



2024-2025 CONNECT Resolutions
CONNECT Legislative Session
September 12, 2024

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Baldwin Township
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Ben Avon
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Resolution 24-01

Welcoming New Members

Presented by Phyllis J Anderson, Oakmont Borough

WHEREAS the Boroughs of Braddock, North Braddock, Neville Township, and Rankin have requested membership to join CONNECT; and

WHEREAS the Boroughs of Braddock, North Braddock, Neville Township, and Rankin have met the criteria set in the “Policy on inviting new municipalities to join the Congress of Neighboring Communities” that was accepted by the CONNECT Executive Committee in February of 2015.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Boroughs of Braddock, North Braddock, Neville Township, and Rankin are accepted as member municipalities by the Congress of Neighboring Communities.

Resolution 24-02

Wellbeing for Local Governments

Presented by Steve Beuter, Carnegie Borough

WHEREAS the wellbeing of local government officials and staff is crucial for maintaining effective governance and delivering high-quality services to the community; and

WHEREAS the demanding nature of their roles often leads to stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction; and the advent of social media and the 24 hour news cycle, our government leaders are under more pressure and increasingly less resourced than ever before and at the same time our infrastructure is crumbling and weather related crises are causing more physical and psychological damage to communities; and

WHEREAS some elected officials, who may hold separate full-time positions, often feel overburdened, and appointed officials may be unable to take time to address their own mental health and wellbeing needs, making it difficult to address needs in their communities; and

WHEREAS CONNECT has recognized the need to prioritize the wellbeing of local government officials and staff, to not only benefit the individuals directly involved, but

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also contribute to a healthier, more resilient, and effective governance system that ultimately serves the community's needs more efficiently and compassionately; and

WHEREAS CONNECT will assess the current wellbeing status of local government officials and staff, develop a customized wellbeing program that includes physical, mental, and social components to promote holistic wellness among employees, and implement targeted interventions and initiatives to support employee wellbeing, such as wellness, mindfulness, and leadership workshops, mental health resources, and team-building activities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CONNECT will create a sustainable framework for ongoing wellbeing initiatives within the local government, including training for local government officials and staff, policies that prioritize employee wellbeing, and a culture that values work-life balance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CONNECT will also evaluate the effectiveness of the program through feedback mechanisms, follow-up assessments, and outcome measurements related to job satisfaction, stress levels, productivity, and absenteeism.

Resolution 24-03
Law Enforcement Assisted-Diversion (LEAD)
Presented by Alice Gabriel, Etna Borough

WHEREAS since 2017, CONNECT members have committed time and resources to addressing the rise of opioid overdoses in their municipalities; and

WHEREAS people with opioid use disorders and other behavioral health issues are often repeatedly arrested for problematic behaviors and cycle through the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS law enforcement officers and other stakeholders in CONNECT communities have identified the need for new tools to assist people with unmet behavioral health needs; and

WHEREAS criminal legal system involvement disproportionately affects people of diverse demographics in CONNECT communities, and repeatedly arresting these community members often does not address the root causes of their problematic behaviors; and

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WHEREAS CONNECT has worked closely with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and Allegheny County Health Department to secure funding for LEAD; and

WHEREAS CONNECT's municipal councils, managers, police departments, social workers, and community members, with the support of the LEAD Project Manager and the CONNECT Director of Public Safety and Wellbeing, have successfully implemented a LEAD pilot in CONNECT member municipalities and their neighboring communities; and

WHEREAS the CONNECT LEAD pilot has completed its first year and began its second, while providing many residents of CONNECT communities with access to housing, education services, treatment for SUD, legal services, and more; and

WHEREAS the CONNECT LEAD initiative has led to 25 incidents of legal charges dropped or dismissed, 38 MAT Sessions, 21 stabilizations of housing situations, hundreds of impacted lives, and much more while providing support to 16 CONNECT communities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CONNECT municipal member representatives will continue to be open to engaging in dialogue with law enforcement and community members about LEAD.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CONNECT will support the exploration of LEAD in CONNECT and the potential to pilot in select CONNECT member municipalities.

Resolution 24-04

Cybersecurity

Presented by George Zboyovsky, Brentwood Borough

WHEREAS the federal government has released millions of dollars for promoting cybersecurity and cyber resilience across the nation; and

WHEREAS the CONNECT municipalities are part of an ever-increasingly global world, and no longer only have to contend with malicious actors from the Western PA region, but have to grapple with cyber attacks from foreign actors; and

WHEREAS the multiplicity of cyber attacks in Western PA in the past year, which have collectively cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and led to the illegal release of thousands of residents' information, have cemented the need for strengthen cybersecurity best practices in CONNECT communities; and

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WHEREAS the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), (SPC), the Western PA Fusion Center, and the federal Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), and others have been working on this and have called upon CONNECT to provide more localized municipal support.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we will work with the federal and state entities to produce a CONNECT Cybersecurity Plan, a guide to regional cybersecurity best practices, and grant applications to fund technical support to implement the identified best practices, and that these efforts should position CONNECT to facilitate a regional effort to achieve cybersecurity awareness and strengthened cyber resilience across the county.

Resolution 24-05
Infrastructure Resilience/ Tree Canopy
Presented by Jim Price, Crafton Borough

WHEREAS the region experienced increasingly erratic weather in recent years including higher temperatures, extreme temperature swings and increased rainfall, and impacts such as flooding, landslides and poor air quality add additional stress on infrastructure and residents; and

WHEREAS trees provide considerable co- benefits of stormwater management, shade cover, air filtering and hillside stabilization; and while Allegheny County has 51.7% tree canopy coverage as of 2020, it also experienced a net loss of more than 4,000 acres in 5 years; and

WHEREAS in 2022, CONNECT membership formally adopted a regional Climate Action Plan to enable greater collective action, impact and efficiency on this issue and in 2024 brought on additional Infrastructure & Resilience staffing capacity; and

WHEREAS federal, state, and private funding for climate mitigation and adaptation is increasingly available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, with funding already distributed to organizations throughout the region.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CONNECT will work with partner organizations including the Pittsburgh Tree Canopy Alliance to launch a cohort to strengthen tree canopy and explore and test strategies to prepare natural infrastructure and the built environment to withstand and protect against impacts of the changing climate.

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Resolution 24-06

Housing

Presented by Joelisa McDonald, Rankin Borough

WHEREAS the Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968 to prevent discrimination in the sale or rent of housing the history of past housing discrimination continues to impact our region as seen in the high levels of segregation within communities; and

WHEREAS member municipalities have been meeting as an exploratory cohort preparing to seek support to promote housing development like market studies, zoning updates and other activities in order to make quality housing and high opportunity neighborhoods equally available to all residents in our region; and

WHEREAS the median age of homes in Allegheny County is 70 years old, leaving many residents vulnerable to lead contamination and costly repairs that threaten the livability of homes; and

WHEREAS 1-in-5 residents in Allegheny County are over the age of 65 and 1-in-3 residents has a functional disability leading to reduced incomes and a need for accessibility modifications to their homes; and

WHEREAS CONNECT has a successful history of multi-municipal collaboration and has produced and compiled documentation and proposed priorities based on the above mentioned education and engagement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CONNECT staff and partners support our region to realize the goal of removing obstacles to affordable and accessible housing and increase the ability of residents to live in neighborhoods of high opportunity.

Resolution 24-07

Multi-Municipal Legal Framework

Presented by Andrew Flynn, Mt. Lebanon Township

WHEREAS historic federal and state investments have been made to improve infrastructure, public safety, equity, and address emerging issues; and

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WHEREAS fragmentation and small tax bases of municipalities in the Southwest PA region make it difficult for communities to organize, manage, and receive funding and financing for these projects on their own; and

WHEREAS an authority structure, formed and governed by one or more governments, would provide a powerful administrative and investment vehicle to expedite regional projects and create efficiencies without mergers/consolidations; and

WHEREAS such special authorities, infrastructure banks, and districts exist across the country to accomplish public purposes on behalf of municipalities; and

WHEREAS CONNECT municipalities are in a unique position to lead and benefit from such a model due to years of successful multi-municipal collaboration.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CONNECT will explore the activation of an official structure in order to scale collaborative municipal initiatives and attract resources to the region, through existing governmental units, or the formation of a new entity, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such an authority will serve to improve the region by providing opportunities for the CONNECT membership as well as all municipalities throughout Southwest Pennsylvania.