

# 2018 Annual Report



**BCPC**

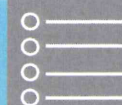
Bucks County Planning Commission







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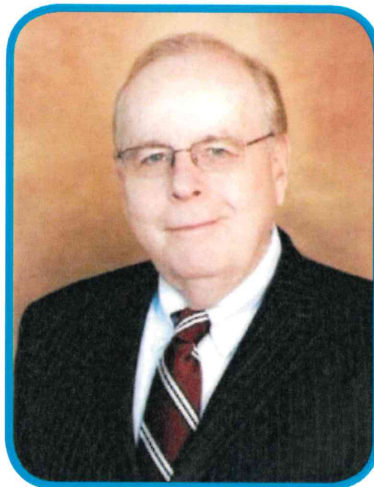
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



## Board of Commissioners



Robert G. Loughery  
*Chairman*



Charles H. Martin  
*Vice Chairman*



Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia,  
LCSW

Brian Hessenthaler  
*Chief Operating Officer*



## Planning Commission

Edward Kisselback, Jr. *Chairman*  
Robert M. Pellegrino, *Vice Chairman*  
Craig E. Bryson, *Secretary*  
Joan M. Cullen  
Carolyn McCreary  
David R. Nyman  
Carol A. Pierce  
R. Tyler Tomlinson, Esq.  
Walter S. Wydro

Evan J. Stone  
*Executive Director, Planning Commission*







## Welcome Message



Greetings and welcome to the Annual Report of the Bucks County Planning Commission for the calendar year 2018!

The year 2018 proved to be a transformative year for the Planning Commission and the following report is just one example of the many positive changes and transitions that have occurred over the past 12 months.

From changes in leadership with a new Executive Director, staff retirements and staff promotions, the composition and organization of the agency has evolved in new and exciting ways. We have brought on four new talented staff planners who all bring unique skills and ideas to the organization and we have named three new directors to lead our planning service areas in community planning, transportation, and geographic information services (GIS).

With a renewed focus and energy, staff has continued to excel at not only producing thorough Act 247 reviews but has also been involved in a new movement toward interdepartmental collaborations and projects. Our contracted work with municipalities continues to grow, and we are actively working on comprehensive plan updates and zoning ordinance re-writes for many Bucks County municipalities.

To improve outreach to our communities, the first bi-monthly edition of the new BCPC newsletter, **Planning InSight**, was emailed to municipalities in late January. Each edition features different topic articles with a timely interest to our municipalities that change with each edition. Every edition features mainstays such as a note from the Executive Director, important updates on upcoming grant information and a Bucks County trivia question just to keep things light and informative.

In early 2018 the **Model Design Guidelines for Main Streets and Commercial Corridors** debuted to help municipalities provide greater clarity and guidance for developers, property owners, and reviewing entities in the revitalization of downtowns and commercial corridors. The model Design Guidelines address a variety of typical design issues including architectural style, building massing and scale, site development, sustainable design, streetscape improvements, and the public realm.

In April of 2018, our Municipal Economic Development Initiative (MEDI) program received a **2018 Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence** in the category of Innovative Planning & Sound Land Use Practices. The Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development recognized the program for its unique and innovative approaches to land planning and we are honored to be recognized for our contribution to our local municipalities.

In perhaps our biggest advancement of the year, the Bucks County **Maps and Data Portal** made its debut in July and ushered in a new era of open data and information accessibility for all residents. Backed by our Board of Commissioners, this new open data platform, not only showcases the various initiatives of the Commissioners and the planning work of the Planning Commission staff, but it also features the collaborative work we are doing with other county departments. The new portal has taken our GIS services to an entirely new level of engagement and has become a new metric of success and planning engagement with the community.

In closing, we hope you find this new annual report format both engaging and informative and may it serve as a glimpse of the year ahead and the continued growth and progress we are striving to achieve.

*"Individually, we are one drop. Together we are an ocean."*

*Ryunosuke Satoro*

Evan J. Stone,  
Executive Director

Edward Kisselback,  
Chairman of the Board

# REVIEW ACTIVITY



## Act 247 Reviews

### PA MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE

Subdivision, land development, and municipal proposals require review and comment by the BCPC, as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code (Act 247).

*In 2018, the Bucks County Planning Commission and staff reviewed a total of 291 proposals submitted for subdivisions, land developments, and municipal actions.*

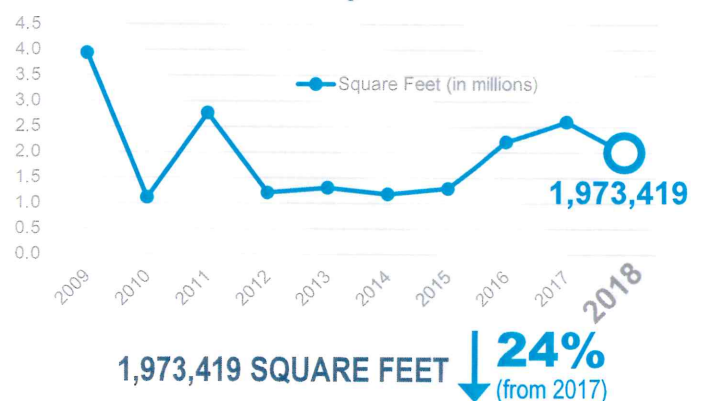
### RESIDENTIAL

#### Proposed Residential Development

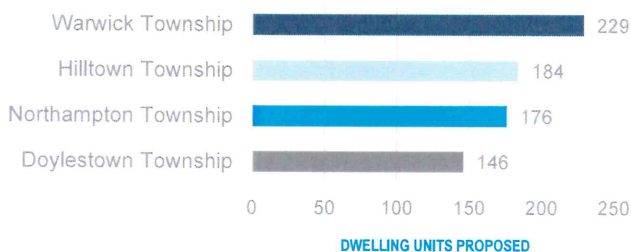


### NONRESIDENTIAL

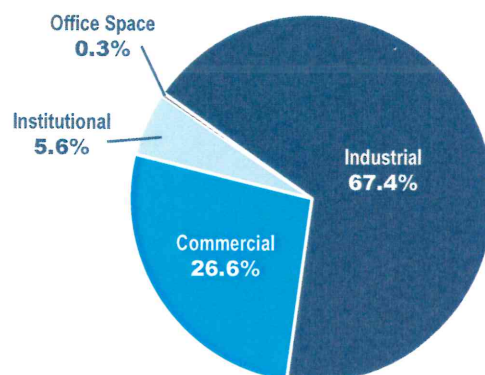
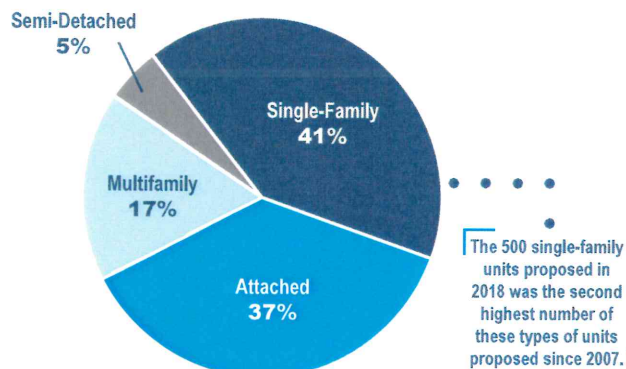
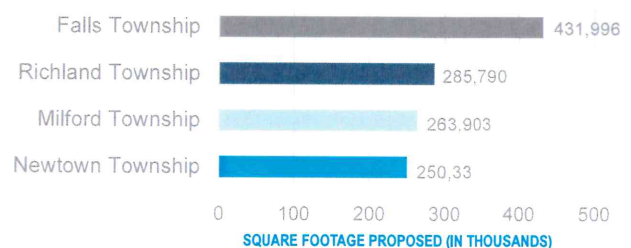
#### Proposed Nonresidential Development



#### Top 4 Municipalities



#### Top 4 Municipalities



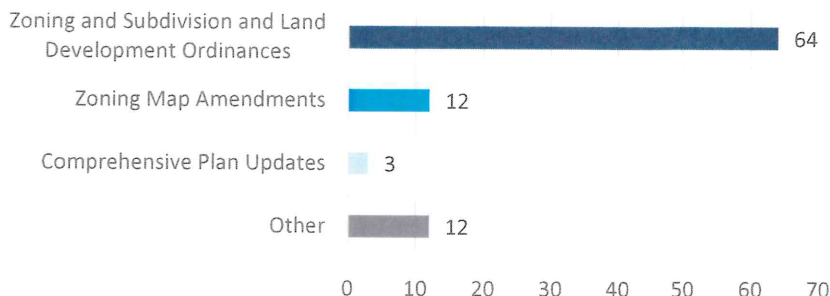


# REVIEW ACTIVITY



## MUNICIPAL PROPOSALS

91 MUNICIPAL REVIEWS ↓ **16.5%**  
(from 2017)



## Act 537 Sewage Planning Reviews

### PA SEWAGE FACILITIES ACT

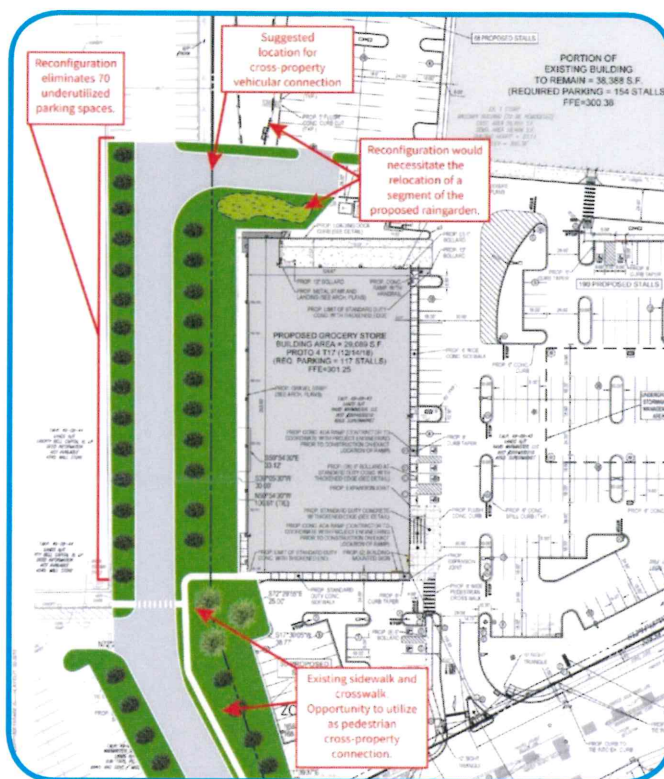
The Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537 of 1970) requires county planning agencies to review sewage facilities planning modules for land development and provide county comment on the planning and regulation of sewage facilities.

*In 2018, we reviewed 41 sewage planning modules and 3 major plan updates.*

## Site Design Assistance

Our review process emphasizes collaboration among staff. "Design meetings" are held to discuss development projects and municipal ordinance proposals to assist review staff. Our goal is ensure that proposals meet major ordinance requirements and the provisions of the PaMPC.

We will suggest redesigns of site plans and include **illustrative concept plans** in our reviews to help guide the planning process and advise municipal officials to help them make good decisions for their communities.





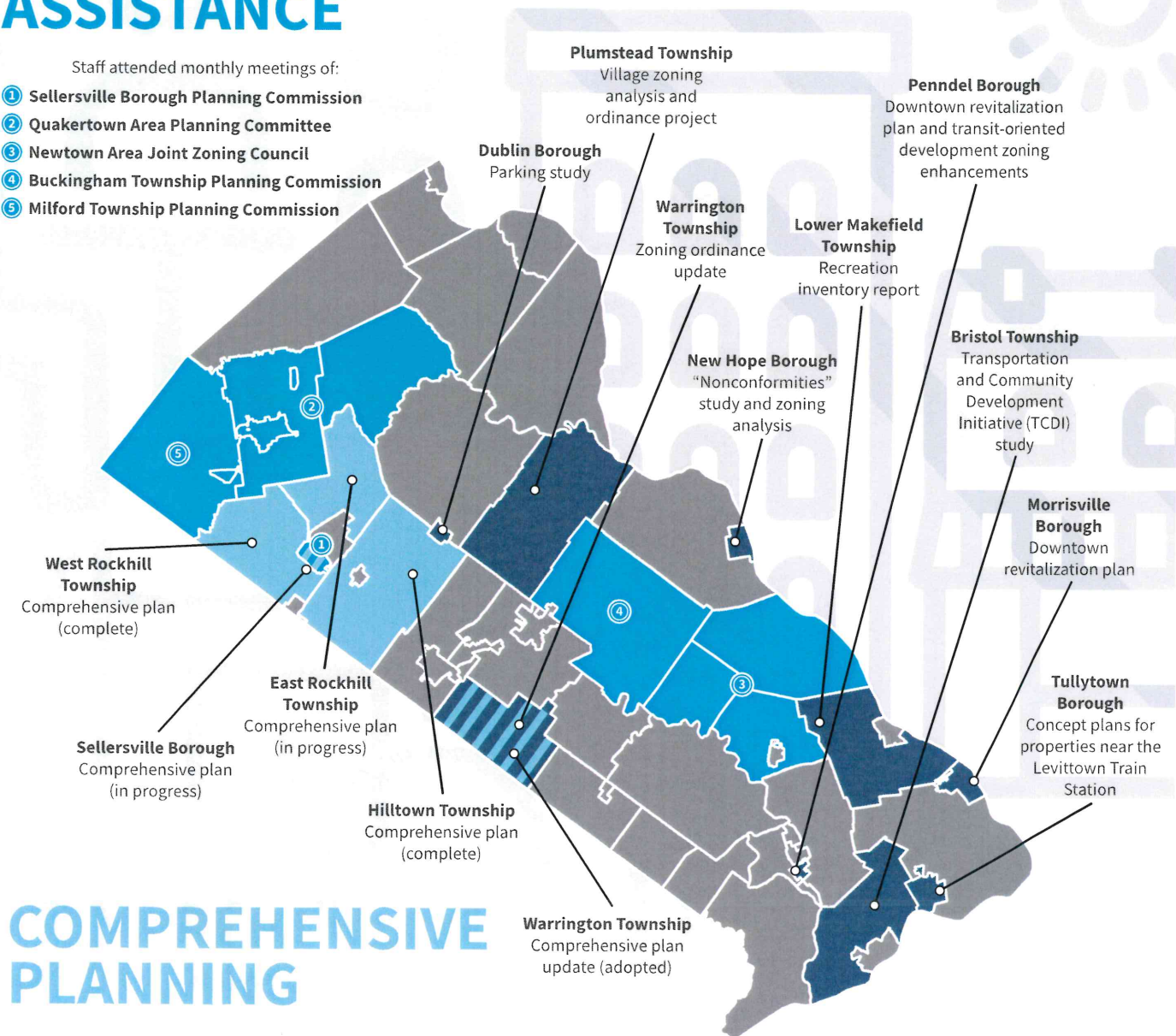
## Countywide Contracts

### MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE

Staff attended monthly meetings of:

- ① Sellersville Borough Planning Commission
- ② Quakertown Area Planning Committee
- ③ Newtown Area Joint Zoning Council
- ④ Buckingham Township Planning Commission
- ⑤ Milford Township Planning Commission

### COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION



### COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING





## Municipal Waste Management

### RECYCLING



Market conditions and contamination in the recycling stream were important issues in 2018. BCPC staff conducted outreach to municipalities to determine local needs and assist with education when requested. We also hosted two meetings for municipal recycling coordinators to offer information on recycling-related grants through DEP, discuss current local concerns about solid waste, and share resources and ideas. The county received \$43,000 to partially reimburse the salary of the Recycling Coordinator.

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE



Nearly 4,000 households participated and 250,000 pounds (125 tons) of materials were collected during the county's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection program. Conducted at five locations throughout Bucks County, the public used this free service to safely dispose of household materials such as pesticides, oil-based paints, solvents, fluorescent bulbs, rechargeable batteries, motor oil, mercury thermostats, and fire extinguishers. The county received over \$220,000 in grants, solid waste hosting fees, and municipal contributions to run the program.

### SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT



A major accomplishment in 2018 was the adoption by the Bucks County Board of Commissioners of the Bucks County Municipal Waste Management Plan (MWMP). This is the official Bucks County policy for solid waste for the next ten years. Ratified by Bucks County's municipalities, the MWMP was written and revised by BCPC staff and the county's Solid Waste Advisory Committee. A \$4,000 reimbursement was received from PaDEP to develop the plan.

Two new waste capacity agreements were secured with Waste Management and Wheelabrator Falls. These agreements secure solid waste disposal capacity for Bucks County-generated trash at Fairless Landfill and the Wheelabrator waste-to-energy facility, both located in Falls Township, through 2028.





## Agricultural Land Preservation Program

In 2018, the Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program received \$3,154,730 in state funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the second largest amount awarded in Pennsylvania for farmland preservation. Total available funds for 2018, including state and county funds, was \$5,733,423. An additional \$995,857 was contributed by municipal partners.

With these funds, the Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program was able to preserve 13 farms in 2018 totaling 834 acres.

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program currently has an application list totaling 40 farms. The preservation of these farms will continue to add to the significant amount of farmland that has been

*Since 1989, the Bucks County Agricultural Program has preserved 17,408 acres on 220 farms.*

preserved throughout many areas of Bucks County. Thanks to all of the farmland owners who have made a lasting commitment to farmland preservation in Bucks County. Their legacy will ensure that our agricultural heritage and agricultural economy will forever be sustained. And special thanks to the Bucks County Commissioners, who continue to regard farmland preservation in Bucks County such a high priority.

### PRESERVING BUCKS COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL LEGACY *THE PATTERSON FARM*

In 2018, The Bucks  
County Agricultural Land  
Preservation Program  
preserved...

**[ 13 Farms  
834 Acres ]**

The Patterson farm was preserved by Bucks County in January 2018. The farm is located at Yardley Road and Mirror Lake Road in Lower Makefield Township. Totalling 221 acres, the Patterson Farm is one of the few remaining large agricultural operations in Lower Bucks County and contains some of the most productive soils in the entire county. Crops grown on this farm include corn, soybeans, sweet corn, and pumpkins. The preservation of the Patterson farm will ensure that one of the signature Lower Bucks County farms remains in agriculture for future generations.





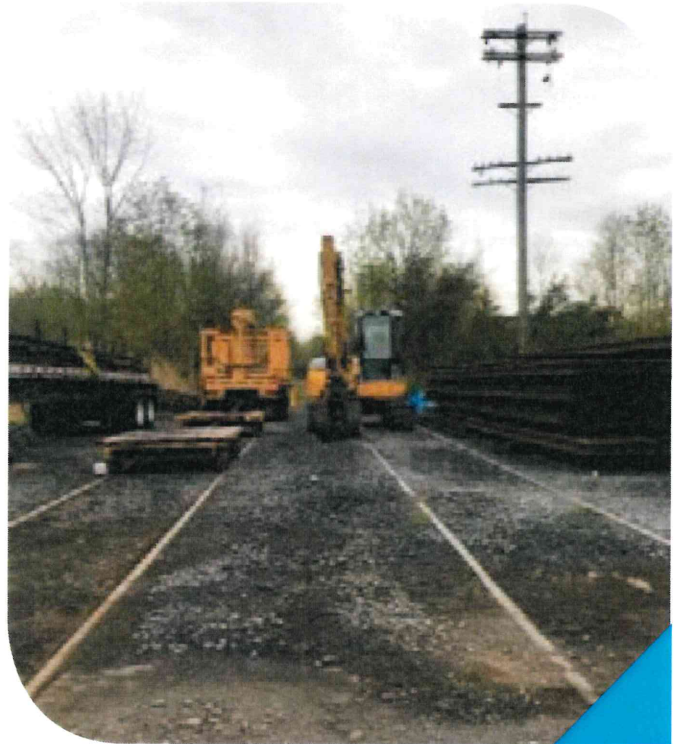
## Trails Planning

Bucks County has a rich heritage of outdoor recreation and trail use with the county's scenic beauty, mix of geography, preserved farmland, and historic sites combining to create a vast array of recreational amenities and opportunities. Trails enhance our residents' quality of life by reducing the need to drive, encouraging physical activity, and developing a sense of community centered around trail usage.

An important goal of the county is to improve our region's trail network by carrying out a comprehensive trail planning program. During 2018, BCPC staff provided project management for five ongoing regional trail projects:

**Upper Bucks Rail Trail** (*photo to right*) is a 3.6-mile multiuse facility located in Richland and Springfield townships on the former SEPTA Bethlehem Branch. This trail will connect to the Saucon Rail Trail in Lehigh County and Veteran's Park in Richland Township. Construction is expected in the summer of 2019.

**Newtown Rail Trail** (*photo below*) is a 2.5-mile multiuse facility located in Upper Southampton Township. This trail will connect with the Pennypack Trail in Montgomery County. Construction is expected in the fall of 2019.



**Neshaminy Greenway Phase I** – Neshaminy Manor Center is a 1.5-mile multiuse facility located in Doylestown and Warrington townships. This trail will connect township residents, park and recreational facilities, shopping centers and offices located in the Easton Road/Almshouse Road area. Construction is expected to begin in 2020.

**Neshaminy Greenway Phase II** – Dark Hollow Park, a 2.2-mile trail located in Doylestown and Warwick townships. This project is currently in the design phase.

**Neshaminy Greenway Phase III** – Core Creek Park, a 1-mile trail located in Middletown Township. Currently in the design phase, construction for this trail is estimated as early 2021.

BCPC staff also helped municipalities plan for trails through the development of the Buckingham Township Trail Study and Middle Neshaminy Creek Trail Feasibility Study.







## Public Transit Planning

Public transit plays an essential role in the county's transportation system. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) provides public transportation service linking Philadelphia and the surrounding counties with an integrated network of about 200 bus and rail transit routes. BCPC staff coordinated

with SEPTA regarding the traveling needs of our citizens through participation of the development of the SEPTA Annual Service Plan, Capital Budget, and the review of proposed service requests. Staff also participated in City/County Coordination Committee meetings.

## Highway Transportation Planning

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) produces the DVRPC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which lists all transportation projects in the region that intend to use federal funds, along with non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant. The current TIP contains over 400 highway and transit projects, totaling over \$5 billion over the next four years.

During 2018, BCPC transportation staff met with municipal partners to discuss potential TIP funding opportunities and participated in the update of DVRPC's Regional Transportation Improvement Program. Staff also provided technical expertise on subdivision

***The Bucks County portion of the TIP contains over \$234 million in projects.***

and land development reviews and reviewed 26 Traffic Impact Studies. We also acted as liaison to several transportation-related committees, including the Quakertown Area Planning Committee and the Upper Bucks Transportation Committee.

### A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

In the fall of 2018, municipal leaders from the communities of Buckingham, Doylestown, and Plumstead townships and Doylestown Borough, business owners, residents, PennDOT officials, and BCPC staff came together to collaboratively discuss potential solutions to the chronically congested intersection at Swamp Road and Old Easton Road. This intersection, long-recognized by transportation officials and local drivers as failing to meet level of service standards, was identified in the Land Use and Transportation Study for the Cross Keys Area (2017) as an obstacle to economic growth and recommended for improvement. The multi-agency process was led by BCPC staff, who developed intersection alternatives for consideration, sought feedback from residents and public officials, and brought together stakeholders in a public meeting to seek consensus on future actions. We look forward to continuing to work with community leaders and PennDOT to address this critical intersection in the coming year.







## Information and Data

The GIS planning staff is responsible for maintaining the countywide GIS database and assisting county departments in their data and mapping needs. With the support of the Commissioners of Bucks County, we unveiled the Bucks County Data Portal in 2018.

The website was developed to provide a platform for accessing information and data about the County of Bucks, including

### COUNTY INITIATIVES

The Opioid Epidemic Initiative was the first initiative developed in conjunction with the District Attorney's office and Bucks County Drug & Alcohol, Inc. The site provides information and resources to help battle the opioid epidemic.



### INTERACTIVE MAPS

The Interactive Maps section allows the user to visually explore the county using interactive maps. These maps allow residents and businesses to view parcel data, flood zones, or public transit routes, explore county parks, or locate the nearest collection box for expired medication.



### DOCUMENTS

The Document's section gives the public the opportunity to view and obtain non-spatial data, such as BCPC applications and documents. Some examples include Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans and Countywide Plans.



### FIND & EXPLORE DATA

Datasets are easy to locate and use; to ensure the user has the most current information, data is connected to the source and automatically updated. Municipal boundaries and zoning are two datasets currently maintained by the Planning Commission. We also link out to other organizations directly to minimize the time spent searching for additional data.



## County Department Assistance

BCPC GIS staff provided assistance to other Bucks County departments, including:

- The BCPC worked closely with the District Attorney's office and the Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc., to combat the opioid crisis developing both an internal application and a public-facing initiative.
- GIS staff assisted Housing and Human Services by developing a survey tied directly to an internal locator application to track single and multifamily apartment locations. Using our open data layers, we are able to tie the public transportation information directly into the web map.
- Using data provided to us from General Services, we created a database mapping all the county-owned facilities and we are in the process of developing a mobile asset management solution.
- Using our Business Analyst application, we provided datasets to our local communities to help understand the local retail environment.



## 2018 BCPC Staff

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Evan J. Stone, PLA

### ADMINISTRATION

Karen Brady - Office Supervisor  
Debra A. Canale - Administrative Assistant  
Rachel M. Leach - Administrative Aide

### COMMUNITY PLANNING

Michael A. Roedig - Director of Planning Services  
John S. Ives, RLA - Senior Planner  
Matthew M. Walters - Senior Planner  
Lisa M. Wolff - Senior Planner  
Patricia Lynn, CRP - Planner/Recycling Coordinator  
Bryn-Erin Kerr - Planner  
Luke Rosanova - Planner  
Jeremy Stoff - Planner  
David C. Zipf, AICP - Planner

### TRANSPORTATION

Richard G. Brahler, Jr. - Director of Transportation  
Paul W. Gordon - Senior Planner (Trails)  
Christian P. Regosch - Planner

### GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Andrew G. Heimark, GISP - Director of GIS Planning  
Robert H. Keough - Senior GIS Planner  
Kelly L. Jerrom - GIS Analyst

### AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

Richard B. Harvey - Director, Agricultural Land Preservation Program; Acting Open Space Coordinator  
Ernest F. Hoferica - Graphic Coordinator/Resource Specialist

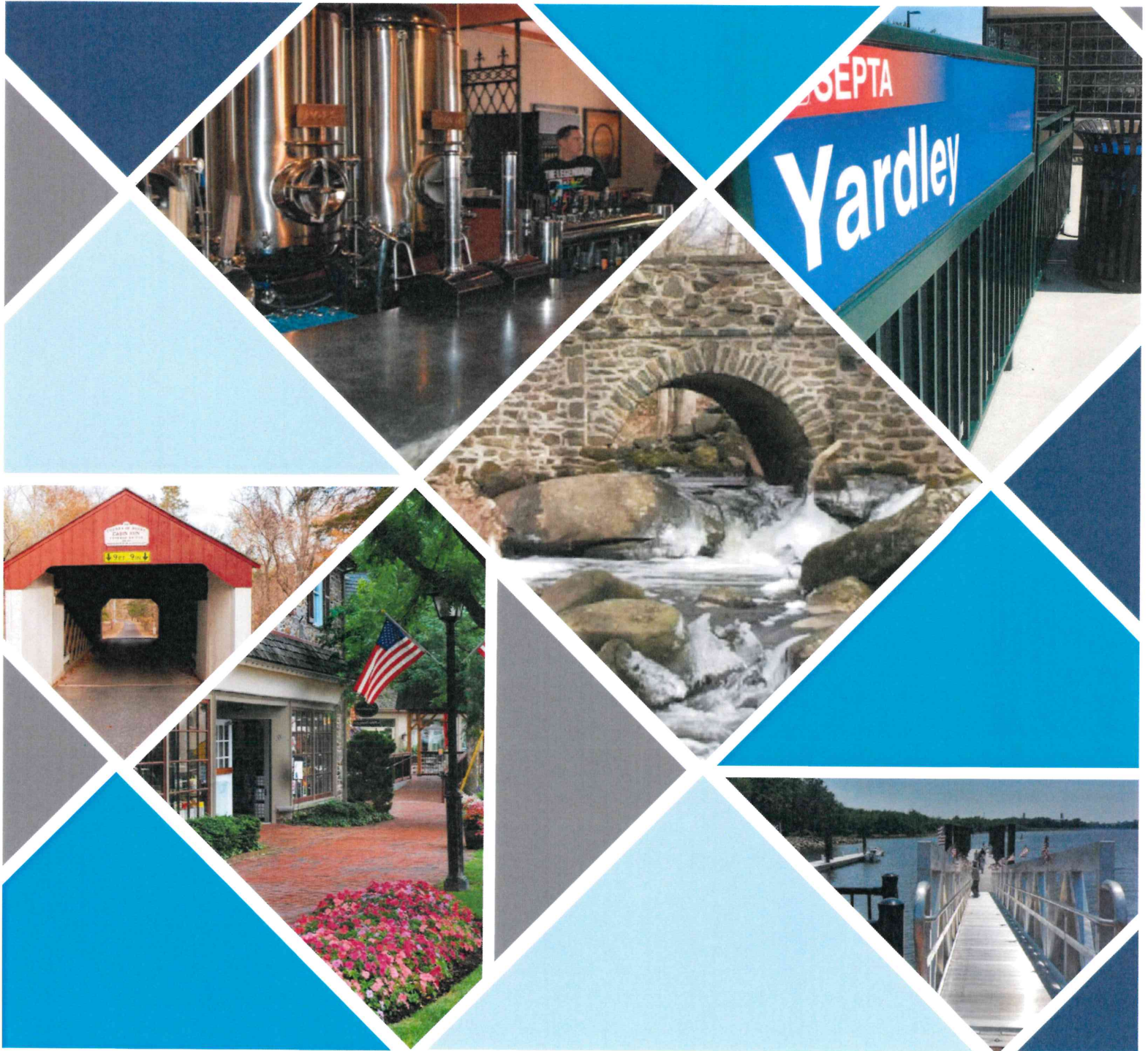
## 2018 Revenue Flow

Application Fees		Community Contracts		Grants/Misc	
Residential, Subdivision, Land Development, and Conversions	\$43,205.00	Completed (10)	\$51,809.96	DCNR (Design & Engineering of Neshaminy Greenway Trail)	\$278,182.00
Nonresidential Land Developments	\$128,766.90	Ongoing (2)	\$6,521.94	DVRPC (TA Set Aside)	\$995,000.00
Nonresidential Subdivisions	\$12,398.95			PaDEP (Recycling Coordinator; HHW)	\$143,005.26
Private Petitions for Zoning Change	\$16,500.00			DCED (PREP; Penn Works)	\$71,280.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$200,870.85</b>		<b>\$58,331.90</b>		<b>\$1,487,467.26</b>

For more information about subdivision, land development, and municipal proposals occurring during 2018, please visit our [2018 BCPC Annual Report](#) webpage.







# BCPC

Bucks County Planning Commission

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P: 215.345.3400 | F: 215.345.3886

 [BCPC@buckscounty.org](mailto:BCPC@buckscounty.org)

 [BucksCounty.org/PC](http://BucksCounty.org/PC)

 [Bucks County Data Portal](#)

 [www.linkedin.com/in/BCPC](http://www.linkedin.com/in/BCPC)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

Robert G. Loughery, *Chairman* | Charles H. Martin, *Vice Chairman* | Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW

