



## **SOUTHWEST BUTLER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

COG Model as a Platform of Ongoing  
Regional Cooperation

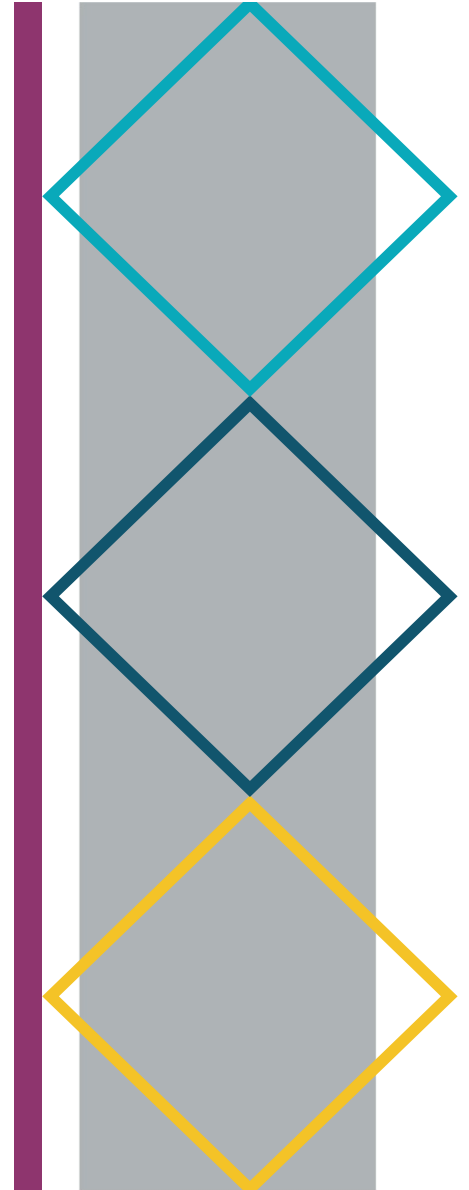


# COG Formation

Formed in 2023, the Southwest Butler Council of Governments is currently comprised of:

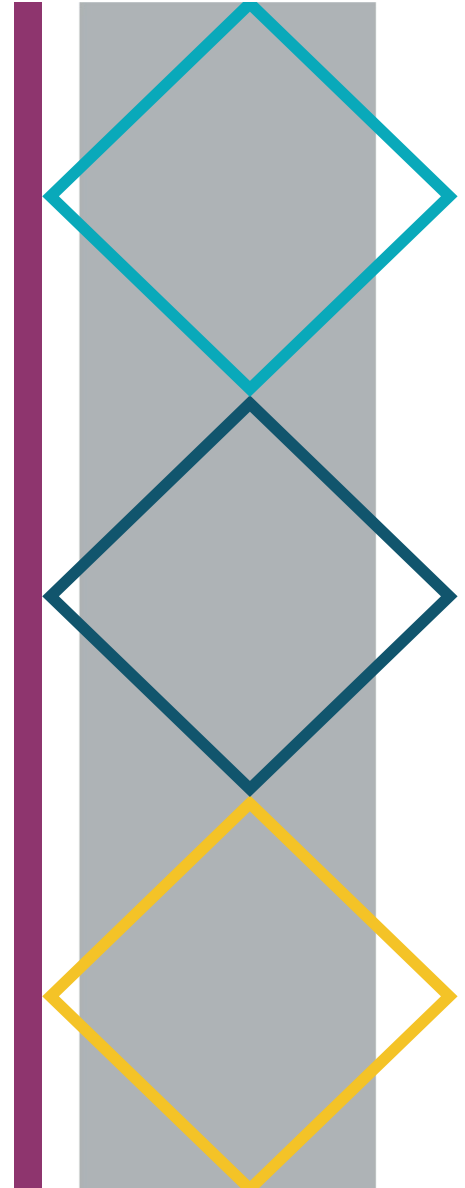
- Jackson Township
- Zelienople Borough
- Lancaster Township
- Harmony Borough

Region has a combined population of 15,000 to 16,000 residents



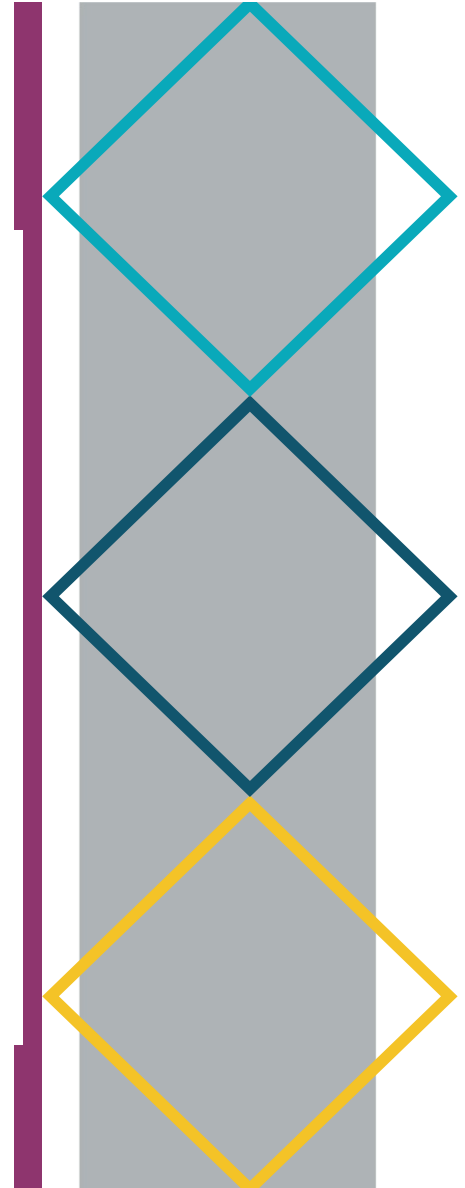
# Seeds of COG Formation

- County efforts, ARPA Funding, and Joint Stormwater Study (2018)
- Resulting formation of the Southwestern Butler Stormwater Authority (2023-2024)
- Capital Improvements and Dedicated Millage Increase for Fire District (2023)
- The Member municipalities share:
  - Historic and ongoing challenges of flooding and stormwater management.
  - Shared fire and EMS services.
  - SR 19 and I-79 corridors.
  - Trail systems and town centers



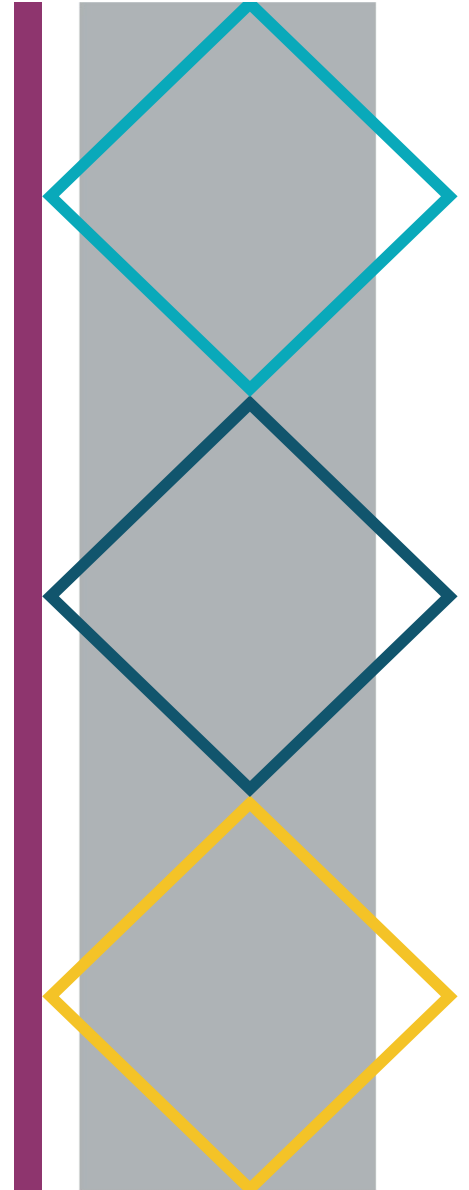
# Results

- Cooperative Agreement between:
  - Four Municipalities
  - Stormwater Authority
  - Fire District
  - COG
- Agreement provides shared staffing for oversight of Fire District finances and management of the Stormwater Authority, office space donated for Authority by Fire District, funding, and oversight and approval processes.
- A full-time position with benefits was funded to provide for services in financial oversight and authority administration.
- Annual joint road paving and seal coat bids.



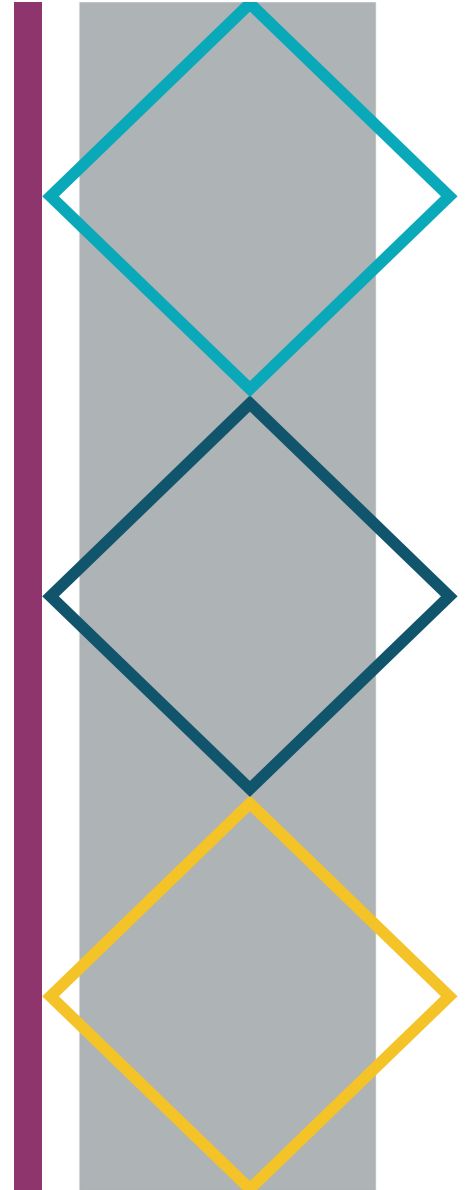
# Current COG Structure

- One elected official and an alternate are appointed from each member municipality.
- The COG currently meets on a monthly basis to conduct regular business and discuss opportunities for ongoing collaboration.
- Executive Director is “volunteer” position by a manager from member municipality.
- Annual financial review by independent auditor.
- Employs one individual full time



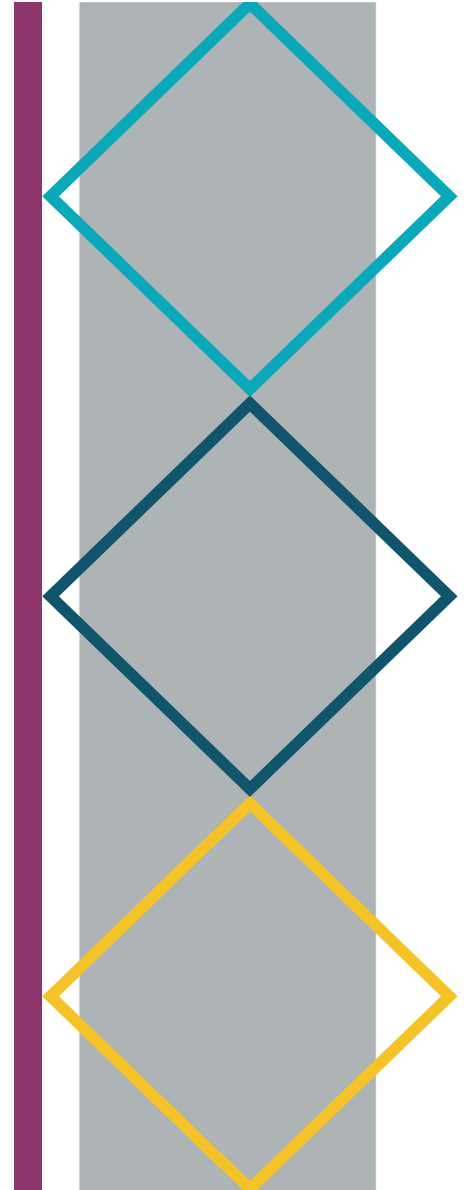
# COG Services

- Financial Oversight Committee for the Harmony Fire District.
- Financial Oversight Committee for the Harmony EMS.
- Staffing for support to the Harmony Fire District
- Staffing of Executive Director position for the Southwestern Butler Stormwater Authority.
- Bidding entity for joint paving and seal coat bids.



# COG Services - Continued

- Shared purchases, grant applications, and possible staffing with pending adoption of Joint Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan
- Inclusion of additional neighbors
- EMS Oversight and Funding
- Emergency Management
- Shared Equipment



# Key Takeaways

- Regional COG has encouraged open dialogue resulting in the exploration of additional shared services and opportunities.
- Dialogue has advanced trust.
- Cooperation and project success increase credibility with funding sources.
- Demonstrated cost savings with minimal overhead.
- Key advantages exist for cooperation at a regional municipal level with respect to emergency, recreation, and stormwater management planning as well as joint purchasing.
- Intergovernmental Cooperation Act provides for flexibility. Same model could exist as subset of a larger COG.

