

THE CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

PROGRAM  
PLAN

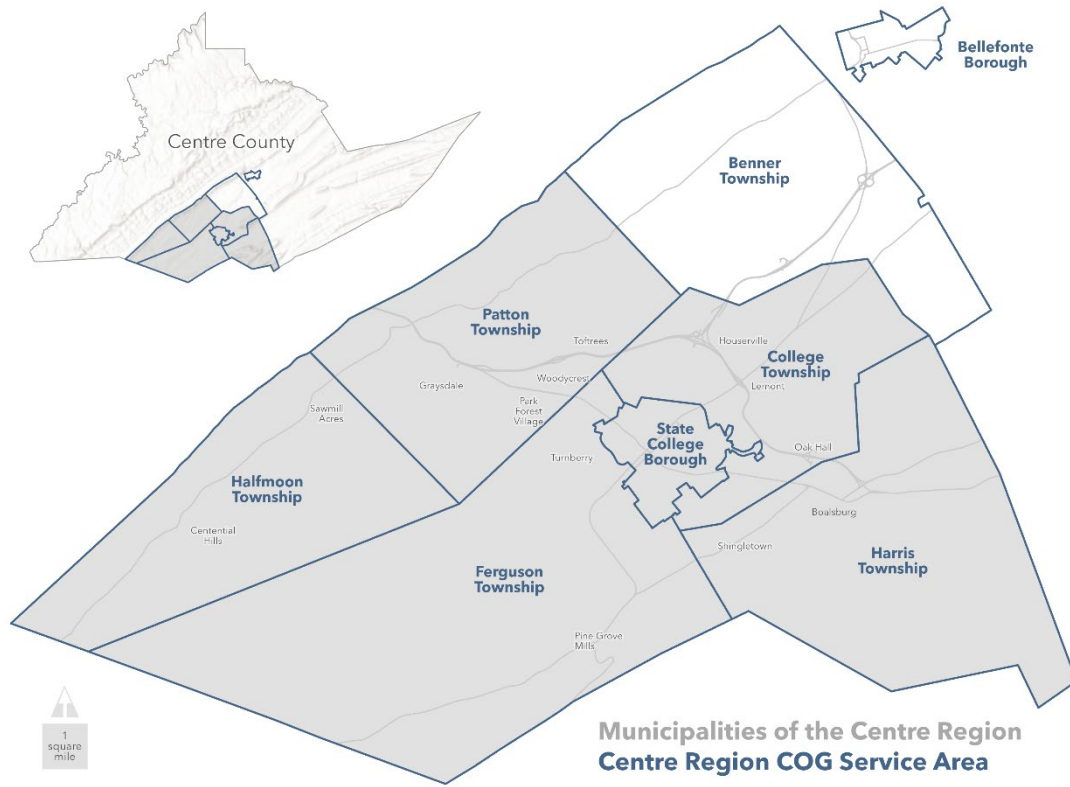
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## CENTRE REGION COG SERVICE AREA & MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES



**CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**2024 PROGRAM PLAN**  
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**GENERAL FORUM MEMBERS**  
2023

CHAIR: Jesse Barlow, State College Borough  
VICE CHAIR: Ronald Servello, Halfmoon Township

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**COLLEGE TOWNSHIP**  
**COUNCIL**

Carla Stilson (Chair)  
Dustin Best (Vice Chair)  
L. Eric Bernier  
D. Richard Francke  
Susan Trainor

**FERGUSON TOWNSHIP**  
**SUPERVISORS**

Lisa Strickland (Chair)  
Patricia Stephens (Vice Chair)  
Laura Dininni  
Corey Gracie-Griffin  
Jeremie Thompson

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**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP**  
**SUPERVISORS**

David Piper (Chair)  
Ronald Servello (Vice Chair)  
Charles Beck  
Patti Hartle  
Rose Ann Hoover

**HARRIS TOWNSHIP**  
**SUPERVISORS**

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

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**PATTON TOWNSHIP**  
**SUPERVISORS**

Elliot Abrams (Chair)  
Pamela Robb (Vice Chair)  
Sultan Magruder  
Dan Treviño  
Betsy Whitman

**STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH**  
**COUNCIL**

Jesse Barlow (President)  
Gopal Balachandran  
Deanna Behring  
Janet Engeman  
Nalini Krishnankutty  
B. Divine Lipscomb  
Peter Marshall  
Mayor: Ezra Nanes

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**STATE COLLEGE AREA**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Gretchen Brandt

**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Charima Young

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER 2024 Program Plan Overview

### Our Vision

*The Centre Region Council of Governments will continue striving to have a positive impact on the quality of life of those living, working, and playing in the Centre Region by maximizing the benefits of shared services through municipal partnerships.*

June 15, 2023

Dear Members of the General Forum,

The Agency Directors and I are pleased to present the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) 2024 Program Plan to the General Forum for review, comment, and referral to the six Centre Region municipalities. In 2020 a condensed Program Plan was prepared for 2021. This year, you have no doubt noticed a difference in the format for the 2024 Program Plan. The updated format continues to deliver relevant information, but more concisely and presents new budget requests using a detailed form. The Council of Governments' management team and I hope that you find the information enables you to have a clear understanding of the requests from various agencies. Also, as in recent years, the history and background of each COG program are available in the Program Preface, which can be found online at <https://www.crcog.net/preface>. For both newcomers and veterans, it is helpful to read and use these two documents together.

Earlier this year, priorities were established by the elected officials to guide staff as the Program Plan was prepared and new budget requests were developed:

### COG Priorities

- **Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).** COG programs are vitally important municipal programs and services that are rightly viewed as extensions of each of our municipal partners' core community services. Two key programs that are most aligned with this priority have an innovative joint recommendation for 2024: Combination Fire and Life Safety Inspector / Firefighter Operator/Driver positions. Please refer to the Regional Fire Protection Program and Centre Region Code Program to learn more about critical partnerships.

- **Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).** Each of the capital programs for 2024 contains recommendations regarding maintaining the facilities that enable your COG staff and programs to safely and effectively serve our residents and visitors to the region.
- **Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).** COG programs are very staff intensive, and it is just as critical for the COG to maintain its human infrastructure as it is to maintain its facilities. Last year the COG initiated the first Classification and Compensation study in over 17 years to ensure that the staff who are critical to providing the services that support the high quality of life in the Centre Region are appropriately compensated at market rates. The implementation plans are being reviewed now by COG Committees and details can be found in the Administration section of this document.
- **Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., including new purchases and adding items to the CIP).** Earlier this year, the Facilities Committee and the Facilities Project Manager took steps to begin developing a long-term plan for COG facilities. To support this longer-range planning (and strategic investment of resources) information will also be gathered on needs, capacity, priorities, lessons learned, and best practices. Information will also be collected on programmatic goals and project management, oversight, decision-making, policies, and procedures for current projects.

Once again, this year’s Program Plan provides data on each program’s mid-year financial status, current issues, and proposed programmatic and financial changes for 2024. 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 June 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 to suggest alternatives.

Last year, a Future Staffing and Studies Outlook section was added to the Program Plan. It includes a look beyond 2023 to anticipate possible staffing additions and studies in upcoming years.

## **TRENDS AFFECTING THE 2024 AND FUTURE BUDGETS**

The outlook for the future is a mixture of positives, as well as areas of concern and uncertainty. The following topics will be monitored in the coming year:

- **Economic Impacts and Uncertainty** – Though employment continues to be strong, inflation is directly impacting COG operations and COG staff. Post-pandemic supply chain issues still affect some markets and COG agencies still find long delays for vehicles, specialized equipment, and other critical items. Though interest rate increases have slowed inflation, the economy appears to remain strong, and some experts believe that a recession may still be possible. These are challenging times, and it is difficult or impossible to accurately predict the impacts that economic uncertainty will have on COG operations and COG staff. Lacking a reliable crystal ball, COG officials and staff must continue to concentrate on transparency,

flexibility, and resiliency.

- COG’s commitment to the environment continues – The COG is continuing to serve as a catalyst and an example in implementing sustainability measures that benefit our local and global environment. The COG is leading the way in the Centre Region and beyond through partnerships and demonstrating the economic advantages of sustainable measures 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 cost-effectively. (The SPPA is projected to save \$6,000 in year one for COG. Total savings for all participating organizations are \$135,000 annually; \$2 million over 15 years.) Similarly, the COG will continue to pursue public and private partnerships that help improve operations, financial performance, health, and equity. To aid in this effort, CRPA is proposing to hire an AmeriCorps member in late-2024 to help leverage new funding opportunities and identify savings for sustainability-related projects. Work performed by the AmeriCorps member will help remove barriers and educate the community about available resources to help municipalities, residents, and businesses capitalize on the opportunities related to energy conservation and conversion.
- Fire protection is becoming more expensive – The results and recommendations of the 2020 study of the Regional Fire Protection program continue to be implemented. The plan includes phasing in recommended additional paid staff as data and operation needs dictate. Staff continues to monitor data points and track volunteerism with the Alpha Fire Company. Volunteer fire companies in many communities have experienced drops in membership and/or challenges in recruiting, and the Centre Region is no different.
- Increasing focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion – In recent years, COG’s leadership team and other COG staff have participated in training and events to gain a greater understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion and how we can use this understanding to better serve the residents, customers, and visitors in the Centre Region and foster a greater sense of belonging COG staff. As the workforce evolves, our organization needs to continue to change and embrace the changing expectations of our current and prospective coworkers. The addition of the Juneteenth Holiday is a key step, as are updated policies that address working from home and ensuring that our employee benefits are competitive and meet current expectations.
- Preparing and Planning for the Future – In recent years, Facility Condition Assessments (FCAs) were completed for COG facilities. These FCAs informed the capital budgets shown in the 2024-28 Capital Improvement Plan. A goal of the Facilities Project Manager is to work with the Facilities Committee to develop a comprehensive long-range facilities plan to prepare for the future needs of the COG. Additionally, the recently completed IT study continues to guide the implementation of security measures and planning for the operational needs of the organization to work more efficiently in the future.

### 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. In addition, the COG Personnel Policy Handbook allows for a 1.5% merit adjustment. For the 2024 budget, the 12-month CPI-U for each month from July 2022 through June 2023 will be averaged. Staff plans to use this formula to calculate the COLA for 2024 and present the information to the HR Committee once the data is available.

### 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 support for the COG will increase or decrease (in absolute or relative terms) depending on how the factors shift among the municipalities. As this Program Plan has been prepared earlier than in prior years, all of the information needed to calculate the 2024 funding formula is not yet available. When the formula is updated, the information will be shared via a Matter of Record.

### CLOSING SUMMARY

Actions and decisions made during the past year continue to demonstrate 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 municipal service delivery system. This integrated relationship has also been described as – *we are COG and COG is us*.

The Centre Region Council of Governments partnership continues to set an example for others in the Commonwealth and beyond. Other areas of Pennsylvania that have faced challenges or are looking for new solutions have visited the Centre Region to learn how such partnerships and joint action could benefit their communities. The Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Governments is being reconstituted during 2023 and is expected to become a greater resource to those forming COGs, those COGs with limited resources, and COGs like the Centre Region Council of Governments. Our team will play a leadership role in this transformation.

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. My coworkers demonstrate their commitment to the region, its municipalities, and our shared vision of service and partnership each day as we collaboratively serve the residents, visitors, and businesses of the Centre Region. We are grateful for our dedicated elected officials and our residents and customers who value our shared service to our Centre Region community.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Norenberg  
COG Executive Director



## OVERVIEW OF THE CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

### MISSION

*The Centre Region Council of Governments supports the residents who live, work, and play in the diverse communities that make up the Centre Region by providing cost-effective, consistent, and high-quality public services.*

### VISION

*The Centre Region Council of Governments will continue striving to have a positive impact on the quality of life of those living, working, and playing in the Centre Region by maximizing the benefits of shared services through municipal partnerships.*

## 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. A main feature of this legislation is:

- 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 is not another layer of government.** The Centre Region Council of Governments provides the means of communication, cooperation, and joint action in the interest of the municipalities, individually and collectively.

## 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, 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 the Articles of Agreement, which are adopted by ordinance by each of the individual municipalities. The table below shows municipal participation for 2023.

### 2023 Municipal Participation in COG

Program Participation by Municipality	College Township	Ferguson Township	Halfmoon Township	Harris Township	Patton Township	State College Borough	Bellefonte Borough	Benner Township
Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Code Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Emergency Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Fire Protection	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Parks & Recreation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Refuse/Recycling	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Schlow Library	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

*Eight municipalities participate in various COG Programs.*

### ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Law requires that a municipality may engage in intergovernmental cooperation with another local government “upon passage of an ordinance” by the affecting governing bodies. 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. The Articles of Agreement may be found on the COG website, [www.crcog.net](http://www.crcog.net).

### 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.



## OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*The Office of Administration facilitates the delivery of high-quality and cost-effective public services through effective leadership and support for the agencies of the Centre Region Council of Governments and supports the work of the General Forum and implements its policies. The Administration Team facilitates effective financial and human resources management and promotes partnerships with COG Agencies and others to build shared solutions to common problems that cross jurisdictional boundary lines.*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As of December 31, 2022, the unaudited fund balance was \$119,530 which is \$41,647 higher than estimated in the adoption of the 2023 budget. This surplus is mainly due to lower personnel costs related to the delays in the hiring of the Finance Assistant and Human Resources Administrator, as well as lower than anticipated overall operating expenses.

The revenue and expenses for the period January 1 through May 31, 2023, were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2023 budget.

- The first COG-wide classification and compensation study in 17 years began in 2022. In a very competitive labor market and as many long-time employees reach retirement age, it is imperative to have an up-to-date, competitive salary scale to aid in recruiting qualified talent. Just as important, COG must focus on employee retention, staff morale, career development, and succession plans. Work areas include updating the pay scale for full-time positions and developing a competitive part-time pay scale, revising the overall classification system, and gathering the information necessary to update all job descriptions. A benefits survey was conducted along with the wage survey to provide an understanding of the total compensation provided to COG staff and comparable positions, and to guide future decisions. The following budget request outlines the proposed implementation of the study results.
- The COG completed an IT Study in mid-2022 that included an information technology assessment and the development of a five-year IT plan. The highest priority security improvements and risk management best practices were included in the 2023 budget. The next tier of improvements are included in the 2024-28 Capital Improvement Program. Recently, COG staff worked with our insurance broker to secure cybersecurity insurance for the coming year. It was made clear that continued vigilance and implementation of security measures like multifactor authentication will be necessary to obtain such insurance in the future.

- During early 2023, the COG Facilities Project Manager began developing the early stages of a long-term plan for COG facilities. The plan will guide future decisions regarding the development of facilities to meet operational needs most cost-effectively. The Facility Condition Assessments (FCAs) completed in recent years will help inform this process. FCAs gather data 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 FCA process include health and safety risks, age of the physical plant, maintenance and operational needs, overall impression, and capital asset reinvestment needs. The results and recommendations from the FCAs have helped staff develop recommendations for this Program Plan and the five-year CIP to ensure adequate resources are available to maintain facilities, support the programs and prioritize requests to flatten the CIP year-to-year requests.

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

- 2024 is a critical year for the implementation of the Classification and Compensation Study recommendations. Doing so will position the organization for the future with a fair and equitable compensation structure that retains experienced, skilled staff and attracts qualified applicants.

### **Looking Ahead**

- The recently completed IT Study includes recommendations for security improvements/practices, replacement software, replacement hardware, new/updated policies, and an IT Coordinator position to be implemented over the next few years. For COG Administration, the 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. One such system is the current general ledger accounting system, AccuFund. This system was selected in early 2014 and implemented on January 1, 2015. While AccuFund has served COG well over the years, its limitations (especially being able to access remotely and its reporting limitations) have had staff considering investigating the replacement of the software since 2020. This replacement has been delayed due to the COVID pandemic and institutional change – allowing time to consider the replacement of the accounting system in the larger context of the potential for organizational efficiency gains. While the replacement is not an imminent need, funds to replace AccuFund with a system that is better suited to the reporting and budgeting needs are prioritized to be accrued for in the Administration ending fund balance. It is recommended implementation occurs no later than January 1, 2026.
- To ensure that the ongoing financial needs of the COG are aligned with the strategic plans, it is recommended that a long-term Comprehensive Financial Plan be developed. Such a plan incorporates the feedback from the leadership and the stakeholders in a manner that details the various financial options and resources associated with the priorities in a manner that provides direction to facilitate long-term financial stability.

- As the CRCA implements the TRAIRS systems, COG Administration and other agencies are preparing to use the asset management and fleet management modules to manage COG facilities and fleet. Fleet data is captured regularly, and the TRAIRS software will be able to help track, plan, and evaluate the fleet. Expected benefits include shared resources, longer life expectancies, geographical planning/locating of equipment, improved maintenance practices, etc.

**A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Implementation of the recommendations of the Classification and Compensation Study.
- Continued implementation of IT security measures recommended in the 2022 IT Study.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- There are no revenue changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- The following pages outline proposed expenditure increases for 2024 to fund the implementation of the Classification and Compensation Study.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.

**E. Five-Year Staffing And Non-Capital Studies Projections:**

To prepare for the future needs of the organization, three positions are listed on the Five-Year Staffing table:

- Grant Writer / Administrator: To seek and take advantage of more grants for COG projects, operations, and facilities, a grant expert is proposed to support the needs of the wider COG organization. (2025)
- Deputy Executive Director: The size and scope of the Centre Region COG's organization are such that it is time to create a Deputy Executive Director to focus on internal operations (IT, HR, finance, etc.). This will enable the Executive Director to work more closely with the Executive Committee, Agency Directors, and Municipal Managers. (2025)
- Communications Administrator: To take full advantage of local media, social media, and other emerging communications forms, this position would support all COG agencies and coordinate messaging and strategy. (2026)

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Implementation of Classification and Compensation Study		
<b>Agency:</b> All Agencies	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP).  <input type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup> : \$ <u>253,000</u>
<b>Program:</b> All Programs		2024 Est. Operational Cost: \$ <u>0</u>
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  Human Resources Finance		2024 Est. Capital Cost: \$ <u>0</u>
<b>Agency Ranking:</b>  _____ 1 _____		2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup> : \$ <u>0</u>
<b>COG Ranking:</b>  _____		2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup> : \$ _____
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span><input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment</span> <span><input type="checkbox"/> New</span> <span><input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair</span> <span><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff</span> <span><input type="checkbox"/> Study</span> </div>		
<b>Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup>:</b> \$ _____		

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

In 2022 COG contracted with GovHR USA to conduct a COG-wide Classification and Compensation Study. Prior to that, a COG-wide Classification and Compensation Study had not been conducted in more than 17 years, which has contributed to a number of positions currently being paid under market.

Job descriptions and job analysis questionnaires were completed and reviewed, staff were interviewed by the consultant, a wage and benefit survey was conducted. Over all, 14 classifications were studied covering 88 positions: 98 full-time staff, 18 regular part-time, plus Library Pages and seasonal staff. The Study outcome for wages is as follows: There are no positions being paid over market, 62 positions are being paid in the market range, and 69 positions are currently being paid below market.

Add link to the study can be found within the June Human Resources Committee and Executive Committee Agenda Packet folders on SharePoint at [www.crcog.net](http://www.crcog.net).

**A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

Phase I - Effective with the first pay in November 2023 implement the title changes as recommended by the Study and move the 69 positions currently paid under market to the bottom of the newly proposed salary ranges. Estimated cost is \$38,900 for 2023. A transfer of \$50,000 from Insurance Reserve to the Administration budget was already approved in the 2023 budget process to help with initial implementation expenses. Effective January 1, 2024, salary ranges slide by 5% (per COG practice) to allow continued growth for current employees and to stay competitive with the market as we bring in new hires. All eligible staff receive the annual COLA and merit per COG policy.

Some of the Insurance Reserve fund balance will be used to help ease the financial burden on the municipalities over a multi-year period (2024-2025 approx. \$150,000) while still ensuring the integrity of the fund so it can be used for supplementing health insurance premiums and employee wellness initiatives. This also brings the reserve fund balance more in-line with overall expectations.

Phase II - Address areas where wage compression exists. Wage compression occurs when a newer hire is earning about the same, or the same as, a tenured employee.

**B. Impact if Not Funded:**

Retention and recruitment will suffer greatly.

If not implemented in a fair and timely manner, current staff will feel undervalued, morale will suffer, which will cause poor attitudes and poor performance. Some staff may resign. COG will spend more funds on advertising, recruitment, and training needs. COG will have trouble recruiting qualified staff as the pay is not competitive and COG will spend more funds on training new hires to bring them to a level of performance to be successful in their positions. Unfortunately, once staff have been trained, we will be unable to retain them, and they will leave for higher paying jobs. COG will be a stepping stone, and, the cycle will start over again.

Further, if Phase II is not implemented in a fair and timely manner, tenured staff will feel undervalued, causing many of the same issues as stated above. They may resign or retire and be less likely to help in training and mentoring new hires. Phase II is equally as important as Phase I.

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**Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.





## CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS CONTINGENCY BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

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.

The General Forum, at the recommendation of the Finance Committee, set the threshold of the Contingency Fund balance at \$35,000, or 1% of the total COG Budget, in 2010. An expenditure under \$4,000 can be approved by the Executive Director, while those over \$4,000 must be approved by the General Forum.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As of December 31, 2022, the unaudited fund balance was \$35,309. For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, neither the General Forum nor the Executive Director has authorized any expenditures from the Contingency Fund. However, a request is pending for \$5,000 to fund the facilitator for the Parks and Recreation Governance Special Committee.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

During 2024 it is anticipated that municipal contributions will be requested to replenish any Contingency funds utilized during 2023 to return the fund balance to the approved fund level of \$35,000 by the end of 2024.

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Ensure that all known expenditures are budgeted in the proper funds so as not to require the use of the Contingency Fund.
- Review the funding level threshold level compared to the budget and make possible recommendations based on the previously agreed to 1% level.

#### B. Revenue Changes for 2024:

- If Contingency Funds are expended during the remainder of 2023, it can be assumed that municipal support will be required to replace those expenses. Depending on the amount utilized, the replenishment could be done in a single year or spread over a couple of years as has been done in the past.

#### C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:

- There are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

D. **Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## COG BUILDING CAPITAL BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*The purpose of the COG Building Capital Budget is to finance capital improvements, capital replacements, and major repairs to the COG Building. This building is the hub of the Centre Region Council of Governments and its internal and external collaboration. In addition to General Forum and COG Committee meetings, the General Forum room and COG building conference rooms host many in-person and hybrid meetings and workshops that advance the goals of the COG and its agencies.*

### 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. The ownership of the building will transfer to the COG at the end of the lease.

Items of note include:

- In the early part of 2023, approved work by the General Forum was largely completed relating to audio/visual improvements to the General Forum room. Improvements included a reworking of the A/V rack, the installation of two new projectors, updating control systems, and making adjustments related to sound engineering since acoustical panels were added to the meeting space in 2022. The vendor will return later in 2023 to complete a small list of technical punch list items but staff has been pleased with these improvements, especially as they relate to the additional sound engineering that was completed. Staff will continue to test and assess the performance of the changes that were made and may make future recommendations to improve the meeting experience if needed.
- To increase the energy efficiency of the COG building, re-lamping the building and parking lot lighting with LED lamps has been progressing. Exterior lighting will be fully converted to LED in 2023. Most interior relamping has taken place in conjunction with other projects or through targeted efforts in 2023. The remainder of the relamping will take place during the Administration Suite renovations planned for later this year.
- The Administration Suite renovations project is anticipated to be completed later in 2023. The project budget is currently set at \$75,000 (\$40,000 funded in 2022 plus an additional \$35,000 being funded in 2023).
- Routine repairs and maintenance for the exterior of the COG building are needed in 2023, including staining, plaster repairs, and sidewalk repairs for approximately \$25,000.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The 2024 COG Building budget and the 2024-2028 CIP include information from the Site Visit Report and the Assessment of the parking lot and grounds at the COG facility conducted for the COG Facilities Committee.

In 2023, staff plan to continue working with the Facilities Committee to develop a long-term facilities plan for the COG, including for the COG building. This will include an evaluation of the roof, HVAC, electrical distribution, and general exterior and interior finishes.

### A. Priorities for 2024:

- The common area appliances in the COG building are mostly original to the building, so it is time to plan for replacement with more energy-efficient products.
- To continue the implementation of the 2022 IT Study recommendations related to security, it is proposed that the replacement of the COG Building Wi-Fi network and other security measures be completed in 2024, along with initial planning for the replacement of the out-of-date accounting software and HR system.

(For details, please refer to the CIP.)

### B. Revenue Changes for 2024:

- There are no revenue changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

### C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:

- There are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

### D. Unfunded Requests:

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## INSURANCE RESERVE BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*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.*

*As funds have been paid by both the employees and the employer, both groups rightly watch the expenditures from this fund closely. This fund represents one of the key internal partnerships between the staff, the employer, and COG member municipalities. As such, this section receives close attention every year.*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, expenditures from the Insurance Reserve Budget are anticipated to be in line with 2023 Budget estimates. Conversely, revenues are anticipated to be slightly higher than anticipated as PMHIC is expected to provide COG with a \$192,316 reimbursement in 2023, an increase from the 2022 reimbursement of \$171,649, and the 2023 budgeted reimbursement was estimated at \$186,157 based on the previous seven-year 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.

In 2018, the Finance Committee established the methodology 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. For the 2023 budget, that number is estimated to be \$186,157. The Insurance Reserve fund's expenditures would then be calculated on that revenue assumption coupled with the estimated beginning fund balance – the staff 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 low 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.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, the December 31, 2023, ending fund balance is expected to

be \$384,839.

For 2024, the COG Executive Director recommends the following expenditures:

- Approximately \$135,000 to offset medical insurance premiums (\$190,000 in 2023). Staff recommends continuing the Employer/Employee/Insurance Reserve split of 80/10/10.
- \$30,000 to fund unexpected and unbudgeted increases in medical insurance costs due to employee changes.
- \$100,000 to partially offset wage adjustments recommended by the Classification and Compensation study for 2024 and \$50,000 for 2025.
- A benefit survey was conducted along with the wage survey to enable the COG to have a complete picture of comparable employee compensation. The benefits survey results will guide the planned evaluation of the current COG Dental Vision program. Staff plans to conduct a comprehensive review of the dental and vision reimbursement program in 2023. Any plan changes that result from that review may not occur until 2024 when the current two-year vision cycle is up.
- Funding for the Employee Relations Committee (ERC) to conduct a Wellness Program (\$30,000 in 2023). 2024 expenditures are anticipated to include:
  - Funding for an employee health improvement reimbursement program to partially subsidize participation in a gym, yoga, or other professionally supervised activity that encourages exercise and movement for full and permanent year-round part-time COG employees and their family members on the COG health insurance plan.
  - Funding for First Aid, AED, and Fire Safety training from the American Red Cross.
- Staff is planning to create an employee Safety Committee in 2023 to increase workplace safety, and staff training and education. In turn, this should help to decrease liability and potentially workers' compensation premiums. (\$10,000 was set aside for this as part of the fund balance carrying forward).
- In 2022, a transfer to the Schlow Library from the Insurance Reserve was approved for \$75,000 to cover the capital cost of improving the HVAC systems for the dielectric union and the vent cleaning projects as identified post-pandemic, of which in 2023 \$16,591 remains available and will carry forward into 2024.

The COG's ERC is comprised of staff members from the agencies and the Human Resources Administrator. For the past several years, ERC members have consulted with the COG's medical insurance representatives and received training on setting up "healthy employee" initiatives. National data shows that healthcare costs are directly related to the overall well-being of the organization's employees in both a physical and mental capacity. The ERC strives to deliver

healthy initiatives in a manner that is conducive to participation for employees who have increasingly busy schedules.

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

### **Departures from the 2023 Budget Plan**

The only departure appears to be that the PHMIC reimbursement will be approximately \$85,000 less than budgeted.

### **Known Changes for 2024**

At the point of Program Plan preparation, staff believes the Insurance Reserve budget for 2024 will look a lot like it did in 2023 and

#### **A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Continuing the 80/10/10 split for health insurance premiums.
- Utilize \$100,000 in fund balance to partially offset the initial impacts of the wage adjustments recommended by the Gov HR Classification and Compensation Study and hold \$50,000 in reserve to ease the impacts in the second year following implementation of the study results.

#### **B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- The PHMIC reimbursement for 2024 will be budgeted at approximately \$192,153 based on the approved formula.

#### **C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- (See above priorities)

#### **D. Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.





## COG UNEMPLOYMENT BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

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

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As of December 31, 2022, the unaudited fund balance was \$134,952, which is approximately \$3,768 higher than estimated due to the lower-than-anticipated claims in 2022 and the associated \$12,900 credit balance with the Commonwealth.

Due to fraudulent claims experienced during 2021 related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth credited the COG the approximately \$12,900 of fraudulent claims to be utilized to offset future claims. The credit balance was utilized during all of 2022 and into the first quarter of 2023.

As part of the 2023 COG Budget, it was determined that the Unemployment Compensation fund balance was exceeding the identified target levels, therefore, \$35,000 in refunds were issued back to funds identified as having higher than normal target levels thereby reducing municipal support to those funds.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

COG will continue to make transfers into the Unemployment Fund in an amount determined to be sufficient to pay claims as directed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

- With the return to normal operations, while taking into consideration the abnormalities occurring within the unemployment claims from 2020 – 2023 as well as the reduction in seasonal maintenance staff within the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Parks Agency, it is very difficult to determine the future funding requirements for the Unemployment Fund.
- Staff should have more information available prior to the development of the 2024 Detailed Budget but will most likely propose a reduction in the Interfund Transfers from the individual funds for 2024 based on anticipated trends.

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Closely monitor the fund balance for the Unemployment Fund and trends to ensure appropriate levels are maintained.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Monitor trends through mid-year to ensure Interfund Transfers are budgeted appropriately for 2024.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- Funds will be budgeted appropriately to meet the identified target levels and maintain the fund balance.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

The six participating municipalities and Penn State University have a joint Emergency Operations Plan and share an Emergency Operations Center located on the University Park Campus. During a major emergency or disaster, Centre Region and Penn State emergency management staff activate the Emergency Operation Center in support of the participating municipalities and the University. Additionally, both Centre Region and Penn State staff plan for and staff an operations center for major special events in the Centre Region. This shared service and partnership meets and exceeds the requirements of the Commonwealth's Title 35 requiring each municipality to have an Emergency Management Coordinator, Emergency Operations Center, and Emergency Operations Plan.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to May 31, 2023, revenue and expenditures for the Office of Emergency Management were consistent with the projections contained in the 2023 budget.

The actual unaudited December 31, 2022, Emergency Management fund balance was \$47,949, which is \$3,567 more than the estimated balance of \$44,382.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Reorganization of Centre Region Community Emergency Response Team training and hosting two CERT courses in 2024.
- Emergency Management staff will continue all aspects of the program which are related to Emergency Operations in the Centre Region.
- Centre Region Community Emergency Response Team training will resume, and current team members will be reorganized beginning in September 2023.
- Provide support for large events such as Memorial Day Weekend, 4th Fest, Arts Festival, Ag Progress Days, and Penn State Football. These large events increase the need for resource management as well as operations support.

#### B. Revenue Changes for 2024:

- There are no revenue changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

C. **Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- There are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

D. **Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONTINGENCY BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

Funds in the program may be utilized by the Emergency Management Coordinator to procure equipment or resources when responding to an emergency that threatens the life of individuals in the Centre Region. The Emergency Management Coordinator as directed by the Emergency Management Council may use these funds for non-life-threatening issues impacting the Centre Region during a disaster or major emergency. This Budget was established in accordance with the Joint Articles of Agreement for the Regional Emergency Management Program.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to May 31, 2023, revenue and expenditures for the Emergency Management Contingency Fund are consistent with the projections contained in the COG Budget.

Looking forward to the last seven months of 2023, the Emergency Management Coordinator does not foresee any planned expenditures for the contingency fund.

The actual unaudited December 31, 2022, Emergency Management Contingency fund balance was \$102,559, which is \$428 more than the estimated balance of \$102,131.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking ahead to 2024, the Emergency Management Contingency Budget municipal support would be based on the 2023 Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment as approved by the Articles of Agreement. At present, it appears the CPI will be about 6.9% (\$7,100). This translates into a proposed budget request of approximately \$5,900 with the \$1,200 (estimate) balance being made up by interest earnings.

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Increase fund balance by estimated CPI.

#### B. Revenue Changes for 2024:

- There are no revenue changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

#### C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:

- There are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

D. **Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## CENTRE REGION CODE ADMINISTRATION OVERALL AGENCY

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

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

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Fund Balance - Near the mid-point of 2023, the fund balance for the New Construction Program has increased slightly from the beginning of the year. The COG staff will continue to monitor the fund balance and provide an assessment to the Public Safety and Finance Committees.
- New Construction Program - Through May of 2023, the New Construction Program was operating at a gain. The building permit revenue of \$989,547 as of May 31, 2023, 49% of the total projected 2023 amount of \$2,035,000. As of May 31, 2023, \$161 million in new construction was permitted compared to \$126 million for the same period in 2022.
- Code Software Study - Since identifying many issues with the permitting and licensing software used by the CRCA and the Centre Region municipalities, it was determined that it was in the best interest of the software users to search for and adopt a more suitable software package. In 2021, the Working Group identified TRAIRS as the preferred software package for the Region to use in the future. The CRCA negotiated with TRAIRS and signed a 10-year contract for a hosted software solution available for use by all participating municipalities at no charge. The details of the recommendation will be further detailed in the Where Are We Going Section.
- During the 2022 budget process, questions centered around fund balance, fee structure, and service model. To better understand these issues and make recommendations to the Public Safety and Finance Committees, a working group, the CRCA Service Model Committee, comprised of Robert Poole (Poole Anderson Construction/S&A homes), Adam Brumbaugh (College Township Manager), Richard Francke (Hamilton Plaza Corporation), Erin Meitzler (L.S. Fiore Inc.), Evan Myers (Accuweather), and Staff (Eric Norenberg, Walter Schneider, and Tiffany Baker) was formed and has been meeting bi-monthly since February 2022.

- To increase customer service, the CRCA is adding the ability to print and scan large format documents in the second half of 2022, as approved in the 2022 Program Plan. Currently, all printing and scanning must be done off-site. Having the printing done off-site requires additional time for the staff to drop the documents off and pick them up, resulting in a significant loss of productivity. The anticipated budgetary adjustment would be \$5,000 per year, covering the cost of the equipment lease and the printing supplies needed. (At this time, it is not anticipated that these services will be extended to the public under normal circumstances. However, fees will be established to recoup costs if printing or scanning was needed in an unusual situation.) This project has been carried over into 2023 due to coordination with the TRAIRS project and the electronic plan review project.
- In 2022 the CRCA and participating municipalities started the process to update the regionally used Centre Region Building Safety & Property Maintenance Code, 2017 edition. The review started with a public comment period and stakeholder meetings in the fall of 2022 and municipal meetings during the second quarter of 2023. It is anticipated that the document will be adopted during June and July and will go into effect on August 1, 2023. The most pronounced change will be the updated name, Centre Region Rental Housing & Building Safety Code, allowing the general public to better understand where the applicable rental housing regulations can be found.
- Electronic Archiving: In keeping with the recommendations of the 2010 operational study and the move to electronic equipment in the field, the CRCA will be moving toward archiving plans and design documents in electronic format. After converting the existing structures (rental housing permits & fire permits) data to electronic format, and archiving the data in the TRAIRS system, the CRCA is proposing to start selectively converting new construction permit data. It is proposed to budget an additional \$25,000 above the document scanning annual service cost to start converting new construction project documents for facilities such as Mount Nittany Medical Center, and the larger housing projects.
- Fleet Management - Over the past four years, municipal comments have been received regarding the need for a fleet management plan. The fleet management plan will be addressed in two ways moving forward. First, with the acquisition of the TRAIRS software package for regional use, the package contains the Fleet Centrl and Asset Centrl modules. These two modules will track the CRCA vehicle fleet, including vehicle inventory, maintenance costs, depreciation value, and vehicle condition data. The second part of the fleet management program will be policy-based to allow repair and replacement decisions to be made utilizing the vehicle data that will be routinely tracked. The policy development of this document is ongoing to ensure that the data categories identified for use are captured during the initial setup of the TRAIRS software package.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

- The basic TRAIRS implementation has taken place with the CRCA and the interested member municipalities are working in the system and issuing permits. Moving forward the region will be expanding the software implementation to include field data collection and

inspection entry. In addition, we will be moving toward the implementation of the citizen self-service features of the program, allowing permit applicants and contractors better access to information at all times of the day.





## CENTRE REGION CODE ADMINISTRATION NEW CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM BUDGET

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

From January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenue is in line with budgeted projections, with 49% of the 2023 budgeted building permit revenue received. Expenditures for the New Construction program are generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2023 budget.

The 2021 ending year fund balance was \$2,181,802; the unaudited 2022 ending year fund balance was \$2,403,181, a \$221,379 increase. It is important to note that the 2022 ending fund balance included funds for building permits received for services not yet provided. This situation occurs because many large projects pay for the permit at the beginning of the construction period which could extend for two or three years. Below is a comparison of building permit revenue for the first five months of each year since 2019:

2023	\$ 989,547
2022	\$ 969,973
2021	\$ 606,960
2020	\$ 441,799
2019	\$1,288,327

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

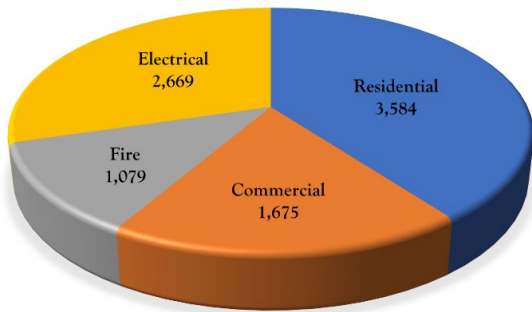
- Continue to implement additional recommendations as identified in the 2010 Code Evaluation Study for the Agency's future organizational and operational needs as approved by the General Forum, including:
  - Implementation of a citizen access system to allow permit applicants access to review comments and inspection records.
  - Increased use of checklists and automated report forms to assist permit applicants in quickly and efficiently achieving compliance.
- With a focus on sustainability and green technologies, the CRCA will continue to investigate green building options and their application to the building code and keep the Public Safety Committee informed of the findings. This includes proposed updates to the Uniform Construction Code and the Centre Region Building Safety and Property Maintenance Code.

- Implement new technology for automated inspections using tablets and laptop computers. Advancements in technology could allow for increased consistency, accuracy, more efficient inspections, and a better method of communication between staff. Implementing the new technology could also allow for improved interagency communication between the CRCA and the participating municipalities and improve overall customer service.

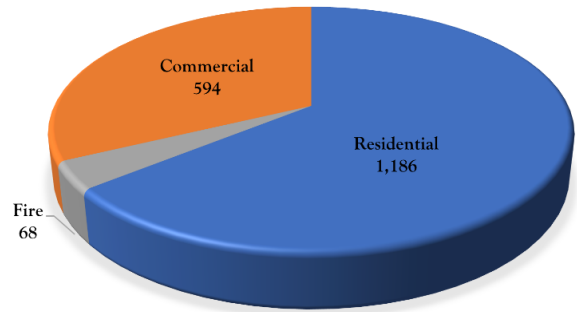
**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- The cost of a building permit will be investigated during the next several months. Then, based on the current and projected regional construction volume and anticipated expenses for the CRCA, staff will recommend to the Public Safety Committee if the building permit fee multiplier should be altered from its current level of 0.0070 for 2024.

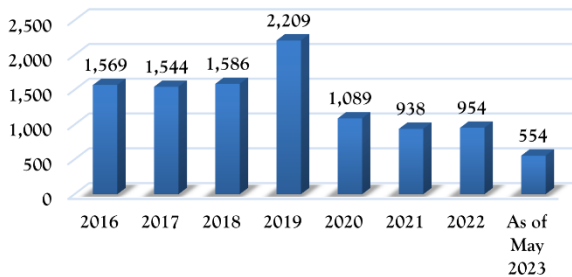
2022 New Construction Inspections



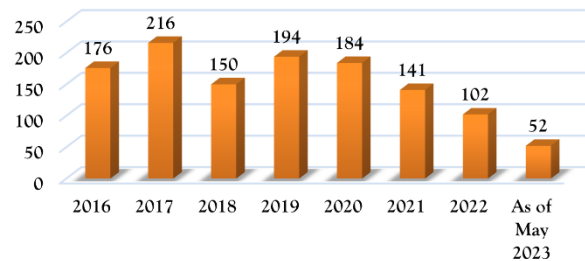
Number of New Construction Plan Reviews in 2022



Number of Building Permits Issued



New Single Family Home Construction 2016 – 2023



**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- There are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## CENTRE REGION CODE ADMINISTRATION EXISTING STRUCTURES PROGRAM BUDGET

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

From January 1 through May 2023, revenue and expenditures for the Existing Structures Budget were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2023 budget. The unaudited 2022 ending year fund balance is \$157,392. This amount is \$56,492 more than the \$100,900 estimated in the 2023 Budget.

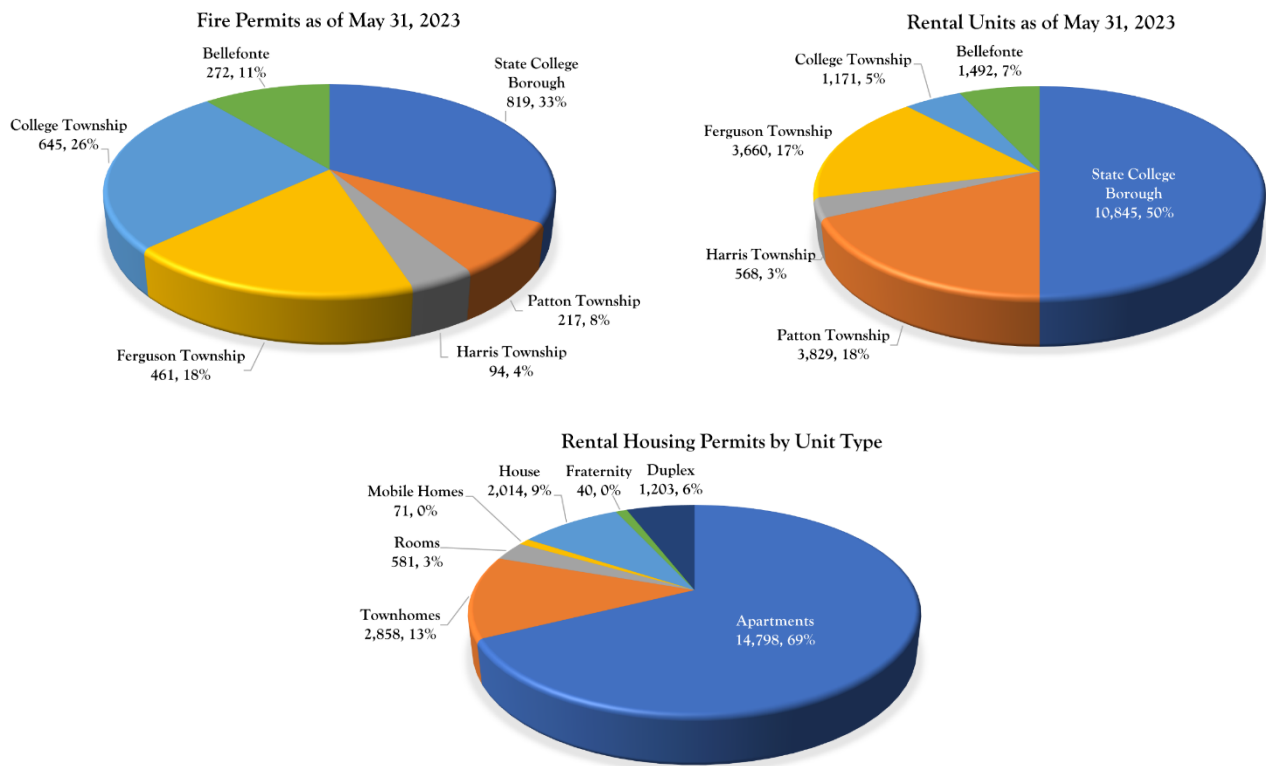
### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Continue to offer the Rental Housing Maintenance Training Program quarterly to realtors, owners, and operators of the Centre Region and Bellefonte Borough rental housing stock and assist them in pre-inspecting their units and educating them on maintenance between inspections. The program goal is to motivate and provide the tools for Rental Property Managers to be proactive instead of reactive in managing their properties.
- An electronic customer survey to assist in gauging the level of customer service in conjunction with Administration staff was implemented in 2022. The results of the survey will help to identify opportunities to make service enhancements or improve efficiencies.
- Evaluate and update the curriculum for the CRCA Fire Prevention and Life Safety Public Education Program to better serve the Centre Region residents and better integrate the schools' curriculum.

#### B. Revenue Changes for 2024:

- During the next several months, staff will evaluate the fee schedule for rental housing and fire permits. Currently, the typical annual cost of a rental housing permit is \$45. The cost of a fire permit varies based on the size of the building and the hazards that are present. The last change in the rental housing permit fees occurred in 2022.



**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

Beyond what is listed below in Section D, there are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

The Existing Structures Budget has the following unfunded request for 2024:

- Personnel Change - The Centre Region Code Administration (CRCA) and the Centre Regional Fire Protection Program (CRFPP) are proposing the addition of three (3) new positions and the filling of one (1) existing position that has not been filled to date in 2024. The positions would be jointly classified as Fire and Life-Safety Inspectors for the CRCA and Firefighters for the CRFPP. The personnel costs for the four (4) positions would be jointly shared by the CRCA and CRFPP. The supporting costs for equipment and supplies would be borne by the respective department. It is proposed that the staff members work a four-day work cycle consisting of two (2) ten-hour days, two (2) fourteen-hour nights, and then would be off for four (4) days. This proposed schedule allows twenty-four-hour coverage across all four positions.

The ten-hour daylight shifts (8 am to 6 pm) would be CRCA inspection times working out of the CRCA office during the normal business week, with weekend shifts being used for public education activities, special inspections, program

development, and employee development with staff working out of one of the regional fire stations and available for response. These four (4) positions would also be the primary on-call for the CRCA, reducing the existing overtime budget. The fourteen-hour overnight shifts (6 pm to 8 am) would be providing firefighter/apparatus operator coverage for the CRFPP in support of the volunteer Alpha Fire Company. In addition, the staff would be working on support functions at one of the regional fire stations when not responding to emergency calls for service.

The positions would be CRCA employees, reporting to the Division Manager for Existing Structures with a portion of their time being bought out by the CRFPP. These four (4) positions are anticipated to be new positions with a new job description that combines the existing Fire and Life-Safety Inspector requirements and the Firefighter/Apparatus Operator requirements. Staff reviews would be handled by the CRCA with input provided by the CRFPP staff assigned to supervise them. The four (4) positions will be permanent joint positions and the ability of existing staff to migrate from the current Fire and Life-Safety Inspector positions would only occur if a vacancy occurred and application was made during the search process.

The addition of these positions does not come without a cost. In addition to the financial cost, the relationship between the CRCA and CRFPP that these shared positions will create results in an employment relationship that will preclude CRCA staff members from volunteering for the Alpha Fire Company going forward. The rule that “public sector employers may not allow their employees to volunteer, without compensation, additional time to do the same work for which they are employed” is an FLSA rule designed to protect both the employer and employee.

While the proposed schedule creates a forty-eight (48) hour work week for these four (4) positions, by FLSA regulations the position would not be due overtime based on the ruling for firefighters allowing for flexibility in schedules allowing work hours up to and including 106 hours in a fourteen (14) day cycle to be paid at the base compensation rate.

The financial cost of this proposal is an annual salary cost of \$115,731 per employee, or \$462,924. This cost would be split evenly between the CRCA and CRFPP with each agency supporting \$231,462 of the cost. The CRCA would have an annual cost of \$8,745 for annual support services including staff development, supplies, IT services, etc. for a total annual cost of \$34,981. There would be a one-time cost for each employee of \$3,990 for their computer, iPad, cell phone, and accessories, for a total of \$15,960. The four (4) positions will be sharing a vehicle. The cost of this vehicle is \$35,000 and would also be added to the capital improvement plan (CIP) for future replacement schedule as part of the CRCA fleet.

The CRFPP would have an initial cost of \$5,500 per position for personal protective equipment and \$500 for a pre-employment physical and eye

examination, for a total cost of \$24,000. Additionally, certification costs could range from \$195 to \$585 per position during the first three years of employment.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Four (4) New Fire & Life-Safety Inspectors/Firefighters & Driver Operators		
<b>Agency:</b> CRCA/CRFPP	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities). <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). ----- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	<b>2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>232k/232k</u>
<b>Program:</b> Existing Structures		<b>2024 Est. Operational Cost:</b> \$ <u>50.9k/26.4k</u>
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  Public Safety Personnel Finance		<b>2024 Est. Capital Cost:</b> \$ <u>35k/0</u>
<b>Agency Ranking:</b>  ----- 1/1		<b>2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>0/0</u>
<b>COG Ranking:</b>  -----		<b>2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>282.9k/258.4k</u>
<b>Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>267k/234.4k</u>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Study		

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

The CRCA and the CRFPP are proposing the addition of 4 positions. The positions would be jointly classified as Inspectors for the CRCA and Firefighters for the CRFPP. The personnel costs for the 4 positions would be jointly shared by the CRCA and CRFPP. The supporting costs for equipment and supplies would be borne by the respective department. It is proposed that the staff members work a four-day work cycle consisting of 2 10-hr days, 2 14-hr nights, and then would be off for 4 days. This proposed schedule allows 24-hr coverage across all 4 positions.

The 10-hr daylight shifts would be CRCA inspection times working out of the CRCA office during the normal business week, with weekend shifts being used for public education, special inspections, program development, and employee development working out of one of the regional fire stations and available for response. These positions would be the primary on-call for the CRCA reducing the existing overtime budget. The 14-hr over-night shifts would be providing firefighter/apparatus operator coverage for the CRFPP in support of the Vol Alpha Fire Co. Staff would be working on support functions at one of the regional fire stations when not responding to emergency calls.

**A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

The positions would be CRCA employees, with a portion of their time being bought out by the CRFPP. These 4 positions are anticipated to be new positions with a new job description that combines the existing Fire and Life-Safety Inspector requirements and the Firefighter/Apparatus Operator requirements. Reviews would be handled by the CRCA with input provided by the CRFPP staff. The 4 positions will be permanent joint positions and the ability of existing staff to migrate between the current Fire and Life-Safety Inspector positions would only occur if a vacancy occurred and application was made during the search process.

In addition to the financial cost, the relationship between the CRCA and CRFPP that these shared positions will create, results in an employment relationship that will preclude CRCA staff members from volunteering for the Alpha Fire Company going forward.

While the proposed schedule creates a 48 hr work week for these 4 positions, by FLSA regulations the position would not be due overtime based on the ruling for firefighters allowing for flexibility in schedules allowing work hours up to and including 106 hours in a 14 day cycle.

**B. Impact if Not Funded:**

With respect to the CRCA, if the proposed positions are not funded the impact will be increased overtime for existing staff members due to the projected work load from rental housing inspections, fire inspections, fire alarm license activities, and public education activities.

With respect to the CRFPP if these positions are not funded, the Centre Region would continue to see gaps in rapid fire/rescue service response. The CRFPP has identified gaps in driver/operator staffing. During these gaps, emergency response times can increase 4-8 minutes. As these gaps increase, the life safety risk to our community increases.

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**Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.



## CENTRE REGION CODE ADMINISTRATION CAPITAL BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

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

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

From January 1 through May 2023, there were no unexpected revenues or expenditures for the CRCA Capital Budget.

The unaudited 2022 ending year fund balance is \$332,619, a \$137,123 increase from the \$195,496 projected in the budget. The Agency was unable to purchase budgeted vehicles due to supply chain issues. These vehicles will be purchased in 2024.

The 2022 and 2023 budgets anticipated revenue from the sale of the replaced fleet vehicles, totaling \$9,000. The Agency could not purchase replacement vehicles and was forced to continue to run the fleet beyond their useful life and value. In 2023, the vehicles were donated instead to the State College Area School District Career and Technical School program. State College Area School District paid the cost of title transfers for five Ford Escapes and one Ford Focus. The auto repair program will use the vehicles as a learning tool.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Replace two Ford Escapes used for the New Construction Program, \$35,000/each.

#### B. Revenue Changes for 2024:

- There are no revenue changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

#### C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:

- There are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

D. **Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## SCHLOW CENTRE REGION LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*Schlow Centre Region Library is The Centre of Reading and Learning. We value community, diversity, excellence, integrity, and innovation.*

The Schlow Centre Region Library (SCRL) is a popular destination for Centre Region residents. Users can browse over 175,000 books and media and use public computers and Wi-Fi while working, playing, or relaxing individually or in groups. Award-winning Adult, Teen, and Children's Services foster community, family fun, social skills, and lifelong literacy skills and provide age-appropriate programming throughout the year. The SCRL offers many cultural and educational programs such as preschool storytimes, children's STEM activities, author visits, concerts, and lectures.

SCRL maintains a critical digital branch website, [schlowlibrary.org](http://schlowlibrary.org) featuring free eBooks and eAudiobooks, magazines, music, movies, tutoring, and resources for learners of all ages, as well as providing account management, book reviews and recommendations, event registration, and program calendars.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Schlow Centre Region Library (SCRL) Operating Budget remained mostly in line with projections from January to April 2023, though changes may occur later in the year. The unaudited fund balance at the start of 2023 was \$290,340 which is \$45,678 higher than the budgeted amount of \$244,662. This increase was due to slightly lower personnel costs as well as lower-than-expected operating expenses. The proposed state aid for SCRL's 2024-2025 fiscal year is \$263,342 for 12 months.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

At their July meeting, the Library Board of Trustees will review/approve the 2024 Program Plan. All activities are in line with the Library's mission and Strategic Plan. They satisfy the requirements of the District Library Center contract and meet most state standards for public library state aid.

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Address the community's needs identified during the 2023 Schlow Strategic Planning process.

- Continually evaluate and adjust our expenses for library collection development to align with changing patron needs and reflect the diversity of our community.
- Support ongoing pandemic recovery efforts, recognizing the long-term mental, financial, and educational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Assist families in preparing children for academic success through early literacy skills and socialization through our programs and passive play activities available in the Children’s Department.
- Take a leadership role in promoting information privacy and security best practices within our library business and throughout the wider community.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Intergovernmental Revenue – State and District Aid will likely remain the same. County Aid remains unknown. There is no annual inflation factor or guarantee for these forms of aid.
- Municipal Support – Halfmoon Township has chosen to withdraw from the Joint Articles of Agreement between the Schlow Centre Region Library and the municipalities of the Centre Region. Using the 2023 COG Library Funding Formula, this represents a loss of at least \$47,825.
- Fees and Miscellaneous Revenue – Almost all the fee and miscellaneous revenue budget lines seem to have settled into post-pandemic levels, except for Test Proctoring, which has increased from 2022 to 2023 by approximately \$250.
- Fines – Revenues have stabilized as extended forgiveness policies and automatic due date renewals continue to minimize barriers to library access and economic inequality. Patron reimbursement for unreturned and lost items will continue.
- Contributions & Donations – Through relationship building and strategic communications, the library has been able to maintain year-over-year donation levels, despite the pandemic and other economic challenges. The success of the 2022 fundraising and early results during CY 2023 indicates that the library is still a philanthropic priority in the community.
- Parking – This revenue is suspended due to SCRL’s parking equipment unexpectedly reaching End of Life (EOL) and being no longer PCI compliant. A decision on whether parking revenue will begin again has been delayed due to an investigation of new options to partner with the State College Borough on a parking solution.
- Interest – Interest earnings remain higher than budgeted for in 2023 due to

favorable interest rates.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- Salaries & Wages - Full and Part Time Staff - It is currently unclear how the COG Classification and Compensation Study will affect the library's budget. However, SCRL's main focus is raising the wages of Library Pages, as they hold the lowest hourly rate positions and face more competition in the local job market than other entry-level roles.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- The Library has no unfunded requests for 2024 beyond those impacts as noted in sections B and C: (1) the Classification and Compensation Study, (2) the effect of COLA on wages, and (3) the loss of funding from Halfmoon Township.





## SCHLOW CENTRE REGION LIBRARY CAPITAL BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*The mission of the Schlow Centre Region Library Capital Budget is to pay for the maintenance, repair, upgrades, and improvements to the facility and technology systems of the Library, which is “the Centre of Reading and Learning.” The Library has been cited as a “destination place” and “Downtown’s Living Room” in community surveys and articles.*

The Schlow Centre Region Library (SCRL) Capital Budget originated from funds that remained from the 2004 new building capital campaign donations, and it was included in the COG Program Plan in the 2011 budget. New revenue is generated through annual municipal contributions, estate gifts, grants, and interest returns from invested funds. SCRL capital expenditures undergo review and approval by the Library Board of Trustees and are subject to COG budget and purchasing procedures. They are made based on the scheduled replacements and repairs outlined in the Library/COG Capital Improvement Plan, Technology, and Strategic Plans.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The 2023 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$360,489, which was \$12,661 more than budgeted, as the SCRL completed several technology projects delayed during the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2022. Many capital replacement expenses were postponed in 2020 and 2021 due to the state-mandated stay-at-home orders and the resulting backlog of work experienced by building service contractors and supply chain interruptions.

SCRL continues to adjust the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) timeline based on the extended impact of COVID-19 disruptions on capital projects. This realignment occurs through cooperation by the Library Director, the Library’s building manager, Borough of State College’s SCRL Facilities Manager and Foreman, and the COG Facilities Project Manager to leverage cost savings whenever possible. Staff acknowledge the difficulty in providing concrete cost estimates for projects far into the future and update costs as more information becomes available. Whenever possible, fully functioning systems are kept in service beyond the initially expected depreciation.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The Library Board of Trustees are scheduled to give final approval of the 2024 Program Plan at their July meeting. SCRL capital expenditures are:

- Reviewed and approved by the Library Board of Trustees. Capital expenditures are subject to COG budget and purchasing procedures.

- Made in accordance with the scheduled replacements and repairs recommended in the 2018 facility study and listed in the Library/COG Capital Improvement Plan, Technology, and Strategic Plans.
- Updated via vendor-provided project cost estimates while acknowledging the difficulty in providing concrete cost estimates for projects far into the future and the need to update costs as more information becomes available.
- Reviewed with the COG Facilities Project manager and the Library’s Facilities Manager and Foreman from the State College Borough Public Works Department as expert resources to ensure all facilities are safe, efficient, and compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Gauged as to their potential to cause unnecessary points of liability for visitors to Schlow’s property and facility.
- In the case of IT assets, tracked in a sophisticated inventory system that matches assets to industry-aligned depreciation schedules for the type of technology, and the Library’s strategic-plan informed use-case. When something has fully depreciated but is still useful, it is often replaced but moved into a lower tier of service where it can still perform valuable functions until it has reached the end of life. Whenever possible, fully functioning systems are kept in service beyond the initially expected depreciation.

**A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Take care of what we currently own. Constructed in 2004, the “new” SCRL building will be 20 years old in 2024. SCRL staff continue to prioritize those projects the ensure the longevity of the building while responding to changing community needs and priorities.
- Ensure safety and security. On peak days, SCRL will see over 1,000 visitors come through its front doors. SCRL will continue to prioritize capital improvements that support security and limit the potential to cause unnecessary points of liability for visitors to SCRL’s property, facility, and technology infrastructure.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Municipal Contributions - Halfmoon Township has chosen to withdraw from the Joint Articles of Agreement between the SCRL and the municipalities of the Centre Region. This represents a loss of at least \$2,498 in capital contributions for 2024, based on the budgeted receipts for 2023.
- Contributions & Donations - Through relationship building and strategic communications, the Library has been able to maintain year-over-year donation levels, despite the pandemic and other economic challenges. The success of the 2022 fundraising and early results during CY 2023 indicates that the Library is still

a philanthropic priority in the community.

- Interest – Interest earnings remain higher than budgeted for in 2023.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

The following bulleted items outline proposed expenditure increases for 2024 that exceed \$10,000. These requests fit within the recommended increase to the baseline budget.

- Computer/Software/Network Maintenance and Replacement – The Library has a technology plan and replaces hardware as needed on a rotating basis. The estimate for 2023 includes replacing the public computing infrastructure at \$18,551. Staff has unexpectedly received notice that our current public computing vendor will end service in 2024. Staff is evaluating the options available to replace the system in 2023 or 2024, whichever option minimizes downtime while maximizing ROI.
- Replace Parking System – Originally scheduled for 2024, the parking lot ticketing and validation system are reaching EOL 12/31/2023. Replacement or upgrade is estimated at \$90,000 but is delayed due to the investigation of new options to partner with the State College Borough on a parking solution.
- Replace Meeting Room A/V – The built-in meeting room projector equipment- used by both staff and the public ~ is scheduled for replacement every eight years. It was shifted two years earlier to accommodate the post-pandemic need for hybrid remote/in-person meetings. Upgrading the system is estimated to cost \$26,800. Phase one will be completed in 2023, with phase two following in 2025.
- Replace Exterior Doors, Operators, and Hardware, as needed – Estimated at \$100,000. Approved for 2022, delayed due to vendor availability, moved to 2024 to bundle with Security System Upgrade focused on locks and alarms.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.





## CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

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

*The CRPA prepares many regional-level plans and implements the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan for the six Centre Region municipalities. The Comprehensive Plan guides policy for regional-level growth decisions. The CRPA also administers the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area (RGB and SSA) Implementation Agreement. The RGB and SSA provide the essential tool to evaluate if the RGB and SSA should be expanded. The CRPA also provides Local Planning Services in three of the municipalities.*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 to May 31, 2023, revenue for the Centre Regional Planning Agency is generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2022 Budget.

The actual unaudited January 1, 2023, fund balance was \$164,113 which was \$114,658 higher than the estimated fund balance of \$49,455. The difference was due to lower-than-expected personnel and unspent special project costs.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Actions to begin implementing the recommendations of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) are emerging as a priority for 2024 and future years. There are also several potential grant funding opportunities to be pursued to implement the CAAP in a manner that is cost-effective for the municipalities, residents, and businesses in the Region and County. The CRPA will begin working on completing the first phase of community engagement in the summer of 2023 for the Comprehensive Plan Update in preparation for developing draft Plan chapters that will start in the fall of 2023 and continue into 2024. The national labor shortage is particularly acute in the planning profession. The Centre Region is a niche market for planners and the Region continues to compete with larger metropolitan areas where planners generally find more opportunities for professional development and advancement. The Region should also prepare for an update to the Centre Region Act 537 Plan after the completion of the Comprehensive Plan. Consultant services should be anticipated to prepare Act 537 Update in 2025 or 2026.

A. **Priorities for 2024:**

- Complete the first phase of community engagement to affirm the vision for the Region, explore regional issues, prepare potential growth scenarios, and identify a preferred growth strategy. This may include an unbudgeted resident survey for the fall of 2023 and potential mailing and reprographics expenses.
- Initiate the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Implement climate actions by leveraging what we learn from the DEP Shared Energy Manager Program, the municipalities, and the CAAP Implementation Technical Advisory Group by hiring an AmeriCorps member in 2024 to assist with implementing actions that will assist homeowners, renters, and business owners. Activities are expected to include educating; developing workshops; hosting demonstrations or tours; and creating toolkits related to improved resiliency, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.
- Work with the municipalities and the UAJA to prepare a scope of work and pursue grant funding for a consultant to update the Centre Region Act 537 Plan (in 2025) upon completion of the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan.
- Complete a staffing and strategic plan in 2024 to align staffing with expectations from the municipalities.

B. **Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- The CRPA does not anticipate any changes in revenue from the Local Planning or Regional Planning funding formulas.
- The CRPA does not anticipate any major changes in revenue from Centre County.
- The CRPA is investigating grant funding opportunities for many projects but does not have an estimate of the revenue change.

C. **Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- AmeriCorps member for sustainability \$6,750.
- Replace the large format plotter at \$6,000. The plotter is well beyond the five-year replacement cycle and software and maintenance support is approaching obsolescence. The cost is shared by the CRPA (65%) and the CCMPO (35%).

D. **Unfunded Requests:**

- A total of \$13,000 for an AmeriCorps member to work on sustainability

implementation actions. The cycle for AmeriCorps members spans two calendar years from fall 2024 to fall 2025. The AmeriCorps member will be funded using the COG Standard Formula since it is part of the Regional Planning Program.

- Evaluate the success of the AmeriCorps member ability to help residents and businesses obtain funding for local energy-efficient and renewable projects. Consider hiring a full-time Planner to assist the Sustainability Planner beginning in 2025. Estimates will be provided in the 2024 Program Plan.

**E. Five-Year Staffing and Non-capital Studies Projections**

- The CRPA should complete a staffing study and strategic plan in 2024 to determine the needs for the Agency to deliver services adequate to meet the demands of the municipalities. At this time, it is anticipated that the following staff changes will be needed between 2025 and 2028:
  - The Sustainability Planner position should be reclassified to a Principal Planner position due to the complexities of sustainability activities, the success of these activities, and to formally be in a supervisory classification.
  - An additional planner is needed to adequately staff sustainability activities beginning in 2025. Employee-related expenses (FICA, Workers Compensation, Unemployment Compensation Retirement, and Life Insurance) are approximately \$110,000.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> AmeriCorps Program Sustainability Position August 2024 - August 2025		
<b>Agency:</b> CRPA	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). ----- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup> : \$ <u>12,000</u>
<b>Program:</b> Sustainability		2024 Est. Operational Cost: \$ <u>1,500</u>
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>		2024 Est. Capital Cost: \$ _____
<b>Agency Ranking:</b> _____1_____		2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup> : \$ _____
<b>COG Ranking:</b> _____		2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup> : \$ <u>7,500</u>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span><input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment</span> <span><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New</span> <span><input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair</span> <span><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff</span> <span><input type="checkbox"/> Study</span> </div>		
2024 Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup> : \$ <u>6,000</u>		

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

Several opportunities are being presented in 2023 that are poised to benefit our community. In 2023, CRPA will be participating in the DEP's Shared Energy Manager Program: <https://www.energy.gov/scep/articles/state-and-community-energy-programs-project-map-pennsylvania>. The Shared Energy Manager Program is free to COG, and will provide the CRPA with remote support in the form of technical expertise and implementation guidance to help lower our energy consumption and improve our energy management practices. Through the CAS Committee the municipalities will define the priorities for this program, but a goal will be to save taxpayer dollars on reduced energy costs.

In addition to this the CAAP Implementation TAG will have completed its Implementation Strategy. It is becoming apparent that to make an impact and realize our objectives in the CAAP additional resources will be needed, particularly for increasing energy conservation, energy conversion and renewable energy.

## A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)

The purpose of the AmeriCorps position is to coordinate activities for the COG and municipalities to lower our energy consumption and improve our energy management practices, both for local government and community-wide. For local government it would include coordinating the recommendations from the Shared Energy Manager Program. For the community it could include developing workshops, hosting demonstrations/tours and creating toolkits related to improved resiliency, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

With additional staff, CRPA would be able to partner with organizations to generate solar growth in the region. The PA Solar Center has a G.E.T. Solar Communities program that performs solar feasibility studies for businesses and non-profits, provides community supported solar outreach, and completes a RFP process for solar installations. Solar United Neighbors is interested in partnering with our community again to host the second Solar Co-op. The community would benefit from local government coordinating co-ops for solar, heat pumps and/or EVs.

## B. Impact if Not Funded:

Hiring through the AmeriCorps Program will help our government operations and community leverage funds and identify savings for sustainability-related projects. If this position is not funded it will take longer to meet our CAAP goals and our community will be less prepared to take advantage of the new rebates and tax credits. Local government has a role to play in making sure the information is getting out to all neighborhoods, non-profits, and small business owners.

The typical home in the Centre Region has the potential to receive more than \$20,000 in rebates and tax credits. Businesses are also able to take advantage of new rebates/credits. Removing barriers, helping to educate, and making the processes simple will help more residents and businesses capitalize on the opportunities related to energy conservation and conversion. It is expected that prepared communities will see growth and additional economic benefits through workforce development which will be necessary with the increased federal and state incentives.

The SPPA can be used as an example of opportunity. COG staff supporting this project was critical to its successful implementation. The SPPA is projected to save \$6,000 in year one for the COG. Total savings for all participating organizations is \$135,000 annually; \$2 million over 15 years.

The benefit-to-cost for this position could be tested during the one year program. If it is successful it could be continued. If not, the future funding can be stopped.

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### Footnotes:

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.





## CENTRE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

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

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period between January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenue and expenditures were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2023 CCMPO Budget, with the following exceptions:

Revenue from PennDOT funding has lagged compared to historic patterns. This is partially due to unanticipated staffing changes in CY 2022. As the Senior Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation Planner departed, tasks related to the Title VI Program update and Public Participation Plan (PPP) update that were anticipated to be divided between the Senior Planner positions for Bicycle/Pedestrian and Transit Planning were allocated more heavily to the Senior Transit Planner. All tasks were completed in a timely fashion but the change in allocations and the vacant position resulted in a lag in PennDOT funding, particularly for Transit Planning Tasks under the UPWP. As staffing has returned to full complement, the funding has trended closer to historic patterns. This may result in an unspent balance for some Transit tasks in year one of the FY 2022-2024 UPWP. If so, a budget transfer will be requested to forward the unspent balance into year two of the UPWP.

The CCMPO requested funds to allow staff to complete a Centre County Active Transportation Plan. The CY 2023 MPO Budget anticipated a total project cost of \$200,000 split between CY 2023 and CY 2024, including a 20% local match of \$40,000, also split evenly between CY 2023 and CY 2024. Based on the availability of funds at the statewide level, CCMPO was directed to submit a request through the PennDOT Connects Program. A 10% local match totaling \$20,000 was proposed as part of the request. The funds were awarded in March 2023, and CCMPO is in the process of selecting a consultant team to assist in the completion of the plan. The net result is that most of the work is anticipated to be completed in CY 2024, rather than evenly split between the two-year period. Additionally, the match requested as part of the CY 2023 project will be sufficient to leverage the entire project, although it will be distributed over a longer period.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

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

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

Local funding is provided by Centre County, the six Centre Region municipalities, and CATA. The contributions from Centre County and the Centre Region 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 continues to seek opportunities to meet the needs of the CCMPO's member organizations more efficiently. The Agency will continue to pursue ways to deploy personnel, use technology, be resourceful, and strategically reorganize to add value to the services provided to the CCMPO's member organizations more effectively.

### **A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Complete the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update and adopt the TIP by June 2024.
- Complete and adopt a two-year Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2025-2027 (July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027) and adopt UPWP by November 2024.
- Complete the Centre County Active Transportation Plan by September 2024.
- Apply to renew the League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Community Designation by September 2024.
- Continue work on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2050 update in preparation for adoption in 2025.
- CRPA staff will continue to work with the State College Area Connector (SCAC) project team on the Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase of the SCAC project. The PE phase will focus on analyzing the impact of alternative solutions and selecting a

preferred alternative. An environmental clearance document for the preferred alternative will be prepared for approval by state and federal agencies. Completion of this phase is anticipated for CY 2026.

- CRPA staff will also support PennDOT staff in the PE phase for the Atherton Street Phase IV project. Phase IV considers the section of Atherton Street beginning at Easterly and Westerly Parkway and extending to the intersection with Scenery Drive. The limits of work and intersection configurations will be evaluated during the PE phase.
- Continue to facilitate the CCMPO safety subcommittee.
- Continue to implement the CCMPO Strategic Plan. In addition to the proposed budgetary changes summarized below, the strategic plan proposed changes to increase participation and improve stakeholder outreach. These efforts include holding regular orientation sessions for new members, holding regular business meetings of the CCMPO at locations around the Centre County to facilitate live participation by members outside of the Centre Region, and continuing to facilitate direct municipal input by attending regularly scheduled supervisor and council meetings in each of the Centre County municipalities on a biennial cycle.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Base allocation of federal and state funding – The CCMPO’s current FY 2022-24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) took effect on July 1, 2022, and extends through June 30, 2024. The CCMPO will be required to complete a one-year UPWP for the period covering July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. Financial Guidance for this UPWP will be released by PennDOT in June of 2023. The state and federal funds that support the UPWP are distributed on a statewide basis using a formula developed collaboratively by PennDOT and the planning organizations across Pennsylvania. Based on previous updates, the Guidance is expected to include a modest increase over current funding levels, impacting the latter half of CY 2024.
- Supplemental federal funding – An opportunity to apply for supplemental federal funding for special planning projects may be provided when the new FY 2024-25 UPWP is prepared. If so, the CCMPO will request \$48,000 in supplemental planning funds to provide consultant assistance in completing a required update to the LRTP 2050. The update must be completed, and the additional funds will be used to provide consulting support for the update. A 20% Local match totaling \$12,000 will also be included in the CCMPO budget. While staff is already working on the update, the additional funds will provide an opportunity to update the regional travel demand model and leverage staff abilities for GIS analysis of condition and network data, outreach, and document production.
- County and municipal funding – Municipal and County funding shares are anticipated to increase in 2024 in connection with the current economic

environment in addition to the need to provide local matching funds for special studies using supplemental funds.

- CATA funding - CATA's share is anticipated to increase slightly in 2024.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

Nearly 70% of expenditures in the CCMPO Budget are for personnel costs. The following minor changes in expenses for ongoing efforts are expected for CY 2024:

- Increases in Operating Expenses are anticipated in 2024. Increases in advertising, meeting, and copying expenses are anticipated because additional meetings of the CCMPO Committees and special subcommittees will be needed for:
  - Completion of the Active Transportation Plan.
  - Adoption of the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Plan.
  - Continued development of the LRTP 2050 update.
- Efforts will continue to reduce costs or minimize increases in the operating and capital line-item expenses over which the CRPA has direct control.
- Expenditures associated with advertising and conducting meetings may increase as a result of the implementation of CCMPO's operations-based Strategic Plan. The Plan was adopted in June 2023 and included several recommendations to improve engagement that may lead to minor cost increases. Specific measures that could lead to moderate increases include:
  - Convening two meetings per year for each committee at venues located outside of the Centre Region.
  - Conducting a biennial outreach effort, attending at least one regular meeting in every Centre County municipality.
  - Convening one to two annual events to increase awareness of transportation grant programs and help municipalities to develop the skills required to submit successful applications.
- In 2024, the CCMPO will continue to work on a new Active Transportation Plan that will replace the Centre Region Bike Plan. The project will be completed in 2024 in advance of the Region's application to the League of American Bicyclists to renew the Region's Bicycle Friendly Community designation. Funding to complete the Active Transportation Plan is provided through the PennDOT Connects Program, supported by a local match split between the Centre Region

Municipalities and Centre County. Staff efforts to lead the plan will be leveraged by using outside consulting services.

The cumulative impact of these changes is expected to fall within the recommended increase to the baseline budget.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

In addition, the following significant increases to expenditures are proposed for 2024:

- In 2023, the CCMPO began an update to the LRTP 2050. The update will address the ongoing implementation of federal PBPP requirements, increased funding levels resulting from the passage of the federal *BIL*, and potential increases in state transportation funding. Work on the update will continue until completion in 2025. The update will be staff-led. If supplemental planning funds are awarded, staff efforts will be leveraged by consulting support.

Additional services provided may include an update to the regional travel demand model, support for GIS analysis of condition data and public input, development of staff abilities to access newly available data sources, and leveraging of staff abilities for document development and outreach. A budget request for the local funds required to match the supplemental planning funds is included. The supplemental planning funds would be available for the second half of 2024 and the first half of 2025, and the need for the requested funds is expected to extend through the same time period.

- The CCMPO proposes to add a position for a Transportation Grant Specialist. The position will be charged with leading a collaborative effort with PennDOT, Centre County, CATA, Centre County Municipalities, and other stakeholders to identify funding opportunities related to existing and developing transportation projects, prioritizing projects and opportunities, and overseeing an effort to submit one to two federal funding applications per year. The development of this position is consistent with the recommendations provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Subcommittee commissioned by the CCMPO to investigate the impacts of the legislation on local transportation needs. The need is also consistent with the staffing approach included in the CCMPO Strategic Plan being developed for June 2023.

The funding for this position would be divided between the Centre Region Municipalities and Centre County using the current formula for the Transportation Planning Program. A budget request is included for the costs to staff this position.

- The CCMPO also proposes to engage consultant services in support of the proposed Transportation Grants Specialist. The complexity of the application process for most federal programs, and the variety of programs to be considered require a skill set likely to be beyond the abilities of any single staff person. The CCMPO proposes to engage a qualified team with expertise in grant preparation

and subject matter expertise covering highway, bridge, active transportation, safety, and resiliency issues. This team would provide the depth and versatility needed to allow the CCMPO to consider a wider range of programs and project types than could be supported with staff-level resources alone. A budget request for the funds required to provide this support is included.

For both changes in expenditure, the CCMPO proposes to begin application efforts in CY 2024, realizing that the timeline required for application development may mean that the first applications are submitted in CY 2025. The effort will be continued in CY 2026, and an evaluation of the application efforts and results will be completed to inform the CY 2027 budget process.

**E. Five-Year Staffing and Non-capital Studies Projections**

- Consistent with the budget requests noted above, the 2024-2028 Anticipated Proposed Staffing Positions will include a Transportation Grants Specialist to be hired in 2024. In support of this effort, the Anticipated Proposed Non-Capital Studies and Consultants Section will include an item for continuing consultant support in the preparation of transportation funding applications.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Consulting Support for the LRTP 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan		
<b>Agency:</b> CRPA	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities). <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). <hr/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup> : \$ _____
<b>Program:</b> CCMPO		2024 Est. Operational Cost: \$ <u>12,000</u> _____
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>		2024 Est. Capital Cost: \$ _____
<b>Agency Ranking:</b> _____ 2 _____		2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup> : \$ <u>48,000</u> _____
<b>COG Ranking:</b> _____	2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup> : \$ _____	
<b>Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>0</u> _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Study		

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

Maintaining a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is one of the core responsibilities of an MPO. LRTPs require updates on a five year cycle, and a long development process. To maintain federal compliance, the MPO must complete and adopt the next update by September 2025. Since the last few months of the LRTP process are typically given to document development and required public comment process, much of the update will have to be completed in CY 24.

The CCMPO requests matching funds for a supplemental planning funds request that will allow staff to employ consulting services to help develop and refine the plan. Services may include an update to the regional travel demand model, support for GIS analysis of condition data and public input, and development of staff abilities to access newly available volume, congestion and routing data, as well as leveraging staff skills for document development and public outreach.

## **A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

The update to the LRTP is already underway, beginning with a "30-month" coordination meeting with PennDOT and FHWA personnel to kick off the process. Staff are also in the process of completing meetings with all 35 Centre County municipalities to introduce the update and provide a chance for municipalities to update the input provided in 2018 and 2019.

While the LRTP is being completed, staff will have to complete an update to the Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), complete two updates to the CCMPO Unified Planning Work Program, complete the recently funded Active Transportation Plan, and implement the recommendations of the ongoing CCMPO Strategic Plan. CCMPO would greatly benefit from the opportunity to engage consulting support, bringing on a team that is familiar with the LRTP development process, and familiar with recent practice-leading examples that can be applied in this update, that can leverage the ongoing efforts of staff, and shorten their learning curve as they address new data sources and requirements, and help staff to develop templates that can be utilized in future updates.

## **B. Impact if Not Funded:**

As noted, keeping an LRTP in compliance with a five-year update cycle is a core function of a MPO. If the requested assistance is not made available, the update will be completed within available staff resources.

Without additional funding, staff will not be able to update the regional travel demand model, which was used in the previous update to project operating conditions in the future, and to use this information to help prioritize investment decisions.

Without this assistance, while staff will still be able to complete the basic programming and fiscal analysis required, they may miss the opportunity to bring in new information from condition, safety, congestion, resiliency, and economic data sources. This will result in a less robust assessment of the county's transportation needs, and may negatively impact future decision-making. Furthermore, the effort required to complete the update may limit staff ability to engage in other projects and needs.

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### **Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> CCMPO Transportation Grants Specialist (Senior Transportation Planner Classification)		
<b>Agency:</b> CRPA	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). <hr/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	<b>2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>115,413</u>
<b>Program:</b> CCMPO		<b>2024 Est. Operational Cost:</b> \$ <u>1,500</u>
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  Recommended by CCMPO BIL Subcommittee, CCMPO Technical Committee, & CCMPO Coordinating Committee		<b>2024 Est. Capital Cost:</b> \$ _____
<b>Agency Ranking:</b>  _____ 3 _____		<b>2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup>:</b> \$ _____
<b>COG Ranking:</b>  _____		<b>2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup>:</b> \$ _____
<b>Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>115,413</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Study		

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides \$550 million in infrastructure funding, including programs for bridges, safety improvements, transit and alternative fuels infrastructure. While previous highway authorization laws distributed the majority of the funding available through formula-driven programs, approximately 40% of the funding in the BIL will be distributed through discretionary programs. The Transportation program seeks to create an annual effort to submit up to three federal and state grant applications per year from 2024-2026, requiring the development of a Transportation Grants Specialist to oversee the effort.

This position originated from a request of the CCMPO for a subcommittee to study potential options, level of staffing and cost required to effectively identify funding opportunities, focusing on federal transportation funding opportunities available under the BIL. As they are identified, the position would be responsible for matching them with potential transportation projects, and leading a transparent, reliable and repeatable process for prioritizing potential projects and programs, and selecting which application opportunities that will be pursued each year.

## **A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

The position would also be responsible for leading coordination efforts with PennDOT, Centre County, CATA, Centre County Municipalities and other stakeholders in the development and support of projects and applications.

Due to the breadth of federal transportation opportunities available, it is anticipated that preparing the actual applications will require the support of a consulting team with a wide range of expertise available that can be applied on an as-needed basis, depending on the projects and programs pursued. This position would be responsible for direct supervision of that effort, supervising the overall application preparation, and leading the efforts to develop documentation of local support and identification of local match (where required). It is anticipated that funded projects will be administered by others (PennDOT for large projects, and municipalities for more local projects).

This position will provide support to those sponsors in moving from award to construction or execution, and will assist existing positions in conducting regular municipal outreach efforts.

## **B. Impact if Not Funded:**

Failing to pursue the additional funding available through discretionary programs means continuing to leave programmed projects vulnerable to cost increases and the overall insufficiency of transportation funding. It also means foregoing opportunities to apply innovative solutions, incorporate additional features or select the best materials or practices for the project. It may also result in the need to down-scope or defer projects that have been in long development processes, such as the final phases of the Atherton Street Improvements, or the State College Area Connector.

While it is difficult to put a net impact of this position, previous efforts to pursue federal funding opportunities resulted in the award of over \$37 million in funds for completion of the High Speed Interchange between Interstate 80 and Interstate 99, and local efforts to pursue state level applications have brought funding on the order of \$2 million to bear for the completion of a package of local bridge projects.

The complexity of the federal applications is intense, and the competition at all levels is fierce. While funding the position does not guarantee success, not funding the position virtually guarantees that the resources needed to effectively compete in these programs will not be available.

This position is part of a package of requests. As noted above, a request is also being submitted to provide for consulting support in the preparation of funding applications. To get the maximum benefit of the request for consulting services, our assessment is that there needs to be a staff position tasked with overseeing the effort and managing the process. Failure to provide funding for this position will, at best, limit the effectiveness of the overall effort.

A further request will be submitted for consulting services to support the CCMPO LRTP update. While not directly related to this position request, the two efforts share overlapping timelines, and efforts of this position may significantly impact the discussion included in the LRTP. While it is less than optimum to entertain the requests in the same budget year, it is necessary to do so to meet the relevant deadlines.

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### **Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Consulting Support for the Development of Transportation Funding Applications		
<b>Agency:</b> CRPA	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). ----- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	<b>2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup>:</b> \$ _____  <b>2024 Est. Operational Cost:</b> \$ <u>225,000</u>  <b>2024 Est. Capital Cost:</b> \$ _____  <b>2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup>:</b> \$ _____  <b>2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup>:</b> \$ _____  <b>Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>225,000</u>
<b>Program:</b> CCMPO		
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  Recommended by CCMPO BIL Subcommittee, CCMPO Technical Committee, & CCMPO Coordinating Committee		
<b>Agency Ranking:</b> ----- 4		
<b>COG Ranking:</b> -----		
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Study		

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides \$550 million in infrastructure funding, including programs for bridges, safety improvements, transit and alternative fuels infrastructure. While previous highway authorization laws distributed the majority of the funding available through formula-driven programs, approximately 40% of the funding in the BIL will be distributed through discretionary programs. The Transportation program seeks to create an annual effort to submit up to three federal and state grant applications per year from 2024-2026, requiring the availability of consultant support.

The expansion of discretionary funding under the BIL has been accompanied by a significant increase in both the competition and the level of complexity of the process. In addition, the variety of programs and project types to be considered under the BIL and across Centre County means that completion of a competitive application requires access to a pool of skilled professionals with varied expertise.

**A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

While the CCMPO has benefited in the past from consulting support in the development of successful applications to provide additional depth of analysis in the development of safety analyses, capacity and travel time analyses, and rigorous cost/benefit analysis, the resources have been provided on a case by case basis for specific projects. This request would make the assistance available on a continuing basis, directed at projects prioritized and selected regionally.

The team would also be available to assist in identification and screening of potential projects, providing analytical support to help staff direct attention to the projects and programs most likely to result in successful applications.

In coordination with the requested staff position, it is assumed that the success of the staff position and this consulting services request will be evaluated in 2026 as part of the development of the CY 2027 budget, and that staff will make appropriate recommendations regarding continuance based on the level of success demonstrated.

**B. Impact if Not Funded:**

While it is possible to allocate staff resources to complete applications for complex federal discretionary program applications without providing for subject-matter expert support available from consulting firms or other sources, past experience of the CCMPO indicates that efforts that include external support are significantly more likely to result in funded projects.

Failing to pursue the additional funding available through discretionary programs means continuing to leave programmed projects vulnerable to cost increases and the overall insufficiency of transportation funding.

It also means foregoing opportunities to apply innovative solutions, incorporate additional features or select the best materials or practices for the project. It may also result in the need to down-scope or defer projects that have been in long development processes, such as the final phases of the Atherton Street Improvements, or the State College Area Connector.

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**Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERI)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.



## REGIONAL REFUSE & RECYCLING PROGRAM BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*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.*

*The COG Refuse and Recycling Program is self-funded through an administrative fee paid by the contracted hauler to the COG. A fund balance exists through recycling rebates paid to the COG from the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority for marketed recyclables collected in the five townships that participate in the COG refuse contract.*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenues and expenditures are in keeping with the projections in the 2023 budget. However, anticipated expenditures for three-line items in 2023 exceed budgeted funding as outlined below:

- In 2023, the COG Climate Action and Sustainability Committee approved additional expenditures for two pilot projects proposed jointly with the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority and State College Borough. Both pilots explore alternatives for managing residential organic waste, specifically food waste, and the outcomes of the pilots will inform the next refuse contract. The 2023 budget includes funds for advertising and public education/information for these pilots but does not include funds to fully cover outreach for both pilots or to purchase the specialized equipment associated with the pilots. Fortunately, in-kind assistance is coming from the Centre County Refuse and Recycling Authority and the State College Borough.
- COG Administration has requested that the Refuse and Recycling Program evaluate the purchase of new recycling containers for the COG building.
- The 2023 budget includes funding to purchase recycling containers for Whitehall Road Regional Park. Actual expenses may exceed the budget due to inflation and increased costs for equipment and transportation. In addition, the budget projection was for recycling bins only, but dual bins may be purchased that hold both recycling and trash to promote the use of the appropriate container for recycling and reduce contamination. Selected containers are intended to improve use by the public and servicing by staff and would become the standard for future installations in parks.

FUND	2023 YTD	ANTICIPATED MAY – DEC	BUDGETED 2023	ANTICIPATED FOR 2023	VARIANCE
7341 ADVERTISING	\$125	\$7,500	\$6,000	\$7,625	\$1,625
7344 PUBLIC INFORMATION/ EDUCATION	\$1,417	\$10,583	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$2,000
8750 PURCHASE OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT	\$2,784	\$15,200	\$14,000	\$17,984	\$3,984

**WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, proposed major budgetary changes for the Regional Refuse and Recycling Program include:

**A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Award a contract for refuse and recycling residential curbside collection through a competitive bidding process in 2024. The current contract expires on March 31, 2025. The Refuse and Recycling Program maintains a fund balance accrued from recycling rebates received from the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority for marketed recyclables over the past decade. The Refuse and Recycling Program anticipates allocating the fund balance in 2025 towards offsetting residents’ and programmatic costs associated with the start of the next contract.
- Continue to investigate options and develop opportunities for residents and businesses to recycle their organic (yard and food waste) materials. These options will be explored through evaluation of the 2023 pilots, through further possible pilots in 2024, through the competitive bidding process for the residential curbside collection contract, and in partnership with State College Borough’s composting program, the University Area Joint Authority’s biodigester project, and the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority.
- Improve and enhance recycling opportunities in public spaces within the Centre Region, which was identified as a priority in the 2023 Refuse and Recycling Survey. Projected expenditures include additional recycling or dual recycling/trash containers for Whitehall Road Regional Park and other regional parks.
- Increase recycling compliance at regional businesses, institutions, and multi-family residences through outreach, education, and enforcement.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- The administrative fee paid by the hauler to the COG to fund the Refuse and Recycling Program increases from \$163,909 to \$168,826 for 2024.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- The COG Refuse and Recycling Program partners with the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority in the Green Business Partner Program that seek to incentivize businesses to expand recycling. This program is broadening its parameters to include the recycling of organic materials, especially food waste. Expenditures in 2024 will include targeted outreach to area businesses and additional award categories.
- There are no other anticipated budget requests for 2024 that exceed the 2023 baseline budget by more than \$5,000.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- Anticipated unfunded requests for 2024 are limited to the following:
  - Programmatic Adjustments - Projected education/outreach and specialized equipment (awards) costs for the Green Business Partner program total \$7,500 for 2024. Recognition is awarded every two years, so no costs are projected for 2025.
- Anticipated unfunded requests for 2025 include the following:
  - Personnel Changes - The Refuse and Recycling Program Administrator and the Climate Action and Sustainability Committee will explore the need for an additional part-time position for the program beginning in 2025, the costs for which will be included in the administrative fee paid by the hauler in the next contract.
  - Programmatic Adjustments - The Refuse and Recycling program anticipates allocating a large portion of the fund balance in 2025 towards offsetting residents' and programmatic costs associated with the start of the next contract which may include refuse collection carts for automated collection, organics carts, or other containers for organics collection, and education and outreach as residents prepare for the next contract.





## REGIONAL FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*The Regional Fire Protection Program supports fire suppression, specialized rescue, and hazardous material response to the Centre Region in partnership with the all-volunteer Alpha Fire Company. The Fire Protection staff provides administrative, financial, and operational oversight to the Alpha Fire Company in order to maintain a mostly volunteer fire department.*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Regional Fire Protection Program is currently operating slightly over budget but expects to end the year within budget guidelines. To date, there has been an unusually high usage of natural gas and several unplanned apparatus maintenance expenditures. The new ThreatID hazardous material analyzer was approved and purchased in 2023 via a budget amendment. The cost of this purchase will be offset by anticipated funds from two hazardous material response invoices.

The Regional Fire Protection Program study by ESCI Consulting in 2020 and the program Strategic Plan, updated in the first quarter of 2021, continue to guide the path forward. The mission and scope of the Regional Fire Protection Program are not expected to change significantly over the next two years.

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. The requested hiring for 2024 is focused on supplementing and sustaining our volunteer workforce.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

One of the recommendations in the ESCI Study of 2020 was to create a succession plan and reduce risks related to the potential loss of key personnel. This is becoming increasingly important as more fire departments across the Commonwealth are hiring line officers and command staff to counter volunteer losses.

- In early 2023, the Acting Fire Director filled duties previously performed by the now the vacant Assistant Chief of Special Operations with a promotion of the Equipment Technician to Captain of Special Operations. Additionally, two part-time Equipment/Maintenance Technicians were hired to assist with the duties performed by the Equipment Technician. Upon completion of necessary training and certifications, the Captain of Special Operations will be considered for the position of Assistant Chief of Special Operations. The vacant

Assistant Chief position will not likely be filled until 2024.

- In 2024, the Regional Fire Protection Program proposes to partner with Centre Region Code Administration to hire four newly created positions that will fulfill Code Administration duties during the weekdays and supplement volunteer response activities during the nights and weekends. These Fire Inspector/Firefighter positions will be employees of the Code Administration and be supervised by Code Staff when conducting inspections and other duties of Code Administration. When supporting the volunteer Alpha Fire Company, these individuals will report to and receive work assignments from the fire department Duty Officer.

Beyond these 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 2023. Budget changes for all other, non-personnel, expenses are expected to reflect the CPI.

A. **Priorities for 2024:**

- Hire four Fire Inspector/Firefighters to supplement the volunteer Alpha Fire Company.
- Provide officer-level training and certification opportunities for both career and volunteer staff.
- In partnership with the Alpha Fire Company develop a volunteer scholarship program to reduce the cost of tuition for student volunteers.

B. **Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Personnel costs to increase by two FTE. Partnership with Code Administration will split the cost of the four new Fire Inspector/Firefighter positions. Two FTEs are estimated at \$231,462.
- Operating costs will increase by approximately \$24,000 for the one-time hiring costs associated with each new hire. Costs include firefighting turnout gear/uniforms and pre-employee physicals and eye exams.

C. **Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- Beyond what is listed below in Section D, there are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

D. **Unfunded Requests:**

- Unfunded requests for this fund for 2024 are shown on the Budget Request Form located in the Centre Region Code Administration – Existing Structures Program Budget section of this document.



## REGIONAL FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM CAPITAL BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

The Capital Budget for the Regional Fire Protection Program provides for regular predictable support for large planned, but irregular, apparatus expenditures for regional fire protection and rescue services through the COG Capital Improvement Plan. The Fire Capital Budget also provides for regular predictable investment 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.

We currently have a replacement engine on order, which is not scheduled for delivery until late 2023. The purchase of a second UTV was approved and included in the 2022 budget, but due to unit availability, it is unlikely we will complete a purchase until late 2023 or early 2024.

Apparatus Replacement Schedule	
1 - Quint	\$1,400,000
4 - Engines @ \$980,000	\$3,920,000
2 - Aerial Towers @ \$1,600,000	\$3,200,000
2 - Tankers @ \$563,000	\$1,126,000
1 - Heavy Rescue Truck	\$1,250,000
1 - Command Unit	\$116,000
2 - Chiefs' Vehicles	\$163,000
2 - Specialty Trailers	\$233,000
3 - Utility Vehicles	\$182,000
1 - Special Unit/Brush Vehicle	\$163,000
1 - ATV with Trailer	\$93,000
2 - Fire Police Vehicles	\$343,000
1 - HazMat Unit	\$145,000
<b>Total Replacement Cost</b>	<b>\$12,334,000</b>

### WHERE ARE WE GOING (VEHICLES)?

Since the first of this year, apparatus prices across all manufacturers have increased approximately 16%. Many manufacturers are also adding surcharges for steel based on metal prices at the time of

order. Lead times have also significantly pushed out to as many as 26 months after receipt of the order. The COG CIP does not identify any apparatus purchases in 2024. However, staff will make another attempt to purchase the UTV in late 2023.

## **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 Project Manager has enabled 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. Examples 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 completed Facility Condition Assessments (FCA) for the Borough, Patton, and College Township Stations in 2021.

#### **State College Borough Fire Station**

The State College Borough Fire Station was built in 1974 and is located at 400 West Beaver Avenue. The building is owned by the Borough of State College and operated by the Centre Region Council of Governments. A major building renovation was completed in 1997. The CRCOG is responsible for all improvements and upkeep. The Borough invoices CRCOG for snow removal services and lawn care services.

The Borough station has three major deficiencies which should be addressed in the following order:

1. Replacement of the front apparatus bay door which has been damaged and is temporarily repaired.
2. The building rooftop heating and cooling units are at the end of life and require replacement.
3. The building masonry is deteriorating and needs to be repointed and repaired.

#### **Patton Township Fire Station**

The Patton Township Fire Station was built in 2001 and is located at 2598 Green Tech Drive. The building is owned by Patton Township and is operated by the Centre Region Council of Governments. The CRCOG is responsible for all improvements and upkeep. Patton Township provides snow removal services and lawn care services.

The Patton station has two major deficiencies which should be addressed at the same time:

- The building rooftop heating and cooling units are situated in such a way that certain conditions cause water to leak into the kitchen of the station. This issue occurs almost annually in the winter when heavy rain is followed by a rapid freeze, snow, and a rapid thaw. To correct this condition, the rooftop units should be replaced with a split system in each living area, and the rooftop area covered with a pitched roof.

### College Township Fire Station

The College Township Fire Station is located within the lower level of the College Township municipal building. The space was renovated and occupied as a fire station in 2010. The Centre Region Council of Governments leases the space by MOU. College Township is responsible for all improvements and upkeep of the interior and exterior of the building.

At this time, the College Township station does not require renovation or repair.

### Support Building

The need for a support building that would serve all existing and future fire stations has been identified and has been discussed with the Public Safety Committee and the Facilities Committee. In 2022, leased space was secured to support fire department operations and to provide time to develop a long-term plan of action. Any long-term support building plans should be tied to the discussion of a Ferguson Township Fire Station. If Ferguson Township elects to build a fire station, the Public Safety and Facilities Committee should collaborate with Ferguson Township on building location, size, and use.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING (BUILDINGS)?

### **A. Priorities for 2024:**

- In 2023, PennDOT plans to start the reconstruction of South Atherton Street. The front apparatus ramp of the Borough Fire Station will be replaced as part of this rebuild project, with costs borne by PennDOT. The project will also involve modifications to the front of the fire station property as part of the rebuild project. Landscape maintenance to the front of the fire station has been suspended for 2023 as a result of these pending changes. The Borough will be undertaking a streetscape project concurrent with the PennDOT rebuild and the restoration of the fire station property will be consistent with the details of the streetscape project. The Borough's improvements will also include sidewalks along West Beaver Avenue between South Atherton Street and H Alley. Portions of the sidewalk are a

COG responsibility and funds were included in the 2023 capital budget to complete this rehabilitation project. Estimates from the Borough for this project are \$62,797.16 of which \$46,661.79 would be borne by COG.

- As a result of the facilities assessment of the Borough Fire Station, the Facilities Coordinator recommends restriking the block and brick at the Borough Fire Station. The estimated cost of the project is \$25,000, split evenly (\$12,500) between 2024 and 2025. Some of the building's masonry, including window lintels and sills, is crumbling.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- There are no revenue changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- There are no expenditure changes anticipated for this fund in 2024.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.



## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

Our Mission: *“We inspire Centre Region to learn, play, protect, and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities in sustainable natural spaces and places.”*

Our Vision: *“The Centre Region is a vibrant area that enjoys a tremendous quality of life through great parks and exceptional recreation opportunities. The parks and recreation system is a part of daily life and shapes the character of the Centre Region. Natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources cultivate outstanding experiences, health, enjoyment, fun, and learning for all people. Residents are proud stewards and supporters of its extraordinary, sustainable parks and recreation system. As the Centre Region’s population continues to grow, so does the demand for more parks, recreation programs, indoor and outdoor facilities, and interconnected bikeways and trails. To address these challenges, we work closely with our residents, streamline operations to become more efficient, maximize the use of alternative funding sources, and place an increased emphasis on partnerships and responsible stewardship of the environment.”*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenue estimates are consistent. Compared to the projected budget, some line items are at the 50% level or higher. The expenditures for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Operating Budget are either near the mid-year projected levels or slightly below those amounts. Revenue from concessions, sporting events, and rentals is always higher in the summer months. The unaudited beginning 2023 fund balance was \$315,727, a \$20,034 increase from the \$295,692 estimated beginning fund balance in the 2023 detailed budget.

The Park Operations Maintenance Building is leased for \$57,300, paid annually. This lease is set to expire on October 31, 2026. The CRPR Administration Office is leased for \$82,404.47, paid annually. This amount increases slightly each year of the lease. The lease is set to expire on December 31, 2026. The Active Adult Center is also a leased property, and those figures can be found in the AAC program plan.

- Recruitment of Kidz Kamp staff has been a challenge. Staff continues to conduct outreach and recruit, but the applicant pool has been limited.
- Rec on the Go has had an increase in rental inquiries, although staffing is a challenge. If a Program Coordinator position is filled in 2024, this person could help with staffing.

- The Agency added its first 5K race in 2023; Fall Feet 5K. This will be a fundraiser for the Youth Scholarships program, and if successful can be modeled for other fundraisers. 5K's typically generate revenue after the first year or two.
- The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau has partnered with CRPR to take over the administration of the Visit Centre County GeoTour. CRPR will continue to promote and be a partner of the GeoTour. Staff will also continue to screen applications for any geocaches that are placed in regional parks. Agency staff has added a local Park Passport Pursuit program for young beginners who maybe aren't sure about geocaching. This program encourages participants to get outside, explore, and learn more about the regional parks. It's a great introduction to Geocaching.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Broaden communication and collaboration with municipal partners to enhance overall park operations, and improve maintenance standards, policies, and procedures. Explore opportunities to share services or resources.
- Continue to explore grant opportunities and partnerships for programming and park development.
- Explore renewable energy sources and opportunities for credits, as it relates to regional parks. Attend various trainings and seminars to learn of opportunities and educate staff.
- Continue to partner with other COG agencies to explore partnership opportunities and shared services/resources.
- Continue to expand professional development opportunities for Agency staff. The Agency will invest in additional training for our Parks Operations staff to build the leadership team for succession planning, and potentially leadership roles for zoning the crew. The 2024 Detailed Budget will provide figures and additional training details.
- Continue to implement the recommendations contained in the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study Action Plan and the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study.
- As the Agency plans for future growth and needs, staff will continue to explore options and alternatives for leased and rented properties that are used for general recreation programs, the Administration Office, and the Active Adult Center. A cost/benefit analysis should be developed over the next few years, to help determine the feasibility of an indoor recreation center. Staff will also explore other

opportunities and compare what's being offered by other similar organizations in the Centre Region. The five-year Capital Improvement Plan includes a proposal for the engineering and design of an Indoor Recreation Facility. This is consistent with recommendations with the Comprehensive, Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan. The lack of indoor space limits the amount and variety of programming we can offer, which directly impacts the revenue generated. It can be difficult to charge competitive rates when rental costs are factored into the cost of service.

- Continue to provide the staff support necessary to complete the Phase II of the Spring Creek Education Building and Welcome Pavilion at Millbrook Marsh in the early part of 2024. Begin developing plans for the Hess Restrooms/Concession facility.
- Continue to monitor the rental property at Oak Hall and the cost/benefit to potentially convert the building for Parks Operations and programming/sports storage in the future.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- The Mobile Concession has been delayed in 2023 due to limited staff time. In 2022, the General Forum voted to approve a Mobile Concessions Plan, which included the purchase of a Mobile Truck to serve food at both community pools, the John Hess Softball Complex, and special events. This program will be evaluated more closely in 2023 and could possibly carry over to 2024. Staff plan to update the Mobile Concessions Plan as part of the planning for the concession/restroom project at Hess (which is part of the 2024 Capital Improvement Plan). There may be other alternatives to explore.
- Modify Kidz Kamp hours to align with staff availability. There will be a slight reduction in the hours of the Kidz Kamp program in 2024. This is due to the challenge of hiring staff for the extended-hour option, which was first implemented in 2019. Our goal is to maintain adequate camper-to-staff ratios, and we are not able to recruit enough staff to provide the extended-hour service.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- Keeping a competitive wage for seasonal staff is crucial for continued operational success and remaining competitive with other seasonal employers in the Centre Region. As part of the COG-wide Classification and Compensation study, staff aims to standardize the salary schedule for similar positions to include annual increases and small seasonal bonuses as methods to attract and retain qualified staff.
- Maintenance and scheduling will increase for Parks Operations and the Sports Coordinator. The opening of Whitehall Road Regional Park is anticipated in late 2023 or early 2024. The first phase brings 40-acres of open space into operation and includes four multi-use premier grass fields, practice space, trails, the “all-abilities”

playground, restrooms, and a maintenance facility. Field use will be dependent on how quickly the grass is established. Staff will continue to monitor conditions throughout the seasons.

- Staff will continue to address IT, safety, and security needs as they arise. There may be increased costs to add existing security systems into a more universal platform.
- Expenses related to the GeoTour, under the “Where Are We Now” category will dissolve.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- Personnel Changes: Per the 2022 Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study, two new positions are proposed for 2024:
  - In 2024, it is recommended that the part-time Rec Aide position (budgeted) convert to a full-time **Program Coordinator** position to assist with programming and sports to help identify appropriate programs to offer, to hire instructors/contractors, to assist with day-to-day operations of summer camp, to help to oversee camp staff scheduling, to assist with the Rec On The Go program, concessions operations, and coordination of sports tournaments and programs. This position will also provide backup staff support for special events. This position will report to the Recreation Supervisor. Staff believes that this position will generate rental and program revenue by helping to lead, teach programs, assist with scheduling, and recruit new instructors. Per the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study (March 2022), this position is recommended and achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan.
  - In 2024, it is recommended that a full-time **Staff Assistant** position be shared between the Active Adult Center and CRPR Administration to assist with critical needs. The demands placed on the Administration Office have increased over the last few years, with growing wait lists, rental inquiries, and peak registrations following the mailing of the Active Guide or when Camp Registration opens. Coverage for the front desk remains a challenge. The position will also support coverage needed at the Active Adult Center. The AAC is currently challenged by having just two full-time staff, and one part-time. When one of the FT staff is not available, it places a lot of responsibility on a Staff Assistant and Part-Time Assistant. The safety of our senior patrons is very important. This new position would work primarily out of the Administrative Office and will report to the Office Manager or Active Adult Center Supervisor. Per the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study (March 2022), this position is recommended and achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan. This position may help generate rental revenue.

- Anticipated Major Changes: The additional 40-acres at Whitehall Road Regional Park will require additional oversight for maintenance and sports scheduling.
- Programmatic Adjustments: The Recreation Supervisor may need to explore other options if a Program Coordinator position is not funded in 2024. Certain programs may need to be reconsidered.

E. Five-Year Staffing and Non-Capital Studies Projections:

- In 2024, it is recommended that a **full-time *seasonal maintenance* position** for the CRPR Parks Operations Division serve 8 months out of the year. The position does not include benefits. The function of this position is to care for Whitehall Road Regional Park and other facilities/parks as needed. In the fall of 2023 or early spring of 2024, Whitehall Road Regional Park will open to the public, therefore, a maintenance position will be needed to assist with interior and exterior maintenance work, custodial duties, athletic field maintenance, preparations and line painting, care of greenspace, light carpentry, inspections, trail repairs, and more. This is an anticipated expense and is also identified in the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study, March 2022. This position also achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan including Core Theme 1 (Take Care of What We Have), Core Theme 7 (Expand Environmental Sustainability Opportunities), and Core Theme 13 (Assess Level of Staffing). While this position does not generate revenue, there may be long-term savings due to improved preventative maintenance. Salaries are subject to change, based on results of the Class and Compensation Plan.
- In 2025, it is recommended that a full-time **Parks Specialist I** position be considered to assist the crew in maintaining Whitehall Road Regional Park and other additional facilities that will come onboard in the regional parks system.
- In 2026, it is recommended that a full-time **Sports Coordinator** position be considered to assist the Sports Supervisor in providing adequate programming throughout the year. The Sports Supervisor is currently challenged with balancing many sports programs, events, and leagues throughout the year. With the addition of Whitehall Road Regional Park, there's an even greater demand for scheduling. This position meets the current needs and demand for sports to be held during each of the four seasons. We'll continue to monitor other local programs and needs in the region. As Whitehall continues to develop and other local parks add athletic facilities, there is an increased demand on the Sports Supervisor to keep providing the same level of service, with more to manage. This position is consistent with the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study (March 2022).
- In 2027, it is recommended that the agency consider splitting the crew into three zones across the region, to maintain and oversee maintenance operations. Additional research and planning are needed before this is determined. The five-

year staffing plan reflects an increase of **Parks Specialist I's to Parks Specialist II's** in hopes of moving individuals into leadership roles, with the responsibility to oversee a small crew and fewer parks in a designated area.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Staff Assistant		
<b>Agency:</b> Parks and Recreation	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). ----- <input type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup> : \$ <u>65,058</u>
<b>Program:</b> Administration/AAC		2024 Est. Operational Cost: \$ <u>3,600</u>
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  The CRPR Authority endorsed the Staffing Study in 2022 and the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan. Prioritizing positions may require further discussion.		2024 Est. Capital Cost: \$ <u>0</u>
<b>Agency Ranking:</b>  ----- 1		2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup> : \$ <u>1,500</u>
<b>COG Ranking:</b>  -----		2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup> : \$ <u>67,158</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Study		2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup> : \$ <u>69,323</u>

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

Staff is recommending a full-time Staff Assistant position be split across the Active Adult Center (40%) and Administration (60%) to assist with critical needs. This position would work primarily out of the Administrative Office and will report to the Office Manager. Duties under the Administration would include assisting during peak season registration, general marketing, wait list management, rentals, bulk mailings, and general office coverage as needed. Duties under the Active Adult Center would include assisting with field trips (frequent outings), program registrations, additional staffing needed for various activities and events, and to provide general office coverage to ensure the safety and security of our patrons. This position is recommended in the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study (March 2022) and also achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan to include Core Theme 1 (Take Care of What We Have), Core Theme 9 (Strengthen Resident Involvement), Core Theme 14 (Make Efficient and Effective Use of Financial Resources), and Core Theme 13 (Assess Level of Staffing).

**A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

This position may help generate rental revenue at the AAC and in the parks. Furthermore, the assistance with general customer inquiries and staff needs will be an aid to various Agency Supervisors and the Director. Salaries are subject to change, based on results of the Class and Compensation Plan.

**B. Impact if Not Funded:**

This position ensures effective delivery of recreation services for administrative purposes and the safety and security of both staff and patrons at the Active Adult Center. If not funded, we will continue to utilize FT staff (in many cases Supervisors/Managers) to fill-in the gaps and provide coverage during peak registration, field trips at the AAC, and when current staff are absent. The current staff assistant for the Administration office is constrained with an increased volume of rental requests, registrations, general inquiries, and managing the increased wait lists and refunds. Workload spikes when the rental season begins, summer camp registration opens, and each season when the Active Guide hits homes. Participation at the Active Adult Center has greatly increased since COVID and the need for additional support staff during outings and for particular events/programs, is essential.

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**Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Parks Specialist I		
<b>Agency:</b> Parks and Recreation	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). ----- <input type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup> : \$ <u>65,395</u>
<b>Program:</b> Parks Operations		2024 Est. Operational Cost: \$ <u>1,000</u>
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  The CRPR Authority endorsed the Staffing Study in 2022 and the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan. Prioritizing positions may require further discussion.		2024 Est. Capital Cost: \$ <u>0</u>
<b>Agency Ranking:</b>  _____ 2 _____		2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup> : \$ <u>50,000 (savings offset)</u>
<b>COG Ranking:</b>  _____		2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup> : \$ <u>16,395</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Study		Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup> : \$ <u>19,714</u>

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

Currently there is a ten-month position split across the Welch Community Pool and Park Forest Community Pool and Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. In 2024, the MMNC portion would revert to Park Operations (general) and we would propose a new Park Specialist I position designated specifically for Millbrook Marsh to oversee day-to-day maintenance, inspections, and janitorial duties. This position will work under the direction of the Parks Manager. This is a full-time, year-round position, and would eliminate the annual expense for 3rd party janitorial services, which is estimated to be \$50,000+, starting in 2024. This position is recommended in the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study (March 2022). Year-round interior and exterior maintenance work are needed at Millbrook Marsh and include trail/boardwalk maintenance and repairs, custodial duties, painting, light carpentry, inspections, winterization of the Diane Kerley Welcome Pavilion, facility repairs, and more. This position also achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan to include Core Theme 1 (Take Care of What We Have), Core Theme 7 (Expand Environmental Sustainability Opportunities), Core Theme 13 (Assess Level of Staffing).

**A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

While this position does not generate revenue, there may be a long-term savings due to improved preventative maintenance. At this time a vehicle is not needed to get this position started, however, the 2025 CIP should reflect a utility truck and additional equipment as a one-time up-front cost. Salaries are subject to change, based on results of the Class and Compensation Plan.

**B. Impact if Not Funded:**

This position ensures effective delivery of maintenance services for the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. If not funded, we will continue to pay 3rd party custodial fees estimated annually at \$50,000 and only specific routine grounds maintenance will be completed, such as mowing, landscaping, and trash removal. Additionally, facility maintenance projects may be delayed and will further constrain Park Operations. It is essential to consider staffing costs and ongoing maintenance needs and requirements, when facilities expand.

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**Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Program Coordinator										
<b>Agency:</b> Parks and Recreation	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP).  <input type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	<b>2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>68,695</u>								
<b>Program:</b> Programming/Sports		<b>2024 Est. Operational Cost:</b> \$ <u>5,600</u>								
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  The CRPR Authority endorsed the Staffing Study in 2022 and the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan. Prioritizing positions may require further discussion.		<b>2024 Est. Capital Cost:</b> \$ <u>0</u>								
<b>Agency Ranking:</b>  _____ 3 _____		<b>2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>3,000</u>								
<b>COG Ranking:</b>  _____		<b>2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>71,295</u>								
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment</td> <td style="width: 25%;"><input type="checkbox"/> New</td> <td style="width: 25%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair</td> <td style="width: 25%;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Study</td> </tr> </table>			<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Study			
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff							
<input type="checkbox"/> Study										

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

Staff is recommending the budgeted part-time Rec Aide position (\$10,622/year) convert to a full-time Program Coordinator position to be split across Programming (75%) and Sports (25%) to help identify appropriate programs to offer, hiring instructors/contractors, day-to-day operations of summer camp, helping to oversee camp staff, scheduling, assisting with the Rec On The Go program, concessions, and coordinating sports tournaments and programs. This position will also provide back-up staff support for special events. Current staff, primarily Supervisors and Managers, are filling in when there is a need. This position will report directly to the Recreation Supervisor, who single-handedly offered the most programs for the agency in 2022, topping 180 programs and an estimated 388 individuals on wait lists. It is assumed that this position will generate rental and program revenue by helping to lead, teach programs, and recruit new instructors. Per the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study (March 2022), this position is recommended and also achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan to include Core Theme 1 (Take Care of What We Have), Core Theme 3 (Strengthen and Enhance Recreation

**A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

Program Opportunities), Core Theme 14 (Make Efficient and Effective Use of Financial Resources), and Core Theme 13 (Assess Level of Staffing). Salaries are subject to change, based on results of the Class and Compensation Plan.

**B. Impact if Not Funded:**

This position ensures effective delivery of recreation programming for the Agency. If not funded, programming and sport opportunities will remain or be reduced. In order to remain status quo, additional CRPR staff will be called on to help fill gaps and pulled away from their primary focus areas. Wait lists will continue to grow as demand grows, leaving patrons feeling frustrated and dissatisfied. There is a very high demand and need for children's programming/camps over the summer months.

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**Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.

## 2024 COG – Budget Proposal

<b>Title/Brief Description:</b> Seasonal Maintenance		
<b>Agency:</b> Parks and Recreation	<b>COG Priority(ies) (Check all that apply):</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Support the safety of those who live, work, and visit the Region (Code, Fire, EM, EMS, transportation facilities).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take Care of What We Own (safe, well-maintained, efficient facilities).  <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of COG Staff (equitable pay, COLA, inflation, merit pay, benefits).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare for the Future of the COG and COG Facilities (planning, etc., includes new purchases and adding items to the CIP). ----- <input type="checkbox"/> Seek opportunities to develop and deliver efficient shared services and partnerships in the region (joint initiatives, cooperative ventures, and other partnerships).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Economic Vitality of the Region as the member municipalities are able.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support an inclusive, healthy, and sustainable community.	<b>2024 Est. Personnel Cost <sup>(1)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>16,800</u>
<b>Program:</b> Parks Operations		<b>2024 Est. Operational Cost:</b> \$ <u>300</u>
<b>Governing Body(ies) Input/Support:</b>  The CRPR Authority endorsed the Staffing Study in 2022 and the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan. Prioritizing positions may require further discussion.		<b>2024 Est. Capital Cost:</b> \$ <u>0</u>
<b>Agency Ranking:</b>  _____4_____		<b>2024 Est. Revenue <sup>(2)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>0</u>
<b>COG Ranking:</b>  _____	<b>2024 Est. Net Impact <sup>(3)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>18,780</u>	
		<b>Est. Ongoing Annual Net Impact <sup>(4)</sup>:</b> \$ <u>19,719</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP/Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Replace/Repair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Study		

**A. Detailed Description / Justification** (include information on why this is necessary/what will be the impact to services, origin of the request, projected outcomes, links to study, etc.):

Staff is recommending a full-time seasonal position for the CRPR Parks Operations Division to serve 8 months out of the year. The position does not include benefits. The primary function of this position is to care for Whitehall Road Regional Park and other facilities/parks as needed. In 2023, Whitehall Road Regional Park will open to the public, therefore, a maintenance position will be needed to assist with interior and exterior maintenance work, custodial duties, athletic field maintenance, preparations and line painting, care of green space, light carpentry, inspections, trail repairs, and more. This is an anticipated expense and is also identified in the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study, March 2022 (page 26). This position also achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan to include Core Theme 1 (Take Care of What We Have), Core Theme 7 (Expand Environmental Sustainability Opportunities), Core Theme 13 (Assess Level of Staffing). While this position does not generate revenue, there may be a long-term savings due to improved preventative maintenance. Salaries are subject to change, based on results of the Class and Compensation Plan.

**A. Detailed Description / Justification (Continued)**

**B. Impact if Not Funded:**

This position ensures effective delivery of maintenance services specifically for Whitehall Road Regional Park and other regional parks as needed. If not funded, Park Operations will be constrained and challenged to provide the same level of service and delivery for park patrons. As regional parks are developed and new facilities become available to the public, it is essential to factor staffing costs and preventative maintenance methods.

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**Footnotes:**

1. Wages and benefits (family health insurance, dental/vision, or ERE)
2. A realistic analysis of projected revenue shall be provided in Section A.
3. 2024 (First Year) impact should include all hiring and start-up (equipment, etc.) costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.
4. Ongoing Annual Net Impact should include full-year/ongoing costs for personnel or project minus revenue, if any.



## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS CAPITAL EQUIPMENT BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*The mission of the Parks Capital Equipment Budget is to track capital purchases for the fleet and equipment asset program, for the replacement of aging equipment items, and to manage the scheduled computer replacements and peripherals used by the Centre Region Parks and Recreation (CRPR) Agency to include those located at the Parks Maintenance Shop.*

The primary goal of this plan is to identify equipment and vehicle needs for park operations. To reflect replacement values more accurately, a 5% inflationary cost was added to the replacement cost, from year to year. Agency staff will continue to partner with municipalities to share and borrow equipment/vehicles for the benefit of the regional parks system.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 2023, revenue and expenditures for the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Capital Budget are generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2023 budget. The unaudited December 31, 2022, ending fund balance was \$652,127, which is \$315,129 more than estimated in the 2023 detailed budget. The increases in fund balance have occurred since 2021 through the present due to continued supply chain constraints and the inability to order certain items such as replacement vehicles as well as the deferral of items.

Forecasting and planning for future years have been complicated with delivery delays of equipment for Whitehall Road Regional Park and supply chain issues for the other planned 2023 Parks Capital Equipment purchases.

In general, there has been an increase in equipment/vehicle costs of roughly 20% since pre-pandemic 2019 pricing. Further evaluation of the Fixed Assets Policy and Procedure Manual ought to be considered concerning Parks Capital purchases.

Replacement decisions are based on the average lifespan of the equipment, the frequency/amount of usage (hours/mileage) within a year, depreciation, additions and changes within the entire parks system, and potential safety hazards associated with aging equipment. Staff also evaluated the safety defects and engine/hydraulic concerns that may require major repair.

Three pick-up trucks have not yet been received and we expect delivery sometime in the fall of 2023. These are 2021-2023 orders. Several mowers are currently being quoted (pending availability from the manufacturer) and these are factored into the 2023 budget.

The purchase of the two mowers (10-foot and 6-foot) was delayed due to the delayed opening of Whitehall Road Regional Park. These funds were carried from previous years. Staff is currently securing quotes for this equipment for purchase in 2023.

## **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

### **A. Priorities for 2024:**

- **Park Partners Program:** This program is an initiative that encourages public and private groups to assist with various improvements to municipal park areas. This assistance has taken the form of volunteer or in-kind services and labor for park maintenance and project development. We will continue to build upon and grow the Park Partners program through shared resources, services, and equipment.
- **Scheduled Computer Replacements:** According to the replacements conducted in 2021-2022, the Agency has completed all scheduled replacements. The Agency and Borough IT is still awaiting some docks to complete the installation. The only additional purchases planned for 2023 will be for two Touchscreen Tablets with SIM Cards and Stands. These pieces will also need two Wireless Card Readers and two Personal Hot Spots. One set-up is for the Oak Hall Regional Park Concession Stand and the other is for the Mobile Concessions Unit. Details for the Mobile Concessions Unit are included in the Business Plan. These systems will run the POS option from our cloud-based software RecDesk.

### **B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- The only revenue for Parks Capital comes directly from the sale of used equipment or vehicles. We anticipate selling the 2006 Toro 4500-D Mower for an estimated \$12,000.

### **C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- The purchases scheduled for the 2024 Parks Capital Equipment Budget are listed below. All equipment scheduled for replacement is evaluated annually (as described above); 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 2023.
  - Purchase Used Concessions Vehicle (*may carry into 2024*)
  - Replace Toro 2013 4500 mower #242
  - Replace 2010 Chevy Silverado Truck #180
  - Replace 2010 Ford Escape XLT #152
  - Replace John Deere Gator Utility Vehicle #216
  - Replace Ford 250 2015 pickup truck #244

- Replace Toro 2014 Infield Pro Ballfield Groomer #246
- The fleet vehicles needed for 2024 will be evaluated in 2023 based on the success of ordering fleet vehicles in 2022 and receiving those vehicles in 2023 due to supply chain issues and limited inventory.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- Consider a replacement policy for parks equipment, as it relates to Fixed Asset Management.
- No programmatic adjustments are proposed in 2024.





## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION AQUATICS OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*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. CRPR operates two public outdoor swimming pools in the Region. William L. Welch Community Pool, which opened in 1959, is a 3.3-acre property that is in the Borough of State College, and Park Forest Community Pool, which opened in 1970, is a 4.4-acre property, located in Patton Township.*

The Agency strives to provide all ages and abilities with the opportunity to obtain lifesaving skills and to gain better physical health through swimming programs. With two public swimming pools that contain features such as spray pads, a separate lap pool, diving boards, slides, and a climbing wall, Centre Region Parks and Recreation offers the community a variety of exciting outdoor swimming opportunities. The Agency offers a robust swimming lesson program with lessons being held at both swimming pools throughout the summer months.

To extend the Aquatics Programs into the fall and winter seasons, we rely on the availability of the high school natatorium through a partnership with the State College Area School District. We also partner with the State College YMCA and other local organizations to provide programming opportunities.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenue and expenditures for aquatic operations are performing as expected. Staff has worked to reduce expenses while supporting revenue goals to maintain fiscal stability. Season pool pass sales, program revenue, and rentals are all performing well. This budget will rely on a continued strong summer swim season—warm temperatures and less rain than experienced in prior years – to yield strong gate attendance. Staffing levels in 2023 are very good for this operation.

The 2023 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$159,379, as compared to the beginning fund balance estimated in the 2023 detailed budget of \$96,588.

From 2011 to 2019, pool attendance generated revenue that exceeded projections and covered all operating expenses. No municipal support was required for pool operations. In 2021, municipal support was required to help the recovery of the pools' operating budget from the 2020 COVID pandemic year. In 2022 and 2023, the pools returned to a self-sustaining operational model, which is expected to continue in 2024 and beyond.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Looking forward to 2024, 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.

Agency staff was able to hold late-winter/early-spring swim lessons in the State College Area School District's natatorium. Winter programming provides a very good launching point for the summer season. The availability of the natatorium is always a factor in the success of the winter programming proposed in each year's budget.

### **A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Continue to offset all operational expenses through revenue streams.
- Continue to care for existing facilities and offer safe and clean aquatic experiences.
- Continue to offer a diverse array of aquatic programming.

### **B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- The Authority has annually adjusted the pool entry fees to better match comparable facilities across Pennsylvania. It is expected with the increase in costs across the board for operational expenses, that some increases in daily admissions and/or season passes may be recommended for 2024. Staff will continue to evaluate program and facility fees and seek grant funding for programming.

### **C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- Keeping a competitive wage for seasonal staff is crucial for continued operational success and remaining competitive with other seasonal employers in the Centre Region. As part of the COG-wide Classification and Compensation study, staff aims to standardize the salary schedule for similar positions to include annual increases and small seasonal bonuses as methods to attract and retain qualified staff.
- The price for sodium hypochlorite, the liquid chlorinating agent used in the pools, has risen significantly over the past 12 months. The result will be an increase in overall chemical costs for both pools.
- Both facilities will require non-capital facility maintenance above the normally expected items in 2024. This may include building siding staining and painting several areas.
- Both facilities may require non-capital replacement of specialty items such as pool furniture and pool equipment.

D. **Unfunded Requests:**

- Personnel Changes: No new changes are proposed. We may look closer at the seasonal staff pay rates to remain competitive.
- Anticipated Major Changes: Most of the capital expenses are for preventative maintenance items, meeting industry standards, and patron safety.
- Programmatic Adjustments: No major changes are anticipated.





## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION AQUATICS CAPITAL BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*The mission of the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Aquatics program is to provide safe, clean, and cost-effective public swimming pool facilities that allow for wholesome recreation opportunities for Centre Region residents and visitors. The Aquatics Program provides all ages with the opportunities to obtain aquatic and life-saving skills and to improve physical health. Centre Region Parks and Recreation Aquatics Program operates two public outdoor swimming pools in the Region: William L. Welch Community Pool in the Borough of State College and Park Forest Community Pool in Patton Township.*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenue for the Aquatics Capital Budget is on target for the projections contained in the budget, based on the municipal payment timeline. The replacement of internal filter components for Park Forest Pool has begun, and research is in progress for a storage solution at Welch Pool.

The 2023 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$106,611, as compared with the estimated fund balance in the 2023 detailed budget of \$78,436.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

2024 marks the 16<sup>th</sup> year since Park Forest Community Pool was renovated (2008-2009) and the 14<sup>th</sup> year since William L. Welch Community Pool was renovated (2009-2011).

In 2021, a detailed Facility Condition Assessment and a review of operational costs were completed for both pool facilities. This led to the creation of a Capital Improvement Program to include short- and long-term needs. It is anticipated that we will review and update the Facility Condition Assessment for both pools in 2024, to help guide and direct decisions regarding capital investments.

In 2018, the COG formula for the pool's loan was updated from the 2008 levels. This 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 (the end of its amortization).

#### **A. Priorities for 2024:**

- No significant changes are proposed; however, the Finance Committee may wish to evaluate long-term capital investments.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

For 2024, proposed budgetary items for capital repairs include:

- Resurface the bathhouse floors at Welch Pool (\$50,000) to improve the longevity of the flooring and provide a safer slip-resistant surface. The currently painted concrete floor can become very slippery when wet and requires regular maintenance.
- Install slip-resistant and cushioned soft surfacing under the sprayground features at Park Forest Pool (\$45,000). This will help increase comfort while adding safety to avoid slips and falls. The splash pad industry is moving toward treating spraygrounds as playgrounds and there is a push to increase safety from slips and falls on the surface.
- Replace the internal filter components at Welch Pool (\$40,000). This should be done every 5-8 years depending on use and has not been done since the pool opened in 2011.
- Replace four of the water-feature pumps (two at each pool, \$30,000 total). Pumps have a typical lifespan of 10-15 years, although the pool filter room is a very caustic environment and may lead to more rapid degradation of equipment. These pumps have not been replaced since the pools opened in 2009 and 2011.
- Continue the annual \$10,000 contingency to cover unplanned capital replacements, as needed.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- There is a slight increase in Capital expenses from 2023 to 2024, covered primarily through fund balance.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- Anticipated Major Changes: Most of the capital expenses are for preventative maintenance items, meeting industry standards, and patron safety.
- Programmatic Adjustments: No major changes are anticipated.



## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION ACTIVE ADULT CENTER OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*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 May 31, 2023, revenue and expenditures for the Active Adult Center are on track with the 2023 budget projections. The attendance at the Center is increasing and program activities seem to be returning to a regular schedule.

The 2023 beginning unaudited fund balance was \$26,142 as compared to the beginning fund balance in the 2022 detailed budget of \$71,334. The balance is primarily based on increases in salaries, wages, and benefits. This can be correlated to the hiring of the Active Adult Center Supervisor and the part-time Staff Assistant's hours increasing from 15 to 20 per week, per the 2023 Budget request.

In 2023, the AAC Supervisor focused on revitalizing the Center's overall appearance, as well as the operational procedures, to ensure that all COG/Agency policies are in place and being followed.

The 2023 budget for donations and contributions was estimated at \$7,000. As of May 31, 2023, the AAC has received \$12,189. This is due to an appeal that was mailed on March 16, 2023. At least \$500 of this total was specifically for memorial contributions, in the name of a participant.

### COG/AUTHORITY/COUNTY AGREEMENT & FACILITY LEASE

The Agreement with Centre County is in place for a period between January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2024. The County agrees to pay for the services outlined in Appendix II of the agreement, entitled "Payment Schedule." The County is covering a third of the costs as described in this agreement. In 2024, the payment schedule and agreement terms will need to be evaluated and updated.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Centre Region Council of Governments and the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority identifying the terms of a \$107,000 loan to fund expenses that were incurred to relocate the Active Adult Center was entered into on November 28,

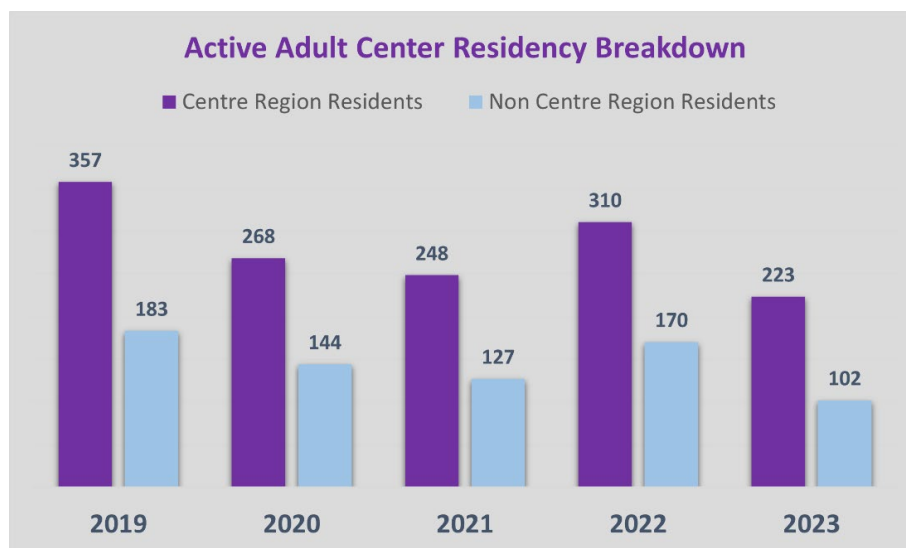
2016. The repayment of this loan was set for annual payments beginning December 1, 2017, and ending December 1, 2026.

The Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority entered into a *Lease Agreement* with Nittany Centre Realty LLC for the space containing approximately 7,075 square feet of floor area, located inside the Nittany Mall. The lease has an expiration date of July 31, 2030, and monthly rent through the end of the term is \$7,075 or \$84,900 annually. This does not include utilities, maintenance, or janitorial services. Additionally, in consideration of the performance of the Landlord’s remodeling work, CRPRA must pay a monthly amount of \$2,358.33 or \$28,300 annually. The annual cost to lease the Nittany Mall property in 2024 is \$113,200.

**WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

**An increase in the senior population by an average of 3% to 4% is anticipated**, based on the U.S. Census (2020). The population of seniors ages 65 years and over is 15.6% of the population of Centre County, based on U.S. Census 2021 data. Approximately 71.9% of Centre County older adults have two or more chronic conditions, according to the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, Centre County, Mount Nittany Health. Keeping our seniors active with regular exercise and movement at the AAC is the first step to better overall health, well-being, and longevity.

An increase in participation is anticipated. As shown in the table below, participation at the Active Adult Center is rebounding from pre-pandemic 2019 numbers. **The estimates for 2023 are based on current data from January 1, 2023, through May 15, 2023.** Not even midway through 2023, and numbers are quickly approaching yearend numbers from 2022.



**A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Continue serving the needs of the growing and diverse older population while identifying the most pressing needs, challenges, opportunities, and funding gaps.

- Continue to outreach and raise funds through fundraisers and sponsorships. The AAC plans to hold its annual fundraising event, Beep, Beep, Bingo. In 2022, this event raised over \$2,000. In addition, the Center will be utilizing several of the outdoor parks and pavilions to hold additional small fundraisers, such as “Dime Bingo & Lunch in the Park,” and a new program started in 2023, Senior Summer Camp!
- Continue to broaden communication with the seniors and build community partnerships, including attending local civic group meetings and events. It is the goal of the Active Adult Center’s Supervisor to stay up to date and bring new, exciting, and vibrant programming to the Active Adult Center.
- Continue to improve the administrative process, policies, procedures, and strategies for improving overall AAC operations. It is important that we develop a maintenance management plan for the Center, which includes routine inspections and preventative maintenance. We will evaluate safety procedures and protocols to improve our level of service.
- Complete a cost analysis and facility assessment for long-term investments and evaluate costs for brick-and-mortar vs. a leased property. Explore various options in consideration of an indoor recreation facility for the Agency as a whole.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Increasing participation and program revenue remain a goal. The vision for the Center is to grow participation across the Centre Region, utilizing the Center as well as the many natural spaces that fall under the Centre Region Parks and Recreation umbrella. Third-party rentals of the AAC increased in 2023 and will be a focus in 2024. Several new groups rent areas of the AAC monthly, bringing in revenue for the Center.
- Staff will continue to evaluate cost recovery methods to determine rate increases. We do not anticipate a rate increase in 2024 for fees and charges. Grant opportunities will be explored.
- An appeal letter will be mailed each year to participants and/or businesses within the Region. Staff will continue to set goals for raising funds that will help offset operational costs.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- Staff is prepared for reduced programming options if Influenza (the flu), the coronavirus, or other catastrophic events become a factor. The Agency will utilize online Zoom class options to include fitness and education, take-home craft kits, and more. This would greatly affect attendance and participation in programming.

- The Agency is requesting a Staff Assistant position, which will be split between the CRPR Administration Office and the AAC. This position will assist the Supervisor in maintaining both internal and external programs and support all special events, fundraisers, program research, and execution of programming. This is a critical position since the Center has returned to high-level attendance. Coverage is essential for this population of attendees, therefore having just two full-time staff and one part-time staff currently makes it challenging in the event of unexpected or planned absences. This position was proposed at the May COG HR Committee meeting and is requested to be a full-year hire.
- It is anticipated that there will be an increase in janitorial fees from 2023 to 2024. Increased rates went into effect in May 2023 when the contract was renewed. The contract will expire on December 31, 2023.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- Personnel Changes: The Agency is requesting a Staff Assistant position for 2024, to provide additional support, as described in Section C, and to be split between the Administration Office and AAC. Additional information regarding this request is provided in the pages that follow. Staff will revisit the need for a full-time Program Coordinator over the next five years. If the Staff Assistant position proposed in the 2024 Personnel Requests is not funded, staff will continue to struggle with necessary coverage for field trips, special events, and programs held at the Center.
- Anticipated Major Changes: No major changes were proposed.
- Programmatic Adjustments: We will continue to evaluate cost recovery methods and programmatic needs.

**E. Five-Year Staffing And Non-Capital Studies Projections:**

- In 2024, a **Staff Assistant** position is proposed for the **Administration and Active Adult Center**. The position will help to address critical coverage needs to ensure the safety and security of participants at the Center, and coverage needs in the Administration office due to high call volume, increased registrations and rentals, and general inquiries. The Agency is challenged in keeping up with the current demand. Specific training is needed for staff who assist at the Active Adult Center, and having this coverage is essential. Current Supervisors/Managers in other areas of the Agency fill in when there is not enough coverage at the AAC. The AAC currently has two full-time staff, and one part-time, which makes it challenging to provide the coverage needed for outings and programs, especially when at least one full-time employee is out for an extended period of time.
- In 2026, CRPR proposes a full-time **Program Coordinator** position, primarily to oversee existing programs. If this position is funded, the Staff Assistant, above,

would fully support the Administration Office and Parks Operations. This proposed staggering is intended to help gradually bring these positions into the Agency. The AAC currently has no specific Program Coordinator with the time dedicated to recruiting and overseeing programs. The current AAC Supervisor and Staff Assistant are taking on these tasks. If funded in 2026, the AAC would be staffed with 3 full-time and 1 part-time positions.

- Staff will continue to monitor the senior population in the area, the overall health of our participants, and specific programming needs as we seek to improve operations.





## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION MILLBROOK MARSH NATURE CENTER OPERATING BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*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.*

Millbrook Marsh provides mission-based programming and events for all ages year-round and hosts families, groups, and organizations through the facility rental program. The 62-acre site includes a trail system with a 3,000 linear foot boardwalk for recreational use. Over 20,000 visits are made annually to the Nature Center for programming and events.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenue and expenditures were generally consistent with the projections contained in the 2023 budget. The unaudited Fund Balance for January 1, 2023, is \$47,303 which is \$17,156 more than budgeted due to unexpected grant funding, dental and vision insurance savings, and lower expenditures for employee development than budgeted.

Efforts that are reported below for 2023 are based on the 2022-2023 Work Plan:

- 50% of the 2023 operational fundraising goal is secured, as of mid-May 2023. Centre Foundation Endowment Funds, community support, and gifts from ongoing donors and foundations have contributed to this operational support.
- Construction of the Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion and the Spring Creek Education Building (SCEB) Phase II began in March 2023. This was originally scheduled for October 2022. Final inspections and occupancy are scheduled for December 2023. Due to this construction, most Nature Center programs have been modified to coincide with the construction schedule. Guided Programs (field trip, scout, and Walk with a Naturalist programs), public programs for all ages, summer camps, and children's birthday parties remain available. The Nature Center continues to partner with the State College Area School District as a provider for the Community Education Extended Learning (CEEL) program offered throughout the 2023-2024 school years. Large group and wedding rentals with more than sixty visitors are on hold until the project is complete.
- It is important to note that 2023 rental and program revenue has been affected by the Phase II SCEB construction as Phase I, and at times the Barn is not available for use.

- Through mid-May 2023, eighteen (18) schools applied for scholarships and were awarded a total of \$10,640 for 1,330 students. Funding for this scholarship program is supported by donations and grants, including the ongoing Connections Grant Program through ClearWater Conservancy. This grant program began in 2002.

## **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

A major focus of the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center budget is for the Agency staff to continue to identify and develop non-municipal revenue sources.

### **A. Priorities for 2024:**

- Develop a maintenance management plan, to include routine inspections and preventative maintenance. Evaluate safety procedures and protocols for daily operations.
- Review and revise the facility assessment for long-term investments and preventative maintenance.
- Evaluate the mission of the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center to better align with conservation efforts and environmental changes and impacts.
- Programs, events, partnerships, and rentals that align with the mission of MMNC will be a priority in 2024. Expanding programs with an emphasis on community partnerships, building community stewardship, promoting rental opportunities, and monitoring short- and long-term maintenance needs of the site continue to be the focus.

### **B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Phase II of the Spring Creek Education Building (SCEB) and the Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion are expected to come online in January 2024 and April 2024 respectively. Program and facility rental revenues are expected to increase from 2023 amounts with the use of these additional amenities. Wedding and large group rentals will be evaluated in 2024. While revenue-generating, these specific types of rentals are staff intensive and should be evaluated to align with the mission.

### **C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- Keeping a competitive wage for seasonal staff is crucial for continued operational success and remaining competitive with other seasonal employers in the Centre Region. As part of the COG-wide Classification and Compensation study, staff aims to standardize the salary schedule for similar positions to include annual increases and small seasonal bonuses as methods to attract and retain qualified staff. Summer programs were affected by a lack of leaders which ultimately affects

revenue generation capabilities. Additionally, the number of program leader hours will increase in 2024 to help staff the welcome desk in the new Donald Hamer Visitors Center located in the Spring Creek Education Building. These rate and hour increases will be proposed as part of the 2024 budget process.

- With the SCEB Phase II and Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion coming online, the 2024 operations budget will incur additional utility expenses, janitorial services expenses, and routine maintenance expenses associated with these facilities. Janitorial expenses may decrease if a Park Specialist I is approved for the 2024 budget (next bullet point). An increased number of visitors to the site, programs, events, and rentals are expected to correlate with the opening of these facilities.

#### D. Unfunded Requests:

- Personnel Changes: Per the 2022 Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study, one staffing change is recommended for 2024:
  - Currently, a ten-month Seasonal Maintenance position is split across the Welch Community Pool and Park Forest Community Pool, and Millbrook Marsh Nature Center (MMNC). For 2024, the Agency is proposing for the MMNC portion of the Seasonal Maintenance position to revert to Park Operations (general) and for a new Park Specialist I position to be designated to Millbrook Marsh to oversee day-to-day maintenance, inspections, and janitorial duties. This full-time, year-round Park Specialist I position would eliminate the annual expense for third-party janitorial services, which is estimated to be well over \$50,000 (roughly 3 cleanings per week), starting in 2024. This position is recommended in the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Staffing Study (March 2022). Year-round interior and exterior maintenance work are needed at Millbrook Marsh and include trail/boardwalk maintenance and repairs, janitorial duties, painting, light carpentry, inspections, winterization of the Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion, facility repairs, and more. This position also achieves several goals of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan.
- Anticipated Major Changes: The addition of the SCEB and Welcome Pavilion will have an impact on operational costs and programmatic offerings.
- Programmatic Adjustments: Staff anticipates that rentals and programs will increase slightly, as new facilities come on board.

#### E. Five-Year Staffing And Non-Capital Studies Projections:

- In addition to the **Parks Specialist I** position proposed for 2024, it is also recommended to hire a **Guided Program and Summer Camp Coordinator** to assist and oversee the various programs at the Marsh. This position will also focus on revenue-generating programs and camps, utilizing the newly expanded space (SCEB).





## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION MILLBROOK MARSH NATURE CENTER CAPITAL BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

*The mission of the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center (MMNC) Capital Budget is to provide funds for the improvements to the Spring Creek Education Building (SCEB), the Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion, the Service Building, the pavilion, sun shelters, boardwalk and trails, outbuildings, and visitor and staff parking areas as approved by the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority and the COG General Forum. This fund also addresses the major routine and preventative maintenance needs at the facility.*

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For the period of January 1 through May 31, 2023, revenues are on target for this budget per the municipal support payment schedule and donor gifts. Interest earnings from the SCEB Phase II and Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion major gifts account are higher than estimated due to the project start being delayed from October 2022 to March 2023.

The unaudited 2023 beginning fund balance is \$2,591,853, which largely consists of restricted funds earmarked for the Spring Creek Education Building Phase II and the Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion construction project.

Repairs to the bridge over Bathgate Springs and the Spring Creek Education Building (SCEB) trellis are anticipated to be completed, concurrent to the Phase II project. Funding for the bridge repairs (\$100,000) is supported through a foundation gift.

Agency staff is currently working on obtaining quotes for barn beam repairs, due to unexpected powder post beetle damage found in 2021. The barn interior was treated in 2021 to prevent further beetle damage. Staff obtained a timber quote in 2022 to repair the beams but was unable to find a contractor available to complete the work. Budgeted improvements for 2023 include construction of the SCEB Phase II, Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion with final inspections and occupancy scheduled for December 2023, completing the Boardwalk Feasibility Study, repainting the MMNC logo on the barn, and, as needed, minor boardwalk repairs.

Project funding for the SCEB Phase II and Diane Kerly Welcome Pavilion is supported by community gifts and local foundations, grants awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR; \$300,000) and the Pennsylvania Department of Community Economic Development (DCED; \$250,000), plus \$200,000 in municipal support with the balance being provided by local donors.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### A. Priorities for 2024:

- Continue to conduct daily and weekly inspections on-site and report any items that are degrading to determine if these items are an emergency, short-term need, or can be placed into a long-term replacement/repair plan.
- Increase inspections, reporting, and preventative maintenance measures for all facilities, grounds, and especially the Boardwalk, if a full-time Parks Specialist I position is supported for the Nature Center.
- Continue the Facility Condition Assessments, to ensure that all facilities, trails, and other amenities are captured as part of the Capital Improvement Program. Estimating routine and preventative maintenance and recommended replacement will be important.
- Evaluate the Service Building, which houses Nature Center Staff, supplies/equipment. The building is formerly a calf barn and was converted to staff offices back in the late 1990s-early 2000s. The age of the structure itself is unknown, but it is well beyond its lifespan and needs major repairs and renovations to meet current codes. The foundation beneath the structure is stone/dirt. Staff has explored a few options to relocate Nature Center staff temporarily to the SCEB building, but a longer-term plan is needed. The work environment for staff is important and must be safe and accessible for all. A future office building is proposed on a draft master plan for Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. Relocating the staff offices to a separate building has been discussed for some time, but an assessment is needed first to determine the next steps and options for renovating the existing building or relocating offices to a new space. This building has been captured in previous CIP documents; design/engineering for the replacement of the service building was captured in the 2022 budget and it has rolled forward due to prioritizing other park projects. It has been on delay until staff time has been available to focus on this. Offices were planned to be in the SCEB at one time but then were removed. Design and engineering for a replacement staff facility is proposed for 2024, with projected construction to follow. Agency staff is currently working to determine space needs and possible replacement options.
- Design and installation of the visitor parking lot and pathway lighting are planned for 2024, pending approval from College Township. The lighting is not in the current land development plan. Safety lighting is necessary for the visitor parking lot and pathway from the parking lot to the Spring Creek Education Building and Barn, due to after-hours programming and events. Lights will have full cut-off fixtures and will be turned on, as needed.

- Originally constructed in 2001-2004, the boardwalk structure continues to shift and deteriorate. Agency and COG staff continue to monitor its condition and as needed minor repair funding is proposed for 2024. Staff will begin working on a funding strategy in 2023.

**B. Revenue Changes for 2024:**

- Capital fundraising efforts will focus on donations and grant funding for the replacement of the boardwalk. The next step for the boardwalk project includes fundraising, planned to begin in 2023, and engineering to follow in 2024.
- Municipal support for grant matching funds may be requested in the detailed capital budget pending identified grant opportunities.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- In 2019, MMNC took out a loan through Centre Region Codes to repair the leaking barn roof. A final installment payment will be made in 2024. The work included a rubber coating application, which has a 10-year warranty. We shall re-evaluate the rubber coating toward the end of the warranty; 2028-2029. Rubber coating applications typically last 10 to 15 years, depending on weather conditions throughout its life. This should be considered in the CIP for 2029 and beyond, based on the condition.
- MMNC also took out a loan through Centre Region Fire for the Boardwalk Feasibility Study Phase II; the annual installment payments continue through 2027.
- An annual contingency fund of \$10,000 was included in the CIP to cover unplanned capital replacements, as needed.
- Additional 2024 expenditures relate to the priorities (section A) listed above.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

- There are no unfunded requests anticipated for this fund in 2024.





## CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION REGIONAL PARKS – CAPITAL BUDGET

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

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?

- Phase I of Whitehall Road Regional Park is on target to be completed in 2023. The scope of the current project is less than the approved plans, due to budget limitations. Scope changes to meet the budget include fewer parking spaces, field development reduction, irrigation system removal, and a maintenance storage building instead of the original maintenance facility. The project does include the restroom facility. Synthetic turf and the all-seasons pavilion are not included at this time.
- Staff will continue to explore alternatives in 2024 for the all-season pavilion at Whitehall Road Regional Park, which is underfunded. To date, \$270,000 in grants and donations has been raised for the project. The cost of the building needs to be defined. It was combined originally with the restroom building. Utilities are believed to be stubbed to this area and stormwater facilities were installed.
- The replacement of two fences at Hess Field was proposed to mitigate safety concerns. This project is complete.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

#### A. Priorities for 2024:

- The land development plan for WRRP was approved in December 2019 and recorded in June 2020. Staff met with Ferguson Township in 2023 to discuss the status of the project and coordinate the completion for occupancy.
- Complete design/engineering and construction for Hess Softball Complex, to include a new restroom/concession building.

#### B. Revenue Changes for 2024:

- Staff will review the Fee Policy and 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 as part of the budget process. The park will not come online for public use most likely until the late fall of 2024 or early spring of 2025. It is dependent on field conditions.
- Research grant opportunities and explore the funding agreement with Centre Soccer, private donors, and other potential funding sources for the all-season pavilion.
- Explore cost/benefit analysis and facility conditions assessment for the Oak Hall rental house. Determine future needs and use. This will slightly impact revenue if the lease is terminated in 2024.

**C. Expenditure Changes Proposed for 2024:**

- As Park Operations take responsibility for Whitehall Road Regional Park when construction is complete, there will be an additional 40-acres of land to maintain, including 4 athletic fields, 2 practice areas, the “All-Abilities” playground (nearly 6,000 square feet), parking, indoor restrooms, trails, trash/recycling, and other vegetation to care for. This will require additional equipment and staffing and will be reflected in the Capital Improvement Plan. Staff have ordered some equipment and hired one Parks Specialist I so far to care for this new facility. Additional needs may be identified as staff develops maintenance management plans.
- As facilities are added to Whitehall Road Regional Park, staff anticipate new utility costs. Upgrades to other regional parks will also require additional oversight and management.
- The Hess Softball Complex Restroom/Concession has been prioritized for 2024 and includes design/engineering and construction. A land development plan is also needed. Staff will begin to explore this work in 2023. The design proposed would be similar to the Oak Hall restrooms, but smaller in size. Further evaluation of the site amenities and condition is needed. Utility connections will need to be explored further and could have a big impact on the overall cost. Comparisons have been made with the construction of the Oak Hall Restrooms; however, sewer connections will not be the same. There could be a much higher cost to run sewer to the site.
- The roof and siding are needing to be replaced on the garage at Hess Softball Complex. This will help extend the life of the building, which is currently used for storage of equipment.

**D. Unfunded Requests:**

Personnel Changes: Personnel expenses are not included in the regional parks budget.

Anticipated Major Changes: Most of the capital expenditures are for new items. The replacement of the roof and siding on the garage at Hess will help extend the life of the building.

Programmatic Adjustments: No major changes are anticipated.





## CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FUTURE STAFFING AND STUDIES OUTLOOK

### 2024–2028+ ANTICIPATED PROPOSED STAFFING ADDITIONS \*

Administration – Position	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Future
Grant Writer / Administrator Fund: C50		\$119,595				
Deputy Executive Director Fund: C50		\$180,895				
Communications Administrator Fund: C50			\$103,095			
IT Administrator (PT to start) Fund: C50			TBD			
Code Administration – Position	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Future
Firefighter Driver/Operator/ Fire and Life Safety Inspector (Fire/Code – 2 Positions, 4 Total) Fund: C30 / C41	\$232,000					
CR Planning Agency – Position	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Future
AmeriCorps Program Sustainability Position Fund: C45	\$7,500	\$6,000				
Complete a staffing study and strategic plan in 2024. Fund: C45	TBD					
Reclass the Sustainability Planner position to Principal Planner. Fund: C45	TBD					
Hire a Planner to assist with sustainability activities and programs. Fund: C45		TBD				
CCMPO – Position	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Future

Consulting Support for the LRTP 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan Fund: C46	\$12,000					
CCMPO Transportation Grants Specialist (Senior Transportation Planner Classification) Fund: C46	\$115,413					
Consulting Support for the Development of Transportation Funding Applications Fund: C46	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$225,000			
TBD after Strategic Plan Fund: C46						
<b>Emergency Mgmt. – Position</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>Future</b>
Deputy EM Coordinator – Upgrade Fund: C35		TBD				
<b>Fire Protection – Position</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>Future</b>
Firefighter Driver/Operator/ Fire and Life Safety Inspector (Fire/Code – 2 Positions, 4 Total) Fund: C30 / C41	\$232,000					
Deputy Chief – Upgrade Fund: C30		TBD				
Firefighter EMT Fund: C30		TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
<b>Parks and Recreation – Position</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>Future</b>
Seasonal Parks Specialist I Fund: C20-452	\$18,780					
Staff Assistant (AAC/Admin) Fund: R14/C20-455	\$67,158					
Convert PT Rec Aid to FT Program Coordinator (Camps, Programs, Sports) Fund: C20-454	\$71,295					
Parks Specialist I – Seasonal to FT (MMNC)   Fund: R11	\$66,395					

Hire Park Specialist I Fund: C20-452		TBD				
AAC Program Coordinator Fund: R14			TBD			
Guided Program & Camp Coord Fund: R11				TBD		
Promote 3 Park Specialist I's to II's Fund: C20-452				TBD		
Sports Coordinator Fund: C20-454					TBD	
<b>Refuse and Recycling – Position</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>Future</b>
TBD after New Contract Fund: C60			TBD			
<b>Schlow CR Library – Position</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>Future</b>
Page - Rate Increase Fund: S05						

\*Footnotes

- This table includes the estimated following expenses:
  - Employee-related expenses (FICA, Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Retirement, Life Insurance)
  - Health and Dental/Vision benefits
  - COLA/Inflation
- Does not include changes as a result of the 2022 classification and compensation study, or miscellaneous costs (recruiting, equipment, etc.).
- This table does not include all positions recommended in the 2022 CRPR Staffing Study. Those recommendations will be reviewed and reassessed by the new Parks and Recreation Director before being reconsidered in the future.

**2024–2028 ANTICIPATED PROPOSED NON-CAPITAL STUDIES AND CONSULTANTS**

Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
COG Master Facility Plan Agency: Administration / All   Fund:	\$150,000				

IT Study and Five-Year Plan Update Agency: Administration   Fund:				\$100,000	
Compensation Plan Update Agency: Administration   Fund:					TBD
TBD after Strategic Plan Agency: CCMPO   Fund: C46					