

**CITY OF OIL CITY
THREE YEAR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PLAN**

2018 Update

**Public Comment will be accepted from
July 26 through August 27, 2018**

Comments can be made to:

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THREE YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) requires a Community Development Plan accompany Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications. This requirement aims to ensure all Entitlement Communities, such as Oil City, design annual CDBG programs to meet community development needs based on a set of long-term (three years) and short-term (one year) objectives. All activities proposed in this Community Development Plan address the identified needs of low and moderate income (LMI) persons living in the City of Oil City.

INTRODUCTION

Situated along the Allegheny River in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains of Northwestern Pennsylvania, the picturesque City of Oil City is well known for its rich history in the petroleum industry. When the first successful oil well was drilled in nearby Titusville, Crawford County, several small towns came to life in Venango County. Oil City was one of these boomtowns, eventually hosting the headquarters for Pennzoil, Quaker State, and Wolf’s Head motor oil companies, making it central to petroleum production in the nation. The City flourished in these times, measuring prosperity in barrels of crude oil. As resources dried up however, Oil City’s prosperity plummeted, marking the beginning of rough economic times for the city and the region. Although the tourism industry based on Oil City’s oil heritage plays a prominent role in the area, hard economic times, to some extent, have not left the region.

INCIDENCE AND CONCENTRATION OF LOW AND MODERATE INCOME PERSONS AND HOUSEHOLDS

Data from the 2000 census showed the number of people living below the poverty level in Oil City as 2,141 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). In 2015, the American Community Survey (ACS) showed 2,619 people living below poverty, an increase of 478 or 5% of Oil City’s total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a). The 2015 ACS data also showed the adjusted median household income in Oil City as \$34,203, which is 21% below the median for Venango County and 36% below the median for the Commonwealth (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015b). Of the eleven census tract block groups in Oil City, eight have been identified as low to moderate income areas (i.e. over 50% LMI; Table 1) and the total percentage of LMI persons living in Oil City has risen to 55.93% (Pa Department of Community and Economic Development [DCED], 2014).

Table 1. Data from the 2010 Census indicating percent of low to moderate income persons in Oil City, PA’s entire census tract block groups. Gray coloration indicates a census tract block group that is not LMI.

Census Tract	Block Group	Percent LMI
2007	1	59.11%
2007	2	51.92%
2008	1	68.54%
2008	2	38.37%
2008	3	56.52%
2009	1	78.85%
2009	2	53.52%
2009	3	61.33%
2010	1	64.42%
2010	2	22.34%
2010	3	36.10%

The stagnation of Oil City’s economy has resulted in a poverty rate of 26.2%, almost double the State average of 13.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a). For the very first time in 2017, the Oil City Area School District reported that 100% of their students qualify to receive free or reduced price breakfasts and lunches and are classified as economically disadvantaged (Oil City Area School District, 2017). Furthermore, Venango County has the 9th highest percentage of persons receiving medical assistance (13,072 people, Pa Department of Human Services [DHS], 2017) and the 12th highest percentage of persons receiving food stamps in the state of Pennsylvania (9,293 people, DHS, 2016).

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Priorities identified in several City of Oil City and Venango County plans have been used to develop Oil City’s Three Year CDBG Community Development Plan. The Northern Venango County Comprehensive Plan was adopted by City Council early in 2011. This multi-municipal comprehensive plan encompasses Oil City and two adjoining municipalities, Cornplanter and Rouseville, in an effort to highlight individual opportunities for economic regrowth and occasions for economic cooperation between the municipalities. The Oil City Comprehensive Waterways Plan was also adopted in 2011. It outlines projects to advance the local community economically and socially by utilizing the waterfronts of the Allegheny River and Oil Creek. In 2014, the City’s Community Development Department updated the City’s Capital Improvement Plan to identify fifty potential capital investment projects totaling more than \$32 million. In 2017, the Oil City Community Strategic Plan was adopted by City Council. This community wide strategic plan focused on economic development, housing, tourism, community engagement, and attraction/retention of residents. Each plan is available for review in the Oil City Community Development Office.

I. Housing

Current statistics from the 2015 ACS characterize Oil City as having 62.7% owner-occupied dwelling units, 37.3% rentals and 13.3% vacancy (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015c). The state of Pennsylvania has 69.2% owner-occupied, 30.8% rentals and 11.2% vacancy (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015d). These statistics show that Oil City has fewer owner-occupied housing units and greater rental occupants than the average at the state level. Although the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has reduced funding for Section 8 Housing Vouchers over the last several years, the Oil City Housing Authority’s records only show a total of 88 persons/households on its waiting list in 2018 (Table 2). Out of 561 vouchers/slots for housing assistance, there is currently enough funding for approximately 341 families and 323 are housed as of July 1, 2018. Additionally, 25 vouchers have been issued to applicants to “search” for units.

Table 2. Persons/households on the Oil City Housing Authority’s waiting list as of July1, 2018.

Housing Unit	Type	# of units	# on waiting list
Moran Towers	Elderly	48	17
Siverly Apartments	Elderly	30	
Towne Towers	Elderly	100	6
Century Terrace	LMI	50	19
Scattered Sites	LMI	20	
Cherry Hill	LMI	20	
Section 8 Voucher	Very LMI	338	46
Total on waiting list			88

The Community Development Department has worked with the Oil City Housing Authority and private developers in the past to design projects addressing local housing needs. In 2001, a private developer completed a 24-unit senior housing complex. The complex, Seneca Court, started accepting residents late in 2001 and is now full with a waiting list (Table 3). The residents at Seneca Court, along with those at Luther Place, an elderly only complex, are required to meet federal income guidelines. In 2006, a private developer constructed an 18-unit apartment complex, the Allegheny Overlook. It is also at full capacity.

Table 3. Persons/households on private developer’s waiting lists as of July 1, 2018

Housing Unit	Type	# of units	# on waiting list
Seneca Court	LMI	24	1
Luther Place	Elderly	49	1
Total on waiting list			2

In 2009, the Venango County Housing Study indicated that there are a large number of deteriorated and dilapidated units within Oil City due in part to an aging population, infrequent reinvestment in property, population loss, and excess housing supply. The 2011 Northern Venango County Comprehensive Plan reiterated this point and also identified five goals to deal with the increasingly deteriorating housing stock in Oil City. These goals included removal of blighting influences; creating a positive real estate market; promotion of condos, townhouses, or apartments for the 55 plus market; addressing the repository properties; and identification of corridors and neighborhoods as priority areas. The City has made it a priority to remove blighting influences and address repository properties in two concentrations of substandard housing located in Census Tract 2007 (North Side) and Census Tract 2009 (South Side).

In 2015, the City completed a HOME program in the St. Joseph Church Neighborhood on the north side in Census Tract 2007. That program resulted in 14 homes being brought up to code, making them safe and more energy efficient. Repairs varied depending on the condition of the house but included new roofs, windows, electric service, furnaces, smoke detectors, and ADA accessibility where needed. Most residents residing in substandard housing though, are tenants. Because they are not owner occupants, many of these residents are ineligible for existing housing rehabilitation assistance programs. To address this situation, the City’s Code Enforcement Office has established a rental housing inspection process and added an additional part time code inspector. With these inspections in place, code violations are detected early and regulations are enforced before blighting conditions can spread. The City will continue to emphasize efforts to enhance the condition of the existing housing stock and encourage an increase in owner-occupied housing which will lead to greater stability in the community.

II. Public/Community Facilities and Improvements

Street, Sidewalk, and Curb Improvements

A major priority for public infrastructure in Oil City continues to be the reconstruction of streets and curbs throughout the community. The static nature of funds from State Liquid Fuels allocations and a restrictive City General Fund budget has left numerous Oil City streets in a deteriorated condition. Many of these deteriorated streets are located in LMI neighborhoods. Guide rails, handicapped accessible corners, new water mains, and drainage improvements are also a necessary part of the infrastructure reconstruction process in these areas. The City typically sets aside part of the CDBG funds allocated each year for street and curb improvements. Recently, CDBG funds were used to mill and reconstruct Wabash Avenue and portions of Glenview Avenue and Oak Grove Street. New water mains were installed prior to the street resurfacing utilizing city funds. These projects benefited Census Tract 2010 Block Group 3. Streets under future consideration include Bissell Avenue, Chestnut Street, Warren Street, and portions of

Front and Orange Streets. Beneficial parties of these proposed activities include Block Groups 1 and 2 in Census Tract 2007 and Block Group 1 in Census Tract 2008. Street reconstruction evaluations include the condition of the roadway, plans for utility replacements, and CDBG eligibility.

Beyond the downtown business areas, sidewalks in many residential areas are also in need of attention. Heaved and deteriorated sidewalks present problems to the elderly, disabled, and residents who must travel these areas on a daily basis. The citizens residing in the East End of the community (Census Tract 2009 Block Group 3) had routinely appealed to City Council to undertake sidewalk improvements in their neighborhood along Route 62; fortunately, these sidewalks were replaced under a PennDOT roadway intersection project in 2013. The City's East End is highly used by pedestrian traffic since it is the location of most of our grocery stores, pharmacies and similar types of businesses. As the City works to become more walkable and recreational trail use increases, sidewalk reconstruction and accessibility improvements in our downtown commercial areas are a higher priority. CDBG funding may be used for improvements to this particular infrastructure. These improvement projects would be beneficial to the City as a whole (55.93% LMI).

Water Improvements

One of the primary functions of a community is to provide safe drinking water to its residents. Any water system improvements, therefore, benefit the entire City (55.93% LMI), enhancing the quality of life for all residents. A large well field at Seneca Farms in adjacent Cranberry Township provides the municipal water supply for Oil City. The well system has a permitted allocation to withdraw up to 4.68 million gallons per day, which is over 2.5 million gallons more than the system's current average daily demand. Although water quality and service are quite good, the age of the distribution mains is a problem, as some parts of the system are over 140 years old. City Council recently authorized a financing package for water and sewer improvements, with over \$5 million targeted to comprehensive water system improvements. Six existing water storage tanks have been reconditioned. Two replacement booster stations are currently under construction and new river and creek crossing projects are being prepared for bidding with the help of the City's consulting firm, Arcadis. Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) along with security improvements are in progress in-house. Replacement of pumping mains and distribution piping has yet to be addressed.

The City's Water Department has undertaken some pipe replacements in-house in recent years. The following water pipeline improvements are prioritized as follows:

- **Zemke Pumping Main:** An old pipe that provided water from the low-service area to the Zemke Lane Booster Station has been replaced by City crews in 2015. The new waterline was installed in Glenview Ave. Additional pipe installation began in the summer of 2017 to complete the project from Glenview to the booster station. The entire Northside intermediate and high service water areas rely on this pipe for water service. As the new booster station nears completion and new pumps are installed, the final hook-up should be completed in the fall of 2018.
- **Central Avenue (7th to 9th Street):** City crews replaced the pipe between Front and 7th in 2013/14. The section between 7th and 9th was completed in the spring of 2017. Numerous water line breaks in recent years have caused significant roadway damage. A new 12" diameter pipe replaced the existing 6" pipe, which greatly improves fire flow capabilities within the surrounding grid. Hook-up to the new Central Avenue booster station should be completed in the fall of 2018.
- **Wabash River Crossing:** Two 12" diameter pipes are both out of service. The City has considered several options for restoring an 800' river crossing in this area. A new line installed by directional drilling is currently being prepared to bid.
- **Railroad Bridge Creek Crossing:** A new 340' crossing of Oil Creek is being prepared for bid to provide back-up to the one currently in service from Justus Park to Relief St.

- Zemke Force Main to Fisher Avenue Booster Station: This 2,810' of pumping main will be upgraded to a 12" diameter main to increase flow capacity and reliability. This main serves the Hasson Heights neighborhood within the City and in Cornplanter Township. This project is currently being prepared for bid.
- Main Street (Relief to Petroleum): The existing 884' of cast iron pipe is within a four-lane state roadway and has had several breaks. The new 12" main will be located outside of the roadway. This future project will provide better fire protection and service reliability to the industries on Main St.
- Sage Run Descending Mains: There are two 12" side-by-side descending mains that transfer water from the Sage Run tanks into the distribution system, 1,035' that feeds E. Second St. and 1,146' that feeds Colbert Ave. The E. Second St. feeder was installed in 1872, while the Colbert Ave. feeder was installed in 1906. Both are cast iron. There have been breaks on the mains, which are laid on a very steep hillside, that have caused a loss of water service to a large number of customers and extensive flooding and damage to the surrounding area. One 18" ductile iron pipe would replace these two mains. This project is being considered for the near future.
- First Street (Central to Wilson): The water main in this downtown street is old cast iron pipe which has been subject to increased breakage in recent years. The section between Central and Wilson was laid in 1900+/- . It is only a 6" main serving a commercial district and providing a feeder main to a residential district. This main needs to be increased in size to a 12" PVC line to provide reliability and capacity.

Other water system improvement needs include the following:

- Cowell Avenue (3rd to 7th): This 1,163' 8" diameter pipe has risen in priority with numerous breaks.
- East Third Street (Wilson to East 2nd): This 3,170' length of 6" pipe needs replaced due to numerous breaks.
- Eighth Street slip-lining (Allegheny Ave to Central Ave): This 1,485' pipe is a pumping main serving the southside high service area.
- Halyday Street (Main to Dwyer): This main is a 6" cast iron main installed prior to 1910, and has been the site of several breaks. Replacement of the 1,335' line with 12" pipe would increase fire protection capability and reliability serving Main Street industries as well as the Clark Summit and Halyday Run residential neighborhoods.
- Clark Summit Pressure: Some areas of Clark Summit have low water pressure, which can be attributed to the fact that the tank elevation limits the system's ability to provide pressure, and that the lines serving these areas are old and small in diameter. The water distribution department has replaced part of the lines in this area; however, engineering services are needed to analyze other options for increasing pressure, and then to develop a project.
- First Street (Petroleum to Central): The water main in this downtown street is old cast iron pipe, which has been subject to increased breakage in recent years. This section was laid in 1872. It is only a 6" main serving a commercial district and providing a feeder main to a residential district. This main needs to be increased in size to a 12" line to provide reliability and capacity.
- There remain about 50 old Corey fire hydrants in the system (out of 467 total) after having replaced over 80 of them, using CDBG and other funding over the last several years. These

hydrants were mostly installed as part of the original distribution system, and are old and corroded. City forces continue to replace a few each year.

- E. Second St. (Wilson to Third St.): The 12” cast iron main between Wilson and Third St. was laid in 1872 and 1930. This main has had frequent breaks, which poses a backflow threat to some customers, and is located on a high traffic State road.
- Washington Ave. (Seeley to Harriott): This 904’ length of 6” cast iron pipe installed in 1872 has had numerous breaks. A hi/lo valve within this block separates the low and intermediate service areas. A break on the intermediate portion has the potential to cause backflow problems for some customers.
- Colbert Ave. (Alcorn to end): This dead end main consists of 2,557’ of 6” cast iron installed in 1912. Customers along this section of pipe frequently complained of water quality problems until the City installed a blow-off that is used to flush the line during warmer months. We think the problem can be attributed to the tuberculation (rust) inside the pipe. A new properly sized line should alleviate this issue.
- Oak Grove St. (Glenview to Kramer): This 875’ section of 8” cast iron pipe was installed in 1946, and has had many breaks. A hi/lo valve within its length separates the low and intermediate water service areas. A break has the potential to affect many customers.
- The City has replaced all service lines, including lead lines, to housing units where water mains have been replaced since 1997 when the Lead & Copper Rule brought a realization of high lead levels to the City’s attention. The Water Department plans to continue service line replacement wherever feasible when water mains are being replaced. CDBG funds could be used to replace lead service lines occupied by Low and Moderate Income individuals.

Sanitary Sewer Improvements

Other primary functions of a community are to collect and treat the sanitary sewage, address storm water drainage, and dispose of residual wastes in an environmentally friendly fashion. Any sanitary sewer improvements, therefore, benefit the entire City (55.93% LMI), enhancing the quality of life for all residents. The City’s consultant, Arcadis (formerly known as Malcolm Pirnie), previously completed an Act 537 Update Revision and Long Term Control Plan for control of combined sewer overflows (CSOs). The plan recommended a phased approach to bring the system into compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) CSO Control Policy. The City has received PennVest revolving loans offered through the Commonwealth to perform design and construction of Phase 1, including an upgrade to the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). Design work has been completed for this project and is currently on hold. CSO monitoring will continue to ensure compliance with the City’s Consent Order and Agreement with PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). In 2012, Malcolm Pirnie performed a study of capital needs and staffing and made recommendations for future improvements. In 2015, City Council authorized a financing package with over \$7 million targeted for sewer system improvements, as described below.

- The North Side Pump Station, which pumps all sewage from the north side to the south side across the Allegheny River, is in a much deteriorated state and needs a complete upgrade. It has reached its useful life and is beset with grit problems and an inefficient working environment. Improvements include the replacement of pumps, motors and controls, the addition of grit removal, and safety and operations improvements. The estimated cost of construction is \$3,900,000. Additional grit removal at the WWTP will also be included with this project. Arcadis has completed the design stage and this project is ready to move ahead.

- The Cooper Run storm pipe collects stormwater from pipes in 14 perpendicular streets and alleys. On most of these streets, the sanitary sewer was constructed overtop of or very close to the storm pipe. This has resulted in various problems during high peak rain events, allowing raw sewage to enter the storm system. The City has been making repairs to these pipes for several decades; however, the deterioration of some pipes is so severe that pipe replacement is needed for a long-term solution. PADEP issued a Notice of Violation in 2010 regarding the raw sewage in Cooper Run. The City targeted one street – Clarion Street- for preliminary design and cost estimating. Malcolm Pirnie provided these services. That cost estimate for the storm and sanitary pipe replacement was \$420,000. During the investigation, it was discovered that the waterline is also in need of replacement, at an estimated cost of \$100,000 if done in-house. The sewage plant personnel are currently investigating all sewer lines in the Palace Hill area for infiltration issues.
- A violation notice was received for a sanitary sewer overflow to Siverly Run, a tributary of the Allegheny River, in Hasson Park. The sewer in Park Road surcharges and overflows during heavy flow periods. The City has made repairs and cleaned the sewer; however, it is not large enough to handle seasonal flows, and it flows into even smaller pipes downstream. It flows into the Cooper Avenue sewer. This sewer network should be upgraded to handle the flows, and the overflow pipe should be plugged.

Other sewer improvements that will need to be addressed in the future include:

- At Southside Pump Station, one pump was replaced in 2014; however, much more work is needed to upgrade the Station as it is reaching its useful life. The second pump and electrical systems need to be replaced, and access to the station must be reassessed and improved significantly.
- Various pieces of equipment at the Wastewater Treatment Plant are aged and in need of replacement and upgrade, including the recirculation pumps for the Anaerobic Digesters, Spare Pumps and Valves for the Belt Filter Press, and a new excess flow pump to be added to the Influent Structure. The sludge scraper in Primary Clarifier No. 1 was replaced in 2015.

Handicapped Access Improvements

The City’s annual Section 504 self-analysis has identified the need for modifications to some City owned facilities in order to accommodate our disabled citizens. In 2012 the ramp to the public library was replaced utilizing some 2009 CDBG funds. Also in 2012, funds from the 2010 CDBG allocation were used to remove architectural barriers at City Hall by installing push button access to the main entrance and locating a handicapped parking space with an access ramp to the sidewalk. In 2017, the City used 2014 CDBG funds as match to a separate DCNR grant to make ADA improvements to the municipal swimming pool bath house. Other projects regularly undertaken include the installation of ADA compliant curbs when reconstructing any road and adding handicapped accessible equipment to the City’s playgrounds as appropriate. Recent playground upgrades have occurred at Justus Park, Siverly neighborhood, and Harriot Avenue. Improvements to public restrooms in several city parks are still a concern. These improvements may involve CDBG funds in the future as the City continues to conduct facility upgrades.

Recreation Improvements

Recently, the City adopted the following mission statement: “The City of Oil City will strive to create a safe, sustainable, vibrant community while capitalizing on the rich history and natural resources afforded to the region.” In keeping with our goals, Oil City has put tremendous effort into developing its’ hiking, biking, and waterway trails. In 2011, the City completed a Comprehensive Waterways Study to

formally outline projects that capitalize on our existing natural water resources in Oil Creek and the Allegheny River. One of the first projects to be completed was repair to the pedestrian walkway adjacent to the railroad bridge in the City's downtown using 2011 CDBG funds. The walkway acts as a connection between the north and south sides of Oil City on the greater Erie to Pittsburgh Bike Trail that follows Oil Creek and the Allegheny River through town. In 2014 a Greenways Block Grant assisted the City in developing Justus Park as a trailhead for both bike and waterway trails. In the same year, Oil City was formally designated a Trail Town. A Marina Master Site Plan was developed in 2015 to provide project ideas with cost estimates to further encourage public use of the Oil City Marina. A grant was received from DCNR in the spring of 2017 to close a trail gap on the Erie to Pittsburgh Bike Trail that runs adjacent to the Marina, as well as to provide enhancements to the Marina Trailhead. A consulting agreement has been signed this year to design the first phase of the Marina project. Plans for 2019 include a paving topcoat on the bike trail, creating a formal trailhead with maps, and constructing 5 primitive campsites at the Oil City Marina. One of the five campsites will be ADA accessible. Future phases of this project will include rebuilding the boat launch, ADA accessibility to the waterfront, and rehabilitation of the parking lot and public restrooms, all of which may be considered when allocating future CDBG funds. The City also intends to pursue additional hiking and bicycling paths with historical marker placement along the waterfront corridor in conjunction with the Oil Heritage Parks Program. All recreational improvements considered for CDBG funding benefit the City's LMI status as a whole.

The City's many playgrounds/parks have been high priority in recent years for structural improvements and ADA updates. In 2010 an additional playground was constructed on the City's East End with the assistance, in part, of 2009 CDBG monies. In 2011, the City installed a disk golf course in Hasson Park and repaired a large sinkhole on the basketball court at the Lincoln Playground with CDBG funds. Improvements to the bath house at the municipal swimming pool were completed in 2017 as indicated above. A complete overhaul of the Mitchell Avenue 'Land of Laughter' playground on the south side of the City is currently necessary. The Land of Laughter equipment was installed in the early 1990's utilizing the recycled wood and tire design. Signs of age and broken equipment now plague this popular park. Consideration will be given to this need as well as the possible pavement of a tennis court and installation of a restroom facility at the Mitchell Avenue complex when determining the use of CDBG funding.

III. Public Service

On occasion, the City receives suggestions or proposals for specific public service activities. These proposals are considered carefully and prioritized along with other projects such as infrastructure improvements. Due to insufficient local revenues and decreasing CDBG allocations, these public service activities are generally not possible. Particular concentration will be placed on health and safety activities relating to police, fire, and code enforcement programs. One Public Service project currently being funded with CDBG monies is the purchase of an Ariel Truck for the Fire Department. CDBG funds are also used for clearance of vacant and condemned houses to reduce blight, public health, and safety hazards throughout the City.

IV. Economic Development

The economic decline of Oil City since its founding has been immense. Since 2000, the City's population has decreased by 13% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). In an effort to make the community more alluring, Oil City intends to continue making citywide and downtown improvements with funding help from the Community Development Block Grant funds. These endeavors should encourage individuals and businesses to reinvest in Oil City and reverse the negative trends of economic decline, lack of capital investment, and limited growth opportunities. The City's efforts were reinforced with its' Main Street designation in 2011. The Main Street mission has been to create an attractive and vibrant downtown business district in Oil City, providing a foundation for the healthy growth and success of current and future businesses and residents. To date, 47 applicants have received façade grant funding, thereby

improving the look and feel of the downtown. Since fall of 2011, over 6.9 million dollars has been reinvested into downtown Oil City via building improvements, new construction, volunteer hours, new businesses, job growth, and more. Currently, the City is awaiting renewed Main Street designation from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

Other recent efforts have also produced positive economic results. The Historic National Transit Building now houses the establishment of an Arts Revitalization Artist Relocation Program, a result of the 2005 Shepstone Consulting study. This program has drawn artists from across the nation to Oil City, creating a much needed economic boost. Penn DOT also recently located their District headquarters in the former Quaker State Corporation building on Elm Street, bringing approximately 200 additional job opportunities to town. In 2012-2013, the Oil City Redevelopment Authority, along with the City and many private donors, successfully removed a series of condemned buildings in the North Side Downtown effectively clearing a full city block. It has been converted into the City's Town Square, a pleasing green space in the North Side Commercial District. Finally, one of the largest improvements to occur in the City was the demolition of the condemned downtown parking ramp. In 2011, the five story ramp was found to be unsafe and beyond the scope of repair during an engineering inspection. Through a combined effort, PennDOT and the Venango County Regional Planning Commission have removed the ramp and designed a new Multi-modal Transportation Complex. This complex will house the County's transportation assets, bringing more jobs into the downtown. Construction is expected to begin in early 2019.

A future endeavor promises to bring even more economic development to the City of Oil City. Through a cooperative effort between Venango County and the City, a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant was awarded from the Commonwealth to purchase a historic building on the brink of decay, the Cornplanter Square building. This development project will capitalize on a state of the art fiber optic network winding its way through our region. Once the network is completely installed, the user will have a direct optimum connection to Chicago, making Oil City a 10 gigabyte city, similar to the connection found in Pittsburgh. With this in mind, the plans for the Cornplanter Square building include a Brewpub microbrewery on the first and second floors with a high-tech business incubator space on the three upper floors. The whole project is a 15 million dollar investment in the revitalization of Oil City.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

I. Housing

- Continue the Clearance/ Demolition program in Oil City to eliminate blighting influences in certain residential neighborhoods. CDBG funds are used each year to clear dilapidated and dangerous structures in the City's LMI neighborhoods.
- Assist in the development of LMI housing opportunities which supplement the publicly financed housing programs.
- Improve the stock of LMI rental housing through code enforcement.
- Undertake a program of exterior rehabilitation to residential structures that will create a sense of pride in neighborhoods.

II. Public/Community Facilities and Improvements

- Continue the street reconstruction program in LMI neighborhoods.
- Continue the addition of ADA curb cuts along with street reconstruction projects.

- Address sidewalk reconstruction in downtown commercial district and in LMI neighborhoods.
- Replace and modernize deteriorated public infrastructure, particularly relating to the City's water, sewer, and storm water management facilities.
- Address handicapped accessibility problems in public buildings and facilities throughout the City.
- Renovate existing recreational facilities within the City that add to the safety and quality of life for area residents.

III. Public Service

- Assist in the development of innovative or expanded public services that address particular social problems in the community.

IV. Economic Development

- Further initiatives that will increase tenancy and employment opportunities.
- Improve the downtown to attract developers and entrepreneurs.
- Cooperate with other Venango County entities in an effort to both retain and attract manufacturing industries to the region.
- Support the Main Street Program efforts to improve Oil City's commercial facades. Assist in the attraction of developers, entrepreneurs, and relocating artists.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The plans developed below are indicative of the immediate needs of the community and are designed to support the solution to the most pressing problems of Oil City and its LMI population.

I. Short term – Year One

- Housing
 - Demolition of Deteriorated Structures
- Public/Community Facilities and Improvements
 - Street/Sidewalk/Curb (ADA) Improvements
 - Renovate existing recreational facilities (ADA)
- Public Service
 - Fire Department Truck

II. Long term – Years Two and Three

- Housing
 - Demolition of Deteriorated Structures
 - Improvement of Rental Properties
 - Home and Exterior Rehabilitation Programs
- Public/Community Facilities and Improvements

- Street and Curb Improvements
- Sidewalk Reconstruction
- Water, Sewer, and Storm Water System Improvements
- Handicapped Access Improvements
- Recreation Improvements
- Public Service
 - Health and Safety Projects
- Economic Development
 - Commercial Revitalization Projects
 - Adaptive reuse of underutilized and abandoned commercial/industrial sites
 - Cooperate with other Venango County entities to attract developers to the area

Local and area-wide plans incorporated into this Three Year Plan include : the 2017 Oil City Community Strategic Plan, the 2016 Oil City Marina Master Site Development Plan, the 2014 Oil City Capital Improvement Plan, the 2011 Northern Venango County Multi-municipal Plan, the 2011 Oil City Comprehensive Waterways Plan, the 2011 Oil City Main Street Strategy, the 2009 Venango County Housing Study, the 2009 Venango County Greenways Plan, and the 2005 “Downtown Economic Development Strategy” developed by Shepstone Management Company and Fairweather Consulting.

Attachments:

- A. LMI map by Census Tract/Block Group

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