

PLANNING

Improving Economic Vitality: Economic Development is a primary focus of the department. While this section addresses direct economic development projects and assistance, it should be recognized that all department work that improves quality of life has a positive, long term economic impact. The department worked collaboratively with and provided Geographic Information Services to various partners to advance economic development projects. For example, the department gives the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) access to a GIS-based program called Business Analyst. The department assisted with Consolidated Funding Applications and participated in the Village of Bath's efforts to develop an economic development strategy. The department continues to follow the development of 5G broadband networks. The department continued to inventory outdoor recreation assets to help the Conference and Visitors Bureau boost the tourism economy and participated in regional outdoor recreation planning efforts. The department continued to administer the NYS Snowmobile Trail grant as part of the tourism effort. The department assisted multiple communities with wind and solar regulations in response to many renewable energy projects under development in the County.

Increasing the Viability of Agriculture and Protecting Farmland: The department worked collaboratively with agricultural agencies on various programs and policies to protect agricultural lands, promote local agricultural products, and advance the agricultural economy. To protect farmland, an eight-year review of Agricultural District No. 6 was conducted and over 30,000 acres were added to the district. XXX acres were added to several districts during the annual "open" period. The department fielded many questions about the agricultural districts program and its benefits. The department evaluated several potential projects for the NYS purchase of development rights program. However, our partner, the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) did not find these projects application worthy. The GIS Coordinator launched an on-line mapper of prime agricultural soils to encourage solar developers to choose more appropriate locations.

Increasing Energy Production and Protecting the Environment: The department assisted municipalities with wind energy generation laws and stayed informed about four major industrial wind farms being developed under NYS Article X regulations. The Senior Planner offered technical assistance on various solar energy proposals, including projects on county-owned property. He also assisted several towns with solar regulations and one town with energy storage regulations. The department worked on Clean Energy Community initiatives, including benchmarking energy use. The department participated on the County Water Quality Committee and helped complete a Flood Smart Communities Project.

Increasing the Capacity of Local Governments: The department provided GIS services to multiple municipalities and assisted the Town of Corning and Bath Electric Gas and Water Systems in developing GIS programs for infrastructure. We also helped local governments with various planning and zoning procedural questions, environmental reviews, and general land use and sustainable development advice. The department provided a four hour training course for local officials, including training provided by NYS Department of State. The department also helped plan the annual Regional Leadership Conference. The department completed 63 county-level reviews of local actions as required by GML Section 239m, a substantial increase over 2018. The department, through a contracted code enforcement officer, enforced the NYS Building Code in the Town of Addison, the only town in the County that has opted out of local enforcement. Staff increased outreach to local governments in order to provide more services.

Improving Housing: Housing is an important factor in economic development and the department has increased focus on housing quality and markets. A 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) was administered by the department in partnership with Arbor Housing and Development to repair and replace wells and septic systems, another CDBG was awarded, and another application for similar projects and mobile home replacement was submitted. Additional septic projects were completed using NYS Septic Replacement program funding in specified watersheds and all funds for this program were committed. More funds may be awarded in 2020. The Appalachian Regional Commission awarded grant funds to complete a housing demand analysis study that will be completed in 2020. The Planning Director was appointed Executive Director of the Steuben County Land Bank Corporation to help with our goal of providing quality housing for people with median incomes or less.

Improving Transportation: The department continued to manage public transportation funding: state and federal funding for Steuben County Transit (operated by First Transit) and federal funding for Steuben Area Rides (StAR, operated by Arc of Steuben.) We received our contracts for 2017 and 2018 and began implementing funded projects, including a wifi project that will eventually allow us to have seamless mobile fare collection and a continuation of operations/efficiency studies. The City of Corning, in partnership with the County received a Local Government Efficiency grant to study how we might share transportation administration costs and save money. Department staff served on various transportation coordination committees and the County's Traffic Safety Board. GIS services were provided for various transportation projects.

Expanding Geographic Information System (GIS) Services: The GIS Coordinator is responsible for the County's geo-spatial data, providing various GIS services, increasing the County's GIS capabilities, and coordinating GIS technicians from other departments and the IT staff that form the County's GIS Unit. The GIS Coordinator trained and oriented a new technician in the Department of Public Works. The GIS Coordinator continued to fulfill a vital role providing addresses for the upcoming 2020 Census. Mapping applications continued to be improved and added including, medication disposal locations for Public Health, a property "story map" for the Land Bank, applications for the County Historian, and mapping for the Flood Smart Communities project. Additionally, the Coordinator is working streamline and better coordinate the geospatial database.

Improving Department Efficiency: The department continued to increase our electronics records storage to save physical space and make things easier to find. We continued to clean out unnecessary items in preparation for our move in 2020. We emphasized cross training and several duties were reorganized in order to fulfill obligations for the Land Bank program.