



FRANKLIN COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Franklin County Planning Department

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2023

PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

The Franklin County Planning Commission seeks to foster the proper growth of Franklin County to ensure the enjoyment of life by each citizen in a pleasant, healthful and harmonious environment. The guiding principles of the Franklin County Planning Commission include:

- Promoting economic development to revitalize communities,
- Sustaining open space and the aesthetic and historic characteristics of the County,
- Protecting farms, forests, and streams, and;
- Safeguarding our recreational and valuable natural resources.

The Planning Commission intends to maintain these principles by:

- Providing guidance and sound community planning advice to local governments,
- Emphasizing regional cooperation in planning efforts, and;
- Fostering growth and development that will complement existing infrastructure.

The 2023 Annual Report was prepared in compliance with the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Section 207 which stipulates a report of the Planning Commission’s activities be completed by March 1st of each year.

Over the last year, the Planning Commission met four times and was provided with reports from staff on the accomplishments of the Planning Department. This included updates on agricultural preservation, subdivision and land development reviews, housing and transportation initiatives, and goals for the coming year.

2023 FRANKLIN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Member	Term of Service
Dr. Jack Benhart	1/1/2020 - 12/31/2023
Dr. George Pomeroy	1/1/2020 - 12/31/2023
Ronald Madison	5/12/2021 - 12/31/2024
John Poniske	8/18/2021 - 12/31/2024
David Mackley	1/1/2022 - 12/31/2025
Chris Ardinger	1/1/2022 - 12/31/2025
Andrew Paszkowski	1/1/2022 - 12/31/2025
Austin Rosenbaum	3/16/2022 - 12/31/2023
Janeen McChesney	3/16/2022 - 5/19/2023



Franklin County Planning Department

Steven Thomas, AICP is the Planning Director of the Franklin County Planning Department. Steve joined the team in 2019 with a background of fourteen-plus years of planning experience in transportation planning, community development, comprehensive planning, site plan reviews, and municipal outreach. He received dual Bachelor's Degrees in History and Geography and a Master's in Public Administration from Shippensburg University. In his role at the County, Steve oversees the daily operations of the Planning Department, ensuring that all roles, responsibilities, and tasks of the Department are executed in a timely manner and in accordance with the overall Mission and Vision of Franklin County.

Nicole Boling, AICP was the Senior Planner and joined the Planning Department in November 2019. She graduated from Shippensburg University with a Bachelor's in Geography and Virginia Tech with a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning. Nicole left her position with the department in April 2023.

Quentin Clapper was promoted from Community Planner to Senior Planner during 2023. He joined the Planning Department in May 2022. He graduated from Shippensburg University with a Bachelor's in Political Science. In his role, he focuses on coordinating the implementation of various programs and activities within the department in addition to facilitating municipal and public outreach initiatives.

Cody Barnhart was a Community Planner and joined the Planning Department in May 2022. He received an Associate's Degree in Environmental Studies and a Bachelor's in Geography from Hagerstown Community College and California University of Pennsylvania, respectively. Cody's primary responsibility was the administration of the Community Development Block Grant program. Cody left the department in July 2023.

Elizabeth Butler is a Community Planner and joined the Planning Department in July 2023. She graduated from Lock Haven University with a Bachelor's in Geology. In her role, she is primarily responsible for administering the Agriculture Land Preservation Program to protect Franklin County's prime farmland.

Matthew Romero is a Community Planner who joined the Planning Department in October 2023. He graduated from California State University, Northridge with a Bachelor's in Psychology and Urban Planning and Development. In his capacity, he focuses on transportation projects to help ensure the continued maintenance of existing infrastructure and effective implementation of new developments by working with state, federal, and local government agencies.

Jason Goetz is the Mosquito and Tick-Borne Disease Control Specialist and joined the Planning Department in April of 2019. He graduated from Shippensburg University with a Bachelor's in Social Science Education. In his position, he works to prevent mosquito and tick-borne diseases in Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Bedford counties.

Zak Long is the Administrative Assistant and joined the Planning Department in February 2022. He coordinates incoming and outgoing plan reviews and performs daily office duties in support of the various programs and goals of the department.



Imagine Franklin 2035: A County Comprehensive Plan

Having spent much of 2022 gathering public input and data on the past, present, and vision for the future, work on the comprehensive plan in 2023 was geared toward writing the plan and identifying specific objectives for implementation. In total, the plan identifies 62 actions to promote the community’s vision moving forward. In an effort to ensure that progress is made toward the vision, the planning team developed a 3-Year Implementation Strategy, which advances 35 of the actions in the first three years of the plan. Progress on the implementation strategy will be monitored annually and is set to have a full review every three years to incorporate additional actions identified in the plan.

3-Year Implementation Strategy Activities:

-  **5** POLICIES - LEGISLATIVE ACTION
-  **24** PROGRAMS - NEW OR ENHANCED SERVICES
-  **6** PLANS - ADDITIONAL STUDY OR TOPICAL RESEARCH

Imagine Franklin 2035 was adopted by the Commissioners on September 27, 2023. It is available in pdf format on franklincountypa.gov or in a web design format on compplan.franklincountypa.gov.

It is with sincere appreciation that we thank all of the steering committee members for their steadfastness and insight during plan development, and the time taken by the community to emphasize their collective vision for Franklin County. It is our desire that Imagine Franklin 2035 will continue to guide the activities of the planning department and our partner organizations.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Member	Affiliation
Dr. Jack Benhart	Franklin County Planning Commission
Kip Feldman	LIDA
Jeff Grove	Agricultural Preservation Board
Madalyn Lander	Warren Township
Emilee Little	Greencastle Borough
Caitlin Lucas	Franklin County Conservation District
Zachary Meyers	Franklin County Farm Bureau
Michelle Moore	Fannett-Metal School District
Noel Purdy	Healthy Franklin County
Chad Reichard	Washington Township
Lillian Rodriguez	Franklin County Human Services
Angela Schaeffer	Cumberland Valley Business Alliance
Matthew Wedd	Conococheague Institute
Amy Weibley	United Way



Agricultural Land Preservation

Agriculture remains a leading industry in Franklin County, accumulating more than \$476 million in cash receipts annually. In 2023, easement purchases were approved for three farms, which will bring the total preserved land to 152 farms and 19,013 acres.

With the continued support of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the Agricultural Land Preservation Board advanced its efforts with the selection of eight farms in 2023. This will add nearly 800 preserved acres to the program. It is anticipated that in the coming year the program will exceed 20,000 acres preserved. In addition to the acres preserved and in progress, there are currently 61 farms on the preservation waiting list that represent roughly 6,500 additional acres of farmland for future preservation.

Pennsylvania leads the nation in farmland preservation with more than 622,000 acres preserved. Within the state, Franklin County continues to rank highly among counties for farmland acres preserved.

Agricultural Preservation 2024 Goals & Initiatives

Goal 1:	Review ranking criteria for the Franklin County Agricultural Preservation Program.
Goal 2:	Update Application information for the Franklin County Agricultural Preservation Program.
Goal 3:	Continue to explore ways to supplement County funding for the agricultural preservation program, enabling the program to take full advantage of the State's match and thus preserve more farms within the County.
Goal 4:	Work with state, regional and local agencies to promote and enhance agriculture.
Goal 5:	Support agricultural land preservation by promoting agricultural security areas and land preservation.
Goal 6:	Coordinate with NRCS and continue to encourage easement owners to update their conservation plans in order to help maintain soil and water quality.



Transportation Planning

The Franklin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (FCMPO) accomplished several items in 2023 such as: beginning preparation of the draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), adoption of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), completing the I-81 Prioritization Plan.

FY 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is the formal document that outlines transportation planning activities for the FCMPO effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. It is the responsibility of the FCMPO, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and other relevant agencies, to accomplish these federally-mandated goals using continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning strategies. The Program is anticipated to be approved by the MPO at their February meeting.

I-81 Prioritization Plan

Many studies have been conducted along the I-81 corridor, identifying various projects that would aid in increasing safety and efficiency of the interstate. In 2023, the MPO sought to prioritize these improvements in order to better plan and advocate for funding these projects. The plan was accepted by the MPO at their November 2023 meeting.

FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Development of the 25-28 TIP began during 2023. Staff coordinated with PennDOT to identify available funding and eligible projects for inclusion in the update to the TIP. Additionally, municipalities were offered opportunities to share projects and safety concerns in their areas. A draft TIP is anticipated to be released for public comment in Spring 2024.

2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan

A federal requirement for all MPO's is to develop a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that covers a minimum twenty-year horizon. This plan outlines goals, strategies, and a list of projects that the MPO will use to guide their activities and programming of funds. The LRTP is one of the key products of the planning process. Franklin County MPO (FCMPO) began their 2023 LRTP planning process on July 1st, 2021. A draft version of the plan, "Franklin County 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan" was released for public comment in November 2022. The FCMPO adopted the final plan in April of 2023. The plan is available online as both a webpage and a pdf file.



Transportation Planning

Public Participation Plan and Title VI Plan Update

Franklin County MPO is committed to public engagement and non-discrimination in all of its programs and activities. As part of this commitment, the department began reviewing both the Title VI and Public Participation plans in 2023 to ensure that our methods of engagement and available services are adequate to support the needs of our ever-changing community. These plans are still undergoing review and are anticipated to be available for public comment in Summer 2024.

MPO 2024 Goals & Initiatives	
Goal 1:	Adopt the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program
Goal 2:	Adopt the 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program
Goal 3:	Advance needs along the I-81 corridor for funding opportunities
Goal 4:	Adopt 2024 Performance Measures
Goal 5:	Adopt updated Title VI and Public Participation Plans to identify and pursue improved public involvement in transportation planning activities



Transportation Planning

Franklin County Bridge Program

Franklin County owns 91 bridges and co-owns one bridge with Cumberland County. Housed within Franklin County Property Management is a bridge maintenance crew that performs regular bridge maintenance and works closely with the County engineering consultant, HRG, to formulate short and long-term bridge improvement plans. A few accomplishments in 2023 include going to bid for replacement projects on bridges 26 and 63, beginning administrative work on replacement projects for bridges 130 and 131, and receiving notice of Burnt Mill Road Bridge’s acceptance for funding from the Historic Metal Truss Bridge Capital Rehabilitation Program.

Franklin County Bridge Program 2024 Goals & Initiatives

Goal 1:	Continue coordinating with PennDOT and the Historic Metal Truss Capital Rehabilitation Program on the initiation of the Burnt Mill Road Bridge project.
Goal 2:	Begin engineering on West King Street Bridges over the Falling Spring and Conococheague Creeks in Chambersburg Borough.
Goal 3:	Complete projects on Leafmore Road and Hickory Run Road Bridges.
Goal 4:	Explore alternative long-term funding solutions to support the Bridge Program needs.



Community Development Block Grant Program

Each year the County receives entitlement funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The source of the entitlement funding is provided by the federal government, through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The County Commissioners allocate funding to selected and approved projects that meet one of the following three national objectives:

- Low-to-Moderate Income persons
- Urgent Need
- Blight

Over the years, the majority of the projects that Franklin County has funded address the first objective, with Low-to-Moderate Income Persons being identified by either the U.S. Census or by conducting income surveys. However, a variety of projects can be completed under this objective. Program funds can be used to ensure affordable housing, provide services and vital infrastructure improvements to the most vulnerable communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. This program has made a difference in the lives of millions of people and their communities across the Nation. A key part of this program's success is citizen participation, especially those that are low-to-moderate income. Citizens are encouraged to attend local meetings, review proposed activities, and provide feedback to identify how best to use the funds provided.

HUD determines the amount of each grant by using a formula that includes community needs, extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing, and population growth lag in relation to other areas. For 2023, Franklin County applied for \$111,828.00 in CDBG funds from HUD through DCED to address various infrastructure, housing, and public service needs throughout the county. The County will retain \$17,058 to cover administrative staffing costs. The remainder of the funds, \$94,770, will be applied to fund the following projects:

- Borough of Greencastle - \$50,000.00
- WCHS - Community Health Nursing Program - \$10,845
- Scotland Youth Baseball League - \$25,000.00
- St. Thomas PTA - \$5,000.00
- Zullinger Community Center - \$3,925.00

During 2023, the CDBG program made strides toward meeting goals and advancing projects, which include:



Community Development Block Grant Program

- FY 2020 & 2021: CONTACT Helpline Emotional Listening & Support PA211 received CDBG funds for mental and physical health assistance of low- to moderate-income families across the region. They successfully completed both contracts, providing services to over 600 residents during 2023.
- The department had the opportunity to connect and network with other counties with regard to CDBG funding. Those connections helped us identify new opportunities and strategies that will help in administering the grant.
- Regional meetings were held to increase public engagement during the development of the FY 2023 grant application. While there is still room for improvement, this method resulted in increased participation.
- 2023 fair housing efforts were focused toward engaging housing developers to discuss housing needs for traditionally underserved regions and households. Franklin County also worked closely with Luminest Community Development in sharing awareness of the Fair Housing Program within the community.

CDBG Program 2024 Goals & Initiatives	
Goal 1:	Continue to explore opportunities to utilize CDBG funds on projects other than infrastructure improvements.
Goal 2:	Complete outreach efforts to other counties that will identify new opportunities for CDBG funds. Identifying new strategies will increase the effectiveness of the program.
Goal 3:	Increase public engagement on project selection and implementation. Additionally, increase engagement from other municipalities and small communities within the County.
Goal 4:	Pair CDBG funds with the HOME program to increase availability of affordable housing.



Mosquito & Tick Borne Disease Program

2023 Mosquito Season Synopsis

The 2023 mosquito season was very slow with dryness persisting from May through October. 2023 was Franklin County's 15th driest year since record-keeping began 129 years ago, ending the year 6.58 inches below average precipitation. Since mosquitoes must have standing water to deposit eggs both the overall population of mosquitoes as well as West Nile Virus in the environment decreased significantly compared to 2022 as shown on the tables below. This was great news for citizens as well as the program.

Mosquito Data	2022	2023
West Nile Virus Positives	86	36
Mosquito Traps Set	484	455
Adult Mosquito Truck Sprays	15	1
Adult Mosquito Backpack Spray	3	1
Mosquito Larvae Sprays	46	42
Mosquito Concern Calls	46	42

With limited control operations, the program shifted focus to education and outreach. This past year, over 1000 citizens of Franklin County were given presentations on personal health and hazards related to ticks and mosquitoes. Educational events included: 1st grade CASD field trips, Franklin County Senior Center visits, an Earth Day event, and speaking opportunities with community group such as Ruritans and Lion's Clubs. As staff continue to maintain the program in the neighboring counties,



Mosquito & Tick Borne Disease Program

education and outreach to officials and the public in those communities continues to be important. In March, a presentation was made at a Huntingdon County commissioners meeting about the discovery of Asian tiger Mosquitoes and what that means for their county.

2023 Tick Season Synopsis

There is currently not much to report on the 2023 Tick season. Only 10 Black-legged Tick nymphs were collected, one of which tested positive for Lyme Disease. Adult Black-legged Ticks are still being collected in Franklin County and no test results have been returned yet. Franklin County was asked to Pilot a tick project which started in 2023 and will continue into 2024. The main goal of this project is to get more stakeholders and members of the community involved.



Male American Dog Tick under microscope

Mosquito & Tick Borne Disease Program 2024 Goals & Initiatives

Goal 1:	Build on the surveillance and control practices in Franklin, Fulton, Bedford, and Huntingdon Counties.
Goal 2:	Continue to grow cooperative relationships with officials and stakeholders in each county.
Goal 3:	Educate a minimum of 1,500 people from the community on ticks and mosquitoes.
Goal 4:	Monitor areas prone to floodwaters for mosquitoes. Particularly areas east of Chambersburg.



Housing

HOME Grant

Throughout 2023, staff continued to work with Luminest, Inc. to finalize the properties and houses for the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) grant officially awarded in June 2020. The project included the demolition of two blighted structures located at 242-244 W. 2nd Street and 246 W. 2nd Street in the Borough of Waynesboro to construct two single-family three-bedroom homes for purchase by families who have incomes up to 80% of median income.

These homes are now occupied and serving two families in our community. All grant documentation and reporting has been completed. Luminest, with oversight by the department will continue to monitor the homes over the life of the affordability period.

Figure 6: HOME Grant project phases



242-244 W. 2nd Street - Pre-demolition



Project Site - Post-demolition - Fall 2021



Project Site - Post-construction - December 2022



Housing

Housing Trust Fund

A number of new requests were approved for funding through the Housing Trust Fund during 2023:

- *Noah's House* - \$13,000
 - Work was completed to bring Noah's House and Gracie's Place up to new Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) standards.
- *Franklin County Community Connections* - \$37,000
 - Provided cash match to HUD Permanent Supportive Housing & Shelter Plus Care programs and funds for transitional housing.
- *Luminest* - \$100,000 (2023/2024)
 - Provided matching funds for a grant application to improve houses in Luminest's Valley Terrace community.
- *Habitat for Humanity* - \$80,000
 - Redevelopment of a housing structure in St Thomas (\$40,000)
 - New construction of a home in Greencastle (\$40,000)

Housing 2024 Goals & Initiatives	
Goal 1:	Improve Coordination with recipients throughout project implementation.
Goal 2:	Explore opportunities to create affordable housing throughout the County.
Goal 3:	Collaborate with the CDBG Program Administrator to potentially fund housing projects in coordination with other federal grant funding sources.
Goal 4:	Work with local municipalities to identify housing needs in each community within the County.

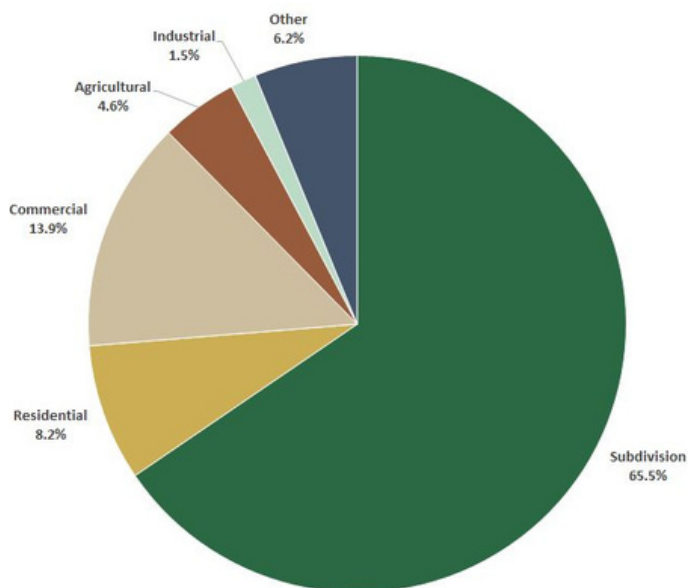


Subdivision & Land Development Reviews

In 2023, the department began tracking plan submissions in slightly more detail to be able to better characterize the types of projects planned in the county. In total, 198 new plans were reviewed. 127 of the plans were for subdivision or lot line adjustment purposes. The remaining plans for land development represent the planned development of 390 housing units, 5,412,200 sq. ft. of warehousing space, and other assorted minor developments. Although a plan for 1000+ acres of solar was resubmitted in 2023, there were no new planned solar projects reviewed.

Other than the outlying solar submission, the majority of acreage submitted for planned land development occurred in Guilford Township with over 500 acres of parcels involved in land development. Hamilton and Peters townships followed behind with roughly 250 acres in parcels affected by development in each. Based on the method used to collect acreages, the areas may not reflect land converted for other uses, but count the total parcel acreages that are being developed.

A goal for the Planning Department in 2024 is to continue to develop tools for tracking plan submissions, in order to better guide staff and program activities and community land use trends and needs.



2023 Land Development and Subdivision Annual Totals			
Municipality	# of Lots	Area (AC)	# of Plans
ANT	56	699.39	14
CHA	53	64.26	17
FAN	24	1266.07	8
GRE	58	384.38	12
GRC	3	18.17	4
GUI	32	738.04	23
HAM	47	407.68	25
LET	171	195.50	8
LUR	19	491.30	7
MER	1	1.80	1
MET	20	317.46	6
MOA	2	1.05	1
MON	19	238.17	9
ORR	0	0.00	0
PET	6	252.52	5
QUI	6	6.62	4
SHI	3	139.60	2
SOH	24	346.75	12
STT	25	473.82	16
WAR	1	10.00	1
WAS	29	206.54	19
WAY	11	21.75	4
Totals	610	6280.84	198



Solid Waste & Recycling

Municipal waste generated by Franklin County residents continues to hover around 110,000 tons each year. Recycling reports for 2022 and 2023 are still being compiled. In 2021, though, 51,696.86 tons of material were recycled for a 2021 recycling rate of about 31.6%. While residential recycling moved back toward the historic trend after a lower volume in 2020, commercial recycling continues to decline. The proper disposal of electronics such as televisions and computer monitors, household hazardous waste (HHW), and glass recycling continue to be the primary solid waste issues within the County. The department is currently exploring the feasibility of hosting recycling events for these types of materials.

The County's Municipal Solid Waste Plan is nearing expiration. Work to update the plan is expected to begin in 2024 and will help to identify additional efforts that can be made to improve waste disposal and recycling rates in the County.

