



## **Quaker Valley Council of Governments 2021 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.

### **New Faces in the QVCOG**

Patrick Conners – Executive Director – Hired in May of 2021 Executive Director Patrick Conners has set out to bring a new energy into the QVCOG. Having served within municipal government in various capacities for both South Strabane Township & Edgeworth Borough, he is seeking to build upon existing programs and services in addition to establishing new collaborative initiatives for the benefit of all member communities.

Michael Packard – Avalon Borough – Mr. Packard was appointed to fulfil a vacancy on Avalon Borough Council on July 20, 2021 Mr. Packard was subsequently appointed to serve as the QVCOG’s delegate for Avalon.

### **Site Visits**

In order to better understand the challenges and opportunities that each member community faces, Executive Director Patrick Conners set out to visit the municipal staff and elected officials within each QVCOG municipality. These visits were essential in building a working relationship between the COG and the communities it serves and are expected to become an annual occurrence in the coming years.

### **Hybrid Meetings**

Due to the recent success and buy-in from participants regarding “hybrid” COG meetings (simultaneous in-person and virtual meetings) this format is set to remain in place in the coming year for both the Board of Directors and the Managers &

Secretaries Committee. Member communities are welcomed to use the Meeting Owl camera/microphone system should they wish to pursue a similar meeting style.

### **Ongoing Programming**

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. Currently Emsworth Borough utilizes this program.

GIS Workshops – These hybrid events are open to both in-person and virtual attendance with each quarterly meeting having a unique focus of discussion. Trainings/demonstrations are facilitated by Matt Mercurio of Civic Mapper. These meetings are open to all QVCOG members with participants having an opportunity to discuss their past/present use of the platform as well as their vision for GIS mapping moving forward. Communities interested in establishing a GIS program are encouraged to reach out to the QVCOG to develop a specific strategy and solution.

Zoning Technical Assistance Program - Proper Zoning Administration is a challenge for both small and large communities alike. Zoning administration 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 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 Emsworth Borough utilizes this program.

**Return of Chief of Police Meetings** - On October 7<sup>th</sup> the Allegheny County Police Department conducted a presentation for QVCOG Police Chiefs and departmental representatives concerning critical incident response and procedures. The event was hosted by Bellevue Borough. The event was a success with nearly every QVCOG municipality being represented. It is anticipated that quarterly “Chiefs” meetings will continue in the new year with discussions centering on training and educational opportunities.

### **Shared Interactive Zoning 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, 11 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](http://qvcog.org/cog-wide-gis).

### **Annual Dinner**

2021 saw the return of in-person attendance at the QVCOG’s Annual Dinner which took place at the Edgeworth Club and saw over 65 attendees convene to celebrate the spirit of intergovernmental collaboration. Senator Devlin Robinson (PA-37) & Representative Anita Kulik (PA-45) served as the event’s keynote speakers through a

joint-speaking session. The event raised over \$450 in donations for 412 Food Rescue, an innovative software solution that links volunteer drivers with food donors and those in need. Mr. David T. Aloe, Councilperson of Edgeworth Borough, was recognized for his many years of Public Service to his community. Additionally, the QVCOG received 12 financial sponsorships for the event.

### **New 5-Year Waste and Recycling Agreement**

Throughout 2021 and with the assistance of Nestor Resources and the Waste & Recycling Committee, the QVCOG worked towards building an innovative bid specification for a new 5-year waste and recycling contract. A total of 11 QVCOG member communities moved forward in seeking a joint bid to select an appropriate package of services for their residents. After receiving two bid proposals the QVCOG Board of Directors ultimately recommended that participating communities award their Waste & Recycling Service to Waste Management through 2022-2026 citing the significant cost gap between the two options. The updated contract specifications included many new facets including a Contract Deposit Fund which will be used moving forward to hold Waste Management financially accountable to the approved service specifications. The joint bidding process saved participating member communities time and resources and helped provide a more competitive price point for refuse service. The QVCOG anticipates approving a waste & recycling service reporting policy which seeks to establish clear channels of communication ensuring a high level of service for all participants.

### **Glass Pop Up Events**

In 2021 the QVCOG and its member communities hosted 7 separate “pop up” glass recycling events in partnership with the Pennsylvania Resources Council which resulted in over 20 tons of glass being collected and sustainably resourced away from landfills. The QVCOG would like to thank Sewickley Borough, Kilbuck Township, Aleppo Township, Bellevue Borough, and Avalon Borough for their financial support in this effort.

### **Hard to Recycle Event**

On July 10, 2021 the Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) hosted a Hard to Recycle Collection Event at the Quaker Valley High School. 379 vehicles responsibly disposed of materials including electronics such as televisions, computer monitors, printers and other items such as tires and glass. It is anticipated that a similar event will be scheduled for 2022 at the same location.

### **Recycling Performance Grant**

The QVCOG has aggregated 2020 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. In the past, the COG has partnered with Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) to collect this data. By bringing this operation “in-house” the QVCOG will save approximately \$5,000 in administrative fees. Additionally, a more comprehensive and robust application has been submitted on behalf of participating municipalities.

### **CDBG Projects - Implementation and Awards**

The QVCOG administered the following projects from CD Year 46 (awarded in 2020)

- Leetsdale Borough – 240 Beaver Street Blight Remediation – **Completed**;
- Bellevue Borough – 255 Dakota Avenue & 529 Tingley Avenue Blight Remediation;
- Leetsdale Borough (through Edgeworth Municipal Authority) – Beaver Street to Ambridge Avenue Waterline Replacement Project – **Completed**;
- Kilbuck Township - ADA Parking & Walkway Project – **Completed**; and
- Leet Township - Eckert, Willow & Neely ADA Sidewalk Project.

The QVCOG was awarded the following CD Year 47 Projects in 2021

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

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, 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 of have been identified as priorities in the coming year:

- Establishment of Permanent Glass Recycling Solution for member communities;
- Evaluation & Expansion of Shared Programming & Services; and
- Return of Quarterly Public Works Workshop Sessions.

2021 QVCOG Delegates

Aleppo Township Arthur Williams	Glenfield Borough Curtis Reiner
Avalon Borough Michael Packard	Haysville Borough Amy Paff
Bell Acres Borough Brock Meanor	Kilbuck Township Jean-Sebastien Valois, President
Bellevue Borough Anthony DiTullio	Leet Township Donna Adipietro
Ben Avon Borough Rick Wagner	Leetsdale Borough Jeff Weatherby
Edgeworth Borough John Schwend, Treasurer	Sewickley Borough Julie Barnes
Emsworth Borough Paul Getz, Vice President	Sewickley Heights Borough Nate Briggs
Glen Osborne Borough Barbara Carrier	Staff Patrick Conners, Executive Director

Public service is a noble calling which often provides a variety of challenges and rewards to those who seek it. The ability of local governments to provide responsive, innovative and effective service to its residents depends on the outstanding performance of dedicated public servants. With that being said, the Quaker Valley Council of Governments would like to thank all of its Board members for volunteering their time and efforts in making intergovernmental collaboration a meaningful and impactful reality for its 15 member communities.