



Strategic Management Program Plan

Baseline Conditions and
Community Characteristics

Final Report - June 2025



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Pennsylvania
**Department of Community
& Economic Development**

Reynoldsville Borough

Strategic Management Planning Program

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Management Letter

Borough Council Members
Reynoldsville Borough, Jefferson County, Penna

June 18, 2025

Dear Borough Council,

Kafferlin Strategies is pleased to present the attached Strategic Management Program Plan for Reynoldsville Borough. As we look ahead, we recognize that there are numerous variables and potential outcomes. While we cannot predict the future with certainty, we advise approaching the implementation of this plan with judiciousness.

Council will need to remain agile and maintain a long-term perspective. The attached plan serves as a reference point - a strategy to follow - but it should be adaptable and revisited throughout its implementation. This plan is a tool for your use, and we hope it proves helpful, though we understand if you need to modify it to better suit your needs.

The estimates and recommendations in this report were developed through a thorough analysis of past results, current conditions, and future projections. Throughout the project, we considered a variety of ideas and plans, ultimately selecting those we found to be the most effective and impactful.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist you and hope that this work product contributes to a prosperous future for Reynoldsville. You are the stewards of a valuable legacy, and the future of those yet unborn depends on your decisions. Embrace this responsibility with the seriousness it deserves, and be worthy of the call.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa M. Hagberg".

Lisa M. Hagberg, Partner

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin D. Kafferlin".

Benjamin D. Kafferlin, Partner

Strategic Management Program

The Strategic Management Planning Program (STMP) is an initiative designed to offer proactive financial and managerial assistance to municipalities experiencing financial difficulties that have not yet been formally declared distressed. Administered by the Governor's Center for Local Government Services within Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the STMP provides grants to local governments for the development and implementation of comprehensive multi-year financial and management plans. These plans are tailored to meet the specific needs of each municipality and are aimed at enhancing financial stability, operational efficiency, and administrative capacity.

The program focuses on critical areas such as expenditure reduction, revenue enhancement, economic development strategies, and best management practices. By fostering regional cooperation and intergovernmental cost-sharing, the STMP

The STMP effort focuses on critical areas such as expenditure reduction, revenue enhancement, economic development strategies, and best management practices.

seeks to promote sustainable economic growth and community revitalization, ensuring that municipalities can effectively plan for and manage their future financial circumstances. Through a structured process involving financial condition assessments, trend forecasting, emergency planning, management audits, and continuous implementation and review, the STMP equips local governments with the tools and resources needed to achieve long-term fiscal health and resilience.

Program Objectives

The program objectives include:

Engage in an assessment of managerial policies, procedures and practices relative to operations and service delivery and provide recommendations to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of financial and human resources.

Provide the resources to assist local governments to identify, prioritize and address financial difficulties by implementing short- and long-term goals and objectives.

- Strengthen** the managerial and administrative capacity within local governments to develop, adopt, monitor and implement Multi-Year Financial Management Plans and incorporate this process into their annual budget process.
- Participate** in related management studies and operational improvements that will enhance financial administration and management of the local government.
- Implement** a system of multi-year revenue and expenditure financial trend analysis, monitoring and forecasting so that local governments can anticipate and plan for future financial circumstances.
- Support** the adoption of best management practices and efficiency measures to increase municipal financial stability.
- Promote** multi-municipal and regional cooperation strategies and cost-sharing opportunities between two or more local governments.
- Advance** the integration of sound community and economic development strategies to encourage the economic growth of a local government's tax base over a multi-year period.

Keystone Principles

The Keystone Principles for Growth, Investment & Resource Conservation are a set of guidelines developed to promote sustainable economic development and resource conservation in Pennsylvania. By reference, these principles support STMP efforts by providing some operating rules for the plan, and thus the community to follow in order to achieve fiscal stability, efficient infrastructure use, regional cooperation, and community revitalization, ensuring that local governments can implement strategies that foster long-term economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Figure 1 - Keystone Principles



- **Redevelop first**, support reuse and redevelopment of previously developed sites, conserve heritage resources, support rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- **Provide efficient infrastructure**, use and improve existing infrastructure, provide transportation choice, require service expansions to be consistent with plans.
- **Concentrate development**, support infill and compact development, foster well-designed neighborhoods.
- **Increase job opportunities**, retain and attract a diverse workforce, invest in businesses offering quality jobs.
- **Foster sustainable businesses**, strengthen natural resource-based industries, support renewable energy, construct green buildings.
- **Restore and enhance the environment**, conserve sensitive lands, promote respectful development.
- **Enhance recreational and heritage resources**, maintain and improve recreational assets, support adaptive reuse of historic resources.

- **Expand housing opportunities**, support construction and rehabilitation of diverse housing types, coordinate housing with jobs and infrastructure.
- **Plan regionally, implement locally**, support multi-municipal planning and implementation, provide education and funding for regional projects.
- **Be fair**, support equitable sharing of development benefits and burdens, ensure fair consideration for rural projects.

Engagement and Approach

On July 16, 2024, Reynoldsville Borough issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking qualified consultants to assist in the development and implementation of a Strategic Management Planning Program (STMP). The RFP outlined the Borough's need for a comprehensive financial and managerial review to enhance their fiscal stability and operational efficiency. Responses were due by August 9, 2024, and Kafferlin Strategies, LLC, submitted a detailed proposal, showcasing relevant qualifications and competitive pricing. Following a thorough interview process, Reynoldsville Borough selected the bid. Borough Council officially voted to hire Kafferlin Strategies on November 18, 2024. To initiate the project, a kick-off meeting was held on November 20, 2024, bringing together all key stakeholders. This meeting set the stage for collaborative engagement and established a clear roadmap for the successful execution of the STMP.

Borough Objectives

Reynoldsville is committed to the development and implementation of a multi-year plan to fulfill the following objectives:

- Strengthen multi-year financial planning processes for the Borough
- Assist the Borough on a Strategic Management Planning Program basis to identify and address financial difficulties.
- Develop the internal capacity within the Borough so that it is able to develop, adopt, monitor, and implement multi-year financial management plans and incorporate this process into the annual budget process.
- Assess possible revenue creation in a borough which has limited taxation ability.



- Conduct related management studies that will improve the management, financial administration, operations, and economic development activities within the borough. This part of the study should include but not be limited to an analysis of the appropriate structure, command, scheduling, and staffing levels of each department and a review of current practices compared to established “best practices” and standards of excellence for local government service delivery. It should also include a review of all current collective bargaining agreements and recommendations regarding cost containment and cost sharing for relevant departments and operations.
- Implement a system of multi-year revenue and expenditure financial monitoring and trend analysis so that the Borough can anticipate and plan for future financial circumstances. This includes analysis of retirement plans, liability and health insurance coverage and cost.
- Determine and establish the adoption of “best practices” for management of the Borough and develop standards that support financial stability.
- Provide a mechanism by which the Borough may adopt prioritized short- and long-term goals and objectives for subsequent adoption and implementation.
- Explore the opportunities for promoting inter-municipal and regional cooperation strategies and cost-sharing among area local governments.

Kafferlin Strategies

Reynoldsville Borough interviewed and selected Kafferlin Strategies, LLC, to create the STMP plan. The company is a management consulting firm focused on small Pennsylvania local governments based out of Warren, Penna. The company is known for strategic planning, comprehensive budgeting, operations reviews, interim management, and executive search. Founded in 2013, the company is primarily owned by Lisa Hagberg and Ben Kafferlin. Together, they have managed projects such as STMPs for Cameron County, Forest County, Potter County, Mercer County, interim management and executive search for Exeter Township, the interim management and consolidation of Sandy Township and the City of DuBois, among other significant projects. The company was honored to be selected by Borough Council to complete the STMP and used the following team members:

Lisa Hagberg is a Partner at Kafferlin Strategies, LLC. She primarily provides consultation to local governments on fiscal and human resources as well as interim manager services; most recently as Interim Manager at DuBois / Sandy Township. She has served as a borough manager for over ten years, a county administrator for three years, and a tax accountant for twenty years primarily working on local government accounts. Her bachelors is in accounting. She took

the lead on the financial conditions assessment and many of the management audits.

Chelsea Puff is a full-time Senior Consultant at Kafferlin Strategies, LLC, where she brings her 17 years of municipal management experience to the table. She specializes in land use planning, zoning, community and economic development. She holds a Masters in Public Administration from Penn State.

Ben Kafferlin is a Partner of Kafferlin Strategies, LLC, where he has experience working with local governments including townships, boroughs, counties, and small cities in Pennsylvania. He is a former two-term Warren County Commissioner. He has bachelors degrees in political science and economics and is nearly done with his Masters in Public Administration. He was the primary project manager for the STMP, and was primary on the trend analysis, many of the management reviews, and implementation schedule.

Seth Higgins is a part-time Senior Consultant at Kafferlin Strategies, LLC. He is a former County Administrator of Elk County and the founder of Town & Country Government Solutions. He holds a Masters in Public Administration from Brown University.

Shawn Arbaugh is a seasoned local government executive with over 20 years of leadership experience in municipal administration, public finance, and infrastructure planning. He has held key roles including City Manager, Township Manager, and Business Administrator, where he led major capital projects, labor negotiations, and organizational reforms. A U.S. Army veteran and summa cum laude graduate of Kutztown University's MPA program, Shawn is known for his collaborative leadership and commitment to sustainable, community-focused solutions.

Reilly Enlow is a part-time Senior Consultant at Kafferlin Strategies, LLC. She holds a Masters in Business Administration and focuses on accounting, particularly handling the financial review, audit reviews, data clean-up and forecasting for all the company's STMPs.

Doug Kafferlin is a Partner at Kafferlin Strategies, LLC, where he primarily supports clients with information technology consulting, process engineering, and community engagement. He is a retired CEO and holds a bachelors degree in engineering.

Jasson Urey has served as Town Manager of Greenville since 2012, bringing over two decades of leadership experience and a strong background in both the private and public sectors. A Greenville native and former councilman, he led the Town through the ACT 47 recovery process, implementing structural reforms including a stormwater utility, fire service fee, Home Rule Charter, and the sale of the wastewater system. He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Management from LeTourneau University and is a graduate of the Pennsylvania Municipal Administration Center.

Brian Zeybel is a consultant specializing in law enforcement-related activities. He is a retired State Trooper with the Pennsylvania State Police, and subsequently a county sheriff. He primarily supported the STMP by completing management reviews of departments related to law enforcement.

Jeff Davidek is an entrepreneur and former Senior Vice President for the predominant pension management firm for Pennsylvania counties, where he helped manage portfolios worth over \$1.5 billion. He reviewed the county's retirement plan in detail. He is a lecturer at Grove City College and holds a degree in economics.

Stephanie Fera, Esq. is a partner in Gabriel Fera, a Pittsburgh-based law firm specializing in labor-related law, mostly serving Pennsylvania local government. Her role primarily related to reviewing staffing levels, collective bargaining agreements, and human resources procedures. She earned her doctor of law from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

Michael Logut is a Principal of Seubert & Associates, Inc. where he has been since 2011. He handles benefits transparency to reduce medical and pharmacy spend. He assisted with reviewing health care costs and projections. He is a graduate of Slippery Rock University.

Project Mission

A kick-off meeting for the STMP was held involving the Borough Council President, Mayor, a DCED representative, the Chief of Police, the Borough Assistant Secretary, and partners from Kafferlin Strategies. The meeting established the process, timeline, and overarching goals for the program, with the primary objective identified as achieving improved financial footing and reporting for the Borough.

Several key themes, challenges, and opportunities emerged from the discussion. Governance issues noted included frequent turnover on Borough Council and a general lack of borough subentities (like a Redevelopment Authority). Significant focus was placed on public safety, particularly the police department needs, described as being significantly stretched. Needs identified include exploring regionalization or collaboration with neighboring municipalities, conducting an architectural study for adequate police facilities (potentially funded via grant), and addressing overall capacity limitations.

Community development challenges discussed encompass the need for zoning (noted as a prerequisite for certain grants), a blight study and enhanced code enforcement, and potential Main Street revitalization efforts such as improved streetlighting and wayfinding, possibly through a Business Improvement District structure. Infrastructure concerns highlighted included stormwater management, sidewalks, and the need for specific feasibility or master plan studies for facilities like the community pool and parks. Public Works operations were characterized as minimal. Financially, the group discussed the potential strategy of implementing dedicated millage rates for specific services like EMS, fire, and library support, separating them from the general fund budget. It was acknowledged that historical reluctance to raise taxes has contributed to current pressures potentially necessitating service cuts. Opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation and shared services were also identified as areas for further exploration within the STMP.

Deliverables

To meet those objectives, Kafferlin Strategies utilized DCED's five step process for STMP efforts, creating the following in a comprehensive document:

1

Step 1: Financial Condition Assessment – This assessment was performed as a means to establish a realistic baseline of the Borough's historic and financial condition. A review was conducted of each fund starting with the General Fund and all other funds that exist for the Borough. This review included five years of detailed historical financial data.

2

Step 2: Financial Trend Analysis – Performed for a multi-year period, this analysis projected future revenue, expenditure, economic and demographic trends for at least a three (3) year period so that the Borough could understand its future financial position and take immediate steps to counteract any negative trends.

3

Step 3: Emergency Plan for Current Fiscal Year – Though not needed for this effort, DCED’s process outlines the development of an emergency financial plan for communities. If a municipality faces a critical cash flow issue that threatens public health, safety, or welfare, an Emergency Plan may be necessary to outline immediate actions over a 6- to 12-month period to prevent a fiscal crisis. This plan, if required, would assess whether the current budget should be reopened or modified, determine the need for operational or personnel reductions, explore short-term borrowing options, and consider administrative restructuring to maintain solvency. However, this step was not necessary for Reynoldsville Borough, as no immediate fiscal emergency was identified.

4

Step 4: Management Audit – With assistance from Kafferlin Strategies, the Borough performed a management audit of all departments and operations. The audit included narrative summaries of each department, which consisted of budget and personnel information, as well as other relevant findings. This data was supported by interviews with members of Borough Council, department heads, and key staff members in order to facilitate a focused comprehensive view of the Borough’s most critical operational needs. Recommended structure, command, scheduling and staffing levels (based on “best practices” for local government service delivery) were provided for each department so that it will be possible for management to use a “benchmarking” strategy to address operational deficiencies. The management audit encompassed any and all areas outlined by the Borough during the interview and consultant selection process.

5

Step 5: Multi-Year Plan Adoption – The Plan, at its foundation, identified the Borough’s top three financial management priorities. Additional prioritization was conducted at the departmental level and with any interdepartmental objectives that are Borough-wide. Each objective included a detailed action plan that describes: 1) policy objectives to be achieved; 2) budgetary impact; 3) timing and deadlines for each action step; and 4) which employee and/or department has the primary responsibility for the objective.

6

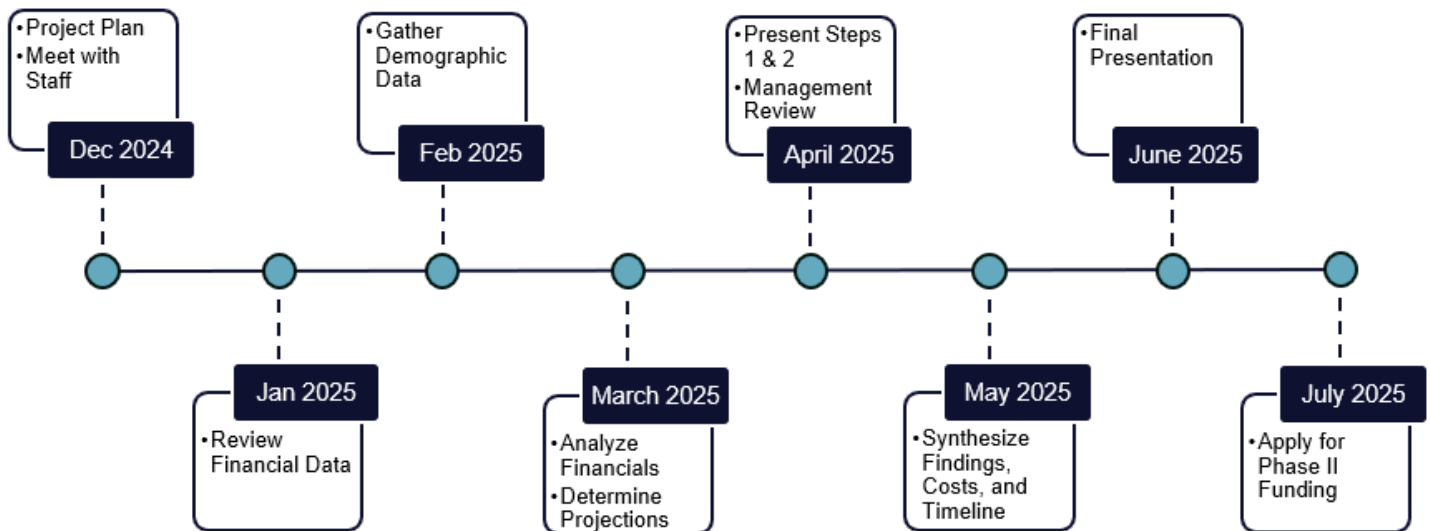
Step 6: Multi-Year Plan Implementation – The Strategic Management Planning Program is an ongoing process and an adopted plan must be evaluated, adjusted and adopted each year. A master implementation schedule should be created that specifies key deadlines for each objective set forth in the Plan. Key to the ultimate implementation of the Plan, this schedule will serve to

monitor whether or not individual department objectives are being met, thus providing a means by which the Board of County Commissioners can measure overall progress in implementing the Plan.

Project Timeline

Reynoldsville's STMP efforts followed a project timeline that outlined the key phases of the assessment process, beginning with the initial project planning in December 2024 and progressing through data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings. Each month represents a critical step in building a comprehensive understanding of financial and demographic trends, evaluating management practices, and preparing for next steps. The project culminates in July 2025 with the application for Phase II STMP funding, setting the stage for continued progress and implementation.

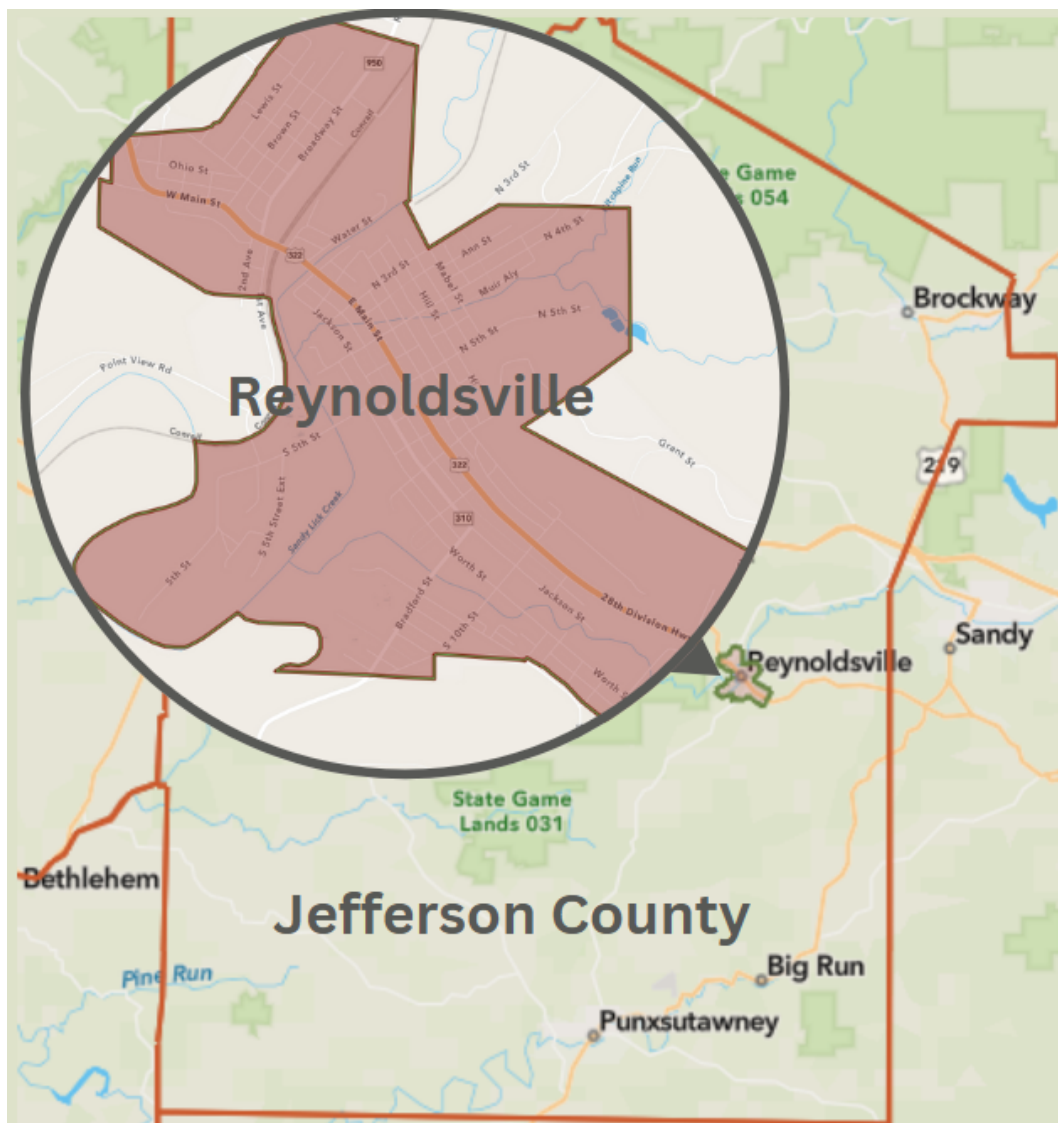
Figure 2 - Project Timeline



Community Profile

The Borough of Reynoldsville, located in eastern Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, is a historic community with a strong industrial past. With an estimated population of 2,600, the Borough is strategically located along U.S. Route 322 and proximal to Interstate 80, connecting it to nearby communities such as Brookville and DuBois. Reynoldsville's governance, infrastructure, and community services play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

Figure 3 - Reynoldsville Location Map



Spanning nearly 1.5 square miles, Reynoldsville lies within the Sandy Lick Creek valley, with Soldier Run also flowing through the community. This geography has historically influenced the community's development, particularly in terms of land use, stormwater management, and public works projects. Transportation access via U.S. Route 322 is vital for economic activity, commerce, and regional connectivity.

Originally founded in 1838 and incorporated in 1873, the Borough's industrial development peaked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when it was home to silk mills, brick and tile works, a tannery, and an asbestos plant. The presence of the historic Herpel Brothers Foundry and Machine Shop, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a testament to the

Borough's rich industrial heritage. Today, the community's economic development efforts focus on revitalization, support of its small businesses, and workforce training through institutions like the Jefferson County-DuBois Area Vocational Technical School, known as Jeff Tech.

Reynoldsville is surrounded by natural features including forests, waterways, and rolling countryside that offer opportunities for outdoor recreation, playing a significant role in the community's quality of life, economic development, and overall vitality. The Borough's proximity to larger recreational areas like Parker Dam State Park, Clear Creek State Park, and the Pennsylvania Wilds region further enhances its outdoor appeal.

Reynoldsville is served by the DuBois Area School District, with C.G. Johnson Elementary School providing early education. Jeff Tech plays a key role in workforce development, offering career and technical training to students in Reynoldsville and surrounding communities. This institution is a valuable asset for aligning local education with economic development goals.



Borough of Reynoldsville Municipal Building
Photo Courtesy: Borough of Reynoldsville

The Borough's recent designation as a Blueprint Community represents a pivotal step toward revitalization and long-term economic sustainability. As part of this initiative, the Borough has committed to a strategic, community-driven approach to planning and development, focusing on improving infrastructure, fostering local business growth, enhancing public spaces, and strengthening community engagement. The Blueprint Communities program, supported by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh and other regional partners, provides Reynoldsville with the tools and resources needed to implement

Reynoldsville's designation as a Blueprint Community marks a critical step toward revitalization, providing resources and a strategic, community-driven framework to improve infrastructure, address blight, support local businesses, and enhance quality of life for long-term economic sustainability.

transformative projects that align with community needs and aspirations. By leveraging this initiative, the Borough aims to address blight, expand economic opportunities, and improve the overall quality of life for its residents and stakeholders, positioning itself as a more vibrant and resilient community for future generations.

Government Overview

Reynoldsville operates under a Mayor-Council form of government, typical of many Pennsylvania boroughs. Borough Council consists of seven members elected at large, which serve as the legislative body responsible for enacting ordinances, approving budgets, and overseeing municipal operations. They have the following committees:

- Streets & Sewer (should meet monthly, rarely do)
- Police & Fire (though does not actually meet with fire - meet monthly)
- Budget & Finance (usually just meet during budget sessions in October)
- Building & Equipment (as needed)
- Negotiations & Personnel (usually only during negotiations)
- Street Lighting
- Grant Development (meets occasionally)
- Code Enforcement (more regularly)
- Police Pension (annually)
- Non-Uniform Pension (annually)
- Citizen Awareness
- Insurance
- Zoning (started 7 years ago to no avail)
- Pool Advisory
- Water & Sewer Authority

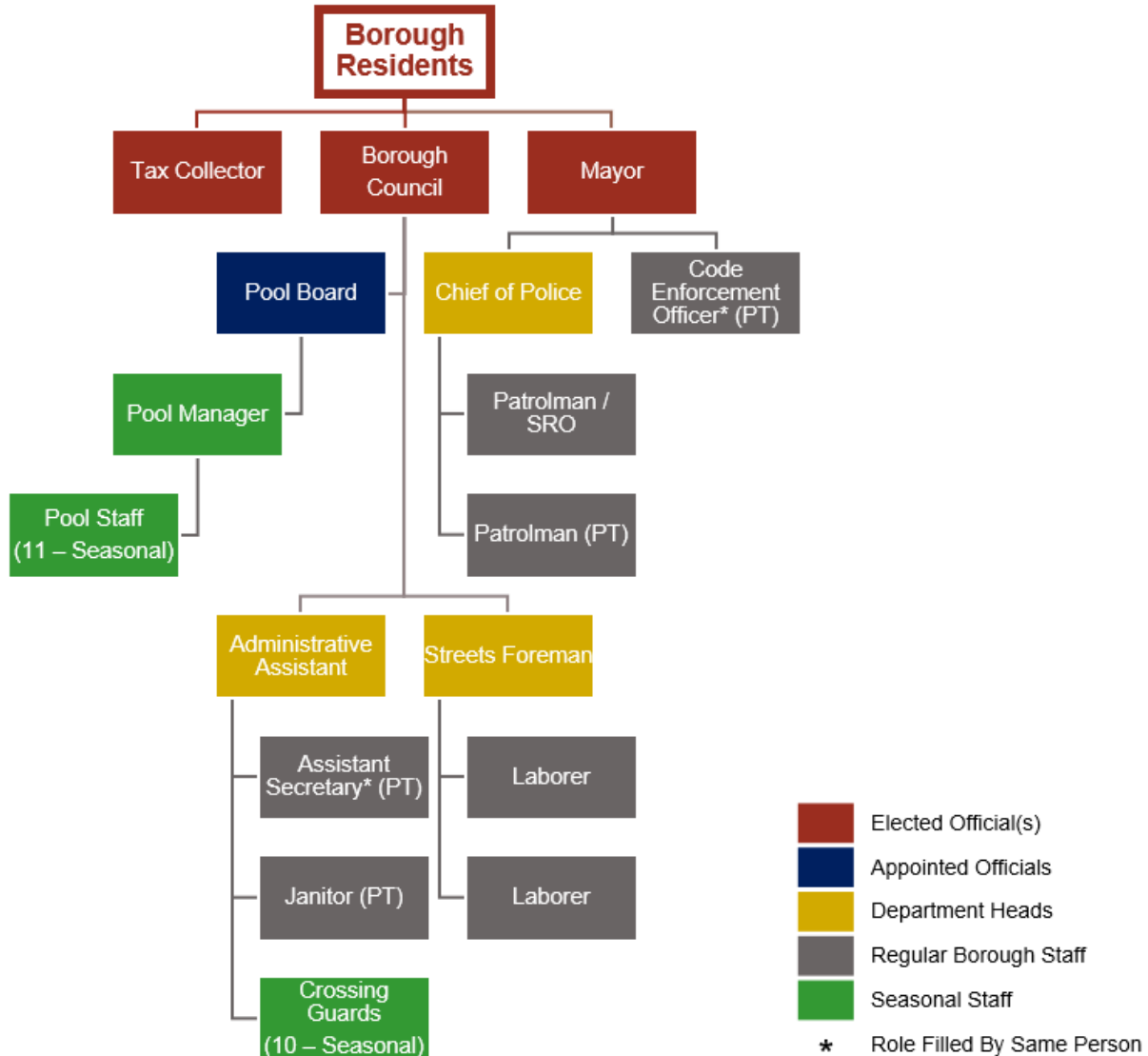
The Mayor, an elected official, primarily oversees public safety, including the police department, and provides leadership on key community issues. Day-to-day administration is managed by an administrative assistant, an appointed position that handles operations, budgeting, and coordination between Borough departments.

Organizational Reporting Structure

The organizational chart below provides a clear overview of the Borough's governance and administrative structure, illustrating the relationships and lines of communication between elected officials, staff, and departmental functions. Currently, Reynoldsville employs three full-time department heads - the Administrative Assistant, the Chief of Police, and the Streets Foreman. In addition, the Department of Public Works employs two full-time laborers, while the

Police Department includes one full-time patrolman who also serves as the School Resource Officer. A part-time janitor and a part time Assistant Secretary report to the Administrative Assistant, as do seasonal school crossing guards. The Assistant Secretary also fills the role of part-time Code Enforcement Officer, reporting to the Mayor. Seasonal pool staff are overseen by the Pool Board.

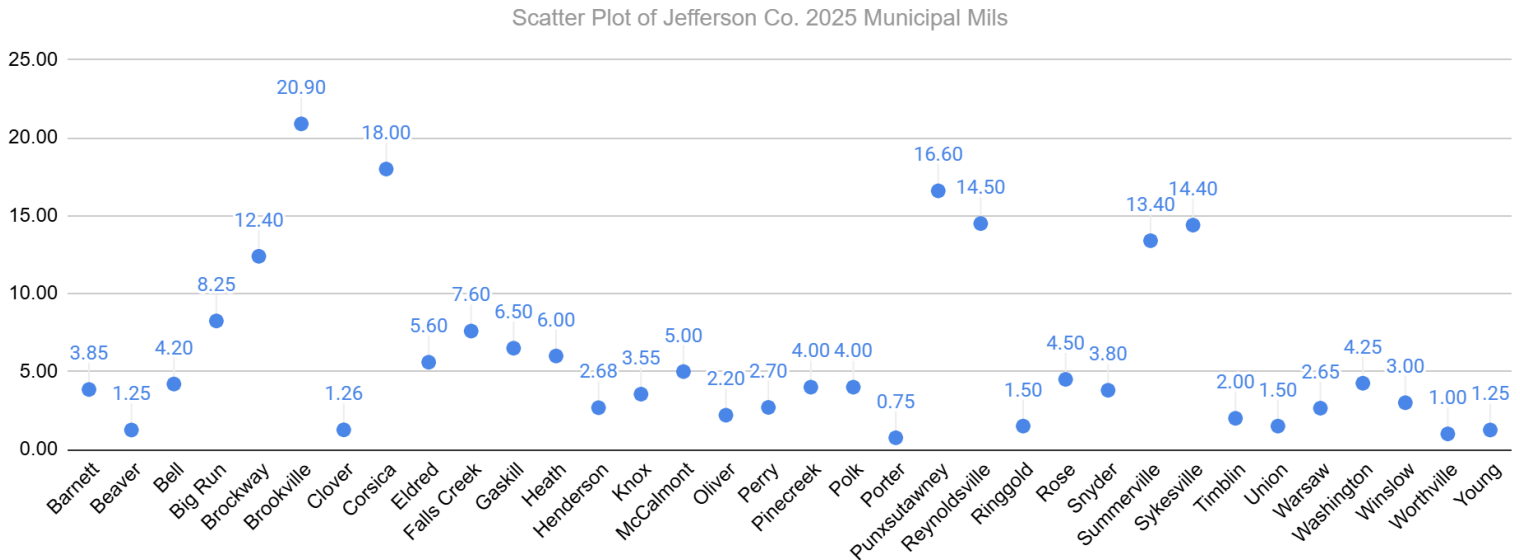
Figure 4 - Organizational Structure (as of April 2025)



Real Estate Tax Comparison

A review of real estate tax millage rates across Jefferson County municipalities indicates that Reynoldsville Borough's rate falls near the countywide median for boroughs and may even be slightly below average. Several peer communities, including Brookville at 20.5 mills, levy higher rates.

Figure 5 - Jefferson County Real Estate Tax Comparison



Previous Planning Efforts

As part of the Strategic Management Planning Program process, it is essential to place Reynoldsville's local challenges and opportunities within the broader context of regional and county planning efforts. Several critical plans, including Jefferson County's recent STMP report, 2018 Comprehensive Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, and Hazard Mitigation Plan, along with the North Central Pennsylvania Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the North Central Greenways Plan, each offer strategic guidance that can directly inform the Borough's path forward.

These documents not only identify key trends and challenges affecting the Borough and the region, but also recommend coordinated responses in areas such as infrastructure investment, land use, public safety, economic development, environmental stewardship, and emergency preparedness. Together, they offer a critical context for shaping Reynoldsville's priorities and inform the recommendations made throughout the STMP process.

Jefferson County Strategic Management Planning Program

Jefferson County undertook its own STMP process, completing the effort in April 2023. The corresponding report provides a comprehensive review of the County's finances, management structure, and long-term strategic needs. The overarching goal of the STMP was to help the County achieve economic stability and improve operational efficiency through five core

principles: expenditure reduction, revenue enhancement, economic development, adoption of best management practices, and intergovernmental cost sharing.

Key Findings

- 1. Stable Yet Constrained Finances:** Jefferson County has generally managed its finances prudently, with the benefit of federal relief funds (CARES and ARPA) temporarily boosting reserves. However, absent these one-time infusions, the County is facing a structural imbalance, with projected operating deficits beginning in 2023.
- 2. Stagnant Tax Base:** The County's revenue system is heavily reliant on real estate taxes, which are hampered by outdated assessments. The last countywide reassessment occurred in 1987. The discrepancy between market and assessed values is now so great that assessed values represent just 42% of market value, limiting the growth potential of property tax revenue.
- 3. Operational Challenges:** Many County departments operate with minimal staff and outdated technology. Despite this, staff are deeply committed and experienced. The County has no centralized fiscal leadership, with financial responsibilities fragmented across several departments and row offices.
- 4. Economic Struggles:** Median household income in Jefferson County is the lowest among its sixth-class peers. The economic base is concentrated in relatively low-wage sectors such as health care, manufacturing, and retail. Retail sales and higher-wage employment opportunities are limited, exacerbating outmigration and underinvestment.

Relevance to Reynoldsville

Reynoldsville's future stability and growth are closely tied to county-level policy and programmatic efforts. The Borough is directly affected by Jefferson County's outdated property assessment system, which constrains local real estate tax

revenues and underscores the need for coordinated advocacy to modernize the approach. In addition, the Borough stands to benefit from county-led economic development initiatives such as business recruitment, broadband expansion, and tourism-based revitalization, particularly given Reynoldsville's location along Route 322 and its access to regional cultural assets.

Reynoldsville can strengthen its fiscal stability and community development by coordinating with Jefferson County's broader efforts in property assessment reform, economic development, financial management support, and shared services.

The Borough's internal challenges related to financial management and reporting could be mitigated through greater centralization of fiscal functions and technical assistance at the County level. As Jefferson County continues to explore opportunities for enhanced intergovernmental coordination and shared services, Reynoldsville is well-positioned to participate in collaborative efforts related to housing, infrastructure investment, and public safety. Aligning with these regional strategies will allow the Borough to amplify its impact and better serve residents with limited local capacity.

Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan

Forward Together, Jefferson County's Comprehensive Plan, outlines a strategic vision for the County's development, emphasizing collaboration among municipalities to enhance economic vitality, infrastructure, and quality of life. While the plan addresses the county as a whole, several themes and recommendations are particularly pertinent to Reynoldsville Borough.

Key Themes

1. Community Infrastructure Strategy:

- **Water and Sewer Systems:** The plan advocates for the modernization of aging water and sewer infrastructure to support current residents and attract new development.
- **Broadband Expansion:** Recognizing the importance of digital connectivity, the plan recommends expanding broadband access to underserved areas, facilitating remote work and education opportunities.
- **Transportation Improvements:** Enhancements to local roadways and transportation networks are proposed to improve safety and connectivity between communities.

2. Economic Development and Workforce Initiatives:

- **Business Retention and Attraction:** Strategies include providing incentives for businesses to remain in or relocate to the county, with a focus on sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, and technology.
- **Workforce Training Programs:** The plan emphasizes partnerships with educational institutions to develop training programs aligned with industry needs, aiming to equip residents with relevant skills.

3. Housing and Community Development:

- **Affordable Housing:** Efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing are highlighted, including the rehabilitation of existing structures and the development of new units.
- **Blight Reduction:** The plan recommends initiatives to address blighted properties, enhancing neighborhood aesthetics and property values.

4. Recreation and Tourism Strategy:

- **Enhancing Recreational Assets:** Investments in parks, trails, and recreational facilities are proposed to improve residents' quality of life and attract visitors.
- **Promoting Tourism:** Marketing the county's natural and cultural attractions is suggested to boost tourism-related economic activity.

5. Public Participation and Governance:

- **Community Engagement:** The plan underscores the importance of involving residents in decision-making processes, ensuring that development aligns with community needs and values.
- **Intergovernmental Collaboration:** Encouraging cooperation among municipalities is recommended to efficiently address regional challenges and opportunities.

Relevance to Reynoldsville

Reynoldsville is not an outlier when it comes to challenges facing Jefferson County's communities. Blight, aging infrastructure, employment opportunities, economic development, and general governance are also issues impacting the Borough. Through the County's implementation of its comprehensive plan, Reynoldsville stands to benefit from the plan's emphasis on infrastructure modernization, economic development, and community revitalization.

By aligning with county-wide strategies and actively participating in programs, Reynoldsville can leverage resources to tackle infrastructure, housing, and economic challenges while promoting long-term resilience and sustainable growth.

By aligning local initiatives with county-wide strategies, the Borough can leverage resources and partnerships to address challenges such as aging infrastructure, housing needs, and economic diversification. Active participation in county programs and adherence to the plan's recommendations will be crucial for Reynoldsville to enhance its resilience and promote sustainable growth.

Jefferson County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Adopted by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners in 2023, the Jefferson County Hazard Mitigation Plan provides a comprehensive strategy to reduce the County's vulnerability to both natural and human-caused hazards. Led by the Jefferson County Department of Emergency Services, the plan involved extensive input from municipalities, public stakeholders, and local planning teams. Reynoldsville Borough participated in this process, submitting risk assessment materials and project opportunity forms.

Key Themes

- 1. Population Decline and Infrastructure Vulnerability:** Jefferson County experienced population decline over the previous ten years, which exacerbates vulnerability by shrinking the tax base and complicating long-term maintenance of public infrastructure and housing stock.
- 2. Hazard Prioritization:** High-risk hazards identified in the plan include flooding, winter storms, tornadoes/windstorms, utility interruptions, and human-caused issues like hazardous material spills and opioid-related emergencies. The plan highlights the need for upgraded stormwater infrastructure and emergency preparedness, which are particularly relevant for the County's aging systems.
- 3. Blight and Emergency Services:** New to the 2023 plan are profiles for blighted properties and emergency services. These issues are recognized as both public safety and economic development concerns.
- 4. Mitigation Goals and Projects:** Goals include protecting critical infrastructure, promoting hazard-resistant development, and improving public education and response capabilities. Communities are encouraged to pursue FEMA and PEMA funding for hazard mitigation actions like floodplain management, emergency generator installations, and property rehabilitation or demolition.

Relevance to Reynoldsville

The Hazard Mitigation Plan underscores the need for sustained, proactive planning in communities like Reynoldsville that face mounting climate and socioeconomic pressures. To enhance public safety and long-term resilience, Reynoldsville should prioritize investment in stormwater management to mitigate localized flooding, pursue blight reduction strategies through demolition, code enforcement, and housing reinvestment, and strengthen

The Hazard Mitigation Plan underscores the need for sustained, proactive planning in communities like Reynoldsville that face mounting climate and socioeconomic pressures.

emergency service coordination, potentially through shared services with neighboring municipalities.

Additionally, the Borough is encouraged to explore mitigation grants to support infrastructure hardening projects, particularly those related to power, water systems, and emergency response capabilities. Active participation in plan maintenance and project development will be essential for Reynoldsville to reduce risk and build long-term resilience.

Jefferson County Stormwater Management Plan

The Jefferson County Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan, adopted in June 2010, provides a countywide regulatory framework to manage stormwater runoff and mitigate flooding. Required under Pennsylvania's Stormwater Management Act (Act 167 of 1978), the plan establishes technical criteria and a model ordinance that all municipalities, including Reynoldsville Borough, are mandated to adopt and enforce. The Ordinance applies to various regulated activities that can impact stormwater runoff, such as land development, construction, stream channel modifications, and the installation of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). Municipalities are responsible for reviewing and approving drainage plans for these activities and ensuring compliance with the Ordinance.

The Jefferson County Conservation District serves as the key partner in implementing these standards. In addition to supporting ordinance compliance, the Conservation District also administers the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, which requires Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) plans for projects disturbing more than one acre of land.

Key Themes

- 1. Act 167 Compliance Required:** All municipalities are mandated to adopt and enforce a local stormwater ordinance consistent with the countywide plan, in accordance with Pennsylvania's Stormwater Management Act.
- 2. Regulated Activities Defined:** The plan applies to land development, redevelopment, and any activities that create impervious surfaces or alter natural drainage, requiring review and approval of stormwater management plans before permits are issued.
- 3. Model Ordinance and Technical Standards:** The plan includes a county-endorsed model ordinance outlining technical criteria for stormwater controls, peak rate reduction, groundwater recharge, water quality protection, and erosion control. Municipalities are responsible for adopting the ordinance, reviewing plans, and

enforcing compliance. Reynoldsville's planning and zoning processes must align with these provisions.

- 4. NPDES Requirements:** Projects disturbing more than one acre must comply with the state Department of Environmental Protection's NPDES permit program, including preparation and review of Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) plans. The Jefferson County Conservation District provides administrative support and technical assistance for ordinance implementation and enforcement, including administering NPDES permits.
- 5. Funding Opportunities:** Implementation may be supported by state and federal grant programs, such as those offered by the DEP, DCED, or PennVEST.

Relevance to Reynoldsville

While the plan does not mention Reynoldsville Borough explicitly, its requirements are uniformly applicable across all municipalities in the county. Therefore, Reynoldsville must implement and enforce the ordinance provisions, ensuring that any development or land disturbance activities within its jurisdiction adhere to the established stormwater management standards.

The Borough's stormwater challenges make coordination with the Conservation District and adherence to Act 167 standards critical, with grant opportunities available to support needed infrastructure improvements and flood mitigation.

For Reynoldsville, this stormwater management framework is especially relevant in light of identified local drainage issues and potential flooding risks. As the Borough considers infrastructure improvements and new development, active coordination with the Conservation District and adherence to Act 167 standards will be essential.

North Central Pennsylvania Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The North Central Pennsylvania Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), led by the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, offers a regional roadmap for advancing economic growth and resilience across six counties: Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter. The plan promotes inter-county collaboration, infrastructure investment, workforce development, and business innovation as key levers for addressing shared economic challenges like population decline and limited broadband access and focuses on five Guiding Principles -

- Expand and strengthen employment and education opportunities that provide stable family wage jobs.
- Invest in entrepreneurship and home-grown business development to build a sustainable, diverse economy.
- Preserve and invest in the region's natural and cultural assets to strengthen economic potential.
- Create and / or improve reliable, consistent access to critical infrastructure in North Central Pennsylvania.
- Provide sufficient availability of right-sized, right-priced housing throughout each county within the North Central Pennsylvania region.

Key Themes

1. **Regional Collaboration:** The CEDS underscores the importance of inter-county cooperation, recognizing that shared challenges such as population decline and limited broadband access require unified solutions. By leveraging collective strengths, the region aims to foster sustainable economic development.
2. **Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Improving transportation networks and expanding broadband access are central to the strategy. These enhancements are vital for supporting local businesses, attracting new industries, and ensuring residents have access to essential services.
3. **Economic Diversification:** The strategy advocates for diversifying the regional economy beyond traditional sectors. This includes promoting tourism, supporting small businesses, and encouraging innovation to create a more resilient economic landscape.
4. **Community Engagement:** Active participation from local communities is a cornerstone of the CEDS. Public input sessions, such as the one held in Reynoldsville, play a crucial role in shaping development priorities and ensuring that strategies align with local needs.

Relevance to Reynoldsville

Through participation in regional initiatives and by pursuing local projects that reflect CEDS priorities, Reynoldsville can access technical assistance and funding opportunities to support infrastructure upgrades, small business growth, and community revitalization.

Reynoldsville played an active role in shaping the CEDS through hosting a public input session and was specifically highlighted in the strategy as a community poised for revitalization. Recommendations relevant to Reynoldsville include supporting downtown redevelopment, strengthening code

enforcement and blight mitigation strategies, and investing in placemaking to improve quality of life and attract residents and businesses. The CEDS also encourages Reynoldsville to leverage its location along Route 322 and its cultural assets as a foundation for tourism-based development.

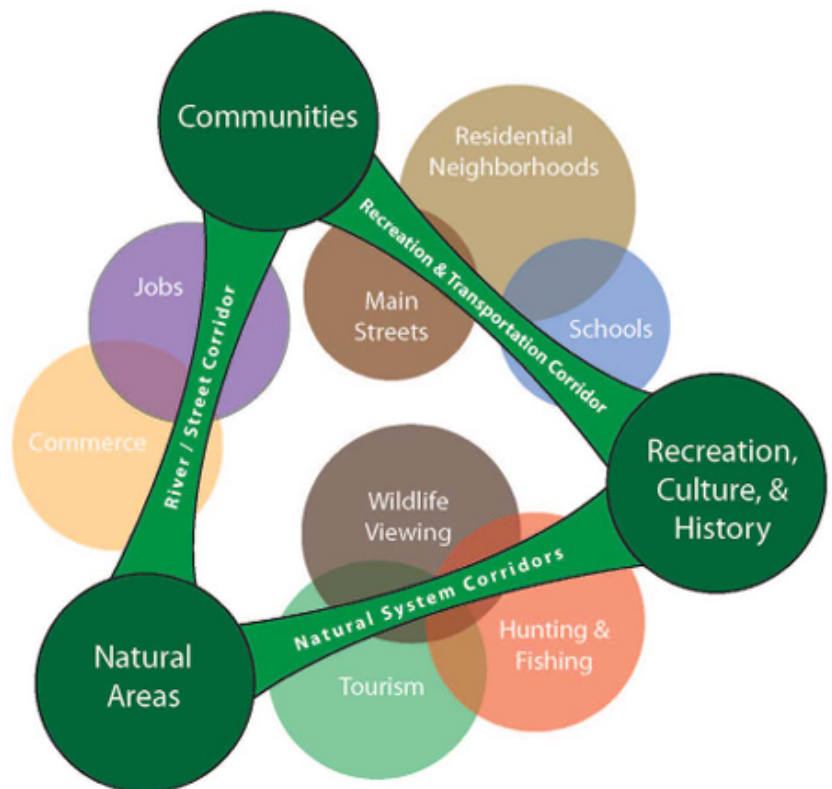
North Central Pennsylvania Greenways Plan

Providing a strategic framework for enhancing recreational, ecological, and transportation connectivity, the North Central Pennsylvania Greenways Plan emphasizes the development of a "hubs and spokes" network, linking natural areas, towns, and recreational sites through greenways and trails across six counties: Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter.

Key Themes

- 1. Regional Connectivity:** The plan identifies 155 existing trails and proposes 85 new recreational and transportation corridors, aiming to create an interconnected network that supports both ecological preservation and community recreation.
- 2. Trail Town Development:** Eighty-two communities are designated as potential "trail towns," envisioned as focal points for trail-based tourism and economic development.
- 3. Natural Systems Integration:** The plan outlines 132 proposed natural system corridors to protect and connect vital ecological areas, enhancing biodiversity and environmental resilience.

Figure 6 - "Hubs and Spokes" Structure for Greenways



Source: North Central PA Greenways Plan

Relevance to Reynoldsville

Reynoldsville is not specifically mentioned in the plan, but its location within Jefferson County positions it to benefit from regional greenway initiatives. The Borough should explore opportunities to connect with nearby proposed corridors, enhancing local recreation options and potentially stimulating economic growth through increased tourism. Engagement with county and regional planning efforts could facilitate the integration of Reynoldsville into the broader greenway network.

Demographic Profile

Reynoldsville's population reflects the characteristics of many rural Appalachian communities. Once a thriving center for manufacturing and industry, the Borough has evolved into a residential hub with a mix of longtime residents and newcomers. Its demographic profile highlights trends in population shifts, housing, employment, and income levels, offering insight into the community's social and economic landscape.

Comparison Communities

To better understand the impacts of Reynoldsville's demographic composition, comparison communities were selected to provide benchmarking and correlation. Communities were selected based on their similar characteristics, regional proximity, and shared economic and social dynamics.

Brockway, Brookville, and Punxsutawney, all within Jefferson County, provide valuable points of reference as they share similar historical development patterns, economic structures, and population sizes. DuBois, in neighboring Clearfield County, serves as a key comparison due to its role as a regional economic hub, offering insight into how a larger nearby community impacts smaller boroughs. Ridgway, in Elk County, presents another useful comparison as a small borough with a strong industrial history and evolving economic base. Analyzing these communities together helps provide a clearer understanding of Reynoldsville's demographic trends, economic positioning, and potential opportunities for growth.

Table 1 below provides a quick comparison snapshot of key demographic indicators across comparison communities, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, and the United States as a whole.

Table 1 - Demographic Snapshot

	Population	Square Miles	Pop. Density	Median Age	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	% Pop. Below Poverty Level	High School Graduates or Higher	College Graduates or Higher
Reynoldsville, Jefferson County	2,622	1.49	1,760	35.4	\$46,433.00	\$64,000.00	23.1%	88.7%	12.7%
Brockway, Jefferson County	2,044	1.18	1,732	48.7	\$54,293.00	\$85,000.00	10.2%	94.1%	17.4%
Brookville, Jefferson County	3,959	3.20	1,237	38.2	\$56,215.00	\$94,000.00	14.5%	95.3%	26.6%
Dubois, Clearfield County	7,449	3.22	2,313	37.7	\$58,626.00	\$87,000.00	10.6%	92.7%	27.6%
Punxsutawney, Jefferson County	5,689	3.4	1,673	45.7	\$43,097.00	\$78,000.00	21.4%	94.8%	19.6%
Ridgway, Elk County	3,991	2.67	1,495	44.4	\$52,059.00	\$77,000.00	14.8%	92.9%	24.8%
Jefferson County	44,099	652.44	68	43.7	\$56,898.00	\$126,700.00	15.3%	91.3%	17.5%
Pennsylvania	12,986,518	46,055	282	41.1	\$73,824.00	\$240,500.00	12.0%	92.3%	35.4%
United States	332,387,540	3,809,525	87	39.2	\$77,719.00	\$244,900.00	12.5%	89.7%	36.1%

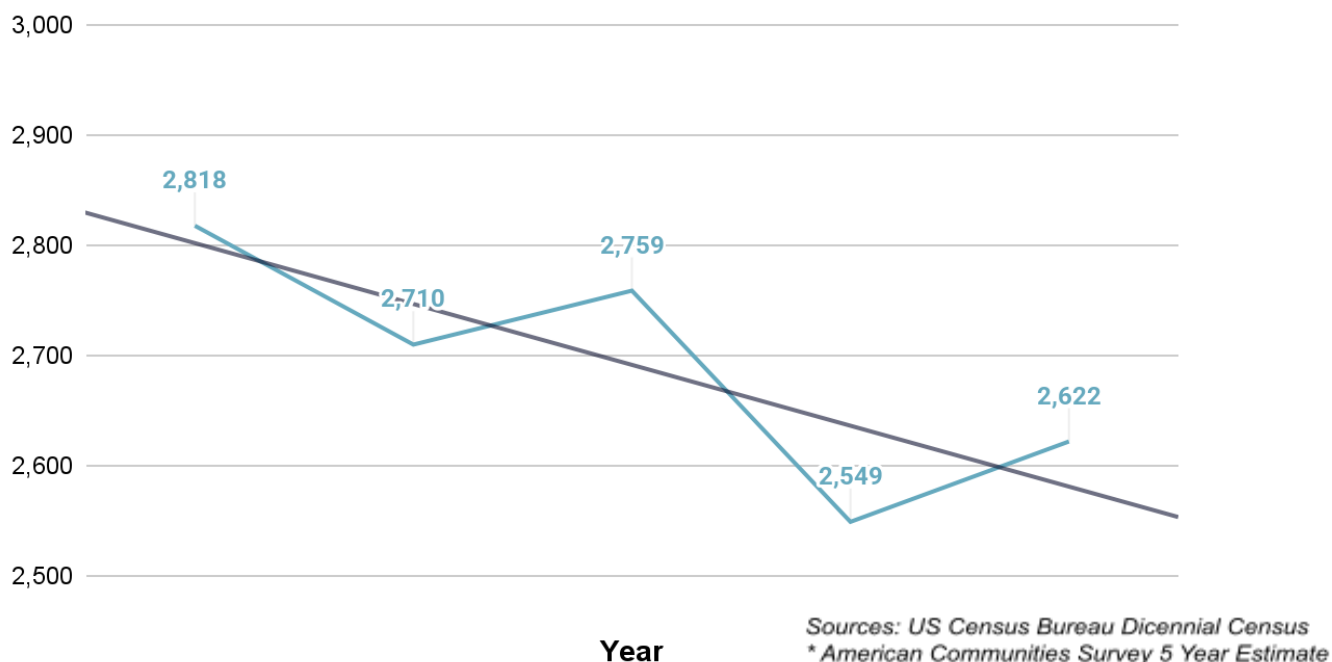
Sources: US Census Bureau Decennial Census; American Communities Survey 5 Year Estimates; Esri Community Profiles

Population

Since 1990, Reynoldsville's population has experienced an ebb and flow of decline and growth. The Borough lost population from 1990 to 2000 but saw a slight rebound from 2000 to 2010. As noted over the previous 20 years, the Borough again experienced decline from 2010 to 2020 but posted modest growth from 2020 to 2023. Overall, the community realized a population decline of nearly 7% from 1990 to 2023.

Reynoldsville's population declined nearly 7% from 1990 to 2023.

Figure 7- Population Shift - 1990 - 2023



Population decline during this period is noted throughout Jefferson County, with the County itself experiencing a 6.45% drop in residents, and all comparison communities also lost population. Conversely, Pennsylvania and the United States as a whole noted population growth during this period, as shown in Table 2 below, with nearly 9% and 34% growth respectively.

Table 2 - Population Change - 1990-2023

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2023*	% Change 1990-2023
Reynoldsville, Jefferson County	2,818	2,710	2,759	2,549	2,622	-6.96
Brockway, Jefferson County	2,182	2,182	2,072	2,276	2,044	-6.32
Brookville, Jefferson County	4,230	4,230	3,924	3,995	3,959	-6.41
Dubois, Clearfield County	9,726	8,123	7,794	7,510	7,449	-23.41
Punxsutawney, Jefferson County	7,792	6,271	5,962	5,769	5,689	-26.99
Ridgway, Elk County	4,835	4,591	4,078	4,039	3,991	-17.46
Jefferson County	47,140	45,932	45,200	44,492	44,099	-6.45
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	12,702,379	13,002,700	12,986,518	9.30
United States	248,709,873	281,421,906	331,449,281	331,449,281	332,387,540	33.64

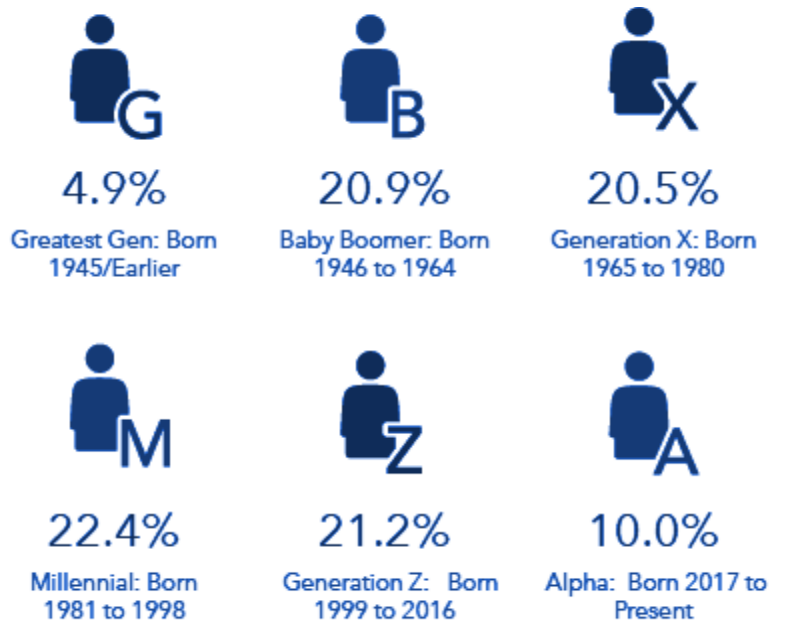
Sources - US Census Bureau Decennial Census; * American Communities Survey 5 Year Estimate

Age and Racial Profile

The Borough's population is somewhat younger than surrounding communities with a median age of 35.4. Generational distribution throughout the community is fairly even, with residents born between 1946 and 1964 comprising nearly 21% of the population and those born from 1965 and 1980 posting a similar percentage at 20.5%. Millennials and Gen Z come in with higher rates, 22.4% and 21.2% respectively, emphasizing the younger demographic.

Reynoldsville's population is younger than surrounding communities and predominantly White.

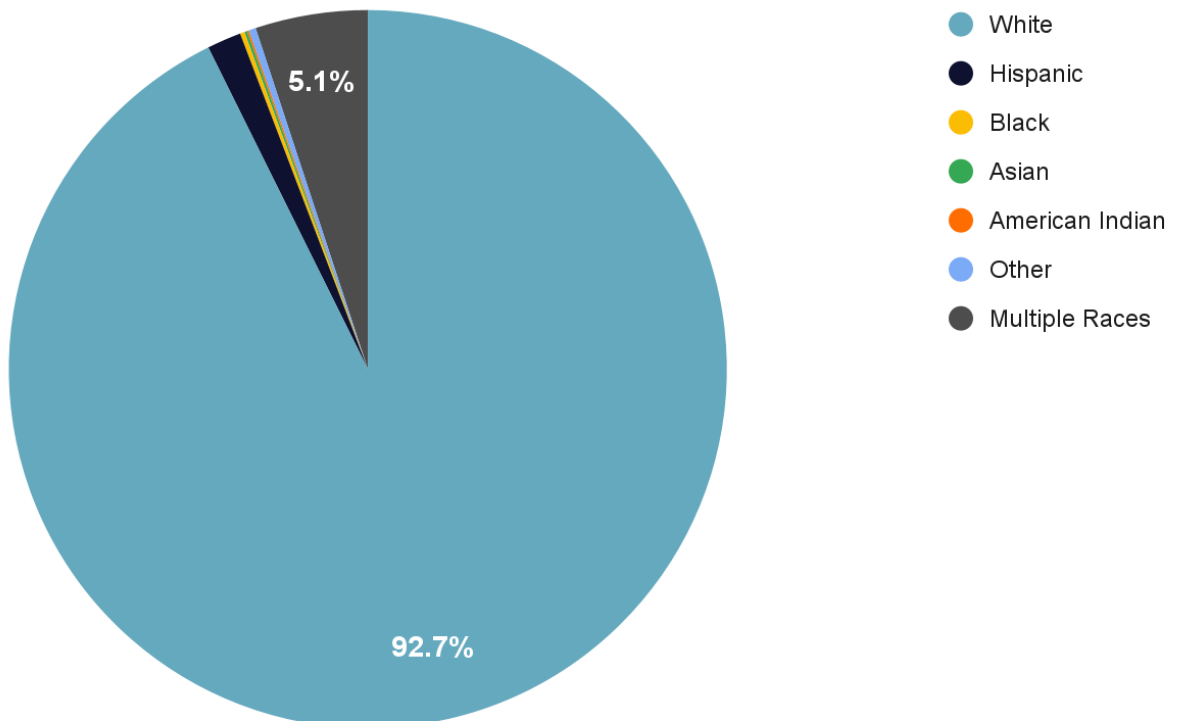
Figure 8 - Population by Generation



Source: Esri - Population Trends and Key Indicators

Reynoldsville's population is predominantly White, with non-Hispanic White residents comprising approximately 93% of the community, as

Figure 9 - Racial Profile by Percentage

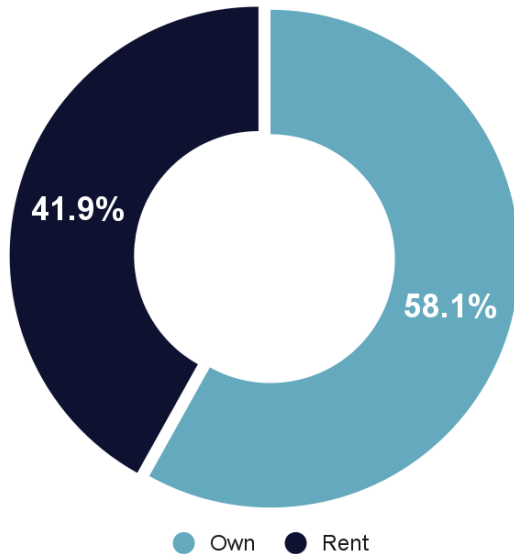


Source: Esri - Race Profile

displayed in Figure 9 above. Other racial groups include individuals of multiple races at 5% and Hispanic residents at 1.5%. Individuals identifying as Black, Asian, or Other each comprised less than 1% of the community's population.

Housing

Figure 10 - Home Ownership



Source: Esri - Housing Summary

Reynoldsville is home to 1,289 housing units, with 1,130 of those units being occupied and 161 noted as vacant, for a vacancy rate of 12.5%. Of the Borough's occupied housing units, nearly 42% are rentals, while 58% are occupied by the property owner.

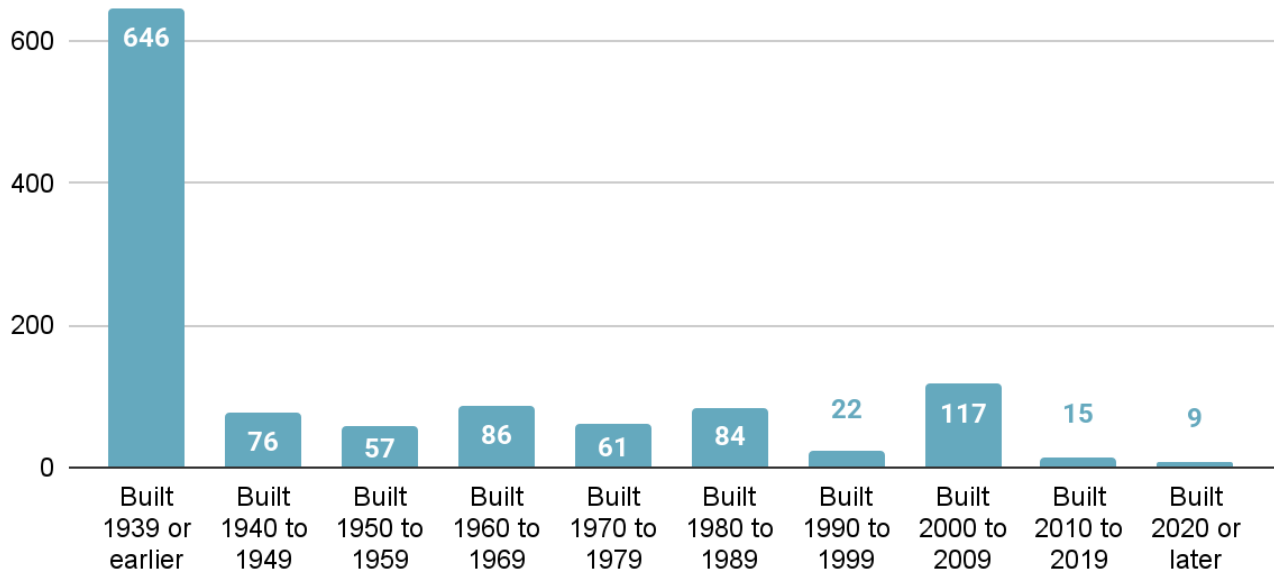
By comparison, Jefferson County's owner-occupied housing rate is 74.2%, indicating greater residential stability as homeowners tend to stay in their homes longer than renters. Higher owner-occupied rates may also indicate a lack of rental housing options, affecting housing affordability and limiting housing choices for certain populations, such as young professionals or low income workers. With this in mind, Reynoldsville's higher rental rate aligns with its younger populace, accounting for residents who do not yet own homes.

Like many of Pennsylvania's historic boroughs, Reynoldsville's housing stock trends older. Figure 11 below details the year housing units were built in the Borough, with 55% of the community's homes built in 1939 or earlier. An older housing stock presents

challenges for communities, including maintenance and repair costs, blight and vacancy, code compliance issues, health hazards from older building materials like lead and asbestos, limited accessibility for aging residents and individuals with disabilities, and energy inefficiencies and surging utility bills. Further, a lack of more modern housing options may deter new residents, particularly younger families, looking for updated homes with contemporary amenities.

Like many of Pennsylvania's historic boroughs, Reynoldsville's housing stock trends older, with 55% of the community's homes built in 1939 or earlier.

Figure 11 - Age of Housing Stock



Source: Esri - Housing Summary

Housing Units by Year Built

Reynoldsville's median home value of \$64,000 is significantly lower than similar communities and Jefferson County as a whole, as well the state and national median. Lower values can be attributed to factors such as the aforementioned older housing stock requiring greater maintenance and modernization, in addition to the community's rural setting, leading to lower demand for housing compared to more urbanized areas and thus, lower property values. Economic factors, such as local employment opportunities and population trends, also play a role in keeping home prices modest.



Lower home values and aging housing stock represent strong opportunities for the Borough. The affordability of housing in Reynoldsville can be an asset for first-time homebuyers and retirees and also indicates favorable circumstances for reinvestment in quality housing and community infrastructure improvements. The Borough should market its housing affordability to potential residents and make the most of programs that focus on housing rehabilitation.

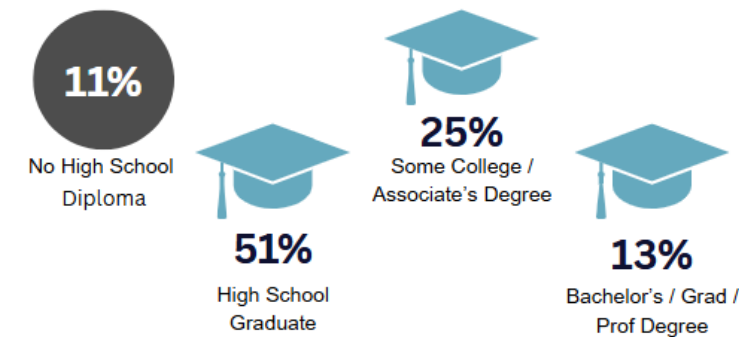
Income

Reynoldsville's median household income of \$46,433 falls below the median income levels of Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, and the United States,

According to the American Communities Survey, 25% of the Borough's population receives food stamps or SNAP benefits.

reflecting economic challenges within the community. Further, the Borough's poverty rate of 23.1% is notably higher than the county, state, and national averages, indicating financial hardship for a significant portion of the community's residents. Factors contributing to these figures may include the local job market, the availability of higher-wage employment opportunities, and educational attainment levels. The combination of lower household incomes and a higher poverty rate underscores the need for targeted economic development efforts, workforce training programs, and social services to support residents and enhance economic stability within the community.

Figure 12 - Educational Attainment Levels



Source: Esri - Community Key Facts

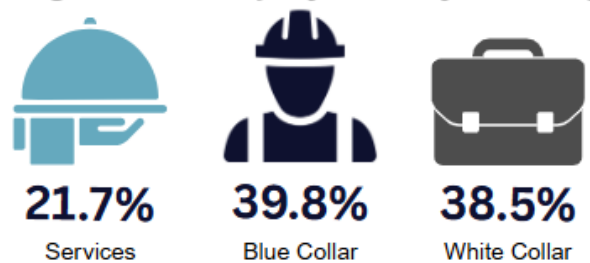
Educational attainment levels of Reynoldsville residents reflect a community with a range of academic backgrounds. Figure 12 at left highlights the highest level of education achieved by Borough residents. A significant portion of the population has earned a high school diploma or equivalent, aligning with

broader trends in rural Pennsylvania. However, the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is lower than county, state, and national levels. Expanding educational and workforce training opportunities could help support local economic development and provide residents with greater career advancement prospects.

Employment

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Jefferson County had an unemployment rate of 4% in December 2024. This figure is slightly higher than the state average of 3.6% but on par with the national average of 4.1% for the same time period.

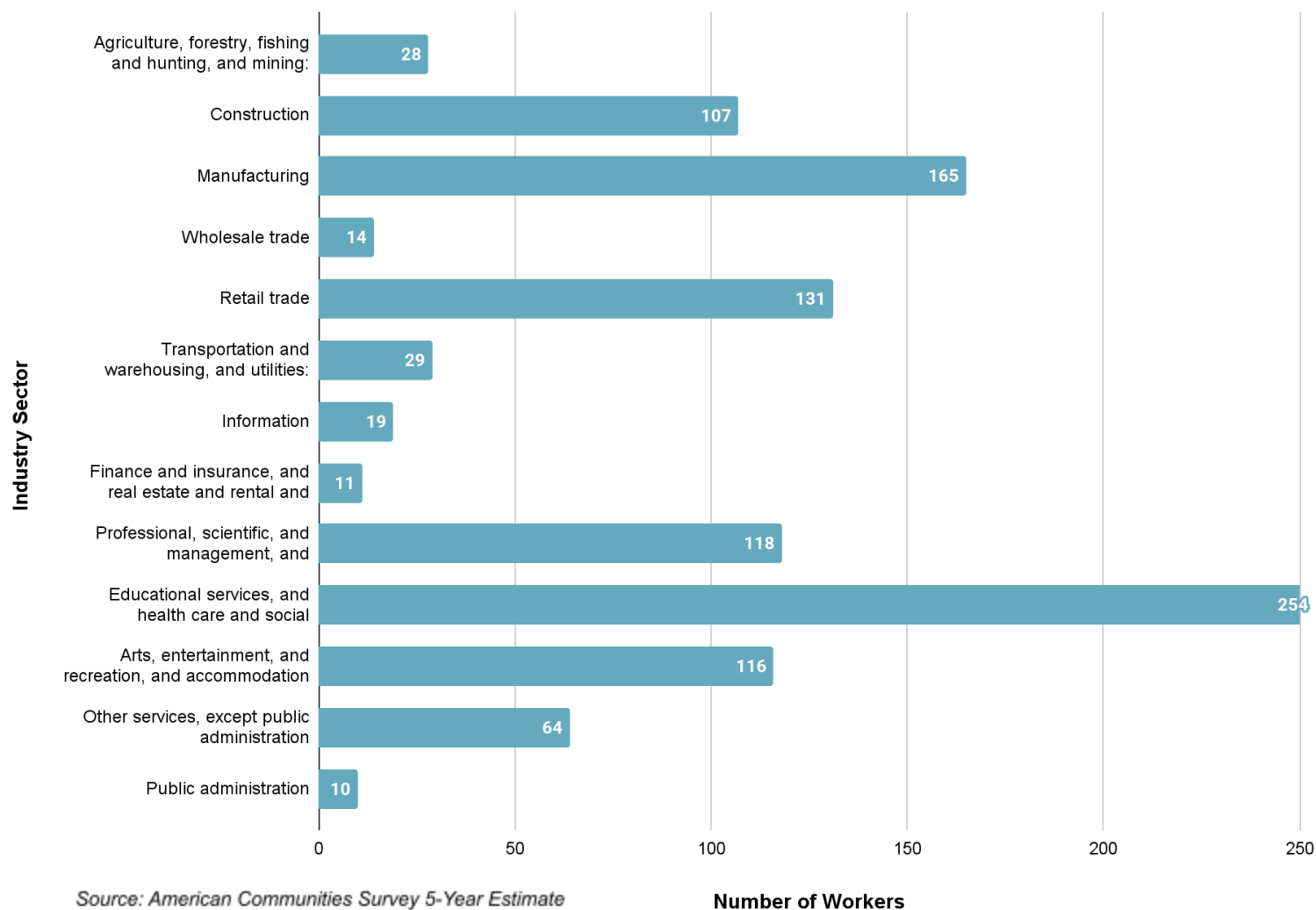
Figure 13 - Employment by Industry



Source: Esri - Community Key Facts

The Census Bureau's American Communities Survey estimates that some 1,066 Reynoldsville residents are a part of the civilian workforce. Noted in Figure 14 below, primary employment sectors for those residents include Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Construction, and Retail Trade. These sectors are consistent with those observed in Jefferson County and the broader U.S. where healthcare and manufacturing are also significant employment sectors. Retail trade, though fluctuating with economic conditions, remains a steady source of employment, particularly in small-town communities like Reynoldsville.

Figure 14 - Employment by Industry Sector



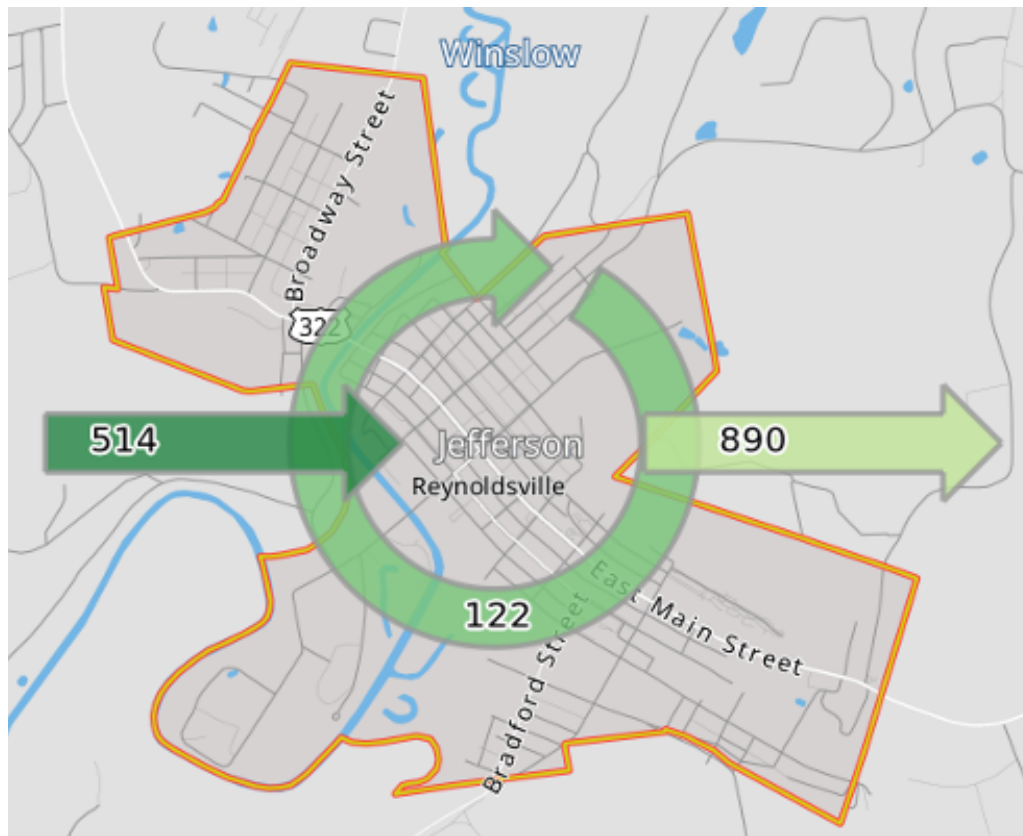
The Borough itself hosts an array of businesses that significantly contribute to its local economy and provide employment opportunities. Among the most prominent are:

- CG Johnson Elementary School (DuBois Area School District)
- STAAR Logistics
- Utilities and Industries
- Sintergy, Inc.
- Seco Tools (Niagara Cutter)

Analysis provided by the Census Bureau's "On the Map" tool shows worker inflow / outflow in Reynoldsville. As shown in Figure 15 below, an estimated 514 people travel into Reynoldsville to work at their primary places of employment, while 890 residents travel outside of the

Borough for employment opportunities. An estimated 122 residents live and work in the Borough.

Figure 15 - Worker Inflow / Outflow



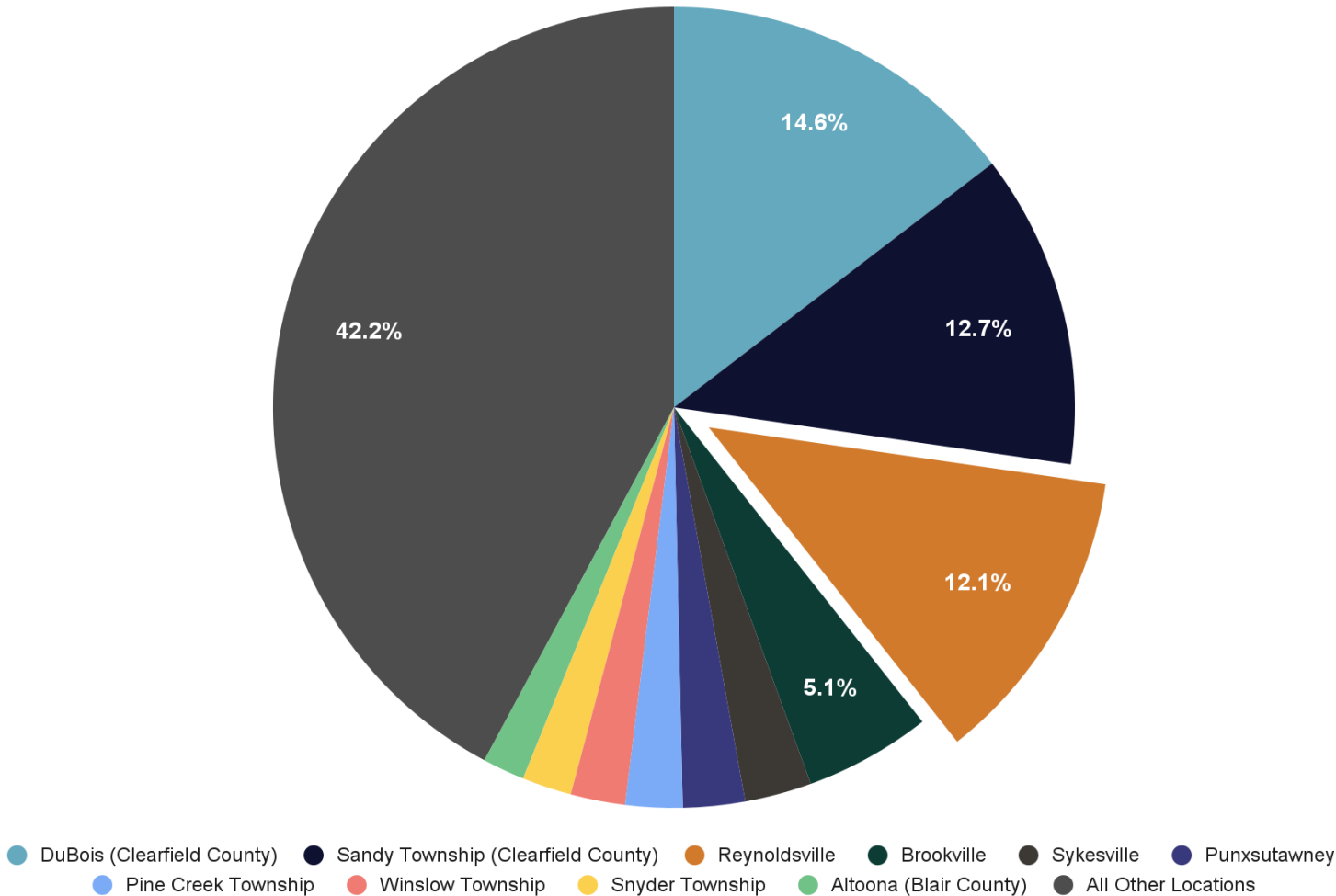
Source: United States Census Bureau - "On the Map" Inflow / Outflow Analysis

Commute patterns for workers in Reynoldsville reflect the Borough's rural character, with many residents traveling to nearby towns and cities for employment opportunities. Figure 16 below highlights employment destinations, with the most popular areas being nearby DuBois and Sandy Township.

The rise of remote work policies has provided new flexibility, allowing residents to seek jobs with employers located far outside the region without the burden of long daily commutes. This shift has the potential to attract new residents to Reynoldsville, as workers could take advantage of the Borough's lower cost of living while maintaining employment with companies in urban centers. However, reliable broadband access remains a crucial factor in fully capitalizing on these remote work opportunities.

The rise of remote work policies provides new flexibility and has the potential to attract new residents to Reynoldsville, as workers could take advantage of the Borough's lower cost of living while maintaining employment with companies in urban centers.

Figure 16 - Employment Destination



Facing the Future: Reversing the Decline and Reclaiming Opportunity

Population decline experienced by Reynoldsville Borough mirrors broader statewide trends among rural communities. A series of multifaceted and interrelated factors contribute to sustained out-migration and natural population decline, particularly in areas with limited economic opportunities, aging infrastructure, and constrained public services. These dynamics are observable in Reynoldsville, where modest household incomes, a steadily aging population, and housing disinvestment have created conditions that discourage new residents while prompting younger populations to relocate.

Table 3 below outlines 15 key variables tied to rural depopulation, ranging from housing availability and job access to educational attainment, healthcare access, and civic engagement.

Reynoldsville demonstrates multiple risk factors across this spectrum. The Borough's limited access to skilled jobs, constrained housing market, and minimal post-secondary opportunities make it increasingly difficult to retain or attract working-age households. The recent announcement of Penn State DuBois' closure - one of the region's few remaining access points to higher education - further compounds the Borough's long-term economic outlook, removing a vital pathway to workforce development and diminishing the area's competitiveness for both residents and employers. As the tax base contracts and infrastructure continues to age, the cycle of disinvestment and population loss is likely to accelerate unless addressed through targeted, coordinated intervention.

Table 3 - Rural Depopulation Variables and Policy Interventions

Variable Identifier	Conceptual Definition	Empirical Synthesis	Evidence Strength	Policy Interventions
Chronic Out-Migration	Sustained departure of residents, especially young adults, due to limited opportunities.	Drives population loss directly and indirectly via fewer births; creates a feedback loop with aging and mortality.	High: consistently cited as a primary driver (e.g., Cromartie, 2017; Johnson & Lichter, 2019).	Job creation, education incentives, remote work opportunities.
Aging Population & Natural Decrease	Older population share increases due to out-migration and low births; deaths exceed births.	Leads to net population loss; exacerbates dependency ratios and service strain in rural PA (20% over 65, 2020).	High: key mechanism in rural decline (e.g., Glasgow & Brown, 2012; Johnson & Lichter, 2019).	Healthcare expansion (e.g., telehealth), family support policies to boost births.
Economic Diversification & Vitality	Variety of industries and ability to sustain growth; reduces reliance on single sectors.	Lack of diversification linked to stagnation and out-migration; critical for resilience (Li et al., 2019).	Moderate: strong theoretical link, less PA-specific data (e.g., Crane, 1975; Herzenberg & Price, 2008).	Industry incentives, entrepreneurship grants, market integration support.
Employment Opportunities & Income Levels	Availability and quality of jobs; average earnings influencing prosperity and retention.	Job scarcity and low incomes spur out-migration; tied to economic distress (Merino & Prats, 2020).	High: direct correlate with migration (e.g., Feser & Sweeney, 2003; Herzenberg & Price, 2008).	Job training, wage subsidies, manufacturing revitalization.
Infrastructure Quality	Condition of transportation, utilities, healthcare, and schools affecting livability.	Deficits (e.g., broadband, healthcare) accelerate decline; quality	High: frequently tied to retention (e.g., Cañal-Fernández &	Broadband expansion, healthcare access

Variable Identifier	Conceptual Definition	Empirical Synthesis	Evidence Strength	Policy Interventions
		retains residents (Herzenberg & Price, 2008).	Álvarez, 2022; Carver, 1927).	improvements, road upgrades.
Social Capital & Community Resilience	Networks and trust enabling collaboration; capacity to adapt to shocks.	Strong social capital buffers decline but can isolate; resilience varies (Peters, 2019; Li et al., 2019).	<i>Moderate:</i> context-specific impact (e.g., PA's tight-knit communities; Peters, 2019).	Community development programs, networking with urban centers.
Educational Access	Availability and quality of schooling (K-12, vocational, higher ed) impacting human capital.	Limited access drives youth out-migration; schools anchor families (Herzenberg & Price, 2008).	<i>Moderate:</i> significant in youth retention (e.g., Cañal-Fernández & Álvarez, 2022).	School funding, distance learning, vocational training centers.
Agricultural Mechanization & Sector Shifts	Tech reducing farm labor needs; economy shifting from agriculture to other sectors.	Fewer farm jobs push labor to cities; lack of new sectors accelerates decline (Carver, 1927; Nickels & Day, 1997).	<i>Moderate:</i> historical relevance, less dominant now (e.g., Nickels & Day, 1997).	Agri-tourism, niche farming support, sectoral diversification.
Proximity to Urban Centers	Distance and connectivity to urban hubs affecting access to jobs and services.	Closer proximity stabilizes populations; remote areas decline faster (Nickels & Day, 1997).	<i>High:</i> spatial pattern evident in PA (e.g., Cañal-Fernández & Álvarez, 2022).	Transportation networks, commuter incentives, regional collaboration.
Income/Wealth Gaps & Poverty	Economic inequality and lack of resources undermining development and retention.	High poverty and gaps weaken resilience, drive out-migration (Peters, 2019; Lichter & Johnson, 2025).	<i>Moderate:</i> linked to social and economic decline (e.g., Lichter & Johnson, 2025).	Poverty alleviation programs, equitable tax policies, local investment.
Housing & Zoning Constraints	Availability, affordability, and regulations shaping residential options.	Limited housing deters new residents; zoning restricts growth (Herzenberg & Price, 2008; Lu & Paull, 2007).	<i>Moderate:</i> practical barrier in PA (e.g., November 2024 data; Herzenberg & Price, 2008).	Affordable housing incentives, zoning reform, vacant property repurposing.
Policy & Governance	Frameworks and decisions guiding resource allocation and development.	Effective policies attract investment; poor ones worsen decline (Loras-Gimeno et al., 2025; Crane, 1975).	<i>Moderate:</i> context-dependent impact (e.g., Ran & Hafer, 2023; Herzenberg & Price, 2008).	Coordinated rural strategies, local leadership empowerment, Act 21 implementation.

Variable Identifier	Conceptual Definition	Empirical Synthesis	Evidence Strength	Policy Interventions
Perceptions of Rural vs. Urban Life	Views on rural living's benefits/drawbacks influencing migration decisions.	Negative perceptions drive out-migration; positive ones can attract (Ran & Hafer, 2023; Carver, 1927).	Moderate: understudied but influential (e.g., Ran & Hafer, 2023).	Marketing rural appeal, quality-of-life enhancements, cultural preservation.
Demographic Diversity & Inclusion	Variations in race, age, ethnicity; welcoming environment impacting cohesion and growth.	Diversity can stabilize numbers; inclusion boosts resilience (Lichter & Johnson, 2025; Peters, 2019).	Moderate: emerging trend in PA (e.g., 7% rise in diverse families; Lichter & Johnson, 2025).	Immigrant integration, cultural inclusivity programs, labor gap initiatives.
Environmental Constraints & Climate Factors	Natural disasters, resource depletion affecting livability and economy.	Subtle role in PA (e.g., flooding, coal legacy); more significant elsewhere (Nickels & Day, 1997; Yu et al., 2022).	Low: minor in PA context (e.g., Nickels & Day, 1997).	Climate adaptation (e.g., flood management), sustainable land use, environmental cleanup.

These variables and findings reinforce the need for the Borough to adopt long-range strategies aimed at reversing decline. This includes focusing on housing revitalization, economic diversification, youth and workforce development, and planning tools such as zoning, SALDO, and comprehensive planning. If left unaddressed, the Borough's current demographic trends will continue to undermine fiscal sustainability, diminish quality of life, and strain core services. These issues must be met with urgency and strategic planning to reposition Reynoldsville for long-term resilience.

Recommendations

Building on this demographic snapshot, the following preliminary recommendations are designed to support governance operations that can effectively respond to Reynoldsville's unique challenges and opportunities. These suggestions aim to align local leadership and operational capacity with broader community needs, ensuring that future investments in housing, economic development, and infrastructure are guided by a responsive and resilient municipal framework.

Recommendation #1 - Decrease Size of Borough Council & Committees

Consider reducing the number of council members from the current number to five. A smaller council can enhance operational continuity, improve meeting efficiency, and streamline decision-making processes. With fewer members, it becomes easier to maintain quorum, foster

consistent engagement, and encourage stronger working relationships among council members. Additionally, a five-member council is often more manageable for small boroughs where the pool of residents interested in public service may be limited.

This change could help improve governance stability, reduce turnover-related disruptions, and ensure that policy and strategic goals are more effectively advanced over time. Such a modification would require an ordinance change in accordance with the Pennsylvania Borough Code. At the same time, evaluate the efficacy of the council committees.

Recommendation #2 - Reenvision Organizational Structure

(To be further examined after the Management Review) Consider securing a regional multi-municipal manager or contracted municipal management services.

Recommendation #3 - Conduct a Housing and Blight Study

Initiate a comprehensive Housing and Blight Study to assess the current condition of its residential housing stock, identify patterns of vacancy and property distress, and inform targeted revitalization strategies. Given the Borough's aging housing inventory and reinvestment challenges, this study would provide critical baseline data to support future planning, land use regulations, and grant-seeking efforts.

A thorough analysis would include a parcel-by-parcel review to categorize properties by condition, occupancy status, and code compliance, as well as a review of demographic, ownership, and market trends. The findings would enable the Borough to prioritize code enforcement, demolition, rehabilitation, and reuse strategies, helping to preserve stable neighborhoods while addressing blight in a strategic, data-driven manner.

This study can also serve as a foundation for collaboration with county agencies, land banks, and regional housing partners, ultimately positioning Reynoldsville to access funding streams such as PHARE (Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to implement its revitalization goals.

Recommendation #4 - Create a Redevelopment Authority and/or Business Improvement District

Establish a Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and / or a Business Improvement District (BID) to support reinvestment and long-term economic revitalization. A Redevelopment Authority would serve as a dedicated entity with the legal authority to acquire, manage, and dispose of vacant, blighted, or underutilized properties, while also leveraging state and federal funding for

redevelopment projects. Alternatively, or in conjunction, a BID would enable downtown property and business owners to collectively invest in services and improvements, such as enhanced maintenance, marketing, façade upgrades, and streetscape enhancements, that go beyond what the Borough can provide alone.

These tools can be instrumental in creating a coordinated, community-driven approach to revitalizing Reynoldsville's downtown area, attracting new businesses, increasing property values, and enhancing quality of life. The Borough should engage stakeholders, conduct feasibility assessments, and seek technical assistance from state agencies like the DCED to initiate this process.

Recommendation #5 - Strengthen Code Enforcement Capacity to Address Community Blight

Expand code enforcement efforts to more effectively identify and mitigate property-related blight and uphold community standards. To support this, the Borough should consider engaging third-party code enforcement professionals or establishing a full-time in-house position dedicated to enforcement activities. A designated, consistent enforcement presence allows for proactive monitoring, timely responses to complaints, and more comprehensive case management.

In tandem with staffing enhancements, the Borough should invest in training opportunities for existing personnel to ensure they remain up to date with current code enforcement best practices, legal procedures, and property maintenance standards. This could include certification programs, regional workshops, and peer networking opportunities focused on enforcement strategies in rural and small-town settings.

A more robust code enforcement program will not only help maintain property values and neighborhood appearance but also serve as a deterrent to neglect. Clear communication with property owners, streamlined citation, recordkeeping, and follow-up processes, and partnerships with redevelopment and housing programs can further support revitalization goals. By strengthening this function, the Borough can more effectively address blighted properties and support long-term community improvement efforts.

Recommendation #6 - Enhance Community Character

Strengthen the Borough's sense of place and improve both aesthetic appeal and functionality by prioritizing investment in sidewalk improvements, upgraded pedestrian-scale lighting, wayfinding signage, and cohesive streetscape enhancements. These elements not only support

walkability and safety but also contribute to a more welcoming and connected environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Well-maintained sidewalks ensure accessibility for all users, while improved lighting enhances safety and visibility, particularly in the downtown and residential areas. Strategically placed wayfinding signage can guide visitors to key destinations such as parks, community buildings, and historic sites while encouraging exploration and supporting local businesses. Streetscape enhancements, including benches, planters, street trees, and consistent design features, help define the community's character and can serve as a catalyst for additional private investment.

The Borough should incorporate these improvements into capital planning efforts and actively pursue funding opportunities through PennDOT's Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF), DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2), and DCED's Keystone Communities Program. Prioritizing community character improvements will foster civic pride, promote walkability, and position Reynoldsville as an attractive place to live, work, and visit.

Recommendation #7 - Enhance the Borough Website to Improve Communication and Community Outreach

Implement enhancements to the Borough's official website to better serve both residents and visitors by improving the accessibility, timeliness, and presentation of information. A well-designed, user-friendly website is a critical tool for transparent governance, civic engagement, and community promotion.

For residents, the website should be regularly updated with council meeting agendas and minutes, public notices, ordinances, budget information, and event announcements. Online forms, permit applications, and fee schedules should be easily accessible to streamline interactions with Borough departments. Clear contact information and a functional calendar of events will further support transparency and resident engagement.

In addition, the website should be used as a marketing tool to highlight the Borough's unique assets, local businesses, recreational opportunities, history, and community events. Creating dedicated pages or interactive features that showcase the area's strengths can help attract new residents, visitors, and economic investment. Enhancements may include integrating GIS-based maps, adding high-quality imagery, and ensuring mobile responsiveness.

Strategic website upgrades will strengthen the Borough's communications infrastructure, support local development goals, and promote a stronger connection between the Borough and its stakeholders.

Recommendation #8 - Fund Shared Services through Intergovernmental Cooperation

Actively pursue and fund shared services in collaboration with neighboring municipalities and the County to improve service delivery and create long-term cost savings. Key opportunities include -

- Creation of a Joint Planning Commission to streamline land use planning and zoning efforts.
- Explore shared police services to ensure sustainable and responsive public safety coverage.
- Implement shared equipment agreements, either through an established Council of Governments (COG) or via Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreements, to reduce capital costs and increase access to specialized tools and resources.

Formalizing these partnerships allows for the leveraging of economies of scale, the standardization of service levels across jurisdictions, and the efficient use of limited personnel and financial resources. Additionally, cooperative arrangements can open doors to targeted state and federal funding opportunities that specifically support regional collaboration.

To begin this process, the Borough should assess existing agreements, identify service areas with the highest potential for collaboration, and work with legal counsel and regional partners to develop the necessary intergovernmental frameworks. Institutionalizing shared services will position the Borough for more resilient governance and improved operational capacity.

Recommendation #9 - Adopt Land Use Regulations

Prioritize the adoption of a modern Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) that align with the Borough's community development and redevelopment objectives. Currently, the Borough does not have a Zoning Ordinance or a SALDO leaving it without two of the most critical tools available to guide future growth, manage land use, and support blight mitigation and redevelopment efforts. The absence of these regulations limits the Borough's ability to promote orderly development, ensure compatibility of land uses, or leverage land use policy as a means of revitalizing distressed or underutilized areas.

A zoning ordinance can establish appropriate land uses, encourage reinvestment in the downtown area and other core areas, promote infill development, and help maintain or enhance community character. Likewise, a SALDO can regulate how land is divided and

developed, ensuring new development meets standards for infrastructure, stormwater management, pedestrian access, and overall livability.

Establishing these ordinances will enable the Borough to proactively shape its future, support strategic redevelopment, and attract private investment. It is recommended that the Borough pursue the development of these ordinances in coordination with planning professionals, and consider working jointly with nearby municipalities or through county planning resources to reduce costs and enhance regional alignment. These foundational land use regulations will be essential to advancing blight mitigation, housing revitalization, and economic development initiatives.

Recommendation #10 - Adopt a (Regional or Joint) Comprehensive Plan

Develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan, ideally as a joint or regional effort with neighboring municipalities, to establish a shared vision for long-term growth, development, and community revitalization. A comprehensive plan provides a strategic framework for guiding land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development over a 10-year horizon.

Given limited capacity and shared challenges common among small, rural municipalities, a joint comprehensive planning process can create efficiencies, strengthen intermunicipal collaboration, and position the Borough and its partners to access state and federal grant funding that prioritizes regional approaches. A regional or joint plan can also help align land use policies across borders, identify common priorities, and create opportunities for shared services and infrastructure investments.

Without a comprehensive plan, Reynoldsville lacks a coordinated, data-driven basis for future land use decisions, zoning, redevelopment, and capital improvement planning. By adopting a joint or regional plan, the Borough can better anticipate future needs, coordinate with surrounding communities, and pursue sustainable growth strategies that reflect the needs and aspirations of its residents. The planning process must follow the provisions outlined by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and should be inclusive, transparent, and focused on creating actionable steps to support economic revitalization, housing reinvestment, and improved quality of life.

Recommendation #11 - Develop a Comprehensive Recreation Plan

Undertake the development of a Comprehensive Recreation Plan to guide the future investment, maintenance, and programming of the Boroughs parks and recreation facilities and community pool. This master planning effort would provide a strategic framework for

evaluating existing assets, identifying community needs, prioritizing improvements, and aligning recreation goals with broader community development and quality of life objectives.

A well-crafted Recreation Plan can support long-term planning for capital improvements, accessibility upgrades, and the expansion of recreational opportunities for residents of all ages. The planning process should include a detailed assessment of current facilities, including the pool, play areas, green spaces, trails, and athletic fields, as well as public engagement to gather community input on priorities and desired amenities.

Developing a Recreation Plan also positions the Borough to be more competitive when applying for state and federal funding, including grants through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). By identifying short- and long-term goals, potential partnerships, and implementation strategies, the plan can serve as a roadmap for reinvesting in outdoor spaces that promote health, community engagement, and local pride.

Recommendation #12 - Implement a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Strategy

Develop and implement a comprehensive stormwater management strategy to address current drainage issues, prevent localized flooding, and support long-term infrastructure resilience. This strategy should include a full assessment of the existing stormwater infrastructure, identification of critical areas needing repair or improvement, and the integration of green infrastructure where feasible to reduce runoff and improve water quality.

Additionally, the Borough should ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal stormwater regulations, including MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) requirements, as required. As part of this effort, the Borough may consider adopting a stormwater ordinance, developing a maintenance and inspection schedule for stormwater facilities, and exploring funding opportunities such as grants or the establishment of a stormwater utility fee to support ongoing improvements.

Effective stormwater management not only safeguards public and private property but also contributes to environmental health and supports community revitalization efforts by improving the overall appearance and function of public spaces.

