



Quaker Valley Council of Governments 2022 Annual Report

What is a COG?

Councils of Governments, enabled by the Pennsylvania Constitution and the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, are a vehicle for local communities to review, discuss and respond to regional needs. COGs promote the development and implementation of shared municipal services, as well as the overall concept of intergovernmental cooperation. Such a partnership of like-minded communities can leverage resources to help each other form and sustain the programming and services necessary to better serve their respective constituents.

About the Quaker Valley Council of Governments

The Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG) is a network of communities along Route 65 & the Ohio River as it heads north from its confluence in downtown Pittsburgh. Starting at the Pittsburgh city line, the QVCOG municipalities form a string of municipalities until they reach Beaver County. A non-profit organization, the QVCOG facilitates multi-municipal efforts and provides cost-effective programming on behalf of its 15 member communities. The organization operates under a set of written by-laws and is governed by a Board of Directors with each member community having one voting delegate.

2022 Year in Review

The QVCOG continues to adapt and evolve to serve its member communities. Though full of challenges and opportunities, 2022 saw a “return to normalcy” with many meetings, conferences, and training opportunities returning to an in-person format. As the past two years have demonstrated, it is more critical than ever that communities work together across municipal boundaries in an effort to build cost effective and efficient solutions for their residents.

This year the QVCOG has worked to develop and build upon the following initiatives:

Recycling Programming

Glass Recycling

2022 witnessed the launch of a drop-off Glass Recycling Program for our member communities. Two sites have been established in order to conveniently serve our region’s residents at **Sewickley Borough’s Riverfront Park (300 Chadwick St, Sewickley, PA 15143)** and **across from Avalon Borough’s Public Works Facility (629 New Brighton Road, Avalon, PA 15202)**. Residents within participating member communities are invited to use the site free of charge. This Program is partially funded through the QVCOG’s Joint Recycling Fund with the remaining cost being generated from participating communities using a formula based on each community’s population size. Over 55 tons of glass has been collected since the program started.

Yard Waste Drop Off Program

At its September 21st meeting, the QVCOG Board of Delegates approved a drop-off yard waste program in partnership with the Michael Brothers Company. Beginning immediately, and free of charge, residents of QVCOG member communities may drop off yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, and more at Michael Brothers' Reserve Township facility located at 408 Hoffman Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. The pilot program is being funded through the QVCOG's Joint Recycling Fund and is expected to last approximately 6 months for evaluation purposes. The guidelines of the Program can be found below as well as in the provided illustration.

Program hours of operation: Tuesday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. & Saturday from 7:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Do's and Don'ts: Patrons may drop-off materials such as grass clippings, leaves, brush, wood chips, small logs (under 12" in diameter), Christmas trees, concrete chunks (clean), and dirt (clean). Items such as stumps (greater than 12" in diameter) and food items (such as pumpkins, etc.) will not be accepted.

Hard to Recycle Event

On July 23, 2022 the Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) hosted a Hard to Recycle Collection Event at the Quaker Valley High School (625 Beaver Street, Leetsdale, PA 15056). The event was organized at no cost to the QVCOG with electronics such as televisions, computer monitors, printers and items such as tires being accepted being collected and sustainably recycled for a nominal fee (paid by users). A total of 605 participants took advantage of the event. The QVCOG will be working with PRC to continue this annual event in 2023.

WM Recycling Center Tour

On May 4th the QVCOG organized a site visit and tour of the GreenStar Recycling Center located on Neville Island. Municipal Officials and Staff were able to observe the single-source separation and recycling process and engaged with WM representatives to better understand proper recycling techniques specific to the curbside recycling program.

Police Chiefs Committee

Initially convening to tour the new Allegheny County Emergency Services Facility, the QVCOG's Police Chiefs Committee has developed into a comprehensive work-shop group which meets six times annually to discuss a variety of issues facing our regional police departments. A few of the accomplishments of the group include the following:

Latent Evidence Grant

The QVCOG is proud to announce that it has received two equipment awards from the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association totaling \$18,813.50 through the "Latent Evidence Improvement Project". These grant awards were used to procure a shared digital camera kit, a 48-inch floor model Safefume CA Fuming Chamber, and a 36-inch floor model Drysafe Evidence Drying Cabinet which may be utilized by our region's 9 Police Departments. The Ohio Township Police Department (serving Aleppo Township, Ben Avon Borough, Emsworth Borough, and Kilbuck Township) will be taking the lead on the storage of the aforementioned equipment and has stated an intention to train officers on latent fingerprint capture practices.

Mutual Aid Agreement

In the spring of 2022 the QVCOG Board of Delegates requested that the Police Chiefs Committee review the current Police Mutual Aid Agreement which was approved and enacted in 2009. After two meetings, the Police Chiefs Committee contributed towards and agreed upon an updated mutual aid agreement. At its August 17th meeting, the QVCOG Board of Delegates approved the structure and language of the Agreement. Highlights of the Agreement include updated verbiage, increased insurance requirements, and the addition of Leet Township and the Quaker Valley Area School District into the pact. The Agreement was unanimously approved by all participating agencies.

Police Active Shooter Training

On November 21st and 22nd QVCOG Police Departments participated in a two-day comprehensive active shooter training course. The event was facilitated by the Ohio Township Police Department and the SRT tactical operating unit and took place at the Ross Township Police SRT Training Facility.

Municipal Intern Program Host Site

This summer the QVCOG brought Ms. Anna Richard on board through the Local Government Academy's 2022 Municipal Intern Program. Anna is now a senior at Washington and Jefferson College studying political science with a public policy minor and a concentration in conflict and resolution studies. Throughout the internship, Anna experienced the multifaceted nature of local government and directly engaged with many QVCOG member municipalities as well as the other Councils of Government within Allegheny County. Anna also participated in a number of local government activities, including code/zoning enforcement and solid waste and recycling administration.

Anna's capstone project began with her creating and administering a survey for the Allegheny County Inter-COG Council, which is a collaboration of COGs within the Allegheny County area. The survey collected information concerning the COG's programs and services and gauged their successes and shortcomings. Additionally, the survey collected practical solutions to common problems facing the municipalities in the county. The second step of Anna's project was to create an additional survey out of the data from her initial COG questionnaire and administer the survey to the QVCOG communities. Ultimately, Anna's work will help evolve the QVCOG's programs, services, and overall structure.

In addition to the survey, Anna was also tasked with increasing engagement (both in person and digitally) with all member communities and their residents. In an effort to boost visibility, Anna created an interactive Geographic Information System (GIS) map of community locations, such as community centers, libraries, schools, and municipal buildings. Further engagement efforts included constructing informational graphics, managing the QVCOG's website and Facebook Page, and reaching out to community partners. These efforts amplified the QVCOG's presence and enhanced the organization's connection to member communities and their residents.

Route 65 Study

On January 26, 2022 the QVCOG hosted a presentation facilitated by Michael Baker International & the Remaking Cities Institute on the topic of the Route 65 corridor.

The presentation was based on a 5-year study, design guide, and report generated by the aforementioned organizations. The Route 65 Corridor Strategic Design Guide incorporates focused case study work on the corridor and provides a broader review and analysis to redefine regional highway corridors. The Study reflects a need for both standardization and stronger identity for the corridor.

The study produced a strategic design guide which includes preliminary recommendations to improve the Route 65 corridor. Additionally, the study produced a Corridor Design Toolbox which identifies potential improvements applicable to municipalities along the busy corridor. Recommendations include the narrowing of travel lanes to creating pocketed turns, enhanced gateways, and designation of pedestrian space, coordinated to support economic growth.

Subsequent steps identified within the report include the formation of inter-municipal cooperation agreements aligned with the master planning process and TIP project recommendations. These will all contribute towards the clearly expressed community objective of a safer, greener, and cleaner Ohio River Boulevard corridor. Those who are interested may access the entire Design Guide and Toolbox by visiting qvcog.org.

Ongoing Programming & New Initiatives

Zoning Technical Assistance Program - Proper zoning administration is a challenge for both small and large communities alike. Zoning is an often misunderstood and underutilized community development tool that leaves many communities with the challenge of hiring a qualified professional to implement and oversee its given set of rules. The QVCOG's Zoning Technical Assistance Program is a service offered to member communities that provides a AICP certified expert that will work with Municipal Staff and officials (i.e. Planning Commission & Zoning Hearing Board, etc.) throughout the permitting/plan review and approval process. Currently Leet Township utilizes this program.

Proactive Code Enforcement Program – The QVCOG has developed a professional solution for member communities concerning the procurement of a Code Enforcement Officer with its Proactive Code Enforcement Program. This program provides municipalities with a qualified professional to pursue a progressive code enforcement solution within their community.

Shared Streets and Infrastructure Map - An accessible GIS map is available for all QVCOG member municipalities. This free resource provides a “one stop shop” for residents, staff, and business owners to help identify designated zoning classifications for any parcel within participating communities. Additionally, users can access the zoning regulations (if available), Allegheny County parcel info, Google Street View, and more! To date, 12 member municipalities have contributed their zoning information or are in the process of doing so. More info can be found at qvcog.org/cog-wide-gis.

Annual Dinner

2022 saw the return of the QVCOG's Annual Dinner which took place at the Edgeworth Club and saw over 60 attendees convene to celebrate the spirit of intergovernmental collaboration. Ms. Marie Pelloni served as the event's keynote

speaker highlighting the challenges and opportunities facing the region's technology sector. The event included a 50/50 raffle with proceeds benefiting 412 Food Rescue, an innovative software solution that links volunteer drivers with food donors and those in need. Ms. Cathy Jones, Municipal Secretary for Emsworth Borough, and Mr. Fred Gregorich, Public Works Supervisor for Edgeworth Borough were both recognized for their many years of Public Service to their communities. Additionally, the QVCOG received 11 financial sponsorships for the event.

Grants

GEDTF Awards The QVCOG has been awarded a total of three Gaming Economic Development and Tourism Fund Grants through the Commonwealth Finance Agency during the 2022 & 2023 cycles. Funding through the GEDTF program is made possible through a state law requiring casinos to pay a daily assessment of 5.5% of their gross terminal revenues. Highlights of the awarded projects can be found below:

Ben Avon Borough Building Renovation Project - This project includes the abatement of asbestos and lead-based paint, replacing the slate roof, replacing the overhead door, and replacing 15 windows to improve energy efficiency, thermal comfort, and security. **Award amount - \$200,000**

Sewickley Heights Borough Public Works Infrastructure Improvement Project - This project includes the installation of 4 new catch basins and 220 linear feet of storm pipe. Additionally, the project will include the reconstruction of 1,235 square yards of driveway and buffer yard. The project seeks to resolve sedimentation from degraded asphalt surface and improve surface to subsurface drainage to mitigate future impacts from heavy precipitation events. **Award amount - \$190,000**

Leet Township Stormwater Improvement Project - This project will reconstruct a failed stormwater management facility in the Old Sewickley Highlands neighborhood. **Award amount - \$100,000**

Leet Township Park Improvement Project - This project will include the restoration of the existing basketball court and deck hockey court at the Township facility including replacement of the surfacing, new fencing, new playground equipment, and construction of a War Memorial. **Award amount - \$300,000**

Recycling Performance Grant - The QVCOG has aggregated 2021 residential and commercial recycling data for 14 member communities for the submission of a joint Act 101 Section 904 Recycling Performance Grant through the PA Department of Environmental Protection. Please note, In December of 2021, the QVCOG received an award in the amount of \$23,691.55 for its 2020 application. Of that amount, \$7,109.58 was sent directly to participating communities with the remainder being allocated towards the QVCOG's Joint Recycling Fund (used to sponsor activities such as the glass recycling and yard waste programs).

CDBG Projects - Implementation and Awards

The QVCOG administered the following projects from CD Year 47 (awarded in 2021)

- Leetsdale Borough - Kohlmeyer Park ADA Parking Project **complete**;

- Leet Township - Eckert, Willow, & Neely Street ADA Sidewalk Project **complete**;
- Bellevue Borough - Bayne Park Retaining Wall; and
- Bellevue Borough - Dakota Avenue Blight Remediation **complete**.

The QVCOG was awarded the following CD Year 48 Projects in 2022

- **CD 48-7.4a** - Bell Acres Borough Park ADA Parking Project
- **CD 48-7.4b** - Centennial Avenue ADA Ramp Replacement Project
- **CD 48-7.4c** - Henle Park ADA Parking & Sidewalk Project
- **CD 48-7.4d** - Orchard & Beech ADA Ramp & Sidewalk Replacement Project

*The QVCOG has submitted 7 CDBG Year 49 Applications on behalf of 6 member communities for consideration. Award announcements for this cycle will be made in the spring of 2023.

Please note that every QVCOG member community is eligible to apply for CDBG funding for “non-income based” projects such as ADA accessibility improvement projects and blight remediation. Communities may also conduct targeted household income surveys in pursuit of CDBG funding for other project types (i.e. road reconstruction, water & sewer, recreation, etc.). All project requests must total at least \$20,000 and municipalities may submit multiple applications each year for consideration. Projects that do not receive funding in a given year may be reconsidered the following year. Pre-Applications are due annually in the month of September.

The Year Ahead

With each new year comes new opportunities for the QVCOG to provide answers and solutions for ongoing challenges within member communities and the region as a whole. The following topics have been identified as priorities in the coming year:

- Introduction of annual in-person introductory gathering for QVCOG Board of Delegates;
- Construction of enhanced organizational administrative safeguards;
- Continuation of Route 65 Analysis; and
- Establishment of a QVCOG Fire Chiefs Committee

2022 QVCOG Delegates

Aleppo Township
Arthur Williams

Glenfield Borough
Curtis Reiner

Avalon Borough
Roberta Edwards

Haysville Borough
Amy Paff
Amanda Muzichuck*

Bell Acres Borough
Carmee Murphy
Lane Grafton*

Kilbuck Township
Jean-Sébastien Valois

Bellevue Borough
Sabreena Miller
Dan McKelvey*

Leet Township
Marty McDaniel
John Stephansky*

Ben Avon Borough
Rick Wagner
Tavia Washington*

Leetsdale Borough
Jeff Weatherby

Edgeworth Borough
John Schwend, Treasurer

Sewickley Borough
Julie Barnes, Vice President

Emsworth Borough
Paul Getz

Sewickley Heights Borough
Nate Briggs

Glen Osborne Borough
Barbara Carrier, President

Staff
Patrick Conners, Executive Director

*Alternate Delegate