



Borough of Chambersburg

A full-service municipality in Franklin County celebrating over 65 years of consumer owned natural gas service over 120 years of community electric and a regional wastewater, water, storm sewer and municipal solid waste utility

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chambersburg Breaks Ground to Improve Critical Gas, Stormwater, and Transportation Infrastructure in the Borough

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Chambersburg, Franklin County – The Chambersburg community celebrated the start of two initiatives on Monday following the receipt of \$15.7 million in federal and state funding to make critical gas, stormwater, and transportation infrastructure improvements.



Replacement of antiquated natural gas infrastructure will occur on nearly 40 street segments throughout the borough, whereas rehabilitation of stormwater infrastructure and addition of key transportation infrastructure will occur as part of the Southgate neighborhood revitalization project.

The borough received nearly \$10.8 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to replace legacy cast iron gas pipes throughout the town to prevent dangerous gas leaks near houses and businesses. Additionally, another \$3.5 million was allocated to the borough through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to rehabilitate the Southgate Shopping Center's dilapidated stormwater infrastructure and prepare the site for future development. Two state grants, one from the Commonwealth Financing Authority and the other through PennDOT were awarded to the borough in the amount of approximately \$1.4 million to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and accessibility in Southgate.

“Our state and federal elected officials have been extremely supportive of the borough’s desire to replace and improve outdated infrastructure,” Chambersburg President of Town Council Allen Coffman said. “Our community is seeing an incredible investment, and it will improve the health, safety and welfare of thousands of people who need it most.”

Borough officials and community members marked the beginning of the projects with a groundbreaking with remarks from key supporters, including Chambersburg President of Town Council Allen Coffman, Congressman John Joyce, State Rep. Rob Kauffman, State Sen. Doug Mastriano, and staff members from US Sen. John Fetterman and US Sen. Bob Casey’s offices. The event gave the community a chance to learn about the projects, interact with stakeholders and project teams, and celebrate the coordinated effort to upgrade community infrastructure.

“We are one of the few municipalities in the Commonwealth that owns and operates its own gas infrastructure,” Chambersburg Borough Manager Jeffery Stonehill said. “While this helps keep costs low for our residents, it comes with the added responsibility of managing a vast infrastructure network.”

Since 2000, the borough has replaced more than 21 miles of its 26 miles of gas cast iron pipes — a technology that first appeared in the 19th century. Just under five miles of legacy cast iron remain; however, these lines have been cost prohibitive to replace due to their location under state roadways and in downtown areas.

“The Borough of Chambersburg’s commitment to a modern, safe, and cost-effective infrastructure is an incredible asset to all those who call the borough home,” Congressman Joyce said. “Working at the local, state, and federal levels, we can continue to support the critical investments that keep our communities running. It was an honor to be a part of this groundbreaking, and in Congress, I will continue working to ensure our tax dollars return home to be used on the projects that matter most.”

The borough received approximately \$5.2 million last year to complete phase one of the project. The second award of \$5.56 million from the USDOT’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration’s Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Monitoring Grant Program will pay for a significant cost of the remaining work to be completed, ensuring the continued provision of safe and affordable natural gas.

The continued supply of reliable natural gas is critical to maintain economic growth and promote development in the borough, which is one of the fastest growing areas in Franklin County. The project is also intended to provide natural gas service to several areas of the borough that are classified as historically disadvantaged communities, ensuring that these communities are supplied affordable energy.

Also celebrated at the event was the borough’s receipt of two allotments of funding in subsequent years to rehabilitate underground insufficient infrastructure at the Southgate Shopping Center, which has been the target of an extensive revitalization effort.

“The revitalization of Chambersburg’s Southgate neighborhood is a prime example of how strategic infrastructure investments can transform our communities. By replacing outdated gas lines and modernizing stormwater systems, we’re addressing urgent safety concerns and paving the way for future growth. This project demonstrates the power of collaboration between local, state, and federal partners to deliver tangible benefits. It’s a testament to what we can achieve when we prioritize the needs of historically disadvantaged areas. I’m proud to support these efforts and look forward to seeing Southgate become a vibrant hub of community and economic opportunity,” Senator Fetterman said.

With a total of \$3.5 million available from the USACE, the borough anticipates that it will be able rebuild much of the dilapidated stormwater infrastructure at the center. This includes relocating and rehabilitating a box culvert that runs under the parking lot that is responsible for managing 20 percent of the borough’s stormwater outflow. This is a critical step to ensuring the long-term efficacy of the culvert and to allow the lot to be redeveloped.

“The goal of the Southgate stormwater infrastructure project is to make the site ready for future commercial and residential development, mitigate flooding, and reduce sediment and nutrient loading into the Conococheague Creek,” Coffman said. “Having support at both the federal and state levels to secure funding needed for infrastructure improvements to advance the Southgate Redevelopment Initiative has been critical.”

The culvert is being relocated out of the shopping center parking lot, as part of the Southgate Redevelopment Initiative — a borough and community-led effort to improve the area in and around the shopping center, create new community-minded amenities, and encourage fresh retail and residential development. Stormwater infrastructure on Cedar Avenue and Water

Street will be completely overhauled. It is currently obsolete and in poor condition. As a result, each roadway will be redeveloped and improved.

Once Water Street is closed and excavated between Catherine and Washington streets, it will remain permanently closed to motorized vehicle traffic. After the stormwater work is complete, the two blocks will be landscaped to offer an enhanced portion of the Chambersburg Rail Trail, which currently exists onsite, but needs to be removed to replace the box culvert. The project will also include benches, lighting, greenspace, bike racks, bollards, crosswalks, pedestrian flashers and other amenities to the site.

“I’m happy to have had the opportunity to help the borough transform one of its blighted areas into a safe and economically-productive center,” Rep. Kauffman said. “This project is about helping create a new community hub and inviting new residential and commercial opportunities to benefit everyone.”

The improvement will be made next to existing senior housing and the under-construction Keystone Health medical facility. The project will allow residents to safely access the shopping center’s existing and anticipated commercial and social amenities without having to contend with motorized traffic. It also doubles as a new recreational asset.

Please contact Phil Wolgemuth, Deputy Borough Manager, at 717-251-2436 or pwolgemuth@chambersburgpa.gov with questions.

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About Chambersburg:

Chambersburg is a unique community. Chambersburg supplies more services than any other municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition to typical town functions, Chambersburg is Pennsylvania’s only municipality providing electric and gas to residents and businesses. Chambersburg is 1 of 35 Boroughs to operate a municipal non-profit electric utility. Chambersburg is the largest municipal electric utility in the State, twice as large as the second largest, Ephrata, Lancaster County; and, the only one to operate multiple generation stations. Chambersburg is 1 of 2 municipalities in PA to operate a natural gas utility. The other is Philadelphia, which does not operate an electric utility. Nationally, Chambersburg is 1 of 2,000 communities to have its own electric system and 1 of 1,000 communities to have a natural gas system but 1 of only about 60 to operate both. Chambersburg manages a regional water system, a regional sanitary sewer system (not through an independent Authority), and a new storm sewer utility; one of the first storm sewer utilities to form under the new Federal mandate to regulate stormwater. Chambersburg has a famous Aquatic Center as well. Chambersburg, the County Seat of Franklin County, currently has 22,172 residents (2022) and over 11,000 utility customers.