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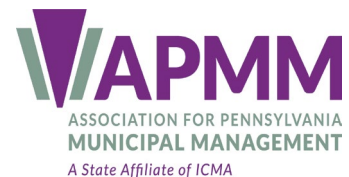
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# Our Mission

The Pennsylvania Municipal League strengthens and empowers effective local government through advocacy, education, and support for our members.

The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1900 as an advocate for Pennsylvania's 3rd class cities. Today, The League represents participating Pennsylvania cities, boroughs, townships and home rule communities that all share The League's municipal policy interests. Our Board of Directors oversees the administration of a wide array of municipal services including legislative advocacy (on both the state and federal levels), publications designed to educate and inform, education and training certification programs, membership research and inquiries, programs, and group insurance trusts.

We are continually monitoring the needs of our members and are committed to providing the commonwealth's municipalities with cost-effective programs and services required to meet the distinct needs of their communities.

The Municipal Reporter is a publication of the Pennsylvania Municipal League, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners and the Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management. It is published six times a year on a bimonthly basis. Opinions expressed by

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Original articles on subjects of interest to municipal officials are welcome, but subject to review by editorial staff. The publisher has the right to reject unsuitable advertising.

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# The League President's Message



DEREK SLAUGHTER  
MAYOR  
CITY OF WILLIAMSPORT



*"As mayor, I believe that strong, resilient infrastructure is the backbone of any thriving city. It not only supports economic growth, but also ensures the safety and well-being of our residents. That is why, in our continued commitment to protecting our community, we have made the recertification of our levee a top regional priority. This critical project will safeguard us against flooding, protect local businesses, and preserve our way of life. We recognize that a well-maintained infrastructure system is essential to building a future that is secure, sustainable, and prosperous for all.*

*Additionally, infrastructure is the foundation that connects not just our city, but all communities within Pennsylvania. From bustling urban centers to smaller townships and boroughs, the strength of our infrastructure determines our collective ability to thrive and respond to challenges. Whether it is ensuring reliable transportation networks, clean water access, or, as we have prioritized in Williamsport, safeguarding our levees against natural disasters, robust infrastructure unites us all.*

*By investing in these critical systems, we are securing a future where every community can grow and prosper, creating a more resilient and interconnected commonwealth for generations to come."*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derek Slaughter".

Derek Slaughter  
Mayor, City of Williamsport



# The League Executive Director's Message

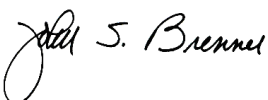
*"Everything you depend on for your daily life is underground or you drive over it." A quote from a public works official from more than 20 years ago is just as relevant today.*

*What local leaders refer to as "hard" infrastructure—roads, bridges, sewers, water, lighting and other utilities—makes up a vast web of pipes and conduits that connect our homes, businesses and non-profits with critical services.*

*This issue of the Municipal Reporter focuses on infrastructure. Sharing important information from our key partners and local leaders about infrastructure investment and the impact on our communities. The Federal Infrastructure and Investment Act, something our own local leaders in conjunction with the National League of Cities fought long and hard to get to the President's desk in 2022, has had a profound impact on projects throughout our commonwealth. But this milestone is just one of many pieces of the puzzle that we need to properly fund infrastructure needs into the future. Reliable, consistent funding would help local leaders to address the most critical needs and to plan for the future.*

*A sustainable funding source for local infrastructure is a top priority for The League during this legislative session and it needs bipartisan support to make it happen. Let's speak with one voice and keep the shovels and backhoes going as we invest in Pennsylvania's economy. The movement of people, goods and services is absolutely necessary in order to power our continued revitalization.*

*Sincerely,*



John S. Brenner



JOHN BRENNER



## Executive Director's Video Report





# Mark Your Calendar



## **43rd Annual PELRAS Conference**

**February 26 - 28**

Hershey Lodge and Convention Center  
Hershey

## **Membership Appreciation Tour of the District Meetings**

### **Southcentral - March 18**

Comfort Suites, Carlisle

### **Northcentral - March 20**

Curry Innovation Center at St. Francis University, Altoona

### **Southeast #1 - April 9**

Blank Canvas, Reading

### **Northeast - April 15**

Pittston Library, Pittston

### **Southeast #2 - April 16**

The Drexelbrook, Drexel Hill

### **Northwest - May 5**

Makers Warehouse, St. Marys

### **Southwest #1 - May 7**

Shooters Pittsburgh, Wesford, Town of McCandless

### **Southwest #2 - May 8**

Palace Theater the Laurel Room, Greensburg

## **2025 Annual APMM Conference**

**May 19 - 21**

Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square  
Lancaster

## **2025 Municipal Leadership Summit**

**October 1 - 4**

Bayfront Convention Center  
Erie



# Inside The League

*As we head into 2025, we can all take a deep breath after national elections and begin focusing on what lies ahead with municipal elections as mayors, city councilmembers, township supervisors and township commissioners focus on their own efforts during this primary season.*



**ABE AMORÓS**  
**DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -**  
**OPERATIONS – CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER**

*This year, The League enthusiastically looks forward to celebrating its 125th Anniversary, a significant milestone in the history of the organization that began its advocacy work on behalf of local governments in 1900, just one year after the concept originated in the City of York by Mayor Frank Guise. The League of Third-Class Cities has had several name changes over the years with the culmination of our current name. As every organization that experiences growth and evolution, today's League is stronger than ever with 146 member organizations.*

*The original 15 municipalities that formed the organization were: Erie, Bradford, Meadville, McKeesport, Altoona, Lock Haven, Lebanon, Reading, Harrisburg, York, Lancaster, Wilkes-Barre, Easton, Allentown and Chester. Look for celebrations throughout the year, especially focused on The League's eight district meetings that will begin in March. Our fine Communications team has been busy planning announcements and news conferences to celebrate the occasion and will be providing details as the events unfold.*

*We want to thank Wells Fargo for agreeing to be our 125th Anniversary Presenting Partner with a special shout out to Mike Hughes, senior vice president of state government relations, for taking the lead in this important collaboration with The League.*

*Switching gears, The League would like to stress to all member municipalities that it will continue offering Diversity, Equity, Belonging and Inclusion (DEIB) training to any municipality that requests it. The League still considers this training as a valuable part of fostering collaboration and understanding to create more innovative and creative solutions to the many challenges facing cities, townships and boroughs and will gladly oblige all requests. We look forward to providing Ferguson Township with this valuable training in March and wholeheartedly welcome other requests throughout the year.*

*Lastly, we hope that all of you are staying warm during this bitter winter and that your employees can meet their planning goals for the year!*

*From Inside The League,*

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Abe Amorós".

Abe Amorós



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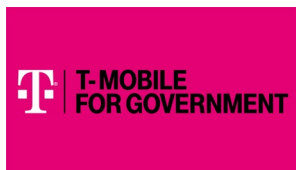
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## Pennsylvania Infrastructure: Did You Know?...

- PA is the #1 state for open railroads (65) (PennDOT) covering 5,600 miles and hauling over 170 million tons of freight each year ([PennDOT](#))
- PA's ranks 3rd in the number of bridges in the nation, and the average age of its bridges is more than 50 years old ([PennDOT](#))
- PA is ranked 13th out of the top 20 states for decayed infrastructure (TRIP) with our rural roads and bridges ranked among the most deteriorated in the US (DCED)
- PA has a Climate Action Plan (2021) with goals to reduce greenhouse gas by 80% by 2050
- PA reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% from 2005 to 2017 ([Climate Action Plan](#))
- PA's largest emission sources are electricity generation (29%), transportation (24%), and industrial fuel use (18%). (CAP)
- PA has the 4th busiest inland port in the US (Port of Pittsburgh)
- PA is the leading handler of frozen cargo (Port of Phila)
- PA has 6 international airports that move more than 600,000 tons of freight each year
- PA is located within a day's drive of nearly 40% of the US population
- PA has 120,000 miles of state and local highways, including a 500+ mile state turnpike
- PA is 2nd in the nation for natural gas production, and the 3rd largest coal producing state ([EIA](#))
- PA's [PULSE](#) project is the largest solar commitment project of any state in the US (<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/residents/saving-energy/renewables.html>)
- PA ranks 17th among states in internet coverage, speed, and availability BroadbandNow [Rankings](#)



## Building Stronger Communities: Understanding and Enhancing Human Infrastructure in Pennsylvania

BY SUSAN SCHRACK WOOD, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, THE LEAGUE

When most of us think of infrastructure, we think of the physical roadways and public utilities that keep traffic flowing and water and electricity coming into our homes and workplaces; the things that allow us to move through life more easily and efficiently. But how often do we consider human health and well-being as an element of a community's infrastructure? Certainly, municipal leaders have always created and improved physical infrastructure elements with the goal of improving daily life for our human populations, but the concept of "human infrastructure" began to gain ground as a collective and unique aspect to infrastructure in the early 2000s. This shift began as policymakers, economists, and community leaders recognized that traditional definitions of infrastructure—focused on physical assets like roads and bridges—did not fully capture what communities need to thrive. The concept really gained traction during legislative discussions that

addressed municipal physical and social investments, including the [American Rescue Plan](#) (2021) and the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (2022-2026). This growing emphasis reflects the recognition that thriving economies and resilient communities depend on comprehensive systems that prioritize human well-being.

### Defining Human Infrastructure

Human infrastructure encompasses the systems and services that support the well-being, development, and productivity of people within a community and focuses on elements such as healthcare, education, childcare, and job training. These components form the foundation for vibrant, resilient communities, particularly in cities and towns across Pennsylvania. At its core, human infrastructure refers to the investments and systems that empower individuals to thrive socially and economically.

This includes access to quality education, comprehensive healthcare, affordable childcare, workforce development programs, and social services. Together, these elements enhance the overall quality of life and economic potential of a population.

### Healthcare

Access to healthcare is a cornerstone of human infrastructure. In Pennsylvania, initiatives to improve healthcare involve expanding access to hospitals, clinics, and mental health services. Addressing rural healthcare disparities, ensuring affordable insurance coverage, and investing in preventative care are essential steps to enhance public health outcomes. For example, to accommodate an aging population in northeastern Pennsylvania, Geisinger Medical Center is investing nearly \$2 billion in hospital projects near Wilkes Barre<sup>1</sup>. These projects are designed to not only increase the number of patients they can





serve, but they will also expand the type of care they can provide. Larger emergency departments, more operating rooms, enhanced pediatric units, and dedicated spaces for patients with behavioral and mental health issues provide greater care and accessibility for the entire surrounding communities. Additionally, the expansion is designed to reduce stress and improve the well-being of its healthcare workers, leading to the community's ability to retain those talented employees.

## Childcare

Affordable and reliable childcare is vital for working families and the development of young children. In cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, initiatives such as subsidies and public-private partnerships help expand access to early childhood education. For smaller towns, investments in childcare facilities and support for home-based providers can address gaps in availability.

## Education

Quality education from early childhood to higher education lays the foundation for individual and community success. Pennsylvania's public school system, charter schools, and state universities play critical roles in shaping the state's human infrastructure. Investing in STEM

programs, arts education, and equitable funding for underserved districts can bridge opportunity gaps and prepare students for future challenges.

## Job Training and Workforce Development

With industries evolving rapidly, job training and workforce development programs are crucial to maintaining a competitive economy. Pennsylvania has made strides through initiatives such as apprenticeships, technical training programs, and partnerships between businesses and educational institutions. Addressing skill gaps and supporting lifelong learning are key to ensuring a resilient workforce. For example, in 2024, Philadelphia launched an ambitious project to develop talent pipelines for critical infrastructure sectors<sup>2</sup>. The city is investing in organizations that advance innovative on-the-job workforce training programs focused on technology, surveying, and leadership principles. This initiative aims to prepare residents for emerging job opportunities and strengthen the city's economic resilience.

## Assessing Human Infrastructure

Municipalities in Pennsylvania can evaluate their human

infrastructure by collecting and analyzing data on healthcare access, educational attainment, childcare availability, and workforce participation. Tools such as community surveys, demographic studies, and economic impact assessments can identify strengths and areas for improvement. This takes collaboration between local governments, community organizations, and private entities to create a comprehensive assessment. For example, healthcare providers can share data on service gaps, while employers can highlight workforce needs. Engaging residents through public forums ensures that community voices guide decision-making.

## Improving Human Infrastructure

- 1. Invest in Public Services:** Increasing funding for schools, healthcare facilities, and childcare programs ensures equitable access to essential resources.
- 2. Leverage Technology:** Digital tools can enhance service delivery, from telemedicine in rural areas to online job training programs.
- 3. Foster Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between governments





and private organizations can expand resources and innovative solutions for human infrastructure.

4. **Promote Equity:** Targeting investments toward underserved communities helps reduce disparities and promotes inclusive growth.
5. **Measure Progress:** Setting clear goals and regularly evaluating outcomes ensures that improvements are sustainable and impactful.

Strengthening human infrastructure is vital for the long-term prosperity of Pennsylvania's cities and towns. By prioritizing healthcare, childcare, education, and workforce development, municipalities can create environments where individuals and communities can flourish. Through thoughtful assessment, targeted investments, and collaborative efforts, Pennsylvania can build a resilient foundation for future generations. □

<sup>1</sup>Geisinger investing \$1.8 billion in major hospital projects. Ron Southwick. July 15, 2024/. Chief Healthcare Executive. <https://www.chiefhealthcareexecutive.com/view/geisinger-investing-1-8b-in-major-projects>

<sup>2</sup>Philadelphia Launches Ambitious Infrastructure Workforce Initiative, Dawn Thomas, Philadelphia Works, Inc. <https://philaworks.org/>

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## The American City Looks Toward the Future

BY GUY GREER, DECEMBER 1944

*In 1944, Guy Greer delivered his address to the Joint Luncheon Conference of the Municipal and Local Finance Officers of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association, Harrisburg, PA.*

Let me begin by reminding you of a state of affairs in the cities and towns that most of you probably understand as well as I do. Our urban communities, whatever their size, are undergoing something that might almost be described as falling apart. They were originally laid out for the requirements of an age that is gone. Their rapid growth, to the accompaniment of the automobile and other modern transportation facilities, has resulted in intolerable congestion and overcrowding in the one hand and spreading out beyond city limits on the other. The results are manifest in a sort of vicious spiral. People and business concerns in the older areas go to the suburbs to escape high taxes and the generally unpleasant conditions downtown. But municipal expenditures are rising and may be expected to go on rising, because the people are demanding more and better municipal services. The municipal government is therefore compelled to maintain and often to increase high assessments and taxes on real estate, although this tends to drive more people and business and industry to the outskirts.

The whole process is often described as “the decentralization disease.” It has many of the aspects of a disease as regards in-town property values and municipal finances. The fly in the ointment is that more often than not the new suburban communities are not properly planned, either as to their own layout or in relation to the urban community as a whole. Thus, frequently they create the very same conditions of congestion and overcrowding that were among the causes of the flight to the suburbs in the first place. Moreover, the new developments are likely to throw out of balance any kind of overall transportation system that can be devised for the urban communities as a whole.

The problem, I suggest, falls naturally into three main divisions. First in importance comes the job of bringing suburban growth under control. The second job is to reshape the interior of the town and bring its pattern up to date. Essentially this involves providing more and better distributed space for nearly everything that goes on. Mainly, plenty of off-street space for parking motor vehicles and for loading and unloading trucks. In most towns the problem is not that of finding more space as that of a better distribution of the space already available.

The third planning job has to do with transportation... an integral part of the planning of both suburbs and interior. A genuine solution will call for a coordinated transportation system for the whole community. This will include all forms of transport and transit and the terminals for them, each playing its proper part in relation to the others and to the needs of the community as a whole.

To talk about carrying out the plans that are needed is sure to provoke the question, “Where’s the money coming from?” The pat answer is that it will come mostly from ordinary private enterprise, just as it always has in the building of cities and towns. But unfortunately, this answer is not good enough just now. Thus, we come to what is undoubtedly the toughest of all the problems confronting the cities and towns. I need not remind a group such as yours that our local governments have long been “behind the eight ball” with regard to taxation and expenditures. They are mainly dependent on real estate taxes, and we have already considered the appalling results of such taxes. Fundamentally, what we need is a grand overhauling of taxation and expenditures from top to bottom- federal, state, and local. But this is likely to be obtainable only after a powerful pressure of public opinion has been built up, not only in one city or town, but in all the cities and towns. Moreover, it must be understood in the rural areas as well; the farmers must learn that there can be no real prosperity for agriculture unless there is prosperity and civic well-being in the cities and towns too.

Let me end this...by reminding you of an important fact. Your local community, whether urban or rural, can actually have for itself anything it can build or produce, and also anything it doesn’t produce by swapping with other communities what it does produce. The legal and financial arrangements can be made to conform if the people understand them and demand action. □







## The Walkable Community: A Strategy for Revitalization

BY E. JEAN KRACK, PHOENIXVILLE BOROUGH MANAGER AND  
MEGHAN STRAUT, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

With the permanent closure of the Phoenix Steel Corporation in 1987, Phoenixville Borough began 20 years of economic downturn with its population dwindling to 14,788. It's a common problem facing many steel and industrial towns. Phoenixville's leaders knew they had to make some serious changes to improve their community and quality of life for their residents.

Beginning around 2006, the borough created a revitalization plan that brought rise to new housing such as townhomes and apartments providing a foundation to build walkable neighborhoods. By the end of 2024, the economic resurgence increased the population to 20,300 through those new housing efforts and the trend continues with an additional 2,500 residential units approved for construction. How did they make it work?

While the PA Municipal Planning Code requires each municipality to update its Comprehensive Plan every ten years, most of them do not. Phoenixville was no exception as its plan had not been updated since 1988. Comp Plans provide for the short- and long-term movement of people within the local street system including pedestrian and bikeway systems, and public transit routes. It also includes a plan for community facilities and utilities, which may include public and private education, recreation, municipal buildings, fire and police stations, libraries, hospitals, water supply and distribution, sewerage and waste treatment, solid waste management, storm drainage, and flood plain management.

With a focus on new investment and downtown revitalization, the borough began the process of



Downtown Walkability

updating its Comprehensive Plan in 2009 and adopted the update in 2011. The updated plan focused on walkability. How could they make the city's resources more accessible? The plan noted the borough was preparing to construct its portion of the Schuylkill River Trail, the French Creek Trail and the Phoenix Iron & Canal Trail. The objectives of the plan were to complete pedestrian circulation studies for Phoenixville Borough, construct new sidewalk pedestrian links on Mowere Road to the center of town via the proposed Schuylkill River Trail, create sidewalk access to Veterans Memorial Park, require sidewalks and pedestrian access in new development projects, and provide sidewalk linkages that could accommodate walk to work opportunities. With its updated plan, and well before French Urbanist Carlos Moreno in Paris coined the term 15-Minute City in 2015, Phoenixville Borough was requiring new development and community connectivity through Walkability.

The concept of a walkable community is where residents have safe and convenient access by walking,



bicycling, or riding in transit to many of the places and services they use daily, including local markets and other neighborhood serving businesses, restaurants, schools, and parks within a half mile walking distance. Clearly marked crosswalks allow pedestrian and wheelchair users to cross streets safely, while making sure cars know where to expect them. It is a neighborhood where residents can have a high quality of life without needing to own a personal vehicle and increasing opportunities for social interaction between neighbors. Walkability supports the borough's growing local economy where residents in the area can easily walk or bike to meet their daily needs and support our local businesses. With a truly attractive and useful downtown destination, Phoenixville was noticing that people were walking longer distances on its sidewalk and trail network.



Midblock Crosswalk

Parks and public green space create a destination encouraging community interaction and providing a rest from the surrounding urban environment. The borough has 15 parks with a total acreage of about 72 acres. The parks vary in size from .1 acres to 27.3 acres and provide several amenities to the community including an all-abilities playground which creates a place where children of all abilities, including those with physical or sensory challenges, can play together. The borough constructed a 38,000-sf recreation center including a full gymnasium, multi-use courts, preschool classrooms, multipurpose rooms, and group exercise rooms. The recreation center is the only municipal owned center in Chester County.



Weekend Street Closure

The borough partnered with sports clubs to create a lighted field for softball, soccer, cricket and rugby. Other partnership projects have created a mountain bike training course, disc golf course, large and small dog parks and a community garden. A partnership with Phoenixville Hospital resulted in all parks being tobacco free through the Young Lungs at Play program.

Phoenixville is a model for sustainability, equity and innovation. Open space and recreation are essential to our quality of life which includes natural areas for nature walks, bird watching, hiking, and biking throughout the borough. Most recently, the borough was gifted 3 acres of undeveloped land to remain an open space nature preserve.

Trails provide convenient, safe routes for biking and walking that promote equity, vibrancy, health and resiliency. The borough has four completed trails with about 4 miles of paved trails and has nine proposed trails in design to further connect its neighborhoods.

Trails serve an important role within the transportation and recreation network by providing convenient, safe routes for biking and walking that promote equity, vibrancy, health and resiliency. They enable people of all ages and abilities to comfortably travel for any purpose including access to work and services. The trails within the borough provide an opportunity for visitors to experience Phoenixville and the trailheads provide gateways into the community. Conversely the trail systems within the borough offer an opportunity to connect to regional open space outside of the community.





The Schuylkill River Trail (SRT) is a multi-use recreational path following the Schuylkill River stretching 128 miles from the southernmost foothills of the Appalachians to tidal lands in Philadelphia. In 2020, Phoenixville Borough completed the Phoenixville and Mont Care Bridge Connector which addressed one of the most challenging gaps in the entire SRT system. The project was a modification of the narrow 550' long SR 29 bridge over the Schuylkill River to accommodate the shared-use path while meeting the needs of the PennDOT roadway, transforming the area under the existing Norfolk Southern railroad bridge, which was a narrow, dark sidewalk area with a 3+ drop off to the adjacent roadway, into a safe and functional part of the trail and enhancing the connection of the new trail area on the bridge to the existing trail 150' away along the narrow driveway to Schuylkill Canal Park. The project improves the safety and connectivity of Phoenixville to Mont Clare for walkers and cyclists and for thousands of cyclists and walkers using the entire SRT. The project was a high-quality collaboration of Phoenixville Borough and Upper Providence Township, Chester and Montgomery Counties, DCNR, DVRPC, and PennDOT.

The Phoenix Iron Canal and Trail is a formal trail along the Schuylkill River that would connect the SRT and the Black Rock Sanctuary, a 118-acre park that includes 3.75 miles of trail, with 0.8 miles of the trail being ADA accessible. Black Rock Sanctuary is a County Park within the borough. This 118-acre park is a great asset to the community that is dedicated to wildlife habitat and public use. It is

a Green Park that includes natural landscaping, and a .80-mile ADA-accessible interpretive trail, among many other amenities. The borough has approved a Chester County project that adds a trailhead and two (2) canoe/kayak portage ramps to safely portage around the Black Rock Dam and fish ladder. The PA Fish & Boat Commission manages a boat launch providing access to the Schuylkill River.

The French Creek Trail is another regional trail that begins where the SRT goes north at the Foundry in the heart of downtown Phoenixville. When completed, the trail will leave the borough at the border with East Pikeland Township and go west to the Horseshoe and Big Woods Trails and French Creek State Park.

In October 2019, the borough prepared its Walk Phoenixville, a borough-wide Pedestrian and Accessibility Plan that studied its walking infrastructure and supporting policies to address weaknesses in its network. With nearly 80 miles of sidewalks, Phoenixville Borough is a walkable community receiving an EPA Walkability rate of 14.95 out of a possible 20. Generally, the closer to the Town Center the higher the walkability score. In 2024, the borough installed 2,200 ft of new sidewalk on Mowere Road, thereby removing a notable pedestrian island where there was no sidewalk connection for a significant portion of north side residents to access the SRT or Veterans Memorial Park.

The Borough of Phoenixville continues to be a desirable place to live and work and faces substantial growth in the form of new development and redevelopment.

In June 2022, the borough updated its Comprehensive Plan to address an increasing population and to continue its efforts as a walkable community. Phoenixville is Connected is a road map within the Comprehensive Plan to add nine more trail connections within and around the borough. □



Schuylkill River Trail



SRT Over Mont Clare Bridge



SRT Pedestrian Bridge Over French Creek





## Responding to the Changing Energy Landscape: Insights for Pennsylvania Municipal League Members

BY CONSTELLATION ENERGY

The energy landscape is rapidly evolving, and municipal leaders in Pennsylvania are facing an array of challenges and opportunities as they navigate these changes. At Constellation's Executive Energy Forum (EEF), industry experts gathered to discuss the most pressing issues and strategies for managing energy demand, forecasting energy trends, and incorporating sustainability initiatives. Here are some of the key takeaways that are particularly relevant for municipalities looking to stay ahead of the curve.

### Adapting to Energy Sector Challenges

Over the past 15 years, the energy industry has undergone significant transformations, with major shifts such as the shale revolution, the rise of renewable energy sources, and the development of Liquid Natural Gas (LNG). These changes have posed unique challenges for grid operators and planners, especially as demand for electricity continues to increase. According to experts, one of the primary concerns is the need for more flexible, dispatchable energy resources to meet peak demand periods.

As municipal leaders, understanding these shifts is crucial for planning future energy strategies. With grid operators increasingly relying on renewable energy sources, there's an ongoing need to address the intermittency of such resources—solar and wind energy, while vital to a clean energy future, can be unpredictable. This underscores the importance of developing more adaptable energy management systems that can respond to changing electricity prices and grid conditions, as well as incorporating

artificial intelligence (AI) for energy forecasting and optimization.

### Prioritizing Energy Costs and Consumption in Municipal Planning

In addition to adapting to technological advancements, municipalities must prioritize energy costs and consumption during project planning. Energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives not only contribute to environmental goals but also help municipalities reduce operational expenses and stretch budgetary resources. By integrating energy-efficient technologies and practices into infrastructure projects, municipalities can lower long-term costs while supporting cleaner energy systems.

Planning with energy consumption in mind also helps mitigate the risks associated with fluctuating energy prices and demand surges. Projects that incorporate energy-conscious designs—such as smart streetlighting, energy-efficient public buildings, and optimized water treatment facilities—offer municipalities the dual benefits of economic savings and reduced carbon footprints. These considerations are essential as local governments strive to balance financial stewardship with environmental responsibility.

### Constellation's Commitment to Supporting Municipal Energy Goals

As the energy landscape continues to evolve, Constellation Energy remains committed to helping





municipalities achieve their energy goals. Whether your focus is on reducing emissions, managing energy costs, or adopting new technologies, Constellation offers tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of each municipality.

With expertise in energy procurement and cutting-edge technology, Constellation can help municipalities navigate the complexities of the modern energy grid. From creating customized energy plans to providing ongoing support for sustainable initiatives, Constellation is an invaluable partner in managing the future of municipal energy consumption.

## Moving Forward

As members of the Pennsylvania Municipal League, staying ahead of changes in the energy landscape is essential. Whether managing growing energy loads, adapting to regulatory changes, or exploring new technologies, municipalities have a critical role to play in shaping the future of energy. By keeping energy costs and consumption at the forefront of project planning, municipalities can ensure long-term sustainability and fiscal responsibility. Constellation

is here to help you meet those challenges, providing the tools and expertise necessary to navigate this changing terrain.

For more information or to explore how Constellation can help your municipality achieve its energy goals, reach out to Matt Shortall at [matthew.shortall@constellation.com](mailto:matthew.shortall@constellation.com) or 443-602-5755 and begin building your tailored energy strategy. Together, we can ensure a sustainable and cost-effective energy future for Pennsylvania's municipalities. □





# AI is Transforming Municipal Infrastructure into The Smart Future

BY CYNTHIA PHILLIPS, SCIENTIA CONSULTING LLC, MANAGING PARTNER

Imagine a city where potholes fill themselves before residents even notice them, traffic lights adjust in real time to prevent gridlock, and water systems detect leaks before they become expensive crises. This isn't sci-fi fantasy—it's the reality that artificial intelligence (AI) is making possible in municipalities across the country. The question isn't if AI will transform our cities and towns, but rather how quickly local leaders will embrace its potential to build smarter, more efficient, and more resilient communities.

Municipalities across Pennsylvania face the constant challenge of maintaining aging infrastructure while balancing limited budgets and growing demands from residents. Roads, bridges, water systems, and energy grids all require constant monitoring and upkeep. These tasks currently rely on routine inspections, reactive maintenance, and human judgment—methods that are both costly and prone to inefficiencies—yet are not easy to change. Transitioning to AI-driven solutions requires a well-thought-out strategy, investment, and workforce adaptation. However, the long-term benefits—including cost savings, improved efficiency, and enhanced public services—making it a challenge worth tackling.

## AI is making cities smarter in many ways including:

**Smarter roads and Traffic Management** through AI-powered traffic systems that can analyze real-time data from cameras, sensors, and GPS signals to optimize traffic flow and reduce congestion; and AI-enabled predictive maintenance that can detect early signs of wear and tear on roads and bridges, allowing municipalities to address issues before they become costly hazards. In Pittsburgh, AI-driven adaptive traffic signals have reduced travel time by 25% and vehicle emissions by 21%—a small change with significant impact.

**Water and Sewer Systems** are a growing concern with leaks and pipeline failures leading to wasted resources and high repair costs. AI-driven monitoring systems use sensors and machine learning to detect irregularities in water pressure and quality, alerting city officials before small leaks turn into major bursts. This approach can save cities millions in repair costs and reduce disruptions for residents.

**Public Safety** can leverage AI for crime prevention, emergency response, and disaster management. AI-powered surveillance and data analytics can help law enforcement predict crime hotspots, while smart 911 systems can prioritize emergency calls based on real-time conditions. AI can also assist in natural disaster planning by analyzing weather patterns, flood risks, and emergency response times, ensuring cities are better prepared when crises strike.

**Energy Efficiency and Sustainability** provides great opportunities to use AI for optimized energy usage in buildings, streetlights, and public facilities. Smart grids powered by AI can predict electricity demand and adjust distribution accordingly, reducing waste and lowering costs. Municipalities using AI-driven energy management have reported reduced energy bills by up to 20%, freeing up resources for other critical needs.

While AI offers enormous potential, municipalities may hesitate due to concerns about cost, implementation challenges, and workforce adaptation. However, AI solutions do not require wholesale infrastructure overhauls—many can be integrated into existing systems with minimal investment. Additionally, grants, public-private partnerships, and federal funding opportunities can help ease the financial burden. Education and training programs will be essential to ensure municipal employees can effectively use AI-powered tools.

Municipal leaders have a unique opportunity to harness AI to improve infrastructure, enhance quality of life, and future-proof their communities. The key is to start small—whether it's implementing AI-driven traffic management, smart water monitoring, or predictive maintenance—and scale up from there. Those who embrace AI now will lead the way in building more resilient, efficient, and livable communities.

So, Pennsylvania municipalities, the question isn't whether AI should be part of your infrastructure strategy—it's when. Will your city be ahead of the curve, or will it play catch-up while others reap the benefits? The future is knocking. Are you ready to answer? □







## Verizon in Pennsylvania: Enhancing Connection by Supporting Community Infrastructure and Expanding Educational Opportunities

BY VERIZON

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Verizon is committed to improving connectivity, increasing educational opportunities, and investing in broadband / network infrastructure across Pennsylvania. Our goal is to support progress and development in both urban and rural communities, ensuring that every resident has the resources and tools necessary for growth. Through our support of recreation centers and the expansion of the Verizon Innovative Learning (VIL) initiative in schools throughout the state, we are fostering education, digital inclusion, and infrastructure development that will have a lasting impact statewide.

### Enhancing Recreation Centers in Philadelphia

Recreational facilities serve as vital gathering spaces where young people can safely engage in activities and develop valuable skills. Recognizing the importance of these centers, Verizon is dedicated to enhancing digital connectivity and educational opportunities within these community hubs.

An exciting aspect of our broadband connectivity partnership with the city of Philadelphia, Verizon will provide high-speed internet at all 183 city-owned recreation centers by the end of 2026. Each recreation center will have broadband connections to accommodate community activities and immersive digital engagements such as online education and workforce training, tele-health video consultations and interactive eSports/gaming experiences. By expanding broadband access, we aim to promote digital inclusion, enhance digital literacy and create

better technology-driven opportunities for all Philadelphia communities, residents, and businesses.

Beyond strengthening internet connectivity in Philadelphia, Verizon will continue to invest in digital literacy and STEM education statewide through partnerships with Pennsylvania community organizations. Collaborations with local nonprofits will bring coding workshops, robotics sessions, and other technology driven programs to inspire youth interest in STEM fields.

### Expanding Verizon Innovative Learning Schools Program in Pennsylvania

Through Verizon Innovative Learning Schools, with nonprofit partner Digital Promise, we provide students and teachers with free devices, internet access, and innovative learning opportunities that help transform the learning experience, giving students the confidence to develop the skills, knowledge and capabilities to pursue opportunities in STEM. Teachers receive professional development and extensive support, empowering them to seamlessly harness the power of technology in their classrooms.

Schools across the state have already experienced positive transformations – nearly 3,700 students and 159 teachers in Pennsylvania have received resources through Verizon Innovative Learning. In 2025, the program will expand to include additional schools in Allentown. Collectively, Verizon Innovative Learning is driving impact through increased student engagement and helping teachers feel more confident in their



ability to leverage technology in the classroom. Through the holistic approach of Verizon Innovative Learning, we will continue to invest in transforming education to empower students to unlock their potential and build the skills they need to succeed in today's digital world.

## **Investing in Pennsylvania's Digital Infrastructure**

Expanding Pennsylvania's digital infrastructure, including 5G deployment, is essential for economic growth, innovation, and enhanced educational opportunities. A strong digital network is crucial for businesses, schools, and households to thrive in today's interconnected world.

Verizon's efforts extend from increasing broadband availability in cities to expanding internet access in rural areas. These initiatives open new possibilities for both residents and businesses, cultivating economic development and technological innovation across Pennsylvania's diverse landscape. Our investment in cutting-edge fiber-optic technology and 5G connectivity ensures that communities remain at the forefront of the digital revolution.

By expanding access to high-speed internet, we are helping to close the digital divide and provide opportunities for all. These advancements support city initiatives, improve public safety networks, and enhance telehealth capabilities, ultimately strengthening Pennsylvania's infrastructure for the future.

## **A Blueprint for Corporate-Community Collaboration**

At Verizon, we believe in the power of collaboration to drive community growth and well-being. By funding recreation centers, modernizing digital resources, and supporting educational programs, we are helping to create economic opportunities and reduce educational disparities. These initiatives benefit students, families, and the broader community by laying the foundation for Pennsylvania's future prosperity. Verizon's commitment to using technology to enhance learning and community development reflects our dedication to building a more inclusive and technologically advanced future for all Pennsylvanians. □



**PennPRIME**  
INSURANCE TRUSTS | A Service Program of The League



## Insurance Coverages for Construction and Infrastructure

**SUBMITTED BY ELIZABETH HENRY, TRUSTS MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER**

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### **Project Risk Advisory Services**

Form a clear understanding of project-specific risks to develop appropriate and effective risk transfer, management and/or mitigation strategies.

### **Subcontractor Default Insurance**

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### **Surety Bonds for Construction**

Gain financial security by using surety bonds to guarantee that contractors will perform the work and pay specified subcontractors, laborers and material suppliers.

For further information on PennPRIME contact:

Elizabeth Henry  
Trusts Member Services Manager  
[ehenry@pml.org](mailto:ehenry@pml.org)  
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# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ...



## Pennsylvania Municipal League

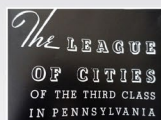


**Celebrating Strengthening Communities**

**This year is a big milestone for The League!  
We are celebrating 125 years of strengthening communities  
and we have exciting events planned so stay tuned...**

**1900**

### **The League of Cities of the Third Class**



October 1899, ten city mayors met and decided to form a League of Cities of the Third Class and Mayor Geise of York invited the group to hold its first meeting in York that following year.

First annual convention of The League was held in May of 1900.

**1940**

League office was set up at City Hall in Harrisburg.



**1955**

The League of Cities of the Third Class becomes the Pennsylvania League of Cities.



**1992**

Relocation of The League's office to its current location, one block from the Capitol.



Renamed to the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities.

**2018-Present**



**Pennsylvania Municipal  
League**

Rebranded The League with a new logo.

#StrengthThroughEngagement

Updated The League Mission, Vision and Values.

**2012**

Renamed to the Pennsylvania Municipal League.



**Pennsylvania Municipal  
League**

Celebrating Strengthening Communities



**Through the Years**

1900-2025



**Municipal  
Reporter**

# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . . .

## From Our Archives...1939

Due to the ravages of time, and flooding, The League has just a limited set of archived historical material and records. The earliest surviving records are from 1938-1939, and our staff found it interesting to see the main concerns that municipal leaders had at that time.

### Taxes

Local municipalities were fighting federal attempts to tax communities.

*November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1938- We go on record... "Condemning any attempt on the federal government to tax the revenue of the states of their municipalities and any attempt to tax state or municipal bonds, unless and until the consent of the state is first obtained through a proper constitutional amendment...copies of this resolution be sent to our United States Senators and to our Representatives in Congress, urging them to do all in their power to carry out our wishes."*

C. Ed Brown, City Clerk, New Castle, PA

Local municipalities were also grappling with ways to balance increasing budgets. Some cities were considering charging fees for sewer and garbage disposal.

Allentown began a series of public ads in the local newspaper urging the public to pay their taxes and highlighting the low cost and high importance of the municipal services the tax money covers. Tax rates per person were as follows:

Per person per year

- Police dept = \$2.19
- Fire protection = \$1.80
- Health services = \$.91
- Street lighting = \$.91

### Pensions

Pensions were a topic of discussion and debate: Who can establish pensions and how could they be transferred from one employer to another? Should boroughs and other municipal divisions be allowed to join the State Employees Retirement Fund? Should

first class townships be allowed to establish their own municipal pension systems?

*"This situation will increase in seriousness as and when economic conditions improve to the point when cities must meet keener competition from private employers to attract and retain competent personnel."*

### Parking

Municipal parking was an issue of discussion. In a national survey regarding municipal parking lots, 33 cities had municipally owned off-street parking lots, and eight others were considering them. Most of the cities did not charge a fee for parking, and the annual cost to the cities ranged from \$50 to \$200 for maintenance with no attendants.

*"While most municipalities cannot expect to provide free off-street parking space for all cars visiting their business districts, officials of many cities believe that municipal operation of parking lots will be necessary to assure permanency of location and reasonable rates for users."*

### Public Safety and Traffic

PA offered Traffic Officers' Training School at Pennsylvania State College. It was a 2-week course, limited to 50 participants, and open to all municipal officers. Cost of participation was \$50, which included registration fee, room, board, and transportation.

The 1939 League of Third-Class Cities Convention

Bethlehem hosted the 1939 Convention. 35 cities attended.

### Agenda

- Correspondence courses in accounting and finance for municipal officers
- Taxation of municipal salaries
- Use of maps to improve municipal administration
- New trailer ordinances as tourist seasons open
- State-wide retirement plans for local employees
- Parking meters as a new invention
- False fire alarms

## Change Over Time: The Evolution of Municipal Infrastructure

SUBMITTED BY SUSAN SCHRACK WOOD, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, THE LEAGUE



PA Trolley Museum Collection

Over the past century, municipal infrastructure has undergone profound changes, driven by rapid urbanization, technological advancements, and shifting social needs. From the introduction of new transportation networks to the development of sophisticated waste

management systems, these transformations have reshaped cities and communities across the globe. In this issue of *The Municipal Reporter*, we look at how transportation infrastructure has changed. Where we've been and where we're going.

### Public Transportation Networks: A full circle

As far back as 1688, Pennsylvania started public transit with a ferry going from Philadelphia to Camden. A century later, as the population of Philly expanded in nearly every direction, new solutions for getting around had to be explored. Early entrepreneurs brought the French idea of the horse-drawn omnibus to Philadelphia, operating hourly and charging from 3-10 cents per ride. This, along with the railroad, became the model for all future street-based public transportation development in the city. On the other side of the state, Pittsburgh and Erie were also wrestling with public transportation challenges. A city's growth was generally limited to how far a person could walk to work, so in order to expand and grow, a city had to have a reliable and effective way to move people farther distances. Pittsburgh began its horse-drawn carriage system in 1859. Erie started horse-drawn streetcars in 1868.

Streetcars and trolleys soon took over city public transportation, as they could serve a larger area, carry more people, and therefore turn a bigger profit. By 1876, Philly had one of the leading transportation systems in the nation. Up until this point in history, public transportation served primarily the middle and upper classes. To accommodate more people going farther distances, the subway system was born in the early 1900s. This, along with motorized buses, provided lower-cost, easily accessible, and efficient transportation.

City infrastructures really took off with the rise of the automobile in the mid-20th century. Public transit was no longer en vogue. As more and more people bought cars and started driving into and out of the cities, municipal infrastructures were increasingly designed around car-centric systems, with extensive networks of highways, bridges, and tunnels. The construction of parking garages and service stations became essential components of urban planning. Alongside this infrastructure boom came the ever-present issue of funding those projects and progress.

In recent decades, however, the focus is shifting back toward sustainable transport options. Although we're not generally reverting to horse-drawn options, bicycles are making a comeback. Bike lanes and trails are emerging in city planning, as well as electric scooters and ride-sharing services. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh are leaders in bike adaptation, as are Carlisle, State College, Harrisburg, Lancaster, York, Lebanon, Chambersburg, and Williamsport. An estimated 27,300 Pennsylvania residents use bicycles for commuting to and from work, and that extends beyond the cities and into towns, suburbs, and rural parts of the state. There has been a resurgence of investment in public transit systems, such as buses, light rail, and metro systems. As municipalities are capitalizing on new opportunities for public transit, or rethinking and reshaping their existing systems, there are some factors to consider:

**Public Transport as a Public Service:** Public transportation must be conceptualized as a public service. Certainly, transit systems must run efficiently and be able to cover their operating expenses, but passengers cannot foot the total bill. One of The



# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . . .

League's legislative priorities in 2025 is advocating for reliable local transportation infrastructure funding. The 2021 Transportation Revenue Options Commission identified a \$4 billion funding gap for local roads and bridges. As gas tax revenue declines, Pennsylvania must develop new funding sources to support transportation infrastructure. The condition of local roads and bridges impacts safety as well as the local and state economy.

Public transport should be well-funded, well-financed, and well-managed, with government oversight and investment to ensure coverage and affordability for all, including those living in rural areas. Rural regions have unique challenges with limited options, long travel times, low population densities, and increased cost for transportation. People who utilize public transportation can save an average of \$10,000 per year on fuel and parking costs; however, public transport must be frequent, reliable, accommodating, accessible, affordable, and safe. This means a variety of transportation modes. These must be designed with data-driven research and public input. Recalling the early decades of public transportation where only middle- and upper-class residents could take advantage of traveling, our new and future

systems must be designed differently. Community participation is essential for creating resilient, sustainable, and equitable transportation systems, ensuring that projects consider the needs of all residents. Finally, transportation must be integrated within the infrastructure of land-use planning. Dense, mixed-use land planning supports shorter trip distances, more accessible services, and financial sustainability, enhancing the overall effectiveness of public transport.

As we look toward the future, municipal infrastructure will continue to evolve in response to global challenges such as climate change, technological innovation, and population growth. Cities will increasingly rely on digital technologies, sustainable energy systems, and green infrastructure to address pressing issues like climate resilience, social equity, and the need for more efficient resource management.

The past 125 years of municipal infrastructure have laid the foundation for the modern cities we live in today, and as we face the challenges of tomorrow, the next 125 years will likely see even more groundbreaking changes that shape the cities of the future. □



## Pavement Preservation and Paving Contractor Everything for Roads

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# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . . .

## A Look Back at York: Our First Convention Host

**SUBMITTED BY JOHN BRENNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE LEAGUE**

It all began when York Mayor Frank Guise, sensing that smaller cities shared common concerns, invited a small group of city mayors to meet in York for a convention of the newly formed League of Third-Class Cities in 1900.

It's no surprise that York was a leader in forming the new League. York is a city of "firsts". It was in fact Yorktowne (as it was then known) where the 2nd Continental Congress met for nine months in 1777.

As the British captured Philadelphia, the delegates decided to move across the Susquehanna River to York's provincial courthouse on the square. During its time as our nation's first capital, the Congress adopted a national thanksgiving proclamation, thwarted the Conway Cabal, and adopted the Articles of Confederation. A sculpture of the Marquis De Lafayette exists today along West Market Street in front of the Gates House and Plough Tavern where it is believed that his toast to General George Washington derailed Conway's plan to replace Washington during a string of battle defeats.



John Adams referred to York in his correspondence as a dirty little town. Roads were basically muddy trails which had been forged out of the woods by native peoples a century or two earlier. Adams comment probably wasn't far off, especially when it rained, and the muddy trails became nearly impassable by foot or by buggy.

In another first, in 1816, members of the York community came together to form the York Water Company to protect the town from fire and to provide a clean, reliable supply of drinking water. This was the first water treatment plant in Pennsylvania and used wooden logs to transport water from the Codorus Creek to 35 homes. According to York Water Company's history, this early example of a public/private partnership is the nation's oldest investor-owned utility.

During the Civil War, the Confederate Army occupied the town and lowered the U.S. flag and replaced it with the Stars and Bars. Penn Park, one of the largest public spaces for a town its size, served as a field hospital and Union encampment following the Battle of Gettysburg.

A Black American abolitionist and a conductor on the Underground Railroad, William C. Goodridge was a prominent businessman in York in the mid 1800's. According to York's history, Goodridge and his wife, Evalina Wallace Goodridge, started with a barbershop and built a significant estate through diverse investments and enterprises. Goodridge developed the first 5-story building in York called Centre Hall and rented space to a tavern, a band and York's first newspaper. The town became an industrial powerhouse with factories and mills lining Codorus Creek. The creek, and York's location along the Northern Central Railway allowed it to grow as a



# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . . .

transportation and industrial hub. The borough became incorporated as a city in 1887, hosting the first convening of the new League of Third-Class Cities. Mayor Guise would be elected the League's first President.

Over the decades, York has been active in The League with numerous mayors serving on the Board of Directors and as Presidents of the Association. Mayor E.S. Hugentugler served as President of The League in 1919-1921 and Councilmember A.L. Hydeman in 1964-1966. Mayor William J. Althaus would serve as President in 1987-1988 (then go on to serve as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors). In recent years, Mayor John S. Brenner served as President in 2005-2006 and Mayor C. Kim Bracey served as President in 2017.

## York Then and Now

In The League archives, in the early 1940s, York's new City Hall was a major point of discussion and pride. The new City Hall would be designed so that "an automobile could be driven around the entire building for police or ambulance service" and to allow for light and air flow on all sides of the structure. It was designed in the colonial style to reflect York's history, but also included the newest codes in fireproofing, plumbing and electricity. Boasting a grand, marble portico with columns, the building had steam heating and allowed for air conditioning in the summer. Construction cost \$225,000. The program at the grand dedication ceremony detailed the hopes that the building was a sign of new, increased cooperation between York residents and their officials. "This is your building, and we trust that it will be the means of closer co-operation between the people of York and the men you have chosen to represent you."

With The League's advocacy and support, York's infrastructure has grown from cobblestones and wooden bridges to a sophisticated network of roads and highways. Interstate 83 and Route 30 connect the city to regional and national destinations. Public transportation has evolved with Rabbit Transit providing bus services, and the city's downtown has undergone significant revitalization, with improved roadways, pedestrian-friendly areas, parks, bike lanes, and green and blue ways such as the Codorus Greenway Project.

York's economy historically relied on agriculture, manufacturing, and trade. The York Peppermint Pattie was created in York, and Pfaltzgraff, Glatfelter Paper Company, Pullman Automobiles, Dentsply-Sirona, and Stauffer Biscuit Company all started in York. Now the city's businesses have diversified with healthcare, education, and technology sectors being primary employers.

York's cultural identity has evolved from its German and English settlers to include more diverse cultures. The city hosts a variety of events such as First Friday Art Walks, York Jazz Festival, and the York Fair. The Appell Center showcases a talented York Symphony Orchestra as well as contemporary performers.

The evolution of York from a colonial settlement to a modern city reflects the resilience and adaptability of its people. While its historical roots remain a source of pride, York continues to innovate and grow, balancing preservation with progress. □



William Goodridge House



York's "new" City Hall



# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ...

## A Look Back at Altoona: One of Our Original Members

SUBMITTED BY BONNIE DELOZIER, LEGISLATIVE AIDE TO MAYOR MATT PACIFICO, CITY OF ALTOONA

Looking back through The League archives, you'll see Altoona is frequently and prominently on the record for many issues. Altoona's city leaders served as League presidents twice in the last 125 years. The city has played significant roles in developing engineering, transportation, history, recreation and culture. Altoona was founded by The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) in 1848 to establish a hub for the Railroad. In 1852, the state's transportation department moved its headquarters from Harrisburg to Altoona, and by 1890, the railroad carried 20 million passengers. Immigrants from all over Europe moved to Altoona, doubling Altoona's population between 1900 and 1930, from

39,000 to 82,000. At that time, the Altoona shops employed over 16,000 people and the Pennsylvania Railroad carried almost 67 million tons of freight. By the early 1900's, PRR shops covered 242 acres with 122 buildings, and the Altoona Roundhouse was one of the largest in the world.

Altoona's role in history, particularly during the Civil War, was significant. Our City hosted the **The Loyal War Governors' Conference**, an important political event of the American Civil War. It was held at the Logan House Hotel in Altoona, Pennsylvania, on September 24 - 25, 1862. Thirteen Union state governors came together to discuss the war effort and to ultimately provide much-needed support for President Abraham Lincoln and his Emancipation Proclamation. The meeting was established and hosted by Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin, who was a staunch defender of the war effort and Lincoln Administration policies.

During that time Altoona played a role in the Underground Railroad, with private homes and churches serving as havens for those escaping slavery. Today the Allegheny Portage Railroad is listed on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

One notable figure of the day was Altoona native William Nesbit. Originally a barber by profession, Nesbit served Altoona as a notary public and the Blair County Republican candidate to the Pennsylvania State Convention. Nesbit was the first president of The Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, a chapter of the National Equal Rights League. In this capacity, he successfully lobbied US Congress, along with other congressional allies, into passing the 14th Amendment in 1868.

The PRR in Altoona maintained its status and importance during World War I, when the U.S. Government assumed control of all railroads.



Altoona Brewing Co. - making Horseshoe Curve Beer



# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . . .

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt visited Altoona in 1936 to talk about the railroad and its importance and resurgence. In WWII, PRR facilities, including the Altoona Shops, were on target lists of German saboteurs. Today, visitors to Altoona can learn about how trains have shaped the city, state and country by visiting the **Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona**.

Altoona is home to one of the eight recognized engineering marvels of the world, the Horseshoe Curve. The **Horseshoe Curve** is a three-track railroad curve, built over four years at a cost of \$2,495,000, without heavy equipment, only Irish immigrants "with picks and shovels, horses and drags." It opened in 1854, reducing the westbound grade to the summit of the Allegheny Mountains. Designated as a **National Historic Landmark** in 1966, people from around the world continue to visit, touring the museum and ascending to the top by funicular, or by climbing the 194 steps.



Horseshoe Curve

As railroad transportation began to flourish, ironmasters saw the potential for demand in their industry. The Allegheny Furnace, built in 1811, produced iron using charcoal until 1860, when coke was used. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991, and part of it remains standing as a Pennsylvania state historical marker.



FDR visits Altoona, 1936

Altoona was a hub for amusement. Originally opened as a trolley park in 1894, Lakemont Park is the 8th oldest amusement park in the United States. In 1902, Lakemont became home to the Leap-The-Dips, not only the oldest wooden roller coaster in the world, but the last remaining side friction figure-eight roller coaster in the world. In 1998, the roller coaster was restored to its original character, using special wood that could be bent to the same configuration as that of the wood used in 1902. Today, it is home to the annual Holiday Lights On The Lake, where over 40,000 vehicles visit each year to view over 1 million lights. Since 1991, it has been listed in the **National Register of Historic Places**.

Our City is home to one of the most beautiful theatres in Pennsylvania, **The Mishler Theatre**. Built by Isaac Mishler at a cost of around \$115,000 (over \$4 million today), the theatre opened its doors in February of 1906, with a seating capacity of 1,900, a 42-foot by 84-foot wide stage equipped with 2900 electrical lamps and 12 dressing rooms with hot and cold running water, a marvel for its time.

Because of its location on the PRR main line, Altoona was a convenient first stop for road shows coming out of New York and Philadelphia. Performances here were often a preview of opinions for future stops on the tour. If the show went well in Altoona, it



Leap the Dips Ride at Lakemont Park



# The League's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . . .

was a good sign. Famously, George Burns performed at the Mishler on the vaudeville circuit, but it was also host to other performers including the Ziegfield Folies, Harry Houdini, W. C. Fields, Ethel Barrymore, Al Jolson, Helen Hayes and the composer Rachmaninoff. In 1931, it was converted to a movie theatre.

In 1965, the Blair County Arts Foundation, with the Altoona Community Theatre, raised \$47,500 to purchase this historic playhouse in order to prevent it from being torn down and replaced with a parking lot. Recognized by the United States Department of the Interior and the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission for its historic, economic, and architectural significance, it was entered on the **National Register of Historic Places** in May 1973. Today it is the home of the Altoona Community Theatre and serves as a venue for other production company shows, touring shows and special events.

Like many cities, Altoona's downtown has had its successes and challenges and has undergone significant revitalization efforts. With beautiful architecture, such as Altoona's Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, three movie theaters, and a myriad of department stores and specialty stores, downtown Altoona flourished, especially in the 1950's and 60's. With the rise of suburbs, including the popularity of malls, Downtown Altoona experienced a decline, as did many cities throughout the state and nation. One of Mayor Matt Pacifico's strongest passions has been the revitalization of downtown Altoona. Today it is a modern, flourishing area with restoration of classic architecture, breweries, shops, an art museum and event venues. Our annual Spirit of Christmas Parade is broadcast live and the old McCrory's building is nearing completion as an indoor market for area vendors, with high end apartments in the upper floors. Parks and recreation are also helping transform the city. Altoona is proud home to 26 parks, including pickleball courts, and all-abilities park, and a community swimming pool, refurbished and revitalized since 2023. New parks continue to be planned and built.

The issue of blight has been strongly addressed by the City, and specifically by Mayor Pacifico. In the past two years alone, the City has aggressively pursued and penalized delinquent landlords and homeowners, significantly improving the look and condition of our properties. In 2022, **Operation Safe Space** was launched, removing tenants from uninhabitable properties and providing them with temporary housing until permanent housing can be found. With the cooperation of Blair County Community Action, area hotels and businesses, this initiative has been a success.

The City of Altoona has made a concerted effort to maintain and repurpose many buildings to provide housing, particularly for those of low to mid-income. A former grade school, former junior high school and a former hospital have all been made into senior living, income-based apartments. The City of Altoona Redevelopment Authority and Land Bank was recently awarded a Neighborhood Assistance Project Grant through DCED to build new housing in the city. As part of this effort, the city is working to acquire the land across the street from this housing for a new neighborhood playground.

Mayor Matt Pacifico has been the City's Mayor since 2014, having served as President of the Pennsylvania Municipal League in 2019 and a current member of The League Board of Directors. In 1972, Altoona hosted a Central District Meeting for The League, (then known as the Pennsylvania League of Cities), with Pittsburgh Mayor Pete Flaherty speaking on revenue sharing. The discussions, forums and shared knowledge provided by the Pennsylvania Municipal League were, and are valuable in bringing together ideas, challenges and successes of Pennsylvania cities, to the benefit of all Mayors in attendance. □





# League Leaders Through History

1900 <b>Mayor Geise, York</b>	1966-1967 <b>Mayor George S. Smith, Easton</b>	1996-1997 <b>Mayor Joyce A. Savocchio, Erie</b>
1901 <b>Mayor Depinet, Erie</b>	1967-1968 <b>Mayor H. Gordon Payrow, Jr., Bethlehem</b>	1997-1998 <b>Mayor Eugene C. Pacsi, Farrell</b>
1902-190? <b>Mayor J.F. Laedlein, Williamsport</b>	1968-1969 <b>Councilmember Richard H. Biddle, New Castle</b>	1998-1999 <b>Mayor Edward G. Rendell, Philadelphia</b>
1905-1907 <b>Mayor William H. Berry, Chester</b>	1969-1970 <b>Mayor John L. Worrilow, Lebanon</b>	1999-2000 <b>Mayor Thomas F. Goldsmith, Easton</b>
1908-1910 <b>Mayor Harry L. Lusk, New Castle</b>	1970-1971 <b>Mayor Michael Close, Pottsville</b>	2000-2001 <b>Council President William F. McLaughlin, Chambersburg</b>
1911-1912 <b>Mayor, City of Wilkes-Barre, elected Nov., 1911</b>	1971-1972 <b>Mayor Basil C. Scott, Sharon</b>	2001-2002 <b>Mayor Timothy Fulkerson, New Castle</b>
1913-1914 <b>Mayor F.M. Graff, Meadville</b>	1972-1973 <b>Mayor Peter F. Flaherty, Pittsburgh</b>	June 02-Feb. 03 <b>Mayor Donald T. Cunningham, Jr., Bethlehem</b>
1914-1917 Lost information in 1972	1973-1974 <b>Mayor Eugene J. Peters, Scranton</b>	Feb. 2003-2004 <b>Mayor Kirk Wilson, Carlisle</b>
1917-1918 <b>Mayor Miles B. Kitts, Erie</b>	1974-1975 <b>Mayor Louis J. Tullio, Erie</b>	2004-2005 <b>Councilmember Roland R. "Bud" Mertz, Greensburg</b>
1918-1919 <b>Mayor A.L. Richenbach, Allentown</b>	1975-1976 <b>Mayor Frank C. Lefevre, Butler</b>	2005-2006 <b>Mayor John S. Brenner, York</b>
1919-1921 <b>Mayor E.S. Hugentugler, York</b>	Jan. 76-June 77 <b>Mayor Joseph S. Daddona, Allentown</b>	2006-2007 <b>Mayor Christopher A. Doherty, Scranton</b>
1921-1922 <b>Mayor A.M. Hoagland, Williamsport</b>	June 77-Jan. 78 <b>Mayor Herbert Pfuhl, Johnstown</b>	2007-2008 <b>Mayor John D. W. Reiley, Pottsville</b>
1922-1923 <b>Mayor James M. Yekle, Bethlehem</b>	Jan . 78-June 78 <b>Mayor Richard M. Scott, Lancaster</b>	June 08- Oct. 08 <b>Mayor Robert Anspach, Lebanon</b>
1923-1924 <b>Mayor, City holding 1924 convention</b>	1978-1980 <b>Mayor Guy Mammolite, Franklin</b>	Oct. 08-2010 <b>Mayor John Callahan, Bethlehem</b>
1924-1925 <b>Mayor W.E. Drumheller, Sunbury</b>	1980-1981 <b>Mayor Michael Salvatore, Jeannette</b>	2010-2011 <b>Councilmember Clifford "Kip" Allen, Edinboro</b>
1925-1926 <b>Mayor James G. Harvey, Hazleton</b>	1981-1982 <b>Mayor DiAnn Stuempfle, Lock Haven</b>	June 2011-Dec. 2011 <b>Mayor Thomas McMahon, Reading</b>
1926-1927 <b>Mayor Daniel L. Hart, Wilkes-Barre</b>	1982-1983 <b>Mayor Richard S. Calguiri, Pittsburgh</b>	Jan. 2012-2013 <b>Mayor Richard Vilello, Jr., Lock Haven</b>
1927-1951 <b>Walter E. Greenwood, Solicitor, Coatesville</b>	June-Dec. 83 <b>Mayor Don Griffith, Lebanon</b>	2013-2014 <b>Mayor Ed Pawlowski, Allentown</b>
1951-1953 <b>Mayor John J. Mullen, Clairton</b>	Jan. 84-June 85 <b>Mayor Arthur E. Morris, Lancaster</b>	2014-2015 <b>Mayor Michael Nutter, Philadelphia</b>
1953-1954 <b>Mayor Kendig C. Bare, Lancaster</b>	1985-1986 <b>Mayor W. Wilson Goode, Philadelphia</b>	2015-2016 <b>Mayor J. Richard Gray, Lancaster</b>
1954-1955 <b>Mayor Edward A. DeCarbo, New Castle</b>	July 86-March 87 <b>Mayor Karen Miller, Reading</b>	2016-2017 <b>Mayor William Peduto, Pittsburgh</b>
1955-1956 <b>Mayor Earl E. Schaffer, Bethlehem</b>	March 87-1988 <b>Mayor William J. Althaus, York</b>	2017 <b>Mayor C. Kim Bracey, York</b>
1956-1957 <b>Mayor Edward A. DeCarbo, New Castle</b>	1988-1989 <b>Mayor Salvatore J. Panto, Jr., Easton</b>	2017-2019 <b>Mayor Salvatore J. Panto, Jr., Easton</b>
1957-1958 <b>Mayor Walter Schweppe, Butler</b>	1989-1990 <b>Councilmember Brian J. O'Neill, Philadelphia</b>	2019-2020 <b>Mayor Matthew Pacifico, Altoona</b>
1958-1959 <b>Councilmember Joseph S. Martin, Altoona</b>	1990-1991 <b>Mayor Howard T. Gierling, Oil City</b>	2020-2021 <b>Councilmember Derek Green, Philadelphia</b>
1959-1960 <b>Mayor Arthur J. Gardner, Erie</b>	July 91-Dec. 91 <b>Mayor Jessie Bloom, Williamsport</b>	2021-2022 <b>Mayor Danene Sorace, Lancaster</b>
1960-1961 <b>Mayor Thomas H. Levering, Williamsport</b>	Jan. 92-June 93 <b>Mayor Sophie Masloff, Pittsburgh</b>	2022-2023 <b>Mayor Michael Lombardo, Pittston</b>
1961-1962 <b>Mayor Joseph W. Barr, Jr., Oil City</b>	1993-1994 <b>Mayor Kenneth Smith, Bethlehem</b>	2023-2024 <b>Mayor Douglas Baker, Franklin</b>
1962-1963 <b>Milton Margolis, Solicitor, Uniontown</b>	1994-1995 <b>Mayor Joseph J. Bendel, Jr., McKeesport</b>	
Aug-Sept 64 <b>Mayor Jack Gross, Allentown</b>	June 95-Dec. 95 <b>Mayor Warren Haggerty, Reading</b>	
1964-1966 <b>Councilmember A.L. Hydeman, Jr., York</b>	Jan. 96-June 96 <b>Councilmember Brian J. O'Neill, Philadelphia</b>	

# PSATC President's Message



DENNIS ARTHUR  
COMMISSIONER  
TINICUM TOWNSHIP



[firstclasstownshipa.org](http://firstclasstownshipa.org)

What does the average citizen think of when they hear the word “infrastructure”? Do they think of roads? Bridges? Stormwater? Utilities? If one thinks of all these examples, they would be right. Infrastructure is the literal foundation on which communities are built. It is the roads that allow one to get to and from their homes. The electric, gas, and water utilities that serve each household. The sewer or wastewater facilities that remove and treat the water we use in our homes. As a Commissioner, I often hear residents lament, “I pay taxes, what am I paying for?” Well, two essential services taxes pay for are police (for those communities with their own police departments) and infrastructure - to repair and maintain roads, remove wastewater from homes, light the streets and sidewalks, and bring water, electricity, and gas service to all users.

And, like everything else that ages and requires maintenance, the older our infrastructure gets the more expensive it becomes to keep operating. Infrastructure is where much of our tax dollars go and why it sometimes becomes necessary to increase the amount of tax dollars we collect.

The PSATC Executive Committee finalized the association’s 2025 Legislative Priorities this month ([See page 45](#)). Two priorities seek to modernize the sources of tax revenue for local government and cut the expenses of the outdated public notice advertising requirements. It is important that each township discuss the 2025 priorities with your State Representative and Senator. The General Assembly’s support of these issues would provide additional revenue at the local level to support municipal operations, including the ever important, maintenance of infrastructure.

Sincerely,

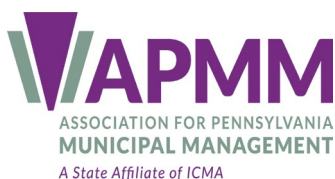
*Dennis R. Arthur Sr.*

Dennis Arthur

# APMM President's Message



**DAN SANTORO**  
**MANAGER**  
**CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP**



**APMM.net**

*Greetings Municipal Managers and Elected Officials!*

*As I write this article on February 3, our famous Pennsylvania prognosticator, Punxsutawney Phil, has predicted another six weeks of winter. I'm sure most of us municipal types are already thinking about our spring projects and how we are going to roll them out, but thanks to Phil's shadow, it looks like the only thing we'll be rolling out is more salt on our roads!*

*Thinking about roads and salt, this month's magazine focuses on Infrastructure. As municipal officials, we are often tasked with balancing immediate operational needs with long-term planning. One of the most critical aspects of our work is ensuring that our communities' infrastructure remains safe, efficient, and sustainable. Roads, bridges, water systems, and public facilities are the backbone of our municipalities, and proactive infrastructure management is essential to maintaining the quality of life for our residents and businesses.*

*There is a cost of inaction. Deferred maintenance and reactive infrastructure management can lead to costly emergency repairs, service disruptions, and even public safety risks. Studies show that every dollar spent on preventive maintenance can save municipalities multiple dollars on future repairs.*

*Whether it's aging water mains, deteriorating roadways, or outdated public buildings, municipalities that fail to invest in their infrastructure today will inevitably face higher costs down the road.*

*Securing funding for infrastructure projects can be a challenge, but municipalities have a range of tools at their disposal. Federal and state grants, public-private partnerships, and innovative financing mechanisms such as infrastructure banks can provide critical resources. In Butler County where I work, our County Commissioners created an infrastructure bank and in the five years since its creation, it has funded two dozen projects totaling \$60 million dollars that would have been unlikely to be completed if not for its existence. Working collaboratively with regional agencies can also enhance project efficiency and funding opportunities.*

*Infrastructure investment is not just a budget item, it's an investment in our community's future. As municipal managers, we have a responsibility to champion forward-thinking infrastructure planning that prioritizes sustainability, resilience, and fiscal responsibility. By taking a proactive approach today, we can ensure that our communities thrive for generations to come.*

*On the APMM front, by the time this article is printed, we will have just completed what I am sure will have been another outstanding program at the APMM Executive Development Workshop in Bedford. I*



want to give a big shout-out to our colleague Stephanie Teoli Kuhls, the Chair of the Professional Development Committee for pulling the program together as well as her years of service and commitment, not only to this committee but to APMM and the profession in general. I am sure many of you know Stephanie is moving on to the consulting world in the coming months, so if you see Stephanie, take a moment to thank her, and if anyone is interested in filling the huge shoes that will be open on the program committee with Stephanie's departure, please let me know.

Finally, if you haven't done so already, be sure to sign up for the APMM Annual Conference in Lancaster May 19-21. Hope to see you all there!

Stay warm!

Sincerely,



Dan Santoro

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## APMM News . . .

### 2025 APMM Executive Development Conference — One for the Books!

**SUBMITTED BY MARY COSTIK, LEAGUE MEETING MANAGER**

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The 2025 APMM Executive Development Conference, held at the historic Omni Bedford Springs Resort on February 6-7, successfully attracted 64 total attendees. This two-day event was a hub of learning, networking, and development tailored specifically for professionals involved in public service and community management.

One of the defining features of the conference was its stellar lineup of 11 excellent speakers. We were fortunate to host the practical and motivating Alicia Rainwater from The Center for Generational Kinetics, LLC. She brought her wealth of knowledge to each generation as team members, offering data-driven insights to help leaders make informed decisions and strategies for driving results through generational collaboration.

This presentation not only informed but also ignited engaging discussions among attendees to

kick off the conference. Thank you to the Delaware Valley Trusts for their continued support of APMM's training program.

A panel of presenters from different age groups shared their perspectives on how generational differences influence the workplace dynamics, management styles and team productivity. This group offered insights on fostering, understanding and collaboration across age groups. The session was moderated by Amanda Seroock, Manager, Concord Township, and speakers included: Julie Bastianini, Manager, Marshall Township; Rafe Kuhls, Special Projects Assistant to CAO, Upper Darby Township; Robert Pellegrino, Manager, Northampton Township; and Gregory Primm, Manager, City of Lower Burrell.

Attendees heard from Marie Conley, a consultant focusing on team development, about unlocking

the potential of the multi-generational team. Participants discovered how to recognize individual strengths and the power of making big things happen by making little things count.

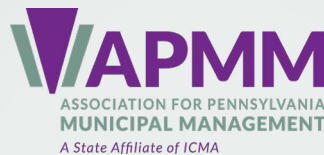
Dr. Lauren Miltenberger, an Assistant Teaching Professor & Nonprofit Coordinator from Villanova University, wrapped up the conference on Friday morning, providing insights into nonprofit strategies which were particularly well received.

Engagement was evident throughout the entire event. This dynamic interaction indicated a lively and participative atmosphere, making the event even more impactful for all involved.

A big shoutout to the APMM Professional Development Committee for their outstanding

efforts in organizing another great series of trainers for the conference!

In conclusion, the 2025 APMM Executive Development Conference was an unequivocal success, marked by engaging sessions, a formidable speaker lineup, high levels of attendee satisfaction, and ample networking opportunities. With passionate attendees and a focus on generational collaboration in public service, the association successfully fostered valuable connections and sparked meaningful conversations. This event not only set a new benchmark for future executive development conferences but left attendees eager for the next opportunity to collaborate and learn together! □



## **Registration is Now Open for the 2025 Annual Conference!**

**Dates: May 19-21, 2025**

**Location: Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square**

**Don't miss our premier event featuring cutting-edge industry insights and unparalleled networking opportunities.**

**[Click Here to Register and Learn More](#)**

# Legislative Status Report STATE



PREPARED BY AMY STURGES, LEAGUE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – ADVOCACY – [asturges@pml.org](mailto:asturges@pml.org)

KAITLIN ERRICKSON, GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS MANAGER – [kerrickson@pml.org](mailto:kerrickson@pml.org)

*All legislation can be found on the General Assembly's website:*

[legis.state.pa.us](http://legis.state.pa.us)

## Legislative Update

### Governor Shapiro's 2025/26 Proposed Budget

Governor Shapiro gave his 2025/26 budget proposal to a joint session of the General Assembly on Tuesday, February 4. The proposal increases spending by 8% to \$51.4 billion. The state is currently working with a \$3 billion surplus and \$7 billion is its Rainy Day Fund. This proposal spends the surplus and \$1.6 billion of the Rainy Day Fund.

In terms of new revenue, the Governor, again this year, proposed legalizing and regulating both skill games and adult-use cannabis. Cannabis revenue would come from a 20% tax at wholesale, plus licensing fees. The proposal estimates \$536.5 million from cannabis for 25/26, with sales beginning in January of 2026.

Under his proposal, skill games would be treated similarly to video gaming terminals and taxed at 52% of gross revenue, with 47% going to the General Fund and 5% to the Lottery. A fixed local share assessment of gaming revenue is contemplated. Taxes and licensing of skill games is estimated to bring in \$369 million for 25/26.

Education is once again the winner in terms of priority funding. To help close the \$4.5 billion adequacy funding gap for poor school districts, the Governor proposes an additional \$500 million. Basic education and school infrastructure would also receive increases. Mental health and school safety continue to be funded with \$111 million proposed.

Public transit funding would see an additional \$290 million by increasing the percentage of the Sales Tax revenue going to transit from 7.68% to 8.43%. There is





also a continued reduction in Motor License Fund money being diverted to the State Police, providing \$750 million additional dollars for road and bridge projects.

The Governor continues to implement his ten-year economic development strategy in this budget with a “major reorganization” of DCED to form a Business PA Team for focused, strategic business investment. He also contemplates modification of a number of business tax credits to promote job creation, innovation, and economic growth. Business tax cuts and modernization efforts are estimated to realize \$10.5 billion in savings for businesses.

Housing initiatives are highlighted in this budget, including the release of the Governor’s Housing Action Plan in the fall of 2025. Specifically, the budget proposes \$50 million to DCED for restoration of aging housing stock; \$10 million to support first-time homebuyers with closing costs; an increase in the PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Program (PHARE) which would bring program funds to \$110 million by 2028/29; a funding increase of \$1 million for the State Planning Board so it can provide housing-specific technical assistance to municipalities; and the development of an opt-in Housing Ready Community designation program.

Under public safety and crime prevention, the budget proposes \$14.5 million to train 432 new state troopers. The Commission on Crime and Delinquency is set to receive an additional \$10 million investment in its Building Opportunity through Out of School Time (BOOST) program; as well as another \$10 million for Violence Intervention and Prevention. Fire companies would have access to a new \$30 million in competitive grants for recruitment, retention, equipment, and operating needs. Additionally, a pilot program would incentivize fire company cooperation. The Governor also mentioned covering cancer screenings for firefighters.

The budget continues the Governor’s REMAP program aimed at reviewing programs throughout all agencies and eliminating inefficiencies. It also continues the Permit Fast Track to process permits and licenses quickly and the SPEED Act which moves projects through the environmental review process more quickly.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committee will hold hearings over the next month to discuss budget priorities with agency staff. The 25/26 budget is due June 30.

For all things budget related, please visit the [Office of the Budget website](#).

## Cosponsor Memos

### Statewide E-Scooter Program

Representative Emily Kinhead has announced her intention to reintroduce legislation allowing municipalities to voluntarily authorize an e-scooter program in their community.

### Playground Safety Act

Representative G. Roni Green has announced her intention to introduce legislation establishing a Statewide Advisory Council on Playground Safety to provide recommendations for the regulations and standards for playgrounds and their safety plans.

### Tool to Redevelop Blighted or Vacant Property

Representative Abigail Salisbury has announced her intention to reintroduce legislation amending Title 68 to allow a municipality to designate a blighted or abandoned property as available for acquisition by a land bank.

## Legislation Affecting Local Government

### Park Protected Bike Lanes

#### *Senate Transportation Committee, February 4, 2025*

[House Bill 291 \(PN 226\)](#), introduced by Representative Mary Jo Daley, would amend Title 75 (Transportation) allowing for the establishment of park protected pedestrian plazas and bike lanes by repealing current law that requires vehicles to park within 12 inches of a curb. This bill would not mandate that pedestrian plazas or bike lanes be established.

### Protecting Local Governments from a Newspaper’s Failure to Advertise

#### *First Consideration in the House, February 5, 2025*

[House Bill 424 \(PN 399\)](#), introduced by Representative Brett Miller, would amend Titles 45 (Legal Notices) and 65 (Public Officials) regarding the satisfaction of the legal advertising requirement.

Under this legislation, a political subdivision or municipal authority that submits an advertisement to a newspaper of general circulation and simultaneously posts a redundant advertisement on its website would meet the legal advertising requirements in the event the newspaper fails to publish the public notice as requested. A political

subdivision or municipal authority holding a meeting under the redundant advertisement would be required to enter into the record a copy of the advertisement and proof that the advertisement was purchased in a timely fashion.

## OSHA for Public Sector Employees

*First Consideration in the House, February 5, 2025*

**House Bill 308 (PN 261)**, introduced by Representative Patrick Harkins, would establish the PA Occupational Safety and Health Review Board within the Department of Labor and Industry and would extend OSHA safety rules to public employers, including the Commonwealth, political subdivisions, public transit systems, and non-profit organizations.

## Local Government Advertising Flexibility

*Senate Local Government Committee, January 29, 2025*

**Senate Bill 194 (PN 144)**, introduced by Senator Doug Mastriano, would amend Title 45 (Legal Notices) providing local governments with options for advertising public notices.

This bill would authorize local governments to choose from a menu of advertising options, including: a newspaper generally circulated in the local government's county; the public website of the local government; the public website of a newspaper; or a website with a primary purpose for posting public notice advertisements.

If a local government wishes to utilize one or more of the methods listed in the bill, it would be required to adopt a resolution declaring its intent and listing the new advertising methods. The local government would also be required to provide public notice of the adopted resolution, to post a copy of each advertisement at its principal office or building, and to retain a copy of each notice for at least three years.

The bill would not relieve local governments of the requirement to advertise certain notices in a legal journal. □

## House and Senate Session Days 2025

### House

March 17-19, 24-26

April 7-9, 22-24

May 5-7, 12-14

### Senate

March 24-26, 31

April 1-2

May 5-7, 12-13

*\*reminder - session dates are subject to change*



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Simply **whitelist the Mailerlite domain- mlsend.com** and you will be able to receive communications from us as part of your member benefits. Please share this information.





Pennsylvania Municipal  
**League**

Celebrating Strengthening Communities



# 2025 Legislative Priorities

## Municipal Finance

### Modern Options for Revenue

The Commonwealth's 1965 local tax structure no longer meets today's expenses. To prevent fiscal distress, the General Assembly must expand proven taxing options to all municipalities.

Specifically:

- authorize an increase in the Local Services Tax to \$156 a year.
- eliminate the rate cap on the Earned Income Tax.
- authorize the Payroll Tax.

### Modern Methods for Public Notice Advertising

The archaic mandate to advertise public notices in print media no longer promotes transparency and good government. The high cost of placing ads, the reduction in daily print newspapers and the shuttering of newspapers has resulted in less transparency, unworkable deadlines and wasted taxpayer dollars. A menu of advertising options is a far more efficient way to serve the public in today's online news environment.

## Community Development and Infrastructure

### Affordable Housing

The League commends Governor Shapiro for elevating the housing crisis to a statewide priority. The League views housing as a statewide issue with localized solutions from both the public and private sector. Local government must be at the table as solutions are developed through the Housing Action Plan and through legislation.

### Reliable Local Transportation Infrastructure Funding

The 2021 Transportation Revenue Options Commission identified a \$4 billion funding gap for local roads and bridges. As gas tax revenue and, in turn, municipal liquid fuels funds decline, the Commonwealth must develop new funding sources to reliably and adequately support transportation infrastructure. The condition of local roads and bridges impacts not only public safety, but also the local and state economy. Any new funding sources must maintain the historic local share of 20 percent.

## Public Safety

### Modern Speed Timing Technology

The current technology that municipal police officers are authorized to use to control vehicular speed on local roads is obsolete and wholly ineffective. Radar, LIDAR and automated cameras are proven technologies that if authorized for all municipalities, can curb speeding and save lives.

### Sustainable Public Safety Services

Public safety is an essential service of local government. The ability to recruit and retain first responders is an ongoing crisis that jeopardizes the health, safety and welfare of all.

Police officer candidates are steadily decreasing. This impacts public safety and the safety of the officers themselves. State level incentives to bring qualified people to the profession are needed.

Volunteer Fire and EMS services have been at crisis levels for years, and there is still a valid concern that when needed, no one will respond. State level incentives are needed, including incentives to achieve voluntary consolidation. It is also important to properly fund, reimburse and support ambulance services so they can continue to serve our communities.





# PSATC 2025 Legislative Priorities

The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners (PSATC) is a non-partisan association representing the Commonwealth's first class townships. Over 1.5 million citizens live in first class townships throughout the Commonwealth.

## Public Safety

### Local Use of Radar

Speeding in neighborhoods is a paramount public safety concern for local elected officials, as it is the number one complaint from residents. Radar is a reliable, accurate and efficient public safety tool, unlike the antiquated VASCAR and ENRADD systems currently in use by local police. PSATC strongly supports the authorization for local police to use radar.

### Delivery of Fire and EMS Services

The delivery of the basic public safety services is in crisis. As organizations struggle to survive,

townships and their residents who rely on these services are at risk of ambulances that don't arrive and too few firefighters to adequately respond and protect lives and property. PSATC supports legislation that will promote sustainable delivery of emergency services, including state funding; authorization for EMS authorities; state tax credits; recruitment and retention initiatives; incentives for voluntary coordination of services; and direct payment to ambulance companies for services rendered.

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## Codification of the First Class Township Code

With the guidance of the Local Government Commission and a working group from PSATC, the Code was updated by Act 96 of 2020. Incorporating

the Code into the PA Consolidated Statutes is the next step, which PSATC is looking to achieve in 2025 again with assistance from the Commission.

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## Mandate Relief

### Public Notice Advertising

Making public information accessible should be efficient and affordable for those seeking the information, as well as for those providing it. As printed newspapers continue to decline in number and frequency, the current mandate to exclusively use print media for advertising public notices is inefficient and wasteful.

PSATC supports use of modern methods of public notice. Whether through a publicly accessible statewide depository, a municipal website or a newspaper with county circulation, the emphasis must be on increasing access to public information while saving tax dollars.

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## Municipal Fiscal Health

### Modernization of Municipal Revenue Tools

Revenue tools authorized in the 1960's are not meeting the needs of twenty-first century municipalities. While the expense of providing necessary and expected services has risen over the last 50 years, the tools to meet those expenses have remained unchanged. This friction creates fiscal pressures leading to fiscal distress. Modern townships need modern tools and the flexibility to put those tools into action.

PSATC supports updating Act 511, The Local Tax Enabling Act, to give all municipalities a level playing field of a menu of local taxing options.

Please contact Amy Sturges, Deputy Executive Director - Advocacy at [asturges@pml.org](mailto:asturges@pml.org) with any questions.



# Legislative Status Report FEDERAL

**NLC** NATIONAL  
LEAGUE  
OF CITIES  
CITIES STRONG TOGETHER



## Ready and Resilient: Building Better Cities, Towns and Villages for the Future

BY STEVE PATTERSON, ATHENS OHIO MAYOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE NLC

This year, the National League of Cities begins its second century of service to America's cities, towns and villages. As the world grows more and more interconnected, local leaders are working together to ensure that communities are ready and resilient for the future, and that no city, town or village gets left behind in the process. We do that by building partnerships and finding innovative solutions to address all of the challenges our communities face – whether it's waning housing supply, increasing incivility, economic challenges, or the growing threat of extreme weather.

As the mayor of Athens, Ohio, with big ambitions for my own city, I understand just how incredible our visions for our communities can be. I also know that it is impossible for us to do this work alone, which is where NLC comes in. No one can predict what the next few years or decades will look like

for our cities, but we can do our best to prepare for whatever challenges or opportunities come our way – together. Our success requires partnering with each other to ensure every community is ready and resilient for the future that lies ahead, doing the work together to build better cities, towns and villages.

### **Lifting Up Small and Underserved Communities**

As we enter the second quarter of the 21st century, we will ensure that no city, town or village feels left behind, overlooked or underestimated. With more than 60% of U.S. residents living in a municipality with a population of less than 50,000 people, it is safe to say that many of the places we call home sometimes feel like they have been forgotten by decision-makers in Washington.

This year, we will build on our recent success and continue to focus on providing the technical assistance that small towns and cities need to help them compete. The free trainings that the Local Infrastructure Hub has provided for the last several years are immensely popular, because they help communities that have previously been overlooked for federal grants win and utilize them effectively today (including in my own city of Athens, where we won a \$16.7 grant to increase electric vehicle infrastructure throughout the region). The next step is to ensure that every community that has won a federal grant now has the tools and resources it needs to successfully manage it, implementing federally-funded projects as effectively as possible, ensuring they break ground and deliver the promises of prosperity.

Furthermore, residents in small towns across America are looking for economic investment and assistance to help get their transformative business ideas off the ground. NLC already has proven programming in place to help support those efforts — in programs like the [Southern Cities Economic Initiative](#) and the [Economic Mobility Rapid Grant Program](#), which both work to overcome poverty, increase economic mobility and promote business development.

### **Cultivating the Next Generation of Local Leaders**

Since leaving my position as a professor at Ohio University to become the mayor of Athens, people often ask me if I miss teaching. What I usually say in response is that I just teach differently now. As local elected officials, we are chosen to lead our communities and to do the work to make them better places to live. A huge part of that responsibility is to help grow and shape the youth in our communities. Collectively, we need to both mentor the young people in our cities and to model the kind of civil leadership that that brings

communities together. This year, I'm excited to uplift and support programs that help us build the bench of the next generation of local leaders and pay it forward — which you'll hear a lot more about at this March's Congressional City Conference.

### **Collaborating on Local Solutions to Global Challenges**

Finally, throughout my career, I've been fortunate to live and to spend time in cities and towns not just throughout America, but across the entire world. When I interact with local leaders from other cities around the globe, what astounds me the most is just how common all of our challenges are. As both a former college professor and an NLC veteran, I know exactly the power that exchanging knowledge and sharing best practices can have in finding solutions to our toughest challenges. This year, we're going to focus on building out a strategy that allows us to take this kind of knowledge-sharing and convening power — NLC's bread and butter — across borders.

In this next year as president of the National League of Cities, I cannot wait to see all that we can accomplish together as we embark on our next century of service to America's communities. This year, we will continue to grow NLC's influence as the leading voice for local leaders and to develop the innovative solutions that our communities need, so they are **ready and resilient** for the future. I am so thrilled to get to work on this together. □



# Public Finance

## PLGIT'S INVESTMENT ADVISER AND ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTING FOR A CHANGING ECONOMIC CLIMATE

BY MATT CONLIN, INSTITUTIONAL SALES & RELATIONSHIP MANAGER, PFM ASSET MANAGEMENT, A DIVISION OF U.S. BANCORP ASSET MANAGEMENT, THE INVESTMENT ADVISER AND ADMINISTRATOR TO PLGIT

Municipal investment shares some key principles with sound architectural practices; as both need a solid foundation in order to succeed, despite being distinctly different fields. Both require a thoughtful balance between long-term vision and practicality. In architecture, this means creating designs that are both aesthetically pleasing and functional, while also considering long-term stability, and the needs of its users. Similarly, Local government investing involves selecting assets that not only have the capacity to yield future growth but are also well-aligned with a local government's financial goals, safety, and short- and long-term plans.

Both disciplines also value adaptability; architects must respond to changing client needs and environmental conditions, while investors must navigate evolving economic landscapes. Ultimately, success in both

areas depends on a strategic blend of attention to detail, analysis, and long-term planning. By understanding and applying these principles, both architects and investors can hope to achieve sustainable and beneficial outcomes.

### Four Pillars of Local Government Investing

You've heard of the Four Pillars of Investing, but have you heard of the Four Pillars of Local Government Investing? PFM Asset Management (PFMAM\*), PLGIT's investment adviser and Administrator, offers recommendations to our investors built around what we refer to as Four Pillars of Local Government Investing. Those pillars address: **Sound Investment Policy Development, Short-Term Investments, Long-Term Investments, and Bond Proceeds.**

In this first part of a four-part series, we will focus on the

importance of the first topic: having a strong investment policy.

### Solid Foundation: Creating a Strong Investment Policy

Above everything, local governments should have a formal policy to articulate the objectives, parameters and limits for their funds, and each should review its policy regularly. Just as an architect uses a set of blueprints to guide the construction of a strong, safe, functional structure, so should a local government use its investment policy as a reference for its funds.

PFMAM believes this kind of investment policy should be structured to place the emphasis on the following:

- **Safety of principal** — Public funds come from taxpayers and are intended for essential services like safety, infrastructure, maintenance, and

planning. Residents expect their contributions to be managed prudently, so ensuring the safety of a municipality's investments builds public trust and confidence. Mismanagement or misuse of funds can lead to reduced service quality and loss of that trust.

At the same time, transparent and accountable practices not only ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards but also maximize the impact of every dollar spent. Ultimately, prioritizing fund safety – such as understanding the security of the institutions and products in which public funds are held -- allows local governments to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, support long-term community development and provides the structure necessary for those governments to ensure that public resources are used for their intended purposes.

- **Liquidity of funds –** Whenever investment decisions are made, the funds that are invested must be available to pay for the expenditure for which those funds were obtained or provided. Liquidity is essential in an investment plan because it ensures that municipalities can meet their short-term financial obligations and respond to unforeseen expenses.

Local government funds are often needed for immediate operational needs, such as

payroll or maintenance, or for specific planned projects. Liquidity allows for a local government to have enough readily accessible assets to cover these costs efficiently, avoiding potential disruptions in services or financial strain.

- **The optimization of returns –** While return-on-investment should always be secondary to safety and liquidity, local governments should use diversification to seek to maximize earnings where possible. As previously mentioned in the topic of liquidity, local governments may benefit from having readily accessible funds to take advantage of investment opportunities. For example, if a municipality commits all its assets to a single investment with a fixed rate, it may risk missing out on potential earnings if rates rise.
- **Compliance with legal restrictions/regulations –** Pennsylvania law requires a high level of security and safety for investment of public funds, charging local governments with finding investment options with the objective of optimizing returns as it focuses on the safety of principal. Local governments should research potential investments to ensure that their investment planning conforms to those restrictions.

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, these investments include:

- U.S Treasury obligations
- Short term federal agency obligations
- Collateralized bank deposits
- FDIC-insured certificates of deposit
- General obligation Pennsylvania municipal debt securities
- Commercial paper
- Bankers' acceptances
- Negotiable certificates of deposit (CDs)
- Insured Bank Deposit Reciprocals
- **Flexibility –** A strong investment policy remains strong by being reevaluated and updated on a regular basis. A static policy can overlook missed new industry standards and best practices, which could result in missed opportunities or worse. PFMAM recommends local governments reassess these elements at least once a year:
  - Update language to meet current industry standards and best practices
  - Update language to conform to current code requirements
  - Reevaluate use of different investment sectors

- Reevaluate maturity limits
- Incorporate diversification and maturity standards
- Strengthen controls

These are just a few examples of what PFMAM considers top priorities of solid investment policy planning. There are several other elements, including the statements of

Internal Controls, Performance Benchmarks, and Reporting Requirements.

If you have any questions about your local government's investment policy, contact your PFMAM team member for more information. □

*Author bio: Matt Conlin is an institutional Sales and Relationship Manager with U.S. Bancorp Asset Management, Investment Adviser and Administrator to PLGIT. Public*

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*\*PFMAM, a division of U.S. Bancorp Asset Management, Inc., services public sector clients.*

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