

Why is the Centre Region COG valuable to Halfmoon Township?

February 9, 2016 draft

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Service Required by Law to be Provided to the Residents: Yes

Cost: \$4,943

Scope of Services: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires the Township and all other municipalities to have an Emergency Management Coordinator, emergency management plan, and an emergency operations center. Halfmoon Township's participation in the COG program satisfies the Commonwealth's requirements in these three areas.

- Halfmoon Township, as a small municipality, has limited personnel, budget, equipment, and supplies to respond to an unexpected emergency. Should a major emergency occur in the Township, its resources would quickly be overwhelmed. The support of the other five Centre Region municipalities will be essential to the Township's recovery. As part of the Centre Region program, Halfmoon Township has efficient and cost effective access to the resources needed during a disaster.
- An public emergency shelter was developed in Halfmoon Township by the COG. This shelter, Halfmoon Christian Fellowship Church, gives Township residents a place to relocate during major emergencies which impact Township residents. In 2010 the COG budgeted **\$15,000** for the Halfmoon Township shelter project.
- The Emergency Management Coordinator provides ongoing training and exercises which are available to Halfmoon Township administrative staff, elected officials, public works employees, Fire and EMS companies, and Township residents at no charge. Training topics include sheltering, communications, incident management and emergency planning.
- The Emergency Management Coordinator is available to assist with planning large scale special events which may impact the Township and its emergency services.
- The Emergency Management Coordinator represents Halfmoon Township during required meetings call by the Centre County Office of Emergency Management.
- On behalf of the Township the Emergency Management Coordinator updates its Hazard Mitigation Plan. This five year plan update is required by Centre County.
- The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Council regards the Centre Region EM program as a "best practice" in the Commonwealth.

COG CODE ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Service Required by Law to be Provided to the Residents: Yes – Uniform Construction Code, & Code Board of Appeals

Cost to the Township: New Construction Plan Review and Inspection: **No cost to the Township**

Administer and enforce Halfmoon Township's ordinance relating to the Sewage Management Program that the Township is required to have by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection: **No cost to the Township**

Administer and enforce Halfmoon Township's Well and Borehole Ordinance: **No cost to the Township**

As required by Pennsylvania's Uniform Construction Code, maintain a Code Board of Appeals: **No cost to the Township**

Structural engineer available to the Township for consultation: **No cost to the Township**

Emergency Response for building evaluation in support of the fire departments and Township: **No cost to the Township**

Scope of Services: Under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Uniform Construction Code, Halfmoon Township is responsible for administering and enforcing the statewide building code. Within the Township, these services are provided by the Centre Region Code Administration (CRCA). No tax monies are used for code services. The Commonwealth considers the CRCA to be a model agency and often uses it as an example for other communities. It enforces the building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical codes in a professional, fair, and cost effective manner. In addition, the CRCA has been deemed to be in the top 0.2 percent of the code administering agencies nationwide and the top code administering agency in the Commonwealth by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) in their 2015 National Building Code Assessment Report. Through the CRCA code administration activities and public education activities in the Township the fire departments gain additional bonus points toward the Townships ISO rating through the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule. This information is used by insurance companies for determining the cost of homeowners/fire insurance for a property and the positive rating equates to savings for the Township residents.

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
SEWAGE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

AS OF 1/27/16

Total Properties in SMP: 941

	Full Tank Inspections	Walk Over Inspections
2008	42	n/a
2009	70	n/a
2010	143	n/a
2011	205	n/a
2012	128	n/a
2013	99	n/a
2014	60	129
2015	30	81
Total	777	210

Full Tank Inspects Waived: 145 (Walk over inspections that are completed or will be completed in the future)*

* Full tank inspections are waived for new systems, when the Sewage Enforcement Officer performs the inspection, etc)

Full Tank Inspections To Be Completed in 2016: 19 (waivers per Sewage Enforcement Officer or change of owner)

- The CRCA responds to requests from the Township for damage assessments (from fires, vehicular accidents, or deterioration over time/neglect) at no cost to the Township.
- The CRCA responds to resident complaints relating to building issues.
- The CRCA conducts site meetings in the Township with contractors and property owners. There is no charge for this service.
- The CRCA handles all of the financial transactions involving code administration, sewage management, and well and borehole fees.
- The CRCA responds to all of Halfmoon Township’s code-related Right-to-Know requests within the time periods mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The CRCA provides Public Officials Liability Insurance, fidelity bond, automotive, general liability, and umbrella insurance policies that are reviewed by a Risk Manager to ensure they are current and adequate to protect Halfmoon Township.
- Halfmoon Township is a member of the Centre Region Housing and Building Code Board of Appeals that reviews and acts on appeals from property owners who are seeking relief from a decision of the designated code official. Local governments are required by Pennsylvania State law to establish and maintain a code board of appeals.
- The CRCA has a Pennsylvania Registered Professional Engineer on staff who has earned a doctorate in structural engineering, undergraduate and master’s degrees in Architectural Engineering and has a breadth of knowledge in the entire built environment to help with code emergencies that may occur in Halfmoon Township, such as a pending wall or building collapse.
- This same code official is available to the Township for consultation on non-emergency issues, such as review of proposed design options for the new Township building or the assessment of the existing facility remediation plans.
- The CRCA maintains an all-inclusive website that explains inspection procedures and provides other code information of interest to contractors and residents. With a third party agency, Halfmoon Township may find it necessary to expand and maintain its website to include code information and invest time in keeping it updated. As a member of the CRCA, Halfmoon Township can simply add a link to the CRCA website.

- A member of Halfmoon Township is invited to attend all meetings of the Public Safety Committee. Building and rental permit fee changes are annually recommended by the Committee and adopted by the municipalities in their annual fee resolutions.
- The CRCA provides monthly reports on building activities to individual municipalities. CRCA Staff routinely attends meetings on local or regional issues where the CRCA may bring expertise or experience in dealing with an issue and participate as part of the local or regional solution if requested.
- Participation in the CRCA program provides intangible benefits to Halfmoon Township such as guidance on municipal construction projects. The CRCA staff also provides many years of experience and a wealth of information regarding the built environment. This experience and information is freely available to Staff and elected officials of Halfmoon Township.
- The thoroughness with which the CRCA conducts inspections of new construction, rental housing, commercial businesses, as well as the requirement for adherence to best construction practices, offers a level of safety that may assist in saving lives and reducing future fire calls in the municipality. This is important given the volunteer nature of the fire companies serving Halfmoon Township.
- The CRCA completes citation enforcement procedures. When ordinance violations are identified and subsequently not corrected by the offender, one of the final steps to compliance may be to issue a citation. The costs associated with completing the process of the citation are the responsibility of the CRCA. In this way, no cost is transferred to Halfmoon Township. Any resulting fines will be distributed to the Township's general fund.
- The CRCA provides Staff to Halfmoon Township in matters dealing with the remediation of problem properties including those that have fallen into a state of disrepair. This includes working with the owner to obtain compliance through order of repair or demolition if all other options have been exhausted.
- Through its work in the villages of Bellefonte, Boalsburg, and Lemont, the CRCA staff has experience in dealing with code issues involving historical structures.
- The CRCA administers Halfmoon Township's well and borehole ordinance. The CRCA staff assisted in the drafting of a similar model ordinance that was adopted by the six Centre Region municipalities and Bellefonte Borough. Staff has several years of experience in administering this ordinance and has a high level of technical knowledge relating to its application.
- The CRCA plan review and inspection services provided to Halfmoon Township are conducted by a nationally certified and experienced Staff that benefits from ongoing professional development activity. The CRCA Staff is among the most highly trained professional code personnel in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Staff members are instructors with the following organizations: the National Fire Protection Association, Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology, Pennsylvania Housing Resource Center, the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, and The Pennsylvania State University.

- The CRCA is audited by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L & I) in accordance with the Uniform Construction Code of Pennsylvania for compliance with the requirements of the code with specific focus on accessibility. The results of these audits have resulted in only minor discrepancies being observed. The CRCA will function as L & I point of contact for these audits. This level of consultation and compliance results in a reduced liability to building and business owners.
- The CRCA maintains all records regarding the building code, including long-term archival of all permit documents. These records are required to be maintained indefinitely and cannot be destroyed. Many of these are large format drawings.
- The CRCA will prepare and submit all building construction reports required by Centre County, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including program audits.
- The CRCA offers Halfmoon Township residents assistance with their building projects. Some property owners require support during the preparation of construction plans, especially for smaller projects. Outside of the normal plan review process, CRCA staff will meet with residents to discuss their projects, identify problems and code concerns, and brainstorm ideas for how to best address these concerns, including making site visits to the project at no additional charge.
- The CRCA will provide access to staff with expertise in a broad range of code disciplines that include mechanical systems, electrical service, and plumbing. In the event a contractor or property owner has a problem or a question regarding these often sophisticated and specialized systems, the CRCA has expertise on Staff to assist in finding solutions.
- Many renovation projects cost less than the current \$8,600. The CRCA building permit fee for a project under this amount is \$56, which is a very low cost given the Staff time invested in plan review and visiting the site possibly multiple times.
- The CRCA conducts public education programs on new building materials, techniques, and code changes. Contractors, design professionals, and owners who work in the municipalities are able to participate in these educational programs at no charge in most cases. The CRCA is able to provide nationally recognized programs to the Township at a significantly discounted cost.
- The CRCA provides faxable permits for some types of building projects (electrical service changes, the replacement of water heaters, etc.). Residents can also file applications electronically. The advantage to residents is that some types of building permits can be completed using a home computer.
- The staff of the CRCA has collectively developed the experience and skill to review and inspect complex construction and many specialty systems. This provides for the efficient review and inspection of construction projects without the need for costly and time consuming third party inspection services.
- The CRCA offers Halfmoon Township design professionals' and contractors' assistance with their large scale building projects through site visits, office meetings, and phone consultations to help

proactively identify and address potential project issues and difficult design situations at no additional charge.

- The CRCA is a resource for local building owners who are considering a building renovation project which is often more complicated than new construction. This guidance can be provided prior to the owner contracting with a design professional and at no additional cost.
- The CRCA through its recent technology upgrade has extended to its member municipalities including Halfmoon, the ability to use its Tyler-Munis software package for the permitting and land development, zoning, and building projects at no cost. This is a state-of-the-art cloud-based software package that has a value of \$18,000 per year for each municipality including the building code, zoning, land development, and re-occurring licensing functions.
- As part of the Tyler-Munis software package offer, the CRCA is paying for an upgraded internet connection, static IP address, and firewall for the Township to allow it access to the software in a high-speed environment. The cost of this was \$7,115 initially and \$1,644 annually going forward.
- As part of the Tyler-Munis software package offer, the CRCA supplied the Township with a cashing station for use with the software package. The cost of this equipment was \$4,249.

COG REGIONAL FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM

Service Required by Law to be Provided to the Residents: Yes

Cost: Operating Budget: \$0
Capital Budget: \$0

Scope of Services – Although Halfmoon Township does not participate in the COG Regional Fire Protection Program, the Alpha Fire Company, funded by the COG, is the primary mutual support company for the Port Matilda Fire Company. Because of the Patton Township Fire Station’s proximity to Halfmoon Township, there are some fires in Halfmoon Township when the Alpha Fire Company is the first company to arrive. Halfmoon Township does not donate to COG Regional Fire Protection Program. The level of support provided to the Port Matilda Fire Company and responses given to Halfmoon Township are identified below:

Number of Requests for Mutual Aid the Alpha Fire Company
received from the Port Matilda Fire Company

2013 = 45
2014 = 28
2015 = 34
2016 YTD = 4

For each of those years, the number of assists
WITHIN Halfmoon Township were:

2013 =6
2014 = 6
2015 = 10
2016 YTD = 0

- In 2015, Company 15 failed to respond twice, resulting in the Centre Region Fire Protection Program taking their call. Both were daytime/weekday calls.
- The Fire Director has reviewed about seven site plans for developments within Halfmoon Township during the last seven years. The Fire Director has also prepared a

comprehensive water study with Halfmoon Water on their supply and he did an evaluation of all the cisterns in the municipality.

- The Fire Director appeared before the Halfmoon Township Board of Supervisors twice and at the Township's request for emergency management, but the conversation involved discussion relating to the fire service.

SCHLOW CENTRE REGION LIBRARY

Service Required by Law to be Provided to the Residents: No

Cost: Operating Budget: \$39,918
Capital Budget: \$2,360

Scope of Services:

SCHLOW CENTRE REGION LIBRARY 2015 HALFMOON TOWNSHIP REPORT

- 7 day a week service, 61 hours per week, over 3,000 hours per year
- Web catalog with online holds and online renewals
- Quick and convenient access to all the materials held at the Centre County Library and its branches
- Remote returns (including Stormstown and Carson's Corner)
- Comfortable place to read, study, meet friends
- Children's programs for ages 1-12, including storytimes and summer reading
- Helpful staff providing reference and information service
- Telephone reference and renewals
- E-mail notifications and email book suggestions (NextReads)
- Online databases for homework assignments and general information
- Public computers and wireless access at the library
- Programs for teens, adults and seniors
- Downloadable audiobooks
- Meeting room for community groups

Total checkouts	19,245	
Average checkouts	7.20%	items per resident
Centre County Library Bookmobile checkouts	2,133	down 5% from 2014
Books/media	17,615	3.11% of all checkouts; up 16% over 2014
E-books	1,630	4.7% of all e-book checkouts
Value of items loaned	\$384,900	average \$20.00 per item
Remote returns to Stormstown-Brothers Pizza	3,127	34% increase over 2014
Remote returns to Carson's Corner-UniMart	3,353	4% increase over 2014
Summer Reading Program	113	children ages 5-12 registered via Gray's Woods Elementary
Library materials to choose from	150,748	total collection size as of 2/3/16

- Homebound library-by-mail service
- Free parking while using the library
- Bookmobile-If a citizen asks Schlow Library for a book can it be delivered to them through the bookmobile? Yes, Schlow Library materials can be delivered and returned via the bookmobile, as can any interlibrary loans from any library in the United States. Conversely, Centre County Library materials may be returned in the Schlow bookdrops.

Centre Regional Planning Agency

Service Required by Law to be Provided to the Residents: Some Regional Plans, by way of example – the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan, are required by state law. Much of the work of the Local Planner that is assigned to Halfmoon Township relates to the Township’s zoning and land development ordinances.

Cost: **Regional Planning** **\$10,429**
 Local Planning **\$49,062** (*The Township increased its share of Local Planning Services from 33 percent in to 40 percent in 2016*)

Scope of Services:

Local

- CRPA staff prepares for, and attends the Board of Supervisor meetings as required by the Township manager. This includes preparing all planning-related reports, making presentations, and answering Board questions.
- CRPA staff prepares the Planning Commission agenda, and facilitates the twice-monthly meeting. This includes preparing all reports, attachments, discussion items and action items on the agenda.
- The CRPA is currently rewriting the entire Township Zoning Ordinance.
- The CRPA staff is responsible for reviewing and assembling all comments related to land development plans, zoning text amendments, and other requests initiated by property owners in the Township.
- The CRPA staff provides training for planning commissioners. This includes specific Township training, Centre Regional Planning Commission training and annual peer-to-peer planning commissioner events.

Regional

- The Township participates in a multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan with the other six Centre Region municipalities. The Plan is administered by the CRPA staff. This substantially reduces the cost of any comprehensive planning the Township may undertake on its own and provides the legal protections necessary to support zoning decisions in the Township.
- The CRPA provide legal training to the planning commission at the 2015 peer-to-peer seminar on challenges to zoning validity in the Centre Region.

- The Township participates in a multi-municipal Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan with the other six Centre Region municipalities. The Act 537 Plan is administered by the CRPA staff. This substantially reduces the cost of any sewage planning the Township may undertake on its own. Because the plan is multi-municipal, the Township has the ability to request public sewer service to the Township without having to establish another sewer authority or build capital facilities to provide public sewer service.
- The Act 537 also provides the Township with a Sewage Management Plan to monitor individual on-lot septic systems and provides assurance to the Township that individual on-lot systems are well constructed, function properly, and will be maintained in working order for the life cycle of the system.
- The CRPA staff compiles demographic profiles of the Centre Region and individual municipalities. These data provide decision-makers information necessary to understand the composition of the Centre Region population and provide a guidance for future policy decisions.
- The CRPA provides a Regional Development Capacity (REDCAP) Report that determines development capacity inside the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area (RGB and SSA) and estimates treatment and discharge capacity at the University Area Joint Authority (UAJA) Treatment Plant.
- The CRPA staff prepared an assessment of the impact of how much development capacity from zoning districts outside the RGB and SSA could impact the Centre Region. Based upon this assessment, over 28,000 single family homes could be built outside the RGB and SSA. The Township used this information to help inform the current local rezoning process.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Service Required by Law to be Provided to the Residents: Federal law requires the expenditure of federal and state highway funds for capital projects be reviewed by an organization similar to the Centre Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCPMO)

Cost: CCPMO Operating Budget: \$4,259

Scope of Services:

- Through the COG, the Township has a voice on the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) that reviews and makes recommendations on the expenditure of state and federal funds for road projects.
- The COG arranges and conducts traffic counts in the Township, as requested.
- The COG arranges for special traffic studies on roads in the Township. Through the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) transportation planning program that is administered by COG, the Township has a voice in the allocation of state and federal funds for highway, bridge and public transit projects and programs that benefit Township residents. Township officials have a voice in the allocation process by having individual voting members on the CCMPO Technical and Coordinating Committees. Projects on the CCMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and short-range Transportation Improvement Program that benefit Township residents include the Route 550 Corridor Safety Improvements (Halfmoon and Patton Townships), the Atherton Street Drainage/Repaving project, and the Waddle Road Interchange Reconstruction.
- The COG's transportation planning staff conducts special planning studies of the transportation system in the Township. For example, in 2009 the CCMPO allocated \$40,000 in supplemental federal transportation planning funds to complete the Halfmoon/Patton Area Plan (HPAP) Traffic Study. The study included development of a sophisticated travel demand model that analyzed the performance of roadways in the HPAP study area under several different alternative land use scenarios, including a scenario addressing potential changes to zoning density in eastern Halfmoon Township that were being contemplated. The Traffic Study was completed in 2011, and was incorporated into the full Halfmoon/Patton Township Area Plan in 2012. Halfmoon and Patton Townships were not required to contribute the 20% (\$10,000) local matching share for the supplemental funding because the match was committed through the local shares included in the annual CCMPO Budget.

- The COG transportation planning staff includes persons with special expertise in pedestrian/bicycle planning and public transportation planning. The transportation staff previously assisted Halfmoon Township in the development and evaluation of a pedestrian crosswalk in the Village of Stormstown, and helped develop an assessment of whether the shoulders of certain Township roadways could be used by pedestrians and bicyclists. The transportation staff also assisted in the Township in preparing grant applications for projects that included the development of trail facilities. Most recently, COG completed a Regional Bicycle Plan to help guide development of bicycle facilities and programs in all six Centre Region municipalities, including Halfmoon Township.
- The COG transportation planning staff recently completed work on a new Strategic Plan for the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA), which provides fixed-route and paratransit service to the Township. One of the highest priority strategic actions approved in the Plan is the development of new models for provision of transit service to areas of low population density within the current service area, such as Halfmoon Township. The CCMPO is expected to request supplemental federal transit planning funds through the CCMPO to complete this strategic action, which may benefit the Township residents by the development of a more cost-effective method(s) of providing transit service.

COG OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Service Required by Law to be Provided to the Residents: There is no state law requiring municipalities to belong to a COG. In the case of the Centre COG, by municipal ordinances (the COG Articles of Agreement) all full members are required to contribute to the costs of the Office of Administration.

Cost: Operating Budget: \$16,031
Capital Budget: \$813

Scope of Services:

- The Administration Agency prepares agendas, minutes, reports, and correspondence for the General Forum and the Executive, Human Resources, Finance, Public Safety, and Public Services and Environmental Committees as well as the Municipal Managers' Roundtable Meetings. The Township has representatives on each of these groups. Additionally, all Township Supervisors are members of the General Forum.
- The Administrative Agency is responsible for payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, investments, administration of employee benefit programs, preparation of monthly voucher and financial summary reports, fund investment, and fixed asset accounting for all COG Agencies.
- The Administrative Agency is responsible for handling many personnel matters for all COG staff including the individuals who serve Halfmoon Township.
- The Executive Director serves as the Board of Supervisors and Township Manager's principal point of contact with the COG on issues relating to the quantity and quality of COG services.
- The Executive Director responds to Right to Know Requests for public records as they relate to the services the COG provides to Halfmoon Township.
- The Office of Administration coordinates among the COG Agencies an annual payment to Halfmoon Township of \$7,295 in rent for the Agencies' use of the COG Building. The COG building is owned by the member municipalities. The land is owned by the COG. Over the 25 lease, the COG will pay the six Centre Region municipalities over \$4.6 million in rent.