

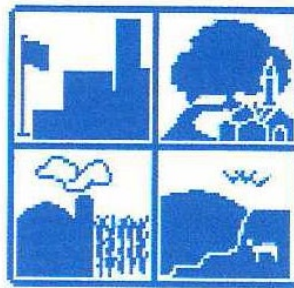
# The Centre Region Council of Governments



## 2021 PROGRAM PLAN



MILLBROOK MARSH NATURE CENTER | BOARDWALK



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**CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
2021 PROGRAM PLAN**

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GENERAL FORUM MEMBERS  
2020

CHAIR: Elliot Abrams, Patton Township  
VICE-CHAIR: Nigel Wilson, Harris Township

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COLLEGE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

Anthony Fragola (Chair)  
L. Eric Bernier  
D. Richard Francke  
Paul Takac  
Carla Stilson

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Steve Miller (Chair)  
Laura Dininni  
Prasenjit Mitra  
Patricia Stephens  
Lisa Strickland

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Danelle Del Corso (Chair)  
Charles Beck  
Patti Hartle  
David Piper  
Bob Strouse

HARRIS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Nigel Wilson (Chair)  
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PATTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

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STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Jesse Barlow (President)  
Deanna Behring  
Janet Engeman  
Theresa Lafer  
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Evan Myers  
Mayor: Ron Filippelli

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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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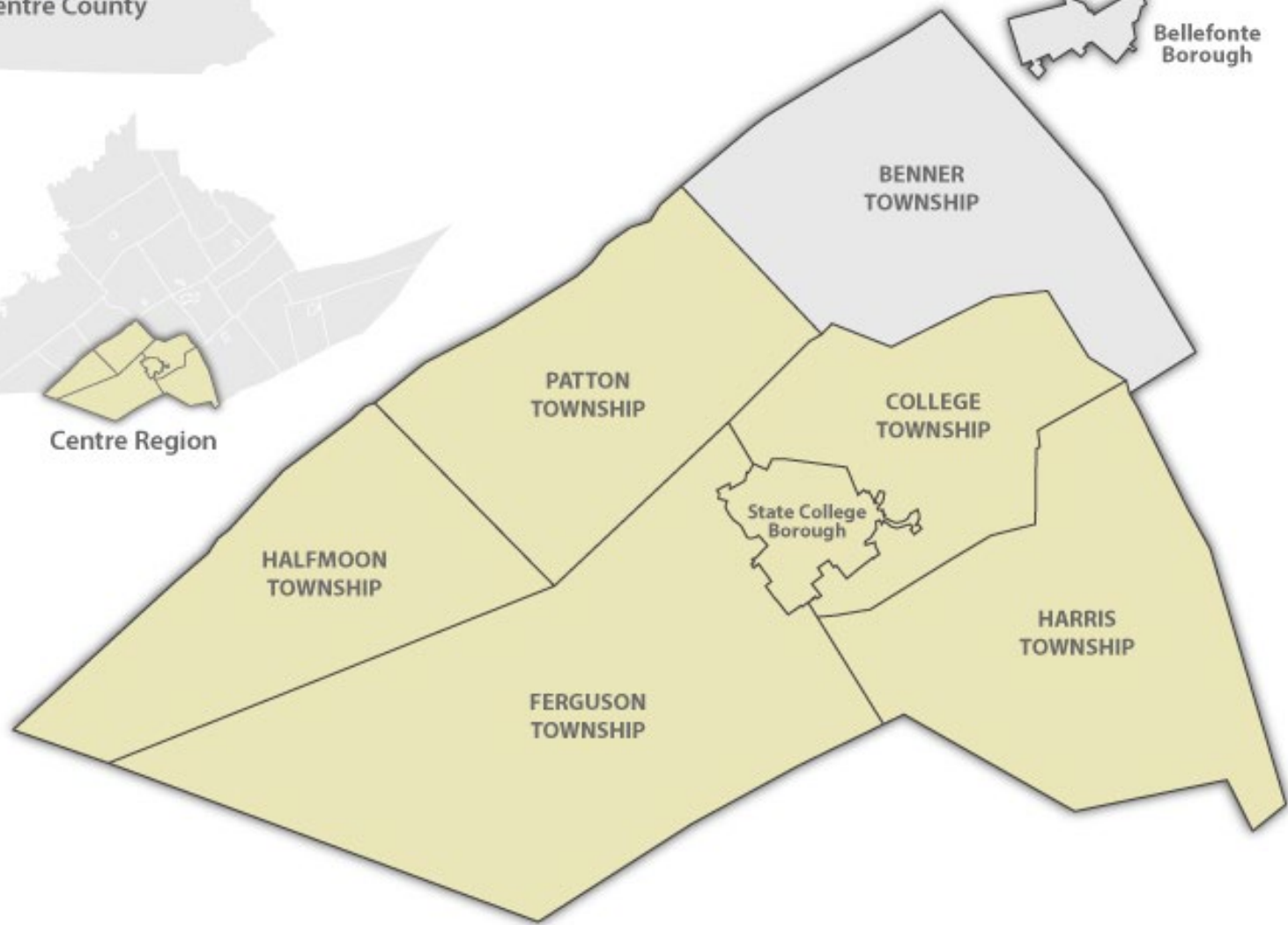
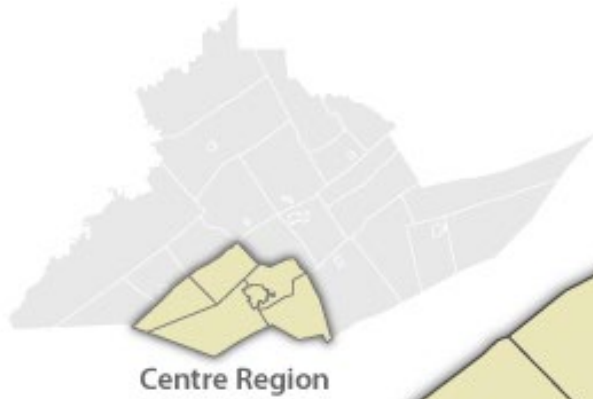
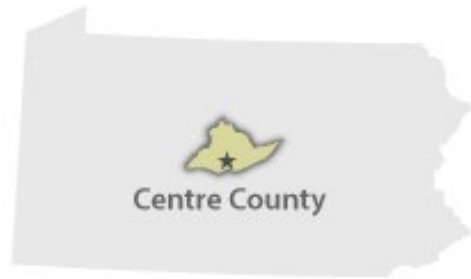
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# Centre Region COG Service Area



## Executive Director's Letter 2021 Program Plan Overview

### 1969 COG Articles of Agreement

*“By joining together, we realized that our individual and common governmental destinies rest with the interdependent actions of the local governments. This voluntary association which we have formed is designed to achieve closer cooperation since it represents an organization in which the members seek by, mutual agreement, to solve mutual problems for mutual benefit, and is not a new layer of government nor a super-government.”*

July 27, 2020

Dear Members of the General Forum,

The Agency Directors and I are pleased to present the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) 2021 Program Plan to the General Forum for its review, comment, and referral to the six Centre Region municipalities. As a result of the impact of COVID-19 on the region and our organizations, and with the guidance of the Finance Committee, we are presenting a condensed Program Plan this year. As you review this year's proposed Plan, you will also note that requests are fewer and more modest as COG staff takes into account reduced revenues impacting COG agencies and municipalities. As the COG management team continues to strive to safely provide the most 'normal' levels of services possible for our communities, we recognize the continued uncertainty placed on the Region by COVID-19. The Finance Committee considered the entire Program Plan during its July 9, 2020 meeting and the Committee's comments are incorporated into this document.

The idea for a Program Plan was suggested by the Finance Committee in 2001. This year, the Finance Committee requested a condensed document as a result of the curtailed time to prepare the Program Plan, the Capital Improvement Program, and other budget documents. Accordingly, this year's Program Plan focuses on providing the General Forum with an explanation of each program's mid-year financial status, current issues, and proposed programmatic and financial changes for 2021. By making this information available to the municipalities early in the budget process, elected officials can be both engaged in and knowledgeable about the COG. The presentation of the Program Plan in July of each year gives municipal officials additional time to consider current status and proposals for the coming year, to ask questions, and to offer comments or suggest alternatives.

## TRENDS AFFECTING THE 2021 AND FUTURE BUDGETS

In the past, the Executive Director presented a five-year look ahead regarding possible impacts on future COG budgets. This year, given the still-to-be-determined impacts of COVID-19 on the regional, state, and national economies, it is difficult to try to project very far into the future. That being said, listed below are some observations we will be monitoring:

- Revenues from state and federal government will be uncertain. State and federal budgets have been dramatically impacted by the pandemic. Revenues have declined and expenditures for relief programs and response measures have been significant. In addition, the fall election has the potential to bring changes for 2021 at the federal and state level that may affect future funding levels for local operations. For the COG, this has direct implications for operations that regularly receive state funding (Schlow Centre Regional Library and the Active Adult Center for example) and federal funding (Centre Region Planning Agency and Centre County MPO). In addition, several COG agencies regularly seek and receive federal or state grants that may or may not be available until after the recovery (for example, grants that support parks capital projects, the fire protection program, or planning projects).
- The pandemic will likely change the workplace and create opportunities and risks for the local economy. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, more workers and companies have found that remote work is a desirable option for many positions. As a result, many employers, including some COG agencies, will be reconsidering where employees need to work in the future. This gives workers who wish to move away from a denser city environment the opportunity to consider other alternatives. This may provide an economic boost for the Centre Region. “Attracting remote workers is a more cost-effective way for smaller communities to build up their economies, certainly when compared with throwing away taxpayer dollars to try to lure factories, offices, call centers, or even headquarters. Remote workers not only add to both the talent base and tax base, they also diversify the local economy ... .” (Richard Florida, City Lab, July 2, 2020)
- COG’s involvement in environmental issues will continue. Topics such as water source protection, energy efficiency, renewable energy, protection of natural areas, stormwater management, and partnerships with environmental groups are likely to continue to be part of the regional engagement.
- Fire protection is likely to become more expensive. The results and recommendations of the study to propose a future organizational model for the Regional Fire Protection program will be received later this year. Across Pennsylvania, many volunteer fire companies have experienced a decline in membership. Combine that trend with the impacts of COVID-19 and the uncertain availability of Penn State student volunteers, the number of community volunteers with the Alpha Fire Company is unlikely to keep pace with call volumes and other demands. Additional paid staff may need to be considered in the future.

## UNEXPECTED EXPENDITURES

As a result of COVID-19, the COG has had unexpected expenditures for a number of items related to staff safety (PPE, cleaning supplies, etc.), support for the community (Meals on Wheels), facility improvements (plexiglass separators, touchless dispensers, etc.), IT hardware and software to support remote working, and the special COVID leave for employees who couldn't work remotely or who had health or childcare issues during the early phases of the pandemic. Some of these expenses are still being incurred and federal reimbursement will be sought for those items that are eligible for reimbursement once instructions and applications are announced.

## COG COST ALLOCATION

Costs for many COG programs are allocated according to the COG funding formula. It has three equally weighted factors - population, assessed property value, and earned income tax base. These factors change from year to year as new buildings are constructed, wage rates increase/decrease, and people move into the municipalities. These formula changes mean that even if the total amount of the COG budget stayed the same, municipal contributions to the COG will increase or decrease (in absolute or relative terms) depending on how the factors shift among the municipalities.

### Comparison of COG Formula Since 1973

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>1973 Formula*</b>	<b>2020 Formula</b>	<b>2021 Formula</b>
State College Borough	52.0%	22.99%	22.89%
College Township	13.6%	16.02%	15.95%
Ferguson Township	15.7%	26.08%	25.81%
Halfmoon Township	1.0%	4.27%	4.30%
Harris Township	7.10%	9.57%	9.85%
Patton Township	10.6%	21.07%	21.20%

*\*Although the COG was established in 1969 the first budget on record is for 1973*

## COG COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)

The annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) for COG employees is calculated following the COG COLA policy. Each year, the COG COLA is calculated by averaging each of the 12-month CPI-U figures during the period of July 1 through June 30. So, for the 2021 budget, the 12-month CPI-U for each month from July 2019 through June 2020 was averaged. Using this formula, the COLA for the

2021 COG budget will be 1.6% (rounded to the nearest 0.1%). In addition, the COG Personnel Policy Handbook allows for a 1.5% merit adjustment.

### CLOSING SUMMARY

The local impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated the strengths of the COG and its municipal partnerships. COG staff at all levels have risen to the occasion to innovate and be flexible to continue to provide services that are critical to the local economy and quality of life for our Centre Region residents. This has been done in concert with our municipal, school district, and authority colleagues. We have worked together to resolve issues through frequent virtual meetings and communication during the peak crisis periods of the pandemic. And, COG's elected leaders have demonstrated commitment, flexibility, and support as we have worked together via Zoom to continue the work of the COG.

This spring, regular meetings of regional human resources officials began as effective management of employee safety, remote work and other human resource issues became part of the COVID-19 response. These meetings joined the regular meetings of the municipal managers, public works officials, finance directors, and police chiefs as avenues for collaboration. As the resurgence of COVID-19 cases develops elsewhere in the country, COG agencies are planning for the next phase of impacts on our operations.

The Centre Region municipalities are exceptional because of the willingness and commitment of the elected and appointed officials to work together to serve the public and address common needs and priorities. In recent weeks, we have heard from residents who are grateful for the services provided by the COG. Such notes of appreciation from residents and the support of our elected officials have helped to lessen the stresses and other unpredictability of the workday during the pandemic.

In summary, the collaboration by the Centre Region municipalities and other partners that led to the successful first 50 years of our COG proved to be essential to an effective response to the pandemic during the recent months. My coworkers and I are grateful for our elected officials and local partners who value our shared service to the public and we look forward to the next 50 years.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Norenberg  
COG Executive Director



# OVERVIEW OF THE CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## MISSION

*As stated in the COG Articles of Agreement, “The overriding goal of the Centre Region COG is to improve the quality of life for the residents of the Centre Region in the face of increasing pressures due to economic and population growth. We believe that this goal can best be achieved through cooperative efforts by the regional municipalities. This involves combining our various resources to meet regional challenges that may be beyond our individual capabilities.”*

## COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT

Councils of Governments are established by State Act 180, the *Intergovernmental Cooperation Law* (53 PA.C.S.A. Section 481 et. seq.) as amended. The main features of this legislation are:

- Municipalities can delegate any function, power, or responsibility to another municipality or to a newly created governmental unit (e.g. a COG).
- A Council of Governments organization has no taxing power.
- A Council of Governments organization’s structure, scope of services, method of municipal representation, and voting requirements are matters of local choice.
- Cooperative services provided by a Council of Governments organization must be approved by ordinances that are adopted by each governing body.



**A COG is not another layer of government.** The COG provides the means of communication, cooperation, and joint action in the interest of the municipalities, individually and collectively. The active and informed involvement of the elected officials in policy and funding decisions is key to the success of all Council of Governments.

## INTRODUCTION

The Centre Region Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the State College Borough and College, Ferguson, Halfmoon, Harris, and Patton Townships. The service area is 150 square miles, and according to the most recent population estimate of approximately 97,000 people live in the Centre Region including students at the University Park Campus of the Pennsylvania State University. The Centre Region COG was established on December 2, 1969, to perform the following functions:

- Provide a forum for discussing regional issues.
- Produce cost-effective public services.
- Promote coordinated land use and infrastructure planning.
- Facilitate the exchange of information.

The organizational structure and the duties of the Centre Region COG are defined by Articles of Agreement, which are adopted by ordinance by each of the individual municipalities. In addition, there are separate Articles of Agreement for each COG Agency, which define: agency responsibilities, funding formulas, and terms of admittance and withdrawal. COG services are offered as a “cafeteria” plan to the municipalities. Each community has the option to participate in some or all COG programs. This menu approach underscores the voluntary nature of the Centre Region COG. The table below shows municipal participation for 2018.

<b>2020 Municipal Participation in COG</b>								
	State College Borough	College Township	Ferguson Township	Halfmoon Township	Harris Township	Patton Township	Benner Township	Bellefonte Borough
Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Parks & Recreation	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Fire Company	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Emergency Mgmt.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Library	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Refuse & Recycling		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Code Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

*Eight municipalities participate in various COG Programs.*

## **ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT**

A requirement of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Law is that a municipality may engage in intergovernmental cooperation with another local government “upon passage of an ordinance” by the affecting governing bodies. The ordinance must address the manner of funding the joint program, how real estate is to be acquired and managed, the method of providing benefits (including social security) for its employees, the program’s organizational structure, and the conditions for entering into the joint program.

The Centre Region municipalities comply with this requirement by adopting individual ordinances that include Articles of Agreement for each COG program. This document addresses all the issues identified by the Intergovernmental Cooperation Law in addition to conditions that may be approved by the municipalities. There are Articles of Agreement for the Centre Region COG as well as for each COG program except the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO), which is a county-wide organization. Articles of Agreement are developed by a COG Committee, referred to the General Forum for review and endorsement, and then forwarded to the individual municipalities for approval. The COG Articles of Agreement were last updated in November 2008.

Highlights of the Centre Region COG's Articles of Agreement are:

- **Voting** - Most issues are decided by a majority vote of the General Forum. The exceptions are the acquiring of property, borrowing more than 1.5% of the budget, or amending the Articles of Agreement; these actions require a unanimous vote. Such votes are conducted by a Unit Vote. These votes are scheduled and called by the Chair as required by the General Forum for actions requiring a unanimous vote. Unit votes may also be called for any reason by a member of the General Forum.
- **Committee Structure** - The standing committees of the COG are: Executive, Finance, Human Resources, Parks Capital, Public Safety, Public Services and Environmental, and Transportation and Land Use. COG Committees may decide to offer voting or non-voting membership to outside organizations (e.g. Penn State University and the Bellefonte Borough).
- **Executive Director** - The General Forum shall appoint an Executive Director who is responsible for: preparing the annual budget; appointing and discharging all COG employees (except Agency Directors whose appointment/dismissal requires the prior concurrence of the Executive Committee); serving as the General Forum "ex officio" treasurer and secretary; and proposing policies and programs for consideration by the General Forum.
- **Formula** - Costs for most COG programs are based on the three factors of the COG formula: population excluding individuals typically of college-age, assessed valuation of taxable property, and gross earned income. Some Articles of Agreements for individual COG programs identify other funding formulas. For instance, the costs for the regional library program are based on the percentage of library items circulated to residents of each municipality relevant to total circulation.

## **GENERAL FORUM**

Under the *COG Articles of Agreement*, the policy-making body of the Centre Region COG is the General Forum, which is comprised of all of the elected officials (32 members) from the six Centre Region municipalities. The General Forum establishes the COG's budget and major policies for the programs approved by the participating municipalities. At General Forum meetings, each municipality has one

vote; the chair may use a voice vote of the majority of those present to pass motions and resolutions. Any member of the General Forum has the right to call for a unit vote by each municipality on any issue being voted upon at any time.

## MISSION

*The mission of the Office of Administration is to facilitate the delivery of high quality and cost-effective public services as requested by the General Forum, to implement the policies approved by the General Forum, and to work with COG Agencies and others to build shared solutions to common problems that cross jurisdictional boundary lines.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through June 30, 2020, revenue and expenditures for the Office of Administration were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2020 budget with the exceptions noted below. The unaudited Fund Balance was \$26,467 higher at the beginning of 2020 than projected in the 2020 COG budget. In addition, the January 1, 2020 fund balance includes funding to complete the delayed COG IT study (\$20,000) and \$6,000 to conduct a customer satisfaction survey of owners/managers who had a rental housing inspection conducted of their property. Both projects are proposed to be delayed to 2021 due to the impacts of COVID-19. Outside of the noted funds that are reserved for specific purposes, the 2020 beginning year fund balance was higher than expected due to lower pension costs (due to multiple factors including state aid, higher investment returns, and the GASB formula used to assign costs) and decreased expenses in several accounts – including financial services costs and employee development. Costs associated with the transition to the new Executive Director should be at or just under budget. In other categories, we anticipate savings in travel and employee development due to COVID-19 restrictions and benefits due to insurance waiver.

At mid-year 2020 there have been no significant unanticipated expenditures/revenues for the Office of Administration budget. Items of note include:

- Compensation and benefit costs may be approximately \$5,000 less than anticipated because of staff turnover.
- Interest income is more than budgeted and may, at years end, exceed the estimated amount by \$1,000.
- The drafting of a Request for Qualification to develop a five-year information technology plan had been postponed until 2020 (after the new Executive Director was hired). It has been delayed again, to allow the new Executive Director to become acquainted with the various IT systems used by COG agencies and due to COVID-19. \$20,000 is budgeted for this expense in 2021.



**OFFICE OF  
ADMINISTRATION  
BUDGET**

- Progress is being made on the update of the COG website and work has largely been completed. The cost is shared among six COG agencies.
- There will be savings due to the delay in hiring the Facilities Coordinator.
- The amount of \$6,000 was budgeted to conduct a customer satisfaction survey for the Centre Region Code Administration's Existing Structures Program in 2020. Due to COVID-19, the survey was delayed. Staff now plan to revamp the survey process and launch surveying for both the Existing Structures Program and the New Construction Program in 2021.

### **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

Typically, the COG Office of Administration Budget changes very little from year to year. After changes due to hiring a new Executive Director in 2020, 2021 will be a return to the historical pattern. This Program Plan proposes only one organizational change to the 2021 Budget: In order to prepare professionals for future careers as local government managers, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has two programs: The Local Government Management Fellow (LGMF) program and the Veterans Local Government Management Fellow (VLGMF) program. Each is designed to give one- to two-year fellowships to aspiring local government management professionals. The LGMF program is geared for recent MPA graduates and the VLGMF program is for veterans. It is proposed that COG Administration host a Fellow in 2021, possibly shared with one of the Centre Region municipalities.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- Possible COG Strategic Plan development process. The Executive Committee and General Forum may determine that this will be a necessary precursor for the final stage of evaluation of the COG committee structure. The Strategic Plan will also help guide consideration of future organizational changes.
- Full-year funding for the Facility Coordinator position.
- As recommended through the Committee review process, it is proposed that COG contract for recording secretary/transcription services to handle minutes of COG meetings to enable COG professional staff to focus on high priority duties and projects. By contracting, rather than hiring this service, we will be able to assess the success and benefits.
- It has been over 15 years since the COG conducted a classification and compensation study. As the employment market and comparables for many positions have changed dramatically since the last study, several of the Agency Directors and the Human Resources Officer are requesting support for a classification and compensation study in 2021.
- If the COG is able to recruit a LGMF, the Fellow would start after the 2020-21 academic year.

### Known Changes for 2021

- Succession planning for the Library Director and other key positions that are eligible to retire in the next couple of years. While direct costs for the recruitments will be in the specific funds, there will be impacts on Administration staff preparing for and during recruitments.
- A laptop computer and some minor office space improvements will be needed for the LGMF, in addition to compensation (which could include use of the house at Oak Hall Regional Park).
- A laptop computer and possibly specialized software/facility planning tools will need to be budgeted for the Facility Coordinator, along with fuel and insurance and transfer of a surplus Code vehicle.
- Continued monitoring and adjusting to impacts and requirements as a result of COVID-19 and public health/workplace changes to maintain the safety and productivity of the COG workforce.
- With the emergence of the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee and the role it plays in how decisions are made at the Centre Region COG regarding the investments made into its capital assets (such as buildings, improvements, etc.), staff foresees beneficial impacts to the COG Building Capital and other capital budgets in the coming years. The Committee, coupled with the planned hire of a Facilities Coordinator in 2020, will lead to revisions in the assumptions in COG's capital planning process as more precise and accurate data becomes available from the analyses being performed.

### Looking Ahead

- As a result of both the COG Committee review and the IT Study, agenda/meeting management software may be proposed to support the many meetings of the COG organization. It is possible that this could be a shared system which could be utilized by COG municipalities for their boards/councils, and other committees.
- Following completion of the IT Study, it should be anticipated that replacement software will be recommended to take place over the next few years. (Possible systems to be replaced include, purchasing, accounting, payroll, and human resources.) Larger applications that replace current legacy systems will require planning and preparation for data conversion and implementation on a schedule to minimize adverse impacts on current operations. Accordingly, after receiving this and other recommendations, staff will prepare an analysis and prioritization schedule to facilitate orderly planning for funding and implementation.
- After completion and implementation of studies that are now underway or are pending, staff plans to undertake an assessment of the COG fleet and evaluate best practices related to fleet utilization.



## MISSION

*The COG Contingency Fund was established to finance the COG's fiscal obligations arising from emergency situations or special projects not provided for in the annual agency budgets and approved by the General Forum.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through June 2020, neither the General Forum nor the Executive Director has authorized any additional expenditures from the Contingency Fund other than what was previously authorized for the purposes of hiring the new Executive Director. The 2020 budget Contingency Fund items were underspent, which along with the municipal contributions to date for 2020, puts the fund balance at approximately \$11,000.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Because the Contingency Funds for 2020 were underspent and no additional expenditures are anticipated during 2020, and the Program Plan proposes the following:

- Reduction of the 2020 municipal contribution from \$15,000 to \$7,500.
- Continue with the replenishment of the Contingency Fund to the \$35,000 level approved by the General Forum in 2010 by continuing with municipal contributions of \$12,000 in 2021 and \$12,000 in 2022.

## Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan

- The Contingency Fund balance as of June 30, 2020, will be approximately \$11,000. This is \$3,500 higher than anticipated, due to the fees associated with the recruitment of the new Executive Director being less than anticipated.

## Scenarios That Have Been Prepared

- It is recommended that during the 2021 budget process, the remaining 2020 municipal contributions be reduced by \$7,500 (i.e. \$0 for the remaining of 2020) due to the overall cost of the Executive Director recruitment being less than anticipated.



**COG  
CONTINGENCY  
BUDGET**

**Known Changes for 2021**

- Staff does not foresee substantial changes to the municipal contributions in the 2021 Budget.

## MISSION

*The purpose of the COG Building Capital Budget is to finance capital improvements, capital replacements, and major repairs to the COG Building.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Since the fund was established in 2005, the following changes were approved by the Finance Committee:

- 2007: Municipal contributions and the estimated replacement costs should be annually adjusted by the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).
- 2010: Technology-related equipment (servers, switches, etc.) shared by the Agencies located in the COG Building should be included in the Building Capital Budget.
- 2012: Costs were updated based upon current and estimated replacement costs and they are adjusted annually by 3% in accordance with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

*Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

The following expenditures are proposals for capital investments in the COG Building:

In connection with Stahl Sheaffer Engineering's assessment of the parking lot at the COG building, the Facilities Committee will be discussing the recommended repairs and maintenance costs which are approaching \$200,000 between 2020 and 2022 based on the findings in the assessment. In addition, the Facilities Committee will likely be looking to replenish between \$10,000 and \$15,000 of Facility Study funds repurposed to repair the windows in the COG Building. Finally, looking even further into the future, as rental and maintenance agreements are updated, more Site Visit Reports are completed, and external assessments are performed for the various COG agencies the Facilities Committee will be receiving data that could likely impact multiple capital funds across the Centre Region COG.



**COG  
BUILDING  
CAPITAL  
BUDGET**

As previously mentioned, the six Centre Region municipalities own the COG building. There is a 25-year lease between the municipalities and COG for the lease of the building. The lease began in 2003 and ends in 2028. In 2021 there will be seven years left on the lease. The elected officials who approved the lease agreement in 2003 were silent about what should happen to the building at the end of a 25-year lease in 2028. They believed that the individuals who are in an elected office close to the time when the lease expires should decide what to do.

In 2018, the General Forum created the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee to review, to improve, and to plan the future utilization of the COG Building and other COG-owned and maintained facilities. This direction is important because, during the next eight years costly improvements (roof replacement, repaving the parking lot, expanding the parking lot, HVAC replacements, emergency power generator, etc.) may be required.

In 2019, due to the growth of the Parks and Recreation and Code agencies, Staff determined the most cost-effective option to deal with the space limitations in the COG Building would be for Parks and Recreation to move to a separate location with an approximate seven-year lease (with options to terminate after five years and extend beyond seven years). In addition, Code Administration is in the process of expanding its space in the COG Building to utilize the former Parks and Recreation suite. Renovation work will be complete in the coming months to enable Code staff to relocate from their current space in the Planning suite. The Refuse and Recycling Assistant will then relocate from the Administration suite to space currently space vacated in the Planning suite. This will create space in the Office of Administration suite for the Facilities Coordinator.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

The Ad Hoc Facilities Committee repurposed approximately \$13,000 in study funds to repair the windows in the COG Building. The Site Visit Report completed by Don Francke indicated that the windows were a problem area and upon a more detailed investigation determined that the window jambs needed to be repaired across the entire COG building.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

The 2021 COG Building budget and the 2021-2025 CIP will be significantly modified to include the information from the Site Visit Report and the Assessment of the parking lot and grounds at the COG facility. Final details are still pending at this time but should be ready for the 2021 Detailed Budget document.

## MISSION

*The mission of the Insurance Reserve Fund is to serve as a depository for the receipt and expenditure of excess funds received from the Pennsylvania Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative (PMHIC) that occurs when employee health insurance premiums are less than the expenses paid.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2020, expenditures from the Insurance Reserve Budget are anticipated to be less than estimated due to staff changeover, resulting in lower health insurance premiums than anticipated and no agency premium subsidies being incurred to date in 2020. PMHIC is expected to provide COG with a \$186,778 reimbursement in 2020, a significant increase from the 2019 reimbursement of \$118,029.

Prior to 2018, it was agreed by the Finance Committee that this rebate would not be assumed in the annual COG budget documents. After reviewing a 9-year history, receipt of a \$25,000 rebate was assumed for the 2018 budget. In its review of the 2018 budget, the Finance Committee requested that the 2019 rebate estimate be based on the historic trend as to the value of reimbursements.

At its June 13, 2018 meeting, the Finance Committee reviewed and supported the methodology in place for determining how much of the Insurance Reserve Budget should be applied each year to the health insurance premiums. To calculate the proposed rebate, staff takes the average of the previous seven years rebates, deducting out the high and the low years as outliers, to get the anticipated refund. The Insurance Reserve fund's expenditures would then be calculated on that revenue assumption coupled with the estimated beginning fund balance – staff's recommendation would be to utilize 1/3 of the available funds to smooth potential large fluctuations that could have a significant impact on COG's budget – such as one or two years of either no or a minor rebate.

Should the reimbursement be low or non-existent beyond two consecutive years then insurance costs paid by the employer and employee are likely to increase.



**INSURANCE  
RESERVE  
BUDGET**

## **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond, the proposed major budgetary changes to the Insurance Reserve Fund are at the discretion of the Finance Committee and can be adjusted and/or revised on an annual basis.

For 2021, the COG Executive Director recommends the following expenditures:

- Approximately \$200,000 to offset medical insurance premiums.
- \$30,000 to fund unexpected and unbudgeted increases in medical insurance costs due to employee changes.
- Funding for the Employee Relations Committee (ERC) to conduct a Wellness Program to include flu shots, wellness program incentives, and educational programs. (\$3,200 in 2020)
- Funding for an employee health improvement reimbursement program to partially subsidize participation in a gym, yoga, or other professionally supervised activity that encourages exercise and movement for full and permanent year-round part-time COG employees. (\$6,000 in 2020)
- Funding for First Aid, and Fire Safety training from the American Red Cross. (\$2,000 in 2020)

The above Wellness Program items were proposed by the COG's ERC, which is comprised of staff members from the agencies and the Human Resources Officer to the Human Resources Committee. For the past several years, ERC members have consulted with the COG's medical insurance representatives and received training on setting up "healthy employee" initiatives. National data shows that health care costs are directly related to the overall well-being of the organization's employees in both a physical and mental capacity. The ERC's effort delivers healthy initiatives in a manner that is more conducive to participation for employees who have increasingly busy work schedules.

It is believed that investments in the Employee Wellness Programs will promote the health of COG staff and their families, thereby reducing costs in medical services, lowering the absentee rate, and helping employees function with optimum efficiency. Because the COG receives a portion of these savings through its participation in the PMHIC cooperation, it is believed that there is a good return on the investments in Employee Wellness Programs.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

The only departure appears to be that the PHMIC reimbursement will be approximately \$55,000 higher than budgeted.

**Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

At present, this budget has not been impacted by COVID-19.

**Known Changes for 2021**

At the point of Program Plan preparation, staff believes the Insurance Reserve budget for 2021 will look a lot like it did in 2020.



## MISSION

*The purpose of the Unemployment Fund is to finance the COG's self-funded unemployment account in an amount sufficient to pay unemployment claims for former COG employees as determined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As of December 31, 2019, the unaudited fund balance was \$98,306, which is approximately \$337 higher than estimated.

The expenditures for January 1 to May 31, 2020 (\$8,652) were on average with the historical claims for the same time period since 2015, except for 2018 when there were higher than anticipated claims due to unanticipated turnover and weather delays in the rehiring of Centre Region Parks and Recreation seasonal maintenance staff.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

COG will continue to make transfers into the Unemployment Fund in an amount determined to be sufficient to pay claims as directed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. There could be adverse effects beyond those forecasted in the 2020 budget due to the furloughs occurring in the Centre Region Parks and Recreation agency, and the delay of hiring seasonal Parks maintenance staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff is assessing this impact, along with the ongoing COVID-19 economic impact, and should have more information available prior to the development of the 2021 Detailed Budget.

Staff and the Finance Committee's decision to steadily increase the Unemployment Budget fund balance over the past five years to a much healthier level has allowed the fund balance to reach a level capable of absorbing the impact of COVID-19 without requiring a substantial amount of additional funding.

## Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan

- With the furloughs and a delay in hiring the seasonal Parks maintenance staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there could be adverse effects beyond those forecasted in the 2020 budget.



**COG  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
BUDGET**

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- Staff will continue to assess the impacts the furloughs and hiring delays of seasonal maintenance staff within the Parks Agency will have on the Unemployment Budget. Staff should have more information available prior to the development of the 2021 Detailed Budget.

### **Known Changes for 2021**

- The furloughs and hiring delays of seasonal maintenance staff within the Centre Region Parks and Recreation agency could have an adverse impact on the Unemployment Budget. Staff should have more information available prior to the development of the 2021 Detailed Budget. Staff does not anticipate much of a divergence for Interfund Transfers from the individual funds, apart from Parks for the 2021 budget.

## MISSION

*The mission of the Centre Region Emergency Management Program is to ensure a coordinated effort to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate emergencies in a manner that utilizes resources effectively to protect lives and property in the Borough of State College and the Townships of College, Ferguson, Halfmoon, Harris, and Patton.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to June 30, 2020, revenue and expenditures for the Office of Emergency Management were consistent with the projections contained in the 2020 budget.

The actual December 31, 2019, Emergency Management fund balance was \$16,395, which is \$4,612 more than the estimated balance of \$11,783.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond, proposed budgetary changes and work objectives for the Emergency Management Program include:

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

In 2021, The EM Coordinator does not foresee any major budgetary changes. A slight reduction in program cost may be realized by changing the Emergency Operations Center exercise noted in the 2020 - 2024 Capital Improvement Plan and the reduction of any non-essential operating expenses.

### *Proposed New Work Objectives...*

At this time, the Emergency Management Program does not foresee any new work objectives for 2021. Emergency Management staff will continue all aspects of the program which are related to Emergency Operations in the Centre Region.



### Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan

- Approximately \$10,000 designated for a 2020 Emergency Operations Center exercise will be moved to 2022 or beyond.

### Scenarios That Have Been Prepared

- The Office of Emergency Management continues to monitor COVID-19 response and recovery as well as other unplanned events that may impact the Centre Region. During June, July, and August 2020 all large special events (Arts Festival, People's Choice, 4<sup>th</sup> Fest, and Ag Progress Days) have been canceled. The 4<sup>th</sup> Fest committee is coordinating several small neighborhood fireworks shows that may require some emergency planning and coordination between the event organizer and public safety agencies. During July and August, the EM Coordinator will replenish personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies. The supplies will be needed if a second wave of COVID-19 impacts the Centre Region before the development of a vaccine. Additionally, the EM Coordinator will work with Penn State University and community partners to identify points of distribution (PODS). These POD locations will provide for vaccine and medication distribution needed for COVID-19.
- Penn State University fall classes are scheduled to resume on campus beginning August 24, 2020. During the fall semester, the Office of Emergency Management will collaborate with Penn State Emergency Management for fall activities as well as monitoring COVID-19.

### Known Changes for 2021

- After Action Review (AAR) a COVID-19 response and recovery effort may identify short- and long-term gaps that require funds to make program changes. The Emergency Management Coordinator recommends funding any short-term gaps identified by the AAR be appropriated from the Emergency Management Contingency Budget, while long term gaps are added to the Emergency Management Capital Improvement Program.

## MISSION

*The mission of the Centre Region Emergency Management Contingency Budget is to provide a pool of funds for the Centre Region Emergency Management Coordinator to use in responding to a declared emergency. This Budget was established in accordance with the Joint Articles of Agreement for the Regional Emergency Management Program that was adopted by the Centre Region municipalities.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to June 30, 2020, revenue and expenditures for the Emergency Management Contingency Fund are consistent with the projections contained in the COG Budget. During this period, there were expenditures of \$15,000 from the fund.

Looking forward to the last six months of 2020, the Emergency Management Coordinator has earmarked up to \$50,000 for COVID-19 shelter support from the Emergency Management Contingency Budget and additional expenses for gaps identified by the COVID-19 After Action Report (AAR).

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking ahead to 2021, the Emergency Management Contingency Budget municipal contributions would be based on the 2020 Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment as approved by the Article of Agreement. At present, it appears the CPI will be about 1.5% (\$1,500). This translates into a proposed budget request of approximately \$800 with the \$700 (estimate) balance being made up by interest earnings.

## Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan

- Expended \$15,000 for support to Meals on Wheels during the initial COVID-19 response.
- Use of EM Contingency funds to support any identified gaps during COVID-19 AAR.

## Scenarios That Have Been Prepared

- Contingency funds up to \$50,000 are earmarked to support a Centre Region First Responder quarantine shelter. An agreement with the Ramada of State College was established to ensure first responders of a



OFFICE OF  
EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT

CONTINGENCY  
BUDGET

shelter during the COVID-19 response. As of June 15, 2020, the shelter has not been utilized by Centre Region First Responders and no funds have been expended for this program. With the anticipation of a second COVID-19 wave, the Office of Emergency Management will continue this agreement with the Ramada of State College. Funds will only be expended if and when the shelter is utilized.

### **Known Changes for 2021**

- The Office of Emergency Management will seek Federal reimbursement for the \$15,000 provided to Meals on Wheels via either FEMA or CARES Act funding. Reimbursement for this expense is not guaranteed but can range from no reimbursement to the full \$15,000. If Federal reimbursement is not available, the Emergency Management Coordinator provides options for replenishing the EM Contingency Fund.

## MISSION

*The overall mission of the Centre Region Code Administration (CRCA) is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all people working, residing, and visiting in the seven municipalities served by the CRCA by providing administration of the Uniform Construction Code of Pennsylvania (UCC) for new construction, the locally adopted Centre Region Building Safety & Property Maintenance Code, and Borough of Bellefonte Safety & Property Maintenance Code for existing buildings.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Fund Balance – At the mid-point of 2020, the fund balance for the New Construction Program has decreased from the beginning of the year. While it remains high it is anticipated it will continue to decrease as construction activity drops, as projected in the 2020 budget. The COG staff will continue to monitor the fund balance and provide an assessment to the Public Safety Committee and Finance Committee as to whether the permit fee multiplier should be modified from where it currently stands at 0.0055. In 2011 it was .0099 and .0060 in 2018. The fee multiplier is the primary basis for determining the cost of a building permit. It is applied to the construction cost of the project. The resulting number is the permit fee.
- New Construction Program – Through mid-May of 2020, the New Construction Program was operating at a loss. The revenue projection for 2020 is \$1,110,000. Through the end of May, the agency revenue was \$441,799, 40% of the budgeted receipts. As of May 31, 2020, \$100 million in new construction was permitted compared to \$205 million for the same period of time in 2019.
- Code Software Study – Since identifying many issues with the permitting and licensing software used by the CRCA and the Centre Region municipalities, it was determined that it was in the best interest of the software users to search for and adopt a more suitable software package. The Public Safety Committee awarded a contract for consulting services to manage the process for Centre Region Code Administration (CRCA) to acquire a new software package that will also be used by the Centre Region municipalities. A Working Group of users from the CRCA, each of the Centre Region municipalities, the CRCA planning agency, and Centre County government was created. In 2019, this Working Group identified software vendors, issued an RFQ, viewed software demonstrations, and were preparing for on-site visits of other municipalities using the software programs. The site visits had been suspended due to COVID-19 travel



CENTRE REGION  
CODE  
ADMINISTRATION

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AGENCY

restrictions. The software selection has been put on hold until the Working Group can conduct site visits.

### **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

- During the first half of 2020, the CRCA had two key new construction staff members leave, a Division Manager and a commercial building inspection/plans examiner. After discussions with the Executive Director, it was decided that the responsibilities of the Division Manager would be split between the Agency Director and the Code Services Manager through September when filling this position will be re-evaluated. The Commercial Building Inspector/Plans Examiner position is currently advertised and is anticipated to be filled in July.
- 2021/2022 CRCA Budgets Electronic Plan Archiving: In keeping with the recommendations of the 2010 operational study and the move to electronic equipment in the field, the CRCA will be moving toward archiving plans and design documents in electronic format. The movement to electronic storage will involve the scanning of all design documents and permit records. At this point it is anticipated that the scanning costs will be included in the building permit fees charged; however, it is anticipated that this will require the purchase of additional electronic storage space. Currently, the CRCA is investigating using a cloud-based storage system and document management system hosted by a third-party vendor. This would include a third-party scanning contract that would convert documents over several years. It is anticipated that this additional electronic storage will result in an additional cost to the program that will be better understood and is anticipated to be in either the 2021 or 2022 budget.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- The primary departure from the 2020 budget plan is the lag in new construction permit revenue. This is attributed to the COVID-19 effects on the construction industry. It is unsure at this point if the revenue will return to the same level as anticipated in the 2020 budget or if the Agency will be operating at a greater loss than anticipated. If the revenue does not rebound, the Agency has sufficient funds available through the reduced salaries due to open positions and the Agency fund balance to maintain current staffing levels for a period of time. However, this will need to be reassessed as more information is known.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- Currently, the CRCA is operating using a variety of strategies to keep the staff and customers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. CRCA staff and COG Administration will continue to review individual measures as conditions change or as guidance from the CDC, Department of Health, and/or the Department of Labor and Industry is updated.

- The CRCA is planning for the ability to be able to conduct inspections remotely/virtually for both the New Construction and Existing Structures programs in the event of a resurgence of COVID-19 in the Region or another similar pandemic. The plan is to utilize cellular phones/tablets and software such as Go-To-Meeting, Zoom, or Skype to allow the contractor/owner/rental manager to walk through the site with either a cell phone or tablet. As more detailed plans are developed, CRCA will review it with the Public Safety Committee.

#### **Known Changes for 2021**

- To increase customer service, the CRCA is recommending adding the ability to print and scan large format documents in 2021. Currently, all printing and scanning must be done off-site. This requires additional time for the staff to drop the documents off and pick them up, resulting in a significant loss of productivity. The anticipated budgetary adjustment would be \$5,000 per year, covering the cost of the equipment lease and the printing supplies needed. (At this time, it is not anticipated that these services would be extended to the public under normal circumstances. However, fees would be established to recoup costs if printing or scanning was needed in an unusual situation.)



**WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2020, revenue is in line with budgeted projections with 40% of budgeted building permits for 2020 having been received. It was expected that construction activity in 2020 would decrease significantly from recent years. Expenditures for the New Construction program are generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2020 budget. Since 2011 building construction in the Centre Region has been robust with a new high school, multiple student apartment complexes, active adult communities, and most currently high-rise structures. As a result of these large commercial projects, the agency’s fund balance has significantly increased.

The unaudited 2019 ending year fund balance was \$4,062,905 which is \$63,942 less than the \$4,126,993 estimated in the 2020 budget. It is important to note that the 2019 ending fund balance included funds for building permits received for services not yet provided. This situation occurs because many large projects pay for the permit at the beginning of the construction period that could extend for 2 or 3 years. Below is a comparison of building permit revenue for the first five months of each year since 2015:

2020	\$441,799
2019	\$1,288,327
2018	\$794,693
2017	\$733,937
2016	\$1,024,203
2015	\$1,015,888

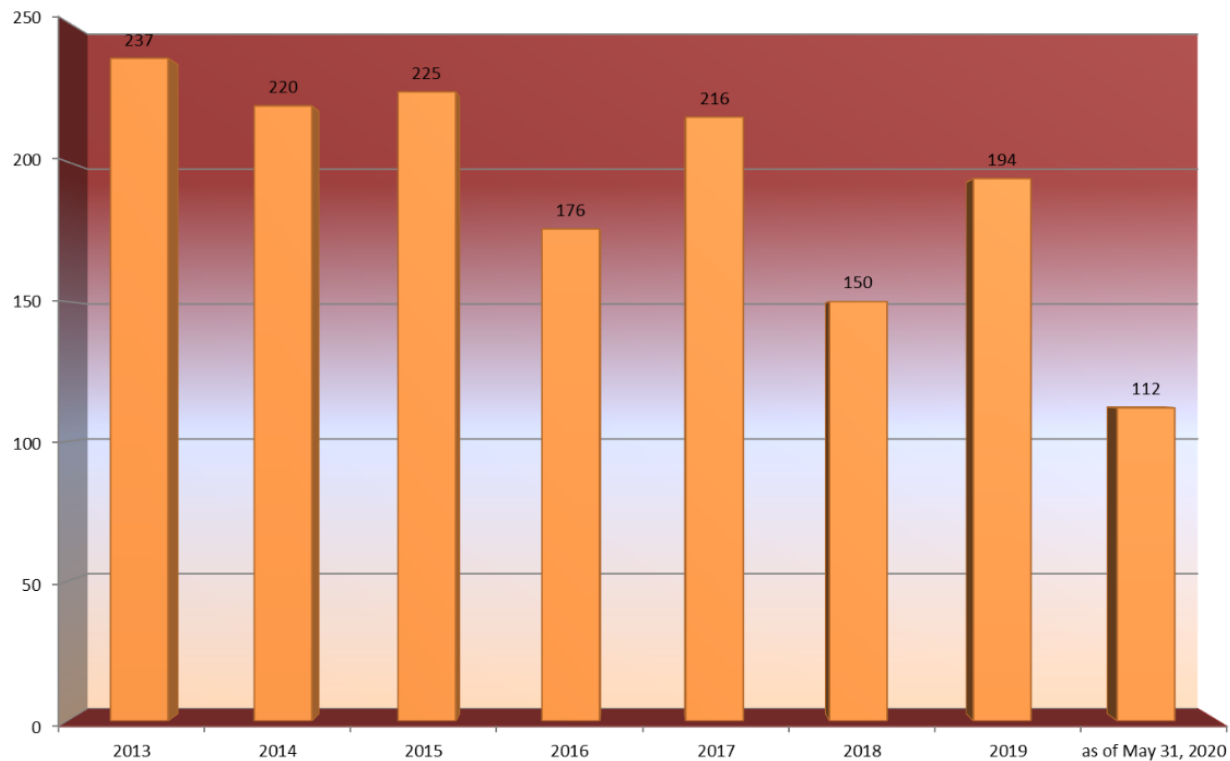
**WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

Looking forward, proposed major budgetary changes, capital changes, and work objectives for the New Construction Program include:

*Proposed Budgetary Changes...*



- The 2021 cost of a building permit will be investigated during the next several months: Based on the current and projected regional construction volume and anticipated expenses for the CRCA, staff will make a recommendation to the Public Safety Committee whether the new construction building permit fee multiplier should be altered from its current level of 0.0055.
- Software acquisition: At the current time CRCA staff is investigating with a working group comprised of Municipal / Planning Agency and Centre County Government officials to identify a preferred new regional permitting software program, to improve the exchange of code information between the CRCA and the member municipalities, making the permitting process more efficient, and provide for customer service enhancement and access. A detailed discussion of this is contained in the CRCA overview section “Of Particular Note”.



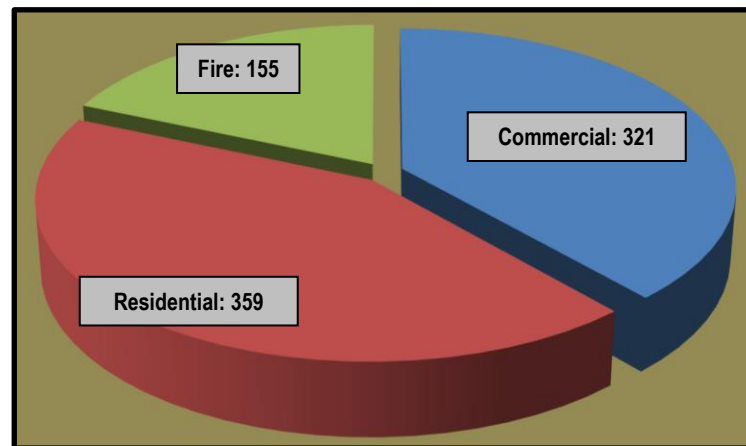
*New single-family homes constructed in the Centre Region from 2013 through May 31, 2020.*

*Proposed New Work Objectives...*

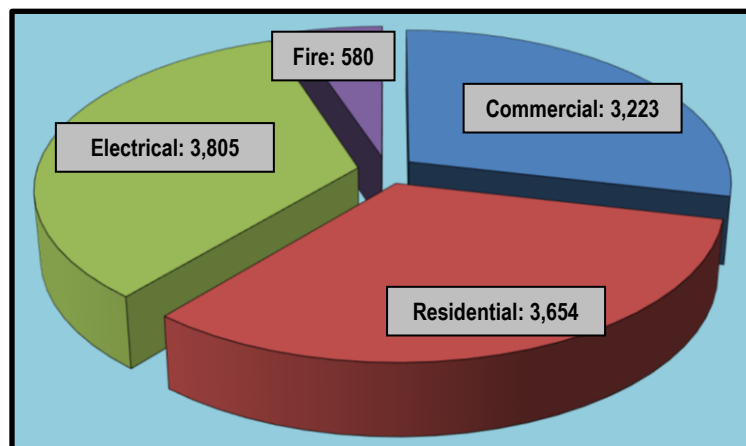
- Continue to implement additional recommendations that were identified in the 2010 Code Evaluation Study for the Agency’s future organizational and operational needs as approved by the General Forum, including:
  - Implementation of a citizen access system to allow permit applicants access to review comments and inspection records.
  - Increased use of checklists and automated report forms to assist permit applicants in quickly and efficiently achieving compliance.
- With the continued focus on sustainability and green technologies, the CRCA will continue to investigate green building options and the application with respect to the building code and keep the Public Safety Committee informed of the findings. This includes proposed updates to the Uniform Construction Code and the Centre Region Building Safety and Property Maintenance Code.
- Implement new technology for automated inspections using tablet computers and laptop computers. Advancements in technology could allow for increased consistency, accuracy, and more efficient inspections as well as a better method of communication between staff. The implementation of the new technology could also allow for improved interagency communication between the CRCA and the participating municipalities and improve overall customer service.

**Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- Please refer to the Codes Overview section for this information.



*New construction plan reviews done in 2019.*



*New construction inspections performed in 2019.*

### Scenarios That Have Been Prepared

- Please refer to the Codes Overview section for this information.

### Known Changes for 2021

- Please refer to the Codes Overview section for this information.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 2020, revenue and expenditures for the Existing Structures Budget were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2020 budget. The unaudited 2019 ending year fund balance is \$469,830. This amount is \$54,152 more than the \$415,678 estimated in the 2020 Budget.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking forward, proposed major budgetary changes, capital budget changes, and work objectives for the Existing Structures Program include:

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

- During the next several months the fee scheduled for rental housing and fire permits will be evaluated. Currently, the typical annual cost of a rental housing permit is \$37. The cost of a fire permit varies based on the size of the building and the hazards that are present. The last change in the rental housing permit fees occurred in 2015.
- Personnel Change – In 2020, Agency Director received approval to hire an additional commercial fire inspector to fill the growing workload. *This staff member was approved in the 2020 budget but was not hired prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that this staff member will be hired in late 2020 or early 2021.*

### *Proposed New Work Objectives...*

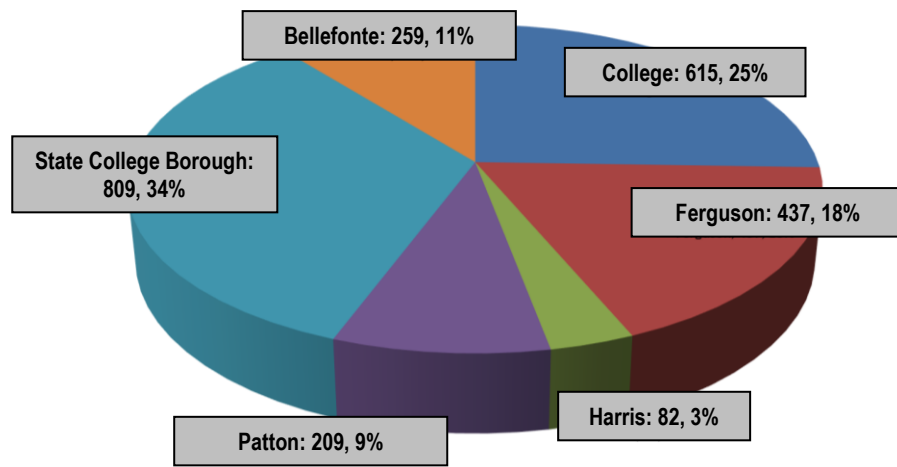
- Continue to offer the Rental Housing Maintenance Training Program quarterly to the realtors, owners, and operators of the Centre Region and Bellefonte Borough rental housing stock, to assist them in pre-inspecting their units and maintaining them between inspections. The goal of the program is to motivate and provide the tools for Rental Property Managers to be able to be proactive instead of reactive in managing their properties.
- Implement an electronic customer survey to assist in gauging the level of customer service in conjunction with Administration staff. The results of the survey will help to identify opportunities to make service enhancements or improve efficiencies.



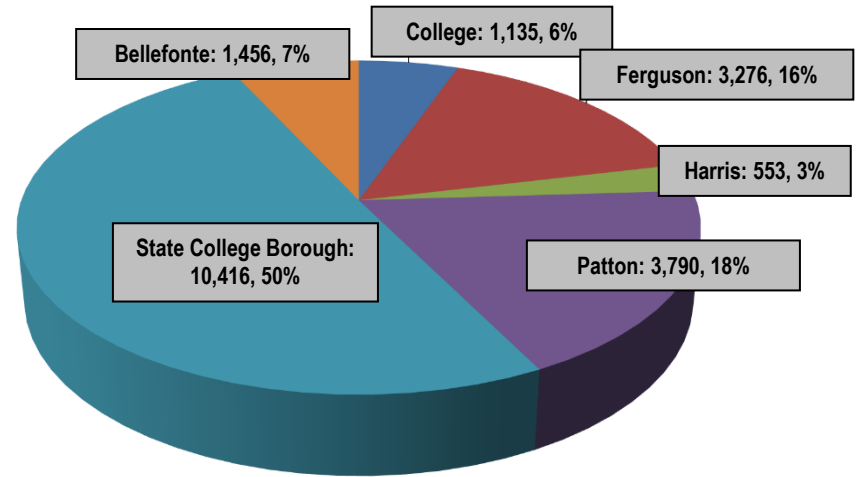
CENTRE REGION  
CODE  
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EXISTING  
STRUCTURES  
PROGRAM  
BUDGET

- Evaluate and update the curriculum for the CRCA Fire Prevention and Life Safety Public Education Program to better serve the Centre Region residents and to better integrate the curriculum in schools.



CRCA fire permit data by municipality as of May 31, 2020.



CRCA rental unit data by municipality as of May 31, 2020.

## MISSION

The Centre Region Code Administration (CRCA) Capital Budget was established to finance: investment in replacing and upgrading in renovating information management systems, office space, fleet vehicles, and major equipment.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 2020, there were no unexpected revenues or expenditures for the CRCA Capital Budget.

The unaudited 2019 ending year fund balance is \$144,707, a \$1,178 decrease from the \$145,885 projected in the budget.

Renovations to the former Parks and Recreation suite in the COG building are nearly complete. There was a \$105,000 budget amendment in February to finance the renovations coming in over budget.

The Agency has deferred 2020 vehicle purchases totaling \$178,000 due to COVID-19.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

- Replace three (3) Ford Escapes used for New Construction Program, with one (1) new Ford Escape (\$28,570) and two (2) new plug-in-electric hybrid Ford Escapes (\$31,000) each.
- Install four (4) electric charging locations to support the purchase of four (4) plug-in-electric hybrid Ford Escapes as part of a pilot program to investigate the use of plug-in-electric hybrid vehicles as the fleet vehicle for the CRCA. The cost of this installation is (\$14,000).

*Note: The following purchases were not made in the first half of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that these purchases will be moved to the 2021 budget year in addition to the budgeted 2021 purchases. For additional details please refer to the Codes Overview Section of this document.*



CENTRE REGION  
CODE  
ADMINISTRATION

CAPITAL  
BUDGET

- Replace two Ford Escapes used for fire inspection in the Existing Structures Program, with two new Ford Escapes (\$28,570).
- Replace one Ford Escape used in the New Construction Program with a new F150 pickup truck for use in the new construction program (\$37,500). The change in vehicle type is isolated to this vehicle replacement and is due to the new SEO program and the need to transport longer equipment into the field for the SEO site investigations and inspections.
- The addition of two (2) new hybrid Ford Escapes (\$31,000) each to support the proposed addition of one new field inspector and the Code Services Manager.
- The addition of one new Explorer: (\$40,000) to support the day to day operations of the CRCA Agency Director. The vehicle will also be used when multiple employees need transportation to a training program or event. The agency is requesting the purchase of one new Ford Explorer as approved in the 2020 Detail and Summary Budget process.
- Computers and electronic equipment will be replaced in accordance with the COG's IT replacement plan as managed by State College Borough IT.

## MISSION

*The Schlow Centre Region Library's mission is to be "The Centre of Reading and Learning."*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to May 2020, revenues and expenditures for the Schlow Centre Region Library Operating Budget were generally consistent with 2020 budget projections, with unknown and dramatic changes expected as the year progresses due to COVID-19. The 2020 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$90,549, \$27,678 less than budgeted, primarily due to additional part-time hours. The fund balance is equal to one month's library expenditures, which is less than desired, although emergency reserve funds are available from the Schlow Library Foundation.

The status of state aid for the Commonwealth's fiscal year 2020-21 provides five months of funding for the months of July through November 2020 at flat levels, with another budget appropriation to commence in month six, amount as yet unknown.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The Library Board of Trustees has approved the 2020 Program Plan. All activities align with the Library's mission and Strategic Plan. They fulfill the obligations of the District Library Center contract and meet most state standards for public library state aid.

The following proposals are activities with the greatest budgetary change. They are subject to alteration or elimination based on the availability of funds.

### Revenue Changes:

- State, County, and District Aid – currently unknown but are likely to decrease. There is no annual inflation factor or guarantee for these forms of aid.
- Fee and Miscellaneous Revenue – Revenues from services such as printing and copying will decline due to reduced building hours.



**SCHLOW CENTRE  
REGION LIBRARY**

**OPERATING  
BUDGET**

- Fines – Revenues will be greatly reduced due to extended forgiveness policies. Reimbursement for unreturned and lost items will be prioritized.
- Gifts – 2020 community donations are likely to decline if the economy enters and stays in a recession.
- Grants – The Library has applied for and received a Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan and is aggressively pursuing emergency and other grant applications.

#### Expenditure Changes:

- Book purchases (variable, as funds allow) – The 2021 budget will attempt to increase materials expenditures, as collections are being used more heavily during the COVID-19 crisis. The Library complies with a state standard that expects 12% of expenditures to be used for collections. The high cost of eBooks and inflation has reduced the number of new titles purchased annually, with the Library often unable to meet community demand for best-sellers.
- Building operations – There may be increased costs for janitorial and sanitization services and supplies if COVID-19 risk continues.
- New Library Director – There will be costs associated with the leadership transition, including recruitment costs and pay for a training overlap period between directors.
- General expenditure reductions – Some savings may be realized due to a partially-opened building and service shifts.

#### Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan

- Strategic planning work has been suspended for the Library, due to the impact and rapidly changing uncertainties related to COVID-19. Only \$5,282 of the \$16,000 budgeted has been spent on the plan as of 5/31/2020.

#### Scenarios That Have Been Prepared

##### **Library Priorities for 2021:**

- Safety first during COVID-19 through adherence to state and other guidelines for public services and facilities.
- Be flexible and innovative in finding solutions to service challenges.
- Emphasize and increase collection expenditures as able.
- Continue the shift to virtual programs and events if group gatherings continue to be limited.
- Expand delivery options of materials to patrons if there is prolonged limited access to the library building.

- Leadership transition to a new library director.

#### **Service Scenarios:**

COVID-19 is likely to disrupt the full range of library services through 2021, or until widespread testing and vaccines are available. The Library has developed 4 stages of responsive COVID-19 operations in accordance with current, federal, and state operating guidance for public libraries.

**Stage One:** Virtual Branch services only; no public services at the building. The virtual library includes digital books and media, online storytimes and programs, and contact with staff via phone and email with chat coming soon. Staff members mostly work from home.

**Stage Two:** Add the return of materials. Minimal staff in building to process, sanitize, and shelve materials.

**Stage Three:** Add lobby pickup of reserved materials. More staff in building for public service and office work.

**Stage Four:** Add controlled and limited public use of the building, following recommended guidelines for browsing, seating, public computer use, and group gatherings. All staff in building with limited work-from-home. Start date TBD based on CDC, Office of Commonwealth Libraries and COG/Municipal safety and health protocols.

#### **Financial scenarios:**

**Revenues:** There is likely to be a steep decline in all revenue sources due to the economic impact of COVID-19 in the state and community. A limited safety net is available in funds held by the Schlow Library Foundation. Those funds can be used as a library reserve and safety net, although they are primarily intended for future capital use. Some Schlow Library Foundation reserve funds may be needed in 2020 and specific amounts for 2021 may be identified later in the budget cycle.

**Expenditures:** The Library will have to adjust its services and expenditures to align with available dollars and resources. Abnormal and additional expenditures are expected for COVID-19 safety and sanitization measures, including cleaning supplies, public area screens and dividers, and other modifications.

#### **Known Changes for 2021**

- The hiring of a new Library Director. The current director will be retiring after 11+ years of service on July 1, 2021.
- Adjustments required by state directives or COVID-19 impacts.



## MISSION

*The mission of the Schlow Centre Region Library Capital Budget is to pay for the maintenance, repair, upgrades, and improvements to the facility and technology systems of the Library, which is “the Centre of Reading and Learning.”*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW

The 2020 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$544,780, which was \$95,778 more than budgeted. Savings occurred due to delayed or changed projects.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The Library Board of Trustees have approved the 2021 Program Plan. Hosting over 285,000 visitors a year, the 15-year-old building is heavily used and showing its age in appearance and function. The 2021 capital expenditures will be dictated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially regarding public use of the building. Priority is being assigned to projects that are necessary for safety and maintenance. Several renovation projects are being delayed in consideration of financial and operational uncertainties.

The library schedules capital projects only when necessary, and completes projects with an eye to safety, cost-efficiencies, and preservation of a popular and valued facility.

### Revenue:

The Capital Fund was established in the COG budget in 2011 with remaining capital campaign money, and until 2016, was supplemented annually with modest inter-fund transfers, donations, grants, and interest. Direct municipal contributions to the capital fund began in 2016 to assure adequate funds for major upcoming repairs.

No increase in municipal contributions to the Library Capital Budget is requested due to the economic strains of the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations and grants will continue to be solicited aggressively.

During its February 27, 2017 meeting the General Forum approved the following motion to revise the formula that is used to allocate municipal costs to the library:



SCHLOW CENTRE  
REGION LIBRARY

CAPITAL  
BUDGET

*“That the General Forum, as recommended by the Finance Committee, amend the Library funding formula utilized by the Centre Region Council of Governments participating municipalities to allow for a three-year smoothing mechanism to be added to the formula effective for the 2018 Centre Region Council of Governments Budget and over the life of the smoothing formula, municipalities will pay no more or less than they would have paid under direct assessment.”*

### **Projected 2021 Capital Expenditures:**

#### **BUILDING:**

- Replace three sets of exterior doors and related hardware (\$160,000). The outer facility doors are requiring more repairs and are nearing the end of useful life. They must be replaced soon for building security, ADA accessibility, and service flexibility.
- HVAC replacement parts (\$30,000). The 2020 HVAC commissioning will likely identify components that need replacement or attention in 2021.
- Sidewalk maintenance (\$25,000). Bricks in the walkway need replacement or sanding.
- Baseboard repairs and replacements (\$17,000). There is extensive baseboard damage throughout the building from public use and book carts.
- Replacing or modifying worn furniture (\$10,000). Many pieces of heavily used staff and public furniture are 15 years old and are being replaced as needed.

#### **TECHNOLOGY:**

- Computer / Network replacements (\$65,210). This is for the scheduled replacement of outdated equipment.
- Virtual Library updates (\$21,216). This covers annual adjustments including website security updates and bug fixes.

#### **CONTINGENCY:**

- Contingency for COVID-19 related building or technology (\$40,000). Among the options being considered if the pandemic is extended are additional service desk shielding, pick-up lockers, smaller public tables, and other necessary safety adaptations.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

#### **Improvement of Buildings – Delayed Projects:**

- Second Floor Redesign (\$242,000), which included lighting and carpeting replacement, is being delayed until 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Loading Dock Repairs (\$35,500) – Repairs have been completed, eliminating the need for the project at this time.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

COVID-19 is likely to disrupt library building access and operations through 2021, or until widespread testing and vaccines are available. The Library has developed 4 stages of responsive COVID-19 operations in accordance with current, federal, and state guidelines for public libraries. Stages will be adjusted based on changes in local COVID-19 infection rates or state directives.

- Stage One:** Virtual Branch services only; no public services at the building. The virtual library includes digital books and media, online storytimes and programs, and contact with staff via phone, chat, and email. Staff members mostly work from home. This stage was in effect March 16 – May 18, 2020.
- Stage Two:** Add the return of materials. Minimal staff in building to process, sanitize, and shelve materials. This stage was added on May 18 – present.
- Stage Three:** Add lobby pickup of reserved materials. More staff in building for public service and office work. This stage was added on June 8 – present.
- Stage Four:** Add controlled and limited public use of the building, following recommended guidelines for browsing, seating, public computer use, and group gatherings. All staff in building with limited work-from-home. Start date TBD based on CDC, Office of Commonwealth Libraries and COG/Municipal safety and health protocols.

### **Financial Scenarios:**

**Revenues:** Contributions are likely to decline in a challenging economy. The Schlow Library Foundation has investments that are intended for long-term capital use. Some Schlow Library Foundation reserve funds may be withdrawn in 2021 for projects deemed necessary. The Library is seeking any grants for capital needs that may be available.

**Expenditures:** Building modifications may be necessary for COVID-19 considerations if the pandemic is prolonged.

### **Known Changes for 2021**

- COVID-19 related changes in facility upkeep or capital projects are expected. The Schlow facility will continue to be affected by COVID-19 and local and state protocols for safety. State directives for libraries are received from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, which continuously update directives for the resumption of business activity, safety measures, physical distancing, and other details.
- Custodial work will increase with more sanitization needed when the building reopens for more public use.

- Additional building modifications for safety may be necessary, including shielding, door adjustments, sanitization stations, and crowd control barriers.

## MISSION

*The Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA) guides regional and municipal efforts to create and sustain a vibrant, healthy, and economically diverse community by providing professional land use planning services that educate and inspire people to make the Centre Region a great place to live.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to June 30, 2020, revenue for the Centre Regional Planning Agency is generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2020 Budget.

- The actual unaudited January 1, 2020 fund balance was \$196,242, which was \$40,662 higher than the estimated fund balance of \$155,580. The difference was due to lower than expected personnel costs.

For the balance of 2020, the CRPA anticipates having all positions filled and does not anticipate any significant variation in expenses for the remainder of the year.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The CRPA remains mindful of municipal funding constraints when considering opportunities to reorganize or shift the responsibilities of Agency personnel to meet the changing needs of the municipalities.

The Agency continues to pursue ways to more effectively deploy personnel, use technology, be resourceful, and strategically reorganize to add value to the services provided to the municipalities.

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

- The CRPA does not plan any programmatic or personnel changes in 2021 that would impact the Budget.

### *Proposed New Regional Work Objectives...*



**CENTRE  
REGIONAL  
PLANNING  
AGENCY  
BUDGET**

The TLU Committee and CRPC began using the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Program (CHIP) process shortly after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 2013. Since then, the CRPA has facilitated the same process on a biennial basis to identify priority projects for the coming year. The following guidelines serve as the basis for establishing the highest priority projects or initiatives:

- Implement the goals, objectives, and policies from the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan.
- Address a significant and clearly demonstrated regional planning issue or problem.
- Benefit all of the municipalities in some way.
- Facilitate Comprehensive Plan implementation based upon the local planning capabilities in each municipality.
- Implement the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

The CRPA continues to utilize the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Program (CHIP) as a process to establish priority projects for the Regional Planning Program. All municipalities actively participate in establishing priority projects for the CRPA to include in the annual Program Plan. The CHIP provides a list of short-term projects that the Region should complete to implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan. The CHIP translates the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan into actionable projects and identifies priorities, timeframes, and primary responsibilities for completing the projects.

Four new Regional Planning work objectives were jointly recommended by the Centre Regional Planning Commission and the COG Transportation and Land Use Committee at their respective meetings in April 2020. The General Forum has not yet endorsed these priority projects for the CRPA's 2021 - 2023 Work Program:

- Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions for the Comprehensive Plan Update
- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Implement the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- Work with the UAJA to Complete ongoing Act 537 Plan Special Studies

#### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- The transition of supervisory responsibility for the Refuse and Recycling Administrator position from Administration to the CRPA was delayed until June 1, 2020. The position will physically move over to the CRPA offices in the fall.

- It is anticipated that there will be savings in several line items in the budget including meals for meetings, professional development, and office supplies. These line items were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- The CRPA is planning to prepare a status quo budget for 2021 and will be able to adjust accordingly when impacts to municipal budgets are known.
- The CRPA staff worked remotely from March 19, 2020, to June 15, 2020, when staff returned on an alternating weekly schedule. During the remote work time, Agency staff became proficient at communicating electronically and continued to complete our work on a timely basis. The Agency is prepared to change back to working remotely, with partial staff in the office, or full staff in the office depending upon COVID-19 conditions in Centre County.

### **Known Changes for 2021**

- CRPA staff abbreviated the 2020 CHIP process with the CRPC and COG TLU Committee to identify several priority projects and to accommodate the 2021 budget process.
- CRPA staff will begin implementing the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan in 2021.
- The Agency has proposed a COG Climate Action and Sustainability Committee to guide climate action and sustainability actions in the Centre Region. The CRPA will participate in a comprehensive study of COG committees to streamline work tasks.



## MISSION

Federal law requires local and state officials in all designated urbanized areas of the United States to maintain a **cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive** transportation planning program, through a “metropolitan planning organization (MPO)”. In Centre County, this responsibility is fulfilled by the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO). The Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA) is the lead staff support agency for the CCMPO, working cooperatively with the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO), the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA), and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Central and Engineering District 2-0 Offices.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period between January 1 and June 30, 2020, revenue and expenditures were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2020 CCMPO Budget, with the following exceptions:

- The actual January 1, 2020 fund balance was \$72,213, which is significantly higher than the estimated fund balance of \$43,085. Most of the difference was due to lower than anticipated personnel costs, and the timing of transactions that occur within the three fiscal years that impact the CCMPO Budget.
- Expenditures for meeting expenses, copying and postage, mileage, and vehicle fuel expenses were lower than anticipated because the March and April CCMPO meetings were cancelled, June meetings were held virtually, and because staff worked remotely from mid-March through mid-June.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Revenue for the CCMPO Budget is divided about equally between PennDOT and local funding.

PennDOT provides an annual base allocation of federal and state funding to the CRPA and offers competitive opportunities for supplemental federal funding for special planning projects.



CENTRE COUNTY  
METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING  
ORGANIZATION  
BUDGET

Local funding is provided by Centre County, the six Centre Region municipalities, and CATA. The contributions from Centre County and the municipalities are calculated by the CCMPO's local funding share formula, which is based on three equally-weighted criteria:

- ✓ Population (less on-campus resident students at Penn State University, and inmates at state and county correctional facilities)
- ✓ Road miles (state roads, and local roads eligible for federal highway funds)
- ✓ Assessed value of property

CATA provides the local share funding required to match federal transit planning funds provided by PennDOT (historically an 80% federal/20% local split).

CRPA staff is mindful of municipal funding constraints when considering opportunities to more efficiently meet the needs of the member-organizations comprising the CCMPO. Looking forward to 2021, there are no personnel or programmatic changes proposed for the CCMPO Budget.

#### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...Revenue*

- Base allocation of federal and state funding – The CCMPO's new FY 2020-22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) took effect on July 1, 2020, and includes about a 5% increase in federal and state funding that will be fully realized in the 2021 Budget. There has been no indication from PennDOT that funding will be reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supplemental federal funding – Supplemental federal funding for three special planning projects approved in 2019 will be fully expended in 2020, assuming no new COVID-related travel restrictions are imposed in 2020. The CCMPO may submit a request for supplemental funding to assist in completing a Strategic Plan, a task that is included in the FY 2020-22 UPWP. Although most of the supplemental funds for the Strategic Plan would be used for consultant services, a portion would be reserved for CRPA staff tasks associated with completing the Strategic Plan.
- County and municipal funding – Municipal and County funding shares are anticipated to remain approximately the same in 2021.
- CATA funding – CATA's share for the 2021 budget is anticipated to increase by approximately 4%, to match the increase in federal transit planning funding in the FY 2020-22 UPWP.

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...Expenditures*

The majority of expenditures (nearly 70%) in the CCMPO Budget are for personnel costs.

- There are no staffing or other significant changes in Personnel Expenses planned for 2021.
- There are no significant changes in Operating Expenses planned for 2021. Efforts will continue to reduce costs or minimize increases in the operating and capital line item expenses over which the CRPA has direct control. For example, a special project to obtain detailed travel data to support the implementation of federal Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) requirements will be deferred beyond 2021.
- A significant decrease in expenditures for the Transportation Projects line items is anticipated in 2021 because three special planning projects will be completed in 2020. If supplemental planning is allocated by PennDOT for assistance in completing the CCMPO Strategic Plan, expenses for consultant services will be included in the Transportation Projects line item. However, overall expenditures under Transportation Projects are still anticipated to be less in 2021.

### *New or Expanded Work Initiatives in 2021...*

- The CRPA staff will continue to work with PennDOT to implement new data-driven processes as part of federal PBPP requirements. The federal emphasis on PBPP is intended to help the CCMPO and PennDOT invest scarce resources wisely, and to evaluate the success of projects and programs towards meeting federal, state, and local performance targets. The focus on performance measures and asset management is significantly changing how transportation planning and programming activities are conducted by PennDOT and the CCMPO.
- The CRPA staff will be closely involved in PennDOT's preparation of a Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) Study for the State College Area Connector (SCAC) project (Route 322/144/45 Corridors in southcentral Centre County). The PEL Study will begin in summer 2020 and be completed in mid-2022. The PEL Study is focused on:
  - ✓ Assessing existing travel conditions and projecting/forecasting future conditions
  - ✓ Documenting project need and purpose
  - ✓ Inventorying community and environmental features
  - ✓ Identifying and evaluating potential solutions/alternatives to meeting project need

### Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan

- Savings are anticipated in several line items impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including copying, postage, meeting expenses (food and beverages), mileage reimbursement, vehicle fuel, and professional development.
- Savings are also anticipated in 2020 because the CRPA's annual maintenance license for the Cube travel demand model software will not be renewed. CRPA staff is not trained to utilize the latest version of the software and is not expecting to utilize the software in the future. The Centre County travel demand model is being updated and utilized by PennDOT and its consultant team for the SCAC project, and data from the model will be made available to the CCMPO for transportation planning purposes.

### Scenarios That Have Been Prepared

- The CCMPO's 2021 Budget is anticipated to be a status quo budget and will be adjusted accordingly when impacts to the County and municipal budgets are known. The increase in funding from PennDOT and a reduction in expenditures associated with certain line items if COVID-19 distancing requirements are reinstated in 2021 will help offset modest reductions in County and municipal funding in 2021.
- If County and municipal funding are significantly reduced in 2021, CRPA staff's initial response would be to request supplemental funding from PennDOT for CCMPO-related work tasks associated with the SCAC PEL and other Preliminary Engineering phase activities. However, because the allocation of supplemental funding is competitive on a statewide basis, there is no guarantee that funding would be allocated by PennDOT.
- The CRPA staff worked remotely from March 19, 2020, to June 15, 2020, when staff returned on an alternating weekly schedule. During the remote work time, staff became proficient at communicating electronically with PennDOT and other partners, conducted several virtual public, Committee and subcommittee meetings, and continued to complete work on a timely basis. The staff is prepared to change back to working remotely, or with a partial or full staff in the office, depending upon COVID-19 conditions in Centre County in 2021.

### Known Changes for 2021

- The travel and distancing restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 resulted in a significant reduction in travel, and a corresponding decline in federal, state, and local revenue from fuel taxes and other programs (e.g. vehicle sales tax, transit fares, PA Turnpike lease payments to PennDOT, etc.). As the nation moves into the recovery phase, it is unknown how revenue for transportation improvements will be impacted in the long term. In 2020 and 2021, the impacts of reduced

revenue are anticipated to affect the CCMPO from at least two perspectives: 1) adjustments needed to the Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to reflect a decrease in funding and/or extended schedules for implementing projects and programs, and 2) changes in staff work tasks associated with the preparation and review of applications from municipalities and stakeholders for discretionary state funding programs impacted by decreased revenue (e.g. Multimodal Transportation Fund, Automated Red Light Enforcement Program, Green Light Go Program, etc.).

- The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic is anticipated to affect travel and transportation systems in Centre County in other ways, such as an increase in the use of bicycles and other mobility devices, reduced utilization of public transportation and ridesharing modes, and changes in travel demand associated with remote working arrangements. The CRPA staff anticipates being involved in assisting PennDOT, member municipalities, and other stakeholders in preparing responses to these changes.
- The completion of a Strategic Plan for the CCMPO in 2020 and 2021 is expected to produce recommendations for modest changes in the future operations of the CCMPO Committees and staff. The shift toward federal performance measures and asset management, the rapid growth in technology associated with transportation systems, and the anticipated departure of long-tenured staff in the next few years are all factors that will influence the strategic direction for the CCMPO. Discussions about the potential outlook for the 2022 CCMPO Budget are anticipated to occur in 2021 as the Strategic Plan is prepared.





## MISSION

*The purpose of the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) Regional Refuse and Recycling Program is to promote public health, safety, and welfare and to eliminate public health hazards, environmental pollution, and economic loss in the participating municipalities through the collection, transportation, and disposal of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional municipal solid waste.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through June 30, 2020, revenues and expenditures are slightly lower than the projections contained in the 2020 budget. The main variance is due to delaying the expansion of recycling options for organic waste. Looking forward to the last six months of 2020, no other variances are expected for the 2020 budget although there may be increased expenditures for the subsidy program due to the economic impact associated with COVID-19.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond, proposed major budgetary changes and major work objectives for the Regional Refuse and Recycling Program include:

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes:*

- Add the purchase of recycling containers for the Whitehall Road Regional Park in 2021.
- Include the purchase of equipment and expenditures for public education regarding organic recycling options in 2021.

### *Proposed Work Objectives:*

- Evaluate bid specifications and determine changes that can promote more haulers bidding on the Request For Bids for the refuse contract.



- Investigate options and develop opportunities for residents and businesses to recycle their organic (yard and food waste) materials.

### WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

The 2020 budget included funding for expanding yard, garden, and food waste recycling options for residents. This included some specialized equipment, public education, and advertising. Closures and changes in municipal and CRPR schedules and priorities in Spring 2020 meant this was not feasible in that season, and the Refuse and Recycling Administrator decided that this missed window of opportunity necessitated moving those plans to 2021.

Additional residents may join the subsidy program as residents continue to face economic hardship, and that may lead to increased expenses for that program in both 2020 and 2021.

Regional Refuse	Y-T-D Actual	Expected Jun-Dec	2020 Anticipated	2020 Budget	Variance	2021 Proposed
7341 Advertising	\$ 551	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,651	\$ 3,900	\$ 2,249	\$ 4,000
7344 Public Information / Education	\$ 1,050	\$ 500	\$ 1,550	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,450	\$ 5,000
7367 Refuse & Recycling	\$ 50	\$ 70	\$ 120	\$ 4,129	\$ 4,009	\$ 120
7511 Subsidy Program	\$ 3,520	\$ 7,040	\$ 10,560	\$ 9,500	\$ (1,060)	\$ 10,500
8750 Purchase of Specialized Equipment	\$ 1,756	\$ 300	\$ 2,056	\$ 7,400	\$ 5,344	\$ 8,000
<b>Total these Line Items Only</b>	<b>\$ 6,727</b>	<b>\$ 9,010</b>	<b>\$ 15,637</b>	<b>\$ 29,929</b>	<b>\$ 13,992</b>	<b>\$ 27,620</b>

## MISSION

*The mission of the Regional Fire Protection Program is to provide quality fire, rescue, and related services to the Borough of State College and the Townships of College, Ferguson, and Patton, a portion of Benner Township, and the University Park campus of Penn State University in the most cost-effective manner.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As of June 1, 2020, the program is on budget and essential service delivery has continued without interruption throughout the entirety of the first half of this fiscal year. Staff has continued to report to work in normal fashion throughout the pandemic crisis. Current indicators show the program ending the year on budget.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected non-essential services such as public education and appearances, and training; all of which were canceled during the “Red” and “Yellow” phases of Pennsylvania’s pandemic response. In the “Green” phase of the response, these activities have been restored to the degree practicable and within the limits prescribed by public health officials.

To date, no fire department personnel have contracted the COVID-19 virus. Volunteers and staff continue to monitor their health and temperature daily, and they have been diligent in their compliance with infection control measures. Contracted cleaning of the fire stations has continued throughout the pandemic crisis and has been supplemented with virucide fogging and/or UV treatment of fire stations.

The current federal SAFER Grant, which has been funding a large portion of our social media recruiting efforts expires on November 14, 2020. Recruiting via social media will continue in 2021 and will be limited to free and paid advertising placements using existing media.

Incident response frequency is at seasonal (summer) norms. As provided in the 2020 budget, we brought on our summer staff hire as planned.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking forward into the remainder of 2020 and beyond, proposed major budgetary changes and work objectives for



the Regional Fire Protection Program include:

- We are investigating costs to replace nonfunctional air scrubbing equipment in the apparatus bays of the fire stations. This project is part of our cancer risk reduction activity which is ongoing. There may be sufficient funds in the capital accounts to undertake this work without significantly modifying the COG CIP.
- Having volunteers in sufficient numbers is critical to maintaining the fire protection system. The ongoing study by ESCi Consulting is expected to be completed by mid-July and will guide future actions related to staffing.
- Since 2013, the Regional Fire Protection Program has handled the administration of the Penn State HazMat Team. Alpha Fire Company members and COG staff now account for more than 60% of the HazMat technicians on the Penn State roster. Formal transfer of the HazMat Team from Penn State to COG is expected to be completed by June 30. After the formal transfer is complete, volunteers and staff will work to fully integrate the team and determine the actual costs to sustain the team. The formal agreements provide for continued Penn State funding through June 30, 2022.
- As in past years, the Fire Director intends to propose the hiring of a summer intern for 2021.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

Very few plans for 2020 have been postponed or canceled due to the pandemic. Major projects for 2020 had received approval early in the year and were launched well before COVID-19 impacted business activities. Currently, there are no outstanding projects beyond the ESCi Consulting study.

Training has been on hold since statewide infection control measures were undertaken. Most of this training will be rescheduled after June 15. On-boarding of new volunteers has been postponed until August.

Spring recruiting was canceled due to our inability to train. Based on the experiences of prior years this will translate to the loss of two or three prospective non-student members. While that number is not large, it represents a significant impact. Recruiting has barely kept pace with natural attrition and over the past two years, volunteer numbers have been in a slight decline.

The direct mail recruiting campaign that was planned for spring will run over the summer in the hopes of increasing recruit numbers in the fall cycle.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

The pandemic persists and the fall season may bring a resurgence of COVID-19 cases. It is also possible that a new strain of the virus, or a new virus altogether, may emerge. The greatest risk to the fire department is the widespread infection of volunteers

and staff. We have identified trigger points for effecting alternate staffing plans should widespread infection occur. We also have plans developed for providing quarantine of exposed responders.

## **Known Changes for 2021**

### **Changes to Operations/COVID-19 Impacts**

Fire stations will remain closed to casual public access as will hosted visits for the foreseeable future and likely the remainder of the year. Participation in some community events will continue to be curtailed and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All non-emergency activities will continue to conform to infection control protocols promulgated by state health officials.

There may be long-term COVID-19 impact on the fire department. Volunteer numbers locally and statewide had been in decline prior to the pandemic and these declines may accelerate after recovery.

### **Impact of PSU Decisions**

In the event Penn State significantly curtails classes in the fall, the fire department will experience a reduction in volunteer staffing and fire station live-ins. Approximately 28% of the fire department volunteer roster is comprised of Penn State students. Experiences through March, April, and May confirm significant reductions for fire department services that occur when the student population drops significantly. The fire department would continue to experience response demands typical of the summer months throughout the fall. The impact of a fall delay or cancellation of university classes or events would have a modest impact on the fire department.

### **Studies Underway or Proposed**

The ESCi Consulting study of the Regional Fire Protection Program was launched in the first week of January. All data collection and most of the data analysis related to this study was completed prior to mid-March. The benchmarking components to the study are underway but are moving much more slowly than planned. It is likely completion of the study will be delayed four to six weeks. A six-week delay results in a report being made available in late-July. There are no other studies underway or planned for 2020 and there are no studies proposed for 2021.



## MISSION

The Capital Budget for the Regional Fire Protection Program was established by the participating municipalities to purchase vehicles needed for regional fire protection and rescue services. The Capital Budget provides for regular predictable contributions for the large planned, but irregular, apparatus expenditures. In accordance with the COG Capital Improvement Plan, the Fire Capital Budget also provides for regular predictable contributions for expenditures related to physical infrastructure, notably building systems, necessary to support program objectives.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The COG has maintained a capital fund (originally termed a sinking fund) for the purpose of replacing apparatus since 1975.

This capital budget provides long term planning for the timely replacement or addition of fire apparatus and ensures that sufficient funding is in place to make purchases. Fire apparatus is owned and licensed to the Centre Region COG. All Centre Region apparatus is insured for full replacement cost.

The COG CIP for the fire apparatus is based on a 25-year rolling replacement plan. The COG CIP for buildings is based on the estimated service life of building systems. The CIP for buildings may be subject to change based on changes to technology and operating costs, such as energy.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

In accordance with the CIP, the Tanker/Tender 5-2 is slated to be replaced in 2021. This unit was built by 4 Guys on a 2005 International commercial chassis.

<b>Apparatus Replacement Schedule</b>	
1 Quint	\$1,200,000
4 Engines @ \$750,000	\$3,000,000
2 Aerial Towers @ \$1,200,000	\$2,400,000
2 Tankers @ \$413,000	\$826,000
1 Heavy Rescue Truck	\$750,000
1 Command Unit	\$100,000
2 Chiefs' Vehicles	\$140,000
2 Specialty Trailers	\$200,000
3 Utility Vehicles	\$156,000
1 Special Unit/Brush Vehicle	\$140,000
1 ATV with Trailer	\$80,000
2 Fire Police Vehicles	\$280,000
<b>Total Replacement Value</b>	<b>\$9,272,000</b>

*Approximate cost to replace the current Alpha Fire Company fleet.*



**REGIONAL FIRE  
PROTECTION  
PROGRAM**

**CAPITAL  
BUDGET**

Recommendations for the renovation of buildings and upgrades of building systems are pending the evaluation reports for each of the fire stations. There are no renovations or upgrades to buildings planned for 2021 in the CIP beyond those outlined below.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

A partial roof replacement of the Borough Fire Station was planned for 2020, however, it is unlikely this will occur owing to contractor availability. Funds allocated for this project will roll into 2021.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

The 2020 construction season has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. However, due to the timing of capital projects for the Regional Fire Protection Program, a direct impact on the program capital plans has been minimal. The most significant impact upon the capital budget will be the recommendations on buildings received from COG's consultant and input from the COG Ad-Hoc Facilities Committee. As a result, no capital scenarios have been modeled beyond the existing CIP.

### **Known Changes for 2021**

#### **Changes to Operations/COVID-19 Impacts**

The pandemic has not significantly altered capital plans. The air handling systems of the fire stations are being fitted with Ultraviolet air cleaning equipment. These expenses are modest (less than \$10,000) and are being funded through the 2020 operating budget.

#### **Impact of PSU Decisions**

The CIP for the Regional Fire Protection Program is not likely to be impacted by decisions made by Penn State concerning the fall academic term.

#### **Studies Underway or Proposed**

Beyond the activities of the COG Ad-Hoc Facilities Committee, there are no studies underway or proposed that would affect the Regional Fire Protection Program CIP.

## MISSION

The mission of the Centre Region Parks and Recreation (CRPR) Agency is that “we inspire the Centre Region to learn, play, protect, and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities in sustainable natural space and places.”



## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through mid-June 2020, revenue and expenditures for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Operating Budget were well below projected levels, mainly due to COVID-19 effects like canceled programming, eliminated pavilion and sports field rentals, and the loss of tournaments and leagues. The Budget remains in the black due to expenditure savings, rolling furloughs through the administrative and programming staff, and a reduced seasonal workforce in Parks Operations.

The unaudited beginning 2020 fund balance was \$200,780, a \$108,658 increase from the \$92,212 estimated in the 2020 detailed budget. The fund balance was higher than anticipated due to savings on personnel costs.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

*Proposed Budgetary Changes for 2021...*

The following are items that are important to note for the 2021 Parks and Recreation Operating Budget. Generally, except for changes in compensation and benefits costs for current staffing, the 2021 CRPR Budget will be very similar to the 2020 Budget, minus one new Comprehensive Study action item.

- The Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study was completed in March 2020. The \$10,000 match and \$10,000 in DCNR funding is earmarked for a post-study project to support the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center Boardwalk Feasibility Study. These funds may need to be carried over to 2021 as the project may need a few additional weeks beyond the December 31, 2020 deadline.
- The Agency proposed to the HR Committee in April 2020 to write a Peer-To-Peer Grant for an Agency Staffing Study. Due to COVID-19, this process is delayed, but should kick-off in the fall. The results of



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that study may allow the Agency to apply for an additional grant to fund only the salary of one new position in 2021. The Agency would need to include the benefit costs at 100%.

- The new Parks Caretaker I position that was scheduled for mid-year 2020 has been rolled to a January 2021 hire. A full-time Parks Caretaker retired in May 2020, and the position's replacement was also rolled to a January 2021 hire. Hiring full-time Parks Caretakers provides an opportunity to recruit qualified staff who are likely to remain with the Agency as the salary and benefits package is attractive. The savings realized by keeping these positions open will go to offset municipal contributions in 2021.
- Continue the professional development opportunities for the CRPR staff. The agency always looks for different opportunities for training and will continue that practice. The 2020 Detailed Budget will provide figures and training details.
- The only new project is an Action Item from the completed Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study. It was recommended that the Active Guide become a direct mail piece. At this time, there is a large portion of this community who are not aware of the programs, events, scholarships, or facilities that the Agency provides, as noted in the study. Inequities exist for residents who do not have access to the Internet, either via phone or computer, to view the guide online. In addition, many do not have access to the guide due to transportation limitations and/or lack of alignment between available transportation and current Active Guide distribution locations. Without access to the website, the knowledge of the Agency's scholarship program is greatly reduced as well as exposure and access to the various free and low-cost programming offered by the Agency. Therefore, the Agency will provide estimates for printing and mailing the Active Guide three times a year in the 2021 Detailed Budget. The Active Guide would be mailed at a reduced rate using the EDDM option through the USPS.

#### *Proposed Work Objectives for 2021...*

The following is a list of proposed 2021 Work Objectives for Centre Region Parks and Recreation:

- Provide the staff support necessary to work with the CRPR Authority members as we continue to work through the Action Plan of the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study.
- Continue to provide the staff support necessary to complete the Phase I improvements at Whitehall Road Regional Park within the budget approved by the General Forum and consistent with the approved master site plan for the park. The General Forum, through Articles of Agreement for the Regional Parks, has asked the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority to lead this development effort within the approved master site plan and budget. The Agency will also be updating its 2021 Fee Policy to reflect the proposed fees and charges for Whitehall Road Regional Park as the Agency prepares a

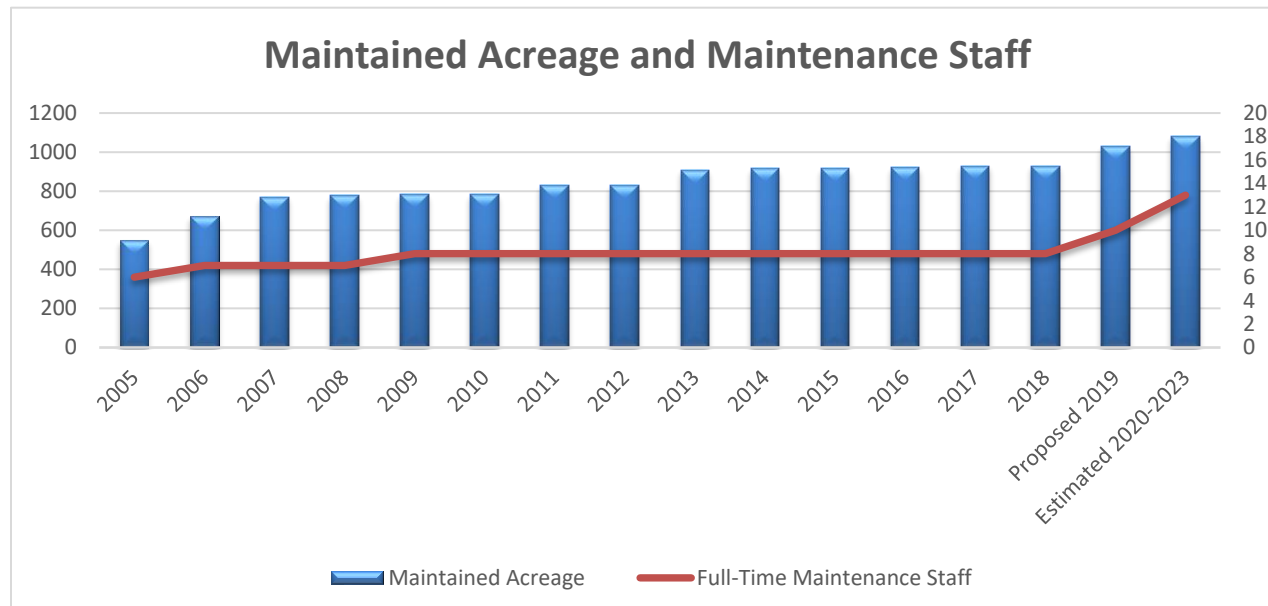
business plan for income and expenses. There will be a need for some additional financial discussions as the park's 2020 budget outpaces the \$4.8 million loan funds, despite hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant and donation funding.

- Continue to promote the tournament opportunities provided by Oak Hall Regional Park and the Hess Softball Complex, along with additional satellite fields, making the Centre Region a premiere softball destination in Pennsylvania for tournaments, leagues, park rentals, and special events. These tournaments have the added advantages of allowing local youth and adults to play on their “home fields” without requiring travel to other locations, and hosting tournaments brings visiting teams to the Region along with their spending to support local businesses.
- Continue to collaborate with the municipalities regarding the purchase and installation of new/replacement playground equipment and other facilities (e.g. pavilions) and the major capital repairs. Historically, these items have been a municipal responsibility. Scheduling these needs within the municipal capital improvement plans remains an important collaborative task.
- The Agency, using results from the Comprehensive Study and on-going program evaluations, will develop a multi-year plan for program operations (including, leagues, fitness classes, swim lessons, etc.). The Agency will continue to develop more community and business partnerships and sponsors while freshening programs and events to keep public interest high. An important Agency need will be to identify and secure future indoor locations to hold programming that cannot be accommodated in parks or in the facilities that we currently lease.
- Develop a policy for accepting major contributions for regional parks development. To help off-set municipal costs, the Agency has been encouraged to work with outside organizations (i.e., Centre Soccer, Happy Valley Adventure Bureau, etc.) to fund improvements at the regional parks, such as lighting and synthetic turf as examples. Contributions from these groups have been discussed on multiple occasions; however, it is important to remember the highest priority for regional parks is to serve the residents of the Centre Region, while at the same time recognizing the programmatic needs of the entity making the contribution. This process was started in 2019 and will need to continue in 2020 and 2021 to complete unfunded Phase I items as well as looking to complete Phase II improvements.

Looking ahead to 2021, the significant policy-level issues relating to the Parks and Recreation Program are:

- Recover from the COVID-19 pandemic financially by shifting how the Agency delivers programs and operates facilities.
- Implement the recommendations contained in the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study that was approved by the Executive Committee on behalf of the General Forum in March 2020, particularly the Governance section.

- As part of the bullet above, review the Articles of Agreement: The 1974 Articles of Agreement for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Agency are out of date and should be revised. Articles of Agreement are recommended by the General Forum and adopted by ordinance by the governing bodies of the five municipalities. Along with the 1974 Articles of Agreement, it is suggested that the Agency and Authority also update the Authority's By-Laws.
- A major issue that was considered in the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Regional Comprehensive Study was the inadequacy of the indoor recreation space for Agency programs and classes, as well as the long-term needs for a maintenance facility, and the viability of the Nittany Mall as the home of the Centre Region Active Adult Center. Permanent office space is also being considered since the current lease is a short-term solution for space needs. The lack of an indoor facility limits the amount and variety of programs offered by the Agency, which directly impacts the revenue generated. This has become very evident with the lack of access to facilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the opportunities for sports leagues, instructional sports, and educational programming.



- A priority of the Park Capital Committee is to identify and evaluate options for developing Phase II improvements to the regional parks. Two of the more immediate needs are constructing restrooms at the John Hess Softball Complex and adding pavilions and playground equipment at Oak Hall Regional Park. It is suggested that there may be an opportunity in the

future to review all Master Plans for Phase II developments at one time, as the Agency begins to look toward funding to complete this work.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- All programs and facility operations changed when COVID-19 hit the area. The Agency will spend the second half of 2020 evaluating those effects as well as planning its recovery effort. The Agency will not be able to fully recover lost revenue, but it can manage the expenditures to remain in the positive.
- The Parks agency has implemented rolling furloughs in an attempt to reduce costs due to the impact associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- The Agency staff are shifting programming delivery methods and are beginning to review what costs are associated with this shift and how we will offer programming in the future if COVID-19 remains active in this community.

### **Known Changes for 2021**

- Other than COVID-19 possibly remaining active in the community, there are no other known changes for 2021.



## MISSION

*The mission of the Parks Capital Equipment Budget is to track capital improvements of park maintenance facilities and the acquisition and scheduled replacement of motorized equipment/vehicles and computers that are used by the Centre Region Parks and Recreation (CRPR) Agency.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 2020, revenue and expenditures for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Capital Budget were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2020 budget. The unaudited January 1, 2020 beginning fund balance was \$248,405, \$9,135 more than the projected beginning fund balance of \$239,270.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

*Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

- **Scheduled Computer Replacements:** According to the most recent IT Replacement schedule, the Agency needs to replace hardware as well as upgrade its software. At this time, multiple machines will need to be replaced due to their running a version of Windows no longer supported by Microsoft.
- **Equipment Replacements and Additions:** The scheduled replacements and additions over \$10,000 within the Parks Capital Equipment Budget are fully outlined in the COG 2021 to 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The goal of the CIP is to verify that there is enough equipment to ensure that all municipal and regional parks are maintained safely, while being kept in a clean and fully operable condition, while remaining a cost-effective investment for the municipalities. The plan also ensures that vehicles are sound and being rotated based on use and condition. To ensure that acquisition costs are low, equipment purchases occur either through a competitive bidding process or from a state contract.
- In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only one vehicle was ordered—a replacement Chevy Silverado 1500 Truck (for #222) at \$29,404, slightly higher than the budgeted amount. The Agency would like to change a planned purchase from an infield groomer to an environmentally-friendly battery-powered mower for some of the smaller areas the Agency mows like the pool enclosures, the marsh farmstead, and



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the COG Building exterior areas, but only if the mower can be purchased for the budgeted amount already in place. Lastly, the purchase of a large mower has been pushed to 2021.

This rollover however, skewed the CIP for 2021, so the Agency staff re-worked the plan for 2021 and 2022 to get back on track. Additionally, the Agency received permission in 2020 to sell vehicles that were overdue for removal; the sale has been delayed due to changes in how the COG and the Borough sell equipment. The Agency's goal is to have these vehicles off the book before the end of the 2020 calendar year.

- Most of the new equipment or fleet vehicle purchases for the Whitehall Road Regional Park are scheduled for 2021, which is the year designated for most of the construction. However, the Agency has rolled the replacement of two trucks to 2022 to help balance the 2021 capital requests.

Therefore, the following purchases are scheduled for the 2021 Parks Equipment Budget for a total of (\$240,325). All equipment scheduled for replacement is evaluated annually; items that have no safety defects or major maintenance issues will not be replaced until further evaluation.

➤ Replace 2010 Toro Groundsmaster - #185 (deferred from 2020)	\$ 28,925
➤ Replace Toro 6' Groundsmaster Mower - #225	\$ 28,925
➤ Replace Toro 6' Groundsmaster Mower - #227	\$ 28,925
➤ Purchase one new pick-up truck	\$ 32,800
➤ Purchase one new utility vehicle w/attachments	\$ 26,275
➤ Purchase a new 6' Turf Mower	\$ 28,925
➤ Purchase a new 10' Turf Mower	<u>\$ 65,550</u>
➤ <b>Total</b>	<b>\$240,325</b>

- Looking ahead to 2022, pending evaluations in 2021, the following purchases are scheduled for the 2022 Parks Equipment Budget. All equipment scheduled for replacement is evaluated annually; items that have no safety defects or major maintenance issues will not be replaced and a new replacement schedule for the item will be assigned.

➤ Replace Chevy Silverado 4x4 Truck - #215	\$ 31,675
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➤ Replace 2011 GMC Sierra Truck - #229	\$ 28,950
➤ Replace Chevy Silverado Dually Truck - #209	\$ 35,325
➤ Replace Toro 6' Mower - #234	\$ 29,800
➤ Replace 2000 John Deere Skid Steer - #174	\$ 43,050
➤ Replace Chevy Express Van - #221	\$ 33,475
➤ Replace 2010 Chevy Silverado Truck - #180	\$ 31,675
➤ Replace GMC Sierra Truck - #235	<u>\$ 31,700</u>
➤ <b>Total</b>	<b>\$265,650</b>

As the COG capital planning progresses the Facilities Committee has begun discussions about a larger maintenance facility. Currently, most of the large maintenance equipment (mowers, tractors, etc.) are stored outdoors and are exposed to harsh weather conditions. In addition, a change in facilities provides the opportunity to improve security and provide a much larger maintenance area.

#### Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan

- The Agency is considering not replacing the Toro Infield Pro groomer #213 with the same groomer, but instead with a battery-powered environmentally friendly mower that can be used at some of the smaller mow areas. This mower will only be purchased if it meets the available funding levels.
- The Chevy Silverado 1500 purchased this year came in approximately \$3,254 over budget due to specifying a higher capacity truck this year. Savings are anticipated when a lower capacity truck is purchased in 2022.

#### Scenarios That Have Been Prepared

- Agency staff evaluated the tentative timeline of Whitehall Road Regional Park construction and have adjusted some of the vehicle and equipment purchases to reflect that timeline.

#### Known Changes for 2021

- Those changes have already been noted in the yearly summaries above.



## MISSION

*The mission of the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Aquatics Program is to provide safe, clean, and cost-effective public swimming facilities that allow for wholesome recreation opportunities for Centre Region residents. The Aquatics Program provides all ages with the opportunities to obtain aquatic and life-saving skills and to improve physical health.*



## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through mid-June 2020, revenue and expenditures for aquatic operations are significantly different than budgeted projections, primarily due to the effects of COVID-19 on aquatic operations. Staff has worked to reduce expenses while supporting revenue goals to maintain fiscal stability.

The 2020 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$195,228, \$12,768 less than the amount of the 2020 beginning fund balance estimated in the 2020 detailed budget of \$207,996.

As the pools continue to move toward a projected opening date, the Agency will continue to review operational numbers; if after the first month of operation, the gap between revenue/expense continues to expand due to additional season pool pass refunds and/or reduced attendance, we will need to possibly close one or both pools, and institute additional staff furlough options. If that happens, the Agency would offer a credit for 2021 or offer a prorated refund depending on if the pools needed to close for financial reasons. Following the announcement of the reopening of pools, a large number of pool passes were sold. However, refunds for earlier purchases were issued too. Overall, the aquatics program remains in the black for pool pass sales, but at a much lower sales amount than before.

During 2011-2019, pool attendance generated revenue that exceeded projections and covered all operating expenses. No municipal contributions were required for pool operations.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking forward to 2021 and 2022, work objectives that have been successful to date will be extended. Aquatics program staff will continue to operate and maintain the pool facilities, provide programs and events, and investigate the life expectancy and costs of capital improvement projects as outlined in the Aquatics Capital Budget section.



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Additionally, the Agency will look for options to provide some programming in multiple formats. For the most part, the aquatics programs rely on in-person experiential opportunities.

Agency staff will evaluate how any State College Area School District closures will affect the winter programming proposed yearly in each budget. The 2021 winter programming may not be operational if SCASD facilities are not available or if they are too cost-prohibitive due to COVID-19 safety protocols.

#### *Proposed Budgetary Changes in 2021...*

- The Authority has annually adjusted the pool entry fees to better match comparable facilities across Pennsylvania. Given where the Aquatics operation budget began the fiscal year and the impacts of COVID-19 on the operations, it is possible that municipal contributions may be needed for 2021. However, the Agency will be in a better position to make the final 2020 projections after a full month of operation in July and will have better projections for 2021 after the operating season.
- In 2019, the Agency proposed 1-2% seasonal staff salary increases over the course of two-three years in order to remain competitive with other hiring agencies. The first round of increases was implemented in the 2019 operating budget, and that was followed by a 1-2% increase for seasonal staff wages in 2020. In the hopes that better pay will attract and retain quality personnel, another small 1% increase is planned for in 2021 if the budget can support it, based on how 2020 ends. Additionally, across the Agency, staff are attempting to standardize the salary schedule for similar positions to include annual increases and small seasonal bonuses as methods to attract and retain qualified staff.

#### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- Revenue and expenses for all programs, including Season Pool Pass sales, have been significantly reduced due to COVID-19. Now that pools are open, staff are regularly monitoring revenues. Some swimmers may not be comfortable swimming despite our COVID-19 safety plan which will require lower occupancy levels.
- Admission revenues are also expected to fall below projections. To offset this loss in revenue operational expenses will be lower as well.

#### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- Some expenditures noted in operational line items have been delayed to 2021. In addition, staff will continue to seek ways to reduce expenses to meet the budgetary goals including early closures of one or both pools and additional staff furloughs.

### Known Changes for 2021

- At this time, it is unclear if there will be changes for 2021. If COVID-19 remains active in our community, our COVID-19 safety plan may remain in place for summer 2021 operation which could negatively affect swimming attendance and consequently pool revenue. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the winter 2021 indoor pool programming could be at risk if the State College Area School District pool rental is not available to the Agency.



## MISSION

*The Aquatics Capital Budget for the Aquatics Program was established by the participating municipalities to fund capital improvements to the regional pools as well as for the renovation of those facilities. The Aquatics Capital Budget provides for debt repayment and for regular, predictable contributions for the larger capital expenditures planned or unplanned capital expenses with a cost of \$10,000 or more.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to mid-June 2020, revenue for the Aquatics Capital Budget is generally consistent with the projections contained in the budget. The planned plaster project for Park Forest Pool has been completed and was significantly below the expected budget, and the new chemical controllers for Welch were installed.

The 2020 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$68,800 consistent with the amount of 2020 beginning fund balance estimated in the 2020 detailed budget of \$68,652.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Together, the five municipalities participating in the regional Aquatics Program have made a significant investment in rebuilding and maintaining the pools. These facilities improve the quality of life of Centre Region residents by providing opportunities to exercise, learn new skills, meet friends, and in hot weather “cool off” in a fun way.

In 2018, the COG formula for the pool’s loan reset from the 2008 levels as was predetermined in the 2008 loan documents.

Looking forward to 2021, proposed budgetary items for possible capital repairs, include:

- Combination of power washing all slides and spray devices at both pools and gel-coating all exterior surfaces to provide UV protectants to decrease fading from chemicals and sunlight. Approximate cost: \$10,000. This project was delayed from 2020 to 2021.
- Replace or repair two of the seven pool pumps at Welch Pool at an approximate cost of \$21,000.



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Although the pools are utilizing relatively new pumps, filters, plumbing, and electrical systems, all mechanical devices will decline over time. At the current level of municipal contributions, (\$45,000) there will not be enough funding available in the long-term to replace the major infrastructure and equipment at the pools if a massive equipment failure happened.

## MISSION

The mission of the Centre Region Active Adult Center is to be the Centre Region's lead agency in providing a diverse menu of activities, events, and resources for active adults, ages 55 and over. These activities will meet the social, emotional, and physical well-being of the Centre Region participants. The Center is operated by the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority (CRPR Authority) with the assistance and support of the Centre County Office of Aging.



## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period between January 1 through mid-June 2020, revenue and expenditures for the Active Adult Center are below the 2020 budget projections. The PA Office of Aging Grant was not awarded for the completion of the Phase II renovations, and program revenue was lost during the COVID-19 closures. To reduce expenses, the Center remains closed and two of three staff were furloughed for a month and the third staff member remaining on furlough until further notice. The Center's opening was predicted for the third week of July, but the County Office of Aging has delayed the reopening. A meeting was planned for late July to reevaluate reopening plans. As of mid-July, the budget was in the black due to expenditure and salary savings.

The 2020 unaudited beginning fund balance was \$20,992, \$5,458 more than the projected beginning 2020 beginning fund balance of \$15,534 in the 2020 detailed budget. This amount is largely consistent with expectations with the increased fund balance being attributable to small savings in multiple accounts.

## COG/AUTHORITY/COUNTY AGREEMENT REVIEW

In 2018, the Parks and Recreation Director, COG Finance Director, Active Adult Center Supervisor, and Centre County Office of Aging staff met to review and recommend updates to the 1984 agreement relating to the operation of the Active Adult Center (formerly the Senior Center).

Through this review process, the following points were finalized:

- Non-resident fees only apply to non-Centre County residents who may be participating in Center programs.

2021 Program Plan - Centre Region Parks & Recreation - Active Adult Center Budget



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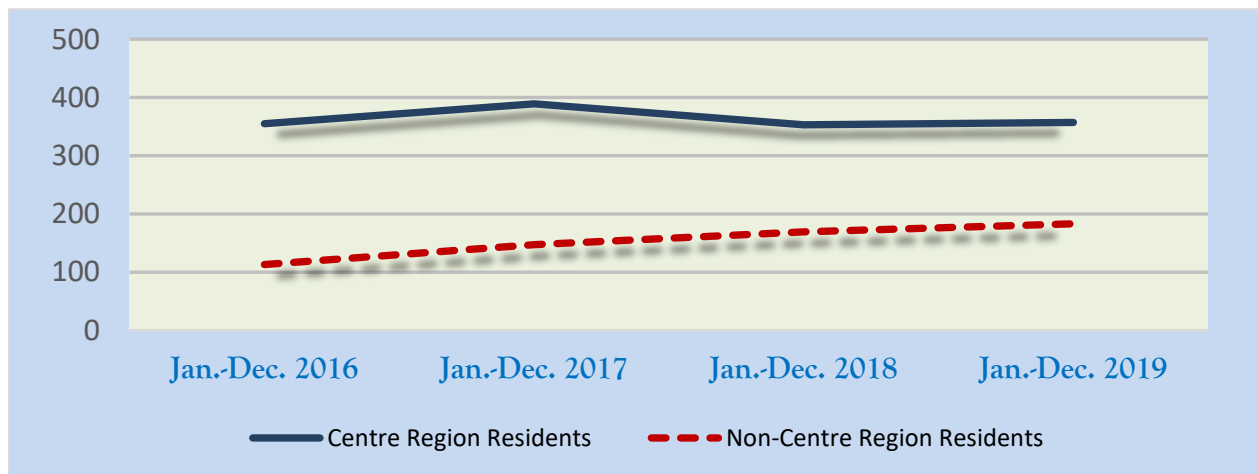
ACTIVE ADULT  
CENTER  
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- The County’s funding level is at approximately 33 percent of operating costs, reflecting the percentage of non-Centre Region residents who live in other Centre County areas and who participate at the Center. The agreement also projects funding levels for three years with an approximated 2 percent increase in funding each year, accounting for merits and cost of living changes.

**WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

It is expected that the trends over the past several years will continue in 2020:

- According to the Centre Regional Planning Agency, the 60 and over population increased by 83% between 1990 and 2010, with an estimated 12% of the Centre Region population now above age 60.
- As shown in the table below, at the Nittany Mall location, there were:
  - 355 residents (76%) and 113 non-residents (24%) in 2016
  - 389 residents (73%) and 147 non-residents (27%) in 2017
  - 353 residents (68%) and 169 non-residents (32%) in 2018
  - 357 residents (66%) and 183 non-residents (34%) in 2019



*Proposed Budgetary Changes for 2021...*

The following factors should be reflected in the 2021 Detailed Budget that will be presented to the Finance Committee in September:

- Increasing program revenue remains a goal. In the Centre Region, there is a shortage of indoor space for hosting recreation programs. The space in the new Center has allowed CRPR to provide new programming options with respect to hosting evening and weekend fee-based programs for all ages, including seniors, adults, and youth. A portion of those program fees will be directed to the Center's budget as rental income. Third-party rentals of the Active Adult Center started in early 2020 but ceased when COVID-19 hit. It's unclear if third-party rentals will return to the Center in late 2020 or 2021, but the Agency will continue to utilize space when possible.
- The Center may need to develop an annual fundraiser to supplement the operational budget if programming levels do not return to previous levels. Agency staff is working on potential ideas.
- Estimates for utility costs are leveling out after being in the space for more than two budget cycles. Figures for 2021 will reflect the additional utility history now in place. Completion of the front closure at the Center reduces these costs as well.

*Proposed New Work Objectives...*

- The second half of 2020 will be a rebuilding phase. As a result of implementing the Pennsylvania Department of Aging COVID-19 safety re-opening protocols that are required to reopen the Center, programming will be altered, and attendance will be greatly reduced. It is not known how long those protocols will be needed. The Agency and Center staff will monitor operational costs vs. program revenue and adjust where possible.
- Much of 2021 will be the same as the second half of 2020—recouping the losses from 2020 and learning to operate in new ways, especially if COVID-19 safety protocols remain in place. This assumes that the Center will be able to open in the latter portion of the summer.
- Staff will actively engage the community by visiting local senior living facilities, by attending local civic group meetings, and engaging Penn State classes.
- Staff will continue to strategically recruit volunteers to assist with a variety of Center tasks. These include providing meals and transportation, program instruction, greeters, and program hosts.

- The staff will continue to conduct community outreach for future program partnerships and funding support, including grant opportunities and program sponsorships such as the PSU Department of Healthy Aging, the Centre County Coalition of Senior Centers, Osher Life Long Learning at Penn State, Global Connections, Geriatric Interest Network Organization, and numerous local senior service providers.

#### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- Reduced program and rental revenues due to cancellations and closures.
- Savings by reducing expenses where possible, including furloughing staff.
- The second half of the budget year will include programming changes and a drastically reduced capacity; more closures are possible, negatively impacting revenue opportunities.

#### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- Staff is preparing for reduced programming options in the second half of 2020 and into 2021; this situation will be evaluated consistently against COVID-19 safety protocols and the community's health.
- Additional furloughs may be needed to keep the budget in the positive.
- Staff have outreached to Centre County to determine funding levels for the second half of our 2020 budget year; as of June 22, the County feels confident that the budget will be funded in full.

#### **Known Changes for 2021**

- Other than what is previously mentioned, there are no other planned changes for 2021, except for the return to normal operations if COVID-19 is no longer a factor.

## MISSION

The mission of the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center is to educate and inspire people about the natural world and to instill a passion for the environment through science, history, culture, and art.



## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through mid-June 2020, revenue is well below projected figures in the 2020 Budget. Between mid-March and June 30, all programs, rentals, and special events were canceled due to COVID-19, which effected the ability to collect those revenues. The remainder of 2020 will allow staff to refocus on new programming options and new delivery methods to generate revenue. All spending is being monitored to ensure that this budget remains in the black.

The unaudited beginning 2020 fund balance was \$87,051, a \$36,610 increase from the \$50,441 estimated in the 2020 detailed budget. The fund balance was higher than anticipated due to higher program and rental income than estimated and savings on personnel costs.

A major focus of the Center's budget is for Agency staff to continue to identify and develop non-municipal revenue sources. Efforts that are reported below for 2020 are based on the 2019-2020 Work Plan:

- 85% of the 2020 operational fundraising goal is secured, as of June 2020. Centre Foundation Endowment Funds, community support, plus gifts from on-going donors have contributed to this operational support. Developing relationships and a track record of success with potential donors are the most effective ways to raise these funds.
- In 2020, seven Specialty Summer Camps are being offered during six weeks of summer; this is an atypical number of camp programs (normally 12-15), but the loss of June programming to COVID-19 left a smaller scheduling window.
- The rental program at the Nature Center has continued to increase and hosts small-to-medium sized business and organizational meetings, third-party special events, family gatherings, and small-to-medium sized weddings. Despite COVID-19 hitting in the first quarter of 2020, the rental program remains active as several rentals moved their dates forward to keep their events in place. Rolling that revenue forward



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will affect rental revenue overall, but there will be a gain in 2021 if COVID-19 doesn't continue to effect the community.

- The popularity of Millbrook Marsh continues to rise for programs, events, passive recreation, and daily visitors. Nearly 16,000 visitors attended programs, events, and rentals in 2019. This does not include the countless visitors that enjoy passive recreation opportunities at the Center, some of whom stop into the office for information.

### **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

The remaining six months of 2020 will begin the rebuilding of our programming, which may include new delivery methods and programming that still accounts for COVID-19 safety protocols. Professionally, nature centers like Millbrook Marsh will need to determine how to deliver in-person, environmental education using new and interactive methods.

Fundraising opportunities and grant writing continue to be vital for covering operational costs. Expanding programs, heightened emphasis on community fundraising, researching grant opportunities that support program operations, promoting rental opportunities, and monitoring short- and long-term maintenance needs of the site continue to be the focus.

In 2020, the Nature Center expanded its contracted programming to offer additional educational opportunities while generating increased revenue without increasing internal staff costs.

#### *Proposed Budgetary Changes for 2021...*

- Initiate and continue to increase operating and capital funding through grants and donations. The Nature Center Advisory Committee and staff will continue to work to grow both types of donations in 2021. These efforts will build a stronger financial foundation that cannot be achieved with exclusive reliance on municipal contributions and user fees.
- During 2021, staff efforts will focus on donations and grant funding to complete the \$2.3 million Phase II Construction funding for the Spring Creek Education Building and the Welcome Pavilion. Overall, the Agency hopes to break ground on this project in 2022 with a tentative completion date in late 2023.

### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- COVID-19 was the main cause of the revenue and expense changes to the 2020 Operational Budget. When the pandemic hit, the Nature Center was in the process of scheduling field trips from Centre County schools, preparing to host several

outdoor special events, and hold revenue-generating programming. At first, attempts were made to postpone activities and try to hold onto rental and programming revenue; it soon became clear that cancellations were necessary as the Governor moved to a stay-at-home order.

- Now the Center will begin to formulate new programming delivery methods to include in-person and online environmental programming. The Center programming staff are working with the rest of the Agency's programmers to determine our plans, equipment that may be needed, and the timing of new programming.

### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- The Nature Center is working closely with other Agency staff to prepare the COVID-19 safety plans for the remaining summer programming and for programs to be held this fall. Staff has evaluated all CDC, PA Department of Health, and local regulations in formulating their safety plans.
- Additionally, staff is refocusing on the highest-performing programs which will lead fall programming, in an effort to recoup as much revenue as possible during the second half of the budget year. Staff is also accounting for expenses and finding new ways to deliver programming with less direct expense, thereby increasing operational success.

### **Known Changes for 2021**

- Programming delivery methods will change for some programs to include an in-person option as well as virtual opportunities. If COVID-19 is still impacting the local community, COVID-19 safety protocols may need to remain in place in 2021. If that is the case, the continued evaluation of program delivery methods will be needed.
- Field trip revenue is uncertain for 2021 and staff have accounted for this loss of income. While the school districts have not announced plans yet for the fall, staff is not planning for any field trips at this time.



## MISSION

*The mission of the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center Capital Budget is to provide funds for the improvements listed on the Master Site Plan, including the Spring Creek Education Building, the Welcome Center, and visitor parking as approved by the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority and the COG General Forum. This fund also addresses the major routine and preventative maintenance needs at the Nature Center.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through mid-June 2020, revenues were on target for this budget, but expenditures were reduced to account for the effect of COVID-19 on the operating budget and across the rest of the Agency. In consultation with COG Administration in March 2020, the Center opted to move forward with the long-overdue power-washing and staining of the Spring Creek Education Building. This project was well under budget. Some of the repairs to the Service Building will be completed in 2020 (the garage door will be replaced for egress safety and energy-efficiency), while the remaining repairs will be pushed to 2021.

The unaudited 2020 beginning fund balance is \$692,316 which includes restricted funds earmarked for the Spring Creek Education Building construction project.

Two grant proposals were submitted in 2020, one in April to PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and one in May to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development—with funding requests totaling \$600,000 and earmarked for the Phase II Development of the Spring Creek Education Building (SCEB).

As of May 2019, the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center lease with Penn State University was updated, approved, and signed after over one year of discussion. The lease now has a “Contingent New Term” that will extend the lease once the Authority receives a Certificate of Occupancy for the Phase II of the Spring Creek Education Building. The “Contingent New Term” may need to be updated based upon fundraising success in order to complete the budget for the SCEB Phase II Project.



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## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

The Millbrook Marsh Advisory Committee is proposing that the Phase II construction of the Spring Creek Education Building, Welcome Pavilion, and the installation of safety lighting for the visitors parking area and walkway, be completed in 2022-2023. Continued fundraising and grant writing will continue well into 2021 and 2022 to reach this goal.

Over the last 20 years, the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center has grown exponentially from the early programming days in 1997 to 3,000 visitors for programs, events, and rentals in the year 2000, to just under 16,000 visitors in 2019; these totals do not include the countless visitors who explore the Marsh on their own for hiking, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and other recreational uses. A contributor to this growth was Phase I development of the Spring Creek Education Building (SCEB) built in 2011. While this growth is exciting, the existing space can only accommodate 50 people per floor and this number is too small for many events and groups. The SCEB is the only temperature-controlled facility on-site. The facility can only accommodate one group at a time due to size and sound restraints.

Proposed improvements included in the project are:

- The proposed addition of 2,784 square feet, would more than double the size of the current building and will significantly increase the capacity to host educational community programs and provide space for meeting groups and special events. Sustainable features will be incorporated into the facility design to match the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification of Phase I. Some of these features are the use of recycled materials and large windows for natural light and to reduce the need for artificial lighting. The COG's participation in the solar power purchase agreement will also support environmental goals.
- The 860 square foot Welcome Pavilion would include: four ADA family restrooms, a water fountain with a bottle filling station, benches, educational and way-finding signage, and a brochure rack. The estimated cost of the Welcome Pavilion is \$387,500 (architect's estimate).
- Install lighting for the parking area and walkways to increase safety and accommodate visitors and events at the Nature Center. The estimated cost to install this lighting is \$36,500.
- The timeline for the SCEB Phase II is for construction to start in 2022; with completion in 2023. The construction for the Welcome Pavilion is unknown as it is based on funding. The lighting project is a capital project that continues to get pushed into the future.

In combination, the building expansion and the Welcome Pavilion are estimated to cost approximately \$2.3 million, which will largely be funded through private donations and grants.

For the Phase I construction of the Spring Creek Education Building, donations from the municipalities were requested but were handled one-on-one with each municipality, under the second amendment of the lease. During the Spring of 2017, MMNC Advisory Committee members approached the individual municipalities to request funding support for the Phase II development of the Spring Creek Education Building. During several of those meetings, the MMNC Advisory Committee received feedback that their current process should be standardized through the COG Capital Improvement Program. Additionally, the same discussion occurred at several 2017 COG Parks Capital Committee meetings; feedback received from the Committee was to not only standardize the funding requests through the COG Capital Improvement Program, but to also review the MMNC Facility Lease to ensure that the municipalities have a lease that extends far enough into the future for full depreciation of the municipalities' investments. The new lease with the contingent 40-year term is in place as of July 2019.

During 2017, the MMNC staff discussed with municipal officials the idea of the municipalities contributing a combined total of \$400,000 to the cost of the Phase II addition to the Spring Creek Education Building. The cost would be split across the 2018 and 2019 budgets (\$200,000 each year). Two concerns were expressed. First, the amount of the request was too high given constrained municipal budgets. And, second, the term of the Authority/Penn State University lease for the MMNC did not provide adequate time to depreciate the cost of the building addition and that the building would revert to the University when the lease expired.

To address the second concern, meetings were held that included the University, MMNC, CRPA, and COG staff regarding the term of the lease. From these discussions, a proposal emerged that would extend the lease for forty years after a Certificate of Occupancy was issued for the building addition. Forty years is the typical period for depreciating a building. By way of example, if a Certificate of Occupancy for the education building was issued in 2023 then the lease would run through 2063. The Authority and the University both agreed to this addendum to the lease and it was endorsed by the General Forum. Additionally, it should not be assumed that the lease, at that time, would not renew.

With the lease extended to coincide with the depreciation schedule for the building addition, the 2021 Program Plan proposes that the five participating municipalities contribute a combined total of (\$100,000) to the project during both the 2021 and 2022 budget years. The municipal funding would be shared among the five participating municipalities in accordance with the modified COG funding formula. In addition to providing funding to the building project, municipal contributions are essential to the ability to obtain grants for which a local government funding match is required.

*Proposed New Work Objectives...*

As noted earlier is a portion of the Service Building repairs will be moved to 2021 to reduce any financial burdens on this Budget during COVID-19.

In 2020, the first part of the Boardwalk Feasibility Study will be complete. From those results, it is hoped that a design recommendation along with materials selection will allow the Feasibility Working Group to complete the feasibility study with a “Part 2” Request for Proposal to complete a design with chosen materials, construction budget, grant opportunities, and permitting information. To do this, the Agency is requesting matching funds in the 2021 capital budget for a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant. Once the Agency has the results, staff can update the projected costs and how the project will be funded.

**Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- As noted earlier, the SCEB Staining Project came in under budget and only a small part of the Service Building Repairs will be completed in 2020; the rest will move to 2021.

## MISSION

*The purpose of the Regional Parks Capital Budget is to provide for the jointly financed capital costs associated with the development of the three regional parks that the municipalities have acquired through the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG). The three parks are: John Hess Softball Complex, the Oak Hall Regional Park, and the Whitehall Road Regional Park.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The intent for Whitehall Road Regional Park is to develop the park within the budget approved by the General Forum and consistent with the approved 2013 Master Site Plan, along with the January 2019 approved site plan updates.

To bolster the budget, the Authority continues to search for additional funding whether through grants or donations from individuals or corporations. The additional amount secured to date is \$957,733 and includes:

- In December 2018, the Authority was awarded a \$300,000 DCNR Development Grant which is earmarked for the “We Play Together” All-Ability Playground.
- In April 2019, the Authority applied for a \$300,000 DCNR Development Grant for LED Sports Field Lighting, and it received \$132,300 in December 2019.
- In May 2019, the Authority applied for a \$250,000 DCED Greenways, Recreation, and Trails grant for the LED Sports Field Lighting project, and it received \$100,000 in September 2019.
- The Authority has received additional pledges and small grants such as:
  - ▶ \$193,750 pledge from the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau for the lighting project;
  - ▶ \$50,000 donation from the Geisinger Foundation for the playground;
  - ▶ \$40,360 pledge from Ferguson Township for the landscaping plan;
  - ▶ \$30,000 donation of in-kind services from Stahl Sheaffer Engineering;
  - ▶ \$25,000 pledge from Fulton Bank toward the lighting project;
  - ▶ \$20,000 grant from USA Football for the lighting project;
  - ▶ \$15,000 pledge from First National Bank for the lighting project;
  - ▶ \$10,000 grant from the Truist Foundation;



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- ▶ \$10,000 donation from Sheetz for the lighting project;
- ▶ \$10,000 pledge from Keystone 10M Trees for the landscaping plan;
- ▶ \$8,625 from 2019 and 2020 Centre Gives for the playground;
- ▶ \$5,000 playground grant from Autism Speaks for the playground;
- ▶ \$5,000 donation from the Autism Opportunities Network, Inc. for the playground; and
- ▶ \$2,698 in memorial donations for plants and benches.

The Agency also launched a fundraising campaign in February 2019 and has been meeting with organizations and businesses to secure private funding for the park project. Unfortunately, in early 2020, COVID-19 hit our community and fundraising stopped. In June, the Agency began reaching out to donors that had been contacted in 2019 and early 2020 to see if they are still willing to donate to this project or if their funding priorities have shifted. In addition, if community groups and/or grants provide sufficient funds to build synthetic turf fields and lighting, then those upgrades will be included in the construction project. If funds are not in place for initial construction, then the project will move forward with grass fields until full funding becomes available.

In addition, during the first half of 2020, the Regional Parks loan with Fulton Bank was amended to extend the final draw date from June 1, 2020 to June 1, 2022 and to extend the fixed term of the loan (fixed at 2.59%) until December 2024.

### **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

The draft 2020 cost estimate for Phase I of the Whitehall Road Regional Park project is \$6.3 million. Even combining the grants and donations to date (current total: \$957,733) with the \$4.8 million in loan funds, the project is not fully funded. A funding /prioritization discussion will be needed during the budget cycle for 2021.

The land development plan was approved in December 2019 and recorded in June 2020. The Authority hired Poole Anderson to handle the construction planning and bid work; the kick-off meeting was held on June 16, 2020. While the budget estimate is just that, an estimate, once the project goes to bid, the Authority will have accurate numbers based on the figures provided in various bids. Pieces of the project are direct purchasing through Costars/KPN, but all of the site development will be bid work. Other local projects are coming in under budget; the park's budget was almost 10 years out of date, so staff are unsure if bids will be higher or lower than what is budgeted.

On the financing side of the project, staff is beginning to investigate if a consolidating loan for both the regional parks (Fulton Bank) and pools (Jersey Shore State Bank) loans would be fiscally prudent. This investigation is in its preliminary phase and the Finance Committee will be assessing this option more fully as more information about its viability becomes available in the coming months.

*Proposed Budgetary Changes for 2021...*

The 2021 Program Plan recommends the following two new expenses:

- \$45,000 is requested to install an irrigation system at Whitehall Road Regional Park to water two fields. It is hoped that this request is funded in 2021 so that irrigation can be installed during the construction of the park, saving time and renovation expenses that would occur with a post-construction install. It will be much more cost-effective to install an irrigation system during construction than to go back and trench these lines and disturb the fields. A grant is available for \$15,000, but the match must be in place to apply.
- (\$15,000) is requested to replace outfield fencing at Hess Softball Complex. The fencing conditions are poor and there are safety issues with a curled chain-link fence that could puncture or tear a player's skin; the entire outfield fence from dugout to dugout will need to be replaced. There are four fields at the facility. This project was intended to begin in 2020 but has been pushed to 2021. The Agency is asking for (\$15,000) to complete the replacement of fence on two fields in 2021 (including the one field deferred from 2020) and then continue to replace one field each in 2022 and 2023. The new chainlink fence will include a bottom rail which should prevent this type of "curl-up". The backstops on all four fields were replaced previously and remain in good condition.
- Per the conversations from earlier in 2020 with elected officials and COG Administration, the Whitehall Road Regional Park Maintenance Storage Building has been placed into the capital purchase program within the Regional Parks Budget.

This Whitehall Road Regional Park maintenance storage building will be used to store park equipment and supplies while the Agency will continue using the Stewart Drive facility as its maintenance facility. There is no funding in place for this building at this time and it remains on the list as an unfunded item for the park at an estimated construction cost of \$75,000. The maintenance/storage building at Oak Hall Regional Park houses equipment dedicated to the maintenance of Oak Hall Regional Park. At this time, donors have not been interested in funding this building, nor has the Agency been able to find grants for this project. In early 2020, it was discussed with elected officials and COG Administration to place the 2021 item back into this budget, and request that the municipalities share the costs.

This building is necessary for the new equipment required for this park. If this building isn't funded, equipment will be stored at the current maintenance facility, outdoors, because of the lack of indoor storage space. Specialty equipment will have to be hauled to Whitehall Road Regional Park daily.

*Proposed Work Objectives for 2021...*

- Attempt to advance the development of the Whitehall Road Regional Park; it is now clear that the funds necessary to build this phase exceed the budget approved by the General Forum, but the design remains consistent with the approved master site plan. Work tasks to be accomplished include:
  - ✓ Complete the pre-construction phase.
  - ✓ Hold the bidding phase to determine actual pricing based on bids/quotes received.
  - ✓ Once bid figures are available, determine next steps to fund the shortfall.
  - ✓ Review and award the construction bids.
  - ✓ Begin construction of the park in late Fall 2020.
- During 2021, prepare an operational budget for Whitehall Road Regional Park as the Agency will need to consider revenue streams, fees and charges, and operational costs. This draft budget will be shared with the Authority, Parks Capital Committee, and Finance Committee in early 2021 as part of the 2022 budget process.
- Continue to move fundraising forward.
- Continue to work with the funding agreement with Centre Soccer to re-start that fundraising program.
- Research grant opportunities in 2020 and 2021 to secure private/grant funding for additional improvements to the facilities at Whitehall Road Regional Park. Most grants require matching funding, so this could be a challenge.

*Proposed Work Objectives for 2021 and beyond...*

- Complete the Phase I construction of Whitehall Road Regional Park and open it to the public.
- Assess the parking lot at Oak Hall Regional Park. Staff is beginning to investigate concerns related to the parking lot and driveway at Oak Hall Regional Park. Staff intends to review the issue with the Facilities Committee and may request additional funding for engineering and related costs in connection with the 2021 budget in hopes of doing a feasibility study.

- After the results of the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study are complete, the Parks Capital Committee and the CRPR Authority should consider reviewing the Master Plans and Phase II plans for Oak Hall Regional Park, Hess Softball Complex, and Whitehall Road Regional Park. Taking the opportunity to evaluate current plans and the study results will allow COG and the Authority to amend these plans, if needed, to reflect current priorities and new information.
- After the General Forum approves the Phase II plans, the Parks Capital Committee, Finance Committee, and Authority should develop a long-term funding plan for implementing the next park development phases.

#### **Departures from the 2020 Budget Plan**

- The Hess Softball Complex fencing project was rolled to 2021 to start the three-year replacement project.
- The Whitehall Road Regional Park Maintenance Storage Building remains unfunded.

#### **Scenarios That Have Been Prepared**

- Once bids are back, the Agency and Authority will need to discuss the mismatch of funding levels for the Whitehall Road Regional Park, and what the next steps should be.

#### **Known Changes for 2021**

- On-going funding discussions for Whitehall Road Regional Park.