of Active Unconventional Gas Wells



## S.A.L.D.O. ADMINISTRATION

### CLEARFIELD COUNTY'S SUBDIVISION & LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (S.A.L.D.O.)-

#### County SALDO Update

A proposed dollar store in Madera brought to light that there are a number of outdated requirements in our County Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), as our ordinance is now 25 years old. More importantly, our local municipalities, many who lack zoning, asked for our help in addressing these new land use conflicts such development was causing in these rural residential areas.

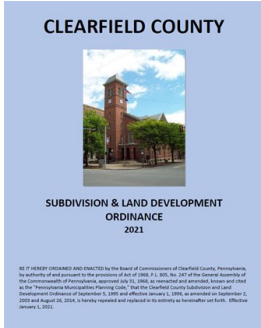
While we can't control land use under a SALDO, we can consider an update to the County Ordinance that reflects current industry design standards that would look at items such as parking, lighting, signage, buffering/screening, and landscaping to minimize the impacts caused by these conflicting land uses.

As such, the Planning Commission requested some financial assistance from the County Commissioners in securing the services of a consultant to assist in drafting suggested edits. Commissioners approved spending up to \$5,000 for such consulting services.

The Planning Commission and Planning Director have worked through these proposed edits presented by the consultant and fine-tuned to produce a product that would best serve Clearfield County.

Overall the County SALDO was streamlined, reduced from 14 to 9 articles; like sections were combined, redundancies removed, sections restructured to flow better, a consistency review of federal/state regulations was conducted, and additional regulatory design regulations to minimize land use conflicts were added.

On December 8, 2020 the county commissioners adopted Ordinance 2 of 2020 which formally enacted new changes to the County SALDO effective January 1, 2021.



### Annual Subdivision & Land Development Summary

Clearfield County currently has jurisdiction over 31 of our 50 municipalities. In 2020, the Planning Commission reviewed fifty-nine plans for compliance with the County's Ordinance. Of those, only five were land development plans while the remaining fifty-four were subdivision plans.

The following chart outlines the activity that occurred in administering the County's Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance in 2020. The following municipalities did not have any activity for the year: Brisbin Borough, Burnside Borough, Chester Hill Borough, Coalport Borough, Ferguson Township, Glen Hope Borough, Houtzdale

Borough, Irvona Borough, Mahaffey, Borough, New Washington Borough, Osceola Mills Borough, Wallacetown Borough, and Westover Borough

#### 2020 County's S.A.L.D.O. Activity

Municipality	# of Subdivisions	# of Land Development	# New Lots Created	# Proposed Buildings
Beccaria Township	2	1	3	2
Bell Township	1	0	1	0
Bigler Township	3	1	3	3
Bloom Township	2	0	4	0
Brady Township	9	2	14	6
Burnside Township	4	1	4	2
Chest Township	5	0	5	2
Grampian Borough	2	0	3	0
Greenwood Township	1	0	2	0
Gulich Township	4	0	7	0
Huston Township	6	0	6	1
Jordan Township	2	0	2	1
Knox Township	2	0	2	0
Newburg Borough	1	0	1	0
Pike Township	8	0	13	3
Ramey Borough	1	0	2	0
Troutville Borough	1	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>20</b>

**S.A.L.D.O. ADMINISTRATION Continued**

**ACT 247 REVIEWS** - The County Planning and Community Development Department reviewed and provided comments on one hundred plans from those nineteen municipalities that administer their own S.A.L.D.O. Of those plans, nine were land development plans and ninety-one were subdivision plans.

The adjacent table reflects the activity. The following municipalities did not have any S.A.L.D.O. activities: Falls Creek Borough, Karthaus Township, and Pine Township.

The bottom adjacent table reflects some notable land development activities that occurred within the County during 2020.

**PERMIT AND PROJECT NOTICES** - In addition to S.A.L.D.O. reviews, our office reviewed several other permit and project notices throughout the year. The type and quantity of those reviews are listed below. Our office also provided support letters for community based projects:

**Act 14 Notifications** - 29

**Act 67 & 68 Reviews** - 10

**Act 537 Reviews** - 4

**Air Quality** - 16

**Bond Releases** - 9

**Correspondence** - 16

**Environmental Assessments/Reviews** - 4

**General Projects/Assessment Reviews Permits** - 21

**Land Use Changes** - 7

**NPDES** - 5

**Penn Vest Reviews** - 1

**Public Utility Commission** - 10

**Sewage Component Reviews/Planning Modules** - 37

**SRBC Permits** - 1

**Support Letters** - 26

**Surface/Underground Mining** - 13

**Water Withdrawals** - 18

**Zoning Changes/Reviews** - 1

**Act 247-Municipalities with their own S.A.L.D.O. 2020**

Municipality	# Subdivisions	# Land Development	#Lots Created	#Proposed Buildings
Boggs Township	8	0	12	2
Bradford Township	9	0	10	3
Clearfield Borough	5	2	5	1
Cooper Township	7	1	9	3
Covington Township	1	0	5	5
Curwensville Borough	1	0	2	0
Decatur Township	6	0	5	4
City of DuBois	6	1	1	1
Girard Township	2	0	3	1
Goshen Township	1	0	1	0
Graham Township	4	0	3	2
Lawrence Township	10	0	11	2
Morris Township	5	0	5	3
Penn Township	5	0	5	2
Sandy Township	13	4	6	0
Union Township	4	0	9	1
Woodward Township	4	0	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>33</b>

**2020 Land Developments**

Clearfield Borough	CNB Bank Expansion, Sheetz #73 (Nichols Street Expansion)
Cooper Township	UN-Kylertown Solar Site
City of DuBois	Pentz Youth Services
Sandy Township	DuBois Area School District Oklahoma School Addition, Oklahoma Elementary Addition, Christ the King Manor Parking Lot Expansion, Hanzely's Garden Center



## HOUSING / BLIGHT PREVENTION / REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

County Affordable Housing Trust Fund - In 2020, Clearfield County solicited applications for affordable housing activities to be funded by the Clearfield County Affordable Housing Fund. Projects which increase the availability of quality affordable housing for county resident whose annual income is less than the median income of county. Four projects were awarded funding.

1. **Young People Who Care (YPWC) – (Homeowner repair – Blight Prevention)** Funds will be used to purchase materials for the agency's summer home repair and ongoing emergency repair programs. This project provides homeowner repairs detrimental to the health and safety of the occupants. YPWC provide these serves as last resort.
2. **County Blight Real Equity LLC – (Create New Affordable Rental Units)** a private development company that offers safe affordable rental options in the DuBois area. Real Equity will utilize AHTF funds to transform a blighted property into three new affordable housing units. This company has cultivated working relationships with Community Connections of Clearfield & Jefferson County, and members of the Local Housing Option Team, to provide much needed safe, decent and affordable housing for the chronic homeless people in Clearfield County.
3. **Clearfield County Housing Authority (Rental Repair Program)** -The Housing Authority will continue to provide an incentive for private investment in the improvement of rental units. This program would offer landlords 50% reimbursement of costs for making code improvements up to \$1,000. This ensures that there are quality rental units available thereby assuring that County families have safe decent and affordable housing.
4. **Clearfield Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Hammers - Emergency Housing Repair Program)** -The Presbyterian Hammers is a group of church volunteers that provide emergency housing repairs for Clearfield County residents in need. This group serves residents with physical and/or mental disabilities who have limited income and no other support system to

help them with the emergency house repair.

### HOME - HOUSING REHABILITATION

In 2020, the Clearfield County Commissioners were awarded \$257,580 in HOME funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development. Funding will be used to prevent blighted housing countywide.



It will assist homeowners with housing repairs to increase their safety and well-being. Housing repairs may include roofing, windows and doors, siding, new electrical wiring, plumbing, mold removal, installation of smoke alarms, testing and treatment of radon and repair/replacement of foundations, porches and steps.

An applicant's eligibility will be based upon income and ownership; and they must be current on county, local and school taxes.

The first eligible project is scheduled to get under way in 2021.

### PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND REHABILITATION ENHANCEMENT (PHARE) FUND

Clearfield County was previously awarded \$60,000 to rehabilitate the vacant county owned home near the jail to create affordable rental housing units.

In 2020, this property, at 1939 Daisy Street Clearfield, PA saw a new gas heating system installed. Zoning and permitting applications were also prepared and will be submitted in 2021.

### BLIGHT PREVENTION

Blight has been an issue negatively affecting counties across our county as documented in both the Clearfield County Housing Study of 2012 and Clearfield County Blight Study of 2014.

Lack of available funding to address these blighted structures has been a significant in remediation. As such, on 1/28/20 the county commissioners adopted ordinance #1 of 2020 that created a new county demolition fund through the imposition of a \$10 increase in fees charged by the recorder of deeds for recording of deeds and mortgages.

Once sufficient funds have accrued a request for proposals for use of these funds will be issued.

### REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Another missing piece of the puzzle in addressing blighted structures and housing needs is an entity who can acquire, demolish, and rehabilitate such structures. As such, the county commissioners passed resolution #8 of 2020 reactivating & reorganizing the Redevelopment Authority of Clearfield County under the leadership of the former County Community Development Specialist, Lisa Kovalick, who in 2021, was made executive director of the new Redevelopment Authority.

The Redevelopment Authority will be administering the County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) fund, Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), HOME, and the new Demolition fund.



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT / COVID RELIEF FUNDS

### 2020 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) COVID FUNDS

On March 27, 2020 the CARES Act was enacted providing additional federal CDBG funds to address COVID-19 related needs.

#### Clearfield County approved projects included:

\$47,199 Crossroads Inc. Domestic Violence Crisis Shelter – PPE, disposables, and financial assistance for crisis hotel stays

\$3,955 Clearfield County League on Social Services – PPE for daycare providers

\$48,473 Haven House Homeless Shelter – PPE disposables, financial assistance for hotel stays, operational costs

\$38,085 Urgent Need - Penn Highlands Clearfield – PPE, Creating COVID Rooms

#### Clearfield Borough approved projects included:

\$16,396 Urgent Need – Fire Department PPE Radios

\$38,258 Subsistence Emergency Payments for utilities (Clearfield Borough Res Only).

#### Lawrence Township projects approved included:

\$17,362 Urgent Need – Fire Department PPE Radios

\$40,514 Subsistence Emergency Payments for utilities (Lawrence Twp. Res Only)

### CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT

Additional COVID relief came through the award of \$7,157,429 for virus-related expenses through the COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant Program from the state's Department of Community and Economic Development.



On Sept. 2, Commissioners awarded \$664,226.52 to 12 municipalities and on Sept. 22, they disbursed the first small grants to 34 local businesses and 19 non-profits, totaling \$793,579.

On Oct. 6, the commissioners awarded relief funding to 56 local businesses, totaling \$1,008,527. and on Oct. 13, they awarded a combined \$62,622 to five businesses.

In late October, the county announced the availability of a second round of CARES funding for local municipalities, businesses and non-profit organizations of which they awarded \$447,783 to another 45 local businesses.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG):

Clearfield County's FFY 2020 CDBG Entitlement is \$268,448 with \$46,680 Administration; \$221,768 Water System Improvements in Huston Township.

Clearfield County applied for CDBG FFY 2020 entitlement funds on behalf of The Borough of Clearfield in the amount of \$115,485 with the Borough allocating \$94,698 for Flood protection and Street Improvement on Clearfield Street and \$20,787 for Program Administration.

Clearfield County applied for CDBG FFY 2020 entitlement funds on behalf of The Township of Lawrence in the amount of \$130,932 with Lawrence Township Supervisors allocating \$107,365 for Street Improvements in the Kerr Area and \$23,567 for Program Administration.

