

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

**2017 Update**

**Public Comment will be accepted from  
August 9 through September 8, 2017**

**Comments can be made to:**

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# THREE-YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) requires that a Community Development Plan (CDP) accompany Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications. This requirement is to ensure that 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 CDP address the identified needs of low and moderate income (LMI) persons living in the City.

## INTRODUCTION

Situated along the Allegheny River in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in Northwestern Pennsylvania, the picturesque City of Oil City is known for its rich history in the petroleum industry. When the first successful oil well was drilled nearby, several small towns came to life in Venango County. Oil City was one of these boomtowns. The City hosted headquarters for the Pennzoil, Quaker State, and Wolf's Head motor oil companies, making it central to petroleum production in the county. 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 region. Although the tourism industry based on the 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

There has been some change in the concentration of low to moderate income (LMI) persons within Oil City since the 2000 census. The 2000 census data showed the number of persons living below the poverty level in Oil City as 2,141 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) numbers show 2,619 people, an increase of 478 or 5% of Oil City's total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a). The 2015 ACS data also shows 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 group combinations in Oil City, eight have been identified as low to moderate income (i.e. over 50% LMI; Table 1). As a result, the ACS data places the total percentage of LMI persons in Oil City at 55.93% (Pa Department of Community and Economic Development [DCED], 2014).

**Table 1.** Census Tract/Block Group combinations with the percent of low to moderate income persons in Oil City, Pa. Data collected from the 2010 Census. Gray coloration indicates a tract/group combination 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%

In Venango County 13,072 people receive Medical Assistance, reflecting 25% of the county’s population (Pa Department of Human Services [DHS], 2017). With the State average at 21%, Venango County has the 9<sup>th</sup> highest percentage in the State (DHS, 2017). There are 9,293 people receiving food stamps in Venango County, which is 17% of the population (DHS, 2016). The State average is 11%, ranking Venango County as the 12<sup>th</sup> highest in the state (DHS, 2016). The stagnation of Oil City’s economy has resulted in a poverty rate of 26.2%, almost twice the State average of 13.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a). The Oil City Area School District reports that this year, for the first time, 100% of their students qualify to receive free or reduced price breakfast and lunches and are classified as economically disadvantaged (Oil City Area School District, 2017).

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The Northern Venango County Comprehensive Plan was adopted by City Council early in 2011. It is a multi-municipal comprehensive plan, incorporating the City and two adjoining municipalities. In 2014, the City’s Community Development Department updated the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP identified 50 capital investment projects totaling more than \$32 million. In 2017, the Oil City Community Strategic Plan was adopted by City Council. It is a community wide strategic plan focused on economic development, housing, tourism, community engagement, and attraction/retention of residents (documents available in the Oil City Community Development Office). Priorities identified in these plans have been used to develop the City’s 3-year CDBG Community Development Plan.

### I. Housing

Statistics from the 2015 ACS estimates 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 has 69.2% owner-occupied, 30.8% rentals and 11.2% vacancy (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015d).

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has reduced funding for Section 8 Housing Vouchers over the last several years causing some families to wait for more than two years for housing. Currently, the Oil City Housing Authority’s records show a total of 126 persons/households on its waiting list (Table 2). Out of 561 vouchers/slots, there is currently only enough funding for approximately 350 families and 338 are housed as of 8/1/2017. Additionally, 31 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 August 1, 2017.

Housing Unit	Type	# of units	# on waiting list
Moran Towers	Elderly	48	18
Siverly Apartments	Elderly	30	
Towne Towers	Elderly	100	10
Century Terrace	LMI	50	42
Scattered Sites	LMI	20	
Cherry Hill	LMI	20	
Section 8 Voucher	Very LMI	338	56
<b>Total on waiting list</b>			<b>126</b>

The above waiting list reflects an increase in the waiting lists from last year. One of the reasons for this spike may be that in 2016, the Oil City Housing Authority took over management of the County Housing Facilities. The Community Development Office has worked with the Oil City Housing Authority and private developers to design projects addressing local 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, along with those at Luther Place, 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 August 1, 2017

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

The 2011 Comprehensive Plan identified five goals to deal with the existing housing stock. These include 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 Plan indicates that there are a large number of deteriorated and dilapidated units within Oil City. This was also noted in the County Housing Study that was completed by Venango County in 2009. Two concentrations of poor housing are evident among Block Groups in Census Tract 2007 on the North Side and Census Tract 2009 on the South Side. The City has made it a priority to remove blighting influences and address repository properties in these areas.

Most residents residing in substandard housing are tenants. Many of these people are ineligible for existing housing rehabilitation assistance programs because they are not owner-occupants. To address this situation, the City’s Code Enforcement Office, in cooperation with the City’s Blighted Property Committee, has established a rental housing inspection process and added an additional part time code inspector. In 2015, the City completed a HOME program in the St. Joseph Church Neighborhood on the Northside that resulted in 14 homes being brought up to code, making them safe and more energy efficient. Repairs varied depending on the situation but included new roofs, windows, electric service, furnaces, smoke detectors, and ADA accessibility where needed. The City will continue to emphasize the condition of the existing housing stock and encourage an increase in owner-occupied housing which leads 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 Liquid Fuels allocations and a restrictive General Fund budget has left many Oil City streets in a deteriorated condition. Many of these deteriorated streets are located in LMI neighborhoods. Guide rails, handicapped accessible corners, and drainage improvements are also a necessary part of the reconstruction process in many of these areas. The City typically sets aside part of the CDBG funds each year for street and curb improvements. In the recent past, CDBG funds were used to mill and resurface Pearl Avenue, Willow Street, Wilson Avenue and Imperial Street. These projects benefited Census Tract 2007 Block Group 2 and Census Tract 2009 Block Group 3. Streets under future consideration include Merritt Street and portions of Bissell Avenue, Chestnut Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and Englewood Avenue. Beneficial parties of these proposed activities include Block Groups 1 and 2 in Census Tract 2007 and Block Group 2 in Census Tract 2009. Evaluations include the condition of the roadway and plans for utility replacements, in addition to 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 are a higher priority. CDBG funding may be used for improvements to these facilities. 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. The booster station improvement/replacement (two stations) and new river and creek crossing projects are currently 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 listed as currently prioritized:

- **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.
- **Central Avenue (7th to 9<sup>th</sup> Street):** City crews replaced the pipe between Front and 7<sup>th</sup> in 2013/14. The section between 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 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.
- **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 (3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>): This 1,163’ 8” diameter pipe has risen in priority with numerous breaks.
- East Third Street (Wilson to East 2<sup>nd</sup>): 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. 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 been hired to complete the design.
- 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.

- 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 504 self-analysis identified the need for modifications to some City owned facilities to accommodate our disabled citizens. In 2009 CDBG funds were dedicated to replacing the ramp to the public library. This project was completed in 2012. Funds from 2010 were dedicated to removing 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, also completed in 2012. The City used 2014 CDBG funds to match a separate DCNR grant to make ADA improvements to the bath house at the municipal swimming pool. Other projects undertaken include the installation of ADA compliant curbs when resurfacing any road and adding handicapped accessible equipment to the City's playgrounds as appropriate. Recent upgrades have occurred at Justus Park and Siverly Playgrounds. Improvements to public restrooms are still a concern. These improvements may involve CDBG funds in the future as the City conducts facility upgrades.

#### *Recreation Improvements*

In 2010 an additional playground was constructed on the City's East End with the assistance of 2009 CDBG monies in part. In 2011 the City installed a Disk Golf course in Hasson Park. A large sinkhole located on the basketball court at the Lincoln Playground was repaired and repaved, both utilizing 2009 CDBG funds. Improvements to the bath house at the municipal swimming pool were completed in 2017 as indicated above. Pavement of a tennis court and installation of a restroom are needed at the 'Land of Laughter' park on the south side of the City. Additional recreational improvements will be considered for funding as they are identified.

Oil City has put a tremendous effort into developing its' hiking, biking, and waterway trails. In 2011, the City completed a Comprehensive Waterways Study. The first project selected for funding using 2011 CDBG monies was to repair the pedestrian walkway adjacent to the railroad bridge in the City's downtown. This project was completed in 2013. In 2014, the City was formally designated a Trail Town. A 2014 Greenways Block Grant assisted the City in developing Justus Park as a trailhead for both bike and waterway trails. A Waterways Overlay District was established in the new 2012 Oil City Zoning Ordinance, motivating the City to improve public use of the Oil City Marina. A Marina Master Site Plan was developed in 2015 to provide project and cost estimates. A grant was then 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. Plans for 2018 include paving a top coat for 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. The City also intends to pursue additional hiking and bicycle paths along the waterfront corridor in conjunction with the Oil Heritage Parks Program. Historical markers will be placed along these paths if developed. All recreational improvements considered for CDBG funding benefit the City's LMI basis.

### **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 others such as infrastructure improvements. Because of 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 project that is being funded is an Ariel Truck for the Fire Department. CDBG funds are also used for clearance of vacant and condemned houses to reduce blight and public hazard throughout the City.

### **IV. Economic Development**

The economic decline of Oil City 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 make citywide and downtown improvements with funding help from CDBG. These enhancements should encourage individuals and businesses to reinvest in Oil City and reverse the trends of economic decline, lack of capital investment, and limited growth opportunities. The City's efforts have been reinforced by receiving a Main Street designation in 2011. The Main Street mission has been to make Oil City's downtown business district attractive and vibrant, providing a foundation for the healthy growth and success of current and future businesses and residents. To date, 44 applications have been approved for 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 PA DCED.

Other recent efforts have also produced positive economic results. The Historic National Transit Building now houses a center for the Arts. A result of the 2005 Shepstone Consulting study, the establishment of an Arts Revitalization Artist Relocation Program has occurred. This program has brought artists from across the nation to Oil City, creating an economic boost for the City. Penn DOT located their District headquarters in the former Quaker State Corporation building, which has brought approximately 200 additional positions into the downtown. The Northwest Regional Planning and Development Commission opened their offices in Oil City which produced an additional 20 jobs and customers for our merchants. 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 Northside Downtown effectively clearing a full city block. It has been converted into the City's Town Square, a pleasing green space in the 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 new complex will house the County's transportation assets, bringing more jobs into the downtown. Construction is expected to begin in 2018.

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 New York City or 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/maker space on the three upper floors. The whole project is a 5 million dollar investment in the revitalization of Oil City.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

### **I. Housing**

- Continue the Clearance and Demolition program in the City to eliminate blighting influences in certain residential neighborhoods. CDBG funds are used each year to accelerate the “addition by subtraction” or clearing 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 program of street and curb reconstruction 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/Curb (ADA) Improvements
- 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
  - Water, Sewer, and Storm Water System Improvements
  - Handicapped Access Improvements
  - Recreation Improvements
- Public Service
  - Health and Safety Projects
  - Fire Department Equipment
- 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 City’s Fair Housing Analysis, the 2017 Oil City Community Strategic Plan, the 2014 Oil City Capital Improvement Plan, the 2011 Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan, the 2011 Comprehensive Waterways Study, the 2011 Oil City Main Street Strategy, the 2009 County Housing Study, the 2009 Venango County Greenways Plan, and the “Downtown Economic Development Strategy” developed by Shepstone Management Company and Fairweather Consulting.

Attachments:

- A. LMI map by Census Tract/Block Group
- B. Proposed distribution of 2017 CDBG Funds

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