

# The Centre Region Council of Governments

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Whitehall Road Regional Park

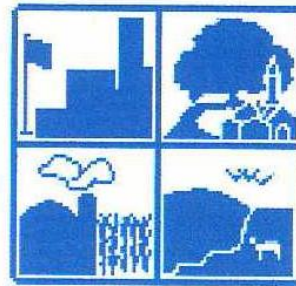
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## 2022 PROGRAM PLAN



*Centre Region Hazmat and Alpha Fire personnel responding to an accident involving entrapment and hazards on General Potter Highway.*

*Cover aerial photos courtesy of the Centre Daily Times.*



[www.twp.ferguson.pa.us](http://www.twp.ferguson.pa.us)



STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH

**CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
2022 PROGRAM PLAN**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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2021 GENERAL FORUM MEMBERS	5	SCHLOW CENTRE REGION LIBRARY OPERATING	53
COG AGENCY CONTACT LIST	6	SCHLOW CENTRE REGION LIBRARY CAPITAL	57
CENTRE REGION COG SERVICE AREA	7		
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER	8	CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY	61
OVERVIEW OF THE COG	13	CENTRE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	65
		REGIONAL REFUSE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM	69
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION	17		
COG CONTINGENCY FUND	23	REGIONAL FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM	71
COG BUILDING CAPITAL	25	FIRE PROTECTION CAPITAL	75
INSURANCE RESERVE FUND	29		
UNEMPLOYMENT FUND	33	PARKS AND RECREATION (CRPR) OPERATING	79
		CRPR CAPITAL EQUIPMENT	85
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	35	CRPR AQUATICS PROGRAM	89
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONTINGENCY FUND	37	CRPR AQUATICS CAPITAL	91
		CRPR ACTIVE ADULT CENTER	95
CODE ADMINISTRATION OVERALL AGENCY	39	CRPR MILLBROOK MARSH NATURE CENTER	99
CODE NEW CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM	45	CRPR MILLBROOK MARSH NATURE CENTER CAPITAL	103
CODE EXISTING STRUCTURES PROGRAM	49	CRPR REGIONAL PARKS CAPITAL	107
CODE CAPITAL	51		

GENERAL FORUM MEMBERS  
2021

CHAIR: Dennis Hameister, Harris Township  
VICE-CHAIR: D. Richard Francke, College Township

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COLLEGE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

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

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

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

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

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

HARRIS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Dennis Hameister (Chair)  
Charles "Bud" Graham  
Frank Harden  
Bruce Lord  
Nigel Wilson (Chair)

PATTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

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STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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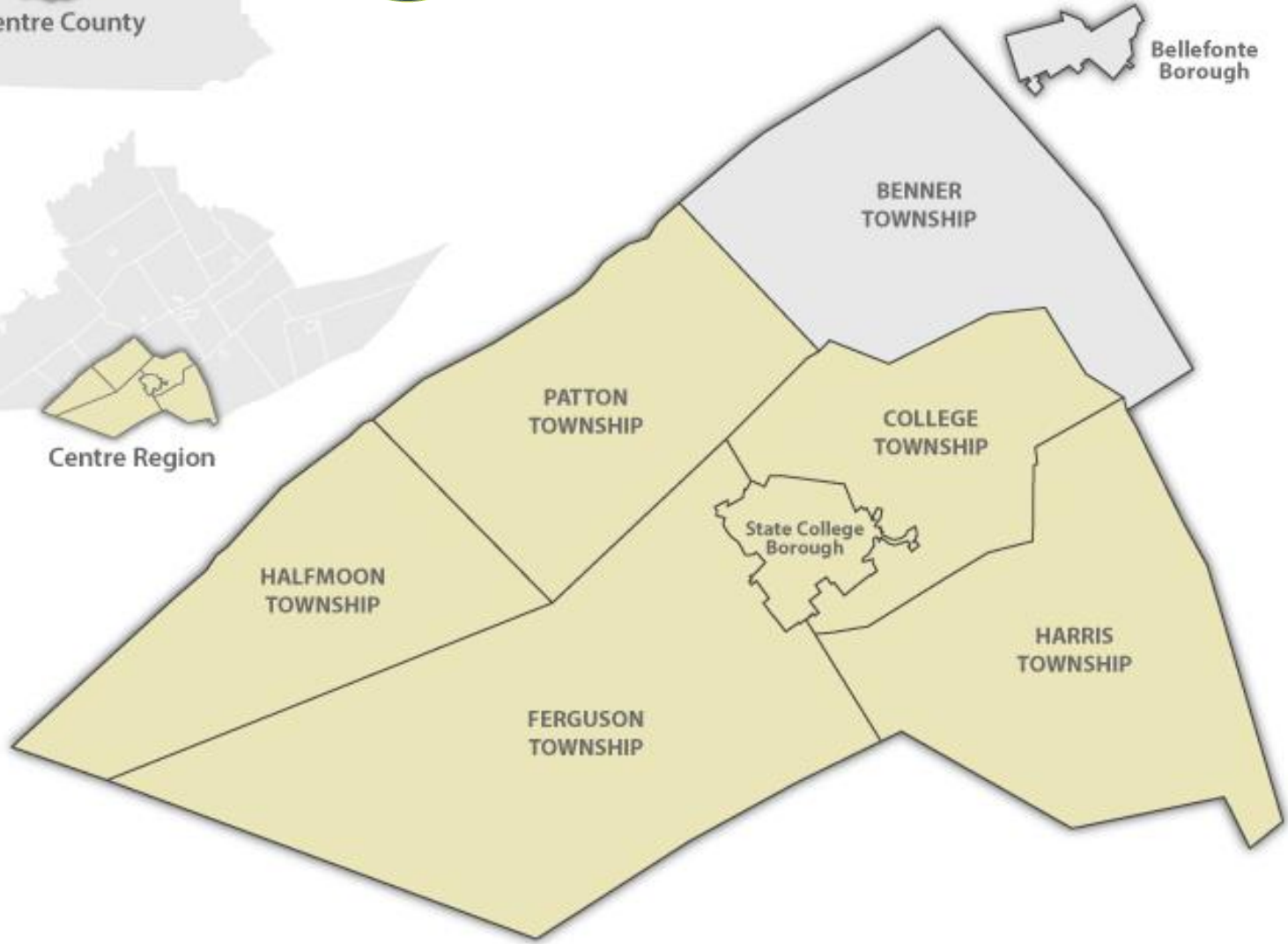
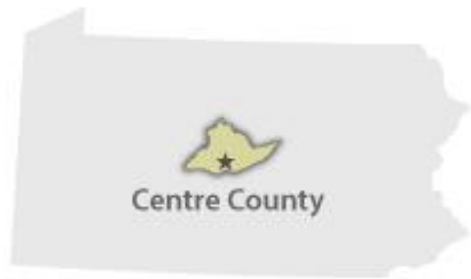
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# Centre Region COG Service Area



## Executive Director's Letter 2022 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 26, 2021

Dear Members of the General Forum,

The Agency Directors and I are pleased to present the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) 2022 Program Plan to the General Forum for review, comment, and referral to the six Centre Region municipalities. In 2020, because of the impact of the pandemic, and with the guidance of the Finance Committee, a condensed Program Plan was prepared for 2021. This year, that same format was retained for the forward-looking Program Plan document and staff are in the process of incorporating the history and background of each COG program in a new document, the Program Preface. The two documents will be able to be read and used as companions.

In reviewing this year's proposed Program Plan, please note that requests are a blend of planning and preparing for the future and recovering/adapting to the impacts and changes to the COG operations because of the pandemic. Over the past year, the COG team worked together to keep our workforce safe while providing as close to 'normal' levels of services possible for our communities. In recent months, we all learned that while many operations can return to nearly "normal," other aspects of COG operations will be affected for some time.

This year's Program Plan focuses on providing an explanation of each program's mid-year financial status, current issues, and proposed programmatic and financial changes for 2022. 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 the current status and proposals for the coming year, to ask questions, and to offer comments or suggest alternatives.

## TRENDS AFFECTING THE 2022 AND FUTURE BUDGETS

While the future looks brighter than it did last year at this time, staff are still assessing and interpreting the long-term impacts of the pandemic and the recovery on jointly provided municipal services and the economy. That being said, the following topics will be monitored in the coming year:

- Revenues from state and federal government. State and federal budgets were dramatically impacted by the pandemic. While state and local revenues were affected in 2020, it is not clear yet how relief from ARPA funds will impact local programs and operations, and support for municipal programs and services provided by the COG. In addition, several COG agencies regularly seek and receive 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). Some grant programs experienced delays during the pandemic but are starting to return to normal.
- The pandemic has changed the workplace. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some workers have found that remote work is a desirable option – at least part-time. As a result, the COG has implemented a work from home policy for eligible positions. In addition, where space constraints are a factor, COG agencies are testing shared workspaces for those who work part-time in the office and part-time elsewhere. In addition, while many elected officials and staff were happy to return to in-person meetings, hybrid virtual meetings are likely to be a permanent part of the business and government environment. Hybrid virtual meetings afford greater participation and reduced emissions and travel costs. As COG phases in hybrid meetings, we will strive to strike the right balance of efficiency with the relationship-building benefits of in-person meetings.
- 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 increasingly important to our residents as demonstrated by the recent sustainability survey. As the COG moves to be an example in implementing sustainability measures that benefit our local and global environment, it is also leading the way with partnerships and demonstrating the economic advantages of efficiency and renewable energy. The collaboration on the regional Solar Power Purchase Agreement is an example of leadership and partnership that will meet the region’s future energy needs sustainably.
- 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 were received in late-2020 and are now being implemented. A plan to phase in the recommended additional paid staff will start impacting budgets. Across Pennsylvania, many volunteer fire companies have experienced a decline in membership, and the Centre Region is no different. This coming year will be an important one as the

community returns to normal, call volumes are already recovering. Staff will be watching to see whether Penn State student volunteer numbers return to normal and if the number of community volunteers returns to normal for the Alpha Fire Company.

- Partnerships – Some Became Stronger; Others Need to be Restored. The strength and benefits of the Centre Region COG were demonstrated over and over during the pandemic. While community organizations collaborated with a focus on pandemic-related priorities, other joint efforts were put on hold. In the coming year, partnerships for joint service delivery, shared facility use and more will need to be renewed or renegotiated.
- Preparing and Planning for the Future: The COG Facilities Coordinator is already demonstrating benefit to COG agencies as pandemic responses and reopening strategies were prepared. Meanwhile, Facility Condition Assessments were being completed to inform the capital budgets and facility plans described elsewhere in this Program Plan. In addition, development of the COG Strategic Plan continues, with draft goals, objectives, and strategies presented to the General Forum later in the Summer. The Strategic Plan will help guide COG committees as they work to assess such important priorities as a COG, not simply as individual agencies. In addition, the COG needs to complete the IT Study to meet the future operational needs of the organization securely and cost-effectively.

### UNEXPECTED EXPENDITURES

As a result of the pandemic, the COG had unexpected expenditures in 2020 and carrying into 2021 for items related to staff safety (PPE, cleaning supplies, etc.), support for the community, facility improvements (A/V upgrades, plexiglass separators, misters, UV-C sanitizing lights, etc.), IT hardware and software to support remote work and hybrid meetings, and the 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 have been or will be reimbursed through CARES Act funds in 2020, a Payroll Protection Program loan/grant, and the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) tax credits. Other expenses are still being incurred and may be eligible for funding through the ARPA funds provided to municipalities.

### 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

Municipality	1973 Formula*	2021 Formula	2022 Formula
State College Borough	52.0%	22.89%	23.34%
College Township	13.6%	15.95%	15.95%
Ferguson Township	15.7%	25.81%	25.64%
Halfmoon Township	1.0%	4.30%	4.23%
Harris Township	7.10%	9.85%	9.65%
Patton Township	10.6%	21.20%	21.19%

*\*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. For the 2022 budget, the 12-month CPI-U for each month from July 2010 through June 2021 will be averaged. Using this formula, the COLA for the 2022 COG budget is projected to be approximately 2.3% (rounded to the nearest 0.1%). In addition, the COG Personnel Policy Handbook allows for a 1.5% merit adjustment.

#### CLOSING SUMMARY

Actions and decisions made during the past year have reinforced the merit and strength of the COG and its municipal partnerships. The COG and its agencies are operational extensions of each partner municipality, but also integral parts of a regional whole. Or, as was described during a recent meeting, *we are COG and COG is us*. The staff of each of the COG agencies demonstrates this strength daily as we serve the residents, visitors, and businesses of the Centre Region collaboratively with our municipal partners. During the pandemic, COG staff at all levels have risen to the occasion to innovate and be flexible to continue the municipal services that are critical to the local economy and quality of life for our Centre Region residents.

Centre Region partnerships and collaborative efforts are setting the example for others in the Commonwealth and beyond. Other areas of Pennsylvania that struggled during the pandemic have looked at the Centre Region COG as an example of partnership and joint action that could benefit their communities. The Solar Power Purchase Agreement governance model has been recognized by the Rocky Mountain

Institute/World Resources Institute as a national/global best practice that others are now trying to mirror.

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. This was demonstrated during the past year, as the COG's elected leaders worked together via Zoom to continue the work of the COG and supported the safety of staff throughout the pandemic. My coworkers and I are grateful for all of our dedicated elected officials and local partners who value our shared service to our Centre Region community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EN', written in a cursive style.

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. The table below shows municipal participation for 2021.

<b>2021 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, Transportation and Land Use, Facilities, and Climate Action & Sustainability. 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, 2021, revenue and expenditures for the Office of Administration were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2021 budget with most variations due to timing issues. The unaudited Fund Balance was \$55,985 higher at the beginning of 2021 than projected in the 2020 COG budget.

The January 1, 2021, fund balance included funding to complete the delayed COG IT study (\$25,000) and \$6,000 to conduct customer satisfaction surveys of owners/managers who had a rental housing inspection conducted of their property or customers who pulled a building permit. Both projects progressed in 2021. Outside of the noted funds that are reserved for specific purposes, the 2021 beginning year fund balance was higher than expected due to lower pension and health insurance costs and decreased expenses in several accounts – including financial services costs, occupancy costs, and employee development.

Items of note include:

- The Request for Proposals to conduct an information technology assessment and develop a five-year IT plan was completed in early-2021 and released in March. A steering committee has reviewed the proposals, checked references, and met with each proposer for “descoping.” The committee determined that the \$25,000 that was budgeted for this expense in 2021 was inadequate to award a contract for the full scope of the RFP. Options were discussed by the Finance Committee and the consensus of the Committee was to attempt to begin the project this year, with currently budgeted funds, and complete the project in 2022 with additional funding budgeted for the balance of the assessment and IT plan. Since this will mean that the results of the study will not be known until early-2022, it is recommended that \$25,000 be budgeted in 2022 for the implementation of any critical needs identified by the study.
- The update of the COG website was completed in 2020 and enhancements continue to be made. Financial information, articles of agreement, and project resources are now online. Using SharePoint,



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BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

staff have prepared and presented consistent, easy to access electronic meeting packets for the General Forum and COG Committees.

- The COG Facilities Coordinator started in January 2021 and has completed facility assessments of Park Forest and Welch Pools, and will continue facility assessments throughout FY2022. The initial phase of the facility condition assessment process was to understand the costs of operation and propose common benchmarks to evaluate utility, maintenance and repair, and other operational expenses per square foot. Key factors that are evaluated in the facility condition assessment process include health and safety risks, age of physical plant, maintenance and operational needs, overall impression, and capital asset reinvestment needs. The results and recommendations from the facility condition assessments will assist to inform future Program Plans and the CIP to ensure adequate resources are available to maintain facilities and support the programs and prioritize requests to flatten the CIP year to year requests.

In addition, the Facilities Coordinator assisted in planning and preparation for a safe reopening of COG facilities and has completed a lease and property management review and is developing recommendations. The Facilities Coordinator is assisting in the development of Whitehall Road Regional Park and the Millbrook Marsh Spring Creek Education Building, Boardwalk, and Welcome Center by reviewing design and construction documents, facilitating value engineering processes, and developing project management tools that ensure budget tracking, project transparency, and schedule management. An additional goal within FY2022 is to develop a COG-wide fleet management program.

- \$6,000 was budgeted to conduct a customer satisfaction survey for the Centre Region Code Administration's Existing Structures and New Construction Programs in 2021. Staff has revamped the survey process and will launch the survey during the summer.
- The RFP for energy consulting services has been released for the regional Solar Power Purchasing Agreement (SPPA). This innovative joint initiative aims to yield cost savings to the 15-members of the partnership while helping to meet regional and individual organization environmental goals. This project and the Facilities initiatives are examples of the collaboration between COG Administration and Sustainability initiatives underway in the Centre Region Planning Agency. Both SPPA and Facilities programs will have an important impact on COG Sustainability goals and demonstrate COG's commitment and investment to achieve sustainability goals and lower operating costs.

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

For many years, the COG Office of Administration Budget varied little from year to year. In 2020, the Refuse and Recycling Coordinator transferred to the CRPA and the Facility Coordinator position was added to the budget. This Program Plan proposes to

begin to address staffing needs in the Office of Administration for the 2022 Budget with the addition of a full-time HR Administrator and a full-time Finance Administrator.

### **Known Changes for 2022**

- As the COG Strategic Plan is expected to be completed and approved in 2021. The Strategic Plan will help guide consideration of future organizational changes, as a result, there are likely to be goals, objectives, and strategies to be acted upon in 2022 and beyond.
- In 2013, a plan was developed to bring COG Finances in house, and establish an HR position, which was implemented in January of 2015. As part of this plan, a third position was discussed, however, to date staff have been able to keep that expense at bay. An important risk management component is associated with the Finance Director and HR Officer responsibilities, and the positions were created in part to help standardize processes across COG agencies and improve compliance with labor laws. Currently, risk management is an area that needs improvement, as the workloads of these professional staff are tied up with many routine tasks which hinder their ability to tackle higher-level projects or even conduct regular desk audits of the administrative tasks being performed at the COG agency levels. Further, as COG agencies have grown in the range of services and staff to support those services, staffing in the Administration Office has not kept pace. This has created a limited ability to cross-train, insufficient capacity to cover when someone is out, as well as staff who are regularly working over 40 hours/week. Further compounding this issue are outside tasks that have been delegated or assigned to Administration staff. In addition, Administration staff have taken on responsibilities as a result of regulatory and unfunded requirements from state and federal governments. Accordingly, it is recommended that the following staff be added to the Office of Administration in 2022:
  - Human Resources Administrator: Will assist the HR Officer, compiling new hire packets/paperwork for new employee orientation sessions; updating workplace posters at each COG work location; collect and organize I-9 forms all in one place; assisting with coordination and planning of ERC events; invoice processing; dental / vision claim processing; payroll data entry; and meeting minutes preparation. (Projected annual cost, including salary, benefits, and ERE: \$84,000.)
  - Finance Administrator: Will assist the Finance Director, including payroll review and approval, cash management, month-end close-out and bank reconciliations, general ledger review and analysis, monthly and quarterly financial reporting, purchasing policy compliance. (Projected annual cost, including salary, benefits and ERE: \$90,000.)
    - The Finance Assistant position will remain and the primary duties for that position will largely be focused on data entry, specifically processing accounts payable invoices, deposit entry, payroll review, and invoicing.

- In addition, the new HR Administrator and existing Finance Assistant positions will be cross-trained to help with general administration assistance potentially including responsibilities such as supply orders, back-up for bank deposits and Right to Know requests, and hybrid COG meeting assistant host.
- Staff is recommending a classification and compensation study be performed in 2022. It has been over 15 years since the COG conducted a classification and compensation study. There are many items this study can help address, such as a competitive part-time pay scale (currently being independently set by each agency), Fair Labor Standards Act exemptions, a living wage, staff morale, and employee retention. With staff turnover, and as many long-time employees reach retirement age, it is imperative to have an up-to-date, competitive salary scale to help recruit qualified talent. As the employment market and comparables for many positions have changed dramatically since the last study, Agency Directors and the Human Resources Officer are requesting support for a classification and compensation study. (Estimated cost: \$45,000.)
- Succession planning for key positions that are eligible to retire in the next couple of years will continue to be a priority for the Executive Director and Human Resources Officer. While direct costs for the recruitments will be in the specific funds, there will be impacts on Administration staff preparing for and during recruitments.
- Continuing to monitor and adjust to impacts and requirements of the post-COVID-19 pandemic workplace will be a priority in 2022. A focus on workplace safety and staff satisfaction and engagement will continue.
- With the establishment of the Facilities Committee as a standing 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 and the Facilities Coordinator will continue to revise 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 the 2020 COG Committee review, the IT Study, and a shift to hybrid meetings, 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 that 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 in conjunction with the planned implementation of the software solution for CRCA that includes a proposed acquisition of a fleet tracking and asset management module. Implementation of the module will enable benefits including shared resources, longer life expectancies, improved maintenance practices, etc. Staff time will need to be allocated to import existing data and information about assets for each agency.



## 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 2021, neither the General Forum nor the Executive Director has authorized any expenditures from the Contingency. The 2021 beginning fund balance for the Contingency Fund is approximately \$18,500.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

In accordance with the previously communicated plan, the Program Plan proposes to continue with the replenishment of the Contingency Fund to the \$35,000 level approved by the General Forum in 2010 by requesting municipal support of \$10,000 in 2022.

- Other than slightly lower than anticipated interest income there has not been a significant change to the 2021 Budget Plan.
- In accordance with the plan adopted in the preparation of the 2021 Detailed Budget, staff will likely be requesting municipal support of approximately \$10,000 to replenish this fund.
- Staff does not foresee substantial changes to the plan put in place in 2020 for the 2022 Budget.



COG  
CONTINGENCY  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN



## 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?

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 2022 there will be six 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.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### Departures from the 2021 Budget Plan

- At mid-year 2021 the only significant unbudgeted expenditure for the Office of Administration budget was the budget adjustment for audio/visual improvements to the General Forum Room as staff prepared for a return to hybrid in-person/remote meetings.
- General Forum Room improvements were needed to begin updating components of the original and aging audio and video equipment and to allow COG to better operate and improve the experience of its in-person and hybrid meetings for those attending on-site and remotely. These improvements were approved by the General Forum and installation began in July 2021.

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

The following expenditures are proposals for capital investments in the COG Building in 2022:



COG  
BUILDING  
CAPITAL  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

- To address feedback and recommendations as discussed by staff and the Facilities Committee regarding COG building security measures and to facilitate anticipated use of the General Forum Room by the public in 2022, recommended improvements to enhance COG building security measures are:
  - Integrate one exterior entryway door directly into the General Forum room to the security system, currently used by all the interior office suites. This would provide greater security to the COG building as well as change the way we provide after business hours access to the building. Currently, COG Administration staff hand out physical building keys to individuals that request use of the General Forum room which in effect provides them access to the COG building until the keys are returned. This process can be difficult to monitor and control. Use of a programable keypad system where unique codes could be entered for predetermined amounts of time would provide greater security (approximately \$1,800). Additionally, a retractable barrier would be installed to deter visitors from accessing the second floor (approximately \$200-\$500).
- To further update aging equipment within the General Forum room A/V rack, staff and Dobil Laboratories recommend selecting Alternate 4 from the 2021 proposal: AV-Over IP would build upon the basic matrix video routing by adding multiple IP endpoints for video ingestion and distribution. Video captured through these HDMI inputs will be able to be distributed to remote hybrid participants via the USB connection from the I/O USB Bridge (\$13,500).
- In connection with Stahl Sheaffer Engineering's assessment of the parking lot at the COG building, the repairs and maintenance (patching, repairs, resealing, and restriping) will be completed in 2021 at an estimated cost of \$75,000. As part of that project, some concrete repairs will be included to address trip hazards on the site. Finally, looking even further into the future, as rental and maintenance agreements are updated, more Facility Condition Assessments (FCA) 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.
- In association with the proposed hiring of two additional staff in the Administration Office, the additions to the HR and the Finance teams, improvements will be needed. To accommodate the proposed additions two workstations will need to be created. This could be accomplished by renovating the front office area, enclosing the current work area, and adding a third workstation, or renovating an existing office or work room space to create two to three workstations. This work will require design and permitting, renovation, and FF&E. Total project cost is estimated at \$40,000.

- To increase the energy efficiency of the COG building, re-lamping building and parking lot lighting with LED lamps are planned for 2022 at an estimated cost of \$17,500. An estimate prepared last year estimated \$34,000 in energy savings over 10 years through the LED re-lamping.
- The main computer server for the COG building was purchased in 2017. It was originally planned for replacement in 2023, but IT support now recommends it be replaced in 2022, so this amount has moved forward a year in the CIP. (\$14,700)
- To improve indoor air quality for staff and visitors to the COG building, it is proposed that additional outside air be drawn into and circulated with the existing system. An exhaust/return air fan will need to be installed to assist with balancing the increased air volume. Estimated cost: \$47,000. Due to the health and safety benefits, this can afford COG staff, use of the higher-than-expected Insurance Reserve Fund refund may be considered for this project.

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

The 2022 COG Building budget and the 2022-2026 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.

In 2022, the staff will be working with the Facilities Committee to evaluate options and decisions about lease, ownership and future facility needs, and future improvements for the COG building. This will include an evaluation of the roof, HVAC, electrical distribution, and general exterior and interior finishes.



## 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, 2021, expenditures from the Insurance Reserve Budget are anticipated to be in line with 2021 Budget estimates. Conversely, revenues are anticipated to be significantly higher than anticipated as PMHIC is expected to provide COG with a \$405,890 reimbursement in 2021, a significant increase from the 2020 reimbursement of \$186,763 and the 2021 budgeted reimbursement of \$161,000 based on the previous seven years' contribution history.

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 nine-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**

**PROGRAM  
PLAN**









































































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 persons in 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 (historically an 80% federal/20% local split).

The CRPA is mindful of the county and municipal funding constraints and seeks opportunities to meet the needs of the CCMPO's member organizations more efficiently. The Agency will continue to pursue ways to more effectively deploy personnel, use technology, be resourceful, and strategically reorganize to add value to the services provided to the CCMPO's member organizations.

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

- Base allocation of federal and state funding – The CCMPO's current FY 2020-22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) will terminate on June 30, 2022. The next FY 2022-24 UPWP will be developed and adopted in late 2021 and will take effect on July 1, 2022. PennDOT will provide guidance in July 2021 about the amount of federal and state funding to be provided in the FY 2022-24 UPWP. Historically, increases ranging from 2% to 5% have been provided in new UPWPs. However, even if the funding amounts are increased in the FY 2022-2024 UPWP, the full benefit of the increase would not be fully realized until the 2023 Budget.
- Supplemental federal funding – An opportunity to apply for supplemental federal funding for special planning projects will be provided when the new FY 2022-24 UPWP is prepared. Examples of potential candidate projects include: a) completion of an operations-based organizational Strategic Plan (included in the FY 2020-22 UPWP); b) completion of special transit planning studies determined by CATA; and c) a mid-term update of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2050. Although most of the supplemental funds for these types of projects are used for consultant services, a portion would be reserved for CRPA staff tasks associated with managing the studies.
- County and municipal funding – Municipal and County funding shares are anticipated to increase in 2022.
- CATA funding – CATA's share is anticipated to increase slightly in 2022, to match the anticipated increase in the amount of federal transit planning funding included in the FY 2022-24 UPWP.

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

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

- The Principal Transportation Planner will retire in March 2022. The CRPA proposes to budget for six to eight weeks of salary and benefits for a successor to overlap with the current Principal Transportation Planner and will budget for accrued benefits disbursement to the current Planner.
- The CRPA proposes to hire a half-time Communications Manager in 2022 to assist with developing a communications strategy, assist with outreach through print and broadcast media, and strengthen social media platforms in the Agency. There is potential to combine this half-time position with another half-time position. The CRPA has found that shared full-time positions cost more but attract more qualified individuals and provide greater long-term organizational stability. It is anticipated that the CCMPO will fund ten percent of this position.
- There are no other staffing changes planned for 2022.
- There are no significant changes in Operating Expenses planned for 2022. A slight increase in meeting, copying, mileage reimbursement, and other operating expenses is anticipated as the CCMPO returns to in-person meetings in 2022. Efforts will continue to reduce costs or minimize increases in the operating and capital line item expenses over which the CRPA has direct control.
- At this time, no expenditures are anticipated to be listed for the Transportation Projects line item. However, if supplemental planning funds are awarded in the next FY 2022-24 UPWP, expenditures associated with the special studies may be incurred in late 2022 and 2023.

### *New or Expanded Work Initiatives in 2022...*

- The CRPA staff will continue expanding its work with PennDOT associated with new data-driven transportation planning and programming processes as part of the federal Performance Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) initiative. The PBPP requirements are intended to help PennDOT and the CCMPO invest scarce resources wisely in the areas of safety, pavement and bridge condition, and travel time reliability; with the goal of meeting pre-established performance targets for each of the areas. The focus on performance measures and asset management will require greater coordination between the CCMPO staff and PennDOT Engineering District 2-0 as part of the preparation of the 2022-2026 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The new TIP is scheduled to be adopted in June 2022.

- The CRPA staff will continue to 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 began in summer 2020 and will be completed in spring 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

Staff anticipates that additional time will be committed to the SCAC in 2022 to review recommended alternative solutions in the PEL Study, and to provide reports about the Study to local officials and the public. In addition, more staff time will be committed in 2022 and 2023 when the alternatives from the PEL Study are advanced for more detailed analysis in the next phase of work.

- Work on an operations-based organizational Strategic Plan is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2021 and be completed in mid-2022. The Strategic Plan is expected to produce recommendations for modest changes in the operations of the CCMPO Committees and staff. The shift to a performance and asset management-based approach, the rapid growth in technology associated with transportation systems, and the departure of long-tenured CRPA staff in 2022 and future years are all factors that may lead to operational, staffing, and budgeting changes. Recommended changes would be proposed for implementation in 2023 and subsequent years.
- In early 2022, the CCMPO will begin a mid-term update to the LRTP 2050, as planned when the LRTP was adopted in September 2020. The update will address the ongoing implementation of federal PBPP requirements, and potential changes in projected funding levels resulting from efforts to address state and federal transportation funding shortfalls. Work on the update will continue through 2022, and an updated LRTP is tentatively scheduled for adoption in June 2023.
- The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic affected travel and transportation systems in Centre County in several ways, such as increasing the use of bicycles and other mobility devices, reducing utilization of public transportation and ridesharing modes, and changing travel demand associated with remote working arrangements. The CRPA staff will continue to be involved in assisting PennDOT, member municipalities, and other stakeholders in responding to these changes.



**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 May 31, 2021, revenues and expenditures are slightly lower than the projections contained in the 2021 budget as outlined below:

- Public Education and Advertising expenditures included outreach regarding residential and commercial organic waste reduction and recycling, some of which have been delayed to 2022.
- The Employee Development line item included expenses for the Professional Recyclers of PA conference, which has been moved to a virtual platform for 2021.
- The 2021 budget reflected an anticipated increase in costs for the Subsidy Program; however, significant growth in participation did not take place.
- The 2021 budget included funding for recycling containers for Whitehall Road Regional Park. Changes in CRPR schedules and priorities in 2021 meant this is not an expenditure in 2021. Those expenses for Specialized Equipment will be deferred to the 2022 budget. Other expenditures in that line item include subsidized backyard composting bins distributed through the course offered through CRPR, which have been higher than anticipated due to increased enrollment.

FUND	2021 YTD	ANTICIPATED MAY - DEC	BUDGETED 2021	ANTICIPATED FOR 2021	VARIANCE
7341 ADVERTISING	\$458.40	\$2,201.60	\$4,000.00	\$2,660.00	\$1,341.60
7344 PUBLIC INFORMATION / EDUCATION	\$1,102.36	\$1,397.64	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,545.64
7460 EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT	\$210.00	\$300.00	\$1,600.00	\$610.00	\$1,090.00
7511 SUBSIDY PROGRAM	\$3,283.18	\$4,200.00	\$10,500.00	\$7,483.18	\$3,016.82



**REGIONAL  
REFUSE &  
RECYCLING  
PROGRAM  
BUDGET**

**PROGRAM  
PLAN**

8750 PURCHASE OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT	\$ 2,649.00	\$ -	\$8,000.00	\$2,649.00	\$5,351.00
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**WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

Looking ahead to 2022 and beyond, proposed major budgetary changes for the Regional Refuse and Recycling Program include:

*New/Changed Expenditures in 2022 budget:*

- Defer the purchase of recycling containers for the Whitehall Road Regional Park from 2021 to 2022.
- Provide more funding for subsidized backyard compost bins based on increased enrollment in 2021 and escalating purchase and shipping costs.

*Proposed Programmatic adjustments:*

- In 2021 and 2022, the Refuse administrator will investigate options and develop opportunities for residents and businesses to recycle their organic (yard and food waste) materials. These options will be explored in conjunction with both State College Borough’s composting program and the University Area Joint Authority’s biodigester project. Expenditures for 2022 will include educational outreach, advertising, and some specialized equipment costs for initiatives and pilots arising from this work objective. These proposed expenditures will be in the 2023 budget as well.

FUND	2021 ANTICIPATED	2022 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET
7341 ADVERTISING	\$2,660.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
7344 PUBLIC INFORMATION/EDUCATION	\$2,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
8750 PURCHASE OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT	\$2,649.00	\$14,000.00	\$6,000.00

## MISSION

*The mission of the Regional Fire Protection Program is to maintain a volunteer fire company to provide 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 and to provide support and assistance as necessary to assure the delivery of quality services.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Regional Fire Protection Plan is operating within the current budget and is expected to end the year as planned. To date, there have been no unusual or unplanned expenditures. The ongoing pandemic has created challenges and has disrupted trends. This creates more uncertainty when making projections.

A study of the Regional Fire Protection Program was undertaken by ESCI Consulting in 2020 and the program Strategic Plan was updated in 1Q 2021. These two activities have established the path forward for the next three to five years. The mission and scope of the Regional Fire Protection Program is not expected to change over the near-term.

Volunteerism in emergency services continues to decline throughout the nation and the Commonwealth. This has a profound impact on the long-term viability of sustaining a mostly volunteer fire department. Requested hiring for 2022 is focused on sustaining our volunteer workforce.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The 2020 ESCI study of the Regional Fire Protection Program made several recommendations related to operations and personnel:

1. In 2022, the Regional Fire Protection Program seeks to add a third career Assistant Fire Chief. Titled as “Assistant Chief, Special Operations”, this position will manage equipment and training for technical rescue services, emergency medical and law enforcement support, and HazMat. An RFP for conducting a hiring Assessment Center will be developed in 2021 with funds budgeted to conduct candidate assessments in early 2022. The estimated costs for this position are:



REGIONAL FIRE  
PROTECTION  
PROGRAM

OPERATING  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

- a. Salary Range: \$66,435 - \$88,687
- b. Fringe: \$34,546 - \$46,117 (Assumes Family Medical)
- c. Assessment Center: \$24,000
- d. Equipment: \$4,000

Assuming the hired candidate is reasonably experienced and is hired at the first quartile of salary (\$71,418):

Estimated Total Year 1 Costs (Assessment Center with 3Q salary, fringe, and onboarding.) = \$136,555

Estimated Total Year 2 Costs (Salary and fringe full-year wage, and merit adjustments.) = \$112,355

- 2. The program will seek to add a part-time Administrative Assistant in 2022. ESCI recommended a full-time assistant, but a careful review of specific work activity by department leadership determined part-time hours are appropriate for the short-term.
  - a. Estimated Wages/Fringe: \$31,600
  - b. Hiring Costs: \$3,000

Estimated Total Year 1 Costs = \$34,600

Estimated Total Year 2 Costs = \$32,706

- 3. Preparations will be made for the retirement of the Fire Director in December 2022.
  - a. Assessment Center: \$24,000
  - b. Equipment: \$4,000 (2023 Budget)
  - c. Estimated cash-out of accrued vacation and sick time: \$17,225 (2023 Budget)

Estimated Total Year 1 Costs = \$24,000

Estimated Total Year 2 Costs = \$21,225

- 4. In 2023, the Regional Fire Protection Program will seek to add a new position, “Deputy Fire Chief”. A job description for this position was developed and reviewed in 2021.
  - a. Salary Range: TBD (COG plans to conduct a salary study in 2022. This position is a 2023 budget item.)
  - b. Assessment Center: TBD (This may be an internal transfer that does not involve an outside/added hire.)

5. If volunteer recruitment trends continue, it is likely a few career personnel will be hired in 2023. Preparation for such hiring will be undertaken in earnest in 2022 using the ESCI Study recommendations as a guide. Although preparation work will occur in 2022, there will be no budget impact until 2023.

Beyond planned personnel changes there are no other significant program changes anticipated. The scope of services provided by the fire department is not expected to change in 2022. Budget changes for all other, non-personnel, expenses are expected to reflect the CPI.



## 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 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 (VEHICLES)?

An inventory and approximate cost to replace the current fleet is shown in the accompanying table. Fire apparatus is owned and licensed to the Centre Region COG. All Centre Region apparatus is insured for full replacement cost.

The project to replace Tanker 5-2 is on time and on budget. The estimated delivery of the replacement unit is November 2021. Various options for the sale of the current Tanker are being evaluated.

At present, there are no deviations to the current vehicle Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and no deviations are anticipated for the remainder of 2021.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING (VEHICLES)?

The COG CIP identifies the following vehicle replacement and addition in 2022:

1. Engine 5-3. This is a 2002 Pierce Engine. The estimated cost of replacement is \$880,000.
2. UTV 5-2. This is a new vehicle, a UTV that is set up for EMS and general utility support. The estimated cost is \$29,220.

<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	\$295,000
1 HazMat Unit	<u>\$125,000</u>
<b>Total Replacement Cost</b>	<b>\$9,412,000</b>



REGIONAL FIRE  
PROTECTION  
PROGRAM

CAPITAL  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

The COG CIP identifies one replacement in 2023:

1. Utility 5-1. This is a 2005 Chevrolet 2500HD 4X4 pick-up with over 150,000 miles.

## **BUILDINGS**

In 2015, capital projects for building maintenance and improvements were moved from the program operating budget to the COG CIP. In the most recent years, most planned capital projects have been held for further evaluation and COG-wide prioritization as part of a broader, ongoing COG facilities strategy. The recent addition of a COG Facilities Coordinator (2020) has permitted forward progress on a facilities strategy and update of the COG CIP.

### **WHERE ARE WE NOW (BUILDINGS)?**

The Regional Fire Protection Program operates three fire stations: one each in State College Borough, College Township, and Patton Township. These buildings are currently in good condition. Alpha Fire Company takes an active role in supporting physical infrastructure and has funded several significant capital projects in recent years. These include: Borough Fire Station Kitchen refurbishment, Borough Fire Station Meeting Room refurbishment, Borough Station Gym remodel, and refurbishment of the Borough Station Laundry Room.

Currently, all fire stations are in fair to good condition for their age. A detailed study of the Patton Fire Station was completed in 2020 and the COG Facilities Coordinator is being consulted for the study of the Borough and College Township Stations. The CIP will be updated using information from these studies.

However, storage and space for support functions is lacking. The need for a support building that would serve all existing and future fire stations has been identified and will need to be discussed with the Facilities Committee and conceptually developed in 2022 (estimated cost: \$75,000) for construction in 2023. This concept development would evaluate location, type, and amount of space indicated from the defined need, documents required for initial estimating, and projecting the overall project schedule. This evaluation would also inform staff of the types of expenses to consider for the longer-term operational needs.

### **WHERE ARE WE GOING (BUILDINGS)?**

Replacement of the lockers where firefighters store their gear at the Borough Station is proposed for 2022. The lockers are approaching

20 years old but are still in good condition allowing for the deferral of this anticipated expenditure from 2019. The estimated cost to replace the lockers is \$20,000.

The Facilities Coordinator and Fire Director recommend restriking the block and brick at the Borough Fire Station. 50% of the work will be completed prior to the Atherton Street project and the remaining 50% of the work completed after the project commencement and possibly project completion. This will allow the living and meeting areas to be completed first. The estimated cost of the project is \$25,000, split evenly (\$12,500) between 2022 and 2023.

In 2023 the front apparatus ramp of the Borough Fire Station will be replaced as part of a rebuild of South Atherton Street by PennDOT. PennDOT will also modify the front of the fire station property as part of the rebuild project. The Borough will undertake a streetscape project concurrent with the PennDOT rebuild. Restoration of the fire station property will be consistent with the details of the streetscape project.



## MISSION

*The mission of the Centre Region Parks and Recreation (CRPR) Agency is to serve Centre Region residents of all ages throughout the year with a variety of recreation opportunities and access to facilities to enrich their lives through participation in programs, facility use, provision of leadership resources and technical assistance, and serving the participating municipalities' residents and groups.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through mid-June 2021, revenue estimates are doing very well for the mid-point of the year compared to the projected budget. The recovery from the pandemic has been swift as the community's participation in programs and events is very strong. The expenditures for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Operating Budget are either near the mid-year projected levels or well below those amounts, mainly due to very good expense estimating and the increased revenue from sponsorships and donations, which offset special events and other program expenditures. At this point in the calendar year, we remain hopeful that the Agency will finish this year in a strong position and be back on track by 2022 regarding projected revenue and expenses for all budget areas-programming, events, field rentals, pavilion rentals, sports leagues, and parks operations.

The unaudited beginning 2021 fund balance was \$313,495, a \$22,302 increase from the \$291,193 estimated beginning fund balance in the 2021 detailed budget. The fund balance was higher than anticipated due to savings on personnel costs to include 2020 furloughs and related personnel costs. Not only did the Agency see rolling furloughs, but the Agency also did not hire any Parks Operations seasonal staff in 2020 thereby creating some savings in personnel costs.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

*Proposed Budgetary Changes for 2022...*

The following are items that are important to note for the 2022 Parks and Recreation Operating Budget. Due to continued challenges in hiring for seasonal maintenance staff, program leaders, and concessions staff, the Agency will be proposing hourly rate increases to be more competitive with our fellow employers in the region. At the mid-point of the year, the Parks Operations team is less than 50% staffed for seasonal employees, and the Agency is



CENTRE REGION  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

OPERATING  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

struggling to keep up with demands and delayed project work from 2019-2020. There may be some consideration for rolling seasonal salaries into a full-time Parks Caretaker I position for 2022. These conversations will take place with the HR Committee in August and through the budget process. Generally, except for changes in compensation and benefits costs for current staffing, the remaining revenue and expenditure lines in the 2022 Agency Budget will be similar to the original pre-pandemic 2020 Budget.



- The Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study was completed in March 2020. \$20,000 (\$10,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resource (DCNR) and \$10,000 in a local match) was earmarked for a post-study project to support the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center Boardwalk Feasibility Study. These funds were carried over to 2021 to complete the Part I Feasibility Study which as of July 2021, is complete. The Agency will begin to close out the original Comprehensive Study grant and the Feasibility Study grant in August and will receive the final grant payments by the end of this calendar year.
- Staff will continue to work on establishing Rec On The Go as an underwritten program offered for free to members of the community who may not be able to afford program fees for a similar summer camp program. During 2020 and 2021, Rec On The Go became a support vehicle and the heart of the Rec In The Parks Summer Camp, which was a new camp developed since indoor space was not available to run KIDVenture Camp. Rec On The Go will return to hosting Family Fun Nights, attending festivals and events when they return, and also be promoted for rentals throughout the year to help offset some of the expenses.
- In April 2020, the Agency proposed to the HR Committee to write a Peer-To-Peer Grant for an Agency Staffing Study. Due to COVID-19, this process was delayed. The grant was submitted in late November 2020, and it was approved in February 2021. After contracting work and Authority approval at their May 2021 meeting, the study kicked off in late June 2021 and should be complete by March 2022. At that time, if a new position is recommended, we will take that information forward to the HR Committee in May 2022. Additionally, there may be grant funds available to fund that position through the DCNR's Circuit Rider program which provides step-down funding for four years as the Agency is able to slowly increase its budget to pay salary and benefits. Benefits must be paid at the 100% level during all years of the Circuit Rider grant program.
- The new Parks Caretaker I position that was scheduled for mid-year 2020 was delayed and filled in early-2021. A full-time Parks Caretaker retired in May 2020, and filling that position was also delayed. In late Spring 2021, a replacement was hired to fill that position. As noted earlier, the Agency was not prepared to request additional staffing in the Parks Operations

division during the May HR Committee meeting; however, due to such staffing challenges for seasonal positions, the Agency may be making a late request for either increased hourly rates, a rollover of seasonal salaries to a full-time position, or both. Additionally, more maintenance staff could be suggested through the 2021-2022 Staffing Study. The Agency remains slightly below the US average for FTEs per park acreage maintained.

- Continue the professional development opportunities for the Agency staff. The agency always looks for fresh opportunities for training and will continue that practice. The 2022 Detailed Budget will provide figures and training details.
- The Agency launched the Active Guide as a mail piece in 2021 as a recommendation of the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study. In the 2021 budget, the Agency included funds for two mailings, the Summer Guide and the Fall Guide. The Summer Guide was a great success: Over 570 new households registered for summer programs for the first time during the first week registration was open and over \$30,000 in revenue was received on the first day of summer registration. The Guide continues to draw attention to programs and events as the Agency rebuilds after the COVID-19 pandemic. The Agency plans to request additional funds in the 2022 budget to ensure that the third Active Guide produced each year can be mailed as well. The guide is being mailed at non-profit EDDM (Every Door Direct Mail) rates, and the Agency is selling third-party ads to offset the mailing/postage costs.

#### *Proposed Work Objectives for 2022...*

The following is a list of proposed 2022 Work Objectives for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Agency:

- Provide the staff support necessary to work with the CRPR Authority members to continue working through the Action Plan of the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study Task List.
- 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 on May 24, 2021. 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 2022 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.
- Continue to promote the tournament opportunities provided by Oak Hall Regional Park and the John Hess Softball Complex, along with additional satellite fields, making the Centre Region a premier softball and baseball destination in Pennsylvania for tournaments, leagues, park rentals, and special events. These local regional parks host hundreds of youth and adult sports enthusiasts during seasonal leagues like flag football, softball, and traditional football. Additionally, these local regional parks provide the advantage for local youth and adults to play on their “home fields” without requiring travel

to other locations, and hosting tournaments bring visiting teams to the Region along with the economic impact to local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and quick-stop stores.

- 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, and one recommended in the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Plan Task List.
- The Agency, using results from the Comprehensive Study and ongoing 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 refreshing 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.
- Host popular, annual special events again in 2022, including the Touch-A-Truck Expo, Winter Carnival, Kids on Wheels Parade, Halloween Parade, So Long Summer Shindig, as well as new events. New events, such as the Classic Movie Series to be held in some of the municipal parks throughout the summer months and themed Park Challenges, continue to encourage our residents to utilize their local parks.
- Work with SCASD staff to return KIDventure Summer Day Camps to SCASD facilities. The use of adequate indoor and outdoor space at one location allows for increased registration numbers, more programming options, and safety during inclement weather. SCASD facilities also help the Agency to offer pre-and post-camp hours that help working parents with drop-offs and pick-ups. By accomplishing this objective, the Agency will be able better serve families in our community and rebuild its Summer Camp revenue line item.
- Continue to accept major contributions for regional parks development. To help offset 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. Contributions from these groups will help to move phased development along more quickly; however, it is important to remember the highest priority for regional parks is to serve the residents of the Centre Region while recognizing the programmatic needs of the entity making the contribution. This process was started in 2019 with Whitehall Road Regional Park's Phase I development and could continue as the Authority begins looking at Phase 2 developments across the regional parks.



Looking ahead to 2022, the significant policy-level issues relating to the Parks and Recreation Program are:

- Continue to be a competitive employer in the region by increasing hourly rates and ensuring that the Agency has the resources to complete the required work in the Parks Operations Division.
- Recover from the COVID-19 pandemic financially by shifting how the Agency delivers programs and operates facilities.
- Continue to implement the recommendations contained in the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study Task List 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 Authority 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 revising the 1974 Articles of Agreement, it is suggested that the Agency and Authority also update the Authority's By-Laws.
- Addressing facility needs was a major issue that was considered in the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study, including:
  - Inadequacy of the indoor recreation space for Agency programs and classes,
  - The long-term needs for a maintenance facility,
  - The viability of the Nittany Mall as the home of the Centre Region Active Adult Center, and
  - Providing permanent office space for the Agency since the current lease at 2040 Sandy Drive 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 during the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced opportunities for sports leagues, instructional sports, and educational programming.

- A priority of the COG Parks 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 correcting the parking lot issues 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 2021 Budget Plan

- All programs and facility operations changed when COVID-19 hit the region. The Agency will continue to strive to recover from the financial hit to the 2020 Budget. The early 2021 trend is that the Agency is doing well financially during this recovery year, and a combination of in-person and online classes will continue to be needed pending a return to holding in-person special events. The Agency will continue to seek partnerships and sponsorships while watching all expenses to maximize revenue.
- The Agency staff proposed pricing changes to the 2022 Fee Policy as changes have not occurred in several years; the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority approved the 2022 Fee Police at the June 2021 meeting.

#### **Known Changes for 2022**

- Other than COVID-19 possibly remaining active in the community, there are no other known changes for 2022.

## 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 2021, revenue and expenditures for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Capital Budget were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2021 budget. The unaudited January 1, 2021, beginning fund balance was \$342,156, \$2,180 less than the beginning fund balance as estimated in the 2021 detailed budget.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

*Proposed Budgetary Changes...*

- **Scheduled Computer Replacements:** According to the cascading replacements started in 2021, the upgrades of Windows 7 to Windows 10, and temporary tablets received from the Codes Agency, Centre Region Parks and Recreation still has additional replacements to accomplish in 2022. Two Microsoft Surfaces will need to be replaced with Dell Tablets for the Agency's front office staff; the docks are already in place. The desktop used by the Recreation Aide will need to be replaced in 2022; the desktop will not be able to be cascaded. Additionally, we need to find a better system for the Oak Hall Regional Park Concession Stand. The Agency used to use Square and its hardware/software, but once we purchased RecDesk, a cloud-based software, we had to return to a desktop set-up. However, for greater efficiency, we would like to find a terminal, credit card swipe and printer, and a new cash drawer that will allow us to sync with RecDesk.
- **Equipment Replacements and Additions:** The scheduled replacements and additions over \$10,000 within the Parks Capital Equipment Budget are fully outlined in the COG 2022 to 2026 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



CENTER REGION  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

PARKS CAPITAL  
EQUIPMENT  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

condition while remaining a cost-effective investment for the municipalities. The plan also ensures that vehicles are sound and being rotated based on mileage 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 also changed 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 the COG Building exterior areas. The Agency had rolled the replacement of two mowers to 2022 to help balance the 2021 capital requests.

These rollovers, however, skewed the CIP for 2021. So, the Agency staff re-worked the plan for 2022, 2023, and 2024 to get back on track. Additionally, the Agency received permission in 2020 to sell vehicles that were overdue for removal; the sale was accomplished by the end of 2021, and the Agency received higher proceeds than anticipated in the 2020 budget.

- Most of the new equipment or fleet vehicle purchases for the Whitehall Road Regional Park (WRRP) were scheduled for 2021. However, due to funding delays, purchases of equipment designated for WRRP (example: a large mower) have been moved to 2022 to coincide with the completion of the park. It should be noted that the budgeted pickup truck was purchased to meet the supplier’s production time.

Therefore, the following purchases are scheduled for the 2022 Parks Capital Equipment Budget for a total of \$248,920. 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. Several equipment pieces will be auctioned at the end of 2021.

➤ Replace 2011 Toro Groundsmaster - #234	\$ 29,800
➤ Replace 2007 Chevy Silverado - #215	\$ 31,675
➤ Purchase a new Ford Transit 15 passenger van for programming (this does not replace #221, but adds to passenger transport fleet)	\$ 41,695
➤ Purchase one new utility vehicle w/attachments for WRRP	\$ 26,275
➤ Purchase a new 6' Turf Mower for WRRP	\$ 28,925
➤ Purchase a new 10' Turf Mower for WRRP	\$ 65,550
➤ <u>Replace Morbark Cyclone 8 Brush Chipper - #212</u>	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
➤ <b>Total</b>	<b>\$248,920</b>

- Looking ahead to 2023, pending evaluations in 2022, the following purchases are scheduled for the 2023 Parks Capital 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 2011 GMC Sierra Truck - #229	\$ 28,950
➤ Replace Chevy Silverado Dually Truck - #209	\$ 35,325
➤ Replace Aero-Vator FIAE60 - #205	\$ 13,100
➤ Replace Smithco Field Groomer - #240	\$ 29,550
➤ Purchase combination synthetic field groomer (holding within budget in case synthetic turf funding comes through)	\$ 15,900
➤ <u>Replace Pick-Up Truck - #243</u>	<u>\$ 32,600</u>
➤ <b>Total</b>	<b>\$155,425</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 with additional amenities to provide additional service options to the staff.

#### Departures from the 2021 Budget Plan

- The only departure from the 2021 Parks Capital Equipment Budget plan is the ongoing delay of equipment for Whitehall Road Regional Park.

#### Known Changes for 2022

- The Whitehall Road Park equipment will not be purchased in 2021 as previously budgeted and will be moved to 2022 and/or 2023 pending construction progress. 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 2021, revenue and expenditures for aquatic operations are performing better than budgeted projections, primarily due to the faster-than-anticipated recovery from the pandemic. Staff has worked to reduce expenses while supporting revenue goals to maintain fiscal stability. Season Pool Pass sales are above the projected figure and are trending better than even 2019. Program revenue is in very good shape and rentals are doing well. Pool Daily Admissions are lagging a bit after eight weeks of operation. The recovery of this budget will rely on a continued strong summer swim season—warm temperatures and less rain than we’ve had in 2021 already. The Agency will need strong gate attendance and a good eye on expenses to help this budget recover fully from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$7,599, \$22,684 more than the amount of the beginning fund balance estimated in the 2021 detailed budget of (\$15,085).

Despite the pools returning to normal operations on June 28, the Agency will continue to review operational numbers. If adjustments are needed to keep the operation fiscally sound, the Agency will make those adjustments and keep the Finance Committee up to date with that operational information. It remains part of the operational plan to consider staying open one month later (through September 2021) if the demand is there and the long-range forecast calls for a warm month. That additional operational month boosted the end-of-season revenue in 2020, and it could help the 2021 recovery as well.

During 2011-2019, pool attendance generated revenue that exceeded projections and covered all operating expenses. No municipal support was required for pool operations. 2021 was the first year that municipal support was required to help the recovery of the pools’ operating budget.



**CENTRE REGION  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION**

**AQUATICS  
OPERATING  
BUDGET**

**PROGRAM  
PLAN**

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking forward to 2022 and 2023, 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. Additionally, the Agency will explore 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 State College Area School District availability will affect the winter programming proposed yearly in each budget. Being able to execute those winter programs will only boost the recovery of this operational budget.

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes in 2022...*

- The Authority has annually adjusted the pool entry fees to better match comparable facilities across Pennsylvania. This will be evaluated in conjunction with the need to recover from financial shortfalls in 2020 due to the pandemic.
- In 2019, the Agency proposed 1-2% seasonal staff salary increases over two-three years 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 in seasonal staff wages in 2020 and 2021. In the hopes that better pay will attract and retain quality personnel, another small 1% increase is planned for in 2022 if the budget can support it, based on how the success of the 2021 recovery. This is crucial for continued operational success and to remain competitive with other seasonal employers in the Centre Region. 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. This will be supported by the COG-wide classification and compensation study proposed in the Administration Program Plan.

## 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, with a cost of \$10,000 or more.*

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to mid-June 2021, revenue for the Aquatics Capital Budget is on target for the projections contained in the budget based on the municipal payment timeline. The siding at Park Forest Pool and Welch Pool were refinished and the pumps slated for replacement at Welch Pool were able to be serviced prior to the swimming season rather than replaced. However, as part of the Facility Condition Assessment, a recommendation was made that the Agency purchase one or two spare pumps for on-site replacements in case a pump malfunction mid-season. With the recovery plan in place, the Agency does not want to face any pool operations downtime if possible.

During the late winter and early spring, the COG Facilities Coordinator assisted with the 2021 facility inspections, generating the Facility Condition Assessments which helped to shape the 2022 capital improvement program. The results of those assessments are discussed further in this program plan.

The 2021 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$47,710, consistent with the estimated fund balance in the 2021 detailed budget.

## 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 “cool off” in a fun way during hot weather.

It is time to look forward to what both pools may need in the future as either enhancements, renovations, or replacements/repairs. The Park Forest Pool was renovated in 2008-2009 and reopened in 2009; the 2022 budget



CENTRE REGION  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

AQUATICS  
CAPITAL  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

year will be the 14th season since renovations. The Welch Pool was renovated in 2009-2011 and reopened in 2011; the 2022 budget year will be the 12th season since renovations.

While the Agency has done an excellent job at maintaining these facilities, it is time to plan equipment replacements, new customer amenities, and possible operational updates. A very detailed inspection of both pool facilities and a review of operational costs was completed by the COG Facilities Coordinator in early 2021. The COG Facilities Coordinator generated the Facility Conditions Assessments which provide a more detailed plan for the Capital Improvement Program to include short- and long-term needs. These Facility Conditions Assessments were reviewed with the Facilities Committee, the Finance Committee, the Parks Capital Committee, and the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority, and were created in conjunction with the Aquatics Supervisor and Agency Director. The short-term facility repairs and upgrades are captured in this document as well as the long-term needs within the 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program document.

In 2018, the COG formula for the pool's loan reset from the 2008 levels as was predetermined in the 2008 loan documents. As part of the Authority's Parks' loan, the Regional Pools loan was bundled with the Authority's Regional Parks loan for a May 2021 refinancing that reduced interest rates for both loans. The Pools loan is now locked into 1.25% interest through 2028. This provided additional savings that will be invested into the Whitehall Road Regional Park.

For 2022, proposed budgetary items for capital repairs, include:

- Combination of refurbishment and power washing/gel coating for two slides and the leisure pool water feature at Welch Pool; this work includes checking all connections, inspecting/replacing caulking, inspecting flanges, making fiberglass repairs, and power-washing and gel-coating all exterior surfaces to provide UV protectants to decrease fading from chemicals and sunlight. The approximate cost for Welch Pool in spring 2022 is estimated to be \$28,000. This project for both pools was delayed from 2020, with Park Forest scheduled for its refurbishment in 2021 and Welch scheduled for 2022. We are committed to having this work completed but finding a vendor prior to the 2021 season proved difficult. This project serves as both a cosmetic and preventative maintenance project.
- Begin the replacement of all pool pumps at both Welch Pool and Park Forest Pool, with four pumps to be replaced each year at an approximate cost of \$50,000 each year. This will be done over two years. This process is starting in 2021 and will continue over an additional two years.
- Complete concrete slab repairs that were started in 2021 for both pool sites at an estimated cost of \$15,000. This includes removing old expansion joints and replacing the epoxy and fixing any additional cracks or broken edges.

- Complete the Park Forest Pool parking lot repairs and resurfacing at an approximate cost of \$15,000.
- Add additional storage to both pool sites to include a small add-on structure/enclosure at Welch Pool and a small storage building/enclosure at Park Forest Pool. The solution development will be created in 2022 for a cost of \$10,000. The construction will be planned in 2023 for \$30,000.
- Complete interior finish upgrades within the restroom facilities at both pools; this will include floor tile, door handles, sink and shower fixtures, etc. This is projected to be \$25,000.
- Contribute to the purchase and retrofitting of a concession truck to serve the pools, other Agency facilities, and special events at an approximate cost of \$30,000. The current operation at Welch Pool would not accommodate a concession stand as planned in the design documents. If one were to be constructed, additional storage space would be needed for equipment and furniture. This mobile option provides services to not only the pools, but it covers other Agency needs. The successful operation at Oak Hall Regional Park is a model to follow.
- New this year is a request for \$10,000 annually to cover unplanned capital replacements as needed.

Although the pools are utilizing 12-14-year-old pumps, filters, plumbing, and electrical systems, all mechanical devices will decline over time. At the 2021 level of municipal support (\$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 happens. Accordingly, the 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program is a revised capital improvement plan stemming, as noted, from the Facility Conditions Assessments made by the COG Facilities Coordinator, in conjunction with the Aquatics Supervisor and Parks and Recreation Director, and reviewed by the Facilities Committee, Finance Committee, Parks Capital Committee, and the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority.



## 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 2021 revenue and expenditures for the Active Adult Center are below the 2021 budget projections. The continued closure of the Center from January 1-March-23 contributed to this decrease. The part-time Staff Assistant position returned from furlough but not to work at the Active Adult Center; the Staff Assistant is helping at the main office and being paid from the Parks Operating Budget since the Agency has not been able to fill the Recreation Aide position. The part-time Staff Assistant will return to the Center once it is open fully and can support the salary. Upon the March reopening, the Center was only open two days per week: one day in the Center and one day on an outing. The limitations directed by the Pennsylvania Office of Aging and Centre County Office of Aging will be lifted in mid-July. The Center will re-open with limited capacity on July 12, five days a week; then, on July 19, the Center will resume operations with full capacity and regular operations to include meals, classes, crafts, games, etc. Despite the Center reopening in July, it will take the rest of 2021 to regain a portion of the revenue projected in the 2021 budget.

The 2021 unaudited beginning fund balance was \$84,781, which is \$21,653 higher than the estimated 2021 beginning fund balance of \$63,128. The increase is solely based on the effects of the pandemic to include 2020 staff furloughs, savings within operational expenses, and the restricted grant and donation funds that are carried from year to year.

## 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). In April 2021, a meeting was held to begin discussing the



CENTRE REGION  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

ACTIVE ADULT  
CENTER  
OPERATING  
BUDGET

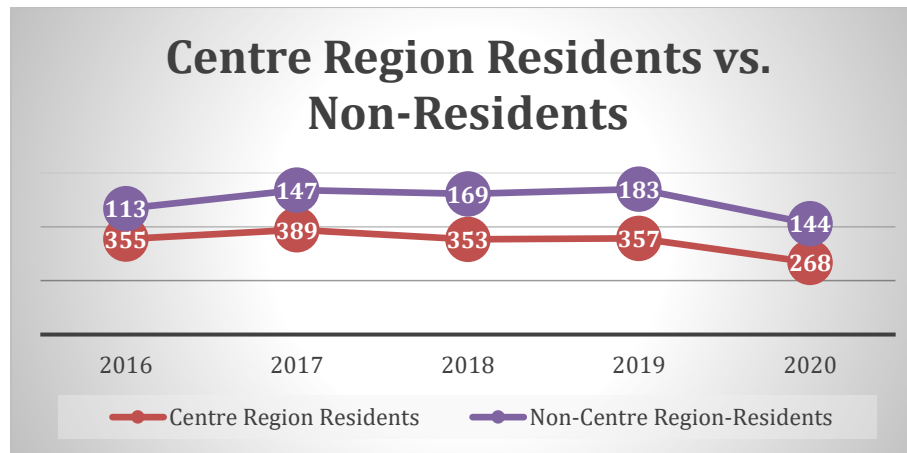
PROGRAM  
PLAN

new three-year contract, which will be in place for 2022-2024. That contract is now in draft form and is scheduled for approval by the County Commissioners and the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority in August 2021.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

It is expected that the trends over the past several years will continue in 2022:

- According to the Centre Regional Planning Agency, the population age 60 and over increased by 83% between 1990 and 2010, with an estimated 12% of the Centre Region population now above age 60. The Agency looks forward to updating these statistics once the 2020 Census data is released.
- As shown in the table below, at the Nittany Mall location, there was the following breakdown of attendees\*:



\*The numbers are skewed for 2020 due to the Center’s shutdown from COVID-19.

### *Proposed Budgetary Changes for 2022...*

The following factors should be reflected in the 2022 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. As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, it is unclear if third-party rentals will return to the Center in late 2021 or wait until 2022, but the Agency will continue to utilize space when possible.

- The Center has developed an annual fundraiser to supplement the operational budget because programming levels within fee-based programs have dropped. In 2021, the Car Bingo Fundraiser will take place in July 2021. This may be the same fundraiser in 2022 or the Center may do something new.
- Estimates for utility costs are leveling out after being in the space for more than two budget cycles, thanks in part to enclosing the front entrance with glass partitions to reduce heating and cooling expense. Figures for 2021 will reflect the additional utility history now in place.

*Proposed New Work Objectives...*

- The second half of 2021 will be a rebuilding phase. Once the operating schedule returns to normal in late July, programming and services will return to normal, and attendance will increase. The Agency and Center staff will continue to monitor operational costs vs. program revenue and adjust where needed.
- Much of 2022 will be the same as the second half of 2021 with recouping the revenue losses from 2020 and 2021 and learning to operate in new ways.
- Staff will actively engage the community by visiting local senior living facilities, attending local civic group meetings, and engaging Penn State classes.
- Once COVID-19 rules are lifted, 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 Lifelong Learning at Penn State, Global Connections, Geriatric Interest Network Organization, and numerous local senior service providers.
- Because of COVID-19, staff created craft programs in 2021 to attract all age groups, and they generated some revenue. These activities were held on days the Center was not open. There may be additional ways to provide programming outside of the

Center, in the parks perhaps, that may be attractive to adults who are not already participating at the Center.

#### **Departures from the 2020 & 2021 Budget Plan**

- Reduced program and rental revenues due to cancellations and closures.
- Savings from reduced expenses where possible, including furloughing staff. (One part-time Staff Assistant remains on furlough.)
- The first half of the budget year will include programming changes and a drastically reduced capacity; it is hoped that the Center will return to full operation in the second half of 2021.

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

- Staff is prepared for reduced programming options in the first half of 2021 and possibly into early summer. The Center remains hopeful to be fully operational by late summer/early fall.
- Additional furloughs may be needed to keep the budget in the positive. The current furloughed staff will not return until the Center is fully operational, and the workload returns to normal.

#### **Known Changes for 2022**

- Other than what is previously mentioned, there are no other planned changes for 2022, 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-May 2021, 60% of the operating revenue goal has been reached and expenditures remain consistent with the 2021 budgeted amounts.

The unaudited beginning 2021 fund balance is \$61,102, a \$30,536 increase from the estimated 2020 ending fund balance of \$30,566.

While it was unclear in early- to mid-2020 if the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center Operating Budget was going to be able to sustain the loss of revenue from canceled programs, the Center was able to re-group by mid-summer and began rebuilding its programming. The Center held several summer camp programs with COVID-19 protocols in place and provided new programming, both in-person with limited enrollment and virtual programming options, that allowed the Center to continue to generate revenue. While trying to rebuild the programs, the Center staff also concentrated on managing the expense side of the budget, keeping costs to a minimum, and trimming expenses where possible. Most savings came from personnel via staff furloughs and reductions within staff development, and also through janitorial and supply savings when the facilities were closed. By the end of the year, through this hard work, the budget ended the year with a stronger fund balance.

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 2021 are based on the 2020-2021 Work Plan:

- 112% of the 2021 operational fundraising goal is secured, as of mid-May 2021. Centre Foundation Endowment Funds, community support, plus gifts from ongoing 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.



**CENTRE REGION  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION**

**MILLBROOK  
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NATURE CENTER**

**OPERATING  
BUDGET**

**PROGRAM  
PLAN**













complete Part II of the feasibility study. The Part II study will include some additional site testing and surveys, streambank stabilization analysis, 30% design documents, detailed construction cost estimates, permitting requirements, and possible funding sources. A proposal for professional services was received in June 2021 for \$225,513, but it has not been accepted at this time. There was \$50,000 in the 2021 capital budget to serve as a grant match, but a grant opportunity did not come to fruition. The Agency will be discussing these funds and next steps for the project at future Facilities and Finance Committee meetings; there may be a future budget amendment for these funds based on these conversations. Budgeting additional funds in the 2022 capital budget will allow the Feasibility Study Working Group to proceed with Part II.

The Service Building, which houses the full-time staff offices and workspace for seasonal and part-time staff, needs careful consideration for 2022. The Service Building is an original building to the property and dates to when this area was a working tenant farm; it has served as a rabbit pen and also as a calf barn. The building is currently in need of a new floor; staff assumes that there is dirt underneath the main section, while there is concrete in the section where seasonal staff work. The heating source is electric baseboard heat which requires some small repairs in 2021. There is cracking plaster in the rear section which will need to be replaced as well. There is no air conditioning, only ceiling fans. The windows do need to be replaced as they are not energy efficient. Scheduled for 2021 are the floor repairs and window replacements through the CIP; these repairs were pushed from 2020 to 2021. However, Agency staff are concerned that investing these funds are placing a band-aid on a structure that may have passed its life expectancy, especially when it serves the staff and our customers. The Agency is holding ongoing discussions with the Facilities Committee, the Facilities Coordinator, and the Finance Director. Consideration is being made to demolish this building and replace it with a prefabricated building. \$21,000 for design services is being included with the 2022 CIP. This design work informs staff of total project costs, schedules, and overall life cycle costs. This work will be completed in the first two quarters of 2022 to ensure the 2023 CIP has reliable estimates for the designed solution of replacing the existing Service Building.

#### **Departures from the 2021 Budget Plan**

- As noted earlier, unexpected repairs to the fire safety monitoring system and powder post beetle treatment are needed in 2021.
- Additional unexpected repairs will need to be addressed in 2021 for the Service Building. The floor repairs and window replacements were already scheduled; now, the baseboard heat needs some small repairs as well as a crumbling plaster ceiling in the rear section.

## 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 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 Authority continues to move toward developing the Whitehall Road Regional Park (WRRP) 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 WRRP 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 just under \$1,000,000, including:

- \$300,000 DCNR Development Grant which is earmarked for the “We Play Together” All-Ability Playground (December 2018).
- \$132,300 DCNR Development Grant for LED Sports Field Lighting (December 2019).
- \$100,000 DCED Greenways, Recreation, and Trails grant for the LED Sports Field Lighting project (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 Shaeffer 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;



CENTRE REGION  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

REGIONAL PARKS  
CAPITAL  
BUDGET

PROGRAM  
PLAN

- ▶ \$10,000 donation from Sheetz for the lighting project;
- ▶ \$10,000 pledge from Keystone 10M Trees for the landscaping plan;
- ▶ \$10,000 pledge from First Energy Foundation;
- ▶ \$8,625 from 2019 and 2020 Centre Gives for the playground;
- ▶ \$5,000 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.
- ▶ Plus, two additional grant applications are waiting for decisions; one application should have a 2021 decision while the other has been postponed until 2022 due to funding issues with the granting agency

The Agency also launched a fundraising campaign in February 2019 and was 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 2020, the Agency reached out to donors that had been contacted in 2019 and early 2020 to see if they were still willing to donate to this project or if their funding priorities have shifted. In most cases, funding shifts did take place. In early 2021, the Agency began its outreach again to re-start conversations with potential donors. 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 May 2021, the General Forum voted to approve the refinance of the Pools' loan and the Parks' loan as a bundle to secure a lower interest rate as well as the necessary funds to complete the Phase I project as budgeted to include any shortfall and any unfunded items. This new loan secures a 1.25% interest rate for the Pools' loan through 2028; it also secures a 1.33% interest rate for the Parks' loan through 2031, and a variable rate thereafter with a cap of 2.5%. This loan contingently provides almost \$ 1.6 million in additional funding for this Phase I project--\$770,180 as savings through lower interest rates and \$816,670 as additional capital for construction costs - provided unanimous approval of the General Forum at a later date to release those funds.

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

The land development plan for WRRP was approved in December 2019 and recorded in June 2020. The Authority hired Poole Anderson to handle the construction planning and bid work; the initial kick-off meeting was held on June 16, 2020. Poole Anderson, Peno Electric, and Fernsler Hutchinson were with the Agency through all of 2020 and waited patiently while staff explored the

refinancing that was noted above and described in detail in the Program Preface. Now that the funding has been approved, in June 2021, a second kick-off meeting was held to discuss the updated timeline, bidding process and bid documents, and funding and how it plays into the project. Several pieces of the project will be handled through direct purchasing through Costars/KPN, but the rest of the project will be bid (site development electrical work, seeding/landscaping, etc.). Since starting in January, the COG Facility Coordinator has played a key role in helping descope bids for WRRP, develop options for scope reduction, and is now assisting with the rebidding process for the project.

An updated cost estimate of \$7.3 million was provided by the Facilities Coordinator in keeping with the scope of the bid documents originally sent out to bid in the Fall of 2021. To fund the park at the level of the bid documents, the funding level of Option 4 would be necessary, which would be approximately \$800,000 more than the currently approved Option 1B. These additional funds are shown as "Loan Draws" in 2023 and would require unanimous approval of the participating municipalities to access. Should that approval not be granted, either alternate funding would need to be obtained or a reduction in scope (expenditures) of the project.

#### *Proposed Budgetary Changes for 2022...*

The 2022 Program Plan recommends the following new expense:

- As noted in the 2021 Program Plan, attention is needed for the Oak Hall Regional Park (OHRP) parking lot and driveway. The Agency is requesting \$45,000 to hire an engineering consultant to assess the situation and to create construction documents demonstrating improvements to the parking lots and driveway while continuing to manage stormwater runoff from those sites. The park continues to see washout and runoff of the parking lot gravel, washout from the parking lot affecting a section of trail surface aggregate (TSA), and pitted areas related to constant patterns of driving and parking. Additionally, the grassy section of the parking lot is unusable whenever heavy rains occur, and that puts demands on the gravel section and driveway. Additionally, the driveway asphalt is breaking down into the drainage swale along one side of the access road. Due to increased traffic, the driveway may need a curb and gutter as well as a new asphalt layer and striping. This has been discussed with the Facilities Committee and will continue to be reviewed.
- Continue the fence replacement project at Hess Softball Complex (\$15,000). There are four fields at the facility. This is a phased project. Two sections are to be completed in 2021. The fencing conditions were poor and there have been 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 needs to be replaced. The Agency is asking for \$15,000 to complete the replacement of the next fence in 2022 and then continue to replace the last field in 2023. The new chainlink fence will include a bottom rail which should prevent this type of "curl-up".

*Proposed Work Objectives for 2022...*

- Advance the development of the WRRP as full funding is now available for the Phase I development which is part of the approved Master Plan:
  - ✓ Complete the pre-construction phase.
  - ✓ Hold the second bidding process.
  - ✓ Review and award the construction bids.
  - ✓ Begin construction of the park in late Fall 2021.
- During 2022, prepare an operational budget for WRRP 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 2022 as part of the 2023 budget process.
- Continue to work with the funding agreement with Centre Soccer to re-start the fundraising program. At this time, the synthetic turf will not be installed in Phase I of WRRP since the funds are not in place. That amenity will be installed when those funds become available.
- Adjust the Capital Improvement Program's purchase of equipment related to Whitehall Road Regional Park; the Agency staff did not purchase these items in 2021 since the project did not start in 2020 as thought. These items, a utility vehicle with attachments, and two new turf mowers have been delayed to 2022 and will be purchased toward the end of that budget year.
- Continue to manage the undeveloped acreage in 2022 and beyond with invasive species management, bushhog mowing, and research grant opportunities to seed this acreage with native meadow grasses and pollinators in designated areas.
- Research grant opportunities in 2022 and 2023 to secure private/grant funding for synthetic turf at WRRP.

*Proposed Work Objectives for 2023 and beyond...*

- Complete the Phase I construction of WRRP and open it to the public. Most amenities will open before the rectangular natural grass fields which should be sometime in 2023.
- Fund the engineering consultant's recommended changes to the parking lot and driveway at OHRP.
- After the completion of Whitehall Road Regional Park's Phase I and the completion of the MMNC Spring Creek Education Building, and completing the majority of the task list from the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Comprehensive Study are complete, the Parks Capital Committee and the CRPR Authority should consider hiring a consultant to review the Master Plans and Phase II plans for John Hess Softball Complex, OHRP, and WRRP, using a combination of public input meetings, public surveys, facility inventory, and evaluation of current user data from the Centre Region. 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.