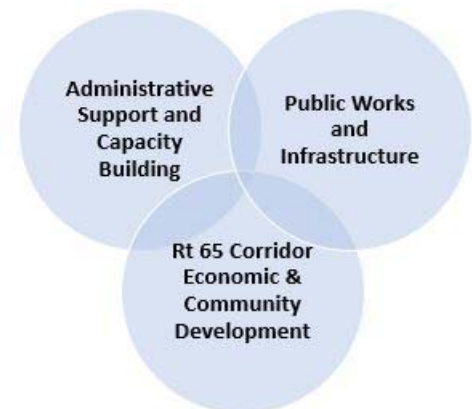




## Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG) 2017 Program Year in Review

2017 saw QVCOG make significant improvements in its ability to serve its constituent communities and residents. The Board of Directors ushered into place a framework to build upon through the support of member communities' governing boards and staff. While there is much work yet to do, here is a summary of some of the 2017 accomplishments:

- **"QVCOG 2.0"** – Having gone through a significant organizational change with the hiring of a new Executive Director, QVCOG conducted surveys, in-person visits to all member communities, and strategic planning in 2017. The QVCOG honed-in on shared interests of (a) budget and fiscal concerns (b) governance and operations (c) fighting blight and community development (d) infrastructure. From those concerns flow the 3 interconnected priorities of QVCOG depicted in the venn diagram at the right.



- **PI Team** - Research shows that intergovernmental cooperation challenges are more effectively navigated when communities are involved in setting regional priorities. Towards that end, QVCOG formed the Project Ideation (PI) Team in 2017, an innovative approach for Councils of Governments in Pennsylvania involving both elected officials and citizens. In 2017 the QVCOG PI Team reviewed data mining for improved tax collection, digital document management, emergency management, zoning technical assistance, financial administrative services, and computer assisted roadway evaluations. It resumes meeting in February 2018.



- **Recycling Reboot** - QVCOG's history of providing special recycling events was improved upon by development of a Recycling Committee to provide oversight of programs and funding. QVCOG communities that participate in the committee have their PA-DEP recycling performance grant submitted by QVCOG, which returns the residential portion to the municipalities. They further benefit from a commercial recycling campaign that funds QVCOG led activities.



QVCOG partnered with Pennsylvania Resources Council to conduct a June 24 Hard to Recycle Event and conducted a Household Hazardous Waste and Special Electronics Collection on September 23. Thanks to volunteers and through work with nonprofit and business partners, QVCOG served over 700 vehicles in these two events and conducted the programs with no cost to QVCOG or member municipalities. QVCOG conducted a recycling education event with a tour of the Waste Management-GreenStar Recycling facility on May 10. Lastly, QVCOG organized the Residential Recycling Challenge resulting in a Waste Management donation to a community group of the winning municipality's choice. Glenfield Borough selected Allegheny Cleanways in support of their river clean-up programs.

- Capital Improvements Planning and Public Works Survey** - Summer 2017 saw Interns come aboard to help with vital programs for the members, including a capital improvements plan and public works survey. Over \$10 million in 65+ capital projects were identified. This work informed QVCOG CDBG pre-applications of approximately \$1.5 million in 21 projects. Seventeen were invited by Allegheny County to make full application. The Public Works survey identified equipment inventory and various operational questions to inform the Foreman's group that will kick off in early 2018.



- Blight Fight and Geographic Information System (GIS) launch** - QVCOG launched COG-wide GIS in June 2017 with Edgeworth, Kilbuck, Sewickley Heights, and Leetsdale becoming subscribers. Additionally, QVCOG performed property condition evaluations for Bellevue and Leetsdale Boroughs. Part of that property evaluation program was to develop multi-criteria evaluations and maps that depict problem properties for code enforcement and an eventual regional blight fight strategy. The criteria for property evaluation was based on the condition of the roof, gutter, soffit-fascia, facade/exterior siding, door, window, porch and the yard maintenance.



Apps developed in QVCOG-wide GIS are part of an iterative implementation strategy that scales solutions to the needs of the communities and keeps costs down. Other uses by subscribers include mapping street trees, recycling participation, and snow removal routes.

- Clean Water Initiative** – Members benefited by having their MS4 public education requirements met through the QVCOG Clean Water Initiative. In addition to providing educational materials at Sewickley Harvest Fest, the Household Hazardous Waste Collection event, and the Emsworth Halloween Parade, residents learned about organic lawn care at a February event at Fern Hollow Nature Center.



The QVCOG also hosts a public complaint form on its website and held a drawing for a free Rain Barrell. Documentation of activities and events are provided to members for inclusion in their NPDES permit files to demonstrate best management practices.

- **Various Programs Serve a Variety of Needs -**

- QVCOG launched cloud based financial administrative services to accomplish segregation of duties and improved reporting for participating municipalities. Kilbuck Township is currently participating.
- The Uniform Construction Code Board of Appeals was re-populated in 2017, after volunteer terms had lapsed and no reappointments had occurred for several years. No cases heard.
- Zoning Technical Assistance program developed. Enrollments pending.
- QVCOG organized Cable TV franchise representation and numerous members participated in a compliance review for the Verizon franchise agreement in 2017. Six municipalities participating.
- QVCOG administers Community Development Block Grants on behalf of Allegheny County and made various improvements in its operations noted in the clean compliance audit it received from Allegheny County Economic Development. An on-line pre-application form was developed as well as digital “plan room” for construction specifications. Completed 10 CDBG funded projects in 2017; administration of an additional nine occurred and is ongoing.



- **Building Relationships to Forge Results -** QVCOG engaged in numerous activities to foster intermunicipal relationships in 2017. Among these were conduct monthly Managers & Secretaries Committee meetings that vetted intergovernmental cooperation ideas to develop a menu of services and budgetary oversight. The committee also served as a policy recommendation panel by providing advice to member governing boards on how to handle the Act 172 Fire and EMS Tax Rebate. As part of that process, regional fire chiefs were invited to a roundtable to provide input.

After a two-year break, the Annual Dinner resumed with a fresh approach that included an insightful and relevant presentation from Don Carter, Director of the Remaking Cities Institute at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and a charitable event collecting donations to the Houston Galveston Area Council Hurricane Harvey Relief. Our community stepped up and attendance was excellent and there was strong sponsorships and donations. The presentation by Don Carter was particularly timely as QVCOG is developing a working relationship with CMU to study the 65 corridor and get advice on mitigating the negative effects and capitalizing on the positives of the highway.

Other outreach included hosting Candidates Night in September to provide information about Intergovernmental Cooperation to those running for local office; relationship-building with school districts, authorities, and presentations for various community groups; “InterCOG cooperation,” among Allegheny County and Pennsylvania COGs, including presentation at Pennsylvania Association of Council of Governments annual conference, hosting a Allegheny InterCOG Council webpage, and inviting municipalities in good standing with any COG to utilize QVCOG fee for service programs. QVCOG also reached out the Beaver County COG and invited their participation in the Rt 65 Corridor study.

- **Attracting Investment and Grant Seeking** – QVCOG was successful in restoring the confidence of Allegheny County in 2017, as well as securing a DCED grant, and a Local Government Academy Internship grant. Additionally, QVCOG submitted 3 grant proposals on behalf of 2 municipalities and one authority to PennDOT for traffic signals and dirt/gravel road improvements.



- **Odds and Ends** –
  - QVCOG increased data security and office efficiency by migrating all operations to “the cloud” in 2017.
  - The QVCOG website was transformed through the photos and edits by a volunteer intern.
  - An e-newsletter was launched and customer relationship management (CRM) was deployed for contact and project management. *QVCOG Notes* inaugurated for monthly meeting packets. QVCOG Team Site launched to provide Board intranet.
  - The overdue dues increased discussed by QVCOG for years was accomplished through a lot of hard work by the Delegates and the governing boards they represent.
  - Board Development sessions conducted on a regular basis provided education on the political and legal underpinnings of intergovernmental cooperation, the role of the delegate, understanding the obstacles to intergovernmental cooperation, conflict resolution and the “Switch” model of change.
  - QVCOG welcomed Sewickley Heights as a new member in 2017.
  - An Ad Hoc By-Laws Committee worked monthly to develop draft By-Laws revisions that will go to the Delegates and members in 2017.



## Conclusion

Communities within the Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG) have the infrastructure and people assets to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Blessed with mixed use walkable neighborhoods, wooded hillsides, public facilities, a diverse workforce, solid housing and good access to transit and transportation, citizens in the QVCOG communities can form high expectations for their quality of life.

Concurrently, there are many challenges. And while a spirit of optimism is necessary, it is not a substitute for robust solution-seeking. The same community assets will be relied upon to address our challenges. As a community, we must “fix what’s wrong with what’s strong.”

To do both, capitalize on assets and tackle challenges, 15 communities working together improve their chances for success. Working together can overcome obstacles that may be daunting if confronted alone. Further, solving problems often takes a complex and sustained effort which can exhaust the capabilities any one organization. It is good to have neighbors to lend a hand.

QVCOG is emerging as the community asset that will enable coordinated and sustained intergovernmental responses to current and future opportunities. In 2017, the QVCOG took steps to correct its course and better serve its member municipalities and the 31,000+ people they represent. QVCOG local government officials and staffs have been working intrepidly, if often incrementally, on laying the groundwork for future success. This report presents some of the results of those efforts.

Many thanks to the leaders who have given of their time in 2017.

### 2017 Delegates

Aleppo	Avalon
– Matthew Doebler	– Tom Lloyd
– Arthur Williams, Alternate	– John McFeeley, Alternate
Bell Acres	Bellevue
– Michelle Veeck	– Kathy Coder
– Ken Alvania, Alternate	– Tom Fodi, Alternate
Ben Avon	Edgeworth
– Earl Bohn	– Joseph T. Hoepf
– Lisa Earl, Alternate	– John Schwend, Alternate
Emsworth	Glen Osborne
– Paul Getz	– Bill Monski
– Jolene Bennett, Alternate	– Barbara Carrier, Alternate
Glenfield	Haysville
– Curtis Reiner	– Amy Paff
– Connie Klauk, Alternate	– Mary Beth Conlin, Alternate
Kilbuck	Leet
– Jean-Sebastien Valois, President	– Betsy Rengers, Vice President
– Tom Tomaro, Alternate	– Wayne Hyjek, Alternate
Leetsdale	Sewickley
– Jeff Weatherby	– Susan Aleshire, Treasurer
– Wes James, Alternate	– Charles Driscoll, Alternate
Sewickley Heights Borough	Staff
– Katie Stringent	– Susan G. Hockenberry, Executive Director
– Nate Briggs, Alternate	– Janet Wenger, Administrative Assistant

