

CLINTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

GOALS AND RESULTS FROM 2023

The Year 2023 began a new era for the Clinton County Planning Department with the first full year under the new Director of Planning/County Engineer, and saw the end of several COVID-19 related grant and assistance programs, which had been the responsibility of the Planning Department to administer.

The Planning Department Staff continued to consist of the Community Planner/Zoning Officer, Grants Administrator and Grants Project Coordinator. The salaries of the Grants Administrator and Grants Project Coordinator were 100% reimbursed through various grant programs, lessening the burden on the County's finances. The Grants Project Coordinator and County Engineer salaries were also partially reimbursed through agreements with local municipalities and authorities that utilized the Planning Department Office to assist with capital project management, which further lessened the burden on the County General Fund.

During 2023, the Clinton County Planning Commission added Dunnstable Township as a county regulated municipality. In late 2023, the County received the first land development plan on behalf of the Township.

Kicked off the Next Generation 911 Communications Project. In early 2023, the Next Generation 911 Communications Project was publicly bid. The project, with an estimated cost of approximately \$11,000,000.00, will update the County 911 System to be compliant with P25 digital requirements, resulting in all new equipment at each of the communications towers, new servers at the Communications Center, and new Dispatch Consoles. The project also funds approximately \$1,000,000.00 in new subscriber radios, for first responders and first responder vehicles. Funding for the project was acquired by securing several grants, consisting of almost \$9,000,000.00 in CDBG CV and \$1,000,000.00 in USDA Funds.

The project was awarded to Motorola Solutions in June of 2023, with construction scheduled for Spring of 2024. The Planning Department is providing Contract/Project Management jointly



with the Department of Emergency Services. This once in a generation project is fairly time consuming, but the County's hands on approach has resulted in fewer change orders and seamless communication with the Contractor.

Funded, Designed and Permitted Two BEVT Trail Projects. During 2023, BEVT 5, which is the trail section that continues from the end of Katie's Crossing, was designed and permitted for construction in 2024. BEVT 5 is fully funded through a Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Grant in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, which is administered by PennDOT. In addition to completing the design and permitting for BEVT Phase 5, the Planning Department prepared a DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program Grant for BEVT 6, which is the connector trail between the Castanea Trail Head and the City of Lock Haven. The Grant was awarded in the Fall of 2023, for the full amount requested. The \$250,000.00 project is scheduled to go through final design in early 2024, with bidding and construction later in the year.

Updated the Clinton County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The Clinton County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) was finalized and adopted in February of 2023. Several land development and subdivision plans were reviewed and approved under the new regulations, which brought stormwater management regulations and roadway construction up to date.

Clinton County Broadband Initiative. The Planning Department assisted the Commissioners and SEDA COG with outlining a plan to fund Broadband for All, which is a federal initiative to provide internet to the last mile. Because of Clinton County's rural setting, state forest acreage and Amish Communities, broadband for all has been very challenging. Very large funding entitlements are expected to be allocated to Pennsylvania in 2024, and the County is striving to be well positioned to address the broadband deficiencies when the funding is released.

Continued to apply for, and manage, grants to accomplish various goals. The Planning Department is currently managing the funding and project execution of approximately \$16,000,000.00 in capital projects through various grant programs:

- CDBG Entitlement and Competitive Grants for ADA Compliance, utility replacement, streets and sidewalk replacements and LMI Facilities Improvements
- PennDOT TASA Grants for BEVT 5 Construction
- DCNR Grants for BEVT 5 Engineering and BEVT 6 Construction
- Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)
- Clinton County Live and Work Program, Clinton County First Time Home Buyers Program
- PennDOT Liquid Fuels and Act 13 Bridge Funding Program



2024 PLANNING DEPARTMENT GOALS

As of the end of 2023, the Planning Department has established goals to accomplish in 2024, pertaining to funding programs, capital projects and planning documents. The list below outlines some of the major goals for the year.

- Hire a consultant and prepare the 2024 Clinton County Comprehensive Plan and Greenways and Open Space Plans, and begin the report outline and GIS Mapping. The effort will consist of forming committees and breakout groups to address local demographic shifts, housing, economic growth, tourism, recreation and transportation for the next decade.
- Complete the 911 Tower Project, which will consist of upgrades at 13 tower sites and the Department of Emergency Services Building in Flemington.
- Construction of the Bald Eagle Valley Trail Phase 5.
- Complete Design and Construction of Bald Eagle Valley Trail phase 6.
- Pursue Right of Ways, Permitting and Design for the Bald Eagle Valley Trail Phase 3.
- Continue to pursue funding for the design and construction of the State Route 150 Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project.
- Take a hard look at the Clinton County Long Term Transportation Plan and provide input to the SEDA COG Metropolitan Planning Organization and PennDOT District 2-0.
- Continue to meet with private industry broadband providers to extend reliable and fast broadband internet to the furthest miles of Clinton County.
- Assist the Clinton County Housing Authority with planning and funding associated with the Susquehannock Heights Phase 2.
- Continue to provide planning and engineering services to the Clinton County Planning Commission for the review and approval of subdivision and land developments.
- Pursue a joint project with the City of Lock Haven to fund and design a bypass around the Tidlow Dam, which would allow both fish and kayaks passage.
- Continue to pursue funding opportunities for our LMI Communities, Recreation and Tourism, as well as other County Capital Projects.



PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Commission members represent different regions of the county and make recommendations to the Commissioners, local municipal officials, and staff on land use ordinances, policies and procedures. They also review all major subdivisions and land developments.

Clinton County Planning Commission Attendance-2023													x = Present
													A = Absent
													E = Excused
	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Terry Murty	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		10
Reza Lotfi	x	x	x	E		x	x	x	x	x	x		9
Dave Calhoun	x	E	x	x		E	x	x	x	E	x		7
Roger Hoy	x	x	E	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		9
Larry Sheats	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	E		9
Ryan Graw	x	x	x	x		E	x	x	x	x	x		9
John Dotterer	E	x	x	x		x	A	x	x	x	x		8
Richard Bowman	E	E	x	x		A	A	A	x	x	x		5
Melvin Coakley	x	E	x	x		x	x	E	x	x	x		8

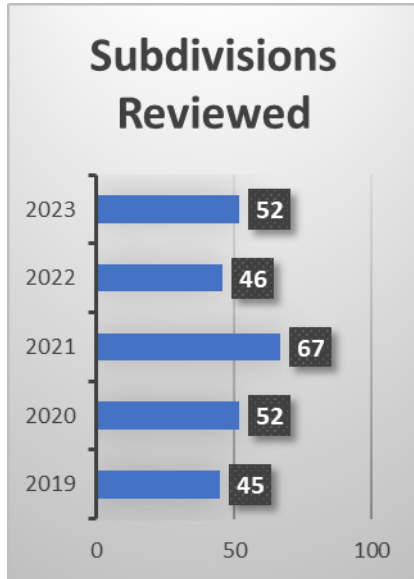
SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS

This year, Planning staff reviewed or approved 52 minor subdivisions, and reviewed 1 major subdivision with the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission reviewed 15 commercial and/or industrial land development plans. Significant projects included a Gas N Go in Lock Haven, Self Storage Facility in Bald Eagle Township, an expansion to Pine Creek Veterinary Associates in Pine Creek Township, an auto maintenance facility in Bald Eagle Township, a Wawa convenience store in Bald Eagle Township, a Nittany Minute Mart in Woodward Township, a Solar Farm in Wayne Township, an expansion to the Sugar Valley Produce Auction in Greene Township and a Dental & Medical Facility in Downtown Lock Haven.



A comparison of land development plans and subdivisions over the last 5 years is presented below. A post COVID surge in land development appears to be the trend in 2023.



ZONING PERMITS AND ENFORCEMENTS

The County Zoning Ordinance is enforced by the County Zoning Officer in Colebrook, Gallagher, Grugan, East Keating, West Keating, Logan, and Noyes Townships. During 2023, Planning Department staff issued 48 zoning permits with a total improvement value of \$3,442,200.00. There were four zoning permits issued for permanent residences for the seven townships that fall under the Clinton County Zoning Ordinance and there was one permit that was denied which will be reviewed by the Zoning Hearing Board in February of 2024.

Breakdown of permits issued by municipality:

Colebrook: 3

Gallagher: 10

Grugan: 4

East Keating: 3

West Keating: 6

Logan: 16

Noyes: 6



Zoning Permits Issued by Year

ZONING HEARINGS

There were no zoning hearings that occurred in the 2023 year.

MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE REVIEWS

The Planning Commission reviews proposals for updates and amendments to zoning and flood plain ordinances and comprehensive plans for all 29 municipalities in Clinton County. In 2023, the Planning Commission reviewed 2 zoning ordinance amendments and provided comments for each.



TOURISM FUND PROJECTS

Tourism and Recreation has continued to be a vital part to the Clinton County economy and 2023 brought several new events to the area such as the Happy Valley Ironman, 2023 Canoe and Kayak Nationals and the Endless Mountain Adventure Race; along with County annual events like Smoked Country Jam in Kettle Creek. To show continued support to the growth of tourism, “for-profit” businesses were permitted to apply for the 2023 Tourism and Recreation Grant to promote their events. In total, there was \$75,000.00 to be distributed to applicants, as summarized in the list below.

Organization/Municipality	Project	Amount Awarded
ABSOLUTELY! Theatre and Fundraising	Lock Haven Fringe Fest	\$1,000
Brick and Barn Estate	Brick and Barn Estate AirBnb Guesthouse	\$1,000
Budstock	Budstock Music Festival	\$1,000
Castanea Township	Castanea Days	\$500
Citizen’s Hose Company South Renovo	Flaming Foliage Festival Concert	\$1,000
City of Lock Haven	Summer Concert Series	\$5,000
Clinton County Country Club	Promotion for Clinton County Country Club	\$2,500
Clinton County Arts Council	LH Jams Festival, CCAC Station Gallery Events	\$5,000
Clinton County Fair Association and Speedway	35 th Anniversary Season Digital Billboard Campaign	\$5,000
Clinton County Historical Society	Circa 1900 Caboose	\$9,000
Clinton County Historical Society	Wine in the Wilds	\$1,000
Clinton County Recreational Authority	Belle Springs Tourism Promotion	\$1,000
CMATV	Promotion and Marketing of ATV Events	\$3,300
CRAAZE LLC	Promotion of opening of Crystal Beech Retreat	\$1,500
Downtown Lock Haven Inc	2023 Downtown Lock Haven Inc Events	\$4,000
Hope 4 Hayze	Truckers 4 Hope	\$3,200
Kettle Creek Music Festival	Kettle Creel Music Festival 2023	\$3,000
Mill Hall Borough	Mill Hall Community Pool Project 2023	\$5,000



Organization/Municipality	Project	Amount Awarded
Millbrook Playhouse Inc.	60 th Anniversary Season	\$6,500
PA State Flaming Foliage Festival	Outdoor Signage	\$2,000
Pine Creek Seed Farm LLC	Pine Creek Seed Corn Maze	\$500
Piper Aviation Museum	Manual Gate for Pilot Access, Museum upgrades	\$1,000
Revibe Outdoors	Little Loggers Trail Fest	\$3,000
The Clinton County Fair Association	Public Address System Upgrade	\$5,000
The Jaycees	52 nd Annual Labor Day Regatta	\$4,000

RECREATION PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Bald Eagle Valley Trail. The Bald Eagle Valley Trail saw no physical construction in 2023, but according to a trip-counter study performed by SEDA COG, the trail experienced much more recreational use with the opening of Katie’s Crossing. SEDA-COG provided several trail counters in the completed trail sections of Castanea and Wayne Township, which gave the County better insight into just how many bike riders and hikers were utilizing the trail on a daily basis. On a daily average, for all sections where counters were placed, the trail saw approximately 37 users per day. The Spook Hollow Road Section (Which leads to Katie’s Crossing) saw the most use, as it averaged 52 users on a daily basis. We look for this trend to continue upward with the completion of phases 5 and 6 during the fall of 2024.

County Staff continued to study and plan for the final stages of the BEVT, which will encompass the extension of Phase 5 through Pine Creek Township and Avis Borough to the Lycoming County Border, approximately 1,000 feet from the Pine Creek Rail Trail.



The Clinton County Recreation Advisory Committee: The Clinton County Recreation Advisory Committee had a huge part in the planning and execution of several major events during the summer of 2023, such as the Happy Valley Ironman Triathlon Race, the 2023 Canoe and Kayak National Championships, and the Endless Mountains Adventure Race. For all three events, the members offered help by volunteering their time to help run and coordinate the races which spanned for several days and a vast area in Clinton County. The committee also went through a major reorganization which featured setting term limits for the respective members and revamping the bylaws of the committee. Currently there are two vacancies for the Clinton County Recreation Advisory Committee and we are accepting interest letters to fill the seats which are both one-year terms. There are several projects in the works for the year such as the Susquehanna River Campsite/River Trail system, The Beech Creek Boulder Park, and the Lockport Fish Ladder project which the group is creating “sub-committees” to offer aid to help with the completion of the projects.



The view looking south from Katie’s Crossing, toward the river bend and Fort Horn.



LIVE AND WORK PROGRAM

The Live and Work Relocation Program is entering into its second year and it has seen tremendous results in bringing new residents to Clinton County. In total, the program has brought 54 new residents to the county, with a majority relocating the City of Lock Haven. Commonwealth University is the top employer of the applicants, but there is also dynamic range of industrial employers such as First Quality, Avery Dennison and Croda. The County Commissioners intent to fund the project through 2024, building on the successes of the previous two years.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVITIES

The Affordable Housing Fund earns fees, collected through property transactions, of approximately \$30,000 per year for use as matching funds for housing-related grant projects. These initiatives consist of closing cost assistance to first time homebuyers, as well as, emergency funding for the unforeseen needs of agencies and organizations that provide housing services around the County. Approximately \$7,500 was awarded to help homebuyers. The County awarded STEP, Inc. \$25,000 for owner-occupied home rehabilitation projects. In 2023, revenues were \$24,245.76 in recording fees, plus \$2,500.00 from satisfied liens, and \$4,509.05 in interest.

HOMELESS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Homelessness grants are written and managed by the Planning Director and Grants Administrator from the following funding sources:

DHS/HAP Funding: The County's Homeless Assistance Program (HAP), an annual county entitlement from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), is used for cash assistance to homeless persons for rent and utility payments, and also to support shelter operations. The County is allocated \$23,818.00 and passes this through to the Housing Coalition.

PHARE Funding: The PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE) grant provides rental assistance and education to eligible homeless clients of the Housing Coalition, as well as Owner-Occupied Home Rehabilitation funding to income eligible households via our rehab contractor, STEP, Inc. The 2023 PHARE request was submitted for the Housing Coalition's Homeless and Forensic Housing project in the amount of \$312,300 to continue their Returning Citizens program and create a new permanent supportive housing development.



Funding Source	Project Name	Funded Amount	Project Status
2020 PHARE	Housing Rehabilitation - countywide	\$250,000	Completed
2021 PHARE	Shelter Operations and Forensic Housing	\$89,350	Completed
2022 PHARE	Housing Rehabilitation-countywide	\$300,000	Underway
2021/2022 HAP	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$23,818	Completed
2022/2023 HAP	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$23,818	Completed
2023/2024 HAP	Housing Coalition Operations and Assistance	\$23,818	Underway
2023	Whole Home Repair	TBD	In progress

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** program is a federally funded entitlement program intended to benefit low to moderate income residents. The CDBG funds are intended to target the neediest areas of the County, or are utilized develop projects that benefit full inclusion for disabled or elderly citizens. CDBG monies are often used as match for very large grant and loan-financed infrastructure upgrades. Below is a summary of the ongoing CDBG Capital Projects:

Fund Year	Project Names	Funded	Project Status
2020 2021	Greater Renovo Area Heritage Park roof	\$38,438.50 \$55,000.00	in progress
2021	Bucktail Medical Center/HVAC upgrade	\$71,400	Complete
2021	Western Clinton Municipal Authority – Grinder pump purchase	\$74,127	Construction has started.
2021	CDBG-Competitive South Renovo Water Consolidation	\$950,000.00	Construction has started.
2022	Renovo Borough Water Authority-Pipe purchase	\$21,771.00	Awarded
2022	Citizen’s Hose of South Renovo-Equipment	\$50,000.00	Awarded/purchased
2022	Laurel St, Renovo-rehab	\$123,924	Awarded



PANDEMIC RELIEF PROGRAMS

Through the CARES and American Rescue Plan Acts passed by Congress in late 2020 and early 2021, PA agencies were awarded billions in funding allocated for all kinds of emergency needs associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some of these programs were passed on to the counties to administer or subcontract. Clinton County subcontracted with SEDA-COG to administer the CHIRP program, and the Housing Coalition to administer the ERAP Program. The other programs are being administered in house by the Planning Department. Several of these programs will be ending in 2024.

Program Name	Program Purpose	Received in 2022/2023 or left from 2021	Funding Distributed	Number of Recipients: businesses, nonprofits, municipalities, households
ERAP Part 1 – From DHS	Emergency rental assistance for tenants and landlords	\$ 2,064,599.81	\$ 2,064,599.81	289
ERAP Part 2 – from DHS	Emergency rental assistance for tenants and landlords	\$2,145,327.80	\$ 2,145,327.80	661
ERAP Part 2 2023 Additional Allocation -from DHS	Emergency rental assistance for tenants and landlords	\$500,000	\$500,000	661
CHIRP – From DCED	Pandemic relief for hospitality industry businesses	\$437,560	\$426,792	20
ARPA – From DCED	Various, emphasis on county operations, water, sewer, and outdoor recreation infrastructure.	\$3,751,906.50	TBD	21
USDA Emergency Rural Health Care	Department of Emergency Services – radio tower project	\$750,000 toward \$1,000,000 request	0	Will be used for installation of 911 equipment
CDBG-CV Competitive	Department of Emergency Services radio tower project – Awarded Phase 1 & Phase 2	\$510,962 \$8,112,115	0	All users and beneficiaries of our 911 system in Western Clinton County
HIRP-PA Office of Rural Health	Health Initiatives for Rural PA-pandemic relief, economic, and health initiatives	\$ 120,000	\$120,000	Countywide



REPRESENTING THE COUNTY

Planning staff represents the County on various boards and committees including: Clinton County Economic Partnership (CCEP) Operating Committee, CCEP Tourism Committee, CCEP Transportation Committee, Clinton County Enterprise Zone, SEDA-COG Transportation Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), PA Wilds Planning Team, Clinton County Sewer Authority, SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative, North Central PA Regional Housing Advisory Board, Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care, Public Transportation Committee, Middle Susquehanna Active Transportation Committee, Downtown Lock Haven, and Clinton County Local Emergency Planning Committee.

COUNTY ENGINEER

The purpose of the County Engineer is to perform all “in house” plan reviews for the County Planning Commission, work with County Government on the planning and execution of capital projects, provide consultation to County Authorities and Municipalities and perform tasks that require the seal of a Professional Engineer. In 2023, the following engineering tasks were accomplished, which offset consulting fees by approximately \$240,000.00.

- Environmental Review, zoning, land development and project management for the 911 Project.
- Engineering consultation for the Chestnut Grove Recreation Authority on the Robbie Gould Youth Sports Center – East Park Project.
- Multiple Environmental Assessments associated with HUD funding, such as the 911 Project, Hope Mitchell House and the South Renovo Citizens Hose Equipment.
- Engineering Consultation for the Clinton County Sewer Authority.
- Engineering sealed costs estimates, which are required for most grant applications.

Projects in 2024 will consist of the execution of the 911 Tower Project, multiple bridge rehabilitation projects, continued consultation on Phase 3, 5 and 6 of the Bald Eagle Valley Trail and fee paid consultation with select municipalities on parks and utility projects.